

THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • MAY 2011

Ensign

A photograph of the Salt Lake Temple in winter. The temple's Gothic Revival architecture is visible through a dense canopy of snow-laden trees. The sky is overcast and grey. A golden statue of a figure with outstretched arms is perched atop one of the temple's spires.

**General
Conference
Addresses**

**75th Anniversary
of Church Welfare
Program**

**Three New Temples
Announced**



COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Such as I Have Give I Thee, by Walter Rane

“A certain man lame from his mother’s womb was . . . laid daily at the gate of the temple . . . ;

“Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. . . .

“Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee:

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

*“And [Peter] took [the lame man] by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet
and ankle bones received strength” (Acts 3:2–3, 6–7).*

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Summary for the 181st Annual General Conference

SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 2, 2011, GENERAL SESSION

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.
Conducting: President Dieter F. Uchtdorf.
Invocation: Elder Allan F. Packer.
Benediction: Elder Dale G. Renlund.
Music by the Tabernacle Choir; Mack Wilberg and Ryan Murphy, directors; Clay Christiansen, organist: "Rejoice, the Lord Is King!" *Hymns*, no. 66; "Glory to God on High," *Hymns*, no. 67; "We Listen to a Prophet's Voice," *Hymns*, no. 22, arr. Murphy, unpublished; "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," *Hymns*, no. 136; "I Know That My Savior Loves Me," Creamer/Bell, arr. Murphy, unpublished; "High on the Mountain Top," *Hymns*, no. 5, arr. Wilberg, unpublished.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 2, 2011, GENERAL SESSION

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.
Conducting: President Dieter F. Uchtdorf.
Invocation: Elder Kevin W. Pearson.
Benediction: Elder Michael T. Ringwood.
Music by a combined choir from Brigham Young University–Idaho; Eda Ashby and Randall Kempton, directors; Bonnie Goodliffe, organist: "How Firm a Foundation," *Hymns*, no. 85, arr. Ashby, unpublished; "How Great the Wisdom and the Love," *Hymns*, no. 195; "Press Forward, Saints," *Hymns*, no. 81; "Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise," *Hymns*, no. 41, arr. Kempton, unpublished.

SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 2, 2011, PRIESTHOOD SESSION

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.
Conducting: President Henry B. Eyring.
Invocation: Elder Rafael E. Pino.
Benediction: Elder Joseph W. Sitati.
Music by a priesthood choir from the Ogden Utah and Logan Utah Institutes; Jerald F. Simon, J. Nyles Salmond, and Alan T. Saunders, directors; Andrew Unsworth, organist: "See the Mighty Priesthood Gathered," *Hymns*, no. 325; "Guide Me to Thee," *Hymns*, no. 101, arr. Unsworth, unpublished; "Redeemer of Israel," *Hymns*, no. 6; "For the Strength of the Hills," *Hymns*, no. 35, arr. Durham, pub. Jackman.

SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 3, 2011, GENERAL SESSION

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.
Conducting: President Henry B. Eyring.
Invocation: Elder Gary E. Stevenson.
Benediction: Elder Tad R. Callister.
Music by the Tabernacle Choir; Mack Wilberg, director; Richard Elliott and Andrew Unsworth, organists: "O Thou Rock of Our Salvation," *Hymns*, no. 258; "Sabbath Day," *Hymns*, no. 148; "Hark, All Ye Nations!" *Hymns*, no. 264, arr. Wilberg, unpublished; "Let Us All Press On," *Hymns*, no. 243; "Have I Done Any Good?" *Hymns*, no. 223, arr. Zabriskie, pub. Plum; "The Spirit of God," *Hymns*, no. 2, arr. Wilberg, unpublished.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 3, 2011, GENERAL SESSION

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.
Conducting: President Henry B. Eyring.
Invocation: Elder José A. Teixeira.
Benediction: Elder Kent D. Watson.
Music by the Tabernacle Choir; Mack Wilberg and Ryan Murphy, directors; Linda Margetts and Bonnie Goodliffe, organists: "I Saw a Mighty Angel Fly," *Hymns*, no. 15, arr. Wilberg, unpublished; "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus," *Children's Songbook*, 78–79, arr. Bradford, pub. Nature Sings; "Come, Ye Children of the Lord," *Hymns*, no. 58; "More Holiness Give Me," *Hymns*, no. 131, arr. Staheli, pub. Jackman.

SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 26, 2011, GENERAL YOUNG WOMEN MEETING

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.
Conducting: Elaine S. Dalton.
Invocation: Emily Lewis.
Benediction: Bethany Wright.
Music by a Young Women choir from stakes in the Salt Lake City area; Merrilee Webb, director; Linda Margetts and Bonnie

Goodliffe, organists: "High on the Mountain Top," *Hymns*, no. 5; "Guardians of Virtue," *Strength of Youth Media 2011: We Believe*, unpublished (cello: Jessica Hunt); "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," *Hymns*, no. 136, arr. Lyon, pub. Jackman (harp: Hannah Cope); "How Firm a Foundation," *Hymns*, no. 85, arr. Wilberg, unpublished.

CONFERENCE TALKS AVAILABLE

To access general conference talks on the Internet in many languages, visit conference.lds.org. Then select a language. Generally within two months following conference, recordings are also available at distribution centers. Recordings for individuals who are deaf are available at languages.lds.org (select ASL) and generally within two months following conference from distribution centers (three DVDs with a signing inset). For more information, call 1-800-537-5971 or log on to store.lds.org.

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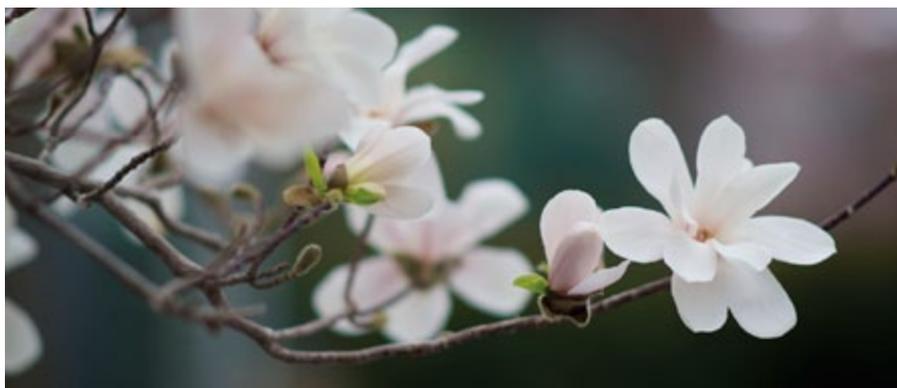
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ON THE COVER

Front: Photograph by Weston Colton.
Back: Photograph by Les Nilsson.

CONFERENCE PHOTOGRAPHY

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Ensign

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By President Thomas S. Monson

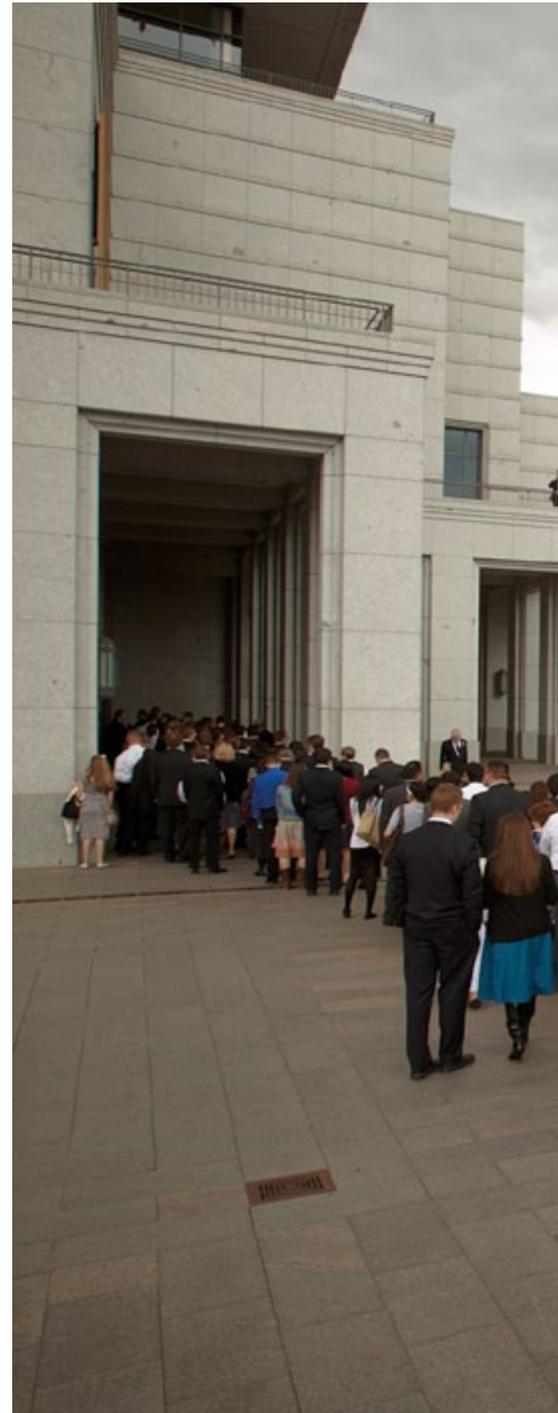
It's Conference Once Again

*Thank you for your faith and devotion to the gospel,
for the love and care you show to one another,
and for the service you provide.*

When this building was planned, we thought we'd never fill it. Just look at it now.

My beloved brothers and sisters, how good it is to be together once again as we begin the 181st Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The past six months seem to have passed rapidly as I've been busy with many responsibilities. One of the great blessings during this time was to rededicate the beautiful Laie Hawaii Temple, which had been undergoing extensive renovations for nearly two years. I was accompanied by President and Sister Henry B. Eyring, Elder and



Sister Quentin L. Cook, and Elder and Sister William R. Walker. During the evening prior to the rededication, which took place during November, we watched 2,000 young people from the temple district as they filled the Cannon Activities Center on the BYU-Hawaii campus and performed for us. Their production was titled "The Gathering Place" and creatively and masterfully recounted significant



events in local Church history and the history of the temple. What a wonderful evening it was!

The following day was a spiritual feast as the temple was rededicated in three sessions. The Spirit of the Lord was with us in rich abundance.

We continue to build temples. It is my privilege this morning to announce three additional temples for which sites are being acquired

and which, in coming months and years, will be built in the following locations: Fort Collins, Colorado; Meridian, Idaho; and Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. They will certainly be a blessing to our members in those areas.

Each year millions of ordinances are performed in the temples. May we continue to be faithful in performing such ordinances, not only for

ourselves but also for our deceased loved ones who are unable to do so for themselves.

The Church continues to provide humanitarian aid in times of disaster. Most recently our hearts and our help have gone out to Japan following the devastating earthquake and tsunami and the resultant nuclear challenges. We have distributed over 70 tons of supplies, including food,

water, blankets, bedding, hygiene items, clothing, and fuel. Our young single adults have volunteered their time to locate missing members using the Internet, social media, and other modern means of communication. Members are delivering aid via scooters provided by the Church to areas that are difficult to reach by car. Service projects to assemble hygiene kits and cleaning kits are being organized in multiple stakes and wards in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka. Thus far, over 40,000 hours of service have been donated by more than 4,000 volunteers. Our help will be ongoing in Japan and in any other areas where there is need.

My brothers and sisters, I thank you for your faith and devotion to the gospel, for the love and care you show to one another, and for the service you provide in your wards and branches and stakes and districts. Thank you, as well, for your faithfulness in paying your tithes and offerings and for your generosity in contributing to the other funds of the Church.

As of the end of the year 2010, there were 52,225 missionaries serving in 340 missions throughout the world. Missionary work is the lifeblood of the kingdom. May I suggest that if you are able, you might consider making a contribution to the General Missionary Fund of the Church.

Now, brothers and sisters, we are anxious to listen to the messages which will be presented to us today and tomorrow. Those who will address us have sought heaven's help and direction as they have prepared their messages. That we may be filled with the Spirit of the Lord and be uplifted and inspired as we listen and learn is my prayer. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Elder L. Tom Perry
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Sabbath and the Sacrament

Let your family be filled with love as you honor the Sabbath all day long and experience its spiritual blessings throughout the week.

My brothers and sisters, across the world this morning we have come to listen to a prophet's voice. I testify that the voice we have just heard is the voice of God's living prophet on the earth today, President Thomas S. Monson. How blessed we are to have his teachings and example!

This year all of us have the opportunity to study the words of the prophets in the New Testament in Sunday School. While the Old Testament is a study of prophets and a people, the New Testament is focused on the life and influence of the only Man who came into mortality with dual citizenship in heaven and on earth—our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

The world today is so saturated with doctrines of men that it is easy to forget and lose faith in that all-important account of the Savior's life and ministry—the New Testament. This sacred volume is the centerpiece of scriptural history, just as the Savior Himself should be the centerpiece of our lives. We must commit ourselves to study it and treasure it!

There are priceless pearls of wisdom

to be found in our study of the New Testament. I always enjoy reading the accounts of Paul as he traveled and organized the Savior's Church, especially his teachings to Timothy. In the fourth chapter of Paul's writings to Timothy, we read: "These things command and teach. . . . Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."¹ I can think of no better way for us to begin or continue to be an example of the believers than in our observance of the Sabbath day.

Beginning with the Creation of the world, one day was set apart from all others. "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it."² Even God rested from His labors on this day, and He expects His children to do the same. To the children of Israel, He delivered the commandment:

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

"But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God. . . .

". . . Wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."³

The pattern of Sabbath day observance must always include worship. After Adam and Eve entered mortality, they were commanded to “worship the Lord their God, and . . . offer the firstlings of their flocks [as] an offering unto the Lord . . . [in] similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father.”⁴ The sacrifice of animals reminded Adam’s posterity that one day the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, would make a sacrifice of His own life for us.

Throughout His life the Savior spoke of that sacrifice.⁵ On the eve of His Crucifixion, His words began to be fulfilled. He gathered His disciples together in the upper room, away from the distractions of the world. He instituted the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

“And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”⁶

From that time forward, the Savior’s Atonement became the great and last sacrifice. When He appeared on the American continent after His Resurrection, He conferred His priesthood upon His disciples and introduced the sacrament by saying:

“And this shall ye always observe to do, . . . even as I have broken bread and blessed it and given it unto you.

“ . . . And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.”⁷

It is remarkable that even through the dark periods of apostasy, this



pattern of Sabbath day worship and the sacrament continued to be practiced in many forms.

When the gospel was restored, Peter, James, and John, three of the Apostles who first received the sacrament from the Savior, appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Under their direction, the priesthood authority necessary to administer the sacrament to the members of the Church was restored.⁸

Conferred by the Savior to His prophets and apostles and from them to us, that priesthood authority continues on the earth today. Young priesthood holders across the world qualify themselves to exercise priesthood power by earnestly keeping the commandments and living gospel standards. As these young men keep spiritually clean hands and pure hearts, they prepare and bless the sacrament in the Savior’s way—a way



defined by what He did over 2,000 years ago.

Partaking of the sacrament is the center of our Sabbath day observance. In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord commands all of us:

“And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

“For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High. . . .

“And on this day thou shalt do none other thing.”⁹

As we consider the pattern of the Sabbath and the sacrament in our own lives, there appear to be three things the Lord requires of us: first, to keep ourselves unspotted from the world; second, to go to the house of prayer and offer up our sacraments; and third, to rest from our labors.

It is a glorious thing to be a Christian and to live as a true disciple of Christ. Of us He said, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”¹⁰ To keep ourselves

unspotted from the world, He expects us to avoid such worldly distractions of businesses and recreational facilities on the Sabbath day.

I believe He also desires us to dress appropriately. Our youth may think the old saying “Sunday best” is outdated. Still, we know that when Sunday dress deteriorates to everyday attire, attitudes and actions follow. Of course, it may not be necessary for our children to wear formal Sunday attire until the sun goes down. However, by the clothing we encourage them to wear and the activities we plan, we help them prepare for the sacrament and enjoy its blessings throughout the day.

What does it mean to offer up our sacraments to the Lord? We acknowledge that all of us make mistakes. Each of us has a need to confess and forsake our sins and errors to our Heavenly Father and to others we may have offended. The Sabbath provides us with a precious opportunity to offer up these—our sacraments—to the Lord. He said, “Remember that on this, the Lord’s day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.”¹¹

Elder Melvin J. Ballard has suggested, “We want every Latter-day Saint to come to the sacrament table because it is the place for self-investigation, for self-inspection, where we may learn to rectify our course and to make right our own lives, bringing ourselves into harmony with the teachings of the Church and with our brethren and sisters.”¹²

As we worthily partake of the sacrament, we witness that we are willing to take the Savior’s name upon us and keep His commandments and *do* always remember Him, that we may have His Spirit to be with us. In this way the covenant of our baptism is renewed. The Lord assured His disciples, “As oft

as ye do this ye will remember this hour that I was with you.”¹³

Sometimes we think of resting from our labors as merely letting the hay baler stand idle in the field or putting a Closed sign on the business door. Yet in today’s world, labor includes the everyday work of our lives. This could mean business activities we may accomplish from home, athletic competitions, and other pursuits that take us away from Sabbath day worship and the opportunity to minister to others.

“Trifle not with sacred things,”¹⁴ the Lord revealed to the Latter-day Saints, as if to remind us of what He told His disciples: “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.”¹⁵

Brothers and sisters, in the latter days the adversary succeeds when we relax our commitment to the Savior, ignore His teachings in the New Testament and other scripture, and cease to follow Him. Parents, now is the time to teach our children to be examples of the believers by attending sacrament meeting. When Sunday morning arrives, help them to be well rested, properly dressed, and spiritually prepared to partake of the emblems of the sacrament and receive the enlightening, edifying, ennobling power of the Holy Ghost. Let your family be filled with love as you honor the Sabbath all day long and experience its spiritual blessings throughout the week. Invite your sons and daughters to “arise and shine forth” by keeping the Sabbath day holy, that “[their] light may be a standard for the nations.”¹⁶

As the years go by, I continue to reflect on the Sabbath days of my youth and young adulthood. I still remember the first day I passed the sacrament as a deacon and the little glass cups I passed to the members of our ward. A few years ago a Church building in my hometown

was remodeled. A compartment in the pulpit had been sealed. When it was opened, there were some of these little glass cups that had remained hidden for years. One of them was presented to me as a memento.

I also remember the green footlocker we carried with us in the U.S. Marine Corps. Inside the footlocker was a wooden tray and package of sacrament cups so that we could be blessed by the peace and hope of the Lord’s Supper even in the conflict and despair of war.

As I think about those sacrament cups from my youth, one in the sheltered valley of my boyhood home and the other thousands of miles away in the Pacific, I am filled with gratitude that the Savior of the world was willing to drink from the “bitter cup”¹⁷ for my sake. And because He did, I can say with the Psalmist, “My cup runneth over”¹⁸ with the blessings of His infinite and eternal Atonement.

On this day before the Sabbath, as we begin this great conference, let us remember the blessings and opportunities that are ours as we attend sacrament meeting each week in our

wards and branches. Let us prepare and conduct ourselves on the Sabbath in a manner that will call down the blessings promised us upon ourselves and our families. I bear my special witness that the greatest joy we receive in this life is in following the Savior. May we keep His commandments by keeping His sacred day holy is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. 1 Timothy 4:11–12.
2. Genesis 2:3.
3. Exodus 20:8–11.
4. Moses 5:5, 7.
5. See, for example, Mark 10:32–34; John 2:19; 10:17; 12:32.
6. Matthew 26:26–28.
7. 3 Nephi 18:6–7.
8. See Joseph Smith—History 1:68–69, 72; see also Doctrine and Covenants 27:12–13.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–10, 13.
10. John 17:16.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 59:12.
12. In Bryant S. Hinckley, *Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin Joseph Ballard* (1949), 150.
13. Joseph Smith Translation, Mark 14:21, in Bible appendix.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 6:12.
15. Mark 2:27.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 115:5.
17. 3 Nephi 11:11.
18. Psalm 23:5.

Kyiv, Ukraine





By Jean A. Stevens
First Counselor in the Primary General Presidency

Become as a Little Child

If we have a heart to learn and a willingness to follow the example of children, their divine attributes can hold a key to unlocking our own spiritual growth.

Our Father in Heaven, in His great wisdom and love, sends His spirit sons and daughters to this earth as children. They come to families as precious gifts with a divine nature and destiny. Our Heavenly Father knows children are a key to helping us become like Him. There is so much we can learn from children.

This important truth was evidenced some years ago as a member of the Seventy was on assignment in Hong Kong. He visited a very humble ward that was struggling in many ways, unable to provide for its own needs. As the bishop described their situation, the General Authority felt the impression to have the members pay their tithing. The bishop, knowing their dire circumstances, was concerned about how he could carry out that counsel. He thought about it and decided he would approach some of the most faith-filled members of his ward and ask them to pay their tithing. The next Sunday he went to the Primary. He taught the children about the Lord's law of tithing and asked if they would be willing to pay tithing on the money they earned. The

children said they would. And they did.

The bishop later went to the adults in the ward and shared with them that for the past six months their faithful children had been paying tithing. He asked them if they would be willing to follow the example of these children and do the same. The people were so touched by the sacrifices the children were willing to make that they did what was necessary to pay their tithing. And the windows of heaven were opened. With the example of these faithful children, a ward grew in obedience and in testimony.

It was Jesus Christ Himself who taught us to look to children as an example. The New Testament records His answer when His Apostles disputed who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus answered their question with a small yet powerful object lesson. He called a little child to Him and set him in the midst of them and said:

“Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is

greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3–4).

What is it we should learn from children? What qualities do they possess and what examples do they demonstrate that can help us in our own spiritual development?

These precious children of God come to us with believing hearts. They are full of faith and receptive to feelings of the Spirit. They exemplify humility, obedience, and love. They are often the first to love and the first to forgive.

Let me share some experiences of how children can bless our lives with their innocent yet powerful examples of Christlike attributes.

Todd, a little boy just two years old, recently went with his mother to an art museum that was showing a special exhibit of beautiful paintings of the Savior. As they walked past these sacred images, she heard her little boy reverently saying the name “Jesus.” She looked down to see him folding his arms and bowing his head as he viewed the paintings. Could we learn from Todd something about an attitude of humility, of reverence, and of love for the Lord?

Last fall I watched the example of a 10-year-old boy in Armenia. As we waited for sacrament meeting to begin, he noticed the oldest member of the branch arrive. He was the one who quickly went to her side, offering his arm to steady her faltering steps. He assisted her to the front row of the chapel, where she could hear. Could his small act of kindness teach us that those who are greatest in the Lord's kingdom are those who look for opportunities to serve others?

Katie, a Primary-age girl, taught us as we saw her influence on her family. She attended Primary and was drawn to the teachings of the gospel. With



growing faith and testimony, Katie left a note on her parents' pillow. She wrote that the gospel truths had found a "home in her heart." She shared her longing to be close to her Heavenly Father, to be obedient to His commandments, and to have their family sealed in the temple. The simple testimony of their sweet daughter touched her parents' hearts in a powerful way. Katie and her family did receive sacred temple ordinances that bound

their family together forever. Katie's believing heart and example of faith helped bring eternal blessings to her family. Could her sincere testimony and desire to follow the Lord's plan lead us to see more clearly what really matters most?

Our family is learning from a close relative, six-year-old Liam. This past year he has battled aggressive brain cancer. After two difficult surgeries, it was decided that radiation would also

be necessary. During these radiation treatments, he was required to be all alone and lie absolutely still. Liam did not want to be sedated because he disliked the way it made him feel. He was determined that if he could just hear his dad's voice over the intercom, he could lie still without the sedative.

During these anxious times, his dad spoke to him with words of encouragement and love. "Liam, although you can't see me, I am right here. I know you can do it. I love you." Liam successfully accomplished the 33 required radiation treatments while holding perfectly still, a feat his doctors thought would be impossible without sedation for one so young. Through months of pain and difficulty, Liam's contagious optimism has been a powerful example of meeting adversity with hope and even happiness. His doctors, nurses, and countless others have been inspired by his courage.

We are all learning important lessons from Liam—lessons about choosing faith and trusting in the Lord. Just like Liam, we cannot see our Heavenly Father, but we can listen for His voice to give us the strength we need to endure the challenges of life.

Could Liam's example help us to better understand King Benjamin's words to become as a child—submissive, meek, humble, patient, and full of love? (see Mosiah 3:19).

These children are providing examples of some of the childlike qualities we need to develop or rediscover in ourselves in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven. They are bright spirits who are untarnished by the world—teachable and full of faith. It is no wonder the Savior has a special love and appreciation for little children.

Among the transcendent events of the Savior's visit to the Americas, His



families. Home is a place where we can all learn and grow together. One of our beautiful Primary songs teaches this truth:

*God gave us families
To help us become what He wants us
to be—
This is how He shares His love,
For the fam'ly is of God.*
("The Family Is of God," *Liahona*,
Oct. 2008, F12–13; *Friend*, Oct. 2008,
28–29)

It is here in our families, in an atmosphere of love, where we see and appreciate in a more personal way the divine attributes of His spirit children. It is here in our families where our hearts can be softened and in humility we desire to change, to become more childlike. It is a process by which we can become more Christlike.

Have some of life's experiences taken from you the believing heart and childlike faith you once had? If so, look around at the children in your life. And then look again. They may be children in your family, across the street, or in the Primary in your ward. If we have a heart to learn and a willingness to follow the example of children, their divine attributes can hold a key to unlocking our own spiritual growth.

I will always be grateful for the blessing of my own children. The example of each one has taught me lessons I need. They have helped me to change for the better.

I bear my humble but certain testimony that Jesus is the Christ. He is the one perfect Son—submissive, meek, humble, patient, and so full of love. May each of us have a heart to follow His example, to become as a little child, and thereby return to our heavenly home, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

tender ministry to the children stands apart. In a poignant way He reached out to each child.

"And he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

"And when he had done this he wept. . . .

"And he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones" (3 Nephi 17:21–23).

Elder M. Russell Ballard has taught us the importance of the Savior's admonition to "behold your little ones" when he said: "Notice that He

didn't say 'glance at them' or 'casually observe them' or 'occasionally take a look in their general direction.' He said to *behold* them. To me that means that we should embrace them with our eyes and with our hearts; we should see and appreciate them for who they really are: spirit children of our Heavenly Father, with divine attributes" ("Behold Your Little Ones," *Tambuli*, Oct. 1994, 40; emphasis added; "Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children," *Ensign*, Apr. 1994, 59).

There is not a more perfect place to behold our little ones than in our



By Elder Walter F. González
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

Followers of Christ

Followers of Christ pattern their lives after the Savior to walk in the light.

Last October my wife and I accompanied Elder and Sister Neil L. Andersen for the groundbreaking of a new temple in Córdoba, Argentina. As is customary, a press conference followed the ceremony. A journalist, not a member of our church, commented that she had observed how well the men treated their wives. Then she unexpectedly asked, “Is that real or fiction?” I am sure that she saw and felt something different among our members. She might have perceived the desire of our members to follow Christ. Members all over the world have such a desire. At the same time, millions who are not members of the Church also have a desire to follow Him.

Recently my wife and I were impressed by the people we saw in Ghana and Nigeria. Most were not members of our church. We were happy to see their desire to follow Christ expressed in many of their conversations in their houses, on their cars, on their walls, and on their billboards. We had never seen so many Christian churches next to one another.

As Latter-day Saints, ours is the duty to invite millions such as these to come and see what our church can add to the good things that they already have. Any person from any continent, climate, or culture can

know for himself or herself that the Prophet Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son in a vision. He or she can know that heavenly messengers restored the priesthood and that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ. In the words of the Lord to Enoch, “Righteousness [has been sent] down out of heaven; and truth [has been sent] forth out of the earth to [testify of the] Only Begotten [of the Father].”¹

The Savior has promised, “He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”² Followers of Christ pattern their lives after the Savior to walk in the light. Two characteristics can help us recognize to what extent we follow Him. First, followers of Christ are loving people. Second, followers of Christ make and keep covenants.

The first characteristic, being loving, is probably one thing the journalist in Córdoba noticed among our Church members. We follow Christ because we love Him. When we follow the Redeemer out of love, we are following His own example. Through love the Savior was obedient to the will of the Father under any circumstance. Our Savior was obedient even when it meant great physical and emotional pain, even when it meant being

whipped and mocked, even when it meant that His enemies would torture Him while His friends abandoned Him. The atoning sacrifice, which is unique to the mission of the Savior, is the greatest expression of love ever. “The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”³

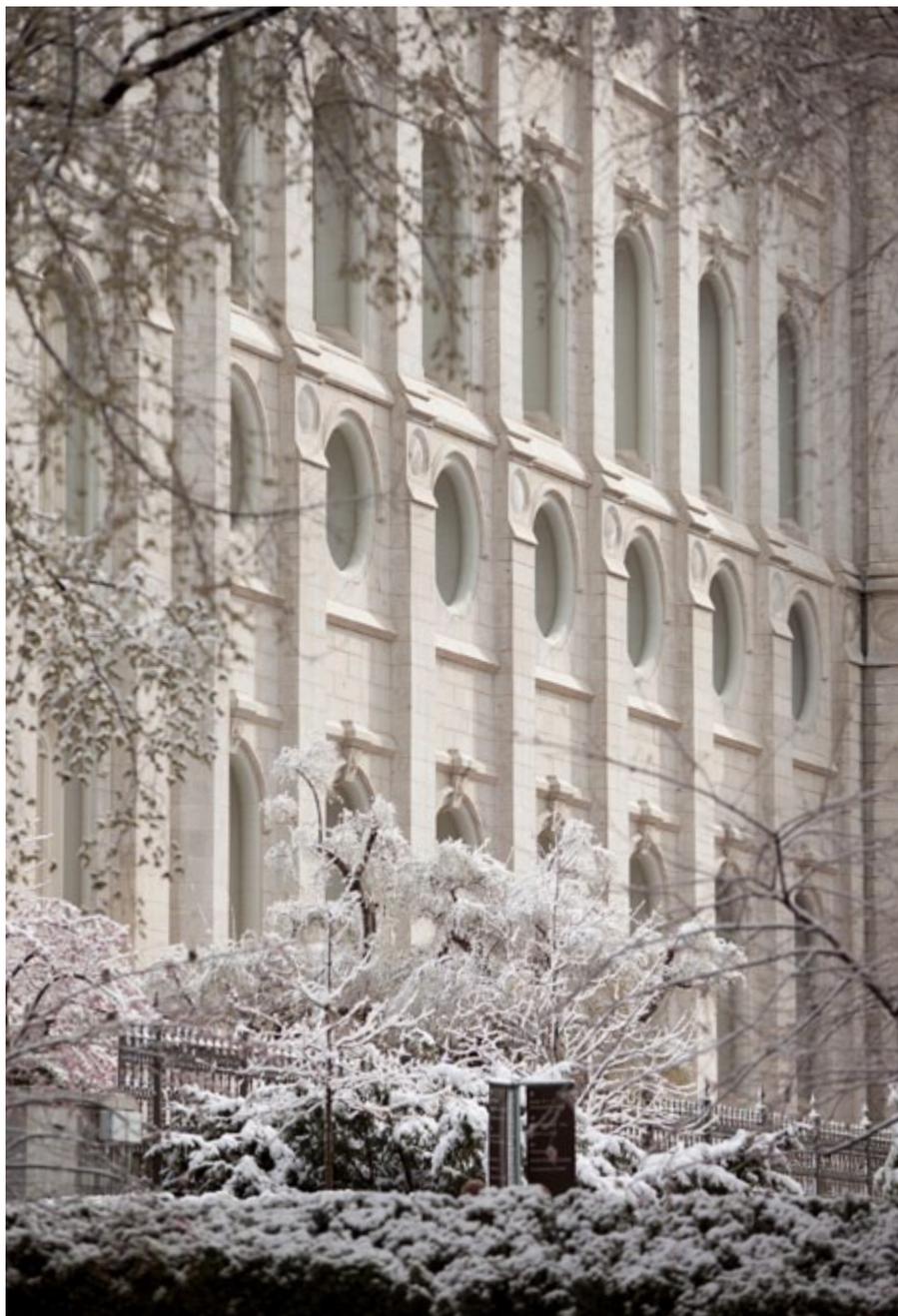
As Christ followed the Father under any circumstance, we should follow His Son. If we do so, it matters not what kind of persecution, suffering, grief, or “thorn in the flesh”⁴ we face. We are not alone. Christ will assist us. His tender mercies will make us mighty under any circumstance.⁵

Following Christ may mean forsaking many dear things, as Ruth the Moabite did. As a new convert, out of love for God and Naomi, she left everything behind to live her religion.⁶

It may also mean withstanding adversity and temptation. In his youth Joseph was sold into slavery. He was taken away from everything he loved. Later he was tempted to be unchaste. He resisted the temptation and said, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”⁷ His love for God was more powerful than any adversity or temptation.

Today we have modern Ruths and Josephs all over the world. When Brother Jimmy Olvera from Guayaquil, Ecuador, received his mission call, his family was struggling greatly. The day he was leaving, he was told that if he walked out the door, he would lose his family. With a broken heart he walked out that door. While he was on his mission, his mother asked him to stay longer in the field because they were receiving so many blessings. Today Brother Olvera serves as a stake patriarch.

Truly loving Christ provides the required strength to follow Him. The



Lord Himself showed this when He asked Peter three times, “Lovest thou me?” After Peter reaffirmed his love for Him out loud, the Lord told Peter about upcoming difficulties. Then the admonition came: “Follow me.” The Savior’s question to Peter can also be asked of us: “Lovest thou me?” followed by the call to action: “Follow me.”⁸

Love is a powerful influence in our hearts in our effort to be obedient. Love for our Savior inspires us to keep His commandments. Love for a mother, father, or spouse can also inspire our

obedience to gospel principles. The way we treat others reflects to what extent we follow our Savior in loving one another.⁹ We show our love for Him when we stop to assist others, when we are “perfectly honest and upright in all things,”¹⁰ and when we make and keep covenants.

The second characteristic that followers of Christ have is making and keeping covenants, as He did. Moroni pointed out that “the shedding of the blood of Christ . . . is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of

your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.”¹¹

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that even before the organization of this earth, covenants were made in heaven.¹² Ancient prophets and patriarchs made covenants.

The Savior Himself gave the example. He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness by one with the proper authority. Through His baptism, the Savior witnessed unto the Father that He would be obedient in keeping all the Father’s commandments.¹³ As in days of old, we also follow Christ and make covenants through priesthood ordinances.

Making covenants is something that millions who are not members of our church can add to the very good things that they already have. Making covenants is an expression of love. It is a way of saying to Him, “Yes, I will follow Thee because I love Thee.”

Covenants include promises, “even of life eternal.”¹⁴ All things will work together for our good if we remember our covenants.¹⁵ They must be made and kept to fully receive the promises they provide. Love for the Savior and remembering our covenants will help us keep them. Partaking of the sacrament is one way to remember them.¹⁶ Another way is to attend the temple often. I remember a young married couple in South America who wanted to separate because they could not get along. A priesthood leader counseled them to attend the temple and pay specific attention to the words and promises of the covenants made there. They did so and their marriage was saved. The power of our covenants is greater than any challenge we face or we may face.

To those members who are not active in the gospel, please come back. Feel the blessing of remembering and

renewing covenants through the sacrament and temple attendance. Doing so is an expression of love and shows a willingness to be a true follower of Christ. It will qualify you to receive all the promised blessings.

To those who are not members of our church, I invite you to exercise faith, repent, and qualify to receive the covenant of baptism in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. By doing so, you will show your love to our Heavenly Father and your willingness to follow Christ.

I testify that we are happier when we follow the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As we strive to follow Him, the blessings of heaven will come unto us. I know His promises will be fulfilled as we make and keep covenants and become true followers of Christ. I testify of His great love for each one of us, and I do so in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Moses 7:62.
2. John 8:12.
3. Isaiah 53:5.
4. 2 Corinthians 12:7.
5. See 1 Nephi 1:20.
6. See Ruth 1:16.
7. See Genesis 39:7–9.
8. See John 21:15–19.
9. See John 13:35.
10. Alma 27:27.
11. Moroni 10:33.
12. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 42; see also Spencer W. Kimball, “Be Ye Therefore Perfect” (devotional address, Salt Lake Institute of Religion, Jan. 10, 1975): “We made vows, solemn vows, in the heavens before we came to this mortal life. . . . We have made covenants. We made them before we accepted our position here on the earth.”
13. See 2 Nephi 31:5–7.
14. Abraham 2:11. See also John A. Widtsoe, “Temple Worship” (lecture, Assembly Hall, Salt Lake City, Oct. 12, 1920), 10: “The covenant gives life to truth; and makes possible the blessings that reward all those who use knowledge properly.”
15. See Doctrine and Covenants 90:24.
16. See, for example, 3 Nephi 18:7–11.



By Elder Kent F. Richards
Of the Seventy

The Atonement Covers All Pain

Our great personal challenge in mortality is to become “a saint through the atonement of Christ.”

As a surgeon, I found that a significant portion of my professional time was taken up with the subject of pain. Of necessity I surgically inflicted it almost daily—and much of my effort was then spent trying to control and alleviate pain.

I have pondered about the purpose of pain. None of us is immune from experiencing pain. I have seen people cope with it very differently. Some turn away from God in anger, and others allow their suffering to bring them closer to God.

Like you, I have experienced pain myself. Pain is a gauge of the healing process. It often teaches us patience. Perhaps that is why we use the term *patient* in referring to the sick.

Elder Orson F. Whitney wrote: “No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude, and humility. . . . It is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire.”¹

Similarly, Elder Robert D. Hales has said:

“Pain brings you to a humility

that allows you to ponder. It is an experience I am grateful to have endured. . . .

“I learned that the physical pain and the healing of the body after major surgery are remarkably similar to the spiritual pain and the healing of the soul in the process of repentance.”²

Much of our suffering is not necessarily our fault. Unexpected events, contradicting or disappointing circumstances, interrupting illness, and even death surround us and penetrate our mortal experience. Additionally, we may suffer afflictions because of the actions of others.³ Lehi noted that Jacob had “suffered . . . much sorrow, because of the rudeness of [his] brethren.”⁴ Opposition is part of Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness. We all encounter enough to bring us to an awareness of our Father’s love and of our need for the Savior’s help.

The Savior is not a silent observer. He Himself knows personally and infinitely the pain we face.

“He suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children.”⁵

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may

obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”⁶

Sometimes in the depth of pain, we are tempted to ask, “Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?”⁷ I testify the answer is yes, there is a physician. The Atonement of Jesus Christ covers all these conditions and purposes of mortality.

There is another kind of pain for which we *are* responsible. Spiritual pain lies deep within our souls and can feel unquenchable, even as being racked with an “inexpressible horror,” as Alma described.⁸ It comes from our sinful actions and lack of repentance. For this pain too there is a cure that is universal and absolute. It is from the Father, through the Son, and it is for each of us who is willing to do all that is necessary to repent. Christ said, “Will ye not now return unto me . . . and be converted, that I may heal you?”⁹

Christ Himself taught:

“And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and *after* that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me. . . .

“Therefore, according to the *power* of the Father I will draw all men unto me.”¹⁰

Perhaps His most significant work is in the ongoing labor with each of us individually to lift, to bless, to strengthen, to sustain, to guide, and to forgive us.

As Nephi saw in vision, much of Christ’s mortal ministry was devoted to blessing and healing the sick with all kinds of maladies—physical, emotional, and spiritual. “And I beheld multitudes of people who were sick, and who were afflicted with all manner of diseases. . . . And they were healed by the power of the Lamb of God.”¹¹

Alma also prophesied that “he shall

go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and . . . he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people. . . .

“That *his* bowels may be filled with mercy, . . . that *he* may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.”¹²

Late one night lying in a hospital bed, this time as a patient and not as a physician, I read those verses over and over again. I pondered: “How is it done? For whom? What is required to qualify? Is it like forgiveness of sin? Do we have to earn His love and help?” As I pondered, I came to understand that during His mortal life Christ *chose* to experience pains and afflictions in order to understand us. Perhaps we also need to experience the depths of mortality in order to understand Him and our eternal purposes.¹³

President Henry B. Eyring taught: “It will comfort us when we must wait in distress for the Savior’s promised relief that He knows, from experience, how to heal and help us. . . . And faith in that power will give us patience as we pray and work and wait for help. He could have known how to succor us simply

by revelation, but He *chose to learn by His own personal experience.*”¹⁴

I felt the encircling arms of His love that night.¹⁵ Tears watered my pillow in gratitude. Later, as I was reading in Matthew about Christ’s mortal ministry, I made another discovery: “When the even was come, they brought unto him many . . . and he . . . healed *all* that were sick.”¹⁶ He healed *all* that came to Him. None were turned away.

As Elder Dallin H. Oaks has taught: “Healing blessings come in many ways, each suited to our individual needs, as known to Him who loves us best. Sometimes a ‘healing’ cures our illness or lifts our burden. But sometimes we are ‘healed’ by being given strength or understanding or patience to bear the burdens placed upon us.”¹⁷ All that will come may be “clasped in the arms of Jesus.”¹⁸ All souls can be healed by His power. All pain can be soothed. In Him, we can “find rest unto [our] souls.”¹⁹ Our mortal circumstances may not immediately change, but our pain, worry, suffering, and fear can be swallowed up in His peace and healing balm.

I have noted that children are often

Guayaquil, Ecuador



more naturally accepting of pain and suffering. They quietly endure with humility and meekness. I have felt a beautiful, sweet spirit surrounding these little ones.

Thirteen-year-old Sherrie underwent a 14-hour operation for a tumor on her spinal cord. As she regained consciousness in the intensive care unit, she said: “Daddy, Aunt Cheryl is here, . . . and . . . Grandpa Norman . . . and Grandma Brown . . . are here. And Daddy, who is that standing beside you? . . . He looks like you, only taller. . . . He says he’s your brother, Jimmy.” Her uncle Jimmy had died at age 13 of cystic fibrosis.

“For nearly an hour, Sherrie . . . described her visitors, all deceased family members. Exhausted, she then fell asleep.”

Later she told her father, “Daddy, all of the children here in the intensive care unit have angels helping them.”²⁰

To all of us the Savior said:

“Behold, ye are little children and ye cannot bear all things now; ye must grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

“Fear not, little children, for you are mine. . . .

“Wherefore, I am in your midst, and I am the good shepherd.”²¹

Our great personal challenge in mortality is to become “a saint through the atonement of Christ.”²² The pain you and I experience may be where this process is most measured. In extremity, we can become as children in our hearts, humble ourselves, and “pray and work and wait”²³ patiently for the healing of our bodies and our souls. As Job, after being refined through our trials, we “shall come forth as gold.”²⁴

I bear testimony that He is our Redeemer, our Friend, our Advocate, the Great Physician, the Great Healer.



In Him we can find peace and solace in and from our pain and our sins if we will but come unto Him with humble hearts. His “grace is sufficient.”²⁵ In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Orson F. Whitney, in Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (1972), 98.
2. Robert D. Hales, “Healing Soul and Body,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 14.
3. See Alma 31:31, 33.
4. 2 Nephi 2:1.
5. 2 Nephi 9:21.
6. Hebrews 4:16. Paul taught us to look to the Savior as an example in dealing with the “contradictions of sinners against [us], lest [we] be wearied and faint in [our] minds” (Hebrews 12:3).
7. Jeremiah 8:22.
8. Alma 36:14.
9. 3 Nephi 9:13.
10. 3 Nephi 27:14–15; emphasis added.
11. 1 Nephi 11:31.
12. Alma 7:11–12; emphasis added.

13. See John Taylor, *The Mediation and Atonement* (1882), 97. President Taylor writes of a “covenant” being entered into between the Father and the Son in the premortal councils for the accomplishment of the atoning redemption of mankind. Christ’s voluntary suffering during life was in addition to the suffering in the garden and on the cross (see Mosiah 3:5–8).
14. Henry B. Eyring, “Adversity,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2009, 24; emphasis added.
15. See Doctrine and Covenants 6:20.
16. Matthew 8:16; emphasis added.
17. Dallin H. Oaks, “He Heals the Heavy Laden,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 7–8.
18. Mormon 5:11.
19. Matthew 11:29.
20. See Michael R. Morris, “Sherrie’s Shield of Faith,” *Ensign*, June 1995, 46.
21. Doctrine and Covenants 50:40–41, 44.
22. Mosiah 3:19.
23. Henry B. Eyring, *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2009, 24.
24. Job 23:10.
25. 2 Corinthians 12:9; see also Ether 12:26–27; Doctrine and Covenants 18:31.



By Elder Quentin L. Cook
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

LDS Women Are Incredible!

Much of what we accomplish in the Church is due to the selfless service of women.

Author and historian Wallace Stegner wrote about the Mormon migration and gathering to the Salt Lake Valley. He did not accept our faith and in many ways was critical; nevertheless, he was impressed with the devotion and heroism of our early Church members, especially the women. He stated, “Their women were incredible.”¹ I echo that sentiment today. Our Latter-day Saint women are incredible!

God placed within women divine qualities of strength, virtue, love, and the willingness to sacrifice to raise future generations of His spirit children.

A recent United States study asserts that women of all faiths “believe more fervently in God” and attend more religious services than men do. “By virtually every measure they are more religious.”²

I was not surprised by this result, particularly as I reflected on the pre-eminent role of families and women in our faith. Our doctrine is clear: Women are daughters of our Heavenly Father, who loves them. Wives are equal to their husbands. Marriage requires a full partnership where wives and husbands work side by side to meet the needs of the family.³

We know there are many challenges for women, including those striving to live the gospel.

Heritage of Pioneer Sisters

A predominant attribute in the lives of our pioneer ancestors is the faith of the sisters. Women by divine nature have the greater gift and responsibility for home and children and nurturing there and in other settings. In light of this, the faith of the sisters in being willing to leave their homes to cross the plains for the unknown was inspiring. If one had to characterize their most significant attribute, it would be their unwavering faith in the restored gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The heroic accounts of what these pioneer women sacrificed and accomplished as they crossed the plains is a priceless legacy to the Church. I am moved by the account of Elizabeth Jackson, whose husband Aaron died after the last crossing of the Platte River with the Martin handcart company. She wrote:

“I will not attempt to describe my feelings at finding myself thus left a widow with three children, under such excruciating circumstances. . . .

I believe . . . that my sufferings for the Gospel’s sake will be sanctified unto me for my good. . . .

“I [appealed] to the Lord, . . . He who had promised to be a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless. I appealed to him and he came to my aid.”⁴

Elizabeth said she was writing the history on behalf of those who passed through like scenes with the hope that posterity would be willing to suffer and sacrifice all things for the kingdom of God.⁵

Women in the Church Today Are Strong and Valiant

I believe the women of the Church today meet that challenge and are every bit as strong and faithful. The priesthood leadership of this Church at all levels gratefully acknowledges the service, sacrifice, commitment, and contribution of the sisters.

Much of what we accomplish in the Church is due to the selfless service of women. Whether in the Church or in the home, it is a beautiful thing to see the priesthood and the Relief Society work in perfect harmony. Such a relationship is like a well-tuned orchestra, and the resulting symphony inspires all of us.

When I was recently assigned to a conference in the Mission Viejo California Stake, I was touched by an account of their four-stake New Year’s Eve youth dance. Following the dance, a purse was found with no outside identification. I share with you part of what Sister Monica Sedgwick, the Young Women president in the Laguna Niguel stake, recorded: “We didn’t want to pry; this was someone’s personal stuff! So we gingerly opened it and grabbed the first thing that was on top—hopefully, it would identify her. It did, but in another way—it was a *For*



the Strength of Youth pamphlet. Wow! This told us something about her. Then we reached in for the next item, a little notebook. Surely this would give us answers, but not the kind we were expecting. The first page was a list of favorite scriptures. There were five more pages of carefully written scriptures and personal notes.”

The sisters immediately wanted to meet this stalwart young woman. They returned to that purse to identify its owner. They pulled out some breath mints, soap, lotion, and a brush. I loved their comments: “Oh, good things come out of her mouth; she has clean and soft hands; and she takes care of herself.”

They eagerly awaited the next treasure. Out came a clever little homemade coin purse made from a cardboard juice carton, and there was some money in a zippered pocket. They exclaimed, “Ahh, she’s creative and prepared!” They felt like little children on Christmas morning. What they pulled out next surprised them even more: a recipe for Black Forest chocolate cake and a note to make the cake for a friend’s birthday. They almost screamed, “She’s a **HOMEMAKER!** Thoughtful and service minded.”

Then, yes, finally some identification. The youth leaders said they felt greatly blessed “to observe the quiet example of a young lady living the gospel.”⁶

This account illustrates the commitment of our young women to Church standards.⁷ It is also an example of caring, interested, dedicated Young Women leaders all over the world. They are incredible!

Sisters have key roles in the Church, in family life, and as individuals that are essential in Heavenly Father’s plan. Many of these responsibilities do not provide economic compensation but do provide satisfaction and are eternally significant. Recently a delightful and very capable woman on a newspaper editorial board asked for a description of the role of women in the Church. It was explained that all of the leaders in our congregations are *unpaid*. She interrupted to say her interest had diminished significantly. She said, “I don’t believe women need any more *unpaid* jobs.”

We pointed out that the most important organization on earth is the family, where “fathers and mothers are . . . equal partners.”⁸ Neither one is financially compensated, but the blessings are beyond description. We of course

told her about the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary organizations that are guided by women presidents. We noted that from our earliest history both men and women pray, perform the music, give the sermons, and sing in the choir, even in sacrament meeting, our most sacred meeting.

The recent highly acclaimed book *American Grace* reported on women in many faiths. It noted that Latter-day Saint women are unique in being overwhelmingly satisfied with their role in Church leadership.⁹ Furthermore, Latter-day Saints as a whole, men and women, have the strongest attachment to their faith of any of the religions studied.¹⁰

Our women are not incredible because they have managed to avoid the difficulties of life—quite the opposite. They are incredible because of the way they face the trials of life. Despite the challenges and tests life has to offer—from marriage or lack of marriage, children’s choices, poor health, lack of opportunities, and many other problems—they remain remarkably strong and immovable and true to the faith. Our sisters throughout the Church consistently “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down,

and strengthen the feeble knees.”¹¹

One Relief Society president who acknowledged this extraordinary service said, “Even when the sisters serve, they are thinking, ‘If only I could have done more!’” Though they are not perfect and all face individual struggles, their faith in a loving Father in Heaven and the assurance of the atoning sacrifice of the Savior permeates their lives.

Role of Sisters in the Church

During the last three years, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve have sought guidance, inspiration, and revelation as we have counseled with priesthood and auxiliary leaders and worked on the new Church handbooks. In this process I have experienced feelings of overwhelming appreciation for the essential role that sisters, both married and single, have historically played and now play both in the family and in the Church.

All members of the Church of Jesus Christ are “to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men.”¹² “[The] work of salvation includes member missionary work, convert retention, activation of less-active members, temple and family history work, . . . teaching the gospel,”¹³ and caring for the poor and needy.¹⁴ This is administered primarily through the ward council.¹⁵

Specifically, it is intended in the new handbooks that bishops, sensitive to existing demands, will delegate more responsibilities. Members need to recognize that the bishop has been instructed to delegate. Members need to sustain and support him as he follows this counsel. This will allow the bishop to spend more time with the youth, young single adults, and his own family. He will delegate other important responsibilities to priesthood leaders, presidents of auxiliaries,

and individual men and women. In the Church the role of women in the home is highly respected.¹⁶ When the mother receives a Church calling that requires significant time, the father will often be given a less-demanding calling in order to maintain balance in the lives of the family.

Several years ago I attended a stake conference in Tonga. Sunday morning the three front rows of the chapel were filled with men between 26 and 35 years of age. I assumed they were a men’s choir. But when the business of the conference was conducted, each of these men, 63 in total, stood up as their names were read and were sustained for ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood. I was both pleased and stunned.

After the session I asked President Mateaki, the stake president, how this miracle had been accomplished. He told me that in a stake council meeting reactivation was being discussed. His stake Relief Society president, Sister Leinata Va’enuku, asked if it would be appropriate for her to say something. As she spoke, the Spirit confirmed to the president that what she was suggesting was true. She explained that there were large numbers of wonderful young men in their late 20s and 30s in their stake who had not served

missions. She said many of them knew they had disappointed bishops and priesthood leaders who had strongly encouraged them to serve a mission, and they now felt like second-class members of the Church. She pointed out that these young men were beyond missionary age. She expressed her love and concern for them. She explained that all of the saving ordinances were still available to them and the focus should be on priesthood ordinations and the ordinances of the temple. She noted that while some of these young men were still single, the majority of them had married wonderful women—some active, some inactive, and some not members.

After thorough discussion in the stake council, it was decided that the men of the priesthood and the women of the Relief Society would reach out to rescue these men and their wives, while the bishops spent more of their time with the young men and young women in the wards. Those involved in the rescue focused primarily on preparing them for the priesthood, eternal marriage, and the saving ordinances of the temple. During the next two years, almost all of the 63 men who had been sustained to the Melchizedek Priesthood at the conference I attended were endowed in the





Kyiv, Ukraine

temple and had their spouses sealed to them. This account is but one example of how critical our sisters are in the work of salvation in our wards and stakes and how they facilitate revelation, especially in family and Church councils.¹⁷

Role of Sisters in the Family

We recognize that there are enormous forces arrayed against women and families. Recent studies find there is deterioration in devotion to marriage, with a decrease in the number of adults being married.¹⁸ For some, marriage and family are becoming “a menu choice rather than the central organizing principle of our society.”¹⁹ Women are confronted with many options and need to prayerfully consider the choices they make and how those choices affect the family.

When I was in New Zealand last year, I read in an Auckland newspaper of women, not of our faith, struggling with these issues. One mother said she realized that in her case, her choice about whether to work or stay home was about a new carpet and a second car that she didn’t really need. Another woman, however, felt “the biggest enemy of a happy family life was not paid work—it was television.”

She said that families are TV rich and family-time poor.²⁰

These are very emotional, personal decisions, but there are two principles that we should always keep in mind. First, no woman should ever feel the need to apologize or feel that her contribution is less significant because she is devoting her primary efforts to raising and nurturing children. Nothing could be more significant in our Father in Heaven’s plan. Second, we should all be careful not to be judgmental or assume that sisters are less valiant if the decision is made to work outside the home. We rarely understand or fully appreciate people’s circumstances. Husbands and wives should prayerfully counsel together, understanding they are accountable to God for their decisions.

You devoted sisters who are single parents for whatever reason, our hearts reach out to you with appreciation. Prophets have made it clear “that many hands stand ready to help you. The Lord is not unmindful of you. Neither is His Church.”²¹ I would hope that Latter-day Saints would be at the forefront in creating an environment in the workplace that is more receptive and accommodating to both women and men in their responsibilities as parents.

You valiant and faithful single sisters, please know that we love and appreciate you, and we assure you that no eternal blessing will be withheld from you.

The remarkable pioneer woman Emily H. Woodmansee penned the text of the hymn “As Sisters in Zion.” She correctly asserts that the “errand of angels is given to women.”²² This has been described as “nothing less than to do the direct and immediate bidding of our Father in Heaven, and ‘this is a gift that . . . sisters . . . claim.’”²³

Dear sisters, we love and admire you. We appreciate your service in the Lord’s kingdom. You are incredible! I express particular appreciation for the women in my life. I testify of the reality of the Atonement, the divinity of the Savior, and the Restoration of His Church, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (1971), 13.
2. Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (2010), 233.
3. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.3.1; see also Moses 5:1, 4, 12, 27.
4. In Andrew D. Olsen, *The Price We Paid: The Extraordinary Story of the Willie and Martin Handcart Pioneers* (2006), 445.

5. See "Leaves from the Life of Elizabeth Horrocks Jackson Kingsford," Utah State Historical Society, Manuscript A 719; in "Remembering the Rescue," *Ensign*, Aug. 1997, 47.
6. Combined and shortened from an e-mail written by Monica Sedgwick, stake Young Women president of the Laguna Niguel California Stake, and a talk given by Leslie Mortensen, stake Young Women president of the Mission Viejo California Stake.
7. In an article titled "Why Do We Let Them Dress Like That?" (*Wall Street Journal*, Mar. 19–20, 2011, C3), a thoughtful Jewish mother advocates for dress standards and modesty and acknowledges the example of Mormon women.
8. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
9. See Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, 244–45.
10. See Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, 504.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 81:5; see also Mosiah 4:26.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 138:56.
13. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), page 22.
14. See *Handbook 2*, 6.1.
15. See *Handbook 2*, 4.5.
16. See Emily Matchar, "Why I Can't Stop Reading Mormon Housewife Blogs," salon.com/life/feature/2011/01/15/feminist_obsessed_with_mormon_blogs. This self-described feminist and atheist acknowledges this respect and says she is addicted to reading Mormon housewife blogs.
17. From conversations with Nuku'alofa Tonga Ha'akame Stake president Lehonitai Mateaki (who subsequently served as president of the Papua New Guinea Port Moresby Mission) and stake Relief Society president Leinata Va'enuku.
18. See D'Vera Cohn and Richard Fry, "Women, Men, and the New Economics of Marriage," Pew Research Center, Social and Demographic Trends, pewsocialtrends.org. The number of children being born has also decreased significantly in many countries. This has been called the demographic winter.
19. "A Troubling Marriage Trend," *Deseret News*, Nov. 22, 2010, A14, quoting a report on msnbc.com.
20. See Simon Collins, "Put Family before Moneymaking Is Message from Festival," *New Zealand Herald*, Feb. 1, 2010, A2.
21. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 69; see also Spencer W. Kimball, "Our Sisters in the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 48–49.
22. "As Sisters in Zion," *Hymns*, no. 309.
23. Karen Lynn Davidson, *Our Latter-Day Hymns: The Stories and the Messages*, rev. ed. (2009), 338–39.



By President Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the First Presidency

Opportunities to Do Good

The Lord's way to help those in temporal need requires people who out of love have consecrated themselves and what they have to God and to His work.

My dear brothers and sisters, the purpose of my message is to honor and celebrate what the Lord has done and is doing to serve the poor and the needy among His children on earth. He loves His children in need and also those who want to help. And He has created ways to bless both those who need help and those who will give it.

Our Heavenly Father hears the prayers of His children across the earth pleading for food to eat, for clothes to cover their bodies, and for the dignity that would come from being able to provide for themselves. Those pleas have reached Him since He placed men and women on the earth.

You learn of those needs where you live and from across the world. Your heart is often stirred with feelings of sympathy. When you meet someone struggling to find employment, you feel that desire to help. You feel it when you go into the home of a widow and see that she has no food. You feel it when you see photographs of crying children sitting in the ruins of their home destroyed by an earthquake or by fire.

Because the Lord hears their cries

and feels your deep compassion for them, He has from the beginning of time provided ways for His disciples to help. He has invited His children to consecrate their time, their means, and themselves to join with Him in serving others.

His way of helping has at times been called living the law of consecration. In another period His way was called the united order. In our time it is called the Church welfare program.

The names and the details of operation are changed to fit the needs and conditions of people. But always the Lord's way to help those in temporal need requires people who out of love have consecrated themselves and what they have to God and to His work.

He has invited and commanded us to participate in His work to lift up those in need. We make a covenant to do that in the waters of baptism and in the holy temples of God. We renew the covenant on Sundays when we partake of the sacrament.

My purpose today is to describe some of the opportunities He has provided for us to help others in need. I cannot speak of them all in our brief



time together. My hope is to renew and strengthen your commitment to act.

There is a hymn about the Lord's invitation to this work that I have sung since I was a little boy. In my childhood I paid more attention to the happy tune than to the power of the words. I pray that you will feel the lyrics in your hearts today. Let's listen to the words again:

*Have I done any good in the world today?
 Have I helped anyone in need?
 Have I cheered up the sad and made someone feel glad?
 If not, I have failed indeed.
 Has anyone's burden been lighter today
 Because I was willing to share?
 Have the sick and the weary been helped on their way?
 When they needed my help was I there?
 Then wake up and do something more
 Than dream of your mansion above.
 Doing good is a pleasure, a joy beyond measure,
 A blessing of duty and love.¹*

The Lord regularly sends wake-up calls to all of us. Sometimes it may be a

sudden feeling of sympathy for someone in need. A father may have felt it when he saw a child fall and scrape a knee. A mother may have felt it when she heard the frightened cry of her child in the night. A son or a daughter may have felt sympathy for someone who seemed sad or afraid at school.

All of us have been touched with feelings of sympathy for others we don't even know. For instance, as you heard reports of the waves rushing across the Pacific after the earthquake in Japan, you felt concern for those who might be hurt.

Feelings of sympathy came to thousands of you who learned of the flooding in Queensland, Australia. The news reports were mainly estimates of numbers of those in need. But many of you felt the pain of the people. The wake-up call was answered by 1,500 or more Church member volunteers in Australia who came to help and to comfort.

They turned their feelings of sympathy into a decision to act on their covenants. I have seen the blessings that come to the person in need who

receives help and to the person who seizes the opportunity to give it.

Wise parents see in every need of others a way to bring blessings into the lives of their sons and daughters. Three children recently carried containers holding a delicious dinner to our front door. Their parents knew that we needed help, and they included their children in the opportunity to serve us.

The parents blessed our family by their generous service. By their choice to let their children participate in the giving, they extended blessings to their future grandchildren. The smiles of the children as they left our home made me confident that will happen. They will tell their children of the joy they felt giving kindly service for the Lord. I remember that feeling of quiet satisfaction from childhood as I pulled weeds for a neighbor at my father's invitation. Whenever I am invited to be a giver, I remember and believe the lyrics "Sweet is the work, my God, my King."²

I know those lyrics were written to describe the joy that comes from worshipping the Lord on the Sabbath. But those children with the food at our



One couple returned to Rexburg from a vacation just after the flood. They didn't go to see their own house. Instead, they found their bishop to ask where they could help. He directed them to a family in need.

After a few days they went to check on their home. It was gone, swept away in the flood. They simply walked back to the bishop and asked, "Now what would you like us to do?"

Wherever you live, you have seen that miracle of sympathy turned to unselfish action. It may not have been in the wake of a great natural disaster. I have seen it in a priesthood quorum where a brother rises to describe the needs of a man or a woman who seeks an opportunity to work to support himself or herself and his or her family. I could feel sympathy in the room, but some suggested names of people who might employ the person who needed work.

What happened in that priesthood quorum and what happened in the flooded houses in Idaho is a manifestation of the Lord's way to help those in great need become self-reliant. We feel compassion, and we know how to act in the Lord's way to help.

We celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Church welfare program this year. It was started to meet the needs of those who lost employment, farms, and even homes in the wake of what became known as the Great Depression.

Great temporal needs of the children of Heavenly Father have come again in our time as they have and as they will in all times. The principles at the foundation of the Church welfare program are not for only one time or one place. They are for all times and all places.

Those principles are spiritual and eternal. For that reason, understanding them and putting them down into our hearts will make it possible for

door were feeling on a weekday the joy of doing the Lord's work. And their parents saw the opportunity to do good and spread joy over generations.

The Lord's way of caring for the needy provides another opportunity for parents to bless their children. I saw it in a chapel one Sunday. A small child handed the bishop his family's donation envelope as he entered the chapel before the sacrament meeting.

I knew the family and the boy. The family had just learned of someone in the ward in need. The boy's father had said something like this to the child as he placed a more generous fast offering than usual in the envelope: "We fasted today and prayed for those in need. Please give this envelope to the bishop for us. I know that he will give it to help those with greater needs than ours."

Instead of any hunger pangs on that Sunday, the boy will remember

the day with a warm glow. I could tell from his smile and the way he held the envelope so tightly that he felt the great trust of his father to carry the family offering for the poor. He will remember that day when he is a deacon and perhaps forever.

I saw that same happiness in the faces of people who helped for the Lord in Idaho years ago. The Teton Dam burst on Saturday, June 5, 1976. Eleven people were killed. Thousands had to leave their homes in a few hours. Some homes were washed away. And hundreds of dwellings could be made habitable only through effort and means far beyond that of the owners.

Those who heard of the tragedy felt sympathy, and some felt the call to do good. Neighbors, bishops, Relief Society presidents, quorum leaders, home teachers, and visiting teachers left homes and jobs to clean out the flooded houses of others.

us to see and take opportunities to help whenever and wherever the Lord invites us.

Here are some principles that guided me when I wanted to help in the Lord's way and when I have been helped by others.

First, all people are happier and feel more self-respect when they can provide for themselves and their family and then reach out to take care of others. I have been grateful for those who helped me meet my needs. I have been even more grateful over the years for those who helped me become self-reliant. And then I have been most grateful for those who showed me how to use some of my surplus to help others.

I have learned that the way to have a surplus is to spend less than I earn. With that surplus I have been able to learn that it really is better to give than to receive. That is partly because when we give help in the Lord's way, He blesses us.

President Marion G. Romney said of welfare work, "You cannot give yourself poor in this work." And then he quoted his mission president, Melvin J. Ballard, this way: "A person cannot give a crust to the Lord without receiving a loaf in return."³

I have found that to be true in my life. When I am generous to Heavenly Father's children in need, He is generous to me.

A second gospel principle that has been a guide to me in welfare work is the power and blessing of unity. When we join hands to serve people in need, the Lord unites our hearts. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. put it this way: "That giving has . . . brought . . . a feeling of common brotherhood as men of all training and occupation have worked side by side in a Welfare garden or other project."⁴



That increased feeling of brotherhood is true for the receiver as well as the giver. To this day, a man with whom I shoveled mud side by side in his flooded Rexburg home feels a bond with me. And he feels greater personal dignity for having done all he could for himself and for his family. If we had worked alone, both of us would have lost a spiritual blessing.

That leads to the third principle of action in welfare work for me: Draw your family into the work with you so that they can learn to care for each other as they care for others. Your sons and daughters who work with you to serve others in need will be more likely to help each other when they are in need.

The fourth valuable principle of Church welfare I learned as a bishop. It came from following the scriptural command to seek out the poor. It is the duty of the bishop to find and provide help to those who still need assistance after all they and their families can do. I found that the Lord sends the Holy Ghost to make it possible to "seek, and ye shall find"⁵ in caring for the poor as He does in finding truth. But I also learned to involve the Relief Society president in the search. She may get the revelation before you do.

Some of you will need that inspiration in the months ahead. To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Church welfare program, members worldwide will be invited to participate in a day of service. Leaders and

members will seek revelation as they design whatever the projects will be.

I will make three suggestions as you plan your service project.

First, prepare yourself and those you lead spiritually. Only if hearts are softened by the Savior's Atonement can you see clearly the goal of the project as blessing both spiritually and temporally the lives of the children of Heavenly Father.

My second suggestion is to choose as recipients of your service people within the kingdom or in the community whose needs will touch the hearts of those who will give the service. The people they serve will feel their love. That may do more to make them feel glad, as the song promised, than will meeting only their temporal needs.

My last suggestion is to plan to draw on the power of the bonds of families, of quorums, of auxiliary organizations, and of people you know in your communities. The feelings of unity will multiply the good effects of the service you give. And those feelings of unity in families, in the Church, and in communities will grow and become a lasting legacy long after the project ends.

This is my opportunity to tell you how much I appreciate you. By the loving service you have given for the Lord, I have been the recipient of the thanks of people you have helped as I have met them across the world.

You found a way to lift them higher as you helped in the Lord's way. You



Presented by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

and humble disciples of the Savior like you have cast your bread upon the water in service, and the people you helped have tried to give me a loaf of gratitude in return.

I get that same expression of appreciation from people who have worked with you. I remember one time standing next to President Ezra Taft Benson. We had been talking about welfare service in the Lord's Church. He surprised me with his youthful vigor when he said, pumping his hand, "I love this work, and it is work!"

For the Master I extend thanks for your work to serve the children of our Heavenly Father. He knows you, and He sees your effort, diligence, and sacrifice. I pray that He will grant you the blessing of seeing the fruit of your labors in the happiness of those you have helped and with whom you have helped for the Lord.

I know that God the Father lives and hears our prayers. I know that Jesus is the Christ. You and those you serve can be purified and strengthened by serving Him and keeping His commandments. You can know as I know, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Joseph Smith was God's prophet to restore the true and living Church, which this is. I testify that President Thomas S. Monson is the living prophet of God. He is a great example of what the Lord did: going about doing good. I pray that we may seize our opportunities to "lift up the hands [that] hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees."⁶ In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. "Have I Done Any Good?" *Hymns*, no. 223.
2. "Sweet Is the Work," *Hymns*, no. 147.
3. Marion G. Romney, "Welfare Services: The Savior's Program," *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 93.
4. J. Reuben Clark Jr., in Conference Report, Oct. 1943, 13.
5. See Matthew 7:7-8; Luke 11:9-10; 3 Nephi 14:7-8.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 81:5

The Sustaining of Church Officers

It is proposed that we sustain Thomas Spencer Monson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Henry Bennion Eyring as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Dieter Friedrich Uchtdorf as Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

Those in favor may manifest it.

Those opposed, if any, may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Boyd Kenneth Packer as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the following as members of that quorum: Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Richard G. Scott, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland, David A. Bednar, Quentin L. Cook, D. Todd Christofferson, and Neil L. Andersen.

Those in favor, please manifest it.

Any opposed may so indicate.

It is proposed that we sustain the counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators.

All in favor, please manifest it.

Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we release the following as Area Seventies effective on May 1, 2011: José L.

Alonso, Nelson L. Altamirano, John S. Anderson, Ian S. Ardern, Sergio E. Avila, David R. Brown, D. Fraser Bullock, Donald J. Butler, Vladimiro J. Campero, Daniel M. Cañoles, Carl B. Cook, I. Poloski Cordon, J. Devn Cornish, Federico F. Costales, LeGrand R. Curtis Jr., Heber O. Diaz, Andrew M. Ford, Julio G. Gaviola, Manuel Gonzalez, Daniel M. Jones, Donald J. Keyes, Domingos S. Linhares, B. Renato Maldonado, Raymundo Morales, J. Michel Paya, Stephen D. Posey, Juan M. Rodriguez, Gerardo L. Rubio, Jay L. Sitterud, Dirk Smibert, Eivind Sterri, Ysrael A. Tolentino, W. Christopher Waddell, and Gary W. Walker.

Those who wish to join us in expressing our gratitude for their excellent service, please manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain as new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy Don R. Clarke, José L. Alonso, Ian S. Ardern, Carl B. Cook, LeGrand R. Curtis Jr., W. Christopher Waddell, and Kazuhiko Yamashita; and as new members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy Randall K. Bennett, J. Devn Cornish, O. Vincent Haleck, and Larry Y. Wilson.

All in favor, please manifest it.

Those opposed, by the same sign.



It is proposed that we sustain the following as new Area Seventies: Kent J. Allen, Stephen B. Allen, Winsor Balderrama, R. Randall Bluth, Hans T. Boom, Patrick M. Boutoille, Marcelo F. Chappe, Eleazer S. Collado, Jeffrey D. Cummings,

Nicolas L. Di Giovanni, Jorge S. Dominguez, Gary B. Doxey, David G. Fernandes, Hernán D. Ferreira, Ricardo P. Giménez, Allen D. Haynie, Douglas F. Higham, Robert W. Hymas, Lester F. Johnson, Matti T. Jouttenus, Chang Ho Kim, Alfred

Kyungu, Remegio E. Meim Jr., Ismael Mendoza, Cesar A. Morales, Rulon D. Munns, Ramon C. Nobleza, Abenir V. Pajaro, Gary B. Porter, José L. Reina, Esteban G. Resek, George F. Rhodes Jr., Lynn L. Summerhays, Craig B. Terry, David J. Thomson, Ernesto R. Toris, Arnulfo Valenzuela, Ricardo Valladares, Fabian I. Vallejo, Emer Villalobos, and Terry L. Wade.

All in favor, please signify.

Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities, Area Seventies, and general auxiliary presidencies as presently constituted.

Those in favor, please manifest it.

Any opposed may manifest it.

President Monson, insofar as I have been able to observe, the voting in the Conference Center has been unanimous in favor of the proposals made.

Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your sustaining vote and your continued faith, devotion, and prayers. ■





Church Auditing Department Report, 2010

Presented by Robert W. Cantwell
Managing Director, Church Auditing Department

*To the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints*

Dear Brethren: As prescribed by revelation in section 120 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Council on the Disposition of the Tithes authorizes the expenditure of Church funds. This council is composed of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and

the Presiding Bishopric. This council approves budgets for Church departments, operations, and related allocations to ecclesiastical units. Church departments expend funds consistent with approved budgets and in accordance with Church policies and procedures.

The Church Auditing Department has been granted access to all records and systems necessary to evaluate the adequacy of controls over receipts of funds, expenditures, and safeguarding of Church assets. The Church Auditing Department is independent of all other Church departments and operations, and the staff consists of certified public accountants, certified internal auditors, certified information systems auditors, and other credentialed professionals.

Based upon audits performed, the Church Auditing Department is of the opinion that, in all material respects, contributions received, expenditures made, and assets of the Church for the year 2010 have been recorded and administered in accordance with appropriate accounting practices, approved budgets, and Church policies and procedures.

Respectfully submitted,
Church Auditing Department
Robert W. Cantwell
Managing Director ■

Statistical Report, 2010

Presented by Brook P. Hales
Secretary to the First Presidency

The First Presidency has issued the following statistical report of the Church for 2010. As of December 31, 2010, there were 2,896 stakes, 340 missions, 614 districts, and 28,660 wards and branches.

Total membership of the Church at the end of 2010 was 14,131,467.

There were 120,528 new children of record in the Church, and 272,814 converts were baptized in 2010.

The number of full-time missionaries serving at the end of the year was 52,225.

The number of Church-service missionaries serving was 20,813, many of whom live at home and are called to support a variety of Church functions.

Four temples were dedicated during the year: the Vancouver British Columbia Temple in Canada; The Gila Valley Arizona Temple in the United States; the Cebu City Philippines Temple; and the Kyiv Ukraine Temple.

The Laie Hawaii Temple in the United States was rededicated in 2010.

The total number of temples in operation throughout the world was 134.

Former General Church Officers and Others Who Have Passed Away since Last April General Conference

Elders W. Grant Bangerter, Adney Y. Komatsu, Hans B. Ringger, LeGrand R. Curtis, Richard P. Lindsay, Donald L. Staheli, and Richard B. Wirthlin, former members of the Quorums of the Seventy; Barbara B. Smith, former Relief Society general president; Ruth H. Funk, former Young Women general president; Norma Jane B. Smith, former counselor in the Young Women general presidency; Helen Fyans, widow of Elder J. Thomas Fyans, an emeritus General Authority; Arnold D. Friberg, artist and illustrator; and J. Elliot Cameron, former Church commissioner of education. ■





By President Boyd K. Packer
President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Guided by the Holy Spirit

Every one of us can be guided by the spirit of revelation and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

It has been 400 years since the publication of the King James Bible, with significant contributions from William Tyndale, a great hero in my eyes.

The clergy did not want the Bible published in common English. They hounded Tyndale from place to place. He said to them, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou."¹

Tyndale was betrayed and confined to a dark, freezing prison in Brussels for over a year. His clothing was in rags. He begged his captors for his coat and cap and a candle, saying, "It is indeed wearisome sitting alone in the dark."² These were denied him. Eventually, he was taken from prison and before a large crowd was strangled and burned at the stake. But William Tyndale's work and martyr's death were not in vain.

Since Latter-day Saint children are taught from their youth to know the scriptures, they in a measure fulfill the prophecy made four centuries earlier by William Tyndale.

Our scriptures today consist of the Bible, the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ, the Pearl

of Great Price, and the Doctrine and Covenants.

Because of the Book of Mormon, we are frequently called the Mormon Church, a title we do not resent, but it is really not accurate.

In the Book of Mormon, the Lord revisited the Nephites because they prayed to the Father in His name. And the Lord said:

"What will ye that I shall give unto you?

"And they said unto him: Lord, we will that thou wouldst tell us the name whereby we shall call this church; for there are disputations among the people concerning this matter.

"And the Lord said . . . , why is it that the people should murmur and dispute because of this thing?

"Have they not read the scriptures, which say ye must take upon you the name of Christ . . . ? For by this name shall ye be called at the last day. . . .

"Therefore, whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name; and ye shall call upon the Father in my name that he will bless the church for my sake.

"And how be it my church save it

be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses' name then it be Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel."³

Obedient to revelation, we call ourselves The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rather than the Mormon Church. It is one thing for others to refer to the Church as the Mormon Church or to us as Mormons; it is quite another for us to do so.

The First Presidency stated:

"The use of the revealed name, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (D&C 115:4), is increasingly important in our responsibility to proclaim the name of the Savior throughout all the world. Accordingly, we ask that when we refer to the Church we use its full name wherever possible. . . .

"When referring to Church members, we suggest 'members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.' As a shortened reference, 'Latter-day Saints' is preferred."⁴

"[Latter-day Saints] talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins."⁵

The world will refer to us as they will, but in our speech, always remember that we belong to the Church of *Jesus Christ*.

Some claim we are not Christians. They either do not know us at all or they misunderstand.

In the Church every ordinance is done by the authority of and in the name of Jesus Christ.⁶ We have the same organization as did the primitive Church, with apostles and prophets.⁷



Anciently the Lord called and ordained Twelve Apostles. He was betrayed and crucified. After His Resurrection, the Savior taught His disciples for 40 days and then ascended into heaven.⁸

But something was missing. A few days later the Twelve gathered in a house, and “suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house. . . . Cloven tongues . . . of fire [rested] upon each of them. And they were . . . filled with the Holy Ghost.”⁹ His Apostles were now empowered. They understood that the authority given by the Savior and the gift of

the Holy Ghost were essential for the establishment of His Church. They were commanded to baptize and confer the gift of the Holy Ghost.¹⁰

In time the Apostles and the priesthood they carried were gone. The authority and power to administer had to be restored. For centuries men looked forward to the return of the authority and the establishment of the Lord’s Church.

In 1829 the priesthood was restored to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by John the Baptist and the Apostles Peter, James, and John. Now worthy male members of the Church are ordained to the priesthood. This

authority and the attendant gift of the Holy Ghost, which is conferred upon all members of the Church after baptism, set us apart from other churches.

An early revelation directs “that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world.”¹¹ The work in the Church today is performed by ordinary men and women called and sustained to preside, to teach, and to administer. It is by the power of revelation and the gift of the Holy Ghost that those called are guided to know the Lord’s will. Others may not accept such things as prophecy, revelation, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, but if they are to understand us at all, they must understand that we accept those things.

The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith a code of health, the Word of Wisdom, long before the dangers were known to the world. All are taught to avoid tea, coffee, liquor, tobacco, and of course varieties of drugs and addictive substances, which are ever present before our young people. Those who obey this revelation are promised that they “shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

“And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

“And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.”¹²

In another revelation, the Lord’s standard of morality commands that the sacred powers to beget life be protected and employed only between man and woman, husband and wife.¹³ To misuse this power is exceeded in seriousness only by the shedding of innocent blood and denying the Holy Ghost.¹⁴ If one transgresses the law, the doctrine of repentance teaches how to erase the effect of this transgression.

Everyone is tested. One might think it is unfair to be singled out and subjected to a particular temptation, but this is the purpose of mortal life—to be tested. And the answer is the same for everyone: we must, and we can, resist temptations of any kind.

“The great plan of happiness”¹⁵ centers on family life. The husband is the head of the home and the wife the heart of the home. And marriage is an equal partnership. A Latter-day Saint man is a responsible family man, faithful in the gospel. He is a caring, devoted husband and father. He reveres womanhood. The wife sustains her husband. Both parents nurture the spiritual growth of their children.

Latter-day Saints are taught to love one another and to frankly forgive offenses.

My life was changed by a saintly patriarch. He married his sweetheart. They were deeply in love, and soon she was expecting their first child.

The night the baby was born, there were complications. The only doctor

was somewhere in the countryside tending to the sick. After many hours of labor, the condition of the mother-to-be became desperate. Finally, the doctor was located. In the emergency, he acted quickly and soon the baby was born, and the crisis, it appeared, was over. But some days later, the young mother died from the very infection that the doctor had been treating at another home that night.

The young man’s world was shattered. As the weeks wore on, his grief festered. He thought of little else, and in his bitterness he became threatening. Today, no doubt, he would have been pressed to file a malpractice suit, as though money would solve anything.

One night a knock came at his door. A little girl said simply, “Daddy wants you to come over. He wants to talk to you.”

“Daddy” was the stake president. The counsel from that wise leader was simply “John, leave it alone. Nothing you do about it will bring her back.

Anything you do will make it worse. John, leave it alone.”

This had been my friend’s trial. How could he leave it alone? A terrible wrong had been committed. He struggled to get hold of himself and finally determined that he should be obedient and follow the counsel of that wise stake president. He would leave it alone.

He said, “I was an old man before I understood and could finally see a poor country doctor—overworked, underpaid, run ragged from patient to patient, with little medicine, no hospital, few instruments, struggling to save lives, and succeeding for the most part. He had come in a moment of crisis, when two lives hung in the balance, and had acted without delay. I finally understood!” He said, “I would have ruined my life and the lives of others.”

Many times he had thanked the Lord on his knees for a wise priesthood leader who counseled simply, “John, leave it alone.”

Around us we see members of the Church who have become offended. Some take offense at incidents in the history of the Church or its leaders and suffer their whole lives, unable to get past the mistakes of others. They do not leave it alone. They fall into inactivity.

That attitude is somewhat like a man being hit by a club. Offended, he takes up a club and beats himself over the head with it all the days of his life. How foolish! How sad! That kind of revenge is self-inflicting. If you have been offended, forgive, forget it, and leave it alone.

The Book of Mormon carries this warning: “And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.”¹⁶

São Luís, Brazil





A Latter-day Saint is quite an ordinary individual. We are now everywhere in the world, 14 million of us. This is only the beginning. We are taught to be in the world but not of the world.¹⁷ Therefore, we live ordinary lives in ordinary families mixed in with the general population.

We are taught not to lie or steal or cheat.¹⁸ We do not use profanity. We are positive and happy and not afraid of life.

We are “willing to mourn with those that mourn . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places.”¹⁹

If someone is looking for a church that requires very little, this is not the one. It is not easy to be a Latter-day Saint, but in the long run it is the only true course.

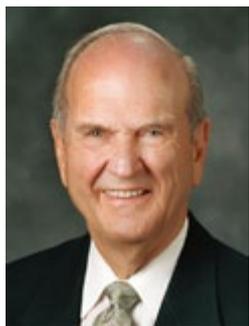
Regardless of opposition or “wars, rumors of wars, and earthquakes in divers places,”²⁰ no power or influence

can stop this work. Every one of us can be guided by the spirit of revelation and the gift of the Holy Ghost. “As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints.”²¹

If you are carrying some burden, forget it, let it alone. Do a lot of forgiving and a little repenting, and you will be visited by the Spirit of the Holy Ghost and confirmed by the testimony that you did not know existed. You will be watched over and blessed—you and yours. This is an invitation to come unto Him. This church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth,”²² by His own declaration—is where we find “the great plan of happiness.”²³ Of this I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. In David Daniell, introduction to *Tyndale's New Testament* (1989), viii.
2. In Daniell, introduction to *Tyndale's New Testament*, ix.
3. 3 Nephi 27:2–5, 7–8.
4. First Presidency letter, Feb. 23, 2001.
5. 2 Nephi 25:26.
6. See Moses 5:8; baptism: see 2 Nephi 31:12; 3 Nephi 11:27; 18:16; blessing the sick: see Doctrine and Covenants 42:44; bestowing the Holy Ghost: see Moroni 2:2; priesthood ordination: see Moroni 3:1–3; sacrament: see Moroni 4:1–3; miracles: see Doctrine and Covenants 84:66–69.
7. See Articles of Faith 1:6.
8. See Acts 1:3–11.
9. Acts 2:2–4.
10. See Acts 2:38.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 1:20.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 89:18–20.
13. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
14. See Alma 39:4–6.
15. Alma 42:8.
16. Title page of the Book of Mormon.
17. See John 17:14–19.
18. See Exodus 20:15–16.
19. Mosiah 18:9.
20. Mormon 8:30.
21. Doctrine and Covenants 121:33.
22. Doctrine and Covenants 1:30.
23. Alma 42:8.



By Elder Russell M. Nelson
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Face the Future with Faith

Truth, covenants, and ordinances enable us to overcome fear and face the future with faith!

My beloved brethren and sisters, thank you for your sustaining influence, not only by your uplifted hand but also by your uplifting service at home, in the Church, and in your communities. We love to be with you and see you among your families and friends. Wherever you live, we observe your efforts to make this world a better place. We sustain you! We love you! As you pray for us, so we pray for you!

We envision your families gathered around the television or online to watch the proceedings of general conference at home. An alert mother and father sent me a copy of a picture they took at conference time. They observed the reaction of their then-18-month-old son, who recognized the features and voice of the speaker. The child started to throw kisses toward the TV. He wanted to come closer. So his thoughtful older sister quickly hoisted her little brother on her shoulders and brought him closer. Here is that photograph.

Yes, the image on the TV is mine, and those children are our grandchildren. In a few years this boy will be an elder endowed in the temple

and ready for his mission. Later he will be sealed to an eternal companion of his choice. Can you see him one day as a husband and father, with children of his own? And one day he will say farewell to his grandfathers, with a sure knowledge that death is part of life.

It is true. We live to die, and we die to live again. From an eternal perspective, the only death that is truly premature is the death of one who is not prepared to meet God.

As apostles and prophets, we are concerned not only for our children and grandchildren but for yours as well—and for each of God's children. All that the future holds in store for each sacred child of God will be shaped by his or her parents, family, friends, and teachers. Thus, our faith *now* becomes part of our posterity's faith *later*.

Each individual will make his or her way in a constantly changing world—a world of competing ideologies. The forces of evil will ever be in opposition to the forces of good. Satan constantly strives to influence us to follow his ways and make us miserable, even as he is.¹ And the normal

risks of life, such as illness, injury, and accident, will ever be present.

We live in a time of turmoil. Earthquakes and tsunamis wreak devastation, governments collapse, economic stresses are severe, the family is under attack, and divorce rates are rising. We have great cause for concern. But we do not need to let our fears displace our faith. We can combat those fears by strengthening our faith.

Start with your children. You parents bear the primary responsibility to strengthen their faith. Let them feel your faith, even when sore trials come upon you. Let your faith be focused on our loving Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Teach that faith with deep conviction. Teach each precious boy or girl that he or she is a child of God, created in His image, with a sacred purpose and potential. Each is born with challenges to overcome and faith to be developed.²

Teach of faith in God's plan of salvation. Teach that our sojourn in mortality is a period of probation, a time of trial and testing to see if we will do whatever the Lord commands us to do.³

Teach of faith to keep *all* the commandments of God, knowing that they are given to bless His children and bring them joy.⁴ Warn them that they will encounter people who pick which commandments they will keep and ignore others that they choose to break. I call this the cafeteria approach to obedience. This practice of picking and choosing will not work. It will lead to misery. To prepare to meet God, one keeps *all* of His commandments. It takes faith to obey them, and keeping His commandments will strengthen that faith.

Obedience allows God's blessings to flow without constraint. He will



bless His obedient children with freedom from bondage and misery. And He will bless them with more light. For example, one keeps the Word of Wisdom knowing that obedience will not only bring freedom from addiction, but it will also add blessings of wisdom and treasures of knowledge.⁵

Teach of faith to know that obedience to the commandments of God will provide physical and spiritual protection. And remember, God's holy angels are ever on call to help us. The Lord so declared: "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up."⁶ What a promise! When we are faithful, He and His angels will help us.

Unfailing faith is fortified through prayer. Your heartfelt pleadings are important to Him. Think of the intense and impassioned prayers

of the Prophet Joseph Smith during his dreadful days of incarceration in Liberty Jail. The Lord responded by changing the Prophet's perspective. He said, "Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good."⁷

If we pray with an eternal perspective, we need not wonder if our most tearful and heartfelt pleadings are heard. This promise from the Lord is recorded in section 98 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"Your prayers have entered into the ears of the Lord . . . and are recorded with this seal and testament—the Lord hath sworn and decreed that they shall be granted.

"Therefore, he giveth this promise unto you, with an immutable covenant that they shall be fulfilled; and all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good, and to my name's glory, saith the Lord."⁸

The Lord chose His strongest words to reassure us! *Seal! Testament! Sworn! Decreed! Immutable covenant!* Brothers and sisters, believe Him! God will heed your sincere and heartfelt prayers, and your faith will be strengthened.

To develop enduring faith, an enduring commitment to be a full-tithe payer is essential. Initially it takes faith to tithe. Then the tithe payer develops more faith to the point that tithing becomes a precious privilege. Tithing is an ancient law from God.⁹ He made a promise to His children that He would open "the windows of heaven, and pour . . . out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."¹⁰ Not only that, tithing will keep your name enrolled among the people of God and protect you in "the day of vengeance and burning."¹¹

Why do we need such resilient faith? Because difficult days are ahead. Rarely in the future will it be easy



or popular to be a faithful Latter-day Saint. Each of us will be tested. The Apostle Paul warned that in the latter days, those who diligently follow the Lord “shall suffer persecution.”¹² That very persecution can either crush you into silent weakness or motivate you to be more exemplary and courageous in your daily lives.

How you deal with life’s trials is part of the development of your faith. Strength comes when you remember that you have a divine nature, an inheritance of infinite worth. The Lord has reminded you, your children, and your grandchildren that you are lawful heirs, that you have been reserved in heaven for your specific time and place to be born, to grow and become His standard bearers and covenant people. As you walk in the Lord’s path of righteousness, you will be blessed to continue in His goodness and be a light and a savior unto His people.¹³

Available to each of you brethren and sisters are blessings obtained through the power of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood. These blessings can change the circumstances of your lives, in matters such as health, companionship of the Holy Ghost, personal relationships,

and opportunities for the future. The power and authority of this priesthood holds the keys to all spiritual blessings of the Church.¹⁴ And most remarkably, the Lord has declared that He will sustain those blessings, according to His will.¹⁵

The greatest of all the blessings of the priesthood are bestowed in holy temples of the Lord. Fidelity to covenants made there will qualify you and your family for the blessings of eternal life.¹⁶

Your rewards come not only hereafter. Many blessings will be yours in this life, among your children and grandchildren. You faithful Saints do not have to fight life’s battles alone. Think of that! The Lord declared, “I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.”¹⁷ Later came this promise to His faithful people: “I, the Lord, would fight their battles, and their children’s battles, and their children’s children’s, . . . to the third and fourth generation.”¹⁸

Our beloved President Thomas S. Monson has given us his prophetic witness. He said: “I testify to you that our promised blessings are beyond measure. Though the storm clouds may gather, though the rains may pour

down upon us, our knowledge of the gospel and our love of our Heavenly Father and of our Savior will comfort and sustain us and bring joy to our hearts as we walk uprightly and keep the commandments.”

President Monson continued: “My beloved brothers and sisters, fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith.”¹⁹

To President Monson’s powerful declaration I add my own. I testify that God is our Father. Jesus is the Christ. His Church has been restored to the earth. His truth, covenants, and ordinances enable us to overcome fear and face the future with faith! I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See 2 Nephi 2:27.
2. Peter taught this concept when he expressed the hope that “ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world” (2 Peter 1:4).
3. See Abraham 3:25.
4. See 2 Nephi 2:25.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 89:19; see also Isaiah 45:3.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 84:88.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 122:7. Another example of change of perspective is recorded in Psalms: “Preserve my soul; . . . my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily. . . . I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore” (Psalm 86:2–3, 12).
8. Doctrine and Covenants 98:2–3.
9. Tithing is mentioned in eight books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 2 Chronicles, Nehemiah, Amos, and Malachi.
10. Malachi 3:10.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 85:3.
12. 2 Timothy 3:12.
13. See Doctrine and Covenants 86:8–11.
14. See Doctrine and Covenants 107:18.
15. See Doctrine and Covenants 132:47, 59.
16. See Abraham 2:11.
17. Isaiah 49:25; see also Doctrine and Covenants 105:14.
18. Doctrine and Covenants 98:37.
19. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 92.



By Elder Richard J. Maynes
Of the Seventy

Establishing a Christ-Centered Home

We understand and believe in the eternal nature of the family. This understanding and belief should inspire us to do everything in our power to establish a Christ-centered home.

Early on in my service as a young missionary in Uruguay and Paraguay, I realized one of the great attractions to those seeking to know more about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was their interest in our doctrine regarding the family. In fact, since the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, truth-seeking investigators have been drawn to the doctrine that families can be together forever.

The principle of eternal families is an essential element in Heavenly Father's great plan for His children. Fundamental to that plan is the understanding that we have a *heavenly* family as well as an *earthly* family. The Apostle Paul teaches us that Heavenly Father is the father of our spirits:

"That they should seek the Lord . . . and find him, . . .

"For in him we live, and move, and have our being; . . . For we are also his offspring."¹

Being offspring of a loving Heavenly Father is such a basic principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ that even our children proclaim its truth

as they sing the Primary song "I Am a Child of God." Remember the words?

*I am a child of God,
And he has sent me here,
Has given me an earthly home
With parents kind and dear.*

*Lead me, guide me, walk beside me,
Help me find the way.
Teach me all that I must do
To live with him someday.²*

Recognizing that we have a *heavenly* family helps us understand the eternal nature of our *earthly* families. The Doctrine and Covenants teaches us that the family is fundamental to the order of heaven: "And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory."³

Understanding the eternal nature of the family is a critical element in understanding Heavenly Father's plan for His children. The adversary, on the other hand, wants to do everything in his power to destroy Heavenly Father's plan. In his attempt to defeat God's plan, he is leading an unprecedented attack on the institution of the family. Some of the more powerful weapons he uses in his attack are



selfishness, greed, and pornography.

Our eternal happiness is *not* one of Satan's objectives. He knows that an essential key to making men and women miserable like himself is to deprive them of family relationships which have *eternal* potential. Because Satan understands that true happiness in this life and in the eternities is found in the form of family, he does everything in his power to destroy it.

The ancient prophet Alma calls God's plan for His children "the great plan of happiness."⁴ The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, whom we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators, have offered us this inspired counsel with regard to happiness and family life: "The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ."⁵

This happiness spoken of by Alma and more recently by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will most surely be found in the home with family. It will be found in abundance if we do everything in our power to establish a Christ-centered home.

Sister Maynes and I learned some important principles as we began the process of establishing a Christ-centered home early in our marriage. We started by following the counsel of our Church leaders. We brought our children together and held weekly family home evenings as well as daily prayer and scripture study. It was not always easy, convenient, or successful, but over time these simple gatherings



became treasured family traditions.

We learned that our children might not remember everything about the family home evening lesson later in the week, but they would remember that *we held it*. We learned that later in the day at school they would probably not remember the exact words of the scriptures or the prayer, but they would remember that *we did read* scriptures and *we did have* prayer. Brothers and sisters, there is great power and protection for us and our

youth in establishing celestial traditions in the home.

Learning, teaching, and practicing the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ in our homes helps create a culture where the Spirit can dwell. Through establishing these celestial traditions in our homes, we will be able to overcome the false traditions of the world and learn to put the needs and concerns of others first.

The responsibility for establishing a Christ-centered home lies with both

parents and children. Parents are responsible to teach their children in love and righteousness. Parents will be held accountable before the Lord in how they perform their sacred responsibilities. Parents teach their children *with* words and *through* example. This poem by C. C. Miller titled “The Echo” illustrates the importance and impact parents have as they influence their children:

*’Twas a sheep not a lamb
That strayed away in the parable
Jesus told,
A grown-up sheep that strayed away
From the ninety and nine in the fold.
And why for the sheep should we seek
And earnestly hope and pray?
Because there is danger when sheep
go wrong:
They lead the lambs astray.
Lambs will follow the sheep, you know,
Wherever the sheep may stray.
When sheep go wrong,
It won’t take long till the lambs are as
wrong as they.
And so with the sheep we earnestly
plead
For the sake of the lambs today,
For when the sheep are lost
What a terrible cost
The lambs will have to pay.⁶*

The consequences to parents who lead their children astray are laid before us by the Lord in the Doctrine and Covenants: “And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion . . . that teach them *not* to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, . . . the sin be upon the heads of the parents.”⁷

It is difficult to overstate the importance parents have in teaching their children celestial traditions through

word and example. Children also play an important role in establishing a Christ-centered home. Let me share with you a short talk recently given by Will, my eight-year-old grandson, that illustrates this principle:

“I like to ride horses and go roping with my dad. A rope has different strands woven together to make it strong. If a rope had only one strand, it wouldn’t be able to get the job done. But because there are more strands that work together, we are able to use it in many different ways and it is strong.

“Families can be like ropes. When only one person is working hard and doing what is right, the family will not be as strong as when everyone is putting forth the effort to help each other.

“I know that when I do what is right, I am helping my family. When I am treating my sister, Isabelle, nicely, we both have fun and it makes my mom and dad happy. If my mom needs to do something, I can help her

Dortmund, Germany



by playing with my little brother, Joey. I also can help my family by keeping my room clean and helping out whenever I can with a good attitude. Since I am the oldest child in my family, I know being a good example is important. I can try my best to choose the right and follow the commandments.

“I know that kids can help their families be strong like a strong rope. When everyone does their best and works together, families can be happy and strong.”

When parents preside over the family in love and righteousness and teach their children the gospel of Jesus Christ *by* word and *through* example, and when children love and support their parents by learning and practicing the principles their parents teach, the result will be the establishment of a Christ-centered home.

Brothers and sisters, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we understand and believe in the eternal nature of the family. This understanding and belief should inspire us to do everything in our power to establish a Christ-centered home. I bear you my testimony that as we strive to do this, we will more fully practice the love and service that was exemplified through the life and Atonement of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and as a result, our homes can truly feel like heaven on earth. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Acts 17:27–28.
2. “I Am a Child of God,” *Hymns*, no. 301.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 130:2; see also Robert D. Hales, “The Eternal Family,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 64.
4. Alma 42:8.
5. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
6. C. C. Miller, “The Echo,” in *Best-Loved Poems of the LDS People*, ed. Jack M. Lyon and others (1996), 312–13.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 68:25; emphasis added.



By **Elder Cecil O. Samuelson Jr.**
Of the Seventy

Testimony

The fundamentals of gaining and retaining a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ are straightforward, clear, and within the capacity of every person.

One of the great blessings of my life over many years has been the opportunity to be surrounded by and work with the young people of the Church. I consider these associations and friendships to be among the sweetest and most valuable of my life. They also are much of the basis for the optimism I have for the future of the Church, society, and the world.

During these interactions I have also had the privilege of conferring with some who have had various doubts or challenges with their testimonies. While the specifics have been varied and occasionally unique, many of the questions and causes for confusion have been quite similar. Likewise, these are issues and concerns not restricted to any demographic or age-group. They may trouble those who are multigenerational Church members, relatively new Church members, and also those just becoming familiar with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Their questions are usually the result of honest inquiry or curiosity. Because the implications are so significant and serious for each of us, it seems appropriate to consider the matter of our testimonies. In our Latter-day Saint context, we refer to

our testimonies as our sure witness of the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is obtained by revelation through the Holy Ghost.

While a testimony is simple and clear in this defining declaration, arising from this declaration are several potential questions, such as: Who is entitled to have a testimony? How does one obtain the necessary revelation? What are the steps in obtaining a testimony? Is gaining a testimony an event or an ongoing process? Each of these queries and others have their own subsets, but the fundamentals of gaining and retaining a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ are straightforward, clear, and within the capacity of every person.

Let me briefly respond to these possible uncertainties and then refer to some insights that have been shared recently by trusted young adult friends who have had personal experience in gaining their testimonies. They have also had opportunities to minister to others having challenges or difficulties with some aspects of their faith and beliefs.

First, who is entitled to have a testimony? Everyone who is willing to pay the price—meaning keeping the commandments—may have a testimony. “Wherefore the voice of

the Lord is unto the ends of the earth, that all that will hear may hear” (D&C 1:11). A fundamental reason for the Restoration of the gospel is so “every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world; that faith also might increase in the earth” (D&C 1:20–21).

Second, how does one obtain the necessary revelation, and what are the fundamental steps to achieve it? The pattern has been clear and consistent throughout the ages. The promise given for obtaining a testimony of the Book of Mormon also applies generally:

“And when ye shall receive these things”—meaning you have listened, read, studied, and pondered on the question at hand—“ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true”—meaning you will pray thoughtfully, specifically, and reverently with a firm commitment to follow the answer to your prayer—“and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

“And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:4–5).

Third, is gaining a testimony an isolated event or an ongoing process? A testimony is similar to a living organism that grows and develops when treated properly. It needs constant nourishment, care, and protection to thrive and prosper. Likewise, neglect or deviance from the pattern of living that a testimony clarifies can lead to its loss or diminishment. The scriptures warn that transgressing or breaking the commandments of God can result in the loss of the Spirit and even to one denying the testimony he or she once possessed (see D&C 42:23).



Khayelitsha, South Africa

Let me now share 10 of the observations and suggestions of my valued and faithful young friends. The ideas they share have a commonality in their thinking and experience; thus, they likely will not be surprising to any of us. Unfortunately and especially at times of our own struggle and distress, we may temporarily forget or discount their applicability to us personally.

First, everyone has worth because we are all children of God. He knows us, loves us, and wants us to succeed and return to Him. We must learn to trust in His love and in His timing rather than in our own sometimes impatient and imperfect desires.

Second, while we believe fully in the mighty change of heart described in the scriptures (see Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:12–14, 26), we must understand it often occurs gradually, rather than instantaneously or globally, and in response to specific questions, experiences, and concerns as well as by our study and prayer.

Third, we need to remember that

a fundamental purpose of life is to be tested and stretched, and thus we must learn to grow from our challenges and be grateful for the lessons learned that we cannot gain in an easier way.

Fourth, we must learn to trust the things that we believe in or know to sustain us in times of uncertainty or with issues where we struggle.

Fifth, as Alma taught, gaining a testimony is usually a progression along the continuum of hoping, believing, and finally knowing the truth of a specific principle, doctrine, or the gospel itself (see Alma 32).

Sixth, teaching someone else what we know strengthens our own testimony as we build that of another. When you give someone money or food, you will have less. However, when you share your testimony, it strengthens and increases for both the bearer and the hearer.

Seventh, we must do the little but necessary things daily and regularly. Prayers, scripture and gospel study, attendance at Church meetings, temple

worship, fulfilling visiting teaching, home teaching, and other assignments all strengthen our faith and invite the Spirit into our lives. When we neglect any of these privileges, we place our testimonies in jeopardy.

Eighth, we should not have higher standards for others than we do for ourselves. Too often we may let the mistakes or failures of others, especially leaders or Church members, influence how we feel about ourselves or our testimonies. Other people's difficulties are not an excuse for our own deficiencies.

Ninth, it is good to remember that being too hard on yourself when you make a mistake can be as negative as being too casual when real repentance is needed.

And tenth, we must always be clear that the Atonement of Christ is fully and continuously operative for each of us when we allow it to be so. Then everything else fits into place even when we continue to struggle with certain details, habits, or seemingly

missing parts in the mosaic of our faith.

I am grateful for the insights, strengths, and testimonies of so many of my exemplary young friends and associates. When I am with them, I am strengthened, and when I know that they are with others, I am encouraged with the knowledge of the good that they are doing and the service that they are rendering in behalf of the Master they worship and strive to obey.

People do good and important things because they have testimonies. While this is true, we also gain testimonies because of what we do. Jesus said:

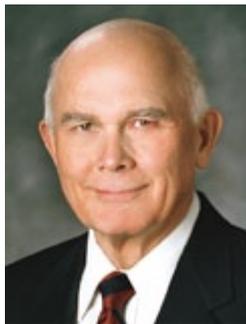
“My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:16–17).

“If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Like Nephi and Mormon of old, “I do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17; see also Words of Mormon 1:7), but let me tell you what I do know.

I know God our Heavenly Father lives and loves us. I know His uniquely special Son, Jesus Christ, is our Savior and Redeemer and the head of the Church, which bears His name. I know Joseph Smith experienced all that he has reported and taught with respect to the Restoration of the gospel in our day. I know we are led by apostles and prophets today and President Thomas S. Monson holds all of the keys of the priesthood necessary to bless our lives and advance the work of the Lord. I know we are all entitled to this knowledge, and if you are struggling, you can rely on the truthfulness of the testimonies you hear from this pulpit at this conference. These things I know and bear testimony of in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Elder Dallin H. Oaks
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Desire

To achieve our eternal destiny, we will desire and work for the qualities required to become an eternal being.

I have chosen to talk about the importance of *desire*. I hope each of us will search our hearts to determine what we really desire and how we rank our most important desires.

Desires dictate our priorities, priorities shape our choices, and choices determine our actions. The desires we act on determine our changing, our achieving, and our becoming.

First I speak of some common desires. As mortal beings we have some basic physical needs. Desires to satisfy these needs compel our choices and determine our actions. Three examples will demonstrate how we sometimes override these desires with other desires that we consider more important.

First, food. We have a basic need for food, but for a time that desire can be overridden by a stronger desire to fast.

Second, shelter. As a 12-year-old boy I resisted a desire for shelter because of my greater desire to fulfill a Boy Scout requirement to spend a night in the woods. I was one of several boys who left comfortable tents and found a way to construct a shelter and make a primitive bed from the natural materials we could find.

Third, sleep. Even this basic desire can be temporarily overridden by an even more important desire. As a

young soldier in the Utah National Guard, I learned an example of this from a combat-seasoned officer.

In the early months of the Korean War, a Richfield Utah National Guard field artillery battery was called into active service. This battery, commanded by Captain Ray Cox, consisted of about 40 Mormon men. After additional training and reinforcement by reservists from elsewhere, they were sent to Korea, where they experienced some of the fiercest combat of that war. In one battle they had to repel a direct assault by hundreds of enemy infantry, the kind of attack that overran and destroyed other field artillery batteries.

What does this have to do with overcoming the desire for sleep? During one critical night, when enemy infantry had poured through the front lines and into the rear areas occupied by the artillery, the captain had the field telephone lines wired into his tent and ordered his numerous perimeter guards to phone him personally each hour on the hour all night long. This kept the guards awake, but it also meant that Captain Cox had scores of interruptions to his sleep. “How could you do that?” I asked him. His answer shows the power of an overriding desire.

“I knew that if we ever got home, I would be meeting the parents of



those boys on the streets in our small town, and I didn't want to face any of them if their son didn't make it home because of anything I failed to do as his commander."¹

What an example of the power of an overriding desire on priorities and on actions! What a powerful example for all of us who are responsible for the welfare of others—parents, Church leaders, and teachers!

As a conclusion to that illustration, early in the morning following his nearly sleepless night, Captain Cox led his men in a counterattack on

the enemy infantry. They took over 800 prisoners and suffered only two wounded. Cox was decorated for bravery, and his battery received a Presidential Unit Citation for its extraordinary heroism. And, like Helaman's stripling warriors (see Alma 57:25–26), they all made it home.²

The Book of Mormon contains many teachings on the importance of desire.

After many hours of pleading with the Lord, Enos was told that his sins were forgiven. He then "began to feel a desire for the welfare of [his]

brethren" (Enos 1:9). He wrote, "And . . . after I had prayed and labored with all diligence, the Lord said unto me: I will grant unto thee according to thy desires, because of thy faith" (verse 12). Note the three essentials that preceded the promised blessing: desire, labor, and faith.

In his sermon on faith, Alma teaches that faith can begin with "no more than [a] desire to believe" if we will "let this desire work in [us]" (Alma 32:27).

Another great teaching on desire, especially on what should be our ultimate desire, occurs in the experience of the Lamanite king being taught by the missionary Aaron. When Aaron's teaching caught his interest, the king asked, "What shall I do that I may be born of God" and "have this eternal life?" (Alma 22:15). Aaron replied, "If thou desirest this thing, . . . if thou wilt repent of all thy sins, and will bow down before God, and call on his name in faith, believing that ye shall receive, then shalt thou receive the hope which thou desirest" (verse 16).

The king did so and in mighty prayer declared, "I will give away all my sins to know thee . . . and be saved at the last day" (verse 18). With that commitment and that identification of his ultimate desire, his prayer was answered miraculously.

The prophet Alma had a great desire to cry repentance to all people, but he came to understand that he should not desire the compelling power this would require because, he concluded, "a just God . . . granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life" (Alma 29:4). Similarly, in modern revelation the Lord declares that He "will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts" (D&C 137:9).

Are we truly prepared to have our

Eternal Judge attach this enormous significance to what we really desire?

Many scriptures speak of what we desire in terms of what we seek. “He that seeketh me early shall find me, and shall not be forsaken” (D&C 88:83). “Seek ye earnestly the best gifts” (D&C 46:8). “He that diligently seeketh shall find” (1 Nephi 10:19). “Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (D&C 88:63).

Readjusting our desires to give highest priority to the things of eternity is not easy. We are all tempted to desire that worldly quartet of property, prominence, pride, and power. We might desire these, but we should not fix them as our highest priorities.

Those whose highest desire is to acquire possessions fall into the trap of materialism. They fail to heed the warning “Seek not after riches nor the vain things of this world” (Alma 39:14; see also Jacob 2:18).

Those who desire prominence or

power should follow the example of the valiant Captain Moroni, whose service was not “for power” or for the “honor of the world” (Alma 60:36).

How do we develop desires? Few will have the kind of crisis that motivated Aron Ralston,³ but his experience provides a valuable lesson about developing desires. While Ralston was hiking in a remote canyon in southern Utah, an 800-pound (360 kg) rock shifted suddenly and trapped his right arm. For five lonely days he struggled to free himself. When he was about to give up and accept death, he had a vision of a three-year-old boy running toward him and being scooped up with his left arm. Understanding this as a vision of his future son and an assurance that he could still live, Ralston summoned the courage and took drastic action to save his life before his strength ran out. He broke the two bones in his trapped right arm and then used the knife in his multi-tool to cut off that arm. He then summoned the strength to hike five miles (8 km) for help.⁴ What an example

of the power of an overwhelming desire! When we have a vision of what we can become, our desire and our power to act increase enormously.

Most of us will never face such an extreme crisis, but all of us face potential traps that will prevent progress toward our eternal destiny. If our righteous desires are sufficiently intense, they will motivate us to cut and carve ourselves free from addictions and other sinful pressures and priorities that prevent our eternal progress.

We should remember that righteous desires cannot be superficial, impulsive, or temporary. They must be heartfelt, unwavering, and permanent. So motivated, we will seek for that condition described by the Prophet Joseph Smith, where we have “overcome the evils of [our lives] and lost every desire for sin.”⁵ That is a very personal decision. As Elder Neal A. Maxwell said:

“When people are described as ‘having lost their desire for sin,’ it is they, and they only, who deliberately decided to lose those wrong desires by being willing to ‘give away all [their] sins’ in order to know God.”

“Therefore, what we insistently desire, over time, is what we will eventually become and what we will receive in eternity.”⁶

As important as it is to lose every desire for sin, eternal life requires more. To achieve our eternal destiny, we will desire and work for the qualities required to become an eternal being. For example, eternal beings forgive all who have wronged them. They put the welfare of others ahead of themselves. And they love all of God’s children. If this seems too difficult—and surely it is not easy for any of us—then we should begin with a desire for such qualities and call upon our loving Heavenly





Father for help with our feelings. The Book of Mormon teaches us that we should “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that [we] may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ” (Moroni 7:48).

I close with a final example of a desire that should be paramount for all men and women—those who are currently married and those who are single. All should desire and seriously work to secure a marriage for eternity. Those who already have a temple marriage should do all they can to preserve it. Those who are single should desire a temple marriage and exert priority efforts to obtain it. Youth and young singles should resist the politically correct but eternally false concept that discredits the importance of marrying and having children.⁷

Single men, please consider the challenge in this letter written by a single sister. She pleaded for “the righteous daughters of God that are sincerely searching for a worthy

helpmeet, yet the men seem to be blinded and confused as to whether or not it is their responsibility to seek out these wonderful, choice daughters of our Heavenly Father and court them and be willing to make and keep sacred covenants in the Lord’s house.” She concluded, “There are many single LDS men here that are happy to go out and have fun, and date and hang out, but have absolutely no desire to ever make any kind of commitment to a woman.”⁸

I am sure that some anxiously seeking young men would want me to add that there are some young women whose desires for a worthy marriage and children rank far below their desires for a career or other mortal distinctions. Both men and women need righteous desires that will lead them to eternal life.

Let us remember that desires dictate our priorities, priorities shape our choices, and choices determine our actions. In addition, it is our actions and our desires that cause us to become something, whether a true

friend, a gifted teacher, or one who has qualified for eternal life.

I testify of Jesus Christ, whose love, whose teachings, and whose Atonement make it all possible. I pray that above all else we will desire to become like Him so that one day we can return to His presence to receive the fulness of His joy. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Ray Cox, interview by author, Aug. 1, 1985, Mount Pleasant, Utah, confirming what he told me in Provo, Utah, circa 1953.
2. See Richard C. Roberts, *Legacy: The History of the Utah National Guard* (2003), 307–14; “Self-Propelled Task Force,” *National Guardsman*, May 1971, back cover; *Miracle at Kapyong: The Story of the 213th* (film produced by Southern Utah University, 2002).
3. See Aron Ralston, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* (2004).
4. Ralston, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 248.
5. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 211.
6. Neal A. Maxwell, “According to the Desire of [Our] Hearts,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 22, 21.
7. See Julie B. Beck, “Teaching the Doctrine of the Family,” *Liahona*, Mar. 2011, 32–37; *Ensign*, Mar. 2011, 12–17.
8. Letter, Sept. 14, 2006.



By Elder M. Russell Ballard
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Finding Joy through Loving Service

May we show our love and appreciation for the Savior's atoning sacrifice through our simple, compassionate acts of service.

Brothers and sisters, I hope those of you visiting Salt Lake will take the opportunity to enjoy the colors and fragrances of the beautiful spring flowers on Temple Square.

Spring brings a renewal of light and life—reminding us, through the cycle of seasons, of the life, sacrifice, and Resurrection of our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, for “all things bear record of [Him]” (Moses 6:63).

Against this beautiful backdrop of spring and its symbolism of hope, there is a world of uncertainty, complexity, and confusion. The demands of everyday life—education, jobs, raising children, Church administration and callings, worldly activities, and even the pain and sorrow of unexpected illness and tragedy—can wear us down. How can we free ourselves from this tangled web of challenges and uncertainties to find peace of mind and happiness?

Oftentimes we are like the young merchant from Boston, who in 1849, as the story goes, was caught up in the fervor of the California gold rush. He sold all of his possessions to seek his fortune in the California rivers, which he was told were filled with gold

nuggets so big that one could hardly carry them.

Day after endless day, the young man dipped his pan into the river and came up empty. His only reward was a growing pile of rocks. Discouraged and broke, he was ready to quit until one day an old, experienced prospector said to him, “That’s quite a pile of rocks you are getting there, my boy.”

The young man replied, “There’s no gold here. I’m going back home.”

Walking over to the pile of rocks, the old prospector said, “Oh, there is gold all right. You just have to know where to find it.” He picked two rocks up in his hands and crashed them together. One of the rocks split open, revealing several flecks of gold sparkling in the sunlight.

Noticing a bulging leather pouch fastened to the prospector’s waist, the young man said, “I’m looking for nuggets like the ones in your pouch, not just tiny flecks.”

The old prospector extended his pouch toward the young man, who looked inside, expecting to see several large nuggets. He was stunned to see that the pouch was filled with thousands of flecks of gold.

The old prospector said, “Son, it seems to me you are so busy looking for large nuggets that you’re missing filling your pouch with these precious flecks of gold. The patient accumulation of these little flecks has brought me great wealth.”

This story illustrates the spiritual truth that Alma taught his son Helaman:

“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass. . . .

“ . . . And by very small means the Lord . . . bringeth about the salvation of many souls” (Alma 37:6–7).

Brothers and sisters, the gospel of Jesus Christ is simple, no matter how much we try to make it complicated. We should strive to keep our lives similarly simple, unencumbered by extraneous influences, focused on those things that matter most.

What are the precious, simple things of the gospel that bring clarity and purpose to our lives? What are the flecks of gospel gold whose patient accumulation over the course of our lifetime will reward us with the ultimate treasure—the precious gift of eternal life?

I believe there is one simple but profound—even sublime—principle that encompasses the entirety of the gospel of Jesus Christ. If we wholeheartedly embrace this principle and make it the focus of our lives, it will purify and sanctify us so we can live once again in the presence of God.

The Savior spoke of this principle when He answered the Pharisee who asked, “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.



“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:36–40).

It is only when we love God and Christ with all of our hearts, souls, and minds that we are able to share this love with our neighbors through acts of kindness and service—the way that the Savior would love and serve all of us if He were among us today.

When this pure love of Christ—or charity—envelops us, we think, feel, and act more like Heavenly Father and Jesus would think, feel, and act. Our motivation and heartfelt desire are like unto that of the Savior. He shared this desire with His Apostles on the eve of His Crucifixion. He said:

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you. . . .

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34–35).

The love the Savior described is an active love. It is not manifested through large and heroic deeds but

rather through simple acts of kindness and service.

There are myriad ways and circumstances in which we can serve and love others. May I suggest just a few.

First, charity begins at home. The single most important principle that should govern every home is to practice the Golden Rule—the Lord’s admonition that “all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Matthew 7:12). Take a moment and imagine how you would feel if you were on the receiving end of thoughtless words or actions. By our example, let us teach our family members to have love one for another.

Another place where we have ample opportunity to serve is in the Church. Our wards and branches should be places where the Golden Rule always guides our words and actions toward each other. By treating each other kindly, speaking words of support and encouragement, and being sensitive to each other’s needs,

we can create loving unity among ward members. Where charity exists, there is no place for gossip or unkind words.

Ward members, both adults and youth, can unite in meaningful service to bless the lives of others. Just two weeks ago, the President of the South America Northwest Area, Elder Marcus B. Nash of the Seventy, reported that by assigning “the strong in spirit to those that are weak,” they are rescuing hundreds of less-active adults and youth. Through love and service, “one by one” they are coming back. These acts of kindness create a strong and lasting bond among everyone involved—both the helpers and the helpees. So many precious memories are centered around such service.

When I think back on my many years of Church administration, some of my most profound memories are the times I joined with ward members to help someone.

For example, I remember as a bishop working alongside several



active members of my ward as we cleaned out the silage pit at the stake welfare farm. This was not a pleasant assignment! A less-active brother who had not been to church for many years was invited to join with us. Because of the love and fellowship he felt with us as we worked and talked in that smelly silage pit, he came back to church and was later sealed in the temple to his wife and his children. Our fellowship through service has blessed his children, grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren. Many of them have served missions, have married in the temple, and are raising an eternal family—a great work wrought by a simple act, a small fleck of gold.

A third area where we can serve is in our communities. As a pure

expression of our love and concern, we can reach out to those who have need of our help. Many of you have put on Helping Hands T-shirts and worked tirelessly to relieve suffering and improve your communities. Young single adults in the Sendai Japan Stake recently provided invaluable service in searching for members in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake and tsunami. There are countless ways to serve.

Through our heartfelt kindness and service, we can make friends with those whom we serve. From these friendships come better understanding of our devotion to the gospel and a desire to learn more about us.

My good friend Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin talked of the power of this

principle when he said: “Kindness is the essence of greatness. . . . [It] is a passport that opens doors and fashions friends. It softens hearts and molds relationships that can last lifetimes” (“The Virtue of Kindness,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 26).

Another way we can serve Heavenly Father’s children is through missionary service—not only as full-time missionaries but also as friends and neighbors. The future growth of the Church will not happen through just knocking on strangers’ doors. It will happen when the members, along with our missionaries, filled with the love of God and Christ discern needs and respond to those needs in the spirit of charitable service.

When we do this, brothers and sisters, the honest in heart will feel our sincerity and our love. Many will want to know more about us. Then and only then will the Church expand to fill all of the earth. This cannot be accomplished by missionaries alone but requires the interest and service of every member.

In all of our service, we need to be sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. The still, small voice will let us know who needs our help and what we can do to help them.

President Spencer W. Kimball said: “It is vital that we serve each other in the kingdom. . . . So often, our acts of service consist of simple encouragement or of giving . . . help with mundane tasks, but what glorious consequences can flow . . . from small but deliberate deeds!” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 82).

And President Thomas S. Monson has counseled:

“The needs of others are ever present, and each of us can do something to help someone.



By Elder Neil L. Andersen
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“ . . . Unless we lose ourselves in service to others, there is little purpose to our own lives” (“What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 85).

Brothers and sisters, may I re-emphasize that the most important attribute of Heavenly Father and of His Beloved Son that we should desire and seek to possess within our lives is the gift of charity, “the pure love of Christ” (Moroni 7:47). From this gift springs our capacity to love and to serve others as the Savior did.

The prophet Mormon taught us the supreme importance of this gift and told us how we can receive it: “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure” (Moroni 7:48).

Great things are wrought through simple and small things. Like the small flecks of gold that accumulate over time into a large treasure, our small and simple acts of kindness and service will accumulate into a life filled with love for Heavenly Father, devotion to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a sense of peace and joy each time we reach out to one another.

As we approach the Easter season, may we show our love and appreciation for the Savior’s atoning sacrifice through our simple, compassionate acts of service to our brothers and sisters at home, at church, and in our communities. For this I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

Preparing the World for the Second Coming

Your mission will be a sacred opportunity to bring others to Christ and help prepare for the Second Coming of the Savior.

I speak tonight especially to the 12- to 25-year-olds who hold the priesthood of God. We think about you a lot and we pray for you. I once told the story of our four-year-old grandson giving his little brother a strong push. After consoling the crying child, my wife, Kathy, turned to the four-year-old and thoughtfully asked, “Why would you push your little brother?” He looked at his grandmother and responded, “Mimi, I’m sorry. I lost my CTR ring, and I cannot choose the right.” We know that you try hard to always choose the right. We love you very much.

Have you ever thought about why you were sent to earth at this specific time? You were not born during the time of Adam and Eve or while pharaohs ruled Egypt or during the Ming dynasty. You have come to earth at this time, 20 centuries after the first coming of Christ. The priesthood of God has been restored to the earth, and the Lord has set His hand to prepare the world for His glorious return. These are days of great opportunity and important responsibilities. These are your days.

With your baptism, you declared

your faith in Jesus Christ. With your ordination to the priesthood, your talents and spiritual capacities have been increased. One of your important responsibilities is to help prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Savior.

The Lord has appointed a prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, to direct the work of His priesthood. To you, President Monson has said: “The Lord needs missionaries.”¹ “Every worthy, able young man should prepare to serve a mission. Missionary service is a priesthood duty—an obligation the Lord expects of [you] who have been given so very much.”²

Missionary service requires sacrifice. There will always be something you leave behind when you respond to the prophet’s call to serve.

Those who follow the game of rugby know that the New Zealand All Blacks, a name given because of the color of their uniform, is the most celebrated rugby team ever.³ To be selected for the All Blacks in New Zealand would be comparable to playing for a football Super Bowl



team or a World Cup soccer team.

In 1961, at age 18 and holding the Aaronic Priesthood, Sidney Going was becoming a star in New Zealand rugby. Because of his remarkable abilities, many thought he would be chosen the very next year for the national All Blacks rugby team.

At age 19, in this critical moment of his ascending rugby career, Sid declared that he would forgo rugby to serve a mission. Some called him crazy. Others called him foolish.⁴ They protested that his opportunity in rugby might never come again.

For Sid it was not what he was leaving behind—it was the opportunity and responsibility ahead. He had a priesthood duty to offer two years of his life to declare the reality of the Lord Jesus Christ and His restored gospel. Nothing—not even a chance to play on the national team, with all the acclaim it would bring—would deter him from that duty.⁵

He was called by a prophet of God to serve in the Western Canadian Mission. Forty-eight years ago this

month, 19-year-old Elder Sidney Going left New Zealand to serve as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Sid told me of an experience he had on his mission. It was evening, and he and his companion were just about to return to their apartment. They decided to visit one more family. The father let them in. Elder Going and his companion testified of the Savior. The family accepted a Book of Mormon. The father read all night. In the next week and a half he read the entire Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. A few weeks later the family was baptized.⁶

A mission instead of a place on the New Zealand All Blacks team? Sid responded, “The blessing of [bringing others] into the gospel far outweighs anything [you] will ever sacrifice.”⁷

You’re probably wondering what happened to Sid Going following his mission. Most important: an eternal marriage to his sweetheart, Colleen; five noble children; and a generation of grandchildren. He has lived his

life trusting in his Father in Heaven, keeping the commandments, and serving others.

And rugby? After his mission Sid Going became one of the greatest halfbacks in All Blacks history, playing for 11 seasons and serving for many years as captain of the team.⁸

How good was Sid Going? He was so good that training and game schedules were changed because he would not play on Sunday.⁹ Sid was so good the Queen of England acknowledged his contribution to rugby.¹⁰ He was so good a book was written about him titled *Super Sid*.

What if those honors had not come to Sid after his mission? One of the great miracles of missionary service in this Church is that Sid Going and thousands just like him have not asked, “What will I get from my mission?” but rather, “What can I give?”

Your mission will be a sacred opportunity to bring others to Christ and help prepare for the Second Coming of the Savior.

The Lord has long spoken of the

necessary preparations for His Second Coming. To Enoch, He declared, “Righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, . . . and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth.”¹¹ The prophet Daniel prophesied that in the latter days the gospel would roll forth unto the ends of the earth as a “stone [that is] cut out of [a] mountain without hands.”¹² Nephi spoke of the latter-day Church as being few in number but spread upon all the face of the earth.¹³ The Lord declared in this dispensation, “Ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect.”¹⁴ My young brethren, your mission is a great opportunity and responsibility, important to this promised gathering and linked to your eternal destiny.

From the early days of the Restoration, the Brethren have been very serious about their charge to declare the gospel. In 1837, only seven years after the organization of the Church, at a time of poverty and persecution, missionaries were sent to teach the gospel in England. Within the next few years, missionaries were preaching in such diverse places as Austria, French Polynesia, India, Jamaica, Chile, and China.¹⁵

The Lord has blessed this work, and the Church is being established across the world. This meeting is being translated into 92 languages. We are grateful for the 52,225 full-time missionaries serving in more than 150 countries.¹⁶ The sun never sets on righteous missionaries testifying of the Savior. Think of the spiritual power of 52,000 missionaries, endowed with the Spirit of the Lord, boldly declaring that there is “no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby



salvation can come . . . , only in and through the name of Christ.”¹⁷ We express appreciation to the tens of thousands of returned missionaries who have given and continue to give their very best. The world is being prepared for the Second Coming of the Savior in large measure because of the Lord’s work through His missionaries.

Missionary service is a spiritual work. Worthiness and preparation are essential. President Monson has said: “Young men, I admonish you to prepare for service as a missionary. Keep yourselves clean and pure and worthy to represent the Lord.”¹⁸ In the years prior to your mission, please remember the sacred assignment ahead of you. Your actions before your mission will greatly influence the priesthood power you bring with you into the mission. Prepare yourself well.

President Monson spoke of “every worthy, able young man [preparing] to serve a mission.”¹⁹ On occasion, because of health or other reasons, one might not be able to serve. You will know your ability to serve as you speak with your parents and your bishop. Should this be your situation, please do not feel less important in the noble commission before you. The Lord is very generous to those who love Him, and He will open other doors for you.

Some may wonder if they are too old to serve. A friend of mine from China found the Church in Cambodia when he was in his mid-20s. He wondered if he should still consider a mission. After praying and speaking with his bishop, he was called and served nobly in New York City. Should your age concern you, pray and speak with your bishop. He will guide you.

Fifty percent of all missionaries serve in their own homeland. That is only right. The Lord has promised that “every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language.”²⁰ You will be called by prophecy and serve where you are needed most.

I love meeting missionaries around the world. Recently while I was visiting the Australia Sydney Mission, do you know whom I found? Elder Sidney Going—the New Zealand rugby legend. Now age 67, he is once again a missionary, but this time with a companion of his own choosing: Sister Colleen Going. He told me of a family they were able to teach. The parents were members but had been less active in the Church for many, many years. Elder and Sister Going helped rekindle the family’s faith. Elder Going told me of the power he felt while standing at the baptismal font next to the father of the family as the oldest son, now holding the priesthood, baptized his younger brother and sister.

He expressed the joy of witnessing a united family pursuing eternal life together.²¹

Speaking to you, the First Presidency has said:

“You are [a] choice [spirit] who [has] come forth in this day when the responsibilities and opportunities, as well as the temptations, are the greatest. . . .

“We pray for each of you . . . [that] you can do the great work that lies before you . . . that you will be worthy [and willing] to carry on the responsibilities of building the kingdom of God and preparing the world for the Second Coming of the Savior.”²²

I love Harry Anderson’s painting of the Second Coming of the Savior. It reminds me that He will come in majesty and power. Amazing events will unfold on the earth and in the skies.²³

Those awaiting the Savior’s coming will “look for [Him].” And He has promised, “I will come!” The righteous will see Him “in the clouds of heaven [with all the holy angels], clothed with power and great glory.”²⁴ “An angel shall sound his trumpet, and the saints . . . from the four quarters of the earth”²⁵ will “be caught up to meet him.”²⁶

Those “that have slept,” meaning those worthy Saints who have died, “shall [also] come forth to meet [Him].”²⁷

The scripture reads, “The Lord [will] set his foot upon [the] mount,”²⁸ and “[He] shall utter his voice, and all the ends of the earth shall hear it.”²⁹

My young brethren of the priesthood, I testify of the majesty, but most of all, of the certainty of this magnificent event. The Savior lives. He will return to the earth. And whether on this side of the veil or the other, you and I will rejoice in His coming and thank the Lord that He sent us to earth at this time to fulfill our sacred duty of helping prepare the world for His return. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “The Lord Needs Missionaries,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Jan. 2011, 4.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “As We Meet Together Again,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 5–6.
3. See stats.allblacks.com.
4. See Bob Howitt, *Super Sid: The Story of a Great All Black* (1978), 27.
5. Phone conversation with President Maxwell Horsford, Kaikohe New Zealand Stake, Mar. 2011.
6. Phone conversation with Elder Sidney Going, Mar. 2011.
7. E-mail correspondence from Elder Sidney Going, Mar. 2011.
8. See stats.allblacks.com/asp/profile.asp?ABID=324.
9. Phone conversation with President Maxwell Horsford, Kaikohe New Zealand Stake, Mar. 2011.
10. Sid Going was awarded with an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in 1978 for his contributions to the sport of rugby (see Howitt, *Super Sid*, 265).
11. Moses 7:62.
12. Daniel 2:45.
13. See 1 Nephi 14:12–14.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 29:7.
15. See *Deseret News 2011 Church Almanac* (2011), 430, 458, 463, 487, 505, 512.
16. As of December 31, 2010.
17. Mosiah 3:17.
18. Thomas S. Monson, *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Jan. 2011, 4.
19. Thomas S. Monson, *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 5–6.
20. Doctrine and Covenants 90:11.
21. Phone conversation with Elder Sidney Going, Mar. 2011.
22. “Message from the First Presidency,” *For the Strength of Youth: Fulfilling Our Duty to God* (booklet, 2001), 2–3.
23. See Doctrine and Covenants 43:18; 45:40.
24. Doctrine and Covenants 45:44.
25. Doctrine and Covenants 45:45, 46.
26. Doctrine and Covenants 88:96.
27. Doctrine and Covenants 45:45; see also Doctrine and Covenants 29:13; 88:96–97.
28. Doctrine and Covenants 45:48.
29. Doctrine and Covenants 45:49.



By Elder Steven E. Snow
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

Hope

Our hope in the Atonement empowers us with eternal perspective.

Our family grew up in the high desert country of southern Utah. Rain is rare, and hope abounds that there will be sufficient moisture for the coming heat of summer. Then, as now, we hoped for rain, we prayed for rain, and in dire times, we fasted for rain.

The story is told there of the grandfather who took his five-year-old grandson for a walk around town. Ultimately, they found themselves at a small grocery store on Main Street where they stopped for a cold soda pop. A car from out of state pulled up and the driver approached the old-timer. Pointing to a small cloud in the sky, the stranger asked, “Do you think it’s going to rain?”

“I certainly hope so,” replied the old man, “if not for my sake, for the boy’s. I’ve seen it rain.”

Hope is an emotion which brings richness to our everyday lives. It is defined as “the feeling that . . . events will turn out for the best.” When we exercise hope, we “look forward . . . with desire and reasonable confidence” (dictionary.reference.com/browse/hope). As such, hope brings a certain calming influence to our lives as we confidently look forward to future events.

Sometimes we hope for things over

which we have little or no control. We hope for good weather. We hope for an early spring. We hope our favorite sports team will win the World Cup, the Super Bowl, or the World Series.

Such hopes make our lives interesting and can often lead to unusual, even superstitious behavior. For example, my father-in-law is a huge sports fan, but he is convinced if he *doesn’t* watch his favorite basketball team on television, they are more likely to win. When I was 12 years old, I insisted on wearing the same pair of unwashed socks to every Little League baseball game in the hopes of winning. My mother made me keep them on the back porch.

Other times our hopes can lead to dreams which can inspire us and lead us to action. If we have the hope to do better in school, that hope can be realized by dedicated study and sacrifice. If we have the hope to play on a winning team, that hope can lead to consistent practice, dedication, teamwork, and ultimately success.

Roger Bannister was a medical student in England who had an ambitious hope. He desired to be the first man to run a mile (1.6 km) under four minutes. For much of the first half of the early 20th century, field and track enthusiasts had anxiously awaited the day the four-minute-mile barrier

would be broken. Over the years many outstanding runners had come close, but still the four-minute barrier stood. Bannister dedicated himself to an ambitious training schedule with the hope of realizing his goal of setting a new world record. Some in the sporting community had begun to doubt whether the four-minute mile could be broken. Supposed experts had even hypothesized the human body was physiologically unable to run at such speeds over such a long distance. On a cloudy day on May 6, 1954, Roger Bannister’s great hope was realized! He crossed the finish line in 3:59.4, setting a new world record. His hope to break the four-minute-mile barrier became a dream which was accomplished through training, hard work, and dedication.

Hope can inspire dreams and spur us to realize those dreams. Hope alone, however, does not cause us to succeed. Many honorable hopes have gone unfulfilled, shipwrecked on the reefs of good intentions and laziness.

As parents, we find our fondest hopes center around our children. We hope they will grow up to lead responsible and righteous lives. Such hopes can be easily dashed if we do not act as good examples. Hope alone does not mean our children will grow in righteousness. We must spend time with them in family home evening and worthwhile family activities. We must teach them to pray. We must read with them in the scriptures and teach them important gospel principles. Only then is it possible our fondest hopes will be realized.

We should never let hope be displaced by despair. The Apostle Paul wrote that we “should plow in hope” (1 Corinthians 9:10). The exercise of hope enriches our lives and helps us look forward to the future. Whether



we are plowing fields to plant or plowing through life, it is imperative we, as Latter-day Saints, have hope.

In the gospel of Jesus Christ, hope is the desire of His followers to gain eternal salvation through the Atonement of the Savior.

This is truly the hope we must all have. It is what sets us apart from the rest of the world. Peter admonished the early followers of Christ to “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15).

Our hope in the Atonement empowers us with eternal perspective. Such perspective allows us to look beyond the here and now on into the promise of the eternities. We don’t have to be trapped in the narrow confines of society’s fickle expectations. We are free to look forward to celestial glory, sealed to our family and loved ones.

In the gospel, hope is almost always related to faith and charity. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf has taught: “Hope is one leg of a three-legged stool, together with faith and charity. These three stabilize our lives regardless of the rough or uneven

surfaces we might encounter at the time” (“The Infinite Power of Hope,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 21).

In the last chapter of the Book of Mormon, Moroni wrote:

“Wherefore, there must be faith; and if there must be faith there must also be hope; and if there must be hope there must also be charity.

“And except ye have charity ye can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God; neither can ye be saved in the kingdom of God if ye have not faith; neither can ye if ye have no hope” (Moroni 10:20–21).

Elder Russell M. Nelson has taught that “*faith* is rooted in Jesus Christ. *Hope* centers in the Atonement. *Charity* is manifest in the ‘pure love of Christ.’ These three attributes are intertwined like strands in a cable and may not always be precisely distinguished. Together they become our tether to the celestial kingdom” (“A More Excellent Hope,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1997, 61).

When Nephi prophesied of Jesus Christ at the closing of his record, he wrote, “Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and

of all men” (2 Nephi 31:20).

This “perfect brightness of hope” of which Nephi speaks is the hope in the Atonement, eternal salvation made possible by the sacrifice of our Savior. This hope has led men and women through the ages to do remarkable things. Apostles of old roamed the earth and testified of Him and ultimately gave their lives in His service.

In this dispensation many early members of the Church left their homes, their hearts full of hope and faith as they made their way west across the Great Plains to the Salt Lake Valley.

In 1851, Mary Murray Murdoch joined the Church in Scotland as a widow at age 67. A small woman at four feet seven inches (1.2 m) tall and barely 90 pounds (41 kg), she bore eight children, six of whom lived to maturity. Because of her size, her children and grandchildren affectionately called her “Wee Granny.”

Her son John Murdoch and his wife joined the Church and left for Utah in 1852 with their two small children. In spite of his family’s own hardships, four years later John sent his mother the necessary funds so she might join the family in Salt Lake City. With a

hope much greater than her small size, Mary began the arduous journey west to Utah at age 73.

After a safe passage across the Atlantic, she ultimately joined the ill-fated Martin handcart company. On July 28 these handcart pioneers began the journey west. The suffering of this company is well known. Of the 576 members of the party, almost one-fourth died before they reached Utah. More would have perished if not for the rescue effort organized by President Brigham Young, who sent wagons and supplies to find the stranded, snowbound Saints.

Mary Murdoch died on October 2, 1856, near Chimney Rock, Nebraska. Here she succumbed to fatigue, exposure, and the hardships of the journey. Her frail body simply gave out under the physical hardships the Saints encountered. As she lay clinging to life, her thoughts were of her family in Utah. The last words of this faithful pioneer woman were “Tell John I died with my face toward Zion.” (See Kenneth W. Merrell, *Scottish Shepherd: The Life and Times of John Murray Murdoch, Utah Pioneer* [2006], 34, 39, 54, 77, 94–97, 103, 112–13, 115.)

Mary Murray Murdoch exemplifies the hope and faith of so many of the early pioneers who made the courageous journey west. The spiritual journeys of today require no less hope or faith than those of the early pioneers. Our challenges may be different, but the struggles are just as great.

It is my prayer that our hopes will lead to the fulfillment of our righteous dreams. I particularly pray our hope in the Atonement will strengthen our faith and charity and give us an eternal perspective of our future. May we all have this perfect brightness of hope, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Larry M. Gibson

First Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency

Sacred Keys of the Aaronic Priesthood

The Lord wants every Aaronic Priesthood holder to invite all to come unto Christ—beginning with his own family.

One of my sons, at age 12, decided to raise rabbits. We built cages and acquired one large male and two female rabbits from a neighbor. I had no idea what we were getting into. In a very short time, our shed was bursting with bunnies. Now that my son is grown, I must confess my amazement at how they were controlled—a neighbor’s dog occasionally got into the shed and thinned out the herd.

But my heart was touched as I saw my son and his brothers watch over and protect those rabbits. And now, as husbands and fathers, they are worthy priesthood holders who love, strengthen, and watch over their own families.

My feelings are tender as I observe you young men of the Aaronic Priesthood watching over, supporting, and strengthening those around you, including your families, members of your quorum, and many others. How I love you.

Recently I watched as a 13-year-old young man was set apart as deacons quorum president. Afterward the bishop shook his hand and addressed him as “president,” explaining to the

quorum members that he “addressed him as president to emphasize the sacredness of his calling. The deacons quorum president is one of only four people in the ward who hold keys of presidency. With those keys, he, with his counselors, will lead the quorum under the inspiration of the Lord.” This bishop understood the power of a presidency led by a president who holds and exercises sacred priesthood keys. (See D&C 124:142–43.)

Later I asked this young man if he was ready to preside over this great quorum. His response was: “I’m nervous. I don’t know what a deacons quorum president does. Can you tell me?”

I told him he had a wonderful bishopric and advisers who would help him become a successful and powerful priesthood leader. I knew they would respect the sacred keys of presidency he held.

I then posed this question: “Do you suppose the Lord would call you to this important calling without giving you direction?”

He thought, then responded, “Where do I find it?”

After some discussion, he realized



that he would find direction from the scriptures, the words of the living prophets, and answers to prayer. We determined to find a scripture that would be a starting place for his search to learn the responsibilities of his new calling.

We turned to the 107th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, verse 85. It mentions that a deacons quorum president is to sit in council with his quorum members and teach them their duties. We noted that his quorum is not only a class but also a council of young men, and they are to strengthen and edify one another under the president's direction. I expressed confidence that he would be an outstanding president who would rely on the inspiration from the Lord and magnify his sacred calling as he taught his fellow deacons their duties.

Then I asked, "Knowing you are to teach the deacons their duties, do you know what those duties are?"

Again we turned to the scriptures and found:

1. A deacon is appointed to watch over and be a standing minister in the Church (see D&C 84:111).

Because the family is the basic

unit of the Church, the most important setting in which an Aaronic Priesthood holder can fulfill this duty is in his own home. He provides priesthood service to his father and mother as they lead the family. He also watches over his brothers and sisters, the young men of his quorum, and the other members of the ward.

2. A deacon assists the teacher in all his duties in the Church if occasion requires (see D&C 20:57).

We determined that if a deacon is to assist with the teachers' duties, he needs to know their duties. We looked in the scriptures and quickly identified over a dozen duties for the office of teacher (see D&C 20:53–59; 84:111). What a powerful experience it would be for every young man—and his father, advisers, and all of us—to do exactly what this young man did: go to the scriptures and discover for ourselves what our duties are. I suspect that many of us will be surprised—and inspired—by what we find. Duty to God contains helpful summaries of Aaronic Priesthood duties and is a great resource for spiritual development. I urge you to consistently use it.

3. Deacons and teachers are also to "warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ" (D&C 20:59; see verses 46 and 68 for priests).

Many young men think that their missionary experience starts when they turn 19 and enter the Missionary Training Center. We learn from the scriptures that it starts long before that. The Lord wants every Aaronic Priesthood holder to invite all to come unto Christ—beginning with his own family.

Next, to help this young president understand that he and he alone was the presiding officer in the quorum, I suggested he read three times the first duty listed in Doctrine and Covenants 107:85. He read, "Preside over twelve deacons." I asked, "What is the Lord telling you personally about your duty as president?"

"Well," he said, "several things have popped into my head as we have been talking. I think Heavenly Father wants me to be president of twelve deacons. There are only five of us who come, and one comes only sometimes. So how do we get twelve?"

Now, I had never interpreted this

scripture the way he did, but then, he held sacred keys that I did not have. I was being taught by a 13-year-old deacons quorum president about the revelatory power that comes to those with the sacred keys of presidency regardless of their intellect, stature, or age.

I answered, “I don’t know. What do you think?”

And he said, “We need to figure out how to keep him coming. I know there are two others who should be in our quorum, but they don’t come, and I don’t know them. Maybe I can become close friends with one and have my counselors work with the others. If they all came, we would have seven, but where do we get five more?”

“I don’t know,” was my answer, “but if Heavenly Father wants them there, He knows.”

“Then we need to pray as a presidency and quorum to find out what to do.” He then asked, “Am I responsible for all deacon-age boys in our ward, even those who are not members?”



In awe, I said, “In the Lord’s view, does your bishop have responsibility for only the members of the ward or for all who live within its boundaries?”

This young “standing minister” got it. He recognized the role of every deacon, teacher, and priest in watching over the Church and inviting all to come unto Christ.

My thoughts turn to a scripture as I think of our wonderful young men and women of the Church—a scripture that Moroni quoted to Joseph Smith, saying that it had “not yet [been] fulfilled, but was soon to be” (Joseph Smith—History 1:41)—“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, . . . your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28).

What “popped into” this young president’s head was a vision of what Heavenly Father wants his quorum to be. It was the revelation he needed to strengthen the active members of his quorum, to rescue those who were struggling, and to invite all to come unto Christ. Thus inspired, he made plans to carry out the Lord’s will.

The Lord taught this young president that *priesthood* means reaching out to serve others. As our beloved prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, explains: “The priesthood is not really so much a gift as it is a commission to serve, a privilege to lift, and an opportunity to bless the lives of others” (“Our Sacred Priesthood Trust,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2006, 57).

Service is the very foundation of the priesthood—service to others as exemplified by the Savior. I testify that it is His priesthood, we are on His errand, and He has shown all priesthood holders the way of faithful priesthood service.

I invite each deacons, teachers, and

priests quorum presidency to regularly counsel, study, and pray to learn what the Lord’s will is for your quorum and then go and do. Use Duty to God to help you teach your quorum members their duties. I invite each quorum member to sustain your quorum president and look to him for counsel as you learn and righteously fulfill all of your priesthood duties. And I invite each of us to see these remarkable young men as the Lord sees them—a powerful resource for building and strengthening His kingdom here and now.

You wonderful young men hold the Aaronic Priesthood, restored by John the Baptist to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery near Harmony, Pennsylvania. Your priesthood holds the sacred keys that open the door for all of Heavenly Father’s children to come unto His Son, Jesus Christ, and follow Him. This is provided through “the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins”; the weekly ordinance of the sacrament; and “the ministering of angels” (D&C 13:1; Joseph Smith—History 1:69). You truly are ministers who must be clean and worthy and faithful priesthood men at all times and in all places.

Why? Listen to the words of our beloved First Presidency, given to each one of you in your Duty to God:

“You have the authority to administer the ordinances of the Aaronic Priesthood. . . . You will greatly bless the lives of those around you. . . .

“Heavenly Father has great trust and confidence in you and has an important mission for you to fulfill” (*Fulfilling My Duty to God: For Aaronic Priesthood Holders* [2010], 5).

I know these words are true, and I pray that each of us will have that same witness. And I say these things in the sacred name of Him whose priesthood we hold, Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By President Dieter F. Uchtdorf
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Your Potential, Your Privilege

As you read the scriptures and listen to the words of the prophets with all your heart and mind, the Lord will tell you how to live up to your priesthood privileges.

There once was a man whose life-long dream was to board a cruise ship and sail the Mediterranean Sea. He dreamed of walking the streets of Rome, Athens, and Istanbul. He saved every penny until he had enough for his passage. Since money was tight, he brought an extra suitcase filled with cans of beans, boxes of crackers, and bags of powdered lemonade, and that is what he lived on every day.

He would have loved to take part in the many activities offered on the ship—working out in the gym, playing miniature golf, and swimming in the pool. He envied those who went to movies, shows, and cultural presentations. And, oh, how he yearned for only a taste of the amazing food he saw on the ship—every meal appeared to be a feast! But the man wanted to spend so very little money that he didn't participate in any of these. He was able to see the cities he had longed to visit, but for the most part of the journey, he stayed in his cabin and ate only his humble food.

On the last day of the cruise, a crew member asked him which of the

farewell parties he would be attending. It was then that the man learned that not only the farewell party but almost everything on board the cruise ship—the food, the entertainment, all the activities—had been included in the price of his ticket. Too late the man realized that he had been living far beneath his privileges.

The question this parable raises is, Are we as priesthood holders living below our privileges when it comes to the sacred power, gifts, and blessings that are our opportunity and right as bearers of God's priesthood?

The Glory and Grandeur of the Priesthood

We all know that the priesthood is much more than just a name or title. The Prophet Joseph taught that “the Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity . . . to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years.”¹ It holds “even the key of the knowledge of God.”² In fact, through the priesthood the very “power of godliness is manifest.”³

The blessings of the priesthood transcend our ability to comprehend.

Faithful Melchizedek Priesthood holders can “become . . . the elect of God.”⁴ They are “sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies”⁵ and can ultimately receive “all that [the] Father hath.”⁶ This may be hard to comprehend, but it is beautiful, and I testify that it is true.

The fact that our Heavenly Father would entrust this power and responsibility to man is evidence of His great love for us and a foreshadowing of our potential as sons of God in the hereafter.

Nevertheless, too often our actions suggest that we live far beneath this potential. When asked about the priesthood, many of us can recite a correct definition, but in our daily lives, there may be little evidence that our understanding goes beyond the level of a rehearsed script.

Brethren, we are faced with a choice. We can be satisfied with a diminished experience as priesthood bearers and settle for experiences far below our privileges. Or we can partake of an abundant feast of spiritual opportunity and universal priesthood blessings.

What Can We Do to Live Up to Our Potential?

The words written in the scriptures and spoken in general conference are for us to “liken them unto [ourselves],”⁷ not for reading or hearing only.⁸ Too often we attend meetings and nod our heads; we might even smile knowingly and agree. We jot down some action points, and we may say to ourselves, “That is something I will do.” But somewhere between the hearing, the writing of a reminder on our smartphone, and the actual doing, our “do it” switch gets rotated to the “later” position. Brethren, let's make sure to set our “do it” switch always to the “now” position!

As you read the scriptures and listen to the words of the prophets with all your heart and mind, the Lord will tell you how to live up to your priesthood privileges. Don't let a day go by without doing something to act on the promptings of the Spirit.

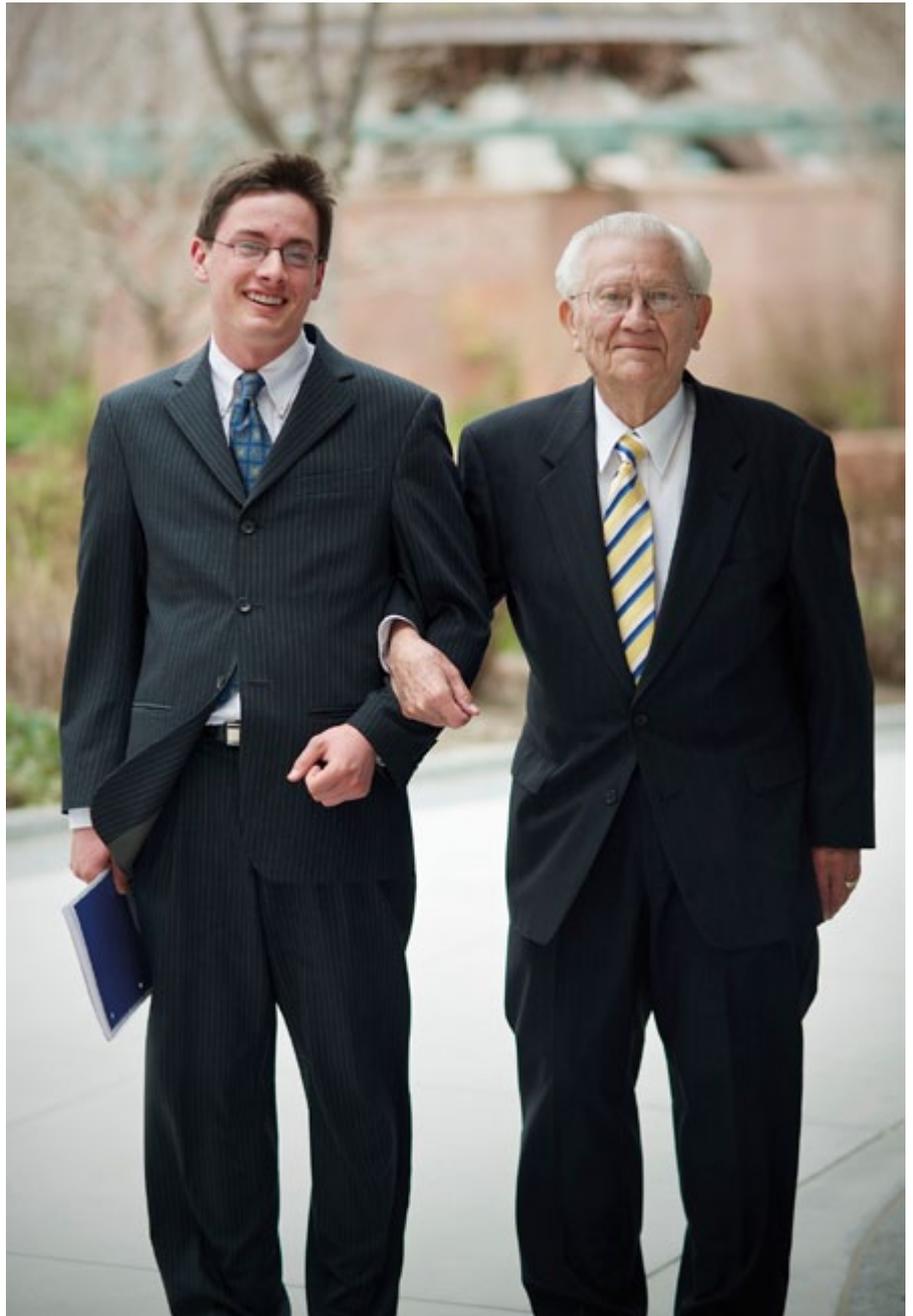
First: Read the Owner's Manual

If you owned the world's most advanced and expensive computer, would you use it merely as a desk ornament? The computer may look impressive. It may have all kinds of potential. But it is only when you study the owner's manual, learn how to use the software, and turn on the power that you can access its full potential.

The holy priesthood of God also has an owner's manual. Let us commit to reading the scriptures and handbooks with more purpose and more focus. Let us begin by rereading sections 20, 84, 107, and 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The more we study the purpose, potential, and practical use of the priesthood, the more we will be amazed by its power, and the Spirit will teach us how to access and use that power to bless our families, our communities, and the Church.

As a people, we rightfully place high priority on secular learning and vocational development. We want and we must excel in scholarship and craftsmanship. I commend you for striving diligently to gain an education and become an expert in your field. I invite you to also become experts in the doctrines of the gospel—especially the doctrine of the priesthood.

We live in a time when the scriptures and the words of modern-day prophets are more easily accessible than at any time in the history of the world. However, it is our privilege and duty, and it is our responsibility



to reach out and grasp their teachings. The principles and doctrines of the priesthood are sublime and supernatural. The more we study the doctrine and potential and apply the practical purpose of the priesthood, the more our souls will be expanded and our understanding enlarged, and we will see what the Lord has in store for us.

Second: Seek the Revelations of the Spirit

A sure testimony of Jesus Christ and of His restored gospel takes more than knowledge—it requires personal

revelation, confirmed through honest and dedicated application of gospel principles. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that the priesthood is a “channel through which the Almighty commenced revealing His glory at the beginning of the creation of this earth, and through which He has continued to reveal Himself to the children of men to the present time.”⁹

If we are not seeking to use this channel of revelation, we are living beneath our priesthood privileges. For example, there are those who believe



Bucharest, Romania

but don't know that they believe. They have received various answers by the still, small voice over an extended period of time, but because this inspiration seems so small and insignificant, they do not recognize it for what it really is. As a result, they allow doubts to keep them from fulfilling their potential as priesthood holders.

Revelation and testimony do not always come with overwhelming force. For many, a testimony comes slowly—a piece at a time. Sometimes it comes so gradually that it is hard to recall the exact moment we actually knew the gospel was true. The Lord gives us “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.”¹⁰

In some ways, our testimony is like a snowball that grows larger with every turn. We start out with a small amount of light—even if it is only a desire to believe. Gradually, “light cleaveth unto light,”¹¹ and “he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day,”¹² when “in due time [we] receive of his fulness.”¹³

Think of what a glorious thing it is to reach beyond our earthly limitations, to have the eyes of our understanding opened and receive light and knowledge from celestial sources! It is our privilege and opportunity as

bearers of the priesthood to seek personal revelation and to learn how to know the truth for ourselves through the sure witness of the Holy Spirit.

Let us earnestly seek the light of personal inspiration. Let us plead with the Lord to endow our mind and soul with the spark of faith that will enable us to receive and recognize the divine ministering of the Holy Spirit for our specific life situations and for our challenges and priesthood duties.

Third: Find Joy in Priesthood Service

During my career as an airline pilot, I had the opportunity to be a check and training captain. Part of this job was to train and test experienced pilots to ensure that they had the necessary knowledge and skills to safely and efficiently operate those magnificent big jets.

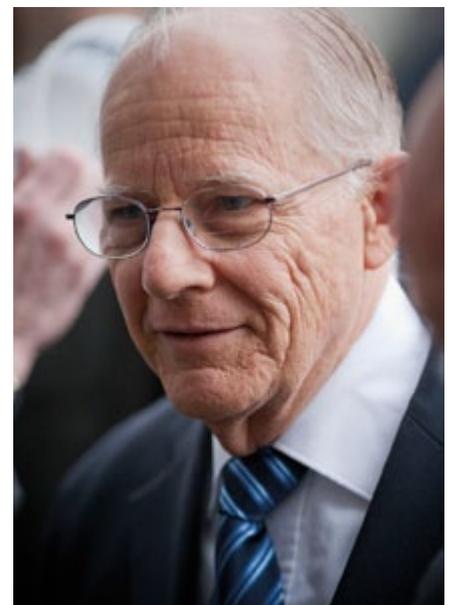
I found that there were pilots who, even after many years of flying professionally, never lost the thrill of climbing into the atmosphere, having “slipped the surly bonds of Earth and danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings.”¹⁴ They loved the sound of rushing air, the growling of the powerful engines, the feeling of being “one with the wind and one with the dark sky and the stars ahead.”¹⁵ Their enthusiasm was contagious.

There were also a few who seemed

to be merely going through the motions. They had mastered the systems and the handling of the jets, but somewhere along the way they had lost the joy of flying “where never lark, or even eagle flew.”¹⁶ They had lost their sense of awe at a glowing sunrise, at the beauties of God's creations as they crossed oceans and continents. If they met the official requirements, I certified them, but at the same time I felt sorry for them.

You may want to ask yourself if you are merely going through the motions as a priesthood bearer—doing what is expected but not experiencing the joy that should be yours. Holding the priesthood gives us abundant opportunities to feel the joy that Ammon expressed: “Have we not great reason to rejoice? . . . We have been instruments in [the Lord's] hands of doing this great and marvelous work. Therefore, let us glory . . . in the Lord; yea, we will rejoice.”¹⁷

Brethren, our religion is a joyful one! We are most blessed to bear the priesthood of God! In the book of



Psalms we read, “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.”¹⁸ We can experience this greater joy if we but look for it.

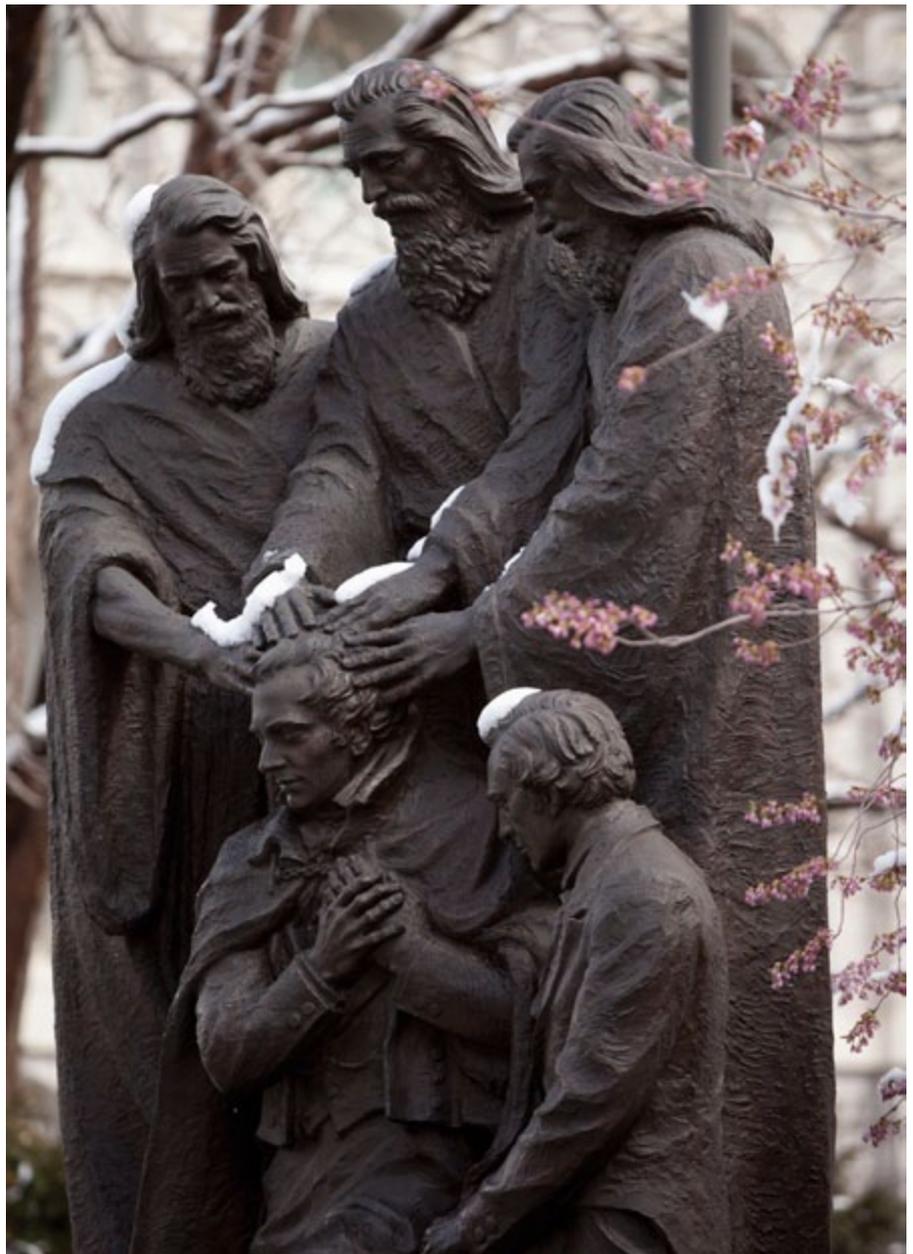
Too often we fail to experience the bliss that comes from daily, practical priesthood service. At times assignments can feel like burdens. Brethren, let us not pass through life immersed in the three Ws: wearied, worrying, and whining. We live beneath our privileges when we allow worldly anchors to keep us away from the abundant joy that comes from faithful and dedicated priesthood service, especially within the walls of our own homes. We live beneath our privileges when we fail to partake of the feast of happiness, peace, and joy that God grants so bountifully to faithful priesthood servants.

Young men, if coming to church early to help prepare the sacrament feels more like a hardship than a blessing, then I invite you to think about what this sacred ordinance might mean to a ward member who perhaps has had a challenging week. Brethren, if your home teaching efforts don’t seem to be effective to you, I invite you to see with the eye of faith what a visit from a servant of the Lord will do for a family that has many unseen problems. When you grasp the divine potential of your priesthood service, the Spirit of God will fill your hearts and minds; it will shine in your eyes and faces.

As bearers of the priesthood, let us never become hardened to the wonder and awe of what the Lord has entrusted to us.

Conclusion

My dear brethren, may we diligently seek to learn the doctrine of the holy priesthood, may we strengthen



our testimonies line upon line by receiving the revelations of the Spirit, and may we find true joy in daily priesthood service. As we do these things, we will begin to live up to our potential and privileges as priesthood holders, and we will be able to “do all things through Christ which strengtheneth [us].”¹⁹ Of this I bear testimony as an Apostle of the Lord and leave you my blessing in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 104.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 84:19.

3. Doctrine and Covenants 84:20.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 84:34.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 84:33.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 84:38.
7. 1 Nephi 19:24.
8. See James 1:22.
9. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 108–9.
10. 2 Nephi 28:30.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 88:40.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 50:24.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 93:19.
14. John Gillespie Magee Jr., “High Flight,” in Diane Ravitch, ed., *The American Reader: Words That Moved a Nation* (1990), 486.
15. Richard Bach, *Stranger to the Ground* (1963), 9.
16. Magee, “High Flight,” 486.
17. Alma 26:13, 15–16.
18. Psalm 89:15.
19. Philippians 4:13.



By President Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the First Presidency

Learning in the Priesthood

If you will be diligent and obedient in the priesthood, treasures of spiritual knowledge will be poured out upon you.

I am grateful to be with you in this meeting of the priesthood of God. We are in many different places tonight and at many stages in our priesthood service. Yet with all the variety of our circumstances, we have a need in common. It is to learn our duties in the priesthood and to grow in our power to perform them.

As a deacon I felt keenly that need. I lived in a tiny branch of the Church in New Jersey, on the East Coast of the United States. I was the only deacon in the branch—not just the only one attending but the only one on the records. My older brother, Ted, was the only teacher. He is here tonight.

While I was still a deacon, my family moved to Utah. There I found three wonderful things in place to speed my growth in the priesthood. The first was a president who knew how to sit in council with the members of his quorum. The second was great faith in Jesus Christ that led to the great love we have heard of—love for each other. And the third was a shared conviction that our overarching priesthood purpose was to labor for the salvation of men.

It wasn't the well-established ward

that made the difference. What was there in that ward could be anywhere, in whatever unit of the Church you are in.

These three things may be so much a part of your experience in the priesthood that you hardly notice them. For others you may not feel the need for growth, so these helps may be invisible to you. Either way, I pray that the Spirit will help me make them clear and attractive to you.

My purpose in speaking of these three aids to growing in the priesthood is to urge you to value them and to use them. If you do, your service will be transformed for the better. And if it is magnified, your priesthood service will bless Heavenly Father's children more than you can now imagine is possible.

I found the first when I was welcomed into a priests quorum, with the bishop as our president. That may seem a small, unremarkable thing to you, but it gave me a sense of power in the priesthood that has changed my service in the priesthood ever since. It began by the way he led us.

As near as I could tell, he treated the opinions of young priests as if we

were the wisest men in the world. He waited until all who would speak had spoken. He listened. And when he decided what should be done, it seemed to me that the Spirit confirmed the decisions to us and to him.

I realize now I had felt what the scripture means when it says that the president is to sit in council with the members of his quorum.¹ And years later as I was a bishop with my priests quorum, both they and I were taught by what I had learned as a young priest.

Twenty years later as a bishop, I had the opportunity to see the effectiveness of a council not just in the meetinghouse but also in the mountains. During a Saturday activity, a member of our quorum had been lost in the forest overnight. As far as we knew, he was alone and without warm clothes, food, or shelter. We searched for him without success.

My memory is that we prayed together, the priests quorum and I, and I then asked each to speak. I listened intently, and it seemed to me that they did too, to each other. After a while, a feeling of peace settled on us. I felt that our lost quorum member was safe and dry somewhere.

It became clear to me what the quorum was to do and not to do. When the people who found him described the place in the woods where he had gone for safety, I felt that I recognized it. But the larger miracle for me was to see a united priesthood council's faith in Jesus Christ bringing revelation to the man with the priesthood keys. We all grew that day in the power of the priesthood.

The second key to increased learning is to have love for each other that comes from great faith. I am not sure which comes first, but both always seem to be there whenever there is great and rapid learning in the



priesthood. Joseph Smith taught that to us by example.

In the early days of the Church in this dispensation, he received a command from God to build strength in the priesthood. He was directed to create schools for priesthood holders. The Lord set the requirement that there be love for each other among those who were to teach and to be taught. Here are the words of the Lord about creating a place of priesthood learning and what it was like for those who were to learn in it:

“Organize yourselves; . . . establish a house . . . of learning, . . . a house of order. . . .

“Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time

and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege.”²

The Lord is describing what we have already seen is the strength of a priesthood council or a class to bring revelation by the Spirit. Revelation is the only way we can come to know that Jesus is the Christ. That great faith is the first rung on the ladder we climb to learn the principles of the gospel.

In section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants, in verses 123 and 124, the Lord stressed love for each other and not finding fault with each other. Each gained entry into the priesthood school established by the Lord’s prophet by making a covenant with uplifted hands to be a “friend and

brother . . . in the bonds of love.”³

Now, we do not follow that practice today, but wherever I have seen remarkable learning in the priesthood, there are those bonds of love. Again I have seen it as both a cause and an effect of learning gospel truths. Love invites the Holy Ghost to be present to confirm truth. And the joy of learning divine truths creates love in the hearts of people who shared the experience of learning.

The reverse is true as well. Discord or jealousy inhibits the ability of the Holy Ghost to teach us and inhibits our ability to receive light and truth. And the feelings of disappointment that invariably follow are the seeds of greater discord and faultfinding among those who expected a learning experience that did not come.

The priesthood holders who learn well together always seem to me to have great peacemakers among them. You see peacemaking in priesthood classes and in councils. It is the gift to help people find common ground when others are seeing differences. It is the peacemaker’s gift to help people see that what someone else said was a contribution rather than a correction.

With enough of the pure love of Christ and a desire to be peacemakers, unity is possible in priesthood councils and in classes. It takes patience and humility, but I have seen it happen even when issues are difficult and the people in councils or classes come from vastly different backgrounds.

It is possible to rise to the lofty standard set by the Lord for priesthood holders in making decisions in quorums. It is possible when there is great faith and love and the absence of contention. Here is the Lord’s requirement for His endorsement of our decisions: “And every decision made by either of these quorums must be by the



unanimous voice of the same; that is, every member in each quorum must be agreed to its decisions, in order to make their decisions of the same power or validity one with the other.”⁴

The third aid to learning in the priesthood comes with a shared conviction about why the Lord blesses and trusts us to hold and to exercise His priesthood. It is to labor for the salvation of men. This shared conviction brings unity in quorums. We can begin to learn about this from the scriptural account of how we spirit sons were prepared before birth for this rare honor of holding the priesthood.

Speaking of those given great priesthood trust in this life, the Lord said, “Even before they were born, they, with many others, received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men.”⁵

In the priesthood we share the sacred duty to labor for the souls of men. We must do more than learn that this is our duty. It must go down into our hearts so deeply that neither the many demands on our efforts in the bloom of life nor the trials that come with age can turn us from that purpose.

Not long ago I visited a high priest in his home. He is no longer able to

come to our quorum meetings. He lives alone. His beautiful wife died, and his children live far away from him. Time and illness limit his ability to serve. He still lifts weights to keep what he can of his once-powerful strength.

When I walked into his home, he stood up from his walker to greet me. He invited me to sit in a chair near him. We talked of our happy associations in the priesthood.

Then with great intensity he said to me, “Why am I still living? Why am I still here? I can’t do anything.”

I told him that he was doing something for me. He was lifting me with his faith and his love. Even in our short visit, he made me want to be better. His example of determination to do something that mattered had inspired me to try harder to serve others and the Lord.

But from the sad sound of his voice and the look in his eyes, I could sense that I had not answered his questions. He still wondered why God let him live with such limitations on his ability to serve.

In his usual generous way, he thanked me for coming to see him. As I got up to leave, the nurse who comes to his home a few hours every day walked in from another room. During our private conversation, he had told me a little about her. He said

she was wonderful. She had lived among the Latter-day Saints most of her life but was still not a member.

She walked up to show me to the door. He motioned toward her and said with a smile, “See, I can’t seem to do anything. I have been trying to get her baptized into the Church, but it hasn’t worked.” She smiled back at him and at me. I walked outside and turned toward my home nearby.

I realized then that the answers to his questions were planted long ago in his heart. That valiant high priest was trying to do his duty, taught to him through decades in the priesthood.

He knew that the only way that young woman could have the blessing of salvation through the gospel of Jesus Christ was to make a covenant by being baptized. He had been taught according to the covenants by every president of every quorum from the deacons to the high priests.

He remembered and felt his own oath and covenant in the priesthood. He was still keeping it.

He was a witness and a missionary for the Savior wherever life would take him. It was already in his heart. The desire of his heart was that her heart could be changed through the Atonement of Jesus Christ by keeping sacred covenants.

His time in the school of the priesthood in this life will be relatively brief compared to eternity. But even in that short span, he has mastered the eternal curriculum. He will carry with him, wherever the Lord will call, priesthood lessons of eternal worth.

Not only should you be eager to learn your priesthood lessons in this life, but you should be optimistic about what is possible. A few of us may limit in our minds our possibilities to learn what the Lord sets before us in His service.



One young man left his little Welsh village in the early 1840s, heard the Apostles of God, and came into the kingdom of God on earth. He sailed with the Saints to America and drove a wagon west across the plains. He was in the next company after Brigham Young coming into this valley. His priesthood service included clearing and breaking ground for a farm.

He sold the farm for pennies on the dollar to go on a mission for the Lord in the deserts of what is now Nevada to take care of sheep. He was called

from that to another mission across the ocean in the very village he had left in his poverty to follow the Lord.

Through it all, he found a way to learn with his priesthood brethren. Bold missionary that he was, he walked down the lane in Wales to the summer estate of a man who was four times the prime minister of England to offer him the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The great man let him into his mansion. He was a graduate of Eton College and of Oxford University. The missionary talked with him about the origins of man, the central role of Jesus Christ in the history of the world, and even the fate of nations.

At the end of their discussion, the host declined the offer to accept baptism. But as they parted, that leader of one of the great empires of the world asked the humble missionary, "Where did you get your education?" His answer: "In the priesthood of God."

You may have thought at one time how much better your life would have been if only you had been admitted to

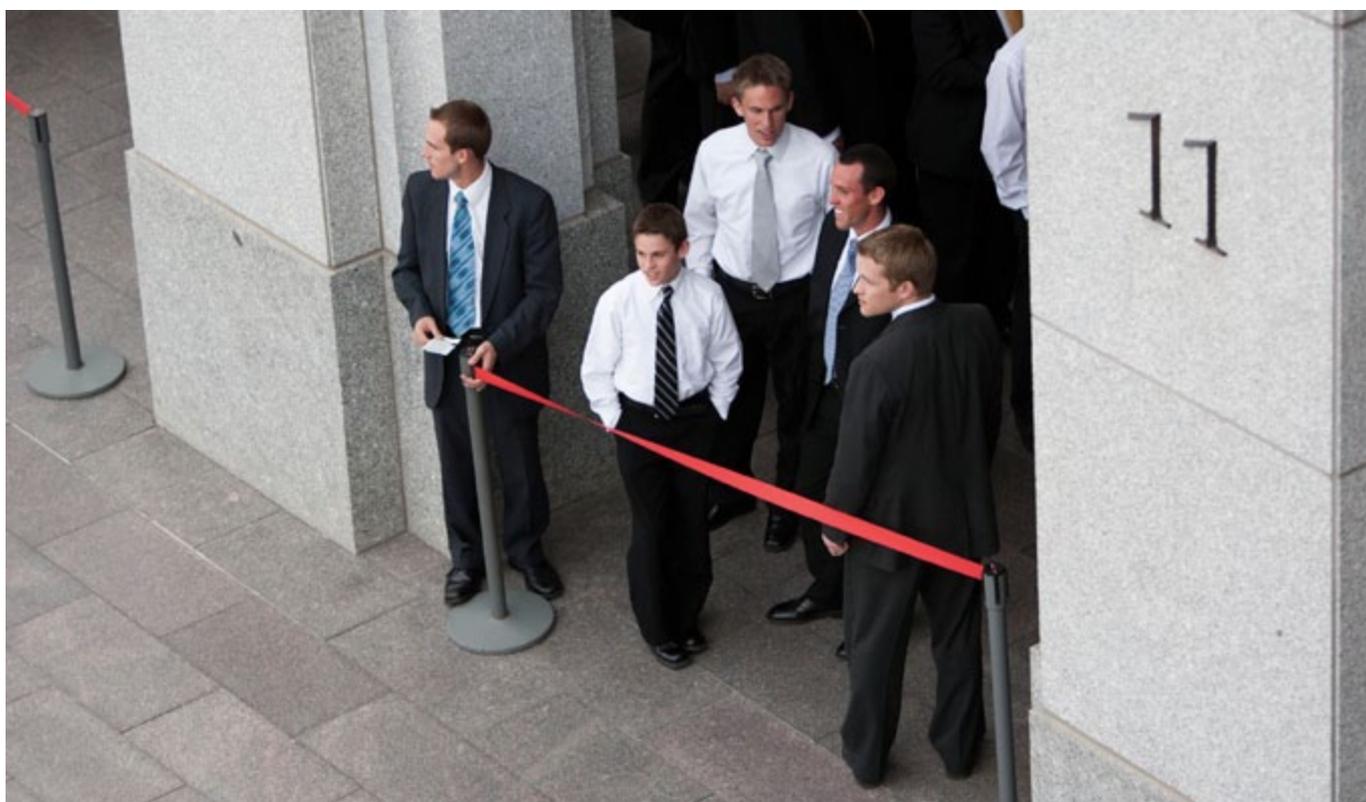
study in some fine school. I pray that you will see the greatness of God's love for you and of the opportunity He has given you to enter His priesthood school.

If you will be diligent and obedient in the priesthood, treasures of spiritual knowledge will be poured out upon you. You will grow in your power to resist evil and to proclaim the truth that leads to salvation. You will find joy in the happiness of those you lead toward exaltation. Your family will become a place of learning.

I testify that the keys of the priesthood have been restored. President Thomas S. Monson holds and exercises those keys. God lives and knows you perfectly. Jesus Christ lives. You were chosen for the honor of holding the sacred priesthood. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See Doctrine and Covenants 107:87.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 88:119, 122.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 88:133.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 107:27.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 138:56.





By President Thomas S. Monson

Priesthood Power

May we be worthy recipients of the divine power of the priesthood we bear. May it bless our lives and may we use it to bless the lives of others.

I prayed and studied long about what I might say tonight. I wish not to offend anyone. I thought, “What are the challenges we have? What do I deal with every day that causes me to weep sometimes late into the night?” I thought that I would try to address a few of those challenges tonight. Some will apply to the young men. Some will apply to those who are middle aged. Some will apply to those who are a little bit above middle age. We don’t talk about old age.

And so I simply want to begin by declaring, it has been good for us to be together this evening. We’ve heard wonderful and timely messages concerning the priesthood of God. I, with you, have been uplifted and inspired.

Tonight I wish to address matters which have been much on my mind of late and which I have felt impressed to share with you. In one way or another, they all relate to the personal worthiness required to receive and exercise the sacred power of the priesthood which we hold.

May I begin by reciting to you from section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

“The rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and . . . the powers

of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

“That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man.”¹

Brethren, that is the definitive word of the Lord concerning His divine authority. We cannot be in doubt as to the obligation this places upon each of us who bear the priesthood of God.

We have come to the earth in troubled times. The moral compass of the masses has gradually shifted to an “almost anything goes” position.

I’ve lived long enough to have witnessed much of the metamorphosis of society’s morals. Where once the standards of the Church and the standards of society were mostly compatible, now there is a wide chasm between us, and it’s growing ever wider.

Many movies and television shows portray behavior which is in direct opposition to the laws of God. Do not

subject yourself to the innuendo and outright filth which are so often found there. The lyrics in much of today’s music fall in the same category. The profanity so prevalent around us today would never have been tolerated in the not-too-distant past. Sadly, the Lord’s name is taken in vain over and over again. Recall with me the commandment—one of the ten—which the Lord revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai: “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”² I am sorry that any of us is subjected to profane language, and I plead with you not to use it. I implore you not to say or to do anything of which you cannot be proud.

Stay completely away from pornography. Do not allow yourself to view it, ever. It has proven to be an addiction which is more than difficult to overcome. Avoid alcohol and tobacco or any other drugs, also addictions which you would be hard pressed to conquer.

What will protect you from the sin and evil around you? I maintain that a strong testimony of our Savior and of His gospel will help see you through to safety. If you have not read the Book of Mormon, read it. I will not ask for a show of hands. If you do so prayerfully and with a sincere desire to know the truth, the Holy Ghost will manifest its truth to you. If it is true—and it *is*—then Joseph Smith was a prophet who saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. The Church is true. If you do not already have a testimony of these things, do that which is necessary to obtain one. It is essential for you to have your own testimony, for the testimonies of others will carry you only so far. Once obtained, a testimony needs to be kept vital and alive through obedience to the commandments of God and through regular prayer and



scripture study. Attend church. You young men, attend seminary or institute if such is available to you.

Should there be anything amiss in your life, there is open to you a way out. Cease any unrighteousness. Talk with your bishop. Whatever the problem, it can be worked out through proper repentance. You can become clean once again. Said the Lord, speaking of those who repent, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow,"³ "and I, the Lord, remember them no more."⁴

The Savior of mankind described Himself as being in the world but not of the world.⁵ We also can be in the world but not of the world as we reject false concepts and false teachings and remain true to that which God has commanded.

Now, I have thought a lot lately about you young men who are of an age to marry but who have not yet felt to do so. I see lovely young ladies who desire to be married and to raise families, and yet their opportunities are limited because so many young men are postponing marriage.

This is not a new situation. Much has been said concerning this matter by past Presidents of the Church. I share with you just one or two examples of their counsel.

Said President Harold B. Lee, "We are not doing our duty as holders of the priesthood when we go beyond the marriageable age and withhold ourselves from an honorable marriage to these lovely women."⁶

President Gordon B. Hinckley said this: "My heart reaches out to . . . our single sisters, who long for marriage and cannot seem to find it. . . . I have far less sympathy for the young men, who under the customs of our society, have the prerogative to take the initiative in these matters but in so many cases fail to do so."⁷

I realize there are many reasons why you may be hesitating to take that step of getting married. If you are concerned about providing financially for a wife and family, may I assure you that there is no shame in a couple having to scrimp and save. It is generally during these challenging times that you will grow closer together as you learn to

sacrifice and to make difficult decisions. Perhaps you are afraid of making the wrong choice. To this I say that you need to exercise faith. Find someone with whom you can be compatible. Realize that you will not be able to anticipate every challenge which may arise, but be assured that almost anything can be worked out if you are resourceful and if you are committed to making your marriage work.

Perhaps you are having a little too much fun being single, taking extravagant vacations, buying expensive cars and toys, and just generally enjoying the carefree life with your friends. I've encountered groups of you running around together, and I admit that I've wondered why you aren't out with the young ladies.

Brethren, there is a point at which it's time to think seriously about marriage and to seek a companion with whom you want to spend eternity. If you choose wisely and if you are committed to the success of your marriage, there is nothing in this life which will bring you greater happiness.

When you marry, brethren, you will



wish to marry in the house of the Lord. For you who hold the priesthood, there should be no other option. Be careful lest you destroy your eligibility to be so married. You can keep your courtship within proper bounds while still having a wonderful time.

Now, brethren, I turn to another subject about which I feel impressed to address you. In the three years since I was sustained as President of the Church, I believe the saddest and most discouraging responsibility I have each week is the handling of cancellations of sealings. Each one was preceded by a joyous marriage in the house of the Lord, where a loving couple was beginning a new life together and looking forward to spending the rest of eternity with each other. And then months and years go by, and for one reason or another, love dies. It may be the result of financial problems, lack of communication, uncontrolled tempers, interference from in-laws, entanglement in sin. There are any number of reasons. In most cases divorce does not have to be the outcome.

The vast majority of requests for cancellations of sealings come from women who tried desperately to make a go of the marriage but who, in the final analysis, could not overcome the problems.

Choose a companion carefully and prayerfully; and when you are married, be fiercely loyal one to another. Priceless advice comes from a small framed plaque I once saw in the home of an uncle and aunt. It read, "Choose your love; love your choice." There is great wisdom in those few words. Commitment in marriage is absolutely essential.

Your wife is your equal. In marriage neither partner is superior nor inferior to the other. You walk side by side as a son and a daughter of God. She is not to be demeaned or insulted but should be respected and loved. Said President Gordon B. Hinckley: "Any man in this Church who . . . exercises unrighteous dominion over [his wife] is unworthy to hold the priesthood. Though he may have been ordained, the heavens will withdraw, the Spirit of the Lord will be grieved, and it will be amen to the authority of the priesthood of that man."⁸

President Howard W. Hunter said this about marriage: "Being happily and successfully married is generally not so much a matter of marrying the right person as it is *being the right person*." I like that. "The conscious effort to do one's part fully is the greatest element contributing to success."⁹

Many years ago in the ward over which I presided as the bishop, there lived a couple who often had very serious, heated disagreements. I mean real disagreements. Each of the two was certain of his or her position. Neither one would yield to the other. When they weren't arguing, they maintained what I would call an uneasy truce.

One morning at 2:00 a.m. I had a telephone call from the couple. They wanted to talk to me, and they wanted to talk right then. I dragged myself from bed, dressed, and went to their home. They sat on opposite sides of the room, not speaking to each other. The wife communicated with her husband by talking to me. He replied to her by talking to me. I thought, "How in the world are we going to get this couple together?"

I prayed for inspiration, and the thought came to me to ask them a question. I said, "How long has it been since you have been to the temple and witnessed a temple sealing?" They admitted it had been a very long time. They were otherwise worthy people who held temple recommends and who went to the temple and did ordinance work for others.

I said to them, "Will you come with me to the temple on Wednesday

morning at 8:00? We will witness a sealing ceremony there.”

In unison they asked, “Whose ceremony?”

I responded, “I don’t know. It will be for whoever is getting married that morning.”

On the following Wednesday at the appointed hour, we met at the Salt Lake Temple. The three of us went into one of the beautiful sealing rooms, not knowing a soul in the room except Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, then an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve, a General Authority position which existed at that time. Elder Christiansen was scheduled to perform a sealing ceremony for a bride and groom in that very room that morning. I am confident the bride and her family thought, “These must be friends of the groom” and that the groom’s family thought, “These must be friends of the bride.”

My couple were seated on a little bench with about a full two feet (0.6 m) of space between them.

Elder Christiansen began by providing counsel to the couple who were being married, and he did so in a beautiful fashion. He mentioned how a husband should love his wife, how he should treat her with respect and courtesy, honoring her as the heart of the home. Then he talked to the bride about how she should honor her husband as the head of the home and be of support to him in every way.

I noticed that as Elder Christiansen spoke to the bride and the groom, my couple moved a little closer together. Soon they were seated right next to one another. What pleased me is that they had both moved at about the same rate. By the end of the ceremony, my couple were sitting as close to each other as though *they* were the newlyweds. Each was smiling.



We left the temple that day, and no one ever knew who we were or why we had come, but my friends were holding hands as they walked out the front door. Their differences had been set aside. I had not had to say one word. You see, they remembered their own wedding day and the covenants they had made in the house of God. They were committed to beginning again and trying harder this time around.

If any of you are having difficulty in your marriage, I urge you to do all that you can to make whatever repairs are necessary, that you might be as happy as you were when your marriage started out. We who are married in the house of the Lord do so for time and for all eternity, and then we must put forth the necessary effort to make it so. I realize that there are situations where marriages cannot be saved, but I feel strongly that for the most part they can be and should be. Do not let your marriage get to the point where it is in jeopardy.

President Hinckley taught that it is up to each of us who hold the priesthood of God to discipline ourselves so that we stand above the ways of the world. It is essential that we be honorable and decent men. Our actions must be above reproach.

The words we speak, the way we treat others, and the way we live our lives all impact our effectiveness as

men and boys holding the priesthood.

The gift of the priesthood is priceless. It carries with it the authority to act as God’s servants, to administer to the sick, to bless our families, and to bless others as well. Its authority can reach beyond the veil of death, on into the eternities. There is nothing else to compare with it in all this world. Safeguard it, treasure it, live worthy of it.¹⁰

My beloved brethren, may righteousness guide our every step as we journey through life. Today and always, may we be worthy recipients of the divine power of the priesthood we bear. May it bless our lives and may we use it to bless the lives of others, as did He who lived and died for us—even Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. This is my prayer in His sacred name, His holy name, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 121:36–37.
2. Exodus 20:7.
3. Isaiah 1:18.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 58:42.
5. See John 17:14; Doctrine and Covenants 49:5.
6. “President Harold B. Lee’s General Priesthood Address,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 100.
7. Gordon B. Hinckley, “What God Hath Joined Together,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 71.
8. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Personal Worthiness to Exercise the Priesthood,” *Liahona*, July 2002, 60; *Ensign*, May 2002, 54.
9. *The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1997), 130.
10. See Gordon B. Hinckley, *Liahona*, July 2002, 58–61; *Ensign*, May 2002, 52–59.



By President Dieter F. Uchtdorf
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Waiting on the Road to Damascus

Those who diligently seek to learn of Christ eventually will come to know Him.

One of the most remarkable events in the history of the world happened on the road to Damascus. You know well the story of Saul, a young man who had “made havock of the church, entering into every house . . . [committing the Saints] to prison.”¹ Saul was so hostile that many members of the early Church fled Jerusalem in the hope of escaping his anger.

Saul pursued them. But as he “came near Damascus . . . suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

“And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”²

This transformative moment changed Saul forever. Indeed, it changed the world.

We know that manifestations such as this happen. In fact, we testify that a similar divine experience happened in 1820 to a boy named Joseph Smith. It is our clear and certain testimony that the heavens are open again and that God speaks to His prophets and apostles. God hears and answers

the prayers of His children.

Nevertheless, there are some who feel that unless they have an experience similar to Saul’s or Joseph Smith’s, they cannot believe. They stand at the waters of baptism but do not enter. They wait at the threshold of testimony but cannot bring themselves to acknowledge the truth. Instead of taking small steps of faith on the path of discipleship, they want some dramatic event to compel them to believe.

They spend their days waiting on the road to Damascus.

Belief Comes One Step at a Time

One dear sister had been a faithful member of the Church all her life. But she carried a personal sorrow. Years before, her daughter had died after a short illness, and the wounds from this tragedy still haunted her. She agonized over the profound questions that accompany an event such as this. She frankly admitted that her testimony wasn’t what it used to be. She felt that unless the heavens parted for her, she would never be able to believe again.

So she found herself waiting.

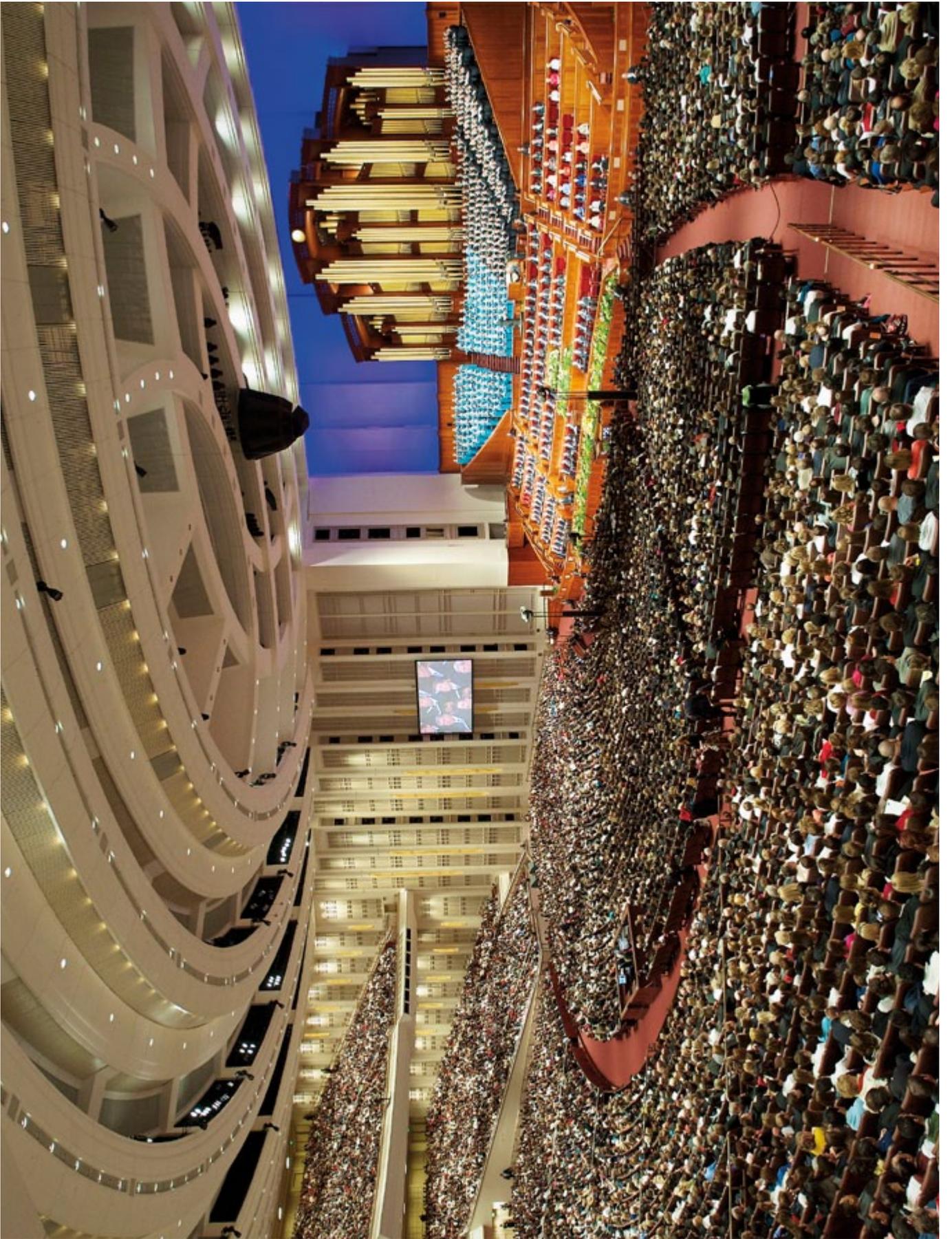
There are many others who, for different reasons, find themselves waiting on the road to Damascus. They delay becoming fully engaged as disciples. They hope to receive the priesthood but hesitate to live worthy of that privilege. They desire to enter the temple but delay the final act of faith to qualify. They remain waiting for the Christ to be given to them like a magnificent Carl Bloch painting—to remove once and for all their doubts and fears.

The truth is, those who diligently seek to learn of Christ eventually will come to know Him. They will personally receive a divine portrait of the Master, although it most often comes in the form of a puzzle—one piece at a time. Each individual piece may not be easily recognizable by itself; it may not be clear how it relates to the whole. Each piece helps us to see the big picture a little more clearly. Eventually, after enough pieces have been put together, we recognize the grand beauty of it all. Then, looking back on our experience, we see that the Savior had indeed come to be with us—not all at once but quietly, gently, almost unnoticed.

This can be our experience if we move forward with faith and do not wait too long on the road to Damascus.

Hearken and Heed

I testify to you that our Father in Heaven loves His children. He loves us. He loves you. When necessary the Lord will even carry you over obstacles as you seek His peace with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Often He speaks to us in ways that we can hear only with our heart. To better hear His voice, it would be wise to turn down the volume control of the worldly noise in our lives. If we ignore or block out the



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April 2011

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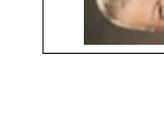
Octaviano Ienorio



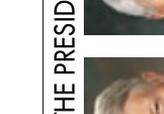
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***"Fellowcitizens with the saints"
(Ephesians 2:19) throughout
the world gather for the 181st
Annual General Conference of the
Church. Pictured clockwise from
top left are Latter-day Saints in
Lusaka, Zambia; Kyiv, Ukraine;
St. Catherine, Jamaica; São Paulo,
Brazil; Odenton, Maryland, USA;
Dortmund, Germany; and
Coimbra, Portugal.***





promptings of the Spirit for whatever reason, they become less noticeable until we cannot hear them at all. Let us learn to hearken to the promptings of the Spirit and then be eager to heed them.

Our beloved prophet, Thomas S. Monson, is our example in this regard. The stories of his attention to the whisperings of the Spirit are numerous. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland relates one such example:

Once while President Monson was on assignment in Louisiana, a stake president asked him if he would have time to visit a 10-year-old girl named Christal, who was in the final stages of cancer. Christal's family had been praying that President Monson would come. But their home was far away, and the schedule was so tight that there wasn't time. So instead, President Monson asked that those who offered prayers during the stake conference include Christal in their prayers. Surely the Lord and the family would understand.

During the Saturday session of the conference, as President Monson stood to speak, the Spirit whispered,

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."³

"His notes became a blur. He attempted to pursue the theme of the meeting as outlined, but the name and image of [the little girl] would not leave his mind."⁴

He listened to the Spirit and rearranged his schedule. Early the next morning, President Monson left the ninety and nine and traveled many miles to be at the bedside of the one.

Once there, he "gazed down upon a child too ill to rise, too weak to speak. Her illness had now rendered her sightless. Deeply touched by the scene and the Spirit of the Lord . . . , Brother Monson . . . took the child's frail hand in his own. 'Christal,' he whispered, 'I am here.'

"With great effort she whispered back, 'Brother Monson, I just knew you would come.'"⁵

My dear brothers and sisters, let us strive to be among those whom the Lord can rely on to hear His whisperings and respond, as Saul did on *his* road to Damascus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"⁶

Serve

Another reason we sometimes do not recognize the voice of the Lord in our lives is because the revelations of the Spirit may not come directly to us as the answer to our prayers.

Our Father in Heaven expects us to study it out first and then pray for guidance as we seek answers to questions and concerns in our personal lives. We have our Heavenly Father's assurance that He will hear and answer our prayers. The answer may come through the voice and wisdom of trusted friends and family, the scriptures, and the words of prophets.

It has been my experience that some of the most powerful promptings we receive are not only for our own benefit but also for the benefit of others. If we are thinking only of ourselves, we may miss some of the most powerful spiritual experiences and profound revelations of our lives.

President Spencer W. Kimball taught this concept when he said: "God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs. Therefore, it is vital that we



serve each other.”⁷ Brothers and sisters, we each have a covenant responsibility to be sensitive to the needs of others and serve as the Savior did—to reach out, bless, and uplift those around us.

Often, the answer to our prayer does not come while we’re on our knees but while we’re on our feet serving the Lord and serving those around us. Selfless acts of service and consecration refine our spirits, remove the scales from our spiritual eyes, and open the windows of heaven. By becoming the answer to someone’s prayer, we often find the answer to our own.

Share

There are times when the Lord reveals to us things that are intended only for us. Nevertheless, in many, many cases He entrusts a testimony of the truth to those who will share it with others. This has been the case with every prophet since the days of Adam. Even more, the Lord expects the members of His Church to “open [their mouths] at all times, declaring [His] gospel with the sound of rejoicing.”⁸

This is not always easy. Some would rather pull a handcart across the prairie than bring up the subject of faith and religion to their friends

and co-workers. They worry about how they might be perceived or how it might harm their relationship. It doesn’t need to be that way because we have a glad message to share, and we have a message of joy.

Years ago our family lived and worked among people who in almost every case were not of our faith. When they asked us how our weekend was, we tried to skip the usual topics—like sports events, movies, or the weather—and tried to share some religious experiences we had as a family over the weekend—for instance, what a youth speaker had said about the standards from *For the Strength of Youth* or how we were touched by the words of a young man who was leaving on his mission or how the gospel and the Church helped us as a family to overcome a specific challenge we had. We tried not to be preachy or overbearing. My wife, Harriet, was always the best at finding something inspirational, uplifting, or humorous to share. This often would lead to more in-depth discussions. Interestingly enough, whenever we talked with friends about coping with life’s challenges, we often heard the comment “It’s easy for you; you have your church.”

With so many social media resources and a multitude of more or less useful gadgets at our disposal, sharing the good news of the gospel is easier and the effects more far-reaching than ever before. In fact, I am almost afraid that some listening have already sent text messages like “He’s been speaking for 10 minutes and still no aviation analogy!” My dear young friends, perhaps the Lord’s encouragement to “open [your] mouths”⁹ might today include “use your hands” to blog and text message the gospel to all the world! But please remember, all at the

right time and at the right place.

Brothers and sisters, with the blessings of modern technology, we can express gratitude and joy about God's great plan for His children in a way that can be heard not only around our workplace but around the world. Sometimes a single phrase of testimony can set events in motion that affect someone's life for eternity.

The most effective way to preach

the gospel is through example. If we live according to our beliefs, people will notice. If the countenance of Jesus Christ shines in our lives,¹⁰ if we are joyful and at peace with the world, people will want to know why. One of the greatest sermons ever pronounced on missionary work is this simple thought attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary, use words."¹¹

Opportunities to do so are all around us. Do not miss them by waiting too long on the road to Damascus.

Our Road to Damascus

I testify that the Lord speaks to His prophets and apostles in our day. He also speaks to all who come to Him with a sincere heart and real intent.¹²

Do not doubt. Remember, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."¹³ God loves you. He hears your prayers. He speaks to His children and offers comfort, peace, and understanding to those who seek Him and honor Him by walking in His way. I bear my sacred witness that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is on course. We have a living prophet. This Church is led by Him whose name we bear, even the Savior Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, dear friends, let us not wait too long on *our* road to Damascus. Instead, let us courageously move forward in faith, hope, and charity, and we will be blessed with the light we are all seeking upon the path of true discipleship. For this I pray and leave you my blessing in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Acts 8:3.
2. Acts 9:3–4.
3. Mark 10:14.
4. See Jeffrey R. Holland, "President Thomas S. Monson: Man of Action, Man of Faith, Always 'on the Lord's Errand,'" *Ensign*, Feb. 1986, 16; see also Jeffrey R. Holland, "President Thomas S. Monson: Always 'on the Lord's Errand,'" *Tambuli*, Oct.–Nov. 1986, 20.
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, Feb. 1986, 16; see *Tambuli*, Oct.–Nov. 1986, 20.
6. Acts 9:6.
7. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 82.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 28:16.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 60:2.
10. See Alma 5:14.
11. In William Fay and Linda Evans Shepherd, *Share Jesus without Fear* (1999), 22.
12. See Moroni 10:3–5.
13. John 20:29.

São Paulo, Brazil





By **Elder Paul V. Johnson**
Of the Seventy

More Than Conquerors through Him That Loved Us

Trials are not just to test us. They are vitally important to the process of putting on the divine nature.

Earth life includes tests, trials, and tribulations, and some of the trials we face in life can be excruciating. Whether it be illness, betrayal, temptations, loss of a loved one, natural disasters, or some other ordeal, affliction is part of our mortal experience. Many have wondered why we must face difficult challenges. We know that one reason is to provide a trial of our faith to see if we will do all the Lord has commanded.¹ Fortunately this earth life is the perfect setting to face—and pass—these tests.²

But these trials are not just to test us. They are vitally important to the process of putting on the divine nature.³ If we handle these afflictions properly, they will be consecrated for our gain.⁴

Elder Orson F. Whitney said: “No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. . . . All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable. . . . It is

through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire.”⁵

Recently a nine-year-old boy was diagnosed with a rare bone cancer. The doctor explained the diagnosis and the treatment, which included months of chemotherapy and major surgery. He said it would be a very difficult time for the boy and his family but then added, “People ask me, ‘Will I be the same after this is over?’ I tell them, ‘No, you won’t be the same. You will be so much stronger. You will be awesome!’”

At times it may seem that our trials are focused on areas of our lives and parts of our souls with which we seem least able to cope. Since personal growth is an intended outcome of these challenges, it should come as no surprise that the trials can be very personal—almost laser guided to our particular needs or weaknesses. And no one is exempt, especially not Saints striving to do what’s right. Some obedient Saints may ask, “Why me? I’m trying to be good! Why is the Lord

allowing this to happen?” The furnace of affliction helps purify even the very best of Saints by burning away the dross in their lives and leaving behind pure gold.⁶ Even very rich ore needs refining to remove impurities. Being good is not enough. We want to become like the Savior, who learned as He suffered “pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind.”⁷

The Crimson Trail in Logan Canyon is one of my favorite hikes. The main part of the trail creeps along the top of tall limestone cliffs and offers beautiful vistas of the canyon and valley below. Getting to the top of the cliffs isn’t easy, however. The trail there is a constant climb; and just before reaching the top, the climber encounters the steepest part of the trail; and views of the canyon are hidden by the cliffs themselves. The final exertion is more than worth the effort because once the climber is on top, the views are breathtaking. The only way to see the views is to make the climb.

A pattern in the scriptures and in life shows that many times the darkest, most dangerous tests immediately precede remarkable events and tremendous growth. “After much tribulation come the blessings.”⁸ The children of Israel were trapped against the Red Sea before it was parted.⁹ Nephi faced danger, anger from his brothers, and multiple failures before he was able to procure the brass plates.¹⁰ Joseph Smith was overcome by an evil power so strong that it seemed he was doomed to utter destruction. When he was almost ready to sink into despair, he exerted himself to call upon God, and at that very moment he was visited by the Father and the Son.¹¹ Often investigators face opposition and tribulation as they near baptism. Mothers know that the challenges of labor precede the miracle of birth. Time



after time we see marvelous blessings on the heels of great trials.

When my grandmother was about 19 years old, she developed a disease that caused her to be very ill. She later said, “I couldn’t walk. My left foot was all out of shape after I had been in bed for several months. The bones were soft like a sponge, and when I touched my foot to the floor it felt

like an electric shock.”¹² While she was confined to bed and at the height of her suffering, she obtained and studied pamphlets from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She was converted and later baptized. Many times a particular challenge helps prepare us for something vitally important.

In the midst of problems, it is

nearly impossible to see that the coming blessings far outweigh the pain, humiliation, or heartbreak we may be experiencing at the time. “No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”¹³ The Apostle Paul taught, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”¹⁴ It is interesting that Paul uses the term “light affliction.” This comes from a person who was beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, imprisoned, and who experienced many other trials.¹⁵ I doubt many of us would label our afflictions light. Yet in comparison to the blessings and growth we ultimately receive, both in this life and in eternity, our afflictions truly are light.

We don’t seek out tests, trials, and tribulations. Our personal journey through life will provide just the right amount for our needs. Many trials are just a natural part of our mortal existence, but they play such an important role in our progress.

As the Savior’s mortal ministry came to a close, He experienced the most difficult trial of all time—the incredible suffering in Gethsemane and on Golgotha. This preceded the glorious Resurrection and the promise that all our suffering will someday be done away. His suffering was a prerequisite to the empty tomb that Easter morning and to our future immortality and eternal life.

Sometimes we want to have growth without challenges and to develop strength without any struggle. But growth cannot come by taking the easy way. We clearly understand that an athlete who resists rigorous training will never become a world-class



more than conquerors through him that loved us.”²⁰

I know that God lives and that His Son, Jesus Christ, lives. I also know that through Their help, we can be “more than conquerors” of the tribulations we face in this life. We can become like Them. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See 1 Peter 1:6–8; Abraham 3:25.
2. See 1 Peter 2:20.
3. See 2 Peter 1:4.
4. See 2 Nephi 2:2.
5. Orson F. Whitney, in Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (1972), 98.
6. See Isaiah 48:10; 1 Nephi 20:10.
7. See Alma 7:11–12.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 58:4.
9. See Exodus 14:5–30.
10. See 1 Nephi 3–4.
11. See Joseph Smith—History 1:15–17.
12. Amalie Hollenweger Amacher, unpublished history in possession of author.
13. Hebrews 12:11.
14. 2 Corinthians 4:17.
15. See 2 Corinthians 11:23–28.
16. See Philippians 4:13.
17. Robert D. Hales, “The Covenant of Baptism: To Be in the Kingdom and of the Kingdom,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2001, 6; *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 6.
18. Alma 36:3.
19. Matthew 25:21.
20. Romans 8:35, 37.

athlete. We must be careful that we don’t resent the very things that help us put on the divine nature.

Not one of the trials and tribulations we face is beyond our limits, because we have access to help from the Lord. We can do all things through Christ, who strengthens us.¹⁶

After recovering from serious health challenges, Elder Robert D. Hales shared the following in general conference: “On a few occasions, I told the Lord that I had surely learned the lessons to be taught and that it wouldn’t be necessary for me to endure any more suffering. Such entreaties seemed to be of no avail, for it was made clear to me that this purifying process of testing was to be endured in the Lord’s time and in the Lord’s own way. . . . I . . . learned that I would not be left alone to meet these trials and tribulations but that guardian angels would attend me. There were some that were near angels in the form of doctors, nurses, and most of all my sweet companion, Mary. And on occasion, when the Lord so desired, I was to be comforted with visitations of heavenly hosts that brought comfort and eternal reassurances in my time of need.”¹⁷

Our Heavenly Father loves us, and we “know that whosoever shall put

their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day.”¹⁸ Someday when we get to the other side of the veil, we want more than for someone just to tell us, “Well, you’re done.” Instead, we want the Lord to say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”¹⁹

I love the words of Paul: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . “Nay, in all these things we are

Bucharest, Romania





By Bishop H. David Burton
Presiding Bishop

The Sanctifying Work of Welfare

The work of caring for one another and being “kind to the poor” is a sanctifying work, commanded of the Father.

Good morning, brothers and sisters. In 1897 a young David O. McKay stood at a door with a tract in his hand. As a missionary in Stirling, Scotland, he had done this many times before. But on that day a very haggard woman opened the door and stood before him. She was poorly dressed and had sunken cheeks and unkempt hair.

She took the tract Elder McKay offered to her and spoke six words that he subsequently would never forget: “Will this buy me any bread?”

This encounter left a lasting impression on the young missionary. He later wrote: “From that moment I had a deeper realization that the Church of Christ should be and is interested in the temporal salvation of man. I walked away from the door feeling that that [woman], with . . . bitterness in [her heart] toward man and God, [was] in no position to receive the message of the gospel. [She was] in need of temporal help, and there was no organization, so far as I could learn, in Stirling that could give it to [her].”¹

A few decades later the world groaned under the burden of the

Great Depression. It was during that time, on April 6, 1936, that President Heber J. Grant and his counselors, J. Reuben Clark and David O. McKay, announced what would later become known as the welfare program of the Church. Interestingly, two weeks later Elder Melvin J. Ballard was appointed as its first chairman and Harold B. Lee its first managing director.

This was no ordinary endeavor. Although the Lord had raised up remarkable souls to administer it, President J. Reuben Clark made it clear that “the setting up of the [welfare] machinery is the result of a revelation by the Holy Ghost to President Grant, that it has been carried on since that time by equivalent revelations which have come to the brethren who have had it in charge.”²

The commitment of Church leaders to relieve human suffering was as certain as it was irrevocable. President Grant wanted “a system that would . . . reach out and take care of the people no matter what the cost.” He said he would even go so far as to “close the seminaries, shut down missionary work for a period of time, or even close the temples, but they

would not let the people go hungry.”³

I was at President Gordon B. Hinckley’s side in Managua, Nicaragua, when he spoke to 1,300 members of the Church who had survived a devastating hurricane that claimed more than 11,000 lives. “As long as the Church has resources,” he said to them, “we will not let you go hungry or without clothing or without shelter. We shall do all that we can to assist in the way that the Lord has designated that it should be done.”⁴

One of the distinguishing characteristics of this inspired gospel-centered endeavor is its emphasis on personal responsibility and self-reliance. President Marion G. Romney explained: “Many programs have been set up by well-meaning individuals to aid those who are in need. However, many of these programs are designed with the short-sighted objective of ‘helping people,’ as opposed to ‘helping people help themselves.’”⁵

Self-reliance is a product of provident living and exercising economic self-discipline. From the beginning the Church has taught that families—to the extent they can—need to assume responsibility for their own temporal welfare. Each generation is required to learn anew the foundational principles of self-reliance: avoid debt, implement principles of thrift, prepare for times of distress, listen to and follow the words of the living oracles, develop the discipline to distinguish between needs and wants and then live accordingly.

The purpose, promises, and principles that reinforce our work of caring for the poor and needy extend far beyond the bounds of mortality. This sacred work is not only to benefit and bless those who suffer or are in need. As sons and daughters of God, we cannot inherit the full measure of eternal life without being fully invested



family history exemplifies a commitment to care for those in need. Many have heard of the Willie and Martin handcart companies and how these faithful pioneers suffered and died as they endured winter cold and debilitating conditions during their trek west. Robert Taylor Burton, one of my great-great-grandfathers, was one of those whom Brigham Young asked to ride out and rescue those dear, desperate Saints.

Of this time Grandfather wrote in his journal: “Snow deep [and] very cold. . . . So cold that [we] could not move. . . . Thermometer 11 degrees below zero [-24°C] . . . ; so cold the people could not travel.”¹²

Life-saving supplies were distributed to the stranded Saints, but “in spite of all [the rescuers] could do many were laid to rest by the wayside.”¹³

As the rescued Saints were traversing a portion of the trail through Echo

St. Catherine, Jamaica



in caring for each other while we are here on earth. It is in the benevolent practice of sacrifice and giving of ourselves to others that we learn the celestial principles of sacrifice and consecration.⁶

The great King Benjamin taught that one of the reasons we impart of our substance to the poor and administer to their relief is so that we may retain a remission of our sins from day to day and walk guiltless before God.⁷

Since the foundation of the world, the cloth of righteous societies has ever been woven from the golden threads of charity. We yearn for a peaceful world and for prosperous communities. We pray for kind and virtuous societies where wickedness is forsaken and goodness and right prevail. No matter how many temples we build, no matter how large our membership grows, no matter how positively we are perceived in the eyes of the world—should we fail in this great core commandment to “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees,”⁸ or turn our hearts from those who suffer and mourn, we are under condemnation and cannot please the Lord⁹ and the jubilant hope of our hearts will ever be distant.

Throughout the world, nearly 28,000 bishops search after the poor to administer to their needs. Each

bishop is assisted by a ward council consisting of priesthood and auxiliary leaders, including a devoted Relief Society president. They can “fly to the relief of the stranger; . . . pour in oil and wine to the wounded heart of the distressed; . . . [and] dry up the tears of the orphan and make the widow’s heart to rejoice.”¹⁰

The hearts of Church members and leaders throughout the world are being positively influenced and guided by the doctrines and divine spirit of loving and caring for their neighbors.

One priesthood leader in South America was burdened by the hunger and deprivation of the members of his little stake. Unwilling to allow the children to suffer in hunger, he found an empty plot of land and organized the priesthood to cultivate and plant it. They found an old horse and hooked up a primitive plow and began working the ground. But before they could finish, tragedy struck and the old horse died.

Rather than allow their brothers and sisters to suffer hunger, the brethren of the priesthood strapped the old plow to their own backs and pulled it through the unforgiving ground. They literally took upon themselves the yoke of the suffering and burdens of their brothers and sisters.¹¹

A moment in time from my own



Canyon, several wagons pulled off to assist in the arrival of a baby girl. Robert noticed the young mother did not have enough clothing to keep her newborn infant warm. In spite of the freezing temperatures, he “took off his own homespun shirt and gave it to the mother to [wrap] the baby.”¹⁴ The child was given the name Echo—Echo Squires—as a remembrance of the place and circumstances of her birth.

In later years Robert was called to the Presiding Bishopric of the Church, where he served for more than three decades. At age 86 Robert Taylor Burton fell ill. He gathered his family to his bedside to give them his final blessing. Among his last words was this simple but very profound counsel: “Be kind to the poor.”¹⁵

Brothers and sisters, we honor those innovative giants whom the Lord raised up to organize and administer the institutional outreach to needy members of His Church. We honor those who in our day reach out in countless and often silent ways to “be kind to the poor,” feed the hungry, clothe the naked, minister to the sick, and visit the captive.

This is the sacred work the Savior expects from His disciples. It is the work He loved when He walked the earth. It is the work I know we would find Him doing were He here among us today.¹⁶

Seventy-five years ago a system devoted to the spiritual and temporal salvation of mankind rose from humble beginnings. Since that time it has ennobled and blessed the lives of tens of millions of people throughout the world. The prophetic welfare plan is not merely an interesting footnote in the history of the Church. The principles upon which it is based define who we are as a people. It is the essence of who we are as individual disciples of our Savior and Exemplar, Jesus the Christ.

The work of caring for one another and being “kind to the poor” is a sanctifying work, commanded of the Father and divinely designed to bless, refine, and exalt His children. May we follow the Savior’s counsel to the certain lawyer in the parable of the good Samaritan: “Go, and do thou likewise.”¹⁷ Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. *Cherished Experiences from the Writings of President David O. McKay*, comp. Clare Middlemiss (1955), 189.
2. J. Reuben Clark Jr., “Testimony of Divine Origin of Welfare Plan,” *Church News*, Aug. 8, 1951, 15; see also Glen L. Rudd, *Pure Religion* (1995), 47.
3. Glen L. Rudd, *Pure Religion*, 34.
4. In “President Hinckley Visits Hurricane Mitch Victims and Mid-Atlantic United States,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1999, 74.
5. Marion G. Romney, “The Celestial Nature of Self-Reliance,” *Liahona*, Mar. 2009, 15; *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 91.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 104:15–18; see also Doctrine and Covenants 105:2–3.
7. See Mosiah 4:26–27.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 81:5; see also Matthew 22:36–40.
9. See Doctrine and Covenants 104:18.
10. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 4:567–68.
11. Interview with Harold C. Brown, former Welfare Services Department managing director.
12. Journal of Robert T. Burton, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Nov. 2–6, 1856.
13. Robert Taylor Burton, in Janet Burton Seegmiller, *“Be Kind to the Poor”: The Life Story of Robert Taylor Burton* (1988), 164.
14. Lenore Gunderson, in Jolene S. Allphin, *Tell My Story, Too*, tellyourstorytoo.com/art_imagepages/image43.html.
15. Robert Taylor Burton, in Seegmiller, *“Be Kind to the Poor,”* 416.
16. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “You Are My Hands,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2010, 68–70, 75.
17. Luke 10:37.



By Silvia H. Allred
First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency

The Essence of Discipleship

When love becomes the guiding principle in our care for others, our service to them becomes the gospel in action.

From the beginning of time, the Lord has taught that to become His people we need to be of one heart and one mind.¹ The Savior also explained that the two great commandments in the law are “Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” and “love thy neighbour as thyself.”² Lastly, soon after the Church was restored, the Lord commanded the Saints to “visit the poor and the needy and administer to their relief.”³

What is the common theme in all these commandments? It is that we must love one another and serve one another. This is, in fact, the essence of discipleship in the true Church of Jesus Christ.

As we celebrate 75 years of the Church welfare program, we are reminded of the purposes of welfare, which are to help members help themselves become self-reliant, to care for the poor and needy, and to give service. The Church has organized its resources to assist members to provide for the physical, spiritual, social, and emotional well-being of themselves, their families, and others. The office of bishop carries with it a

special mandate to care for the poor and needy and to administer such resources for the members in his ward. He is assisted in his efforts by priesthood quorums, Relief Society, and in particular, home and visiting teachers.

Relief Society has always been at the heart of welfare. When the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the Relief Society in 1842, he said to the women, “This is the beginning of better days to the poor and needy.”⁴ He told the sisters that the purpose of the society was “relief of the poor, the destitute, the widow and the orphan, and for the exercise of all benevolent purposes. . . . They will pour in oil and wine to the wounded heart of the distressed; they will dry up the tears of the orphan and make the widow’s heart to rejoice.”⁵

He also stated that the society “might provoke the brethren to good works in looking to the wants of the poor—searching after objects of charity, and in administering to their wants—to assist by correcting the morals and strengthening the virtues of the community.”⁶

Men and women of the Church

participate jointly today in bringing relief to those in need. Priesthood holders provide essential support for those needing spiritual guidance and help. Inspired home teachers bless lives and provide the blessings of the gospel to every family unit. In addition, they lend their strength and talents in other ways, such as helping a family in need of home repairs, in helping a family move, or in helping a brother find needed employment.

Relief Society presidents visit homes to assess the needs for a bishop. Inspired visiting teachers watch over and care for sisters and families. They are often the first response in times of immediate need. Relief Society sisters provide meals, render compassionate service, and give constant support during times of trial.

Church members all over the world have rejoiced in the past and should rejoice now at the opportunities we have to serve others. Our combined efforts bring relief to those who are poor, hungry, suffering, or distressed, thereby saving souls.

Every bishop has available to him the Lord’s storehouse, which is established as “faithful members give to the bishop of their time, talents, skills, compassion, materials, and financial means in caring for the poor and in building up the kingdom of God on the earth.”⁷ We can all contribute to the Lord’s storehouse when we pay our fast offerings and make all our resources available to the bishop to assist those in need.

Despite the rapidly changing world, welfare principles have not changed with the passing of time because they are divinely inspired, revealed truth. When members of the Church and their families do everything they can to sustain themselves and still cannot



meet basic needs, the Church stands ready to help. Short-term needs are met immediately, and a plan to help the recipient become self-reliant is established. Self-reliance is the ability to provide the spiritual and temporal necessities of life for self and family.

As we increase our own level of self-reliance, we increase our ability to help and serve others the way the Savior did. We follow the Savior's example when we minister to the needy, the sick, and the suffering. When love becomes the guiding principle in our care for others, our service to them becomes the gospel in action. It is the gospel in its finest moment. It is pure religion.

In my various Church assignments, I have been humbled by the love and concern bishops and Relief Society leaders demonstrate for their flocks. While I was serving as a stake Relief Society president in Chile during the early 1980s, the country was experiencing a deep recession and the rate of unemployment was 30 percent. I

witnessed how heroic Relief Society presidents and faithful visiting teachers went about "doing good"⁸ under such grim circumstances. They portrayed the scripture in Proverbs 31:20: "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."

Sisters whose families had very little themselves were constantly helping those who they thought were in greater need. I then more clearly understood what the Savior saw when He declared in Luke 21:3–4:

"Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:

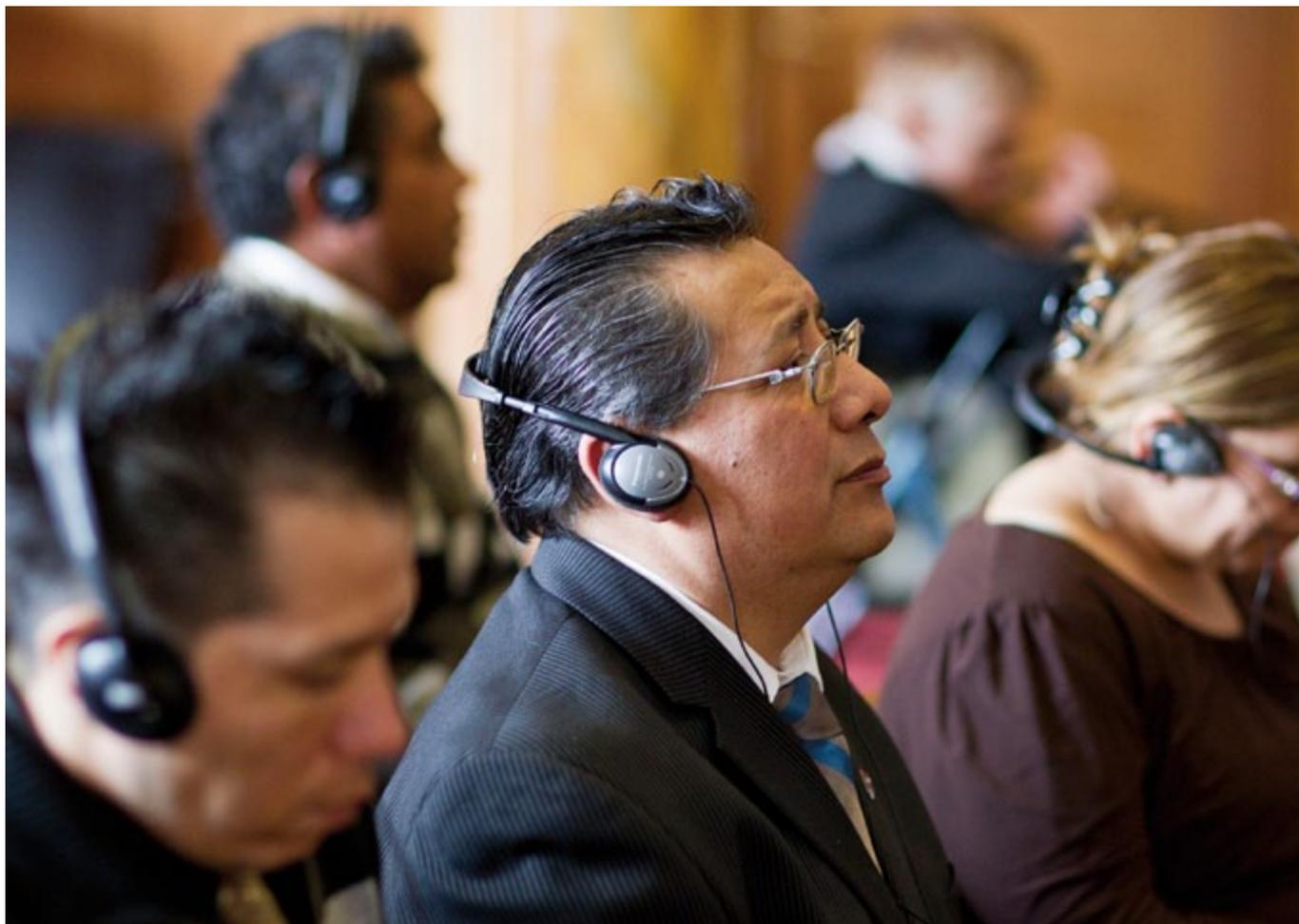
"For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had."

A few years later I witnessed the same thing as a stake Relief Society president in Argentina when hyperinflation hit the country and the economic collapse that followed affected many of our faithful

members. I witnessed it yet again during my recent visits to Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Antananarivo in Madagascar, and Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. Ward members everywhere, and Relief Society sisters in particular, continue to build faith, strengthen individuals and families, and help those in need.

To think that a humble sister or brother with a Church calling can go into a home where there is poverty, sorrow, sickness, or distress and can bring peace, relief, and happiness is astonishing. No matter where the ward or branch is or how big or small the group is, every member throughout the world has that opportunity. It happens every day, and it is happening somewhere at this very moment.

Karla is a young mother of two. Her husband, Brent, works long hours and commutes an hour each way to work. Soon after the birth of their second little girl, she related the following experience: "The day after I received the call to serve as a



counselor in my ward Relief Society, I began to feel quite overwhelmed. How could I possibly take on the responsibility to help care for the women in my ward when I was struggling just to fulfill my role as a wife and mother of a very active two-year-old and a new baby? Just as I was dwelling on these feelings, the two-year-old became sick. I wasn't quite sure what to do for her and care for the baby at the same time. Just then, Sister Wasden, who is one of my visiting teachers, unexpectedly came to the door. A mother of grown children, she knew just what to do to help. She told me what I needed to do while she went to the drug-store to get some supplies. Later on she arranged for my husband to be picked up at the train station so that he could get home quickly to help me. Her response to what I believe was a prompting from the Holy Ghost along with her willingness to

serve me were just the reassurance I needed from the Lord that He was going to help me to fulfill my new calling.”

Heavenly Father loves us and knows our unique circumstances and abilities. Although we seek His help daily through prayer, it is usually through another person that He meets our needs.⁹

The Lord said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”¹⁰

The pure love of Christ is expressed as we give selfless service. Helping one another is a sanctifying experience which exalts the receiver and humbles the giver. It helps us become true disciples of Christ.

The welfare plan has always been the application of eternal principles of the gospel. It truly is providing in the Lord's way. Let us each renew our desire to be part of the Lord's storehouse in blessing others.

I pray that the Lord will bless each of us with a greater sense of mercy, charity, and compassion. I plead for an increase in our desire and ability to reach out and assist the less fortunate, the distressed, and those who suffer, that their needs may be met, that their faith may be strengthened, and that their hearts may be filled with gratitude and love.

May the Lord bless each one of us as we walk in obedience to His commandments, His gospel, and His light. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See Moses 7:18.
2. See Matthew 22:36–40.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 44:6.
4. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 4:607.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 452.
6. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 452.
7. *Providing in the Lord's Way: A Leader's Guide to Welfare* (1990), 11.
8. Acts 10:38; Articles of Faith 1:13.
9. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 82.
10. John 13:35.



By Elder David A. Bednar
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Spirit of Revelation

The spirit of revelation is real—and can and does function in our individual lives and in the Church.

I express gratitude for the inspiration that attended the selection of the hymn that will follow my remarks, “Have I Done Any Good?” (*Hymns*, no. 223). I get the hint.

I invite you to consider two experiences most of us have had with light.

The first experience occurred as we entered a dark room and turned on a light switch. Remember how in an instant a bright flood of illumination filled the room and caused the darkness to disappear. What previously had been unseen and uncertain became clear and recognizable. This experience was characterized by immediate and intense recognition of light.

The second experience took place as we watched night turn into morning. Do you recall the slow and almost imperceptible increase in light on the horizon? In contrast to turning on a light in a dark room, the light from the rising sun did not immediately burst forth. Rather, gradually and steadily the intensity of the light increased, and the darkness of night was replaced by the radiance of morning. Eventually, the sun did dawn over the skyline. But the visual evidence of the sun’s impending arrival was apparent hours before the sun actually appeared over the horizon. This experience was

characterized by subtle and gradual discernment of light.

From these two ordinary experiences with light, we can learn much about the spirit of revelation. I pray the Holy Ghost will inspire and instruct us as we now focus upon the spirit of revelation and basic patterns whereby revelation is received.

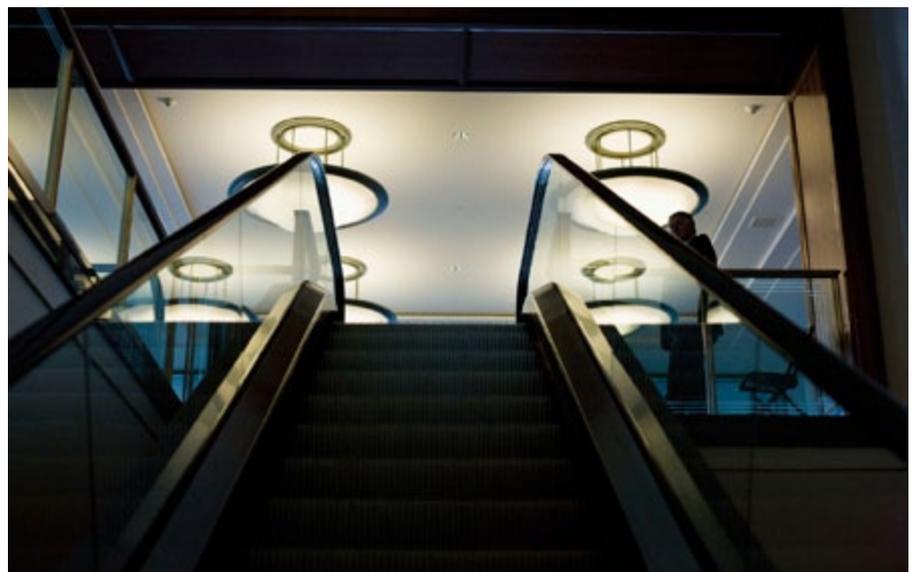
The Spirit of Revelation

Revelation is communication from God to His children on the earth and one of the great blessings associated with the gift and constant

companionship of the Holy Ghost. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “The Holy Ghost is a revelator,” and “no man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 132).

The spirit of revelation is available to every person who receives by proper priesthood authority the saving ordinances of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost—and who is acting in faith to fulfill the priesthood injunction to “receive the Holy Ghost.” This blessing is not restricted to the presiding authorities of the Church; rather, it belongs to and should be operative in the life of every man, woman, and child who reaches the age of accountability and enters into sacred covenants. Sincere desire and worthiness invite the spirit of revelation into our lives.

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery gained valuable experience with the spirit of revelation as they translated the Book of Mormon. These brethren learned they could receive whatever



knowledge was necessary to complete their work if they asked in faith, with an honest heart, believing they would receive. And over time they increasingly understood the spirit of revelation typically functions as thoughts and feelings that come into our minds and hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost. (See D&C 8:1–2; 100:5–8.) As the Lord instructed them: “Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation; behold, this is the spirit by which Moses brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground. Therefore this is thy gift; apply unto it” (D&C 8:3–4).

I emphasize the phrase “apply unto it” in relation to the spirit of revelation. In the scriptures, the influence of the Holy Ghost frequently is described as “a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12; 1 Nephi 17:45; see also 3 Nephi 11:3) and a “voice of perfect mildness” (Helaman 5:30). Because the Spirit whispers to us gently and delicately, it is easy to understand why we should shun inappropriate media, pornography, and harmful, addictive substances and behaviors. These tools of the adversary can impair and eventually destroy our capacity to recognize and respond to the subtle messages from God delivered by the power of His Spirit. Each of us should consider seriously and ponder prayerfully how we can reject the devil’s enticements and righteously “apply unto it,” even the spirit of revelation, in our personal lives and families.

Patterns of Revelation

Revelations are conveyed in a variety of ways, including, for example, dreams, visions, conversations with heavenly messengers, and inspiration. Some revelations are received immediately and intensely; some are recognized gradually and subtly. The two experiences with light I described

help us to better understand these two basic patterns of revelation.

A light turned on in a dark room is like receiving a message from God quickly, completely, and all at once. Many of us have experienced this pattern of revelation as we have been given answers to sincere prayers or been provided with needed direction or protection, according to God’s will and timing. Descriptions of such immediate and intense manifestations are found in the scriptures, recounted in Church history, and evidenced in our own lives. Indeed, these mighty miracles do occur. However, this pattern of revelation tends to be more rare than common.

The gradual increase of light radiating from the rising sun is like receiving a message from God “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30). Most frequently, revelation comes in small increments over time and is granted according to our desire, worthiness, and preparation. Such communications from Heavenly Father gradually and gently “distil upon [our souls] as the dews from heaven” (D&C 121:45). This pattern of revelation tends to be more common than rare and is evident in the experiences of Nephi as he tried several different approaches before successfully obtaining the plates of brass from Laban (see 1 Nephi 3–4). Ultimately, he was led by the Spirit to Jerusalem, “not knowing beforehand the things which [he] should do” (1 Nephi 4:6). And he did not learn how to build a ship of curious workmanship all at one time; rather, Nephi was shown by the Lord “from time to time after what manner [he] should work the timbers of the ship” (1 Nephi 18:1).

Both the history of the Church and our personal lives are replete with examples of the Lord’s pattern for

receiving revelation “line upon line, precept upon precept.” For example, the fundamental truths of the restored gospel were not delivered to the Prophet Joseph Smith all at once in the Sacred Grove. These priceless treasures were revealed as circumstances warranted and as the timing was right.

President Joseph F. Smith explained how this pattern of revelation occurred in his life: “As a boy . . . I would frequently . . . ask the Lord to show me some marvelous thing, in order that I might receive a testimony. But the Lord withheld marvels from me, and showed me the truth, line upon line . . . , until He made me to know the truth from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and until doubt and fear had been absolutely purged from me. He did not have to send an angel from the heavens to do this, nor did He have to speak with the trump of an archangel. By the whisperings of the still small voice of the spirit of the living God, He gave to me the testimony I possess. And by this principle and power He will give to all the children of men a knowledge of the truth that will stay with them, and it will make them to know the truth, as God knows it, and to do the will of the Father as Christ does it. And no amount of marvelous manifestations will ever accomplish this” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1900, 40–41).

We as members of the Church tend to emphasize marvelous and dramatic spiritual manifestations so much that we may fail to appreciate and may even overlook the customary pattern by which the Holy Ghost accomplishes His work. The very “simplicity of the way” (1 Nephi 17:41) of receiving small and incremental spiritual impressions that over time and in totality constitute a desired answer or



the direction we need may cause us to look “beyond the mark” (Jacob 4:14).

I have talked with many individuals who question the strength of their personal testimony and underestimate their spiritual capacity because they do not receive frequent, miraculous, or strong impressions. Perhaps as we consider the experiences of Joseph in the Sacred Grove, of Saul on the road to Damascus, and of Alma the Younger, we come to believe something is wrong with or lacking in us if we fall short in our lives of these well-known and spiritually striking examples. If you have had similar thoughts or doubts, please know that you are quite normal. Just keep pressing forward obediently and with faith in the Savior.

As you do so, you “cannot go amiss” (D&C 80:3).

President Joseph F. Smith counseled: “Show me Latter-day Saints who have to feed upon miracles, signs and visions in order to keep them steadfast in the Church, and I will show you members . . . who are not in good standing before God, and who are walking in slippery paths. It is not by marvelous manifestations unto us that we shall be established in the truth, but it is by humility and faithful obedience to the commandments and laws of God” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1900, 40).

Another common experience with light helps us learn an additional truth about the “line upon line, precept upon precept” pattern of revelation. Sometimes the sun rises on a morning

that is cloudy or foggy. Because of the overcast conditions, perceiving the light is more difficult, and identifying the precise moment when the sun rises over the horizon is not possible. But on such a morning we nonetheless have sufficient light to recognize a new day and to conduct our affairs.

In a similar way, we many times receive revelation without recognizing precisely how or when we are receiving revelation. An important episode from Church history illustrates this principle.

In the spring of 1829, Oliver Cowdery was a schoolteacher in Palmyra, New York. As he learned about Joseph Smith and the work of translating the Book of Mormon, Oliver felt impressed to offer his assistance to the young prophet. Consequently, he traveled to Harmony, Pennsylvania, and became Joseph’s scribe. The timing of his arrival and the help he provided were vital to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

The Savior subsequently revealed to Oliver that as often as he had prayed for guidance, he had received direction from the Spirit of the Lord. “If it had not been so,” the Lord declared, “thou wouldst not have come to the place where thou art at this time. Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did enlighten thy mind; and now I tell thee these things that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth” (D&C 6:14–15).

Thus, Oliver received a revelation through the Prophet Joseph Smith informing him that he had been receiving revelation. Apparently Oliver had not recognized how and when he had been receiving direction from God and needed this instruction to increase his understanding about the spirit of revelation. In essence, Oliver

had been walking in the light as the sun was rising on a cloudy morning.

In many of the uncertainties and challenges we encounter in our lives, God requires us to do our best, to act and not be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:26), and to trust in Him. We may not see angels, hear heavenly voices, or receive overwhelming spiritual impressions. We frequently may press forward hoping and praying—but without absolute assurance—that we are acting in accordance with God’s will. But as we honor our covenants and keep the commandments, as we strive ever more consistently to do good and to become better, we can walk with the confidence that God will guide our steps. And we can speak with the assurance that God will inspire our utterances. This is in part the meaning of the scripture that declares, “Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God” (D&C 121:45).

As you appropriately seek for and apply unto the spirit of revelation, I promise you will “walk in the light of the Lord” (Isaiah 2:5; 2 Nephi 12:5). Sometimes the spirit of revelation will operate immediately and intensely, other times subtly and gradually, and often so delicately you may not even consciously recognize it. But regardless of the pattern whereby this blessing is received, the light it provides will illuminate and enlarge your soul, enlighten your understanding (see Alma 5:7; 32:28), and direct and protect you and your family.

I declare my apostolic witness that the Father and the Son live. The spirit of revelation is real—and can and does function in our individual lives and in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I testify of these truths in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By President Thomas S. Monson

The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World

The all-important and crowning blessings of membership in the Church are those blessings which we receive in the temples of God.

My beloved brothers and sisters, I extend my love and greetings to each of you and pray that our Heavenly Father will guide my thoughts and inspire my words as I speak to you today.

May I begin by making a comment or two concerning the fine messages we have heard this morning from Sister Allred and Bishop Burton and others pertaining to the Church’s welfare program. As indicated, this year marks the 75th anniversary of this inspired program, which has blessed the lives of so many. It was my privilege to know personally some of those who pioneered this great endeavor—men of compassion and foresight.

As both Bishop Burton and Sister Allred and others mentioned, the bishop of the ward is given the responsibility to care for those in need who reside within the boundaries of his ward. Such was my privilege when I presided as a very young bishop in Salt Lake City over a ward of 1,080 members, including 84 widows. There were many who needed assistance. How grateful I was for the welfare program of the Church and for the

help of the Relief Society and the priesthood quorums.

I declare that the welfare program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is inspired of Almighty God.

Now, my brothers and sisters, this conference marks three years since I was sustained as President of the Church. Of course they have been busy years, filled with many challenges but also with countless blessings. The opportunity I have had to dedicate and rededicate temples has been among the most enjoyable and sacred of these blessings, and it is concerning the temple that I wish to speak to you today.

During the October general conference in 1902, Church President Joseph F. Smith expressed in his opening address the hope that one day we would “have temples built in the various parts of the [world] where they are needed for the convenience of the people.”¹

During the first 150 years following the organization of the Church, from 1830 to 1980, 21 temples were built, including the temples in Kirtland, Ohio, and Nauvoo, Illinois. Contrast

that with the 30 years since 1980, during which 115 temples were built and dedicated. With the announcement yesterday of 3 new temples, there are additionally 26 temples either under construction or in preconstruction stages. These numbers will continue to grow.

The goal President Joseph F. Smith hoped for in 1902 is becoming a reality. Our desire is to make the temple as accessible as possible to our members.

One of the temples currently under construction is in Manaus, Brazil. Many years ago I read of a group of over a hundred members who left Manaus, located in the heart of the Amazon rain forest, to travel to what was then the closest temple, located in São Paulo, Brazil—nearly 2,500 miles (4,000 km) from Manaus. Those faithful Saints journeyed by boat for four days on the Amazon River and its tributaries. After completing this journey by water, they boarded buses for another three days of travel—over bumpy roads, with very little to eat, and with nowhere comfortable to sleep. After seven days and nights, they arrived at the temple in São Paulo, where ordinances eternal in nature were performed. Of course their return journey was just as difficult. However, they had received the ordinances and blessings of the temple, and although their purses were empty, they themselves were filled with the spirit of the temple and with gratitude for the blessings they had received.² Now, many years later, our members in Manaus are rejoicing as they watch their own temple take shape on the banks of the Rio Negro. Temples bring joy to our faithful members wherever they are built.

Reports of the sacrifices made in order to receive the blessings found



only in temples of God never fail to touch my heart and bring to me a renewed sense of thankfulness for temples.

May I share with you the account of Tihi and Tararaina Mou Tham and their 10 children. The entire family except for one daughter joined the Church in the early 1960s, when missionaries came to their island, located about 100 miles (160 km) south of Tahiti. Soon they began to desire the blessings of an eternal family sealing in the temple.

At that time the nearest temple to the Mou Tham family was the Hamilton New Zealand Temple, more than 2,500

miles (4,000 km) to the southwest, accessible only by expensive airplane travel. The large Mou Tham family, which eked out a meager living on a small plantation, had no money for airplane fare, nor was there any opportunity for employment on their Pacific island. So Brother Mou Tham and his son Gérard made the difficult decision to travel 3,000 miles (4,800 km) to work in New Caledonia, where another son was already employed.

The three Mou Tham men labored for four years. Brother Mou Tham alone returned home only once during that time, for the marriage of a daughter.



After four years, Brother Mou Tham and his sons had saved enough money to take the family to the New Zealand Temple. All who were members went except for one daughter, who was expecting a baby. They were sealed for time and eternity, an indescribable and joyful experience.

Brother Mou Tham returned from the temple directly to New Caledonia, where he worked for two more years to pay for the passage of the one daughter who had not been at the temple with them—a married daughter and her child and husband.

In their later years Brother and Sister Mou Tham desired to serve in the temple. By that time the Papeete Tahiti Temple had been constructed and dedicated, and they served four missions there.³

My brothers and sisters, temples are more than stone and mortar. They are filled with faith and fasting. They are built of trials and testimonies. They are sanctified by sacrifice and service.

The first temple to be built in this dispensation was the temple at Kirtland, Ohio. The Saints at the time were impoverished, and yet the Lord had commanded that a temple be built, so build it they did. Wrote Elder Heber C. Kimball of the experience, “The Lord only knows the scenes of poverty, tribulation and distress

which we passed through to accomplish it.”⁴ And then, after all that had been painstakingly completed, the Saints were forced to leave Ohio and their beloved temple. They eventually found refuge—although it would be temporary—on the banks of the Mississippi River in the state of Illinois. They named their settlement Nauvoo, and willing to give their all once again and with their faith intact, they erected another temple to their God. Persecutions raged, however, and with the Nauvoo Temple barely completed, they were driven from their homes once again, seeking refuge in a desert.

The struggle and the sacrifice began once again as they labored for 40 years to erect the Salt Lake Temple, which stands majestically on the block just south of those of us who are here today in the Conference Center.

Some degree of sacrifice has ever been associated with temple building and with temple attendance. Countless are those who have labored and struggled in order to obtain for themselves and for their families the blessings which are found in the temples of God.

Why are so many willing to give so much in order to receive the blessings of the temple? Those who understand the eternal blessings which come from the temple know

that no sacrifice is too great, no price too heavy, no struggle too difficult in order to receive those blessings. There are never too many miles to travel, too many obstacles to overcome, or too much discomfort to endure. They understand that the saving ordinances received in the temple that permit us to someday return to our Heavenly Father in an eternal family relationship and to be endowed with blessings and power from on high are worth every sacrifice and every effort.

Today most of us do not have to suffer great hardships in order to attend the temple. Eighty-five percent of the membership of the Church now live within 200 miles (320 km) of a temple, and for a great many of us, that distance is much shorter.

If you have been to the temple for yourselves and if you live within relatively close proximity to a temple, your sacrifice could be setting aside the time in your busy lives to visit the temple regularly. There is much to be done in our temples in behalf of those who wait beyond the veil. As we do the



work for them, we will know that we have accomplished what they cannot do for themselves. President Joseph F. Smith, in a mighty declaration, stated, “Through our efforts in their behalf their chains of bondage will fall from them, and the darkness surrounding them will clear away, that light may shine upon them and they shall hear in the spirit world of the work that has been done for them by their children here, and will rejoice with you in your performance of these duties.”⁵ My brothers and sisters, the work is ours to do.

In my own family, some of our most sacred and treasured experiences have occurred when we have joined together in the temple to perform sealing ordinances for our deceased ancestors.

If you have not yet been to the temple or if you *have* been but currently do not qualify for a recommend, there is no more important goal for you to work toward than being worthy to go to the temple. Your sacrifice may be bringing your life into compliance with what is required to receive a recommend, perhaps by forsaking long-held habits which disqualify you. It may be having the faith and the discipline to pay your tithing. Whatever it is, qualify to enter the temple of God. Secure a temple recommend and regard it as a precious possession, for such it is.

Until you have entered the house of the Lord and have received all the blessings which await you there, you have not obtained everything the Church has to offer. The all-important and crowning blessings of membership in the Church are those blessings which we receive in the temples of God.

Now, my young friends who are in your teenage years, always have the temple in your sights. Do nothing which will keep you from entering its doors and partaking of the sacred and eternal blessings there. I commend



those of you who already go to the temple regularly to perform baptisms for the dead, arising in the very early hours of the morning so you can participate in such baptisms before school begins. I can think of no better way to start a day.

To you parents of young children, may I share with you some sage advice from President Spencer W. Kimball. Said he: “It would be a fine thing if . . . parents would have in every bedroom in their house a picture of the temple so [their children] from the time [they are] infant[s] could look at the picture every day [until] it becomes a part of [their lives]. When [they reach] the age that [they need] to make [the] very important decision [concerning going to the temple], it will have already been made.”⁶

Our children sing in Primary:

*I love to see the temple.
I'll go inside someday.
I'll cov'nant with my Father;
I'll promise to obey.*⁷

I plead with you to teach your children of the temple's importance.

The world can be a challenging and difficult place in which to live. We are often surrounded by that which would drag us down. As you and I go to the holy houses of God, as we remember the covenants we

make within, we will be more able to bear every trial and to overcome each temptation. In this sacred sanctuary we will find peace; we will be renewed and fortified.

Now, my brothers and sisters, may I mention one more temple before I close. In the not-too-distant future as new temples take shape around the world, one will rise in a city which came into being over 2,500 years ago. I speak of the temple which is now being built in Rome, Italy.

Every temple is a house of God, filling the same functions and with identical blessings and ordinances. The Rome Italy Temple, uniquely, is being built in one of the most historic locations in the world, a city where the ancient Apostles Peter and Paul preached the gospel of Christ and where each was martyred.

Last October, as we gathered on a lovely pastoral site in the northeast corner of Rome, it was my opportunity to offer a prayer of dedication as we prepared to break the ground. I felt impressed to call upon Italian senator Lucio Malan and Rome's vice-mayor Giuseppe Ciardi to be among the first to turn a shovelful of earth. Each had been a part of the decision to allow us to build a temple in their city.

The day was overcast but warm, and although rain threatened, not more than a drop or two fell. As the

magnificent choir sang in Italian the beautiful strains of “The Spirit of God,” one felt as though heaven and earth were joined in a glorious hymn of praise and gratitude to Almighty God. Tears could not be restrained.

In a coming day, the faithful in this, the Eternal City, will receive ordinances eternal in nature in a holy house of God.

I express my undying gratitude to my Heavenly Father for the temple now being built in Rome and for all of our temples, wherever they are. Each one stands as a beacon to the world, an expression of our testimony that God, our Eternal Father, lives, that He desires to bless us and, indeed, to bless His sons and daughters of all generations. Each of our temples is an expression of our testimony that life beyond the grave is as real and as certain as is our life here on earth. I so testify.

My beloved brothers and sisters, may we make whatever sacrifices are necessary to attend the temple and to have the spirit of the temple in our hearts and in our homes. May we follow in the footsteps of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who made the ultimate sacrifice for us, that we might have eternal life and exaltation in our Heavenly Father’s kingdom. This is my sincere prayer, and I offer it in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, Oct. 1902, 3.
2. See Vilson Felipe Santiago and Linda Ritchie Archibald, “From Amazon Basin to Temple,” *Church News*, Mar. 13, 1993, 6.
3. See C. Jay Larson, “Temple Moments: Impossible Desire,” *Church News*, Mar. 16, 1996, 16.
4. Heber C. Kimball, in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (1945), 67.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 247.
6. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 301.
7. Janice Kapp Perry, “I Love to See the Temple,” *Children’s Songbook*, 95.



By Elder Richard G. Scott
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Eternal Blessings of Marriage

The temple sealing has greater meaning as life unfolds. It will help you draw ever closer together and find greater joy and fulfillment.

That beautiful message by this magnificent choir describes, I think, the pattern of life for so many of us: “trying to be like Jesus.”

On July 16, 1953, my beloved Jeanene and I knelt as a young couple at an altar in the Manti Utah Temple. President Lewis R. Anderson exercised the sealing authority and pronounced us husband and wife, wedded for time and for all eternity. I have no power to describe the peace and serenity that come from the assurance that as I continue to live worthily, I will be able to be with my beloved Jeanene and our children forever because of that sacred ordinance performed with the proper priesthood authority in the house of the Lord.

Our seven children are bound to us by the sacred ordinances of the temple. My precious wife, Jeanene, and two of our children are beyond the veil. They provide a powerful motivation for each remaining member of our family to live so that together we will receive all of the eternal blessings promised in the temple.

Two of the vital pillars that sustain Father in Heaven’s plan of happiness are marriage and the family. Their lofty significance is underscored by Satan’s relentless efforts to splinter the family and to undermine the significance of temple ordinances, which bind the family together for eternity. The temple sealing has greater meaning as life unfolds. It will help you draw ever closer together and find greater joy and fulfillment in mortality.

Once I learned an important lesson from my wife. I traveled extensively in my profession. I had been gone almost two weeks and returned home one Saturday morning. I had four hours before I needed to attend another meeting. I noticed that our little washing machine had broken down and my wife was washing the clothes by hand. I began to fix the machine.

Jeanene came by and said, “Rich, what are you doing?”

I said, “I’m repairing the washing machine so you don’t have to do this by hand.”

She said, "No. Go play with the children."

I said, "I can play with the children anytime. I want to help you."

Then she said, "Richard, please go play with the children."

When she spoke to me that authoritatively, I obeyed.

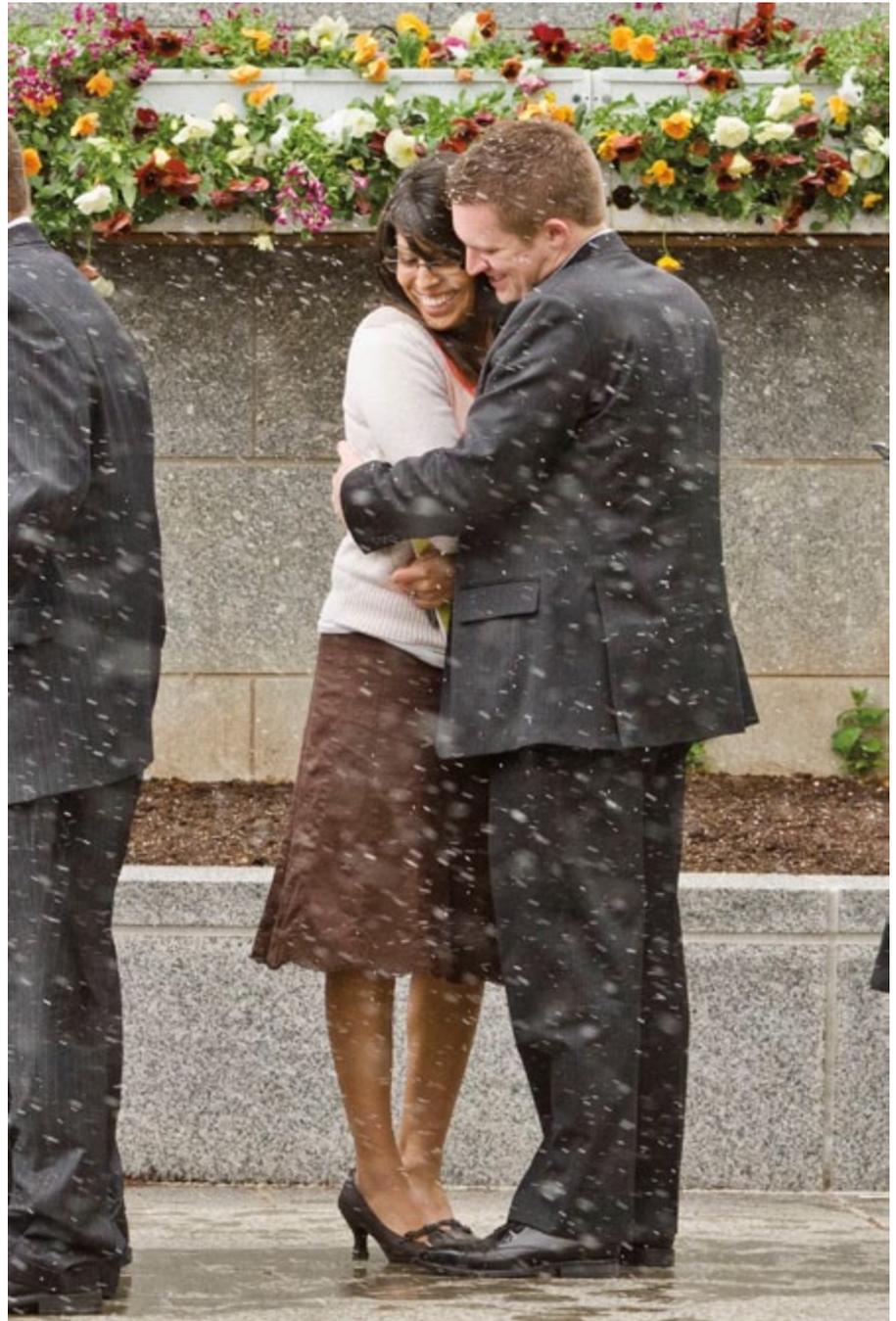
I had a marvelous time with our children. We chased each other around and rolled in the fall leaves. Later I went to my meeting. I probably would have forgotten that experience were it not for the lesson that she wanted me to learn.

The next morning about 4:00 a.m., I was awakened as I felt two little arms around my neck, a kiss on the cheek, and these words whispered in my ear, which I will never forget: "Dad, I love you. You are my best friend."

If you are having that kind of experience in your family, you are having one of the supernal joys of life.

If you are a young man of appropriate age and are not married, don't waste time in idle pursuits. Get on with life and focus on getting married. Don't just coast through this period of life. Young men, serve a worthy mission. Then make your highest priority finding a worthy, eternal companion. When you find you are developing an interest in a young woman, show her that you are an exceptional person that she would find interesting to know better. Take her to places that are worthwhile. Show some ingenuity. If you want to have a wonderful wife, you need to have her see you as a wonderful man and prospective husband.

If you have found someone, you can form an extraordinarily wonderful courtship and marriage and be very, very happy eternally by staying within the bounds of worthiness the Lord has established.



If you are married, are you faithful to your spouse mentally as well as physically? Are you loyal to your marriage covenants by never engaging in conversation with another person that you wouldn't want your spouse to overhear? Are you kind and supportive of your spouse and children?

Brethren, do you lead out in family activities such as scripture study, family prayer, and family home evening, or does your wife fill in the gap your lack of attention leaves in the home?

Do you tell your wife often how very much you love her? It will bring her great happiness. I've heard men tell me when I say that, "Oh, she knows." You need to tell her. A woman grows and is greatly blessed by that reassurance. Express gratitude for what your spouse does for you. Express that love and gratitude often. That will make life far richer and more pleasant and purposeful. Don't withhold those natural expressions of love. And it works a lot better if you are



holding her close while you tell her.

I learned from my wife the importance of expressions of love. Early in our marriage, often I would open my scriptures to give a message in a meeting, and I would find an affectionate, supportive note Jeanene had slipped into the pages. Sometimes they were so tender that I could hardly talk. Those precious notes from a loving wife were and continue to be a priceless treasure of comfort and inspiration.

I began to do the same thing with her, not realizing how much it truly meant to her. I remember one year we didn't have the resources for me to give her a valentine, so I decided to paint a watercolor on the front of the refrigerator. I did the best I could; only I made one mistake. It was enamel paint, not watercolor. She never let me try to remove that permanent paint from the refrigerator.

I remember one day I took some of those little round paper circles that form when you punch holes in paper, and I wrote on them the numbers 1 to 100. I turned each over and wrote her a message, one word on each circle. Then I scooped them up and put them in an envelope. I thought she would get a good laugh.

When she passed away, I found in her private things how much she appreciated the simple messages that

we shared with each other. I noted that she had carefully pasted every one of those circles on a piece of paper. She not only kept my notes to her, but she protected them with plastic coverings as if they were a valuable treasure. There is only one that she didn't put with the others. It is still behind the glass in our kitchen clock. It reads, "Jeanene, it is time to tell you I love you." It remains there and reminds me of that exceptional daughter of Father in Heaven.

As I have thought back over our life together, I realize how blessed we've been. We have not had arguments in our home or unkind words between us. Now I realize that blessing came because of her. It resulted from her willingness to give, to share, and to never think of herself. In our later life together, I tried to emulate her example. I suggest that as husband and wife you do the same in your home.

Pure love is an incomparable, potent power for good. Righteous love is the foundation of a successful marriage. It is the primary cause of contented, well-developed children. Who can justly measure the righteous influence of a mother's love? What enduring fruits result from the seeds of truth that a mother carefully plants and lovingly cultivates in the fertile soil of a child's trusting mind and heart? As a mother you have been given divine

instincts to help you sense your child's special talents and unique capacities. With your husband you can nurture, strengthen, and cause those traits to flower.

It is so rewarding to be married. Marriage is wonderful. In time you begin to think alike and have the same ideas and impressions. You have times when you are extremely happy, times of testing, and times of trial, but the Lord guides you through all of those growth experiences together.

One night our little son Richard, who had a heart problem, awoke crying. The two of us heard it. Normally my wife always got up to take care of a crying baby, but this time I said, "I'll take care of him."

Because of his problem, when he began to cry, his little heart would pound very rapidly. He would throw up and soil the bed clothing. That night I held him very close to try to calm his racing heart and stop his crying as I changed his clothes and put on new bedsheets. I held him until he went to sleep. I didn't know then that just a few months later he would pass away. I will always remember holding him in my arms in the middle of that night.

I remember well the day he passed away. As Jeanene and I drove from the hospital, we pulled over to the side of the road. I held her in my arms. Each of us cried some, but we realized that we would have him beyond the veil because of the covenants we had made in the temple. That made his loss somewhat easier to accept.

Jeanene's kindness taught me so many valuable things. I was so immature, and she was so disciplined and so spiritual. Marriage provides an ideal setting for overcoming any tendency to be selfish or self-centered. I think one of the reasons that we

are counseled to get married early in life is to avoid developing inappropriate character traits that are hard to change.

I feel sorry for any man who hasn't yet made the choice to seek an eternal companion, and my heart weeps for the sisters who haven't had the opportunity to marry. Some of you may feel lonely and unappreciated and cannot see how it will be possible for you to have the blessings of marriage and children or your own family. All things are possible to the Lord, and He keeps the promises He inspires His prophets to declare. Eternity is a long time. Have faith in those promises and live to be worthy of them so that in His time the Lord can make them come true in your life. With certainty, you will receive every promised blessing for which you are worthy.

Please pardon me for speaking of my precious wife, Jeanene, but we are an eternal family. She was always joyously happy, and much of it came from service to others. Even while very ill, in her morning prayer she would ask her Father in Heaven to lead her to someone she could help. That sincere supplication was answered time and again. The burdens of many were eased; their lives were brightened. She was blessed continually for being an instrument directed by the Lord.

I know what it is to love a daughter of Father in Heaven who with grace and devotion lived the full feminine splendor of her righteous womanhood. I am confident that when, in our future, I see her again beyond the veil, we will recognize that we have become even more deeply in love. We will appreciate each other even more, having spent this time separated by the veil. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Elder D. Todd Christofferson
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

"As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten"

The very experience of enduring chastening can refine us and prepare us for greater spiritual privileges.

Our Heavenly Father is a God of high expectations. His expectations for us are expressed by His Son, Jesus Christ, in these words: "I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (3 Nephi 12:48). He proposes to make us holy so that we may "abide a celestial glory" (D&C 88:22) and "dwell in his presence" (Moses 6:57). He knows what is required, and so, to make our transformation possible, He provides His commandments and covenants, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and most important, the Atonement and Resurrection of His Beloved Son.

In all of this, God's purpose is that we, His children, may be able to experience ultimate joy, to be with Him eternally, and to become even as He is. Some years ago Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained: "The Final Judgment is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts—what we have *done*. It is an acknowledgment of the final effect of our acts and thoughts—what we have *become*. It is not enough for anyone just to go through the motions. The commandments, ordinances, and covenants of

the gospel are not a list of deposits required to be made in some heavenly account. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a plan that shows us how to become what our Heavenly Father desires us to become."¹

Sadly, much of modern Christianity does not acknowledge that God makes any real demands on those who believe in Him, seeing Him rather as a butler "who meets their needs when summoned" or a therapist whose role is to help people "feel good about themselves."² It is a religious outlook that "makes no pretense at changing lives."³ "By contrast," as one author declares, "the God portrayed in both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures asks, not just for commitment, but for our very lives. The God of the Bible traffics in life and death, not niceness, and calls for sacrificial love, not benign whatever-ism."⁴

I would like to speak of one particular attitude and practice we need to adopt if we are to meet our Heavenly Father's high expectations. It is this: willingly to accept and even seek correction. Correction is vital if we would conform our lives "unto a

perfect man, [that is,] unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). Paul said of divine correction or chastening, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth” (Hebrews 12:6). Though it is often difficult to endure, truly we ought to rejoice that God considers us worth the time and trouble to correct.

Divine chastening has at least three purposes: (1) to persuade us to repent, (2) to refine and sanctify us, and (3) at times to redirect our course in life to what God knows is a better path.

Consider first of all repentance, the necessary condition for forgiveness and cleansing. The Lord declared, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Revelation 3:19). Again He said, “And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer” (D&C 105:6; see also D&C 1:27). In a latter-day revelation, the Lord commanded four senior Church leaders to repent (as He might command many of us) for not adequately teaching their children “according to the commandments” and for not being “more diligent and concerned at home” (see D&C 93:41–50). The brother of Jared in the Book of Mormon repented when the Lord stood in a cloud and talked with him “for the space of three hours . . . and chastened him because he remembered not to call upon the name of the Lord” (Ether 2:14). Because he so willingly responded to this severe rebuke, the brother of Jared was later given the privilege of seeing and being instructed by the premortal Redeemer (see Ether 3:6–20). The fruit of God’s chastisement is repentance leading to righteousness (see Hebrews 12:11).

In addition to stimulating our repentance, the very experience of



enduring chastening can refine us and prepare us for greater spiritual privileges. Said the Lord, “My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion; and he that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of my kingdom” (D&C 136:31). In another place He said, “For all those who will not endure chastening, but deny me, cannot be sanctified” (D&C 101:5; see also Hebrews 12:10). As Elder Paul V. Johnson said this morning, we should take care not to resent the very things that help us put on the divine nature.

The followers of Alma established a Zion community in Helam but then were brought into bondage. They did not deserve their suffering—quite the contrary—but the record says:

“Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith.

“Nevertheless—whosoever putteth his trust in him the same shall be lifted up at the last day. Yea, and thus it was with this people” (Mosiah 23:21–22).

The Lord strengthened them and lightened their burdens to the point they could hardly feel them upon their backs and then in due course delivered them (see Mosiah 24:8–22). Their faith was immeasurably strengthened by their experience, and ever after they enjoyed a special bond with the Lord.

God uses another form of chastening or correction to guide us to a future we do not or cannot now envision but which He knows is the better

way for us. President Hugh B. Brown, formerly a member of the Twelve and a counselor in the First Presidency, provided a personal experience. He told of purchasing a rundown farm in Canada many years ago. As he went about cleaning up and repairing his property, he came across a currant bush that had grown over six feet (1.8 m) high and was yielding no berries, so he pruned it back drastically, leaving only small stumps. Then he saw a drop like a tear on the top of each of these little stumps, as if the currant bush were crying, and thought he heard it say:

“How could you do this to me? I was making such wonderful growth. . . . And now you have cut me down. Every plant in the garden will look down on me. . . . How could you do this to me? I thought you were the gardener here.”

President Brown replied, “Look, little currant bush, I am the gardener here, and I know what I want you to be. I didn’t intend you to be a fruit tree or a shade tree. I want you to be a currant bush, and someday, little currant bush, when you are laden with fruit, you are going to say, ‘Thank you, Mr. Gardener, for loving me enough to cut me down.’”

Years later, President Brown was a field officer in the Canadian Army serving in England. When a superior officer became a battle casualty, President Brown was in line to be promoted to general, and he was summoned to London. But even

though he was fully qualified for the promotion, it was denied him because he was a Mormon. The commanding general said in essence, “You deserve the appointment, but I cannot give it to you.” What President Brown had spent 10 years hoping, praying, and preparing for slipped through his fingers in that moment because of blatant discrimination. Continuing his story, President Brown remembered:

“I got on the train and started back . . . with a broken heart, with bitterness in my soul. . . . When I got to my tent, . . . I threw my cap on the cot. I clenched my fists, and I shook them at heaven. I said, ‘How could you do this to me, God? I have done everything I could do to measure up. There is nothing that I could have done—that I should have done—that I haven’t done. How could you do this to me?’ I was as bitter as gall.

“And then I heard a voice, and I recognized the tone of this voice. It was my own voice, and the voice said, ‘I am the gardener here. I know what I want you to do.’ The bitterness went out of my soul, and I fell on my knees by the cot to ask forgiveness for my ungratefulness. . . .

“. . . And now, almost 50 years later, I look up to [God] and say, ‘Thank you, Mr. Gardener, for cutting me down, for loving me enough to hurt me.’”⁵

God knew what Hugh B. Brown was to become and what was needed for that to happen, and He redirected his course to prepare him for the holy apostleship.

If we sincerely desire and strive to measure up to the high expectations of our Heavenly Father, He will ensure that we receive all the help we need, whether it be comforting, strengthening, or chastening. If we are open to it, needed correction will come in many forms and from many sources. It may



come in the course of our prayers as God speaks to our mind and heart through the Holy Ghost (see D&C 8:2). It may come in the form of prayers that are answered no or differently than we had expected. Chastening may come as we study the scriptures and are reminded of deficiencies, disobedience, or simply matters neglected.

Correction can come through others, especially those who are God-inspired to promote our happiness. Apostles, prophets, patriarchs, bishops, and others have been put into the Church today, just as anciently, “for the

perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12). Perhaps some of the things said in this conference have come to you as a call to repentance or change, which if heeded will lift you to a higher place. We can help one another as fellow Church members; it is one of the primary reasons that the Savior established a church. Even when we encounter mean-spirited criticism from persons who have little regard or love for us, it can be helpful to exercise enough meekness to weigh it and sift



out anything that might benefit us.

Correction, hopefully gentle, can come from one's spouse. Elder Richard G. Scott, who just addressed us, remembers a time early in his marriage when his wife, Jeanene, counseled him to look directly at people when he spoke to them. "You look at the floor, the ceiling, the window, anywhere but in their eyes," she said. He took that gentle rebuke to heart, and it made him much more effective in counseling and working with people. As one who served as a full-time missionary under then-President Scott's direction, I can attest that he does look one squarely in the eye in his conversations. I can also add that when one needs correction, that look can be very penetrating.

Parents can and must correct, even chasten, if their children are not to be cast adrift at the mercy of a merciless adversary and his supporters. President Boyd K. Packer has observed that when a person in a position to correct another fails to do so, he is thinking of himself. Remember that reproof should be timely, with sharpness or clarity, "when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an

increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy" (D&C 121:43).

Remember that if we resist correction, others may discontinue offering it altogether, despite their love for us. If we repeatedly fail to act on the chastening of a loving God, then He too will desist. He has said, "My Spirit will not always strive with man" (Ether 2:15). Eventually, much of our chastening should come from within—we should become self-correcting. One of the ways that our late beloved colleague Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin became the pure and humble disciple that he was, was by analyzing his performance in every assignment and task. In his desire to please God, he resolved to determine what he could have done better, and then he diligently applied each lesson learned.

All of us can meet God's high expectations, however great or small our capacity and talent may be. Moroni affirms, "If ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is [God's] grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ" (Moroni 10:32). It

is a diligent, devoted effort on our part that calls forth this empowering and enabling grace, an effort that certainly includes submission to God's chastening hand and sincere, unqualified repentance. Let us pray for His love-inspired correction.

May God sustain you in your striving to meet His high expectations and grant you a full measure of the happiness and peace that naturally follow. I know that you and I can become one with God and Christ. Of our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son and the joyous potential we have because of Them, I humbly and confidently bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, "The Challenge to Become," *Liahona*, Jan. 2001, 40; *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 32.
2. Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (2010), 17.
3. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 30; see also Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (2005), 118–71.
4. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 37.
5. Hugh B. Brown, "The Currant Bush," *Liahona*, Mar. 2002, 22, 24; *New Era*, Jan. 1973, 14, 15.



By Elder Carl B. Pratt
Of the Seventy

The Lord's Richest Blessings

As we pay our tithing faithfully, the Lord will open the windows of heaven and pour out upon us His richest blessings.

I am grateful for righteous ancestors who taught the gospel to their children in the home long before there were formal family home evenings. My maternal grandparents were Ida Jesperson and John A. Whetten. They lived in the small community of Colonia Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. The Whetten children were taught by precept and by observing the examples of their parents.

The early 1920s in Mexico were hard times. The violent revolution had just ended. There was little cash circulating, and most of it was in silver coins. People often conducted their business through barter, or exchange of goods and services.

One day toward the end of summer, Grandpa John came home, having completed a trade and having received as part of the deal 100 pesos in silver coins. He gave the money to Ida with instructions it was to be used to cover the upcoming school expenses of the children.

Ida was grateful for the money but reminded John that they had not paid any tithing all summer long. They had had no cash income, but Ida reminded him that the animals had

provided meat, eggs, and milk. Their garden had provided an abundance of fruits and vegetables, and they had made other trades for goods not involving cash. Ida suggested they should give the money to the bishop to cover their tithing.

John was a little disappointed, as the cash would have helped a great deal toward the children's schooling, but he readily agreed they needed to pay their tithing. He carried the heavy bag to the tithing office and settled with the bishop.

Shortly afterward he received word that a wealthy businessman from the United States, a Mr. Hord, would arrive the next week with several men to spend a few days in the mountains hunting and fishing.

Grandpa John met the party of men at the railroad station not far from Colonia Juárez. He had the string of saddle horses and the necessary pack animals ready to transport the baggage and camp equipment into the mountains. The following week was spent guiding the men and caring for the camp and the animals.

At the end of the week, the men returned to the railroad station to take

the train back to the United States. John was paid that day for his work and was given a bag of silver peso coins to cover the other expenses. Once John and his men had been paid, John returned the balance of money to Mr. Hord, who was surprised, as he had not expected any money to be left over. He quizzed John to make sure all costs had been covered, and John answered that all the expenses for the trip had been met, and this was the balance of the funds.

The train whistled. Mr. Hord turned to go and then turned back and tossed the heavy bag of coins to John. "Here, take this home for your boys," he said. John caught the bag and headed back to Colonia Juárez.

That evening as the family gathered around after supper to hear the stories of the trip, John remembered the bag and brought it in and set it on the table. John said he didn't know how much was in the bag, so for fun the bag was emptied onto the table—it was quite a pile—and when it was counted, it came to exactly 100 pesos in silver. Of course it was deemed a great blessing that Mr. Hord had decided to make that trip. John and his boys had earned good wages, but the 100 pesos left over was a reminder of the exact same amount of tithing paid the week before. To some, that might be an interesting coincidence, but to the Whetten family, it was clearly a lesson from the Lord that He remembers His promises to those who faithfully pay their tithing.

As a child I loved that story because it was about a horseback camping trip into the mountains for hunting and fishing. And I loved it because it teaches that when we obey commandments we are blessed. There



are several things we can conclude about tithing from this story.

First, you will notice that the payment of tithing in this case was not related to the amount of cash income. The Whettens decided to use their first cash income for tithing because they had lived well from their animals and their productive fruit and vegetable garden. They obviously felt indebted to the Lord for their blessings.

That is a reminder of the implication in the Lord's words when He asks: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me." The people ask, "Wherein have we robbed thee?" And the Lord thunders back, "In tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3:8). Yes, brothers and sisters, just as John and Ida Whetten realized that summer decades ago, we are all indebted to the Lord. Let us not be accused of robbing God. Let us be honest and pay our debts to the Lord. All He asks is 10 percent. Integrity in paying our debts to the Lord will help us be honest with our fellowmen.

The next thing I notice about that story is that my grandparents paid tithing regardless of the poor condition of their family finances. They knew the Lord's commandment; they likened the scriptures unto themselves (see 1 Nephi 19:23–24) and obeyed the law. This is what the Lord expects of all His people. He expects us to pay tithing not from our abundance nor from the "leftovers" of the family budget but, as He commanded anciently, from the "firstlings" of our income, be it scarce or abounding. The Lord has commanded, "Thou shalt not delay to offer the first . . . fruits" (Exodus 22:29). It has been my personal experience that the surest way to pay tithing faithfully is to pay it as soon as I receive any income. In fact, I've found it to be the only way.

We learn from my Whetten grandparents that tithing is not a matter of money, really; it is a matter of faith—faith in the Lord. He promises blessings if we obey His commandments. Clearly, John and Ida Whetten

showed great faith in paying their tithing. Let us show our faith in the Lord by paying our tithing. Pay it first; pay it honestly. Teach our children to pay tithing even on their allowance or other income, and then take them with us to tithing settlement so they know of our example and our love for the Lord.

There is a possibility of misinterpretation in this story from my grandparents. We might conclude that since we pay tithing with money, the Lord will always bless us with money. I tended to think that way as a child. I have since learned it doesn't necessarily work that way. The Lord promises blessings to those who pay their tithing. He promises to "open . . . the windows of heaven, and pour . . . out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10). I testify that He fulfills His promises, and if we faithfully pay our tithing, we will not lack for the necessities of life, but He does not promise wealth. Money and bank

accounts are not His richest blessings. He blesses us with wisdom to manage our limited material resources, wisdom that enables us to live better with 90 percent of our income than with 100 percent. Thus, faithful tithing payers understand provident living and tend to be more self-reliant.

I have come to understand that the Lord's richest blessings are spiritual, and they often have to do with family, friends, and the gospel. He often seems to give the blessing of a special sensitivity to the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, especially in marriage and family matters like raising children. Such spiritual sensitivity can help us enjoy the blessings of harmony and peace in the home. President James E. Faust suggested that the payment of tithing is "an excellent insurance against divorce" ("Enriching Your Marriage," *Liahona*, Apr. 2007, 5; *Ensign*, Apr. 2007, 7).

The payment of tithing helps us develop a submissive and humble heart and a grateful heart that tends to "confess . . . his hand in all things" (D&C 59:21). Tithing fosters in us a generous and forgiving heart and a charitable heart full of the pure love of Christ. We become eager to serve and bless others with an obedient heart, submissive to the Lord's will. Regular tithing payers find their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ strengthened, and they develop a firm, abiding testimony of His gospel and of His Church. None of these blessings are monetary or material in any way, but surely they are the Lord's richest blessings.

I testify that as we pay our tithing faithfully, the Lord will open the windows of heaven and pour out upon us His richest blessings. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Elder Lynn G. Robbins
Of the Seventy

What Manner of Men and Women Ought Ye to Be?

May your efforts to develop Christlike attributes be successful so that His image may be engraven in your countenance and His attributes manifest in your behavior.

To be, or not to be" is actually a very good question.¹ The Savior posed the question in a far more profound way, making it a vital doctrinal question for each of us: "What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as *I am*" (3 Nephi 27:27; emphasis added). The first-person present tense of the verb *be* is *I Am*. He invites us to take upon us His name and His nature.

To become as He *is*, we must also *do* the things He *did*: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must *do* in my church; for the works which ye have seen me *do* that shall ye also *do*" (3 Nephi 27:21; emphasis added).

To *be* and to *do* are inseparable. As interdependent doctrines they reinforce and promote each other. Faith inspires one to pray, for example, and prayer in turn strengthens one's faith.

The Savior often denounced those who *did* without *being*—calling them hypocrites: "This people honoureth

me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mark 7:6). To *do* without to *be* is hypocrisy, or feigning to be what one is not—a pretender.

Conversely, to *be* without to *do* is void, as in "faith, if it hath not works, is *dead*, being alone" (James 2:17; emphasis added). *Be* without *do* really isn't *being*—it is self-deception, believing oneself to be good merely because one's intentions are good.

Do without *be*—hypocrisy—portrays a false image to others, while *be* without *do* portrays a false image to oneself.

The Savior chastised the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithing"—something they *did*—"of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matthew 23:23). Or in other words, they failed to *be* what they should *have been*.

While He recognized the

importance of *do*, the Savior identified *be* as a “weightier matter.” The greater importance of *being* is illustrated in the following examples:

- Entering the waters of baptism is something we *do*. The *be* that must precede it is faith in Jesus Christ and a mighty change of heart.
- Partaking of the sacrament is something we *do*. *Being* worthy to partake of the sacrament is a weightier and much more important matter.
- Ordination to the priesthood is an act, or *do*. The weightier matter, however, is power in the priesthood, which is based “upon the principles of righteousness” (D&C 121:36), or *be*.

Many of us create *to do* lists to remind us of things we want to accomplish. But people rarely have *to be* lists. Why? *To do*'s are activities or events that can be checked off the list when *done*. *To be*, however, is never done. You can't earn checkmarks with *to be*'s. I can take my wife out for a lovely evening this Friday, which is a *to do*. But *being* a good husband is not an event; it needs *to be* part of my nature—my character, or who I am.

Or as a parent, when can I check a child off my list as *done*? We are never done *being* good parents. And to be good parents, one of the most important things we can teach our children is how *to be* more like the Savior.

Christlike *to be*'s cannot be seen, but they are the motivating force behind what we *do*, which can be seen. When parents help a child learn to walk, for example, we see parents *doing* things like steadying and praising their child. These *do*'s reveal the unseen love in their hearts and the unseen faith and hope in their child's potential. Day after day their efforts

continue—evidence of the unseen *be*'s of patience and diligence.

Because *be* begets *do* and is the motive behind *do*, teaching *be* will improve behavior more effectively than focusing on *do* will improve behavior.

When children misbehave, let's say when they quarrel with each other, we often misdirect our discipline on what they *did*, or the quarreling we observed. But the *do*—their behavior—is only a symptom of the unseen motive in their hearts. We might ask ourselves, “What attributes, if understood by the child, would correct this behavior in the future? Being patient and forgiving when annoyed? Loving and being a peacemaker? Taking personal responsibility for one's actions and not blaming?”

How do parents teach these attributes to their children? We will never have a greater opportunity to teach and show Christlike attributes to our children than in the way we discipline them. *Discipline* comes from the same root word as *disciple* and implies patience and teaching on our part. It should not be done in anger. We can and should discipline the way that Doctrine and Covenants 121 teaches us: “by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness and pure knowledge” (verses 41–42). These are all Christlike *be*'s that should be a part of who we, as parents and disciples of Christ, *are*.

Through discipline the child learns of consequences. In such moments it is helpful to turn negatives into positives. If the child confesses to a wrong, praise the courage it took to confess. Ask the child what he or she learned from the mistake or misdeed, which gives you, and more important, the Spirit an opportunity to touch and teach the child. When we teach children doctrine by the Spirit, that

doctrine has the power to change their very nature—*be*—over time.

Alma discovered this same principle, that “the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people *to do* that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword” (Alma 31:5; emphasis added). Why? Because the sword focused only on punishing behavior—or *do*—while preaching the word changed people's very nature—who they *were* or could *become*.

A sweet and obedient child will enroll a father or mother only in Parenting 101. If you are blessed with a child who tests your patience to the nth degree, you will be enrolled in Parenting 505. Rather than wonder what you might have done wrong in the premortal life to be so deserving, you might consider the more challenging child a blessing and opportunity to become more godlike yourself. With which child will your patience, long-suffering, and other Christlike virtues most likely be tested, developed, and refined? Could it be possible that you need this child as much as this child needs you?

We have all heard the advice to condemn the sin and not the sinner. Likewise, when our children misbehave, we must be careful not to say things that would cause them to believe that what they *did* wrong is who they *are*. “Never let failure progress from an action to an identity,” with its attendant labels like “stupid,” “slow,” “lazy,” or “clumsy.”² Our children are God's children. That is their true identity and potential. His very plan is to help His children overcome mistakes and misdeeds and to progress to become as He *is*. Disappointing behavior, therefore, should be considered as something temporary, not permanent—an act, not an identity.



We need to be careful, therefore, about using permanent phrases such as “You always . . .” or “You never . . .” when disciplining. Take care with phrases such as “You never consider my feelings” or “Why do you always make us wait?” Phrases like these make actions appear as an identity and can adversely influence the child’s self-perception and self-worth.

Identity confusion can also occur when we ask children what they want to *be* when they grow up, as if what a person *does* for a living is who he or she *is*. Neither professions nor possessions should define identity or self-worth. The Savior, for example, was a humble carpenter, but that hardly defined His life.

In helping children discover who they are and helping strengthen their self-worth, we can appropriately compliment their achievement or behavior—the *do*. But it would be even wiser to focus our primary praise on their character and beliefs—who they *are*.

In a game of sports, a wise way to compliment our children’s performance—*do*—would be through the point of view of *be*—like their

energy, perseverance, poise in the face of adversity, etc.—thus complimenting both *be* and *do*.

When we ask children to *do* chores, we can also look for ways to compliment them on *being*, such as, “It makes me so happy when you do your chores with a willing heart.”

When children receive a report card from school, we can praise them for their good grades, but it may be of greater lasting benefit to praise them for their *diligence*: “You turned in every assignment. You are one who knows how to tackle and finish difficult things. I am proud of you.”

During family scripture time, look for and discuss examples of attributes discovered in your reading that day. Because Christlike attributes are gifts from God and cannot be developed without His help,³ in family and personal prayers, pray for those gifts.

At the dinner table, occasionally talk about attributes, especially those you discovered in the scriptures earlier that morning. “In what way were you a good friend today? In what way did you show compassion? How did faith help you face today’s challenges?

In what way were you dependable? honest? generous? humble?” There are scores of attributes in the scriptures that need to be taught and learned.

The most important way to teach *to be* is *to be* the kind of parents to our children that our Father in Heaven is to us. He is the one perfect parent, and He has shared with us His parenting manual—the scriptures.

My remarks today have been addressed primarily to parents, but the principles apply to everyone. May your efforts to develop Christlike attributes be successful so that His image may be engraven in your countenance and His attributes manifest in your behavior. Then, when your children or others feel of your love and see your behavior, it will remind them of the Savior and draw them to Him is my prayer and testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, act 3, scene 1, line 56.
2. Carol Dweck, quoted in Joe Kita, “Bounce Back Chronicles,” *Reader’s Digest*, May 2009, 95.
3. See *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 115.



By **Elder Benjamin De Hoyos**
Of the Seventy

Called to Be Saints

How blessed we are to have been brought into this fellowship of the Latter-day Saints!

My dear brothers and sisters, I pray that the Holy Ghost will help me deliver my message.

In the course of my visits and conferences in stakes, wards, and branches, I am always filled with a profound sense of joy in meeting with the members of the Church, those who today as well as in the meridian of time are called Saints. The spirit of peace and love that I always feel when being with them helps me realize that I am in one of the stakes of Zion.

Even though many come from families that have been members for two or more generations in the Church, many others are recent converts. To these we repeat the welcoming words of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians:

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:19–20).

Some years ago while serving in the office of public affairs of the Church in Mexico, we were invited to participate in a radio talk show. The purpose of the show was to describe and discuss the different religions of the world. Two of us were assigned to

represent the Church in responding to questions that might be asked during this type of a program. After several commercial breaks, as they say in radio parlance, the program director made this comment: “We have with us this evening two elders from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” He paused and then asked, “Why does the Church have such a long name? Why don’t you use a shorter or more commercial name?”

My companion and I smiled at such a magnificent question and then proceeded to explain that the name of the Church was not chosen by man. It was

given by the Savior through a prophet in these latter days: “For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (D&C 115:4). The program director immediately and respectfully responded, “We will thus repeat it with great pleasure.” Now, I cannot remember how many times he repeated the significant name of the Church, but I do remember the sweet spirit that was present when we explained not only the name of the Church but also how it makes reference to the members of the Church—the Latter-day Saints.

We read in the New Testament that the members of the Church of Jesus Christ were called Christians for the first time in Antioch (see Acts 11:26), but they called *each other* Saints. How stirring it must have been for them to hear the Apostle Paul call them “fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19) and also say they were “called *to be* saints” (Romans 1:7; emphasis added).

To the degree that members of the Church live the gospel and follow the counsel of the prophets, they will, little by little and even without noticing it,

Ushuaia, Argentina



become sanctified. Humble members of the Church who conduct daily family prayer and scripture study, engage in family history, and consecrate their time to worship in the temple frequently, become Saints. They are those who are dedicated to creating eternal families. They are also those who set apart time from their busy lives to rescue those who have become alienated from the Church and encourage them to return and sit at the Lord's table. They are those elders and sisters and mature couples who respond to a call to serve as the Lord's missionaries. Yes, my brothers and sisters, they become Saints to the degree that they discover that warm and wonderful feeling that is called charity, or the pure love of Christ (see Moroni 7:42–48).

The Saints, or members of the Church, also come to know our Savior through afflictions and trials. Let us not forget that even He had to suffer all things. “And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:12).

Over the last several years, I have witnessed the suffering of many people, including many of our Saints. We pray continually for them, petitioning the Lord's intervention that their faith may not weaken and that they may move forward with patience. To these we repeat the comforting words of the prophet Jacob from the Book of Mormon:

“O then, my beloved brethren, come unto the Lord, the Holy One. Remember that his paths are righteous. Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course



before him, and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name.

“And whoso knocketh, to him will he open” (2 Nephi 9:41–42).

It does not matter the circumstances, trials, or challenges that might surround us; an understanding of the doctrine of Christ and His Atonement will be the source of our strength and peace—yes, brothers and sisters, that internal tranquility that is born of the Spirit and which the Lord gives to His faithful Saints. He nourishes us, saying: “Peace I leave with you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

For many years I have been a witness to the faithfulness of the members of the Church, Saints of the latter days, who with faith in our Heavenly Father's plan and in the Atonement of our Savior, Jesus Christ, have overcome tribulations and afflictions with bravery and great enthusiasm, thus persevering and continuing in the strait and narrow path of sanctification. I do not have

words adequate to express my appreciation and admiration for all of those faithful Saints with whom I have had the privilege of associating!

Even though our understanding of the gospel may not be as deep as is our testimony of its truth, if we place our confidence in the Lord, we will be sustained in all of our difficulties, our trials, and our afflictions (see Alma 36:3). This promise from the Lord to His Saints does not imply that we will be exempt from sufferings or trials but that we will be sustained through them and that we will know that it is the Lord who has sustained us.

My dear brothers and sisters, how blessed we are to have been brought into this fellowship of the Latter-day Saints! How blessed we are that our testimonies of the Savior are found alongside those of past and modern prophets!

I testify that our Lord, the Holy One of Israel, lives and that He directs His Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, through our beloved prophet, Thomas S. Monson. In the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By **Elder C. Scott Grow**
Of the Seventy

The Miracle of the Atonement

There is no sin or transgression, pain or sorrow, which is outside of the healing power of His Atonement.

While preparing my talk for this conference, I received a shocking phone call from my father. He said that my younger brother had died that morning in his sleep. I was heartbroken. He was only 51 years old. As I thought about him, I felt impressed to share with you some events from his life. I do so with permission.

As a youth my brother was handsome, friendly, and outgoing—totally dedicated to the gospel. After serving an honorable mission, he married his sweetheart in the temple. They were blessed with a son and a daughter. His future was full of promise.

But then he gave in to a weakness. He chose to live a hedonistic lifestyle, which cost him his health, his marriage, and his membership in the Church.

He moved far from home. He continued his self-destructive behavior for more than a decade, but the Savior had not forgotten or abandoned him. Eventually the pain of his despair allowed a spirit of humility to enter his soul. His feelings of anger, rebellion, and militancy began to dissipate. Like the prodigal son, “he came to

himself.”¹ He began to reach out to the Savior and to make his way back home and to faithful parents who never gave up on him.

He walked the path of repentance. It wasn’t easy. After being out of the Church for 12 years, he was rebaptized and received again the gift of the Holy Ghost. His priesthood and temple blessings were eventually restored.

He was blessed to find a woman who was willing to overlook the ongoing health challenges from his prior lifestyle, and they were sealed in the temple. Together they had two children. He served faithfully in the bishopric for several years.

My brother died on Monday morning, March 7. The previous Friday evening he and his wife attended the temple. On Sunday morning, the day before he died, he taught the priesthood lesson in his high priests group. He went to bed that evening, never to awaken again in this life—but to come forth in the resurrection of the just.

I am grateful for the miracle of the Atonement in the life of my brother. The Savior’s Atonement is available to each of us—always.

We access the Atonement through repentance. When we repent, the Lord allows us to put the mistakes of the past behind us.

“Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.

“By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them.”²

Each of us knows a person who has had serious challenges in his or her life—someone who has wandered or wavered. That person could be a friend or relative, a parent or child, a husband or wife. That person may even be you.

I speak unto all, even unto you. I speak of the miracle of the Atonement.

The Messiah came to redeem men from the Fall of Adam.³ Everything in the gospel of Jesus Christ points toward the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah, the Son of God.⁴

The plan of salvation could not be brought about without an atonement. “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.”⁵

The atoning sacrifice had to be carried out by the sinless Son of God, for fallen man could not atone for his own sins.⁶ The Atonement had to be infinite and eternal—to cover all men throughout all eternity.⁷

Through His suffering and death, the Savior atoned for the sins of all men.⁸ His Atonement began in Gethsemane and continued on the cross and culminated with the Resurrection.

“Yea, . . . he shall be led, crucified, and slain, the flesh becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son

being swallowed up in the will of the Father.”⁹ Through His atoning sacrifice, He made “his soul an offering for sin.”¹⁰

As the Only Begotten Son of God, He inherited power over physical death. That allowed Him to sustain His life as He suffered “even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great [was] his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people.”¹¹

Not only did He pay the price for the sins of all men, but He also took “upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.” And He took “upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, . . . that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.”¹²

The Savior felt the weight of the anguish of all mankind—the anguish of sin and of sorrow. “Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.”¹³

Through His Atonement, He heals not only the transgressor, but He also heals the innocent who suffer because of those transgressions. As the innocent exercise faith in the Savior and in His Atonement and forgive the transgressor, they too can be healed.

There are times when each of us needs “relief from feelings of guilt that come from mistakes and sins.”¹⁴ As we repent, the Savior removes the guilt from our souls.

Through His atoning sacrifice, our sins are remitted. With the exception of sons of perdition, the Atonement is available to everyone all the time, no matter how large or small the sin, “on conditions of repentance.”¹⁵

Because of His infinite love, Jesus Christ invites us to repent so that we will not have to suffer the full weight of our own sins:



“Repent—repent, lest . . . your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

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

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

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit.”¹⁶

The Savior offers healing to those who are suffering from sin. “Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?”¹⁷

Jesus Christ is the Great Healer of our souls. With the exception of sins of perdition, there is no sin or transgression, pain or sorrow, which is outside of the healing power of His Atonement.

When we sin, Satan tells us we are lost. In contrast, our Redeemer offers redemption to all—no matter what we have done wrong—even to you and to me.

As you consider your own life, are there things that you need to change? Have you made mistakes that still need to be corrected?

If you are suffering from feelings of guilt or remorse, bitterness or anger, or loss of faith, I invite you to seek relief. Repent and forsake your sins. Then, in prayer, ask God for forgiveness. Seek forgiveness from those you have wronged. Forgive those who have wronged you. Forgive yourself.

Go to the bishop if necessary. He is the Lord’s messenger of mercy. He will help you as you struggle to become clean through repentance.

Immerse yourself in prayer and scripture study. As you do so, you will feel the sanctifying influence of the Spirit. The Savior said, “Sanctify yourselves; yea, purify your hearts, and



cleanse your hands . . . before me, that I may make you clean.”¹⁸

As we are made clean through the power of His Atonement, the Savior becomes our advocate with the Father, pleading:

“Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified;

“Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life.”¹⁹

Each of us has been given the gift of moral agency. “Men are free . . . to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the . . . power of the devil.”²⁰

Years ago my brother exercised his agency when he chose a lifestyle that cost him his health, his family, and his membership in the Church. Years later he exercised that same agency when

he chose to repent, to conform his life to the teachings of the Savior, and to literally be born again through the power of the Atonement.

I testify of the miracle of the Atonement. I have seen its healing power in the life of my brother and felt it in my own life. The healing and redemptive power of the Atonement



is available to each of us—always.

I testify that Jesus is the Christ—the Healer of our souls. I pray that each of us will choose to respond to the Savior’s invitation: “Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?”²¹ In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Luke 15:17.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 58:42–43.
3. See 2 Nephi 2:25–26.
4. See Alma 34:14.
5. Alma 42:15.
6. See Alma 34:11.
7. See Alma 34:10.
8. See Alma 22:14.
9. Mosiah 15:7.
10. Mosiah 14:10.
11. Mosiah 3:7.
12. Alma 7:11–12.
13. Mosiah 14:4.
14. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 2.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 18:12.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 19:15–18.
17. 3 Nephi 9:13.
18. Doctrine and Covenants 88:74.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 45:4–5.
20. 2 Nephi 2:27.
21. 3 Nephi 9:13.



By Elder Jeffrey R. Holland
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

An Ensign to the Nations

If we teach by the Spirit and you listen by the Spirit, some one of us will touch on your circumstance.

I have been so moved by every note of music sung and every word spoken that I pray I can be able to speak at all.

Before leaving Nauvoo in the winter of 1846, President Brigham Young had a dream in which he saw an angel standing on a cone-shaped hill somewhere in the West pointing to a valley below. When he entered the Salt Lake Valley some 18 months later, he saw just above the location where we are now gathered the same hillside prominence he had seen in vision.

As has often been told from this pulpit, Brother Brigham led a handful of leaders to the summit of that hill and proclaimed it Ensign Peak, a name filled with religious meaning for these modern Israelites. Twenty-five hundred years earlier the prophet Isaiah had declared that in the last days “the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains,” and there “he shall set up an ensign for the nations.”¹

Seeing their moment in history as partial fulfillment of that prophecy, the Brethren wished to fly a banner of some kind to make the idea of “an ensign for the nations” literal. Elder

Heber C. Kimball produced a yellow bandana. Brother Brigham tied it to a walking stick carried by Elder Willard Richards and then planted the makeshift flag, declaring the valley of the Great Salt Lake and the mountains surrounding it as that prophesied place from which the word of the Lord would go forth in the latter days.

Brothers and sisters, this general conference and the other annual and semiannual versions of it are the continuation of that early declaration to the world. I testify that the proceedings of the past two days are yet one more evidence that, as our hymn says, “Lo, Zion’s standard is unfurled”²—and surely the dual meaning of the word *standard* is intentional. It is not happenstance that one English publication of our general conference messages is in a magazine simply titled the *Ensign*.

As our conference comes to a close, I ask you to reflect in the days ahead not only on the messages you have heard but also on the unique phenomenon that general conference itself is—what we as Latter-day Saints believe such conferences to be and what we invite the world to hear and

observe about them. We testify to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people that God not only lives but also that He speaks, that for our time and in our day the counsel you have heard is, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, “the will of the Lord, . . . the word of the Lord, . . . the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.”³

Perhaps you already know (but if you don’t you should) that with rare exception, no man or woman who speaks here is assigned a topic. Each is to fast and pray, study and seek, start and stop and start again until he or she is confident that for this conference, at this time, his or hers is the topic the Lord wishes that speaker to present regardless of personal wishes or private preferences. Every man and woman you have heard during the past 10 hours of general conference has tried to be true to that prompting. Each has wept, worried, and earnestly sought the Lord’s direction to guide his or her thoughts and expression. And just as Brigham Young saw an angel standing over this place, so do I see angels standing in it. My brethren and sisters among the general officers of the Church will be uneasy with that description, but that is how I see them—mortal messengers with angelic messages, men and women who have all the physical and financial and family difficulties you and I have but who with faith have consecrated their lives to the callings that have come to them and the duty to preach God’s word, not their own.

Consider the variety of the messages that you hear—all the more miraculous with no coordination except the direction of heaven. But why wouldn’t they be varied? Most of our congregation, seen or unseen, is made up of members of the Church.



strait the way of the peacemaker and the pure in heart would need to be. “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill,” He observed. “But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother . . . shall be in danger of the judgment.”¹¹

And likewise,

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”¹²

Obviously as the path of discipleship ascends, that trail gets ever more narrow until we come to that knee-buckling pinnacle of the sermon of which Elder Christofferson just spoke: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”¹³ What was gentle in the lowlands of initial loyalty becomes deeply strenuous and very demanding at the summit of true discipleship. Clearly anyone who thinks Jesus taught no-fault theology did not read the fine print in the contract! No, in matters of discipleship the Church is not a fast-food outlet; we can’t always have it “our way.” Some day *every* knee shall bow and *every* tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ and that salvation can only come *His* way.¹⁴

In wanting to measure up to the stern as well as embrace the soothing in our general conference messages, please be reassured that when we speak on difficult subjects, we understand not everyone is viewing pornography or shirking marriage or having illicit sexual relationships. We know not everyone is violating the Sabbath or bearing false witness or abusing a spouse. We know that most in our audience are *not* guilty of such things,

However, with marvelous new methods of communication, ever larger proportions of the audience for our conferences are not members of the Church—yet. So we must speak to those who know us very well and those who know us not at all. Within the Church alone we must speak to the children, the youth and young adults, the middle-aged, and the elderly. We must speak to families and parents and children at home even as we speak to those who are not married, without children, and perhaps very far from home. In the course of a general conference, we always stress the eternal verities of faith, hope, charity,⁴ and Christ crucified⁵ even as we speak forthrightly on very specific moral issues of the day. We are commanded in the scriptures to “say nothing but repentance unto this generation,”⁶ while at the same time we are to preach “good tidings [to] the meek . . . [and] bind up the broken-hearted.” Whatever form they take,

these conference messages “proclaim liberty to the captives”⁷ and declare “the unsearchable riches of Christ.”⁸ In the wide variety of sermons given is the assumption that there will be something for everyone. In this regard, I guess President Harold B. Lee put it best years ago when he said that the gospel is “to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the [comfortable].”⁹

We always want our teaching in general conference to be as generous and open-armed as Christ taught originally, remembering as we do the discipline that was always inherent in His messages. In the most famous sermon ever given, Jesus began by pronouncing wonderfully gentle blessings which every one of us want to claim—blessings promised to the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the meek.¹⁰ How edifying those Beatitudes are and how soothing they are to the soul. They are true. But in that same sermon the Savior went on, showing how increasingly

but we are under a solemn charge to issue warning calls to those who are— wherever they may be in the world. So if you are trying to do the best you can—if, for example, you keep trying to hold family home evening in spite of the bedlam that sometimes reigns in a houseful of little bedlamites— then give yourself high marks and, when we come to that subject, listen for another which addresses a topic where you may be lacking. If we teach by the Spirit and you listen by the Spirit, some one of us will touch on your circumstance, sending a personal prophetic epistle just to you.

Brothers and sisters, in general conference we offer our testimonies in conjunction with other testimonies that will come, because one way or another God *will* have His voice heard. “I sent you out to testify and warn the people,” the Lord has said to His prophets.¹⁵

“[And] after your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes, . . . of thunderings, . . . lightnings, and . . .



Bucharest, Romania

tempests, and the voice of the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds. . . .

“And angels shall . . . [cry] with a loud voice, sounding the trump of God.”¹⁶

Now, these mortal angels who come to this pulpit have, each in his or her own way, sounded “the trump of God.” Every sermon given is always, by definition, both a testimony of love and a warning, even as nature herself will testify with love and a warning in the last days.

Now, in a moment President Thomas S. Monson will come to the pulpit to close this conference. May I say something personal about this beloved man, the senior Apostle and the prophet for the day in which we now live. Given the responsibilities I have referred to and all that you have heard in this conference, it is obvious that the lives of prophets are not easy, and President Monson’s life is not easy. He referred specifically to that last night in priesthood meeting. Called to the apostleship at age 36, his children were ages 12, 9, and 4, respectively. Sister Monson and those children have given their husband and father to the Church and its duties for more than 50 years. They have endured the illnesses and demands, the bumps and bruises of mortality which everyone faces, some of which undoubtedly yet lie ahead of them. But President Monson

stays irrepressibly cheerful through it all. Nothing gets him down. He has remarkable faith and unusual stamina.

President, for this entire congregation, seen and unseen, I say we love and honor you. Your devotion is an example to us all. We thank you for your leadership. Fourteen others holding the apostolic office, plus others on this stand, those seated in the congregation, and legions gathered around the world love you, sustain you, and stand shoulder to shoulder with you in this work. We will lighten your load any way we can. You are one of those angelic messengers called from before the foundation of the world to wave the ensign of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world. You are doing so magnificently. Of that gospel being declared, the salvation it provides, and He who provides it, I so testify in the grand and glorious name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Isaiah 2:2; 11:12.
2. “The Morning Breaks,” *Hymns*, no. 1.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 68:4.
4. See 1 Corinthians 13:13.
5. See 1 Corinthians 1:23.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 6:9; 11:9.
7. Isaiah 61:1.
8. Ephesians 3:8.
9. See Harold B. Lee, in “The Message,” *New Era*, Jan. 1971, 6.
10. See Matthew 5:3–12.
11. Matthew 5:21–22; see also 3 Nephi 12:22.
12. Matthew 5:27–28.
13. Matthew 5:48.
14. See Romans 14:11; Mosiah 27:31.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 88:81.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 88:89–90, 92.





By President Thomas S. Monson

At Parting

None of us can conceive the full import of what Christ did for us in Gethsemane, but I am grateful every day of my life for His atoning sacrifice.

My brothers and sisters, my heart is full as we come to the close of this conference. We have felt the Spirit of the Lord in rich abundance. I express my appreciation and that of members of the Church everywhere to each one who has participated, including those who have offered prayers. May we long remember the messages we have heard. As we receive the issues of the *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines which will contain these messages in written form, may we read and study them.

Once again the music in all of the sessions has been wonderful. I express my personal gratitude for those willing to share with us their talents, touching and inspiring us in the process.

We have sustained, by uplifted hand, Brethren who have been called to new positions during this conference. We want them to know that we look forward to working with them in the cause of the Master.

I express my love and appreciation for my devoted counselors, President Henry B. Eyring and President Dieter F. Uchtdorf. They are men of wisdom and understanding. Their service is invaluable. I love and

support my Brethren of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. They serve most effectively, and they are completely dedicated to the work. I also express my love to the members of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric.

We face many challenges in the world today, but I assure you that our Heavenly Father is mindful of us. He loves each of us and will bless us as we seek Him through prayer and strive to keep His commandments.

We are a global church. Our membership is found throughout the world. May we be good citizens of the nations in which we live and good neighbors in our communities, reaching out to those of other faiths as well as to those of our own. May we be examples of honesty and integrity wherever we go and in whatever we do.

Thank you for your prayers in my behalf, brothers and sisters, and in behalf of all of the General Authorities of the Church. We are deeply grateful for you and for all that you do to further the work of the Lord.

As you return to your homes, may you do so safely. May the blessings of heaven be upon you.

Now, before we leave today, may I share with you my love for the Savior

and for His great atoning sacrifice for us. In three weeks' time the entire Christian world will be celebrating Easter. I believe that none of us can conceive the full import of what Christ did for us in Gethsemane, but I am grateful every day of my life for His atoning sacrifice in our behalf.

At the last moment, He could have turned back. But He did not. He passed beneath all things that He might save all things. In doing so, He gave us life beyond this mortal existence. He reclaimed us from the Fall of Adam.

To the depths of my very soul, I am grateful to Him. He taught us how to live. He taught us how to die. He secured our salvation.

As I close, may I share with you touching words written by Emily Harris which describe so well my feelings as Easter comes:

*The linen which once held Him
is empty.
It lies there,
Fresh and white and clean.
The door stands opened.
The stone is rolled away,
And I can almost hear the angels
singing His praises.
Linen cannot hold Him.
Stone cannot hold Him.
The words echo through the empty
limestone chamber,
"He is not here."
The linen which once held Him
is now empty.
It lies there,
Fresh and white and clean
And oh, hallelujah, it is empty.¹*

Blessings to you, my brothers and sisters. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen. ■

NOTE

1. Emily Harris, "Empty Linen," *New Era*, Apr. 2011, 49.



By Ann M. Dibb

Second Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency

I Believe in Being Honest and True

Being true to our beliefs—even when doing so isn't popular, easy, or fun—keeps us safely on the path that leads to eternal life with our Heavenly Father.

My dear young women, it is a great privilege and opportunity for me to stand before you this evening. You are an amazing and inspiring sight.

The thirteenth article of faith is the 2011 Mutual theme. As I've attended youth gatherings and sacrament meetings this year, I've heard young men and young women share what the thirteenth article of faith means to them and how it applies in their lives. There are many who know it to be the last article of faith, the longest, the hardest to memorize, and the article of faith they hope the bishop does not ask them to recite. However, many of you also understand the thirteenth article of faith is much more.

The thirteenth article of faith is a guide for righteous, Christian living. Imagine for a moment what our world would be like if everyone chose to live by the teachings found in the thirteenth article of faith: "We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to

all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things."

In the first Sunday morning general conference address President Thomas S. Monson delivered as the prophet, he quoted the admonition of Paul found in Philippians 4:8, which inspired many of the principles in the thirteenth article of faith. President Monson acknowledged the challenging times in which we live and provided encouragement. He said, "In this sometimes precarious journey through mortality, may we . . . follow that advice from the Apostle Paul which will help to keep us safe and on course."¹

Tonight I would like to focus on two closely related principles in the thirteenth article of faith that definitely help "keep us safe and on course." I have a strong testimony of and





Montalban, Philippines

commitment to the important principles of being honest and being true.

First, “[I] believe in being honest.” What does it mean to be honest? The booklet *True to the Faith* teaches, “To be honest means to be sincere, truthful, and without deceit at all times.”² It is a commandment from God to be honest,³ and “complete honesty is necessary for our salvation.”⁴

President Howard W. Hunter taught that we must be willing to be strictly honest. He said:

“Several years ago there were posters in the foyers and entries of our chapels that were entitled ‘Be Honest with Yourself.’ Most of them pertained to the little, ordinary things of life. This is where the principle of honesty is cultivated.

“There are some who will admit it is morally wrong to be dishonest in big things yet believe it is excusable if those things are of lesser importance. Is there really any difference between dishonesty involving a thousand dollars or that which involves only a dime? . . . Are there really degrees of dishonesty, depending upon whether or not the subject is great or small?”

President Hunter continues: “If we would have the companionship of the Master and the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, we must be honest with ourselves, honest with God, and with our fellowmen. This results in true joy.”⁵

When we are honest in all things,

big and small, we experience peace of mind and a clear conscience. Our relationships are enriched because they are based on trust. And the greatest blessing that comes from being honest is that we are able to have the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

I would like to share a simple story that has strengthened my commitment to be honest in all things:

“A man . . . went one evening to steal corn from a neighbor’s field. He took his little boy with him to sit on the fence and keep a look-out, so as to give warning in case any one should come along. The man jumped over the fence with a large bag on his arm, and before commencing to take the corn he looked all around, first one way and then the other, and not seeing any person, he was just about to fill his bag. . . . [The boy then called out]:

“Father, there is one way you haven’t looked yet! . . . You forgot to look up.”⁶

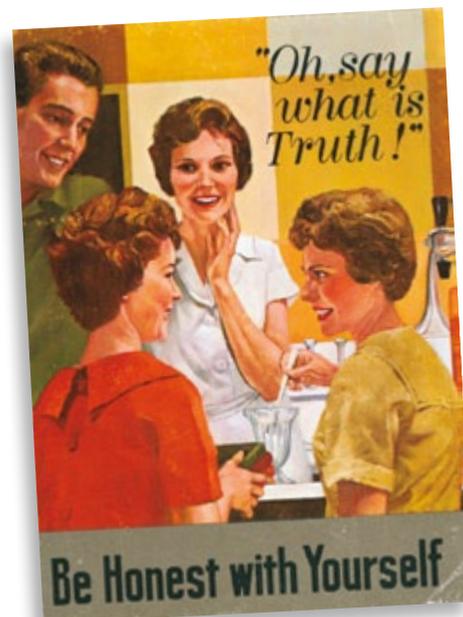
When we are tempted to be dishonest, and this temptation comes to all of us, we may suppose that no one will ever know. This story reminds us that our Heavenly Father always knows, and we are ultimately accountable to Him. This knowledge helps me continually strive to live up to this commitment: “[I] believe in being honest.”

The second principle taught in the thirteenth article of faith is “[I] believe in being . . . true.” The dictionary

defines the word *true* as being “steadfast,” “loyal,” “accurate,” or “without deviation.”⁷

One of my favorite books is the British classic *Jane Eyre*, written by Charlotte Brontë and published in 1847. The main character, Jane Eyre, is a penniless, teenage orphan who exemplifies what it means to be true. In this fictional account, a man, Mr. Rochester, loves Miss Eyre but is unable to marry her. Instead, he begs Miss Eyre to live with him without the benefit of marriage. Miss Eyre loves Mr. Rochester as well, and for a moment she is tempted, asking herself, “Who in the world cares for *you*? or who will be injured by what you do?”

Quickly Jane’s conscience answers: “I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God. . . . Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this. . . . If at my individual convenience I might break them, what would be their worth? They have a worth—so I





have always believed. . . . Preconceived opinions, foregone determinations, are all I have at this hour to stand by: there I plant my foot.”⁸

In a desperate moment of temptation, Jane Eyre was true to her beliefs, she trusted in the law given by God, and she planted her foot in resistance to temptation.

Being true to our beliefs—even when doing so isn’t popular, easy, or fun—keeps us safely on the path that leads to eternal life with our Heavenly Father. I love this picture drawn by one young woman to remind her of her desire to experience the joy of living with Heavenly Father forever.



Being true also allows us to have a positive effect on the lives of others. I recently heard this inspiring story

of a young woman who, through her commitment to be true to her beliefs, had a great impact on another young woman’s life.

Several years ago Kristi and Jenn were in the same high school choir class in Hurst, Texas. Although they didn’t know each other well, Jenn overheard Kristi talking with her friends one day about religion, their various beliefs, and favorite Bible stories. Recently, upon reconnecting with Kristi, Jenn shared this story:

“I felt sad that I didn’t know anything about what you and your friends were talking about, and so for Christmas I asked my parents for a Bible. I received the Bible, and I started reading it. This began my religious journey and my search for the true Church. . . . Twelve years passed. During that time I visited several churches and attended church on a regular basis but still felt that there was something more. One night I fell on my knees and begged to know what to do. That night I had a dream about you, Kristi. I hadn’t seen you since we had

graduated from high school. I thought my dream was strange, but I didn’t attribute it to anything. I dreamed about you again for the next three nights. I spent time thinking about the meaning of my dreams. I remembered that you were a Mormon. I checked the Mormon website. The first thing I found was the Word of Wisdom. My mother had passed away from lung cancer two years previously. She had been a smoker, and reading about the Word of Wisdom really hit home with me. Later I was visiting my father’s house. I was sitting in his living room, and I started to pray. I asked to know where to go and what to do. At that moment a commercial for the Church came on television. I wrote down the number and called the same night. The missionaries called me three days later, asking if they could deliver a Book of Mormon to my home. I said, ‘Yes.’ I was baptized three and a half months later. Two years later I met my husband at church. We were married in the Dallas Temple. Now we are the parents of two beautiful little children.

“I wanted to thank you, Kristi. You set such a wonderful example throughout high school. You were kind and virtuous. The missionaries taught me the lessons and invited me to be baptized, but *you* were my third missionary. You planted a seed through your actions, and you truly have made my life better. I have an eternal family now. My children will grow up knowing the fulness of the gospel. It is the greatest blessing that any of us can be given. You helped bring that into my life.”

When I contacted her, Kristi shared: “Sometimes I think we hear the list of attributes that the thirteenth article of faith outlines, and we feel overwhelmed. However, I know that as we live these standards and strive to follow Christ’s example, we can make a difference. . . . I feel much like Ammon in Alma 26:3 when he says, ‘And this is the blessing which hath been bestowed upon us, that we have been made instruments in the hands of God to bring about this great work.’”

It is my prayer that each of you will not only state, “I believe in being honest and true” but that you will also commit to live that promise each and every day. I pray that as you do this, Heavenly Father’s strength, love, and blessings will sustain you as you do the work you were each sent here to do. I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Looking Back and Moving Forward,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2008, 90.
2. *True to the Faith* (2004), 84.
3. See Exodus 20:15–16.
4. *Gospel Principles* (2009), 179.
5. Howard W. Hunter, “Basic Concepts of Honesty,” *New Era*, Feb. 1978, 4, 5.
6. William J. Scott, “Forgot to Look Up,” *Scott’s Monthly Magazine*, Dec. 1867, 953.
7. See *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (2003), “true.”
8. Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (2003), 356.



By Mary N. Cook

First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency

“Remember This: Kindness Begins with Me”

Benevolence can bring joy and unity to your home, your class, your ward, and your school.

A few weeks ago I learned an important lesson from a Laurel who was the youth speaker in my ward. I was touched as she confidently taught and testified of Jesus Christ. She concluded her remarks with this statement: “When I make Jesus Christ the center of my life, my day goes better, I’m kinder to my loved ones, and I am filled with joy.”

I have observed this young woman from a distance over the past few months. She greets everyone with sparkling eyes and a quick smile. I’ve watched her rejoice in the success of other youth. Two Mia Maids recently reported to me of this young woman’s decision to forfeit her ticket to a movie when she realized that it was not going to be an experience that was “virtuous and lovely.”¹ She’s loving, kind, and obedient. She comes from a single-parent home, and her life has not been without challenges, so I’ve wondered how she maintains her happy, kind spirit. When this young woman testified, “I center my life on

Jesus Christ,” I had the answer.

“We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men.” This beautiful list of Christlike attributes, found in the thirteenth article of faith, will prepare us for temple blessings and eternal life.

I would like to focus on just one of these words—*benevolent*. *Benevolent* is a lovely word that we don’t hear very often. Its roots are Latin, and it means “to wish someone well.”² To be benevolent is to be kind, well meaning, and charitable. Many of you learned about the idea of benevolence when you were in Primary and committed this song to memory:

*I want to be kind to ev’ryone,
For that is right, you see.
So I say to myself, “Remember this:
Kindness begins with me.”³*

Our Savior taught us about and lived a benevolent life. Jesus loved all and He served all. Centering our lives on Jesus Christ will help us acquire



this attribute of benevolence. For us to develop these same Christlike attributes, we must learn about the Savior and “follow in His ways.”⁴

From the parable of the good Samaritan we learn that we are to love all. The story begins in Luke, chapter 10, when a lawyer asked the Savior, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

The answer: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.”

The lawyer then asked, “Who is my neighbour?” That was a very interesting question for the lawyer to ask, since the Jews had neighbors to the north, the Samaritans, whom they disliked so much that when they traveled from Jerusalem to Galilee, they would take the longer way through the Jordan Valley rather than travel through Samaria.

Jesus answered the lawyer’s question by telling the parable of the good Samaritan. According to the parable:

“A certain man went down from

Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. . . .

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

“And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

“And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.”⁵

Unlike the Jewish priest and Levite who passed by the wounded man, one of their own, the Samaritan was kind regardless of differences. He demonstrated the Christlike attribute of benevolence. Jesus taught us through this story that everyone is our neighbor.

A counselor in a bishopric recently shared an experience that teaches how important each neighbor is. While looking out over the congregation, he saw a child with a large box of crayons filled with a variety of different hues. As he looked at the many members of his ward, he was reminded that, like the crayons, they were very similar but each person was also very unique.

He remarked: “The shade they brought to the ward and the world was all their own. . . . They had their individual strengths and weaknesses, personal longings, private dreams. But together, they blended into a color wheel of spiritual unity. . . .

“Unity is a spiritual quality. It’s the sweet feelings of peace and purpose that come from belonging to a family. . . . It’s wanting the best for others



as much as you want it for yourself. . . . It's knowing that no one is out to harm you. [It means you will never be lonely.]”⁶

We build that unity and share our unique colors through benevolence: individual acts of kindness.

Have you ever felt lonely? Do you notice those who are lonely, living in a black-and-white world? Young women, I've watched as you bring your unique color into the lives of others with your smiles, your kind words, or a note of encouragement.

President Thomas S. Monson taught us how to interact with our peers and everyone we meet when he told the young women of the Church, “My precious young sisters, I plead with you to have the courage to refrain from judging and criticizing those around you, as well as the courage to make certain everyone is included and feels loved and valued.”⁷

We can follow the example of the good Samaritan and “change the world” of just one person by being benevolent.⁸ I would like to invite each of you to do at least one Samaritan-like act this coming week. It may require that you reach beyond your usual friends or overcome your shyness. You may courageously choose to serve someone who doesn't treat you well. I promise that if you will extend yourself beyond what is easy to do, you will feel so good inside that

kindness will start to become a part of your everyday life. You'll see that benevolence can bring joy and unity to your home, your class, your ward, and your school. “Remember this: kindness begins with me.”

Not only did our Savior love all; He served all. Expand your goodness to many. Old and young can be greatly blessed by your kind service. President Monson, since the time he was a young man, has always had a special place in his heart for the elderly. He recognizes the value of a short visit, a ready smile, or a squeeze of a well-worn, wrinkled hand. Such simple acts of charity bring color into a life that sometimes is made up of long, lonely, gray days. I would invite each of you to be mindful of your grandparents and the elderly. Look around at church tomorrow and identify those who could use your shade of color added to their life. It doesn't take much: greet them by name, engage them in a short conversation, be available to assist them. Could you open a door or offer to help with their home or garden? What is a simple task to you at your young age can be an overwhelming project for an older person. “Remember this: kindness begins with me.”

Sometimes being benevolent is most difficult in our own families. Strong families require effort. “Be cheerful, helpful, and considerate of

others. Many problems in the home are created because family members speak and act selfishly or unkindly. Concern yourself with the needs of other family members. Seek to be a peacemaker rather than to tease, fight, and quarrel.”⁹ “Remember this: kindness begins with me.”

Jesus loved the children, took them in His arms, and blessed them.¹⁰ Like the Savior, you can bless all children with your kindness, not just those in your home.

You may not know the impact your life and example may have on a little child. I recently received a note from a friend who manages a day-care center in a local high school. Attending that high school are several young men and young women who are members of the Church. She shared with me this experience: “As I walk through the halls with the little children, it is nice to see how many lockers have pictures of Jesus or of temples taped to the inside of the doors. One of the children saw a picture of Jesus on the inside of a [young woman's] opened locker door and said, ‘Look, Jesus is at our school!’ The student was moved to tears as she bent down and gave the child a hug. I thanked the young woman for the good example she was to those around her. It is uplifting to know that there are so many youth that are trying to stand for truth and righteousness and do their part in inviting the Spirit into their lives, even though it is difficult at times with all the noise and harshness in the world around them. We have some wonderful youth in the Church.”

I couldn't agree more! Young women, *you* are changing the world by centering your life on Jesus Christ, and you are “becoming what He wants you to be.”¹¹

Thank you for your benevolent

lives; for including those who may be different; for your kindness to your peers, the elderly, your family, and little children; for being neighbors to those who are lonely and those who have challenges and heartache. Through your benevolence, you are “pointing others to [the Savior’s] light.”¹² Thank you for remembering “kindness begins with me.”

I know that President Thomas S. Monson is a prophet of God whose life has been a model of benevolence from which we can learn. Follow our prophet. Learn from his example and listen to his words. I believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I know that through Joseph Smith the priesthood has been restored to the earth.

I know that our Savior lives and loves each of us. He has given His life for all. I pray that we will center our lives on Jesus Christ and “follow in His ways” by loving and serving one another.¹³ By so doing, I know that we can make the world a better place, because “we believe in being . . . benevolent.”¹⁴ I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See Articles of Faith 1:13.
2. See *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2nd ed. (1989), “benevolent,” oed.com.
3. “Kindness Begins with Me,” *Children’s Songbook*, 145.
4. “Guardians of Virtue,” *Strength of Youth Media 2011: We Believe* (DVD, 2010); also available at lds.org/youth/video/youth-theme-2011-we-believe.
5. Luke 10:25, 27, 29, 30, 33–35.
6. Jerry Earl Johnston, “The Unity in a Ward’s Uniqueness,” *Mormon Times*, Feb. 9, 2011, M1, M12.
7. Thomas S. Monson, “May You Have Courage,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2009, 125.
8. “Guardians of Virtue.”
9. *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2001), 10.
10. See Mark 10:16.
11. “Guardians of Virtue.”
12. “Guardians of Virtue.”
13. “Guardians of Virtue.”
14. Articles of Faith 1:13.



By Elaine S. Dalton
Young Women General President

Guardians of Virtue

Prepare now so that you may qualify to receive all the blessings that await you in the Lord’s holy temples.

There are times when words cannot express what we feel. I pray that the Spirit will witness to your hearts your divine identity and your eternal responsibility. You are the hope of Israel. You are elect and royal daughters of our loving Heavenly Father.

Last month I had the opportunity to attend the temple wedding of a young woman I have known since she was born. As I sat in the sealing room, looking at the beautiful chandelier sparkling in the light of the temple, I remembered that day when I first held her. Her mother had her dressed in a little white dress, and I thought she was one of the most beautiful babies I had ever seen. Then this young woman walked through the door, once again dressed in white. She was radiant and happy. As she entered the room, I wished with all my heart that every young woman could envision that moment and strive to always be worthy to make and keep sacred covenants and receive the ordinances of the temple in preparation to enjoy the blessings of exaltation.

As this couple knelt at the sacred altar, they received promises beyond mortal comprehension that will bless, strengthen, and assist them on their mortal journey. It was one of those

moments when the world stood still and all of heaven rejoiced. As the newly married couple looked into the large mirrors in the room, the groom was asked what he saw. He said, “All those who have gone before me.” Then the couple looked into the large mirror on the opposite wall, and the bride said with tears in her eyes, “I see all those who will follow after us.” She saw her future family—her posterity. I know that she understood again in that moment how important it is to believe in being chaste and virtuous. There is no more beautiful sight than a couple, properly prepared, kneeling together at the altar of the temple.

Your years in Young Women will prepare you for the temple. There you will receive the blessings to which you are entitled as a precious daughter of God. Your Heavenly Father loves you and wants you to be happy. The way to do this is to “walk in the paths of virtue”¹ and “cleave unto [your] covenants.”²

Young women, in a world ever growing in moral pollution, tolerance of evil, exploitation of women, and distortion of roles, you must stand guard of yourself, your family, and all those with whom you associate. You must be guardians of virtue.

What is virtue and what is a



guardian? “Virtue is a pattern of thought and behavior based on high moral standards. It includes chastity and [moral] purity.”³ And what is a guardian? A guardian is someone who protects, shields, and defends.⁴ Thus, as a guardian of virtue, you will protect, shield, and defend moral purity because the power to create mortal life is a sacred and exalted power and must be safeguarded until you are married. Virtue is a requirement to have the companionship and guidance of the Holy Ghost. You will need that guidance in order to successfully navigate the world in which you live. Being virtuous is a requirement to enter the temple. And it is a requirement to be worthy to stand in the Savior’s presence. You are preparing now for that time. Personal Progress and the standards found in *For the Strength of Youth* are important. Living the principles found in each booklet will strengthen and help you become “more fit for the kingdom.”⁵

Last summer a group of young women from Alpine, Utah, decided that they would become “more fit for the kingdom.” They determined to focus on

the temple by walking from the Draper Utah Temple to the Salt Lake Temple, a total distance of 22 miles (35 km), just as one of the pioneers, John Rowe Moyle, had done. Brother Moyle was a stonemason who was called by the prophet, Brigham Young, to work on the Salt Lake Temple. Each week he walked the distance of 22 miles from his home to the temple. One of his jobs was to carve the words “Holiness to the Lord” on the east side of the Salt Lake Temple. It was not easy and he had many obstacles to overcome. At one point, he was kicked in the leg by one of his cows. Because it would not heal, he had to have this leg amputated. But that did not stop him from his commitment to the prophet and to work on the temple. He carved a wooden leg, and after many weeks he again walked the 22-mile distance to the temple to do the work he had committed to do.⁶

The young women in the Cedar Hills Sixth Ward decided to walk that same distance for an ancestor and also for someone who was their inspiration to remain worthy to enter the temple. They trained each week at Mutual, and as they walked, they shared what

they were learning and feeling about temples.

They began their walk to the temple early in the morning with a prayer. As they started out, I was impressed with their confidence. They had prepared well, and they knew they were prepared. Their eyes were set on their goal. Each step they took was symbolic of each of you as you too are preparing now to enter the temple. Your personal training has begun with your daily personal prayers, your daily reading of the Book of Mormon, and your working on Personal Progress.

As these young women continued to walk, there were distractions along the course, but they stayed focused on their goal. Some began to feel blisters forming, and others felt knees starting to protest, but they kept going. For each of you, there are many distractions, hurts, and obstacles along your path to the temple, but you too are determined and keep going. The route these young women took was mapped out by their leaders, who had walked and driven the course and determined the safest and most

direct way to go. Again, your course is marked, and you can be assured that the Savior has not only walked the course but will again walk it with you—every step of the way.

Along this journey to the temple there were fathers, mothers, family members, and priesthood leaders acting as guardians. Their job was to ensure that everyone was safe and protected from danger. They made sure each young woman stayed well hydrated and had enough nourishment to maintain her stamina. There were aid stations provided by their priesthood leaders, with places to rest and to drink water. Young women, your fathers, your mothers, your bishops, and so many others will be your guardians as you walk your path to the temple. They will call out cautions and direct your course, and should you become injured or hurt or get off course, they will help you.

I was impressed that in the final miles of their walk, brothers, other young men, and friends came to support these determined young women



and to cheer them on. One brother lifted his sister, who had large blisters on her feet, and carried her on his back the final distance to the temple. As these incredible young women reached their goal, tears were shed as they touched the temple and made a silent commitment to always be worthy to enter there.

The temple walk is a metaphor for your life. Parents and priesthood leaders stood guard along the route. They provided support and aid. Young women guarded and encouraged each other. Young men admired the strength, commitment, and stamina of the young women. Brothers carried sisters who had been injured. Families rejoiced with their daughters as they ended their walk at the temple and took them safely home.

In order to stay on the path to the temple, you must guard your personal virtue and the virtue of others with whom you associate. Why? Mormon taught in the Book of Mormon that virtue and chastity are “most dear and precious above all things.”⁷

What can each of you do to be a guardian of virtue? It starts with believing you can make a difference. It starts with making a commitment. When I was a young woman, I learned that some decisions need to be made only once. I wrote my list of things I would

always do and things I would *never* do in a small tablet. It included things like obeying the Word of Wisdom, praying daily, paying my tithing, and committing to never miss church. I made those decisions once, and then in the moment of decision, I knew exactly what to do because I had decided beforehand. When my high school friends said, “Just one drink won’t hurt,” I laughed and said, “I decided when I was 12 not to do that.” Making decisions in advance will help you be guardians of virtue. I hope each of you will write a list of things you will *always* do and things you will *never* do. Then live your list.

Being a guardian of virtue means you will always be modest not only in your dress but also in your speech, your actions, and your use of social media. Being a guardian of virtue means you will never text words or images to young men that may cause them to lose the Spirit, lose their priesthood power, or lose their virtue. It means that you understand the importance of chastity because you also understand that your body is a temple and that the sacred powers of procreation are not to be tampered with before marriage. You understand that you possess a sacred power that involves the holy responsibility of bringing other spirits to earth to



receive a body in which to house their eternal spirit. This power involves another sacred soul. You are a guardian of something “more precious than rubies.”⁸ Be faithful. Be obedient. Prepare now so that you may qualify to receive all the blessings that await you in the Lord’s holy temples.

For the mothers listening tonight, you are your daughters’ most important example of modesty and virtue—thank you. Never hesitate to teach them that they are royal daughters of God and that their value is not based on their sensual appeal. And let them see your belief modeled correctly and consistently in your own personal attitude and appearance.⁹ You are also guardians of virtue.

This week I again climbed Ensign Peak. It was early in the morning, and as I looked down from that mount at the mountain of the Lord’s house—the Salt Lake Temple—it was again crystal clear. The pioneers gave everything they had to come to the tops of the mountains so that you and I could have the blessings of the temple and be sealed eternally as families. Forty years of sacrifice, painstaking work, and even walking from Alpine to the temple—why? Because, like you, they believed! They believed in a prophet. They believed he had seen and talked with God and His Beloved Son. They believed in the Savior. They believed in the Book of Mormon. That’s why they could say, “We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things.”¹⁰ They endured many things and so can we. The thirteenth article of faith is what we believe because those are the very things that qualify us to be worthy to enter the temple and to one day stand in our Heavenly Father’s presence—proven, pure, and sealed. This will require that you be “more fit



for the kingdom” and that you prepare now and gain the confidence that you can do hard things.

Young women, you are engaged in a great work! And you are not alone! As you guard your virtue and purity, you will be given strength. As you keep the covenants you have made, the Holy Ghost will guide and guard you. You will be surrounded by heavenly hosts of angels. President Thomas S. Monson reminds us, “Remember that we do not run alone in this great race of life; we are entitled to the help of the Lord.”¹¹ Prepare for that day when you will come to the Lord’s temple worthy and prepared to make sacred covenants. As guardians of virtue, you will want to *seek* the Savior in His holy house.

I testify that God lives and that His Beloved Son, our Redeemer,

Jesus Christ, lives and because of the redeeming and enabling power of His infinite Atonement, each of you will be guided and guarded on your path to the temple and back into Their presence. I pray that each of you will be strengthened for that work which will be your finest hour. Live for that beautiful day spoken of in the book of Revelation when you will “walk . . . in white: [because you] are worthy.”¹² In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 25:2.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 25:13.
3. *Young Women Personal Progress* (booklet, 2009), 70.
4. See thefreedictionary.com/guardian.
5. “More Holiness Give Me,” *Hymns*, no. 131.
6. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Lift Where You Stand,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 55.
7. Moroni 9:9.
8. Proverbs 3:15.
9. See M. Russell Ballard, “Mothers and Daughters,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2010, 18–21.
10. Articles of Faith 1:13.
11. Thomas S. Monson, “Great Expectations” (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Jan. 11, 2009), <http://lds.org/library/display/0,4945,538-1-4773-1,00.html>.
12. Revelation 3:4.

São Paulo, Brazil





By President Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the First Presidency

A Living Testimony

Testimony requires the nurturing by the prayer of faith, the hungering for the word of God in the scriptures, and the obedience to the truth.

My beloved young sisters, you are the bright hope of the Lord's Church. My purpose tonight is to help you believe that is so. If that belief can become a deep testimony from God, it will shape your daily and hourly choices. And then from what might appear to you to be small choices, the Lord will lead you to the happiness you want. Through your choices He will be able to bless countless others.

Your choice to be with us tonight is an example of choices that matter. More than a million young women, mothers, and leaders were invited. Of all the other things you could have chosen to do, you chose to be with us. You did that because of your beliefs.

You are a believer in the gospel of Jesus Christ. You believe enough to come here to hear His servants and have enough faith to hope that something you will hear or feel will move you toward a better life. You felt in your heart that following Jesus Christ was the way to greater happiness.

Now, you may not have recognized that as a conscious choice of any great importance. You may have felt drawn to be with us by friends or family. You may have simply responded to the kindness

of someone who invited you to come. But even if you did not notice it, you felt at least a faint echo of the invitation of the Savior: "Come, follow me."¹

In the hour we have been together, the Lord has deepened your belief in Him and strengthened your testimony. You have heard more than words and music. You have felt the witness of the Spirit to your heart that there are living prophets on the earth in the Lord's true Church and that the path to happiness lies within His kingdom. Your testimony has grown that this is the only true and living Church on the earth today.

Now, we did not all feel exactly the same things. For some it was a witness of the Spirit that Thomas S. Monson is a prophet of God. For others it was that honesty, virtue, and doing good to all men really are attributes of the Savior. And with that came a greater desire be like Him.

All of you have a desire for your testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ to be strengthened. President Brigham Young could see your need many years ago. He was a prophet of God, and with prophetic foresight 142 years ago, he saw you and your needs. He was a loving father and a living prophet.

He could see the influence of

the world coming down on his own daughters. He saw that those worldly influences were drawing them away from the Lord's pathway to happiness. In his day those influences were brought in part by the new transcontinental railroad connecting the isolated and protected Saints to the world.

He may not have seen the technological marvels of today where with a device you can hold in your hand you can choose to connect to countless ideas and people across the earth. But he saw the value for his daughters—and for you—in having their choices be made out of a powerful testimony of a living and loving God and His plan of happiness.

Here is his prophetic and inspired counsel for his daughters and for you always.

It is at the heart of my message tonight. He said in a room in his home less than a mile from where this message now goes out to daughters of God in nations across the world: "There is need for the young daughters of Israel to get a living testimony of the truth."²

He then created an association of young women that has become what we now call in the Lord's Church "Young Women." You have felt tonight some of the wonderful effect of his choice made in that Sunday evening meeting in the parlor of his home.

More than 100 years later, daughters of Israel across the world have that desire for a living testimony of the truth for themselves. Now, for the rest of your lives, you will need that living and growing testimony to fortify you and lead your path to eternal life. And with it you will become the transmitters of the Light of Christ to your brothers and sisters across the world and across generations.

You know from your own experience what a testimony is. President



Joseph Fielding Smith taught that a testimony “is a convincing knowledge given by revelation to [a person] who humbly seeks the truth.” He said of testimony and the Holy Ghost, who brings that revelation, “Its convincing power is so great that there can be no doubt left in the mind when the Spirit has spoken. It is the only way that a person can truly know that Jesus is the Christ and that his gospel is true.”³

You have felt that inspiration for yourselves. It may have been to confirm one part of the gospel, as it was for me tonight. When I heard the words from the thirteenth article of faith about “being honest, true, chaste, [and] benevolent,” it was for me as if the Lord spoke them. I felt again that those are His attributes. I felt that Joseph Smith was His prophet. So for me those were not just words.

In my mind I saw the dusty roads of Judea and the Garden of Gethsemane. In my heart I felt at least something of what it would have been like to kneel as Joseph did before the Father and the Son in a grove of trees in New York. I couldn’t see in my mind a light above the brightness of the sun at noonday as

he did, but I did feel the warmth and wonder of a testimony.

Testimony will come to you in pieces as parts of the whole truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ are confirmed. For instance, as you read and ponder the Book of Mormon, verses you have read before will appear new to you and bring new ideas. Your testimony will grow in breadth and in depth as the Holy Ghost confirms that they are true. Your living testimony will expand as you study, pray, and ponder in the scriptures.

The best description for me of how to gain and keep this living testimony has already been referred to. It is in the 32nd chapter of Alma in the Book of Mormon. You may have read it many times. I find new light in it every time I read it. Let’s review the lesson it teaches once again tonight.

We are taught in those inspired passages to begin our quest for testimony with “a particle of faith” and with desire for it to grow.⁴ Tonight you have felt faith and that desire as you listened to stirring talks of the Savior’s kindness, His honesty, and of the purity His commandments

and Atonement made possible for us.

So a seed of faith is already planted in your heart. You may even have felt some of the expansion of your heart promised in Alma. I did.

But, like a growing plant, it must be nurtured or it will wither. Frequent and heartfelt prayers of faith are crucial and needed nutrients. Obedience to the truth you have received will keep the testimony alive and strengthen it. Obedience to the commandments is part of the nourishment you must provide for your testimony.

You remember the promise of the Savior: “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”⁵

That has worked for me, as it will for you. One of the doctrines of the gospel I was taught when I was young is that the greatest of all the gifts of God is eternal life.⁶ I learned that part of eternal life is to live together in love in families forever.

From the first time that I heard those truths and they were confirmed to my heart, I felt obligated to make every choice I could to avoid

contention and seek peace in my family and in my home.

Now, only after this life can I enjoy the fulness of that greatest of all blessings, eternal life. But amidst the challenges of this life, I have been given at least glimpses of what my family in heaven can be like. From those experiences my testimony of the reality of the sealing power exercised in temples has grown and been strengthened.

Watching my two daughters be baptized in the temple for their ancestors has drawn my heart to them and to those ancestors whose names we found. The promise of Elijah that hearts would be turned to each other in families has been granted to us.⁷ So faith for me has become certain knowledge, as we are promised in the book of Alma.

I have experienced at least some of the joy which my ancestors felt when the Savior came into the spirit world after His mortal ministry. Here is the description in the Doctrine and Covenants:

“And the saints rejoiced in their redemption, and bowed the knee and acknowledged the Son of God as their Redeemer and Deliverer from death and the chains of hell.

“Their countenances shone, and the radiance from the presence of the Lord rested upon them, and they sang praises unto his holy name.”⁸

My feeling of their joy came from acting on my testimony that the Lord’s promise of eternal life is real. That testimony was strengthened by my choosing to act upon it, as the Savior promised that it would be.

He has also taught us that, in addition to choosing to be obedient, we must ask in prayer for testimony of truth. The Lord taught that to us in His command to pray about the Book of Mormon. He said through His prophet Moroni:

“Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

“And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

“And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.”⁹

I hope that you all have proved that promise for yourself or that you will do it soon. The answer may not come in a single and powerful spiritual experience. For me it came quietly at first. But it comes ever more forcefully each time I have read and prayed over the Book of Mormon.

I do not depend on what has happened in the past. To keep my living testimony of the Book of Mormon secure, I receive the promise of Moroni often. I don’t take that blessing of a testimony for granted as a perpetual entitlement.

Testimony requires the nurturing by the prayer of faith, the hungering for the word of God in the scriptures, and the obedience to the truth we have received. There is danger in neglecting prayer. There is danger to our testimony in only casual study and reading of the scriptures. They are necessary nutrients for our testimony.

You remember the warning from Alma:

“But if ye neglect the tree, and

take no thought for its nourishment, behold it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out.

“Now, this is not because the seed was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable; but it is because your ground is barren, and ye will not nourish the tree, therefore ye cannot have the fruit thereof.”¹⁰

Feasting on the word of God, heartfelt prayer, and obedience to the Lord’s commandments must be applied evenly and continually for your testimony to grow and prosper. All of us at times have circumstances beyond our control that interrupt our pattern of scripture study. There may be periods of time when we choose for some reason not to pray. There



may be commandments that we choose for a time to ignore.

But you will not have your desire for a living testimony granted if you forget the warning and the promise in Alma:

“And thus, if ye will not nourish the word, looking forward with an eye of faith to the fruit thereof, ye can never pluck of the fruit of the tree of life.

“But if ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to grow, by your faith with great diligence, and with patience, looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life.

“And because of your diligence and your faith and your patience with the word in nourishing it, that it may take root in you, behold, by and by ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white, yea, and pure above all that is pure; and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst.

St. Catherine, Jamaica



“Then . . . ye shall reap the rewards of your faith, and your diligence, and patience, and long-suffering, waiting for the tree to bring forth fruit unto you.”¹¹

The words in that scripture “looking forward to the fruit thereof” guided the wise teaching you received this evening. That is why your eyes were pointed toward a future day in a temple sealing room. That is why you were helped to visualize tonight the seemingly endless chain of light reflected in facing mirrors on the walls of a sealing room, where you could be married in a temple of God.

If you can look forward to such a day with enough desire born of testimony, you will be strengthened to resist the temptations of the world. Each time you choose to try to live more like the Savior, you will have your testimony strengthened. You will come in time to know for yourself that He is the Light of the World.

You will come to feel light growing in your life. It will not come without effort. But it will come as

your testimony grows and you choose to nurture it. Here is the sure promise from the Doctrine and Covenants:

“That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.”¹²

You will be a light to the world as you share your testimony with others. You will reflect to others the Light of Christ in your life. The Lord will find ways for that light to touch those you love. And through the combined faith and testimony of His daughters, God will touch the lives of millions in His kingdom and across the world with His light.

In your testimony and your choices lies the hope of the Church and of the generations who will follow your example of hearing and accepting the invitation of the Lord: “Come, follow me.” The Lord knows and loves you.

I leave you my love and my testimony. You are daughters of a loving and living Father in Heaven. I know that His resurrected Son, Jesus Christ, is the Savior and the Light of the World. I testify that the Holy Ghost has sent messages to you tonight confirming truth to your heart. President Thomas S. Monson is the living prophet of God. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Luke 18:22.
2. Brigham Young, in *A Century of Sisterhood: Chronological Collage, 1869–1969* (1969), 8.
3. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. (1957–66), 3:31.
4. See Alma 32:27.
5. John 7:17.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.
7. See Malachi 4:5–6; Joseph Smith—History 1:38–39.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 138:23–24.
9. Moroni 10:3–5.
10. Alma 32:38–39.
11. Alma 32:40–43.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 50:24.

Conference Story Index

The following is a list of selected experiences from general conference addresses for use in personal study, family home evening, and other teaching. The number refers to the first page of the talk.

SPEAKER	STORY
Jean A. Stevens	(10) Children show example by paying tithing. Liam listens to his father's voice during medical treatment.
Elder Walter F. González	(13) Reporter wonders if good treatment of spouses is truth or fiction.
Elder Kent F. Richards	(15) Young girl sees angels around children in a hospital.
Elder Quentin L. Cook	(18) Purse contents reflect a young woman's gospel living. Sister in Tonga suggests a way to help young adult men.
President Henry B. Eyring	(22) Community gives service after the Teton Dam breaks.
President Boyd K. Packer	(30) Stake president counsels man to "leave it alone" after the death of his wife.
Elder Dallin H. Oaks	(42) Captain Ray Cox forgoes sleep to keep soldiers safe. Aron Ralston summons courage to save his life.
Elder M. Russell Ballard	(46) Gold prospector learns to value flakes of gold.
Elder Neil L. Andersen	(49) Sidney Going chooses a mission over rugby.
Larry M. Gibson	(55) Deacons quorum president learns his responsibilities.
President Dieter F. Uchtdorf	(58) Man doesn't realize what privileges are included on a cruise ship.
President Henry B. Eyring	(62) Quorum searches for member lost in the woods. Henry B. Eyring visits faithful high priest.
President Thomas S. Monson	(66) Thomas S. Monson invites couple to witness a sealing.
Elder Paul V. Johnson	(78) Young woman is converted during long illness.
Bishop H. David Burton	(81) Robert Taylor Burton helps rescue a handcart company.
Silvia H. Allred	(84) Young mother is served by her visiting teacher.
President Thomas S. Monson	(90) Brazilian Saints travel long distances from Manaus to the temple. Mou Tham family sacrifices to go to the temple. Thomas S. Monson participates in groundbreaking for a temple in Rome, Italy.
Elder Richard G. Scott	(94) Richard G. Scott is urged to play with children instead of fixing the washer. Jeanene Scott saves love notes. Richard G. Scott cares for young son with heart problem.
Elder D. Todd Christofferson	(97) Hugh B. Brown prunes a currant bush and then is figuratively pruned himself.
Elder Carl B. Pratt	(101) Whetten family pays tithing and receives blessings.
Elder C. Scott Grow	(108) C. Scott Grow's brother makes poor choices but then repents.
Ann M. Dibb	(115) Kristi sets an example that Jenn remembers when she seeks for the truth.
Mary N. Cook	(118) Child sees a picture of Jesus in a school locker. Young woman chooses not to attend a questionable movie.
Elaine S. Dalton	(121) Young Women walk from Draper, Utah, to the Salt Lake Temple.

Making Conference Part of Our Lives

Consider using some of these activities and questions as a starting point for family discussion or personal pondering as you make the teachings of general conference a part of your life.

You can find all general conference talks online at conference.lds.org.
Note: The page numbers listed below indicate the first page of the talk mentioned.

For Children

- President Thomas S. Monson announced that the Church will build three new temples, bringing the total number of temples operating, under construction, or announced to 160. Look at a map to find Meridian, Idaho, USA;

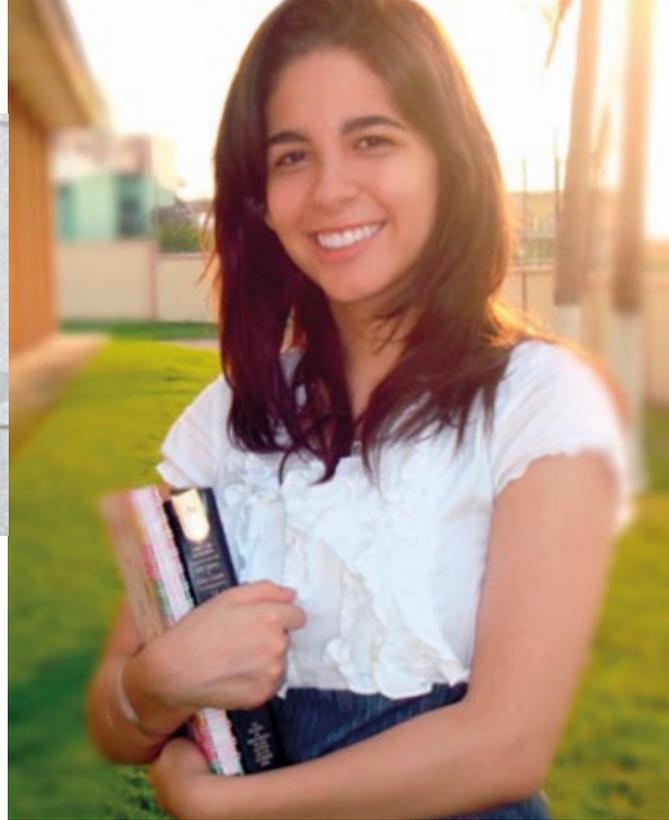
Fort Collins, Colorado, USA; Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; and the temple nearest your home. Read or retell some of the stories President Monson told of faithful members who sacrificed greatly to attend the temple (page 90). Make goals to attend the temple as soon as you can, or discuss ways to remain worthy to enter the temple.

- When Adam and Eve lived on earth, one of the ways they worshipped Heavenly Father was by sacrificing animals. Elder L. Tom Perry taught that the Savior introduced the sacrament to His disciples on the Sabbath day as a new form of worship. We continue to worship by partaking of the sacrament on the Sabbath. Review Elder Perry's talk (page 6) as a family to learn about proper Sunday dress and other ways to honor the sacrament and the Sabbath.

- Elder D. Todd Christofferson taught that Jesus Christ instructed us that we ought to strive to be like Him and our Heavenly Father (page 97). Our Heavenly Father sometimes "chastens" His children to help us become more like Him. Discuss what it means

Ljubljana, Slovenia





Coatzacoalcos, Mexico

about the “cafeteria approach” to obedience (page 34). Discuss with your family, class, or quorum what this means and why it doesn’t work.

- Elder M. Russell Ballard described the pure love of Christ as an active love (page 46) that is shown in simple acts of kindness and service. Plan a way your class or quorum can show love to someone in your ward, branch, or community and then carry out your plan.

- Elder Quentin L. Cook told the story of a purse found after a youth dance (page 18). What the leaders found inside the purse spoke volumes about the young woman who owned it. What do the contents of your purse, wallet, or schoolbag say about you, and what changes might you want to make in the things you keep close to you?

- Elder Lynn G. Robbins talked about becoming more like the Savior (page 103). Think about what it means to be like Jesus Christ rather than just doing what He asks. Then think about what changes you can make in your life to become more like the Savior.

For Adults

- President Dieter F. Uchtdorf (page 58) shared a story about a man who lived below his privileges as he

to chasten. Read or retell the story of the overgrown currant bush. Talk about how having a setback or failure can actually help us grow stronger and be more fruitful.

- Elder Richard J. Maynes taught that families can be like ropes (page 37). A rope has many strands that are weak on their own but are strong when woven together. Similarly, when all the members of a family do what is right and help one another, each person in the family is strengthened and can do more than he or she could do alone. Give each member of your family a piece of string or yarn. Talk about ways each family member serves and strengthens other family members. Then see how strong the pieces of string or yarn are when they are put together.

For Youth

- Is your class or quorum as unified as possible? After reviewing President Henry B. Eyring’s talk about unity (page 62), make a list of what you can do to bring your group closer together.

- Elder Russell M. Nelson talked

missed out on the many activities and good food offered on his cruise ship because he didn’t realize all of these things were included in the price of his ticket. Discuss with family members who hold the priesthood ways they can live up to their “privileges when it comes to the sacred power, gifts, and blessings that are [their] opportunity and right as bearers of God’s priesthood.”

- President Boyd K. Packer taught about the power of forgiveness (page 30). Are there people you need to forgive, or are there troubling experiences you need to “leave . . . alone”? Seek the Lord’s help in finding peace and the power to forgive.

- Elder Richard G. Scott told of how he and his wife, Jeanene, showed affection by writing notes to each other (page 94). Consider writing a note saying how much you love and appreciate your spouse. Put it where your spouse will find it.

- Elder David A. Bednar quoted President Joseph F. Smith’s experience with gaining a testimony (page 87). Review this story and think about what experiences have influenced your testimony. ■

General Auxiliary Presidencies

RELIEF SOCIETY



Silvia H. Allred
First Counselor



Julie B. Beck
President



Barbara Thompson
Second Counselor

YOUNG WOMEN



Mary N. Cook
First Counselor



Elaine S. Dalton
President



Ann M. Dibb
Second Counselor

PRIMARY



Jean A. Stevens
First Counselor



Rosemary M. Wixom
President



Cheryl A. Esplin
Second Counselor

YOUNG MEN



Larry M. Gibson
First Counselor



David L. Beck
President



Adrián Ochoa
Second Counselor

SUNDAY SCHOOL



David M. McConkie
First Counselor



Russell T. Osguthorpe
President



Matthew O. Richardson
Second Counselor

Teachings for Our Time

Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society lessons on fourth Sundays will be devoted to “Teachings for Our Time.” Each lesson can be prepared from one or more talks given in the most recent general conference (see chart below). Stake and district presidents may choose which talks should be used, or they may assign this responsibility to bishops and branch presidents. Leaders should stress the value of Melchizedek Priesthood brethren and Relief Society sisters studying the same talks on the same Sundays.

Those attending fourth-Sunday lessons are encouraged to study and bring to class the latest general conference issue of the magazine.

Suggestions for Preparing a Lesson from Talks

Pray that the Holy Spirit will be with you as you study and teach the talk(s).

You may be tempted to prepare the lesson using other materials, but the conference talks are the approved curriculum. Your assignment is to help others learn and live the gospel as taught in the most recent general conference of the Church.

Review the talk(s), looking for principles and doctrines that meet the needs of class members. Also look for stories, scripture references, and statements from the talk(s) that will help you teach these truths.

Make an outline of how to teach the principles and doctrines. Your outline should include questions that help class members:

- Look for principles and doctrines in the talk(s).
- Think about their meaning.
- Share understanding, ideas, experiences, and testimonies.
- Apply these principles and doctrines in their lives. ■

MONTHS LESSONS TAUGHT

May 2011–
October 2011

November 2011–
April 2012

FOURTH-SUNDAY LESSON MATERIALS

Talks published in the May 2011 *Liahona* and *Ensign**

Talks published in the November 2011 *Liahona* and *Ensign**

* These talks are available (in many languages) at conference.lds.org.

Church Leaders Celebrate Welfare, Announce Temples

More than 100,000 people attended the five sessions of the 181st Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, while millions more watched or listened via TV, radio, satellite, and Internet broadcasts.

Members around the world participated in the conference in 93 languages. Audio, video, and text of the broadcast are already online in many languages at conference.lds.org and will be made available on DVD and CD.

President Thomas S. Monson opened the conference by announcing the locations of three new temples—Fort Collins, Colorado, USA; Meridian, Idaho, USA; and Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada—which will bring the number of temples announced or under construction to 26. Currently, 134 temples are in operation.



Above: A young man harvests grapes at the Madera, California, USA, Church-owned vineyard, which produces raisins for the Church welfare system. **Lower left:** A family attends a satellite broadcast of general conference in Coimbra, Portugal.

President Monson also emphasized the importance of missionary work, saying, “Missionary work is the life-blood of the kingdom.” Some 52,000 missionaries currently serve in 340 missions throughout the world.

On Saturday afternoon, 10 new General Authorities and 41 Area Seventies were sustained, while 34 Area Seventies were released. In addition, Elder Don R. Clarke of the Second Quorum of the Seventy was called to serve in the First Quorum of the Seventy. The 2010 Statistical Report showed that Church membership now tops 14 million.

A number of talks given during the two-day conference centered on the theme of Church welfare and the Church’s unique welfare program—celebrating its 75th year in 2011.

On Saturday, President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, announced that to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the welfare program, members worldwide are invited to participate in a day of service activity. The day of service should be held on a ward or stake level sometime during the year. Local leaders should decide the details of each project, and members are encouraged to invite others to participate as appropriate.

President Monson closed the conference with his Easter testimony of Christ: “At the last moment, [Jesus Christ] could have turned back. But He did not. He passed beneath all things that He might save all things. In doing so, He gave us life beyond this mortal existence.” ■



Elder José L. Alonso

Of the Seventy

Even before he joined the Church, José Luis Alonso Trejo had a testimony of the power of prayer. “When I was 11 years old,” he says, “I nearly died. The doctors had given up on me—I overheard them speaking. So I prayed and prayed to the Lord, and He healed me.

“When I later heard the story of Joseph Smith and learned how a boy only 14 years old spoke with God, I knew it was true. I knew that God could answer our prayers, that He knows us.”

That same feeling of comfort guided Elder Alonso as he studied the Book of Mormon. “Because of prayer and this book, I know with certainty that Jesus is the Christ,” he says.

Elder Alonso was born in Mexico City, Mexico, in November 1958 to Luis and Luz Alonso. As a teenager he moved to the city of Cuautla, Mexico, where he joined the Church. Attending Mutual brought him into contact with strong youth who fellowshipped him and provided him a second home. It was also while attending Mutual that he met Rebecca Salazar, the woman who would later become his wife.

When Elder Alonso turned 19, he served a full-time mission in the Mexico Hermosillo Mission. Following his mission, Elder Alonso and Rebecca were married on February 24, 1981, in the Mesa Arizona Temple. They are the parents of two children.

In addition to serving as an institute director for the Church Educational System, Elder Alonso has a medical degree in pediatric development and worked as a homeopathic physician and surgeon. His career demonstrates a long-held desire to serve and bless others—just as the Lord blessed him when he was sick as a child. “Service to others builds unity and brotherhood,” he says, “and invites the power of the Lord into our lives.”

Prior to his call to the First Quorum of the Seventy, Elder Alonso served as a bishop, stake mission president, stake president, mission president’s counselor, president of the Mexico Tijuana Mission, and Area Seventy. ■



Elder Ian S. Ardern

Of the Seventy

Whenever there’s a phone call or knock at the door, the first words out of Elder Ian Sidney Ardern’s mouth are typically “How can I help you?”

Born to Harry and Gwladys McVicar Wiltshire in Te Aroha, New Zealand, in February 1954, Elder Ardern recounted that it is often the seemingly small acts of service that make the greatest difference in the lives of the giver and the receiver. “Service is not always convenient, but it always blesses your life,” says Elder Ardern.

Elder and Sister Ardern met while attending the Church College of New Zealand and married in the Hamilton New Zealand Temple on January 17, 1976. Their four children grew up in a home where a loving concern for one another and a need to understand and live gospel principles were priorities. “It’s a blessing to see these same priorities in the homes of our married children,” says Elder Ardern.

The Lord expects much of His children, and He provides a way for those expectations to be met. “I am most grateful to all those who have helped our family to follow the Lord,” Elder Ardern says.

Following the teachings of the prophets in the home has been a priority for the Ardern family. Daily scripture study became a habit because the young children made sure it was held so they could take turns placing a red sticker on the calendar to show the reading that day was done. “By small and simple things good habits can be formed,” says Sister Ardern.

Prior to his call to the First Quorum of the Seventy, Elder Ardern served as a missionary in France and Belgium, stake Young Men president, high councilor, bishop’s counselor, bishop, stake president’s counselor, president of the Fiji Suva Mission, and Area Seventy.

Elder Ardern received bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education from the University of Waikato in New Zealand. His professional career includes many Church Educational System positions, including teacher, director, seminary coordinator in New Zealand, principal of the Church College of New Zealand, and Pacific Area Director. ■



Elder Carl B. Cook

Of the Seventy

As a young missionary in the Language Training Mission (the predecessor to the Missionary Training Center) preparing to go to Hamburg, Germany, Carl Bert Cook struggled to learn German. While he tried to grasp basic vocabulary, members of his district quickly moved on to more complex concepts.

Frustrated by his lack of progress, young Elder Cook sought divine help through a priesthood blessing and prayer. After one particularly heartfelt prayer, Elder Cook remembers receiving a specific answer: the Lord hadn't called him to master the German language but to serve with all of his heart, mind, and strength.

"I immediately thought, 'I can do that,'" says Elder Cook, recently called as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. "I can serve with all of my heart, mind, and strength.' I stood up and felt a sense of relief. All of a sudden, my measuring stick changed from how my companion and district members were doing to how the Lord felt that I was doing."

Although Elder Cook says that he didn't necessarily learn the language more quickly after that experience, he no longer felt his previous concerns because he knew that he was doing what the Lord wanted him to do. That lesson, he says, has been important in all of the callings he's held since, including bishop, counselor in a stake presidency, stake president, president of the New Zealand Auckland Mission, Area Seventy, and now in his current assignment.

Elder Cook earned a bachelor's degree in business marketing from Weber State College and a master's degree in business administration from Utah State University. He spent his career working in real estate development.

Elder Cook was born in Ogden, Utah, USA, in October 1957 to Ramona Cook Barker and the late Bert E. Cook. He married Lynette Hansen on December 14, 1979, in the Ogden Utah Temple. They are the parents of five children. ■



Elder LeGrand R. Curtis Jr.

Of the Seventy

Elder LeGrand Raine Curtis Jr. knows that "the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind" (D&C 64:34).

"He loves serving in the Church, and he does it with hard work and a willing attitude," says his wife, Jane Cowan Curtis, whom he married in the Salt Lake Temple on January 4, 1974. "Service is his greatest wish and desire."

Elder Curtis was born in August 1952, in Ogden, Utah, USA, to LeGrand R. and Patricia Glade Curtis. His father later became a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy (1990–95).

Before his call to the First Quorum of the Seventy, Elder Curtis Jr. served in the Italy North Mission and as bishop, high councilor, stake president, president of the Italy Padova Mission, and Area Seventy. He was serving as a member of the Fifth Quorum of the Seventy in the Utah Salt Lake City Area at the time of his call to the First Quorum.

Elder Curtis graduated from Brigham Young University with a degree in economics and earned his juris doctorate from the University of Michigan. At the time of his call, he was working as an attorney and partner at a law firm. In addition to attending school and working, Elder Curtis and his wife have raised five children.

After serving as an Area Seventy from 2004 to 2011, Elder Curtis says he has appreciated the opportunity to work with the General Authorities. "I have been blessed to work with some exceptional leaders in the Church," he says. "Watching them and learning from them has been a great privilege."

Sister Curtis says Elder Curtis always has had willing hands and a willing heart. "His attitude was always, 'I will do,'" she says.

Doctrine and Covenants 64:34 ends with these words: "The willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days." Brother and Sister Curtis say they and their children and grandchildren have been exceptionally blessed for serving the Lord. ■



Elder W. Christopher Waddell

Of the Seventy

An unwritten guiding principle in Elder Wayne Christopher Waddell's family has always been, "Trust in the Lord."

"As you trust in the Lord, you don't have to worry about major changes," Elder Waddell says of life's unexpected twists and turns. "We know He has our best interests at heart, and we will be blessed."

Elder Waddell was born in June 1959 in Manhattan Beach, California, USA, and is the son of Wayne and Joann Waddell. He received a bachelor's degree in history from San Diego State University, where he also played volleyball. He has worked in many positions in a global investment services firm.

Elder Waddell married Carol Stansel on June 7, 1984, in the Los Angeles California Temple. They have four children. Unity is paramount in the Waddell family. They attribute that unity to striving to follow the Savior's gospel in their home. Family activities also have been important—spending time together at beaches near their home and attending sporting events as a family.

Prior to his call to the First Quorum of the Seventy, Elder Waddell served as a full-time missionary in Spain, bishop, high councilor, mission president's counselor, stake president, president of the Barcelona Spain Mission, and Area Seventy.

Elder Waddell says that one experience has built upon another and each continues to add to the "treasure of testimony" that he relies on to face challenges in life.

When speaking of preparation for his new calling, Elder Waddell speaks of the temple.

"What prepared us for this? When we went to the temple for the first time and made covenants, we pledged to be willing to do whatever it was the Lord asked us, even if it wasn't convenient," he says. "Going to the temple, serving a mission, making covenants, and then seeing His hand and how He directs the work—that is all you need. We aren't doing anything unique; we are keeping covenants we've made, just like everyone else." ■



Elder Kazuhiko Yamashita

Of the Seventy

Since becoming a young bishop in Fukuoka, Japan, many years ago, Elder Kazuhiko Yamashita has learned from the good examples and attitudes of his senior leaders.

Soon after Elder Yamashita married his wife, Tazuko Tashiro, they moved from Tokyo to Fukuoka, where Elder Yamashita was called as a bishop when he was in his late 20s.

"That was hard for me and my family," Elder Yamashita says. "We had three young children at the time and were new to the area—but it was also a very good teaching and learning experience for me, and my testimony and faith got stronger.

"Of course I had hard times, because my family was young and I didn't have much experience as a Church leader beforehand," Elder Yamashita says. "My senior leaders were good examples and taught me many lessons through their attitude and behavior."

Sister Yamashita says she has seen her husband receive many callings and become a great father and great spiritual leader through the challenges those callings presented. Over time she has seen him change and become a kinder, more loving father and husband. The family enjoys spending time together, including taking long road trips every year.

Elder Yamashita, born in September 1953, is the son of Kiyoshi and Sadae Yamashita. He grew up in Tokyo, Japan, where he found the Church in 1971 through Expo 70, the World's Fair.

Elder Yamashita received a bachelor's degree in education from Saitama University and a master's degree in sport science from Tsukuba University. He also studied the philosophy of physical education at Brigham Young University. Elder Yamashita has been an instructor and professor at various universities and served in numerous scientific, community, and sports organizations.

Elder Yamashita and his wife were married on March 29, 1980, and sealed in December 1980, after the completion of the Tokyo Japan Temple. They have six children.

Prior to his call to the First Quorum of the Seventy, Elder Yamashita served as a bishop, high councilor, stake mission president, stake president, and Area Seventy. ■



Elder Randall K. Bennett

Of the Seventy

It was at the height of his career as an orthodontist that Randall Kay Bennett and his wife, Shelley, felt “a distinct impression” to prepare to serve missions. This meant that they would need to sell their home right away.

The reason for the prompting didn’t become immediately apparent—it took three years for their home to sell, a process that “took a lot of patience” and required that they “show the Lord that we were really committed,” Elder Bennett says. “We continued to trust in the Lord and tried to stay close to Him through frequent temple attendance, daily scripture study, prayer, fasting, and service to others.”

Shortly after their home finally sold, Elder Bennett was called to serve at the Provo Missionary Training Center and then as president of the Russia Samara Mission.

“It was wonderful—and very humbling—to know that the Lord had been mindful of us and had been preparing us,” Elder Bennett said. “We have come to know that the Lord is aware of the thoughts of our minds and the feelings of our hearts. We have learned to trust that He knows better than we do, that He knows more than we do, and that He loves us.”

In addition to his callings as a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy and a mission president, Elder Bennett has served as president and counselor in a Provo Missionary Training Center branch, member of a stake high council, counselor in a bishopric, ward Young Men president, various other callings, and as a missionary in the France Paris and France Toulouse Missions.

Elder Bennett earned a doctor of dental surgery degree from the University of Alberta (Canada) and a master’s degree in orthodontics from Loma Linda University in Southern California, USA.

Elder Bennett was born in June 1955 in Magrath, Alberta, Canada. His parents are Donald Kay Bennett and Anne Darlene Long. He married Shelley Dianne Watchman on April 23, 1977, in the Cardston Alberta Temple. They are the parents of four children. ■



Elder J. Devn Cornish

Of the Seventy

Elder John Devn Cornish knows that every member and every calling in the Church is important. “It is important to remember when considering callings in the Church that it doesn’t matter where we sit on the plane—it matters that we’re on the plane,” he says. “Being a part of the work matters eternally. Which position we occupy is of very little importance.”

From his call to serve in the Guatemala–El Salvador Mission to his most recent call to the Second Quorum of the Seventy, Elder Cornish has been engaged in fulfilling his Church callings, including ward Young Men president, elders quorum president, ward executive secretary, high priests group leader, high councilor, bishop, stake president, president of the Dominican Republic Santiago Mission, and Area Seventy.

Born in April 1951 in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, to George and Naomi Cornish, Elder Cornish grew up in Utah, Georgia, and Virginia, USA, before returning to Utah for college.

While living in Provo, he met Elaine Simmons at a young single adult activity. They married in the Manti Utah Temple in August 1973.

While raising six children with his wife, Elder Cornish served in the United States Air Force Medical Corp, earned bachelor’s and medical degrees from Johns Hopkins University, and pursued his residency in pediatrics at Harvard Medical School—Boston Children’s Hospital.

Education and work in Idaho, Texas, California, and Georgia, USA, moved the family a lot over the years, but wherever they were, Elder and Sister Cornish say, they loved serving in the Church.

“The work is growing throughout the world, and it is a great blessing to be able to help serve the Lord’s children wherever they may be,” Elder Cornish says.

This call to the Seventy, “like every calling in the Church, will be another opportunity to be a part of the Lord’s work,” Elder Cornish says. “We are grateful for that privilege.” ■



Elder O. Vincent Haleck

Of the Seventy

From a young age Elder Otto Vincent Haleck paid tithing, fasted, and studied scriptures—and then he met the missionaries and was baptized.

Elder Haleck's mother was a member of the Church but hadn't attended in years. His father wasn't a member of the Church. Yet the family paid tithing, fasted weekly, read the Bible daily, and gave of what they had to those in need. Elder Haleck comes from a legacy of faith.

Elder Haleck was born in January 1949 in American Samoa. His parents, Otto and Dorothy Haleck, sent him to school in California, USA. At the age of 17, he noticed that some friends in student government were different from other students. "They invited me to Mutual, and the rest is history," Elder Haleck says.

Elder Haleck received a bachelor's degree in advertising and marketing from Brigham Young University. He owns a number of businesses in American Samoa and is involved in philanthropic work. Elder Haleck and his wife, Peggy Ann Cameron, were married on June 29, 1972, in the Provo Utah Temple. They are the parents of three children.

Eventually Elder Haleck's whole family found the gospel. Elder Haleck had the privilege of baptizing his 80-year-old father and seeing his mother return to Church activity after 50 years of marriage.

Prior to his call to the Second Quorum of the Seventy, Elder Haleck served as a full-time missionary in the Samoa Apia Mission, bishop, stake high councilor, patriarch, stake president, and most recently, president of the Samoa Apia Mission.

Elder Haleck believes that all his life experiences have led him to where he is now. "I look back on my life, and I can say that I can see the hand of the Lord," Elder Haleck says. "I'm grateful and honored by the confidence the Lord has placed in us. I love the Lord and hope to be a good instrument. I know the Lord will help me." ■



Elder Larry Y. Wilson

Of the Seventy

Balancing the demands of work, Church, and family responsibilities has been a challenge for Elder Larry Young Wilson, but he has made sure family members know how important they are to him.

"The most formative experience I have had is being a husband and a father," Elder Wilson says. "I rarely missed a child's performance in an athletic, musical, or other event. I read them bedtime stories and said prayers with them before tucking them into bed at night. It is so important to be there."

Elder Wilson knows well the demands placed on one who has leadership roles in all aspects of life. He was born in December 1949 in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, to George and Ida Wilson and grew up in Pocatello, Idaho, USA. He received a bachelor's degree in English and American literature from Harvard University and later a master's degree in business administration from the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

Elder Wilson has spent his career as a consultant and executive in the health care industry. Although his career was demanding, Elder Wilson made sure it never took over his life.

"You have to establish boundaries around your work life," he says. "Otherwise, it will swallow everything else. Practically speaking, the areas of work, church, and family time have to take turns being put on hold. Pray to be guided and you will know which one takes precedence on any particular day."

Elder Wilson served diligently as a missionary in the Brazil Central Mission and as bishop, stake president, and Area Seventy before being called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

Helping Elder Wilson find that important balance in all his service is his wife, Lynda Mackey Wilson, whom he married on July 10, 1974, in the Logan Utah Temple. The Wilsons raised four children.

"Whenever I left for Church meetings, she would say, 'Good-bye, honey. Go serve the Lord,'" Elder Wilson says. "She was teaching our children the deeper meaning of my service. Before long they would say, 'Good-bye, Daddy. Go serve the Lord!'" ■



Presidents David O. McKay, Heber J. Grant, and J. Reuben Clark Jr. (left to right) of the First Presidency visit Welfare Square in 1940.

Celebrating 75 Years of Welfare

By Heather Wrigley

Church Magazines

Several addresses during the 181st Annual General Conference of the Church were dedicated to the commemoration of the Church's welfare program, celebrating its 75th year.

On its inaugural day in 1936, President David O. McKay, then a counselor in the First Presidency, affirmed the divinely inspired roots of the Church's welfare plan: "[The welfare program] is established by divine revelation, and there is nothing else in all the world that can so effectively take care of its members."¹

Seventy-five years have come and gone. Economic cycles have run their course and begun again. The world has seen huge societal and cultural changes, and the Church has seen monumental growth.

But the words spoken of the Church's divinely inspired welfare plan on that day in 1936 are as true today as they were then.

Welfare Principles

In 1929 the United States experienced huge financial losses when the stock market crashed. By 1932 unemployment in Utah had reached 35.8 percent.

Though the Church had welfare principles in place, including a system of storehouses and programs to help members find work, many members were turning to government relief.

"I believe that there is a growing disposition among the people to try to get something from the government of the United States with little hope of ever paying it back," President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945) commented during this time.²

Church leaders wanted to help struggling members without promoting idleness and a sense of entitlement. The goal was to help people help themselves become independent.

In 1933 the First Presidency

announced: "Our able-bodied members must not, except as a last resort, be put under the embarrassment of accepting something for nothing. . . . Church officials administering relief must devise ways and means by which all able-bodied Church members who are in need, may make compensation for aid given them by rendering some sort of service."³

With the principles in place and the faith of the Saints in play, individual Church units as well as the Church at large went to work organizing classes on sewing and canning, coordinating work projects, acquiring farms, and emphasizing righteous, thrifty, and independent living.

The Church Welfare Plan

With the organization of the Church Security Plan (renamed the Church Welfare Plan in 1938), people were given the opportunity to work, to the extent of their ability, for the assistance they received. The plan taught people to turn to themselves for a "hand up" rather than to other sources for a handout.

"Our primary purpose was to set up . . . a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self-respect be once more established amongst our people," President Grant said during the October 1936 general conference. "Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership."⁴

Over the years, the Church's welfare system has included many programs: Social Services (now LDS Family Services), LDS Charities, Humanitarian Services, and Emergency Response. These programs and others have blessed the lives of hundreds



Whether making bread (above left), growing grapes (above right), or providing aid in some other way, the Church's welfare program aims to develop self-reliance through faith in Jesus Christ.

of thousands both in and out of the Church.

Going International

Even after the Great Depression came to an end at the outbreak of World War II, President J. Reuben Clark Jr., Second Counselor in the First Presidency, providentially advocated continuing the welfare program. In October 1945, U.S. President Harry S. Truman called on Church President George Albert Smith (1870–1951) to determine how and when supplies could be delivered to areas of Europe devastated by the war. To President Truman's astonishment, Church leaders replied that the food and clothing and other relief supplies were already collected and ready for shipping.

Over time the Church expanded its welfare facilities and programs to cover more areas of need, including more geographical areas. In the 1970s, the Church expanded its welfare projects and production to Mexico, England, and the Pacific Islands. During the following decade Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay became the first countries outside the United States to receive

Church employment centers.

With the formation of Church Humanitarian Services in 1985, the Church's international welfare efforts grew tremendously as clothing and other goods were sorted for shipment around the world in response to poverty and disasters.

Today the growth of the international membership of the Church, especially in developing nations, poses new challenges, which the welfare program is adapting to meet.

An Inspired Plan for Today

The basic principles of welfare—self-reliance and industry—remain the same today as when the Lord commanded Adam, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (Genesis 3:19).

In latter days the Lord has declared, “And the storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the church; and widows and orphans shall be provided for, as also the poor” (D&C 83:6). Then He reminds us, “But it must needs be done in mine own way” (D&C 104:16).

Welfare principles are at work in members' lives around the world as a daily principle in individual homes.

“The strength of the Church and the Lord's real storehouse is in the homes and hearts of his people,” Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said.⁵

As individuals develop their own self-reliance through faith in Jesus Christ, the program's long-term objective, as defined by President Clark, continues to be fulfilled: “the building of character in the members of the Church, givers and receivers, rescuing all that is finest down deep inside of them, and bringing to flower and fruitage the latent richness of the spirit, which after all is the mission and purpose and reason for being of this Church.”⁶ ■

NOTES

1. David O. McKay, in Henry D. Taylor, *The Church Welfare Plan*, unpublished ms., Salt Lake City (1984), 26–27.
2. Heber J. Grant, in Conference Report, Oct. 1933, 5.
3. In James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols., (1965–75), 5:332–34.
4. Heber J. Grant, in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, 3.
5. Robert D. Hales, “Welfare Principles to Guide Our Lives: An Eternal Plan for the Welfare of Men's Souls,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 28.
6. J. Reuben Clark Jr., in special meeting of stake presidents, Oct. 2, 1936.

Inspired Words on an Inspired Work: What Speakers Said about Welfare

Several addresses during the 181st Annual General Conference of the Church were dedicated to the commemoration of the Church's welfare program, celebrating its 75th year.

Below are excerpts from speakers' talks focusing on the welfare program and the welfare principles set forth by the Lord to help His children help themselves.

President Thomas S. Monson

"I declare that the welfare program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is inspired of Almighty God." (See "The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World," page 90.)

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency

"Great temporal needs of the children of Heavenly Father have come again in our time as they have and as they will in

all times. The principles at the foundation of the Church welfare program are not for only one time or one place. They are for all times and all places."

"[The Lord] has invited and commanded us to participate in His work to lift up those in need. We make a covenant to do that in the waters of baptism and in the holy temples of God. We renew the covenant on Sundays when we partake of the sacrament." (See "Opportunities to Do Good," page 22.)

Bishop H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop

"The prophetic welfare plan is not merely an interesting footnote in the history of the Church. The principles upon which it is based define who we are as a people. It is the essence of who we are as individual disciples of our Savior and Exemplar, Jesus the Christ."

"This sacred work is not only to

benefit and bless those who suffer or are in need. As sons and daughters of God, we cannot inherit the full measure of eternal life without being fully invested in caring for each other while we are here on earth. It is in the benevolent practice of sacrifice and giving of ourselves to others that we learn the celestial principles of sacrifice and consecration."

"This is the sacred work the Savior expects from His disciples. It is the work He loved when He walked the earth. It is the work I know we would find Him doing were He here among us today." (See "The Sanctifying Work of Welfare," page 81.)

Silvia H. Allred, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency

"Men and women of the Church participate jointly today in bringing relief to those in need. . . . When love becomes the guiding principle in our care for others, our service to them becomes the gospel in action. It is the gospel in its finest moment. It is pure religion." (See "The Essence of Discipleship," page 84.) ■

Perpetual Education Fund Fulfills Prophetic Promises

By Natasia Garrett
Church Magazines

Ten years ago President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) outlined a problem—the inability of many returned missionaries and other worthy youth in developing areas to escape poverty—and provided a solution: the Perpetual Education

Fund (PEF). A revolving fund that would be established using donations from members and friends of the Church, the PEF would supply educational loans to young people with the expectation that they would prepare for gainful employment in their communities and repay the loans so that others could have similar

opportunities. He said the Church would rely on volunteers and existing Church resources to succeed.

Miracles Brought to Pass

When President Hinckley stepped to the pulpit on March 31, 2001, and laid out a vision of the Perpetual Education Fund before the priesthood of the Church, it was evident to many that the Lord's prophet had received direction.

The potential for failure might have seemed to loom as the PEF's



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN WILCOX

The Perpetual Education Fund, which began 10 years ago, has helped more than 47,000 participants.

newly appointed leaders rushed to begin providing loans by autumn of 2001, as President Hinckley had directed. Outside of the prophet’s inspired outline there existed no business plan, no detailed proposal. The program was organized using the text of President Hinckley’s conference talk as its charter. Hundreds of loan applications were flooding into Church headquarters even as directors were being called and the basic structure of the program was being formed.

But miracles were already taking place. Within the first year, millions of dollars were donated to the program. Several individuals whose backgrounds made them uniquely qualified for the work of the PEF were immediately available to serve as volunteer directors. The infrastructure necessary to support the PEF globally had already been laid in the form of Church Educational

System institute programs and Church Employment Resource Centers. Whatever was needed fell into place quickly, providing the program with what President Hinckley reported in April 2002 to be a “solid foundation.”¹

“President Hinckley’s invitation helps those who contribute to the PEF as well as those who [use it to] improve themselves to draw closer to our Savior.”

—Elder John K. Carmack

Rex Allen, currently serving as volunteer director of training and communications for the PEF, said, “Long ago, Moses stretched his staff over the Red Sea and the waters divided. President Hinckley mirrored

this same faith when he held his prophetic mantle over the dark sea of poverty and initiated PEF.”

“It is a miracle,” President Hinckley confirmed repeatedly.

After 10 years, though, the greatest miracles may be just beginning.

Promises Fulfilled

In his announcement of the PEF and in later addresses, President Hinckley promised several blessings would flow from the PEF. Each is being fulfilled with increasing momentum as more participants graduate from the PEF and repay their loans.

Opportunity and Employment

“[Participants] will be enabled to get good educations that will lift them out of the slough of poverty,” President Hinckley said.²

As of February 2011, nearly 90 percent of those who have sought

work after completing their schooling have found employment. Some 78 percent of those now employed say that their current employment is an improvement over what they had before receiving training. The average income after schooling for PEF participants is three to four times greater than income prior to schooling, representing a vast improvement in economic status.

Family and Community

“They will marry and go forward with skills that will qualify them to earn well and take their places in society where they can make a substantial contribution,” President Hinckley declared.³ Just over one-third of current PEF participants are now married.

Elder John K. Carmack, executive director of the PEF, says: “One of the most encouraging outcomes of the PEF so far is that we are seeing that young people gain more hope. This hope gives them the courage to get married and to move forward in their lives.”

As they do so, their growing families look forward to brighter futures.

Church and Leadership

“As faithful members of the Church, they will pay their tithes and offerings, and the Church will be much the stronger for their presence in the areas where they live,” President Hinckley said.⁴

In some areas where the PEF has been in operation for several years, as many as 10 to 15 percent of current Church leadership consists of PEF participants.

“Participants have encouraged other young people to use PEF loans and to break out of poverty,” said Rex Allen. “After 10 years we are seeing

the circle of hope expand as those who have been blessed share the blessings with others.”

Effects on the Lives of Many

“[The PEF] will become a blessing to all whose lives it touches—to the young men and women, to their future families, to the Church that will be blessed with their strong local leadership,” President Hinckley promised.⁵

More than 47,000 people have participated in the PEF since fall 2001. That’s not counting the extended families that are supported and inspired by family members participating in the PEF, the wards and branches that benefit from members who have a greater capacity to serve and contribute, and the local economies that need skilled workers to grow.

“Imagine the impact as you consider all who are affected,” Brother Allen said. “This extends to those who donate to the PEF—the donors, their families, their wards and branches—all are blessed by their contributions.”

“Within the grasp of almost all Latter-day Saints is the ability to give something regularly to this fund and to other worthy endeavors,” Elder Carmack said. “President Hinckley’s invitation helps those who contribute to the PEF as well as those who [use it to] improve themselves to draw closer to our Savior.”

Continuing Growth

President Hinckley’s prophetic vision of the Perpetual Education Fund has been realized as the influence of this inspired program continues to spread throughout the world, and it will continue to be realized in ever-greater numbers as

donations continue and loans are repaid, allowing a new generation of participants to improve themselves and their situations.

To learn more about the Perpetual Education Fund, please visit pef.lds.org. ■

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Church Goes Forward,” *Liahona*, July 2002, 4; *Ensign*, May 2002, 6.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Liahona*, July 2002, 4; *Ensign*, May 2002, 6.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Liahona*, July 2002, 4; *Ensign*, May 2002, 6.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Perpetual Education Fund,” *Liahona*, July 2001, 62; *Ensign*, May 2001, 52.
5. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Liahona*, July 2001, 62; *Ensign*, May 2001, 52.

Call for Survey Participants

If you have ever wanted to influence the *Liahona* or *Ensign* and the millions who read the messages in the magazines, here’s your chance. The magazines are looking for members around the world who are willing to provide feedback and participate in a handful of simple online surveys each year. If you would like to participate, please e-mail liahona@ldschurch.org or ensign@ldschurch.org and put “Magazine Evaluation” in the subject line. Volunteers must have Internet access and be able to communicate in English, Portuguese, or Spanish. Your feedback will help the magazines better meet the needs of readers around the world. ■



The 400-year-old King James Version of the Holy Bible continues to influence members of the Church today.

Bible's 400th Anniversary Best Celebrated with More Study, Apostles' Words Suggest

It is not by chance or coincidence that we have the Bible today," said Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.¹ He explains that the Bible exists because of the obedience of righteous individuals who followed promptings to record sacred experiences and teachings, as well as the faith and courage of others, including translators, who later sacrificed much to "protect and preserve" the Bible.

May 2, 2011, marks the 400th anniversary of the first publication of the King James Version of the Bible. Throughout the world, people are already commemorating the publication of the Bible with symposia, celebrations, concerts, speaking competitions, and more. Members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles suggest another way to mark the occasion: by developing a love for the Bible as we study the life and ministry of the Savior and the words of the ancient prophets and apostles.

"How grateful we should be for the Holy Bible," Elder Ballard said. "I love

the Bible, its teachings, its lessons, and its spirit. . . . I love the perspective and peace that come from reading the Bible."²

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles agrees. "We love and revere the Bible," he said. "It is always identified first in our canon, our 'standard works.'"³ He reminded us that the Restoration came about because Joseph Smith studied the Bible and exerted faith in the promise made in James 1:5 that God will answer our prayers.

Recalling the events that paved the way for the Restoration, Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke with gratitude for all who made possible the translation and publication of the Bible. Because of their work, the King James Version of the Bible was available for anyone to read—and because it was available to Joseph Smith, the true Church was restored to the earth. "Is it any wonder that the King James Version is the approved English Bible of The Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints today?" Elder Hales asked.⁴

"We must ever remember the countless martyrs who knew of [the Bible's] power and who gave their lives that we may be able to find within its words the eternal happiness and the peace of our Heavenly Father's kingdom," Elder Ballard said.⁵

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, shared a story about viewing a centuries-old family Bible and finding a quote on the title page that said, "The fairest Impression of the Bible is to have it well printed on the Reader's heart."⁶ He follows with this scripture: "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2).

By knowing and loving the Bible and its accompanying scriptural texts, we can show our appreciation and enjoy the blessings of the Restoration of the gospel.

"Consider the magnitude of our blessing to have the Holy Bible and some 900 additional pages of scripture," said Elder D. Todd Christofferson. "May we feast continuously on the words of Christ that will tell us all things we should do."⁷ ■

NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, "The Miracle of the Holy Bible," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2007, 80.
2. M. Russell Ballard, *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2007, 81.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, "My Words . . . Never Cease," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2008, 92.
4. Robert D. Hales, "Preparations for the Restoration and the Second Coming: My Hand Shall Be over Thee," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 90.
5. M. Russell Ballard, *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2007, 80.
6. Boyd K. Packer, "The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ," *Liahona*, Jan. 2002, 73; *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 63.
7. D. Todd Christofferson, "The Blessing of Scripture," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2010, 35.



Architectural Rendering of the Rome Italy Temple

“Every temple is a house of God, filling the same functions and with identical blessings and ordinances,” said President Thomas S. Monson in the Sunday morning session. “The Rome Italy Temple, uniquely, is being built in one of the most historic locations in the world, a city where the ancient Apostles Peter and Paul preached the gospel of Christ. . . . In a coming day, the faithful in this, the Eternal City, will receive ordinances eternal in nature in a holy house of God.”



I share with you my love for the Savior and for His great atoning sacrifice for us. . . . I believe that none of us can conceive the full import of what Christ did for us in Gethsemane, but I am grateful every day of my life for His atoning sacrifice in our behalf," said President Thomas S. Monson at the close of the 181st Annual General Conference. ". . . He passed beneath all things that He might save all things. In doing so, He gave us life beyond this mortal existence. He reclaimed us from the Fall of Adam. To the depths of my very soul, I am grateful to Him. He taught us how to live. He taught us how to die. He secured our salvation."