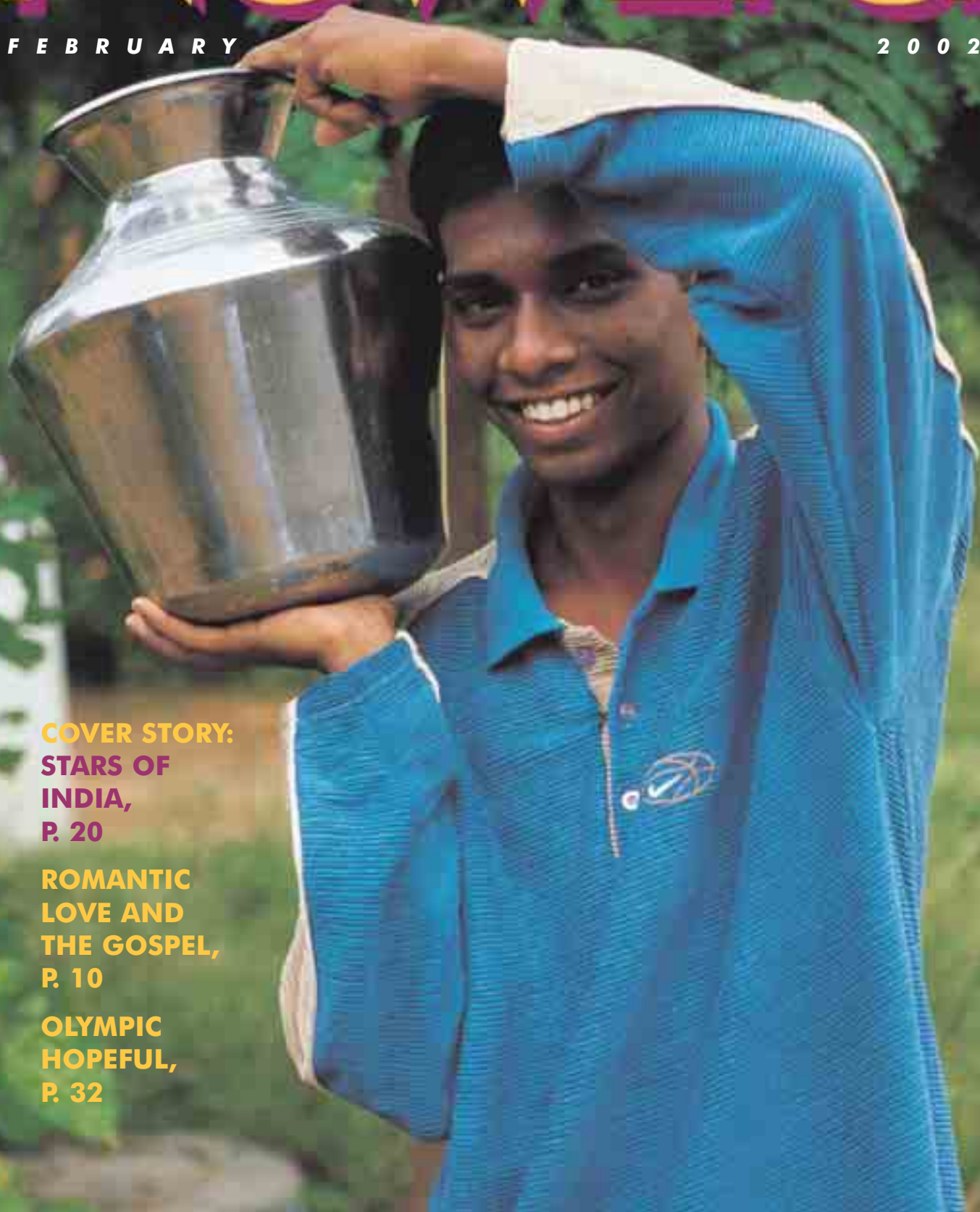


THE New Era

F E B R U A R Y

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COVER STORY:
STARS OF
INDIA,
P. 20

ROMANTIC
LOVE AND
THE GOSPEL,
P. 10

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HOPEFUL,
P. 32

**The New Era Magazine
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Cover: Kiran Arul, of
Hyderabad, India, has
seen his life and attitude
change for the better
since joining the Church.
See "Stars of India," p. 20.

Cover photography:
Larry Hiller (front),
John Luke (back)

In a country
long famed
for its jewels,
these teens have
found a priceless
pearl. See "Stars
of India," p. 20.



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“I Am But a Lad”



Your possibilities are immense. Trust the Lord to lead you from what you are to what you have the power to become.

Some in the Maori village laughed when a baby named Barney Wihongi was blessed to become an educational leader. But the Lord knew his potential.

by Elder
Neal A. Maxwell
of the Quorum of the
Twelve

An ancient Greek leader tried to rally his people by urging them, in effect, to believe in themselves and their city-culture not only for what they then were but for what they had the power to become! Youth of the Church, this is an appropriate message for you today, even though some of you may presently feel very inadequate and uncertain.

When the prophet Enoch was called, he wondered why and said, “I . . . am but a lad, and all the people hate me; for I am slow of speech” (Moses 6:31). Yet Enoch knew that in responding to God the test is not our capability but our availability. Enoch kept the commandments and trusted in the Lord’s vision of his possibilities, going on to become the builder of the greatest city of all time. The only time in all of human history when a whole people’s righteousness did not relapse was in the City of Enoch. And it all began with a comparatively young man who was less than sure of himself.

Your personal possibilities, not for status and position but for service to God and mankind, are immense, if you will but trust the Lord to lead you from what

you are to what you have the power to become. Chapters from three diverse stories illustrate this perspective.

A grandfather’s blessing

Not very many years ago in a Maori village in New Zealand, a baby boy was born. He soon received a blessing from his grandfather who said in the blessing that this boy would one day become an educational leader among his people. Some of the men in the village laughed at that blessing; it seemed so unrealistic. That boy, Barney Wihongi, earned his doctorate and became president of the Church College of New Zealand. He became president of the Church College of New Zealand at age 35 and had influence among other educators in the country of New Zealand. The promises given to Brother Wihongi as a baby amused some. Brother Barney Wihongi inspired many!

Inspired blessings can part the curtains of your possibilities! Performance and patience must then follow.

What may be

During the time of the Korean War, a young man, Rhee Ho Nam, was pressed into a helping role by an American military unit involved in court martials. At the time, being dislocated from his regular way of life looked like a tragedy. Ho Nam, however, made the best of his challenges as did Joseph in ancient Egypt. He developed English as a second language. He carefully observed the things the American soldiers did, especially an LDS lieutenant who was



n the midst of a war, a young Korean man recognized the truth outlined on a scrap of paper. He studied the gospel, was baptized, and went on to serve with distinction in the Church.

“different” from his fellow soldiers and much admired by Ho Nam. They discussed things often. One day the lieutenant asked Ho Nam what the purpose of life was. Rhee Ho Nam could not answer, saying only that philosophers had struggled in vain with that question for centuries. Thereupon, the officer took out a plain sheet of paper and drew an outline of the plan of salvation. At that very moment, the Lord bore testimony through the power of His Spirit to Rhee Ho Nam’s heart that what the American had told him was true. Ho Nam studied, then joined the Church, keeping that piece of paper for years as a treasured reminder of that special moment.

The Korean War was soon over, but Ho Nam’s life in the Church had just begun. While in his thirties, Rhee Ho Nam became the first stake president of the first stake of the Church on the mainland of Asia. He served with distinction as a mission president in Pusan, Korea, as an outstanding leader among his people. With special conviction, President Rhee taught his missionaries and members to look with hope beyond what is to what may be! Sometimes within difficulty and even seeming tragedy there is opportunity!

As did Enoch, you must trust the Lord; if you are righteous, His purposes will be served. Joseph in Egypt did just that, having many opportunities to become bitter over the way he was mistreated. He not only rose above his difficulties, but lifted others, feeding millions of starving people. Even though his brothers had intended to do evil to Joseph, the Lord used those evil designs to give Joseph opportunities far beyond his boyhood dreams! (see Gen. 50:20).

Hassling the missionaries

A few years ago in Italy, LDS missionaries were harassed by some Italian youths. Among the group on two occasions was a young man named Felice Lotito. He was challenged by a bold elder to come to the local LDS branch so that he could judge for himself. It was a dare which Felice accepted. He came. He heard. He studied. He believed. He was baptized. Later he was sent on a mission to England where he increased his faith and his facility with English. He served honorably, came home, married a lovely

Italian girl in the Bern Switzerland Temple, and became one of the directors of the seminary and institute program in Italy.

In July of 1980, Felice Lotito left at age 32 to be the mission president in the Italy Padova Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints! God saw in Felice possibilities that Felice did not see in himself. When the gospel was presented to him, Felice had the integrity of heart and intellect to believe it, even though he had been hassling the missionaries just days before.

Believe in yourselves not only for what you now are, but for what you have the possibilities to become!

In the Lord’s debt

One of the reasons we must trust God is that we are presently locked in the dimension of time; He is not. This personal experience may be illustrative.

In May of 1945 as a frightened, not-too-effective young infantryman in the U.S. Army in combat on Okinawa, I had several soul-stretching, faith-promoting experiences, including a dramatic answer to my prayers that came during an artillery shelling of our company’s mortar position. It demonstrated to me, again, that the Lord was cognizant of my prayers as well as those of others. In one of those selfish, honest prayers that we offer when we are in real trouble, I promised the Lord that if He would spare me on that occasion, I would seek to serve Him all my life. The prayer was answered at once. I foolishly thought then that I could repay the Lord. Since then I am more deeply in His debt than ever.

On a stopover on Okinawa in 1973, I found the same spot, now overgrown by sugarcane, where my foxhole was during that shelling. Just a few hills away, I was privileged to speak in a chapel full of Okinawan Saints and servicemen—not very far from where I and others spent those grim nights so many years before.

I wonder if I had been told in the spring of 1945 that these things would happen later if my mind and heart could have been so stretched? The Lord foresaw, but I did not.

Trust the Lord

Trust yourselves to the Lord who sees

the end from the beginning—and all that is in between! He sees you as you are but also what you may become! Meanwhile, do not let your present feelings of inadequacy keep you from growing or responding to your challenges. Do not let the pressures of time cause you to make choices that will damage your eternity.

The Lord reached out for His elect during a street scene in Italy, gave promises in a humble Maori village, and brought about a moment of truth in a quiet conversation during the Korean War. He sees beyond our cramped

foxholes of the moment and prepares us, if we will, for the chapels of our future!

If you will but keep His commandments, each of you will have more opportunities for service than you can possibly imagine; some of these are around you even now! **NE**

Originally printed in the May 1981 New Era.

The Plan of Salvation

Premortal
Life

Earth
Life

Spirit
World

Birth
(Veil)

Death
(Grave)

Resurrection
and
Final
Judgment

Celestial

Terrestrial

Telestial

Outer
Darkness

No One

WILL

My biggest babysitting challenge came while the kids were asleep and no one was looking.

Before dances, dating, and driving occupied my weekends, I often spent Saturday nights babysitting. I remember thinking that I was prepared for any challenge. I had already dealt with overflowing toilets, policemen at the front door, minor illnesses and injuries, and even a leaking ceiling. But I was about to face my biggest babysitting challenge, and it would happen while the kids were sleeping happily and safely down the hall.

Mrs. Porter* left in a hurry, handing me her usual list of instructions and emergency phone numbers with a note at the bottom that read, "I grabbed a movie for you to watch after the kids go to bed. It's supposed to be good. Thanks again."

With the exception of an entire bottle of bubbles being spilled on the closet floor, the night went without major upsets. Five rounds of Mother May I later, bedtime came and I had a chance to see what Mrs. Porter had picked out.

I popped the movie into the VCR and read the description on the back of the

box. The opening credits started rolling as I noticed the letter R in the bottom corner. With a sigh of exasperation, I pushed eject and put the movie back in the box. I didn't watch R-rated movies.

But sitting there on top of the TV, the movie seemed to stare at me, calling my name. The minutes seemed like hours as thoughts started to invade my mind, forcing me to question my standards.

No one will know if you watch this, it seemed to say to me. When you're done, you can just hit rewind. You don't have to tell anyone. Besides, it's just a little bad language. It's not like you don't hear worse language every day in the hallways of school. How bad could it be? No one will know.

The movie won. My heart started to pound as I opened the box. It's just a movie, I reassured myself. Just as I reached to put the movie into the machine, I paused. What was I doing?

Then it hit me. Even if no one else in the world ever found out what I had done, I would know, and my Heavenly Father would know. I shut the box with a snap, amazed that I had come so close to doing something I knew in my heart was wrong. The movie lost.

Standing there with the box in my hands, I made a promise to myself to keep my mind clean of things that did not meet Heavenly Father's standards. I promised to do what was right, even when no one was watching. **NE**

The video beckoned. I could rewind it after watching. Besides, how bad could it be?

by Becky Manion

KNOW



The GOSPEL and Romantic Love



by Elder Bruce C. Hafen
of the Seventy

Church teachings are not a fence to keep you away from love. They are guardrails to keep you on the road to true love and happiness.

Gospel teachings about romantic love are full of hope, peace, and joy.

The idea of romantic love, so commonplace that it is touched upon in virtually every book or movie or magazine, is also at the very center of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As President Boyd K. Packer put it, “Romantic love is not only a part of life, but literally a dominating influence of it. It is deeply and significantly religious. There is no abundant life without it. Indeed, the highest degree of the celestial kingdom is unattainable in the absence of it” (BYU Fireside, Nov. 3, 1963).

The other side of this coin, of course, is represented by what Alma told his wayward son, Corianton, who had gone after the Lamanite harlot Isabel. He said to his son: “Know ye not, . . . that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost?” (Alma 39:5).

Why the law of chastity?

Sometimes we give as reasons for the law of chastity the risk of pregnancy or abortion, the possibility of an unwanted or embarrassing marriage, or the chance of a terrible venereal disease. With

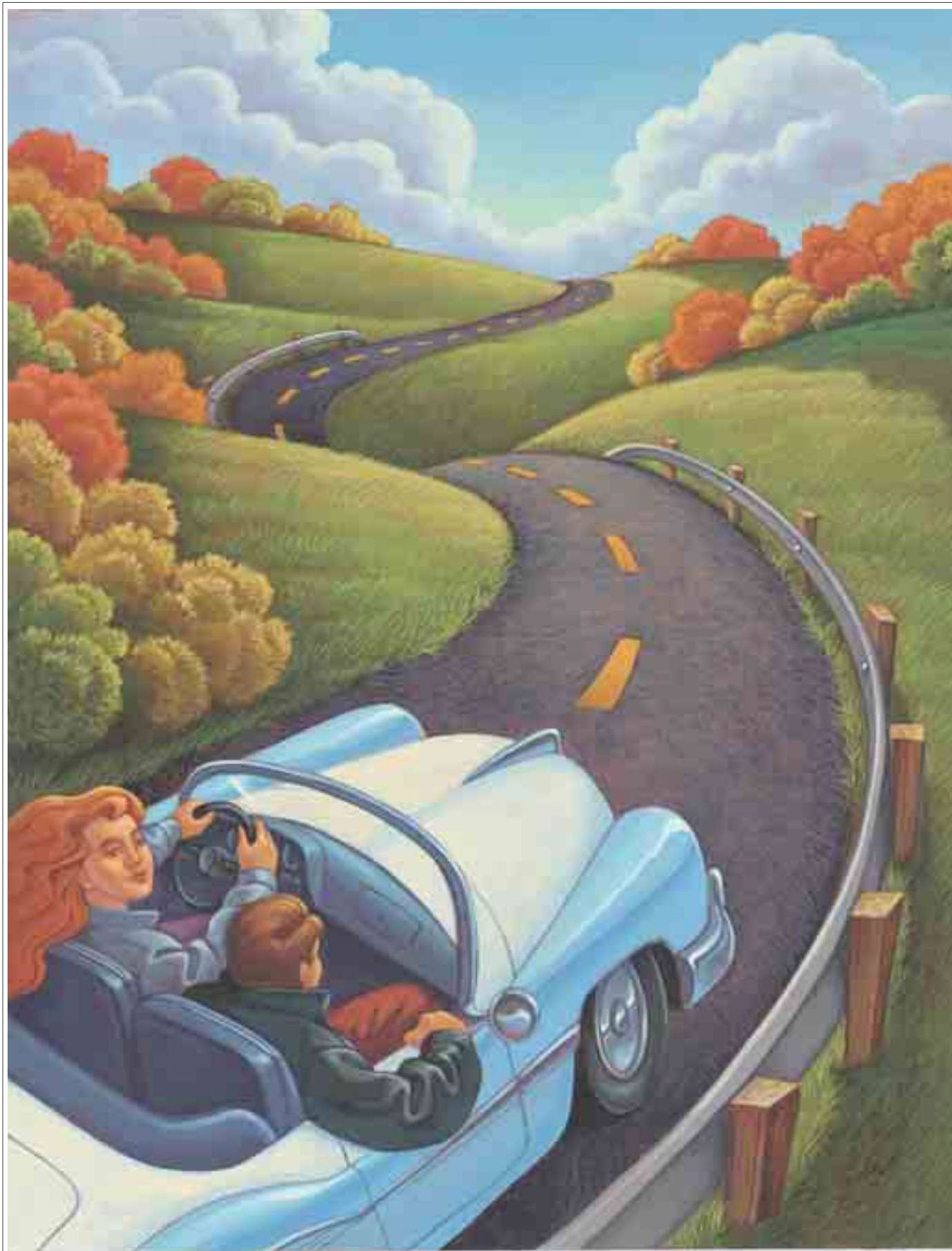
adultery, we talk about the damage of destroying an existing marriage or family. As serious as these things are, I’m not sure they are the fundamental reason for the Lord’s having placed this commandment ahead of armed robbery and fraud in the seriousness of sins.

Think of it—unchastity is second only to murder. Perhaps there is a common element in those two things—unchastity and murder. Both have to do with life, which touches upon the highest of divine powers. Murder involves the wrongful taking of life; sexual transgression may involve the wrongful giving of life, or the wrongful tampering with the sacred fountains of life-giving power.

I have been around enough to know that this is not the first time you have ever heard this subject mentioned. But I have also been around enough to know that no matter what you have heard and no matter how often, today we live in a world so completely soaked through with tragically wrong and evil ideas about sex that you must be warned—in love and kindness, but warned—lest the moral sleeping sickness that is overcoming the whole world calm you into deadly slumber.

Nuclear-powered sin

It’s now simply a fact that most of those who write and most of those who produce today’s movies, TV programs, and popular music, as well as those who set the editorial policies of many magazines, believe that sex outside of



S *Stay away from the edge of danger by developing self-restraint. Nobody ever fell off a cliff who never went near one.*

Build your relationship like a pyramid with a base of friendship. Add layers of things like time, understanding, respect, and restraint. Right at the top of the pyramid is a glittering little mystery called romance.

marriage is really quite harmless. On this particular subject of sexual morality, I honestly believe our society is within the grip of the evil one.

Can you see why the Brethren tell us to stay away from X- and R-rated movies? Can you see why they plead with us to avoid drugs, alcohol, vulgar music, and the other products of the carnal environment that now surrounds us almost as water surrounds the fish of the sea? These aren't trivial things. If the H-bomb symbolizes our age, we are playing now not just with fire, but with nuclear power. The prince of darkness has dragged out the heavy artillery.

The highway to love

Let me talk now, on the other hand, about the more positive aspects of the law of chastity, because that part of the law is fundamental and important.

President Packer said:

“Oh, youth, the requirements of the Church are the highway to love, with guardrails securely in place, with help along the way. How foolish is the youth who feels the Church is a fence around love to keep him out. How fortunate is the young person who follows the standards of the Church, even if just from sheer obedience or habit, for he will find rapture and a joy fulfilled.”

Properly understood, then, the scriptures counsel us to be virtuous not because romantic love is bad, but precisely because romantic love is so good. It is not only good; it is pure, precious, even sacred and holy. For that reason, one of Satan's cheapest and dirtiest tricks is to make profane that which is sacred.

Eight steps to true love

May I suggest now eight brief, practical steps for those who would one day be true sweethearts, based on a foundation of righteous living.

1. Have reverence for the human body and the life-giving powers of that body. Your body is a temple. It is sacred and holy. It is also the dwelling place of the seeds of human life, the nurturing of

which, with your chosen companion, within the bounds set by God himself, is lovely, of good report, and praiseworthy (see A of F 13).

2. During the time of courtship, please be emotionally honest in the expression of affection. Sometimes you are not as careful as you might be about when, how, and to whom you express your feelings of affection. You must realize that the desire to express affection can be motivated by other things than true love.

In short, save your kisses—you might need them someday.

3. Be friends first and sweethearts second. University professor Lowell Bennion once said that relationships between young men and young women should be built like a pyramid. The base of the pyramid is friendship. And the ascending layers are built of things like time, understanding, respect, and restraint. Right at the top of the pyramid is a glittering little mystery called romance.

Now, you don't have to be very smart to know that a pyramid won't stand up very long if you stand it on its point instead of its base. In other words, be friends first and sweethearts later, not the other way around. Otherwise, people who think they are sweethearts may discover they can't be very good friends, and by then it may be too late.

4. Develop the power of self-discipline and self-restraint. Please remember that nobody ever fell off a cliff who never went near one. You've got to be like Joseph, not like David. When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, the scripture says, Joseph “fled, and got him out” (Gen. 39:12). Joseph knew that it is wiser to avoid temptation than to resist it.

In your courtships, even when you feel there is a growing foundation of true love, show your profound respect for that love and the possibilities of your life together by restraining your passions. Please don't be deceived by the false notion that anything short of the sex act itself is acceptable conduct. That is a lie, not only because one step overpoweringly leads to another, but also



because the handling of another's body is in an important sense part of the sexual act that is kept holy by the sanctuary of chastity.

If ever you are in doubt about where the line is between love and lust, draw the line toward the side of love.

5. Live for the presence of the Holy Spirit, that you may have it as your constant guide. Don't date someone you already know you would not ever want to marry. If you should fall in love with someone you shouldn't marry, you make it more difficult for the Lord to guide you away from that person after you are already emotionally committed. It is difficult enough to tune your spiritual receiver to the whisperings of heaven without jamming up the channel with the loud thunder of romantic emotion.

The key to spiritual guidance is found in one word: worthiness. Those who garnish their thoughts with virtue have the Spirit and have confidence in God's presence (see D&C 121:45–46). Those who have lust in their hearts can't have the Spirit (see D&C 63:16–17).

6. Avoid the habit of feeling sorry for yourself, and don't worry excessively about those times when you feel socially unsuccessful. Everybody in the world doesn't have to marry you—it only takes one. Remember: "Worry not that you are not well known. Seek to be worth knowing."

There are times when we wonder if the Lord loves us; we wonder if other people love us. And so we mistakenly seek the symbols of success—whether that is being popular or being rich or being famous within our own sphere. You might be tempted to let someone take improper liberties with you, or you may indulge yourself in some practice that seems to bring temporary relief but only makes you feel worse in the long run.

Ultimately, however, only the Lord's approval of our lives really matters. If you seek to be worth knowing and seek to do His will, all the rest will take care of itself. Never forget that all things work together for good to them who love



God (see Rom. 8:28).

7. Avoid at all costs, no matter what the circumstances, abortion and homosexuality. As serious as is fornication or adultery, you must understand that abortion and homosexuality are equally wrong and may be worse. Even persons who only assist others, much less pressure them, to have an abortion are in jeopardy of being denied the privilege of missionary service. They may also be called upon to face a Church disciplinary council, at the peril of their membership in the Church.

8. If, through some unfortunate experience in your past, you have committed a moral transgression of this kind, there is a way by which you may receive full forgiveness. There is no more glorious language in all scripture than the words of Isaiah, speaking as if it were by the voice of the Lord himself:

“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land” (Isa. 1:18–19).

If your transgressions are of the serious kind, you will need to see your bishop and voluntarily offer a full and complete confession. As frightening as that experience may seem to you, by this means you will find purpose and a peace of mind more hopeful and uplifting than you can now imagine.

Our ultimate happiness

For all that I have said by way of warning about the social conditions of the day or the limits we must place on ourselves, I'd like you to remember that the teachings of the gospel about romantic love are full of hope and peace and joy of the most uplifting and everlasting kind.

I testify to you with all my heart that the commandments of God are designed for our ultimate happiness, and that being sweethearts in the way the Lord intended it is worth waiting for. **NE**

*Adapted from a September 28, 1982
BYU devotional address.*

FIGHTING PRIDE

Whether or not we like to admit it, we are all prideful in some way. Everyone needs a little improvement here and there. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said, “pride is the universal sin.” He also said “the antidote for pride is humility” (*Ensign*, May 1989, 6). Here are some specific ideas President Benson gave to help us fight pride and become more humble (see *Ensign*, May 1989, 4–7).

Love God. Enmity or opposition toward God is the number-one characteristic of pride. If we love God we will seek to do His will and obey His commandments (see John 14:15). Trust God and His revelations and not the wisdom of the world.

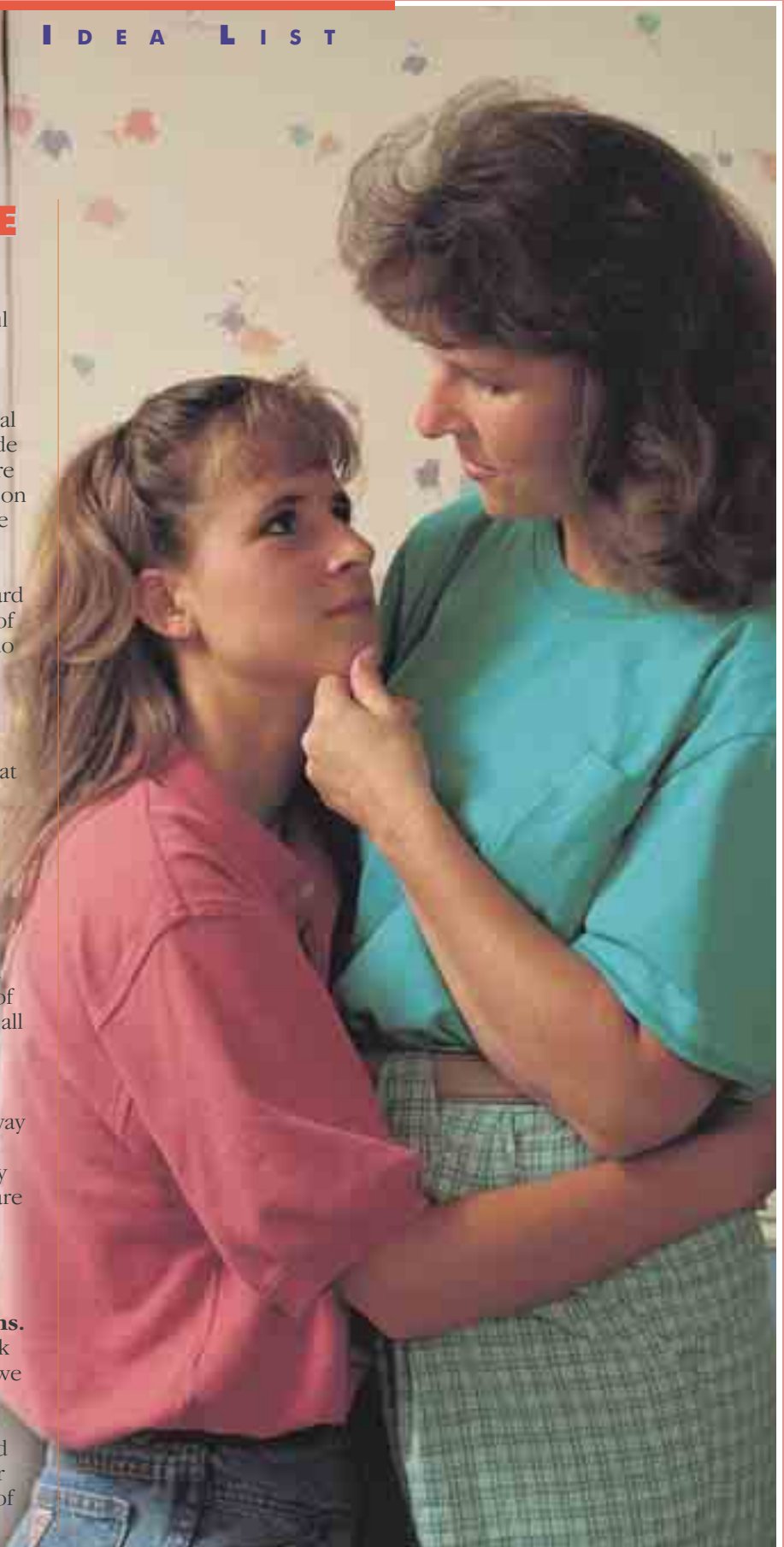
Love your brothers and sisters. That means everyone, and especially your family. Remember not to compare yourself to others and to be sincerely happy for others’ successes. Avoid faultfinding, gossiping, jealousy, or withholding gratitude or praise that might lift someone else.

Give selfless service. Selfishness is a common characteristic of pride. Give of yourself—your time, your talents, and all you have—to fight self-pity and self-gratification. A mission is one way all young men should plan on serving. Temple work for the dead is another way we can all serve.

Forgive. Holding grudges, being easily offended, or encouraging contention are all forms of pride. We become more humble when we forgive those who might have offended us and when we avoid arguing and contention.

Confess, forsake, and repent of sins. When we admit we are wrong and seek to do God’s will through repentance, we come closer to Him.

Be open to counsel. None of us is perfect, so be accepting of counsel and correction instead of rationalizing your mistakes. Be teachable and accepting of gospel truths. **NE**



Q & A

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

NEW ERA

When looking for answers, the New Era does the same thing everyone should do—looks at what the scriptures and our Church leaders say about the topic. This time we found that Elder Henry B. Eyring answered this same question in our magazine when he was the Deputy Commissioner of Church Education, prior to his call as a General Authority. The following response is adapted from Elder Eyring’s comments in the May 1979 New Era.

It’s not fair to compare a mission and going to college, because, in an important way, they are opposites. One is paying on a debt. The other is creating a debt. One is mostly giving. The other is mostly getting. When you’ve accepted the blessings of the gospel into your life, you’ve created a massive obligation. And by far the most effective way to begin paying on that debt is to qualify for a full-time mission and take the gospel, with all your energy, to other people.

Attending college is creating a new debt. Most of the cost of your education

Attending college is creating a new debt, going on a mission is paying off a debt.

When you’ve accepted the blessings of the gospel into your life, you’ve created a massive obligation.

By delaying a mission you run the risk of not getting the chance to make a unique payment on the greatest debt you will ever have.

Your experience as a missionary will make it far more likely that you will be willing and able to serve society as repayment for your education.

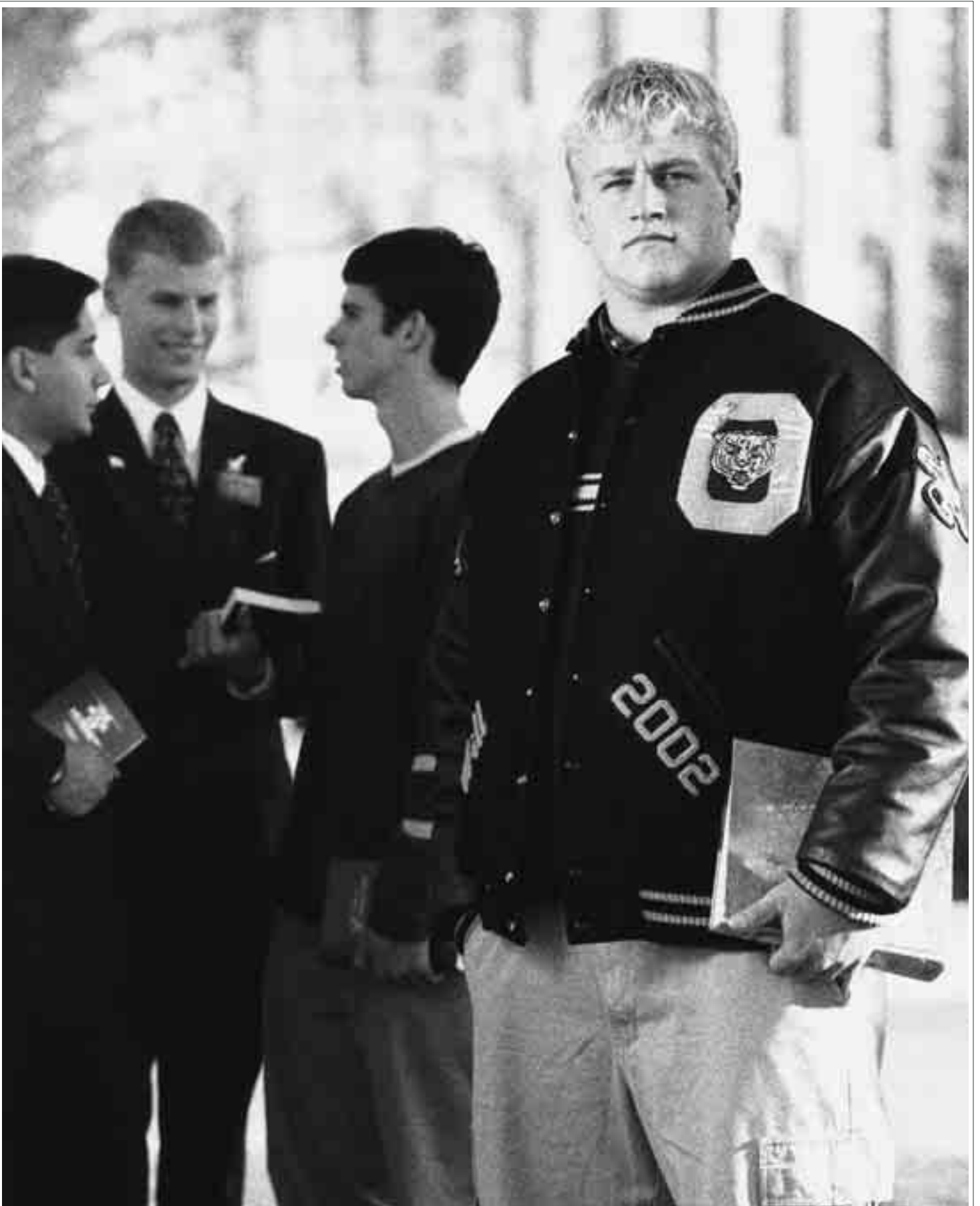
READERS

The glory of God is intelligence; and the most intelligent thing you can do is seek first His kingdom. Your life will be greatly blessed, and after your mission He will provide for your temporal needs.
Tim Douberley, 21
Apopka, Florida



Every day I learn things on my mission that are not taught anywhere else or through any other experience. While it is important to get an education, it is also important to educate yourself about the gospel and work on gaining a stronger testimony.
Sister Stephanie A. Folaumoeloa, 21
California San Fernando Mission





Photography by Robert Casey. Posed by models

is given you by society, even if you earned the money for your expenses and tuition. Attending college creates an obligation to pay society by added skill in your work, service in civic life, and by support of educational institutions.

At 18, I thought that a mission was an extra sacrifice some members made for the Church. I didn't understand that it was payment on an eternal obligation I already owed. And I thought college was an investment on my part for which society should repay me in better salary and greater opportunities. I didn't understand that society was investing in me, expecting I would return that investment, and more, in service.

Whether you feel a mission or two years of college is more important depends on how you feel about debts. By delaying a mission you run the risk of not getting the chance to make a unique payment on the greatest debt you will ever have. By serving a mission you run little risk of failing to pay your obligations to society for college training. On the contrary, your experience in devoted service as a missionary will make it far more likely that you will be willing and able to serve society as repayment for your education.

At least part of the reason for that obligation must go back to the promises we made before we were born. It's my belief that we were permitted to come into the world at a time when and in a place where we could hear the gospel in return for our covenant that we would then take the gospel to others.

You and I have been blessed with that gospel. It's our obligation now to try to bless all the families of the earth. A full-time mission is the best way I know to do that. I'd put opportunity to pay debts ahead of creating new ones. Of course, there's this about a mission: the harder you work, the more the Lord blesses you, and the further you get in His debt. **NE**

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



“You can do nothing more important. School can wait. Scholarships can be deferred. Occupational goals can be postponed. Yes, even temple marriage should wait until after a young man has served an honorable full-time mission for the Lord” (*Ensign*, May 1986, 44).

—President
Ezra Taft Benson
(1899–1994)

As a missionary, I am developing self confidence, and learning to speak up, organize, and set goals. I learn about people and places, and I learn to learn. Serving a mission is my greatest preparation for a college degree, career, and the rest of my life.



Elder Glen Mari Lamis, 22
Philippines Olongapo Mission

God has asked, through His prophets and apostles, that every worthy young man serve a mission. The decision to serve a mission, and to give two years of our lives towards service to the Lord, is very Christlike and will bring us true happiness.



Bryce Evans, 18
Lindon, Utah

A college degree is important, but when we accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, we also accept the responsibility to share it with others. The scriptures tell us to seek the kingdom of God first and the rest shall be added.



Sister Janet Monalisa Akambasi, 22
Ghana Accra Mission

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send us your answer to the question below, along with your name, age, and where you are from. Please include a snapshot of yourself that is 1 1/2 by 2 inches (4 by 5 cm) or larger.

Q&A, New Era
50 East North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

QUESTION

I know the Holy Ghost can guide me, but how can I tell the difference between my own thoughts and feelings and the inspiration of the Spirit?

Please respond by April 1, 2002.

IT'S
GREAT
EXCEPT FOR . . .



. . . EXCEPT FOR THE BAD PARTS.
WHAT KINDS OF MOVIES AND MUSIC ARE YOU FEEDING YOUR MIND?
(See A of F 13.)

Stars of



The “Star of India” is a famous sapphire that reflects light wonderfully.

The universal language isn’t English or Esperanto. It’s spoken by the Spirit, and it’s heard wherever the gospel goes.

*I*n a nation with more than a billion voices, which one do you listen to? In a land with more than a thousand languages and dialects, including more than a dozen official languages, which is the most important language to learn?

As the restored gospel of Jesus Christ begins to take root in India, young people there are discovering that whether their native language is Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, or whatever, they have a language in common with Latter-day Saints all



by Larry Hiller

India

over the world. And even in crowded cities like New Delhi, one special voice can stand out if you listen.

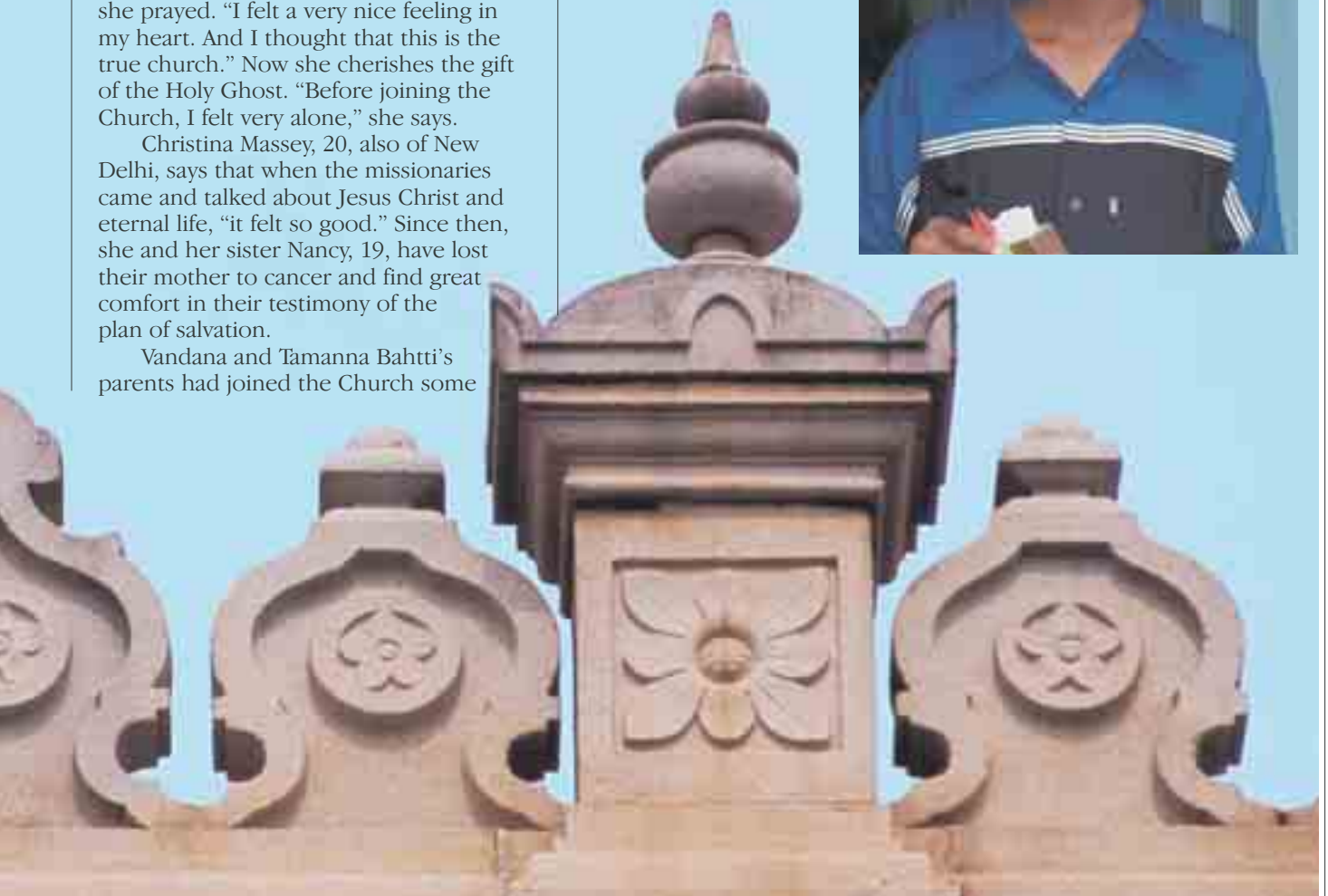
A language of the heart

Gloria Thomas, 18, of New Delhi, was introduced to the gospel by her friend Sheila. At first, Gloria didn't think too much about the message presented by two elders from south India. But then she prayed. "I felt a very nice feeling in my heart. And I thought that this is the true church." Now she cherishes the gift of the Holy Ghost. "Before joining the Church, I felt very alone," she says.

Christina Massey, 20, also of New Delhi, says that when the missionaries came and talked about Jesus Christ and eternal life, "it felt so good." Since then, she and her sister Nancy, 19, have lost their mother to cancer and find great comfort in their testimony of the plan of salvation.

Vandana and Tamanna Bahtti's parents had joined the Church some

An even brighter light—that of the gospel—is reflected in the eyes and smiles of young Latter-day Saints in India.





Studies consume most of the day, so time with other LDS youth, even if it's just a visit to the city's most famous market (left), is an enjoyable treat for these Young Women in Hyderabad . . .

years ago. But the girls had to make their own decision about baptism. They read the Book of Mormon and the Joseph Smith story. They prayed. And they received the witness they needed. Vandana, 20, says many people had told her not to be baptized, that the Church is not true. "I was confused," she says. "I really prayed to God. I just remember that one week before my baptism I prayed about it, and the Spirit was so strong."

A minority language

Christianity has been in India for hundreds of years, brought by missionaries of many different denominations. But India is the birthplace of major religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism. And 13 to 15 percent of Indians are Muslim. Christians make up only about 3 percent of the total population.

It was among those few that the message of the restored Church began to take root. The Bamandla family of Hyderabad were already Christians when they first encountered the missionaries. Anita, 14, tells of how her brother first met the elders as they were looking for water for a baptism. When they came to her home and taught the family, Anita says simply, "I was very



happy.”

After the elders came to the Bamandla home, the family began to have all sorts of problems. “That was Satan trying to stop us from coming to Christ,” says Anita. The branch president, the members, and the elders provided encouragement, the Spirit provided strength, and “we took baptism and we come to church regularly.” Interestingly enough, the Bamandlas had not been very active in their former church because it was so far from their home. But where the Hyderabad Fourth Branch meets is even more distant. Now, distance doesn’t keep them away.

“We are blessed very much,” Anita continues. “I can’t express the blessings. Our Father in Heaven is so good. I love my Father. I love my Jesus Christ.”

But not a foreign language

The British ruled India from the 1700s until 1947, and English is still recognized as one of the official languages of the country. It’s taught in the schools and is often the language of business and higher education. It’s also a language that frequently allows Latter-day Saints from one language region of India to communicate and share testimony with those from another area.



*... and for their
Aaronic
Priesthood
counterparts
(above).*





In New Dehli, as elsewhere, young Latter-day Saints are often found at their favorite gathering place—the local chapel.

The language of the Spirit, on the other hand, crosses *every* barrier and is the native language of *every* open heart. Naveen Kumar, 18, had no prior religion. But one day his older brother saw two young men in white shirts pass by the family's home. Something prompted him to call out to them. Eventually the whole family joined the Church, and now Naveen is looking forward to serving a mission.

Karthak Unni, 15, also of Hyderabad, is another who felt the Spirit. "I did not know it was the Spirit I was feeling," he says, "but I felt so happy." The elders who were teaching him explained those feelings to Karthak. "Whenever they came to my home I felt so happy. And whenever I read the Book of Mormon I feel really great about it."

A language of love

In the city of Bangalore the Roshan family was introduced to the gospel through an uncle. At the time, Rakesh, 18, or "Rocky" as everyone calls him, was the only family member to be baptized. He wasn't serious at first, but as he attended church, read the scriptures, and heard the testimonies of others, he gained a testimony of his own. After his baptism, however, Rocky

became somewhat inactive and the elders began to visit the family regularly again. This led to the baptism of Rocky's older brother, Dinesh, whose example of faithfulness and love not only led Rocky back into activity, but led their parents to the waters of baptism also.

Then there's the powerful example of love shown in the Bangalore Second Branch, where a large part of the congregation is deaf. Using yet another language—sign language learned from welfare service missionaries—several young hearing sisters take turns interpreting the services for the deaf. But it doesn't stop there. Many of the hearing members of the branch have taken it upon themselves to learn at least some sign language. And so, before and after meetings there are the usual happy greetings and conversations you find in any Latter-day Saint congregation. But here, many of them are silent, as the language of the Spirit overcomes physical communication barriers.

With so many people and languages and religions, India is a richly complex society. But among the Latter-day Saints there, a Church member from anywhere else in the world would feel right at home. Because we have a common language. **NE**

Though India's long been known for beautiful fabrics (right), for spices and precious gems, her greatest natural resource is her warm, bright, ambitious people—traits that are magnified when the gospel comes into their lives.



DON'T BET

Gambling is contrary to gospel principles. Losing money is bad enough; losing the companionship of the Spirit is tragic.

by Shanna Ghaznavi

Those who gamble risk more than just money. Their lives and families are at stake too.

Mike* started gambling when he was still in high school—only a few dollars here and there. By the time he was in college he had graduated to all-night poker games. As a young adult, Mike joined the Church but returned to his old habits. And later, when he was married with two children, his problem with gambling had only grown.

He mortgaged the family's New England home, lost his children's college funds, and couldn't even pay the utility bills because he used all his family's money to pay gambling debts. Along with

* Names have been changed.

his compulsive gambling came compulsive lying to cover up his habit and his debts. Mike's gambling problem eventually led to divorce and the loss of his children's trust.

Mike's case is an extreme one, but not uncommon. His children, Kristen and Amber, now 21 and 18, know the devastating effects of gambling—and lying to cover up the problem—on a family. "It's a plague," says Kristen. "Stay away from it like you would the plague."

Although their dad is now seeking help at Gamblers Anonymous, the years of heartache his gambling caused are difficult to forget. "It's even hard to trust him now," Amber says.

Terrible odds

It can be as addictive as drugs, as destructive as drinking, and, chances are,

YOUR LIFE

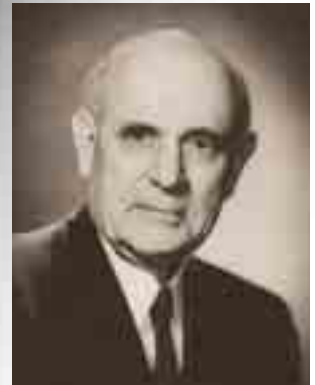


it's legal where you live. Gambling, in all its many forms, is accepted in most societies, but the problems it leads to are widespread and serious. In Australia, there are three times as many teens with gambling problems as adults with gambling problems. In America, rates of compulsive gambling among teens are more than twice as high as those of adults. And the more teens there are who try it, the more there are who get hooked.

Gambling is any game of chance. It involves risking something of value on an outcome that is not certain. It includes anything from pitching pennies or flipping for baseball cards, up to the things such as poker or casino games. Even though teenagers might not be able to go into a casino and sit at a slot machine, there are many other ways to become addicted to gambling. One of the most common forms of gambling in schools is sports betting.

But what's so bad about a raffle for charity? Or a poker game between friends? Is it wrong if you don't lose any money?

The truth is, there's no such thing as a friendly bet. Gambling ruins lives and families. Elder Dallin H. Oaks said, "Gambling tends to corrupt its participants. Its philosophy of something



"So obsessed do some people become with [gambling] that they cannot contemplate or think of any other way in which to increase their means and their income except by taking the chance that gambling affords" (Where Is Wisdom? 1955, 55).

—President
Stephen L. Richards
(1879–1959)



“For reasons we do not understand, some persons lack the control mechanism that allows them to try something and then leave it alone. Some are susceptible to addictions to tobacco, others to alcohol or other drugs, and some can be addicted to gambling. For the susceptible, what looks like a harmless experiment actually chains them to an indulgence by bonds that seem too strong to break” (Ensign, June 1987, 69).

***—Elder
Dallin H. Oaks***

for nothing undermines the virtues of work, industry, thrift, and service to others” (*Ensign*, June 1987, 69). And President Spencer W. Kimball said, “Damage comes to the person, whether he wins or loses, to get something for nothing, something without effort, something without paying the full price” (*Ensign*, May 1975, 6).

Beating the odds

The Internet and video poker, among other things, make it easy for teenagers to gamble. Most teenagers are introduced to gambling through a family member. So, how can you avoid something that is all around you and is so widely accepted? President Gordon B. Hinckley says our temptations today are easily handled through correct, personal choices (see *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 7).

Keresa Gifford of the Orchard Valley Ward in Las Vegas, Nevada, says, “It’s obvious what’s good and what’s bad. Temptation is not trying to sneak in. It’s just there. Either you do what’s right or you don’t.”

No dice

When you hear the word gambling, it probably goes along with a mental picture of a place like Las Vegas, one of the world’s gambling capitals. A few miles from the glaring lights of the strip in Las Vegas is a very different scene. Each weekday morning, seminary students from Western High School gather for class at their chapel to escape the influences of the world. Most of them have grown up surrounded by gambling and its culture. They know it’s there, but they don’t participate in it.

The people at their school know they are Latter-day Saints and have been turned down enough times that they have stopped asking LDS students to wager on sports or to play craps. The Western High seminary students know it can be hard to avoid the Las Vegas gambling scene and all the evils that go along with it, like pornography and drinking. But they also know it’s possible to be in the world and not of it.

“It really doesn’t matter where you live,” says Anna Haynes. “As long as you ignore the influence of the world you can easily stay strong in the Church, the same way it is anywhere else.”

You bet your life

Gambling is dangerous. It corrupts those who participate and, especially for teenagers, is addictive. Gambling is also a gateway to other unrighteous things; its usual companions are drinking, pornography, and illegal acts used to support this bad habit. Regular gambling almost always leads to financial trouble. “The drug for the gambler is money,” says Kevin O’Neill, of the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, Inc. “Teenagers don’t have money, so they usually have to do something illegal to get it.” In many cases, gambling leads to theft or other immoral and illegal acts to get betting money.

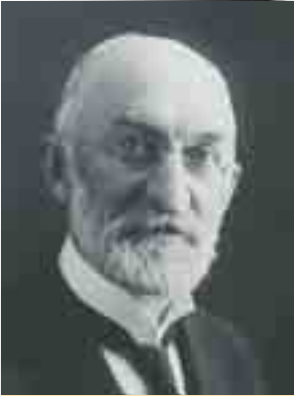
But, the most harmful effect of gambling goes beyond losing your money. For Latter-day Saints, it is the loss of the companionship of the Holy Ghost that is the greatest consequence.

We lose the Spirit when we gamble because it is an activity that is inconsistent with gospel living. Elder Oaks says, “Jesus taught us to give. He will even test our willingness to sacrifice all that we have in service to Him and to our fellowmen. Satan, the adversary, teaches men to take—forcibly if necessary, deviously if feasible, continuously if possible. Whatever encourages men to take from one another without giving value in return serves the cause of Satan” (*Ensign*, June 1987, 69).

So gambling is the opposite of Christ’s way of giving, because for you to win, someone else has to lose.

Our lot

The Church has always opposed gambling, whether it is legalized or not. “The question of lotteries is a moral question,” says President Hinckley. “That government now promotes what it once enforced laws against becomes a sad



“The Church . . . is opposed to any game of chance, occupation, or so-called business, which takes money from the person who may be possessed of it without giving value received in return. It is opposed to all practices the tendency of which is to encourage the spirit of reckless speculation. . . .”
(Improvement Era, Sept. 1926, 1100).

—President
Heber J. Grant
(1856–1945)



“The spirit of gambling is a progressive thing. Usually it begins modestly; and then, like many other hazardous habits, it often grows beyond control. At best it wastes time and produces nothing. At worst it becomes a ruinous obsession and fosters false living by encouraging the futile belief that we can continually get something for nothing”
(Improvement Era, Dec. 1946, 793).

—Elder
Richard L. Evans
(1906–1971)



“One reason for the spiritual sickness of our society is that so many do not know or care about what is morally right and wrong. . . . Many things are just plain and simply wrong, whether they are illegal or not. Those who persist in following after the evil things of the world cannot know the ‘peace of God, which passeth all understanding’ (Philip. 4:7) (Ensign, May 1992, 6).

—President James E. Faust

reflection on the deterioration of public and political morality . . .” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 52).

Our prophets and apostles have given a clear warning. As Latter-day Saints, we should not take part in any form of gambling. “So what should Latter-day Saints do about gambling? They should not participate in any way, and they should encourage others, especially their family members, not to participate,” says Elder Oaks (*Ensign*, June 1987, 69). You can also try to help others you know who might have a gambling problem.

Gambling can ruin lives, financially and otherwise. If you know someone who has a problem and you want to help them, the first thing you need to do is educate yourself on the subject. “Talk to them as your friend,” says Mr. O’Neill, of the Council on Compulsive Gambling. “Just tell them you’re concerned, and never give them money.”

Borrowing money is one of the first signs of a gambling problem. “Don’t just let it go and think it’s no big deal,” says Mr. O’Neill. He also warns that the person who has a gambling problem will most likely deny it, so don’t try to confront them about their problem alone. Talk to a parent, counselor, or other adult you can trust. Also, gambling addiction help-lines and organizations



“What does gambling do to its participants? The attitude of taking something from someone else in order to enhance our own position—the essence of gambling—leads us away from the giving path of Christ and toward the taking path of the adversary. The act of taking or trying to take something from someone else without giving value in return is destructive of spiritual sensitivities” (Ensign, June 1987, 69).

—Elder
Dallin H. Oaks

SYMPTOMS OF ADDICTION

If you or someone you know has problems with gambling, you should seek help immediately. Here are some of the major symptoms of dependence or addiction:

- Borrowing money to gamble with or to pay gambling debts
- Increasing isolation from family and friends
- Declining school or work performance
- Receiving a “high” from gambling
- Neglecting basic needs, like money for food
- Lying about how money is spent
- Denying there is a problem

(Minnesota Institute of Public Health)

Check the phone book for local help centers.

exist in almost every country. Check the phone book for help centers that might be in your area.

As members of the Church, we don’t need luck or random chance, only the gospel with its values of diligence, hard work, and service. These values always lead to a real success where no one else needs to lose. **NE**

In a land not famous for winter sports, this Aussie Olympic skier is—

Shinin



When she was four years old, Rowena Bright sat by her mother, Marian, in the small town of Cooma, Australia, as they watched the 1984 Summer Olympics taking place in Los Angeles, California. “I have a vivid picture of that time,” says Rowena. “I remember my mother in tears when gymnast Peter Vidmar won gold and the announcer said that he and his wife were devout Mormons.” The Brights had joined the Church just a couple of years before, and Marian was thrilled that a Church member was getting such worldwide recognition.

Rowena turned to her mother and said, “I’m going to do that.” Her mother answered, knowing what it takes to get to the Olympics, “Oh, are you?”

It turns out that Rowena was right. She is going to do that, as an alpine skier in slalom, giant slalom, and the

combined (downhill and slalom) when the Winter Olympics take place in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Her first choice

Rowena first wanted to be a gymnast, but there wasn’t a good gymnastics program close by. There was, however, a good swimming coach in town. As her mother says, “Rowena became very good very quickly. She thought she’d go to the 2000 Olympics in swimming. But the pool in town is only open half the

by Janet Thomas





g Bright

year.” She was not able to train consistently.

That’s when her plans changed. She and her brothers and sisters had taken up cross-country skiing because alpine skiing was too expensive. When Rowena was 11, a girl on her school’s ski team broke her arm. Another person was needed to complete the team. The team knew Rowena cross-country skied and asked her to try alpine. As Rowena says, “That’s when I started, and I’ve never looked back.” The following year she was the Australian children’s champion.

The Bright family lives about an hour and a half from the only mountains that have much snow in Australia. Even then, with bad snow years and short ski seasons, Rowena has had to train in less-than-ideal conditions. Once she was asked to join the Australian training institute, and gained sponsors to help with the expense, then she was able to do some training and participate in competitions in Europe and North America where snow is more abundant.

It was a bad snow year that changed the direction Rowena’s brother Ben, and

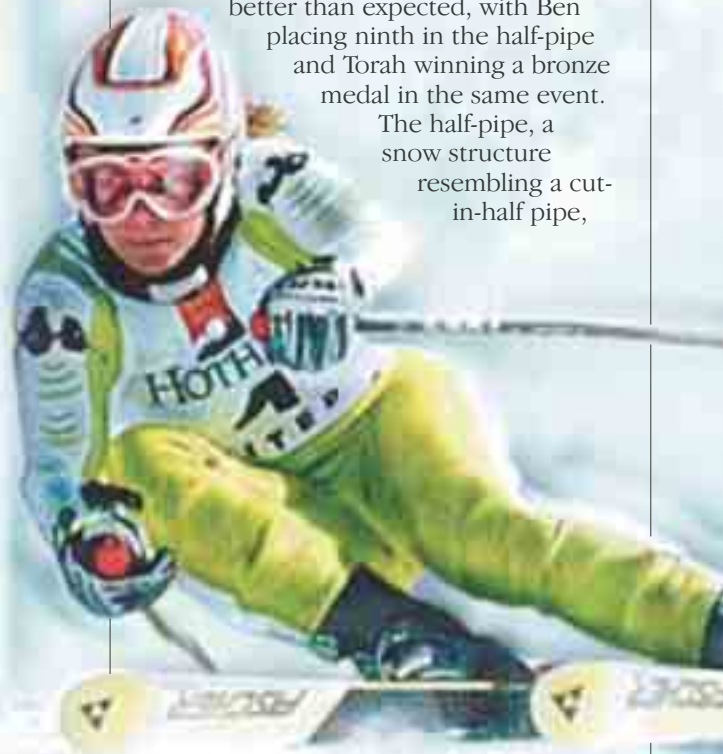


Rowena (below and right) set her sights on skiing in the Olympics and didn't let herself be held back by injuries or by short ski seasons that limited her training.

sisters, Torah and Abi, took in sports. Their mother explains, "They took a year off from ski racing and decided to try snowboarding because it could be done on man-made snow. They all became very good quickly, and that was it."

Ben, 17, is one of Australia's top junior snowboarders. Torah, 14, is in the top three in women's snowboarding, and Abi, 12, is the one of the top under-14 snowboarders. (Older brother Robin, 23, is married and does not compete in skiing.) As Ben and Torah compete in world competitions, they are doing better than expected, with Ben placing ninth in the half-pipe and Torah winning a bronze medal in the same event.

The half-pipe, a snow structure resembling a cut-in-half pipe,



consists of walls of identical height that snowboarders use to help them catch air and perform tricks.

Rowena had a setback a little more than a year ago. She fell and was injured just before the first Olympic qualifying event. She was given a blessing, and in that blessing she was told that her Heavenly Father was well aware of her lifelong dream. She went on to place high enough to qualify for the Olympics, skiing on what later was discovered to be a broken ankle.

Rowena's alpine skiing skills continued to improve. When asked what it takes to succeed in ski racing, she explains, "It's the toughest sport I've ever done. I tell



Rowena and her sister Torah (above) often train together. Torah's one of the top women snowboarders in Australia, and younger sister, Abi, and brother Ben rank high in that sport as well.

people that you need to have the precision of a car racer, the agility of a gymnast, the speed of a sprinter, and the focus of a golfer. I think there is so much that makes up being at the highest levels of ski racing. You need all those skills.”

When asked to describe his daughter Rowena, Peter Bright says, “She’s just delightful. Nothing’s a problem to her. She is very helpful and definitely thinks of others. She’s very happy and loads of fun to be around.”

Setting the example

Rowena has an unusually close relationship with her younger sister Torah. They train together. They laugh together. As Rowena says, “Over the last few years, we’ve become close. She seems a lot wiser than her age, and we have so much fun together. It’s really good to have a sister be your friend.” They don’t argue much about which sport is better. But they do help each other remain focused, especially on their beliefs.

The Bright family is very active in their branch. Rowena was her branch’s only Young Woman for most of her teen years. When she traveled, she always took her

seminary workbooks and scriptures along and attended wards or branches where she was. Still, it took time to establish with her teammates just who she was and what she believed. “I found that I needed to draw upon everything that I was taught, being in the world with so many lost people. I just can’t imagine living without the truth that we have. I just knew everything I had been taught was right,” she says.

Now that she is 21, Rowena says that her resolve to stay true to Church standards grows stronger. “Once the decision is made, it’s made. It’s easier to live the standards now. It’s the hardest when you’re 14 or 15. People thought I was just following my parents’ teachings and that I hadn’t found my own way yet. But I knew why I was living the way I did.”

Now Torah, at 14, is facing some of the same challenges Rowena faced. “I think it’s great,” says Rowena, “that I can tell her little stories of how I’ve dealt with things. I got to be with her at world juniors, and she got to see how I dealt with the party scene and how you can have friends but still make good decisions.”

A dream come true

Seven years and seven months ago, Rowena and her mother sat in the car waiting for her brother’s soccer game to finish, listening to the announcement of where the 2002 Winter Olympics would be held. When they heard that it would be Salt Lake City, Rowena became even more determined. She has never wavered. Rowena’s dream, the one she has worked for since the age of four, is coming true. She gets to participate in the Olympics, and it’s a huge bonus that it takes place in the town that means so much to the church she belongs to.

One of Rowena’s favorite quotations is from a Maude Osmond Cook poem that President Ezra Taft Benson used in an October 1977 general conference address: “Look to this day, arise in all your splendor, And bear the standards of a world-to-be” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 32).

Says Rowena, “It stirs something great in me. Inside you feel you can be better than you are now.” **NE**

MISSIONARIES

Scott Brown, standing in front of the board, looks forward to serving a mission. His great-grandfather, Stephen S. Bunnell (far right), served in California from 1904 to 1906. Bishop Keith Holdaway (inset, right) with his three sons (left to right): Ryan, a returned missionary, Jacob, presently serving, and Ben, preparing for a mission.

by Caroline H. Benzley

Vineyard, Utah, is obviously fertile ground for growing missionaries.

Throughout Church history there have been many heroes—people who have sacrificed for the gospel. Monuments are dedicated to some of these heroes at Church-history sites, and Church members often travel hundreds, or even thousands, of miles to visit these monuments.

But the Church members in Vineyard, Utah, only have to travel as far as the ward house to visit a monument dedicated to their heroes.

On the wall of their ward house hang many pictures of their heroes. These heroes did not join the Mormon Battalion, and most of them never walked across the plains. Rather, these members sacrificed in order to serve full-time missions for the Church.

Missionary heritage

The missionary board displays pictures of every missionary who has left Vineyard since 1893—more than 200 pictures. It is not uncommon for the young men to find a picture of their Scoutmaster, Young Men president, or bishop. They say it is funny to look at these pictures taken when styles of clothes and hair were so different. But seeing pictures of their leaders helps the youth gain testimonies of missionary work. The pictures are a



Photography by Janet Thomas

on Board



great way to realize the faith and dedication of the leaders they look up to.

The young men in Vineyard want to follow in the footsteps of those who lead them. "I want to be like a leader and have my picture up there," says 18-year-old Scott Brown. Scott is looking forward to his upcoming mission and the time his picture can join those of his leaders.

A family tradition

Todd Robins, 15, is particularly excited to get his picture up on the board because when he does he will be carrying on a family tradition. Todd's family has lived in Vineyard for five generations, and so he has many relatives already on the missionary board. One of those relatives is Todd's great-great-great grandfather, Neils Larsen. Neils, who served a mission in Denmark from 1902 to 1904, is Todd's oldest relative on the missionary board.

Looking at his relatives' missionary pictures every week at church has helped Todd decide early that he will serve a mission. "I know I am going to go because it is just stuck in my mind. I am going no matter what."

A brother's example

Even though they have at least four years before they will be old enough to serve, Brett Roper, 14, and Ben Holdaway, 15, are determined to serve missions when they turn 19. Both of these young men look at the missionary board often. They especially like seeing pictures of their older brothers on the board.

Brett's older brothers, Lane and Greg,

Dave Robins (right, with son, Todd) represents the fifth generation of family members to serve a mission. His grandfather Ray Gammon (below) served in Hawaii from 1930 to 1932. Todd plans to make it six generations. The Ropers (top, right) show the same inspiring pattern. Dad, Gail, served a mission. His son Lane (left) also served, returning to inspire younger brother Brett.



are great examples to him. Lane has returned from his mission in Birmingham, Alabama, and Greg is currently serving in the Dominican Republic. His brothers' examples have helped Brett understand how important it is for him to start preparing for his mission now.

Ben Holdaway likes to think about where he might be called to serve a mission. His brother Ryan served his

mission in Jacksonville, Florida, and his brother Jacob will soon serve in Montevideo, Uruguay. Both Ryan and Jacob feel the board helped them make their decision to serve a mission. As Jacob describes, "The missionary board helps you answer the question about serving a mission so much earlier than when you are a priest. It helps you answer it when you are a deacon."

Now that Brett's brother Lane and Ben's brother Ryan have returned from their missions, Lane and Ryan feel the missionary board means more to them than it did before they left. As Lane explains, "When I came home the missionary board meant a lot more to me because I knew what the past missionaries had gone through, and I knew the importance of their service." Ryan also said the missionary board was the first thing he looked for his first Sunday home from his mission.

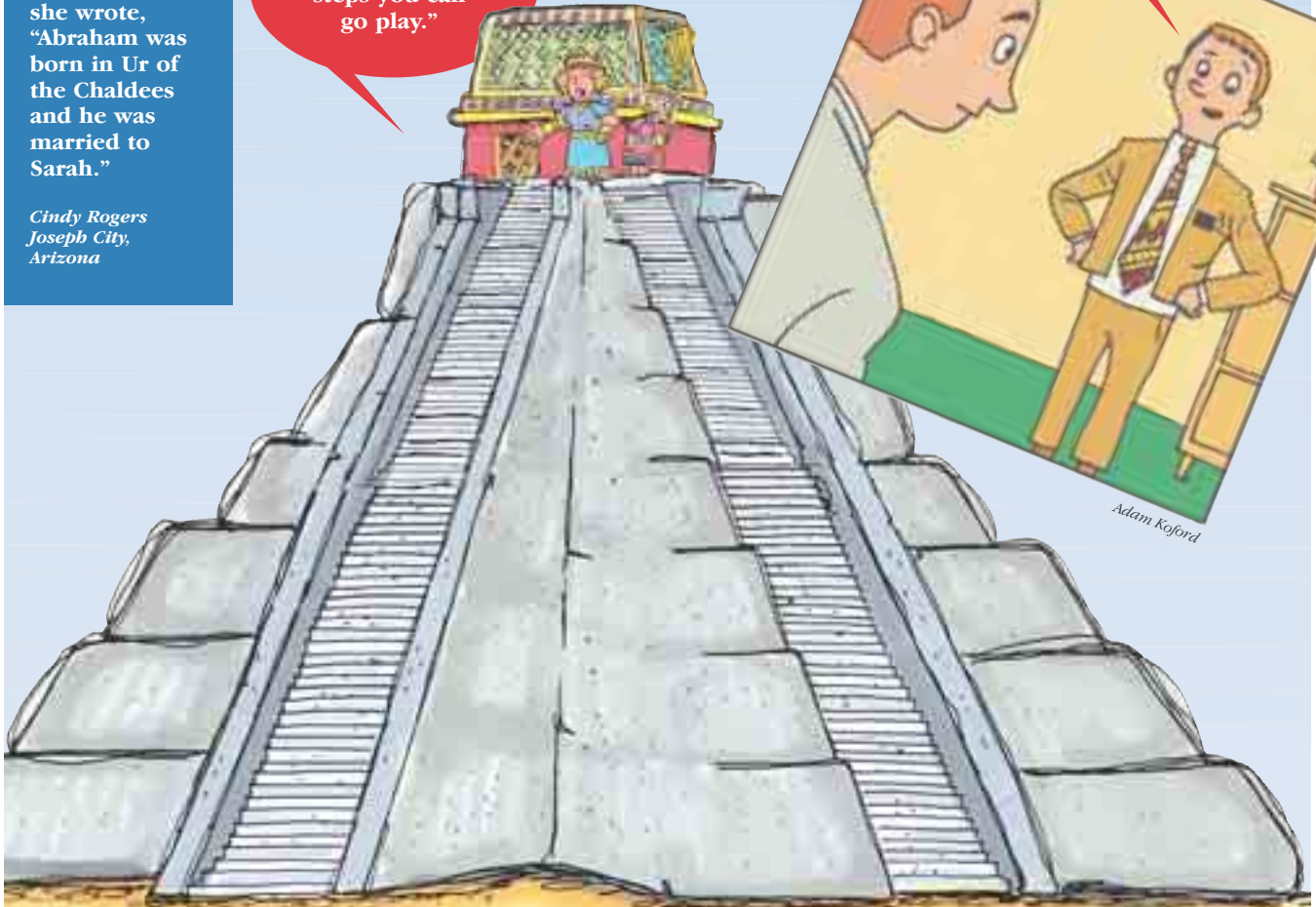
Vineyard missionary heroes

At first sight the missionary board might look like just a lot of old pictures, but a closer look reveals that this is a board of heroes. Although some of these heroes lived many years ago, and others have long since moved away, their examples live on and their pictures remain among the rows of the Vineyard missionaries. **NE**

Editor's note: Elder Jacob Holdaway is currently serving in the Uruguay Montevideo Mission.

A few years ago, as Presidents' Day was approaching, my daughter's third-grade class was studying a unit on Abraham Lincoln. At the culmination of their studies, the teacher asked each student to write a paper on what they had learned about Abraham. My daughter got her Abrahams mixed up, and in her paper she wrote, "Abraham was born in Ur of the Chaldees and he was married to Sarah."

Cindy Rogers
Joseph City,
Arizona





WHAT'S THE HURRY?

You already know the best reason not to rush into romance: The prophet counsels the youth of the Church not to date until they are 16 years old—and then, only to date in groups (see *For the Strength of Youth*, 24).

Here's another good reason: A recent study found that teenagers involved in romantic relationships are more likely to suffer from depression. They are also more prone to alcohol abuse and delinquent behavior than if they had stayed away from serious romance between the ages of 12 and 17 (*Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, Dec. 2000).

Letting yourself fall in love might seem harmless and enjoyable, but the long-term effects might not be—especially if you are too young. When you're a teenager, just being friends is the best idea.

BE A FRIEND

A friend is a priceless possession because a true friend is one who not only is willing to love us the way we are, but is able to leave us better than he found us. . . .

“A person is poor when he is friendless, but even poorer when he ceases being a friend” (*Ensign*, Sept. 1982, 73).

—Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–1994)



TEST YOUR BIBLE I.Q.

How much do you know about romance and marriage in the Old Testament? (Yes, even in Biblical times, there were love stories.) See if you can match these Old Testament prophets to their wives.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 Adam | A Leah (see Gen. 29: 21-23) |
| 2 Joseph (son of Jacob) | B Asenath (see Gen. 41:45) |
| 3 Jacob (son of Isaac) | C Eve (see Gen. 3:20) |
| 4 Isaac (son of Abraham) | D Zipporah (see Ex. 2:21) |
| 5 Abraham | E Rebekah (see Gen. 24:67) |
| 6 Moses | F Rachel (see Gen. 29:20, 30) |
| | G Sarah (see Gen. 11:29 and 17:15) |

Answers: 1C (We really hope you got this one right!); 2B; 3A and F; 4E; 5G; 6A.



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

Now don't get all mushy about your Valentine, or lack thereof, just yet. Instead of turning your fancy to romance this year, try to focus on the true meaning of love.

The first and great commandment tells us to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37). Part of the way we can do that is by living the second great commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:39).

Think of some ways you can show your family, friends, and neighbors you love them this Valentine's Day. You could have a one-on-one visit with a family member you haven't seen for a while, or try to patch up a friendship that has fallen into disrepair. Whatever you decide to do, let your love for others reflect the Savior's love for you.

WRITE AWAY!

You've seen stories in the *New Era* about youth activities in places all around the world. As you plan your ward or stake youth service projects, your youth conferences, or anything interesting the youth are doing together, be sure to keep the *New Era* in mind.

Let us know at least three months in advance, if possible, of the youth events that are going to happen in your ward or stake. The more notice, the better. If time allows and your ward or stake is having an activity that fits our editorial needs, we might want to cover your event. Send a brief description of your activity plans to the *New Era*, 50 East North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150. Or e-mail us at cur-editorialnewera@ldschurch.org



BEAUTY TIP

Some of you may think you are not attractive, that you have no talents. Stop wandering around in the wasteland of self-pity. The greatest missionary the world has known, the Apostle Paul, is said to have been short, have a large Roman nose, rounded shoulders, and a whining voice, all of which may not sound too attractive to some persons. . . .

"Attitude has more to do with personality, with attractiveness, with getting along with others than does any other attribute" (*Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 60).

—President Gordon B. Hinckley

COLD FEET

At a bitter-cold winter camp, my deacons quorum president did something really cool.

by R. John Walker

In the 1960s, my family was an early casualty in the demise of the small American farm. Times were grim and we had no choice but to move—with our herd of about 20 dairy cattle—from a 40-acre spread to a five-acre, semi-urban lot with barely enough room for our large family and our cows. We felt fortunate when we had the bare essentials. We were literally dirt poor and the only “farm kids” in our community and ward.

As a new deacon, I desperately wanted to fit in, but it was difficult. I dressed funny and didn’t have the freedom of the city kids because of my responsibilities to help run the dairy. But several special people extended kindness to me.

One of the great adventures of my youth was a winter camp for our group of Scouts. It was a cold, cold winter, so special preparation was needed. The boys bought insulated boots—except for me. We had no money. I pleaded and negotiated with my father. I even asked him to sell a cow to obtain money for boots.

But there was no way. Having survived





WARM HEART

even colder winters in his youth, my father learned some important tricks. He took me to the barn and showed me how to wrap burlap sacks around my leather shoes for insulation and for a semblance of waterproofing. How appalling! No way would I use them. I'd rather freeze. But Dad insisted that I pack the burlap. I buried them as deep as possible in my bag.

Off to the mountains and the snow camp. We had a great time, but it became bitterly cold. Our common quest became staying warm. I was especially suffering because my leather shoes were now wet. Overnight they had frozen solid.

I knew I could no longer avoid using the burlap, so I went to the tent and lashed the sacks around my frozen shoes. My feet felt better immediately. But walking out of the tent was one of the worst moments of my life. The ridicule was instant and predictable. I was the laughingstock of the camp, and I felt just terrible.

At the depth of my humiliation, my very cool deacons quorum president, Kyle Blacker, came up to me and asked if I had any more burlap. I did! He asked me how to wrap his boots. In that instant, Kyle deflected the ridicule, and I became the second-coolest boy in camp because of his gesture.

I don't know if Kyle remembers me or his gesture. It was a little thing to everyone but me. To me it was huge. I learned more of goodness and charity in that moment than at any other time in my life. I learned more about humility, kindness, meekness, lack of guile, and gentleness from Kyle than anyone else has ever taught me. I hope his feet were warm for the rest of the day. He lifted me, and I've had the warmth of confidence every day of my life since then. We moved again not long thereafter, and I did not keep in touch with Kyle.

I have served as bishop for several years. In my work with youth I have been blessed by my memory of Kyle's kindness. The greatest application of the lesson I learned has been in my role as a father. My wife and I are blessed with wonderful children, and one of our sons is named Kyle. **NE**

WHEN LIFE GETS TOUGH

I had only one arm. I could do very little about that. But my attitude about it, and life in general, was up to me.

It was 1962, and I was 19. I had been called to serve a mission in Mexico when I learned I had cancer.

Cancer? Me? I thought only people in big cities got cancer. After biopsies and close examinations by competent specialists, I learned the problem I was having with the swelling in my right forearm was an osteogenic sarcoma. Translated, it meant I had a type of bone cancer which, in those days, was nearly always fatal, even with the amputation of the affected limb.

Fatal! At age 19, having something fatal had never crossed my mind. I was excited to serve my mission, marry in the temple, have a great family, and enjoy a wonderful life. Still, I loved the Lord and I knew He loved me. Whether allowed to remain here or leave this life, it would be okay.

The immediate outcome was the loss of my right arm. The extended outcome has proven to be a lifetime of adventure. As I look back, I can honestly say the loss of my arm, rather than being a tragic experience, has been one of my greatest blessings. I have learned and gained so much from it.

The adjustment was interesting. I had been working in logging and road-building operations in the Pacific



stood there thinking. Now what am I going to do with this silly tie? I knew my mother couldn't go on my mission with me to tie my ties and care for me. I simply had to fend for myself.

by Elder
John B. Dickson
of the Seventy

Northwest woods, so my body was strong. But I was extremely right-handed and that greatly-dependen-upon arm was truly missed. Although I could formerly throw a baseball farther than anyone on the team, with my left arm I could throw a ball only a few yards. Writing was really interesting. My penmanship could have been improved by almost any preschool child. Everything was a challenge: tying shoes, buttoning shirts, carrying large objects, driving, shaving, drawing, eating, being stared at, enduring phantom pain, and so on.

Very quickly I came to realize I had much to get used to, to learn, and to relearn. I also realized there was very little I could do about the fact I had only one arm, and my attitude about that fact—and in life in general—was totally up to me. I was at a crossroads. It was apparent I could cry if I wanted to, or I could handle this and all other challenges with faith and a positive attitude. My happiness and eternal well-being were dependent upon my choice. The decision was simple. I chose to be positive, creative, very active, and to do everything possible to fulfill my destiny as a son of God, sent to grow from an earthly experience. Once made, this choice was firm and I never looked back.

The Prophet Joseph Smith experienced many challenges and much suffering as he languished in the Liberty Jail. Concerned for the well-being of the Saints and his family in the wilderness, while his own physical condition was very bad, he pleaded with the Lord to know why all of these things were happening when he felt he had understood the process of the



Restoration and the establishment of Zion so well. The Lord gave an answer that we can all benefit from during our own mortal experience with so many challenges: “Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7).

As I was learning from my own true-life experience, I stood alone in my bedroom a few days after the operation, preparing to go to church. I held a tie in my hand and thought, Now what am I going to do with this silly tie? I thought



The reason for having and keeping commandments becomes very clear to each of us when we understand what the Lord wants us to become. A testimony of such important matters isn't free but will increase as you pray daily with faith, read the scriptures, and partake of the sacrament worthily each Sunday.

about having my mother help me but soon rejected the idea, knowing she couldn't go on my mission to tie my ties and otherwise care for me. I simply had to fend for myself. With patience, I tied my tie, and although I used my teeth a little, I learned that I could do it and do it well. That day, a window was opened to my mind where I could clearly see that with patience, faith, and determination, I would be able to handle almost any challenge I would face.

Over time I realized that same faith, determination, and positive attitude could help anyone through the various

tough challenges of life. My own story has to do with a physical problem, but we humans face all kinds of other challenges as well. Those challenges may be about finances, problems in a family relationship, getting an education, feelings of rejection, loss of a loved one, or being misunderstood. The challenges for youth often have to do with temptations regarding the Word of Wisdom, inappropriate language, moral purity, inappropriate entertainment, or Internet viewing.

Let me share four principles that might be helpful to you.

1. Know your Father in Heaven

Make sure you know of your relationship with your Father in Heaven and the Savior. In other words, make sure you know who you are. Your testimony of the plan of happiness your Heavenly Father has prepared for you will help you understand your eternal destiny and will help you with your determination to succeed on life's journey. The reason for having and keeping commandments becomes very clear to each of us when we understand what the Lord wants us to become. Make sure you understand the plan of salvation and that your testimony of the gospel is solid.

A testimony of such important matters isn't free but will increase as you pray daily with faith, read the scriptures, and partake of the sacrament worthily each Sunday.

2. Decide now

Decide now how you will act when peer pressure and temptation arise. At about age 12, I made a personal decision to always keep the Word of Wisdom. Over the years, there were invitations to break that commandment, but the answer “No!” was always kind, quick, and effective. Because I had determined beforehand how I would react when invited, I never felt threatened with the possibility of a bad decision under pressure from my friends.

Nothing is lost with a good decision. Remember, if you haven't already made up your mind before destructive invitations or temptations present themselves, the probability of making the wrong decision is many times greater.

The Prophet Joseph Smith experienced many challenges and much suffering as he languished in the Liberty Jail. Concerned for the well-being of the Saints and his family in the wilderness, while his own physical condition was very bad, he pleaded with the Lord to know why all these things were happening. The Lord gave an answer that we can all benefit from: “Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7).



Painting Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail © by Greg K. Olsen. Artwork courtesy of the artist and art print publisher Mill Pond Press, Inc., Venice FL 34292, www.milpond.com

I am very aware that some of you have not done as I am suggesting and have already fallen into serious errors. Possibly only you or another person or two are aware of these mistakes, yet they are an embarrassment to your soul. Although you want to be right with the Lord, you may not know where to turn and how to fix the problem. I suggest you talk to the

Lord in sincere prayer, explain the matter to the bishop, and speak with your parents. You may anticipate criticism or embarrassment, but I believe you will find love, support, and a wonderful window of opportunity.

3. Don't postpone repentance

Make sure you are not drawn into thinking that the way is easy and that you can live by the standards of the world and no matter what, the Lord will bail you out or that you can postpone repentance. Please do not fall into the trap mentioned by Nephi: "And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry;

nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God" (2 Ne. 28:8).

The Lord wants us to return to Him, but we cannot return and also embrace the sins and stains of the world. He wants us to be true disciples who are committed to working to be like Him. It requires work and discipline to enjoy the blessings He wants to share with us. When we repent and do our best, the Lord, in His mercy, can help us to be clean.

4. Keep the commandments

Make sure the Spirit is with you each

day as you move through life. The next time you partake of the sacrament, listen closely to the words of the prayers and you'll hear a very special promise to those who keep the commandments. It is that you will "always have his Spirit to be with [you]" (Moro. 4:3). What a blessing the commandments are.

Some think the commandments are meant to restrain or restrict us. In reality, they have been given to simply help us become more like our loving Father, who wants to share incredible eternal blessings with His faithful sons and daughters. He invites us to avoid and not participate in things that wouldn't belong in a lifestyle that He desperately wants to share with us.

A couple of years ago, as Sister Dickson and I arrived at the Missionary Training Center to speak with the missionaries, the MTC president asked if I would tie my tie for the missionaries to help them understand that they could handle the challenges that come with missionary service. I considered his request and adjusted my talk to cover some of what has been mentioned in this article. As I was about to conclude, I invited four missionaries in the front to come forward for a little race at tie-tying. One asked if they should just use their left hand, but I suggested they would need them both. As you can imagine, the missionaries were quite excited when I won.

This article, however, really has little to do with being the fastest tie-tier, the best quarterback, cheerleader, or hamburger-eating champion. It simply has to do with knowing who we are, that we truly matter to our Heavenly Father and that He loves us and wants us back. At the same time, He wants us to be clean and to learn and to grow from our experiences.

Over the years I have handled many challenges in my life, as you will in yours. During the time between those interesting adventures, life has been restful and easy, but any true personal growth has always come when I was working my way through one of life's challenges. As challenges come, we must look at them as stepping-stones in our development rather than barriers to stop our progress. Come they will, and we must simply win and move on. **NE**



The next time you partake of the sacrament, listen closely to the words of the prayers and you'll hear a very special promise to "always have his Spirit to be with [you]" (Moro. 4:3).

Creative ideas for using this issue of the New Era.

Young Men and Young Women Activity Ideas

□ Read Elder Bruce C. Hafen's article, "The Gospel and Romantic Love," on page 10 to learn more about building friendship first and romance second. Prepare a small treat for the members of your ward who are in the same age group as you—Young Men make treats for the Young Women and vice versa. Be sure to include everyone in your age group.

□ Give a "heart attack" to the bishop, a family that has just moved into the ward, or a less-active member of your ward. Tape heart-shaped pieces of paper with messages of encouragement and love to the "attack victim's" car or front door. For a special touch, deliver a plate of heart-shaped cookies.

□ "Don't Bet Your Life" (page 26) talks about the evils of gambling. Invite your bishop or an approved guest to give a talk about this topic and hold a group discussion afterwards. Pay particular attention to things youth in your ward might be doing—participating in raffles or other games of chance.

Personal Improvement

□ "Cold Feet, Warm Heart" on page 42 tells how one young man's life changed when someone was kind to him. Think of ways you can extend kindness to those around you and plan to put at least one of your ideas into action in the next week.

Family Home Evening Ideas

□ Read "No One Will Know" on page 8 aloud to your family. Discuss other scenarios which could test the integrity of members of your family. Read Job 27:5 together.

□ Education and missionary service are both worthy goals. Discuss ways your family can work together to help each other in both of these endeavors. Read Q&A (page 16) together for ideas.

Value Project

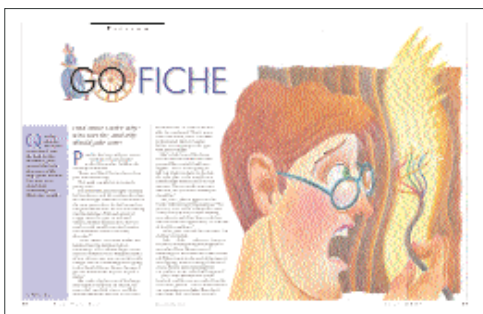
□ Make a collection of articles, posters, or Idea Lists from past issues of the *New Era* concerning one of the Young Women values. Use the index in the December magazine to identify articles that fit the value you have chosen. Photocopy them and place them together in a binder. You'll have an excellent resource in one place for giving talks or participating in lessons.

Seminary Devotional

□ Ask a few volunteers to share a decision they made recently (whether it be a large decision like where to go to college or a small decision like what they had for breakfast) and tell the class how the decision has affected them. Summarize Elder John B. Dickson's article, "When Life Gets Tough," on page 44 and talk about the power of choosing to be positive in facing life's challenges.

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Her relative too

I was recently reading the July 2001 issue and was both surprised and fascinated when I came upon the story “Go Fiche.” Annie Hicks, who was depicted in that story, was my third great-grandmother. The events mentioned in the story were just as they are in our family history. I have always liked hearing and learning about Annie Hicks. I actually wrote about her in an essay I had to write in the eighth grade. I always like to read the *New Era*, but this story was extra fun for my family and me to read.

*Kami Mecham
Roseburg, Oregon*

A lot better

I am always excited to get the *New Era* every month. The first thing I turn to is The Extra Smile. They are a lot better than some of the gross jokes people come up with today. I especially liked the May 2000 jokes. Thank you for putting The Extra Smile in the *New Era*.

*Sabrena Smart
Preston, Idaho (via e-mail)*

Calming influence

Like most LDS teens today, I, too, look forward to reading the *New Era* each month. It calms me to know I’m not the only one going through certain challenges, and that many of the stories apply to me. I can’t put these stories full of wisdom and hope down until I’ve read all of them! The *New Era* really brightens my day and gets me thinking more about the gospel.

*Anne Peterson
Flowermound, Texas (via e-mail)*

An eye-opener

I want to thank you for your article “Just Hanging Out” (Aug. 2001). As a young adult I am past the age of not dating until I’m 16. But your article had a profound effect on me as I finally admitted that “just hanging out” can get you into more trouble than you think. I have always followed Church standards on dating—to the letter of the law, not the spirit of the law. I never dated before I was 16 but always

“I can’t put these stories full of wisdom and hope down until I’ve read all of them!”



managed to “hang out” with friends, making it seem like nothing was wrong. Even after I turned 16 I didn’t exclusively date someone. Yet, because of “just hanging out,” I managed to get myself into trouble. I never realized that one of the biggest mistakes I made was just not having something planned and organized with my friends. This article really opened my eyes and helped me stop ignoring the fact that hanging out is the form of dating youth have adopted. If I had just made rules for myself, like making sure an adult was always around or not slipping off with one person, I could have stayed out of the trouble that I’m still trying to repent of and forgive myself for today. This article really opened my eyes.

Name Wittbeld (via e-mail)

New reader

I just turned 12 and started reading the *New Era*. It’s very good. I love the inspirational stories. They really help me.

*Whitney Hollman
Porterville, California*

Similar situation

I’ve been reading the *New Era* since I was baptized in 1992. It’s always been inspiring and encouraging. The message from Elder Hugh B. Brown, “The Currant Bush,” (April 2001) reminded me of a similar situation I was in. I felt as if I lost so many opportunities because I was a member of the Church. But I’ve gained many too, like coming on a mission which is a blessing to me and hopefully the people I meet.

*Elder Romeo N. Owusu
Nigeria Enugu Mission*

*We love hearing from you. Write us at
New Era*

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50 E. North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150*

Or e-mail us at

cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



by V. Elisabeth Westwood

A CHILD'S IMAGINATION

by Kimberly Webb

The garage became our cave
with monsters lurking inside.
The backyard was a carnival,
the swing set was our ride.
The living room was our center stage,
blasting radio our band.
And our business to make us millionaires
was a lemonade stand.
We converted the couch into a boat,
the floor was the raging sea.
Our bicycles were parade floats,
our house was in a tree.
We were princesses and pilgrims,
sometimes rich movie stars.
We built a cardboard spaceship
and blasted off to Mars.
Now the garage is just a garage,
musty and filled with dust.
The swing set is just a swing set
though creaky and covered with rust.
The brilliant colors have faded
from those childish daydreams.
Wouldn't life be adventurous
if it were the way it had seemed?



*“We are
blessed very
much. I can’t
express the
blessings.
Our Father
in Heaven is
so good. I
love my
Father. I love
my Jesus
Christ.”*

*See “Stars of
India,” p. 20.*

