



On the cover:

Lawn Daisy, or *Bellis perennis*, in Portland, Oregon.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

A Reason for the Hope

The strength of this Church lies not alone in the powerful witnesses of the fifteen men we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators but also in the deep reassurance and resolve that rest in the souls of individual Latter-day Saints from Alabama to Zanzibar. A testimony—a witness of the truth—is, however, a dynamic matter; indeed, our testimony today may not be our testimony tomorrow. Our testimony is, as someone has wisely noted, as delicate as an orchid, as elusive as a moonbeam. President Joseph F. Smith proclaimed soberly that “the voicing of one’s testimony, however eloquently phrased or beautifully expressed, is no fit or acceptable substitute for the needed discourse of instruction and counsel expected in a general gathering of the people. The man who professes a testimony as herein described, and who assumes that his testimony embraces all the knowledge he needs, and who therefore lives in indolence and ignorance shall surely discover his error to his own cost and loss” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971], 206).

We reinforce and undergird our testimonies through a lifetime of study, thereby providing a reason for the hope within us (see 1 Peter 3:15), a conviction that proves as strengthening and stretching to the mind as it is settling and soothing to the heart. Competent disciples are those who not only know the gospel is true but are also striving diligently to know the gospel.

The Religious Studies Center (RSC) at Brigham Young University was established in 1975 to assist members of the Church in their continued pursuit of knowledge and understanding, background and context, implications and ramifications of the revelations and teachings of the restored gospel. This is not merely an academic endeavor or an intellectual enterprise for Latter-day Saints but also a central feature of our theology, for we know that life and love and learning are forever: “The glory of God is intelligence or, in other words, light and truth” (D&C 93:36), and “Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection” (D&C 130:18). Those of us who work in the RSC are pleased to do what we can to make available to the Saints the results of recent study, research, and reflections of many of our colleagues throughout the Church. Our hope is that this issue will broaden your base of learning and bless your life.

Robert L. Millet
Editor