

Ensign



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Great Father, p. 2**

**You and Your Son's
Duty to God, p. 32**

**Women of the
Old Testament, p. 38**



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Look to Your Children, by Minerva Teichert

The artist gave this oil painting to the Relief Society in 1947 as her donation to the building fund for the Relief Society Building (see story on page 54). This painting shows the moments after Christ had blessed the little children, when angels “encircled those little ones about . . . with fire; and the angels did minister unto them” (3 Nephi 17:24).

Ensign



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

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The Father Who Cares

BY PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Some time ago a father of six children who had the sole responsibility for raising the family, beginning when the youngest was in diapers, told of the struggles of doing so alone. One night he came home from work faced with the problems of being both father and mother and felt unusually burdened with his responsibilities. One of his appreciative daughters, age 12, approached him eagerly after having laid on his dresser a rock that she had painted at school. On the flat portion of the rock, she had written, “Happiness is having a dad who cares.” This painted rock and its sublime message instantly and permanently lightened the burden of this father.

Speaking in general conference some years ago, President Stephen L Richards (1879–1959), First Counselor in the First Presidency, quoted from an article, written by a veteran criminal court judge, titled “Nine Words That Can Stop Juvenile Delinquency.” The nine words suggested by the judge were “Put Father back at the head of the family.” President Richards concluded from the article “that the primary reason for the reduced percentages of juvenile delinquency in [certain] European

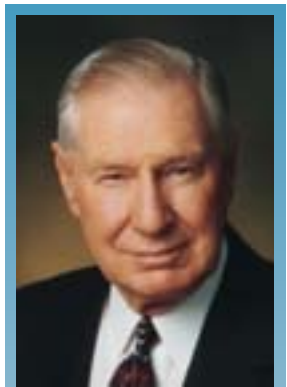
countries was respect for authority . . . in the home, which . . . normally reposes in the father as head of the family.”

President Richards continued: “For generations we as a Church have been endeavoring to do just what the judge advocates—to put and keep Father at the head of the family, and with all our might we have been trying to make him fit for that high and heavy responsibility.”¹ Since the primary purpose of the Church is to help the family and its members, how well the father functions in his responsibility is of utmost importance.

More recently I read in the paper: “Social scientists across the political spectrum tell us that father absence is a stronger predictor of criminal behavior than family income, education, or . . . race.

“And while individual youngsters can manage life without father reasonably well in many cases, few are able to come unscathed through fatherless *communities*.”²

In urging that fathers be put back at the head of their homes, we wish to take nothing away from mothers. In all the world there is no higher or greater honor or responsibility than motherhood. Hopefully they too will



God bless you fathers to be equal to your overwhelming responsibilities and to have a father's special caring for each one under your protective arms.

have their powerful influence extended to even a greater degree within the home and beyond the home.

To Strengthen Father

In order to strengthen the father in the home, I make two simple suggestions: first, sustain and respect the father in his position; second, give him love, understanding, and some appreciation for his efforts.

There are some voices in our society who would demean some of the attributes of masculinity. A few of these are women who mistakenly believe that they build their own feminine causes by tearing down the image of manhood. This has serious social overtones because a primary problem in the insecurity of sons and daughters can be the diminution of the role of the father image.

Let every mother understand that if she does anything to diminish her children's father or the father's image in the eyes of the children, it may injure and do irreparable damage to the self-worth and personal security of the children themselves. How infinitely more productive and satisfying it is for a woman to build up her husband rather than tear him down. You women are so superior to men in so many ways that you demean yourselves by belittling masculinity and manhood.

In terms of giving fathers love and understanding, it should be remembered that fathers also have times of insecurity and doubt. Everyone knows fathers make mistakes—especially they themselves. Fathers need all the help they can get; mostly they need love, support, and understanding from their own.

A Father's Responsibilities

As fathers we need to set priorities to guide us in allocating our time. Some men forget that their "first priority

should be to maintain their own spiritual and physical strength. Then comes their family, then the Church, and then their professions—and all need time."³ In giving time to his children, a father should be able to demonstrate

that he has enough love for them to command as well as discipline them. Children want and need discipline. As they approach some dangers, they are silently pleading, "Don't let me do it." President David O. McKay (1873–1970) said that if we do not adequately discipline our children, society will discipline them in a way we may not like.⁴ Wise discipline reinforces the dimensions of eternal love. This reinforcement will bring great security and stability into their lives.

In a landmark address to the priesthood in October 2000, President Gordon B. Hinckley focused his remarks on the role of fathers. He told us: "This is a subject which I take very seriously. It is a matter with which I am deeply concerned. I hope you will not take it lightly. It concerns the most precious asset you have. In terms of your happiness, in terms of the matters that make you proud or sad, nothing—I repeat, nothing—will have so profound an effect on you as the way your children turn out."⁵

He went on to give counsel to fathers: that they are to help their children resist temptation, to listen to them, to be patient and prayerful, and to teach them the ways of the Lord.

The exalted position of a father was well stated by American general Douglas MacArthur, who said: "By profession I am a soldier and take pride in that fact. But I am prouder—infinately prouder—to be a father. A soldier destroys in order to build; the father only builds, never destroys. The one has the potentiality of death; the other embodies creation and life. And while the hordes of death are mighty, the battalions of life are mightier still. It is my hope that my son, when I am gone, will remember me not



In this Church, the husbands and fathers, and members of the family through them, enjoy a power and influence in their lives far beyond the natural gifts of intellect and character of the father. I refer to the priesthood of God.



from the battle but in the home repeating with him our simple daily prayer, 'Our Father who art in heaven.' ”⁶

It is important to remember that in this Church, the husbands and fathers, and members of the family through them, enjoy a power and influence in their lives far beyond the natural gifts of intellect and character of the father. I refer to the priesthood of God, which every worthy man and boy over 12 years of age enjoys.

A prominent Church and business leader, now healthy, was born without life. His father, exercising his priesthood, made a promise that if his firstborn could live, that he, the father, would do all in his power to provide the proper example and teachings for his son. After a few minutes his infant son began to breathe and is well and vigorous to this day.

It is through the power of the priesthood that marriage and the family unit can extend

into and continue throughout all eternity. The conscientious women of this Church wish to have such a righteous influence in abundance in their homes.

A Legacy of Joy

One gracious mother joyously recounted in a stake conference the marvelous experience of being in one of the temples with her husband and with all of her children but one and being sealed together as husband and wife and family for time and all eternity. Her husband, newly involved in the priesthood, sat in the conference audience a few rows back. For a moment she seemed to forget all of the rest of us and spoke only to him. Over the pulpit and through the loudspeaker, with more than a thousand people in tears watching and listening, she said: “John, the children and I don’t know how to tell you what you mean to us. Until you honored the

President Gordon B. Hinckley has counseled fathers to be patient and prayerful, to help their children resist temptation, to listen to their children, and to teach them the ways of the Lord.

priesthood, the greatest blessings of eternity would not open up for us. Now they have. We all love you very much, and we thank you with all our hearts for what you have made possible for us.”

You may recall the story about a child trapped in a hole in the ground who could be extricated only by sending another, smaller child into the tunnel. One little fellow was approached to see if he would be willing to go down and rescue the one who was lodged. The lad said, “I am scared to go in that hole, but I will go if my father will hold the rope.”

Elder Richard L. Evans (1906–71) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave the proper dimension for all fathers in this faith when he said: “First of all, fathers are giving a name and a heritage to their children—clean and honorable. Fathers are for long, hard work, mostly their own kind of work; . . . for trying to give their children things [their] fathers never had. Fathers are for talking with, for encouraging, for putting arms around; for understanding mistakes, but not condoning them; for disciplining when needed, then loving all the more; for being strong and forceful, and for being tender and gentle.”⁷

It is always appropriate in all family relationships to ask, “What would Jesus do?” Having turned to the scriptures for the answer to this question, President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), First Counselor in the First Presidency, testified: “There in the Gospel as recorded by St. John, I found the clear and certain answer: Jesus would always do the will of his Father. . . . ‘For I do always those things that please him’ [John 8:29].”⁸

God bless you children to have listening ears and understanding hearts. God bless you mothers for the endless dimension of your love and for all the help you give the fathers of your children. God bless you fathers to be equal to your overwhelming responsibilities and to have a father’s special caring for each one under your protective arms. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). ■

NOTES

1. “The Father and the Home,” *Improvement Era*, June 1958, 410; quoting from Samuel S. Leibowitz, “Nine Words That Can Stop Juvenile Delinquency,” *Reader’s Digest*, Mar. 1958, 106.
2. William Raspberry, “Crime Rates Rise from Fatherless Communities,” *Deseret Morning News*, Oct. 10, 2005, sec. A, p. 11.
3. *Bishop’s Training Course and Self-Help Guide* (1972), sec. 2, p. 7.
4. See Conference Report, Apr. 1955, 27.
5. “Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2001, 61; *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 50.
6. In Emerson Roy West, comp., *Vital Quotations* (1968), 118.
7. *Vital Quotations*, 120.
8. “What Would Jesus Do?” *New Era*, Sept. 1972, 4.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

After prayerfully studying this message, share it using a method that encourages the participation of those you teach. Following are some examples. (As you teach from this article, be sensitive to families in which the father is not present.)

1. Select from the article principles you feel best apply to the families you teach. Invite family members to read from portions of the article that teach or illustrate these principles. Share testimony and experiences from your own life about these principles.

2. Plan ways in which family members could show love and appreciation for their father. One idea could be to prepare a piece of paper for each family member bearing the words “I love my dad because _____.” Ask each person to write a phrase in the blank and explain why that phrase was chosen. Read the first paragraph of the article, and have family members give their papers to their father.

3. List the priorities for fathers suggested in the article, and discuss why each is important. Drawing from the examples in the article and from personal experience, illustrate ways that fathers can fulfill these four priorities.

4. Read the last paragraph of the article, and discuss how children could more carefully listen to the counsel of their fathers. Talk about times when the fathers (or grandfathers perhaps) helped family members accomplish a hard or difficult task. Share how your own father helped you in your life.

The Sacred Role of Fathers



BACKGROUND PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT CASEY



Be Kind

“Let us deal in kindness and with appreciation with those for whom the Lord will hold us accountable. I never get over the depth of meaning of the words President McKay often quoted: ‘The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother’ ” [see *Richard Evans’ Quote Book* (1971), 11] (“Reach Out in Love and Kindness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 77).

Gordon B. Hinckley
(1910–), Fifteenth
President of the Church

Express Your Love

“We encourage you, brethren, to remember that priesthood is a righteous authority only. Earn the respect and confidence of your children through your loving relationship with them. A righteous father protects his children with his time and presence in their social, educational, and spiritual activities and responsibilities. Tender expressions of love and affection toward children are as much the responsibility of the father as the mother. Tell your children you love them” (“Being a Righteous Husband and Father,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 51).

Howard W. Hunter
(1907–95), Fourteenth
President of the Church

Teach for Understanding

“Brethren, we are to teach the fundamental doctrines of the Church in such a way that our children may understand. Some fathers teach, but their children do not understand. This places responsibility on fathers to study and learn the gospel.

“With few exceptions, righteous sons and daughters who have attained eternal blessings are not just physically begotten by their fathers. They are spiritually regenerated by the examples and teachings of their fathers.

“Great fathers lead their children to Christ” (“Great Things Required of Their Fathers,” *Ensign*, May 1981, 36).

Ezra Taft Benson
(1899–1994), Thirteenth
President of the Church

Avoid Anger

“A father may have to discipline his child, but he should never do it in anger. He must show forth an increase of love thereafter, lest that one so reproved were to esteem him to be an enemy (see D&C 121:43). The Lord forbid the feeling of a child that his father or mother is an enemy” (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1996], 279).

Harold B. Lee
(1899–1973), Eleventh
President of the Church

Put First Things First

“When one puts business or pleasure above his home, he that moment starts on the downgrade to soul-weakness. When the club becomes more attractive to any man than his home, it is time for him to confess in bitter shame that he has failed to measure up to the supreme opportunity of his life and flunked in the final test of true manhood. No other success can compensate for failure in the home. The poorest shack in which love prevails over a united family is of greater value to God and future humanity than any other riches. In such a home God can work miracles and will work miracles” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1964, 5).

David O. McKay,
(1873–1970), Ninth
President of the Church

Sharing Family Heritage

BY ELDER L. TOM PERRY

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



The greatest refuge we will find in our life will be those wonderful, close associations we have with our immediate family members.

The first part of August 2002 I reached a major milestone in my life. I was passing from middle age to old age with my 80th birthday. To celebrate it I decided to take my children and grandchildren on a tour of Logan, Utah, my hometown, to share with them the impact this city has had on my life.

I designated nine stops in Logan that I wanted my family to see. With each stop I selected a scripture to teach a lesson on the importance that particular location had in my life.

1. Logan High School Lesson: Live Up to Your Potential

“With some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they bide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man” (D&C 60:2).

I was very shy in high school and did not take advantage of opportunities to enlarge and build my talents. I was afraid to try. The lesson I wanted to teach my family is to live up to your potential. Don't be afraid to try. Have confidence in yourself. You won't succeed the first time on anything you do, but successive

attempts will bring confidence and the development of new talents.

2. Logan Tabernacle Lesson: The Joy of Gospel Service

“When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiab 2:17).

My father served in the presidency of the Cache stake in Logan for some 20 years. It seemed appropriate to stop at the tabernacle, where we held our stake conferences, to teach the lesson that Church service brings great joy and is a sure way of developing your skills in human relationships. You enter Church service with the pure intent to build our Father in Heaven's kingdom. The Lord more than compensates you for your time and effort with blessings that increase your talents and abilities to be used in further service. It is impossible to stay even with the Lord.

3. My Father's Law Office Lesson: Build Character, Integrity

“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.





Elder Perry talks to his children and grandchildren on the campus of Utah State University, one of nine locations in Logan, Utah, where he shared with his family a scripture and an experience from his life. Opposite page: Elder Perry as a young father with his three children—Barbara (left), Linda Gay, and Lee.

“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:10–12).

I related to my family how I had prepared myself for the banking profession. Dad was the bank attorney. From my newspaper delivery earnings, I saved enough to buy 10 shares of First National Bank stock. Dad insisted that I attend the stockholders’ meetings and vote my 10 shares. He thought that was a way of introducing me to the banking profession. A job offer came after graduation that was much more lucrative than banking. I thought I would accept the

position for a few years and then return to banking. I never did become a banker. I tried to teach my grandchildren that choosing a major in college is not as important as developing integrity, ethics, and good study habits and building character as a person of faith, confidence, and industry.

4. My Birthplace Lesson: The Value of Our Heritage

“Behold, I have given unto you the names of our first parents . . . ; and this I have done that when you remember your names ye may remember them; and when ye remember them ye may remember their works; and when ye remember their works ye may know how that it is said, and also written, that they were good” (Helaman 5:6).



Above, top row: Elder Perry's parents, L. Tom and Nora Sonne Perry; Elder Perry as a boy. Middle row: Elder Perry as a young man (standing in the back) with his family; Logan High School. Bottom row: Elder Perry holding his nephew; Sonne family reunion in 1937. Opposite page: The Logan Utah Temple; Elder Perry in the doorway of his childhood home.

I was given the name of my father. I honored my father and wanted to retain the same values he had established. Our heritage gives us those enduring values that will be with us now and through all the eternities.

5. Old Family Home Lesson: The Blessing of Good Parents

"I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father" (1 Nephi 1:1).

I tried to teach my family that the credit for the success you achieve in life really belongs to the parents who have given you a wonderful start. My father was a hard worker, a good provider, and a sterling example of service, honor,

and integrity. He loved his family and made time for us in his busy life.

Mother was always there to teach and encourage us. She was a great homemaker, a careful housekeeper, an excellent manager of household finances, and a wonderful cook. How I honor and love my parents.

6. Cow Pasture Lesson: Accept the Challenge of Change That Occurs in Your Life

"That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day" (D&C 50:24).

We checked in at the motel. After checking in I told my family, "Tonight you will sleep in the place that used to be our old cow pasture." This is where the motel had been built. My, how times have changed! I will always be grateful that I grew up in an age when we plowed, planted, tended, irrigated, and harvested. These activities were very important in our lives.

Future generations will have little opportunity to enjoy those same blessings we received. We live in a world of rapid change. Somehow we must find a way to hold onto the basic unchanging values and yet be ready for additional revealed light that will lead us to greater opportunities.

7. Ice-Cream Store Lesson: The Value of Traditions

"That same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy" (D&C 130:2).

Having an ice-cream cone on every trip to Logan has become one of our many traditions. More important are traditions of Church activity, Church service, family loyalty, and so forth. Special traditions we establish here with members of our family will endure. We should build traditions that will be strong in our remembrance, a remembrance that will last even into the eternities.

8. Utah State University Lesson: The Value of Taking Time to Have a Happy, Successful Courtship

“Whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man” (D&C 49:15).

I explained that most of my courtship occurred at Utah State University. Dances, ball games, walking across the campus to the library, studying in the library, attending institute classes, meeting in the halls between classes, taking special walks around the campus, and so on, all gave time to becoming better acquainted and enjoying the richness of the relationship that was being developed. It became the most important thing in my life at that time. When this time comes to you, it affects all that you do. Make it precious and special.

9. Logan Temple Lesson: The Importance of the Temple

“In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

“And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];

“And if he does not, he cannot obtain it” (D&C 131:1–3).

The center of our lives must be the holy temple. We must always be worthy to enter therein. If we live worthy of the covenants we make with the Lord in His house, we literally bind the Lord to give the blessings He has promised us. The Lord will fulfill His promises if we will be faithful to the covenants we make with Him.

We ended the tour later in the evening at the old Logan



Ninth Ward building. We had arranged for a room there in which the family could gather. There was a presentation on my life, including pictures starting with my grandparents, parents, and on through my early life. Then there were pictures of my marriage and of the blessings of children, followed by a collage of pictures of the events we have enjoyed together as a family.

On Sunday morning we attended church in the Ninth Ward chapel. This building was constructed under the supervision of my father while he served as bishop. He was the bishop for 18 years. I had the opportunity that morning to bear my testimony of the blessings of the gospel in my life.

We then drove to our home in Salt Lake City. However, before letting the family enjoy a delicious birthday dinner prepared by my wife, I quizzed them on what they had learned. I again bore witness to the divinity of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I am absolutely convinced that the greatest refuge we will find in our life will be those wonderful, close associations we have with our immediate family members.

I add my witness to you. The gospel of Jesus Christ is true. It will not fail you in your life. It is the only hope for individual salvation and refuge from the storms that descend as we journey through mortality. May God continue to bless you with the desire to learn more of His ways and to be obedient to His law. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University Education Week on August 20, 2002.

Learning to Hear the Lord's Voice

If we approach Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society meetings in the right way, we will return home from church with a testimony that we have heard the Lord's voice and that we know His words.

BY AARON L. WEST
Curriculum Department

Imagine that you are sitting in an elders quorum, high priests group, or Relief Society meeting. The teacher is just beginning a “Teachings for Our Time” lesson when President Gordon B. Hinckley walks into the room and takes a seat. Everyone turns and looks at the prophet, not knowing what to say.

President Hinckley breaks the silence. He excuses himself for being a few minutes late and asks if he might share some counsel with the members in attendance.

Now imagine that the teacher nods in President Hinckley's direction, smiles, and goes on with his or her lesson. A few members raise their hands and share lengthy comments and personal experiences—without any mention of the prophet sitting in their midst.

About 40 minutes later, you can bear it no longer. You raise your hand. When the teacher calls on you, you say,

“Um, I wonder . . . could we hear from President Hinckley now?”

The teacher looks at the clock. “Oh!” he or she exclaims. “I had so much prepared. It seems like we never have enough time to cover it all. Well, uh . . . let me conclude, and then we'll hear a few words from President Hinckley.”

After President Hinckley says a few words, the teacher

thanks everyone for participating. Someone says a prayer, and everyone files out of the room.

This is an extreme example, of course. If President Hinckley ever visits your elders quorum, high priests group, or Relief Society, the teacher will surely give him all the time he needs. But what happens when we are assigned to discuss a general conference address by President Hinckley or the teachings of President Wilford Woodruff? Do we give the words of the prophets the attention they deserve? Do we study each talk or chapter in preparation for our Sunday lesson? Do we allow ourselves to be taught by latter-day prophets?

A second example:

Imagine that a few weeks later, you attend another meeting with your elders quorum (or high priests group or Relief Society). The quorum president makes a few announcements and turns the time over to a teacher.



Then the teacher walks to the front of the room and says, "Today's lesson is chapter 17 in the Wilford Woodruff book." He opens the book to the first page of the chapter and starts reading.

As the teacher reads about the blessings we can receive in the temple, someone in front of you raises his hand. It's Brother González, who was sealed to his wife and children a few months ago. After keeping his hand in the air without acknowledgment from the teacher, Brother González finally gives up. The teacher continues reading.

A few pages later the teacher begins reading a statement that really inspired you when

you studied the chapter last night. You raise your hand, only to lower it a minute later. The teacher reads on as your heart burns with a testimony that you have not been permitted to share.

You look around at your brethren in the quorum. Some are reading along. Others are staring at the floor, glancing at their watches periodically. A few are struggling to stay awake. No one raises his hand.

As we teach
and read
the words
of latter-day
prophets, we hear
the words of the
Lord.





Let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, . . . that all may be edified of all.”

By the time the teacher has read the entire chapter, his time is almost up. He bears his testimony and concludes the lesson a little bit earlier than he needs to. Someone says a prayer, and everyone files out of the room.

Another extreme example? Certainly. Most teachers are anxious to hear the testimonies and experiences of quorum and class members. But as a Church of teachers and learners, we could probably improve in our efforts to encourage and participate in meaningful discussion.

Teaching and Learning in the Church

Although these examples seem unlikely and may even sound a bit ridiculous, they highlight two common challenges with teaching and learning in the Church: Sometimes we are so eager to conduct a good class discussion that we stray from Church-produced resources. On the other hand, we are sometimes so intent on following the prepared curriculum that we shut off valuable discussion.

When we have opportunities to teach, how can we be true to the Church’s curriculum and encourage good discussion? I have pondered this question, desiring to teach the truth by the power of the Spirit and receive the truth by that same power (see D&C 50:17–22). While I don’t have all the answers, I have rediscovered two scripture passages that have helped me.

“You Have Heard My Voice”

The Lord declared:

“These words are not of men nor of man, but of me; wherefore, you shall testify they are of me and not of man;

“For it is my voice which speaketh them unto you; for they are given by my Spirit unto you, and by my power you can read them one to another; and save it were by my power you could not have them;

“Wherefore, you can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words” (D&C 18:34–36).

This counsel refers to the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, but it also applies to the teachings we discuss in Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society meetings—and in all our Sunday meetings. As we read the words of latter-day prophets to one another, we read the words of the Lord (see D&C 1:38).

I believe that if we approach teaching and learning in the right way, every one of us will return home from church with a testimony that we have heard the Lord’s voice. Isn’t that our hope when we share the gospel with one another? When a lesson is over, we don’t want people to marvel at what we have said; we hope they will rejoice in the word of the Lord.

“All May Be Edified of All”

Still, we don’t gather every Sunday merely to read to one another. The Lord taught,

“Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege” (D&C 88:122).

We need one another’s strength, and class discussions provide a great opportunity to share that strength. I love to see a teacher act as an instrument of the Lord, testifying of truths he or she has learned during lesson preparation. And my testimony grows as I hear the testimonies of others. My experience is enriched when others share their experiences. I am grateful for insightful, honest, faith-promoting discussions at church.

Reading and Discussing

Can we apply Doctrine and Covenants 18:34–36 and 88:122 in the same lesson? I believe we can—if we follow one simple rule: begin with Doctrine and Covenants 18:34–36. Begin by reading the teachings of the prophets. Establish the word of the Lord as the foundation for discussion, and then build on that foundation by following the principle in Doctrine and Covenants 88:122.

This rule is so simple that it almost doesn’t need to be said. However, it can have a profound effect on the way we approach teaching and learning in the Church. For specific ideas on how teachers and learners can follow this rule, we can consult the following Church-produced resources:

- *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff*, introduction. These pages include help for individual study and lesson preparation. They outline a pattern teachers can follow as they prepare lessons from the book.
- *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff*, chapter 6. This chapter, titled “Teaching and Learning by the Spirit,” contains inspiring counsel on what we should do when we gather to learn the gospel.

- Instructions for “Teachings for Our Time,” found in the final pages of each general conference issue of the *Liabona* and *Ensign*. These instructions outline a simple process for preparing a “Teachings for Our Time” lesson.

When It All Comes Together

One more example. This one really happened.

I remember sitting in my elders quorum meeting several years ago, enjoying a lesson based on “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” At one point in the lesson a member of the quorum read part of the proclamation. The instructor was about to move forward with the lesson when another quorum member raised his hand. “I have a question,” he said. Quoting a phrase that had just been read, he asked, “How can we teach our children ‘to love and serve one another?’” The expression on his face and the sound of his voice revealed that this was more than just a question—it was a plea for help. I was grateful that he asked because he expressed a plea that was in my heart as well.

This heartfelt question changed the pace of the lesson. Our teacher put his lesson plan aside temporarily. Quorum members paused to think, and some shared ideas and experiences in response to their friend’s question. Then the teacher shared an insight of his own and continued with the lesson, focusing on other truths in the proclamation. The discussion lasted only a few minutes, but it continues to influence my family and me.

Doctrine and Covenants 18:34–36 and 88:122 came together in that quorum meeting. The process began with a teacher who was humble and wise enough to invite us to read the words of the prophets. It continued when a quorum member had the courage to ask a question—to ask for help. Then, as different men with different backgrounds spoke one at a time, “all [were] edified of all.” I testify that by the power of the Holy Ghost, I heard the Lord’s voice that day—first through His prophets and second through my neighbors and friends. And I went home knowing the word of the Lord better than I had the day before. ■

“He Took My

BY GRACE BRASSE PANNELL

How could I calm a disruptive six-year-old and restore peace to my class?

One Sunday shortly after I became a member of the Church, I was asked at the last minute to be a substitute teacher for a class of five- and six-year-olds whose regular teacher had suddenly become ill.

When I belonged to another church, I had taught teenagers and adults, but I had no experience teaching young children. This would be a class of boys and girls I had never met, whose names I did not even know. But I had been asked, so I agreed, depending on the Lord to see that everything worked out all right—for all of us.

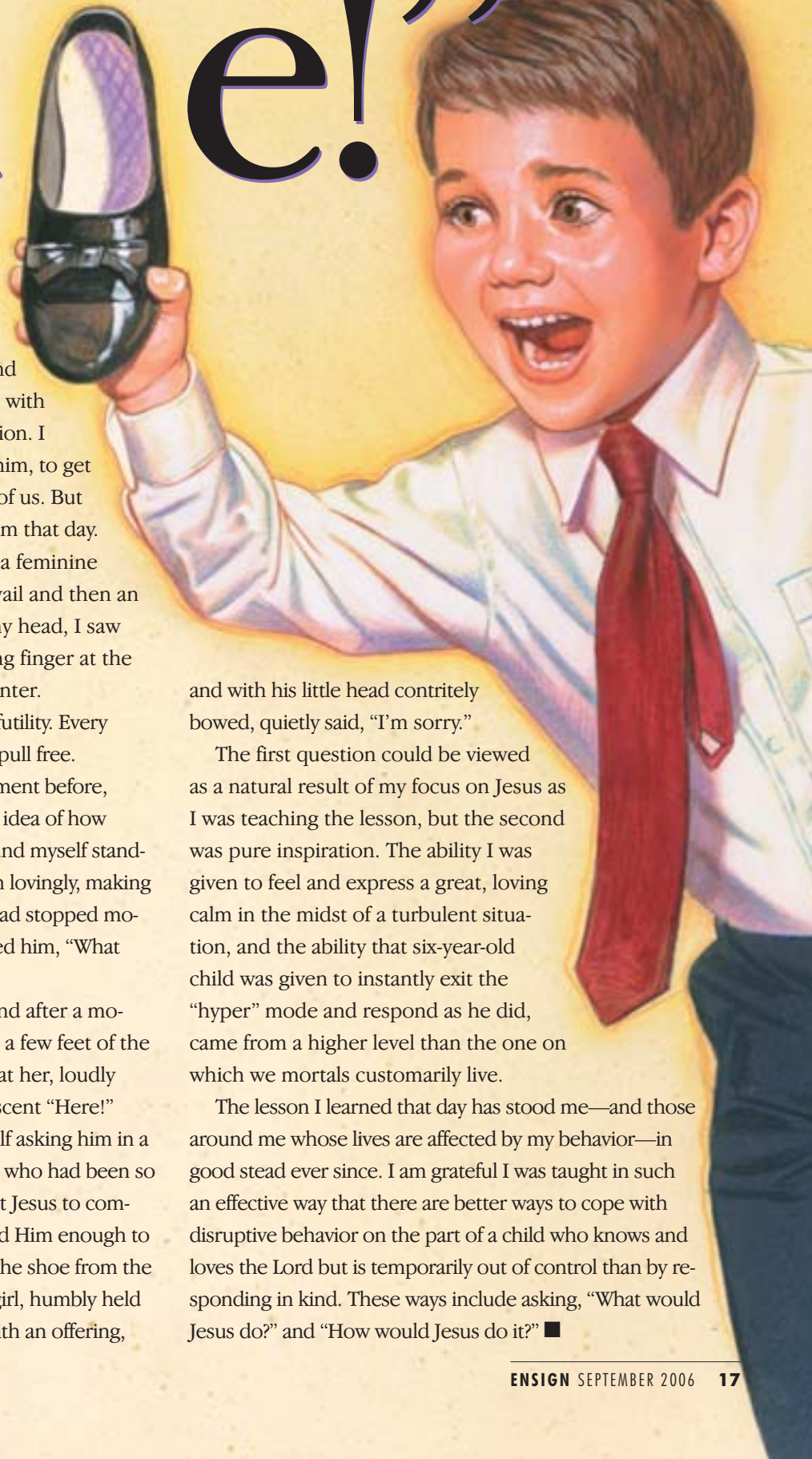
I walked into the room feeling unprepared, not really knowing what to expect. Fortunately, the lesson was on Jesus, a subject so dear to my heart that I would have many meaningful things to share with the children.

After a brief getting-to-know-you period, I began talking to the children about the goodness, love, and selflessness of our beloved Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All would have been well if not for one little boy who was too restless to settle down and



ILLUSTRATION BY ROGER MOTZKUS

Shoe!”



listen. Soon he was noisily running around the room, periodically poking or tussling with classmates who were trying to pay attention. I made repeated attempts to reason with him, to get him to stop, to coax him to join the rest of us. But reason seemed to have no power over him that day.

Soon his disruptive behavior elicited a feminine outcry that quickly became a plaintive wail and then an outraged “He took my shoe!” Turning my head, I saw one of the little girls pointing an accusing finger at the laughing, provoking figure of her tormenter.

Trying to catch him was an exercise in futility. Every time I thought I had him, he managed to pull free. Then the Holy Spirit rescued us all. A moment before, I had been completely frustrated, with no idea of how to proceed. But now, quite suddenly, I found myself standing in the middle of the room calmly, even lovingly, making eye contact with the young culprit, who had stopped momentarily to catch his breath. I gently asked him, “What would Jesus do?”

The expression on his face sobered, and after a moment’s thought he walked over to within a few feet of the little girl and suddenly pitched her shoe at her, loudly voicing a still defiant but partially acquiescent “Here!”

“How would Jesus do it?” I found myself asking him in a kind, unruffled voice. And that little child, who had been so unruly but who understood enough about Jesus to comprehend how He would act and who loved Him enough to not want to misrepresent Him, retrieved the shoe from the floor. Then he walked slowly over to the girl, humbly held out the shoe to her as if presenting her with an offering,

and with his little head contritely bowed, quietly said, “I’m sorry.”

The first question could be viewed as a natural result of my focus on Jesus as I was teaching the lesson, but the second was pure inspiration. The ability I was given to feel and express a great, loving calm in the midst of a turbulent situation, and the ability that six-year-old child was given to instantly exit the “hyper” mode and respond as he did, came from a higher level than the one on which we mortals customarily live.

The lesson I learned that day has stood me—and those around me whose lives are affected by my behavior—in good stead ever since. I am grateful I was taught in such an effective way that there are better ways to cope with disruptive behavior on the part of a child who knows and loves the Lord but is temporarily out of control than by responding in kind. These ways include asking, “What would Jesus do?” and “How would Jesus do it?” ■



FOR THE
DIVORCED
SINGLE PARENT

BY KAYE TERRY HANSON

I never planned on being a single mother, but several important decisions helped me make the most of a difficult situation.

After agonizing decisions and many months of trying to determine the right thing to do, my husband and I divorced. I raised two children alone. Family, not fault, is what I focus on now as I look back and try to share some of what my experiences have taught me. I earnestly pray that you will never need this information. But I know that even if you are not a single parent, you will have friends, ward members, and family members you may be able to help.

Based on my experience, I would suggest three areas of consideration for a divorced single parent:

- The gospel and the Church
- The children
- Yourself

The Gospel and the Church

1. Choose to live the gospel and be completely active in the Church.

Be there. It's where you belong. Sit closer to the front than you usually do. Arrive early enough so you can greet people as you go to your seat. Sing the hymns. Have your children close beside you. Hug them and hold their hands so they will recognize church as a safe, comfortable, happy place to be. On the way in and out, assign yourself to smile at and speak to several people. Remember, you belong.

2. Ask for good home teachers.

When I moved to a new ward as a single parent, our new home teacher had been my bishop 10 years earlier in another city. He was perfect for us. He had a son the same age as mine. When my home teacher signed his boy up for Little League or soccer, he signed mine up too.

Our home teacher and his wife attended my children's dance recitals and track meets and invited us to dinner. He told us all that we were terrific, and gradually we learned to believe him. Over the years he gave my son a baseball mitt, priesthood blessings, his ordination to the priesthood, advice on starting a business, and the perfect example of what home teaching is. He gave my daughter tennis lessons, flowers when she won the track meet, her first job, and the perfect example of gentlemanly kindness. He attended their weddings in the temple and exulted over the births of their first children. Long after having moved from the ward, he still remains a friend and a mentor to all of us.

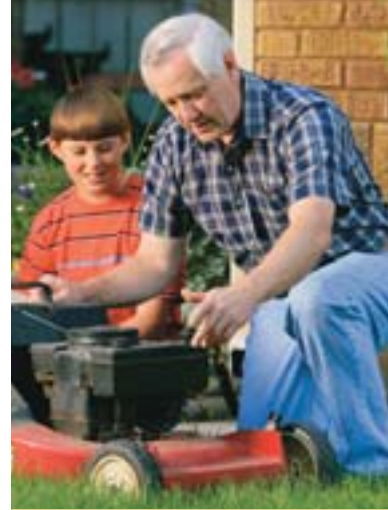
3. Use music, prayer, and scriptures.

Shortly after the divorce, when the children were just five and one, I found it hardest after they were tucked into their beds at night. Often my loneliness seemed unbearable. I discovered that the classical music station on the radio soothed my troubled soul.

Prayers became more earnest and more pleading, and the scriptures became a lifeline to sustain me through the maze of complexities I faced each day. Both prayers and scriptures brought revelation and comfort and hope. I will never know, but I sometimes wonder how long the despair might have lasted if I had not had music and prayer and scriptures.

4. Pay tithing.

Even at this time of potential financial challenges—*especially* at this time—keep your tithing current that you may have access to promised blessings.



Over the years my home teacher has given my children priesthood blessings, tennis lessons, and advice on starting a business. He has been the perfect example of gentlemanly kindness and what true home teaching is. Long after having moved from the ward, he still remains a friend and mentor to all of us.



Preserve as much of the familiar as possible for your children. Establish a routine, and keep as many family traditions as you can.

5. Serve.

Serving gets us outside ourselves. It opens the windows of heaven and teaches principles that may not come any other way. I'm reminded of the terrible first week when my husband left. I didn't know where he had gone or what would happen next. I was the Spiritual Living teacher in Relief Society, and the lesson was on the Prophet Joseph Smith. No one in the ward except the bishop knew my husband had gone away, and I determined that I must teach that lesson. I had served a mission, been married in the temple, finished graduate school, and borne testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel and the Prophet Joseph Smith many, many times. Yet on that day, in the sunny room of our ward Relief Society, I was allowed to *know*, to feel completely, to recognize with a surety beyond question, that the Prophet Joseph Smith had restored the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness. I remain forever grateful that I was allowed to serve on that day when my world was crashing down on every side.

Later I was called to be Primary president in my new ward. I couldn't believe the courage of the bishop in calling me to lead the little children. I felt I was not a good role model, and I thought such service would be denied me forever. Then I remembered a wise bishop years before who, when I was serving as Young Women president, had

fielded my concerns about calling a Laurel teacher who was married to a nonmember. "It's not where she is right now," he said, "but where her heart is. She longs to be married in the temple. She is a good example to the Laurels." And as I came to know her, I fully agreed. Could it be that if my heart was right I could serve in such leadership callings? From my current vantage point I say yes.

6. Attend the temple.

Reviewing those sacred eternal promises again and again eventually helped me focus on their meaning and gave me new perspective. After a long time I volunteered for sealings and heard the words I had heard at my own temple marriage. This time they took on new meaning as I tried to look at the promises from the viewpoint of someone who had never received them in this life. I think of temple work as the ultimate service, allowing us to get outside ourselves for the sake of someone else.

The Children

1. Develop family routines and traditions.

Preserve as much of the familiar as possible. Establish a routine. For example, each day we go to school, eat dinner

at six o'clock, and read scriptures together before we go to bed. We also practice the piano, do homework, and play on the soccer team.

Keep as many family traditions as you can. Have special dinners and birthday celebrations. Listen to friends' suggestions and find some new traditions that you can make your very own.

2. Realize that each child goes through different stages of understanding at different times.

When my son was six and his sister was two, they would race to their daddy as he drove into the driveway to pick them up. By the time my son turned ten, he would stand at my side struggling with where his loyalties should be while his six-year-old sister still flew out the door to welcome her daddy. A few years later my maturing, manly son of fourteen could stride out the door to welcome his father while my now ten-year-old daughter would stand by my side struggling with where her loyalties were. No matter how far away they got from the initial pain, they had to process what they were feeling in an age-appropriate manner. As I grew to understand that, I was better able to encourage them to be themselves and to reach out across what could have been awkward situations.

3. Rejoice in your children.

After a divorce, children develop an unusual maturity in some matters. I remember driving down the freeway with my children when, out of the blue, my son said to me, "We will all have new jobs now."

Wondering where he was going with that, I asked, "What do you mean?"

"Well," he responded, "it will be your job to be in charge of everything. And I will help you. And it will be Gretchen's job to make us laugh."

To this day I am astonished at his wisdom. That statement got us through many a hard time. Sometimes, after some messy project we would find Gretchen in, he would jump to his little sister's defense by telling me, "Remember, Mom, she's just doing her job!" And we would all relax in laughter, remembering his comment about assignments.

4. Learn to bite your tongue.

Don't criticize the absent parent—ever, but especially not in front of the children. I was blessed with a friend who taught me that very early in my pain. She was older, and her aging mother had come to live with her. My friend said her mother, who had been divorced from her father many years before, complained endlessly about her father's faults—his drinking, his attitude, his personal habits, his clothing. My friend then said, "Guess who I feel sorry for?" and "Guess who I identify with?" My friend said it didn't matter how much truth was in her mother's statements; she began, after all those years, to side with her father.

That's when I remembered again that the commandment is "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12). And I knew that if I did my job right, my children would love their father.

5. Keep a scrapbook for each child.

Write down the delightful things they say. Talk about your feelings for the child at different ages and different stages. Keep a box of treasures for each one. Tuck in some of their drawings or their notes to you as they grow.



I learned how important it is to write down the delightful things your children say, to talk about your feelings for your children at different ages and different stages, and to keep family photo albums or scrapbooks.



Do something. Give yourself purpose at something you like to do or want to learn. Start anywhere. Just start.

Keep family photo albums or scrapbooks. I was gratified with the importance of those simple snapshots when the children each brought the person they eventually married into the living room and shared the family albums and all their childhood memories with them. We all laughed and remembered and began to love each other as extended family.

Yourself

1. Allow those who love you to be helpful.

So many people still love you after your marriage ends. For me these include every member of my husband's family. One of my husband's brothers and his wife insisted that they stay in my life. My sister-in-law called me every day at first, just to be sure I was all right. She proved to be trustworthy, offering help and ever able to keep a confidence. My brother-in-law offered priesthood blessings to my children and simply raved over their accomplishments. I came to know that those dear people had hearts so kind and good that they could appreciate my children without feeling any threat to the worth of their own. Never at any time did I question their love of their brother, my former husband. What I learned was that they could love us both. Family and friends really

don't have to line up behind one of us or the other and take sides.

2. Face your fears.

I had grown up being afraid of the dark. When I became the only adult sleeping in the house, I worried about that. My washer and dryer were in the garage, and I didn't dare go out there to change the clothes from the washer to the dryer if it was dark outside. Now that I was alone with the children, I realized I couldn't indulge in that fear anymore. I knew I couldn't risk frightening my children, nor could I face a world where I was afraid after sundown. So I took it to the Lord. I explained how I was afraid, how I needed to be braver, and I pleaded for Him to take the fear away. He did. The fear was gone—simply gone. I didn't even have to think about it anymore. Since then I have confronted darkness many times and have not been afraid.

Another fear was the financial one. During those first weeks of heavy burden, even though I had a master's degree, my feelings of self-worth were so low I could see nothing possible but the most menial jobs. Not knowing how to get a meaningful job in that frame of mind, I chose to return to graduate school to open job opportunities again. For me it has been a heaven-sent decision, offering opportunities I never could have imagined.

3. Do something.

Make quilts, go to a ball game, paint pictures, take a hike, bottle fruit, start a business, write a book, do family history, build bookshelves, paint rooms, go back to school, read biographies, take tennis lessons, practice the piano, plant a garden, learn to use new computer software, sing in a trio, take bicycle rides, walk every day. Do something. Give yourself purpose at something you like to do or want to learn. Start anywhere. Just start.

4. Be generous to and gracious with your former spouse.

There is simply no point in wasting time or energy or thought on bitterness or revenge. Life is too short. Besides, such sentiments leave their deepest scars on *you*, not on your former spouse. Accept the fact that you'll get better at it over time, and begin as early as you can.

5. Allow yourself time.

Everything seems to get better over time. Just as our miraculous bodies bear the ability to heal themselves, so do our marvelous minds and spirits, if we let them. Be patient with yourself and with the children's emotions. I worried for 13 years about the day my son would speak in church before leaving on a mission. But when the day came, I was able to walk into the audience before the meeting started and greet my son's father. It was good for my son. It was good for me.

6. Accept that even if the divorce is final, the relationship may never be.

The court may say the divorce is final, but if you have children, the worlds you and your former spouse inhabit will likely keep circling into each other. One surprise to me is that now

my grandchildren come with questions. "Why didn't you and Grandpa stay married?" "What is divorce?" "Will my mommy and daddy get divorced?" The pain comes again in an entirely different context, and I return to my knees to ask the Lord for right answers to their queries.

7. Keep a journal.

Writing is often therapeutic and is always useful. If you write what you are feeling, you will find over time that you are progressing. Looking back, you will discover you are not quite as sad or as confused or as desolate as you once were. Here is a place to plead with the Lord, to explore your thinking, to understand your own struggle. In my journal I can dream, explain, explore, and come back another day and find I was completely off base. It helps my sanity and my testimony.

Adversity

These ideas have helped me deal with the adversities of living in this telestial world. Do I wish this particular adversity hadn't happened? Oh, yes. But it did, and I have learned many things.

I think of Joseph Smith and the adversities that came with restoring the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I hang onto knowing that "all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7). I think of the Savior Himself in the council in heaven saying, "We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them" (Abraham 3:25).

The gospel of Jesus Christ is true. The plan of salvation allows each of us to choose to return and live with our Father in Heaven again. Choosing is the key to who we are and where we are going. I want to live with Him again. ■



I worried for 13 years about the day my son would speak in church before leaving on a mission. But when the day came, I was able to walk into the audience before the meeting started and greet my son's father. It was good for my son. It was good for me.



Trust in the Lord Forever

BY MARGARET S. LIFFERTH

First Counselor in the Primary General Presidency

Isaiah was called to a difficult task. He was the prophet for the people of Judah when they lived in apostasy and, for the most part, followed the leadership of wicked rulers. It was a time of oppression of the poor, increased idolatry, and transgression of moral laws as the kingdoms of Judah and Israel faced the advancing armies of hostile neighbors.

Isaiah's counsel to the people was to repent, believe in the coming Messiah, and "trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:4). When the people listened, they prospered. But Isaiah watched in sorrow as the covenant house of Israel ultimately rejected divine counsel. Moved by inspiration, Isaiah prophesied of the destruction and scattering of Israel and lived to see the captivity of the ten tribes of Israel and the approaching end of Judah's power and prosperity.

But in his great prophetic calling, Isaiah also saw us, the covenant people of the latter days. He received comfort in knowing that not only would the kingdom of God again be established on the earth but that Saints in the latter days would seek and live worthy

of the blessings promised to the house of Israel. "Yet now hear, . . . Israel, whom I have chosen: . . . I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring" (Isaiah 44:1, 3).

The words of Isaiah are preserved specifically for us. They are referred to throughout the scriptures. The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob reminds us: "There are many things which have been spoken by Isaiah which may be likened unto you, because ye are of the house of Israel" (2 Nephi 6:5). How do the teachings of Isaiah apply to us? How can we liken his words to each of us individually?

Seeking the Lord

Just as Isaiah and the people of his day lived on a political and moral battlefield, we do too. When Isaiah entreated his hearers to trust in the Lord, he was also talking to us. How do we seek the direction, strength, and protection of the Lord and then recognize and acknowledge His hand in our lives?

Great blessings become available to us as we make and keep covenants. Specifically, when we are baptized and confirmed, we are given the gift of the Holy Ghost. As we keep our covenants and renew them every week when we take the sacrament, we are



We will recognize His guiding hand in our lives as we live worthy to receive the promptings of His Spirit and then as we act upon those promptings.

promised that we may “always have his Spirit to be with” us (Moroni 4:3; D&C 20:77). The promises of the Lord are sure. We will recognize His guiding hand in our lives as we live worthy to receive the promptings of His Spirit and then as we act upon those promptings.

In addition to the scriptures and guidance of living prophets, I have found at least three ways that the Lord can give direction to our lives:

1. We can receive answers to specific prayers.
2. The Lord will often influence our thoughts, words, and actions even when we have not sought specific direction.
3. When we face adversity and think we have been abandoned by the Lord, He will bless

S*uddenly it became clear to me that I needed to go early to my daughter's school and pick her up. How grateful I am that the Lord will guide a mother to comfort her child.*



us with the strength to learn the important lessons of life.

Divine Guidance

It is a privilege and a blessing to seek the guidance of the Lord as we come to Him in prayer. We seek His will for us in the diverse circumstances of our lives:

when we are deciding whom to marry and when; what education or career to pursue or where to live; when we are seeking to know how to serve in a calling, how to help in family matters, or how to assist a neighbor or a child; and when we need to know what lessons we should learn from adversity.

Most of the time my prayers on matters such as this are answered



Sometimes the Lord answers our prayers specifically. At other times we are left to make decisions according to our own best judgment.

specifically. At other times I am left to make a decision with my own best judgment. Sometimes the Lord has a different timetable in mind for me, but I gratefully acknowledge His hand in my life as He answers my prayers.

I have also discovered that the Lord is generous and will often guide us in matters for which we have not sought direction. Some time ago one of our children had run for an elected office at the junior high school she attended. It was the day of the election, and I was home, busy with the routine of the day. Suddenly, it came clearly to my mind that our daughter had lost the election and I needed to go early to the school to pick her up. I watched the clock, and when I knew it was time for the election results to be announced, I arrived at the school. As I walked through the front door, all the youth who had participated in the election were seated in the front hall. They were listening to the results before they were announced to the other students. Our daughter was grateful for an early ride home in order to collect her thoughts, emotions, and priorities before meeting her friends the next day. I am grateful that the Lord, who created the universe, will also guide a mother to comfort the heart of a child.

I have felt the promptings of the Spirit at other times when I have not sought specific direction. It has been there to warn me. It has helped me when I didn't know what to say or do in my efforts to "mourn with those that mourn . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (Mosiah 18:9). It has confirmed the truths taught in a lesson or a talk and has directed my response when my children

have had questions or doubts or when they felt desires to follow the world. I have discovered that often the necessary words to say or actions to take "shall be given you in the very hour" (D&C 100:6).

As we each face adversity, there may be times when we wonder if the Lord is mindful of us. Isaiah teaches us to trust the Lord even then:

"And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:20–21).

Adversity often makes us more receptive to the promptings of the Spirit. And we "shall return even to the Lord, and he shall be intreated of [us] and shall heal [us]" (Isaiah 19:22). When we trust in the Lord during adversity, we open the door to His strengthening and healing power.

"We Will Be Glad and Rejoice"

I know that as we liken the teachings of Isaiah to our own lives, we will rejoice in his counsel to "trust ye in the Lord for ever." As we make and keep covenants and as we follow the promptings of His Spirit, the hand of the Lord will guide our lives and we can be sure of promised blessings.

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces. . . .

"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isaiah 25:8–9). ■



IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH

BY LOIS McCUNE SEWELL

As I have faced cancer, I have learned that the most important thing is not how we die but how we have lived.

Your cancer has returned.” I was shocked at my oncologist’s words. It had been almost six years since I had had surgery and chemotherapy for breast cancer, which had been discovered during a routine mammogram. Now I was at my oncologist’s office to learn the results of a previous routine blood test.

My daughter and I looked at the doctor, speechless, and then I lamely said, “Well, at least I have my will made out.” I knew that breast cancer can return 10 or even 20 years after an initial episode. However, I had had so many good checkups since my first bout with cancer that I had become rather complacent.

The first question I could manage was “How long do I have?” The doctor replied, “I can’t tell you that. No one can. You might have several months or several years.” We decided I would undergo drug therapy to prevent further

bone damage and to help with pain management. Beyond that, the doctor told me, there was nothing that could forestall the progression of the disease.

What does a person do when faced with a death sentence? People often go through these stages of grieving: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.¹ I felt I had dealt with the first four stages during my previous encounter with cancer, but I find that some of these feelings still emerge every now and then.

I am now working on the acceptance stage. However, I am not going to just lie down in bed, turn my face to the wall, and wait to die. Far from it! I intend to live my life as fully as possible as long as I can. I have renewed my passport in hopes of visiting an old friend in Germany, and I ordered more flowers for my garden. But I realize that ultimately Heavenly Father is in charge. I must rely on my faith and my knowledge that God is good, that He knows me, and that He is aware of my circumstances. He is there to help all of us bear our suffering, to listen to our prayers, and to give us peace.



Prayer

After the diagnosis, I did not pray for a miracle cure. My first prayer was a prayer for strength to endure this disease to the end and for a feeling of peace. Heavenly Father has answered this prayer and continues to answer it daily as I continue to pray. And yet I have come to understand to some degree what Jesus meant when He prayed, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).

In the past, I often said my prayers in a rather mechanical fashion. I have learned to pray with more depth. I have tried to understand better the meaning of the Atonement, and sometimes I have wonderful insights. And yet many times I feel a poignant sense of isolation and loneliness. I will catch myself saying, “I have no future.” But then I correct myself and say, “I have no future here on earth, but I have a future in the next life. I must work toward that future.”

Opposition in All Things

At first I worried about what to say to people who asked, “How are you?” Should I say, “I’m dying of cancer”? Eventually I decided to just say, “I’m fine,” because basically I am still feeling pretty good, and grocery store clerks don’t need to know about my health problems anyway. All of us will have unpleasant or sad experiences in this life. This is in accordance with the scriptures: “For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad” (2 Nephi 2:11). Similarly, we read in Doctrine and Covenants 29:39, “For if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet.”

In fast and testimony meetings I have heard people say

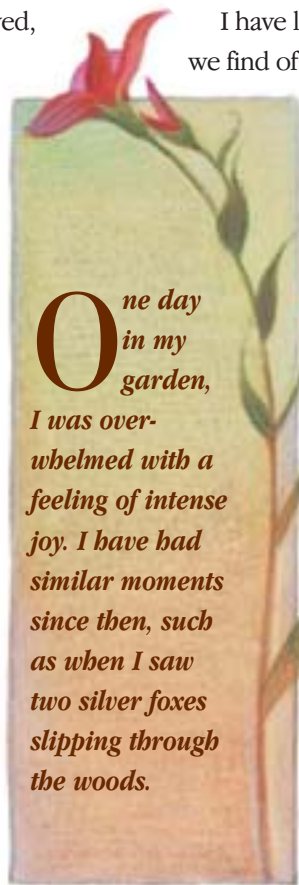
they are thankful for their trials. At times I think to myself, “I would like deliverance from mine.” But I know I really have grown from these experiences and that my faith has increased. Often it is life’s most difficult lessons that have the most to teach us.

I have learned so much about hope. *Hope* is a word we find often in the scriptures and use frequently in our prayers and daily conversations. Hope still exists for those facing death, but it is a different kind of hope. It is not always the hope for a cure but rather for a good day, a pleasant visit with family and friends, an uplifting sacrament meeting or time spent reading the scriptures. It is the hope of living the rest of one’s life in dignity and being remembered as a good and caring person after one’s death. It is the hope of peace and strength; a hope of faith to be fulfilled; a hope, ultimately, in the saving power of Jesus Christ.

Finding Joy

I have adopted several mottoes that help me deal with my condition day to day. One is “You’re alive until you’re dead.” Another I found in an e-mail message: “It’s not the number of breaths we take in this life that matters, but rather the number of moments that take our breath away.” I have had many of these moments. One of the surprising things I have discovered is that I can be happy even when facing death.

I learned that one day in my garden last year. The sun was just coming up, and the flowers were covered with dew. Birds were singing in the trees and shrubs around me. Suddenly I was overwhelmed with a feeling of intense joy and happiness. I wondered how I could be feeling such joy at that time. But rather than question it too deeply, I just let the feeling wash over me.



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SUBMISSION AT DEATH



“Uncertainty as to longevity leaves a balance to be struck by us all. We are to salute the Lord for the gift of life, for as long as it lasts, and yet, at the same time, to be spiritually submissive as it ends. . . .

“ . . . When death comes to all of us, as a result thereof some things will be clearly missed. But these are small dunes of deprivation when placed alongside that vast Himalayan range of all our past and present blessings.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (1926–2004), One More Strain of Praise (1999), 12, 14.

Later, in my bedroom, I glanced at a *New Era* poster on my wall with a quotation from John 14:18: “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”

Then I understood. The Savior had come to me figuratively in my garden, letting me feel His love and comforting me through the beauty of the world around me. I was so thankful! I have had many similar moments since then, such as when I saw two silver foxes slipping through the woods, watched the full moon set in the morning as I took my dogs out in the darkness, and admired the intense colors of the leaves on sugar maple trees glowing





in the sunshine on an October day. I know the Lord will continue to send me such moments when I need them.

Making the Most of My Time

After my diagnosis, I knew I needed to assess where I was in my life if I was to make the most of the time I had left. I had repented of my major sins, but there were still areas that needed work. I needed to spend more time with the scriptures. I needed to mend some personal relationships. I needed to do my temple work. I had done baptisms for the dead, but I had hesitated to do my own work for fear it might put a wedge between me and my husband, who is not a member of the Church. However, my husband felt fine about my receiving my endowment. I had also promised myself that I would do the temple work for a family member who had gained a testimony before she passed away.

Some temporal items were on my “to do” list. I wanted to tie a quilt I had promised my daughter last summer, and I wanted to visit my relatives in the West. I have accomplished those things, but others are still pending.

I have become very aware of how I use my day. I used to spend far too much time playing computer games. However, on the day I got word that the cancer had returned, I said to myself, “Computer games are such a waste of time.” I have never been tempted to play a game since that day. I have also become careful about what television shows I watch and what I read. I want to spend my time in worthwhile ways.

Sources of Comfort

I have found that I enjoy being around upbeat people. A sense of humor is more important now than ever. I try to

find something every day that will make me laugh. I have also gained much joy from helping people. When I am feeling down, nothing helps me more than to write to a friend or to think of something nice to do for someone.

It is also important to have someone to talk to. I have been blessed to have tremendous support from my husband, other family members, and several dear friends. When we pray to Heavenly Father for help, our prayers are often answered through other people. I am thankful for the strength I receive through others.

I have come to find personal meaning in many of the words of our Latter-day Saint hymns. I have always loved the hymn “The Lord My Pasture Will Prepare,” and I have come to better understand these words: “My noonday walks he will attend, / And all my silent midnight hours defend.”² It is often in the still of the night when fears and doubts rage most strongly. I also resonate to these words from “How Firm a Foundation”: “In ev’ry condition—in sickness, in health, / . . . As thy days may demand, so thy succor shall be.”³

The Power of the Scriptures

As I face death, my scripture study has become more meaningful. I often find insights and interpretations that escaped me before. Many of the scriptures speak directly to me, and they help me to live with this disease.

Memorizing scriptures has given me strength. I often recite to myself, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). I find comfort in John 14:27: “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.”



I needed to make the most of the time I had left. I received my endowment and did temple work for my ancestors. Temporal items on my “to do” list included tying a quilt.



I also think of Romans 8:35–37:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

When we face personal and family problems, even serious illnesses, we *can* be conquerors. We may be physically destroyed, but we need not be defeated.

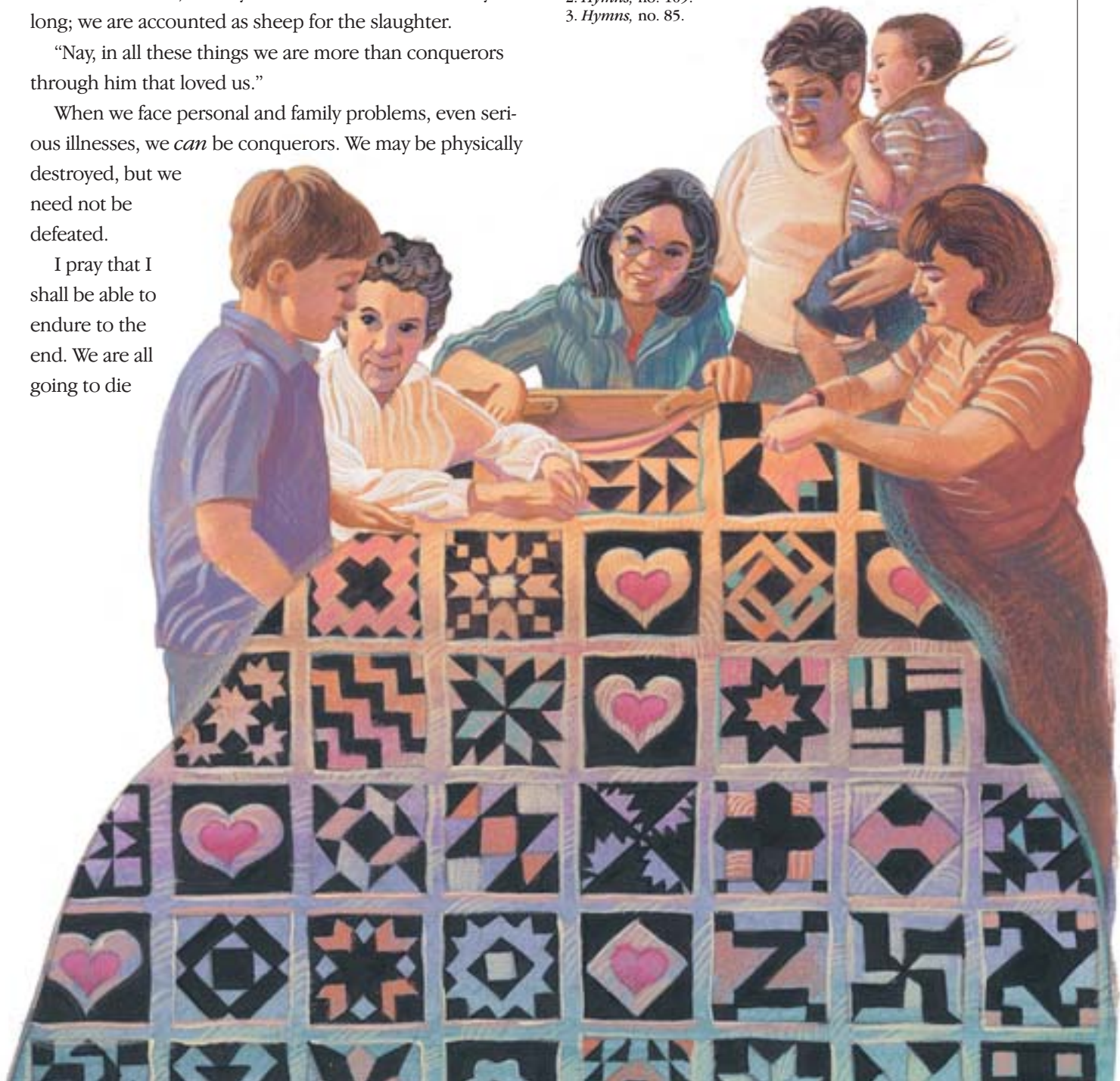
I pray that I shall be able to endure to the end. We are all going to die

eventually. However, from an eternal perspective, the most important thing is not how we die but how we have lived. Have we put our lives in order? Have we accomplished the really important things? Have we put aside that which is unimportant?

Yes, I am living in the shadow of death. But I find comfort in the gospel, in the eternal perspective it provides, and in the Savior. I echo the Psalmist’s words to the Lord: “Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast” (Psalm 57:1). ■

NOTES

1. See Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (1969).
2. *Hymns*, no. 109.
3. *Hymns*, no. 85.





For behold,
this life is the
time for men
to prepare to meet
God; yea, behold
the day of this life
is the day for men
to perform their
labors" (Alma 34:32).

Fulfilling Our Duty to God

A Window of Opportunity



BY CHARLES W. DAHLQUIST II
Young Men General President

How parents and leaders can help young men achieve the Duty to God Award.

The First Presidency announced a few years ago a new achievement program for the young men of the Church. *Aaronic Priesthood: Fulfilling Our Duty to God* was created to help young men prepare for the Melchizedek Priesthood, the temple endowment, a full-time mission, marriage, and fatherhood through setting and achieving worthy goals. On September 28, 2001, the First Presidency sent a letter to priesthood leaders stating: “We desire all young men to strive to earn the Eagle Scout [in the United States and Canada] and Duty to God Awards. We desire all young women to strive to earn the Young

Womanhood Recognition. As youth work on these goals, they will develop skills and attributes that will lead them to the temple and prepare them for a lifetime of service to their families and the Lord.”

In this fall’s Young Men open house and workshops, as well as in other upcoming training, the Young Men general presidency will be emphasizing the important role parents and quorum leaders play in helping young men reap the promised blessings of this program.

As I have traveled throughout the world, I have been pleased with the progress young men have made in the program. However, there are still many young men and their leaders who know very little about the program. Yet our youth are hungry for opportunities to achieve and develop their talents and abilities.

I was recently in Vladivostok, on the east coast of Russia. As I sat on the stand at the beginning of a youth and adult fireside, I noticed a young man in the second row immersed in a Duty to God guidebook for priests. I was thrilled and thought to myself: “Marvelous! Seventeen time zones away from Salt Lake City, and Duty to God is alive and well.” When I rose to speak, I asked him what his name was.

“Gere” was the reply.

“How old are you?”

“Seventeen.”

I then moved to my real inquiry: “I noticed that you have been reading a book. What book have you been reading?”

Quick came the reply: “I don’t know.”

“Well, where did you get it?”

“Out in the hall just before the meeting” was his reply.

Immediately, as Gere spoke, Dimitri, a young man on the front row, jumped up, left the room, quickly returned with his own copy, and began to read. They were so ready for opportunities to grow.

The program is intended to be individual, quorum, and family oriented. This means that many of the requirements for each of the deacon, teacher, and priest awards may be accomplished at home—and signed off by a young man’s parents. Thus, the first place a young man and his parents should become acquainted with the program and the guidebook is in the home. Let’s see just how this might happen.

The Visit from Priesthood Leaders

My friend Dan is 11 years old, and soon he will be ordained a deacon. Shortly before he becomes a deacon, Dan will receive a visit from the deacons quorum presidency in



Quorum and ward leaders will visit young men to explain the Duty to God program.

Some of the Duty to God requirements include giving family home evening lessons, preparing family meals, and reading the scriptures daily.



his ward and either a member of the bishopric or his deacons quorum adviser to welcome him into the quorum. They will explain to Dan and his parents all the wonderful

things that Dan will be able to do when he receives the Aaronic Priesthood and is ordained a deacon, such as passing the sacrament, collecting fast offerings, being involved in service projects, and attending priesthood meeting and Mutual.

They will probably also share with Dan the wonderful

blessing it is to bear the Aaronic Priesthood, which was restored by John the Baptist when he appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on the banks of the Susquehanna River and said, “Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins” (D&C 13:1).

They will bring Dan his own copy of the deacon’s *Aaronic Priesthood: Fulfilling Our Duty to God* guidebook. They will explain to Dan what the program is and what it is to accomplish. They might have Dan read the promise of the First Presidency to each deacon who works on and achieves the Duty to God Award:

“The Lord believes in you and has an important mission for you to do. He will help you as you turn to Him in prayer. Listen for the promptings of the Spirit. Obey the commandments. Make and keep covenants that will prepare you for the temple. Work with your parents and leaders as you set goals and strive to achieve them. You will feel a great sense of accomplishment as you fulfill your duty and prepare for the exciting challenges of the future.”¹

In the Home

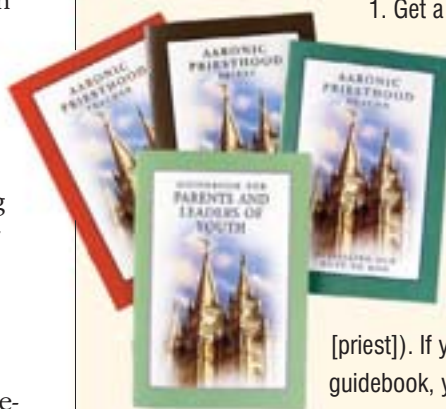
Since many of the requirements can and should be fulfilled in the home, the quorum adviser will suggest that Dan’s father and mother become familiar with the requirements. Dan’s parents may receive a *Guidebook for Parents and Leaders of Youth* (item no. 36415), which explains their role in helping Dan. A number of the requirements (especially those in the “Family Activities” and “Spiritual Development” sections) are appropriate for family home evenings or for Sunday and will help Dan keep the Sabbath day holy.

His parents will



Parents should be familiar with the Duty to God requirements because many of them will be fulfilled in the home.

CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS



1. Get a copy of the *Guidebook for Parents and Leaders of Youth* (item no. 36415) as well as the appropriate *Aaronic Priesthood: Fulfilling Our Duty to God* guidebook (item nos. 36412 [deacon], 36413 [teacher], 36414

[priest]). If you don’t already have a guidebook, you may wish to show this article to your bishop or branch

president or to your son’s Aaronic Priesthood adviser and ask when you might expect a visit. (These guidebooks are available at no charge at local distribution centers and through www.ldscatalog.com.)

2. Become familiar with each of the requirements for the appropriate Duty to God certificate.

3. With your son, review the requirements he has completed, and help him select those he still needs to accomplish. You may find the Duty to God Achievement Record (item no. 36720) helpful. Remember, you can modify the requirements or write your own to meet the needs of some young men.

4. Help your son plan when he will work on and complete each goal. Discuss how you and the family can help him. You might also discuss how each of these goals will strengthen the family and help prepare your son to become an effective missionary.

5. Set a regular time to review progress. Have your son keep his guidebook in a safe place. Remember that young men need praise when they have accomplished a goal. Be generous, specific, and sincere in your praise.

6. Repeat steps 3 to 5 above. Have fun working with your son as he strives to complete his requirements.

want to know, for example, that one requirement is for Dan to give four family home evening lessons during his time as a deacon. They can arrange for him to learn how to prepare and give those lessons. They will also want to know that Dan (and possibly the entire family) will review and memorize the Articles of Faith. Dan also needs to prepare at least two meals for his family, fill out a four-generation pedigree chart, complete a service project, develop the habit of reading the scriptures daily, and read the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet (item no. 36550) and discuss it with his parents or priesthood leader.

SCOUTING AND DUTY TO GOD



*Aaronic Priesthood:
Fulfilling Our Duty to God*

is an approved priesthood achievement program that, along with Scouting in the United States and Canada, helps prepare a young man to receive

the Melchizedek Priesthood, receive temple ordinances, and serve a worthy, full-time mission. Many Scouting requirements also fulfill Duty to God requirements.

Both programs become more effective in strengthening young men when leaders and parents understand the programs and can help young men set goals to accomplish both the Eagle Scout Award and the Duty to God Award.

Where Scouting is available, priesthood and Young Men leaders are encouraged to become adequately trained and familiar with the requirements for Scouting awards as well as the Duty to God Award so both programs can be prayerfully applied in meeting the needs of the youth.

These two programs also provide ideal opportunities for parents (whether members of the Church or not) to become involved in their sons' activities.

As Dan's parents learn about the program, they will know how they can help and support him in accomplishing its requirements. What a great thing it would be for Dan's father to review Dan's progress toward his deacon certificate in father's interviews with his son. During these interviews it might be helpful for Dan's father to ask: How are these goals helping prepare you for your mission? How do they help prepare you for the temple? Tell me how your testimony has grown as you have read the Book of Mormon. How do you think your efforts in accomplishing your Duty to God goals

are helping strengthen our family and helping you be a better son? How are your efforts preparing you to be a husband and father? (In families without a father in the home, this is a wonderful time for a mother to talk with her son about his goals and dreams and to discuss these same questions.)

In the Quorum

Dan's quorum president may mention to him that some of the requirements are quorum based and that quorum activities will be planned to help Dan fulfill these requirements. The president may also review Dan's progress with

him periodically and may check with Dan's parents now and

Quorum presidencies and advisers will plan activities to help young men complete the goals leading to their Duty to God Award.



then to see how the quorum can help. The quorum presidencies and advisers will also plan Mutual activities to help him complete the goals leading to his Duty to God Award. The bishopric can also use their regularly scheduled interviews to review Dan's progress. They might even have an adult in the ward or branch, possibly the secretary to the Young Men presidency, help track each young man's progress in the program.

Certificates and Advancement

When Dan has accomplished all the requirements for the deacon certificate, he will have an interview with the bishop to review his progress and sign the "Completion of Duty to God" page at the end of his deacon's booklet. Dan can then receive his deacon Duty to God certificate.

Shortly before Dan becomes a teacher and then again when he is ready to become a priest, he may receive a similar visit from his quorum leaders to receive his teacher (and then priest) Duty to God guidebook. When he has received his deacon, teacher, and priest certificates, he is eligible to receive his Duty to God medallion. And though that, in itself, is a wonderful accomplishment, the most important result of Dan's efforts will be the personal growth he has experienced in earning the award—personal growth that will help him be better prepared to receive the ordinances of the temple, to serve a full-time mission, and to be a faithful husband and father.

If you are a parent of a young man in the Aaronic Priesthood, I encourage you to carefully study the appropriate *Fulfilling Our Duty to God* guidebook, as well as the *Guidebook for Parents and Leaders of Youth*. Discuss the requirements and purposes of the program with your son, and help him set appropriate goals that will challenge him. You will note



TO HOME TEACHERS

Sometimes a young man of Aaronic Priesthood age is the only member of the Church in his family. In such a case or in single-parent families, home teachers can help support a young man in his priesthood duties and in accomplishing the requirements for the Duty to God Award.

that the requirements listed in the guidebooks may be modified according to the individual circumstances, interests, and needs of the young man—with the approval of parents and Aaronic Priesthood leaders.

A Window of Opportunity

With the challenges that are bombarding young men today—Satan's attempts to weaken them and lead them astray—there has never been a greater need for the blessings that come through achieving the Duty to God Award. A young man who is dedicated to reading the scriptures daily, memorizing the Articles of Faith, and accomplishing the other requirements will not only be more focused on that which is good and right and true, but he will be more prepared to shun evil.

When I was a teenager in Mutual, we learned a scripture that was our theme for the year: "For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors" (Alma 34:32).

The window of opportunity with our young men is not open for very long and passes so swiftly. Today, as the scripture teaches, is the day to perform our labors. The First Presidency has challenged the young men in the Church: "You live in a day of great challenges and opportunities. You have been called to make a difference in the world. As a son of God, with the power of the Aaronic Priesthood, you can be a wonderful force for good."²

May God bless each parent and leader of young men in the Aaronic Priesthood to begin today to understand the Duty to God program and to help our young men achieve the objectives of this program. ■

NOTES

1. *Aaronic Priesthood: Fulfilling Our Duty to God* (2001), 5.
2. *Fulfilling Our Duty to God*, 4.



She Shall Be Called Woman

Women of the Old Testament



The Formation of Eve, by Gustave Doré (above background). The name *Eve* in Hebrew means “life.” She was the first woman and the mother of all living. “*And I, the Lord God, caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam; . . . and I took one of his ribs . . . [and] made I a woman. . . . And Adam said: This I know now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man*” (Moses 3:21–23).

Leaving the Garden, by Joseph Brickey (above inset). Of Eve’s use of her agency to partake of the forbidden fruit, Elder Dallin H.

Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “*Informed by revelation, we celebrate Eve’s act and honor her wisdom and courage. . . . Our first parents understood the necessity of the Fall.*”¹

Hagar and Ishmael Expelled, by George Soper (lower right). *Hagar* in Hebrew means “flight.” She was an Egyptian and Sarah’s handmaiden, whom barren Sarah asked Abraham to take as his wife that he might have children. When Hagar’s son, Ishmael, mocked Isaac, Sarah asked Abraham to cast them out, “*for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with*



... Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham’s sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, . . . bearken unto [Sarah’s] voice: for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also for the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar . . . and the child, and sent her away: and she departed” (Genesis 21:10–14).

NOTE
1. “The Great Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 73.

Is Anything Too Hard for the Lord?

by Elspeth Young (left). Sarah in Hebrew means “princess.” She was of royal lineage, the wife of the prophet Abraham and the mother of Isaac. Abraham and Sarah, his barren wife, were in their old age when the Lord spoke to Abraham saying, *“And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations”* (Genesis 17:16). They named the promised heir Isaac. Isaac’s son Jacob became known as Israel, and his descendants became the twelve tribes of Israel. Through the house of Israel, the covenants and promises made to Adam and Eve were restored.

Queen Esther, by Roger W. Otis

(right). Esther in Hebrew means “star.” She was the Jewish queen to Ahasuerus. Esther pleased the king and he chose her as his queen, but he did not know she was Jewish. When a decree went out to kill all the Jews in the kingdom, Queen Esther was afraid to approach the king. Her cousin Mordecai counseled her, *“Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”* (Esther 4:14). After fasting and praying for three days, she put on her royal apparel and arranged a banquet for the king. She said to him, *“If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request”* (Esther 7:3). The king agreed, and thus the entire Jewish nation was saved.





Waiting for the Promise, by Elspeth Young. *Rahab* in Hebrew means “spacious.” She was a harlot in Jericho. She hid the Hebrew spies in her home and “*let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall.*” They in turn promised to save her and all of her family from the destruction of Jericho (see Joshua 2:12–21). In the painting, Rahab awaits the fulfillment of

that promise as Jericho is destroyed. Rahab’s faith is discussed by Paul (see Hebrews 11:31), and her good works by James (see James 2:25). The spies made good on their word: she and her family were the only survivors of the battle of Jericho.



Puah and Shiphrah Defy Pharaoh, by Sallie Clinton Poet (top). **The Protector (Shiphrah), by Elspeth Young** (above). Puah and Shiphrah were two Hebrew midwives during the Israelites’ captivity by the Egyptians. The name *Puah* in Hebrew means “splendid,” and the name *Shiphrah* means “brightness.” These two faithful midwives secretly refused to carry out the pharaoh’s edict to slay all Hebrew males at birth. Proverbs 14:26 teaches that “*the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.*” Puah and Shiphrah defied the pharaoh because they feared God more than man. These women were rewarded with descendants, referred to in the scriptures as “houses” (see Exodus 1:21).

But Ruth Clave unto Her, by Brian Kershisnik (below). Naomi, her husband, and their two sons went to Moab because of a famine in Bethlehem. Naomi's husband died there, and eventually her sons married Moabite women—Ruth, who converted to the Israelite way of life, and Orpah. Within 10 years of their marriages, both of Naomi's sons died. As Naomi was leaving to return

to Bethlehem, she told her daughters-in-law to return to their families. Orpah obeyed Naomi's wishes. Ruth, however, displayed loyalty and selfless concern when she said to her mother-in-law, *"Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whithersoever thou goest, I will go; and . . . thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God"* (Ruth 1:16).



Ruth Pledges Loyalty to Naomi, by Robert T. Barrett. *Ruth* in Hebrew means "friend." She was the Moabite ancestress of King David and of Jesus Christ. *Naomi* in Hebrew means "pleasant." She was Ruth's mother-in-law.





Rebekah at the Well, by Michael Deas.

Rebekah in Hebrew means “ensnarer.” She was the wife of Isaac and the mother of Esau and Jacob. Rebekah served water to Abraham’s servant Eliezer at the well and later accepted his offer to go to the land of Canaan to marry Abraham’s son Isaac.

Rebekah, by Del Parson (top right). After the long journey, Rebekah met Isaac. When she saw him, Rebekah put on a veil as a sign of her virtue, modesty, respect, and readiness for a covenant marriage. (See Genesis 24:45–65.) Later, when

her twins, Esau and Jacob, struggled within her womb, she inquired of the Lord. *“And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger”* (Genesis 25:23). This prophecy came to pass symbolically when the adult Esau sold his birthright to his younger brother, Jacob, for *“bread and pottage of lentiles”* (see Genesis 25:29–34).



A Lamp unto My Feet, by Elspeth Young.

Abigail in Hebrew means “father of joy.” She was the wife of Nabal and later of King David. She *“was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance.”* She gathered foodstuffs to take to King David’s army after her husband refused to help them. *“Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs. . . . But she told not her husband Nabal”* (1 Samuel 25:3, 18–19). Her act of courage saved the lives of her whole household.



Charity Never Fails, by Elspeth Young. The widow of Zarephath's name is not known. She fed the prophet Elijah the last morsel of her food before feeding her son and herself. Because of her faith, the Lord fed her, her household, and Elijah for many days. *“And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: . . . and the barrel of meal wasted*

not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah” (1 Kings 17:15–16).



Elijah Raises the Widow of Zarephath's Son from Death, by Robert T. Barrett. Later when the widow's son fell sick, *“that there was no breath left in him,”* Elijah *“cried unto the Lord and said, . . . let this child's soul come into him again.”* And the Lord *“revived”* the child, and Elijah took him *“out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth”* (1 Kings 17:17, 21–23).

Commitment TO GOD



BY PRESIDENT HOWARD W. HUNTER
(1907–95)

Fourteenth President of the Church

Howard W. Hunter was born in Boise, Idaho, on November 14, 1907. He was ordained an Apostle on October 15, 1959, and was ordained and set apart as President of the Church on June 5, 1994. He passed away on March 3, 1995. This address was given in general conference in October 1982.

We should decide in the light of the morning how we will act when the darkness of night and the storms of temptation arrive.

Reading and studying the scriptures make us conscious of the many conditional promises made by the Lord to encourage obedience and righteous living. Israelite history is filled with examples of covenants, which constitute one of the central themes of the Old Testament—the promises of God made in exchange for the commitments of the prophets and the people.

The Lord made a covenant with Noah, and the rainbow became the token of that eternal covenant with all mankind (see Genesis 9:13). The covenant made with Abraham and his seed was sealed by the ceremony of circumcision as a sacrament (see Genesis 17:10–11). And the token or sign of the great covenant with all Israel made at Sinai was the Sabbath (see Exodus 31:12–17).

Several experiences in the life of Joshua are instructive to

us today regarding the importance placed by the Lord on keeping commitments and on being committed to following the commandments and direction He has given.

Joshua is remembered as the one who, on the death of Moses, took command and completed the task of giving leadership to the tribes of Israel. Perhaps to comfort Joshua—who now had the responsibility for the children of Israel, who didn’t yet have a homeland—and perhaps to comfort that large body of people who had just lost their leader of more than 40 years, the Lord spoke to Joshua and said:

“As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

“Be strong and of a good courage: for unto

this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them” (Joshua 1:5–6).

The Lord then continues to speak to Joshua by way of commandment: “Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou



Moses ordains Joshua to lead the Israelites.



mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1:7).

Then speaking about the law given to Moses, the Lord adds: “Observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

Finally, we have this last reiteration by the Lord of what He had previously said, to comfort and to remind Joshua of the relationship between the blessings of heaven and obedience to divine law: “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1:9).

Joshua would need courage for what he had to do. He would need the Lord’s help at every step. Here is a commitment of the Lord to provide that help. With faith in the Lord, Joshua could now go forward, knowing that the Lord would direct him in the way he should go. Joshua knew

When the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant touched the water of Jordan, it dried up, “and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground.”

that his obedience would bring success, and although he did not know exactly how he would succeed, he now had confidence in the result.

The record tells us that the tribes of Israel moved to the Jordan river and encamped for three days, preparing to cross at a point near the city of Jericho. At that time Joshua gave his people this interesting counsel. He said, “Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the Lord will do wonders among you” (Joshua 3:5).

He knew the victory that would surely come would depend upon their willingness to do the will of the Lord. Then the Lord said unto Joshua, “This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know



Joshua and his people followed the Lord's instructions precisely, and the walls of Jericho "fell down flat, . . . and they took the city."

that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee" (Joshua 3:7).

Joshua now knew that the miracles of the Lord would continue, just as when Moses had been the leader of Israel. And so it was that when the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people touched the water of the Jordan, it dried up, "and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground" (Joshua 3:17).

Soon after, when Joshua was directed to destroy the city of Jericho that lay before them, the great walls of the city stood as an imposing and physically impossible barrier to

Israel's success—or at least so it seemed. Not knowing the means, but assured as to the end, Joshua carried out the instructions he had been given by a messenger of the Lord. His commitment was to complete obedience. His concern was to do precisely as he was instructed, that the promise of the Lord would be fulfilled. The instructions no doubt seemed strange, but his faith in the outcome urged him on. The result, of course, was another in a long series of miracles experienced by the Israelites as they were led over many years by Moses, by Joshua, and by many other prophets who were committed to follow the commandments and the directives of the Lord.

As Joshua and his people approached Jericho, the instructions of the Lord were followed precisely, and according to the scriptural account, "the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city" (Joshua 6:20).

The record states that after Israel had rested from the wars with their enemies, Joshua, who was now very old, called all Israel together. In his farewell address he

reminded them they had been victorious because God had fought for them, but if they now ceased to serve the Lord and keep his law they would be destroyed. He recalled how the Lord God of Israel had led Abraham throughout Canaan and had "multiplied his seed" (Joshua 24:3). He reminded them of how Jacob and his children had gone down into Egypt. He told of how the Lord had been with Moses and Aaron and had brought their fathers out of Egypt; how, in all of the battles and conquests, they had prevailed, adding this significant statement: "But not with thy sword, nor with thy bow" (Joshua 24:12). They had been led by the Lord to victory. The battles had not been won by swords and bows. He then admonished them: "Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

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

Divide the family into groups. Using the article, scriptures, and the Bible Dictionary, see which group can find the most facts about Joshua. Discuss how Joshua was obedient. Then invite family members to share instances when they were obedient to the Lord. Conclude with the last two paragraphs of the article, and commit as a family to continually serve the Lord.



How pleased the Lord must have been when Abraham, after receiving direction to sacrifice his son Isaac, did as he was instructed, without question and without wavering.

fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord” (Joshua 24:14).

This great military and spiritual leader then urged a commitment, and made one himself and for his family: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

Here was a great statement of full commitment of a man to God; of a prophet to the desires of the Lord; of Joshua the man to his God, who had many times previously blessed his obedience. He was telling the Israelites that regardless of how they decided, he would do what he knew was right. He was saying that his decision to serve the Lord was independent of whatever they decided, that their actions would not affect his, that his commitment to do the Lord’s will would not be altered by anything they or anyone else would do. Joshua was firmly in control of his actions and had his eyes fixed on the commandments of the Lord. He was committed to obedience.

Surely the Lord loves, more than anything else, an unwavering determination to obey His counsel. Surely the experiences of the great prophets of the Old Testament have been recorded to help us understand the importance of choosing the path of strict obedience. How pleased the Lord must have been when Abraham, after receiving direction to sacrifice his son Isaac, did as he was instructed, without question and without wavering. The record states that God said unto Abraham: “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of” (Genesis 22:2).

The next verse simply states: “And Abraham rose up

early in the morning . . . and took . . . Isaac his son . . . and went unto the place of which God had told him” (Genesis 22:3). Years later, when Rebekah was asked if she would go with the servant of Abraham to become Isaac’s wife, and no doubt knowing that the servant’s mission had the blessing of the Lord, she simply said, “I will go” (Genesis 24:58).

A generation after that, when Jacob was instructed to return to the land of Canaan, which meant leaving all for which he had worked many years, he called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was and explained what the Lord had said. The reply of Rachel was simple and straightforward and indicative of her commitment: “Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do” (Genesis 31:16).

We have, then, examples from the scriptures of how we should consider and evaluate the commandments of the Lord. If we choose to react like Joshua and Abraham and Rebekah and Rachel,

our response will be simply to go and do the thing that the Lord has commanded.

There is good reason to make our decision now to serve the Lord. When the complications and temptations of life are somewhat removed and when we have the time and more of an inclination to take an eternal perspective, we can more clearly evaluate what will bring us the greatest happiness in life. We should decide in the light of morning how we will act when the darkness of night and the storms of temptation arrive.

I pray that we will have the strength to decide now to do what we ought to do. I pray that we will decide now to serve the Lord. ■

NICARAGUA

Hungering for the “Beautiful Fruit”

By sharing the “beautiful fruit” of the gospel, Nicaraguan members and missionaries are helping loved ones and friends find peace.

BY DON L. SEARLE
Church Magazines

I believe Nicaragua’s moment has come,” says Larry Zúniga of the San Miguel Ward, Masaya Nicaragua Stake. He is speaking of growth in the Church that increased the number of stakes in his country from two to seven in just one year.

If Brother Zúniga is right, then the arrival of this happy moment in the history of the Church in Nicaragua is the result of at least two factors: the influence of the Holy Ghost on people who are seeking truth and the influence of *Preach My Gospel* in helping members share the gospel. Priesthood leaders will tell you they see both of these factors at work in people’s lives.

Bishop Luís Castrillo of the Ciudad Sandino Ward, Managua Nicaragua Stake, explains that many people in Nicaragua are seeking answers to life’s questions and finding those answers in the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He compares their condition to being very thirsty on a hot day and unable to find a place



to get a drink. When at last they find the way to quench their thirst, they drink freely and gratefully of the water that the gospel of Jesus Christ has to offer.

Looking at the overall picture of what is happening in Nicaragua, Elder Spencer V. Jones of the Seventy, President of the Central America Area, offers three reasons for the Church’s growth there. First, Nicaraguans seem to feel a “spiritual hunger.” After a long period of conflict in their country, “people are looking for peace in their lives, and the gospel is providing that peace.” Second, “there has also been a succession of strong mission presidents who have developed a good working relationship with the local leaders and members. Basically, the missionaries don’t have to knock on doors very often. They have tremendously large teaching pools because of this relationship.” Third, as a result, “the missionaries have developed a faith that they have the capacity to baptize. They’re not afraid to challenge investigators to prepare for baptism. They have that confidence and faith in the Lord.”

Committed to Serve

Brother Zúniga typifies the commitment to missionary work found among Latter-day Saints. “There are many members willing to help here,” he says. A returned missionary himself, he goes out to work with the full-time



Opposite page: Jeannethe Campos de Espinoza, former Managua stake Relief Society president; Bishop Luís Castrillo, Ciudad Sandino Ward, Managua stake. **Below:** Victor Vallecillo and his son, Victor. **Right:** Cindy Orozco teaches a Young Women class in Managua’s Miraflores Ward. **Bottom right:** Managua stake center.



THE CHURCH IN NICARAGUA

National population: approximately 5,500,000

Managua area: approximately 1,400,000

Members in Nicaragua: more than 52,000

Stakes: 7

Districts: 5

Wards: 44

Branches: 41



missionaries as often as he can. Almost all of his friends have been willing to at least listen to the gospel.

From the time he was a boy, Larry Zúniga wanted to serve a full-time mission. His father, a carpenter, made him a small box for a bank, and Larry began to save money for his mission. But when he was 18, his mother became seriously ill. He had to give up his mission savings and sell his bicycle to help pay for her treatment, but he sacrificed gladly for her.

Nevertheless, through the help of other members and also of relatives, including some who are not members of the Church, he was blessed with the resources he needed to serve a full-time mission. Brother Zúniga’s commitment to missionary work helped bring five of his good friends into the Church, and two of them have also served missions. He continues to work with other friends.





Above: Melchizedek Priesthood holders of the Miraflores Ward meet on the patio of a rented facility while their meetinghouse is remodeled. Top right: Paula Merlo, Chinandega. Right: Sergio Saenz, Managua.

Paula Merlo of the Acome Ward, Chinandega Nicaragua Stake, is another member who never passes up an opportunity for missionary work. If the missionaries ask members to help them find people to teach, she simply does it. Visitors to her home are likely to find a missionary meeting in progress. On one Saturday, for example, she arranged for missionaries to teach a total of 11 investigators in separate group meetings in her home.

Sister Merlo came into the Church 14 years ago after being introduced to the gospel by a daughter who had been baptized. She has a daughter in Panama and a son in Honduras and tries to share the gospel wherever she travels in Central America. Even she is not sure how many people she has helped bring into the Church. If people decline her invitation to hear the missionaries, she invites them to family home evening in her home so they can feel something of the spirit of the gospel.

What motivates her in missionary work? “First, it is a commandment the Lord has given us. And then, after going to the temple, I realized that if we’re not doing anything for our dead or for the living, we’re not doing anything for the Lord.”

Sister Merlo’s stake president, Ernesto Maravilla, holds her up as an example of what he wishes every member would do. President Maravilla works constantly with members and missionaries to help them remember that they have both the commandment and the precious opportunity

to share the gospel. He leads by example, also inviting friends and acquaintances to family home evenings in his own home to introduce them to the gospel.

“I have two roles in missionary work,” he says, “one to supervise and one to motivate members to work at the level of the missionaries.”

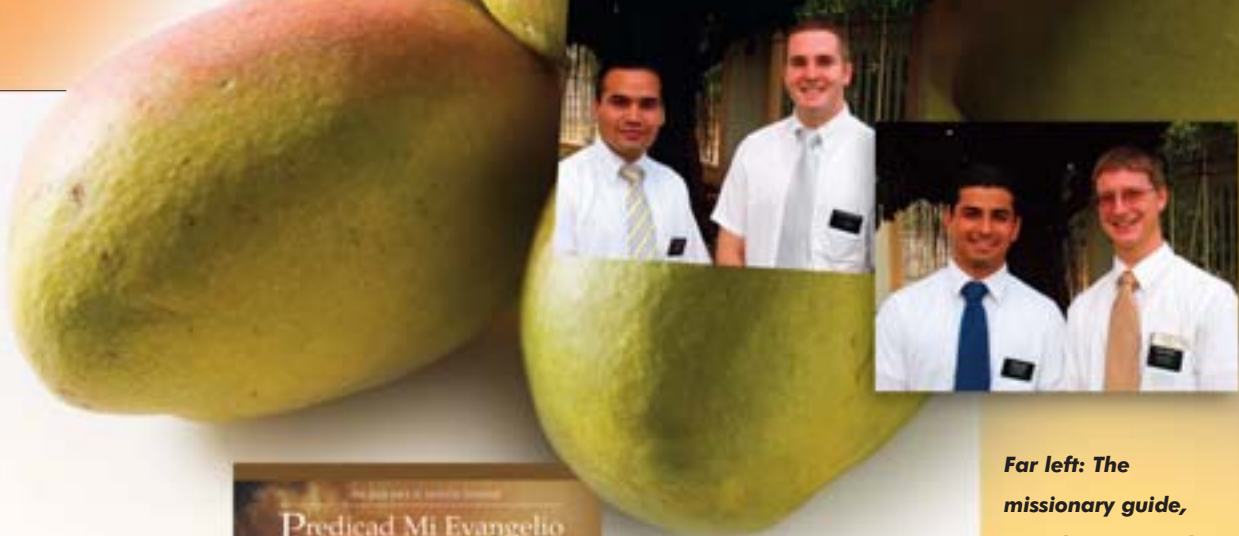
Because of the meaning of his surname (*maravilla* means “marvel” in Spanish), friends joke that he is a marvel in missionary work. A man of good humor, President Maravilla laughs with the joke, but he is serious about missionary work. He meets regularly with missionary zone leaders to coordinate efforts in the stake. He strongly encourages bishops to actively direct missionary work in their wards through ward council meetings and to follow up on assignments. Those councils are “the heart of missionary work in the ward,” the president says. When the meetings are not held, the work slows down. “We have learned this in practice.”

The Chinandega stake averages 45 baptisms per month.

Partners in Teaching

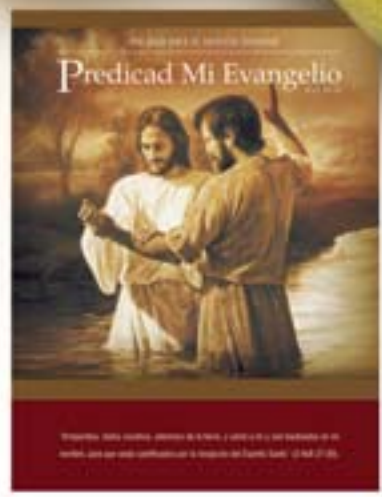
“Everything starts with the planning meeting we have with members,” commented Elder William J. Reano of Waverly, Tennessee, USA, a missionary in the Nicaragua Managua Mission. Elder Reano, who has since finished his mission, and his companion met weekly with members in their area of Managua. Members supplied new missionary referrals or directed the missionaries to someone who could. “We formed a chain of referrals,” Elder Reano said. “I’ve learned that the basis of success in missionary work is this planning.”

His companion, Elder Rodrigo León of Costa Rica, attributes their success in teaching both to the experience of his companion and to *Preach My Gospel*, the approach to teaching that missionaries are now using. “That approach is 100 percent effective when it is used



Far left: The missionary guide, *Preach My Gospel*. Above: Elders Rodrigo León and William J. Reano. Above left: Elders Jonathan Estrada and Joshua Kasteler. Below: Silvia Zamuria Vanegas, Granada.

correctly,” Elder León says. Success breeds success, Elder Reano adds; members who see regular baptisms want their friends to have the opportunity to learn about the gospel too. Elder León notes that many members bring investigators to Church meetings each week.



other congratulations and speak of new opportunities.

Testimonies at Work

The enthusiasm of the missionaries is infectious.

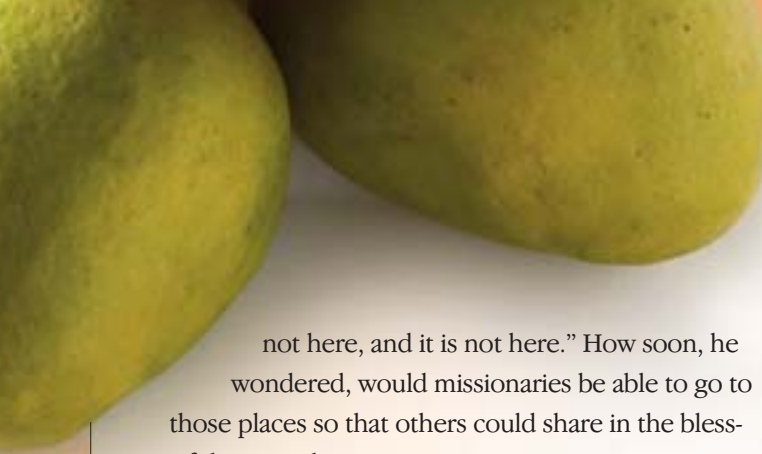
Victor Vallecillo is a co-worker of Pedro Aviles, president of the Managua

Elder Joshua Kasteler of Murray, Utah, says missionaries find it is important to help members know they are necessary to missionary work. He and his companion, Elder Jonathan Estrada of Santa Ana, El Salvador, try to help leaders and members know that the missionaries care about what is happening in the ward. They work with the ward after a baptism to help the new members become assimilated and receive callings. This is important for both the new members and the ward, Elder Estrada points out, because in serving, people are nourished by the word of God.

The enthusiasm and love of the missionaries for the people they teach comes through strongly at a mission-wide meeting in Managua with their president, Ricardo Valladares. There is a spirit of gladness among the missionaries as they receive instruction and hear of successes in the work. When transfers are announced, no one says, “Oh, Elder, too bad you are going to *that* place.” They offer each

Nicaragua Stake. When Victor was seeking religious truth, President Aviles gave him a Book of Mormon. Brother Vallecillo feels so joyful about the gospel that since his baptism in November 2004 he has adopted the habit of inviting friends to hear the gospel, and he often goes out with missionaries to teach. His wife and two children have the spirit of missionary work too. One night, Brother Vallecillo recalls, his teenage son was studying a map of Nicaragua, looking at the northern part of the country where Brother Vallecillo grew up. “Papa,” his son said, pointing to places on the map, “the gospel is not here, and it is





not here, and it is not here.” How soon, he wondered, would missionaries be able to go to those places so that others could share in the blessings of the gospel?

Silvia Zamuria Vanegas of the Granada Branch, Granada Nicaragua District, recalls, “When I was baptized, I made a promise to the Lord that one day I would teach other people because what I had found brought me so much joy.” In May 2005, four years after her baptism, she left to serve a mission in Guatemala. But she had been sharing the gospel with friends and working with the sister missionaries long before her call. Sister Zamuria quotes a favorite saying that calls on those who can light a candle to share the light with people around them.

Raúl Díaz Hernández of El Coyolar Branch, Leon Nicaragua District, grew up in the Church and has been preparing to serve a mission since his childhood. He has worked with the missionaries and begun to study *Preach My Gospel*. It is a privilege to share his testimony with anyone, he says, but he has a more personal reason for helping the missionaries teach his brother-in-law. He would like his sister to be able to enjoy the blessings of the temple with her family.

The Influence of Members

José Contreras, president of the Masaya Nicaragua Stake, estimates that more than three-quarters of convert baptisms in his stake come about through the assistance of members who want to share the joy they found in the gospel. But even with recent growth, President Contreras says, “we need to do more to take the missionaries out to people we may not have thought of yet.” The president and his counselors are not only helping members develop their own ability to share the gospel, but they are also accompanying some of them as they go out with the missionaries to teach.

President Contreras keeps track of the rate of activity for members in the stake, and he is concerned about those who are not enjoying the blessings of the gospel right now. How to reach those members? He favors a basic approach:

teach them again the simple doctrines they learned from the missionaries—the pure doctrines of Christ. When they remember these, he says, they will want the promised blessings. Efforts to retain them are efforts to bless them.

Jeannethe Campos de Espinoza, former president of the Relief Society in the Managua stake, admires the creativity of one visiting teacher who helped activate a woman she visited. The visiting teacher asked the sister to prepare a message from the Book of Mormon to share with her visiting teachers; this helped the woman discover what she was missing spiritually. The same approach has been used to activate others as well. Sometimes Relief Society leaders also ask to hold small group meetings in the homes of less-active members to remind them of gospel blessings.

Sister Espinoza, baptized in 2001, has a strong desire to share the gospel with others “so they can taste this beautiful fruit.” It gives her pain, she says, to see people wandering in paths that lead them away from happiness.

Sharing the gospel so others can taste the “beautiful fruit” seems to be a theme in most Church meetings in Nicaragua.

President Aviles of the Managua stake was one of the first stake presidents in the country, and he has been an eyewitness to the Church’s growth over the past several years. His is a country burdened by great poverty, a country where the pull of old traditions and temptations is very strong. But it is a country where Church facilities are often unable to keep up with growth because of missionary work and because retention has improved. President Aviles knows how the Holy Ghost and loving members can touch people’s lives.

Speaking at a ward conference in Managua, he takes up the theme of reaching out to others so they may taste that sweet fruit of the gospel. With faith, he says, members can overcome the challenges the adversary puts in our paths. “We ought to move forward so that we can be perfected.”

“We need to be strengthened in righteousness,” he adds. “We want to be blessed for doing good.” Let the Saints be drawn together in unity, he pleads; let unity be our strength. This is the way for the spiritual growth in Nicaragua to continue. ■

Serving and Supporting Each Sister



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

Blessings of Belonging to Relief

Society: Relief Society helps sisters feel needed, included, valued, and loved regardless of their personal circumstances. Sisters in Relief Society support each other as they share their faith, friendship, and love.

How Can Relief Society Help Us Feel Valued and Loved?

Mosiah 18:21: “He commanded them that . . . they should look forward with one eye, . . . having their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another.”



Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president: “Every time we watch over one another, godlike qualities of love, patience, kindness, generosity, and spiritual commitment fill the souls of those we visit and enlarge our souls as well. In the process, we honor our covenants. I see legions of faithful sisters around the world going forward on the Lord’s errands, performing simple yet significant service” (“Visiting Teaching: The Heart and Soul of Relief Society” [address given at the fall 2003 open house]).

Kathleen H. Hughes, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency: “We sometimes hear women say that they don’t feel the love of the Lord. But perhaps they would feel more of His love if they looked for His hand in the actions of those who care for them. It may be a member of their branch or ward, a neighbor, or even a stranger who blesses them and manifests Christ’s love” (“What Greater Goodness Can We Know: Christlike Friends,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 75).

How Do We Serve and Support One Another through Relief Society?

1 Thessalonians 5:11: “Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “Who can measure the joy that has

come into the lives of . . . women as they have mingled together? . . .

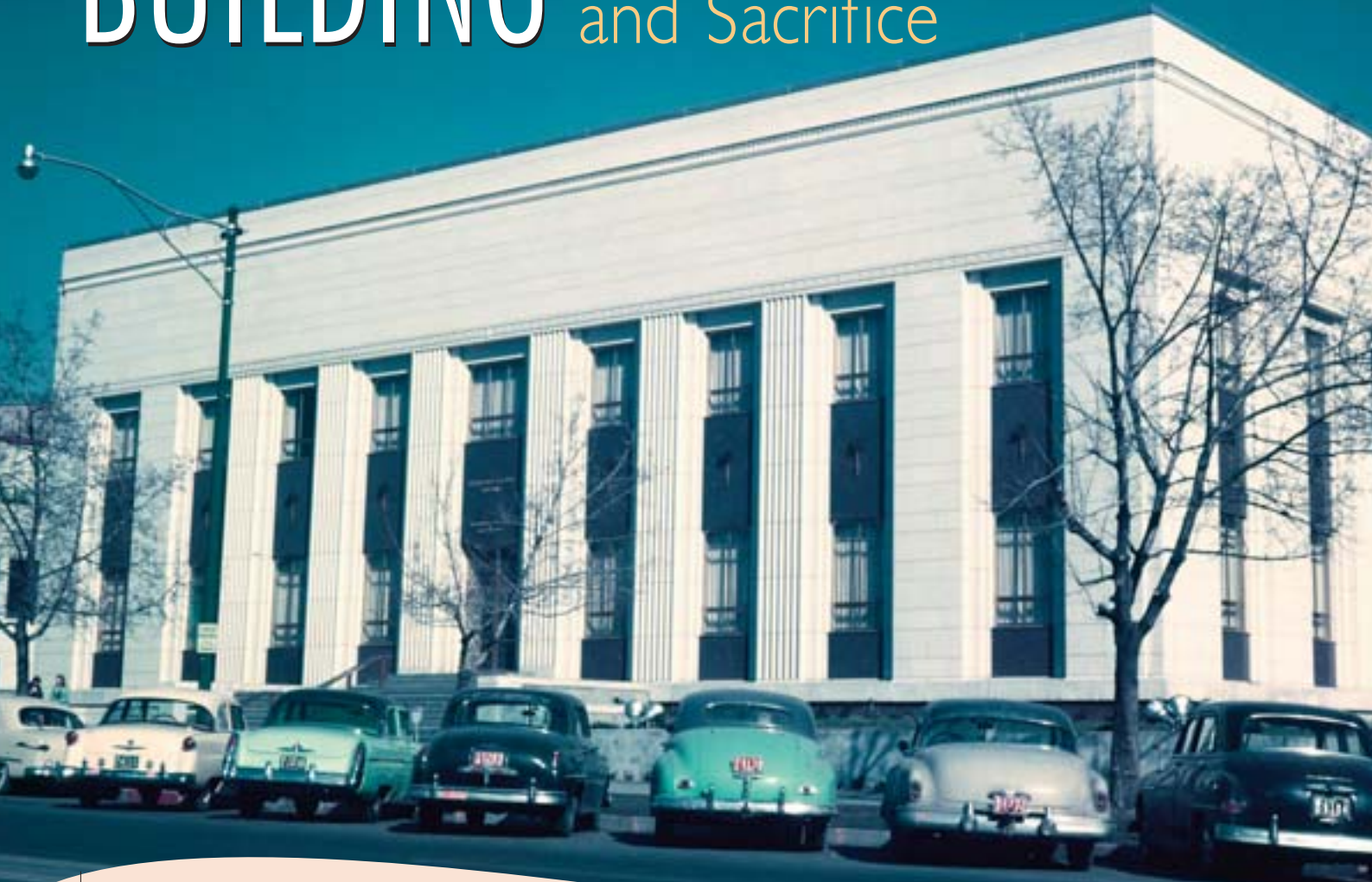
“Who . . . can fathom the uncountable acts of charity that have been performed, the food that has been put on barren tables, the faith that has been nurtured in desperate hours of illness, the wounds that have been bound up, the pains that have been ameliorated by loving hands and quiet and reassuring words, the comfort that has been extended in times of death and consequent loneliness?

“Lucy Mack Smith, mother of the Prophet, in speaking to the sisters in Nauvoo, said, ‘We must cherish one another, watch over one another, comfort one another and gain instruction that we may all sit down in heaven together.’ . . . Women of the Church have not had to wait to sit together in heaven to taste the sweet fruit of the kind of activities she described. They have experienced much of heaven on earth as in life they have cherished one another, comforted one another, and instructed one another” (“Ambitious to Do Good,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1992, 4–5).

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “The Church is not a place where perfect people gather to say perfect things, or have perfect thoughts, or have perfect feelings. The Church is a place where imperfect people gather to provide encouragement, support, and service to each other. . . . We are here with the same purpose: to learn to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves” (“The Virtue of Kindness,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 28). ■

THE RELIEF SOCIETY BUILDING

A Symbol of Service and Sacrifice

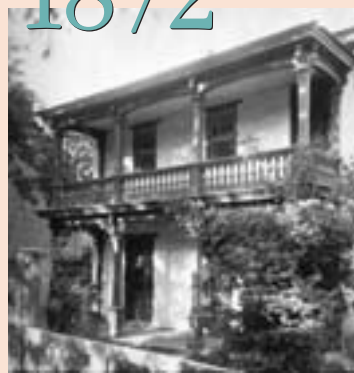


PAST OFFICES OF THE RELIEF SOCIETY



1847–71: General Relief Society leaders in Salt Lake City worked out of makeshift quarters. From 1868 to 1921, however, local Relief Society units had separate, serviceable buildings near their meetinghouses, such as this one (left) built for the 19th Ward Relief Society and located on Capitol Hill in Salt Lake City. These small buildings were an important part of life in many towns and communities.

1872



1872–1910: The home on 243 South State (left) of Emmeline B. Wells—editor of the *Woman's Exponent* (the longest running women's newspaper west of the Mississippi)—did double duty as the office of the newspaper and the general Relief Society for more than 30 years.

BY HEIDI S. SWINTON, Relief Society General Board,
AND LARENE GAUNT, Church Magazines

Fifty years ago, on October 3, 1956, President David O. McKay dedicated the Relief Society Building. It still stands prominently in the shadow of the Salt Lake Temple and is adorned with bronze sheaves of wheat, emblematic of the Relief Society's commitment to caring for the poor. President McKay offered the dedicatory prayer from the new structure as the sisters gathered in the Tabernacle and Assembly Hall on nearby Temple Square to hear his prophetic words.

"As we dedicate this edifice," he said, "we also dedicate our lives to Thy service and pray for divine assistance in all our efforts to serve Thee by serving Thy children."¹

His prayer has been answered time and again through the work of auxiliary leaders and officers who now occupy the building. Cheryl Lant, Primary general president, affirms his words when she says, "We know the work is not about us. We are here to bless the women of the Church, to bless the children, and to move the kingdom forward."

Indeed, when the three auxiliary general presidents—Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society; Susan Tanner, Young Women; and Cheryl Lant, Primary—describe working in the Relief Society Building, they use words like *love*, *heart*, and *spirit*. Clearly this building is much more to them than the offices, meeting rooms, and reception halls.

"A wonderful spirit of love and cooperation abounds here," says Sister Parkin. "We are blessed to work side by

side, trusting in one another as we fulfill our commitment to the Lord."

Sister Tanner enjoys the gracious boardroom where portraits of the previous general presidents of all three auxiliaries (including her mother, former Relief Society president Barbara W. Winder) hang on the wall. "I feel like they care about what is happening here. We feel honored to work within walls that speak of the heritage of women who have been so valiant."

For Latter-day Saint women, this building is more than an office building; it is a place where women can gather, learn from educational displays, and hear the testimonies of auxiliary leaders. General Relief Society president Belle S. Spafford said at the building's dedication that it "represents the spirit and character of Latter-day Saint womanhood in its strength, its beauty, and its usefulness."² It stands today, as it did when it was dedicated, as an example of service and sacrifice.

Donating in the Spirit of Love

In the years before the First Presidency announced that ward and stake budgets would pay for all activities on the local level, each auxiliary had its own budget and raised its own funds. Relief Society sisters paid yearly dues, and local Relief Society units held annual bazaars selling homemade items. Similar activities took place in the Young Women Mutual Improvement Association and in the Primary. Such was the situation in October 1947 when Relief Society general president Belle S. Spafford asked all

HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE ARCHIVES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

1910



1910–56: The Relief Society general officers moved in 1910 into the second floor of the Bishop's Building, located directly east of the Salt Lake Temple. They donated the money they had raised 10 years earlier in conjunction with the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association and the Primary toward the building of the Bishop's Building.



1947: With the request for donations from Relief Society sisters, the Relief Society general presidency—(from left) Belle S. Spafford, president; Marianne C. Sharp, first counselor; and Velma N. Simonsen, second counselor—also revealed an architect's rendering of the proposed Relief Society Building.

SACRIFICING TO DONATE

More than 123,000 women made a \$5 donation to the Relief Society Building. The stories of sacrifice abound, and the name of each donor was recorded. Copies of the books containing these names are located on the first floor of the Relief Society Building. A sampling of those who donated are pictured at right.



Millie Shields (left) and her daughter Wanda Naylor (right) sold crocheted and embroidered pillowcases for 5¢ to 15¢ each.



Agnes Kunz Dansie, grandmother of Bonnie Parkin, wrote a newspaper column and sold eggs.



Mary Mitton Kennedy sewed a beautiful child's dress.

Relief Society sisters to donate \$5 and each stake Relief Society to donate one-half of their funds for one year to the building of the proposed Relief Society Building.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: "I was pleased to see that my wife paid her \$5. That represented, as we've calculated it, \$50 in today's money. . . . To think that over 100,000 women contributed \$5 was a most significant and wonderful thing in my judgment."³

Sister Parkin's grandmother, Agnes Kunz Dansie, wrote a column for the local newspaper and sold eggs from her chickens. "With that little bit of money," says Sister Parkin, "she contributed \$5 to the Relief Society Building fund in



Dolores Torres (front row, second from left) invited President Belle Spafford (front row, second from right) and other general, stake, and ward Relief Society leaders to her home for a luncheon in their honor.

the name of each woman in her family and each granddaughter."

Mary Mitton Kennedy, now 99 years old, says, "We were having somewhat of a struggle to make ends meet, so I decided to do something to earn that money. I had a sister with five daughters, and I loved to sew for them. It was natural that I decided to make a beautiful little dress and sell it. This paid my donation to the fund."⁴

I Will Go and Do

Dolores Torres served as Relief Society president in the Salt Lake Mexican Branch. At first she felt that



Left: A Meissen vase donated by sisters in the Swiss-Austrian Mission.

Right: Singing Mothers perform in the Tabernacle at the annual general Relief Society conference on September 30, 1948. A replica of the planned Relief Society Building is in the background.

1947





Thella Hunter Fagg gave extra music lessons and scrubbed floors.



Ida Jacobsen Farnes saved a little money each day from the milk she sold.



Leone Layton contributed \$40 in her name and the names of seven of her women relatives and friends.



Conrad Gertsch Jr. donated \$5 in the name of his wife, Elise, who died before the request for donations.

the sisters in her ward were too poor to meet the goal. Then she considered that this request had come from her Church leaders. She remembered the story of Nephi when he said, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 3:7). Sister Torres wrote to Belle Spafford and said, "I don't know how we can do it. But the First Presidency has authorized it. If they authorize it, it is right. If it is right, we can do it."⁵ The whole branch rallied behind the challenge, and the Salt Lake Mexican Branch was the first branch in the Church to meet the goal.

Gifts Instead of Money

European sisters desired to contribute also, but in the years just after World War II, laws in many of their countries prohibited sending money. Instead, women gathered money on behalf of their mission and purchased fine art representations of their cultures to adorn the new Relief Society Building. For example, as Hermine Weber Cziep searched for something that would represent those in

the Swiss-Austrian Mission, she found an exquisite Meissen vase (page 56), 30 inches high and ornately covered with figures and blossoms, that once had been displayed in a German castle. When she noticed it was dated 1830, the date of the organization of the Church, she knew she had located just the right gift.

Other gifts included purchased and handmade items such as a carved table from Hawaii, dolls from Japan, lace from Belgium, oil paintings, herb-dyed tapestries, and silver sets. They came from the Netherlands, Argentina, Denmark, Tonga, Africa, France, and elsewhere.

Seeing these gifts, some of which are displayed in the Relief Society building, Sister Lant says, "It is humbling to know we are building upon a great and noble past." ■

NOTES

1. "Dedicatory Prayer of the Relief Society Building," *Relief Society Magazine*, Dec. 1956, 789.
2. "We Built as One," *Relief Society Magazine*, Dec. 1956, 801.
3. Transcript of the DVD of the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the remodeled Relief Society Building on March 17, 2006.
4. Letter from Mary Mitton Kennedy to Colleen Hinckley, May 31, 2006.
5. Quoted in Belle S. Spafford, "The Spirit of the Gospel, the Soul of Relief Society," *Relief Society Magazine*, Mar. 1949, 149.



1953

Left: President David O. McKay (left) watches Belle Spafford turn a shovelful of dirt at the groundbreaking on October 1, 1953. A year later a large copper box was placed in the cornerstone. Among the contents of the box were the names of all those who had donated to the building.

Right: On March 17, 2006, 164 years after the organization of the Relief Society in Nauvoo, Illinois, President Gordon B. Hinckley and Sister Bonnie D. Parkin led the celebration at the opening of the newly remodeled Relief Society Building in Salt Lake City.



2006

I Tossed Your Name...

NAME WITHHELD

Your example of Christ-like love continues to influence my life today.

You may not remember me, but I will always remember you.

When I was a young woman, my husband and I moved to a farm near yours. Eventually you were assigned to be my visiting teacher.

Although I was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we did not attend church and were definitely not receptive to visits from Church members. When you and your companion first tried to visit me, I made it abundantly clear, using coarse language and threats, that you should never return.

Your short note soon arrived in the mail. You asked for my forgiveness if you had offended me and wrote that you would just like to be good neighbors. You included your name and phone number and told me to call if I ever needed a hand. I chucked the note into a corner with the junk mail, ignoring a small twinge of guilt. My husband and I kept to ourselves, and you did not visit again.





Aside

In late spring I called you. My five-month-old baby had rolled off the bed onto a hardwood floor. I was very worried because my little one wasn't acting as she should. I did not drive and had no car. I couldn't reach my husband, and all my family and friends lived more than an hour away. Your note still happened to be lying on a pile of papers in the corner.

I was blunt when I called you. "The baby needs to go to the doctor immediately. Can you take us?" I asked. Whatever you were doing that day, you left it and took us to the doctor, who treated the baby for a skull fracture.

You brushed off the sacrifice of time and resources with a simple, "That's what neighbors are for." I never forgot your service.

Periodically after that, you offered me rides to town. Kind and helpful, you always said it was no trouble. One afternoon after a shopping trip, you asked if it would be OK if we stopped on the way out of town to pick up some things before you took me home. You seemed hesitant as you explained that the stop would be at the church. You also assured me that your errand could be done later if I would rather not go there. I said it would be fine.

When we arrived at the church you told me I did not need to go in, but I followed you into the building. Despite distancing myself from religion, I was still part of a large, close-knit family that was active in the Church. I often helped my mother with Relief Society functions, so I began to help clean up after this one, too.

Although I attended some Relief Society activities with you after that, I never did allow you to visit me at home, nor did I attend church. A year or so later we moved away.

I've forgotten your name, but I've always remembered how you made me feel. Many years have passed, and I now marvel at the kindness you showed me. Your friendliness exemplified the love of the Savior. I trace the beginning of my personal testimony to your example.

For about 10 years after I knew you, I continued to avoid Church contacts. I would say or do whatever was necessary to discourage Church members from returning to my home.

But other influences were affecting me. We moved often and for a time lived in a very large city. An older woman in my apartment complex befriended me. She was helpful, concerned, and sincere like you—like my family. And like my own family, she included me in her prayers every day.

When I eventually wanted more in my life, I read many religious books, including the Book of Mormon. I did this privately. No one besides God knew that I was watching and observing, reading and studying, and praying about it all. Eventually I asked my older neighbor her thoughts about religion. I felt a strange delight when she told me she was a Latter-day Saint. She was very surprised to learn that I was too. I knew I had sensed something unique in the family I had grown up in; it was not until I also felt and observed it in others like you and her that I realized its value.

I try now to follow your examples. The love and kindness you showed me are at the core of the doctrine of the Church. Thank you for not hardening your heart against me. Thank you for loving me even when I deliberately set out to offend you. Thank you for being forgiving and kind instead of seeking revenge. Thank you for your simple, selfless example of Christlike love. ■

UNFORGETTABLE

FAMILY HOME EVENINGS



As members worldwide testify, memories of a special family home evening can uplift us, guide us, and even stay with us for a lifetime.

Julio Cesar Merlos of the Arlington Texas Stake writes: “I remember when my brothers and sisters and I were growing up. We were new members of the Church, and our family didn’t have many financial resources, but we had faith in the gospel. My father set the example for us by his scripture reading. For him, family home evening was an opportunity to teach us what he himself was learning.

“One of my father’s family home evening lessons really made an impression on me. That was the time he taught us about agency. I remember the words my father spoke: ‘I want to give you a piece of advice to remember for the rest of your lives. When you are tempted to disobey the Word of Wisdom or the law of chastity or any other commandment of God, think about whom you are sinning against. Is it God, the Church, your parents, your family, or yourself? I want to tell you that the one you are sinning against the most is yourself.’

“As I grew up, tests came to me that were as serious as the ones my parents warned me about. I tried to remember the advice my father gave us that night. Twenty-five years after hearing my father’s counsel, it still fortifies me greatly and makes me stronger. Now my children are hearing the same advice from me.”

A Life-Changing Home Evening

Edevanir Leopoldino of the São Paulo Brazil São Miguel Paulista Stake remembers a family home evening that changed his life. He was 16 years old and not a member of the Church when he stopped at his friend Leandro’s house to see if Leandro wanted to attend a local dance. His friend instead invited Edevanir to share in his family home evening. Not sure what to expect, Edevanir reluctantly agreed to take part.

Of the evening, Edevanir writes, “It was great!”

Leandro's brother was going on a mission, so the family home evening was a going-away party. Edevanir recalls: "The Spirit of the Lord touched me in such a way that I felt a warmth inside me so strongly that I didn't know what to do, and I felt a joy so grand that I could no longer feel alone."

"After that family home evening I began the missionary discussions and soon was baptized. The following year I was called to serve in the Brazil Porto Alegre Mission [later the Brazil Santa Maria Mission]. Just eight years after that special family home evening with Leandro, I am now sharing family home evenings with my own family."

At Peace in a Crowd

A family home evening doesn't need to be at home to be memorable. Lyubov Salimova of the Donetsk Ukraine District shares a special family home evening she experienced while vacationing at the seashore. Her sister, who lived nearby, had invited her to family home evening at 8:00 p.m. "Much to my surprise, however, long before the appointed hour, my sister met me at the seashore. 'It won't work out at home,' she explained. She tried to smile, but the smile came out wry and forced. I felt that she was doing her best not to start crying. She was having problems at home. Her suggestion to have family home evening right there on the seashore was surprising in its absurdity. All around, people were walking, sitting, sunbathing, and laughing. Nevertheless, I agreed."

"We placed our towels across from each other and lay down on them. We bowed our heads and prayed. My sister had the July 2002 *Liabona*, in which general conference talks were

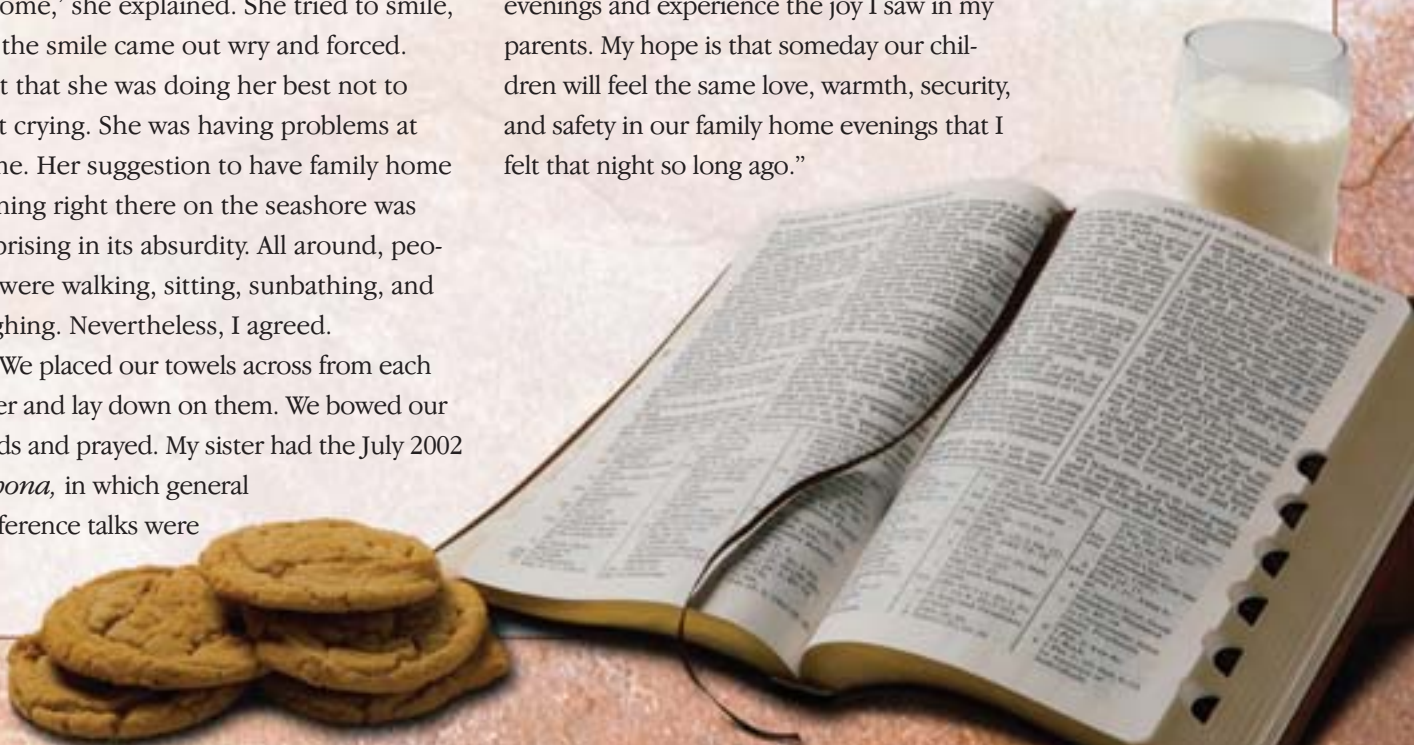
published. She began reading a talk by President Gordon B. Hinckley. It seemed that each of his words explained to us how to conduct ourselves in relation to other family members. As we read the words of our living prophet, I saw that my sister had grown calm, having found support in the Holy Ghost, which was liberally poured out on us. We felt like beloved daughters of God, able to go further in order to fight for good. Our souls were at peace."

Wanting This Happiness

Carla Santivañez Castro of the Lima Perú Surco Stake writes: "I remember one family home evening in particular. We four children were very attentive to the lesson Papa shared with us. We participated in wonderful games. We not only had a lot of fun, but we learned about the Savior. The thing I remember most about that night was seeing my parents so happy as they enjoyed this time with us, their children. Many times I have remembered the joyful feelings of that night."

"Now my beloved husband and I have the opportunity to hold our own family home evenings and experience the joy I saw in my parents. My hope is that someday our children will feel the same love, warmth, security, and safety in our family home evenings that I felt that night so long ago."

Opposite page: The Velasco family of Manila, Philippines, gathers for family home evening. Next page: The Pardo family of Santiago, Chile, enjoys a game as part of home evening.



PHOTOGRAPHS OF FAMILIES BY ADAM C. OLSON

Family Home Evening Alone

Berengere Caviale of the Nancy France Stake writes: “A few weeks ago, during an interview with one of the members of the stake presidency, I was given the challenge to hold regular family home evenings. Since I am single, I did not feel it was necessary to have family home evening, but I did commit to trying it as an experiment. The following week I put my commitment to the test, although I was somewhat skeptical. I began with a prayer and then sang a few hymns. From that moment I was able to feel the Spirit very strongly. Then I read a passage in the Bible about the life of Christ. I read it, wrote down some comments, and then decided to follow His example. I ended with several hymns, which lifted my spirit. During those 45 minutes of family home evening, I was able to hold on to a bit of heaven!”

Trying to Inspire a Six-Year-Old

A challenge faced by some families is how to reach and inspire young children during family home evening. Christine Carter of the Syracuse New York Stake writes: “I recently attended the temple to receive my own



TAKE TIME FOR HOME EVENING

“Draw your children around about you. Teach them, guide them, and guard them. There was never a time when we needed so much the strength and the solidarity of the home.”

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973), “Follow the Leadership of the Church,” Ensign, July 1973, 95.

endowment, and I wanted to hold a family home evening about the importance of the temple. I had prepared well, but my six-year-old son, Tyler, was inattentive and disruptive. I felt discouraged and ready to cancel the lesson.

“Prompted by the Spirit, I looked my son in the eyes and asked him, ‘Do you know that attending the temple is the most important thing you need to do?’ The impact of those

words was incredible. He was sobered and became interested in learning about the temple. We marveled over the pictures of the temples and wondered about the mansion Jesus Christ is preparing for our return to Him. We put together a puzzle of the temple and then did it again because we had so much fun. We sang ‘I Love to See the Temple.’ Later, Tyler decorated our hallway with pictures of different temples. He also decided to make a temple switch plate cover for the hall light, complete with his own drawing of the Salt Lake Temple. Now every time we turn on the light we can remember that the temple lights our way to return home to the Lord.

“I am so grateful that the Spirit guided me during our lesson and that I did not give up on teaching my son of the importance of the temple.” ■



Let's Try Again!

BY MARIANNE MONSON-BURTON

When our son Nathan turned two and a half, we began using occasional time-outs as a consequence for breaking family rules. I became concerned, however, by the negative feelings my son displayed when a time-out concluded. He often seemed sad and discouraged. As I prayed for a way to make the experience more positive, I felt impressed to say the phrase “Let’s try again.”

After the next time-out, I took my son’s hand and said with enthusiasm, “Let’s try again!” Suddenly the focus shifted away from his negative behavior and centered instead on the opportunity he had to start over. I was amazed at the difference this approach made. Instead of coming out of time-out feeling punished, he was eager to make better choices.

I soon started using the phrase in a multitude of situations. I found myself inviting Nathan in lots of ways: “Let’s try again! This time we can do better. This time we can be gentle” or “This time we can be kind.”

The saying became such a motivator for my son that during a time-out he often called to me, “Mommy, I am ready to try again!”

As I pondered the dramatic effect this simple phrase had on my son, I considered the power contained in the words “Let’s try again!” I realized that God, the

Father of us all, does not want us to dwell hopelessly on the mistakes we have made. Instead, He invites us to sincerely repent and focus on a brighter future where we can improve each day.

To make repentance possible, God was even willing to offer the life of His Beloved Son. His promise is: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

Watching my son’s renewed determination to do better, I felt a surge of gratitude for a loving Father in Heaven, who is merciful to His children when they repent. I also felt a deep appreciation for the Savior, whose infinite Atonement makes it possible for each of us to say, “Let’s try again!” ■



WATCHMEN *of the* LORD

BY ELDER GARY J. COLEMAN
Of the Seventy



Just as a “watchman upon the tower” was able to protect his people because of the perspective his position afforded, so do the prophets and apostles protect us.

One of the great blessings of membership in the restored Church is the opportunity to be led by prophets and apostles of the Lord, just as members of the ancient Church were led. When I was a new convert many years ago, I noticed that my friends and colleagues in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were not bashful in declaring their desire to “follow the Brethren.” I came to know they meant following the 15 men whom the Lord had designated as prophets, seers, and revelators and as His special witnesses in the latter days. Anciently

these men were referred to as “[watchmen] unto the house of Israel!” (Ezekiel 33:7) and “watchmen upon [Jerusalem’s] walls” (Isaiah 62:6). “Therefore,” the Lord declared, “thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me” (Ezekiel 33:7).

In the latter days the Lord gave a parable in which a nobleman told his servant to “set watchmen round about . . . , and build a tower, that one may overlook the land round about, to be a watchman upon the tower” (D&C 101:45). Just as a “watchman upon the tower” was able to protect his people because of the



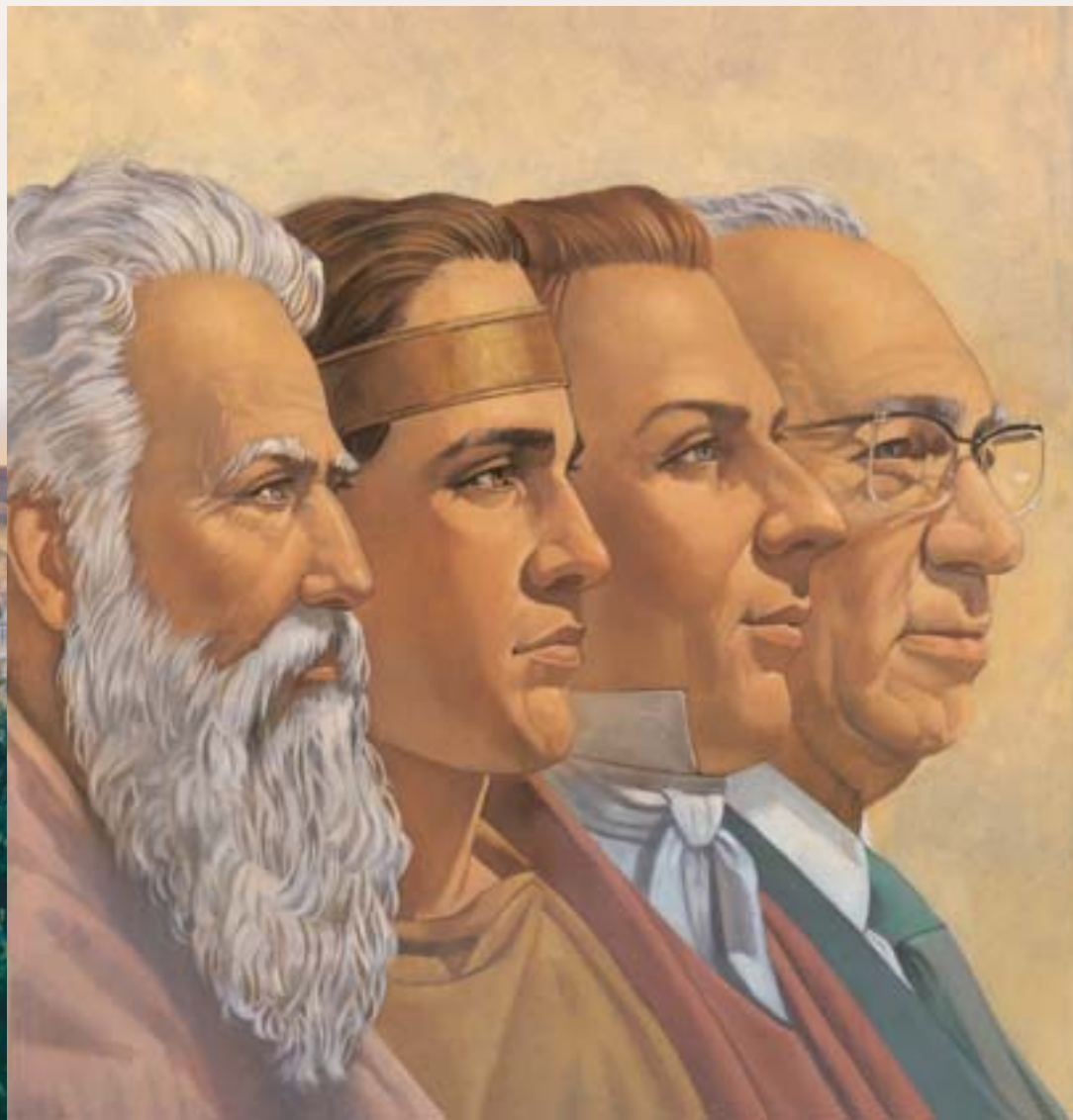
perspective his position afforded, so do the prophets and apostles protect us.

Personal Experiences

My appreciation for the vision, insight, revelatory nature, and far-reaching discernment of our living prophets has been heightened because of personal experiences I have had high in the lookout towers of U.S. national forests. Immediately following our sealing in the Cardston Alberta Temple, my wife and I journeyed to northern Idaho to begin my assignment on Anthony Peak in the St. Joe National

Forest. We were to be “watchmen upon the tower” throughout the summer, watching for fires started accidentally by careless campers and hikers, prompted by sparks from heavy machinery or hotboxes on railroad cars, or ignited by hundreds of lightning strikes from passing storms. We were housed high above the ground in a 20-by-20-foot cabin with four glassed walls positioned upon four stout legs.

Prior to taking up residence in the lookout tower, we paid a visit to the president of the St. Maries Branch, some 35 miles from the tower, and asked for his counsel concerning our responsibilities as Church members living in his branch.



One of the great blessings of membership in the restored Church is the opportunity to be led by prophets and apostles of the Lord, just as members of the ancient Church were led.



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

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

1. Take the family to a hill or to a higher level of the home for family home evening. Invite family members to look around and discuss what they see. What are their advantages of vision? How could they be of aid if an emergency arose below? Relate how Elder Coleman's experience in the Idaho mountains gave him a new perspective on following Church leaders. Remind family members that the prophets and apostles have a better perspective and serve as our watchmen.

2. If the family has young children, have them draw an interpretation of the second paragraph of the article. Discuss dangers watchmen see and invite them to add these to their drawings. Who are the latter-day watchmen? Bear testimony of how prophets have prepared and protected you from the dangers in the world today.

with the Lord, and a desire to honor the Lord and His prophets and apostles and to endure to the end. We enjoyed 100 percent attendance at all our meetings, even though we had no high council visitors to check up on us all summer! We determined to do as the prophet Joshua taught his people: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

They Have Seen the Terrain

I was no stranger to mountain work and firefighting prior to this experience. When we lived on the tower as "watchmen" over our district, we could literally survey for

miles the conditions and locations where I had worked in that district during the previous two summers.

Similarly, the prophets and apostles are "watchmen upon the tower" during these latter days. They bring to their assignment many years of experience on the pathways of the Church worldwide. They have seen the terrain, and they have walked the hills and valleys of life in their responsibilities as fathers, husbands, students, young

We did not have access to Church services due to our isolation and professional duties each day while manning the tower. He gave us permission and encouragement to hold all of our Church services and regular member activities as a couple on the lookout tower.

As each Sunday came along that summer, we prepared our worship services, following the commandments of the Lord and counsel of the Brethren to attend church, nourish one another in the gospel, and faithfully renew our covenants. Priesthood meeting was held for the one priesthood holder in attendance; Relief Society meeting was prepared by my dear wife; Sunday School lessons were implemented, with each of us helping to give the lessons; and sacrament meeting was always a sacred opportunity to sing, pray, and bless and pass the sacrament in memory of the Savior's Atonement. We followed this by sharing talks and testimonies with each other. We had everything we needed to be active members of the Church: the scriptures, the manuals, family home evening lessons, our faith, our obedience to our eternal covenants

marrieds, participants in Church callings, and professionals in various pursuits of life. They man the Lord's watchtowers with vision and with the ability to give direction and counsel on countless matters that arise throughout the kingdom of God here on the earth. We remember the Lord's counsel to the prophet Amos: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

The Lord tells these watchmen on the tower what they need to teach and how they should help prepare Church members for storms and difficulties (see D&C 115:6). They see far into the distance and thus make warnings and preparations even for those who haven't seen the storm clouds beginning to form. These watchmen counsel us to keep the Sabbath day holy, study the scriptures regularly,

pray daily, avoid the pitfalls of immorality, honor parents, be respectful to spouse and children, serve God and humankind, keep our covenants, follow the example of Jesus Christ in our daily living, and keep all the other commandments that will help us stay on gospel paths during these troubled times.

Just as the prophets of the Old Testament guided the covenant people through generations of ancient times, so do our prophets guide us during our mortal journey in these latter days. We welcome the opportunity to heed these watchmen on the tower, for we know that in following their counsel, we are following the Lord. "My word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled," the Savior tells us; "whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38). ■



As each Sunday came along that summer, we prepared our worship services, following the commandments of the Lord and counsel of the Brethren to attend church and nourish one another in the gospel.

Heart Condition

By Raquel Pedraza de Brosio

I had just started a new job and was trying to save money to serve a mission. As time went on, new employees were hired, and I was assigned to train a young woman about my age.

Maria (name has been changed), my new co-worker, was obviously concerned with her appearance. She conformed to the popular trend of wearing short skirts, dark makeup, and bold hairstyles, and she also had developed some bad habits, such as smoking. Despite our differences, Maria and I worked well together. She was pleasant to talk with, and time passed quickly when we were together.

One day at work she asked, “Raquel, do you ever go dancing?” I told her I attended dances at my church. She asked which church it was, and I explained that it is called The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and that its members are often called Mormons. Maria told me she had heard of the Mormons, but she didn’t know any of our beliefs. I was excited to share more about the Church with her, and I offered her a copy of the Book of Mormon, which she was happy to accept.

In time I invited her to attend the

branch closest to her home. I was quite surprised when she accepted my invitation. We decided to meet at the train station the following Sunday so we could go to the meetings together.

Sunday arrived, and as my train approached the station where we were to meet, I peered out the window, looking for the Maria I knew from work. To my surprise, I saw instead a young lady whose skirt was modest and whose hair and makeup were all that could be asked

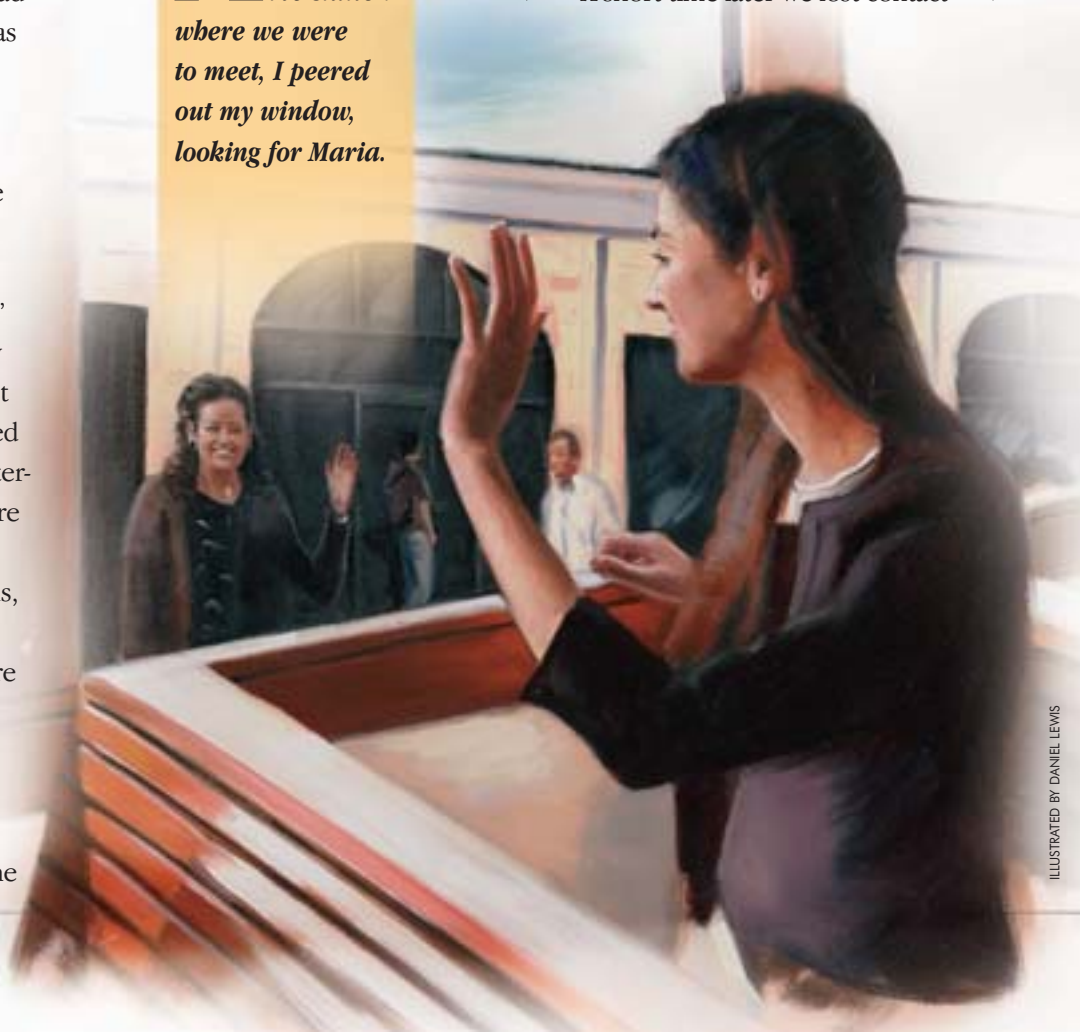
of a Latter-day Saint young woman. But it was Maria!

I confess that I had doubted she would be there waiting for me, and I also doubted that the gospel would produce any changes in her life—inside or out.

We greeted each other and walked the 15 minutes to church. We went to Relief Society first, where Maria wanted to answer the questions and participate in everything the teacher asked us to do. She also enjoyed Sunday School and sacrament meeting. I introduced her to the sister missionaries, who invited her to hear the lessons, and Maria readily agreed.

A short time later we lost contact

As my train approached the station where we were to meet, I peered out my window, looking for Maria.



Attached to the e-mail was a page Cesare had scanned from a *Book of Mormon* I had given him.

because she didn't continue with her job. But it wasn't long before I received an invitation to her baptism. I was disappointed I couldn't attend, and again we lost contact.

After serving for nine months in the Argentina Mendoza Mission, I read in the local pages of the *Liabona* that Maria was serving in the Argentina Resistencia Mission. I started jumping for joy and immediately wrote to her.

In her reply she told me about her mission preparation. Her parents had not supported her desire to join the Church. Yet she had attended church and institute classes and had sacrificed much in order to serve a mission.

Many years have now passed, and Maria and I have seen each other again. She is a temple worker in the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple and is enjoying the love of her husband and children. She lives the gospel and radiates its light. Today her appearance reflects all that is in her heart, and although she does not know it, she has not only given me a special memory but has taught me a great principle—the gospel is for everyone. As members of the Church, we should not refrain from sharing our testimonies just because, in our judgment, a person's appearance indicates he or she might reject our message.

Now, whenever I think about Maria, 1 Samuel 16:7 comes to mind: "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; . . . for the

Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Heavenly Father knows the hearts of His children, and to Him the heart is what matters. ■

Delayed Harvest

By Rian W. Jones

I sat at my desk one Monday morning looking at all the e-mails that had piled up over the weekend. Always suspicious of a computer virus, I was almost ready to delete an e-mail and its attachment that were from an unknown sender. But as my finger paused on the mouse button, ready to click, the Spirit prompted me to open the message.

"Hello, Elder Rian Jones," it began.

"You are now around 50 years old, and I am 37. I have only a vague remembrance of your person, and I am not sure if the man I remember is the one I am writing to." Actually, I was 45 years old, and who was this person who would address me as "Elder"? I hadn't been called that since my mission. The writer then asked if I was still active in the Church and had kept the spirit of my mission. My curiosity was really piqued now.

"I was only 12 years old when you and your companion taught me the gospel in Taranto, Italy. The year was 1975." My mind raced as I tried to recall the writer. "You are probably asking yourself if you baptized me. No, you didn't, because my mother and father refused permission." The writer went on to explain how painful



and embarrassing it was for him and his brother to stop the missionaries on the steps of their apartment building as we were going to ask his parents for permission to baptize him. He recounted how he kept coming to church for a while but eventually stopped because he could not be baptized. "But I kept the teachings in my heart and never betrayed the principles I was taught," he wrote.

I served in the Italy Rome Mission from 1975 to 1977, and Taranto was my first city. But I could not recall the story that was unfolding in this e-mail. The writer explained that when he was 22 years old he was called into compulsory military service in northern Italy. There he suffered a spiritual crisis that caused him to pray for the first time as an adult. He received an answer to his prayers, and because of this, he sought out the missionaries in that area. He found them at a fast-food restaurant and told them he wanted to be baptized. "Nothing like that ever happened to me on my mission," I thought. Those elders must have been shocked.

He was baptized and later married in the temple at Friedrichsdorf, Germany. He now had three children, had moved to Canada several years ago, and was an active member of the Church.

"I don't know if you will ever answer this e-mail. If you do, I will tell you many other things about my life and how I have been blessed by your mission. Elder, you never know

where a small, good action can lead." He signed his e-mail "Cesare Quarinto." Later he told me he had found my e-mail address on the Italy Rome Mission Web site.

Try as I might, I could not recall the experience of teaching a 12-year-old boy in Taranto. But the attachment to the e-mail was a page he had scanned from an old copy of the Book of Mormon. It was a dedication, written in my handwriting in Italian, dated September 14, 1975. It read:

"Dear Cesare,

"I am giving you this gift so that you can read it to find the beautiful truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Don't ever forget prayer, because it is only through prayer that you can find the truth. . . . I know this is the true Church, and I hope to share this truth with you.

"Your friend,

"Elder Rian Jones"

Suddenly I had a perfect recollection. Seeing the words I had written caused the memory to return. I recalled vividly the rented space we used for a chapel in Taranto. We taught young Cesare the gospel in that building. I had given him his own copy of the Book of Mormon shortly before I was transferred to another city. Recalling the circumstances and reading Cesare's e-mail, I was overcome with joy.

I did have some success on my mission, but unfortunately most of the people I baptized had fallen away from the Church over the

years. Now a scripture came to mind: "And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!" (D&C 18:15). ■

A Unique Combination

By Francis Davis

It was 5:30 p.m. on a Friday in June 2001, and I was working in my home office when the phone rang. It was my wife calling in a bit of a panic. She and our three daughters had been on a bike ride and had stopped at the supermarket for a cold drink and some ice cream. When they came out of the store, the combination lock securing the bicycles wouldn't work. The combination was 3690, but it didn't open the lock, which was firmly holding the bicycles against a metal fence just outside the store.

I jumped in our minivan and drove to the supermarket, but I had no more luck than they had had. I drove my wife and daughters home and began to think of what I could do. The first counselor in the branch presidency repairs saws, so I called and explained my predicament to him. He told me that most bicycle locks of this kind are made from

toughened steel that is impervious to saws and bolt cutters. But he said I could at least try to cut the lock.

I found the box containing my electric saw and an extension cable. I called the store to ask if I could use their power for my saw. They kindly said I could. By the time I arrived, it was 7:45, and the store would close at 8:00. I was under pressure and started to panic too.

If the bicycles were there overnight, they would surely be a target for vandalism, and besides, my wife, who couldn't drive at that time, used them every day to get the children to and from school.

When I got to the store I grabbed my electric saw's hard plastic case, opened it, and found I had brought my cordless drill by mistake. They

both have the same black plastic casing. It was now 7:55 and too late to get home and back before the store closed.

I tried the lock again, tugging as hard as I could to separate the two pieces, but nothing moved. A couple of people were staring at me, and employees were starting to close the store.

I sat in the minivan and thumped the steering wheel, feeling utterly frustrated. Then in my "mind's ear" I heard my daughter singing the hymn

I tried the lock again, but nothing moved. It was getting late, and I was getting worried.

"Did You Think to Pray?" (*Hymns*, no. 140).

In my panic I had failed to do the simplest thing. I had forgotten to pray. So I bowed my head and explained my situation to Heavenly Father. I left nothing out. I even told Him how silly I felt about the drill/saw mistake. In an instant I felt prompted to try the lock again. I got out of the car, and as I started to tumble the combination to read 3690 again, I heard a number whispered in my ear: 2591. I looked around, but no one was standing there. I tried 2591, and the lock fell open in my hands.

Never before or since have I had an answer to my prayers given so clearly or so quickly. Tears rolled down my face as I loaded the bicycles into the back of our minivan. I hurried home and related the story to my wife and children.

Later when I turned the numbers to 3690, just as I expected, the gaps in the teeth inside the cylinder didn't line up so that I could put the two pieces of the lock back together. I then tried 2591, and it didn't work either. Inspecting more closely, I realized that the tumblers had broken. Every time I turned them, a different number would open the lock. So, considering the thousands of possible combinations I could have tried that Friday evening, only heaven could help me find the one unique combination. And all I had to do was ask in faith. ■



Six Tips for Spotting a Fad Diet

Our Heavenly Father has given us the wonderful gift of a physical body, which is needed to progress and become like Him. With this gift we are given the responsibility to care for our bodies, and good nutrition is an important part of our responsibility.

As a registered dietitian, I am often asked my opinion of the latest diet. Some diets are based on solid nutrition and health

principles, while others seem to defy basic biochemistry and promise quick, easy results.

Below are six tips to help you recognize a fad diet:

- **The diet claims a large or rapid weight loss.** Sound nutrition plans aim for a weight loss of one to two pounds per week. Slow, gradual weight loss increases your success for keeping weight off in the long term.

- **The diet restricts or eliminates certain food groups or requires specific food combinations.**

Eliminating certain food groups may lead to deficiencies of some nutrients.

Combining or sequencing certain foods does not enhance weight loss. Diets should raise concern if they emphasize certain foods, such as unlimited amounts of cabbage soup, grapefruit, or ice cream, or eliminate food groups, such as carbohydrate-rich foods.

- **The diet promotes "miracle" foods or makes promises that sound**

too good to be true. Foods don't burn or melt fat away. No food can undo the long-term effects of overeating and underexercising. Testimonials, histories, and anecdotes that sound too good to be true probably are. Look for documented scientific research to support claims.

- **The diet implies that weight can be lost without**

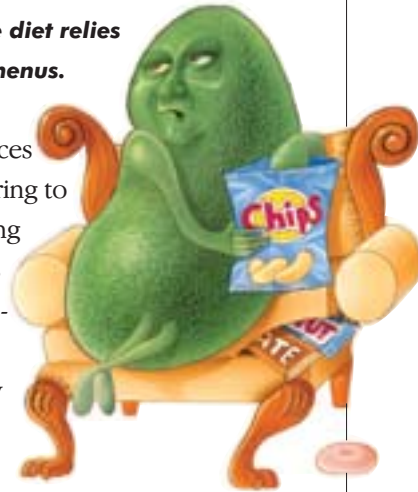
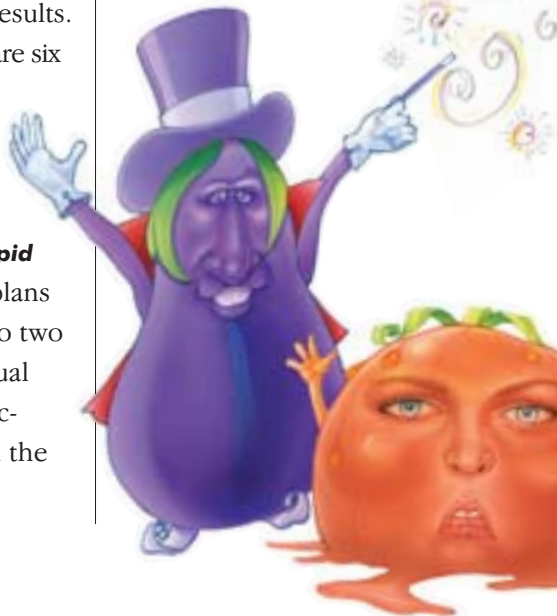
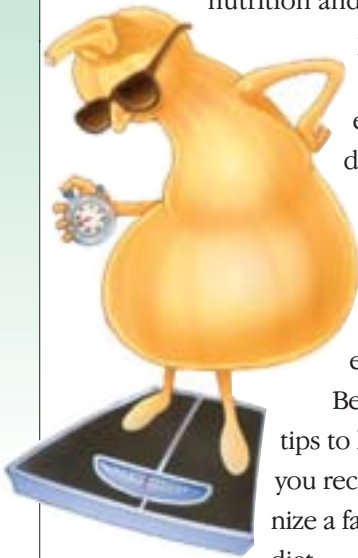
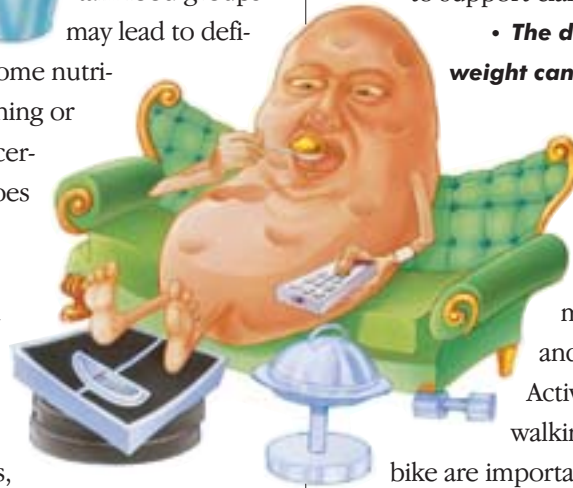
exercise. An increase in any daily activity can help you burn more calories and lose weight. Activities such as walking or riding a

bike are important in losing weight and maintaining weight loss.

- **The diet relies on rigid menus.**

Limiting food choices and adhering to strict eating schedules is unpleasant and unhealthy and may increase

the likelihood that you will cheat, binge, or give up on the diet. You should be able to follow a diet plan for a lifetime.





An Article of Faith a Month

Does your family struggle to remember the Articles of Faith? We did until we decided to work on understanding and memorizing one each month during family night. We wanted to help our oldest daughter to pass off her Faith in God requirements. To engage everyone's interest, we incorporated a variety of teaching methods and household settings.

First, our daughter typed up the Articles of Faith and made several copies of each, preparing in advance for us to eventually learn all 13. Then, in the course of learning a particular article of faith, we would go from room to room in our home, participating in a different activity in each one.

For instance, in the family room we used scriptures to discuss the

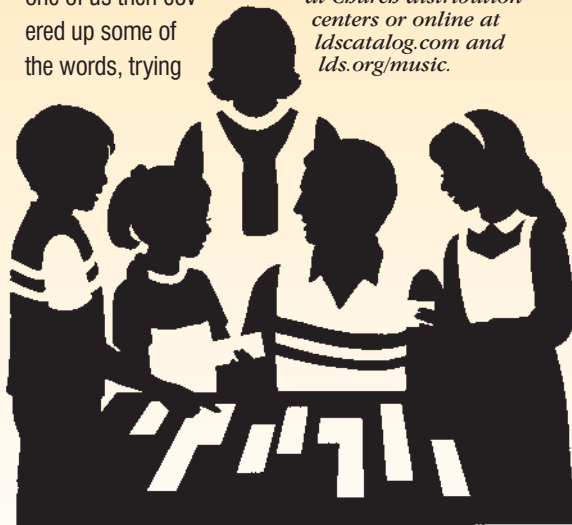
meaning of our first article. Then we moved to the master bedroom, where we listened to that particular article of faith Primary song on CD. To motivate us to sing it several times, we played a simple game of hiding a piece of candy and singing louder as one of our children came close to finding it and softer if he was farther away. Then in the kitchen we cut up one of our paper printouts and invited the family to put it back together. Next, in a bedroom we had family members write the article of faith or draw what it was about. With a written copy, one of us then covered up some of the words, trying

to stump the others as they determined what was missing. Our last stop was another bedroom, where we invited the children to further discuss the meaning of the article of faith and recite it from memory if they could.

Simple reminder copies of each month's article of faith, posted throughout the house and included as bookmarks in our scriptures, also helped us to easily commit the Articles of Faith to memory and to heart.

Laura Turek, Nevada

Note: Audio recordings of the Primary Children's Songbook are available at Church distribution centers or online at ldscatalog.com and lds.org/music.



• The diet contradicts what most trusted health professionals and

groups say. Look for a diet that emphasizes a variety of foods, including whole grains, vegetables, fruits, lean meats, and low-fat dairy products.

Before you begin following a diet, review the program for signs of a fad diet, study the opinions of trusted nutrition professionals, and compare the diet to the Word of Wisdom. We will be blessed as we follow the Lord's counsel to care for our bodies.

Pauline Williams, Utah

Dear Son

When my first child was just seven weeks old, I began writing "journal letters" to him. I wanted to express feelings I might otherwise forget to share later. With each entry in a notebook journal, I addressed a letter to him, describing how he was growing and things I had observed him doing. I also shared advice and my testimony, as well as comments on worldwide, community, and family events. Soon my husband wanted to join in the

writing, and we made it a regular Sunday practice.

I have since invited his grandparents to write entries also. Now that we have our third child, I type their journals on the computer, copying and pasting the parts I want to share with all of them. I also like to add digital pictures to enhance what I have

written. Then each year for their birthdays, I give them a personal copy of their previous year's journal.

It brings me great joy to know that through these journals our children have lasting records of our strong love for them, the gospel, and our Savior.

Emily Cushing, Utah

LEFT AND ABOVE: ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOE FLORES; RIGHT: ILLUSTRATION BY BETH WHITTAKER



President Gordon B. Hinckley breaks ground for a building named in his honor at Brigham Young University.

President Hinckley Begins 96th Birthday Breaking Ground

President Gordon B. Hinckley started off his 96th birthday celebration with a shovel and some dirt.

Hundreds of Brigham Young University alumni, faculty, family, friends, and students looked on as President Hinckley took his own shovel in hand to scoop dirt to kick off the construction of an 80,000-square-foot building that will bear his name at the school in Provo.

“You do me a great honor and a great kindness in what you do today,” President Hinckley told guests at the groundbreaking celebration for the new Gordon B. Hinckley Alumni and Visitors’ Center on June 23, 2006.

President Hinckley thanked guests and commented about how his wife, Marjorie Pay Hinckley, who died in 2004, had also been honored at BYU when the Social Work and Social Sciences chair was named in her honor in 2003.

“Maybe we could move her chair into my building, and we’d be together again,” he said.

President Thomas S. Monson, President James E. Faust, and President Hinckley’s son Clark also spoke at the groundbreaking. Family, counselors in the First Presidency, BYU Board of Trustees, friends of the university, and donors joined President Hinckley

in ceremoniously turning the first dirt for the building. Afterward President Hinckley donated the shovel he used from his own tool collection. Construction commenced immediately after the ceremony.

The BYU Board of Trustees approved development of the new center in October 2005, and President Cecil O. Samuelson announced the new building the following month. The building is funded entirely from private donations. Brigham Young University has eight other buildings named after Presidents of the Church.

“This new building is singular in the fact that it has

been built while the man whose name it bears is still alive,” President Hinckley said. “I suppose Brother Samuelson concluded I was only half dead and that we could go forward accordingly.”

The Gordon B. Hinckley Alumni and Visitors’ Center is scheduled to be finished by fall 2007. A building bearing the prophet’s name was also dedicated at Brigham Young University–Idaho in October 2002.

In addition to being a gateway to BYU and a campus home for alumni, the building is a tribute to President Hinckley and his life.

“Because of his unflagging efforts in the areas of education, public outreach, and international friendship, his name evokes the very purposes of this building,” the BYU Alumni Web site states. He is “an extraordinary ambassador” for the Church, and “his long life is characterized by openness, understanding, and love of the Savior.”

After the groundbreaking, family, invited guests, and university leaders hosted President Hinckley at a private luncheon.

His children paid tribute to their father, and President Samuelson presented him with a brick with his name on it to represent the new center that bears his name.

President Hinckley has served as the 15th President of the Church since 1995. Before that, he served 14 years as a counselor in the First Presidency and 20 years as a member of the Quorum

of the Twelve Apostles. President Hinckley has traveled around the world, dedicating many temples and visiting Church members, who now number more than 12.5 million worldwide. He has been interviewed by several major news organizations.

CBS newsmen Mike Wallace paid tribute to President Hinckley at the "Celebration of Life" program for his 95th birthday last year.

"He is and has always been a builder," Mr. Wallace said, "a builder of families, youth, missionaries. A builder of

character and faith, and through it all, a builder of people. The pace has been tiring, but he has been tireless. But from his point of view, it's been worth it to help build the organization he loves by building the people that he loves so much." ■

The Church's Welfare Department stayed in contact with leaders across the flooded states, offering support and assessing needs in the different areas.

President Nixon said, "At times like this, you feel extremely blessed that you're part of such a magnificent organization. . . . When you have people . . . calling from Salt Lake to check on members whom they don't even know, and also willing to provide resources to the community at large, it's a pretty remarkable organization." ■

Church Members Affected by Flooding

Extensive rainfall from New York to Virginia in the eastern United States in June caused widespread flooding and evacuations.

Flooding occurred in low-lying areas. Particularly hard hit were areas along the Susquehanna River. Thousands were evacuated from their homes temporarily, roads were closed, and buildings were damaged. Governors of flooded states declared a state of emergency in several counties. There were 16 confirmed deaths. All missionaries and Church members were reported safe.

"We felt a kinship to

Noah," said William Nixon, president of the Mount Vernon Virginia Stake, near Washington, D.C., as he described the approximate foot of rain that drenched the area.

He said four Latter-day Saint families in the Franconia Ward, Mount Vernon Virginia Stake, were displaced when 200 homes in their neighborhood were evacuated due to flooding. Although other members in the stake weren't required to evacuate, many had anywhere from three inches to three feet of water in their basements.

Farther north in the Scranton Pennsylvania Stake,

members were also affected by the flooding.

Keith Dunford, president of the stake, told of one family whose house succumbed to the flooding. Crews helped the family get their belongings out of the house before it slid into the water.

For the most part, Church members have maintained a positive attitude in the wake of the flooding. "We're grateful that the levy along the Susquehanna held," President Dunford said. Otherwise, "that would have been a disaster."

Members in the Wilkes-Barre Ward evacuated and stayed overnight with other members but were able to return the next day.

In the Owego New York Stake, members evacuated their homes, and some were housed temporarily in a meetinghouse. One couple in Binghamton was rescued by a helicopter, and some in Owego were rescued by boat. Many stayed at shelters until the water receded.

Richard Miller, president of the Owego New York Stake, said that as the floods abated, members were able to go in, clean up, and help the people affected.

Deaf Attend Family History Workshop

By Abbey Olsen,
Church Magazines

An occasional laugh from the audience broke the silence as full-time missionary Robert Powers explained different family history resources at the Church's Family History Library.

Elder Powers's library orientation class was one of 50 classes taught at the fourth biennial genealogical workshop for the deaf and hard of hearing June 19–23, 2006, in Salt Lake City.

"It's probably the quietest conference you'll ever go to," remarked an observer as Elder Powers communicated through sign language to his audience.

"The goal of this workshop is to have the deaf community



Heavy storms flooded the northeastern United States and knocked down this elm at the White House.

and the deaf patrons come here and take these classes the same as hearing people,” said Dulane Woodhouse, chairperson for the workshop.

Twenty-five instructors, 17 of whom are deaf, taught genealogical classes on 40 topics to 135 registered participants in classrooms at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building. Workshop participants learned everything from family history basics, such as using PAF or TempleReady, to more advanced information such as the Napoleonic Civil Registration. Many participants practiced their newfound skills a block away at the Family History Library.

Elder Robert and Sister Virginia Powers have been serving as full-time missionaries in the deaf zone of the Family History Library for more than two years. They helped organize and coordinate the event.

“I’m at a loss for words right now to describe the spirit that is here,” Sister Powers said. “It’s very touching.”

Although they left 14 grandchildren behind when they left their home in Riverside, California, to serve a mission, Elder and Sister Powers have been influential in making Family History Library resources more accessible to deaf patrons.

With a force of about 14 Church service missionaries helping in the library, Sister Powers said deaf people comment that it is easier to come to the library because they know someone can communicate with them.

In addition to classes and

family history work, workshop attendees participated in activities such as going on an interpreted field trip to the Humanitarian Center, watching the film *Joseph Smith: The Prophet of the Restoration* in an ASL-interpreted and closed-captioned session, touring the Lion House and Museum of Church History and Art, and visiting This Is the Place Heritage Park. Some participants attended a special temple session for the deaf in the Salt Lake Temple as well.

About 50 percent of

workshop attendees came from outside Utah, across the United States and Canada. Although three-fourths of the participants are Latter-day Saints, a fourth are not members of the Church but are actively interested in genealogy.

The weeklong activities and workshops culminated on June 25, 2006, when all the deaf wards and branches from Utah gathered in the Conference Center Theater on Sunday morning for a family history regional conference. ■

Church Satellite Broadcasts Available Online

Web users will be able once again to see and hear the prophet speak live through video streams online in next month’s general conference.

Beginning with the first major test at the April 2006 general conference, the Church partnered with BYU-TV to provide live video streams of general conference in English through a link on LDS.org.

The Church had previously provided live conference video streaming online, but the cost became prohibitive per user when it was last available on LDS.org about three years ago.

Last year BYU-TV offered to provide the service, and the partnership began when the Church linked to BYU-TV to provide live video streams of the Joseph Smith celebration and the 2005 Christmas devotional.

Ron Schwendiman, manager of Internet coordination in the Church’s Curriculum Department, says the service “enables English speakers who are not able to get to a building or who are unable to receive it through other means to be able to watch conference live on their computers.”

Through this technology, more than 200,000 live online video connections from more than 126 different countries were provided during general conference in April. Of the sessions, the Sunday afternoon session had the most Internet traffic with 108,312 connections.

Brother Schwendiman said some interruptions in the service occurred during conference, but feedback has been mostly positive as the Church and BYU-TV continue to work to understand how to best use the technology to

provide another venue to access conference.

Web users who have a high-speed Internet connection can go to the broadcast page on LDS.org during live Church broadcasts and click on a link that will take them to BYU-TV’s live video stream.

BYU-TV launched in 2000 and has regularly broadcast Church content for programs such as general conference, the Young Women and Relief Society general meetings, and Church Educational System firesides.

BYU-TV had previously provided a limited number of online video streams, but in November 2005 it partnered with a company that provides mass video streaming capability on the Internet. The technology allowed BYU-TV to provide online video streams to thousands of viewers. The technology also allowed viewers who live on the other side of the globe, where conference airs during the middle of the night, to access sessions at a time convenient to them.

BYU-TV also offers a Windows Media stream for Mac, Linux, and other users (www.byutv.org/streaming). The Church provides Windows Media video archives of the conference broadcasts at www.lds.org/conference.

Although the live video stream is currently available only in English, discussions are ongoing about the possibility of providing the live video streams in other languages such as Spanish and Portuguese. ■

Strengthening the Community

Youth Take On an “Extreme Neighborhood Makeover”

Getting up before 6:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning to shingle roofs, paint houses, and mow lawns after being soaked in a mountain downpour the day before might deter some people, but not Andy Pearce and Ryan Wheeler, youth from the Alpine Fourth Ward, Alpine Utah Stake.

Arriving before the majority of their youth counterparts, who came at about 8:00 a.m., they climbed a roof and began reroofing in a small neighborhood in Provo and didn't want to eat breakfast until they'd finished a good portion of the job.

These young men were just 2 of almost 400 young people and 100 leaders and

adults in the Alpine Utah Stake who joined forces June 10, 2006, to work in a neighborhood fix-up project in Provo, Utah, as part of their stake's three-day youth conference. They reroofed 5 homes, painted 15, and laid a few lawns with sod, performing service on a total of 25 homes.

Some homeowners were skeptical when stake service committee members visited their neighborhood in the weeks before the project to find out what repairs needed to be done.

But eight months of planning paid off as leaders directed the youth, who were organized into “families,” in making requested repairs on each house. They pulled weeds, primed houses, edged lawns, shingled roofs, painted

fences, and held a carnival for children to attend while the repairs were being completed.

“It's just been amazing to watch how hard these kids have worked,” said Joseph Nilson, president of the Alpine Utah Stake. “You don't have to go too far to find service opportunities, and it's wonderful for them to get out and see their religion in action.”

The morning before, the group had traveled up the mountain for a sunrise fireside. But a storm met the youth, and they trekked down the mountain in a downpour. They relocated to a nearby college campus to listen to speakers and attend workshops. They got rained out again as they tried to hold some outdoor games.

“I hope the service day [was] the highlight of youth conference,” said JoAnn

Tolman, stake Young Women president. “This is why missionaries say that [missions are] the best two years of their lives. It's because they were in complete service—complete.”

Sister Tolman said some homeowners just stood there and cried with the offers of service:

“Can we paint your house?”

“I can't afford the paint.”

“We're going to provide the paint. What color do you want?”

“I have a choice of color?”

“Yes.”

She said, “It's just been like opening the windows of heaven for them, and it's our opportunity to let the youth reach out.”

Brad Christensen, who was a youth conference coordinator with his wife, Kim, said he hopes the youth will take at least two things from the experience. First, a rain metaphor: when it rains, it doesn't rain everywhere, but everyone needs water.

“The water in the mountains we pipe to people in the valley so that they can use it even though no rain fell on them,” he explained. “Material wealth is the same way. It rains in different places. What I hope they walk away with is that God expects us to share the wealth.”

Brother Christensen also hopes the youth learn that one way to find more happiness “is the least obvious way they ever would have considered, and that is to get out and work and help other people.”

“I hope they leave here



Youth from the Alpine Utah Stake clean up, reroof, and paint one of the homes selected for service during their youth conference.

feeling happier and more fulfilled and more full of light today than they ever would playing video games or going to a movie or doing something self-indulgent, and that they'll catch onto the idea that true happiness is found through helping other people," Brother Christensen said.

Oregon Stake Serves Neighbor to Neighbor

Performing for inmates, refurbishing the roof on the local Baptist community center, or pruning yards—the Oregon City Oregon Stake is in its fifth year serving neighbor to neighbor.

The Neighbor-to-Neighbor initiative—created to unite in service and enhance the image of the Church in the community—brings members together to serve others with whom they would not likely come into contact otherwise, such as the inmates of Oregon State Prison.

Inmates and volunteers worked side by side, shoulder to shoulder, in the demolition and construction of a new chapel.

"I've learned that together we can accomplish very difficult things," said Oregon City Oregon stake president Gene Trone. "Doing the Lord's work is always worth it."

The stake also remodeled the chapel in the Coffee Creek Women's Correctional Facility and performed the musical *Honk* for inmates, though bringing the production to a secure facility was a challenge. The process of checking all the props and materials took hours.



Members of the Brazilian media reported on a 150-city service project organized by Church members.

"But the look on the faces of the guards and the inmates made all the hard work worthwhile," said Don Ririe, high councilor over this part of Neighbor-to-Neighbor.

"We enjoyed laughing with each other and feeling close to one another," one guard shared. "No one has ever done this before. Thank you for coming and helping us remember we are really more alike than different."

Approximately 150 members toured the prisons to learn how they can play a supportive role in reducing recidivism rates in their community.

While this year's Neighbor-to-Neighbor service projects focused on serving inmates, the stake has also reached out to numerous groups in the community under this initiative, including the

Oregon City School District, Clackamas County Mental Health agencies, and Oxford Homes—homes providing shelter to women recovering from substance abuse.

This year each ward within the stake was assigned to an Oxford Home to assess and address the needs in each. Bishops and Relief Society presidents each toured their ward's assigned home, and volunteers cleaned, painted, weeded yards, repaired roofs and decks, and completed other construction projects.

"Never has there been a better way for my family to grow than serving in the Neighbor-to-Neighbor projects," said Kati Morris, a member of the Oregon City stake. "I cannot tell you how strong the desire is in my own heart to become a better person."

Church Aids More Than 200 Brazilian Hospitals

Sixty thousand Brazilian Church members have concluded a four-month service project that provided aid to more than 200 hospitals in 150 cities throughout Brazil.

Church members held workshops and sewing bees in which they produced approximately 150,000 items to be donated to local hospitals. The items included bed-sheets, shoe coverings, gowns, pillowcases, and infant clothing.

Items such as bedsheets are scarce for many hospitals in Brazil, as most funds go toward medications, hospital equipment, and employee salaries. And since hospital clothing is subjected to sterilization up to four times daily, the clothing has to be replaced frequently.

In one month Restauração Hospital in Recife admits 800 patients, performs 700 surgeries, treats 12,000 outpatients, and handles 12,000 emergencies. Hospital director George Teles was happy to receive supplies from the Church. "We give thanks for any help we get, since we always work beyond our patient capacity," he remarked. "Now we will have some breathing room in terms of bedclothing changes."

Members of the Church not only sewed clothes and bedsheets but also volunteered their time giving presentations to school-age children to teach them the importance of helping others. Others worked in hospitals providing service wherever needed. ■

October Special Issue Aimed at Helping New Members

New members of the Church and those who work with them will receive an important additional resource in October. The October *Ensign* and *Liabona* will speak directly to those who have recently joined the Church, providing information and encouragement aimed at strengthening their testimonies and

commitment while explaining some of the blessings and challenges associated with joining the Church.

New and long-time members alike will find the issue helpful in dealing with common challenges and frequently asked questions. The issue features a welcome by President Gordon B. Hinckley, an article explaining what a

member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wishes every member knew, and articles addressing the topics of learning new traditions and leaving old ones behind, finding peace in part-member families, how to share what you've learned, finding your place in the Church, and more.

The *Ensign* will retain all of the magazine's usual departments, including the First Presidency Message, Visiting Teaching Message, Random Sampler, and

Latter-day Saint Voices, yet each article will contain a special message for new members. Many converts will share how they overcame the challenges and difficulties they experienced as new members. The issue will also include an introduction to the Church magazines and suggestions for getting the most out of them.

For members who would like additional copies of the issue, the magazine will be available through local distribution centers. ■

Comment

Protecting Minds and Bodies

Your article "A Hole in Her Soul" (July 2006) brought with it a flood of tears and memories of my experience some 27 years ago as a teenager. I met a young man at a stake youth dance who claimed to be a member of a ward in a nearby town. We began dating. My mom didn't like him, but she never told me this or forbade him to come over. I suppose she feared it would make me like him more. One day he dropped by the house when no one else was home, and that was when he assaulted me. I was in shock and had no idea what to do or how to handle the situation. I felt like my life was over and there was nothing anyone could do. I was "dirty," and no one would want "used merchandise." Like the girl in the story, I followed a path of self-loathing and destruction that lasted nearly four years. The mother of the young

woman in the article rightly explains that being a loving parent and providing "a soft place to fall" was key to the daughter's recovery.

For the rest of us, prevention is of utmost importance. Your dating-safety inset is fine but may not go far enough.

Parents need to come up with as nearly foolproof guidelines as they can, no matter how strict. There were a few times I didn't give my daughter permission to attend a social function simply because I had a bad feeling about it. She would complain and say I didn't have concrete evidence, but my point was that if something bad *were* to happen, there would be no reversing the effect of it. We would never know what might have happened, nor did we want to know.

As we move farther and farther into these perilous times, we cannot be too careful in protecting the minds and bodies of our precious

children from the predators who would do them harm.

Name Withheld

A Realistic Preview

I appreciated the perspective shared in "Yelled At, Barked At, and Rained On" (July 2006). Offering prospective missionaries an honest and realistic preview

of what missionary service entails is valuable and commendable. As more of them understand that even sincere and obedient missionaries often experience profoundly difficult challenges, the quiet strength and maturity of our missionary force will increase.

Cameron Turner, Indiana

Call for Articles

Has your ward or branch experienced notable success in its missionary efforts? Please send us your experiences or stories about sharing the gospel with family, friends, and neighbors.

Please send your submission (up to 1,600 words) by October 15, 2006, to ensign@ldschurch.org or to *Ensign* Editorial, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150-3220, USA. Clearly mark your submission "Missionary Work,"

and at the top of your submission include your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and ward and stake (or branch and district).

While we cannot acknowledge receipt of individual responses, we will notify authors whose submissions we select for publication. If you would like us to return your manuscript, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and allow up to a year. ■



MAKING THE MOST OF THIS ISSUE

S E P T E M B E R 2 0 0 6

is supposed to work? Have you wondered what you can do as a parent to help your son achieve this important award? See page 32.

For Teaching and Gospel Study PRIESTHOOD AND RELIEF SOCIETY LESSONS

Are you a teacher in Relief Society or in a Melchizedek Priesthood quorum or group? Do you find yourself wondering how to best use the *Teachings of Presidents of the Church* manuals? For some helpful ideas, see “Learning to Hear the Lord’s Voice,” page 12.

BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN PRIMARY

Do you have a child in your Primary class who seems out of control? To learn how one teacher handled this type of problem, see “He Took My Shoe!” page 16.

WOMEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Artists’ depictions teach of the strength of righteous women of the Old Testament. See page 38.

Women of the Old Testament, p. 38



Gaining Spiritual Strength LISTENING FOR SPIRITUAL PROMPTINGS

“The Lord will often influence our thoughts, words, and actions even when we have not sought specific direction,” writes Margaret S. Lifferth, First Counselor in the Primary General Presidency. See “Trust in the Lord Forever,” page 24.

IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH

Facing cancer, the author has discovered a new kind of hope—“the hope of peace and strength; a hope of faith to be fulfilled; a hope, ultimately, in the saving power of Jesus Christ.” See “Living in the Shadow of Death,” page 27.

Spreading the Gospel WATCHMEN ON THE TOWER

Earlier in his life, Elder Gary J. Coleman of the Seventy worked as a watchman in a lookout tower in one of the U.S. national forests. His experiences have helped him understand the importance of having priesthood watchmen in the Lord’s towers. See page 64.

FROM ONE NICARAGUAN TO ANOTHER

Members’ willingness to share the gospel so others can taste its “beautiful fruit” is helping the Church take root in Nicaragua. See page 48.

THE POWER OF EXAMPLE

Quiet good deeds and selfless service may seem like small things, but they can have a large impact on people you did not know were watching. See “I Tossed Your Name Aside,” page 58.



I Tossed Your Name Aside, p. 58

Home Teachers, Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on pages 2 and 53.

For Families

SHARING FAMILY HERITAGE

“I am absolutely convinced,” says Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “that the greatest refuge we will find in our life will be those wonderful, close associations we have with our immediate family members.” To read more about how we can strengthen family members by sharing our family heritage, see page 8.

FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

Families from around the world share experiences that have made family home evening an unforgettable experience in their lives. See “Unforgettable Family Home Evenings,” page 60.

FOR DIVORCED SINGLE PARENTS

“Do I wish this particular adversity hadn’t happened? Oh, yes. But it did, and I have learned many things.” For some wise counsel on raising children after divorce, see page 18.

DUTY TO GOD

Are you confused about how the Duty to God program

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MAY NOT BE COPIED

Father Lehi, by Glen S. Hopkinson

Of the scriptural record Nephi retrieved from Jerusalem, King Benjamin said: "Were it not for these plates, which contain these records and these commandments, we must have suffered in ignorance. . . . For it were not possible that our father, Lehi, could have remembered all these things, to have taught them to his children [and they to their children], except it were for the help of these plates" (Mosiab 1:3–4).



God bless you children to have listening ears
and understanding hearts. God bless you
mothers for the endless dimension of your love
and for all the help you give the fathers of your children.
God bless you fathers to be equal to your overwhelming
responsibilities and to have a father's special caring for each
one under your protective arms." See President James E. Faust,
"The Father Who Cares," p. 2.