



THE New Era

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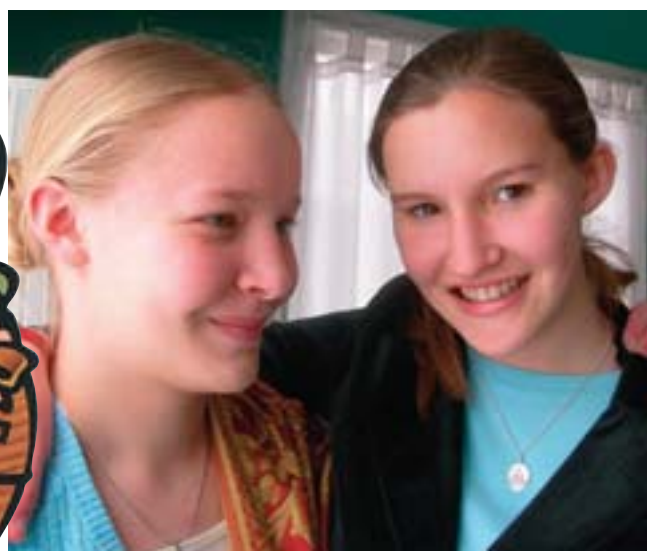
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Cover photography:
Shanna Butler (front)
and Christina Smith
(back)

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BRIGHT AS THE SUN

BY ELDER DIETER F. UCHTDORF
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

*What you do today will determine how the heavenly rays
of the gospel will light every land in the future.*



Toward the end of World War II, my family was living in Czechoslovakia, where I was born. My father, a customs officer, was drafted into the army and sent to the western front of the war. As the war raged with more severity and the eastern front moved closer to our town, my mother, alone with her four children and in an effort to protect them, made the decision to leave our home and all our earthly possessions behind and head west, toward the home of her parents in East Germany.

It was the winter of 1944—one of the coldest, harshest winters of World War II. My mother instructed us to take only warm clothes and food but no other possessions. At this time, we were members of the Lutheran Church, not even aware that there was a restored Church of Jesus Christ. Considering this, it is interesting that she took most of our family records and family pictures on our flight west.

We were on one of the last

refugee trains, and the journey, which would usually take one or two days, took us almost two weeks. I was only four years old. Traveling in a freezing train, stopping over in refugee camps, and heading out again—exhaustion, hunger, and fear were the continuous ingredients of this perilous flight.

A Prayer of Faith

One night the train stopped again at a train station, and, as usual, my mother stepped out in search of some food for us children. Often, kind people came to those stations and brought milk and bread and other food for the refugee children. But this time when my mother returned with some precious food for us, the train was gone, with all of her four children in it.

During this time of the war, many family members were separated from each other, never to be united again. There she was, in a war zone, without her husband, alone on deserted railroad tracks,





Elder Uchtdorf at about age 12 (right) holding his favorite book. At the age of two (above, second from right) with his older sister Christel (above, far right) and two childhood friends.



realizing that she had just lost all of her children! Later she shared with us how lonely and devastated she felt. The physical stress of the effort to flee to the west and the emotional stress culminating in the apparent loss of all her children in a few minutes of

time were overwhelming. She started to pray—the only source of solace available to her at that desperate time.

I know today that the Light of Christ moved her to pray with faith, as a good Lutheran, and then to get up and look around to see if she

could find the train somewhere else at the station. After a short period of terror and despair, she got on her feet and moved from one track to another and eventually found our train on a parallel track quite a distance away, where it had been moved during her absence.

With the protection of God and under the inspired leadership of our mother, we reached her hometown and were reunited with her parents in Zwickau, East Germany.

A Light in the Darkness

It was in this town of Zwickau that my grandmother was invited by an elderly single woman to attend church with her. The setting was still desperate—the war was just over.

Food was scarce, and so were all other goods,

like coal to heat our homes or cook our meals. Houses had been destroyed, and a family was fortunate if they were all still alive and had a roof over their heads.

My grandmother accepted the invitation of this dear single sister to attend sacrament meeting with her. This act of kindness might appear small and not too hard to do, but it changed our lives forever.

We attended church in a cold, cramped, backroom meeting place with electricity often failing, leaving us in the dark. But at the same time, this room was filled with the Spirit, and the divine light of the



Elder Uchtdorf (above, right) with two friends, Arthur Hüttemann (above, left) and Karl-Heinz Radtke (above, middle) in front of the Frankfurt meetinghouse. Pictured (right) with a friend's car in Frankfurt about 1958.



message of the restored gospel was in great abundance, and we were surrounded by the love, friendship, and helping hands of the dear members.

All of our family joined the Church. Because I was only six at the time, I was baptized two years later in a local indoor swimming pool by one of the Church leaders in our branch. I will always remember the feeling of warmth, safety, and importance as I came out of the water after this sacred ordinance had been performed.

How grateful I am to these two women of the Church—my grandmother and my mother! They are true modern-day pioneers! They went before and ventured into new spiritual territory. They helped me to gain a testimony of the restored Church of Jesus Christ. They had faith, and they radiated love to a little boy, even in places and times of darkness, despair, and coldness.

The light of the gospel, bright as the sun, lighted up their life in these challenging times. And then in return, the warmth of their light and example helped me to feel secure and well grounded in the principles of the gospel.

I share these very personal experiences with you, hoping to impress upon you that wherever you live, whatever circumstances you live in, whatever your background or challenges might be, the gospel light has the power and purpose to bring blessings into your life and into the lives of those placed in your path. The gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored to bring blessings to our Heavenly Father's children. You are planted in your country, your community, your family to facilitate these blessings. I urge you to bloom where you are planted!



A Place of Refuge

A few years after my baptism, my family became refugees for a second time. The political regime in East Germany perceived my father as a dissident. His life was at risk, and we had to leave the country overnight, leaving behind everything we possessed. Again we had only the clothes we wore, some food for the trip, and family records as well as family pictures. By the time I was 11, we had been refugees twice within only seven years. But this time we had already received the gospel of Jesus Christ. We had made covenants with the Lord through baptism, and we came to a branch in Frankfurt, West Germany, with other members who had the same principles and precious values.

Into this branch, just a few years later, came a young widow with her two daughters. The missionaries had found this beautiful family, which included my future wife, Harriet.

When I saw Harriet for the first time, with her dark brown eyes, I thought, "These

A young single adult group meeting in a member's home. Elder Uchtdorf is on the far left of the back row, sitting on the arm of the chair. Harriet, who always declined his offers of a lift to church, is in the front row, second from left.





Hildegard and Karl Uchtdorf (above), Elder Uchtdorf's parents, in front of the Bern Switzerland Temple. A family portrait (far right) with the Uchtdorfs' two children and their spouses and grandchildren. (Below) Elder and Sister Uchtdorf out for a bicycle ride.

missionaries are really doing a great job!" Even as a teenager I liked Harriet quite a lot. My bold advances, however, showed only marginal success. I tried, for instance, to influence the seating at the sacrament table so I could pass the sacrament to her. This did not impress her very much. On my way to Church activities during the week, I usually rode my nice bicycle and often stopped at their home to ask if Harriet would want to have a ride to church on my bicycle. Harriet always declined. Sometimes, however, her mother was there and would say, "Harriet will walk, but I will gladly ride with you on your bike to church." This wasn't really what I was hoping for at the time, but I later realized it is an advantage to be on good terms with the mother of the girl of your dreams!

My mother and my mother-in-law both had the same strong faith that blessed them with the gifts of the Spirit. And they blessed not only my life, but the lives of generations to come.

Today Is Part of Eternity

President David O. McKay (1873-1970) said the principal reason the Church was organized was "to make life sweet today, to give contentment to the heart today, to bring salvation today. . . . Some of us look forward to a time in the future—salvation and exaltation in the world to come—but today is part of eternity" (Pathways to Happiness [1957], 291–2).

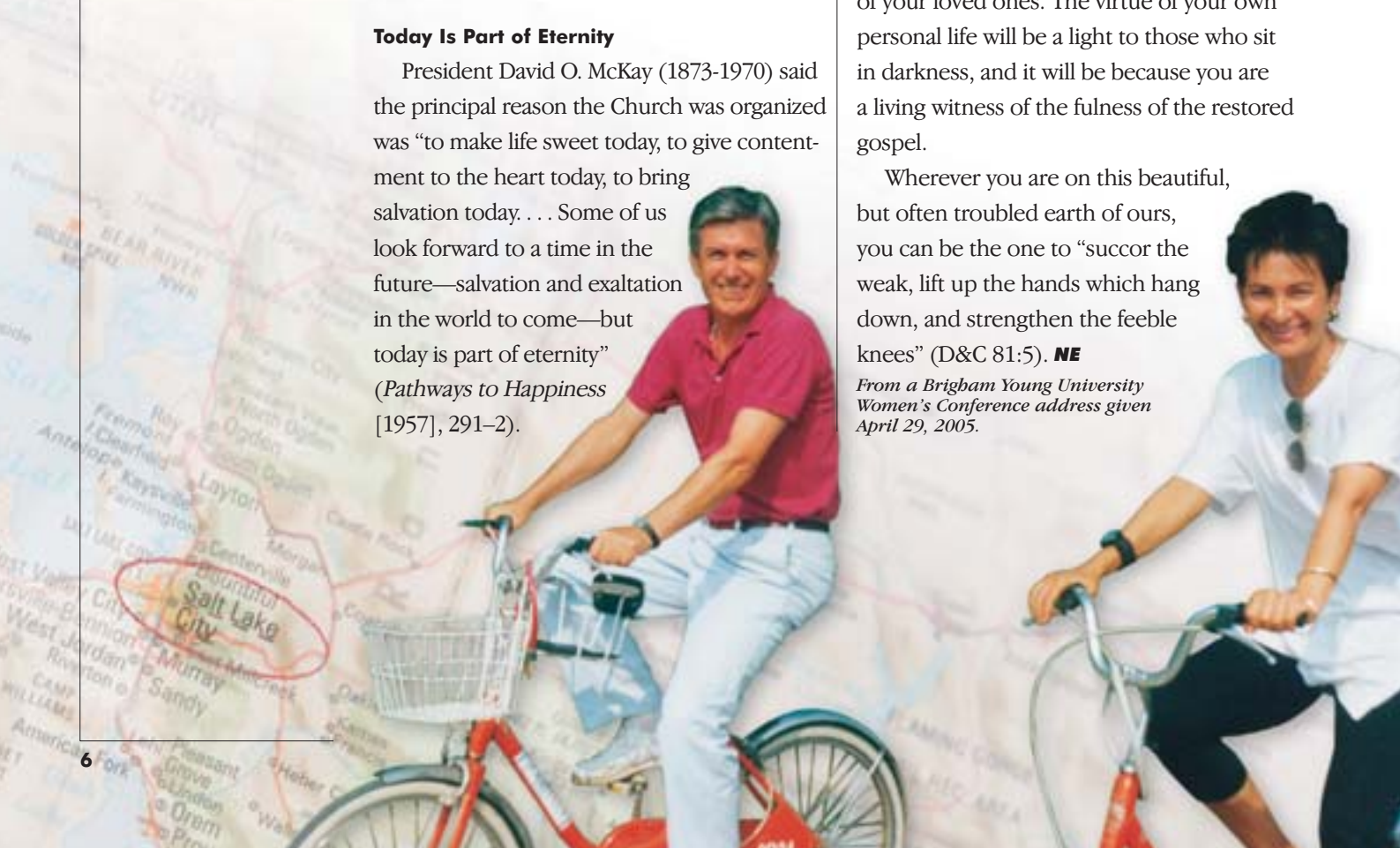
What you do today will determine how the restored gospel principles can influence the nations of the world tomorrow. It will determine how these heavenly rays of the gospel will light every land in the future.

By living up to this mission—in whatever life circumstance you find yourself—the Lord our God has responsibilities and blessings in store for each of you individually, far beyond your imagination.

May I invite you to rise to the great potential within you. But don't reach beyond your capacity. Don't set goals beyond your capacity to achieve. Don't feel guilty or dwell on thoughts of failure. Don't compare yourself with others. Do the best you can, and the Lord will provide the rest. Have faith and confidence in Him, our Savior, and you will see miracles happen in your life and the lives of your loved ones. The virtue of your own personal life will be a light to those who sit in darkness, and it will be because you are a living witness of the fulness of the restored gospel.

Wherever you are on this beautiful, but often troubled earth of ours, you can be the one to "succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5). **NE**

From a Brigham Young University Women's Conference address given April 29, 2005.



WEARING TWO NAMES

To represent the Savior, I had to reconcile with my father.

BY JEAN BRICE LAGOUA

A year after I joined the Church, I had a desire to serve a full-time mission. During my interview with the bishop to fill out my application, he asked me, “Do you have any problems with anyone that you have not yet resolved?”

I answered no, because I told myself that I didn’t, ignoring the bad feelings between my father and me. I declared myself worthy and ready to serve.

The days that followed were extremely painful. The idea that I would have to reconcile with my father bitterly invaded my soul. My father never worried about his children. We all had reached the point where we no longer spoke to him. If I was ever asked about my father, I answered without remorse, “He is dead.”

I really couldn’t see any reason to try to reconcile with someone who wouldn’t take time to listen to me. I didn’t feel that I had wronged him. On the contrary, I felt that he was the one who needed to come see me and ask for my forgiveness. Nevertheless, the idea that I needed to go see my father continued to torment me.

One evening I went to visit him. He lived some 220 miles (360 km) away. The first hour of our conversation was a time for insults, mutual accusation, and words that truly hurt. In spite of our angry words, my intention to reconcile was strong. With the help of the Spirit of God, we managed, after five hours, to end with positive feelings.

After many tears were shed, my father and I were able to embrace, happy to finally understand the core of the problem that had kept us so angry at each other for so long. At the end, my father took a container of warm water and, while speaking, slowly poured out its contents, as we do in Africa to represent a reconciliation. He then gave me his blessing after reviewing all that had happened in the past and committing to repent of his mistakes.

I am so grateful to Heavenly Father, who inspired me to seek such a discussion that gave way to mutual repentance. As a missionary in the Ivory Coast Abidjan

Mission I was happy to wear a badge on which was inscribed two names: Lagoua, my father’s name, and Jesus Christ, my Savior’s name. **NE**



BY LAURA ANDREASEN

I thought the music I listened to didn't affect me much. After all, most of the time I didn't pay attention to the words.

When I was 12 years old, I had an excellent Young Women leader named Sister Smith. She noticed that my friends and I loved to talk about all the popular music groups. We all declared that one boy band was definitely the most awesome music group since our favorite girl band had broken up. When the boy band came along, they stole all our hearts, and they became all we could talk about.

Sister Smith became concerned about us and our obvious obsession with these popular bands and their music. One Sunday, she expressed her concern. I remember speaking for my friends and myself when I said, "There's nothing wrong with pop music, even if some of the words aren't very good. It doesn't really affect us."

Giving me a skeptical look, Sister Smith said, "If you're so sure music doesn't affect you, let's try an experiment." She gave us all two crossword puzzles. Then she told us to do the first puzzle while listening to classical music. For the second puzzle, we were told to listen to our favorite pop music while completing it. We all wondered what she was getting at, but we agreed to do what she said.

The next Sunday, Sister Smith began by giving us the hints from the first crossword puzzle and asking us to give her the answers. We all remembered every answer. However, when she gave us the hints from the crossword puzzle we had completed while listening to pop music, we couldn't remember many of the answers. That day I learned that good music could help inspire me to remember things, while music with words and fast beats distracted me and got stuck in my head, causing me to forget the things I had learned.

I learned that the music I listen to really does affect me.

It isn't always easy knowing what music to listen to. The thirteenth article of faith can help us make good choices: "If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things." **NE**

POP

QUIZ YOURSELF

Ask yourself some of these questions when choosing the music you listen to:

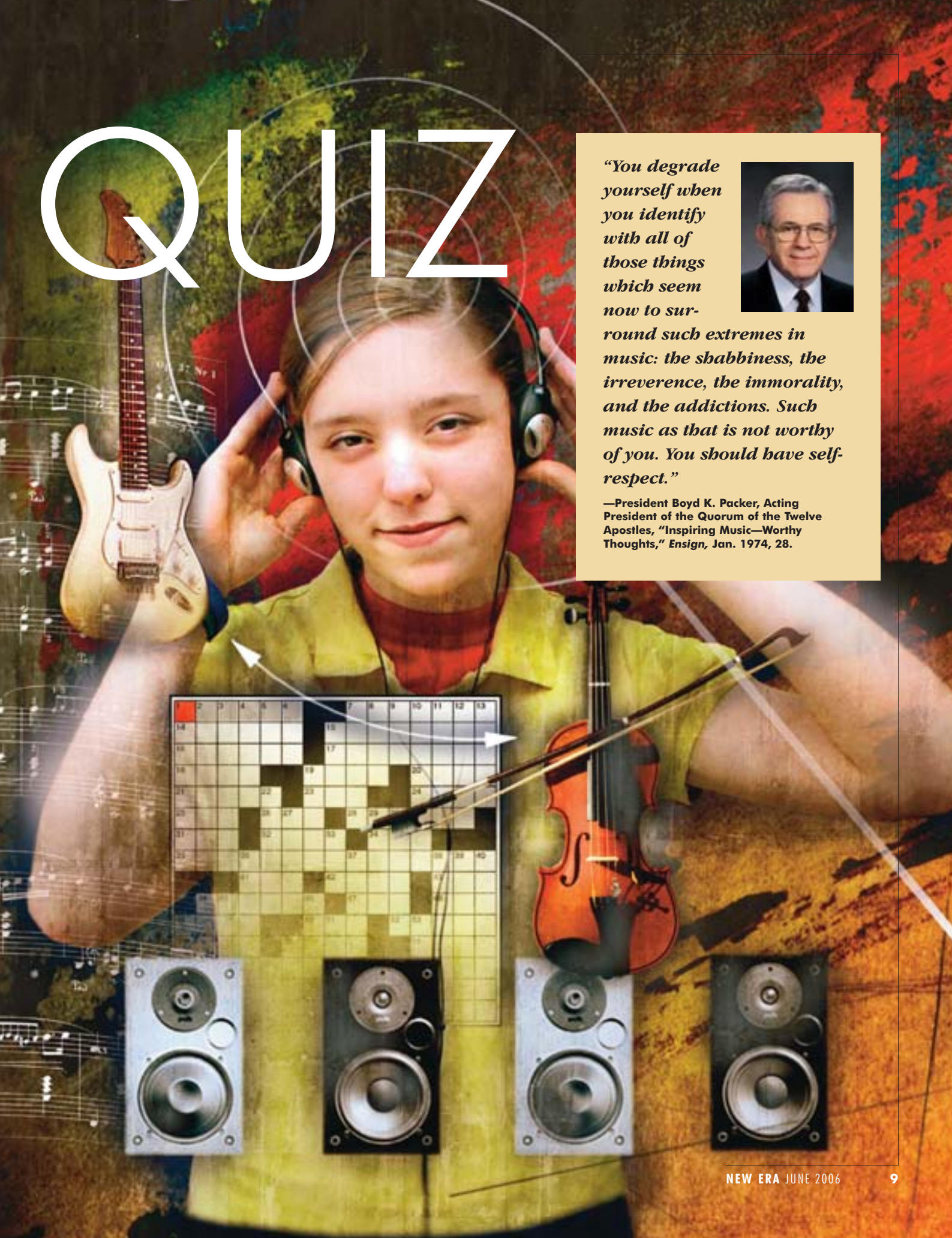
- How do I act or imagine myself acting when I listen to this music?
- How is the music affecting those around me?
- Do I see my surroundings as light and hopeful while listening to this music, or dark and depressing?
- Could I comfortably speak the lyrics to my family and friends?
- Does the CD cover display immoral or degrading visual material?
- If this music is accompanied by a video, does the video portray immoral or degrading actions or ideas?
- Does the group or individual performing promote standards similar to my own?
- Is the music helping me accomplish my current goals? (Some music may help you while jogging but may not be the best when studying for school or preparing for a Church meeting.)
- Do I think, act, or feel contrary to the teachings of Christ when I listen to this music? **NE**

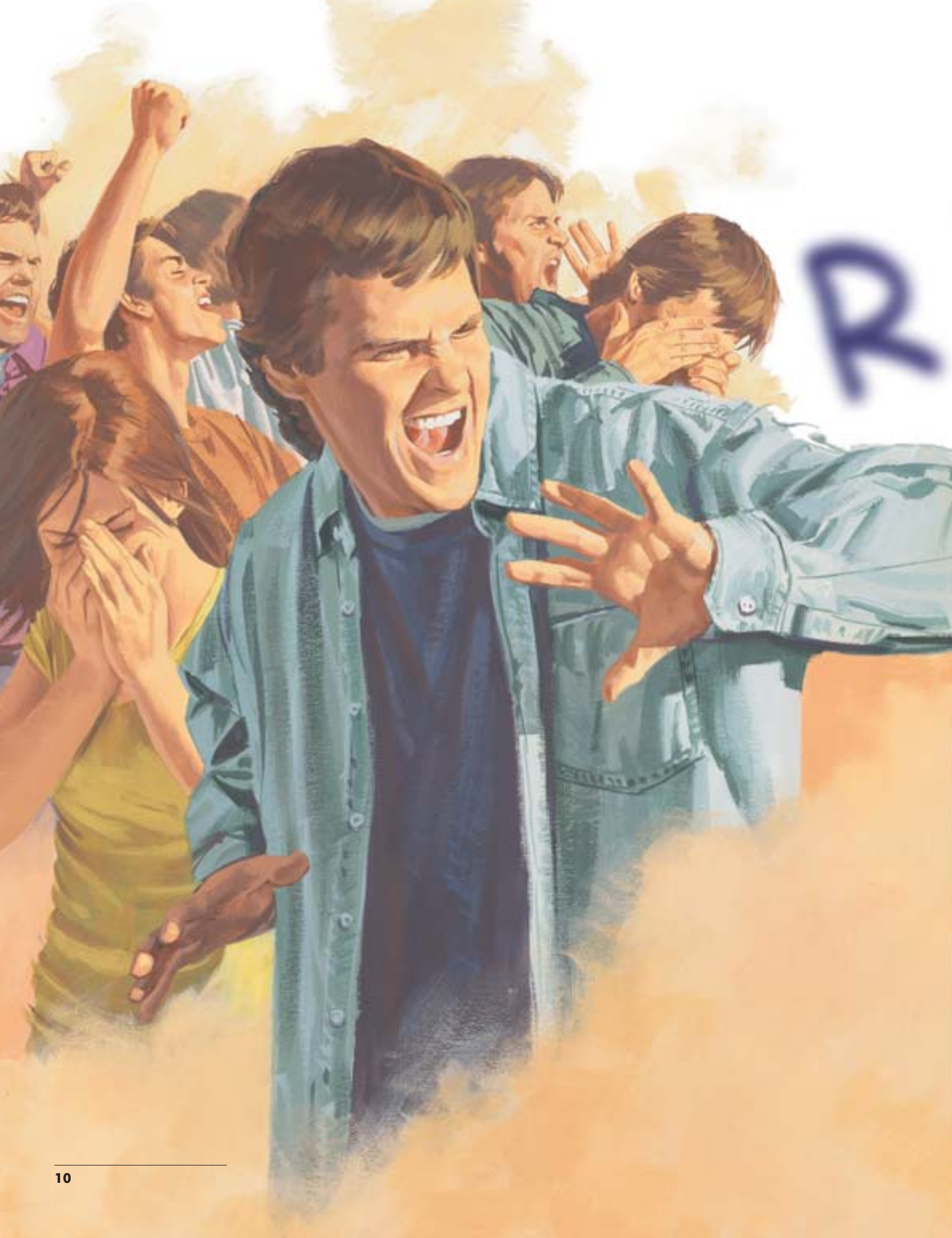
QUIZ

"You degrade yourself when you identify with all of those things which seem now to surround such extremes in music: the shabbiness, the irreverence, the immorality, and the addictions. Such music as that is not worthy of you. You should have self-respect."



—President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Inspiring Music—Worthy Thoughts," *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 28.







BY DAVID C. CAMPBELL

“We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.”—Articles of Faith 1:12

Twelve of us stood tall and, with right arms raised, repeated the solemn oath of office. I was 22 years old and, after being sworn in, a police officer in the Salt Lake City Police Department. We all congratulated one another, shook hands, hugged, and even shed a few tears.

During my long career in law enforcement, I learned how inspired the Prophet Joseph Smith was when he wrote the twelfth article of faith and how important it is that we live by its principles. Without laws and obedience to those laws, anarchy would reign. We would live in fear instead of freedom. I remember too clearly a day when I felt that kind of fear.

I had been in the police department only a few years when I was promoted to the rank of sergeant. One of my first assignments was to patrol the east side of Salt Lake City. It was a beautiful Sunday, and Liberty Park was crowded with families enjoying the spring

weather. Suddenly, my quiet patrol was interrupted by a call for assistance from another officer in the park. As I approached the officer, I could see a large group of people pushing and shoving him around. (This group had been having a “beer party” in the park, even though many signs in the park read, “No Beer or Alcohol Allowed.”) The officer had tried to arrest one of the individuals who was determined to keep drinking despite the law.

The crowd appeared angry and threatening. I could see that the officer was in real trouble and that drastic action would be needed to rescue him. I quickly picked up my microphone and ordered the crowd to disperse.

“This is the police! Please disperse and leave the area immediately!” Upon hearing the announcement, the crowd became even more violent. I called for additional help, but because it was Sunday, few officers were on duty. I was on my own.

In a desperate attempt to rescue the officer, who was now being beaten and having his uniform torn, I opened the trunk of my car and got out the tear gas grenades. I knew that if anything would disperse the crowd this would be it. I selected a canister,

In my desperate attempt to help the officer under attack, I got out the tear gas grenades.

*Laws protect us and
keep us safe and free.
Obedience to those
laws preserves our
rights.*



pulled the pin, and lobbed it toward the angry crowd.

Poof! The gas began to fume, and people were running to get out of the way. The tear gas was effective in dispersing the crowd, but it also enraged the beer partiers. Chaos broke out, and within a short time the crowd was throwing bottles and rocks and jumping on police cars. More police arrived, and more people joined the riot. Before the situation was finally brought under control, more than 1,000 people were involved, including almost 100 police officers and several police dogs. Both citizens and officers were the victims of torn clothing and dog bites. For a few hours that day in Liberty Park, anarchy reigned.

Seeing that riot convinced me of the importance of obeying the law and sustaining those who uphold or enforce the laws. Obedience to the laws of the land ensures our safety and freedom in many ways. Laws protect us on the highways; laws help keep us safe in our homes and neighborhoods and preserve our rights and freedoms. Most communities have organizations that encourage residents to protect their neighbors and to report suspicious circumstances. Participating in these programs is an excellent way to demonstrate our willingness to honor, obey, and sustain the law.

Edmund Burke has been quoted as saying, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." The freedoms we enjoy and the blessings of the gospel have come to us through the sacrifice of good men and women who chose to do something. It is up to us to ensure that these blessings continue to be available through our efforts in honoring and sustaining the law. **NE**

Grateful and Glad

BY TAMARA LEATHAM BAILEY

To help us find happiness, President Gordon B. Hinckley has encouraged us to be grateful. When we recognize our many blessings—and show gratitude for them—we develop a positive, optimistic attitude. It truly makes us happier.

How can you become more grateful—and show it?

■ On a fast Sunday, fast and pray for help in seeing your blessings more clearly. Express thanks in prayer that day.

■ Thank your parents for the sacrifices they have made for you.

■ Show gratitude for your physical body by starting a new exercise program, learning a new sport, or eating a healthier diet.

■ Write a thank-you letter to a teacher or leader who has influenced your life.

■ In your journal, make a list of people and experiences you are grateful for.

■ Make a special phone call to thank someone who has helped you.

■ Tell a friend thanks, just for being your friend.

■ Spend some time helping an older relative, such as a grandparent, aunt, or uncle. Express thanks for his or her help or example in your life.

■ When you have a challenge, pray to see the many gifts in your life. It will put your challenge in perspective, and you may even be grateful for the growth it will bring.

■ Demonstrate gratitude for your talents by developing one of them through lessons, practice, performance, a contest, or an art show.

■ Do family history or temple work for an ancestor as a way of showing gratitude for your heritage.

■ Serve someone in a Christlike way to show your thankfulness for the Savior's gifts and for His example.

■ If you don't already have the habit of saying thank you, make a point of developing that habit. **NE**



Q & A

“What’s the best way to introduce the Book of Mormon to a friend who is a member of another faith?”

NEW ERA

The best way to share the Book of Mormon is to pray for and follow the inspiration of the Spirit. That means you might share it differently with each friend.

To prepare yourself to share the Book of Mormon, you may want to read the Book of Mormon introduction. It gives a good overview of the book, in terms that you can use when explaining it to your friend.

If your friend doesn’t know what the Book of Mormon is, explain it briefly. Tell him or her that it’s another testament of Jesus Christ, that it is scripture written by prophets who lived on the American continent. You could explain that the Book of Mormon was written for our day and translated by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Then bear your testimony of the Book of Mormon.

After you share a copy of the Book of Mormon, encourage your friend to begin reading it. You could suggest a few passages to start with. Missionaries often invite people

■ **Pray for inspiration to know how best to introduce the Book of Mormon to a friend.**

■ **Prepare yourself by studying and praying about the Book of Mormon.**

■ **Explain the Book of Mormon simply, suggest a few passages for your friend to start reading, and share your testimony of the book.**

■ **If you don’t have a copy to share, your friend can get a free copy of the Book of Mormon through a pass-along card or www.mormon.org.**

to read the introduction, 3 Nephi 11, and Moroni 10:3–5. You could even share some favorite verses and tell your friend what they mean to you.

If you don’t have a copy of the Book of Mormon to share, refer your friend to www.mormon.org or give him or her a pass-along card. Your friend can get a free copy of the book by requesting it on the Web site. The copy will be delivered by mail or by the missionaries, whichever way your friend prefers.

It’s important to share the Book of Mormon with people because it testifies of Christ and of the Restoration of the gospel. President Gordon B. Hinckley said recently: “The Book of Mormon has come forth by the gift and power of God. It speaks as a voice from the dust in testimony of the Son of God. It speaks of His birth, of His ministry, of His Crucifixion and Resurrection, and of His appearance to the righteous in the land Bountiful on the American continent.



READERS

"It is a tangible thing that can be handled, that can be read, that can be tested. It carries within its covers a promise of its divine origin. Millions now have put it to the test and found it to be a true and sacred record" ("The Great Things Which God Has Revealed," *Ensign*, May 2005, 81–82).

Invite your friend to be one of the millions who have read and prayed about the Book of Mormon and have come to know of its truth.



I always had the desire to share the Book of Mormon, but I never found an ideal way. In time, I gained confidence in the doctrines

of the gospel and desired to share with everyone the same joy that I felt when following Jesus Christ. Only then did I discover that to present the Book of Mormon to another person I should bear my testimony of the changes that it brought in my life and in the lives of other people. If we are good friends,

they will learn from our example that this testimony is true, and they will have the desire to acquire it.

Gisela M., 21, Mozambique



Once a friend of mine of another religion was celebrating her birthday. I resolved to present her with a copy of the Book of Mormon. I wrote in the dedication that this was the most precious thing I could give her and wrapped it. This aroused

her curiosity, and she began to read it that same instant.

Marcus A., 16, Brazil

Sharing the Book of Mormon can be scary, but I know that if you pray for help and the guidance of the Spirit beforehand, things will go well. As for the last four copies I have given away, I have marked some of my favorite scriptures (including Moroni 10:3–6) with a red pencil, then placed a note card in the book to mark the page. That way the person I am giving it to will have a place to start. A 500-page book can be intimidating. I also usually explain that the people in the Book of Mormon are the “other sheep” Christ was referring to in John 10:16. Then I share my testimony with the person I am giving it to.

Rebecca C., 17, Illinois



First find common ground by telling your friend that we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and in the Bible as the word of God. Then tell him or her we believe in another book of scripture called the Book of Mormon and that it also testifies that Jesus is the Christ. You can share some Bible scriptures that talk about the Book of Mormon such as Psalm 85:11, Isaiah 29:11–12, Ezekiel 37:15–17, and John 10:16.

Christopher W., 16, California

The best way for me to share the Book of Mormon is to always carry my scriptures with me to school and on vacations. Reading the Book of Mormon gives me a great chance to share it with others because they want to know what I’m reading. This has worked very well for me, and I’ve had two of my friends ask me for a Book of Mormon. I help them understand that God doesn’t just remember one nation, but everyone.

Matilde C., 18, Peru



“If we have the desire and we pray about it, we can receive inspiration on . . . how to share the Book of Mormon with a neighbor. . . . Let’s each find the best way according to our best possibilities.”

—Elder Charles Didier of the Presidency of the Seventy, in “Teaching from the Heart,” *Ensign*, June 2004, 13.

Present the Book of Mormon accompanied by the Bible. That way, you can explain that it is another testament of Christ and that these two books complement each other. You can also explain that Christ came to America and that the account of His visit in the Book of Mormon helps us better understand the life of Christ. I know this book is true and that it helps us in our lives and will help our friends.

Cathy U., 17, France



A good way to present the Book of Mormon is to say, “I would like to give you a book that contains the history of a people who lived in the Americas.” I would write in a

dedication about my feelings and respect for the Book of Mormon. I would also ask the Lord to help my friend understand that the Book of Mormon is an inspired book.

Ana B., 15, Brazil

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

NEXT QUESTION

“I’ve come back to church and tried to make a fresh start in life after making some mistakes, but I’m afraid of falling again. How can I overcome this fear?”

SEND YOUR ANSWER, along with your full name, birth date, ward and stake, and a photograph (including your parent’s written permission to print the photo if you are under 18) to:

New Era, Q&A

50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

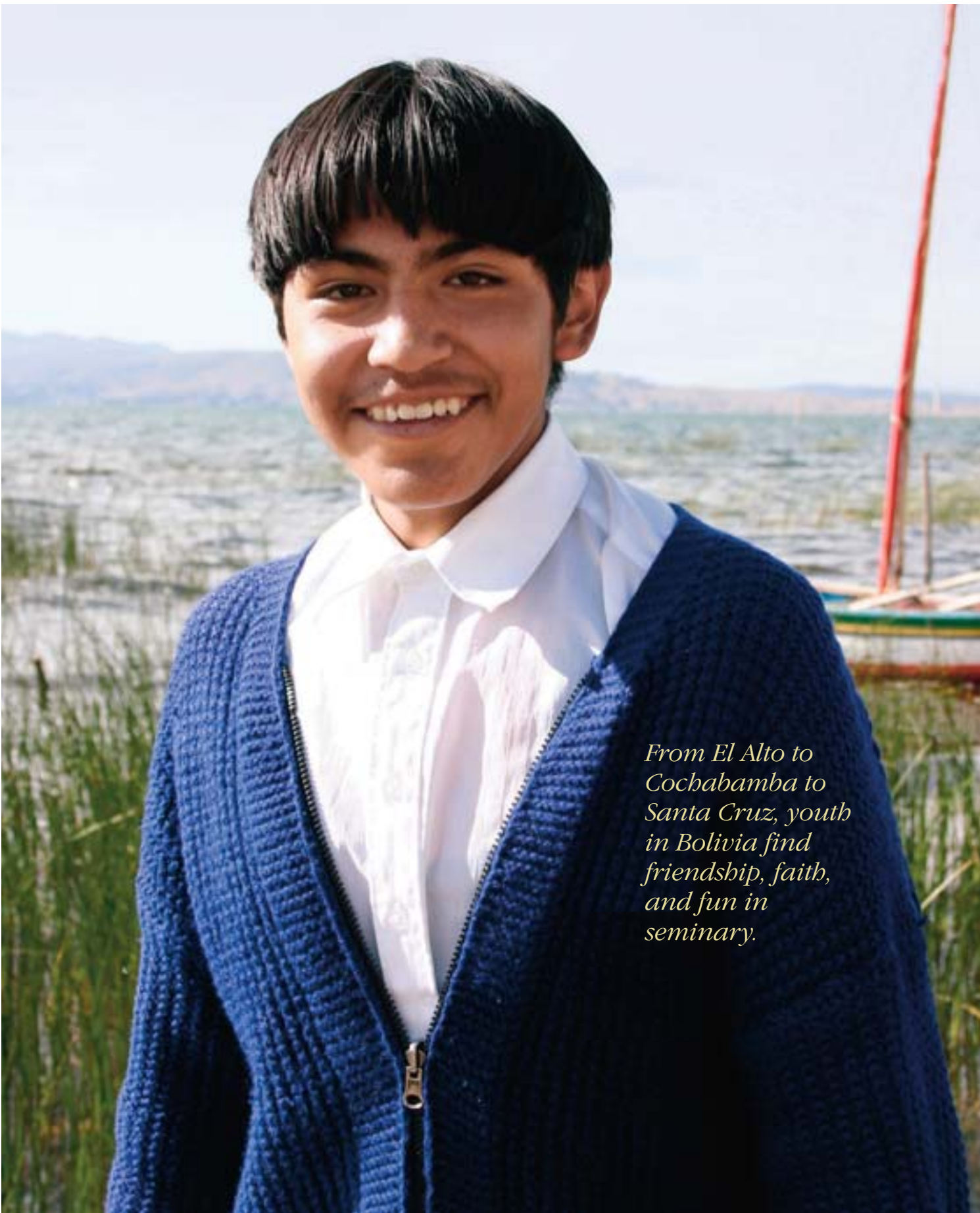
Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by July 15, 2006.

Procrastination



IF YOU DON'T START, YOU'LL NEVER . . .
(See D&C 60:13.)



From El Alto to Cochabamba to Santa Cruz, youth in Bolivia find friendship, faith, and fun in seminary.

COME LEARN AND

have Fun

BY PAUL VANDENBERGHE
Church Magazines

High in the Altiplano—the high plains of the Andes Mountains on the border of Bolivia and Peru—lies Lake Titicaca. At 12,500 feet (3,800 m) above sea level, it's the world's highest lake navigable to large boats. It is also the legendary birthplace of one of the oldest American civilizations, the Inca. Legend says that the sun sent founders of the Incan civilization down to earth on Titicaca Island.

The lake's water stays at an almost constant temperature of 51° F (11° C); that's pretty brisk for swimming—downright cold for a baptism. But it was in Lake Titicaca that Roberto Carlos Condori Pachuri, 16, was baptized last year. Sometimes the village doesn't have enough water to fill the font at the meetinghouse in El Alto, Bolivia, so they

go to the lake. Roberto Carlos remembers his baptism well, but it's not because of the water. It's because of the warm spirit he felt when he became a member of the Church.

Roberto Carlos was introduced to the Church by his friend José Luís Mamani Kari, 15. "I came to seminary," says Roberto Carlos. "It was the first time I entered a Church building, and I was a little scared." But he quickly found out he was welcome. In fact, usually 15 of the 30 or so youth who attend seminary each week are not Church members. Youth from the Batallas Branch, Titicaca Bolivia District, attend seminary on Thursday evenings and study at home during the week.

"I invite my friends to come and learn something," says Ángela Daniela Sanjines

Roberto Carlos Condori Pachuri of Bolivia was introduced to the Church by a friend and started attending seminary. "I liked the things I was learning," he says. Last year Roberto Carlos was baptized in Lake Titicaca, seen in the background.

Flores, 16, “and then we have fun after.” Why do they come? “The truth is that some come to play and have fun, others want to learn, and others come because their friends invite them.”

Roberto Carlos wanted to attend seminary for all these reasons. “I liked the things I was learning, and I have lots of friends here,” he says. “We play soccer or volleyball after class.” It was at seminary and in meeting with the elders that he learned about ancient prophets, a living prophet today, and Christ’s visit to the Americas. It was through learning the truths of the gospel that Roberto Carlos joined the Church.

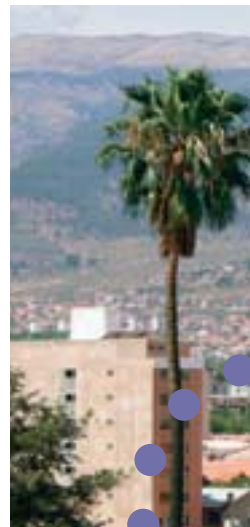
President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) had a motto to remind us of our duties as member missionaries: “Do it!” He promised that as we testified of the Restoration we would be blessed. José Luís knows this is true.

“It felt good,” says José Luís, to see Roberto Carlos accept the gospel. “I wanted to share my testimony, so I did.”

Courage in Cochabamba

In Cochabamba, about 160 miles (260 km) southeast of El Alto, the youth attend early-morning seminary.

Outside Church functions, these teens often feel pressure from peers to lower their standards. “Being a member of the Church here is hard because I’m surrounded by many people who want me to do bad things,” says Cristhian Pérez, 19, of La Chimba Ward, Cochabamba Bolivia Cobija Stake. “That’s why I think our friends are one of the most important things.” Even though many





of these young men and young women may be the only member in their school or even in their family, they can always count on each other for support. Cristhian continues, “The way we help each other in the Church is by going to seminary together and doing activities together.”

“We’re like a family, and we take care of each other,” agrees Miriam Eugenia Copa Fernández, 19, of the Alalay Ward, Cochabamba Bolivia Jaihuayco Stake. “It’s a really good way to start the day, because it makes me happy all day.”

The spiritual support that these youth offer each other as they learn and grow together revolves in a cycle of strength.

“Seminary has helped me overcome my weaknesses and temptations and has helped me make better decisions,” says Nefia Flores, 18, of the América Ward, Cochabamba Bolivia Cobija Stake. As the young men and young women build stronger testimonies, they become better examples to their friends.

“The four years I’ve spent in seminary have been a big help to me because every lesson and every piece of counsel has helped me face a particular

challenge,” says Luís Carlos Gonzales Jaimes, 19, of La Chimba Ward, who is preparing to serve a mission.

Since there is a temple in Cochabamba, many of the youth in the area go there often to find strength. “Having a temple here in Cochabamba makes us very happy. We have the chance to visit there every week,” says Harold Reinaldo Salazar, 18, of the Petrolero Ward, Cochabamba Bolivia Jaihuayco Stake. “When we do baptisms there, it’s an unforgettable experience.”

Because they see the strength of testimony in their friends’ actions, like when they attend the temple, these young people know they can look to each other for spiritual power.

“I respect them a lot,” says Miriam of her friends. “They are strong spiritually and prepared to face all the challenges they have. I trust them. They have powerful testimonies of the Church. They are courageous. They are fun.”

Breakfast with Friends

In the eastern part of the city, about 20 youth from the Colcapirhua Ward, Cochabamba Bolivia Los Alamos Stake, meet each day at 5:30 a.m. for a simple breakfast before seminary begins at 6:00.

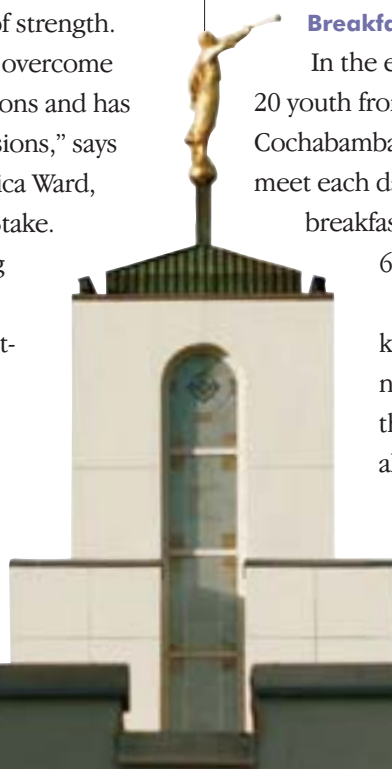
“I get up early because I know that if I come to seminary it’s going to help me have the Spirit and be closer to God all day,” says Jenny Linares, 18.

Breakfast usually consists of bread with sugar and *mate*, an herbal drink, or *api*, a drink

Having a temple in Cochabamba

is a great blessing to the youth of the area. Many of them go to the temple every week.

Members of this seminary class from Cochabamba say they are more than friends—they are like family. From left to right: Nefia Flores, Alejandra Gamboa, Luís Carlos Gonzales Jaimes, Miriam Eugenia Copa Fernández, Cristhian Pérez, Yescenia Salgado, and Harold Reinaldo Salazar.





Attending seminary every morning makes a difference in how the youth of Santa Cruz live. “We need to move

forward and put into practice the principles we have been taught in seminary classes,” says Adán Quintela Aparicio, 18, of the Estación Ward, Santa Cruz Bolivia Cañoto Stake. “It is a great privilege to have the seminary program in the Church, where we can learn so many things that help us for the rest of our lives.”

Confronted on all sides with temptation and pressure to relax their standards, the youth of Bolivia have found protection and support in gospel truths.

“Seminary has been like a shield in my life,” says María D. Justiniano, 18, of the Carmen Branch, Santa Cruz Bolivia El Bajío Stake. “It has been a shield, because it protects me each day at school. For example, the schoolteachers come up with evolutionist theories and things like that, and in seminary they prepare us well. We have the ability to think on our own and to feel in our hearts that God truly was the Creator of this world.”

What all these youth in Bolivia agree on—from the high altitude of the Altiplano to the heat of Santa Cruz—is that as they meet together, they grow stronger in the gospel and are better able to withstand the temptations of the world. “When a stick is alone it can easily be broken,” explains Franz Condori. “But when many sticks are joined together they cannot be broken. When there is unity in a group, it is difficult for someone or something to break us. We help each other.” **NE**

made with ground purple and white corn. But the youth come to seminary more for spiritual nourishment than for food.

“It’s fun to come to seminary,” says Lucy Bravo, 14. “The youth brighten your day in the morning. We come to learn more about our Father in Heaven and His Son.”

“The truth is that the four years of seminary have made me think a lot about a mission,” says Diego Díaz, 18. “That’s why I am graduating from seminary, so I can go on a mission.”

Franz Condori, 20, of the Arocagua Ward, Cochabamba Bolivia Universidad Stake, agrees. He was baptized four years ago and plans to serve a mission soon. “When I became a member of this Church, I had already set the goal to go on a mission, and the four years in seminary have helped me a lot,” he says. “I know the scriptures we always read and study will help me answer the questions I might be asked when I become a missionary.”



Strong in Santa Cruz

About 180 miles (290 km) east of Cochabamba is Santa Cruz. In that distance the climate changes; it is much hotter here. But more important things do not change.

Above, from left to right: “Four years in seminary have helped me a lot.” —Adán Quintela Aparicio

“We can learn so many things that help us for the rest of our lives.” —Franz Condori

“Seminary has been like a shield in my life.” —María D. Justiniano

THE EXTRA SMILE

"If you want any of these knots to count toward your merit badge, you'll untie me right now!"



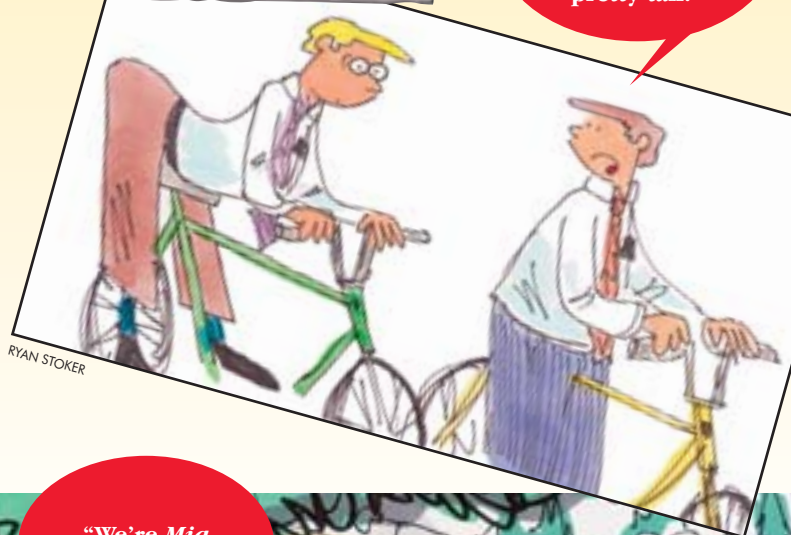
ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

"I have to stay home tonight and help my dad with his new camera phone. We need to delete 750 pictures of his hand."



RANDY GLASBERGEN

"You might want to adjust that bike seat. My last companion was pretty tall."



RYAN STOKER

"I love having my maids."

"We're Mia Maids!"



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

BY SHANNA BUTLER



RIGHT O

Jamie Lessie might race around a lot, but she's in no hurry to leave when she's spending time with her family.

Jamie Lessie's favorite shirt reads, "I drive faster than boys." And it's true. She does, at least faster than many of them. But Jamie, 17, isn't the speeding-ticket kind. Her kind of fast driving is totally legal, and her family supports her 100 percent. Jamie drag races on a professionally supervised closed track. Racing isn't the only thing Jamie's family supports her in. Her dad, Larry, her mom, Kelli, and her brother, Jake, 13, do just about everything together. Besides family vacations and just having fun around their home playing

N TRACK



games, the Lessie family, of the Del Mar Ward, Del Mar California Stake, loves to serve together in their community. Jamie's and Jake's parents help them as they fulfill their Personal Progress, Duty to God, and Scouting requirements. Brother Lessie is Jake's Scoutmaster; he's also an assistant coach for Jake's baseball team. The bottom line is, this family loves to be together.

"We get along on so many levels, and we trust each other," says Jamie. "I get along really well with my dad." She says her parents are her best friends.

Both Jamie and Jake say the secret to getting along with each other and their parents so well is just spending

time together and supporting one another. "I think it's awesome how we take vacations and do stuff together," says Jake. When Jake goes surfing or has a baseball game, his family goes to watch. If Jamie has a race, her family shows up to cheer her on.

Jamie and her dad have grown especially close because they share an enthusiasm for cars and driving. Brother Lessie and his father, Jamie's grandfather, built the 1965 Shelby Cobra replica that Jamie races. Jamie works on the car with her dad now. "I like fixing up any car with him. I like working with cars, and I like being with him."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHANNA BUTLER AND DON SEARLE, EXCEPT AS NOTED



Car Care

Before Jamie could drive, she loved it when her dad would let her sit in the passenger seat while he raced on the same track she races on now. As soon as she turned 15, though, she was ready to drive herself. She still had to have an adult in the car with her, but she was legally old enough to race. And she was a sensation.

When you combine Jamie's amazingly fast response time, her driving skill, and a lightweight car, she is almost unbeatable on the one-eighth-of-a-mile straight track at Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego.

Sometimes she has a hard time finding people to race her when she attends the drag meets because there are some people who find it hard to be beaten by a 17-year-old girl. Even though there are more than 100 drivers at the stadium, the announcers know Jamie well and are used to announcing her winning times.

Her brother, Jake, is not old enough to drive yet, but both he and his mom know a lot about cars. "It's amazing how much I've learned about cars hanging around with those two," says Jamie's mom. She even races Jamie on the drag track some-

times. It's a fun mother-daughter activity, even though Sister Lessie never wins.

Jamie's parents know racing can be risky, but

they also know Jamie. "My parents know I act responsibly when I race," Jamie says. "They're really good about it. They're really supportive."

Drag racing

can be dangerous, especially if it's done illegally, but Jamie does it in the safest way possible. She goes to a legal course where all the drivers have to register, the cars all have to meet certain standards, and the track is relatively short, so she never gets to the high speeds that other racers reach on longer tracks. She always wears a helmet, except when she takes it off between races to make sure her hair still looks good.

Time Together

Racing is only one of Jamie's interests. She's taking many business courses in high school and hoping to study business in college when she graduates. She is also a master scrapbooker. Her favorite is scrapbooking the photos she and her family take when they are together.

Maybe the Lessie family has just been blessed with the gift of getting along together, but they think there's a lot more to their relationship than that. They work really hard at being a good family and at spending time together. "It takes quantity and quality time to have a great family relationship," says Brother Lessie. The

PUT FAMILY FIRST



"Choose your priorities. Let your family come first."

Hold worthwhile family time together. Let the time that you spend with your families be consistent with how important they are. Cherish and nurture family members and never allow busy schedules and frustrations to drive a wedge between you and your loved ones."

—Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Three Choices," *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 81.





family spends as much time together as possible doing good things, like having family home evening, family scripture study, serving, and supporting each other in activities.

Jamie has learned how to love and get along with her parents and has great advice

for others on how they can try to do that too: "Find something you both can relate to. Just spend time with them and get to know them better."



You'll be surprised. Find out about them when they were your age."

When Jamie asks her dad about when he was her age, she finds out a lot of things. "He's a prankster, just like I am," she says.

She also says, "He's a great example."

When her front tires are on the starting line and Jamie sees those racing lights go yellow, yellow, yellow, green, just as she takes off, she always knows she is on the right track—not just with racing, but with her family. She is grateful for their examples, for their support, and most of all for their love. **NE**

Jamie's dad, Larry, and 13-year-old brother, Jake, (above) watch as Jamie races. Cheering each other on is just one way the Lessies have grown closer as a family.



A Sense of the



We dress formally at church and other sacred occasions not because we are important, but because the occasion is important.

BY ELDER D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

A while back a young woman from another state in the United States came to live with some of her relatives for a few weeks. On her first Sunday she came to church dressed in a simple, nice blouse and knee-length skirt set off with a light, button-up sweater. She wore hose and dress shoes, and her hair was combed simply but with care. Her overall appearance created an impression of youthful grace.

Unfortunately, she immediately felt out of place. It seemed like all the other young women her age or near her age were dressed in casual skirts, some rather distant from the knee; tight T-shirt-like tops that barely met the top of their skirts at the waist; no socks or stockings; and clunky sneakers or flip-flops.

One would have hoped that seeing the new girl, the other girls would have realized how inappropriate their manner of dress was for a chapel and for the Sabbath day and immediately changed for the better. Sad to say, however, they did not, and it was the visitor who, in order to fit in, adopted the fashion of her host ward.

This example illustrates one of my concerns. Speaking of society in general, I am afraid that many of my generation have not taught your generation to have a feeling for

sacred things. In this article I hope to help you refine your ability to recognize what is sacred and to respond with reverence for all that is holy. Of the many sacred things for which we should show reverence—the scriptures, prophets, one’s body, Deity—I will focus on respect for sacred places and events.

Much of what I want to convey cannot really be passed from one person to another. It must grow from within. But if I can help you think about some things, the Spirit may work in you so you will not need anyone to tell you what is sacred or how to respond—you will feel it for yourself. It will be part of your nature; indeed, much of it already is.

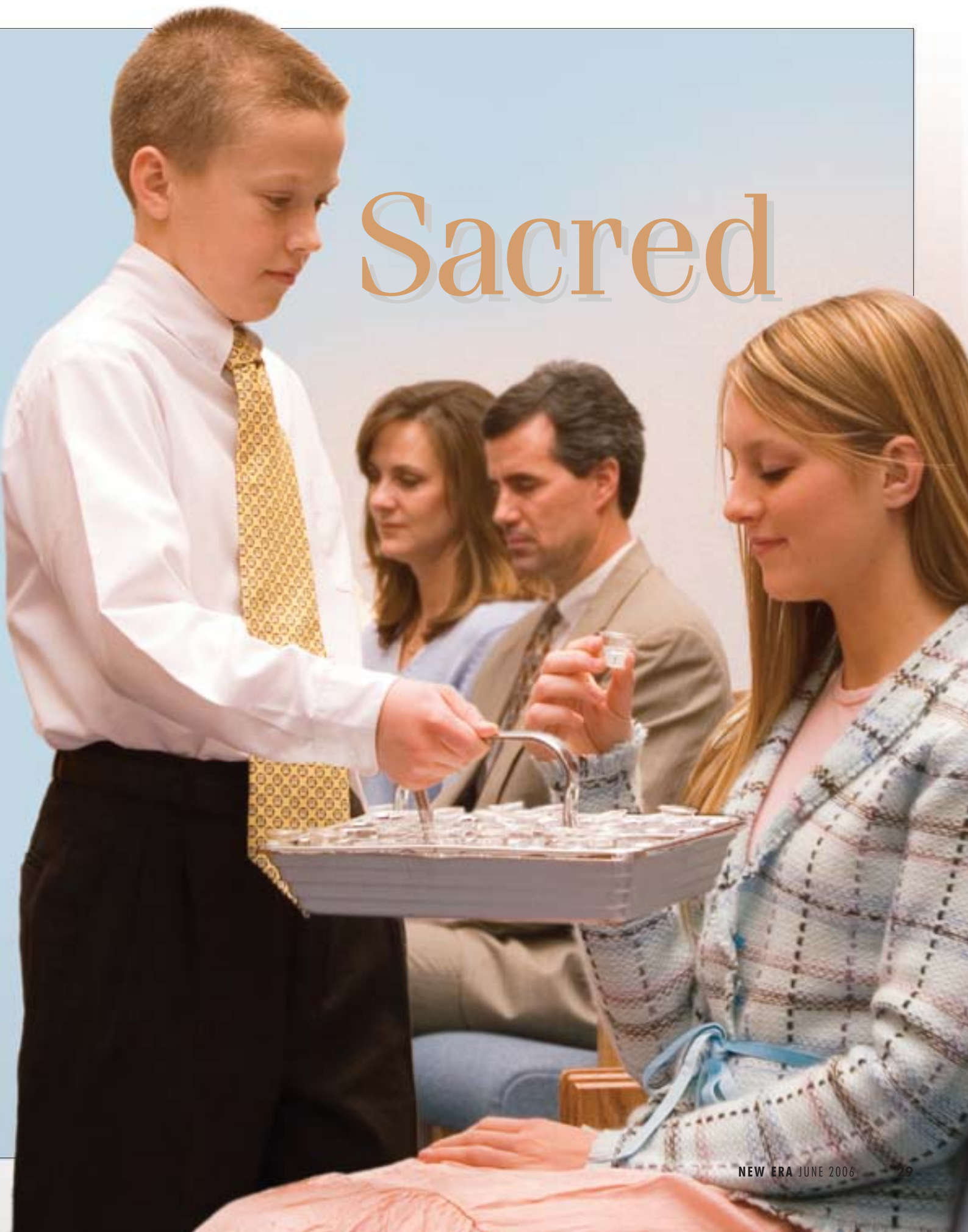
Sunday Best

Our temples and meetinghouses are dedicated to the Lord as sacred space. On each temple is found the words *Holiness to the Lord—the House of the Lord*. A sense of the sacred should lead us to act and speak with reverence in and around these buildings. It would lead us to dress a certain way when we are there.

As immodest dress dishonors the body—God’s most sacred creation—immodest, casual, or sloppy dress and grooming at sacred times and places mocks the sacredness of the Lord’s house and what is taking place.

Years ago my ward in Tennessee used a

Sacred



**You are a
Saint of the
great latter-
day dispensation—
look the part.**



high school for Church services on Sundays while our chapel, which had been damaged by a tornado, was being repaired. A congregation of another faith used the same high school for their worship services while their new chapel was being constructed.

I was shocked to see what the people of this other congregation wore to church. There was not a suit or tie among the men. They appeared to have come from or to be on their way to the golf course. It was hard to spot a woman wearing a dress or anything other than very casual pants or even shorts. Had I not known that they were coming to the school for church meetings, I would have assumed that there was some kind of sporting event taking place.

The dress of our ward members compared very favorably to this example, but I am beginning to think that we are no longer quite so different as more and more we seem to slide toward that lower standard. We used to use the phrase “Sunday best.” People understood that to mean the nicest clothes

they had. The specific clothing would vary according to different cultures and economic circumstances, but it would be their best.

It offends God when we come into His house, especially on His holy day, not groomed and dressed in the most careful and modest manner that our circumstances permit. Where a member from the hills of Peru must cross a river to get to church, the Lord surely will not be offended by the stain of muddy water on his white shirt. But how can God not be pained at the sight of one who, with all the clothes he needs and more and with easy access to the chapel, nevertheless appears in church in rumpled cargo pants and a T-shirt?

It has been my experience as I travel around the world that members of the Church with the least means somehow find a way to arrive at Sabbath meetings neatly dressed in clean, nice clothes, the best they have, while those who have more than enough are the ones who may appear in casual, even sloppy clothing.

Does Dress Matter?

Some say dress and hair don’t matter—they say it’s what’s inside that counts. I believe that it is what’s inside a person that truly counts, but that’s what worries me. Casual dress at holy places and events is a message about what is inside a person. It may be pride or rebellion or something else, but at a minimum it says, “I don’t get it. I don’t understand the difference between the sacred and the profane.”

In that condition people are easily drawn away from the Lord. They do not appreciate the value of what they have. I worry about them. Unless they can gain some understanding and capture some feeling for sacred things, they are at risk of eventually losing all that matters most. You are a Saint of the great latter-day dispensation—look the part.

These principles apply to activities and events that are sacred or that deserve reverence: baptisms, confirmations, ordinations, blessings of the sick, administration of the sacrament, and so forth. The Doctrine and Covenants tells us that in the ordinances of the priesthood “the power of godliness is manifest” (D&C 84:20). I appreciate priests, teachers, and deacons who wear ties and dress shirts (white, if possible) to officiate in the administration of the sacrament. They are demonstrating an appreciation and respect for God and for the event.

Recently I read a note from a man who was urging his companions to wear a suit and tie when they appeared together at a public event honoring their organization. Their service was civic, not religious in nature, and we would not term it sacred, but he understood the principle that some things deserve respect and that our manner of dress is a part of that expression. He said he was going to dress more formally “not because I’m important, but because this occasion is so important.” His comment states an important truth. It is really not about us. Acting and dressing in a way to honor sacred events and places is about God.

Blessings of Reverence

When you develop a deepening reverence for sacred things, the Holy Spirit becomes your constant companion. You grow in understanding and truth. The scriptures speak of it as a light that grows “brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24). That process is described as progressing from grace to grace. The Savior Himself progressed in that way until He received a fulness, and you may follow in His footsteps (see D&C 93:12–20). That is where a sense of the sacred will lead you.

On the other hand, those who do not appreciate holy things will lose them. Absent a feeling of reverence, they will grow increasingly casual in attitude and conduct. They will drift from the moorings that their covenants with God



Acting and dressing in a way to honor sacred events and places shows our reverence for the Lord.

could provide. Their feelings of accountability to God will diminish and then be forgotten. Thereafter, they will care only about their own comfort and satisfying their uncontrolled appetites. Finally, they will come to despise sacred things, even God, and then they will despise themselves.

Treat Sacred Things with Care

Always remember, as holiness grows within and you are entrusted with greater knowledge and understanding, you must treat these things with care. The Lord said, “That which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit” (D&C 63:64). He also com-

manded that we must not cast pearls before swine or give that which is holy to dogs (see 3 Nephi 14:6; D&C 41:6), meaning sacred things should not be discussed with those who are not prepared to appreciate their value.

Be wise with what the Lord gives you. It is a trust. You would not, for example, share the content of your patriarchal blessing with just anyone.

All things sacred and holy are to be revealed and brought together in this last and most wonderful dispensation. With the Restoration of the gospel, the Church, and the priesthood of Jesus Christ, we hold an almost incomprehensible store of sacred things in our hands. We cannot neglect or let them slip away.

Rather than letting your life drift into carelessness, may it be one of increasing exactness in obedience. I hope you will think and feel and dress and act in ways that show reverence and respect for sacred things, sacred places, sacred occasions. It is my prayer that a sense of the sacred will distill upon your soul as the dews from heaven. May it draw you close to Jesus Christ, who died, who was resurrected, who lives, who is your Redeemer. May He make you holy as He is holy. **NE**

From a Church Educational System satellite broadcast address given on November 7, 2004.

CHRIST'S TEACHINGS



ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL MANN

TEST YOUR LDS I.Q.

Here's a crossword puzzle that will help test your knowledge of Christ's teachings in the New Testament and Book of Mormon. You can find the answers and refresh your memory by turning to the scripture references.

ACROSS

- 3.** The second great commandment (three words; Matthew 22:39)
4. Those who follow Christ's teachings (Matthew 16:24)

6. The wounded traveler's good neighbor (Luke 10:33)

10. "Freely ye have ____, freely give." (Matthew 10:8)

11. "Lay not up for yourselves ____ upon earth." (Matthew 6:19; 3 Nephi 13:19)

12. It's in your brother's eye. (Luke 6:41)

13. The pure love of Christ (Moroni 7:47)

DOWN

- 1.** How many times? Seventy times seven (Matthew 18:21–22)
2. They shall be called the children of God. (Matthew 5:9; 3 Nephi 12:9)

5. "I am the good ____." (John 10:14)

6. "This do in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19)

7. What the ruler was hesitant to give up (Luke 18:18–24)

8. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in ____." (Matthew 6:20; 3 Nephi 13:20)

9. They shall inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5; 3 Nephi 12:5)

Answers: Across: 3. love thy neighbor 4. disciples 5. shepherd 6. sacrament 7. riches 8. heaven 9. meek
 Down: 1. forgive 2. peacemakers 11. treasures 12. mote 13. charity

“**TESTIFY THAT OUR PRAYERS, OFFERED IN HUMILITY AND SINCERITY, ARE HEARD AND ANSWERED. IT IS A MIRACULOUS THING, BUT IT IS REAL.**”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, “An Humble and a Contrite Heart,” Ensign, Nov. 2000, 89.



LEADERSHIP TIP

Have you ever read Jacob 5? We mean *really* read it? If you look closely you'll find that this longest chapter in the Book of Mormon—a parable about the Lord of the vineyard, his servant, and olive trees—contains some valuable lessons on leadership. Read

Jacob 5 again, looking at the example of the Lord of the vineyard. See what kind of leader he is. Notice his patience, his willingness to listen to counsel, his love for those around him, and you will have begun to learn some lessons from the Lord of the vineyard.



SCOTLAND YOUTH ON PARADE

Two dozen youth from the Dundee Second and Dundee Bingham Wards in the Dundee Scotland Stake recently took part in the first-ever Lord Provost of Dundee Youth Parade. More than 1,000 young people participated in the event, which was held to recognize the outstanding young people of Dundee, their talents, and their service to the people in the city.

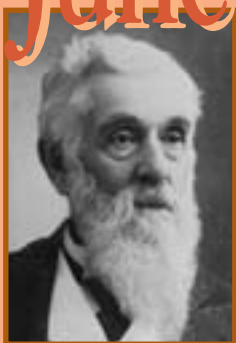
After the parade through the town, the lord provost (mayor) addressed the crowd. Following this, some of the youth groups demonstrated activities such as soccer, hockey, cheerleading, tae kwon do, and baton twirling. The Dundee young men and young women were excited for the opportunity to represent the Church on this historic occasion and plan to take part in the event every year.

IT HAPPENED IN June



June 1, 1801: Brigham Young (left), second President of the Church, was born in Vermont (above). He died at the age of 76 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

June 19, 1836: Lorenzo Snow (above right), fifth President of



the Church, was baptized near Kirtland, Ohio, when he was 22 years old.

June 27, 1844: The Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were killed at Carthage Jail (above center), in Illinois. John Taylor, third President of



the Church, said their martyrdom would remind the world that “the Book of Mormon, and this book of Doctrine and Covenants of the church, cost the best blood of the nineteenth century” (see D&C 135:6).



June 18, 1850: President John Taylor (1808–87) (above), then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and other missionaries arrived in France to open the French Mission.

FROM MISSION



BY BRIAN MARBLE

What I learned on my mission helps me not only survive but thrive as a disciple of Christ in a war zone.

I am a returned missionary. I am also a soldier in the United States Army serving a second tour of duty in Iraq.

Between my mission and my military service, I have seen people both at their best and at their worst. I'm grateful for all the experiences I've had, but I'm grateful I could serve a mission first. It prepared me for military service in some surprising ways.

Communication

One of the first things I learned on my mission was how to talk with other people. When I attended high

school, I was shy and unsure of myself. I felt uncomfortable around strangers and uneasy in crowds. I found it hard to strike up conversations with people and often wouldn't try. Serving in the México Mérida Mission helped get me out of my comfort zone. I slowly realized that people are easy to talk to if I put forth the effort. I soon found it easy to speak with strangers, and I had my heart touched by many people with whom I met and talked. When I joined the army, I took with me what I had gained on my mission—the ability to communicate.



TO MILITARY

Communication is imperative in the army. I am a flight crew chief on Black Hawk helicopters, in charge of the defense and security of aircraft and aiding pilots in their side vision. The lives of the pilots, passengers, and my own life often rely on my communication skills. It was on my mission that I learned to be open and to communicate effectively.

Humility

Another thing I learned on my mission was humility. When I was growing up, I had everything I needed. I never had to worry about food, shelter, or the clothes on my back. In contrast, my mission area was on the Yucatán Peninsula, and life was very simple there. Not having the luxuries I had grown accustomed to all my life was extremely humbling.

As anyone who has served in the military knows, a soldier must place himself second to the safety of his fellow soldiers

and the preservation of his country. I look back on my mission now and thank my Heavenly Father for allowing me to be humbled in preparation for serving my country.

As a soldier at war, you give up every luxury of home. The men and women I served with gave up their warm beds, dry socks, and daily showers. When I am deployed, not a day goes by that I don't appreciate all the blessings I have waiting for me at home.

Example

Perhaps the greatest way my mission prepared me for military service was what it taught me about the power of example. While serving with the 101st Airborne Division, I have come to realize how powerful a good example can be to those with whom I serve. People say they never hear me use profanity or see me drink alcohol or view pornography. A lot of the guys in my unit have asked me why I won't participate in those activities and have questioned me about





There were days during my mission when I felt frustrated and wanted to give up. I would pray for strength to get through the day. There is a saying in the army: “Drink water, and drive on.” To me that means, no matter what happens, one must persevere.

the Church and what it teaches. I always explain my values, telling them my religion teaches me that certain things are bad for me and to abstain from them. Knowing that others are noticing my actions helps me strive to be a good example of what a Latter-day Saint should be.

Prayer and Perseverance

Finally, on my mission I learned to have faith in Heavenly Father. I learned to pray to Him for strength. There were days during my mission when I felt frustrated and wanted to give up. I would pray for strength to get through the day. Learning to deal with my frustrations by relying on the Lord has helped me get through many tough situations in Iraq.

There is a saying in the army: “Drink water, and drive on.” To me that means, no matter what happens, one must persevere.

In the scriptures, this is called enduring to the end. I have learned that I need to continually have faith, read my scriptures, and pray for guidance to get me through tough times. I have learned that the Lord is in control and is looking out for me, so I try to focus on my job. Living with Heavenly Father’s guidance has helped me realize how true the gospel is. My faith is a great source of strength in helping me cope with being deployed in a war zone.

In these and other ways my mission experiences in Mexico help me survive and thrive in the army. I always remember my Book of Mormon hero, Moroni. He served in wars and saw death and destruction, yet he remained a true and faithful servant of the Lord. I find great comfort in knowing that even during the darkest of times you can be at your best. **NE**

PLANNING ON JOINING THE MILITARY?

Are you a member of the military or considering military service? The Church is aware of your needs and challenges. Here are some resources to help you make the transition to military life:

★ Each Church member who joins the military should receive a servicemember’s edition of the scriptures (available only in English), a copy of the book *Principles of the Gospel* (available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese), and an LDS dog tag from his or her bishop or whoever conducts the pre-military service Church orientation.

★ A pre-military service Church orientation video and brochure, both called *Serving Your Country*, are available through your stake president. This orientation will help answer questions and concerns about what to expect in military service. The video is only available in English, but the brochure is available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

★ A new DVD, *Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled—A Message of Peace for Latter-day Saints in Military Service*, is available to help members in the military understand and cope with the challenges of military duty. The DVD is available through priesthood leaders, military chaplains, and Church distribution centers (item #54616000). It is only available in English.

★ Local Church leaders and missionary couples stationed near training bases help look after recruits. To find the nearest service member group leaders and missionary couples, call 1-800-453-3860, ext. 2-2286. For help in locating a Church unit, call 1-800-453-3860, ext. 2-3500.

★ For additional help and resources, go to www.lds.org, and click on “Serving in the Church” and then “Military Relations.” To contact Church Military Relations, call 1-800-453-3860, ext. 2-2286, or e-mail PST-Military@ldschurch.org. **NE**

BY ANDREA CARTWRIGHT

When our ward boundaries changed, I found myself in a new ward without any friends. Or did I?

I was only half listening in sacrament meeting until the bishop announced that the ward boundaries were changing. I was devastated. I looked around the chapel, wondering who wouldn't be in our ward next week. These were the people I'd gone to church with since I was three. They were more like family than ward members.

After sacrament meeting, in our Laurel class, our group of 16 usually talkative girls was quiet and tearful. We didn't want to think about what it would be like with half of us gone. We would still see each other at school, but it wouldn't be the same.

That night at a fireside, the stake president put up a map of the new boundaries. My stomach sank. My family was in the new ward. Looking more closely, I realized every other Laurel I knew would be staying in the old ward. I couldn't believe it. I kept looking at the map, hoping I was wrong, but I wasn't.

The next Sunday was miserable. I saw only a handful of familiar faces. There was only one other girl in my Laurel class.

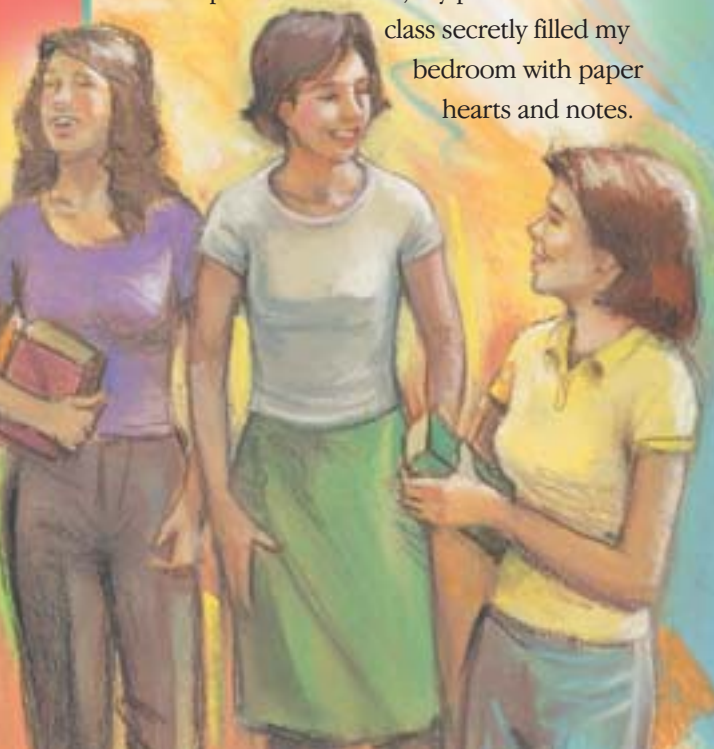
A couple of weeks later, my previous Laurel class secretly filled my bedroom with paper hearts and notes.

I knew these girls cared about me, and ward boundaries wouldn't change that.

It was still hard to be in the new ward. Sometimes I felt like I was missing out on fun experiences with my old friends. But I learned that I was gaining much in return. I met new people and had many interesting callings. My new ward was definitely different from my old one, but that was what made it so fun.

My previous Laurel class president had said something on my last Sunday in the old ward that stuck with me. She said that the Church was true, no matter what ward you were in. I realized I wasn't going to church because my friends were there. I was going to church to worship Heavenly Father, and I could make sure that never changed. **NE**

BEYOND BOUNDARIES



It MATTERED

I was receptive to the influence of the Spirit and was given the desire of my heart.

BY SUMMER BARRICK

I'd worked hard on that assignment. It couldn't be late. In checking my backpack, I found it wasn't there.

“How can it be six o'clock?” I thought my head had just hit the pillow, but my alarm clock was already screaming at me to get out of bed. The darkness and cold air made it even harder to peel back the blankets. After a few more seconds of enduring the screeching of my alarm clock, I finally got up.

My goal was to wake up at six a.m. and read my scriptures before I started a busy day. I flipped on my lamp and opened my scriptures.

After a good half hour of scripture study and a prayer, I showered and dressed for my eight o'clock class. I couldn't be late. My first big humanities paper was due at eight. One second late and the paper wouldn't be accepted. A zero on this assignment would ruin any chance of earning an A in the class. I had put a lot of effort into writing this paper, and I finished a couple of days before it was due. I left myself plenty of time to walk to campus to turn in my polished paper.

As I walked down the dorm hall stairwell, I heard a voice say, “Check to make sure you have your paper.” Surprised, I immediately opened my backpack and discovered that I had grabbed the wrong folder. I didn't have my paper with me!

As I rushed back to my room, I knew it had been the influence of the Spirit that told me I didn't have my paper. A sense of relief washed over me when I put the paper in my backpack and started off to class again.

On my walk to campus I reflected on what had happened. The impression I had received was intense. I did not doubt the voice, and I immediately acted upon the prompting. As a result I was blessed with the chance to fix the situation quickly.

This experience left me asking some questions. Why was the feeling so intense? Why did I not doubt it? Why was I given the opportunity to go back and get my paper? Why did I have the prompting at all? In the great scheme of things, did it really matter if I got an A in this class?

When I stepped into the classroom, the answer became clear. Yes, it mattered; it mattered to me. As I put my paper on the teacher's desk, I realized Heavenly Father knew the desires of my heart. Through my early-morning scripture study and prayer, I had invited the Spirit to be with me. Even though my situation wasn't a matter of life or death, I was receptive to the influence of the Spirit and was given the desire of my heart. **NE**



to Me

EXTRA! EXTRA!

To learn more about listening to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, read these scriptures: 1 Nephi 4:6; D&C 8:2; 11:12–14.

And read these articles in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org: “Communion with the Holy Spirit” (*Ensign*, Mar. 2002) by President James E. Faust and “Q&A: How can I tell the difference between inspiration and my own thoughts?” (*New Era*, Apr. 2003).

SHAKING UP *Shakespeare*

BY DANIELLE NYE POULTER

Church Magazines

Chelsea (right, applying makeup) helped the children in her neighborhood gain an appreciation for Shakespeare's writing while at the same time teaching gospel principles.

Chelsea found success in her neighborhood theater by giving faith a starring role in her life.

Sixteen-year-old Chelsea Frandsen watches helplessly as the choreographed battle between the English and the French deteriorates into a free-for-all, with soldiers thrusting their wooden swords at whoever is closest and dead men falling and lying still for only a second before jumping back up to join the fun again.

Of course, Chelsea knew this was one of the hazards of enlisting three-year-olds to play soldiers in her neighborhood

production of Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

"I was just laughing my head off," recalls Chelsea, a Laurel in the Oak Hills Fourth Ward, Provo Utah Oak Hills Stake. She knows that on performance night, the real goal isn't perfection—it's having fun.

While it *is* fun, the Oak Hills Neighborhood Theater also means a lot of work for Chelsea, who has, so far, directed three Shakespeare plays put on entirely by children from her neighborhood.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE FRANDSEN FAMILY





Performing as part of a professional Shakespearean festival (above, right, and opposite page) was “the best thing that could have happened” for Chelsea and the children she directed.

More than 100 children from ages 3 to 13 have participated in the plays—building sets, doing makeup, finding their own costumes, and playing the parts of characters such as Bianca in *The Taming of the Shrew* and Puck in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. The children have gained a love of Shakespeare and more self-confidence thanks to Chelsea’s positive attitude and patience.

“I’ve always loved theater, and I think Shakespeare teaches universal truths,” says Chelsea, who started the neighborhood children’s theater at the request of a 10-year-old boy in her ward. “Being in these plays increases the children’s confidence and has broken down a lot of social barriers in our neighborhood.”

Getting the theater off the ground was both frightening and rewarding for Chelsea. “It was scary to do because I’m not much older than a lot of these children, and I was afraid they wouldn’t listen to me or that they would quit, so it took a lot of prayer for me to put that first production together, and it strengthened my faith to have those prayers answered.”

Chelsea has found faith-promoting experiences in all aspects of her undertaking.

“I love Shakespeare’s works because I think they have a lot of layers; there are a lot of teachings. I think Shakespeare teaches us about life. Our road to the celestial kingdom isn’t easy, and I think Shakespeare makes you realize that a lot of the problems you have in life can be avoided by choosing the right.”

One of the biggest delights for Chelsea is helping the children she directs gain an appreciation for Shakespeare’s writing, as well as a better understanding of the gospel through the good things his works teach. She recalls one experience when she was trying to help a young girl understand her role as Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

“There’s a speech that Katherine makes about how wives need to obey their husbands





and how both need to be partners and work together. The girl playing Katherine had no idea what the speech was saying, so I was telling her how husbands and wives should love each other.

"Another girl was listening and said, 'Isn't that in the scriptures somewhere?' and then this little girl's face just lit up and she said, 'Oh, yeah! I know that scripture!' talking about the New Testament where it says, 'Husbands, love your wives' (Ephesians 5:25). It was fun to watch her read the speech after that because I knew she understood it."

Chelsea's testimony has been strengthened not only by the stories told in Shakespeare's plays, but also by her own trials in making the theater a success.

"Sometimes I would come home after a difficult rehearsal, and my mom would say, 'Aren't you glad you have Heavenly Father's help?' Every night I prayed for His help with the production and thanked Him for helping me get through it."

Chelsea's prayers and hard work paid off. In their second season, the Oak Hills Neighborhood Theater put on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which Chelsea shortened and simplified for the children. The production went so well that the group was invited to participate in the Utah Shakespearean Festival's Elementary Shakespeare Showcase in Cedar City, Utah.

"It was the best thing that could have happened to these wonderful, talented children," says Chelsea.

She says her love of theater is a gift and that by sharing it with the children in her neighborhood she can help strengthen their confidence, their friendships, and their faith.

"If you have a righteous goal," says Chelsea, "Heavenly Father will help you see it through." **NE**



THE ANSWER IN THE BOOK

BY ANDREW CONFER,
AS TOLD TO MILES T. TUASON

Elder Confer, teach me,” said the voice on the other end of the line, “but don’t teach me about the Book of Mormon.” Christine Yong, our new investigator, was wanting to know more about our religion.

As missionaries in the Singapore Mission, my companion and

I were excited to have an investigator like Christine. She and her sister Sara seemed to be sincerely interested in the gospel. But during the weeks we had shared the gospel with them, they had some doubts about Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. We weren’t about to give up on them, though, so we set up another appointment.

I went with our branch mission leader, Patrick Lim, while my companion went with another member to other appointments. Brother Lim and I planned to teach Christine about repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. We usually invited people to be baptized when we talked about baptism. But both of us wondered, given all the challenges she was facing, whether Christine would be ready for baptism. We prayed for the Spirit before meeting with her.

During the discussion, Christine seemed to understand repentance and baptism. But as Brother Lim taught about receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, Christine voiced her concerns.

“Elders, I’m not sure if God is there and if He would really answer my prayer,” she hesitantly admitted.

We described to her the calm, peaceful feelings the Spirit brings, but she wasn’t familiar with the influence of the Holy Ghost. She had tried to pray and read the scriptures, but things just didn’t seem to be coming together.

For a moment, we were at a loss for answers. Then a scripture came to my mind, and I felt impressed to share it, even though it was in the Book of Mormon—the book she had requested us not to teach from. I asked Christine to read Ether 12:6: “I would show unto the world that faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.”

As I explained that our faith in the Lord is tested before we receive an answer from Heavenly Father, I felt the Spirit strongly in my heart. I prayed Christine would feel it too. And she did.

“I’m so touched. I’m really very touched,” Christine said, as tears flowed down her cheeks.

“This is the Spirit, Christine. This is what the Spirit feels like,” Brother Lim and I said as tears started to flow down our cheeks too.

After we had shared that verse with her and taught her further, Christine accepted our invitation and was soon baptized. **NE**

"YOU'VE ALWAYS KNOWN"

BY DEBBRA B. NANCE

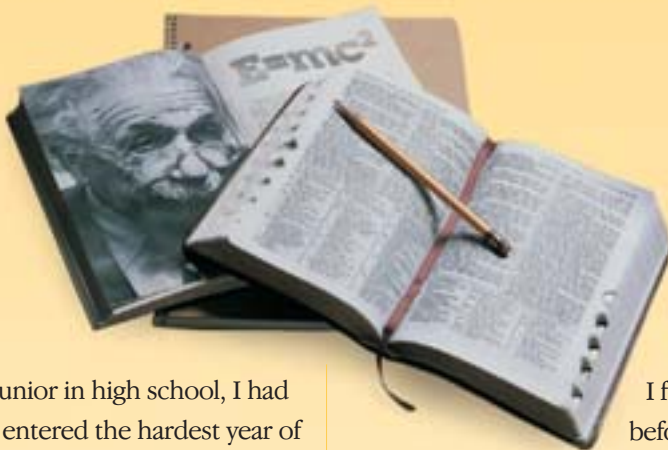
When I turned 14, I was excited to finally be old enough to attend stake youth conference, which was held on a ranch owned by our stake. I was from Seattle, so the remote location was quite a change from the traffic, concrete, and buildings I was used to. The ranch had a rustic beauty with lots of trees, grass, and clean air that made me feel peaceful and close to God. It made me think about Joseph Smith. I wondered if the Sacred Grove was similar to our surroundings.

I had a wonderful time and wished the conference could have lasted longer, but soon it was the final day and almost time for the testimony meeting. I lingered behind for a few minutes and found myself alone in my bunkhouse. I felt that this youth conference was the time to figure out for sure if the Church was true. I had borne my testimony before and said I believed it was true, but I wanted to be able to stand as others had done and say that I knew it was true.

I believed that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ had spoken to Joseph Smith when he was 14, so I thought that since I was now 14, Heavenly Father could tell me, too. I didn't expect a vision, but I believed God would somehow let me know if this was His Church. I decided that as soon as the testimony meeting ended, I would go a little ways from the lodge among the trees to kneel and pray as Joseph had.

MY FORGOTTEN PRAYER

BY SYDNEY V. LAMBSON



As a junior in high school, I had just entered the hardest year of my academic career. I was swamped with classes and other activities. One Thursday, I had a swim meet that took all day. I not only missed school, but I didn't get home until seven o'clock at night.

As I tried to prepare for the busy Friday ahead of me, I found myself burdened by the amount of homework I had to do and several tests I had to study for. I was worn out from my swim meet and felt stressed about everything I had to get done.

In desperation, I said a prayer to my Heavenly Father. I told Him of my troubles and all the deadlines I had to meet. Despite my prayer, I could not avoid a sense of doubt. I thought to myself, "How can the Lord help me if what I've done just isn't enough?" Mentally and physically exhausted,

During the meeting, I listened intently to the testimonies, and I recognized that the Spirit was very strong. My sister's friend stood to bear his testimony. As he said the words, "I know the Church is true and that God lives," I heard a still, small voice whisper within me: "You know it's true, too.

I fell asleep before I had

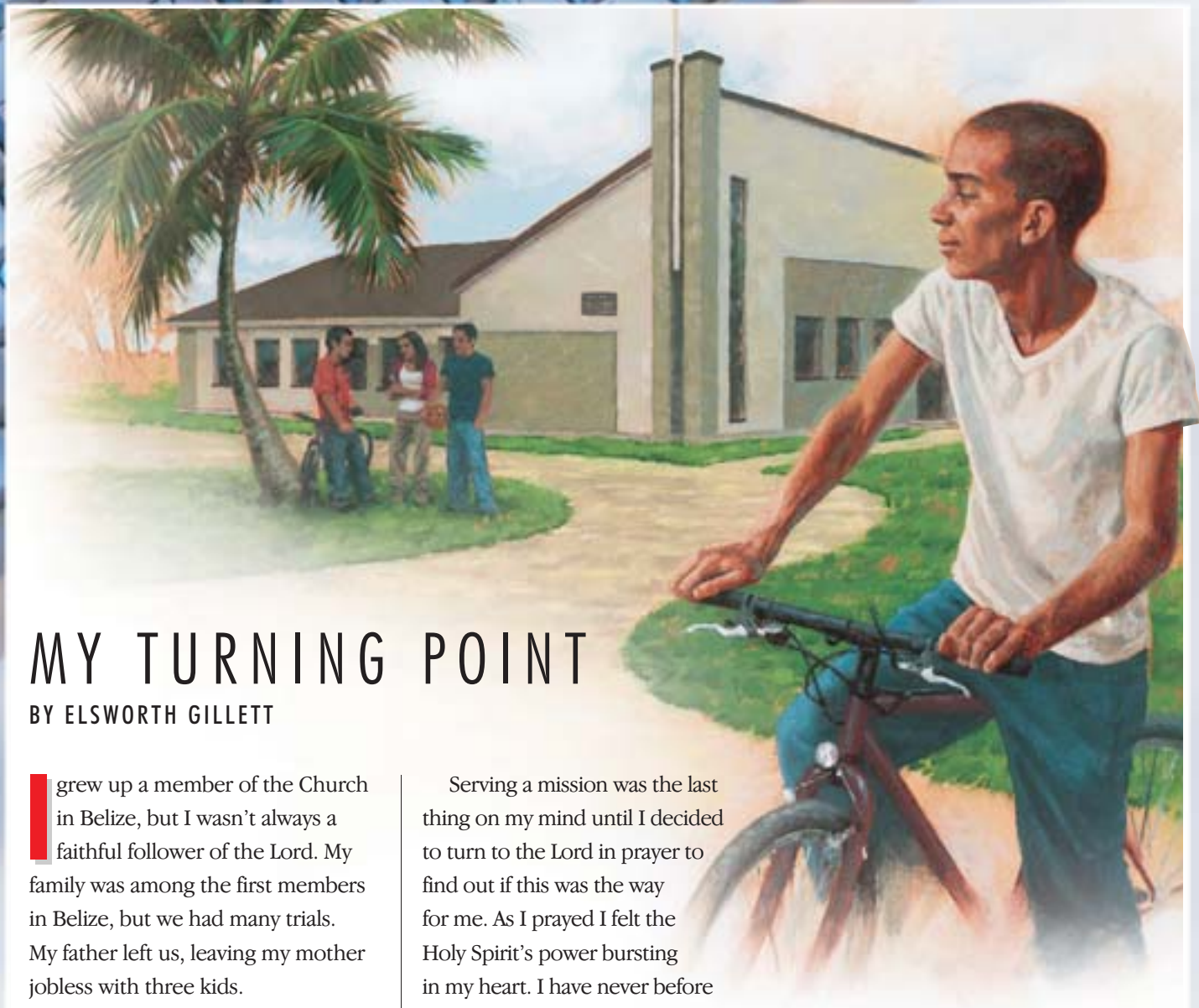
finished preparing for the next day.

On Friday, I was amazed at how everything I needed fell into place. I didn't miss any deadlines, and I had been able to complete all my homework. Some of my teachers allowed me to take my tests on Monday, enabling me to study for other tests and finish other homework. After doing all I could do, things had somehow worked out.

But in the consuming events of the day, I had completely forgotten my prayer from the night before. It wasn't until later that night, as I remembered the words of my prayer and reflected on what had happened, that I recognized the Lord's hand in my life. I am grateful the Lord heard and answered my prayer, even when I wasn't sure it was possible. **NE**

You've always known." Tears filled my eyes because I knew God had heard my prayer before I had even spoken it.

How grateful I was then, and still am, for the knowledge that the Church is true, that God knows me, and that He hears and answers even my unspoken prayers. **NE**



MY TURNING POINT

BY ELSWORTH GILLETT

I grew up a member of the Church in Belize, but I wasn't always a faithful follower of the Lord. My family was among the first members in Belize, but we had many trials. My father left us, leaving my mother jobless with three kids.

My mother's faith in the Lord allowed us to overcome our trials. My mom worked hard to support us and to bring us to the Lord, but I had to gain a testimony for myself. For a time I chose wrong paths, mainly because of the company I spent my time with. They influenced me to draw away from—rather than near to—the Lord.

My turning point was when I started to spend most of my time with youth of the Church. I witnessed the marvelous spirit they had. It brought an unusual joy in my life. Seeing my friends going out to serve the Lord on their missions brought an even greater spirit.

Serving a mission was the last thing on my mind until I decided to turn to the Lord in prayer to find out if this was the way for me. As I prayed I felt the Holy Spirit's power bursting in my heart. I have never before witnessed such marvelous power. It led me to know that a mission was right for me. I talked to my branch president, prepared spiritually and financially, and later served a full-time mission.

I can now say without any doubt that I know that this is the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and that President Gordon B. Hinckley is a living prophet, seer, and revelator, called by God to declare His word and to bring all people to our Heavenly Father's fold. As Moroni said, you need to read the Book of Mormon, ponder it in your heart, pray, and you will receive answers to the questions in your heart (see Moroni 10:3–5). **NE**

INSTANT MESSAGES features personal experiences, insights into 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 St. Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail it to
newera@ldschurch.org

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

Mutual Activity Idea

- Have a “Display Your Hobby” night in Mutual. Invite youth with unusual hobbies, collections, or crafts to make a short presentation explaining, sharing, or demonstrating them. For example, Jamie Lessie in the article “Right on Track,” on page 24, could bring some of her awards and explain how she and her family participate in racing. Learning more about each other’s interests can help bring unity to your Mutual.

Personal Progress or Duty to God

- Read the Q&A on page 14. Write your testimony and place it in a copy of the Book of Mormon to give away.

Pray about a person you could give the book to. Follow through by giving the book to that person.

Family Home Evening Idea

- Challenge all your family members to go through their music CDs (or even all your family’s DVDs) and determine if there are any they should not be listening to or watching. Have each family member take a turn playing a favorite song and explaining why they enjoy it. This can help the family appreciate and understand one another’s tastes.



SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November in the *Ensign*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 26–30.

Young Women Manual 1

Lesson 26: The Sacrament

Ron Frandsen, “Passing Up Passing the Sacrament,” *New Era*, May 2006, 30.

Q&A: “. . . How can I ‘always remember Him?’” *New Era*, Jan. 2005, 16.

Lesson 27: Strengthening Testimony through Obedience

Lacey McMurry, “The Laughter Never Came,” *New Era*, May 2006, 10.

Poster: “You’re Never Big Enough,” *New Era*, Mar. 2006, 17.

Lesson 28: Agency

D. Todd Christofferson, “A Sense of the Sacred,” *New Era*, this issue, 28.

Wayne S. Peterson, “Decide Who You’ll Be,” *New Era*, May 2006, 40.

Lesson 29: Exaltation

Shanna Butler, “What Abraham’s Covenant Means to You,” *New Era*, Apr. 2006, 32.

Jamie Glenn, “Walk Tall, You’re a Daughter of God,” *New Era*, Jan. 1996, 10.

Lesson 30: Strengthening Testimony through Service

Janet Thomas, “The Sound of Giving,” *New Era*, May 2006, 12.

Kelly Anne Sansom, “Room for Love,” *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 46.

Ashley Merriam, “No One Should Cry Themselves to Sleep,” *New Era*, Mar. 2004, 24.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 1

Lesson 26: Worthy Thoughts

Laura Andreason, “Pop Quiz,” *New Era*, this issue, 8.

Poster: “Mental Floss,” *New Era*, Oct. 2005, 19.

Lesson 27: The Lord’s Law of Health

Katie May Hess, “My Battle with Anorexia,” *New Era*, Apr. 2006, 42.

Q&A: “. . . other players take supplements to enhance their performance.” *New Era*, May 2004, 16.

Lesson 28: The Sabbath

Joseph Richardson, “To Keep It Holy,” *New Era*, Oct. 1997, 34.

Q&A: “. . . all the jobs require Sunday work.” *New Era*, June 2004, 16.

Lesson 29: The Purpose of Life

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Bright As the Sun,” *New Era*, this issue, 2.

Thomas S. Monson, “A Code to Live By,” *New Era*, Sept. 2005, 4.

Lesson 30: Charity

George Brewer, “Wood for the Widows,” *New Era*, Dec. 2005, 36.

Carl Webb, “Something Better to Do,” *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 14.



WE'VE GOT MAIL

ADOPTION

Thank you for putting "The Adoption Decision" in the *New Era* (Mar. 2006). I was 17 when I gave my daughter up. I think that girls (and guys) need to know that people can repent. Thank you for showing me that I am not the only one. Sometimes it helps to know that others have gone through the same trial and pain.

Name Withheld

Thank you so much for the article on adoption in the March 2006 issue! I was adopted through LDS Social Services 17 years ago this April. I loved reading about the process my birth mom had to go through. I know some of the circumstances were different then, but it really did mean a lot to me.

Crystal G., California

HELP FOR WIDOWS

Thank you so much for publishing the story "Wood for the Widows" (Dec. 2005). As I was reading that story, I couldn't help but think, "This is my family—that's my dad." My dad also liked to serve others, including widows. A few weeks ago my father passed away, and now my mother is a widow. I know I can follow my dad's example and give more meaningful service to others.

Rebecca B., Texas

FAMILY TIME

Every time my father and I get our Church magazines, we read and discuss the stories with each other. For example, the September 2005 *New Era* had a story about a boy and his stepdad. My dad was very impressed with that story. He said, "That's the best story I've ever heard. I wish I got the *New Era*." I don't blame him.

Laukau M., New Zealand



"The New Era is a wonderful resource, and I look forward to it every month. Sometimes I sit down and read it cover to cover; sometimes I just read a story or two on subjects that I may need to work on in my life."

IT CAUGHT MY ATTENTION

I was bored one night, so I picked up the *New Era*. I flipped through the pages and I found "Lunch Table Lesson" (Feb. 2006). It caught my attention, so I read the story. It made me think: Do people really notice how different we are? Yes, people do notice. And they admire you. Thank you for putting this story in the *New Era*.

Erika F., California

HELP WITH EVERYDAY LIFE

I enjoy the magazine very much. I really enjoy the joke page—it is very funny. Your magazine has helped me in my everyday life. It has helped me resist temptations.

I especially enjoyed the issue that was dedicated to stories of Joseph Smith. I used one of them in a talk I gave in sacrament meeting.

The *New Era* is a wonderful resource, and I look forward to it every month. Sometimes I sit down and read it cover to cover; sometimes I just read a story or two on subjects that I may need to work on in my life.

Garry Z., Oregon

IT'S BENEFICIAL

Each time I feel lonely or depressed, I have the *New Era* close to my heart and I immediately feel loved. As a teenager, I think the *New Era* is not only inspiring, it is beneficial too. So thanks a lot!

Comfort O., France

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 St. Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail us at

newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



FISHING FOR MONSTERS

BY SHERYL L. NELMS

It was dough balls and stink bait
mixed days before,
then we had to wait for
the night of the full moon.

We'd go at dusk to Lake Afton,
spread out Grandma's old quilt,
bait the hooks, loft them out,
set the tensions, and wait.

In the darkening night,
with the water-cooled breeze
chattering the cottonwood leaves,
we would listen for the whine of a reel
or the flop of a giant cat,
as the cicadas packed seventeen years of buzz
into one blitz.

And later we would eat
white bread sandwiches
of cheddar cheese and mustard,
and I would squint
at the moon-rippled water
from my spot between Mom and Dad
and imagine my life.



*"I like fixing up
any car
with my dad.
I like working
with cars,
and I like being
with him."*

See "Right on Track," p. 24.