

THE  
**New Era**

APRIL

2008

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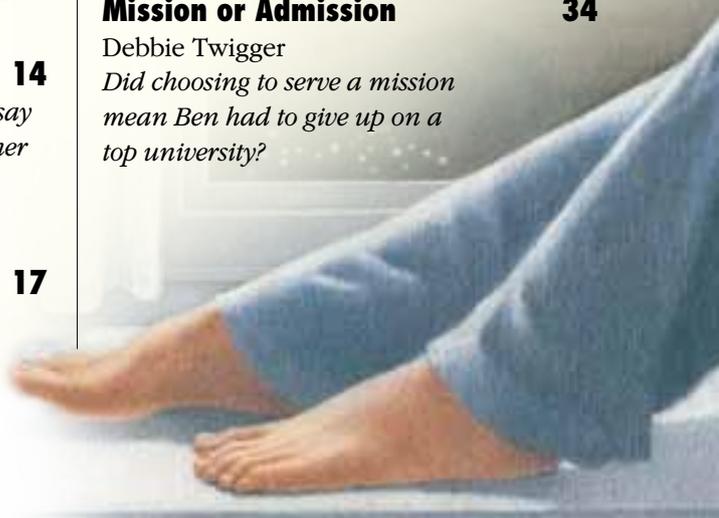
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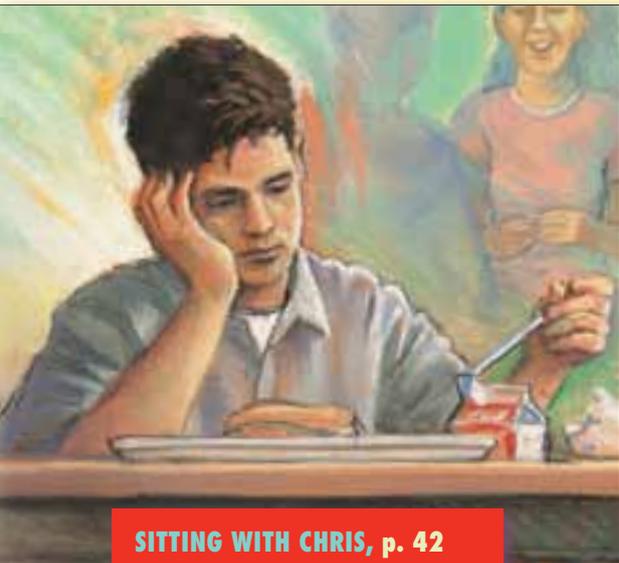
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**Editorial Offices**

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

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# STEADFAST & SURE

Gordon B. Hinckley (June 23, 1910–January 27, 2008)

*President Gordon B. Hinckley, 15th President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, leaves a legacy of love and hope.*

**W**ith love for the Lord and all people, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) dedicated his life to building up the kingdom of God on earth. Millions will miss and remember him. He charmed listeners with his sense of humor. He taught Church members to “be a little more kind, a little more thoughtful, a little more courteous.”<sup>1</sup> He was inspired to build smaller temples throughout the world, bringing them closer to the members. During his presidency 125 temples were built. He participated in 95 temple dedications or rededications.

He served as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for 20 years, 14 years as a counselor in the First Presidency, and nearly 13 years (since March 1995) as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His prophetic voice guided a worldwide Church with more than 13 million members in 171 nations. But his testimony started simply.

## **Spiritual Preparation**

Gordon B. Hinckley was born on June 23, 1910, in Salt Lake City, Utah. One of the first spiritual experiences he remembered happened when he was five. He had an earache that made him cry from the pain. To comfort him, his father gave him a priesthood blessing. The pain lessened and went away.

As a boy, he started the habit of praying next to his bed before going to sleep. He remembered “thinking of what I had just done in speaking to my Father in Heaven in the name of His Son. I did not have a great knowledge of the gospel. But there was some kind of lingering peace and security in communing with the heavens in and through the Lord Jesus.”<sup>2</sup>

After graduating from high school, Gordon went to the University of Utah, just as the Great Depression struck the U.S. economy. Factories and businesses closed; many people lost their jobs. Despite limited finances, Gordon continued his university studies. He studied journalism, English, Greek, and Latin.

## **Serving a Mission**

After graduating from college, he had to decide if he would go on a mission. He and his parents knew it was important for him to serve, but during the Depression most young men couldn’t afford a mission. Fortunately, Gordon’s mother had started a savings account for his mission. She died before he got his mission call, but the money she had saved started him on his way.

Shortly after Elder Hinckley arrived in England, he got sick, and “it seemed that everyone was prejudiced against us,” he recalled. “Those first few weeks, because of illness and the opposition which we felt, I was discouraged.” During this difficult time, he wrote a letter to his father, saying that he felt he was wasting his time and money.

His father sent back a short note: “Dear Gordon, I have your recent letter. I have only one suggestion: forget yourself and go to work.”<sup>3</sup> Elder Hinckley did just that: he



stayed and worked hard.

During his mission, his testimony grew as he read the New Testament and the Book of Mormon. “That knowledge became the foundation of my life, standing on the footings of the answered prayers of my childhood.”<sup>4</sup>

Many years after his mission, President Hinckley testified, “Everything good that has happened to me since then is the result of having served a mission. That had greater effect upon my life in terms of giving me direction than any other experience of my life.”<sup>5</sup> A few years ago, he said, “How grateful I am for the mission which I was on more than 60 years ago. . . . Going on a mission did something for me . . . that has value every day of my life. I would like to see every boy have the opportunity of a mission.”<sup>6</sup>

### **His Love of Family and Youth**

Two years after returning home from England, he married Marjorie Pay, who grew up living across the street from him. They were married in 1937 and had five children, 25 grandchildren, and 62 great-grandchildren. Sister Hinckley passed away in April 2004.

Let us remember what President Hinckley taught and stood for. He was a special witness for the Savior, His gospel, and His Church. President Hinckley taught us to be faithful, to stand a little taller, to be kinder family members. He taught us to help new members by being a friend, giving them a responsibility in the Church, and nurturing them with the Lord’s word. He encouraged us to follow the Savior’s commandment: “What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? . . . Even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27). **NE**

### **NOTES**

1. “Let Us Live the Gospel More Fully,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 103.
2. “My Testimony,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 70.
3. “Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel,” *New Era*, July 2000, 7.
4. *Ensign*, May 2000, 71.
5. *Church News*, Dec. 7, 2002.
6. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 365.



# THE PROPHET

## *Spoke to* YOUTH

**P**resident Gordon B. Hinckley loved the youth of the Church. Shortly after he was sustained as President of the Church in 1995, he said to the press: “We are particularly proud of our youth. I think we have never had a stronger generation of young men and women than we have today. . . . They are going forward with constructive lives, nurturing themselves both intellectually and spiritually. We have no fears or doubts concerning the future of this work.”<sup>1</sup>

And in general conference he said: “I love the youth of the Church. I have said again and again that I think we have never had a better generation than this. How grateful I am for your integrity, for your ambition to train your minds and your hands to do good work, for your love for the word of the Lord, and for your desire to walk in paths of virtue and truth and goodness.”<sup>2</sup>



### President Hinckley’s Six B’s

One of the most memorable messages given by President Hinckley for teens was the six B’s. In a special fire-side, broadcast around the world in November 2000, President Hinckley taught teens six ways to be:

**Be grateful.** “Thank the Lord for His marvelous Church. . . . Thank Him for all that it offers you. Thank Him for friends and loved ones, for parents and brothers and sisters, for family. Let a spirit of thanksgiving guide and bless your days and nights. Work at it. You will find it will yield wonderful results.”

**Be smart.** “The Lord wants you to educate your minds and hands, whatever your chosen field. . . . Become a workman of integrity in the world that lies ahead of you.”

**Be clean.** “We live in a world that is filled with filth and sleaze, a world that reeks of evil. . . . Avoid evil talk. . . . Don’t waste your time in destructive entertainment. . . . I don’t care what the variety [of illicit drugs] may be. They will destroy you if pursued. . . . In matters of sex . . . you know when you are walking on dangerous ground, when it is so easy to stumble and slide into the pit of transgression. I plead with you to be careful, to stand safely back from the cliff of sin over which it is so easy to fall. Keep yourselves clean.”

**Be true.** “You who are members of this Church must have a loyalty to it. . . . Be true to your own convictions. You know what is right, and you know what is wrong.”

**Be humble.** “I believe the meek and humble are those who are teachable. They are willing to learn.”

**Be prayerful.** “You need His help. . . . You cannot do it alone. You will come to realize that and recognize that more and more as the years pass. So live that in good conscience you can speak with the Lord.”<sup>3</sup>



## TEENS TEXT TO WEAR SUNDAY BEST

**C**ell phones throughout the world spread the news of the passing of our beloved prophet Gordon B. Hinckley on Sunday evening, January 27. Within hours additional text messages filled the airwaves with teens encouraging each other to dress in their Sunday best instead of casual clothes for school the following day in honor of President Hinckley.

*“I wore my white shirt, my very best, to remember the prophet,” said Daniel, a student at a middle school in Salt Lake City, Utah.*

*One surprised parent in Mesa, Arizona, found her daughter up early and ironing a skirt for Monday’s day at school. She said after her daughter, Mackenzie, received many text messages she and her friends decided to wear church clothes to school in honor of the prophet. So did thousands of others.*

*President Hinckley’s grandson, James Pearce, explained his understanding of why so many youth wore their best clothing to school. “He loved the youth so much. He really cared about them, and they felt that love. They acknowledged it with their behavior.”*

*That same spirit was exhibited along the route from the memorial services to the cemetery, as youth and adults waved white handkerchiefs and held up canes as a farewell gesture to the prophet.*

### From around the World

President Hinckley was the only prophet youth around the world knew while in their teen years. He was beloved and revered. Here are some teens’ and young adults’ feelings about President Hinckley:

***I’ve never met President Hinckley, but when I see his picture, I feel good. He is almost like another father to me. I know he is a prophet. The six B’s made a big impression on me. Being clean and being humble struck me and led me to repent of my pride. I tried to follow the prophet.***

So-Ra L., 19, Korea

***President Gordon B. Hinckley was a true man of faith. His teachings helped me become a better young man—to have more faith and patience, to pray regularly, to be obedient to my parents and to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.***

Gazelem C., 15, Philippines

***When I was about nine years old, President Hinckley came to a conference in Geneva, Switzerland. I remember watching him come into the hall, and he radiated love and kindness. I was very excited to see him. President Hinckley was a great example for me. It always impressed me when he spoke to the youth in general conference because I knew what he said came from God. I had great trust in him.***

Annina S., 17, Switzerland



### President Hinckley’s many teachings

***made me feel that he really understood the challenges of young people in this latter day. He always warned young people, reminding us not to go astray.***

Yu C., 20, Taiwan

***I will never forget how I felt the moment in which President Hinckley arrived at Pacaembu Stadium. I felt the Spirit of God intensely. When President Hinckley was ending his talk, he said to us, “You can leave here, go home, and forget everything that I said here today, but never forget that I love you.” I will never forget those words that have meant so much to me.***

Dryele M., 20, Brazil

***I love President Hinckley. His quiet dignity makes me feel at peace and reassures me that I am being led by a man of God. When I saw him, I couldn’t help but smile and feel thankful.***

Candice M., 15, New Zealand

### NOTES

1. Quoted in Jeffrey R. Holland, “President Gordon B. Hinckley: Stalwart and Brave He Stands,” *Liabona*, June 1995 (special edition), 4; *Ensign*, June 1995, 2.
2. “This Is the Work of the Master,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 70.
3. See “A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Liabona*, Apr. 2001, 30–41; *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 4–15; *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 2–11.



# Worthy Music, Worthy Thoughts

BY PRESIDENT BOYD K. PACKER

President of the Quorum  
of the Twelve Apostles

**W**hen I was a boy, we lived in a home surrounded by an orchard. There never seemed to be enough water for the trees. The ditches, always freshly plowed in the spring, would soon fill with weeds. One day, in charge of the irrigation turn, I found myself in trouble. As the water moved down the rows choked with weeds, it would flood in every direction. I worked in



the puddles trying to build up the bank. As soon as I had one break patched up, there would be another. A neighbor came through the orchard. He watched for a moment, and then with a few vigorous strokes of the shovel, he cleared the ditch and allowed the water to course through the channel he had made. He said, "If you want the water to stay in its course, you'll have to make a place for it to go."

I have come to know that thoughts, like water, will stay on course if we make a place for them to go. Otherwise, our thoughts follow the course of least resistance, always seeking the lower levels. Probably the greatest challenge and the most difficult thing you will face in mortal life is to learn to control your thoughts. In the Bible it says, as a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Those who can control their thoughts have conquered themselves.

## **The Mind Is like a Stage**

As you learn to control your thoughts, you can overcome habits, even degrading personal habits. You can gain courage, conquer fear, and have a happy life. I had been told a hundred times or more as I grew up



*Thoughts, like water, will stay on course if we make a place for them to go. As you learn to control your thoughts, you can gain courage, conquer fear, and have a happy life.*

**Y**ou cannot afford to fill your minds with the unworthy music of our day. It is not harmless. It can welcome onto the stage of your mind unworthy thoughts.

that thoughts must be controlled, but no one told me how. I've thought about this over the years and have decided that the mind is like a stage. During every waking moment the curtain is up. There is always some act being performed on that stage. It may be a comedy, a tragedy, interesting or dull, good or bad; but always there is some act playing on the stage of your mind.

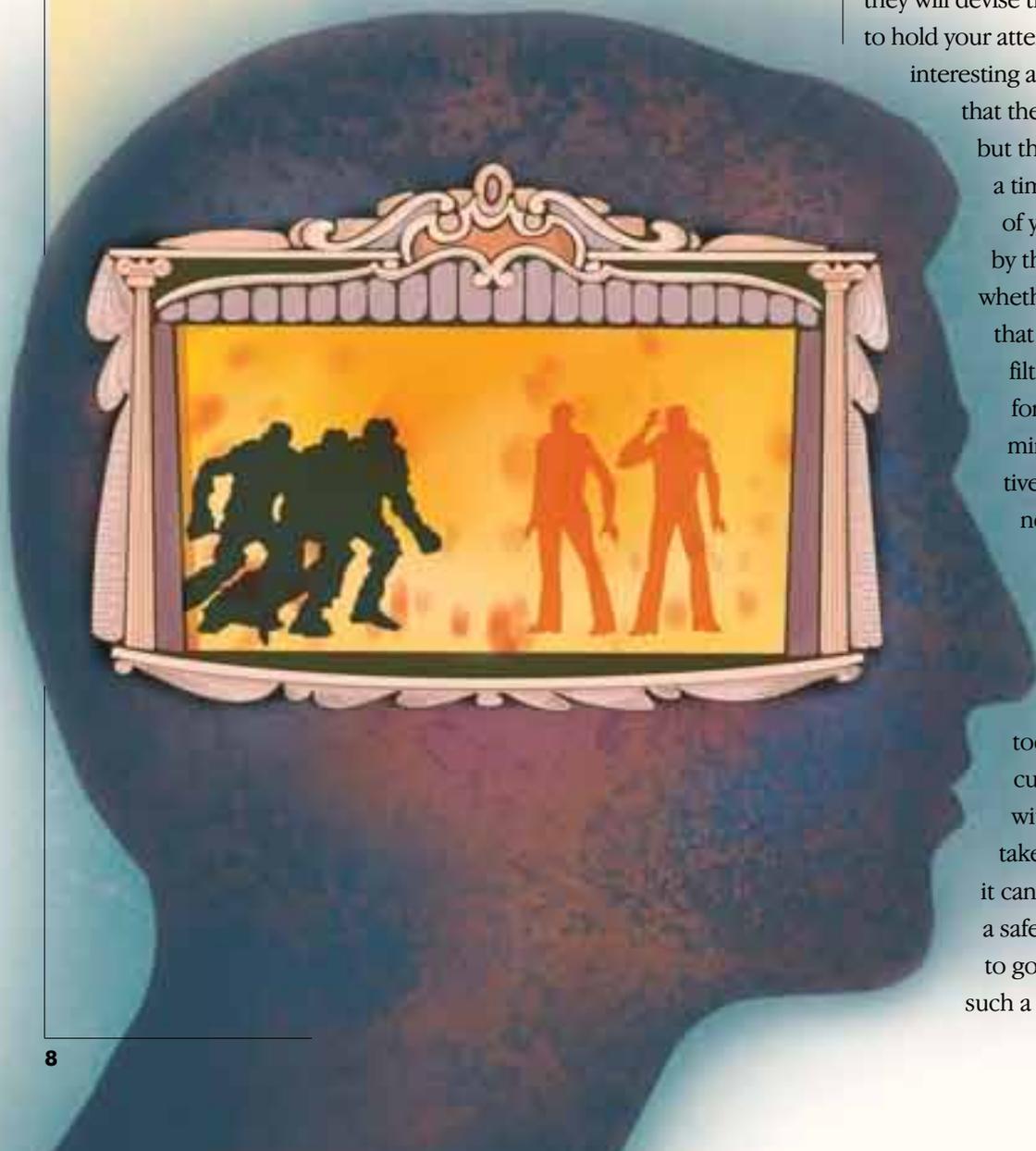
Have you noticed that shady little thoughts may creep in from the wings and attract your attention in the middle of almost

any performance and without any real intent on your part? These delinquent thoughts will try to upstage everybody. If you permit them to go on, all thoughts of any virtue will leave the stage. You will be left, because you consented to it, to the influence of unrighteous thoughts. If you yield to them, they will enact for you on the stage of your mind anything to the limits of your toleration. They may enact themes of bitterness, jealousy, or hatred. They may be vulgar, immoral, even depraved. When they have the stage, if you let them, they will devise the most clever persuasions to hold your attention. They can make it

interesting all right, even convince you that they are innocent, for they are but thoughts. What do you do at a time like that, when the stage of your mind is commandeered by the imps of unclean thinking, whether they be the gray ones that seem almost clean or the filthy ones that leave no room for doubt? If you can fill your mind with clean and constructive thoughts, then there will be no room for these persistent imps, and they will leave.

#### **How Do You Control Your Thoughts?**

I realize that in today's world it's often difficult to keep your mind filled with worthy thoughts. This takes careful control. However, it can be done when you make a safe place for your thoughts to go. I've found a way to make such a place, and I'd like to share it



with you. It has to do with music—worthy music. A wise man once said, “Music is one of the most forceful instruments for governing the mind.” Whether it governs in a



positive way or a negative way is determined by what it brings onto the stage of your mind. If you can say that a song is spiritually inspiring

or that it urges you to see yourself in a more noble perspective, the music is worthwhile. If it merely entertains or lifts your spirits, then it also has a useful place. But if it makes you want to respond in a carnal, sensual way or to consider unrighteous desires, then that music should be avoided. It is not worthy.

There have always been those who take the beautiful things and corrupt them. It’s happened with nature; it’s happened with literature, drama, art; and it certainly has happened with music. For centuries it has been obvious that when the wrong kind of

words are set to appealing music, songs can lead men astray. And music itself, by the way it is played, by its beat, by its intensity, can dull the spiritual sensitivity.

We are living at a time when society is undergoing a subtle, but powerful, change. It is becoming more and more permissive in what it will accept in its entertainment. As a result, much of the music being performed by popular entertainers today seems to be more intended to agitate than to pacify, more to excite than to calm. Some musicians appear to openly promote unrighteous thoughts and action.

Young people, you cannot afford to fill your minds with the unworthy music of our day. It is not harmless. It can

welcome onto the stage of your mind unworthy thoughts and set a tempo to which they dance and to which you may act. You degrade yourself when you identify with those things that at times surround extremes in music—the shabbiness, the irreverence, the immorality, the addictions. Such music is not worthy of you.

Be selective in what you listen to and produce. It becomes part of you. It controls your thoughts and influences the lives of others as well. I would recommend that you go through your music and throw away that which promotes degrading thoughts. Such music ought not to belong

to young people concerned with spiritual development.

I don’t mean by this that all of today’s music produces unworthy thoughts. There is music today that builds understanding of people; music that inspires courage; music that awakens feelings of spirituality, reverence, happiness, and awareness of beauty.

#### **Choose Inspiring Music**

The Lord has said, “For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be

answered with a blessing upon their heads” (D&C 25:12). The First Presidency of the Church, commenting on the influence of music in our lives, has said: “Through music, man’s ability to express himself extends beyond the limits of the spoken language in both subtlety and power. Music can be used to exalt and inspire or to carry messages of degradation and destruction. It is therefore important that as Latter-day Saints we at all times apply the principles of the gospel and seek the guidance of the Spirit in selecting the music with which we surround ourselves.”<sup>11</sup>

Let me say to you young leaders, pay careful attention to the music you plan for your activities. Consult with your advisers as selections are made. You need the benefit of



their wisdom,  
for the breach  
between the Church and  
the world, with the extremes  
of its music, is wider in our day than  
ever in generations past.

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961),  
one of our great Church leaders, explained it this  
way: “We may not, under our duty, provide or tolerate  
an unwholesome amusement on the theory that if we do  
not provide it the youth will go elsewhere to get it. We

could hardly set up a roulette table in  
the Church amusement hall for gam-  
bling purposes, with the excuse that  
if we do not provide it the youth  
would go to a gambling hall to gam-  
ble. We can never really hold our  
youth thus.”

Nor is it proper to provide the  
kind of music and atmosphere that  
attracts youth in the world. You must  
stand firm and not compromise with  
what you know is right and good;  
you must have the courage to turn  
the lights up and the music down  
when they don’t contribute to the  
kind of atmosphere that produces  
worthy thoughts; and you must insist  
on high standards of dress and per-  
formance from those who entertain  
as well as those who attend.

I would counsel you to develop  
your talents, and if you have musical  
talent, think of this: There is much  
music yet to be created, much to be  
performed. Yours can be the worthy music that will be  
uplifting, that will spread the gospel, touch hearts, give  
comfort and strength to troubled minds.

There are many examples, both ancient and mod-  
ern, that attest to the influence of righteous music.

Discouragement disappeared and minds were filled with  
peace as the words to “Come, Come, Ye Saints” gave the  
pioneers courage to face their trials. This same song has  
been an inspiration  
to many over the  
years. At one time  
I was talking to a  
pilot who had just  
returned from a  
hazardous flight. We  
spoke of courage



and of fear, and I asked how he had  
held himself together in the face of  
what he had endured. He said, “I  
have a favorite hymn, and when it  
was desperate, when there was little  
hope that we would return, I would  
keep it on my mind, and it was as  
though the engines of the aircraft  
would sing back to me.”

*Come, come, ye Saints,  
No toil nor labor fear;  
But with joy wend your way.  
Though hard to you  
This journey may appear,  
Grace shall be as your day.<sup>2</sup>*

From this he clung to faith, the  
one essential ingredient to courage.

The Lord Himself was prepared  
for His greatest test through the  
influence of music, for the scripture  
records, “And when they had sung  
an hymn, they went out into the  
mount of Olives” (Mark 14:26).

#### **Choose a Favorite Hymn**

Remember, young people, I want each of you to  
remember that this is your Church, and He is your Lord  
and your Savior who stands at the helm. His constant

guidance and inspiration are available to you when you keep your mind filled to overflowing with the good, the beautiful, the inspiring. And this is one way to do it. Choose a favorite hymn or song, just as my pilot friend did, one with words that are uplifting and music that is reverent, one that makes you feel something akin to inspiration. There are many beautiful songs to choose from. Seek the guidance of the Spirit in making your selection. Go over the song in your mind carefully. Memorize it. Even though you have had no musical training, you can think through a simple song. Now use this as the course for your thoughts to follow. Make it your emergency channel.

Whenever you find shady actors slipping from the sidelines of your thinking onto the stage of your mind, put on this CD, as it were. It will change your whole mood.

Because the music is uplifting and clean, the baser thoughts will slip shamefully away. For while virtue, by choice, will not associate with filth, evil cannot tolerate the presence of light. In due time you will find yourself humming the music inwardly, almost automatically, to drive out unworthy thoughts. As you young people involve yourselves with righteous and worthwhile things, keep your minds filled with worthy thoughts, for as a man thinketh so is he, and you will have the ability to accomplish those things that will bring fulfillment to your lives.

You are a son or a daughter of Almighty God. I bear witness that God is our Father, that we are His children, that He loves us and has provided great and glorious things in this life. I know this, and I thank Him for the uplifting influence of good music, which has influenced my thoughts and uplifted my soul. **NE**

*Adapted from an October 1973 general conference address.*

**NOTES**

1. *Priesthood Bulletin*, Aug. 1973, 3.
2. *Hymns*, no. 30.

**A**s you involve yourself with righteous and worthwhile things, keep your mind filled with worthy thoughts, and you will have the ability to accomplish those things that will bring fulfillment to your life.



Download a short video clip of President Packer's "Worthy Music, Worthy Thoughts." Go to [www.worthymusicworthythoughts.lds.org](http://www.worthymusicworthythoughts.lds.org).

# MY FIRST BATTLE

BY COLIN SLINGSBY

*My first Saturday night in the army was one of the hardest in my life. I made a choice that would decide my future.*

**W**hen I was 17 years old, I enlisted in the Royal Canadian Army Reserve. I was sent to a training base, and for the first time in my life, I was on my own to determine my path. I suspected that I would be tempted not to remain active in the Church and that my testimony would be challenged

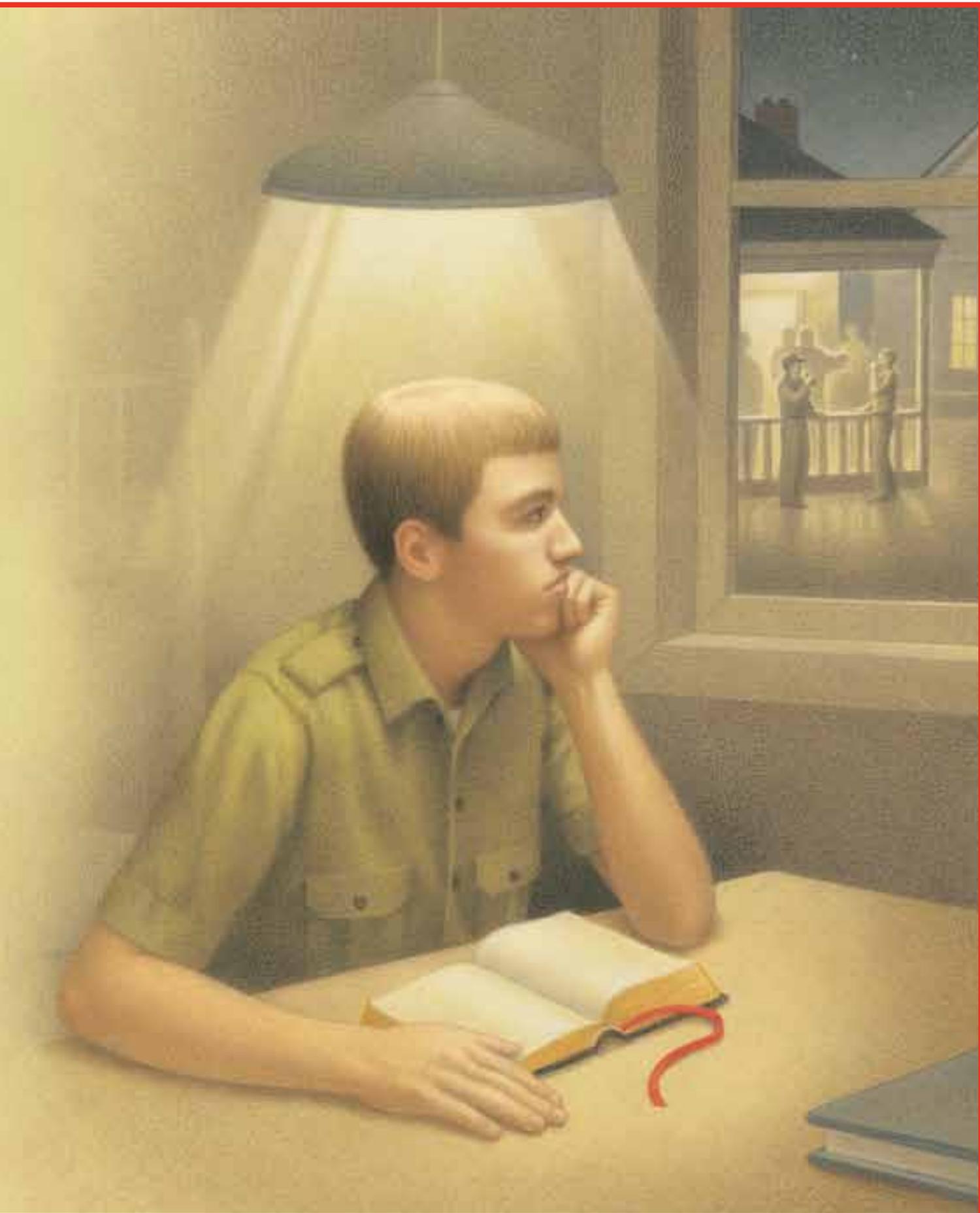
When I arrived on the base, a course sergeant gave a tour of the different buildings and churches. I was prompted to ask where the LDS branch was located. The sergeant paused for a moment. Then he said that church won't be found on base, but if I would like to attend, I could go with him and his wife. He was a recent convert to the Church and was happy to take anyone who wanted to go. I was glad to have the option of going, even though I had not decided if I was going to go that Sunday. After all, I was alone and free to choose for myself now. But something in my heart told me I needed to attend.

That Saturday night was one of the hardest in my life. I have since called it my "tree of life" experience. It started when my friends wanted me to hang out with them at the mess hall. I knew they were just going

to drink, and I told them I needed sleep because I had to get up early for church. They laughed at my choice and went their way.

After they left, I sank into my bunk. From there, I could look out the window and watch my friends on the mess hall balcony, drinking and laughing. I remembered how they had teased me for not joining them. I felt like I imagine Lehi must have felt when he looked at the great and spacious building, where people were similarly laughing at him. I turned around to face my desk, only to notice my scriptures. I eagerly opened them and began to read. These were my iron rod, and just as the word of God had kept Lehi's family safe, I knew they would likewise protect me.

I don't recall what I read that night, but I do recall the Spirit I felt. I felt it again when I went to church the next morning. By attending church every Sunday while I lived on the base, I built a lasting testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Since my time at training camp, I have been given the opportunity to share my testimony with others as a full-time missionary in California. **NE**



# Q & A

*“How should I respond when my friends say that Jesus Christ was a great moral teacher but not the Savior or the Son of God?”*

## NEW ERA

**Y**ou could begin by sharing your own brief testimony of Jesus Christ. Let your friends know that you agree that the Lord was a great moral teacher but that you also believe the scriptures, which testify that He is the Savior and Son of God. Explain that your testimony brings you peace and confidence. Let your friends know that they can have that same knowledge if they want to. If they are not interested, there is little you can say that will convince them. Just cheerfully move on to another subject.

If they want to know the truth, your testimony may catch their interest and give you a chance to teach them how to gain a testimony of their own. They will need to study the scriptures, hear the testimonies of others, and pray sincerely about what they have learned so the Holy Ghost can reveal the truth to them. You can help them get started by sharing these testimonies:

1. Heavenly Father Himself testified that Jesus Christ is His Son (see Matthew 3:17; 17:5; 3 Nephi 11:7; Moses 6:52, 57). The most

■ **Encourage your friends to gain a testimony by studying the scriptures, praying with faith, and trying to live the Lord’s teachings.**

■ **Refer your friends to scriptures that teach and testify of the Savior.**

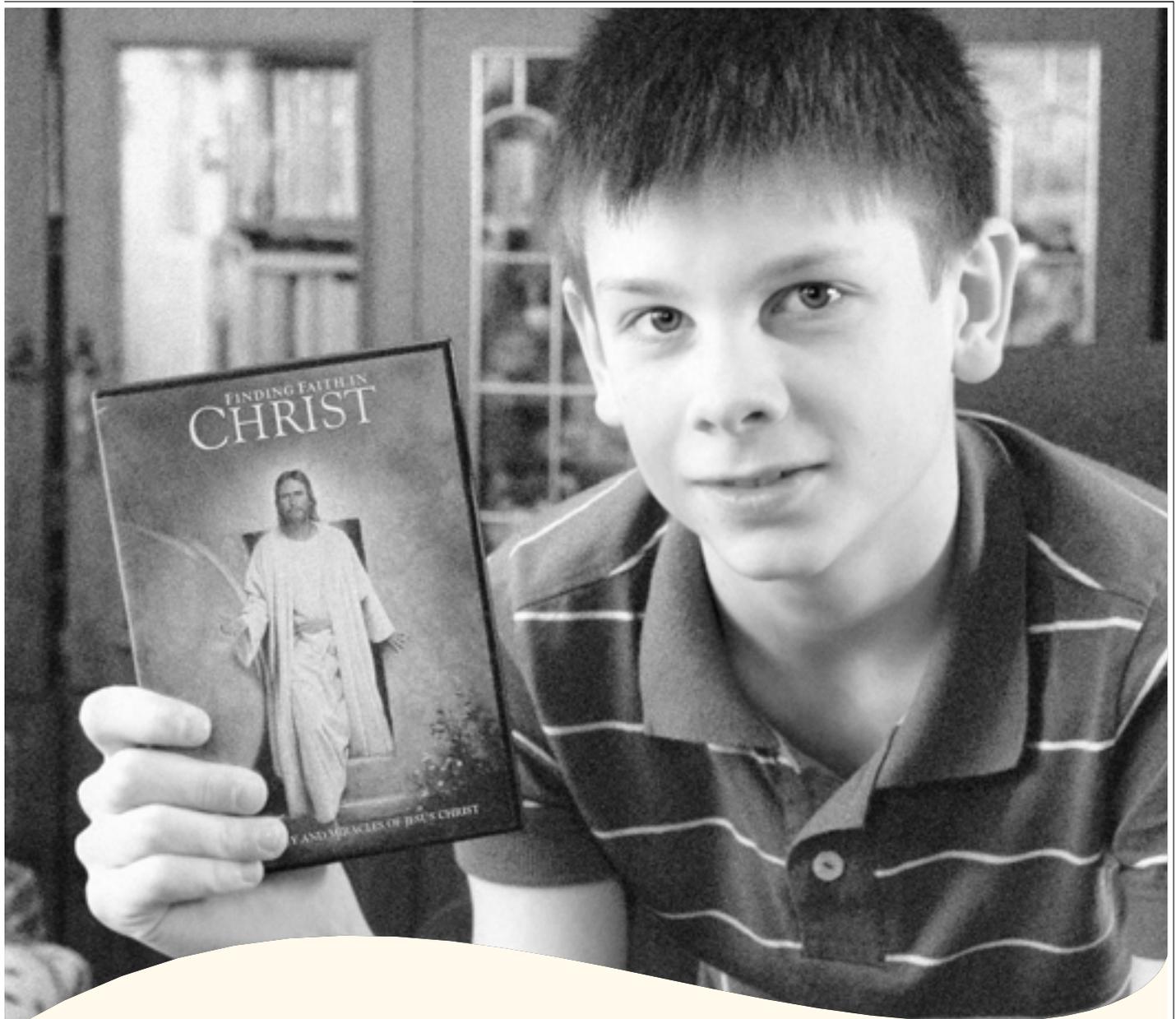
■ **Respect their opinions—“let them worship how, where, or what they may” (Articles of Faith 1:11)—but also let them know of your testimony of Jesus Christ.**

■ **The Church DVD Finding Faith in Christ (item no. 54041) is available through your local distribution center or from [www.ldscatalog.com](http://www.ldscatalog.com).**

recent experience came in 1820 when Joseph Smith heard Heavenly Father say, pointing to the Savior, “This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

2. If your friends believe that Jesus was a great moral teacher, then invite them to look at His teachings and testimony. He said things that only the Savior could say, such as, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25). To be a moral teacher, He must teach the truth, and the Lord Himself testified, “I am Jesus Christ the Son of God” (3 Nephi 9:15).

3. Prophets also testify of the Savior. For instance, the Apostle Peter testified: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). Invite your friends to listen to general conference, or give them a copy of the March 2008 issue of the *Ensign*. In that issue and in conference, living apostles and prophets—special witnesses of Jesus Christ—bear testimony that He is the Savior and Son of God.



Finally, you could tell your friends why we need a Savior. Explain that sin and death keep us from returning to Heavenly Father. Only the Son of God could perform the Atonement, making forgiveness and the Resurrection possible. Testify that without the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we couldn't enjoy peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). **NE**

## READERS



***I would tell my friends that Jesus truly was a great moral teacher. One of the most important things He taught was that He was the promised Savior and Son of God. I do not think a person who would lie and make up such a story could be a great moral teacher. My friends must decide if He was a man of honesty. I believe Jesus was who He claimed to be, the Son of***

***God. I have learned that for myself through prayer and scripture study, and I would invite my friends to do the same.***  
Jacob J., 13, Arizona

***One time I was with my friends, and one of them said he didn't believe Jesus Christ was everything people said He was and that the Bible could have been written by anyone. I never felt the Spirit so strongly as when I said, "I know it's true. I know it." Everyone was quiet. My friend said he wished he could have***

that same knowledge. It was the perfect chance to share with him how to obtain a testimony. Pray for Heavenly Father to guide you so you can be an instrument in His hands. Don't be afraid to share your testimony.

Laura R., 20, Asunción, Paraguay



Let him or her view the Church DVD Finding Faith in Christ. I've seen lots of people who came to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He carried

out the infinite Atonement. Also, share your testimony because it will give spiritual witness through the Holy Ghost.

Elder Mahunray Ada, 22, Philippines Manila Mission

In this situation, it is not worth trying to fight and insist that Jesus Christ truly was the Savior. I would try to explain by sharing facts and, at the same time, by testifying that Jesus is the Savior and the Son of God. I am certain that God will give you support, and the Spirit will definitely help you find thoughts and necessary words (see Hebrews 10:15-16; 3 Nephi 28:11).

Elena F., 19, Ulianovsk, Russia



You can share your testimony about Christ. You can tell them what you believe and share passages from the Bible. If they're not interested, you just have to

let it go and not let it dampen your testimony.

Cortney C., 16, Arizona

I wouldn't argue, but I would share my testimony of the Savior and in this way help them understand that not only did He die and was



testify that He is a teacher of truth—but He is more than a teacher. He is the Exemplar of the perfect life—but He is more than an exemplar. He is the Great Physician—but He is more than a physician. He is the literal Savior of the world, the Son of God, the Prince of Peace, the Holy One of Israel, even the risen Lord.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Your Personal Influence,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 23.

resurrected, but He also suffered for us so we could repent. He gave us the example of how we could make it back to where He is and live eternally with Him. Also help them know that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ.

Cristopher F., 18, Talagante, Chile

Never be afraid to share your testimony of the Savior. Testify to them that you know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He truly did die for our sins. The Spirit will testify to them that He is the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the world. It just might be your testimony that convinces them of who He really is.

Chelsea N., 18, Nevada

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

## NEXT QUESTION

“My parents aren't active in the Church. How do I stay strong without their support?”

Send your answer by May 15, 2008, to:

New Era, Q&A 5/08

50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

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

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter:

FULL NAME

BIRTH DATE

WARD (or branch)

STAKE (or district)

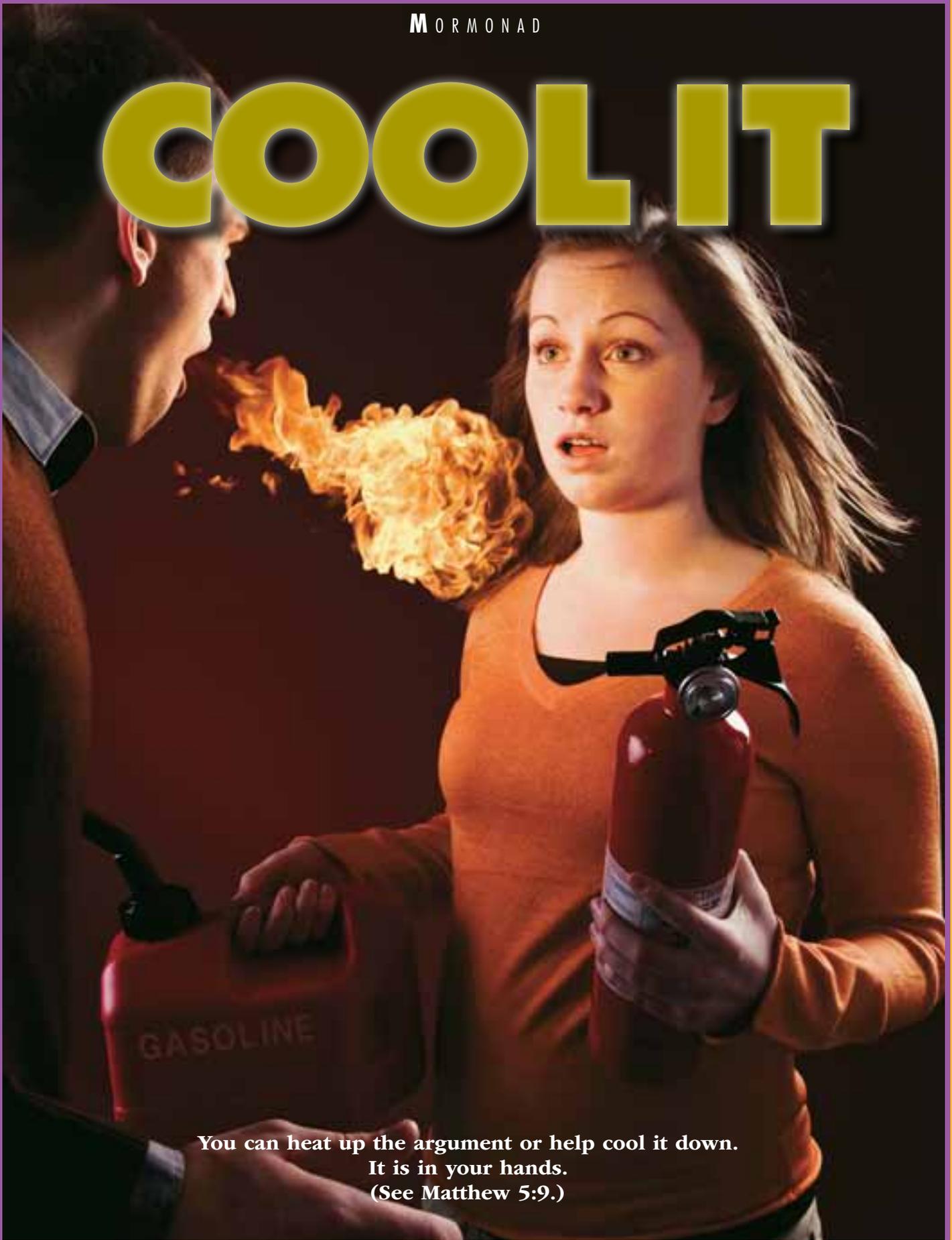
I grant permission to print response and photo:

SIGNATURE

PARENT'S SIGNATURE (if you are under 18)

M O R M O N A D

# COOL IT



You can heat up the argument or help cool it down.  
It is in your hands.  
(See Matthew 5:9.)

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID STOKER

# GOOD SHEPHERDS

*We can better understand the Savior and ourselves by observing what He taught about sheep and those who love them.*

BY SALLY JOHNSON ODEKIRK  
Church Magazines

**H**ave you ever watched a flock of sheep? They mill around, baaing and butting into each other. One sheep starts to wander one way, another goes in the other direction, both seeking food.

Then along comes the lead sheep, wearing a bell that gets their attention, and the flock starts to follow. The shepherd is always there, watching over the flock, rescuing a wayward or injured lamb, guiding them to food and water, and helping the sheep bed down at night in a safe area.

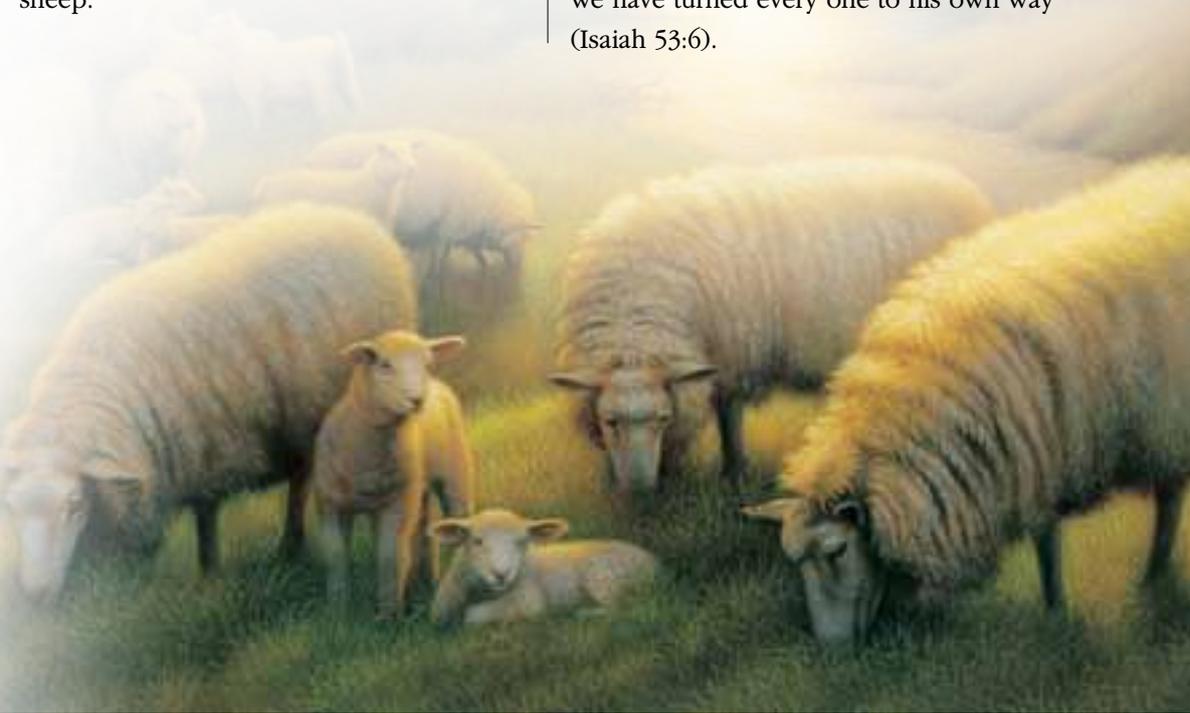
Some of the most tender images in the scriptures are those of the Good Shepherd. Sheep and shepherds were part of everyday life at the time of Christ, and we can learn a lot about the Savior and ourselves by learning about how a shepherd cares for his sheep.

## **We Are All Sheep**

All sheep follow a leader to safety and food because the only natural protection they have is the ability to spot their enemies and run from danger.

Kerry Smith grew up on a sheep ranch in Idaho and helped her father care for their lambs. She remembers that sometimes they would get their heads caught in the wire fencing or fall on their backs in a ditch. “Sheep are absolutely helpless on their backs. They can’t roll over without some assistance. That’s what makes them easy to handle and to shear, but it can also kill them,” she says. “We watch for any that might be in trouble and run to their rescue.”

The prophet Isaiah knew that, like sheep, people can also get into trouble. He wrote, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6).







*When we learn  
the qualities  
of a true  
leader, we become true  
spiritual shepherds.*

Shepherds and leaders watch for those in trouble and help them get back on their feet. Kerry puts it this way: “Because we each have weaknesses Heavenly Father can help us ‘get up off our backs’ and resume our lives. Though we must always do our part, He is our protector. He gave us the perfect example of His Only Begotten Son, who is always watching, always guiding, always our Shepherd.”

### **The Loving Shepherds**

Shepherds were an important part of society in ancient Israel. The prophets Abraham, Jacob, and Moses were shepherds, as was King David. Comparisons of leaders to shepherds were common. The prophet Ezekiel wrote, speaking as though he were the Savior, “As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day” (Ezekiel 34:12).

When Jesus spoke of shepherds, His followers knew He was encouraging them to love and care for those around them, like shepherds do for their sheep.

Max Wallentine of Salem, Utah, spent many years raising sheep. He says, “A kind, loving shepherd is always on guard for the sheep that leave the flock. He is also alert to the attack of a predator.”

One of today’s shepherds is Sister Susan W. Tanner, Young Women general president. She says, “If you think of a flock of sheep, they are needy. They need someone who will lead them, who will know them, and who will enfold them with love. The Father sent His Son to show us the way, lead us, and enfold us in His love. We have His example, and we feel of His love.”

Charles W. Dahlquist, Young Men general president, reflects on the example of

the Savior as a leader: “I continually marvel at His understanding and loving kindness. Sometimes we just need to feel His love, and it is there. Each soul is precious to Him, and it gives Him a fulness of joy when His sheep hearken to His voice (see 3 Nephi 27:30). He wants us to become undershepherds and share in that joy.”

### Leading the Sheep

When Brother Dahlquist was a mission president, he met a shepherd with his sheep near Kassel, Germany. He asked the shepherd if he led the sheep or if he followed them. The shepherd said, “It all depends. If it’s someplace they’ve been before, the sheep lead and I follow. If it’s someplace new, I lead and they follow me.” Wise leaders know this and set the example and then let others lead. When that happens, new leaders gain the confidence they need to apply those same skills.

We learn about love and leadership when we serve in quorums and class presidencies and have the responsibility to strengthen faith, build character, have fun, and fellowship others. We are also entitled to inspiration to help those in our quorums and classes. Sister Tanner points out that as we learn to reach out in friendship, care for other class members, and plan activities with individuals in mind, we learn the qualities of a true leader: to teach, testify, and lift. We become true spiritual shepherds.

Brother Dahlquist reminds youth in leadership positions of the importance of caring for everyone in their quorum or class. “It’s the lost ones that take the effort—those who are wandering that need our help. Leadership is understanding what the Good Shepherd would do: look beyond who comes and seek after those who are straying.”

The Savior taught this principle: “What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?”

“And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

“And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost” (Luke 15:4–6).

## A SHEPHERD’S WORLD

Some of the words in the scriptures that refer to sheep and shepherds become clearer with explanation. Here are a few of their meanings:\*

### Sheepfold (see John 10:9)

“A shallow cave was a good place of safety, and a wall was often built partly across the cave mouth to form an enclosure in front of it. The wall was made of local stones and was topped with thorns. . . . The shepherd lay down across the one opening, effectively becoming a door for the sheep.”

### Cloak (see Jeremiah 43:12)

“The shepherd’s cloak is made of sheepskin or material woven of wool, goat hair or camel hair and protects him from cold and rain. It serves as his blanket at night. An inner pouch is large enough to hold a newborn lamb when it has to be helped over rough places, or when because of sickness or injury, it has to be taken to a place of shelter.”

### Rod and Staff (see Psalm 23:4)

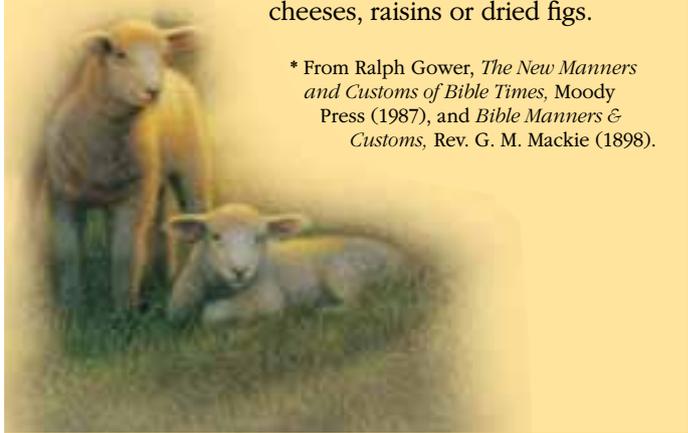
The rod is a club made out of a straight young tree uprooted for this purpose, the bulb at the beginning of the root is trimmed to make the head of the club.

The staff is about six feet long and made of wood; it may have a crook at one end. It can be used as a weapon of defense, but it is also used to help the shepherd get around easily in hilly or rough country, and it helps control the sheep.

### Scrip (see 1 Samuel 17:40)

The scrip is a bag made of tanned skin where the shepherd usually put his stock of bread, olives, cheeses, raisins or dried figs.

\* From Ralph Gower, *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, Moody Press (1987), and *Bible Manners & Customs*, Rev. G. M. Mackie (1898).





**A** good leader has the ability both to lead a big group and to touch the lives of each individual.

### Loving and Guiding the Sheep

Elder John R. Lasater, formerly of the Seventy (1987–92), told of an incident that occurred while he was traveling in Morocco. A car had injured one of the lambs belonging to a shepherd, and according to local law, the shepherd was entitled to 100 times its value. His interpreter said, “But the old shepherd will not accept the money. They never do because of the love [they have] for each of [the] sheep.” Elder Lasater then observed the old shepherd pick up the injured lamb, place it in a pouch in the front of his robe, stroke its head, and call it by name. The interpreter told him, “All of his sheep have a name, for he is their shepherd, and the good shepherds know each one of their sheep by name.”

Elder Lasater continued, “Do we understand the personal nature of the shepherd’s call? . . . Do they know us as true shepherds who love them, who willingly and freely give time and attention to their needs, and in that marvelous process, instill the confidence and security so greatly needed in God’s children today?” (“Shepherds of Israel,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 74–75).

Brother Dahlquist says that as we look after quorum or class members, the Good Shepherd will, through the Holy Ghost, prompt us about what we need to do for them. It may be a feeling that we need to visit someone or just call them on the telephone. That is what President Hinckley has taught—that everyone needs a friend, an opportunity to serve, and spiritual nourishment (see *Ensign*, Oct. 2006, 4).

### Serving Them One by One

Sister Tanner reminds us that when Jesus visited the Nephites after His Resurrection, He invited them to come to Him one by one to feel the prints of the nails in His

hands and feet (see 3 Nephi 11:14–15). “The Savior in His individual ministry called people to Him one by one. A shepherd may have a flock of 100 or more, but he knows each one and goes after the one missing. A good leader has the ability to touch the whole big group and at the same time helps them feel of his individual love and concern. That’s what President Hinckley does for youth today. People love President Hinckley, and when I ask the youth why, they say, ‘Because I feel that he loves me.’ That’s the type of shepherd he is.”

Sister Tanner adds: “Leaders or shepherds in the gospel can follow the Savior’s example by working with the one. That individual, one-on-one ministering is a very important part of shepherding.”

Brother Dahlquist says, “To truly follow the Savior, we need to know His voice and learn how He dealt with others—the sick, the lame, and the struggling. Then we need to go and do likewise.”

### The Good Shepherd

Centuries before the Savior’s birth, Isaiah prophesied: “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom” (Isaiah 40:11).

Jesus Christ was the Good Shepherd when He was on earth. He loved and served those around Him and, by His example, taught us to love and serve others. He is still the Good Shepherd. He knows us by name and calls us to come to Him for comfort and peace. **NE**

For more on shepherds, read Ezekiel 34; President Henry B. Eyring, “Feed the Lambs” (*Ensign*, Feb. 2008, 4); and Jane B. Malan, “Summer of the Lambs” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 78).



Our Savior Jesus Christ is ‘the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep’ (John 10:11).

“Some years ago I went to a national championship and watched shepherds perform in competition. I learned an unforgettable lesson. The true shepherd does not run to and fro, chasing the sheep. He walks among them and gains their trust. He teaches his sheepdogs and gives them assignments. Some will lead, and some will be behind. He then leads his sheep and goes before them. Along the way he uses voice and hand signals to direct his trusty dogs. From his vantage point, he watches over the sheep and leads them where they need to go.

“So it is with the true Shepherd: ‘The sheep hear his voice: and he calleth [them] by name, and leadeth them out’ (John 10:3).”

**Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Calling and Responsibilities of a Bishop,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting, June 21, 2003, 8.***

BY SARAH CUTLER

*I should have felt small. Instead I felt significant.*

I rolled over and threw back my sheets. Why wasn't I asleep yet? The house had been dark for hours while I was still lying here, wide awake. I gave up on sleeping and walked over to my window. From here I could easily see the city stretching out from my house to the desert, and the desert stretching out from the city to the horizon.

From the windowsill, I looked over the city. This was the first time I'd watched it so closely, and though it was dark, I seemed to see it more clearly than ever before. I could trace streetlights shining along roads and traffic lights signaling at intersections. Lights glowed from houses, blazed from signs, and flickered from cars.

As I stared at the city I was amazed by it all: by all the life happening under those lights, by the civilization symbolized by those lights, by the progress that had created those lights. Except when using candles or fires, our ancestors had to go to bed when the sun went down. But we have harnessed energy to light our streets, power our ovens, run our TVs and telephones and toasters. What could be more miraculous?

Even as I thought about those triumphs, I looked out past where the city ended in darkened mesas and extinct volcanoes and then up to the sky, where millions of stars twinkled and sparkled and glittered in the heavens. Starlight came from billions of miles away and was hundreds or even thousands of years old. It didn't need to be turned on or transmitted by wires. And it was more beautiful than any lights display could ever be.

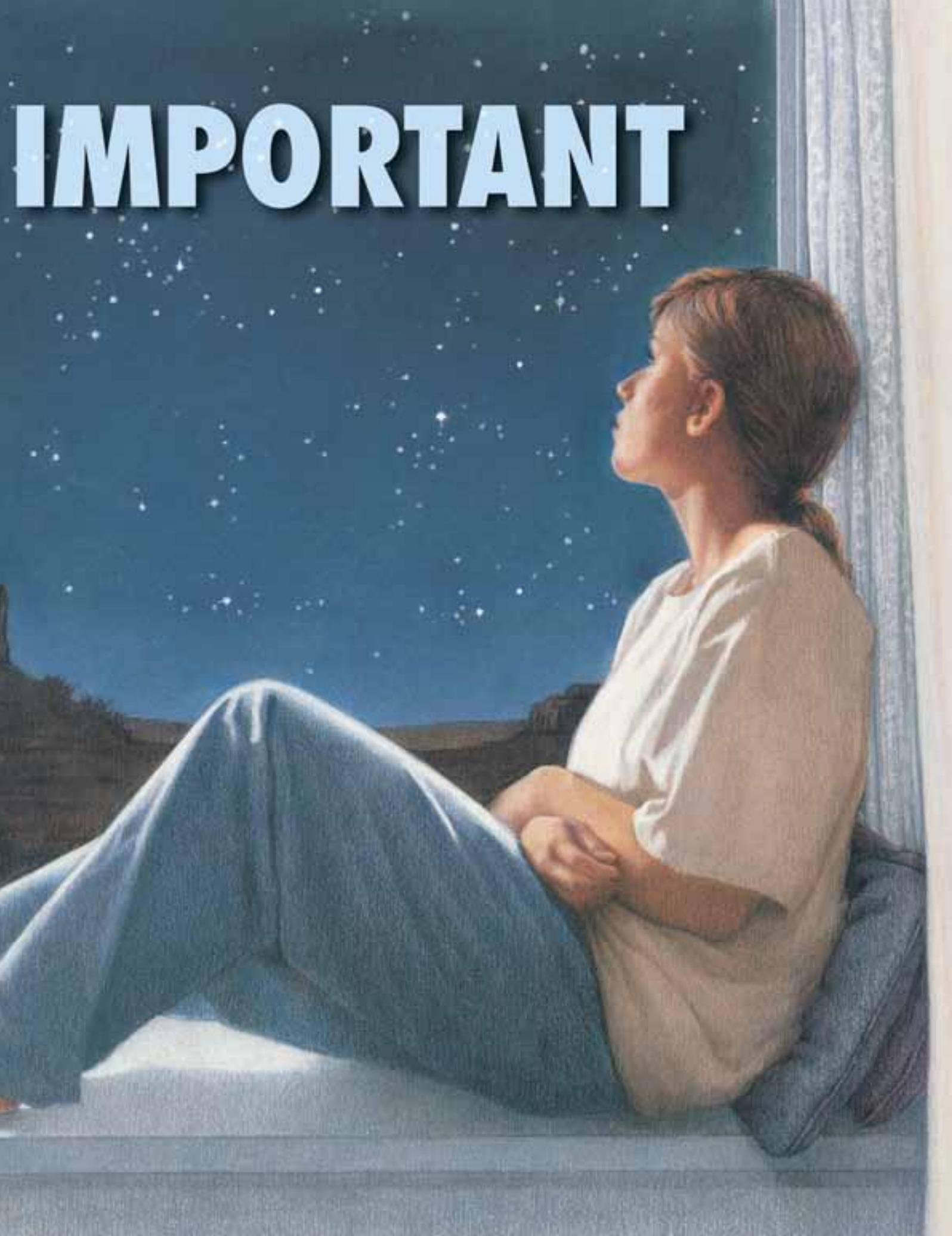
The city lights, which took thousands of us to create, didn't begin to compare with what Heavenly Father had made. Thinking about the vastness of what I was seeing, I expected to feel myself drop to insignificance. Instead I had a feeling that I was Heavenly Father's daughter. He knew I was sitting in a little bedroom looking at the sky and thinking about Him. And I knew that even though He created so many worlds and galaxies, He cared about me.

I stayed by the window for a long time. When I got back to bed, I was filled more with feelings than thoughts: feelings of amazement and love, excitement and peace. **NE**

*I Am*

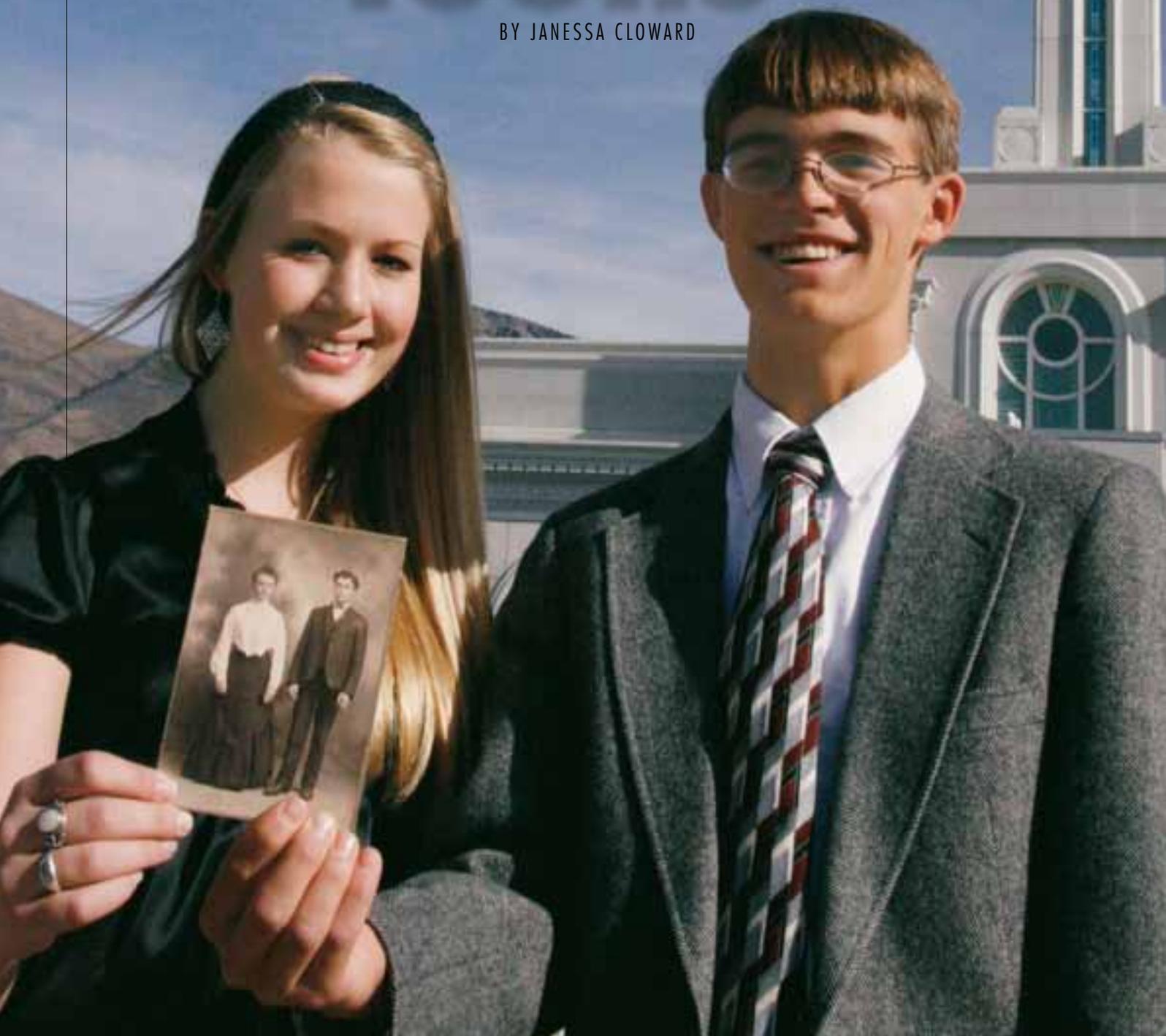


**IMPORTANT**



# Temple-Going Teens

BY JANELLA CLOWARD



**L**ike most 18-year-old- almost-19-year-old young men in the Church, Cameron Smiley is busily preparing to serve a full-time mission. But unlike most young men his age, Cameron has already participated in the baptisms and confirmation of hundreds of people. In the temple, that is.

Cameron is building on a heritage that started years ago in his ward. He is one of a continuing number of young men since that time who have become interested in temple work while earning the Genealogy merit badge in Boy Scouts. Like so many of them before him, Cameron loves to go to the temple.

“When I’m there I can just forget about everything—trouble with school or friends—and concentrate on helping people,” he says.

This legacy began about 10 years ago when some Aaronic Priesthood holders in the Canyon View Seventh Ward in the Orem



Utah Canyon View Stake decided they wanted to earn the Genealogy merit badge, so they worked with the ward’s family history consultant to research their families and get names ready for the temple.

“We had so many names we couldn’t do them all in one trip!” their former Scoutmaster, Lani Hatch, remembers. “We had to go back four or five times to finish up the family file cards from that merit badge project.”

Young Women in the ward also became interested and found opportunities to help with family history research and to go to the temple.

Today many of the young men from that first Scout troop have already returned from their missions. Others are preparing to serve. And with each new Beehive or deacon, the interest in the temple continues.

*In front of the Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple, Rachel Luke and David Bergeson (far left) show a photo of a ward member’s ancestors. Many of the youth in the ward (below) have participated in baptisms and confirmations for the dead.*



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY; HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF WARD MEMBERS

*Elizabeth Sartori is grateful to know youth of the ward are participating in temple work that will bless her ancestors, and she enjoys sharing family photos and talking about her heritage.*

### **From Temple Work to Missionary Work**

Daniel Jacobs, who recently returned from his mission to Tallahassee, Florida, remembers being part of the original temple-going group. Even though he sometimes had to get up early to go, he never thought of it as a sacrifice. “How could it be a sacrifice when we felt so good doing it?”



All we had to do was wake up, and we had all the energy we needed,” he remembers. “It was a powerful lesson to me—that making time for the gospel is not a matter of convenience. You show your devotion to the Lord by putting His work first, and He blesses you with the strength to do it.”

He says that lesson helped him endure the challenges he faced on his mission. “When things were hard, I would think back to that experience and put more effort into serving the Lord. I know He will support me as I do His work.”



Richy Judd, who recently returned from serving in the Ohio Cleveland Mission, says one of his most memorable experiences in the temple happened when he was the one baptizing and confirming.



“I went to the temple with the youth one more time before my mission, when I had already received my endowment,” he explains. “I actually got to do the baptizing and confirming, and it just really got me excited to go out there and baptize and confirm people. I wanted to find the families I was supposed to teach and bring into the Church.” And every time he baptized someone on his mission, “I’d remember being at the temple as a teenager,” he adds.

Richy says going to the temple reminded him how important it was to stay worthy. It motivated him to make right choices. When his bishop and stake president interviewed him before ordaining him an elder, Richy





*Recently returned from the Ohio Cleveland Mission, Richy Judd (center) explains to Garrett Bergeson (left) and Joe Rivest (right) how going to the temple prepared him to be a better missionary.*

could confidently say that he was living all of the standards. "It made the transition a lot easier," he says.

### **Growing Up at the Temple**

Brother Hatch's daughter, Keilani, had wanted to go to the temple with her dad for as long as she can remember. She prepared and planned, and when she turned 12 last year, she eagerly set her alarm. Then she realized how tired she was. "We went early in the morning and I was really grumpy when I got there, but the temple workers brought my spirits up," she remembers. "Then, when it was time for my dad to confirm me on behalf of someone else, I could feel the Spirit so strongly. I realized why I was there, and I just felt happy."

She says going to the temple helps her stay true to her standards because she wants to be worthy to go back. She remembers a time when those standards were tested by some of her friends, who wanted her to help them cheat on an exam. "I wasn't allowed to help, but I was alone in the room

with my friends, and they were begging me to," she explains. "It's really hard to tell your friends no, but it was easier because I had gone to the temple that day. I made a choice to put God first in my life."



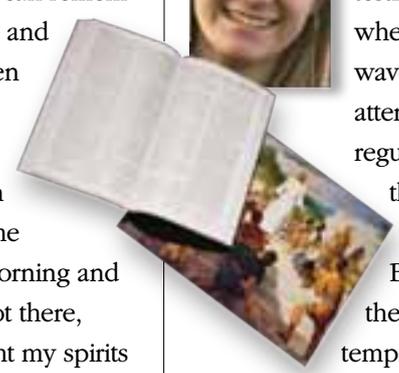
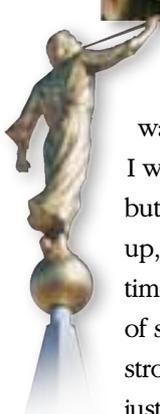
For McKinzie Mower, going to the temple helped her testimony develop at a time when it could have easily wavered. She remembers attending church and praying regularly, but "I was just going through the motions."

"Then one day, Brother Hatch told me they were going to the temple and said I would be welcome if I could come," she continues. "I didn't really want to do it, but then I thought about it and decided to go. After that first time, I just started going as often as I could, and as I did, spiritual things became more important in my life."

McKinzie says the best part of going to the temple is the good feelings she gets from serving others. "I love doing something for people that they can't do for themselves," she explains. "Temple work is the ultimate example of that." **NE**

### **PREPARATION FOR THE TEMPLE**

The temple is sacred. It is a great privilege for youth to enter the house of the Lord to perform baptisms for the dead. Likewise, the endowment is a sacred blessing. It requires worthiness, preparation, and maturity and is most often received just before temple marriage or a full-time mission. Even though it may be years before you receive your endowment, you can prepare for the temple today by keeping the commandments and living so that you will be worthy.



# Preparing to Receive the Ordinances of the Temple

BY CHARLES W. DAHLQUIST II  
Young Men General President

**W**hen I was a boy I used to walk in a nearby cemetery with my Grandpa Ahlander. I learned to love those walks and to appreciate the special feelings I felt there. Yet I really did not understand why I felt as I did.

Not long ago I walked alone along the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania, where on a beautiful spring morning in 1829 John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and restored the Aaronic Priesthood. As I pondered that event, I felt once again that I was on holy ground. Over the years I have felt a similar link with eternity as I have visited battlefields and other sacred places across the world.

In each of these places, it seemed that the veil between mortality and eternity was very thin. In each was the lingering reassurance that life does not begin with the cry of a baby or end with mortal death, but it continues on.

Today I again stood on holy ground in one of God’s holy temples, and once again the feelings of eternity were very near. I had the same feeling as I entered temples recently in Finland, Switzerland, Hong Kong, and Costa Rica. Each temple is a sacred haven, a sanctuary from the storm of the world, a place of peace where we can participate in sacred ordinances for ourselves and others and personally be strengthened and prepared to stand for truth and righteousness.

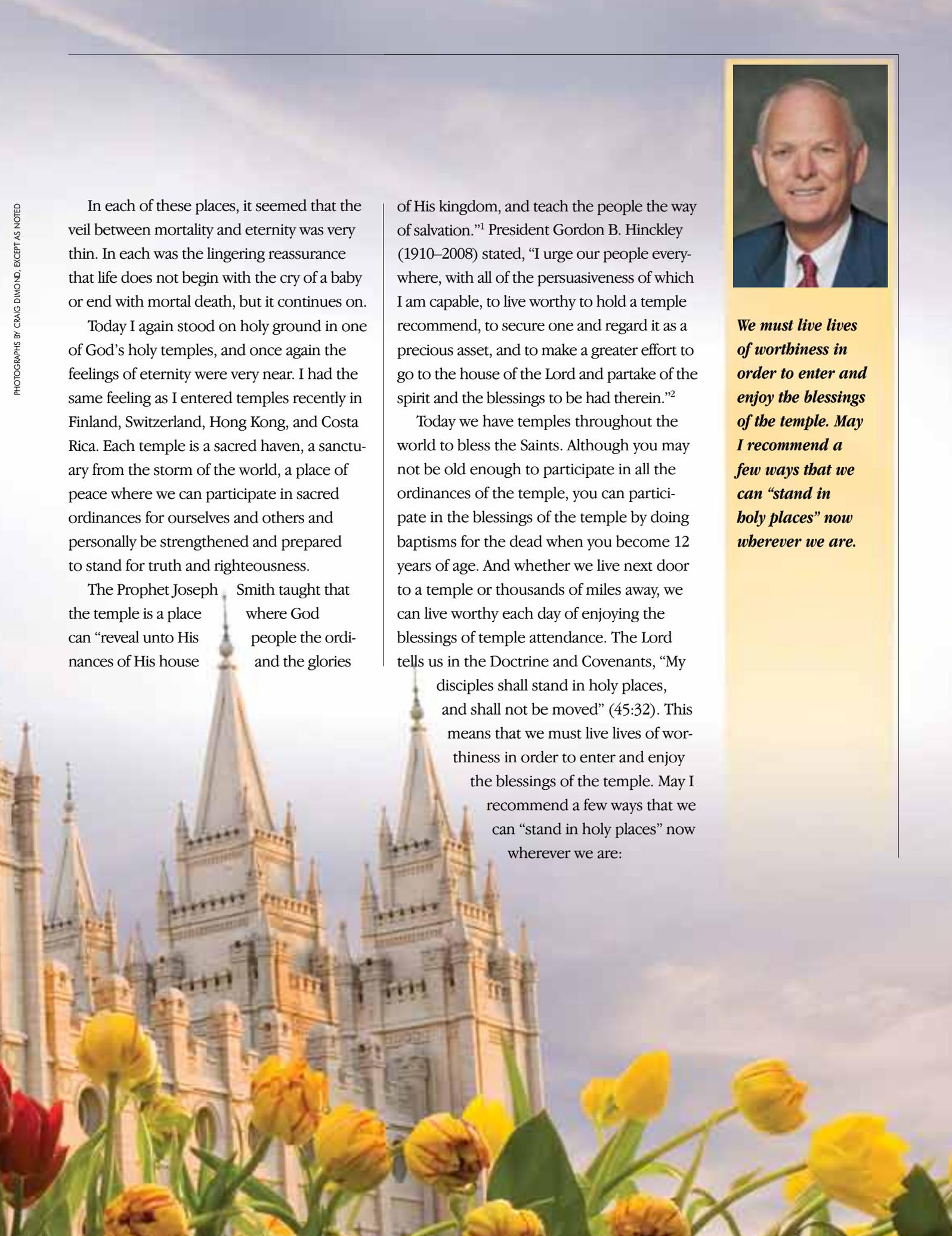
The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the temple is a place where God can “reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories

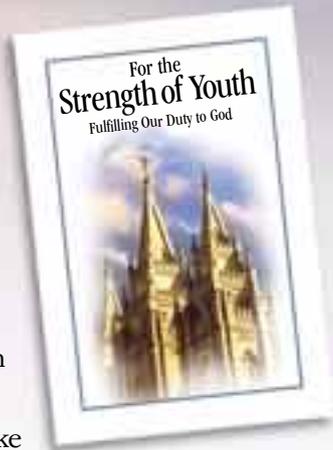
of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation.”<sup>1</sup> President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) stated, “I urge our people everywhere, with all of the persuasiveness of which I am capable, to live worthy to hold a temple recommend, to secure one and regard it as a precious asset, and to make a greater effort to go to the house of the Lord and partake of the spirit and the blessings to be had therein.”<sup>2</sup>

Today we have temples throughout the world to bless the Saints. Although you may not be old enough to participate in all the ordinances of the temple, you can participate in the blessings of the temple by doing baptisms for the dead when you become 12 years of age. And whether we live next door to a temple or thousands of miles away, we can live worthy each day of enjoying the blessings of temple attendance. The Lord tells us in the Doctrine and Covenants, “My disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved” (45:32). This means that we must live lives of worthiness in order to enter and enjoy the blessings of the temple. May I recommend a few ways that we can “stand in holy places” now wherever we are:



***We must live lives of worthiness in order to enter and enjoy the blessings of the temple. May I recommend a few ways that we can “stand in holy places” now wherever we are.***





**1 Always live the standards in the For the Strength of Youth pamphlet, and avoid “unholy places.”** To enter the temple, we must be worthy. It helps when we stand in holy places now. That means avoiding places and times when we would be tempted to make wrong choices. I recall a story by President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961), a counselor in the First Presidency, about his teenage daughter. She was leaving for a dance, and he said, “Have fun, my dear. Be back by midnight.” She replied, “Daddy, this is the night of the prom. We go to the dance and are not back until early morning.” President Clark responded, “Yes, I know that is what many will be doing. But you must be back before midnight.” She, then, in desperation said, “Daddy, you just don’t trust me!” To which he replied, “My dear, in the wrong place, at the wrong time, I don’t even trust myself. Be back by midnight.”<sup>3</sup>

You make similar decisions everywhere you go. Wherever you are, ask yourself, “Is this a place where the Spirit can dwell?” If not, have the courage to leave. If your room (including the pictures on the wall) is not someplace the Spirit can dwell, change it so it is. Learn early to stand in holy places, to associate with good friends, so that you will be supported in your quest to always be worthy to enter the Lord’s house.

**2 Stay close to and help strengthen your family.** The message of the temple is a message about families—eternal families. Our homes can be places of holiness and strength. The



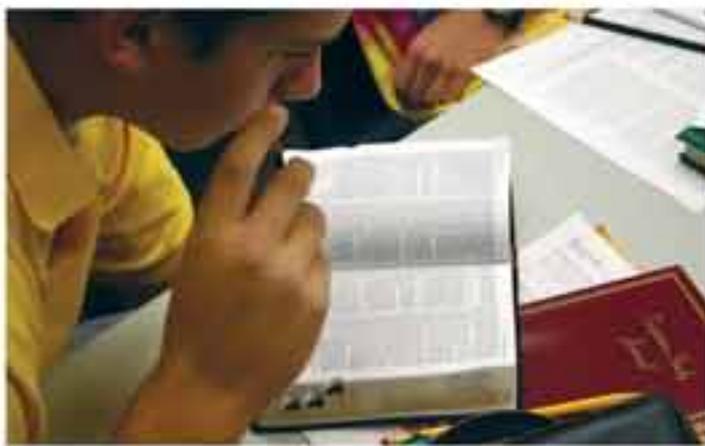
*For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet teaches: “Being part of a family is a great blessing. Your family can provide you with companionship and happiness, help you learn correct principles in a loving atmosphere, and help you prepare for eternal life. Not all families are

the same, but each is important in Heavenly Father’s plan.

“Do your part to build a happy home. Be cheerful, helpful, and considerate of others. . . . Seek to be a peacemaker rather than to tease, fight, and quarrel. Remember that the family is the most sacred unit of the Church.”<sup>4</sup>

**3 Make scripture study a part of your life**—not only by reading regularly but also by relying on the scriptures to help you make important decisions.

When I was a mission president in northern Germany, I had a very difficult problem. I had searched in vain for an answer for many weeks. One morning I was reading in the Book of Mormon where Nephi was commanded to build a



ship: “And I, Nephi, did go into the mount oft, and I did pray oft unto the Lord; wherefore the Lord showed unto me great things” (1 Nephi 18:3). As I read that small passage, the impression came to me, “That is what I need to do.” I pondered and prayed, and finally the answer came, and I knew what I needed to do. I am grateful for that little window of inspiration that came—as I was searching the scriptures. As I received my answer, I felt that I was “standing in a holy place.” I know that you too can have similar experiences as you search, ponder, and pray about the scriptures.

**4 Attend seminary when you are old enough.** I have found that regular attendance in seminary helps youth remember that they are indeed sons and daughters of God, that they can always ask Him for help in making choices, and that He answers their prayers. It is also a place where they are reminded that they are not alone and that there are many others around the world who are striving to stand in holy places and live worthy lives.

**5 Fill your mind with positive, clean, and uplifting thoughts.** My patriarchal blessing promises, “Look to the light above, and those who go with you will know that you seek for something higher.” I have found that the best way to keep my sights on the light above is to control my thoughts by memorizing scriptures, poetry, hymns, and other uplifting material. Then when we are tempted by unclean or negative thoughts, we can substitute those positive thoughts and drive out the unclean and impure ones.

**6 Have a picture of a temple in your room.** When our children were young, we asked each of them to select a temple that had particular meaning to them. We then purchased pictures of the selected temples for their rooms to help them remember the importance of the temple and of always being worthy to enter the temple. There is something powerful about seeing a picture of the temple day after day and using that to recommit ourselves to remain worthy to attend the temple. You might even want to put your own picture next to the temple to remind yourself that you belong in the temple!

**7 Spend time developing your talents and becoming what our Heavenly Father expects you to become.** We are blessed to have the Young Women Personal Progress program and the Aaronic Priesthood Duty to God program. The purpose of each is to help us become like the Savior by setting and accomplishing worthy goals, developing character and life skills, strengthening our families, and helping us develop faith in Jesus Christ.

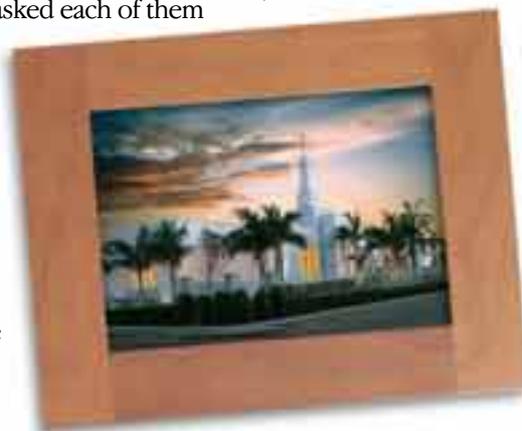
**8 When you become 12 years of age, attend the temple to do baptisms for the dead whenever you can.** We live in a blessed day when 124 temples dot the earth. Many of you can attend the temple as youth groups and as families. But even if you do not have a temple near you, you can enjoy the blessings of the temple by learning more about the temple and always being worthy to hold a temple recommend. When I was a mission president, our mission did not have a temple, so our missionaries were not able to attend the temple during their missions. At first I did not think to encourage them to keep a current temple recommend. Then in late 1994 President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) counseled adult members of the Church to have a current temple recommend—even if they did not live near a temple.<sup>5</sup> During the next interviews with our missionaries, I taught this principle and conducted a temple recommend interview for each of our missionaries. What a blessing that was for our mission and our missionaries!

May our Heavenly Father bless you that you might continually prepare, with each decision you make, to stand in holy places now so that you will always be worthy to enter the Lord’s holy temple. You are the “youth of the noble birthright”<sup>6</sup> of whom we sing. You are the “hope of Israel.”<sup>7</sup> You must be prepared to accomplish the great works of

righteousness that the Lord has sent you here to do. May God bless you, my dear young friends, to prepare diligently to be worthy to enter the temple and partake of the sacred ordinances our Heavenly Father has for each of us. **NE**

#### NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 416.
2. “Of Missions, Temples, and Stewardship,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 53.
3. See *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1996), 629.
4. (2001), 10.
5. See “The Great Symbol of Our Membership,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 5.
6. “Carry On,” *Hymns*, no. 255.
7. “Hope of Israel,” *Hymns*, no. 259.



# MISSION OR

BY DEBBIE TWIGGER

*Punting on the Cam River (below), Ben Twigger and friends enjoy the views of Cambridge University. Ben eventually served in the France Toulouse Mission (right).*

*He always dreamed of attending Cambridge, but another dream was more important.*

**B**en Twigger loves good things. Even from a young age, he received good grades in school, attended early morning seminary in his hometown in Northampton, England, and enjoyed studying the Book of Mormon. He also loved sports and became the 800- and 400-meter racing champion for his county, despite not taking part in the Sunday league trials.

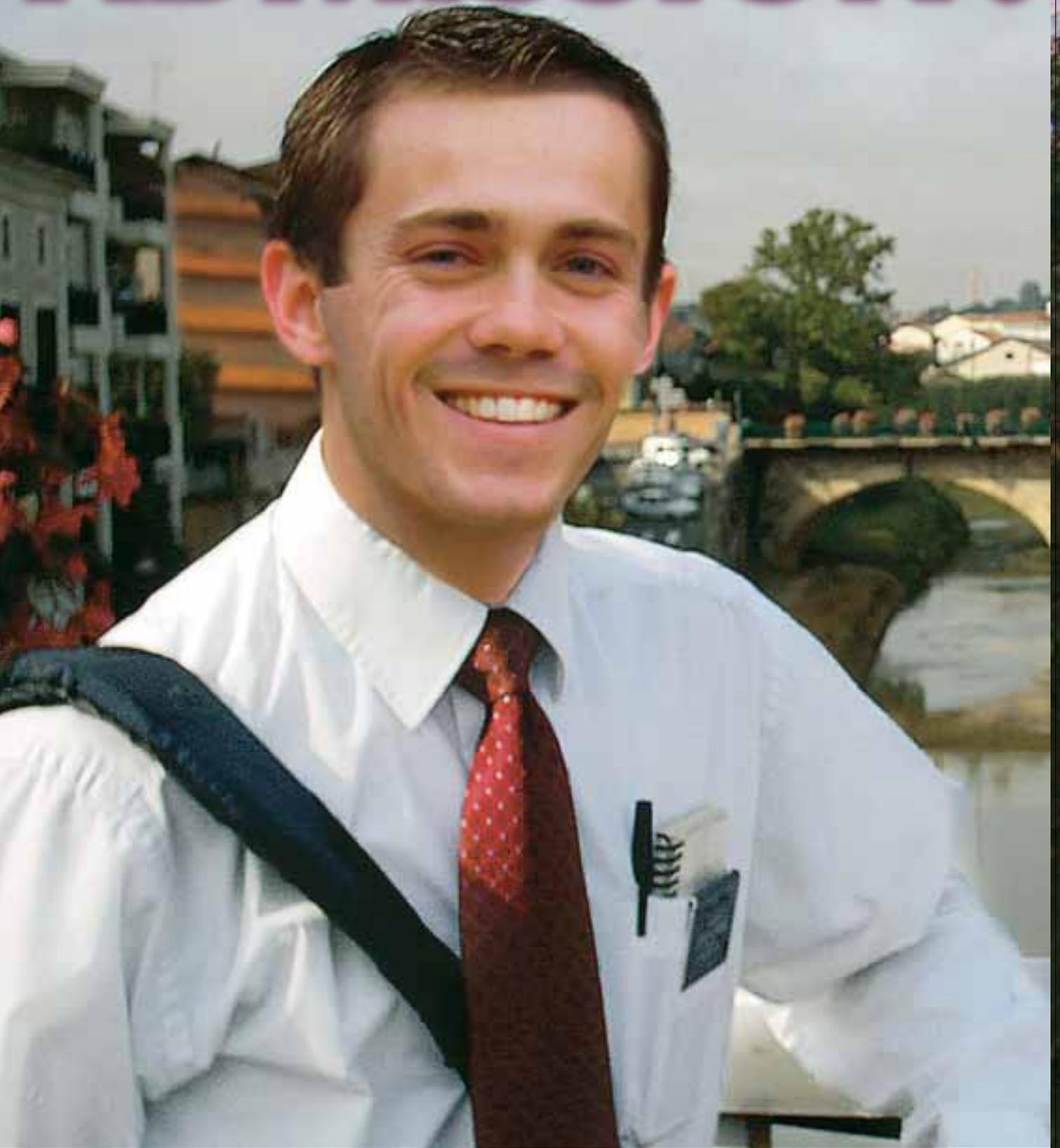
Having been raised in the Church, Ben always planned on serving a full-time mission. “When I saw missionaries serving in

our ward and visiting in our home, I knew deep down that being a missionary was what I wanted to become,” he says.

However, it wasn’t until Ben started planning for college that everything he loved collided. Ben decided at an early age that he would like to attend Cambridge University, one of the world’s foremost universities. Ben achieved A levels in six subjects—well above the minimum requirement for admission to Cambridge. In fact, Ben was the top-performing student in his



# ADMISSION?





**B**en (above and below, with his parents) always planned on serving a mission. After his mission, he realized his dream of attending Cambridge.

city the year he applied. Yet despite his eagerness to learn from world-class scientists, Ben resolved early on to request a two-year deferment so that he could serve a mission. However, when he checked out the university prospectus for maths and maths-based subjects, he discovered that even a one-year deferment was strongly discouraged.

"I was not daunted and applied anyway," Ben says. He received an interview, even though he was informed that the university application system does not allow for such a deferment.

Despite his hopeful attitude, Ben was denied admission. Although the reason for the denial was not specifically stated in the letter, his tutor assumed it was a result of the two-year deferment he had requested and the subsequent loss of skills the university felt it would cause.

"When I received a letter from Cambridge informing me of their decision, I felt very disappointed, as it had been a long-term goal, but I felt determined to serve the Lord regardless of the sacrifices it would require."

Ben was called to serve in the France Toulouse Mission. He had a wonderful experience, bringing souls unto Christ and serving with other spiritually prepared missionaries. During his mission, Ben admits, he learned a valuable lesson about faith and about putting that faith into practice.

"However much God wants to help us, unless we believe and act accordingly, He cannot help us," Ben says. "But when we act in faith

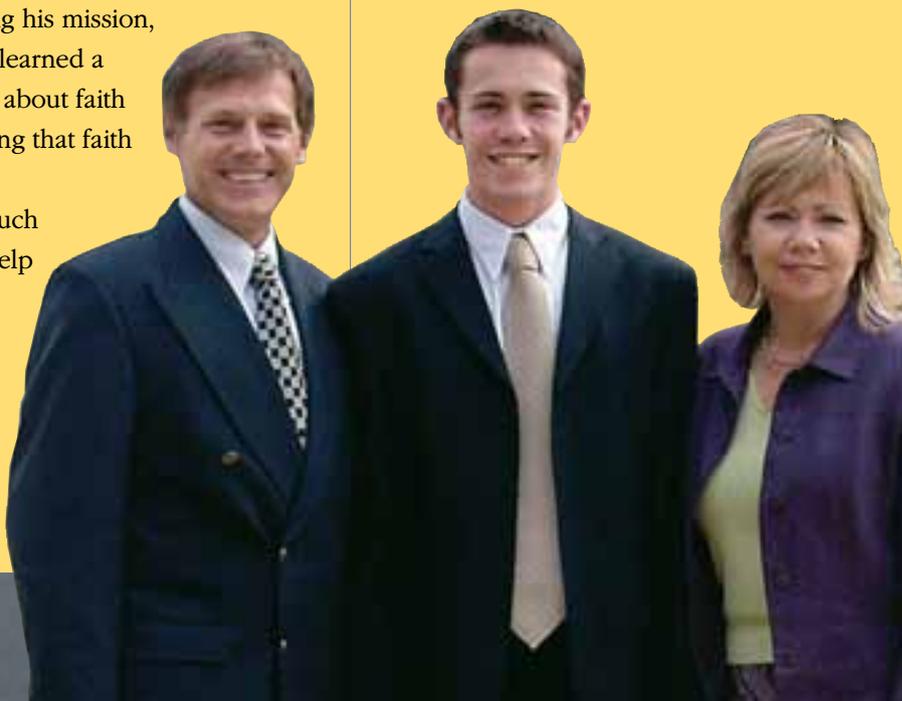
and put in the necessary works, small and great miracles can occur."

Toward the end of his mission Ben started thinking about his future studies. He was initially nervous to reapply for admission to Cambridge after his mission. But he was reminded of the invaluable lessons he had learned on his mission, as well as a scripture he had learned as a child. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart" (Proverbs 3:5). Even though Ben could have applied to go straight to another university, he decided to take the time necessary to study and prepare so that he could apply again to Cambridge. Within two weeks of returning home, he was studying full-time to refresh his skills.

After successfully completing the verbal and written tests required for the interview, Ben received an offer to study natural sciences, specializing in physics, a four-year master's degree program at Cambridge starting exactly one year after his return from his mission.

"I do consider my acceptance as a direct result of putting the Lord first and obeying His commandments," Ben says. "I know that because I trusted in the Lord, I was blessed with the righteous desires of my heart." **NE**

Are you getting ready for a mission? Check out the March 2007 *New Era* issue on missionary preparation.



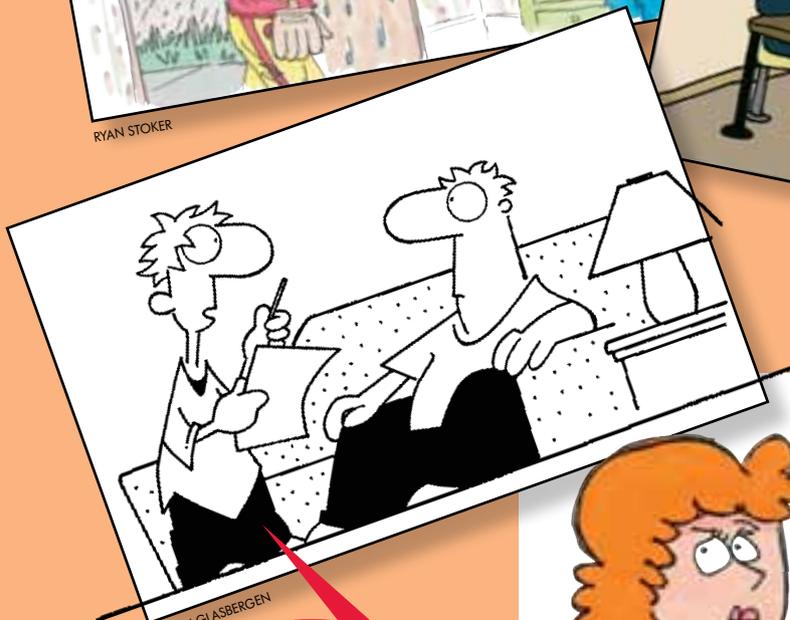


RYAN STOKER



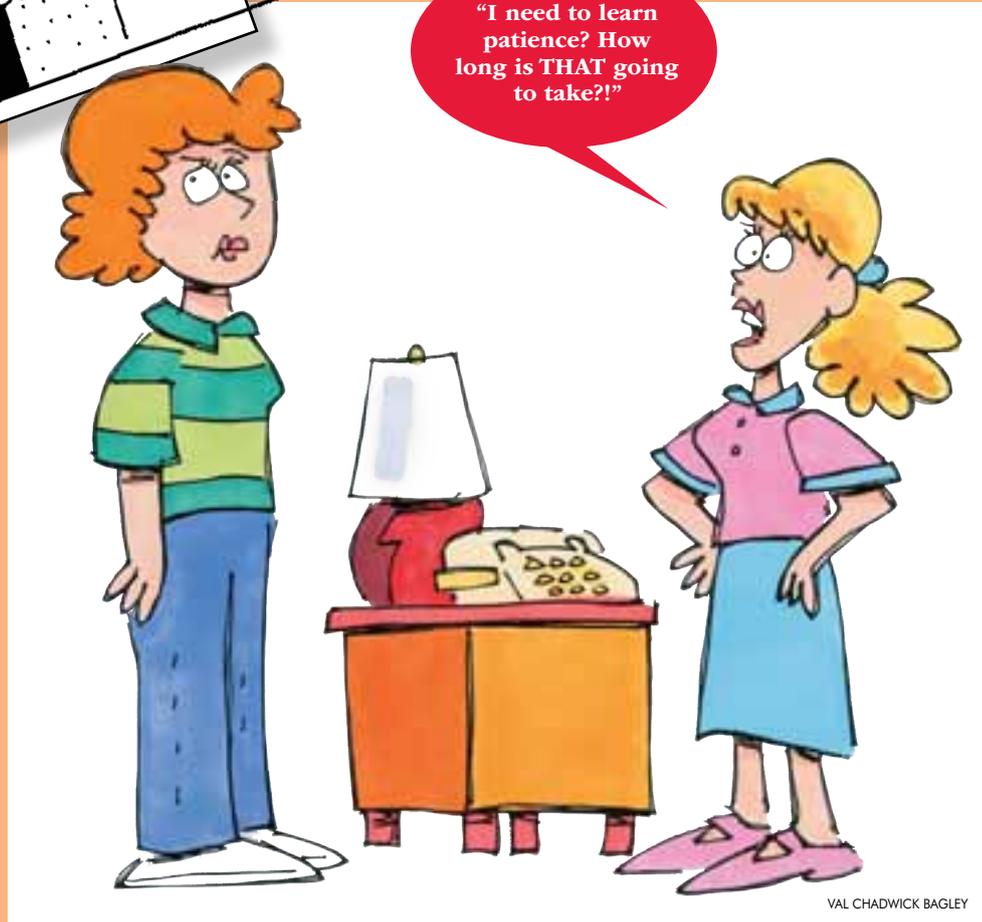
ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

"You Mormons have weird dance themes."



RANDY GLASBERGEN

"The medical form asks if I have any history of mental illness or heart disease. Does being in love count?"

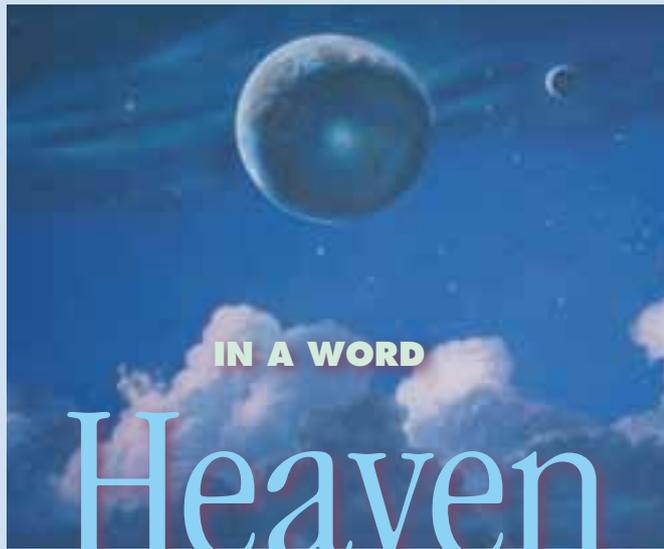


VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

"I need to learn patience? How long is THAT going to take?!"

In a recent printed program of services in our ward, the hymn number was typed before the name of the hymn. Imagine our amused disappointment when we read that 300 Families Can Be Together Forever.

Neil D., Utah



**IN A WORD**

# Heaven

In the scriptures, the word *heaven* is often used to refer to the place where God lives, which is the ultimate home of the faithful (see Mosiah 2:41). It sometimes also refers to the expanse around the earth (see Genesis 1:1). (See *True to the Faith* [2004], 78.)



## 293 MERIT BADGES

It isn't easy achieving 121 merit badges," say brothers Scott and Bryce Vaughan of the Spring Creek Ward in Spring, Texas. That's probably why so few Scouts across the United States ever accomplish the feat. But both Scott and Bryce earned all 121 merit badges sponsored by the Boy Scouts of America. Scott and Bryce say that their older brother, Austin, was one of their biggest

supporters and helped inspire them to excel in Scouting.

"I never expected that Scott and I would complete all 121 merit badges," says Bryce. "Once we got going we didn't want to stop until we earned them all." Between the three Vaughan brothers, who are all Eagle Scouts, they have a combined 293 merit badges. Austin, Scott, and Bryce are pictured from left to right.

**BY THE NUMBERS**

# 42,680

Number of Personal Progress medallions issued in 2006.



## THE CHURCH IN USA MARYLAND

After a 10-hour debate with a Campbellite minister in Leitersburgh, Washington County, Elder Erastus Snow baptized 11 people. He began preaching in Maryland with three other missionaries in 1837. Elder Snow baptized one convert, an 89-year-old man, after cutting through 18 inches of ice.

The Washington D.C. Temple, actually located in

Kensington, Maryland, is one of the state's most prominent landmarks and was completed in 1974.

<b>Membership</b>	<b>38,489</b>
<b>Missions</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Temples</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Congregations</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Family History Centers</b>	<b>13</b>

*Information from Newsroom at [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org).*



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF LUCIANO P.

**MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE**

**ALMA 29:1**

I like where it talks about Alma wanting to have the voice of an angel so he could tell everyone about the gospel. I would like to share my testimony like that.

**Luciano P., 18, Montevideo, Uruguay**

Tell us about your favorite scripture in one or two sentences. Send it to [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org).

# Plenty of Ponytails

**A**manda Rawlins, a 13-year-old Beehive from the Burton Second Ward in Rexburg, Idaho, just finished holding a week-long Locks of Love event. She decided to organize the event for her Good Works project after seeing a TV interview about girls going through chemotherapy. Amanda learned that it takes

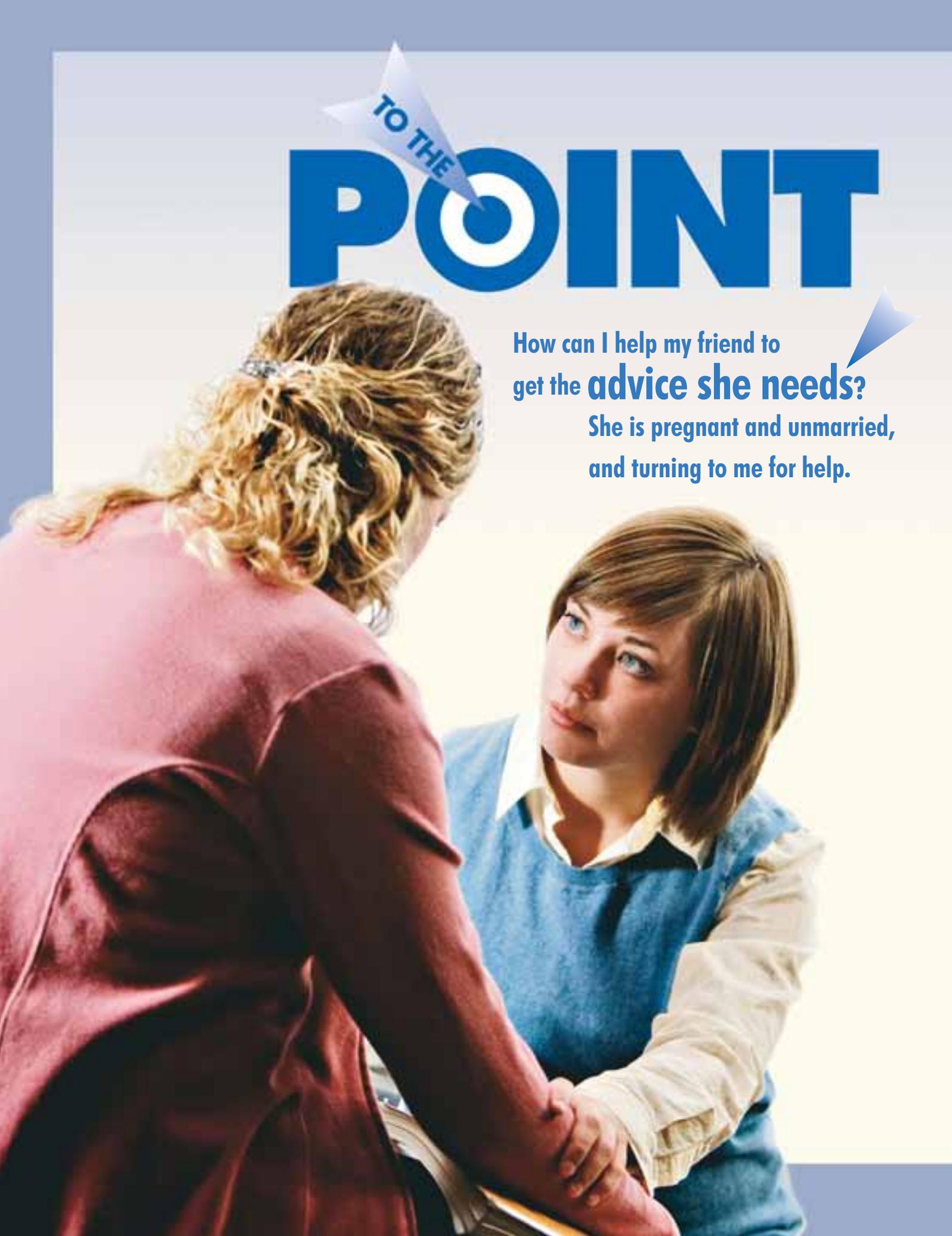
6 to 10 ponytails to make a wig for one patient who has lost her hair. She realized that simply donating her own hair would not be enough. She wanted to do more.

She made arrangements for a beauty college to give free haircuts to those willing to donate their hair for the event. With her mother's help, Amanda put up posters and handed out

flyers at local schools. At the end of the project, they had collected 30 ponytails. That's enough hair for three or four full wigs. "I am so happy with how many ponytails we received," Amanda says. "I am so thankful to all those willing to cut off the 10 inches needed for the donation."

*“If you understand the great plan of happiness and follow it, what goes on in the world will not determine your happiness.”*

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Father and the Family," *Ensign*, May 1994, 20.



TO THE

# POINT

How can I help my friend to  
get the **advice she needs?**

She is pregnant and unmarried,  
and turning to me for help.

It's difficult when a friend turns to you for advice on such a serious problem. Encourage her to gather the information she needs to make a decision that will be best for her baby and herself.

Encourage her to talk with her parents. She may be afraid that they will be upset and disappointed, but they love her and will want to help.

During this difficult time, your friend needs someone who can give her spiritual guidance. If she is a member of the Church, she should turn to her bishop. The bishop can discuss with her the counsel that has been given by the First Presidency regarding unwed pregnancy.

Your friend may not know about the help that LDS Family Services offers. Whether or not your friend is LDS, she can meet with a counselor from LDS Family Services who will explain her options, and she can find support from other girls who have been in similar situations.

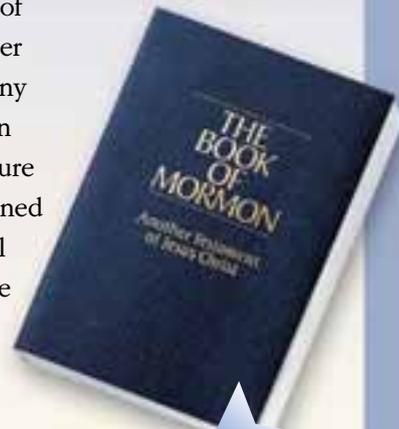
There are many people who understand her situation and are available to offer the help and support she will need as she decides what to do.

## Is there anything wrong with drinking sodas with caffeine in them? Is caffeine bad? The Word of Wisdom doesn't mention it.

Doctrine and Covenants 89:9 says we shouldn't drink "hot drinks." The only official interpretation of this term is the statement made by early Church leaders that it means tea and coffee. Caffeine is not specifically mentioned as the reason not to drink these drinks.

However, we should keep in mind this counsel given by President Boyd K. Packer:

"The Word of Wisdom was 'given for a principle with promise' (D&C 89:3). . . . A principle is an enduring truth, a law, a rule you can adopt to guide you in making decisions. Generally principles are not spelled out in detail. Members write in asking if this thing or that is against the Word of Wisdom. . . . We teach the principle together with the promised blessings. There are many habit-forming, addictive things that one can drink or chew or inhale or inject which injure both body and spirit which are not mentioned in the revelation. . . . Obedience to counsel will keep you on the safe side of life" ("The Word of Wisdom: The Principle and the Promises," *Ensign*, May 1996, 17–18).



## My friend doesn't want to hear anything about the gospel. How can I still be a good missionary?

The line between being a bold missionary and a pushy friend can be hard to balance, but there are definitely things you can do to share the gospel. First of all, don't underestimate the value of being a good example. In addition, make the gospel a part of your everyday conversation. If he asks how your weekend was, don't skip over your Sunday meetings. Tell him about your great lesson or what they announced for your Mutual activity. When he asks you what your goals are, tell him you want to serve a mission and be a father or mother.

He may eventually have further questions, so be prepared. If he has more questions than you can answer, ask him to go to [www.mormon.org](http://www.mormon.org), or invite him to your house to visit with the missionaries. But be patient. When the time is right, you can invite him to church, youth activities, or family home evening. You can also share a copy of the Book of Mormon with him and perhaps point out your favorite scripture. Then follow up to see what he thought. **NE**

# SITTING WITH CHRIS

BY AMANDA TINGEN JONES

*Everyone said Chris was weird, but as soon as we started talking, I realized he was a really neat guy, and we became the best of friends.*

I can still remember one particular Young Women lesson, even though my teacher, Sister Cato, taught it years ago. It was about reaching out to others who may not seem to fit in with “our group.”

I was in high school then, captain of the marching band color guard, publicity chair for a club, active on the academic team and in drama, Laurel class president, and a member of the stake youth committee. I was the only member of the Church at my school, but people seemed to respect me for my beliefs.

The day after Sister Cato’s wonderful lesson, I noticed a guy at lunch I’d never really noticed before. He was sitting by himself, except for two other guys who were making fun of him. I remembered having seen him at band practice after school, but I didn’t even know his name. I asked my friends from the band if they knew anything about him.

“That’s Chris. He can’t march and won’t play his trombone loud enough for you to hear him three feet from you!” the trombone section leader replied.

“I think he just moved here from another school,” said another. “People say he’s really weird.”

“I heard he can’t drive to save his life. Once he hit someone’s trash can when he was driving home after school!” another of my friends said.

The bell rang, and we all scattered for class. I continued to think about Chris and

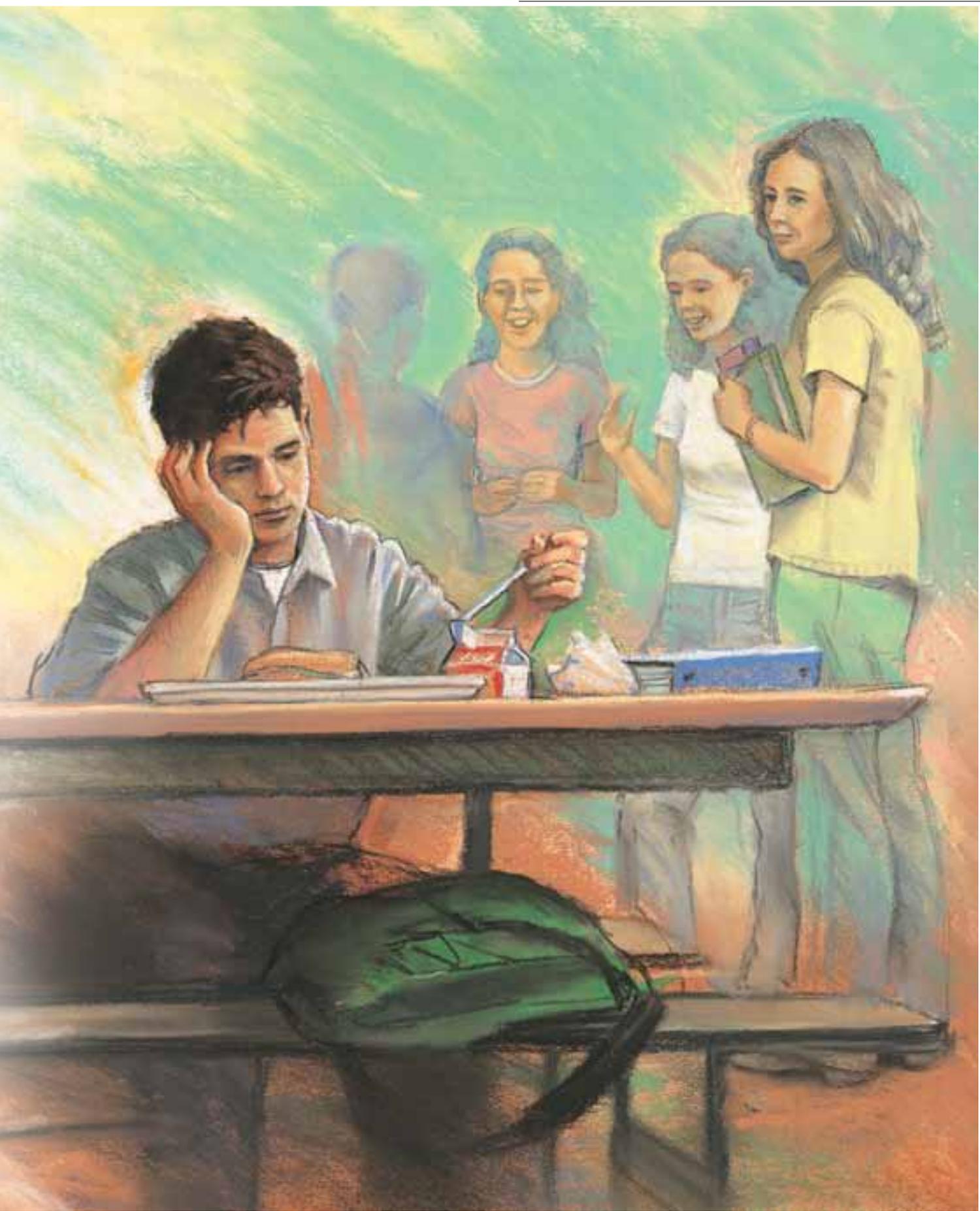
how lonely he had seemed at lunch.

The next day, I decided to sit with Chris instead of with my usual group. Ignoring my friends’ stares, I introduced myself and sat down. I really enjoyed my lunch with Chris. He was funny and bright, though a little quiet that first day. The next day at lunch, I asked Chris to sit with my friends and me. My friends protested, but I insisted, and Chris had lunch with us the rest of the year.

I’m so thankful for that lesson in Young Women. Chris and I became the best of friends. When band practice ended each afternoon, we would often end up at one or the other’s house. I introduced him to my younger brothers, with whom he became fast friends, and he introduced me to his girlfriend. We went to the movies together. He helped me get my first job, and we even double-dated to the prom.

The next year, I completed the Personal Progress program in Young Women. My parents decided to have a little party to celebrate my receiving the Young Womanhood Recognition. I handed out invitations to all my friends and reminded them many times, hoping they would come. Chris came—my only friend who wasn’t a member of the Church to show up.

Graduation day came and went, but Chris and I still keep in touch. Who would have known that by following a Young Women lesson, I would end up with a great friendship? **NE**



ILLUSTRATED BY SCOTT SNOW

# CHANGING FRIENDS

NAME WITHHELD

I have always had a hard time making friends. I knew people and had a lot of acquaintances, but I didn't feel like I had anyone that I could hang out with without feeling out of place.

When I started 10th grade, I had a group that I ate lunch with from junior high, but I just didn't fit in with them. I tried to stay strong, but it felt like I was being dragged slowly down where I could never escape. I decided that no friends were better than bad ones, so I stopped hanging out with them.

The period of time when I had no one to eat with was the loneliest time of my life. Still, I tried to be good. I told my Mia Maid leader about it, and she said, "You are a great girl, and no matter what happens, you will be better because of this." I took her words to heart, and my world brightened. I prayed that I would meet good people and find happiness. I felt as though weights were lifted.

Soon at school I met some Latter-day Saint girls who went to the temple to do baptisms for the dead nearly every week, and they





# HEY, SIS!

BY LISA NISSEN

included me in their circle of friends. I felt happier than ever. They were so nice and honest in everything they did. They were wonderful, but I was scared they would change and end up just like the others.

Before an important test, my father gave me a blessing. He said something that took me by surprise. He said, "You are doing what's right, and your Father is very pleased. If you continue in righteousness and do not falter, you will gain friends. Your friends will encourage you to be good and strive to be your best."

I was struck deeply. I followed the blessing and found these girls to be more than I had ever hoped for. They introduced me to other friends, and we became a strong support to each other.

I found that Heavenly Father listens to my prayers and cares about what I feel. **NE**

I was leaving junior high school, embarking on a new adventure riddled with unknown possibilities and, of course, filled with fun. Little did I know that the first few months of high school would feel disastrous and ultimately change my life.

It all started normally enough for a freshman. I felt small at this new, big school. Everything seemed twice as big, but it was nice knowing I was going through this with my friends. When we checked our class schedules, we saw that I didn't have any classes with my friends. As the weeks passed, we drifted apart. Instead of the close relationship we'd once shared, I would be lucky to see the backs of their heads as they walked in another direction.

My lunch hour was miserable. I tried to make myself look busy, like making several unneeded trips to my locker

to retrieve books I didn't need, tying my shoes, or pretending to look for someone who would never be found. I guess I wasn't very good at pretending, because my older brother, Shawn, noticed.

Since my childhood, Shawn was always there, whether it was teasing me incessantly or putting his arm around me after a bad day. He never really asked me what was wrong; he just knew. He started inviting me to eat lunch with him and his friends. When I was with him, he never ignored me. I remember him yelling, "Hey, Sis!" and walking over to put his arm around me.

Slowly I became stronger, and I became comfortable in my own skin. I realized I didn't need my old friends to define who I was. I had my brother, my friend. **NE**

# A PRAYER IN SAMOAN

BY JACOB LOOSLE

When I opened my mission call and learned I would serve an English-speaking mission in America, I was relieved. I struggled in vain to learn a language in high school, and I was glad I wouldn't have to deal with that again in the MTC.

During my mission I served in a Samoan ward. Most of the members spoke English as well, so we could easily work with them.

Then my companion and I began to teach a part-member family who

had been raised in Samoa and had just moved to America. When one of the girls asked me to perform her baptism, I felt impressed to learn how to say the baptism prayer in Samoan. I knew my weakness in learning other languages, but my love for her and her family overcame my fear.

That night I went to another member's house so he could teach me how to say the prayer in Samoan. Despite 30 minutes of practicing, I left discouraged and frustrated because I had not gotten very far.

That night I asked the Lord to bless me with the gift of tongues if He wanted me to say the baptism prayer in Samoan.

When I practiced the next morning, I quickly found I was not only able to say the baptism prayer, but also recite it from memory. The day of the baptism came, and I was able to say the baptism prayer in Samoan nearly perfectly. I felt the Spirit work through me. I know the Lord can work miracles for us if we have the faith and allow Him to work through us. **NE**

# FAITH FOR MY FATHER

BY TYNDALL TAYLOR

A few years ago our family had a faith-building experience. My dad, who is in the military, got called on deployment to Iraq for six months. He would leave in October and miss Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Valentine's Day, four kids' birthdays (including my sister Danielle, who was going to wait until Dad got home to be baptized), and his anniversary. We were very sad. But we knew he had to go, and we said goodbye.

It was almost time for him to come home when he called us from Iraq and told us that he might have to stay for another six months to a year. We were very discouraged. He had already missed so much, and we didn't want him to miss any more!

That night Mom came to us with a plan that we should fast and pray for Dad. We decided it was a good idea. The next day we woke up and

got ready for school. It was the day we had chosen to fast. All through the day people were offering us food and asking if we were OK. We declined the offers because we knew that if we followed through with the fast, the Lord would bless us and comfort us with an understanding and acceptance of His will.

That afternoon, before we had broken our fast, our dad called and said that he had just received news that he would be coming home soon. We were so happy! We thanked Heavenly Father for blessing us in this way. Now when something is wrong, we remember to combine prayer with fasting. I will always remember this experience, and I will turn to Heavenly Father to help me. **NE**

For more on the purposes of fasting, read *True to the Faith* (2004), pp. 66–69.

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

[newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)

or send it to:

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

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



**Mutual Activity Idea**

• Some of the most memorable activities come with opportunities to give service. Look for ways to serve the widows or widowers of your ward or those with special needs. Even such simple things as making cards for special occasions or delivering fruit or cookies are often appreciated. Of course, helping with



chores or yard work can be fun to do with a large group.

**Personal Progress or Duty to God**

• Select a Church book to read together with a parent. Choose a time, such as Sunday afternoon, when you can read aloud together. Discuss what you are learning.

**Family Home Evening Idea**

• Have a family home evening dedicated to learning good manners. Make a list of situations and have family members act out what they should do to be polite. For example, how do you open a door for someone or help them on or off with their coat? You can set the table with dishes and silverware and teach each other how to use the correct utensil or how to act properly at the table.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (online at [www.lds.org/gospellibrary](http://www.lds.org/gospellibrary), in the Shortcuts section), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these resources helpful in enhancing lessons 16–19.

**Young Women Manual 3**

**Lesson 16: Temple Endowment**

Charles W. Dahlquist II, “Preparing to Receive the Ordinances of the Temple,” this issue, 30.  
L. Aldin Porter, “Come to the Temple,” *New Era*, Oct. 2004, 8.

**Lesson 17: Preparing to Attend the Temple**

Rachel Barton Morris, “Preparing for My Endowment,” *New Era*, Oct. 2004, 12.  
Tamara Leatham Bailey, “The Temple-going Type,” *New Era*, Apr. 1998, 34.

**Lesson 18: Temple Marriage**

The October 2004 *New Era* was a special issue on courtship and temple marriage.  
Shirlyn Andersen Jones, “That Day in Manti,” *New Era*, Feb. 1994, 8.

**Lesson 19: Heritage**

Thomas S. Monson, “A Code to Live By,” *New Era*, Sept. 2005, 4.  
Monte J. Brough, “Mighty Men and Women,” *New Era*, May 1995, 4.

**Aaronic Priesthood Manual 3**

**Lesson 16: Jesus Christ, the Life and Light of the World**

William Kim Rawlinson, “The Source,” *New Era*, Apr. 2006, 37.  
Shelly L. Johnson, “The Price I Couldn’t Pay,” *New Era*, Sept. 2005, 26.  
Q&A (how to always remember Him), *New Era*, Jan. 2005, 16.

**Lesson 17: The Holy Ghost**

Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Gift of the Holy Ghost,” *New Era*, Jan. 2005, 4.  
Lindsey T. Dil, “If You Listen,” *New Era*, July 2005, 8.

**Lesson 18: Prayer**

Dallin H. Oaks, “The Special Language of Prayer,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 2.  
Robert C. Oaks, “Shot Down!” *New Era*, Aug. 2006, 24.

**Lesson 19: Fasting**

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

**TO THE POINT**

I love “To the Point.” It has such good answers to great questions. I am always able to apply something from it to my life. I also like “In Tune.” I’m learning to play piano and love to sing. It gives me something to practice and sing. I always look forward to each month’s *New Era* because it has something to answer a question I’ve been pondering.

Cheyenne B., Minnesota

**WHEN A BUG FLIES IN**

I just wanted to say that I was inspired by the article “When a Bug Flies in Your Mouth” (Sept. 07). I want to follow its advice and also tell my friends to do the same—when something bad crosses your mind, spit it out immediately.

Dallas R., Mexico

**MORE CONFIDENCE**

Thank you for publishing the *New Era*. I always look forward to getting it. It always has something I need help with. The story “Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts Unceasingly” (Oct. 07) helped me have more self-confidence. It really makes a difference in my life. Thank you so much.

Analee B., Virginia

**I FEEL CONNECTED**

I am 13 and live in Vietnam, where the Church is just starting to open up. I am the only deacon in our small branch, and our Young Men group consists of me and one priest. Being the only Latter-day Saint at my school (except for my brothers) can be hard. I love the *New Era*. It

helps me feel connected with the rest of the

*I love the New Era. It helps me feel connected with the rest of the Church even though I live far away from most Church members.*

Church, even if I am thousands of miles away. I enjoy reading the short stories from other youth. It helps me remember I am not the only one with trials. I also enjoy the inspiring *New Era* posters and the “Extra Smile.”

Ashton O., Vietnam

**JUST A LITTLE VIOLENCE?**

I read the article in the August 2007 *New Era* called “Just a Little Violence.” I liked it a lot because usually I don’t take violence very seriously and ignore it in the movies I see. This article was inspiring to me because I realized violence is a bad thing and that we shouldn’t even pretend to be violent. I love the *New Era* and thank you for putting this article in.

Brett H., location not given

**TESTIMONIES**

Whenever I read the *New Era* I feel the Spirit, which comforts me from what I see in the world. I feel the testimonies of others who have submitted many wonderful photos and stories. It strengthens my testimony and really boosts my confidence. I really like the *New Era* posters and the poems that are always in the back accompanied by an inspirational photo. I love this Church and wish to be a part of it always. I can’t wait to be a missionary.

Austin R., Utah

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

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

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

*Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.*

ILLUSTRATED BY SCOTT GREER



## DAILY SOWING

BY ERIN K. RUSSELL

I have a plot of earth  
and have planted there  
a handful of good seeds  
that I hope will bear,  
but I must labor  
and till the soil,  
feed the plants.  
And with my toil,  
if I rise early  
to work each day  
and thrust away  
the strangling weeds  
and infertile land,  
then comes the progress  
by my steady hand.  
It's the day-to-day  
productive hours  
that purchase growth

and produce flowers.  
Likewise, my life.  
If I take care,  
I will mature  
and strengthen where  
I once was weak,  
had lacked in heart  
or wanted for courage,  
so, for my part,  
I have endeavored.  
Life's like the earth  
and requires effort  
for yielding worth.  
It's the day-to-day  
productive row  
that reaps the good  
from seeds you sow.



### **COMING NEXT MONTH**

- *Why do we have the Book of Mormon?*
- *Notes to the good guys and the good girls.*
- *What happens to the money from fast offerings?*
- *Read about Aaronic Priesthood holders in North Carolina and elders in Hawaii.*

*Just a few of the articles waiting for you in the upcoming May 2008 New Era.*

SEE US ONLINE AT [WWW.NEWERA.LDS.ORG](http://WWW.NEWERA.LDS.ORG)