

THE New Era

DECEMBER

2003

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NIGHT,
P. 20

GIFTS
WITHOUT
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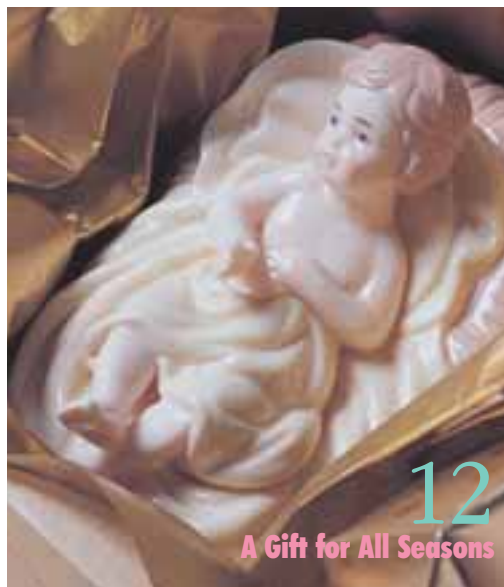
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Cover: Aileen Akagi of
Midway, Utah, helps
arrange nativity scenes
as part of a community
celebration. See "Images
of That Holy Night" on
p. 20.

Cover photography:
Craig Dimond (front)
and (back)

From
shepherds
to wise men,
each had their
place in the story
of our Savior's
birth. See "Images
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THE SEARCH FOR *Jesus*

How do we follow Him if we haven't found Him? And how shall we find Him if we don't seek Him?



BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON
First Counselor in the First Presidency

For generations, enlightened people in the Old and New Worlds eagerly sought the fulfillment of prophecies spoken by righteous men inspired of Almighty God. Then came that night of nights when the angel of the Lord came upon shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock, with the pronouncement, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

Thus, personally invited to search for the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, did these shepherds worry about the security of their possessions? Did they procrastinate their search for Jesus? The record affirms that “the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem. . . . And they came with haste” (Luke 2:15–16).

Wise men journeyed from the East to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in

the east, and are come to worship him. . . .

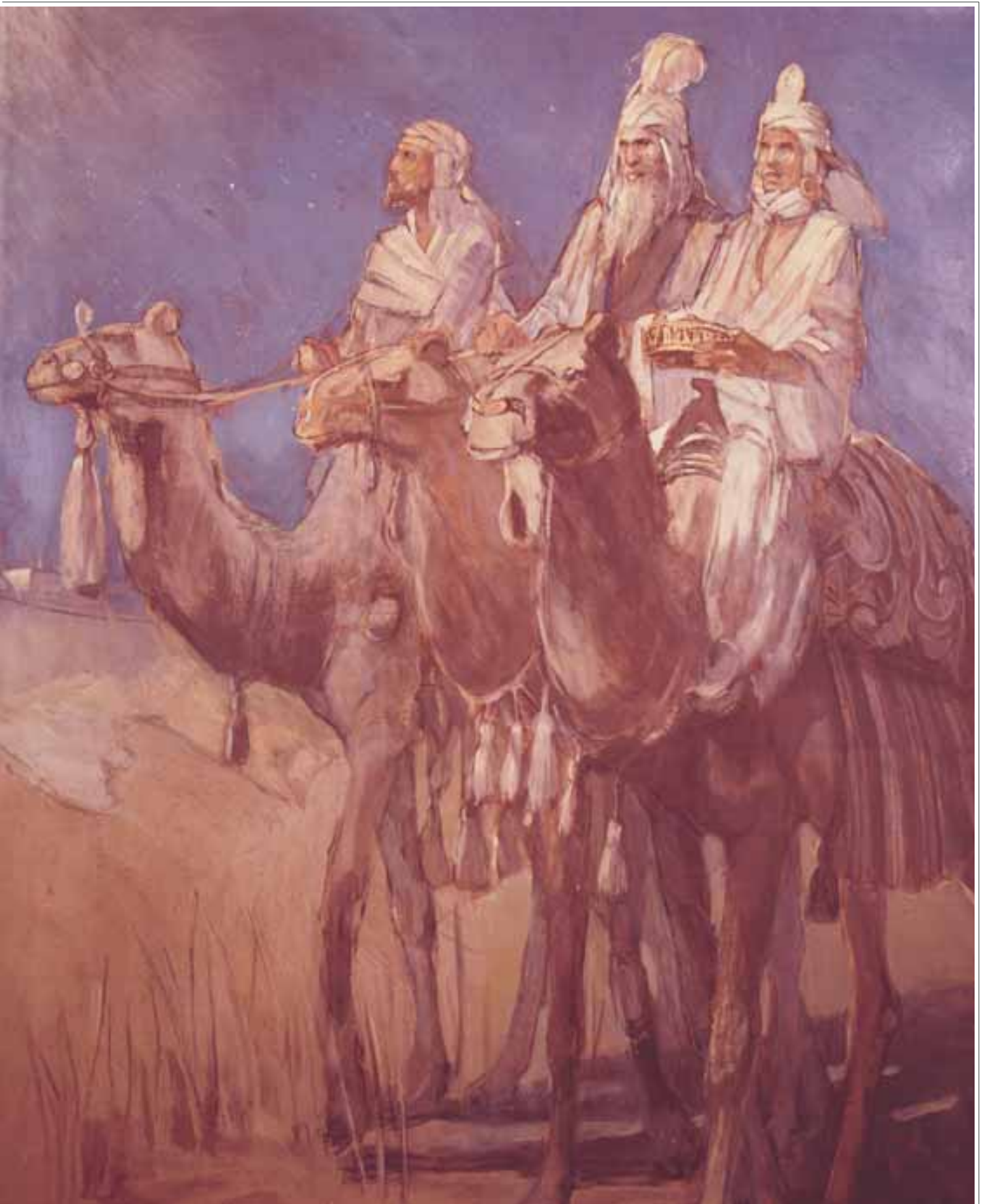
“When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh” (Matthew 2:2, 10–11).

With the birth of the babe of Bethlehem, there emerged a great endowment—a power stronger than weapons, a wealth more lasting than the coins of Caesar. This child was to be the King of kings and Lord of lords, the promised Messiah, even Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, He came forth from heaven to live on earth as mortal man and to establish the kingdom of God. During His earthly ministry, He taught men the higher law. His glorious gospel reshaped the thinking of the world. He blessed the sick; He caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He even

Wise men journeyed from the East to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him.”





The shepherds of old sought Jesus the child. But we seek Jesus the Christ, our Older Brother, our Mediator with the Father, our Redeemer.

raised the dead to life.

What was the reaction to His message of mercy, His words of wisdom, His lessons of life? There were a precious few who appreciated Him. They bathed His feet. They learned His word. They followed His example.

Formula for Finding Him

Down through the generations of time, the message from Jesus has been the same. To Peter by the shores of beautiful Galilee, He said, “Follow me.” To Philip of old came the call, “Follow me.” To Matthew came the instructions, “Follow me.” And to you and to me, if we but listen, shall come that same beckoning invitation, “Follow me.”

But how do we follow Him if first we don’t find Him? And how shall we find Him if first we don’t seek Him? Where and how should we begin this search for Jesus?

The formula for finding Jesus has always been and ever will be the same—the *earnest and sincere prayer of a humble and pure heart*. The Lord told the prophet Jeremiah, “Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13).

Before we can successfully undertake a personal search for Jesus, we must first prepare time for Him in our lives and room for Him in our hearts. In these busy days there are many who have time for golf, shopping, work, or play—but no time for Christ.

Lovely homes dot the land and provide rooms for eating, rooms for sleeping, play-rooms, sewing rooms, television rooms, but no room for Christ.

“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no

room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:7). No room. No room. No room. Ever has it been.

As we undertake our personal search for Jesus, aided and guided by the principle of prayer, we must have a clear concept of Him whom we seek. The shepherds of old sought Jesus the child. But we seek Jesus the Christ, our Older Brother, our Mediator with the Father, our Redeemer, the Author of our salvation; He who was in the beginning with the Father; He who took upon Himself the sins of the world and so willingly died that we might forever live. This is the Jesus whom we seek.

When We Find Him

And when we find Him, will we be prepared as were the wise men of old to provide gifts from our many treasures? They presented gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These are not the gifts Jesus asks of us. From the treasure of our hearts Jesus asks that we give of ourselves: “Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind” (D&C 64:34).

In this marvelous dispensation of the fullness of times, our opportunities to give of ourselves are indeed limitless, but they are also perishable. There are hearts to gladden. There are kind words to say. There are gifts to be given. There are deeds to be done. There are souls to be saved.

As we remember that “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17), we will not find ourselves in the unenviable position of Jacob Marley’s ghost, who spoke to Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens’s immortal *A Christmas Carol*. Marley spoke sadly of opportunities lost. Said he, “Not to know that any Christian spirit, working kindly in its



little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunities misused. Yet such was I. Oh, such was I."

Marley added, "Why did I walk through crowds of fellow beings with my eyes turned down, and never raised them to that blessed star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode? Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me?"

In a vain effort to comfort Marley, Scrooge offered: "But you were always a good man of business, Jacob." Lamented Marley: "Mankind was my business!"

Fortunately, the privilege to serve others can come to each of us. If we but look, we too will see a bright, particular star that will guide us to our opportunity.

Every member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the waters of baptism, has covenanted to stand as a witness of God "at all times and in all things, and in all places" and has expressed a willingness to "bear one another's burdens, that they might be light" (Mosiah 18:8-9).

By fulfilling this covenant in our lives, we will become acquainted with Him who declared, "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world" (3 Nephi 11:10). This is the Jesus whom we seek. This is our brother whom we love. This is Christ the Lord, whom we serve. I testify that He lives, for I speak as one who has found Him. **NE**

From an article printed in the December 1990 Ensign.



To the Christ child, the wise men of old presented gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These are not the gifts Jesus asks of us. From the treasure of our hearts Jesus asks that we give of ourselves.





ONE MORE STOP

BY JAMES TSCHUDY

The Lord uses small means to accomplish great things. I'm glad He decided to use my family that Christmas.

While the streets showed no hint of white, our freezing hands and frosty breath told us it was cold enough to snow. Cotton capped and wrapped up tight, my family was enjoying our traditional Christmas Eve caroling. My parents and all 10 of us children had made it home for the holidays.

We had ended our family home evening that week by practicing the carols we wished to sing that year. Balancing the guitar on his knee, my father practiced the chords he would struggle to play in the frigid night. No one would ever line up to see my nine siblings, parents, and me sing; yet, undaunted, year after year, we wanted to share our Christmas spirit.

This year we had chosen to sing to some of our ward friends to thank them for their friendship and fellowship. The names on our list were crossed off one by one. A few of the


families weren't home, so we finished our planned visits early. My dad asked my mother if she knew of anyone else we should visit before returning home for hot chocolate. My mother's eyes lit up after a moment's thought. She felt impressed to visit the Ramage family.

The Ramages were a sweet couple, grayed with maturity and experience. Brother Ramage had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. We thought at first that it might be too late to visit, but, persuaded by my mother's urgings, we filed into our van and headed to our destination.

Tiptoeing in the quiet night air, we gathered around the front porch of the Ramage's simple home while my younger brother rang the doorbell. To our surprise, Sister Ramage, wrapped in a flannel shawl, answered the door almost immediately. Startled by her quick appearance, we falteringly began singing "Silent Night." After croaking our way through "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," we were surprised to see a single chilled tear hanging on Sister Ramage's cheek. After we sang, she gave us cookies while she visited with my mother.

We were surprised to see a single chilled tear hanging on Sister Ramage's cheek.

The Savior came humbly into the world. His precious gift allows us to be with our families forever.



Our parents later told us that Brother and Sister Ramage had bravely confronted the doctor's grim diagnosis. So on that Christmas Eve, just a few months before Brother Ramage would pass away, Sister Ramage had been especially troubled in her heart, anticipating the loss of her husband. Unable to sleep and struggling in

spirit, she retired to the dark of their living room. Sitting near the door, she needed little time to respond when the bell rang. As unimpressive as our family choir was, it meant a great deal to her. Seeing our family

huddled together reminded her of the promise of an eternal family.

That Sunday, as we wandered into the chapel before sacrament meeting, our eyes fell to where Brother and Sister Ramage sat together. Sister Ramage's eyes sparkled. She welcomed us with a bright smile that warmed my spirit. Never had I expected our musical effort to be an answer to someone's prayer.

I realized that a lot of good things can take place through seemingly unimpressive means, like our family's caroling. The Savior came into the world in humble circumstances. In both cases, the true beauty was in the gift given, and such gifts are what make Christmas meaningful. **NE**

James Tschudy is a member of the *BYU 73rd Ward, Brigham Young University First Stake.*



Gospel Gifts

It seems stores begin decorating for Christmas earlier and earlier every year, each store advertising the perfect gift. But for members of the Church, Christmas is always about Christ, who not only gave us the greatest gift—the Atonement—but who also *is* the “perfect” gift we can give to others.

Students in Patricia Gibson’s Ledgewood First Ward seminary class in Morristown, New Jersey, offer these ideas on using the Christmas season to share the gospel.

- ☺ Pray for opportunities to share your belief in the Savior.
- ☺ Give scriptures as gifts. Write your testimony in the front.
- ☺ Share with friends some of your family’s Christmas traditions that center on Christ.
- ☺ Invite friends to a Christmas program at church, whether it’s a ward choir fireside, a Christmas sacrament meeting, a Mutual Christmas project, or a ward or branch party.

- ☺ Invite neighbors to dinner or for a holiday treat. Share Christmas traditions. Read the story of Christ’s birth. Consider arranging to have the missionaries participate as well.

- ☺ Plan a “12 days of Christmas” activity for a friend or neighbor, leaving an anonymous gift for them on each of the 12 days before Christmas. The gifts can be anything from spiritual thoughts to needed food or clothing.

- ☺ Go caroling as a family, Mutual group, or with friends to the homes of friends or neighbors.

- ☺ Prepare small treats to give away with messages about Christ.

- ☺ Invite someone who is spending Christmas alone to celebrate it with your family. Include him or her in family traditions and activities centered on Christ.

- ☺ Spread the Christmas spirit through helpful acts, kind words, and friendly smiles. Go out of your way to serve others. **NE**

A **GIFT** *for All* **SEASONS**

BY ELDER DARWIN B. CHRISTENSON
Of the Seventy



You don't have to wait until Christmas to give the gifts of friendship, love, and service.

My brother, sister, and I grew up in the rural town of Blackfoot, Idaho. My family didn't have a lot of money, but that didn't stop us from being excited about Christmas. We would wake up early in the morning, sneak into my mom and dad's room, and ask them if we could get up. They'd say with tired voices, "No. It's only three o'clock in the morning. Go back to bed."

So we'd climb back into our beds and wait and wait and think, "Boy, it's got to be later now." Then we'd get up again and ask my parents, "Mom, Dad, can we get up now?"

They'd say, "No, it's only 10 minutes after 3:00. Go back to bed." It seemed like so long before we'd finally get up to celebrate Christmas.

In those early years, we began to understand the importance of the Savior by celebrating Christmas. By developing a relationship with Him, we were able to make good choices and receive many wonderful gifts in our lives.

The Gift of Good Friends

True friendship has been one of those gifts. I had several good friends while growing up. The gospel bound us together, and special leaders helped us choose the right. We had a wonderful Sunday School teacher named Eva Manwaring who knew how to handle a group of ruffian boys. I don't think there were too many sisters who would have put up with us, but she did. Her husband

took care of us in Scouts, helping us get our Eagle ranks. I am grateful for good friends and leaders who helped me make good choices, especially the choice to serve a mission.

The Gift of Brazil

When I first arrived in Brazil as a missionary, I immediately loved the beautiful, green country and the open, loving, humble people.

The work was often difficult. Representatives of another church would tell the youth to throw rocks at us. We were put in jail. It was hard for people to join the Church, because their neighbors would ostracize them. That was in the late 1950s when the Church didn't have even one stake in Brazil.

Now there are almost 200 stakes. It has been a spiritual blessing to see the miraculous growth of the Church in Brazil as I've returned with my family as a mission president and member of an Area Presidency.

After my first mission was over, I sailed for home on a boat. I stood on the deck and cried as I saw Brazil disappear over the horizon. I'm always excited to return, but it hasn't gotten easier to say good-bye.

The Gift of Love

When I got back from my mission, I met a beautiful lady named Sandra Joelene Lyon at stake conference. We both attended Idaho State University in Pocatello but lived in Blackfoot. The best part about commuting was that Sandra and I carpooled in the same group. I could tell she was one of God's precious daughters, and I knew she was the right one for me to marry. One day I sat next to her in the car and said, "You know, you really



By developing a relationship with the Savior, we were able to make good choices and receive many wonderful gifts in our lives.

Being married for eternity is the greatest gift my wife and I could have given each other.

ought to write your missionary a ‘Dear John’ letter because you know you’re going to marry me anyway.” It wasn’t quite that simple, but after a couple of years we were married.

We got engaged in December, which makes Christmas especially meaningful. Being married for eternity is the greatest gift we could have given each other. My wife is a wonderful blessing as she provides gifts of love to me, our children, their spouses, and our grandchildren. Her love does much to keep our family united.

The Gift of Priesthood Power

After a few years of marriage, Sandra and I had our third child, a little boy named Stephen who was born just three days before Christmas. When he was born, he could not inflate his lungs. He had a valiant little spirit about him. He fought for life, but the doctors said it wasn’t likely he would live. Our bishop invited the ward to join their prayers with ours for our son.

The greatest gift that special Christmas Eve was being able to give him a blessing. After the blessing, I felt prompted to go to Sandra’s hospital room and tell her Stephen was going to be just fine and that she shouldn’t worry. On Christmas morning, the doctors told us Stephen was going to be OK. They had no idea what had happened. It was a miracle. I’m so grateful for the power of the priesthood. We consider Stephen’s survival to be one of our family’s greatest Christmas gifts.

The Great Gift

The great gift we receive at Christmas is a remembrance of the Savior’s birth. He is our gift from the Father. Living close to the Savior while growing up helps us to make good decisions. You don’t want to disappoint Him. Forming a testimony while you are young will help you to always appreciate His miraculous sacrifice.

It’s critical to live close to the Savior and know that He is always there and that He always loves you. Following His example and His teachings brings wonderful feelings at Christmas and marvelous blessings in eternity. I testify that the Savior lives. Merry Christmas, beloved brothers and sisters. **NE**



NO COMPARISON

BY EMMA WITHERS

No earthly pleasure can compare to the peace and joy of the temple.

Recently, on a family holiday at a game park north of our home in South Africa, my family decided we would spend a few nights in Johannesburg and visit the temple.

The hotel in Johannesburg was incredible. I mean, it was the kind of hotel you see in the movies. My bedroom suite was bigger than the kitchen and family room at home combined, the tiles in the bathroom were heated, and the television came out of a box when we pressed a button. The staff was there to take care of our every whim.

I was impressed. This, I thought, was how my life was meant to be: swanning around, acting like royalty. In fact, I was so caught up in the luxury of the hotel that I forgot why we were there in the first place.

The only opportunity my brother, sister, and I would have to attend the temple to do



The beauty of the temple and the feelings I had when I was doing baptisms were worth any sacrifice.

baptisms for the dead was Saturday morning. But instead of thinking about the temple, all I was thinking about was how nice it would be to sleep late on Saturday, spend the day in this beautiful hotel, and then leave for home.

Still, we decided to go to the temple. As I walked through the temple doors and saw and felt the holiness and beauty of that place, my perspective changed, and I realized what was really important. The hotel may have been beautiful, but it couldn't compare to the temple. The feelings I had as I did baptisms for the dead brought such peace and joy to me, greater than any worldly pleasure.

I am so grateful for this lesson. It is easy to become caught up in the things of the world. These things are attractive, but the pleasure they bring doesn't last. Now I more clearly understand that real joy and peace can be found only through obeying and honoring Heavenly Father's commandments. **NE**

Emma Withers is a member of the Cambridge University Second Ward, Cambridge Massachusetts Stake.

Q & A

“What can I give my family for Christmas that would be more meaningful than something bought at the store?”

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

NEW ERA

Imagine this. You’ve just received a present. It’s big. It’s fancy. It’s expensive. The card with it says, “Merry Christmas. I didn’t put any thought into this gift. I didn’t put any effort into it. I had the money, so it wasn’t really a sacrifice. Enjoy.”

Of course, you’ll probably never get a card like that. But you might get a gift like that—something impressive but without real meaning.

How can you make sure the gift you’re giving will mean something to the person receiving it? Whatever the gift, what *will* make a difference is how much thought you put into the gift, how much of yourself you put into it, or what kind of sacrifice it represents.

For example, a heartfelt poem that you worked on for days or offering a night of free baby-sitting so your parents can spend time together would probably mean more to someone than a gift that took only five minutes to buy, no matter how much it cost.

Christ gave us the ultimate gift—the Atonement. We can give others gifts that testify of Christ and His gift.

Giving of yourself, as Christ did, means giving of your time, talents, and love.

Just because a gift is expensive doesn’t guarantee it will mean something to the person you give it to.

Think about your gift. What would the person really like, need, or want?

Service can be a meaningful gift. Offer to help with chores or other tasks.

The American writer-philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: “Rings and jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only [true] gift is a portion of thyself” (*The Complete Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* [1929], 286).

Christ taught us how to give gifts. It seems like every time you turn the page in the scriptures, there’s another story about the Savior doing things for others or giving of Himself. He gave His time—answering questions. He gave His talents—teaching the people and comforting the sick. He gave His love—serving selflessly. We too can give of ourselves by offering our time, talents, service, and love.

Christ also gave us the greatest gift of all: the possibility of eternal life through His Atonement (see D&C 14:7). We can’t atone for others, but the gifts we give could teach others about Christ’s gift. Here are some suggestions, many of them offered by our readers. Also, see “Gospel Gifts” on page 11 and “Homemade Christmas” on page 34 of this issue.

★ Give a picture of Jesus, along with a



scripture verse and your feelings about the Savior.

- ★ Give “service coupons” offering your help with chores or other tasks.

- ★ Forgive someone, or ask for someone’s forgiveness.

- ★ Write an encouraging letter.

- ★ Give someone a Book of Mormon.

- ★ Spend your time with someone doing what he or she likes to do.

- ★ Paint a picture; write a poem; compose a song.

Really thinking about what to give and then giving of yourself often takes more time than just running to the store. So plan ahead. You’ll find that the extra effort will be worth it, and you will be repaid with happiness and the warmth of the Spirit.

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) taught, “The Christmas spirit is the Christ spirit, that makes our hearts glow in brotherly love and friendship and prompts us to kind deeds of service” (*Gospel Ideals* [1953], 551). **NE**

READERS



Some of the most important gifts don’t come from the store. Some gifts you can give that possess a magic beyond store-bought things

are kindness, love, and charity. We pick the name of a family member, then fill little bags with encouraging notes or some service we can do and maybe a piece of candy.

Briana Deaver, 14, Rocklin Fourth Ward, Rocklin California Stake

We have many valuable gifts, but the important gift to give is a copy of the Book of Mormon and a testimony of the truthfulness of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As we greet each other with grateful hearts and sincere souls, it is like we behold the loving face of our Savior.

Phyllishena Faamoe Savelio, 19, Lalovi Ward,
Upolu Samoa West Stake



I decided it would be meaningful to make something for my younger brother this Christmas. The answer came to me through the Church magazines. Almost every article

includes a sidebar with a quote and picture. Backed with cardboard and wrapping paper, they make great bookmarks. I also covered a box with quotes to keep them in.

Jenny Maynes, 16, Geneva Ward,
Naperville Illinois Stake

The gifts I'm planning to give are gifts that I made myself, maybe a poem or a homemade card telling them how much I love them. For me, it's not the cost that counts—it's the thought.

Carol T. Vallo, 21, Calasiao Second Branch,
Calasiao Philippines District



Just like the Savior does, we can present our neighbor with an inestimable gift—our love. Material things deteriorate with time, but the joy of knowing that someone

cares about you has no price nor end.

Luiz Henrique Keng Quieroz Jr., 17,
Cariacica Ward, Vitória Brazil Stake



For a few moments, may we set aside the catalogs of Christmas, with their gifts of exotic description. Let's even turn from the flowers for Mother, the special tie for Father, the cute doll, the train that whistles, the long-awaited bicycle—even the 'Star Trek' books and videos—and direct our thoughts to those God-given gifts that endure, [including] the gift of love."

—President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Gifts," *Ensign*, May 1993, 60.



Last Christmas I received a call from my friend. He bore his testimony of the gospel and our Savior. I was so touched that I still remember that. At that instant,

I saw that jewelry, clothes, or toys are not the best presents, but the best gift is a testimony that Christ was born among us, that He conquered the chains of death, and that He lives today.

Jephsey Lorena T. Cardenas, 23, Jardim Roberto Ward,
São Paulo Brazil Parque Pinheiros Stake

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send us your answer to the question below, along with your name, age, address, ward and stake (or branch and district). Please include a photograph of yourself that is 1 1/2 by 2 inches (4 by 5 cm) or larger.

Q&A, New Era

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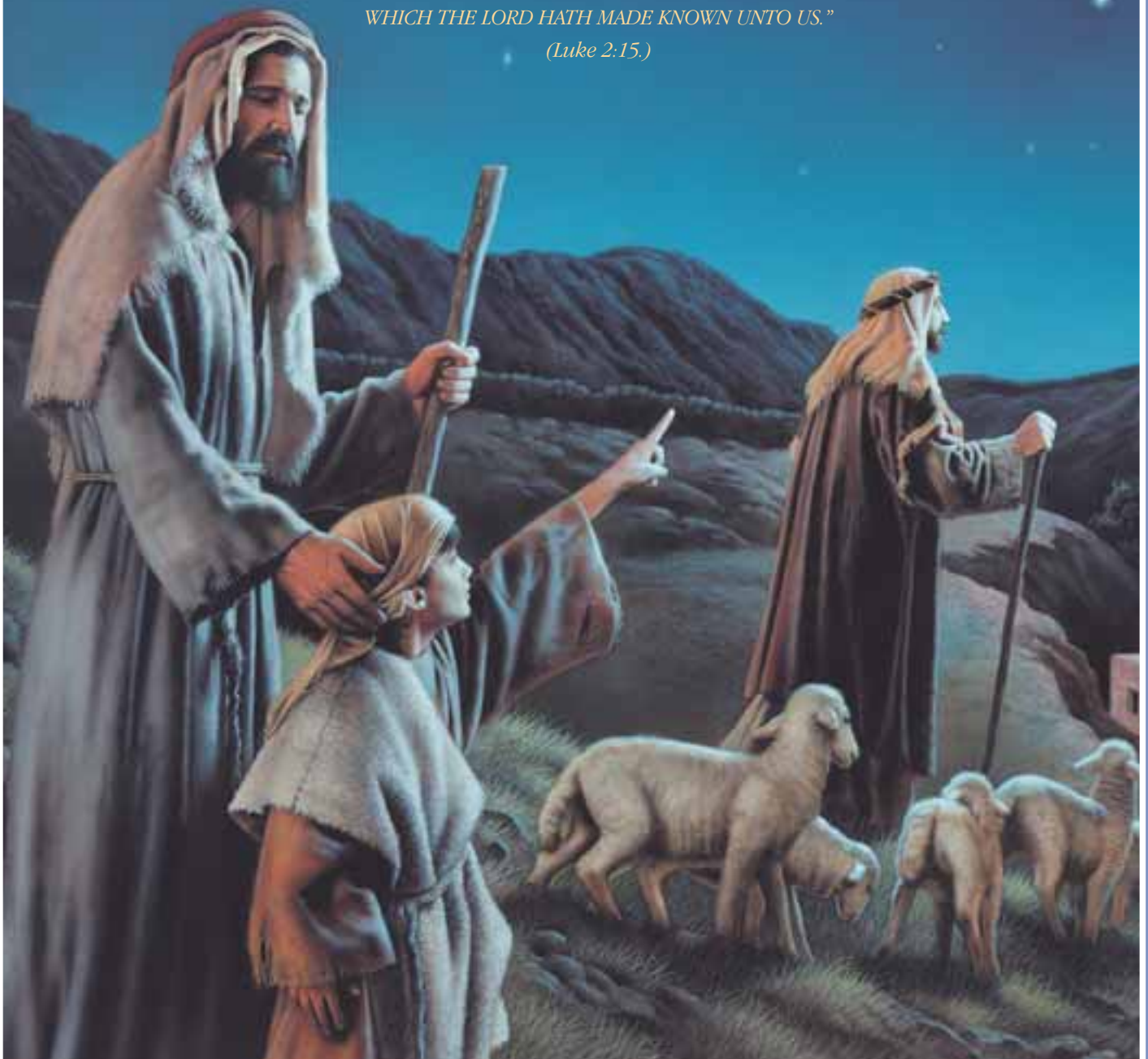
QUESTION

"I'm not attractive. Please don't tell me I am. Why did Heavenly Father give me this face and body? Didn't He know how much it would hurt?"

COME, LET US ADORE HIM

*"THE SHEPHERDS SAID ONE TO ANOTHER,
LET US NOW GO EVEN UNTO BETHLEHEM,
AND SEE THIS THING WHICH IS COME TO PASS,
WHICH THE LORD HATH MADE KNOWN UNTO US."*

(Luke 2:15.)



Images of That HOLY NIGHT

BY KIMBERLY WEBB
Church Magazines

MARY

Mary, descended from King David, was Joseph's cousin (see James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 86). Scriptures indicate that she, too, had been called to her earthly role in the premortal world (see Isaiah 7:14; 1 Nephi 11:15–19; Mosiah 3:8; Alma 7:10). Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote, "As the Father chose the most noble and righteous of all his spirit sons to come into mortality as his Only Begotten in the flesh, so we may confidently conclude that he selected the most worthy and spiritually talented of all his spirit daughters to be the mortal mother of his Eternal Son" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, vol. 1, 85).





When you hear the word *crèche*, what do you think of? The word literally means crib or manger, but it has come to mean any depiction of the Savior's birth, or Nativity. For Aileen Akagi, 17, the word *crèche* doesn't remind her of only one nativity scene—it reminds her of roughly 600 of them! As a member of the Midway Fourth Ward, Midway Utah Stake, she has volunteered at the Interfaith Crèche Exhibit for three years in a row.

The exhibit was started several years ago by Sister Holly Zenger, an adult member of the Midway stake, as a small exhibit in her home. It has since become a community event, supported by people of many faiths. Each year, during the first week of December, people lend their nativity scenes from all over the world to be displayed

Aileen (right) helps Holly Zenger, founder of the crèche exhibit.



THE STAR

As prophesied, a new light in the heavens confirmed that the Light of the World had been born (see Numbers 24:17; Matthew 2:2; Helaman 14:5; 3 Nephi 1:21). According to some traditions, even unbelievers could not ignore the sign. A letter from Ignatius to the Ephesians, dated A.D. 100, reads, "A star shone in heaven

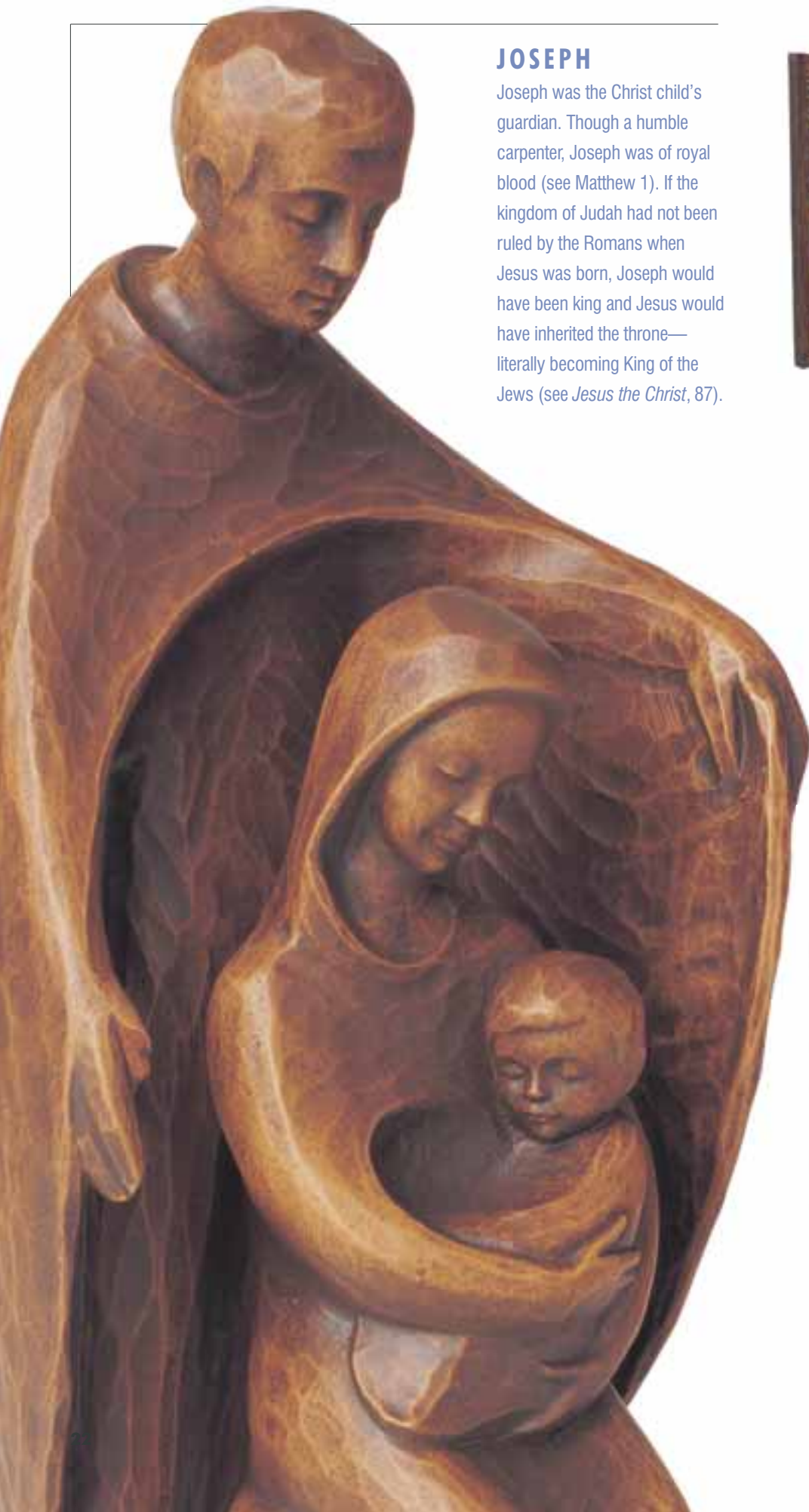
beyond all the other stars, and its light was inexpressible, and its novelty struck terror into men's minds. All the rest of the stars, together with the sun and moon, were the chorus to this star . . . that sent out its light exceedingly above them all. And men began to be troubled to think whence this new star came so unlike to all the others" (*Ensign*, Oct. 1981, 26).



THE STABLE

During Jesus' day, inns offered travelers safety and shelter from the weather but no privacy. Guests spread their blankets on the floor wherever they could find space. Animals were tied up in an inner courtyard or housed in a stable, which was often a limestone cave. Here, amid mules and camels, the Son of God made His entrance into mortality. It was one of the lowliest places, but at this busy time in Bethlehem, it may have also been the most private (see *Ensign*, Dec. 1997, 40).





JOSEPH

Joseph was the Christ child's guardian. Though a humble carpenter, Joseph was of royal blood (see Matthew 1). If the kingdom of Judah had not been ruled by the Romans when Jesus was born, Joseph would have been king and Jesus would have inherited the throne—literally becoming King of the Jews (see *Jesus the Christ*, 87).



THE ANGELS

We do not know the identities of the angelic messengers who appeared to Joseph in a dream (see Matthew 1:20) or to the shepherds (see Luke 2:9–14). But it was the angel Gabriel who spoke to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, and to Mary (see Luke 1:5–19, 28–38). In mortality, Gabriel was known as Noah (see Bible Dictionary, “Gabriel,” 676).





Aileen has volunteered at the crèche exhibit three years in a row.

in the Midway stake center. Roughly 4,300 visitors come each year.

“It’s interesting to see the different styles of nativity scenes,” Aileen says. Seeing how diverse cultures portray the Christ child’s birth reminds her of how well-known the Christmas story is.

Volunteers set up the exhibits, monitor them, and lead children’s activities. Although Aileen has done a little of each, she spends most of her time running the marionette show for children. She organizes young women into groups who perform scenes from the Nativity with puppets. The show runs every 20 minutes.

“The first year we did the marionette show, one little boy brought his grandma to see it four times in a row,” Aileen laughs.

Throughout the show, the young women and audience sing Christmas songs. “One

Volunteers set up roughly 600 nativity scenes in the Midway stake center each year.

THE SHEPHERDS

Humble shepherds were among the first to know that the Messiah had come (see Luke 2:10–11). Perhaps angels appeared to these shepherds because their labor contributed to temple work. Under the law of Moses, firstborn sheep without blemish were sacrificed on temple altars, symbolizing Christ’s infinite and eternal sacrifice. By law, only sheep chosen for temple sacrifice could be raised near the city, so the shepherds were probably caring for these consecrated animals—symbols of the Savior born that night (see *Ensign*, Dec. 1997, 43).





THE WISE MEN

No nativity scene seems complete without Wise Men, but they weren't there on that holy night. They later found Jesus in a house, perhaps when he was two years old. After the Wise Men's visit, Herod decreed that all children under age two in Bethlehem were to be killed. He probably based his decree on information given him by the Wise Men, who had told him how long ago the star had appeared.

We don't know how many Wise Men there were, but three are traditionally shown because of the three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

The scriptures tell us that they came from the east.

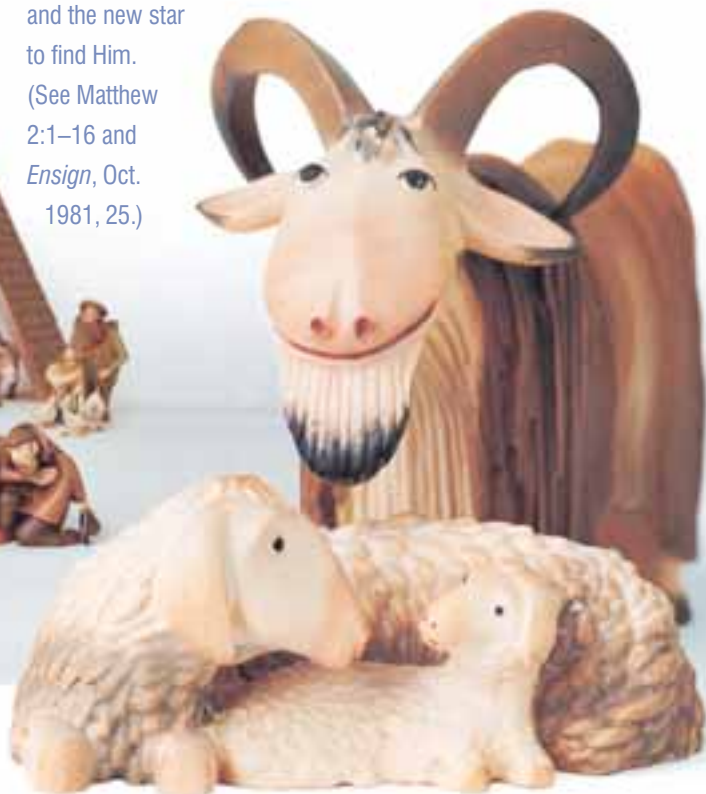


Some say that they were the kings of Tarshish, Sheba, and Seba. Others say they were noblemen from Persia or Babylonia. No one knows exactly where these holy men came from, but they knew and

believed in the prophecies about the Messiah's birth, and they followed the Spirit and the new star to find Him. (See Matthew 2:1–16 and *Ensign*, Oct. 1981, 25.)

THE ANIMALS

Mary and Joseph, alone with animals in the stable, were the first to see their Creator in the flesh. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated, "At the focal point of all human history, . . . probably no other mortal watched—none but a poor young carpenter, a beautiful virgin mother, and silent stabled animals who had not the power to utter the sacredness they had seen" ("Without Ribbons and Bows," *New Era*, Dec. 1994, 6).





Young women perform a puppet show of the Nativity.

year, we finished by singing ‘Silent Night’ (*Hymns*, no. 204), and all the children and their parents joined in. It sounded like more than the audience was there—like angels were singing.”

Seeing so many images of that holy night causes Aileen to reflect on what Mary must have experienced. “I couldn’t imagine being as young as she was and taking on her responsibility. How overwhelming to have a baby and know that He was the Savior! She must have been a very virtuous, spiritual woman. I wish I could speak to her and find out what she felt.”

Aileen has also been touched when thinking of the shepherds. “They may have been lowly in status, yet they were important because they cared for sheep. To me, they symbolize the Son of God and what He does for us.”

The greatest thing Aileen has pondered? “If I had been there to witness the Savior’s birth, how would I have lived my life afterwards, knowing that I had seen the Christ?”

Most likely she would have lived her life as she already does—as a Latter-day Saint committed to service and willing to bear testimony of the Savior who was laid in a manger—a crèche—so long ago. **NE**

THE CHRIST CHILD

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).





10 THINGS

I Love about You

BY LOIS ZURLIGEN JORGENSEN

Eric's heartfelt Christmas gift meant a lot to our family.

When my oldest son, Eric, was a senior in high school, he wanted to give his family gifts for Christmas. He had little income, so he decided on a gift of the heart.

For each family member Eric made a list of the 10 things he would miss most about him or her while he was at college and on his mission. His lists were rolled up like scrolls and tied with ribbon.

At Christmas we opened our gifts with great enthusiasm and curiosity. My list included things like "Watching her try to use the computer" and "Her hugs." It must have taken him a long time to think of 10 things for each of us. I cried, his brothers laughed, and his only sister cherished her list. It still hangs on the door of her room today, three years later.

Now as Eric serves a mission in Guatemala, we wanted to send him something different for his last Christmas before returning home. Each of us wrote our

own version of the present he gave us three years ago. We titled them "Ten Things I Have Missed Most about Eric While He's Been on His Mission."

For some of us it was easy. Eric's brothers had a hard time but finally finished. It was a great project for family home evening, and we all laughed and cried as we thought of our 10 things. What a great family tradition we've started and hope to continue as our other children leave for college and missions.

I will never forget this gift from a busy son who thought to make a gift that would make a difference. We are grateful we were able to receive this from him. **NE**

Lois Zurligen Jorgensen is a member of the Asbland Second Ward, Medford Oregon Stake.





THE PARTY THEY GAVE AWAY

Each Christmas, teens from the Holladay 24th Ward create a Christmas party for about 50 children from local low-income areas. The youth organize the party, gather the gifts, make treats and blankets, and decorate the chapel.

BY BARBARA JEAN JONES

All the gifts, all the food, all the treats are for someone else. It's the best kind of Christmas party to give.

Every December, the youth of the Holladay 24th Ward, Holladay Utah North Stake, put on an amazing Christmas party. They decorate with beautiful lights, have a delicious dinner, make Christmas goodies, and receive *hundreds* of gifts.

Sound fun? It is, because none of it is for the teens themselves. They give it all away.

For nine years, the youth have put on a Christmas party at their ward building for elementary school students—about 50 children each year—from local low-income areas. The event includes a variety of themed

rooms designed to make the children's Christmas unforgettable.

In the Bethlehem room, children learn about the birth of the Savior as they dress up and act out the Nativity while reading the story from Luke.

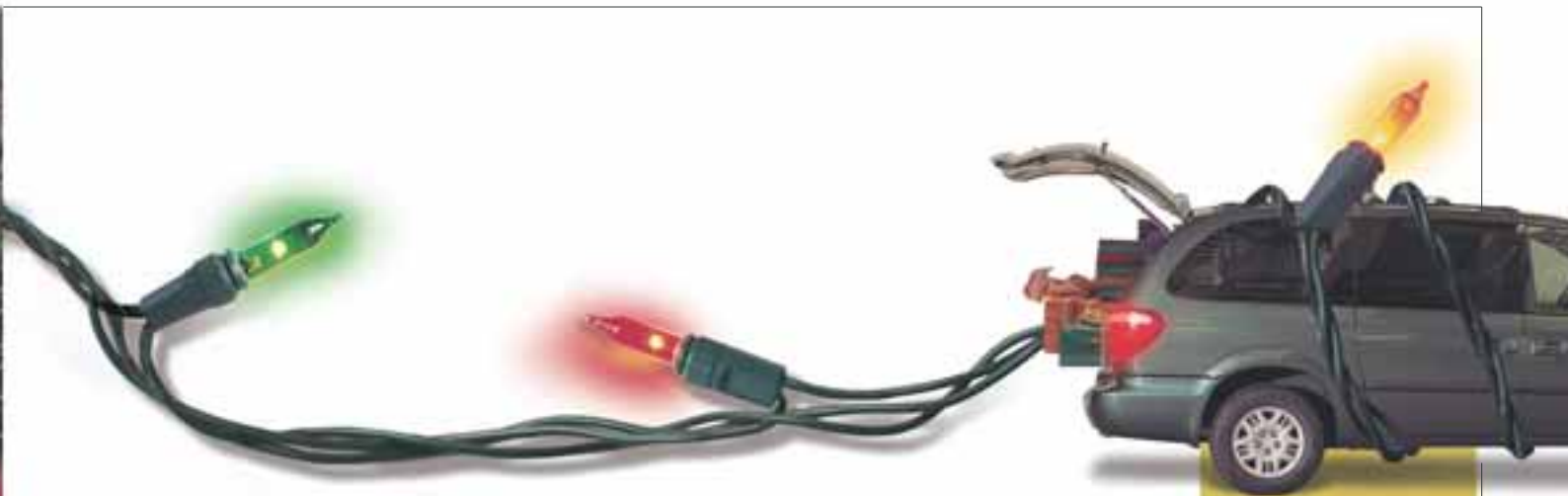
In the Santa Claus room, they get their picture taken while receiving their own fleece blankets made by the youth. The children also choose a box full of home-baked treats to give to their families. Their teenage "buddy" for the evening also reads them their favorite Christmas story.

And then there's a stop at the North Pole Diner for a scrumptious Christmas dinner.

As wonderful as each of these rooms is, they're not what make this party so extraordinary. The big event happens in the cultural hall. When the children enter this area, their eyes get *really* big, and exclamations of "Wow!" fill the air. Some of the little ones even jump up and down with anticipation.







For there before them is a “store,” just like the big stores downtown, full of hundreds of donated gifts.

But, like the youth of the ward who choose to give their Christmas party away each year, the children aren’t excited to pick these gifts for themselves. They are overjoyed because this is the first time for most of them to be able to get Christmas gifts for their family. “The best part of Christmas is giving, and this gives the kids the chance to experience the joy of giving themselves,” says Tiffany Thompson, 15.

At the end of the evening, adult volunteers from the ward drive the children home with bags full of gifts, treats, and a ham and other food items their parents can use to make a wonderful Christmas dinner. “It touches your heart to see kids who otherwise would not have anything to give to their families be able to give them so much,” says Valen Campbell, 17, who co-chaired this year’s party.

The giving doesn’t stop there. Even after the hundreds of hours of combined effort involved in putting on this service activity, youth of the ward say *they* are the ones who receive. “The children serve us, because they teach us about being selfless,” says 17-year-old Whitney Drage, the event’s other co-chair. “If there are gifts left over at the end, we let the children pick a gift for themselves. One year a little 8-year-old

girl asked me, ‘Instead of getting a gift for myself, could I just choose another one for my sister?’ ”

Becca Nelson, 14, adds, “It brings us the true meaning of Christmas: Christlike service. These kids are such an example of that. They hardly want anything for themselves, only for their families.”

The project also brings unity to the youth, the ward, and even the community. Ward members and members of other faiths help serve the Christmas dinner, donate food and gifts, and transport the children to and from the party. “It brings everyone closer because it takes everyone to make it work,” says Valen.

Perhaps these are the reasons the youth keep putting on this party year after year. “We had one year when we thought we’d do something else, but there was a ‘revolt,’ ” Bishop Gerreld Pulsipher says with a smile. “The youth and ward really look forward to giving this service.”

George Theodore, the counselor and social worker at the children’s school, adds, “This will be a Christmas these kids will never forget. When you’re not used to having something so special, the memory always stays in your heart. I think these kids will in turn give to others someday when they have a little extra to give.” **NE**

Barbara Jean Jones is a member of the Wasatch Ward, Salt Lake Hillside Stake.

The children, with their teen “buddies,” act out the Nativity in the “Bethlehem room,” eat dinner at the “North Pole Diner,” and receive gifts in the “Santa Claus room.” The children took presents home to their families.

ONE SLEEPLESS NIGHT

BY KORTNEY DAWNE WARBURTON

At first, worry made it impossible for me to sleep. Then I thought of a great way to help my family have a wonderful Christmas.

I couldn't wait for Christmas morning. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't go to sleep. I was so filled with love and excitement.

It was almost Christmas, and the year had been hard for my family. My dad's job was not going well. At night I could hear my parents talk about Christmas and how they didn't know what to do. They knew that they could tell us that we would have to go without giving presents to each other, but they didn't know what they could do about Santa, because most of the kids were still young. I was 13 years old and the oldest of six. At nights I would lie in my bed and try to think of a way that I could help my family to have a good Christmas.

One night I had the idea that I could earn some money, buy gifts for my brothers and sisters, lay them out on Christmas Eve, and say that they were from Santa. The next day, I walked around my neighborhood asking people if there was any work that needed to be done so I could earn some money. For a couple weeks before Christmas, I worked to earn the money I needed.

Two days before Christmas Eve, a friend

who was old enough to drive took me to the store so I could finish some Christmas shopping.

As I was walking down the aisles in the store, I was getting excited looking for things that I knew my brothers and sisters would like. Every present was chosen with much love, and I couldn't wait for them to open these gifts. Spending all the money I earned, I took the gifts home and hid them in my room until Christmas Eve.

When Christmas Eve came, all of my brothers and sisters were excited. After having our Christmas dinner, we got ready for bed and laid our stockings out for Santa to fill. Going downstairs to my room, I set my alarm so I could wake up in the night to lay out the gifts I had bought. I knew that my mom and dad would be setting things up and going to bed late, so I tried to get as much sleep as I could so I wouldn't be tired for Christmas day.

That night, no matter how hard I tried, I



couldn't go to sleep. I hoped my parents would go to bed soon. After waiting a few hours, I got all the gifts that I bought and snuck upstairs. A warm feeling came over me as I set out the gifts. I couldn't wait for morning to come. I didn't sleep the rest of the night because I was so filled with excitement and love.

When morning came, we all ran upstairs to wake up Mom and Dad and to see what Santa had brought.

Watching my brothers' and sisters' faces as they opened the gifts that I bought them was the best part of my day. When mom and dad realized there were other gifts, they started to cry.

I will never forget that Christmas and the feeling I felt. It was worth working hard to prepare for that day. **NE**

Kortney Dawne Warburton is a member of the Smithfield Seventh Ward, Smithfield Utah North Stake.



HOMEMADE *Christmas*

BY ELDER GENE R. COOK

Of the Seventy

Setting some guidelines made our Christmas gifts mean much more for the giver and the receiver.

During the four and one-half years my family lived in South America, we experienced Christmases that were very different from any Christmas we had celebrated in the United States.

Christmases there were simple compared to what we usually experienced. Because of the economic situations of many people, the commercial aspect of the holiday was downplayed.

We returned home to the United States from our South America assignment right at Christmastime. Going into the stores, we saw hundreds of items for sale—games, watches, stereos, televisions, snowmobiles, talking dolls, model airplanes, video recorders, microwave ovens, and so forth. This sudden shift of emphasis was difficult to adjust to.

The question was obvious: “What is Christmas?” In dividing up the word *Christmas*, we get *Christ* and *mas*. In Spanish the word

mas means “more.” It seemed to us that to some people Christmas meant *mas y mas y mas* (“more and more and more”). The “Christ” part of it and the *real* gift of giving seemed to have been forgotten.

What the true spirit of Christmas is all about—commemorating Jesus’ birth and enjoying the spirit of giving, loving, and caring for one another—seemed to be drowned out, at least for us, in the hustle and bustle. We felt great pressure to buy gifts for others, perhaps more out of obligation than in the true spirit of giving.

Family Guidelines for Giving

We asked ourselves how we could put the true spirit of giving into Christmas (and birthdays) more than we normally did. We decided to use the following guidelines:

1. Few, if any, gifts may be purchased.
2. Most gifts must be made using your own hands or given from your own time.
3. Few, if any, parts for the gifts may be purchased. You must improvise.
4. You must give of your own time, talents, and self, immersing yourself in the needs of the receiver.

This has been a great experience for our family. We have found that in following such



How could we put the true spirit of giving back into Christmas? Finding the answer has been a great experience for our family.



The following teachings from the Lord indicate that there really is a true spirit of giving and that the greatest gifts, the gifts of most value, are gifts of time, means, or talent. The greatest gift is a giving of self.

SERVICE

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd *giveth his life* for the sheep” (John 10:11; emphasis added).

LOVE

“For God so loved the world, that he *gave* his only begotten Son” (John 3:16; emphasis added).

RIGHTEOUS GIFTS

“Go ye also into the vineyard, and *whatsoever is right I will give you*” (Matthew 20:4; emphasis added).

GIVING

“Freely ye have received, *freely give*” (Matthew 10:8; emphasis added).

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is *more blessed to give* than to receive” (Acts 20:35; emphasis added).

“For unto whomsoever *much is given*, of him shall be much required” (Luke 12:48; emphasis added).

GIVING CHEERFULLY, NOT GRUDGINGLY

“Let him give; *not grudgingly, or of necessity*: for God loveth a *cheerful giver*” (2 Corinthians 9:7; emphasis added).

“If a man . . . *giveth a gift* . . . [and] doeth it *grudgingly*; . . . it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift” (Moroni 7:8; emphasis added).

rules we think more deeply about, even pray about, the person to determine what his or her real needs and wants are. Working on a meaningful gift many months before birthdays or Christmas helps us internalize the spirit of giving. This method has also helped us realize that we can be more self-sufficient than we thought.

I remember helping my eight-year-old son make a gift for his mother. He had determined to make a key holder from a piece of board. Following the guidelines of not purchasing anything, we found an old piece of wood. It took about three times longer than normal to sand it down, as it was not a quality piece of wood.

When it came time to paint it, we realized we didn’t have a paintbrush. So we took some pieces of straw and bamboo from an old basket and made our own. I wondered whether it really would look that nice when finished, but to our surprise, the bamboo and straw together worked as well as any paintbrush I had ever used.

I wanted to buy the hooks needed to hold the keys, but my son reminded me that we couldn’t do that. We ended up using some headless nails that we patiently shaped with great love and dedication. They were shaped into hooks as beautiful as any that we could have purchased at a store. When it was all finished, it was a gift from our hearts to Mom.

Gift Certificates to Neighbors

There are other kinds of gifts that we give to neighbors and friends. We call them family gift certificates. On a piece of paper, we draw up a certificate that lists the person’s name and indicates a service to be given. Some of the certificates show the following:

- One free shoveling of snow from a driveway
- One free lawn-mowing job
- One free garage cleaning
- One free car wash
- One free piano recital from one of our children
- Two free loaves of bread (not from Mom, but from the children)
- Free baby-sitting

- Two hours of repair work for a widow
 - One free fireside to teach the gospel
- Again, these personal kinds of gifts carry extra meaning.

Gift Certificates to Family Members

We give these same kinds of gift certificates to family members, including the following:

- Make your bed seven times (exchanged among the children)
- Do the dishes three times at any time you want to redeem the certificate
- One hour at the piano with Dad singing
- One mountain trip
- Clean the garage for you
- Six one-hour periods alone with Mom or Dad
- Six one-hour times of peace and harmony (offered to Dad and Mom)
- Twelve letters, one per month, for a year (offered to a distant relative)

If you try to give according to the Spirit of the Lord and the scriptures (see sidebar), you will find yourself giving more of yourself, thinking more of the receiver, expressing love from your soul, praying to the Lord for help in giving a gift that would be acceptable, and feeling a tremendous sense of self-fulfillment in having given in that manner.

As we practice the true spirit of giving, we will grow closer to the Lord. May we emulate more fully the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who taught us the true spirit of giving and loving. May we focus on Christmas and giving—not on more and more things, but on the spirit of Christ. **NE**

Adapted from "A Christmas Made at Home," Ensign, Dec. 1984, 56-59.

As we practice the true spirit of giving, we will grow closer to the Lord.



WHO'S ASKING?

BY BISHOP H. DAVID BURTON
Presiding Bishop



You'll receive many invitations in this life. Some will be terrifying, while others will be exciting and wonderful. On one hand, you have a loving Heavenly Father who invites you to be good. On the other, Satan invites you to betray those heavenly aims.

As he peered over the edge of the tub, his mom touched him on the shoulder. "One of those things has a tag tied to its leg. That will answer your questions."

Ryan* came through the door and placed his schoolbag on a peg in the hallway. His mother called to him, "Be sure to check out the bathtub. You won't believe this."

His curiosity aroused, Ryan walked directly to the bathroom. He didn't know what to expect, but what he saw made him shudder. In the bottom of the tub were five hairy tarantulas. Each was half the size of a man's hand.

As Ryan peered tentatively over the edge of the tub, his mom touched him on the shoulder. "I can't even look," she said nervously. "The girls promised me that those things couldn't get out of the tub. I'll have nightmares for a week over this."

"Who brought them?"

**Names have been changed.*

"One of those things has a tag tied to its leg. That will answer your questions," his mom said as she turned away.

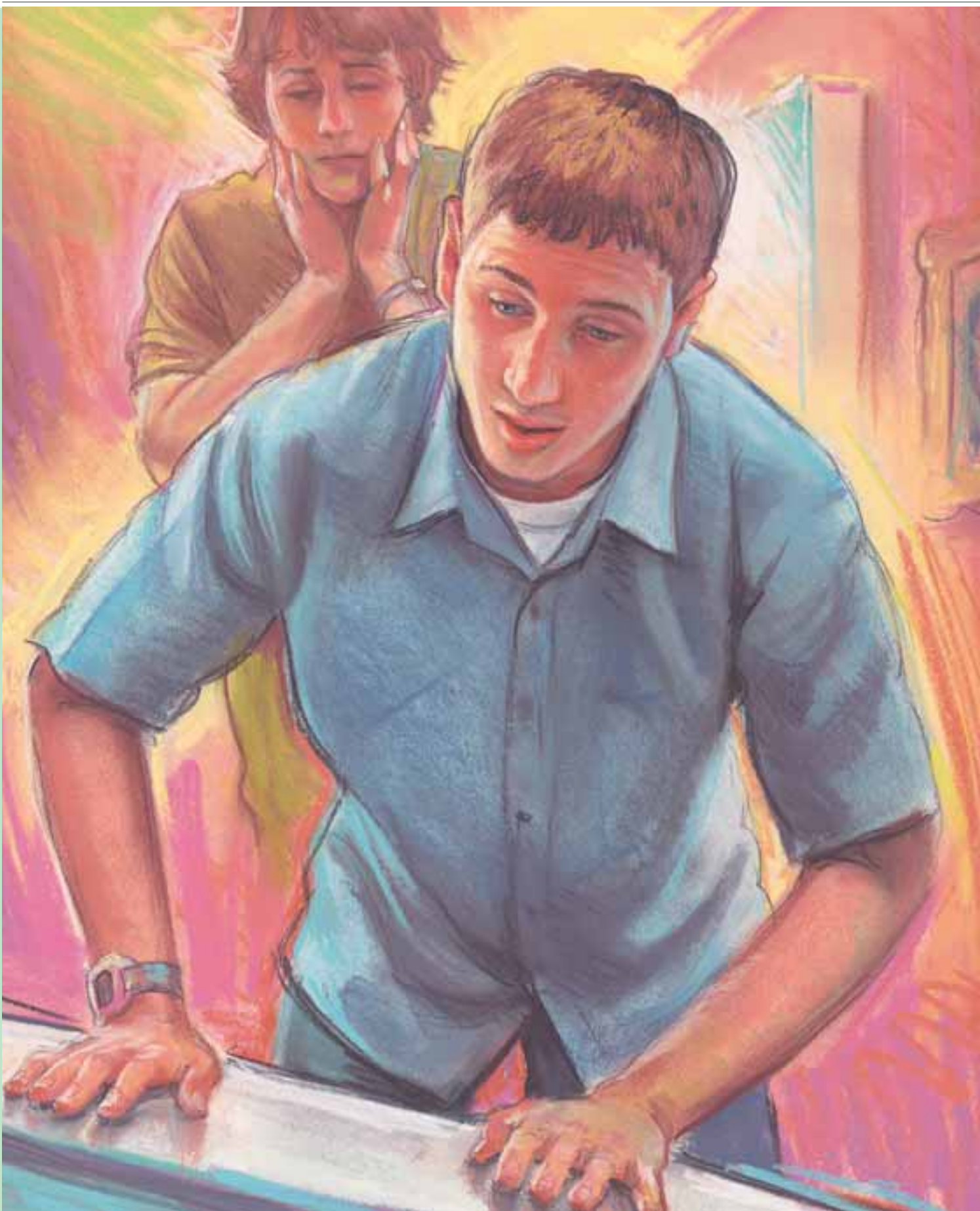
Getting the tag off the tarantula's leg took half an hour and occasioned the gathering of several of Ryan's friends, who thought this was the coolest dance invitation they had seen yet. The house was in an uproar. On one side, the tag read: "Hey, big guy! How about going to the girl's dance with me? Kim." On the other: "Don't hurt the spiders. They're rented."

When the last of the visitors had drifted away, Mom said to Ryan, "You don't seem that excited about the invitation. Is Kim somebody you want to go with?"

Ryan replied after a pause, "Yeah, I guess." "She's certainly a gorgeous girl. I was impressed by her poise and self-confidence," his mom continued.

"Uh huh."





“And her friends were very classy. I’ll bet they don’t have any trouble dating the boys they want to.”

“Not much.”

“Is she the person you hoped would ask you?”

“Not really,” said Ryan.

“Tell me about her,” his mom pressed.

Ryan was starting to feel impatient with the conversation. He ended it more abruptly than he meant to by saying, “I don’t think it would be a good thing for me to go out with her. She and her friends are making some bad choices.”

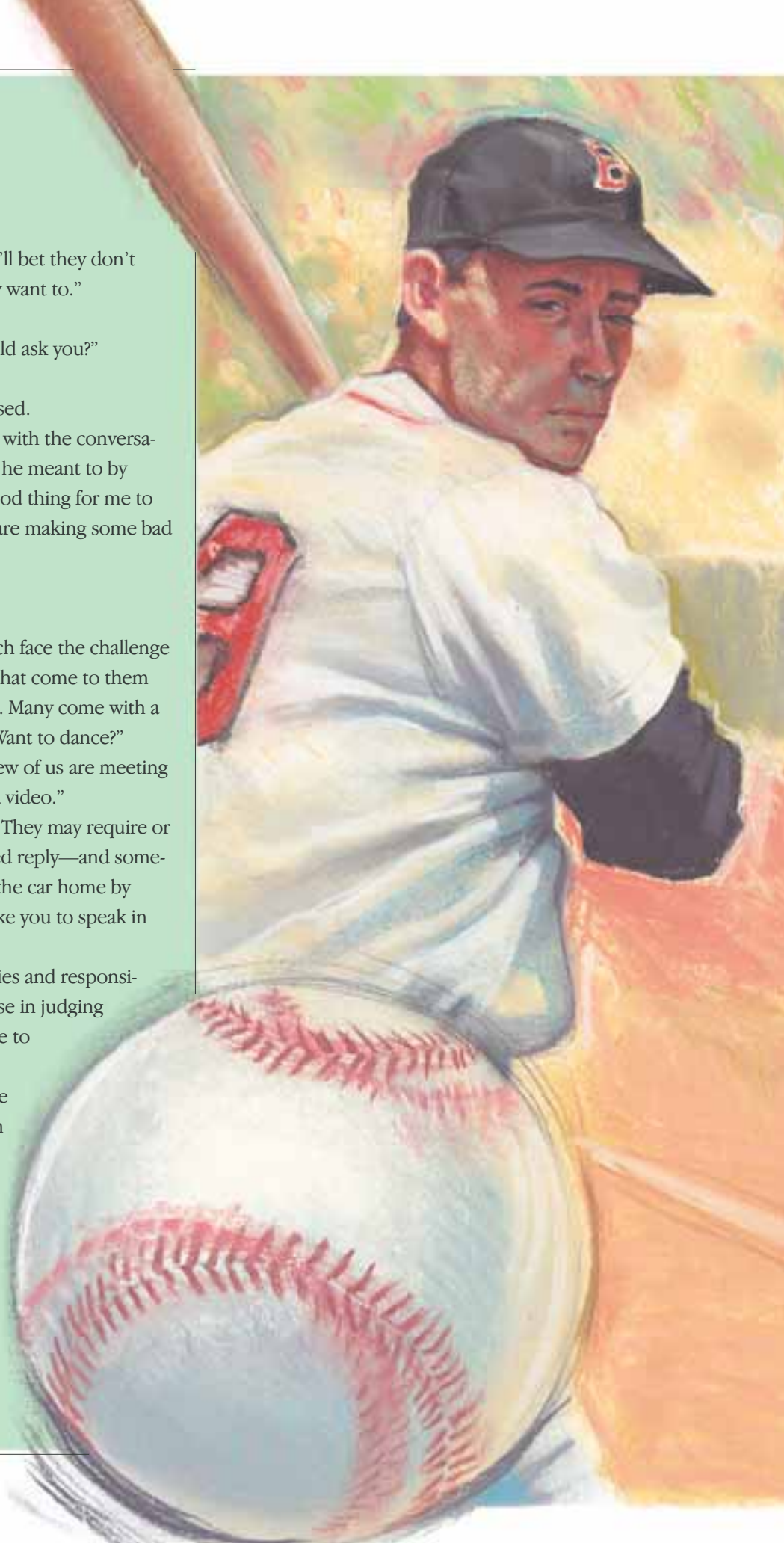
Saying Yes to the Right Invitations

Like Ryan, youth all over the Church face the challenge of weighing the merits of invitations that come to them daily. Not all are as dramatic as Ryan’s. Many come with a passing remark or an inviting look: “Want to dance?” “Come to the ball game with us.” “A few of us are meeting on the corner tonight.” “Let’s watch a video.”

Some invitations are more formal. They may require or deserve a more thoughtful or dignified reply—and sometimes a commitment. “Will you have the car home by 11:00 p.m.?” “Please R.S.V.P.” “We’d like you to speak in Church.” “You are called to serve.”

To be prepared for the opportunities and responsibilities that lie ahead, you must be wise in judging the merits of the invitations that come to you. On one hand, you have a loving Heavenly Father who invites you to be good, to do well, and to live with Him again after you have proven yourself worthy. On the other hand, Satan, the adversary, the enemy to all that is right and good, invites you to betray those heavenly aims. He promises nothing but momentary thrills, the illusion of popularity, and other counterfeit rewards.

As a Latter-day Saint, you are privileged to receive priceless help



in judging which invitations you can safely accept. That help comes through the gift of the Holy Ghost. This gift is not an insurance policy and does not take the effort out of making right choices. But if you will try to feel the promptings of the Spirit, you will see a little more clearly where life's invitations are leading you. With that clearer vision, you are free to choose the good and avoid the evil.

Eye on the Ball

A story from the National Baseball Hall of Fame may illustrate how a clearer vision gives us an edge in the fight for right. A generation ago, Ted Williams was a household name in America. The veteran slugger for the Boston Red Sox proved his talent, integrity, and commitment year after year. In 1941, after only three years in the majors, Ted was hitting an incredible .39955 entering the last day of the season. Few hitters have ever come near to batting .400 in a season. Ted's manager, the legendary Joe Cronin, offered to bench him for the last day of the season so that his average would round up to .400, knowing that if he had a bad day he would miss the mark altogether.

Not a chance, Ted replied. If he couldn't hit .400 all the way, he said he didn't deserve it. So he played.

Williams got six hits in eight times at bat during a doubleheader on that last day and ended the season with a .406 batting average. That record still stands. During a career that spanned 22 years, interrupted by 5 years of service as a military pilot in two wars, Ted averaged .344 at bat and hit 521 home runs. Even in his last season, at the age of 42, Ted hit .316, an exceptional average for most baseball players.

Ted Williams's secret was his keen eyesight. After the pitcher threw the ball, Ted could see the stitching on the ball and could tell by the direction the ball was spinning whether it was a curve, slider, knuckleball, or fastball.

Do not suppose that Ted Williams relied upon his exceptional vision alone. He was known as the hardest worker in the major leagues. He combined personal integrity and tireless preparation with his love of the game to become one of the greatest players ever.

Extend Your Vision

You also live in a fast-paced world. Sometimes, choices come at you with the speed of a fastball. And it may seem like the whole crowd is watching you and cheering you on in one direction or another. You don't always have a lot of time to react. To be successful, to be safe, to be prepared, you need the edge that comes from carefully cultivating your ability to follow the promptings of that precious gift, the gift of the Holy Ghost.

I urge you young men and women to extend your vision through familiarity with the holy scriptures, the counsel of Church leaders, and the teachings of your parents. Keep your eye on the ball by maintaining personal worthiness and constant prayer. Be ready to swing or hold up in an instant as you feel that still small voice signaling whether an invitation is safe or dangerous.

That's what Ryan did. He just didn't feel right about accepting an invitation from Kim, no matter how cleverly it was presented. In the end, he choose to do what was right. I hope and pray that you will be faithful in developing the ability to do the same. **NE**

Y*ou live in a fast-paced world. Sometimes, choices come at you with the speed of a fastball. You don't always have a lot of time to react. Keep your eye on the ball by maintaining personal worthiness and constant prayer.*

NO TIME?

BY TODD CHRISTENSEN

Let's go! They're waiting for us," I said anxiously. I was nervous, the crowd was waiting, and I was ready to perform.

My friends Carson, Mark, Tyson, Bryce, and I had formed a dance group called Saturday Knights. After performing well in a competition, our group had become well known in the community. Tonight we were dancing during the intermission of a scholarship pageant.

As we were about to go on stage, Mark suggested we say a prayer. We always have a prayer before and after each performance.

"No, let's just go," I said. "They're waiting for us. We don't have time."

Mark looked at me intently and said firmly, "There is never enough time to thank the Lord for all He has given us. We have time to pray."

I was struck dumb. I stood there feeling terrible. Correcting myself, I knelt with my friends, said a prayer of thanksgiving, and then went on stage.

Mark's comment gave me a new perspective on gratitude. He was right. There really isn't enough time to thank Heavenly Father for all of His countless blessings. Because of Mark's example, my testimony was strengthened. I have never forgotten his words, and my life has been greatly blessed because of them.

Todd Christensen
is a member of
the La Costa Ward,
Del Mar California
Stake.

HYMN IN MY HEART

BY CLAUSEL M. NSONDI

The day before I left for my mission, youth from our area gathered for a meeting. For the closing hymn we sang "Be Still, My Soul" (*Hymns*, no. 124). While singing I could feel my nervousness and worries vanish, and warm feelings replace them. I could feel every word of the hymn being engraved in my heart.

Now as I serve in the Lord's vineyard, this hymn still helps me. When discouragement comes, I think, "Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake." When challenges seem too heavy, I remember that "thru thorny ways [the Lord] leads to a joyful end." I know if I bear my part well, "all safe and blessed we shall meet at last" as we live forever with the Lord.

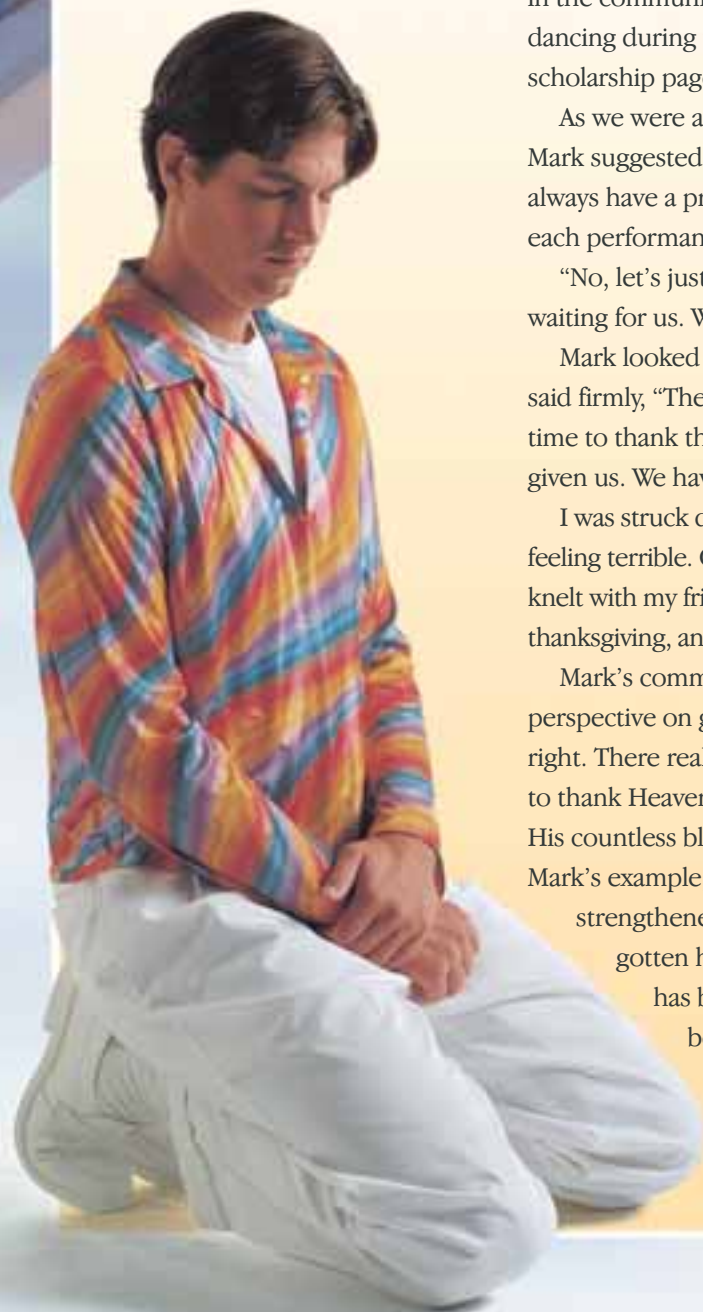
Clausel M. Nsondi is a member of the Rennes Branch, Rennes France District.

SUNDAYS WITH SYLVIA

BY BRANDON E. BARRICK

Sister Sylvia Gaitan was in a four-car freeway accident last week," explained my Young Men president. "She's in the Westlake Medical Center, and we need someone to take her the sacrament."

"Westlake?!" I thought to myself. That was at least a 20-minute drive.





I pleaded for volunteers. One hand went up. “I don’t have a car,” said Russell, “but I’ll go with someone.”

On the way to Westlake, I said to Russell, “Next week we’ll make someone else take this time-consuming drive.”

We arrived at the hospital and wasted a few minutes getting lost. When we finally found Sister Gaitan’s room, my heart fell right into my stomach. Not even five feet tall, she seemed even smaller lying in a giant hospital bed surrounded by medical equipment. Looking at her I immediately felt guilty for having complained.

“How are you feeling, Sister

Gaitan?” I asked.

“Oh, I’m all right,” she said, “but I’ll be much better after they perform those two surgeries they keep telling me I need.” I was amazed by how upbeat she was.

Russell and I blessed the small piece of bread we had brought and then blessed the water in her hospital drinking cup. She was so grateful to us for coming. I smiled and said, “We’re just doing our priesthood duty.”

I decided that I would bring the sacrament to her the next week, too. I took Sister Gaitan the sacrament every week until she recovered. Seeing

her always made my day brighter.

The brightest day was when I saw her back at church for the first time. I was happy, not because I no longer had to drive to the hospital each week but because she was finally able to take the sacrament with her ward family.

I’m grateful I was able to take Sister Gaitan the sacrament, but I’m even more grateful that she taught me to fulfill my priesthood duties with a smile and a happy attitude.

Brandon E. Barrick is a member of the Springwood Ward, North Salt Lake Utah Stake.



BULLIES ON THE BUS

BY EMILY HALVERSEN

One day as I was riding the bus to school, some boys who sit in the back were throwing paper balls everywhere. That didn't really bother me, until I heard one of them say, "Hey, let's throw them at those Mormons."

These boys didn't like me, my friends, or any of the other "Mormons" who ride the bus. They threw paper balls at us and swore a lot.

I wanted to shout at them and tell them to be quiet. I wanted to really lose my temper, but then

I had a peaceful feeling. A thought came to mind that said, "It is okay to be proud to be a member of the Church. Try not to listen to their bad language." The thought brightened my day, and I'm glad I chose not to lose my temper.

That night I prayed that they wouldn't do the same bad things again the next day, and they didn't. I'm so glad that I had the Spirit of the Lord with me, and I'm glad that my prayers were answered.

Emily Halversen is a member of the Hunter Third Ward, Salt Lake Hunter Stake.

THE WAY IS PREPARED

NAME WITHHELD

A few months ago I was having trouble keeping the commandments. One morning as I was reading my scriptures, I read 1 Nephi 10:18: "And the way is prepared for all men from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto him."

That verse gave me the courage I needed to speak to my bishop. Because of my example one of my closest friends, who also was struggling, spoke to her bishop, as well. Then we were able to go to the temple to do baptisms for the dead.

I know that our Heavenly Father loves us and that His Son Jesus Christ atoned for our sins. I'm grateful for this knowledge.

INSTANT MESSAGES is a new section that features personal experiences, favorite hymns and scriptures, and other uplifting thoughts. If you have a personal experience that has strengthened your testimony and you'd like us to consider it for Instant Messages, please send it to

New Era
Instant Messages
50 E. North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

Or e-mail it to
cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Please limit submissions to 300 words. They may be edited for length and clarity.

THE EXTRA SMILE

"I see you're getting started on your year's supply of food."

"I'm dreaming of a green Christmas."



GLENN BERNHARDT

VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

"I used to be naughty, but I repented."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

Key to Abbreviation: (p) poem

A

ADDICTION
 Enemy Within, The, *James E. Faust*, Mar, 4

ADVERSITY
 Coming up Short, *Chad Morris*, Sep, 10
 It's Just Hair, *Juli Housholder*, Aug, 20
 P.S. He Loves You, *Heather Schiffman*, Jul, 9
 Q&A (bad things happen to good people), Jul, 16
 Somebody Had It Harder, *Frank Preston*, Nov, 32
 Staying Power, *H. Ross Workman*, Oct, 32

Aisen, Becca
 All I Asked For, Jun, 11
 All I Asked For, *Becca Aisen*, Jun, 11
 All My Sisters, *Andrea Nixon*, Jan, 34
 Angels May Quote from It, The, *Spencer W. Kimball*, Feb, 32
 Another Mother, *Tracie Hobl*, Jun, 46
 Argyle, Carolyn
 I Hope, I Wish, I Dream, Jan, 40
 Arnold, Jaime Wiese
 Book of Mormon Story, Jan, 26
 Ask Yourself, Jun, 36

ATONEMENT
 King of Kings, *Lisa Ann Jackson*, Apr, 8
 Power Restored, May, 10
 Power to Heal, *Merrill J. Bateman*, Apr, 42
 Wounds That Heal My Own, The, *Elvin Mencia*, Apr, 15

ATTITUDE
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 Me, a Leader? *Larry Hiller*, May, 28
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Augustine, Kif
 Choices in Life (p), Jul, 51

B

Ballard, M. Russell
 Joseph's Family, Jun, 42
 Barrick, Brandon E.
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 Bateman, Merrill J.
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 Bean, Scott

Truth about My Family, The, Mar, 26
 Becoming a True Friend, *Kristi McLane*, Mar, 41
 Benson, Ezra Taft
 Faces of Pride, The, Oct, 40
 Benzey, Caroline H.
 134 Years Young, Nov, 24
 Open Door, An, Sep, 20
 Story of a Lifetime, The, Oct, 28
 Birthday Temple Trip, *Kristen Winnmill Southwick*, Feb, 28
 Book of Mormon Story
 Jaime Wiese Arnold, Jan, 26
 Book of Mormon: Read All about It, The, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Sep, 4
BOOK OF MORMON
 Book of Mormon Story, *Jaime Wiese Arnold*, Jan, 26
 Book of Mormon: Read All about It, The, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Sep, 4
 That Book, *Suwit Saisam-ang*, Oct, 26
 Wake-Up Call, *Isaac Kofi Morrison*, Feb, 42
 Bradshaw, Anne
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 Worth the Wait, Feb, 46
 Brunson, Charity
 Saving the Bees, Nov, 10
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 Burton, H. David
 Who's Asking? Dec, 38

C

Cachapero, Charlotte
 Teens Leading Teens, Jan, 29
 Called Home, *Loralee Bassett Leavitt*, Jan, 10
 Campbell, DeAnn
 Going Dutch, Feb, 8
 Carpenter, Tara
 Self-portrait (p), Mar, 51
 Castor, Rachele Pace
 He Loves You More, Feb, 24
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CHASTITY
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 Reasons to Stay Pure, *Neal A. Maxwell*, Mar, 42
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Out of Small Things, *Stephen A. West*, Jul, 12
 What-If Question, The, *Shirley Bock Testi*, Nov, 40
 Who's Asking? *H. David Burton*, Dec, 38
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 Come, Let Us Adore Him (poster), Dec, 19
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 Con Amore, *Stefania Postiglione*, Sep, 26
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 Day on the Battlefield, A, Aug, 12
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 You Are Different, *David B. Haight*, Apr, 4
 Creer, Scott
 Keep on Pedaling, Aug, 46
 Crunch Time, *Arianne B. Cope*, Apr, 26

D

Dancing Back to Church, *Ned B. Roueche*, Apr, 12
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 Daughters of the Almighty, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Nov, 4
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 Deppe, Rosemarie
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 Dorenbosch, Neal T.
 Don't You Love the Rain? (p), Apr, 51
 Down on Yourself? (poster)
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 Dressed Up! *Nikki Miner*, May, 44
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 Mesa Pageant: Getting into the Act, Mar, 20
 Ellsworth, Amanda M.
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 Embley, Jessica N.
 Glad I Walked, Jul, 10
 Enemy Within, The, *James E. Faust*, Mar, 4
 Engelmann, Kaarin Neves
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 Erickson, Lane V.
 Photo of the Month, Mar, 51
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 Every Young Man, *Adam C. Olson*, Nov, 34
 Eyring, Henry B.
 Matter of the Heart, A, Nov, 12

F

Faces of Pride, The, *Ezra Taft Benson*, Oct, 40
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 Do You Need a Miracle? *Larry W. Gibbons*, Feb, 12
 Following in Faith, *Joseph B. Wirtblin*, Jul, 4
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 It's Just Hair, *Juli Housholder*, Aug, 20
 Locket in the Sand, *Jane Frater Jackson*, Feb, 44
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 Homemade Christmas, *Gene R. Cook*, Dec, 34
 Joseph's Family, *M. Russell Ballard*, Jun, 42
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 Jul, 30
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 Q&A (meaningful gifts), Dec, 16
 Q&A (reaching out to a
 brother), Jun, 16
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 Thomas*, Jun, 26
 Smooth Sailing Home, Oct, 15
 Spanning the Generations,
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 Ten Things I Love about You,
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 Truth about My Family, The,
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 What a Brother, *Mamie
 Hunsaker Hammer*, Jun, 24
 Your Family, *Gordon B.
 Hinckley*, Jun, 4
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 Enemy Within, The, Mar, 4
 Feed My Sheep, *Boyd K. Packer*,
 Jan, 4
 Finding a Fortune, *D. Rex Gerratt*,
 Sep, 8
 Finding Jason, *Arianne B. Cope*,
 May, 24
 Finding Your Sweetheart, *Lynn G.
 Robbins*, Sep, 44
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 Following in Faith, *Joseph B.
 Wirthlin*, Jul, 4
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 Wiese Arnold*, Jan, 26
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 Forsgren, Jane H.
 Sheena's Keys to Success,
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 Postiglione*, Sep, 26
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 B. Christenson*, Dec, 12
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 Mar, 10
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 Open the Circle, *Jan
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 Jun, 20
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 Christenson*, Dec, 12
 Giles, Russell Tolley
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 Glad I Walked, *Jessica N. Embley*,
 Jul, 10
 Glassett, Margot
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 González, Gabriel
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Howard W. Hunter, Jul, 36
 Dandy, *David O. McKay*, Apr, 10
 Faces of Pride, The, *Ezra Taft
 Benson*, Oct, 40
 Only an Elder, *Bruce R.
 McConkie*, Jan, 36
 Ten-Cent Solution, The, *Sterling
 W. Sill*, Aug, 42
 Today I Will . . . , *N. Eldon
 Tanner*, Mar, 12
 Why All the Rules? *Richard L.
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 Gospel Gifts, Dec, 11
 Graduating with Honor, *Gabriel
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 G-Rated Recruit, *Preston D. Taylor*,
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 Discouragement, *Gene R.
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 We Thank Thee, *Steven E. Snou*,
 Jan, 12
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 Hammer, Mamie Hunsaker
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 Harris, Jim
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 Hayden, Belle
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 He Loves You More, *Rachelle Pace
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 Us, *Susan W. Tanner*, Oct, 10
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 Hinckley, Gordon B.
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 Following in Faith, *Joseph B.
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 Still a Sacred Place, *Janet
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 Another Mother, Jun, 46
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 Q&A (recognizing inspiration),
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 Ten-Cent Solution, The, *Sterling
 W. Sill*, Aug, 42
 Housholder, Juli

It's Just Hair, Aug, 20
 How Do I Love Thee? *Jeffrey R.
 Holland*, Oct, 4
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 Discouragement, *Gene R. Cook*,
 Jan, 44
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 Open Your Mouth, Jul, 29
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 Cachapero*, Jan, 29
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 Preston*, Nov, 32
 Instant Friends, *Stephen Rucker*,
 Mar, 10
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 Open Door, An, *Caroline H.
 Benzley*, Sep, 20
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 Be Honest with Yourself,
Howard W. Hunter, Jul, 36
 Crunch Time, *Arianne B. Cope*,
 Apr, 26
 Finding a Fortune, *D. Rex
 Gerratt*, Sep, 8
 Graduating with Honor, *Gabriel
 González*, Jul, 40
 In Crowd? Out Crowd? Right
 Crowd! *Lori Anne Ries*, Jul

Oct, 36
Ten-Cent Solution, The, *Sterling W. Sill*, Aug, 42
Who's Asking? *H. David Burton*, Dec, 38
It's Just Hair, *Juli Housholder*, Aug, 20

J
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Locket in the Sand, Feb, 44
Jackson, Lisa Ann
King of Kings, Apr, 8
Jaynes, Lynn C.
Me Included, Apr, 46

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Book of Mormon: Read All about It, The, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Sep, 4
Come, Let Us Adore Him (poster), Dec, 19
Do You Need a Miracle? *Larry W. Gibbons*, Feb, 12
Faces of Pride, The, *Ezra Taft Benson*, Oct, 40
Feed My Sheep, *Boyd K. Packer*, Jan, 4
Following in Faith, *Joseph B. Wirthlin*, Jul, 4
Gift for All Seasons, A, *Darwin B. Christenson*, Dec, 12
He Is within Reach (poster), Apr, 19
He Loves You More, *Rachelle Pace Castor*, Feb, 24
Images of That Holy Night, *Kimberly Webb*, Dec, 20
King of Kings, *Lisa Ann Jackson*, Apr, 8
Out of Small Things, *Stephen A. West*, Jul, 12
Power to Heal, *Merrill J. Bateman*, Apr, 42
Saving the Bees, *Charity Brunson*, Nov, 10
Search for Jesus, The, *Thomas S. Monson*, Dec, 4
We Thank Thee, *Steven E. Snow*, Jan, 12
Wounds That Heal My Own, The, *Elvin Mencia*, Apr, 15
Your Family, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Jun, 4
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Party They Gave Away, The, Dec, 28
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Ten Things I Love about You, Dec, 26
Joseph's Family, *M. Russell Ballard*, Jun, 42

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Keele, Kristine Anne
Sun Kisses (p), Oct, 51
Keep on Pedaling, *Scott Creer*, Aug, 46

Keep Yourself Free (poster), Feb, 19
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Angels May Quote from It, The, Feb, 32
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L
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Light in the Land of Mystery, *Lynne S. Topham*, Jul, 20
Lim, Emily
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Livsey, Laury
Count on Maurice, Feb, 20
Locked Out, *Michele Tolley*, Jul, 26
Locket in the Sand, *Jane Frater Jackson*, Feb, 44
London, Clayton
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Love God with All Your Might (poster), Jul, 19

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Finding Your Sweetheart, *Lynn G. Robbins*, Sep, 44
Gift for All Seasons, A, *Darwin B. Christenson*, Dec, 12
He Loves You More, *Rachelle Pace Castor*, Feb, 24
Home Security (poster), Jun, 19
Homemade Christmas, *Gene R. Cook*, Dec, 34
How Do I Love Thee? *Jeffrey R. Holland*, Oct, 4
Love God with All Your Might (poster), Jul, 19
Minus One Rose, *Alma J. Yates*, May, 14
Miracles and Maoris, *Larry E. Morris*, May, 32
Open the Circle, *Jan Pinborough*, Aug, 32
P.S. He Loves You, *Heather Schiffman*, Jul, 9
Q&A (reaching out to a brother), Jun, 16
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Tagalong, *BreighAn Olsen*, Jun, 40
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Loveland, Ronald L.
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M
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How Do I Love Thee? *Jeffrey R. Holland*, Oct, 4
Worth the Wait, *Katie Lea Brown*, Feb, 46
Matter of the Heart, A, *Henry B. Eyring*, Nov, 12
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Reasons to Stay Pure, Mar, 42
McConkie, Bruce R.
Only an Elder, Jan, 36
McKay, David O.
Dandy, Apr, 10
McLane, Kristi
Becoming a True Friend, Mar, 41
Plan Now for Then, Jun, 7
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Me, a Leader? *Larry Hiller*, May, 28
Mencia, Elvin
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Mesa Pageant: Getting into the Act, *Cheri Earl*, Mar, 20
Message on a Bottle, *Ronald L. Loveland*, Jun, 34
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Enemy Within, The, *James E. Faust*, Mar, 4
Feed My Sheep, *Boyd K. Packer*, Jan, 4
Following in Faith, *Joseph B. Wirthlin*, Jul, 4
Getting Where You Want to Go, *Russell M. Nelson*, May, 4
How Do I Love Thee? *Jeffrey R. Holland*, Oct, 4
Recognizing Answers to Prayer, *Richard G. Scott*, Aug, 4
Search for Jesus, The, *Thomas S. Monson*, Dec, 4
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Dressed Up! May, 44
Minus One Rose, *Alma J. Yates*,

May, 14
Miracles and Maoris, *Larry E. Morris*, May, 32
MISSIONARY WORK
Called Home, *Lorelee Bassett Leavitt*, Jan, 10
Connecting with Heaven, *John H. Groberg*, May, 38
Feed My Sheep, *Boyd K. Packer*, Jan, 4
Finding Jason, *Arianne B. Cope*, May, 24
Fishing License (poster), Mar, 19
Keep on Pedaling, *Scott Creer*, Aug, 46
Miracles and Maoris, *Larry E. Morris*, May, 32
Online Testimony, *Amanda M. Ellsworth*, Mar, 38
Open Your Mouth, Jul, 29
Staying Power, *H. Ross Workman*, Oct, 32
Talk All You Want, *Don Carlos Vidal*, Aug, 24
Tell My Teacher, *Suzanna L. Wilbers*, Apr, 34
Time to Testify, *Clayton London*, Oct, 9
Why Should I Go? *Russell Tolley Giles*, May, 8
MODESTY
Dressed Up! *Nikki Miner*, May, 44
Q&A (music, modesty, and dancing), Nov, 16
Monson, Thomas S.
Search for Jesus, The, Dec, 4
MORALITY
Dressed Up! *Nikki Miner*, May, 44
How to Discourage Discouragement, *Gene R. Cook*, Jan, 44
Reasons to Stay Pure, *Neal A. Maxwell*, Mar, 42
More than a Medallion, Nov, 28
Morris, Chad
Coming up Short, Sep, 10
Morris, Larry E.
Miracles and Maoris, May, 32
Morrison, Isaac Kofi
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How to Discourage Discouragement, *Gene R. Cook*, Jan, 44
Hymn in My Heart, *Clausel M. Nsondi*, Dec, 42
Note by Note by Note, *Shanna Gbaznavi*, Sep, 30
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My Best Days, *Courtney Harrison*, Apr, 36
My Fathers, *Rosemarie Deppe*, Jun, 8

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Nelson, Russell M.
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CLASSICS
Nixon, Andrea
All My Sisters, Jan, 34
No Comparison, *Emma Withers*,
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Dec, 42
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May, 43
Note by Note by Note, *Sbanna
Ghaznavi*, Sep, 30
Nsondi, Clausel M.
Hymn in My Heart, Dec, 42

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OBEDIENCE
Dandy, *David O. McKay*, Apr, 10
Getting Where You Want to Go,
Russell M. Nelson, May, 4
Q&A (list of commandments),
Aug, 16
Why All the Rules? *Richard L.
Evans*, Nov, 44
Oberly, Brett
Photo of the Month, May, 51
Oldham, Meredith
Why Hurry? Sep, 37
Olsen, BreighAn
Tagalong, Jun, 40
Olson, Adam C.
Every Young Man, Nov, 34
Photo of the Month, Nov, 51
134 Years Young, *Caroline H.
Benzley*, Nov, 24
One More Stop, Dec, *James
Tschudy*, Dec, 8
One Sleepless Night, *Kortney
Dawne Warburton*, Dec, 32
Online Testimony, *Amanda M.
Ellsworth*, Mar, 38
Only an Elder, *Bruce R. McConkie*,
Jan, 36
Open Door, An, *Caroline H.
Benzley*, Sep, 20
Open the Circle, *Jan Pinborough*,
Aug, 32
Open Your Mouth, Jul, 29
Other Side of the Fence, The,
Shane Hamilton, Sep, 34
Our Greatest Happiness, Jun, 12
Out of Small Things, *Stephen A.
West*, Jul, 12

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P.S. He Loves You, *Heather
Schiffman*, Jul, 9
Packer, Boyd K.
Feed My Sheep, Jan, 4
Palmer, Cathi L.
Song without Words (p), Jan, 51
Party They Gave Away, The,
Barbara Jean Jones, Dec, 28

PEACE

Light in the Darkness, A,
Timothy Cobbley, Feb, 11
P.S. He Loves You, *Heather
Schiffman*, Jul, 9
Time to Testify, *Clayton London*,
Oct, 9
Why Hurry? *Meredith Oldham*,
Sep, 37

PEER PRESSURE

In Crowd? Out Crowd? Right
Crowd! *Lori Anne Ries*,
Oct, 36

Stand Out (poster), Nov, 19

PERSONAL PROGRESS

More than a Medallion, Nov, 28
Pinborough, Jan
Open the Circle, Aug, 32
Plan Now for Then, *Kristi McLane*,
Jun, 7

Play Your Part, *Anne Bradshaw*,
Jul, 30

Playmaker, The, *Janet Thomas*,
Nov, 20

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Choices in Life, *Kif Augustine*,
Jul, 51
Diary, *Kara Hutchison*, Sep, 51
Don't You Love the Rain? *Neal T.
Dorenbosch*, Apr, 51
End of a Day, *Margot Glassett*,
Jun, 51
Perfection, *Heather Obern
Hemsley*, Aug, 51
Self-portrait, *Tara Carpenter*,
Mar, 51
Snow, *Kaarin Neves
Engelmann*, Feb, 51
Snowfall at Evening, *Belle
Hayden*, Dec, 51
Song without Words, *Cathi L.
Palmer*, Jan, 51
Sun Kisses, *Kristine Anne Keele*,
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May, 51
Why Eternity? *Brenda Williams*,
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Faust*, Mar, 4

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Be a Strong Link, Sep, 19
Clean Up Your Act, Aug, 19
Come, Let Us Adore Him,
Dec, 19
Down on Yourself? Jan, 19
Fishing License, Mar, 19
He Is within Reach, Apr, 19
Home Security, Jun, 19
Keep Yourself Free, Feb, 19
Love God with All Your Might,
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Stand Out, Nov, 19
Stay Out of Hot Water, May, 19
Postiglione, Stefania
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Power Restored, May, 10
Power to Heal, *Merrill J. Bateman*,
Apr, 42

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All I Asked For, *Becca Aisen*,
Jun, 11
Book of Mormon Story, *Jaime
Wiese Arnold*, Jan, 26
How to Discourage
Discouragement, *Gene R.
Cook*, Jan, 44
Hungry for Answers? Nov, 9
Light in the Darkness, A,
Timothy Cobbley, Feb, 11
Locket in the Sand, *Jane Frater
Jackson*, Feb, 44
Matter of the Heart, A, *Henry B.
Eyring*, Nov, 12
Me Included, *Lynn C. Jaynes*,
Apr, 46
Miracles and Maoris, *Larry E.
Morris*, May, 32
No Time? *Todd Christensen*,
Dec, 42
Recognizing Answers to Prayer,
Richard G. Scott, Aug, 4
To the Ends of the Earth,
Richard M. Romney, Jan, 20
We Are Daughters of Our
Heavenly Father, Who Loves
Us, *Susan W. Tanner*, Oct, 10

Preston, Frank
Somebody Had It Harder,
Nov, 32

PRIESTHOOD

Connecting with Heaven, *John
H. Groberg*, May, 38
My Best Days, *Courtney
Harrison*, Apr, 36
Only an Elder, *Bruce R.
McConkie*, Jan, 36
Power Restored, May, 10
Q&A (preparing for the
Melchizedek Priesthood),
Oct, 16
PROFANITY
G-Rated Recruit, *Preston D.
Taylor*, Mar, 32
No-Swear Zone, *Kristen Sucher*,
May, 43

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Connecting with Heaven, *John
H. Groberg*, May, 38
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people, Jul, 16
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Jun, 16
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Reasons to Stay Pure, *Neal A.
Maxwell*, Mar, 42

Recognizing Answers to Prayer,
Richard G. Scott, Aug, 4

Reid, Pamela J.

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Be Honest with Yourself,
Howard W. Hunter, Jul, 36
Clean up Your Act (poster),
Aug, 19

How to Discourage
Discouragement, *Gene R.
Cook*, Jan, 44

Power Restored, May, 10
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Wounds That Heal My Own,
The, *Elvin Mencia*, Apr, 15

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Deacon in Motion, Sep, 14

Ries, Lori Anne
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Crowd! Oct, 36

Robbins, Lynn G.
Finding Your Sweetheart,
Sep, 44

Romney, Richard M.
To the Ends of the Earth, Jan, 20

Rossiter, Jennifer
Photo of the Month, Jul, 51

Roueché, Ned B.
Dancing Back to Church,
Apr, 12

Rucker, Stephen
Instant Friends, Mar, 10

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SABBATH

Glad I Walked, *Jessica N.
Embley*, Jul, 10
Playmaker, The, *Janet Thomas*,
Nov, 20

SACRAMENT

Out of Small Things, *Stephen A.
West*, Jul, 12

SACRIFICE

Birthday Temple Trip, *Kristen
Winmill Soubwick*, Feb, 28
We Thank Thee, *Steven E.
Snow*, Jan, 12

Safe Harbour, *Pamela J. Reid*,
Apr, 30

Saisam-ang, Suwit
That Book, Oct, 26

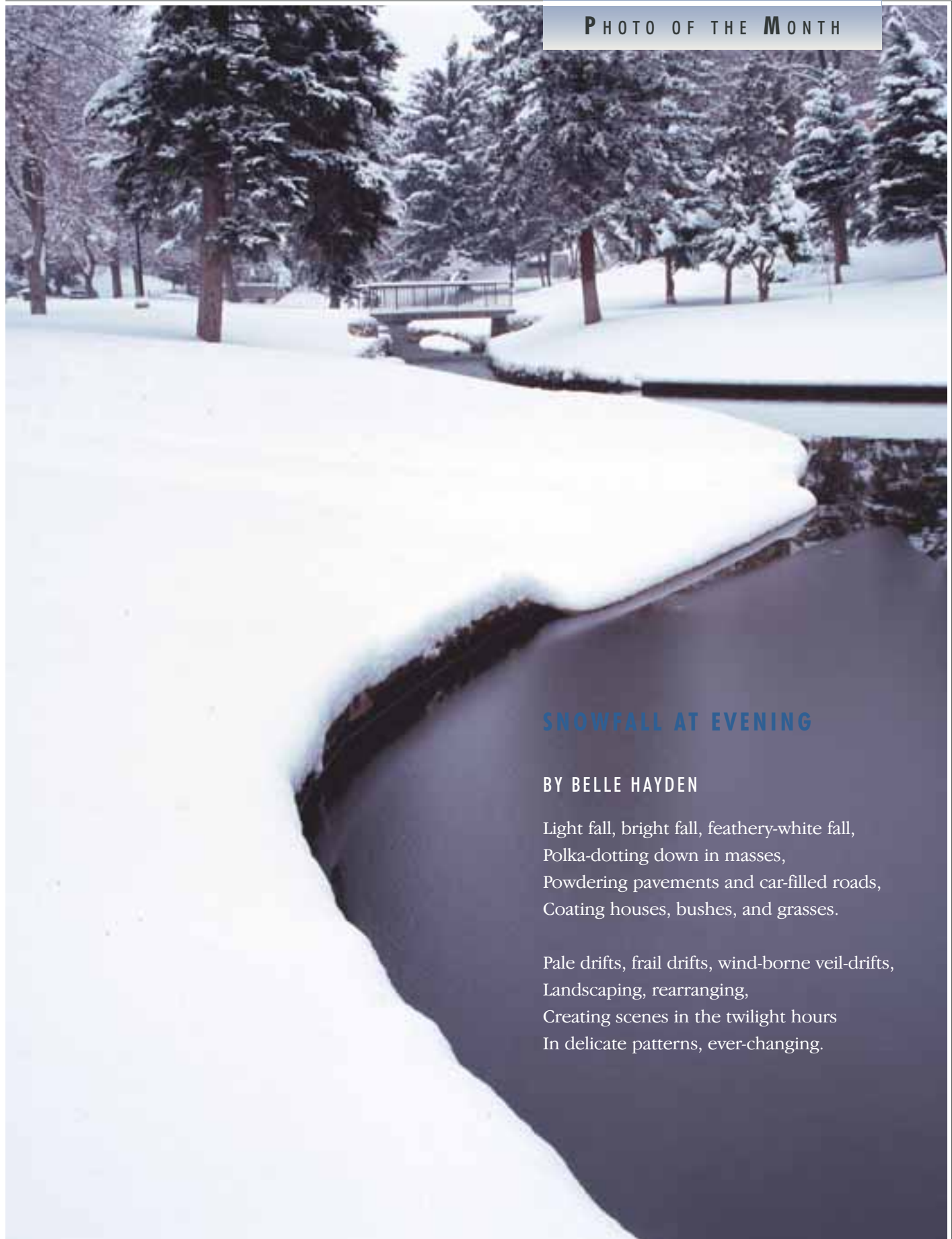
Saving the Bees, *Charity Brunson*,

Nov, 10
 Saving the Stories, *Arianne B. Cope*, Sep, 38
 Schiffman, Heather
 P.S. He Loves You, Jul, 9
 Schluchter, Christian
 Photo of the Month, Jun, 51
 Scott, Richard G.
 Recognizing Answers to Prayer, Aug, 4
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 Coming up Short, *Chad Morris*, Sep, 10
 Hungry for Answers? Nov, 9
 Smooth Sailing Home, Oct, 15
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 Book of Mormon Story, *Jaime Wiese Arnold*, Jan, 26
 Getting Where You Want to Go, *Russell M. Nelson*, May, 4
 Wake-Up Call, *Isaac Kofi Morrison*, Feb, 42
 Way Is Prepared, The, Dec, 44
 Search for Jesus, The, *Thomas S. Monson*, Dec, 4
 Secret Service, Feb, 27
 SEMINARY
 Soaking up Seminary, *Katie Bliss*, Aug, 38
 Wake-Up Call, *Isaac Kofi Morrison*, Feb, 42
 SERVICE
 Becoming a True Friend, *Kristi McLane*, Mar, 41
 Count on Maurice, *Laury Livsey*, Feb, 20
 Day on the Battlefield, A, *Buckley Condie*, Aug, 12
 Deacon in Motion, *Artel Ricks*, Sep, 14
 Every Young Man, *Adam C. Olson*, Nov, 34
 Feed My Sheep, *Boyd K. Packer*, Jan, 4
 Getting the Point, *Taylor Woodruff*, Oct, 46
 Homemade Christmas, *Gene R. Cook*, Dec, 34
 One More Stop, Dec, *James Tschudy*, Dec, 8
 Party They Gave Away, The, *Barbara Jean Jones*, Dec, 28
 Secret Service, Feb, 27
 Sheena's Keys to Success, *Jane H. Forsgren*, Mar, 28
 Sill, Sterling W.
 Ten-Cent Solution, The, Aug, 42
 Sister Connection, *Janet Thomas*, Jun, 26
 Smiling in Memphis, *Arianne B. Cope*, Oct, 20
 SMITH, JOSEPH
 Joseph's Family, *M. Russell Ballard*, Jun, 42
 Smooth Sailing Home, Oct, 15
 Snow, Steven E.
 We Thank Thee, Jan, 12
 Soaking up Seminary, Aug, 38

Somebody Had It Harder, *Frank Preston*, Nov, 32
 Song without Words, *Catbi L. Palmer*, Jan, 51
 Southwick, Kristen Winmill
 Birthday Temple Trip, Feb, 28
 Spanning the Generations, *Sbanna Gbaznavi*, Jun, 20
 Spread Thin? (poster), Oct, 19
 Stan, Mihaela
 Romanian Rhapsody, Jan, 30
 Stand Out (poster), Nov, 19
 STANDARDS
 Graduating with Honor, *Gabriel González*, Jul, 40
 G-Rated Recruit, *Preston D. Taylor*, Mar, 32
 Who's Asking? *H. David Burton*, Dec, 38
 You Are Different, *David B. Haight*, Apr, 4
 Stay Out of Hot Water (poster), May, 19
 Staying Power, *H. Ross Workman*, Oct, 32
 Still a Sacred Place, *Janet Thomas*, Apr, 20
 Story of a Lifetime, The, *Caroline H. Benzley*, Oct, 28
 Sucher, Kristen
 No-Swear Zone, May, 43
 Sundays with Sylvia, *Brandon E. Barrick*, Dec, 43
 T
 Tagalong, *BreighAn Olsen*, Jun, 40
 Talk All You Want, *Don Carlos Vidal*, Aug, 24
 Tanner, N. Eldon
 Today I Will . . . , Mar, 12
 Tanner, Susan W.
 We Are Daughters of Our Heavenly Father, Who Loves Us, Oct, 10
 Taylor, Preston D.
 G-Rated Recruit, Mar, 32
 Teens Leading Teens, *Charlotte Cachapero*, Jan, 29
 Tell My Teacher, *Suzanna L. Withers*, Apr, 34
 TEMPLES
 Birthday Temple Trip, *Kristen Winmill Southwick*, Feb, 28
 My Best Days, *Courtney Harrison*, Apr, 36
 No Comparison, *Emma Withers*, Dec, 15
 Safe Harbour, *Pamela J. Reid*, Apr, 30
 Why Hurry? *Meredith Oldbam*, Sep, 37
 Ten Things I Love about You, *Lois Zurligen Jorgensen*, Dec, 26
 Ten-Cent Solution, The, *Sterling W. Sill*, Aug, 42
 Testi, Shirley Bock
 What-If Question, The, Nov, 40
 TESTIMONY

Book of Mormon Story, *Jaime Wiese Arnold*, Jan, 26
 Light in the Darkness, A, *Timothy Cobbley*, Feb, 11
 Light in the Land of Mystery, *Lynne S. Topham*, Jul, 20
 Me Included, *Lynn C. Jaynes*, Apr, 46
 Online Testimony, *Amanda M. Ellsworth*, Mar, 38
 Q&A (meaningful gifts), Dec, 16
 Smiling in Memphis, *Arianne B. Cope*, Oct, 20
 Tell My Teacher, *Suzanna L. Withers*, Apr, 34
 Why Should I Go? *Russell Tolley Giles*, May, 8
 That Book, *Suwit Saisam-ang*, Oct, 26
 Thomas, Janet
 Playmaker, The, Nov, 20
 Sister Connection, Jun, 26
 Still a Sacred Place, Apr, 20
 Time in a Tube, *Arianne B. Cope*, Jul, 44
 Time to Testify, *Clayton London*, Oct, 9
 TITHING
 Out of Small Things, *Stephen A. West*, Jul, 12
 Q&A (tithing and mission money), Mar, 16
 To the Ends of the Earth, *Richard M. Romney*, Jan, 20
 Today I Will . . . , *N. Eldon Tanner*, Mar, 12
 Tolley, Michele
 Locked Out, Jul, 26
 Topham, Lynne S.
 Light in the Land of Mystery, Jul, 20
 True Beauty, *Rosalyn Collings*, Mar, 9
 Truth about My Family, The, *Scott Bean*, Mar, 26
 Tschudy, James
 One More Stop, Dec, Dec, 8
 V
 Van Horn, Ted
 Photo of the Month, Jan, 51; Apr, 51
 Vidal, Don Carlos
 Talk All You Want, Aug, 24
 W
 Wake-Up Call, *Isaac Kofi Morrison*, Feb, 42
 Warburton, Kortney Dawne
 One Sleepless Night, Dec, 32
 Way Is Prepared, The, Dec, 44
 We Are Daughters of Our Heavenly Father, Who Loves Us, *Susan W. Tanner*, Oct, 10
 We Thank Thee, *Steven E. Snow*, Jan, 12
 Web of Friendship, *Richard H. Winkel*, Aug, 10

Webb, Kimberly
 Images of That Holy Night, Dec, 20
 West, Stephen A.
 Out of Small Things, Jul, 12
 What a Brother, *Mamie Hunsaker Hammer*, Jun, 24
 What-If Question, The, *Shirley Bock Testi*, Nov, 40
 Who's Asking? *H. David Burton*, Dec, 38
 Why All the Rules? *Richard L. Evans*, Nov, 44
 Why Hurry? *Meredith Oldbam*, Sep, 37
 Why Should I Go? *Russell Tolley Giles*, May, 8
 Williams, Brenda
 Why Eternity? (p), Nov, 51
 Winkel, Richard H.
 Web of Friendship, Aug, 10
 Wirthlin, Joseph B.
 Following in Faith, Jul, 4
 Withers, Emma
 No Comparison, Dec, 15
 Withers, Suzanna L.
 Tell My Teacher, Apr, 34
 Woodruff, Taylor
 Getting the Point, Oct, 46
 WORD OF WISDOM
 Enemy Within, The, *James E. Faust*, Mar, 4
 Graduating with Honor, *Gabriel González*, Jul, 40
 WORDS OF THE PROPHET
 Book of Mormon: Read All about It, The, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Sep, 4
 Daughters of the Almighty, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Nov, 4
 Reach Out, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Feb, 4
 Your Family, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Jun, 4
 Workman, H. Ross
 Staying Power, Oct, 32
 Worth the Wait, *Katie Lea Brown*, Feb, 46
 Wounds That Heal My Own, The, *Elvin Mencia*, Apr, 15
 Y
 Yates, Alma J.
 Minus One Rose, May, 14
 You Are Different, *David B. Haight*, Apr, 4
 YOUNG MEN, See PRIESTHOOD, DUTY TO GOD
 YOUNG WOMEN
 All My Sisters, *Andrea Nixon*, Jan, 34
 More than a Medallion, Nov, 28
 134 Years Young, *Caroline H. Benzley*, Nov, 24
 Your Family, *Gordon B. Hinckley*, Jun, 4



SNOWFALL AT EVENING

BY BELLE HAYDEN

Light fall, bright fall, feathery-white fall,
Polka-dotting down in masses,
Powdering pavements and car-filled roads,
Coating houses, bushes, and grasses.

Pale drifts, frail drifts, wind-borne veil-drifts,
Landscaping, rearranging,
Creating scenes in the twilight hours
In delicate patterns, ever-changing.



“If I had been there to witness the Savior’s birth, how would I have lived my life afterwards, knowing that I had seen the Christ?”

See “Images of that Holy Night,” p. 20.