

T H E
NewEra

F E B R U A R Y

2 0 0 5

**HOW TO FIND
PEACE, P. 4**

**WHERE DID
CHRIST'S CHURCH
GO? P. 8**

**THE RIPPLE
EFFECT, P. 26**

**MOURNING FOR MY
FRIEND, P. 34**

**COVER STORY:
FLEXING YOUR
SPIRITUAL
MUSCLES, P. 20**

The New Era Magazine
Volume 35, Number 2
February 2005

*Official monthly publication
for youth of
The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints*

The *New Era* can be found
in the Gospel Library at
www.lds.org.

Editorial Offices:
New Era
50 E. North Temple
Salt Lake City, UT
84150-3225, USA

E-mail address:
cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Please e-mail or send stories,
articles, photos, poems, and
ideas to the address above.
Unsolicited material is wel-
come. For return, include a
self-addressed, stamped
envelope.

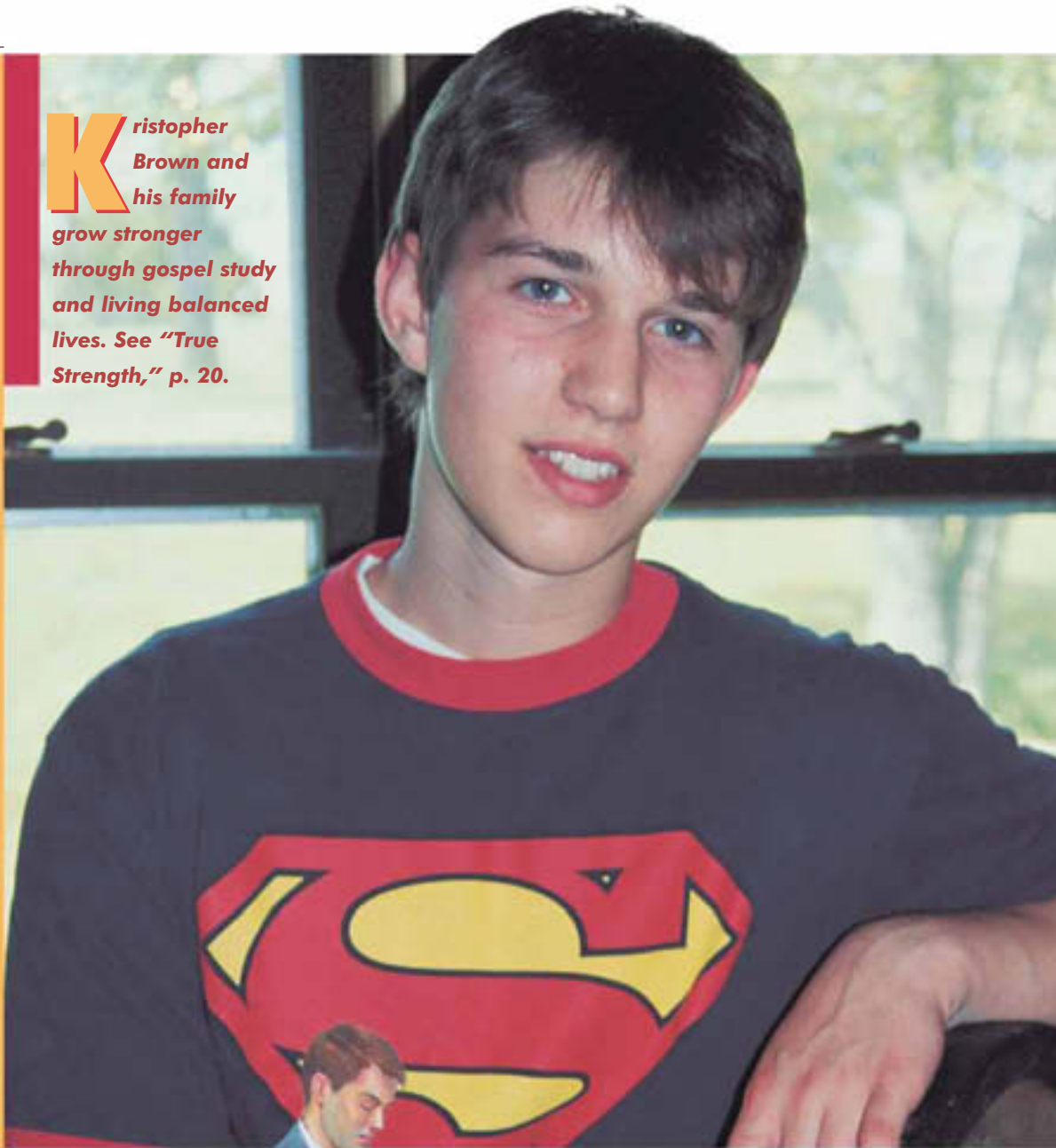
To Subscribe:
By phone: Call 1-800-537-
5971 to order using Visa,
MasterCard, Discover Card,
or American Express. Online:
Go to www.ldscatalog.com.
By mail: Send \$8 U.S.
check or money order to
Distribution Services,
P.O. Box 26368,
Salt Lake City, UT
84126-0368, USA.

To change address:
Send old and new address
information to Distribution
Services at the address
above. Please allow 60 days
for changes to take effect.

Cover: Denver Brown
supports his younger
brother, Navaar, in more
ways than weight lifting.
See "True Strength" on
p. 20.

Cover photography:
Shanna Butler (front)
and John Luke (back)

Kristopher
Brown and
his family
grow stronger
through gospel study
and living balanced
lives. See "True
Strength," p. 20.



Pack Your Bags, Elder, p. 40



Breakdown, p. 12

The Message: It Starts in the Heart 4

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin
*Peace can become a normal part
of our everyday lives.*

What Happened to Christ's Church? 8

*Just a few hundred years after Christ's
death, great changes took place in
His Church.*

Breakdown 12

Daryl A. Scott
*Did the Lord care enough to have the
right help come at the right time?*

Idea List: Ready to Serve? 15

*Getting ready for a mission means
taking time to strengthen your testimony.*

Q&A: Questions and Answers 16

*I love the gospel, but talking about it
with others terrifies me. How can
I overcome my fear?*

New Era Poster: Don't Be Fooled 19

True Strength 20

Shanna Butler
*The Brown family of Seymour,
Missouri, understands what it takes to
be strong in both body and spirit.*

Teaching My Teacher 24

Prince Ihenkoro
*I never thought I'd be the one to teach
a great lesson to a good man.*

Count the Ripples 26

Name withheld
*One person can make a difference
that goes on and on.*

Missing Andy 28

Steven Tuitupou
Would I ever see him again?

The Extra Smile 29

Watching over the Church 30

Caroline H. Benzley
*This teachers quorum in Iowa City,
Iowa, has important work to do.*

Tears for Ashley 34

Katie Laird
*I didn't want to sit by a stranger, but
I had to—and found a precious friend.*

My Prayers Became Blessings 37

Berengere Caviale
*My prayers were answered in a way
I didn't expect.*

What's Up? 38

From the Field: Pack Your Bags, Elder 40

Brian Kiley
*I couldn't extend my mission, but I
did get another chance to teach.*

You'll Be Tested and Taught 42

Elder Christoffel Golden Jr.
*Testing experiences can teach us
important lessons.*

Instant Messages 46

*Beating the gossip habit; the Book of
Mormon changed me; I need Thee; hope
for a better world; on my feet again.*

What's in It for You 49

We've Got Mail 50

Poem: My Baptism 51

Izabela Markiewicz

Photo 51

Evan Zinser

*Text and visual material in the New Era may be copied for
incidental, noncommercial church or home use. Visual material
may not be copied if restrictions are indicated in the credit line
with the artwork. Copyright questions should be addressed to
Intellectual Property Office, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City,
UT 84150, USA; e-mail: cor-intellectualproperty@ldschurch.org.*

The First Presidency:

Gordon B. Hinckley,
Thomas S. Monson,
James E. Faust

Quorum of the Twelve:

Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry,
Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H.
Oaks, M. Russell Ballard,
Joseph B. Wirthlin, Richard G.
Scott, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey
R. Holland, Henry B. Eyring,
Dieter F. Uchtdorf, David A.
Bednar

Editor: Jay E. Jensen

Advisers: Monte J. Brough,
W. Rolfe Kerr

Managing Director:

David Frischknecht

Planning and Editorial

Director: Victor D. Cave

Graphics Director:

Allan R. Loyborg

Magazines Editorial Director:

Richard M. Romney

Managing Editor:

R. Val Johnson

Editorial Staff:

Collette Nebeker Aune,
Susan Barrett, Shanna Butler,
Ryan Carr, Marvin K. Gardner,
Jennifer L. Greenwood, Carrie
Kasten, Sally J. Odekirk, Adam
C. Olson, Roger Terry, Janet
Thomas, Paul VanDenBerghe

Managing Art Director:

M. M. Kawasaki

Art Director: Brent Christison

Senior Designer: Fay P. Andrus

Marketing Manager:

Larry Hiller

Printing Director:

Craig K. Sedgwick

Distribution Director:

Kris T. Christensen

© 2005 by Intellectual
Reserve, Inc. All rights
reserved. Periodicals Postage
Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah, and
at additional mailing offices.
The *New Era* (ISSN 0164-5285)
is published monthly by The
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-
day Saints, 50 East North
Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT
84150-3225, USA.

POSTMASTER: Send address
changes to Distribution
Services, Church Magazines,
P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City,
UT 84126-0368, USA.

Canada Post Information:

Publication Agreement

#40017431.

IT STARTS IN THE

Heart

ELDER JOSEPH B. WIRTHLIN

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, have provided the way for us to be at peace. We can enjoy it personally, within our families, in our communities, in our nations, and in our world if we do the things that produce it.

Our hearts are filled with compassion for families on all sides who have lost loved ones and for the innocent victims of war, especially the children. We pray now for a lasting peace when men “shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: . . . neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:4).

In the scriptures, peace means either freedom from conflict or war, or an inner calm and comfort born of the Spirit.

The value of peace in our hearts cannot be measured. When we are at peace, we can be free of worry and fear, knowing that with the Lord’s help, we can do all that is expected or required of us. Few, if any, blessings from God are more valuable to our spiritual health than the reward of peace within.

In modern-day revelation the Savior said, “But learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23).

Peace Can Be a Reality

Despite dismal conditions in the world and the personal challenges that come into every life, peace within can be a reality. We

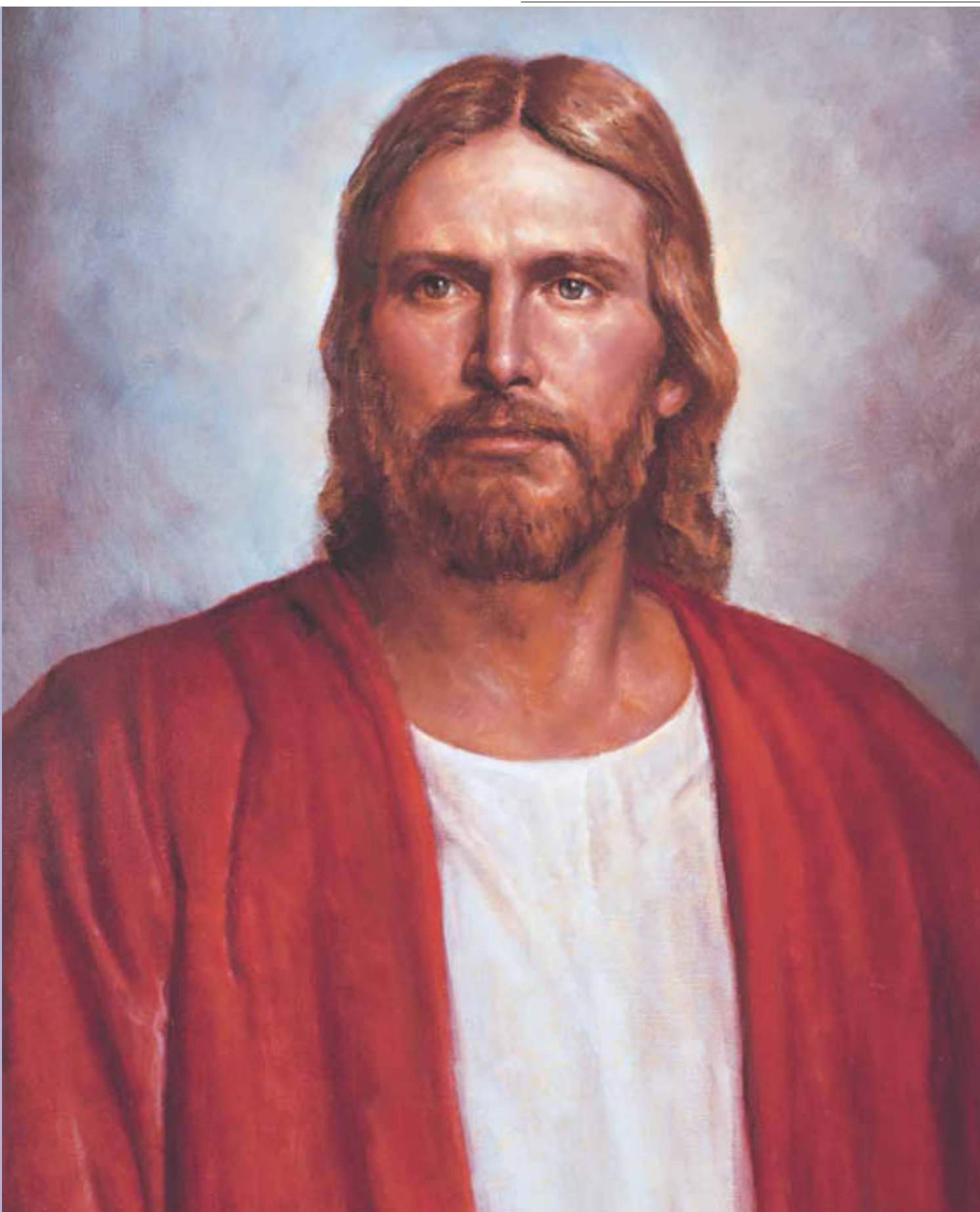
can be calm and serene regardless of the swirling turmoil all about us.

Attaining harmony within ourselves depends upon our relationship with our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and our willingness to emulate Him by living the principles He has given us. During the Passover feast, the Savior taught His disciples: “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” (John 14:27). Referring to the teachings He had given to His disciples, Jesus said: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

In his epistle to the Romans, Paul gave us one key to finding the peace promised by the Lord. Paul taught, “To be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:6).

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) said, “The peace of Christ does not come by seeking the superficial things of life.” This peace is “conditioned upon obedience to the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹

Earth life is a period of probation to



We see an example of individual peace amidst strife and contention in the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. In *Carthage Jail* (opposite page) the Prophet was at peace as John Taylor sang “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief.” A few days before his death, the Prophet said, “I am calm as a summer’s morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men.”

provide an opportunity for choices. Two mighty forces are pulling in opposite directions. On the one hand is the power of Christ and His righteousness. On the other hand is Satan and the spirits who follow him. President Marion G. Romney said: “Mankind . . . must determine to travel in company with the one or the other. The reward for following the one is the fruit of the Spirit—peace. The reward for following the other is the works of the flesh—the antithesis of peace. . . . The price of peace is victory over Satan.”²

We can know which one to follow because God has given everyone the Spirit of Christ to know good from evil and to protect themselves from sin (see Moroni 7:15–18). We sometimes refer to the Spirit of Christ as our conscience. If we follow its promptings, we can be free of sin and filled with peace. If we do not, but instead let our carnal appetites control us, we never will know true peace. If we damage or violate our conscience by ignoring it, we can lose that gift because we no longer are sensitive to it.

Times of Peace

Though we abhor war, peace nearly always has been more a dream than a reality. During most of the world’s history, strife, dissension, and conflict have flourished and displaced peace. The times when peace has reigned, it began in the hearts of righteous, obedient individuals and grew until it engulfed a society. We have at least two scriptural accounts of periods of absolute peace and a third that is yet to come.

The first of these periods of peace was among the people of Enoch, who lived before the great flood (see Moses 7:16–21). The second period of peace followed the ministry of the resurrected Jesus among the

Nephites (see 4 Nephi 1).

A third period of perfect peace will come during the Millennium. “Satan shall be bound, that he shall have no place in the hearts of the children of men” (D&C 45:55). As they live the gospel of Jesus Christ, the righteousness of the people will banish Satan from their midst. We look forward to that day of universal peace and justice, when Christ will reign upon the earth.

These three instances show that peace, whether in a city, a nation, or other society, develops from peace that begins within the hearts of individuals as they live by the precepts of the gospel.

We see an example of individual peace amidst strife and contention in the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Near the end of his life, he was at the center of a whirlwind of turmoil and tribulation caused by devious associates, false accusations, and cunning plots against his life. Yet a few days before his death, he said, “I am calm as a summer’s morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men” (D&C 135:4). His inner peace sustained him through monumental adversities, even his own martyrdom.

How You Can Find Peace

Peace is more than a lofty ideal. It is a practical principle that, with conscious effort, can become a normal part of our lives as we deal with matters both large and small. One habit that prevents inner peace is procrastination. It clutters our minds with unfinished business and makes us uneasy until we finish a task and get it out of the way. This is true of going to the temple often, performing our home teaching and visiting teaching assignments, preparing lessons and talks, and doing other assignments.



Can anyone's mind be at peace if he or she is morally unclean? How much mental anguish results from a little lying, cheating, or stealing even if they are never discovered? Do we have peace of mind if we knowingly violate traffic laws? Or do we watch nervously for the ever-present policeman? Do we have peace of mind if we are not honest with our employers and do not give fair value for the pay we receive?

If sin has deprived us of peace within, we can repent and seek forgiveness of our sins. The Lord said that He "cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; Nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven" (D&C 1:31–32). President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) wrote: "The essence of the miracle of forgiveness is that it brings peace to the previously anxious, restless, frustrated, perhaps tormented soul. In a world of turmoil and contention this

is indeed a priceless gift."³

My brothers and sisters, we can be at peace if we "let virtue garnish [our] thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45). The power is in us as spirit children of our Heavenly Father. He and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, have provided the way for us to be at peace. We can enjoy it personally, within our families, in our communities, in our nations, and in our world if we will do the things that produce it. This peace leads to happiness.

I bear testimony that our Heavenly Father lives and that He knows and loves each one of us. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind, and yes, the Prince of Peace. **NE**

From an April 1991 general conference address.

NOTES

1. In Conference Report, Oct. 1938, 133.
2. *Ensign*, Oct. 1983, 4, 5.
3. *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 363.

WHAT HAPPENED TO CHRIST'S CHURCH?

What if you could be arrested for going to Mutual? Or killed for bearing your testimony? Imagine what it would be like if it were against the law for you to have your own copy of the scriptures or if there were no living prophets to guide you.

Early Christians faced those kinds of situations after Jesus Christ's death. Fewer than 400 years after the death of the Savior, the Church as Jesus organized it was nowhere to be found in the whole world. This began the period known as the Great Apostasy. The New Testament Apostles and Book of Mormon disciples were gone. And gone with them was the authority to run the Church and to hold the priesthood.

It was a time when people persecuted, tortured, and killed Christians and when the church itself became corrupt without inspired leadership. The world was in spiritual darkness.

JOHN THE BELOVED

The Apostle John was banished to the Isle of Patmos in about A.D. 93 or 94. The Savior had promised John that he would live to see His Second Coming (see John 21:21–23; D&C 7). The Prophet Joseph Smith said John was ministering among the lost ten tribes (see History of the Church, 1:176).

What Is the Apostasy?

The term *apostasy* means turning away from the truth. Some people today leave the Church. But the Great Apostasy, as we call it now, was more than that. With the death of the Apostles, priesthood keys (the presiding priesthood authority) were taken from the earth. Without the Apostles—these watchman who had kept the doctrines of the gospel pure and who maintained the order and standard of worthiness in the Church—the members faced serious



BOTTOM: GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BY HARRY ANDERSON; TOP: PETER, BY MARILEE B. CAMPBELL; PAINTING OF JOHN THE BELOVED BY PAUL MANN

According to tradition, Peter was crucified in Rome.



A.D. 64 or 65

The Apostle Paul died while a prisoner in Rome.



A.D. 65

THE APOSTLE PAUL

The Apostle Paul was not one of the original Twelve Apostles. He was a Jew called Saul who persecuted the Christians for many years until the Savior appeared to him on the road to Damascus, and he was converted. (See Acts 8–9.) Saul, later called Paul, became a great Apostle and missionary. He was martyred for his faith in the Savior during Roman persecutions against the Church.

John the Beloved was banished to the Isle of Patmos.



A.D. 93 or 94

challenges. Over time doctrines were corrupted and unauthorized changes were made in Church organization and priesthood ordinances.

What Happened to the Apostles?

Following the Savior's death, the Apostles spread the gospel, and the Church grew quickly throughout the Roman Empire. But almost immediately after the Ascension of the Savior, the Apostles began to be persecuted. James, the brother of John and one of the

original Twelve Apostles, was killed by Herod (see Acts 12:1–2). Peter and Paul were also killed during New Testament times.

We don't have records of the deaths of all the Apostles, but we do know that all but John the Beloved died and, after a time, ceased to be replaced. The keys and authority of the holy priesthood were lost with the deaths of the Church leaders. Without this authority,

THE APOSTLE PETER

Peter served as the head of the Church after the Savior's death and Resurrection. His life was one of faithfulness. Although there are no scriptural records of Peter's martyrdom, tradition says Peter died on a cross. Peter is said to have requested to be crucified upside down, because he did not consider himself worthy to die in the same way the Savior did (see Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 3:151–52).

In modern times, Peter appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said of Peter: "With his loyal associates, James and John, Simon Peter returned to the earth, bridging the gap of darkened centuries. Together they appeared on the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania, where Peter delivered to the young prophets the keys of the kingdom, which the apostles possessed from the Lord Jesus Christ" (Peter, My Brother, *Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year* [July 13, 1971], 8).



Constantine made Christianity a legal religion.



A.D. 324

EMPEROR CONSTANTINE

It is still a mystery why Constantine stopped years of persecution and made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire. Some sources say he did so because of a vision he had during a battle. Whatever his reasons, Constantine tried to convince Romans to be baptized into Christianity.

no new revelation, doctrine, or scripture could come.

What Happened to the Church?

The Apostles were killed during a time when the entire Church was being persecuted. Nero, a Roman emperor, was the first to make laws to exterminate Christians, in about A.D. 65. Under his reign, thousands were cruelly killed. A second round of persecutions began in about A.D. 93 under Emperor Domitian. Succeeding emperors continued torturing and killing Christians. As a result of these persecutions, thousands of Christians were martyred. Many others apostatized.

In about A.D. 324 Constantine became the emperor of the Roman Empire. He made Christianity a legal religion, stopping centuries of persecution. His actions linked the church to the government, and corrupt church leaders began seeking power and the honors of the world.

Teachers within the church began to adopt false religious concepts from Greek philosophy and pagan religions. Gospel ordinances were corrupted, and false

THE NICENE COUNCIL

Since there was no prophet to receive revelation, the church would frequently decide issues in a council, or meeting of church leaders. In A.D. 325, Emperor Constantine called a council in Nicaea (in modern Turkey) to decide on the nature of the Godhead. There had been much argument about whether God was one or three individuals, and the decision of the council further confused understanding of the Godhead. The truth that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three distinct beings and that They have separate roles was lost.

Moroni told of the apostasy of the Nephite nation.



A.D. 400–21

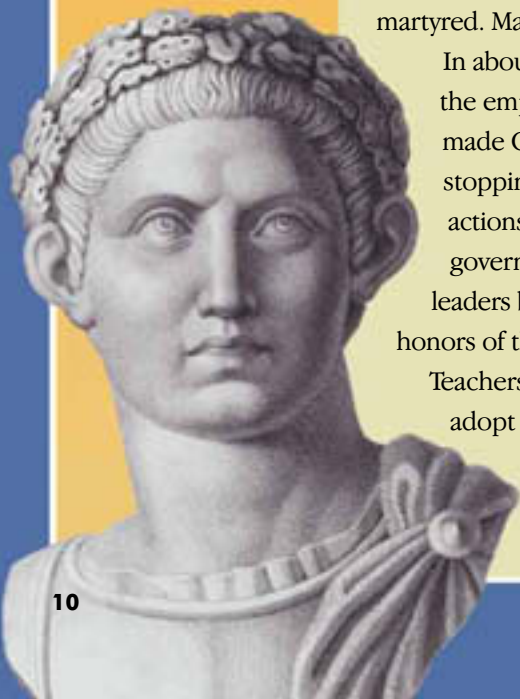
ceremonies were introduced. Even though the church still taught some truth, the true Church of Christ and the priesthood were no longer on the earth. And as Christianity spread to various parts of the world—including to Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas—new

churches were formed and grew. None of these churches, however, was the true Church, since the Lord had already taken

INCORRECT PRACTICES

During the Apostasy, many ordinances were altered or added without proper authority. The church allowed infant baptism and baptism by sprinkling or pouring, instead of by immersion. Pagan influences and philosophies of the time crept into the church—such as burning incense, celibacy (the clergy remaining unmarried), and the belief that the body was evil and that God did not have a body. The honoring of martyrs turned to superstition and worship.

Because of the wickedness within the church, the gifts of the Spirit ceased and people began to deny true spiritual gifts. Without revelation, church organization changed through the government of men, instead of through inspiration from God. Church offices were bought, sold, and voted on.



**Movable type
allowed scripture
to be widely
available.**



A.D. 1450

**Reformers
helped create an
environment for
the Restoration.**



A.D. 1500–1600

**God the Father
and His Son, Jesus
Christ, appeared
to Joseph Smith.**



A.D. 1820

**Priesthood authority
was restored and
the Church was
organized.**



A.D. 1829–30

priesthood authority and priesthood keys from the earth.

What Happened to the Scriptures?

The eighth article of faith says, “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly.” We know from the Book of Mormon that the scriptures that came from the Jewish people had many plain and precious parts taken from them (see 1 Nephi 13:23–29).

During the time of the Apostasy, precious doctrines were lost from the Bible through carelessness, uninspired translation, or deliberate efforts to erase the truth. A restoration of that lost doctrine and truth was necessary. The Book of Mormon and other scripture revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith brought back many of those plain and precious parts of the gospel.

A Light out of the Darkness

The Lord knew the Great Apostasy would take place (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3), so He prepared a way for His gospel to be restored. In the centuries leading up to the First Vision in 1820, various translations of the Bible became widely available through the newly developed printing process of movable type. Because the church did not want people to read the word of God, many were imprisoned

or martyred for reading or owning scriptures. But during this time, the Lord inspired people to begin fighting against the abuses and evil they saw within the church. This period is called the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation eventually created an environment in which the Lord could restore His authority and truth to the earth.

Today we can be members of “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth” (D&C 1:30) because the Lord restored His gospel and conferred priesthood authority to the Prophet Joseph Smith to organize His Church (see D&C 27; 65; 128:18–21).

We are blessed to live in this time, when the gospel in its fulness has been restored—a time when you can go to church, bear your testimony, and read the scriptures. **NE**

APOSTASY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

In the Book of Mormon, we learn that Christ’s Church in the Americas disappeared by about A.D. 400. All those who would not deny Christ were killed, and the three Nephite disciples were taken from among the Nephite people. Moroni alone was left to tell of his people’s destruction. (See Mormon 8:3, 10–11; Moroni 1:2.)



*Our car was stalled
on a mountain road, and
the only tool we had to repair it
was prayer.*

BY DARYL A. SCOTT

When I was 14, I lived with my family on a small island off the coast of Malaysia. Weather on the island was always warm, so my family enjoyed an occasional escape to the cool highlands on the mainland. During one such escape, we decided to visit a small mountain village accessible only by a narrow road. For safety reasons, this road was closed after dark. During the day, it operated on an alternating hourly schedule with one-way traffic flow directed either up or down the mountain.

After spending the afternoon on the mountain, we decided to return to our hotel. We waited patiently for the traffic direction to change and began our descent. When we were about halfway down the mountain, the engine of our car stopped. With great effort, my father steered the stalled car into a clearing along the side of the road. He inspected the engine but couldn't find the cause of our problem. Everything appeared to be fine, but the engine would not start.

We quickly realized how difficult our situation was. Even if we could find the cause of our engine trouble, we did not have the tools needed to make major repairs. We could not walk to find help because the only towns with services were miles away. We had little hope for help from other motorists because traffic was light and the road would soon be closed for the night.

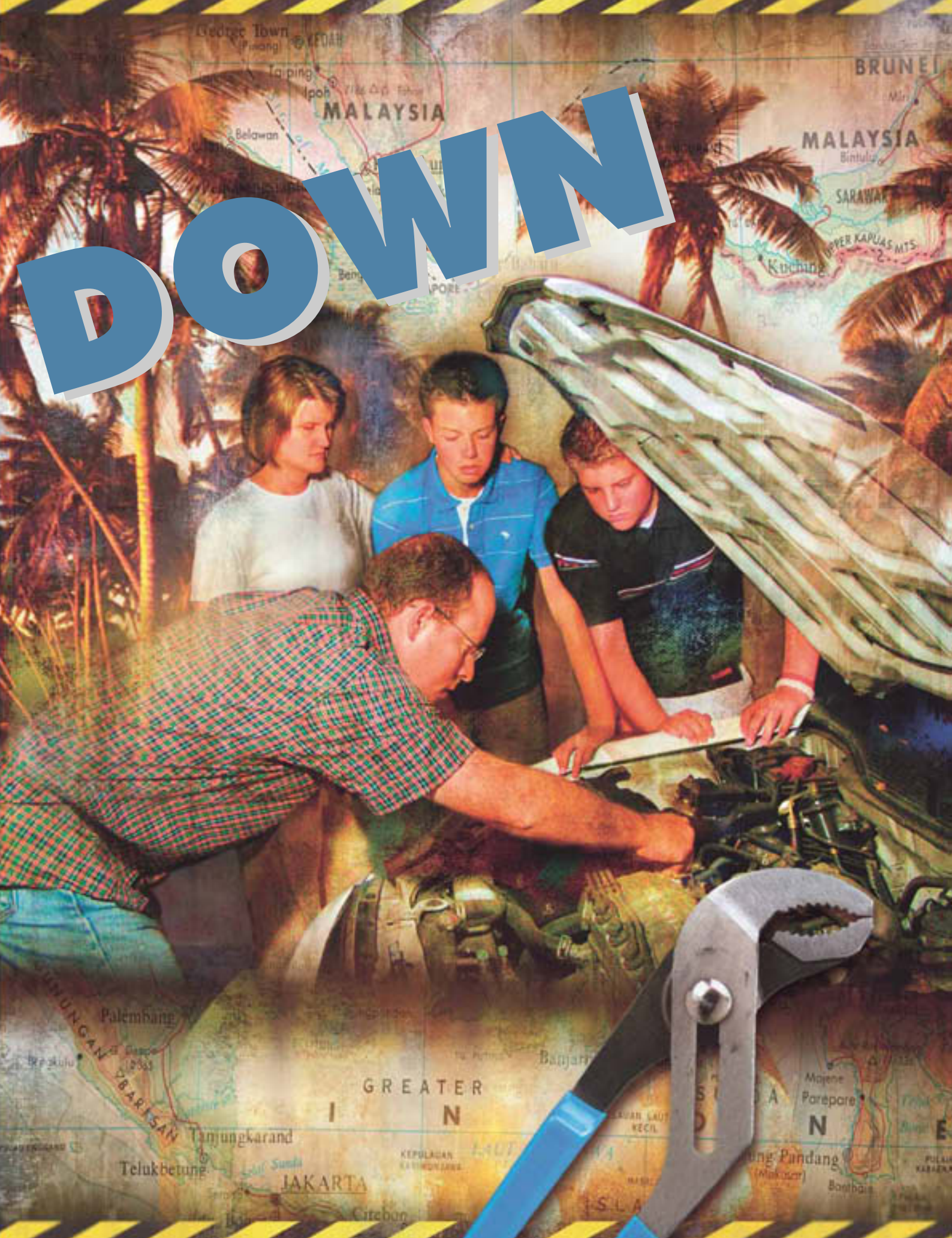
Knowing that we could not solve the problem ourselves, my father called us together and led us in a family prayer. He explained the situation to Heavenly Father and asked for guidance and help in getting the engine started. As we said amen at the end of the prayer, the clearing was filled with a strong breeze that moved the surrounding trees and bushes. The air had been unusually still up to that point, and we all felt that the breeze was Heavenly Father's way of telling us not to worry, that our prayers had been heard.

About a half hour after our family prayer, we heard the sound of a vehicle making its way up the mountain. When it came into view, we could see from the telephones painted on the doors that it was a government telecommunications vehicle. As it rounded the corner, it came to a halt, and three men walked over to our car. My father explained the trouble we were having, and the leader of the group assured us they would fix our car.

The men unloaded an array of specialized tools and began a systematic check of the engine. It was clear that the men were highly skilled and, after 30 minutes of work, they found and repaired a problem in the car's electrical system.

As they packed up their tools, my father thanked them for their help and asked what had brought them up the mountain. The leader of the group explained that a

DOWN



Knowing that we could not solve the problem ourselves, my father called us together and led us in a family prayer.

television transmission tower on the mountaintop had gone dead. They had been sent to repair the tower but had felt compelled to help our family, even before restoring television service to a large part of the country. When we inquired further, we learned that the television transmissions had ended about the same time our engine had failed.

As we started down the mountain again, my heart was filled with gratitude for an earthly father who could call down the blessings of heaven and for a Heavenly Father who sent people to help us.

This experience taught me that Heavenly Father takes a keen interest in us. When we face challenges that we cannot overcome by ourselves, we can call on a loving Heavenly

Father. He usually answers our prayers through someone who has resources and talents we lack. I have learned to call on Him for help, and I try to be ready to serve others with my talents as He directs. **NE**

Daryl A. Scott is a member of the Pearland Ward, Friendswood Texas Stake.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

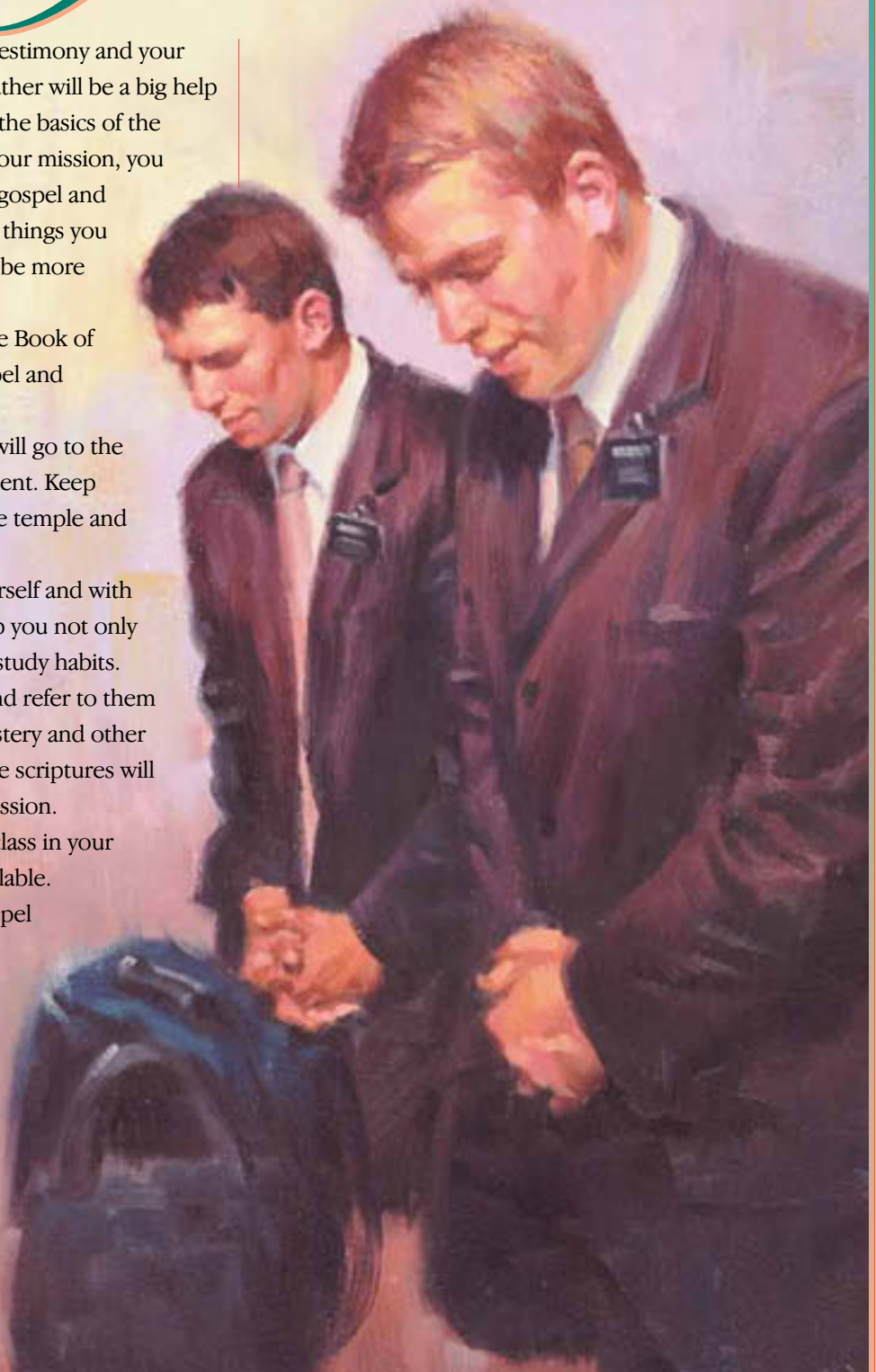
To learn more about prayer, read these scriptures: James 1:5–6; 3 Nephi 14:7–11; and “Prayer” (Bible Dictionary, 752).

And read these articles in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org: “Questions & Answers” (*New Era*, July 2002) and “Be Prayerful” (*New Era*, Apr. 2002) by Caroline H. Benzley.

Ready TO SERVE?

Learning now to rely on your testimony and your relationship with Heavenly Father will be a big help on your mission. If you learn the basics of the gospel and gain a testimony before your mission, you will be able to focus on teaching the gospel and strengthening others. Here are a few things you can work on right now to prepare to be more spiritually self-sufficient:

- Gain a testimony of the Savior, the Book of Mormon, the Restoration of the gospel and priesthood, and our living prophet.
- Before you go on a mission, you will go to the temple to receive your own endowment. Keep yourself pure and worthy to enter the temple and make covenants there.
- Study the gospel regularly by yourself and with your family and friends. This will help you not only learn the gospel but also form good study habits.
- Carry your scriptures with you, and refer to them frequently. Memorizing scripture mastery and other verses and becoming familiar with the scriptures will be a great blessing to you on your mission.
- Attend a missionary preparation class in your ward, stake, or institute, if one is available.
- Share your testimony and the gospel every chance you get, and pray for opportunities to do so.
- Be obedient. Before you become a missionary, gain a testimony of the importance of being obedient.
- Learn to love service. Your mission will consist of serving others.
- If you have the opportunity, go teaching with the missionaries in your area, or ask your parents if the missionaries can teach an investigator in your home. **NE**



Q & A

*“I love the gospel,
but talking about it with others terrifies me.
How can I overcome my fear?”*

NEW ERA

Even the best member missionaries are nervous about sharing the gospel sometimes. But they overcome their fear in the same way you overcome any fear—by replacing your fear with faith.

The scriptures are full of encouragement: “Fear not; I will help thee” (Isaiah 41:13). “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear” (D&C 38:30). “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” (2 Timothy 1:7–8).

Developing the kind of faith that replaces fear with power and love will take effort and practice. You can’t just wait for faith to come to you. You need to develop it. Start by thinking of small ways to share your testimony. You could write your testimony in a letter. Or you could write your testimony in your journal every day for a week. Once you feel confident expressing your testimony in writing, try bearing it in sacrament meeting, in family home evening, or to a close friend. As you

■ **You can overcome fear through developing your faith.**

■ **Faith requires action. Practice sharing the gospel in situations where you feel comfortable.**

■ **Seek added knowledge so you can be prepared to answer others’ questions. Preparation will help you share the gospel without fear.**

■ **Build on your righteous desire to share the gospel as you work to conquer your fear.**

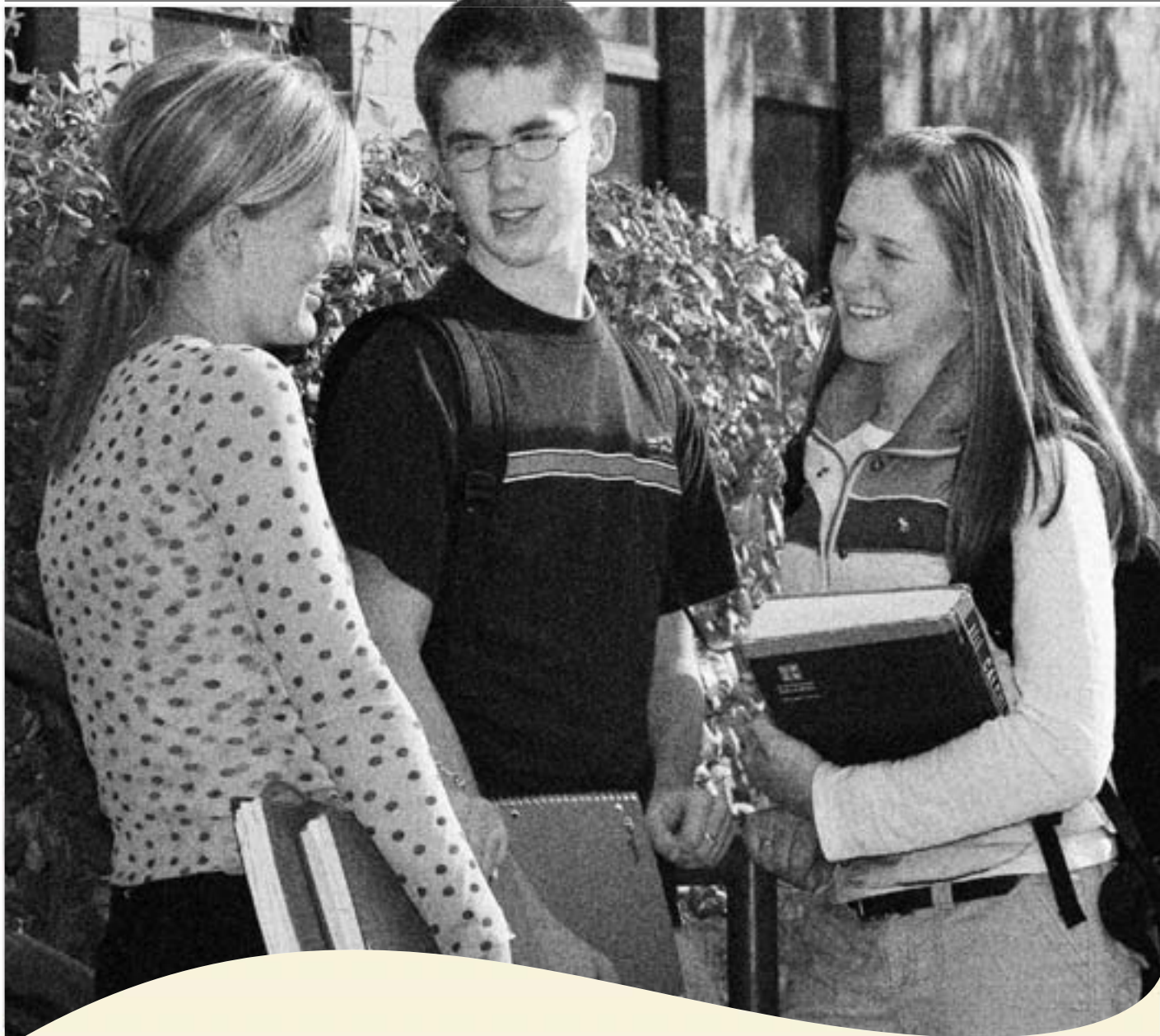
build your testimony-sharing skills, your confidence and faith will grow.

If you are nervous because you think you might be asked questions you cannot answer, a little preparation can help. The Lord told Hyrum Smith, “First seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men” (D&C 11:21).

Read the scriptures and other Church materials to help build your gospel knowledge. Share these resources—pamphlets, magazines, and so on—with others.

Mormon.org is another great place to learn more and to refer others to as well. Pray for added courage. Remember, if you don’t have all the answers, you can always ask someone or do some research.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “The intensity of our desire to share the gospel is a great indicator of the extent of our personal conversion”



("Sharing the Gospel," *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 7). You have the desire. Now let that desire grow into action as you practice sharing the gospel (see Alma 32). **NE**

Heavenly Father for opportunities to share the gospel. He will give you the words He wants you to say.

Vikki Hamme, 17, Mountain Home Ward,
Springfield Missouri South Stake

Then I'm sure you will love to speak about the Church and will want to do so again and again.

Dana Jill Barthel, 16, Bonn Ward,
Düsseldorf Germany Stake

READERS



Your fear is natural. Ask the missionaries if you can go on exchanges with them. Have them teach a discussion in your home, and share your testimony. But most important, ask



I always used to be scared of talking with others about the gospel. But think of your testimony and that wonderful feeling you get because you know the gospel is true. Ask your Heavenly Father for a missionary experience, and pray for His guidance.

In seminary, I learned that Jesus Christ has called us to participate in His work. I understood from 3 Nephi 12:13-16 that I am a light and also the salt of the earth and that if I love the Lord, I must live by His words. That is how I overcame my fear.

Jean Garry Gilot, 17, Carrefour Ward,
Port-au-Prince Haiti Stake

The love I feel for this great work has allowed me to talk about the gospel. We need to pray a lot, read the scriptures, attend seminary, and seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Then the words will come.

Cesar A. Flores Barrios, 15, Cantaura Ward,
El Tigre Venezuela Stake



If you try to talk to a good friend, you will feel more comfortable. If you start by talking about a gospel standard that is easy to explain, it will be easier to share more. Once you talk to one friend, you will be able to talk to anyone!

Gretchen Schillemat, 14, Keene Ward,
Concord New Hampshire Stake

It doesn't matter what others think, but it does matter what Heavenly Father thinks. If I were enjoying a wonderful feast and my friends were with me, I wouldn't ignore them. I also wouldn't just invite them to read the recipes. I would ask them to eat with me.

Kristina M. Harrop, 16, Palmer Third Ward,
Wasilla Alaska Stake



I learned to trust the Lord and let the Spirit guide me. You just have to remember that you don't have to be afraid when the Lord is on your side. The Spirit will help you.

Amber Wilson, 14, Parkersburg Ward,
Charleston West Virginia Stake

To overcome this fear, I think of how much I wish I had known about this gospel sooner. My friends and family also need to receive it urgently. We must talk with enthusiasm of the activities we participate in, of the joy the gospel brings. Others will desire to know where our happiness and faith come from.

Évila Fernanda de Campos, 19, Bragança Paulista Ward,
Itatiba Brazil Stake



Do not let fear overcome your efforts. . . . Fear comes not from God but from the evil one. The adversary of all truth would put into your heart a reluctance to make an effort. Cast that fear aside and be valiant in the cause of truth and righteousness and faith. If you now decide that this will become the pattern of your life, you will not have to make that decision again."

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, "Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, Jan. 1998, 72.



Our fear will be gone when we are made perfect in love (see 1 John 4:18). Pray diligently for that gift of perfect love, and approach your friends with love. Smile, give a helping hand, and express gratitude. By doing so you can not only overcome fear, you can radiate the blessings of the gospel.

Elder Tomohiko Funai, 19, Idaho Pocatello Mission



We can overcome this fear initially by becoming friends, and then we will feel more at ease about bearing our testimony to people so the Spirit can touch them.

Anne Diniz, 16, Valentina Ward, João Pessoa Brazil Rangel Stake



One must have a testimony of this gospel to courageously share it with others. Use your testimony as a guide. Search and pray about overcoming your fear.

Aaron Michaelson, 13, Southbury Ward,
New Haven Connecticut Stake

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send your answer to the question below, along with your name, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and a photograph to:

Q&A, New Era

50 East North Temple Street, Floor 24

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail:

cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by March 15, 2005.

QUESTION

"My friend doesn't feel that she fits in. What can I do to make her feel welcome at church?"

DON'T BE **FOOLED**



NO MATTER HOW IT'S DISGUISED,
SIN IS STILL SIN. STAY AWAY FROM IT.
(See D&C 50:3; Moses 4:4.)

True



STRENGTH



This family of weight lifters from Seymour, Missouri, rely on the Lord's strength instead of their own.

BY SHANNA BUTLER
Church Magazines

Building muscle takes time. When you lift weights, your muscles tear a little. They get stronger and bigger as they are torn and rebuilt over a long period of time. Denver Brown of Seymour, Missouri, started out bench-pressing 80 pounds (36 kg) when he was 14. Now that he's 19, he can bench 430 pounds (195 kg) raw (without the aid of a power-lifting shirt). In fact, he holds the United States record in his age group for raw lifting.

As a state and national record holder in bench-press events for his age group, Denver has trophies to prove he's physically fit. But what's most important to him is balance. He was in college building his mental strength and is now in the Mexico Culiacán Mission continuing to build his spiritual strength.

"My family has always focused on having spiritual strength," says Denver, 19. "But my dad taught us we need to have mental strength, physical strength, and spiritual strength. To be the best you can be in any of those areas, you have to be balanced."

Uplifting Each Other

Another kind of strength the Browns have is family strength. In their home in southern

Missouri, they pray together, dance together, and play music together. If someone has a weight-lifting meet, they all pile into a car and drive many hours to support him. If Denver starts playing his drums, his brothers Navaar and Kristopher pick up their guitars and play along. And, if they're lucky, their cousins Sam and Jake Dias will join them too. "Yeah," says Jake, "we usually jam, weight lift, or eat together."

All the family lifts weights together. Even Megan, the youngest, who is 12, can bench press a little more than she weighs. She blames her brothers for getting her started. And they blame their dad, Dan Brown, for getting them started.

"I was pretty skinny," Denver says. "I asked my dad what I could do to start looking better and be healthier." His dad had lifted weights in high school and picked it up again when his children became interested. Denver's example got his brothers and cousins interested too.

"Denver was doing it, so I started," says Navaar. "I found out I could break records, so I just went for it." Navaar, who is 14, holds a national bench-press record for his age group.

The family is careful as they try to stay in

Left, top to bottom: Denver and Kristopher Brown, Jake and Sam Dias, and Navaar and Megan Brown draw strength from each other as they live the gospel. Far left: Denver finds his cousin Sam very uplifting.

Far right: Navaar Brown, his siblings, and his cousins support each other when they are weight lifting and playing music. They also support each other as they live the gospel.

shape. They don't overdo it, and they eat healthily. "Our focus is more on health than on weight lifting," Denver says.

The Power of Example

Holding records in weight lifting is nice, but physical fitness is only part of being balanced. Kristopher, 16, says, "I wanted to be fit so I'd be better able to serve." Kristopher and his brothers and sister who still live at home are eager to serve, whether it's babysitting or just helping a friend.

Denver says service is not the only opportunity weight lifting has given him: "Anywhere you excel, people are going to notice, and that will give you missionary opportunities." Recently at a national meet, a world-class power lifter asked Denver why he wasn't coming to the next meet. Denver told him about his mission, and the power lifter surprised him by encouraging him to put God first. Denver later told his mother, Tammy, "I could be known as Denver the weight lifter, but I'd rather be known as Elder Brown in Mexico."

Being Strong

The whole family puts a lot of effort into building their spiritual muscles. "You can't just work out one day and expect to compete and do well," says Sam. "Just like you can't expect to come to church one day and then be ready to go on a mission. It takes time."

"Weight lifting takes a lot of determination and eating well," Jake explains. "With the gospel, you need spiritual food, and you need determination to stay with it, because it's not always easy."

All the boys have had instances where

their physical strength was useless, and they were glad they could rely on the spiritual strength they had built up.

"When my dad had cancer, we weren't really sure what was going to happen. We prayed a lot, and the Lord helped us through it," Jake says.

"Prayer always helped," agrees Sam. "That's why we did it so much."

Denver relied on the Lord when his best friend was killed in a car accident. "It took a lot of time and a lot of prayer. That was probably the time when I felt most reliant on Heavenly Father, rather than trying to take care of things for myself, because I felt helpless," he says.

The whole family needed to rely on the Lord when their previous house burned down a year and a half ago. They've since moved to a new town and have made their new house into a home.

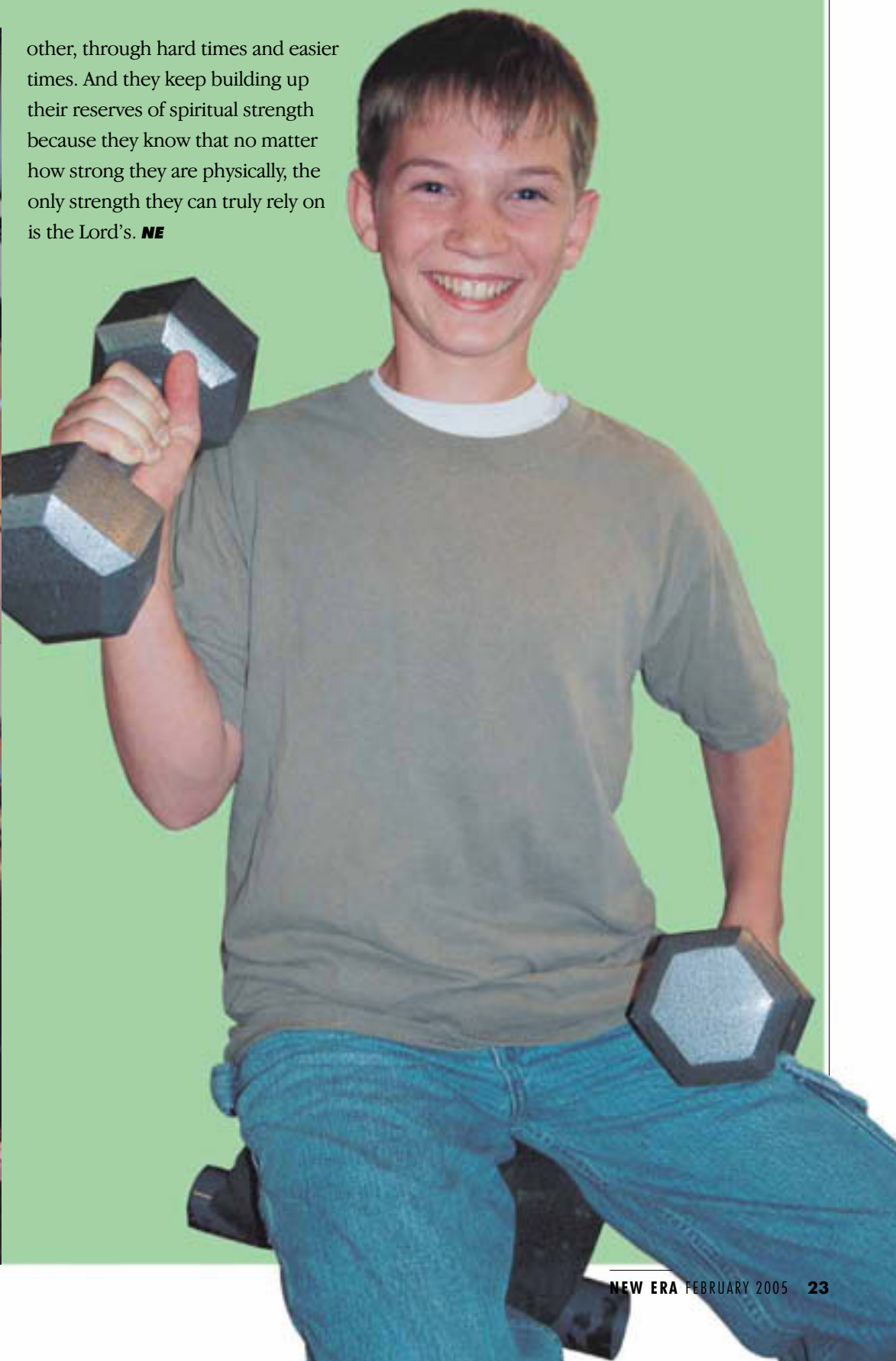
Ammon's Example

One of the family's favorite scripture stories is of Ammon, a son of Mosiah, going to preach to the Lamanites (see Alma 17–20). Denver is not only impressed by Ammon's physical strength in defeating those trying to steal the king's sheep, but he is also impressed by his optimism. "There's a possibility he's going to get killed for letting the sheep get scattered, but he thinks, 'Great! An opportunity!'"

Navaar likes the story of Ammon because even though Ammon was strong, he didn't boast about his strength. He was still humble and trusted in the Lord. For Navaar, Ammon is an example of living a balanced life.

The Brown family keep striving to have balance in their lives and to support each

other, through hard times and easier times. And they keep building up their reserves of spiritual strength because they know that no matter how strong they are physically, the only strength they can truly rely on is the Lord's. **NE**



TEACHING

My TEACHER

BY PRINCE IHENKORO

Several years back, some youth from my branch and I were returning from an activity and were standing alongside a lonely road waiting for a bus. Finally we saw a car coming. It stopped, and the driver was my former teacher, Mr. Enemor. We had not seen each other for some years. With great joy on his face, he exclaimed, "Thenkoro, it's been quite some time. You've grown big."

Having him stop seemed a miracle, for we had been there for hours without seeing any cars. Now we would not even have to pay for a ride. As we drove, Mr. Enemor asked, "Where are you people coming from?"

I replied, "From a Church program."

He said, "Oh, that's nice. How I

wish every young person would attend church. This country would be fine." Then he asked, "Which church?"

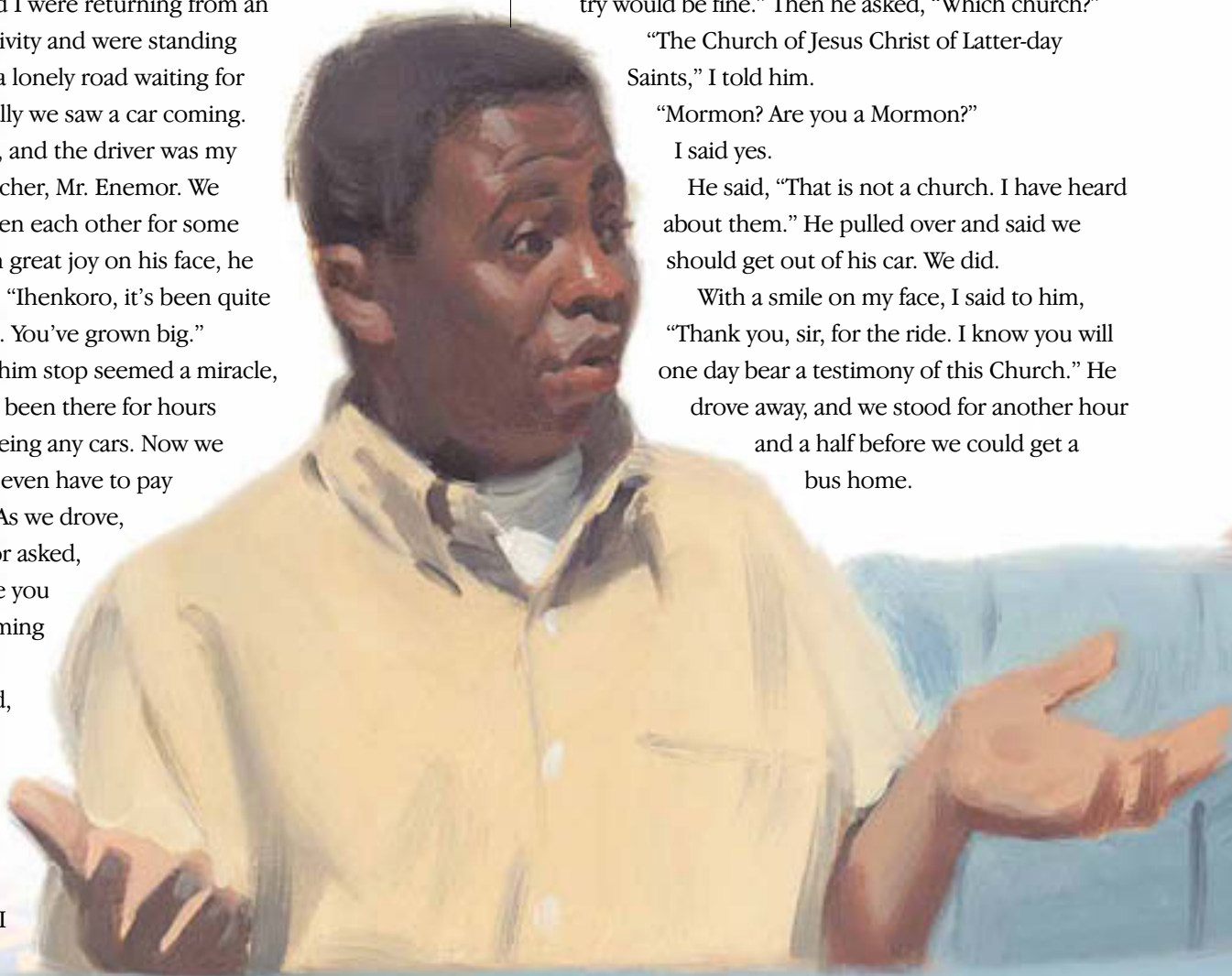
"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," I told him.

"Mormon? Are you a Mormon?"

I said yes.

He said, "That is not a church. I have heard about them." He pulled over and said we should get out of his car. We did.

With a smile on my face, I said to him, "Thank you, sir, for the ride. I know you will one day bear a testimony of this Church." He drove away, and we stood for another hour and a half before we could get a bus home.



I knew I would have to pay a price to be a good missionary. We all have to pay a price for anything of value. Our Savior showed us that when He paid the price for our sins.

I wanted to share the gospel with Mr. Enemor, so I went to his house. He never allowed me in, but I dropped off several Church pamphlets and a Church magazine for him.

Many months after that I received a letter from him. In the letter he asked, "Please forgive me for what I did to you that evening. I owe you an apology and all our thanks. My family and I are now members of that church I was once against. I am now a Latter-day Saint."

Brother Enemor and his family are strong members of the

Church in Abuja, Nigeria. He and his family have been sealed in the temple. He still writes me and always says, "I thank you for leading me to the light."

We gain a living by what we get, but we gain a life by what we give. We can give the gospel and bring light to the lives of many others. People may forget what you say and what you do, but they don't forget how you make them feel. Go and make them feel good by giving them the gospel light. I have been blessed with great rewards for the small price I paid to share the gospel with someone who at first spurned me for

my beliefs. **NE**

Elder Prince Ibenkoro is serving full time in the Ghana Accra Mission.

M^y membership in the Church cost me a ride home, but it also resulted in a good man and his family finding the gospel.



NAME WITHHELD

Scott (name has been changed) had every excuse to stop coming to church. His mom never went. When his alcoholic dad wasn't in prison, he wasn't around, so he wasn't going to take Scott to church. His two younger sisters went to Young Women sometimes but weren't really interested.

The only reason Scott had been going in the first place was because his family was living with his grandma, who would wake him up for priesthood every Sunday. But when he turned 16, Scott's grandma died, and his family moved away from the only bishop Scott had really connected with.

It would have been easy for him to just not show up anymore.

But Scott didn't stop going to church.

"I felt good at church," Scott says. "I felt the Spirit there. I knew that's where I was supposed to be, so I kept going."

He didn't realize it at the time, but when Scott decided to keep going to church, even though it seemed he had every reason not to, he changed my life and affected hundreds of others.

Scott went on a mission, even though there was no way he or his family could pay for it. By then his dad had left the family. But, supported by ward members, Scott

served a faithful mission. He taught hundreds and baptized dozens.

After returning home, he married in the temple. He served as elders quorum president, Young Men president, and bishop, blessing the lives of hundreds of ward members and their families.

He and his wife had their own family, where his influence was perhaps more strongly felt. It was there that his four children gained their own testimonies of the gospel. In large part because of his faithfulness, the three oldest have served missions—together having taught more than 1,000 people and baptizing more than 100. Scott's youngest son is now serving a mission.

Forty years after Scott made the decision to be faithful, people are still being affected by his decision. I know. He's my dad.

Scott's decision was like a rock tossed into still water—the ripples continue to move outward through generations, touching not only the lives of those around him but the lives of their children and their children's children.

Those ripples are now moving into the third generation as I look into the eyes of my two-year-old son, who, because of my temple marriage, can be part of our family forever.

I have wondered what would have happened if my dad had simply chosen not to go to church anymore. Would I have come to know the Savior? Would I have served a mission? Would I have married in the temple? Would my son be facing a future without the blessings of the gospel? Those are questions I'm glad I don't have to answer.

What I have learned is this: 14-year-olds

are changing the world every day, usually without realizing it. When I was 14 and faced with decisions, I wasn't thinking about how I was affecting others. But now I understand that every choice I make is like

throwing another rock into the water—others will be affected.

I'm grateful my dad made the decisions he did. I hope that my children and their children will be able to say the same thing about me. **NE**

TOO MANY TO COUNT

You never know how the decisions you make will affect others. But the story of Abinadi (see Mosiah 11–17) is an example of how doing what's right, even when it's hard, can affect many lives for good.

ABINADI

Abinadi's testimony to wicked King Noah cost him his life (see Mosiah 17:20), but changed the life of one of the king's priests, Alma the Elder (see Mosiah 18:1), who at the time was "a young man" (Mosiah 17:2).

ALMA THE ELDER

Alma helped bring into the Church about 450 of King Noah's people (see Mosiah 18:35). They joined the Nephites at Zarahemla, where Alma became the high priest of the Church and baptized many more (see Mosiah 25:18). His son was Alma the Younger (see Mosiah 27:14).

ALMA THE YOUNGER

Alma was the Nephite's first chief judge and high priest of the Church (see Mosiah 29:42). He helped convert more than 3,500 people and converted many more during later missions to Nephite cities. Alma's sons served missions as well. His oldest son was Helaman.

HELOMAN, SON OF ALMA

Helaman kept the records and was one of the high priests of the Church (see Alma 46:6). At about 73 BC and again about 54 BC, he reestablished the Church after years of war (see Alma 45:22; 62:46). He led the 2,000 stripling warriors. His son was also named Helaman.

HELOMAN, SON OF HELMAN

Helaman kept the records of the people as well. He became chief judge of the Nephites. During his righteous rule, "tens of thousands" joined the Church (Helaman 3:26). He had two righteous sons, Nephi and Lehi.

NEPHI AND LEHI, SONS OF HELMAN

Nephi was chief judge before leaving to preach the gospel with Lehi. These brothers were such powerful missionaries that most of the Lamanites were converted to the gospel (see Helaman 5:50). Nephi turned the records over to his son, Nephi.

NEPHI, SON OF NEPHI

Nephi became a great prophet. He taught and baptized many in the wicked days before Christ's coming, even raising his brother from the dead (see 3 Nephi 7:15–26). He was chosen as one of Christ's 12 disciples when the Savior appeared (see 3 Nephi 12:1). The disciples helped convert all the Nephites and Lamanites after Christ's coming (see 4 Nephi 1:2).

Abinadi's teachings and example affected countless lives over the years, from Alma the Elder to Nephi. These men didn't just affect the lives of their converts. Those people likely affected others, including their own children and children's children, who also affected others. You never know how many people will be affected by what you choose to do. So make sure you choose the right. **NE**



The influence of your personal testimonies is ever so far-reaching. . . .

"You can make a difference."

—President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "You Make a Difference," *Ensign*, May 1988, 43.

MISSING ANDY

BY STEVEN TUITUPOU

When my older brother Andy passed away from bone cancer at age 15, I felt like a part of me also died. The week after Andy's death, I felt sick. I couldn't sleep. Sometimes I felt like I couldn't breathe.

Andy and I never got along. I was the one Andy always picked on. In response to his endless teasing, I did my best to be the most annoying little brother around. So why did I feel so horrible when Andy wasn't here anymore?

At night I spent hours tossing, turning, and staring at the ceiling. Thoughts of Andy kept going through my mind. My 12th birthday would be in a few days. I wasn't a baby anymore, but after a short prayer, I felt Mom would know what to do.

Mom didn't know what to say. She had lost a son a few days before. I could tell by her bloodshot eyes and sad face that she wasn't too excited about my new problem. "We'll visit the doctor tomorrow morning. Okay, Steve?"

Morning came. My brothers and sister went to school while Mom and I left to see Dr. Freestone. I had visited the doctor's office several times; the visits were not good memories. I looked around the room uneasily. Finally the doctor came.

"Hi, Steven, what seems to be the problem?" he asked.

"I don't know. I have headaches, and sometimes I can't breathe at night," I mumbled.

"How long have you been feeling like this?" he asked.

"It's been about a week," I answered slowly.

He conducted his examination and asked many questions. After several tests, the doctor sat down. He studied



his notes and then looked at me for a few seconds before he spoke. "Steven, I can't find anything wrong with you," he said. "You say you've had headaches though?"

I nodded.

"What have you been thinking about when you get these headaches?" he asked.

Tears welled up in my eyes. "Well, I am usually thinking about Andy."

"Do you miss Andy?"

I had to nod. I couldn't speak, and my eyes had turned into waterfalls. Mom also started to cry. Dr. Freestone, getting a little teary himself, said something I'll never forget.

"You know, Steven, Andy loves you. And just because you can't see him anymore doesn't mean he isn't there. Andy is happy where he is right now, and I know he wants you to be happy too."

Everything he said made perfect sense to me. I needed to remember that I didn't really lose my brother. He would still be with me in spirit. Mom put her arm around me as we said thank you to Dr. Freestone, wiped our tears, and went on our way.

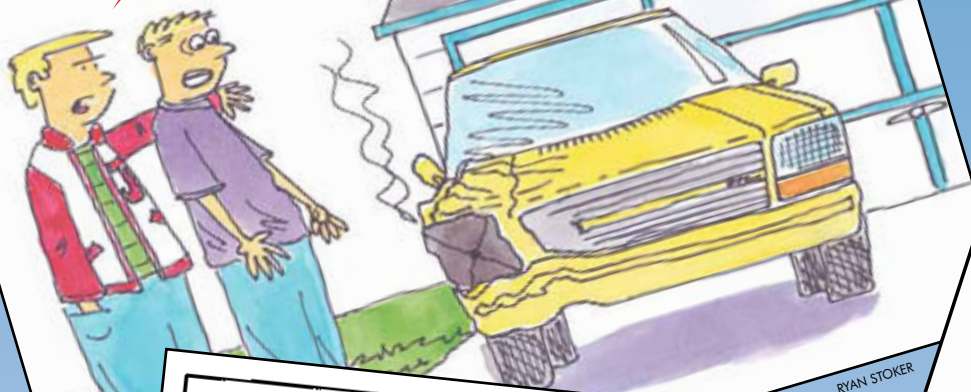
I had always believed in the plan of salvation, but at that moment it became real to me. I would see Andy again.

I had never even thought I liked Andy, but as soon as he was gone, I missed him more than anything.

I slept that night knowing that Andy loved me and wanted me to be happy—just as he was. **NE**

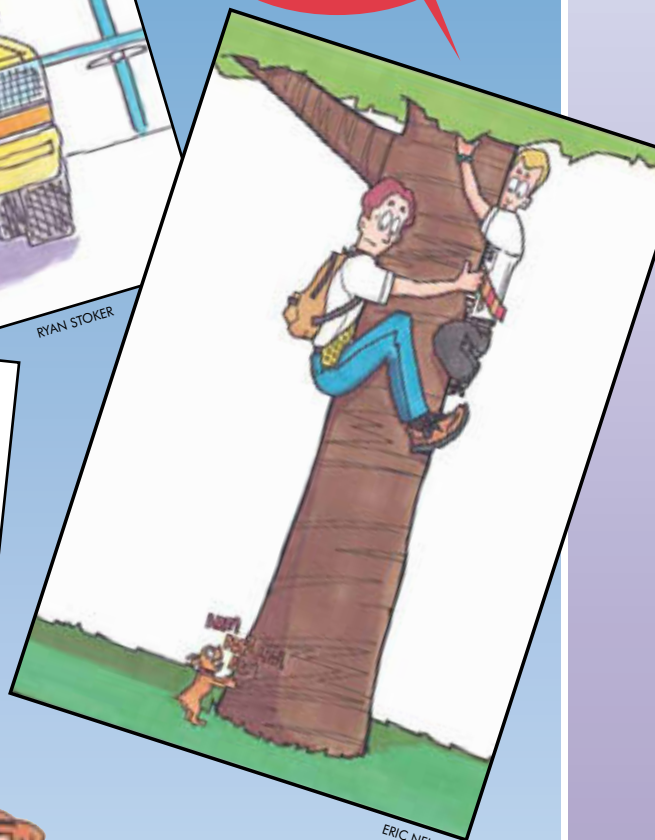
Steven Tuitupou is a member of the Orem College 12th Ward, Orem Utah College First Stake.

"Andy, I always say honesty is the best policy. Besides, I'm pretty sure your parents are going to notice anyway!"



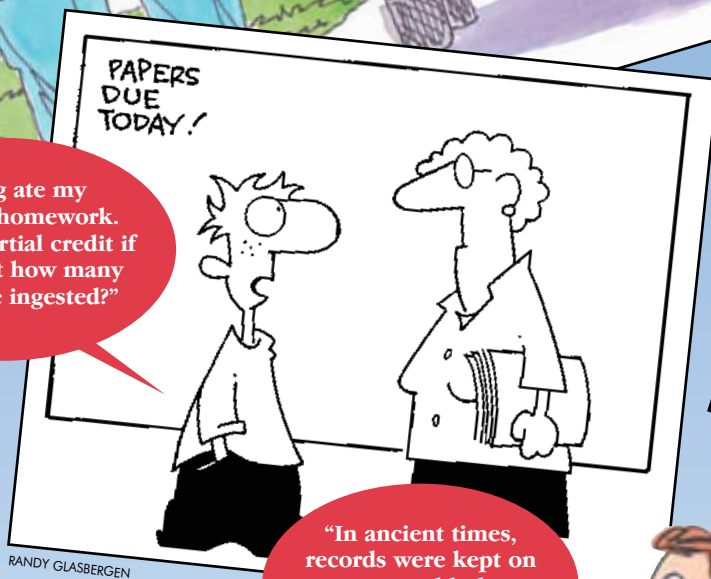
RYAN STOKER

"Is he gone yet?"



ERIC NELSON

"My dog ate my nutrition homework. Can I get partial credit if I figure out how many calories he ingested?"



RANDY GLASBERGEN

"In ancient times, records were kept on papyrus, gold plates, and filmstrip projectors."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

WATCHING OVER THE CHURCH



BY CAROLINE H.
BENZLEY

As members of the teachers quorum in the Iowa City Second Ward, these worthy young men are called to participate in Church and community service and to teach the members of their ward. Brandon Stewart (far right) with his father, Greg, goes home teaching to Stephen and Lorene Hunter and their family.

If they hold the priesthood, boys in their early teens are given a very important assignment—the assignment to watch over the Church.

These young men must be amazing, you might say, to be given such an important assignment. And, in fact, they are. Teachers in the Aaronic Priesthood are given the assignment to “watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them” (D&C 20:53).

How Do They Do This?

As members of a teachers quorum, worthy young men are called to strengthen the Church as they participate in Church and community service, home teach the members of their ward, and prepare the sacrament with reverence and respect.

For the teachers in the Iowa City Second Ward, Iowa City Iowa Stake, these responsibilities are an exciting part of their everyday lives. They strive to be worthy holders of the Aaronic Priesthood and to magnify their callings to the office of teacher.

Serving Their Neighbors



These young men have found that serving is easy when they are always looking for ways to help. For example, Brandon Stewart was glad to shovel his neighbor’s walks after a big snowstorm, and Ryan

Hunter recently enjoyed the chance to help a family pack for a move.

These young men also have fun serving as a quorum. They can’t help but smile when they remember Christmas caroling at a home for families with children in the hospital. “I was a little nervous to go at first,” explains Brandon. “But after the first song I felt a lot better, and my favorite part was when they thanked us afterward.”

Learning to Be a Home Teacher

Home teaching is another way these young men serve. Each member of the teachers quorum works with a senior



The teachers quorum (right) pauses outside the doors of their ward's meetinghouse. These young men prepare the sacrament table each Sunday with reverence and respect. Joshua Tryon (far right) serves as president of his quorum.

companion. This senior companion is their father or another Melchizedek Priesthood holder in the ward.



Josh Tryon has learned a lot from his senior companion. Josh admires how well he prepares the lesson and how willing he is to help the families they teach. "Through watching the example of

my home teaching companion, I have learned how to be a better person and how to someday be a Melchizedek Priesthood holder," Josh



explains.

"The first time I went home teaching, I was really nervous about what I would have to say to the families," admits Ryan Hunter. "I was glad when I only had to give the closing prayer." But after just a couple months of home teaching, Ryan wasn't nervous anymore. Now he looks forward to going. "My favorite part is talking to the people and learning more about them and how we can help them," says Ryan. "If it were not for home teaching, people might not ask for help, even when they really need it."

One of the most important parts of a successful home teaching visit is preparing and sharing a lesson. Every other month Brandon Stewart gives the lesson. Brandon has learned how to prepare a lesson by watching his senior companion, his father. Thanks to his dad's good example, giving the lesson is Brandon's favorite part of home teaching.

To prepare his lesson, Brandon starts by reading the First Presidency Message in the *Ensign*. He picks the parts he thinks may help the family he will be teaching. He then



adds his personal experiences and feelings about the topic and concludes his lesson just as his father does, by bearing his testimony.

Preparing the Sacrament

Along with home teaching, members of a teachers quorum also have the opportunity to serve by preparing the sacrament each Sunday. In the Iowa City Second Ward, the teachers are given rotating assignments of either preparing the sacrament before the meeting or putting the trays away after the meeting.



Before Nate Rideout was a teacher, he admits he wasn't too concerned about getting to church on time. But now things are different. When it is his month to help prepare the sacrament, Nate makes sure he gets to church 30 minutes

before sacrament meeting begins. "The sacrament is the most important part of the meeting," explains Nate. "I know I can't be sloppy when I prepare the sacrament, because it is a sacred ordinance." Nate is grateful for the opportunity he has to reflect upon the importance of the sacrament as he carefully sets out the trays and fills the cups with water.

By faithfully serving neighbors, ward members, and their Heavenly Father, these young men have felt their testimonies of the gospel grow as they watch over the Church. **NE**

Caroline H. Benzley is a member of the Iowa City University Ward, Iowa City Iowa Stake.



TEARS *For* Ashley

BY KATIE LAIRD

I didn't want to sit by a stranger, but it took such a short time for Ashley to become a great friend, a friend that I was devastated to lose.

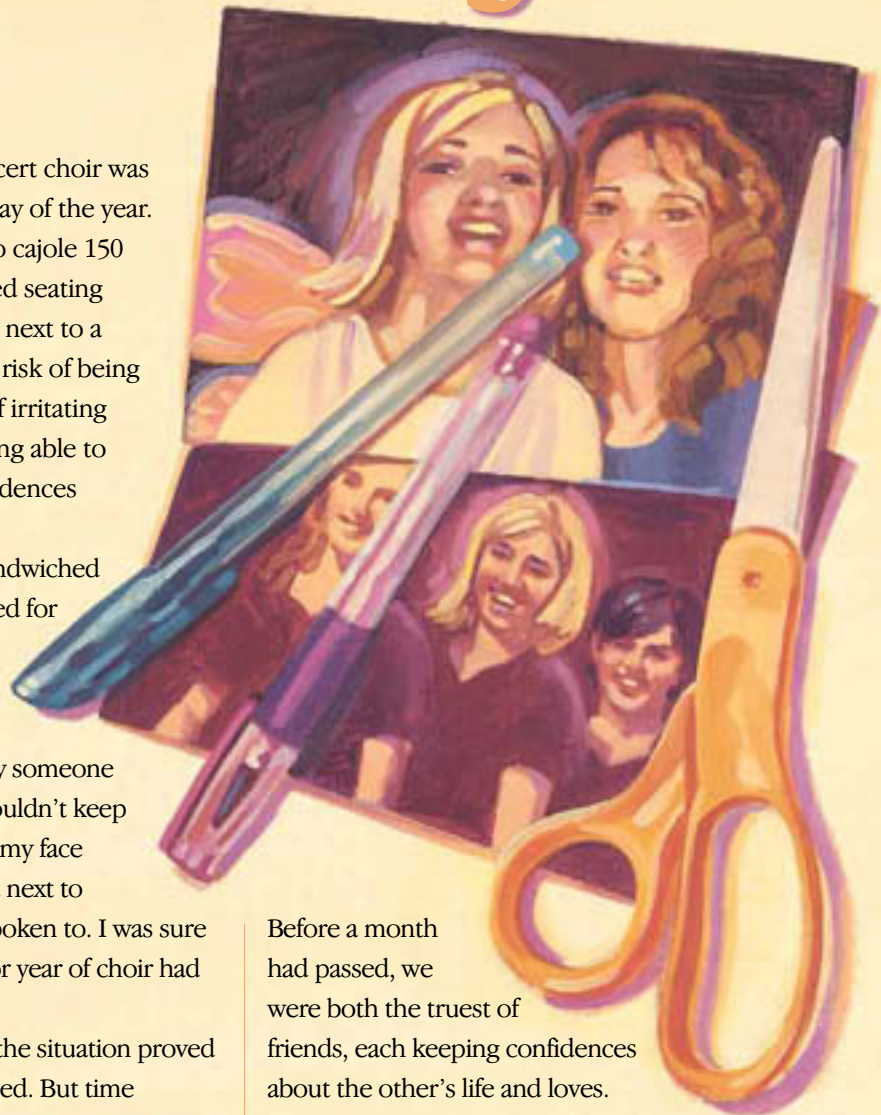
The first day of concert choir was always the worst day of the year. The teacher had to cajole 150 teenagers into an arranged seating assignment. If I had to sit next to a stranger, I would run the risk of being subjected to two hours of irritating interaction instead of being able to exchange news and confidences with friends.

I sat in the first row, sandwiched among friends as we waited for our seating assignments. I surveyed my peers and submitted a fervent prayer to end up sitting by someone I knew. Consequently, I couldn't keep the disappointment from my face when I was assigned to sit next to Ashley—a girl I'd rarely spoken to. I was sure the happiness of my junior year of choir had been doomed.

For the next few days, the situation proved as miserable as I'd predicted. But time worked its magic, and my walls of reserve were broken by this girl's unusual character.

Before a month had passed, we were both the truest of friends, each keeping confidences about the other's life and loves.

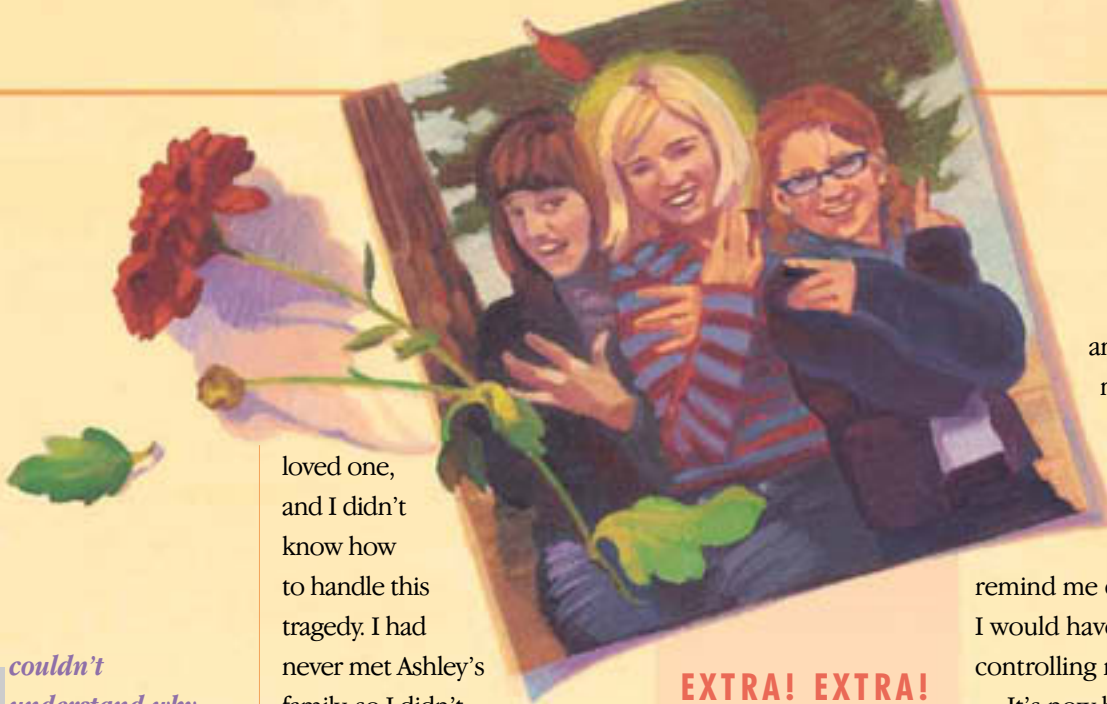
Ashley's enthusiasm for life spilled over to include everyone she came in



contact with. I began to look forward to choir more than any other class merely for the sake of being with her. She was the happiest person I knew, and she constantly delighted me with her humor. Ashley stood out because of her kindness and true Christlike attitude.

When I hugged Ashley good-bye a day before graduation, I thought I would see her again before she set off on a yearlong journey across the nation to help children. But less than a month after graduation, Ashley died in a car accident.

At 17, I'd never experienced the loss of a



I couldn't understand why the things I knew to be true weren't a comfort to me. How was I going to accept that Ashley was really gone?

loved one, and I didn't know how to handle this tragedy. I had never met Ashley's family, so I didn't feel that I could share my grief with them. My other friends hadn't been as close to her as I had.

So I mourned alone in my room at night, with tears trickling into my ears as I lay on my bed. "Okay," I thought, "this is natural. I'll have my cry and then go to sleep." But to my surprise, the pain didn't end. I was frightened to feel a great hole growing inside of me, and it felt bottomless.

In desperation, I pulled out my scriptures and read blindly until a measure of calm stopped the aching, and I slept. But the sadness continued. For about a week it was hard to sleep, and the tears kept falling.

I started to get angry. I was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I knew that death was not the end and that Ashley was in a better and happier place. I was aware that I would see her again. I didn't understand why I was having such a hard time getting over her death while knowing these things were true. I'd always heard that members of the Church weren't as sad at funerals because they know about our life after death,

and I felt ashamed of my sorrow.

As time passed, so did the ache, but occasionally something would

remind me of my friend, and I would have a hard time controlling my emotions.

It's now been over three years since Ashley's death, and I've finally come to a better understanding of my grief. Jesus Christ blesses those who mourn and commands us to "live together in love, insomuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die" (D&C 42:45).

My tears for the loss of my friend were not wrong. These tears did not indicate a lack of faith in God's plan. Comfort can reach us. It will sit beside the grief, and while not replacing sorrow, will at least keep it from overpowering one's heart entirely.

I still think of Ashley occasionally. I picture her in her favorite striped sweater

and with the hundreds of friends she had from all areas of the high school. Many times I have thanked my Heavenly Father for not answering my prayer that first day of choir class to be seated by someone I knew. If He had, I never would have experienced the joy of knowing such an inspiring person before she left this earth. **NE**

Sister Katie Laird is serving full time in the France Paris Mission.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

To learn more about coping with the loss of a loved one, read these articles in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org:

"Hopeless Dawn—Joyful Morning" (*Ensign*, Feb. 1993) by President Thomas S. Monson, "But If Not" (*Ensign*, Nov. 2002) by Elder Lance B. Wickman, and "To Mourn with Those That Mourn" (*Ensign*, June 1992) by Kevin Fitzwater.



MY PRAYERS BECAME *Blessings*

BY BERENGERE CAVIALE

A few years ago, I became active in the Church again after six months of inactivity. My spiritual thirst was unbelievable, for I was once again on the right path. After just a few months, I felt the desire to serve the Lord as a missionary. I had interviews with my bishop, who helped me prepare. I had to wait to be truly ready, and in the meantime the bishop advised me to tell my parents of my plans.

My parents are members of the Church, but they had been less active for more than nine years. From the day I spoke with them about my desire, the opposition became real. I agreed with my family that if I passed the competitive examination from the school I had been accepted to, they would let me go on a mission in one year.

That year ended up being the most difficult of my life. My mother thought I would forget about my desire to go on a mission. However, after I had attended a few months of school, she realized I was truly preparing for a mission. So she cut off my financial support. It was then that my prayers became great blessings.

My Heavenly Father inspired me to look for a job, which I did. After finding three good openings, I wrote my letters of application and pleaded with the Lord to let me

receive at least one positive response, for I had done all that He had commanded me.

A response came only three days later. I was called in for an interview with one of the companies. Following the interview, I got the job that day. The only problem was that I was still not earning enough money to cover all my expenses. After praying to God, I felt inspired to trust Him and not to fear. So I paid my tithing without fear.

A few weeks later my landlord asked to see me. "Most likely to talk about rent," I thought. What he said was, "You will not need to pay your rent until you finish school!"

I could not believe it. This blessing enabled me to pay for what I needed, and most important, it helped me prepare financially for my mission. Miracles were taking place in my life at just the right time.

I have now completed my mission. I feel such gratitude for the ability to pray to our Father in Heaven. I am so happy to know with a certainty that He lives and that He loves His children. If we listen to Him, we will see many miracles in our lives. **NE**

Berengere Caviale is a member of the St. Quentin En Yvelines Branch, Paris France Stake.



SCRIPTURE STUDY: HOW DEDICATED ARE YOU?

Are you a scripture whiz or “Scriptures? What?” kind of person? This quiz will clue you in. Use the key at the end to find your score.

1. You’re about to begin reading your scriptures. The first thing you do is:

A. Check to see what time it is, so you make sure to read for at least 10 minutes.

B. Get on your knees and pray to understand what you read through the Spirit.

C. Wonder if Laman and Lemuel will still murmur as you read 1 Nephi *again*.

2. You receive an impression to do something while reading the Book of Mormon. You make up your mind to:

A. Write it down, so you don’t forget. You always knew that scripture journal would come in handy!

B. Do your best to remember it for at least a week.

C. Read your scriptures more often so you’ll get more impressions like that, but then forget what you were supposed to do by the next day.

3. You get home from school. You’re tired and you have a load of homework to do, so you:

A. Take a nap, eat dinner, and do homework until you fall asleep.

B. Do homework, eat dinner, and study scripture mastery verses for your seminary quiz in the morning.

C. Take a nap, do your homework, eat dinner, and go to bed. You already read your scriptures in the morning when you were awake.

4. If someone picked up your set of scriptures, they would most likely say:

A. Wow. Why are all these pages still stuck together?

B. Hey, your bookmark is in Mosiah. Aren’t we studying Alma in seminary now?

C. There is a lot of underlining, and the binding is worn. You must use these a lot.

See how you did!

1. a=2 b=3 c=1

2. a=3 b=2 c=1

3. a=1 b=2 c=3

4. a=1 b=2 c=3

1–4 points: Scripture Hungry

Well, at least it sounds like you have scriptures. Now it’s time to open them and feast on the words of Christ. There’s a lot to learn, and much comfort can be found in the scriptures. Just read them and you’ll see!

5–8 points: Scripture Seeker

You’re trying to read your scriptures. Good job! But you still have some work to do. Set aside some time to really get into the scriptures, and remember to pray before you study.

**9–12 points:
Scripture Powerful**

There is so much to learn from the scriptures, and you’re making a great start. Keep up the good work. Remember to study the scriptures daily and to start sharing them with others to stay “Scripture Powerful.”

“The most important thing every one of us can do is to examine our own commitment and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ.”

—Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “How Is It with Us?” *Ensign*, May 2000, 31.



IT HAPPENED IN FEBRUARY

February 16, 1832
Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon received a vision of the Savior on the right hand of God and a magnificent revelation on the three degrees of glory, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76.

February 8, 1846
Brigham Young, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, dedicated completed portions of the Nauvoo Temple in a private ceremony. Many Saints received temple blessings before being forced out of

Nauvoo, Illinois (above).

February 20, 1977 The Brussels Belgium Stake was organized, becoming the first stake in Belgium.

February 13, 1981
President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) broke ground for the Papeete Tahiti Temple.

February 21, 1990
Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004), of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, dedicated Swaziland, in southern Africa, for the preaching of the gospel.



IT'S GREAT TO DELEGATE

Learning to delegate assignments is an important part of being a leader. In the Book of Mormon and in the New Testament, Jesus Christ offered the perfect example of involving His disciples. He shared work with them, He gave them specific things to do, and He trusted them. By following the Savior's example and delegating to your class and quorum members, the job will

get done and everyone will grow in ability.

You can delegate effectively if you . . .

- Know and understand the assignment.
- Ask someone to accept the assignment.
- Are specific: Explain exactly what needs to be accomplished.

- Set a date for completion.
- Have the person report to you after completing the assignment.

“One on God's side is a majority.”

—Wendell Phillips (1811–84), in John Bartlett, comp., *Familiar Quotations*, 14th ed. [1968], 659.



PACK YOUR BAGS, ELDER

BY BRIAN KILEY

I'd been given permission to serve an extra month, so I couldn't understand why my mission president would send me home on time.

The day I discovered I could, with my mission president's permission, extend my mission for a month was one of the most exciting in my life. As a recent convert, I was determined to stay in the mission field and share the gospel with as many people as I could.

As the end of my 24th month drew to a close, I was grateful for the chance to stay a little longer and teach the gospel. On Sunday night, three days before transfers, the phone rang. I was serving as the zone leader in Lubbock, Texas, so I wasn't surprised to hear my mission president's voice.

I figured he was going to update me on the upcoming transfers. Instead, he told me that he felt inspired to send me home on time and revoke my extension. The president instructed me to pack my belongings and be on the mission van headed for Fort Worth at 7:00 a.m. the next morning.

As I hung up the phone, I began to cry. I couldn't believe my mission was about to end. I wanted badly to have an extra month to share the gospel as a full-time servant of the Lord.

The next morning I boarded the van for the 15-hour ride to Fort Worth. By the time I reached my destination I was drained, spiritually and emotionally. I could not understand why I needed to go home now. In my final interview, the mission president assured me that it was the Lord's will.

After returning home, I reported on my mission to the stake high council. When I left the high council meeting, I was approached by a high councilor, who invited me to accompany him on an upcoming speaking assignment.

The topic was on being a modern-day pioneer. I agreed to speak.

During the next few weeks I readjusted to life but still had no answer as to why I had been sent home on time. The day of the speaking assignment arrived, and I prayed that Heavenly Father would help me speak with His Spirit. During my talk, I told of being a pioneer as my family's only Church member and of the hardships I had faced since my baptism. I also shared the experiences of other converts I had met on my mission and how they overcame their obstacles. I felt that the Spirit was guiding my every word.

After the meeting, a 17-year-old girl approached me. She said she was not a member of the Church but was friends with a young man who was. Her friend and his family had shared the gospel with her. The girl said she had a testimony but was afraid of how her parents would react to her desire for baptism. She thanked me for sharing my experiences and told me she now knew what she needed to do.

Several months later, the high councilor I had spoken with approached me. He mentioned the girl who had talked with me after my pioneer talk and said she had been baptized a few days earlier. He said the girl felt the Spirit so strongly during my talk that she had no doubt that Heavenly Father wanted her to join the Church.

My heart swelled with joy as I realized why I had been denied my mission extension. I was merely an instrument in Heavenly Father's hands, and He knew where I could serve best—at home. **NE**

Brian Kiley is a member of the Nashville Second Ward, Nashville Tennessee Stake.

YOU'LL BE TESTED AND TAUGHT

BY ELDER CHRISTOFFEL GOLDEN JR.
Of the Seventy



God watches over each of us in a very personal way. Often, prompted by His infinite love, He allows us to have difficult experiences that help us become more like Him.

This life is a probationary state in which we are to be tested and taught. Unfortunately, many of life's important lessons are not easily learned. Nevertheless, when properly learned, these lessons can become stepping-stones toward happiness in this life and eternal glory in the world to come.

The following experiences taught me two of the most important lessons I have learned.

Dare to Speak Up

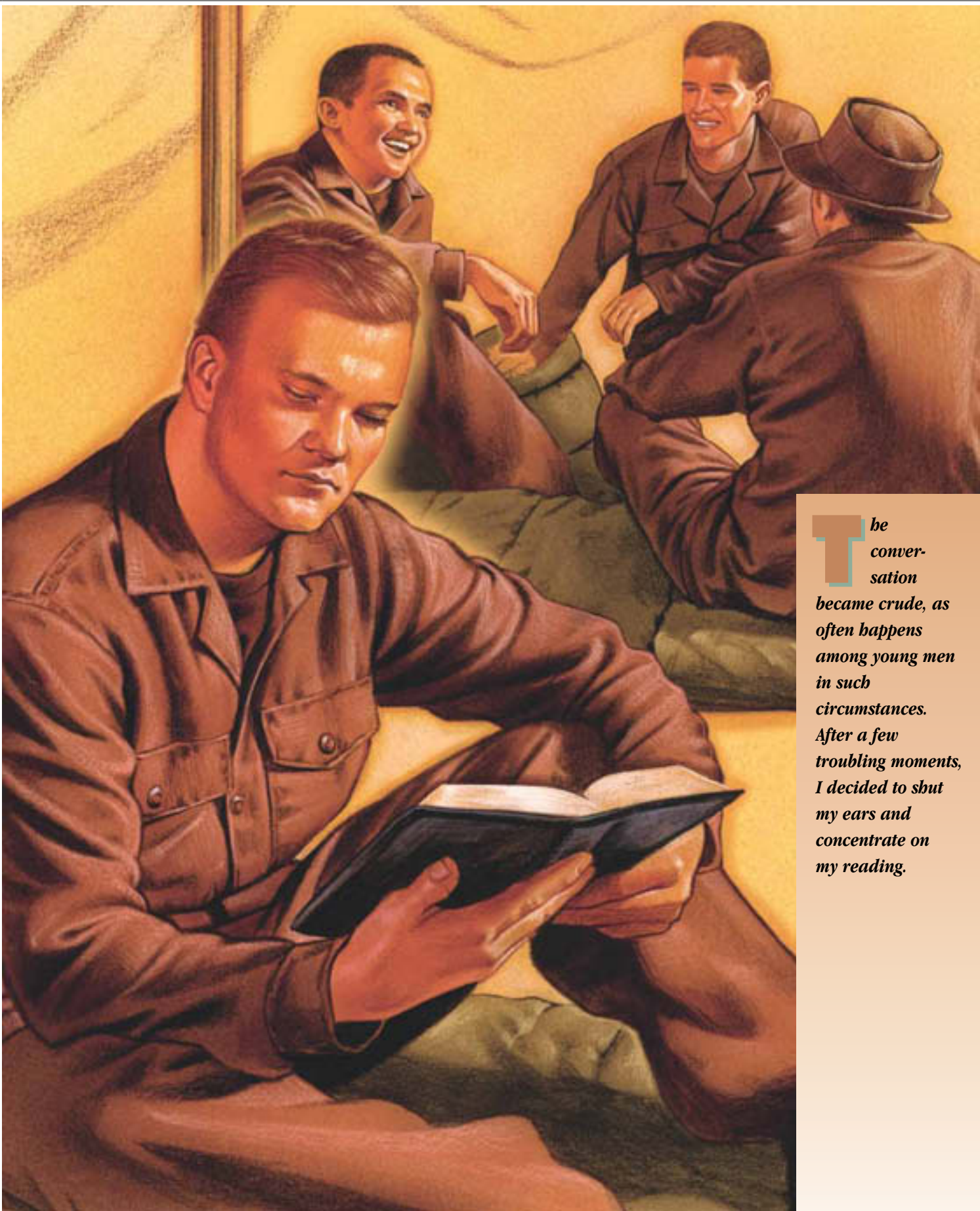
It was a cold, blustery Sunday afternoon. I was away from home serving in the South African army, and the 10 men of our section had gathered in our tent to visit and relax after having just completed some chores. Unfortunately, much of the conversation became crude, as often happens among young men in such circumstances.

I was uncomfortable and thought about leaving. My eyes turned toward the tent door, which was flapping wildly in the wind and failing to hold back the chill of winter. The sight immediately convinced me it would be foolish to leave, so I decided to

remain inside and read my scriptures. Although it had not been uncommon for me to read from them in the presence of these men, on this day it would prove to be difficult. The discussion soon took a turn for the worse as my friend, something of a ringleader in the group, began telling some dirty stories.

My immediate impulse was to object out loud. However, I was checked by the thought that others might consider me self-righteous and accuse me of trying to spoil their fun. After a few troubling moments, I decided to do the only thing I thought possible under the circumstances: shut my ears and concentrate on my reading. This approach worked somewhat. Yet I could not shrug off a feeling of uneasiness.

Time has a way of clouding our memories, and within a few weeks I forgot about the experience. Then, two years later, my friend did something that brought the memory of that day back into focus. We were in the presence of a number of soldiers who were drinking beer. In the group was a man I didn't know. He began teasing me for not joining them in drinking a little alcohol. My



The conversation became crude, as often happens among young men in such circumstances. After a few troubling moments, I decided to shut my ears and concentrate on my reading.

friend rose to my defense and added with an earnestness that surprised me, “Chris Golden is the only true Christian in our group.” Others who knew me joined my friend in defending me, which silenced my critic.

Later, as my friend and I walked back toward our foxhole on a gray, half-moonlit night, he suddenly stopped and looked at me with a seriousness I had not been accustomed to during our friendship. He recalled the event of earlier that evening and said, “I meant what I said. In fact, I have never met an individual who has been more true to his faith in God than you, Chris!”

This was unexpected. Even though I had always tried to live the gospel, I felt I had not done more than many Latter-day Saints would have done in similar circumstances, and I had always tried to do it without drawing attention to myself.

Still, he had more to say: “You have let me down only once.” My shock at his matter-of-fact accusation was matched only by the speed with which my mind raced through all of the events we had shared together. I finally remembered that blustery, cold Sunday two years earlier. My friend’s words exposed painful memories of a day I would rather have forgotten.

He continued, “Do you remember that cold Sunday afternoon when we were sitting inside our tent and telling stories, some of which I now feel quite embarrassed about?”

I nodded a little numbly in acknowledgment. Standing opposite him, I hoped that the shadows of the night hid my discomfort.

He said, “While I was talking, I had been silently praying that you would ask me to stop telling those dirty stories—*but you did nothing.*”

During the long silence that followed his stinging condemnation, a deep sense of disappointment welled up within me. I had let not only him down, but I had failed the Lord—and myself.

Ever since that day, I have tried not to make the same mistake. I was taught an important lesson about the true meaning of the Lord’s command to “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). Observing that “no man can serve two masters” (Matthew

6:24), the Savior counseled us, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

Trust in the Lord’s Promises

Another lesson I have learned came from an experience I had as a missionary many years ago in the South Africa Johannesburg Mission.

One particular day had been discouraging. My companion and I had met with no success from our proselyting efforts, even though we had worked long and hard in a spirit of fasting and prayer. It was past the time we usually left for home when we turned our bicycles toward a nearby store. Our only thought was finding something to eat. Unfortunately, it was late and the store had already closed for the night. As we debated what to do, I remembered a store on the other side of town that might be open. We both felt impressed to go there. To our delight, we found it open.

I was bending down to select a chocolate bar when I felt a tap on my shoulder. On turning around, I looked into the smiling face of a woman I had not seen for many years.

In speaking with her, we learned that during the past several years she had become less active and had married someone who was not a member of the Church. Recently she and her family had moved into an area about nine miles (15 km) from our proselyting area. She was feeling lonely and missed her association with the Church, but she was a shy person and was reluctant to make contact with strangers. So she had been asking the Lord to bring her into contact with someone she knew well who could introduce her family to the ward they now lived in. She felt our meeting in this store was an answer to prayer, as this was her first visit to this particular store and her decision to visit had come to her suddenly.

On the following Sunday my companion and I gratefully welcomed her and her husband to the local ward.

Many years after this event, she sent me a detailed summary of all the members of her family who in some way had been affected by this experience. Before she returned to Church activity, all of her extended family who were members of the Church were less active. Because of her renewed activity in the Church, her husband was

baptized and together they raised their children in the gospel. Since her activation, more than 20 family members have been activated or baptized. Many of them have been married in the temple. Some have also served full-time missions. Three have served as bishops.

I continue to marvel at the faithfulness of this sister and at the graciousness of the Lord in responding to her humble prayer. The store we met in late that evening was out of the way and a long distance from both of our homes—and yet the Lord used it to perform a great work.

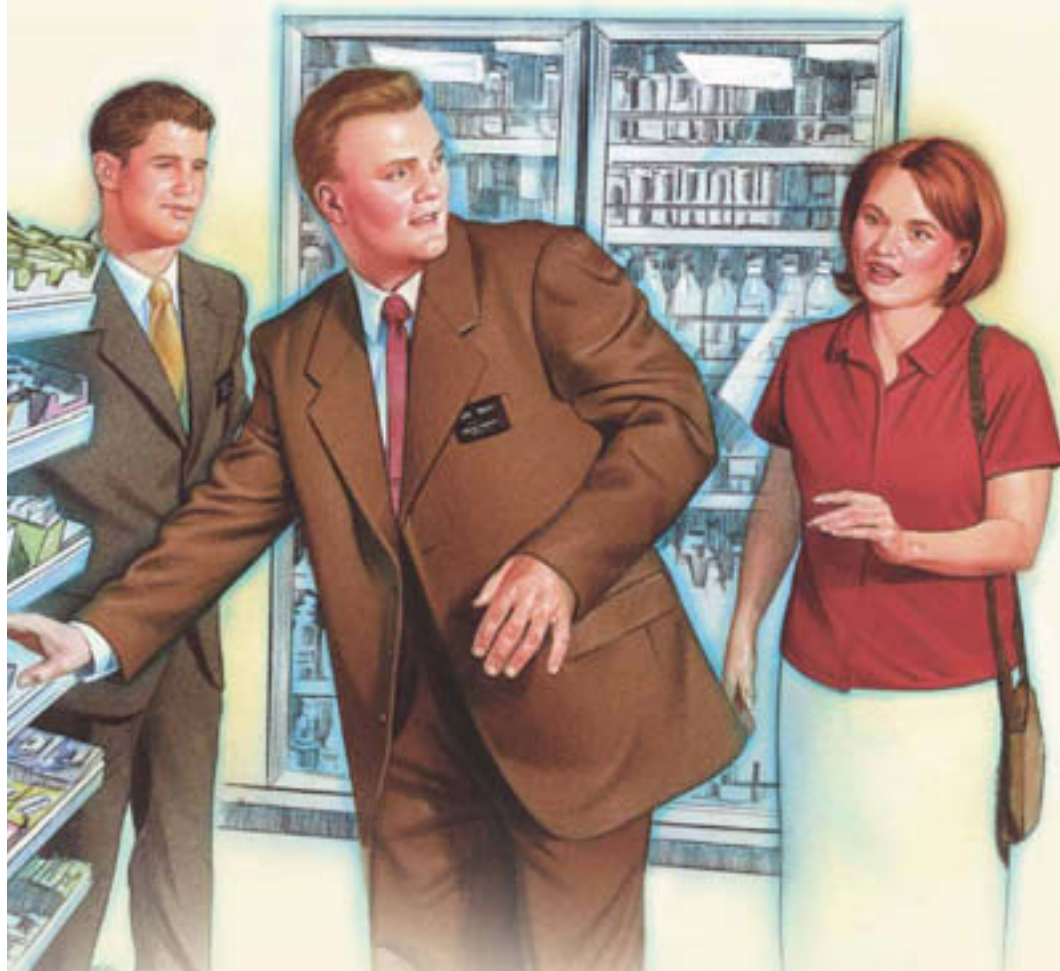
When I think of that experience, I see in my mind's eye two tired, discouraged missionaries and a fulfillment of the Lord's

promise: "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say" (D&C 82:10).

Isn't it interesting that the Lord wants us to bind Him in fulfilling His promises? We put ourselves in that position simply by doing what He asks and trusting that He will do what He has said He will. Perhaps that is one of the most important lessons we can learn in life.

As I learned from these and other experiences, God watches over each of us in a very personal way. It is natural that He does, because we are His sons and daughters. We are precious to our Heavenly Father, and often, prompted by His infinite love, He allows us to have difficult experiences that help us become more like Him. **NE**

The Lord answered one woman's prayer by sending my companion and me to a store late one night.



ZIPPING MY LIP

BY KRISSIE BAK

I never seemed to quit gossiping. I didn't think of how it affected other people but instead thought only of what

I would gain from it. I thought I could become more popular by knowing everything about others.

One day I received an invitation to a friend's party. When I arrived at the party, I met a girl I disliked. While she

was in another room watching TV, the rest of us formed a circle. We began to talk about how mean the girl

was and how we hated her.

One of my nonmember friends stood up, looked at everyone, and said, "We shouldn't talk behind someone's back, no matter how mean they are. It's not right." She then stood up and left the circle.

Everyone disagreed with her but me. I was speechless. I stood up and left the circle too. I thought to myself: "You knew better. Your example hasn't



been the right one.” I began to cry.

I realized that I had been hurting others. My friend had shown great courage; I had been too scared to think of standing for truth and righteousness. That night I repented. I promised Heavenly Father that I would try to do the right thing and be a good example to others no matter what situation I’m in. **NE**

Krissie Bak is a member of the Waconia Branch, Burnsville Minnesota Stake.

I TOOK THE CHALLENGE

BY MILLICENT LAWRENCE

As a teenager I was lonely and depressed. I had few good friends, hated school, withdrew from my family, and often had doubts of Heavenly Father’s love for me. I hated myself and despised the world.

Then everything changed. My Young Women president challenged the girls in my ward to read the Book of Mormon and pray regularly for three weeks. Despite my doubts I took the challenge. That night I opened my Book of Mormon and read for about 10 minutes, then said my first sincere prayer in months. Though difficult at first, eventually the reading and praying became a habit. Soon the three weeks were done.

Our Young Women president gave each girl who had completed the

I NEED THEE

BY HANNA JARDINE

At the age of 13, I was struggling with a recurring illness.

I had no idea what was affecting me, and no one seemed to have any answers. (I was later diagnosed with a muscle disease that can be treated.)

Even now, years later, I can remember finding a quiet place at school so I could pray. I would sing these lines over and over again in my mind: “I need thee, oh, I need thee; Every hour I need thee!” (*Hymns*, no. 98).

I will never forget those times when I kept a constant prayer and song in my heart. I could recognize so clearly that my Father in Heaven heard me. I learned that He is

challenge a small prize. But more prized to me was the difference it had made in my life. As I continued to read the scriptures and pray, I became happier. Problems no longer seemed as difficult, and I recognized how blessed I was. Instead of feeling worthless, I felt like a beloved daughter of God and developed a strong testimony with steadfast faith.

listening and loves me enough to never leave me. He continues to be the one constant strength in my life. **NE**

Hanna Jardine is a member of the Fallon Second Ward, Fallon Nevada Stake.

How wonderful it was when in the midst of prayer, I felt the Spirit testify of Jesus Christ and His loving sacrifice for me! I wept to think that I had ever doubted my Heavenly Father, who is merciful enough to forgive me when I am ready to repent. To know this is a wonderful prize indeed. **NE**

Millicent Lawrence is a member of the Fort Wayne First Ward, Fort Wayne Indiana Stake.



A BETTER WORLD

BY LINDSAY PETERSEN

Sometimes I get really down about all the heartbreaking things that are happening in the world around me. It's hard to go anywhere or do anything without coming into contact with negativism. Here in the last days Satan is working extra hard because his time is running out. If he can't get us to be unfaithful, he tries to make us lose hope.

But the Lord can give us courage, hope, and joy. Ether 12:4 reaffirms this: "Whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world . . . which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast." **NE**

Lindsay Petersen is a member of the Carmel Ward, Indianapolis Indiana North Stake.

LEARNING TO STAND

BY MARCUS E. PRICE

Most people don't think of a 17-year-old boy having to relearn to stand, but that was my situation this past year.

I broke my jaw in a car accident and also had an emergency appendectomy. I was in rough shape, physically and mentally, and spent a lot of time in the hospital.

I remember clearly the first chance I had to stand after days of lying in bed. Despite the awkwardness, standing felt good. It wasn't easy to do, but I did it.

Standing isn't just putting your feet on the floor and standing up. We must also stand in holy places where we can be protected (see D&C 87:8). With the Lord's loving help, any child of God can withstand the winds of temptation and evil. Everyone can stand strong. The Lord has provided a way for me to stand tall physically and, more importantly, spiritually. And boy, am I grateful! **NE**

Marcus E. Price is a member of the Seward Branch, Lincoln Nebraska Stake.

INSTANT MESSAGES features personal experiences, favorite hymns and scriptures, and other uplifting thoughts. If you have a personal experience that has strengthened your testimony and you'd like us to consider it for Instant Messages, please send it to

*New Era
Instant Messages
50 E. North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150, USA*

*Or e-mail it to
cur-editorial-newera@
ldschurch.org*

Please limit submissions to 400 words. They may be edited for length and clarity.

FREE MUSIC DOWNLOADS

Did you know you can download your favorite hymn or Primary song as an MP3 file at the Church's Web site? You can also use the Interactive Church Music Player to help you learn a song. It lets you view, listen to, and print the hymns and children's songs. You can even transpose the key or change the tempo. Or learn how to conduct music. Try it out. You'll be humming along in no time. Go to **www.lds.org/music** and hear what's there for you.

Mutual Activity Ideas

- Read “Watching over the Church” on page 30. As a Young Women class, ask your bishop if there is anything you can do to assist the teachers quorum, such as washing and ironing the sacrament cloths or baking the bread used in the sacrament.

- Have a *New Era* quiz. Prepare by telling everyone the week before to read the latest two issues and come ready to answer questions. Gather in a circle. Start by tossing a soft ball to someone in the circle. The one who catches the ball answers the question. Those with wrong answers are eliminated. Continue like musical chairs until only one person is left.

Personal Progress or Duty to God

- Read the Q&A on page 16 about

overcoming the fear of teaching the gospel. If permitted, offer to go on exchanges with the full-time missionaries to see how they share the gospel.

Family Home Evening Ideas



- Even though you may not be into lifting weights, as the Brown family does in “True Strength” on page 20, suggest having a night of fitness. Figure out some exercise routines you can do at home. Or measure a distance around your neighborhood and challenge your family to make the walk every day for a month.

- Have each family member take the scripture quiz on page 38. Have each family member share his or her favorite verse of scripture.

Index of Topics

Aaronic Priesthood 30
adversity 42
Apostasy 8
blessings 37
example 26
family unity 20, 28
forgiveness 26
grieving 28, 34
Jesus Christ 4, 8
mission preparation 15, 16
missionary work 16, 24, 40
peace 4
prayer 12, 37
quorum unity 30
Reformation 8
sin 19
teachers quorum 30
teaching 16, 24
temptation 19
testimony 15
war 4

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November in the *Ensign* and *Liabona*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 6–10.

Young Women Manual 3

Lesson 6 A Woman's Responsibility to Teach

James E. Faust, “Ten Ways to Make a Difference,” *New Era*, Nov. 2004, 4.

M. Russell Ballard, “The Divine Touch,” *New Era*, Dec. 2004, 42.

Lesson 7 Our Purpose in Life

Christoffel Golden Jr., “You’ll Be Tested and Taught,” this issue, 42.

Bruce R. McConkie, “All the Light and Truth,” *New Era*, Jan. 2004, 42.

Lesson 8 Eternal Families

Special issue on families, *New Era*, June 2003.

Lesson 9 Encouraging Family Unity

Shanna Butler, “True Strength,” this issue, 20.

Brett M. Condon, “Murmuring and Mowing,” *New Era*, July 2004, 8.

Q&A: “. . . How can I let them know I love them without saying it?” *New Era*, Nov. 2004, 16.

Lesson 10 Encouraging Enjoyable Family Activities

Q&A: “What can I do to stay close to my dad . . . ?” *New Era*, Feb. 2004, 16.

Ryan Carr, “Making Monday Memories,” *New Era*, Apr. 2004, 20.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 3

Lesson 6 The Fall of Adam

Q&A: “Why doesn’t the Church make a list telling me exactly what I can and can’t do?” *New Era*, Aug. 2003, 16.

Lesson 7 The Atonement Brings Victory over Death and Hell

Spencer V. Jones, “The Stench of Sin,” *New Era*, Aug. 2004, 26.

Chad Morris, “Coming Up Short,” *New Era*, Sept. 2003, 10.

Tricia Hardcastle, “Worth Loving,” *New Era*, Apr. 2004, 37.

Lesson 8 The Resurrection and Judgment

Ezra Taft Benson, “The Greatest Event in History,” *New Era*, Apr. 2004, 44.

Lisa Ann Jackson, “King of Kings,” *New Era*, Apr. 2003, 8.

Lesson 9 Justice and Mercy

Stephen E. Robinson, “Believing Christ,” *New Era*, Apr. 1994, 46.

Melissa Ransom, “Amazed,” *New Era*, Jul. 1998, 9.

Lesson 10 A Mighty Change

Q&A: “. . . I made fun of the Church. How can I show them I was wrong?” *New Era*, July 2004, 16.

“I Was the 100th Sheep,” *New Era*, Apr. 2004, 8.



WE'VE GOT MAIL

JAM AND ROLLS

Thanks for the November 2004 *New Era*! I really enjoyed The Extra Smile comic strip about the missionary who is jamming to the Tabernacle Choir. That was funny! The comic strip about the turkeys was funny too. Also we made "grandma's rolls" this weekend (see "The Family Secret," Nov. 2004, 39). They were so good. Thanks for the recipe, because the rolls were a hit.

Bethany E. Walker, Ellsworth Ward,
Cocoa Florida Stake

PREPARING FOR MY MARRIAGE

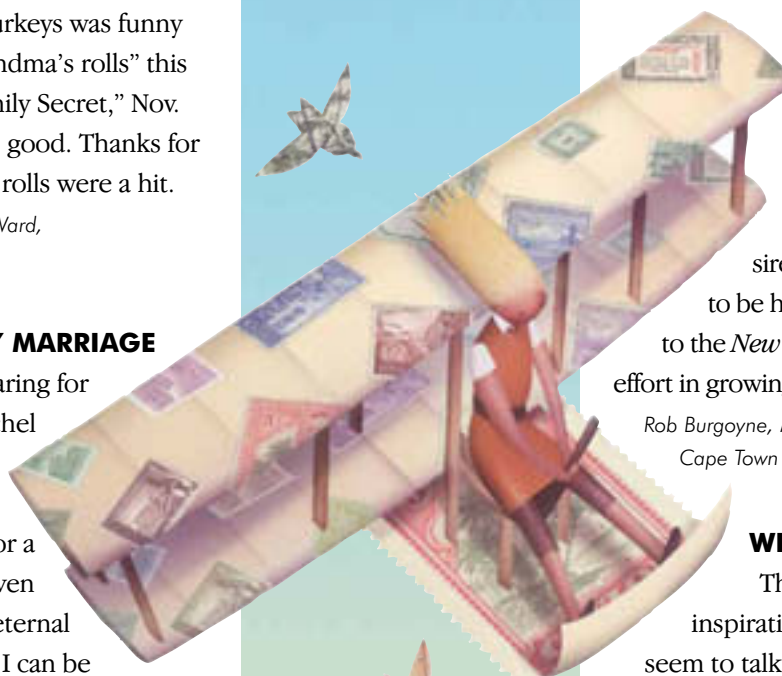
Thank you for "Preparing for My Endowment" by Rachel Barton Morris in the October *New Era*. This article has excited me for a temple marriage and given me strength to find an eternal companion with whom I can be sealed for time and all eternity. I will continue to live by my standards and date young men who have a strong testimony of the gospel as well. Thank you, Rachel, for your inspiring words!

Liberty Nelson, Clifton First Ward,
Preston Idaho North Stake

QUALITY TIME

My sister has Down syndrome. I try to help her and love her. One thing that helps me spend even more quality time with her is reading the *New Era* with her. We have lots of fun reading the articles, and she points out her favorite pictures. She sees things in them that I had never seen before. I love my sister, and I love the *New Era*. Thank you for the time and effort that is put into every wonderful issue.

Kalia Robinson, Aurora Ward,
Springfield Missouri Stake



*"One thing
that helps me
spend even
more quality time
with my sister
is reading
the New Era
with her."*

A DESIRE TO BE BETTER

I couldn't have been better prepared to read the October 2004 *New Era*. I felt the Lord speaking to me through the articles therein, and I knew in my heart that this was what I wanted: the simple purity of the temple sealing. President Monson's, Sister Tanner's, and John Bytheway's articles have created within me the desire to try harder, to live purer, to be holier, to be better. Thank you to the *New Era* team for their continued effort in growing the youth of the Church.

Rob Burgoyne, Mowbray Ward,
Cape Town South Africa Stake

WHEN I NEED COMFORT

The *New Era* has so many inspirational stories and quotes that seem to talk right to me. Whenever I need comfort, I read it and feel peace and Heavenly Father's love.

Risa Mainord, Royal Oaks Ward, Keizer Oregon Stake

GREAT IDEAS

I just wanted to express my gratitude for the *New Era*. I look forward to reading it every month. It's so neat to have an inspirational article to read daily. I always look forward to the Idea List. There's always a subject that helps me be a better person.

Brienna Smith, Brigham City Ninth Ward,
Box Elder Utah Stake

We love hearing from you. Write us at the following address. Please include the names of your ward and stake (or branch and district).

New Era
We've Got Mail
50 E. North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150, USA

Or e-mail us at

cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



MY BAPTISM

BY IZABELA MARKIEWICZ

The winter was almost gone,
but that night
was still white and cold,
with flakes of snow
dancing in the hallway.
I walked inside
to say good-bye
to the girl I used to be.
At the same time, baby buds
were held in arms of trees
and were to bloom,
touched by the morning sun.
That night my heart
melted in the streams
of water,
and I was awakened
to the first day of the spring
of my life.





*“My family has
always focused on having
spiritual strength. But my dad
taught us we need to have mental
strength, physical strength, and
spiritual strength. To be the best
you can be in any of those areas,
you have to be balanced.”*

See “True Strength,” p. 20.