

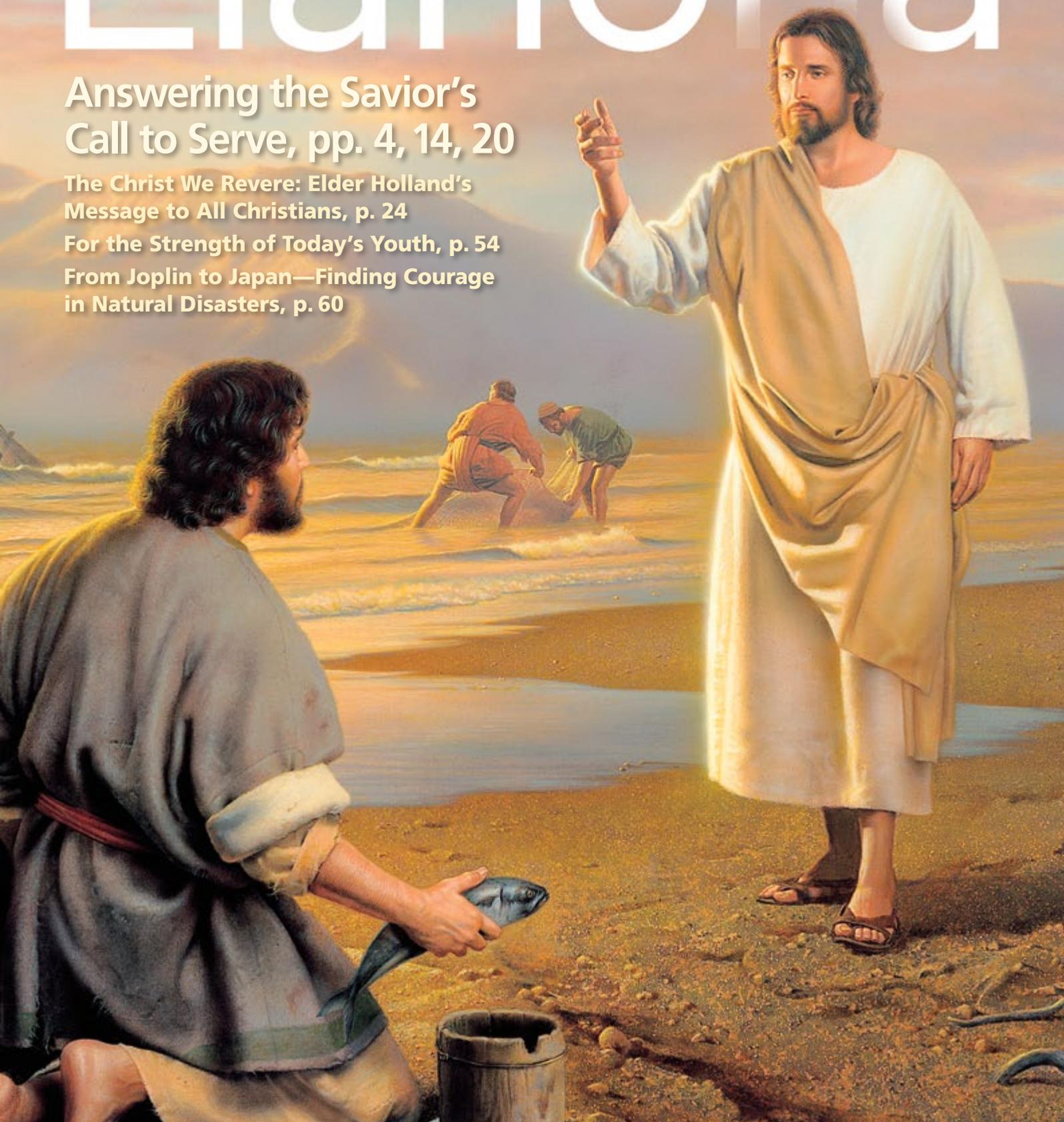
Liahona

Answering the Savior's Call to Serve, pp. 4, 14, 20

The Christ We Revere: Elder Holland's
Message to All Christians, p. 24

For the Strength of Today's Youth, p. 54

From Joplin to Japan—Finding Courage
in Natural Disasters, p. 60





Five That Were Wise,
by Rose Dato Dall

Ten virgins went to meet the bridegroom. "Five of them were wise, and five were foolish." The wise "took oil in their vessels with their lamps." The foolish took their lamps but "no oil with them." When the cry came that "the bridegroom cometh," the foolish virgins left to buy oil. "The bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." (See Matthew 25:1-13.)



MESSAGES

- 4** **First Presidency Message:
The Savior's Call to Serve**
By President Thomas S. Monson
- 7** **Visiting Teaching Message:
Taking Action in Time of Need**

FEATURE ARTICLES

- 14** **Thomas S. Monson:
Answering the Call of Duty**
By Heidi S. Swinton
*Experiences from the life of
President Thomas S. Monson
inspire us to follow his example.*
- 20** **Celebrating a Day of Service**
By Kathryn H. Olson
*Members throughout the world
contributed to their communities
in a day of service.*

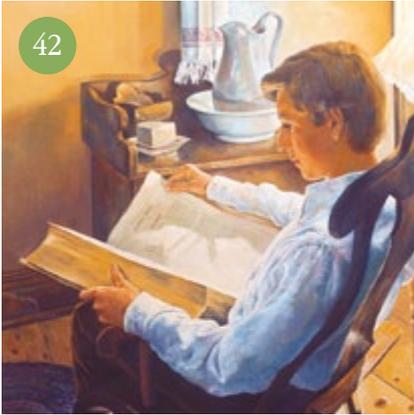
- 24** **Standing Together for the
Cause of Christ**
By Elder Jeffrey R. Holland
*A call for Christians to stand
together in conviction, compas-
sion, and understanding.*
- 34** **Finding Faith at the Ends
of the Earth**
By Michael R. Morris
*Converts in Ushuaia, Argentina,
begin a new life as they embrace
the gospel.*
- 78** **Answering Questions about
Our Faith**
By Michael Otterson
*Five ideas to keep in mind as
you answer others' questions.*

DEPARTMENTS

- 8** **April Conference Notebook**
- 10** **What We Believe:
The Sacrament—
Remembering the Savior**

- 12** **Gospel Classics:
Learn Your Duty**
By Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin
- 19** **Serving in the Church:
Serving the One**
By Al VanLeeuwen
- 30** **Our Homes, Our Families:
Natural Disasters—We Don't
Have to Be Afraid**
By Elder Stanley G. Ellis
- 38** **Latter-day Saint Voices**
- 74** **News of the Church**
- 77** **Family Home Evening Ideas**

ON THE COVER
Fishers of Men, by Simon Dewey.



42 Keeping the Faith in a World of Confusion

By Bishop Gérald Caussé
Five principles to help us keep our faith and testimonies strong.

See if you can find the Liahona hidden in this issue. Hint: In a fable.



46 Questions and Answers
I've become addicted to pornography. It's ruining my life. What can I do to break the addiction?

48 How Do I Know When I Am Forgiven?
By Elder Tad R. Callister
If I am forgiven, why do I still feel guilt?

51 Our Space

52 A Sacrifice but a Joy
By Edward M. Akosah
Could serving the Lord be more important than the money I was earning?

53 Picturing Myself in the Temple
By Adriane Franca Leao
I knew I wanted to be married in the temple, but I had to make the right choices first.

54 For the Strength of Youth: An Anchor for Today
By David L. Beck and Elaine S. Dalton
How can the new For the Strength of Youth help you? Read what the Young Men and Young Women general presidents have to say.

58 My Mother's Example
By Erin Barker
Even though my mom was sick, she could still teach me about love and service.



59 Special Witness: Women Are Important in the Church!
By Elder Quentin L. Cook

60 Prayers, Notes, and Natural Disasters
By Marissa Widdison
Although thousands of miles apart, Honoka and Maggie both learned that God watches over us in hard times.

62 Bright Idea

63 Our Page

64 Bringing Primary Home: I Choose to Fill My Life with Things That Invite the Spirit

66 Follow the Prophet: Learning to Serve Others
By Heidi S. Swinton

68 Leute's Home
By Adam C. Olson
No matter where we live, we can make our home a sacred place for our family.

70 For Young Children

81 Book of Mormon Scripture Figures

The First Presidency: Thomas S. Monson, Henry B. Eyring, Dieter F. Uchtdorf

The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Richard G. Scott, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland, David A. Bednar, Quentin L. Cook, D. Todd Christofferson, Neil L. Andersen

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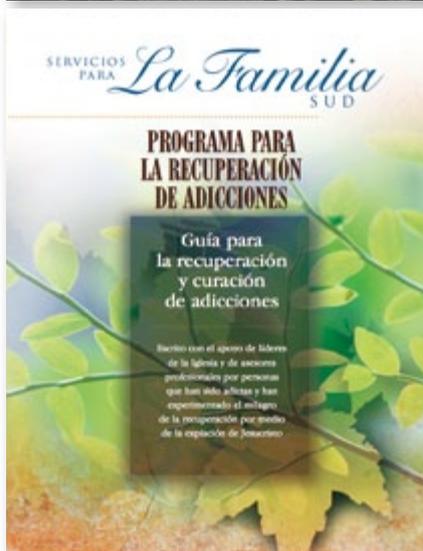
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FOR ADULTS

"Finding Faith at the Ends of the Earth" (page 34) describes the conversion stories of several members in Argentina's southernmost city. See more photos of them at liahona.lds.org.

FOR YOUTH

Youth offer several tips for overcoming an addiction to pornography (see page 46). Another helpful resource is the Church's addiction recovery workbook, available online in several languages at recoveryworkbook.lds.org.

IN YOUR LANGUAGE

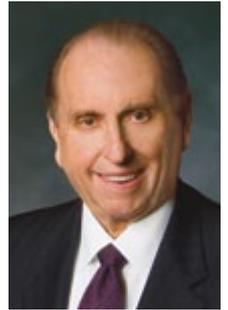
The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at languages.lds.org.

TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

Numbers represent the first page of the article.

- Addiction**, 46
- Adversity**, 30, 51, 60
- Atonement**, 48
- Blessings**, 54
- Book of Mormon**, 34, 40
- Christianity**, 24
- Church callings**, 4, 19
- Compassion**, 7, 19, 24, 58
- Conversion**, 34
- Covenants**, 10
- Dating**, 53
- Duty**, 4, 12, 14, 51, 73
- Duty to God**, 51
- Example**, 14, 58, 63, 66
- Faith**, 42, 48
- Faith in God program**, 63
- Family**, 30, 54, 58, 59, 63
- Family history**, 38
- Forgiveness**, 48
- For the Strength of Youth**, 54
- Friendship**, 64
- General conference**, 8
- Holy Ghost**, 19, 30, 34, 42, 48, 64
- Hope**, 38
- Jesus Christ**, 10, 24, 48
- Marriage**, 53
- Media**, 46
- Missionary work**, 34, 52, 78
- Natural disasters**, 30, 60
- Obedience**, 52
- Personal Progress**, 51
- Pornography**, 46
- Preparation**, 30
- Repentance**, 46, 48
- Revelation**, 38, 40, 41
- Sacrament**, 10
- Sacrifice**, 52
- Service**, 4, 7, 14, 20, 58, 66, 70
- Standards**, 54
- Temple work**, 53
- Testimony**, 34, 42, 51
- Unity**, 20, 24
- Visiting teaching**, 7
- Women**, 59

By President
Thomas S. Monson



THE SAVIOR'S Call to Serve

All who have studied mathematics know what a common denominator is. For Latter-day Saints, there is a common denominator that binds us together. That common denominator is the individual call each of us receives to fill assignments in God's kingdom here upon the earth.

Are you ever guilty of murmuring when a calling comes to you? Or do you accept with thanksgiving each opportunity to serve your brothers and sisters, knowing that our Heavenly Father will bless those whom He calls?

I would hope that we would not lose the real objective of our cherished opportunities to serve. That objective, that eternal goal, is the same spoken of by the Lord and found in the Pearl of Great Price: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."¹

May we ever remember that the mantle of membership



in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not a cloak of comfort but rather a robe of responsibility. Our duty, in addition to saving ourselves, is to guide others to the celestial kingdom of God.

By willingly walking the path of service to God, we will never be in the position of Shakespeare's Cardinal Wolsey. Stripped of his power after a life of service to his king, he sadly lamented:

*Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my king, He would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.²*

What kind of service does heaven require? "The Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days."³

I pause when I think of the words of President John Taylor (1808–87): "If you do not magnify your callings, God will hold you responsible for those whom you might have saved had you done your duty."⁴

Like a glowing searchlight of goodness is the life of Jesus as He ministered among men. "I am among you as he that serveth,"⁵ Jesus declared as He brought strength to the limbs of the cripple, sight to the eyes of the blind, hearing to the ears of the deaf, and life to the body of the dead.

With the parable of the good Samaritan, the Master taught us to love our neighbors as ourselves.⁶ With His answer to the rich young ruler, He taught us to shed our



selfishness.⁷ With the feeding of the 5,000, He taught us to see to the needs of others.⁸ And with the Sermon on the Mount, He taught us to seek first the kingdom of God.⁹

In the New World, the resurrected Lord declared, “Ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do.”¹⁰

We bless others as we serve in the shadow of “Jesus of Nazareth . . . who went about doing good.”¹¹ God bless us to find joy in serving our Father in Heaven as we serve His children on earth. ■

NOTES

1. Moses 1:39.
2. William Shakespeare, *King Henry the Eighth*, act 3, scene 2, lines 456–58.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 64:34.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* (2001), 164.
5. Luke 22:27.
6. See Luke 10:30–37; see also Matthew 22:39.
7. See Matthew 19:16–24; Mark 10:17–25; Luke 18:18–25.
8. See Matthew 14:15–21; Mark 6:31–44; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:5–13.
9. See Matthew 6:33.
10. 3 Nephi 27:21.
11. Acts 10:38.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

“[The Lord] will not permit us to fail if we do our part. He will magnify us even beyond our own talents and abilities. . . . It is one of the sweetest experiences that can come to a human being” (Ezra Taft Benson, in *Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 20). Consider sharing an experience when you or someone you know has felt the Lord magnify his or her talents and abilities. Invite the family to share some of their own positive experiences as they have responded to “the Savior’s call to serve.”



Serving in the Temple

By Benjamin A.

When I turned 17, I started thinking seriously about my future, and I prayed to Heavenly Father about what I could do to prepare to go on a mission and receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. I felt that I ought to go to the temple more often because it is the house of the Lord and would be the place where I could feel closest to my Heavenly Father.

So I set a goal to do 1,000 baptisms in a year. I truly felt the need to set this goal; I fasted to know if this was what I ought to do. Our Heavenly Father answered me, and I began to go to the Tampico Mexico Temple every Saturday.

After I had done 500 baptisms, I set a goal to do family history research on my ancestors, and I liked doing the research so much that I could not sleep because I was looking for names. I found 50 names and eight generations of my family history; I helped do the temple work for all of them.

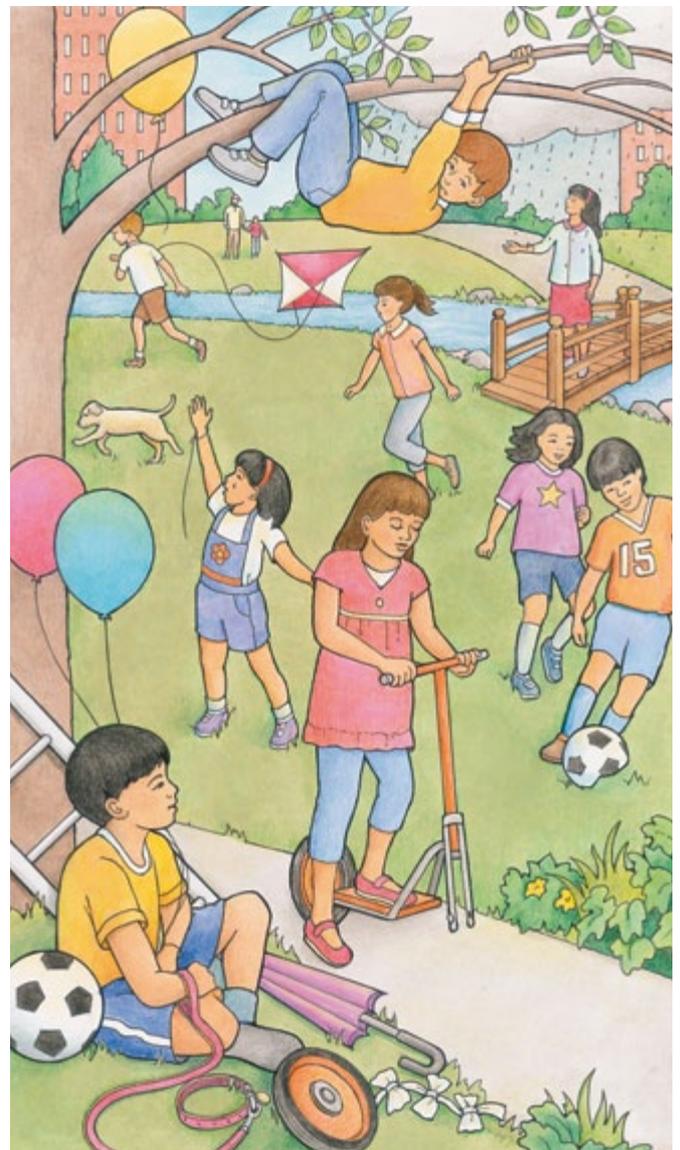
I ended up doing over 1,300 baptisms, and I graduated from seminary, received the Melchizedek Priesthood, and am now serving as a full-time missionary, which was one of my biggest goals in life.

I Can Do Something for Others

Each of us can do something to help others. President Monson taught that we should love everyone and learn to see how we can help them.

Look at the boy sitting by the tree. Can you see others around him he could help?

When you have dinner with your family, suggest that each family member share one thing he or she did to serve someone that day. Write your own service experiences in your journal each day.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF WENDY BENTLEY; ILLUSTRATION BY BETH M. WHITAKER

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



Faith, Family, Relief

Taking Action in Time of Need

As visiting teachers, one of our purposes is to help strengthen families and homes. The sisters we visit should be able to say, “If I have problems, I know my visiting teachers will help without waiting to be asked.” In order to serve, we have a responsibility to be conscious of the needs of the sisters we visit. When we seek inspiration, we will know how to respond to the spiritual and temporal needs of each sister we are assigned to visit. Then, using our time, skills, talents, prayers of faith, and spiritual and emotional support, we can help give compassionate service during times of illness, death, and other special circumstances.¹

Through the help of reports from visiting teachers, the Relief Society presidency identifies those who have special needs because of physical or emotional illness, emergencies, births, deaths, disability, loneliness, or other challenges. The Relief Society president then reports her findings to the bishop. Under his direction, she coordinates assistance.²

As visiting teachers we can have “great reason . . . to rejoice” because of “the blessing which hath been bestowed upon us, that we have been made instruments in the hands of God to bring about this great work” (Alma 26:1, 3).



From the Scriptures

Matthew 22:37–40; Luke 10:29–37; Alma 26:1–4; Doctrine and Covenants 82:18–19

NOTES

1. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 9.5.1; 9.6.2.
2. See *Handbook 2*, 9.6.2.
3. Henry B. Eyring, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 110.

What Can I Do?

1. Am I using my gifts and talents to bless others?
2. Do the sisters I watch over know that I am willing to help them when they have a need?

From Our History

In the early years of the Church, membership was small and centralized. Members could respond quickly when someone was in need. Today our membership is over 14 million and is spread throughout the world. Visiting teaching is part of the Lord’s plan to provide help for all His children.

“The only system which could provide succor and comfort across a church so large in a world so varied would be through individual servants near the people in need,” said President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

“. . . Every bishop and every branch president has a Relief Society president to depend upon,” he continued. “She has visiting teachers, who know the trials and the needs of every sister. She can, through them, know the hearts of individuals and families. She can meet needs and help the bishop in his call to nurture individuals and families.”³

April Conference Notebook

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

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

STORIES FROM CONFERENCE

Building Lasting Foundations

As a young man I worked with a contractor building footings and foundations for new houses. In the summer heat it was hard work to prepare the ground for the form into which we poured the cement for the footing. There were no machines. We used a pick and a shovel. Building lasting foundations for buildings was hard work in those days.

It also required patience. After we poured the footing, we waited for it to cure. Much as we wanted to keep the jobs moving, we also waited after the pour of the foundation before we took away the forms.

And even more impressive to a novice builder was what seemed to be a tedious and time-consuming process to put metal bars carefully inside the forms to give the finished foundation strength.

In a similar way, the ground must be carefully prepared for our foundation of faith to withstand the storms that will come into every life. That solid basis for a foundation of faith is personal integrity.

Our choosing the right consistently whenever the choice is placed before us creates the solid ground under our faith. It can begin in childhood since every soul is born with the free gift of the Spirit of Christ. With that Spirit we can know when we have done what is right before God and when we have done wrong in His sight.

Those choices, hundreds in most days, prepare the solid ground on which our edifice of faith is built. The metal framework around which the substance of our faith is poured

is the gospel of Jesus Christ, with all its covenants, ordinances, and principles.

One of the keys to an enduring faith is to judge correctly the curing time required. . . .

That curing does not come automatically through the passage of time, but it does take time. Getting older does not do it alone. It is serving God and others persistently with full heart and soul that turns testimony of truth into unbreakable spiritual strength.

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Mountains to Climb,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2012, 24.

Questions to Ponder

- Can you remember a time when your personal integrity was tested? How did you respond?
- How does serving God and others in faith strengthen your spiritual foundation?

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

Additional resources on this topic: “Faith” in Study by Topic at LDS.org; Richard G. Scott, “The Transforming Power of Faith and Character,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 43–46.



Fill in the Blank



1. “We can be delivered from the ways of evil and wickedness by turning to the teachings of the _____”

(L. Tom Perry, “The Power of Deliverance,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2012, 97).

2. “We are not diminished when someone else is _____ upon”

(Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Laborers in the Vineyard,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2012, 31).



4. “This life is training for eternal exaltation, and that process means _____”

(Ronald A. Rasband, “Special Lessons,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2012, 80).

3. “The truths and doctrine we have received have come and will continue to come by divine _____”

(D. Todd Christofferson, “The Doctrine of Christ,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2012, 86).



TWO-WORD SERMON

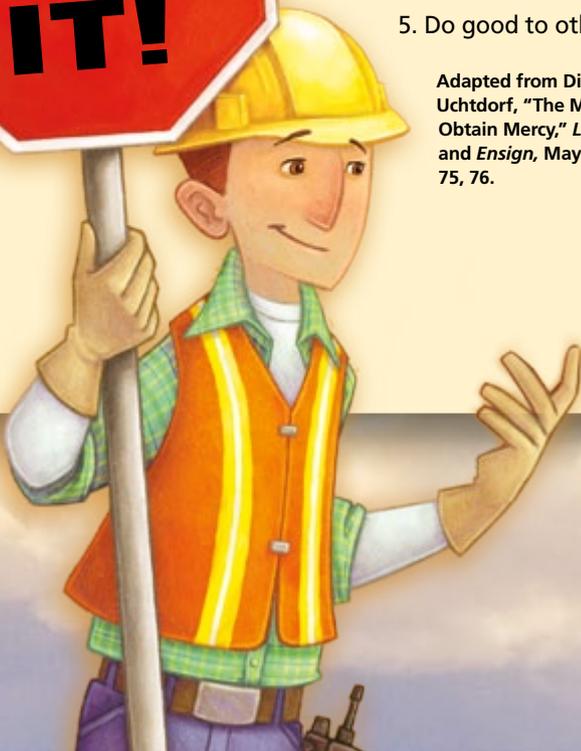
DO YOU:

1. Harbor a grudge?
2. Gossip?
3. Exclude others?
4. Envy another?
5. Wish to cause harm?

INSTEAD:

1. Be kind.
2. Forgive.
3. Talk peacefully.
4. Let the love of God fill your heart.
5. Do good to others.

Adapted from Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Merciful Obtain Mercy,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2012, 75, 76.



Answers: 1. holy scriptures; 2. added; 3. revelation; 4. tests and trials.

Prophetic Promise



“The Holy Ghost has confirmed truth in this conference. Further confirmation can come as you seek it, as you listen, and as you later study the messages of the Lord’s authorized servants.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Mountains to Climb,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2012, 26.

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

The Sacrament

REMEMBERING THE SAVIOR

The sacrament is a sacred priesthood ordinance performed each Sunday. Jesus Christ instituted this ordinance when He was on the earth and restored it in our day through the Prophet Joseph Smith. “The ordinance of the sacrament,” said Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “makes the sacrament meeting the most sacred and important meeting in the Church.”¹

The Lord has commanded us to meet together and take the sacrament each Sunday (see D&C 20:75). Aaronic Priesthood holders bless and pass the bread and water to members of the congregation, who take the sacrament in remembrance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. In doing so, they recommit to live the covenants they made with God when they were baptized. Specifically, they promise to always remember Jesus Christ, to take His name upon them, and to keep His commandments (see D&C 20:77).

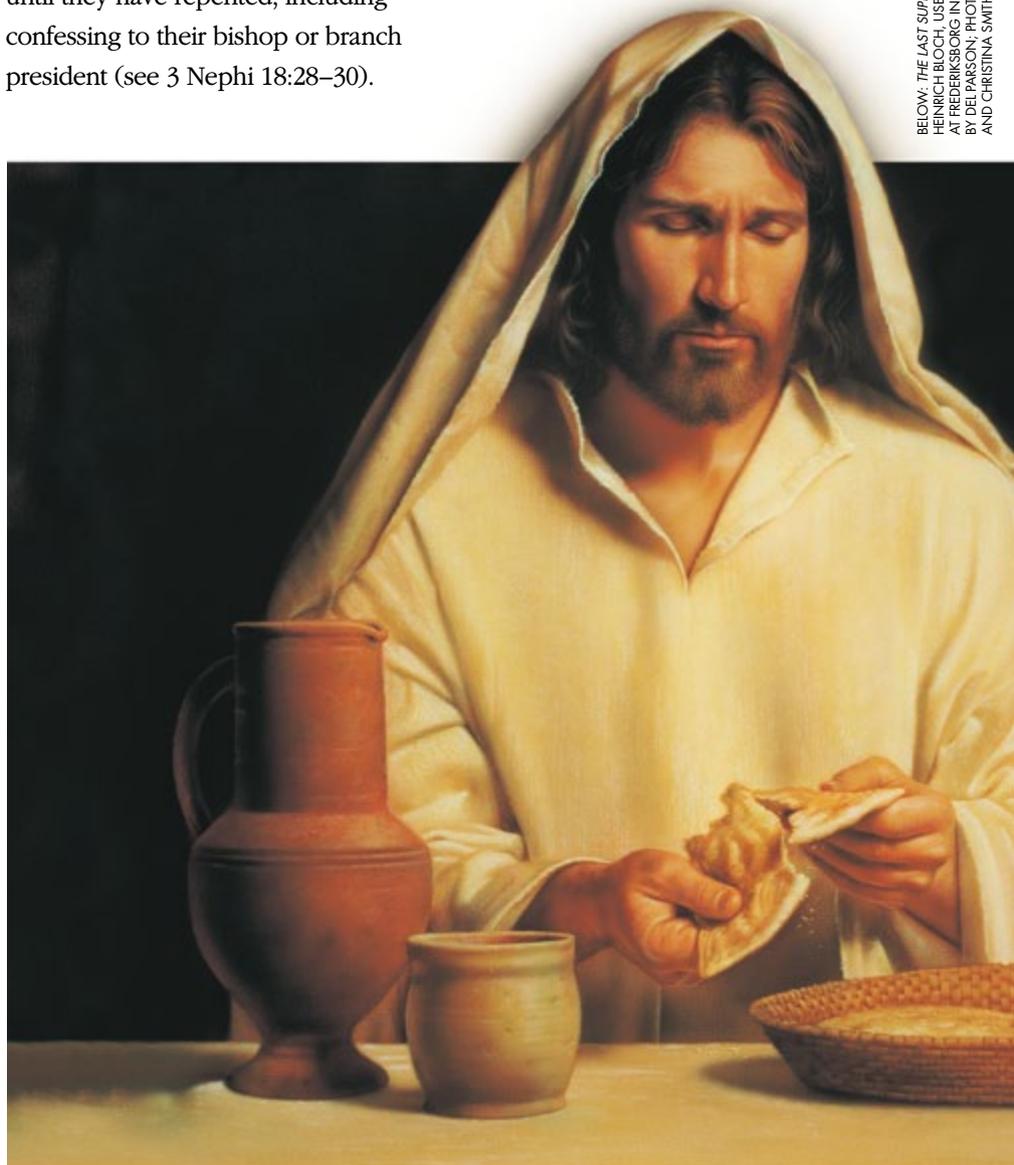
Proper preparation to take the sacrament includes repenting, desiring

to follow the Savior, and having a “broken heart and a contrite spirit” (3 Nephi 9:20). Taking the sacrament is a weekly opportunity for introspection and rededication. Reverence and prayer enhance the experience. Individuals who have committed serious sins should not take the sacrament until they have repented, including confessing to their bishop or branch president (see 3 Nephi 18:28–30).

Worthily partaking of the sacrament brings great blessings, such as forgiveness of sins, the companionship of the Holy Ghost, and sanctification—being made holy—through the Atonement. ■

NOTE

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “Sacrament Meeting and the Sacrament,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 17.



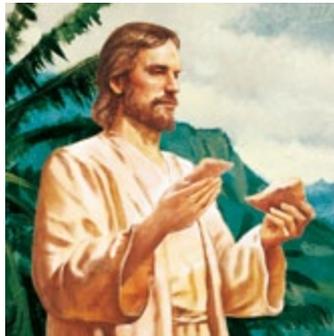
BELOW: THE LAST SUPPER, BY SIMON DEWEY; RIGHT: THE LAST SUPPER, BY CARL HEINRICH BLOCH, USED BY PERMISSION OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC MUSEUM AT FREDERIKSBORG IN HILLERØD, DENMARK. MAY NOT BE COPIED; PAINTING BY DELPARSON; PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY EDWIN REDKINO, ROBERT MILNE, AND CHRISTINA SMITH

For more information, see 1 Corinthians 11:23–30; Doctrine and Covenants 27:2.

1. Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament among His Twelve Apostles on the night before His Crucifixion (see Luke 22:19–20).



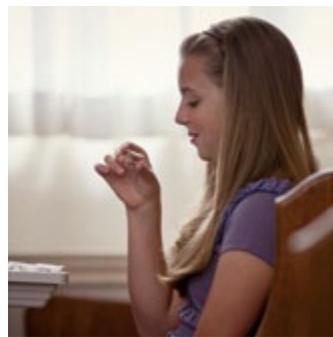
2. After His Resurrection, the Savior instituted the sacrament in the Americas (see 3 Nephi 18:1–11).



3. Holders of the Aaronic Priesthood prepare, bless, and pass the sacrament under the direction of the bishop or branch president.



4. During sacrament meeting, we concentrate on worship and refrain from behavior that would distract others.



5. We remember the Savior's life, example, teachings, and Atonement as we reverently take the sacrament.

“We acknowledge that all of us make mistakes. Each of us has a need to confess and forsake our sins and errors to our Heavenly Father and to others we may have offended. The Sabbath provides us with a precious opportunity to offer up these—our sacraments—to the Lord.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Sabbath and the Sacrament,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2011, 8.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Those who are not familiar with our Sunday meetings might wonder if those of other faiths can attend our worship services and take the sacrament. All are welcome to attend church with us. The sacrament is intended to help members renew their covenants, but if taking the sacrament helps visitors worship, they are welcome to do so.

LEARN YOUR Duty

Duty reminds us we are stewards of all that our Creator has entrusted to us.



By Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Joseph B. Wirthlin was born on June 11, 1917, in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was sustained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1986. The following excerpt is from an address he gave in general conference on October 5, 1980, as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. For the full text in English, see Ensign, Nov. 1980, at ensign.lds.org.

Most of us don't mind doing what we ought to do when it doesn't interfere with what we *want* to do, but it takes discipline and maturity to do what we ought to do whether we want to or not. Duty is too often what one expects from others and not what one does. What people think and believe and plan are all very important, but what they *do* is the thing that counts most. It is a call to throw out selfishness and to think of the common good of all.

We must always remember that duty reminds us we are stewards of all that our Creator has entrusted to us. When we accept duties willingly and faithfully, we find happiness. Those who make happiness the chief objective of life are bound to fail, for happiness is a by-product rather than an end in itself. Happiness comes from doing one's duty

and knowing that his life is in harmony with God and His commandments. . . .

Every successful man and woman in the history of the world has known his or her duty and has had a firm desire to fulfill it. The Savior had a perfect sense of duty. Even though what was required of Him surpassed the limits of human capabilities, He submitted Himself to His Father's will and fulfilled His divine duty by atoning for the sins of mankind.

Joseph Smith was true to his calling and fulfilled his duty even in the face of severe persecution and great personal sacrifice. He persevered, he endured, and he accomplished the Restoration of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. . . .

President Spencer W. Kimball [1895–1985] has accepted the charge to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. He faithfully pursues his duty and is a wonderful example to us in all that he does to spread the gospel of love. The result is a worldwide Church and the fulfillment of latter-day prophecy.

These great men . . . might have chosen to follow a path easier than the one where duty led. But they did not. Certainly their duty did not always lead to personal comfort or casual convenience. Their duty frequently meant great sacrifice and personal hardship; but nevertheless, duty they chose, and duty they performed.

Life requires us to perform many duties—some routine, others more meaningful and important. An integral part of duty is to set the proper example and to take every opportunity to bolster others along this uphill road of life. This might be done with an



encouraging word, a compliment, a handshake—any indication of caring. And we need to keep in mind that as we learn our duties well here, we also are preparing for the performance of eternal duties. . . .

The absolute necessity to do our duties at home, in the Church, in our daily work, and also for our beloved country . . . is vividly and beautifully described by the Master Teacher, Jesus the Christ. He declared:

“For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither

doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

“For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

An integral part of duty is to set the proper example and to take every opportunity to bolster others along this uphill road of life.

“Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

“He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

“But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great” (Luke 6:43–49).

“Be not weary in well-doing” (D&C 64:33), my brothers and sisters. Being true to one’s duty is a mark of true disciples of the Lord and the children of God. Be valiant in your duty. Stay in step. Do not fail in your most important task, that of keeping your second estate. Be true to your duty, for it will bring you to God.

I bear you my deep and sincere testimony that this is the only way to obtain happiness and help the kingdom grow and flourish. ■

Capitalization and paragraphing standardized.



LEFT PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND; RIGHT, FROM TOP: PHOTOGRAPHS BY JED A. CLARK © RI, JEFFREY ALURED © DESERET NEWS, AND CHRISTINA SMITH

THOMAS S. MONSON

Answering the Call of Duty

Long ago President Thomas S. Monson committed to fulfill his duty to do the work of the Lord and to follow the example of Jesus Christ.

By Heidi S. Swinton

President Thomas S. Monson has said many times, “I like the word *duty*.” He considers it “something sacred.”¹ Of fulfilling his duty as the 16th President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he said, “I pledge my life, my strength—all that I have to offer—in serving [the Lord] and in directing the affairs of His Church in accordance with His will and by His inspiration.”²

Known for his service to others, President Monson has given away his suits and shoes when on assignments abroad and returned home in slacks and slippers. He has made it a practice to visit friends and acquaintances who need encouragement. He has blessed countless people at hospitals and care centers, followed the prompting to make phone calls, and spoken at funerals too numerous to count. He has delivered dinners, chickens ready for roasting, and books with a tender inscription. His daily schedule as President

of the Church is filled with meetings and appointments, but he always makes time for people—most often one at a time. In the annals of Church history, he will be known for his love of people and his expression of that love by giving them his time.

Jesus Christ's Example of Duty

President Monson's actions are driven by his testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said: “Although He came to earth as the Son of God, He humbly served those around Him. He came forth from heaven to live on earth as mortal man and to establish the kingdom of God. His glorious gospel reshaped the thinking of the world.”³ The Savior expressed His sense of duty when He proclaimed, “I came into the world to do the will of my father” (3 Nephi 27:13). With determination and gentle kindness born of eternal perspective, He “went about doing



From top: President Monson emanates love for people as he shakes hands with Boy Scouts, accepts a gift (with his wife, Frances), guides a young girl at a groundbreaking, and waves to the congregation at general conference (with his wife).



Jesus Christ taught in the synagogue and at the well. He blessed little children and raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead.

good, . . . for God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

President Monson notes that when the call of duty came to Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, He answered, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39). The Savior knew and responded time and again to His duty to guide, edify, and encourage all His Father’s children. President Monson said of this: “The Savior was ever up and about—teaching, testifying, and saving others. Such is our individual duty as members.”⁴

Learning to Fulfill His Duty

President Monson grew up in the Sixth-Seventh Ward in the Temple View Utah Stake. There he learned about his duty to fulfill his priesthood assignments under the guiding hands of wise priesthood leaders, and he gained knowledge and a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ from inspired teachers.

In 1950 at age 22, Thomas Spencer Monson was sustained as bishop of the Sixth-Seventh Ward. He applied what he had learned about duty to those who had taught him its meaning. He was father of the ward, the president of the Aaronic Priesthood, a provider for the poor and needy, the keeper of proper records, and the common judge in Israel. His duties were many, but he met them with his characteristic optimism.

One of the bishop’s duties was to

“The Savior was ever up and about—teaching, testifying, and saving others. Such is our individual duty as members.”

send to every serviceman a subscription to the *Church News* and to the *Improvement Era* and to write a personal letter to him each month. Since President Monson had served in the navy in World War II, he appreciated the importance of a letter from home. He had 23 ward members serving in the military, so he called

a sister in the ward to handle the details of mailing these letters. One evening he handed her the monthly stack of 23 letters.

“Bishop, don’t you ever get discouraged?” she asked. “Here is another letter to Brother Bryson. This is the 17th letter you have sent to him without a reply.”

“Well, maybe this will be the month,” he said. It was. The reply from Brother Bryson read: “Dear Bishop, I ain’t much at writin’ letters. Thank you for the *Church News* and magazines, but most of all thank you for the personal letters. I have turned over a new leaf. I have been ordained a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood. My heart is full. I am a happy man.”

President Monson saw in that letter the practical application of the adage “Do your duty, that is best. Leave unto the Lord the rest.” Years later, while attending a stake conference, he spoke of his experience of writing to the servicemen. After the meeting, a young man came up to him and asked, “Bishop, do you remember me?”

Without a pause President Monson replied, “Brother Bryson! How are you? What are you doing in the Church?”

The former serviceman replied with great pleasure that he was fine and serving in his elders quorum presidency. “Thank you again for your concern for me and the personal letters which you sent and which I treasure.”⁵

Of events like these, President Monson said: “Often small acts of service are all that is required to lift and bless another: a question concerning a person’s family, quick words of encouragement, a sincere compliment, a small note of thanks, a brief telephone call. If we are observant and aware, and if we act on the promptings which come to us, we can accomplish much good.”⁶

Learning to Fulfill Our Duty

“As we follow in [Jesus Christ’s] steps today, we too will have an opportunity to

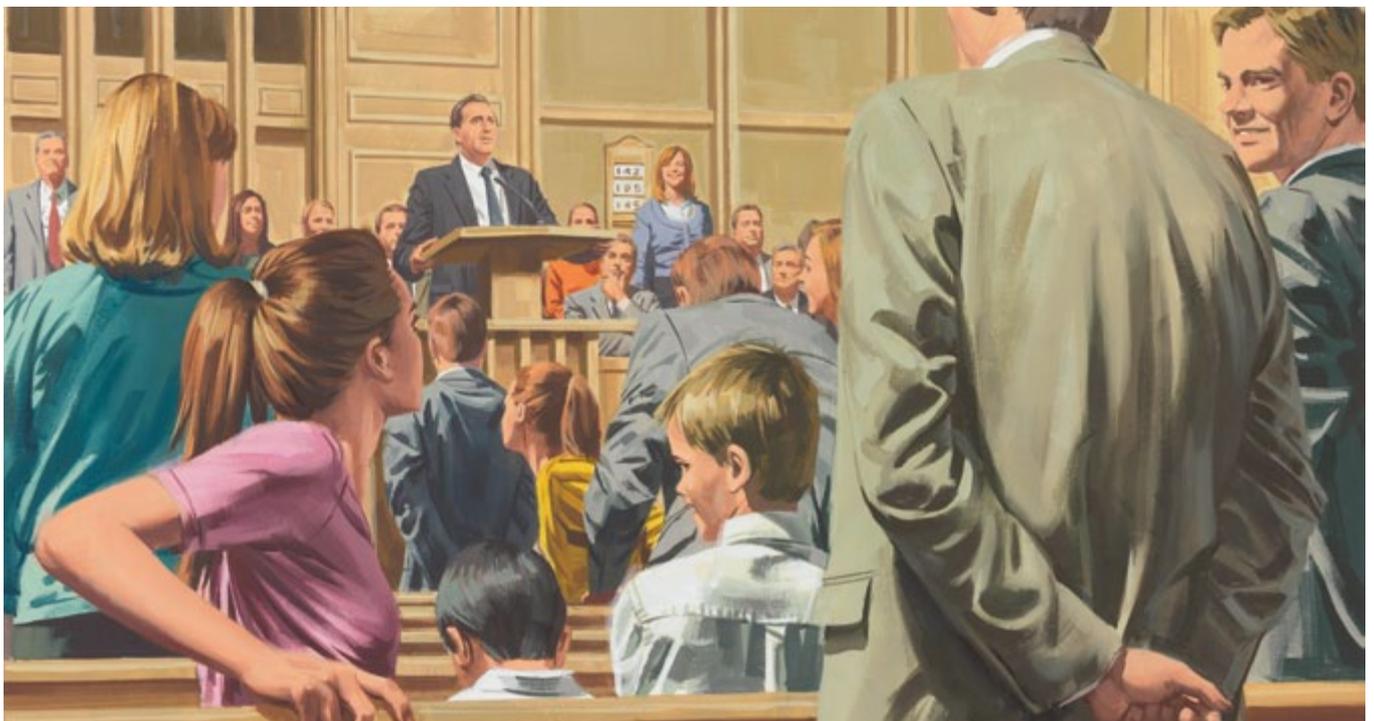
bless the lives of others,” said President Monson. “Jesus invites us to give of ourselves: ‘Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind.’”⁷

Our prophet’s view of duty requires looking beyond personal ambition, success, convenience, or pleasure to seeing and responding to the greater good. “To find real happiness,” President Monson said, “we must seek for it in a focus outside ourselves. No one has learned the meaning of living until he has surrendered his ego to the service of his fellowmen. Service to others is akin to duty, the fulfillment of which brings true joy.”⁸

He believes that friendship makes serving others easy. “A friend is more concerned about helping people than getting credit,” he said. “A friend cares. A friend loves. A friend listens. And a friend reaches out.”⁹

Years ago President Monson attended a

As President Monson asked everyone to stand whose life had been touched by the stake president, the congregation began to rise until everyone was standing.



stake conference in Star Valley, Wyoming, USA, with the assignment to reorganize the stake presidency. But he did more than fulfill that duty. He touched the lives of all who attended with a simple gesture of love as he released the stake president, E. Francis Winters, who had served for 23 years.

The day of the stake conference, the members filled the building. It seemed as if each one was saying “a silent *thank-you* to this noble leader,” who obviously had done his duty with whole-souled devotion. As President Monson stood to speak, he stated how long President Winters had presided in the stake and had been “a perpetual pillar of strength to everyone in the valley.” Then he was prompted to do something he has not done before or since. He asked everyone who had been touched by President Winters’s life to stand. The outcome was electrifying. Every person in the audience rose to his or her feet.

President Monson told the congregation, many of whose eyes were filled with tears, “This vast throng reflects not only individual feelings but also the gratitude of God for a life well lived.”¹⁰

Our Prophet’s Testimony of Duty

President Monson has given us these encouraging teachings regarding duty:

“Whatever our calling, regardless of our fears or anxieties, let us pray and then go and do, remembering the words of the Master, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who promised, ‘I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’”¹¹

“We can strengthen one another; we have the capacity to notice the unnoticed. When we have eyes that see, ears that hear, and hearts that know and feel, we can reach out and rescue those for whom we have responsibility.”¹²

“None of us lives alone—in our city, our nation, or our world. There is no dividing line between our prosperity and our neighbor’s poverty.”¹³

“There are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save.”¹⁴

“Often small acts of service are all that is required to lift and bless another.”

“Perhaps when we face our Maker, we will not be asked, ‘How many positions did you hold,’ but rather, ‘How many people did you help?’”¹⁵

“As we go about our daily lives, we discover countless opportunities to follow the example of the Savior. When our hearts are in tune with His teachings, we discover the unmistakable nearness of His divine help. It is almost as though we are on the Lord’s errand; and we then discover that, when we are on the Lord’s errand, we are entitled to the Lord’s help.”¹⁶

“By learning of Him, by believing in Him, by following Him, there is the capacity to become like Him. [Our] countenance can change; [our] heart can be softened; [our] step can be quickened; [our] outlook enhanced. Life becomes what it should become.”¹⁷

Like our prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, we can commit to fulfill our duty to do the work of the Lord and follow the example of Jesus Christ. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Stumbling Blocks, Faith, and Miracles,” *Liahona*, June 1996, 20; “Happy Birthday,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1995, 59.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Looking Back and Moving Forward,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2008, 90.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “The Bridge Builder,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 68.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Anxiously Engaged,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 56.
5. See Thomas S. Monson, “The Call of Duty,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 39.
6. Thomas S. Monson, “Three Goals to Guide You,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 120–21.
7. Thomas S. Monson, “The Gifts of Christmas,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Dec. 2003, 2.
8. Thomas S. Monson, “The Lord’s Way,” *Ensign*, May 1990, 93.
9. Thomas S. Monson, “To the Rescue,” *Liahona*, July 2001, 59; *Ensign*, May 2001, 50.
10. Thomas S. Monson, “Your Eternal Home,” *Liahona*, July 2000, 70; *Ensign*, May 2000, 54.
11. Thomas S. Monson, “They Pray and They Go,” *Liahona*, July 2002, 57; *Ensign*, May 2002, 51.
12. Thomas S. Monson, “The Call to Serve,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2001, 58; *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 47.
13. Thomas S. Monson, “In Search of the Abundant Life,” *Tambuli*, Aug. 1988, 4; “In Quest of the Abundant Life,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1988, 3.
14. Thomas S. Monson, “How Firm a Foundation,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 68.
15. Thomas S. Monson, “Faces and Attitudes,” *New Era*, Sept. 1977, 50.
16. Thomas S. Monson, “Windows,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 69.
17. Thomas S. Monson, “The Way of the Master,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Jan. 2003, 4.

SERVING THE ONE

By Al VanLeeuwen

When I started my freshman year of college, I quickly formed friendships with two other freshmen, one a rancher and the other a farmer. We made an unlikely threesome—two down-to-earth western US country boys and one fast-talking East Coast city slicker. After graduating from college, they returned home to ranch and farm, and I entered the corporate business world.

Annual Christmas cards and occasional phone calls kept us up to date as our lives advanced. By the time I was in my mid-30s, I had served twice as Scoutmaster. Later, as I finished my second “tour” as an assistant nursery leader, my two friends were serving in bishoprics. As time progressed, I fell into the trap of comparing my callings to my friends’ callings, and I began to feel unwanted and ignored.

By the time I was in my mid-40s, leadership callings extended to others would trouble my thoughts for days. Each time someone was called to a ward or stake leadership position, Satan would whisper to me that I was unworthy or lacked the faith necessary for such callings. I could intellectually fight off such thoughts through prayer and study, but I still struggled with my self-worth. Being “just an elder” and refereeing youth basketball games at age 50 while my friends were serving in stake presidencies was not what I had envisioned I would be doing at that age.

Then came an experience that changed my understanding of the gospel. I was assisting my



wife one Sunday with her Primary class full of energetic seven-year-olds. As Primary sharing time started, I noticed one of the class members huddled on her chair and obviously not feeling well. The Spirit whispered to me that she needed comfort, so I sat by her and quietly asked what was wrong. She didn’t answer but seemed to be in real distress, so I began to sing softly to her.

The Primary was learning a new song, and when we sang, “If I listen with my heart I hear the Savior’s voice,”¹ I began to feel the most incredible light and warmth fill my soul. I felt wrapped in eternal arms of love. I understood that Heavenly Father had heard this young girl’s prayer and that I was there to provide the comfort He wanted to give her. My spiritual understanding was opened, and I received a personal testimony of our Savior’s love for her, for each of His children, and for me. I knew He trusted me to serve someone in need, and I was where He wanted me to be. I learned that we are His hands when we serve the one.

I rejoice in any opportunity to serve, and I try to remain worthy to feel the promptings of the Spirit and to be where Heavenly Father wants me to be when one of His children needs service. ■

NOTE

1. Sally DeFord, “If I Listen with My Heart,” *2011 Outline for Sharing Time*, 28.



HOW MANY PEOPLE DID YOU HELP?

“Perhaps when we face our Maker, we will not be asked, ‘How many positions did you hold?’ but rather, ‘How many people did you help?’ In reality, you can never love the Lord until you serve him by serving his people.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Faces and Attitudes,” *New Era*, Sept. 1977, 50.



London, England



Bangalore, India

Celebrating

By Kathryn H. Olson
Welfare Services

Cleaning buildings, mopping floors, teaching students, collecting food, helping immigrants, visiting widows, weeding grounds, and painting schools. These are just a few of the many service projects carried out last year by Church members responding to the First Presidency's invitation to perform a day of service in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the welfare program. These projects have profoundly affected those who served and those who were served. Many communities around the world have been changed for the better.

London, England

Church members in London celebrated the anniversary by helping clean up Tottenham, a city that experienced the August 2011 riots. In a regional park, volunteers weeded, built flower beds, and cleared litter.

Members also served at a children's hospice, where they cleaned garden pathways and made the hospice grounds more accommodating to the children and their families. Charlotte Illera helped coordinate the project. "It was really hard work, but it was really sort of joyful work as well," she said. "Even a little thing like sweeping up can be such a benefit. You don't need to have any great skills. Just little things can make a difference to other people."

Rudi Champagne shared his view on the inspiration behind the First Presidency's invitation to serve: "I think this revelation was to bring us closer together—to bring us out in the community, to meet new people." He continued, "To see the Church getting involved in the community is a wonderful thing. To be a part of it is even more special. It has strengthened my testimony, and it has given me the desire to do more."



Bujumbura, Burundi

a Day of Service

Hong Kong, China

Adult leaders of the youth in the Hong Kong China Stake asked the youth council to choose their own service project. After the youth looked into their community's needs, they decided to teach children from low-income families at a local school. Around 125 youth taught over 80 schoolchildren about developing talents, making healthy food, holding family gatherings, and creating true friendships.

"This was not just a one-time influence," said Anita Shum, stake Young Women president. "What the youth have done with the kids could have a lasting effect." She added that the youth now have good memories and experiences that will bless them forever.

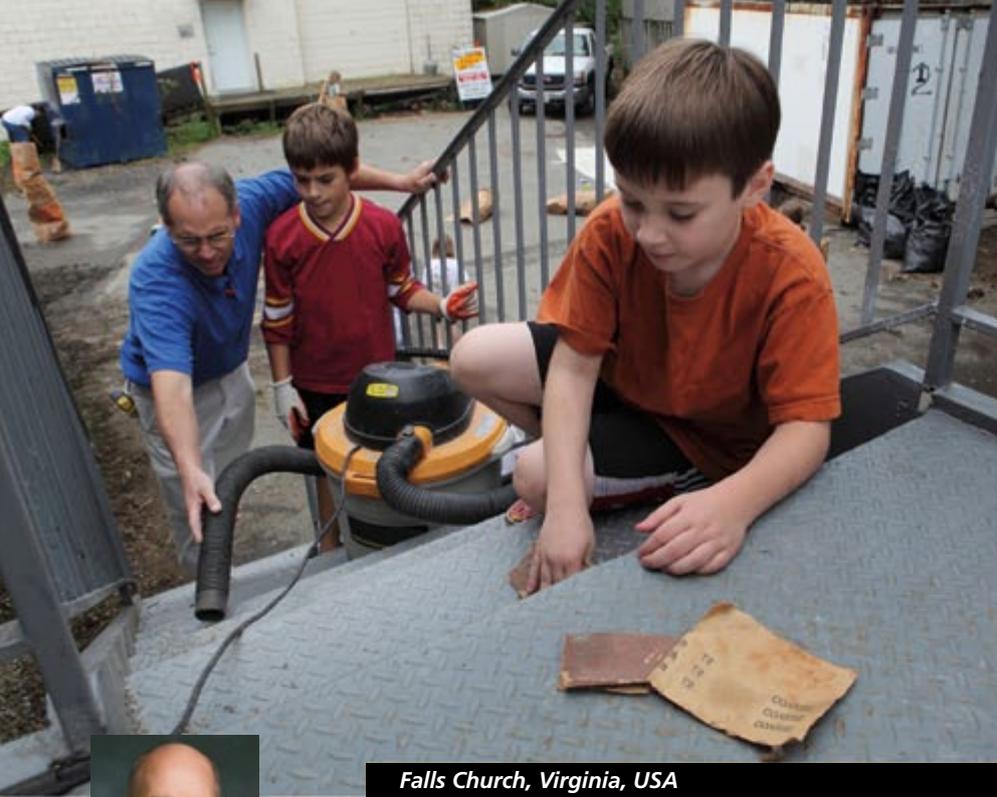
Accra, Ghana

Members in Accra, Ghana, participated in a day of service by painting schools, sweeping

streets and gutters, and cleaning the grounds around hospitals and clinics.

Emma Owusu Ansah of the Accra Ghana Christiansborg Stake was involved in planning their day of service. "Coming together as members of the Church unifies us and makes a principle like service easier to obey," she said. At the end of the project, members gathered to share their testimonies. Sister Ansah remarked, "After listening to the individual testimonies, I realized how much we are missing when not serving others."

When President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, issued the invitation to participate in a day of service, he spoke of the unifying effect the projects would have: "A . . . gospel principle that has been a guide to me in welfare work is the power and blessing of unity. When we join hands to serve people in need, the Lord unites our hearts."¹



Falls Church, Virginia, USA



FEELINGS OF CHARITY

“The Lord is keeping His promise to you as you keep yours. As you serve others for Him, He lets you feel His love. And in time, feelings of charity become part of your very nature. And you will receive the assurance of Mormon in your heart as you persist in serving others in life that all will be well with you.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “A Witness,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 68.

Córdoba, Argentina

Despite the rain on an October day, 1,601 Latter-day Saints from five stakes in Córdoba, Argentina, donated a combined 10,234 hours of service at a nursing home. Members delivered previously collected clothing, food, and hygiene kits. They also gardened, painted walls and benches, and performed talent shows. A number of sisters also volunteered hair, foot, and hand care services.

“I know that project was a help not only for them but for me too,” said 14-year-old Rocío B. after the project. “I knew I was doing the right thing and that Heavenly Father was pleased with me.”

São Paulo, Brazil

Members of the São Paulo Brazil Stake felt inspired to collect sugar, oil, rice, and beans and donate the food to two charities. Then they trained representatives from the charities in the basics of food storage. Members also volunteered to present education, finance, and employment training to stake and community members to help them develop the skills necessary to compete for available jobs.

“The community we invited was delighted

with the work of the Church. Many did not know us, but they went away with good feelings,” said stake member Kátia Ribeiro. “Among the members, there was a spirit of unity and service, and among those who were served, there was a spirit of deep gratitude.”

Falls Church, Virginia, USA

Members in Falls Church, Virginia, USA, felt the joy of serving together at two homeless shelters. Scrubbing a wall, Adeana Alvarez told a fellow ward member, “I’ve had a frustrating

week, and it feels good to just take out the frustration on this wall! We all need service at some time in our lives, and it’s good to do it for other people.”

Another ward member, Anne Sorensen, remarked, “It’s a great way to be connected with your community. I now feel more invested in what is going on with that organization. Every time I drive by here, I’ll think about the people who attend classes here and hope that the work we did gives them a tangible way to feel like they aren’t alone in what they are doing to improve their lives.”

Tokorozawa, Japan

At an elementary school in Tokorozawa, Church members presented a seminar on food storage to 50 parents and educators. Because of the March 2011 earthquake, community members were eager to learn how to prepare for natural disasters, especially how to put together a long-term food supply.

“Even though the great east Japan earthquake occurred, I hadn’t done anything to prepare,” said one participant. “I was glad I was able to learn this. I want to find a place to store food, and I want to do this to protect my dear family.”

TOP: PHOTOGRAPH BY TODD SCHWANEVELDT

Musashino Japan Stake member Akihito Suda observed that the Light of Christ touched the community as members showed the preparations they had made in case of a crisis. “Christ is the Light of the World,” he said. “His teachings illuminate the community.”

Tallinn, Estonia

Church members in Tallinn spent a day helping needy community members perform maintenance on their homes. Some participants chopped wood and shoveled coal, while others cleaned carpets, changed curtains, and washed windows and walls.

Maila Chan went with her family to visit an older woman and chop wood for her. “As a mother I am so happy that our family had such a wonderful experience,” she said. “How great it is that while serving others, you forget your own problems completely. I know that while serving others, we only serve our God.”

Margit Timakov also observed, “Putting aside my own duties and committing myself wholly

to helping somebody, I understood what power sacrifice really has. We do not need to ask why or whether we could have done something else. We just reach out and help. We help because we care. We help because we want to follow Christ’s example.”

The Fruit of Your Labors

The testimonies of those who served their communities around the world teach us that by serving, we feel better about ourselves and our testimonies grow. President Eyring affirmed that we are blessed for our service: “For the Master I extend thanks for your work to serve the children of our Heavenly Father. He knows you, and He sees your effort, diligence, and sacrifice. I pray that He will grant you the blessing of seeing the fruit of your labors in the happiness of those you have helped and with whom you have helped for the Lord.”² ■

NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, “Opportunities to Do Good,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2011, 25.
2. Henry B. Eyring, *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2011, 26.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Seeing Mormon Helping Hands in the community, some may wonder if Church members are helping fellow Latter-day Saints only or those of other faiths as well. We are, of course, helping both. We strive to follow the Savior’s example in serving, whether that’s raking leaves in a neighbor’s yard or sending and distributing tons of supplies to respond to a natural disaster. We seek to help others, regardless of their faith or culture.

RECOGNITION IN COMMUNITIES

One of the common attributes of the worldwide day of service projects was the effect they had on local communities. Many passersby stopped to ask project participants questions about the Church, and members shared their testimonies.

In several parts of the world, government officials recognized the efforts of Church members. For instance, in a radio interview about the day of service, the chief from the Kisanga quarter of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, called on people of other religions to follow the example of “the Mormons” in serving the community.

Of the service given by 300 members of the Church in the greater London area, the mayor, Boris Johnson, remarked, “Now, more than ever, it is great to see community-minded Londoners—volunteers—who turned out in droves.”

Governor Dannel Malloy of Connecticut, USA, and Governor Robert McConnell of Virginia, USA, issued proclamations to honor the days of service in their states. Governor Malloy said in his proclamation, “We are thankful to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for their service to others and [for their] invitation to all of the residents of all faiths and backgrounds to join with them as they celebrate their anniversary year of service.”





**By Elder
Jeffrey R. Holland**

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

STANDING TOGETHER

for the Cause of Christ

This article is excerpted from an address delivered in Salt Lake City on March 10, 2011, to a group of national Christian leaders.

Friends, you know what I know—that there is in the modern world so much sin and moral decay affecting everyone, especially the young, and it seems to be getting worse by the day. You and I share so many concerns about the spread of pornography and poverty, abuse and abortion, illicit sexual transgression (both heterosexual and homosexual), violence, crudity, cruelty, and temptation, all glaring as close as your daughter’s cell phone or your son’s iPad.

Surely there is a way for people of goodwill who love God and have taken upon themselves the name of Christ to stand together for the cause of Christ and against the forces of sin. In this we have every right to be bold and believing, for “if God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

You serve and preach, teach and labor in that confidence, and so do I. And in doing so, I believe we can trust in the next verse from Romans as well: “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

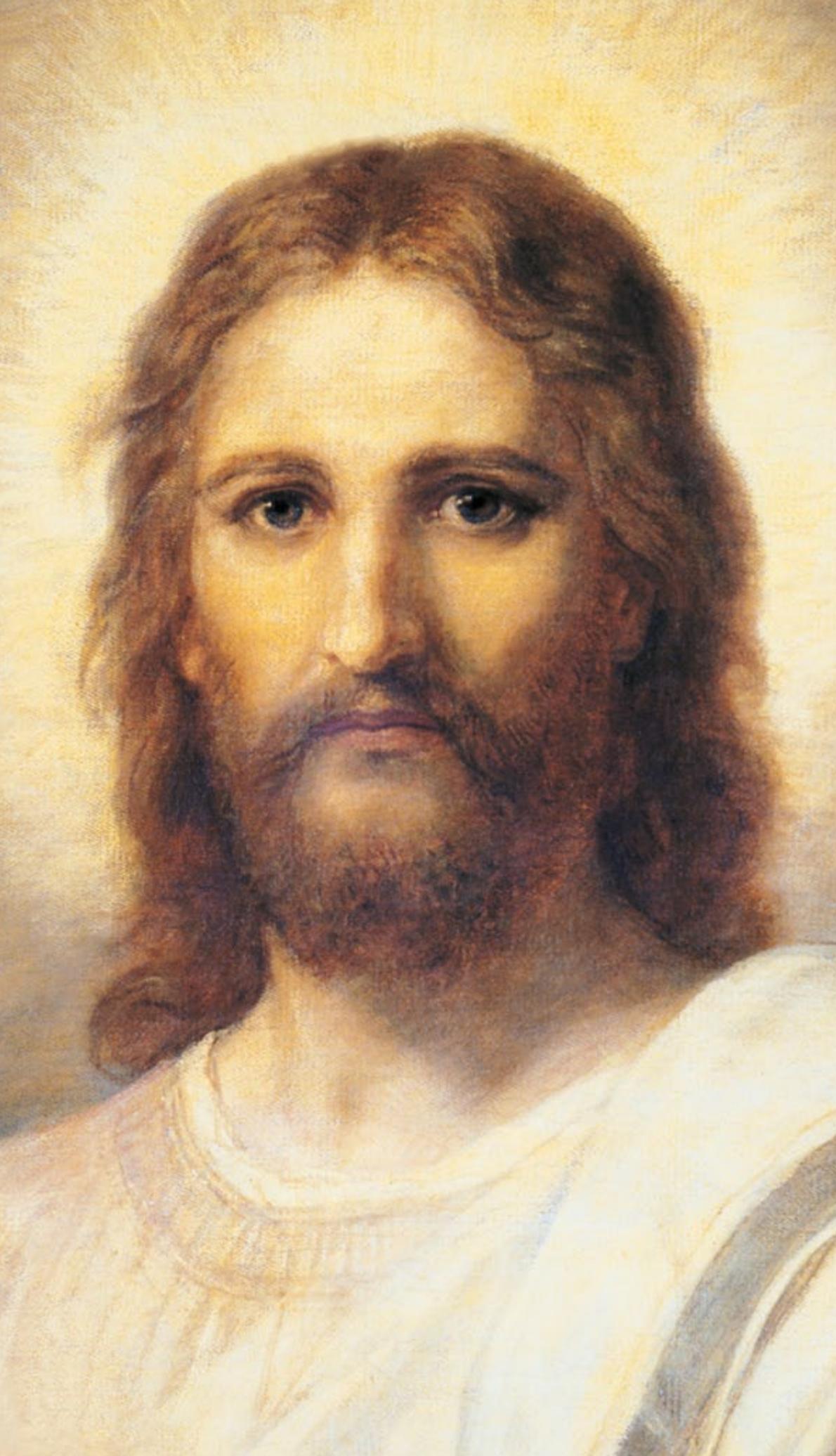
Are Latter-day Saints Christians? Of course we are. As Elder Holland explains, “We believe in the historical Jesus who walked the dusty paths of the Holy Land and declare that He is one and the same God as the divine Jehovah of the Old Testament.”

I truly believe that if across the world we can all try harder *not* to separate *each other* from the “love of Christ,” we will be “more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Romans 8:32, 35, 37).

Theological Dialogue

Evangelicals and Latter-day Saints have not always met on peaceful terms. From the time in the early 19th century when Joseph Smith came from his youthful revelatory epiphany and made his bold declaration regarding it, our exchanges have too often been anything but cordial.

And yet, strangely enough—and I cannot help but believe this to be a part of a divine orchestration of events in these troubled times—LDS and evangelical academics and church figures have been drawn together since the late 1990s in what I think has become a provocative and constructive theological dialogue. It has been an honest effort to understand and be understood, an endeavor to dispel myths and misrepresentations on *both* sides, a labor of love in which the participants have felt motivated by and moved upon with a quiet force deeper and



Surely there is a way for people of goodwill who love God and have taken upon themselves the name of Christ to stand together for the cause of Christ and against the forces of sin.

more profound than a typical interfaith exchange.

The first of those formal dialogues took place in the spring of 2000 at Brigham Young University. As the dialogue began to take shape, it was apparent that the participants were searching for a paradigm of some sort, a model, a point of reference. Were these to be confrontations, arguments, debates? Were they to produce a winner and a loser? Just how candid and earnest were they expected to be? Some of the Latter-day Saints wondered: Do the “other guys” see these conversations as our “tryouts” for a place on the Christian team? Is it a grand effort to “fix” Mormonism, to make it more traditionally Christian, more acceptable to skeptical onlookers?

In turn, some of the evangelicals wondered: Are those “other guys” for real, or is this just another form of their missionary proselytizing? Can a person be a New Testament Christian and yet not subscribe to later creeds that most of traditional Christianity adopted? A question that continued to come up on both sides was just how much “bad theology” can the grace of God compensate for? Before too long, those kinds of issues became part of the dialogue itself, and in the process, the tension began to dissipate.

The initial feeling of formality has given way to a much more amiable informality, a true form of brotherhood and sisterhood, with a kindness in disagreement, a respect for opposing views, a feeling of responsibility to truly understand (if not necessarily agree with) those of other faiths—a responsibility to represent one’s doctrines and practices accurately and grasp that of others in the same way. The dialogues came to enjoy “convicted civility.”¹



We would be eager to join hands with our evangelical friends in a united Christian effort to strengthen families and marriages, to demand more morality in media, to provide humane relief effort in times of natural disasters, to address the ever-present plight of the poor, and to guarantee the freedom of religion that will allow all of us to speak out on matters of Christian conscience.

Realizing that Latter-day Saints have quite a different hierarchal and organizational structure than the vast evangelical world, no official representative of the Church has participated in these talks, nor have there been any ecclesiastical overtones to them. Like you, we have no desire to compromise our doctrinal distinctiveness or forfeit the beliefs that make us who we are. We are eager, however, not to be misunderstood, not to be accused of beliefs we do not hold, and not to have our commitment to Christ and His gospel dismissed out of hand, to say nothing of being demonized in the process.

Furthermore, we are always looking for common ground and common partners in the “hands-on” work of the ministry. We would be eager to join hands with our evangelical friends in a united Christian effort to strengthen families and marriages, to demand more morality in media, to provide humane relief effort in times of natural disasters, to address the ever-present plight of the poor, and to guarantee the freedom of religion that will allow all of us to speak out on matters of Christian conscience regarding the social issues of our time. In this latter regard the day must never come that you or I or any other responsible cleric in this nation is forbidden to preach from his or her pulpit the doctrine one holds to be true. But in light of recent sociopolitical events and current legal challenges stemming from them, particularly regarding the sanctity of marriage, that day could come unless we act decisively in preventing it.²

The larger and more united the Christian voice, the more likely we are to carry the day in these matters. In that regard we should remember the Savior’s warning regarding “a



*For more information about Latter-day Saints being Christians, see "About Mormons" under Frequently Asked Questions at Mormon.org; "Christianity: Following Jesus in Word and Deed" under News Releases at MormonNewsroom.org; and Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Prophet's Testimony," *Ensign*, May 1993, 93.*

house divided against [itself]"—a house that finds it cannot stand against more united foes pursuing an often unholy agenda (see Luke 11:17).

The Christ We Revere

Building on some of this history and desirous that we not disagree where we don't need to disagree, I wish to testify to you, our friends, of the Christ we revere and adore in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We believe in the historical Jesus who walked the dusty paths of the Holy Land and declare that He is one and the same God as the divine Jehovah of the Old Testament. We declare Him to be both fully God in His divinity and fully human in His mortal experience, the Son who was a God and the God who was a Son; that He is, in the language of the Book of Mormon, "the Eternal God" (title page of the Book of Mormon).

We testify that He is one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the Three being One: one in spirit, one in strength, one in purpose, one in voice, one in glory, one in will, one in goodness, and one in grace—one in every conceivable form and facet of unity *except* that of Their separate physical embodiment (see 3 Nephi 11:36). We testify that Christ was born of His divine Father and a virgin mother, that from the age of 12 onward, He was about His true Father's business, that in doing so, He lived a perfect, sinless life and thus provided a pattern for all who come unto Him for salvation.

We bear witness of every sermon He ever gave, every prayer He ever uttered, every miracle He ever called down from heaven, and every redeeming act He ever performed. In this latter regard we testify that in fulfilling the divine plan for our salvation, He took upon Himself all the sins, sorrows, and sicknesses of the world, bleeding at every pore in the anguish of it all, beginning in Gethsemane and dying upon the cross of Calvary as a vicarious offering for those sins and sinners, including each of us.

Early in the Book of Mormon a Nephite prophet "saw that [Jesus] was lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world" (1 Nephi 11:33). Later that same Lord affirmed: "Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me. And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross" (3 Nephi 27:13–14; see also D&C 76:40–42). Indeed, it is a gift of the Spirit "to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world" (D&C 46:13).

We declare that three days after the Crucifixion, He rose from the tomb in glorious immortality, the firstfruits of the Resurrection, thereby breaking the physical bands of death and the spiritual bonds of hell, providing an immortal future for both the body and the spirit, a future that can be realized in its full glory and grandeur only by accepting Him and His name as the only "name under heaven given

It is a gift of the Spirit “to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world.”



among men, whereby we must be saved.” Neither is there, nor can there ever be, “salvation in any other” (Acts 4:12).

We declare that He will come again to earth, this time in might, majesty, and glory, to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. This is the Christ, whom we praise, in whose grace we trust implicitly and explicitly, and who is “the Shepherd and Bishop of [our] souls” (1 Peter 2:25).

Joseph Smith was once asked the question, “What are the fundamental principles of your religion?” He replied, “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”³

As a rule, Latter-day Saints are known as an industrious people, a works-conscious people. For us, the works of righteousness, what we might call “dedicated discipleship,” are an unerring measure of the reality of our faith. We believe with James, the brother of Jesus, that true faith always manifests itself in faithfulness (see James 2). We teach that those Puritans were closer to the truth than they realized when they expected a “godly walk” (D&C 20:69) from those under covenant.

Salvation and eternal life are free (see 2 Nephi 2:4); indeed, they are the greatest of all the gifts of God (see D&C 6:13; 14:7). Nevertheless, we teach that one must prepare to receive those gifts by declaring and demonstrating

“faith in the Lord Jesus Christ” (Articles of Faith 1:4)—by trusting in and relying upon “the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah” (2 Nephi 2:8; see also 2 Nephi 31:19; Moroni 6:4). For us, the fruits of that faith include repentance, the receipt of gospel covenants and ordinances (including baptism), and a heart of gratitude that motivates us to deny ourselves of all ungodliness, to “take up [our] cross daily” (Luke 9:23), and to keep His commandments—*all* of His commandments (see John 14:15). We rejoice with the Apostle Paul: “Thanks be to God, [who] giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57). In that spirit, as one Book of Mormon prophet wrote, “We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ . . . that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins . . . [and] may look forward unto that life which is in Christ” (2 Nephi 25:26, 27).

I hope this witness I bear to you and to the world helps you understand something of the inexpressible love we feel for the Savior of the world in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A Call to Christian Conscience

Given our shared devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ and given the challenges we face in our society, surely we can find a way to unite in a national—or international—call to Christian conscience. Some years ago Tim LaHaye wrote:

“If religious Americans work together in the name of our mutually shared moral concerns, we just might succeed in re-establishing the civic moral standards that our forefathers thought were guaranteed by the [United States] Constitution. . . .

“ . . . All of our nation’s religious citizens need to develop a respect for other religious people and their beliefs. We need not accept their beliefs, but we can respect the people and realize that we have more in common with each other than we ever will with the secularizers of this country. It is time for all religiously committed citizens to unite against our common enemy.”⁴

To be sure, there is a risk associated with learning something new about someone else. New insights always affect old perspectives, and thus some rethinking, rearranging, and restructuring of our worldviews is inevitable. When we look beyond people’s color, ethnic group, social circle, church, synagogue, mosque, creed, and statement of belief, and when we try our best to see them for who and what they are—children of the same God—something good and worthwhile happens within us, and we are thereby drawn into a closer union with that God who is the Father of us all.

Few things are more needed in this tense and confused world than Christian conviction, Christian compassion, and Christian understanding. Joseph Smith observed in 1843, less than a year before his death: “If I esteem mankind to be in error, shall I bear them down? No. I will lift them up, and in their own way too, if I cannot persuade them my way is better; and I will not seek to compel any man to believe as I do, only by the force of reasoning, for truth will cut its own



“Do you believe in Jesus Christ and the Gospel of salvation which He revealed?” asked the Prophet Joseph Smith. “So do I. Christians should cease wrangling and contending with each other, and cultivate the principles of union and friendship in their midst; and they will do it before the millennium can be ushered in and Christ takes possession of His kingdom.”

way. Do you believe in Jesus Christ and the Gospel of salvation which He revealed? So do I. Christians should cease wrangling and contending with each other, and cultivate the principles of union and friendship in their midst; and they will do it before the millennium can be ushered in and Christ takes possession of His kingdom.”⁵

I close with the love for you expressed by two valedictories in our scripture. First this from the New Testament author of Hebrews:

“[May] the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

“Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20–21).

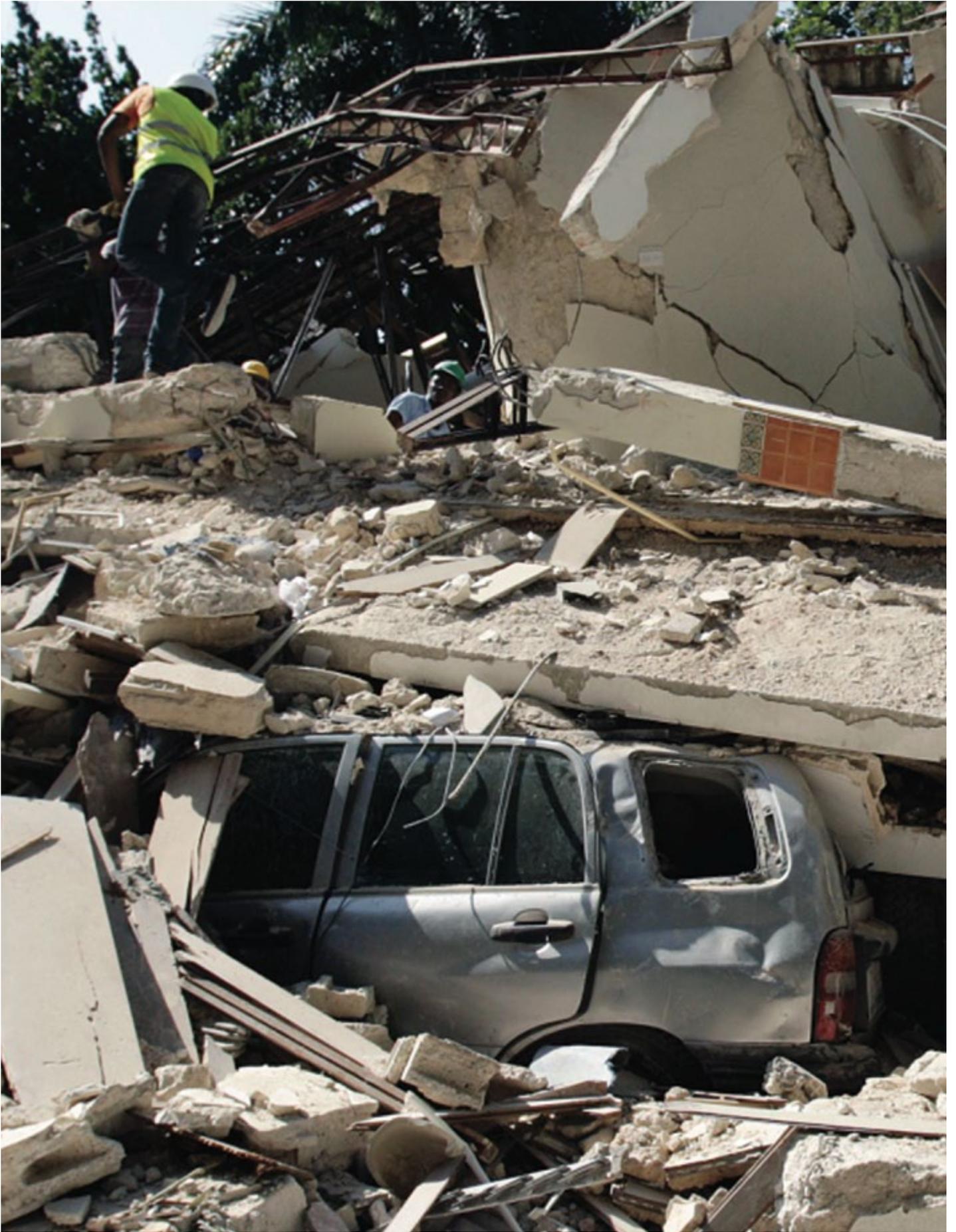
And this from the Book of Mormon, a father writing to his son:

“Be faithful in Christ . . . [and] may [He] lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death . . . and his mercy and long-suffering, and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever.

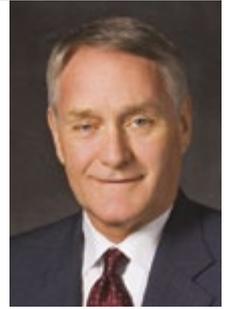
“And may the grace of God the Father, whose throne is high in the heavens, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who sitteth on the right hand of his power, until all things shall become subject unto him, be, and abide with you forever. Amen” (Moroni 9:25–26). ■

NOTES

1. A term introduced in Richard J. Mouw, *Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World* (1992).
2. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Preserving Religious Freedom” (speech, Chapman University School of Law, Feb. 4, 2011), newsroom.lds.org/article/elder-oaks-religious-freedom-Chapman-University.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49.
4. Tim LaHaye, *The Race for the 21st Century* (1986), 109.
5. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 5:499.



By Elder
Stanley G. Ellis
Of the Seventy



Natural Disasters

WE DON'T HAVE
TO BE AFRAID

The last days will be marked by many calamities and the rise of evil in the world. Against these threats the Lord and His prophets have given us counsel on how to be righteous and avoid spiritual pitfalls and evil. However, calamities—such as tornadoes, earthquakes, and tsunamis—seem to strike randomly and devastate the just as well as the unjust. These calamities terrify many of us. But I have learned that we don't have to be afraid of disasters. When we are grounded in the gospel and when we are prepared, we can weather any storm.

Before the Storm: Make Preparation a Family Priority

In September 2005, I was an Area Seventy serving in the North America Southwest Area, which included parts of the United States such as Houston, Texas. We learned that Hurricane Rita—the most intense cyclone in recorded history that had ever been observed in the Gulf of Mexico—was headed straight for us. I was asked to preside over the Church's emergency response in the area. We held daily conference calls with priesthood leaders, stake presidents,

*As we seek
Heavenly Father's
guidance,
the Holy Ghost
will help us
prepare for,
endure, and
recover from
natural disasters.*

mission presidents, Church welfare and humanitarian aid representatives, and emergency response leaders. We talked about all kinds of things—whether the bishops' storehouse was in order, where people could evacuate, and how best to coordinate the recuperation efforts after the storm. It was a well-coordinated Church response and an inspirational experience.

One of the stake presidents in the area was impressed eight or nine months before the storm to encourage members of the stake to prepare. He indicated that he wasn't claiming to be a prophet but that the promptings from

the Spirit had been clear. Members of the stake followed the basic preparation strategies suggested by the Church. When the hurricane hit, no members of the stake were killed. Furthermore, because members had gathered needed supplies and had a plan in place, their circumstances were far better than they might otherwise have been. They had paid attention to that warning from the Spirit.

A similar situation occurred to my family and me. About three months before the storm, we were impressed to

Do you want to talk to your children about giving and receiving comfort during disasters? See the inspiring testimonies of two young survivors on pages 60–61 of this issue.

Previous page: Workers sort through the rubble of an apartment that collapsed during the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

People evacuating Houston, Texas, USA, before the onslaught of Hurricane Rita.

have our generator serviced. Many people in the area have small generators so that when storms come and electricity is lost, they can provide power to keep the food in their refrigerators and freezers from going bad. When we had our generator checked, we discovered it was not working. We were able to get it fixed well before the storm came. Our family, members of our ward, and neighbors all ended up using our generator after the hurricane hit. Fixing it turned out to be a great blessing.

This principle of preparation applies to individuals as well as families. Parents, you can have a powerful impact on your family by involving your children in preparation and in family prayers for the Lord's guidance. In other words, when your family considers its preparedness, the question, what should we do? ought to be a major part of your family prayer. You can also talk about these topics and share

ideas in family home evening. Then carry out those plans.

Moreover, the best thing parents can do is to live by these teachings. Someone once said that values are “caught” not “taught.” I found that to be true. As children see their parents seeking and following the guidance of the Spirit, they will learn how the process of revelation works.

During the Storm: Follow the Revelation You Receive for Your Family

As the storm approached, a major question we asked was whether or not people should evacuate the area. The Spirit directed me not to make a general recommendation for the whole area but rather to ask each stake leader, each bishopric, and each family to prayerfully consider the situation and receive their own inspiration as to what they should do. As events unfolded, it became obvious that the Spirit knew what was best for each individual family.

Leaders in one stake, for example, knew they were directly in the path of the hurricane and advised members to evacuate. The stake president and his wife evacuated to the home of his sister. Afterward, the hurricane veered, heading toward them once again. They had evacuated directly into the storm!

You might ask yourself, “What kind of inspiration was that?” But consider what happened. This stake president and his wife knew how to prepare a home for a hurricane, whereas his sister did not. They were able to help their relatives get ready for the storm, and when it hit, the damage was minimal compared to what it would have been otherwise. The Lord had guided them to do what was best.





A Mormon Helping Hands volunteer sifts through rubble in Joplin, Missouri, USA, after a tornado in May 2011.

In our family's case, we felt that we should not evacuate. So we stayed. Not only did we safely weather the storm, but we also were able to help other people in the area. Some of our married children were impressed to evacuate, so they left. Heeding the Spirit blessed each family, ward, and stake.

After the Storm: Let the Gospel Remove the Sting

Sometimes good people do suffer during calamities. The Lord does not eliminate suffering—it's part of the plan. For example, a stake center in the central United States was recently destroyed by a tornado. That tornado also demolished the stake president's home. He and his family lost all of their earthly possessions. However, that's all they were: earthly possessions. The loss was sad, but it was not an eternally damaging disaster. Sometimes what we think is important really isn't important at all. This realization is not necessarily easy to accept, but it is true, and understanding this provides reassurance.

The worst-case scenario in one of these disasters is that someone might be killed. That's a very sad thing. But since we know the truth, we know that even such loss is part of Heavenly Father's plan. We know what life is truly all about; we know why we are here and where we are

going. Because of this eternal perspective, the pain can be eased. Knowledge of the plan of salvation takes the sting out of death (see 1 Corinthians 15:55).

Long ago, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego did not know what would happen when they were tossed into the fiery furnace for refusing to worship a false god. They said to the king, "Our God . . . will deliver us. . . . But if not, we [still] will not serve thy gods" (Daniel 3:17–18).

Likewise, many pioneers of the restored Church were willing to attempt crossing the North American plains in the mid-1800s, even with the possibility of death along the way. The Book of Mormon describes good people being killed and teaches that they "are blessed, for they have gone to dwell with their God" (Alma 24:22).

In each case, individuals faced death with faith. For them, because of the peace the gospel brings, the sting of death was taken away. Although it is painful to lose someone you love and though most of us would hate to die because we have so many great things to live for, the fact of the matter is that everyone is going to die sometime. When you know the gospel plan, you know that death is not the end of the world. Your existence will continue, and family relationships can continue even after the grave has claimed our mortal bodies. In the overall scheme of things, death is not eternally devastating. As Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "We live to die, and we die to live again. From an eternal perspective, the only death that is truly premature is the death of one who is not prepared to meet God."¹ An eternal perspective is part of the peace the gospel can give us.

The Lord knows us. The Lord loves us. And the Lord wants to help us. Calamities will come, but we don't have to fear them. If we are willing to be guided and ask for His direction, the Lord through the Holy Ghost will help us prepare for, endure, and recover from any natural disaster. ■

NOTE

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Face the Future with Faith," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2011, 34.

FINDING FAITH

at the Ends of the Earth

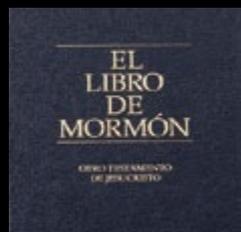
By Michael R. Morris

Church Magazines

Les Éclaireurs Lighthouse rises like a sentinel from its islet perch in the chilly Beagle Channel. French for “the Scouts” or “the Enlighteners,” Les Éclaireurs emits a flash of light every 10 seconds from its isolated post.

Five nautical miles (9 km) to the north is Argentina’s southernmost city, Ushuaia, located on the tip of the archipelago of Tierra del Fuego. Ninety miles (145 km) to the south is Cape Horn and beyond that, the frozen Antarctic.

For those who have embraced The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints here at what locals call “the end of the earth,” Les Éclaireurs serves as a metaphor for the restored gospel. Like a lighthouse, the gospel is a beacon that has brought them from the spiritual darkness of the world and landed them safely on the shores of faith and fellowship.



Through the Book of Mormon, God “answered the most important prayer I ever said,” says Guillermo Leiva (above, center), who serves as a branch president in Ushuaia. Above right: Les Éclaireurs Lighthouse and photos of Ushuaia.

I Found Answers

Guillermo Javier Leiva remembers the pain of his divorce in 2007. He had to find his own apartment and was no longer able to return home every evening to his young son, Julian. He felt empty and alone.

“I was very unhappy,” he says, “and in moments of anguish, I looked for God.”

Guillermo began praying for answers and help. “I said, ‘Father, I’m not worthy for Thee to enter my house, but a word from Thee will be enough to heal me.’”

The answer to that prayer came a short while later when two young men in white shirts and ties stopped to talk with him while he was playing with his son outside his new apartment.

“One of them greeted me and asked if I had faith,” he recalls. “I told him yes but that I wasn’t the best Christian. He then asked if I would



read a book if he left it with me. I told him yes.”

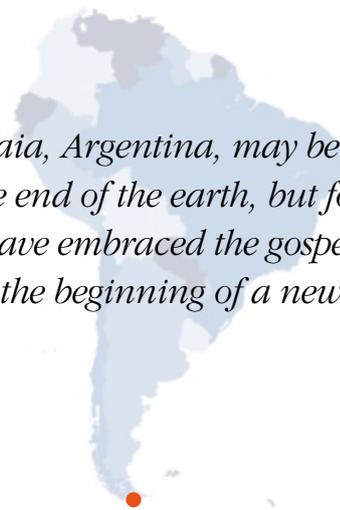
As Guillermo began reading the verses in Alma 32 that the missionaries had marked for him, he says, “I immediately felt a great joy in my soul that I hadn’t felt in a long time. The book touched my heart. I couldn’t stop reading.”

Guillermo no longer attended his previous church, but he told the missionaries that he had no intention of being baptized again. Nevertheless, he welcomed their visits and their reading assignments in the Book of Mormon.

As he read, his soul grieved with Nephi when he learned how that prophet had sorrowed “because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me” (2 Nephi 4:18). “I knew that I too had sinned,” Guillermo says, “and I felt bad about it.”

As he read, he felt that he was being rescued from darkness and despair and brought into “the light of the glory of God” (Alma 19:6).

Ushuaia, Argentina, may be located at the end of the earth, but for those who have embraced the gospel here, it is the beginning of a new life.



And as he read of the baptismal covenant set forth at the Waters of Mormon, he realized the importance of baptism by proper priesthood authority. “If I recognized that the seed was good, what *did* I ‘have . . . against being baptized in the name of the Lord?” (Mosiah 18:10), he asked himself.

“Every time I read, I felt peace and I found answers,” Guillermo says. “I realized that the Book of Mormon was the word of God I had asked for in my prayers.”

When he was baptized in March 2009, he experienced a spiritual rebirth and a renewed hope for the future.

Amanda, “and we knew we needed a church to help us.”

In the early 1990s the Robledos moved with their four children from Mendoza, in northwest Argentina, to Ushuaia. When they were introduced to the Church two years later, they perceived immediately that there was something different about both the spirit and the teachings of the full-time missionaries.

Amanda knew little of Latter-day Saints. “And what I had heard wasn’t good,” she says. But she, Ricardo, and their children resonated to what they were learning.

“I felt the Spirit when the missionaries taught us,” says



Right: For Amanda and Ricardo Robledo (with daughters Bárbara and Irene), learning that their family could be together forever was the crowning doctrine that helped them accept the restored gospel.



“Baptism was a chance to start over,” Guillermo says. “I have changed my life. I am very happy now. I know that this is the true Church of Jesus Christ and that God answers prayers because He answered the most important prayer I ever said.”

We Needed a Church

As a child, Amanda Robledo had no spiritual remedy for the physical pain she suffered after her mother died. And her husband, Ricardo, could find no answers to his heartfelt religious questions following the death of his brother.

One of those questions was, Is there a church on earth that follows the teachings of Jesus Christ? Their search for that church and for answers to their questions ultimately prepared them to accept the restored gospel.

As they searched, they attended different denominations and investigated various religious beliefs. They looked for a church that not only conformed to Christ’s teachings but would also strengthen their family.

“This was a difficult time for our family,” recalls

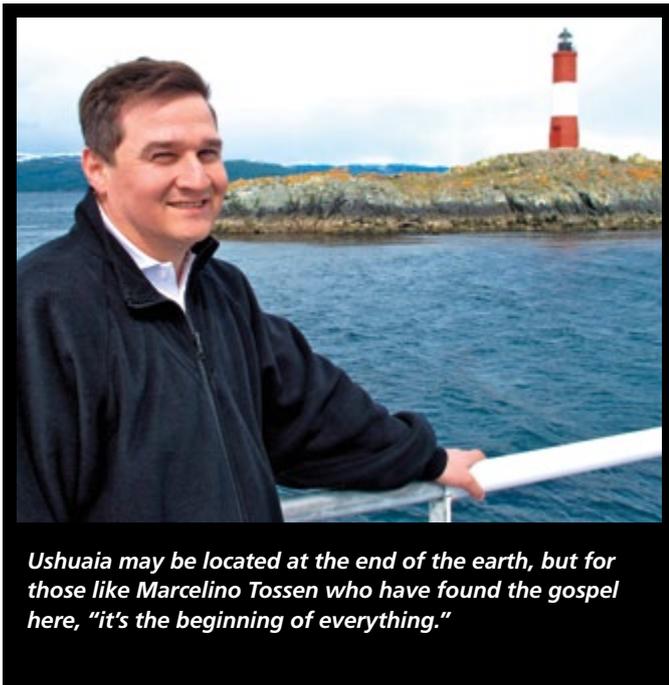
their daughter Bárbara, who was 11 at the time. “And I liked it when they taught us that we could pray as a family.”

Taking the missionary discussions, reading the Book of Mormon, and attending church, Ricardo says, “gave us all the answers we were seeking—answers about baptism, pre-earth life, the divinity of Christ, the immortality of man, gospel ordinances, marriage, and the eternal nature of the family.”

For the Robledos, learning that their family could be together forever was the crowning doctrine of the restored gospel.

“My conversion came at that moment,” says Ricardo, who was baptized less than three weeks after the first discussion and now serves as second counselor in the district presidency. “I suffered when I lost a brother at age 49, but I understood that I could reclaim him by doing his temple work. This assurance gave me peace and happiness.”

Amanda, baptized a short while later with one of their sons, says, “I haven’t had my mother since I was very young. I always thought I had lost her, and this caused



Ushuaia may be located at the end of the earth, but for those like Marcelino Tossen who have found the gospel here, "it's the beginning of everything."

me a lot of pain. But when the missionaries told us that a family can be together forever, it really touched my heart. It is wonderful to think that I will see her again."

After Ricardo and Amanda were married for eternity in the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple, their children were sealed to them. Being sealed as a family, completing ordinance work for many deceased family members, and sending three of their children on full-time missions have brought Ricardo and Amanda great joy.

"One of the greatest blessings we have received as members of the Church," Amanda says, "is that our children obey God."

The Beginning of Everything

Marcelino Tossen believed in God, read the Bible, and enjoyed talking about religion, so when the full-time missionaries knocked on his apartment door one warm January day in 1992, he invited them in. That decision changed his life.

"Elder Zanni and Elder Halls worked under the impressions of the Spirit," recalls Marcelino. Before that first discussion had even ended, the elders told him that he would be baptized into the Church, even telling him the exact day he would be baptized.

"I'm not going to get baptized," Marcelino countered. "I want only to talk to you."

The missionaries gave him a Book of Mormon and

asked him to read several verses and pray that night about their message. He did so but felt nothing.

During a subsequent discussion, however, Elder Zanni asked him, "Would it be all right if we prayed so you can ask Heavenly Father if what we have been teaching you is true?"

As he prayed, Marcelino says, "my heart began to burn fervently within me. Nothing like that had ever happened to me before. I couldn't even finish my prayer, and I arose from my knees."

Elder Zanni asked Marcelino if he had felt anything during his prayer. When Marcelino told him no, the missionary said, "I felt the Spirit very strong. It's strange that you didn't feel anything."

When he admitted what he had felt, Marcelino says, "the elders read from the Doctrine and Covenants, telling me that when the Lord wants us to know if something is right, He will send His peace or make our heart burn within us [see D&C 6:23; 9:8]. That day was a turning point for me."

From then on, the Spirit labored with him and testified of the truth through numerous spiritual experiences. "I'd feel the burning again while I was alone in my apartment," Marcelino says. "When I would open the window, I'd see the elders nearby on a corner teaching people about the Church. I could feel when they were close, and I began to take seriously what they were teaching me."

Marcelino received a warm welcome when he began attending church. He was baptized a short while later on April 22—the exact day the missionaries had named three months earlier. Today, after serving nine years as president of the Ushuaia district, he serves as the second counselor in the presidency of the Buenos Aires north mission.

"When we read that the Lord will 'send forth [His] word unto the ends of the earth' [D&C 112:4], that's Ushuaia," says President Tossen. "Ushuaia *is* the end of the earth. But for those like me who found the gospel here, it's the beginning of everything. Here you'll find the lighthouse at the end of the world. But here is where I found faith and the lighthouse of the Lord." ■

LOOK AT THE LAST PAGE

When I joined the Church, I was eager to get involved in family history work. I began visiting local archives to search for my ancestors' information in public records.

I found the work fulfilling, but it was not always easy. The old handwriting was often difficult to read, and some of the books were moldy, which agitated my asthma. Still, I continued researching as best I could.

One day I was researching about my grandfather, looking for his date of birth. I found a 1,500-page book that might be helpful. But what if it didn't have the answer I needed? I dreaded having to look through more big, dusty books.

I began skimming the book's contents, hoping a familiar name would catch my eye. Suddenly, I thought I heard someone say, "The last page." I looked around, but it did not appear that anyone had spoken to me. I continued and read several more pages. Then I heard the same words again: "The last page." Somewhat hesitantly, I decided to check the last page. I found the text that is usually written there: a summary of children born and the total number of pages. Just in case, I checked the page that preceded the last one but found nothing helpful there, so I turned back to the page I had been reading before.

My thoughts were soon interrupted once more by the soft but persistent

voice: "The last page!" I decided to try the last page again and read the now-familiar text several times.

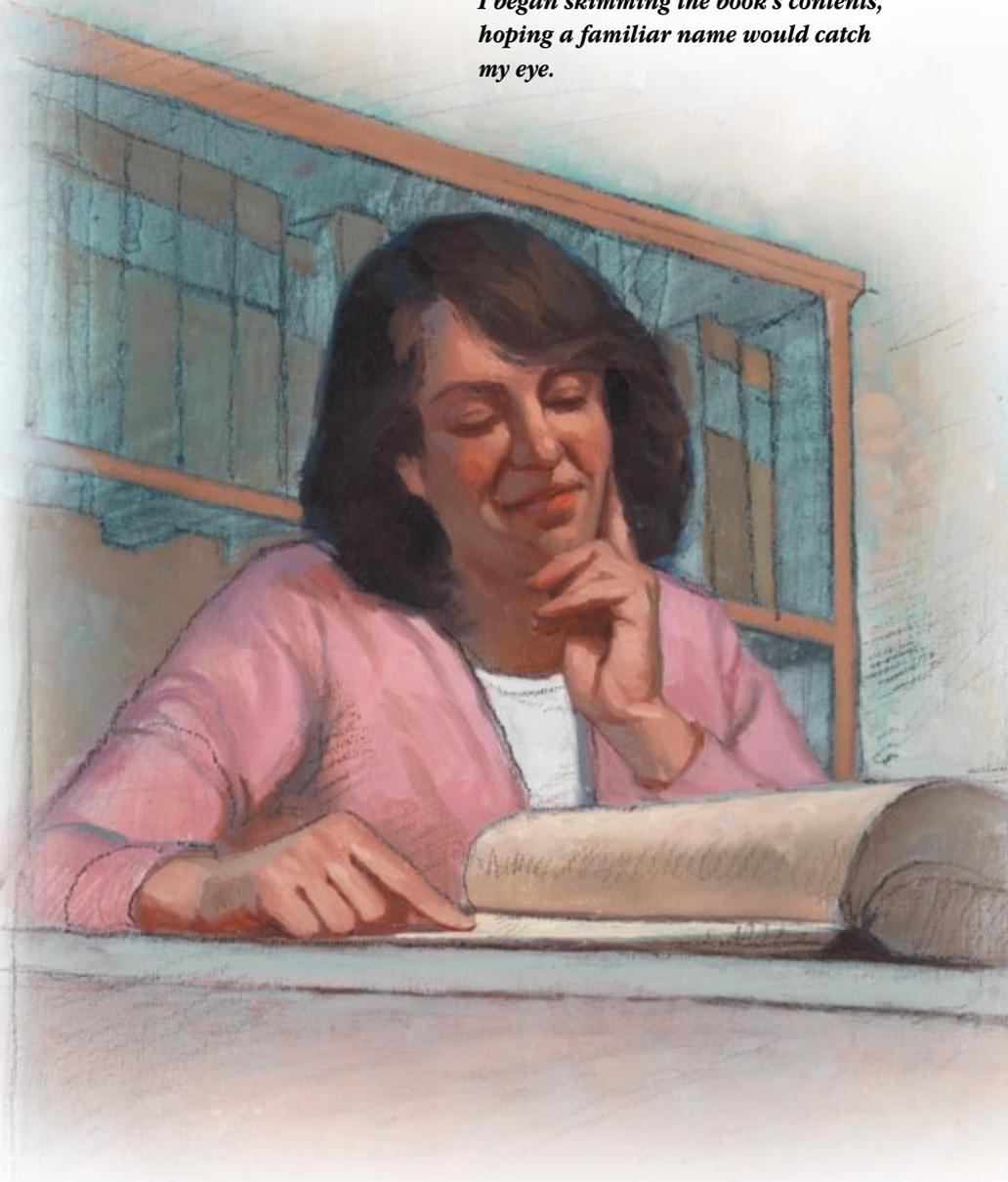
Then I noticed something I had missed before: an extra page pasted inside the back cover. As I read the handwriting scribbled across the page, I saw the names of children born near the end of December. There I recognized my grandfather's

name and saw that it stated where and when he was born and baptized. I was astonished but filled with gratitude that I had been led to the information I needed.

Family history can be challenging at times, but I know that God guides and assists us in our efforts. ■

Natalia Shcherbakova, Ukraine, as told to Pavlyna Ubyiko

I began skimming the book's contents, hoping a familiar name would catch my eye.



I CHOSE THE GOOD PART

As I prepared for my daughter's wedding, my mind was so occupied with wedding plans that I rarely thought of anything besides my checklist. One morning I looked at my long list of tasks. I was making progress, but I still needed to do some deep cleaning. I had been putting off cleaning the kitchen blinds, so I decided to tackle that chore.

As I climbed on the counter with my rags, brushes, and cleaner, I could see that it was going to be a dirty job. While I worked, my mind wandered to the story of Martha and Mary, the sisters who had welcomed the Savior into their home. While Martha "was cumbered about much serving," Mary "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word." Martha asked Jesus to tell her sister to help with the chores, but the Savior told her that "Mary hath chosen that good part" (see Luke 10:38–42).

"Today I will just have to be Martha," I thought. The truth was that I had been Martha for several weeks, "cumbered about" with mundane chores and wedding preparations.

My mind wandered again, and I tried to remember when my blinds had last been cleaned so thoroughly. I thought of the two girls who had come to help me get ready for a gathering at my house two years earlier. Together they had scrubbed my kitchen from floor to ceiling, including the blinds. That memory



I picked up the phone and dialed the number of an old friend I hadn't talked to in years, planning to tell her about my daughter's wedding.

reminded me of their mother, an old friend I hadn't talked to in years.

At that moment I picked up the phone and dialed her number to tell her about my daughter's wedding. I didn't expect her to answer because she taught school, but I happened to call during her planning hour. We spent the next hour laughing, crying, and sharing. She had recently been through a difficult divorce and had been feeling alone and abandoned. As we talked, our spirits were lifted and our hearts were comforted.

I marveled at the way the Lord was able to work through me even while I

was doing something as mundane as cleaning blinds. I marveled even more at the truth that He knows and loves each of us enough to send help at the very hour and moment we need it.

That night I smiled as I put a check mark on my list next to "clean the kitchen blinds." Though I felt a sense of satisfaction from completing the chore, I felt a greater sense of gratitude knowing I had been an instrument in the Lord's hands. He had shown me how I could be a Mary who chose the "good part" even as I was a Martha "cumbered about" my chores. ■
Jeanette Mahaffey, Missouri, USA

THE RIGHT SCRIPTURE AT THE RIGHT TIME

While serving as an assistant chaplain in the Maricopa County Jail system in Arizona, USA, I would visit and share a scripture and prayer with detainees who requested a Latter-day Saint chaplain. On one occasion a young woman made such a request.

I went to her area of the jail, which was behind several locked doors. The reception area had two cafeteria-style tables with a bench on each side and one desk with a guard. I gave the guard the request slip, slid onto one of the benches, and waited for the young woman.

I arose as she entered the reception area, greeted her, and suggested we sit at the table. She looked sad and unkempt and was on the verge of tears. As she discussed her situation, I considered what scripture I would share. I listened carefully to her concerns, and as she disclosed the difficulties she had had with various compulsive behaviors and poor choices, I thought of the perfect scripture to help her: Mosiah 3:19.

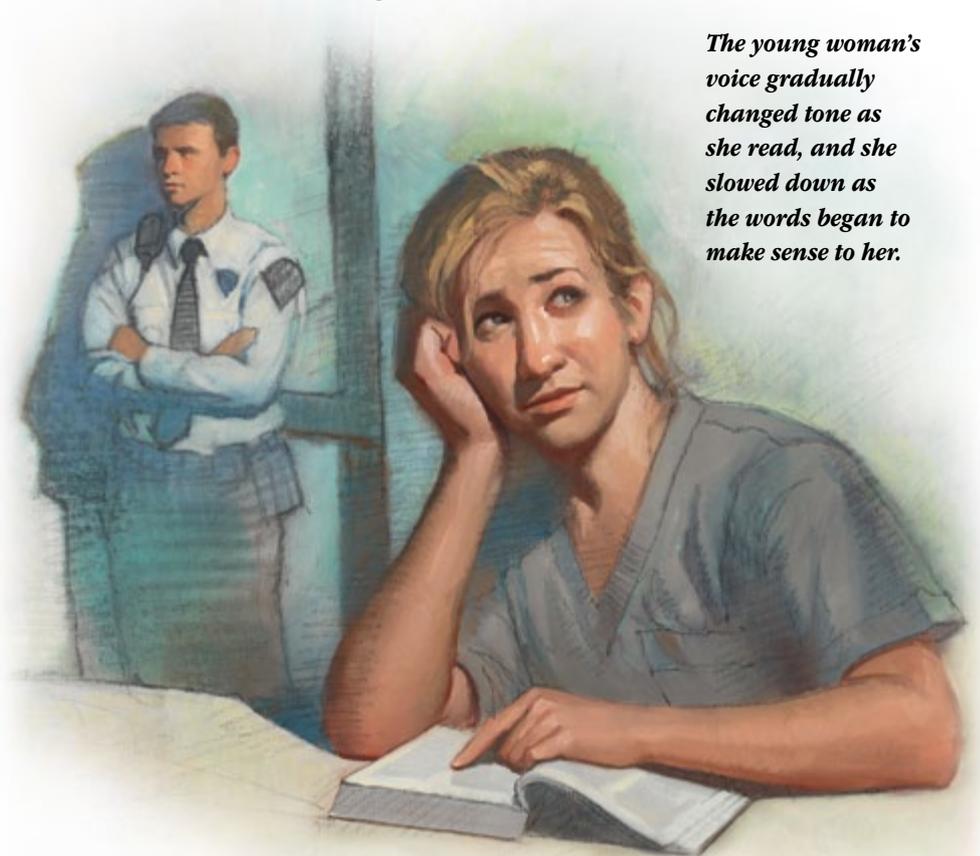
I opened the Book of Mormon to Mosiah 3:19, pushed it toward her, and asked her to read. She seemed a little disgruntled at first and began reading in a fast, singsong voice that seemed to express annoyance at being asked to read a scripture. As she finished the first phrase, “For the natural man is an enemy to God,” I interrupted to explain the meaning of

“natural man.” When she understood the reference, she continued to read. Her voice gradually changed tone, and she slowed down as the words began to make sense to her.

When she started to read the list of childlike attributes of “a saint,” she slowed down even more. I could tell she was absorbing the meaning of each attribute listed in the verse. When she read “submissive, meek, humble, patient,” I began to feel the Spirit all around us. As she read the words “full of love, willing to submit,” I witnessed a change in her. Her face brightened and her attitude, tone of voice, and general

manner seemed affected by the Spirit. I could see hope as she was taught by the Spirit what these words meant to her and how she should make the changes described in the scripture.

I said a prayer and then shook the young woman’s hand warmly. I left the jail on a spiritual high. I had never before seen such an immediate, powerful, magnificent effect from the scriptures. I knew Mosiah 3:19 because I have frequently encountered it while reading the scriptures, but never before had I understood the depth of the impact it could have on someone. ■
Allen Hunsaker, Arizona, USA



The young woman's voice gradually changed tone as she read, and she slowed down as the words began to make sense to her.

YOU HAVE NOT FASTED

In 1998 I was enjoying being a young mother. But I panicked one day when I realized that my six-month-old son made whistling sounds when he breathed and couldn't swallow anything. The doctor immediately diagnosed bronchiolitis, a swelling of the smallest air passages in the lungs usually caused by a viral infection. He prescribed both medication and physical therapy.

The visits to the physical therapist were a trial for my son and me. My son was uncomfortable being moved in every direction, and I worried that the therapy caused him pain. I took courage, however, when the therapist explained the benefits of therapy.

Despite the medical treatment and the therapy, my son's condition didn't improve. He ate little, and the whistling continued. The doctor prescribed 5 more sessions with the physical therapist in addition to the 10 we had already attended.

While I waited during the 13th session, I read an article posted in the doctor's office titled "Bronchiolitis Kills." As I read, I realized that my son could die. I felt as though my heart was in a vise. At the end of the session, the therapist told me that my son's condition wasn't improving. I'm not sure how I got home safely because tears blurred my vision.

I called my husband and then began to pray. I told my Heavenly

Father that if His will was to take my son, He would need to give me the strength to bear it.

After my prayer I asked myself what we could do in addition to the prayers we had uttered and the priesthood blessings our son had received. I glanced at the bookshelf and saw a copy of the *Liahona* (*L'Étoile* at the time). I opened it at random, searching for help, and found an article titled "I Fasted for My Baby." Then I clearly heard a voice say, "You have not fasted for your child."

I had not, so I immediately began to fast for him. At the therapy session the next day, I was still fasting. After examining my son,

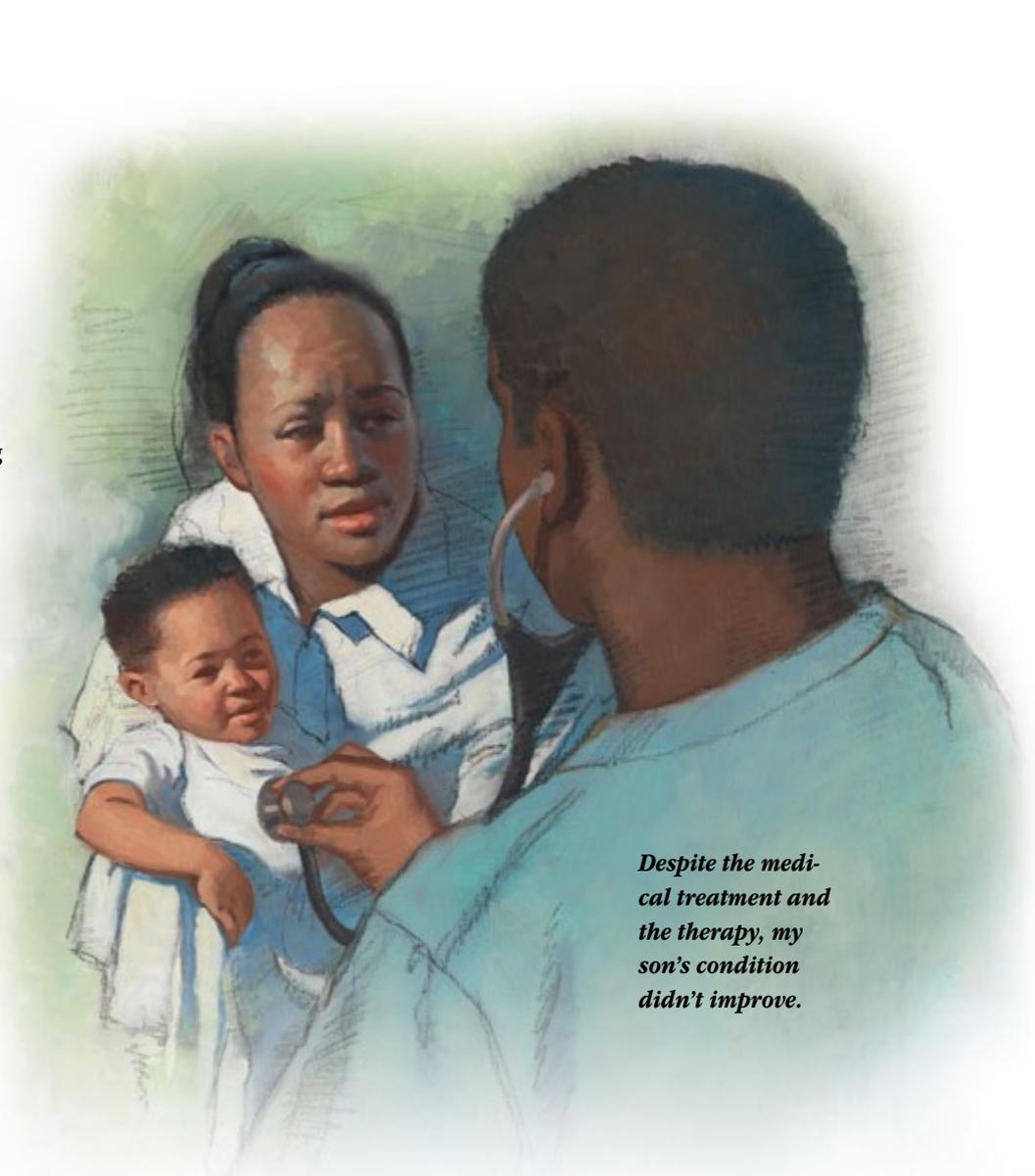
the therapist looked surprised.

"Madame," he told me, "your son is fine. I don't understand, but he doesn't need any more sessions."

I couldn't hold back the tears of joy. Returning home, I knelt to thank God for His mercy and love. I called my husband to tell him the good news. Then I ended my fast in peace, not doubting the intervention of the Lord.

My son was healed thanks to faith, prayer, priesthood blessings, *and* fasting. I have no doubt that my Heavenly Father loves me and that He also loves my son. I am confident that He will continue to help us overcome our difficulties. ■

Ketty Constant, Guadeloupe



Despite the medical treatment and the therapy, my son's condition didn't improve.



**By Bishop
Gérald Caussé**

First Counselor in
the Presiding Bishopric

Keeping the Faith

IN A WORLD OF CONFUSION

I was born in southwestern France “of goodly parents” (1 Nephi 1:1) who, from the time I was young, helped me develop faith in Jesus Christ and a testimony of the restored gospel. At school, on the other hand, many of my professors expressed doubts about and even hostility toward any religious belief. On many occasions I heard the teachings of Korihor from those who were belittling my beliefs:

“Behold, they are foolish traditions of your fathers. How do ye know of their surety?”

“. . . Behold, ye cannot know of things which ye do not see” (Alma 30:14–15).

When I was 17, I began taking philosophy classes in high school. One day the teacher said to the class, “Surely there isn’t anyone here who believes that Adam really existed!” Then he scanned the room with the look of an inquisitor, ready to pounce on whoever dared to admit to such

belief. I was petrified! However, my desire to be loyal to my faith was even stronger. I glanced around to see that I was the only one of those 40 students to raise a hand. The teacher, taken by surprise, changed the subject.

All members of the Church at some time in their lives face moments that test the sincerity and strength of their testimonies. Braving these trials of our faith helps us stand firm in a world that is falling more and more into the depths of confusion. This confusion is evident in the barrage of messages that surround us. With the advent of the Internet, for example,

To strengthen our testimonies and protect ourselves from error, we must constantly nourish and fortify our faith.

an uninterrupted avalanche of contradictory opinions and information invades our everyday lives. These contradictions can become disconcerting and paralyzing.

How can we distinguish between truth and error? How can we avoid becoming like those who are “kept from the truth because they know not where to find it”? (D&C 123:12).

It is up to us whether we remain firm in our testimonies. When I think about my past, I realize that the success of my personal journey depended on a few simple principles that kept me on course. These principles allowed me to develop myself



Disciples of Christ hunger and thirst every day after spiritual knowledge. This personal practice allows us to follow the example of Joseph Smith.

spiritually despite the “mists of darkness” (1 Nephi 12:17) and snares that surround all of us.

Seek the Truth Continually

To those who claim that “ye cannot know” (Alma 30:15), the Lord has answered, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7). That is a marvelous promise.

Disciples of Christ hunger and thirst every day after spiritual knowledge. This personal practice is founded on study, contemplation, and daily prayer. It allows us to follow the example of Joseph Smith, who “came to the conclusion that [he] must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else . . . ask of God” (Joseph Smith—History 1:13).

Studying the word of God protects us from the influence of false doctrines. The Lord said, “For unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have

enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have” (2 Nephi 28:30).

Accept Unanswered Questions

In our search for truth, we can be tempted to want to understand everything right away. However, the intelligence of God is so infinite that “it is impossible that man should find out all his ways” (Jacob 4:8). We must accept living for a time without answers to all of our questions. Like Nephi, we faithfully acknowledge that God “loveth his children; nevertheless, [we] do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17).

The Lord, nevertheless, supplies us with the knowledge necessary for our salvation and exaltation. He promises, “Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you” (D&C 88:64). We receive these answers progressively, “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little” (2 Nephi 28:30), depending on our needs and our capacity to comprehend.

It is up to us to distinguish between questions that are truly essential to our eternal progress and those that result from intellectual curiosity, need for proof, or desire for personal satisfaction.

Seek the Testimony of the Spirit

Each of us may experience moments of personal doubt. These



We must exercise works. We cannot hope to receive personal revelation unless we conduct ourselves like faithful disciples of Christ.



doubts are rarely alleviated by the search for rational explanations. For example, some scientific or archaeological discoveries may reinforce our testimonies of scripture, but spiritual knowledge cannot be proven by logic or physical evidence.

Knowledge of the truth is based on the testimony of the Spirit. As the Apostle Paul said, “The things of God knoweth no man, but [by] the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11).

We have the assurance that “the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not” (Jacob 4:13). The Spirit can have an even more powerful effect on us than our physiological senses. To the Apostle Peter, who had just declared his faith, Jesus replied, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:17). After all, how many of Christ’s contemporaries did not recognize Him despite seeing Him with their own eyes!

Seek the Words of Prophets and Apostles

I recently had a discussion with a dignitary of another church. Desirous to determine if we were a Christian church, he suggested organizing a debate between the doctrinal experts of our two religions.

The strength and truth of the doctrine of Christ, however, rest not upon the debate of experts but upon the sacred testimonies of His chosen

disciples. The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven.”¹

For the many long centuries of the Apostasy, the world did not lack experts, but it *had* lost the witnesses of Christ. As a result, human reason replaced the strength of divine revelation.

When we are troubled, our first reflex must be to search the scriptures and the words of the living prophets. Their writings are beacons that cannot deceive us: “Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy; and having all these witnesses we obtain a hope, and our faith becometh unshaken” (Jacob 4:6).

Nourish Your Faith

We do not receive a “witness until after the trial of [our] faith” (Ether 12:6). Faith has the power to unlock knowledge of eternal truths. Pushed to its fulness, knowledge becomes an absolute and perfect certitude. Of the brother of Jared, Moroni wrote that “because of the knowledge of this man he could not be kept from beholding within the veil; . . . and he had faith no longer, for he knew, nothing doubting” (Ether 3:19).

To strengthen our testimonies and protect ourselves from error, we must

therefore constantly nourish and fortify our faith. To begin with, we need to have pure hearts and great humility. Jacob warned the people of Nephi about the pride of those who “when they are learned . . . think they are wise, and . . . hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves” (2 Nephi 9:28).

Next, we must exercise works. The Apostle James taught that “faith [was] wrought with . . . works, and by works was faith made perfect” (James 2:22). We cannot hope to receive personal revelation unless we conduct ourselves like faithful disciples of Christ. Respecting the covenants we have made with God qualifies us to receive the companionship of the Holy Ghost, who enlightens our intelligence and causes our spirits to blossom.

I testify of the truthfulness of these principles. I know by experience that when we apply them in our lives, they ensure our protection in a confused and disoriented world. They harbor a marvelous promise: “And because of your diligence and your faith and your patience with the word in nourishing it, that it may take root in you, behold, by and by ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, . . . and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst” (Alma 32:42). ■

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49.

“I’ve become addicted to pornography. It’s ruining my life. What can I do to break the addiction?”

Pornography is a widespread and serious problem. It hurts your spirit and infects your mind with unclean thoughts. It damages your relationships. Looking at pornography causes you to lose the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Getting over the addiction is not easy, but it is simple—decide now to stop looking at or thinking about pornography. Speak immediately with your bishop or branch president. Don’t feel embarrassed to talk to him. He can help you repent so the Savior’s Atonement can cleanse your thoughts and spirit. “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:43).

Do everything you can to avoid pornography in the future. That might mean getting rid of your cell phone and your Internet access, except in public places, with strong Internet filters installed.

Make prayer, scripture study, service, and other uplifting activities the focus of your life. The Lord taught, “Cease from . . . all your lustful desires” and “let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly” (D&C 88:121; 121:45). With sincere repentance and the help of the Savior and His chosen servants, you *can* overcome this addiction.

Read Scriptures



Pray for strength. Enos prayed for an entire day, supplicating the Lord for his sins to be forgiven, and through his faith, he felt great peace and the guilt disappeared. Read the scriptures to obtain the Holy Spirit, since when you have His companionship, you will not think or do impure things. Read Psalm 24:3–5 (about keeping oneself clean). Keep busy: do sports, go out and have clean fun, and don’t let yourself be influenced by supposed friends. When temptations come, be decisive and

reject them. Remember that Heavenly Father knows everything you think and do.

Ana G., age 17, Zulia, Venezuela

Never Give Up

Pornography ruined my life, but I have finally broken the addiction after much suffering. The repentance process will be long and hard, but pray sincerely every day for the Lord’s help during this trial. Never think that you are unworthy to repent, as the Atonement is for everyone. Also remember that each time you are tempted, Satan is trying to bring you down into sin. But it will always be your choice to either give in or ignore the temptation. Never give up on yourself or the Lord, as He will give you no trial that you cannot bear (see 1 Nephi 3:7).

A young woman from Victoria, Australia

Talk to Your Bishop

Go talk to your bishop as soon as possible. It’s hard to take that first step, but you have to talk to him to repent. He won’t make fun of you or be disgusted with you. He cares about you and wants only what’s best for you. Jesus Christ suffered for your sins so you can feel free again from the crushing guilt and sadness you’ve been feeling for so long (see Alma 5:9). It’s not too late to change. You can feel true joy again. Ask God to give you the courage to repent.

Taylor P., age 18, North Carolina, USA

Sing a Hymn



Pornography is not of God. The repentance process is long and painful, but it is possible! You have to have the desire to change, to perceive the gravity of the sin, and above all to seek help from Heavenly Father. To avoid falling into temptation, I have a picture of Jesus Christ beside my computer. He is always there watching me! Whenever pornographic images or music comes into my mind, I sing a hymn and soon these evil things are forgotten.

Natália Q., age 18, São Paulo, Brazil

Pray

The power of prayer is indescribable; it gives us the strength to withstand adversity and come off conqueror (see D&C 10:5). If you seek Heavenly Father in prayer, He will give you the strength to free yourself from temptation. As you read the scriptures daily, you will be strengthened even more. If you trust in the Lord and not in your own strength, He will free you from the chains that bind you. It is through the Atonement that you can be healed.

Gian G., age 18, Rivera, Uruguay

Confess

I've had this problem. It still haunts me. First of all, stop looking at pornography. Go to Heavenly Father. I felt Him forgive me when I didn't think I could be forgiven. And then I thought I was fine. I didn't want anyone to know about it; I was so ashamed. But it's something you

need to tell your bishop. I tried not to. But over and over I heard the words, "If you have a problem with pornography, go to your bishop." One day, in my temple recommend interview, it just spilled out. And I felt so good afterwards. I was free. A burden was lifted. Afterwards, I told my parents. They were sad, but they accepted it. Don't be afraid to come out with it.

A young woman from Tennessee, USA

Tell Someone

I was trapped by pornography for a long time. It was only with my parents' support and my bishop's help that I finally broke free. Reduced Internet privileges or a few weeks of not taking the sacrament is a small price to pay for the joy of being clean. Professional counselors can also help and will not judge you. They are also a tool the Lord has given us.

A young man from California, USA



HOW TO GUARD AGAINST TEMPTATION

"Start by separating yourself from people, materials, and circumstances that

will harm you. . . .

"Acknowledge that people bound by the chains of true addictions often need more help than self-help, and that may include you. Seek that help and welcome it. Talk to your bishop. Follow his counsel. . . .

"Along with filters on computers and a lock on affections, remember that the only real control in life is self-control. Exercise more control over even the marginal moments that confront you. If a TV show is indecent, turn it off. . . .

"Cultivate and be where the Spirit of the Lord is. Make sure that includes your own home or apartment, dictating the kind of art, music, and literature you keep there."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Place No More for the Enemy of My Soul," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2010, 45–46.

NEXT QUESTION

"How do I 'stand in holy places' when there's so much unholiness around me, like at school?"

Submit your answer by September 15 at liahona.lds.org, by e-mail to liahona@ldschurch.org, or by mail to:

Liahona, Questions & Answers 9/12
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter: (1) full name, (2) birth date, (3) ward or branch, (4) stake or district, (5) your written permission, and, if you are under age 18, your parent's written permission (e-mail is acceptable) to publish your response and photograph.





By Elder
Tad R. Callister
Of the Presidency
of the Seventy

How Do I **KNOW** *When I Am* **FORGIVEN?**

When I served as mission president, missionaries often asked these two questions: (1) How do I know when I am forgiven of my sins? and (2) If I am forgiven, why do I still feel guilt?

When asked those questions, I usually responded by saying, “If you feel the Spirit—when you pray, read the scriptures, teach, testify, or at any other time—then that is your witness that you have been forgiven or, alternatively, that the cleansing process is taking place, for the Spirit cannot dwell in an unholy tabernacle” (see Alma 7:21). In most cases the cleansing process takes time because our change of heart takes time, but in the interim, we can proceed with the confidence that God approves of our progress as manifested by the presence of His Spirit.

Some people are harder on themselves than the Lord is. Of course,

we must repent to be eligible for the cleansing and forgiving powers of the Atonement, but once we have repented, there is no such thing as a spotted repenter in God’s kingdom. There is no black mark on our right ankle that says “2008 sin” or brown stain behind our left ear that says “2010 trespass.” The Lord declared the comprehensive cleansing power of the Atonement when He said, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18). That is the miracle of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

On some occasions I believe our sins are cleansed before the guilt goes away. Why is that? Perhaps in God’s mercy, the memory of that guilt is a warning, a spiritual “stop sign” that cries out when similar temptations confront us: “Don’t go down that road. You know the pain it can bring.” Perhaps for those in the process of

repenting, it is meant to be a protection, not a punishment.

Will our guilt ever go away? The promise of the Lord is certain in that regard. To the righteous, the Lord said that the time would come when “there shall be no more . . . sorrow, nor crying, *neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away*” (Revelation 21:4; emphasis added).

I do not know if we will forget our sins, but the time will come when those who repent will no longer be troubled by their sins. Such was the case with Enos, whose “guilt was swept away” (Enos 1:6), and the converted Lamanites, who witnessed that the Lord had “taken away the guilt from our hearts” (Alma 24:10), and with Alma, who exclaimed, “I could remember my pains *no more*” (Alma 36:19; emphasis added). No doubt all of them remembered their sins, but



Will our guilt ever go away? The promise of the Lord is certain in that regard. To the righteous, the Lord said that the time would come when "there shall be no more . . . sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

The more we learn about the Atonement and exercise faith in Christ's healing powers, the greater our ability to be forgiven and to forgive ourselves.



somehow they were no longer troubled by them. The infinite powers of the Atonement miraculously healed every wound and soothed every conscience with “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7).

There seem to be two conditions that will free us from all guilt and pain. First is our unwavering faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. When Enos asked how his guilt was “swept away” (see Enos 1:6–7), the Lord responded, “Because of thy faith in Christ” (Enos 1:8). Accordingly, the more we learn about the Atonement and exercise faith in Christ’s healing powers, the greater our ability to be forgiven and to forgive ourselves. Second is the development of a character that has “no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2). When this happens, we no longer view ourselves in our “carnal state” (Mosiah 4:2) but as spiritually begotten sons and daughters of God. We recognize that we are a different person than the one who sinned. Scrooge, the famous character in Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*, had so transformed his life that he could rightfully declare, “I am not the man I was.”¹

As we repent, we become a different person than we were. The realization of our new identity, coupled with our faith in Christ’s cleansing powers, helps us reach the point

where we can say as Alma said, “I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more” (Alma 36:19). Accordingly, we can be comforted by the truth that God will ultimately judge us by what we have become, not by what we were.

The Apostle Paul gave some constructive counsel to all of us who have sinned but are striving to repent. He said we should be “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before” (Philippians 3:13). In other words, we should put the past behind us and press forward, trusting in God’s redeeming power. Such an effort on our part is a demonstration of faith. Further, Paul counseled, “Happy is he that condemneth not himself” (Romans 14:22).

In the meantime, until that final drop of guilt is removed, if we feel the Lord’s Spirit we can proceed with confidence that we have been cleansed or that the cleansing process is working its divine miracle in our life. The promise is certain—if we do our best to repent, we will be cleansed of our sins and our guilt will eventually be swept away, because the Savior’s Atonement descended not only below our sins but also our guilt. Then we will be at perfect peace with ourselves and with God. ■

NOTE

1. Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol in Prose* (1843), 150.

Our Space

WHY TRIALS?

Many times we wonder why we have problems even when we keep the commandments and live the gospel. We must not forget that we came to this earth to be tested. When we overcome the trials and show Heavenly Father through our choices that we love Him, He will bless us so that within our families the Spirit of the Lord will reign.

Kahellyn V. (below), Venezuela



DUTY TO GOD

I've been working to complete my Duty to God goals, both when I lived in Venezuela and when I moved with my family to China. Duty to God truly is inspired. A young man can learn marvelous things that will be applied throughout the rest of his life by completing the goals. He will learn spiritual things, temporal things, physical things, and much more. It's well worth the effort of dedicating yourself to complete these goals. I have learned to be a better man, I've grown in my testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I have better prepared myself to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and to serve a mission. It's gratifying to know that I will be able to be a good example to my future children one day.

Jonathan A., China



MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

1 Nephi 3:7
 This scripture strengthens my faith because Nephi shows during trials that he still obeys and does what the Lord wants him to do. And Heavenly Father blesses him for that.

Kaila T. (above), Philippines

FINDING A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I was born into the Church, and I didn't have much of a testimony until I started to read the scriptures with pure intent. Instead of just reading the words on the paper, I searched deep for their meaning. I read 3 Nephi 11:3, and I put myself in the people's shoes. That scripture and the ones following it shook me. From then on I kept reading the scriptures and praying with sincerity, and my testimony grew.

Ryan R., Washington, USA

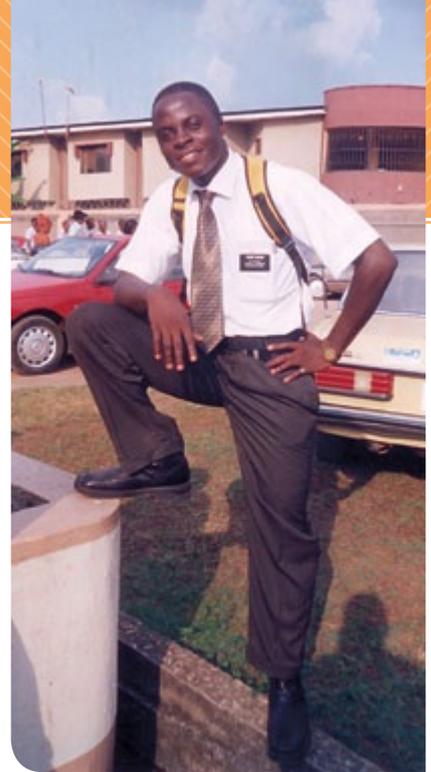
PERSONAL PROGRESS

On February 27, 2011, I received my Young Womanhood Recognition. I am happy that I completed the Personal Progress program, that I kept myself pure and clean, and that I can wear my medallion with pride. I know that the Young Women organization helps us progress and prepare ourselves for marriage in the holy temple. I am grateful to my Heavenly Father for this organization. By earning my medallion, I have completed one of my goals, and I know that I can continue to do much good in the work of the Lord.

Katherine M., Venezuela



A SACRIFICE *but a* JOY



My desire to serve a mission almost became lost because I enjoyed the money I was making.

By Edward M. Akosah

When I was six years old, my mother met the missionaries and joined the Church in Ghana, Africa. My father had left her with five children, but the teachings of the Church helped keep our family strong. We loved each other and had peace in our home. I loved going to church with my mom and enjoyed attending Primary classes and then seminary.

As a young man I was called as a ward missionary and enjoyed proselyting with the missionaries. I also watched as some of the young men in our ward went on missions. When they returned, they were different. They were more learned and mature, both physically and spiritually. My

older brother also served a mission. When he returned, I saw many improvements in his behavior. I kept asking myself, “What is it about a mission that makes all these people change and grow so much?” I became enthusiastic about going on a mission.

After I finished high school, I was working to save money for a mission. Soon my desire to serve a mission became lost because I enjoyed the money I was making. It would have been a sacrifice to go on a mission because the money I earned helped support my family. Each time I started filling out my mission forms, I thought about the money I would be giving up, and I dropped my forms and continued working.

As my friends left on missions, I felt bad because I knew I should also be getting ready to go. This caused me to examine myself. I thought, “Sustaining the prophet and my leaders is not just raising my

right hand. It’s doing what they say and obeying our Heavenly Father’s commandments.”

Now was the time to serve a mission, so I submitted my mission papers to the bishop. It was the second happiest day of my life. The happiest was the day my bishop called me to his office and gave me a white envelope with my mission call to the Nigeria Ibadan Mission. My heart was full of joy.

In the missionary training center, I became better acquainted with the doctrines of the gospel and learned marvelous things. I was also able to receive my endowment in the temple. I am so grateful for my decision to come on a mission, and I have never regretted it. I too have grown spiritually on my mission. I believe it is because I am helping people receive the same gospel blessings that have brought so much happiness to me and my family. ■

PICTURING MYSELF IN THE TEMPLE

A good-looking guy from work asked me out, but he was not a member of the Church, and I had a goal to marry in the temple.

By Adriane Franca Leao

As a young girl, I dreamed of being part of a forever family. I was 12 years old when my family was sealed in the São Paulo Brazil Temple. I perfectly remember kneeling with my family at the temple altar and being sealed with my siblings to our parents for time and for all eternity. I knew then that this was the type of family I wanted. I placed a picture of the São Paulo Temple beside my bed, and I looked at it every night, renewing my commitment to have nothing less than an eternal family.

Several years later I was working in the commercial department of a large company. One day our manager introduced me to a new employee. He was a tall young man with gorgeous blue eyes, an easy smile, and a great sense of fashion.

I could hardly believe it when he later began to flirt with me. I felt on top of the world! On our first date, I was excited to find out that he was a drummer in a band that was experiencing some success. I also discovered that he smoked and drank, but



I reasoned that, since he was not a member of the Church, it was not wrong for him.

That night when I arrived home, my thoughts were full of that beautiful young man. But as I knelt to pray, I saw my picture of the temple, and a strange feeling came over me. I ignored it and went to sleep.

The next day, when we went out together, the fact that he drank and smoked gave me a bad feeling. I was ashamed to be seated at a table with drinks, even though I hadn't touched any of them. I felt first excited and then frustrated when he tried to kiss

me. When I smelled the cigarettes and alcohol on his breath, that kiss didn't make it past an attempt!

I knelt beside my bed to pray that night, looking at the picture of the temple. I reflected that this young man was not the type of person who could take me to the temple for an eternal marriage.

I lay down and slept, but not before happily thinking about my goal of marrying a worthy young man with whom I could establish an eternal family.

Even though the drummer was still attractive, his romantic look no longer impressed me. I knew the type of marriage I wanted.

A year later I was married in the São Paulo Temple to a worthy priesthood holder whom I love. It was worth waiting for a faithful young man who could receive with me that wonderful blessing from the Lord. ■

To buy your own picture of the temple, visit store.lds.org. Click the "Music, Media, and Art" tab and then click "Temple Pictures."



For the Strength of Youth AN ANCHOR FOR TODAY



David L. Beck
Young Men
General President



Elaine S. Dalton
Young Women
General President

The First Presidency wrote that the standards in For the Strength of Youth “will help you with the important choices you are making now and will yet make in the future.”¹ With the release of a new edition of the pamphlet, Church magazines were able to spend a few moments with Young Women general president Elaine S. Dalton and Young Men general president David L. Beck talking about the revised pamphlet.

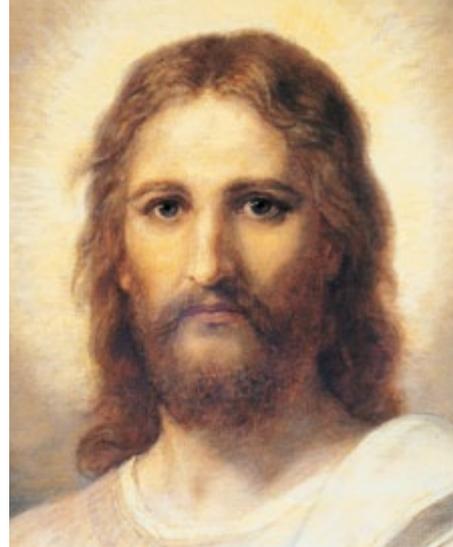
Why a new edition of *For the Strength of Youth* now?

Brother Beck: The Lord’s standards have not changed, but the adversary’s

attacks against those standards have increased in frequency and intensity. *For the Strength of Youth* has been updated to help youth withstand these attacks.

Sister Dalton: Prophets continue to speak in very clear terms to youth, and we want to keep their current words available. Youth need to be anchored in following the prophet, so recent teachings have been integrated into this pamphlet.

Brother Beck: As President Thomas S. Monson has reminded us, today’s youth are growing up in a time when the gap between the Lord’s standards and the world’s



standards is widening.² Temptations are becoming stronger, and sinful behavior is becoming more socially acceptable. The inspired counsel in this new pamphlet is an indication of Heavenly Father's love for the youth. He wants each young person to enjoy the blessings of living the gospel and has given them standards to help them. He has an important work for them to do now. The standards in *For the Strength of Youth* help qualify them to perform His work.



This goes along well with another new section: "Physical and Emotional Health." You need to be physically healthy and take care of your body, but you also need to be mindful of your emotional health.

Brother Beck: Additional emphasis has also been placed on following the Spirit and living worthy to attend the temple.

How can youth make *For the Strength of Youth* a part of their lives?

Sister Dalton: I'd like for them to look for the blessings mentioned in the pamphlet and think about how these blessings will lead them to their goals. I really believe this generation is preparing the earth for the Savior's Second Coming. I would urge youth to remember that they want to stand with confidence in His presence when He comes again.

Brother Beck: The *Fulfilling My Duty to God* and *Young Women Personal Progress* booklets also offer several good ideas. For example, in the "Live Worthily" sections of *Duty to God*, young men are invited to study the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*, make a plan to live by them, and then share their experiences with others. By doing so, they strengthen not only their own testimonies, but they also strengthen others.

Sister Dalton: Another interesting exercise would be for the youth to go through *For the Strength of Youth* and circle all mentions of the Spirit. Living these standards will enable

What has been updated with this edition?

Sister Dalton: "Work and Self-Reliance" has been added. A lot of youth are spending so much time with new technologies—social networking, Internet browsing, video gaming—that they never really learn how to work. That's a concern because when a young person goes on a mission, sometimes he or she isn't prepared for the rigors of that hard physical and spiritual labor.



them to have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. And in a time when youth are making critical decisions in their lives, they need that companionship.

Brother Beck: I also see the pamphlet as a great resource for sharing the gospel; we can use it to help our friends understand why we live the way we do. Youth could also use it to prepare family home evening lessons, sacrament meeting talks, or lessons for Church classes—or even just to find answers to questions about the Lord’s standards. As youth do these things, the doctrines and principles in *For the Strength of Youth* will go deep into their hearts and become a part of who they are.

What would you say to those who think it’s hard to keep these standards in today’s world?

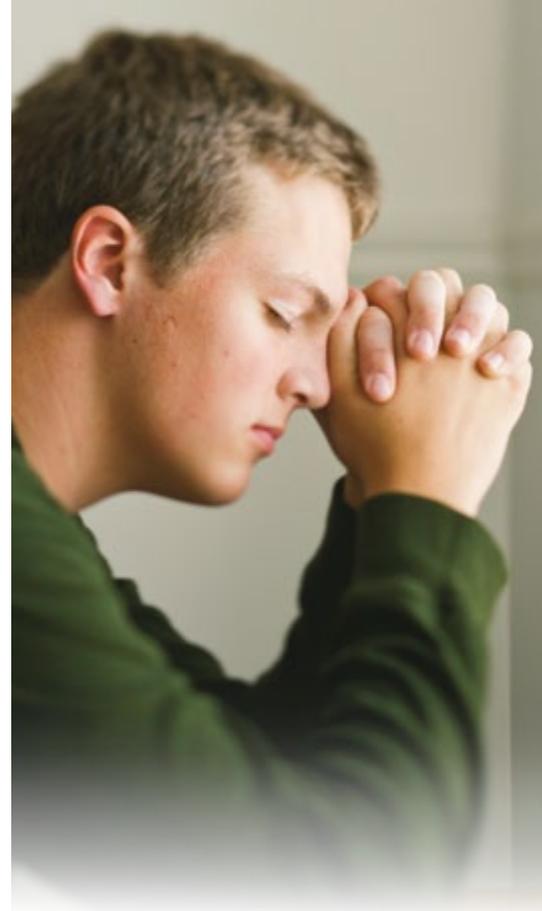
Sister Dalton: I’d say, “You’re right; it is hard.” But I would remind them that it’s a lot harder when you *don’t* keep the standards. Sin complicates your life and leads you to deal with things that you don’t want. I would say that living the standards in *For the Strength of Youth* is a key to happiness, and everyone wants to be happy.

Brother Beck: Nothing this world has to offer can compare to the comforting influence of the Holy Ghost, to the satisfaction of knowing that Heavenly Father is pleased with you, or to the power of temple covenants. These are the blessings promised to those who obey the Lord’s standards.

Sister Dalton: So many young women say, “I did a bad thing, so I can’t come to church anymore.” Then they start falling into worse behavior. But I’d say, “You *can* repent. You can change, and now’s the time. This is the day. This is your moment.”

What advice would you give to youth who don’t receive a lot of support at home in living these standards?

Brother Beck: I believe the Lord places each of us where we can do the most good with the spiritual gifts He has given us. If your family doesn’t share your commitment to living the Lord’s standards, don’t give up. Keep living the way you



know you should, because you never know who in your family might be watching you and privately drawing strength from your example.

Sister Dalton: Also, always remember who *you* are. You were reserved to be on the earth now because you have a strong testimony of the Savior. You proved that in the premortal world. As Brother Beck mentioned, your living the standards might ultimately bless your family. Don’t compromise. Don’t give in. As we live these standards, we can be a light. We can reflect the Savior’s light.

What blessings will come to youth as they live the standards?

Brother Beck: The Lord has promised many wonderful blessings to those who are true to the standards He has set. Some are immediate: the companionship of the Holy Ghost,



peace of conscience, and increased faith and confidence. Each time we obey a commandment, our ability to obey grows.

Sister Dalton: The world says, “Try everything. Because you’re young now, you can experiment.” What happens when you follow that message is like a funnel that starts out wide but gets pretty narrow at the bottom. Your agency becomes restricted by those decisions. Experimentation can lead to addiction. A moment of excitement



can lead to pregnancy out of wedlock or a change in your life plan. But if you will walk a strict path—turn the funnel upside down—and obey the Lord’s standards, the whole world opens up for you and grows wider as you keep the commandments. Instead of being bound to your mistakes, you have the freedom to live the kind of life that will make you happy.

Brother Beck: The world needs young people who understand the value of these blessings and how to qualify for them. There are many among your friends and your peers who are looking for an alternative to the world’s ways, who want true principles to build their lives upon. All they need is your example and testimony.

Would you like to share anything else with the youth?

Sister Dalton: The message I would give to the youth is that repentance is not a bad thing; it’s a blessing. The Savior provided for us the ability to repent. Don’t wait. We can change, and that will help us live the standards. One virtuous young man or young woman led by the Spirit can change the world. You can be that one.

Brother Beck: We love you, and we rejoice in your goodness. It’s exciting and inspiring for us to witness your faithfulness. If you feel alone, remember that there are thousands of youth just like you around the world who are committed to keeping the Lord’s standards. Remember also that the Holy Ghost can be your constant companion. Live worthy of His presence, follow His promptings, and allow Him to comfort you when you need it. Heavenly Father loves you and trusts you. He has great things in store for you. ■

NOTES

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

HOW CAN I EXPLAIN TO MY FRIENDS WHY OUR STANDARDS AREN’T RESTRICTIVE?

You can use the funnel analogy Sister Dalton mentions. Trying things the world suggests will narrow your future because of the negative consequences. We turn the funnel the opposite way, where following standards and commandments opens up lots of opportunities for us now and in the future.

Standards help us:

- Have the companionship of the Holy Ghost, especially in making important choices.
- Enjoy happiness and freedom rather than enduring consequences of addiction or sin.
- Be worthy of temple blessings and eternal life, which is our ultimate goal.



My Mother's EXAMPLE

By Erin Barker

I slammed the plate into the dishwasher and cried in frustration.

"Erin, you can go to that pool party," my dad said. "You can take a break."

"It's not about that!" I yelled as I stormed from the room.

My tantrum wasn't about Adriane's pool party. My mom and my youngest sister, Abby, were sick with pneumonia. My dad and I had spent the last week caring for them and trying to keep the household functioning normally. This meant cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping, doing laundry, and driving my other two sisters around.

All of these things muffled my nagging worries and fears. I was worried about my family and nervous about leaving for college soon. So I kept myself busy and tried to ignore my fears. I had even planned on skipping Adriane's party, but I was tired and the thought of a carefree evening, hanging out with friends by the pool, pushed my

emotions over the edge. I exploded and took out my frustration on my dad.

I cried for a while in my bedroom. Then, feeling guilty, I went upstairs to see if my mom or Abby needed anything. I found my mother giving medicine to my fever-flushed sister. My mom was barely able to breathe and had been bedridden for days. My dad and I urged her to return to bed. We told her that we could take care of Abby. She wouldn't listen.

"I'm all right. You two get some sleep," she said. "Abby needs me."

I tried not to cry as I watched my mom comfort my 10-year-old sister. She checked her temperature, helped her into bed, then crawled in after her and held her shaking body. Abby stopped moaning and calmed under my mom's protection.

My mom was more ill than she had ever been. The pneumonia would eventually send her to the hospital for several days. Yet in the middle of her trial, she forgot about herself. Rather than complaining about her own illness, she found a way to ease her daughter's pain.

I had planned on becoming the martyr that night by staying home to help. Instead, I was embarrassed by my outburst and humbled by my mother's actions. Watching her, I knew she would do anything to help my sisters and me.

I felt her love that night and wanted to follow her example. I resolved to show those I love that I will be there when they need me, regardless of the personal sacrifice required. ■





Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shares some thoughts on this subject.

Women Are Important in the Church!

Women are daughters of our Heavenly Father, who loves them.

God placed within women divine qualities of strength, virtue, and love.

Wives are equal to their husbands. Wives and husbands work side by side to meet the needs of the family.

Women of the Church today are strong and faithful.

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

Latter-day Saint women are incredible! ■

*From "LDS Women Are Incredible!"
Liahona and Ensign, May 2011, 18–21.*



Prayers, Notes, and Natural Disasters

By Marissa Widdison
Church Magazines

Although these two girls speak different languages and live more than 6,000 miles (9,600 km) apart, they have something special in common: they both found ways to keep a positive attitude when natural disasters struck their hometowns. Take a look at the true stories of Honoka O. from Japan and Maggie W. from Missouri, USA. During sad and scary times, what helped them stay faithful and optimistic?



Honoka

My name is Honoka, and I live in Chiba Prefecture, Japan. I like to play, jump rope, and draw. My dream is to be an illustrator someday.



Maggie

Hello! I'm Maggie from Joplin, Missouri. One night my mom saw storm warnings on the news, and we all went to the basement. The loud, whistling wind scared me. I was worried about my friends and our animals. After the storm, I was grateful my family was safe and our house didn't have much damage.



Honoka

My favorite scripture story is about Lehi's dream (see 1 Nephi 8). I think

Primary is very important because I can learn a lot about God and Jesus. I love sacrament meeting because



I can feel myself becoming clean when I take the sacrament, and that makes me so happy.

I was at school when a big earthquake happened. My first thoughts were, "This is scary!" and "I wonder if my family is OK." I prayed

in my heart that they would be safe and that peoples' lives would be spared. Later I found out that none of my friends had been hurt. At that time, I felt that God had protected us. I know that God and Jesus live.



Maggie



Lots of other homes and businesses were destroyed by the tornado that came

through town. I felt sad for people who lost loved ones. My parents and older brother and sister decided to help

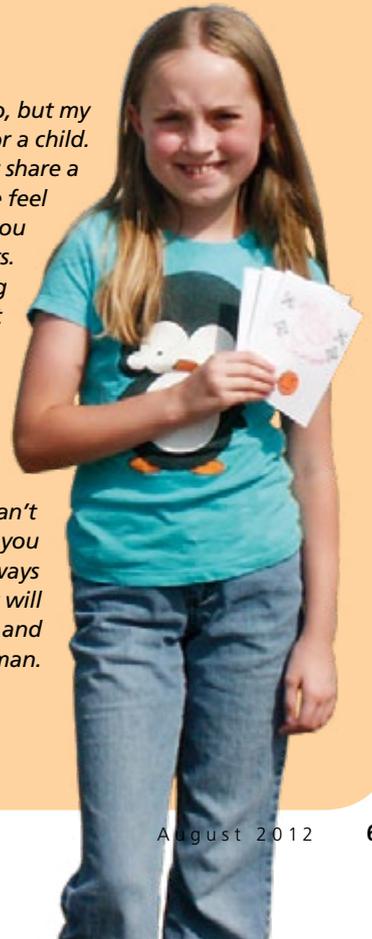


clean up our town. It made me think of the scrip-

ture, "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17).

I wanted to help clean too, but my mom said it wasn't safe for a child. Then I felt the Holy Ghost share a great idea to make people feel happy. I made 20 thank-you notes to give to volunteers. I spent lots of time making each card special so that people could feel the Spirit and know they were very important to our town.

I learned that even if you can't do certain things to serve, you can always think of other ways to serve. Heavenly Father will bless you for serving Him and your fellowman.

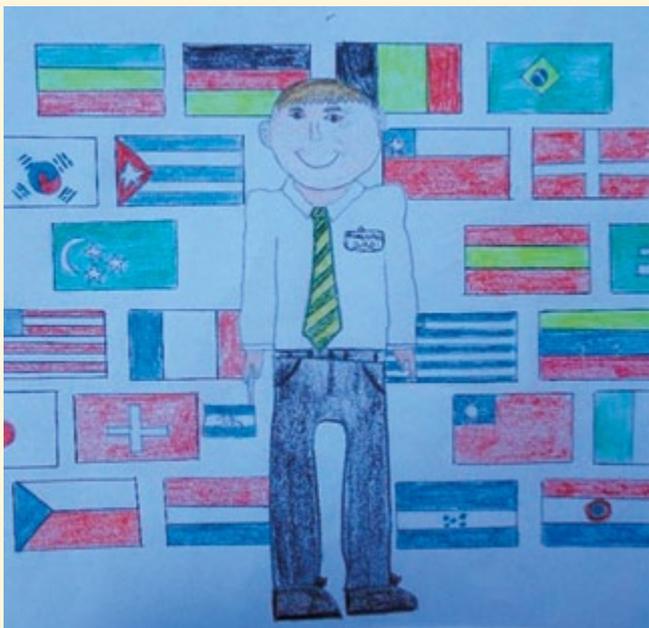


“May your homes be
filled with love
and **courtesy**
and with the
**Spirit of the
Lord.**”

President Thomas S. Monson
From the April 2012 general conference



Our Page



Lucas L., age 9, Argentina

DEVELOPING FAITH IN GOD



The booklet *Faith in God* has helped me progress in keeping the commandments of Heavenly Father. I encourage all children to complete the booklet and develop their talents by serving in the Church. I set a goal and played the violin in a duet with my brother at church. I have a

brother who is serving a mission—he is a great example for me, as are all the members of my family!

Charlotte de B., age 10, France



Rebeca B., age 4, from Brazil, adores going to church. She always wants to sing "I Am a Child of God" and "Families Can Be Together Forever" in family home evening each week, and she knows all the words. At only three years and a few months of age, she already knew the first three Articles

of Faith. She speaks of Sunday as the Lord's day and is a blessing to her family.



Jay R., age 5, from Indonesia, loves his family very much. His parents have taught him to love others. He has many friends, and he likes to share with them. He loves the Lord's creations, such as plants and animals. He really likes insects and also spiders, because they make their own webs. He is grateful for all things the Lord has created for him.



Timothy K., age 3, Ukraine

Submit your drawing, photo, or experience for Our Page at liahona.ldschurch.org, e-mail it to liahona@ldschurch.org with "Our Page" in the subject line, or mail it to:

Liahona, Our Page

50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Each submission must include the child's full name, gender, and age (must be 3 to 11 years old) plus the parent's name, ward or branch, stake or district, and the parent's written permission (e-mail is acceptable) to use the child's photo and submission. Submissions may be edited for clarity or length.

You can use this lesson and activity to learn more about this month's Primary theme.

I Choose to **Fill My Life** with Things That **Invite the Spirit**

We can read in the Bible an amazing story about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. King Nebuchadnezzar threw these three friends into a fiery furnace because they refused to worship a golden image he had created. The three Israelites told the king they would worship only God. Because the young men were faithful, God delivered them from the furnace and saved their lives. (See Daniel 3.) This story is about trusting in God and being faithful and courageous. It is also about good friends who help each other choose the right.

Together, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego chose to keep their promise to worship only God. They chose to have faith that God would save them. They chose to not fear the king but to trust in God. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, said, "All of us need true friends to love us, to listen to us, to show us the way, and to testify of truth to us" ("True Friends," *Liahona*, July 2002, 32; *Ensign*, May 2002, 29).

Remember, good friends will make a difference in your life by helping you choose the right. Look for friends like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and be a friend like they were! ■

Song and Scripture

- "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus," *Children's Songbook*, 78–79
- Articles of Faith 1:13

Just You

Here are some ideas for being a good friend:

- At the end of a week, write in your journal what you did to be a good friend to someone.
- Think about ways you could show your love for your friends.
- Write down how you and your friends can strengthen your faith in God.
- Share with a parent or Primary leader what you are doing to be a good friend.

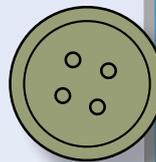
You helped a girl when she got hurt on the playground. Move forward one space.

You invited a new student to share your bus seat. Move forward one space.

CTR Game: Friendship

Play this game to learn more about how to be a good friend. You will need a bean or button for each player and small pieces of paper with "1," "2," or "3" written on them. Place these papers in a sack or envelope.

To play, one person chooses a paper and moves his or her bean or button that many spaces. Read what's on the space and follow the instructions. The game is not over until everyone reaches the end as a good friend!



A girl dropped her lunch tray, but you didn't help her pick it up. Move back one space.

You shared your lunch with a boy who didn't have one. Move forward one space.

You included someone in your game at recess. Move forward one space.



You ignored a visitor in Primary. Move back one space.

Your family visited a new neighbor. Move forward one space.



END

You helped a younger brother with his chores. Move forward one space.

You laughed at a boy who looks different. Move back one space.

You shared the gospel with a friend. Move forward one space.



You gave others the courage to make right choices. Move forward one space.

You teased your friend and hurt her feelings. Move back one space.



Learning to **Serve Others**

By Heidi S. Swinton

Thomas Spencer Monson was named for his grandfather Thomas Condie. Young Tommy learned many lessons from his grandfather, who lived just a few houses away. The lesson he best remembers was about how to serve others.

One day when Tommy was about eight years old, he and his grandfather were sitting on the front-porch swing. An elderly man from England lived on the same street. His name was Robert Dicks, but most of the neighbors just called him “Old Bob.” He was widowed and poor.

Old Bob came over and sat down on the porch swing with Tommy and his grandfather. He said that the small adobe house where he lived was going to be torn down. He had no family, no money, and nowhere to go.

Tommy wondered how his grandfather would respond to the sad story. His grandfather reached into his pocket and pulled out a

small leather change purse. He took out a key and put it in Old Bob’s hand. “Mr. Dicks,” he said tenderly, “you can move your things into that empty house of mine next door. It won’t cost you a cent, and you can stay there as long as you like. And remember, nobody is ever going to put you out again.” Tears filled Old Bob’s eyes.

Tommy’s mother also taught him how to love and serve others. Every Sunday before the Monson family ate dinner, Tommy’s mother prepared a plate of roast beef, potatoes, and gravy for Old Bob. Sometimes it also included Tommy’s mother’s famous ribbon cake with layers of pink, green, and white cake and chocolate frosting. Tommy’s job was to deliver the dinner to Old Bob.

At first Tommy did not understand why he couldn’t eat first and then





WORDS FROM PRESIDENT MONSON

"I believe that love is shown by how you live, how you serve, and how you bless others. When we serve others, we are showing them that we love them, and we are also showing Jesus Christ that we love Him" ("Friend to Friend," *Liahona*, Nov. 1997, 6; *Friend*, Oct. 1996, 7).

take the plate over. But he never complained. He would run quickly down to Old Bob's house, balancing the full plate. Then he would wait anxiously as Old Bob came slowly to the door.

The two would then trade plates—Bob's clean plate from the previous Sunday and Tommy's plate mounded with food. Then Bob would offer a dime as payment for the kindness.

Tommy's answer was always the same: "I can't accept the money. My mother would tan my hide."

The old gentleman would pat Tommy's blond hair and say, "My boy, you have a wonderful mother. Tell her thank you." When Tommy reported the compliment from Old Bob back to his mother, her eyes glistened with tears.

Showing charity, giving unselfishly to others, putting others first, and being a good friend and a good neighbor were important in the Monson home. They have become the hallmark of President Monson's life. ■

HOW ARE YOU LIKE PRESIDENT MONSON?

What do you have in common with the prophet? Below is a list of things that describe President Monson when he was young. Mark the box next to the ones that you have in common.

- He had an older sister.
- He was the second child in his family.
- He was born on a Sunday.
- He was the oldest brother in his family.
- He had a nickname (see below).
- He had five brothers and sisters.
- His dad often made breakfast for him.
- He gained a testimony of the gospel when he was young.
- He liked homemade ice cream.
- He had a library card.
- He liked to play with his cousins.
- He liked being with his grandpa.
- He lived next to train tracks.
- He ran errands for his mother.
- He was baptized when he was eight years old.
- He liked to go fishing.



NAMES AND NICKNAMES

Match each of President Monson's names and nicknames with the situation when it was used.

SITUATION	NAME OR NICKNAME
1. What people called him at church and at school when he was young.	a. Dad
2. What members of the Church call him today.	b. Nervous Willy
3. What his grandchildren call him.	c. Tom or Tommy
4. What his children call him.	d. Thomas Spencer Monson
5. A nickname his mother gave him because he liked being busy doing things instead of resting.	e. President Monson
6. His full name, which was used when he was baptized.	f. Grandpa

Do you have a nickname that describes something special about you?

Answers: 1. c; 2. e; 3. f; 4. a; 5. b; 6. d.

Leute's HOME

By Adam C. Olson
Church Magazines

Every night Leute's family gathers in their traditional Samoan *fale*, an oval-shaped hut on stilts. It is about 15 feet (4.6 m) long and 10 feet (3 m) wide and has no walls, though sometimes they put up sheets for privacy.

Leute, age 10, and her family members sit in a circle on the floor and have family scripture study. They sing hymns and discuss family matters before going to sleep.

This time they spend together each night is called *sā*, meaning "sacred." It is a time that most families in Samoa spend together.

Prophets have taught that our homes should be sacred like the temple. No matter what our house looks like, there are things we can do to help invite the Holy Ghost into our home and to make it a beautiful, happy place of peace and learning. ■

After rolling out her bed mat and hanging her mosquito netting, Leute says her personal prayers.

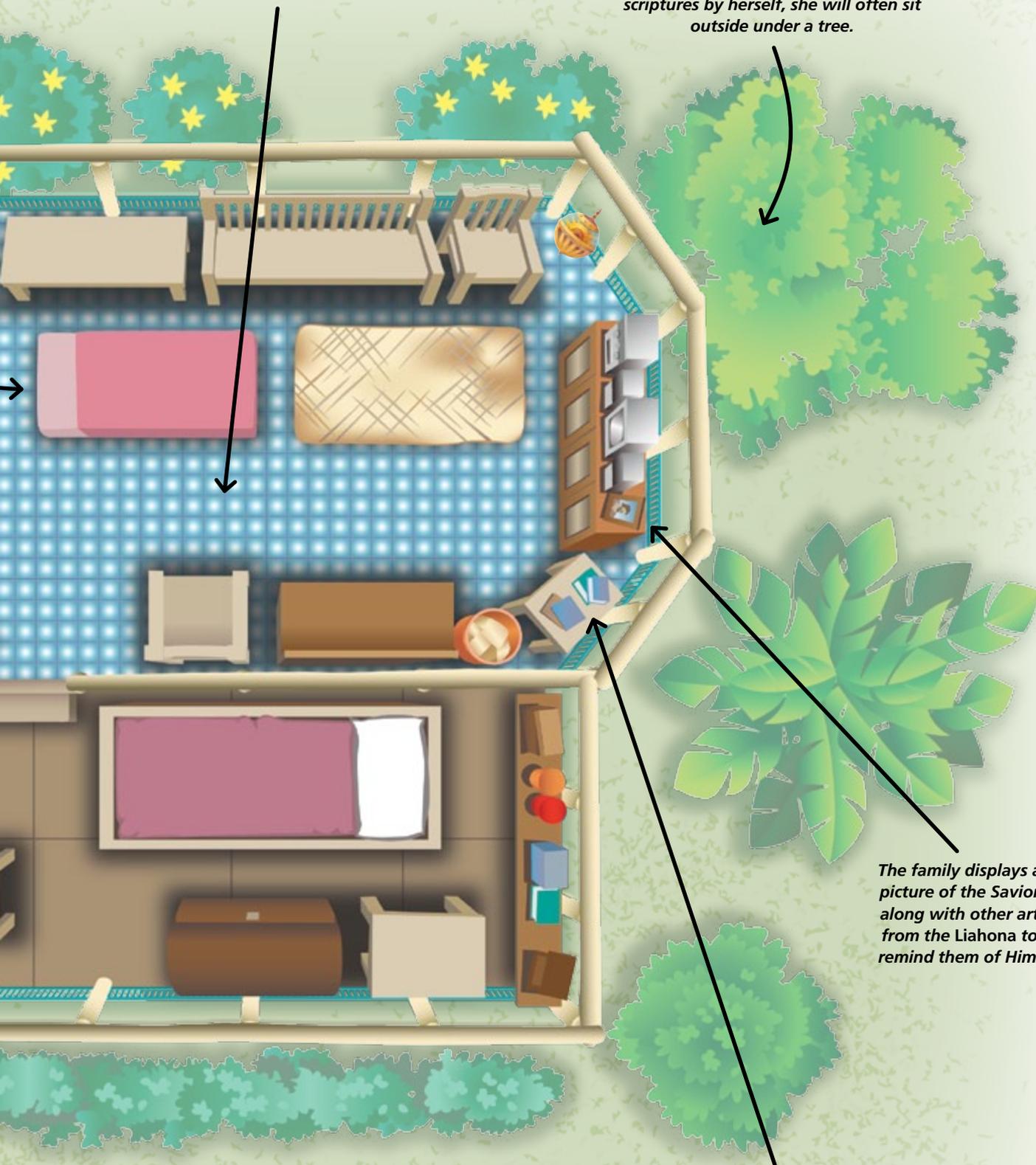
Often the family will gather at Leute's grandparents' fale for family home evening.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVEN KEELE; PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM C. OLSON



The family gathers in their fale for family prayer, scripture study, and family discussions almost every night.

When Leute wants to study the scriptures by herself, she will often sit outside under a tree.



The family displays a picture of the Savior along with other art from the Liahona to remind them of Him.

Mealtimes are important family times. The family cooks over an open fire or using hot stones in a ground oven called an umu kuka.

The family keeps their scriptures, manuals, and issues of the Liahona on a table.

Serving Heavenly Father

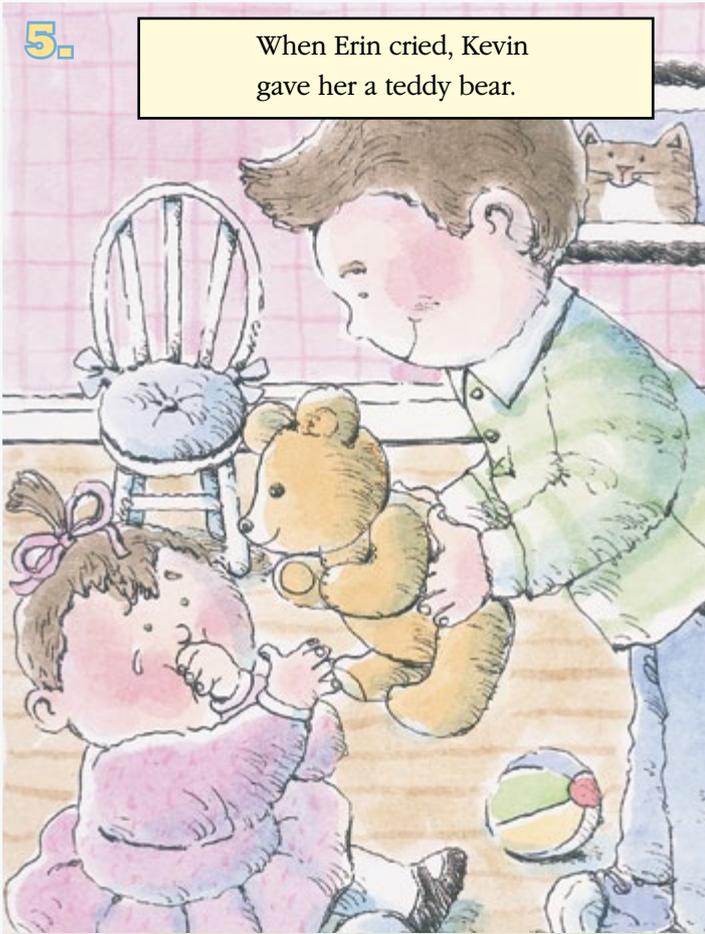
By Jane McBride Choate

Based on a true story



5.

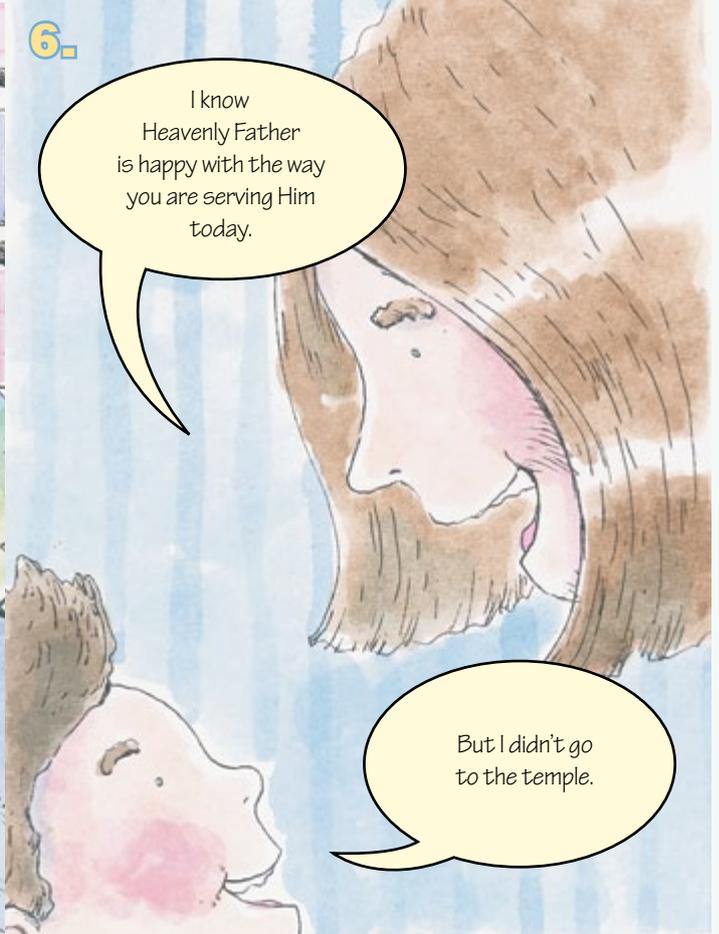
When Erin cried, Kevin gave her a teddy bear.



6.

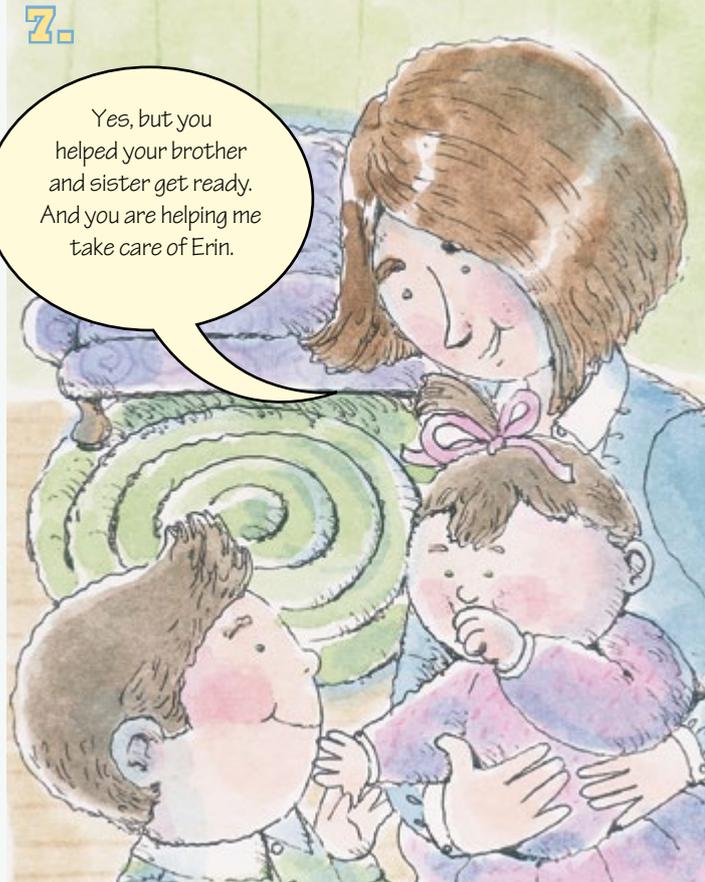
I know Heavenly Father is happy with the way you are serving Him today.

But I didn't go to the temple.



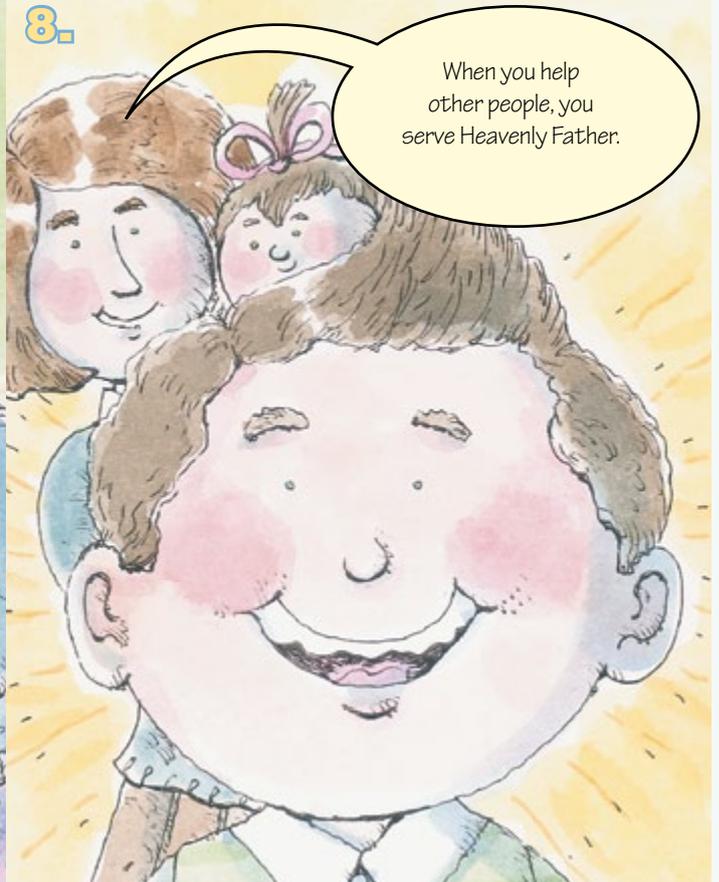
7.

Yes, but you helped your brother and sister get ready. And you are helping me take care of Erin.



8.

When you help other people, you serve Heavenly Father.



Fun Service

Look closely and you will see that not all of these pictures of service are the same. Can you find the two that are the same?



Do Your Duty

President Thomas S. Monson teaches that it's important to do our duty. Can you spot the five differences between these two pictures? Which child has done her duty?



News of the Church

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

New Area Leaders Assigned

The First Presidency has announced the following changes in area leadership assignments effective on August 1, 2012. All members of Area Presidencies are members of the First or Second Quorums of the Seventy. ■

Presidency of the Seventy



Ronald A. Rasband
Assists in All Areas



Walter F. González
1. North America Southeast



L. Whitney Clayton
2. Utah North
3. Utah Salt Lake City
4. Utah South



Donald L. Hallstrom
5. North America Northeast



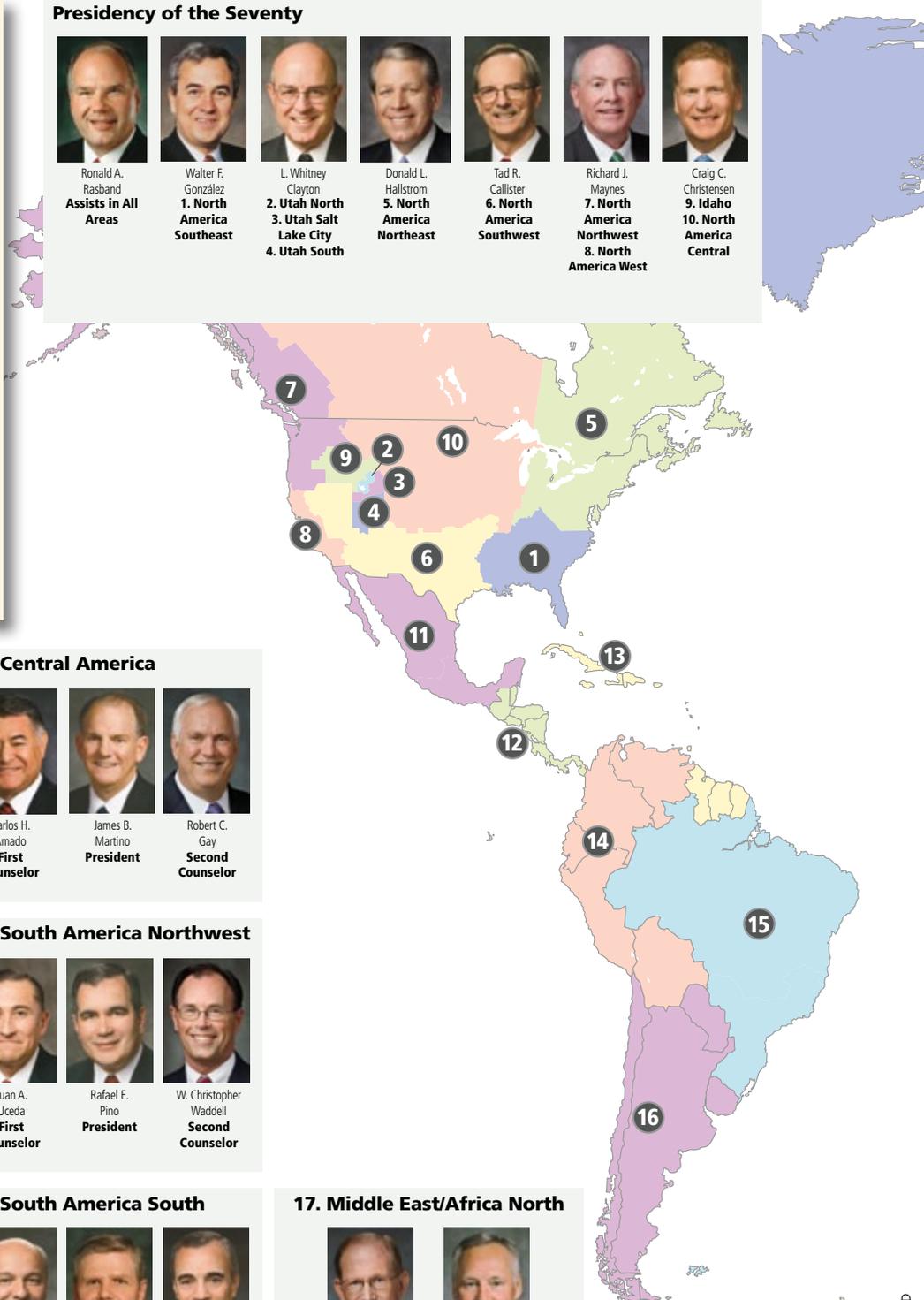
Tad R. Callister
6. North America Southwest



Richard J. Maynes
7. North America Northwest
8. North America West



Craig C. Christensen
9. Idaho
10. North America Central



11. Mexico



Benjamin De Hoyos
First Counselor

Daniel L. Johnson
President

José L. Alonso
Second Counselor

12. Central America



Carlos H. Amado
First Counselor

James B. Martino
President

Robert C. Gay
Second Counselor

13. Caribbean



J. Devn Comish
First Counselor

Wilford W. Andersen
President

Claudio D. Zivic
Second Counselor

14. South America Northwest



Juan A. Uceda
First Counselor

Rafael E. Pino
President

W. Christopher Waddell
Second Counselor

15. Brazil



Carlos A. Godoy
First Counselor

Claudio R. M. Costa
President

Jairo Mazzagardi
Second Counselor

16. South America South



Jorge F. Zeballos
First Counselor

Mervyn B. Arnold
President

Francisco J. Viñas
Second Counselor

17. Middle East/Africa North



Bruce D. Porter
Administered from Church Headquarters

Bruce A. Carlson

18. Europe



Patrick Kearon
First Counselor
José A. Teixeira
President
Kent F. Richards
Second Counselor

19. Europe East



Randall K. Bennett
First Counselor
Larry R. Lawrence
President
Per G. Malm
Second Counselor

20. Asia

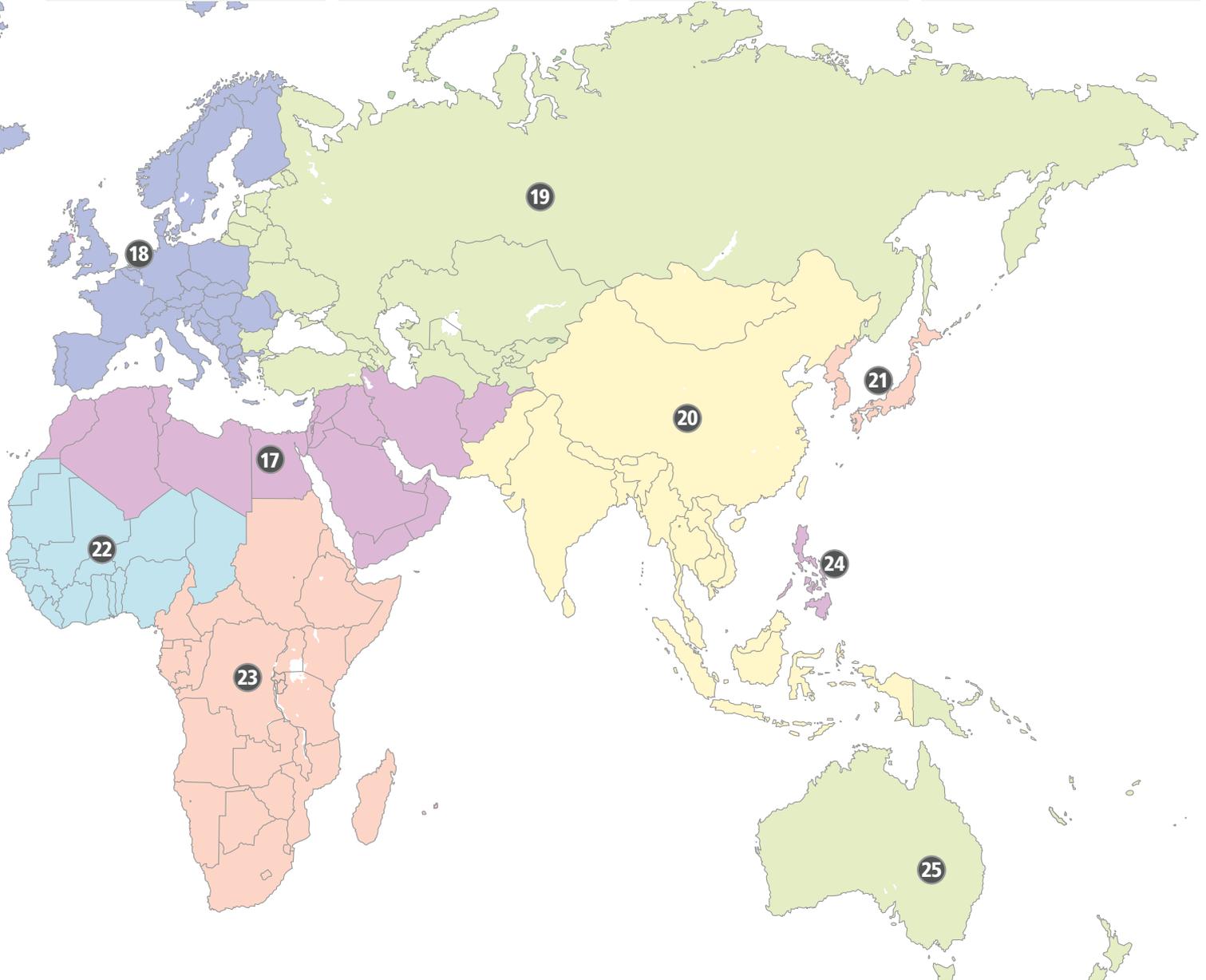


Gerit W. Gong
First Counselor
Kent D. Watson
President
Larry Y. Wilson
Second Counselor

21. Asia North



Kazuhiko Yamashita
First Counselor
Michael T. Ringwood
President
Koichi Aoyagi
Second Counselor



22. Africa West



Joseph W. Sitati
First Counselor
John B. Dickson
President
LeGrand R. Curtis Jr.
Second Counselor

23. Africa Southeast



Ulisses Soares
First Counselor
Dale G. Renlund
President
Carl B. Cook
Second Counselor

24. Philippines



Brent H. Nielson
First Counselor
Michael John U. Teh
President
Ian S. Ardern
Second Counselor

25. Pacific



Kevin W. Pearson
First Counselor
James J. Hamula
President
F. Michael Watson
Second Counselor

Liahona Now Offered in Simplified Chinese

Chinese speakers can now receive the *Liahona* in simplified Chinese.

Six *Liahona* issues—the two conference issues (May and November) and four regular issues (January, April, July, and October)—will be created in simplified Chinese each year. The January and April 2012 issues were published online only; the May issue was the first available in print.

For information about obtaining individual issues of the magazine or subscribing, please contact Distribution Services or visit store.lds.org.

Church Magazines Highlight For the Strength of Youth Standards

Starting this month, the Church magazines are featuring a series of articles that highlight the standards outlined in the newly updated *For the Strength of Youth* booklet. The series will appear in the *New Era* and the youth pages of the *Liahona* for many months (except for conference issues); each article will focus on a different standard and will be authored by a member of the Young Men or Young Women general presidencies or a member of the Seventy.



Chinese speakers in various parts of the world can now read the *Liahona* in simplified Chinese.

A one-page article for adults about how parents can teach that month's standard to their children will be included in the *Liahona* and *Ensign*, and, in instances when the topics in *For the Strength of Youth* correspond with topics in My Gospel Standards for Primary children, there will also be an article for children in the *Liahona* and *Friend*.

FamilySearch Indexing App Now Available

The FamilySearch Indexing app for iPhone and iPad users now helps individuals preserve

and share precious genealogical records from around the world on mobile devices.

The app, released about the same time that the 1940 United States Census became available for indexing, is available for download from the Apple App Store (iOS devices) or Google Play (Android version).

Available in English and Spanish, the app allows users to view image snippets—a name, a place, or other relevant piece of information—from handwritten historical documents such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, or census records. Individuals simply transcribe (index) what they see, and the FamilySearch indexing system adds the data to the collection of free genealogy records available at familysearch.org. ■



The new FamilySearch Indexing app will allow more individuals to contribute to family history research on a small or large scale.

He Continues to Reveal His Secrets

When I was about 13 years old, I lived with my grandmother. One day I found some abandoned magazines and began to read them. They contained stories from people all over the world, telling of miracles that had happened in their lives. These magazines were the *Liahona*; my aunt, who was a member of the Church, had left the magazines in my grandmother's house.

The stories captivated me, and I felt something special telling me they were true. A year later I was baptized, and since then I have had my own subscription. The magazine has been a guide and a blessing. To me it is proof that God loves us and continues to reveal His secrets unto His servants the prophets (see Amos 3:7).

Lucilino Mendonça, Cape Verde

Temporal and Spiritual Help

I love reading the *Liahona* magazine—it helps me both temporally and spiritually. It strengthens my faith, enhances my talents and abilities, and cleanses my mind and thoughts through the uplifting counsel of members of the Church and our living prophets.

Derek Balolong, Philippines

Please send your feedback or suggestions to liahona@ldschurch.org. Submissions may be edited for length or clarity. ■

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



“Natural Disasters—We Don’t Have to Be Afraid,” page 30: Read the article beforehand and prayerfully ponder what your family can do to better prepare for natural disasters in your area. Then, as Elder Ellis suggests, utilize family home evening to put your plan into action. You may decide to put together emergency packs, replenish your home food storage, or discuss how to be spiritually prepared. Emphasize Elder Ellis’s reassuring message that “when we are prepared, we can weather any storm.”

“Keeping the Faith in a World of Confusion,” page 42: Consider sharing Bishop Caussé’s classroom experience found at the beginning of the article. Then ask family members what they would have done in that situation. You

may want to review the principles Bishop Caussé follows to remain firm in his testimony.

“How Do I Know When I Am Forgiven?” page 46: Start by asking family members, “After you have repented, how can you know when you have been forgiven?” You can then read Elder Callister’s response in the second paragraph of the article. Share additional sections of the article appropriate for your family.

“Learning to Serve Others,” page 66: Read the story about President Monson’s childhood to your family. You then might want to do the corresponding activities with any young children in the family. Close by bearing your testimony that Thomas S. Monson is the living prophet. ■



A Picture-Perfect Family Home Evening

I had always dreamed of having family home evenings like the ones I saw in Church pictures. But after my husband and I adopted a beautiful little girl, she did not want to join in. So we realized we had to make some changes in our family home evenings to reach her.

How grateful I am for the family home evening ideas published in the *Liahona*. Now our daughter is the first to want to hold family home evening and wishes we held it every day.

One of our favorite lessons was about how the Holy Ghost can guide us. We asked our daughter to go into her room. After we counted to three, she could return to the living room and try to find a picture of the Savior. When she was close, we said that she was warm, and when she was far away, we said that she was cold. She was so excited when she found the picture. It was marvelous seeing her understand the importance of being obedient and following the Spirit in order to be close to our Savior.

We concluded by reading Doctrine and Covenants 11:12. By placing our “trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good,” we have found family home evening to be a blessing. ■

Moema Lima Salles Broedel, Brazil

ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR FAITH

By **Michael Otterson**

Managing Director, Church Public Affairs Department

I had been a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints just a few days when a casual conversation among a group of friends turned to my recent conversion.

Some were intrigued, even fascinated. A few were indifferent. One young woman my age simply and uncompromisingly refused to believe I was Christian.

It was my first taste of trying to explain my beliefs to those who did not share them. I remember feeling utterly frustrated as I tried to penetrate a mind so tightly shuttered that no amount of reasoning could pry it open.

As the Church grows it will face increasing scrutiny, like any major faith, and that will lead to many more face-to-face or online conversations between our members and their families, friends, and associates who don't share our faith.

Paying attention to some basic principles can help members respond to questions or comments with more confidence.

Live Your Religion

One of the great advantages that faithful Church members have

is that our faith encourages us to “live our religion.” There is a sense of authenticity that comes as friends and associates see the connection between what one says and what one does.

If a Latter-day Saint's life is his or her best sermon, then our conversations ought also to be open, genuine, and engaged in with a spirit of kindness, even if people ask inappropriate questions or adopt a cynical tone. Our claims to be followers of Jesus Christ are most convincing when our actions are in harmony with our beliefs. When we are answering questions or even criticisms, there will be times when we need a thick skin. We may also need a sense of humor.

In 2007 at a commencement ceremony for BYU–Hawaii graduates, Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “If you live the principles of the gospel [rather than] just study them, that special combination of knowledge will allow you to feel comfortable and prepared to teach what you know to be true—in any setting.”

Set the Context

When we are addressing questions or comments about our faith, it is important to establish some context from the outset.

Rather than simply responding to a series of random questions, it might be helpful to first take 30 seconds to establish a foundation. That can be as simple as explaining that we embrace Jesus Christ as our Savior and accept the Bible's teachings about His birth, life, ministry, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. We also believe that the Christian world departed from the truths Jesus taught in the Bible and that the Church He established needed to be restored.

Laying out the foundational beliefs of the Church in this way supplies a reference point as the discussion turns to other tenets of the gospel.

Connect the Dots

As members listen to questions, they can discern the gospel principle at the heart of the question and connect the answer back to the Savior.

For example, why do we send missionaries to Christian countries? Because in His day Jesus sent His messengers two by two “into all the



Sharing personal experiences can be a more effective way to answer questions than reciting memorized answers.

world.” And we do the same today. Why do we frown on cohabitation before marriage? Because Jesus and His Apostles taught the sanctity of marriage and all that goes with it.

We do not need complicated, sophisticated secular arguments when the principles we try to live by come from the Son of God.

Share Personal Experiences

Answering our friends’ questions is not about reciting memorized

answers. Sharing genuine, personal experiences can invite the Spirit to bear witness and carry the message into the listener’s heart.

One of the greatest hindrances to sharing our faith is being afraid we don’t have the answers. Few people in other churches are experts in their own history or doctrine, and studies show that Latter-day Saints are incredibly well educated in their own faith by comparison.

When someone asks a question

ONLINE RESOURCES

The Church has created online resources that can be helpful for members to share with those who have questions.

Mormon.org

Mormon.org/Jesus Christ

Mormonnewsroom.lds.org

LDS.org

Liahona.LDS.org



When answering friends' questions, be yourself. Who you are is often the reason they asked you the question.

about the Church's doctrine or history that we don't know, it's okay to say, "I don't know." But we can all share personal experiences to explain how we feel about our faith.

If we relate our own experiences about prayer or fasting or communicating effectively with our families, those experiences can't be challenged. They are ours, and no one understands them better than we do.

Be Aware of Your Audience

Some people won't approach a member with questions because they fear being roped into a half-hour lecture. If they ask a casual question, be sensitive to their interest, comfort, and level of understanding. Signaling our sensitivity at the outset can put

those who are curious at ease.

Understand that the same conversation isn't going to work for everyone due to differing backgrounds—religious, secular, and otherwise.

Sharing What We Believe

Members of the Church have an unprecedented opportunity to be a force for good in helping clear up misconceptions about what we are not and to increase others' understanding of who we are and what we believe.

As people learn more about Latter-day Saint beliefs, they may see some distinct differences and yet find some unexpected common ground on which to build better relationships. ■

Helpful Hints

Assume the Best

It can be intimidating when someone asks probing questions about our faith. However, for the most part, people are just curious. Don't be defensive.

Listen Carefully

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that the gift of discernment operates best when we are listening. To really understand the question and the intent, ask clarifying questions and be prepared to do as much listening as you do talking.

Honor Agency

All people have God-given moral agency. So we may invite or even persuade—but we should not pressure or coerce.

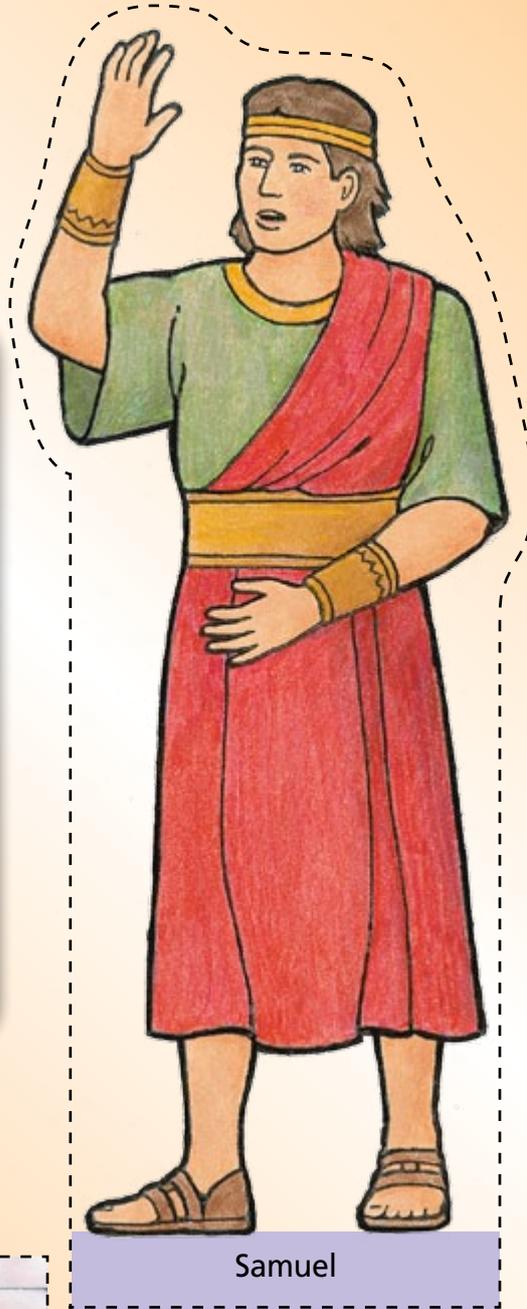
Avoid Church Jargon

Avoid Latter-day Saint terminology or jargon that can sound foreign, like "ward," "family home evening," or "Word of Wisdom." If you use these terms, explain them without waiting to be asked.

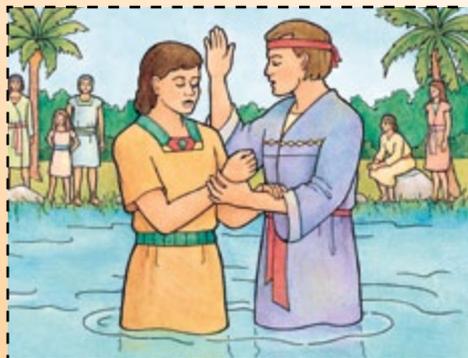
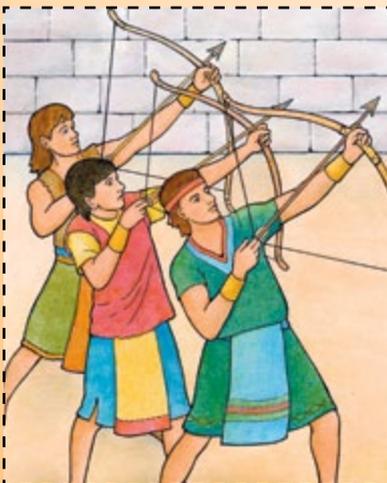
Use the Church's Full Name

Whenever possible, use the full name of the Church at least once, and early in the conversation. There is a power in the name of the Church, so explain it. It says a great deal about who we are.

This year many issues of the *Liahona* will contain a set of Book of Mormon scripture figures. To make them sturdy and easy to use, cut them out and glue or tape them to heavy paper, small paper sacks, or craft sticks. Store each set in an envelope or bag, along with the label that tells where to find the scripture story that goes with the figures.



Samuel



Samuel the Lamanite
Helaman 13–14, 16



*“As we go about our daily lives,”
teaches President Thomas S. Monson,
“we discover countless opportunities to
follow the example of the Savior.
When our hearts are in tune with
His teachings, we discover the
unmistakable nearness of His divine
help. It is almost as though we are on
the Lord’s errand.” President Monson
is himself an example of one who
seeks divine help in his daily life and
answers the call to serve.
See “Thomas S. Monson: Answering
the Call of Duty,” page 14.*