

# Liahona



**Learn of Him and  
Listen to His Words,  
pp. 12, 14, 20**

**Three Scripture Stories That Give  
Me Hope, p. 44**

**We Seek After These Things, p. 52**

**You Can Be a Missionary Now,  
pp. 58, 68**



MAY NOT BE COPIED

*Eunice Teaching Her Son, Timothy, the Holy Scriptures, by Sandy Freckleton Gagon*

*The Apostle Paul praised Timothy for “the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice” (2 Timothy 1:5). Timothy*

*was a “fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ” (1 Thessalonians 3:2) and a faithful assistant to Paul, who called Timothy “my own son in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:2).*



Liahona, January 2011

### MESSAGES

- 4 **First Presidency Message:  
The Lord Needs Missionaries**  
By President Thomas S. Monson
- 7 **Visiting Teaching Message:  
The History and Heritage of  
Relief Society**

### FEATURE ARTICLES

- 14 **The Savior—the Master  
Teacher**  
By Elder Jay E. Jensen  
*The Lord's use of scriptures in  
teaching and strengthening  
others sets an example for all  
of us.*

**ON THE COVER**  
*Jesus, Mary, and Martha*, by Anton  
Dorph, courtesy of Hope Gallery.

- 20 **The Historical Context  
of the New Testament**  
By Thomas A. Wayment  
*Who wrote the New Testament?  
How was it passed down to us?*
- 26 **Fundamental to Our Faith**  
By Elder Dallin H. Oaks  
*Our neighbors may not know  
these key truths about our faith.*
- 34 **What's New in  
Personal Progress?**  
By Elaine S. Dalton  
*The Young Women general pres-  
ident explains some changes in  
Personal Progress.*
- 37 **The Aaronic Priesthood—  
Greater Than You Might  
Think**  
By David L. Beck  
*The new Duty to God booklet  
will help you learn, act on, and  
share the gospel.*

### DEPARTMENTS

- 8 **Small and Simple Things**
- 11 **Our Homes, Our Families:  
The Restoring Power of  
Prayer**  
By Marcos A. Walker
- 12 **What We Believe: The  
Scriptures Teach and Testify  
of Jesus Christ**
- 40 **Latter-day Saint Voices**
- 74 **News of the Church**
- 79 **Family Home Evening Ideas**
- 80 **Until We Meet Again:  
Never Forsaken**  
By Adam C. Olson





**44 Ancient Examples, Modern Promises**

Name withheld

*Why these stories, which are thousands of years old, are meaningful to me today.*

**47 Gospel in My Life: From Believing to Knowing**

By Chiao-yi Lin

*See if you can find the Liahona hidden in this issue. Hint: Friendship.*

53



**48 To the Point**

**50 From the Mission Field: In the Presence of Angels**

By Samuel Gould

**52 We Believe!**

By the Young Women General Presidency

*We must believe in standards and values and seek after these things to have the power of the Holy Ghost.*

**53 Becoming a Faithful Priesthood Man**

By the Young Men General Presidency

*We know you can do great things as you become a faithful priesthood man.*

**54 Line upon Line: Articles of Faith 1:13**

**55 You Should Take Seminary**

By Lisa Pace

*My friend's suggestion changed my life.*

**56 Our Space**

**57 Poster: It's Nice to Be Important**

**58 I Hope They Call Me on a Mission?**

By Loran Cook

*Not sure how to prepare for a mission? Here are five ways.*



**60 The Best Brigham Young**

By Karen A. Kimball

*The script for the part of Brigham Young was wrong. What could Kathy do?*

**62 Special Witness: How Do I Build a Spiritual Foundation?**

By Elder Neil L. Andersen

**63 Our Page**

**64 Sharing Time: The Scriptures Are the Word of God**

By JoAnn Child and Cristina Franco

**66 Stories of Jesus: Jesus as a Child**

By Diane L. Mangum

**68 Where Is Isabelle?**

By Susan Denney

*Isabelle was missing at her own baptism when it came time to take a picture!*

**70 For Young Children**

Official international magazine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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[Liahona.lds.org](http://Liahona.lds.org)



## FOR ADULTS

The Savior was a master teacher (see page 14).

To improve your teaching skills, visit [www.teaching.lds.org](http://www.teaching.lds.org).

## FOR YOUTH



In this issue find out what's new in **Personal Progress and Duty to God** (pages 34 and 37). Then check out the accompanying Web sites at [www.PersonalProgress.lds.org](http://www.PersonalProgress.lds.org) and [www.DutytoGod.lds.org](http://www.DutytoGod.lds.org).

## FOR CHILDREN



Take a look at "Making Friends around the World" on page 72 and then play an online version of the game at [www.liahona.lds.org](http://www.liahona.lds.org).

Children's art is now on display at the Church History Museum in Salt Lake City, and every piece of art that was submitted is accessible online at [www.liahona.lds.org](http://www.liahona.lds.org).

## IN YOUR LANGUAGE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at [www.languages.lds.org](http://www.languages.lds.org).

## TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

*Numbers represent the first page of the article.*

- |                                |  |  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Aaronic Priesthood</b> , 37 | <b>Godhead</b> , 26                        | <b>Prayer</b> , 48, 56, 62                 |
| <b>Activation</b> , 40         | <b>Home teaching</b> , 42                  | <b>Priesthood blessings</b> , 42           |
| <b>Book of Mormon</b> , 47, 56 | <b>Honesty</b> , 60                        | <b>Relief Society</b> , 7                  |
| <b>Church callings</b> , 43    | <b>Jesus Christ</b> , 14, 66, 80           | <b>Revelation</b> , 26                     |
| <b>Conversion</b> , 41, 56     | <b>Kindness</b> , 57, 58, 70               | <b>Scriptures</b> , 12, 20, 44, 47, 62, 64 |
| <b>Courage</b> , 60            | <b>Media</b> , 48                          | <b>Seminary</b> , 55                       |
| <b>Divine protection</b> , 50  | <b>Missionary work</b> , 4, 41, 50, 58, 68 | <b>Service</b> , 58, 62                    |
| <b>Duty to God</b> , 37        | <b>Mutual</b> , 52                         | <b>Teaching</b> , 14                       |
| <b>Faith</b> , 44, 58          | <b>New Testament</b> , 20                  | <b>Testimony</b> , 49, 55, 56              |
| <b>Family</b> , 26, 48         | <b>Obedience</b> , 50                      | <b>Virtue</b> , 54                         |
| <b>Family history</b> , 8      | <b>Personal Progress</b> , 34              |  |
| <b>Fellowshipping</b> , 8      |  |  |



By President  
Thomas S. Monson



# THE LORD NEEDS MISSIONARIES

Last October in general conference I called for more missionaries. Every worthy, able young man should prepare to serve a mission. Such service is a priesthood duty—an obligation the Lord expects of us who have been given so very much. Young men, I admonish you to prepare for service as a missionary. Keep yourselves clean and pure and worthy to represent the Lord. Maintain your health and strength. Study the scriptures. Where such is available, participate in seminary and institute. Familiarize yourself with the missionary handbook *Preach My Gospel*.

Sisters, while you do not have the same priesthood responsibility as do the young men to serve as full-time missionaries, you also make a valuable contribution as missionaries, and we welcome your service.

To the mature brothers and sisters of the Church, I remind you that the Lord needs many, many more of you to serve as full-time missionaries. If

you are not yet at the season of life to serve a couples mission, I urge you to prepare now for the day when, as your circumstances allow, you and your spouse might do so. There are few times in your lives when you will enjoy the sweet spirit and satisfaction that come from giving full-time service together in the work of the Master.

Now, some of you may be shy by nature or consider yourselves inadequate to respond affirmatively to the call to serve. Remember that this is the Lord's work, and when we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help. The Lord will shape the back to bear the burden placed upon it.

Others, though worthy to serve, may feel they have more important priorities. Well do I remember the Lord's promise: "For them that honour me I will honour" (1 Samuel 2:30). None of us will honor our Heavenly Father and our Savior more than by serving as a devoted, compassionate missionary.

An example of such service was the missionary experience of Juliusz and Dorothy Fussek, who were called to fill a mission in Poland. Brother Fussek was born in Poland. He spoke the language. He loved the people. Sister Fussek was born in England and knew little of Poland and nothing of its people. Trusting in the Lord, they embarked on their assignment. The work was lonely, their task immense. A mission had not at that time been established in Poland. The assignment given the Fusseks was to prepare the way so that a mission could be established.

Did Elder and Sister Fussek despair because of the enormity of their assignment? Not for a moment. They knew their calling was from God. They prayed for His divine help, and they devoted themselves wholeheartedly to their work.

In time Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; Elder Hans B. Ringger, then of the



Seventy; and I, accompanied by Elder Fussek, met with the religious affairs minister, Adam Wopatka, of the Polish government. We heard him say, “Your church is welcome here. You may build your buildings; you may send your missionaries. This man,” pointing to Juliusz Fussek, “has served your church well. You can be grateful for his example and his work.”

Like the Fusseks, let us do what we should do in the work of the Lord. Then we can, with Juliusz and Dorothy Fussek, echo the Psalm:

“My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

“ . . . He that keepeth thee will not slumber.

“Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep”

(Psalm 121:2–4). ■

#### TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

**T**eaching, *No Greater Call* states: “Share a personal experience about how living a gospel principle has blessed your life. Invite those you teach to briefly share their own experiences” ([1999], 159). Read this message and then ask family members whom President Monson has said should serve a mission. Share personal experiences that you or others have had serving as full-time missionaries. Or share your plans to serve as a missionary in the future. Ask family members to share their plans and positive experiences.

## YOUTH



### Bike to the Future

By Peter Evans and Richard M. Romney

**L**ots of young men prepare financially to serve a mission. In Africa part of that preparation is earning enough money for a passport. Sedrick Tshiambine earned what he needed in an enterprising way: by selling bananas from the back of a bicycle.

Sedrick lives in Luputa, Democratic Republic of Congo. He's one of 45 young men in the Luputa district who is working to save money for a passport to go on a mission. In DR Congo a passport costs \$250, which is about two-thirds the cost of building a house.

But Sedrick was undaunted. He earned his mission money by cycling 15–30 kilometers (9–19 miles) from Luputa to small villages, where he purchased bananas, then cycling back across the hot African savanna, his bike heavily laden with fruit to sell in the city. Each week he traveled about 180 kilometers (112 miles) along the sandy roads, and only once did an unbalanced load cause a tumble.

For his efforts Sedrick earned about \$1.25 a week, or \$65.00 a year. It took him four years to save enough to purchase his passport, but now he knows his future will include a full-time mission because he is financially ready to answer the call to serve.

## CHILDREN

### I'll Prepare While I Am Young

**T**o help children remember President Monson's call to prepare to serve a mission, photocopy this certificate, print it from LDS.org, or make a certificate of your own for your children to sign and keep as a reminder, perhaps on their wall or in their journal.



### I WILL PREPARE

President Thomas S. Monson called me to prepare to serve a mission. I will:

- Keep myself clean and pure and worthy to represent the Lord.
- Maintain my health and strength.
- Pray and study the scriptures.

I will prepare to serve a mission.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)





Faith • Family • Relief

## The History and Heritage of Relief Society

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

Eliza R. Snow recalled the Prophet Joseph Smith teaching that “although the name [Relief Society] may be of modern date, the institution is of ancient origin.”<sup>1</sup>

Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, visited Joseph Smith and, through him, restored the fulness of the gospel to the earth. Relief Society was part of that restoration. The organization of the Church was not complete until the sisters were organized.<sup>2</sup>

In the coming months, each Visiting Teaching Message will give us the opportunity to learn more about the history of Relief Society and its part in the restored gospel. For many reasons, understanding our history is not only important but *essential*.

First, an understanding of our history inspires us to be the women of God we need to be. By following the examples of noble Latter-day Saint women, we can learn from the past how to face the future.<sup>3</sup>

Second, our history teaches that the same principles that existed in the early Church are our foundational principles today. This knowledge and our purposes—to increase faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and homes, and help those in need—draw a connection between our past and our present.

Third, as we value our history, we can better share our spiritual heritage. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “You pass the heritage along as you help others receive the gift of charity. . . . The history of Relief Society is recorded in words and numbers, but the heritage is passed heart to heart.”<sup>4</sup>

Finally, understanding our history helps make us an effective part of the future of Relief Society. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) explained, “We know that women who have deep appreciation for the past will be concerned about shaping a righteous future.”<sup>5</sup>

*Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president.*

### What Can I Do?

1. What can I do to help the sisters I visit receive the gift of charity?
2. What can I begin to do this month to help shape a righteous future for myself? for my family? for others?

For more information, go to [www.reliefsociety.lds.org](http://www.reliefsociety.lds.org).

### From the Scriptures

Esther 9:28–29;  
Romans 16:1–2;  
Alma 37:8;  
Moroni 7:45–47

### From Our History

“Relief Society is the Lord’s organization for women.”<sup>6</sup> In his capacity as a prophet, Joseph Smith organized the Relief Society on March 17, 1842. The small, diverse group at that first meeting were dedicated women, similar to Relief Society sisters today. “The youngest were three teenagers, and the oldest, a woman in her fifties. Eleven of the women were married, two were widows, six were unmarried, and the marital status of one is unknown. Their education and backgrounds varied greatly, as did their economic circumstances. Their diversity would be magnified many times as the organization’s membership continued to grow, but they were and would continue to be one.”<sup>7</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Eliza R. Snow, “Female Relief Society,” *Deseret News*, Apr. 22, 1868, 81.
2. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 451.
3. See L. Tom Perry, “The Past Way of Facing the Future,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 73–76.
4. Henry B. Eyring, “The Enduring Legacy of Relief Society,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 124–25.
5. Spencer W. Kimball, “Privileges and Responsibilities of Sisters,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 104.
6. Spencer W. Kimball, “Relief Society—Its Promise and Potential,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1976, 4.
7. Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant* (1992), 28.



# Small & Simple Things

*“By small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6).*



## WAYS TO HELP NEW MEMBERS FEEL WELCOME

- Introduce yourself to new ward or branch members and go out of your way to sit by them in classes and sacrament meeting.
- Make an effort to remember their names.
- Priesthood leaders and members of the Sunday School and Relief Society presidencies can invite new members to introduce themselves before the lesson begins.
- Offer to assist newcomers in moving in and becoming familiar with the area.
- Invite them to ward or branch activities.
- Be a friend! Continue to become acquainted with new members in the ensuing weeks and months.

## Engaging in Family History Work

Perhaps you are the only member of the Church in your family and are new to family history work. Or perhaps others in your family have done much of the family history and temple work for your ancestors. Whatever your situation, there are still many ways you can contribute to this important work.

If you're not sure where to start, start with what you know best: yourself. After all, family history isn't just about your loved ones who are deceased. It's also about capturing your personal history as you live it. Here are some ways you might begin:

- Find an archival-safe box and put your important records inside: your birth certificate, diplomas, awards, journals, photographs—anything representative of your life.
- If you have access to scanning equipment, consider scanning old photographs to create digital copies of important photos.
- Keep a journal of inspiring thoughts, feelings, and events in your life.

- Interview your family members to record their life histories. Start with your oldest living relative. Ask questions like these: How did you get your name? What were your family traditions when you were young and later in life? What can you tell me about your family's special talents or characteristics? Compiling others' histories will be a family treasure for generations to come.
- Register for an account at [www.New.FamilySearch.org](http://www.New.FamilySearch.org) and input the genealogical information you gather about yourself and family members. Online tutorials will help you step by step.
- If possible, attend the temple to perform ordinances for your ancestors.

If you have questions about family history work, your ward or branch family history consultant can help.



## TREASURES IN HEAVEN

**“W**hen we research our own lines we become interested in more than just names or the number of names going through the temple. Our interest turns our hearts to our fathers—we seek to find them and to know them and to serve them.

“In doing so we store up treasures in heaven.”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Your Family History: Getting Started,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 17.



**CHURCH HISTORY AROUND THE WORLD**



## Hungary

**A**lthough the first Latter-day Saint missionary arrived in Hungary in 1885, he had little success and left after about three months. The first Hungarian known to join the Church, Mischa Markow, was baptized in Constantinople in 1887. He subsequently served a mission in Europe, but he was banished from Belgrade and later from Hungary because of his preaching.

For many years the political climate of Hungary limited missionary work there. During the 1980s, publicity about the Church caused many Hungarians to investigate it, and late in 1986, Hungarian government officials agreed to allow missionaries to enter the country.

Since then, missionary efforts have met with great success. The Book of Mormon was published in Hungarian in 1991, and the first stake was created in 2006.

*The Hungarian Parliament Building, completed in 1904, sits on the banks of the Danube River in Budapest.*



THE CHURCH IN HUNGARY	
Membership	4,594
Missions	1
Stakes	1
Districts	2
Wards and Branches	21



### DEALING WITH ADVERSITY

**L**iving the gospel has helped my family and me overcome temptation. I know that through fasting, paying tithing, and daily prayer, combined with hope in the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can overcome temptation.

But that doesn't mean that our lives will be free from adversity. I have also learned that the more obstacles we face, the more we can qualify for blessings and learn from our experiences. I like to think of adversity as the wind that blows a kite. The stronger it blows, the higher the kite can fly.

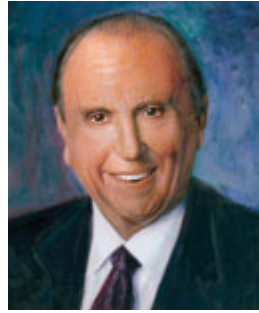
**Chhoeun Ravuth, Cambodia**



Howard W. Hunter



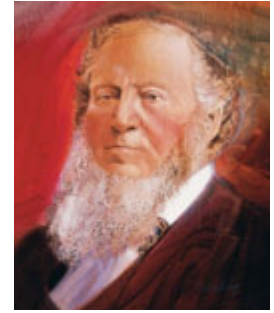
Gordon B. Hinckley



Thomas S. Monson



Joseph Smith



Brigham Young



Ezra Taft Benson



Spencer W. Kimball



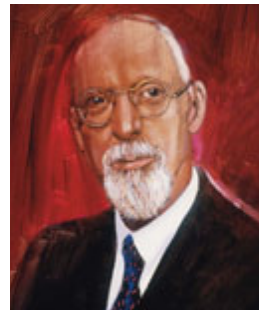
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Joseph Fielding Smith



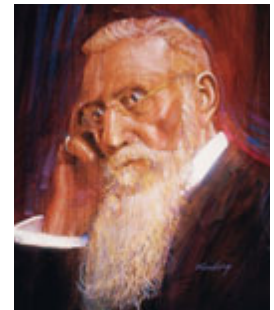
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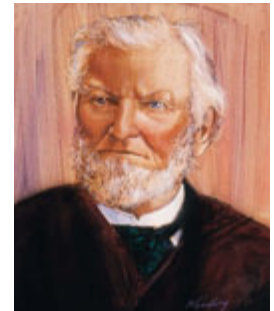
## Presidents of the Church

How well do you know the Presidents of the Church? Take this quiz and find out. Answers are below.

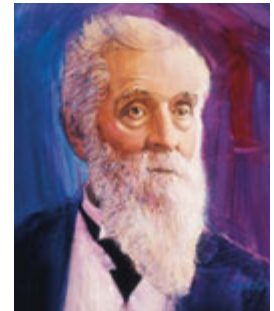
1. After Joseph Smith, who served the shortest time as an Apostle before becoming President of the Church?
2. Who served for the longest total time as a General Authority?
3. Who served the longest time as Church President?
4. Who was the only Church President born outside the United States?
5. Before President Thomas S. Monson, who was the only Church President to have served as a bishop?
6. Who served a mission to what is now the Hawaiian Islands when he was only 15?
7. Who served as the United States Secretary of Agriculture while also serving as an Apostle?
8. Who was the longest-living President of the Church?
9. Who broke bones in his arms and legs, accidentally split his foot with an ax, was bitten by a rabid dog, had his legs crushed by falling trees, nearly died of blood poisoning, nearly drowned, nearly froze to death, and survived the wreck of a speeding train?



John Taylor



Wilford Woodruff



Lorenzo Snow

- Answers:**
1. Brigham Young, 12 years
  2. David O. McKay, nearly 64 years
  3. Brigham Young, 30 years
  4. John Taylor, born in Milnthorpe, England
  5. Howard W. Hunter
  6. Joseph F. Smith
  7. Ezra Taft Benson
  8. Gordon B. Hinckley, age 97
  9. Wilford Woodruff

# THE RESTORING POWER OF PRAYER

By Marcos A. Walker

I can still remember my feelings the time I saw tears of repentance streaming down the face of my 10-year-old son, Arián.

He had been playing with his older brother, Joel, who was 12, in the bedroom, when all of a sudden an

In response, Arián, who was visibly shaken and crying after his altercation with his brother, responded to me in an unacceptable manner. I corrected him twice (now his argument was with me), but the situation just got worse. He was out of control, red in

the face, and shaking. My nerves were getting to me, but I knew that there had to be a solution without my starting to shout.

The principle of prayer quickly came to mind. Yes, that was the answer, and so I took him into my room, closed the door, and said, “Arián, let’s kneel down, and I’m going to offer a prayer to Heavenly Father.”

We both knelt down as his cries of fury continued. I prayed with the objective of trying to help my son. In the middle of the prayer I noticed that his sobs were dying down. The tears rolling down his cheeks were now tears of repentance.

argument broke out, and I had to intervene and reestablish order. Perhaps because of their ages, fighting had become frequent between the boys.

As we concluded our prayer, Arián raised his eyes and asked, “Dad, can you forgive me?” We embraced, and I was not able to contain my own tears.



## THE GIFT OF PRAYER

“Prayer is a supernatural gift of our Father in Heaven to every soul. Think of it: the absolute

Supreme Being, the most all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful personage, encourages you and me, as insignificant as we are, to converse with Him as our Father. . . .

“It matters not our circumstance, be we humble or arrogant, poor or rich, free or enslaved, learned or ignorant, loved or forsaken, we can address Him. We need no appointment. Our supplication can be brief or can occupy all the time needed. It can be an extended expression of love and gratitude or an urgent plea for help. He has created numberless cosmos and populated them with worlds, yet you and I can talk with Him personally, and He will ever answer.”

**Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2007, 8.**

Feelings of peace and love filled my soul. Arián said nothing more, but I knew that he had experienced the restoring power of prayer and that the Holy Ghost had penetrated his heart.

Now he not only knew about the power of prayer, but he had gained a testimony of it. ■

# THE SCRIPTURES

## TEACH AND TESTIFY OF JESUS CHRIST

**T**he scriptures contain counsel from prophets, inspired accounts of God's dealings with people, and revelations from God to His prophets. Scriptures teach that we are children of our Heavenly Father, who loves us. As part of His plan for our eternal happiness, we have come to earth. While we are here, the scriptures are a spiritual lifeline to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

The main purpose of the scriptures is to testify of Christ, helping us come unto Him and receive eternal life (see John 5:39). Thus Latter-day prophets counsel us to study the scriptures every day, both individually and with our families. President Thomas S. Monson said: "Participate in daily scripture study. Crash courses are not nearly so effective as the day-to-day reading and application of the scriptures in our lives. Become acquainted with the lessons the scriptures teach. . . . Study them as though they were speaking to you, for such is the truth."<sup>1</sup>

Through the words of the scriptures, we can come to know and love our Heavenly Father and the Savior Jesus Christ. We can read Their commandments and, as a result, learn to see the difference between right and wrong. We gain strength to resist the temptation to sin. We increase our desire to obey God's laws. The scriptures comfort us and teach us while we are on earth, and they show us the way back to our heavenly home.

#### NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, "Be Your Best Self," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 68.

For more information, see *Gospel Principles* (2009), 45–49; and *True to the Faith* (2004), 155–59.

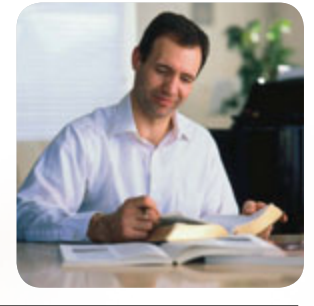
**T**he central purpose of all scripture is to fill our souls with faith in God the Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ. . . .

". . . Faith comes by the witness of the Holy Spirit to our souls, Spirit to spirit, as we hear or read the word of God. And faith matures as we continue to feast upon the word. . . .

". . . Study the scriptures carefully, deliberately. Ponder and pray over them. Scriptures are revelation, and they will bring added revelation."

**Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Blessing of Scripture," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2010, 34, 35.**

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accept the following as scripture:



*"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).*

1. *The Bible is a collection of sacred writings containing God's revelations to ancient prophets in the Holy Land. Our eighth article of faith states, "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly."*



2. *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ contains God's revelations to ancient prophets in the Americas. It contains the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see D&C 20:9).*



3. *The Doctrine and Covenants is a book of revelations regarding the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, given to modern prophets beginning with Joseph Smith.*



4. *The Pearl of Great Price contains additional revelations from God to Moses, Abraham, and Joseph Smith.*



5. *God continues to reveal truths to living prophets through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. These truths are considered scripture (see D&C 68:4). They come to us primarily through general conference, held the first weekend in April and October, when members throughout the world hear addresses from our prophet and other Church leaders. ■*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DEREK ISRAELSEN © 2002; CHRIST IN GETHSEMANE, BY HARRY ANDERSON © IRI; THREE NEPHITES, BY GARY KAPP © 1996 IRI; JESUS CHRIST APPEARS TO THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH AND OLIVER COWDERY, BY WALTER RANE, COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM; THE FIRST VISION, BY DEL PARSON © 1987 IRI; PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND © IRI; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA SMITH © IRI



By Elder Jay E. Jensen  
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

# THE SAVIOR

## THE MASTER TEACHER

*We are to feast upon the words of Christ—the scriptures—and, as He did, use them to teach and strengthen others.*

Under the direction of His Father, Jesus Christ created worlds without number. He was the great Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament. He was born of a mortal mother, Mary, and of God the Eternal Father. He was the greatest being to live on earth. He said He came “to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34).

His message and ministry were declarations without equivocation that He is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the promised Messiah.

In His teachings He often cited Old Testament scriptures. He used the scriptures to prepare for His ministry, to resist evil and temptation, to honor and affirm the validity of past prophets, and to strengthen others. From His example we may learn to use the scriptures more effectively in our responsibilities as parents,

leaders, and teachers—He having set a perfect example in all things, including as the master teacher.

### Preparing for His Ministry

When the Lord came to earth, He had a veil of forgetfulness placed over His mind, as we do, but He, like us, progressed from grace to grace (see D&C 93:11–17). He was taught by His Heavenly Father (see John 8:28; 12:49) and by mortal teachers. As Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles pointed out: “Our knowledge of Jewish life in that age

justifies the inference that the Boy was well taught in the law and the scriptures, for such was the rule. He garnered knowledge by study, and gained wisdom by prayer, thought, and effort.”<sup>1</sup>

**“I am the bread of life:**  
he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”







From His early childhood until He began His public ministry, the only story we have of Him is in a teaching role in the temple at age 12, demonstrating an unusual command of wisdom and knowledge: “After three days [Joseph and Mary] found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors [or teachers], both hearing them, and asking them questions” (Luke 2:46). The Joseph Smith Translation clarifies this verse and indicates that the teachers were listening to Jesus and asking *Him* questions.

“After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors [or teachers], both hearing them, and asking them questions.”

His growing in knowledge before He began His ministry exemplifies the counsel He gave to Hyrum Smith in 1829: “Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men” (D&C 11:21).

We too can search the scriptures for instruction and inspiration as we begin our ministries, whether that ministry be a new calling, a new responsibility (such as parenthood), or simply a family home evening lesson.

### Resisting Evil and Temptation

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus was tempted by the devil. Two of the three temptations began with a barb of doubt: “If thou be the Son of God” (Matthew 4:3, 6). To resist Satan, the Savior cited three Old Testament scriptures, saying, “It is written . . .” (verses 4, 7, 10).

The Savior also taught His followers through scriptural examples how to overcome evil. Teaching people to resist evil or face dire consequences, the Master Teacher cited an Old Testament account: “It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than

LEFT: ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS, BY HARRY ANDERSON; COURTESY OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH; RIGHT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MATTHEW REIER © IRI; JESUS IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT NAZARETH, BY GREG OLSEN, COURTESY OF LEO AND ANNETTE BEUS

for that city [those who rejected His gospel]" (Matthew 10:15).

If we obey it, the word of God has an inherent protective power: "Whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them" (1 Nephi 15:24).

One of my favorite scriptures to resist Satan today is this verse: "Mine eyes are upon you. I am in your midst" (D&C 38:7). It dispels forever the lie "no one will know."

### Honoring Past Prophets

The Savior acknowledged the ancient prophets and quoted what they said. In this dispensation, He commanded Sidney Rigdon to "call on the holy prophets to prove [Joseph Smith's] words" (D&C 35:23).

To give testimony of and reverence to Old Testament prophets, the Savior referred to Noah (spelled "Noe" in the New Testament; see Matthew 24:37–38); Abraham (see Luke 16:22–31; John 8:56–58); Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see Matthew 8:11); Moses (see John 5:46); David (see Luke 6:3); Elijah (spelled "Elias" in the New Testament; see Luke 4:25–26); and Isaiah (spelled "Esaias" in the New Testament; see Luke 4:16–21; John 1:23). He also honored and supported His contemporary, John the Baptist (see Matthew 11:7–11).

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Savior made important connections to Old Testament prophets and their teachings concerning Him. This is illustrated by the close correlations between phrases from the Beatitudes (see Matthew 5:3–11) and from Isaiah 61:1–3.<sup>2</sup>

We too can honor past and current prophets by considering their teachings for what they are: the word and the will of the Lord

(see D&C 68:4). As we prepare to teach from the scriptures, we must prayerfully search for principles we can liken to those we teach.

### Strengthening Others

A singularly significant message in the life of the Master is "the bread of life" sermon (see John 6). It illustrates His command and use of the scriptures as well as their relevance to us.

The day before He gave this message, the Lord had worked the miracle of feeding the 5,000, gaining more followers (see John 6:5–14). If this and other miracles were not enough to help lead others to believe in Him, He openly declared in the bread of life sermon who He is. This sermon served to train His Apostles, especially Peter, whose testimony was strengthened (see verses 63–71).

The Master Teacher referred to an Old Testament event to introduce the bread of life sermon:

"Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.



### THE MASTER TEACHER

"The Savior is the master teacher. The teaching of Jesus Christ constitutes a treatise on teaching technique surpassed by none. Jesus has been described as a philosopher, an economist, a social reformer, and many other things. But more than these, the Savior was a teacher. If you were to ask, 'What did Jesus have as an occupation?' There is only one answer: He was a teacher. It is He who should be our ideal. It is He who is the master teacher."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, *Mine Errand from the Lord* (2008), 336.



bread and water in the sacrament: “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (John 6:53).

We know this sermon strengthened Peter, for he testified, “We believe and are sure that thou art Christ, the son of the living God” (John 6:69). The bread of life sermon is relevant to us, for we too will believe and be certain that Jesus is the Christ when we read, study, and cite—not paraphrase—holy writ to strengthen ourselves and others.

**Fulfilling Scripture:  
The Triumphal Entry**

The Lord’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem was a tacit affirmation of His knowledge and use of scriptures: “Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Psalm 118:26; see also Mark 11:9–10). He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling the prophecy “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: . . . thy King cometh unto thee: . . . riding upon an ass” (Zechariah 9:9; see also Matthew 21:4–5).

From the beginning of His mortal ministry to the Garden of Gethsemane, the cross, and the empty tomb, Jesus the Christ had established—through ancient scripture and His ministry, miracles, and messages—that He was the promised Messiah.

“For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world” (John 6:32–33; see also Exodus 16).

To which they said, “Evermore give us this bread” (John 6:34).

His answer revealed to the spiritually endowed His divine identity as the Son of God, the promised Messiah and Savior: “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).

The Savior then declared the divine doctrine uniting the Atonement and the emblems of the

**“Rejoice greatly,  
O daughter of Zion:  
. . . thy King cometh  
unto thee: . . . riding  
upon an ass.”**



## Sharing the Bread of Life

By Carlos Roberto Fusco, as told to Maiby Márcia Bastos Fusco

It was a hot day in Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná, Brazil. I had traveled several hours and was tired. As a leader in the Church Educational System, I had matters to address with the bishop, who was meeting me at the church. However, he was unavailable for a few minutes when I arrived.

While I waited, a lady entered the church. She approached me and humbly asked for a small amount of money to buy bread. She explained that she and her husband were hungry, and despite being embarrassed for asking, she said she didn't have any other choice. "Just for a little bread is all," she added.

I was moved, and I took a little money from my pocket. She thought it was a lot. I told her, "Buy bread, milk, and some meat."

She was grateful and told me that her husband had been promised a job for the next Tuesday. She wanted to pay me back as soon as he received his payment.

I told her that she didn't need to. She insisted.

I told her, "Instead of paying me, you can come back to this chapel on Sunday morning. When you get here, tell anyone you see that you want to talk with the missionaries. OK?" She agreed.

The woman left. I resolved what had to be discussed with the bishop and continued traveling through Paraná, doing my work.

Many months passed, and another opportunity took me to that same meetinghouse in Foz do Iguaçu for a conference. The choir was beautiful and performed sweetly. When the conference ended, one of the members of the choir approached me. She stretched forth her hand, greeting me with a beautiful smile, and said with emotion, "Thank you, brother. You gave me not only bread to satisfy my hunger and my husband's; you also gave me the bread of life. Thank you."

I felt an immense joy as I recognized the woman as the one who had asked me for a little money several months earlier. I realized that the gospel of Jesus Christ—who declared Himself to be the Bread of Life—transforms the life of whoever accepts it.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). This declaration of His submissiveness and His accomplishment of the infinite atoning sacrifice testifies that He is the Son of God, the greatest teacher who has ever or will ever live.

The scriptures testify and teach of Jesus Christ. When we immerse ourselves in them, we will come to know Him and His voice: "These words are not of men nor of man, but of me; wherefore, you shall testify they are of me and not of man" (D&C 18:34). I have found that when I immerse myself in the scriptures first at home with my wife and family, I am more effective in my service in the Church.

I love the scriptures. I testify that they are the word of God. May we teach from them, as the Savior did, in our homes and in our callings, that "the virtue of the word of God" might have a "powerful effect" upon those we teach (Alma 31:5). ■

### NOTES

1. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 112.
2. See Thomas A. Wayment, "Jesus' Uses of the Psalms in Matthew," in Frank F. Judd and Gaye Strathearn, eds., *Sperry Symposium Classics: The New Testament* (2006), 137–49.



# The Historical Context of the New Testament

**By Thomas A. Wayment**

Associate Professor of Ancient Scripture,  
Brigham Young University

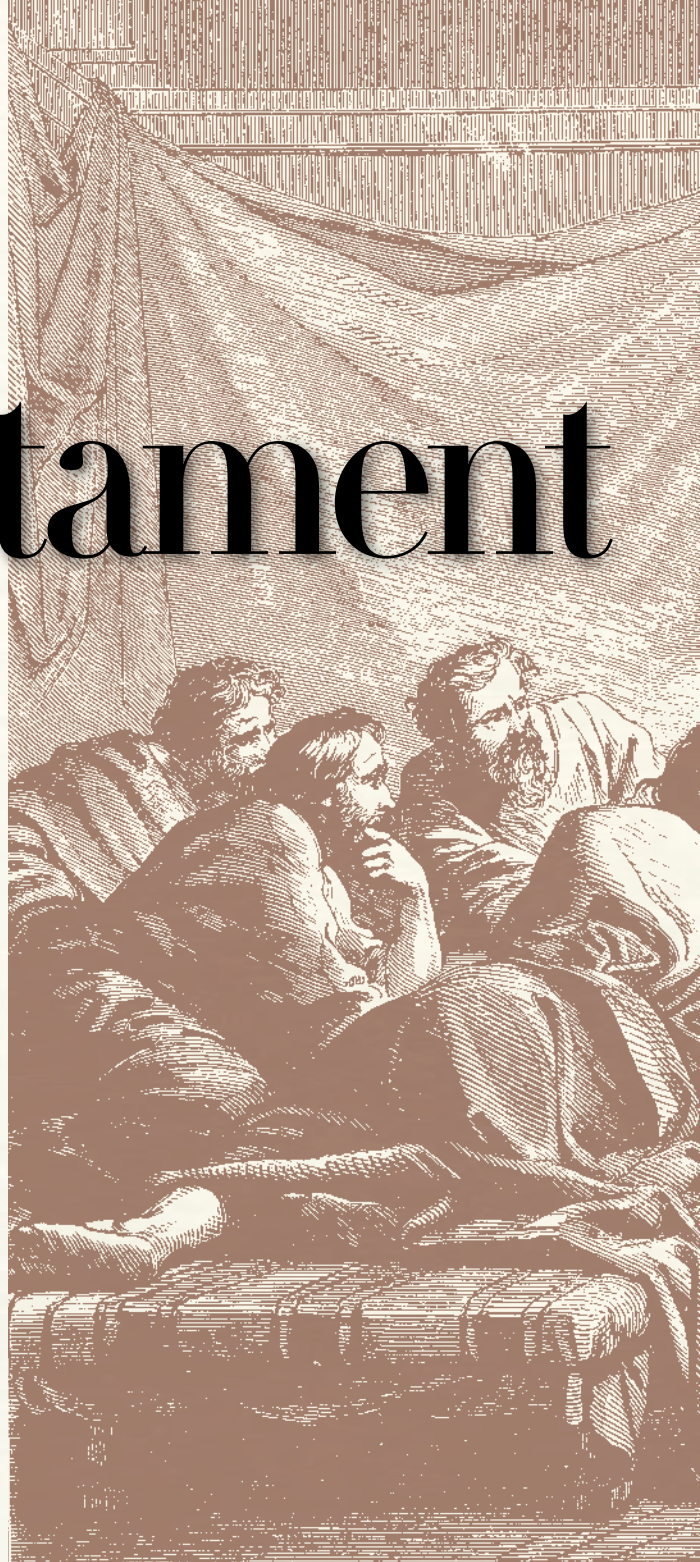
Each volume of sacred scripture has its own unique history and bears testimony to the gospel of salvation in its own distinct way. The New Testament has the distinction of being the volume of scripture that preserves the words of individuals who knew Jesus personally or who followed Him shortly after His Resurrection—making the New Testament an invaluable resource to help us come closer to the Savior and gain a glimpse of His mortal ministry. An understanding of the history of the New Testament, how it has been passed down to us, and who wrote it can increase our appreciation of this remarkable book of scripture and in turn give us greater spiritual strength as we, like the early followers of Jesus Christ, face our own trials.

## **What Is the New Testament?**

In the years shortly after Jesus died, the term “New Testament”

would not have referred to a collection of books about the Lord’s life and death but more precisely to something He said to His disciples on the night of the Last Supper: “This is my blood of the *new testament*, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28; emphasis added). The Greek words translated as “new testament” actually refer to a covenant, the new covenant the Savior extends to us through the Atonement. The writings recorded in the Bible and referred to as the New Testament describe, document, and teach about that new covenant between the Lord and His people.

The writings preserved in the New Testament focus upon different aspects of the Savior’s ministry. The New Testament begins with the Gospels, a term that means the “good news,” referring to the life, ministry, and divine role of Jesus Christ. The New Testament also contains a



*Understanding the origins of this remarkable book of scripture can inspire our study.*



*Jesus Christ and His Apostles at the Last Supper.*

history of the first missionary efforts of the Church (the book of Acts); letters from early leaders, such as Peter and Paul, that admonish the early Christians (who were also called Saints) to remain true to the faith; a

testimony (Hebrews); and an apocalypse (Revelation) that promises the return of the Lord in the latter days. Each of the writers has a different perspective to offer, and each wrote with a specific audience in mind rather

than attempting to fill in perceived gaps in the historical record. In the middle of the fourth century A.D., the 27 books that record the new covenant of the Lord were gathered together and ordered as they appear today.



The early Saints hearing one of Paul's epistles.

## How Was the New Testament Passed Down to Us?

From the larger group of disciples, Jesus called 12 men as Apostles. Those men followed Him throughout His ministry, suffered with Him, and also enjoyed triumphs and Spirit-filled experiences. After Jesus died, the Apostles, along with other faithful followers, began to record their experiences. Two events may have triggered their desire to preserve their records about the life of Jesus: first, Jerusalem and the temple fell to a Roman army in A.D. 70. Second, the forces of

apostasy were already at work (see Acts 20:29–30). Therefore, many of the writings in the New Testament were recorded to help the faithful see their way through the calamity and controversy of their day.

Looking back on their experiences, we can learn how they faced troubling times and how the good news of the gospel became a steadying power in the struggle against the forces of apostasy.

Toward the end of the first century,

all of the writings now preserved in the New Testament were completed and circulated widely among the branches of the Church. Scribes made copies of the texts on papyrus and then later on parchment,

*Many of the writings in the New Testament were recorded to help the faithful see their way through the calamities of their day.*

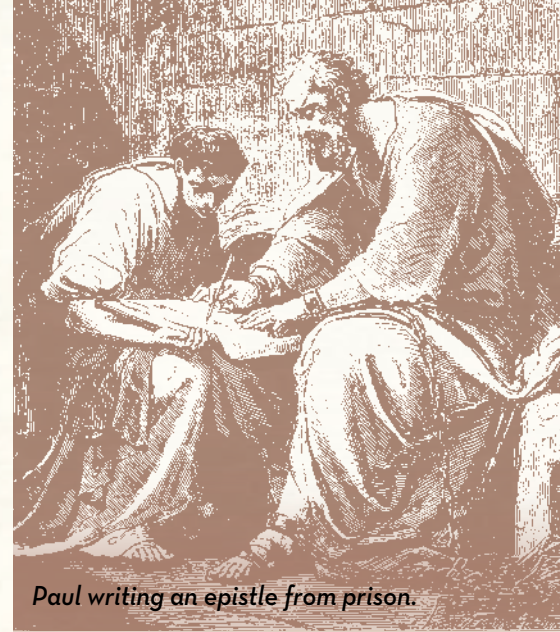


but there were relatively few copies available. Church members gathered the books that were available to them and read and studied the words of the Lord and the Apostles. One notable setback to the circulation of the scriptures was the persecution of Christians by the Roman emperor Diocletian in A.D. 303. He ordered that the Christian scriptures be burned and forced Christians to offer sacrifices to pagan gods. Many faithful individuals hid the sacred texts during those years of persecution. Later, when the first Christian emperor, Constantine, ordered new copies of the scriptures to be made, his scholars were able to recover books that had been used in the branches prior to Diocletian's edict. Our modern printed editions of the New Testament trace their ancestry to the copies of the Bible made during Constantine's day and therefore back to those individuals who sacrificed their safety to preserve the new covenant of the Lord.

Not long after Constantine had directed the New Testament to be copied and circulated anew, the books that compose our current Bible came to be organized in their present order. This order follows a pattern set by the Old Testament. The New Testament contains the Law (the Gospels), the history of Christianity (Acts), and the Prophets (Romans through Revelation). Both the Old and New Testaments end with a promise of the Lord's return (Malachi and Revelation). The placement of these prophetic works also emphasizes a forward-looking hope of salvation and future revelation.

### Who Wrote the New Testament?

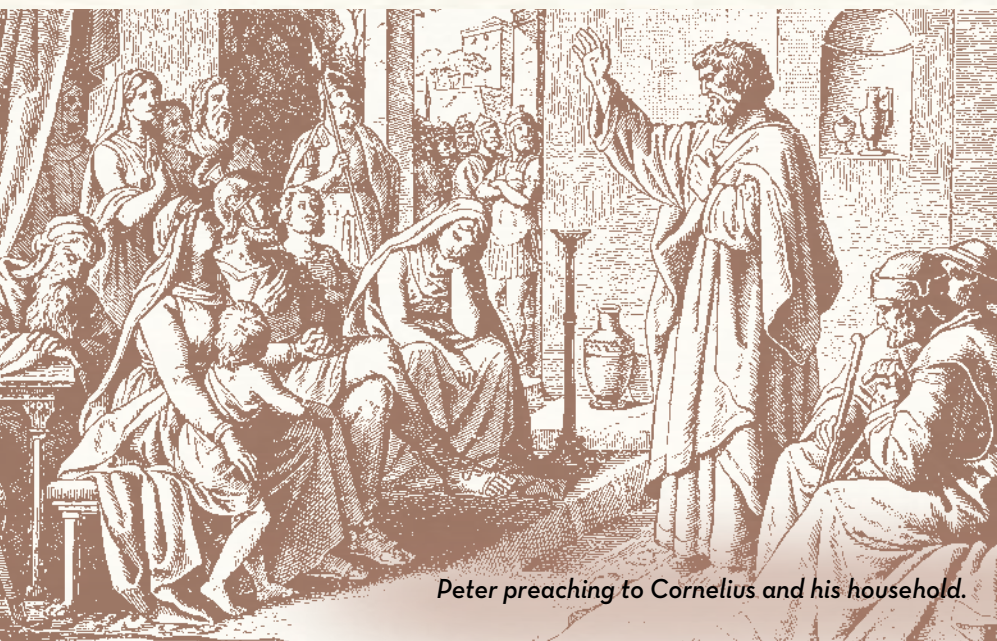
Each author of the New Testament wrote with a distinct perspective on the saving mission of Jesus Christ. Two of the Gospels were written by Apostles: Matthew and John. These apostolic witnesses provide an eyewitness testimony to the life of Jesus. Two later followers of the Lord also



*Paul writing an epistle from prison.*

wrote Gospels: Mark and Luke, who testified to what they had felt and heard. Both of these men were at one time companions of Paul (see Acts 12:25; 2 Timothy 4:11) and reflect in part the interests of the growing number of Saints who lived outside of Judea and who had never known the Lord in His lifetime. Instead, their accounts provide a vivid testimony of Him in whom they believed.

Paul's letters are likely the earliest writings in the New Testament, although they were not all written at the same time. His testimony was borne of experience as a missionary, from several powerful visions (see Acts 9:1-6; 2 Corinthians 12:1-7), and through personal association with Peter and others (see Galatians 1:18-19). He wrote largely to settle disputes within the branches, but at other times he wrote to his personal friends (Timothy and Titus). In one letter Paul asks that a slave owner accept the return of a runaway slave whom Paul had met while they were in prison (Philemon). Traditionally, the book of Hebrews is ascribed to Paul, although the usual introduction wherein he identifies himself as the



*Peter preaching to Cornelius and his household.*



*Peter and John preaching and healing.*

author is not present. Regardless, the book testifies of how we can boldly come to the Lord through faith. Included in the New Testament after Paul's letters, Hebrews is a treatise on having faith in the face of adversity.

The short Epistle of James was also written quite early and contains references to Jesus's teachings from the Sermon on the Mount that were transmitted orally and separately from the written Gospel of Matthew (see James 1:13; 4:12; 5:12). James, the Lord's younger brother, is the probable author of this epistle. He was privileged to know and see the resurrected Savior (see 1 Corinthians 15:7) and played an important role in many events in the Church's history (see Acts 15:13–29).

The New Testament also contains two letters by the Apostle Peter and three by the Apostle John. Both urged Christians to be faithful; Peter in particular was concerned about fidelity during times of trial.

Jude is one of the latest books written in the New Testament. Like James, this book was also probably written by

one of the Lord's brothers ("Juda" in Mark 6:3). Jude wrote in an attempt to quell growing apostasy in the branches.

Finally, the New Testament ends with the revelation to the Apostle John, who recorded a vision of the Lord's return in glory to usher in His millennial reign. That vision describes in vivid detail the struggle between good and evil. Most of the chapters deal with events that were in the future



#### **EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS**

"I love the New Testament's apostolic travels and miracles and the letters of Paul. Most of all, I love its eyewitness accounts of the words and the example and the Atonement of our Savior Jesus Christ. I love the perspective and peace that come from reading the Bible."

**Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Miracle of the Holy Bible," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2007, 81.**

for John, including events in the latter days—our day.

#### **For Whom Was the New Testament Written?**

Because the New Testament is properly a new covenant between the Lord and those who have faith in Him, the books are intended for all those who seek to know Him, whether in this dispensation or in previous dispensations. Originally, the authors of the New Testament wrote texts that could be of immediate use in the branches of the Church in their day, with an understanding that they were recording the most important events in the history of humankind. John, for example, viewed his writings as a testimony: "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). Others, such as Luke, wrote with the intent to document the history:

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a

## CHILDREN

### Where Is It in the Scriptures?

Listed below are eight stories from the scriptures. Find which book of scripture each story comes from. If you're not sure, look up the subject of the story in the index, Topical Guide, or Guide to the Scriptures.

- Nephi breaks his hunting bow. (1)
- Noah builds the ark. (2)
- The Word of Wisdom is given. (3)
- Esther saves her people. (4)
- The prodigal son returns home. (5)
- Captain Moroni makes the title of liberty. (6)
- Jesus teaches the Sermon on the Mount. (7)
- The Kirtland Temple is dedicated. (8)

Now find the numbers in the puzzle that match the number in parentheses. Color those spaces the color listed below for that book of scripture.

Old Testament=blue

Book of Mormon=yellow

New Testament=red

Doctrine and Covenants=brown

declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

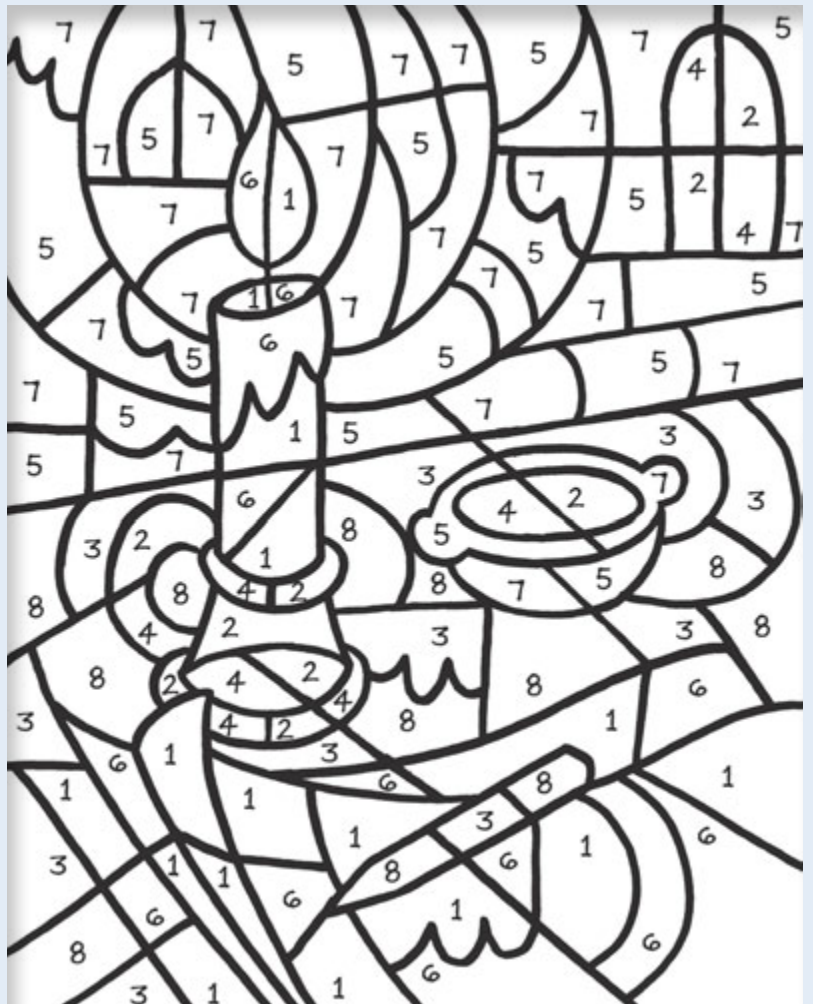
“Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

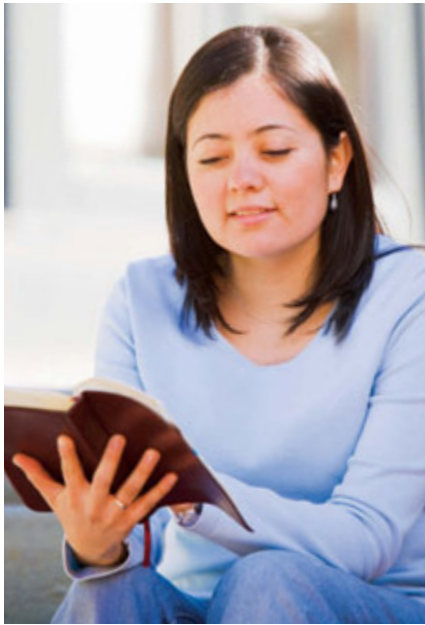
“It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order” (Luke 1:1–3).

Early Christians were diverse, some coming from Jewish families, while others had been raised in Gentile homes, while still others likely had very little formal religion in their lives prior to being baptized. They were, in effect, a mirror of today's diverse group of Saints. Therefore, their struggles can reveal to us powerful lessons on how to overcome wickedness and remain faithful despite trial and temptation. They also show us how the branches struggled when they were very small and how there was safety in the words of the apostles and prophets.

#### A Testimony for Today

The New Testament reveals that during uncertain times, when some would not hearken to the call of the gospel, there was safety for those who “continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). Other examples teach us how even the righteous are tried (see 1 Corinthians 10:13) and how the heart of the gospel message is as simple today as it was 2,000 years ago: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27). Like the Doctrine and Covenants, in which the Prophet Joseph Smith bore the testimony “that he lives!” (D&C 76:22), the New Testament bears a similar testimony that the tomb was empty on Easter morning: “He is not here: for he is risen” (Matthew 28:6). ■





*This article is excerpted from an address given to the faculty and students of Harvard Law School on February 26, 2010.*

**W**e Latter-day Saints know that our doctrines and values are not widely understood by those not of our faith. This was demonstrated by Gary C. Lawrence's nationwide study published in his recent book, *How Americans View Mormonism*. Three-quarters of those surveyed associated our Church with high moral standards, but about half thought we were secretive and mysterious and had "weird beliefs."<sup>1</sup> When asked to select various words they thought described Latter-day Saints in general, 87 percent checked "strong family values," 78 percent checked "honest," and 45 percent checked "blind followers."<sup>2</sup>

When Lawrence's interviewers asked, "To the best of your understanding, what is the main claim of

# FUNDAMENTAL

## TO OUR FAITH

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



Mormonism?" only 14 percent could describe anything close to the idea of restoration or reestablishment of the original Christian faith. Similarly, when another national survey asked respondents what one word best described their impression of the Mormon religion, not one person suggested the words or ideas of original or restoration Christianity.<sup>3</sup>

My disappointment with these findings is only slightly reduced by Lawrence's other findings and observation

*As an Apostle I am called to be a witness of the doctrine, work, and authority of Christ in all the world. In that capacity I bear witness of the truth of these premises of our faith.*



that on the subject of religion Americans in general are “deeply religious” but “profoundly ignorant.” For example, 68 percent said they prayed at least several times a week, and 44 percent said they attended religious services almost every week. At the same time, only half could name even one of the four Gospels, most could not name the first book of the Bible, and 10 percent thought Joan of Arc was Noah’s wife.<sup>4</sup>

Many factors contribute to the predominant shallowness on the subject of religion, but one of them is surely higher education’s general hostility or indifference to religion. With but few exceptions, colleges and universities have become value-free places where attitudes toward religion are neutral at best. Students and other religious people who believe in the living reality of God and moral absolutes are being marginalized.

It seems unrealistic to expect higher education as a whole to resume a major role in teaching moral values. That will remain the domain of homes, churches, and church-related colleges and universities. All should hope for success in this vital task. The academy can pretend to neutrality on questions of right and wrong, but society cannot survive on such neutrality.

I have chosen three clusters of truths to present as fundamental premises of the faith of Latter-day Saints:

1. The nature of God, including the role of the three members of the Godhead and the corollary truth that there are moral absolutes.
2. The purpose of life.
3. The threefold sources of truth about

man and the universe: science, the scriptures, and continuing revelation—and how we can know them.

## 1. The Nature of God

My first fundamental premise of our faith is that God is real and so are eternal truths and values not provable by current scientific methods. These ideas are inevitably linked. Like other believers, we proclaim the existence of the ultimate lawgiver, God our Eternal Father, and the existence of moral absolutes. We reject the moral relativism that is becoming the unofficial creed of much of modern culture.

For us the truth about the nature of God and our relationship to Him is the key to everything else. Significantly, our belief in the nature of God is what distinguishes us from the formal creeds of most Christian denominations. Our Articles of Faith begin as follows: “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost” (verse 1).

We have this belief in the Godhead in common with the rest of Christianity, but to us it means something different than to most. We maintain that these three members of the Godhead are three separate and distinct beings and that God the Father is not a spirit but a glorified Being with a tangible body, as is His resurrected Son, Jesus Christ. Though separate in identity, They are one in purpose. We maintain that Jesus referred to this relationship when He prayed to His Father that His disciples would “be one” even as Jesus and His Father are one (John 17:11)—united in purpose but not in identity. Our unique belief that “the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit” (D&C 130:22) is vital to us. But, as Gary Lawrence’s interviews demonstrate, we have not effectively conveyed this belief to others.<sup>5</sup>

**W**e maintain that the three members of the Godhead are three separate and distinct beings and that God the Father is not a spirit but a glorified Being with a tangible body, as is His resurrected Son, Jesus Christ. Though separate in identity, They are one in purpose.



Our belief in the nature of God comes from what we call the First Vision, which began the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith, an unschooled boy of 14 seeking to know which church he should join, was given a vision in which he saw “two Personages” of indescribable “brightness and glory.” One of Them pointed to the other and said, “This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17). God the Son told the young prophet that all the “creeds” of the churches of that day “were an abomination in his sight” (Joseph Smith—History 1:19). This divine declaration condemned the creeds, not the faithful seekers who believed them.

Joseph Smith’s First Vision showed that the prevailing concepts of the nature of God and the Godhead were untrue and could not lead their adherents to the destiny God desired for them. A subsequent outpouring of modern scripture revealed the significance of this fundamental truth and gave us the Book of Mormon. This new book of scripture is a second witness of Jesus Christ. It affirms the biblical prophecies and teachings of the nature and mission of Christ. It enlarges our understanding of His gospel and His teachings during His earthly ministry. It also provides many teachings and illustrations of the revelations by which we may know the truth of these things.

These teachings explain our testimony of Christ. We are not grounded in the wisdom of the world or the philosophies of men—however traditional or respected they may be. Our testimony of Jesus Christ is based on the revelations of God to His prophets and to us individually.

What does our testimony of Jesus Christ cause us to affirm? Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son of God the Eternal Father. He is the Creator. Through His incomparable mortal ministry, He is our teacher. Because of His Resurrection, all who have ever lived will be raised from the dead. He is the Savior, whose atoning sacrifice opens the door for us to be forgiven of our personal sins so that we can be cleansed to return to the presence of God our Eternal Father. This is the central message of the prophets of all ages. Joseph Smith stated this great truth in our third

article of faith: “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.”

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we testify with the Book of Mormon prophet King Benjamin “that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent” (Mosiah 3:17).

Why is Christ the only way? How could He break the bands of death? How was it possible for Him to take upon Himself the sins of all mankind? How can our soiled and sinful selves be cleansed and our bodies be resurrected by His Atonement? These are mysteries I do not fully understand. To me the miracle of the Atonement of Jesus Christ is incomprehensible, but the Holy Ghost has given me a witness of its truthfulness, and I rejoice that I can spend my life in proclaiming it.

## **2. The Purpose of Mortal Life**

My second fundamental premise concerns the purpose of mortal life. This follows from our understanding of the purposes of God the Eternal Father and concerns our destiny as His children. Our theology begins with the assurance that we lived as spirits before we came to this earth. It affirms that this mortal life has a purpose. And it teaches that our highest aspiration is to become like our heavenly parents, which will empower us to perpetuate our family relationships throughout eternity. We were placed on earth to acquire a physical body and—through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and by obedience to the laws and ordinances of His gospel—to qualify for the glorified celestial condition and relationships that are called exaltation or eternal life.

We are properly known as a family-centered Church, but what is not well understood is that our family-centeredness is not just focused on mortal relationships but is also a matter of fundamental theology. Under the great plan of the loving Creator, the mission of His Church is to help us achieve exaltation in the celestial kingdom, and that can be

accomplished only through an eternal marriage between a man and a woman (see D&C 131:1–3).

My faithful widowed mother had no confusion about the eternal nature of the family relationship. She always honored the position of our faithful deceased father. She made him a presence in our home. She spoke of the eternal duration of their temple marriage and of our destiny to be together as a family in the next life. She often reminded us of what our father would like us to do so we could qualify for the Savior's promise that we could be a family forever. She never referred to herself as a widow, and it never occurred to me that she was. To me, as a boy growing up, she wasn't a widow. She had a husband, and we had a father. He was just away for a while.

We affirm that marriage is necessary for the accomplishment of God's plan to provide the approved setting for mortal birth and to prepare family members for eternal life. Knowledge of God's plan gives Latter-day Saints a unique perspective on marriage and children. We look on the bearing and nurturing of children as part of God's plan and a sacred duty of those given the power to participate in it. We believe that the ultimate treasures on earth and in heaven are our children and our posterity. And we believe that we must contend for the kind of mortal families that provide the best conditions for the development and happiness of children—all children.

The power to create mortal life is the most exalted power God has given His children. The use of this creative power was mandated in the first commandment to "be fruitful, and multiply" (Genesis 1:28). Another important commandment forbade its misuse: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14), and

**2** *Our theology affirms that this mortal life has a purpose. And it teaches that our highest aspiration is to become like our heavenly parents, which will empower us to perpetuate our family relationships throughout eternity.*





“ye should abstain from fornication” (1 Thessalonians 4:3). The emphasis we place on this law of chastity is explained by our understanding of the purpose of our procreative powers in the accomplishment of God’s plan.

There are many political, legal, and social pressures for changes that confuse gender, deemphasize the importance of marriage or change its definition, or homogenize the differences between men and women that are essential to accomplish God’s great plan of happiness. Our eternal perspective sets us against such changes.

Finally, our understanding of the purpose of mortal life includes some unique doctrines about what follows mortality. Like other Christians, we believe that when we leave this life, we go to a heaven (paradise) or a hell. But to us this two-part division of the righteous and the wicked is merely temporary while the spirits of the dead await their resurrection and Final Judgment (see Alma 40:11–14). The destinations that follow the Final Judgment are much more diverse, and they stand as evidence of the magnitude of God’s love for His children—all of them.

God’s love is so great that He requires His children to obey His laws because only through that obedience can they progress toward the eternal destiny He desires for them. Thus, in the Final Judgment we will all be assigned to the kingdom of glory that is commensurate with our obedience to His law. In his second letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul told of a vision of a man “caught up to the third heaven” (2 Corinthians 12:2). Speaking of the resurrection of the dead, he described “bodies” with different glories, like the respective glories of the sun, moon, and stars. He referred to the first two of these as “celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial” (see 1 Corinthians 15:40–42). For us, eternal life in the celestial, the highest, glory is not a mystical union with an incomprehensible spirit-god. Rather, eternal life is family life with a loving Father in Heaven and with our progenitors and our posterity.

The theology of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is comprehensive, universal, merciful, and true. Following the necessary experience of mortal life, all sons and

daughters of God will ultimately be resurrected and go to a kingdom of glory more wonderful than any mortal can comprehend. With only a few exceptions, even the very wicked will ultimately go to a marvelous—though lesser—kingdom of glory. All of this will occur because of God’s great love for His children, and it is all made possible because of the Atonement and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, “who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands” (D&C 76:43).

### 3. Sources of Truth

Latter-day Saints have a great interest in pursuing knowledge. Brigham Young (1801–77) said it best: “[Our] religion . . . prompts [us] to search diligently after knowledge. There is no other people in existence more eager to see, hear, learn, and understand truth.”<sup>6</sup>

On another occasion he explained that we encourage our members “to increase [their] knowledge . . . in every branch of [learning], for all wisdom, and all the arts and sciences in the world are from God, and are designed for the good of his people.”<sup>7</sup>

We seek after knowledge, but we do so in a special way because we believe there are two dimensions of knowledge: material and spiritual. We seek knowledge in the material dimension by scientific inquiry and in the spiritual dimension by revelation. Revelation is God’s communication to man—to prophets and to every one of us if we seek it.

Revelation is clearly one of the distinctive characteristics of our faith. The Prophet Joseph Smith was directed and edified by a continuing flow of revelation throughout his life. The immense quantity of his published revelations, including the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants, carried forward his unique calling as the Prophet of this last dispensation of time. In this *prophetic revelation*—to Joseph Smith and to his successors as Presidents of the Church—God has revealed truths and commandments to His prophet-leaders for the enlightenment of His people and for the governance and direction of His Church.

This is the kind of revelation described in the Old Testament teaching that “the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). Joseph Smith declared, “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded upon direct revelation, as the true Church of God has ever been.”<sup>8</sup> He asked, “Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations, and where is our religion?” He answered, “We have none.”<sup>9</sup>

Joseph Smith also taught that because revelation did not cease with the early Apostles but continues in these modern times, each person can receive *personal revelation* for his or her conversion, understanding, and decision making. “It is the privilege of the children of God to come to God and get revelation,” he said. “God is not a respecter of persons; we all have the same privilege.”<sup>10</sup>

The New Testament describes such personal revelation. For example, when Peter affirmed his conviction that Jesus was the divine Son of God, the Savior declared, “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:17).

Personal revelation—sometimes called “inspiration”—comes in many forms. Most often it is by words or thoughts communicated to the mind by sudden enlightenment or by positive or negative feelings about proposed courses of action. Usually it comes in response to earnest and prayerful seeking. Jesus taught, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7). Revelation comes when we keep the commandments of God and thus qualify for the companionship and communication of the Holy Spirit.

**3** We seek knowledge in the material dimension by scientific inquiry and in the spiritual dimension by revelation. Revelation is God’s communication to man—to prophets and to every one of us if we seek it.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY RUTH SIPUS

Some wonder how members of the Church accept a modern prophet's teachings to guide their personal lives, something that is unusual in most religious traditions. Our answer to the charge that Latter-day Saints follow their leaders out of "blind obedience" is this same personal revelation. We respect our leaders and presume inspiration in their leadership of the Church and in their teachings. But we are all privileged and encouraged to confirm their teachings by prayerfully seeking and receiving revelatory confirmation directly from God.

Most Christians believe that God closed the scriptural canon—the authoritative collection of sacred books used as scriptures—shortly after the death of Christ and that there have been no comparable revelations since that time. Joseph Smith taught and demonstrated that the scriptural canon is open.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the canon of scripture is open in two ways, and the idea of continuing revelation is crucial to both of these.

First, Joseph Smith taught that God will guide His children by giving new additions to the canon of scriptures. The Book of Mormon is such an addition. So are the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. Continuing revelation is necessary for us to receive what the Lord would have us understand and do in our own time and circumstances.

Second, continuing revelation opens the canon as readers of scripture, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, find new scriptural meaning and direction for their personal circumstances. The Apostle Paul wrote that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16; see also 2 Peter 1:21) and that "the things of God knoweth

no man, [except he has] the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11; see footnote c, from Joseph Smith Translation). This means that in order to understand scripture, we need personal inspiration from the Spirit of the Lord to enlighten our minds. Consequently, we encourage our members to

study the scriptures and prayerfully seek inspiration to know their meanings for themselves. The ultimate knowledge comes by personal revelation through the Holy Ghost.

Jesus taught, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). To me, to countless other believers, and to many observers, the fruits are good—good for the members, good for their families, good for their communities, and good for their nations. The millions of dollars worth of supplies and services The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members quietly and efficiently provide in response to tragedies such as the earthquake in Haiti in January 2010 are evidence of that fact.

As an Apostle I am called to be a witness of the doctrine, work, and authority of Christ in all the

world. In that capacity I bear witness of the truth of these premises of our faith. ■

*For the full text in English, visit [www.lds.org/fundamental-premises-of-our-faith](http://www.lds.org/fundamental-premises-of-our-faith).*

#### NOTES

1. Gary C. Lawrence, *How Americans View Mormonism* (2008), 32.
2. *How Americans View Mormonism*, 34.
3. See *How Americans View Mormonism*, 42.
4. See *How Americans View Mormonism*, 40.
5. See *How Americans View Mormonism*, 49.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 194.
7. *Teachings: Brigham Young*, 193.
8. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 195.
9. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 196.
10. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 132.
11. See *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 193–216, 265–66.

#### SHARING THIS ARTICLE

The following ideas may help you share Elder Oaks's article:

- Prayerfully think of a friend who could benefit from reading this article. As you visit that friend, consider sharing in simple terms how the gospel has blessed your life.
- Consider sharing this article electronically. Visit [www.liahona.lds.org](http://www.liahona.lds.org), find the article in the January issue, and click "Share." In the message you send with the article, you could comment on how the basic doctrines Elder Oaks shares are meaningful to you.



**By Elaine S. Dalton**

Young Women  
General President

# WHAT'S NEW IN PERSONAL PROGRESS?

**N**ow is the time to prepare for the wonderful future that awaits you. Personal Progress will help you prepare and will help you understand your identity as a daughter of God.

Personal Progress is not a program that is separate from your life. It can help you to draw closer to the Savior, serve others, learn leadership skills, develop relationships, and prepare for temple covenants. Personal Progress can help you develop righteous routines. When you do small things consistently, they become part of who you are and they change you. It really is “by small and simple things” that “great things [are] brought to pass” (Alma 37:6).

The revised Personal Progress booklet has the temple on the cover. The temple is the focus for all that we do in Young Women. We hope that as you look at the cover, you will remember that participating in Personal Progress helps you prepare to make and keep covenants in the temple someday.

The new Personal Progress booklet is pink! This soft feminine color is a reminder that you are a daughter of our Heavenly Father with unique feminine characteristics, gifts, and roles.

In the new booklet, some of the value experiences and projects have changed slightly to be more current and more focused on the temple covenants you will one day make and keep. Now some answers to your questions.

**How do I begin Personal Progress?** Beginning is easy! Start on any one of the values that interests you. You don't have to do the values in order. Doing the required experiences will help you understand the values and why they are important in your life.

**Who can participate?** Personal Progress is primarily for the young women of the Church, although others may also participate. For example, you may choose to invite friends who are not members of the Church to work on Personal Progress with you. In some



**THE BEEHIVE SYMBOL**  
*is the beehive, which is a reminder of harmony, cooperation, and work.*

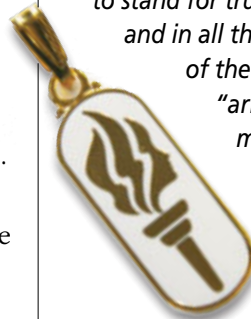
**THE MIA MAID SYMBOL**  
*is the rose, which is a reminder of love, faith, and purity.*



**THE LAUREL SYMBOL**  
*is the laurel wreath, which stands for honor and accomplishment.*

## **TORCH NECKLACE**

*When you enter the Young Women organization, your leaders will present you with a torch necklace. This necklace symbolizes your commitment to stand for truth and righteousness at all times and in all things and in all places. The symbol of the flame will also remind you to “arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations” (D&C 115:5). Wear this necklace proudly and remember your commitment.*





**YOUNG WOMANHOOD RECOGNITION**

When you complete *Personal Progress*, you will record your testimony in your journal and have an interview with the bishop or branch president. You will then be eligible to receive your Young Womanhood Recognition. The medallion has been changed to include the age-group symbols as well as the temple. It also has a small ruby in the center of the Mia Maid rose. This ruby symbolizes that you have completed your *Personal Progress* and the new value of virtue. The ruby will remind you that a virtuous young woman is precious and that "her price is far above rubies" (Proverbs 31:10).

**HONOR BEE**

After earning your medallion, you may go on to earn an Honor Bee by reading the *Book of Mormon* again and doing more service, including helping another young woman with *Personal Progress*.

**PERSONAL PROGRESS BOOKLET**

When you complete the experiences and project for a value, you will receive a gold sticker to go in the back of your *Personal Progress* booklet. Add the date on which you completed this value. Your booklet and journal will become your personal record of all the good things you are accomplishing.



cases, your mother may also choose to participate with you in some of the value experiences and projects.

**How quickly should I proceed?** When you open the Personal Progress book, you will find some things you are already doing at school or home. Give yourself credit for these things and plan ahead so that you can do them with purpose. You can go at your own pace. If you are 12 and do one experience each month and two projects each year, you will be finished by the time you are a Laurel. Then you will have the opportunity to mentor other young women who are working on their Personal Progress. When you do this, you may earn an Honor Bee, which symbolizes going the extra distance in serving others.

**Can I do Personal Progress at Mutual?** You can do some of your Personal Progress at Mutual. A project could become your Mutual activity. You may also work on Personal Progress in your Young Women class as you learn about the values and study the scriptures.

**What kinds of leadership opportunities does it give me?** As you prepare to accomplish a 10-hour project, you may invite other young women to help you. Doing this will help you learn the leadership skills for your future roles as a wife, mother, and homemaker. It will also help you learn how to organize, communicate, and complete a difficult task.

**Why am I asked to keep a journal?** This journal will become a precious record for you of your days in the Young Women organization and the commitments you have made. Writing in your journal will also invite the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

The blessings of Personal Progress extend far beyond the Young Women years. Your faith and testimony of the Savior and of His restored gospel will increase. You will be prepared for your divine mission and roles on the earth. You will taste the sweetness of service and the joys of righteous accomplishments. You will feel the promptings of the Holy Ghost, who will guide and teach you. You will develop a pattern of living that will bless your life, now and throughout all eternity. It is a pattern of progress and of making and keeping temple covenants. May you be blessed as you begin this pattern of progression. We love you! The Lord loves you! You are His precious daughter. ■



### SCRIPTURE RIBBONS

*As you complete the experiences and project for a value, you will receive a ribbon to mark your favorite scriptures about the values. The ribbons are the color of the values: white for faith, gold for virtue, and so forth. Your leader will present this ribbon to you in a Young Women meeting.*



### ADVANCEMENT CERTIFICATES

*As you advance from one age group to another, you will be recognized by your bishop or branch president with a certificate of recognition and completion. Keep this in a special place to remind you of the things you have learned and accomplished in your Beehive, Mia Maid, and Laurel years.*

*For more information about Personal Progress, read the booklet's introduction or visit [www.PersonalProgress.lds.org](http://www.PersonalProgress.lds.org).*

By David L. Beck

Young Men  
General President



# The Aaronic Priesthood— Greater Than You Might Think

## A MESSAGE ABOUT DUTY TO GOD

**F**our years ago I attended a memorial service for my brother Gary. One of the speakers paid a great tribute to my brother. I have been thinking about it ever since. He said, “Gary was a priesthood man. . . . He understood the priesthood, honored the priesthood, and fully embraced the priesthood and its principles.”

When my brother died, he was a high priest in the Melchizedek Priesthood, and he had enjoyed 50 years of priesthood service. Gary was a loving husband and father who had served an honorable full-time mission, married in the temple, magnified his priesthood callings, and served diligently as a home teacher.

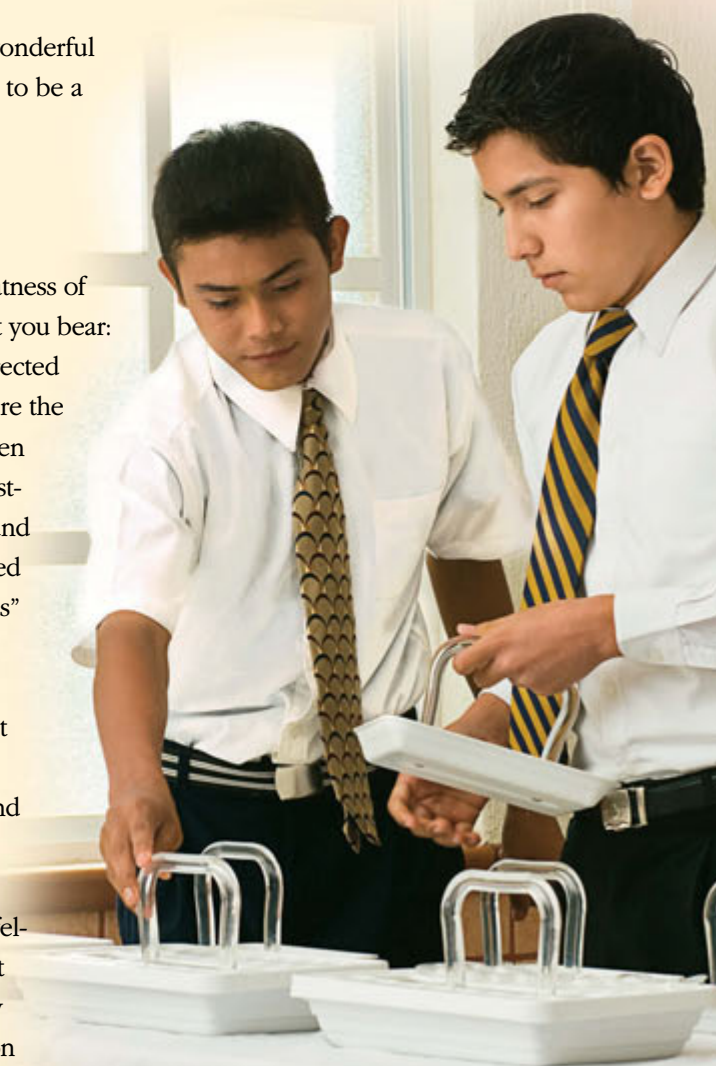
You are an Aaronic Priesthood holder. Your priesthood service is just beginning. You may not even have 50 days of priesthood experience yet. But you can be worthy of the same tribute Gary received. In fact, you *should* be worthy of that tribute. The

Lord has called you to a wonderful work, and He expects you to be a priesthood man.

### The Greatness of the Aaronic Priesthood

Just think about the greatness of the Aaronic Priesthood that you bear:

- The Lord sent the resurrected John the Baptist to restore the Aaronic Priesthood. When John conferred this priesthood on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, he called them his “fellow servants” (D&C 13:1). President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) pointed out that John “did not place himself above Joseph and Oliver. He put them on his same level when he addressed them as ‘my fellow servants.’” President Hinckley went on to say that a 12-year-old deacon





*As you grow in spiritual strength and help others come unto Christ through your priesthood service, you are truly a priesthood man.*

can also be John's fellow servant.<sup>1</sup>

- The Aaronic Priesthood holds the key of the ministering of angels (see D&C 13:1). As you live righteously and serve diligently, you can receive the ministering of angels to guide and strengthen you. Through your administration of the sacrament, you can help others receive this blessing as well.<sup>2</sup>
- The Aaronic Priesthood "holds the keys of . . . the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins" (D&C 13:1). Repentance and baptism join to form the gate that people enter to start on the path to eternal life (see 2 Nephi 31:17–18). Acting under the direction of your priesthood leaders, you can help people open this gate.
- The Aaronic Priesthood includes the authority to administer the

sacrament. When you prepare, bless, or pass the sacrament, you represent Jesus Christ (see 3 Nephi 18:1–12). You help your family members and friends remember Him, renew their covenants, and qualify for the companionship of the Holy Spirit.

Such opportunities require the work of priesthood men—men who are spiritually strong and who fulfill their priesthood duties.

### **New Duty to God Book**

Under the direction of our living prophets, a resource has been prepared to help you be a priesthood man. Although the resource is new, it has a familiar name: Duty to God.

I am excited about the new Duty to God book. It can help you obey the Lord's command to "learn [your] duty" and "act in the office in which [you are] appointed, in all diligence" (D&C 107:99).

Using the book as a deacon, teacher, and priest, you will participate in activities in two categories: spiritual strength and priesthood duties.

### **A Pattern of Becoming**

Each activity in the Duty to God book follows a pattern that will help you become the priesthood holder the Lord wants you to become: First, you *learn* about a gospel principle or a priesthood duty. Then you *act* on what you have learned. Finally, you *share* your thoughts and feelings about what you have learned and

experienced. Some of these activities are personal. Others may be adapted for your entire quorum to use in Sunday lessons or in activities during the week.

On page 39 the sample from the book shows how this pattern works. The comments are from young men who have already had great experiences with the new book.

### **A Priesthood Man**

When I think of the phrase "priesthood man," I obviously think of my brother Gary. But I also think of others. I think of President Thomas S. Monson, who, as a deacon, felt that he stood on holy ground when he helped a disabled man partake of the sacrament.<sup>3</sup> I think of John the Baptist, the great Aaronic Priesthood holder who prepared the way for the Savior's mortal ministry by teaching, testifying, and administering the sacred ordinance of baptism. And I think of you. As you grow in spiritual strength and help others come unto Christ through your priesthood service, you are truly a priesthood man. ■

*For more information about Duty to God, read the booklet's introduction or visit [www.DutytoGod.lds.org](http://www.DutytoGod.lds.org).*

#### **NOTES**

1. See Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Aaronic Priesthood—a Gift from God," *Ensign*, May 1988, 45.
2. See Dallin H. Oaks, "The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament," *Liahona*, Jan. 1999, 44–45; *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 37–39.
3. See Thomas S. Monson, "Do Your Duty—That Is Best," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 56.



**1. Learn:** This portion of the activity guides your efforts to learn about a gospel principle or a priesthood duty. It includes instruction for you to make a plan of your own based on what you have learned.

"You get to learn spiritually" about your priesthood duties before you do them.

**Aaronic Priesthood holder in the United States**

"I liked the idea of trying to come up with things that could really help me as an individual."

**Aaronic Priesthood holder in Guatemala**

"I liked the sections of studying the scriptures and praying, and I did these things and am still doing them. I am preparing to serve a mission."

**Aaronic Priesthood holder in the Philippines**

**2. Act:** In this portion of the activity, you follow your plan and write your thoughts and feelings about your experiences.

"As young men in the branch, we decided that we would set a goal to get together and jog. We really liked planning this together and, as a group, working on becoming more physically fit."

**Aaronic Priesthood holder in Guatemala**

"The book is . . . like a diary or a journal where you can be . . . self-reflective. It's a good process to go through."

**Aaronic Priesthood holder in the United States**

"I have a hard time scheduling my scripture study. . . The goals I had to read the scriptures and pray helped me to make time and stay focused. It really made a difference for me, and I felt the Spirit as I did it."

**Aaronic Priesthood holder in the Philippines**

**3. Share:** After you have followed your plan, you have the opportunity to share your thoughts and feelings with family members, quorum members, and others.

"When you share, you want to keep talking with others about it because [sharing has] helped you to better understand."

**Aaronic Priesthood holder in the United States**

"It was good to be able to talk with my parents."

**Aaronic Priesthood holder in the Philippines**

"In our quorum meeting we liked talking with one another about our goals: what we were doing as individuals and how this was helping us."

**Aaronic Priesthood holder in Guatemala**



"He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more" (D&C 58:42).

**LIVE WORTHILY**

**Learn**

- Read the section titled "Repentance" in *For the Strength of Youth*, and write your answers to the following questions in a notebook or journal:

1. What do you learn about the Atonement and repentance from this section?

2. How does repentance help you grow spiritually?

3. What is the relationship between repentance, the Atonement, and personal worthiness?

Discuss your answers with your parents or quorum members. Discuss how repentance will help you prepare to enter the temple and participate in sacred ordinances.

- Choose at least three other sections from *For the Strength of Youth* that will help you live worthily. Study the standards in these sections, and write what you will do to live these standards and to help others do the same.

**Act**

Sections from *For the Strength of Youth* I will study:

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Specific things I will do to live these standards and help others do the same:

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**Share**

- After studying and applying these standards, share with your parents or quorum members what you are learning, how it is influencing your life, and the kind of person you are becoming.



Consider studying and applying "Dress and Appearance," "Entertainment and the Media," or "Language" in *For the Strength of Youth*.

Filling My  
**to God**  
Priesthood Holders



## COULD I LEAVE MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER?

When I turned 21, I wanted to serve a mission. My great-grandmother, Margarita Sippo de Lallana, supported my decision even though that meant she would be alone. She had reared me since I was small, and I was concerned about who would care for her while I served.

We had been baptized in 1978, when I was 11 and my great-grandmother was 73. We soon quit attending our meetings, but concerned brothers and sisters from the Church came looking for us.

I became active again, and ward members looked forward to my ordination. “We’re going to have a deacon!” they would say excitedly. At that time our ward had no Aaronic Priesthood holders. I became the president of the deacons quorum because there weren’t any other deacons. I wondered why

they would give me such a calling, but I came to understand that ward leaders were training me in priesthood responsibilities. As a result, I tried to be faithful.

My grandmother, however, remained less active, attending meetings only occasionally. But she supported my decision to serve because she knew in her heart the gospel is true.

When I turned in my missionary papers in 1990, most full-time missionaries called from Córdoba served in the Argentina Buenos Aires North or South Missions. I was sure I would be called to one of those two missions and not be too far away from my great-grandmother.

Later, when my stake president called, he told me that I needed

a passport because I was going to Colombia instead! Despite my on-going concerns, my great-grandmother encouraged me to go. Just before I left, she promised that she would return to church the very next Sunday and go to the temple before I returned. This was difficult to believe but made it easier for me to leave her.

While I was on my mission, she did exactly what she had promised. Although in her 80s, she not only attended all of her meetings but also arrived on time. And she prepared for and went to the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple.

After a 12-hour, all-night bus ride returning from that first trip to the temple, my great-grandmother arrived at our ward meetinghouse on Sunday morning at 8:30, shortly before

Church meetings began. Our stake president, Rúben Spitale, told her, “Let me take you home so you can rest.”

“No,” she replied. “I’m going to church.” And she did.

After I returned from my mission, we attended the temple together three times before she passed away in 2000. Because of my mission, we were both blessed. Had I stayed home, I’m confident none of these blessings would have occurred. ■

Hugo Fabián Lallana, Córdoba, Argentina

**Just before I left on my mission, my less-active great-grandmother promised that she would return to church the very next Sunday and go to the temple before I returned.**

## WE LISTENED TO THE SPIRIT

One morning my missionary companion and I decided to go tracting in a small community in our assigned area in the southern Philippines. While we were busy knocking on doors, a man approached us and asked what we were doing. We could tell that he had been drinking.

Thinking that he was not really interested in our message, we handed him a pamphlet about the purpose of life. We then told him that if he would read the pamphlet and not drink that evening, we would come to his home to explain the purpose of life. He nodded and said he would wait for us. We hurriedly went on our way to a scheduled teaching appointment.

We really had no intention of returning to teach him that night, but every day afterward as we passed his house, I felt an impression to stop. I would immediately disregard the feeling, however, and justify my decision by telling myself that he was probably too drunk to listen.

After a few days the prompting became so strong that I could no longer resist it. As we knocked on his door, we were met by a startled lady who asked us why we had not returned earlier, as we had promised. She said her husband had waited for us that night and that for the first time in their married life, he had not been drinking.

We were embarrassed and apologized profusely. We set an appointment to return that night to teach her and her husband. Soon afterward Brother Gumabay (name has been changed) repented of all his worldly vices, was baptized, and became a pillar in the community.

A few days after his baptism, I was transferred to another area and lost contact with the family. All I could do was hope and pray that they would stay active in the Church.


Later I learned that the small community where the Gumabay family lived had a branch and then a ward. Brother Gumabay was called to be the bishop of that ward. I also learned that most of

his relatives had joined the Church.

When I eventually returned to visit my old missionary area, I learned that many people had joined the Church there because of the good example of Bishop Gumabay, who had put his life in the hands of the Lord and placed Him at the helm of his family and daily activities.

I am so grateful we listened to the promptings of the Spirit to visit the Gumabay home. Through this experience I came to comprehend what the Lord meant when He said, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Matthew 9:12). ■

Michael Angelo M. Ramírez,  
New Zealand



**W**e really had no intention of returning to teach the man that night, but every day afterward as we passed his house, I felt an impression to stop.

## CALL YOUR HOME TEACHERS

**M**any years ago when our four children were small, my husband took a job in another state while I stayed behind until our two older children finished school for the year. We had recently been assigned new home teachers, who had the chance to visit only twice before my husband was transferred.

One night after putting the children to bed, I heard our baby girl crying in her room. When I picked her up, I noticed that she was burning with fever. I considered taking her to the hospital, but a quick perusal of our new insurance policy showed that it covered only residents of Idaho—the state where my husband now worked. The rest of us were still residents of the state of Washington.

I grew alarmed when I took our daughter's temperature—105 degrees Fahrenheit (41 degrees C). I immediately knelt in prayer and fervently asked for help. An answer came that I would never have considered: “Call your home teachers.”

The hour was growing late, and I knew that the two men, Brothers Halverson and Bird, had undoubtedly retired for the night. But I picked up the phone and called Brother Bird anyway, quickly telling him what was wrong. Within five minutes, at 11:00 p.m., my home teachers were at the front door—in suits and ties.

By this time our baby's cheeks and

eyes were red, and her hair was plastered with sweat. She whimpered with pain, but Brothers Bird and Halverson were calm as they took her. Then, laying their hands on her head, they gave her a blessing and told her in the name of the Savior to be healed.

When I opened my eyes after the blessing, I could hardly believe what I saw. My daughter was giggling and squirming to be let down to play. Her fever was gone!

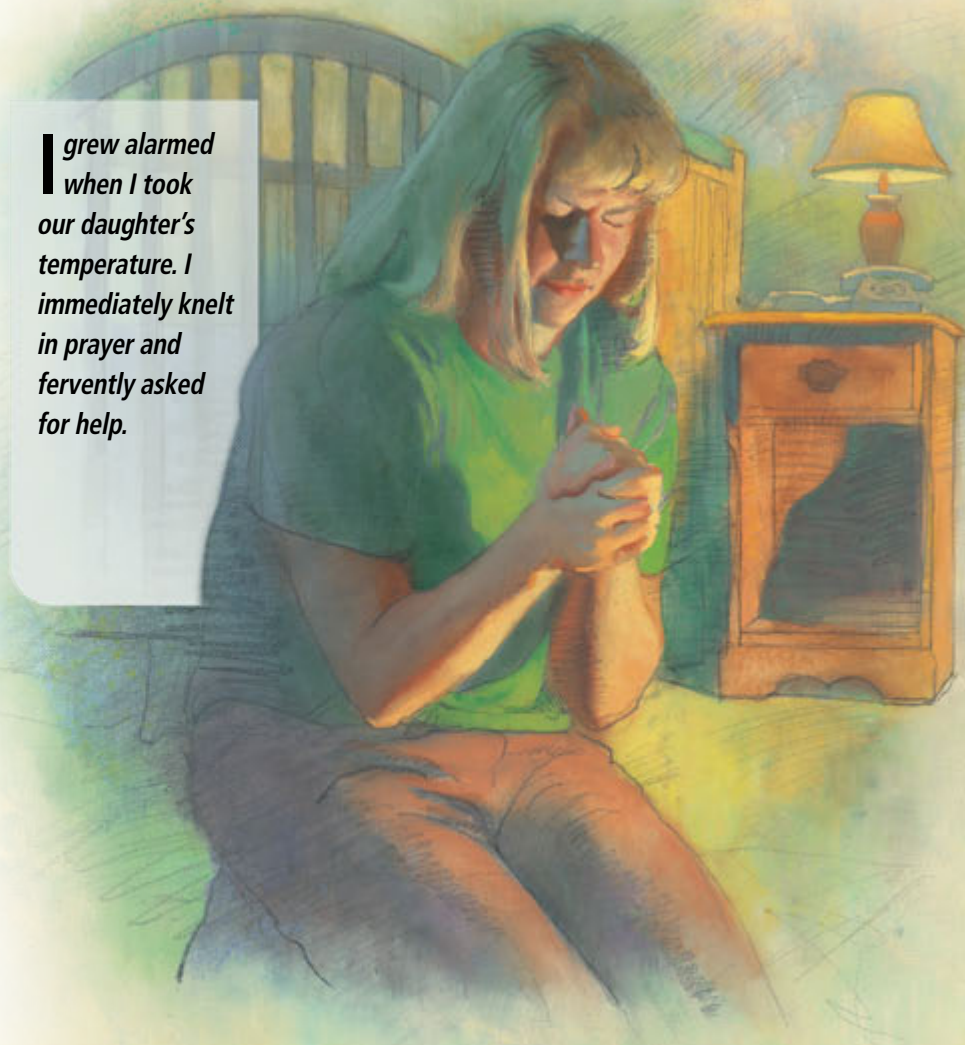
“I could feel her cool down as we administered to her,” Brother Bird

said to me as we all watched my child in amazement. They soon left, after which I was up for several hours with a baby who wanted to stay awake and play. I didn't mind a bit.

Many years have passed since that night when two ministering angels, in the form of home teachers, blessed my child. Soon afterward we moved to Idaho and lost touch with them, but I will always be grateful to two kind home teachers who came at the eleventh hour on the Lord's errand. ■

Diana Loski, Pennsylvania, USA

**I grew alarmed when I took our daughter's temperature. I immediately knelt in prayer and fervently asked for help.**



## WAS MY BISHOP MISTAKEN?

**O**ur ward had just been divided, so when the bishop asked to see me, I was sure I would receive a calling in the new ward. I had been working with the young women and loved them. They were so receptive to the gospel and such a joy to teach. Surely the Lord would allow me to continue teaching them.

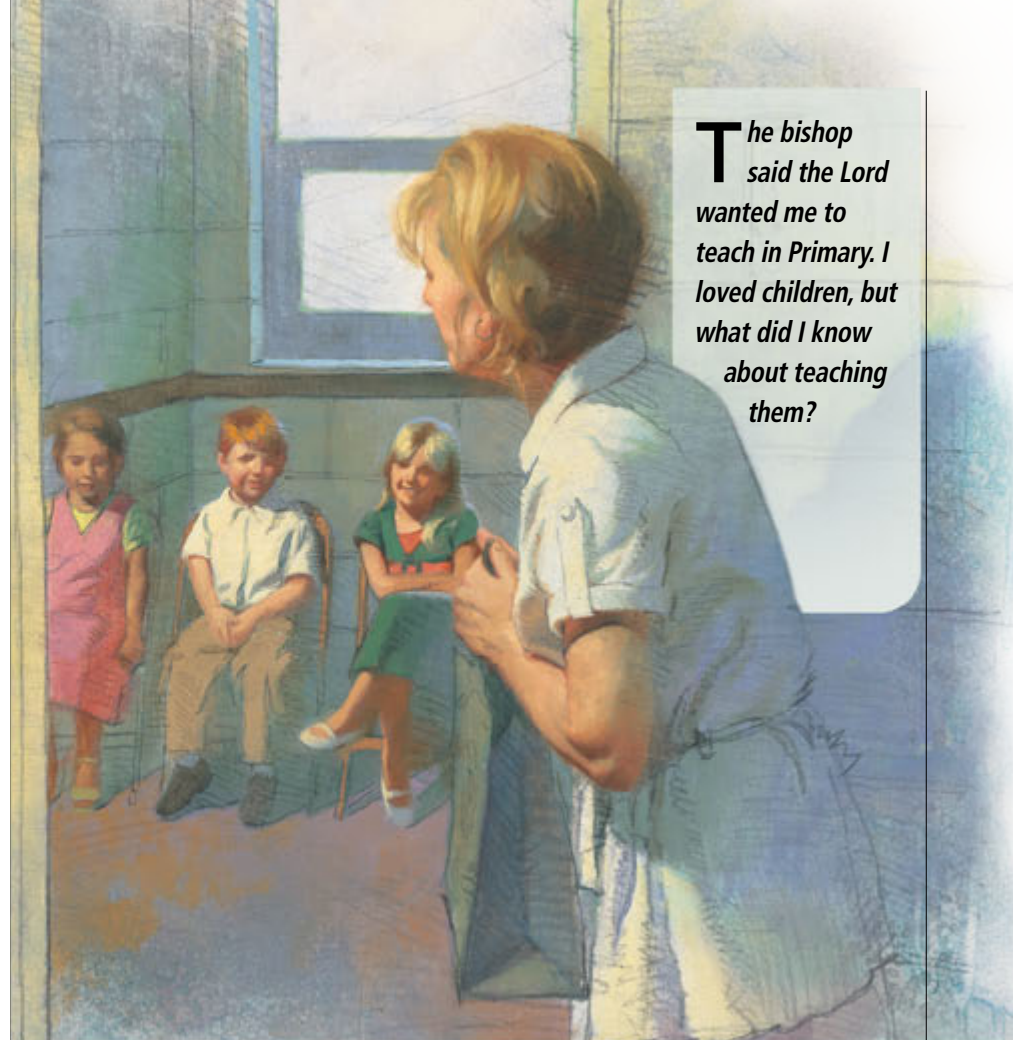
To my surprise, the bishop said the Lord wanted me to teach in Primary instead. Surely he was mistaken! He assured me, however, that he had fasted and prayed and felt strongly about my calling. I loved children, but what did I know about teaching them?

For 15 years of marriage the only sadness my husband and I shared was that the Lord had not blessed us with children. Our efforts to adopt had also been fruitless because of our medical challenges.

Trusting the bishop, I accepted the call to teach in the Primary, but in my heart I struggled. I was angry with the Lord for leaving me childless, and I resented this new calling.

“Why, Lord, art Thou asking this of me?” I wondered. “In Thy wisdom, I have been deprived of children of my own. Why should I be asked to teach other people’s children?”

I prayed and struggled and



**T**he bishop said the Lord wanted me to teach in Primary. I loved children, but what did I know about teaching them?

wrestled with the Lord, pleading through my tears for understanding. Finally I decided that since I had accepted the calling, I had better stop feeling sorry for myself and do the best I could.

That is when the blessings came. I quickly learned to love the children, and they learned to love me. I found that their love was great enough to help me fill the emptiness in my life. Soon I couldn’t go down the hall at church without at least two children holding onto my hands and others stopping for a hug as I passed by. In turn, my husband was called as a Scout leader. Before long our home was full of children and teens.

My husband died at age 47 in November 1986. Once again the Lord knew what I needed better than I.

Within weeks of my husband’s death, I was called to serve a teaching mission in the Primary of the Fresno, California, Laotian branch. The courage of these exceptional people and their children gave me strength to carry on without my husband.

What a special joy it was to see the young people I had taught grow to adulthood, serve missions, marry in the temple, and start families of their own. Dozens of these “adopted” children still stop by to say hello and make my day brighter, and I’m happy when I see them in the Fresno California Temple, where I now serve.

My service in Primary truly has been a lifelong blessing. I am so grateful that our callings are dictated by the Lord and not by us. ■

Jeannie L. Sorensen, California, USA

# Ancient Examples, Modern Promises

*Dating has never come easily to me, but I draw strength from scriptural examples of faithfulness.*

## Name withheld

Although I find most social situations enjoyable, I've struggled in the dating scene. I never dated before my mission, and when I returned home after two years, I felt particularly inexperienced.

In the decade since then, I've tried seemingly "all [I] can do" (2 Nephi 25:23) to marry—something I've been promised in my patriarchal blessing—but have had no success. Sometimes I have felt tempted to despair that I might ever find someone, and in particularly dark moments, I have cried out in prayer: "Please help me. I don't know what I'm doing."

Recently, I have found substantial comfort in examples from the scriptures. The following three stories have been especially powerful in helping me trust in Heavenly Father and His plan.

### Joseph of Egypt: Maintain Faith and Hope in God

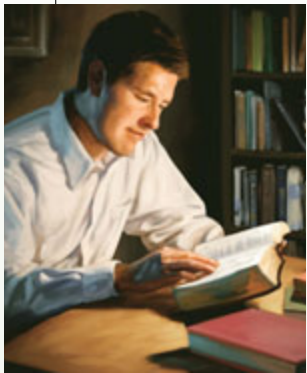
Joseph was forcefully taken from home at 17 and thrust into a foreign land where few shared his religious beliefs. Despite this severe trial, he kept a good attitude and remained faithful

to his masters and to God (see Genesis 37; 39–41). Even so, for 13 years he experienced one undesirable situation after another. His hard work appeared to do little but land him in prison, where he remained until age 30.

I sometimes wonder if Joseph ever thought that God had somehow forgotten him or if Joseph questioned how long he would be in prison or whether he would ever be released. I wonder if the dreams Joseph had dreamed earlier in his life (see Genesis 37:5–11) gave him hope for a brighter future.

Of course, God *did* remember Joseph, as He had Joseph's mother, Rachel (see Genesis 30:22). Joseph was blessed to prosper even in unpleasant situations. Instead of choosing to rebel, pout, or curse God, Joseph exercised remarkable faith. As a result, he was tremendously blessed.

We may be tempted to bemoan our own afflictions, possibly blinding ourselves from the blessings God has already granted us. But maintaining faith and hope can bring about great blessings, as they did for Joseph. And even when our faith isn't rewarded how we





would like, maintaining that faith can still help us live happier lives.

Joseph's experience is also a testament of the superiority of the power and wisdom of God. For years Joseph's efforts seemed to get him nowhere, but through the hand of God, Joseph was released from prison and exalted just below Pharaoh (see Genesis 41:41–43). Could Joseph have foreseen or anticipated such tremendous opportunities?

Sometimes we try hard to achieve something, but our own efforts, however great, are insufficient for the task. I know Heavenly Father can bless us for our faith and obedience with even greater blessings than we hoped for initially. I trust that if I have a good attitude and make the most of difficult

*Maintaining faith and hope can bring about great blessings, as they did for Joseph. And even when our faith isn't rewarded how we would like, maintaining that faith can still help us live happier lives.*

situations, as Joseph did, in time—the Lord's time—He will “[make] bare his holy arm” (Isaiah 52:10). My toil will not have been in vain. He *will* remember us; in fact, He is constantly aware of and has good things in store for each of us if we remain faithful.

### **Abraham: Love God above All Else**

Some time ago a dating relationship with someone I cared a great deal about ended. Already anxious about being unmarried, I doubted whether I could find another person with whom I was as compatible.

Not long after, I was reminded of the story of Abraham being commanded to sacrifice Isaac (see Genesis 22:1–14). I realized that both of us were asked to give up someone we loved. Of course, my experience pales in comparison to Abraham's, but I discovered that his experience taught patterns I could follow.

Abraham waited a long time for a son to be born to him and Sarah. Isaac's birth was a miracle, and Abraham was told, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” (Hebrews 11:18). Yet the Lord commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. How would Abraham's seed “be called” in Isaac if Isaac was sacrificed?

Knowing that—but not necessarily *how*—God would keep His promises, Abraham was obedient. His love for his son was great, but his response showed that he loved the Lord above all else. We are asked to demonstrate the same thing (see D&C 101:4–5), and we too have the promise of great reward upon our faithful endurance (see Matthew 24:13). When my relationship ended,



it was difficult to move on. Having received the promise that I will marry, moving on seemed to be unaligned with the fulfillment of that promise. But the promise gave me hope, which helped me to try again and to show Heavenly Father that I love Him above all else.

Abraham's faithfulness was rewarded not only with the life of his son but also with innumerable posterity and other blessings (see Genesis 22:15–18). We too will be rewarded for making the sacrifices God asks of us and for demonstrating our love for Him. That is the essence of the trial of our faith.

### **Zacharias: Believe That God's Promises Are Real**

Sometimes we don't know how the promises the Lord gives us could ever be fulfilled—

*Knowing that God would keep His promises, Abraham was obedient. His love for his son was great, but his response showed that he loved the Lord above all else.*

like the promise that if we desire it and remain faithful, we'll be blessed with an eternal marriage. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught about this paradox, "There may be times when we must make a courageous decision to hope even when everything around us contradicts [our] hope."<sup>1</sup>

Zacharias and his wife, Elisabeth, prayed faithfully and waited for a child all their lives. Finally, Zacharias was promised by an angel that his elderly wife would conceive and bear a child who would prepare the way for the Savior. So great was the blessing that it was incomprehensible to Zacharias. Though an angel had declared it, Zacharias asked, "Whereby shall I know this?" (Luke 1:18).

As with Zacharias, we may become so used to feeling disappointed in our desires—or the promised blessings seem so unbelievable—we forget that "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). Zacharias's experience has reminded me that Heavenly Father's greatest promises are real and that He always keeps them.

The stories of Joseph, Abraham, and Zacharias are not the only ones that have bolstered my faith and given me hope. There are scores of scriptural accounts of people whose faith has reminded me to have faith regarding what the Lord has promised *me*. I can hardly read a chapter of scripture nowadays without being reminded that the Lord always keeps His promises. This understanding gives me great hope for the future. ■

#### **NOTE**

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Infinite Power of Hope," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 23.



# From Believing to KNOWING

By Chiao-yi Lin

I first met Latter-day Saint missionaries at a train station when I was 19. I could tell that there was something special about these young women, and I felt an urge to talk to them. So I approached and asked what they were doing in Taiwan. They told me they were missionaries and began to talk about the gospel. Over the course of several meetings, I learned about Jesus Christ, His restored gospel, and the Book of Mormon. It was the last of these topics—the Book of Mormon—that caused me to join the Church.

I can still remember my experience praying about the book. After reading from it one night, I closed the book, knelt down, and asked my Heavenly Father if it were true. I felt a blanket of warmth surround me, something I had never felt in the Buddhist temples I had attended all my life. This feeling was different. I knew someone was listening. In that moment I went from believing the Church was true to knowing it was true, and I decided to be baptized.



*Believing the Book of Mormon is true was only the beginning.*

The Book of Mormon has continued to bless my life since then. It blessed me when I served as a missionary.

It has also blessed me in my callings. While serving as an institute teacher, I learned that the Book of Mormon was written for our day.<sup>1</sup> But in preparing my lessons, I found that statement is not only generally true, but it's true for specific people in specific situations at specific times. For instance, sometimes as I prepared to teach, one of my student's faces would come into my mind, and I would recognize something particular I needed to teach for that person's benefit. Such promptings occurred frequently and were confirmed when a student would talk to me after class to let me know the lesson was exactly what he or she needed.

Finally, and perhaps most meaningfully, the Book of Mormon has guided my personal life. I remember turning to the scriptures when I was about to

end a dating relationship. I felt a great deal of anguish. But a verse I read, 2 Nephi 10:20, spoke directly to my heart and gave me a calm feeling: "Now, my beloved brethren, seeing that our merciful God has given us so great knowledge concerning these things, let us remember him, and lay aside our sins, and not hang down our heads, for we are not cast off; nevertheless, we have been driven out of the land of our inheritance; but we have been led to a better land, for the Lord has made the sea our path, and we are upon an isle of the sea."

Remembering the Lord, as that verse suggests, gave me courage and hope. I could rely on the "great knowledge" of the gospel that God had given me, and I could be assured that I was not "cast off." There were good things ahead.

It was a great blessing to believe the missionaries' words as I investigated the Church. It is far greater to know the truthfulness of the gospel, particularly the validity of the Book of Mormon, for myself. I know that God lives and that He teaches us directly and personally through the scriptures. ■

#### NOTE

1. See Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon Is the Word of God," *Tambuli*, May 1988, 2; *Ensign*, Jan. 1988, 3.

# To the Point

## Why do I need to pray on my own when I already pray with my family?

**I**magine that you're struggling with a personal problem. Would you feel comfortable sharing your struggle with a group, or would you prefer to confide in one person in private?

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught: "Some things are best prayed about in private, when we don't have to be concerned about time or the confidentiality of our prayers. Prayer in solitude is priceless and profitable.



*"Thou shalt pray vocally as well as in thy heart; yea, before the world as well as in secret, in public as well as in private" (D&C 19:28).*

Praying alone helps us to shed shame or pretense, any lingering deceit; it helps us open our hearts and be totally honest and honorable in expressing all of our hopes and attitudes."<sup>1</sup> That which we are not comfortable praying for in our family prayers may be—and often should be—addressed in private prayer.

Our personal prayers allow us to be the most candid with our loving Heavenly Father and discuss the deepest fears and desires of our hearts. It was when Joseph Smith prayed privately that he received the revelation that began the

## My family watches movies with mature ratings. Spending time with them is important, so how do I explain why I don't watch those movies?

**C**hoosing the right with your family can be just as hard as with your friends—sometimes even harder. It's good that you're not willing to compromise your values. Although it may not feel like it now, putting God first in your life will bless your family and allow you to be an example to them. But they are still your family, and it

is important to spend time with them. You could suggest other movies you know are uplifting or activities such as games or hikes.

It's important to let your family know your standards in a sincere, humble way. Talk honestly with them about why you choose not to watch certain types of movies. Pray that you will have the strength to communicate this to them and that

Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Speaking to our Heavenly Father on a one-on-one basis allows us to be more receptive to promptings of the Spirit intended for our benefit.

However, family prayer is also extremely valuable—it allows us to draw nearer to our Father in Heaven and to have spiritual experiences with our family. As President Kimball taught, “The Church urges that there be family prayer every night and every morning.”<sup>2</sup> ■

**NOTES**

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “Pray Always,” *Tambuli*, Mar. 1982, 2; *Ensign*, Oct. 1981, 4.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, “Prayer,” *New Era*, Mar. 1978, 15.

there will be a spirit of understanding. Hopefully, your family can respect you for this, and you will help keep the Spirit in your heart while keeping bad media out. ■



## My brother is having a hard time finding out if the Church is true. How can I help him?



**B**e supportive of him; he needs to feel love—not pressure—from his family. Consider asking him what his concerns and doubts are. Let him finish telling you all of his concerns before you respond. Perhaps his concerns are social or personal, rather than faith-based. You may not be able to provide all the answers he is seeking, but you can reassure him that solutions can be found.

Ask him to pray with you about his worries and encourage him to pray personally about them too. Be sensitive to the fact that it takes some people longer to receive answers than others, especially if they need to sort through things themselves. You could read with him about prayer and gaining a testimony from Alma 32, 3 Nephi 17, or Moroni 10. Also, you could encourage him to speak with your parents, with your bishop or branch president, or with other faithful members of the Church who have worked through similar concerns.

When prompted, bear your



testimony to him. Let him know how you feel about the gospel.

Last but not least, remember it is the Spirit who bears witness of the truth. To gain a testimony or to realize that he already has one, your brother must learn to recognize the Holy Ghost. This may take time, and it cannot be forced. You can tell him facts all day long, but it is only through a meaningful connection with the Spirit that he will gain a testimony.

Pray for him and encourage him, support him and listen to him, but remember that he is free to choose. He will choose most wisely by following the guidance of the Spirit. ■

**Help loved ones gain a testimony by reading from the scriptures and teaching them how to recognize the witness of the Holy Ghost.**

E-mail your questions to [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org), with “To the Point” in the subject line.

# IN THE PRESENCE OF ANGELS

*When I was set apart as a missionary, my stake president gave me a promise that at times I would feel the presence of angels and they would protect me.*

**By Samuel Gould**

In 2003 I was called to serve a mission in the Ivory Coast, in western Africa. As I researched, I found that the country seemed to be involved in constant civil war, but I was comforted to learn there was a ceasefire in place. Further comfort came when I was set apart. The stake president gave me a promise that while I was serving, I would at times feel the presence of angels and they would protect me. I was also promised that if I was obedient, I would return home safely.

In the first months of my mission, the mission president counseled us to be prepared. In our apartment in the capital city of Abidjan, we kept a three-day supply of food and water, and at meetings we received training on what to do if conflict broke out.

Still, we were nervous when rebels broke the ceasefire on November 4, 2004. Our mission leaders gave us a 6:00 p.m. curfew. During our last teaching appointment the next day, we heard a sudden explosion. Immediately we ended with a prayer, left the family

a chapter from the Book of Mormon to read, and rushed home. The other companionship in our apartment arrived shortly after us. The assistants phoned and told us not to leave our apartments under any circumstances—not for church or even food. We learned that some French peacekeepers had been killed in air strikes, so France had attacked the military airport, crippling the small Ivorian air force. In reaction, massive riots had broken out across the capital.

Tens of thousands of protesters swarmed the streets, wielding machetes, looting French shops, and breaking into homes where they suspected the French lived. From our window, we could see the violence unfolding. We knew we were in danger because of our white skin.

On Sunday afternoon, November 7, amid the sounds of screaming, gunshots, and explosions, we held a sacrament meeting in our apartment with only four participants. After blessing and passing the bread and water from our three-day food supply, each of us shared a scripture and bore testimony.

I read Doctrine and Covenants 84:88: “And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.” As I read, I reflected on the blessing my stake president had given me, and I knew I would be safe.

We were shut in our apartment for a week. Ward leaders and members visited us and brought us food. One member even took messages from us and e-mailed our families, letting them know we were safe for now. These members’ help was amazing! Meanwhile, our families and Church members around the world were praying for our safety. As my family prayed, they felt a calm assurance that I would be OK.

On Friday, November 12, our evacuation began. Ivorian Church members led us through the streets of Abidjan, and though we heard reports of other refugees being harmed, we made it safely through the barricades to the British ambassador’s home. Then British forces evacuated us from the country, and my family’s prayers were



answered when they saw two other elders and me on the news being evacuated. In the dark of the night, members took other non-African missionaries to the mission home. From there the Italian air force transported them to Ghana, where we were reunited.

Despite dozens of attacks on foreigners throughout the country, none of the missionaries were harmed during the riots, and no missionary apartments were broken into. Because we listened to the mission president's counsel, we were safe at home when the riots broke out and we had supplies necessary for our survival. And even more comforting than military protection was knowing we had the Lord's protection.

When we were being evacuated, I found out that on Sunday afternoon after our sacrament meeting, a group of protesters had been preparing to attack our apartment. One of our neighbors shouted, "They aren't French!" but they would not leave. Finally, another neighbor cried, "They're missionaries!" and the rioters dispersed. I again remembered the words, "My Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you," and I realized that I was living the promise from my stake president's blessing. I had seen prophecy fulfilled. ■

*Note: Conditions in the Ivory Coast have improved since 2004. Nonnative missionaries are now serving there again.*

# 2011 Mutual Theme

*“We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things” (Articles of Faith 1:13).*



Elaine S. Dalton (center), president; Mary N. Cook (left), first counselor; and Ann M. Dibb (right), second counselor.



David L. Beck (center), president; Larry M. Gibson (left), first counselor; and Adrián Ochoa (right), second counselor.

## WE BELIEVE!

By the Young Women General Presidency

**W**e believe that one virtuous young woman, led by the Spirit, can change the world. As a Young Women general presidency, we have observed young women doing what they believe is right, standing as witnesses, living the gospel standards, and truly making a difference. It is amazing what one young woman can accomplish when she is virtuous, listens to the still, small voice of the Holy Ghost, and then acts!

When Joseph Smith wrote the thirteenth article of faith, he expressed everything we can and must seek and become as believers. Joseph Smith knew that we must believe in standards and values and seek after these things in order to have the power and strength of the Holy Ghost. He knew we would need to follow the Savior in word and deed. He knew that doing this would prepare us to be worthy of the blessings of the temple.

### Believe in Yourself

How will you do this? How will you lead others in following the Savior's example, living a virtuous life, and preparing for the temple? First, believe in yourself! Your courage and strength have helped you become a leader, and your commitment will make all the difference this year. Your ideas, innovations, and actions can shape the world now and in the future.

Because of the technological world in which you live, you have the ability

to flood the earth with those things that are virtuous, lovely, and praiseworthy. You have at your fingertips the ability to testify of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the entire world. Never before has a generation had such an ability, blessing, and opportunity.

### Three Things Plus One—Every Day!

We believe in you. Now is the time to unite and begin a change that will empower you and bless others. We invite you to continue to do three things every single day—plus one.

1. Pray every morning and every night.
2. Read in the Book of Mormon at least five minutes every day.
3. Smile!
4. In addition, we invite you to obey and live the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*. Become familiar with these standards. Share them with others. And *be* an example of the believers.

This year, believe. Believe you are a daughter of Heavenly Father, who loves you and will help you. Believe in the Savior Jesus Christ. He is your light. He is your hope. He is your exemplar and Redeemer. Believe in yourself! Believe in the power of all young women living the standards. All together we can seek after those things that are virtuous, lovely, and praiseworthy. All together we can make a difference in our world.

We believe you are the generation whose belief and actions will change the world. We believe in you! ■

# BECOMING A FAITHFUL PRIESTHOOD MAN

By the Young Men General Presidency

**B**efore you graduated from Primary, many of you memorized the thirteenth article of faith and hopefully can still recite it by heart. This year we as a presidency challenge you to move beyond simple memorization and truly learn what the Prophet Joseph Smith meant when he said we follow the admonition of Paul. We ask you to carefully study each quality mentioned in the thirteenth article of faith, this year's Mutual theme.

We invite you to act upon what you learn. And we invite you to share with others the joy that living these standards brings into your life.

This pattern of behavior is the same one you are using in the new Duty to God program: learn, act, share. Following these three simple steps will help you become a faithful priesthood man.

The thirteenth article of faith states in part, "We believe in *being* honest, true, chaste, benevolent, [and] virtuous" (emphasis added). *Being* is more than

how you act—it is who you are. *Being* honest, true, chaste and so on makes you different from most young men your age. When others see the good qualities in you, they will want what you have. As you learn your priesthood duties and act upon them, you will change. As you go about "doing good to all men," you will bless and change people's lives.

## Good Examples

Ben is a great example of helping others and being a blessing in their lives. He looks out for people who are not as popular or don't feel as involved. He thinks of others more than himself. When Kelon moved into Ben's ward, Kelon described his life as "nothing but a party" that was going in the wrong direction. He felt empty inside. But because of the examples of his Latter-day Saint friends and particularly that of his best friend, Ben, he saw there was a better way. Ben invited Kelon to participate in Church activities. At those activities

Kelon noticed there was something different about the young men there. He wanted to be like them. He wasn't sure what it was, but he knew he wanted it. He wanted to be happy like they were.

He prayed to God and knew that he needed to join the Church. Ben baptized his best friend when they were 16. Kelon said of his baptism, "I had finally found peace, and I felt the loving arms of the Savior as I came out of the font. I'm grateful for good friends who live what they believe."

## Aaronic Priesthood Power

Doctrine and Covenants 58:27–28 says that "men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause," doing "many things of their own free will" in order to "bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them." The power is in you. You have been entrusted with the power of the Aaronic Priesthood. We love you, and we know you can do great things as you become a faithful priesthood man. ■

*As you go about "doing good to all,"  
you will bless and change people's lives.*



# Articles of Faith 1:13

The Articles of Faith come from a letter written by the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1842 to an editor named John Wentworth. They were first published in the *Church's Times and Seasons* newspaper in Nauvoo and have since become part of latter-day scripture.



## We Believe

"[This] article of our faith is one of the basic declarations of our theology. We ought to reflect on it again and again. Then, whenever we might be tempted to do anything shoddy or dishonest or immoral, there would come into our minds with some force this great, all-encompassing statement of the ethics of our behavior."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "Fear Not to Do Good," *Liahona*, Feb. 2000, 5; *Ensign*, Jan. 2000, 2.

## Chaste

"Human sexuality is not just a physical matter. In fact, chastity and fidelity begin in the spirit, not in the body. They are expressions of the condition of our spirit. When our spirit is in tune with gospel truths, we want to live high standards, and our actions reflect that desire. Thus, chastity and fidelity are more than sexual abstinence before marriage and sexual fidelity after marriage. They express the quality of our spiritual life."

Terrance D. Olson, "Truths of Moral Purity," *Liahona*, Oct. 1999, 31; see also *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 43.

## Benevolent

To be benevolent is to be kind and giving, in a word—to do good. During His ministry Jesus Christ "went about doing good, . . . for God was with him" (Acts 10:38). As you live your life with benevolence, God will strengthen and uplift you.

## Admonition of Paul

See Philippians 4:8, which is part of a letter from the Apostle Paul to the Saints in Philippi.

13. "We believe in being <sup>b</sup>honest, true, <sup>c</sup>chaste, <sup>d</sup>benevolent, virtuous, and in doing <sup>e</sup>good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we <sup>f</sup>hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to <sup>g</sup>endure all things. If there is anything <sup>h</sup>virtuous, <sup>i</sup>lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

## Seek after These Things

Read the "Entertainment and Media" section in *For the Strength of Youth* (page 17). Is the entertainment you choose consistent with these



standards and with the thirteenth article of faith? Consider writing in your journal about how you have been blessed by making good media choices.



## Virtuous

"Virtue 'is a pattern of thought and behavior based on high moral standards' (*Preach My Gospel*, 118). It encompasses chastity and moral purity. Virtue begins in the heart and in the mind. . . . It is the accumulation of thousands of small decisions and actions. . . . Virtuous women and men possess a quiet dignity and inner strength. They are confident because they are worthy to receive and be guided by the Holy Ghost."

Elaine S. Dalton, Young Women general president, "A Return to Virtue," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 78–80.

Editors' note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected scripture verse, only a starting point for your own study.



# You Should Take Seminary

*A casual suggestion by a friend helped change my life.*

By Lisa Pace

Lisa, you should take seminary," Ashley mentioned casually. Before us were folders displaying lists of class choices for the next school year, when we were starting high school.

I looked vacantly at my friend, finally managing a smile. I hated to tell her, but seminary was the furthest thing from my mind. I was then a less-active member of the Church, as I had been for most of my life. Over the years, I had grown vaguely aware of the gospel but hadn't received a strong testimony of its truthfulness.

As I went home after school that day, the prospect of seminary began to intrigue me. Ashley, as well as my other friends, all seemed very excited to become a part of it. I had a desire to do what my friends were doing, even if I didn't understand what they were doing or why they were doing it. After discussing my plan with my parents and getting their permission, I decided to take seminary my first year of high school.

I didn't know what a profound impact that simple act would have on my life. My first year of seminary changed my life as I began to see myself and others as children of God, loved and cherished. I began going to church on Sundays,

despite my family's inactivity.

I have now finished high school, but I will always be grateful for seminary. During that hour each day, I had my prayers answered and my testimony strengthened. Seminary helped me prepare for a temple marriage and encouraged

me to strive to be a better person.

I know that God cares for each of us. I know that seminary is a blessing that helped me build on a firm foundation in Jesus Christ. I would encourage you to enroll in seminary. It will change your life too. ■



## AFRAID TO CHANGE

By Olivia Ghafoerkhan

I grew up as a Christian. Even though my family was never religious, my father always taught me to act upon what I know to be true.

In my early teen years I went through many trials. Back surgery, my parents' divorce, my mother's illness, and caring for a younger sister left me bitter and cynical. Then a few months before I turned 15, I came into contact with missionaries. Elder Johnson and Elder Chadwick taught me about the gospel.

I read the Book of Mormon, but I didn't want to make the changes they asked me to. I told them the changes were too much and almost told them to leave me alone. I looked up as I spoke those words and met Elder Chadwick's eye. A single tear rolled down his cheek, and I have never felt so ashamed. I told them I would call them the next day.

I went home from church and finished reading the Book of Mormon for the first time. Then I knelt down,



which I had never done before, and asked God if it was true. I'd never asked God a question before. I was so afraid of changing. After I said "amen," a feeling of calm and peace came over me. I knew I had a Heavenly Father who loved me, I knew the Book of Mormon was true, and I knew I could change.

Ten days later I was baptized. Both of my parents came to my baptism. Although I'm still the only member in my family, I have faith that one day they too will kneel and ask God. I'm reading the Book of Mormon for the eighth time now, and it's as wonderful as the first time. I know that the Book of Mormon is true. It has the power to change people. ■

## MY TESTIMONY OF PRAYER

Prayers are not always answered in the way you hope or expect. Think about what you are praying for and pay attention to what you are feeling. Always remember that the Lord loves you and will answer your prayers. He may already have answered them, and it is a matter of recognizing the answer.

Mary M., age 17,  
England



**TO** contribute to Our Space, e-mail your story, artistic photo, or feedback to [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org), with "Our Space" in the subject line. Please include your name, birth date, ward or branch, stake or district, and parent's permission (e-mail is acceptable). Submissions may be edited for length or clarity.

IT'S NICE TO BE  
**IMPORTANT**

BUT IT'S MORE IMPORTANT TO BE  
**NICE**

# I Hope They Call Me? on a Mission



By Loran Cook

Maybe you've heard the Primary song "I Hope They Call Me on a Mission." There is actually another important children's song about serving a mission. It says: "I want to be a missionary now. I don't want to wait until I'm grown."<sup>1</sup> Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles agrees. He said, "Young people need to commit themselves early in life to the idea of a mission."<sup>2</sup>

However, knowing you need to serve a mission and feeling prepared to serve are two different things. Where do you start? Strengthening your testimony and knowledge of the gospel are two of the best things you can do. Below are a few ways you can prepare to serve a mission.

## 1. Faith

We need to grow our faith daily. Jesus Christ taught, "If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me" (Moroni 7:33).

- Study the scriptures. They teach and testify of Jesus Christ.
- Apply faith in meeting personal problems. Having faith in Jesus Christ will comfort you in difficult times and will help you overcome all obstacles.

- Gain a greater control over your body and mind by learning the importance of education, fitness, and health.
- Continue to repent, obey the commandments, fast, and pray to purify your life.
- For young men, exercise faith in Jesus Christ by learning about and fulfilling your priesthood duties.

## 2. Spirit

Elder Ballard also taught, "Missionaries need to be morally clean and spiritually ready."<sup>3</sup>

- Study and follow the guidelines in *For the Strength of Youth*.
- Seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost by fasting, studying the scriptures, and praying for guidance.
- Read about gifts of the Spirit in Doctrine and Covenants 46:11–26. Prayerfully seek to discover your spiritual gifts. Seek the counsel of your parents and leaders to help you develop spiritual gifts.
- Ask yourself, "Are the books I read and television programs and movies I watch uplifting?" If not, think about how you can make better choices for entertainment.
- Learn to listen for spiritual promptings.





### 3. Love

You need charity, the pure love of Christ, to serve well as a missionary. Loving others is not always easy. It takes service, faith, the Holy Ghost, and courage. Mormon said that you need to pray with all your might to be filled with the pure love of Christ (see Moroni 7:48).

- Pray humbly and sincerely for the ability to love others as Christ loves.
- Show love for your family by doing a kind act for each family member. Choose a family member who needs extra love or attention and spend some time with him or her.
- Show your love for someone in need by doing something kind for him or her.



### 4. Service

King Benjamin taught his people about the importance of service. He said that when we serve others, we are serving God (see Mosiah 2:17).

- Make service a regular habit. You could offer to do the dishes after dinner, help a sibling with homework, talk to someone who needs a friend, or help keep your neighborhood clean.
- Pray for strength and direction in following the Savior's example of service.
- Help your Young Men or Young Women group plan a service activity.

### 5. Invitation

Alma, one of the great Book of Mormon missionaries, invited those who were not members of the Church to “come and be baptized unto repentance” (Alma 5:62). You can follow his example.

- Be a good friend and example to friends and family members who aren't members of the Church.
- Seek opportunities to teach your friends and neighbors about the gospel.
- Learn the gospel and practice teaching it now. Ask your ward or branch mission leader for guidance on how to teach the gospel. If possible, attend lessons when the full-time missionaries teach investigators.
- Study *Preach My Gospel* with your parents for family home evening. You could take turns talking about the lessons, teaching parts of them, and inviting each other to bear testimony of what you learn.

Serving a mission is an important goal to make now, and preparing now will benefit your life every day leading up to a mission. You're never too young to start preparing—you don't have to wait until you've grown a foot or two. ■

#### NOTES

1. “I Want to Be a Missionary Now,” *Children's Songbook*, 168.
2. M. Russell Ballard, “How to Prepare to Be a Good Missionary,” *Liahona*, Mar. 2007, 10; *New Era*, Mar. 2007, 6.
3. M. Russell Ballard, *Liahona*, Mar. 2007, 12; *New Era*, Mar. 2007, 8.

**By Karen A. Kimball**

Based on a true story

*“Brigham Young [was] reserved to come forth in the fulness of times to take part in laying the foundations of the great latter-day work” (D&C 138:53).*

**K**athy listened as Mr. Sodeberg explained how people migrated in the United States. She was excited about her new history class. Flipping through the pages of her new history book, Kathy stopped at a picture of Brigham Young. She had never realized Brigham Young’s significance in United States history before.

Mr. Sodeberg finished his lecture. “There will be homework every day,”

he said. “Your first assignment is due tomorrow.”

At home Kathy sighed as she looked at all the questions Mr. Sodeberg had assigned.

“Tough day at school?” Mom asked.

“Homework every day,” Kathy said. She remem-

bered the picture in her history book. “Mom, Brigham Young is in my textbook. What makes him so important in U.S. history?”

“He directed the migration of thousands of Latter-day Saints to the Salt Lake Valley. Then he organized



# The Best Brigham Young

them into settlements,” Mom said. “That took a lot of planning. It was a significant part of the country’s westward migration.”

The next day Mr. Sodeberg announced, “Next week we will perform a readers’ theater. Each of you will dramatize a character of the westward migration. Your parents and other students will be invited to attend the performance.”

Mr. Sodeberg began assigning characters and handing out scripts. When he asked who wanted the part of Brigham Young, Kathy quickly raised her hand.

“Tonight’s homework is to begin memorizing your part,” Mr. Sodeberg said. “You must recite it perfectly. Your grade depends on it.”

Kathy read over her part as she and her friend Laura left class. A terrible feeling came over her. “This is all wrong,” she said to Laura. “It makes Brigham Young sound dishonest.”

“You just see things differently because of your church,” Laura said.

“I can’t say these things,” Kathy said.

“You have to recite them perfectly,” Laura reminded her.

Tears rolled down Kathy’s cheeks as she ran home and burst through the front door.

“More homework?” Mom asked.

“Worse,” Kathy said, handing her the script. “Read this.”

Mom read the script and shook her head. “This writer didn’t know a lot about Brigham Young.”

“What should I do?” Kathy asked.

“First let’s find a Brigham Young costume,” Mom said.

Kathy tried on Grandpa’s long black coat and rolled up the sleeves on her brother’s white shirt. Mr. Grandi next door showed Kathy how to walk with his extra wooden cane.

Mom found a tall black hat in a closet and put it on Kathy’s head. “You’d make Brigham Young proud,” Mom said. “Now you need a new script.”

Kathy looked for information about Brigham Young in Church history books and on the Church Web site. Soon the script was rewritten.

“The true story of Brigham Young,” Kathy said.

On the day of the performance, Kathy’s class gathered in the auditorium. Parents and other students waited in their seats.

Mr. Sodeberg introduced the program; then he stood offstage as the students recited their parts.

Alex recited his script perfectly, but Randall mixed up his words. Mr. Sodeberg made him begin again. Kathy squeezed her cane. When it was her turn, Kathy recited the true story of Brigham Young.

“Did you change your script?” Laura asked after the performance.

“Yes. I told the truth,” Kathy said.

“Here comes Mr. Sodeberg,” Laura said.

“Well done, ladies,” Mr. Sodeberg said. “Kathy,” he continued, “you were the best Brigham Young I have ever seen.” ■



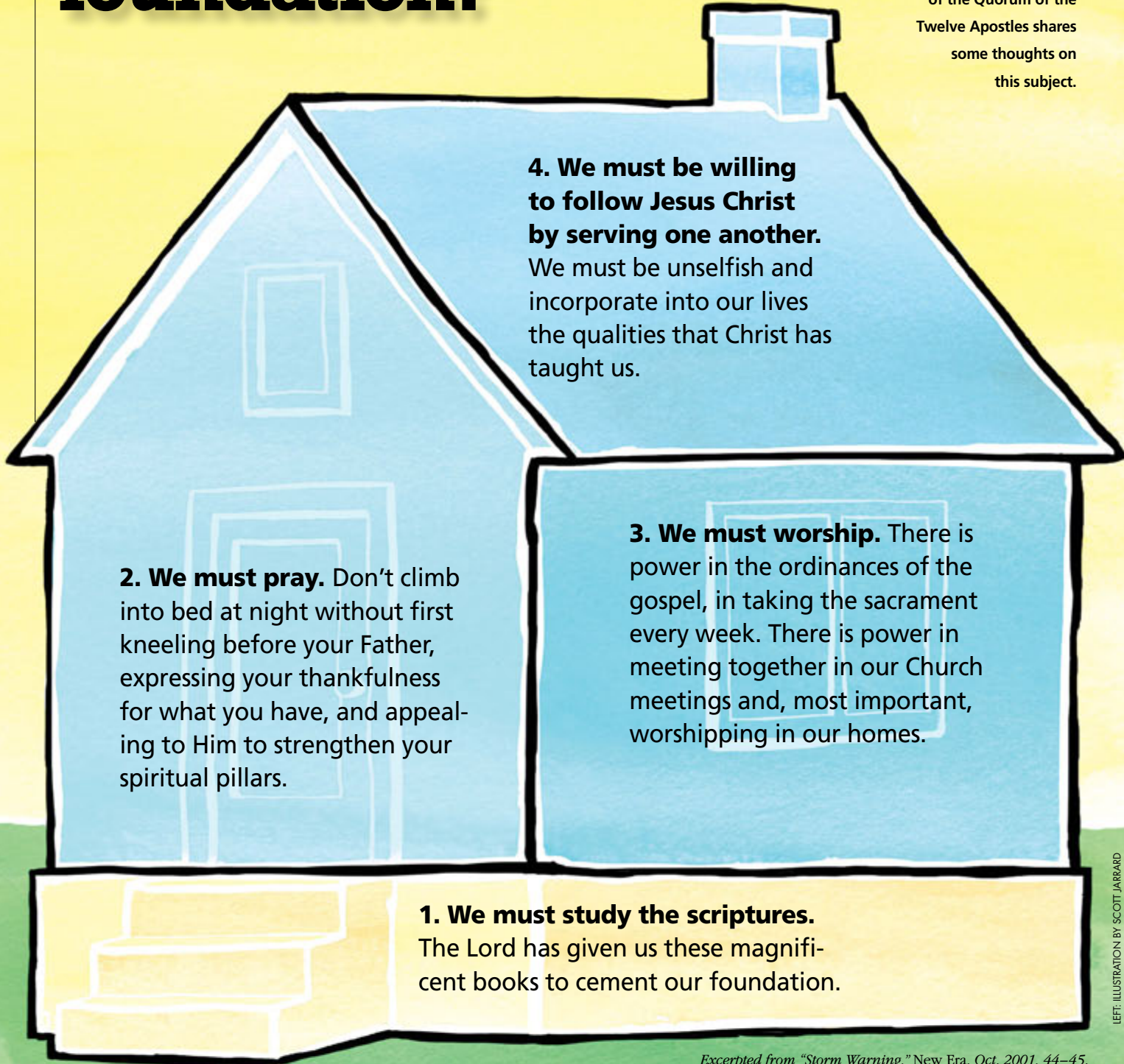
**B**righam Young . . . acted in accordance with correct principles, and he became a mighty instrument in the hands of the Lord.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “And Nothing Shall Offend Them,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 90.

# How do I build a spiritual foundation?



Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shares some thoughts on this subject.



**4. We must be willing to follow Jesus Christ by serving one another.**

We must be unselfish and incorporate into our lives the qualities that Christ has taught us.

**2. We must pray.** Don't climb into bed at night without first kneeling before your Father, expressing your thankfulness for what you have, and appealing to Him to strengthen your spiritual pillars.

**3. We must worship.** There is power in the ordinances of the gospel, in taking the sacrament every week. There is power in meeting together in our Church meetings and, most important, worshipping in our homes.

**1. We must study the scriptures.**

The Lord has given us these magnificent books to cement our foundation.

*Excerpted from "Storm Warning," New Era, Oct. 2001, 44–45.*



# Our Page



**I** am so grateful that I was born to a family that knows about the true gospel of Jesus Christ. My eighth birthday fell on Easter Sunday, and I felt great joy to be baptized on the day we celebrate the Resurrection of the Savior. I

was a little nervous, but my father was there, and I knew that I could trust him. During the baptism I had a warm, happy feeling in my heart, and then I knew that I could trust Heavenly Father the same way I trust my father.

I am 11 now, and I am looking forward to going to the temple to be baptized for the dead. I know that only through baptism can we return to our Heavenly Father.

**Mirjam S., age 11, Switzerland**



**Jerry L., age 9, Philippines**

REUNIÃO FAMILIAR



**"Family Home Evening," by Nicolas M., age 6, Brazil**



**Sakura O., age 8, from Japan, was baptized recently. She reads the Book of Mormon every day. She enjoys going to church,**

**likes to pray, and loves to see the temple. She wants to follow Jesus Christ and tries hard to make good choices.**



*The children of the Primero de Mayo Branch, Bermejo Bolivia District, after they participated in their sacrament meeting presentation.*

# The Scriptures Are the Word of God

**By JoAnn Child and Cristina Franco**  
*“Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do”*  
 (2 Nephi 32:3).

**I**n the Book of Mormon, Lehi tells his family about his dream of the tree of life. In the dream, Lehi wanted his family to eat the fruit of the tree, which was “desirable above all other fruit” (1 Nephi 8:15). He saw many people walking along the path that led to the tree of life, but some got lost in mists of darkness and wandered away from the path. Others held onto the iron rod that led along the path toward the tree. They walked forward, holding tightly to the rod until they reached the tree and ate the fruit, which brought them joy. (See 1 Nephi 8.)

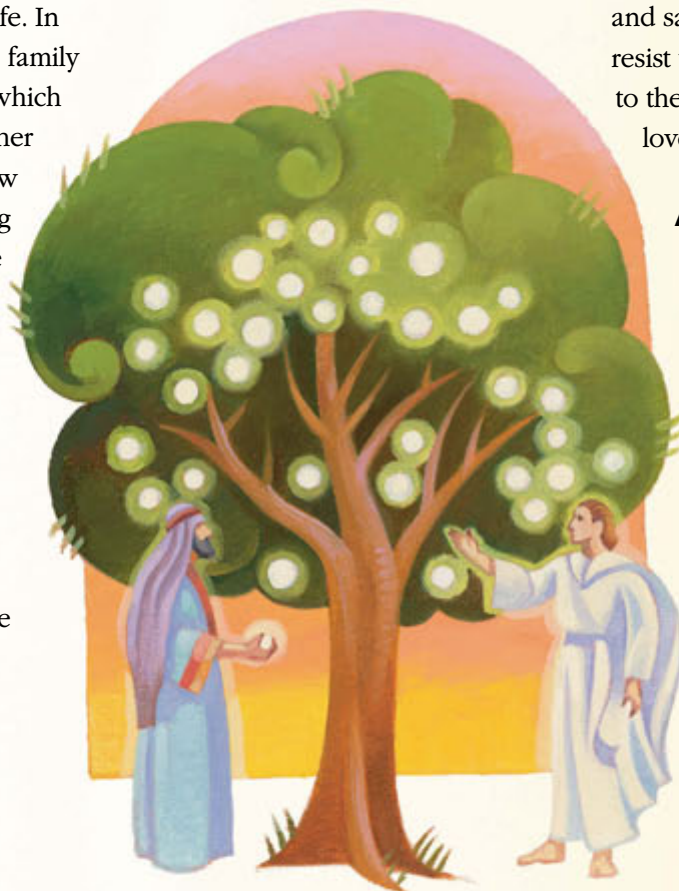
Lehi’s son Nephi prayed to know the meaning of the things his father had seen. Nephi was shown the same dream as his father. The Spirit taught Nephi that the tree of life represents the love of God. Nephi was shown Jesus Christ, the Son of God, teaching and blessing

people on the earth. Nephi was also taught that the rod of iron represents the word of God. (See 1 Nephi 11.)

The scriptures are the word of God. Reading the scriptures is like holding onto the iron rod. We will know what Jesus wants us to do and say. We will have power to resist temptation and make our way to the tree of life and to feel the love of God. ■

## ACTIVITY

**L**ook up the scripture references on page 65 to discover the meanings of the things Lehi and Nephi saw in their visions of the tree of life. Cut out and use the drawings to share with others what you learn. You can also ask your parents if you can share the story in family home evening.



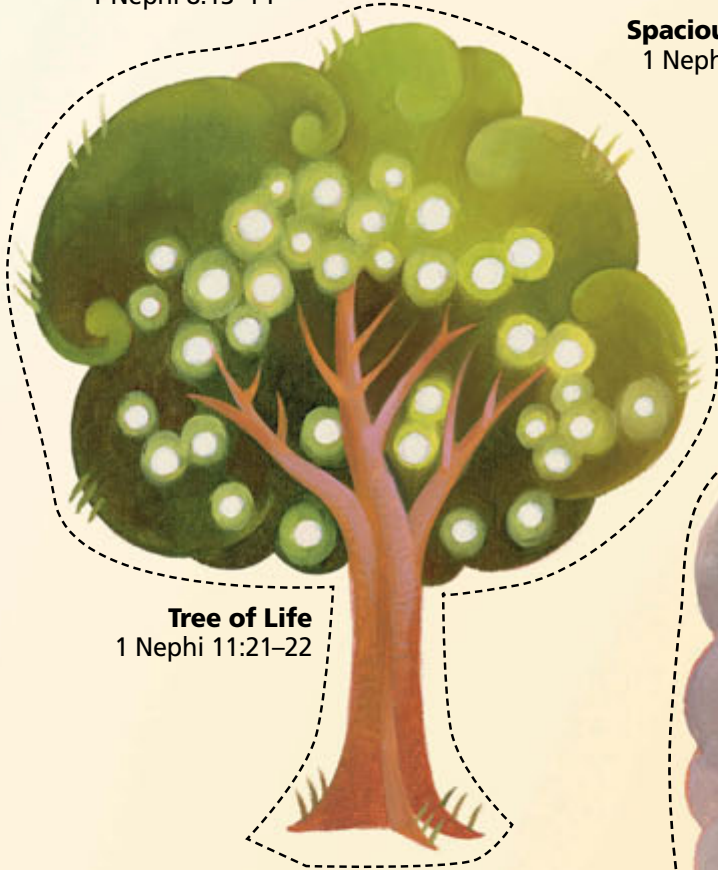


**Sariah, Sam, and Nephi**  
1 Nephi 8:13-14



**Spacious Building**  
1 Nephi 11:35-36

**People Mocking**  
1 Nephi 8:26-27



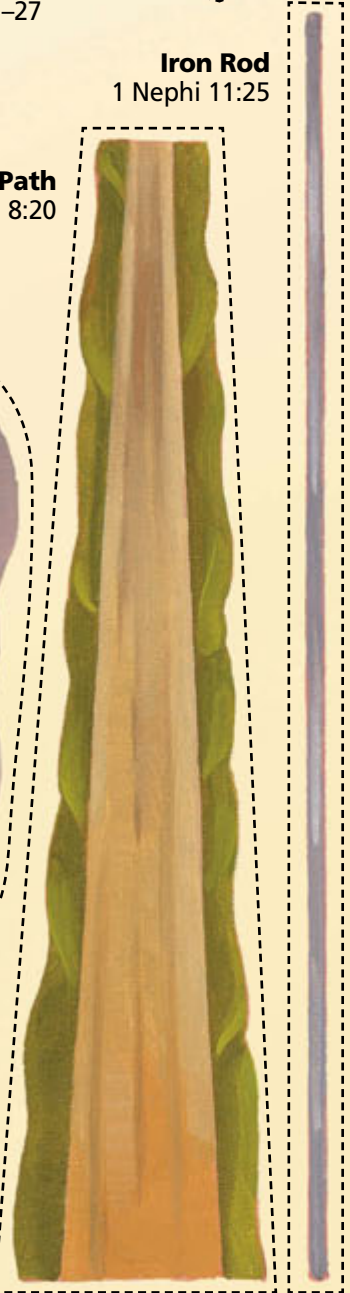
**Tree of Life**  
1 Nephi 11:21-22

**Iron Rod**  
1 Nephi 11:25

**Strait and Narrow Path**  
1 Nephi 8:20



**Mists of Darkness**  
1 Nephi 12:17



**Spacious Field**  
1 Nephi 8:20



# JESUS as a Child

By Diane L. Mangum



**Temple at Jerusalem**—This temple was different from temples today. It was very large, with courtyards and porches filled with people. People brought animals to the temple for priests to sacrifice.

**Sacrifice**—When priests sacrificed animals on an altar, it taught people that someday Heavenly Father would sacrifice His Son, Jesus Christ, who would die for our sins.



**M**ary held the baby Jesus as she walked into the busy **temple** at Jerusalem. She and Joseph had come from Bethlehem to offer a **sacrifice** of two doves at the temple. Jesus was almost six weeks old.

In the temple was an elderly man named Simeon. He had been promised that he would see the Savior someday. “It was revealed unto Him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ” (Luke 2:26). When he saw the baby Jesus, Simeon rejoiced because he knew the promise had been fulfilled. Then a woman

named Anna who served in the temple joyfully testified that Jesus was the Savior.

But not everyone was happy about the Savior’s birth. King Herod heard that a child had been born who would be the king of the Jews. Herod did not want any other kings in his land. He ordered

that all the babies born near Bethlehem in the past two years be killed!

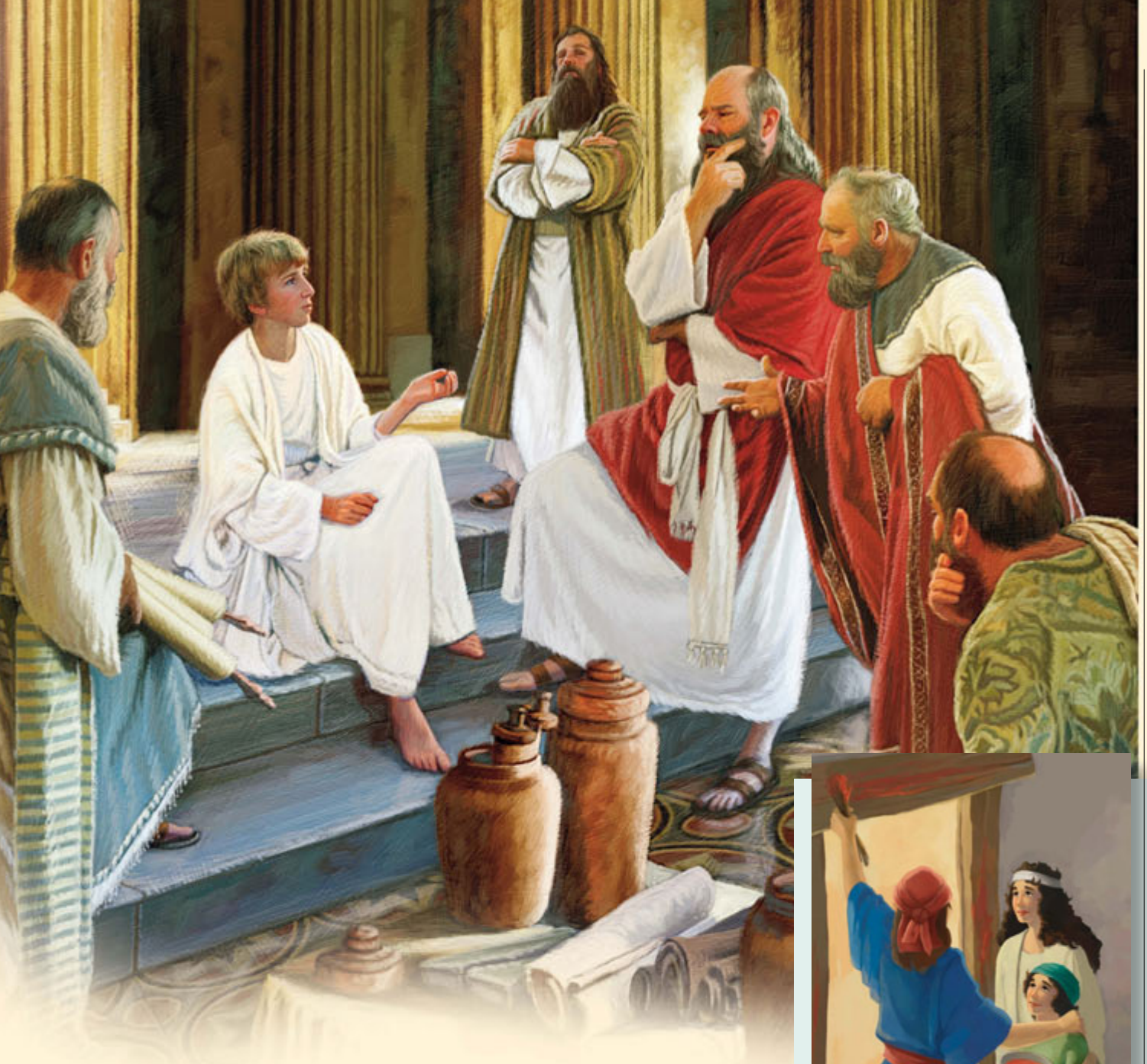
An angel came to Joseph in a dream to warn him about Herod’s plan. Joseph and Mary fled in the night. They took Jesus to live in the land of Egypt, where He would be safe.

After King Herod died, Jesus’s family moved to the town of Nazareth. Joseph worked as a carpenter. Mary took care of the household.

Jesus learned to work beside Joseph. Like all Jewish boys, He studied the scriptures and Jewish laws. Joseph and Mary obeyed the commandments, and Jesus learned from His earthly parents. Jesus “grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40).

When Jesus was 12, Mary and Joseph took Him to Jerusalem to celebrate **Passover**. They

*This account comes from Matthew 2; Mark 6:3; Luke 2:21–52.*



**P**assover—This important holiday celebrated the time when Jehovah helped the Jews escape from slavery in Egypt, about 1,400 years before Jesus was born.

traveled with many people. Women and men walked in different groups, and families met up each evening for dinner as they camped along the way.

After the celebration Joseph and Mary started back home. That night they realized that Jesus was not with any of the groups they were traveling with. They hurried back to Jerusalem to find Him. After three days they found Jesus in the temple.

He was talking to the teachers and answering their questions. The men in the temple were astonished.

Mary told Jesus that she and Joseph had been very worried. Jesus reminded her that He needed to be doing His Heavenly Father's business. Even though He was young, Jesus knew He had important work to do as part of His Heavenly Father's plan. ■



# Where Is Isabelle?

By Susan Denney

Based on a true story

*“They were desirous to be baptized as a witness and a testimony that they were willing to serve God with all their hearts” (Mosiah 21:35).*

**I**sabelle was so excited that she almost skipped as she and her dad walked down the hallway. Her mom had just brushed her dark hair and zipped up the long white dress Isabelle would wear for her baptism. She stopped outside the room where everyone was waiting.

“Can anyone have one of those?” she asked her dad, pointing to copies of the Book of Mormon on a small table.

“Yes. They’re for people who want to know more about our church,” Dad said.

Isabelle peeked into the room. It was full of people she loved. Her grandmother, aunts, uncles, and cousins sat near the front. Her best friend, Grace, sat with her family at the back. But Isabelle didn’t see Miss Perkins, her schoolteacher.

“Let’s go in,” Dad said. “It’s time for the meeting to start.”

“Can we wait one more minute for Miss Perkins?”

Miss Perkins was Isabelle’s favorite teacher. She loved books, and Isabelle did too.

“It was nice of you to invite her, Isabelle, but she might not come,” Dad said gently.

Isabelle sighed and nodded. She and Dad walked into the room and sat in the front row. Right before the opening hymn, Isabelle turned around to look for her teacher one last time. There she was with Grace’s family! Isabelle smiled. Miss Perkins smiled back.

After Isabelle’s baptism the bishop asked everyone to squeeze together for a photo.

“Where is Isabelle?” he asked.

Everyone looked around. No Isabelle!

Grace went to find her friend. First she looked down the hallway, but Isabelle wasn’t there. Then she looked in the foyer, but she wasn’t there either. Finally, Grace looked outside and saw Isabelle standing on the steps of

the meetinghouse talking to Miss Perkins.

“Thank you for coming to my baptism,” Isabelle said.

“You’re welcome,” said Miss Perkins. “I’m sorry I had to leave so quickly. I have another appointment today.”

“That’s OK. But I wanted to give you something.” Isabelle handed her teacher a Book of Mormon that she had picked up off the table in the hallway. “I know you love to read, and this is a *really* good book.”

“Thank you,” Miss Perkins said.

“Will you read it?” Isabelle asked.

“Yes, I will,” Miss Perkins said. “I promise.”

Isabelle felt so happy. She smiled as she turned and saw Grace waiting for her.

“What were you doing out there?” Grace asked. “Your mom wants a group picture.”

“I went to give Miss Perkins a Book of Mormon,” Isabelle said.

Grace’s eyes widened. “Were you scared?”

“A little. But I was more afraid



**I**t should be ‘with great earnestness’ (D&C 123:14) that we bring the light of the gospel to those who are searching for answers the plan of salvation has to offer.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Bring Souls unto Me,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2009, 110.



that she would just put it away on a shelf somewhere. So I asked her if she would read it.”

“What did she say?” Grace asked.

“She promised that she would!”

“That’s great!” Grace said.

The two girls joined the group

of friends and relatives.

“I’m glad Grace found you, Isabelle!” the bishop said. Then he asked everyone to squeeze together again for the picture. Isabelle stood right in the middle of the front row.

Afterward, Isabelle’s mom leaned

over to hug her. “Now you can remember your baptism day forever!” she said.

Isabelle smiled. She knew that with or without a picture, she would never forget her baptism day and how good it felt to be a missionary. ■

# Can't We Be Friends?

By Patricia Graham

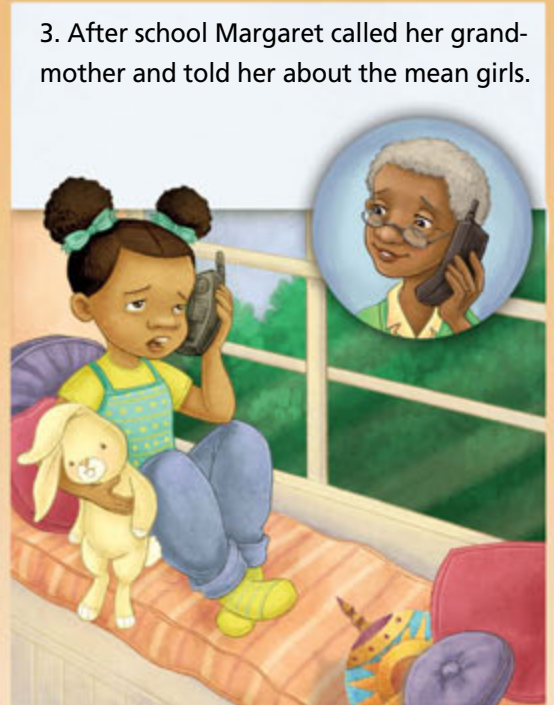
Based on a true story

*"Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another" (Ephesians 4:32).*

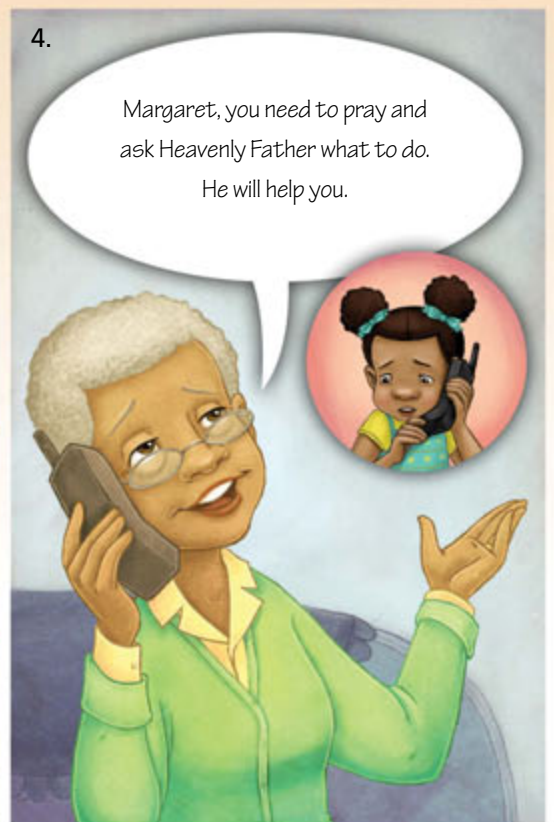


1. Margaret was nervous because she did not know anyone at her new school.

2. Some girls teased her. One girl even pulled the ribbons in Margaret's hair. Margaret didn't think she would be happy at her new school.



3. After school Margaret called her grandmother and told her about the mean girls.



4.

Margaret, you need to pray and ask Heavenly Father what to do. He will help you.



5. That night Margaret prayed to Heavenly Father. She told Him about her problem. Then she had an idea.



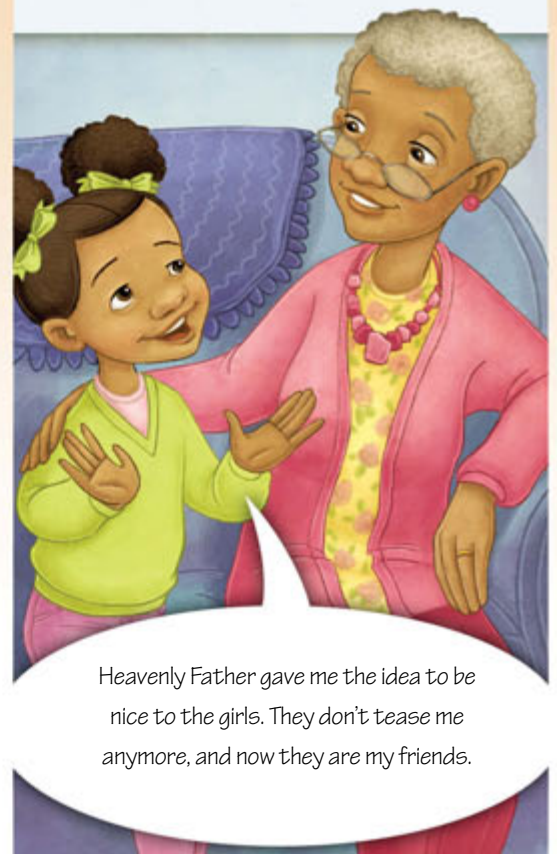
7. And the next day the girls started to tease her.



6. The next day at school the girls pulled her ribbons.

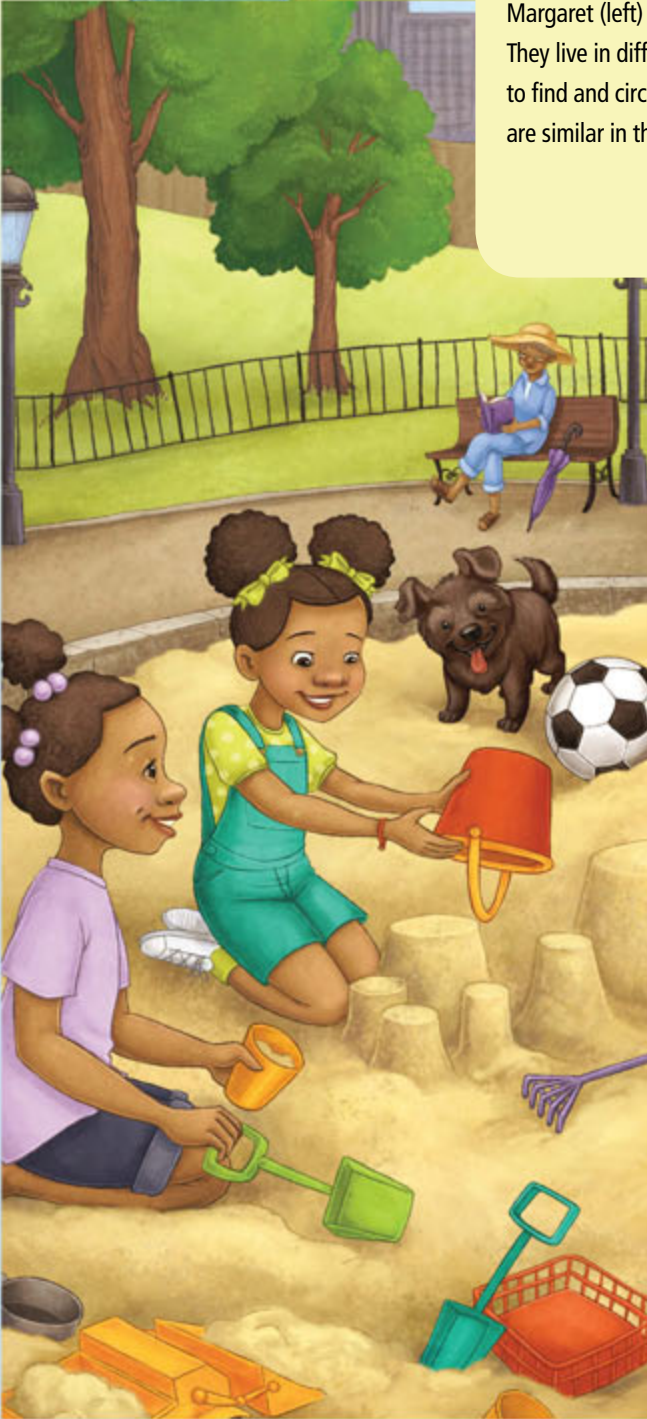


8. One week later Margaret was happy to tell her grandmother what had happened.



# MAKING FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD

No matter where you live, you can make friends by being kind to others. Look at the pictures of Margaret (left) and Antoine (right). They live in different countries. Try to find and circle five things that are similar in the two pictures.



# Making a Great Day

By Lindsay Stevens

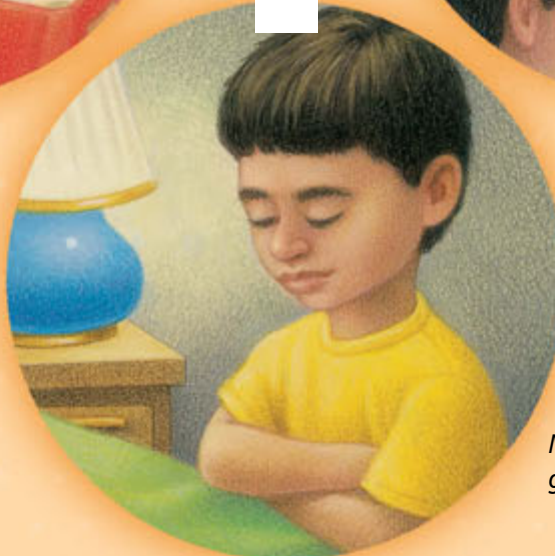


*Manuel helps his mom make breakfast.*

*Manuel studies at school.*



*Manuel listens as his father reads the scriptures to the family.*



*Manuel prays before going to bed.*

**M**anuel spent his day doing good things. Put his day in order by writing a number in the boxes to show what he did first, second, third, and fourth.

What good things can you do today?

RIGHT: ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEVE KROPP

## New Handbooks Introduced During Worldwide Training

By Adam C. Olson, Church Magazines

President Thomas S. Monson and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles introduced the Church's new handbooks and some of the significant changes they contain during a worldwide leadership training meeting on November 13, 2010.

The leadership training that introduced the new handbooks—*Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops* and *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*—was broadcast in 22 languages to priesthood and auxiliary leaders in 95 countries.

The broadcast is available on LDS.org at [www.lds.org/leadership-training](http://www.lds.org/leadership-training).

### Importance of the Handbooks

“There is safety in the handbooks,” President Monson said, warning against aberrations that can creep into Church programs when leaders aren't familiar with Church policies and procedures. “They will be a blessing to you and to those you serve as you read them, understand them, and follow them.”

The handbooks provide greater simplification and flexibility to avoid two great dangers, according to President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

The first is the danger of regimenting the influence of the Holy Ghost out of Church programs. “It is a spiritual work that we are about,” he said, “and a spiritual work must be guided by the Spirit.”

The second is the danger of “establishing the Church without establishing the gospel,” he said. “We need to have the Church in the lives of the

members and the gospel established in the hearts of the members.”

### Important Changes

Most of the text of *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops* remains unchanged from the 2006 update to the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1*. Instructions contained in the most recent First Presidency letters have been incorporated, chapters on the duties of the stake president and bishop have been shortened and clarified, and some material has been reorganized for easier reference.

Changes to *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* are more extensive. A principle-based approach is meant to reduce the complexity of Church programs and allow some local adaptation where necessary without sacrificing the uniformity of policies, procedures, and programs.

Other changes of note include reduction of the bishop's workload by enhancing the role of the ward council and its members, the possible increase in the frequency of ward council meetings, a clarification of the mission of the Church, folding the work of the ward welfare committee into the discussions of the priesthood executive committee (to which the Relief Society president may be invited as necessary) and ward councils, eliminating a standing ward activities committee and handling activities through the ward council, and other changes.

### The Mission of the Church

The new handbooks clarify confusion regarding what the First Presidency referred to in

A second worldwide leadership training meeting will be held in February 2011 to focus in detail on the responsibilities of stake presidents and bishops, the work of quorums and auxiliaries, and the special challenges of units that lack sufficient members and leaders to carry out the full programs of the Church.



1981 as the three-fold mission of the Church—proclaiming, perfecting, and redeeming.

*Handbook 2*, section 2.2, reaffirms the First Presidency’s intent in 1981 that these three applications were part of one great work, stating: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized by God to assist in His work to bring to pass the salvation and exaltation of His children” (see Moses 1:39).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles warned against giving “excessive attention to definitions and boundaries among these three applications of the Lord’s work” or “excluding other essential elements such as caring for the poor.”

He said, “The general principle, stated in section 2.2, is that ‘the programs and activities of the Church [are intended to] support and strengthen individuals and families.’”

### Uniformity and Adaptation

The principles and doctrines found in the first three chapters of *Handbook 2* “are foundational to the administration of the Church and must undergird everything [leaders] do,” said Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. However, the chapters of the book that follow, particularly a new chapter called “Uniformity and Adaptation,” help explain where flexibility exists in Church policies and programs.

This chapter helps “set forth clearly which matters must be uniform everywhere in the Church” and also “contains exceedingly important principles setting forth the conditions that may permit . . . local adaptation,” Elder Cook said.

Examples of where adaptations may be appropriately made include in the staffing and programs of the auxiliaries and in the format and frequency of leadership meetings and activities. Circumstances to be considered include family circumstances, transportation and communication, small numbers of members, and security.

“When considering what adaptations may be appropriate, leaders should always seek the guidance of the Spirit and counsel with their immediate presiding authority,” Elder Cook said.

### Moving Forward

In leading a panel discussion, Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles suggested that studying the instructions one chapter at a time and discussing the principles in council meetings may lead to more meaningful learning.

If leaders have questions regarding policies and programs that cannot be answered by the handbooks, they should discuss them with their presiding priesthood leader, Elder Oaks counselled. If there are unresolved questions, he said, “only the most senior priesthood leaders should be checking with the Office of the First Presidency.” ■

*Elders M. Russell Ballard, Jeffrey R. Holland, and David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president; and Walter F. González of the Presidency of the Seventy discuss principles in the new Church handbooks during a November 2010 Worldwide Leadership Training.*

# Early-Morning Seminary Celebrates 60 Years

**E**arly-morning seminary can be challenging, but over the past 60 years more than a million teenage members of the Church have learned that rising before the sun and trying to focus not just their eyes but their minds on the scriptures is worth the effort.

“Spending a few minutes in the scriptures each day, bearing testimony, and feeling the Spirit has not only a strengthening effect as students go to school, but it has a healing effect as the Atonement of Jesus Christ acts in their lives,” said Kelly Haws, assistant administrator for seminaries and institutes of religion. “It’s a great opportunity for youth.”

*More than a million young Latter-day Saints have benefited from early-morning seminary since its beginnings 60 years ago.*



## The Birth of Early-Morning Seminary

The first seminary classes were held during regular school hours in 1912 in a seminary adjacent to Granite High School in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. However, as years passed, more and more Church youth were enrolled in the growing public school system but did not have access to seminary classes as the students at Granite High did.

As Church membership grew rapidly in

Southern California in the late 1940s, the need to educate young people in the gospel inspired a group of stake presidents to request the establishment of the Church’s seminary program in the Southern California area.

During the 1948–49 school year, Marion D. Hanks, who later served in the Presidency of the Seventy, had success teaching an early-morning seminary class at West High School in Salt Lake City. Holding similar classes seemed a logical solution for the Saints in California, and the 11 stakes were approved to form 13 early-morning classes.

## Meeting Diverse Needs

From the program’s official start during the 1950–51 school year, early-morning seminary

spread across the United States and throughout the world, helping youth everywhere to learn the scriptures and apply gospel principles. Its official name was recently changed to “daily seminary,” because not all such classes are held in the early morning.

Part of what makes daily seminary so successful is its flexibility. Programs are organized at the stake and district level, and classes can be organized in a single ward or branch or with multiple wards or branches meeting together accord-

ing to the needs and circumstances of youth, parents, and priesthood leaders.

While approximately 115,000 students still benefit each year from released-time seminary held during school hours in areas with a large concentration of Church members, nearly 217,000 seminary students throughout the world participate in daily seminary.

Because some youth in the Church live too

far from other Church members to attend either released-time or daily seminary classes, the home-study seminary program was established. Home-study students spend four days each week studying assigned material independently, then gather with other home-study students once a week to discuss what they've learned.

**A Stone Cut without Hands**

Today, seminary classes are held in every state in the United States and in 140 countries around the world. In 1948 Canada became the first country outside the United States to hold seminary. With the spread of early-morning seminary, Mexico followed in 1958, Finland and Germany in 1962, Japan in 1963, Panama in 1964, and more countries over the years. Most recently, seminary classes were established in 2008 in the countries of Benin, Georgia, and Morocco.

As seminary spreads around the world, a worldwide community of seminary students is developing. No matter where seminary students live, they memorize the same scripture-mastery verses, study the same passages of scripture, feel the same Spirit as their testimonies grow, and work to build the same kingdom.

**Blessings from Sacrifice**

Seminary students, whether they attend released-time, daily, or home-study seminary, make sacrifices that bring them closer to Heavenly Father.

“When a 15-year-old decides, ‘I’m going to get up at 5:00 a.m. for seminary,’ not only is that a sacrifice, but that use of agency is a statement to Heavenly Father that is returned with a blessing,” Brother Haws said.

Those blessings are as real today as they were 60 years ago, and seminary in all its forms continues to bless the lives of youth all over the world. ■

**Saints Serve across Africa**

Church members across the African continent spent Saturday, August 21, 2010, improving their communities as part of the 2010 All-Africa Helping Hands Day.

This year, the Aba Nigeria Stake invited several community-based youth groups to partner with them, bringing together



more than 1,000 people. In the Umuahia Nigeria District, more than 100 members from six branches cut grass, trimmed flowers, and cleaned the gutters and grounds of the Broadcasting Corporation of Abia State.

In Accra, Ghana, branches were assigned to clean up various areas, including hospitals, children’s schools, and police stations. Some members were assigned to fill potholes or to clear storm drains that had become clogged.

Wherever the members went in their Helping Hands vests, grateful communities welcomed their help. The rector of Abia State Polytechnic told the

volunteers, “In an era where everybody is asking what the government will do for them, it is a welcome development to have an organization that continuously provides service to humanity.” ■

**Triple Combination Now Available in Indonesian**

An Indonesian version of the triple combination is now available, making it possible for Indonesian speakers to have the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price bound together in their own language. A new edition of the Book of Mormon in Indonesian is also available.

The Indonesian triple is also available online. The online version includes footnotes, maps, and photographs and allows readers to mark the scriptures and perform key word searches. It can be accessed at [scriptures.lds.org/ind](http://scriptures.lds.org/ind).

There are more than 6,000 Indonesian-speaking members of the Church worldwide, most of them in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the United States. Indonesia is the fourth-most populous nation in the world.

The First Presidency has encouraged members to acquire their own scriptures and to use them in regular

study, in Church meetings, and for Church assignments. ■

## Program Inducted into Hall of Fame

*Music and the Spoken Word*, the weekly broadcast of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, has been inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in the United States. The broadcast was selected after a board of officials nominated programs for induction and the

public voted for their favorite programs and personalities.

*Music and the Spoken Word* won the National Pioneer category, which honors broadcasters who have given at least 10 years of service to the radio industry and have been leaders in developing or improving radio programming at the national level.

*Music and the Spoken Word* is the longest-running radio broadcast in the United States. The first broadcast took



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place on July 15, 1929.

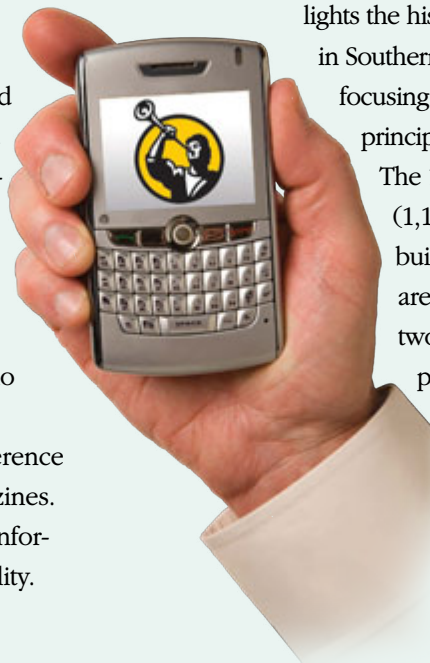
The program is carried on more than 2,000 radio stations, television stations, and cable systems. It is also available online at [musicandthespokenword.org](http://musicandthespokenword.org). From the home page, click on **Listen Live** and follow the link for online streaming. ■

**The weekly *Music and the Spoken Word* broadcast has been inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame.**

## WORLD BRIEFS

### Church Releases Mobile Phone Apps

The Church has released mobile phone applications to help members study the gospel even on the go. The Gospel Library application allows users to bookmark, highlight, and make notes as they read from the scriptures, general conference talks, and Sunday manuals. The Mormon Channel application broadcasts the Church's official radio station and contains the scriptures, general conference talks, and Church magazines. Visit [mobile.lds.org](http://mobile.lds.org) for information about compatibility.



### Los Angeles Temple Visitors' Center Reopens

The Los Angeles Temple Visitors' Center reopened on August 7, 2010, after two years of remodeling. The center highlights the history of the Church in Southern California while focusing on fundamental principles of the gospel. The 12,000-square-foot (1,100 square meter) building includes several areas for exhibits and two theaters. Its centerpiece is an 11-foot (3.4 meter) replica of the *Christus* statue, which is visible from outside the visitors' center.

### 200 Million More Records Now Available Online

FamilySearch.org released more than 200 million new searchable records in August 2010, bringing the total records available on the Records Search site to 700 million. To access the free collections, visit [Pilot.FamilySearch.org](http://Pilot.FamilySearch.org) or [beta.familysearch.org](http://beta.familysearch.org). The increased records availability is possible in large part because of the 350,000 Family Search Indexing volunteers worldwide who transcribe images of historical records to make them digitally searchable. ■



## COMMENT

### My Life's Compass

I love the *Liahona*. It is my life's compass; it guides me onto the right path and toward better things. It helps me grow strong and avoid the temptations I so often face. It nurtures my life every day. Thank you for making it so the people of the whole world can have this compass and guide, which puts us on the path of faith.

Anastasia N., age 17, Ukraine

### Liahona Is a Counselor

I often give subscriptions to the *Liahona* to my friends and employees for Christmas gifts as a way of teaching the gospel to them. Those at work often come to me and comment on the articles they read. They use the *Liahona* as a counselor, and they say that when they have problems in their families they read the *Liahona* together. I also place a copy of the magazine in the waiting room of our office. It is a wonderful missionary instrument.

Prycila Villar, Brazil

### A Source of Spiritual Strength

We are Colombians who live in Logan, Utah, USA, and we are grateful to receive the *Liahona* in Spanish. As parents, we strive to have our three daughters learn to live the gospel and develop a love for the temple. Thank you for publishing the *Liahona* every month, for in its messages our family finds a source of spiritual strength.

Rincon family, Utah, USA

*Please send your feedback or suggestions to [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org). Submissions may be edited for length or clarity. ■*

## FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

*This issue contains articles and activities that could be used for family home evening. The following are a few examples.*

**“Engaging in Family History Work,”** p. 8: You could provide each family member with a box to decorate and use to store photographs, journals, and other records.

**“What’s New in Personal Progress?”** p. 34, and

**“The Aaronic Priesthood—Greater Than You Might**

**Think,”** p. 37: The new Personal Progress and Duty to God programs encourage youth to reflect on and share what they have learned. If you have teenagers in your family, you could ask them to plan a family home evening lesson based on a Duty to God or Personal Progress activity they have recently completed.



**“How Do I Build a Spiritual Foundation?”** p. 62: In one waterproof container, place several small rocks next to each other. In another waterproof container, spread out a layer of sand. Find two small objects to represent houses. Place one “house” on the rocks and one on the sand. Then fill each container with water. The “house” on the sand will sink, while the “house” on the rocks will stand still. Discuss how a strong spiritual foundation allows us to endure the storms of life (see Helaman 5:12).

.....

### The Lessons a Puppy Taught

When our children were young, I took them to a pet store to redeem a coupon for a free goldfish. Two hours later we emerged with a puppy, purchased with the children’s own money. That night we put the puppy in the laundry room to sleep. In the morning the room was a mess. The children were expected to clean up, but they felt it was too much. “We can’t!” they sobbed.

That night we held a family home evening on the subject of consequences. “When you bought the dog,” their father said, “you didn’t think about the consequences. Now the dog is part of our family, and you must take responsibility for her.” We discussed how consequences always follow any choice we make, and we encouraged them to always make righteous choices.

The dog recently died after 14 years as part of our family, but the life lessons she helped teach us will always remain.

Jill Grant, Victoria, Australia

# Never Forsaken

By Adam C. Olson

Church Magazines

During His ministry the Lord often quoted scripture. So we should not be surprised to find verses in the Old Testament that the Savior quoted in the New. But I was caught off guard one day when I read the first verse of Psalm 22: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

I had never considered that the Savior may have been quoting sacred writings when He spoke those words in His agony on the cross (see Matthew 27:46). That idea led to a profound spiritual realization.

Almost all of us at some time have wondered, “O God, where art thou?” (D&C 121:1). That question has entered my mind most often during moments of spiritual uncertainty or distress.

For that reason the Savior’s words seemed to beg the question: Did His cry also rise from uncertainty—even doubt? Did it mean that there was a question for which my all-powerful, all-knowing Savior had no answer in the very moment my salvation depended on His power to provide all answers and overcome all things?

Reading this psalm taught me that, though these words indeed give soul-wrenching expression to the “paralyzing despair of divine withdrawal,” which He may have anticipated but not fully comprehended, they were *not* an indication of doubt.<sup>1</sup>

The very act of calling out to His Father in His greatest hour of need using words from holy writings was not only an evidence of



*The Savior’s reference to holy writings assured me that we are never forsaken.*

faith but also a profound teaching opportunity. Though Psalm 22 begins with a question, it is an expression of profound trust that God does *not* forsake:

“Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

“They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded” (verses 4–5).

Using the psalmist’s experiences as a foreshadowing of the Savior’s suffering, the psalm foretells the mocking (verses 7–8), the false trial and coming torture (verses 11–13), His pain and suffering (verse 14), His thirst (verse 15), the wounding of His hands and feet (verse 16), and the casting of lots and parting of His garments (verse 18).

Though the Savior quoted only the first verse, the remainder of the psalm stands as another testimony that He is the promised Messiah, that His suffering fulfilled prophecy, and that He trusted in His Father completely.

This understanding brought my soul an overwhelming reassurance that my faith was not misplaced. But even more powerful than learning that Jesus had not doubted and was delivered was the testimony in that psalm for the times when I wonder if God has forsaken *me* or when I worry that He has not heard *my* cry.

“Ye that fear [God], praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

“For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted [Jesus]; neither hath [the Father] hid his face from him; but when [Jesus] cried unto him, *he heard*” (verses 23–24; emphasis added). ■

#### NOTE

1. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “None Were with Him,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 87.



DEL PARSON, © 1983 IRI

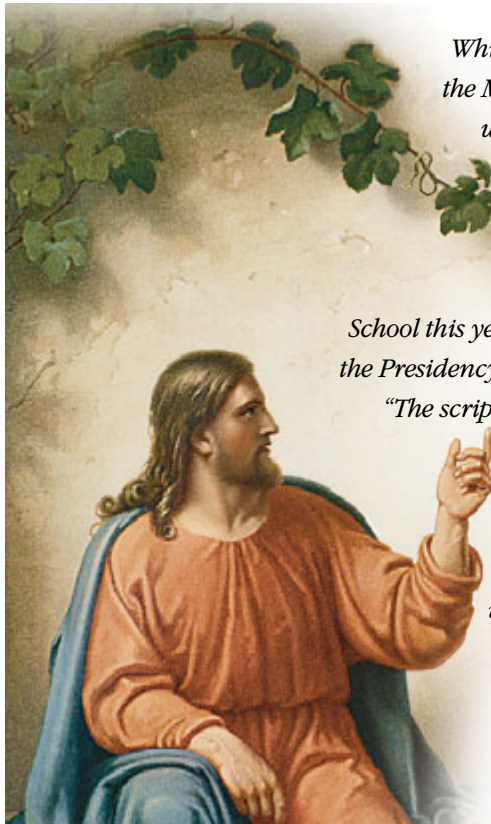
*Jesus at the Door*, by Del Parson

*“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

*“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit*

*with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

*“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith” (Revelation 3:20–22).*



*While we can't literally sit at the Master's feet as Mary did, we can learn of Him and listen to His words as we study the New Testament in Sunday School this year. Elder Jay E. Jensen of the Presidency of the Seventy explains: "The scriptures testify and teach of Jesus Christ. When we immerse ourselves in them, we will come to know Him and His voice." See "The Savior—the Master Teacher," page 14.*