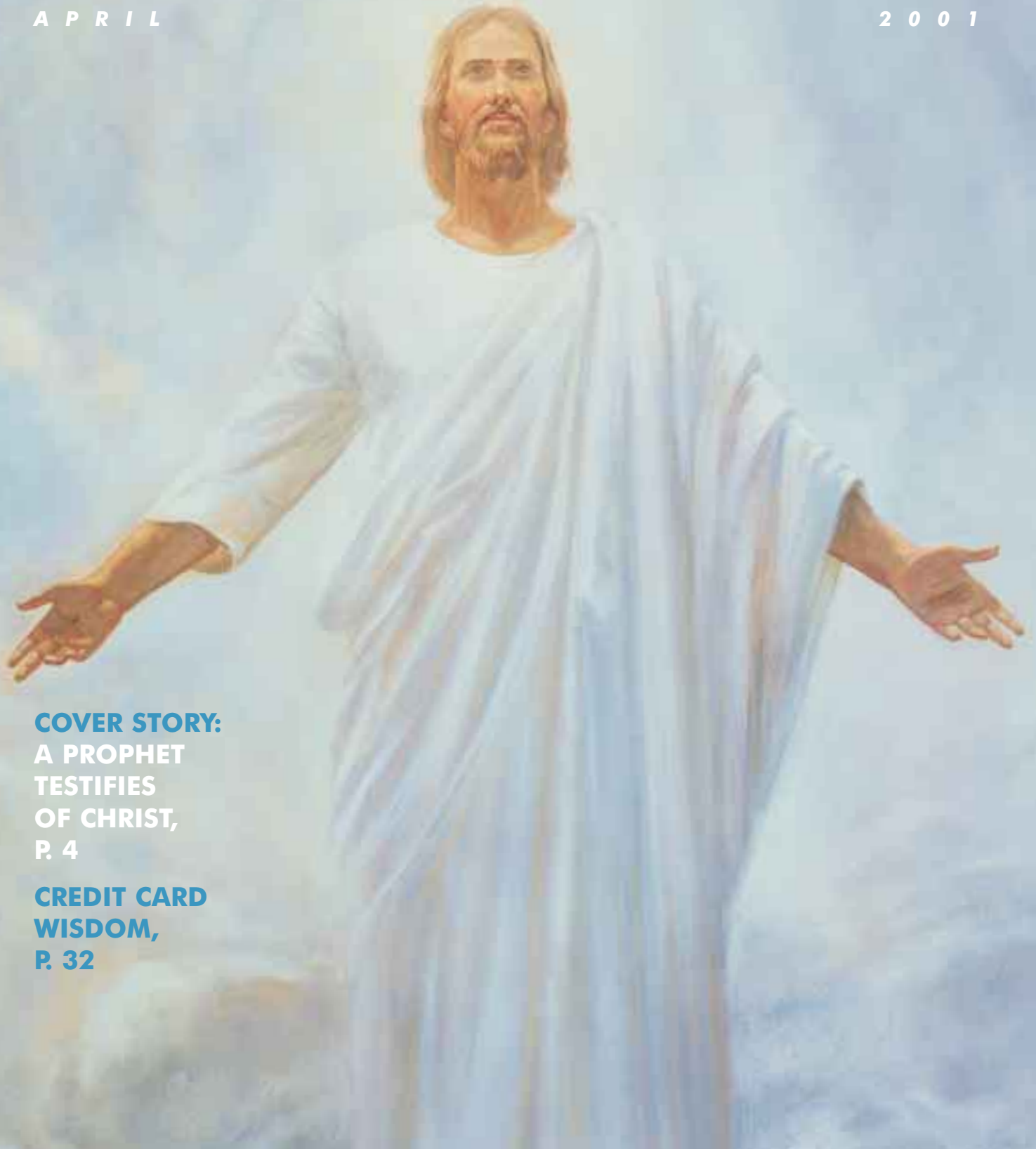


THE
NewEra

A P R I L

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COVER STORY:
A PROPHET
TESTIFIES
OF CHRIST,
P. 4

CREDIT CARD
WISDOM,
P. 32

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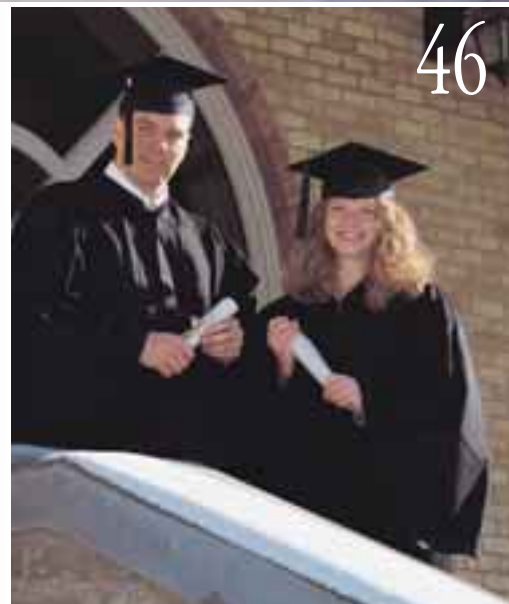
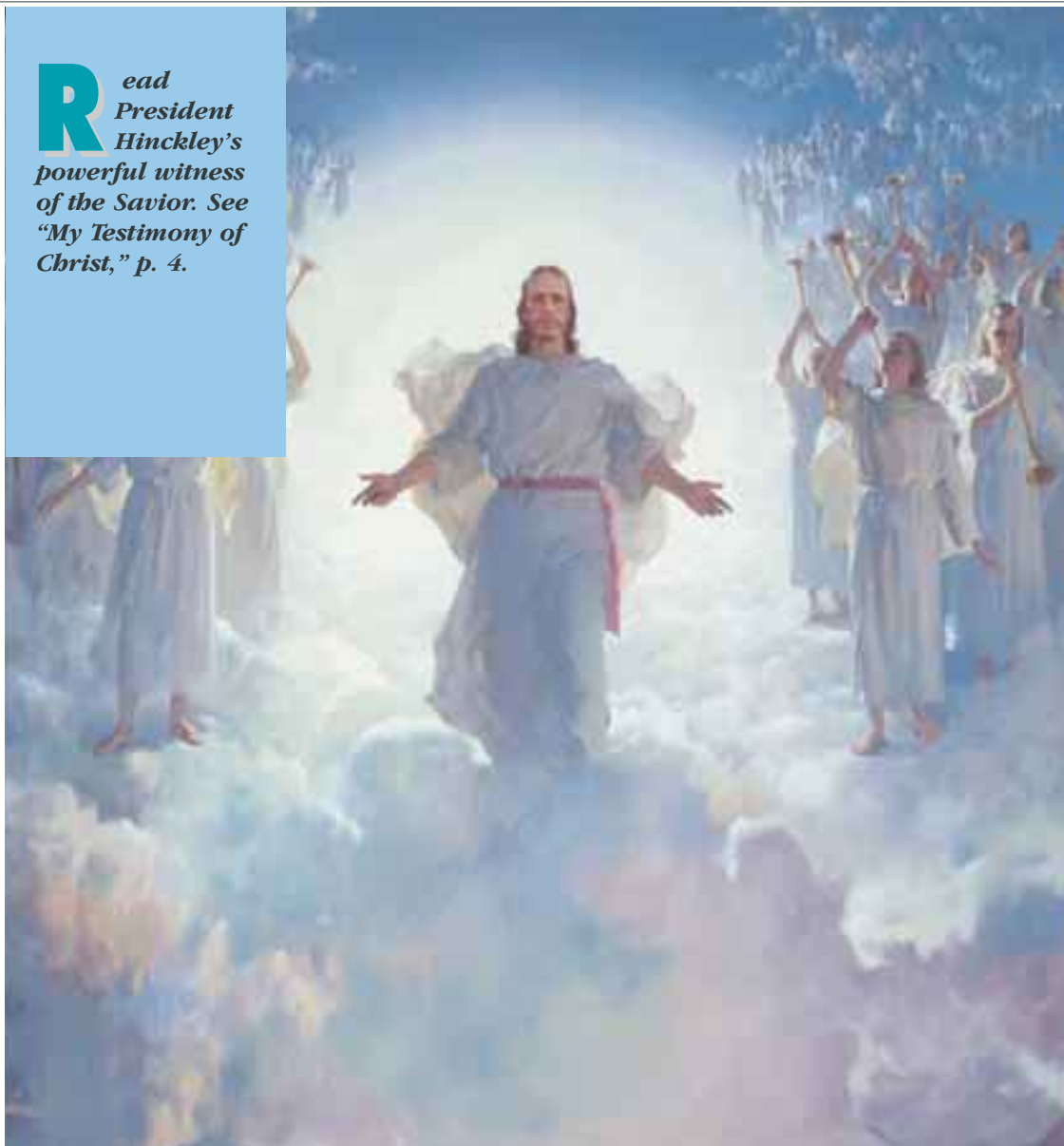
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Cover: *Easter is a time
we remember the
Resurrection of the
Savior. See "My Testimony
of Christ," p. 4.*

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Read
**President
Hinckley's
powerful witness
of the Savior. See
"My Testimony of
Christ," p. 4.**



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MY *Testimony* OF CHRIST



by President
Gordon B. Hinckley

Absolutely basic to our faith is our testimony of Jesus Christ. He is the cornerstone of the church which bears His name.

I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the eternal, living God. I believe in Him as the Firstborn of the Father and the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. I believe in Him as an individual, separate and distinct from His Father. . . .

I believe that in His mortal life He was the one perfect man to walk the earth. I believe that in His words are to be found that light and truth which, if observed, would save the world and bring exaltation to mankind. I believe that in His priesthood rests divine authority—the power to bless, the power to heal, the power to govern in the earthly affairs of God, the power to bind in the heavens that which is bound upon the earth (*Ensign*, Mar. 1998, 5).

The love of God

It is small wonder that angels sang at

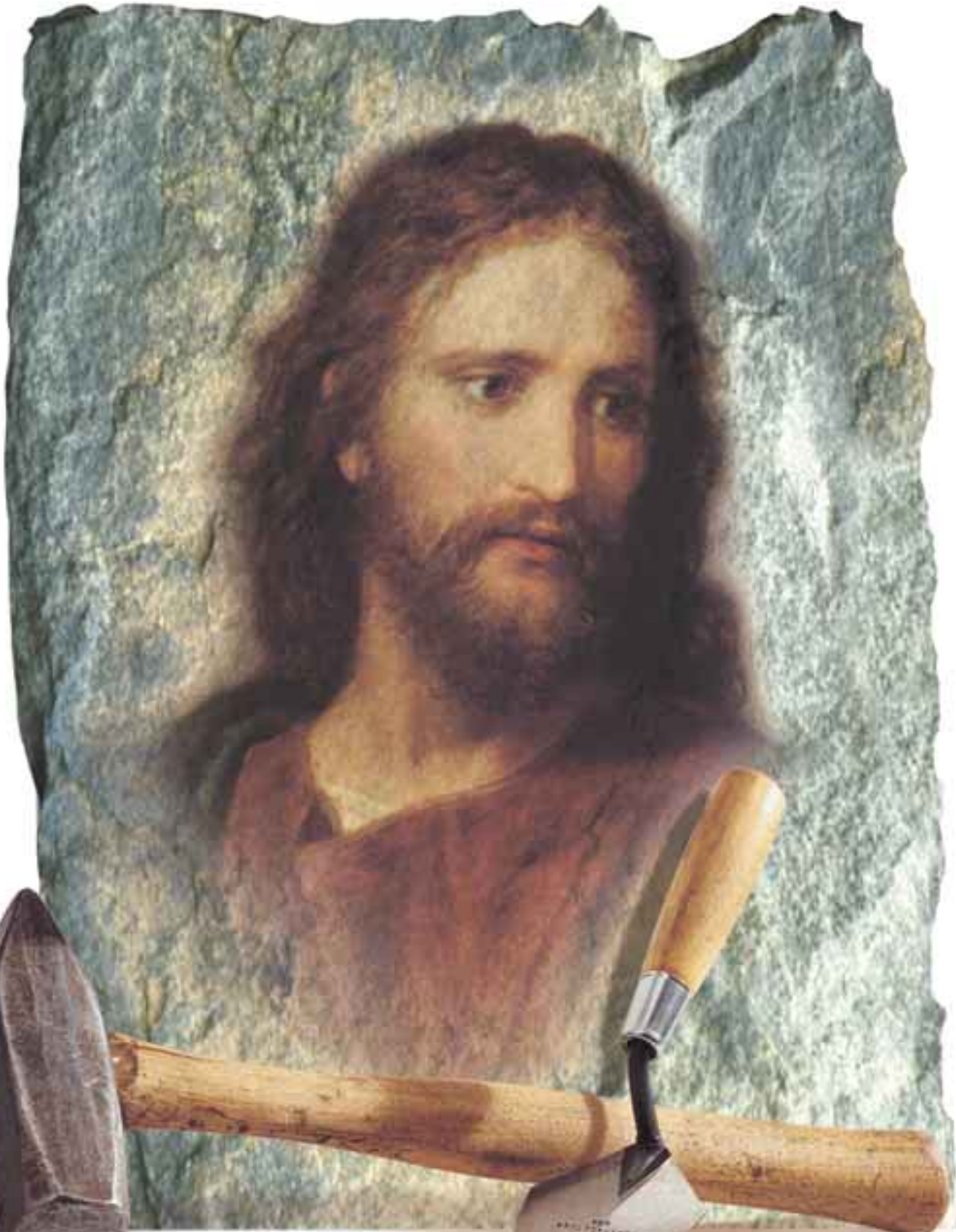
[Christ's] birth and Wise Men traveled far to pay Him homage. . . .

The magnificent expression of His love came in His death when He gave His life as a sacrifice for all men. That Atonement, wrought in unspeakable pain, became the greatest event of history, an act of grace for which men gave nothing but which brought the assurance of the Resurrection to all who have or would walk the earth.

No other act in all of human history compares with it (*Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 73).

The simple words—"He is not here, but is risen"—have become the most profound in all literature. They are the declaration of the empty tomb. They are the fulfillment of all He had spoken concerning rising again. They are the triumphant response to the query facing every man, woman, and child who was ever born to earth (*Ensign*, May 1999, 71).

Of all things of heaven and earth of which we bear testimony, none is so important as our witness that Jesus, the Christmas child, condescended to come to earth from the realms of His Eternal Father, here to work among men as healer and teacher, our Great Exemplar. And further, and most important, He suffered on Calvary's cross as an atoning sacrifice for all mankind (*Ensign*, Dec. 1992, 6).



Photography by Matt Reier. Electronic composition by Charles M. Baird

Read the scriptures. There will come into your heart an understanding and a warmth that will be pleasing to experience.

Pray. Speak to your Eternal Father in the name of His Beloved Son. There will come a heaven-sent assurance, peaceful and certain.

Live the teachings and serve in the work of the Lord.

The Chief Cornerstone

Absolutely basic to our faith is our testimony of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. . . .

With His Resurrection came the promise to all men that life is everlasting, that even as in Adam all die, in Christ all are made alive (see 1 Cor. 15:20–22).

Nothing in all of human history equals the wonder, the splendor, the magnitude, or the fruits of the matchless life of the Son of God, who died for each of us. He is our Savior. He is our Redeemer. As Isaiah foretold, “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6).

He is the chief cornerstone of the church which bears His name, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (*Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 51–52).

Live your testimony

[Christ] said: “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

As His followers, we cannot do a mean or shoddy or ungracious thing without tarnishing His image. Nor can we do a good and gracious and generous act without burnishing more brightly the symbol of Him whose name we have taken upon ourselves.

Our lives must become a symbol of meaningful expression, the symbol of our declaration of our testimony of the living Christ, the Eternal Son of the living God (*Ensign*, Apr. 1994, 5).

Read, pray, do

The acquisition of understanding and enthusiasm for the Lord comes from following simple rules. I should like to suggest three of these, elementary in their concept, almost trite in their repetition, but fundamental in their application and most fruitful in their result.

The first step is to read—to read the word of the Lord. I know that with the demands of daily living there is little time to read anything. But I promise you that if you will read that which we call scripture, there will come into your heart an understanding and a warmth that will

be pleasing to experience. “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). . . .

The second step is to pray. Speak with your Eternal Father in the name of His Beloved Son. “Behold,” he says, “I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20).

This is His invitation, and the promise is sure. It is unlikely that you will hear voices from heaven, but there will come a heaven-sent assurance, peaceful and certain.

The third step is to live the teachings and to serve in the work of the Lord. Spiritual strength is like physical strength; it is like the muscle of my arm. It grows only as it is nourished and exercised.

As you exercise your time and talents in service, your faith will grow and your doubts will wane.

The Lord declared: “If any man will do [the Father’s] will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17); and He has also declared that as we apply the teachings of God and lose ourselves in his great cause, we find ourselves and we find the truth (*Ensign*, Apr. 1983, 6–7).

Christ’s healing power

I would that the healing power of Christ might spread over the earth and be diffused through our society and into our homes, that it might cure men’s hearts of the evil and adverse elements of greed and hate and conflict. . . .

Jesus of Nazareth healed the sick among whom He moved. His regenerating power is with us today to be invoked through His holy priesthood. His divine teachings, His incomparable example, His matchless life, His all-encompassing sacrifice will bring healing to broken hearts, reconciliation to those who argue and shout, even peace to warring nations if sought with humility and forgiveness and love. . . .

I testify of Him who is the great source

of healing. He is the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, “The Sun of Righteousness,” who came “with healing in his wings” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 59).

Be believing

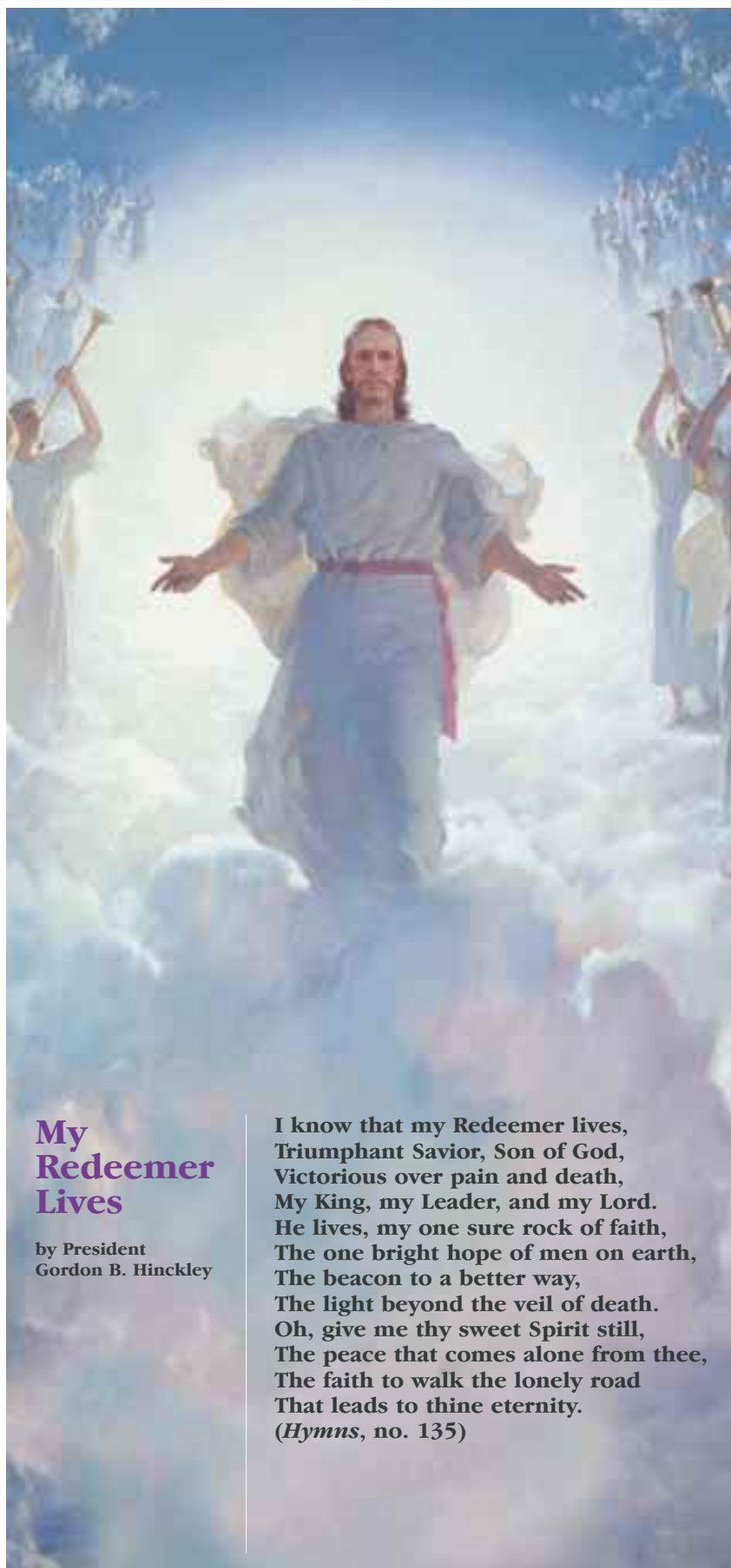
To all who may have doubts, I repeat the words given Thomas as he felt the wounded hands of the Lord: “Be not faithless, but believing.” Believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the greatest figure of time and eternity. Believe that His matchless life reached back before the world was formed. Believe that He was the Creator of the earth on which we live. Believe that He was Jehovah of the Old Testament, that He was the Messiah of the New Testament, that He died and was resurrected, that He visited the western continents and taught the people here, that He ushered in this final gospel dispensation, and that He lives, the living Son of the living God, our Savior and our Redeemer (*Ensign*, Apr. 1989, 2).

The way, the truth, and the life

On Calvary’s hill [Christ] gave His life for each of us. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Cor. 15:55).

We honor His birth. But without His death that birth would have been but one more birth. It was the redemption which He worked out in the Garden of Gethsemane and upon the cross of Calvary which made His gift immortal, universal, and everlasting. His was a great Atonement for the sins of all mankind. He was the resurrection and the life, “the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15:20). Because of Him all men will be raised from the grave.

We love Him. We honor Him. We thank Him. We worship Him. He has done for each of us and for all mankind that which none other could have done. God be thanked for the gift of His Beloved Son, our Savior, the Redeemer of the world, the Lamb without blemish who was offered as a sacrifice for all mankind (*Ensign*, Dec. 1997, 4). **NE**



My Redeemer Lives

by President
Gordon B. Hinckley

**I know that my Redeemer lives,
Triumphant Savior, Son of God,
Victorious over pain and death,
My King, my Leader, and my Lord.
He lives, my one sure rock of faith,
The one bright hope of men on earth,
The beacon to a better way,
The light beyond the veil of death.
Oh, give me thy sweet Spirit still,
The peace that comes alone from thee,
The faith to walk the lonely road
That leads to thine eternity.
(*Hymns*, no. 135)**

THE BEST OF TIMES

In April we celebrate the Restoration and the beginning of the last dispensation. But just what was restored, and what exactly is a dispensation?

President Gordon B. Hinckley has called our day a “glorious season.” What is it that makes it so glorious?

If thinking about the days of black-and-white TV makes you shudder, what about living when there were no antibiotics? Then, a simple sore throat could linger and perhaps even become deadly. And if that’s a much more sobering thought, what about living in a time when the gospel was not on the earth? No knowledge of the plan of salvation and the real purpose of your life. No temple sealings or knowledge of the eternal family. No priesthood blessings. No gift of the Holy Ghost for comfort and guidance.

The greatest blessings we enjoy today were made possible when the gospel was restored through Joseph Smith and the dispensation of the fulness of times began. In April, we commemorate the Restoration, but what exactly was restored, and what is a dispensation?

Dispensations are time periods “in which the Lord has at least one authorized servant on the earth who bears the holy priesthood and the keys, and who has a divine commission to dispense the gospel to the inhabitants of the earth” (*Bible Dictionary*, “Dispensations”).

Adam was the first to have the plan of salvation and the priesthood authority, and he shared these blessings with his entire family. But the knowledge and authority were lost through the scattering and apostasy of the people. Throughout

Old Testament times there were periods when the gospel and the priesthood authority were restored, followed by times of apostasy and spiritual darkness. In addition to Adam’s dispensation, the Bible suggests dispensations identified with Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus with His Apostles. There were also dispensations of the gospel among the Jaredites and the Nephites. When more is revealed, we may very well see that there were additional dispensations. (See *Bible Dictionary*.)

After the deaths of the early Apostles, priesthood authority was lost because the keys to use and pass along that authority had been held by the Apostles. Also lost was the continuing revelation that was necessary to keep doctrine pure. The great general Apostasy began. And it continued until a spring day in 1820 when young Joseph Smith entered a grove of trees to pray for guidance. When the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph, the dispensation of the fulness of times—our dispensation—began.

The Apostle Paul prophesied of this dispensation as a time when God would “gather together in one all things in Christ” (Eph. 1:10). Speaking to an area conference in Tahiti in 1976, Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve said: “Every dispensation of the past is like a great river. The present dispensation is like a great ocean. All of the rivers of the past flow into the ocean of the present. We have received again every key and power and right that the ancient saints had. Once again the voice of God has been heard. Once again angels have ministered from his presence. Once again the Church and kingdom of God has been set up.”

You live in the dispensation when the



SOME MAJOR DISPENSATIONS



ADAM



ENOCH



NOAH



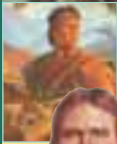
JAREDITES



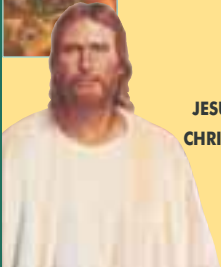
ABRAHAM



MOSES



NEPHITES



JESUS CHRIST



**JOSEPH SMITH
(FULNESS OF TIMES)**

For some reason unknown to us, but in the wisdom of God, we have been privileged to come to earth in this glorious age. . . . May God bless us with a sense of our place in history and, having been given that sense, with our need to stand tall and walk with resolution in a manner becoming the Saints of the Most High” (Ensign, Nov. 2000, 74).
—President Gordon B. Hinckley



Savior reestablished His church and instructed Joseph Smith “line upon line” and “precept upon precept” (D&C 128:21); when John the Baptist restored the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood; when Peter, James, and John restored the keys of the kingdom of God and the Melchizedek Priesthood; when Moses restored the keys of the gathering of Israel; and when Elijah restored the keys of the sealing power.

President Hinckley said, “We live at this glorious season when the gospel of Jesus Christ, in all its purity, has been restored to the earth. His Church has come again to bless His people. The curtains of the past have been parted. New light and understanding have come through divine revelation. Somehow, among all the children of our Father who have walked the earth, we appear to be most fortunate” (*New Era*, Jan. 2000, 4). **NE**

RESTORED FROM DARKNESS

The First Vision parted the curtains through which came the restoration to earth of the Church of Christ. It came out of the wilderness of darkness, out of the bleakness of ages past into the glorious dawn of a new day. The Book of Mormon followed as another witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. His holy supernal priesthood was restored under the hands of those who held it anciently. Keys and powers were bestowed upon the Prophet and his associates. The ancient Church was again upon the earth with all of the blessings, powers, doctrines, keys, and principles of previous dispensations” (First Presidency Christmas Devotional, 3 Dec. 2000).

Painting The First Vision by Gary Kapp

WE SANG MY ANSWER

I grew up in a Latter-day Saint home with loving parents and a sister and brothers whom I adored. I was generally happy, but there were times when I struggled, not knowing who I was and questioning my purpose in life. During my late junior high years I had few friends at school and wondered if anyone really loved me.

One Sunday evening during this time, a youth fireside was held specifically for young women and their fathers. Throughout the meeting I thought about my life. I dreaded the coming week of school and couldn't find one thing to look forward to. Consumed with my own thoughts, I was only half listening to the fireside speakers. I didn't even realize the speakers had finished until the congregation began singing the closing song.

The words were familiar, but I had never paid attention to their meaning before. *Walk tall, you're a daughter, a child of God.* I straightened up in my

I was at a low point in my life, feeling as though I had nothing to look forward to. Then, at the end of a fireside, the words of a song lifted me right up.

Name Withheld

seat. I was a daughter of God. *Be strong—please remember who you are.* Why had I been questioning who I was? The answer was clear in the teachings of the gospel I had learned throughout my life. *Try to understand, you're part of His great plan.* I was part of His plan. He had a mission for me if I would but follow His teachings and live righteously. *He's closer than you know—reach up, He'll take your hand.* I had felt alone in the world when all along my Father in Heaven was there beside me, waiting for me to reach up for His hand (see *New Era*, Jan. 1996, 10–11).

As I sang those words I was comforted by the knowledge that I was important. I was part of Heavenly Father's plan, and He was by my side, ready and willing to help me every step of the way. I had known this my entire life but had somehow forgotten. The answer I was searching for and the lesson I needed to learn came to me through the words of a song. **NE**

THE *Currant*



by Elder Hugh B. Brown (1883–1975)

Hugh B. Brown was born in Granger, Utah, but grew up in Alberta, Canada. From 1961–1970, he served as a counselor to President David O. McKay. He was a powerful speaker and teacher with a great love for and understanding of the youth of the Church.

“Thank you, Mr. Gardener, for loving me enough to cut me down.”

You sometimes wonder whether the Lord really knows what He ought to do with you. You sometimes wonder if you know better than He does about what you ought to do and ought to become. I am wondering if I may tell you a story. It has to do with an incident in my life when God showed me that He knew best.

I was living up in Canada. I had purchased a farm. It was run-down. I went out one morning and saw a currant bush. It had grown up over six feet high. It was going all to wood. There were no blossoms and no currants. I was raised on a fruit farm in Salt Lake before we went to Canada, and I knew what ought to happen to that currant bush. So I got some pruning shears and clipped it back until there was nothing left but stumps. It was just coming daylight, and I thought I saw on top of each of these little stumps what appeared to be a tear, and I thought the currant bush was crying. I was kind of simpleminded (and I haven’t entirely gotten over it), and I looked at it and smiled and said, “What are you crying about?” You know, I thought I heard that currant bush say this:

“How could you do this to me? I was making such wonderful growth. I was

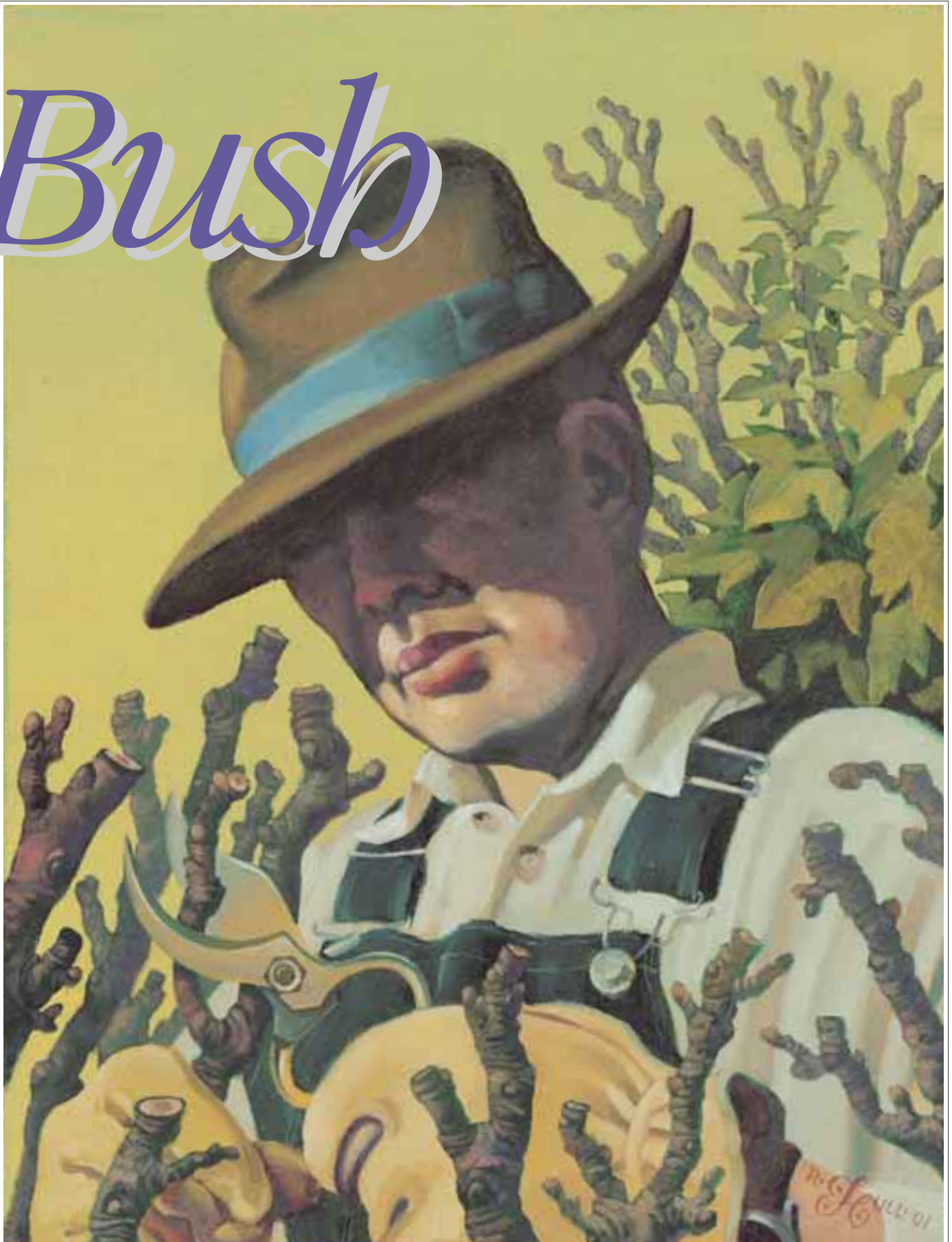
almost as big as the shade tree and the fruit tree that are inside the fence, and now you have cut me down. Every plant in the garden will look down on me because I didn’t make what I should have made. How could you do this to me? I thought you were the gardener here.”

That’s what I thought I heard the currant bush say, and I thought it so much that I answered. I said, “Look, little currant bush, I am the gardener here, and I know what I want you to be. I didn’t intend you to be a fruit tree or a shade tree. I want you to be a currant bush, and someday, little currant bush, when you are laden with fruit, you are going to say, ‘Thank you, Mr. Gardener, for loving me enough to cut me down. Thank you, Mr. Gardener.’”

Years passed, and I found myself in England. I was in command of a cavalry unit in the Canadian Army. I held the rank of field officer in the British Canadian Army. I was proud of my position. And there was an opportunity for me to become a general. I had taken all the examinations. I had the seniority. The one man between me and the office of general in the British Army became a casualty, and I received a telegram from London. It said: “Be in my office tomorrow morning at 10:00,” signed by General Turner.

I went up to London. I walked smartly into the office of the general, and I saluted him smartly, and he gave me the same kind of a salute a senior officer usually gives—a sort of “Get out of the way, worm!” He said, “Sit down, Brown.” Then he said, “I’m sorry I cannot make

Bush



Illustrated by Richard Hull



The promotion he deserved was denied because he was a Mormon. Heartbroken, he asked the Lord why and seemed to hear his own voice reply, “I am the gardener here.” Later he saw how much greater his blessings were because he had allowed the Lord to shape his life.

(Previously published in the January 1973 New Era.)

the appointment. You are entitled to it. You have passed all the examinations. You have the seniority. You’ve been a good officer, but I can’t make the appointment. You are to return to Canada and become a training officer and a transport officer.” That for which I had been hoping and praying for 10 years suddenly slipped out of my fingers.

Then he went into the other room to answer the telephone, and on his desk, I saw my personal history sheet. Right across the bottom of it was written, “THIS MAN IS A MORMON.” We were not very well liked in those days. When I saw that, I knew why I had not been appointed. He came back and said, “That’s all, Brown.” I saluted him again, but not quite as smartly, and went out.

I got on the train and started back to my town, 120 miles away, with a broken heart, with bitterness in my soul. And every click of the wheels on the rails seemed to say, “You are a failure.” When I got to my tent, I was so bitter that I threw my cap on the cot. I clenched my fists, and I shook them at heaven. I said, “How could you do this to me, God? I have done everything I could do to measure up. There is nothing that I could have done—that I should have done—

that I haven’t done. How could you do this to me?” I was as bitter as gall.

And then I heard a voice, and I recognized the tone of this voice. It was my own voice, and the voice said, “I am the gardener here. I know what I want you to do.” The bitterness went out of my soul, and I fell on my knees by the cot to ask forgiveness for my ungratefulness and my bitterness. While kneeling there I heard a song being sung in an adjoining tent. A number of Mormon boys met regularly every Tuesday night. I usually met with them. We would sit on the floor and have Mutual. As I was kneeling there, praying for forgiveness, I heard their singing:

*“But if, by a still, small voice he calls
To paths that I do not know,
I’ll answer, dear Lord, with my hand
in thine:*

I’ll go where you want me to go.”
(Hymns, no. 270)

I arose from my knees a humble man. And now, almost 50 years later, I look up to Him and say, “Thank you, Mr. Gardener, for cutting me down, for loving me enough to hurt me.” I see now that it was wise that I should not become a general at that time, because if I had I would have been senior officer of all western Canada, with a lifelong, handsome salary, a place to live, and a pension, but I would have raised my six daughters and two sons in army barracks. They would no doubt have married out of the Church, and I think I would not have amounted to anything. I haven’t amounted to very much as it is, but I have done better than I would have done if the Lord had let me go the way I wanted to go.

Many of you are going to have very difficult experiences: disappointment, heartbreak, bereavement, defeat. You are going to be tested and tried. I just want you to know that if you don’t get what you think you ought to get, remember, God is the gardener here. He knows what He wants you to be. Submit yourselves to His will. Be worthy of His blessings, and you will get His blessings. **NE**

DO THEY KNOW WE'RE CHRISTIANS?

If you were to read 2 Nephi 25:26, you would know “we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ.” But how would someone who is not familiar with the Book of Mormon or the Church know you are Christian? *New Era* readers contributed many ideas on how Latter-day Saints can show they believe in Jesus Christ. Here are just a few:

Be an example

- ❖ Live a Christlike life. It is the best way to show you are Christian.
- ❖ Love others and respect their beliefs. They will be more accepting of you and more willing to listen to what you believe.
- ❖ Keep the commandments and the standards of the Church; they set you apart from the world as a follower of Jesus Christ.

Bear testimony

- ❖ Use the curiosity others show about the Church as an opportunity to share your testimony of the Savior. The Spirit will teach them the truth.
- ❖ It is usually wise to bear testimony of the Savior, the Book of Mormon, the current prophet, and of Joseph Smith and the Restoration of the Church before launching into a detailed explanation of other Church doctrines.

Share the gospel

- ❖ Prayerfully decide how and when to share the gospel with others. Start with sharing your testimony.
- ❖ Write your testimony in a Book of Mormon and give it to someone who is wondering about the Church and what you believe.
- ❖ Invite the Spirit by not arguing with others about their beliefs. Try to find common ground and start from there when sharing the gospel.
- ❖ If your friends or others are interested, invite them to a Church meeting or youth activity.

In site: To learn more on this topic you can read “Are Mormons Christians?” by Stephen E. Robinson (*New Era*, May 1998, 41–47). You can find it at www.lds.org. **NE**

GOT ANY BRIGHT IDEAS?



The Christmas spirit seems to encourage us to try harder than usual to help others. Tell us some of your great Christmas service activity suggestions. Send your ideas to Idea List, *New Era*, 50 East North Temple, Salt Lake City Utah 84150. Or e-mail us at cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org. Please send your ideas by June 1, 2001.

Q & A

“Early-morning seminary starts at 5:30 where I live. Getting up that early is hard for me. Is it really that important to go? Why can’t I just study on my own?”

NEW ERA

It can be difficult to pry the bed from your back when it seems the rest of the world is still sleeping. And once you are up, it can be difficult to remain awake through a seminary lesson if you haven’t slept all the hours your body requires. Although it may be tempting to stay in bed and say you will just study the gospel on your own, missing out on seminary means missing out on blessings and opportunities.

You can study on your own. In fact, we have been commanded to study the scriptures individually. But personal study and seminary shouldn’t be seen as an either/or choice. They should complement each other so you can glean as much knowledge as possible from your gospel study and have more opportunities to build your testimony.

One of the greatest blessings we can gain in this life is gospel knowledge. “And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come” (D&C 130:19). Seminary

Attending seminary can help you gain a stronger testimony, build friendships with other Church members, and start your day off right.

Seminary teachers are trained to help you understand the scriptures.

Missing out on seminary means missing out on blessings and opportunities.

Studying as a group allows you to learn from others and share what you know.

Seminary is a blessing, not a task or obligation.

READERS

Sleep is nice, but seminary will change your life. We have been asked by the prophet to attend seminary. It is an inspired program where we can learn about the gospel through seminary teachers and other students. I know that you will be blessed for your efforts and that your testimony will grow just as mine has.

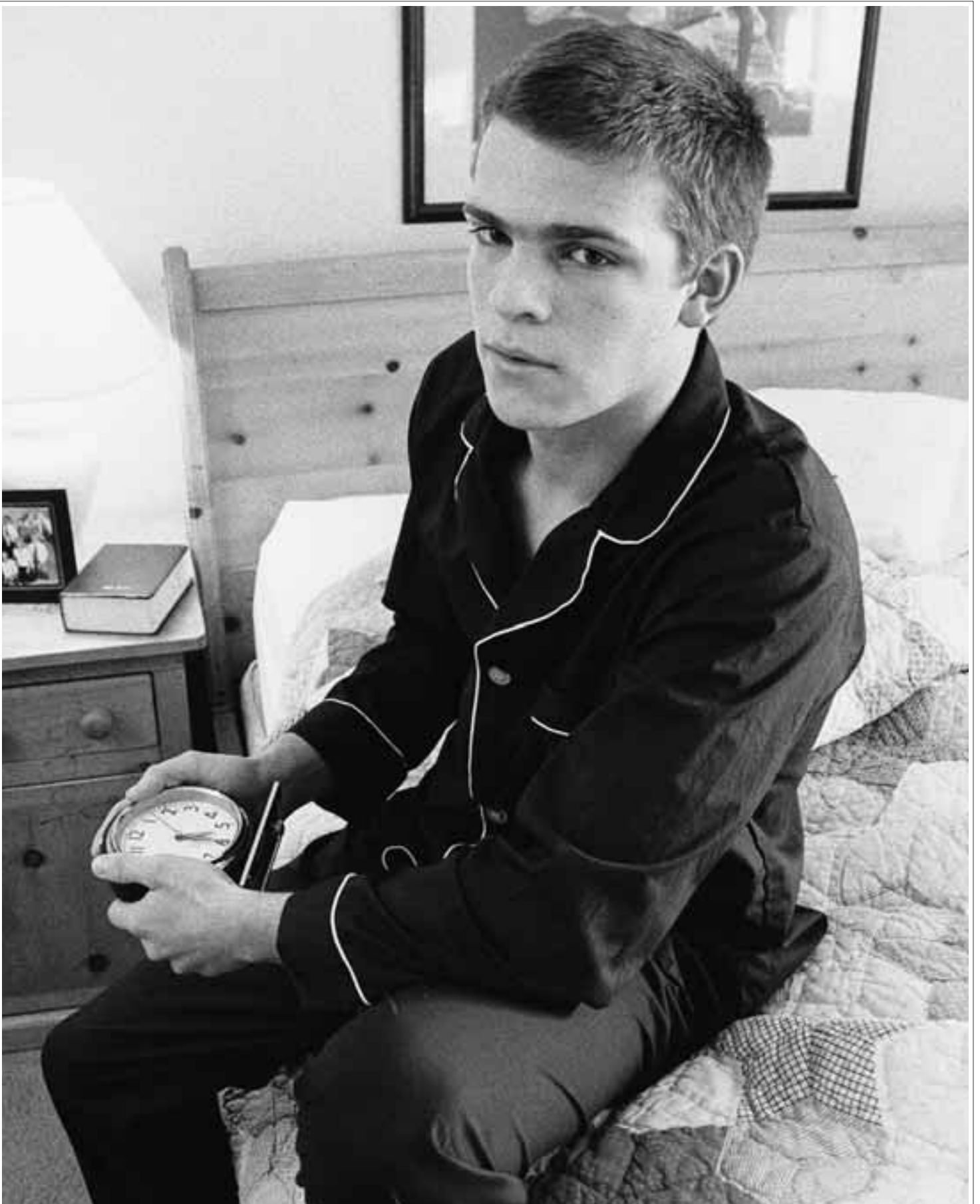
Brooke Richards, 17
Sandy, Utah



I am not quite old enough to go to seminary yet. However, I can really see how important it is for the other young men and women. Getting up early before school and learning about the gospel can really change your day. You should stick with it, and I know you’ll benefit.

Claire Dawson, 13
Windlesham, England





is an excellent place to gain or add to that knowledge.

In addition to helping you develop supportive friendships and associations, studying as a group allows you to learn from others and share what you know. There isn't one person who has a corner on all gospel knowledge. When you study with a group, you hear the testimonies of others and gain insights that make the scriptures easier to understand. You also have the opportunity to share your testimony and insights.

Another benefit of early-morning seminary is the teacher. Seminary teachers are trained to help you understand the scriptures. Studying with a teacher on a set schedule can provide the structure and motivation necessary to feast on the scriptures regularly.

At the *New Era*, we are sold on seminary because we have seen the impact it has in people's lives.

One key to waking up and staying alert during early-morning seminary is to make sure you get enough sleep. Recent studies show that teenagers need at least eight hours of sleep each night. That might mean going to bed earlier than usual.

Another key to staying attentive during seminary is to cultivate a hunger to learn all you can about the gospel. You should try to look at seminary as a blessing, not a task or obligation. You can gain this hunger through prayer and striving to have a positive attitude about seminary. Once you have it, seminary and personal study should help feed your spiritual hunger, and staying awake shouldn't be as difficult.

By sacrificing the urge to snooze, you have the opportunity to gain a stronger testimony of Jesus Christ and a better understanding of the gospel, to build friendships with other Church members, and to start your day off right. These blessings should more than compensate for your lost Zs. **NE**

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



“Our great program of Church education moves forward. . . . We urge all for whom it is available to take advantage of it. We do not hesitate to promise that your knowledge of the gospel will be increased, your faith will be strengthened, and you will develop wonderful associations and friendships” (*Ensign*, May 1984, 47).

—President Gordon B. Hinckley

I'm still struggling with being on time for seminary, but I know that's where I should be in the early morning. I find that having a desire to learn and participate makes it a little easier. Plus, when you go to seminary with a class, you make new friendships and become better friends with those you already know.



Cassie Zaugg, 17
Tallahassee, Florida

I always have a great day when I go to seminary before school, because I have the Spirit with me for the whole day.

Richy Littleddyke, 16
Wells, Nevada

There is a unique feeling of fellowship and love at seminary. When you attend with those who share your values, hopes, and feelings, you become strengthened and unified by each other. Getting up early is definitely worth the memorable experiences of seminary.



Kamron Eck, 16
Meridian, Idaho

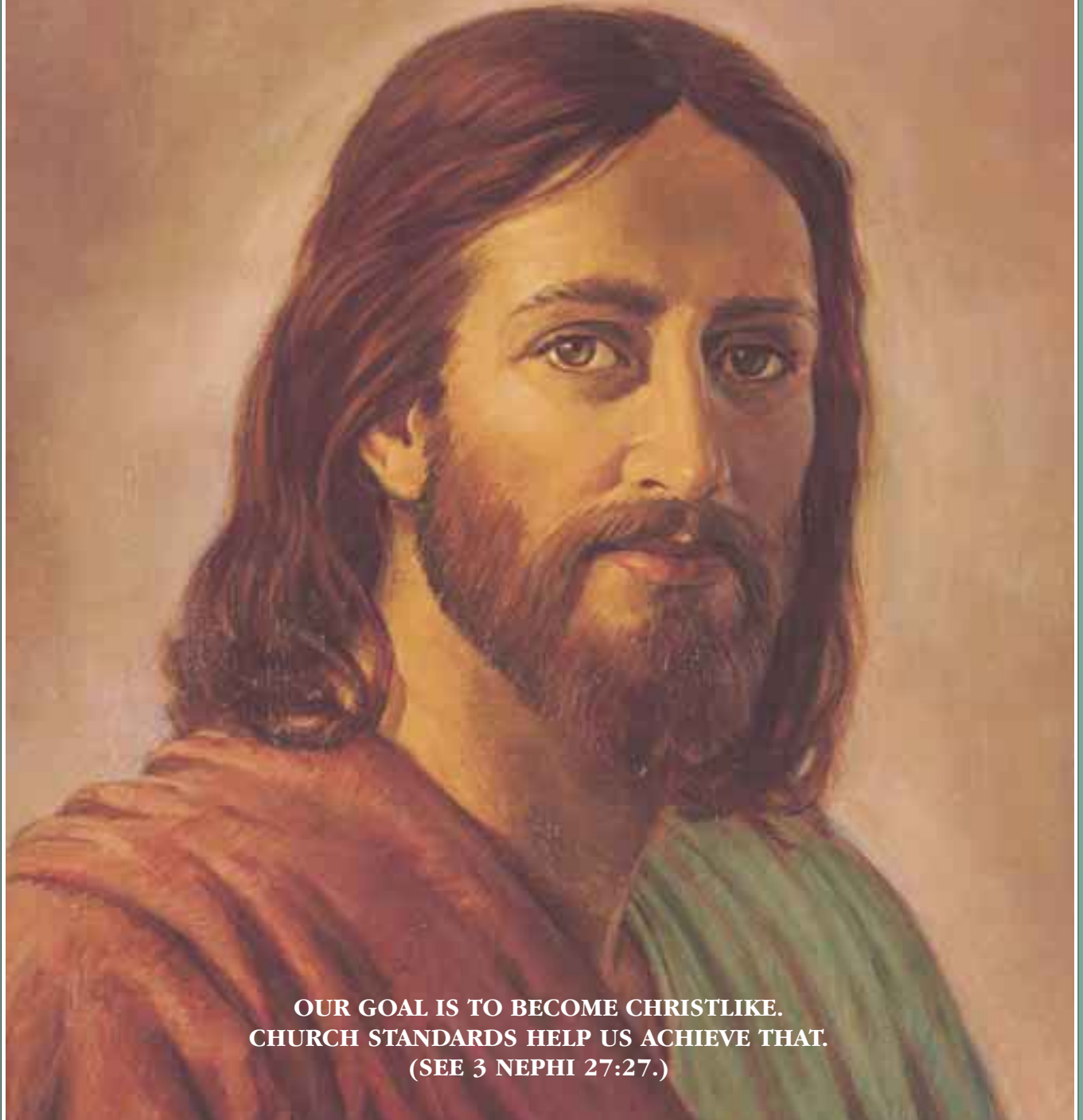
HELP Q&A BE OF HELP

You can help make Q&A helpful by answering the question below. Please mail your answers before June 1, 2001, to Q&A, *New Era*, 50 East North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150. Print or type your name, age, city, and state with each answer. Also, please include a snapshot of yourself. This will not be returned. If your answer is of a sensitive nature, your name may be withheld from publication.

QUESTION

I know great blessings can come from serving a mission. But I know a college degree is good, too. It seems they both happen at about the same age. How can I make such an important decision between two right things to do?

BE
**EVEN AS
I AM**



**OUR GOAL IS TO BECOME CHRISTLIKE.
CHURCH STANDARDS HELP US ACHIEVE THAT.
(SEE 3 NEPHI 27:27.)**

On the RIGHT PATH

Ella's path may be less traveled, but it leads in the right direction.

Walking the trail is a part of Ella Allred's everyday life. Every morning, when she and her brothers go to school, they walk the trail. Every afternoon, after school, they walk the trail home. When Ella goes to her part-time job, she walks the trail. And to go to Mutual activities, she walks.

"Walking the trail," as Ella and her family call it, means hiking about a mile and a half on packed dirt up and down the moss-covered hills and through the thick forest leading to the Allred home. Ella lives with her parents and brothers on the tip of a peninsula in the forest of southeastern Alaska, outside the little town of Haines.

Ella's day-to-day life is interesting and challenging. When she gets up in the morning, if she wants warm water to wash her hair, she has to build a fire under the water heater. She has to light a candle to practice the piano if the bank of batteries is running low. And if the tide



is coming in, she has to row a small boat across the inlet that separates the end of the trail from the highway into town.

The Allred home is too far away from town to be connected to public utilities like electricity or water or phone service. But her family has figured out ways to live comfortably with some electricity provided by a small windmill and stored in batteries, with running water piped from streams, and with heat provided by burning some of the endless supply of driftwood or logs on their beach. They still make do without a telephone, which as a teenage girl, Ella finds something of a hardship.

Every single day, in rain or snow or darkness, she makes the trek back and forth. Just facing the ice-coated trail on a cold winter morning might make most teens think twice—or three times—about making the trip to Mutual activities or even to Sunday meetings. Not Ella. If it's a Church activity, she'll find a way to be there. When she had the opportunity to attend the dedication of the Anchorage Alaska Temple, she, of course, walked the mile and a half from her house to the road, caught the ferry to Skagway, got a ride with other branch members across

by Janet Thomas



Ella Allred (opposite page) on the trail to her home. (Above, left) Ella with her mother, Carlene. (Above, right) Swinging on her brothers' rope swing. Ella takes a break along the trail.



the
pass to
White Horse,
then boarded a chartered
bus for the trip to Anchorage—
hours and hours of traveling to
experience something as special as the
dedication of a temple.

Naturally, with hiking the trail every day, Ella is in great shape. She is a natural to run the distance events in track. But where Ella really stands out is that she has made decisions about how she wants her life to be and works at making those things come to pass.

For example, Ella was quite shy growing up. She didn't want her shyness to stop her from having lots of friends and being involved in school and Church activities. Now, at 17, Ella certainly isn't shy, and she has many friends in many towns. She travels with the track team and is also involved in debate and forensics. She plays the piano, sings, and figures out how to attend just about every activity for youth in her stake, even though the stake center is in Juneau and the stake itself extends from White Horse to Ketchikan, a distance so great that it's hard for the stake to get together for anything.

How did she cure her shyness? "I watched the good things other girls did, how they acted, and what they talked about," says Ella. "Then I tried to do the same things." By trial and error, Ella found her place and a comfortable way to relate to others. She learned how to be a

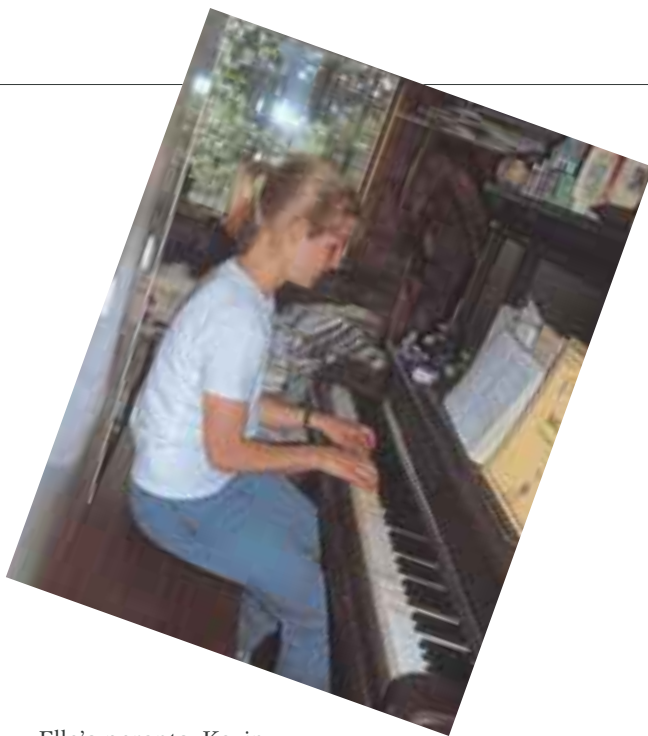
kind and supportive friend. Since she can't talk to her friends by phone regularly, she has discovered e-mail and uses the computers at the public library to keep in touch. Then, when she does visit their towns for school trips or other reasons, she arranges to go to church or seminary or Mutual with them.

Although Ella loves her branch in Haines, she wishes there were more teens in Young Women and Young Men. Right now, Ella and the branch president's daughter, Heidi Berry, are the only two active Young Women, and Ella's brothers, Soren and Flint, are two of the three Young Men. Their youngest brother, Forrest, is still in Primary. Ella loves to attend the wards in Juneau, when she's visiting on school trips, or in California, when she's visiting relatives, because there are more teens. "Whenever I get a chance, I go to seminary or to church with them," says Ella. She likes to experience the Church programs in larger groups.

But some things, like developing a testimony, don't depend on having lots of members around. When it comes to Ella's testimony, it is something that has been with her always. Ella says, "I've always felt that the gospel was true. If I've ever doubted, I've prayed about it, and I just have this feeling that if I knew before, then nothing has changed. I just know that it is true."



Sitting at an outdoor table in front of their house (opposite page, left), Ella watches her brother Forrest cut up rhubarb for a pie their mother is making. (Opposite page, right) Soren stacks wood he and his father have gathered and split for winter. (Above, inset) Soren gets the oars ready for their boat. When the tide comes in, Ella has to row to school and work.



Soren, 16, has had the same feeling. He explains, “I have the knowledge. It’s not like it’s suddenly there. A testimony kind of develops, and it takes time.”

Now that they are teenagers, both Ella and Soren have had strong feelings that it is time to study and read the scriptures regularly. “I was encouraged to read the scriptures in Sunday School, but I never really did,” says Ella. “At one point I just decided that it was time for me to start.”

Soren says, “One reason I study the scriptures as much as I can is to prepare for my mission. It’s good to know as much as possible, and it will make that experience much better.”

What Ella and Soren like about their home is obvious. No more than five steps from their front door is an incredible view of an ocean channel with ragged, sheer mountains lining the opposite shore. The quiet of their forest is deep and peaceful. Ella says, “I like it out here because it’s quiet. It’s easy to be by myself. If I spend all day here, I get relaxed.” Summer, with the long hours of sunlight, is a time to work on the gardens, fish, go backpacking, play on rope swings, and explore. Winter is challenging because of the long hours of darkness and the ice and snow. But the Allred home is cozy with plenty of time to read, their favorite entertainment.

Ella’s parents, Kevin and Carlene, are quite well known in their profession; they discover, explore, and map caves. Ella has been with them on some of their trips, but she admits it’s not her thing. “I can’t be in a cave for that long,” says Ella, “because I get kind of claustrophobic. I think it’s cool for my parents.”

Right now, Ella takes advantage of activities in church and school. She is committed to making good choices. And when you ask Ella what makes her so committed—committed enough to do whatever it takes to be where she is supposed to be, doing what she is supposed to be doing—she looks at you with her blue eyes for a few moments. She smiles a little as she’s thinking of just how to answer so you’ll understand. You can even see the inner strength that comes with her words. There is no doubt. There is no hesitation. It’s hard to find the exact words, but what she tells you is that when you believe something is true, like the gospel, then that’s how you live, no matter how hard, no matter what. How could it be any other way? If you have to “walk the trail,” then just make sure you’re on the right path. Ella is. **NE**





Flint with the family's pet birds

(opposite page, left). Ella's dad brought a piano in by boat

(opposite page, right). Ella with Heidi Berry

(opposite page, below). These two girls are the only active Young Women in their branch. (Above) Ella's chores include helping with laundry and the gardening.

(opposite page, below). These two girls are the only active Young Women in their branch. (Above) Ella's chores include helping with laundry and the gardening.



Here I Come,

As I watched my brother run into Dad's arms, my embarrassment was replaced by understanding and maybe even a glimpse of heaven.

by Judith P. Taylor

I was 13 or 14 years old, living with my father and two of my older brothers. My oldest brother was living in a group home in Provo, Utah, and we were going to meet him at church. He was mentally disabled, and he was going to pass the sacrament that day. I was nervous. I was always nervous around the people in the group home. I didn't know what to say, and I didn't know how to act. Arnol, my brother, was okay, because I grew up with him and he would make me laugh with his silly jokes. He always called me "dog eyes" because my eyes were brown and they looked like the eyes of our dog.

My dad was wearing his suit, and he looked very distinguished. We didn't talk much in the car. It was a two-hour drive, and I think we were all a little nervous. We were all wondering how Arnol was going to handle this big responsibility.

The church was crowded, and we were sitting in the very back of the chapel in the overflow area. I could see Arnol sitting by the sacrament table. He kept looking around to see if he could spot us. He looked good. His hair was combed, his tie was on, and his jacket hid his stooped shoulders. I could tell he was nervous and hesitating, looking for reassuring nods from the other boys.

The boys stood up for the prayer, then took their trays and started down the aisles. Arnol tipped his tray as he shuffled along, but nothing fell off. He took it to the correct row, and he managed to pass it to the first person. People in the audience smiled at him and gave him

encouraging nods. He was grinning. I could tell that he was pleased with himself. He was doing this all by himself. He was doing a good job. I heard a sigh of relief pass from my dad's lips. Inwardly, I started to relax a little too. It was going to work out fine.

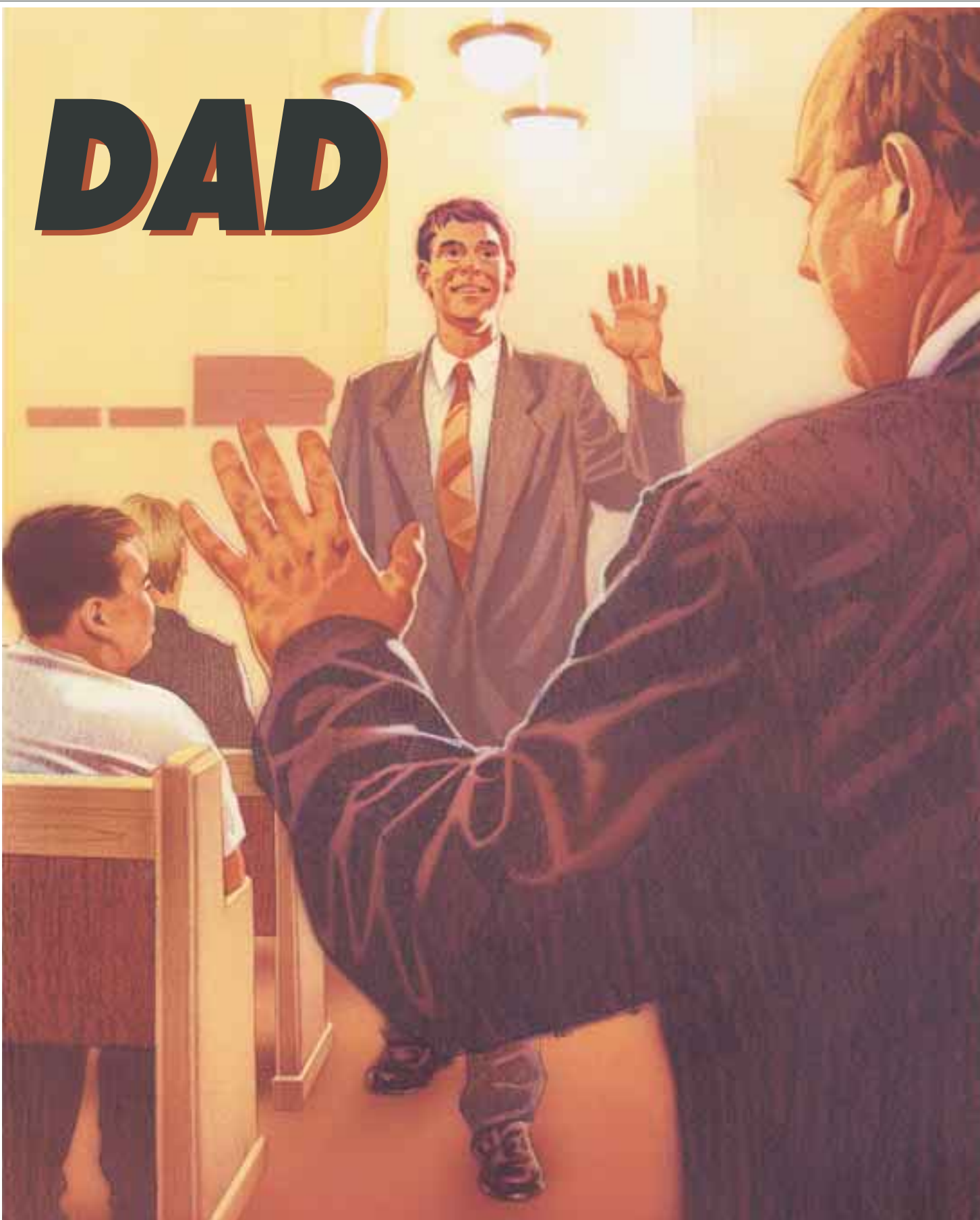
After the sacrament, the boys stood up to join their families. My dad stood up straight and tall in the back of the chapel so that Arnol could see him. Arnol looked around and saw Dad; then while half running down the aisle, he said, "Did you see me, Dad? Here I come, Dad; did you see me?"

I was embarrassed, and I could feel my face grow red. What would everyone think? But no one was frowning; they were smiling as they watched Arnol head towards his dad. And my dad stood tall and proud, ready to welcome his son after a job well done.

I think of this instance often. I reflect on the poise and pride in my dad's stance and the love he felt for Arnol. Arnol accomplished what he was able to do. He would never be a football star or a great musician or an A student, but he could pass the sacrament and my dad was proud of that.

I think this must be similar to how our Heavenly Father is. He knows each of our capabilities and each of our limitations. He knows the burdens that we are called upon to bear. And whether we are physically disabled or have any other kind of disability, when we go to meet Him, He will greet us with love for accomplishing the things He knows we are capable of. **NE**

DAD



COMING CLEAN

Sure, they weren't exactly excited when first asked to help clean the stake center every week. But when they all pitched in, the job went from not so bad to enjoyable.



by Matthew Baker

When they show up for Mutual, they end up scrubbing, sweeping, and polishing. So why do they still show up?

Daniel Schlegel looks at the reflection of the Detroit Michigan Temple in the stake center window. The window is dirty, covered with water stains, and dimly mirrors the temple just across the parking lot. He sprays the window with cleaner, and the image disappears in streaks of blue liquid. As his hand moves in circular motions, the image slowly reappears. When he's finished, the reflection of the temple is bright, and he moves on. There are plenty of windows to clean and not much time.

It doesn't sound like something that would lure youth to Mutual, but cleaning the meetinghouse every week is what they've been asked to do, and the youth keep coming.

When the bishop first asked the youth in the Bloomfield Hills First Ward to clean the stake center, they didn't exactly shout with joy. Who wants to finish off each activity night by scrubbing the building? There are more exciting ways to end Mutual activities, like shooting hoops or just chatting with friends.

But after the youth had cleaned the building for several weeks, they realized it wasn't as bad as they thought it would be. And after a few more weeks, they



even began to enjoy it. Now they say cleaning the church has changed the way they feel about the building and about themselves.

A call from the prophet

Three years ago, the First Presidency requested that ward members take more responsibility for cleaning Church meetinghouses. They recommended that the youth take on the responsibility as part of their weekly activities. The Bloomfield Hills youth knew this meant them.

"It cuts costs so we can provide more money for missionary work and temples," says Rob Montierth, a priest who helps



Cleaning the building in preparation for Sunday has taught these youth more respect for the Lord's house. They've also learned that the building isn't the only thing that needs to be prepared for the Sabbath.

clean the building each week. "But it also teaches us responsibility and to respect the house of the Lord."

Rob's words echo the promise the First Presidency gave in a letter sent to bishops and stake presidents in the United States and Canada when they requested that youth clean the buildings. "From this service, young people can deepen their reverence and feelings of respect for the house of the Lord."

Christina Wirthlin, a Laurel, says taking the call from the prophet seriously and cleaning each week makes her feel personally responsible for the cleanliness of the building. "It just makes me look out for things more. When I see papers on the floor and when I see things that need to be put away, I feel more responsibility to do those things. Before, I would just look past it because I figured someone else would do it."

A 15-minute flurry

The Bloomfield Hills stake center isn't a small building. The task of cleaning it seems a bit overwhelming.

There are windows to polish, carpets to vacuum, hymnbooks to straighten, floors to mop, chalkboards to dust, a

courtyard to sweep and weed—the list goes on and on. But the youth are not only willing to clean; they're anxious to get started.

It's almost like a tornado has hit the inside of the stake center. But unlike other tornadoes, this whirlwind of activity puts things in place.

The storm of activity is intense for about 15 minutes as the sound of vacuums squealing adds to the chorus of a squeaky wheel on the mop bucket and the rhythmic sweeping from the brooms in the courtyard. People are wiping down



cabinets in the kitchen, making sure there are hymnbooks at every bench, pushing mops across the gym floor, and pulling tiny weeds out of the cracks in the courtyard cement.

Then, just as quickly as the cleaning supplies came out of the closet, the activity settles, and Mutual is over. When the youth leave, the stake center is spotless. Everything is in its place, and the building is ready to welcome them on Sunday morning.

A house of order

As people file into the meetinghouse on Sunday morning, everything is in its place. And if something is out of line, or there's a scrap of paper on the floor, you don't have to tell the youth to take care of it; it has become instinct.

"I think that since we've been cleaning the building, I notice more when it's clean," says Diana Parker, a Mia Maid. "And I think the fact that the youth clean it makes a big difference because it's something we can do to help invite the Spirit into the building."

All the youth agree that it's easier to feel the Spirit in a clean place. "When the building is clean, it just makes a better feeling, and the Spirit is stronger," says Christina. "The Spirit is more willing to come in when it's clean."





Cleaning the building in preparation for Sunday has taught the youth respect for the building, but they have also learned that the building isn't the only thing that needs Sunday preparation.

Just as the building needs to be cleaned, so do the people attending church, says Kay Smith, a Laurel. "We don't just come to church in regular clothes; we come in Sunday clothes."

Rob says that, as well as cleaning up our appearances, we have to do some deep cleaning. "We clean up our thoughts and our minds so that when we come to church we can have more of a spiritual experience."

Coming clean

Before Mutual starts and before anyone signs up for specific cleaning responsibilities, Bishop Kunz asks the youth to especially make sure the windows and doors are washed. He says the glass doors are the first thing people notice when they walk into the building, and nothing is worse than water stains and fingerprints on glass.

Daniel, a teacher, is one of many who help fill the bishop's request. Like the other youth, he wants the building to look good for Sunday. Even though the windows become spotted and require plenty of polishing, Daniel is up for the task. The crisp reflection of the temple in the spotless window is the reward he gets from his work.

Although the meetinghouse only takes a short time to clean each week, the youth have learned an important principle from doing it—respect.

"There are places in the world where they don't even have ward buildings," says Laura Hansen, a Mia Maid. "We are so blessed to have this building, and I think we should feel some responsibility, even if a janitor did what we do, because it is the house of the Lord."

Just like the building, the youth know that their appearance can be a reflection of what they value and can influence how they behave. And they know that it's more than just coming with a clean appearance to church; they also try to come spiritually clean. Cleaning the stake center has helped teach them this lesson. That's why, when it's time to get ready for church, they are eager to come clean. **NE**

FANTASTIC



by Elyssa
Renee Andrus

Tempted by all those credit card offers? Here's what you need to know.

Steve was working on a term paper when a credit card company called his Brigham Young University dorm. The company was offering cards to students and wondered if he would like to apply. Happy to take a break from studying, Steve agreed to answer a few questions. He told the representative he was on scholarship and had no income. Since he planned to serve a mission at the end of the year, it would be a long time before he graduated and began a career. I'll never get approved, Steve thought as the conversation ended. To his amazement, he received a \$2,000-limit credit card a week later in the mail.

Teens and college students like Steve are an attractive market for credit card companies, according to Catherine

PLASTIC?



Williams, president of a nonprofit organization that offers credit card counseling. If you are nearing your 18th birthday, you may have already received an enticing credit card offer or two in the mail. Some companies offer discount airfares, while others give away free T-shirts for filling out an application. Whatever the incentive, credit card companies aggressively seek youth because they want to establish brand loyalty early.

What is credit, anyway?

Since you have to be 18 to qualify for most credit cards, what does this have to do with you? Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) said, “Proper money management and living within one’s means are essential in today’s world if we are to live abundantly and happily” (*Liabona*, Apr. 2000, 44) If you have a job, you may have already been able to budget and establish wise habits like paying tithing and saving money. When

CREDIT CARD SAVVY

❑ With your parents, shop around for a credit card with a low interest rate and no yearly fees. Credit card companies that aggressively solicit students often have high interest rates. The bank where you have your checking account is often a good place to find a card with a lower rate.

❑ You can make payments on your credit card anytime, including before you receive a bill. Paying off your credit card early helps reduce the risk of missing a payment.

❑ Pay the monthly balance in full, period.

❑ Avoid getting cash advances on your credit card. These have no grace period and have an average Annual Percentage Rate of 19.56 percent, according to a 2000 Internet survey.

❑ Keep all of your credit card information in a safe place. If you are moving for the summer, make sure the credit card company knows the address to which the bill should be sent.



“Proper money management and living within one’s means are essential in today’s world if we are to live abundantly and happily.”

—Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94)

you turn 18 or leave for school, owning a credit card might seem like the logical next step in your financial education. But you need to know the basics first.

“Before you decide to get a credit card, you need to know the facts. You need to know what’s out there,” says David Ogden, chairman of an Internet company that offers advice to students about credit cards.

First of all, he says, it’s important to understand how credit works. A credit card is basically a monthly loan, usually with a grace period to pay back the money borrowed. Each card has a limit,

or maximum amount of money you can spend with that card. With most companies, you have until a certain date each month to repay your purchases before they start accruing interest.

Let’s say you purchase \$80 worth of books one month and pay off the full balance early. You owe the credit card company nothing. Sound like a good deal? In many ways, it is.

Avoiding debt’s pitfalls

The problem with credit cards arises when you can’t pay your entire monthly bill. Credit card companies make money by allowing people to make minimum payments and charging interest on the rest. For example, instead of paying off your entire \$80 bill, let’s say you make the minimum payment of \$20. From the due date forward, you must pay interest on the remaining \$60. This can add up quickly. Having a debt on your credit card is like agreeing to give someone a bigger and bigger portion of your paycheck each month. The amount you owe the credit card company will increase until you pay off your full balance.

Credit card debt can get out of control, causing heartache and deep financial troubles if unchecked. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said, “Debt can be a terrible thing. It is so easy to incur and so difficult to repay. Borrowed money is had only at a price, and that price can be burdensome” (*Ensign*, Mar. 1990, 4). Steve learned this lesson the hard way. For the first few months he had his credit card, it stayed in his wallet. But in the last three weeks of his freshman year, Steve went on a spending spree. “After a year of living on a few hundred dollars a month, I decided to go have some fun,” says Steve.

With his credit card he paid for weekend trips and new clothes. By the time he went home, he had racked up charges nearing his credit limit. As a result, he spent the summer before his mission working frantically to pay off the debt. “It wasn’t a positive learning experience,” says Steve. “At the time, I didn’t realize that a credit card doesn’t

expand your income now; it shrinks your future income because of debt.”

Wise credit card use

Owning a credit card doesn't automatically put you in a situation like Steve's. A credit card is just a form of payment and, if used responsibly, can be a helpful tool. Having a credit card and paying your bills on time establishes good credit, which will be handy in the future if you need a loan to purchase a car or home. Credit cards also allow you to make big purchases, like all your books for the semester, without carrying around large amounts of cash.

The trick to using a credit card is to realize it's not free money. "A credit card is not an extension of your income," says credit counselor Catherine Williams. She says youth with credit cards need to establish a monthly budget and decide what part of that budget can be used for credit card purchases. To stay out of trouble, Williams recommends starting with one low-limit credit card with no annual fees. And she says paying off the balance each month is an absolute must.

Bekah Swiss, a 19-year-old from Sandy, Utah, applied for a credit card specifically to build a good credit rating. To make sure she stays out of trouble, Bekah and her parents have set some guidelines. She says she will never make a credit card purchase unless she has the money in the bank to pay it off immediately. That way, she won't pay a cent in interest. "The money some people are paying in interest could have been put in a savings account. Then it would earn them interest," says Bekah.

Credit cards aren't for everyone. Melinda Blunt from Tucson, Arizona, decided to leave for college without one. "I don't feel the need for a credit card because the things that I need I can pay for up front with a debit card. That way, I don't have to worry about debt," she says. Melinda hasn't ruled out getting a credit card in the future. She says she may get one to establish good credit.

Understanding credit and establishing good financial skills will set you on the

❑ Sign the back of your credit card as soon as you receive it.

❑ Never let anyone borrow your credit card.

❑ If your credit card is lost or stolen, report it immediately. You are only responsible for \$50 of unauthorized purchases, and you are not responsible for any unauthorized purchases if you report the card missing before they are made.

❑ Go over your monthly bill carefully to make sure all the charges are correct.

❑ If you need to contest a billing, call the company's customer service number.

❑ If you decide to discontinue using the credit card, simply cutting it up isn't enough. You must call the company and cancel your account as well.

CREDIT CARD SAFETY



right path. Becoming financially savvy means learning to live within your means and to save a little, as well. Elder James E. Faust has said, "It is important to learn to distinguish between wants and needs. It takes self-discipline to avoid the 'buy now, pay later' philosophy and to adopt the 'save now and buy later' practice" (*Ensign*, May 1986, 20). A credit card is a convenient way to pay for things, but it won't bring you more money or pad your savings account. If you expect it to, you'd better wait and store those offers for cards with free T-shirts and discount airline fares in a safe place: the garbage. **NE**

"Debt can be a terrible thing. It is so easy to incur and so difficult to repay. Borrowed money is bad only at a price, and that price can be burdensome."

**—President
Gordon B.
Hinckley**

DEBT LOAD

Rationalizing their way into debt was easy. Getting out was tougher.

Melissa got her first credit card when she went away to college. Her parents, who helped her apply for the card, told her it was for emergency use only. At first, Melissa followed that advice closely, usually consulting her parents before she made any purchases on the card.

"At first, I didn't use my card all that much," she says. "The problem was, my parents didn't really explain how credit worked. In fact, I saw my mom use her credit card all the time to buy things at the store. She never thought to tell me that she only bought things she knew she could pay for in full every month when the bill came."

Married while she was still in college, Melissa and her husband soon longed for the comfortable lifestyle they had enjoyed at home with their parents.

"We felt that we deserved most of the things we purchased with our credit card. We never stopped to consider if we could afford it."

Soon Melissa and her husband were charging necessities like groceries and gas for the car on credit cards because all their available cash was used up paying the minimum balance on several credit cards. Finally things were so bad that Melissa sought help from her parents.

"It was really embarrassing to have to go to my dad and tell him what we had done. We were really lucky that my dad was in a position to help us."

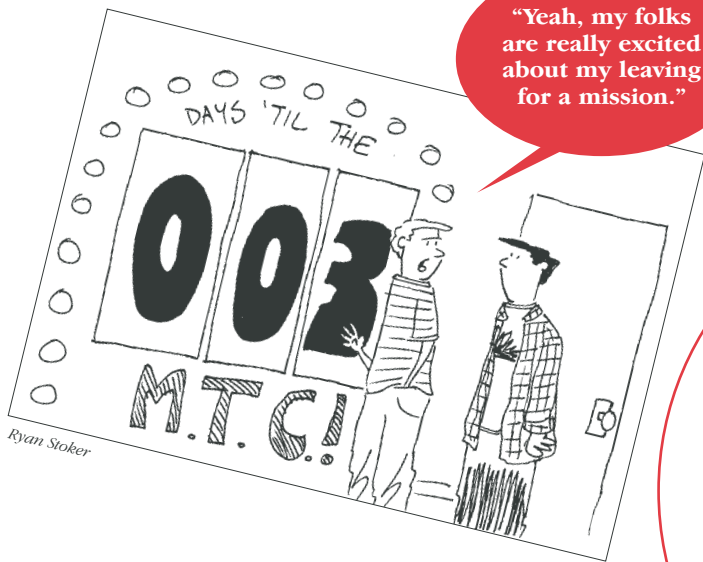
But even with help and new knowledge about how credit works, it hasn't been an easy road, says Melissa. In addition to having to check in with her dad for several months after he bailed them out, paying the loan back to her father has meant several years of a very restrictive budget. But Melissa says the sacrifice has been worth it.

"I felt like I was in prison before. Now, even though I don't have as much money to spend, I feel a real sense of freedom. Getting out of debt is worth whatever it takes." **NE**



by Lisa M. G.
Crockett

T H E E X T R A S M I L E



"Yeah, my folks are really excited about my leaving for a mission."

Ryan Stoker

"I promised my daughter I would wear these to work. She made them at girls' camp."



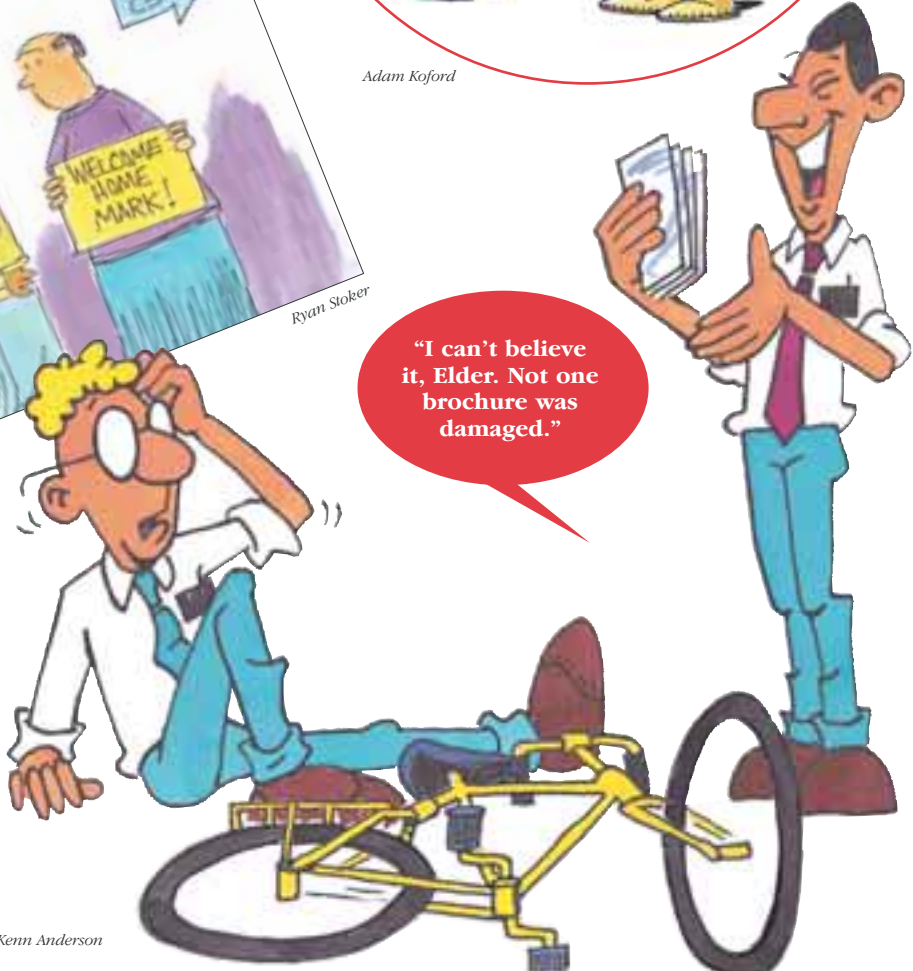
Adam Koford



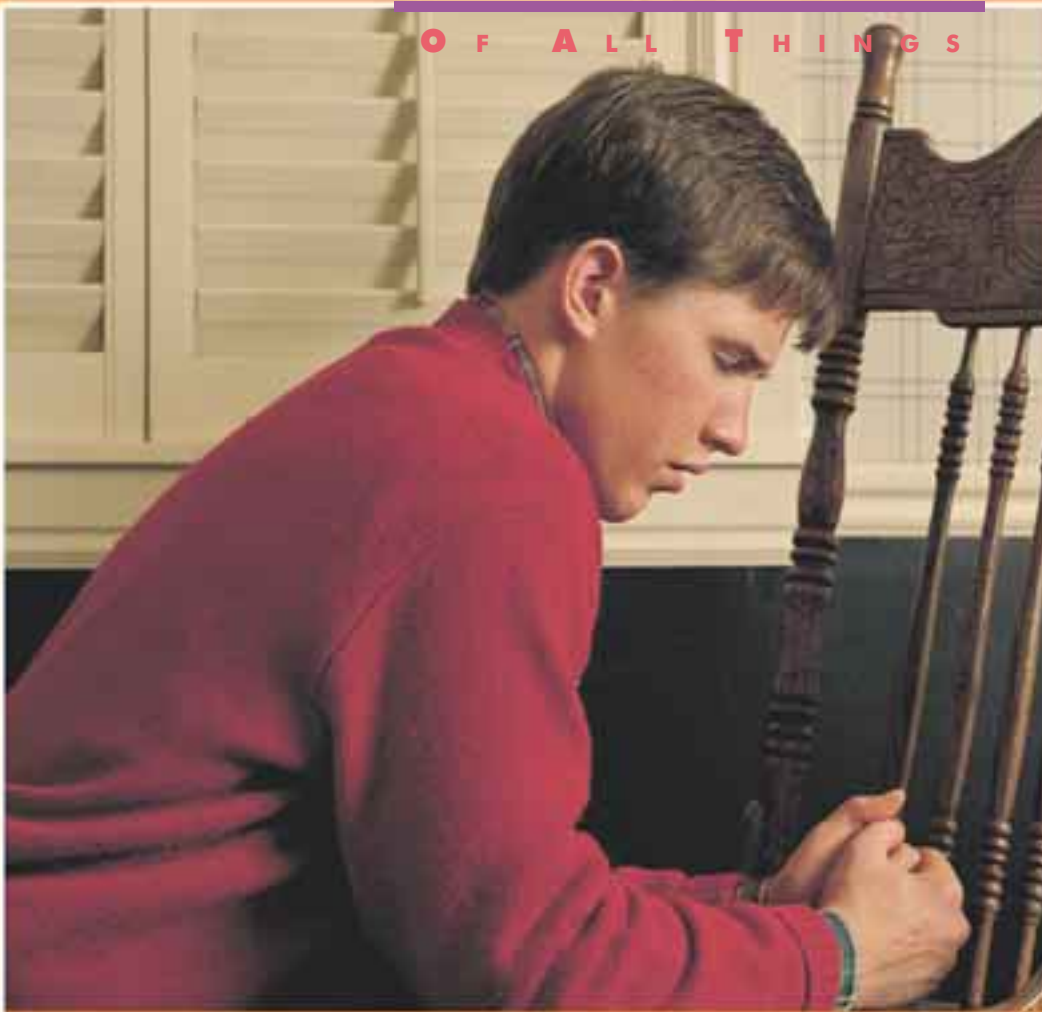
"Um, me the sorry, me speak no that English much good anymore."

Ryan Stoker

"I can't believe it, Elder. Not one brochure was damaged."



Alan Kenn Anderson



EASTER TREATS

Here are a few things you can do this Easter to remind you of the sacredness of this time of year:

- ✿ Choose a favorite scripture that quotes the Savior. Make it your “motto” for the month. Try taping a copy of the scripture to your mirror or inside your school locker.
- ✿ Follow the Savior’s example by being a peacemaker in your home. Instead of arguing, look for ways to help members of your family.
- ✿ The Savior loved everyone. Show your love by serving someone in need.
- ✿ Look for those who might be lonely during Sunday meetings. Shake their hands, talk with them, and make them feel welcome.
- ✿ Write your testimony of the Savior in a Book of Mormon and give it to a friend who might be discouraged.

ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS

You should learn while you are young that while the Atonement of Christ applies to humanity in general, the influence of it is individual, very personal, and very useful. Even to you beginners, an understanding of the Atonement is of immediate and very practical value in everyday life. . . .

“Among you young people are those who are ‘vexed,’ as Peter said, ‘with the filthy conversation of the wicked’ (2 Pet. 2:7). Some of you joke about standards and see no need to change behavior. You tell yourselves it doesn’t matter because ‘everybody’s doing it.’

“But that doesn’t work because you, by nature, are good. How many times have you heard someone say, after doing some generous or heroic deed or simply helping others, how *good* it made them feel? Like any natural feeling or emotion, that reaction is inborn in you. Surely you have experienced that yourself!

Happiness is inseparably connected with decent, clean behavior. . . .

“Most mistakes you can repair yourself, alone, through prayerful repentance. The more serious ones require help. . . . The path you need to follow is in the scriptures. . . .

“You need not know everything before the power of the Atonement will work for you. Have faith in Christ; it begins to work the day you ask!” (*Ensign*, May 1997, 9–10).

—President Boyd K. Packer



SUPPLEMENTARY INFO

You've heard all the sales pitches.

This herb will give you more energy.

That supplement turns fat into

muscle. You may have a friend who takes a supplement and thinks it's great.

Be careful! Some advertisements make claims that cannot be independently proven.

And a substance that helps (or at least doesn't hurt) one person can have bad effects on another. It is dangerous for teens to take supplements with unproven effects, especially those that claim to build muscles or promote growth; these supplements can interfere with the body's natural growth and development processes, causing long-term harm. Just because a supplement is "natural" doesn't

mean it's harmless. Some of the most powerful drugs and medicines come from plants; they are natural but must be used under a doctor's direction.

The Nemours Foundation, a children's health organization, says the best way to get all the vitamins and minerals you need is to eat a diet based on the Food Guide Pyramid.

Healthy eating, combined with exercise, is also the safest way to lose weight and stay physically healthy. The Church Welfare Services agrees:

"The best policy is to eat a balanced diet of nutritious foods (milk, meats, fruits, vegetables, breads, and cereals) rather than trying to bolster a poor diet with vitamin and mineral supplements" (*Ensign*, Jan. 1981, 12).

Amy Reeder, a registered dietician who teaches at the University of Utah, says, "Most often teenagers don't have the greatest diets and might not be getting all the vitamins and minerals they need." She suggests taking a multivitamin if your diet isn't the healthiest. And, especially for girls who don't drink enough milk, a calcium supplement might be a good idea as well. But she also stresses that the best way to get all the nutrients you need is to eat a balanced diet.

If there are certain food groups you are unable to eat, check with your parents and a doctor or a registered dietician before taking any kind of dietary supplements. Even vitamins and minerals can have harmful side effects if taken in the wrong dosages. And don't fall for the argument that because something is "natural" it is safe.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

President George Albert Smith, the eighth president of the Church, was named after his grandfather. Once, when he was very ill, President Smith had a dream in which his deceased grandfather spoke to him. "I would like to know what you have done with my name," his grandfather said.

President Smith said, at that moment, everything he had ever done in his life up until that time passed before his eyes. He looked at his grandfather, smiled, and replied, "I have never done anything with your name of which you need be ashamed."

As the vision closed, President Smith found himself in bed with tears of gratitude soaking his pillow. "I have thought of this many times," he said, "and I want to tell you that I have been trying, more than ever since that time, to take care of that name. . . . Honor the names that you bear, because some day you will have the privilege and the obligation of reporting to them (as well as to your Father in Heaven) what you have done with their name." (See George Albert Smith, *Sharing the Gospel with Others*, 112.)

Think about your name. Even if you aren't named after a family member, as a member of the Church you promise to take the name of Jesus Christ upon you when you are baptized, and you renew that promise when you partake of the sacrament. Are you living up to that covenant?





The ANSWER Guy

Sure, I could dish out advice—until I asked myself some questions.

My throat felt scratchy, and my stomach was doing cartwheels as Mrs. Allen cleared her throat and prepared to read the last assignments for newspaper staff.

I didn't know journalism class could be such an emotional experience.

"All right, we have only a couple of assignments left," Mrs. Allen said cheerfully. "The student government beat is open."

Student government? I don't think so. Covering endless and pointless debates about crummy school food, keeping the water fountains free of gum, and ways to get drivers to slow down in the parking lot didn't exactly bring to mind stories that would land my byline on the front page of the *New York Times*.

Mrs. Allen looked over her list again. "And we need an advice columnist to take Twila Terwilliger's place. That was our most popular feature last year."

Yes, I remember Twila's column, "Tips from Twila." No matter what the question, Twila had a spunky answer, which always ran along the theme of

Last year, the advice columnist for our school paper handed out sugary, feel-good answers. But things are going to be different now. No more mushy stuff. Just straight, hard-hitting answers now that Gabe Jeffries is in charge.

by Don Smurthwaite

"Hang in there!" or "Keep your chin up!" or "Think positive thoughts and everything will be better!" Twila believed that a heavy dose of sugar could cure anything, and she poured it into her columns by the bagful.

Now, if I were the advice columnist, things would be different. Straight answers. No mushy, sensitive stuff. No coddling from Gabe Jeffries. Besides, for my first three years in high school, I hadn't really found my place. I wasn't an athlete or much of a scholar, and I never ran for school office. Having my photo in every edition of the paper with a big byline over my column, I had to admit, sounded more than okay.

"Any takers?" Mrs. Allen pleaded. I raised my hand.

"Gabe? You want to take the column?" Mrs. Allen sounded a little surprised.

"Yeah, Mrs. Allen. I can handle a column."

She seemed doubtful but said, "Okay, Gabe. Let's give it a try. Maybe a male perspective would work in an advice column. Stay a few minutes after class. Some letters have already been sent in, and you can get to work on them right away."



Success! My byline would never appear on a story about crusty spaghetti and runny sauce, or cross-country runners getting sick halfway through their race. My journalism career was looking up.

Later that night, at a desk in the corner of my room, I grabbed the small stack of letters and prepared to take on the problems of the cold, the weary, the downtrodden, the hopeless, the nobodies who inhabited my corner of the world.

To Whomever Is the New Advice Person:

I have a boyfriend, and what we do most of the time for our dates is sit on the couch at his house and watch football or basketball games or action movies. Like, we never do anything fun; we just sort of sit and watch games and eat, although he does most of the eating. If I suggest we go to a movie or on a walk, he just says he's tired. But I really do love him, and we may get married after we graduate next spring. What do you think? Should I stay with him?

*Signed,
Wondering*

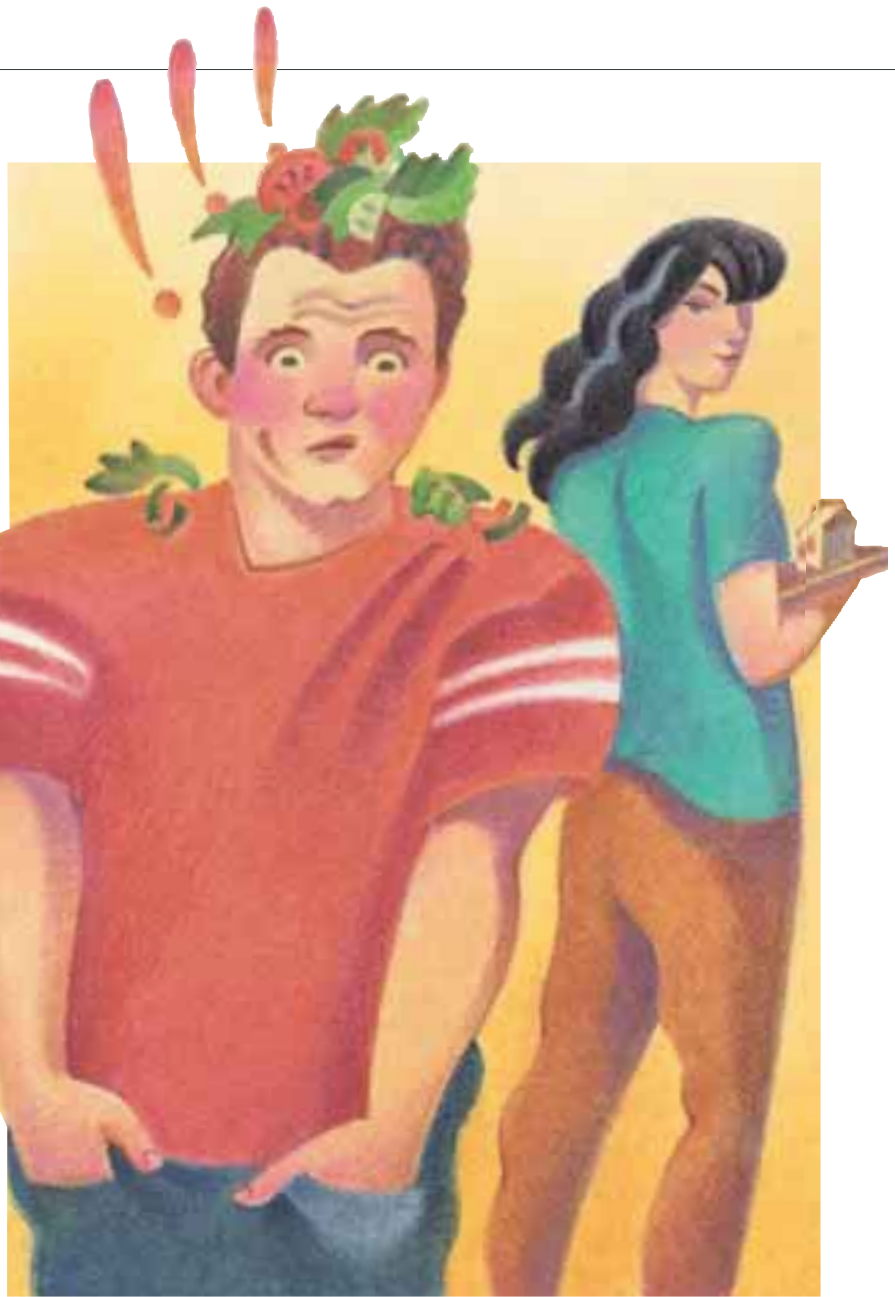
I thoughtfully read the letter and asked myself, What would Twila say? She'd say, "Be perky, smile a lot, and things will get better before you know it."

Of course, I didn't want to even faintly sound like Twila. I sat at the keyboard of my computer and began picking at the letters. My answer came quickly.

Dear Wondering,

I have three words for you: Lose the loser. Fast forward a few years and think what life will be like if you hang in with this dude. Imagine, Friday night in the house, you have three noisy kids to deal with, and your husband is passed out in front of the TV. He's 60 pounds heavier than he is now, hasn't shaved in three days, and he's sitting in his undershirt and sweat pants snoring. Is this the life you want? No way. Drop him. The sooner the better. You don't want to be his girlfriend now and for sure not his wife. Get the picture?

*Signed,
The Answer Guy*



I sat back and re-read my answer. Well, maybe it is a little rough, but someone had to steer this girl away from the wreck that was awaiting her. No one would ever confuse me with Twila, that's for sure. No one would call me Mr. Nice Guy.

I sorted through the other letters Mrs. Allen had given me and picked out a couple more to answer. One from a guy who wanted to move out of his house ("What? Free room and board, the folks pay the utilities, and you want to leave? Are you nuts?") and another from a kid who complained it was unfair that the 10th graders were assigned early lunch ("Quit whining. You've got to eat sometime, right? Stick with it, and maybe you'll make it all the way to the senior

class and get to eat with the grown-ups”).

Three letters, three answers, in 20 minutes. And I didn't sprinkle any sugar.

I didn't think much about my column until the newspaper came out a week later. Just before English class began, Adam Fletcher, who is among the very chosen in our school, a guy who would make anyone's I-want-him-at-my-next-party list, flopped his hands on my desk, leaned over and said “Man, your column was great. Harsh. I really like it. Sixty pounds in an undershirt. That was money, man.”

“Uh, thanks. Yeah, it was. But I can do harsh. Really.”

Adam, who in the last three years of school had done little more than occasionally grunt at me, was actually paying me a compliment. He wasn't the only one who noticed the column. A dozen more people said something about “The Answer Guy.” Even Mrs. Allen gave me a thin smile and mumbled, “Well, it looks like you're not Twila, Gabe.”

Gabe Jeffries, columnist. The Answer Guy, a Someone. Maybe someday I'd have my own radio talk show, coast-to-coast, every weekday night, handing out advice like candy at Halloween. I would be wise, witty, clever, and above all, tell it like it is. My name would be heard in every household.

Two weeks later, I was back home reading a fresh stack of mail. A lot of letters had come in since my first column.

I grabbed a letter out of the middle of the bundle.

*To the Answer Guy,
Since you're a guy, maybe you can help me with this one. I went to homecoming last week, and the guy I was with seemed really annoyed when I ordered a salad for dinner. He got really quiet and seemed like he was upset. We were with a whole group of people at the restaurant, and he hardly spoke to me later on. I just wasn't hungry and didn't want to cost him a lot of money, so that's why I ordered a salad. Did I do something wrong? Let me know.*

Signed,

Lettuce Woman

This is too easy, I thought.



I thought I had arrived when smart, gorgeous Rachel came up to me in the cafeteria and said she had read my latest column. Then I was just glad there wasn't much dressing on the salad she dumped on my head.

Dear Lettuce Woman,

Of course the guy you went out with was annoyed. You are a Salad Girl. Guys do not like to take out Salad Girls. He takes you to a nice restaurant, hungry, ready to eat a big meal, and then you order a salad. He's not impressed when you do that. It makes him feel stupid to order a steak with the trimmings if all you're eating is a salad. You finish your salad and then all you do is stare at him while he eats, or he decides he'd better just get a salad too, so he doesn't show you up.

Do everyone a favor: next time when you go out to dinner, order a T-bone, rare, and smack your lips all the way through it. Everyone will relax more. Leave the salads to the weight-challenged who really need to diet!

Not exactly Shakespearian, but I thought Lettuce Woman would get the idea.

The next edition of the newspaper came out, and my transformation to being a Someone rolled along. People who never paid much attention to me were becoming friendly. Sure, I would never be a great athlete, Harvard would never offer me an academic scholarship, and I'd never date a cheerleader, but through my column I was starting to feel accepted by the socials. And I liked it.

Of course, not everyone was ready to nominate me for a Pulitzer Prize. There was the cafeteria incident.

I was sitting among some of my new friends, at a table where mostly the popular hung out, and Rachel Patton came by with a sweet smile on her face.

“Hello, Gabe. I read your column yesterday,” she cooed. “And I just wanted to give you a little something.” Rachel is smart enough to be a doctor and gorgeous enough to be a model. Maybe she'll end up being both.

“Uh, great,” I stammered. “Yeah. Thanks.”

She pulled out a salad from behind her back and dumped it on my head. “Just a little token of our affection, Gabe. Call it a little gift from all the Salad Girls. And I thought you were such a nice guy before.”

At least there wasn't much dressing on it. Some people, I guess, just don't know how to deal with celebrities.

The third edition of the newspaper

was much the same, although I had to work harder at coming up with rude answers. The guys at school loved what I wrote. In the fourth edition, I answered a letter from a guy who thought his girlfriend was going to dump him (“Beat her to it. Dump her. It is much better to be the dumper than the dumpee, and she is not worthy of you anyway”) and another from a girl who worried about having no social life (“Millions of people don’t have enough food to eat, and you’re whining because you haven’t had a date since June?”).

After I finished my last answer, I sat back. Great stuff. How will I ever top it? The answer was easy: Just get a little more rude; find new ways of ripping others. Just keep those put-downs coming.

I picked another letter, handwritten on plain white paper.

Dear Answer Guy,

I’m kind of new to this school, and I am having a hard time fitting in. I feel lonely. Sometimes I wish I had a good friend or two. Sometimes, I just feel like giving up. What can I do?

Signed,

No One

It was signed in an unusual style, small letters, backslanted, the way left-handed people often write. It was definitely a male’s handwriting. I waited a second for inspiration, then started my answer.

Dear No One,

You are a loser. That’s why you don’t have any friends. That’s why you sit by yourself at lunch, stay home on weekends, and sit in class too afraid to raise your hand and answer a question. You have no confidence, bud. I know your kind. I know everything about you. I know exactly what you’re like and . . .

And what? I stopped typing. What if this letter were real? What if someone was really asking me for help? What if I gave him rude advice when he needed a real answer? And why did I write that I knew exactly what he was like? Was it because, not too long ago, I’d sat in a class or the cafeteria and wondered where I fit in?

All of a sudden, I felt like a fraud. For too long, I’d been ignoring the gnawing feeling in me every time I wrote an



It was a letter from “No One” that really changed my mind about writing the column. I discovered that “No One” was really someone who needed a friend, not sarcastic advice.

answer filled with put-downs. Was I taking the chance of hurting someone just to get some attention?

I didn’t sleep well that night. I kept thinking about what I’d written. Every column was becoming more rude, more attacking. It was getting tougher to out-do myself. I could feel the expectations of others. In each answer, they wanted me to cut more deeply. Rachel’s words bothered me: “I thought you were such a nice guy before.”

And about midnight, when my eyes were wide open and my mind racing along, I finally understood that feeling inside. I didn’t like the kind of person I was becoming. Acceptance, at least the kind I was getting, wasn’t worth becoming someone else. Maybe I hadn’t been popular before, but at least I was a nice guy who wouldn’t hurt anyone. It was time for Gabe Jeffries to become Gabe Jeffries again.

I finally had come up with an honest answer.

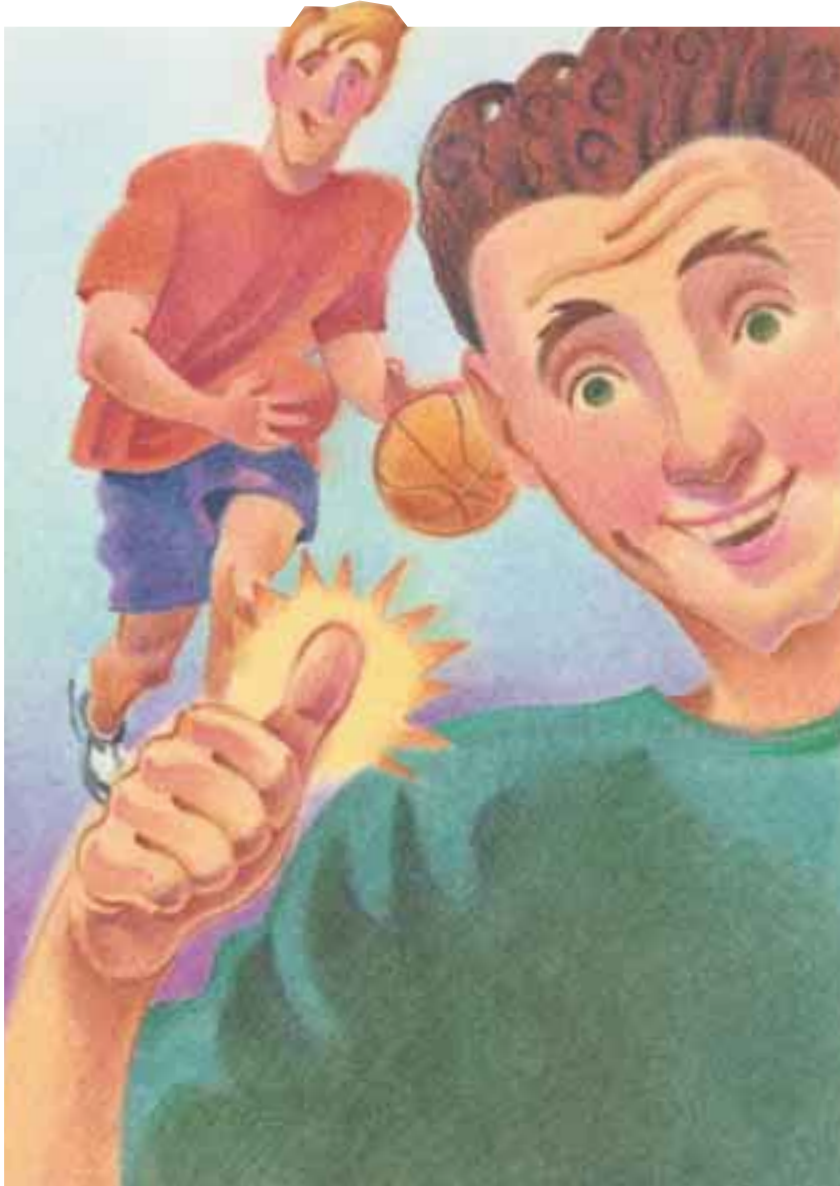
In the morning, I took the letter to school. In study hall, I started writing another answer to the guy who could only call himself “No One.”

Dear No One,

I liked your letter. It took courage to write it. I can tell some things about you from your letter, and they are good things. But I must disagree about one thing. You’re not a No One. You are Someone—someone who is important, who has talent and ability, even though you might not recognize it. You’re someone I’d like to become friends with. I hope we meet. Until then, try to find some good in your life. I’m sure you have a few friends. I also hope you have a family who cares about you. You deserve that much. Things will get better. I know it.

I read through it again. For the first time since I’d become a columnist, I’d provided someone with a real answer.

Later that afternoon, I wrote a second letter. This one was to Mrs. Allen. I gave it to her at the beginning of class. She placed it on her desk and said softly, “I guess I’m surprised, Gabe. You have potential as a writer, and I’m sorry you’re resigning as the Answer Guy. Maybe we can find another place for you as a different kind of columnist.”



"If you still need someone to write about water polo, I guess I'm the one," I said.

"We'll find you something a little more exciting than that, Gabe," she promised.

The following day in history class, Mr. Haney droned on about Germany's economic collapse after World War I.

Suddenly, Mr. Haney said, "Okay, everyone, put away your books. It's quiz time!"

The quiz was only 10 questions. When it was over, Mr. Haney told us to pass our papers to the person two rows to our right for correcting. Someone handed me a paper, and as I looked down at it, I almost fell out of my chair. I'd seen that

handwriting before: small letters, backslated, distinctive. No mistake about it. I was correcting "No One's" paper. Funny, he'd been in my class three months, and I didn't even know his name.

He nailed nine out of ten answers on the quiz, so I scribbled "Way to go!" on the top of his paper, then passed it back just as the bell rang.

I wasn't sure what to do next, but I knew I had to do something. He was already out the door. I called his name.

He turned toward me, a look of surprise on his face.

I thought quickly. "Uh, a bunch of us are going to my church tonight to shoot hoops. Want to come?"

He smiled awkwardly. "You want me to play basketball? I'm not very good."

"None of us are. That's why we have so much fun. We don't even keep score. And we only call fouls if blood is involved. You'll fit right in."

And the way he looked back at me, I knew he would. I could sense the changes taking place at that very moment: a "no one" was becoming a "someone."

Well, the *New York Times* never called, begging me to work for them. I ended up writing feature stories most of the semester, one of which won a statewide writing prize; I even covered a couple of student council meetings, which were, of course, really boring. The next semester, I became the news editor. Mrs. Allen thinks I have a chance at a journalism scholarship. I asked Rachel Patton out, and she said yes, probably just a charity date, but she kept her salad on her plate and off my head at dinner, which I appreciated. On the doorstep, she told me I was a really nice guy.

I took it as a major compliment.

And the guy in history class, well, we still hang out, and I never have mentioned his letter to him. He seems happier now.

Yep, things are going great for me. It all started, I think, when I decided to not worry about trying to be someone else or pleasing others who didn't really care for me. Everything I need to deal with any problem is all around me: home, family, church, and friends.

I guess I had the right answers all along. **NE**

What MATTERS MOST

*In all of your studying,
learn the most important
truth of all.*

When I was serving as a mission president in Brazil, our family had five missionaries out at the same time. Three of our children were serving, and, of course, Sister Hillam and I considered ourselves missionaries. It was a great experience.

When our children came home from their missions, we were still in Brazil. They started their missions and reported their missions, and we were never there. Of our seven children, we've only been home to hear one report his mission. Likewise, we've only been home to see two of them go on their missions, and we've been gone when they started college. With that in mind, I'd like to share with you the counsel I gave them, even from long distance.

First, I would remind them of the scripture in the Doctrine and Covenants directed to Oliver Cowdery: "Behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right" (D&C 9:8).

Now what does that scripture mean?



by Elder
Harold G. Hillam
of the Seventy

**Once you
have
thought-
fully and prayer-
fully decided on a
career path, keep
that goal in mind
as you move
ahead.**

I'd say be sure that when you go to school you've really studied it out in your mind as to what you want to do. Don't go just with the idea "I'll go put in a few hours." Study it out. Don't expect that the Lord is just going to tap you on the shoulder and say, "Now, Harold, you go into orthodontics or you do whatever."

You really study it out, and then, when you feel that it's the right thing, take it to the Lord and ask Him for a confirmation. Then I'm sure you will have that burning in your bosom and you will know that it is right.

When I decided that I wanted to go into dentistry, that's all I could think of. I wanted to be a dentist so badly I could almost taste it. I don't know what it is to taste dentistry, but it just permeated all my thoughts. And I believe I had a sensation reassuring me that it was the right decision for me. Once you've made your decision, be ready to stand by it. And be ready to not move your position, not to start this one day and that another day.

Brigham Young, thought of as one of the greatest colonizers in history, gave us some good counsel. One of the keys to his greatness was this statement: "I have Zion in my view constantly" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, 443).

He had a vision. He knew what Zion was going to be. And everything he did was to build Zion.

Brigham Young is a remarkable model.





Above all, learn to know the Savior. Know what He really did for us. If you learn to follow His example and live His teachings, the other things that you learn will be brought into the proper balance and perspective.

He taught us that once we know what we want to do, once the Lord has given that confirmation, we must have it in our vision constantly. Have it in our vision and don't plan on straying from it.

Now there are times when we do have to alter our goal just a bit. I'll never forget my first day as a student at Ricks College. One of the instructors asked, "What are you all going to be?" One raised his hand and said, "I'm going to be a brain surgeon." Another one said, "I'm going to be an atomic physicist." I sat there and thought, Boy, I'm in the wrong league. I don't know whether I can keep up with these guys.

But it was interesting how many of them hadn't really thought it out. When I looked back at them later, some had dropped out of school and others hadn't pursued the courses that would qualify them for such lofty goals. It was easy for

them to set a goal and let it slip. Now there are times when we do need to modify our goals. But I would suggest that, in general, we should try to raise them rather than lower them simply because it is easier.

One pivotal scripture that teaches us a great deal about our destiny is found in the New Testament.

"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34).

I'd like you to remember the Savior had His agency. He was not commanded. He was not forced to do what He did in completing the Atonement. He did it because He loved us. He did it because He knew that our exaltation depended on Him and what He did. It was not easy.

The Savior, as He hung on the cross, agonized more than you or I could ever imagine. All of the pains of this world, He suffered while He was in Gethsemane and on the cross. And because Heavenly Father had to let the Savior do it by Himself, He withdrew His presence from the Savior. This is the first time the Savior had ever gone through that, I believe. And now all the weight of the suffering of Gethsemane, all of the horrible suffering on the cross, every known suffering we could ever imagine was heaped upon Him—all without the help of His Father in Heaven.

He could have quit any time. He had control over life and death. He could have ended it and said, "I cannot." And at the moment He was without the support of His Heavenly Father, I think we were at one of the most precarious times in the history of this world. I am confident we watched it all take place; as spirit children, we saw it. I believe that our prayers were with the Savior.

If I were to counsel my children, I would say, "In all of your studying, learn to know the Savior. Know what He really did for us. Know that He is the author as well as the finisher of our faith" (see Moro. 6:4). If you learn to follow His example and live His teachings, the other things that you learn will be brought into the proper balance and perspective. **NE**

Adapted from an LDS Business College devotional on February 11, 1998.

Creative ideas for using this issue of the New Era.

Personal Improvement

□ Read President Hinckley's personal testimony of the Savior on page 4. Spend some time alone on a Sunday thinking about your own testimony of the Savior. Read some scriptures about His life and write some of the things you have learned about the Savior in your journal.

□ "The Answer Guy" on page 40 is the story of a young man who befriends someone at school who has no friends. Think of someone at your school who is in need of a hand of friendship. If you're too shy to do it alone, enlist the help of some of your friends.

□ When you're handed a difficult trial, remember that some good can also come with it. Read "The Currant Bush" on page 12 for a great insight into adversity.

Family Home Evening Ideas

□ Summarize the main points from Elder Hillam's article on page 46. Have family members each list one goal they'd like to reach during the next year. Then discuss how the family can help them reach that goal.

□ Read the story about Ella Allred and her family on page 20. Plan a family night that uses no modern technology. Read scriptures by candlelight. Then spend the evening playing games, singing, or reading. Talk about how the feeling in your home changes when the computer, television, stereo, and telephone are all silenced.

Young Men and Young Women Activity Ideas

□ Make your turn to clean the meetinghouse into a great activity. Read "Coming Clean" on page 28 for inspiration and then get creative. Divide up into teams. Make some fun trophies (perhaps made of a feather duster or cleaning brush) to be passed around each time you clean.

□ Read "Fantastic Plastic?" on page 32. Then bring some catalogs or advertising sections from the newspaper and have everyone go on a mock shopping trip. Have everyone write down what they would buy if money were no object. Have one of your leaders or a special guest speaker help you figure the interest if you paid for your purchases with a credit card and only made the minimum payment each month. Talk about budgeting and the difference between necessities and extras.

Seminary Devotional Idea

□ Read to your class the Q&A about seminary attendance on page 16. Give everyone a plain paper bookmark (add a creative touch like a tassel if you're so inclined) and have everyone write a few of the reasons they like coming to seminary on their bookmark. The next time they're fighting a yawn, seeing that list marking their scriptures might be just the lift they need.

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It's hard

I can never wait until the *New Era* comes in the mail. The stories are so inspiring. I especially liked the article "When Parents Divorce" (Aug. '00). My parents are divorced, and I know how hard it is. But this article gave me hope that no matter what happens, my Heavenly Father is there for me and that nothing can stop me from being happy.

*Amanda Francis
Widefield, Colorado*

A little extra

I am a teen who does not read a lot of magazines. I prefer books. But when my mother ordered the *New Era* for me, I could not put it down. This is odd since I am not a member of the Church even though she is. I think it is great that your religion has a magazine especially for teens. Many other religions will push aside their youth and then wonder why they aren't interested. There are many problems teens face today, and it never hurts to have a little extra advice or encouragement.

*Amanda Widener
Live Oak, California*

Help and comfort

My family has been getting the *New Era* for several years now, but I never really read one until just lately. It is so great to have a magazine that helps youth. In a world where evil comes from almost every point, it is nice to have something to comfort and give help. It is so easy to fall into temptations. But the *New Era* has helped me see the big picture.

*Dan Egbert
Orem, Utah (via e-mail)*

A compelling reason

I think the *New Era* is awesome. I must confess that I have never really read all of it before. I usually read the really short stories, Questions and Answers, and the Extra Smile. However, for some reason I felt compelled to read all of the March 2000 issue. It was great! Ever since then I take time every Sunday to read some of the *New Era*. I want to compliment everyone on the great work and

"I think it is great that your religion has a magazine especially for teens."



effort that is put into it. It really shows.

*Jennifer Rous
Fort Meade, Maryland (via e-mail)*

Influential

I just wanted to thank you for all the influential articles that you had in the February 2000 issue. It changed my outlook on life. I was headed down the wrong road, thinking everyone was against me. But the articles changed my life. Thank you very much. It was what I needed at the time.

*Jill Jensen
Las Vegas, Nevada (via e-mail)*

Just American?

I've been reading the *New Era* for more than five months, and it's so inspiring. But one thing saddens and displeases me. In Q&A and We've Got Mail, we mainly get answers from Americans. Are you trying to give impressions to my friends in Africa and other parts of the world that Latter-day Saints are mainly American? It should be noted that more people than just me are having these feelings. It will be miraculous to see a change.

*Victor B. Williams
Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria*

Family relation

I would like to tell you how much our family appreciates your magazine. The *New Era* has been used for family home evening lessons as long as I can remember. I love the stories that relate to my life. All of them are inspiring.

*Travis Thompson
Alpine, Utah*

The New Era welcomes your letters. Send them to We've Got Mail, New Era Magazine, 50 E. North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150 or via e-mail at:

*cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org
Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.*

The Sanctuary

by Christopher A. Woods

Of knotted wood and lofted green
entered a boy of faith,
a prophet in embryo.
Therein was granted an
herald of peace
to echo through time's
final corridor.

On the back of
a wooden chair
rest my forearms
and clasped hands.
My grove lies in
a quiet room with
worn carpet.
Wherein I, too,
am grateful for
the power of prayer.



by George Edward Anderson (1907)



“The simple words—‘He is not here, but is risen’—have become the most profound in all literature. They are the triumphant response to the query facing every man, woman, and child who was ever born to earth.”

*See “My Testimony of Christ,”
p. 4.*