

Liahona



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She Worketh Willingly with Her Hands, by Elspeth Young

Lydia was a seller of purple in the city of Thyatira. Like the virtuous woman described in Proverbs, Lydia worked “willingly with her hands” (Proverbs 31:13). She was among those who listened to the Apostle Paul and “whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul” (Acts 16:14). After she and her household were baptized, she invited Paul to come to her home and further teach them (see Acts 16:15).



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More Online

Liahona.lds.org



FOR ADULTS

Read inspiring stories about senior missionaries overcoming obstacles to serve (see page 20). See photos and testimonies of more senior missionaries in various locations at liahona.lds.org.

FOR YOUTH

On page 52, you will find the first in a series of articles about the standards in the new *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet. Find all the standards online—with additional content about them—at youth.lds.org.

FOR CHILDREN

Try the "General Conference Countdown" activity on page 63 and find other conference activities at lds.org/general-conference/children.

IN YOUR LANGUAGE

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

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



Sharing the Gospel

HEART TO HEART

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

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

YOUTH

Knowing What to Say

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

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

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

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

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



CHILDREN

Prepare to Share

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

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



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

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



Faith, Family, Relief

Special Needs and Service Rendered

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

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

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

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

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



From the Scriptures

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

NOTES

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

What Can I Do?

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

From Our History

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

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

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

April Conference Notebook

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

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

STORIES FROM CONFERENCE

My First Church Calling

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

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

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

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

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

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

I realize now that the branch president

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

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

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

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

Questions to Ponder

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

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

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

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

USING AGENCY WISELY

One of the most important truths we can learn in our youth is that true freedom and lasting happiness come from using our agency to keep the commandments of God.¹ On pages 52–53 of this issue, Elder Shayne M. Bowen of the Seventy emphasizes this principle.

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

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

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

Suggestions for Teaching Youth

- Read with your teen the section on agency and accountability in *For the Strength of Youth*. Doing so will give you an opportunity to discuss the standard and to answer any questions your son or daughter may have.
- Read Elder Bowen’s article on pages 52–53 of this issue. Consider using the story about feeding the correct wolf to help your teen understand the importance of making good decisions.
- Go to youth.lds.org, click on “For the Strength of Youth” under “Youth

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

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

Suggestions for Teaching Children

- This month’s Bringing Primary Home is about choosing to keep the commandments (see pages 64–65 in this issue). Read the story as a family and ask your child to keep track of the number of decisions made in the story. Explain that Heavenly Father allows us to make decisions so that we can learn and grow. Share some of the things you have learned from making decisions.
- Complete the CTR Activity in Bringing Primary Home. Then talk about the consequences of making good decisions. Share your testimony of the blessings you have received for making righteous decisions.
- For additional ideas on teaching agency and accountability, see January’s section of the *2012 Outline for Sharing Time* (online at lds.org/service/serving-in-the-church/primary/sharing-time-2012). ■

NOTES

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



SCRIPTURES ON AGENCY

Deuteronomy 11:26–28;
30:15–20

Joshua 24:14–15

2 Nephi 2

Helaman 14:30–31

Moroni 7:15–19

Doctrine and Covenants
58:26–28; 101:78

Moses 4:3–4



AN INWARD HEALING

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

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

Loving My Enemies

Name withheld

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

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

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

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

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

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

One day I came across the following scripture: "Pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ" (Moroni 7:48). I felt



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

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

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

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

HOW DO WE LEARN TO FORGIVE OTHERS?

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

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

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





By Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

BUILDING FAITH IN Christ

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

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

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

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

Faith Comes by Hearing the Word of God

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Faith Comes by Repentance

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

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

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

Faith Comes through Covenants

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

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

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

Faith Can Increase

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

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

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

Faith Is Also a Principle of Power

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sharing the Gospel

BY SHARING YOU

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

By Stephanie J. Burns and Darcie Jensen

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

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

There may be a better way.

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

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



Living Testimonies

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



SAY A LITTLE MORE

“Years ago our family lived and worked among people who in almost every case were not of our faith. When they asked us how our weekend was, we tried . . . to share some religious experiences we had as a family over the weekend—for instance, what a youth speaker had said about the standards from *For the Strength of Youth* or how we were touched by the words of a young man who was leaving on his mission.”

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

Being Friends First

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

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

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

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

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

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

Anabel’s conversion did not take days; it



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

Listening with Love

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sharing the Gospel Naturally

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

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Be Thou an Example of the Believers,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 48.
2. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 115.
3. See *Preach My Gospel*, 115.
4. M. Russell Ballard, “Creating a Gospel-Sharing Home,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2006, 86.
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Witnesses unto Me,” *Liahona*, July 2001, 16; *Ensign*, May 2001, 15.
6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Waiting on the Road to Damascus,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2011, 76.
7. See Barbara Thompson, “Mind the Gap,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 120.



THE POWER OF “I’M A MORMON”

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

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

“Are Mormons Christian?”

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

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

RESPONDING

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



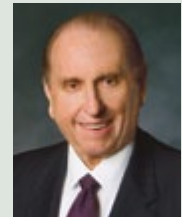
By Kendra Crandall Williamson

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

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

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

TO THE PROPHET'S CALL



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

President Thomas S. Monson, "As We Meet Together Again," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 6.



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

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

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

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

TOP: PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT CASEY



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

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

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

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



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

Facing Fear

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Resolving Family Concerns

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

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

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

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

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

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

Finding the Right Mission Opportunity

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



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

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

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

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

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



CHANGES IN SENIOR MISSIONARY POLICIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Addressing Finances

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Overcoming Obstacles by Building Faith

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



NOTES

1. See Robert D. Hales, “Couple Missionaries: A Time to Serve,” *Liahona*, July 2001, 28–31; *Ensign*, May 2001, 25–27.
2. Robert D. Hales, *Liahona*, July 2001, 29; *Ensign*, May 2001, 25.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “We Are All Enlisted,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 46.
4. Richard G. Scott, “Now Is the Time to Serve a Mission!” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2006, 89.
5. Robert D. Hales, “Couple Missionaries: Blessings from Sacrifice and Service,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2005, 40.
6. Russell M. Nelson, “Senior Missionaries and the Gospel,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 81.
7. Robert D. Hales, *Liahona*, July 2001, 31; *Ensign*, May 2001, 27.

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

Elder Leonard Chisango, Zimbabwe

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



THE BLESSINGS OF FOCUSING ON THE TEMPLE



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

Alma 40:11

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

By Joshua J. Perkey

Church Magazines

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

Dealing with Loss

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

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

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

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

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

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

Valuing Agency

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Facing Challenges with Faith

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

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

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



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

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

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

Focusing on the Temple Changes the Ward

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

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

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

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

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

Focusing on the Temple Changes Individuals

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



ACTING AS AGENTS

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

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

HOW Disciples of Christ LIVE IN TIMES OF War and Violence

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



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

By David Brent Marsh
Priesthood Department

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

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

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

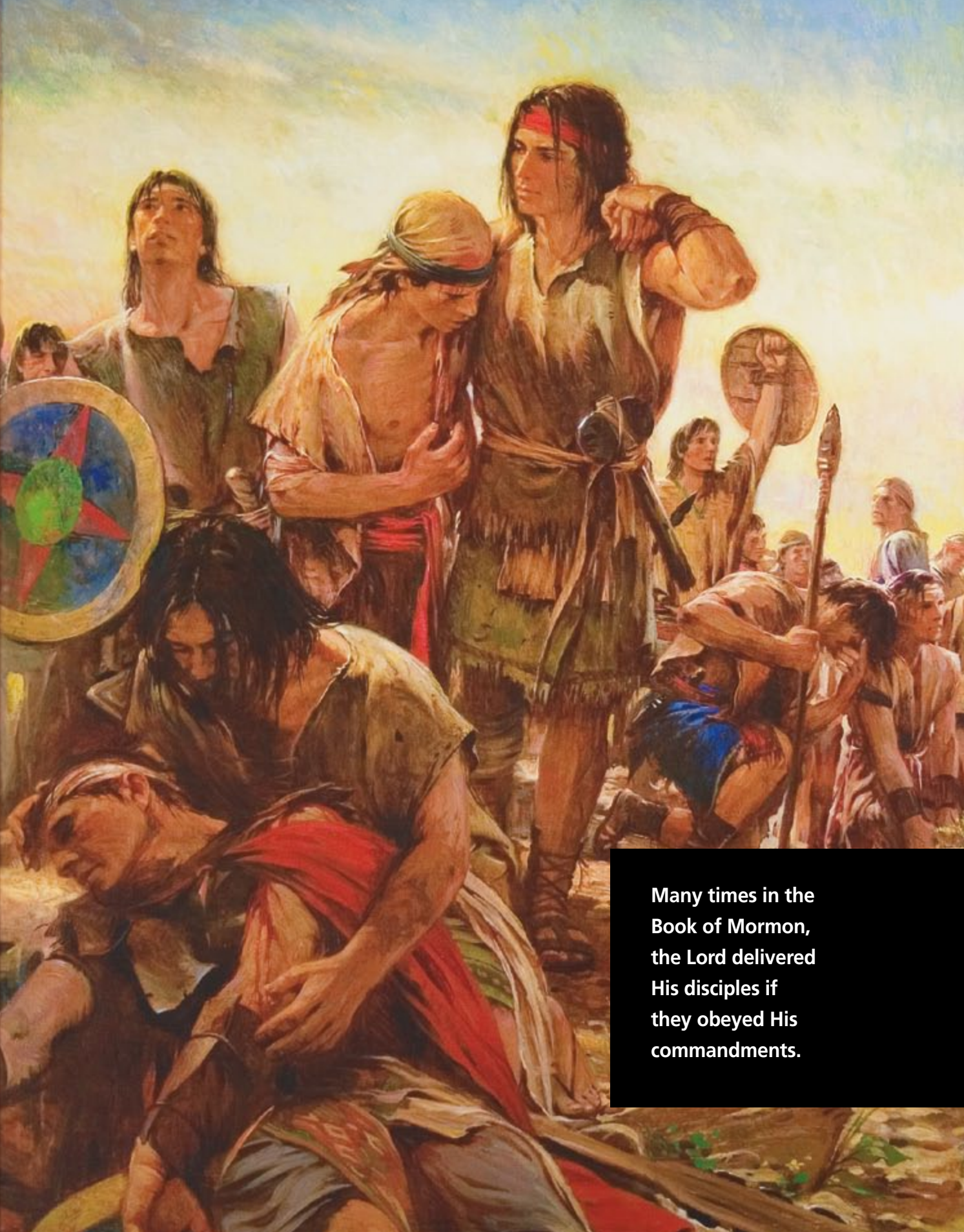
Why did the Book of Mormon record keepers preserve so many incidents of war?

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

Obedience Invites Deliverance

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

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



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



GOD WILL PROTECT US

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

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

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

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

War Can Be a Call to Repent

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

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

God Provides Relief during War

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

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



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



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

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

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

Some Are Called to Stand as a Witness against Wickedness

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

The Prince of Peace

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

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

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Priesthood Power,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2011, 66.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Living in the Fulness of Times,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2002, 6; *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 6.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 7.
4. There are at least 56 scriptures in the Book of Mormon that teach how the Lord delivered people from war and other dangerous circumstances.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “Face the Future with Faith,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2011, 34–35.
6. There are at least 35 scriptures, including 11 in the Book of Mormon, that teach how the Lord allows war and natural disasters to help us remember Him.
7. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Finding a Safe Harbor,” *Liahona*, July 2000, 71; *Ensign*, May 2000, 59.
8. Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1950, 146.
9. Neal A. Maxwell, “Encircled in the Arms of His Love,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 17.
10. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Times in Which We Live,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2002, 86; *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 74.

WHY DO WARS AND VIOLENCE OCCUR?

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



WHEN UNRIGHTEOUS INDIVIDUALS SEEK POWER

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

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

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

WHEN CITIZENS ALLOW INIQUITY TO THRIVE

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



PHOTOGRAPHS OF FAMILY BY MICHAEL R. MORRIS

THE HARVEST WILL COME

By Michael R. Morris

Church Magazines

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Reference Points

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

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

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



WHEN THE LORD BALANCES HIS BOOKS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Spiritual Harvest

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

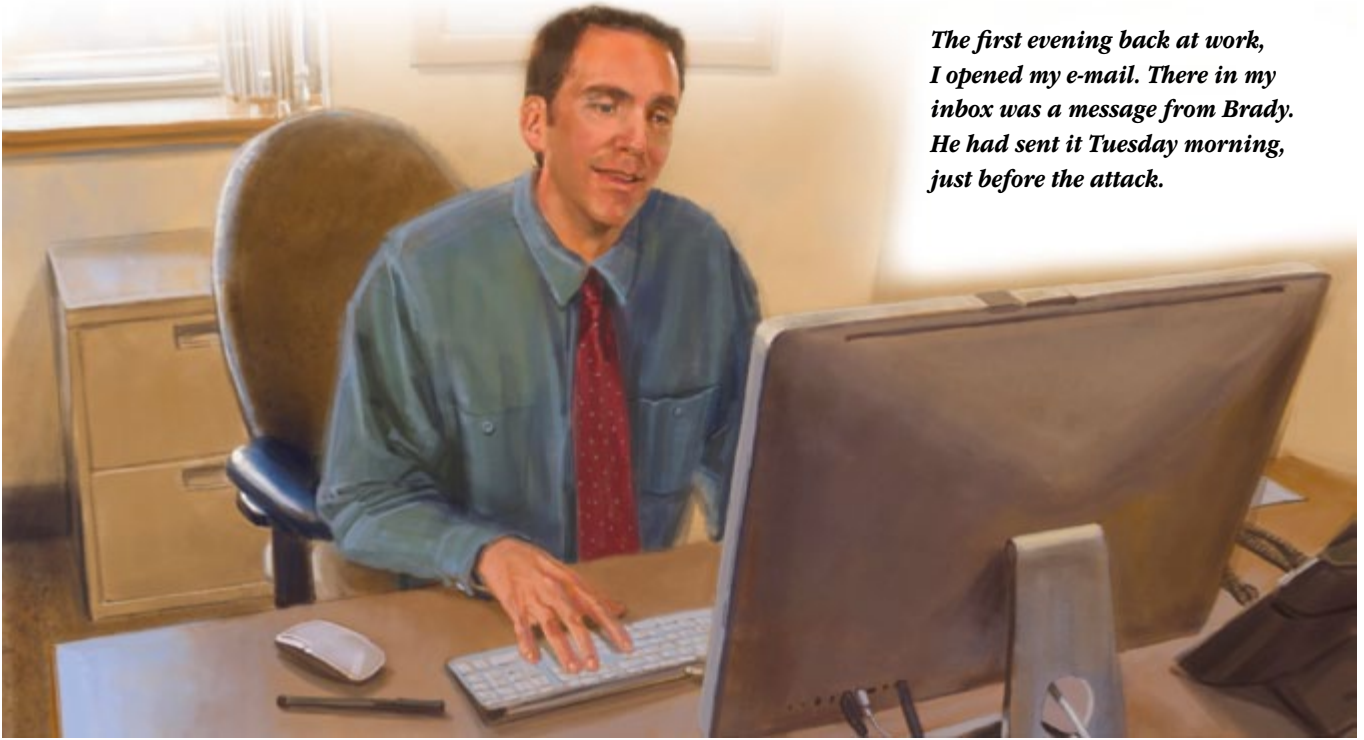
And the harvest has come from the whisperings and calming influence of the Holy Ghost, which helped the family avert tragedy late one night when they thought their home was being burglarized. Daniel woke up when he heard a sound and prepared to defend the home, but the supposed intruder turned out to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

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

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

NOTE

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



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

HE GAVE ME PEACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ASK THE MORMON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kari Koponen, Uusimaa, Finland



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

WOULD HE CALM MY STORMS?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nick Gentile, Utah, USA

MY ANSWER CAME FROM CONFERENCE

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

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

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

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

I downloaded a copy of the talk from the Internet following conference and used it as the basis for preparing a slideshow presentation, which I delivered the next week. I had been allotted 20 minutes, but

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



because of all the questions my teacher and classmates posed, the presentation lasted 40 minutes—the entire duration of the class.

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

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

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

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

Sara Magnussen Fortes, São Paulo, Brazil

NOTE

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



By **Adrián Ochoa**

Second Counselor
in the Young Men
General Presidency

YE Are the LIGHT of the WORLD

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

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

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

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

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

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

is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16).

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

Alma: Being Humble

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

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

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

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



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

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

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

Joseph Smith: Gaining an Eternal Perspective

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

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

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

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

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

The Savior: Concentrating on Others

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

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

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Of Missions, Temples, and Stewardship,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 52.
2. See M. Russell Ballard, “Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet,” *Liahona*, June 2008, N2; *Ensign*, July 2008, 60.



RESPONDING TO A CALL FROM THE PROPHET

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

In April 2011 he reported on the number of missionaries and missions throughout the world and then said: “Missionary work is the lifeblood of the kingdom. May I suggest that if you are able, you might consider making a contribution to the General Missionary Fund of the Church.”¹

In October 2010 he said:

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

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

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

NOTES

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

To the Point

If people ask why we send missionaries to Christian nations, what should I tell them?

For many people who are not members of our Church, “missionary work” means going to a far-flung land where, for instance, non-Christians can be taught about Christianity and where humanitarian aid work can be performed. So when they find out that our Church is doing “missionary work” right in their neighborhood, they may wonder why.

The message our missionaries share is for all the world, so we send them to all the world. We believe that the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored, including Christ’s Church and the priesthood authority necessary to perform ordinances, such as baptism. Only in this Church is the gospel fulness restored. Because all people need to hear this message, including those in places where there is a long tradition of Christianity, we send missionaries to all people. ■



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SWAY CHANEZ

When is it not appropriate to share spiritual experiences?

Sharing our spiritual experiences with those who are open to hearing them is a wonderful way to build the faith and testimony of others. If you feel prompted to tell about an answer to prayer, for instance, others will have more faith that their prayers can be answered. But if you have had an unusual or deeply personal spiritual experience, it is wise not to share it unless the

Holy Ghost moves you to do so.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has said:

“I have learned that strong, impressive spiritual experiences do not come to us very frequently. And when they do, they are generally for our own edification, instruction, or correction. . . .

“I have come to believe also

that it is not wise to continually talk of unusual spiritual experiences. They are to be guarded with care and shared only when the Spirit itself prompts you to use them to the blessing of others. . . .

“We are, I believe, to keep these things and ponder them in our hearts.”¹ ■

NOTE

1. Boyd K. Packer, “The Candle of the Lord,” *Tambuli*, July 1983, 31; *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 53.

People sometimes ask me about temple garments, occasionally in disrespectful terms. What should I say to them?

First of all, when people use disrespectful terms to refer to temple garments, it is entirely appropriate for you to kindly ask them to show more respect, since the garments are sacred to us.

Also, you may want to point out that members and clergy in many other religions wear specific articles of clothing to represent their personal faith or their official responsibility, so

the fact that our religious practice includes special clothing is really not unusual.

To explain the significance of temple garments, you can say that they are simple, modest underclothing given to adult members of the Church as part of special ceremonies in our temples. In these ceremonies, we commit ourselves to live the way Jesus Christ would have us live, and the garments are a

constant physical reminder of this personal, spiritual commitment. In this way, garments can help protect us against temptation and evil. ■

Keeping YOUR LIFE IN BALANCE

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



These eight suggestions can help you face life's many challenges without feeling overwhelmed.

Coping with the complex and diverse challenges of everyday life, which is not an easy task, can upset the balance and harmony we seek. Many good people are trying very hard to maintain balance, but they sometimes feel overwhelmed and defeated.

I have a few suggestions that I hope will be valuable to those of you concerned with balancing life's demands. These suggestions are very basic; their concepts can easily be overlooked if you are not careful. You will need a strong commitment and personal discipline to incorporate them into your life.

1. Establish Priorities

Think about your life and set your priorities. Find some quiet time regularly to think deeply about where you are going and what you will need to do to get there. Jesus, our exemplar,

often “withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed” (Luke 5:16). We need to do the same thing occasionally to rejuvenate ourselves spiritually as the Savior did.

Write down the tasks you would like to accomplish each day. Keep foremost in mind the sacred covenants you have made with the Lord as you write down your daily schedules.

2. Set Attainable Goals

Set short-term goals that you can reach. Set goals that are well balanced—not too many nor too few and not too high nor too low. Write down your attainable goals and work on them according to their importance. Pray for divine guidance in your goal setting.

3. Budget Wisely

Everyone faces financial challenges in life. Through wise budgeting, control your real needs and measure them carefully against your many wants in life. The prophet Jacob said to his people: “Wherefore, do not spend money for that which is of no

worth, nor your labor for that which cannot satisfy” (2 Nephi 9:51).

Remember to always pay a full tithing.

4. Build Relationships

Stay close to your parents, relatives, and friends. They will help you keep a balance in your life. Build relationships with your family and friends through open and honest communication.

Good family relationships can be maintained through gentle, loving, thoughtful communication. Remember that often a glance, a wink, a nod, or a touch will say more than words. A sense of humor and good listening are also vital parts of good communication.

5. Study the Scriptures

Search the scriptures. They offer one of the best sources we have to keep in touch with the Spirit of the Lord. One of the ways I have gained my sure knowledge that Jesus is the Christ is through my study of the scriptures. Presidents Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) and



Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) called upon members of the Church to make the study of the Book of Mormon a daily habit and a lifetime pursuit.

The Apostle Paul's advice to Timothy is good counsel for each of us. He wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

6. Take Care of Yourself

Many people, including me, have difficulty finding the time for sufficient rest, exercise, and relaxation. We must schedule time on our daily calendars for these activities if we are to enjoy a healthy and balanced life. Good physical appearance enhances our dignity and self-respect.

7. Live the Gospel

The prophets have taught repeatedly that families should teach one another the gospel, preferably in a weekly family home evening. This family practice, if we are not very careful, can slowly drift away from us. We must not lose this special opportunity to "teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom" (D&C 88:77), which will lead families to eternal life.

Satan is always working to destroy our testimonies, but he will not have the power to tempt or disturb us beyond our strength to resist when we are studying the gospel and living its commandments.

8. Pray Often

My last suggestion is to pray often as individuals and as families. You can know the right decisions to make each day through constant, sincere prayer.

The prophet Alma summarized the importance of prayer in these words: “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering” (Alma 13:28). When I am in tune spiritually, I find that I can balance everything in my life much more easily.

Stay Focused and Do Your Best

Other suggestions could be added to these. However, I believe that when we focus on a few basic objectives, we are more likely to be able to manage the many demands that life makes on us. Remember, too much of anything in life can throw us off balance. At the same time, too little of the important things can do the same thing. King Benjamin counseled “that all these things [be] done in wisdom and order” (Mosiah 4:27).

Often the lack of clear direction and goals can waste our time and energy and contribute to imbalance in our lives. A life that gets out of balance is much like a car tire that is out of balance. It will make the operation of the car rough and unsafe.

Tires in perfect balance can give a smooth and comfortable ride. So it is with life. The ride through mortality can be smoother for us when we strive to stay in balance. Our main goal should be to seek “immortality and eternal life” (Moses 1:39). With this as our goal, why not eliminate from our lives the things that clamor for and consume our thoughts, feelings, and energies without contributing to our reaching that goal?

Not long ago, one of my children said, “Dad, sometimes I wonder if I will ever make it.” The answer I gave

to her is the same as I would give to you. Just do the very best you can each day. Do the basic things and, before you realize it, your life will be full of spiritual understanding that will confirm to you that your Heavenly Father loves you. When a person knows this, then life will be full of purpose and meaning, making balance easier to maintain. ■

From an April 1987 general conference address.

When we focus on a few basic objectives, we are more likely to be able to manage the many demands that life makes on us.



SPEND TIME WISELY

*“CHOOSE TO DO MANY GOOD
THINGS OF YOUR OWN FREE WILL”*

(For the Strength of Youth [2011], 3).



Agency and Accountability



By Elder
Shayne M. Bowen
Of the Seventy

There is a story told of an old Cherokee teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside me,” he said to the boy.

“It is a terrible fight, and it is between two wolves. One is evil: he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.”

He continued, “The other is good: he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you—and inside every other person too.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?”

The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.”

Agency and Premortality

Eons of time ago, when we were all in the presence of our Father in Heaven, there was a Grand Council held. In that council our Father, desiring that we have the same joy and happiness that He enjoys, presented His plan whereby we could come to this earth, gain a

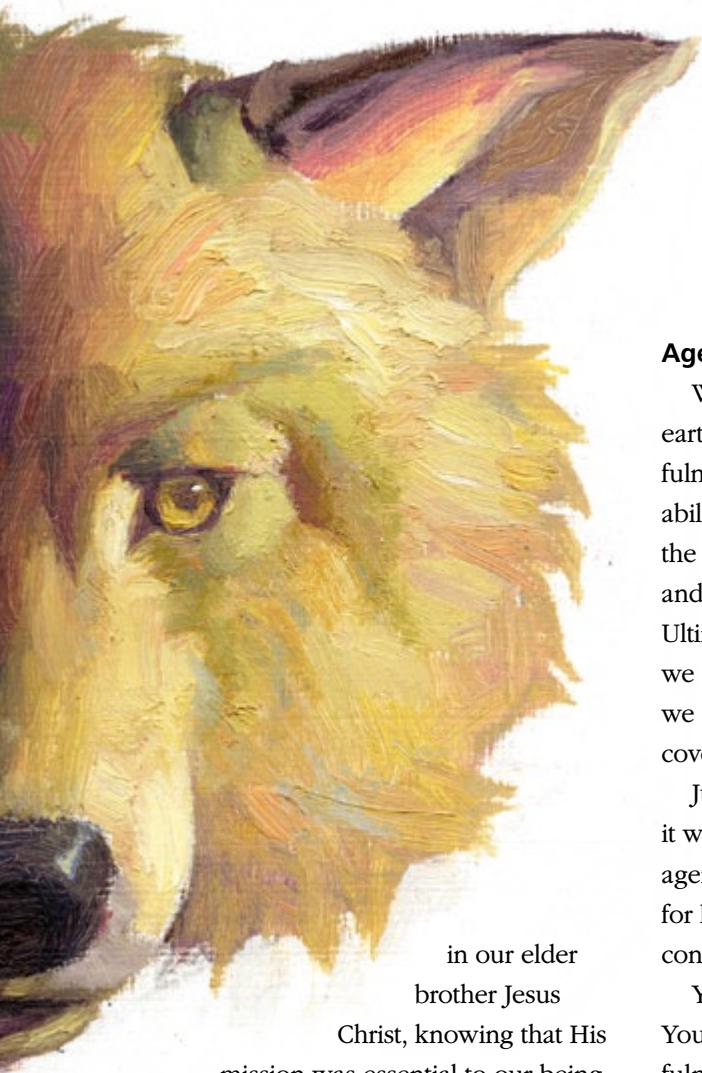
physical body, and experience the bitter and the sweet of this life. We could choose to keep His commandments and become like Him or choose not to keep His commandments and deny ourselves of the joy and blessings He promises.

A central part of our Father’s plan was that we would be free to choose. This gift is called agency, the power to choose. The companion of agency is always accountability. We are individually responsible for the choices we make.

When Heavenly Father asked who would carry out the plan, Lucifer offered to redeem all mankind under his conditions, where agency would be denied and he would receive all the glory. This would frustrate God’s eternal plan of happiness.

Jesus Christ offered Himself to be the Savior in the Father’s plan. He chose to submit to the plan of the Father. We put our faith





in our elder
brother Jesus
Christ, knowing that His
mission was essential to our being
able to return to our Father's kingdom.

What happened to Lucifer? The Father said:

"Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down;

"And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice" (Moses 4:3–4).

Because agency is an eternal principle and Heavenly Father would not violate it, He lost one-third of His children, who chose to follow Satan.

Agency and Mortality

What then is the purpose of life on this earth? One key purpose is to prove our faithfulness (see Abraham 3:24–25). We have the ability to know right from wrong. We have the power given to us from God "to act . . . and not to be acted upon" (2 Nephi 2:26). Ultimately, we will receive the kingdom that we desire according to the commandments we obey, the ordinances we receive, and the covenants we keep.

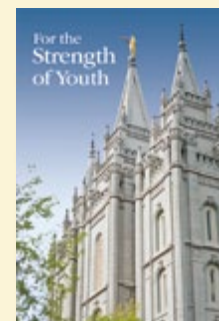
Just as the wise old Cherokee explained, it was up to him which wolf he fed. He had agency, and he alone would be accountable for his choice. He would have to live with the consequences of his choices.

You are the youth of the noble birthright. You have been sent to the earth when the fulness of the gospel is here. You have been baptized and confirmed so that you can receive, if you desire, the Holy Ghost as your constant companion. You have made baptismal covenants. And young men, you have made additional priesthood covenants.

You have agency to choose eternal life by keeping yourself clean and worthy to enter into God's holy temple and receive the ordinances that will allow you to return to the presence of the Father. You can choose the blessing of eternal life, to live the life that God lives for all eternity with your family. You have the potential to receive all that the Father has. The choice is yours.

Use your God-given agency wisely. ■

Future issues will have more articles about standards in the new For the Strength of Youth.



KEY IDEAS ABOUT AGENCY

"The right to direct your life is one of God's greatest gifts to you. . . .

"You are responsible for the choices you make. . . .

"While you are free to choose your course of action, you are not free to choose the consequences."

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 2.



BLESSED BY
EXAMPLE

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

Recently I visited with a friend I knew in high school. We talked about when we first met, about the joy that comes from living the gospel, and about the influence friends can have on our lives. In fact, it was because of the example of my friends that I joined the Church.

I first came to the United States from American Samoa when I was 10 because my father wanted his children to have more educational opportunities than those he had. I lived in Seattle, Washington, with an aunt and uncle. At 14, I moved to California. My grandmother, with whom I lived, was a temple worker in the Los Angeles California Temple, but I was not a member of the Church.

During my junior year of high school, I became involved with student government and noticed several people on the student council who stood out from all the rest. They were respectful of others, clean in speech and dress, and had a dignity and light about them that caught my attention. We became friends, and they invited me to go to Mutual with them. I liked the fun, wholesome activities and the Spirit that I felt there, so I began attending regularly. Just a few weeks later my friends introduced me to the missionaries and to the Book of Mormon. I was baptized soon afterward and began a lifelong study of the Book of Mormon.

My friends followed the counsel found in 1 Timothy 4:12: “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” Like my friends, we can be an influence for good by our day-to-day actions of living the gospel. As we live our lives to reflect our standards and beliefs, those who are prepared to receive the gospel will notice and want to know more.

For example, remember the story of Alma found in the Book of Mormon. Alma was living a comfortable life as a priest in the court of King Noah. When Abinadi bore his testimony, Alma believed him and, with great danger to himself, wrote down Abinadi’s words and taught others about the Savior (see Mosiah 17:2–4).

“And it came to pass after many days there were a goodly number gathered together at the place of Mormon, to hear the words of Alma. Yea, all were gathered together that believed on his word, to hear him. And he did teach them, and did preach unto them repentance, and redemption, and faith on the Lord” (Mosiah 18:7; see also verses 1–6).

Later, when Alma the Younger was causing problems for the Church, an angel answered Alma’s prayers: “The Lord hath heard the prayers of his people, and also the prayers of his servant, Alma, who is thy father; for he has prayed with much faith concerning thee that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge of the truth”



By Elder
O. Vincent Haleck
Of the Seventy





Alma the Younger and his friends became great missionaries and touched the lives of thousands by their example for good.

(Mosiah 27:14). Alma the Younger and his friends repented, became great missionaries, and touched the lives of thousands by their example for good.

“And thus they were instruments in the hands of God in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth, yea, to the knowledge of their Redeemer.

“And how blessed are they! For they did publish peace; they did publish good tidings of good; and they did declare unto the people that the Lord reigneth” (Mosiah 27:36–37).

My friends also set a good example for me when they chose to serve missions. Although I faced some opposition, I decided I also wanted to serve a mission. That decision has shaped the rest of my life. When I served in the Samoa Apia Mission, the missionaries carried much of the priesthood leadership responsibilities, and I could see that the Church in the islands needed to be strengthened. I made up my mind to do my part—I would return to Samoa after finishing my mission and my education.

After graduation from college, my wife and I moved to Samoa, where we raised our children and worked to strengthen the Church and the community. My father, not a member of the Church, was actively involved in local business and community affairs. His motto was “If it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing right.” As my siblings and I discovered the gospel and lived it to the best of our abilities, he noticed the changes for good in our lives. In 2000, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) stayed in my father’s home on his return from the dedication of the Suva Fiji Temple. During that visit, the Spirit touched my father’s heart, and I was privileged to baptize him when he was 82 years old. He found great joy in the gospel and was unashamed and bold in sharing it with others during the last days of his life.

I know the importance of being an example of the believers and the happiness it brings into our lives and the lives of others. Because of my friends’ good examples and the love of a prophet, my family and I have been blessed with the joy the gospel brings.

Every day we influence others by our actions. Let us be sure to reach out to others and share the truth of this scripture that it may bring happiness to their lives too: “Remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12). ■

The Most Powerful Army

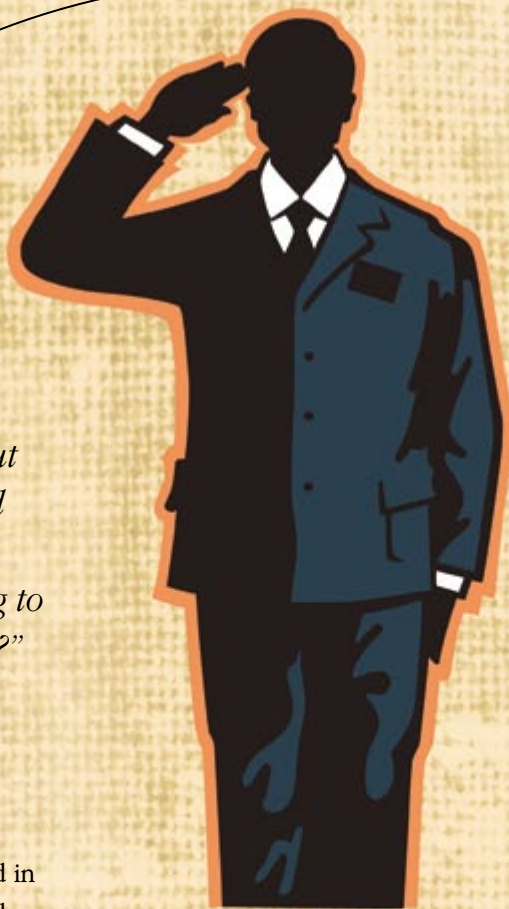
I planned to become an officer in the army. But when I thought about my future, I remembered my mother's question, "When are you planning to serve a full-time mission?"

By H. Daniel Wolke Canales

Ever since I was little, I was fascinated by the stories of Church leaders who served in the armed forces. Many of them have been war heroes and great examples of valor and humility in their home countries. Their experiences inspired me to participate in my country's military.

When I was 13, I entered a school known for its strict military discipline and infantry training. My schedule was demanding. I often was so exhausted by the end of the day that my scripture study and seminary participation seemed impossible.

By my second year at school, I had made plans for my life: upon finishing school at age 18, I would go directly into officer school and graduate four years later as an officer in the Guatemalan Army. All my wishes and dreams seemed to be coming true.



One day I told my mom about my plans, and she asked, "When are you planning to serve a full-time mission?" From that day forward her question lingered in my mind every time I thought about my future.

I still had a rigorous schedule, but I started to show more interest in my spiritual training. I started attending seminary, working with the full-time missionaries, and participating in Church activities. Following the advice of my older brother who was serving a full-time mission, I also began reading the Book of Mormon.

When I was training to be a paratrooper, we had very intense training each day. We would get back to our barracks almost crawling, but I always

found the strength to read the Book of Mormon. Daily reading of the scriptures strengthened my spirit and helped me continue with my training.

One evening several of my friends gathered around my bed to ask me some questions about the Book of Mormon and the Word of Wisdom. It was my opportunity to be the best kind of soldier—one who defends the truth and brings freedom through a firm and convincing testimony of the Book of Mormon.

When I was 19, I enlisted again in an army—the army of God, the most powerful army of all. I had the privilege of standing shoulder to shoulder with the valiant elders and sisters of Zion in the battalion of the Mexico Puebla Mission. Girded with the armor of God, we proclaimed the gospel and fought for liberty with courage and strength.

We are fighting against the hosts of darkness, but the victory belongs to God. I want to continue to be a brave soldier, enlisted for our King. We have powerful weapons: the Book of Mormon, the Holy Ghost, and the fulness of the gospel. We are led to victory by living prophets. If we train and prepare ourselves for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ, He will give us crowns of honor in celestial glory. ■



PERSONAL PROGRESS PRAYER

By Amalia Camila Wilte

All my life my parents taught me to pray, but as I began to grow up, I said my personal prayers only at night. I thought that was enough—until I entered Young Women.

When I was given the Personal Progress booklet, I read through all the goals. There was one that really caught my attention: a faith value experience said I should say my prayers in the morning as well as in the evening. “Why in the morning?” I asked myself. “That will be impossible for me.”

Time went by, and I was not fulfilling that goal. But I determined to do it, and even though it was difficult, I trusted in the Lord.

At first everything seemed the same. But something inside me began to change. I seemed to feel more sure in everything I did. The small fights I had with my family were not happening anymore. When I got up early for church, I did not feel exhausted. Instead I had a great desire to go.

There was one particular day when I thought that I would not have enough time to do all that I had to do. When I woke up that day, I prayed—although without much confidence—that something would change. I was amazed at what happened: I was able to complete everything I had to do! I felt ashamed for not having trusted fully in the Lord but very happy that He answered my prayer.

Now I say my prayers every morning and evening, and my life really has changed.

I know that Heavenly Father always hears us and answers our prayers. We just need to have faith in Him. He will never abandon us. He is there. We just have to go toward Him. I know that the promise “knock, and it shall be opened unto you” is true (Matthew 7:7). We have only to kneel down, pray, and trust in His timing, not ours.

I am grateful to Him for the Personal Progress program and for the wonderful gift of prayer.



MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

D&C 64:10

This is my favorite scripture because we all make mistakes. No one is perfect except Jesus Christ, so we should learn to forgive each other when we make mistakes.

Cedric G., age 16, Luzon, Philippines

SEND US YOUR STORY

Do you have an experience with applying counsel from these guidelines in *For the Strength of Youth*?

- Music and dancing
- Physical and emotional health
- Repentance
- Sabbath day observance

Please submit your experience online at liahona.lds.org or by e-mail to liahona@ldschurch.org with “For the Strength of Youth” in the subject line. In your e-mail, include your full name, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and parent’s permission (by e-mail) to print your response.



By Elder Larry R.
Lawrence
Of the Seventy

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



LEARNING

When I was six years old, I struggled to learn to read. My teacher said I would need to repeat the first grade. My father was concerned when he heard this. So every night after dinner, he practiced reading with me. Dad made a game out of it so I would stay interested. Soon I was recognizing words when I saw them, and Dad rewarded me with praise and encouragement. We spent hours reading together, and my ability improved.

My teacher decided to promote me to the second grade. Dad was proud of me. He was always interested in my progress at school. For Christmas he bought me books he knew I would enjoy.

A few months after I completed high school, my father died of cancer. He didn't live to see me graduate from college or medical school, but he did live long enough to know that I had learned

TO READ

to love to read. That gave him great satisfaction.

My family and I were not members of the Church. One day while I was in medical school, I checked out a book from the library called *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*. It was written by an Apostle named Elder LeGrand Richards. The book was all about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I read the book over and over. I studied and prayed about it. The book prepared me to join the Church a few months later.

After I was baptized, I learned that I could go to the temple and be baptized for my father. He had made a huge difference in my life. Finally I could do something special to thank him for all he had done for me.

I still love to read. The gift my father gave blesses my life every day as I read the scriptures and the words of the prophets. ■

Missionary FRIEND

By Jane McBride Choate

Based on a true story

*“Invite all to come unto Christ”
(D&C 20:59).*

Alex asked his friend Jake to play at his house on Saturday. They were having fun with race cars when Jake noticed a picture hanging on the wall.

“Who’s that?” he asked, pointing to the picture of Thomas S. Monson.

“That’s President Monson,” Alex said.

Jake didn’t say anything.

“You know, the prophet of our Church,” Alex said.

Jake looked embarrassed. “We don’t go to church anymore,” he said.

“Why did you stop going?” Alex asked.

Jake shrugged. “I don’t know.”

“Do you want to come with me on Sunday?” Alex asked. “We could go to Primary together. My teacher is really great.”

Jake’s eyes brightened. “I’ll have



to ask my mom, but I think she'll let me go," Jake said.

At lunchtime, Alex asked his mom, "Can Jake go to Primary with me tomorrow?"

"We have to check with Jake's mother," Mom said. "If she says yes, then of course he can go."

Later that day, Jake's mom came to pick him up.

"Can Jake go to Primary with me tomorrow?" Alex asked.

"Can I, Mom?" Jake said. "Alex says Primary is really great. They have stories, sing songs, and learn about people in the scriptures."

"I don't know," Jake's mom said, looking uncertain. "We haven't been to church for a long time."

"Please, Mom," Jake said. "I want to go."

"Jake is welcome to come with us," Alex's mom said.

"Are you sure you want to go?" Jake's mom asked.

"I'm sure!" Jake said.

"Then I guess it's OK," Jake's mom said.

Jake gave his mom a quick hug.

"Thanks," he said.

On Sunday

morning, Alex's family picked up Jake. He was dressed in his Sunday clothes. After sacrament meeting the boys went to Primary. When they got to class, their teacher said, "We're so glad to have you here, Jake."

After church, Alex's family took Jake home.

"Thanks for taking me to church with you," Jake said.

Alex's mom smiled at him. "You're welcome, Jake. We hope you'll come with us again," she said.

That evening at dinner, Alex asked, "Can I invite Jake to go to church with us next Sunday?"

Mom nodded. "I'm going to follow your example and invite his mother to go with us too," she said.

"You're a good missionary, Alex," Dad said.

Alex was surprised. "I was just being a friend," he said.

"That's what a missionary is," Mom said, "a friend." ■



"The work of naturally and normally sharing the gospel with those we care about and love will be the work and joy of our lives."

Elder David F. Evans of the Seventy, "Was It Worth It?" *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2012, 106.

Our Page



Nicolas M., age 5, Colombia



Captain Moroni, by Ezra B., age 9, Philippines



The children of La Huerta Ward, Guadalajara Mexico Mirador Stake, prepare for their sacrament meeting presentation.



Eternal Family, by Nicole M., age 5, Brazil



Creation, by Melanie M., age 6, Brazil



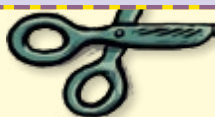
Alondra E., age 5, from Guatemala, likes Primary very much. Her favorite hymn is "I Am a Child of God." She knows that Heavenly Father loves her and that the Church is true. She loves the children's section of the Liahona.



General Conference Countdown

You can get ready for general conference by cutting out the strips below and taping the ends to form a chain. Each day for the two weeks before conference, take a link from the chain and do what is written on the strip. As the chain grows shorter, conference gets closer!

1. Read about Lehi's Liahona (see 1 Nephi 16:10, 28, 29 and Alma 37:38–40). How are the words of the prophets like a Liahona for families today?
2. Find pictures of the prophet and apostles in the May or November *Liahona* or at lds.org/church/leaders and learn their names.
3. Imagine you have been asked to give a talk in Primary about prophets. What would you say?
4. Sing the hymn "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" (*Hymns*, no. 19).
5. What gospel topic would you like to learn more about during conference? Make a list of words to listen for.
6. Pray for help to focus and feel the Spirit during conference. You could also pray for the Church leaders who will speak.
7. Share with your parents or family members why you are looking forward to conference.
8. Read about King Benjamin speaking to his people (see Mosiah 2:1, 5, 9, 41). How was that meeting like general conference?
9. Draw a picture of your favorite prophet from the scriptures.
10. Make a journal where you can take notes or draw pictures about the talks during conference. You can find a printable conference notebook at lds.org/general-conference/children.
11. Sing the song "Follow the Prophet" (*Children's Songbook*, 110–11).
12. Read about the righteous Nephites in 4 Nephi 1:12–13, 16. What did they do when they met together?
13. Read the story "Missionary Friend" on page 60 of this issue.
14. Talk about this teaching from Elder M. Russell Ballard: "If you will listen to the living prophet and the apostles and heed our counsel, you will not go astray" ("They Spoke to Us," *Liahona*, July 2001, 116; *Friend*, June 2001, 4).



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

The Ten Commandments Teach Me to Love God and His Children

You had a busy day! Your classmate asked if he could copy your homework. You wanted to be honest, so you told him no but offered to help him.

On the way home from school, you saw your neighbor struggling to pick up a big basket of vegetables she had just picked from her garden. You wanted to get home, but you ran over and helped her carry the basket inside.

After dinner your dad asked you to do your math homework. Math is hard and you didn't want to do it, but you decided to obey your dad.

You were tired at bedtime, but you knelt down and thanked Heavenly Father for your blessings.

Did you know that by making all of these good decisions, you were following the Ten Commandments? After the Israelites escaped from Egypt, they needed guidance from the Lord. Through the prophet Moses, the Lord gave the people 10 important commandments to follow to live a righteous life. The Ten Commandments teach about respecting God, being honest, honoring our parents, keeping

SONG AND SCRIPTURE

- "Keep the Commandments," *Children's Songbook*, 146–47
- Doctrine and Covenants 42:29

the Sabbath day holy, and being good neighbors. These rules are as important today as they were thousands of years ago. When we follow the Lord's commandments, we learn to love and respect God and be kind and loving to those around us. ■

JUST YOU

You can find the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. Can you count all 10? Mark them with a scripture marking pencil if you'd like.



CTR ACTIVITY: LIVING THE COMMANDMENTS

The Ten Commandments can be divided into three important categories: (1) honoring God, (2) respecting parents and family, and (3) respecting others.

Cut out the three labels below. You can attach them to jars or bags or lay them on a table. On separate pieces of paper, have family members write down a few good things they did or saw someone else do during the past week to follow a commandment.

Maybe you showed reverence during a prayer, or maybe your brother helped your parents make dinner.

Read one of the papers and then as a family decide which one of the three categories the experience goes under. Put the paper in the jar or bag or place it next to the label on the table. Read through the rest of the papers and put them in their correct categories. Some experiences could fit in more than one category.



HONORING GOD

RESPECTING PARENTS AND FAMILY

RESPECTING OTHERS

By Chad E. Phares
Church Magazines

At school I asked my three friends if they believed in God. They said yes. I said that I do too. I gave them an invitation to the temple open house. They said, "OK, we'll come."



Hi!

I'm Timofei

from Kyiv, Ukraine

Six-year-old Timofei lives in Kyiv, Ukraine, the capital city of Ukraine and the home of his country's first temple. Timofei is excited about the new temple and about many other things. He was especially happy when he lost his first two teeth. His father pulled one out at his grandmother's house, and the other one fell out all by itself.



This year I started to take karate lessons because my dad and my brothers study karate too. I have learned how to throw strong punches, protect myself, and lift heavy things.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHAD E. PHARES



My brother and I like to build houses, cars, and little guys with our building blocks.

My brothers served at the temple open house. I wanted to serve there too, but I was too young. I did go through the open house tour at the temple two times. I really liked it.



During the summer my two brothers taught me how to play football. They taught me to run the field and guard the goal. Even though they are older, I play with them and their friends.



I like my little cars. Because they are metal, they don't break and don't get ruined. I've had mine a long time, and they are barely scratched at all.

I really like to sleep with my toys at nighttime. When my brothers are asleep, I still play a little bit with my toys.



JESUS Visits the NEPHITES

By Diane L. Mangum

For three days thick darkness covered the land of the Nephites. There was not a glimmer of sunlight or a twinkle of starlight. It was so dark that not even a candle would light.

The frightened Nephites had listened to the thunder and terrible storms and felt earthquakes shake the ground. Now in the darkness many people cried and howled. They wished they had followed the prophet Nephi's teachings and repented!

AS A HEN GATHERS HER CHICKS

Jesus told the Nephites He had tried to gather them as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings to keep them safe. He was saying that He loved all of them and wanted to watch over them and keep them safe.

Suddenly a voice was heard throughout all the land: "Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father in the beginning."

Jesus said He had come to earth to save the world from sin. He had laid down His life and was now resurrected. He invited everyone to repent and be saved.

The Nephites were so astonished to hear the voice of Jesus that they sat silent for many hours, pondering what they had heard.

In the morning it was light again, and the people began to rejoice. Many people gathered around the temple in the land of Bountiful to talk about the amazing things that had happened. Then from heaven they heard a quiet voice. The voice caused their hearts to



burn, but they couldn't understand it.

The voice came again, but they still did not understand the words.

A third time the voice came, saying, "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him."

The people looked up and saw Jesus coming down from heaven



until He stood right there with them. The Nephites fell to the earth. They remembered the words of the prophets—that Jesus Christ would visit them after He had been crucified and resurrected.

Jesus let every person touch His hands and feet to feel the places where He had been nailed to the cross in Jerusalem. When all the

people had seen and felt for themselves, they knew He was the resurrected Savior. They cried, “Hosanna!” and worshipped Him.

Jesus called for the prophet Nephi to come to Him. He gave Nephi and



NEPHI

In the Book of Mormon, there are four prophets named Nephi. Nephi, who saw the resurrected Jesus and was His disciple, lived 600 years after Nephi, the son of Lehi.

11 other righteous men the authority to teach and baptize after He returned to heaven. These 12 became the disciples of Jesus Christ’s Church in the New World. ■

From 3 Nephi 8–12.

Pretend Primary

By Tryn Paxton

Based on a true story

1. Sophie didn't feel good as she sat down for breakfast on Sunday morning.



Sophie, I'm sorry. You are too sick to go to church today.

2. Sophie started to cry.



But I want to go to Primary.

Maybe we can do something special at home.

3. Sophie was sad. She went to her room and covered her face with her blanket. Then she got an idea.



Maybe we can have pretend Primary at home today.

4. As Sophie's brothers got ready for church, Sophie put on her own Sunday clothes. She also dressed her dolls and stuffed animals in pretty dresses so they could come to pretend Primary too.



5. After the rest of the family left for church, Sophie and Mom made the living room into a pretend Primary room. Sophie taped pictures of Jesus to the wall and got the *Children's Songbook* from the bookshelf. She also got out crayons and scriptures.



6. Sophie sat on the couch with her dolls and stuffed animals. Mom said an opening prayer. Then Sophie and Mom sang "I Am a Child of God" and "I Love to See the Temple."

7. Sophie was happy during pretend Primary. Even her dolls and stuffed animals sat still.



8. After pretend Primary was over, Mom laid Sophie in her bed for a nap.

Thanks for doing a pretend Primary with me. But I can't wait to go to real Primary next week!



WHAT IS THE SAME?

When Sophie was too sick to go to Primary, she and her mom made the living room into a pretend Primary room. See if you can find the things that are the same in both pictures.



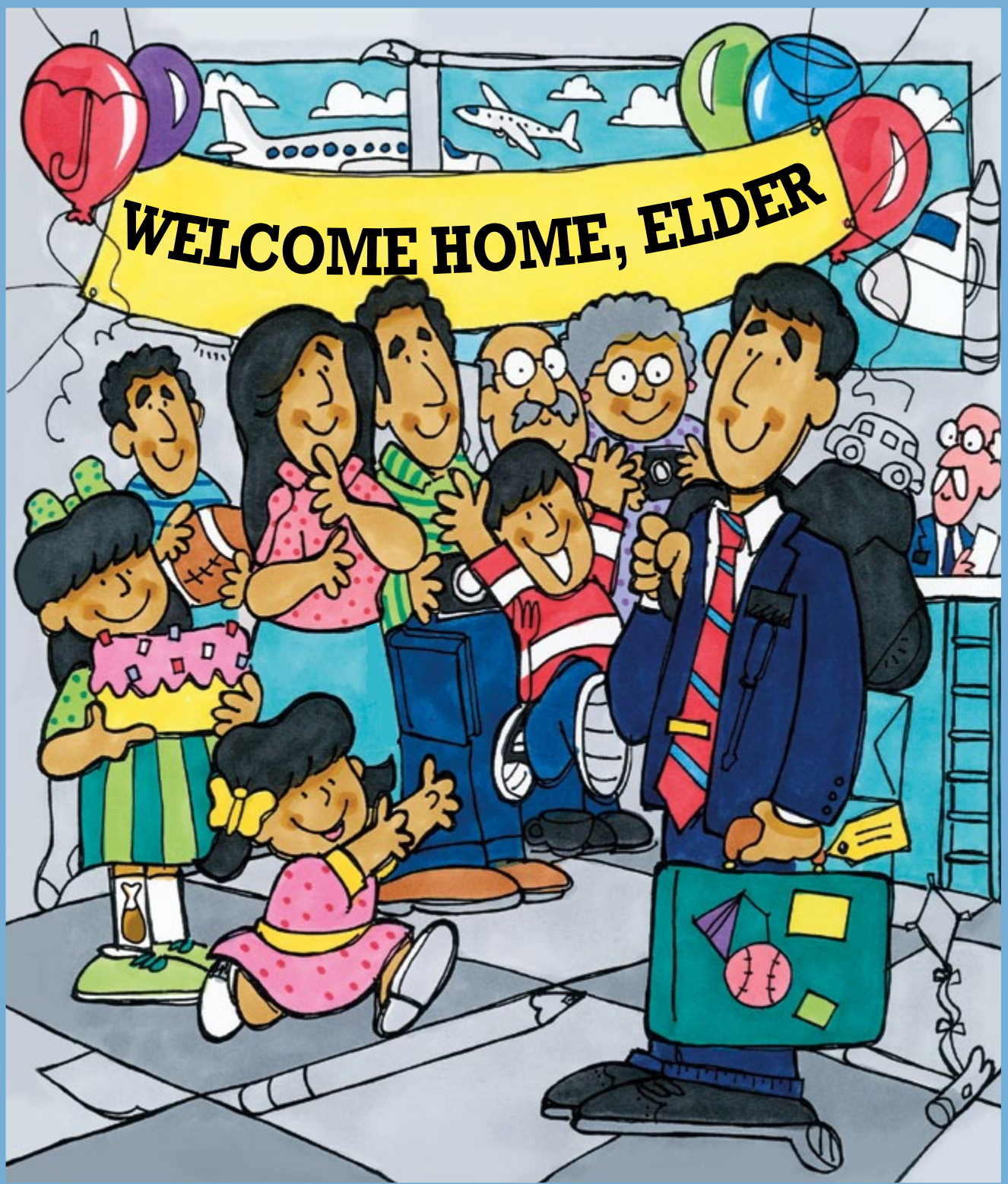


ILLUSTRATION BY VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

By Val Chadwick Bagley

This elder is returning home after serving Heavenly Father as a missionary. Look at the picture and see how many hidden items you can find, including a baseball, book, bowl, butterfly, car, crayon, cup,

drumstick, envelope, fork, golf club, hammer, kite, ladder, paintbrush, pencil, piece of paper, ruler, screwdriver, socks, spoon, tent, toothbrush, umbrella, and watermelon slice.

Relief Society Sisters around the World Celebrate 170th Anniversary

By Lok Yi Chan

Church News and Events

To honor the 170th anniversary of the organization of Relief Society, sisters around the world are actively participating in service and other activities that engage them in the work of the organization.

In February, the Relief Society general presidency issued an invitation to sisters worldwide, suggesting eight possible ongoing activities for celebrating the anniversary—which took place on Saturday, March 17, 2012. The activities can be planned under the direction of local priesthood leaders.

And sisters around the globe have responded. What follows are brief highlights from some of the celebrations that have taken place throughout the Church.

Dominican Republic

Sisters from the Primavera First Branch of La Vega Dominican Republic District were reminded of the selflessness of women from early Latter-day Saint history and of their enduring legacy through the branch's celebration on March 17.

Each sister who participated

dressed in the style of pioneers and shared a message about Relief Society. María Elena Pichardo de Gómez, first counselor in the Relief Society presidency, reminded the sisters of their responsibility to prepare for difficult times, as taught by modern prophets. She added, “The great strength of the Primavera First Branch Relief Society is in how different we are but how we are united by the same gospel.”

Fiji

Following the counsel of the Relief Society general presidency to “organize Relief Society service in the community,” the Relief Society of the Samabula Ward of the Suva Fiji North Stake launched an ongoing project called “Making a Difference—Charity Never Faileth.” Each sister in the ward made a goal to perform an act of service, love, or kindness 170 times—all to different people—by the end of September 2012.

The ward also held an activity to help the sisters better understand and appreciate the lives and contributions of all Relief Society general presidents, from Emma Smith on.

Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, sisters from the New Territories Stake celebrated the Relief Society anniversary by reflecting on their personal and Relief Society histories.

They organized an exhibit, themed “Pursuit of Grace,” in which they showcased old missionary photos, family records, paintings, and handicrafts made at previous Relief Society activities, including lanterns and peacocks made of red paper pockets, embroidery work, key chains, and wallets.

Kenya

In the Bamburi Branch of the Kenya Nairobi Mission, Relief Society sisters donated the money they would have spent on an activity and instead purchased kitchen utensils and other items the branch needed. After thoroughly cleaning the local meetinghouse, the sisters of the ward assembled for a time of reflection on the creation of Relief Society in 1842, using and discussing resources from *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society*.

“The thought of being part of this worldwide organization of Relief Society is special,” said Irene Kioi, second counselor in the Relief Society presidency. “It gives me the assurance that [Relief Society] is



The Relief Society of the Samabula Ward of the Suva Fiji North Stake held an activity to help the sisters better understand and appreciate the lives and contributions of all the Relief Society general presidents from Emma Smith on.

ordained of God and not men.”

In the Mombasa Branch, sisters studied about female disciples of Jesus Christ from *Daughters in My Kingdom* and the New Testament. The branch’s Relief Society president, Jael Mwambere, said, “This is our first anniversary for the Mombasa Branch Relief Society. It is my hope that we may all start anew in our devotion to our duties in Relief Society. May we care for one another, attend our Church meetings, and help those in need, starting from today.”

The Republic of the Marshall Islands

On Saturday, March 17, hundreds of sisters from the Ajeltake Branch,

Laura Ward, and Long Island Majuro Ward of the Majuro Marshall Islands Stake met at Rairok, a town near the Majuro Atoll, at 4:30 a.m. The reason: they walked for an hour and a half to the Delap meetinghouse to demonstrate the virtue of endurance. They later met the sisters of the Delap and Rita Wards, who also walked to the meetinghouse, for a devotional and breakfast. Later the sisters performed skits and dances and listened to an address from the stake president.

Spain

The Dos Hermanas Ward of the Seville Spain Stake displayed an exhibit of the history of the ward’s

Relief Society and included a special book of photos of the service and activities the sisters have performed together over time.

María Pérez Sánchez, first counselor in the Relief Society presidency, said, “[Being] able to participate in the anniversary of this organization makes me feel closer to those pioneering women who sacrificed so much for us. And now, today, we can continue carrying out this work they undertook.”

The United States

In the Gardner Ward of the Springfield Massachusetts Stake, the sisters celebrated the 170th anniversary of Relief Society at a dinner held on March 15. The evening included presentations from four sisters, each of whom spoke about a woman who had influenced her life positively. Each speaker also brought a small display highlighting her presentation.

“This was an activity that promoted the strength and worth of women,” said Jennifer Whitcomb, Relief Society president, “and also encouraged us to see the strengths, commonalities, and worth in each other.”

Although the anniversary itself has passed, the invitation for sisters to engage in service and other celebratory activities is ongoing throughout 2012. ■

Helpings Hands Program Opens Way for Missionary Work, New Stake in Amapá, Brazil

By Michelle Sá, with contributions from Elder Fabiano Cavalheiro

On Saturday, March 10, 2012, 21 people entered the waters of baptism. This is the largest number of people in recent years in the Brazilian states of Para and Amapá, both part of the Brazil Belém Mission, to receive the ordinance of baptism on the same day and to become “fellowcitizens” with the Saints (Ephesians 2:19) and walk “in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).

The baptisms came shortly after the announcement that the Macapá district was to become a stake, which happened on April 14 and 15.

Leaders, members, and missionaries have joined forces in working toward this kind of growth. The work of the Helping Hands program has also been instrumental in recent missionary work.

“The Helping Hands projects held over the past two years in the state of Amapá have brought the Church out of obscurity, awakening in government officials, the press, and society in general the desire to become familiar with this marvelous program and the church that promotes it,” said José Claudio Furtado Campos, recently released president of the Brazil Belém Mission.

In fact, the projects have helped so much in the state that government officials have introduced three new holidays in the region: April 6, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Day; July 30, Helping Hands Solidarity Action Day; and September 23, “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” Day. Additionally, a vote of thanks to the Church was presented to Elder Jairo Mazzagardi of the Seventy, Second Counselor in the Brazil Area Presidency.

“The Helping Hands projects have helped the Church earn much more credibility among the people of Amapá,” President Campos continued. “When our missionaries introduce themselves . . . , the people tell them that they have already heard about the Church because they have seen material on television, on the radio, and in the newspaper. They have heard great things about the Church, and this often increases receptivity to missionary work.”

Michelle Sá is the assistant director of public affairs, Macapá Brazil Stake; Elder Fabiano Cavalheiro is a full-time missionary serving in the Brazil Belém Mission. ■

In Macapá, Brazil, 21 people entered the waters of baptism on Saturday, March 10, 2012, approximately one month before the Macapá Brazil District became a stake. Those new members are pictured here with missionaries from the Brazil Belém Mission. The signs say, “Estaca Macapá,” or “Macapá stake.” Local leadership and membership attribute much of the growth and strength of the Church in the area to the Helping Hands program.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHELLE SÁ

Church Leaders Speak at Commencements in Hawaii, Idaho, Utah

Church leaders traveled to Church schools in Hawaii, Idaho, and Utah, USA, during April to give words of advice to graduates.

At Brigham Young University–Idaho on April 7, 2012, Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled students to “replace fear with faith.”

“I believe we are standing on the threshold of a new era of growth, prosperity, and abundance,” he said. “I urge you to make a commitment to yourself and to Heavenly Father to dedicate your life and consecrate your time and talents to the building up of the Church of Jesus Christ in anticipation of the Savior’s Second Coming.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited LDS Business College in Salt Lake City, Utah, on April 13, 2012, to deliver the commencement address to graduating students from all 50 US states and 67 countries.

He stressed the need for students to give service throughout their lives. “Service will be your antidote against selfishness and the sense of entitlement that more and more afflict societies around the world. . . . Your service will bless others, but it will also protect you,” he said.

The next day, Elaine S. Dalton, Young Women general president, gave these words of advice to students at BYU–Hawaii: “Remember who you are.” “Work hard.” “Train for adversity.” “Dream big.” “Winners do not always finish first.”

“Run into your marathon of faith and life,” she said. “Don’t get discouraged by the hills, but see the opportunity in adversity. Go with a sure foot

and a sure knowledge that you are never alone. . . . I truly believe that one virtuous young man or young woman led by the Spirit can change the world.”

On April 19, 2012, graduating students at BYU in Provo, Utah, listened to Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who spoke of the challenges of the world but told graduates to look to the future with faith.



Graduating students at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, USA, listen to Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on April 19, 2012.

“Though men’s hearts are failing them, you should take heart. There have always been challenging times,” Elder Oaks said. “We, the generations of your predecessors, have survived daunting challenges, and so will you. . . . We have a Savior, and He has taught us what we should do.”

For more on this story and on other messages from Church leaders, visit the Prophets and Apostles Speak Today page at prophets.lds.org. ■

LDS Maps Upgrade Helps Members Find Church Locations

A new version of LDS Maps includes a variety of new features that will improve members' experiences finding stake members, meetinghouses, temples, and other Church facilities.

To access the new LDS Maps, go to **LDS.org > Tools > Maps**. It is available in 16 languages—Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish.

Some of the new features include household verifications, numerous map display options, better iPad and tablet support, unit boundary maps, the Locate Me feature, and improved print options.

A new release of LDS Maps includes household verifications, numerous map display options, better iPad and tablet support, unit boundary maps, the Locate Me feature, and improved print options.

Individuals using the new version can locate LDS places of worship, view driving directions and print them out, and share map links through social media. Also, when signed in with an LDS Account, members can see ward and stake information specific to them and their surrounding areas.

Members Invited to Submit General Conference Photographs to Magazines

The *Liahona* and *Ensign* magazines are asking members to participate in the upcoming general conference, and the general conferences to follow, by submitting conference-related photographs from their local areas immediately after conference occurs. These

photographs will be considered for publication in the May and November issues of the magazines.

Members can submit their photographs quickly and easily through LDS.org by going to **Menu>Magazines** (or typing in **lds.org/magazine**), and then clicking on **Submit Your Material** in the right column of the magazines landing page.

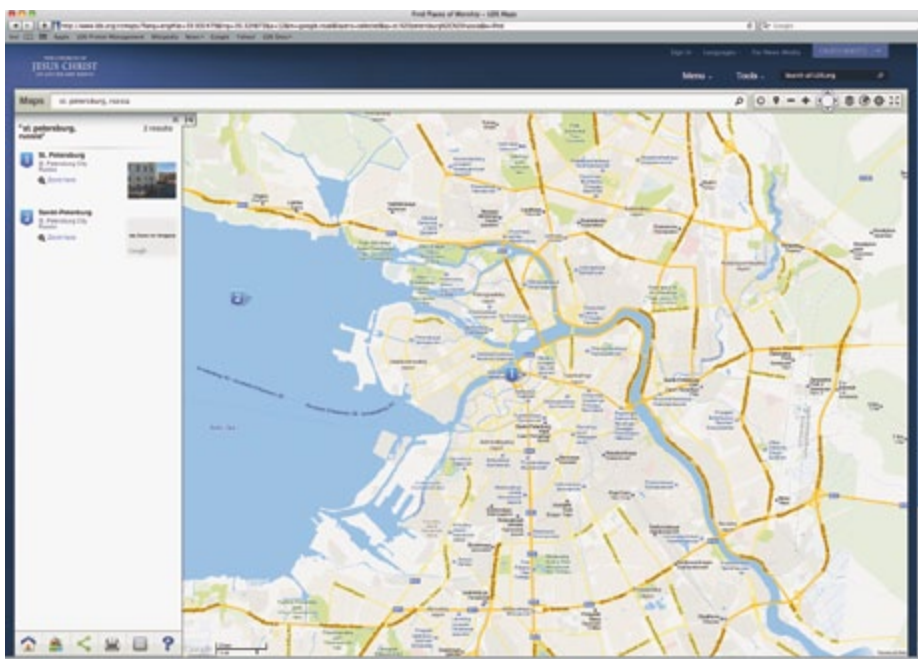
The *Liahona* and *Ensign* pages also have sections titled "Submit Material" where members can access the online forms to submit photos.

Members should review the Image Guidelines before submitting their images. The guidelines under "General Conference Photos" specify the photograph format, quality, and content that magazine editors are looking for, as well as the deadline for conference photograph submissions.

Tablet App for *Liahona* Released

The Church has made available a new prototype tablet app featuring magazine content. The LDS *Liahona* app includes the October 2011, November 2011, and May 2012 issues of the magazine—in other words, the Book of Mormon issue and the two most recent general conference issues.

LDS *Liahona* is available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish and offers a more interactive—even immersive—magazine experience; for instance, users can read the magazine while listening to an audio file of the same text. The app is designed for use on either the Android or Apple platforms. ■



COMMENT

By Small and Simple Things

My son Taylor (Elder Mulford) is serving a mission on the island of Bora Bora in Tahiti. He told me that not long ago the stake president came to Bora Bora and told the missionaries about how he had visited a barber, who was a member, for a haircut. He asked the barber why there were no *Liahona* magazines among the others he had for patrons to read. The barber promised him that the next time he came, there would be *Liahonas* there. However, the next time the stake president went to the barber, there were still no *Liahonas*. Disappointed, he asked the barber why. The barber explained that each time he put a *Liahona* out, someone would read it, ask him many questions, and then ask if he could keep the magazine. The barber said he had no more magazines to give away, but he added that many of the people who took the magazines were taking the missionary discussions.

Can you imagine what might happen if every doctor, dentist, and barber in the Church would put a few Church magazines in his or her waiting room? The Church is moving forward because of the small and simple things the members do.

Burdell Mulford, Utah, USA

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

FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEAS

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



“Building Faith in Christ,”

page 12: At the end of the article, Elder Christofferson talks about faith as a principle of action and of power. As a family, consider discussing some challenges you face and goals you can set to overcome them. Choose one goal to work on this week, remembering that with Jesus Christ’s help, we have the power to do all things, according to His will and timing. In an upcoming family home evening, you might want to discuss your family’s progress on the goal you set.

“Sharing the Gospel by Sharing

You,” page 16: As you share stories from the article, ask your family to think about friends and family members with whom you could share the gospel. Discuss how to be a friend and listen with love so that when opportunities to bear testimony come, you will be prepared.

“Personal Progress

Prayer,” page 58: Read Amalia’s experience about learning to pray both morning and night. Consider reading what Amulek teaches in Alma 34:17–27 about how we should pray. You may want to ask family members what insight these verses give about how and when we should pray. Conclude by bearing your testimony of the power of prayer.

“**Missionary Friend,”** page 60: After reading the article, consider making a list of upcoming Church activities and meetings that might interest friends of individual family members. You may want to role-play ways to invite friends to one of the activities. Talk about what it means to be a true friend, especially to those who are not members of the Church. Conclude by making a plan to contact the friend and extend the invitation. ■

We Are a Happy Family

The family home evening we remember most fondly was one we held at a difficult time. Due to a change in management, my husband had gone through some challenges at work and felt discouraged.

We decided family home evening that week would be in his honor. Every member of the family wrote him a letter of thanks, saying why we love him and what we hope for him. Then we made an album of photographs of the family at important times, such as anniversaries, marriages, sealings, births, and other events. We wrote a comment by each one, ending each with “And so we are a happy family.” At the close of the evening, my daughter and I sang a Primary song that contains a similar phrase (see “A Happy Family,” *Children’s Songbook*, 198).

During family home evening we could feel the Savior’s love for us and the love we have for each other.

I am grateful for the inspired commandment to hold family home evening. Obeying it strengthens us, preparing us to be an eternal family. ■

Kenia Duarte dos Santos, Brazil

WHAT AM I WORTH?

By Adam C. Olson

Church Magazines

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

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

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

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

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



The buyer decides if an item is worth the price.

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

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

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

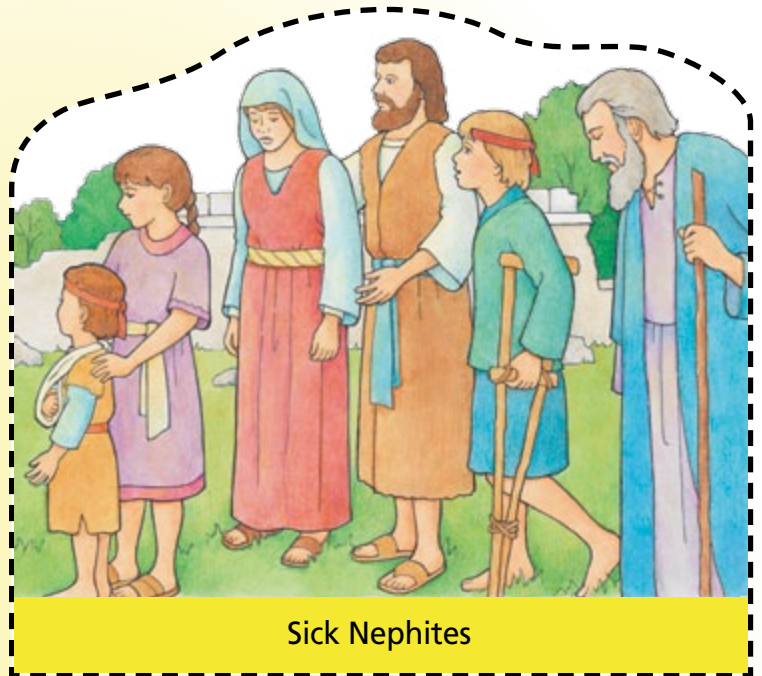
Attacking our self-worth is one of Satan's most subtle yet sinister tactics. It is essential for me to believe that the Son of God died not only for the sins of the world but that He died for *my* sins. If the adversary can lead me to believe otherwise, my doubt may keep me from seeking the Savior's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

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

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

NOTES

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



Jesus Heals the Sick and Blesses Children
3 Nephi 17

This year many issues of the *Liahona* 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.



Welfare and humanitarian projects, employment centers, mission offices, family history centers, temples, visitors' centers, and many, many other locations provide opportunities for senior missionary service. And seniors can be assured that their call comes from the Lord, through His prophet. The Lord knows the right opportunity for each missionary willing to serve. See "Senior Missionaries: Responding to the Prophet's Call," page 20.