

THE  
**NewEra**

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2007

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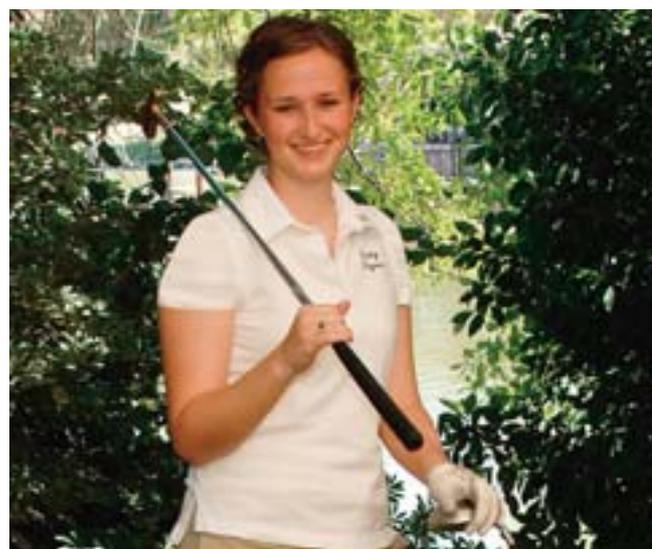
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while you're young can  
improve the rest of your  
life. See "Good Work" on  
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*Cover photography:*  
Matt Reier (front) and  
(back)

**S**uccessful  
work  
experiences  
while you are  
young can give  
you confidence  
and the ability to  
succeed. See  
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# THE QUEST FOR SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

BY PRESIDENT BOYD K. PACKER

Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



***There is a God! He does live! Even if it is difficult to explain in words alone how I know that, I know through the power of the Holy Spirit.***

I will tell you of an experience I had before I was a General Authority that affected me profoundly. I sat on a plane next to a professed atheist who pressed his disbelief in God so urgently that I bore my testimony to him. “You are wrong,” I said. “There is a God. *I know* He lives!”

He protested, “You don’t *know*. Nobody knows that! You can’t *know* it!” When I would not yield, the atheist, who was an attorney, asked perhaps the ultimate question on the subject of testimony. “All right,” he said in a sneering, condescending way, “you say you know. Tell me *how* you know.”

When I attempted to answer, even though I held advanced academic degrees, I was helpless to communicate.

When I used the words *Spirit* and *witness*, the atheist responded, “I don’t know what you are talking about.” The words *prayer*, *discernment*, and *faith* were equally meaningless to him. “You see,” he said, “you don’t really know. If you did, you would be able to tell me *how* you know.”

I felt, perhaps, that I had borne my testimony to him unwisely and was at a loss as to what to do. Then came the experience! Something came into my mind. And I mention here a statement of the Prophet Joseph Smith: “A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas . . . and thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus.”<sup>1</sup>

Such an idea came into my mind, and I said to the atheist, “Let me ask if you know what salt tastes like.”

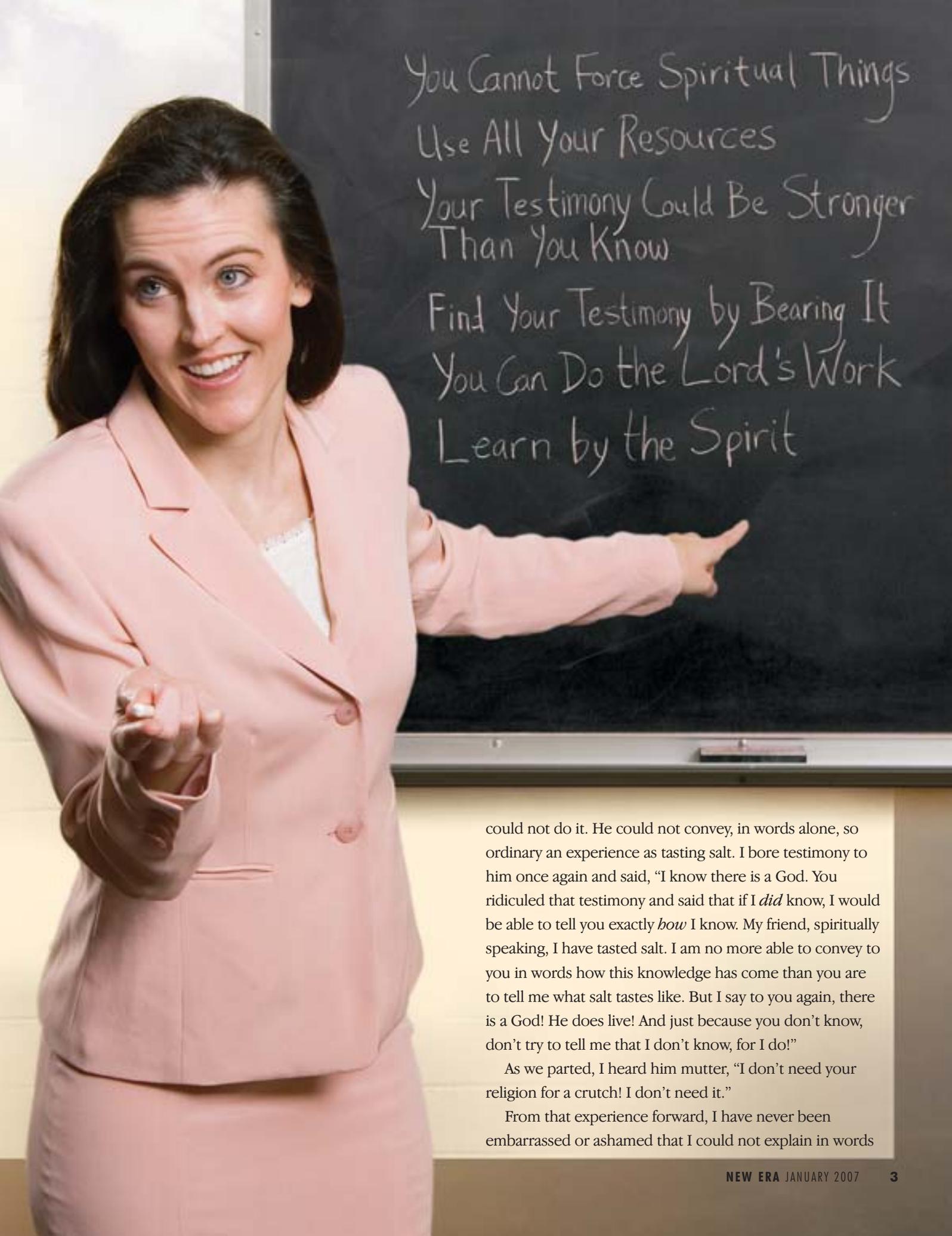
“Of course I do,” was his reply.

“Then,” I said, “assuming that I have never tasted salt, explain to me just what it tastes like.”

After some thought, he said, “Well, I, uh, it is not sweet and it is not sour.”

“You’ve told me what it isn’t, not what it is.”

After several attempts, of course, he



You Cannot Force Spiritual Things  
Use All Your Resources  
Your Testimony Could Be Stronger  
Than You Know  
Find Your Testimony by Bearing It  
You Can Do the Lord's Work  
Learn by the Spirit

could not do it. He could not convey, in words alone, so ordinary an experience as tasting salt. I bore testimony to him once again and said, "I know there is a God. You ridiculed that testimony and said that if I *did* know, I would be able to tell you exactly *how* I know. My friend, spiritually speaking, I have tasted salt. I am no more able to convey to you in words how this knowledge has come than you are to tell me what salt tastes like. But I say to you again, there is a God! He does live! And just because you don't know, don't try to tell me that I don't know, for I do!"

As we parted, I heard him mutter, "I don't need your religion for a crutch! I don't need it."

From that experience forward, I have never been embarrassed or ashamed that I could not explain in words



**W**e should not expect revelation to replace the spiritual or temporal intelligence that we have already received. Nor should we expect that the Spirit will get our attention by shouting or shaking us. Rather it whispers, as it did with the prophet Samuel.

alone everything I know spiritually. The Apostle Paul said it this way:

“We speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:13–14).

#### **The Still, Small Voice**

The voice of the Spirit is described in the scriptures as being neither “loud” nor “harsh” (3 Nephi 11:3). It is “not a voice of thunder, neither . . . a voice of a great tumultuous noise,” but rather, “a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper,” and it can “pierce even to the very soul” (Helaman 5:30) and “cause [the heart] to burn” (3 Nephi 11:3). Remember, Elijah found the voice of the Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but was a “still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12).

The Spirit does not get our attention by shouting or shaking us with a heavy hand. Rather it whispers. It caresses so gently that if we are preoccupied we may not feel it at all.

Occasionally, it will press just firmly enough for us to

pay heed. But most of the time, if we do not heed the gentle feeling, the Spirit will withdraw and wait until we come seeking and listening and say in our manner and expression, like Samuel of ancient times, “Speak [Lord], for thy servant heareth” (1 Samuel 3:10).

#### **You Cannot Force Spiritual Things**

There is something else to learn. A testimony is not thrust upon you; a testimony grows. We become taller in testimony like we grow taller in physical stature; we hardly know it happens because it comes by growth.

You cannot force spiritual things. Such words as *compel*, *coerce*, *constrain*, *pressure*, and *demand* do not describe our privileges with the Spirit. You can no more force the Spirit to respond than you can force a bean to sprout or an egg to hatch before its time. You can create a climate to foster growth, nourish, and protect; but you cannot force or compel: you must await the growth.

Do not be impatient to gain great spiritual knowledge. Let it grow, help it grow, but do not force it or you will open the way to be misled.

#### **Use All Your Resources**

We are expected to use the light and knowledge we already possess to work out our lives. We should not need a revelation to instruct us to be up and about our duty, for we have been told to do that already in the scriptures; nor should we expect revelation to replace the spiritual or temporal intelligence that we have already received—only to extend it. We must go about our life in an ordinary, workaday way, following the routines and rules and regulations that govern life.

Rules and regulations and commandments are valuable protection. If we need revealed instruction to alter our course, it will be waiting along the way as we arrive at the point of need. The counsel to be “anxiously engaged” is wise counsel indeed (see D&C 58:27).

**Your Testimony Could Be Stronger Than You Know**

Now, do not feel hesitant or ashamed if you do not know everything. Nephi said, “I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17).

There may be more power in your testimony than even you realize. The Lord said to the Nephites:

“Whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me at the time of their conversion, were

baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, *and they knew it not*” (3 Nephi 9:20; emphasis added).

Several years ago I met one of our sons in the mission field in a distant part of the world. He had been there for a year. His first question was this: “Dad, what can I do to grow spiritually? I have tried so hard to grow spiritually, and I just haven’t made any progress.”

That was his perception: to me it was otherwise. I could hardly believe the maturity, the spiritual growth that he had gained in just one year. He “knew it not,” for it had come as growth, not as a startling spiritual experience.

**Y**ou can no more force the Spirit to respond than you can force a bean to sprout or an egg to hatch before its time. You can create a climate to foster growth, nourish, and protect; but you cannot force or compel: you must await the growth.



## FIRE IN MY HEART

BY TYLER ANDRUS

It took me until I was 15 to publicly bear my testimony. I had never doubted the truthfulness of the gospel, but my first year of seminary gave me the beginnings of my own testimony of the Church and the Book of Mormon.

During the summer after that first year of seminary, our stake held a youth conference at a campsite. The conference concluded with a testimony meeting in which I had no intention of bearing my testimony. Soon the Spirit began to whisper that I needed to get up and bear my testimony. I suppressed it, but I had a continued feeling that I should get up. I finally decided that I would bear my testimony, and as I did a warm feeling came over me so much so that I felt a burning in my bosom. I had a fire inside my heart.

I have since learned the importance of bearing my testimony, as every time I do my testimony grows. I will continue to make bearing my testimony a lifelong practice. **NE**

It is one thing to receive a witness from what you have read or what another has said; and that is a necessary beginning. It is quite another to have the Spirit confirm to you in your bosom that what you have testified is true. Can you not see that it will be supplied as you share it? As you give that which you have, there is a replacement, with increase!

To speak out is the test of your faith.

Bear testimony of the things that you hope are true, as an act of faith. It is something of an experiment, like the experiment that the prophet Alma proposed to his followers. We begin with faith—not with a perfect knowledge of things. That sermon in the 32nd chapter of Alma is one of the greatest

### Find Your Testimony by Bearing It

It is not unusual to have a missionary say, “How can I bear testimony until I get one? How can I testify that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that the gospel is true? If I do not have such a testimony, would that not be dishonest?”

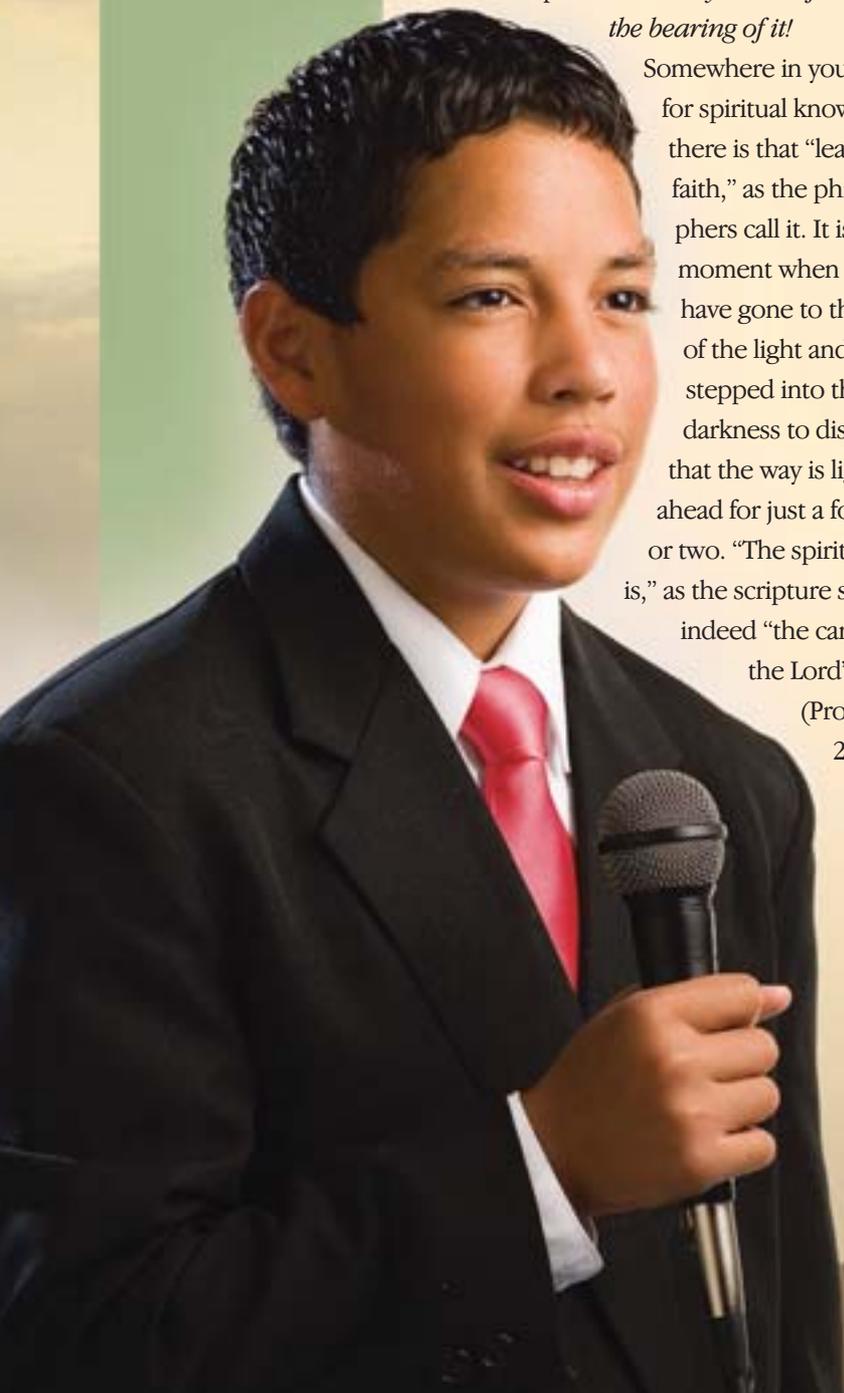
Oh, if I could teach you this one principle: *a testimony is to be found in the bearing of it!*

Somewhere in your quest for spiritual knowledge, there is that “leap of faith,” as the philosophers call it. It is the moment when you have gone to the edge of the light and stepped into the darkness to discover that the way is lighted ahead for just a footstep or two. “The spirit of man is,” as the scripture says, indeed “the candle of the Lord”

(Proverbs 20:27).

To speak out is the test of your faith.

Bear testimony of the things that you hope are true, as an act of faith.



messages in holy writ, for it is addressed to the beginner, to the humble seeker. And it holds a key to a witness of the truth.

The Spirit and testimony of Christ will come to you for the most part when, and remain with you only if, you share it. In that process is the very essence of the gospel.

Is not this a perfect demonstration of Christianity? You cannot find it, nor keep it, nor enlarge it unless and until you are willing to share it. It is by giving it away freely that it becomes yours.

#### You Can Do the Lord's Work

There is great power in this work, spiritual power. The ordinary member of the Church, like you, having received the gift of the Holy Ghost by confirmation, can do the work of the Lord.

Years ago a friend told this experience. He was 17 years old and with his companion stopped at a cottage in the southern states. It was his first day in the mission field and was his first door. A gray-haired woman stood inside the screen and asked what they wanted. His companion nudged him to proceed. Frightened and somewhat tongue-tied, he finally blurted out, "As man is God once was, and as God is man may become."

Strangely enough, she was interested and asked where he got that. He answered, "It's in the Bible." She left the door for a moment, returned with her Bible. Commenting that she was a minister of a congregation, she handed it to him and said, "Here, show me."

He took the Bible and nervously thumbed back and forth through it. Finally he handed it back saying, "Here, I can't find it. I'm not even sure that it's in there, and even if it is, I couldn't find it. I'm just a poor farm boy from out in Cache Valley in Utah. I haven't had much training. But I come from a family where we live the gospel of Jesus Christ. And it's done so much for our family that I've accepted a call to come on a mission for two years, at my own expense,



**T**he day of miracles has not ceased.

*The spiritual gifts are with the Church. Choice among them is the gift of the Holy Ghost!*

to tell people how I feel about it."

After half a century, he could not hold back the tears as he told me how she pushed open the door and said, "Come in, my boy. I'd like to hear what you have to say."

#### Learn by the Spirit

There is so much more to say. I could speak of prayer, of fasting, of priesthood and authority, of worthiness—all essential to revelation. When they are understood, it all fits together—perfectly. But some things one must learn individually, and alone, taught by the Spirit.

I know by experience too sacred to touch upon that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that the gift of the Holy Ghost conferred upon us at our confirmation is a divine gift. The Book of Mormon is true! This is the Lord's Church! Jesus is the Christ! There presides over us a prophet of God! The day of miracles has not ceased, neither have angels ceased to appear and minister unto man! The spiritual gifts are with the Church. Choice among them is the gift of the Holy Ghost! **NE**

*From a talk given at a seminar for new mission presidents on June 25, 1982.*

#### NOTE

1. *History of the Church*, 3:381.

# REAL CONFIDENCE

*Want to feel better about yourself?  
Want to gain confidence? Then this  
year's Mutual theme is for you.*

## BY THE YOUNG WOMEN AND YOUNG MEN GENERAL PRESIDENCIES

**A**t times, we all wrestle with thoughts of insecurity. Have you ever asked yourself: “What can I do to feel more confident?” or “How can I feel better about myself?”

There's a great answer in the scriptures. It says that if you have charity and “let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God” (D&C 121:45). That kind of confidence is true confidence. If you are confident in God's presence, you can feel confident around anyone else.

“So,” you might ask, “what does *virtue* mean?” President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, says that *virtue* has many definitions—moral excellence, right action and thinking, goodness of character, and chastity.<sup>1</sup>

And then you might ask: “How can I do this? Is there something to guide me?” Yes, there is. The principles and doctrines in *For the Strength of Youth* will guide you to make decisions that will qualify you for the companionship of the Holy Ghost. And if you have the Holy Ghost with you, you are, in a sense, living in the presence of God. Think of the confidence Heavenly Father has in you to send you His Spirit.

As you live the standards described in *For the Strength of Youth*, you are promised that the Lord “will increase your opportunities, expand your

2007  
MUTUAL THEME

“Let virtue garnish thy thoughts  
unceasingly; then shall thy confidence  
wax strong in the presence of God”  
(D&C 121:45).

vision, and strengthen you.”<sup>2</sup> You will become more and more virtuous, more and more confident.

But be careful. This is not the way the world tells you to have confidence. The world tells you that to be confident you have to be better than others in some way—that you need to have more things, more talent, more intelligence, more popularity. This simply is not true. That is counterfeit confidence.

The Lord’s standards are different from the world’s standards. While the world focuses on outward appearance, “the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). You are a child of God, and your divine nature is not inferior or superior to anyone. In fact, everyone—including you—has different talents and abilities. These are gifts of the Spirit given to you so you can perform your divine mission on the earth. Heavenly Father wants you to be happy, growing and becoming all that He intends for you to become.

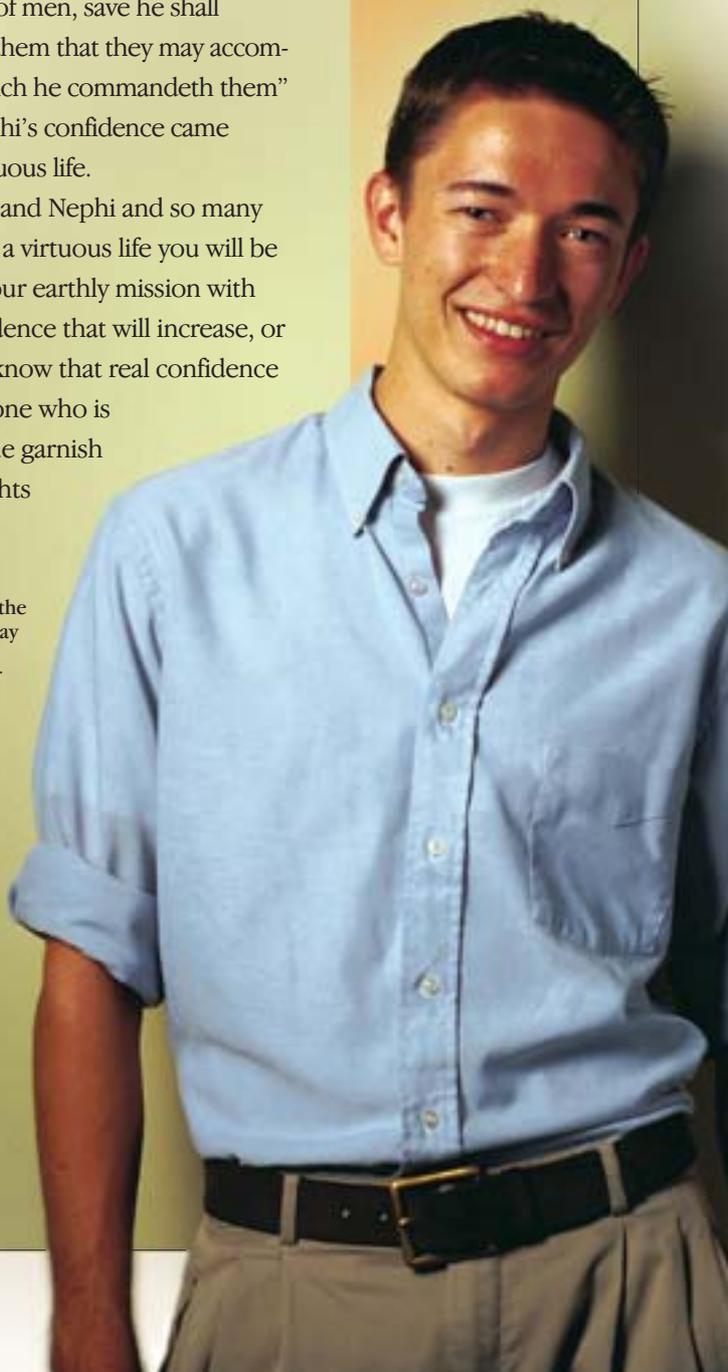
When you experience opposition in your life, think of scriptural heroes. Like Moses, you can gain strength by praying and remembering that you are a child of God (see Moses 1:13, 20–22). Nephi is another good example

of one who had confidence in the Lord. When he and his brothers were asked to obtain the brass plates, he confidently knew he could do it with the Lord’s help. He said, “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7). Nephi’s confidence came because of his virtuous life.

Just like Moses and Nephi and so many others, as you live a virtuous life you will be free to perform your earthly mission with confidence, confidence that will increase, or “wax strong.” We know that real confidence is available to anyone who is willing to “let virtue garnish [his or her] thoughts unceasingly.” **NE**

NOTES

1. See “How Near to the Angels,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 95.
2. *For the Strength of Youth* (2001), 42.



**The Young Women general presidency: Susan W. Tanner (center), Julie B. Beck (left), Elaine S. Dalton (right). The Young Men general presidency: Charles W. Dahlquist II (center), Dean R. Burgess (left), Michael A. Neider (right).**

**N**ephi's response to being

asked to obtain the brass plates sets an example for us all: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."

## I CAN DO IT! CONFIDENCE BUILDERS

If you want to grow more and more confident, here are some things you can do:

- Pray, as Moses did, that the Lord will help you remember that you are His child and that you have an important work to do.
- Make a list of your strengths and good qualities.
- Read and ponder your patriarchal blessing, or prepare to receive one.
- Serve others, and write in your journal how service makes you feel.
- Eat well and exercise. Your body is a gift from God, and good nutrition and physical activity will lift your mood and help you feel better about yourself.
- Offer prayers of gratitude, and record your gratitude in a journal.
- Develop your talents.
- Keep the commandments.

Remember that confidence does not come by being better than someone else. It comes from knowing you are a child of God and doing what He would have you do.

## HOW TO HAVE GOOD THOUGHTS UNCEASINGLY

Here are some Mutual activities and family home evening ideas that can help you let virtue garnish your thoughts:

- Read the scriptures listed in the Topical Guide under "Thought" and "Virtue."
- Memorize or review the 13th article of faith. What does it mean to you? List ways you can "seek after these things."
- List synonyms for the words *virtue* and *virtuous*. How can you apply these words in your life?
- What does *pure* mean? Why does water need to be pure before we drink it? Why should our thoughts be pure?

- Read the account of Joseph fleeing Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39. When should you flee and get yourself out? How can you be in the world but not of the world?
- Make a booklet with a favorite scripture or thought from each young man and young woman in your ward.
- Choose a "scripture of the week," and post it someplace where you can read it every day. See if you can memorize 52 scriptures this year—one every week. If you memorize scripture mastery scriptures, you're halfway there!
- Make a commitment not to use any profanity.
- With your quorum or class, make a commitment to avoid any form of pornography. How will you help each other?
- As a family, decide on ways you can show your love and support to each other through positive words and actions.
- Read and study the sections "Entertainment and the Media" and "Language" in *For the Strength of Youth*. Highlight the word *Spirit* in those sections. List ways the Spirit will bless your life as you live these standards.
- Discuss Internet and media safety as a class or quorum and as a family.
- "Holiness to the Lord" is inscribed on our temples. Discuss how virtuous thoughts help prepare you to attend the temple. If possible, attend the temple to perform baptisms for the dead.
- Memorize two favorite hymns you can hum or sing to replace bad thoughts with inspired words.
- Work on Duty to God or Personal Progress. The spiritual development section of Duty to God or the integrity value in Personal Progress will especially help you understand more about purity and the blessings of letting "virtue garnish [your] thoughts unceasingly."



# D&C 121:45

*The 2007 Mutual theme teaches us about the power of virtuous thoughts.*

Virtue means righteousness, or excellence of moral character. Make a list of seven qualities you would consider virtuous (such as being kind or honest), and focus on one of those qualities each day for the next week. Try to do something each day that demonstrates the quality for that day. Write your experiences in your journal at the end of each day.

Garnish—adorn; decorate; beautify (originally it meant fortify, defend, or give warning)

Confidence—feeling of trust in yourself; self-assurance

Wax—grow

household of faith, and let 'virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy 'confidence wax strong in the 'presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the 'dews from heaven.

“Whatever you read, listen to, or look at has an effect on you. Therefore, choose only entertainment and media that uplift you. Good entertainment will help you to have good thoughts and make righteous choices.”

—*For the Strength of Youth* (2001), 17.

“Thoughts are talks we hold with ourselves. Do you see why the scriptures



tell us to ‘let virtue garnish [thy] thoughts unceasingly’ and promise us that if we do, our ‘confidence [shall] wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon [our] soul[s] as the dews from heaven’ and then ‘the Holy Ghost shall be [our] constant companion.’ . . .

“Young people, the voice of the Spirit is felt rather than heard. You can learn when you are very young how the Holy Ghost works.

“The scriptures are full of help on how good can influence your mind and evil control you, if you let it. That struggle will never end. . . .

“When you learn to control your thoughts, you will be safe.”

—President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Spirit of Revelation,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 24.



“The Lord has given a commandment in our time that applies to each of us. He has said, ‘Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly.’ And with this He has given a promise: ‘Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God’ (D&C 121:45). I believe He is saying that if we are clean in mind and body, the time will come when we can stand confidently before the Lord. . . . There will be a feeling of confidence, and there will also be smiles of approval.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1996, 48.

# Good to KNOW

BY KONG NHEAN SEREY,  
AS TOLD TO PHYLLIS GUNDERSON

*Who would ever guess that memorizing the Articles of Faith would change my life?*

**W**hen I was 19, I left my small village in central Cambodia to live with my older brother in the capital city of Phnom Penh. Several years earlier my brother had met two young men wearing white shirts, ties, and name tags. Now my brother introduced me to the gospel and baptized me into the Church.

When I was baptized, my district president, President Pen Vibol, told me, “Memorize the Articles of Faith. They explain everything that is good in the Church, things you should always remember.” I thought this was wise advice, so I memorized all 13 and reviewed them regularly. But I never imagined how important President Vibol’s advice would turn out to be.

My brother always encouraged me to improve myself and get an education. A few years after I was baptized, I was able to pass the English university entrance test, and I received a four-year scholarship to study international marketing at Brigham Young University–Hawaii.

But as difficult as the entrance test was, the hardest part was still ahead—getting an American visa. Permission to enter the United States is difficult and expensive. Sometimes permission is denied even for students who have scholarships to attend American universities. I filled out the proper forms, made an appointment for an interview at the U.S. Embassy, and soon found myself sitting across the desk from a young man with blue eyes.

“There are a lot of American universities,” the

interviewer said. “Why do you want to go to BYU–Hawaii?”

“Because I’m a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and it’s a Church-owned university,” I replied.

The interviewer shuffled his papers. “I see your brother is already there,” he said. I knew that the embassy didn’t like more than one member of a family to leave the country at the same time.

“Yes,” I admitted. “My older brother is attending BYU–Hawaii.” The interview wasn’t looking good.

“Can your parents support you?” was the next question.

“My father is a farmer, and my mother is a seller,” I said. I told him they didn’t make much money.

“Then how can you afford to study in the United States?” asked the interviewer.

I pulled out my acceptance letter and explained that I had a scholarship to attend the university.

After looking at the letter, the interviewer reached into his desk drawer and pulled out a small card. “Recite four of these Articles of Faith,” he said.

I knew them as well as I knew my own name. “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost,” I began. After I had finished the third, the interviewer stopped me.

“OK, great!” he said, putting the card back in his desk. “You can pick up your visa tomorrow.”

I don’t know why the interviewer had an Articles of Faith card in his desk, but I was grateful I didn’t have to think twice when he asked me to recite them. Knowing the Articles of Faith may not always bring such dramatic results, but they’ll always be good to know. **NE**



# Q & A

*“Why do people who are doing wrong seem to be having so much fun? It doesn’t seem fair.”*

## NEW ERA

**T**hey *seem* to be having fun, but it’s impossible to do wrong and be happy. “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). Those who do wrong might have short-lived fun, but unless they repent, they will never enjoy the true happiness that our Heavenly Father wants each of us to have for eternity.

Unfortunately, what the world thinks is fun often leads to regret. And when people do wrong, even though they seem to be having fun, they are moving away from God, the source of blessings like peace and joy. Joy comes from living the gospel and is deeper and more lasting than brief moments of fun.

Those who are doing wrong miss out on other blessings. If they aren’t virtuous, they won’t have the Holy Ghost with them (see D&C 121:45); if they aren’t obeying the Word of Wisdom, they won’t enjoy the blessings promised to those who follow it (see D&C 89:18–21).

So keep fun in perspective. It’s okay to have good, clean fun, and it can be part of a

■ **Doing wrong might seem fun at the time, but it can only bring unhappiness.**

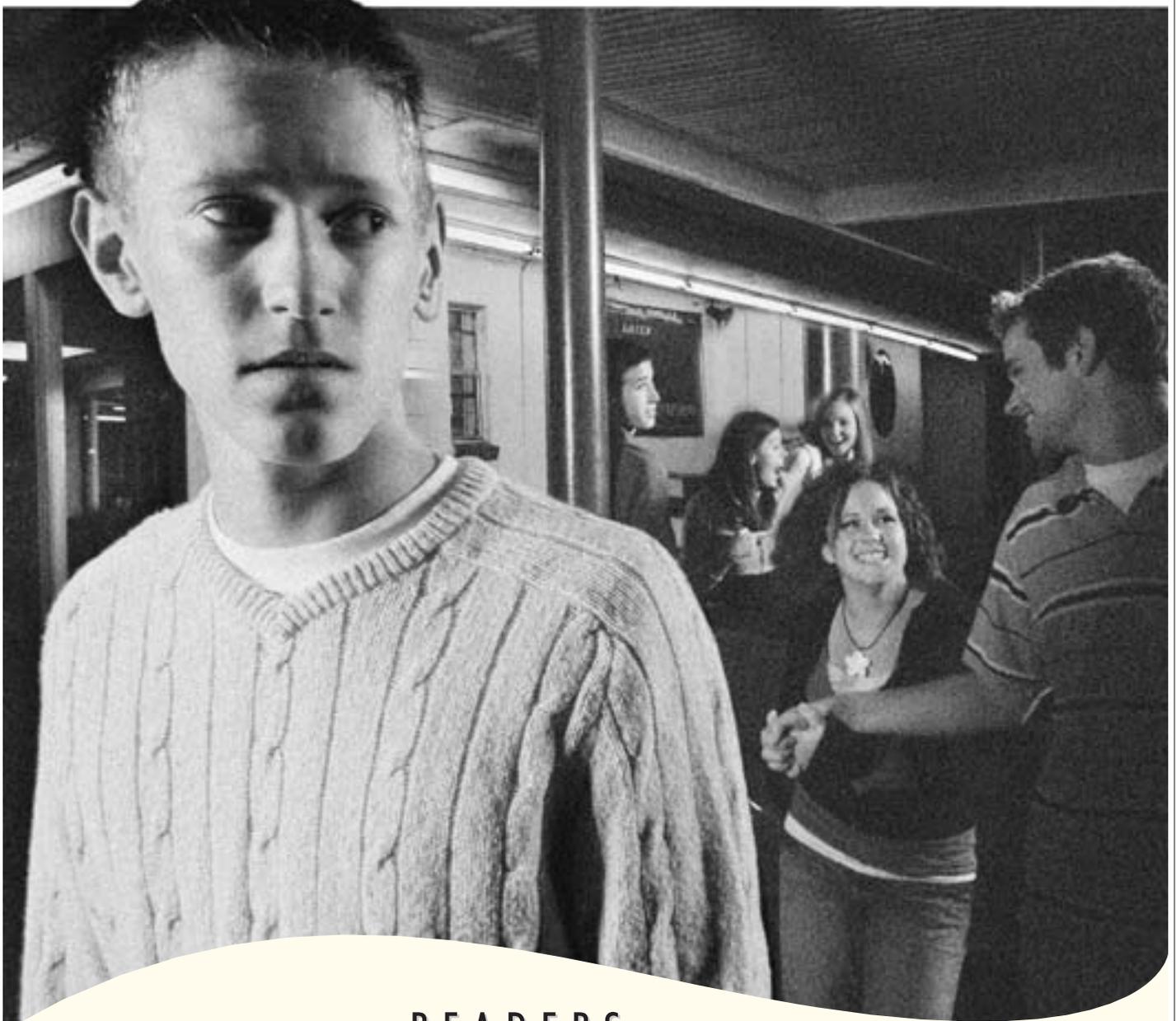
■ **There are lots of fun things you can do and still have the Spirit with you.**

■ **Every choice we make affects us—now and later. Things will turn out to be fair, especially in the next life.**

wholesome, happy life. But it’s not the most important thing in life. This life is “a time to prepare to meet God” (Alma 12:24). Spiritual growth is much more important than having fun.

As a member of the Church, you know that there are many fun things you can do that you won’t regret. Sports, outdoor activities, time with friends and family, and creative activities that use your talents are all good ways to have fun. If your activity stays within the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*, then you know it’s the kind of fun that will help you keep the Spirit with you.

You say it doesn’t seem fair that people who do wrong seem to be having fun. Actually, it is more fair than you, or they, may realize. Every choice affects us. Doing wrong always hurts that person and others involved. Doing right always improves that person and brings him or her blessings. In the next life, we will be held accountable for all of our thoughts and actions. Those who repent and are faithful in this life will be blessed



## READERS

with the greatest of all the gifts of God.

Your question is actually not a new one. The ancient Israelites said:

“It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance . . . ?

“And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered” (Malachi 3:14–15).

But the Lord taught them that He knows those who live faithfully; He writes their names in a book of remembrance (see v. 16). **NE**



**The scripture 3 Nephi 27:11–12 might help us answer this question. It states that “they have joy in their works for a season, and by and by the end cometh”**

**and “it is because of their works that they are hewn down.” We learn that, in fact, they will think they are having fun because the devil tricks them into believing there are no consequences for wrong choices. But in the end the devil will not support those he brings down. The fun is only temporary. We can find hope in the scripture Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.**

*Jon M., 15, California*



**Satan will try to entice us to make the wrong choice because he wants us to be miserable like himself. He tries to create the illusion that making**

**wrong choices leads to more fun. We can see through the illusion by thinking about the consequences that choice will eventually lead to. Remember that those who look like they may be having fun now will eventually have to repent later or suffer. If we look at the big picture, we will realize that it will be fair in the end. We need to remember that when a wrong choice seems appealing. The people**

**who are doing wrong are also trying to make their wrong choice seem fun to others so that they can temporarily escape their guilt.**

Tyler O., 15, Utah

**Part of the devil's plan is to make evil things look fun and glamorous. We may not realize it, but those who look like they are having fun making wrong choices suffer consequences. Sin is not worth committing. We have to stop and think about what we're going to do and think about the consequences before we do it.**

Alyssa K., 16, Indiana



**They seem to be having fun because that is how Satan wants you to see it. He makes doing wrong seem fun so he can capture you in his snare. He will use illusions to tempt you. It may not seem fair, but what of the consequences from doing wrong? Satan will not help you if you get in trouble. If you stay in good company though, it is easier to walk away from temptation.**

Sarah M., 16, Texas



**I don't think they are really having fun. I have seen many people abusing their bodies, and it may have been fun for them at the time, but they ended up with a lot of problems. They lost their parents' trust, they were being kicked out of their houses, they lost money, they had to go to rehabilitation, and many more bad things came because of this abuse. If you respect yourself, you will be happier.**

Heather R., 17, Alberta, Canada

**Fun is a very temporary thing. If fun is what you seek, you are cutting your potential short. Our true potential is to have the joy and peace given from God. The way to attain this is to keep the laws of the Lord placed before us to ensure our eternal joy. If we are doing what He wants us to do, we will reach our full potential and have joy, which is much better than a temporary rush of "fun."**

Andrea M., 17, Arizona



**“You are making a serious error if you mistake an emotional thrill that passes with the moment for the upsurge of deep feelings that is the joy of living. If one feels strong surges of happiness and desire from the quiet of a happy home, from the unfolding of a beautiful life, from the revelation of divine wisdom, or from a love for the beautiful, the true and good, he is having a taste of the fulness of the joy that the living of a rich, full life only can bring.”**

—President Harold B. Lee, *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1996), 621.

**I have a friend who is living a very poor lifestyle. He always appears to be happy on the surface, and yet I know of the internal pain and suffering his choices have caused him. People may experience temporary relief from this pain through substance abuse, immorality, etc., but that is all it is—temporary. Living unrighteously is never fun.**

Jenna M., 18, Utah



**I have a few friends who seem to have fun because of wrong choices they make, but in the end the wrong choice is never the right choice. Even though people may appear to be having fun, they feel empty on the inside. They do wrong things attempting to fill the emotional hole inside of them.**

Courtney D., 15, Utah



**When we come to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ, we are able to see the reality of true happiness. We come to understand the world and identify its unrighteousness.**

**If we understand the gospel, we will soon realize that no one is truly happy when doing wrong. Seek to obtain a strong testimony, and wrong acts will not seem fun and unfair to you anymore.**

Karina C., 21, Victoria, Australia

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

## NEXT QUESTION

**“I always feel good at church, but I don't feel the Spirit as much throughout the week. How can I feel closer to God at home, school, and work?”**

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

**New Era, Q&A, 2/07**

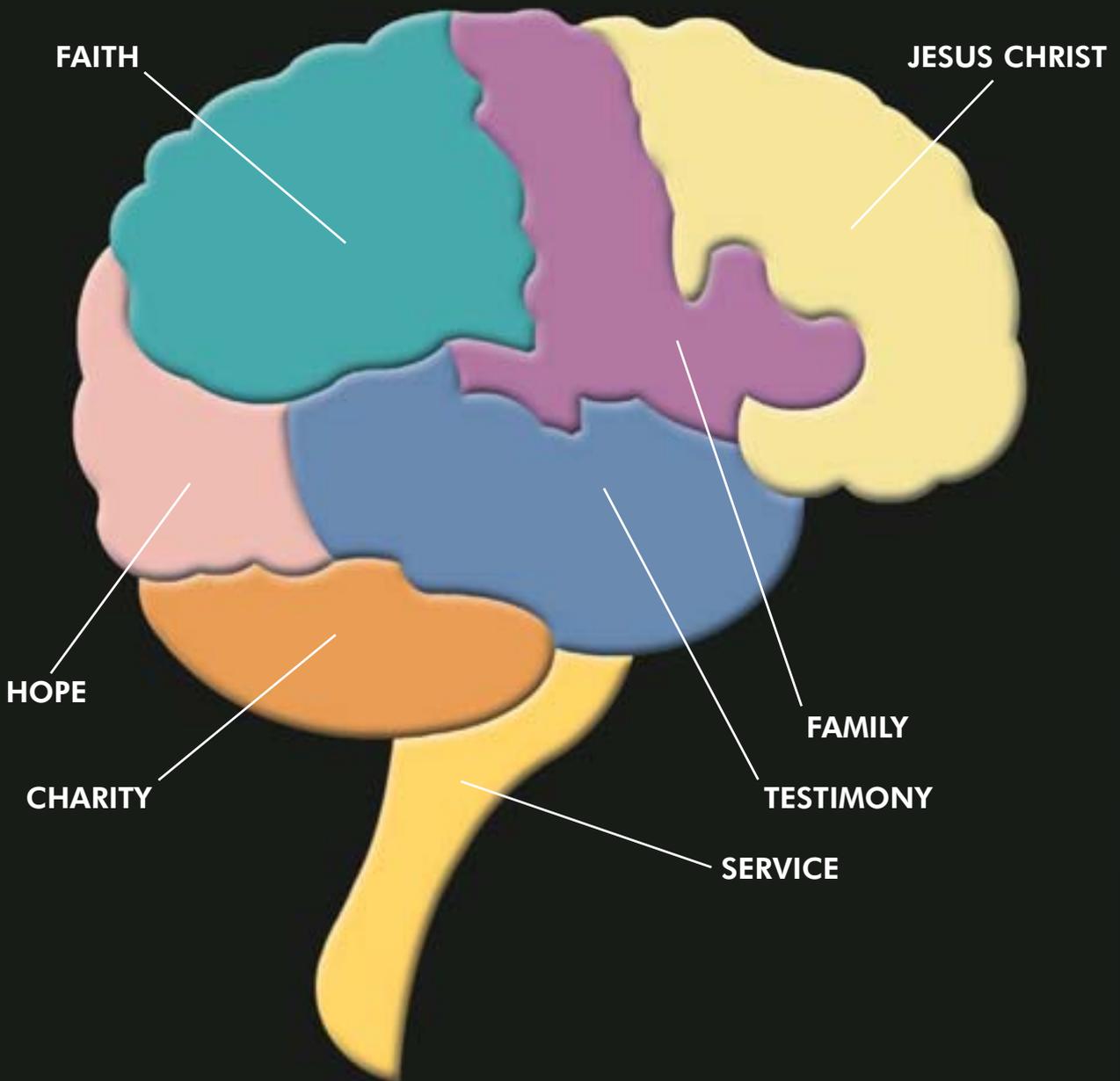
**50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420**

**Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA**

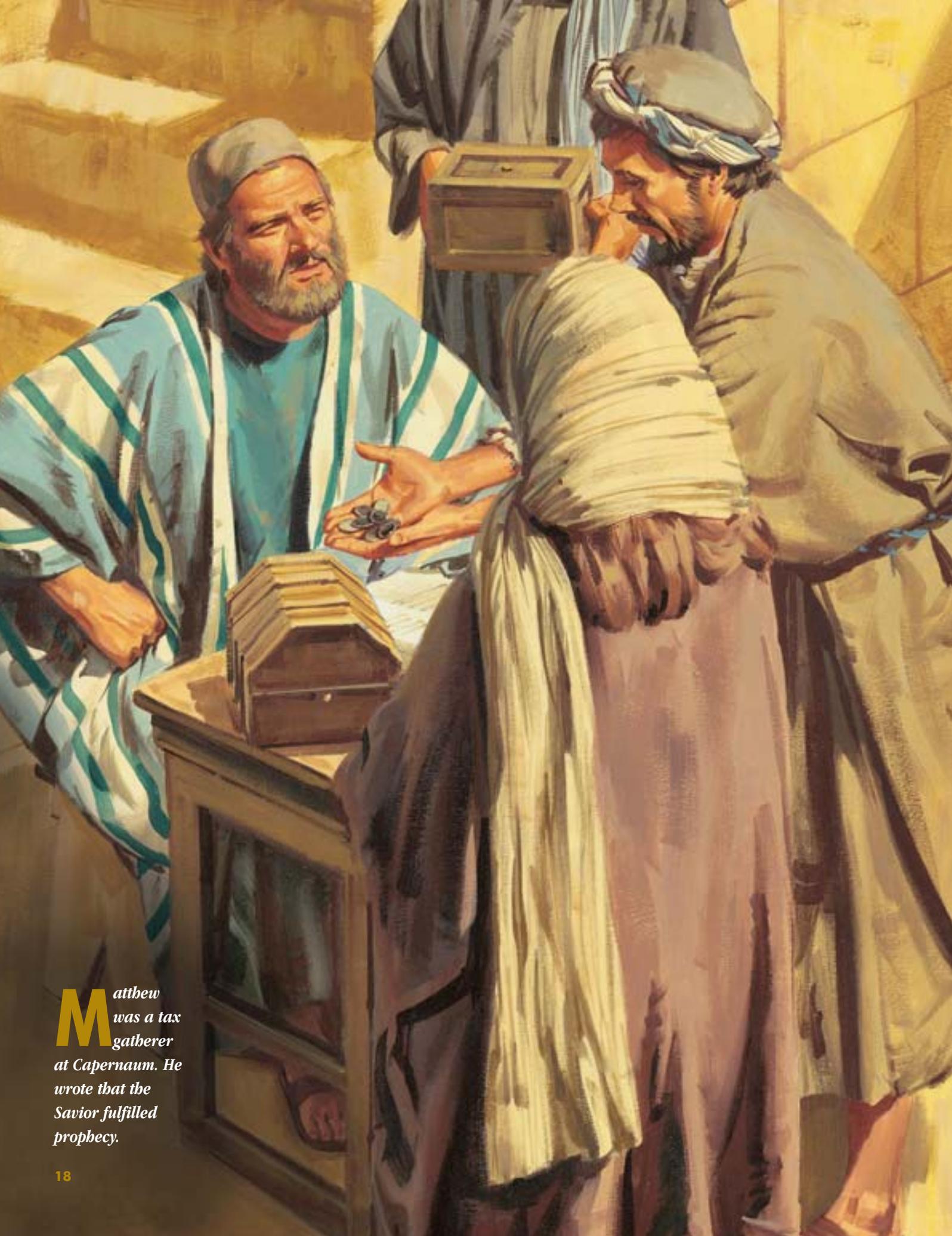
**Or e-mail: [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)**

**Please respond by February 15, 2007.**

# WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?



“LET VIRTUE GARNISH THY THOUGHTS UNCEASINGLY; THEN SHALL THY CONFIDENCE WAX STRONG IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD”  
(D&C 121:45).



**M**atthew was a tax gatherer at Capernaum. He wrote that the Savior fulfilled prophecy.



# Who Are **MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, and JOHN?**

BY JANET THOMAS  
Church Magazines

*A doctor, a fisherman, a tax collector, and another who was just a teenager when he heard the Savior speak, they wrote some of the most famous books in existence.*

**W**e recognize their names immediately. Their names are attached to the first four books of the New Testament. And most important of all, their writings are almost all we have describing the mortal life of Jesus Christ and the things He said.

The first four books of the New Testament are called the Gospels. It's easy to imagine why these books were written and why they have always been so important. Can you imagine how exciting it would have been for people who were just learning about the Savior to have someone read to them the things He said and did? These books have always been precious.

Matthew and John were two of the original Twelve Apostles. They were with the Savior often as He taught. But who were Mark and Luke, and how did they come to write about the Savior's life and ministry?

Here are a few things scholars know about the four men who wrote their testimonies of the Savior.<sup>1</sup>

## **Matthew**

Matthew was a publican, or tax collector, before he was called as one of the Lord's Apostles. Because of that profession, we can guess that he was well educated and knew how to read and write, probably in several languages, including Greek. He also knew arithmetic. He saw and heard many wonderful things while with the Savior, and it is likely he wrote down some of the sayings of the Savior as notes or in a journal. Later, these notes would have helped him when he wrote what he remembered about the teachings of Jesus.

In his book, Matthew often stresses that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and came to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies. Matthew wrote specifically to the Jews, who were familiar with those prophecies.

Matthew was a man who could have moved comfortably in political circles, and his book mentions things that someone in his position would know. For example, his account of the Resurrection tells that those assigned to guard the Savior's tomb saw two angels roll back the stone that covered the door of the tomb. They told their superiors what had happened, so the soldiers were offered large sums of money to say that the Lord's followers had crept in and carried His body away. This lie was then spread among the Jews. (See Matthew 28:2–15.)



**M**ark, also called John Mark, was the son of a woman named Mary, a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ who lived in Jerusalem.

Matthew must have been informed about the bribery. The book of Matthew is the only place this interesting bit of information is told.

### **Mark**

Mark was much younger than the other writers. His mother was a prominent follower of Jesus Christ. Acts 12:12 tells us that her house in Jerusalem was used as a meeting place for other disciples. From this verse we also learn that her son's full name is John Mark.

Mark was also a follower of Jesus Christ but would likely have been in his teens when the Lord was in Jerusalem. He may have seen and listened to the Savior on occasion. After the Resurrection, as the Savior's message was beginning to be spread, Mark traveled with the Apostle Paul. He then accompanied the Apostle Peter to Rome and stayed by him while he was in prison. Mark is known as Peter's interpreter, both in speech and in writing. As a fisherman from Galilee, Peter may not have spoken Greek fluently, so Mark interpreted for him.

In his book, Mark wrote down the observations and memories of Peter, one of the original Apostles. Mark's book reflects Peter's interest in spreading the gospel among the Gentiles.

### **Luke**

Luke is an interesting writer because he did not know Jesus Christ personally. He became a follower after the Lord's death, when Paul taught him the gospel. Luke had been a physician, but he left that profession to travel with Paul. He had the opportunity to talk with many of the Apostles as well as others who were eyewitnesses to special events or moments in the Lord's life. In the first few verses of his book, Luke says that he

is going to write the things that eyewitnesses and other teachers of the gospel had to say about the Savior. Apparently he had the opportunity to talk to many who were present when the Savior taught or performed miracles.

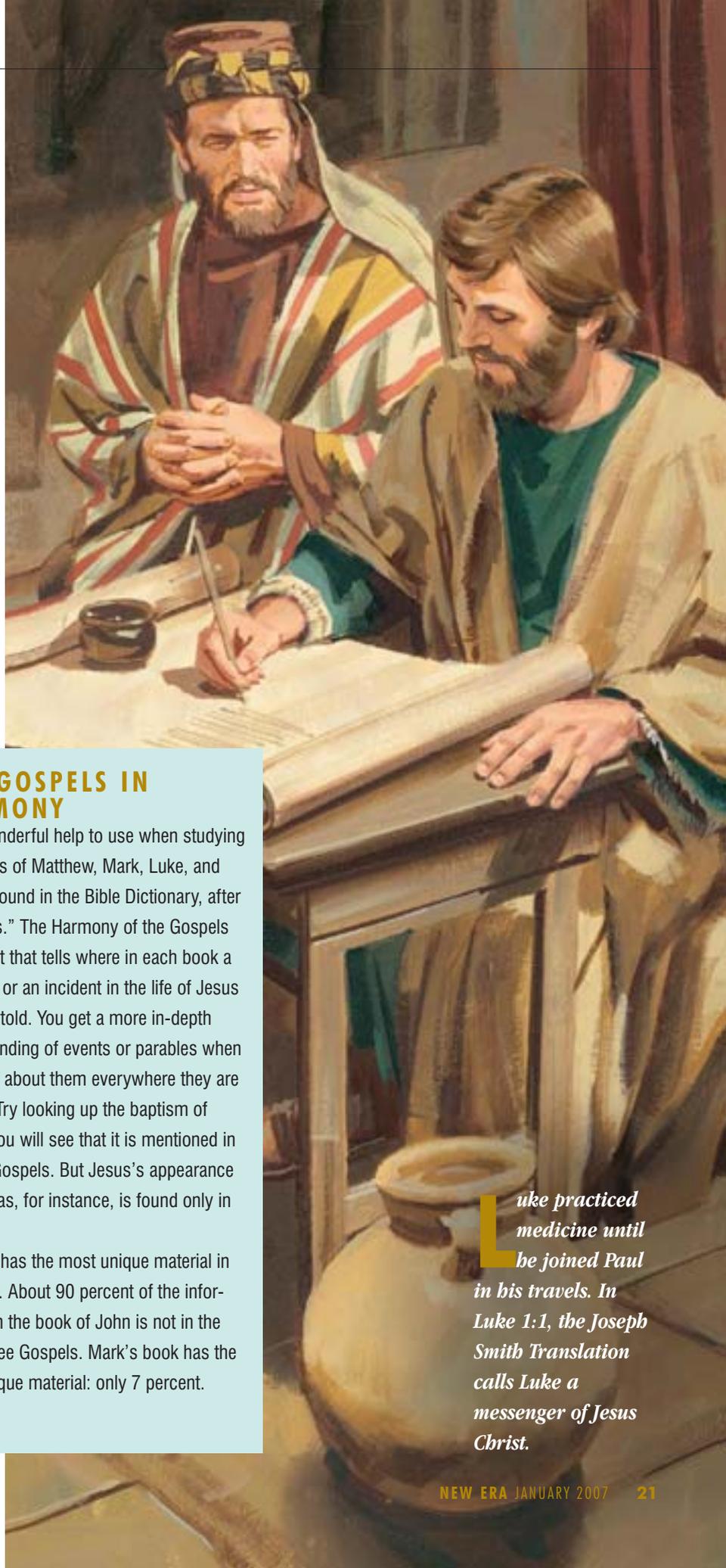
One of the most amazing stories Luke wrote about was the birth of the Savior. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles says that Luke probably got his information about Jesus’s birth from Mary herself.<sup>2</sup>

Who were the other people Luke interviewed about Jesus Christ? The list would have been long. Many of the people who knew the Savior would still have been alive and would have remembered such important times in their lives. Paul mentions that about 500 people saw the Savior after His Resurrection and that most of them were still alive when he was writing to the Corinthians (see 1 Corinthians 15:6).

### John

John, or John the Beloved as he was known, served as one of the Apostles. His book was probably written last, as John seems to have already read the other Gospels before he wrote his own book. Often, instead of telling his version of an event or parable the others had already written about, he writes about things the other writers did not include. Also, John’s Gospel includes the testimony of John the Baptist. It seems likely that he had some of the writings of John the Baptist.

John was writing to members of the Church, who already knew something of the Lord. John



### THE GOSPELS IN HARMONY

A wonderful help to use when studying the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is found in the Bible Dictionary, after “Gospels.” The Harmony of the Gospels is a chart that tells where in each book a teaching or an incident in the life of Jesus Christ is told. You get a more in-depth understanding of events or parables when you read about them everywhere they are written. Try looking up the baptism of Jesus. You will see that it is mentioned in all four Gospels. But Jesus’s appearance to Thomas, for instance, is found only in John.

John has the most unique material in his book. About 90 percent of the information in the book of John is not in the other three Gospels. Mark’s book has the least unique material: only 7 percent.

**L**uke practiced medicine until he joined Paul in his travels. In Luke 1:1, the Joseph Smith Translation calls Luke a messenger of Jesus Christ.



**J**ohn was a fisherman until Jesus called him as an Apostle. He was known as John the Beloved. John 21:22–23 and D&C 7 tell us that John did not die but remained on the earth.

emphasizes Jesus’s divine nature as the Son of God.

In the last five verses of his book, we find out what happened to John. Referring to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” John tells us that he would not die but would remain on earth until the Second Coming (see John 21:20–23; D&C 7).

#### **Four Separate Books**

Right after the Lord’s death and Resurrection and for many years afterward, each of the books written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John was a separate item, written on a separate scroll and copied over and over. The individual books weren’t put together into the New Testament until several hundred years after they were written. This explains John’s warning in Revelation 22:18: “If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.” Some people have interpreted this to mean that no other scriptures could be revealed after the book of Revelation, which in modern times is the last book of the Bible. But John was most likely warning people not to add anything to his writing only in the book of Revelation.

Eventually the four Gospels were joined with other valuable writings such as the letters that Paul and others wrote. Other original Apostles also wrote things that were copied repeatedly. Remnants of these writings survive, but it is difficult to determine which are authentic. When the New Testament was gathered into a single book, these writings were not included.

#### **The Rest of the New Testament**

After the four Gospels, the book of Acts records the events following the Ascension of the Savior. Most scholars agree that Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles. Nearly all the rest of the books in the New Testament are letters, or epistles. Paul wrote most of these, but also included are letters written by James, Peter, John, and Jude. The book of Revelation, written by John, concludes the collection we now call the New Testament. **NE**

#### **NOTES**

1. Information in this article came from Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet, eds., *Studies in Scripture, Volume 5: The Gospels* (1986).
2. See *The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 4 vols. (1979–81), 1:324.

# OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

**A** sure way to overcome temptation is to avoid it in the first place. President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, tells of visiting a wild-animal park in Africa where he was warned to stay away from even the smallest puddle. Any place with water—even the water-filled footprints of elephants—could easily have a crocodile lurking nearby. (See “Spiritual Crocodiles,” *New Era*, Oct. 2001, 8.)

**The following ideas will help you avoid those dangerous “puddles”:**

- Avoid places and situations where you know temptation might be lurking. Otherwise, it’s like hanging around the bakery while you are dieting.
- Be careful of people who don’t have your standards and who don’t respect them. It’s OK to be friendly; you can invite them to your good activities. But avoid their territory.
- Watch the clock. When it’s late and you are tired, your resistance is lower.

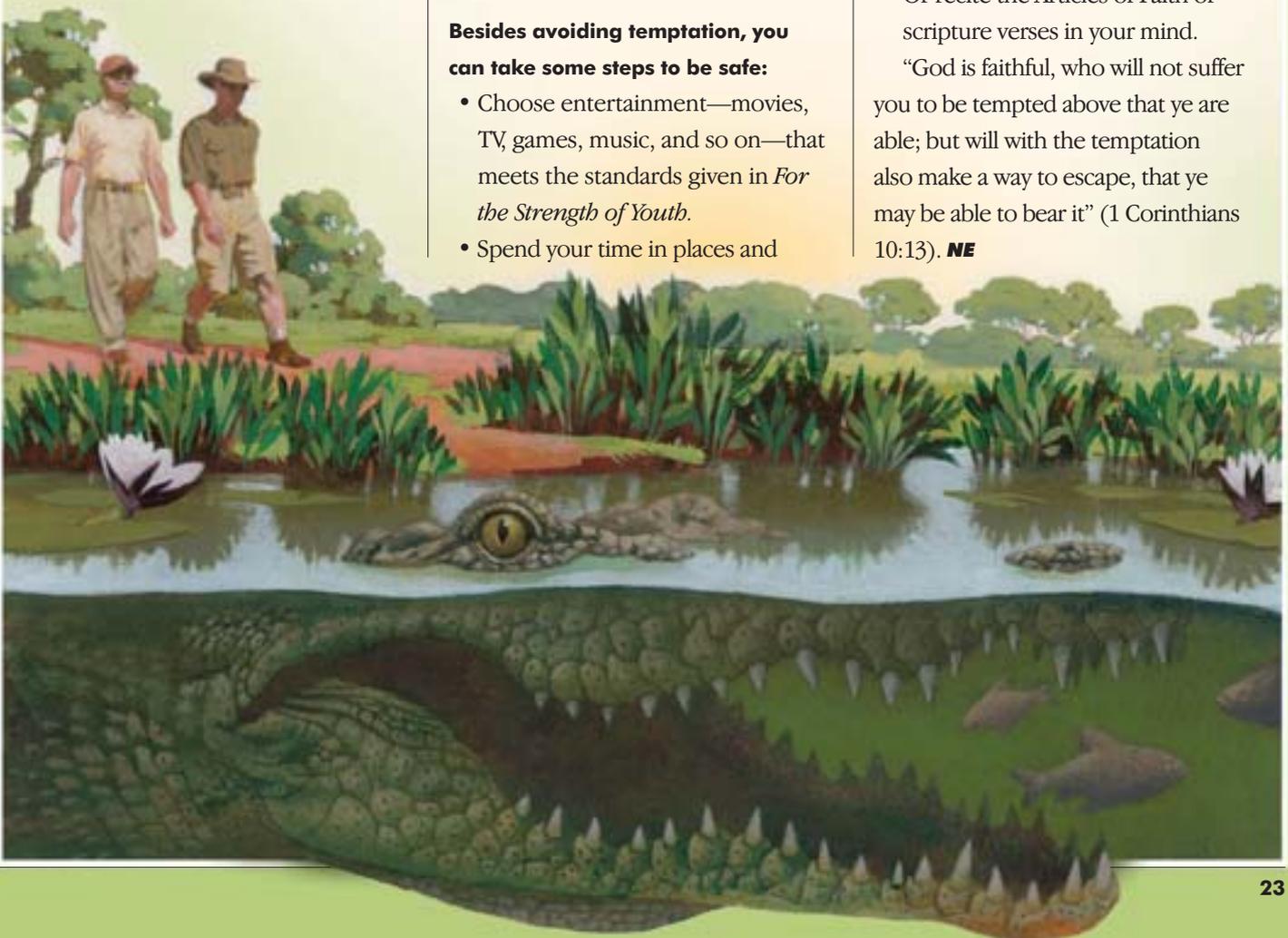
**Besides avoiding temptation, you can take some steps to be safe:**

- Choose entertainment—movies, TV, games, music, and so on—that meets the standards given in *For the Strength of Youth*.
- Spend your time in places and

activities that are good for you, with people who have high standards.

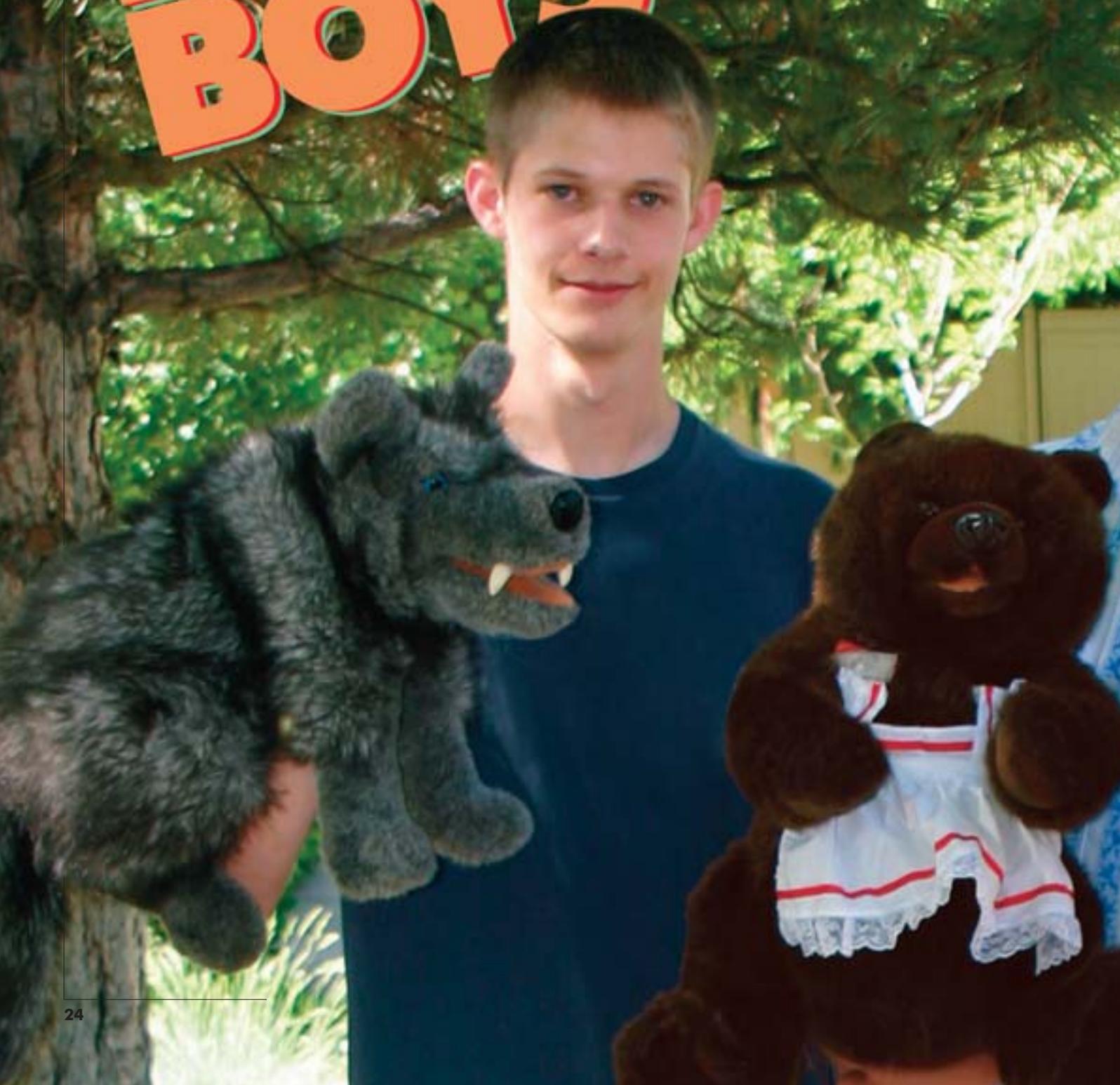
- Keep up your spiritual strength with daily prayer and scripture study and weekly Church attendance.
- Improve your memory. Remember your baptismal covenant. Remember that you want to be worthy to take the sacrament. Remember the Savior and what He did for you.
- Memorize the words to a favorite hymn. Sing it or think about it when unwelcome thoughts come. Or recite the Articles of Faith or scripture verses in your mind.

“God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). **NE**



# The PUPPET BOYS

BY RILEY M. LORIMER





*To children in need of attention, these priests are more than mere puppeteers.*

Last December, two small boys extended a very special dinner invitation to Alec Ferguson, Jimmy Rasband, and Brandon Clayton, priests in the Provo Edgemont Stake. The young boys, who came from a high-risk home, invited their teenage friends as guests of honor.

“Apparently they were in a situation where they didn’t have a dad in the family. And so they kind of looked up to us three guys as father figures,” Brandon recalls with a smile. It’s one of his favorite memories of his high school years. He loves spending time with the children who have come to know and love him, Alec,

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR



**T**he puppet shows last only a few minutes, but the boys often play with the children for hours afterward.

and Jimmy as “the puppet boys.”

For the past three years, Alec, Jimmy, and Brandon have been volunteering their time once a month as puppeteers at Kids on the Move, a care program for children at a local hospital. Recently, the boys added a weekly show at the Family Support and

Treatment Center in their hometown of Orem, Utah. In both venues, the boys perform for children in high-risk situations.

And although the work can be draining, it’s also the highlight of their week.

“It’s so fun! It’s like being a kid again,” says Brandon.

### **Selfless Service**

In the last year alone, Alec, Jimmy, and Brandon have performed more than 100 hours of service with their puppet shows. In doing so, they have completed the service requirements for their Duty to God awards. Each of the boys has also qualified for the Presidential Service award, which is awarded to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding volunteer service and civic participation. But for these boys, it’s not about the awards—it’s about the kids.

“It’s cool to say we did 100 hours of service in a year,” says Brandon, “but I think the best thing that’s come out of this for me is just that great feeling that you get knowing that you’ve helped someone or that you’ve brought a smile to a child’s face—a child that probably doesn’t get that happiness too often in life.”

Alec, Jimmy, and Brandon are famous among the children at both facilities. The children frequently ask when the puppet boys are



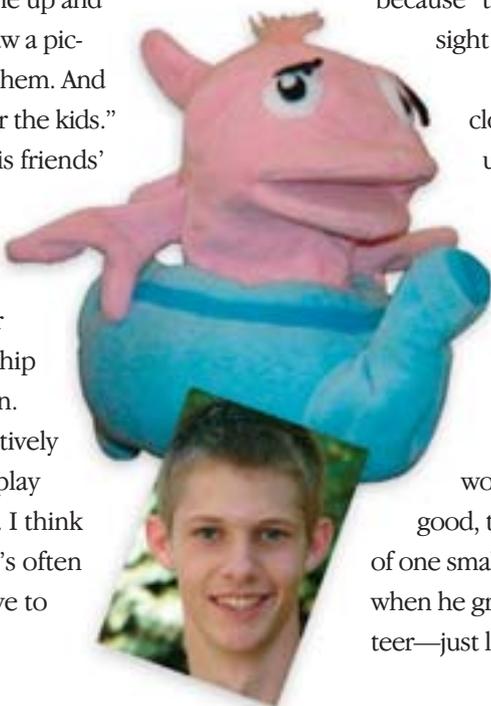
coming. When the three teenagers walk through the door, they are greeted by countless hugs and shouts of delight. The puppet shows that they perform last only about 20 minutes, but the boys often stay for several hours to play with their young friends. Each of the boys has made a connection in his own way with the children they serve.

“Brandon will really get into playing with the kids, and they love him for it. Sometimes 15 kids just come to him at the same time. He’s really lovable when it comes to the kids,” says Alec.

Brandon says, “Jimmy is always there for the kids that maybe don’t look like they have someone giving them one-on-one attention. Jimmy goes right over there and makes friends. He’s always there for them when they need him.”

In addition to doing the puppet show, the boys draw pictures with the children. Alec’s artistic talents make him a favorite. “They’re fascinated by Alec’s drawing ability,” says Brandon. “I’ve seen it where literally 18 kids have come up and asked him to draw a picture for each of them. And he does it just for the kids.”

Jimmy says his friends’ enthusiasm and willingness to serve are the reasons for their special relationship with the children. “They go and actively participate and play with all the kids. I think with little kids it’s often that you just have to be there.”



### Setting the Example

Francesca Lawson, Alec’s mother, often goes with the boys when they perform their shows. She describes the response of the children’s mothers. “There was one mother who said, ‘My children don’t have many positive role models in their lives. My boys really look forward every month to coming and being with these guys, because they’re positive male role models.’ I was touched by that. I don’t think these boys totally understand what a difference they’ve made.”

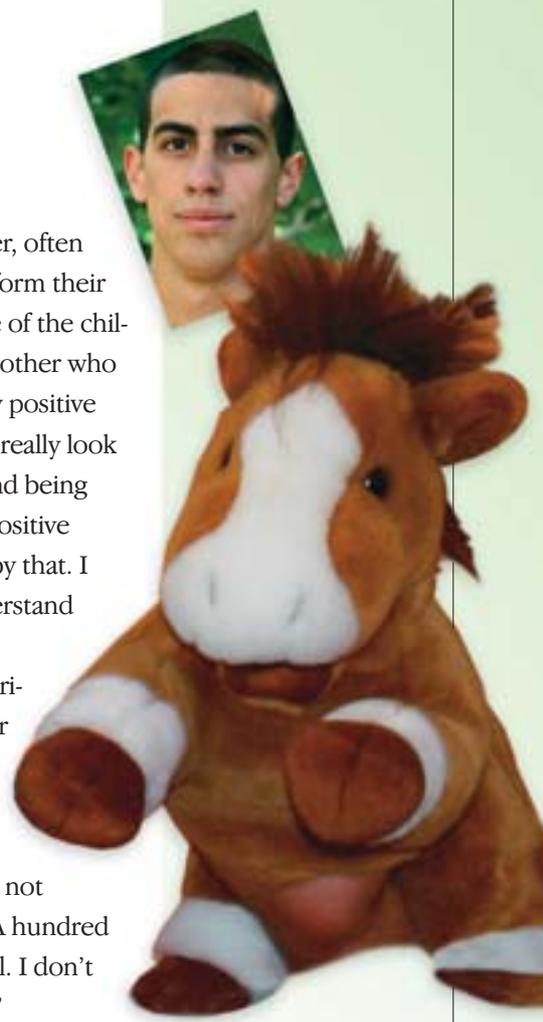
All three boys feel that the experience has blessed them with greater understanding.

“It’s not like it takes special people to be able to give service,” says Alec. “It’s not difficult, and it’s not necessarily very time-consuming. A hundred hours out of a year is not a lot at all. I don’t think enough people give service.”

Jimmy says he learned the importance of taking time to get to know individual children, because “the worth of souls is great in the sight of God” (D&C 18:10).

Brandon says he has gained a closeness to the Savior and a greater understanding of charity. “It’s helped me to be more Christlike. And in a lot of ways, I feel closer to the Lord, especially when I’m serving. It makes me feel like I’m doing good in life—like I’m doing okay.”

If these three friends should ever wonder whether they’ve done any good, they need only remember the words of one small boy who recently announced that when he grows up, he wants to be a volunteer—just like the puppet boys. **NE**



**A**lec, Jimmy, and Brandon use their unique talents to connect with the children, many of whom do not have a male role model at home.



# SERVE IT FORWARD

BY JORDAN MUHLESTEIN

*We were stranded and in need of help; we didn't realize that we were just one link in a chain.*

**A** cloud of Mexican dust consumed the minivan, and Jeff drove blind for a moment.

A moment was enough.

A sharp grinding sound from under the vehicle made the barren landscape suddenly seem menacing, and as soon as the dust had cleared among the dry, crusty cactus, Jeff, Brandon, and I climbed out to inspect the damage.

We had driven to Baja Mexico in Jeff's mother's car to spend the last week before school camping, surfing, and remembering Spanish from our missions, but our excitement quickly changed into dry-mouthed worry.

Jeff looked below the car and found that a large rock had punctured the oil pan. A pool of thick, black motor oil was spreading on the dirt. We tried to stop the leak with a towel, but the slimy oil spread into it. The flow couldn't be stopped. This wasn't good.

As we tried to figure out how far it was to town, a truck we had seen earlier at the beach pulled up in a cloud of dust. A tan man with shaggy hair leaned out the window and asked what was wrong.

"We put a hole in our oil pan," Jeff said.

"We tried to plug it, but it didn't work."

"Hold on," said the man. "I have some stuff that could help."

He and his wife climbed down from the truck, and after fishing around in a toolbox, he produced a tube of self-hardening epoxy made specifically for sealing oil pans.

*Wow, are we lucky,* I thought.

While her husband was putting the epoxy on our car, his wife explained that they had just had battery trouble with their truck and had needed a jump start from someone else.

"So we get to help you now," she said. "Now it's your turn to help someone."

Her comment made me think, and I promised myself that I would help someone in need the first chance I got.

The couple drove off, and we waited an hour for the epoxy to harden. As we waited, we all expressed our gratitude for the couple and marveled at the perfect timing we had had in driving down the deserted road at about the same time they had. And they had happened to have something that could fix our problem.

We decided to say a prayer of thanks, and as we prayed, we knew our Father in Heaven

**O**ur cracked oil pan wouldn't stop leaking. We needed help. But where would it come from?



was looking out for us personally, even in that remote desert in Mexico.

When the car was ready to go, we started on our way again, slowly, down the coast. A short time later we saw two young Mexican parents and their two toddlers standing next to a car with a mangled tire. Our opportunity to help had come sooner than I expected.

We spoke with them and offered to take them to their home a few miles down the road. They gratefully accepted and piled into the back seat.

Two dusty little hands plunged into our box of crackers as we bumped along that rocky dirt road in the Mexican desert. Now seven people were crammed into the minivan, along with a cooler, two surfboards, camping gear, and a pile of oily towels.

As the toddlers eagerly devoured the last cracker crumbs and we joked with their parents, I realized that this was what helping was all about. It didn't matter how much it cost the man to give us the epoxy or how far out of our way we went to take the family home. We all knew we had done the right thing, and the feeling was worth more than anything in the world. **NE**

Corey (far right), dressed in his school uniform, leans on a pile of books that represent his favorite subjects. (Right) The Karaka family photo. Corey is the oldest of six sons. (Below) One of the oldest buildings on the campus of his school.

# REACHING FOR THE TOP

BY JANET THOMAS  
Church Magazines

*Trying new things and new subjects helps Corey grow in areas that surprised him.*

**A**ustralian Corey Karaka knows that each challenge, change, or opportunity can help you grow.

Corey Karaka grew up in a suburb of Sydney, Australia, where, as the oldest of six brothers, he grew up like many typical Australian boys. He played rugby, soccer, basketball, and learned to swim. In fact, he quickly became a good enough swimmer to make it to the national swimming championships at the age of 12, qualifying a year early. As a boy, Corey thought he actually might want to make swimming his career, but then a whole world full of choices started coming his

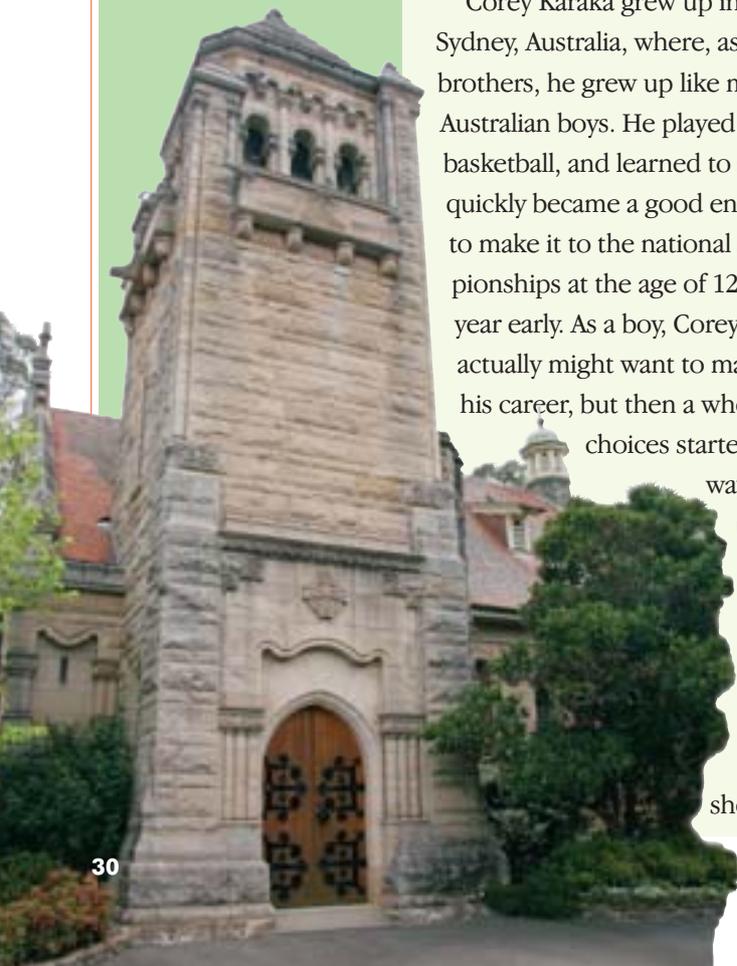
way, and he began taking advantage of some great opportunities.

#### **Taking New Opportunities**

First was his short opera career.



Opera? Why would a boy who loved sports want anything to do with opera? But Sydney, after all, has one of the most famous opera houses in the world. And Corey just happened to have a grandmother who had been an opera singer. She taught her grandson (in fact, she teaches music lessons to all her grandchildren) to sing while he was still a boy soprano. Corey auditioned and was hired to sing with Opera Australia. He remembers it as a fun time, going to rehearsals and dressing up in makeup and costumes. Corey says, "It wasn't an intense experience for children. There are scenes





**A**t one time Corey thought he would pursue championship swimming, but after he was accepted to The King's School, he concentrated on academics and music—and seminary.



where you come in as part of the chorus. It's a shame that my voice broke, but it was a good experience." Plus, his mother, Caragh, says, "He put away the money he earned for a mission and university."

Just as he was ready to enter high school, another opportunity presented itself, one Corey was more than prepared for. He was a great swimmer. He had a good singing voice, and his grades were excellent.

Why not try for admission to one of the most prestigious preparatory schools in New South Wales? He also had a little luck on his side. "I applied for a scholarship at King's School. I took a test and performed a piece of music. At first there were no scholarships available at all, but at the school they

thought they would have me do the tests and offer me a scholarship for the next year. On the day that I did my tests and performed, another person was offered a scholarship and withdrew. I took his place. I was at King's School the next four years." As it turned out, he was also the only Latter-day Saint student attending there.

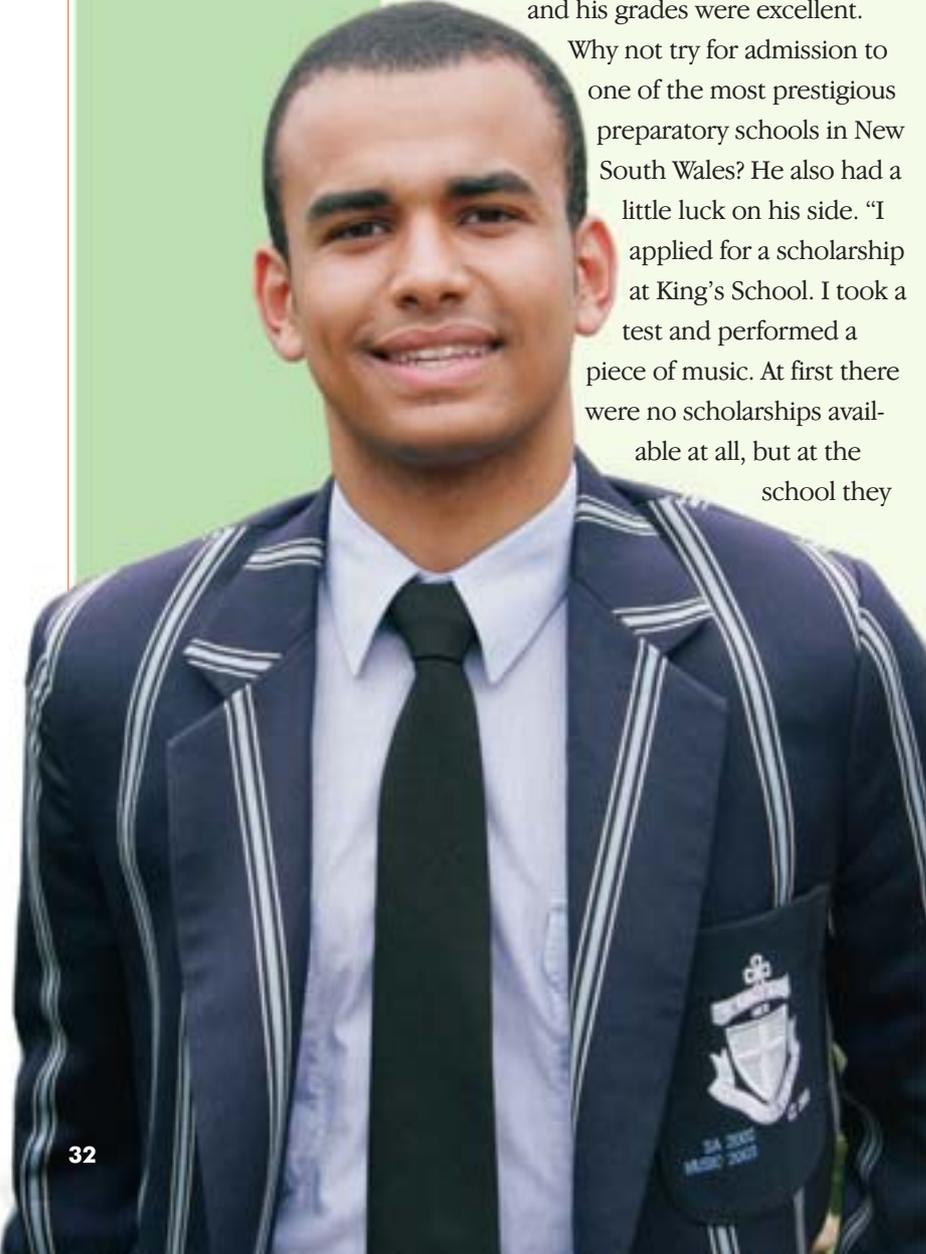
In school Corey loved the sciences and maths at first. But an English teacher changed Corey's mind as to his favorite subjects. Ever since, he has loved literature and history. He now easily admits to liking some of the oldest literature ever written in English like *Beowulf* and the works of Chaucer.

### **Making Hard Choices**

Even though Corey was constantly busy with his academic studies and activities such as debate and drama, he made the choice to attend early morning seminary. He knew he would have to give up something, and that something was swimming. By then he knew he wanted to focus on academics, and that made dropping swimming much easier. Seminary, on the other hand, was too valuable. Corey says, "I've known all my life that I would take seminary. It is very helpful in understanding the scriptures. If you study the scriptures every day, you come to a better understanding of what they are all about."

From his seminary study, Corey now has a favorite passage of scripture. "It's when Jesus approaches a Samaritan woman at a well. She's rather taken aback by His approaching her. But what He teaches her is a simple affirmation of how one can gain one's testimony. Her experience wasn't full of drama or revelations. It was incredibly simple and beautiful yet deep and profound. 'Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

'But whosoever drinketh of the water that



I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life' (John 4:13-14).

"The living water is the gospel. It's a deep hope for eternal happiness. It's an everlasting hope for eternal life and to be with God and to be with one's family in an eternal and celestial kingdom. I think that scripture, that passage, best expresses that hope."

Corey's introduction to scripture study came from his grandfather. He remembers going to visit him. Each morning at breakfast, his grandfather had them read scriptures together. "I used to dislike it," says Corey. "But now I realize that doing it is essential to strengthen one's testimony. My grandfather was an incredible example of adhering to the gospel and to Christ. I respect him so much for that."

#### As Number One

Corey has now graduated from King's School. At the conclusion of his studies there, he was named Dux (pronounced like ducks), meaning he is the top scholar in his class, like a valedictorian.

It was not a goal Corey set for himself but one he achieved by focusing on the subjects he enjoyed.

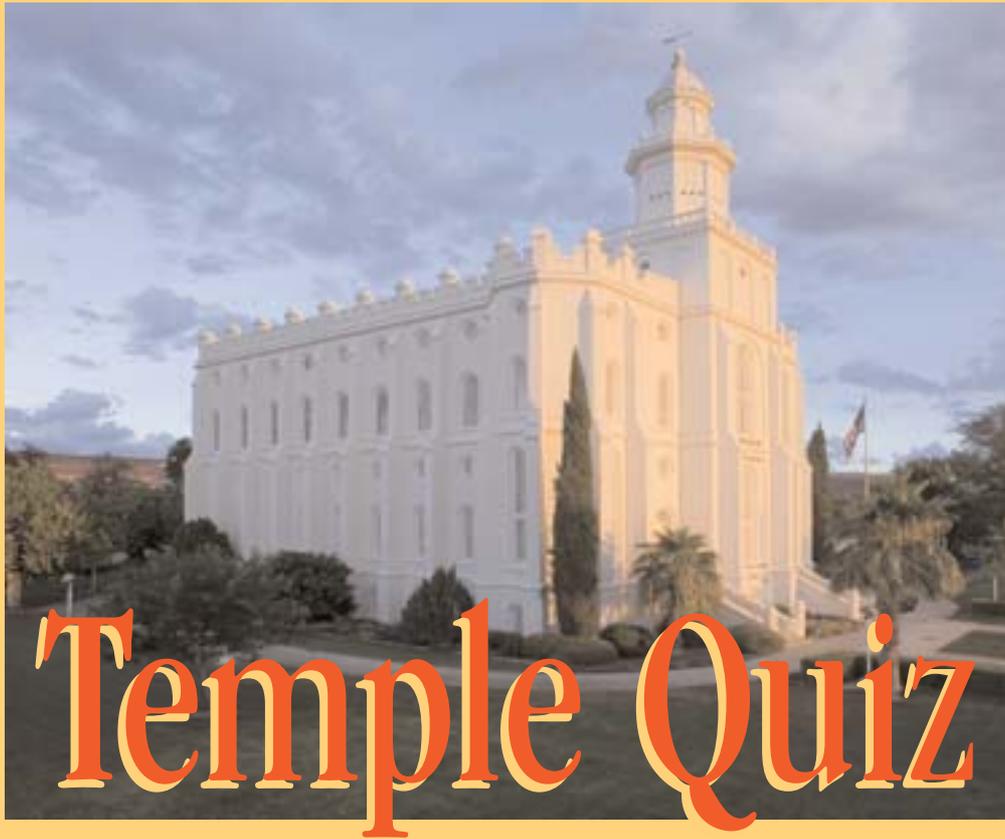
In fact, that's some good advice Corey has for doing well in school. "I guess you just have to focus your energy on the things you like. When I do that, I'm more motivated and willing to put in more time." But as Corey has proven, if you are willing to try new things and new subjects, your interests can expand and grow into areas that may surprise you as they have him.

Corey has an excellent example about trying something new. When his stake announced they were going to have a pioneer trek, he thought he wouldn't go.

He couldn't imagine walking around in 19th-century-style clothing, pushing a heavy cart with all his gear in it. But as the time for the trek came, Corey found himself wanting to try. He says, "The experience was incredibly beneficial because it gave me an insight into what the pioneers had to go through. My understanding was broadened. It was hard, but it showed me that perseverance is necessary to gain a great testimony. I think you have to experience some pressure and difficulty in order for that testimony to be tested and then become strong."

Corey doesn't limit himself or his interests. As a result, he keeps reaching for the top at home, at school, and in living the gospel. **NE**





# Temple Quiz

**1.** With 10 spires of different heights, this temple has more spires than any other.

- A. Oakland California
- B. Salt Lake
- C. San Diego California
- D. Washington D.C.

**2.** This was the first temple constructed in Africa.

- A. Aba Nigeria
- B. Accra Ghana
- C. Johannesburg South Africa
- D. Kiev Ukraine

**3.** This temple was originally constructed with a horizontal, flying angel Moroni atop its tower.

- A. Nauvoo Illinois
- B. St. George Utah

- C. Salt Lake
- D. Stockholm Sweden

**4.** A Tudor-style manor house sits on the grounds of this temple.

- A. Helsinki Finland
- B. London England
- C. Perth Australia
- D. Preston England

**5.** This was the first temple constructed in Asia.

- A. Hong Kong China
- B. Manila Philippines
- C. Seoul Korea
- D. Tokyo Japan

**6.** This temple has a white quartz exterior offset by a striking blue tile roof.

- A. Hamilton New Zealand

- B. Recife Brazil
- C. Santo Domingo Dominican Republic
- D. Sydney Australia

**7.** This was the first temple constructed in South America.

- A. Bogotá Colombia
- B. Lima Peru
- C. Santiago Chile
- D. São Paulo Brazil

**8.** This temple's tower was hit by lightning, burned away, and was then rebuilt.

- A. Apia Samoa
- B. Cardston Alberta
- C. Papeete Tahiti
- D. St. George Utah

**9.** This was the 100th operating temple of the

**Church.**

- A. Bountiful Utah
- B. Boston Massachusetts
- C. Halifax Nova Scotia
- D. Medford Oregon

**10.** This temple took 40 years to build.

- A. Logan Utah
- B. Manti Utah
- C. Nauvoo Illinois
- D. Salt Lake

**11.** The site of this temple was once a pecan orchard.

- A. Atlanta Georgia
- B. Baton Rouge Louisiana
- C. Ciudad Juárez México
- D. Dallas Texas

**12.** This was the first temple built outside the United States.

- A. Bern Switzerland
- B. Cardston Alberta
- C. Frankfurt Germany
- D. London England

**13.** This was the only temple built and dedicated in a communist country.

- A. Aba Nigeria
- B. Freiberg Germany
- C. Hong Kong China
- D. Kiev Ukraine

**14.** This was the first temple constructed in Europe.

- A. Bern Switzerland
- B. Frankfurt Germany
- C. Freiberg Germany
- D. London England

Answers: 1c, 2c, 3a, 4b, 5d, 6d, 7d, 8d, 9b, 10d, 11d, 12b, 13b, 14a



# LET'S DANCE

“If thou art merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving” (D&C 136:28).

Nearly 1,300 young men and women, ages 12–18, from the Bellingham, Bothell, Lynnwood, Marysville, Mount Vernon, Shoreline and Snohomish Washington Stakes performed in a

multi-stake dance festival last April.

In three performances youth danced an Asian fan and ribbon dance, a Russian Cossack dance, and a Samoan Sasa, with additional dances from Africa, Germany, South America, and Tahiti. Along with the traditional dances from

around the world, the performances included unique dances specially choreographed for the festival.

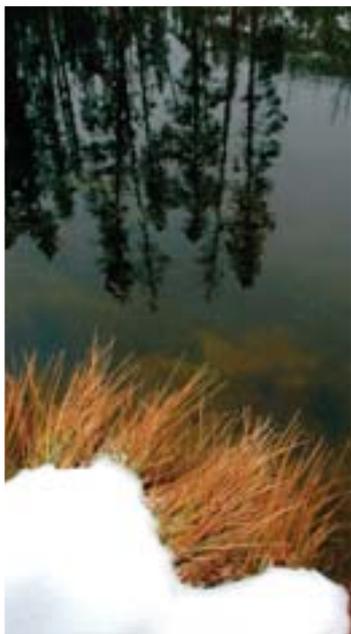
The event theme was “Celebrating a Life Well Lived,” in honor of President Gordon B. Hinckley. It was attended by nearly 10,000 residents of western Washington.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE BELLINGHAM, BOTHELL, LYNNWOOD, MARYSVILLE, MOUNT VERNON, SHORELINE, SNOHOMISH WASHINGTON STAKES

## TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT

Have you looked at the inside back cover of your *New Era* lately? There’s always a great photo and a great poem. Now to the point—we need more great photos! So, all you budding photographers, start snapping. Take pictures of people, landscapes, interesting things; go ahead and be creative. Remember that your pictures don’t have to be particularly “churchy” either.

Send in your slides or



prints, or send the electronic photo file if you’re shooting digital images. Just make sure to use your digital camera’s highest setting; preferably use a camera resolution of 5 megapixels or better. So, what’s the address?

*New Era*, Photo  
50 E. North Temple St.,  
Rm. 2420  
Salt Lake City, UT  
84150-3223, USA  
Or attach the photo file to an e-mail to:  
newera@ldschurch.org.

“If we choose the wrong road, we choose the wrong destination.”

—Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Be Not Deceived,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 44.

# GOOD WORK

BY ELDER STEPHEN B. OVESON

Formerly of the Seventy

*Those who successfully seek out job opportunities gain a sense of accomplishment and security that is far superior to merely having fun.*

**O**ne important need I see for you, today's young people, is to learn how to work. Everyone needs to feel at least partially self-sustaining and self-supporting, and I wonder whether these feelings may be slipping away or ignored.

I know you often have a difficult time finding jobs, but the problem can become worse if you have too many activities that take away from the opportunity to learn how to work. My observation is that many teens think they must constantly be dancing, playing soccer or football, or participating in other sports or recreational activities.

These teens seem to hope that participating in sports or recreational activities will somehow take care of all their other needs. I don't think it does, and I'm con-

vinced they must instead find other ways to learn how to work hard.

## Learn While Young

I grew up in a small town and participated in a 4-H club that each year required me to purchase a lamb or a calf to raise. I had to maintain a workbook to keep track of what I paid for feed, veterinarian bills, and anything else I needed. The most memorable lamb I had was when I was nine. I bought a Southdown-cross lamb from a farmer and took good care of it. My dad helped me, and the county agent met with members of the club periodically to sign off in our workbooks. I

learned how to raise and show that lamb, including shearing it so it would look its best.

I ended up taking it to The Dalles,



*I'm especially convinced that having a job is one of the best ways possible to prepare for the rigors of serving missions. Jobs teach many kinds of skills—especially the ability to work hard and work effectively.*

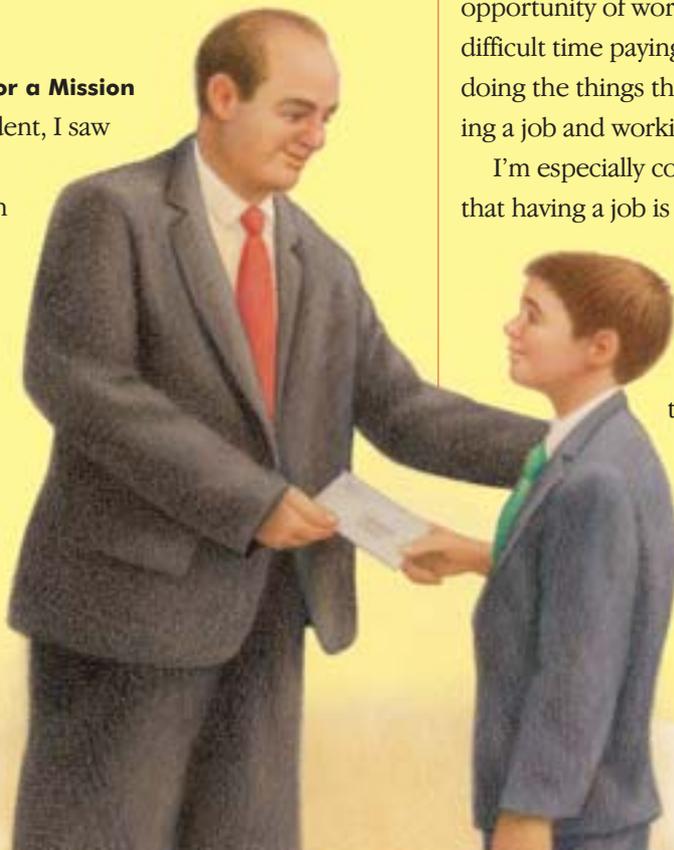




Oregon, livestock show, and I won the grand-champion prize. The lamb weighed 92 pounds, and I received \$2.50 per pound for my efforts. For a nine-year-old, that was a lot of money. And because of the records I had kept, I knew how much I earned after costs. For me, that was good training. For the last 20 years, I have been self-employed. I've paid my tithing on the same basis I learned when I was nine.

### **Work Prepares You for a Mission**

As a mission president, I saw a lot of young men come into the mission field who had never paid tithing. They taught investigators the principle of tithing, citing scriptures and quoting prophets about the need to pay tithing, but they had no firsthand testimony of the blessings



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

that come from paying tithing. Many of them saw their parents pay tithing, but they themselves had neither earned a paycheck nor felt the good feelings of giving 10 percent to the Lord. They were missing the feeling that comes from fulfilling that commandment of the Lord and supporting His Church.

I am afraid that young people who have not had the opportunity of working hard and paying tithing will have a difficult time paying their tithing and fast offerings and doing the things that those of us who grew up while holding a job and working hard learned to do.

I'm especially convinced, based on what I've observed, that having a job is one of the best ways possible to prepare for the rigors of serving missions.

I guarantee you will be a better missionary if you have experienced the success of working a job satisfactorily than if you have never held down a job. Jobs teach many kinds of skills—especially the ability to work hard and work effectively.

### **Many Ways to Work**

You can learn to work in many ways. In my little town of 300

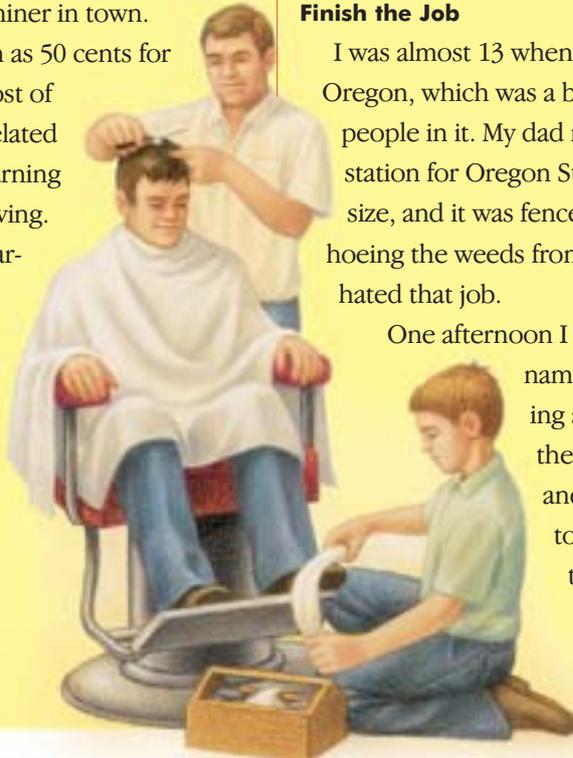


people where I spent the first 12 years of my life, I mowed many lawns for those who would pay me for that service. For a while, I also delivered *The Dalles Chronicle*, our local newspaper.

At that time, our town had only one barbershop, and it had a shoeshine stand in it. When I was 10 and 11, I reigned supreme as the best shoe shiner in town. Some Saturday nights, I got as much as 50 cents for shining a pair of shoes, although most of the time I received a quarter. I was elated with the feelings I experienced in earning my own money for spending and saving.

One lesson I learned from that barber in the town of Moro, Oregon, I have never forgotten. I came in late one day, and I started making up an excuse for my lateness. He got my attention and said, “Look, I’ve been in the army, and I’ve heard every possible excuse. Just tell me the truth, and we’ll get along fine.”

That counsel has stuck with me ever since. Every time I



start to make an excuse for a mistake, I remember that nothing is gained with the excuse process. As a result, one of my mottoes is “Don’t make excuses. Either do the job or don’t do the job. When appropriate, express sorrow for not doing the job—but don’t make excuses.”

### Finish the Job

I was almost 13 when my family moved to Pendleton, Oregon, which was a big town to me with about 6,000 people in it. My dad ran the agricultural experimental station for Oregon State University. It was 168 acres in size, and it was fenced all the way around. I had a job hoeing the weeds from under the fence, and initially I hated that job.

One afternoon I was hoeing weeds with a friend named Arlen Jenkins. I was complaining and moaning and groaning about the hard work, but he looked at me and said, “You know, you really need to consider that if we weren’t doing this, we might be doing something worse.” That was his attitude. He was always happy doing any type of work



“Children need to explore many employment opportunities when they begin high school. Then when they marry and establish a home, they will be well on their way to a vocation or a trade that will return an income that will be sufficient to meet their basic needs.”

—Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Providing for Our Needs,” *Ensign*, May 1981, 86.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

because he knew he could be doing something worse. I have tried to reflect that attitude in every job I have had since that time.

Many young people get into a job they don't like, and they give up. My advice to them is the following: Make a habit of doing the job until you get it done. Then, if you don't want to do that kind of work again, find something you do want to do.

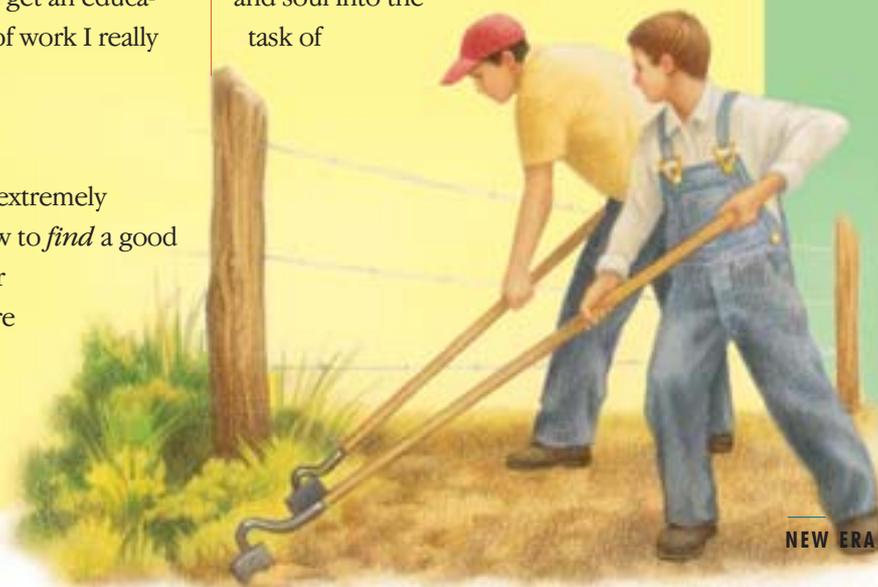
Because of the hard work I had experienced, I realized while I was young that I needed to go to college and get an education so I could do the kind of work I really wanted to do.

### Finding a Job

Learning how to work is extremely important. But knowing how to *find* a good job is just as important. Your parents and grandparents are among your greatest resources. Consult them! The Church provides some really great training

for that purpose. The Church has professionals in employment resource centers who can help you figure out what you can do and how to do it and then send you out to get a job. You need to know how to dress, how to talk, and how to act during an interview.

Employers want to see someone who is neat and clean in appearance, who knows how to address others respectfully, and who shows a willingness to work. If you decide what you want to do and then really put your heart and soul into the task of



**R**eflect an attitude of self-fulfilling prophecy in connection with work. Say to yourself, “If others of my age and circumstances can find jobs, I can, too. It’s time to prove I’m as capable as others my age.”

getting that job, you will likely get it.

I see opportunities everywhere for young people to work. For example, I’ve often seen “Help Wanted” signs, and I’ve observed the difficulties of trying to find a good babysitter and of locating someone who wants to mow lawns.

Reflect an attitude of self-fulfilling prophecy in connection with work. Say to yourself, “If others of my age and circumstances can find jobs, I can, too. It’s time to prove I’m as capable as others my age.”

In many cases, today’s teens have traded skilled work for activities that are merely fun. But those who successfully seek out job opportunities gain a sense of accomplishment and security that is far superior to merely having fun. Through successful work experiences while you are young, you will begin to feel that you can support a family and help build the kingdom of God on the earth. **NE**



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

## FOUR STEPS TO FINDING THE RIGHT JOB

**C**an I offer to the youth . . . four steps which are important in obtaining the right employment. They are: first, to invite the Lord’s help in this important search; second, to plan ahead carefully; third, to gather all possible necessary information; and fourth, proper vocation or education preparation.

“The first step, prayer, must continue throughout the entire process. As we gather facts, make decisions, gain the appropriate training and experience, and then seek jobs, it is essential that we combine our self-reliant efforts with a humble, prayerful attitude. The decision is ours to make, but the Lord will increase our wisdom if we seek him earnestly.

“Planning ahead for a vocation is a very important second step. The sooner a young man [or woman] can begin the planning, the sooner he [or she] will begin to acquire the skills of that vocation.

. . .

“The third step, gathering facts, involves many

people and resources. Youth and parents should be able to draw upon the ward . . . employment resource person, school counselors, and others. Interviews with potential employers, visits to occupational locations, and actually working at different jobs will greatly broaden career perspective.

“Effective fact gathering includes a search to learn which vocations are in demand now and which will be in the future. . . .

“As the final step, when the decision has been made and the young person feels right about the decision, the preparation process should begin in earnest. Whether the training involved is an apprenticeship, university education, or a trade school, it is often an advantage to have formal, recognized training for a vocation. The best positions and the highest pay go to those who have adequately prepared themselves.”

—President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), 14th President of the Church, “Prepare for Honorable Employment,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, 123.

# THE EXTRA SMILE

“Welcome to the area, Elder. Feel free to choose any bike you like, as long as it’s this one.”



RYAN STOKER

“Rick is walking east at 3 mph and Tanya is walking west at 2.5 mph. If Rick decides to ask Tanya for a date and increases his speed to 4 mph, how long will it take him to chicken out and run the other way?”



RANDY GLASBERGEN

“How romantic . . . Weldon just text-messed me a marriage proposal.”



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

“Never let a giraffe borrow your turtleneck sweater.”



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

# ONE SPECIAL LEADER

BY SARIAH DE BARROS  
FERREIRA DA SILVA

I will always remember with gratitude one special leader who changed my life for the better. When I met her, I didn't have many friends. I was not very talkative and would not smile at people. I didn't participate in seminary or other activities. In fact, I went to church only on Sundays. And even then my thoughts wandered in Young Women class. Some of the girls tried to include me, but I closed myself off from them.

When this leader first tried to get close to me, she didn't have much success. At first I didn't even know her name. Then she gave me a job to do and

began to depend on me. I accepted the responsibility only because I didn't know how to tell her no. Then, before I even realized it, she started to become my friend. I began trying harder and harder to fulfill my calling, and I began paying attention in class. I even started attending seminary and other Church activities. I also made friends with the young people in my ward. Soon the gospel was the most important thing in my life.

Who started all these changes in my life? It was my leader. Today when I

look into her eyes, I feel an immense love and gratitude. I am grateful to Heavenly Father for the opportunity of having such a special leader. I am grateful to her for preparing me and being with me on the day I received my endowment in the São Paulo Brazil Temple. I am grateful for her example of love, a love I try to apply in my own life.

Now that I am a Young Women leader in my ward, I hope I can do for my young women at least a part of what she did for me. **NE**



# I KNOW FAMILIES CAN BE FOREVER

BY MOISÉS NEFI MORALES GONZÁLES

I still remember that day. It could have been the most terrible day of my life if I hadn't had the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was July 12, 2001, when my mother died of an illness that had struck on Sunday night and took her life the following Thursday morning. I was 16 years old. I had to miss exams in school to be with my family and attend my mother's funeral services.

I went home from the funeral feeling completely undone. I had a great hole in my heart, a hole so huge I thought it would never heal. I lay down on the bed, broke into sobs, and asked myself, "Why did she have to go so soon? Why did she have to leave me?"

My 10-year-old brother and I decided to listen to some quiet Church hymns. I had that lonely, sad, comfortless feeling, and then a warm sensation came over me. I felt great peace and tranquility. My sad expression vanished, as did the empty feeling in my chest.

I was still feeling this comforting spirit when I went with my family to the church where my relatives were mourning. All of my relatives were very sad, with some breaking into heartrending sobs. Deep pain was reflected in their faces. They looked at my family strangely,

# HE UNDERSTANDS

BY KATHY M. GILBRIDE

As I was listening to the hymn "I Know That My Redeemer Lives" (*Hymns*, no. 136), I was comforted by the words, "He lives to hear my soul's complaint." I had never thought anyone would live to hear another's complaint.

I began to realize that because I had experienced pain and sorrow,

as if they wondered why we didn't seem to feel as bad as they did. But my heart was beating calmly, and my whole body was filled with peace. I knew that the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, was calming our pain. He was also testifying that Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father live and that this is the true Church, with eternal covenants.

Afterward, I wrote in my journal: "Our mother didn't want us to cry very much. I do feel sad, but still I have a great peace inside. I just have to be strong and live a good life so I can see her again. My faith and testimony have

I had been privileged to feel and understand a little of what Jesus went through as He atoned for my sins.

He understands my pains and sorrow because He has felt them.

Now, as I pray, I feel closer to my Savior because I know He truly cares and understands everything I am experiencing. **NE**

grown, and so have my desires to serve my God and my fellow man on a full-time mission. She will always be there, helping me stay on the right path. I know that families can be forever. On a day like today 15 years ago, my family and I were sealed as an eternal family in the Lima Peru Temple, and this is what comforts me."

My family and I continue to experience many difficulties. But each time my testimony falters, I remember the time when the Holy Ghost comforted me and testified to me of the eternal truths of the gospel. **NE**



# A GIRL CALLED



BY JILL B. ADAIR

*Charlee lifted others by facing her life—and death—with courage and a sense of humor.*

Seventeen-year-old Charlee Hawkins loved life. A member of the Cullumber Ward, Gilbert Arizona Stake, she could always find something positive in the most difficult situations. Even when she faced her life's hardest challenge of being diagnosed with cancer, Charlee kept smiling and found things to laugh about.

Charlee's battle began at age 15, when a small bump appeared on her left index finger. She thought it was simply a result of practicing her golf swing as she prepared to play on the girls' golf team at Gilbert High School.

When she had the bump removed, test results showed that Charlee had a very rare and very aggressive form of cancer, known as epithelioid sarcoma. The only effective treatment was surgery. Charlee's finger was quickly removed.

Charlee handled the situation with humor instead of

despair. She nicknamed herself "Nine" and never hid the fact that one finger was missing.

Five months later, during a routine test, doctors discovered spots in her lungs—the cancer had spread. They explained that chemotherapy wasn't usually successful with this type of cancer and that it was impossible to remove the tumors. Charlee decided to give chemotherapy a try anyway.

The treatment made her lose her hair, but she refused to wear a wig and didn't like hats. She told others that she might be the only "nine-fingered, bald-headed" girl they'd ever meet.

In January 2004 she celebrated what she called her "Handiversary." It had been one year since her finger was amputated. She and her friends wore matching "Nine" T-shirts. She made hand-shaped sugar cookies with pink frosting and one finger missing.

Charlee attended two weeks of her senior year in the fall of 2004 but was too sick to continue. She had her heart set on graduating from high school, so she got her class assignments by e-mail and continued to work toward her diploma.

“9”



*Charlee's family had this picture (far left) taken after her death. "We felt her with us," says her mom. "We were wearing her shirt." (Front row from left) Kendyl; Heidi; mother Charlene; Natalie. (Back row) Tyler; father Kent; David.*

*Charlee continued to do the things she loved: pretending to drive at an amusement center and later got her driver's license; playing golf; and learning to improvise on the piano.*



*Charlee lived her life to the fullest. She continued to go to school for as long as she was able, including going to a dance with Jason Payne. This picture of her friends at school was taken on her second "handiversary."*



Charlee's health progressively declined. The family set up a Christmas tree in her bedroom and celebrated Christmas around her bedside. Her Young Women class often came to visit her. Despite her trials, her friends and family never heard her complain.

By January 2005, Charlee's strength was nearly gone. Sister Hawkins recalls a conversation she had with her daughter when Charlee was in excruciating pain. Charlee said, "I'm ready to go." Her mother says she felt the Spirit guiding her as she explained to her daughter that Heavenly Father has a moment for each of us and that her moment was near. Then she felt the Spirit fill her daughter and ease her pain. Charlee said, "I'm ready to go home."

"When she added the word 'home,' I knew that she knew that this place is only temporary," says Sister Hawkins. "The veil must have been so thin that she felt safe because she knew that place was her home. It brought me such comfort and peace. I knew then that I had to let her go."

The next day at school, classmates celebrated Charlee's second "Handiversary" without her. They lined up for a photo with a sign saying, "We love you, Nine." Charlee's

family provided the four-fingered cookies.

Four days later, on January 25, an assistant principal from Charlee's school called to check on her. When she learned that Charlee wasn't doing well, she asked if the administration could come and present Charlee's diploma to her that afternoon. At 2:00 p.m., Charlee received recognition for what she had worked so hard to achieve.

Less than 45 minutes after her private graduation ceremony, Charlee died. Her life had touched so many. More than 1,500 people attended her funeral.

"She had an amazing attitude, a spirit that just radiated, and a great sense of humor," says her mother. "That carried her, and that carried us."

Charlee's influence is still being felt. The family continues to hear from those who say her example encourages them to be better and to improve their lives. Some of her friends who are serving missions are using their experiences with Charlee to help teach the plan of salvation to others.

"She lived every day to the fullest," says her mother. "I believe she did what she was supposed to do. She knew how to live, and she knew how to die." **NE**

### Mutual Activity Ideas

- Look for ways to serve those in need, but as King Benjamin advised, “See that all these things are done in wisdom and order” (Mosiah 4:27). Call local shelters or service organizations and see if there is a specific need your Mutual can help fill. For example, one ward found out there was a need for towels at a shelter, so they called local hotels that were willing to donate excess towels.

### Seminary Devotional Idea

- Take two oranges, one peeled and the other unpeeled. Drop them into a clear pitcher of water. The peeled orange will sink while the unpeeled one will float.

Talk about how the peel, which can be compared to keeping high standards or values, will serve as a protection and a shield.

### Family Home Evening Idea

- Before beginning the lesson portion of your family home evening, organize your family by assigning each person a room or area to straighten or clean. Set a timer or mark the time on a clock. At the start signal, each person works as hard and as fast as he or she can. At the end of the time, perhaps 10 minutes, stop and admire how much was accomplished by working together as a family on a goal that benefits everyone.

## 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 1–6.

### Young Women Manual 2

#### Lesson 1: Drawing Closer to Jesus Christ

Poster: “Come Unto Me,” *New Era*, Oct. 2006, 17.  
William Kim Rawlinson, “The Source,” *New Era*, Apr. 2006, 37.

#### Lesson 2: Spiritual Gifts

Summer Barrick, “It Mattered to Me,” *New Era*, June 2006, 38.  
Angela Woods Anderson, “The Gift of Tagalog,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 38.

#### Lesson 3: Building the Kingdom of God

Sally Johnson Odekirk, “Putting the Puzzle Together,” *New Era*, Nov. 2006, 18.  
L. Aldin Porter, “Come to the Temple,” *New Era*, Oct. 2004, 8.

#### Lesson 4: Obeying Commandments Helps Us Fulfill Our Divine Roles

Greg Burgoyne, “Surfing the No-Swim Zone,” *New Era*, Aug. 2006, 8.  
April Anderson, “Chicken Bones,” *New Era*, Aug. 2005, 19.  
Q&A (People doing wrong seem to be having fun), this issue, 14.

#### Lesson 5: Home Environment

Janet Thomas, “The Family Secret,” *New Era*, Nov. 2004, 36.  
Gordon B. Hinckley, “Love at Home,” *New Era*, Oct. 1999, 4.

#### Lesson 6: Sharing Work in the Home

Brett M. Condon, “Murmuring and Mowing,” *New Era*, July 2004, 8.  
Stephen B. Oveson, “Good Work,” *New Era*, this issue, 36.

### Aaronic Priesthood Manual 2

#### Lesson 1: Who Am I?

Hugh W. Pinnock, “Your Personal Checklist,” *New Era*, July 1995, 4.  
Wayne S. Peterson, “Decide Who You’ll Be,” *New Era*, May 2006, 40.

#### Lesson 2: Knowing Our Father in Heaven

Jeffrey R. Holland, “Be Ready and Worthy,” *New Era*, May 2006, 2.  
Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,” *New Era*, July 2005, 10.

#### Lesson 3: Faith in Jesus Christ

“Charting the Plan,” *New Era*, July 2006, 33.  
Kirk Sheldon Wilkinson, “My Brother,” *New Era*, Jan. 1996, 12.

#### Lesson 4: Companionship of the Holy Ghost

Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Gift of the Holy Ghost,” *New Era*, Jan. 2005, 4.  
Tyler C. Burch, “Call Brett Now,” *New Era*, Oct. 2006, 28.

#### Lesson 5: Agency

Shirley Bock Testi, “The What-If Question,” *New Era*, Nov. 2003, 40.  
Poster: “You’re Never Big Enough,” *New Era*, Mar. 2006, 17.  
Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Your Right to Choose the Right,” *New Era*, Aug. 2005, 4.

#### Lesson 6: Christlike Service

George Brewer, “Wood for the Widows,” *New Era*, Dec. 2005, 36.  
Nancy Checketts, “Caroling with Chrsllyn,” *New Era*, Dec. 2005, 26.

**WHY DATE?**

I love the *New Era* magazine and appreciate its guidance so much. I believe that it is an inspired work that blesses my life and the lives of so many others in a profound way. However, I was disappointed in the first part of the article "Why Date?" (Aug. 2006). The section about respecting young women was beautiful and true, but I was offended at the language used in the section about respecting young men. Words such as "awkwardness," "immaturity," and "clumsy" were degrading, and the young men were robbed of their integrity and agency when the article made it seem like we could only uphold our standards and our desires to serve the Lord if the young women were dressing appropriately and encouraging us in that direction. It is my experience that many young men are amazing priesthood holders and strong disciples of Christ, even during their teenage years. There are many young men who are choosing now to be righteous, obedient, and faithful, despite mounting trials and temptations. I appreciated the article, but I wish the young men could receive a little more credit for the strength that we have.

Bob W., Wyoming

**VETERAN WISDOM**

I'm always happy when I get a new issue of the *New Era*. I especially liked the article on World War II "Torpedoes, Typhoons, and War Stories" (July 2006) because both of my grandpas served in it. This article made me appreciate what they did for me. I also really liked the "Veteran Wisdom" sidebar and copied it down to hang up in my room. I could just hear my grandpa repeating one of the pieces of advice ("get a good education"), which is something my father really stresses, too.

Emma V., Washington

**MORE THAN POSTERS**

I like to read the *New Era*. It helps me to better understand things in the Church. When I was younger all I would read were the cartoons and the *New Era* poster. Since I started reading the articles I realized that there's more to it. For instance, the article "Shot Down" (Aug. 2006) taught me how important and powerful prayer can be. I'm thankful for the magazine.

Jon S., Iowa

**IN KUWAIT**

I just want you to know how much I love the *New Era*. I am actually an adult stationed in Kuwait right now, but I have continued to read the *New Era*, and I order it for our chapel here. I love the cards that are occasionally included in the magazine and I put them out for any of the soldiers who feel so inspired to take one. They disappear fast!

Charleen C., Kuwait

**POSTERS**

I'd like to thank you so much for the posters that are in every issue of the *New Era*. They provide a very humorous and spiritual uplift in my day. Many times I cut them out and put them in my scriptures if I'm having a particular problem they address in my life. They have really helped me.

Nicholas R., Ohio

*"Since I started reading the articles, I realized that there's more to the New Era than just the cartoons and poster."*

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

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*Or e-mail us at*

*newera@ldschurch.org*

*Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.*

ILLUSTRATED BY BILL MAYER



**NOONDAY**  
BY CHRISTINE LAYTON

All the fields away  
Are flat with brightness,  
Lightness  
Of sun on white,  
Snow.

Eyelashes interlocking,  
Squinting at white,  
Bright beyond looking at  
Under noon-sun  
Snow.

Awed breath, clouds white  
Oh! At the glow  
Of pure-fallen, earth bright,  
Not angel white  
Snow.



**J**obs teach many kinds of skills—especially the ability to work hard and work effectively. . . . Those who successfully seek out job opportunities gain a sense of accomplishment and security.”

See “Good Work,” p. 36.