



THE
New Era

JUNE

2007

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The New Era Magazine
Volume 37, Number 6
June 2007

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

The *New Era* can be found
online at newera.lds.org.

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Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah.

The *New Era* (ISSN 0164-5285)

is published monthly by The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-

day Saints, 50 E. North Temple

St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220,

USA.

POSTMASTER: Send address

changes to Distribution Services,

Church Magazines, P.O. Box

26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-

0368, USA.

Canada Post Information:

Publication Agreement

#40017431.



PUT LIGHT IN YOUR LIFE

BY PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Many of you are struggling with your identity. Some of you may wonder what the future holds for you. The world presents alluring enticements. It is bewildering. Some of you may not only be unsure about where you are going; you may also be questioning your real worth. Let me assure you, I believe with all my heart that you are a chosen generation.

I speak about coming out of the darkness and into the light. Micah said, “When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me” (Micah 7:8).

How We Receive Light

We receive light from the Lord. This can happen to us when we study the scriptures and “our eyes [are] opened and our understandings [are] enlightened” (D&C 76:12). Daily scripture study turns on the light of our spiritual perception and opens our understandings to further knowledge. I try to read from the scriptures at the close of the day. It brings a remarkable peace. I sleep better by doing this.

We receive spiritual light when we attend sacrament meeting. Partaking of the sacrament and the inspiration of the worship

service weekly charges our spiritual batteries.

We receive spiritual light when we respond to calls. Serving in a calling in the Church blesses us more than it blesses others.

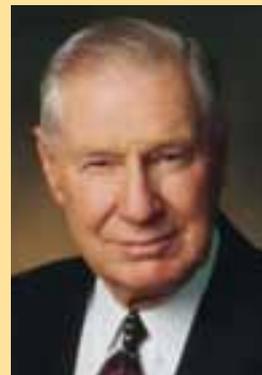
We receive spiritual light when we pay our tithing, as the windows of heaven can then open up (see Malachi 3:10).

We receive spiritual light when we sing the hymns. Singing the hymns strengthens us and brings us together spiritually.

We receive spiritual light when we pray. As a young teenager, the Prophet Joseph Smith read, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally” (James 1:5).

I commend to you his account of the First Vision, which followed as he determined that he would seek wisdom from God. He wrote, “When the light rested upon me I saw . . .” What did he see? He saw the Father and the Son. As the vision ended, he said, “When the light had departed, I had no strength” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17, 20).

Obviously, we do not expect a heavenly visitation, but we are entitled to increased spiritual and intellectual enlightenment if we first seek “the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).



We do not expect a heavenly visitation, but we are entitled to increased spiritual and intellectual enlightenment if we first seek “the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.”



To be called to serve as a missionary for this Church is not a right but a privilege. Missionary service is joyful, but it is not fun and games; it is hard work.

What Is the Focus of Our Faith?

Part of our coming into the light depends upon the focus of our faith. Is it seen as repression or liberation? As young people mature, they feel new power, new passions, and new ambitions. Yet they are told that some of these must be restrained. Bridling our passions, or yielding appropriately to restraint, is necessary for our personal growth and progression. As Alma said, “Bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love” (Alma 38:12).

A few years ago a nationally broadcast program talked about imprisoned criminals who were taming wild horses. As the prisoners formed friendships with the horses, they learned about patience, controlling tempers, respect for others, and the value of working within a system. As they watched the horses learn to obey their commands, they realized how they could have avoided the terrible mistakes that had put them in prison.

In our modern society, so many voices in books, magazines, television, and movies depict sexual intimacy outside of marriage as being socially acceptable, even desirable. Some young people, deceived by this sophistry, ask: “Why is it wrong? We are in love!” Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles answered this question as follows:

“In matters of human intimacy, you must wait! You must wait until you can give everything, and you cannot give everything until you are legally and lawfully married. To give illicitly that which is not yours to give (remember, ‘you are not your own’ [see 1 Corinthians 6:19]) and to give only part of that which cannot be followed with the gift of your whole self is emotional Russian

roulette. If you persist in pursuing physical satisfaction without the sanction of heaven, you run the terrible risk of such spiritual, psychic damage that you may undermine *both* your longing for physical intimacy *and* your ability to give wholehearted devotion to a later, truer love. . . . On your wedding day the very best gift you can give your eternal companion is your very best self—clean and pure and worthy of such purity in return.”¹

Faith Carries Us Out of Darkness

Our faith is not a bundle of beliefs and practices that are too heavy to bear. Those who have come out of the darkness find that their faith carries them. Faith is not heavy; faith lifts and gives us wings to carry us over hard places. As Isaiah promised, “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as

eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).

Coming out of the darkness into the light frees us from the dark side of our souls, which comes from fear, dis-



couragement, and sin. You can tell one who has come into the light by his or her countenance and attitude. The Savior said it well: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Since September 11, 2001, we have been concerned about another form of darkness—the influence of terrorists and hijackers. You are growing up in a different world than I did. For years we traveled on





airplanes without having our baggage searched or going through metal detectors.

My dear young friends, your enemies are not all terrorists and hijackers. Some are within your peer group—perhaps even among those you look upon as friends—who would encourage you to free yourselves from restraints and to try drugs, alcohol, or intimacy with someone of the opposite sex—or even the same sex. They are the critics, the dissenters, and the skeptics—anyone who keeps us in darkness and tries to keep us from finding the light in our eternal journey. Other spiritual terrorists include pornography pushers, those with no values. These people are in darkness, lack faith, and are unwilling to seek a source higher than themselves for solutions to questions and problems. Some have such egotism, poor self-image, and weak faith that they cannot conceive of obtaining light and knowledge by any other means.

Become Defenders of the Faith

All of us ought to become defenders of the faith. As we do defend our faith, we come out of darkness and move

toward the light. You young people share the responsibility of proclaiming the truth of the restored gospel. You will be effective in doing this only if you try to do right in your individual lives. To do this you will need an understanding and testimony of the basic doctrines of the Church. These fundamental absolutes of our faith are first, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and the Redeemer of the world and second, that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, actually appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith, restoring the fulness of the gospel and the true Church.

From this follows the purposes of the Church: First, to prepare its members for the perfect life. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Second, to foster and encourage its members to become a body of Saints, united in faith and works. Third, to proclaim the message of restored truth to the world. Fourth, to save our dead.

You may be preparing to serve as full-time missionaries. To be called to serve as a missionary for this Church is not a right but a privilege. Missionary service is joyful, but it is not fun and games; it is hard work. The Lord’s admonition



to missionaries is contained in section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants: “O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day” (v. 2).

All missionary service presumes personal worthiness. The Lord said, “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord” (D&C 38:42). Some of you are worthy, but because of health problems may not be able to stand the rigors of proselytizing in the mission field. You may find alternative service opportunities that will be a great blessing to you.

Accepting the Atonement

A few years ago, when Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Presidency of the Seventy was in Japan, the missionaries introduced him to a young Japanese brother who had just joined the Church. He was from a non-Christian background. When he met the missionaries, he was interested in the message, but he could not understand or feel the need for a Savior, and he didn’t have a witness regarding the gospel. One day the missionaries decided to show him

a film about the Atonement. The young man saw the film, but still he didn’t have a witness.

“The next morning he went to work. He worked in an optician’s shop making eyeglasses. . . . An elderly woman came in. He remembered her coming in a few weeks before. She had broken her glasses. She needed a new pair. When she had come in earlier, she didn’t have enough money and had gone away to save more in order to purchase the new glasses. As she came in that day, she again showed him her spectacles and showed him the money that she now had. He realized that she didn’t have enough yet. Then a thought came to him: *I have some money. I don’t need to tell her. I can make up the difference.* So he told her the money she had was adequate, took her glasses, [and] made an appointment for her to return when he had finished making the spectacles. . . .

“She returned later. He had the glasses ready for her. He handed them to her, and she put them on [and exclaimed] ‘. . . I see. I see.’ Then she began to cry. At that point, a burning sensation began to grow within his bosom and swelled within him. He said, ‘. . . I understand. I understand.’ He

began to cry. Out the door he ran, looking for the missionaries. When he found them, he said, 'I see! My eyes have been opened! I know that Jesus is the Son of God. I know the stone was rolled away from the tomb and on that glorious Easter morning He arose from the dead. He can make up the difference in my life when I fall short.'



We can all see by the candle of inspiration, which is the Spirit of the Holy Ghost. It will light our way out of darkness and difficulty. The most sure way to come out of darkness and into the light is through communication with our Heavenly Father by the process known as divine revelation. President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) declared, "Whenever the Lord had a people on the earth that He acknowledged as such, that people were led by revelation."³ The inspiration of God is available to all who worthily seek the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is particularly true of those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Revelation Continues

Those who wish to come out of darkness and into the light must make sure they are in harmony with the inspiration and revelation that come through our prophets, seers, and revelators. Amos tells us, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). The prophets have tuned in over the centuries to the celestial transmitting station with the responsibility to relay the Lord's words to others.

The best way for you young people to come in closer harmony with the Savior is to sustain His living prophet on the earth, the President of the Church. If we do not follow the living prophet, whoever he may be, we are in danger of dying spiritually.

I can testify that the process of continual revelation comes to the Church very frequently. It comes daily. This is necessary for the Church to fulfill its mission. Without it we would fail. The Church constantly needs the guidance of its head, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Continual revelation will not and cannot be forced by outside pressure from people and events. It is not the so-called "revelation of social progress." It does not originate with the prophets; it comes from God. The Church is governed by the prophet under the inspiration, guidance, and direction of the Lord.

My belief in and conviction of the divine truthfulness of the Church has now covered a long period of time—as long as I can remember. That testimony has grown stronger as the years have passed. The certain knowledge of the truthfulness of this gospel came before I was called to the holy apostleship and has been reconfirmed many times since. I testify to you young people that the gospel contains the answers to life's challenges and problems. It is the sure way to happiness and the fulfillment of the Savior's promise, which is "peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23). **NE**

From a Church Educational System fireside talk given on September 8, 2002.

NOTES

1. "Personal Purity," *New Era*, Feb. 2000, 6.
2. "Stretching the Cords of the Tent," *Ensign*, May 1994, 65–66.
3. *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham (1946), 138.

When the optician banded the glasses to the woman, she exclaimed, "I see. I see." At that point, a burning sensation began to grow within his bosom. He said, "I understand. I understand. . . . My eyes have been opened! I know that Jesus is the Son of God. . . . He can make up the difference in my life when I fall short."



TOO BUSY TO CARE

BY ANNIE VALENTINE TINTLE

*My father was counting on me.
But why worry about a bunch of cows?*

Basketball practice was more important than counting the cattle, until that terrible day when I had to face the consequences of my own selfishness.

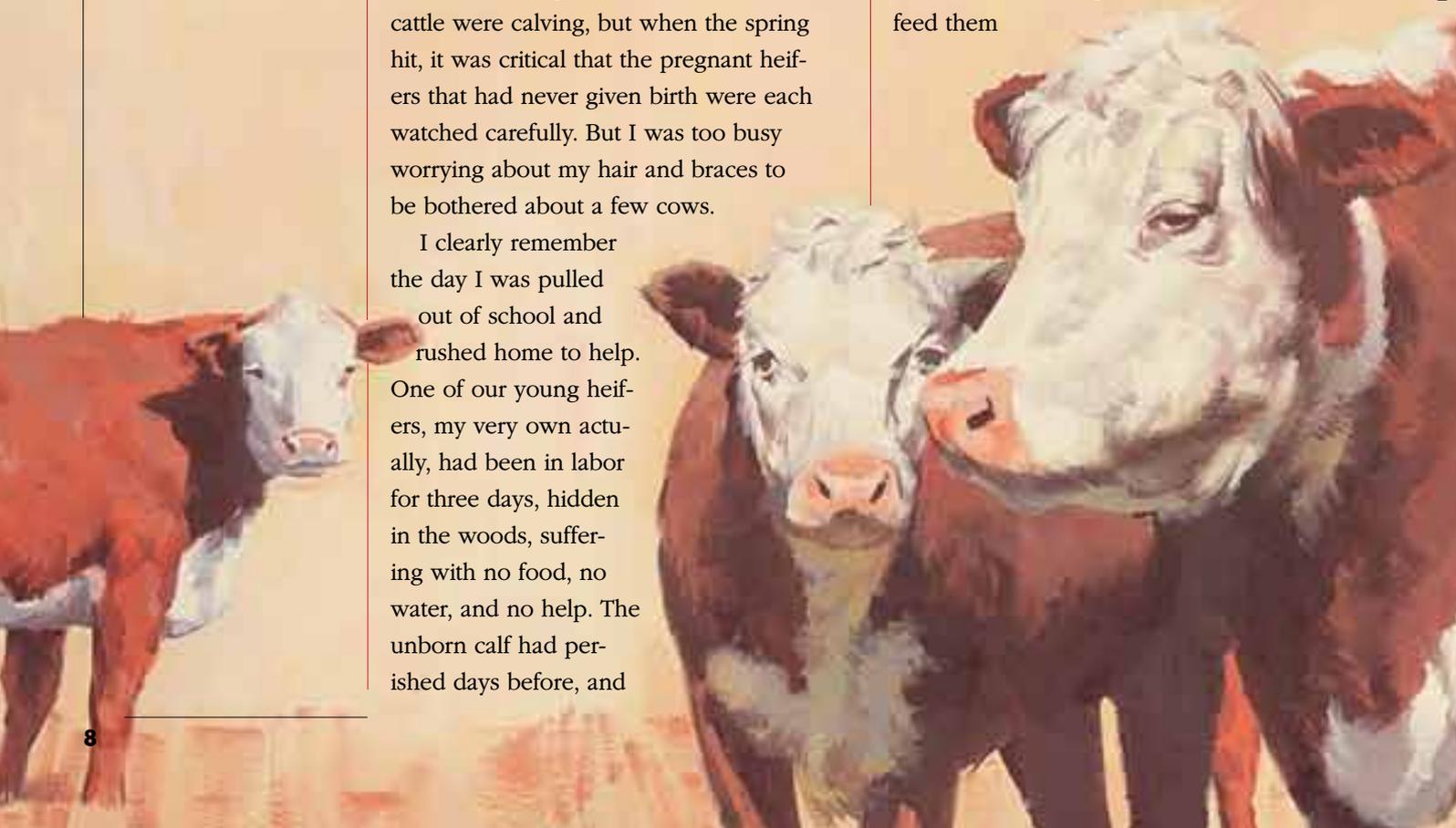
I grew up on a farm in Washington State, where my parents raised kids and cattle. I was the youngest in our large family, and at 14 I was busy trying to balance chores at home with my budding social schedule.

Each day after school it was my responsibility to feed and count all 60 head of cattle to make sure that each was safe. To a 14-year-old girl, this was a tedious chore, so I avoided counting them. In the winter it wasn't as dangerous because none of the cattle were calving, but when the spring hit, it was critical that the pregnant heifers that had never given birth were each watched carefully. But I was too busy worrying about my hair and braces to be bothered about a few cows.

I clearly remember the day I was pulled out of school and rushed home to help. One of our young heifers, my very own actually, had been in labor for three days, hidden in the woods, suffering with no food, no water, and no help. The unborn calf had perished days before, and

the cow had been unable to birth it. So, with the help of a vet, my father and I had to remove it from her.

When I pulled up in the truck and saw my father standing there, I was sure he would be angry with me. He had told me thousands of times to count the cattle, always asking if they were all there and all safe. But I was too busy to listen. I was too busy with things I thought were more important, like basketball practice. Or I would wait too long and feed them



ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL MANN

in the dark, making it impossible to count the herd. At the time, my own things really did seem more important. I didn't understand; I didn't have the big picture yet.

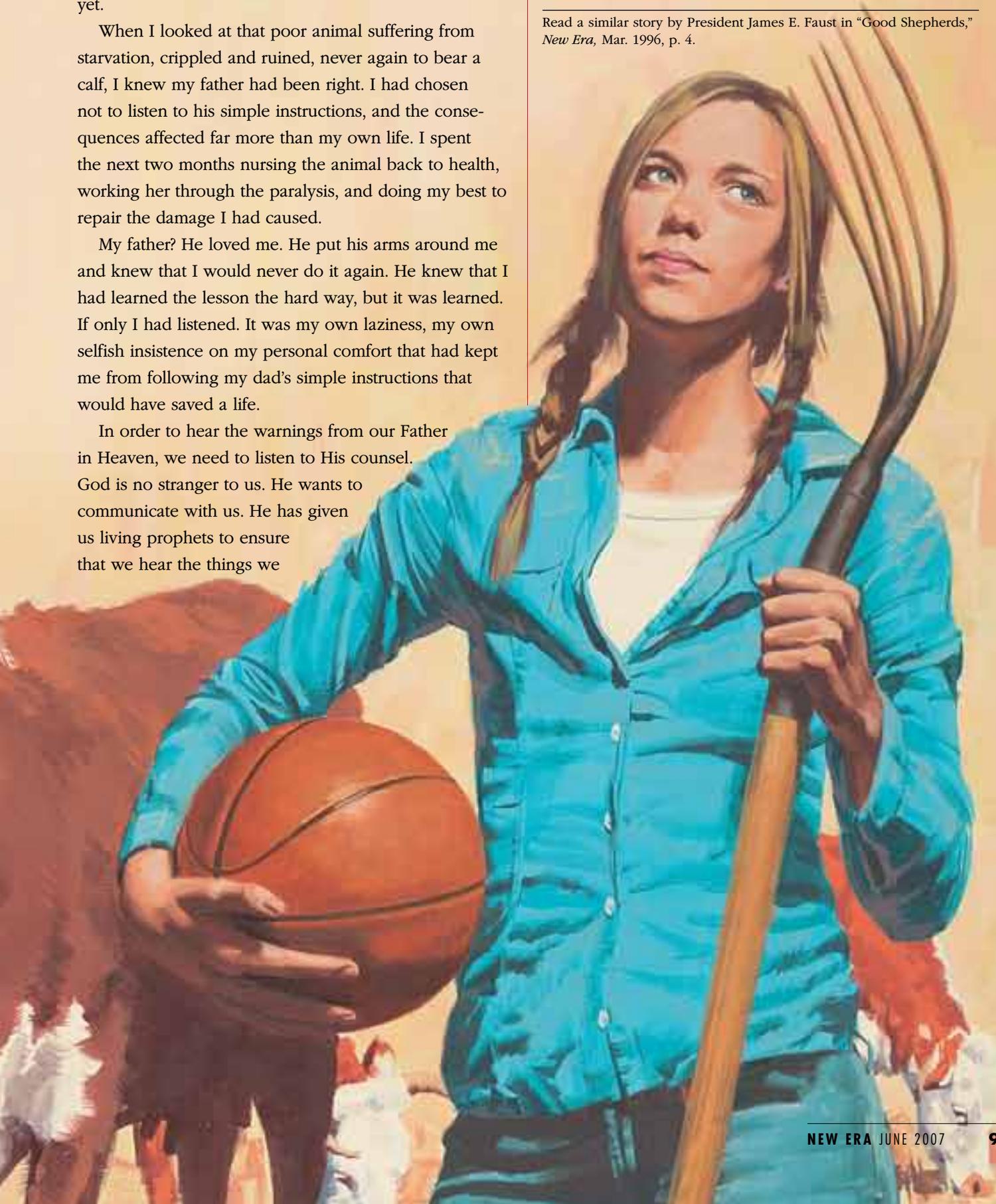
When I looked at that poor animal suffering from starvation, crippled and ruined, never again to bear a calf, I knew my father had been right. I had chosen not to listen to his simple instructions, and the consequences affected far more than my own life. I spent the next two months nursing the animal back to health, working her through the paralysis, and doing my best to repair the damage I had caused.

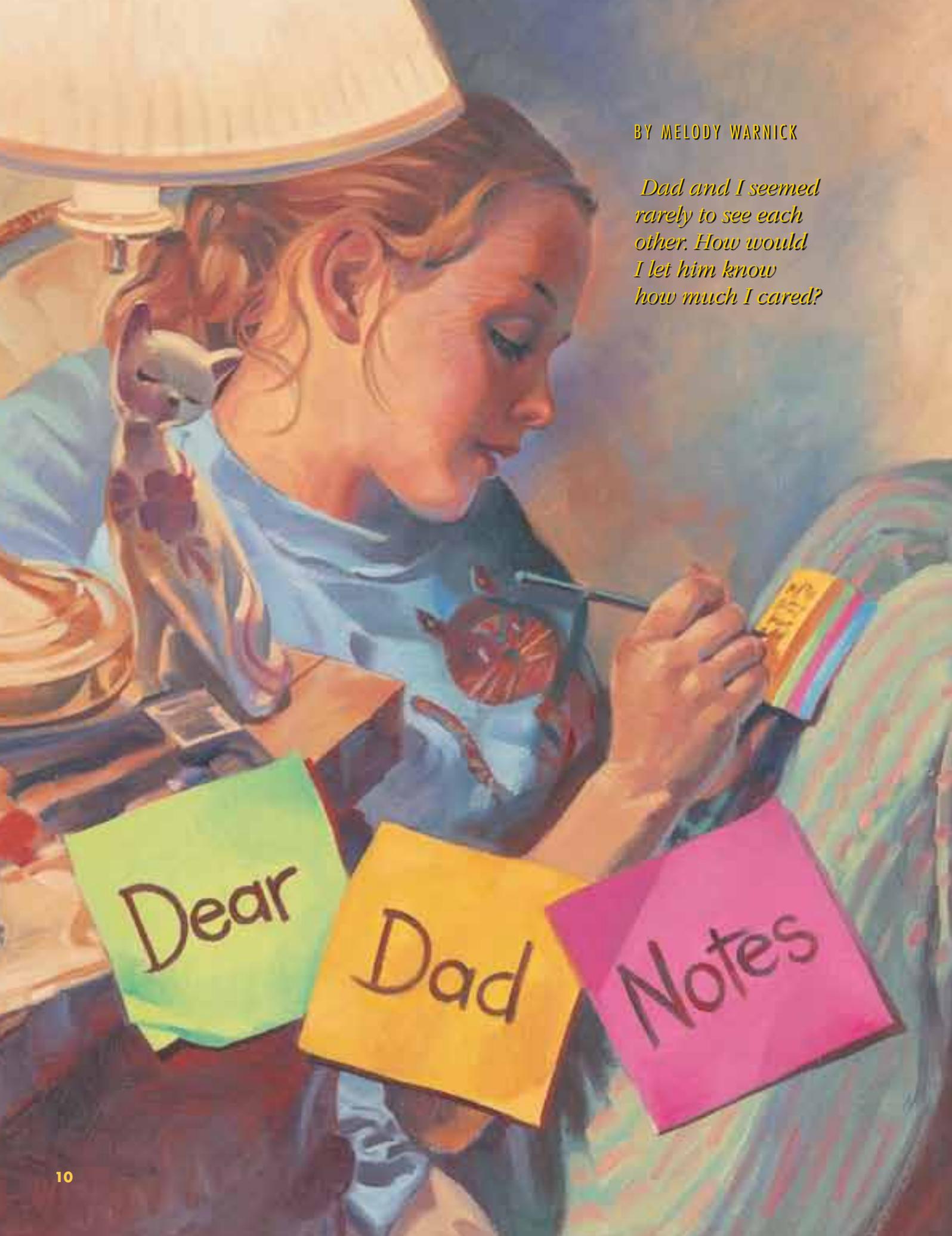
My father? He loved me. He put his arms around me and knew that I would never do it again. He knew that I had learned the lesson the hard way, but it was learned. If only I had listened. It was my own laziness, my own selfish insistence on my personal comfort that had kept me from following my dad's simple instructions that would have saved a life.

In order to hear the warnings from our Father in Heaven, we need to listen to His counsel. God is no stranger to us. He wants to communicate with us. He has given us living prophets to ensure that we hear the things we

must know to survive and be safe in these latter days. Our prophet gives us the simple instructions we need to return home safely, and we must listen. **NE**

Read a similar story by President James E. Faust in "Good Shepherds," *New Era*, Mar. 1996, p. 4.





BY MELODY WARNICK

Dad and I seemed rarely to see each other. How would I let him know how much I cared?

Dear

Dad

Notes



It was 11 p.m. when I heard my father's car door close outside. He was home a little early tonight. Dad was a college professor with a full load of night classes to teach, so his normal arrival time wavered somewhere between 11:30 p.m. and midnight. And since I left for my early-morning seminary class before sunup, I usually only saw him for a few flurried minutes each night. That is, if I saw him at all.

Tonight I was brushing my teeth when he popped his head through the bathroom doorway. "How are you?" he asked. Through a mouthful of toothpaste I mumbled a response, then asked how his day had been.

"Great," he said boisterously. "The plane got in a few hours ago, and the bus dropped us off at the school. After that I came right home."

Plane? Bus? Was I missing something? He must have noticed my vacant stare, because he quickly added, "I was at a conference in Indianapolis all week."

He was? Why didn't I know about this? I realized with a pang of shame that my father had just spent five days on the other side of the country, and I hadn't even noticed he was gone.

As my sister and I got older, it seemed like the whole family got busier until we were, as Mom liked to say, "like ships passing in the night." We barely had time to blurt out "good morning" before we rushed

in separate directions. But even with our classes and after-school activities, my sister and I couldn't compete with Dad at being busy. His work-

day was longer than anyone else's. Even when he was home, he spent hours at the computer, writing textbooks and revising lecture outlines.

Because Dad wasn't a member of the Church, we only saw him on Sunday mornings over our bowls of breakfast cereal. By the time the rest of the family came home after our Church meetings, he had usually disappeared to his office at the college to get more work done.

I had always thought my family was a regular busy family, and I figured that feeling out of touch with my dad was just a part of such a high-speed life. Until that night over the bathroom sink, I never really considered the idea that we might be too busy.

A few weeks later, the missionaries from our ward came to my house for dinner. Dad, of course, was missing in action, but after we had eaten, the missionaries began to ask us some questions about Dad's feelings toward the Church. Had he ever taken the discussions? Had he read the Book of Mormon? Did he ever come to Church with us? My mother and I answered the questions as best we could. Then the elders said that they'd really like the chance to teach my father the gospel, and they wanted to enlist our help.

Although I was usually enthusiastic about thinking up ways to help share the gospel with my father, I leaned back into my chair and frowned. "What can we do?" I asked skeptically. "We hardly ever see him." I explained to the missionaries about Dad's overly hectic schedule, and they nodded understandingly.

Finally one of the missionaries, who also had a non-member father, said, "My dad was the same way when I was in high school. He was such a workaholic that I felt like I never saw him, and we just drifted farther and farther apart. I got even busier after I joined the Church.

"I just decided," he went on, "that it was important for my dad to know that I loved him, that my joining the Church didn't make me love him less. Since I didn't see

Our note exchange became a regular thing, and it became easier to put into words how I really felt about my dad.

him very often, I started leaving him notes. Nothing special. I just wrote a quick note telling him that I loved and appreciated him, and I made sure I put it where he'd find it."

"Did it work?" I asked skeptically.

He smiled and shrugged. "Why don't you find out for yourself?"

It was a challenge I couldn't refuse. That night, after I was in my pajamas and Dad still hadn't gotten home from work, I pulled out a pad of sticky notes and wrote a quick message: "Dear Dad: I hope you had a good day. I love you." I signed my name at the bottom and stuck the note to his computer screen, knowing Dad almost always made a stop at

his computer before he finally got to bed.

The next morning when I plodded into the bathroom still half asleep, I noticed a piece of yellow paper clinging to the mirror. "Dear Melody," it read. "Thanks for the note. I love you too. Love, Dad."

I smiled, something I rarely did at 5:30 in the morning.

For the rest of that year before I went away to college, I left notes for my father a few times a week. Nothing elaborate, just a few lines to tell him what was going on in my life,

to wish him a good day, to tell him I loved him. He almost always responded

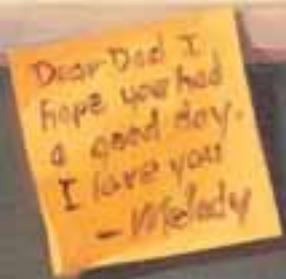
with another note attached to my bathroom mirror or my bedroom door.

As the weeks went on and our note exchange became a regular thing, it became easier to put into words how I really felt about my dad. I realized that even though I didn't spend as much time with him as I wanted to, I really did love him. And I realized that even though he worked a lot, he really loved me too. Having a true friendship made us more eager to do things with each other, too, like trips to museums or into the city on Saturday afternoons.

Over the years I kept a few of the sticky notes from Dad. I even taped one to the mirror in my dorm room at college just to make it feel like home. When I finally went back home for Christmas, I noticed that Dad had done the same. A piece of yellow paper with the words "Dad, I love you. Melody" was firmly attached to the top of his computer desk.

My father never joined the Church. But when he died suddenly several years ago, the yellow sticky note was still on his computer desk, right where it had been for five years. In the weeks after his death, I felt grateful that I had found a way to communicate with Dad even when we were both at our busiest. I didn't have to wonder whether he knew that I loved him. I knew that he looked at my words every day. **NE**

How do you and your dad connect? Send your story to newera@ldschurch.org.



Getting the Most Out of Sacrament Meeting

FROM YOUTH OF THE HARLEM FIRST AND SECOND WARD, NEW YORK MANHATTAN STAKE

Ever hear someone say, “That was a great sacrament meeting,” and wonder if they were in the same meeting you were in? Sacrament meeting is intended to bless our lives, but in order to really get the most out of it, we need to invest a little of ourselves. Here are some suggestions about . . .

The sacrament:

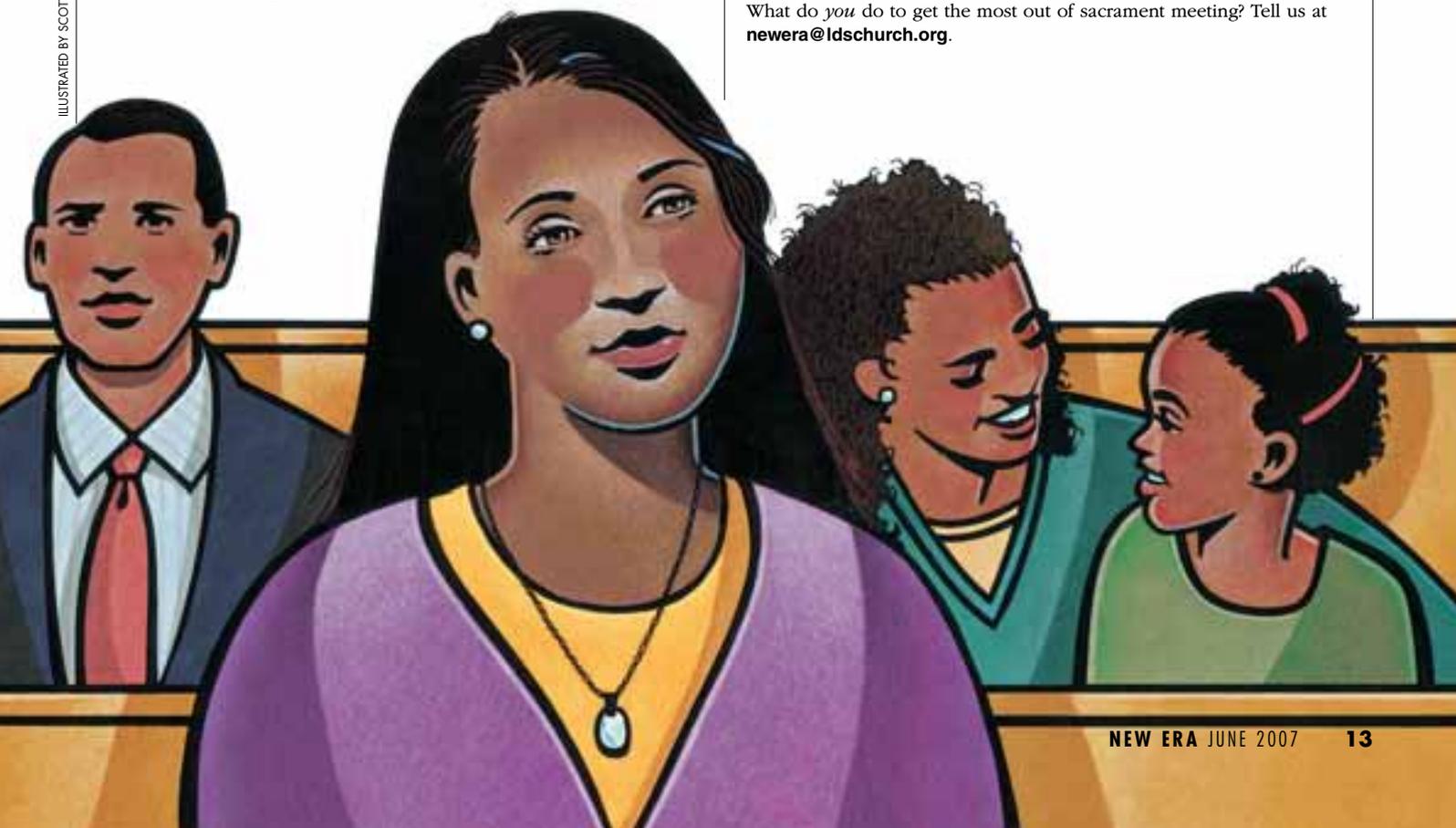
- ♥ As part of your daily study, read what the scriptures in the Topical Guide have to say about “Sacrament.”
- ♥ Prepare ahead of the meeting. Arrive early, listen to prelude music, and seek revelation.
- ♥ During the sacrament hymn, really think about the words of the hymn.
- ♥ Review in your mind just why you are taking the sacrament.
- ♥ Focus on the prayers as they are being said. Think of yourself as being placed under covenant.

The talks:

- ♥ Decide that you are going to learn at least one new thing from each of the speakers. Then, really listen.
- ♥ If a speaker seems nervous, smile and make eye contact. Avoid whispering to others. You would want the same kindness and respect if you were at the pulpit. And your thoughtfulness will help invite the Spirit to teach you.
- ♥ Imagine you are going to have to write a report about a talk. What good points does the speaker make?
- ♥ Write down questions about the topic of a talk so you can research them later.
- ♥ Bring a nonmember or less-active friend. You’ll find yourself paying attention and learning more in case your friend has questions or wants to talk about what he or she has heard.
- ♥ Remember that if you approach the talks with an attitude of wanting to learn, the Spirit can teach you the things *you* need to learn, even if the speakers don’t mention them directly.

What do *you* do to get the most out of sacrament meeting? Tell us at newera@ldschurch.org.

ILLUSTRATED BY SCOTT GREER



Q & A

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

NEW ERA

You’re not alone in this challenge. We all make mistakes, and we can all fall if we’re not careful. You can find some answers to your question in 1 Nephi 8, a description of Lehi’s vision. Here are a few things Lehi saw that can help you:

He saw people “pressing forward” on the strait and narrow path—that is, trying to be faithful. But some of them “wandered off and were lost” (v. 23). Some made it to the tree of life but then “were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost” (v. 28). Others succeeded; they “did press their way forward, continually holding fast to the rod of iron, until they came forth and fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree” (v. 30). The fruit of the tree represents the love of God—the blessings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Notice what they did to succeed. If you do these things, you can overcome your fear of falling away.

■ **To overcome your fear of falling away, “press forward” on the strait and narrow path.**

■ **Obey the word of God, found in the scriptures and teachings of latter-day prophets.**

■ **Worship God, seek to feel His love, and repent so the Savior can strengthen you.**

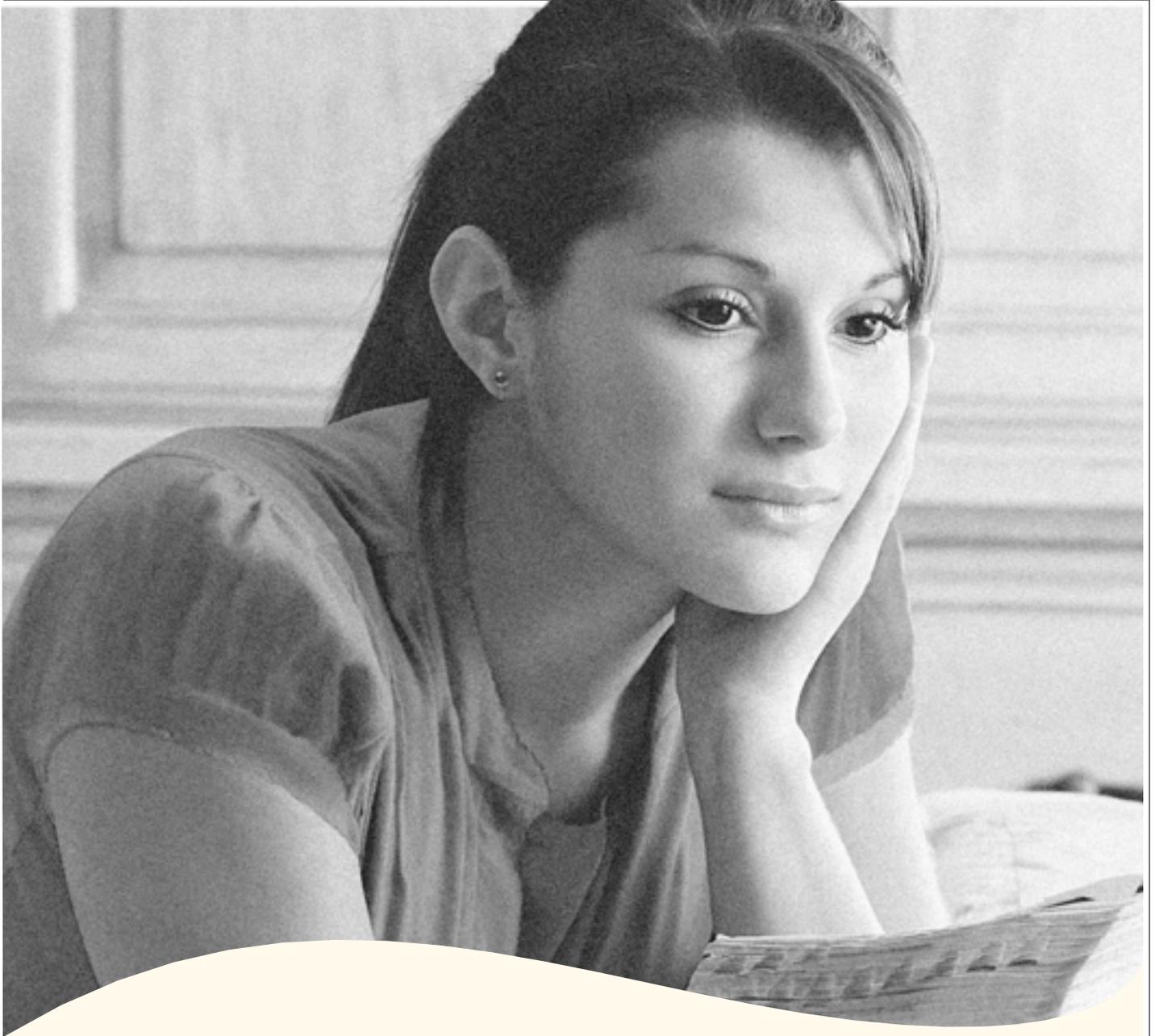
■ **Disregard people who make fun of you for trying to do what’s right.**

1. Press forward. Nephi explains: “Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:20).

2. Hold fast to the iron rod. Nephi said the iron rod is “the word of God; and whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away” (1 Nephi 15:24).

3. Partake of the fruit of the tree. To partake of the fruit means to feel the love of God in your life. You can pray to feel that love, and you can repent, allowing the Atonement to bless your life.

4. Disregard those who make fun of you for doing what’s right. In Lehi’s dream, those who paid attention to the mocking people in the great and spacious building fell away. That



building represents the pride and beliefs of the world. Because that building had no foundation, “it fell, and the fall thereof was exceedingly great” (1 Nephi 11:36). The pride of the world is temporary; doing what’s right will bless you forever.

Doing these four things will help you build on the foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, “which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12).

READERS



Three years ago I was away from the Church. My heart became sad because of my mistakes, and I decided to return to

the Church. I was afraid of falling into error, so I decided to get on my knees and do what I had not done for a long time: pray to our Heavenly Father. I asked Him to help me leave the temptations so evil wouldn’t have place in my heart because it destroys my peace and

saddens my soul. I put my trust in the Lord for Him to enlighten my way. Now I have peace in my heart. If you feel sad because of your sins and mistakes, read 2 Nephi 4:17–35.

Elder John Sanchez, 21, Perú Piura Mission



We are tempted and we make mistakes daily even though we may be in the Church. But the important thing is that we sincerely

repent for what we have done and constantly strive against temptation and, above all, be worthy and continually pray and ask our Heavenly Father for help, because He never forgets us. If we really want to change, He will help us because He loves us immensely.

Denise E., 18, Rancagua, Chile



When you feel afraid, pray, fast, and especially search the scriptures. The word of the Lord is there, and the answers to our questions are there. Remember that the Lord does

not give any commandments without preparing the way for us to accomplish them. And He loves us so much that He forgives us when we repent.

Ana A., 16, Falcón, Venezuela



First, we must realize that Heavenly Father loves us even when we've fallen. The key is to get up and keep trying. Second, understand that discouragement is Satan's tool

to keep us from achieving the true happiness that can be found only in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

One of the devil's best tricks is to keep our attention focused on the sins or mistakes of the past and the fear of their reoccurrence in the future.

This line of thinking only prohibits us from moving forward and bettering ourselves. Finally, here is a quote that I live by: "Don't let the fear of striking out prevent you from playing the game." We are children of our Heavenly Father, and with His help, we will succeed.

Chad C., 20, Utah

In your personal prayers, pour out your fears of falling away. Read the scriptures daily to gain knowledge of the gospel and to feel the Spirit.



T*he power of your covenants is greater than the power of temptation. Don't let the fear of past transgressions weaken your resolve to repent and abandon them. Remember! God has promised to save you 'from the band of him that hated [you], and [redeem you] from the band of the enemy' (Psalm 106:10)."*

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "What I Wish Every New Member Knew—and Every Longtime Member Remembered," *Ensign*, Oct. 2006, 14.

Attend every Church meeting, temple trip, and activity possible so you can feel the Spirit as much as possible. It would also be wise to seek counsel from your bishop and parents.

Jaclyn B., 17, Kansas

I know how you feel. I have come back to church, and I am now actively participating in all Church activities including missionary work. One of the lessons I've learned is to have strong faith in Jesus Christ. If we have faith in Him, it will help us be strong. I know that Jesus Christ is our only sure foundation, as Helaman 5:12 says.

Cheene L., 17, Bulacan, Philippines

Our Heavenly Father loves us and understands us. He knows we're not perfect and are susceptible to falling. I know my Heavenly Father loves me and gives me strength to continue on through the scriptures, prayer, and fasting. When we fall, we must always get back up.

Celeste S., 20, Oslo, Norway

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

NEXT QUESTION

"Can I try alcohol and tobacco at least once so I'll know for myself what they're really like? I'll never do it again. What's the harm if it's only once?"

SEND US YOUR ANSWER, along with your full name, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and photograph (including your parent's written permission to print the photo) to:

New Era, Q&A, 7/07

50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by July 15, 2007.

CHOOSE



GOOD AND EVIL ARE POLAR OPPOSITES.
(See 2 Nephi 2:27.)

A young man with dark hair and a slight smile is looking towards the camera. He is wearing a dark blue soccer jersey with a white logo on the chest and the number '6' on the front. He is standing in front of a green and yellow soccer goal net. The background is a bright, slightly overexposed area, possibly a field or a bright sky.

SOCCER *or*

BY ALEXANDRE MACHADO VASCONCELOS

Like other prospective missionaries, Lohran Saldanha Queiroz had to make a choice to serve a mission or not. But besides deciding whether to give up school, work, family, and friends for two years, Lohran had another tough choice: serve a mission or have the opportunity to play professional soccer in Brazil?

Lohran, a member of the Barra da Tijuca Ward, Rio de Janeiro Brazil Jacarepaguá Stake, has soccer in his blood. His father, Milton, is known simply as Tita throughout Brazil. He has played professionally in five countries, won many titles, been a top scorer in the state, and played on the national team.

Tita noticed his son's ability early on. "I grew up with a soccer ball always close by," Lohran remembers. "My father has always encouraged me. I started accompanying him to his practices when I was three or four and have been around professional players ever since."

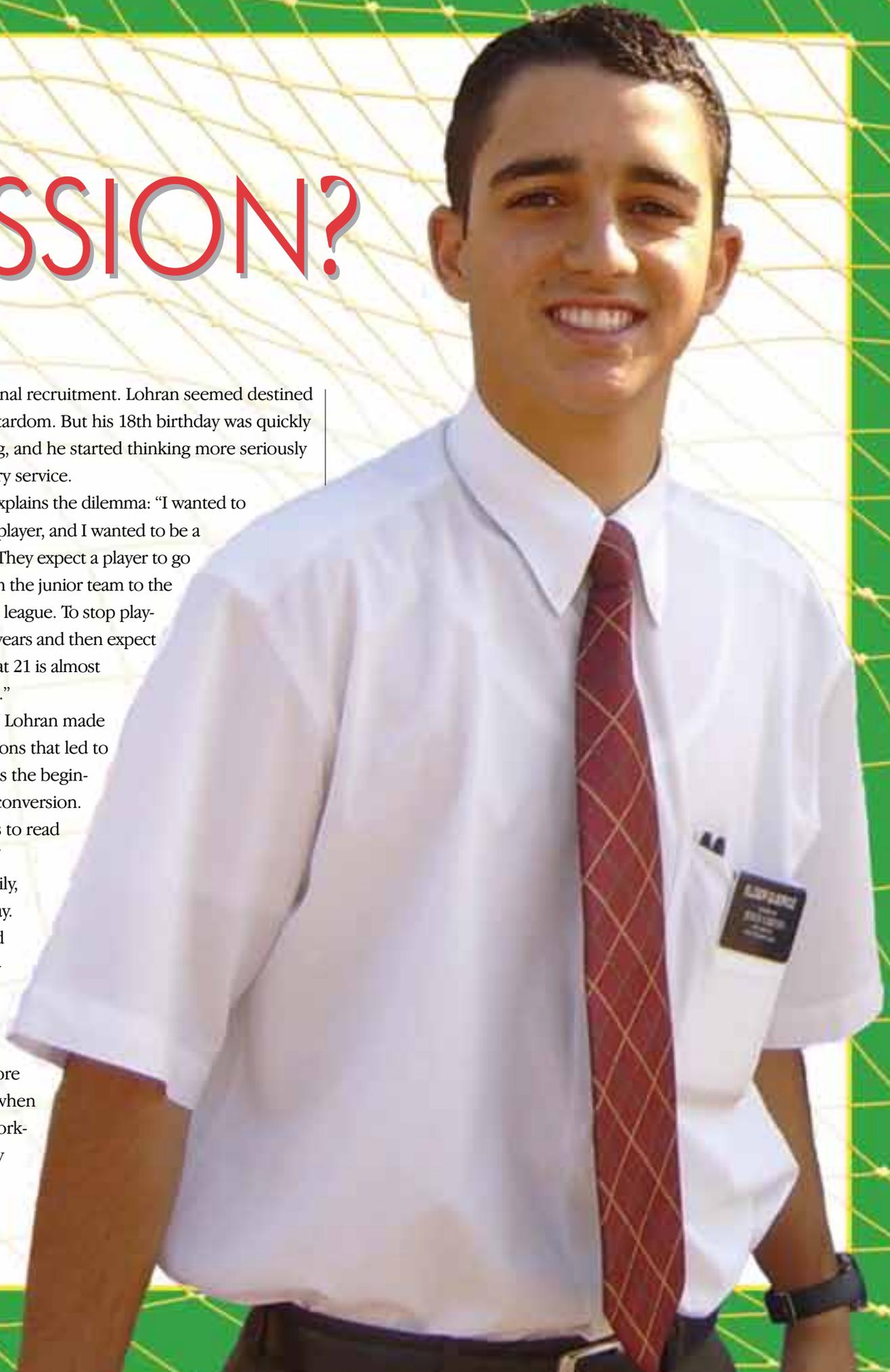
Formal training began for Lohran at age 6 in Mexico, where his father was playing soccer at the time. By age 12 he was playing in elite competitions back in Brazil. And when he was 17 Lohran played in the junior league—the fast track

MISSION?

to professional recruitment. Lohran seemed destined for soccer stardom. But his 18th birthday was quickly approaching, and he started thinking more seriously of missionary service.

Lohran explains the dilemma: “I wanted to be a soccer player, and I wanted to be a missionary. They expect a player to go straight from the junior team to the professional league. To stop playing for two years and then expect to be hired at 21 is almost unthinkable.”

At age 17 Lohran made some decisions that led to what he calls the beginning of his conversion. He set goals to read the Book of Mormon daily, fast, and pray. He attended Mutual, fire-sides, and other Church activities more often. And when he began working regularly



Previous pages:
Lobran turned
in his soccer

uniform for the
white shirt and
tie of a missionary.

Below: Lobran
shows his athletic
skills at a young
age. Top right and
bottom: Lobran with
his father and with
his father's team.



with the missionaries, he found a love of the people he visited and prayed for. He wanted them to have the blessings of the gospel. His desire to serve a mission began to grow. But when would it be best for him to serve? And what would happen to his soccer career after a two-year interruption?

Lobran sought to learn God's will through fasting and prayer. That very week, he noticed the recently delivered issue of the *New Era* magazine in his home, and he began thumbing through it. He was attracted to the article "Ice Dreams," about ice skater Chris Obzansky, who interrupted a promising skating career to serve a mission at age 19, losing the opportunity to compete in the 2006 Winter Olympics.

One passage in particular caught Lobran's attention: as Chris was in sacrament meeting listening to his Young Men president talk about his own mission call, the Spirit told Chris, "You need to serve a mission when you're 19, or you're going to have a tough life." Chris said, "The message was so clear I actually turned around to see if someone was there. The feeling came back 10 times stronger, and I knew I had to go on a mission."¹

Lobran smiles. "When I read that, I felt it had been written for me. Age 19 is the age prescribed by the Lord. I realized that was the answer I needed, and it was like an

enormous weight was taken off my back." The time for Lobran to serve a mission

was now. He talked to his bishop, made the necessary preparations, and never looked back. "It was not even difficult to make the decision of leaving soccer behind," he says, "for I knew it was the right time to do it."

Lobran served in his country's capital, in the Brazil Brasília Mission. He was known as "Elder Happy" because of his contagious enthusiasm. "I am exceptionally happy serving people, sharing with them what I know is true," he says. "It is so gratifying to see people change their lives after learning the gospel."

Like all missionaries, though, he experienced his share of hardships. "Obviously, missionary life is not all fun," he says. "There are difficulties, moments of weakness and loneliness, but all that is next to nothing compared to the treasures of a mission. These are years I'll never forget, that I'll always have in my mind and, more important, my heart."

A few months ago he finished serving a successful mission. Now that he's home, he has joined a soccer team in Rio de Janeiro and believes more chances to continue his soccer career will come his way. With faith he says, "I am now waiting for the opportunities to come, opportunities that our Heavenly Father will bless me to enjoy." **NE**

NOTE

1. Quoted in Shanna Butler, *New Era*, Jan. 2004, 22.



MISSING THE WORLD CUP

BY SUZANA ALVES DE MELO

There is one sport that everyone in Brazil loves—soccer. And there is no bigger soccer event than the World Cup. So when Fabiana Silva, a member of the Brasil Ward, Vitória da Conquista Brazil Stake, won a contest and got to attend the 1998 World Cup in France, she was thrilled! But she had no idea it would become a missionary opportunity.

The other contest winners couldn't help noticing Fabiana's standards as they attended soccer game after soccer game, and Brazil headed to the final game against France. They respected her modest dress, her positive attitude, and her clean language. That respect turned to disbelief, though, when she told them she would not be attending the championship because it was going to be held on Sunday.

Despite pressure and even ridicule from the group, Fabiana stood firm. Sunday found her reading scriptures in her

hotel room because she didn't know where to find a local chapel. Brazil lost; the group went home.

A few weeks later Fabiana was surprised to receive a letter from Fábio Fan, another contest winner from across the country. He told her he was impressed by her standards and that he was investigating the Church. Later he sent another letter—he had been baptized. Fábio then helped bring members of his family into the Church and served a mission.

Fabiana also served a mission, to Campinas, Brazil, where she was well prepared because she had already learned that “the most effective tract we will carry will be the goodness of our own lives and example.”¹ **NE**

NOTE

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 107.

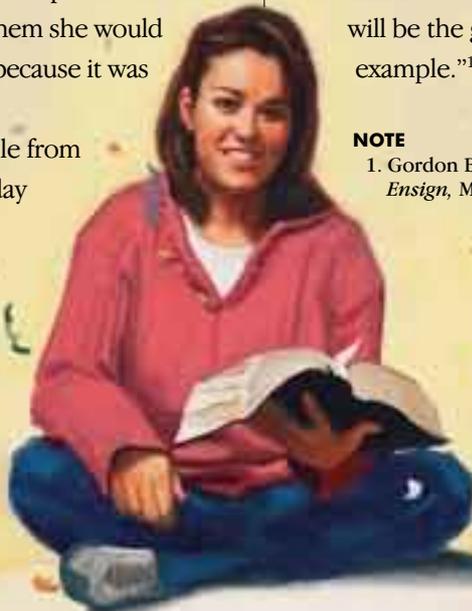


ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL LEWIS

BY RACHEL R. STEPHENSON

I learned that thanks to the Atonement, nothing is beyond my reach.



Like many people I meet, my new friends at camp were not sure what to make of me at first. I was born with a genetic condition called achondroplasia (commonly known as dwarfism), and I stand only four feet, four inches (1.3 meters) tall with unusually short arms and legs.

Once people get to know me, they find that I am just a regular girl and my height seems to make no more difference than my hair color. Soon my new friends and I were doing everything together.

One day at camp we all had the chance to take on the confidence course, a high ropes challenge. For this activity, each participant was strapped into a climber's harness and had to climb halfway up a steep, notched telephone pole and then up a climbing wall featuring handholds placed randomly across its face. The whole time an instructor watched and waited on a platform high above the climber holding a safety rope attached to the climber's harness.

For most participants, the course's height and degree of difficulty made for an imposing obstacle. Still, most of my friends were determined to meet the challenge. In spite of my physical shortcomings, I try to do all I can to match the abilities of average-sized people, and so I decided to attempt the climb.

Before I knew it, I was suited up with climbing helmet and harness, standing at the base of the notched pole. As I began to climb, I heard encouragement from

A FEW EXTRA INCHES



my friends below and from my instructor above. I soon discovered that no matter how hard I tried, my reach was insufficient for the spacing of the notches, which were designed for people with “normal wingspans.”

The instructor at the top watched as I struggled and, when he saw that I had stretched just as far as I was able, he pulled up on the rope a few extra inches allowing me to reach the next handhold. He then relaxed his tension, allowing me to do all of the work that I could.

After much effort I would try for the next handhold. Again I was just inches short of reaching. But because of a caring person at the top who wanted me to succeed, I was again lifted those few extra inches needed to reach the next level. It continued this way, with few exceptions, until I was at last at the top.

The instructor congratulated me, and I felt such appreciation, not only for the help he gave me but also for the fact that he let me do all that I could for myself. It was our success, not his or mine alone.

A few weeks after the camp, my family was asked to speak in sacrament meeting on the grace of God. As I studied for the talk, my mind went back to my experience on the confidence course. I was able to recognize how often in my life the Lord has acted much like that instructor, encouraging me to succeed, letting me do all I can do in the struggles of life before giving me just the amount of boost required for the task at hand.

The Apostle Paul tells us that all of us have shortcomings and that none of us have the reach needed to ascend back to our Father. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). I am grateful for Jesus Christ’s Atonement, which is the means by which we can all ascend if we continue to put forth our best efforts. I know that He cares for me and will gently lift me while allowing me the freedom to grow. After all, “it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23). **NE**



BRINGING

Abish TO LIFE

BY JADE SWARTZBERG AND SHARI WHYTE



One small Book of Mormon story has made a big difference in the lives of the youth of Silverdale, Washington.

Mentioned by name only once, Abish and her story may be easy to miss, hidden in Alma's account of Ammon's mission and King Lamoni's conversion. But the youth of the Silverdale Washington Stake have not missed her and have shared her story of faith through an original musical production called, quite fittingly, *Abish*.

The play was written and directed by stake leaders and involved the youth in a variety of ways through acting, singing, playing in the live orchestra, costuming, set design, lighting, and sound. The production, which was presented as a part of a stake youth conference, took a lot

of time and dedication. It also took a lot of faith.

Faith Like Abish

Miranda Feltzman is not a member of the Church; she had never heard of the Book of Mormon before she was invited to audition for the musical. A stake leader knew her and felt prompted to call her. It took courage for Miranda to try out for the play, but she did, and landed a lead role—the part of Abish.

“I was really worried initially—it was my first time playing a lead role in a musical. But everyone was really supportive and had faith in me, and eventually I learned to have that sort of faith in myself,” recalls Miranda.

That faith helped her understand the role she was playing, although at first she was worried she wouldn't be able to. “I realized that Abish really was almost exactly like me and every other young man or woman out there at some point in their life. She has to learn fairly quickly to stick to her convictions no matter what, even if the entire world—or the court in this case—seems set against her.”

Abish's story taught the youth that with God, anything is possible. They learned this as they juggled hectic high school schedules and play rehearsals to make the production happen.

Steven Connell of the Silverdale Second Ward found himself turning to prayer for help. “There were many times when nothing seemed to be going right. I wanted to devote all my time to the play and not have to deal with



The story of Abish is in the 19th chapter of Alma. Her name is mentioned in verse 16. She witnesses the miraculous conversion of King Lamoni, his queen, and his household. See Alma 19:16-18, 28-29. (Above) Miranda Feldtman plays the role of Abish.

anything else, but I couldn't do that. There was homework, finals, and just everyday high school life that demanded my attention. I had to pray that the production would be what Heavenly Father expected and that it would be a great missionary tool for the youth and the others in the audience."

Kyle Hollenback of the Poulsbo Second Ward also learned that faith and prayer were just as important in their lives as they were in the story. "I prayed that I would receive the strength and confidence to somehow find the talent to sing and perform. We prayed as a cast and crew



that we would be guided by the Lord and that all the little kinks in the play would get worked out."

True Scripture

Abish's testimony of Jesus Christ began "on account of a remarkable vision of her father" (Alma 19:16). She later had the opportunity to be courageous and bold in exercising her faith and bearing her testimony. Many of the youth also had the chance to catch their own personal visions of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon as they saw the scriptures come to life and learned to relate to the people of long ago.

As Steven Connell worked on his character, King Lamoni became a very real person to him. During the scene in which Lamoni feels the weight of his mistakes and longs to have his sins forgiven, Steven was so overcome by emotion that he cried. "I really felt that through faith in Jesus

Christ, we can change everything about our own lives and start over again to be new and better people," says Steven.

Kyle Hollenback, who played Ammon, learned something not found by simply reading the Book of Mormon. "Sometimes people get in the mode of reading the Book of Mormon as a history book, but getting into our characters gave me a better understanding of the reality of this book," he says. "I can relate to Ammon in that when called upon, I can be a little bold, like acting in this play."

Kendra Hollenback shares her brother's new understanding. "After *Abish* the Book of Mormon doesn't seem like a history book anymore. It's real. You can't just expect to get a testimony without working on it. You have to read the Book of Mormon and pray about it."

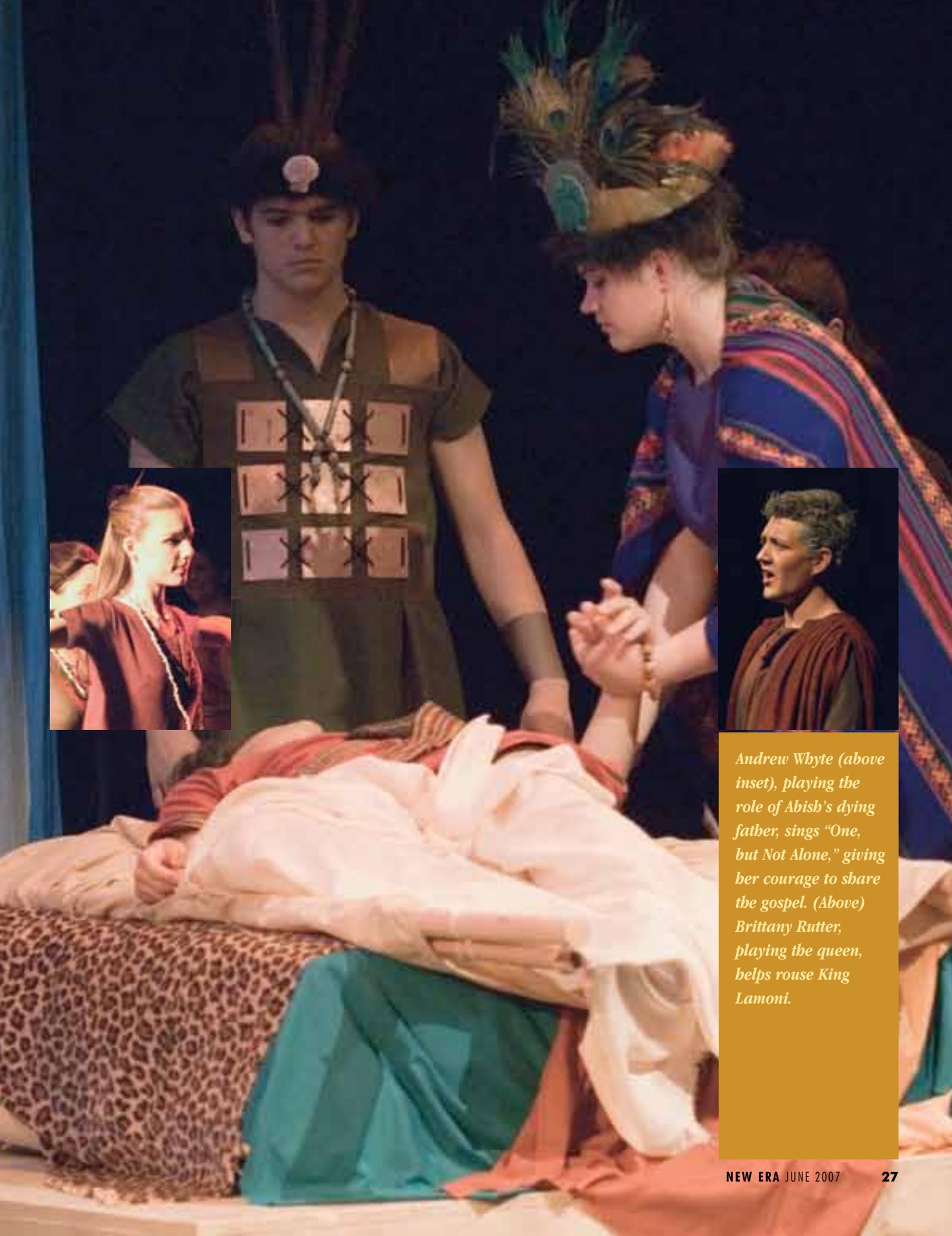
An Invitation

Abish's message invites all to find and share the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Through her faith and courage she made it possible for many to hear the word of the Lord and become converted. Many of the youth chose to be bold like Abish in sharing their testimonies as they invited their friends to attend the production.

"There were so many people from school who came out of curiosity and have now been introduced to the Book of Mormon," says Christina Willey of the Poulsbo Second Ward, who helped with stage management.

Those who came were touched by the spirit of the production. From his place in the orchestra, where he played the clarinet, Scott Daly of the Silverdale First Ward was able to see that the audience was affected by what was happening onstage. "There was one scene where the queen's servants and family kneel to pray," he says. "During this moment, the lights in the auditorium begin to fill the room with brightness. Then I could see every smiling and crying face in the audience. The play definitely





Andrew Whyte (above inset), playing the role of Abish's dying father, sings "One, but Not Alone," giving her courage to share the gospel. (Above) Brittany Rutter, playing the queen, helps rouse King Lamoni.

strengthened my testimony of the Book of Mormon.”

Like most of the youth involved in the play, Abish herself was not necessarily a great leader. She was primarily a poor, humble servant who put her trust in her Heavenly Father and risked her job and her friends in order to bear her testimony. And she was probably a little scared.

Knowing that the play would be many people’s first introduction to the Church, Andrew Whyte of the Bainbridge Island Ward was nervous in his role as

Abish’s father. But he was comforted and strengthened. “The Spirit helped me to put my trust in the Lord, comforted me, prompted me to pray and gave me the assurance that I would remember

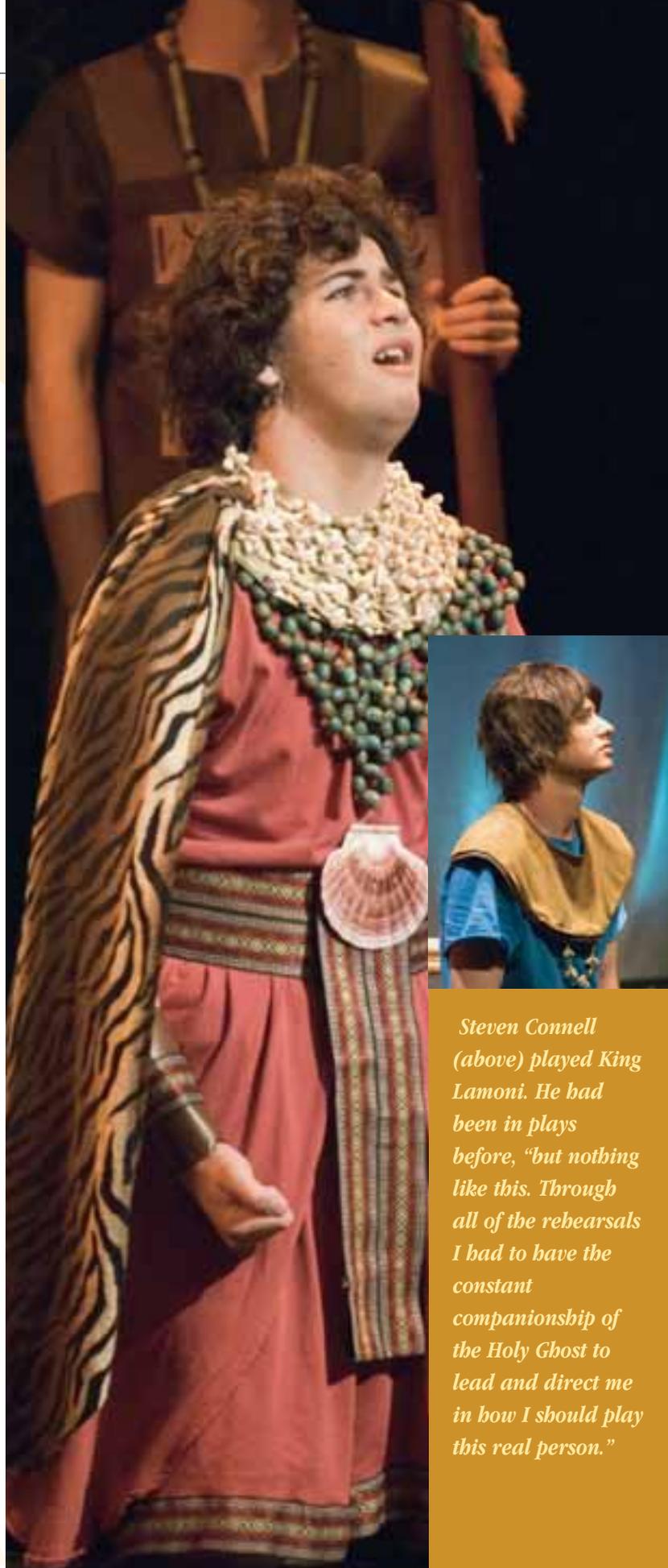


all my lines and sing my whole soul out,” he says.

As a dancer in the play, Stacie Brown of the Poulsbo Second Ward learned that many people can be inspired through Abish’s story. “Every time Miranda got up on stage and did a scene, it looked like she had been a member all her life. I know that I felt the Spirit each time she performed.”

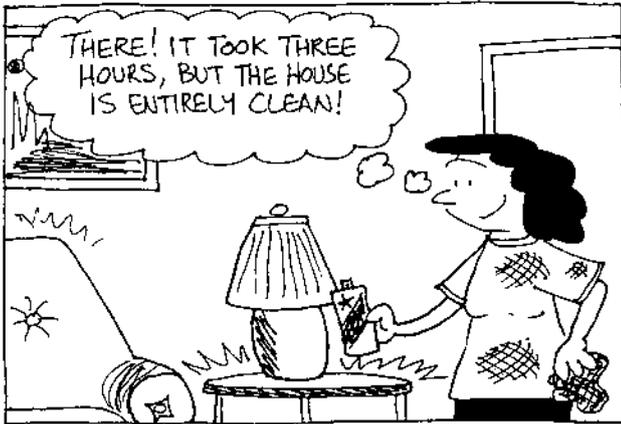
Besides inspiring others, Miranda says she was able to witness firsthand what Latter-day Saints are really about. “I would never have traded that time in my life for anything else in the world.” **NE**

Want to know about women in the Bible? Read “For She Loved Much: Women in the New Testament” in this month’s *Ensign*, p. 40.

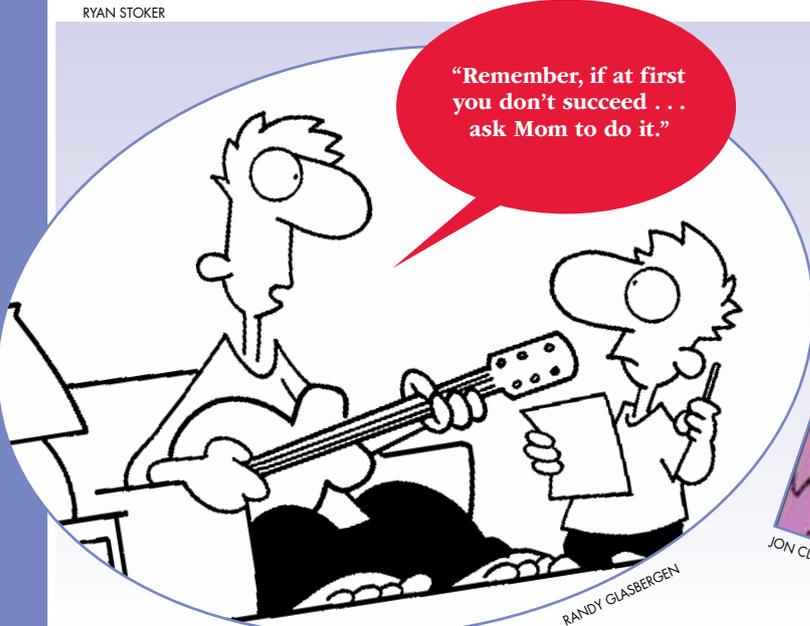


Steven Connell (above) played King Lamoni. He had been in plays before, “but nothing like this. Through all of the rehearsals I had to have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost to lead and direct me in how I should play this real person.”

THE EXTRA SMILE



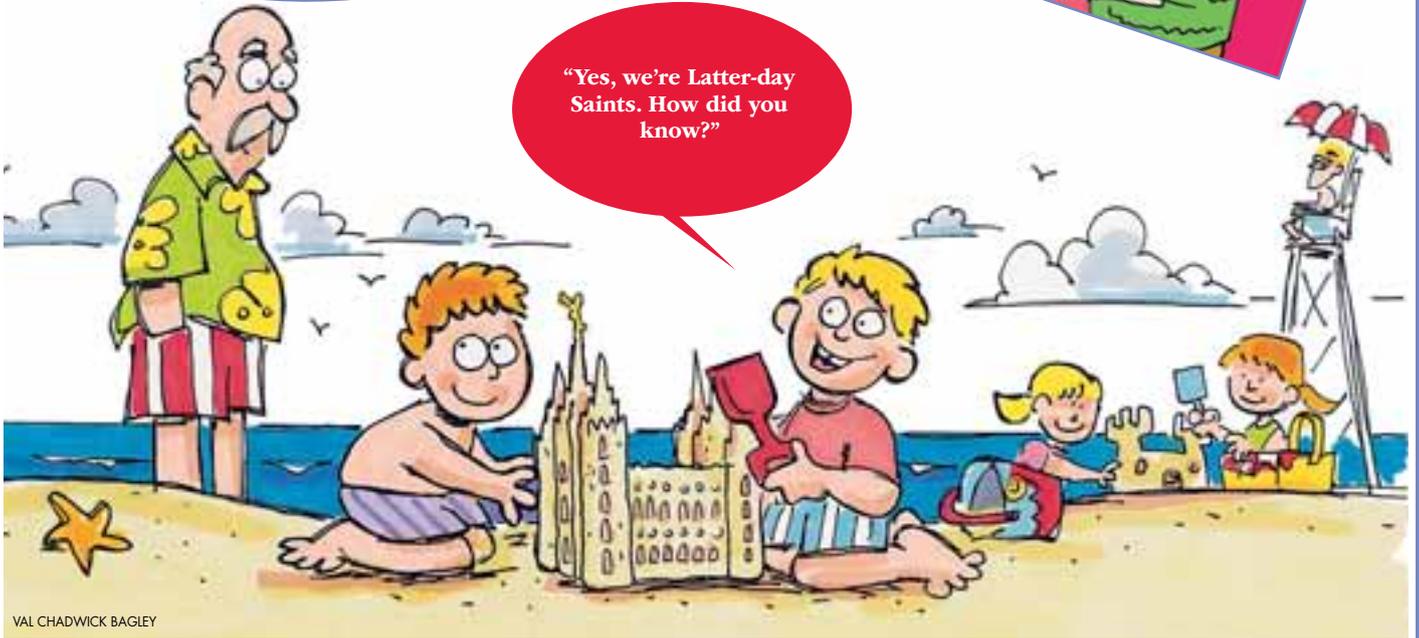
RYAN STOKER



RANDY GLASBERGEN



JON CLARK



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

What I Learned from

DOING THE DISHES

BY SHERRIE MACKELPRANG

“I love to do the dishes!” Brother Eves announced each week in our Sunday School class. He was in his 60s and taught our class of 14- and 15-year-olds. I was doubtful about learning from someone who was so far removed from my own age. He always shared his testimony and stories of faith. Each lesson ended with a challenge for all of us to go home and learn to love washing the dishes, or to learn to love some other chore that we didn’t enjoy.

I didn’t believe Brother Eves could really love to do the dishes. I figured he was just saying that to inspire us to go home and do the dishes for our parents. I listened each week as he repeated this to us, and I decided to put his words to the test.

I had moved into Brother Eves’s ward because of my parents’ divorce, and at the time I was embarrassed and sad. My mother, my sister, and I had moved from our comfortable family home into a little trailer that was several decades old. I was scared of the changes that lay in front of me, and I was ready to cast a negative attitude on my new situation.

We did not have a dishwasher in our new home, which meant we had to wash all of the dishes by hand. While I completed this chore, I repeated over and over in my head that I too loved to do the dishes. A few weeks went by, and I continued my experiment. I

was shocked to discover that doing the dishes did actually become more enjoyable.

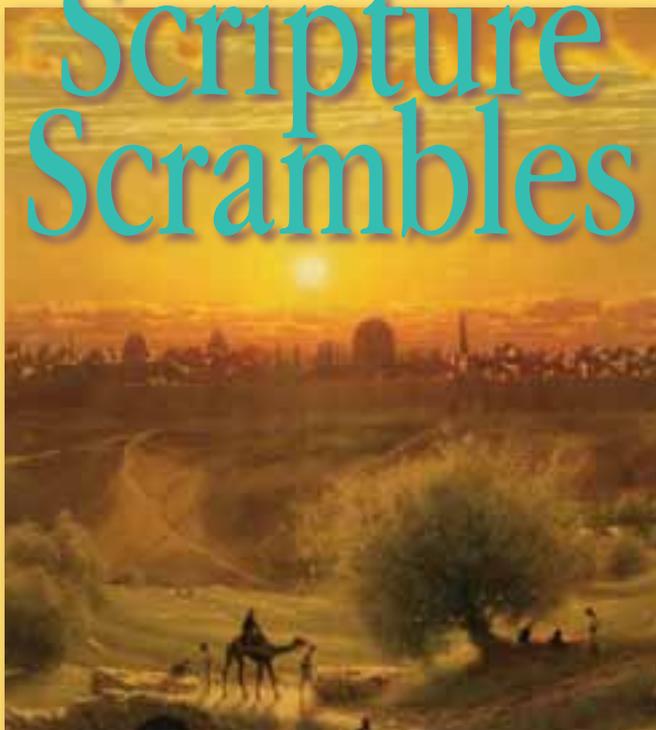
I felt this pattern of work and positive attitude growing inside of me. I began thinking positively about all the good things that I had. I quit focusing on what I didn’t have and put my energy into making ordinary daily tasks into something that I enjoyed. My faith increased. I prayed for guidance to face each day’s challenges. I began reading the scriptures with more purpose. I felt my own testimony grow to a firm belief in the truth of the gospel.

Like Moroni, Brother Eves taught that faith needs work (see Ether 12:29–30). The fruit of my faith and work was the attitude I needed to be successful in life. I will always be thankful for that. **NE**

See “What I Learned as a Corn Dog,” *New Era*, July 2006, p. 24.



Scripture Scrambles



PAINTING BY JAMES FAIRMAN, COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART

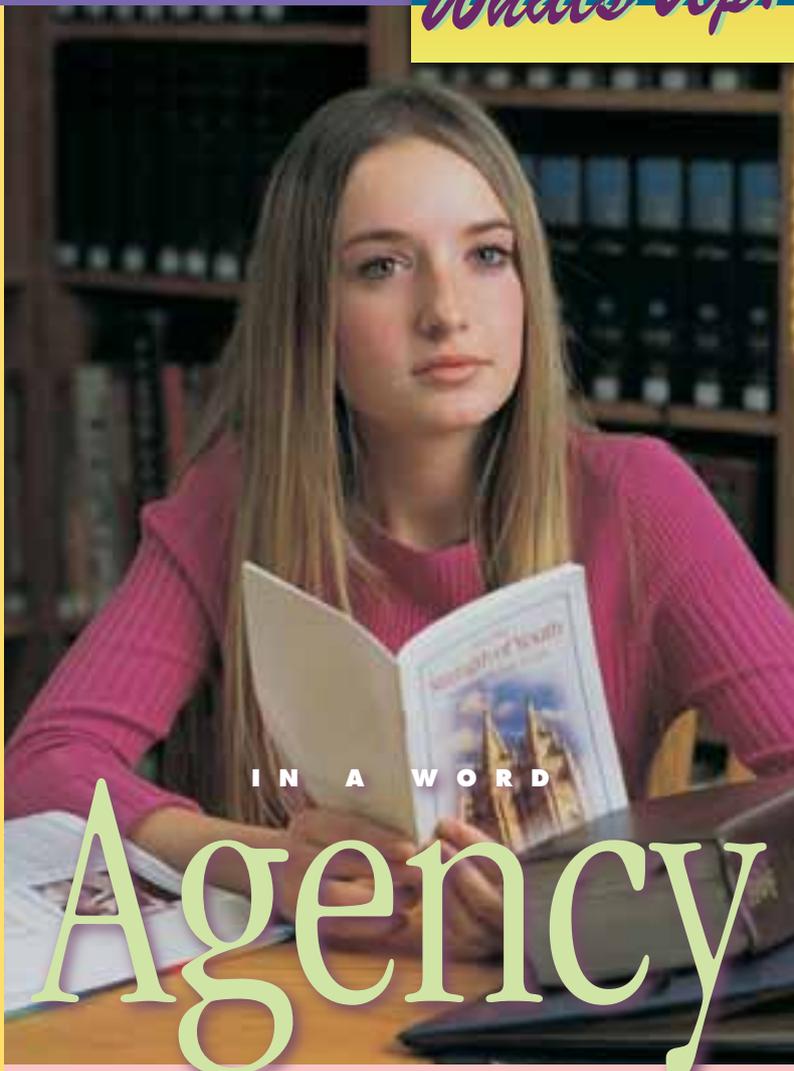
Unscramble these letters to make words or names from the Bible. Then unscramble the boxed letters to solve the puzzle in the quote from President Hinckley.

- LOTAPSE _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- ISPLETE _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- UJEMRALSE _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- CELIPSID _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- LOTREEVINA _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- SOGLSEP _ _ _ _ _
- BSHREEW _ _ _ _ _
- TIRANOHINGS _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

"The _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ sets forth, in language beautiful and moving, the matchless life and sacrifice of the Savior of mankind" ("Words of the Prophet: Search the Scriptures," *New Era*, Apr. 2000, 4).

ANSWERS
 APOSTLE, EPISTLE, JERUSALEM, DISCIPLE, REVELATION,
 GOSPELS, HEBREWS, CORINTHIANS
 NEW TESTAMENT

PHOTOGRAPH BY KELLY A. LARSEN



I N A W O R D

Agency

Your Heavenly Father has given you agency, the ability to choose and to act for yourself. Agency is essential in the plan of salvation. Without it, you would not be able to learn or progress or follow the Savior. With it, you are "free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil" (2 Nephi 2:27).

Your use of this gift determines your happiness or misery in this life and in the

life to come. You are free to choose and act, but you are not free to choose the consequences of your actions. You are responsible for the decisions you make. You should not blame your circumstances, your family, or your friends if you choose to disobey God's commandments. You are a child of God with great strength. You have the ability to choose righteousness and happiness, regardless of your circumstances.

(Adapted from *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference*, which you can read online at lds.org in the Gospel Library.)

“Remember, the family is one of God’s greatest fortresses against the evils of our day.”

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), “To the ‘Youth of the Noble Birthright,’ ” *Ensign*, May 1986, 43.

KEEPING IT CLEAN



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE AKRON OHIO STAKE

Dressed in neon-green “Helping Hands” T-shirts, 150 youth from the Church descended upon the city of Ashland, Ohio, and worked to help beautify the city. The youth picked up trash along the roads entering the city. They also pulled weeds and

mulched around trees at three city parks. In all, the youth provided two days and nearly 1,000 hours of volunteer service.

Their efforts were part of last year’s Akron Ohio Stake youth conference. Weeks before the conference, the stake youth committee

worked with the mayor and other city leaders to identify service projects.

Shortly after the conference, the group gave the mayor a copy of the Book of Mormon with a handwritten testimony about the gospel and the joy of service. Along the way, 150 copies of the

Book of Mormon were given to members of the Ashland Branch for them to hand out to friends and family in the community.

The mayor was so touched by the whole experience that all he could say, in a humble and emotional voice, was “thank you.”



Seeing SIGNS

There are a lot of missionaries out there who are seeing signs—road signs, that is. Here are some of our favorite sign photos that missionaries have sent to the *New Era*.

What’s up where you are? Let us know at newera@ldschurch.org.



CHAIN REACTION

BY SHANNA BUTLER

For a group of teens in Boston, one good turn led to many others.

Milly Astwood (above) was a friend to Jonathan Ubri (below), who was a friend to Bernard Lewis (below right) and many others. Now Jonathan is on a full-time mission, and a chain reaction that started with a simple invitation will keep growing.

Jonathan Ubri and his friends in the Boston First Ward, Boston Massachusetts Stake, know that President Gordon B. Hinckley is a prophet of God. They also know that what he says is true: “Every [convert to the Church] needs three things: a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with ‘the good word of God’ (Moroni 6:4).”¹

Jonathan, Milly Astwood, and Bernard Lewis know these words are true because they have lived them, and they have started a chain reaction of goodness in their lives and in the lives of others.

A Friend

“I invite every member to reach out in friendship and love for those who come into the Church as converts.”—President Gordon B. Hinckley²

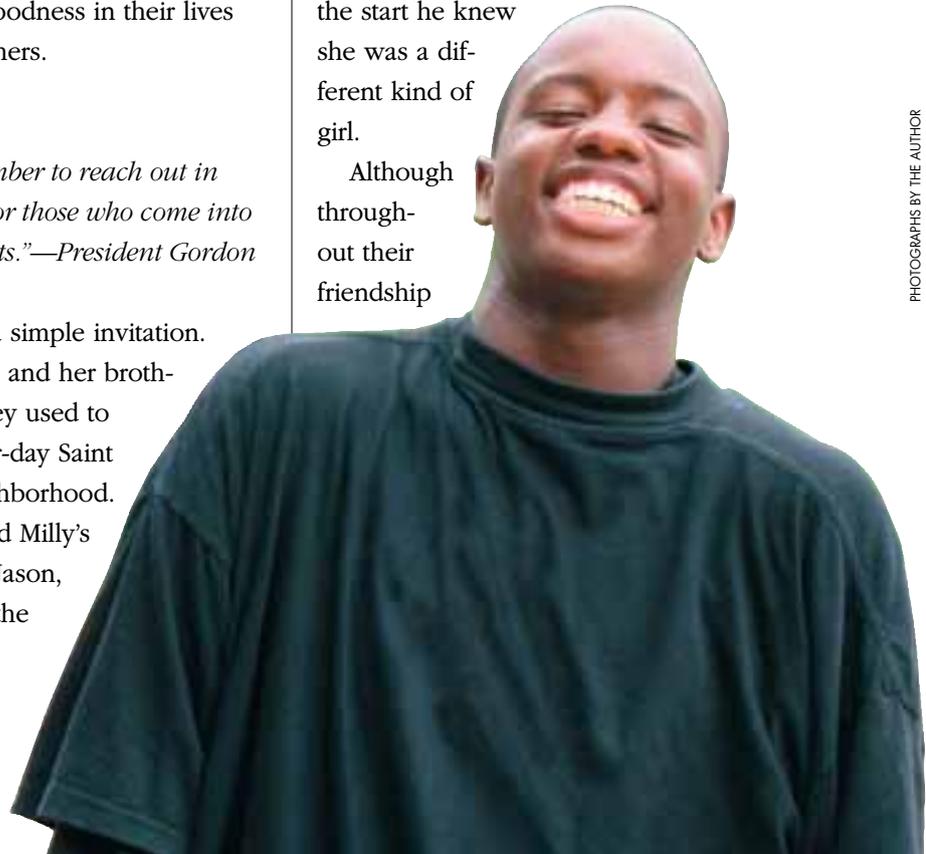
It all started with a simple invitation. When Milly (now 19) and her brothers were younger, they used to play with some Latter-day Saint children in their neighborhood. Those children invited Milly’s brothers, Henry and Jason, to play basketball at the meetinghouse and to attend church. When

they were teens, Henry and Jason joined the Church and eventually went on missions. Milly started going to church with her brothers when she was 8, and when she was 14, her parents allowed her to be baptized.

About a month after her baptism, Milly met Jonathan at school.

“The first day that I met her, I asked her what she was doing and she said she was going to the temple,” says Jonathan. Right from the start he knew she was a different kind of girl.

Although through-out their friendship



PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR





“Every convert needs a friend in the Church, someone who will be close to him, someone who will answer his questions, someone who will look after him and keep him coming. He needs a responsibility. He needs something to do. He won’t grow without responsibility. He must have a responsibility. We must take care of those who come into the Church as converts. They need constant nurturing in the gospel.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Inspirational Thoughts,” Ensign, Oct. 2003, 3.



Milly would talk to him about the Church, Jonathan wasn’t really interested. Finally, she decided to invite him to a youth dance.

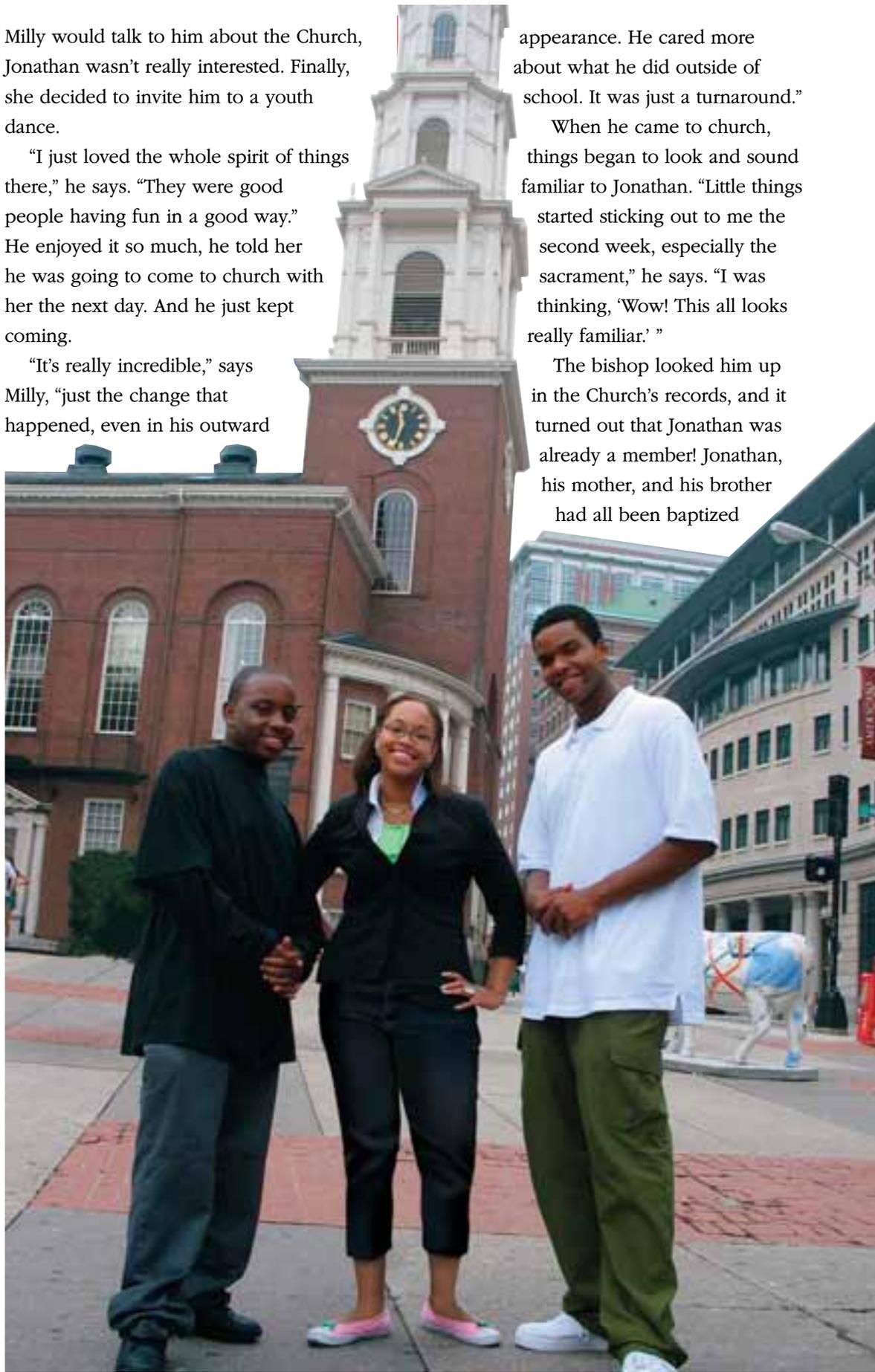
“I just loved the whole spirit of things there,” he says. “They were good people having fun in a good way.” He enjoyed it so much, he told her he was going to come to church with her the next day. And he just kept coming.

“It’s really incredible,” says Milly, “just the change that happened, even in his outward

appearance. He cared more about what he did outside of school. It was just a turnaround.”

When he came to church, things began to look and sound familiar to Jonathan. “Little things started sticking out to me the second week, especially the sacrament,” he says. “I was thinking, ‘Wow! This all looks really familiar.’ ”

The bishop looked him up in the Church’s records, and it turned out that Jonathan was already a member! Jonathan, his mother, and his brother had all been baptized





Whether they're on Boston Common (opposite page) or at church, these friends work together to help others and bring them closer to the gospel.

when he was 11.

"I just did because my mother did, and the same goes for my brother." Jonathan's family stopped attending church a month after their baptism. "It really didn't mean much to me because I didn't know much about the Church," he says.

But when Milly invited him back, the Church began to mean a lot to him. "Coming back, I never felt out of place," he says. He was welcomed warmly and ordained to the priesthood when he was 14. Before he went on his mission to Rio de Janeiro, Jonathan was a member of his ward's Young Men presidency.

And how has living the gospel changed his life?

"How hasn't it? It was a complete 180. There was so much potential in me that I never would have realized."

A Responsibility

"Every convert who comes into this Church should have an immediate responsibility. It may be ever so small, but it will

spell the difference in his life."—President Gordon B. Hinckley³

Milly's invitation to Jonathan was followed by many more invitations from Jonathan to others—other members of the Young Men who were not attending church. He and the other active young men in the ward called their invitations "Operation Mormonation."

Not only did they get on the phone at the start of Young Men class to invite everyone on the roll who wasn't there to come to church, but they also assigned those young men responsibilities. Those responsibilities helped the young men feel welcome and useful.

Quorum presidencies worked with the bishop to remind people of activities, and each young man was given the opportunity to help teach lessons, organize activities, set up for Mutual, and teach with the full-time missionaries. They also had to call and report on the status of their assignments.

"It was basically just learning how to serve each other and to delegate. The





The first time Bernard came to church he helped clean the building so that he could play basketball afterwards. His first visit was followed by many others because the young men in the ward welcomed him and helped him to gain a testimony.

Church is really run through quorums. Everyone has an important role in each quorum, not just the presidents,” Jonathan says.

Serving in their quorum made the young men of the Boston First Ward more dedicated to the gospel. “I know that loving each other and teaching each other and serving each other in the Church will bring us closer to the Savior,” Jonathan says.

The Good Word of God

“And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God.”—Moroni 6:4.

Bernard Lewis, 16, received a few invitations from the Boston First Ward. The first was from the Young Men president, Rob Smith. Brother Smith, Bernard’s neighbor, saw him outside playing basketball one day and invited him and his brother to come play at the church—after they helped clean the chapel.

Bernard was happy to come, and when he got there the other young men immediately welcomed him. “They were like family to me. I really liked it there,” he says.

Brother Smith invited him to church, and as Bernard started to attend church,

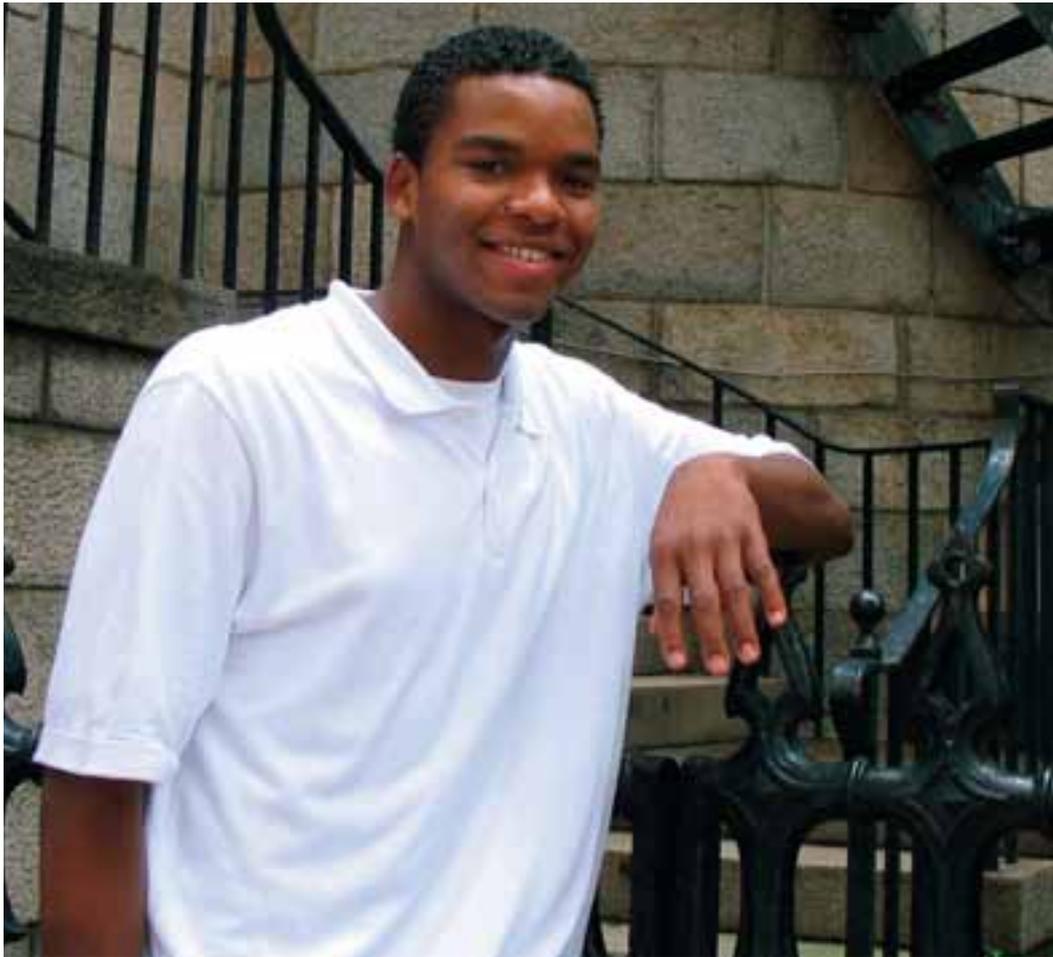
youth conference, and other activities, he decided to stay because it all made him feel so good. He says that during this time Jonathan was a good example to him. “I look up to him,” he says. “He’s like my big brother.”

Jonathan agrees. “We became really close. I call him my little brother now.”

And when Bernard’s mother allowed him to join the Church, Jonathan was able to baptize him.

Besides the invitation to come to church and be baptized, the young men in the ward also invited Bernard to read his scriptures. His testimony of the scriptures led him to join the Church,





These Boston youth know that you can start a chain reaction in your city too. So invite a friend to come to church and to come unto Christ. You never know how many people you will affect for good.

and he continues to study them regularly.

“The scriptures lead you to the right place,” Bernard testifies. “You need to read the scriptures to know what you believe in and ask the Lord if they are true. The scriptures are important. They are the word of the Lord.”

You Are Needed

“I ask each of you to please help in this undertaking. Your friendly ways are needed. Your sense of responsibility is needed.”—President Gordon B. Hinckley⁴

It all started with a simple invitation. Henry and Jason, Milly’s brothers, were invited, so they invited Milly. Milly was invited, so she invited Jonathan. Jonathan was invited, so he invited Bernard and many other young men to the gospel. And now that Jonathan is going on a mission, he will continue to invite people to Christ.

“It’s a pattern, and it’s pretty incredible if you think about it,” says Milly. She says if you have a friend you want to invite to church, “Just do it. The worst thing that could happen is they’ll say no. If you really care about someone, then you should invite them because you could change their life.”

Jonathan says, “There’s a chain of people we affect with our actions. Not just one person.”

So, go ahead. Invite someone. And start a chain reaction. **NE**

Learn how to be a member missionary by studying *Preach My Gospel*.

NOTES

1. “Converts and Young Men,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 47.
2. “Some Thoughts on Temples, Retention of Converts, and Missionary Service,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 51.
3. “Inspirational Thoughts,” *Ensign*, July 1998, 4.
4. “Converts and Young Men,” 48.



MAKE YOUR LIFE A

Legacy

BY ELDER MERVYN B. ARNOLD
Of the Seventy

You can fill your life with valuable lessons for those who come after you.



She had a speech impediment, so one of the elders remarked, “Why have they sent Sister Bennion? She can’t even talk.”

She turned to that missionary and said, “Yes, I can talk.” And in that moment her problem was gone, and it never returned.

Like Nephi, I was “born of goodly parents” (1 Nephi 1:1), who set a righteous example for their children. Here are a few of the lessons they taught me.

The Value of a Mission

I was the youngest of seven children, and every morning at 6 a.m. my father would bang on the door and say, “It’s time for prayer.” He would go into the kitchen and start cooking the oatmeal, and we would gather and get on our knees. Something we would often hear our parents say in our family prayers was, “Please bless the missionaries that they will be led to the honest in heart and that our children will have the desire to go on a mission.” When we were young and one of us was called on to say a prayer, we would almost always say the same thing, and it affected us.

In this way, our parents impressed upon our minds the importance of a mission from the time we were young. Perhaps this was because they had both served missions. My father served in the Mexican Mission, and my mother served in Missouri

at the height of the Depression.

My mother’s mission taught her a great lesson on faith. Her bishop and stake president told her that it would be difficult for her to serve a mission because she had a speech impediment, which made it hard for her to be understood. But she felt impressed to go and had the overwhelming feeling that if she would be faithful, the Lord would correct her problem and she would be able to serve.

At age 14 she had received a blessing regarding a mission. Some time later she went to the secluded upper rooms of the meetinghouse and poured her soul out to her Heavenly Father regarding her desire to serve a mission. She felt inspired to call her uncle, who was a mission president in Missouri, and ask him if she could be his secretary. (Back then they didn’t have all the formalities concerning mission calls that we do now.) He said yes, and she was set apart by a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, who promised her she would bring many people into the Church. She was surprised at this, knowing that she had



Five hundred years later, the Nephites were still naming their children after Lehi and Nephi of old because of their good example and their good works.

You too can begin a legacy by the way you act.

difficulty speaking.

However, after she began to serve, one of the sister missionaries became very ill. The mission president asked my mother to work with this sister's companion so that the sister could come to the mission home to recover and her companion could keep working. My mother took a train to the area where she would be working. When she stepped off the train, she was met by a couple of elders, one of whom remarked when he saw her, "Why have they sent Sister Bennion? She can't even talk." She turned to that missionary and said indignantly, "Yes, I *can* talk." And in that moment her problem was gone, and it never returned.

I was raised in a home where the parents prayed that their children would go on missions because they knew what a mission does. Without reservation, I can say that, apart from my marriage to my wonderful wife, nothing has done more for me than my mission—for education, learning to get along with all sorts of people, learning a foreign language. But much more than that, through my mission I came to know my Heavenly Father and my Savior. I know the Savior lives. I know that. I am so grateful for parents who taught me the value of a mission.

The Value of Your Name

I would like you to realize that whatever you do as a young person will set a precedent for the rest of your life.

Before Helaman's sons Nephi and Lehi went out on their missions, their father gave them this counsel:

"Behold, my sons, I desire that ye should remember to keep the commandments of God; and would that ye should declare unto the people these words. Behold, I have given unto you the names of our first parents who came out of the land of

Jerusalem; and this I have done that when you remember your names ye may remember them; and when ye remember them ye may remember their works; and when ye remember their works ye may know how that it is said, and also written, that they were good.

"Therefore, my sons, I would that ye should do that which is good, that it may be said of you, and also written, even as it has been said and written of them" (Helaman 5:6–7).

When Helaman spoke these words, 500 years had passed away and they were still remembering Lehi and Nephi of old and what examples they were as the first prophets in the Book of Mormon; they were still naming their children after them because of their good example and their good works.

Try to visualize your own future. You too can begin a legacy by the way you act. Someday you will have children just as Helaman did. In generations to come they can look back and say that you were good.

My father's name was John. I have a hard time counting how many of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren are named after him because he was such a good man. He was honorable and well-loved, so his posterity named their children after this good man whose name they will remember by hopefully continuing that legacy.

I admonish you to make your name one that your family can be proud of and that will be remembered because of your good works for a long time. You should always keep your name clean and pure so that your grandchildren and great grandchildren will remember you as an honorable person. They should be able to say that this wasn't a person who took drugs or was involved in illicit sex or other sins, but one who remained faithful and worthy.

Believe me, your name will be remembered. For example, your missionary com-



panions will speak of you whether you were a good missionary or not. It's been many years since I served my mission, and I can still tell you the missionaries who gave everything, those who goofed off and broke mission rules, and those who did not give it their best. Many have expressed their regrets for not being the kind of missionary they could have been. Of course, nobody is perfect. However, as President Hinckley has asked, we should do the very best we can. Your name carries through from the time you are a young person up through your mission, through adulthood and beyond.

The Value of Honesty

I worked as a real estate developer, and it's not easy to get farmers to sell you their land. But I can tell you of many instances when I went out to find land to purchase and people asked me, "Are you John Arnold's son?"

I would say, "Yes, I am."

And they would say, "He was an honest man. I'm sure you'll be honest with us." I bought several properties because of my father's good name.

My father never made much money, but my parents were honest and hard working, and they taught these values to their children. My father worked at a copper mine. He didn't earn enough money to send his sons and daughters on missions or to college, so my parents bought 1,000 chickens for us to raise so that we could sell the eggs. They also contracted to deliver a large number of newspapers each evening to our neighbors.

My father would have us go out to the chicken coops and shoot the rats out of the feed troughs because they would eat the chickens' food. On many occasions I would go out with a flashlight and a small gun to shoot the rats that were in the hoppers eating the chickens' food.

I'll never forget one night when I was out on that particular assignment. My father came home from a Church meeting and looked down at me and said, "Son, what flashlight do you have?" I looked down and realized it was the one my father took to work, and it had the name of the copper mine on the side. My father said, "Son, that flashlight is for me to use on the job. You should never take anything from your employer for personal use—not even a pencil, a flashlight, or anything else. Go back and get another flashlight." I am so grateful for my father's legacy of honesty.

Most of the money from the eggs and delivering newspapers went into the bank to help pay for our education and our missions. Five of the children used the money to serve missions and all seven graduated from college. The lessons of value that my parents taught me on honesty, hard work, the Word of Wisdom, the law of chastity, and many other things continue to bless my life.

What legacy will you and I leave behind to be passed on to those who will remain after we have passed away—especially our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren? I would hope it would be like that of Lehi and Nephi of old—a legacy of love, trust, and honor. We can and should set those who follow us for hundreds of years to come on a course that will lead them to happiness, joy, and eternal life. **NE**

For more, read "Your Good Name," *New Era*, July 1996, p. 46.

MY JOURNEY TO FAITH

BY DAVID DANCE

What did you say?" I replied to my mother as she informed me of her plans to take the family to Nauvoo. I could already feel the Laman-and-Lemuel-like murmurings enter my heart. I even let a few of them slip. I complained about how I had to work and how unbelievably boring that town would be. But my

wonderful mother persisted and tried to convince me that it would be "cool."

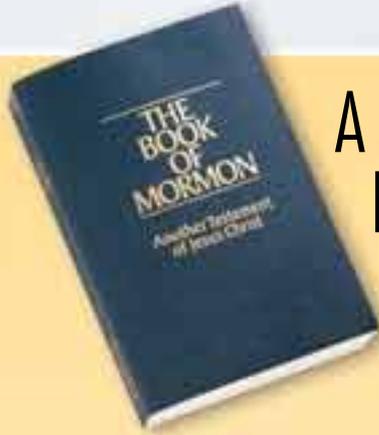
A few months passed and it came time for our trip. We were in Nauvoo for only three days, but for those days I was filled with the Spirit. I was blessed to visit many sites of historical significance. I was even able to perform baptisms for the dead in the beautiful Nauvoo temple with my father, grandfather, and a few friends who were also there. Although the trip was going better than expected, it was still to hold more meaning for me.



Only one week before we left for Nauvoo, I received my patriarchal blessing. In it I was told that my testimony of the Restoration and of Joseph Smith would be strengthened. I thought little of it at the time and simply figured it would just happen over time.

On the final day we spent in Nauvoo, we went and visited Carthage Jail, where the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum were killed. We walked the grounds and read many quotes from the Prophet, and I felt the Spirit very strongly. During our tour of the jail, I felt the Spirit even stronger. We ended up in the upstairs room where the mob broke in and killed Joseph and Hyrum in cold blood. As I sat there and learned of that great man and listened to the hymn “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief,” the words of my patriarchal blessing, which I had received only 10 days before, entered my mind. I have never felt like I received such a blessing as my trip to Nauvoo was. It was amazing that barely one week had passed since my blessing, and I could already see it being fulfilled.

On my trip to Nauvoo I learned more about the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Restoration, and the early pioneers than I ever have at one time in my life. I already had a testimony of Joseph Smith and the Restoration before that trip, but afterwards I realized how small that testimony was. I knew before, but now I know with a greater surety that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. He did restore the gospel to the earth. I also know that Heavenly Father loves each one of us and answers our prayers if we have faith in Him. **NE**



A BOOK FOR BRANDON

BY EMILIE EVERETT

One night at Mutual the missionaries gave us copies of the Book of Mormon to share. We had the option of giving it to a person we had in mind or giving it back to the missionaries to distribute. I had it set in my mind that I was going to give it to a friend in my math class. It was going to be great. As I went to school the next day excited about the start of my missionary work, I saw one of my friends, Brandon. He was going to class as well, but we stopped and spoke. Right then I had the strongest feeling that I had to give him the Book of Mormon. I thought about it as I kept going to class and came to the conclusion that the feeling was too strong to ignore and that I needed to place the book with him.

The next day I asked him to meet me after school so that I could give him

something really important. He agreed, and we went on. When the time came for me to go downstairs to give it to him, I thought that I couldn't do it. It kept going through my mind that he would think I was strange. What if he said no? I finally heard a still small voice tell me that if I didn't do this, then I wouldn't have the experience I need for the future. So, I went down and I spoke with him. I told him that the book was another testament of Jesus Christ, and that it has many important truths in it. I also told him that when I read it, it fills me with a comfort that I know I will be OK in the end. He took it, and I was relieved. Later that week he came to church with my family and met the missionaries.

I am extremely grateful for the Book of Mormon. I know that it is the true word of God. I also know that I was given the best opportunity to share the gospel because I listened and felt the Spirit. **NE**

IN ROYAL COURTS

BY SARA MASON

Within a year-and-a-half both my grandmothers died. At both funerals the hymn “O My Father” (*Hymns*, no. 292) was part of the program. The fourth verse reads: “When I leave this frail existence, / When I lay this mortal by, / Father, Mother, may I meet you / In your royal courts on high?”

This comforted me because it told me that my grandmothers are in an exquisite place. I know that if I remain worthy, I will be able to see my grandmothers and my Heavenly Parents again. **NE**

Share your own experience with us at newera@ldschurch.org.

FAITH IN HIS PLAN

I really liked the article “Faith in His Plan” (Oct. 2006), because through our many trials that may come our way, the Lord is always watching over and taking care of us. It is by His plan that we live up to the measure of our creation. No matter what happens in this life, we can rejoice and have happiness by having faith in His plan.

Ashley T., Montana

JUST KIDDING

Thank you for the article “Is Anyone Laughing?” (Feb. 2007). I don’t think I ever fully realized how hurtful some jokes can be and how many times I follow up my own sentences with “just kidding.” I never thought about the consequences it might have on someone’s feelings and on my friendships. Now I recognize this problem, and I’m determined to change this and uplift those around me.

Name withheld

OPTIMISTIC AND HOPEFUL

I just finished reading “Reverencing the Temple” in the February 2007 issue of the *New Era*. I learned so much about the temple and its blessings. It was so cool to read about other teenagers who care about the temple and love the gospel just like I do and who live so far away. Whenever I start to feel bitter about the way the world is going, I look at the *New Era*, and it is always optimistic and hopeful. I love reading the articles by President Hinckley and the Apostles. Thank you for putting together the world’s best magazine!

Amelia B., Utah

“Whenever I start to feel bitter about the way the world is going, I look at the New Era, and it is always optimistic and hopeful.”

ENLIGHTENING

Whenever I’m having a hard day, I like to read the *New Era*. I always find that it helps me cheer up. February 2007’s issue came exactly on one of those days. I was sick and couldn’t go to school. That night I read the *New Era* and found the article “Don’t Face the World Alone.” It included a couple of scriptures that helped me regain happiness. The article itself said that if we can have faith in the Lord and obey Him, we can have good things happen to us and we can help other people. After that, I felt inspired to read the rest of the articles.

Wryn W., Colorado

LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

I would like to express my feelings on your article “Good to Know” (Jan. 2007). I really liked this story because it made me see that at any time, in any place, we, as members of the Church, could be asked questions about our beliefs, and we have a responsibility to answer them the best we can. We never know when we could be faced with the opportunity to bring the light of the gospel to someone who needs it. It is our duty to be prepared. Thank you for sharing this story with me and with the rest of the world. Keep up the good work!

Kortnee S., Utah

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

*New Era
We’ve Got Mail
50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA*

Or e-mail us at newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.

ILLUSTRATED BY SCOTT GREER

Mutual Activity Idea

• Invite the bishop to come and explain what fast offerings are used for. You could watch the video *In the Service of Your God* about Humanitarian Services. Or read Bishop David H. Burton's talk "More Holiness Give Me" from general conference (*Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 98).

• Make copies of the *New Era* survey on page 48 of this issue. Make sure each person has a copy. Fill them out. Ask a leader to mail them to the *New Era*.

• Have a recently returned missionary bring a suitcase full of things he took and used on his mission. Have him explain each item, especially the unusual ones.



Personal Progress or Duty to God

• Create your own Church library of pictures, poems, and stories. Use the Church magazines and manuals. Photocopy or cut out *New Era* posters, illustrations, poems, and stories that are meaningful to you and could be used in family home evening lessons or in class lessons. You could also group items that deal with similar themes such as the Young Women values.

Family Home Evening Idea

• If you have younger brothers and sisters, use "recess" as a theme for a family home evening activity. Ask your parents to teach you some of the games they played as children. Teach them some of the games your siblings are playing now. Talk about staying physically fit and getting enough exercise.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in the May and November *Ensign*), Young Women and Atonic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 23–26.

Young Women Manual 2

Lesson 23: Fasting Brings Blessings

Esther Hansen, "The Real Fast," *New Era*, May 2002, 11.
 Larry A. Hiller, "Fasting Is What?" *New Era*, Oct. 1989, 38.

Lesson 24: Revelation in Our Daily Lives

Harold B. Lee, "Your Right to Revelation," *New Era*, Mar. 2006, 18.
 Gerald N. Lund, "Is It Revelation?" *New Era*, July 2004, 44.

Lesson 25: The Law of Sacrifice

Alexandre Machado Vasconcelos, "Soccer or Mission?" this issue, 8.
 S. Michael Wilcox, "The Abrahamic Covenant," *Ensign*, Jan. 1998, 42.

Lesson 26: The Sacrament

D. Todd Christofferson, "A Sense of the Sacred," *New Era*, June 2006, 28.
 L. Tom Perry, "As Now We Take the Sacrament," *Ensign*, May 2006, 39.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 2

Lesson 23: Practical Preparation for a Mission

The *New Era* March 2007 special issue on mission preparation.
 The *New Era* June 2000 special issue on serving a mission.

Lesson 24: The Blessings of Work

Sherrie Mackelprang, "What I Learned from Doing the Dishes," this issue, 22.
 Stephen B. Oveson, "Good Work," *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 36.

Lesson 25: Personal Purity through Self-Discipline

M. Russell Ballard, "Go for It!" *New Era*, Mar. 2004, 4.
 Jeffrey R. Holland, "Personal Purity," *New Era*, Feb. 2000, 4.

Lesson 26: Worthy Thoughts

To the Point (getting rid of inappropriate thoughts), *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 37.
 Q&A (dirty jokes stick with me), *New Era*, Nov. 1995, 16.
 Kenneth McKinney, "Rolling without Rock," *New Era*, Nov. 2004, 14.

NewEra Tell us more.

SURVEY

In your opinion

Please circle your favorite covers.



What parts of the *New Era* do you enjoy most?

- General Authority message
- The Extra Smile
- Photo of the Month
- Idea List
- What's in It for You
- Poem of the Month
- Questions & Answers
- Instant Messages
- Experiences of other teenagers
- Poster
- Stories with photographs
- Other

Do you usually read all of the *New Era*, or do you skip parts? Read all Skip parts

If you skip parts, which parts do you usually skip?

What else would you like us to include in the *New Era*?

What do you use the *New Era* for? (Check all that apply.)

- Personal enjoyment, enrichment, and spiritual growth
- Help in preparing Sunday lessons
- Help in preparing talks
- Help in planning activities
- Help in preparing family home evening lessons
- A missionary tool

What other magazines do you read?

How often do you use the Internet?

- Every day
- Once a week
- A couple of times a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely or never

Do you read the *New Era* online at www.newera.lds.org?

- All the time
- Sometimes
- I didn't know it was available online
- Never

Do you have any other comments or suggestions for the *New Era*?

Please fill in the following information.

Age _____ Gender: Male Female

Country _____

Stake/District _____

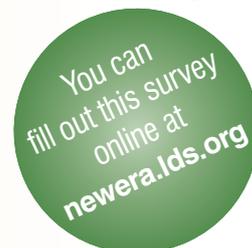
Please return this survey to:

New Era Survey, 50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220 USA

What do you enjoy?

Check it out.

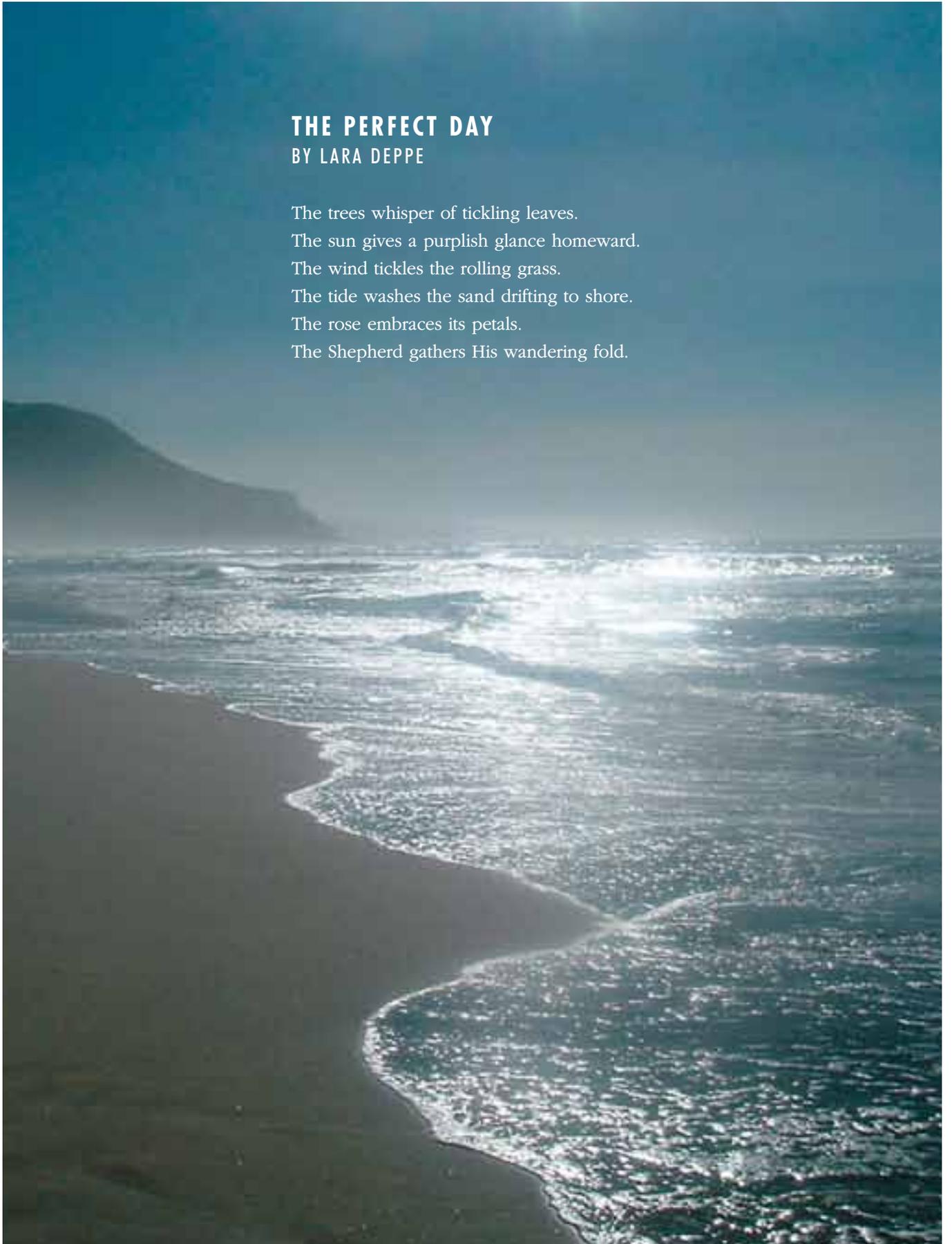


What do you think?

THE PERFECT DAY

BY LARA DEPPE

The trees whisper of tickling leaves.
The sun gives a purplish glance homeward.
The wind tickles the rolling grass.
The tide washes the sand drifting to shore.
The rose embraces its petals.
The Shepherd gathers His wandering fold.





COMING NEXT MONTH

- *An anniversary for the handcart pioneers.*
- *Do the words you use or what you choose to talk about reveal who you are?*
- *How did witnesses describe the golden plates?*
- *One young man's battle with pornography.*

Just a few of the articles waiting for you in the upcoming July 2007 New Era.

