

Sermoncitos II

Roy E. Howard
Nathan L. Howard
and other authors

Foreward

In October 1967 I left home to serve a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My father, Edward Lorenzo Howard Jr., started sending me a letter each week, which was in the form of a one page typed sermon. This was really an extension of the sermons he had published on his own printing press with handset type. He continued the little sermons every week until the day before his death at age 90. His mailing list expanded and he purchased a copy machine and lots of stamps. He adjusted to the changes in technology with a computer for typing, then used email to send out the weekly sermoncitos, always on schedule. His creativity and academic integrity never wavered. He bore his testimony of Jesus Christ and the restoration of the Gospel to innumerable people through this tremendous effort. He continued to be a teacher to his children and grandchildren all the days of his life. The tradition became such an integral part of the family, that his oldest son, Nathan, took over the responsibility with not one week missed in the routine.

This first volume is a compilation of Sermoncitos II, those written since the passing of Edward L. Howard, Jr. Since there have been hundreds of Sermoncitos before and after these, this is just a small collection through December, 2007.

Authors of this volume:

Nathan Lorenzo Howard, family patriarch and custodian of the project; LouAnna Fifield, a dear friend that has influenced many, including us, by her living example of the of “cocoa seed” analogy; and family members JoAnn F. Howard; Corla H. McFarlane; Al Pace; and Roy Edward Howard. Where no credit is given at the end of the article, Roy is the author. When Nathan has felt the need to quote his father, a Sermoncito from E. L. Howard is included.

Occasionally you will see articles that quote scriptures in the Navajo language. Each Navajo passage is replicated with an English version, so everyone can understand the entire article. These have been read in the Lupton, Arizona branch of the church, where Roy is branch president. Navajo is quoted from the scriptures, or from the “Gospel Principles” manual.

Since the articles are submitted weekly to the family and the church members, there are seasonal topics, and those marking historical or family events. There is some repetition, especially in the funeral sermons

This collection is offered as an aid in building testimony and changing lives by sharing scriptural perspectives. May the Spirit touch your heart as you read these scriptures, stories, experiences, and testimonies. Future projects include compilations of Sermoncitos I, those that inspired us all for 40 years.

Achievement

There was a British physician and novelist, A.J. Cronin who said, “The virtue of all achievement is victory over oneself. Those who know this victory, can never know defeat.”

Elder Eyring’s father was a world-renowned scientist. He said to Henry when he was growing up, “We were working a problem (science equation) just last week. You don’t seem to understand it much better. Isn’t that what you think about all the time?” Hal’s answer was “No”. His father gave him this advice, “Find something to do that you think about all the time that you enjoy so much that when you don’t have to think about it, that’s all you think about.” So, that’s just what President Eyring went on to do and has done so well all his life. Choosing a particular course in life that you love, may not be the easiest route to take, but it will provide the greatest rewards. Adlai Stevenson said, “There are two steps in getting any task done: the first is to begin, the second is to begin again. The first is the hardest.” For me personally, I finally chose the profession of my Father and I enjoyed working in it for nearly 40 years. I was not so easy and I considered more than once to take another route. Church service and our level of activity is another choice we make and what we achieve is optional and involves time and commitment. But none can deny, the blessings are proportional to our efforts. Whether in business, play, in our church activity, in our health pursuits and in all phases of life...Success is achieved by going the extra mile and putting in the effort.

“Most people are seduced by the lure of the comfort zone. This can be likened to going out of a warm house on a cold, windy morning. The average person, when he feels the storm swirling outside his comfort zone, rushes inside where it’s nice and warm. But not the true leader. The true leader has the courage to step away from the familiar and comfortable and to face the unknown with no guarantees of success. It is this ability to “boldly go where no man has gone before” that distinguishes you as a leader from the average person. This is the example that you must set if you are to rise above the average. It is this example that inspires and motivates other people to rise above their previous levels of accomplishment as well.” John Haremza (Waiora Corp)

President Hinckley said, “Believe in yourself. Believe in your capacity to do great and good things...You are not destined to be a scrub. You are a child of God, of infinite capacity.”

Seek out and achieve the best of you. Glean the good from the past and from loved ones and from role models. Don’t settle for failure to achieve that, which Father in Heaven expects from each one of us. Program yourself for success and follow the Master in all your achievements.

Nathan L. Howard

Adversity

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. Her mother took her in the kitchen...filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first she placed carrots, the second - eggs and the last - ground cocoa seeds. She let them sit and boil without saying a word. In about 20 min. she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots and eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the cocoa out and placed it in a cup. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me what you see." "Carrots, eggs and cocoa," she replied.

Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. They were soft. The mother then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the cocoa. The daughter smiled as she tasted it's rich aroma. The daughter then asked, "What does it mean, mother?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity - boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. It's thin outer shell had protected it's liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground cocoa seeds were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they literally CHANGED THE WATER!

"Which are you?" she asked the daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or cocoa?" Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup or a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart? Or am I like the cocoa seeds? The cocoa actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the cocoa, when things are at their worst you get better and change the situation around you. When the hour is the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate yourself to another level? How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg or cocoa?

May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human and enough hope to make you happy. The happiest people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their way.

This week's message was given to us by LouAnna Fifield.

God Knows Each of Us

There are many witnesses to the reality of the resurrection. The apostles of the New Testament give their personal testimony (Acts 4: 33). Others were resurrected at that time and appeared unto many (Matt. 27: 53). To the people in America Jesus said, “thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world” (3 Nephi 11:14). Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon proclaimed in 1832, “and now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father. That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:20-24). The resurrection is just part of the reason we celebrate Easter. “For behold, this is my work and my glory-to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

There are many witnesses to his Omniscience (Alma 18:32). His suffering at Gethsemane and on the Cross was for our sins. As I contemplate this marvelous and wonderful work, it occurs to me that He suffered for what he knew of us; he suffered as he knew each of us. He qualifies to feel compassion toward us because of His intimate understanding of our past, present, and future. And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice (Mosiah 15:1,9).

Jesus knew the people he walked with in Jerusalem (John 4:17, Matthew 26:21, 34). He appeared unto many and showed them all from the beginning to the end (Abraham 1; Ether 3; Moses 1; Moses 7: 67; 1 Nephi 10, 11). While in mortality he was keenly aware of all the people of the earth (John 10:16). When Jesus, the creator of heaven and earth, died on the cross, the whole earth responded by shaking and the veil of the temple was torn (Matthew 27:51). The survivors of the destruction in America heard His voice as He named each of the cities and explained why they were destroyed (3 Nephi 9). When He came to America he called the names of his chosen apostles from the multitude (3 Nephi 11:18,22) Jesus knew the thieves on the cross and told them they would be with him in paradise (Luke 23: 43). While in paradise, Jesus organized the missionary work “that they might carry the message of redemption unto all the dead” (D&C 138:35-37; Isaiah 61: 1). What caused Him to suffer was an intimate knowledge of our shortcomings and misdeeds.

And surely every man must repent or suffer.... Therefore I command you to repent-repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings

be sore-how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not. For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; but if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit-and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink. (D&C 19: 4, 15-18). God knows you. Work to come to a knowledge of God and His Grace to you.

One who expects completely to escape low moods is asking the impossible...Like the weather, life is essentially variable,...and a healthy person believes in the validity of his high hours even when he is having a low one. (Harry Emerson Fosdic)

JoAnn and I have been down with sore throats for a few days and are exercising all the normal cures and remedies hoping to get back to the temple this week. The ironic thing is, the cures are working...but we reek so bad from garlic doses and onion poultices, that we would not be very popular nor even welcome there as workers.

Being sick once in a while is not such a bad thing and as Mr. Fosdic implies, it's even "nomal". It's not only a way for the body to "de-tox it self...but it also makes you appreciate the healthy and happy times, even more. There was a great Jewish mystic of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century who regularly experienced ecstasy on solitary wanderings through forests. He recommended the following: "Always be joyful, no matter what (or who) you are. With happiness, you can give a person life.

Every day we must deliberately induce in ourselves a bouyant, exuberant attitude toward life; in this manner, we will gradually become receptive to the subtle mysteries around us. And, if no inspired moments seem to come, we should act as though we have them anyway. If you have no enthusiasum, put on a front. Act enthusiastic, and the feeling will become genuine." We achieve true and sincere happiness as we care for and love others. President David O McKay said, "There are three means of achieving the happy, abundant life: first, making God the center of one's life; second, using the free agency given to man; and third, rendering service to others. JoAnn, even when feeling her worst, made extra potatoe soup for a widow in the ward and wearing our face masks, we made a brief visit to a very grateful sister. I remember having to wear such masks particularly in the early days of transplant. JoAnn made sure even though I was not feeling so happy to be there...she adorned my mask with a big red smile. It worked! I soon started counting my blessings, putting God and others first. The result was ...I made others happier, and also... I enjoyed a much quicker recovery.

"Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof... if, we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virture, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God." (Joseph Smith)

Nathan L. Howard

Baptism

Jesus began his public ministry with baptism, a public display of his commitment (Matthew 3:13,15). His last charge to the apostles was “go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. When Father Adam asked for forgiveness for his transgression in the Garden of Eden the Lord “also said unto him: If thou wilt turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men, ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask, it shall be given you (Moses 6: 52-53, 65-66).

Joseph Smith read so much about the ancient practice of baptism as he translated the Book of Mormon, that he was driven to know if this ordinance was required in our day. So he and Oliver Cowdery “went into the woods to pray and inquire of the Lord respecting baptism for the remission of sins... While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying: Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness (Joseph Smith History 1: 68-69).

As we exercise faith and accept the sacrifice that Jesus made for us we realize that we cannot save ourselves. We become like Paul, touched by the grace of Christ’s love and willing to follow Christ’s example, being baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 22:16). Being baptized is necessary to receive the Holy Ghost and join the church (2 Nephi 31:18) and enter the strait and narrow path that leads to life (33:9) and the Celestial Kingdom (John 3:3). It is even required for those who have already died (1 Corinthians 15:29; D&C 128).

It was clear that John needed enough water (John 3:23) to immerse the people because baptism is a symbol of the burial and resurrection (Romans 6:5). It is also clear that the one doing the baptism must have proper authorization (Acts 8:18-20). Those who baptize must be ordained with the proper authority (John 15:16). The ancient ones had to be ordained in order to perform baptisms (3 Nephi 7:25). The same is true today (D&C 42:11).

Small children are not to be baptized, for baptism is for the remission of sins (Moroni 8:9-22). However, we do need to teach this doctrine to our children. “And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be

upon the heads of the parents” (D&C 68: 25).

Baptism serves to bind us to covenants with God and demonstrate our willingness to join the community of God and serve one another (Mosiah 18:8-10). Once we have been baptized “we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). We are blessed as we live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, including faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins.

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Jesus began his public ministry with baptism, a public display of his commitment... “Bíni’dii k’ad éi ákót’é, háálá ákót’éego t’áá ákogi ádaat’éii t’áá áltso bi’diilníł” (Matthew 3:13,15). His last charge to the apostles was “go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost... éi baą nihíłááh, ał’aa dine’é t’áá áltso ídahool’aahii danilíigo ádaahłe’, aTaa’ áádóó aYe’ índa Níłch’i Diyinii bízhi’ bee tó bee daahsíłh” (Matthew 28:19). When Father Adam asked for forgiveness for his transgression in the Garden of Eden the Lord “also said unto him: If thou wilt turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men, ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask, it shall be given you (Moses 6: 52-53, 65-66).

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As we exercise faith and accept the sacrifice that Jesus made for us we realize that we cannot save ourselves. We become like Paul, touched by the grace of Christ’s love and willing to follow Christ’s example, being baptized for the remission of sins... “áko k’ad ba’át’íi biniyé na’áhodíłziid? Nídiidáahgo tó bee ni’dółzłhgo Bóhólníihii bízhi’ yínízhíigo Diyin God bich’i’ ádił ni’iyíníłz’ígíi áltso naąh táidoogis, shizhdíiniid (Acts 22:16). Being baptized is necessary to receive the Holy Ghost and join the church... dóó índa díi áłts’óózi k’é hózdongo honít’i’ ígíi bik’eh woháál dooleł éi éiyá hool’áágóó iiná bich’i’ honít’i’” (2 Nephi 31:18) and enter the strait and narrow path that leads to life... dóó náabi’diilyáajj’ t’áá álahjji’ díi atiinígíi yik’i yikahgo t’éiyá” (33:9) and the Celestial Kingdom (John 3:3). It is even required for those who have already died... “Díi k’ad iinánígíi t’éiyá biyi’ Christ bee nihił chodahoo’íigo diné t’áá áltso biláahdi hojooba’ ádaniit’é (1 Corinthians 15:29; D&C 128).

“John ałdó’ Séílimdóó t’áá áyídígi Íńnan hoolyégei tó yee síłh nít’éé’”. It was clear that John needed enough water (John 3:23) to immerse the people because baptism is a symbol of the burial and resurrection... “Háálá Christ daaztsánígi át’éego bił danee’náago bee bił łá’í dasiidłj’go t’áá ákót’éego ałdó’ dadziztsááđéé’ náázdiidzáhígi át’éego nihí ałdó’ náádijé’ígíí bee t’áá aaníi hoł łá’í daniidłj’ doo” (Romans 6:5). It is also clear that the one doing the baptism must have proper authorization (Acts 8:18-20). Those who baptize must be ordained with the proper authority... “nihí doo nídashidoołtj’ da, nidi shí t’éi nánihiyeláa’go ninihinil...” (John 15:16). The ancient ones had to be ordained in order to perform baptisms (3 Nephi 7:25). The same is true today... áko t’áá háida Diyin bibee’óhólníhii dah yoolééłgíí éi tó yee nihidoosj’łgo íłj’ dooleeł. Kot’áo t’éiyá tó bee alziłh Diyin bił t’áá aníi dóó bił yá’át’ééh” (D&C 42:11).

Small children are not to be baptized, for baptism is for the remission of sins (Moroni 8:9-22). However, we do need to teach this doctrine to our children. T’áá háida tseebíłh bináahai dóó yówohji’ éi tó bee bidi’doolzj’łgo bee bá haz’á. “And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents” (D&C 68: 25).

Baptism serves to bind us to covenants with God and demonstrate our willingness to join the community of God and serve one another... ahíłká anídeijah doogo éi ałdó’ bee nihá nohoot’á; and stand as witness... áko t’áá ałalahji’ Diyin bá nisiidzj’ dooleełgo ałdó’ bee nihá noot’á (Mosiah 18:8-10). Once we have been baptized “we also should walk in newness of life... bígi át’áo éi tó bee nanihi’doolzj’... áko nihí éi ałdó’ iina’ ániidígíí nihee hodooleeł” (Romans 6:4). We are blessed as we live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, including faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins. Baąhági át’éii nahji’ ádadoolníł biniyé Jesus Christ bízhi’ binahji’ tó bee danihi’dilzj’łgo nihi’iina’ łahgo ánídaahdlééh.

We make a great effort to recruit local people to be the teachers and leaders at church; however, we have much difficulty retaining them; because the members are very hard on the Indian teachers and leaders and their own family members, as they know their weaknesses too well. This is not a new problem.

Mark 6:1-6. Jesus grew up in a small town, then left at age 30, got an education and returned to his village as a teacher and healer. The people looked at him scornfully, saying, “who does he think he is now? We know him as a carpenter, we know his sisters and brothers, and now he thinks he is our teacher?” Jesus was not able to do healing or teaching in his community. He started a circuit and had great success in other towns.

The goal of Indian Education during the 20th Century was to remove children from the influence of their home and teach them to survive in the job markets far from home. Now we realize that this educational goal results in methodology that does not help families prepare chil-

dren to assume a role in their own community. The new goal for the 21st Century is to strengthen families and help them empower their children to solve the problems of their own communities. The church leaders call it “building Zion in her stakes, wherever they may be”.

If parents come to believe that attending church with their children will make their families more healthy and prosperous, they will enthusiastically attend with their families. However, we must realize that families do not exist to help the church, rather, churches exist to strengthen families, and thus build communities. Life is a circle that must include all generations. Churches that do not have the active participation of all members of the families and don't facilitate intergenerational transmission of values and culture and tend to leave the children at risk in this time of sin and worldliness.

Once we start teaching the Gospel in our families we cannot ever stop, for we are on a road and we can't go back, we must go forward. We are learning that when we invite people to accept Christ, we ask them to change their religion, not their culture. The Mohawk have a story that illustrates the collaborative nature of integrating cultures. “Two vessels, the canoe and the ship, on the same river should work together in peace, neither trying to steer the other vehicle. In New York we have turned our children's education over to the ship, not trying to steer our own canoe. In the 20th Century the Indians were encouraged to leave the canoe and ride in the ship, abandoning their language and culture.” Now in the 21st Century the Mohawk are learning to paddle their own canoe. They know they must share the river with the ship and move in the same direction, but they don't have to abandon the canoe to keep moving in a positive direction.

The people of Zarahemla did not bring the Lamanite refugees brought by Ammon into their own city, but set aside a refuge for them. Their reservation was called “Jershon”(Alma 27::22-24). The land of Jershon became a place of refuge for all who were rejected by their families and communities (Alma 35:6,7).

I pray that our little church may become a place of refuge and peace for all people; a place where our family and community differences are forgotten and the gospel of Christ brings harmony and order to our lives, progress to our lives, and prosperity to our families; a place where we can become “fellow citizens with the saints”; and place where we belong.

Born in the Covenant

Nihighangi éí kót'áo hazhó'ó hasht'e dít'ée doo

Congratulations to Luke and Carlene for the birth of their first child on the last day of August, 2006. When I told someone the name was Annie, the first question was, does she have red hair? This was a reference to Little Orphan Annie. How different it is for little Annie Williams! She is not only part of a family, but she is born in the covenant, and thus sealed to her parents for eternity.

The Church exists to help families gain eternal blessings and exaltation Diyin binahagha' éí aláahdi át'áo yaa nitsídaakees and help us live as families forever dóó áko binahjí' hool'áágóó ahił kээdahoniit'ıı doo. One way this happens is through the sealing power of the priesthood. The temple ceremony connects families through the generations, and thus gives children an eternal perspective of who they are, a solid foundation for life.

Annie is blessed to have parents joined in eternal marriage giving her the opportunity to continue in the family after this life ákondi temple biyi' góne' asiigehgo éí hool'áágóó ahił kээnááhoniit'ıı doo. Thanks to her parents' choices, Annie has access to the fulness of the gospel through the new and everlasting covenant. Jesus binahagha' éí Diyin ániid dóó hool'áágóó aha'deet'ánígíí wolyé.

These are the perilous times spoken of by the prophets of old díí baa ákonínízín doo! Nihoogháahjí' yookkáałgo yéego ach'ı' nahwii'náa doo. The messages of the prophets of today teach that families with fathers assuming an appropriate role are key to children's success in life. Luke has taken this charge seriously, giving all his attention to his wife and daughter in their time of need. He is committed to making his wife and children the first priority in his life, and all his other life activities supportive of that role.

Annie's parents respect her status as a child of God. They see God as our creator and our Heavenly Father, because "all men and women are literally the sons and daughters of Deity... Ts'ídá t'áa ałtso nihookáa' dine'é éí t'áa aníí Diyin ya'áłchíní danilı". (Joseph F. Smith, The Origin of Man). Because of this view, they treat Annie with kindness, and act constantly to guide her toward a knowledge of her heavenly home and her relationship with her Father who is in heaven. They strive to make their home much like Annie's heavenly home, full of love and acceptance. In addition, Annie will not only benefit from the ordinances of the church, but the fellowship and teachings of the church.

Our Father in Heaven has chosen the time and place for each of us to be born so we can learn the lessons we personally need and do the most good with our individual talents and personalities. T'áa nihí daniidzingo bik'eh dahoniil'ıı doo, doodago éiyá hool'áágóó nihá nízínígíí doo nihee dahólqo da dooleeł. Annie will have the greatest possible opportunity to learn those lessons, develop those talents, and be of a mind to serve others; because she has a mother who

has done just that. Carlene not only has prepared herself for life's work, but knows how to prepare Annie to find her own path in life.

We know we can have our children with us throughout eternity, nááná nihi' áłchíní ałdó' hool'áágóó nihił kéédahat'ıı doogo éi nihił bééhózin doo; it is through the sealing power of the priesthood and by guiding them toward the tree of life. "And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedly great joy; wherefore I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also; for I knew that it was desirable above all other fruit (1 Nephi 8:12). This fruit is none other than "the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men' wherefore it is the most desirable above all things" (1 Nephi 11:22).

May we all strive to be worthy of the covenants that God has reserved for our families. May we teach our children to know their Father in Heaven, by living like Him in our homes. May God bless Luke and Carlene in raising Annie; and all of you in modeling a Christ centered home in the way you teach your children all the days of your life.

Many are Called but Few are Chosen

During his ministry, Jesus spoke often of the "Kingdom of Heaven", a place that we strive to attain. The testimony of the scriptures is hope that we can be chosen to enter this wonderful place. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality... Háálá díi ats'ııs didoołdziııi éi doo diłdzidii nıdoodleeł, áádóó díi dadootsaalııi éi ats'ııs doo daatsaahii nıdoodleeł" (1 Corinthians 15: 53).

We enter this kingdom by a narrow path that few find (Matthew 7:13-14). "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven... T'áálá'ı jınıtınıgo, Bóhólnııhii, Bóhólnııhii, dashijınıgıı doo t'áá ádzıłtso yá'ąashii bee bóhólnııhgo bıł haz'áanii bıih dahizhdoookah da, nidi t'áá háııda shıTaa' yá'ąashdi hóloonii ınıızinii bık'eh ájıt'éhıgıı téiyá." (Matthew 7:21).

It is clear who is called to this holy calling, it is those who have received a testimony that Jesus was chosen as Redeemer and Savior. "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious... háálá Bóhólnııhii bıbee ajooba' t'áá ııdąą' dassoolııhgo áąkót'é... ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ... nihi' ałdó' tsé hináaniigi ádanoh't'éego Nıłch'i Diyinii k'ehgo kin nihee ádaolne'" (1 Peter 2:3, 5).

Those who enter this narrow path of testimony in Jesus and offer the spiritual sacrifice of obedience "are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people... nidi chahałheel bıts'ąajı' ayóó ánóolningo Diyin God bıbee adınıdınıjı' nihi'ká ádıınıidıgıı ayóó át'éego yee áanııhii baa dahohniih doo binıyé t'áálá'ı dine'é nohıııgo nánihi' diılyá, áádóó aláahgo naat'áanii danohıııgo nááda'ııhniıhii danohıı, áádóó dine'é diyinii ında Diyin

God bíí’ danohłı.” (1 Peter 2:9). They are converted and become like little children, qualified to be called into the Kingdom of Heaven... t’áá aaníígóó ánihidishní, Doo łahgo át’éégo dahinohnáágóó índa doo áłchínígi át’éégo ída’doołyaagóó, yá’ąashii bee bóhólníihgo bił haz’áanii ts’ídá doo biihdadoohkah da (Matthew 18:3).

To clarify the qualifications, Jesus teaches in parables. “For the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard... Yó yá’ąashii bee bóhólníihgo bił haz’áanii, éi díi nahalin: diné léi’ kéyah bił haz’ąągi bee bóhólníihii bich’il na’atł’o’ii bitahgóó bá nidadoolnishii łá’ t’ah abínídąą’ yíká dah diiyá” (Matthew 20:1-16). He hired all day and paid the same wages to the last as to the first. The early hires got offended, and inspired the fateful declaration, “many are called, but few are chosen... háálá łá’í bíká ádahodoo’niid, nidi t’áá díkwíi nídahaasdláá” (verse 16); a reminder of His conversation with the rich young man whose desires for his possessions inspired the astonishing statement, “that a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven... Diné at’íinii yá’ąashii bee bóhólníihgo bił haz’áanii yiih doogáłgíi bá niłdzil” (Matthew 19:23).

The parable of the vineyard finished with the caution: “the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof... Diyin god bee bóhólníihgo nił haz’áanii nihighadidoot’áál, índa náánála’ dine’é éi bits’ąądóó aneest’ą’ nídahoodleeł doo biniyé baa didoot’áál” (Matthew 21:33-45). Again, “the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son”, and the people he invited did not come, so he invited others, and they were the ones who were received into the banquet (Matthew 22:2-14). Once again the parable finishes with “many are called, but few are chosen... háálá łá’í bíká ádahodoo’niid, nidi t’áá díkwíi nídahaasdláá’, díiniid”.

May we hearken to the call, and remain faithful so that we may be chosen to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Faith to Have a Chapel

“Behold, this is the tithing and the sacrifice which I, the Lord, require at their hands, that there may be a house built unto me for the salvation of Zion - for a place of thanksgiving for all saints, and for a place of instruction for all those who are called to the work of the ministry in all their several callings and offices; that they may be perfected in the understanding of their ministry, in theory, in principle, and in doctrine, in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth, the keys of which kingdom have been conferred upon you” (D&C 97:12-14).

Forty and fifty years ago, the Saints in Lupton had to travel to Sanders or Gallup for meetings. During the 1970s and 80s they met in Lupton in a small trailer. They were promised a building if they would show faith. The sacrifices they had to make were worth the effort to them. They persisted year after year with attendance in the 30s, 40s, and 50s, until they were blessed with a beautiful brick building in May of 1993. The day of the dedication there were

134 people in attendance at Sacrament meeting. The next Sunday there were 27, which became the average attendance for the year, as the initial excitement wore off. During the next 11 years the branch saw a steady growth in attendance, which is a true measure of faith and willingness to accept the presence of the Lord. By early 2005 there were many Sundays with attendance in the 50s and 60s. Then in the early Fall, faith was shaken, the attendance dropped by 1/2, and on October 15 a fire was started in the building. By Sunday morning the 16th, there was no more chapel. The next two years of meeting in Gallup was a terrible strain on the faith of the members. The first meeting in Gallup was attended by the branch president, the missionaries, and one member. Many times there were fewer than a dozen. The weekly average dropped steadily from the 20s down to the teens. The members rallied when construction started in the summer of 2007. The first to return and accept assignments were those same people whose faith gave them strength to serve during the entire history of the branch.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized 177 years ago with 6 members in a small rural village. Now there are 13 million members in 126 nations. Daniel saw that the Kingdom of God in the latter days would start small like a stone cut out of a mountain, but keep rolling persistently until it fills the earth. Speaking of his descendants, Nephi prophesied, “the fullness of the Gospel shall come unto them, they shall come to a knowledge of the forefathers and of the gospel of their Redeemer; wherefore, they will rejoice, give praise, receive strength and nourishment, come unto the true fold of God” (1 Nephi 15:13-16). In fulfillment of prophecy, there have been one million missionaries, 133 million copies of the Book of Mormon have been printed in 105 languages, and 6,000 join the Church weekly. In his day Nephi did not succeed in activating all his family for, “he spake many great things unto them which were hard to be understood, save a man should inquire of the Lord; and they being hard in their hearts, therefore they did not look unto the Lord as they ought” (1 Nephi 15: 2-11). The history of Lupton is like the history of the church in all times, that is, some do not have the strength to persist in the face of adversity, and others look unto the Lord in faith no matter what happens. The destiny of the branch is to have faith and prosper (2 Nephi 30: 3-5).

We have a chance to once again bring the Gospel to the Lupton area, “and inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it; Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God” (D&C 97:12-16). The Spirit of the Lord will come to all the people of this area, and this new chapel is the catalyst.

Charity

This weekend we attended a funeral for a helicopter pilot. A soldier friend said he had volunteered unselfishly in Iraq in defense of freedom for all of us. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:12-13). Our attendance at the funeral was greatly appreciated by his mother as an act of love from us to her that she needed at

a time of grief. We too, have been blessed by charitable acts of others recently. A simple meal or forgiveness, or even a compliment for a job well done is a great blessing when given from the heart. Charitable acts can soften hearts and change lives. “Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail - but charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever” (Moroni 7:46-47).

When I read the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), I recall running out of gas one day. I was 10 miles from Silver City. I stood by the car with a gas can looking helpless and forlorn. The man who rescued me would not accept payment except a promise that I would help someone else. Since then I have passed up more hitchhikers than I picked up, but I do help strangers from time to time, sometimes giving whatever cash I happen to have, or snacks and water I carry in the truck. I try not to judge whether someone really deserves help (Mosiah 4:16-24), whether a stranger or a brother. “But whoso... shutteth up his bowels of compassion from [his brother], how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John 3:17).

A true measure of charity is being able to forgive others like Jesus did (Luke 23:34). “I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). It is not easy or natural to exercise godlike charity. In order to be Christlike in how you react to others, you must “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). This love must be applied to our wayward children (Luke 15:32) and our brothers who offend us (Matthew 19:21,22). If we truly have charity, then we “fear not what man can do, for perfect love casteth out all fear” (Moroni 8:16). Giving and even accepting this kind of love requires a deep humility. I experienced this for a few weeks when I was humbled by appendicitis. I was so touched that people would come visit me, that I could hardly talk to them, I was so overwhelmed with emotion.

This world needs less condemnation and more acceptance, in other words, this world needs those who would reach out in kindness and love; in other words, we need to be friends. “Charity suffereth long and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things...for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail - but charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever, and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him. Wherefore, 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, that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear ye 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. Amen” (Moroni 7:45-48).

Chastity

My father wrote “...you came into this world from Heavenly Father, you can live always with our Heavenly Father”. Prophets, preachers, and parents may tell us; the Light of Christ within us may help us recognize the truth (John 1:4-9); but only by being in tune with the Holy Ghost can we know for ourselves if it is true that we are children of God (Moroni 10:5). Christ declares that we are children of the Father. “And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn. Ye were also in the beginning with the Father...” (D&C 93: 21, 23).

We can return to the presence of our Father by living a life that conforms with who and how He is. To help us know to return, Heavenly Father has given us commandments, including the highest law, the law of eternal marriage. “In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood (the new and everlasting covenant of marriage); and if he does not, he cannot obtain it” (D&C 131:1-3).

In our life before birth, we were raised by loving parents while surrounded by siblings, and developed knowledge, skills, talents, and personality. The veil over our memory permits the principle of “agency”. We are free to choose to follow light or darkness, good or evil, for we are free to act for ourselves (Helaman 14: 30, 31). The interviews we have as we prepare for the temple help us do a self assessment of worthiness, faith, and commitment. The commitment we make in the temple prepares us for the commitments of a lifetime. The law of chastity applies to married people as they maintain devotion to each other. The need to obey this law applies throughout our life, as we overcome the temptations that befall everyone.

In the Grand Council in Heaven, we learned about how earth life is one step in an eternal plan (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 348, 349, 365). We learned that everyone would have sufferings and temptations to teach us endurance, patience, and charity, so that we could learn to become more like our heavenly parents. Satan knows our potential and appeals to our carnal nature in his attempt to stop our progress. Satan attacks the standards of modesty that lead to a chaste life. He wants us to believe that since our bodies are beautiful, that they should be seen and appreciated. Satan encourages us to think immoral thoughts with pictures, movies, stories, jokes, and music. Our actions and even our thoughts can condemn us. Only Christ can heal us when we have entered onto forbidden paths. He will indeed heal us, as that is the purpose of His sacrifice for us.

Carnal sins are very attractive and difficult to stop once started. The friends you choose can make your path easier or harder. The path to forgiveness is clear: “To every forgiveness there is a condition... The fasting, the prayers, the humility must be equal to or greater than the sin. There must be a broken heart and a contrite spirit... There must be tears and genuine change of heart. There must be a conviction of the sin, abandonment of the evil, confession of the error

to properly constituted authorities of the Lord” (The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 353).

You can qualify for eternal marriage. You can qualify for eternal life with God. You can qualify for the company of the Comforter. You can make good choices about your dress, speech, and behavior. You can choose friends who will uplift you. You can dress modestly. You can defeat the temptations of the destroyer. You can be forgiven. You can return to the path that leads to peace, joy, and happiness.

I am a Child of God

“For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device” (Acts 17: 28, 29). Christ claimed that he was the son of God (Hebrews 1:5,6). He taught us to call upon our Father (John 14:12, 13). My father wrote “...you came into this world from Heavenly Father, you can live always with our Heavenly Father”. Prophets, preachers, and parents may tell us; the Light of Christ within us may help us recognize the truth (John 1:4-9); but only by being in tune with the Holy Ghost can we know for ourselves if it is true that we are children of God (Moroni 10:5).

The prophets declare that we are children of a Heavenly Father (Hebrews 12:9). “All men and women are... literally the sons and daughters of Deity... Man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal body” (Joseph F. Smith, Improvement Era, Nov. 1909). Christ declares that we are children of the Father. “And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn. Ye were also in the beginning with the Father...” (D&C 93: 21, 23).

Every person who was ever born on earth was our spirit brother or sister in heaven (Ephesians 3:14, 15). When we call each other “brother” or “sister”, we are recognizing this truth. Now we see truths such as this “as through a glass, darkly”, but we will return to the place we came from and will know our parents, brothers, and sisters again (1 Corinthians 13:12). When the veil is taken from our eyes, we will remember what we knew in the presence of the creator (Ether 3:19).

In our life before birth, we were raised by loving parents while surrounded by siblings, and developed knowledge, skills, talents, and personality. We received blessings and promises about our life on earth (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 51). We gain insight into the callings we may have received by way of a Patriarchal Blessing (Harold B. Lee, Stand Ye in Holy Places, p. 117). The time and place we were born was chosen to give us the most opportunity to do good with our particular talents and personalities. The veil over our memory permits the principle of “agency”. We are free to choose to follow light or darkness, good or evil, for we

are free to act for ourselves (Helaman 14: 30, 31).

When come to earth, our spirit body enters a mortal body. Thus each of us is a dual being: an immortal spirit body, clothed with a body of flesh and bone. As defined in scripture, the spirit and the body constitute the mortal soul (D&C 88: 15; Gen. 2: 7; Moses 3: 7-9; Abr. 5: 7). A spirit can live independent of a body, but the body cannot live without the spirit (James 2: 26). "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Hebrews 12:9).

In the Grand Council in Heaven, we learned about how earth life is one step in an eternal plan (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 348, 349, 365). We learned that everyone would have sufferings and temptations to teach us endurance, patience, and charity, so that we could learn to become more like our heavenly parents. May you be open to the Gift of the Holy Ghost to confirm the truth of this plan of happiness that leads you to your Heavenly Father. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Child Raising

The trouble with raising children is by the time they have left your home and you know everything about parenting, you are unemployed. That is not really true because the Proclamation to the World tells us that families are eternal.

"Children are an heritage of the Lord. Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizen wherever they live."

We are greatly blessed by the clear statements of principle in the Proclamation on the family. Those declarations, together with the teachings of scripture and prophets, allow us to sort through the numerous discoveries and theories of family scholars in order to arrive at answers to the challenges of family life. In the latter-days the Lord has (D&C 121:33) "poured down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-Day Saints". That knowledge can help us to be the kind of parents He would have us be.

An eternal perspective can make an eternal difference in family relationships. Elder Boyd K Packer has taught that "true doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines will improve behavior...that is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ."

The Latter Day prophets have suggested an environment in which spiritual experiences

can bless our families.

1) To have family prayer everyday. Elder Joe J Christensen has said “Sending children out of our home without the spiritual protection of prayer is like sending them out into a blizzard without sufficient clothing.”

2) Hold Family Home Evening every week without fail. This is a time to share your testimony with your children. It also gives them an opportunity to share their feelings about the gospel. It creates an island of refuge and security within our homes.

3) Read the scriptures daily as a family. President Benson has said, “May I admonish you to participate in a program of daily reading and pondering of the scriptures. The Book of Mormon will change your life. It will fortify you against the evils of our day. It will bring a spirituality into your life that no other book will.”

4) Follow the counsel of the prophets. President Harold B Lee said this concerning listen to the prophet: “We must learn to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through his prophet.”

May I suggest six best things parents can do for their children:

1) Be prepared to teach gospel principles more than you punish.

2) Communicate more than you control

3) Encourage more than you criticize

4) Involve and individualize

5) Love more than you isolate

6) Love enough to limit

Quoting President Hinckley:

“To any who have sons and daughters who stray, may I suggest that you never quit trying. They are never lost until you have given up. Remember that is is love, more than any other thing that will bring them back.”

You are never unemployed as a parent. Families are forever and so is Parenthood. It is never to late to become a better parent.

Steve Mathwig

Children in the Church

During the first two months of Annie’s life, Carlene worried day and night about her health and welfare. She fretted over her breathing, eating, and everything she did or did not do, wondering if she could ever survive. Well, at 8 weeks the doctor measured and weighed her and declared her to be in the 90th percentile. That means that Carlene’s efforts in nutrition and nurturing have produced a child who is bigger than 90 percent of 2 month old American girls. I am sure she is receiving better care and protection than my great great grandparents could give

their children as they sailed the Atlantic and crossed the Great Plains as they were driven from their homes into the barren wilderness of the Great Salt Lake. Yet there is something that is the same; the blessings and advantages of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in their home.

The first advantage is the perspective that the Gospel teachings give of the eternal nature of the children who come to our homes. Each of us is a child of God. Heavenly Father commanded Adam and Eve to have children NihiTaa' éi Eve, Adam yiniítjigo, niha'álchíní dahodooleeł yidíniid (Genesis 1:28). He revealed that one of the purposes of marriage is to provide mortal bodies for spirit children. Ba'álchíní bits'íis dahodooleełgo éi binyé iigeh hóló ałdó' díniid. Parents are partners with our Heavenly Father. Nihí amá dóó azhé'é daniidljigo éi nahasdzaán bikáa'ji' álchíní nidahiidleehgo éi jó Diyin God bił nideiilnish. He wants each of his children to receive a physical body and to experience earth life. Díi bits'íis éi dahodooleełi' nahasdzaán bikáa' iina' éi yaa ákodadínóozjil biniyé. When a man and a woman bring children into this world, they help our Heavenly Father carry out his plan. Álchíní nihits'áądóó nidahwiileehgo éi nihiTaa' be'iiná bee hoot'ááłgíi éi bee biká anéilwo'. Seven generations later, our family continues in these beliefs. Seven generations from now, Annie's descendants will be blessed as a result of this tradition.

Another advantage is the priesthood. “And they brought young children to Jesus that he should touch them... áko diné ła' álchíní yázhí bidazhdidoolchił biniyé hach'j' nidayii'éesh..and he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them... áko náhizhdiilteehgo bik'i dah dahizhdilniihgo bá sozdoolzin” (Mark 10:13-16). Today Annie was brought before the church, held by the assembled priesthood brethren and blessed by her father. This naming ceremony is more than a ritual, it is an opportunity to have an intervention from God, as the power of the priesthood is exercised on her behalf. Her health and welfare and education and career will all be enhanced as a result.

Eight years from now she will have another advantage of the Gospel. Now she does not need baptism, as “little children are alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world... Álchíní yázhí éi Christ níléi hodeeyáhąądąą', binikáa' góne' dahiná” (Moroni 8:12). The Atonement of Christ makes possible “repentance and baptism unto those who are accountable and capable of committing sin; iiná łahgo anáálnéeh dóó tó bee alziłh éi bíighahgo béédáahai dóó baąhági át'é ídoolił yídáaghahígíi bich'j; yea, teach parents that they must repent and be baptized, aoo', amá dóó azhé'é danilínígíi nihe' iina' łahgo ándaahdléeh dóó tó bee danihi''dilziłh, and humble themselves as their little children, dóó niha'álchíní nahalingo hojooba'go ída'dółnéeh, bidiniigo binabiníłtin, and they shall all be saved with their little children, dóó ba'álchíní yił yisdáhidookah” (Moroni 8:10). Carlene describes her eight year old nephew as bigger, more mature, serious and wise for his years that she expected. Christopher describes himself as ready to make the commitments of baptism with “hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised into life eternal, éi Christ nihibaąhági át'éii yik'é niná'ídláhígíi binikáa' góne' dóó anoonéel yił náadiidzáhąą binahji', nihídó' hool'áágóo iiná biyi'ji' náanihididoołjahígíi éi biká nihił chohoo'ii doo, and this because of his faith in Him, according to the promise... díi éi Christ be'oodla' dahólónígíi yee yá nihoní'ánęę bik'ehgo iino-

hdláa doo ” (Moroni 7:41).

Yesterday Christopher accepted the ordinance of baptism, and received the Gift of the Holy Ghost, one of God’s greatest gifts to us. Diyin God díí Níłch’i Diyinii ii’sizíinii nihaa yílyáhígíí tsídá aláahdi nihaa yílyá. Through the Gift of the Holy Ghost he may know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that his Church has been restored to the earth. Níłch’i Diyinii binahjí’ God t’áá aníí hiinánígíí dóó Jesus t’áá aníí hiinánígíí dóó Yisdá’iiníííi nilnínígíí ínida bisodizin bá hooghan ninéídláhígíí nihił béédahodooziįįgo át’é. He may have the promptings of the Holy Ghost to tell him all the things he should do... Áádóó Níłch’i Diyinii t’áá doole’é yá’át’éehii baa nideiikaígíí nihił íshjáá’ áyósín (2 Nephi 32:5). The Holy Ghost sanctifies him to prepare him for God’s presence. Diyin God ayóó át’áo nihik’ijidlí Níłch’i Diyinii binahjí’. He may enjoy the gifts of the Spirit and have peace in his heart and an understanding of the things of God. Díí bits’áádóó k’é daniidzin dóó Diyin bik’ehgo bik’idadiitįįh (1 Corinthians 2:9-12).

May we all bless our children for seven generations to come with Gospel teachings about the Atonement of Christ, and provide them the blessings and ordinances of the priesthood.

Becoming like Annie

We all rejoice at the birth of a child. When Jesus was born, “suddenly there was a...multitude of the heavenly host praising God”. People “came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger” (Luke 2:13,16). When they took the baby to the temple to offer the required sacrifice, Simeon took him up in his arms; and blessed God...” (Luke 2:28). When Annie was born there were lots of phone calls, emails, and digital photos shared. Indeed, all rejoice at the birth of a baby (Luke 1:14).

“And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:2,3).

We are to become as little children, so I am studying my one month old grand daughter, the only daughter of a daughter I have. So far I have seen her eat, sleep, cry and need constant attention. Are we to become like Annie?

Eating. We could be like Annie and Elijah. He did not hear the still, small voice until he was weakened by his fasting “and an angel touched him, and said unto him, arise and eat” (1 Kings 19:4,5). Those who accepted food from Jesus were filled (Matthew 14:20).

Sleeping. Everyone needs sleep, like “the sleep of a laboring man is sweet whether he eat little or much” (Ecclesiastes 5:12). We should be like Annie and sleep when we need it, and sleep as long as we need to.

Crying. When King David cried unto God, “his voice was heard and the Lord thundered from heaven and the Most High uttered His voice...and delivered me from my strong enemy” (2 Samuel 22:7,14). When Annie cries, her mother comes to solve her problems. We should cry for help as well. “The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles” (Psalms 34:17).

Needing attention. Like Annie, we all have problems. “The whole creation groaneth and trembleth in pain together...likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26). Like Annie, we don’t always know what we need, but there is one who does.

Jesus said, “suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 19:14). May we study little children to become like them, for we must be like Annie to have God with us.

For of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven

Jesus was a very popular preacher. Large multitudes would gather to hear his teachings. His disciples saw his importance and tried be sure that only people they approved of could take his time. Jesus had to rebuke them from time to time so that he could give attention to the poor, the weak, the sick, and all those who were rejected of men. At one point they tried to keep the mothers from bringing their little children for a blessing. All they wanted was “that he should put his hands on them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them” (Matthew 19:13). His answer was, “forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them...” (Matthew 19:14).

We too, should take time with the children, even when other interests press about us. As we interact with the little ones, we learn more about the place they recently came from and how to prepare to enter into heaven. “Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:4). Maybe that is what is wrong with teacher education. We have signs at the door of the university: “No children allowed due to insurance regulations”. We gather as adults to talk about children and talk about teaching and talk about schools. Then we send children to school where there is one adult for 25 children.

Perhaps we have a chance to do a better job at church. In our first meeting the children are with us as we sit together as families. They are not only learning to dress respectfully and sit with reverence for the sacred ordinances, but they are seeing the adults practice their religion. The children observe our reaction to the ceremonies and the instructions, and they feel the love of the whole congregation towards them. There is no parallel in any institution or gathering in all of society. Then when we gather at home for prayer, meal times, or a family home evening

activity, we are practicing in our family what we practiced with the whole congregation: being together, involving the children, showing by our actions that we reverence God and love each other.

In church we have the presiding officers sit in the front to show their leadership role and to give focus to the one giving instruction. Jesus's disciples asked if that was how it would be in heaven: "who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven", they asked. His answer tells us how we should live our lives: "And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:2,3).

May we all pay attention to the children, spend time with them, and show them by example how to live a good life. Tell stories to children. Listen to children. Share ideas with children. Attend church with children. Love children.

Chosen of God and Precious

Throughout all the history of the earth, God has called people to receive His covenants and blessings. To ancient Israel He said, for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth. Deuteronomy 14:2.

Writing to the early Christians, Peter said, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious... Háálá Bóhólníihii bibee ajooba' t'áá iidáá' dasoolihgo ákót'é... to whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious... Bóhólníihii, éí tsé hináanii nilíinii, diné doo dabiniizjii'ii nidi Diyin God bił niljigo nibiníftíinii baa hohkááh. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Nihí ałdó' tse hináaniiigi ádanoh't'égo, Níłch'i Diyinii k'ehgo kin nihee ádaolne'. Diyingo nááda'iíłniihii da'nohljigo, Níłch'i Diyinii k'ehgo náádahidoołniihii, éí Diyin God bił yá'át'éehii Jesus Christ bee Diyin God bich'į náádahoołniih... But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of the darkneses into His marvelous light.... Nidi chahałheef bits'ąajj' ayóó ánóolningo Diyin God bibee adinídínjį' nihíká ádíniidígíí ayóó át'égo yee ááníłkii baa dahohniih doo biniyé t'áálá'í diné'é nohljigo nánihi'diilyá, áádóó aláahgo naat'áanii danohljigo nááda'iíłniihii danohlj', áádóó dine'é diyinii índá Diyin God bí' danohlj'. 1 Peter 2: 3- 5, 9.

Joseph Smith was told that there has been a time of calling but the day has come for a time of choosing; and let those be chosen that are worthy...and they shall be sanctified; and inasmuch as they follow the counsel which they receive, they shall have power after many days to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion. D&C 105: 35-37.

Lehi's last words to his posterity referred to the conditions upon which those who are called may be chosen: Inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments ye shall prosper in the land... Wóónáásdóó shibeehaz'áanii bik'eh dahonohł'íigo éí díí kéyah biyi'ńdi doohłééł. 2 Nephi 1:20.

In the beginning God created the heavens and earth and charged Adam to care for the earth. When Adam's descendants became wicked, God sent the flood to bring about a new beginning. Then the earth was one land mass, not divided until after the flood. When prosperity came again, the people became confident in their own power. Genesis chapter 11 describes the time that God confounded their language so they would have to rely upon Him. We only have a record of one group that was chosen to stay together as family and friends, keeping their historical language intact. The Lord had compassion on them because of their faithfulness. They were brought to a land apart that had been prepared by God to be a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ. Ether 2:12.

Moroni saw the entire destruction of his people as they chose not receive their calling. He read of the entire destruction of the Jaredites who had also been called and set apart in this covenant land. Moroni also saw our day when this land would be restored to the people of the covenant. He calls to us with these words:

Awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled. Dóó ch'éénídzíí, dóó łeeshtahdóó ńdii'nééh, O Jerusalem; aoo' dóó ni'éé' nizzhónígíí biih ninááh, O Zion bich'é'é nilíinii; dóó hool'áágóó nńbaal bistake ádaat'éhígíí daníłdzilgo ádanile' dóó hótšaago áhólééh hool'áágóó, áko doo nihił náádahaląą da dooleeł, áko Hool'áágóó aTaa' nilíinii nił ahada'deet'ánęę, O Israel bighandóó danohłíinii, éí bi'doolníł. Moroni 10:31

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve becomes a magical time as we share stories and experiences and take time to listen to one another. In order to accommodate all the religions and traditions of the winter season, the trend is to wish everyone "Happy Holidays". However, we are of a particular religion and tradition that celebrates the coming of the Savior of of mankind. Every time we wish people a "Merry Christmas" we are bearing testimony. Although December is good for sharing the gifts and greetings of the season with our neighbors of every tradition, let's be specific about our belief and testimony with our families, at least on our sacred day, Christmas Eve.

"And behold, an angel of the Lord hath declared it unto me, and he did bring glad tidings to my soul. And behold, I was sent unto you to declare it unto you also, that ye might have glad

tidings...” (Helaman 13:7). For centuries the prophets gave the people hope in the midst of their suffering by telling the good news, that a Savior would come to a troubled world.

“And behold, [Samuel] said unto them: Behold, I give unto you a sign; for five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe in his name. And behold, this will I give unto you for a sign at the time of his coming; for behold, there shall be great lights in heaven, insomuch that in the night before he cometh there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it were day. Therefore, there shall be one day and a night and a day, as if it were one day and there were no night; and this shall be unto you for a sign; for ye shall know the rising of the sun and also of its setting... and it shall be the night before he is born. And behold, a new star shall arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you. And behold, this is not all, there shall be many signs and wonders in heaven.... And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall believe on the Son of God, the same shall have everlasting life” (Helaman 14:2-8).

Our Christmas Eve is a celebration of lights. Let us use the symbols of the lights to remind our children of the great joy that came to all mankind when lights in the sky were a sign of His Holy Birth. “Lift up your heart and be of good cheer, for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the sign be given, and on the morrow come I into the world, to show unto the world that I will fulfill all that which I have caused to be spoken by the mouth of my holy prophets” (3 Nephi 1:13).

“And it came to pass that the words which came unto Nephi were fulfilled according as they had been spoken; for behold, at the going down of the sun there was no darkness; and the people were astonished because there was no darkness when the night came. And they began to know that the Son of God must shortly appear...” (3 Nephi 1:15-17). “And it had come to pass, yea, all things, every whit, according to the words of the prophets. And it came to pass that a new star did appear, according to the word. And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms. And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father” (1 Nephi 11:20, 21)

This Christmas Eve, let us gather our children and be with our friends and make this a most sacred day of praise and worship and joy. Let us put our differences and offenses behind us today. Let us rejoice together, for the Creator of heaven and earth has come to us. Let us learn to come to Him. Let us make this a day to remember, a day for our children to remember. Merry Christmas!

Christmas Readings from the Book of Mormon

1 Ne 11:13

And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the great city of Jerusalem, and also other cities. And I beheld the city of Nazareth; and in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white.

:15

and I beheld...a virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins.

:18

...Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.

Helaman 13:7

And behold, an angel of the Lord hath declared it unto me, and he did bring glad tidings to my soul. And behold, I was sent unto you to declare it unto you also, that ye might have glad tidings...

Jó áádóó, Bóhólníhii yá naal'a'ii yee shił hoolne', dóó hane' yá'át'éhii shiníla. Jó áádóó, nihich'j

ashi'dool'a' áko bee nihił hodeeshnih ałdo' biniyé, áko hane' yá'át'éhii nihí dooleet; ákondi doo dashinoozıı' da.

Away in a Manger (206) [7]

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the heavens looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

Ñléidi awéé' bits'áál dooígíí ádin,
Bóhólníhii Jesus t'oh bikáá'niiltıı,
Sı' wódahdęę' sitııjıı' dadéez'ii'
Bóhólníhii Jesus t'oh yikáá' ałhosh.

Helaman 14:2

And behold, [Samuel] said unto them: Behold, I give unto you a sign; for five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe in his name.

Jó áádóó, iııní: Jó, bee ééhózinii ła' nihił íshjájá ąshlééh; ashdla' nináádoohah, jó áádóó, Diyin god biye' doogáál t'áá ałtso bizhi' dayoodlánígíí shónéidoolt'éeł.

:3

And behold, this will I give unto you for a sign at the time of his coming; for behold, there shall be great lights in heaven, insomuch that in the night before he cometh there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it were day.

Jó áádóó, díí bee ééhózinii nihił íshjáá ádeeshliił áadi niyáago; jó áko, yádiłhił biyi' ayóó bists'ada' deezdín dooleeł, áko índá díí t'ée' yigháahgo doo chahodoołhił da, áko índá diné bich'ı'go éi t'óó jí dooleeł.

Oh Little Town of Bethlehem (208) [8]

Oh little town of Bethlehem how still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Bethlehem kin síní nilii has yéelgo nił haz'á;
Honíłqogi dóó wódahdi sq' nikáa'di' deíkááh.
Hool'áágóó bee hool'inii nitahgóó adiníłdín;
Hoogááłdée' diné nayólii niyi' k'ad hasht'eelyaa.

:4

Therefore, there shall be one day and a night and a day, as if it were one day and there were no night; and this shall be unto you for a sign; for ye shall know the rising of the sun and also of its setting... and it shall be the night before he is born.

Éi baą, ła' ají dóó ła' at'ée' dóó ła'ají adooleeł, áko át'áo t'áala'ajíní dooleeł dóó t'ée' ée' éi ádin dooleeł nahalin; dóó díí éi bee ééhózinii nihich'ı' kólyaii át'ée dooleeł; jóhona' éi hanádaáh dóó anádaahgo nihił bééhózin dooleeł; éi baą t'áa aaníi bił béédahózin dooleeł naaki jí dóó ła' at'ée' áhóót'ııdígíi; ákót'ée ndi ła' at'ée' éi doo chahodoołhił da; dóó yiská bidi'doochíłgo bit'ée' kódooníł.

:5

And behold, a new star shall arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you.

Jó áádóó, sq' ániidígíi ła' hadoogáál, éi sq' ts'ídá t'ah doo daoohłtséhígíi; dóó díí ałdó' bee ééhózinii hádisídóo'ıı' dooleeł.

:6

And behold, this is not all, there shall be many signs and wonders in heaven.

Jó áádóó díí éi doo ałtso da; t'óó ahayóí ał'aa' atéego bee éédahózinii dóó ayóó ádaat'ėii yá biyi'.

:8

And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall believe on the Son of God, the same shall have everlasting life.

Áádóó t'áá háíshíí Diyin God biye' yoosdlaádíí, éí hool'áágóó iiná baa doolyééł.

3 Nephi 1:13

Lift up your heart and be of good cheer, for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the sign be given, and on the morrow come I into the world, to show unto the world that I will fulfill all that which I have caused to be spoken by the mouth of my holy prophets.

Nitsiist'iin de ánínééh dóó nił hózhq; jó háálá, ádahodooníł hodoo'niidéę éí baa hoolzhish, díí t'ée' éí bee éédahózinii ndoolyééł, dóó yiskáago éí nahasdzáán bikáa'jii' nishááh, áko nihokáá' diné'é bił iishjáá ádeeshlííł t'áá ałtso diyingo shá dahalne'ii yee hadahaasdzi'ęę éí bida'deeshlííł.

Hark the Herald Angels Sing (209) [10]

Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations, rise; Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim Christ is born in Bethlehem!
Hark! the herald angels sing Glory to the newborn King!

Sin diyinii deiísólts'áá' Naat'áanii ayóó át'é
Ni'bikáa'gi bi'dizhchí God k'é nánihidoo'niid
Nihookáá' diné nohłjii Diyin bił baa dahohniih
K'ad díishjí nihinant'a'í Bethlehemgi bi'dizhchí.
Jesus díishjí bi'dizhchí Éídí k'ad baa dahwii'niih.

:15

And it came to pass that the words which came unto Nephi were fulfilled according as they had been spoken; for behold, at the going down of the sun there was no darkness; and the people were astonished because there was no darkness when the night came.

Áádóó Nephi saad yidiizts'á'áá be'elyaa, t'áá bee ha'oodzi'ęęgi át'éego jó háálá, i'í'áago t'áadoo t'ée' hazlíí' da; dóó diné t'óó bił ádahóoyóí chadahałheelęę ádingo biniinaa.

:17 And they began to know that the Son of God must shortly appear...

Dóó doo da'oodlánęę éí Diyin God biYe' hodíina'go íshjáá ábidi'doolníłgíí yaa ákodaniizíí' ...

:20 And it had come to pass, yea, all things, every whit, according to the words of the prophets.

Áádóó, aoo' ts'ídá, t'áá ałtsoní, Diyin God yá dahalne'ii yaa dahoone'ęę bida'alyaa.

:21 And it came to pass that a new star did appear, according to the word.

Áádóó ałdó' saad yęę bik'ehgo sq' ániidí léi' hááyá.

Silent Night (204) [9]

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
'round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace;
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Doo íits'a'ída, hodíiyjíd
Chahałheet adińdín
Amá dóo awéé' bik'idi'ńdín
Hodígheelgo awéé' ałhosh.
Hózhóqgo awéé' ałhosh
Hózhóqgo awéé' ałhosh.
1 Nephi 11:20

And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms.

:21
And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father.

What Child is This?
Liza, Libby, and Kathy Shaw

1 Nephi 11:24
...I beheld the Son of God going forth among the children of men; and I saw many fall down at his feet and worship him.

:27
And I looked and beheld the Redeemer of the world, of whom my father had spoken; and I also beheld the prophet who should prepare the way before him. And the Lamb of God went forth and was baptized of him; and after he was baptized, I beheld the heavens open, and the Holy Ghost came down out of heaven and abide upon him in the form of a dove.

Redeemer of Israel (6) [14]

Redeemer of Israel, our only delight,
On whom for a blessing we call,
Our shadow by day and our pillar by night,
Our King, our Deliverer, our all!

Israel biisdá'iinííí nihu hóshóqonii
Ni hik'ijiíndlí nídií'niih
Nihá hwííní 'ííni, nihinaat'áanii
Nihisdá'iinííí níí.

:28
And I beheld that he went forth ministering unto the people, in power and great glory; and the multitudes were gathered together to hear him; and I beheld that they cast him out from among them.

:31
And he spake unto me again, saying: Look! And I looked, and I beheld the Lamb of God going forth among the children of men. And I beheld multitudes of people who were sick, and who were afflicted with all manner of diseases, and with devils and unclean spirits; and the angel spake and showed all these things unto me. And they were healed by the power of the Lamb of God; and the devils and the unclean spirits were cast out.

1 Nephi 12:1
And it came to pass that the angel said unto me: Look, and behold thy seed, and also the seed of thy brethren. And I looked and beheld the land of promise; and I beheld multitudes of people, yea, even as it were in number as many as the sand of the sea.

Helaman 16:13
But it came to pass in the ninetieth year of the reign of the judges, there were great signs given unto the people, and wonders; and the words of the prophets began to be fulfilled.
Ndi áádóó ándahwii'aahii dadíneezebndóó náhást'édiin yihahígíí biyi', diné ła'ída bee éédahózinii, dóó ayóó ádaat'éii dayiíłtsá; dóó Diyin god yá dahalne'ii bizaad yéę bik'é dahoni-idzo.

:14
And angels did appear unto men, wise men, and did declare unto them glad tidings of great joy; thus in this year the scriptures began to be fulfilled.
Dóó diyin yá ndaal'a'ii, diné dahóyáanii yich'í' íshjáá áda'diilyaa, dóó hane' ayóó át'áo bits'áádóó hózhóonii yee yił dahoolne; áko díí yihahígíí biyi' Diyin God bizaad bida'alnéhgo hahoolzhiizh.

1 Nephi 11:32
And it came to pass that the angel spake unto me again, saying: Look! And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, the Son of the everlasting God was judged of the world; and I saw and bear record.

:33

And I, Nephi, saw that he was lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world.

There is a Green Hill Far Away (194) [32]

There is a green hill far away,
without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.

Atk'idáá' kin haal'áhígíí
Bíighahgi dah yisk'id
Jesus ayóó ánihóní
Éí baa ákwii daaztsá.

1 Nephi 12:4

And it came to pass that I saw a mist of darkness on the face of the land of promise; and I saw lightnings, and I heard thunderings, and earthquakes, and all manner of tumultuous noises; and I saw the earth and the rocks, that they rent; and I saw mountains tumbling into pieces; and I saw the plains of the earth, that they were broken up and I saw many cities that they were sunk; and I saw many that they were burned with fire; and I saw many that did tumble to the earth because of the quaking thereof.

:6

And I saw the heavens open, and the Lamb of God descending out the heaven; and he came down and showed himself unto them.

3 Nephi 11:7

Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name - hear ye him.
Donól'í shiYe' Ayóí úníshnínii, éí íyisíí baa shił hózhó, éí bee shizhi' ayóó ánoolningo iishłaa - deísínóofs'áá'.

:9

And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people saying:
Áádóó bíla' yee diné yich'í' dah diilnii' dóó kót'éego diné yich'í' haadzíí', kóníigo:

:10

Behold, I am Jesus Christ whom the prophets testified shall come unto the world.
Jó, shí éí Jesus Christ ásht'í' Diyin God yá halne'ii nahasdzáán yikáá' doogááł daanínée éí shí ásht'í'.

:11

And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of the bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.

Jó áádóó, shí éiyá nahasdzáán be'adinííín dóó be'iina' nishłı; dóó aTaa' bąąh ha'íizhahí dích'ii'go yee sheinikánígíí yishdláá', dóó aTaa' íinízinígíí yishdláá', dóó aTaa' íinízinígíí bik'ehgo nihookáá' dine'é t'áá ałtsoní hodeeyáádáá' nda'iisi'hęę bá ti'hwiisenii', áko éi éi aTaa' ayóó ánoolningo íishłaa.

:32

And this is my doctrine... and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me.

Dóó díí éi shina'nitin, dóó díí na'nitin éi aTaa' sheinílá; dóó t'áá aaníí aTaa' baa hashne', aTaa'do' t'áá aaníí shaa hane', dóó Ii'sizí Diyiniidó' aTaa' dóó shí éi aTaa' diné, t'áá ałtso, nihe'iina' łahgo ándaahdléhígíí dóó deinohdlá shıł nínígíí éi baa hashne'.

:33

And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved, and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Dóó háishıı shoosdląądígíí dóó tó bee yilzı'ígíí, éi yisdádoodlós; dóó éi éi Diyin god bıł haz'ąądi bá hwiidooh'aał.

:35

...for he will visit him with fire and with the Holy Ghost.

...háálá éi éi kọ' dóó Ii'sizí Diyinii yee yidoosııł.

Come Follow Me (116) [15]

“Come follow me”, the Savior said
Then let us in his footsteps tread,
For thus alone can we be one
With God's own loved, begotten Son.

Jesus ání, “Shikée' yínááł
Akoláą bikée' yiikahdoó.
Hait'áo t'áá łá'í daniidłı dooleeł?
Nihi Taa' God biye' binahjı'.

:37

And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in nowise receive these things.

Dóó ánáánihidishní, nihé iina' łahgo ándaahdlééh, dóó ałchínigi át'éego ída'dółnééh, dóó

shízhí' binahjí' tó bee danihi' dilzǐh, éí doodago díí doo shǒdeidooft'eeł da.

:38

And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.

Dóó ánáánihidishní, nihé iina' łahgo ándaahdlééh, dóó shízhí' binahjí' tó bee danihi' dilzǐh, dóó áłchínigi át'éego ída'dółnééh, éí doodago díí aTaa' bił haz'ąądi doo nihá hwiidoo'aal da.

:39

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

T'áá aaní, táá aanígo, ánihidishní, díí éí shí shina'nitin át'é, háishǐ díí yoosdłąądígi éí shitse' bikáa'gi ha' doohtł'ǐł, dóó ch'ǐdiitah bidándítłhí doo bik'ehdidoodleeł da.

3 Nephi 12:20

Therefore, come unto me and be ye saved: for verily I say unto you, that except ye shall keep my commandments which I have commanded you at this time, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Éí baą dashiinohdlą dóó shaa wohkáahgo yisdáoohkááh; háálá t'áá aaní ánihidishní, t'áá hazhó'ó shibeehaz'áanii bik'eh dahonoł'ǐ doo, éí éí k'ad nihidíniidęę bik'eh dahonoł'ígo t'éiyá, yá'ąąsh haz'ąąjí' yah ahidoohkah.

:48

Therefore I would that ye should be perfect as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.

Éí baą shígi át'áo, éí doodago niTaa' yá'ąąshdi hólóonii haakt'éhígi át'áo nihídó' hadanoł'é.

3 Nephi 17:20

Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full.

Nihe' oodłą'ígí binahjí' nihik'ihojidlí doołeel. Dóó k'ad éí shijéi bił hózhó.

3 Nephi 11:41

Therefore, go forth unto this people, and declare the words which I have spoken, unto the ends of the earth.

Éí baą, díí diné bitah hohkááh, dóó díí saad bee nich'ǐ' haadzi'ęę bee bił dahołne', nahasdzáán nineel'áají'.

Joy to the World (201) [6]

Joy to the world the Lord is come

Let earth receive her King!

Let every heart prepare Him room.

And heaven and angels sing

And heaven and angels sing

And heaven and heaven and angels sing!

Hózhó náhásdlíí' ni' bikáá'
Jesus dííshjí yizhchí
T'áá ánóltso baa dahohniih
Nihijéí biyi'déé'
T'áá altso dinéhígíí
Ni'bikáá' gi baa dahohniihgo dahohtaaf.

Circles of Influence

When we moved to Texas, our high school daughter said she felt like she was in a bubble looking out at the world. Her circle of friends was gone, and she rejected all those who would reach out to her. She even rejected us, and left us with no option but to leave the door open and love her. Years later this strategy paid off and now she calls us every day expressing gratitude and love to us. Now she reaches out to others in love, blessing the lives of many.

He drew a circle that shut me out--
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!
“Outwitted” an Epigram by Edwin Markham, 1852-1940

Isaiah describes God as one who draws a circle to take us in: “It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in” (Isaiah 40:22). Jesus was often criticized for who he associated with, but he kept expanding his circle to include the neglected of his region and beyond. “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10: 16).

We can choose each day who to include in our circle. Jesus returned to his “own country” to teach, “and they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (Matthew 13:57, 58). Some chose to reject him, others chose to take him in. When he heard of the death of John the Baptist, “...he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, [thousands] followed him on foot out of the cities” (Matthew 14:13).

We can choose each day how to react to our trials. Two years ago I was assigned to the Lupton Branch of the church and my circle expanded and dozens of people included me in their circle. When the arsonist burned down our meeting house, the church members in Gallup took us in. Some in Lupton decided to wait for a new building rather than following us to a “place

apart”. Now that our new building is nearly ready, we expect that many will come and see whether any good thing can come out of Lupton (John 1:46). “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7). Lupton’s trial by fire is not just a trial of faith, but a test of each person’s ability to take in others in during a time of great need.

When the fire destroyed a place of worship for one group, did those of other groups consider their grief? When the new building becomes available will the community come together to encourage the members? Will the members reach out to all those in need, members or not? Will brothers forgive one another? Will each accept a responsibility to be of service?

What happens to anyone affects us all. Can we, like Jesus, show empathy to our families as well as to those who are different from us? “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8:16). “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19). To be a fellow citizen is to draw your circle to let others in, and reach out to include others through your interest and service.

Teach me, Father, how to be
Kind and patient as a tree.
Joyfully the crickets croon
Under the shady oak at noon;
Beetle, on his mission bent,
Tarrys in that cooling tent.
Let me, also, cheer a spot,
Hidden field or garden grot-
Place where passing souls can rest
On the way and be their best.
from “A Prayer” by Edwin Markham, 1852-1940

Covenant People

Suffering from the devastating effects of fibromyalgia syndrome, a few years ago Janeen cashed in her retirement with the schools because she was exhausted. However, she was so good at her work that they persuaded her to come back. She soon discovered that she was close to fulfilling her contract and made a great effort to continue until her regular retirement age. This was so valuable a goal that she borrowed to restore her retirement fund. She sacrificed time, energy, and money to achieve her regular retirement. This past week she was honored and remembered by her clients, students, colleagues, and family as she celebrated this long desired milestone. It was very difficult, but since she fulfilled her part of the covenant, the retirement board ensures that she receives a monthly pension for the rest of her life. The Lord has also of-

ferred a covenant to us that is worth the sacrifices necessary to fulfill our part.

God said to Abraham, “Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him” (Genesis 17:19). “...and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). To the descendants of Lehi the Lord said, “And behold, ye are the children of the prophets; and ye are of the house of Israel; and ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham: And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed” (3 Nephi 20:25).

Jesus makes it clear that this covenant requires something of those who accept it: that they turn away from their iniquities, receive the fulness of the gospel, and not harden their hearts against God (20:26-28). The reward is worth the trouble, as they will receive an outpouring of the Holy Ghost, be gathered by God to the land promised to their fathers, and become a mighty nation, overcoming all their enemies; “and with the voice together shall they sing...for they shall see eye to eye” (20:26-34).

In his letter to the Romans, Paul explains that this covenant is not about symbols like circumcision, but it is about faith, repentance, obedience, becoming a follower of Christ (Romans 4). This theme was reiterated by Peter, who added that this covenant is available to all who have lived on the earth, even those who hear the Gospel in the Spirit World (1 Peter 3). Abraham clarifies that through the covenants of the priesthood “all the families of the earth [will] be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal” (Abraham 2:11). The Lord emphasizes the importance of fulfilling the conditions of the covenant in order to receive the blessings of the covenant (D&C 132:2).

This covenant is sometimes referred to as a straight gate, or a narrow way (Matthew 7:14; 2 Nephi 9:41) requiring baptism as a symbolic acceptance of the covenant (2 Nephi 9:23-24; 3 Nephi 11: 21-38) and requiring that we endure to the end (Matthew 24:13; 1 Nephi 22:31). Like Moses, Peter told the people that this covenant would set them apart from the world, for “ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2: 9; Deuteronomy 14:2). Dare to be different, dare to be clean, dare to be married, dare to live the Word of Wisdom, dare to accept a calling in the Kingdom. Accept this ancient covenant and be prepared to receive the blessings promised by the creator of heaven and earth.

Covenants

Ahada'dit'ááh

Our faith is tested daily as we suffer temptation, sickness, and grief. Every one of us suffers these ways. Some react to the suffering by becoming bitter and rejecting God. Others react by humbling themselves and learning to rely on God. Speaking of the second group, Jesus said,

“blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven
...diyin k’ehgo hojooba’ ádaat’éego ádaa ntsídaakeesii bik’idahojidlí, háálá yá’qashii bee bóhólníhgo bił haz’ánii daabí” (Mathew 5:3).

We accept this baptism because we “are desirous to come into the fold of God and be called his people, and to bear one another’s burdens that they may be light...

...Diyin God bisodizin bá hooghan bididiikah danohsinígíí, dóó bidiné’ é nihidi’ ní dooígíí, dóó t’áá nihí íniidzingo nihich’ í’ndahwii’ nánígíí bee ahíłká ańdeihjah dooleeł, áko bee ádaniilzólí doo” (Mosiah 18:8)

“...and are willing to mourn with those that mourn and comfort those that stand in need of comfort

...dóó yíníł danilíinii bił yíníł danohsingo bíká adoohjah; dóó doo bił dahats’ ídii bee bił hats’ íd bee bíká oohjeeh” (Mosiah 18:9).

Jesus said, “blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted

...Yíníł nidaakaígíí bik’idahojidlí, háálá haada’ ídóoniił” (Mathew 5:4).

You are baptized as “a witness before Him that ye have entered into a covenant with Him that ye will serve Him and keep His commandments that He may pour out His Spirit more abundantly upon you

...bidááhdóó bił ahada’ dinooh’ ánígíí bee bééhozin doo, bá ndaahłnish dóó bibeehaz’ áanii bik’eh dahonoł’ íi dooleeł, áko bii’ Siziinii hozhó yee nihik’ ijidoodliił” (Mosiah 18:10).

Jesus said, “blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled

...ts’ ídá t’áá ákogi é’ ét’ éii yíká dichin áádóó dibáá’ danilíinii bik’idahojidlí, háálá éi yee hwiih dadooleeł” (Mathew 5:6).

As we accept these covenants we are blessed by God, but may be rejected by friends and relatives. Of this Jesus said, “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven

...ts’ ídá t’áá ákogi é’ ét’ éii biniinaa atídabi’ dil’ íinii bik’idahojidlí háálá yá’qashii bee bohólníhgo bił haz’ánii dabí” (Mathew 5:10).

“And if a man be meek and lowly of heart and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity...the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him

...dóó diné da ła’ aa hojooba’ go dóó ajéi hojoba’ íiznízingo, dóó Iisizí Diyinii bee adzilii bee Jesus éi Christ át’ í níigo éi éi diyingo ayóó’ ó’ ó’ ní bee holqó doo, háálá diyingo ayóó’ ó’ ó’ ní doo bee holqóqóó t’ áadoo nilíni da” (Moroni 7:44,47).

This charity gives us the desire to fellowship with the saints, to serve others, to be obedient to the commandments, and to strive for an eternal family. We strive to live a higher law. The law of God is different from the laws of man. Jesus gave a examples: “Ye

have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already in his heart

...ts'ídá doo azhdilée da ha'níí nít'éego dasidoots'áá. Ndi shí ánihidishní, T'áá'í jínítínigo asdzání bidázhnoolnigo jínéél'í'ígíí t'áá ídáá' hajéi bii' bił ahizhdoolyáago át'é" (Mathew 5:27,28).

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor... but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you

...Jó áádóó ałdó' bik'ínáá'ashí, bił k'ééda'ahidoh'nínígíí ayóí íní'ní...nidi shí ánihidishní, Nihí'ana'í ayóó'ádeínóh'ní, danihódzihígíí hózhóqgo bá hadahohdziih, nihik'ee dadiniihígíí nizhónígíí bich'í' ádanoh't'é, áádóó t'áá bitaígi ádanihií'ínii áádóó atídanihił'ínii bá sodadołzin" (Mathew 5:43,44).

If it seems hard to live the higher law, fortunately, a covenant is a two way relationship, and it is my witness that God's promises to us make it worth the effort.

Áko t'áá ałtso ił hózhóonii dóó yá'át'échii bee hólónígíí éi nihíł íshjáá' ídoolíł.

The Creation

We know that before the creation of the earth there was a great deal of planning and work to “make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:24, 25). When we heard the plan, we, with “all the sons of God shouted for joy!” (Job 37:7). In preparation for the creation of the earth, we were “called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of [our] exceeding faith and good works” (Alma 13:3). All this was “organized before the world was” (Abraham 3:22). We know these things because of the testimony of the prophets who received “a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers” (Abraham 1:31).

“And the Lord God said unto Moses: For mine own purpose have I made these things... by the word of my power, have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth. And worlds without number have I created” (Moses 1:31-33). Moses was astonished by his review of the creation: “And were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea, millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations” (Moses 7:30).

All cultures in history have myths and legends about the creation, because “...all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a

Supreme Creator” (Alma 30:44). The Abaluyia of A Western Kenya, believe that God created man so that the sun would have someone to shine on. Our scriptures are clear that “Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and of earth, [is] the Creator of all things from the beginning” (Helaman 14:12). “...That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created” (D&C 76:24).

Upon completion of the creation, a day was set aside. We are blessed by the creator as we respect the creation by keeping the Sabbath Day. “And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day; ... on this, the Lord’s day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord. And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full.... And inasmuch as ye do these things with thanksgiving, with cheerful hearts and countenances, not with much laughter, for this is sin, but with a glad heart and a cheerful countenance... the fulness of the earth is yours, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and that which climbeth upon the trees and walketh upon the earth; Yea, and the herb, and the good things which come of the earth, whether for food or for raiment, or for houses, or for barns, or for orchards, or for gardens, or for vineyards; Yea, all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man, both to please the eye and to gladden the heart; Yea, for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul. And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used...” (D&C 59: 9).

In our day the earth is groaning “under the weight of its iniquity” (D&C 123:7). Let us respect creation by recognizing and respecting the creator.

The Atonement and Resurrection

My heart has been tender all this Easter Week as I pondered the love my Savior has for me. I see reminders of His condescension all around me in nature and in the messages I hear from the prophets and apostles, the special witnesses. We have a Heavenly Father. Jesus is his literal son. Jesus Christ is the creator of heaven and earth, the Savior of all mankind, and the God of every nation on the earth. This is their testimony to us, and through the power of the Holy Ghost, this is my witness to you.

I am also humbled as I am reminded of my limitations and my need to be rescued constantly by the help of others, including this week when the tongue of my trailer broke in half while I was driving 70 miles per hour down I-40. Several people had to help me this week do things I could not do for myself. I needed the intervention of those willing to be of service.

I know my Savior, who rose from the dead, can restore my body after I die. We are happier when we accept our dependence upon God. “The Holy Messiah, layeth down his life ac-

ording to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise.” 2 Nephi 2:8.

We are nourished by the good word of God, our bodies rest, then we are restored in the resurrection. We need not doubt the reality of this resurrection, as there have been many witnesses. Jesus said to the people in Zarahemla, “arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the the prints of the nails in the hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.” 3 Nephi 11:14. The cycle of life seen in nature teaches me that life is renewed. That which withers is buried in the frozen ground, comes back more glorious than ever.

My mother’s sister, Varena Lambert, lived a life of self sufficiency, resourcefulness, and service to others. Yet she, like my mother and my father’s sister, became dependent upon those she had served. It is true for all of us. If we live long enough, we don’t just become older and wiser, we become older and more dependent. If we are humble, we give others the chance to be of service and we learn to accept the interventions of others; we learn to be dependent as part of our preparation to meet our God.

Throughout history the Lord has relied upon the power of humility to bring His people back to Him. When Father Adam was cast out of the Garden of Eden into the lone and dreary world, it quickly became apparent to him that he needed to rely upon God for his survival. Likewise, Noah learned to be humble and rely upon the Lord to be saved at the time of the Flood. The people of Jared humbled themselves at the Tower of Babel and were sustained and guided by the Lord. King Benjamin worked for his own sustenance and reminded his people, “when you are in the service of your fellow being you are in the service of your God”. We sympathize with Mary, who had the terrible burden of burying her son; but we are encouraged that she accepted the support of others, as Jesus on the cross commended her care to his beloved disciples.

All through the Book of Mormon we read of the cycle of pride and humility: pride causing sin, and the inevitable suffering bringing about the humility that puts the people back in touch with the Spirit and in the service of others. Then the Spirit of God leads them on the straight and narrow path that leads to the Plan of Happiness, Hozhóózhí Hoot’alígíí. The greatest blessing of the Atonement of Christ we celebrate this Easter, is forgiveness. Christ has the power to cleanse us from our sins as we accept His intervention for us through faith, repentance, baptism, and enduring to the end.

It is my testimony that God lives and that Jesus Christ, whose Atonement and Resurrection we celebrate each Easter and each time we partake of the Sacrament, is our living Savior. I have received this powerful witness of the Spirit as I studied the Gospel and tried to live my covenants. I have learned by the Spirit that this is His church, led by living prophets, and endowed with power in the priesthood.

Enduring to the End

Bijííjí Yéigo

While Christ was visiting in America, he gave many teachings and performed many miracles. “Behold I have given unto you my Gospel... Jó shina’nitin nihich’i kwíishłaa...” 3 Nephi 27: 13. Mormon only gives a small account of all that was said and done (3 Nephi 26:6). He only included those portions he felt were of great worth to his purpose: “that they may be brought again unto this people from the Gentiles...dóó díí íishłaaígíí áko náasdi díí diné, Gentile dine’é bits’áádeé, bitah ndoot’ááł biniiyé...” (3 Nephi 26:8). The coming forth of this book is a sign that the Lord is beginning to fulfill the covenant to restore the people of Israel to the lands of their inheritance (3 Nephi 29:1). The Navajo were restored to their homelands with the Treaty of 1868 while William Walter Howard was serving in the Army in Washington. The Jews were established in the nation of Israel with the United Nations initiative of 1948, the year I was born in San Francisco.

Mormon gives the next 200 years of history in only a few verses. We learn from times of controversy and strife, as we see how people solve their problems. I would really like to know how they lived in peace and prosperity (4 Nephi 1).

They formed a church in the name of Jesus Christ. All those who came in faith and repented of their sins, were baptized in the name of Jesus; and they did also receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Dóó diné éí t’áá ałtso yaa yíkaigo, dóó be’iina’ łahgo ándayiidlaa éí, Jesus bízhi’ binahjí’ tó bee dabi’doolzıı’; dóó éí éiyá ałdó’ Ii’sizıı Diyinii baa dahaasyá. (verse 1).

After one year of preaching they were all converted and there were no longer any ethnic distinctions and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another. And they had all things in common... dóó doo éí ts’ídá hait’áo ałch’i bá dahachıı’ da dóó ałk’ijıı’ danilıı’ da, áko t’ááałgsogo ahaa dajooba’go hahoolzhiizh. Dóó t’áá ałtsonıı’ éí yee ahaa dajooba’ ít’éé’... (verse 2, 3) they did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and God, continuing in fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord... dóó t’áá áłahjí’ diyink’ehgo ch’iyáán ádaąh deit’ııgo sodadilzin, dóó t’áá áłahjí’ éí ahéediikahgo sodadilzin, dóó Bóhólnııhıı bizaad deididoots’ııł biniiyé (verse 12). There was no contention in the land because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people. kéyah bikáá’góo doo saad ahídeet’áah, da, háálá Diyin God be’ayóo ó’ó’nııniıı diné bijéıı bii’ dahólóqgo biniinaa. (verse 15).

And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness... Dóó doo éí oolch’ııd da, doodago doo ahiłk’ijıı’ ntsídaakees da, doodago doo saad ahídeet’áah da dooda ałjiłıı, doodago yoochııd, doodago nda’ałtseedıı, doodago atseezıı dóó na’adlo’ diné dóó asdzanıı bee tsi’na’adáah ádaat’éıı éı bitahgóo ádin ít’éé’... (verse 16). They continued in peace and prosperity until some revolted from the church (verse 20) and some were lifted up in pride due to their prosperity, divide into

classes, and deny the true church of Christ (verses 24-26).

The solution to achieving this peace in our lives is to do as they did, to follow Christ. “Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me and endure to the end; and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life. Jó, shí éi beehaz’áanii, dóó adinídín nishłı. Shich’ı dadínóo’ıı’, dóó nihá ndahwiist’á bijııııı yéigo ádaahıt’ı, dóó dahinohnáa doo; háálá, háıshııı bá nihoot’á bijııııı yéigo át’ıinıı éi hool’áágóo ııná Diyin God bıł baa deeshłéel (3 Nephi 15:9).

We are in the days of the fulfilling of all these covenants. We can achieve that same peace and prosperity by following those correct principles. Accept Christ and endure to the end.

Faith Building

Every time I assign a sermon at church, I tell them that I want to build the faith of the people. The result of my assignments is a lot of speeches about the nature of faith; but today I want to explore how to build faith. Elder Workman of the Seventy gave me an insight today in stake conference. He explained that each person who accepts the challenge to obey a commandment builds faith if the reward is delayed. “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:2-4).

Body and spirit comprise a living soul; and each soul is pulled in spiritual and carnal directions. As we respond to the body’s desire to seek pleasure now and avoid pain now, we are in danger of hardening our hearts to the tender feelings of the spirit. “Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and inticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (James 1:14,15).

Faith is the first principle of the Gospel, because we must believe that God lives and that we have a Redeemer who can raise us from our carnal state through grace. “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved” (Ephesians 2:5). The faith that allows us to accept this grace will grow as we act in faith. “Of his own will he begat us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only...” (James 1:18, 22).

Faith grows as we accept commandments like these in James 1:

“...be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (v.19)

“...lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (v.21)

“...bridle your tongue...” (v. 26)

“...visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, keep yourself unspotted from the world” (v.27).

When we act in faith, we must not waver like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed, “for let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord” (James 1:6,7). Yet if we do act upon God’s word, and are patient for the response, then we are sure to grow in the kind of faith that gives us power.

When young Joseph Smith pondered which church to join, he studied the scriptures, which gave the Spirit an opening to reveal to him what to do: “...ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering...” (James 1:5,6). When he read this scripture, the spirit prompted him to bring his question to Father in Heaven. When he acted in faith, then his faith grew, and he gained knowledge and power. This same principle applies to each of us.

I know by personal experience that faith grows as we act on the promptings of the spirit. I gained my testimony by being willing to apply the principles of the scriptures in my own life. I know that each of you can also grow in faith and find power in your life by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

How to Have A Successful Family

Nihighangi éí kót’áo hazhó’ó hasht’e dít’ée doo

Since becoming Branch President, I have performed wedding ceremonies. I have not been involved in the planning and preparations of wedding events, the traditions of the people drive those. I am only responsible for the ordinance that binds couples in a covenant relationship and teaching principles of how to have a successful family. President Harold B. Lee taught, “The most important of the Lord’s work that you will ever do will be the work you do within the walls of your own home”

President Harold B. Lee éí áníí lá: “Alááhdi naanish ádoofííígíí éí nihighan góne’ nihinaanish baa nidoogaaf”.

Satan knows how important families are to our Heavenly Father’s plan.

NihiTaa’ ba’áłchíní ayóó’áyó’ nínígíí éí níłch’i bee iinízjídíí Satan bił béełhózin.

He seeks to destroy them by keeping us from drawing near to the Lord.

Doo éí Diyin nihił hólóq da doogóó éí t’áá ádzaagóó nihá naha’á.

He will tempt us to do things that will draw our families apart.

Áko niha’áłchíní nihits’áá’ ałts’áidooniłgo éí áłahjį’ yinaalnish.

All of us want to have happy, successful families.

T’áá áníłtso éí nihił dahózhóqgo niha’áłchíní bił kéedahoniit’jį dooleeł daniidzin. The following things will help us achieve this:

Díí éí kót’áo t’áá nihił dahózhóq doo:

1. Have family prayer every night and morning

1. T'áá áwíí t'ée' éí ahił séédadołzjih. (3 Nephi 18:21)

2. Teach children the gospel by meeting together as a family at least once a week to study gospel principles.

2. T'áá lá'í dimóo ná'ádleehgo niha'átchíní bił Diyin bizaad nídeiyínółtahgo éí ahił dabighanígíí t'áá ákwíjį Diyin bizaad bídayółtahgo éí bóhonedzá"

3. Do things together as a family, such as work projects, outings, and decision making

3. T'áá doole'é ahił baa naahkai.

4. Kneel together as husband and wife each night in prayer.

4. T'éego asdzáán dóo hastiin éí ahił nitséedígohgo éí séédíłzjih doo.

5. Learn to be kind, patient, long-suffering, and charitable

5. Ayóó'ó'ó'níinii éí áfahjį' baa nitsóhkees

6. Attend church meeting regularly

6. Sodizin bá hooghan bii' ałah ná'ádleehgóo éí ałnáádaahkah

7. Follow the counsel of the Lord in D&C 88:119.

D&C 88:119 góne' Diyin nihich'į' yáfti'ígíí bik'eh honoł'į:

“Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing;

Hazhó'ó hasht'e' ádółnééh:

and establish a house, even a house of prayer,

dóo hooghan éí ádoohíł, sodizin bá hooghan,

a house of fasting,

dóo diyingo doo adánígíí bá hooghan

a house of faith,

dóo oodłq' bá hooghan

a house of learning,

ínida hooghan biyi'dóo óhoo'aahígíí

a house of glory,

dóo hooghan ayóó át'ėii hólónígíí

a house of order,

ínida hooghan bee hasht'e' hodídzinígíí

a house of God.

dóo Diyin God bá hooghan.”

8. Keep a family history

Naaltsoos t'áá nihí nihaa ádaa hane'go ádadoohíł

and gather family genealogy.

dóo danihicheiyėę baa hane' bá naanish ádadoohíł.

The family is the most important unit in the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Jesus Christ binahagha' biyi' góne' éi hooghan góne' diné ayóó'áda'ahó'níinii dah yikahígíí éi aláahdi át'áo yaa nitsídaakees.

The Church exists to help families gain eternal blessings and exaltation.

Diyin binahagha' éi aláahdi át'áo yaa nitsídaakees.

The organizations and programs within the Church are designed to strengthen us individually T'áá ałtso Diyin binahagha' bii' naanish danít'i'ígíí éi bits'áądóó náás éi danihidziil dadiidleeł and help us live as families forever.

dóó áko binahjí' hool'áágóó ahił kéédahoniit'íı doo.

Family Responsibilities

THE FUNDAMENTAL LAWS OF THE DINÉ. Title 1 General Provisions. Chapter 1.

The Foundation of the Diné, Diné Law and Diné Government § 4. Diyin Diné'é Bitsaadee

Beehaz'áanii-Diné Customary Law

The Diné Customary Law declares and teaches that:

A. It is the right and freedom of the people that there always be holistic education of the values and principles underlying the purpose of living in balance with all creation, walking in beauty and making a living; and

B. It is the right and freedom of the people that the sacred system of k'e, based on the four clans of Kiiyaa'áanii, Todich'íinii, Honaghááhnii and Hashtl'ishnii and all the descendent clans be taught and preserved; and

C. It is the right and freedom of the people that the sacred Diné language (nihiinei') be taught and preserved; and

D. It is the right and freedom of the people that the sacred bonding in marriage and the unity of each family be protected; and

E. It is the right and freedom of the people that every child and every elder be respected, honored and protected with a healthy physical and mental environment, free from all abuse.

F. It is the right and freedom of the people that our children are provided with education to absorb wisdom, self-knowledge, and knowledge to empower them to make a living and participate in the growth of the Navajo Nation.

The great effort of the Navajo Nation, along with the churches and other agencies, is to help families return to the traditional values that include each member of the family accepting and acting in their respective responsibilities. In traditional times, the father would build a house and keep it supplied with food and protection, requiring him to be gone for extended times in the hazardous profession of hunting and gathering. The mother accepted the responsibility of home ownership, weaving, food preparation, and child rearing. The children learned by watching adults and being with them. The long internment at Fort Sumner and the boarding schools were designed to teach Navajos to change to an agricultural lifestyle that did not match the reality of their environment. The traditional role of the men was taken away, and many women set boots out by the door, and tried to raise the children alone. Children were taken

away from home into boarding schools, where they were surrounded by other children. They could no longer learn by watching adults. A return to traditional values would require marriages to be “like planting seeds of life and love, so the couple will live together for the rest of their lives. The love between the couple will grow throughout the years as they live together. They will bring new lives into this world as they become parents and later as grandparents” (Johnson Dennison).

Children should learn their adult family roles by being part of a healthy family lifestyle. Children learn to pray as their parents gather the family together daily (D&C 68:25, 28). Fathers should lead by persuasion, gentleness, love, and kindness (D&C 121:41-44). Mothers create a home environment where worship and love prepare children for the difficulties of life (Alma 53:16-23). Children should honor and obey their parents and avoid contention (Exodus 20:12). Harmony in the home is a goal worth working toward as each member of the family accepts and fulfills their respective responsibilities.

Fasting

Every culture has a tradition of fasting for a purpose, whether to seek to be in tune with spiritual knowledge or power; or to gain some physical advantage, such as cleansing bodily toxins or losing weight. In our church, fasting is a practice with many applications and a multitude of benefits.

Fasting is going without food and drink. There is a physical advantage to letting the body rest and cleanse itself occasionally. If going without food for a few hours causes overwhelming cravings, that may be a sign that you have been eating or drinking something that is not good for your body. For example, I used to buy candy to keep me going all day. Then I spent a night in the hospital for a problem associated with high cholesterol. When the doctor said this was caused by sugar, I quit sugar. I immediately felt much better, had more energy, ate less because I was relieved of the cravings caused by sugar, and quickly lost 40 pounds with no special effort. As a teenager I heard about the ill effects of caffeine and decided to avoid it. As a result, I spent no money on soda pop during the past 40 years, and live a healthier life without cravings for things that would make me feel badly. Being selective about what we eat and drink can result in great increases in energy and health.

When I turned 18 I decided to spend one year of extra spiritual effort in preparation for my mission. During that time I frequently would add fasting to my study and prayer, including skipping a meal or two. At the end of the year I did a 48 hour fast which I ended by taking the sacrament and rededicating my life to service to the Savior. The spirit was strong in my heart; strong enough to bring about a change in the direction of my life; strong enough to sustain my direction for many years to come. “I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit” (Alma 5:46). Fasting and prayer can invite the spirit

and bring knowledge and testimony.

However, fasting should be sensible. Our monthly Fast Sunday in the church is a pattern for good practice. Eat sensibly on Saturday, then again Sunday evening after church. The two meals we skip result in a 24 hour fast associated with prayer and worship and testimony sharing. Since you did not buy food for those two meals, you save money. The church invites you to sacrifice the value of those meals in a “fast offering”. This offering of money is used to help those in need through the welfare system of the church. These sacred funds are used to help people with utilities, rent, food, and medical expenses. Thus our monthly fast is for personal spiritual and physical benefit and also a consecration of our life to help others.

Not everyone can fast, and no one is required to fast. Nursing mothers, young children, and those with medical conditions that don't allow fasting should not fast. Those of us who do fast should “not appear unto men to fast” (Matthew 6:16-18). Instead we should be cheerful and not advertise our fasting to others.

Fasting improves our lives and gives us added strength. Fasting helps us live other principles of the gospel because it draws us closer to God. Whether you are fasting today or not, you can receive blessing by sharing testimonies and considering the principles of the Gospel.

Fatherhood

A hundred years ago, puberty was only one or two years, after which children became adults and assumed responsibility for their own families and homes. Now there is a worldwide trend for children to stay dependent upon their parents well past their teen years, sometimes not assuming adult responsibility until their 30s. Part of this phenomenon are those who do not even make an effort at raising their own children, because they don't think of themselves as mature and don't want to grow up and act like parents. So, what is mature fatherhood? President Harold B. Lee taught, “The most important of the Lord's work that you will ever do will be the work you do within the walls of your own home...Alááhdi naanish ádoołííígíí éí nihighan góne' nihinaanish baa nidoogaaf”.

A father blesses his children (Genesis 27; 3 Nephi 20:25).

A father comforts...Áko aTaa' néideeshkaąłgo, Áká Análwo'ii ła' nihaa néididoo'áalgo éí hool'áágóó nihił hólóq doo (John 14:16) and loves...áko ayóó'áshijó'nínígíí éí shiTaa' ayóó'áhó'níi doo (14:21).

A father passes judgment ...ákondi ánihwiish'aah ládáqá', bee ánihwiish'aahii éí t'áá aaníí (John 8:16).

A father helps us recognize the Spirit of God (Joseph Smith History 1:48-50).

A father presides over a family (Numbers 1:2) and an extended family (1:4,16)

A father does things together with the family, such as work projects, outings, and decision making...T'áá doole'é ahił baa naahkai.

A father passes on the blessings of the priesthood to his children (D&C 84:14-16; Abraham 1:2-4)

A father builds a house of worship (1 Kings 8:20)

A father has family prayer every night and morning...Táá áwíí t'ée' éí ahił séedadotziłh. (3 Nephi 18:21)

A father teaches devotion and obedience to God (1 Kings 8:57,58)

A father worries and rejoices in his children... t'áá úyisíi bił hózhqod (1 Nephi 5:1)

A father loves and teaches his adult children and their families. (Exodus 18:4-8; 1 Nephi 15)

A father guides and advises his adult children (Exodus 18:14-24)

A father lives the Gospel as an example to his children .. Bóhólníihii t'áá úyisíi shik'ihojisdi' (1 Nephi 16:8)

A father desires that his children have joy (1 Nephi 8:12)

A father loves his wayward children ...háálá díi shiye' daaztsáá ní'ée' hinááh násdlíí'; yóó'íyáá nít'ée' bénáhoosdzin (Luke 15:11-32)

A father learns to be kind, patient, long-suffering, and charitable...Ayóó'ó'ó'níinii éí áłahji' baa nitsóhkees

A father prays mightily for his people. shizhé'é yigáałgo Bóhólníihii yich'i' sodoolzin, aoo' bijéi t'áá nt'ée' yee, bidine'é yá sodoolzin (1 Nephi 1:5)

A father attends church meeting regularly...Sodizin bá hooghan bii' áłah ná'ádleehgóó éí ałnáadaahkah

A father reads and studies the Gospel ...shizhé'é t'óó ahoyóí t'áadoo le'é ts'ídá ayóó ádaat'éego dóó baa daha'niihgo yaa íłta' dóó yiyiłtsá (1 Nephi 1:14)

A father teaches his children his knowledge and his language... Shí Nephi, amá dóó azhé'é yá'át'éehgo naa'aashgo éí baą shizhé'é k'asdáá' t'áá ałtsoní bił bééhózinígíí yee nashineeztáá' (1 Nephi 1:1-2; Mosiah 1:2) Teaches his children to search the scriptures (Mosiah 1:7)

A father teaches children the gospel by meeting together as a family at least once a week

to study gospel principles...T'áá łá'í dimóo ná'ádleehgo niha'áłchíní bił Diyin bizaad nídeiyínółtahgo éí ahił dabighanígíí t'áá ákwííjí Diyin bizaad bídayółtahgo éí bóhoneedzá'".

A father shares inspiration and spiritual knowledge (1 Nephi 15)

A father writes for the benefit of his children (1 Nephi 15:16; Mosiah 1:4,5)

A father passes knowledge through the records he keeps for his posterity (Abraham 1:31)

A father keeps a family history...Naaltsoos t'áá nihił nihaa ádaa hane'go ádadoohłííł and gathers family genealogy...dóó danihicheiyéę baa hane' bá naanish ádadoohłííł.

A father preserves his heritage and lineage for his children ...shizhé'é dabizhé'é yéę ákót'áo bił bééhoozin (1 Nephi 5:14-16)

A father prophesies concerning his seed ...shizhé'é díi t'áá ałtso yiyiłtsáągo li'sizíinii bił hazlıí', dóó náásgóó ba'áłchíní danilíi dooleełgíí yaa á'niłti' (1 Nephi 5:17)

A father bears his testimony (Mosiah 1:6)

All of us want to have happy, successful families.

T'áá ániłtso éí nihił dahózhqogo niha'áłchíní bił kéedahoniit'íi dooleeł daniidzin. The follow-

ing things will help us achieve this:

Díí éí kót'áo t'áá nihił dahózhq̄q̄ doo:

“Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing;

Hazhó'ó hasht'e' ádółnééh

and establish a house, even a house of prayer,

dóó hooghan éí ádoołííł, sodizin bá hooghan,

a house of fasting,

dóó diyingo doo adánígíí bá hooghan

a house of faith,

dóó oodłá' bá hooghan

a house of learning,

ínida hooghan biyi'dóó óhoo'aahígíí

a house of glory,

dóó hooghan ayóó át'éii hólónígíí

a house of order,

ínida hooghan bee hasht'e' hodídzinígíí

a house of God.

dóó Diyin God bá hooghan.”

Fear vs. Faith

I saw a launching of a space traveler in the news. Those at control could not brag enough about their success. It was a sharp bit of computer work and it made a text for this Sermoncito.

The planet Kolob must be a great and marvelous computer. It controls the universe our little world is in, keeping the suns and planets in their proper orbits. Kolob is an easy commute from our old home, the home of Heavenly Father. I suppose somewhere in the computer memory is a record of each of us. No one is like anyone else. Each differs from others in intelligence, skills and talents. Our father sends us here in the time, and place, and at the where, and when we fit into his plan for the earth.

We are created equal in only one thing, we are free to choose the way we want to live. It is called free agency. “Every mortal being must stand up as an intelligent, organized capacity and choose or refuse the good and thus act for himself.” (Brigham Young)

It is too common among leaders and parents to frighten young people about the BIG BAD world. Kids are told temptations are much worse than in the past generations. They, the kids, come to think they are no match for the world's sinful ways. Teachers and parents are not prepared for the children's world. But the kids are and they CAN please the Lord in their time.

Kolob's computer makes no mistakes, today's young people have been designed for

today's problems. They have built-in spiritual strength to meet every evil Satan can dream up. They can succeed in righteousness. Our job is to teach them and train them in the right way. They came here now to prepare the world for His coming. They face Satan's designed peer pressure. Alma's answer to his son was, when Corianton gave in to peer pressure, "That was no excuse for you, my son." Be sure kids understand that.

I quote once again from Anon, "The first thing a fellow ought to do after he hears he's been born equal is to try to out-grow it."

E.L. Howard

Fear: the Great Motivator

The late October theatrical production of the Gallup Performing Arts Center is called "Spook Alley". Attendees are led in small groups through a series of horrible scenes. The music and sound effects and fog machine are all designed to elicit feelings of fear. It works; especially at the end when a large man comes toward them in the dark and starts his chain saw. They run out laughing and talk about the experience for some time. The strange thing to me is that they are willing to pay for this experience. I am not scared by the actors; as the owner of the Center, I am only afraid that the production will cost more than we take in.

Fear of my bills motivates me to promote the production and the thrill that fear brings motivates children, youth, and adults to pay for the experience. I was curious as to why parents would work so hard to encourage their fearful children into the theater. As they came out, I could see the answer: as children learn to trust their parents and confront their fears, they become better prepared to take the risks inherent in daily life. "The fear of the Lord is strong confidence; and his children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death" (Proverbs 14:26,27). The scriptures are full of examples of fear as a teacher and motivator.

Children want to be independent, but as the recorded screams rose in the darkness of the theater they reach out for their parents and loved ones. They just want to be held. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear..." (1 John 4:17,18).

Fear was a military strategy that facilitated the Israelite escape from Egypt (Exodus 14:31) and their subsequent conquest of Canaan (Exodus 23:27). Fear motivated them to "believe the Lord, and his servant Moses". Jesus said, "be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do...", fear God who has power over you after this life (Luke 12:4,5). "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding" (Job 28:28).

“Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling... lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him” (Psalms 2:11,12). To be strengthened in your fears, reach out to family, friends, and your faith in God. “Fear not what man can do; for perfect love casteth out all fear” (Moroni 8:16).

Why are ye fearful?

Matthew Chapter 8

Verses 23-26. After an exhausting day, Jesus slept as the ship sailed, guided by experts who spent their lives on the water. But a storm came up that covered the ship with waves of water. Not until they were certain that the ship could not withstand the severe storm; not until they realized that their skills were not enough; did they cry out, “Lord save us, we perish, Bóhólníihii, yisdánihíníí”. Jesus seemed to be a little impatient: “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Ha’át’égoshą’ nidasoołdzííd, t’j̄hdígo da’iinohdláanii?” They were astonished that he easily calmed the storm, and seemed to expect they should have been able to do it, too. After all, they had the same priesthood that he used to calm the storm. We also have the power to calm the storms of life and overcome fear if we will exercise faith. We also have the power to cry out to God for help, and should do so regularly, not just when there is a crisis.

Verses 1-17. With a series of specific examples, Matthew bears witness of the Master’s power to “take our infirmities and bear our sicknesses, T’áá hó, doo nihitah dahółdzilii ák’ijj’ kójjilaa, índa nihitah dahoneezgaii bá dziizj’, díniid”. Faith is a key theme in the stories. Great multitudes followed him, but individuals came asking for help. Jesus was particularly impressed with the centurion, not a member of the church. “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel... Oodlą ayóó át’éii Israel dine’é bitahgi ndi, t’ah doo kót’éii bik’ínisháah da... as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee... Nílááh yínááł; t’áá iinídlánigi át’éego ná ádooníí...” Jesus also expected each to do something more than show faith. The leper was asked to perform ordinances with the priests; the feverish mother-in-law rose and ministered unto them. Additional examples illustrate the compassion of the friends and relatives of the infirm who “brought unto him many...”. We should have the faith to bring those in need to get help from the priesthood, and the humility to come unto Christ ourselves.

Verses 28-33. These verses remind us that the adversary has many powerful allies. These devils immediately recognized Jesus, and bore witness of his divinity. Although the two men were possessed by many devils, they all obeyed Jesus immediately. The misery that these devils cause is illustrated by the ferocity of the two men and the terror of the swine. It would be wise for each of us to seek light rather than darkness, and the spirit of God that would drive away those devils that can so easily influence our lives.

Verses 1, 34. There is no clear explanation why many follow Jesus and many others

asked him to stay away. It is clear that each person is a free agent and can choose whether to follow the darkness or the light.

May we all choose light over darkness, choose Christ rather than devils as our companions, and have the faith to overcome fear.

I go a fishing

After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to many, reorganized the apostles, and set them forth into full time service. However, they still had to live their own lives. At one point Peter said to Thomas, Nathanael, and four others, “I go a fishing. They say unto him, we also go with thee”. Although they were expert professional fishermen fishing on their home waters, they fished all night long with no success. In the morning Jesus appeared to them, told them where to fish, and they instantly had more large fish than they had ever caught before.

Peter put on his fisher’s coat and swam to shore, excited to see the Lord for the third time since the Crucifixion. Jesus built a fire and dined with the disciples on fish and bread that Jesus prepared. After eating, Jesus spent time instructing them, including the famous analogy, “feed my sheep”. My brother must have really studied this chapter of John 21, because it seems to be the way he has lived his rich, full life.

Born with a damaged heart, his reaction to this disability has been to become big hearted, his “murmur” turned into a shout for joy. Starting with a physical weakness, his reaction has been to become athletic. Unable to sleep, his reaction has been to be alert to the needs of others. He began at the testing lab, applied himself in college, and rose from floor sweeper to the top of his profession. He retired at a young age and has fulfilled one church mission after another, constantly in service to people and building the Kingdom of God. His disability did not slow him, it empowered him.

When I came to visit him, I wondered if I could keep up the pace. Indeed, everywhere he goes the people know and love him. It is hard to follow him, because he stops to reach out to everyone; and they return the favor with a smile and a kind comment. No wonder, he has developed skills I can only admire of connecting to others and reaching out to their needs. But what he said to me was, “I go a fishing”. I felt compelled to come along for the ride, and caught more than fish.

My brother follows the admonition in Proverbs (3:4-7) to “trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding”. As a result, he has “found favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man”. I sat with him in the back of the Sunday School class. His headache was severe, yet he opened the door for everyone, and like an usher greeted and spoke to everyone; and even carried a fussy baby into the hallway. He has reacted to his pain with sweetness, to darkness with light. He has not learned to raise his voice or judge oth-

ers, but to have compassion to those suffering and offer healing to those in need.

Like Peter, he takes his brother fishing, and like Peter, finds the Lord there. Like Jesus he gets tired, but like Jesus he thinks of others more than himself, and with kindness he changes for good those around him. He does not set out the hay for the sheep and let them feed themselves, but he visits the people in their homes and touches everyone for good. Like Jesus, his meekness and lowliness of heart have qualified him, and he answers the call.

Freedom

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. subjected himself to the rigors of academic and religious study. Our whole nation is blessed because he chose to share the vision of freedom that he gained. As we celebrate on his special day, I think of choices and of freedom.

Our father Adam's wise choices in the Garden of Eden made possible a world in which we are free to choose and then live with the consequences of our choices. This was a victory over Satan's plan to destroy the agency of man. Moses 4:3. Abraham's choice to leave his father's home freed him from the oppression of sin and led him to a land of promise and a covenant with God that lives today. D & C 84:32-35. Moses' choice to leave the slave culture of Egypt led him to receive the priesthood and desire freedom for his people. Deuteronomy 14:2.

John Howard left the monarchy of England in 1625 to have better choices in a land of relative freedom. His descendant, William, chose to join the forces fighting against England in 1776. After the war he chose to leave the plantation with its oppressive culture of slavery and go into the western wilderness to seek new choices. This gave his descendant, William Walter Howard the conditions needed to accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and set our family on a path of freedom. He joined with those who rejected oppression of the kings of Europe in the mid 1800s to come to America. They found that freedom is not free, there are those, even in America, who work to take our freedoms. In the 1800s, our ancestors were driven from their homes at gunpoint, their churches burned. They relocated to find the freedom to live their religion. They used that freedom to build cities and send their children on missions throughout the world, to teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the way to peace and freedom.

Marley tells Scrooge that he is bound by the chains he forged in life by the choices he made. ... for the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father. Háálá diné ats'íisk'ehgo ntsékeesígíí Adam asiihgo adaátłizhęędąá' dóó wóshdęę', Diyin God yits'áájí nilí, dóó t'áá ákót'éego, ahool'áa dooleęł, táá hazhó'ó li'sizí Diyinii bá hane' yiyúists'áá'go t'éiyá,

dóo diné ats'íisk'ehgo ntsékeesígíí nahjí' kóyiilaago dóo Bóhólníhii Christ bee niná'ílyáhígíí binahjí' Bóhólníhii yá sizí silíí'go, dóo áłchínigi át'é silíí'go, ak'eh hól'í, aa hojooba', hojooba' áhwiinidzin, ha'ólní, ayóó ó'ó'níinii t'áá íiyisíí bii' hólq dóo Bóhólníhii t'áá ałtsoní íidoolíí nízínígíí yik'eh hól'í', áłchíní bizhé'é yik'eh hól'ínigi át'éego. Mosiah 3:19.

Today we can choose freedom when confronted with the chains of slavery wrought by addictions to gambling, pornography, and substances. Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. T'áá háiida baqahági áánííí t'áá éí baqahági át'éíí binaalte' jíí. John 8:34. As we choose to be free now, we choose freedom for eternity. ...for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world. Háálá t'áá éí ii' sizíinii t'ah doo náándiilyéhéédáá' nihits'íis yiyi' hólónéé t'áá éí ii' sizíinii adziilii bee hólqogo nihits'íis nayiílnáa dooleeł hool'áágóó iiná bíł haz'áądi. Alma 34:34. Zechariah's vision showed that this struggle of slavery against freedom continues in the next life, but as we choose the Savior's plan of freedom, He has power to save us. Zechariah 3.

Dr. King's vision was that "when we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!'", ...the time shall come when the knowledge of a Savior shall spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. ...t'áá ałtso bíla'ashdla'ii kéédahat'í, dóo ał'áą dóone'é dah deíkááh, dóo bizaad ał'áą ádaat'éego, Yisdá'iinííí bíł béédahodooziííí' ahodoolzhish. Mosiah 3:20.

...we see that God is mindful of every people, whatsoever land they may be in; yea, he numbereth his people, and his bowels of mercy are over all the earth. Now this is my joy, and my great thanksgiving; yea, and I will give thanks unto my God forever. Amen. Alma 26:37.

FUNERALS

The Atonement and Forgiveness

My heart has been tender all this week as I confronted the challenges of sickness and death, and misunderstandings and offenses. In the face of my shortcomings and disappointments I pondered the love my Savior has for me. We have personal grief when we lose a loved one. We also can grieve when we lose confidence in our personal relationships.

We all know that life is short and no one is perfect; why don't we learn sooner to love and forgive each other? Háálá diné nihich'í' doo ákqó ádaát'íííí bá yóó'adahidoh'aahgo nihiTaa' yá'aaashdi hólóníí bich'í' doo ákqó ádaot'íííí ałdó' nihá yóó'iidii'aah doo (Mathew 6:14). The consequences of not forgiving others are too great for anyone. "nidi diné nihich'í' doo ákqó

ádaát'íidii doo bá yóó'adahidoh'aahgóogo, nihiTaa' bich'í' doo ákóq'ádaot'íidii áldó' doo nihá yóó'iididoo'áa' da" (Matthew 6:15). Why don't we learn to follow Jesus's commandment to not judge one another? Doo nihaa nídahódóot'íílgíí biniyé t'áadoo aa nídaht'íni" (Matthew 7:1)

We have a Heavenly Father. Diyin God hinánígíí shíł bééhozin. Jesus is his literal son. Jesus Christ is the creator of heaven and earth, the Savior of all mankind, and the God of every nation on the earth. Háálá Diyin God éí nihokáá' diné'é t'áá íyisí ayóó'ájó'nígo baq haYe' t'áá'í há yizhchínígíí baazhníłtj, áko t'áá háiida boodląago baa dzólhígíí éí doo ádoodíłtj da, nidi iiná doo ninít'i'ii bee hólqo dooleet (John 3:16). Through the power of the Holy Ghost, this is my witness to you.

I know my Savior, who rose from the dead, can restore my body after I die. We are happier when we accept our dependence upon God. "Ákohgo, díí t'áadoo le'é ts'ídá íyisí aláahdi nihookáá' diné'é bee bił hodoonihígíí át'é... The Holy Messiah, layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, áko bił bééhodoozjłł ts'ídá t'áá háiida Diyin

God bił haz'ą góne' doo yah adoogaał da, t'áá hazhó'ó Ayóó Át'éii Messiah biwoosba', dóo be'ajooba', dóo bidiyingo jooba' binahjł' t'éiyá, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise... bí éí bits'íis ni' níníłá, dóo Iizsiziinii bibee adziilii binahjł' nínéidiidłá, áko daneeznánígíí náádidoojahgo ídoolíłł, bí áłtsé náádidoodaałgo" 2 Nephi 2:8.

We are nourished by the good word of God in life, our bodies rest in death, then we are restored in the resurrection. We need not doubt the reality of this resurrection, as there have been many witnesses. Jesus said to the people in Zarahemla, "arise and come forth unto me, daoohsijłł dóo wóshdęę' shaa hohkááh, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, áko shooshk'iizh tídiilyaa yęę bídadidoołnih, and also that ye may feel the the prints of the nails in the hands and in my feet, áádóo shíłá' dóo shikee' góne' bił ada'askaalęę bídadidoołnih, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel áko shí t'áá aaní Israel biDiyin god nishłł, and the God of the whole earth, dóo nahasdzaán t'áá át'éé nt'ęę' biDiyin God nishłł, and have been slain for the sins of the world, dóo nahasdzaán bibaqahági át'éii biniinaa shi'diisxínígíí nihił béédahodoozjłł" (3 Nephi 11:14). The cycle of life seen in nature teaches me that life is renewed. That which withers and is buried in the frozen ground, comes back more glorious than ever.

Joe reminds me of my grandfather. Shináli was born over one hundred twenty years ago in a remote mountain cabin with no villages or towns for many miles around. Like Joe Begay, he worked at a saw mill and for the railroad, and his life was altered by a world war. Joe reminds me of my father. Shizhé'é was born over 90 years ago in a log cabin. He lived in railroad cars and roamed about the desert with bitéelii dóo biléechąą'i. His poverty and isolation were aggravated by religious persecution. The first funeral I ever attended was for shináli in 1962. I did not know how to act or what to expect. I thought everyone would be sad and grieving, I was surprised that the relatives were glad to see each other and enjoyed the gathering. When I was called to the hospital to give Joe Begay a blessing I was surprised at the family gathering. Everyone came together to support one another. I have learned that no matter

what our situation in life, we all need one another. When my father was ready to go, he left this world for the next, joyful at the prospects there.

My mother's sister, Varena Lambert, lived a life of self sufficiency, resourcefulness, and service to others. Yet she, like my mother and my father's sister, became dependent upon those she had served. It is true for all of us. If we live long enough, we don't just become older and wiser, we become older and more dependent. If we are humble, we give others the chance to be of service and we learn to accept the interventions of others; we learn to be dependent as part of our preparation to meet our God.

Throughout history the Lord has relied upon the power of humility to bring His people back to Him. When Father Adam was cast out of the Garden of Eden into the lone and dreary world, it quickly became apparent to him that he needed to rely upon God for his survival. Let's be humble like Father Adam and pray to God. Likewise, Noah learned to be humble and rely upon the Lord to be saved at the time of the Flood. Let's be like Noah and obey God. The people of Jared humbled themselves at the Tower of Babel and were sustained and guided by the Lord. Let's be like Jared and work hard to stay close to our families. King Benjamin worked for his own sustenance and reminded his people, "when you are in the service of your fellow being you are in the service of your God, áko bídahwiidoo'ááł diné bíká añjílwo'go Diyin God t'éiyá bíká añjílwo' lá" (Mosiah 2:17). Let's be like King Benjamin and do what we can for ourselves. We sympathize with Mary, who had the terrible burden of burying her son; but we are encouraged that she accepted the support of others, as Jesus on the cross commended her care to his beloved disciples. Let's be like Mary, humble enough to accept what others have to offer us.

All through the Book of Mormon we read of the cycle of pride and humility: pride causing sin, and the inevitable suffering bringing about the humility that puts the people back in touch with the Spirit and in the service of others. Then the Spirit of God leads them on the straight and narrow path that leads to the Plan of Happiness, Hozhóózhí Hoot'ałgíí. The greatest blessing of the Atonement of Christ (Niná'íyahígíí) is forgiveness (ákóq' ádáát'ııdii). Christ has the power to cleanse us from our sins as we accept His intervention for us through faith (oodłá'), repentance (ándaahdleeh), baptism (tó bee), and enduring to the end (bijııjı' yéigo). "Yea, and as often as my people repent will I forgive them their trespasses against me. And ye shall also forgive one another your trespasses... (Mosiah 26:31,32)

It is my testimony that God lives and that Jesus Christ, whose Atonement and Resurrection we celebrate each time we partake of the Sacrament, is our living Savior. I have received this powerful witness of the Spirit as I studied the Gospel and tried to live my covenants. I have learned by the Spirit that this is His church, led by living prophets, and endowed with power in the priesthood. I know that Christ lives and loves us all, Jesus éí Christ nilí áádóó Christ ayóó'áshó'ní. I know that our Heavenly Father loves all of His children. Diyin God éí ba'áłchíní ayóó'ájó'nııgo éí shıł bééhozin. I know that he has given us a way to be happy. Hózhóqjí hoot'ałgíí éí niilyá shıł bééhozin. We must love one another.

Ayóó'áda'ahíínóh'níigo shídahooł'aahii danohłııgo diné t'áá ąłtso bił béeđahózin doo (John 13:35).

Jesus Christ bízhi' binahji' ádaa'ndii'ní. Amen.

Eternal Life

Hool'áágóó Iiná

Yá'át'éeéh shidiné'é danohlíinii. Roy Howard yinishyé. Lupton Branch President nishłı. Bilagáana nishłı dóó nihookáá' dine'é baashíıshchíín. Shichei bichei England naagháá dóó Kamas, Utah baghaan ńt'ęę'. Shizhé'é binálı Kentucky dóó Washington, dóó Idaho íyisíı naaghá. Shi éı San Francisco íyisíı naashá ndi k'ad Vanderwagendi shighan. Bilagáana bizaad diists'a, dóó naakai bizaad diists'a, ndi doo hqzhó diné bizaad diists'a da, ndi diné bikéyah shıł hózhońı, dóó diné bizaad shıł nizhónı.

As branch president, it is my job to teach the Gospel today, to bring you the glad tidings, hane' yá'át'éeerii. I started writing this message on Eternal Life, Hool'áágóó Iiná, last Monday morning. As I prepared, I thought often of Bill and Ervin, and the conversations I had with them. The last time I saw them sitting together and smiling, was two weeks ago right here in this chapel. I want to talk about life here on earth, and the eternal life we have before and after this life.

In preparation for the wave of retirements by the “Baby Boomers”, the people born after WWII, there are many studies about aging. They have concluded that life expectancy and years of productivity and health have increased. In fact, two thirds of the people who have ever lived over age 65 in the history of the earth are currently living on the earth! So many people are striving for extended youth and long life, such that when they approach they end, they think it is a tragedy instead of looking forward to the next step in life. Many even blame God for their grief or refuse to believe a just God would take their loved ones. This attitude toward life and death is not new. Consider this glimpse into human nature from over 2,000 years ago:

“The birth of a man is the birth of his sorrow. The longer he lives, the more his anxiety to avoid unavoidable death. What bitterness! He lives for what is always out of reach! His thirst for survival in the future makes him incapable of living in the present.” Chuang-Tzu (369-286 B.C.).

Writing hundreds of years before that, Isaiah recognized our life of sorrow: “...I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro... Behold, I was left alone...” 1 Nephi 21:21.

Yet he saw the past and future too: “Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth... for they

shall be smitten no more; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.” 1 Nephi 21:13.

The Prophet Lehi wrote of the miseries of man on the earth; “but behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of Him who knoweth all things” 2 Nephi 2:24. Jó ndi, t’áá ałtso bił bééhózinii be’ééhózinii binahjı’ t’áá ałtsonı́ ádaalyaa.

Six hundred years before Christ Yisdá’iiníııii atoned for our sins and broke the bonds of death so we could be free (hiiná), Lehi knew he was at the end of his time on earth. He gathered his children and grandchildren around him and gave these words of hope: “Adam fell that men might be; Diné hodooleeł biniyé Adam asiihgo adáátłizh; and men are, that they might have joy.” dóó diné bił dahózhóq dooleeł biniyé, hazlıı’ 2 Nephi 25.

The prophet of our day, Diyin God yá dahalne’ii, shows us how to follow this plan of happiness, hózhóqjí hoot’áıgıı́, by setting our priorities here on earth. “The only things you will take with you, when all is said and done, are your family relationships... God bless us to be good fathers,... good parents, and good husbands to our good wives, for we shall continue our relationships with them in the next life.” Gordon B. Hinckley.

The last years of my mother’s life, I got into the habit of calling her regularly. They rigged a headset for the phone, since she could not hold it with her hands. She could only listen, and not even respond, but I was told that she deeply appreciated hearing my voice.

For the next ten years after she was gone I continued calling my father every week. He always asked about my children and sent his love to my wife. After the funeral last spring in Kamas, Utah, I started calling my brother in Washington. He never fails to tell me all about his children and express interest in mine.

Yesterday I wished my youngest sister a happy 55th birthday. She told me about all the new babies and expectant mothers in our our extended family.

“What is the great strength of this Church? ...It is the emphasis which we place on families.... We put great emphasis on the family. Keep your families close together and love and honor your children. Raise them in truth and faith to love the Lord” Gordon B. Hinckley.

Lehi continues his advice: “and now my sons, dóó k’ad shiye’ donohłı́inii, I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, Ata’sizı́inii ayóó át’éii éi bá danół’ıı doo nisin, dóó bi-zaad deinohdlı́ą dooleeł nisin; and hearken unto his great commandments; dóó bibeelaz’áanii ayóó áadaat’éii bik’eh dahonoł’ı́, and be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life... dóó hool’áagóó iinánıgıı́ daoohłtsóód...” 2 Nephi 2:28.

The ancient Náhua people of México considered the extreme difficulties of this life to be a sign that this life is not our real life, it just a dream; death is waking up to our real life. “Is it

true, there is life on the earth? Not for always on the earth, only for a bit”.

Eighty two years before Christ was born, Amulek clarified this truth: “And Amulek hath spoken plainly concerning death, Dóó Amulek anoonééł doo nanitł’ahgóó yaa hoolne’ and being raised from this mortality to a state of immortality... dóó díí ats’íís anoonééł bidééłnínii ats’íís doo anoonééł bidééłnījį’ hiná ndadoodleeł... Alma 12:12.

“O how great the goodness of our God, O nihiDiyin God Yá’át’éhgo ayóó át’ée da, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; éí éiyá naayée’ tsídá báhádzidii bílák’ee hádiilwołgo nihá hasht’ehósın; yea, that monster, death and hell, aoo’, naayée’ báhádzidii, anoonééł dóó ch’ııdiitah, which I call the death of the body, éí éiyá ats’íís daazsánígíí ábidishní....

And because of the way of deliverance of our God, the Holy One of Israel, Dóó nihiDiyin God, Israel be’Ayóó Át’éii, nihá hasht’ehoolaaígíí biniinaa, this death, of which I have spoken, díí anoonééł baa yááłti’ígíí, which is the temporal, éí éiyá ats’íísk’ehgo anoonééł, shall deliver up its dead; éí daneeznánígíí nédidoodlééł; which death is the grave éí daneeznánígíí łeyi’ dahóló. 2 Nephi 9:10, 11.

When we pray we call upon our Eternal Father... O Diyin God Hool’áágóó aTaa’ nılínii... because he lives eternally. We are His children just like the song suggests: God be’awee’ nishlı. The glad tidings, hane’ yá’át’éhii, is that we live eternally, just like God. We lived with God before our birth, and return to his presence after our short life on earth yá’aashdée’. We are God’s people Diyin Bidine’é.

Last weekend I was in the temple, Diyin God bighaan, and witnessed the baptism, tó bee, of our youth for hundreds of people who live in eternal life, hooláágóó iiná. This is a basic tenet of our religion, that we continue to know and love and be loved even after this earth life. Love is the greatest commandment, diyingo ayóó ó’ó’nínii, and the love we have for each other continues beyond the grave. In their time of difficulty, Bill and Ervin returned to the bosom of their family, and found each other and all of you. That is their disposition, to love their family. They still love each one of you and look forward to seeing you again.

These things I have written díí éí shí íishlaa to share the words of the prophets of God, Diyin God yá dahalne’ii bahane’. I also bear witness that I know these things to be true, díí éí shıł bééhózin.

May God bless you with peace, a gift of the Holy Ghost, Niłch’i Diyiniı Ii’sizıniı aa yılyéii, and a reminder, “for I the Lord have not forgotten my people... háálá Bóhólnıhii nishłıniı éí shidine’é doo beisénah da. I leave this blessing upon you in the name of Jesus Christ bízhi’ binahjı’. Amen.

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Eternal Life

Hool’áágóó Iiná

Yá’át’éeéh shidiné’é danohlíinii. Roy Howard yinishyé. Lupton Branch President nishłı. Bilagáana nishłı dóó nihookáá’ dine’é baashíshchíín. Shichei bichei England naagháá dóó Kamas, Utah baghaan nt’éeé’. Shizhé’é binálí Kentucky dóó Washington, dóó Idaho íyisíí naaghá. Shi éí San Francisco íyisíí naashá ndi k’ad Vanderwagendi shighan. Bilagáana bizaad diists’a, dóó naakai bizaad diists’a, ndi doo hqzhq diné bizaad diists’a da, ndi diné bikéyah shił hqzhqni, dóó diné bizaad shił nizhóní.

As branch president, it is my job to teach the Gospel today, to bring you the glad tidings, hane’ yá’át’éeehii. Today’s message is inspired by the life of Maggie Becenti. This message is on Eternal Life, Hool’áágóó Iiná, I want to talk about life here on earth, and the eternal life we have before and after this life.

In preparation for the wave of retirements by the “Baby Boomers”, the people born after WWII, there are many studies about aging. They have concluded that life expectancy and years of productivity and health have increased. In fact, two thirds of the people who have ever lived over age 65 in the history of the earth are currently living on the earth! So many people are striving for extended youth and long life, such that when they approach they end, they think it is a tragedy instead of looking forward to the next step in life. Many even blame God for their grief or refuse to believe a just God would take their loved ones. This attitude toward life and death is not new. Consider this glimpse into human nature from over 2,000 years ago:

“The birth of a man is the birth of his sorrow. The longer he lives, the more his anxiety to avoid unavoidable death. What bitterness! He lives for what is always out of reach! His thirst for survival in the future makes him incapable of living in the present.” Chuang-Tzu (369-286 B.C.).

Writing hundreds of years before that, Isaiah recognized our life of sorrow: “...I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro... Behold, I was left alone...” 1

Nephi 21:21.

Yet he saw the past and future too: “Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth... for they shall be smitten no more; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.” 1 Nephi 21:13.

The Prophet Lehi wrote of the miseries of man on the earth; “but behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of Him who knoweth all things” 2 Nephi 2:24. Jó ndi, t’áá ałtso bił béełhózinií be’éełhózinií binahjí’ t’áá ałtsoní ádaalyaa.

Six hundred years before Christ Yisdá’iinííi atoned for our sins and broke the bonds of death so we could be free (hiiná), Lehi knew he was at the end of his time on earth. He gathered his children and grandchildren around him and gave these words of hope: “Adam fell that men might be; Diné hodooleeł biniiyé Adam asiihgo adááłkizh; and men are, that they might have joy.” dóó diné bił dahózhóq dooleeł biniiyé, hazłí’ 2 Nephi 25.

The prophet of our day, Diyin God yá dahalne’ii, shows us how to follow this plan of happiness, hózhóqjí hoot’áłígíí, by setting our priorities here on earth. “The only things you will take with you, when all is said and done, are your family relationships... God bless us to be good fathers,... good parents, and good husbands to our good wives, for we shall continue our relationships with them in the next life.” Gordon B. Hinckley.

The last years of my mother’s life, I got into the habit of calling her regularly. They rigged a headset for the phone, since she could not hold it with her hands. She could only listen, and not even respond, but I was told that she deeply appreciated hearing my voice.

For the next ten years after she was gone I continued calling my father every week. He always asked about my children and sent his love to my wife. After his funeral, I started calling my brother in Washington. He never fails to tell me all about his children and express interest in mine.

Next week I’ll call to wish my youngest sister a happy 56th birthday. When I call she tells me about all the new babies and expectant mothers in our our extended family.

“What is the great strength of this Church? ...It is the emphasis which we place on families.... We put great emphasis on the family. Keep your families close together and love and honor your children. Raise them in truth and faith to love the Lord” Gordon B. Hinckley.

Lehi continues his advice: “and now my sons, dóó k’ad shiye’ donohłínii, I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, Ata’sizínii ayóó át’éii éi bá danół’íí doo nisin, dóó bizaad deinohdláą dooleeł nisin; and hearken unto his great commandments; dóó bibeehaz’áanii ayóó áadaat’éii bik’eh dahonoł’í, and be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life... dóó hool’áágóó iinánígíí daoohłtsóód...” 2 Nephi 2:28.

The ancient Náhua people of México considered the extreme difficulties of this life to be a sign that this life is not our real life, it just a dream; death is waking up to our real life. “Is it true, there is life on the earth? Not for always on the earth, only for a bit”.

Eighty two years before Christ was born, Amulek clarified this truth: “And Amulek hath spoken plainly concerning death, Dóó Amulek anoonééł doo nanit’ahgóó yaa hoolne’ and being raised from this mortality to a state of immortality... dóó díí ats’íís anoonééł bidééłnínii ats’íís doo anoonééł bidééłníníí’ hiná ndadoodleeł... Alma 12:12.

“O how great the goodness of our God, O nihiDiyin God Yá’át’éhgo ayóó át’ée da, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; éí éiyá naayéé’ tsídá báhádzidii bílák’ee hádiilwołgo nihá hasht’ehósin; yea, that monster, death and hell, aoo’, naayéé’ báhádzidii, anoonééł dóó ch’íídiitah, which I call the death of the body, éí éiyá ats’íís daaztsánígíí ábidishní....

And because of the way of deliverance of our God, the Holy One of Israel, Dóó nihiDiyin God, Israel be’Ayóó Át’éii, nihá hasht’ehoolaaígíí biniinaa, this death, of which I have spoken, díí anoonééł baa yááłti’ígíí, which is the temporal, éí éiyá ats’íísk’ehgo anoonééł, shall deliver up its dead; éí daneeznánígíí néididoodlééł; which death is the grave éí daneeznánígíí łeyi’ dahóló. 2 Nephi 9:10, 11.

When we pray we call upon our Eternal Father... O Diyin God Hool’áágóó aTaa’ nílínii... because he lives eternally. We are His children just like the song suggests: God be’awee’ nishłi. The glad tidings, hane’ yá’át’éhii, is that we live eternally, just like God. We lived with God before our birth, and return to his presence after our short life on earth yá’ąashdéé’. We are God’s people Diyin Bidine’é.

Recently I was in the temple, Diyin God bighaan, and witnessed the baptism, tó bee, of our youth for hundreds of people who live in eternal life, hooláágóó iiná. This is a basic tenet of our religion, that we continue to know and love and be loved even after this earth life. Love is the greatest commandment, diyingo ayóó ó’ó’nínii, and the love we have for each other continues beyond the grave. In her later years, Maggie lived in a care center, but received her family there just like she had at home. That is her disposition, to love her family. She still loves each one of you and looks forward to seeing you again.

These things I have written díí éí shí íishlaa to share the words of the prophets of God, Diyin God yá dahalne’ii bahane’. I also bear witness that I know these things to be true, díí éí shíł bééhózin.

May God bless you with peace, a gift of the Holy Ghost, Niłch’i Diyinií Ii’sizíinii aa yílyéii, and a reminder, “for I the Lord have not forgotten my people... háálá Bóhólníhii nishłínii éí shidine’é doo beisénah da. I leave this blessing upon you in the name of Jesus

Christ bízhi' binahjí'. Amen.

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It is my job to teach the Gospel today, to bring you the glad tidings, hane' yá'át'éeheii. Today's message is inspired by the life of my friend, Dollie Yazzie. This message is on Eternal Life, Hool'áágóó Iiná, I want to talk about life here on earth, and the eternal life we have before and after this life.

In preparation for the wave of retirements by the “Baby Boomers”, the people born after WWII, there are many studies about aging. They have concluded that life expectancy and years of productivity and health have increased. In fact, two thirds of the people who have ever lived over age 65 in the history of the earth are currently living on the earth! So many people are striving for extended youth and long life, such that when they approach they end, they think it is a tragedy instead of looking forward to the next step in life. Many even blame God for their grief or refuse to believe a just God would take their loved ones. This attitude toward life and death is not new. Consider this glimpse into human nature from over 2,000 years ago:

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Writing hundreds of years before that, Isaiah recognized our life of sorrow: “...I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro... Behold, I was left alone...” 1 Nephi 21:21.

Yet he saw the past and future too: “Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth... for they shall be smitten no more; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.” 1 Nephi 21:13. It seems to me that Dollie suffered as much as anyone, but complained a lot less than most. I think her joy in living was because of her Christ-like love for us. Díí Yisdá'iiníííí Jesus Christ be'ayóó'ó'óníinii éí Diyin be'ayóó'ó'ó'níinii bidii'nı.

The Prophet Lehi wrote of the miseries of man on the earth; “but behold, all things have

been done in the wisdom of Him who knoweth all things” 2 Nephi 2:24. Jó ndi, t’áá ałtso bił bééhózinii be’ééhózinii binahjį’ t’áá ałtsoní ádaalyaa.

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The last years of my mother’s life, I got into the habit of calling her regularly. They rigged a headset for the phone, since she could not hold it with her hands. She could only listen, and not even respond, but I was told that she deeply appreciated hearing my voice. Dollie appreciated the attentions that each of you gave her during her hospital stays.

For the next ten years after my mother was gone I continued calling my father every week. He always asked about my children and sent his love to my wife. After his funeral, I started calling my brother in Washington. He never fails to tell me all about his children and express interest in mine. I think Joseph will appreciate hearing from you from time to time.

Last Sunday I called to wish my daughter a happy 36th birthday. When I call she tells me about all the new babies and expectant mothers in our our extended family. Joseph will want to hear about your family.

Gordon B. Hinckley asks, “what is the great strength of this Church? ...It is the emphasis which we place on families.... We put great emphasis on the family. Keep your families close together and love and honor your children. Raise them in truth and faith to love the Lord”. On this day that we honor grandma and remember her dedication to the children, let’s all remember our role to teach the children.

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These things I have written díí éí shı íshlaa to share the words of the prophets of God, Diyin God yá dahalne’ii bahane’. I also bear witness that I know these things to be true, díí éí shıł bééhózin.

May God bless you with peace, a gift of the Holy Ghost, Nítch'i Diyinii li'sizíinii aa yílyéii, and a reminder, "for I the Lord have not forgotten my people... háálá Bóhólníhii nishlínii éi shidine'é doo beisénah da. I leave this blessing upon you in the name of Jesus Christ bízhi' binahjí'. Amen.

Service

The past few months I was in a struggle for the attentions of Rafferty Brown. I needed him to do construction on my new building. He needed to spend time with his ailing mother. As she needed him more, I got him less, and we are all blessed because of his choice. His service to his mother is an inspiration and example to us all. We all suffer in life; and we all need others at the time of our death; and we all need each other at the time of the death of our loved ones.

His service to her did not make her more dependent, but met her need for loving attention at a critical time, and met his need as well. His life will be blessed for all his life, because he served someone while they were in need. We know that he and all the family are also in need and we gather to serve them in their hour of grief.

Today we are celebrating the life of a sister who lived long enough to once again need the constant care of others. She was gracious enough to accept that change from self sufficient mother to becoming totally dependent, like a small baby. As she accepted the attention and care of others, their love grew, and everyone loved being around her. My daughter had her first baby two weeks ago. She has sacrificed much in the past nine months for Annie, and loves her like no one else can. She is the one who serves her the most.

We learn to love Jesus, because of his service, "I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22:27). Jesus éi kodííníid: "Shí éi naal'a'ígí át'éego nihitahgi naashá" (Luke 22:27). As true followers of Jesus, we show love of god and man by serving others. Nihí Jesus bikéé'nisiidzí dadii'nínígí éi ałdó'ła' diné bíká' anéijah dooleeł.

Service is helping others who need assistance. Christlike service grows out of genuine love for the Savior and of love and concern for those whom he give us opportunities and direction to help. Diné ayóó ádeíní'níigo dóó bíká' anéijahgo Jesus Christ át'áo át'áo ádaaniit'éé doo.

Love is more than a feeling; when we love others, we want to help them. Díí ayóó'ó'ó'ní doo t'óó baa nitsídeikees da, diné ayóó ádeíní'níigo bíká' nideilwo' dooleeł daniidzin.

We live the gospel by serving others. Whether its being in church and fulfilling an assignment, or visiting people in their homes, or coming when they call, when we serve others we receive important blessings. Diyinshá' éi ha'át'íi biniyé diné bíká' anáhjah nihiłní? T'áá háida bíká' anéilwo'go éi bits'áádóó nihik'ihojidlí.

Through service we gain the ability to love. We become less selfish. As we think of others our own problems become less serious.

Dóó t'áá háidi bíká anéilwo'go éi ayóó'ó'ó'níinii ayoo bee neiilnish dóó t'áá nihí éi bits'áádóó íhwiil'aah.

A few weeks ago she came to church in Gallup. The room was filled with love as she asked for a blessing, and with the Spirit of God as the prayers of all were offered in her behalf. Her need resulted in a blessing to everyone who extended love to her.

We are all in need of others, yet throughout our lives we also offend others and fall short of their expectations. We must forgive offensives so we can accept and offer service. Often we refuse the attentions of others for one reason or other without thinking of the eternal implications, because we must serve others to gain eternal life. Áko t'áá háida bíká anéilwo'go hool'áágóó iina' éi nihí ałdó' shódeidiilt'eełgo át'é.

God has said that those who want to live with him must love and serve his children. (Mathew 25:32-46; Romans 12:1,2). Diyin God éi niha'áłchíní bá nidaałnish dóó t'áá áłahjí' ayóó' ádeiínoh'ní nihíłní.

As I left on my mission my father gave me this advice: "accept the service that others may want to give you. They need the blessings that will come as they serve you."

He lived this advice until the end of his own life a year ago. His years of service to my disabled mother made his heart tender, and increased his love and concern for us all. He served those on the other side of the veil through the name extraction program until the day he joined them. I am sure that he learned to love them, and was received with joy and appreciation by thousands. My own brother has greatly extended his fragile life by dedicating all the energy he has to the service of others in the missions and the temples.

Those in need like our dear sister teach you how to be humble all your life so you are able to accept the blessings of giving and receiving service. When we willingly serve others in the spirit of love, we become more like Christ. T'áá háida ayóó'ó'ó'ní bee bíká anéilwo'go éi Christgi át'ée dadiidleetgo éi nihíł hoolzhish dooleet.

May we live the Gospel by learning to be more like Christ by serving and accepting service is my prayer. God lives, and we learn to be more like Him as we serve others. We are all here only a short time before going on to the next life. Let's forgive one another and learn to give and accept service.

God and Man

Each of us has the blessing to have revealed to us, a testimony of the Savior, along with the desire to be in his presence. Being in His house is a wonderful way to feel close to Him... hope that each of us are attending the temple regularly.

The temple is a great place in which we can be strengthened to endure the trials of life, receive help to fulfill all the callings we have been asked to do as well as receive energy and inspiration to perform acts of service for others. Don't look for ways to avoid all these growing opportunities, but take on what you can and maybe a little more than you thought you could and grow in strength and become more like the Savior, ultimately gaining eternal life.

There was a young man who had a dream. He was carrying a cross through the 'wilder-ness' and with each step, got more discouraged and doubtful as to his ability to carry the load. In the dream he sawed off sections of the cross until it became easy for him to proceed toward his destination. Finally he came to a narrow but very deep ravine. He stood on the edge and looked across. There on the other side with outstretched arms, was the Savior. He beckoned him. It was too wide to jump...but he got a great idea...to use the cross to span the gap. He quickly took up the cross, but as he attempted to span the ravine, he discovered that the cross was too short.

May we all bear up our crosses and be faithful in life to be able to come into His house.

Nathan L. Howard

God and Man

I listen to the news about man's inhumanity to man: violence against women and children, revenge and retaliation, missiles and bombs; always trying to find a more effective way to destroy, a more sure way to prevent migration, a more secure prison. This is not unique to our day; when Jesus was on the earth, conditions were similar. He was especially impatient with those who would profess religion, but not live their religion. He often told his disciples that he would be betrayed and killed. This talk made them very sad, and they could not believe it, nor could they understand that it was necessary so that the Atonement for sins and the Resurrection of the dead could take place.

The people of that time recognized that Jesus was unique and had special powers. They wondered who he really was. "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets" (Matthew 16:14). It was so hard for them to imagine that in their own day there could be a prophet, let alone God on the earth. To them, prophets were something of the past. Their current suffering precluded them from imagining that one of the modern people could have authority from God like those of old.

Peter spoke for all the apostles when he said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). The expression of this testimony opened the door for a manifestation of God on the earth. Jesus told Peter that his testimony came by revelation from “my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:17). He announced that this rock of revelation would be the rock upon which the church would be established, “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” He explained how this church would be able to overcome evil and survive in a world filled with violence and greed: “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven...” (Matthew 16:19).

Within six days the Apostles had received keys directly from Jesus, Moses, and Elias, and heard the witness of the Father: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matthew 17:5). The pattern of revelation and keys in the church was established. I testify that revelation and keys from God are in the church today.

The Gift of the Holy Ghost Níłch’i Diyinii li’ sızıinii aa Yílyéii

King Benjamin said that a man can be blessed if he “...yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit,,, wóshdę́’, Diyin God yits’ áájí nilí, dóó t’áá ákót’éego , ahoor’áa dooleet, t’áá hazhó’ó li’ sızı Diyinii bá hane’ yiyiists’ áą’ go t’éiyá..., and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father... Bóhólníihii t’áá ałtsoní ídoolíł nízínígíi yik’eh hół’í, áłchíní bizhé’é yik’eh hół’ínígí át’éego” (Mosiah 3:19). Thus we see that the Holy Spirit “...will show unto you all things what ye should do... yah ahóót’i’ góne’ yah ooyáago, dóó li’ sızı Diyinii nihaíyáago, t’áá ałtso ádoohłíígíi éi nihił íshjáá ídoolíł” (2 Nephi 32:5). However, even those who have received the Gift of the Holy Ghost must ask for the guidance of the Spirit, be obedient, and have faith in order to benefit from this gift (32:7).

Baptism is a first step, the door to the path, but we need guidance along the path... díí bá laanaa nisin ndi t’áá hazhó’ó Christ ndeiyoosdlaądgo t’éiyá, dóó hool’áágóó iiná bich’i’, dóó adándítłhí áłts’óózígíi, dóó k’éhózdongo atiin yii’ yah eekaigo t’éiyá, dóó náabi’ diilyáajj’ t’áá áłahjł’ díí atiinígíi yik’i yikahgo t’éiyá... (2 Nephi 33:9). John the Baptist said “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire... hó t’éi Níłch’i Diyinii índa kq’ bee danihidzisíłh doo” Matthew 3:11). There are three members of the God-head, each with a unique role, although on occasion they appear together: “When Jesus was baptized the Holy Ghost descended...upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased... Níłch’i Diyinii hasbídí ánoolinígíi át’éego hak’ijj’ hadahóóle’, áádóó yádiłhił biyi’ dę́’ iinéé’ diists’ áągo áni, ShiYe’ ayóó’óósh’ nínii nílí; t’áá íyisí naa shił hózhq’” (Luke 3:22). Jesus promised that his followers could qualify to receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost after his departure. “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give

you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever... áko aTaa' néideeshkʼaałgo, Áká Análwo'ii ła' nihaa néididool'áałgo, éí hool'áágóó nihíł hólq̄q̄ doo; but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost... nidi Áká Análwo'ii, Níłch'i Diyinii nilíinii, whom the Father will send in my name... t'áá éí aTaa' shízhi' yee yidooł'aalígíí, he shall teach you all things... éí t'áá ałtsoní yínanihiniłtin doo, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you... áádóó t'áá ałtso bee nihich'į' hahásdzí'ígíí béédaałniihgo ánihósin doo" (John 14: 16, 26).

Comfort may be one of the most important gifts of the spirit, but there are many, including miracles, prophecy, discernment and the gift of tongues in its various forms... náánała' Diyin God bibee adziilii bee éédahózinii álílee k'ehgo ázhdoolłígíí haidiyii'aah, náánała' Diyin God bá hojilne' doogo haidiyii'aah, náánała' éí níłch'i danilíinii nijiłkaah bízhneel'ąą doogo haidiyii'aah, náánała' éí álílee k'ehgo saad bee yáįłti' doogo haidiyii'aah, náánała' éí saadígíí bee ata' hojilne'go haidiyii'aah (1 Corinthians 12:10). We can ask for the gifts of the spirit... díí bee ak'ihojidłhígíí éí ła' nihee dahólq̄q̄go át'é (D&C 46:8), but we receive just those gifts that match God's plan for us. For example, I have a limited gift of tongues. I first experienced this gift in January, 1968. I had studied Spanish for years, but could barely understand or communicate when I got to Costa Rica. Then one day my companion had laryngitis, and the family we were teaching had serious personal problems. I was astonished that I could understand everything they said, and could give counsel that lifted their spirits. Although the next day I was back to struggling to understand, I kept nourishing this gift and found that within one year I could understand everything, remember everyone, and communicate like a native speaker of Spanish. Since then I have kept practicing this gift daily, and can even translate, do simultaneous interpretation, read, write, and do creative work, including singing and composing new songs. It is an astonishing gift, and I assumed that this gift would equally apply to other languages. However, after struggling for 25 years with Navajo, the Spirit has gifted me with only the phonology and the ability to decode the written language. I can read so others can understand me, but it is only a partial gift, not like the gift I received for Spanish. Náákai bizaad diists'a dóó bilagáana bizaad diists'a ndi doo hózhq̄ Diné bizaad diists'a da. Yet it is a valuable gift, as I can share the scriptures with others, and teach the Gospel terms in Navajo, a blessing to the members of the Lupton Branch, and thus to all the Lupton area.

The Gifts of the Spirit come individually, and on the Lord's terms. Some have the gift to heal, others have the gift to be healed... ła' diné éí be'oodłq̄ ayóó dabidziilgo bits'ís hadadłt'éego ánídabi'dilne' (D&C 46:19-20). D&C 42:43-52 explains this principle of blessing the sick: that some are healed, others are blessed in their death, and others are strengthened in their faith. Not everyone receives the gift of healing in the same way.

On a number of occasions I observed people receiving a powerful witness of the Spirit as they heard the testimony of the missionaries... nihí ła' bee hódzáanii bídin nohłłigo Diyin God bíídóohkił, éí bił hadlee'go índá doo ak'íhá'áahgóó t'áá ałtso aidii'aah, áko honohsąągo ánihidoolíł (James 1:5), then lose the testimony because they did not follow through on their insight... nidi ts'ídá t'áadoo nihíł naaki nilíni iinohdląągo yídóohkił, áko doo nihíł naanááyot nidahonohłin da doo (1:6-7). This begins with the spirit being present during the instruction...

jó áko , ła' éi Diyin God bii'Sizíinii, bits'áádóó saad bee hódzáanii yee na' nitin dooleet; dóó náánała', éi saad bee béé hózinii beinitin dooleet t'áá éi Ii'Sizíinii bits'áádóó (Moroni 10:9-10). Then the Spirit witnesses in an undeniable way. I have seen people deeply moved by the Spirit when only hearing the simple words of young men... áko díí baa sodiilzinígíí t'áá aníí át'éego nihinitsékees baa hqzhq̄q̄ doo, Diyin binahjí' (D&C 6:22-23). Those who attend church, read the scriptures, pray, and strive to live the principles they learn, are blessed with baptism and the Gift of the Holy Ghost, an abiding strength which helps them stay on the path to Salvation (Alma 7:19-20).

May you always give thanks for the gifts of the Spirit you receive, work at recognizing and developing your gifts, and use them to bless others.

Honesty

The latest Senate scandal involved a “sting operation” in which a police officer tries to illicit illegal behavior. In this current case, the Senator, an older man, did not understand the signals and responded inappropriately. The police told him he was in trouble. He did not understand what trouble he was in, but since he did not want trouble, he cooperated with them, inadvertently confessing to a crime he did not commit. Now all his companions have abandoned him, and want him to resign so the voters do not associate their party with a criminal. A career is ruined, not due to a crime, but due to an attempted cover up. The first sin was similar. Satan lied to Eve, and when she realized the error, she was ashamed and Satan told her to hide from God (Moses 4:13). Satan does not want you to know that you can't hide from God, for “...none shall be found blameless before God, except it be little children, only through repentance and faith on the name of the Lord God Omnipotent” (Mosiah 3:21).

The commandment is clear, “thou shalt not steal” (Exodus 20:15). That seems easy. Locks and labels help keep the honest man honest about what belongs to him. Yet, all things belong to God. “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings” (Malachi 3:8). It is simple to repent from such dishonesty, just pay tithing before any other obligation, and you will prosper. Who tells you that you can't afford to pay tithing? It is “Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, [whose plan is] to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto [God's] voice” (Moses 4: 4).

Satan can deceive almost anyone by telling each one what he wants to hear. “For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good. And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well - and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell. And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none - and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no

deliverance” (2 Nephi 28: 20-22).

I have a friend who is a great musician, but the other musicians won't play with him anymore. He believes that he can have one beer like everyone else. Satan lies to him, and he believes it, even though he knows he cannot drink only one. I have a friend who believes that looking at women is not a sin because it is not touching. Christ said that looking to lust is the same as adultery (Matthew 5:28), and the multibillion dollar, multinational pornography industry takes advantage of this lie. As a result of this lie, the divorce rate, STDs, abortions, and “moving in” are all higher than ever. “Behold, verily I say unto you, that there are many spirits which are false spirits, which have gone forth in the earth, deceiving the world. And also Satan hath sought to deceive you, that he might overthrow you. But wo unto them that are deceivers and hypocrites, for, thus saith the Lord, I will bring them to judgment” (D&C 50: 2-3, 6).

The most insidious lie is when Satan tells you that you have gone too far and cannot repent. “...Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point because of your sins, by denying the justice of God; but do you let the justice of God, and his mercy, and his long-suffering have full sway in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust in humility”(Alma 42:30). May God bless you to face your weaknesses and be honest in resolving issues, so that you may have the Spirit of God with you always.

Hope

Mormon lived his entire life in a day of great wickedness and war. He outlived his people, having seen the entire destruction of all the armies, all the wives, all the children, all the homes and cities and farms. Yet he had hope because of the statement of his Savior: “Whatsoever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, in faith believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you” (Moroni 7:26).

In a day when all had lost hope, he preached the Gospel of hope: “...ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise” (Moroni 7:41).

On April 2, 2006, President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke of himself. “When you are designated as the president of such a large church, there is no privacy, everyone knows everything about you.” So he told us all about himself and why he has hope. His life began in the age of the Model T before World War I. He has lived for over half the history of the restored church. He has seen much death and destruction, and is the person in the church who hears the worst stories of apostasy and sin of the members. Yet in his 200 conference messages as a general authority, his message is always one of hope, faith, love, and redemption.

The reason he is able to maintain such a positive outlook is because he is full of charity, the pure love of Christ, and “charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not

puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things” (Moroni 7:45).

I listen to the international news, and learn of war and oppression, poverty, hunger, disease, and the general mistreatment and suffering of billions of people. I listen to the church news and learn of the sacrifice of people on behalf of others. I learn of the time people spend with family, friends, and strangers. I learn that there is enough hope left in the world for people to sacrifice for others and find peace.

How can we attain this hope? “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, 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 that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear 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).

“Now my brethren, we see that God is mindful of every people, whatsoever land they may be in; yea, he numbereth his people, and his bowels of mercy are over all the earth. Now this is my joy, and my great thanksgiving; yea, and I will give thanks unto my God forever” (Alma 26:37).

“If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me” (Moroni 7:33). May our church responsibilities bring joy and satisfaction. May we live in our families with respect and devotion. May the Lord be with us each and everyone until we meet again. May we live the Gospel of Hope.

Freedom

The 19th and 20 Century freedom movements in the Americas were foreseen by Nephi 600 years before Christ, as were the eventual success of these battles. “And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles who had gone forth out of captivity did humble themselves before the Lord; and the power of the Lord was with them. And I beheld that their mother Gentiles were gathered together upon the waters, and upon the land also, to battle against them. And I beheld that the power of God was with them, and also that the wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle. And I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles that had gone out of captivity were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations” (1 Nephi 13:16-19).

May is a good time to celebrate freedom, as it was “el Cinco de Mayo” 1862 that General Ignacio Zaragoza led the citizens of Puebla in a successful resistance against the invasion of the French army. It was 15 May 1776 that the Continental Congress passed a resolution to seek independence from England. “And the time will come that war will be poured out upon all

nations, beginning at this place” (D&C 87:2). Independence is celebrated by Paraguay 14 May 1811, Cuba 20 May 1902, Ecuador 24 May 1822, and Guyana 26 May 1966.

June is a good time to celebrate freedom, as 18 June 1868 the Navajo left their long confinement at Fort Sumner and started the long walk home. “...wherefore, thou seest that the Lord God will not suffer that the Gentiles will utterly destroy the mixture of thy seed, which are among thy brethren” (1 Nephi 13:30). 19 June 1865 the slaves in Texas learned of Emancipation and began to be free. 19 June 1867 Benito Juárez ordered the execution of Emperor Maximiliano and ended the five year French Intervention in México, restoring to them “the land which is choice above all other lands, which is the land that the Lord God hath covenanted with thy father that his seed should have for the land of their inheritance” (1 Nephi 13:30).

July is a good time to celebrate freedom. It was 2 July 1776 that Congress, after much resistance and debate, approved the Declaration composed by Thomas Jefferson. John Adams signed it, and predicted that “this day will be celebrated with fireworks and music throughout all ages of history. The celebration is finally set to 4 July, and the Congress completes signing it on 19 August. 4 July 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo passes 1/3 of Mexico to the United States. Independence is celebrated by the USA 4 July 1776, Venezuela 5 July 1821, Argentina 9 July 1816, Bahamas 10 July 1819, Colombia 20 July 1810, Peru 28 July 1821.

September is a very good time to celebrate freedom. 9 September 1850 California became the 31st state and Utah and New Mexico were made territories of the U.S. 9 September 1492 Columbus set sail to explore a western route to the East Indies, but landed in the West Indies. “And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land” (1 Nephi 13:12).

September 11 is a day to contemplate the effort that it takes to acquire and maintain freedom. “And it came to pass that I beheld multitudes gathered together to battle, one against the other; and I beheld wars, and rumors of wars, and great slaughters with the sword among my people” (1 Nephi 12:2):

11 Sep 1297 Scottish rebel William Wallace defeats the British at the battle of Stirling Bridge, making Wallace the sole guardian of Scotland.

11 Sep 1649 Oliver Cromwell seizes Drogheda, Ireland, killing 3,000 people (most of the inhabitants). 1659 Sir George Booth’s troops are routed by John Lambert at the Battle of Warrington Bridge, the last battle of the English Civil War.

11 Sep 1773 Benjamin Franklin states: “There never was a good war or a bad peace”.

11 Sep 1777 General Washington loses 1200-1300 of his troops and Philadelphia to General Howe at the Battle of Brandywine.

11 Sep 1814 Francis Scott Key is captured at the Battle of Lake Champlain, and composes the Star Spangled Banner (14 September).

11 Sep 1857 Utah militiamen at war with the U.S. try to blame an unauthorized

battle with emigrants on the Paiute, but when they are discovered, they try to cover up by leaving no witnesses, and 120 are massacred at Mountain Meadows.

11 Sep 1973 President Nixon orders a coup in Chile in which Pinochet deposes Allende. 11 Sep 1980 Chile establishes a new constitution.

11 Sep 1986 nuclear bomb tests in Nevada. 11 Sep 1983 nuclear bomb tests in USSR. 11 Sep 1969 nuclear bomb tests in USSR.

11 Sep 1987 shoot out at Jean-Bertrand Aristides' church in Haiti, 12 die.

11 Sep 1991 14 die in a Continental Express commuter plane crash near Houston

11 Sep 2001 19 Saudi terrorists hijack four commercial jets, killing nearly 3,000 in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania. President Bush declares September 11 "Patriot's Day" and retaliates by unleashing "Shock and Awe" against Iraq in March 2003 and declares victory on 14 April, but the war never ends. "Behold what the scripture says - man shall not smite, neither shall he judge; for judgment is mine, saith the Lord, and vengeance is mine also, and I will repay" (Mormon 8:20).

11 Sep 1992 Hurricane Iniki injures 8,000 in Hawaii. September 2005 flags are at half mast for 1,836 Hurricane Katrina victims. 11 Sep 1847 "Oh Susanna" premiers in Pittsburg: in this dream sequence it rained all night in Louisiana. "For I, the Lord, have decreed in mine anger many destructions upon the waters; yea, and especially upon these waters" (D&C 61:5). Yet, "they shall not be beaten down by the storm at the last day; yea, neither shall they be harrowed up by the whirlwinds; but when the storm cometh they shall be gathered together in their place, that the storm cannot penetrate to them; yea, neither shall they be driven with fierce winds whithersoever the enemy listeth to carry them" (Alma 26:6).

On the 15th of September 1810 the native born people of New Spain (criollos) met to discuss freedom from Spain. The "Literary Guild" meeting in the home of Doña Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez is discovered by the Españoles. Doña Josefa sends word to Padre Hidalgo, who rings the bell of the church late at night to gather the people. His rousing speech initiates the revolution.

16 Sep 1810 Padre Hidalgo shouts "Viva la Independencia, Viva la América, Muera el mal gobierno, Viva México", and the movement for freedom from European kings is initiated for all of Western North America, Middle America, and South America. "And I beheld that the power of God was with them, and also that the wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle" (1 Nephi 13:18). The war ends in 1821. The constitution of 1823 forms México.

17 Sep 1787 the Constitutional Convention presided over by George Washington in Philadelphia concluded its work on what is now the oldest federal constitution in existence. It is based on the oldest existing constitution on the planet: the Massachusetts Commonwealth Constitution written by John Adams, and the Constitution of the Iroquois Confederacy (People of the Six Nations). September 17 is U.S. Citizenship Day and the beginning of U.S. Constitution Week. "According to the laws and constitution of the people, which I have suffered to be established, and should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles; That every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment. Therefore, it is not right that any man should be in

bondage one to another. And for this purpose have I established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose, and redeemed the land by the shedding of blood.” (D&C 101:77-80).

Independence is celebrated by Brazil 7 September 1822, 15 September 1821 Costa Rica, Guatemala, 15 September 1838 Honduras, México 16 September 1810, 18 September 1818 Chile, 19 September 1983 St. Christopher-Nevis, 21 September 1821 El Salvador, 28 September 1821 Nicaragua.

“Nevertheless, thou beholdest that the Gentiles who have gone forth out of captivity, and have been lifted up by the power of God above all other nations, upon the face of the land which is choice above all other lands, which is the land that the Lord God hath covenanted with thy father that his seed should have for the land of their inheritance; wherefore, thou seest that the Lord God will not suffer... that the Gentiles shall forever remain in that awful state of blindness, which thou beholdest they are in, because of the plain and most precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church, whose formation thou hast seen...I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them, in mine own power, much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious, saith the Lamb... And in them shall be written my gospel, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my salvation... And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; and whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be” (1 Nephi 13:30-37).

We have many reasons to remember the sacrifices that have given us a hope of freedom. We should hearken to the words of the God of this land, and walk in obedience to His commandments, so that our freedoms may be preserved. “Wherefore, I, Lehi, have obtained a promise, that inasmuch as those whom the Lord God shall bring out of the land of Jerusalem shall keep his commandments, they shall prosper upon the face of this land; and they shall be kept from all other nations, that they may possess this land unto themselves. And if it so be that they shall keep his commandments they shall be blessed upon the face of this land, and there shall be none to molest them, nor to take away the land of their inheritance; and they shall dwell safely forever” (2 Nephi 1: 9). Let us use our freedom to fulfill our calling to bring the Gospel of Peace to the world.

Jesus Christ

A friend recently asked me to clarify the role and nature of the Holy Ghost. I had to put the answer in the context of the Godhead. We have a father of our spirits through whom we inherit divine nature. Since we are born into mortality we have a carnal nature and need a savior, who is Jesus Christ. Our complete soul includes a mortal body joined with a spirit that came from the presence of God. The Holy Ghost is able to communicate to our spirit to give us tes-

timony, guidance, comfort, and spiritual gifts. Since a testimony of Jesus Christ and his role as savior and redeemer is key to salvation, I pray that your heart may be open to the testimony of the Spirit today.

Before we were born on the earth, we lived in the presence of our Heavenly Father as one of His spirit children. In this premortal existence, we attended a council with Heavenly Father's other spirit children. At that council, Heavenly Father presented His great plan of happiness in which we would have the agency to choose. When the Father chose Jesus's offer to sacrifice himself for us over Lucifer's plan to save everyone, Lucifer mounted a rebellion. One third of the hosts of heaven followed him and were cast down to the earth without the chance to have bodies. They are still here, striving to tempt us to their same destruction. (see Abraham 3:22-26).

As the Only Begotten Son of God the Father in the flesh, Jesus Christ had the power to overcome death and initiate the resurrection of all who die. He was the Creator, He is our Savior, and He will be our Judge. Under the direction of our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ created the earth. Jesus Christ was foreordained to carry out the Atonement, becoming "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," (Revelation 13:8; see also 1 Peter 1:19-21). Through His suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane and by giving His life on the cross - that is, by performing the Atonement - Jesus Christ saves us from our sins as we follow Him.

To put us in tune with the Spirit so we can learn and gain a testimony and be sanctified, sacrifice has always been a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To sacrifice is to give up something valuable or precious, often with the intent of accomplishing a greater purpose or goal. It is a reminder of the great atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ for all who have lived or will live on earth. Before the ministry of Christ, animal sacrifices were offered for this purpose (Moses 5:4-8). After the Atonement of Christ, followers of Jesus Christ - by His direction - began to offer instead a "broken heart and contrite spirit" (3 Nephi 9:20), a willingness to repent of sins and a desire to follow Jesus Christ and align one's life with His commandments.

To prepare our spirit to accept the sacrifice of Christ, we practice the law of sacrifice in our own lives in many ways. We accept assignments to serve by speaking in church, passing the sacrament, or bringing food to a church function. We fast and give voluntary donations to help others. We demonstrate faith by obeying the law of tithing. We accept callings to serve as teachers, visitors, or leaders in the church. We accept covenants of obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel so we can qualify for a recommend, then sacrifice our time and resources to serve in the temple, a sacrifice that requires faith, as we are serving strangers and relatives long gone.

May we offer a broken heart and contrite spirit, live the law of sacrifice, and accept Christ so that we may find peace through the Gift of the Holy Ghost, and assurance that we are on a path to return to our Heavenly Father.

Jesus Christ, our Role Model

At Christmas time we celebrate the fulfilling of prophecy in the miraculous birth and life of Jesus (Acts 10:43). At Easter time we recognize what He has done for us that we can't do for ourselves (Isaiah 53:3-7). All year long we can look to His life as a guide for our own (Matthew 22:36-39). There is no better role model than the life of Jesus.

Jesus was born as the King of the Jews (Matthew 1:1-17; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:38) during a time of military occupation by a foreign power, which put Him in great danger (Matthew 2: 16-18). Therefore he began life in political exile far from home. Joseph found this place of safety by responding to the inspiration he received in a dream (Matthew 2:13-15). We can rely upon inspiration to guide us in safe paths.

He was raised in a family that faithfully followed their religious practice (Luke 2:22, 23, 39). In His childhood He seriously studied the scriptures and discussed the meaning with the teachers and leaders (Luke 2:40-47). He respected and honored His parents (Matthew 15:4). Jesus learned His Father's will, and worked to please Him (John 8:28-29). We can make the effort to teach our children those principles and practices that guide our own lives.

When the people laughed at Him, He ignored their scorn and thought of others' needs (Mark 5:39-42). We can take charge of our own feelings and not be brought down by others.

A man of sorrows with great burdens (Isaiah 53:3-4), He found joy in living (John 16:20-22). We can choose to see the beautiful forest and not be focused on the trees that block our path.

He met challenges with fasting and prayer, (Matthew 4:1-2). He chose the words of life over worldly pleasures (4:3-4). He knew He was powerful, but chose a life of service (4:8-10). We can overcome temptation and choose a higher path.

He taught that we should serve others (Matthew 25:35-46) and often sacrificed His own comfort to take time for others (Luke 9:12-17). We can think of others more than ourselves.

He took time for the children when others would have kept them away (Mark 10:13-14). We can take time for our families in spite of the pressures of jobs and friends.

He suffered abandonment by his friends (Luke 22:54-62), people mocked and mistreated Him (22:63-65), and He was falsely accused (23:8-25); yet He rose above all that and forgave all (23:34). He lived as He spoke: "that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). We can choose to react to violence, disdain, and false witness with truth and love.

He accepted death with hope and a vision of the next step in life (Luke 23:46). We can

find peace as we accept the trials of life.

He sacrificed time and energy on behalf of others, and to be obedient to a higher law (John 15:13-14). We can find joy as we live like Jesus, a worthy role model for our own lives.

Joy

The purpose of man's creation is to enable him to gain joy - as the scripture says: "Men are, that they might have joy." Joseph Smith not only understood the profound meaning of this scripture as it relates to our eternal pursuits but also in regards to our earthly endeavors when he said, "Happiness is the object and design of our existence, and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it." The Lord has clearly defined this path which is kindness, obedience and godliness.

The process of acquiring this joyful state of happiness began in the preexistence. It was there that all the sons of God shouted for joy at the prospect of coming to earth and undergoing probationary experiences. To those who are obedient to the gospel, the scriptures say that good tidings of great joy will be ours. Joy is a gift from the Spirit. It comes from the Holy Ghost.

It is universally known that providing service adds purpose and joy to our lives - as Robert Louis Stevenson wrote, "I know what happiness is, for I have done good work." More importantly the Lord stated in D&C 58, "Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness. For the power is in them."

I read a story of a 92 -year-old man. His wife recently passed away, making it necessary for him to move into another room in the care center. He smiled sweetly when told his room was ready and followed the attendant into the hall. As she motioned toward the room he said, "I love it", with enthusiasm. "Mr. Jones, you haven't seen the room, just wait." "That doesn't have anything to do with it," he replied...happiness is something you decide on ahead of time, Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged...it's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it. It's a decision I make every morning when I wake up. I have a choice. Each day is a gift, and as long as my eyes open, I'll focus on the new day and all the happy memories I've stored away...just for this time in my life."

My advise to you would be to deposite a lot of happiness in the back account of memories.

President Hinckley said, "In all of living have much fun and laughter. Life is to be enjoyed, not just endured."

Remember these five simple rules to be happy:

1. Free your heart from hatred.

2. Free your mind from worries.
3. Live simply.
4. Give more.
5. Expect less.

JoAnn F. Howard

Judge Not

When the first Europeans came to America, they learned to eat the native foods. The Pilgrims restored their health with pumpkin, corn, squash, turkey, and a multitude of berries and sea foods so different from the salted meat and fish, peas, beans, beer, and hard cheese of their journey. Later the traders brought exotic tropical goods like sugar. By the late 1800s Americans were consuming five pounds of sugar per year. By the late 1900s the consumption was 26 pounds per year. Now Americans ingest 135 pounds of sugar per year! Taking in more sugar than your body can process causes problems, including raising the insulin level, inhibiting the release of growth hormones, depressing the immune system, promoting the storage of fat, elevating triglyceride levels. Sugar increases cardiovascular disease, cancer, osteoporosis, and tooth decay. Sugar aggravates asthma, mood swings, personality changes, mental illness, nervous disorders, diabetes, gallstones, hypertension, obesity, degenerative disease, and the common cold. Furthermore, sugar is devoid of minerals, vitamins, fiber, and has a deteriorating effect on the endocrine system. Sugar can even speed the aging process, causing wrinkles and gray hair. Yet we are constantly served sugar rich foods, and easily develop a constant urge to eat more of this imported poison, even though it makes us feel worse.

It seems to be in our nature to do things that are bad for our bodies. We do the same with things that are bad for our spirits. When Adam was confronted by God about eating something he shouldn't, he first hid himself. Then he said, "The woman thou gavest me, and commandest that she should remain with me, she gave me of the fruit of the tree and I did eat" (Moses 4:18). It seems to be a natural, pleasant pastime to criticize the government, the church, our friends, and especially our relatives. But if we make it a habit, criticizing others only weakens ourselves. It seems to be very natural for us to do things that are bad for us and then justify ourselves by blaming others. "For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19). One characteristic of children that we need to learn for ourselves, is their purity of heart. They are willing to submit to all things, and not blame others. Blaming others does not affect the person we blame, it changes us; it changes our heart.

Our 17th Century ancestors used sugar as a condiment and a rare and special treat. Some-

how we have continued to increase the dose until our bodies cannot process it, and it changes us like a poison. We are also poisoned within when we criticize others. The principle is, “See that ye love one another...”(D&C 88: 123) “cease to contend one with another; cease to speak evil one of another” (D&C 136: 23). If we take too much sugar, we develop cravings and want even more. The result of criticizing is that it becomes our nature, we do it more and more, causing a change in our own heart, such that we no longer have room for the Spirit of God, and darkness rules our life. Be aware of your own weaknesses and shortcomings. I guarantee that the people around you, especially your friends and relatives, will do plenty to irritate you. However, criticizing them only poisons your own heart, resulting in more adverse symptoms than you want or need. I am fortunate that my wife does not have any weakness or shortcomings, so we are both free to concentrate on mine. Christ atoned for the sins of your friends and relatives. Let Christ judge them. Don’t weaken your own heart by choosing to react badly to their shortcomings.

There are no references in all the scriptures to sugar; it is a new, modern problem that is “to be used, with judgment, not to excess” (D&C 59:20). Just like too much sugar weakens the body, too much criticism weakens the spirit. Choose to be strong, not weak. Choose to let Christ be the judge, you are not the judge. Choose to love one another. The scriptures do give advice about this ancient problem. “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 John 4:20). “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” (1 John 4:7).

Judging Others

Trying to catch up on the news, I used my scripture time to read the newspaper. I reasoned that the newspaper was full of spiritual lessons that I could write about. Indeed, I found plenty to criticize, the reports of mayhem and disregard of the rights of others are on every page. However, I could not bring myself to report their sins to you; instead I found myself thinking of the Saviors’ words, “judge not that ye be not judged. Doo nihaa nídahódóot’ííígíí biniyé t’áadoo aa nídaht’íní. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; Háálá bee aa ndaht’íinii t’áá éi bik’ehgo nihaa nídahódóot’ííł, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again, áádóó t’áá ła’ bá ída’nooł’ąąd yéęgi ánéelt’e’go nihá ínídadí’nóol’ąął” (Matthew 7:1,2).

One article reports the decline in attendance at confessional in the Catholic churches, down to 9%! Other articles report people taking judgment and execution of the penalty into their own hand through violence. The trend worldwide is to judge ourselves less in favor of blaming others. Jesus calls hypocrites those who are more concerned about the “mote that is in thy brother’s eye” instead of considering “the beam that is in thine own eye; áko ha’át’íi biniyé nik’is binák’e oolts’idígíí níní’ł, nidi t’áá ni nástáán ninák’ee sitánígíish doo baa ákonínízin da? (Matthew 7:3).

We are cautioned to use good judgment in recognizing who to follow. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. T’óó ádahodil’íigo dahlne’ii bits’aa ádaa ádahotya, jó éí dibégi át’éego doo báhádzidgo dichin daazlí’go da’aldeefii nidahalin. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Nidi éí tsin bineet’a’ bee bééhózinígi át’éego ádaanígíí bee nihił béédahózinígi át’éego ádaanígíí bee nihił béédahózin doo.” (Matthew 7:15,16). His doctrine astonished the people, “for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Háálá naat’áanii ídlíigo na’nitinígígi át’éego naz’neetzáá’, bee haz’áanii yínda’niłtinii nahalingo éí dooda.” (Matthew 7:29). He did advise the people “whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not; éí baa yee nihił dahlne’ígíí t’áa ałtso bi’da’ołíigo baa naahkai, nidi ąadaat’ínigi át’éego éí t’áadoo ádaaht’íní, háálá éí yádaałti’, nidi doo yik’ehgo ąadaat’íi da. Even so, ye outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity; t’áa ákót’éego nihił ałdó’ t’áa ákogi ádanohł’é nidahonohłingo danihidi’nił’í, nidi t’óó áhodi’í índa doo ákóó át’éii nihił hadadeezbin” (Matthew 23:3,28).

There is also the danger that we could misjudge those who are sent to lead us. “Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; éí baa jó’akon, Diyin god yádahlne’ii áádóó diné dahóyáanii índa bee haz’áanii yínda’niłtinii nihił’i’ ahish’a, áko ła’ nidadoołtsił áádóó ła’ tsin ałnáoszid bikaa’jii’ bił ida’doołkał, ła’ kin bii’ álah nídaahdleehí biyi’góó nabídadí’noołtsxis ída kin hadaas’áágóó atídaał’íi doo” (Matthew 23:34). So, how do we avoid judging others, while exercising good judgment in who we follow? Jesus warned of perilous times of false prophets and false Christs who shall deceive many (Matthew 24:5,11). In the same breath he promises that “the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; yá’ąashii bee bóhólníihgo bił haz’áanii baa Hane’ Yá’át’’éehii nahasdáán nidahonees’ąágóó, ał’ąa dine’é t’áa ałtso bee hwéédahodooził biniyé bee hoł dahodoonih, áko áadi índa nihodoogáál” (Matthew 24:14).

He gives the answer in chapter 25: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ShiTaa’ nihił’ijidlíi, hágo, aláahgo bee óhólníihgo bił haz’áanii hahaszdáán niit’ąądéé’ nihá hasht’eelyaaígíí nihił’í’ ádaahłééh: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; háálá dichin nishłíigo shada’soołtsood: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; dibáá’ nishłíigo tó shaa dasooká: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; dé’éyóní nishłíigo shił yah adasoohkai: naked, and ye clothed me; shi’ée’ ádingo hadashidoohłaa: I was sick and ye visited me; daastsaahgo shaa nidasinootáá’: I was in prison and ye came unto me; awáalyaa góne’ sédáago shaa dasoohkai” (verses 34-36).

May we all use good judgement in following the light of Christ and his chosen messengers, avoid judging others, and make wise choices for our own path in life.

Knowing God

Jesus often spoke of “the father which sent me” (John 12:49). He promised to go to his father and prepare a place for us (John 14:2, 28; 16:16). “Oh righteous father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee... (John 17:25). Jesus recognized that his father loved him “before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24). He said that we also can, indeed we must know the father. While praying to his father, Jesus declared, “this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent”. We know God by loving him, and show that love by obedience (1 John 2:1-6). This requires faith.

King Benjamin, who knew God well, called upon the people to “believe in God, believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom; and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend” (Mosiah 4:9). The first step in developing faith in God is to have hope, and exercise that hope by pondering God and his role in our lives.

In order to know God, we must consider his works, his words, and the testimony of others. Paul reminds us to study the scriptures from childhood, for “all scripture is given by inspiration from God, and is profitable for doctrine... that the man of God may be perfect... (2 Timothy 3:14-17). Nephi was inspired to understand that obtaining the scriptures was worth the risk to his life, that the prosperity of his descendants depended upon their obedience to the commandments, and for that they needed the scriptures (1 Nephi 4:14-17). Nephi knew that their would be many voices to deceive the people, so he wrote plainly “that these things which I write shall be kept and preserved, and handed down unto my seed, from generation to generation... for we labor diligently to write,, to persuade our children,, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God... (2 Nephi 29:18-23). We have the writings of the prophets, we can build our faith and knowledge of God by reading the scriptures.

It is a sure thing that our faith will be tried (James 1); yet we are not left alone to struggle with our knowledge of God. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God; that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him; but let him ask in faith...” (James 1:5, 6). Alma taught his sons to pray continually to God: “let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever; counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord; that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day” (Alma 37:36, 37).

The most sure way to know God is to follow him. “If a man love me he will keep my commandments; and my father will love him, and we will come unto him; and make our abode with him” (John 15:23). Martin Luther King said we must be willing to die for a cause in order for our life to be worth living. Joseph Smith said that a religion that does not require sacrifice

does not have power to save. Alma said, “preach unto them repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ; teach them to humble themselves and to be meek and lowly in heart; teach them to withstand every temptation of the devil... teach them to never be weary of good works, but to be meek and lowly in heart; for such shall find rest to their souls” (Alma 37:33-34).

The Lord declared to the people of Lehi: “I will consecrate this land unto thy seed and them who shall be numbered among this seed, forever, for the land of their inheritance” (2 Nephi 10:19). On the other hand, my children are born into a heritage of family, not land; an inheritance of faith, not possessions; and a promise from God, not man. Although the Howards have no location that is a home base, we are inheritors of the promise of God to those who live the covenants pertaining to America and the Holy Priesthood.

There have been many migrations to this sacred land, and each has survived or perished according to whether they followed the traditions of the God of this land.

500 B.C. Enos 1:14. “The Lamanites swore in their wrath they would destroy our records, and us, and all the traditions of our fathers”. Yet later, the descendants of the Lamanites returned to the tradition of Lehi and qualified to be preserved until this day. However, by 200 B.C. there was a complete destruction of the Jaredites, and by 421 A.D. a complete destruction of the Nephites.

130 A.D. Mosiah 1:5. Alma 17:9. The Nephites were warned that their traditions were not correct. They did not listen to this warning. The Lamanites were preserved because of their faithfulness, but were warned to keep the tradition or lose their land. In 1492 the long predicted invasion began with the landfall of Columbus on October 12. In 1598 the invasion led by Juan de Oñate entered New Mexico. Over 100 Pueblos became extinct and two languages were lost forever. After this, the Howards came to America.

In 1625 John Heward came to Virginia to escape the oppression of the British monarchy. In 1680 his grandchildren were unaware of the New Mexico Pueblo Revolt against the Spanish occupation. In 1776 William Howard left the plantation and served in the Revolution against King George. This action, long predicted in scripture, served as an inspiration for occupied people all over the Americas. 1810: Viva la Independencia, Viva la América, shouted Padre Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla; launching the Revolution against Spain. In 1812 the U.S. was at war with Great Britain again.

1820. America is finally prepared for a Restoration of the covenants of God for this land. Joseph Smith entered a grove of trees with faith that if he asked a question of God, that he would receive an answer. The answer he received changed this land and all the earth forever. Filled with the Holy Ghost, Joseph spoke in person with the Father and the Son. In the next few years our ancestors would respond to this announcement. For example, in 1826 William Ove Andersen, my grandfather Lambert’s grandfather was born in Copenhagen. As a young man he gained a testimony of Joseph Smith’s announcement and migrated to Utah in time for the mira-

cle of the seagulls. His testimony, and those of all our pioneer ancestors, is a tradition that can guide us today.

1848. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends the U.S. war with Mexico, which cedes 1/3 of its territory, including New Mexico. In 1849, William Walter Howard, my Grandfather Howard's father is born. Most of our ancestors came West in the 1840s and 1850s, settling the places where we live now. They came as prophecied in Isaiah 2:2-3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

In the 1860s the U.S. is involved in a Civil War. W.W. and his brother head West. During this time of distraction and chaos, 1862-1867, there is a French invasion of Mexico and a U.S. invasion of Navajo land. W.W. joined the Church in Deweyville, Utah, tried New Mexico, and raised his family in Idaho. In 1898 the U.S. initiates a war with Spain and takes over many more of their territories, including Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, and more. In later years our family learns Spanish and other languages and travels all over the world with messages of peace.

2 Nephi 19, 18. Speaking to Nephi's brother, Jacob, the Lord said: "Wherefore, I will consecrate this land unto thy seed, and them who shall be numbered among thy seed, forever, for the land of their inheritance; for it is a choice land, saith God unto me, above all other lands, wherefore I will have all men that dwell thereon that they shall worship me, saith God". He added this statement that directly refers to our pioneer ancestors: "The Gentiles shall be blessed and numbered among the House of Israel. I will establish this land as the land of the descendants of Lehi, plus all those who obey the covenants God has established for his people."

Jesus said, whosoever would be great among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:27,28). The role of my family is supportive. Our inheritance is our testimony. The descendants of Lehi are the inheritors of this land. We who are non-Indians may join with them only if we obey the commandments and serve others.

The Book of Mormon is a record of the Nephites, with some information about the Lamanites and Jaredites and Mulekites. However, it is not written to the Nephites, but to the convincing of the Lamanites, Jews, and Gentiles that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself to all nations. Dóó ałdó' Lamanite diné'é, dóó Jew diné'é, dóó Gentile diné'é Jesus éí Christ nilįįgo deisdoodłaał biniiyé, Hool'áágóó Diyin God nilį, diné t'áá ałtsogóó dah deikáhígíí yich'į' ííshjáá ádil'į.

It was clear to the writers that the book would come to the Lamanites by way of the Gentiles. 2 Nephi 30: 3-5 says there shall be many Gentiles "which shall believe the words which

are written; and they shall carry them forth to the remnant of our seed. And then shall the remnant of our seed know concerning us, how that we came out of Jerusalem, and that they are descendants of the Jews. And the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; wherefore they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which was had among their fathers. And then shall they rejoice; for they shall know that it is a blessing unto them from the hand of God... I am one of those Gentiles who believes in the words and is carrying them forth to the descendants of Lehi as prophecied. I have brought this witness to Lamanites in California, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Colombia, Utah, Maine, Washington, Nuevo México, and Texas. Now I am called to give witness in Lupton, Arizona, where the saints are tried in their faith, even by fire.

I have studied the languages needed to carry out this work. For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding; for He speaketh unto men according to their language, unto their understanding. Háálá Bóhólníhii Diyin God éi ak'i'diitj̄hii bee adinídíín aa yiilé; háálá nihookáá' diné' é ak'idadi'dootj̄ł biniyé, t'áá bí bizaad yee yich'j̄' yáłti'.

I expect that the result of this teaching in our day, shall be like the years before the coming of Christ as recorded in Helaman 15: 4, 5: But behold, salvation hath come unto the Lamanites through the preaching of the Nephites... Jó ndi, Nephi bidiné' é ndabinitinígíí binahj̄i' yisdá'iildéhígíí bił bédahózin; dóó díi biniinaa Bóhólníhii nízaadgóó dahiináago áyiilaa...

We are working toward the day that, like in the days of Samuel the Lamanite, ...that the more part of them are in the path of their duty... dóó nihil bédahózin dooleeł nisin ałnii' biláahgo éi diyin k'ehgo ndaakai...

Samuel goes on in verse eight to speak of their faithfulness: Therefore, as many have come to this, ye know of yourselves are firm and steadfast in the faith, and in the thing where-with they have been made free. Éi baą, la'ída kót'áo náhaaskaiígíí éi nihił bédahózingo dabiidziil dóó doo nahj̄i'kódaalne'at'éego da'oodłá dóó binahj̄i'doo naalte' danilj̄i da.

Verse 12 gives us confidence that this day of faithfulness will return: Yea, I say unto you that in the latter times the promises of the Lord have been extended to our brethren, the Lamanites... Aoo' ánihidishní, akée'di yookáígíí biyi' Bóhólníhii yá'át'éehii yee nihwiis'ánęę', bił haiijéé', Laman bidiné' é bich'j̄' kódoolníł...

Verse 13 gives us confidence to continue to strive toward this goal: and this is according to the prophecy, that they shall again be brought to the true knowledge, which is the knowledge of their Redeemer, and their great and true shepherd, and be numbered among His sheep... Dóó díi éi náás ádahoodniiłgo baa hane'ígíí bik'ehgo, éi t'áá aníinii bééhózinígíí bich'j̄'kóndoolníł éi éi baa Niná'nídláhígíí bił béndahoodziil, dóó ayóó át'éii t'áá aaníi dibé baa áhályáanii, dóó bidibé yitah danilj̄i doo.

I know that my service to the Lamanites is temporary until they gain the faith to fulfill their callings in service to each other. Verse 16 gives us reason to continue our labors, in spite of the times that some waiver in their faith: I will cause that in the day of my wisdom they shall return again unto me, saith the Lord. Shí ínísinígíí bijj̄i di bik'ehgo índa shich'j̄'nínáhidookah, ní Bóhólníhii.

May we all be as faithful as the Lamanites in the years before the coming of Christ to the world. May we be ever diligent in our service to Christ and to each other.

Laughter

“A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance.” Proverbs 15:13

President Hinckley said, “We need to have a little humor in our lives. We better take seriously that which should be taken seriously, but at the same time we can bring in a touch of humor now and again. If the time ever comes when we can’t smile at ourselves, it will be a sad time.”... also... “In all of living - have much fun and laughter. Life is to be enjoyed, not just endured.”

Craig wrote an article about laughter and how it applies to our good health. He quoted from Paul E. McGhee, Ph.D. McGhee is president of the Laughter Remedy in Wilmington, Del. and has published 11 books on humor. McGhee cites a study of people who had suffered a myocardial infarction. Half were put through the regular cardiac rehab program, while the other half were asked to view a 30 min comedy program. Dr. McGhee reported, “At the end of one year, the comedy group had significantly fewer recurrent incidents of myocardial infarction during the year and significantly lower blood pressure”.

I know for myself, when I get out the movie, “Three Amigos”, and watch till I’m bending over in laughter...I always feel much better. In technical terms the thing that is happening to us when we laugh is muscle relaxation, reduction of stress hormones, immune system enhancements, pain reduction and cardiac benefits. I agree with the experts and promise you ...Your sense of humor will not only enrich your life; it also promote within you... physical, mental and spiritual health.

Nathan L. Howard

LIGHT in the Longest, Darkest Night

How dark and gloomy it is in the north part of the country this time of year! The days are short and the nights, oh, so long and dreary. It brings to mind the many passages of scripture that speak of LIGHT.

To start with, let’s see what our Prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley said about the subject. “People sometimes ask me, ‘what is your favorite verse of scripture?’ I tell them that I have many, but among these is one for which I feel a particular love. It is found in the fiftieth section of the Doctrine and Covenants and reads as follows: ‘And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness. That which is of God is LIGHT.... (D&C 50:23-24). I ask you to ponder [these] words: ‘That which is of God is LIGHT; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light growth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.’ For me, in those few words there is encompassed the marvelous concept of the eternal plan of God in behalf of His sons and daughters whom He loves. That statement speaks of learning. It speaks of the now and the forever. It speaks of growth and development. It is posi-

tive and affirmative and wonderful...’The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth’ (D&C 93:36).”

This light that he speaks of is the light that comes from Jesus Christ. It is enlightenment, knowledge, and an uplifting, ennobling, persevering influence. It belongs in some degree to each person born to this earth, but we can increase it, make it brighter as we desire. How? Through daily prayer, repentance, scripture study, keeping covenants, having faith in Christ and in listening and obeying Him and our church leaders.

It comes to us by serving others and by setting a good example. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matt 5:14-16. The LIGHT is a spiritual gift, but it is also a physical thing that can be seen in the faces of those who are educated and good.

As we prepare and follow the Savior, we might be like the Brother of Jared in the book of Ether (Ether 2-3). He prepared the glass stones for the Lord to touch. They gave unfaltering light through the long, dark, stormy voyage to the place of peace and safety for himself and his people. We, in a similar manner, are also not left alone in darkness, but are ‘touched’ by the finger of Jesus Christ who is the source of all light and truth and life. “...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

“Cling to the Church. If you will do so it will become as an anchor in the midst of a stormy sea. It will be a LIGHT to your lives....” Gordon B. Hinckley

As the physical darkness descends upon us each winter afternoon, we are prepared to face it by flipping on an electric light switch or lighting a cheery candle. So, also, when the darkness of life descends upon us, we will be prepared to face it, having our light source ready in place by our individual spiritual preparation. “...Let us walk in the LIGHT of the Lord” (Isaiah 2:5).

Corla H. McFarlane

Nathan on Valentine’s Day

This week is a reminder that every day should be our sweetheart day. My Dad never did like such holidays because he figured it was a way to make the card and flower and candy makers rich...but he never failed to show love and affection to Mom and didn’t need the calendar to tell him it was time to do so.

“Love is like a flower, and, like the body it needs constant feeding. The mortal body would soon be emaciated and die if there were not frequent feedings. The tender flower would wither and die without food and water. And so love, also, cannot be expected to last forever unless it is

continually fed with portions of love, the manifestation of esteem and admiration, the expressions of gratitude, and the consideration of unselfishness.”

How do you keep your marriage blooming? Just like a flower we all radiate electromagnetic energy as well as receiving it from others. If our spouse has had a tough day at home or at the office and our stress levels are high, our partner and family members can sense the negative vibes, without us even saying a word. Have a worry tree in your front yard to de-stress before entering the house. Better yet sing a favorite hymn, say a prayer, turn off the TV, radio and cell phone before greeting each other. Smiles and laughter are great forms of communication and always generate positive energy and love.

When you are together, look each other in the eye and listen intently. JoAnn and I recently had a miscommunication that actually turned out with a positive end. We laughed, but later agreed that we need to work harder at listening to each other.

I admit, I was paying attention to a game on TV more than listening to JoAnn...I thought she said, “I’m going downstairs for a while to exercise...how about polatti for dinner.”

I said to myself... well... Italian food sounds good to me too... so I got up at half time and went to the kitchen. I couldn’t find any polatti, so I did spaghetti. I added french bread and a veggie tray and lit a candle. She laughed all through dinner, but seemed to love every bite. She explained later all about pilates and said, “besides, it’s french.” “If we really try, our home can be a bit of heaven here on earth. The thoughts we think, the deeds we do, the lives we live influence not only the success of our earthly journey; they mark the way to our eternal goals.” Thomas S. Monson

Lucas the Healer

Congratulations on becoming certified as a healer. Patch Adams’s philosophy of healing began with attitude. Grandpa Ed Howard taught the same thing. He believed that most illness was brought on by people believing they were sick. “Harry Emerson Fosdic put it this way:

One who expects completely to escape low moods is asking the impossible... Like the weather, life is essentially variable,...and a healthy person believes in the validity of his high hours even when he is having a low one” .

Uncle Nathan believes that being sick once in a while is not such a bad thing and as Mr. Fosdic implies, it’s even “normal”. It’s not only a way for the body to “de-tox” itself...but it also makes you appreciate the healthy and happy times, even more. There was a great Jewish mystic of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century who regularly experienced ecstasy on solitary wanderings through forests. He recommended the following solution to health:

“Always be joyful, no matter what or who you are. With happiness, you can give a person life. Every day we must deliberately induce in ourselves a bouyant, exuberant attitude toward life; in this manner, we will gradually become receptive to the subtle mysteries around us. And, if no inspired moments seem to come, we should act as though we have them anyway. If you have no enthusiasum, put on a front. Act enthusiastic, and the feeling will become genuine.”

We achieve true and sincere happiness as we care for and love others. President David O McKay said,

“There are three means of achieving the happy, abundant life: first, making God the center of one’s life; second, using the free agency given to man; and third, rendering service to others.”

Joseph Smith also gave advice for achieving the abundant life:

“Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof... if, we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God.”

The president of a Lamanite branch needs to have a vision of his purpose and his role in healing the people. The people of Zarahemla did not bring the Lamanite refugees brought by Ammon into their own city, but set aside a refuge for them. Their refuge was called “Jershon” (Alma 27:22-24). The land of Jershon became a place of refuge for all who were rejected by their families and communities (Alma 35:6,7).

I pray that your little church may become a place of refuge and peace and health for all people; a place where family and community differences are forgotten and the gospel of Christ brings harmony and order to lives, and progress and prosperity to families; a place where all can become “fellow citizens with the saints”; a place where all belong, and thus are healed.

Felicidades, ¡qué Dios te bendiga!

The Trial by Fire Church

Lupton Branch has a long and glorious history, a history that has just experienced challenging times. We have started calling ourselves the “trial by fire” church.

Jó, kq’ bee óola baq̄h hadoolyí’ígíí biláhídi át’éego nihe’oodlq̄ nabóhonitaahgo ílǵigo bééhodoozǵí. 1 Peter 1: 7-9. “Trial by fire” is a term used by Peter to refer to the intensity of the challenge to the people’s faith. “That the trial of your faith, being more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire... yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable

and full of glory... t'aa iiyisi if hózhóonii doo baa yájóofti' át'éii bee nihił nidahoozhqoh!... receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls "Háálá nihe'oodla' ła' yiyiilaaígíí binahjí' hihii' siziinii yisdá'iildééh shódayoost'e'. Peter reminds us that the trial of our faith, even if tried with fire, has the potential to bring us great blessings.

It is with the hope of receiving great blessings that the members of the Lupton Branch continued to meet each Sunday, even though we had to travel to Gallup. "And also that ye might know of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning... Dóó ałdó' díí Jesus Christ, Diyin God biYe', Yá'aaash dóó nahasdzáán yiTaa' nilfinii, t'áa ałtsoní hodeeyáádáá, Áyiilaaai doogáígíí, nihił béédahózin biniiyé..."

After His series of visits with the people in America, they organized a church "and they who were baptized in the name of Jesus were called the church of Christ." Dóó Jesus bízhi' binahjí' tó bee dabi'doolzı'ęę éí Christ bisodizin bá hooghan da'atahgo bee dabi'dééji'. 3 Nephi 26:21.

The 12 disciples traveled to preach and baptize. They were not alone; they knew they were acting in the name of Jesus Christ and under His direction. "...it came to pass that the disciples were gathered together and were united in mighty prayer and fasting. Áádóó naakits'áadahii t'áála' yéigo sodadilzin díí ch'iyáán ádaah deit'ııgo álah daazlıı'." And Jesus again showed himself unto them, for they were praying unto the Father in his name. Dóó Jesus yich'ı' íishjání ánaá'diilyaa, háálá éí bízhi' binahjí' aTaa' yich'ı' sodadilzin." 3 Nephi 27:1, 2.

Jesus continued to teach them and answer their questions..."ye must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name. éí ání Christ bízhi' ák'idadidooh't'áál... For by this name shall ye be called at the last day; Jó díí ázhi' éí akée'di yookáígíí biyi' bee danihi'dójıı dool-eeł. And whoso taketh upon him my name and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day... dóó t'áa háishıı shízhi' ák'iidootáago, dóó nihoniyáaji' yá'átéehgo iinánígíí bidiniłkaalgo, éí akée'di yookáígíí biyi' yisdádoogáál... and ye shall call upon the Father in my name that he will bless the church for my sake...dóó shízhi' binahjí' aTaa' bich'ı' sodadidoolziıł áko sodizin bá hooghaan shinahjí' yik'ijidoodliıł." 3 Nephi 27:5-7.

He makes it clear to them that each person must take upon himself the name of Christ and endure to the end to be saved, and explains what that means..."and this is my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you, that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me...Jó shin'nitin nihich'ı' kwııshłaa, dóó díí éí shina'nitin nihich'ı' kwııshłaaígíí át'é, shizhé'é bini' be'eshłéehgo biniiyé nahasdzáán bikáa'gi níyá, shizhé'é shinıł'a'ígíí biniinaa. that I might be lifted up upon the cross...that I might draw all men unto me..to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil. Dóó tsin ałnáoz'a'ı bikáa'gi dah shidi'dooltéel biniiyé shiTaa' shinıł'a', dóó bik'ijı' tsin ałnáoz'ai bikáa'gi dah shidi'diiltııgo... And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guilt-

less before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world...Áádóó baa hodoolzish, t'áá háishíí bąąhagi át'éii yóó iidii'ánígíí dóó shízhi' biinahjí' tó bee bi'doolzı'ígíí éí Iisizı́ Diyinii biyi' dooleet; dóó nahasdzáán bikáá' bá nihoot'ąąjí yéigo át'ııgo iiná hazhó'ó áyiilaago; jó, nihookáá' dineé bá ndáhwiist'ąąjí' ahoolzhiizhgo éí díí diné shizhé'é bidááhdóó nizhónigo iiná áyiilaago bá hadeesdzih." 3 Nephi 27:13-16.

Endure to the end, is clearly the doctrine of maintaining oneself clean by obeying the commandments throughout life. "Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day. K'ad díí éí beehaz'áanii át'é: Nahasdzáán ndaneez'áajı' kéédahoht'íinii, nihe'iina' łahgo ándaahdlééh, dóó shaa hohkááh dóó shízhi' binahjí' tó bee danihi'dilzı́łh, áko li'sizı́ Diyinii doo niąąąh chingóó shidááhdóó nihidoohkah." 3 Nephi 27:20.

He did not ask them to do anything that he wouldn't do himself, in fact, he said, "...for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do; dashinót'ıı'go íishłaaígíí jó éí ádadoohłı́ł... therefore if ye do these things blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day... Éí bąą, díí óohłaaago nihik'ihojı́dlı́ dooleet, háálá nihonı́yá bijı́ıdı éí yisdánihidii'doo'nił". 3 Nephi 27:21, 22.

He did not leave them without the resources to accomplish this great task: "Therefore, ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for he that asketh, receiveth; and unto him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Éí bąą, bí'dı́nóhkeed, dóó nihaa doolyéet; dáádılkał nahóhłts'in, dóó nihich'ı' ąą ádoolnı́ł; háálá t'áá háiida adókeedígíí, éí ba'doolyéet, dóó dáádılkał neiniłts'inígíí, éí bá ąą ádoolnı́ł. 27: 29.

He expressed great joy, knowing they would indeed endure to the end, "and now, behold, my joy is great, even unto fulness... Jó dóó k'ad, ts'ı́dá yéigo éiyá, nihaa shıł hózhó..." 3 Nephi 27:30.

"And it came to pass that when Jesus had ended these saying he said unto his disciples: Enter ye at the strait gate; for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it; but wide is the gate, and broad the way which leads to death, and many there be that travel them in, until the night cometh, wherein no man can work. Áádóó díí Jesus áltso yee haadzı́'go naakits'áadahı́ kónı́go yich'ı' hanáánaádzı́': Áhoołts'óózı́go yah a'atiindéé' yah ahohkááh' háálá iiná doo ninıt'ı'ii éí álts'óózı́go bił yah ahóót'ı', doo áhoołts'óózı́go bich'ı' atiin, dóó t'áá díkwı́hı́go t'éiyá yik'ı' hakááh, ndi hool'áágóó anoonéet éí hóteelgoo yah a'atin, dóó hóteelgo bich'ı' atiin, dóó t'óó ahayóı' éí yikáá' yikah, ł'ée' hodooleetjí', éí biyi' éí doo ła' diné naanish ı́doolı́ł da." 27:33.

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families and communities (Alma 35:6,7).

We pray that our little church may become a place of refuge and peace for all people; a place where our family and community differences are forgotten and the gospel of Christ brings harmony and order to our lives, progress to our lives, and prosperity to our families; a place where we can become “fellow citizens with the saints”, a place where we belong.

Circles of Influence

When we moved to Texas, our high school daughter said she felt like she was in a bubble looking out at the world. Her circle of friends was gone, and she rejected all those who would reach out to her. She even rejected us, and left us with no option but to leave the door open and love her. Years later this strategy paid off and now she calls us every day expressing gratitude and love to us. Now she reaches out to others in love, blessing the lives of many.

He drew a circle that shut me out--

Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.

But Love and I had the wit to win:

We drew a circle that took him in!

“Outwitted” an Epigram by Edwin Markham, 1852-1940

Isaiah describes God as one who draws a circle to take us in: “It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in” (Isaiah 40:22). Jesus was often criticized for who he associated with, but he kept expanding his circle to include the neglected of his region and beyond. “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10: 16).

We can choose each day who to include in our circle. Jesus returned to his “own country” to teach, “and they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (Matthew 13:57, 58). Some chose to reject him, others chose to take him in. When he heard of the death of John the Baptist, “...he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, [thousands] followed him on foot out of the cities” (Matthew 14:13).

We can choose each day how to react to our trials. Two years ago I was assigned to the Lupton Branch of the church and my circle expanded and dozens of people included me in their circle. When the arsonist burned down our meeting house, the church members in Gallup took us in. Some in Lupton decided to wait for a new building rather than following us to a “place

apart”. Now that our new building is nearly ready, we expect that many will come and see whether any good thing can come out of Lupton (John 1:46). “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7). Lupton’s trial by fire is not just a trial of faith, but a test of each person’s ability to take in others in during a time of great need.

When the fire destroyed a place of worship for one group, did those of other groups consider their grief? When the new building becomes available will the community come together to encourage the members? Will the members reach out to all those in need, members or not? Will brothers forgive one another? Will each accept a responsibility to be of service?

What happens to anyone affects us all. Can we, like Jesus, show empathy to our families as well as to those who are different from us? “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8:16). “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19). To be a fellow citizen is to draw your circle to let others in, and reach out to include others through your interest and service.

Teach me, Father, how to be
Kind and patient as a tree.
Joyfully the crickets croon
Under the shady oak at noon;
Beetle, on his mission bent,
Tarries in that cooling tent.
Let me, also, cheer a spot,
Hidden field or garden grot-
Place where passing souls can rest
On the way and be their best.
from “A Prayer” by Edwin Markham, 1852-1940

Missionary Work

Every week on this planet, about 6,000 baptisms are performed in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One third of those are due to parents teaching the Gospel to their children. Convert baptisms come after a series of lessons given by the full time missionaries, along with support and encouragement from members who welcome newcomers. Almost 2% of the earth’s population currently has responded to the Gospel message by being baptized. That means that over 98% have not. “For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved” (John 3:20). Yet the Creator of Heaven and Earth cautions that rejecting Him brings condemnation. “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”

(John 3:19). "But remember that he that persists in his own carnal nature, and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his fallen state and the devil hath all power over him. Therefore he is as though there was no redemption made, being an enemy to God..." Mosiah 16:5).

No wonder Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." (John 3:7). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh [and subject to being led by the devil]; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6) and subject to being led by God. He who is not born of the Spirit is not on the Lord's path. "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:21). Thus, the message of the missionaries is the Good News of the Gospel: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" John 3:17). The missionaries give a message that invites the Spirit to testify to the hearts of the sincere seekers of eternal truth. When they feel the Spirit and recognize that Christ is their Savior they want to know what to do. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). "For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost".

We can't all be full time missionaries, but there is something that each can do to bring the message of the Creator to family, friends, and neighbors. "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). "...Be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them..." (2 Chr. 10:7). "Preach unto them repentance, and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ; teach them to humble themselves and to be meek and lowly in heart; teach them to withstand every temptation of the devil, with their faith on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Alma 37:33). Invite people into your home, or send missionaries to their homes. Pay tithes and offerings that support the mission work or support a specific missionary. Invite friends and neighbors to church activities, conferences, and meetings. Be a good example to your children and teach the Gospel at home.

An especially valuable missionary opportunity comes next week with the General Conference. If you have BYU TV you can invite people to your home, or you can just invite people to go with you to the stake center. General Conference is broadcast twice each year; further, the messages of conference are published in the Ensign each May and November. Another opportunity is the special open houses where your friends can experience the beauty of our new building and the Spirit of Peace which resides there. May your friends and family experience an immediate joy and a long lasting peace as they are touched by the Spirit of the Gospel you share.

A Month of Sundays

The thirty Sundays from January to July are like a month of Sundays. During this time in 1999 there were many special Sundays, including conferences, Easter, Fast and Testimony meetings, a temple dedication, and a farewell, High Council Speakers, and Bishopric messages. During this time there were hardly any “regular Sundays” with speakers selected from the ward members. But it is not our special events and speakers that make the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints unique in the world. Our distinction comes from being the restored church and the Kingdom of God upon the earth, with keys to perform the saving and sealing ordinances and prophets who have a unique relationship with the Lord of the earth.

Because of my unique role as a musician and academic, I have been in close contact with ministers, and believers of many churches, and each year I gain a greater respect for the goodness available to them. Although Nephi saw that in the last days there “are many churches built up which cause envyings, malice, and strifes” (priestcrafts and secret combinations - 2 Nephi 26:21), yet he reports from this intimate acquaintance with the Lord: “He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world, for He loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that He may draw all men unto Him. Wherefore, He commandeth none that they shall not partake of His salvation. He hath given His Salvation free for all men... none are forbidden from partaking of His goodness... and He commanded aall to repent, to have charity... and denieth none that come unto Him; black and white, bond and free, male and female; and He remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile” (2 Nephi 26: 24-33). “Jesus is the very Christ... and He manifesteth Himself unto all those who believe in Him, by the power of the Holy Ghost; yea, unto every nation, kindred, tongue and people, working mighty miracles, signs and wondres, among the children of men, according to their faith” (2 Nephi 26:12-13).

Like Joseph Smith and Nephi, I have discovered the “honorable men of the earth” (D&C 76) and found many who believe, as we do, that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer who died for our sins and who broke the bands of dath that we may live. Mormon said, “...if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ” (Moroni 7:19). Áko éí ts’ídá t’áá aaníí Christ be’awéé’ nohlii dooleeł.

Mother’s Day

Everyone has a mother. My mother passed on to the next life long ago, but I am still under the obligation: “honor thy mother” Diyin éí áłchíní hazhó’ó nihimá dóó nihizhé’é bik’eh honof’i yidííneed (Exodus 20:12). The Lord gave this commandment to a people to whom he declared “for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth” (Deuteronomy 14:2). Yet we are not alone in honoring mothers, as this tradition has been practiced for thousands of years in all cultures. President David O. McKay said that motherhood is woman’s

noblest calling. Éí áníí lá asdzáán amá nilj̄ dooleełgo éí íyisíí áájí áłtsé binaanish.

My own mother was a full time mother, which was a long and difficult task. She was fifty four years old when her youngest finished high school. I know that surviving four teenagers was one of her greatest challenges. Yet she met this challenge with grace and dignity. She modeled the characteristics she hoped we would learn: peace and joy, service and sacrifice, patience and love. To her, motherhood was a sacred calling, a partnership with God in bringing his spirit children into the world. Éí éiyá Diyin God yił naalnishgo nahasdzáán bikáa'j̄' ba'áłchíní ii'siz̄inii danilínígíí nidahwiileeh; dóó éí nideinitingo éí áłdó' binaanish.

Being six years younger than my brother, I spent much more of my childhood alone with my mother than with any of my siblings or my busy father. She was my first and greatest teacher. I watched her work long hours in the kitchen preparing bread by hand, blending exotic juices, or crafting deluxe menus and special table spreads. We worked out together with special exercise equipment demonstrated by Jack LaLaine on TV. I learned to sing and play instruments along with her as she played the organ. My mother believed that her most important responsibility was to bring children into the world and to care for and teach them. Łá' asdzáán éí doo sha'áłchíní hodooleeł da daaníí łeh; éí doo yá'át'éełgóó doo ákót'ée da. No wonder I was drawn to become a teacher and musician like my mother, instead of an engineer like my father and brother.

Helaman's great success as a leader was due to what the young men had been taught by their Lamanite mothers about Jesus Christ (Alma 56:47). I think of the great advantage I have had over my peers, having been taught the Gospel by my mother. A mother needs to spend time with her children and teach them the gospel. Amá éí ayóó'ó'ó'núigo ba'áłchíní Diyin bina-hagha' éí yee neinitin doo.

I think of the great advantage I have had over my peers, having learned a strong work ethic, having worked and played with my mother. Mothers should play and work with the children so they can discover the world around them. Nááná ba'áłchíní éí yił naanéego dóó yił naalnishgo éí áłdó' binaanish.

I have a great advantage over my peers, having been raised in a home where a kind mother provided sweet music, gentle speech, unconditional acceptance, intellectual stimulation, and spiritual enlightenment. Amá éí ba'áłchíní t'áá áłahj̄i' hazhó'ó nitsékeesgo áyósin doo. Dóó baghan éí hazhó'ó yá'át'éełgo hasht'ehodósin doo.

I am blessed indeed to have a mother who believed that children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward (Psalms 127:3).

I am blessed indeed that Edward Howard recognized greatness in Corine as they met in Belén, New Mexico, and she became his wife; and he loved her (Gen. 24: 67).

I am blessed that my mother forgot her pains and stayed with me through my times of pain (2 Kings 4:30).

I am blessed that my mother taught me by example to respect women as teachers and leaders (Proverbs 31).

I am blessed by the way my mother prepared me by her example for my own marriage (Song of Solomon 3).

I am blessed that my mother taught me by example to care for and serve others (Isaiah 49:23), for honoring your mother prepares you to love your neighbor as yourself. Nizhé'é índa nimá nił niljigo ínísin, áádóó, T'áá ni ádí'ní'níníni át'éego bił kééhót'íinii ayóó'íini'ní (Mathew 19:19).

I am blessed that my mother prepared me to seek comfort from God by the comfort she gave me (Isaiah 6:13).

I am blessed that my mother taught me to worship by taking me with her to worship. Nít'éé' Zébedii biye'ké bimá yił haa yíkaigo t'áadoo le'é yíídóokił biniyé Jesus yich'í' nitsidinígo (Mathew 20:20).

All throughout the Old Testament, each king is introduced to us by his name and the name of his mother. I honor my mother by sharing her name with you: I am Roy, my mother is Corine, daughter of Roy of Kamas, Utah. Shimá éi Corine wolyé, dóó shicheii éi Roy wolyé, éi Kamas nagháa nt'éé'.

May the Lord bless all the mothers, my wife, my daughters, and all those women who care for and love others, for the Lord's blessing to mothers goes to all those who give of themselves to bless others (Ruth 1:14).

The Family: A Proclamation to the World

The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life. 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 first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalms 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

We call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

Music for Worship

The angel of the Lord announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds. Suddenly there was 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). At the Last Supper, Jesus taught his followers, “and when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives” where he offered his ultimate sacrifice for us, those He loves. In this same pattern, today we sing for worship and instruction at home and at church. Music has power to teach the Gospel.

During the Jaredite journey of three hundred and forty four days on the water,, “they did sing praises unto the Lord; yea, the brother of Jared id sing praises unto the Lord, and he did thank and praise the Lord all the day long; and when the night came, they did not cease to praise the Lord” (Ether 6:9). Today we can sing to cheer our hearts. Music has power to sustain people during difficult times.

“Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things... Cry out and shout... for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee” (2 Nephi 22:5,6). “Break forth into joy; sing together... for the Lord hath comforted his people,, he hath redeemed Jerusalem” (Mosiah 12:23). “Break forth into singing, and cry aloud...” (3 Nephi 22:1). By singing we bear testimony. Music has power to express our deepest feelings of gratitude, praise, and honor.

In his vision of heaven Lehi “saw God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God” (1 Nephi 1:8). When Alma saw the same vision of angels singing and praising their God he longed to be there (Alma 36:22). King Benjamin was looking forward to the time when his “immortal spirit may join the choirs above in singing the praises of a just God” (Mosiah 2:28). Mormon saw the time when the just would “dwell in the presence of God in his kingdom, to sing ceaseless praises with the choirs above, unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, which are one God, in a state of happiness which hath no end” (Mormon 7:7). Singing is an attribute of God. Music has power to lift us to a state of happiness in the presence of God.

When Alma taught the people at the waters of Mormon, they found testimony and knowledge, “and how blessed are they, for they shall sing to his praise forever” (Mosiah 18:30). Alma taught that those who had received a change of heart were “loosed from the pains of hell; and they are brought to sing the song of redeeming love, and this because of the power of his word which is in us” (Alma 5:26; 26:13). Music is the natural expression of a changed heart.

When the Nephites realized the war was over, “they did break forth, all as one, in singing, and praising their God for the great thing which he had done for them” saying, “Hosanna to the Most High God. Blessed be the name of the Lord God Almighty, the Most High God. And their hearts were swollen with joy, unto the gushing out of many tears, because of the great goodness of God” (3 Nephi 4:31-33). Music gives voice to our gratitude.

“Therefore, the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy and holiness shall be upon their heads; and they shall obtain gladness and joy; sorrow and mourning shall flee away” (2 Nephi 8:11). May you invite the spirit of peace and joy into your homes by having a musical Christmas.

New Year

When I was four, each month was a major part of my life. When I was 20, two years was a whopping 10 percent, and seemed like a long time. However, the past 10 years I have lived in this area seems like a short time, as it is a small percentage of my life. What seems “wisdom of the elders” may be just a more patient view of each day, due to having seen so many days. The elders are beginning to see from experience that “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18). “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now... for we are saved by hope... if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Romans 8:22, 24, 25).

The One with the most experience put it this way: “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9). Thus, it is our experience that strengthens our hope. Hope is the foundation of faith, and faith leads us to charity towards others and a personal path of healthy, happy living (1 Corinthians 13). Since charity and a broad experience can lead us to think of others and lift their burdens (Isaiah 58: 6, 7), as we begin the new year, let us take personal time to reflect on how these past years have prepared us to be of service to others. Let us take stock of our responsibility to those who have not had our years of experience, or built a strong foundation of faith, hope, and charity. Think of the children of our community and how we can influence them.

This new year portends perilous times of great tribulation (Matthew 24). Our children who are prepared will be blessed (Matthew 25). But we cannot leave children to raise each other. Adults must take an active role in their instruction. Let us resolve to take an active role in preparing the next generation for the challenges they will face. Here are a few suggestions.

Take time to read and talk to the children from birth. Today we see many children who cannot give attention in school to instruction or to books or even to the wonders that computers can offer. Such children not only do not prosper in school, but may not become self sufficient, responsible citizens and parents because of their undisciplined habits. It is never too late to start the habits of reading and discussing in the home. When the children of Israel returned from captivity in Babylon, it was hearing the scribe read to them that brought great changes in their lives (Nehemiah 8).

Introduce children to the best in music and the all the arts. Pay attention to the lyrics and the images and the effect they have on the children. “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound,

who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (1 Corinthians 14:8). Children raised on popular styles alone are not prepared to benefit from the spiritual and intellectual opportunities of the classics. “I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Corinthians 14:15).

Attend church regularly with the children. There we hear the good news and fellowship with others of similar values. Our children need the rituals, the instruction, and the example of peers and elders. They need to experience goodness to develop hope, faith, and charity.

“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). You will be blessed in this new year as you lead others in safe paths.

New Beginnings

We have many opportunities to start a new path in life including major turning points such as graduation, job changes, marriage, and the birth of child. We also have the weekly opportunity to renew our covenants and start over as we partake of the emblems of the sacrament. New Year’s Day is such an opportunity. We can reflect on our path and make course adjustments, and new beginnings.

I thought I had passed a great milestone of life’s path when I turned 50. “I guess I am over the hill”, I commented to my father. He gave me the advice he thought I needed. “You are only half-way, you had better start taking care of yourself if you want to have a good second half of your life”. If I live as long as my father, I need to make plans through the year 2038 for my health and financial security. I need to take time for my family every day during these precious years. I cannot put off my priorities for service until a better time. Today is the only time I have right now.

Christ’s visit to America was the most dramatic new beginning in history. The whole face of the earth was changed, and the people were changed dramatically. They responded to His words with such a change of heart that they lived in peace for 200 years! A study of his words might bring a change in our own lives, resulting in that same kind of peace.

He presented himself to them as the Savior and Redeemer. They witnessed for themselves that he suffered and died for their sins, and was resurrected to a glorious state. “Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world”. Daohsijh dóo wóshd’éé’ shaa hohkááh, áko shooshk’iizh tídiilyaa yéé bídadidoołnih, áádóo shíla’ dóo shikee’ góne’ bił ada’askaal’éé bídadidoołnih, áko shí t’áá aaníí Israel biDiyin God nishlí, dóo nahasdzáán t’áá át’ée ní’éé biDiyin God nishlí, dóo nahasdzáán bibaąhágí át’éii bininaa shi’diisxínígíí nihił béédahodoozítł. 3 Nephi 11:14

He immediately organized the church and gave power to men to act in His name, and blessed them with baptism and the Holy Ghost. “And more blessed are they who shall believe in your words because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me and that ye know that I am. Yea, blessed are they who shall believe in your words and shall come down into the depths of humility and be baptized, for they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins.” Dóó nááná, nihizaad, dayoosdlaqadígíí łaągo bikidahojidoodliif háálá dashooltsánígíí t’áá aaníí honishłónígíí nihił béédahodooziif. Aoo, nihizaad dayoosdlaqadígíí éi bikidahojídlíi dooleeł, dóó hojooba’go ndaasdlí’ígíí dóó tó bee dabi’doolzi’ígíí, háálá kq’ dóó li’sizí Diyinii bee baa hodoot’ih, dóó baąhagi át’éii yaa naaskai yéę baa ndadidoot’ááł. 3 Nephi 12:2

Then He taught them principles of good living by reciting the Sermon on the Mount and admonished them to keep their priorities in order. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Ndi Diyin God bił haz’áanii dóó biyá’át’éhii áłtsé bíká hádaht’í, dóó díí t’áá ałtso nihaa doolyééł. 3 Nephi 13:33

He recounted the covenants he had made with His chosen people, and gave a sign: that when the Book of Mormon comes forth, “then shall the work of the Father commence at that day, even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. But if they will repent and hearken unto my words, and establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance...and then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I will also be in the midst.” Dóó índa éi bijí aTaa’ binaanish bee hahodoolzhish, díí na’nitin éi díí diné t’ahdi daadzihi bínabídi’nooltíif. Ndi bibaąhagi át’éii yóó adeidiyiz’ąągo dóó shizaad yik’eh dahos’ııdgo, dóó t’áadoo bijéi deitł’isí, shisodizin bá hooghan bitahgóó ndeesh’ááł, dóó ałha’deet’ánéę éi yik’idookah dóó Jacob bidine’é danilínígíí yitah daólta’ dooleeł, éi éi díí kéyah baa diní’á. 3 Nephi 21: 26, 22, 25

The Lord will bless you in this new year as you follow Him.

Obedience

My father often quoted what his grandfather had learned from his grandfather in the 1850s: “do what you are told when you are told to do it!” I tried to raise the bar for my children in the 1970s; assuming that they already knew their duty, I said, “do what you are doing until you are done!” Athletes and musicians and engineers and artists all know that you have to follow rules to get the results you want. Joseph Smith said in 1843 that “if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.... and when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:19,21). No matter how you say it, obedience is a key principle for progress, safety, freedom, and even salvation.

“We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel” (Articles of Faith 1:3).

We all look to the temple as the highest privilege of our religion. Well, it is a place of higher commandments. In the temple we covenant beyond the law of chastity and tithing; beyond the law of obedience. We covenant to consecrate all our time, talents and energies to building the Kingdom of God. In return, God promises to give us all that He has. As we learn to obey the higher law, we qualify for the higher blessing, and the highest glory in His Kingdom.

Obedience is a universal principle of balance and harmony. In Navajo this path is called Hozhóqgo Iiná. Those who are not self disciplined in some path are “...tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness...” (Ephesians 4:14). Obedience is a principle of wisdom and freedom, not one of domination. Follow correct principles, don’t wait to be told everything you must do. “For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward” D&C 58:26).

“And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days, that we may not bring upon ourselves a never-ending torment, as has been spoken by the angel, that we may not drink out of the cup of the wrath of God... And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters. And under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called by the name of Christ” (Mosiah 5:5-9)

Obey the traffic laws and save gas and lives. Obey the rules of your profession to get the job done. Obey the callings and assignments in the Church to serve others and build the Kingdom. Obey the Word of Wisdom to have health. Obey the law of tithing to prosper in your finances. Don’t wait to be asked; step up and do your part by following correct principles. May we be obedient to the commandments and to the whisperings of the Spirit, and thus claim the blessings of Heaven.

People Organize

This week seemed determined to teach me that people organize. Monday I saw a family pull together, each with a task, to organize a funeral. Tuesday we all voted in a general election, selecting people for legislative, executive, and judicial roles. Wednesday the building and fire inspectors reminded me that we have to follow the rules of the community. Thursday I attended a conference where a thousand people followed a printed program to know what session to attend. On Friday I joined with other college faculty to form a consortium to address common interests. Saturday I met with a state association, and each board member was given responsibilities for the coming year. Today our congregation gathers for our annual branch conference to remember why our religion has a church, not just a family tradition.

Organizing strengthens each individual. Adam and Eve were organized into a family “because is it not good that the man should be alone” (Abraham 5:14). Abraham achieved financial success by leadership over many (Genesis 24:35). Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people” (Exodus 18:25) Jesus “gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...” (Ephesians 11-14).

God promised to gather his people in the last days. “And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel...” (Isaiah 11:12). “And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase” (Jeremiah 23:3). But gathering together to promote the prosperity of each individual takes a lot of organization. “And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them...(Jeremiah 23:4). Who are these shepherds? Who fills the roles in a family, a community, or a congregation? “Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it...” Isaiah 56:2).

Fathers teach their children. “I heard my father, desired to know what he knew, I believed the Lord could make it known, I sat pondering in mine heart so I was caught up in the Spirit and shown all things” (1 Nephi 11:1).

Brothers teach their siblings. “I persuaded my brothers to be faithful to the commandments so they came with me” (1 Nephi 3:21-22).

Whoever teaches is blessed. “Whoso shall publish peace, what great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be” (1 Nephi 13:37).

When the Gospel comes to the descendants of Lehi, they are blessed. “The fullness of the Gospel shall come unto them, they shall come to a knowledge of the forefathers and of the gospel of their Redeemer; wherefore, they will rejoice, give praise, receive strength and nourishment, come unto the true fold of God” (1 Nephi 15:13-16).

After his conversion by Ammon, King Lamoni “caused that there should be synagogues built in the land of Ishmael; and he caused that his people... should assemble themselves together” (Alma 21:20).

In each place he preached, Alma “ordained priests and elders, by laying on his hands according to the order of God, to preside and watch over the church” (Alma 6:1).

May we each accept a role in the organization of the Kingdom and be willing to help one another.

Pray Always

Matthew 20:30-34. Jesus left Jericho with a large crowd following him. As they passed, 2 blind men started calling to Him for mercy. The people were irritated with their insistent petitions, and told them to hold their peace. After all, the Lord was busy and should not be disturbed. However, Jesus stopped walking, came up to them and asked, “what will ye that I should do unto you? Ha’át’íí nihá baa nideeshaał shíínóh’ní?” They asked for their sight and he gave it to them. From this we learn that not only is the Lord willing to help us, but he requires that we ask. “And whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that you shall receive, behold, it shall be given unto you” (3 Nephi 18:20) “Áko da’iinohdláągo t’áa ha’át’íhída dayínóhkeedgo sodadołzingo, éí nihaa dahalyée doo (Matthew 21:22).

Jesus commands us to pray to the Father in His name: “Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. NihiTaa’ yá’ąashdi honíloonii nízhi’ diyingo óolzin le” (Mathew 6:9).

Alma admonished the people: “receive the Holy Ghost, take upon you the name of Christ; (Christ Bízhi’ ák’idadoht’aah); that ye humble yourselves even to the dust, and worship God, in whatsoever place ye may be in, in spirit and in truth; (áko t’áa íiysíí hojooba’ ída’dótnéehgo ni’jį’ ntsidahidoohgeeh), and that ye live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which he doth bestow upon you”(dóo Diyin God bich’į’ sodadołzin, t’áa naaháágóó, dinohsinígíí dóó t’áa aaníinii nihił béeéhózinígíí binahjį’) (Alma 34:38). We should praise God and be grateful for life and the blessings we receive from Him. “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth” (Áko íídáą’ Jesus haadzí’go ádíiniid, ShiTaa’, yá’ąash índa nahasdzáán bee Nóhólníihii, nich’į’ ahééh nisin) (Matthew 11:25). “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven”. (Bee nóhólníihii náásgóó k’ee’ąa yilzhish le’)(Matthew 6:10).

Jesus said, “Pray for your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and children may be blessed” (Niha’áłchíní bił aTaa’ bich’į’ sodadołzin, t’áa áłahjį’ shízhi’ binahjį’, áko nihe’esdzáán dóó nihada’ áłchíní bik’idahojidoodliił) (3 Nephi 18:21). “Give us this day our daily bread” (Ch’iyáán t’áa ákwíí jį niha’iyíłtsódígíí díí jį nihaa náádiní’aah) (Mathew 6:11).

From the beginning of the world there has been the commandment to pray. An angel of the Lord commanded Adam and Eve to repent and call upon God in the name of the Son (Ła' Diyin yá naal'a'í éí Adam dóó Eve, "nihe'iina' łahgo ánádléehgo Diyin biYe' bízhi' binahjí' nihiTaa' God bich'į' sodadołzin" yidíniid) (Moses 5:8). "...ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye be led away captive by him" (hada'ohsííd dóó t'áá áłahjí' sodadołzin)

(3 Nephi 18:15). "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Áádóó t'áá nihich'į' bąhági ádaanííii bá yóó'adahidiit'aahígi át'éego nich'į' nida'ayiilzihígíi nihá yóó'ahidí'aah; áádóó nihí hodínóotahjí' nihi'óótníh lago) (Mathew 6:12, 13).

Jesus said, "...ye shall meet together oft (t'áá áłahjí' áłah nádleeh doo); and ye shall not forbid any man from coming unto you when ye shall meet together (áłah ndaahdleehgo háishíí diné nihaa níyáago t'áadoo bich'į' aa danohchį'í...but ye shall pray for them unto the Father, in my name (éí aTaa' bich'į' shízhi' binahjí' bá sodadołzin doo" (3 Nephi 18:22, 23). "O God the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ" (O Diyin God, Hool'áágóo aTaa' nílíinii) (Moroni 5:2). And as I have prayed among you even so shall ye pray in my church (shisodizin bá hooghan góne' sodadołzingo)... Behold, I am the light; I have set an example for you (Jó shí éí adinídín nishłí; shí éí nihináál i'iishłaa) (3 Nephi 18:16). "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever" (Háálá ahóyéel'áágóo ni t'éi nóhólníh áádóó t'áadoo bee nóodziilí da, índa ayóó ánít'é) (Matthew 6:13).

We pray for you that you may always remember your covenants and walk in the path that leads to happiness (hózhóqjí hoot'álgíí). May you continually have His Spirit (li'sizí Diyinii) by remembering to pray always.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. (niYe', Jesus Christ, bízhi' binahjí' áda'ndii'ní. T'áá ákót'éé doo.

Preaching and Healing

When Jesus began his ministry, "he went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and disease among the people" (Mathew 9:35). By this time, John the Baptist was in prison. When he heard about Jesus, he sent two of his disciples to ask "art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Mathew 11:3). "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them" (Mathew 11:4-5).

It is clear by this answer that one reason he did preach and heal was so that many could

bear witness that Christ had come “as prophecied by all the prophets and the law until John” (Mathew 11:13).

Another reason was that “when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Mathew 9:36). He gave his disciples power to “preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at at. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils” (Mathew 10:7, 8). It was clear that Jesus had power and was able to give this power to others. Multitudes followed him.

Yet many rejected this witness saying, “He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils” (Mathew 9:34). Jesus warned his disciples that “if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?” (Mathew 10:25). “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves” (Mathew 10:16).

This same warning is given to all the followers of Christ. “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth... for I am come to set a man at variance against his father...” (Mathew 10:34-38). “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mathew 10:22).

Speaking to his disciples, Jesus said, “the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers unto his harvest” (Mathew 9:38). Even today he sends messengers with the good news of the gospel:

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Mathew 11:28-30).

May we respond to the call, “follow me”; may we not be discouraged by those who would take this gift away; but may we endure to the end in obedience and discipleship. May we be the messengers of the good news. Our meek and lowly preaching and service will help heal others so they shall find rest.

The Priesthood of God

Yesterday I participated in a university graduation ceremony. At one point the president granted bachelors and masters degrees by the authority invested in him by by the Board Regents. The Regents get their authority from the state constitution. National accrediting bodies further certify that the university and its individual programs comply with professional standards. The actual diploma does not come until authorized officials audit the transcripts and certify that the candidate has complied with every requirement and has been assessed by faculty who also have to meet stringent standards. Then I checked my email. I was offered the opportunity to purchase a degree from a “nonaccredited university”. The sales pitch was attractive,

as I would not have to attend class, write papers, or deal with a bureaucracy, but receive a “prestigious degree” based on my life experience. I did not check the price, but no doubt it would be less expensive than paying tuition year after year, buying books, and paying technology fees to an accredited university.

The Kingdom of God is like that. There is an accredited organization with proper authorization and there are the counterfeits who offer a lesser plan. It has always been that way. Adam received authority from God, but not all his children followed the covenant. Abraham was blessed with the higher priesthood and told that his descendants could have this inheritance; but few have complied with the standards (Genesis 24:35). Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people” but they qualified only for the lesser priesthood (Exodus 18:25). Jesus “gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...” (Ephesians 11:14), but a great apostasy resulted in the structure of church leadership being changed.

God promised to gather his people in the last days. “And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel...” (Isaiah 11:12). “And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase” (Jeremiah 23:3). But setting up the Kingdom of God requires authority from God . “And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them...(Jeremiah 23:4). Who are these shepherds? Who is authorized to act in the name of Jesus Christ?

I have received confirmation by the Spirit of the Holy Ghost that the authority of God has been restored as prophecied. “The fullness of the Gospel shall come unto them, they shall come to a knowledge of the forefathers and of the gospel of their Redeemer; wherefore, they will rejoice, give praise, receive strength and nourishment, and come unto the true fold of God” (1 Nephi 15:13-16). This is a restoration of the priesthood that has been in the church in the past. After his conversion by Ammon, King Lamoni “caused that there should be synagogues built in the land of Ishmael; and he caused that his people... should assemble themselves together” (Alma 21:20). In each place he preached, Alma “ordained priests and elders, by laying on his hands according to the order of God, to preside and watch over the church” (Alma 6:1). General apostasy resulted in the loss of this priesthood, but it has been restored. The authorized, accredited Kingdom of God has returned to earth in preparation for the Second Coming of Christ.

May we gain a testimony of the Restoration and qualify for the blessings of the priesthood.

Listen to the Prophet's Voice

In stake conference a speaker recounted an embarrassing moment. When she told a friend that the church had a prophet, the friend asked what had he said lately. Of course, she could not recall anything in particular, and vowed to pay more attention, and be ready to pass his messages on to others. The next day, the prophet attended our stake conference via satellite. He bore witness of doctrines like the divinity of Jesus Christ and the importance of the atonement in our lives. He urged us to understand and accept principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ like “love one another”, and “sacrifice”. He called upon us to live those principles in our daily lives by serving one another and living the commandments. He explained the pattern of the scriptures and the prophets. We are blessed as we study the doctrine, subscribe to the principles, and obey the commandments.

I had been praying lately about financial concerns. I tried everything to address my problem, seeking God's plan, exercising faith, and doing what came to mind. I had to accept my dependence on God, as my own efforts fell short. I know that the full blessings of heaven come only after a test of faith, so I paid my tithing and continued to pray and work on my problem.

By chance I was home when my sister, Anita, called Janeen. She told me that Sunday she happened to attend church in her Salt Lake City ward. The opening song was “We Thank Thee O God For a Prophet”. As they started the 3rd verse, Gordon B. Hinckley walked into the room to take his usual place in that ward. The entire room rose and the Spirit was strong. That evening I dreamed that Janeen and I were in a meeting where the prophet had time for casual conversation with us. I reminded him that 40 years ago Janeen had served as interpreter as he interviewed lady missionaries in Argentina. I talked to him about his visit to Colombia, where I served as his interpreter in a speech to members. I awoke at 4 am with a sweet spirit of peace in my heart.

That day, Janeen went to the credit union and made arrangements that exactly addressed all the problems I had prayed about, including her retirement and my business loans. It became evident to us that our testimony had undergone an exercise of faith, we had maintained the course set by Christ's plan, and our prayers had been answered. God hears our petitions. God knows our needs. God only needs to know that we trust Him. We only need to have patience and accept His solution for our lives.

I testify that there are fixed and constant truths. We can learn the principles attached to them. As we apply those principles in daily life, we can qualify for the blessings of heaven.

The counsel from Roy, is applicable for all of us and I add my testimony that there is always a solution to our financial concerns, if we work together with our companions and prayerfully approach Heavenly Father for help. We all have the need to budget, regardless whether we are school teachers, CEO of a large company, writers, CPA's or retired. President N. Eldon

Tanner listed five principles of economical constancy:

Pay an honest tithing.

Live on less than you earn.

Learn to distinguish between needs and wants.

Be honest in all your financial affairs.

President Hinckley stated, “The time has come to get our houses in order. So many people are living on the very edge of their incomes. I urge you to look to the condition of your finances. I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay them off as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage.”

I stopped working at the age of 55 after making a very modest salary. JoAnn and I have never gone without, and credit our contentment on having served several missions. I know as we strive to serve the Lord and keep his commandments and follow the counsel from President Tanner and other other leaders, we will be blessed with the bounties of the earth and heaven.

Nathan L. Howard

The Prophet's Advice

Make the scriptures and words of the prophets part of our lives: read, study, feast upon the words of Christ. Following this pattern in our study, commitment, and action, will...

build our testimony of Christ

bring an added measure of the Spirit of the Holy Ghost into our lives

strengthen our resolve to follow the commandments

increase spiritualiy and righteousness in our homes

give us greater strength to resist temptation and defend truth and righteousness

qualify us for the full blessings of Heaven

prepare us to be lifted up at the last day

enfuse our soul with Eternal verities

give us confidence that our prayers are heard

bring blessings into our lives.

Young people will obey the rules if they understand why. Teach rules in the context of the principles and doctrines. Here are some examples of the pattern: Doctrine - Principles - Policy.

Eternal Truths - Guidelines - Rules

Scripture - Standards - Practice

Scripture - Counsel - Power to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion

Testimony of Gospel - Exercise Faith - Follow the Commandments

God's ways - Spirit directs - Correct choices
Covenants - Gift of the Holy Ghost - Wise choices
Presence of God - Ordinances - Be worthy
Eternal Life - Sealed in the temple - Live worthily
Knowledge & Wisdom - Interview - How we conduct our lives
Sanctification - Develop soul - Obedience
Celestial law - Sacrifice - Pay tithing
Eternal companion - Birds of a feather flock together - Choose worthy friends
God is our Eternal Father - He will hear us - Pray to Him
God is our source of strength - God is our friend - Talk to Him
Atonement - Plan of Happiness - Accept Christ's Grace
Seek Truth - Ask questions - Read the scriptures
Ministering of angels to watch over you, bless and protect you - Receive priesthood keys - live worthily to receive the Aaronic Priesthood
Call down the blessings of heaven - Bless your family - Receive the Melchizedec Priesthood
Govern the affairs of the church - Accept responsibilities - Do what is expected of us
Temple blessings - Refuge from the world - Overcome evil
Eternal blessings - House of the Lord - Survive the times of darkness
Peace, respect of God - Magnify your calling - do your duty
Peace of Heaven - Live worthily - Love and help one another

Hymn 21, Joseph S. Murdock, Bruce R. McConkie ©1985 LDS

Come, listen to a prophet's voice, and hear the word of God,
And in the way of truth rejoice, and sing for joy aloud.
We've found the way the prophets went who lived in days of yore.
Another prophet now is sent this knowledge to restore.

Then heed the words of truth and light that flow from fountains pure.
Yea, keep His law with all thy might till hine election's sure,
Till thou shalt hear the holy voice assure eternal reign,
While joy and cheer attend thy choice, as one who shall obtain.

Prophets of God

Last Sunday I left early so I would make it to Lubbock in time for church. As I passed through Tijeras Canyon at 4 am, I slowed to 55, as there was a construction zone. The policeman did not think I slowed enough: "What part of 45 don't you understand?" he demanded. "The part where I did not see the sign". That just made him more angry. He pointed out that I had passed at least 2 signs giving the speed limit. At 4 am on a Sunday, you just don't expect construction workers to be about, but the officer was working very hard to enforce the law, and was greatly frustrated because the people were not paying attention to the signs. It has always

been this way with the prophets of God.

We are concerned with the evils of the world. “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken” (Deut. 18: 15). The prophet reminds us that eternal blessings are available now to help us overcome evil if we attend the temple; yet few go regularly to the temple.

A major problem of our time is debt. “Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer. (1 Sam. 9: 9). Today the prophet teaches that principles of financial security are based on the law of sacrifice and gives the law of tithing as a means to attain this; yet many lack faith to test this principle.

We all have daily problems. To the seekers of truth the prophet says, read the scriptures daily; yet many don’t take the time to even read one verse each day to take advantage of these insights into our needs. “...Nephi said unto them: Behold they were manifest unto the prophet by the voice of the Spirit; for by the Spirit are all things made known unto the prophets, which shall come upon the children of men according to the flesh” (1 Ne. 22: 2).

Christ established his Kingdom with the leadership of prophets (Ephesians 2:20). We have this advantage today. “The Kingdom of God Is Here. Brethren, the quorums of the Church need your talents, your loyalty, your devotion; and each man needs the fellowship and blessings that come of quorum activity in the kingdom of God”. (Gordon B. Hinckley, Ensign, January 1994)

There are twelve classical world religions. Baha’i, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism. There are over 4,200 religions, churches, denominations, religious bodies, faith groups, tribes, cultures, movements, ultimate concerns, etc. Yet only one has the authority to lead the Kingdom of God. “I have sealed upon your heads all the keys of the kingdom of God. Well might Brigham Young say, “The keys of the kingdom of God are here.”.(Wilford Woodruff. Ensign, April 2004).

“Revelation is a continuous principle in the Church. “We have the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants; but all these books, without the living oracles and a constant stream of revelation from the Lord, would not lead any people into the Celestial Kingdom of God. (Elder Boyd K. Packer, Ensign, August 1996). Our next opportunity to hear the prophets is General Conference next weekend. Come, listen to a prophet’s voice. I know you will hear what you need to address your daily problems.

Repentance

Iina ʔahgo ánalnééh

The Lord calls His people to repentance “because my people hath forgotten me... and they have ...stumbled in their ways from the ancient paths...” T’áá áníłtso nihe’iina’ ʔahgo ánídadiilníł (Jeremiah 18:15). The Lord knows His people. “Can anyone hide himself in secret places so I shall not find him?”(23:24). Áko díí éí biniinaa Diyin “T’áá áłtso dine’é nihe’iina’ ʔahgo ánídaahdlééh (Moses 6:57). “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (31:33). “I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and shall increase. I will set up shepherds over them who shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking, saith the Lord” (23:3,4). The Lord is not satisfied with hypocritical compliance of the outward appearances of religion. When the Pharisees criticized him for spending time with “sinners”, he replied, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I did not come to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance... Háálá ts’ída t’áá ákogi ádaat’éii doo bíká ádideeshnił biniyé nýáa da, nidi baḡahági ádaaníłii ʔahgo át’éego Diyin God bich’i’ tsíndadohkeesgo nihibaḡahági át’éii bits’áhóhkááh, bidideeshnił biniyé nýá” (Matthew 9:13).

Repentance is clearly an important task of every man, for “the wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God will render to each one according to his deeds... háálá t’áálá’í jiniínigo ádajíł’iídígí bik’ehgo Diyin God hach’i’ nidi’yooléél” (Romans 2:5,6). On the day of Pentecost, Peter gave such a powerful witness of the Resurrection and the Atonement that the people were “pricked in their heart... éí deidiizts’áḡ’go bijéi dajishishiigi ádaadzaago yíníł daazlı́” (filled with faith...Jesus Chris woodlánígí) and desired to know what to do. Peter replied with basic principles of the Gospel: “Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins... t’áálá’í nootínigo ʔahgo át’éego Diyin God bich’i’ tsíndahidohkeesgo Jesus Christ bízhi’ bee tó bee dinihi’dółzı́ł; and you shall receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit... áko Diyin God bich’i’ ádił da’soohsí’ígí nihá yóó’iididoo’áál, áádóó Níłch’i Diyinii nihaa deet’áanii nihí’ dadooleeł” (Acts 2:38). They became changed in all their actions and thoughts, joined the church, and contributed their time and resources to the building up of the Kingdom and helping one another... (2:44-47). Indeed, repentance brings about a change of heart and a change of behavior, including a commitment to serve in the Kingdom.

The first step of repentance is to admit that we have sinned. Doo yá’át’ééhii baa nisiidzáhígí nihanídi’doot’áál niidzingo éí áłtsé baa ákodíníidził. We cannot repent unless we recognize shortcomings in our ways (Luke 16:15-16).

We must feel sorrow for our sins. Baḡahági át’éi éi baa yíníł niidzin doo. The scriptures call this “a broken heart and contrite spirit” (Psalms 51:17). “T’áá háida Diyin bidááhdóó jooba’ nízingo dóó íyisí yíníł nízingo áádóó tó bee shid’doolzı́ł nízingo ínida baḡahági át’éii áłtso yóó’iidí’áḡ’go éi tó bee alziłł binahji’ éi bisodizin bá hooghan yididoogáál” (3 Nephi 9:20).

Our sincere sorrow should lead us to forsake our sins. Baqahági átéii doo baa nináánéidáa da doo “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins - behold, he will confess them and forsake them...Diné bibaqahági át’éii yóó’ iididoo’áałgo éi kót’áao nił bééhózin doo: éi ádaa hoolnih dóó doo yaa nináánádáa da doo” (D&C 58:43).

We must confess our sins. Doo yá’áat’éhii be’illyaahígíí éi baa hodiilnih. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.. baqahági ádeit’ínígíí bee ádaa dahwiilne’go, hó ha’ahódlíii índa ts’ídá t’áa ákogi ááníííi jílíigo nihibaqahági ádaat’éii ałtso nihá yóó’azhdidoo’áał, áádóó doo t’áa ákogi ádeit’íidii ałtso nihqah táázhdoois” (1 John 1:9).

Part of repentance is to make restitution. Doo yá’át’éhii be’iilyaago éi bik’eh niná’diilyééł. This means that as much as possible we must make right any wrong that we have done (Ezekiel 33:15-16; 18:7). Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift... nik’is áłtsé bich’i’ nídídáałgo bił k’é ná’ahididí’nił, áko índa nídídáałgo náádi’yíłnih.” (Matthew 5:23,24).

A vital part of repentance is to forgive those who have sinned against us. Ła’ diné éi banídadi’diit’áał. “But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses” Nidi náánała’ diné nihich’i’ baqahági ádaadzaii doo bá yóó’anídahidoh’aahgóó nihiTaa’ yá’aqashdi hólóonii ałdó’ baqahági ádahot’íidii doo nihá yóó’anéididoo’áał da (Mark 11:26).

To make our repentance complete we must keep the commandments of the Lord. Diyin God bibeeháaaaniki bik’eh honiil’íi doo. “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love... T’áa shiTaa’ yee nahas’áanii bik’eh honish’óigo be’ayóó’ó’óníbi’ honishłónígi át’éego” (John 15:10).

Repentance is the great gift of the Atonement of Christ. “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord... éi baq nihibaqahági ádaat’éii nihá k’ééda’doolchqoł biniyé łahgo át’éego tsíndahidohkeesgo Diyin God bich’i’ dah nídahidoohkááh” (Acts 3:19). When you are cleansed by the mercy of Christ, your burdens are lifted and you are freed to be of service to others.

In 1965 I received my patriarchal blessing. From time to time I read it again, searching for insights that might guide my choices and decisions. The beginning of a new year is a very good time for reflection and decision making. The world calls it “New Years Resolutions”. Whatever you call it, it is important to take a careful look at your path in life and make course corrections so you get where you want to go. Here are some highlights from my blessing.

“I give you this patriarchal blessing and inform you of the will of our Father in Heaven. May this blessing be to you as a guiding light throughout your life and give to you a stronger

desire to live according to the principles of the gospel and an insight into you eternal past, the present, and things which will be of value in our future life.” I was told that I was of the tribe of Joseph and Ephraim and heir to the covenant of Abraham; I was blessed to rejoice in the priesthood and accept callings. I was promised the companionship of the Holy Ghost to constantly guide me; and health and strength to fulfill my callings. I was blessed to finish my schooling and to instruct and influence others with music. I was promised that I would run and not be weary and walk and not faint because of the blessings of the Word of Wisdom. I was promised prosperity if I would pay tithing. I was admonished to honor my parents and appreciate their strengths. I was blessed with a testimony of the restoration of the gospel and blessings for sharing my testimony with others. I was promised an eternal companion and children who would praise God if I would obey the law of chastity. I was promised eternal life with my family, and all this according to my faithfulness.

Surely I have not always walked a straight path. I have not always met the expectations of others or been faithful to the promises and covenants of my blessing. Although I can't do anything about what happened before, I can change the future. I can plot a course to where I want to go based on where I am now. I can read the scriptures daily to stay in tune with the Gift of the Holy Ghost. I can attend church where I can share testimonies and have opportunities to serve others. I can live the law of chastity by rejecting offensive movies and internet content. I can pay my tithing as a first step toward solving my financial problems. I can live and make choices with more than myself in mind. I can think of the consequences of my actions on those around me and my descendants to the 7th generation. I need to think of teaching the Gospel to my children all the days of my life.

“And now my sons, 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 yea are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12).

Helaman's sons shared this testimony among all the people of Nephi from one city to another, and among the Lamanites. Their testimony convinced many who had become inactive. The people they taught abandoned their sins and false traditions, and repented and remained faithful all their lives.

Let us be like the Lamanites of old by self reflection and course correction. Look ahead to where you want to be, and set a course that will take you there with your family.

A Restoration

Lehi received a promise from the Lord about his descendants and others who would come to America. “Yea, the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me, and to my children forever, and also all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord... Bóhólníihii díí kéyah shí, dóó sha’áłchíni bich’i’ ah’ deet’á hool’áágóó, dóó hái shíí Bóhólníihii náána’á kedaayahdégé’ ch’íini’eezhígíí daabídó’ ...I, Lehi, have obtained a promise, that inasmuch...that they shall keep his commandments they shall be blessed upon the face of this land, and there shall be none to molest them, nor to take away the land of their inheritance; and they shall dwell safely forever...Bóhólníihii Diyin God Jerusalemdegé’ t’áá háida ch’íidoo ishígíí bibeehaz’áanii yik’eh dáhól’ígó éí, díí kéyah bikáa’gi náásgóó dadinóoséél” (2 Ne. 1: 5, 8-9). Nephi too, saw that others would come to inherit this land. “And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles, and they did prosper and obtain the land for their inheritance” (1 Nephi 13:15).

The coming of the Gentiles was given as a sign that the restoration of the Gospel and the restoration of the people to their lands was about to begin...díí kéyah ałk’idáá’ yee diní’ánéę baa ndeet’aahígíí éí t’áá ídáá’ hahoolzhiizh dooleęł (3 Ne. 29: 1). The restoration of the Gospel was to begin in America, then go to the descendants of Lehi and to all the world: “And the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; wherefore, the descendants of Lehi shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which was had among their fathers...And it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall commence his work among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to bring about the restoration of his people upon the earth” (2 Ne. 30: 5, 8).

The coming of the Gentiles to America was predicted to be traumatic for the descendants of Lehi. However, Lehi was promised that his descendants would not be destroyed, though they would be “smitten and scattered...nevertheless, the Lord will be merciful unto them, that when they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer, they shall be gathered together again to the lands of their inheritance” (2 Ne. 6: 11). The restoration of lands to the people always is connected in the prophecies to returning to the covenants their fathers had made to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In 1820 Joseph Smith was given a powerful witness that God remembers his covenants to restore all things to the people (Joseph Smith History 1). “Diyin God bich’i’ sodizingo, adinídíin hooleełgo wónáásdóó ałné’é’aah bilááhgi át’éego adinídíin silíí’, t’áá hooshch’i’ ayóó ájít’éii léi’ shitsásk’eh bíighahgi hojizlíí’, doo ni’gi níkídees’eezgóó, níłch’i’ yiyi’ dasizł’”. During the years after the First Vision, Joseph received much instruction from Heavenly Beings, and was commissioned to “set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed” (Dan. 2: 44). The Lord declared: “I gave unto thee, my servant Joseph, an appointment, and restore all things... for I have conferred upon you the keys and power of the priesthood, wherein I restore all things, and make known unto you all things in due time” (D&C 132: 40, 45). The promises to Lehi

about his descendants began to be fulfilled when “the time comes that they shall be restored to the true church and fold of God; when they shall be gathered home to the lands of their inheritance, and shall be established in all their lands of promise...t’áá yich’i’ yááfti’go níleí sodizin bá hooghan t’áá aaníinii dóó Diyin God bidine’é yaa náhidookah...dóó kéyah bee aha’deet’ánigi bikáá’góó t’áá ałtsogo kéédahat’ıı dooleeł” (2 Ne. 9: 2). “After they were restored they should no more be confounded, neither should they be scattered again” (1 Ne. 15: 19-20).

The Book of Mormon prophets wrote about their own descendants, how they would fall away from the Gospel and then have it restored to them in the latter days. They also saw that many of the Gentiles who afflicted them would fall away from the Gospel...Dóó nihił íshjání ádeeshłíł, O Israel bighandóó danohłíinii, éi díí Gentile dine’é doo nihik’ehdidłıı da dooleeł; ndi Israel bighandóó danohłíinii, nihił ałhadi’nisht’ánéę béedeeshnih, dóó shina’nitin hadaakt’éhígíí nihił béedahodooził, and in those days, this land would be restored to the descendants of Lehi along with all the people who keep the covenants of the fulness of the Gospel. “T’áá aaní, t’áá aanígo, ánihidishní, ákót’áo éi díí diné díí kéyah baa didíí’áál áko daabí dooleeł (3 Nephi 16:4-13). May we all respond to the promptings of the Spirit that guide us to live the covenants our fathers made to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Sabbath Day Diyin Bidimóo

Ramah, New Mexico celebrates Pioneer Days each year in July. They have parades, talent shows, food, and many activities, including three days of rodeo. My grandson learned that his ancestors liked to work hard and play hard, but only until Sunday. As they traveled across the vastness of the continent and confronted every challenge, they pioneered roads, gardens, and home sites, but on Sunday they took time to rest, pray, and conduct worship services. They believed that the Old Testament admonition to “remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy... Dimóó bənáłniihgo diyingo hadíínóhsin doo” (Exodus 20:8) was reiterated by the Lord for their day (D&C 68:29).

When Jesus was criticized for what he ate, or who he was with, or the service he rendered others on the sabbath, Jesus told them, “the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath...Jesus Christ éi nihookáá’ dine’é domóo bá ályaa nígo na’neeztáá” (Mark 2:27). This is a day set aside for the blessing of our families as we gather together to ask the Lord’s blessings. Ramah’s pioneer days are for all the community, not just members of the church, yet they are like ancient Israel, calling down a blessing on all those who live among them, by ending their festivities and closing their businesses on Sunday. Israelite dine’é éi Diyin bidimóo hazhó’ó ik’eh dahół’ııgo éi Diyin yił ahada’deet’ánée éi bééhozin nít’éé’ (Isaiah 56:1-8).

Jesus joined all Israel in celebrating the sabbath on the seventh day. Jesus níleí náábi’diilyáajı’ éi tsost’id jí Diyin Bidimóo ha’níı nıt’éé’. The Romans were careful to respect this tradition, even in their savage punishments like crucifixion, ensuring that all the bod-

ies were removed before the end of the week. In honor of the resurrection, the early saints changed their sabbath to the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Diyin éí shidimóo hazhó'ó hasht'edeidíínóhsin doo nihiñí The commandment to respect one day per week is the same today as in ancient times. “Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle... Dimóogo éí naanish doo ádoohííł da... ínida ǰǰ' da éí doo dago t'áá ałtso naaldlooshii éí ndi Diyin bidimóogo doo nidaalnish dagóó éí yee nohoní'á” (Exodus 20:10). Our prophets today have explained that this means we should not shop, hunt, fish, attend sporting events, or participate in similar activities on that day, but should “call the sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord, honourable” (Isaiah 58:13). Áko Diyn yá yádaałti'ii éí dimóogo t'áá doo nida'iyofnihi dóó t'áá doo nida'iyofnihi dóó t'áá doo nidaałzheehé dóó t'áá doo nidaahnéhé danihiñí. Díí éí doo nida'ahóohaigóo daahkááh da ałdó' nihiñí. When we must work, we should maintain the spirit of sabbath worship in our hearts as much as possible.

The Lord has said that we may receive great spiritual and temporal blessings if we keep the sabbath day with thanksgiving and cheerful hearts. “The fullness of the earth is yours, ...whether for food or for raiment, or for houses, or for barns, or for orchards, or for gardens, or for vineyards... yá'át'échii t'áá ałtso nahasdzaán bikáa'gi dahólónígíí éí nihí dooleeł...ch'iyáán da, éé' da, kin da, ǰǰ' bighan da, dá'ák'eh da, tsintah da” (D&C59:15). Like tithing and the other commandments, keeping the sabbath day is a way to be apart from the world, a way to act in faith, a way to invite the blessings of the creator into our lives.

“God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it...and he rested on the seventh day from all his work... hodeeyáádáǰ' éí Diyin dimóo diyingo haidiilaa” (Genesis 2:2-3). May we seek the blessings of the creator by respecting this ancient tradition. Keeping the sabbath day is an act of faith, and every time you act in faith, your ability to have the spirit with you increases. Diyin bidimóo hasht'edíniilozingo éí Diyin t'áá doole'é yee nihik'ijidoodliiłgo át'é.

Sacrament

Diyingo Tó Dóó Bááh Naakáhígíí

All religions have some symbol of sacrifice as their sacrament. “Some use the sacrament as a means to procure great graces and blessings; others use the “Eucharist”, “Communion,” “Lord’s Supper,” or “Breaking of Bread” as an office of thanksgiving for what they have received.” The Huichol and Chichimeca use their sacrament as a healer, or divine “messenger” enabling the individual to communicate with God without the medium of a priest. Only one church schedules something called the “Sacrament Meeting”, that is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. NihiYisdá'iiníłii éí ti'hwiisénii'ígíí béédaałnih dóó shibeehaz'áanii éí bik'eh dahonoł'í nihiñí. This is where those who are baptized can renew their covenants by partaking of the emblems of bread and water as instituted by Christ, and receive messages that invite the Spirit into their lives. Bee béédeilniih dooleełgo éí tó dóó bááh naakáago éí yee nihá hooł'a'.

In his last gathering with the apostles before suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ initiated an ordinance that replaced the ancient practice of blood sacrifice. The new practice is in remembrance of the sacrifice of the Savior for us... “daosá; díí binahjí’ éí shits’íís bee nihá ti’hwiisénii’ígíí bee béédaañiih dooleeł” (Matthew 26:26-28). After the resurrection, Jesus came to the Americas and taught the Nephites the same ordinance “Jesus bi’diisyíigo dóó hiiná násdłí’go kojí díí kéyah bikáa’gi Nephite dine’é yaa náyá. Kojí náyáago éí ałdó’ díí tó dóó báá naakáhígíí bee ó’ool’íı̄ł yee nináá’neeztáá” (3 Nephi 18:1-11) Neither the New Testament nor the Book of Mormon mention the word “sacrament”, however, what, how, and why are clear. “He said unto the Disciples: Behold there shall one be ordained among you, and to him will I give power that he shall break bread and bless it and give it unto the people of my church, unto all those who shall believe and be baptized in my name. And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done... And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you (and my blood which I have shed for you). And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you... Diyin éí t’áá háida yá’át’éehgo hiináago éí tó dóó bááh naakáhígíí éí yinahjí’ bił hózhq̄q̄ doo níí lá (18:5-7) and have a remission of sins...áádóó Diyin éí “diné bidoo yá’ádaat’éehii yaa naaskaígíí ba nídi’yii’t’aaah” ałdó’ náádoo’niid” (Matthew 26:24).

Not every one who attends a Sacrament meeting actually partakes of these symbolic references to the baptismal covenants. Only the baptized members and blessed children participate. Diyin éí hazhó’ó hadíínóht’éego ínida tó dóó báá diyinii éí doohsíı̄ł nihidíniid. “..See that ye partake not of the sacrament of Christ unworthily; but see that ye do all things in worthiness, and do it in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God; and if ye do this, and endure to the end, ye will in nowise be cast out (Morm. 9: 29). Áko doo yá’át’éehii baa neidáhígíí éí áłtsé nahjí’ ádiilníł. “The elders or priests are to have a sufficient time to expound all things concerning the church of Christ to their understanding, previous to their partaking of the sacrament and being confirmed by the laying on of the hands of the elders, so that all things may be done in order” (D&C 20:68). T’áá haáida doo yá’át’éehii yaa naayáhígíí baa nídeet’áago ínida éí yidooyíı̄ł dóó yidoodłı̄ł (D&C 46:4) “For, behold, I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory - remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins (D&C 27: 2).

The exact wording of the Sacramental prayers is given in both the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. The priest breaks the bread, addresses God, the Eternal Father... Diyin God hool’áágóó nihiTaa’ nilíinii, niYe’ Jesus Christ bizhi’ binahjí’ádanidii’ní... and asks that the bread and water be blessed and sanctified to the souls of all who partake of it... díí bááh bik’ijinídlí doo dóó diyingo ádílıı̄ł diné t’áá ałtso díí bááh yidooyíı̄łígíí bá: that they eat in remembrance of the body of Christ... áko nich’i’ íshjáá’ áda’diilyaa doo, and drink in remembrance of the blood He shed for them...áko dayoodłá’go niYe’ bidił bá dadeezna’áa yéédaañiih dooleeł. This is done as a witness that they do always remember Him and keep His commandments...éí t’áá áłahjí’ yéédaañiih dooleeł. The priest finishes the prayer with a reminder of

God's promise: that if they make these covenants, remember Christ, and keep His commandments, that they may always have His Spirit to be with them... áko biyi'sizíinii t'áá álahji' bił dahólóo dooleeł. After this ordinance, we listen to testimonies that soften our hearts to receive the Spirit. Díí éi t'áá íyisíi diyingo baa nitsíikees dooleeł.

Tó dóo bááh naaháago éi hazhó'ó éi biniyé áłínígíí éi baa nitsíikees doo. Diyin éi t'áá álahji' deijinohba'go tó dóo bááh diyinii nídaahdijh doo nihiłní. Áko ákót'áo éi Diyin ayóo nihik'hojidlıi doo.

May we always attend Sacrament Meeting, renew our covenants, and seek the Spirit.

A Pearl of Great Price

I travel frequently, staying in motels and hotels all over this and other countries. I rarely turn on the TV, but I always look in the drawers for a bible. Most often I find one and am grateful to the Gideons, who place scriptures wherever people gather in over 175 countries, including hotels, hospitals, schools, and with members of the armed forces. Their prayer is that each reader will “find the individual instruction and blessing he may need”. The words of scripture have always had power to change lives for the better.

When the children of Israel returned from captivity, they had many problems and much to learn, as they had been suffering “not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11). Ezra mourned their condition: “I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens” (Ezra 9:6). They addressed the problem by gathering the people together, “all the men and women who could hear with understanding... and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law” (Nehemiah 8:2,3). As a result of reading the scriptures, there was a great change that came over the people, and they made covenants to abide by the precepts of the scriptures (Nehemiah 9:38).

The historical period when the scriptures were exclusive, and not shared with the people, is referred to as the “Dark Ages”. Every book had to be written by hand, and scripture reading was done in Latin, not the languages of the people. “It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite (Isaiah 29:8). In the mid 15th Century, Johann Gutenberg invented a mechanical way of making books, and the Dark Ages gave way to an age of enlightenment. “And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 29:18, 19). Since then the scriptures have become available in nearly every language of the earth. “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and

to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people (Revelation 14:6).

According to economic theorists, we have passed through the Information Age, when those with information had the advantage. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field (Matthew 13:44). When information ceased being scarce, the Knowledge Economy commenced. The current economic era is defined as the Intangible Economy, in which four factors of production are the key resources from which economic activity and competitive advantage are primarily derived and delivered today - knowledge assets (what people know and put into use), collaboration assets (who people interact with to create value), engagement assets (the level of energy and commitment of people), and time quality (how quickly value is created).

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13:45,46). May we know and put into use those ancient words that are like a pearl of great price. May we interact with others make the scriptures valuable. May we dedicate our energy and commitment to principles of lasting value. As we take time to share the scriptures, our friends and families will be blessed now and in the future.

See and Understand

The ancient prophet Esaias saw the times of Christ when the people would see but see not, and hear but not understand (Mathew 13:14). Isaiah said that in our day people would rely upon their own understanding and not trust the Lord (2 Nephi 25:27). In the parable of the sower, Jesus explains that sometimes this happens because “the evil one comes and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.” The Lord says of such people: “Wo be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough!” (2 Nephi 28:27-29).

Helaman explains how to overcome the evil one: “...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...” Helaman 5:12.

The Lord asks us to stand in holy places, to call upon His name, to worship Him, and to gather together to learn our duty in the stakes, which are the strength of Zion (D&C 101:21, 22). We were reminded in stake conference this weekend that our stake presidency and the 12 high councilmen are organized in the same fashion as the general leadership of the church, because for us, they are the church. They have the keys to administer everything we need here to progress in the covenants and ordinances of the church. We should listen to their counsel.

The word of God has the power to change the direction of our lives in a way that blesses our children for generations (Helaman 5:17-19). “And He cometh unto the world that he may save all men if they will hearken unto his voice... (2 Nephi 9:21). Yet “O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God... Wo unto the deaf that will not hear... Wo unto the blind that will not see...” (2 Nephi 9:28, 31, 32).

We are blessed in our day to have prophets and presidents, bishops and teachers, magazines and internet, classes and conferences, all to bring us the word of God to uplift and enrich our lives.

Jesus calls upon us to see with our ears, hear with our ears, and understand with our heart, that we be converted so He should heal us (Mathew 13:15). Attend your meetings, participate in classes, study the scriptures with your family. The word of God will benefit your family. Seek for it every day.

Seek the Kingdom

Yesterday I conversed with a man who assured me that in his study of the Bible he has determined that all the churches are false. He continued to explain to me in great detail that my church was also false, but he found the truth on the internet, received a confirmation of the spirit, and is now busy preaching the true Gospel. He did not actually preach any of this Gospel to me, but did assure me that since my church has prophets, it must be false. His enthusiasm for helping people know they are in a false church, and that the right answer is on the internet (not in churches) makes me ponder the scriptures. What does Jesus ask of us?

When we respond to the testimony of the spirit and join the church through baptism, we have entered at the straight gate, áhoołts’óózigo yah ahóót’i’í góne’ yah ahokkááh (Mathew 7:13). This narrow path requires us to exercise faith by following the Savior and his example. Jesus says that “no man can serve two masters... Diné ła’da doo t’áá łaħjı’ naat’áanii naaki bá nijól’a’ átée da...” He uses many metaphors to emphasis that we should trust the Lord, and not our own judgement: “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon... Diyin God índa at’ı’ doo t’áá łaħjı’ bá nijól’a’ át’ée da.” He reassures us that if we would “seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things shall be added unto you...Diyin God bee bóhólnııhgo bił haz’áanii áádóo yee ts’ídá t’áá ákogi át’ėii aláajı’ hádaht’ı’, áko éidı t’áá ałtso nihá bíidoolyéeł” (Mathew 6: 24, 33). The Lord knows what we need, and is anxious to bless us, if we would only have faith to walk in his narrow path.

Jesus said, “follow me, tı’, shikée’ woh’ash” (Mathew 4:19). He said, “repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, łaħgo át’ėego Diyin God bich’ı’ tsındahidohkeesgo ádił nida’iyohsııhi bits’áhóhkááh, háálá yá’ąashii bee bóhólnııhgo bił haz’áanii bílátah da-

hashzhiizh” (Mathew 4:17). Our worship should be sincere and personal, t’óó diné yee danihiní’í doo biniyé diné binááł jooba’ bee ádaahnííígíí bits’ąą ádaa ádahoot’ą (Mathew 6:1-4; 16-18). Our prayers should address needs, “niTaa’ t’áadoo yi’nihi ááníłii yoo’íinii, éi na’doolééł” (verse 5-13). We should forgive others, “háálá diné nihich’i’ doo ákóó ádaát’íidii bá yóó’adahidoh’ aahgo nihiTaa’ yá’ąashdi hólóonii bich’i’ doo ákóó ádaot’íidii ałdó’ nihá yóó’iidii’ aah doo” (verse 14-15). We should treasure eternal values, “háálá nihinaalye’é siláadi t’áá ákwii ałdó’ nihijéi hólóo doo” (verse 19-21). We should seek light to guide our path, “bee hool’ini bee adinídínigi át’éego anáá’ bee ats’íis bá adinídín. Éi ąą nináá’ yá’át’éhgo nits’íis t’áá át’é bił hool’in doo (verse 22-23). He calls us to a better life: “be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect, éi ąągo nihiTaa’ yá’ąashdi hólóonii ts’idá t’áá ákóne’ át’éhigi át’éego, nihí ałdó’ ts’idá t’áá ákóne’ ádanoht’ée le” (Mathew 5:48).

It is an act of supreme faith to “take no thought for the morrow” when choosing our daily activities. Yesterday I told a colleague that the new Gallup Performing Arts Center would be closed on Sundays. She was shocked that we would sacrifice a day of income just because of our religion, “for after all these things do the Gentiles seek” (Mathew 6:32). We do need to maximize our income in order to pay the bills for this business, but we also know that “your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things, jó ndi, nihiTaa’ yá’ąashdi hólóonii díidí t’áá ałtso bídin danohłíigo chodaot’ínígíí nihá bił bééhózin” (verse 32), and our faith is that we trust Heavenly Father.

Jesus asked us to not judge others. “Doo nihaa nídahódoot’ííígíí biniyé t’áadoo aa nídaht’ini” (Mathew 7:1-5), but to use good judgement (verse 6). He calls us to exercise the faith to ask for help, “how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? éi bilááh át’éego nihiTaa’ yá’ąashdi hólóonii ha’át’ihída yá’adaat’éhii bídajókeedígíí haa yiiniłgo át’é” (verse 7-12). The difference between true and false prophets is seen in their works, áko tsin bineest’ą’ bee bééhózinígíí át’éego t’óó ádahodil’íigo dahalne’ii ádaahníígíí bee nihíł béédahózin doo (verse 20). Good works are also a measure of true discipleship. “T’áálá’i jinitínigo, Bóhólníihii, Bóhólníihii, dashijinínígíí doo t’áá ádzíłtso yá’ąashii bee bóhóníhgo bił haz’ánii biih dahizhdookah da, ndi t’áá háiida shiTaa’ yá’ąashdi hólóonii íinízinii bik’eh ájít’éhígíí t’éiyá” (verse 21-27). The true church has spokesmen with authority, not philosophy (verse 28-29). The true worshipper follows the narrow path of light that leads to life, háálá iináaji’ ááhoołts’óózigo yah ahóót’i’ áádóó áhoołts’óózigo bich’i’ honít’i’, áko t’áá díkwíí éi yik’idahakááh (verse 14).

Truth is not whatever is convenient for us, it is a narrow path, hohzóójí hoot’áłígíí, that we find by exercising faith as we seek the Kingdom of God. “Diné doo bááh t’éi yee hináa da doo, ndi saad t’áá ałtso Diyin God yee hahadziihii yee hináa doo” (Mathew 4:4).

In our daily choices, it is my prayer that we show enough faith to choose to follow Jesus rather than depend upon our own strength and judgement.

Service

I saw Julie carrying her baby and gave her a warning: “be careful, if you hold that baby all the time, you’ll get attached to it!” “No kidding!” she replied. I thought I was making a joke, but to her, every sense of the idiom was real. The more time she spends serving this helpless being, the more she grows to love him, the more she wants to be with him, and the more she misses him when they are apart.

Yet her service to the baby does not make him more dependent, it makes him more self sufficient as he matures. She enjoys their good times and bad times together while he is young, because too soon he will exert his independence. If he is humble, he will continue to accept her love throughout his life. He will be happier if he can appreciate her attentions, even when he is a teenager.

Today in our branch we are celebrating the life of a brother who lived long enough to once again need constant care of others. He was gracious enough to accept that change from self sufficient rodeo cowboy to becoming totally dependent, like a small baby. As he accepted the attention and care of others, their love grew, and everyone loved being around him.

Jesus said, “I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22:27).

Jesus éí kodííniíd: “Shí éí naal’a’ígi át’éego nihitahgi naashá” (Luke 22:27).

As true followers of Jesus, also must serve others.

Nihí Jesus bikéé’nisiidzı́ dadii’nínígíí éí ałdó’ła’ diné bıká’ anéijah dooleeł.

Service is helping others who need assistance. Christlike service grows out of genuine love for the Savior and of love and concern for those whom he give us opportunities and direction to help.

Diné ayóó ádeíníí’níigo dóó bıká anéijahgo Jesus Christ át’áo át’áo ádaaniit’ée doo.

Love is more than a feeling; when we love others, we want to help them.

Díí ayóó’ó’ó’ní doo t’óó baa nitsídeiikees da, diné ayóó ádeíníí’níigo bıká nideilwo’ dooleeł daniidzin.

Whether its being in church and fulfilling an assignment, or visiting people in their homes, or coming when they call, when we serve others we receive important blessings.

Diyinshą’ éí ha’át’íí biniyé diné bıká anáhjah nihińní? T’áá háida bıká anéilwo’go éí bits’ááddóó nihik’ihojidlí.

Through service we gain the ability to love. We become less selfish. As we think of others our own problems become less serious.

Dóó t’áá háidi bıká anéilwo’go éí ayóó’ó’ó’níinii ayoo bee neiilnish dóó t’áá nihí éí bits’ááddóó

íhwiil'aah.

We must serve others to gain eternal life.

Áko t'áá háida bíká anéilwo'go hool'áágóó iina' éí nihí ałdó' shódeidiilt'eełgo át'é.

God has said that those who live with him must love and serve his children. (Mathew 25:32-46; Romans 12:1,2).

Diyin God éí niha'átchíní bá nidaałnish dóó t'áá áłahjì' ayóó' ádeiínoh'ní nihiłní.

As I left on my mission my father gave me this advice: “accept the service that others may want to give you. They need the blessings that will come as they serve you.”

He lived this advice until the end of his own life. His years of service to my disabled mother made his heart tender, and increased his love and concern for us all. He served those on the other side of the veil through the name extraction program until the day he joined them. I am sure that he learned to love them, and was received with joy and appreciation by thousands. My own brother has greatly extended his fragile life by dedicating all the energy he has to the service of others in the missions and the temples.

Be humble all your life so you are able to accept the blessings of giving and receiving service. When we willingly serve others in the spirit of love, we become more like Christ.

T'áá háida ayóó'ó'ó'ní bee bíká anéilwo'go éí Christgi át'ée dadiidleetgo éí nihił hool-zhish dooleet.

May we learn to be more like Christ by serving and accepting service is my prayer.

New Heavens and a New Earth

After acknowledging a lack of material goods, the singer adds, “I got the sun in the morning and the stars in the evening, so I'm all right”. We look to the sky for signs and inspiration all year long. I was fortunate to be driving home last night at sunset. For a few moments the clouds were ablaze with unlimited colors, and the mountains painted with shades and filters. I wondered how long a artist would have to study a photograph of the scene to select all the tints and mixtures to capture the scene on canvas. The passage of time has brought cold, clear nights to the high desert mountain where I live. The garden has been frozen since September 18th, signaling a change in the seasons and the focus of our family tasks. Now that the harvest is over, we pause to gaze at the changes in the heavens and ponder our life and duty. The sky has been as fascinating to our ancestors as it is to us today.

For centuries the “Western” world has subscribed to the Greek paradigm for seeing the stars organized into “constellations” like Orion (the hunter) and Ursa Major (the great bear). Each constellation has its traditional stories that are used in teaching principles and values. The

Navajo have seen the Big Dipper, Cassiopeia, and the North Star as Nahookos Bik'a'ii, Nahookos Bi'aadii, and Nahookos Biko. The first two represent the father and mother in a family, and the third represents the fire hearth of the home. The traditional understanding is that the constellation patterns were placed by the Holy People to teach proper roles and responsibilities of families. The Holy Ones met, discussed, planned, and laid out the constellations by which the people will understand the passage of time, growing, and aging. All cultures see stories in the skies, but many people have taken the potential lessons of the stars to extremes, such as those that Isaiah calls “astrologers, stargazers, and monthly prognosticators” (Isaiah 47:13). For these folks, the stars don't tell stories to guide decisions; they suppose that the alignment of the stars determines their path in life.

Using special tools like the Spitzer telescope, the Chandra X-Ray Observatory, the Hubble Space Telescope, and the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory, NASA continues to identify objects without number in the expanse around us. Abraham saw all this thousands of years ago: “and He put his hand upon mine eyes, and I saw those things which his hands had made, which were many; and they multiplied before mine eyes, and I could not see the end thereof” (Abraham 3:12). Abraham also saw that “the Gods organized the lights in the expanse of the heavens” (Abraham 4:14); and the children of God were organized before the creation of the world, and like the Holy Ones of Navajo tradition, they met, discussed, and planned. “And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell (Abraham 3:24). NASA sees these materials all throughout space, including Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons, oxygen, carbon, nitrogen, and all the building blocks of life.

The Gods, or Holy People organized the stars in a pattern for our guidance. Learn what lessons you can from God's creations from every perspective, for they will not always look the way they do now, maybe because we will be taken to a better place. Anyway, the Christian scriptures teach us that God will “create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create... Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart...” (Isaiah 65:17, 18, 14).

Taking Time

Easter is not a day, like Christmas it is a season. This Easter season, let's take time, like we do at Christmas time. At General Conference there were examples of this principle. Apostle Richard Scott admonished us to take time for prayer. President Hinckley encouraged us to take time to visit the families as a priesthood duty. President Faust gave examples of the Amish finding peace and forgiveness by taking time for each other when a tragedy struck their community. Elder Oakes pled with us to take time for our families and marriages. Elder Anderson and Elder Pace explained how to take time to study the witness of the scriptures and prophets to build a testimony that can drive our daily decisions.

During his time of suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus took time to be with his friends and even to teach them the eternal principles associated with taking time. “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with me...watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation...” (Matthew 26:38,41). In preparation for this, Jesus spent time with the disciples. They sat at a meal together, prayed together, participated in ordinances, talked of important principles, and sang together (26:17-30).

Jesus took time to explain the importance of reaching out to those in need (Matthew 25:31-46). He admonished His followers to take time to avoid deception now (24:4,5), as the day will come when there is no time for indecision (24:14-22). Jesus took time with those who were trying to make him stumble, and he taught them by precept and example that “thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (23:39). The mother of two apostles had a testimony, but not an understanding, as she asked the Lord for favors for her sons. He took time to explain to her the sacrifice they would have to make. When the other disciples became jealous at the attention He was giving, he took time to understand and address their misunderstandings (20:17-29).

Jesus took time for the children, and when that seemed to surprise others, he took time to explain that of such is the Kingdom of Heaven; and that forgiving others like children do is our duty (Matthew 18). He took time to bring his close friends “up into a high mountain apart”. We don’t know how many days they traveled and talked, but we know that they became prepared for a vision of eternity (17:1-13). He taught them that it takes time to become prepared to perform ordinances of the priesthood. “this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” (17:21).

Jesus cautioned his followers that their devotion would require time, disappointing those who were unwilling to make that sacrifice (Matthew 8:18-22; 16:24-26; 19:23-26). He reinforced this principle with parables that compare our efforts in living a gospel life to long processes like planting seeds and nurturing the tender plants, or planting and growing a tree, or mixing and baking bread, or buying and selling hard goods (chapter 13).

When I attend educational conferences I witness many people taking time for entertainment and travel, and not taking full advantage of the conference sessions. The same happens during the church conferences. The conferences are full of messages and songs that could touch your heart and prepare you to hear the whisperings of the Spirit. Take time to listen to the Spirit that will help you in all the challenges of your life. In this Easter season, take time to read again the witnesses of the Atonement and Resurrection. Take time to share your testimony with others.

Talents

Jesus said to all mankind: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind... and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matthew

22:37, 39). This is a serious command, as all nations will be judged on this universal law. “Before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another...” based on how they serve one another, especially those in need. (Matthew 25:31-46). It is interesting that this comes immediately after the parable of the talents (verses 14-30), reminding us that we are to sustain the weak and glorify God using whatever the Lord has given us.

There is no need to do a laudable deed or have great skills to be appreciated by the Lord or to be received into His Kingdom. Of the woman who did no more than anoint Him with oil He said, ““Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for memorial of her” (Matthew 26:13). In the parable, the talents are not given equally, but it is clear that each is expected to use whatever talent they may have.

Today we are honoring Elder and Sister Rowley who have used their substantial talents well, serving the Lupton Branch for their entire mission. They were not called to preach, but were called to help those in need. How appropriate that their calling was to the neediest little branch in the church. Well prepared by years of church and professional service, they were now given an opportunity (at their own expense) to be with people who needed the comfort of their consistent and patient attention. They have received no recognition for their sacrifice. Not even the burning of the chapel garnered the recognition of the local or the church news; but their persistent home visits and willingness to fulfill any calling in the meetings will long be remembered, like the man in the parable with many talents.

Janeen Howard is another whose contributions are greatly appreciated by many. We honor her today, as she celebrates 36 years of being a Howard. She has been ill during her time with Lupton Branch, and her service limited. However, like the widow donating her mite and the woman with the oil, she has anointed her life to service. She gives freely of her time to the young mothers of the community. She not only remembers each of the Lupton Saints and prays for their well being, but serves them in ways that only God knows. Her support of the Branch President is what makes the continuance of the branch possible during this difficult time between chapels. Her talent for loving others blesses friends and family.

May we all consider the talents and capabilities we have, and dedicate them to serving others.

Let Your Light Shine

Jesus calls us to be “the light of the world. Nihí nihokáá’ dine’é bá adinídín danohłí ... Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven... T’áá ák’ót’éego diné binááł dadí’ nółdín, áko yá’át’ éehgo ádaahníłígíí nihá dayoo’ ı́igo nihiTaa’ yá’ aashdi hólónii yaa dahaniih dooleeł” (Matthew 5:14, 16). As the “salt of the earth, Nihokáá’ dine’é bá áshı́ı́h danohłí”, we are to develop our talents and use them

to serve others. Háálá yá'át'éhgo t''áá doole'é yee nihik'ihojisdli'ígíí nahasdzáán bikáa'gi choiniil'íigo.

They say that the key to job satisfaction is to discover what you like to do and then figure out a way to get people to pay you to do that. My family has learned how to do that. I know I am not good at marketing like my son Zane. I can't keep records like my son Jess. I am not good at hospitality like my daughter Heather. I can't design like my daughter Carlene. I can't foster relationships like my wife Janeen. As I reviewed my Patriarchal Blessing for clues to my possible talents, I discovered that in the 42 years since then I have indeed fostered talents in music and teaching, just as the patriarch counseled. Unfortunately I have also realized my father's fears for me in that profession: no business sense. But I have learned a few things about talents.

We must be willing to spend the time and effort to develop the talent we are seeking. I never did have much talent in music, but I did work at it year after year, and get to where I can be of use in specific circumstances. This past week I put on the first Gallup Folk Music Festival. I never scheduled myself to perform, but ended up playing for hours, filling in as needed on various instruments and songs and styles and languages.

We must have faith that our Heavenly Father will help us, and we must have faith in ourselves. Janeen has developed extraordinary talents in cooking, sewing, and communicating. Her love for others makes miracles happen as she counsels with young mothers, or consoles the grieving, or uplifts the weary. Yet when she was called to teach these skills in Relief Society in 1970, she cried and worried and prayed for weeks before each lesson. Faith that she would receive help resulted in not only the needed assistance, but an increase in ability. Now she is recognized as a leader in every gathering of women.

We must learn the skills necessary for us to develop our talents. Zane and Jess both went into the business world with enthusiasm and willingness to work. They soon learned that constant training was a key to progression. They have been consistently rewarded for this attitude. Humility is the foundation for this attitude. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" Mathew 5:3.

We must practice using our talent. Every talent takes effort and work to develop. Carlene has advised me not to use the wonderful illustrations she did for my books while she was in high school. Through constant effort and daily application, her ability to illustrate has grown tremendously since then. The mastery of a talent must be earned. She has paid the price to become a highly sought after professional artist.

We must share our talent with others. When Heather first started as a server, she was shy and fearful. She overcame these fears by reaching out to others every day. It is by using our talents that they grow. Now she is highly appreciated by managers and coworkers and the public. They especially appreciate her great skill as a trainer. As she shares this talent with others, her ability to serve increases.

My parents were great trainers, too. Posted by the kitchen table for us to memorize was this reminder from President Heber J. Grant: “That which we persist in doing becomes easier for us to do; not that the nature of the thing is changed, but that our power to do is increased”. I commend this motto to each of you as a call to daily effort; and also to give you confidence to continue the effort in spite of your weaknesses and failures along the way.

May we all recognize the call of the Savior to exercise the faith necessary to develop talents and use them in the service of others.

Teaching One Another

At some point in our lives, each of us has responded to the Spirit as it touched our heart. Now we look with hope to the messages that the Spirit might bring. We hope that those messages may bring peace to our lives, and harmony and prosperity to our families. When Adam taught his children, he had a vision of the purpose of life, and a perspective from the beginning to the end of time to motivate and guide his instruction. He was very effective with some, such that the entire City of Enoch was taken into heaven, their test on earth no longer needed. With others he was not so effective. God found it necessary to cleanse the earth with a flood and start over. The people had become limited in their vision of life, lost their sense of eternity, and become selfish in their relationships. Even when Christ himself taught in Jerusalem, some were blessed by his teachings and others rejected Him. Effective teaching and learning require that both the teacher and the student have common purpose and vision.

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”, gives a sense of purpose that could guide all families: “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”. Imagine your family members all possessed of this vision of the purpose of life, and this sense of eternity. Each would think more of others than themselves, accept the covenants of charity and chastity, and resolve misunderstandings, contentions, and challenges. “Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities” (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102).

How can your family attain this vision? Only if they both hear and accept these teachings, and live these principles. They must hear these messages in the home and in the places the family goes together, such as the Church. Take upon yourself the role of teacher by telling stories, sharing testimonies, reading aloud from the scriptures, and giving guidance and advice. Have the habit of listening to your young children and grown children and spouse so that they know you care. Show interest in their friends and activities and studies. Hold them accountable

for their actions, and show an increase in love after each reprimand. Live the Gospel you are teaching them. They will learn some from your words, but more from your actions.

Because the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the “power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16), it must be taught by divine power, the power of the Holy Ghost. Take time to study and reflect upon the scriptures, and Sunday lessons, and Church publications. Fill your mind with the thoughts that will allow the Spirit to guide you. Ponder the needs and problems of your children so that when opportunities arise to interact with them, you will be ready to receive inspiration from the Spirit. A great teacher is not someone who knows the answer, a great and inspired teacher is someone who listens and guides the student to discover the answers they need.

You are a teacher in every act and interaction with others. The people around you will learn from you by the way you live, and the attentions you give. Learn to teach by the Spirit by filling your thoughts with the Gospel, and living the Gospel every day.

Temple Work

“Fishing is not a matter of life and death, it is much more important than that”. I just spent 10 days in South Texas where this is not a joke, but the way people live. Every home has at least one boat, and some communities are built on the shoreline, each home having its own boat dock. They even excavate canals to provide boat access for the homes that are more inland. I always felt that you could tell a person’s religion by what they do on Sunday. You know what those people are doing on Sunday. Yet all those people have something in common with us: their interest to family. Every home has walls and books and videos and albums dedicated to family photos. We are identified by not only the company we keep, but by our relatives.

We have entered the “holiday season” of family gatherings. This desire to kindle relationships is an eternal principle that extends beyond our immediate relatives to our forebears. The great interest in our day of knowing our ancestors was foreseen by Malachi. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse (Malachi 4:5,6). This passage was clarified by Joseph Smith, who was actually visited by Elijah and given keys for temple work and told that the earth would indeed be cursed unless we make those connections to our ancestors and descendants (D&C 128:16-18).

Yet it is not enough to collect family photos and have gatherings during the holidays. The authority to seal families by the power of the priesthood was restored by Elijah. The temples are built for this purpose. Everyone can contribute the names that go to the temples for this important work. My ancestors collected names and did temple work 7 generations ago during the mid 19th century. In the 1960s there was a push called the “Four Generation” program, in

which every family was encouraged to do temple work for at least their grandparents and great grandparents. Since then, those members of my family touched by the spirit of Elijah have been diligent in searching ancient records and sending names to the temple. I always thought that was enough, but there is more to the spirit of Elijah.

I remember in the 1970s when my mother sent copies of the testimonies of my ancestors. What a difference in my attitude! Suddenly these are not just names dutifully submitted, but they are real people with personalities and problems. Now my sister and my daughter are the key people in compiling and publishing these stories for our next family gathering planned by our children. There is hope that the true heritage and identity of our family will persist, as the next generation is clearly touched by the spirit of Elijah. They are gathering stories and names, and attending the temple to perform baptisms and sealings of families, because they have a testimony that this is their family.

May the Spirit of Elijah touch your heart this holiday season as you gather or send greetings to family members. Go one step further. Interview family members and record their testimonies and life histories to pass on to the next generation. Go another step further and submit the names to the temple so your family may be blessed with “a whole and complete and perfect union”.

Testimony

The Savior told us: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” There isn’t anything more important in heaven or on earth than to know the Father and the Son with a perfect knowledge. However, the only way to know by the power of the Spirit of God that He lives, hears and answers our prayers, that the Savior atoned for our sins, and that we may live again with Him, is through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

Preaching to the Nephites, Samuel gave as conditions for repentance that we should first learn the truth, then believe on His name. He continued with a plan of action: those who believe will repent (Helaman 14:11-13). When Samuel’s prophecies of the birth of Christ began to be fulfilled, Satan sent forth lyings to harden the hearts of the people, “but notwithstanding these lyings and deceivings the more part of the people did believe, and were converted to the Lord”. Nephi’s follow up to this movement of the Spirit upon the people was to teach the Gospel of repentance, and baptize the converts. The result was “peace in the land” (3 Nephi 1:22, 23). When Jesus came in person and spoke to the people he said, “Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day” (3 Nephi 27:20). Although the evidence was strong, Jesus had to remind them of the straightness of the gate and the narrowness of the way (3 Nephi 27:33). The disciples of Christ

suffered persecution from those who did not believe (3 Nephi 28:19-22). Those who receive a testimony are driven to action by the burning urgings of the Spirit. Those who desire a testimony must pay the price to receive it: they must live the principles.

We should be on our knees every morning and every night pleading with the Lord that the testimony we have could be maintained, as we have ample examples that a testimony can be lost through neglect or disobedience. A testimony is a fragile gift of the Spirit that must be nurtured. The evidence that God lives is ample. The evidence that Jesus returned from the dead has been given to us again and again. The consequences of denying the revelations of the Lord are equivalent to turning away from light and living in darkness (3 Nephi 29:6, 7). We can be filled with the Holy Ghost, but only by rejecting sin (3 Nephi 30:2).

Attending church regularly, giving service, and being a good person all contribute to gaining and maintaining a testimony. These actions are logical and needful, yet they are not natural. Moroni saw our day, and knew that “there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts...”, and that many would be “ashamed to take upon themselves the name of Christ...” (Mormon 8:36-41). He noted that “...the reason why he ceaseth to do miracles among the children of men is because that they dwindle in unbelief, and depart from the right way, and know not the God in whom they should trust” (Mormon 9:20). Moroni goes on to give us hope. There is a sure way to receive a witness of the Spirit: receive these things, ask God if these things are true with a sincere heart, real intent, having faith in Christ (Moroni 10:4).

It takes effort to obtain and maintain a testimony. Once we have done this, we are filled with the Spirit and anxious to share with others, as I do today: God lives, Jesus is the Christ, the power to baptize and give the Holy Ghost is in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Testimony of Jesus

We know that Jesus is the Christ, our Redeemer. We gain this testimony by the Spirit as we live the principles he taught. To help us gain this witness, we listen to those who have received this knowledge, and study the words and actions of Jesus. We find that he also testified of his divine nature.

When Jesus first began his ministry, he constantly bore witness to the astonished people of his true nature as Creator, Savior, the Son of God. The Pharisees criticized him for gathering food to eat on the Sabbath. Referring to David taking food from the temple, he told them plainly that he was greater than the temple, and the Lord of the Sabbath (Mathew 12:6,8).

When the Pharisees dismissed the miracles of casting out devils, Jesus showed them that this was evidence that the “kingdom of God has come unto you” (Mathew 12:28).

When a scribe of the Pharisees asked for a sign, he prophesied that he would rise from the tomb after three days, like Jonas had emerged from the whale (Mathew 12:39-42).

When asked about his teaching methods, Jesus reminded the disciples that his coming fulfilled ancient prophecies, and that those prophets and righteous men only could wish they had lived to hear these stories in person, suggesting that he was the one they spoke of (Mathew 13:17).

With each parable he called upon the people to hear, receive and apply his word in order to receive the blessings that could only come from God (Mathew 13:23). In so doing he identified himself as the very fulfillment of the prophecies, and the giver of the blessings, and the bearer of the eternal knowledge. (Mathew 13:35).

When Jesus returned to his own childhood village, he was rejected as a teacher, since they had known him as a local, referring to his ordinary brothers and sisters who still lived there. He noted that he, like all prophets, was without honor in his own country (Mathew 13:57).

The very evening that he was mourning the death of John the Baptist, he was besieged by thousands. He healed their sick, fed them by the miracle of loaves and fishes, went alone to pray, walked on the water to join the disciples, calmed the water, and accepted the worship of those witnesses, who declared: "Of truth thou art the Son of God" (Mathew 14:33).

Everywhere he went there were people who recognized him for what he was, and felt compelled to not just listen or seek a blessing, but to worship him (Mathew 15:25).

May each of us study his holy word, listen to the testimony of his disciples, and become disciples ourselves by following Christ and living those principles that lead to the peace he promises. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Mathew 7:21). "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mathew 6:33).

I bear my witness that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that we live with purpose on the earth. Our purpose is to prepare for our eternal life. The path to peace and happiness is to follow the teachings and example of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Testimony

The Savior told us: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." There isn't anything more important in heaven or on earth than to know with a perfect knowledge, the Father and the Son...however it is one thing to know by the power of the Spirit of God that He lives, hears and answers our prayers, that the Savior atoned for our sins, and that we may live again with Him...it's equally as important to apply that knowledge. Joseph Smith was prompted by the Spirit and then he acted on that prompting and

received his answer. We all have such promptings and sometimes regrettably we say later, “If only I had listened to the still small voice, things would have turned out differently.” But, most of us do better next time - we become better listeners. You all complied with the Spirit as it testified to you of the blessings that would come into your life by reading the Book of Mormon (as uttered by Pres. Hinckley last year). You were recipients of those blessings because you acted upon that prompting. In order for us to be better listeners for the important communication from the heavens, we must be faithful in keeping the commandments. After a stirring testimony given by George Pace to a gathering of not so reverant students at Colorado State University, where he was the institute director, Sister Pace was confronted by a young man in a rude fashion. He blurted out, “I read the Book of Mormon and prayed about it and didn’t learn it was true.” She was inspired to ask, “What kind of a life were you living when you read the Book of Mormon.” His responses were to her expectations...she then replied, “Young man, don’t you ever think that God will reveal to you sacred truths my husband testified of, when you are living in violation of such a sacred law.” I know that each of us have specific needs that we pray for every day. Our Heavenly Father is waiting anxiously to answer those needs as well as to shower upon us countless other blessings that He has in store for us. Some we pass up because we were not listening, others have been held back because we have not worked hard enough for them. Set righteous goals and seek inspiration to include Heavenly Father in the process and He will see them to the end, if you keep you part of the contract. “There is no chance, no destiny, no fate, nor unhal- lowed hand, that can circumvent or hinder or control the firm resolve of a determined soul.”

Al Pace

Gratitude

During the ravages of the Civil War, the President took time to reflect on the blessings of a free nation, of food and work, health, emancipation, and immigration: “I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do, hereby, appoint and set apart the last Thursday in November next as a day, which I desire to be observed by all my fellow-citizens wherever they may then be as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to Almighty God the beneficent Creator and Ruler of the Universe. And I do farther recommend to my fellow-citizens aforesaid that on that occasion they do reverently humble themselves in the dust and from thence offer up penitent and fervent prayers and supplications to the Great Disposer of events for a return of the inestimable blessings of Peace, Union and Harmony throughout the land, which it has pleased Him to assign as a dwelling place for ourselves and for our posterity throughout all generations.” Congress approved an annual Thanksgiving celebration in 1941, on the eve of America entering World War II!

This practice is consistent with the scriptures: “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (Col. 3:15, 17).

Gratitude is an attribute of Christian living that takes effort and practice, yet yields a high return. As we learn to be grateful for God's gifts, we also become grateful in our nature, and are able to appreciate and thank those around us. One reason this is difficult, is that life is so hard; people are so annoying. Even those that love us can offend us and harm us and neglect our needs. Let us develop a daily habit of thankfulness so that we can be uplifted in times of disappointment, comforted in times of pain, given hope in times of despair. When we have work and food, let us be grateful and share, so that in times of unemployment and hunger we may be grateful for the family and friends who sustain us.

“The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God.” (Abraham Lincoln, 3 October 1863).

The times of suffering that brought this celebration of gratitude was the 1860s when, in addition to the Civil War, France invaded México and Kit Carson forced the Navajo into captivity at Fort Sumner. We have overcome these sufferings. The Navajo Treaty of 1868 resulting from the Fort Sumner experience brought an unprecedented sovereignty that is celebrated today in every tribal election. The rise of the Mexican people in defense of their sovereignty is celebrated by all of us every Cinco de Mayo.

As we celebrate the Christmas season, let us be filled with gratitude, in spite of our problems. “Now my brethren, we see that God is mindful of every people, whatsoever land they may be in; yea, he numbereth his people, and his bowels of mercy are over all the earth. Now this is my joy, and my great thanksgiving; yea, and I will give thanks unto my God forever. Amen” (Alma 26:37).

Traditions we Practice

Lamanite traditions are usually characterized by the Nephite writers as false traditions that prevent people from accepting the true religion and living in peace (Mosiah 1:5; 10:12-17; Alma 3:8; 9:16,17; 17:9-15; 24:7-10; 60:32; Helaman 5:51; 15:7-9; 6:7; Alma 37:25-31; 4 Nephi 1:38-39).

Áádóó, Christ bina'nitin doo deiniizí'ęę éí Laman bidine'é, dóó Lemuel bidine'é, dóó Ishmael bidine'é daolyéé nt'ęę'; dóó Christ bina'nitin t'áá aaníí át'éhígíí ałdó' bił bécadahózin, ndi doo diniizíí'góó yik'iji' daazlíí'; dóó ałk'idáá', bizhé'é, doo da'oodłanęęgi át'áo, ba'átchíní t'áadoo da'iinoahlání deıłnıgo éí ndeinitin nt'ęę'.

Nephite traditions are usually characterized as correct ideas that lead to salvation and peace (Enos 1:14; Mosiah 26:1; 60:34; 1 Nephi 15:14; Alma 37:32-37; 3 Nephi 1:9-11; Alma 21:8; Helaman 7:5; 20; 13:21-22; 1 Nephi 1:37).

Éí bąą Christ t'áá aaníí dayoodlánígíí, dóó t'áá aaníí Christ yich'į' sońdadılzhįhígíí, éí Nephi bindine'é, dóó Jacob bidine'é, dóó Zoram bidine'é daolyéé nt'éé'.

The solution for keeping correct traditions is clear in the scripture: Nephites preserved correct traditions by keeping records (Alma 3:11). Lamanites who believed the scriptures abandoned the traditions of their fathers (3 Nephi 5:3-6; Helaman 15:15).

Jó háálá, diyink'ehgo na'anish ayóó át'éii nihich'į' kwíilyaaígíí éídó' bich'į' kólyaago, aoo', dabizhé'é bibee o'ool'įįł biniinaa doo da'oosdłąądígíí, nihił bécédahózingo doo éí doo da'oodłąą da náádadoodleeł da nt'éé'.

Practicing false traditions can deviate us from correct paths. It would behoove us to periodically review our own traditions to be sure that they represent and facilitate our beliefs.

December traditions practiced by my parents in California did not include a “white Christmas”. We did more singing around the organ. We had a devotional around the lighted tree on the 24th that included a reading of Luke Chapter 2 as well as “The Night Before Christmas”. The next morning we were ushered past the tree and into the kitchen for a hardy breakfast before we could gather as a family to unwrap presents from each other and see what Santa had brought in the night. This year it is just the two of us at home. We have not killed any trees or strung any special lights. We are not looking for Santa Claus to come down the chimney, and we are not even singing carols around the organ. Our traditions have changed with our circumstances. We join in community celebrations that reinforce and give voice to our beliefs.

Janeen's office party fostered good will and thoughtfulness through a “Secret Santa” gift exchange. For several days each person left little gifts and sayings. Roy's office selected two families in need. Each was assigned to prepare gifts or food to help them celebrate. By thinking of others we are following the Lord's example of giving (3 Nephi 13:1) T'áá aaníí aaníigo, ádishní baa dahojóobá'í baa djiinohbaah; and laying up treasures in heaven (3 Nephi 13:20) Ndi naadeefii da'ílíinii yá'ąąshdi hasht'endahojááh.

The Gallup community choir and orchestra presented Handel's Messiah to a full house. The music delivers the message of Nephi's favorite writer, Isaiah, that the Savior would come to bring peace to a troubled world. This music has been a Christmas tradition since 1741. Those who attended could hear the Gospel quoted directly from the scriptures: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together (3 Nephi 16:18-20). Nihá hada'asíidii iinéé' diits'a'go; iinéé' yił dahataał dooleeł; háálá t'áá áłah anáá'

yee deez'íí' dooleet Bóhólníihii Zion nináánéídláago. Nihit dahózhóqgo dahohataa, t'áá ánq̄tso dahohataa...

Four musical groups performed at the Christmas Caroling concert in Gallup. In the European tradition, “a carol” was a secular song about the birth of Jesus, not music officially sanctioned by the church. Tens of thousands of these tunes have come and gone since our oldest known carol was written back in 1410. In our singing, let us remember the carols and hymns that remind us of the Savior, and keep “Frosty the Snowman” and all the holiday songs in their place (Alma 5:26). Jó dóó k'ad, ánihidishní, shik'is danohíinii, nihijéí łahgo ádzaaígíí bii' nisoohyáádą́ą́', dóó k'adęę sin ayóó'ó'ó'ní bee yisdáná' iildéehii bee dahohataałgo noozíí'go, nanihídíshkid, da' k'adísh t'ashdii táá ákodanohsin?

Some of our strongest traditions like mistletoe, holly, decorated trees, and even Santa Claus, are adapted for Christmas from other cultures. The tropical Poinsettia was brought from Mexico to South Carolina by Ambassador Dr. Joel Poinsett. Since it bloomed in December and had red leaves, it easily adapted to the Christmas tradition of the U.S. We can't keep it alive in our climate, but we don't try to keep the trees alive either. In Mexico, the 16th Century Spanish priests created new stories to overcome the traditions of the people, including a story of a Christmas miracle to change “El Cuetlaxóchitl” into “la flor de la noche buena”. In fact, El Cuetlaxóchitl had been used for centuries in México by physicians to treat disease, by weavers as a dye, and by priests to overcome evil (Alma 46:40).

Hard candy sticks were first bent into a cane by a choir master in Cologne in 1670. He just wanted to keep the kids quiet during the services. The crook made it easy to hang on a tree. The red stripes were invented by Bob McCormick in Albany, New York in 1920, and the legends and myths about the meaning of the shepherds crook and the red blood and the purity of the white were added. Candy canes may be an invention, and not even good for our teeth and cholesterol, but if we try we can add stories to any tradition that attach those practices to our beliefs. The test of the goodness of a tradition is the result (3 Nephi 14: 18, 20). Tsin yá'át'éehii neest'ą́' doo yá'áhónígíí baąh hodooleełgo éi doo bíghah da, ında tsin yíchxq'ígíí neestą́ yá'át'éehgo doo baąh dínóot'ííł ndi da...Ákohgo, bineet'á' binahjí' béédahodoohsijł.

We believe with Joseph Smith that Christ was born during the lambing season of the spring, but are glad to celebrate the coming of our Savior along with the rest of the world in December. We need a celebration of lights when the nights are long and cold (3 Nephi 1:15). Jó háálá i'ii'ą́ago t'áadoo t'ée' hazłí' da; dóó diné t'óó bił ádahóoyóí chadahatheełęę ádingo biniinaa. Let's celebrate our Christian belief with Christian living, every chance we get (3 Nephi 16:4). Dóó shí ánihidishní dah ndiisdzáago díí bee nanihinétá'ígíí náadahídóohsoh...éi doodago naneestą́ą́'go sheéndahodoosijł binina'nídláii.

Traditions and Values

I attend many conferences which celebrate and promote the traditions of various groups, especially those whose languages and cultures are in danger of being lost. The people who attend are simultaneously open to a variety of practices, and dedicated to helping people keep alive their specific traditions, and to creating environments that are safe for differences. The history of the world is replete with examples of intolerance. At the Binational Summit for Rural Indigenous Education in Creel, Chihuahua today, many examples were shared of oppression of native languages and cultures. Now there seems to be a trend for governments to have official policies supporting native languages and cultural perspectives, but there are many barriers to implementing these policies, the strongest of which are the attitudes of people and the way they treat one another when there is a difference.

My own family has suffered for generations in many ways. When my father was a young boy in Mina, Nevada, he was an outcast due to the religion of his family. As a result he spent a lot of time with his dog and his burro, wandering about the desert. His only friends were other outcasts: the Italian Catholic boy, and the Washoe boy. As a result, he became an expert in rocks and raised a family with multicultural values, including learning languages and making friends of various countries and creeds. Another result was a clear definition of his own values and the ability to pass those values on to his children, and their children, and their children.

Today we are bombarded with challenges to our values. In Chihuahua there are communities of people (such as the Mennonites and Tarahumara) who live apart from others as a choice to insulate themselves from the influence of the world in order to preserve their values throughout each generation. The conference identified challenges to those communities. As their children leave the traditional community for education or work they are more likely to transfer their support to other traditions. They are losing their children to worldliness, marriage into other traditions, and the vagaries of life. No one can keep their children from the world, not even ourselves. How can we live in the world, but not be of the world?

The traditions of December can help. If we join with the world in seeing December as a time for giving, we are following the Lord's example of giving (3 Nephi 13:1) t'áá aaníí aaníigo, ádishní baa dahojobá'í baa dijiinohbaah; and laying up treasures in heaven (3 Nephi 13:20) ndi naadeefii da'ílinii yá'ąashdi hasht'endahojááh. Of course, if we join with the world as seeing December as a time for getting, we are in danger of losing our values.

Another help is our weekly practice of ordinances and teachings and fellowship at church meetings. Our children see that highly valued people live and speak as they do, and it becomes safer and more desirable for them to be like their parents.

The most important way to preserve our values is for our children to see us practice them daily. Choose to view only the best in entertainment. Choose to model speech that honors the

creator and is respectful of others. Choose to seek knowledge from the best books. Show your children your love with the gift of time and good conversation and by listening to them. Teach children about Jesus. He was criticized for spending time with those of various cultures and classes; but he was able to interact with different people with confidence because he was secure in his own beliefs and values.

Gordon B. Hinckley said: “These are the days long foreseen when the earth would be in turmoil. Jesus reassured us that the Lord is in charge of our fate, and when we are in tune with His teachings and Spirit, we will be under His influence. No power on earth can thwart the progress of His work. Act in love for others, be kind in spite of differences, pray, be obedient, be good.”

Victory

Janeen has become quite sophisticated in watching ladies figure skating. She can tell the difference between a triple lux and a triple toe loop, and can easily tell which skater will receive high scores for artistry. The gold medal winner was a surprise. Arakawa is tall for the sport at 5’5”, and was not favored to win, but skated perfectly, scoring far above the other medalists. The Russian favored to win was discouraged by mistakes and lost focus. We can take inspiration from the Silver medal winner, Sasha Cohen. Her pains were under control by treatments and medicines, but she was nervous and fell on the first two jumps of the final competition. What she did next made all the difference: she got up and kept going. Not only did she keep going, but she skated with more strength, grace, dignity, poise, confidence, and skill than anyone. We can learn from those who do perfectly, but we can learn more of importance from mistakes and how people react to mistakes.

The compilers of the Book of Mormon understood this principle as they wrote for us. Mormon summarizes 200 years of Nephite history in 22 verses, “and how blessed were they! For the Lord did bless them in all their doings...and there was no contention in the land”...
dóo dooládó’ éí diné bik’idahojisdli’ da! Háálá éí t’áá altsoní ádeiléhígíí Bóhólníihii yee yik’idahojidlíí nt’éé’ ... dóo t’áá altso déyah bikáá’góo doo diné saad ahídeet’áah da.

Most of the Book of Mormon is dedicated to relating the mistakes and the messages of hope and encouragement that help people deal with their mistakes. Mormon cautioned those who would read his words in the last days: “Turn from your wicked ways”...nihibąąhági át’éii, bits’ánóhkááh... (3 Nephi 30:2).

Jesus recognizes our weakness and gives counsel in how we should deal with it: “I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot understand all my words which I am commanded of the Father to speak unto you at this time. Doo danihidziilgóo nihaa ákonisin, díí aTaa’ kwe’é saad bee bich’i’ hadíídzih shílnínéę doo táá át’é hazhó’ó bik’idohtjih da. Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye

may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again... Éí baa, nihighangóó ndohkah, dóó áadi hazhó'ó bee nihich'í' haasdzí'ígíí baa ntsídahkees, dóó shízhí' binahjí', aTaa' hazhó'ó bik'idadi'diitííł dadohníigo, baa ndeinohkaqah, dóó yiskáago biniyé hasht'e'dadidoołníł, dóó dihaa náádeeshdáál.

Another inspiring story of courage in overcoming adversity in our day is my brother, Nathan and my sister, Anita. In spite of the pain, and in defiance of the odds for heart transplants, they just keep going and going; and going somewhere important. Rather than being distracted by troubles, they have lost themselves in the service of others. ..when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God... áko bídahwiidooł'áál diné bíká ańjılwo'go Diyin God t'éiyá bíká ańjılwo' lá.

Yet our day is like all times in history, some people listen and learn and others reject all inspiration. The destruction of the Nephites is described in the same terms as the destruction of the Jaredites, a cycle of revenge killings that only ended when no one was left. “But behold, the judgements of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished; for it is the wicked that stir up the hearts of the children of men unto bloodshed... Ndi, jó, Diyin God bibee ánihwiit'aahii éi diné baqahági át'éii yaa naakaiígíí bich'í' doołáál; dóó diné baqahági át'éii yaa naakaiígíí éi bíla'ashdla'ii ba'álchíní yíni' yá ádahale'go dine'é ndeiltseed.

As I write, the radio reports hundreds of revenge killings in Iraq and many other places in the world, as people of one religion or sect exact violence against those of another because of some offence. In the Book of Mormon we see this strategy used again and again with always the same results: violence against the wicked always results in increased violence. The most effective strategy in history for defeating terrorism is summarized in one verse: “and it came to pass that the Lamanites did hunt the band of robbers of Gadianton; and they did preach the word of God among the more wicked part of them, insomuch that this band of robbers was utterly destroyed from among the Lamanites”...Laman bidine'é éi Diyin God bibeehaz'áanii t'áá íiyisíi yik'eh dohól'í... Helaman 6:37.

Victory over death and sin was won for us by Christ. We can accept this victory as we pursue victories each day over discouragement and learn from mistakes.

Wisdom and Understanding

Alone in the motel, just trying to recuperate from my surgery and gain strength to endure the conference, I turned to the Gideon bible in the bed stand. The first page that fell open in the Old Testament reminded me that the concept of redemption has given hope to our ancestors as it does to us. Twenty eight generations before Christ, David saw Christ's coming and knew of our salvation.

David claims that wisdom and understanding are more precious than any earthly treasure,

as no one can purchase that which is most needed. “They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me” (Psalm 49: 6, 7, 8, 15).

David offers the conditions of accepting this gift that we cannot purchase: “Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God” (Psalm 50: 14, 15, 23).

Yet David recognizes that we are not even capable of entering this path without help, yet we must do our part: “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psalm 51: 10, 12, 17).

In the days of his misery, Job’s friends tried to reason with him, that his suffering must be a punishment for some shortcoming. However, their sophistry could not generate wisdom, and their prosperity could not bring understanding. “But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (Job 28:12, 14, 23, 28).

We learn from Job to listen to the Lord in order to accept the atonement, but we should also teach one another. “As all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom, seek learning even by study and also by faith” (D&C 109:7).

“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding” (Proverbs 4:7). We must come to an understanding that we cannot save ourselves, we must learn to learn to listen to the Spirit that teaches us how to follow God and accept His Grace. “And now, my son, I have told you this that ye may learn wisdom, that ye may learn of me that there is no other way or means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ. Behold, he is the life and the light of the world. Behold, he is the word of truth and righteousness” (Alma 38:9).

Woe, Woe, Woe

People are still searching for relatives lost in last year's hurricanes while the first category fives of this season are preparing to pound the Gulf Coast. Viruses and bacteria are evolving faster than science can develop treatments. Droughts and fires destroy crops and homes over broad areas of the earth. The earth is out of balance, yet the resources of each country are spent on weapons designed to kill ever more efficiently. When John saw our day, he had trouble describing those weapons: "and the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power was to hurt men five months. Dabitsee' séigo' bitsee' nidahalin, áádóó bizóóqz dahóló, ashdla' nídeezidjì' diné atídeit'íi doogo dabitsee' yee dabidziil." (Revelations 9:7-10).

John knew he was writing for our day, not his own day, so his counsel about our relationship to our enemies applies to us: "Brethren I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning... Shik'isóó ayóó' ánihósh' níinii, bik'eh ó'oo' nííii ániidíii doo bee nihich'í' ak'e' ashchíi da, nidi díi t'áá ałk'idáá' bik'eh ó'oo' nííii... He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. T'áá háiiida hool'ingi naashá, jinínígíí, ákondi hak'is bik'eezhdiniihgo éi t'ahdii chahałheeł bii' joogáałgo át'é. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him... Hak'is ayóó'ájó' níínígíí éi t'áá álahjì' hool'ingi hojłłó áko ła'da doo ha-niinaa didoogoh da. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. Háálá, Ayóó'áda' ahíínóh'ní, ha'núigo ts'ídá átséedi hane' dasidoots'áá'" (1 John 2:7-10; 4:11).

Jesus also spoke clearly of our day: "and ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars... anaa' dahazłjì'go índa anaa' dahaleeh ha'núigo baa dahane'go dadoohts'a' doo... for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; Háálá ał'ąą dine'é ałch'í' nídahidiibáah doo áádóó łahgo nihokáá' bee bóhólníihgo bił haz'áanii yił ałch'í' nídahidiibáah dooleeł, and there shall be famines, índa łahgóó dahodichin doo, and pestilences, (áádóó ach'í' nidahwii'náa doo,) and earthquakes, in divers places; áádóó ni' nídahidi'náah doo. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Díidíígíí t'áá ałtso ti'hoo' níih bee dadeezt'i'ii ádaat'é (Matthew 24:6-8). Yet during this time of tribulation, people will carry on with their lives and rationalize the signs of the times as natural phenomena (Matthew 24:36-41; 25:1-13). No wonder "I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth... Doo hojooba' ájíníi da! doo hojooba' ájíníi da! doo hojooba' ájíníi da! níigo, háálá diyingo nidaal'a'í taa'go k'adęę diní yee ádaaniih" (Revelation 8:13).

We are blessed if we heed the warnings of ancient time and recognize the signs of our own times. Jesus greatly loved us to give these counsels at his own time of grief. After warn-

ing us to be prepared in our own day, he demonstrated by his actions how to be prepared. He gathered his disciples, “nighangi atis’adeesdzá bee bééhániihgo yidánígíí shídahool’ aahii bił dadeeshíłł... introduced the ordinance of the sacrament, Jesus bááh néidii’á, áádóó yik’i sodoolz-ingo niyiizti’... sang a hymn, áádóó sin ła’ bee dahojíítáalgo, and went to the Garden of Gethsemane to bring about the Atonement for us. Dził Alivzgóó dashdiikai (Matthew 26:17-45).

As we prepare the trials and tribulations of our day, let us gather to share the sacrament, sing hymns together, and serve one another. It is by accepting the emblems of the sacrament that we ratify our commitment to Christ. As we raise our voice in song, we reaffirm our devotion to Christ and review the doctrines of Salvation. As we accept assignments in the church to serve, we demonstrate our love to one another.

“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. Sha’áłchíní, Ayóó’áda’ííní’ní, dadii’núigo t’áadoo t’óó áadadii’níní doo, nidi t’áá aaníinii bee ayóó’áda’ahííní’núigo ałk’i nideildzil doo. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. Ayóó’ánihósh’níinii, díigi át’éego Diyin God ayóó’ánihó’núigo, haa’íshą nihí ałdó’ ayóó’áda’ahííní’ní doo” (1 John 3:18; 4:11).

Word of Wisdom

I just heard the news: the most famous expert on the qualities of fine beers has died of a heart attack at age 65 after suffering 10 years with Parkinsons Disease. Most people my age are like that, suffering more than their share, due to substances they were long addicted to. I remember when I turned 50, I told my father, “I guess I’m over the hill”. Thinking of his uncle who lived over 100 he said, “you are only half way, you had better start taking care of yourself; you don’t want to have a bad second half”. I have had my share of ups and downs, but since my health is generally good, I always recover soon and well. My father stayed healthy and active until he suddenly passed on at age 90.

When I was a teenager I received a patriarchal blessing that served as “a guiding light throughout [my] life and [gave to me] a stronger desire to live according to the principles of the gospel and an insight into [my] eternal past, the present, and things which [would] be of value in [my] future life.” It was a spiritual blessing with advice that would help me in this mortal life: “Roy, always remember to observe the Word of Wisdom and adhere to the counsel given in this inspired revelation and live this commandment, and if you do, you will enjoy health and strength and shall run and not be weary and shall walk and not faint.”

When I was young, it seemed like everyone I knew ate whatever they wanted and used coffee, tea, alcohol, and tobacco. It was in later years that the scientific evidence mounted in support of the revelation received by Joseph Smith in 1833. For 150 years our family observed this Word of Wisdom as a token of a covenant with spiritual blessings. Now most of these are part of popular culture: people live longer, so they are motivated to take better care of them-

selves. For a long time it was peculiar to live such a healthy life style. Now at least we are not persecuted for making good choices.

However, we are still different. Sometimes it is peculiar to turn down an offer of iced tea on a warm day. Our choice is to trust the Lord and obey a commandment. We don't need any scientific evidence to convince us, because we know that doing this is "the order and will of God in the temporal salvation of all saints in the last days". The Lord gave us this principle of action with a promise "in consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days". We should consider ourselves "warned and forewarned".

The Lord has always given advice about health, or included foods in covenants with people throughout time. Consider Isaiah 5:11, Proverbs 20:1, Deuteronomy 14:2-21, Acts 10:14, Ephesians 5:18, Romans 14:20-21, Isaiah 5:11, Proverbs 20:1, and Romans 14:17. Don't forget what made Daniel and his friends different in their leadership school. They had covenanted not to eat and drink the king's meat and wine. They persuaded the cook to give them what the Lord had commanded. Their miraculous success in health, strength, and academics may have more to do with their willingness to trust the Lord than with what they ate (Daniel 1:6-20).

Now, 174 years after the Word of Wisdom was revealed to Joseph Smith, the commandments and counsels of this revelation are tokens of our covenant. We avoid all coffee, tea, tobacco, and alcohol in order to show the Lord we are willing to trust Him. The Lord's plan for building the faith that brings blessings always requires action on our part. It is not really a sacrifice to avoid addictive substances and eat well, for there are blessings: those who follow Section 89, "walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health...wisdom...knowledge..." and more.

September is the month of freedom: 9 September 1850 New Mexico became a Territory of the U.S. 11 September 2005 was designated Patriot's Day. 14 September 1814 is the birthday of the National Anthem. 16 September 1810 began the independence movement of New Spain. 17 September 1787 is the birthday of the U.S. Constitution. 23 September 2007 is when we first use our new building in Lupton.

As we celebrate our freedoms this month let us renew our covenant to obey the Lord's law that makes us free of substances by studying and living the Word of Wisdom. Let us enter our clean new building on September 23 with a resolve to make our bodies clean and welcoming dwellings for the Lord's Spirit. Let's obey a simple commandment that will make us free. Let's show the Lord we are willing to follow Him, and thus, qualify for His blessing and protection. As you resolve to trust the Lord, you will prosper, not only in the new building, but in your family, your job, your health and personal life.

Work

My father learned from personal experience that “he who chops his own wood gets warm twice”. His mother would send him out on a winter day to split and shape wood to exact proportions so that she could control the temperatures in the oven. The disciplined cooking of my grandmother’s generation created an expectation for high quality meals that has been passed down to my grandchildren. The modern appliances do not decrease the amount of work we do each day; I think our access to high tech tools increases the expectation for the amount and the quality of our cooking and every other job we do. Work is an eternal principle introduced to Adam to prepare him for what life is like in the Celestial Kingdom (Genesis 3:19, Moses 5:1). The challenge in our day of conveniences is to raise our children with the work ethic they need.

We have many role models for understanding the Gospel principle of “Work”. James E. Faust, served as second counselor in the First Presidency from age 75 until he died at age 87. President Faust was born 31 July 1920, in Delta, Utah. He participated as a member of the University of Utah track team in 1938 and ran the quarter-mile and mile relay. His college career was interrupted first to serve as a missionary for the Church in Brazil and later by World War II, during which he served in the U.S. Army Air Force and was discharged as a first lieutenant. In 1948 he graduated from the University of Utah with a bachelor’s and Juris Doctor degree. He began the practice of law in Salt Lake City and continued until his appointment as a general authority of the Church in 1972. He was given many difficult assignments, in spite of his advanced age. He retired from his law practice, but not from church work.

Whereas some would like to work fewer days or years, life expectancy is longer for those who delay retirement. The Lord said to the people of Israel, “Six days shalt thou labour” (Exodus 20:9). In the early days of the restored Church, the Lord told the Latter-day Saints, “Now, I, the Lord, am not well pleased with the inhabitants of Zion, for there are idlers among them” (D&C 68:31). In this century, a prophet of God has said, “Work is to be reenthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership” (Heber J. Grant, in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3). I am currently working two full time jobs, and hoping to reduce that down to one so I might have more time to get things done. Parents should teach work ethics by working together to provide for the physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being of their family. They should never expect anyone to take care of this responsibility for them. The Apostle Paul wrote, “If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith” (1 Timothy 5:8).

I had a pleasant dream last night. I could see the rain falling on a distant peak. I ran to the arroyo to watch the water come down. I got there in time to see the first trickles, and stayed until all the stream was gone. It was like watching a sunset: you have to be there on time. It is like going to the concert: they only play once, then it is over. It is like taking care of the livestock: you are blessed by having a daily, urgent responsibility. My father was raised with this sense of responsibility, and received the blessings that come with it: “Being forced to work, and

forced to do your best will breed in you temperance and self-control, diligence and strength of will, cheerfulness and content, and a hundred virtues which the idle will never know.” (Charles Kingsley, quoted in *Liahona: The Elders’ Journal*, 12 May 1914, p. 761.) Modern technology has made us busier than any generation. We should remember the second part of chopping your own wood: sit in front of the fire and enjoy a renewal of body and spirit.

Worry

We all need a tree!

JoAnn and I look for a “worry tree” in front of each temple we enter, that we may hang our worldly cares on, before entering the house of the Lord. The Spokane temple has two of them on either side of the walkway. They are spiral in cut and are perfect to deposit such thoughts and worries. We figure they spiral right down into the depths of the earth, some never to be heard of again. True, some are clinging to the roots when we come out again, but strangely, they don’t seem as threatening as when we hung them there.

I read the following story of a man who had a similar habit with a tree that was positioned in front of his house.

“I hired a plumber to help me restore an old farmhouse, and after he had just finished a rough first day on the job: a flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric drill quit and his ancient one ton truck refused to start. While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. When opening the door he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss. Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier. ‘Oh, that’s my trouble tree’, he replied ‘I know I can’t help having troubles on the job, but one thing’s for sure, those troubles don’t belong in the house with my wife and the children...so I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home and ask God to take care of them. Then in the morning I pick them up again.’ ‘Funny thing is’, he smiled, ‘when I come out in the morning to pick’em up, there aren’t nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before.’”

Elder Packer said, “Sometimes our minds are so beset with problems, and there are so many things clamoring for attention at once, that we just cannot think clearly and see clearly. At the temple the dust of distraction seems to settle out, the fog and the haze seem to lift, and we can see things that we were not able to see before and find a way through our troubles that we had not previously known.”

Go to the temple often. Don’t drag extra worldly distractions into the your home or into

the temple. Turn your attention to Heavenly Father and the Savior and the Holy Spirit will help you solve what seemed to be insurmountable mountains of problems and worries.

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