

NEW ZEALAND LOCAL PAGES

AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

The Prophetic Promise of the Messiah

By Elder Kevin W. Pearson

First Counsellor in the Area Presidency

The birth of Jesus Christ in the meridian of time was one of the most anticipated events in all recorded ancient scripture. Beginning with Adam and continuing with every ancient prophet through the ages, the promise of the Messiah, the Redeemer, the Saviour, and the Only Begotten Son of God was foretold.

The righteous have worshiped the Father in the name of the Son and have exercised faith in Him, repented and covenanted through baptism and received the gift of the Holy Ghost in every age where the Melchizedek Priesthood has been available on the earth. The prophets foretold of His coming in the meridian of time to prepare His people, and the prophets of the Restoration continue to warn the people of His Second Coming and the need to prepare to meet Him.

Sadly, there were but few looking for Jesus of Nazareth when He came: “Notwithstanding his mighty works, and miracles, and

proclamation of the truth, in great power and authority, there were but few who hearkened to his voice, and rejoiced in his presence, and received salvation at his hands” (D&C 138:26). Contrast that with “the angel [and] a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:13–14).

The birth of the Son of God would have been one of the most acknowledged and celebrated days in all of recorded history in the pre-mortal realm. His mission there would be the very foundation of the Father’s plan of salvation. Who in the heavens would not have known of that event? Thirty-three years later, as President Joseph F. Smith in vision witnessed, “there were gathered in one place an innumerable company of the spirits of the just, who had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality . . . they were filled with joy and gladness, and were rejoicing together because the day of



Elder Kevin W. Pearson

their deliverance was at hand. They were assembled awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world, to declare their redemption from the bands of death” (D&C 138:12,15–16).

He will come again, and all His words will be fulfilled which He has caused to be spoken through His prophets. As we look to the Saviour this Christmas, may we also heed the voices of His holy prophets, for a voice of warning, teaching, counsel, instruction and guidance, that we might ever be found with the “valiant in the testimony of Jesus” (D&C 76:79), that we “may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true follows of his Son, Jesus Christ; that we may

become the sons [and daughters] of God; that when he shall appear [again] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure” (Moroni 7:48).

Consider these prophetic messages as you celebrate Christmas in your home this year.

The Christmas Spirit

“With the birth of the babe in Bethlehem, there emerged a great endowment—a power stronger than weapons, a wealth more lasting than the coins of Caesar. This child was to become the King of kings and Lord of lords, the promised Messiah—Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

“Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, He came forth from heaven to live on earth as mortal man and to establish the kingdom of God. During His earthly ministry, He taught men the higher law. His glorious gospel reshaped the thinking of the world. He blessed the sick. He caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He even raised the dead to life. To us He has said, ‘Come, follow me.’

“As we seek Christ, as we find Him, as we follow Him,

we shall have the Christmas spirit, not for one fleeting day each year, but as a companion always. We shall learn to forget ourselves. We shall turn our thoughts to the greater benefit of others. . . .

“There is no shortage of opportunities to forget self and think of others. Such opportunities, however limitless they may be, are also perishable. There are hearts to gladden. There are kind words to say. There are gifts to be given. There are deeds to be done. There are souls to be saved. . . .

“As we lift our eyes heavenward and then remember to look outward into the lives of others, as we remember that it is more blessed to give than to receive, we, during this Christmas season, will come to see a bright, particular star that will guide us to our precious opportunity” (Thomas S. Monson, “In Search of the Christmas Spirit,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1987, 5–6).

A Season for Gratitude

“What a wonderful season this is, this Christmas season. All of the Christian world, while not understanding the things that we understand, pauses for

a moment and remembers with gratitude the birth of the Son of God. . . .

“In that spirit we reach out to embrace one and all with that love which is of the essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We Latter-day Saints are a vast concourse of people bound together in a oneness of love and faith. Our blessing is great, as a people and as individuals. We carry in our hearts a firm and unshakable conviction of the divine mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Creator who, under the direction of His Father, made all things, ‘and without him was not anything made that was made’ (John 1:3). He was the promised Messiah, who came with healing in His wings. He was the worker of miracles, the great healer, the resurrection and the life. His is the only name under heaven whereby we must be saved. . . .

“We love Him. We honor Him. We thank Him. We worship Him. He has done for each of us and for all mankind that which none other could have done. God be thanked for the gift of His Beloved Son, our

Savior, the Redeemer of the world, the Lamb without blemish who was offered as a sacrifice for all mankind.

“He it was who directed the restoration of this, His work, in this the dispensation of the fullness of time. This is His Church which bears His Holy Name. . . .

“Christmas is more than trees and twinkling lights, more than toys and gifts and baubles of a hundred varieties. It is love. It is the love of the Son of God for all mankind. It reaches out beyond our power to comprehend. It is magnificent and beautiful.

“It is peace. It is the peace which comforts, which sustains, which blesses all who accept it.

“It is faith. It is faith in God and His Eternal Son. It is faith in His wondrous ways and message. It is faith in Him as our Redeemer and our Lord.

“We testify of His living reality. We testify of the divinity of His nature. In our times of grateful meditation, we acknowledge His priceless gift to us and pledge our love and faith. This is what Christmas is really about” (Gordon B. Hinckley, “A Season for Gratitude,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1997, 2, 4–5).

Giving as He Gave

“The Saviour dedicated His life to blessing other people. As expressed by His chief Apostle, Peter, ‘God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good’ (Acts 10:38).

“Never did the Saviour give in expectation of receiving. He gave freely and lovingly, and His gifts were of inestimable value. He gave eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and legs to the lame; cleanliness to the unclean, wholeness to the infirm, and breath to the lifeless. His gifts were opportunity to the downtrodden, freedom to the oppressed, forgiveness to the repentant, hope to the despairing, and light in the darkness. He gave us His love, His service, and His life. And most important, He gave us and all mortals resurrection, salvation, and eternal life.

“We should strive to give as He gave. To give of oneself is a holy gift. We give as a remembrance of all the Saviour has given.

“Christmas is a time for giving. . . . This Christmas:

- Mend a quarrel.
- Seek out a forgotten friend.

- Dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust.
- Write a letter.
- Give a soft answer.
- Encourage youth.
- Manifest your loyalty in word and deed.
- Keep a promise.
- Forgo a grudge.
- Forgive an enemy.
- Apologize.
- Try to understand.
- Examine your demands on others.
- Think first of someone else.
- Be kind.
- Be gentle.
- Laugh a little more.
- Express your gratitude.
- Welcome a stranger.
- Gladden the heart of a child.
- Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth.
- Speak your love and then speak it again.

“Christmas is a celebration, and there is no celebration that compares with the realization of its true meaning—with the sudden stirring of the heart that has extended itself unselfishly in the things that matter most” (Howard W. Hunter, “The Gifts of Christmas,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2002, 18–19). ■

The Spirit of Charity Is in Those Bricks

By Rosanna Whaanga

On a remote island 50 kilometres northeast of Auckland City resides the Iwi of Ngati Rehua and the Ngawaka Dynasty. The Maori name for their island is *Aotea*. Captain Cook renamed it Great Barrier Island because it formed a barrier between the Hauraki Gulf and the Pacific Ocean.

Ngati Rehua was led by Raihi Miraka Ngawaka. She was a full-blooded white Maori and a direct descendant of Ngati Turehu and Tutumaiao, the original fair-skinned inhabitants on Aotea. It was during this time that missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints arrived on Aotea and taught the gospel.

A young Matthew Cowley was one of those missionaries. He played an important role in converting Raihi Ngawaka, her son Tame Ngawaka, and daughter-in-law Rhipaea Ngawaka. But Rhipaea's husband Nupere Ngawaka did not join the Church straight away. Nupere approached Matthew Cowley and said he struggled between his Maori culture and the Church. Brother Cowley counselled Nupere, and told him the Melchizedek Priesthood was stronger than his Tohunga customs. One year later Nupere gave up his customary ways and joined the Church. His brother Tame was made the branch president on Aotea. His descendant Matthew Ngawaka is the branch president on Aotea today.

On March 14, 1926, Sam Beazley was born on Great Barrier Island. He was the fourth child of nine children, and growing up, was no different



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RANGI & VIC PARKER NZ CHURCH HISTORY COLLECTION.

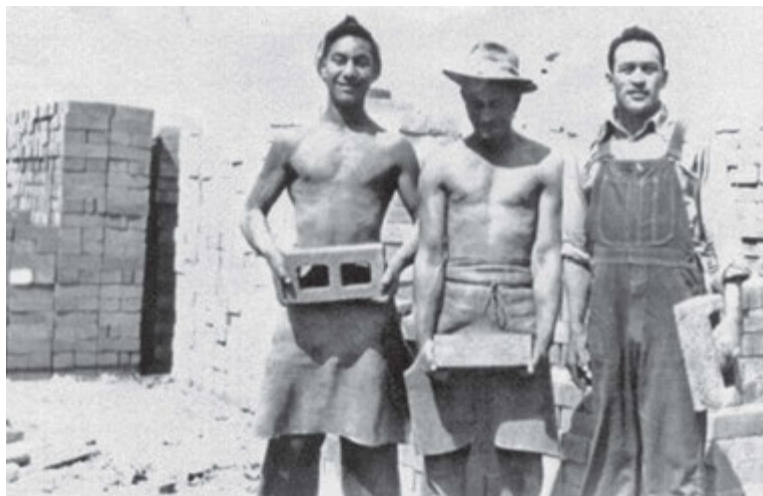
**Raihi Miraka
Ngawaka**

from any other child. Sam and his cousins loved the outdoor life. One day they were chasing goats through the bush. Not realising how close they were to the edge of a cliff as they ran through the dense bush, Sam fell off the cliff on to the rocks below. His cousins used a boat to rescue him. His family was devastated by the accident. Living so far away from any hospital meant they had to care for his injuries. They did the best they could, but not realising that Sam had broken bones in his fingers they wrapped his hands in bandages, and his fingers healed bent, not straight.

When he was 10 years old Sam's mother passed away, and about a year later his grandfather Nupere Ngawaka passed away too, the

last Tohunga of Great Barrier Island. His grandmother made a decision that the whole family would move to Whananaki in the north. Sam's father Fred dismantled their home on Great Barrier Island and took the timber to Whananaki to build a home there. Fred relied on the support of the extended family to help raise his children after losing his wife. He took his three

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RANGI & VIC PARKER NZ CHURCH HISTORY COLLECTION.



eldest sons, including Sam, to the King Country to work in the forestry and send money back to the family. After a few years they returned back to Whananaki and Fred purchased land in Hikurangi for his family.

By this time Sam had moved to Auckland to work at the Auckland City Council and spent his Saturdays helping to build the Scotia Place Chapel, in Queen Street, Auckland. In September 1951, Elder George R. Biesinger, who was called as General Supervisor of Church Building in the South Pacific, visited the Scotia Place building site to assess how things were going. He called Sam, Matt Tarawa, Bertie Purcell and Sam Edwards to go to Hamilton to be part of the first block crew

L to R: Ben Hippolite, an unknown block plant worker, and Sam Beazley.

working on the construction of Church College. These young men were obedient and took up the challenge, left their families, moved to Hamilton and worked hard.

In the book *Mighty Missionary of the Pacific*, Sam was interviewed, and said, "It became my responsibility to supervise the old block-plant which was more or less used as a workshop as well, where we made our fence posts and drain tiles. On several occasions we received visits from the General Authorities of our Church; we had the honour and the privilege of actually meeting a prophet of God, President David O. McKay. From him we learned that the temple of God was to be built in our fair land, a truly heart-warming experience" (Cummings, 1961, p. 113).

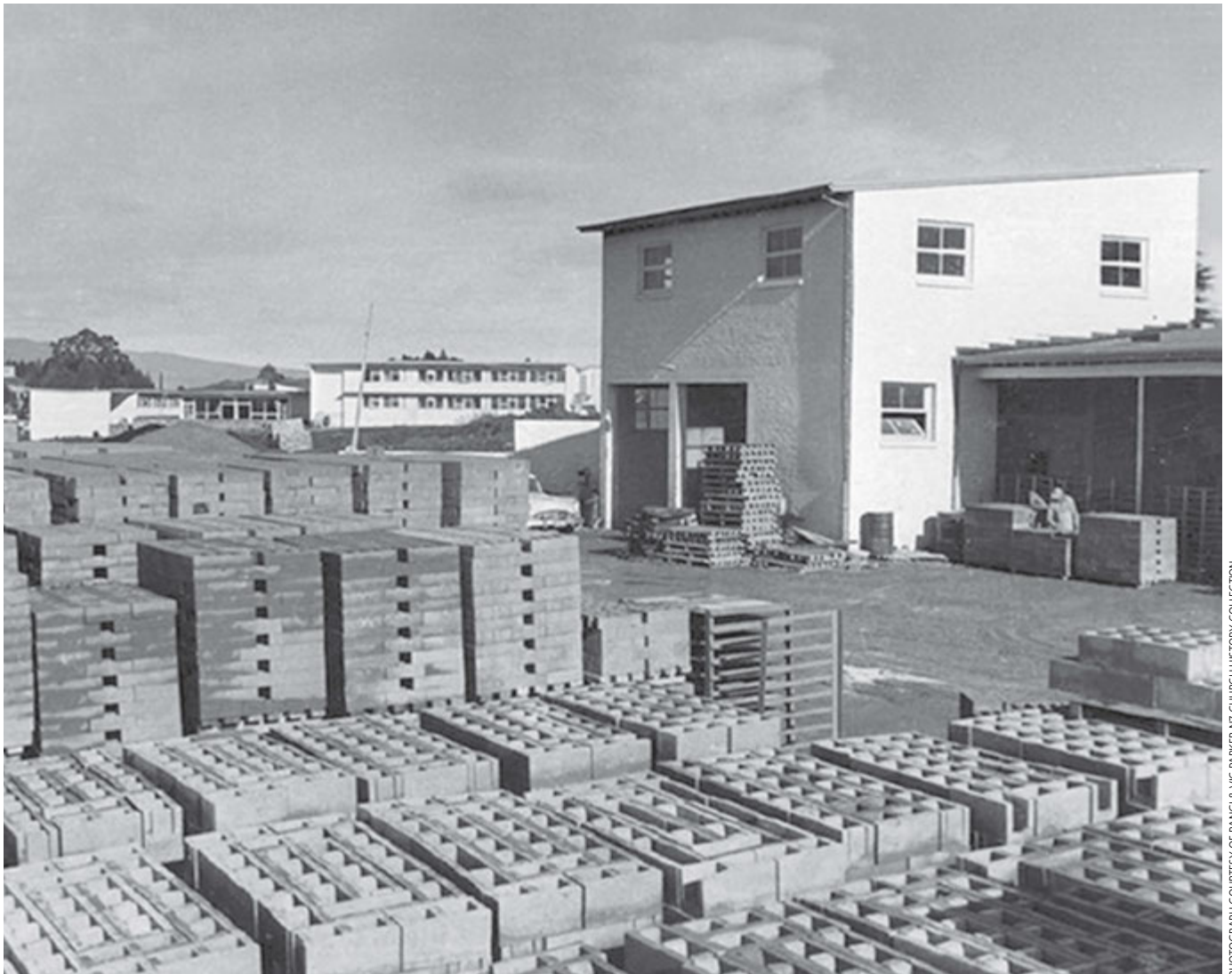
An additional article, written by Elsdon Craig entitled "Mormon Maoris Build Their Way to Education," added, "Sam Beazley . . . is another who has been with the college community since the beginning. He is now in charge of the important brick plant which is operated by a crew composed almost entirely of Maoris. To show how important and efficient this section of the work is, they make all the bricks for the Mormon buildings being erected in New Zealand. This involves fulfilling an order of 5,000 bricks weekly for the new Mormon chapel at Hastings. After satisfying the demand for local projects the brick-making crew was able, a month ago, to send a shipment of 5,500 bricks to help their cousins in the Cook Islands erect a chapel at Rarotonga. But this is not all. The crew is actually two months ahead of schedule with supplies and has been able to go to Hastings as a body and help with the project there on the spot" (Elsdon Craig, 1955).

***Block Plant at
Temple View,
Hamilton***

Sam made bricks from 1952 until he was released in 1962. The first block plant produced over one million bricks. Many of the bricks were shipped to Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, and the Cook Islands, to chapels all over New Zealand, and were used in the construction of Church College buildings and the New Zealand Temple in Hamilton. It was an achievement, considering

many of those bricks were made by hand until the Church imported a block-making machine. Sam's hands were crippled from his childhood accident, yet he made bricks for 10 years, and he loved making those bricks.

"The spirit of charity is in those bricks," says Ra Puriri, a St. George resident whose father was one of the Church's labour missionaries. "You



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RANGI & VIC PARKER NZ CHURCH HISTORY COLLECTION.

can see their contributions in the buildings” (Stack, 2009).

Mighty Missionary of the Pacific describes the Church’s 1950s building program of the Pacific as a “phenomenon” and the coming together of two great creative forces. “One was devotion flaming in the hearts of hundreds of men, untrained, inexperienced, willingly answering a call to service. The other was dedicated leadership” (Cummings, 1961, p. 123).

In 2006 Church College closed. Soon some of the buildings and bricks Sam helped make will be gone. The bricks may disappear but Sam’s devotion and willingness to serve the Lord will live on in the hearts of many members.

In 2011 Sam Beazley passed away. Mourners at his service summed up his life, as they sang these lines from his favourite hymn, “Each life that touches ours for good Reflects thine own great mercy, Lord; Thou sendest blessings from above Thru words and deeds of those who love” (“Each Life That Touches Ours for Good,” *Hymns*, no. 293). ■

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Lessons in the Home

By Catherine Vaughan

As the mother of a large family, my life was always busy and loud. With a set of twins in the middle, our first six children arrived in just under eight years, and by the time our seventh child came along three years later, our house was bursting at the seams. We had always wanted a large family, so our hearts were full, and we revelled in the noise and constant activity that accompanies a multitude of children.

Overall, the children were well behaved, and happy, and got along well together, enjoying the ready-made friends and play mates they had in the home. But having so many children so close in age also meant there were moments of conflict and disagreement. Sometimes I struggled to keep a feeling of peace and harmony in the home, amidst the disputes and scattered toys. As the children grew, it seemed that I spent all my time repeating the same words over and over, especially when it came to their assigned weekly chores, clearing up after themselves, and dispute

resolution. On more than one occasion I retired to my bedroom to kneel in prayer, feeling completely overwhelmed.

One rainy day, with everyone cooped up inside, my mother’s voice of reason was completely lost amidst the noise and boisterous activity. No matter how many times I asked them to do things, it seemed to be ignored, or quickly forgotten. My vision of a perfect family with obedient, helpful offspring bore no resemblance to the free-spirited children enjoying this earthly adventure who inhabited our home.

Tired and frustrated, I stormed off to my bedroom, and threw myself down onto my knees at the end of the bed. As I poured out my feelings of annoyance to Heavenly Father, I complained about how my children never listen to me, and finished by saying emphatically, “How many times do I have to tell them?!”

In the silence that followed my little outburst, I very distinctly heard the quiet answer, “About as many times as I have to tell you.”

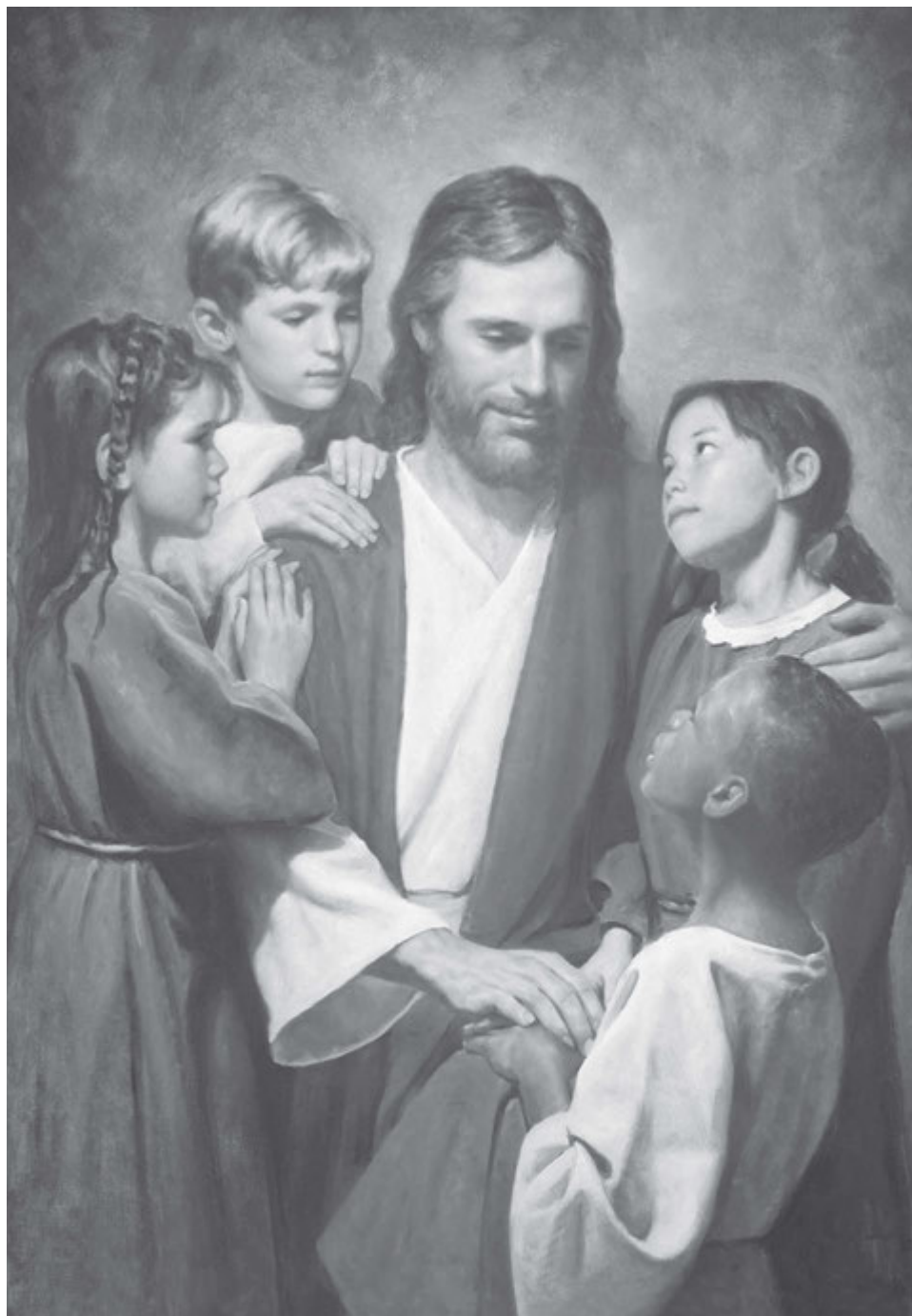
My “righteous indignation” evaporated immediately as I

recognised the validity of those words. It was true. I had to be reminded over and over to read my scriptures, to prepare for emergencies with food storage, to not be judgemental . . . I knew the list was extensive.

As I knelt there, pondering on the loving patience of our Heavenly Father, and the many chances He has given me as I learn the gospel principles line upon line, precept upon precept, I repented of my previous anger and frustration.

I listened to the giggles and laughter coming from the other room, and I recognised that our home had been blessed with precious spirits, enjoying the excitement of having a physical body and earthly emotions. They weren't being wilfully naughty, they were being children. They were sons and daughters of God, and I felt deeply humbled and blessed that they have been entrusted to my care while they are experiencing this earthly journey.

As I went back out into the lounge and they ran to hug me, I gave thanks for personal prayer, for Heavenly Father's plan, and the knowledge that families can be together forever. ■



Christ with Children, by Del Parson