

teousness in their lives. As I thought about my commitment to the youth of the Church, words of Elder Boyd K. Packer had added meaning. Elder Packer has spoken of the warnings of Alma and Helaman as they told of the Church in their day. Quoting Elder Packer: "They warned about fast growth, the desire to be accepted by the world, to be popular, and particularly they warned about prosperity. Each time those conditions existed in combination, the Church drifted off course" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 30 Mar. 1990).

Again I was thinking about the youth of the Church. Consider the transition of a young person beginning at the age of twelve and lasting until the eighteenth year. The conditions spoken of in the Book of Mormon are almost always present in the lives of young people—a period of fast growth, a desire to be liked by others, to be popular, and often prosperity. A pattern of personal righteousness which includes prayer, scripture study, and service is the answer to avoiding the dangers spoken of in the Book of Mormon. Nephi knew this when he asked the Lord, "O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness!" (2 Nephi 4:33).

When I looked for a definition of *pattern*, I found it had a Latin origin derived from *pater*, or "father," one who served as a model or pattern to be emulated. Our Savior Jesus Christ set

the pattern and asked us to follow him. Nephi asks, "Can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father?" (2 Nephi 31:10).

I am grateful to men and women and people of all ages whose lives help us see this pattern of righteousness. I am thankful for a living prophet. A few days after I was called as a counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, the First Presidency of the Church approached my chair to set me apart and give me a blessing. I realized the prophet of God was about to lay his hands upon my head, and I was in awe. Following the blessing, as I turned to face the prophet, I was quite unprepared for the magnificence of the spirit I felt. I bear testimony that Ezra Taft Benson is a prophet of God and that Jesus Christ is our Savior. He has given us a pattern of righteousness that, when followed, will lead us back to our Heavenly Father. I bear this witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### President Monson

Sister Janette C. Hales, second counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, has just spoken to us. What a pattern she has provided for all of us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Robert E. Wells of the Seventy.

## Elder Robert E. Wells

### Christ offers spiritual peace

Last Sunday Latter-day Saints joined together with the entire Christian world in remembering and celebrating Easter. We were worshipping our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and honoring his resurrection. We were

also thanking God, as we have done today on this special day of prayer, for the liberation of Kuwait and the hope of lasting peace in the Persian Gulf area with the returning of troops to their homelands.

When Christ was born into this world, angels proclaimed, "Peace on earth, good will toward men" (see

Luke 2:14). Yet in the two thousand years since that proclamation there has been little peace in the world. Even with the successful cessation of major hostilities in the gulf, there still remains an uneasy peace between some nations and great unrest within other nations. Just as Christ's atonement has saved us from both physical and spiritual death, the peace of which the Savior of mankind spoke is also both physical and spiritual.

Today I'd like to speak about this spiritual peace offered by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, when he gave us the beautiful beatitude about peace and peacemakers. The entire sermon is a blueprint for us to use in our personal path towards perfection, as well as a pattern of the many attributes and qualities we must develop in our eternal quest to approach the perfection and peace Jesus personifies.

I like to think of when the sermon was first taught. In my mind's eye, I see a scene of peaceful beauty: I envision an afternoon in early April. The sky is softening toward dusk, with not even a breeze. White, wispy cirrus clouds stand almost motionless in the clear blue sky. And below, on the coast of the Sea of Galilee, soft waves lap against moored fishing boats. A great crowd assembles on the side of the hill. Eager listeners sit on the grass or stand amidst the rocks and early spring flowers. All are hushed and thoughtful as every face is lifted up, every eye looking toward the Lord and every ear listening as the Savior tells them what they need to do in order to have peace in their lives.

Tenderly Christ speaks, "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9). Another Bible translator quotes the Savior as saying, "Happy are those who *make peace*" (J. B. Phillips, trans., *The New Testament in Modern English* [New York: Macmillan Co., 1958], p. 9; italics added). Either way, we focus on the strong verb *make* as in "make peace" or

"peacemakers." To follow Christ and bring forth the blessings of heaven, we must actively make peace in the world, in the community, in the neighborhood, and above all, in the home we live in.

In the meridian of time, many expected Christ to take a political stand against Roman rule and offer peace to the oppressed people. Christ did indeed offer peace, but it was not external or political; rather, the peace Christ taught was internal and personal.

#### **President Lee's statement about war**

I would like to share an incident which took place during the Vietnam War. There were some who were convinced that the United States was engaged in a noble and justifiable war. However, public opinion was changing, and there was opposition which argued that the U.S. should pull out of Vietnam.

President Harold B. Lee was the President of the Church at the time. While at an area conference in another country, he was interviewed by reporters from the international news services. One reporter asked President Lee, "What is your church's position on the Vietnam War?" Some recognized the question as a trap—one which could not be answered without a very real risk of being misunderstood or misinterpreted. If the prophet answered, "We are against the war," the international media could state, "How strange—a religious leader who is against the position of the country he is obliged to sustain in his own church's articles of faith." On the other hand, if President Lee answered, "We are in favor of the war," the media could question, "How strange—a religious leader in favor of war." Either way, the answer could result in serious problems regarding public opinion both inside and outside the Church.

President Lee, with great inspiration and wisdom, answered as would a man who knows the Savior: "We, together with the whole Christian world, abhor war. But the Savior said, 'In me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation' (John 16:33)." And then the prophet quoted that other comforting scripture from John: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27). President Lee then explained: "The Savior was not talking about the peace that can be achieved between nations, by military force, or by negotiation in the halls of parliaments. Rather, he was speaking of the peace we can each have in our own lives when we live the commandments and come unto Christ with broken hearts and contrite spirits." (See Conference Report, Oct. 1982, p. 101; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, p. 70.)

#### A father's voice brings peace

A tender, sweet story about receiving peace from the scriptures appeared in the January 1991 *Ensign*, submitted by Sister Carole Seegmiller. Using a few excerpts, I quote from her article:

"Dad decided that our family should begin an intensive study of the scriptures to help my brother Bruce prepare for his mission. Dad's goal was to read the entire Book of Mormon before Bruce left, tape-recording our voices as we went along. . . . We would take turns reading a chapter [each]. . . .

"The family finished the Book of Mormon a few months later, . . . so Dad decided we should read and record the four Gospels from the New Testament. I complained this time, telling Dad that I didn't see the point: we could buy audiotapes of professionals reading the scriptures—and they sounded a lot better than we did. Still Dad persisted. 'Carole, one day

these tapes will be a great blessing to us.' . . .

"I began to enjoy these times together with the family. I especially liked to hear Dad share his personal insights about a passage. Soon I began to sense the peace that comes through studying the scriptures. We finished reading the four Gospels shortly before Bruce left for the Missionary Training Center. . . .

"After Bruce left, I noticed how comforting the tapes were to Dad. He often listened to them, partly just to hear Bruce's voice, I thought, since they had been very close. Sometimes at night Dad would fall asleep listening, and I would smile to myself as I heard the familiar click-click-click of the recorder that had run to tape's end. . . .

"When Bruce had been gone for more than a year, Dad died quietly of a heart attack. . . . All of our family members . . . gathered except Bruce, who had determined to finish his mission.

"That evening, after [the funeral], I was feeling low. I went upstairs to Dad's room and dejectedly sat down at his desk. I noticed his well-used tape recorder lying nearby; inside was one of our tapes of the New Testament, which Dad must have listened to the night before he died. I began rewinding the tape, stopping it at random, hoping to find solace in hearing the gentle resonance of Dad's voice. . . . I sat upright as my father spoke from the tape:

"'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' . . .

"I listened to that passage over and over; the words reached out and wrapped a comforting arm around me. . . .

"Peace did come to us that night. . . . Since then, I have tasted the sweet peace of the New Testament

time and time again. To me, that is its greatest message" ("Our Family's Tape-recorded New Testament," *Ensign*, Jan. 1991, p. 27).

### St. Francis of Assisi's prayer

One of the world-famous prayers of St. Francis of Assisi suggests that we can be instruments in the hands of the Savior for bringing personal peace to others. This is the essence of the true "maker of peace."

The prayer reads:

Lord, make me an instrument of  
your peace.  
Where there is hatred let me sow  
love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
And where there is sadness, joy.  
[In John Bartlett, comp., *Familiar  
Quotations*, (Boston: Little, Brown  
and Co., 1980), p. 138]

### How to find personal peace

To be a maker of peace, it helps if we understand what brings peace. Paul says that it is the Spirit: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (Galatians 5:22). Our closeness to the Lord will, in great measure, determine the peace and comfort and renewed strength that we feel as we invite the Spirit into our lives.

As I was preparing for this occasion, a man phoned. His priesthood leader had requested earlier that I accept his call. Desperately he pleaded, "We need to see someone. We just have to find some peace in our lives." There are probably as many different sources of personal strife and lack of peace as there are people. The roots might be in one's own life or in the life of a loved one. The causes can be sin, failure to live the commandments of God, selfishness, pride, lack of love,

lack of commitment, lack of willingness to make sacrifices for others, or even just being an innocent victim. No matter what the reason, the solution to achieve peace is always the same: Turn to Christ; follow his example; repent of all transgressions. His command to the storm-tossed sea, "Peace, be still" (Mark 4:39), can also apply to his calming influence in our lives as we experience the buffetings of life's storms.

Personal peace and our level of spirituality will increase as we focus on studying and thinking about Christ every day; by loving and thanking Christ more each day for his atoning sacrifice; by daily striving to serve Christ better through becoming more involved in missionary service; by making a greater effort to find his lost sheep, his lost coins, his lost prodigals, and helping them to return to the fold; by making a more concerted effort to be in the temple more frequently; and by researching more diligently our family's history. Is there any peace greater than that of the faithful missionary, the caring shepherd, the dedicated temple patron and worker?

In spite of all the problems in the world today, peace can come to the hearts of each of us as we follow the Savior. Christ is the way to peace, the truth of peace, the life of peace, the source of peace. Look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, talk of Christ, rejoice in Christ, preach of Christ, live as Christ would have us live, and worship him and our Heavenly Father with all your heart, might, mind, and strength.

May peace be with you this day and always is my prayer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

We have just listened to Elder Robert E. Wells of the Seventy.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us.