

## AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

### The Light of the World

By Elder O. Vincent Haleck

**N**ow when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

“Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. . . .

“ . . . And, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was” (Matthew 2:1–2, 9).

Just as prophesied, signs preceded the birth of Jesus Christ. In the New World, the prophet Samuel declared: “There shall be great lights in heaven, insomuch that in the night before he cometh there shall be no darkness. . . .

“And behold, there shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign” (Helaman 14:3, 5).

Light was part of the signs that preceded His birth, and the star led the Wise Men to a humble stable in

Bethlehem, where He was born and lying in a manger. For generations, the imagery of that scene has illuminated our minds and touched our hearts about the significance of His birth and where He was born. The Son of God and Creator of heaven and earth did not make His entrance into the world in an ornate and royal palace filled with fine furniture and precious things of the world but in a humble stable for livestock. To the Nephites He said, “Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you” (3 Nephi 18:16).

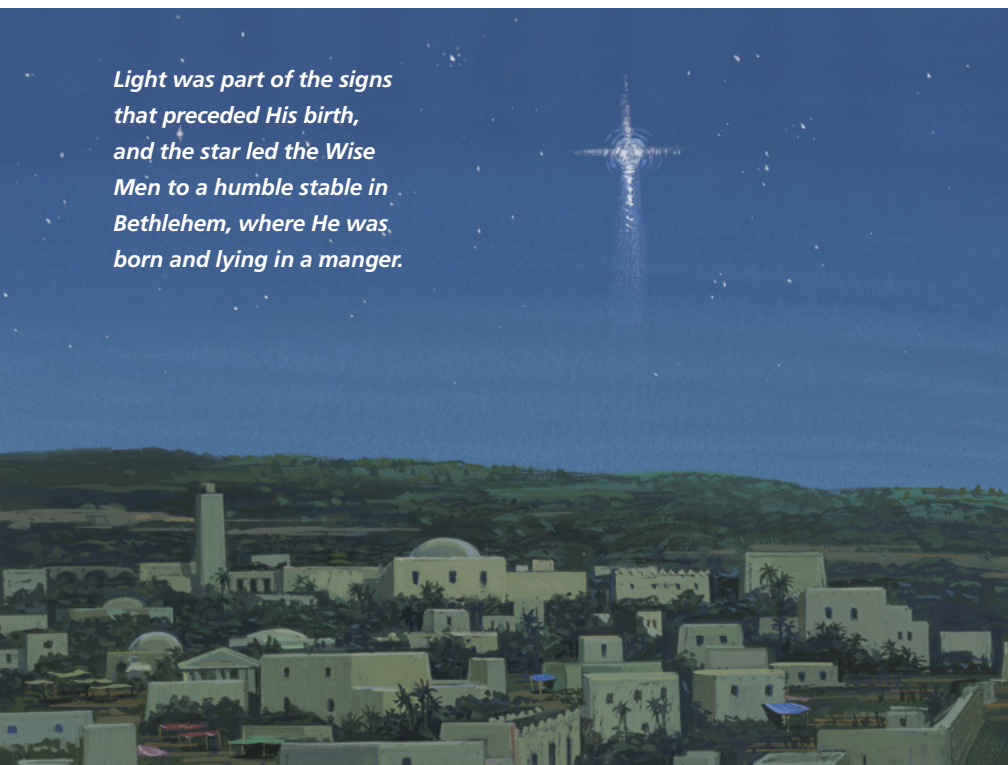
Then He spoke about praying unto the Father in His name: “Pray in your families . . . , that your wives and your children may be blessed” (verse 19). He counselled that the Nephites should meet together oft and not forbid anyone from coming unto them when they met (see verse 22). “Therefore, hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up” (verse 24).

More light came as He went about teaching the doctrine of His Father, who sent Him. He went about healing the infirm, gave hope to the hopeless, and restored and strengthened the faith of the downtrodden of His society. Many who heard Him felt His love and followed Him.



Elder O. Vincent  
Haleck

*Light was part of the signs that preceded His birth, and the star led the Wise Men to a humble stable in Bethlehem, where He was born and lying in a manger.*



He was the light as He taught His gospel, and He has beckoned us to follow His light by living the principles of faith, repentance, baptism, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. His teachings should be reflected in our lives, as He has counselled: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). He wants us to reflect His light in our examples to those around us.

Brothers and sisters, as we consider this Christmas season, let us look outward and consider our brothers and sisters who may need our concern, support, and love. Let us reflect the light of the Saviour’s example and love, not just during the Christmas season but throughout our lives, to honour His great gift, His Atonement, which He gave freely for all to receive. As we reflect His light through our example, His Spirit will always be with us. ■

from the Lord, which helped. Soon Jan was pregnant with our last child, and we welcomed another son into our family. Our love for children and our capacity to love and nurture them was strengthened with our faith.”

They also describe “practicing self-reliance and having fun with each other.” Family traditions have included attending Carols by Candlelight and Christmas pageants, going camping, having a weekly family night together, as well as holding daily family prayer and scripture study.

“Through it all we have been challenged and blessed,” they say. “And also stretched and tested.”

The couple often talked about having foster children but never got

## LOCAL PAGES

# Adelaide Couple Focus on Giving Children Good Start in Life

By Mormon Newsroom

**G**lenn and Jan Smith of Adelaide, Australia, both nearly 60 years old, are starting a new family.

Before beginning their adventure as foster parents, they raised six of their own children. Their commitment to family and to giving children a good start in life is firm.

“If you are committed to your marriage and family, you will be OK, notwithstanding that trials and challenges come,” Glenn says. “We have tried to look after each other . . . and make the happiness of each other a priority.

“One of our earliest decisions as a couple was to have children. Our first son was very physically and mentally disabled. After him followed four daughters. It wasn’t easy to look after Matthew, particularly for Jan when she was pregnant.”

They wondered whether five children was enough. Taking that decision to the Lord in prayer, they both felt the answer was, “Don’t worry about it.”

Shortly thereafter Matthew died, just before his 11th birthday. “While we grieved, we felt a peace that came



*Glenn and  
Jan Smith*

around to looking into it. Jan says, “We wish we had started sooner and not when our youngest child was preparing for marriage.”

When they finally chose to take in foster children, it was far from easy. “Our two foster children . . . came to us very angry, constantly yelling, fighting, being destructive,” Glenn says.

“They would have a ‘meltdown’ maybe 30 to 40 times a day. We thought our training would prepare us for anything but were surprised how a four- and six-year-old were so affected by the trauma they had experienced.”

Glenn continued: “One night the missionaries came for dinner. The children were out of control, and we were a little embarrassed. I invited Sister Garrotte to say a prayer when they were about to leave, and she prayed from the heart that our children would feel God’s love. It was as though a cloud of warmth and love descended as we prayed. The children became reverent. Our hearts were touched, and we were reminded each day from then on . . . that God’s help was available every day.”

“We use therapeutic parenting to raise these children,” the Smiths explain. “How we talk to them when tired and frustrated determines their response. Some days are very hard, but after twelve months, their progress has been a miracle. They can now play and work on their own or together with

very few squabbles, like other children.”

Glenn and Jan explain, “We never knew how easy it would be to love our foster children. Our foster agency, Key Assets and Families SA, have supported and trained us to cope with the

fact that fostering is very hard. But it is so rewarding.

“We remembered at a recent Church conference that we were invited to help refugees. Fostering is so similar to helping refugees.” ■

## New Collaboration Makes FamilySearch Even More Fun and Engaging

Family history and genealogy enthusiasts in New Zealand, Australia and the rest of the South Pacific have a potentially exciting new tool available.

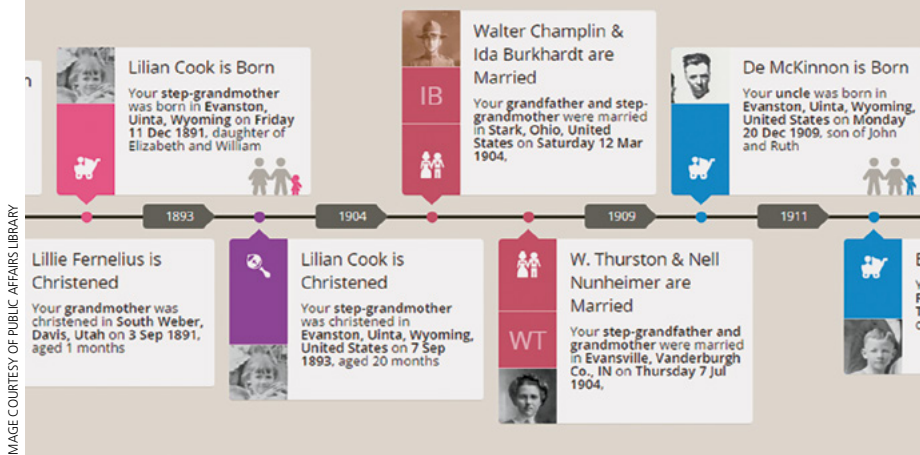
Twile and FamilySearch International have announced the launch of a new feature that will let FamilySearch.org users generate and



*Elder and  
Sister Bennett*



## A family tree in timeline form



share online with others a family tree in timeline form.

The family tree timelines are designed to make research and discoveries more engaging for the broader family, especially younger generations.

“My initial view is Twile is easy to use and creates visually appealing timelines,” said Lynda Bennett, who, along with her husband, Larry, recently returned home to Boise, Idaho, after spending 22 months in the Pacific Area as family history missionaries.

“I think this will be of interest to family historians and non-genealogists; plus it will appeal to younger users,” said Larry.

While serving as missionaries, the Bennetts, who are family history experts, have helped members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and their friends and neighbours use FamilySearch to seek out and record their family stories.

“What I find intriguing and potentially exciting,” said Lynda, “is it appears Twile enables a FamilySearch user to easily share online with family and others information about living relatives, if desired. This is a feature not available on FamilySearch.”

Connecting securely to FamilySearch.org, Twile imports a user’s tree and automatically adds events, such as births and marriages, to a personal, interactive timeline of their family history. Users can then browse the timeline, add photos, and share it privately with other family members.

By presenting a family tree as a timeline, Twile makes it easy for the non-genealogists in a family to explore their ancestry through events, stories, and pictures. It also encourages collaboration by letting them add missing details, their own life events, and recent photos.

Paul Brooks, Twile CEO, said, “The FamilySearch import has been our most requested feature, especially following our success at RootsTech. We have a passionate community of FamilySearch users who have waited patiently while we built it, and we’re so happy that it’s now ready for them.”

“FamilySearch is always looking for fun, engaging experiences that help our patrons make new personal discoveries and family connections. Twile’s rich, custom timeline of key family history events does exactly that!” said Steve Rockwood, FamilySearch CEO.

To utilize the new feature, FamilySearch users will need to register for Twile at [www.twile.com](http://www.twile.com). The basic service is free and lets users add up to 10 events and photos per month.

FamilySearch is the largest genealogy organization in the world and is a nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Millions of people use FamilySearch records, resources, and services to learn more about their family history.

To help in this great pursuit, FamilySearch and its predecessors have been actively gathering, preserving, and sharing genealogical records worldwide for over 100 years. Patrons may access FamilySearch services and resources for free at FamilySearch.org or through more than 4,921 family history centres in 129 countries, including the main Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Twile is a UK-based interactive timeline of your family’s past, present, and future. The timeline consists of photos and milestones—such as births, marriages and deaths—that tell the story of your family from your earliest known ancestor right through to today.

While the Twile website is aimed primarily at family historians, it is also designed to encourage the rest of the family to add their own content, including the younger generations. ■

# Knowing We Are Not Alone

By Catherine Vaughan

It is difficult to explain how the most traumatic moments of our lives can also be the most sacred.

The tragedies that resulted in our having to bury two of our children ultimately enabled me to develop increased trust in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, and to more fully accept the Saviour's Atonement, to relieve our suffering.

In 1998, our happy, energetic, full-of-life 21-month-old daughter, Brittany, tragically drowned. Throughout the dark months that followed, our devastated family and our aching hearts were comforted by family, friends, and those in the community around us, who truly lived the teachings of Alma, who admonished the Saints to be "willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; . . . mourn with those that mourn; . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (Mosiah 18:8, 9).

One day, a couple of years after Brittany passed away, I lost my cell phone. I felt certain it was still in the house and looked in all the usual places but couldn't find it. After a week I decided to call my service provider to see if my phone had been used at all, in case someone had found it

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**Vision**  
To strengthen families and individuals by increasing faith and trust in Heavenly Father and in Jesus Christ and His Atonement

**Objectives**

- 1 Honour the Sabbath Day at Home and at Church
- 2 Increase Spiritual and Temporal Self-Reliance
- 3 Hasten the Work of Salvation
- 4 Seek the Blessings of the Temple

**Goals**

- Make the Sabbath a delight
- Make the sacrament a
- Increase sacrament
- Pay a full tithe
- Seek learning
- Complete
- Increase baptisms and reconverts
- Increase Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood ordina
- Make "Heavenly Father knows each of us individually. He is aware of our needs and the desires of our hearts."
- Invite y
- Complete "My Family 15" and take a name to the t

elsewhere. I was randomly connected with an operator in a city far from where I lived. I explained the situation and asked if the phone had been used. The lady I was talking to established that no one had been using it since it

was lost, and we both concluded that the phone was probably still somewhere in my home. During the course of the conversation, she asked me if we had children and said that one of them may have knocked it under the couch

or armchair. I replied that we did indeed have seven children, and she asked me their ages. As I ran through their ages from oldest to youngest, I hesitated slightly before saying that our youngest child would have been four years old now but had died two years previously. There was a moment of silence on the other end of the phone; then she quietly replied, “Please tell me about it.”

I briefly related how Brittany had drowned, and I heard a gasp at the other end of the line, followed by quiet sobbing. The phone operator then softly told me that her two-year-old son had also drowned a few years previously. He had wandered off at a park and fallen over, landing in a puddle. He knocked himself out when his head hit the ground and he had drowned in one inch of water. The day we spoke was the day before the anniversary of his death, and she was not coping well and feeling miserable.

We talked for another 45 minutes about our precious children and the way it was affecting our families. Complete strangers, from different cities, with different lives, but both mothers with aching hearts, grieving the untimely loss of our children. We both wept. We both offered words of comfort. And we both laughed together at the absurdity of our common tragedies. We had both tried unsuccessfully to resuscitate our children and had similar

questions and concerns, with both of us wondering, if we had done something differently, would it have made a difference?

By the end of the call we both felt grateful to have been able to talk and to strengthen one another. Of all the telephone operators in the country, I had been connected with the one person who needed to hear my story and share her sadness. We were both blessed by the experience.

In a world where we were quietly going about our day, God knew of the heartache we carried within and touched us both with a small miracle.

I found my phone the next day, right where I had previously been looking for it, but I know it was no coincidence that I hadn’t found it earlier, and as a result my call was connected to the one person whose heart was aching and who needed to talk to another mother who understood.

And in the process of comforting and supporting the stranger on the other end of the line, I too was strengthened and comforted—not just by her words and encouragement, but by the knowledge that our Heavenly Father knows each of us individually. He is aware of our needs and the desires of our hearts. I learnt that in the darkest moments of my life, I am not alone. I can trust Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ to be there with me every step of the way. ■

## Physical Loss Brings New Meaning to Life

By Bill Davison

**M**y story and my journey began in 2010. I developed a muscular skeletal problem in my right shoulder. I’ve always led a full and active life; I swam, jogged, worked out with weights, and played soccer. So I put it down to overuse or strain.

Unfortunately it continued to deteriorate, and the tendons began to contract under the armpit. Eventually I had a CT scan, which revealed a tumour inside the armpit, and a subsequent biopsy also revealed an internal basal cell carcinoma that was of a reasonable size.

I was obviously greatly shocked by the diagnosis, as I had worked hard at staying healthy and fit all my life. The surgeon recommended the removal of my arm, immediately.

I decided to try alternatives first, to see if I could save the shoulder. Thus began my nightmare journey. Fortunately I was able to reduce the pain without drugs and reduce the swelling in the arm, and 16 months after the initial diagnosis, the CT scan also indicated a reduction in the tumour.

Unfortunately the arm had been gradually degenerating all that time. The tumour had destroyed the nerve supply to the arm as well as affecting the blood

flow. The cancer had responded, but it was too late for my arm.

My surgeon indicated that along with the arm, I would lose my shoulder as well. So I went ahead with the surgery, and while in hospital I reacted badly to the antibiotics. I was in agony for days. I couldn't understand why despite my best efforts, and all the blessings, the prayers did not deliver the result I so desperately desired. I felt somewhat like the Saviour on the cross when he said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Matthew 27:46).

Before I went into hospital I posted a video blog of my journey up to that point. After the operation, my wife came to the hospital and told me I had many positive comments and responses to the video. I asked her to read them to me, and as she did I wept. I was overwhelmed with the love and support that I received. It was an unbelievable experience. I felt to exclaim as Alma when he cried, "Oh, how exquisite was my pain but how exquisite was my joy" (see Alma 36:21).

Perhaps the biggest lesson I have learned over the past 20 months is when I realised how much Heavenly Father and my Saviour loved me. I gained a greater understanding of the pain and suffering the Saviour went through for me—and all of us—as I went through my pain and suffering.

It taught me the power of love to uplift, to heal, and to bless. I learned

more fully the power of prayer, especially the combined prayers of many, including those of other Christian denominations, and even those of no specific affiliation.

On a less spiritual level, I have learned to appreciate the small and simple things of life. I have had to master doing everyday things with my non-dominant one arm and hand, such as tying shoelaces, making a sandwich, doing up buttons on a shirt, tying a tie, writing, and driving—common things we all take for granted.

I was ready to give up on a number of occasions, and the only thing that got me through was God and the love and the prayers of numerous people, especially my family, for which I am eternally grateful.

I posted a second video blog shortly after the operation thanking everyone for their love, support, and prayers and testifying of the strength I got from God and the Saviour's Atonement. To my surprise it went viral and reached over 7000 people, most of whom were nonmembers. Many people responded by exclaiming what a powerful effect it had upon them. It's been a humbling, refining, purifying, and sanctifying experience.

Heavenly Father knows what is best for us. He supplies the level of support for us that we need through the Atonement of the Saviour. Strength can also come through the

support, love and prayers of others.

I lost many things that were precious to me, but I'm trying to ask how I can turn this to my and other people's advantage. I say "trying" because it's not easy; it's still a struggle.

I've tried to see the loss of my arm as symbolic of how I need to lose my sins and my imperfections in order to become the person I need to be (see Matthew 5:30).

I choose to believe that I'm not loved less because I have one arm, but I can be loved more; that I can, and do, achieve more with one arm than I did with two because of the insight I have gained. I'm learning not to rely on the arm of flesh (see D&C 1:19) but to rely on my Saviour and the person I am on the inside.

President Spencer W. Kimball, who was no stranger to pain and suffering, said: "I have not enjoyed all of the physical sufferings that I have gone through. . . . But in all my suffering I have come to know God" (in M. Russell Ballard, "Do Things That Make a Difference," *Ensign*, June 1983, 73).

I can say that I know more than ever that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that He suffered for us beyond our comprehension and understanding, that the way is there for us to get through our challenges and to eventually rise above it and become better for it—perhaps not on the outside but certainly on the inside. ■



## TIP OF THE MONTH

# Effectively Managing Our Money

By LDS Family Services

**M**anaging money responsibly and effectively is both a universal challenge and an individual blessing. It is a challenge because it takes discipline and effort. It is a blessing because we will grow to become more like our Saviour as we become just stewards over that which the Lord blesses us.

It is very important to remember that we will not be judged by the amount of money we have; rather it is what we do with the resources with which we have

been blessed that will determine both our peace and our joy in this life.

There are many principles that can help us effectively manage our finances. Here are three principles that will help us become more effective stewards over all of our resources.

### **Pay our tithes and offerings**

President Gordon B. Hinckley stated: "I do not say that if you pay an honest tithing you will realize your dream

of a fine house, a Rolls Royce, and a condominium in Hawaii. *The Lord will open the windows of heaven according to our need, and not according to our greed.* If we are paying tithing to get rich, we are doing it for the wrong reason. The basic purpose for tithing is to provide the Church with the means needed to carry on the Lord's work. The blessing to the giver is an ancillary return, and that blessing may not be always in the form of financial or material benefit" ("The Sacred Law of Tithing," *Ensign*, Dec. 1989, 4; emphasis in original).

### **Live within our means**

In a world of increasingly easy credit and shiny consumer goods, it is easy to get trapped in unnecessary debt. Budgets can help us avoid debt. A commitment to living within our means is an internal and even spiritual process of delaying gratification and staying focused on what matters most. Also, beware of "get rich quick" schemes, and completely avoid gambling or lotteries as a method of making money.

### **Save and invest for the future**

Even if we can save only a very small percentage of our income, the practice itself will help us develop patterns of healthy financial management, and we will be surprised how quickly it can add up. ■

