

Family

TRADITIONS



From an interview with Elder Christoffel Golden Jr. of the Seventy, currently serving in the Africa Southeast Area Presidency; by Barbara Jean Jones

“By the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:5).

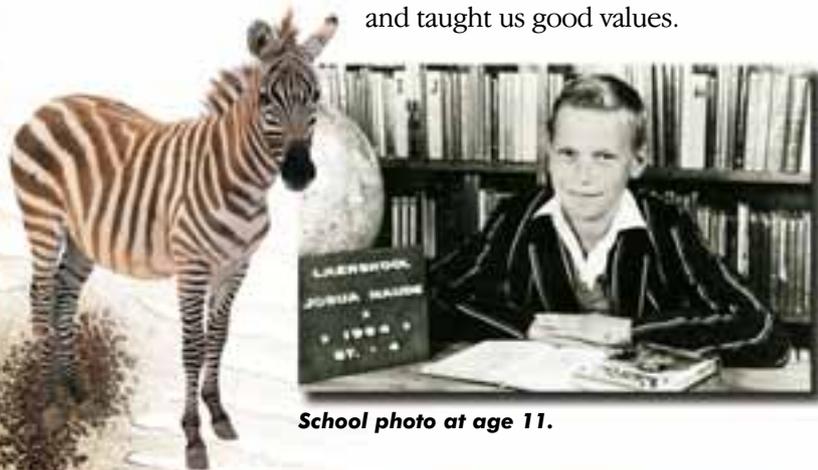
I grew up in South Africa. South Africa has wonderful game parks where wild animals such as lions, elephants, giraffes, and zebras roam free. When I was a boy, our family would often visit these game parks. Seeing the beauty of the animals and the wilderness was always a spiritual experience. It gave me a love for the creations of the Lord. Visiting South Africa’s game parks is a tradition my wife, Diane, and I have continued with our own four children.

Other traditions I grew up with that have continued in my own family today are family prayer and scripture study. Although we were not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when I was a boy, my parents had strong Christian roots and taught us good values.

Our regular prayer and scripture study prepared us for when the missionaries knocked on our door. I was 20 years old at the time. We immediately recognized the truths the missionaries were teaching as we learned about modern prophets, the Book of Mormon, and the Restoration of the gospel. As I read the Book of Mormon, from the very first verse I knew it was true. Our entire family was soon baptized.

I hope you young children will look forward to being baptized and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. I did not receive those blessings until I was 20, so I remember well what it was like not to have the power of this gift in my life. I read the Bible every day starting when I was a young boy, but I understood the scriptures so much better after I received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Even at a very young age, children can feel the influence of the Holy Ghost. I



School photo at age 11.



With his volleyball team (standing at right).

remember a family home evening in which tears started streaming down the cheeks of our five-year-old daughter, Chanel. I thought her brother, Christopher, might have pinched her or something, so I asked, "Chanel, why are you crying?" She answered, "Daddy, I feel so happy."

I can't remember what the family home evening lesson was about, but I stopped and said, "Chanel, what you're feeling is the power and influence of the Holy Ghost." She replied, "Yes, Daddy, I know that is true." Like Chanel, you can feel the happy, peaceful feeling, which will tell you when something is right or true.

The Holy Ghost will also help you to do what is right, even when that seems very difficult. I hope you children will never be afraid to stand up for what is right. I still remember an experience I had in primary school. Primary school includes first through seventh grades. When I was about 12 and in my final year of primary school, the head boy, who was supposed to be the school leader, was actually the school's biggest bully. He and three or four of his pals would go around teasing other kids.

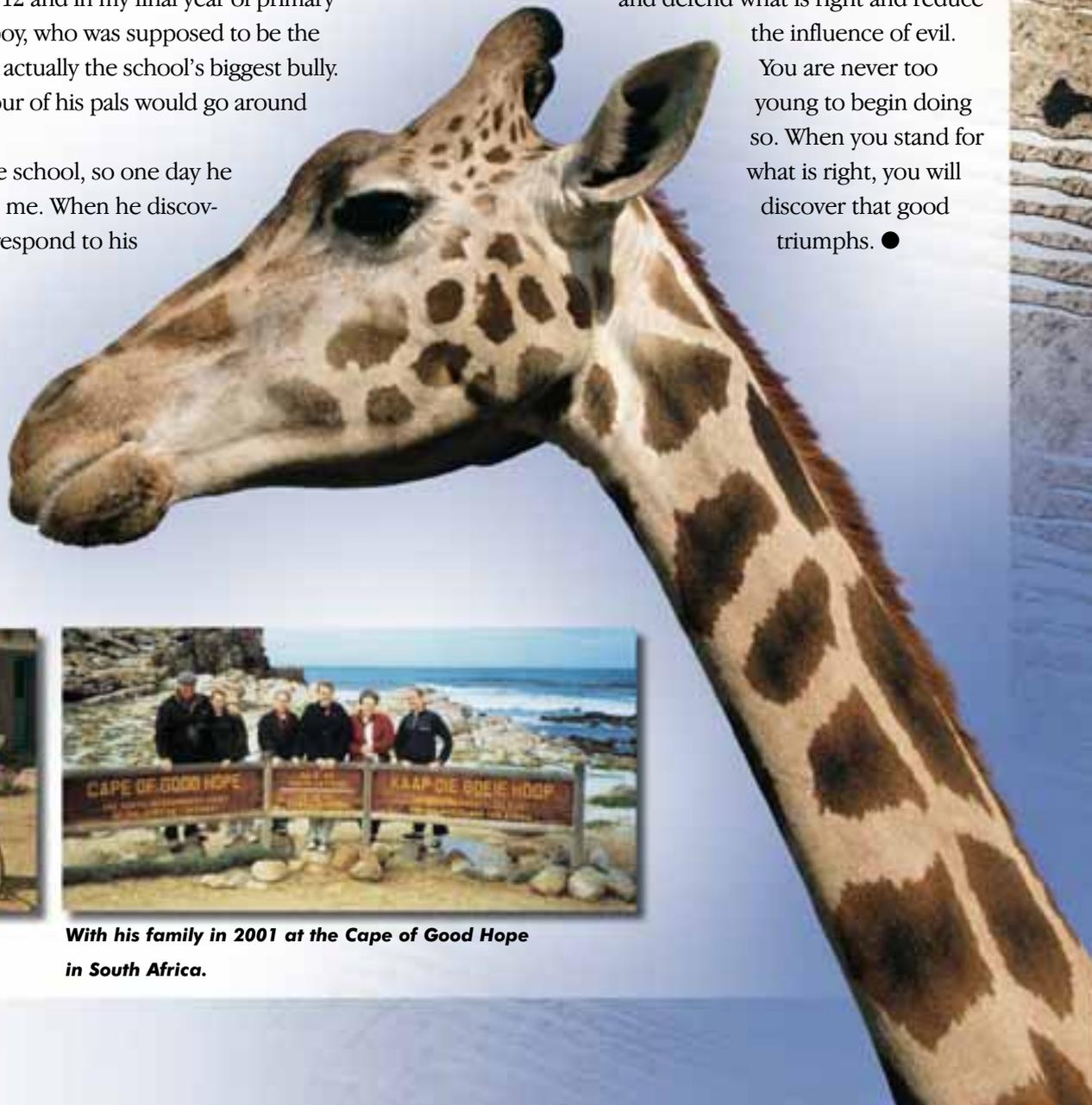
I was new at the school, so one day he tried to intimidate me. When he discovered I would not respond to his

intimidation, he gave up and bullied other kids, especially the weaker ones. One day when I saw this happening, I walked over and told him to stop. I said that if he did not stop I would defend the smaller boy. There stood the bully with his three or four friends, surrounding this small, timid boy and myself. It was very scary. I thought they were going to beat me up. To my surprise, the bully withered under my words. He and his friends made some smart remarks and left.

Throughout the rest of the year I continued to defend other boys from these bullies. Others started to do so too, until the bullies gradually lost all their power and influence. Children, the lesson I learned from this experience was that when we do things for the right reason, even when it is very difficult, the Lord will bless us and help us. He needs courageous people to stand up

and defend what is right and reduce the influence of evil.

You are never too young to begin doing so. When you stand for what is right, you will discover that good triumphs. ●



As a missionary in South Africa.



With his family in 2001 at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa.