

Ensign



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**Overcoming Addiction
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She Worketh Willingly with Her Hands, by Elspeth Young

Lydia was a seller of purple in the city of Thyatira. Like the virtuous woman described in Proverbs, Lydia worked “willingly with her hands” (Proverbs 31:13). She was among those who listened to the Apostle Paul and “whose heart the Lord opened” (Acts 16:14).

After she and her household were baptized, she invited Paul to come to her home and further teach them (see Acts 16:15).

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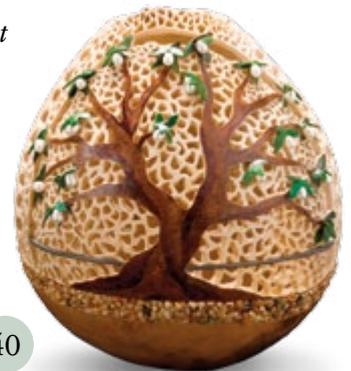
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September 2012 Volume 42 • Number 9

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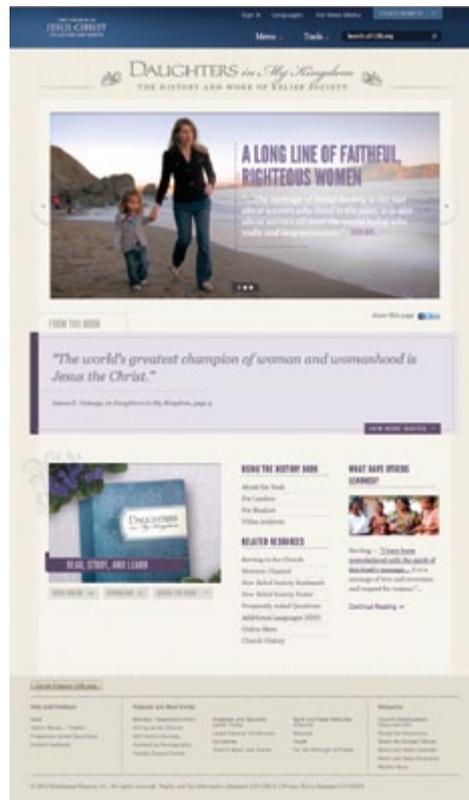
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DAUGHTERS IN MY KINGDOM AVAILABLE ONLINE

Women who appreciate the past are better able to shape the future. Enjoy this visually interesting and easy-to-read Relief Society history. Visit lds.org/relief-society/daughters-in-my-kingdom.

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



Sharing the Gospel

HEART TO HEART

God will put prepared people in the way of His prepared servants who want to share the gospel. You have had that happen in your own life. How often it happens depends on the preparation of your mind and your heart.

I have a friend who prays every day to meet someone who is prepared to receive the gospel. He carries with him a copy of the Book of Mormon. The night before a short trip, he decided not to take a copy with him but instead to carry a pass-along card. But as he got ready to leave, a spiritual impression came to him: “Take a Book of Mormon with you.” He put one in his bag.

When a woman he knew sat next to him on the trip, he wondered, “Is this the one?” She rode with him again on the return trip. He thought, “How should I bring up the gospel?”

Instead, she said to him, “You pay tithing to your church, don’t you?” He said he did. She said she was supposed to pay tithing to her church but didn’t. Then she asked, “What can you tell me about the Book of Mormon?”

He explained that the book is scripture, another witness of Jesus Christ, translated by the Prophet Joseph Smith. She seemed interested, so he reached into his bag and said, “I was impressed to bring this book with me. I think it is for you.”

She began to read it. As they parted, she said, “You and I are going to have more conversations about this.”

What my friend could not know—but what God *did* know—was that she was looking for a church. God knew she had watched my friend and wondered why his church made him so happy. God knew she would ask about the Book of Mormon and that she would be willing to be taught by the missionaries. She was prepared. So was my friend. You and I can also be prepared.

The preparation we need is in our mind and our heart. The woman had heard and remembered words about the Book of Mormon, the Lord’s restored Church, and the commandment to pay tithes to God. And she had felt the beginning of the witness of truth in her heart.

The Lord has said He will reveal truth to our mind and our heart by the Holy Ghost (see D&C 8:2). Most of the people you will meet have had the beginning of that preparation. They have heard or read of God and His word. If their hearts are soft enough, they have felt, however faintly, a confirmation of truth.

The woman was prepared. So was my friend, the Latter-day Saint who had studied the Book of Mormon. He had felt a witness that it is true, and he recognized the direction from the Spirit to take a copy with him. He was prepared in his mind and his heart.



God is preparing people to receive your testimony of restored truth. He requires your faith and then your action to share fearlessly what has become so precious to you and to those you love.

Prepare to share by filling your mind every day with the truths of the gospel. As you keep the commandments and honor your covenants, you will feel the testimony of the Spirit and more of the Savior's love for you and for those you meet.

If you do your part, you will increasingly have the sweet experience of meeting people who are prepared to hear your testimony of the truth—offered from heart to heart, yours to theirs. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Consider reading the message with the family and discussing the next-to-last paragraph, where President Eyring discusses ways to strengthen one's testimony. Discuss with the family the importance of bearing testimony when sharing the gospel. Children in the family may find it helpful to role-play how to bear testimony to friends.

YOUTH

Knowing What to Say

If you feel like you don't know enough about the gospel to share it with others, take comfort in these promises from the scriptures:

"Lift up your voices unto this people; speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts, and you shall not be confounded before men;

"For it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say" (D&C 100:5–6).

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

These are great promises, but to obtain them, we have to do our part. In this message, President Eyring taught us how: "Prepare to share [the gospel] by filling your mind every day with the truths of the gospel." What can you do to fill your mind with the truths of the gospel?



CHILDREN

Prepare to Share

President Eyring says that an important way to prepare to share the gospel is to fill our minds with gospel truths, like the children below are doing.

Look at the pictures on the bottom row and find something different from the picture above it.



What are some other things you could do to prepare to share?

Prayerfully study this material and, as appropriate, discuss it with the sisters you visit. Use the questions to help you strengthen your sisters and to make Relief Society an active part of your own life.



Faith, Family, Relief

Special Needs and Service Rendered

The needs of others are ever present,” said President Thomas S. Monson, “and each of us can do something to help someone. . . . Unless we lose ourselves in service to others, there is little purpose to our own lives.”¹

As visiting teachers we can sincerely come to know and love each sister we visit. Service to those we visit will flow naturally out of our love for them (see John 13:34–35).

How can we know the spiritual and temporal needs of our sisters so we can render service when it is needed? As visiting teachers, we are entitled to receive inspiration when we pray about those we visit.

Maintaining regular contact with our sisters is also important. Personal visits, telephone calls, a note of encouragement, e-mails, sitting with her, a sincere compliment, reaching out to her at church, helping her in time of illness or need, and other acts of service all help us watch over and strengthen each other.²

Visiting teachers are asked to report the well-being of sisters, any special needs they have, and the service rendered to them. These kinds of reports and our service to our sisters help us demonstrate our discipleship.³



From the Scriptures

John 10:14–16; 3 Nephi 17:7, 9;
Moroni 6:3–4

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 85.
2. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 9.5.1.
3. See *Handbook 2*, 9.5.4.
4. Mary Ellen Smoot, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 117.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 82.

What Can I Do?

1. Am I seeking personal inspiration to know how to respond to the spiritual and temporal needs of each sister I’m assigned to watch over?
2. How do the sisters I watch over know that I care about them and their families?

From Our History

Serving one another has always been at the heart of visiting teaching. Through ongoing service we bring kindness and friendship that go beyond monthly visits. It is our caring that counts.

“My desire is to plead with our sisters to stop worrying about a phone call or a quarterly or monthly visit,” said Mary Ellen Smoot, the 13th Relief Society general president. She asked us to “concentrate instead on nurturing tender souls.”⁴

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught, “It is vital that we serve each other in the kingdom.” Yet he recognized that not all service need be heroic. “So often, our acts of service consist of simple encouragement or of giving . . . help with mundane tasks,” he said, “but what glorious consequences can flow . . . from small but deliberate deeds!”⁵

April Conference Notebook

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

As you review the April 2012 general conference, you can use this page (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.

STORIES FROM CONFERENCE

My First Church Calling

I attended with my family the branch of the Church in Frankfurt, Germany. We were blessed with many wonderful people in our little branch. One was our branch president, Brother Landschulz. . . .

One Sunday, President Landschulz asked if he could speak with me. . . .

[He] invited me into a small classroom—our chapel did not have an office for the branch president—and there he extended a call to me to serve as deacons quorum president.

“This is an important position,” he said, and then he took his time and described why. He explained what he and the Lord expected of me and how I could receive help.

I don’t remember much of what he said, but I do remember well how I felt. A sacred, divine Spirit filled my heart as he spoke. I could feel that this was the Savior’s Church. And I felt that the calling he had extended was inspired by the Holy Ghost. I remember walking out of that tiny classroom feeling quite a bit taller than before. . . .

. . . I felt honored, and I wanted to serve to the best of my ability and not disappoint either my branch president or the Lord.

I realize now that the branch president

could have merely gone through the motions when he called me to this position. He could have simply told me in the hallway or during our priesthood meeting that I was the new deacons quorum president.

Instead, he spent time with me and helped me understand not only the *what* of my assignment and new responsibility but, much more important, the *why*. . . .

. . . It is an example to me of the motivating power of priesthood leadership that awakens the spirit and inspires action.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Why of Priesthood Service,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 58.

Questions to Ponder

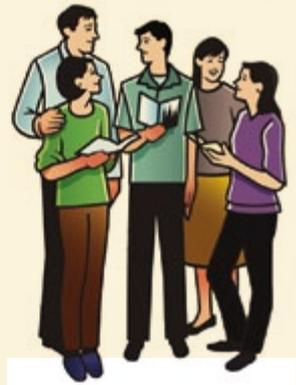
- How does accepting Church callings strengthen you and those you serve?
- What can you do to prepare yourself to accept a Church calling, even when you are busy?

Consider writing your thoughts in your journal or discussing them with others.

Additional resources on this topic: Guide to the Scriptures, “Call, Called of God, Calling,” scriptures.lds.org; Henry B. Eyring, “Rise to Your Call,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 75–78.

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit conference.lds.org.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY RUTH SIPUS



USING AGENCY WISELY

One of the most important truths we can learn in our youth is that true freedom and lasting happiness come from using our agency to keep the commandments of God.¹ On pages 8–9 of this month’s issue of the *New Era*, Elder Shayne M. Bowen of the Seventy emphasizes this principle.

“You have the potential to receive all that the Father has. The choice is yours,” he tells youth.

In a world fraught with wickedness and peril, parents play a crucial role in preparing their children to make correct choices and to overcome temptation. In fact, the Lord has commanded parents “to bring up [their] children in light and truth” (D&C 93:40).

The Church has provided parents with resources to help their children learn and live this standard. The following suggestions may prove helpful.

Suggestions for Teaching Youth

- Read with your teen the section on agency and accountability in *For the Strength of Youth*. Doing so will give you an opportunity to discuss the standard and to answer any questions your son or daughter may have.
- Read Elder Bowen’s article on pages 8–9 of this month’s issue of the *New Era*. Consider using the story about feeding the correct wolf to help your teen understand the importance of making good decisions.
- Go to youth.lds.org, click on “For the Strength of Youth” under “Youth

Menu,” and then click on “Agency and Accountability.” There you will find scriptural references, videos, questions and answers, and articles.

- Consider holding a family home evening or family devotional on the importance of being courageous and standing for what we believe.²

Suggestions for Teaching Children

- This month’s Bringing Primary Home is about choosing to keep the commandments (see pages 40–41 in this month’s issue of the *Friend*). Read the story as a family and ask your child to keep track of the number of decisions made in the story. Explain that Heavenly Father allows us to make decisions so that we can learn and grow. Share some of the things you have learned from making decisions.
- Complete the CTR Activity in Bringing Primary Home. Then talk about the consequences of making good decisions. Share your testimony of the blessings you have received for making righteous decisions.
- For additional ideas on teaching agency and accountability, see January’s section of the *2012 Outline for Sharing Time* (online at lds.org/service/serving-in-the-church/primary/sharing-time-2012). ■

NOTES

1. See *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 3.
2. See Thomas S. Monson, “Dare to Stand Alone,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 60.

SCRIPTURES ON AGENCY

Deuteronomy 11:26–28;
30:15–20
Joshua 24:14–15
2 Nephi 2
Helaman 14:30–31
Moroni 7:15–19
Doctrine and Covenants
58:26–28; 101:78
Moses 4:3–4

THE BLESSINGS OF FOCUSING ON THE TEMPLE



“Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.”

Alma 40:11

There is no greater work than building an eternal family—and that work finds fulfillment in the house of the Lord.

By Joshua J. Perkey

Church Magazines

Few things in life affect us more poignantly than the loss of a loved one. The lives of Bishop Richard Rodriguez and his wife, Ruth, have been punctuated by such a loss. Yet with eyes to see and ears to hear and through the sacred ordinances of the temple, they have faced this challenge with faith, which has led them closer to the Savior, to happiness, and to peace.

Dealing with Loss

Richard and Ruth met while working at a cement production company in Azogues, a small town in the Andes Mountains not far from Cuenca, Ecuador. Richard was a convert to the Church, having joined with his mother and brother a few years before. At the time, Ruth was not a member.

“When I met Ruth, I couldn’t leave her,” he says, smiling.

They were married in 1996. Just a few months later, Ruth’s father passed away.

“His death was the cause of a severe depression in my life,” Ruth explains. “You never get over losing a loved one. You always feel the loss.”

In 2001, Richard’s mother died. Again, the loss brought much sorrow. But over the years, Richard had matured in his knowledge and testimony of the gospel, and that provided a comforting perspective.

“Because of the gospel,” he says, “I understood a little bit about how my mom was doing. I shared Alma 40:11 with Ruth and explained what happens to the spirit when it leaves the body. This was a great comfort to us both.”

Valuing Agency

Nevertheless, Ruth was still not interested in the Church, though she was friendly to Church members and the missionaries. “I just didn’t feel the need to change my religion,” she says.

Richard decided not to press the issue. “Every time we talked



about the Church, the conversation ended badly,” he says. “And when I pressured her, it went badly. So I stopped. I didn’t want to do that to her.”

In the fall of 2001, the missionaries invited Ruth to a baptismal service. Her decision to accept the invitation changed everything.

At the service the sister who was being baptized shared her testimony. “She spoke about the miracles that had happened in her life since she had come to know the Church—miracles of health, well-being, and strength,” Ruth recalls. “This sister basically lived alone yet had this testimony.”

Ruth wondered how a woman who had faced such difficult trials could have that kind of faith. That question and acting on the invitation to attend the baptismal service touched Ruth’s heart and prepared her to receive a witness from the Spirit.

“That’s when I made the decision to be baptized. Later, when Richard and I were alone, I said, ‘Richard, what do you think about me getting baptized in December?’ And there you have it. I was already familiar with the Church and the gospel. But I still needed to hear the discussions from the missionaries.”

“God prepares the hearts of people,” Richard adds. “We can do some things on our own. I did many things, but it wasn’t until Ruth was prepared that this happened.”

Ruth agrees: “I had many challenges to overcome when we got married. When I finally overcame those challenges, that’s when I realized I didn’t need to wait for another miracle in my life. That’s when I was ready to be baptized.”



Above: Richard and Ruth Rodriguez with their children (from left): Maria Judith, Jorge, Richard Jr., and Freddy. They were sealed in the Guayaquil Ecuador Temple (right).

“Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.

Facing Challenges with Faith

Ruth’s baptism in December 2001 marked a shift in their family focus. With that shift came spiritual strength and blessings that have guided them to this day.

“We were sealed in the temple on June 28, 2003,” Richard says. “Because of that, many blessings have come into our lives. Our first two children were sealed to us, and our next two children were born in the covenant. Our children are a blessing.”

Richard explains that serving faithfully in the Church has brought harmony into their home: “My wife and I are yoked together equally. We have faced challenges and trials, but we have been able to get through them



“The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.”

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.

united. We believe in the same things. Being sealed in the temple, we know that if we endure faithfully, the Lord will help us.”

Focusing on the Temple Changes the Ward

When Ruth was baptized, only 25 members lived in what was then the Azogues Branch. Now a ward, it often has 75 or more members at sacrament meeting.

“You strengthen individuals when you strengthen families,” Ruth says. “As members keep the commandments and listen to all that the leaders teach us, we strengthen our families and the ward. It is like each family is a part of the cement that holds the ward together so that it can grow.”

As bishop, Richard has promoted efforts to strengthen families through making and keeping temple covenants and frequent temple worship. One manifestation of this emphasis is ward temple trips to the Guayaquil Ecuador Temple, about five hours away.

“We attend as a ward as often as we can,” Ruth says. “Our goal is to have every family sealed in the temple.”

“Attending the temple to be sealed has helped families grow spiritually,” Richard adds. “In recent years a number of families have been sealed. And now they prepare their own family names and perform ordinances for their ancestors. Those who do have developed a greater commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ and found greater happiness. The temple has changed the vision of the members.”

Focusing on the Temple Changes Individuals

Through sacred, personal experiences, the Rodriguez family has gained a powerful,

personalized testimony of temple covenants and of performing vicarious work for ancestors.

“We have performed the work for my uncles and aunts, siblings of my father,” Ruth says. “We have felt that we should do the work for our family ourselves. I know the vicarious work we do is true. I feel great peace in the work we have been able to do for our ancestors. This has been a most special work.”

Richard testifies, “I love doing temple work for those who are waiting. This is the work of our whole lives. This is what we want to do.”

Attending the temple has changed their family. “When we were sealed in the temple, things changed radically,” Ruth says. “Our spiritual strength has grown.”

Richard agrees: “For our family, it has meant greater family unity, knowing that the family bond, which ultimately is the beginning and end of everything, gives us the strength to move forward. In life there are always challenges. But with the focus that the temple gives us, we can face the future in a different way. Being able to share these blessings—and especially to help other families do the same—brings great joy to our lives. I feel greater commitment in our home.”

Richard feels that the family’s decision to prepare to go to the temple, receive ordinances, be sealed, and then return to perform vicarious work for their ancestors has been one of their greatest blessings. “When we exercise faith and accept the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and especially when we go to the temple to receive sealing and saving ordinances through the priesthood, lives are changed,” he says. “One who receives the covenants of the temple is no longer the same.” ■



ACTING AS AGENTS

“In the grand division of all of God’s creations, there are ‘things to act and things to be acted upon’ (2 Nephi 2:14). As children of our Heavenly Father, we have been blessed with the gift of moral agency, the capacity and power of independent action. Endowed with agency, we are agents, and we primarily are to act and not merely be acted upon—especially as we ‘seek learning . . . by study and also by faith’ (D&C 88:118).”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Watching with All Perseverance,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 42.



FROM Longing TO Belonging

At first I felt out of place in my new ward. But a few key decisions helped make the transition a smooth one.

By Jennifer Brinkerhoff

In my first weeks attending a family ward as a single adult, I felt as though I had a spotlight over my head and a neon sign announcing that I was not married. Because my new ward seemed to be filled with couples—many of whom were younger than I was—I felt vulnerable and out of place. I had attended a singles ward for more than a decade and had become familiar with the unique culture that these wards foster. There, I had become comfortable and in some ways complacent.

It didn't take me long to discover that I had some important decisions to make about what I would do to integrate into my new ward. The following are a few of the choices I made based on principles I believe can be applied to a variety of situations, whether we are married or single.

Be Quick to Observe

One of the greatest challenges I initially faced was a feeling of isolation because I sat alone. I decided that instead of focusing on how I felt different, I would begin to observe who might need my help. I discovered that to fill voids or overcome insecurities, I must act intentionally rather than wait for someone to take care of me or ask me to help. For instance, I asked a neighbor whose husband was completing his hospital residency and was often gone on Sundays if I could sit with her and help manage her



two small boys. When the family moved away, I developed a habit of standing at the back of the chapel before the meeting to see if there might be someone I should meet or who might need some help.¹ Doing this has proved a great opportunity to trust and follow the promptings of the Spirit.

Attending church with an attitude of “what can I give today?” rather than “what will I get today?” has been a great blessing in my life. I love to talk with the young women in my ward and learn what is going on in their lives. I am happy to walk the halls with an upset toddler while his or her parents are teaching a priesthood or Relief Society lesson. I have learned how to prayerfully seek to act without an assignment. In short, I am finding that I must *do*—that I can create and act upon opportunities to serve without being asked, told, or solicited.

Seek to Build Unity

The Spirit, I am learning, is a great equalizer. It could be easy to feel different and separate because of my singleness. Yet I know that I find peace in seeking to build relationships on common ground. For example, I found that a married woman struggling with infertility could describe my desires for marriage better than I could, and that my ability to understand the heartache of a recently divorced woman was greater because I had learned to turn to the Savior when I experienced my own loneliness. I have found that as covenant makers and keepers, and in many other ways, we as members of the Church have more in common than we have differences.

There are many opportunities where we can come to know other people and build unity. Home and visiting teaching is a natural setting for learning about people and discovering our similarities. As I have visited with other sisters and discovered what was hidden in their “quiet hearts,”² I have recognized what we have in common. The passing moments between classes or while walking in the hall have also become cherished exchanges for me.

I feel that it is important to know and use people’s names and to watch for those who are new. As I’ve



learned to extend the kind of welcome that I desired as a new ward member, I've realized that it creates a deeper connection for me in the ward. It also helps to ease the transition that we all face as we join a new ward family.

I continue to marvel at how much I have in common with the members of my ward. I find that when I choose to minister to the needs of others, things really do work together for my good (see Romans 8:28).

Accept Selfless Service

Selfless service fills in the cracks of disappointment and unmet expectations. It is a vital key to adjusting to any transition. Yet it took several months before I received a calling in my new ward. In retrospect, I feel that this may have been the Lord's way of developing within me a desire to serve without having a specific calling.

One month after moving in, I gratefully accepted a compassionate service assignment from Relief Society leaders to take a meal to a family with newborn triplets. This opened up a great opportunity. There were two parents and three infants, and they would need help! Many Sundays, I was able to tend one of the babies for part or all of the meeting.

As I have consciously followed the promptings of the Spirit by actively believing that my ward is exactly where I belong, I have learned to accept assignments for service, whether the assignment comes from a leader or from the Spirit. I have also learned to accept others' kindness toward me.

On his first visit, one of my home teachers in my new ward expressed to me that he felt honored to provide priesthood watchcare to my roommate and me. I came to know that he meant it because as each week passed, he made sure to make some kind of contact

with me, even if it was a simple but sincere "hello" at church. Even though this man had a priesthood companion in his assignment, his wife also acted as a partner to him in service and was equally generous in her love and support.

I have also been blessed with intuitive bishops who quickly respond to my needs. Without fail, my bishop seems to know when to ask "how are you *really* doing?" when I need it the most. He listens with compassion and encouragement.



I also recognize that bishops are busy and have many needs to meet. One of the best ways I have learned to help him is simply to communicate my needs with authenticity and openness and then ask for ways that I can help him. As I am seeking for ways to lighten his load rather than add to it, I am creating greater ties to the ward.

Belong

For me, attending my family ward has brought a sense of belonging. It isn't always easy, but as I choose not to focus on what I *don't* have, I see what I *do* have. There is a greater dimension in my Sunday worship and daily

fellowshipping. There are greater connections to individuals and families of all ages and situations. I feel a deeper sense of belonging to my community, my stake, and my ward.

I am grateful for my years in the singles ward where I was given opportunities for leadership and service. I know that those years prepared me for what was to come. However, I am gratefully overwhelmed with the opportunity to actively participate in the blessings of belonging as I serve in my "family ward," a ward that has become my family. ■

NOTES

1. This was inspired by the actions of Susan Bednar, as described by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in "Quick to Observe," *Ensign*, Dec. 2006, 33.
2. See "Lord, I Would Follow Thee," *Hymns*, no. 220.

Attending church with an attitude of "what can I give today?" rather than "what will I get today?" has been a great blessing in my life.



UNITY: MORE MUST BE DONE

"As we think of the great growth of the Church, the diversities of tongues and cultures, and the monumental tasks that yet lie before us, we wonder if there is any more important objective before us than to so live that

we may enjoy the unifying spirit of the Lord. As Jesus prayed, we *must* be united if the world is ever to be convinced that he was sent by God his Father to redeem us from our sins.

"It is unity and oneness that has thus far enabled us to bear our testimony around the globe, bringing forward tens of thousands of missionaries to do their part. More must be done. It is unity that has thus far enabled the Church, its wards and stakes, branches and districts, and members, to construct temples and chapels, undertake welfare projects, seek after the dead, watch over the Church, and build faith. More must be done. These great purposes of the Lord could not have been achieved with dissension or jealousy or selfishness. Our ideas may not always be quite like those who preside in authority over us, but this is the Lord's church and he will bless each of us as we cast off pride, pray for strength, and contribute to the good of the whole."

President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), "That We May Be One," *Ensign*, May 1976, 106.

Sharing the Gospel

BY SHARING YOU

*The best way to share the
gospel is to live it.*

By Stephanie J. Burns and Darcie Jensen

For some of us, sharing the gospel comes naturally. But for many of us, it's not that easy. In fact, we might even be afraid of opening up to friends, family, or neighbors to talk about the gospel, even though we know how important it is to do so.

Further, sometimes when we think about missionary work, we focus too much on the method, activity, or outcome, rather than focusing on helping the individual. The problem is that any efforts that lose sight of the individual can make those efforts feel forced and insincere.

There may be a better way.

That way is to become more converted to the gospel—as individuals—and let the example of our lives and our friendly conversation open the way. The more converted we become, the more comfortable we are with our religion, and we begin to feel an increasing desire for others to enjoy the blessings of the gospel. When that happens, sharing comes more naturally.

In fact, we may not even realize we are sharing the gospel. As we increase the level of our faithful discipleship, the effect it has on our actions, speech, and even countenance will be difficult to ignore. “Your good works will be evident to others,” explains Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “The light of the Lord can beam from your eyes. With that radiance, you had better prepare for questions.”¹



Living Testimonies

Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service explains: “The Savior has shown the way. He has set the perfect example, and He commands us to become as He is (see 3 Nephi 27:27).”² As members learn of Christ and seek to incorporate His attributes into their lives through the power of His Atonement, they become more like Christ and thus more capable of leading others to Him.³

One recent convert from Washington, USA, says that spending time with members was all it took for her to become interested in the gospel. “The happiness they brought with



them and the way I felt around them was undeniable,” she shares. “They didn’t preach to me about God. It was simply in their very being: their lifestyle, their choices, their actions and reactions. When I looked at them, I said to myself, ‘That is how I want to live. That is where I want to be in life.’”

As we become more comfortable with the gospel’s influence in our lives, talking about that influence becomes easier both because we have things to talk about and because we can share what that message has done for us.

Miriam Criscuolo from Italy found that, even after establishing a meaningful friendship with a neighbor, she still didn’t know how to talk about the gospel. “We spent a

lot of time together, but the courage to speak to my new friend about the gospel, even though I knew it was my duty, escaped me,” she shares.

But when the gospel came up naturally, things started to happen. Miriam remembers, “It was my daughter who, when showing a Primary project, aroused the curiosity of my friend. ‘What’s Primary?’ she asked. From that question were born a hundred others. I learned that my friend had been looking for something for years. I told her that the peace of mind she was looking for would be found in our Church.

“She later joined the Church. She was an answer to my prayers about how to find a way to do missionary work and to show my children how it can be done.”



SAY A LITTLE MORE

“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 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.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Waiting on the Road to Damascus,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 76.

Being Friends First

Like Miriam, sometimes we may feel duty-bound to share the gospel and find that this sense of duty can foster forced, uncomfortable discussions. In addition, the feeling of responsibility can overwhelm us and inhibit our ability to effectively explain gospel principles.

Successful missionary opportunities are more likely to be found when members are just good, true friends with others. As Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “If we are open about our membership in the Church from the very beginning, . . . friends and acquaintances will accept that this is part of who we are.”⁴

Including the gospel in existing friendships rather than basing friendships on sharing the gospel can increase missionary successes. Eliana Verges de Lerda, a member of the Church in Argentina, met her friend Anabel when they were both six years old. Their friendship grew as they went to school together. During that time, Eliana never hid the fact that she was a member of the Church.

“I felt very comfortable talking about the gospel with Anabel, even though we didn’t share the same beliefs,” she says.

When the girls were 14, Anabel agreed to listen to the missionaries, but she decided not to be baptized.

Eliana was disappointed, but this did not stop her from continuing their friendship; nor did it stop the gospel discussions. A few years later, Eliana invited Anabel to attend seminary with her. During the lesson, Anabel felt the Spirit very strongly. As Eliana prepared to go to the temple a few days later, Anabel told her, “I promise to go with you next time.” Anabel was baptized a short time after.

Anabel’s conversion did not take days; it



took years. The process was possible because Eliana was her friend first—regardless of whether or not Anabel felt an interest in accepting the gospel.

Listening with Love

Friendships like Eliana and Anabel’s often begin when people discover that they share similar interests, standards, or other commonalities. These friendships deepen as individuals share their experiences, emotions, and love. And love, of course, is a central part of the restored gospel.

We, as members of the Church, can express Christlike love by spending time with our friends—through activities, service, and conversation. In fact, many people are looking for just that kind of friend.

Describing our interactions with others, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counsels: “More important than speaking is listening. These people are not lifeless objects disguised as a baptismal statistic. They are children of God, our brothers and sisters, and they need what we have. Be genuine. Reach out sincerely. Ask these friends what matters most to *them*. . . . And then listen. . . . I promise you that *something*

in what they say will *always* highlight a truth of the gospel about which you can bear testimony and about which you can then offer more.”⁵

We don’t need to bombard our friends with the gospel. We just need to be good friends and not be afraid to share gospel concepts when opportunities arise. Satan uses fear to attempt to prevent members from sharing testimony. This powerful emotion can be crippling. President Uchtdorf notes: “Some would rather pull a handcart across the prairie than bring up the subject of faith and religion to their friends. . . . They worry about how they might be perceived or how it might harm their relationship.” He continues, “It doesn’t need to be that way because we have a glad message to share, and we have a message of joy.”⁶

The prophet Mormon taught, “Perfect love casteth out all fear” (Moroni 8:16). As we live the gospel more fully, we can eliminate fear by replacing it with charity—the pure love of Christ—toward our friends, family, and neighbors. This love will increase our natural tendency to share the gospel.⁷

Sharing the Gospel Naturally

Heavenly Father’s children need the perspective the gospel offers. For members who follow the gospel pattern, their life stands as a witness of Christ’s love. When members focus on actively becoming like Jesus Christ, building meaningful friendships, and developing charity, sharing the gospel becomes a natural outgrowth of who they have become. As they work to share who they are, members can find comfort and guidance in the Savior’s words to His disciples: “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32). ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Be Thou an Example of the Believers,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 48.
2. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 115.
3. See *Preach My Gospel*, 115.
4. M. Russell Ballard, “Creating a Gospel-Sharing Home,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 86.
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Witnesses unto Me,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 15.
6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Waiting on the Road to Damascus,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 76.
7. See Barbara Thompson, “Mind the Gap,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 120.



THE POWER OF “I’M A MORMON”

Launched in 2010, the “I’m a Mormon” campaign has been an easy and effective way for members of the Church to share their feelings about what they believe. The campaign has included

TV and billboard ads in many US cities as well as an online component. At Mormon.org, Latter-day Saints share personal stories and answer dozens of questions such as

“Are Mormons Christian?”

and “What do Mormons believe about the Bible?” Rochelle Tallmadge from Texas, USA, shares: “I had been praying for missionary experiences and got a call from someone who wanted to know if I would be interested in this new Mormon.org program.

“Because my boys are disabled, most of my correspondence on the site has come from those who are either disabled or in a family with someone who is disabled. My most exciting experience was with Mia. She lives in Oslo, Norway, and is confined to a wheelchair. She was searching on Mormon.org for something about disabilities and came across our video. It really touched her. She contacted the missionaries, we corresponded all summer, and she was baptized mid-August. We both see it as a miracle that the Lord was able to connect us across an ocean.”

RESPONDING

Senior missionaries around the world speak of great rewards in overcoming obstacles to serving missions.



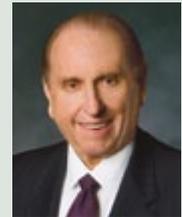
By Kendra Crandall Williamson

Chanta and Sounthara Luangrath sat in their home in California, USA, wondering what they should do. They had prepared their four children to serve missions, and now they knew it was their turn. The decision was bigger than they'd expected: they would miss their grandchildren so much! They were also concerned

about a few health issues. And what would they do with their home and belongings while they were gone?

The Luangraths' concerns about serving a mission are not unique to them. In fact, Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles identified four categories of obstacles to senior missionary work: fear, family concerns, finding the right mission opportunity, and finances.¹

TO THE PROPHET'S CALL



“We need many, many more senior couples. . . . Make yourselves available to leave home and give full-time missionary service. There are few times in your lives when you will enjoy the sweet spirit and satisfaction that come from giving full-time service together in the work of the Master.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “As We Meet Together Again,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 6.



Chanta and Sounthara Luangrath, who moved to California, USA, point to Laos—the land where they were born and raised and are now serving as missionaries.

Overcoming these obstacles requires great faith, a trait the Luangrath demonstrated when they heard President Thomas S. Monson’s call for more missionaries in the October 2010 general conference. “We felt the Spirit so strong,” they reflect. “We wanted to follow the prophet, so we turned in our mission application.”

The Luangrath were called to serve as humanitarian missionaries in Laos, the land where they were born, raised, and married. Their worries

Above left: Senior missionaries serving in Salt Lake City, Utah, help refugees from various countries transition to their new homes. The Ntabwoba family (center) of Rwanda was recently sealed in the temple.

TOP: PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT CASEY



Sondra Jones served among the women of the Marshall Islands (left, with husband, Neldon).

faded as they prepared to serve: their family supported them, they resolved their health issues, and they made their home available for lease. They felt confident as they did what the Savior commanded: “Go thy way, . . . take up the cross, and follow me” (Mark 10:21).

Seniors can serve missions in many ways and in many places. As the following stories illustrate, whether serving full- or part-time, as

Martha Marin (far right) served full-time in the employment resource center in Puebla, Mexico.



a couple or single, in their own country or a foreign land, senior adults can faithfully overcome the obstacles that stand in their way.

Facing Fear

“Fear of the unknown or fear that we don’t have the scriptural skills or language required can cause reluctance to serve. But the Lord has said, ‘If ye are prepared ye shall not fear’ (D&C 38:30). Your life is your preparation. . . . Just go and be yourselves.”²

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

Fear can frustrate missionary work. Some people fear they lack the necessary skills and knowledge to serve. Others worry about living in a different area of the world or working with people they don’t know.

Sister Martha Marin of Veracruz, Mexico, confronted some of her fears as she served full-time in the employment resource center in Puebla, Mexico. She was uncomfortable using computers, an important part of the employment center. But with the help and support of her companion and the others she worked with, she learned the necessary skills. “This obstacle has turned into a blessing,” she says. “I know that I am not alone in this work.”

Sister Sondra Jones of Utah, USA, was called to serve in the Marshall Islands with her husband, Neldon. “I was scared to death about what I was getting into. I have never felt comfortable trying to teach the gospel,” she says. After initially feeling that she had nothing to contribute, she decided to focus on her talents and skills. She learned to love the Marshallese people and served them by cutting hair and teaching them to sew.

After 18 months she estimated having done around 700 haircuts. Eagerly sharing her talents allowed her to serve and build

relationships with hundreds of people, including members of the Church, investigators, and other members of the community.

Resolving Family Concerns

“What greater gift could grandparents give their posterity than to say by deed as well as word, ‘In this family we serve missions!’”³

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The thought of leaving struggling children or growing grandchildren seems unbearable for many people. Still, missionaries find that their service strengthens their families in ways they could not have expected.

Raymond and Gwen Petersen of Wyoming, USA, have served four missions. Their leaving on their second mission—to Samoa for the second time—was initially a challenge for their children, who didn’t understand why their parents needed to serve *another* mission.

The family quickly realized what great blessings came from their service. “They had all prospered!” says Sister Petersen. “One couple who had been unable to have children were blessed with a baby boy, another had a miraculous healing from cancer, another with a struggling child saw great progress, and others had their best year in business.”

Their hard work has left a trail of faith through their family line. “We have four grandsons on missions right now who tell us we were their inspiration to go,” says Sister Petersen. “What could be more rewarding than that?”

Finding the Right Mission Opportunity

“I am constantly amazed at how the Holy Ghost matches the characteristics and needs



Raymond and Gwen Petersen served two missions among the Samoan Latter-day Saints.

of each missionary and couple to the widely varying circumstances of missionary service throughout the world.”⁴

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Senior missionary service is needed in employment centers, mission offices, family history centers, temples, and visitors’ centers, among other places. Applicants can request where they would like to serve, but ultimately

George and Hine Chase served as humanitarian directors in Papua New Guinea.



CHANGES IN SENIOR MISSIONARY POLICIES

- Missionary couples may choose to serve for 6, 12, 18, or 23 months.
- Housing costs for senior couples will be capped at US\$1,400 per month.
- Senior missionaries may return home for critical family events (for up to 10 days) at their own expense.

For more detailed information, see <http://lds.org/church/news/changes-in-senior-missionary-rules>.

the call comes from the Lord, through His prophet. The Lord knows the right mission opportunity for each willing single sister or couple.

George and Hine Chase of New Zealand found that their mission call was just right for them; they were pleasantly surprised when so many of their vocational and family talents helped them do humanitarian work in Papua New Guinea.

Elder Chase had been a carpenter and could help assess and organize projects such as establishing water wells. Sister Chase had worked for 18 years in office management. “My administration and computer skills were invaluable,” she says. She and Elder Chase used their combined abilities to run a career workshop program, helping locals learn skills like time management, organization, leadership, hygiene, and communication.

Together the Chases used the experience they’d gained from their Church callings

and—most of all—from being parents. As the Chases worked to distribute school supplies and improve infant child care, their parenting experience helped them appreciate the difficulties local families and schools faced.

Addressing Finances

“Counsel with your extended family and your bishop or branch president. As the Lord’s servants understand your temporal situation, you will be able to receive the eternal blessing of full-time missionary service.”⁵

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

Many couples fear that they don’t have enough money to serve a mission. They think of their living, medical, and housing expenses and wonder how to finance it all. Church leaders recognize these real concerns and have made policy changes to help relieve the burden (see sidebar at left). Still, addressing financial concerns requires faith, careful planning, and some sacrifice.

Leonard and Vera Chisango of Zimbabwe experienced challenges even with effective planning. They had prepared to serve missions their whole married life, and they knew their pensions and investments could sustain them for their first mission at the Johannesburg South Africa Temple. But while they were serving, the economy suddenly took a huge downturn, and their investments were greatly reduced.

With the help of their family, the Chisangos stayed on their mission. The blessings of that sacrifice were gratifying: their son’s business performed well, their daughter was promoted at work, and their children learned to work together in support of their parents.

Many senior missionaries testify that the blessings of service far outweigh the temporal

Peter and Kelly Sackley served in the Hong Kong area office.



cost. Elder Peter Sackley, a Canadian missionary serving with his wife, Kelly, in the Hong Kong area office, summarized the feelings of many: “I have gone from a paid job to a blessed job.”

Overcoming Obstacles by Building Faith

“Many humble Latter-day Saints fear that they are not qualified for missionary labors. But to such a prospective missionary, the Lord has given this assurance: ‘Faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work.’”⁶

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

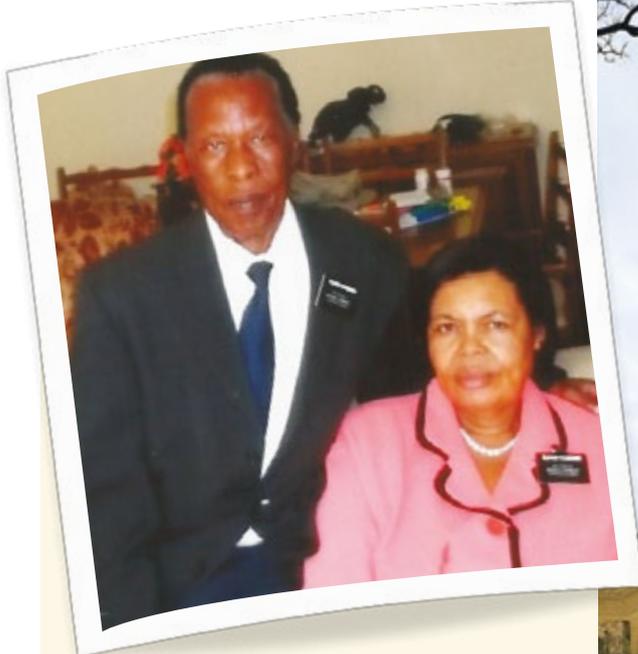
To counter the four obstacles to senior missionary service, Elder Hales suggested a simple remedy: “Have faith; the Lord knows where you are needed.”⁷ Faith conquers fear, strengthens families, helps a senior missionary find the right opportunity to serve, and helps provide financial comfort.

Many years ago, such faith was growing in a young Polish girl, Stanislaw Habel. Later in life, her faith led her to accept the restored gospel and then, as an adult, to serve as a family history missionary in Utah.

Sister Habel’s service has taught her a little-known secret: “Missions keep people younger.” She smiles and says, “When you forget about your obstacles, you learn to be grateful. You learn to become more like Christ through serving others, and this is preparation to live with Heavenly Father. A mission could change the life of a senior.”

Indeed, it does, as well as the lives of those they humbly serve. ■

Senior missionaries are serving in a variety of ways around the world. Visit liahona.lds.org to read more of their stories.



Leonard and Vera Chisango served at the Johannesburg South Africa Temple (right).



NOTES

1. See Robert D. Hales, “Couple Missionaries: A Time to Serve,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 25–27.
2. Robert D. Hales, *Ensign*, May 2001, 25.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “We Are All Enlisted,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 46.
4. Richard G. Scott, “Now Is the Time to Serve a Mission!” *Ensign*, May 2006, 89.
5. Robert D. Hales, “Couple Missionaries: Blessings from Sacrifice and Service,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 40.
6. Russell M. Nelson, “Senior Missionaries and the Gospel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 81.
7. Robert D. Hales, *Ensign*, May 2001, 27.

“There is probably no better way of expressing thanks to the Almighty than serving a full-time mission.”

Elder Leonard Chisango, Zimbabwe

Stanislaw Habel helps patrons at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.





By **Adrián Ochoa**

Second Counselor
in the Young Men
General Presidency

YE Are the LIGHT of the WORLD

Returned missionaries often refer to their service as the best years of their lives. Why is this the case?

Perhaps it's the joy of seeing another soul come unto the Savior (see D&C 18:15). Perhaps it has to do with the bonds they feel with investigators, converts, members, companions, and mission presidents. I think these things are part of it, but I think it also has to do with the light of the Savior they feel—and the light they share in the form of service and testimony.

We know that the Savior identified Himself as the Light of the World (see John 9:5; 12:46). But in the Sermon on the Mount, He declared the same thing of His followers:

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

“Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which

is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16).

Sharing our light—that is, reflecting the Savior's light (see 3 Nephi 18:24)—is something we can do all of our lives, and it's something we need to begin while we are young. As we engage in formal missionary assignments and lifelong missionary work, we can look to three people who, in my opinion, best exemplify this work: Alma, the Prophet Joseph Smith, and the Savior. All three have strongly influenced my understanding of the importance of missionary work—of showing the Savior's light to the world.

Alma: Being Humble

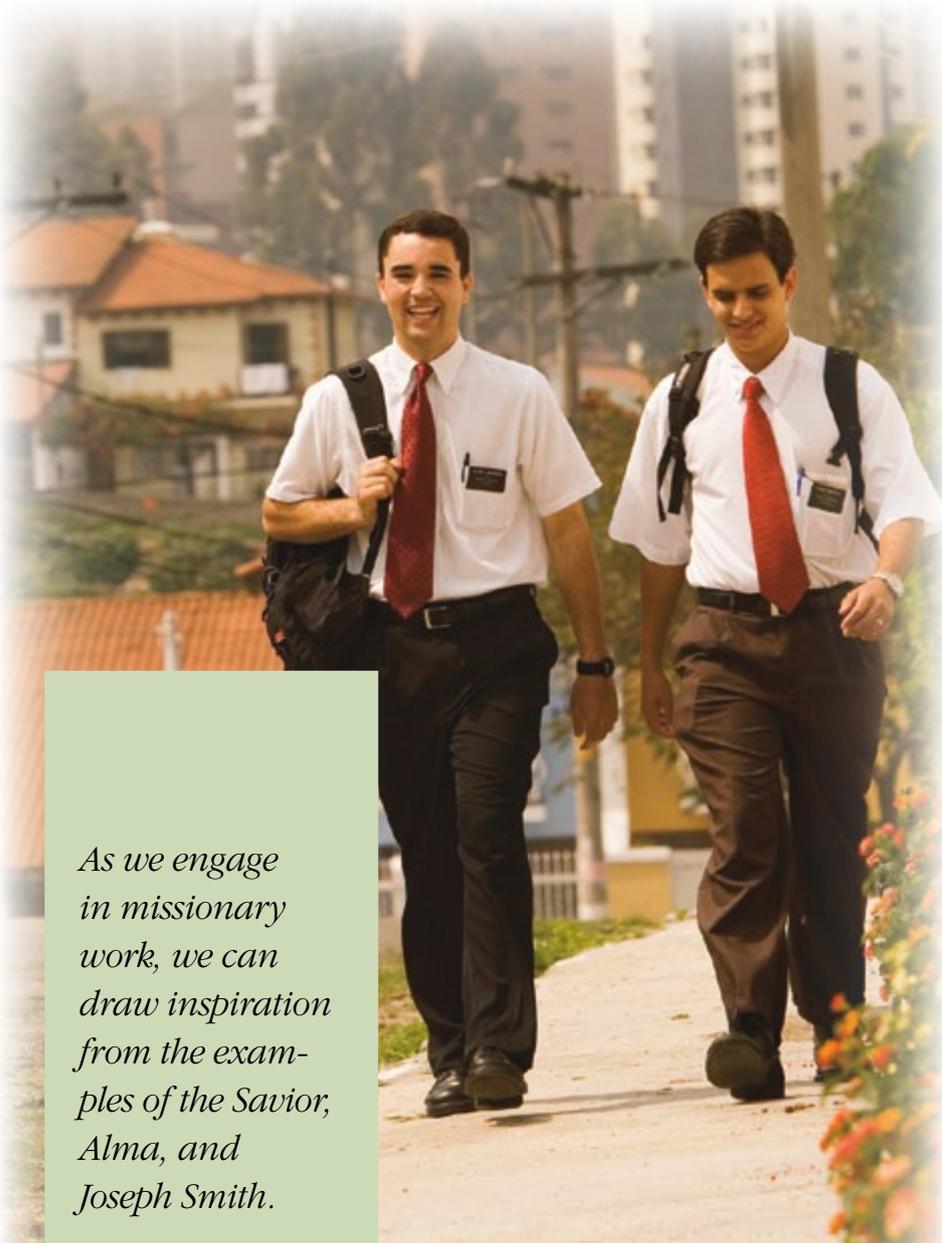
Alma's teachings were very instrumental in my intention to serve a mission. Although my grandmother ensured that I was baptized when I was eight years old, I seldom attended church in my youth. When missionaries crossed my path when I was a young adult and I began thinking about the Church, I started to study the scriptures. Alma's discussion about being compelled to be humble versus choosing to be humble caught

my attention (see Alma 32:13–15). I felt inadequate because of my shortcomings, but I gave it some serious thought—deciding to serve a mission would require significant change. I already had a career and my own business, and I wanted to marry my girlfriend (who, by the way, is now my wife). Could I give all of that up to serve the Lord?

I went to a private place and took time—real time—to pray and commune with my Heavenly Father. In humbling myself, I came to recognize that Heavenly Father did want me to serve. I decided to follow His word, and in doing so, I found the truth of Alma's promise: “He that truly humbleth himself, and repenteth of his sins, and endureth to the end, the same shall be blessed—yea, much more blessed than they who are compelled to be humble” (Alma 32:15).

Even though I was well over age 26, I went to my bishop, who helped prepare me. I submitted my mission papers and waited for months. Finally, I received a call telling me I was not eligible to serve a full-time mission but

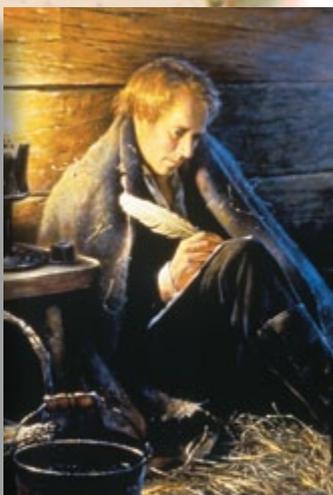
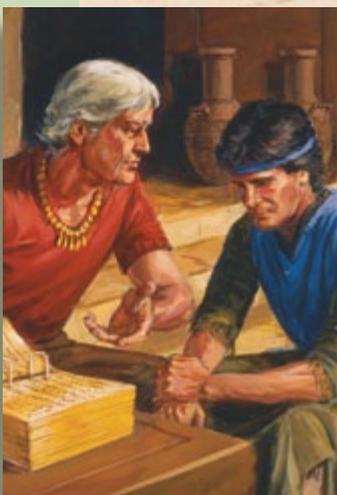
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MATTHEW REIER; CHRIST AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN, BY CARL HEINRICH BLOCH, USED BY PERMISSION OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC MUSEUM, AT FREDERIKSBORG IN HILLERÖD, DENMARK; MAY NOT BE COPIED; ALMA THE YOUNGER COUNSELING HIS SON, BY DARRELL THOMAS © IRI; JOSEPH SMITH IN LIBERTY JAIL, BY GREGG K. OLSEN, MAY NOT BE COPIED.



As we engage in missionary work, we can draw inspiration from the examples of the Savior, Alma, and Joseph Smith.

that I could serve in public communications, the field I was already working in. It was an exciting time. I was trained and then appeared in media discussions soon after the Church in Mexico was officially recognized by the Mexican government. I helped stakes train their public affairs specialists and established relationships with government officials. This opportunity to serve blessed me in more ways than I can describe and in ways I never could have anticipated. It affected many aspects of my life for good.

Your missionary service will be the single most important thing to prepare you for the rest of your life. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) promised prospective missionaries: “The time you spend in the mission field, if those years are spent in dedicated service, will yield a greater return on investment than any other two years of your lives. . . . If you serve a mission faithfully and well, you will be a better husband, you will be a better father, you will be a better student, a better worker.”¹ If you are not beyond the age to serve

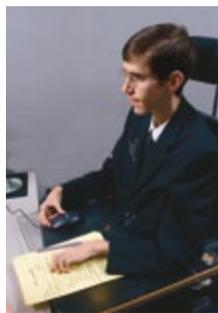


MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

Formal missionary service is not limited to those who are able to serve proselyting missions. There are many young adults for whom a proselyting mission isn't possible due to physical, mental, or emotional challenges. These young men and women do a great deal of good in Church organizations throughout the world as Church-service missionaries.

Church-service missionaries are needed worldwide to serve in family history centers, bishops' storehouses, canneries, employment centers, community service organizations, media positions, and various other Church operations. Men and women of mission age who are unable to serve a proselyting mission can counsel with parents and leaders to consider options for a service mission. While service missions vary in terms of assignment and length depending on the missionary's abilities, they involve real work, real service, and real sacrifice that make a difference in building the kingdom of God on earth.

For more information on Church-service missions, please visit www.lds.org/service/missionary-service.



a full-time mission, prepare now to serve. The blessings you will receive will far outweigh any sacrifice you may make.

I know challenges may come as you contemplate serving a mission. The adversary does all he can to discourage the Lord's work from moving forward. If you are unsure about whether you should serve a mission, I invite you to humble yourself and

then kneel and ask Heavenly Father. He made known His will for me, and I know He will do the same for you.

Joseph Smith: Gaining an Eternal Perspective

From Joseph Smith I have learned that focusing on the eternal perspective can increase your ability as a servant of the Lord. I used to wonder how he was able to endure all that he endured—the trials and the persecution in particular. But I came to understand that because Joseph saw beyond the veil, he knew that this mortal existence is only a fraction of our eternal journey. I wondered what would happen to

me if I understood what he did, and in pondering this, I came to realize that when we focus on the here and now, our vision is limited. When we maintain an eternal perspective, we understand how crucial it is that we become committed to helping others, rescuing others, and bearing testimony of the truths we know.

If we were to focus, as Joseph did, on things from an eternal viewpoint, how much more willing and eager would we be to share the gospel in our everyday lives? Sharing our light—reflecting the Savior's light—need not be limited to formal missionary assignments. When you are open and receptive, you can share the Light of Christ with those around you, sharing who you are as a member of the Church and what you believe. As you move from place to place throughout your life and associate with many different people, I encourage you to get to know your neighbors, your classmates, and your co-workers of other faiths. Follow Elder M. Russell Ballard's instruction to share the gospel online, including through social media websites, blogs, and video-sharing sites.²

While we can teach others about the gospel through a formal discussion, sometimes all it takes for someone to turn to the gospel are a righteous example and a willingness to share your testimony through the way you live your life. When you live worthy of the Spirit and let your light shine, then people will “see your

good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

The Savior: Concentrating on Others

And finally, the Savior, who is our example in all things, taught me not to worry so much about myself but to concentrate on the salvation of others. His entire life was about others. Sometimes in considering sharing the gospel with those of other faiths, we are afraid of what they will think of us or how they will respond. In thinking about full-time missionary service, we often worry too much about income or schooling or relationships—these are good and important things but still things that can wait. The Savior Himself had “not where to lay his head” (Matthew 8:20). He taught His followers to “seek . . . first the kingdom of God,” and “all these things” would be added to them (Matthew 6:33).

The same is true for us. As we seek to follow and reflect the Light of the World, blessings will come to the world and ultimately to us as individuals. May we all seek not to hide that light but to bring it forward throughout our lives. ■

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Of Missions, Temples, and Stewardship,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 52.
2. See M. Russell Ballard, “Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet,” *Ensign*, July 2008, 60.



RESPONDING TO A CALL FROM THE PROPHET

If the opening sessions of general conference are any indication of what is on the prophet’s mind, it’s evident that President Thomas S. Monson is thinking about missionary work.

In April 2011 he reported on the number of missionaries and missions throughout the world and then said: “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.”¹

In October 2010 he said:

“I repeat what prophets have long taught—that every worthy, able young man should prepare to serve a mission. Missionary service is a priesthood duty—an obligation the Lord expects of us who have been given so very much. Young men, I admonish you to prepare for service as a missionary. Keep yourselves clean and pure and worthy to represent the Lord. Maintain your health and strength. Study the scriptures. Where such is available, participate in seminary or institute. Familiarize yourself with the missionary handbook *Preach My Gospel*.

“A word to you young sisters: while you do not have the same priesthood responsibility as do the young men to serve as full-time missionaries, you also make a valuable contribution as missionaries, and we welcome your service.”²

And in October 2009 he said: “I would ask that your faith and prayers continue to be offered in behalf of those areas where our influence is limited and where we are not allowed to share the gospel freely at this time. Miracles can occur as we do so.”³

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “It’s Conference Once Again,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 6.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “As We Meet Together Again,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 5–6.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 6.



PROPHETIC COUNSEL

We can help restore morality and preserve religious freedom by

- Being a righteous example.
- Being civil in our discourse.
- Being an advocate for morality and religious freedom.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY CODY BELL AND DAVID STOKER

Restoring Morality & Religious Freedom

In this so-called Mormon Moment, where there is more attention being paid to the Church and its members, we will need to be the best examples we can possibly be.

I challenge all of us to work with people of other faiths to improve the moral fabric of our communities, nations, and world and to protect religious freedom. To do this, we need to understand and comprehend “things which have been” (D&C 88:79), with particular emphasis on events that were precursors to the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ and that still need to be protected. These are the underpinnings of our Judeo-Christian heritage and bless people worldwide.¹

If we understand these events, we can help protect, defend, and enhance knowledge that will bless mankind, prepare us for the kingdom of God, and bring us happiness and

joy. Much of what we will do to improve the moral fabric of society and protect religious freedom will be accomplished in our families and communities.

I will review four major “things which have been” that were precursors to the Restoration, and then I will suggest three courses of action that will build on the great heritage bestowed upon us.

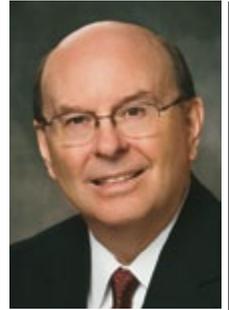
Tyndale and the King James Bible

1. A unique and profoundly important group of achievements occurred during the 1500s and early 1600s. William Tyndale, a man of strong religious beliefs and a gifted linguist, translated much of the Hebrew and Greek versions of the Bible into English. His translation contained “phraseology that we associate with the sacredness of the word of God.”² It was the language of religion, the language that captured the dramatic importance of the Old Testament and the Savior’s spiritual message, ministry, and mission set forth in the New Testament.

Tyndale’s vision was that the common laborer, the plowboy in England, could read and understand the Bible. His language became to religion what William Shakespeare’s writings became to the language of literature and social discourse in the English tongue.

With the enhancement of the English language by Tyndale and Shakespeare, wise

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





The magnificent King James Version of the Bible has endured and is as important to us today as it was 400 years ago.

and noble scholars produced the magnificent King James Version of the Bible in 1611. This great book of scripture has endured and is as important to us today as it was 400

years ago. We share with many people a love and appreciation for the Judeo-Christian values set forth in the King James Bible.

2. *English common law and the U.S. Constitution.* At about the same time as the events just described, Sir Edward Coke produced the consolidation of English law in written form. His work was to law what the King James Bible was to religion.³ His volumes covered every conceivable legal topic and stated what the common law was on each.

Many consider the provisions of the common law produced by Coke as a foundation for several provisions in the U.S. Constitution, which celebrates its 225th anniversary this year and is viewed by Latter-day Saints as both inspired and necessary to the Restoration. Five elements of the Constitution have been identified as being particularly inspired:

1. Separation of powers into three independent branches of government.
2. The Bill of Rights' guarantee of freedom of speech, press, and religion.
3. Equality of all men and women before the law.
4. The federal system, with a division of powers between the nation as a whole and the states.
5. The principle of popular sovereignty—the people are the source of government.⁴

These five basic fundamentals have been

a great blessing and were necessary to the Restoration of the gospel. We share with many others a love and appreciation for the Constitution and a concern about efforts to diminish the Bill of Rights' guarantee of freedom of religion.

3. *Scientific achievements, including the Industrial Revolution, the communications revolution, and advancements in medicine.* President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) acknowledged these achievements and the contribution they provide to the kingdom of God. He saw some of this body of scientific knowledge as a precursor to the Restoration and encouraged Latter-day Saints to participate in the acquisition of this knowledge.⁵

Daniel Walker Howe, in his Pulitzer Prize-winning history of the transformation of America between 1815 and 1848, titled his book *What Hath God Wrought*. In his introduction he focuses on professor Samuel F. B. Morse, writing, “Morse, seated amidst a hushed gathering of distinguished national leaders in the chambers of the United States Supreme Court in Washington, tapped out a message” on a new device, the telegraph: “WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT.”⁶

“The message ‘baptized the American Telegraph with the name of its author’: God.”⁷ Morse shared a “religious sense of divine providence” and saw himself as “an instrument of providence.”⁸

Howe states, “During the thirty-three years that began in 1815, there would be greater strides in the improvement of communication than had taken place in all previous centuries.”⁹

A second communications revolution has occurred during our lifetime. The most significant part of this involves the Internet.

4. *A return to Judeo-Christian moral principles.* This was especially necessary for the Restoration of the gospel. A renewed emphasis on morality occurred in both England and the United States. It involved fervent religious awakenings, including those associated with the area of western New York State.

The practice of religious beliefs had been a “principal reason for the original settlements in New England, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.” On the eve of the Revolutionary War, religious pamphlets “topped *secular* pamphlets from all thirteen colonies by four to one.”¹⁰

A farmer who had fought at Concord Bridge on the first day of battle in the American Revolutionary War “declared that he had never heard of Locke or Sidney, his reading having been limited to the Bible, the Catechism, Watt’s Psalms and Hymns, and the Almanac.”¹¹ It was these principles that he was defending.

A recent op-ed in the *New York Times* noted that many people believe “that repairing the economic moral fabric is the essential national task right now. . . . America went through a similar values restoration in the 1820s. Then, too, people sensed that the country had grown soft and decadent. Then, too,

Americans rebalanced. They did it quietly and away from the cameras.”¹²

Be a Righteous Example

How can you help bring about this restoration of morality in our day and help preserve religious freedom? First, be a righteous exam-



ple. You must not be in camouflage as to who you are and what you believe.

Elder J. Devn Cornish, who prior to his call to the Seventy was a nationally recognized pediatrician, tells of his efforts to be admitted to Johns Hopkins Medical School. In an interview, distinguished professors at the medical school asked him why he wanted to be a doctor. He told them that he wanted to be a pediatrician. They interrupted him and asked how he could possibly know that when he hadn’t even been to medical school. He explained with great

The U.S. Constitution, which celebrates its 225th anniversary this year, is viewed by Latter-day Saints as both inspired and necessary to the Restoration.

passion that he had served an LDS mission in the Guatemala–El Salvador Mission. He had seen the enormous need the children there had for medical care. This, and the promptings of the Spirit, had inspired in him a desire to attend medical school and specialize in pediatrics.

He was surprised when these world-famous

our honesty, integrity, morality, and desire to serve our fellowmen.

Recently we met with a top government leader in a South American country. He also had been a physician. We did not expect a particularly good meeting because some of his views are not in accord with certain

principles that are important to us. We were surprised when we were received in a warm and gracious manner. He had known only one Latter-day Saint—a fellow student in medical school. He admired this student, knew about our beliefs, and was most respectful because of one example of a Church member whose life was based on honesty, integrity, and morality.



One of the reasons the attack on moral and religious principles has been so successful is the reluctance of people of faith to express their views. Be an active participant, not a silent observer.

physicians extended his interview. They were interested in what he did as a missionary, his ability to speak Spanish, and his interaction with and love for the people he had served.¹⁵

In this so-called Mormon Moment, where there is more attention being paid to the Church and its members, we will need to be the best examples we can possibly be. Collectively our example will be more important than what any single member or leader proposes. Research has shown that those who know faithful Latter-day Saints appreciate

Be Civil in Your Discourse

We need to be civil in our discourse and respectful in our interactions. We live in a world where there is much turmoil. Many people are both angry and afraid. The Savior taught us to love even our enemies (see Matthew 5:44). This is especially true when we disagree. The moral basis of civility is the Golden Rule. It is taught in most religions and particularly by the Savior. “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” (Luke 6:31). Our

faith requires that we treat our neighbors with respect.

In a general conference address I pointed out that “there are some who feel that venting their personal anger or deeply held opinions is more important than conducting themselves as Jesus Christ lived and taught. . . . How we disagree is a real measure of who we are and whether we truly follow the Savior. It is appropriate to disagree, but it is not appropriate to be disagreeable. . . . If we show love and respect even in adverse circumstances, we become more like Christ.”¹⁴

Be an Advocate for Religious Freedom and Morality

This is a time when those who feel accountable to God for their conduct feel under siege by a secular world. You understand the moral principles that are under attack and the need to defend morality. Religious freedom all over the world is also under attack. It is important for us to become well educated on this issue and assume responsibility for ensuring that the religious freedom we have inherited is passed on to future generations. We must work together to both protect religious freedom and restore morality.

Presidents of the Church, including President Thomas S. Monson, have made it clear that all religions hold truths and that we should work together for the common good. In his inaugural press conference, President Monson emphasized this cooperation. He stated, “We have a responsibility to be active in the communities where we live . . . and to work cooperatively with other churches. . . . It’s important that we eliminate the weakness of one standing alone and substitute for it the strength of people working together.”¹⁵

Our joint effort should be to protect important civic values like honesty, morality, self-restraint, respect for law, and basic human rights. An important study established, “The associations between religious freedoms and other civil liberties, press freedoms, and political freedoms are especially striking.”¹⁶ If we fail to diligently protect religious freedom, we risk diminishing other important freedoms that are important both to society and to us.

Our challenge is to help people without religious faith understand that the protection of moral principles grounded in religion is a great benefit to society and that religious devotion is critical to public virtue.

Many U.S. founding fathers, including George Washington and James Madison, pointed out that shared moral values espoused by different religions with competing doctrines allow societies to be bound together.¹⁷ Unfortunately, religious influence has often been replaced by so-called secular religions. “For instance, humanism and atheism function as secular religions binding their adherents through common belief and ideology.”¹⁸

Many philosophers have been at the forefront in promoting secularism and rejecting a moral view of the world based on Judeo-Christian values. In their view there is no “objective moral order” and no reason “to choose one goal over another.”¹⁹ They believe no preference should be given to moral goals.²⁰ A British high court recently denied a Christian family the right to foster children because the children could be “‘infected’ by Christian moral beliefs.”²¹ The ruling demonstrates just how radically things have shifted.

One of the reasons the attack on moral and religious principles has been so successful is



Religious conscience is grounded in one’s belief in being accountable to God for conduct.

the reluctance of people of faith to express their views.²² Extraordinary effort will be required to protect religious liberty. Our doctrine confirms what the U.S. founding fathers and political philosophers have advocated.

“No government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as

of religion is to inspire . . . principles. There is no religion which does not place the object of man’s desires above and beyond the treasure of earth, and which does not naturally raise his soul to regions far above those of the senses. Nor is there any which does not impose on man some duties toward his kind,

and thus draw him at times from the contemplation of himself.”²⁴

My challenge is that we join with people of all faiths who feel accountable to God in defending religious freedom so it can be a beacon for morality. We caution you to be civil and responsible as you defend religious liberty and moral values. We ask that you do this on the Internet and in your personal interactions in the neighborhoods

and communities where you live. Be an active participant, not a silent observer.

In conclusion, our reason for undertaking the objectives *to be an example, to be civil in our discourse, and to be an advocate for religious freedom* is to serve mankind and follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. In doing so, our efforts will be blessed by heaven and will further the purposes of this life established by a loving Father in Heaven. ■

From a commencement address delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on December 16, 2011. For the full text, visit <http://web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches/speeches.aspx>.



Research has shown that those who know faithful Latter-day Saints appreciate our honesty, integrity, morality, and desire to serve our fellowmen.

will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience” (D&C 134:2). Religious conscience is grounded in one’s belief in being accountable to God for conduct. The effort of secularists and governments to coerce conduct in conflict with religious conscience leads to social disunity and is a primary reason that religious liberty is essential for civil peace.²³

The role of religion in blessing a secular society was set forth succinctly by Alexis De Tocqueville in his classic *Democracy in America*. He stated, “The greatest advantage

NOTES

1. I recognize that the study of Western civilization has been under attack. "Some criticize its study as narrow, limiting, arrogant and discriminatory, asserting that it has little or no value for those of non-European origins" (Donald Kagan, "A Good Run," *New York Times*, Nov. 27, 2011, BR27).
2. David Rolph Seely, "William Tyndale and the Language of the At-one-ment," in Kent P. Jackson, *The King James Bible and the Restoration* (2011), 29.
3. See Roy Strong, "Soul of England: English Law," *Country Life*, Feb. 23, 2011, 32.
4. See Dallin H. Oaks, "The Divinely Inspired Constitution," *Ensign*, Feb. 1992, 71–73.
5. See Spencer W. Kimball, "When the World Will Be Converted," *Ensign*, Oct. 1974, 10–11.
6. Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848* (2007), 1.
7. Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 3.
8. Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 2.
9. Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 5.
10. Kevin Phillips, *The Cousins' Wars: Religion, Politics, and the Triumph of Anglo-America* (1999), 94. See also Gordon Smith, "Protecting the Weak: Religious Liberty in the Twenty-First Century," *Brigham Young University Law Review*, vol. 1999, no. 2 (1999), 487–88.
11. Phillips, *The Cousins' Wars*, 95.
12. David Brooks, "The Great Restoration," *New York Times*, Oct. 18, 2011, A22.
13. Personal conversation with J. Devn Cornish, June 11, 2011.
14. Quentin L. Cook, "We Follow Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, May 2010, 84–85.
15. Thomas S. Monson, in "Who Are the Mormons?" <http://mormonnewsroom.org/article/who-are-the-mormons>.
16. Brian J. Grim and Roger Finke, *The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century* (2011), 205.
17. See Brian W. Walsh, "George Washington Thanked God for America," *USA Today*, Nov. 23, 2011, available at usatoday.com. See also *Federalist Papers*, no. 51.
18. Margaret Somerville, "Should Religion Influence Policy?" *The Mark*, May 19, 2010, themarknews.com. Secularists espouse a mistaken interpretation of the principle of separation of church and state. They do this to attack moral values based on religion. See also Dallin H. Oaks, "Preserving Religious Freedom," Chapman University School of Law, Feb. 4, 2011, <http://mormonnewsroom.org/article/elder-oaks-religious-freedom-Chapman-University>.
19. David D. Kirkpatrick, "The Right Hand of the Fathers," *New York Times Magazine*, Dec. 20, 2009, 27. (Story on and quoting from Robert P. George, professor of jurisprudence at Princeton University.)
20. Kirkpatrick, "The Right Hand," 27. Robert P. George teaches that either we have moral reason and free choice or we have amorality and determinism.
21. "UK Court Rules Christianity Harmful to Children," *Charisma*, Mar. 1, 2011, <http://charismamag.com/index.php/news-old/30325-uk-court-rules-christianity-harmful-to-children>.
22. See "Onwards and Upwards—Why Is the Modern View of Progress So Impoverished?" *The Economist*, Dec. 17, 2009, economist.com. See also Susan Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy* (2002). They fear that they will be charged with being intolerant or judgmental and shamed by those in the "great and spacious building" (1 Nephi 8:26; see also 11:35–36), often the academics who mock them.
23. See A. Keith Thompson, *Religious Confession Privilege and the Common Law* (2011), 352.
24. Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Henry Reeve, 2 vols. (1862), 2:25.



ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Do Latter-day Saints believe the U.S. Constitution is a divinely inspired document? The Lord Himself answered that question when He declared, "I established the Constitution . . . by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose" (D&C 101:80).

Since the time of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who called the U.S. Constitution "a heavenly banner" (in *History of the Church*, 3:304), latter-day prophets have said the Constitution is divinely inspired, declaring that America by divine design was prepared as the place for the Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ. The freedoms and protections enumerated in the Constitution—including freedom of speech, assembly, and religion—made the Restoration possible.

The Church respects the rule of law and constitutional government in every nation and expects Latter-day Saints to adhere to the law, to use their influence to promote and preserve their God-given rights, and "to make popular that which is sound and good, and unpopular that which is unsound" (Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 5:286).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has observed: "After two centuries, every nation in the world except six have adopted written constitutions, and the U.S. Constitution was a model for all of them. No wonder modern revelation says that God established the U.S. Constitution and that it 'should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles' (D&C 101:77)" ("The Divinely Inspired Constitution," *Ensign*, Feb. 1992, 68).

For more information on preserving religious liberty, go to mormonnewsroom.org/official-statement/religious-freedom and mormonnewsroom.org/article/introduction-religious-freedom.

Testifying of Christ

The Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ. Artwork from the Ninth International Art Competition shares this and other sacred messages from this holy book.

The Book of Mormon is a volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible. It is a record of God’s dealings with the ancient inhabitants of the Americas and contains, as does the Bible, the fulness of the everlasting gospel.

“The book was written by many ancient prophets by the spirit of prophecy and revelation. . . . The record gives an account of two great civilizations. One came from Jerusalem in 600 B.C., and afterward separated into two nations, known as the Nephites and the Lamanites. The other came much earlier when the Lord confounded the tongues at the Tower of Babel. This group is known as the Jaredites. . . .

► **The Fruit of Joy**, by Nanako Hayashi. *Tasting the fruit of joy, which is the love of God, encourages us to “make known his wonderful works among the people” (D&C 65:4).*



▲ **I Will Bring You Up Again out of the Depths**, by Jonathan Arthur Clarke. *The Jaredites traveled for 344 days across the waters in their unusual barges. Though “the mountain waves” dashed upon them, the Lord brought them up “out of the depths of the sea.” (See Ether 2:24; 6:6–7, 11.)*



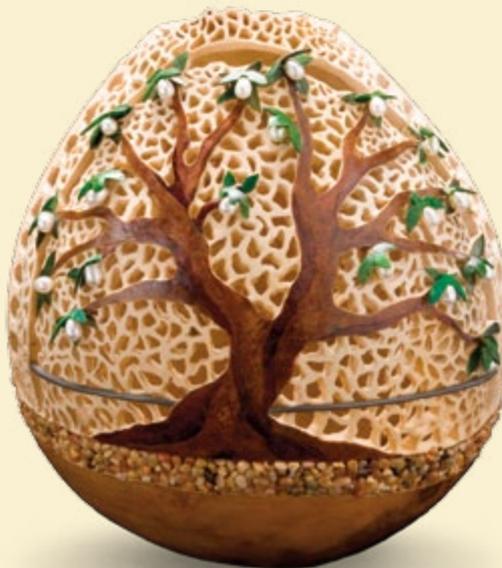
◀ **Brass Plates**, cutout paper art, by Aniko Brewer. *At first Nephi could not get the brass plates from Laban, but Nephi chose to be obedient, and the Lord prepared a way. Nephi obtained the plates and gave them to his father, Lehi. (See 1 Nephi 3–4.)*



▲ *The Jaredites Leaving Babel*, by Albin Veselka. Merit Award. From the story of the Jaredites, we learn that when the world is full of pride, we can rely on living prophets, who teach the word of God (see Ether 1:33–43).



▲ *I Will Send Their Words Forth* (Jacob the Teacher), by Elspeth Caitlin Young. Purchase Award. Jacob, sitting before a representation of the tree of life, engraves his “great anxiety” for his people on the plates (see Jacob 1:1–8).



◀ Compare the Word unto a Seed, by Kay B. Spjut. We learn in Alma 32:28–43 to “compare the word unto a seed” and nourish that seed with faith so it will grow. This gourd began its journey as a seed that was nourished by faith and loving hands. Now it stands as an object of art, designed to teach the gospel through one of the most powerful symbols in scripture—the tree of life (see 1 Nephi 8).



◀ **My Beloved Son—3 Nephi 11**, by **Steven Lloyd Neal**. This scene, representing the temple in the Nephite land Bountiful, is the artist's imaginings of what it might have looked like about the time that Christ appeared to the people in the Americas (see 3 Nephi 11).

“The crowning event recorded in the Book of Mormon is the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ among the Nephites soon after his resurrection. It puts forth the doctrines of the gospel, outlines the plan of salvation, and tells men what they must do to gain peace in this life and eternal salvation in the life to come. . . .



◀ **Taste of the Fruit of the Tree of Life**, by **Denis Gerard Daniel Mejean**. We, like Nephi, can taste of the love of God by acting as His true disciples (see 1 Nephi 11:21–23).

▲ **Faith, Hope, and Charity**, by **Jonathan Linton**. Faith (left), Hope (right), and Charity (center) nurture a tender plant representing the word of the gospel as described by the Book of Mormon prophet Alma (see Alma 32).





▲ **Mary Lightner Reads the Book of Mormon**, by *Andrew Knaupp*. When a copy of the first edition of the Book of Mormon reached Isaac Morley, presiding elder in Kirtland, Ohio, USA, Mary begged to read it. She spent all night reading. Then Brother Morley gave her permission to finish reading it before returning it to him.

“We invite all men [and women] everywhere to read the Book of Mormon, to ponder in their hearts the message it contains, and then to ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ if the book is true. Those who pursue this course and ask in faith will gain a testimony of its truth and divinity by the power of the Holy Ghost. (See Moroni 10:3–5.)”¹ ■

NOTE

1. Introduction to the Book of Mormon.



▲ **Teacher John**, by *GayLynn Lorene Ribeira*. Schoolteacher John Essel teaches one of his weekly after-school gospel classes to Institute students in Ghana.



▲ **As I Sat Pondering**, by *Vicki Lynn Walker*. The Holy Ghost, represented by the dove, is a powerful witness of the truth of all things.

HOW Disciples of Christ LIVE IN TIMES OF War and Violence

*Principles from
the Book of
Mormon help
us live with
faith and hope
during troubled
times.*



Above: *Nephi endured being bound for four days until Laman and Lemuel repented and loosed him (see 1 Nephi 18:9–21). Right:* *None of the 2,000 young men in Helaman's army were killed in battle (see Alma 56:44–57).*

By David Brent Marsh
Priesthood Department

We live in a time of widespread war and violence. News sources report incidents of these awful events every day. The Lord's prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, said, "We have come to the earth in troubled times."¹ He affirms what President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said: "We live in a season when fierce men do terrible and despicable things. We live in a season of war."²

While sobering, this should not be surprising. The scriptures teach that in the last days Satan will "make war" (Revelation 12:17) with the faithful and that "peace shall be taken from the earth" (D&C 1:35).

God foresaw our day and called the Prophet Joseph Smith to bring forth the Book of Mormon to help us (see D&C 1:17, 29; 45:26). Of the 239 chapters in the Book of Mormon, 174 (73 percent) deal with war, terrorism, murder, political conspiracies, secret combinations, threats, family collusions, and other hostilities.

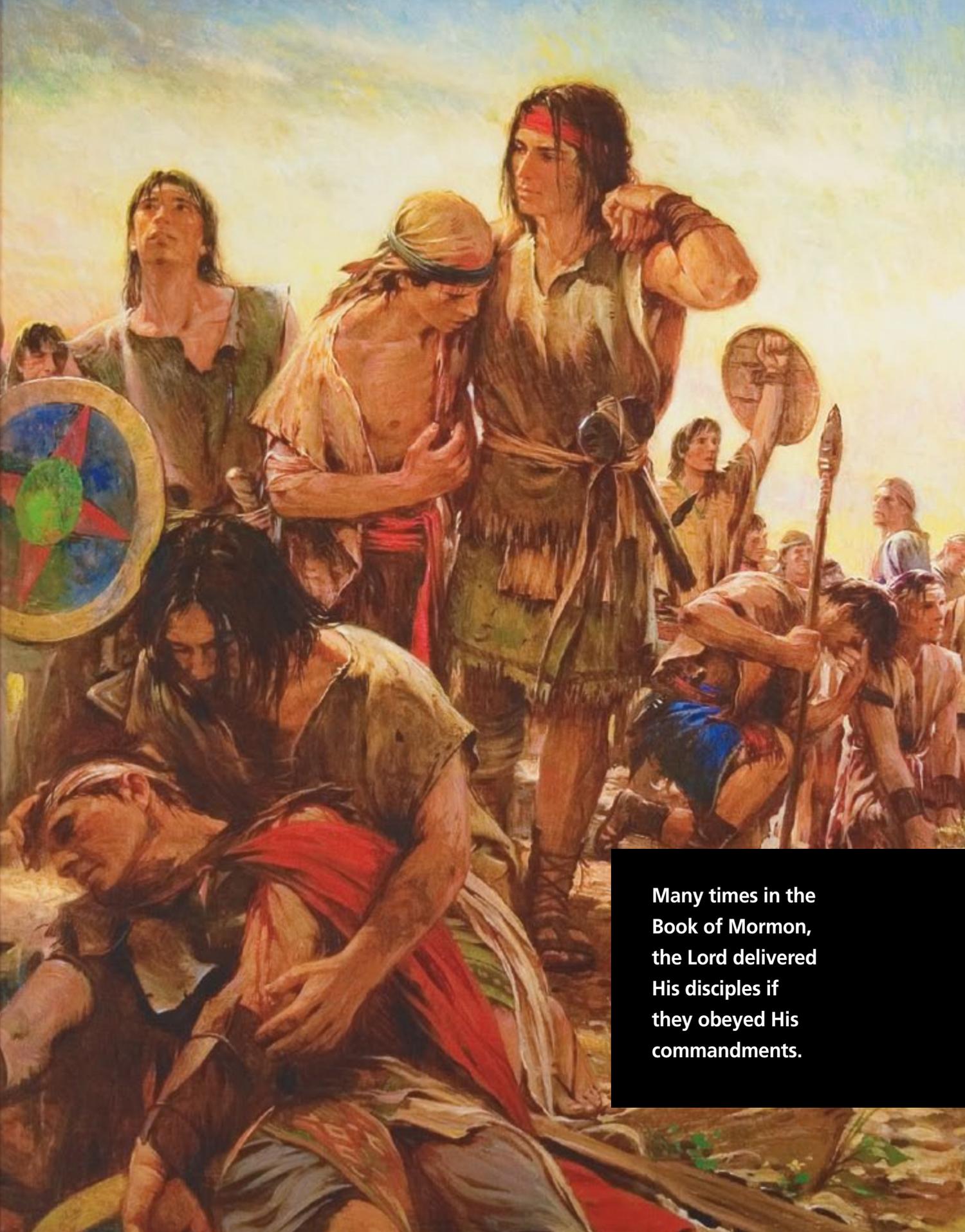
Why did the Book of Mormon record keepers preserve so many incidents of war?

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) answered, "From the Book of Mormon we learn how disciples of Christ live in times of war."³ Following are insights that can guide us as we live in troubled times.

Obedience Invites Deliverance

Many times in the Book of Mormon, the Lord delivered His disciples if they obeyed His commandments.⁴ Nephi taught, "The tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance" (1 Nephi 1:20). Nephi then recorded how the Lord delivered his father from people who attempted to kill him, delivered his family from the destruction of Jerusalem, delivered him and his brothers from Laban's murderous attempt, and delivered him when Laman and Lemuel resorted to violence (see 1 Nephi 2:1–3; 3:28–30; 4; 7:16–19; 18:9–23).

Alma told his son Shiblon, "I would that ye should remember, that as much as ye shall put your trust in God even so much ye shall be delivered out of your trials, and your troubles, and your afflictions" (Alma 38:5). Mormon



Many times in the Book of Mormon, the Lord delivered His disciples if they obeyed His commandments.



GOD WILL PROTECT US

“God will be with us. He will watch over us. He will protect us . . . if we will be true and faithful and obedient and hearken to His word.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “God Will Protect Us in These Perilous Times,” *Church News*, Feb. 22, 2003, 3.

also observed that “those who were faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord were delivered at all times” (Alma 50:22). Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reaffirmed this principle when he said: “Obedience allows God’s blessings to flow without constraint. He will bless His obedient children with freedom from bondage and misery.”⁵

The Book of Mormon also shows that even a few righteous people can secure peace and safety for a whole city (see Helaman 13:12–14).

War Can Be a Call to Repent

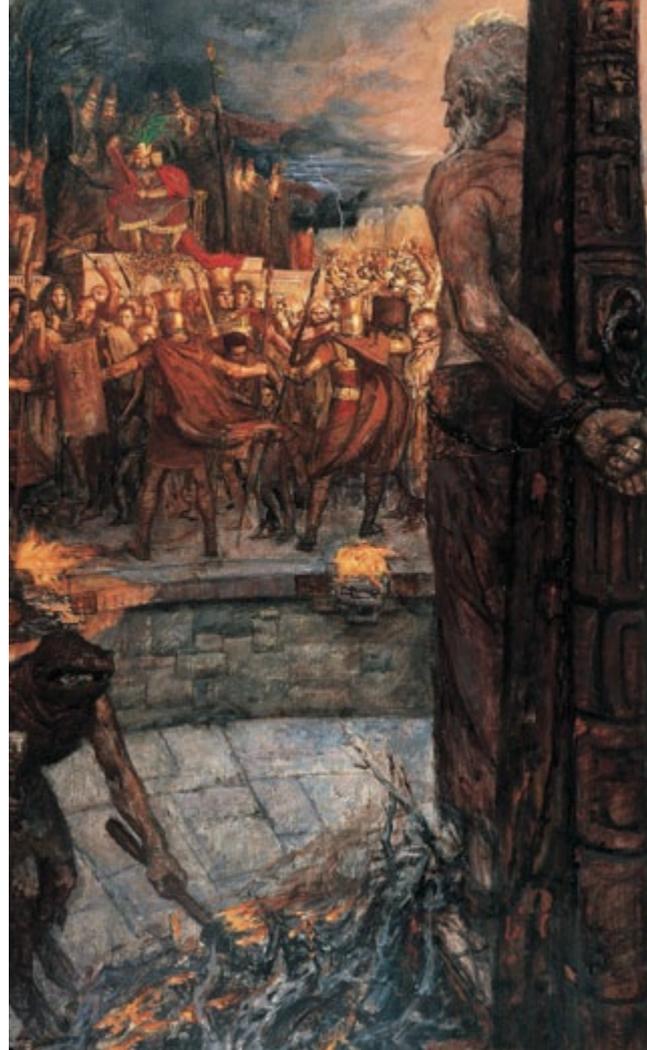
When we forget God, He calls after us. At first He uses merciful means such as personal promptings and prophets. But if we do not respond, He escalates His efforts. At times, He allows wars and violence as part of His last resort to help us return to Him.⁶

Mormon said, “And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, yea, except he doth visit them with death and with terror, and with famine and with all manner of pestilence, they will not remember him” (Helaman 12:3). War can be a reminder to repent and return to God.

God Provides Relief during War

When God’s disciples are required to suffer the effects of war, God provides relief for them. When Alma and his followers were taken captive, they immediately turned to the Lord (see Mosiah 23:27–28), and He promptly answered: “I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage; . . . that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions” (Mosiah 24:13–14).

Jacob told the pure in heart of his day, “Look



Some disciples, like Abinadi (depicted above and below), are called to suffer or die in order to stand as a witness against the wicked.



unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause, and send down justice upon those who seek your destruction” (Jacob 3:1).

Modern-day prophets confirm this truth. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “While [God] does not always intervene in the course of events, He has promised the faithful peace even in their trials and tribulations.”⁷

President Benson said, “Even though times become perilous, . . . if we only trust in God and keep his commandments we need have no fear.”⁸

Some Are Called to Stand as a Witness against Wickedness

While disciples of Christ can be delivered from war, some disciples are called upon to suffer or die to stand as a witness against the wicked. This is a harsh reality not easily accepted or understood. Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded us that “the faithful will not be totally immune from the events on this planet.”⁹ President Hinckley acknowledged that some of us “may even be called on to suffer.”¹⁰

The Book of Mormon preserves a few episodes of inhumane abuse and savagery to help us understand why the Lord’s disciples, including prophets as well as innocent women and children, sometimes suffer and die in war. For example, the wicked priests of King Noah bound the prophet Abinadi “and scourged his skin with faggots, yea, even unto death.” Before dying, Abinadi testified, “If ye slay me ye will shed innocent blood, and this shall also stand as a testimony against you at the last day” (Mosiah 17:10, 13).

In another occurrence of torturous murder in the Book of Mormon, the wicked lawyers and judges of Ammonihah burned the wives and children of religious converts. Alma and Amulek were brought to the place of martyrdom and forced to witness this merciless massacre.

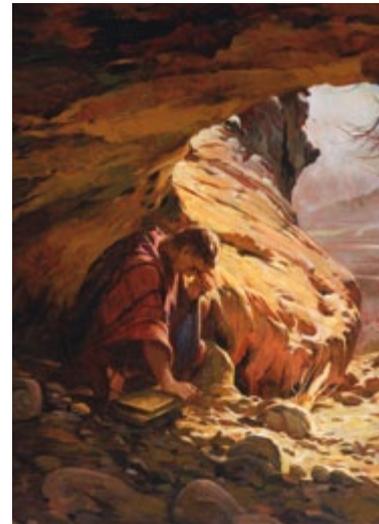
“When Amulek saw the pains of the women and children who were consuming in the fire, he also was pained; and he said unto Alma: How can we witness this awful scene? Therefore let us stretch forth our hands, and exercise the power of God which is in us, and save them from the flames.”

Alma responded, “The Spirit constraineth me that I must not stretch forth mine hand; for behold the Lord receiveth them up unto himself, in glory; and he doth suffer that they may do this thing, or that the people may do this thing unto them, according to the hardness of their hearts, that the judgments which he shall exercise upon them in his wrath may be just; and the blood of the innocent shall stand as a witness against them, yea, and cry mightily against them at the last day” (Alma 14:10–11).

The Righteous Who Die in War Enter into the Rest of the Lord

As we mourn the loss of faithful loved ones, the Book of Mormon assures us that they have entered into the rest of the Lord and are happy. Moroni makes this pointed remark, “For the Lord suffereth the righteous to be slain that his justice and judgment may come upon the wicked; therefore ye need not suppose that the righteous are lost because they are slain; but behold, they do enter into the rest of the Lord their God” (Alma 60:13).

After a battle which left the “bodies of many thousands . . . moldering in heaps upon the face of the earth,” including some faithful



Ether (above) and Moroni (page 34) saw the destruction of their civilizations because of war (see Ether 13:13–14; Moroni 1:1–4).

disciples of Christ, the Book of Mormon records that the survivors “truly mourn for the loss of their kindred, yet they rejoice and exult in the hope, and even know, according to the promises of the Lord, that they are raised to dwell at the right hand of God, in a state of never-ending happiness” (Alma 28:11–12).

The Prince of Peace

The Book of Mormon was brought forth to bless those who live in times of war and violence. The events and teachings recorded therein highlight hope, convey comfort, and provide divine perspective. We learn that obedience to God delivers many, that war can be a call to return to God, and that God provides relief for His disciples who are required to suffer. We also learn that the righteous who are called upon to die during war or violence will stand as a witness against the wicked and that these disciples will enter into the rest of the Lord.

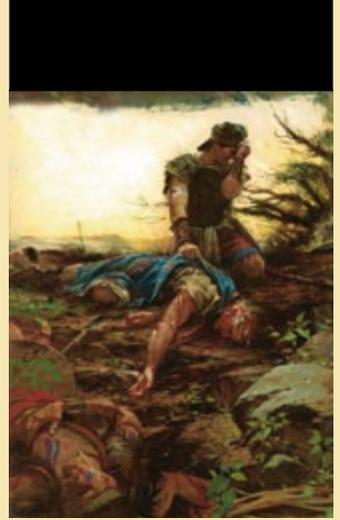
Ultimately, the Book of Mormon teaches us how disciples of Christ can receive peace in their hearts, homes, and nations. It is the eminent instrument to bring us to Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Priesthood Power,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 66.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Living in the Fulness of Times,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 6.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 7.
4. There are at least 56 scriptures in the Book of Mormon that teach how the Lord delivered people from war and other dangerous circumstances.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “Face the Future with Faith,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 34–35.
6. There are at least 35 scriptures, including 11 in the Book of Mormon, that teach how the Lord allows war and natural disasters to help us remember Him.
7. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Finding a Safe Harbor,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 59.
8. Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1950, 146.
9. Neal A. Maxwell, “Encircled in the Arms of His Love,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 17.
10. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Times in Which We Live,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 74.

WHY DO WARS AND VIOLENCE OCCUR?

The Book of Mormon testifies with distinct clarity that iniquity invites war. Whether unrighteous individuals seek power over others or a citizenry allows iniquity to thrive unrestrained, the result is war, conflict, and violence.



WHEN UNRIGHTEOUS INDIVIDUALS SEEK POWER

Amlici lost a contentious but legitimate election yet refused to relinquish his desire to reign over others. He convinced his constituents to consecrate him king anyway. He then commanded his new subjects to engage in war to destroy the Church of God and subject the people to him. Thousands suffered unnecessary violence because one man wanted power over others. (See Alma 2.)

Zerahemnah, a Lamanite commander, stirred up his people against the Nephites to bring them into bondage. War broke out, and their dead could not be counted because of the greatness of the number. (See Alma 43:6–8, 37; 44:21.)

Amalickiah, a Nephite dissenter, employed deception, violence, and war in his personal pursuit for power. He brought the Nephites into bondage, and they suffered war and violence for the next five years. (See Alma 46–48.)

WHEN CITIZENS ALLOW INIQUITY TO THRIVE

Nephi taught that various groups of people were “destroyed from generation to generation according to their iniquities” (2 Nephi 25:9). Captain Moroni assured his people that they would not be destroyed until they brought it upon themselves by their own transgressions (see Alma 46:18). Mormon noted, “It has been [the Nephite] quarrelings and their contentions, yea, their murderings, and their plunderings, their idolatry, their whoredoms, and their abominations, which were among themselves, which brought upon them their wars and their destructions” (Alma 50:21).



PHOTOGRAPHS OF FAMILY BY MICHAEL R. MORRIS; MAP © ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

THE HARVEST WILL COME

By Michael R. Morris
Church Magazines

For Oscar Filippini and his family, making a living off the land has never been easy. Wind, drought, equipment breakdown, slow markets, and other challenges seem at times to conspire against the family's best efforts.

"Every day here in the *chacra*—on our land—we must seek inspiration and revelation to be able to live off what the land gives us," says Oscar, who farms 100 acres (40 ha) in the Lower Chubut River Valley, located in southern Argentina's Chubut Province. "Every day brings challenges."

One of the Filippini family's biggest challenges is that they don't always know when their tireless efforts will bear fruit. They have learned, however, that hard work and perseverance eventually pay off.

"Working the land doesn't reward your efforts on a daily or weekly basis," Oscar explains. "We work every day but Sunday—every week, every month—without necessarily seeing any monetary return, so we have to have economic plans in place. Sometimes it takes months or even a year to enjoy the fruits of our labors. We must always remember that the work we do now will yield a harvest later."

The Filippini family has learned that the law of the harvest—both physical and spiritual—requires persistence, patience, and prayer.



Oscar Filipponi and his family don't always know when their tireless efforts will bear fruit. But they have learned that hard work and perseverance eventually pay off.

With his wife, Liliana, and two of their children, Daniel and María Céleste, Oscar grows alfalfa and raises livestock.

"Sometimes we have money, and sometimes we don't because it all goes to the cost of running the farm," he says. "Sometimes our machines break down. Sometimes we can't sell our animals when they're ready to be sold. But if we ponder and pray, remain patient, and hold on to hope, within a day or two a solution will present itself. Someone will come by and say, 'Che,¹ do you have any animals for sale?' Things work out, and we move forward. Working the land is difficult, but we have been sustained through our daily efforts."

Reference Points

Daniel says that working the land gives him opportunities each day to reflect on blessings and challenges from a gospel perspective. "It's a blessing to speak with the Lord and be attentive to the influence of the Spirit without distractions from noise or music or advertising," he says of working the land.

"It's easy to be a member of the Church living in a place like this surrounded by loved ones and by nature," adds Liliana. "It helps me remember that we depend on the Lord and that all we have comes thanks to Him. Almost everything we do here reflects some principle of the gospel. Oscar is always coming in the house with a reflection from farming or working with the animals."

When Oscar is plowing a field, for example, he selects a reference point such as a tree or a rock in the distance that will help him plow a straight row. "It doesn't matter if there are obstructions in his way," Liliana says. "He can't deviate from



WHEN THE LORD BALANCES HIS BOOKS

"There were two farmers once who had adjoining fields. The one never worked

in his field on Sunday, and his neighbor used to chide him about it. He said, 'Your crops aren't doing as well as mine are. Why don't you work on Sunday?'

"The other farmer said, 'Well, I want to do what the Lord said. I want to gain the blessings of the Lord.'

"Then one October day they stood at a fence line. The [neighbor] said, 'Just look at it. Look at my field. It is beautiful, the grain is tall, the heads are full of wheat, and your field shows little signs of neglect. You haven't tended yours as well as I've tended mine. Look at my harvest compared to yours. What do you say now about the blessings you thought you were earning?'

"The [Sabbath-keeping] farmer thought for a few minutes and said, 'The Lord doesn't balance his books in October.' "

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, *Mine Errand from the Lord* (2008), 193.

his course because he wants the rows to be straight.”

Oscar adds, “If I look behind me to see how my row is coming, I get off course. So I concentrate on my reference point and move forward.”

As in the *chacra*, he says, so in the Church. “To stay on course in our lives, we must look to the Lord, read the scriptures, and keep the commandments. If we allow ourselves to be distracted, we lose our reference points and our paths become crooked.”

A Spiritual Harvest

The Filipponis attend a branch of the Church in nearby Gaiman. In this town of 6,000, settled by Welsh immigrants in the 1870s, branch members have ample opportunities to hold up their light. “We have to be the best we can be each day because people are always watching,” says Liliana.

Getting people interested in the gospel can be a slow process. Like the physical law of the harvest, the spiritual law of the harvest requires patience. But because of the family’s consistency in living gospel principles, people have come to know and respect their Latter-day Saint standards.

Earlier, when Oscar worked for the government, he constantly turned down offers of coffee, tea, and alcohol. “After a few years,” he says, “fellow workers became considerate and supportive and would ask, ‘What kind of soda do you want?’ Sometimes they would even become interested in the Church. That is the harvest.”

Where the spiritual harvest of learning and living gospel principles has been particularly bountiful is within the family itself.

The harvest has come through blessings from Oscar’s service as patriarch of the Trelew Argentina North Stake, from Liliana’s service as branch Relief Society president, and from additional service rendered in a host of other callings family members have fulfilled throughout the years.

The harvest has come from keeping the Sabbath day holy and through living the law of tithing. “The windows



of heaven really do open—if not immediately, then through a process of continuing obedience,” Oscar says.

The harvest has come with the graduation of all the Filipponi children from high school and with all four sons having served full-time missions. Their education and missionary service have provided them with employment and leadership opportunities they likely would not have had otherwise.

The harvest has come in the queries María Céleste has received from peers who want to know about her brothers’ full-time missionary service, her religious beliefs, and why she avoids parties that begin late Saturday night.

And the harvest has come from the whisperings and calming influence of the Holy Ghost, which helped the family avert tragedy late one night when they thought their home was being burglarized. Daniel woke up when he heard a sound and prepared to defend the home, but the supposed intruder turned out to be a neighbor who had come looking for help after his car had broken down.

“I realized that the Spirit had calmed me down so that we could resolve the situation by not overreacting,” Daniel says. “Afterward we prayed and thanked Heavenly Father that nothing bad had happened.”

When we truly give ourselves to God, members of the Filipponi family say, He blesses us with our needs and we become instruments in His hands. It is a process that requires persistence, patience, and prayer. It also requires a lot of faith and work. But in the Lord’s due time, the harvest will come. ■

NOTE

1. An expression commonly used in Argentina that means “friend,” “pal,” or “mate.”





By Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

BUILDING FAITH IN Christ

There is much we can do to influence and expand the endowment of faith we receive through the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul provides perhaps the best-known definition of faith: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Alma adds that the things hoped for and not seen “are true” (Alma 32:21).

Faith in Jesus Christ is the conviction and assurance of (1) His status as the Only Begotten Son of God, (2) His infinite Atonement, and (3) His literal Resurrection—and all that these fundamental realities entail for us.

Paul includes faith in his list of spiritual gifts (see 1 Corinthians 12:9). Faith indeed comes by the Spirit, yet as the Bible Dictionary notes, “Although faith is a gift, it must be cultured and sought after until it grows from a tiny seed to a great tree.” There is much we can do to influence and expand the endowment of faith we receive through the Holy Spirit.

Faith Comes by Hearing the Word of God

The first intimations of faith in Jesus Christ come by hearing the word of God—the gospel of Jesus Christ. When that teaching is given

and received by the Holy Ghost, “the Spirit of truth” (see D&C 50:17–22), the seed of faith in Christ is planted. Paul taught this to the Romans when explaining that all may receive the gift of faith: “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). In other words, faith cometh by hearing the message that is the word, or gospel, of Christ.

As he describes the ministry of angels, Mormon tells us that it has always been the pattern that faith comes by hearing the gospel:

“And the office of their [the angels’] ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfil and to do the work of the covenants of the Father, which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men, by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him.

“And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the

Faith indeed comes by the Spirit, yet as the Bible Dictionary notes, “Although faith is a gift, it must be cultured and sought after until it grows from a tiny seed to a great tree.”



Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men” (Moroni 7:31–32).

Commissioned to “bear testimony of him,” missionaries are called, set apart, and empowered under apostolic keys and authority. They are therefore counted among “the chosen vessels of the Lord.” In other words, as the Lord’s authorized messengers, they, through their teaching and testifying by the power of the Holy Ghost, will introduce faith in Christ in the souls of those who hear them.

The word that we declare, the word that generates faith in Christ, is the gospel, or good news, of Jesus Christ. Simply put, the good news is that death is not the end of existence and our separation from God is temporary. We have a Savior, Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, who by His Atonement has overcome death and hell so that all will be resurrected and all who will repent and be baptized in His name may have place in the heavenly kingdom of God forever.

Faith Comes by Repentance

Repentance plays a prominent role in building faith in Christ. Receiving the word of Christ generates the faith needed for repentance, and repentance, in turn, nourishes a growing faith. Mormon declares, “And [Christ] hath said: Repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, and have faith in me, that ye may be saved” (Moroni 7:34).

For example, a wise missionary will counsel and pray with his or her companion, seeking inspiration regarding the course of repentance that each investigator should follow. The missionaries will plan their teaching accordingly. They will prayerfully determine what invitation or invitations to extend in each contact with the investigator. They will build their lessons around the invitation, identifying the doctrines that the investigator needs to understand in order to accept their invitation.

The missionaries will determine how to teach those doctrines to achieve the greatest clarity and conviction for that particular individual. They will plan ways and means for bringing to bear all resources available, including the assistance of members, in helping the investigator keep his or her commitment to act in harmony with the principle or commandment in question. This kind of missionary teaching and testifying is how we conduct an investigator through the process of repentance.

Faith Comes through Covenants

Another essential element of repentance is baptism by immersion, by which we begin to take upon us the name of Christ. Many verses in the scriptures refer to “baptism unto repentance” or “baptism of repentance” (see Acts 19:4; Alma 5:62; 7:14; Moroni 8:11; D&C 35:5–6). These phrases recognize the doctrine that the baptism of water

is the final or crowning step in the process of repentance. The renunciation of sin, coupled with our covenant of obedience, completes our repentance; indeed, repentance remains unfinished without that covenant. With it we qualify for a remission of sins by the grace of Jesus Christ through the baptism of the Spirit (see 2 Nephi 31:17). Further, the baptismal covenant applies prospectively as well as retrospectively: each time we truly repent, that covenant is reinvigorated and we once again qualify for a remission of sins.

What do these ordinances and their related covenants have to do with building faith? Faith in Christ is an essential prerequisite to entering into divine covenants, but covenants also add to one's faith in a way that cannot otherwise be attained. By covenant, the great God of heaven permits Himself to be bound to each of us individually (see D&C 82:10). So long as we abide by our covenants with Him, He is obligated to grant us a place in His kingdom and, with the higher covenants, exaltation within that kingdom. He is a God who has all power and who cannot lie. Thus, we can have unbounded faith that He will fulfill His pledges to us. By our covenants with God, we can enjoy a faith in Christ strong enough to see us through any challenge or trial, knowing that in the end our salvation is assured.

Faith Can Increase

What I have said about building faith in Christ among those taught by missionaries applies to all of us. Our faith in Christ is born of the Spirit as we hear the word of God taught by those who are His commissioned servants, both living and dead. As we build upon that foundation, our faith is strengthened by prayers of faith that have become a part of our daily life—and sometimes a part of our hourly life.

Continuing to feast upon the words of Christ in the Book of Mormon and other scripture adds to and deepens the faith that had its origins in the word. Repentance rooted in faith further nourishes our faith as obedience is perfected. Repentance invigorates our own baptism of water and of the Spirit to produce a remission of sins committed not only before baptism but also after baptism.

Christlike service to our neighbor is a critical part of the covenant keeping that nurtures faith in Christ. Over time we find that the blessings promised for obedience to God are in fact realized in our lives and that our faith is confirmed and strengthened.

Faith Is Also a Principle of Power

What I have been describing up to this point is a level of faith that consists of spiritual assurances and that produces good works, most especially obedience to the principles and commandments of the gospel. This is a true faith in Christ and the level at which our teaching of investigators should be focused.

There is, however, a level of faith that not only governs our behavior but also empowers us to change what is and to make things happen that otherwise would not happen. I am speaking of faith not only as a principle of action but also as a principle of power. Paul stated that this was the faith by which prophets “subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, [and] women received their dead raised to life again” (Hebrews 11:33–35). These are grand things—but in a way no greater than conquering a powerful addiction or other comparable obstacle to conversion and baptism.

Key to our obtaining power through faith is learning, asking, and acting according to the will of God. “Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me” (Moroni 7:33).

He cautions, however, “If ye ask anything that is not expedient for you, it shall turn unto your condemnation” (D&C 88:65).

Your own faith in Christ will grow wonderfully as you seek day by day to know and to do the will of God. Faith, already a principle of action in you, will then become also a principle of power. ■

From an address given at a seminar for new mission presidents in Provo, Utah, USA, on June 23, 2011.



AN INWARD HEALING

"Most of us have not reached [a Christlike] stage of compassion and love and forgiveness. It is not easy. It requires a self-discipline almost greater than we are capable of. But as we try, we come to know that there is a resource of healing, that there is a mighty power of healing in Christ, and that if we are to be His true servants we must not only exercise that healing power in behalf of others, but, perhaps more important, inwardly."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "The Healing Power of Christ," *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 59.

Loving My Enemies

Name withheld

I knew of the Lord's command to love others, including our enemies, but as I looked at the soldier, I did not love him.

I grew up in a country under occupation. The occupying soldiers did not treat my people well. Many in my town were arrested, beaten, shot, or even killed by the soldiers for no apparent reason. One day when I was 16, the soldiers came to my university and shot one of the students in the head. For two hours they would not allow him to be taken to the hospital. That day I developed hate in my heart for those soldiers. I could not forgive them for the pain they caused my people and could not forget the image of that student.

When I joined the Church at age 25, it was difficult to attend church because checkpoints, curfews, and other travel restrictions were imposed on us. I had to risk my life to sneak out so I could take the sacrament and be with fellow Latter-day Saints. It was hard being the only member of the Church in my family and in my town. I wanted to be with

members of the Church, yet I was turned back by the soldiers almost every week.

One Sabbath as I was trying to cross the checkpoint, the soldier told me that I was not allowed out and demanded that I go home. I looked at the soldier and remembered the Savior's words: "Love your enemies" (see Matthew 5:43–44).

I realized then that I did not *love* that soldier. The hate I felt as a teenager had disappeared after I joined the Church, but I did not love my enemies. The Savior Jesus Christ gave us this commandment, yet my heart could not love those occupying soldiers. This bothered me for days, especially since I was preparing to go to the temple at that time.

One day I came across the following scripture: "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" (Moroni 7:48). I felt



Mormon was speaking to me personally and showing me how to love.

I decided to ask Heavenly Father for help. I fasted and prayed for help to love my enemies. For days I felt no change, but I didn't realize that Heavenly Father was gradually changing my heart. About a year later, as I was trying to pass through one of the checkpoints, the soldier told me I was not allowed in. This time I felt differently. As I looked into the eyes of that soldier, I felt an amazing love for him. I felt how much Heavenly Father loved him, and I saw him as a child of God.

I now know, like Nephi, that the Lord gives us no commandment save He shall prepare a way for us that we may accomplish the thing which He commands us (see 1 Nephi 3:7). When Christ commanded us to love our enemies, He knew it was possible with His help. He can teach us to love others if we but trust Him and learn from His great example. ■

“As always, Christ is our exemplar. In His teachings as in His life, He showed us the way. He forgave the wicked, the vulgar, and those who sought to hurt and do Him harm” (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Merciful Obtain Mercy,” Ensign, May 2012, 76).

HOW DO WE LEARN TO FORGIVE OTHERS?

President George Albert Smith (1870–1951) helps answer this question in chapter 23 of *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith* (2011):

- “Before we get into the glory of our Father and enjoy the blessings that we hope to receive through faithfulness, we will have to live the laws of patience, and exercise forgiveness toward those who trespass against us, and remove from our hearts all feelings of hatred toward them.”
- “When we partake of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, . . . let us purge from our hearts all feeling of unkindness toward one another and toward our brothers and sisters who are not of our faith.”
- “May we have the Spirit of the Master dwelling within us, that we may forgive all men as He has commanded, forgive, not only with our lips but in the very depths of our hearts, every trespass that may have been committed against us.”

Whom do you need to forgive? Prayerfully consider an appropriate time and place to speak with this person (or people) and express your love and forgiveness.

Repentance is the process of changing and doing and becoming what God wants us to be so that we can return to His presence.

REPENTANCE THAT BRINGS CONVERSION



One of my favorite stories in the Book of Mormon relates the missionary efforts of the sons of Mosiah as they went among the Lamanites. Teaching a people whose traditions were seemingly not conducive to spiritual growth, these faithful missionaries nonetheless helped bring about a mighty change in these Lamanites. We know that the sons of Mosiah “taught with power and authority of God” (Alma 17:3), but one of the remarkable events in this story is that “as many of the Lamanites as believed in their preaching, and were converted unto the Lord, never

did fall away” (Alma 23:6).

I have watched people come into the Church through missionary work and through being raised in the Church, and I have seen some of them fall away. This process has made me wonder what occurred in the conversion of the Lamanites so that they “never did fall away.”

In teaching the king of the Lamanites, Aaron told him that if he would “bow down before God” and “repent of all [his] sins,” he would “receive the hope” he desired, which was eternal life. The king responded with a simple, heartfelt prayer, asking God, “Wilt

By Elder
James B. Martino
Of the Seventy



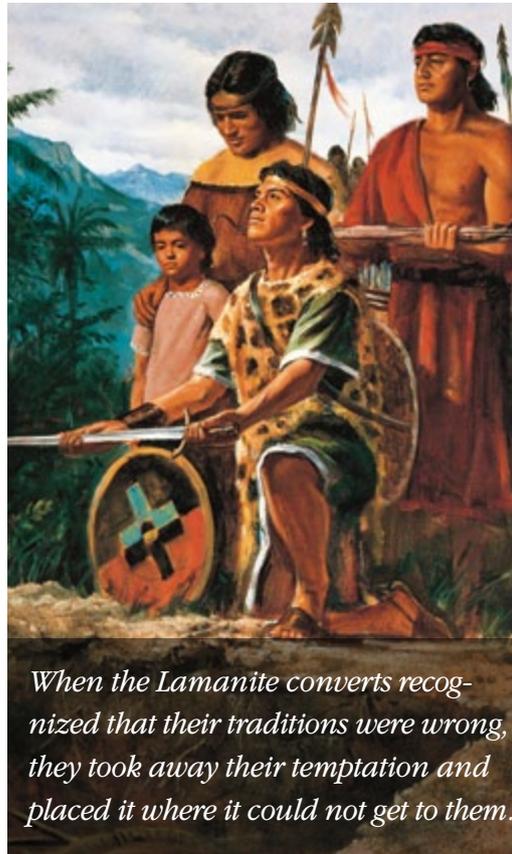
thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee, . . . that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day” (Alma 22:16, 18). Here is a king who sincerely desired to give away his sins, turn to God, and change his lifestyle completely.

As a sign of his conversion, the king sent forth a proclamation that the sons of Mosiah be allowed to “go forth throughout all the land, that his people might be convinced concerning the wicked traditions of their fathers” (Alma 23:3). These traditions included blaming others for their condition, being lazy, and committing serious sins like murder, stealing, and immorality (see Mosiah 9:12; 10:12–13, 17).

Righteous Traditions

How did these converts become a peaceful people and an example for all to emulate? In Alma we are told that these Lamanites “were brought to believe in the traditions of the Nephites” (Alma 23:5). (In our day we might say they were brought to believe in the traditions of the Latter-day Saints.) Often we think that repentance is the process of only laying aside the wrong we have done; however, equally important is what we do to replace bad habits and traditions with new and better ones.

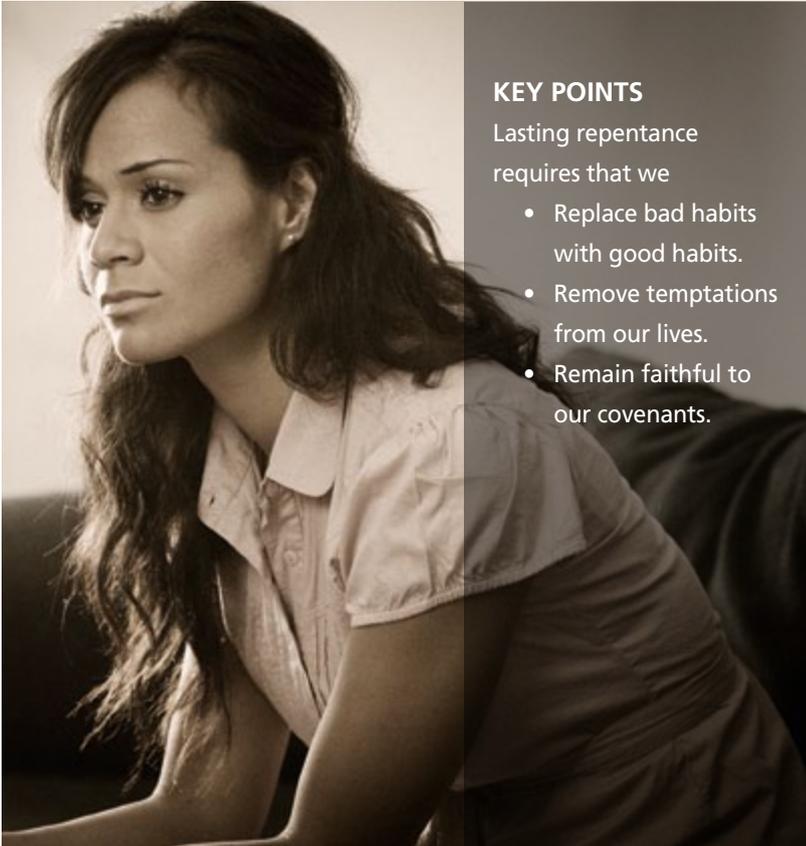
I remember when my parents joined the Church. I was 16 at the time and had no interest in following them, but it did not take long before I began to see meaningful changes taking place in our home. We had always attended church on Sunday, but now religion



When the Lamanite converts recognized that their traditions were wrong, they took away their temptation and placed it where it could not get to them.

was more than a Sunday activity. We began to hold family home evening and family prayer. We began to read the scriptures. We began to discuss gospel topics and render service to others throughout the week. In other words, our lives were changing and we were adding righteous habits and traditions. These traditions strengthened us through the difficult process of making necessary changes.

The process of repentance, therefore, is more than just asking forgiveness for what we have done wrong. Repentance requires further action on our part. When investigators commit to be baptized, they have felt the



KEY POINTS

Lasting repentance requires that we

- Replace bad habits with good habits.
- Remove temptations from our lives.
- Remain faithful to our covenants.

Spirit and want to repent. Sometimes, however, they fail to maintain their righteousness because they do not “lay down the weapons of their rebellion” (Alma 23:7), whatever they may be.

When the Lamanite converts recognized that their traditions were wrong, they realized they had to change. They decided to take their weapons of rebellion and “bury them up deep in the earth” (Alma 24:17).

In other words, they took away their temptation and placed it where it could not get to them. What about us? Do we likewise remove “the temptations and the sins

which do so easily beset [us]” (2 Nephi 4:18)? Do we stay away from people and places that might tempt us to break the Word of Wisdom? Have we installed an Internet filter on our computer and moved it to a public area of our home? Have we figuratively buried habits that keep us from the companionship of the Holy Spirit?

The Lamanites also began to establish righteous patterns in their lives. This was the key to their success—they filled the vacuum in their lives by implementing new traditions that drew them closer to God.

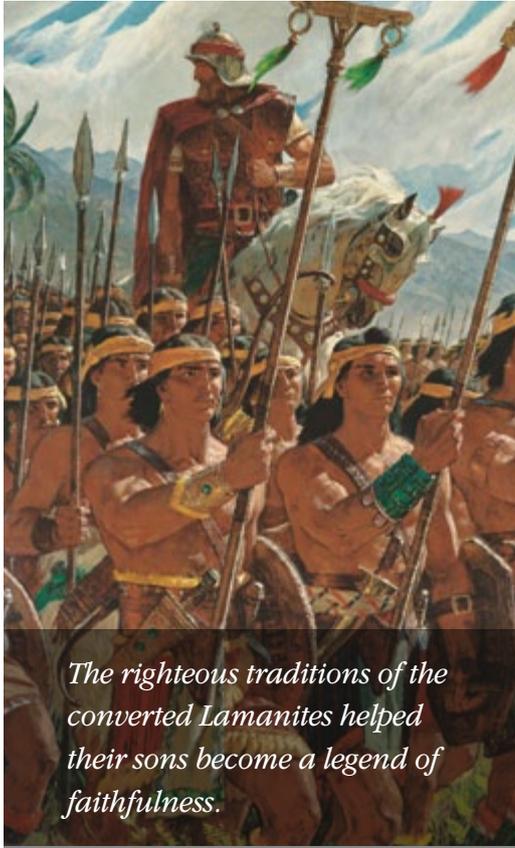
Changing Our Lives

Our goal is to become like the converted Lamanites so that we too might have great desires to be forgiven and, therefore, “not fight against God any more” (Alma 23:7).

“It has been all that we could do . . . to repent of all our sins . . . and to get God to take them away from our hearts,” they said, “for it was all we could do to repent sufficiently before God that he would take away our stain” (Alma 24:11).

Their hearts were changed, which moved them to action. Their repentance led to an application of new traditions that would strengthen them in the face of temptations. These traditions replaced old ones and allowed them to remain strong despite continued testing.

Moved by compassion because of “the many afflictions and tribulations which the Nephites bore for them,” these Lamanites later considered taking up their weapons “in the defence of their country” (Alma 53:13).



The righteous traditions of the converted Lamanites helped their sons become a legend of faithfulness.

But with persuasion from Helaman and his brethren, they remained faithful to their covenants. And what was the result? Their righteous traditions helped the rising generation become righteous; in fact, their sons became a legend of faithfulness. (See Alma 53:15–21.)

The scriptures tell us that their sons “did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them.” In addition, “they [were] young, and their minds [were] firm, and they [did] put their trust in God continually” (Alma 57:21, 27). This type of faith came from the example

of repentant, righteous parents who established new traditions—the traditions of righteous Nephites—in their homes.

For both new and old members of the Church, here are five practices that can change our lives. These are commandments of God and will help us remain faithful, even in the face of trials and temptations. If we follow them, these practices will allow the Holy Spirit to continue to strive with us and strengthen us as our testimonies grow:

1. Hold personal and family scripture study.
2. Hold personal and family prayer.
3. Hold family home evening.
4. Pay an honest tithe.
5. Serve others by fulfilling Church callings.

If we establish the traditions of a righteous people, we will overcome our weaknesses, progress in our faith, and not fall away.

When my parents joined the Church, their lives changed. Were they perfect? No. But the patterns of righteousness they established changed their lives as well as the lives of generations that will follow.

Holding on to the iron rod and calling upon God in all we do are major parts of the repentance process. So is casting off evil habits and replacing them with righteous traditions.

Whether we are newly baptized or were born into the Church, our spiritual strength comes from consistently engaging in righteous actions that draw us closer to God. Repentance, after all, is the process of changing and doing and becoming what Heavenly Father wants us to be so that we can return to His presence. ■



STAYING ON THE PATH

“Decisions are constantly before us. To make them wisely, courage is needed—the courage to say no, the courage to say yes. Decisions *do* determine destiny.

“I plead with you to make a determination right here, right now, not to deviate from the path which will lead to our goal: eternal life with our Father in Heaven.”

President Thomas S. Monson,
“The Three Rs of Choice,”
Ensign, Nov. 2010, 68.

By Christine Bryant

A few years ago, my husband and I let our feelings be hurt by a few comments made by fellow ward members about our 12-year-old son with autism, and we decided to stop attending church.

Time passed, and before long, it had been almost two years since we had attended church as a family. Occasionally my husband or I would go on our own, but we never went together, and never with our son.

While we tried to maintain our testimonies, we made no attempt to regain activity.

When the ward boundaries changed, we also avoided contact with members of the new ward. Soon our new home teachers began calling us almost weekly to set up a time to visit. We made excuse after excuse of why we couldn't meet with them.

One Sunday afternoon while I was setting dinner on the table, our home teachers showed up unannounced. When my husband told them that we were just sitting down to eat, they said they had something to say that was much more important than our meal.

We let them in.

The spirit that filled our home that day was strong. The men spoke from their hearts, bearing testimony of the importance of returning to church. One spoke of his own experience with inactivity and his journey back to the fold. His story of faith and obedience was exactly what we needed to hear. When they invited us to return to the Church, we accepted their invitation and told them we would be at church the following week.

Even though we knew we had made the right choice to return to church, we worried that our son would act out and that we would receive the same kinds of negative comments we had in the past.

However, on our first Sunday back, the bishop asked for volunteers among the brethren to sit with our son during his meetings. We expected a handful of men, at most, who would rotate each week. The response was overwhelming as a steady stream from both the elders and high priests quorums eagerly agreed to befriend him.

The young men in the ward also stepped in. They

FINDING OUR Way Back



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH JENSON, PROPS BY ERIC JOHNSON

REACHING OUT TO MEMBERS WITH DISABILITIES

Here are some ways you can reach out to and include those families who have a member with a disability.

- When you see a child have an outburst, realize it might be because of a disability.
- Don't be afraid to ask how to include an individual with a disability or offer to help.

- Consider inviting the family to join yours for family home evening or other social events.
- Encourage your children to reach out to members with disabilities at church and school.
- If you are a teacher, visit the individual with a disability and, if appropriate, his or her family.
- Look for ways to modify lessons and adapt programs to meet the needs of all class members, including those with disabilities.

For more information on disabilities, visit lds.org/disability.

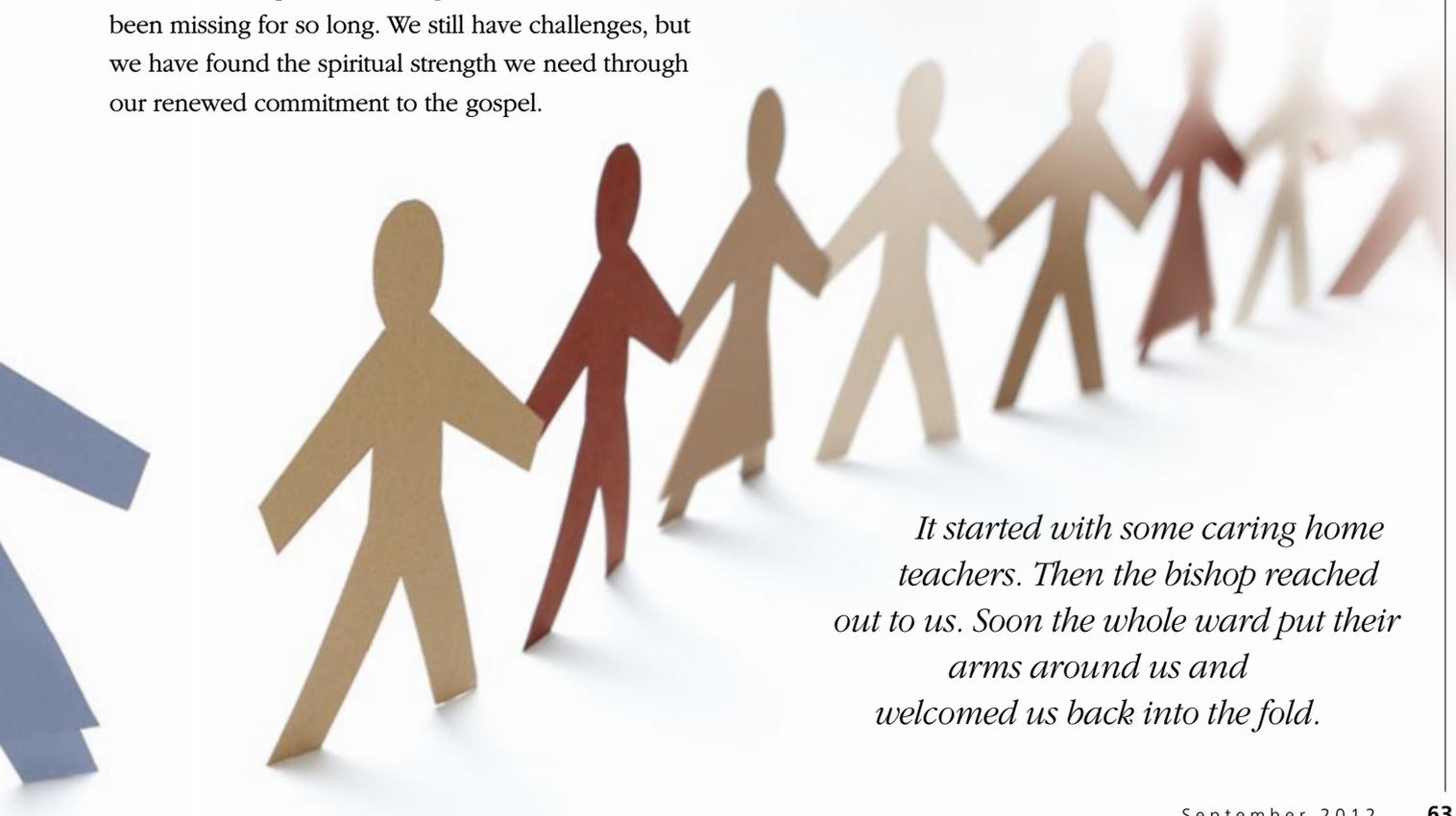
quickly made friends with our son and helped him learn more about his Aaronic Priesthood duties. For the first time since he was a little boy, our now 14-year-old son loved church and felt happy there.

Within a few weeks he was reverently passing the sacrament on his own. There are no words to describe the joy I felt as I watched my son standing tall among the other boys. I was grateful for the progress he had made and the friends who loved him.

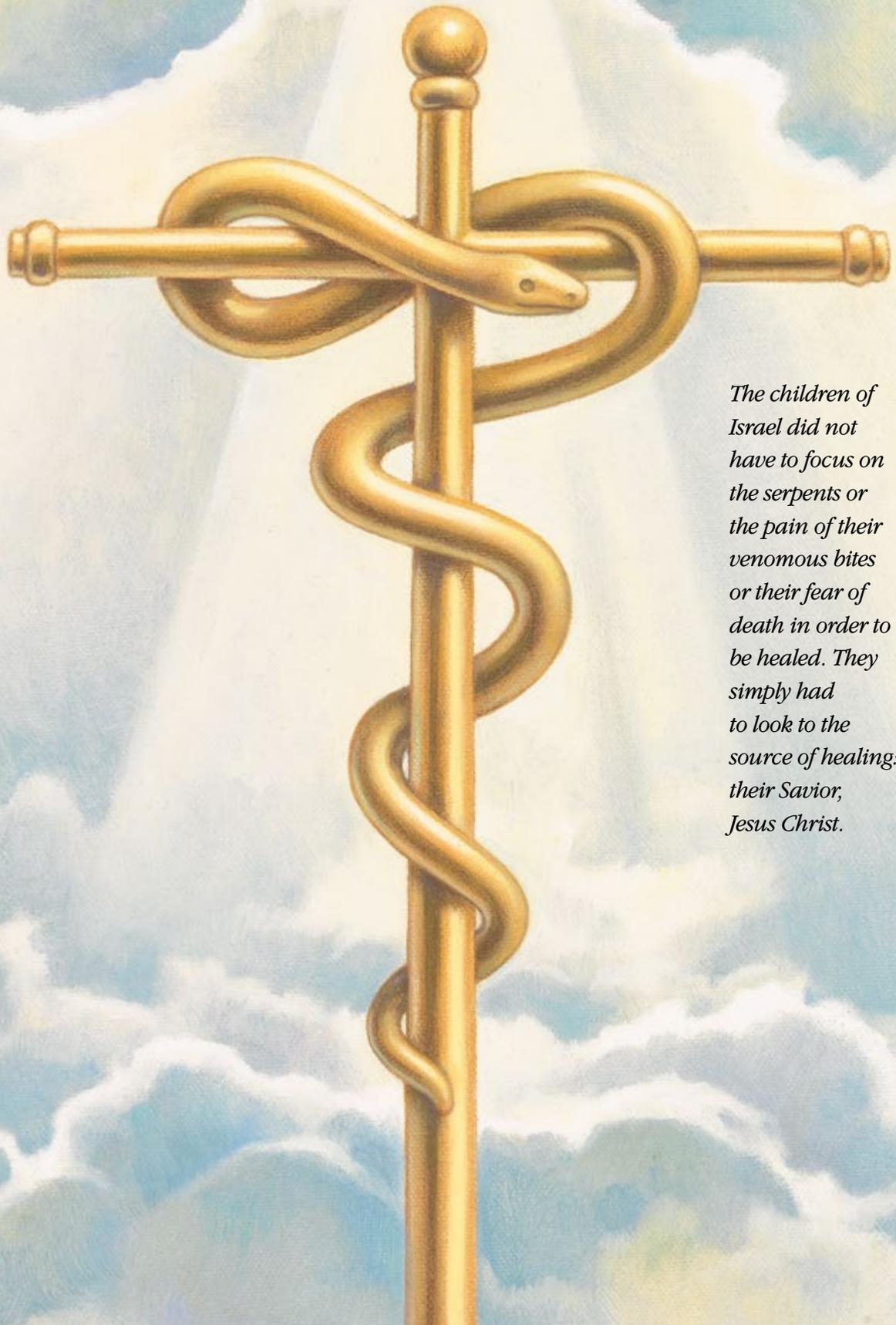
As we have returned to Church activity, we have felt an increase in spiritual blessings in our lives that we had been missing for so long. We still have challenges, but we have found the spiritual strength we need through our renewed commitment to the gospel.

Looking back, we realize that the comments made about our son were not meant to hurt him or us but instead reflected a misunderstanding of our son's disability and how difficult it was to control his behavior, especially in large groups like our expanding ward.

By accepting our home teachers' invitation to let go of the things that had offended us, return to church, and forgive, we were able to feel part of our ward family and once again partake of the blessings of the gospel. ■



It started with some caring home teachers. Then the bishop reached out to us. Soon the whole ward put their arms around us and welcomed us back into the fold.



The children of Israel did not have to focus on the serpents or the pain of their venomous bites or their fear of death in order to be healed. They simply had to look to the source of healing: their Savior, Jesus Christ.

Overcoming Addiction through the Atonement

To those who despair of healing and peace, there is hope in Christ.

By Benjamin R. Erwin

LDS Family Services

Many of us are familiar with the story in Numbers 21 in which the fiery serpents come among the children of Israel. To save the people, at the instruction of the Lord, “Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” (verse 9).

This story has particular relevance to our day, when addiction—especially to pornography—is plaguing our society and families. Just as fiery serpents swept through the camp of Israel, pornography is sweeping through our world, and even the Saints of God are not escaping unharmed. President Thomas S. Monson has aptly called pornography “deadly.”¹ President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) called it a “plague” and “poison.”² In very real ways, the serpents of addiction are attacking us as fiercely and with as devastating consequences as the fiery serpents attacked the children of Israel.

Most of us are aware of the sad consequences of addictive behavior, so instead of focusing on the dangers of pornography and the pain associated with addiction, I would like to share a message of hope.

Look to the Savior

Numbers 21 isn’t the only scriptural account about Moses’s brass serpent saving the children of Israel. In the Book of Mormon, Alma spoke of this symbol as well:

“Behold a type was raised up in the wilderness, that whosoever would look upon it might live. And many did look and live.

“But few understood the meaning of those things, and this because of the hardness of their hearts. But there were many who were so hardened that they would not look, therefore they perished. Now the reason they would not look is because they did not believe that it would heal them.

“O my brethren, if ye could be healed by merely casting about your eyes that ye might be healed, would ye not behold quickly, or would ye rather harden your hearts in unbelief, and be slothful, that ye would not cast about your eyes, that ye might perish?

“If so, wo shall come upon you; but if not so, then cast about your eyes and begin to believe in the Son of God” (Alma 33:19–22).

Consider the details Alma shared as he recounted this story. He focused his comments on the Savior and the healing power of His Atonement. He did not even mention the fiery serpents!



*We can take
counsel from Nephi
to “press forward
with a steadfastness
in Christ,
having a perfect
brightness of hope”
(2 Nephi 31:20)
that He can heal —
and is healing — us.*

What Alma chose to tell—and what he chose to leave out—teaches one key to overcoming pornography addiction (or any challenge we may have in this life): to “cast about [our] eyes and begin to believe in the Son of God” (verse 22).

I have observed in my work as a counselor and in life in general that too many of us focus on the problem we face and how horrific it is. To some degree, it is good to realize the tendency of addictions to destroy lives and ruin relationships. There is a time and a place for warning our neighbors (see D&C 88:81), and recognition can help “harrow up” our consciences and lead us to repentance (see Alma 36:17–18). But when we spend so much time describing the attacking “serpent” that we fail to see the source of healing, we’re not much different than the Israelites. The children of Israel did not have to focus on the serpents or the pain of their venomous bites or their fear of death in order to be healed. They simply had to look to the source of healing: their Savior, Jesus Christ.

Don’t Focus on the Serpents

We know from the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets that genuine repentance requires feeling sincere remorse. But focusing too much on the negative can lead to fear, loss of hope, and diminishing self-worth—in the words of Nephi, we begin to “droop in sin” (2 Nephi 4:28).

Those who struggle with sin sometimes lie and rationalize in an attempt to minimize the consequences of their behavior. But somewhere inside themselves, they are aware of what they have done and know they are accountable for it. They know they are in spiritual bondage. Almost everyone I have met struggling with addiction suffers from a terrible sense of shame and a belief that he or she is broken, defective, and beyond the love and grace of God.

But this belief, in my experience, is far from the truth. Usually I find that those who struggle with addictions are warriors with tenacity, courage, and a strong desire to be clean. They win far more battles than they lose as they march toward recovery.

This may be hard for some to comprehend—if people are so strong, why is overcoming addiction so difficult?

Addiction is often misunderstood, and some believe that if a person would simply choose to recover or work harder at stopping, he or she would be able to. But the nature of addiction—and all sin, for that matter—is such that we cannot heal ourselves from it. The children of Israel could not heal themselves from the bites of the fiery serpents, and we cannot simply wish or even work addiction away. We must find our hope of healing in Christ.

Hang onto Hope

But why do some choose not to look and live? In Alma 33:20 we read that “few understood the meaning of those things, and this because of the hardness of their hearts,” and that they would not look “because they did not believe that it would heal them.” Some of the children of Israel had abandoned all hope of recovery.

Consider the experience of those who struggle with pornography. Addiction brings heavy burdens of secrets and pain. It usually doesn’t take people long to want to stop. They tell themselves “never again,” yet time after time, they fall. Such succumbing can bring with it a “hardness of heart,” a refusal to believe that anything can help them.

Others may harden their hearts by becoming frustrated when, despite their best efforts, the Savior doesn’t seem to be healing them. They have counseled with their priesthood leaders, fasted and prayed with real intent, attended the temple, received priesthood blessings, and experienced promptings and comfort from the Holy Ghost—all without feeling that the Savior has healed them.

Preach My Gospel addresses this very concern regarding addictive behaviors: “Repentance may involve an emotional and physical process. . . . Both repentance and recovery may take time. . . . Even though a person may have some initial success, further emotional healing may be necessary to completely repent and recover.”³

It takes faith, hope, and time to heal from the patterns of self-deception, isolation, and secrecy that nearly always accompany addiction. We can take counsel from Nephi to “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope” (2 Nephi 31:20) that He can heal—and is

KEY POINTS

- It takes faith, hope, and time to heal from the patterns that accompany addiction.
- Recovery comes through focusing on the Savior, not on the addiction.
- Those who struggle with addiction can find help and support through Church leaders, professional counseling, and family and friends. Additional resources include the Addiction Recovery Program available through LDS Family Services and the Church website combating pornography.org.

healing—us. We need to not give up or decide that because temptations and cravings return, there is no hope in Christ. To those who will not look because they feel no hope, I say that there *is* hope in Christ. He is the hope of recovery.

Seek Professional Knowledge and Help

We can also do much to enable our faith and the power of Christ. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that “Latter-day Saints believe in applying the best available scientific knowledge and techniques. . . . We enlist the help of healing practitioners, such as physicians and surgeons, to restore health.”⁴ We should do what we can to improve our situations, learn about addiction, and find support in our families and friends. Combatingpornography.org offers resources and suggestions for individuals, families, and Church leaders. The Church-produced pamphlet *Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts* (available from priesthood leaders or from store.lds.org) may also be helpful.

Professional counseling may also be appropriate. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve has suggested to priesthood leaders that “where necessary, they can refer [those with addictions] to qualified licensed counselors and LDS Family Services.”⁵ I do not wish to imply that everyone needs a counselor. President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve has warned us that too often we seek a counselor when we should seek the Lord.⁶ Yet in some cases it may be appropriate.

Another resource, the Addiction Recovery Program, available through LDS Family



THE SOLUTIONS ARE FOUND IN CHRIST

“The solutions to life’s problems are always gospel solutions. Not only are *answers*

found in Christ, but so is the power, the gift, the bestowal, the miracle of giving and receiving those answers.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “How Do I Love Thee?” in *Brigham Young University 1999–2000 Speeches* (2000), Feb. 15, 2000.

Services, is a free and confidential resource for individuals struggling with addiction and for their family members.

Participants learn how to apply the principles of the gospel to help them experience

not only *repentance* but also *recovery* through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

One final note to family members and loved ones of those who struggle with addiction. Often it seems that help and aid come readily to the person dealing with addiction while leaving you feeling neglected. The Savior offers you the same healing and hope He offers your loved one. You too can be supported in this trial through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Alma 36:3). The Atonement of Jesus Christ is for *all* of us.

I know that as we “cast about [our] eyes” and “begin to believe in the Son of God,” He will heal us (Alma 33:22). He is the Son of God, and His is the only name and way by which we can return to our Father (see Mosiah 3:17).

Alma ends his sermon on the brass serpent with his testimony that Christ “will come to redeem his people, and that he shall suffer and die to atone for their sins” (Alma 33:22). I add my own witness that Christ *has* come and that “[our] burdens may be light, through the joy” and healing of His eternal Atonement (Alma 33:23). ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Pornography—the Deadly Carrier,” *Ensign*, July 2001, 2.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Be Not Deceived,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 45; “A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 7.
3. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 187–188.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, “Healing the Sick,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 47.
5. M. Russell Ballard, “O That Cunning Plan of the Evil One,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 110.
6. Boyd K. Packer, “Solving Emotional Problems in the Lord’s Own Way,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 91–93.



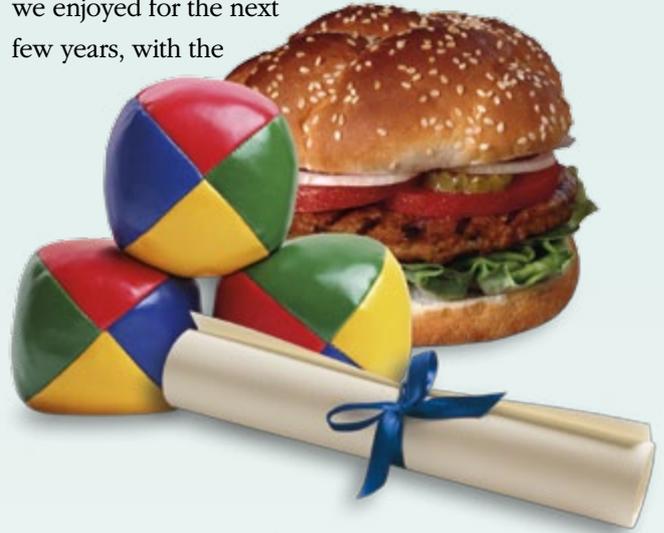
Family Talent Night

When our kids were young, we used to invite family friends to share a special family home evening with us. We started by having a dinner that our children helped prepare and serve, and then we had a talent night that featured the children's talents. They could sing a song, recite a poem, tell a joke, share artwork, juggle, perform a duet with mom or an acrobatic

trick with dad—whatever they wanted to rehearse to share. Our guests were the judges, and they gave awards for best song, funniest joke, most unique act, and so forth. Each child was awarded a certificate for his or her talent and participation. The goal of those family home evenings was to instill in the children's minds the idea of serving and supporting one another and of sharing

their talents with others. Our first talent night began a special tradition that we enjoyed for the next few years, with the

preparations beginning weeks in advance. ■
Marcia Biewer, Utah, USA



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

“Sharing the Gospel by Sharing You,” on page 18: As you share stories from the article, consider asking your family to think about friends and family members with whom they could share the gospel. Discuss how to follow the counsel given to be a friend and listen with love so that when opportunities to bear testimony come, you will be prepared.

“The Harvest Will Come,” on page 49: Consider reading the article together, especially the section entitled “Reference Points.” You might want to play a game with family members where you pick out a reference point in the distance and try walking toward it in a straight line. To conclude, you could discuss how to “stay on course” as you go through life.

“Building Faith in Christ,” on page 52: At the end of the article, Elder Christofferson talks about faith as a principle of action and of power. He quotes Mormon

saying, “Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me” (Moroni 7:33). As a family, discuss some challenges you face and goals you can set to overcome them. Consider choosing one goal to work on this week, remembering that with Christ's help, we have the power to do all things. Write down the goal and set a date to report to one another how you are doing.

By Elder D. Todd Christofferson
 of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

BUILDING FAITH IN Christ

There is much we can do to influence and expand the endowment of faith we receive through the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul provides perhaps the most eloquent definition of faith: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Albeit subtle, that definition helps us understand the nature of faith. It is not a mere belief in the unseen, but a conviction and assurance of things to come, based on the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

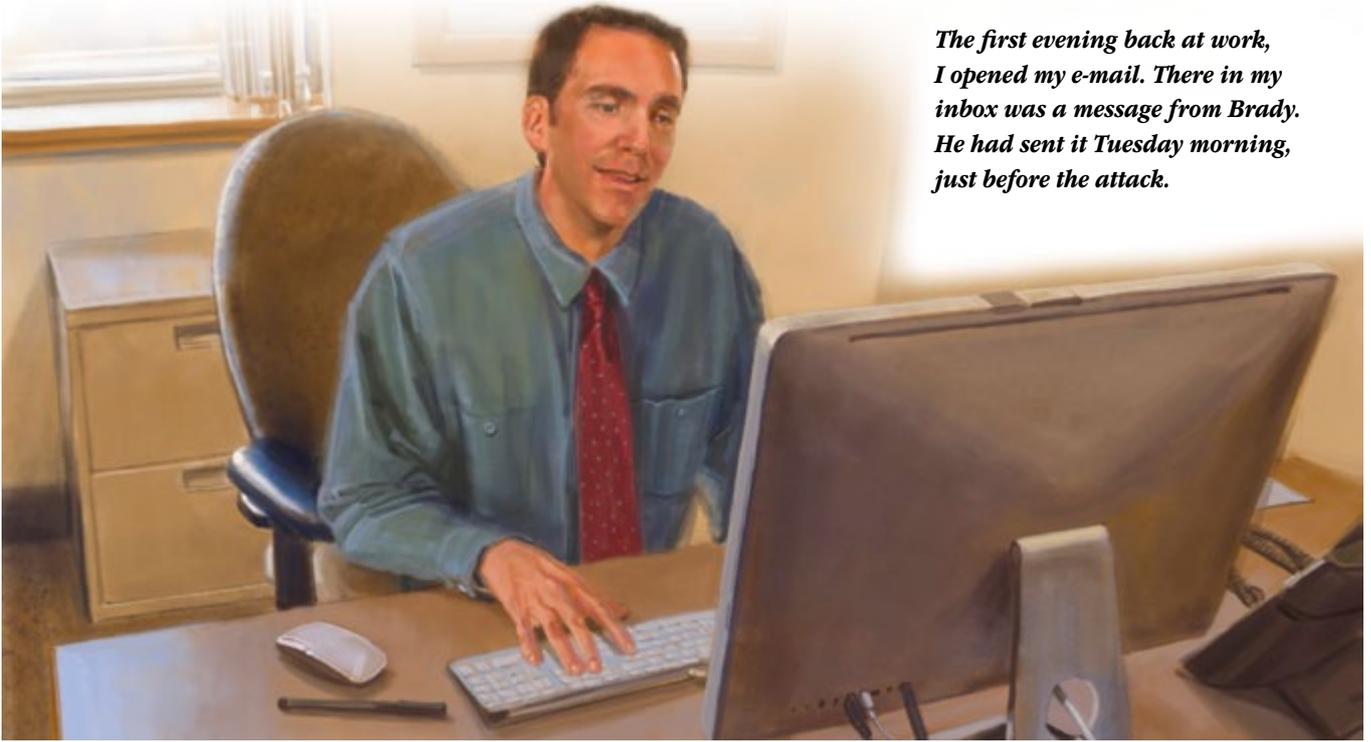
Faith Comes by Hearing the Word of God. When that teaching is given and received by the Holy Spirit, “the Spirit of God” (see John 14:26), the word of faith in Christ is planted. Paul taught that to the Romans, when explaining that all of us receive the gift of faith, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). In other words, faith cometh by hearing the message that we need, or gospel, of Christ, through that we need, or gospel, of Christ.

Mormon tells us that a few days have been given to all of us since we were born, and he says that the gift of faith comes by hearing the gospel and by the witness of the Holy Spirit.

“And the witness of the Holy Spirit cometh and dwelleth in the heart of the child of man, to prepare the way among the children of men, by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of Him.”

“And by so doing, the Lord God purgeth the heart that the witness of His Holy Spirit may be given unto the chosen, according to the power thereof, and after this manner bringeth to pass the

IMAGE OF JUGGLING BALLS © ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/BRIAN A. JACKSON; IMAGE OF HAMBURGER © GETTY IMAGES



The first evening back at work, I opened my e-mail. There in my inbox was a message from Brady. He had sent it Tuesday morning, just before the attack.

HE GAVE ME PEACE

My brother Brady was a presidential management intern working in naval intelligence at the US Pentagon when the attacks of September 11, 2001, occurred. I was working in Idaho, USA, at the time, and when I saw the news that morning about what had happened, I called my boss to let him know I would not be coming to work for several days.

A few members of my family gathered in Washington, D.C., at a hotel ballroom that government officials had designated as a briefing room, where they could update the families on the ongoing recovery efforts. We waited day after day to learn whether Brady had been among the victims. The feeling in that environment was one of insurmountable grief and hopelessness. Yet our family banded together and prayed that whatever happened, we would not lose our faith.

Nearly one week after the attacks, on September 17, we received confirmation that Brady had died.

I don't know that I ever asked, "Why me?" But I certainly asked, "Why *him*?" From the time I was a child, I had loved, admired, and wanted to be just like Brady. I also wondered, "Why *now*?" For several weeks, Brady had been planning a trip to Idaho to spend time with family. He was scheduled to come on Thursday, September 13, just two days after he had died.

The first evening back at work after returning to Idaho, I opened my professional e-mail account, which I hadn't done since September 10. There in my inbox was a message from Brady. He had sent it Tuesday morning, just before the attack. In it he talked about our getting together and all the fun things we had planned. When he signed off, he simply wrote, "Peace."

That wasn't how Brady usually ended his e-mails, but I count it as a tender mercy of the Lord that he did so. I don't think Brady knew what was going to happen, but I love that his last words—his last word—to me was *peace*.

Even now, more than a decade later, I occasionally reread that e-mail. Every time I do, I am reminded that it is through the gospel that we can find the peace the Savior promised: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Of course I still miss Brady, but because of the gospel, I have not lost my faith to this trial. Through the help of the Savior, I have been able to move forward with hope and with peace. ■
Carson Howell, Utah, USA

ASK THE MORMON

All young men over the age of 18 in Finland are required to serve in the military for 6 to 12 months. As I began my required service, I found that the opinions and attitudes of many of my army buddies conflicted with my principles. As a result, I took steps to stay close to the Spirit, praying at least twice a day and reading the scriptures.

At first I was nervous because I didn't know how my buddies would react, but they didn't seem to care, so I relaxed. After a while my bunk mates asked what I was reading. "The Book of Mormon," I told them directly. Their next question, of course, was whether I was a Latter-day Saint. I told them I was, and for a while, they let the matter drop.

In time a few of my army buddies began to ask about the Book of Mormon—its origin, contents, and so forth. Later their questions ranged from the purpose of life to principles of the Church. My religion became a natural part of our discussions, and it popped up in almost any situation.

One fellow in a neighboring bunk asked if he could read from my Book of Mormon. Of course I said yes. On another occasion, after a roommate had returned from attending a funeral for a friend, he told me that the funeral had raised many questions in his mind about life and its purpose. He asked me what the Church believed about those things. We had a

long discussion about the purpose of life, the Atonement, the Creation, and other gospel topics. Afterward, other roommates became interested in the Church's teachings and standards.

During the rest of our time together, we had many discussions that always seemed to turn to the Church's teachings. My roommates called these discussions "Ask the Mormon" sessions. Later, after we had graduated from our training, one roommate told me he had decided to quit swearing.

Throughout my time in the military, I noticed that the more open I was about my Church membership and

the more faithfully I followed gospel teachings, the more open others were toward me and the more opportunities I had to share the gospel.

I am thankful for the blessings and opportunities I had to talk about the gospel during my army service. I testify that if we are bold in standing up for our values, we will be blessed with opportunities to do missionary work. And if we let the light of the gospel shine freely in our lives, we can protect ourselves from darkness and have a positive influence on the world around us. ■

Kari Koponen, Uusimaa, Finland



One fellow in a neighboring bunk asked if he could read from my Book of Mormon. Of course I said yes.



As I spoke, I felt the Spirit fill me with peace and power. I bore witness of God's great love for His children and of their divine nature.

in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed" (D&C 123:17).

As I spoke, I felt the Spirit fill me with peace and power. I bore witness of God's great love for His children and of their divine nature, amazing potential, and eternal worth. I taught that God's commandments demonstrate His love because they provide the path to the greatest happiness. And I declared that Jesus Christ can heal wounds of both nature and nurture.

Before I knew it, my 30 minutes of allotted time had passed. I backed slowly away from the podium, gathered my papers, and looked up. A sacred stillness filled the room. Some people were smiling and others were crying. Teachers who held opposing views thanked me for my courage and conviction. One colleague confessed that she had been touched by a "special spirit" as I spoke. Others told me they had never heard such a sensitive and respectful articulation of such beliefs and that my words had helped them see that the school's curriculum needed to change.

The Master, who had calmed the raging tempest by commanding, "Peace, be still" (Mark 4:39) had done it again—this time for me!

Through this experience, I learned that we are never alone when we stand for truth. The Lord's help is ever near. As He promised, "I will go before your face. I will be on your

WOULD HE CALM MY STORMS?

As a fifth-grade teacher at a private school in Massachusetts, USA, I had been meeting with administrators to discuss the school's diversity curriculum, which opposed the principles in "The Family: A Proclamation to the World." My efforts to stand for truths about marriage and family and to promote objectivity, respect, and understanding, however, resulted in a storm of misunderstanding, ridicule, and persecution.

At times I felt like the Apostles crossing the tempest-tossed Sea of Galilee while Jesus slept. I felt that my faith, like theirs, had begun to falter, and I too wondered, "Carest thou not that [I] perish?" (Mark 4:38).

I believed that Jesus had indeed rebuked the raging wind and waves long ago, but as my trials intensified, it became hard for me to trust that He would calm my storms.

One day a school administrator asked me to explain my concerns to the entire faculty and staff at a diversity-training meeting. As I prepared for this presentation, my personal prayers, scripture study, and temple attendance became increasingly sincere, and I felt the Spirit guiding me to know what to say.

When the time came to address my colleagues, I took courage from the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith: "Let us cheerfully do all things that lie

right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88).

With my whole soul, I testify that He is a God of deliverance. I know this truth because He rescued me. He calmed my storms. ■

Nick Gentile, Utah, USA

MY ANSWER CAME FROM CONFERENCE

In 2006 I was taking an anthropology class at a Catholic college. Our teacher assigned us to conduct research about a particular religion and present it to the rest of the class. I chose to make my presentation about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—after all, I had been a member for 21 years. I knew this would be a rare and marvelous opportunity to share what I believed with 40 colleagues and friends.

During the two months I had to prepare my presentation, I struggled to find a simple way to present the doctrines I hold dear in a way that my classmates would understand. I wasn't sure what points I should make or how I should make them. When my presentation was a week away, I still didn't know what to do. In desperation, I prayed and asked for the Lord's help.

My answer came in the form of general conference, which was held

that weekend. During the April 2006 conference, President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, gave a talk titled “The Restoration of All Things.”¹ I felt the Holy Ghost confirm that the truths President Faust shared—and the way he shared them—were a pattern I could follow in giving my presentation.

I downloaded a copy of the talk from the Internet following conference and used it as the basis for preparing a slideshow presentation, which I delivered the next week.

Because of all the questions my teacher and classmates posed, my presentation about the Church lasted 40 minutes.



I had been allotted 20 minutes, but because of all the questions my teacher and classmates posed, the presentation lasted 40 minutes—the entire duration of the class.

When I finished, our teacher pointed out that none of his students had ever made such a good presentation. He gave me a high grade and told me that the only reason I didn't get a perfect score on my presentation was because I hadn't shown impartiality to the theme.

I later shared with the teacher the *Liahona* web page, where he could find President Faust's talk and others he might find helpful. I also gave him a copy of the Book of Mormon and asked him to read it, inviting him to talk with me afterward.

I was grateful to learn that the presentation had influenced some of the students as well. Throughout the rest of the year, I saw evidence of the difference it had made in their lives. One of them even received the missionaries in his home, which gave us a great opportunity to continue our conversation about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I am grateful for the opportunity I had to share my beliefs with my classmates. But more important, I am grateful that I came to learn that the Lord answers our heartfelt prayers through the words of modern prophets and apostles. ■

Sara Magnussen Fortes, São Paulo, Brazil

NOTE

1. See James E. Faust, “The Restoration of All Things,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 61–62, 67–68.

News of the Church

Visit news.lds.org for more Church news and events.

UK Members Celebrate Queen's Diamond Jubilee with Day of Service

By Paul Oliver

UK & Ireland Local Pages Editor

With Queen Elizabeth II's diamond jubilee taking place in June, the leaders of the Church in the United Kingdom also wanted to celebrate the 60th anniversary of her ascension to the throne and of her commitment to serve her people for the rest of her life. Following the queen's example of commitment and service, each ward and branch was invited to choose a day of service in honor of the queen's jubilee. During these service days members completed thousands of hours of service.

Within the boundaries of the Norwich England Stake lies Sandringham Palace, the summer home of Queen Elizabeth. Members of the stake gave over 1,000 hours of voluntary service in recognition of the queen's anniversary.

Members from Mildenhall and Thetford cleaned and refurbished a large staircase at a public building owned by Breckland District Council. The project was organized by the Eagle Scouts based in the American Scout troops organized by the Church. The council officers who assigned the project said that they have had voluntary groups regularly completing projects before, but that the LDS group arrived early, were ready to work immediately, and stayed beyond the planned finish time—going the extra mile.

Other projects around the stake involved clearing rubbish from a public eyesore and working in the garden of a primary school that had become neglected when the gardener was injured. Family groups also worked at Smithdon High School in Hunstanton. They cleared the gardens and

PHOTOGRAPH BY SUE BIEACH



In late May and early June, Church members across the United Kingdom gathered in their branches, wards, and stakes to participate in various service projects to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's diamond jubilee.

the playing field of litter; painted the wood of newly built tables, seats, and fences; cleaned windows; and moved stacks of paper to the printing room. The school headteacher, Mr. J. Goodchild, expressed his praise and appreciation to all those who participated in the service project. Staff members at the school were very surprised and pleased by the volume of work completed.

"The most important thing is the wonderful impression left in the minds and hearts of the communities and groups blessed by this service," said Lawrence Vingoe, Norwich England Stake president.

Warwick, England, is the home of Warwick Castle—the home of knights of the realm and noble servants of monarchs for centuries. Members of the Coventry England Stake spent their day of service cleaning an area in the town, leaving it "fit for a queen." Mike Kinson, chair of Warwick District Council, cancelled a prior engagement elsewhere to be with the Saints. He was impressed

by the large number of volunteers who were present—in the rain—and expressed his gratitude for their work.

York was the ancient capital of the Viking kingdom and was a vital defensive stronghold in the north of England for centuries. Today it is the center

of the York England Stake. Members supported a jubilee fair in Bridlington that was provided free for the elderly and for underprivileged families. Other projects around the stake included creating a cinder path for hikers and walkers along Monks Trod in Whitby and cleaning a cemetery in York.



PHOTOGRAPH BY DEBBIE TWIGGER

In Dundee, Scotland, members worked at a school for children with special needs. They cleared and tilled a large section of ground, removed stones, planted grass seed, and made bird-scarers. The area is to become a large grassed area for whole-school outdoor activities. Michael Wood, the director of education for the Dundee City Council, attended and thanked the volunteers.

Cardiff, Wales, hosted the BYU Singers and used the proceeds to benefit the Noah's Ark Appeal, the official charity of the Children's Hospital for Wales. An additional project cleared invasive weeds from the Taff Trail, a 55-mile (89 km) biking and walking trail between Cardiff Bay and Brecon in Wales.

Among the many projects in Cheshire and North

Wales, the members of the Chester England Stake worked at the Pewithall Primary School in Runcorn, preparing ground for an outdoor classroom and helping to create a woodland education path. Saints in Leeds, England, supported St. Gemma's Hospice in their fundraising efforts, while Thundersley Primary School in Essex, England, had their PTA room refurbished. In Warrington, Cheshire, a park was cleaned in preparation for a jubilee carnival. Members of the Glasgow Scotland Stake spent their day of service at Firhill Basin on the Forth and Clyde Canal.

The Wandsworth London Stake chose to support Stave Hill Ecology Park, a 5.2-acre nature area in Rotherhithe, London, that conserves a variety of wildlife and is managed by the Trust for Urban Ecology. In addition to being a nature area, it is also an education and research facility. Members spent time weeding, removing debris, building a fence, building insect boxes, and making a mosaic pathway.

The sisters of the Northampton Stake supported three projects. One group provided cushions for a women's shelter in Bletchley, Milton Keynes. Another group made quilts for the Project Linus UK charity, which seeks to provide a sense of security and comfort to sick, distressed, and traumatized infants, children, and teenagers through providing new homemade patchwork quilts. Approximately 12 quilts were finished and 30 cushions made on Saturday, June 2, 2012. The third group sang for residents of a local home, St. Argyll House, Northampton.

The First Presidency also sent a letter of congratulations to Her Majesty in recognition of her long service to her people. It read in part: "We rejoice with Her Majesty's people . . . and commend her for her love of God, her acts of charity, and her sublime example of service and duty." ■

FamilySearch Launches New Indexing Initiative

By Heather Whittle Wrigley

Church News and Events

With the recent completion of the 1940 U.S. Census Community Project, FamilySearch has provided enthusiastic indexers and arbitrators with the next big genealogy initiative—the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Community Project, which includes records of those who passed through all major U.S. ports from the 1800s to the 1950s.

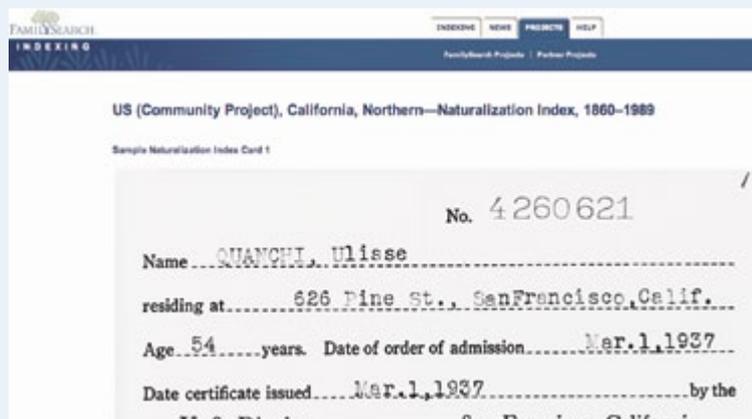
“The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Project will help document the lives of immigrant ancestors who came to live in the United States,” said Michael Judson, the indexing workforce development manager for FamilySearch. “This is an opportunity for volunteers to provide even more searchable records, especially for family historians who are looking for information that will link

their ancestors to their native lands.”

The new project contains a substantially larger number of records than the 1940 U.S. Census does, so FamilySearch representatives expect it will take more time and additional volunteers.

Collections of records are available for indexing at indexing .FamilySearch.org, under “Current Projects,” and most of the record sets involve passenger lists and naturalization records. All collections available as part of the new “Community Project” are designated by the prefix “US (Community Project).”

For more information about the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Community Project and to learn how to get involved, visit the project website at familysearch/us-immigration-naturalization.org. ■



The immigration and naturalization indexing project, available through FamilySearch indexing, includes records of immigrants through all major U.S. ports from the 1800s to the 1950s.

“Golden Days” Event Celebrates President Monson’s 85th Birthday

On Friday, August 17, 2012, at 8:00 p.m. mountain daylight time, thousands of people gathered in the Conference Center to participate in “Golden Days: A Celebration of Life,” honoring the 85th birthday of President Thomas S. Monson.

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Orchestra at Temple Square, and notable guest artists performed beloved Broadway selections and other favorites. Former San Francisco 49ers star quarterback and professional football Hall-of-Famer Steve Young shared master of ceremony duties with national network news anchor and author Jane Clayson Johnson.

The evening took a nostalgic look at President Monson’s illustrious life—from his childhood, marriage, and stint in the Navy during World War II to his decades of service.

The program was shown at various stake centers over the Church satellite system on Saturday, August 18, with subsequent rebroadcasts to many areas of the world. ■

Elder Holland to Address Young Adults in September

At 6:00 p.m. mountain daylight time on September 9, 2012, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will address young adults ages 18 to 30, married and single, in a Church Educational System devotional broadcast originating from St. George, Utah.

The one-hour devotional will subsequently be rebroadcast to many areas of the world. Check local program listings for availability in your area, or visit broadcastinfo.lds.org, byubroadcasting.org, cesdevotionals.lds.org or mormonchannel.org.

Within three weeks of the event, audio and video of the devotional will be archived online at cesdevotionals.lds.org in several languages. ■

Apostle Dedicates New MTC in Philippines

By Gerry Avant, *Church News* editor

With contributions from Minnie Advincula, Arvin James Despuig, Sariah Ordinario, Riz Tumalak, and Kaye Tyapon-Bay

When Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles dedicated the new missionary training center that stands near the Manila Philippines Temple, he was a witness of and a participant in the ongoing growth of the Church in this nation of islands in the western Pacific Ocean.

The Philippines Missionary Training Center, which Elder Nelson dedicated on May 20, 2012, can house up to 144 missionaries from the Philippines, Cambodia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Thailand. These “locally grown” missionaries are trained in the languages of their home countries.

In offering the prayer to dedicate the new facility, Elder Nelson expressed gratitude for the Atonement of Jesus Christ and for faithful missionaries and Church members worldwide who love and serve the Lord. He asked for a blessing upon the Republic of the Philippines that it will “maintain open doors of welcome” to all the Lord’s servants and that the nation’s people will be blessed with “freedom and accountability to grow in righteousness, both temporally and spiritually.”

The new center has two buildings. The first houses state-of-the-art



PHOTOGRAPH BY NOEL MAGLAQUE

At the new Philippines Missionary Training Center, up to 144 missionaries from the Philippines, Cambodia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Thailand are trained in the languages of their home countries.

training facilities, including an auditorium—the Joseph Smith Hall. Also in the building are translation booths, a computer lab, a laundry area, teaching rooms with built-in audiovisual equipment, and sleeping quarters for the missionaries. The second building houses additional teaching rooms and the offices of the MTC’s presidency and director.

Elder Nelson shook hands with all the missionaries at the MTC. He also met with and shook the hands of missionaries in the Philippines Manila Mission on May 22, the Philippines

Cebu Mission on May 23, and the Philippines Angeles Mission on May 25. It was, he said, “a real pleasure” to personally greet each one. He addressed each gathering of missionaries.

Elder Nelson returned to Salt Lake City on May 27. In a conversation with the *Church News* in his office, he spoke of the missionaries he met at the new MTC and throughout the Philippines. “It is a thrill to see these enthusiastic, intelligent, highly focused missionaries,” he said.

For more on Elder Nelson’s visit to the Philippines, please visit news.lds.org. ■

LDS Maps Upgrade Helps Members Find Church Locations

A new version of LDS Maps, available in 16 languages, includes a variety of new features to improve members' experiences finding stake members, meetinghouses, temples, and other Church facilities.

To access the new LDS Maps, go to **LDS.org > Tools > Maps**. Some of the new features include household verifications, numerous map display options, better iPad and tablet support, unit boundary maps, the Locate Me feature, and improved print options.

Leader and Clerk Resources Now Offered via LDS.org

Priesthood leaders and clerks can now access selected membership reports, lists, and forms from any Internet-connected device at LDS.org/leader and LDS.org/clerk.

Previously, accessing member information, requesting records, or submitting reports were tasks clerks and priesthood leaders could perform exclusively through

the Member and Leader Services (MLS) software installed on the machines at their local meetinghouses.

The pages, available in 10 languages, offer several functions already; more features (and more languages) will be added in the future. Future enhancements will provide similar online tools to priesthood quorum and auxiliary leaders.

Some of the same material is available to priesthood leaders and clerks via LDS Tools, a free mobile app that can be downloaded through an app store or at mobile.lds.org.

Ensign Tablet App Available

The Church has released a new *Ensign* tablet app featuring the October 2011, November 2011, and May 2012 issues—in other words, the Book of Mormon issue and the two most recent general conference issues.

The app, available on both the Android and Apple platforms, offers a more interactive—even immersive—magazine experience. For instance, users can read the magazine

while listening to an audio file of the same text. (In fact, in the October 2011 issue on the *LDS Ensign* app, the audio file associated with President Ezra Taft Benson's "The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion" is a recording of President Benson delivering this talk in 1986.) The conference issues likewise have interactive features, including the ability to listen to or watch the speakers delivering their conference addresses.

The Apple version will be placed inside the Newsstand, a feature previously not offered. The Android version will be a standalone app.

Language Pages to Provide Church Materials in 108 Languages

For members around the world who don't speak one of the 10 more prevalent languages—Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish—finding Church materials in their native tongue may seem difficult. But for those who are aware of LDS.org's language pages, accessing core Church materials is only a few clicks away.

Under the **Languages** tab, located at the top right of the LDS.org homepage, click on **See Other Languages on LDS.org** to find links to 84 language sites, including Hrvatski (Croatian), Malagasy (spoken in Madagascar), and Twi (spoken in Ghana).

The materials available on each language page vary, but each item is printable and downloadable. Digital channels senior product manager Matt Robinson, who works with the language pages, has described them as an "expanding digital gospel library."

"These pages are available to all members for personal as well as Sunday use," he explained. "Local leaders should use this resource themselves as well as point members to it for use in callings and families." ■

MLS reports and member information for priesthood leaders and clerks are now available via LDS.org.



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In Other Church Magazines

THE NEW ERA



BLESSED BY EXAMPLE

Just as my friends influenced my life, you can bring the light of the gospel to your friends. Share by the way you live.

Perhaps I tried with a friend to live in a way that would be an example to others. I tried to be a good person, to be a good friend, to be a good neighbor. I tried to be a good son, to be a good brother, to be a good father. I tried to be a good man.

I tried to be a good person, to be a good friend, to be a good neighbor. I tried to be a good son, to be a good brother, to be a good father. I tried to be a good man.

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I tried to be a good person, to be a good friend, to be a good neighbor. I tried to be a good son, to be a good brother, to be a good father. I tried to be a good man.

For example, remember the man of the house in the book of Mormon. When he was a young man, he was a good person, a good friend, a good neighbor. He was a good son, a good brother, a good father. He was a good man.

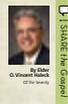
I tried to be a good person, to be a good friend, to be a good neighbor. I tried to be a good son, to be a good brother, to be a good father. I tried to be a good man.

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Elder M. Russell Ballard

“The What and How of Sharing the Gospel,” “Blessed by Example,” and “Answering Difficult Questions about the Church.”

Priorities and Balance

It can be difficult to find time for everything in our lives. In “Keeping Your Life in Balance” (page 2), Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of

the Twelve Apostles shares how we can best prioritize our commitments.

Peace after Repentance

On page 14, find a Questions & Answers feature on what we can do if we have trouble forgetting past mistakes after repenting.

Sharing the Gospel

This month’s *New Era* features a special section with ideas for talking about the gospel with others. It shares both prophetic counsel and experiences from youth who have put the prophets’ words into practice. See pages 20–40 for articles such as

THE FRIEND

Being a Missionary Now

Your children don’t have to travel to a different country, dress in Sunday clothes, or wear name tags to be missionaries. See page 10 of the September *Friend* for ideas about what you and your children can do to share the gospel with others.

Clean Language

“Dear Class” on page 44 of the September *Friend* features a letter of apology a boy wrote to his class after using language that he shouldn’t have. Page 45 includes a description of lessons the boy learned and features a certificate that your children can sign to pledge that they will not use bad language.



COMMENT

Helping Primary Children with Disabilities

My seven-year-old son has Asperger’s syndrome. I was excited to see “How Do I Help This Child?” in the February 2012 *Ensign*. I know that my Heavenly Father wants us in church on Sundays and that He loves all His children, including the ones who need added attention and help. Kristi Schmoie, Illinois, USA

A Father Feels the Heartache of Divorce

The poignant reflections of Donna Hollenbeck’s article, “With Faith in God, I Am Never Alone,” in the February 2012 *Ensign* resonated deep within my heart. As a father I also have struggled with the heartache of divorce. Like her, I find strength and peace through the gospel of Jesus Christ and the sure knowledge that despite all of my flaws and failures, God loves me and I am never alone.

Name withheld, West Virginia, USA

WHAT AM I WORTH?

By Adam C. Olson

Church Magazines

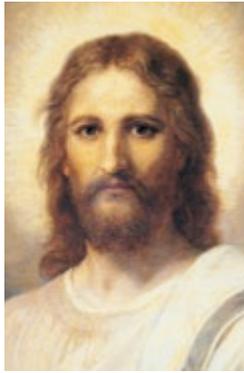
After four years without a television and six more living on hand-me-down sets, my wife and I finally decided to buy a new TV. Because of the cost, we carefully compared models, brands, features, and prices before finally making a purchase. Interestingly, I walked away with not only a TV but an important insight into determining self-worth.

Our experience teaches us that our worth is measured by comparison—against our siblings, classmates, peers, and co-workers. Yet, while determining value by comparison makes sense when buying a TV, in life we *are* the TVs.

Comparing ourselves to others in order to determine our worth makes as much sense as one TV looking at the others in the store and wishing it were 40 inches (102 cm) instead of 27 (69 cm). It doesn't make sense, for "which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature" (Matthew 6:27) or one inch to your screen size? The Apostle Paul warned that people "measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12).

We should also pay little attention to those who do the comparing for us and tell us what *they* think we're worth. Even though the retailer has control over a TV's price, he or she doesn't determine its value.

Here is the key: it is the customer who looks at the price, evaluates the product, and decides if it is worth the cost. And in this life there is only one Buyer of consequence.



The buyer decides if an item is worth the price.

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, evaluated "the product"—us, both collectively and individually. He knew of the depth of iniquity that would be connected with the human family.¹ He understood the awful, inestimable price He would be required to pay, "which suffering caused [Him] even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit" (D&C 19:18).

And knowing all, *He still decided I was worth it.*

No matter how short I think I fall in comparison to others, no matter how little value others see in me, Jesus felt I was worth the price He had to pay.

Attacking our self-worth is one of Satan's most subtle yet sinister tactics. It is essential for me to believe that the Son of God died not only for the sins of the world but that He died for *my* sins. If the adversary can lead me to believe otherwise, my doubt may keep me from seeking the Savior's atoning grace and returning to His presence.

If you doubt your value, go to the Buyer to get the only product review that matters. "We can pray with confidence that we can feel the Savior's love for us," said President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency. ". . . He loved us . . . enough to pay the price of all our sins."²

Having faith in that love allows the Redeemer to change our lives and carry His purchase home. ■

NOTES

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 406.
2. Henry B. Eyring, "A Child and a Disciple," *Ensign*, May 2003, 31.



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The Vision of Lehi (The Tree of Life), by Lukchau Tang
In the Ninth International Art Competition

This pearl shell sculpture of Lehi's vision of the tree of life features ancient Chinese architecture and people, which are carved into nearly every opening. The tree of life is visible in the upper left corner; the "great and spacious building" at the top center, and the river of filthy water running through the center.

Lehi wrote, "I did go forth and partake of the fruit thereof; and I beheld that it was most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted. Yea, and I beheld that the fruit thereof was white, to exceed all the whiteness that I had ever seen" (1 Nephi 8:11; for the full vision, see verses 2-35).



Welfare and humanitarian projects, employment centers, mission offices, family history centers, temples, visitors' centers, and many, many other locations provide opportunities for senior missionary service. And seniors can be assured that their call comes from the Lord, through His prophet. The Lord knows the right opportunity for each missionary willing to serve. See "Senior Missionaries: Responding to the Prophet's Call," page 22.