

THE
NewEra

F E B R U A R Y

2 0 0 4

**COVER STORY:
EXPLORING
MONUMENTS TO
FAITH, P. 20**

**CREATIVE WAYS
TO SOLVE YOUR
PROBLEMS, P. 4**

**IS THIS REALLY
THE TRUE
CHURCH?
P. 42**

The New Era Magazine
Volume 34, Number 2
February 2004

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

Editorial Offices:
New Era
50 E. North Temple
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3225

E-mail address:
cur-editorial-newera
@ldschurch.org

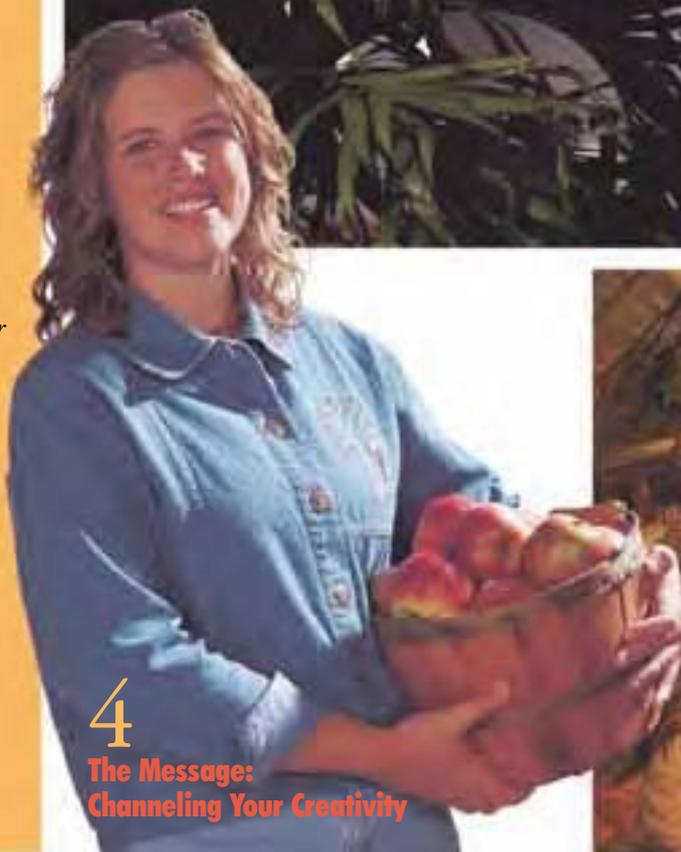
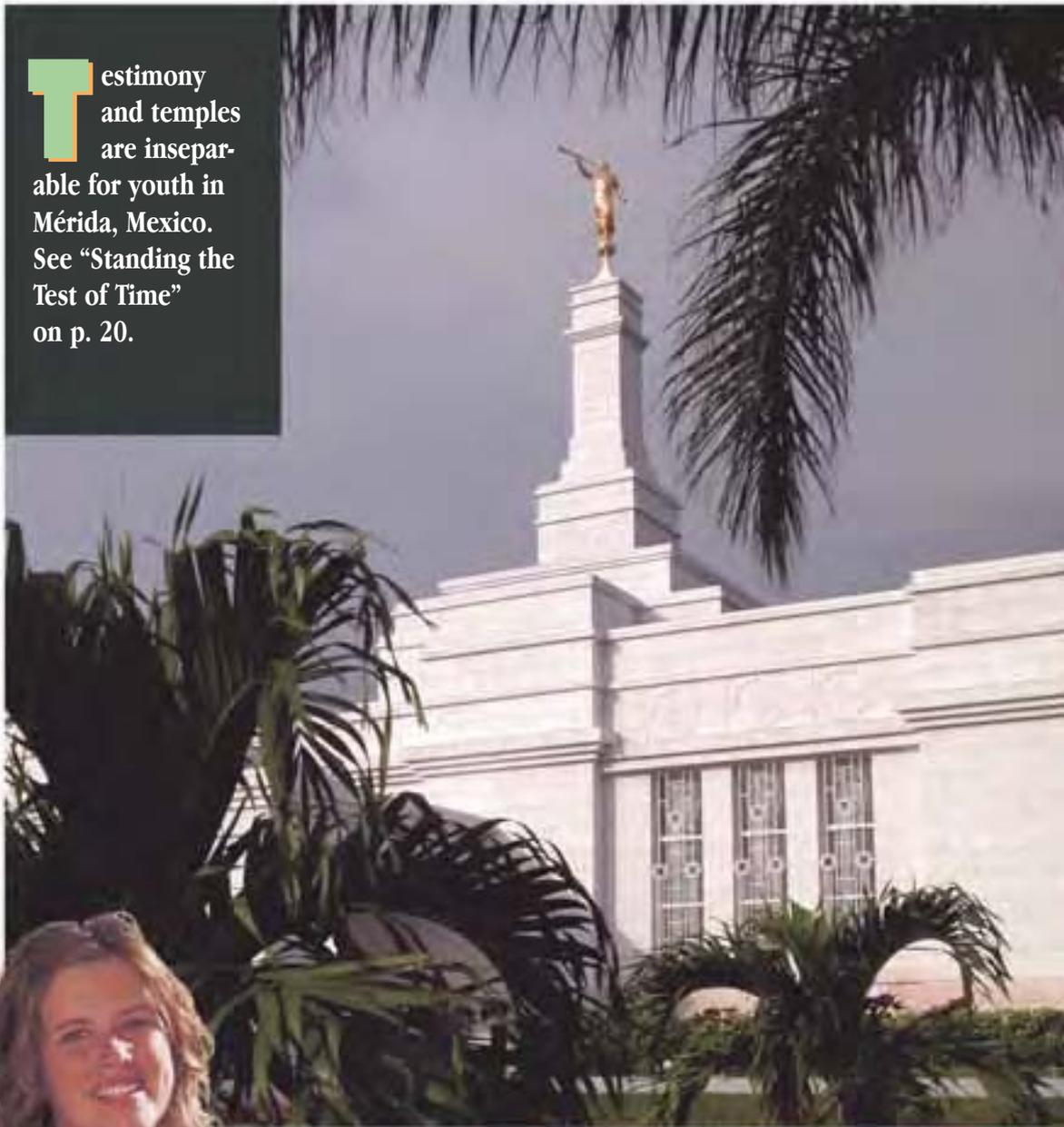
The *New Era* can be found at
www.lds.org in the Gospel
Library.

To Subscribe:
By phone: Call 1-800-537-
5971 to order using Visa,
MasterCard, Discover Card,
or American Express. Online:
Go to www.ldsatalog.com.
By mail: Send \$8 U.S.
check or money order to
Distribution Services,
P.O. Box 26368,
Salt Lake City, UT
84126-0368.

Cover: Carmen
Hernández explores the
beautiful ruins near her
home in Mexico. See
“Standing the Test of
Time” on p. 20.

Cover photography:
Adam C. Olson (front)
and Norman Campbell
(back)

Testimony
and temples
are insepar-
able for youth in
Mérida, Mexico.
See “Standing the
Test of Time”
on p. 20.



4
The Message:
Channeling Your Creativity



32
Not Just Me

**The Message:
Channeling Your Creativity** 4
Elder Robert D. Hales
Creativity can be used to solve everyday problems.

Out of the Mouth of Blake 8
Kirk J. Faulkner
My little brother was bigger than I when it came to helping out.

Homegrown Happiness 10
Elder D. Lee Tobler
If the family is to be eternal, the family has to be first.

**Idea List:
Prime Time** 13
Here are some suggestions for things to do instead of just watching television.

Monday, Monday 14
Julie Baker
We were too busy to hold family home evening. Something had to change.

**Q&A:
Questions and Answers** 16
What can I do to stay close to my dad when we're both so busy?

**New Era Poster:
Heart Broken?** 19

Standing the Test of Time 20
Adam C. Olson
Ancient temples and modern temples—they're both part of LDS life in Mexico.

Church-Ball Champ 26
Tony Anderson
The words on the poster hit me harder than the wild elbow of my opponent.

Called to Play 28
Arianne B. Cope
Making music is the Willey family's mission on Temple Square.

Not Just Me 32
Renée Harding
Whose life has been harder than mine?

The Extra Smile 35

**Gospel Classics:
Practice Makes Possible** 36
President Heber J. Grant
His musical deafness disappeared through practice and perseverance.

Of All Things 40

**How I Know:
Who's Telling the Truth?** 42
Kersten Campbell
I chose to believe the missionaries instead of those opposed to the Church.

Instant Messages 46
You are never alone; taking out the trash; looking for comfort; and giving something back on a mission.

What's in It for You 49

We've Got Mail 50

**Poem:
Frosty Winter** 51
Callie Taggart

Photo of the Month 51
Lane V. Erickson
Everything in the New Era may be copied for incidental, noncommercial Church or home use unless otherwise indicated. Other uses require permission of the copyright owner.

The First Presidency:
Gordon B. Hinckley,
Thomas S. Monson,
James E. Faust
Quorum of the Twelve:
Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry,
David B. Haight, Neal A.
Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson,
Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell
Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin,
Richard G. Scott, Robert D.
Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland,
Henry B. Eyring

Editor:
Dennis B. Neuenschwander
Advisers: E. Ray Bateman,
Monte J. Brough, Jay E. Jensen,
Stephen A. West
Managing Director:
David Frischknecht
Planning and Editorial
Director: Victor D. Cave
Graphics Director:
Allan R. Loyborg

Magazines Editorial Director:
Richard M. Romney
Managing Editor:
R. Val Johnson
Editorial Staff:
Collette Nebeker Aune,
Susan Barrett, Ryan Carr,
Shanna Ghaznavi, Jenifer L.
Greenwood, Carrie Kasten,
Sally J. Odekirk, Adam C. Olson,
Roger Terry, Janet Thomas

Managing Art Director:
M. M. Kawasaki
Art Director: Brent Christison
Design Staff: Fay P. Andrus

Marketing Manager:
Larry Hiller
Printing Director:
Craig K. Sedgwick
Distribution Director:
Kris T Christensen

© 2004 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah, and at additional mailing offices. The *New Era* (ISSN 0164-5285) is published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3225.

To change address: Send old and new address information to Distribution Services at the above address. Please allow 60 days for changes to take effect.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Distribution Services, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368 USA.

Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431.

We are
thinking,
reasoning

*human beings.
We have the ability
to identify our
needs, to plan,
to set goals, and
to solve our
problems.*



CHANNELING YOUR Creativity

BY ELDER ROBERT D. HALES
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

When I was a young man, my home was on Long Island about 30 miles from New York City. My father had a large yard with hedges, rock gardens, a fish pool, a vegetable garden, lawns, and trees. They all required regular care. There were always chores, like cutting the lawn in the summer and raking leaves in the autumn.

I thought we worked pretty hard taking care of our yard, but one day my father said to me, "You're never going to learn how to work until you go out and work on the ranch with your Uncle Frank." So I spent that summer in Skull Valley near Tooele, Utah, learning how to work.

I had grown up near a large city. Ranch life was an education for me. I was impressed to see the cattle and the horses and the hard work necessary to bring about the harvest. I can remember the feelings when I first realized that an enormous amount of preparation was necessary before the crops were brought in. We had to plow, harrow, plant, cultivate, weed, irrigate, and then continue to cultivate, weed, and irrigate, endlessly it seemed. That summer

is a cherished part of my heritage because it was there, in this almost desolate, remote corner of the world, that I learned the law of the harvest.

The Law of the Harvest

The law of the harvest is simply that you don't get something for nothing in life. The scriptures tell us the law of the harvest is that as ye sow (plant), so shall ye reap (harvest). "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

Living Creatively

Since then, I have learned that working out creative solutions to life's problems uses these same law-of-the-harvest principles. To many, the word *creativity* simply refers to the cultural, performing, or visual arts. This is a very limiting definition. There are endless ways of applying creative reasoning.

We have the ability to produce creative works in our daily activities. Creativity can also be used to find solutions to everyday



As ye sow (plant),
so shall ye
reap (harvest).



Creative thinking can become a process of inspiration that leads us to decisions.

problems by developing new ways of approaching the problems. I have seen such creativity during my lifetime.

Project 48

When I was elders quorum president of the Cambridge Ward in Boston, Massachusetts, we found that we often lost track of incoming LDS students during the first few days of their arrival to attend universities in the area. Some of them never did associate with us in a strong, active way. So we developed a program called Project 48. It offered incoming students who would be members of our elders quorum a chance to stay with a quorum member for 48

hours. The quorum member helped the newcomer find a place to live. (We kept a list of available apartments.) Quorum members offered friendship and brotherhood to the arriving student and made sure he knew his way around.

We bonded many new arrivals to our quorum this way. We didn't lose them during the first critical hours in a new environment. Years later, Project 48 was still being used to welcome students in the Boston area.



The Brother of Jared

In the Book of Mormon, the brother of Jared sets a good example of how the Lord lets us solve our own problems with His guidance.

The brother of Jared had already built barges according to the Lord's specifications. But there was no way of supplying light for the travelers inside. The brother of Jared prayed: "Behold, O Lord, wilt thou suffer that we shall cross this great water in darkness?" (Ether 2:22). Too often in our prayers we only restate our problems. "And the Lord said unto the brother of Jared: What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels?" (Ether 2:23). He was told he couldn't use windows or fire. In life we are sometimes limited in the possible options we can use to solve problems.

The brother of Jared's solution was to take 16 transparent stones and ask the Lord to touch them. "Touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger, and prepare them that they may shine forth in darkness . . . that we may have light while we shall cross the sea" (Ether 3:4). The Lord made the stones glow, and they worked perfectly throughout the voyage.

I'm sure there could have been other acceptable solutions to the same need for light. Once, at home evening, my son suggested that the brother of Jared should have had the Lord put his finger in a can

of paint. Then the glowing paint could have been applied to the boat's interior. But the brother of Jared decided to use rocks, and the Lord accepted his solution.

Creative Solutions

We are thinking, reasoning human beings. We have the ability to identify our needs, to plan, to set goals, and to solve our problems. The characteristics of a creative person can be used to develop solutions for seemingly insurmountable obstacles. We can use originality to overcome opposition. We can develop new ways to help others resolve difficult situations in their lives.

The creative approach is a disciplined approach to meet life's needs. Creative thinking is not a substitute for education, integrity, or living the commandments. Nor is it a shortcut around the challenges of life. Creative thinking can become a process of inspiration that leads us to decisions.

Creative people must have a constant curiosity. They should be constantly observing and listening to new ideas. They should be willing to admit that someone else's solution might be better. And they should learn the lessons provided by previous experience—both their own and others'.

May each of us use our creative reasoning to do all in our power to solve our problems and then look to the Lord for the reassuring, peaceful confirmation that we have made the right decision. Surely then our harvest will be plentiful. **NE**

From an article printed in the August 1983 New Era.

CREATIVE THINKING

The process of creative thinking reminds me time and again of the work we used to do on my uncle's ranch. The steps used in growing crops offer a good guideline:

1. Prepare the soil.

Start with prayer to clear your mind and set the proper atmosphere. Research the problem thoroughly. Develop a positive attitude that a solution can be found. Establish an atmosphere of trust in yourself and in others.

2. Plant the seeds.

Investigate what you can do to help. Determine where you may need help. Ask for counsel when you are ready to act on the advice given to you, but don't ask someone else to make the decision for you.

3. Let the seeds grow.

Don't uproot your idea before it has a chance to grow. Back off and give the idea time to develop. But you must be willing to face failure with a willingness to try again.

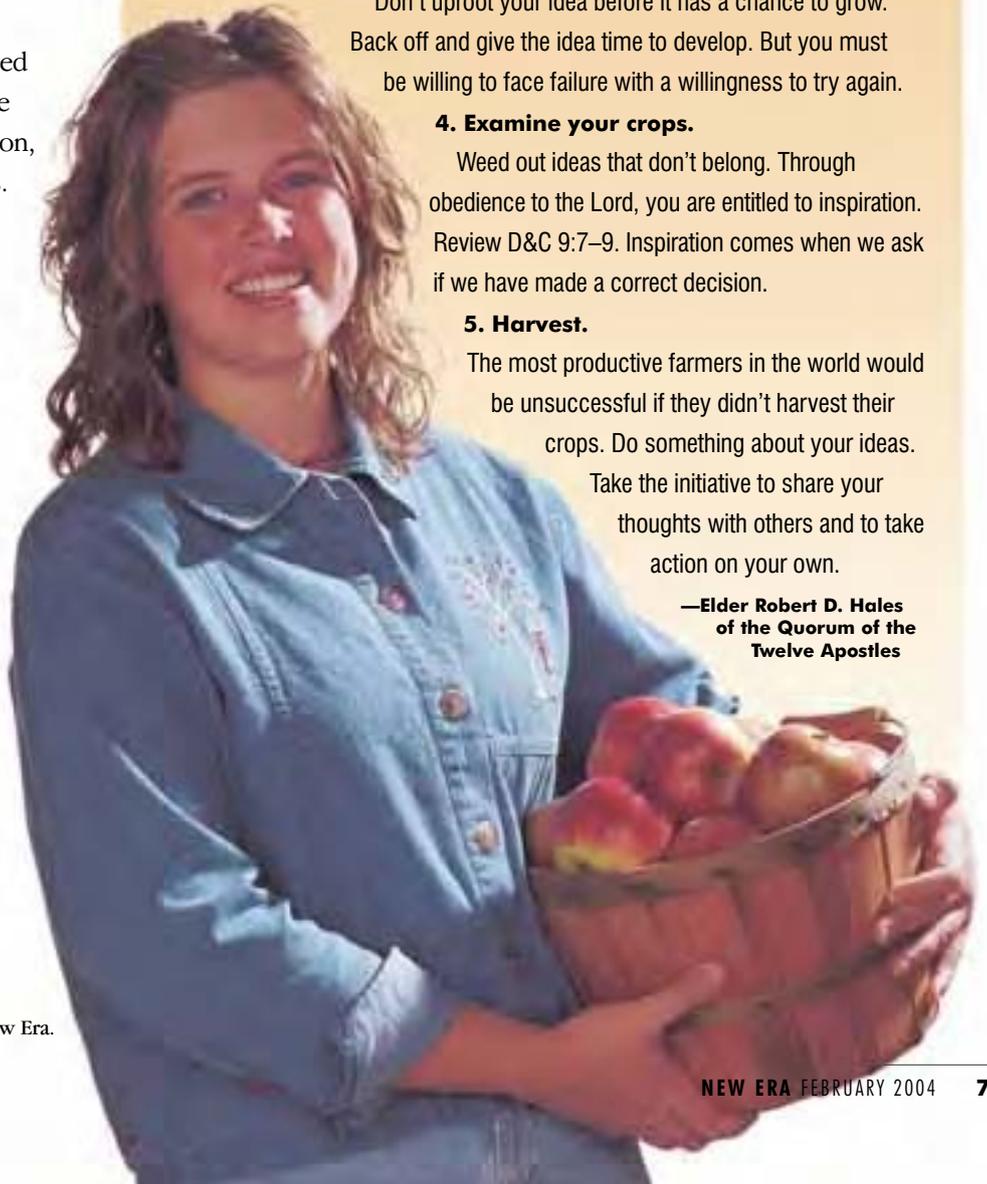
4. Examine your crops.

Weed out ideas that don't belong. Through obedience to the Lord, you are entitled to inspiration. Review D&C 9:7–9. Inspiration comes when we ask if we have made a correct decision.

5. Harvest.

The most productive farmers in the world would be unsuccessful if they didn't harvest their crops. Do something about your ideas. Take the initiative to share your thoughts with others and to take action on your own.

—Elder Robert D. Hales
of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles



At first I thought I heard my conscience, then I realized it was my little brother, Blake.

I had suffered through the policeman issuing the speeding ticket, endured traffic school, and now faced my final punishment: standing in line at the courthouse to pay my fine.

My mom had asked me to take my 10-year-old brother, Blake, with me on my errands.

As I looked around the courthouse, I noticed several unsavory characters. I was

trying to appear confident and grown-up, but I wondered if this might not be the best place to have brought an impressionable kid.

I continued to scan the room, lost in my own thoughts, when I felt a tug on my arm. I looked down at Blake, who worriedly whispered, "That lady can't pay!"

The woman in front of us was

discussing her financial situation with the clerk. Apparently, she had already received several extensions on a fine incurred the year before that she hadn't been able to pay. From their conversation I learned that she was a single mother of several children, working as a substitute teacher. Her fine was substantial for her, and she had no means to pay it.

I dismissed the situation with the thought: "What a shame. Too bad it's none of my business" and tried to think of something to block out the conversation.

"We should help pay the fine," my conscience seemed to say. No, wait, it wasn't my conscience; it was my little brother. "Do you have that much money?" he asked.

I gritted my teeth. I actually did have that much money. I had just received some gift money from relatives and was fortunate to be working a well-paying job. I could easily afford to help the lady. It wasn't the money though. I tried to explain to Blake that some people don't like it when others try to solve their problems.

Out of the

BY KIRK J. FAULKNER

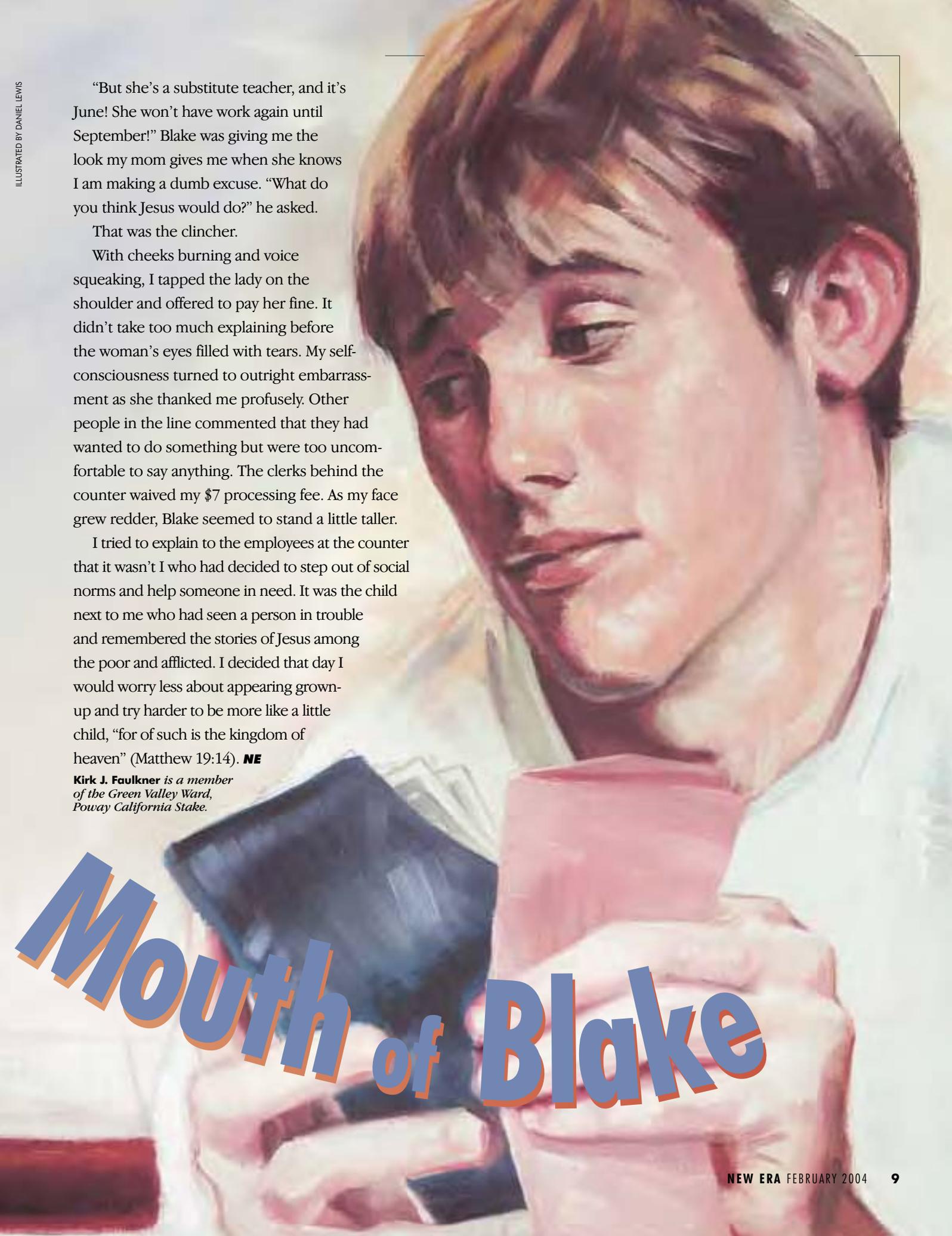
“But she’s a substitute teacher, and it’s June! She won’t have work again until September!” Blake was giving me the look my mom gives me when she knows I am making a dumb excuse. “What do you think Jesus would do?” he asked.

That was the clincher.

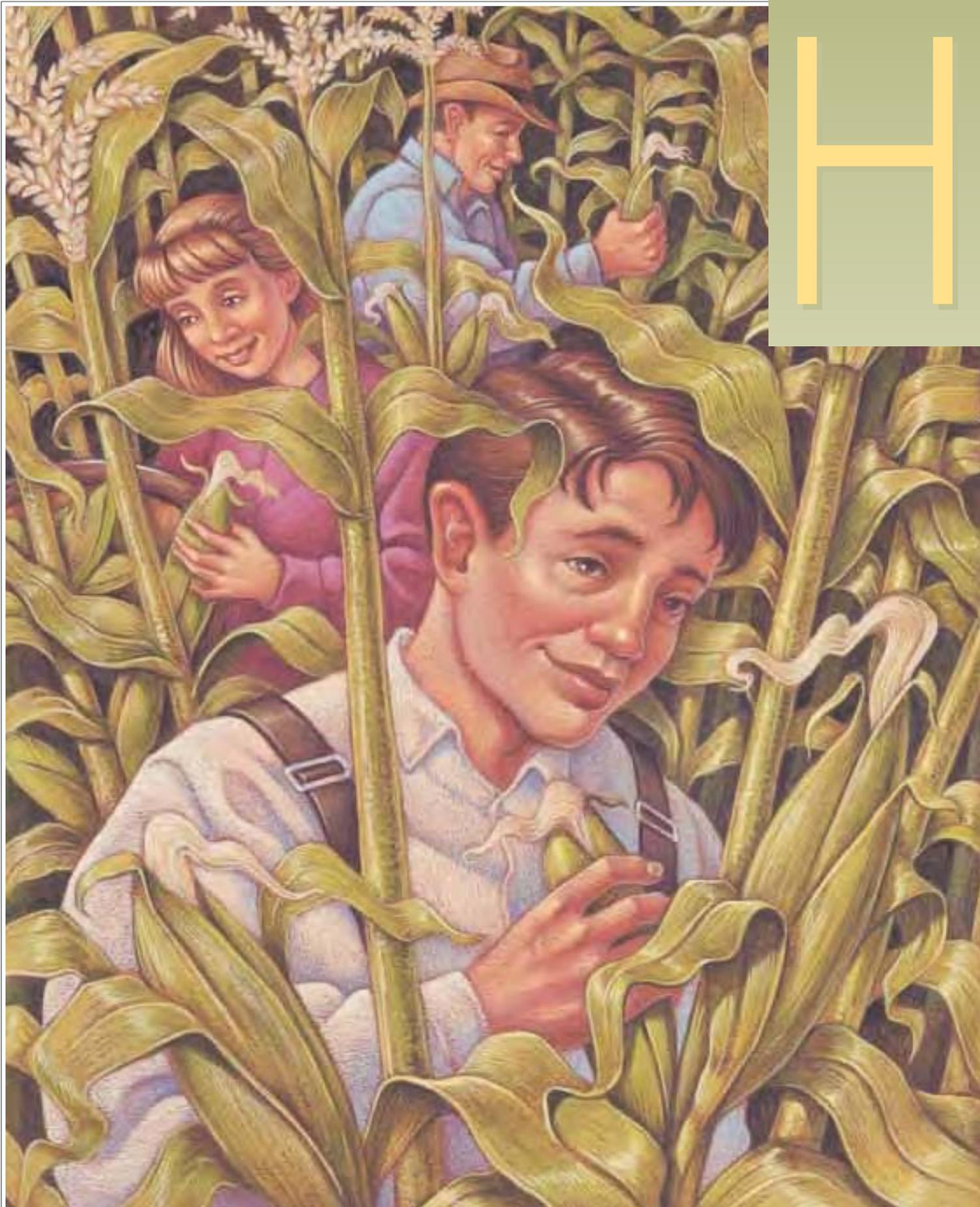
With cheeks burning and voice squeaking, I tapped the lady on the shoulder and offered to pay her fine. It didn’t take too much explaining before the woman’s eyes filled with tears. My self-consciousness turned to outright embarrassment as she thanked me profusely. Other people in the line commented that they had wanted to do something but were too uncomfortable to say anything. The clerks behind the counter waived my \$7 processing fee. As my face grew redder, Blake seemed to stand a little taller.

I tried to explain to the employees at the counter that it wasn’t I who had decided to step out of social norms and help someone in need. It was the child next to me who had seen a person in trouble and remembered the stories of Jesus among the poor and afflicted. I decided that day I would worry less about appearing grown-up and try harder to be more like a little child, “for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14). **NE**

Kirk J. Faulkner is a member of the Green Valley Ward, Poway California Stake.

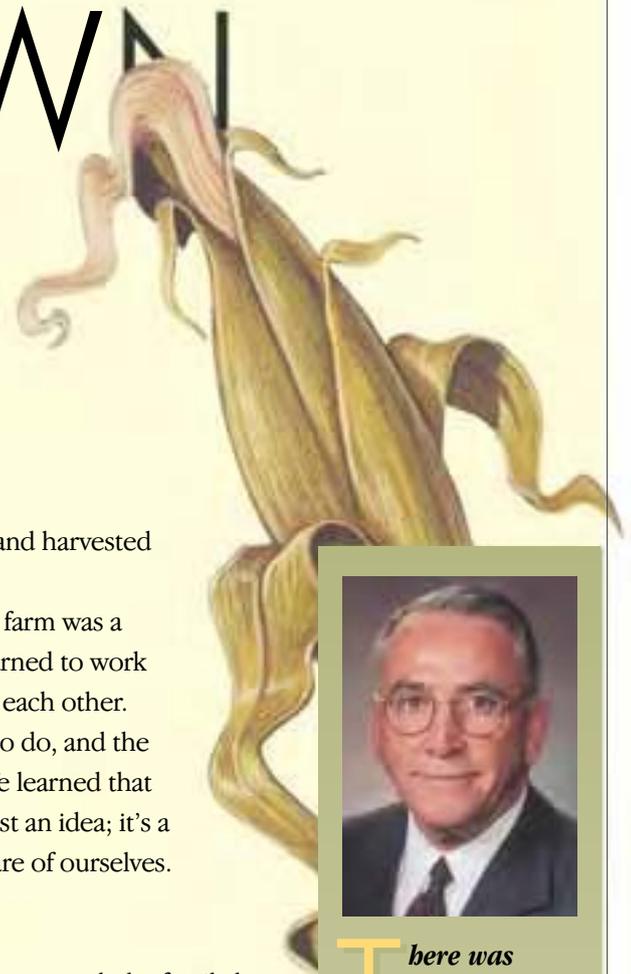


Mouth of Blake



H

OMEGROWN APPINESS



BY ELDER D. LEE TOBLER
Of the Seventy

We all have work to do, and the most important work is in the family.

Growing up in Bunkerville, Nevada, my siblings and I had many chores to do. One of my chores was to open a headgate that allowed water to pass through to our gardens. If I didn't do my job, the plants would die, and we wouldn't have food from the garden. We also did housework, washed dishes by hand, and took care of pets. We were taught to work, and we thought we worked pretty hard.

When I was nine years old, my parents, who were both school teachers at the time, made a dramatic decision. They decided to leave teaching to become farmers. My family moved to a farm in Idaho.

You Call That Work?

When we moved to the farm, work took on a new meaning for us children. We had to milk the cows; clean out the sheds; take care of the pigs, chickens, and calves; and still take our turn opening the headgate for the irrigation water. All of us, even my sister, hoed sugar beets, detassled corn, planted

and topped onions, and harvested onion seed.

Taking care of the farm was a family activity. We learned to work together and rely on each other. There was so much to do, and the family got it done. We learned that "family first" is not just an idea; it's a principle of taking care of ourselves.

Family Comes First

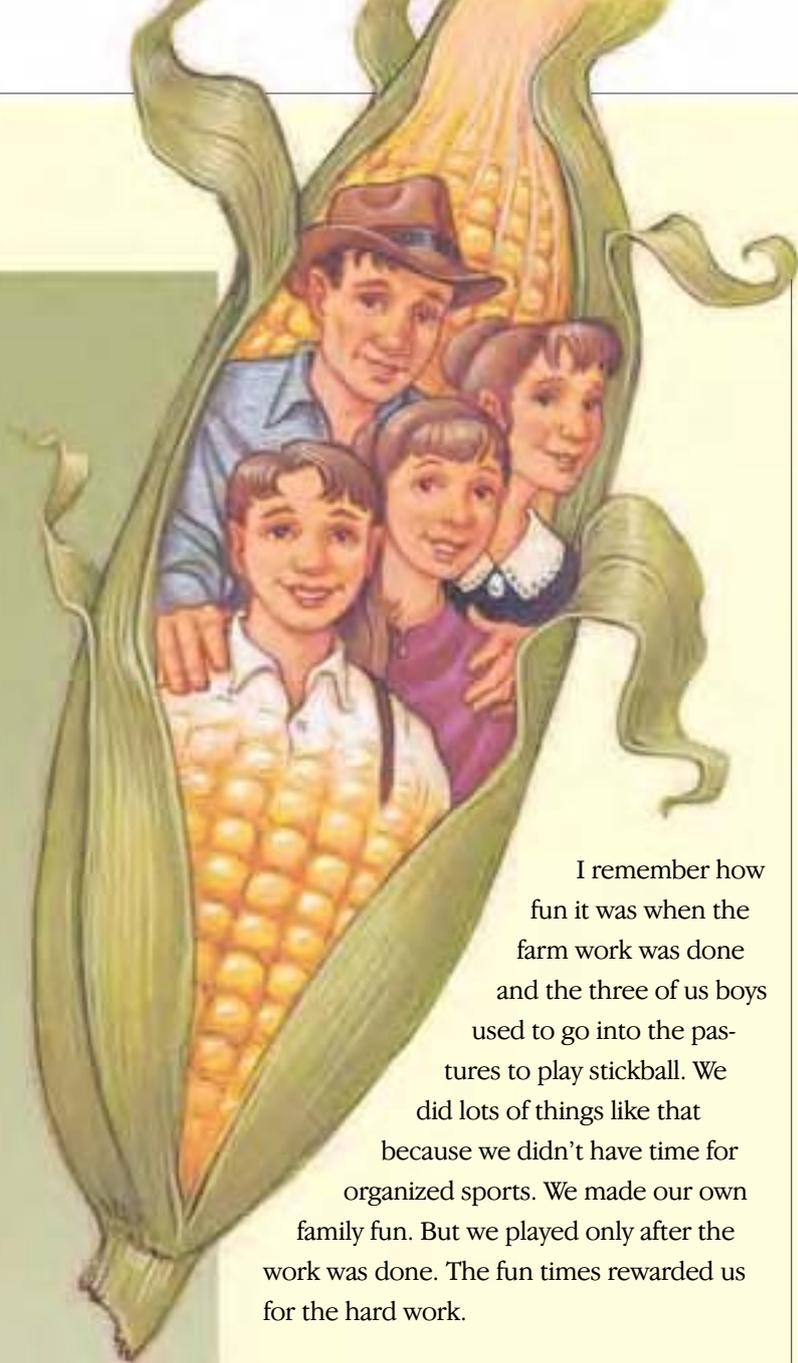
If the family is to be eternal, the family has to be first—the highest priority. Sometimes the family needs the teenagers to help earn a living. Sometimes the family needs them to take care of younger children and share in the workloads. Sons and daughters can prepare dinners and clean the house. There's a lot of day-to-day work in making families succeed.

Work Then Play

Fun times are important for families too, but our days shouldn't be organized around entertainment. Our days should be organized around the family and its needs and work requirements. Then entertainment and fun times can give us some relief and a lift of mind and spirit.



There was so much to do, and the family got it done. We learned to work together and rely on each other.



I remember how fun it was when the farm work was done and the three of us boys used to go into the pastures to play stickball. We did lots of things like that because we didn't have time for organized sports. We made our own family fun. But we played only after the work was done. The fun times rewarded us for the hard work.

Family Meetings

I'm grateful for a father who organized well. Breakfast was a time not only for eating but also for organizing. During breakfast, we planned the day's work and made the day's assignments.

We also benefited from having family home evenings. We grew up on stories of faith. We had a healthy reverence for the apostles and prophets. Their words carried a lot of weight in our family.

In your own family, try to think of family home evening not as an obligation but as a great chance to do a number of things: to

plan what the family is going to do, to decide how to meet the needs of the family members, and most of all, to learn the gospel. Remember that family members learn the gospel best when they teach each other.

Family home evening can also include something fun. But don't let the desire to be entertained overshadow the need to learn. We're blessed when we learn together.

All in the Family

One of the most important things I learned by working hard on the farm is that everyone must be involved. We knew that if we were going to have a home, a car, reasonably good clothing, and a few other things, we all had to work at it. We all had a sense that we were helping.

One of the major stresses on families today is that the individual—the child or the parent—sees himself or herself, rather than the family, at the center of life. Focusing on ourselves, and not on the larger vision of bringing the family together, can lead to contention.

We have to work together to make a family succeed. But it's not something we can do by assignment. It's a matter of the heart. Children and parents have to have in their hearts a desire to make each other happy.

A happy home takes work, but if you can focus more on others than on yourself, you'll find that you will be taken care of and will be happier. Our greatest happiness comes when the family is healthy spiritually and emotionally. Whether you live on a farm or in a city, you'll find that a healthy family is the seedbed from which personal growth and personal happiness really rise. **NE**

Elder D. Lee Tobler served as a member of the Seventy from April 1998 to October 2003.

Children and parents have to have a desire to make each other happy.

PRIME TIME



Television was one of the great inventions of the 20th century, but today it presents some danger. Not only must we be careful to avoid watching harmful shows, we must also be aware of how much time we spend watching television.

Much of the time we spend watching television could be spent in other ways. The students in Juan Chácon's seminary class in the Itzaes Ward, Mérida México Stake, suggest the following good things to do instead of sitting down in front of the television set.

- ❖ Spend time talking with family members or friends.
- ❖ Study scriptures.
- ❖ Play basketball, other sports, or board games.
- ❖ Do homework.
- ❖ Visit less-active ward or branch members your age.
- ❖ Plan an activity with friends.
- ❖ Do something nice for someone else.
- ❖ Read a Church magazine or a good book.
- ❖ Listen to uplifting music.
- ❖ Take a nap.
- ❖ Write letters to friends or missionaries.
- ❖ Write in your journal.
- ❖ Take your little brothers or sisters to a playground or for a walk.
- ❖ Ask your parents or grandparents about their childhood.
- ❖ Learn a new hobby.
- ❖ Memorize scripture mastery verses.
- ❖ Take a walk or do some other type of exercise.
- ❖ Help prepare dinner or clean up around your home or yard.
- ❖ Volunteer at a library, school, or hospital. **NE**



MONDAY MONDAY

BY JULIE BAKER

I was upset about losing my Monday night band practices, but my family was in jeopardy of losing something much more important.

My family is your typical busy family, running around with a million things to do every day. Last year, new schedules revealed that many of our activities would fall on Monday evenings. My younger sister had a dance class on Monday night; my younger brothers had soccer practice that night; and I had marching band. I loved being in marching band, and I had just received a solo part. That part was a particular joy because I love creating music.

When my mom and dad realized family home evening was in jeopardy, they decided that our other Monday night activities had to go—including marching band practice. I was very upset. I knew that not going to those practices meant my grade in band would suffer and that I might lose my solo part. I tried to explain my dilemma to my parents, but their answer was, “The prophet says we need to have family home evening,”

and that was that, end of discussion.

I knew they were right, but I was still angry and upset over the loss of my practices. And it wasn’t just me. My brothers could no longer go to soccer practices; my sister had to change dance classes. It was inconvenient for all of us.

The first couple of Mondays, we complained about the things we were missing, but then we realized Mom and Dad weren’t going to give in on this one. Eventually, I started looking forward to free Monday nights and family time. I didn’t have to go back to school for more practice. I could just stay home and be with my family.

Then my fear happened: I lost the solo in the marching band show. How my heart ached. It was hard to give up something I loved so much. But a short while later, band practices were moved to Wednesdays. It’s nice that band doesn’t conflict with family home evening anymore.

Some people might say it was a coincidence that practices were moved, but to me it says that blessings come from keeping the commandments. **NE**

Julie Baker is a member of the Pocatello Seventh Ward, Pocatello Idaho Tybee Stake.

Q & A

“What can I do to stay close to my dad when we’re both so busy?”

NEW ERA

Building or strengthening a relationship takes time and effort. With all of the demands on your time, it’s unlikely that your schedule and your parents’ schedules will work out just right to provide quality time together—unless you and your parents are willing to plan for it.

You can start building a better relationship by talking about it. If your dad knows you want to spend more time with him, he will probably do everything he can to make time for you. But that means you have to be flexible too. The only schedule you can control is your own. So if your schedules don’t match up, you might have to sacrifice something that is important to you in order to spend time with your dad.

The good news is that you want to stay close—or become closer—to your parents. Many youth don’t realize how important that

Family relationships are meant to be eternal. These relationships should take priority over others.

Building relationships takes time. Be flexible enough to make time for your family.

Talk to your dad. If he doesn’t know you want to spend more time with him, he can’t help fix the problem.

Support family prayer, family home evening, family scripture study, and other family activities.

Make the effort to schedule time together. Plan activities in advance to use that time well.

relationship is and that they’re responsible for doing their part in strengthening it. Some Latter-day Saint youth think, “My family is going to be around forever, so I’ll hang out with my friends now.” But if you don’t put your family first, you may not have them forever.

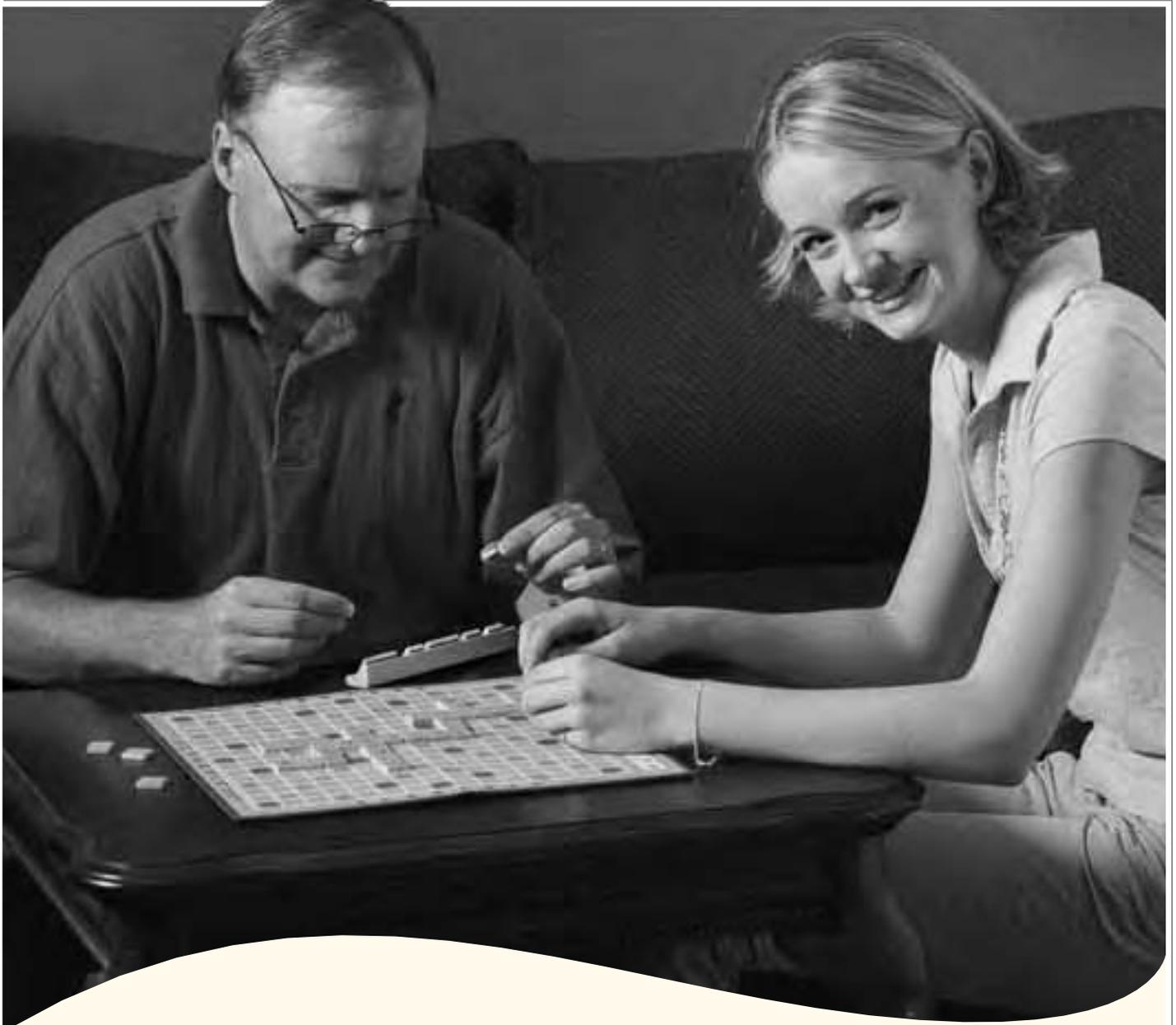
Friends, sports, and other activities aren’t necessarily bad. But family is eternal; popularity isn’t.

When you’re trying to decide how to spend more time with your dad or any other family member, don’t be distracted by other activities that might seem good but aren’t as essential as family relationships.

Here are some ideas from readers that can help you strengthen your relationship with your dad:

Find Time Together

Regular time together is important, even if it’s only five minutes each day. Don’t miss family prayer, family scripture study, or family



home evening. Don't miss other family activities, including meals together. Go with your dad on his errands. Plan a weekly get-together. When you plan time together, mark it on the calendar so neither of you will forget.

When You Find Time

Talk to each other, tell jokes, play games, share favorite scriptures, pray together, share feelings about articles in the Church magazines or what you have learned in seminary

or at church, ask his opinion or advice on problems you're facing, and so on.

When There's No Time

Find out when would be an appropriate time to call him at work for a few minutes to tell him a little about your day. Leave short notes for your father to find—on his pillow, in the bathroom, on the couch. Pray for help in strengthening your relationship. **NE**

READERS



It all comes down to time. I will never forget the time I had with my father. No matter how short or how long we're with our fathers, time is essential to that relationship.

*Elder Frank Maea, 21,
Philippines Baguio Mission*



Love requires sacrifice. If you want to have a better relationship with your father, you may have to sacrifice some of the time you spend with your friends or give

up a few activities.

Lindsay Powell, 14, Evergreen Ward, Golden Colorado Stake

I love my father, and I can try to make sacrifices for him like watching for his return so I can talk to him. During family home evening or other family activities, I can tell him about my feelings. I can leave him notes on his desk at home or call him during his lunch hour at work.

Marie Fania Sophia François, 14, Frères Ward, Port-au-Prince Haiti Stake

We must practice open communication in order to obtain a close relationship with each other. We must also have family prayers every day. Talk openly with your father. Participate in family activities and family home evening.

Elder Su' Tulimanu Jr., 21, Samoa Apia Mission

My father is also busy, but we share our daily experiences at breakfast. At least once a week we have our family council. We pray as a family. We also share articles from the Church magazines. Although we are often apart, I have learned a lot from him, and I pray that the Lord will bless us to be a spiritual family.

Jenirée M. Rodríguez Hernández, 15, Las Colinas Branch, El Tigre Venezuela District



When things of the world crowd in, all too often the wrong things take highest priority. Then it is easy to forget the fundamental purpose of life. Satan has a powerful tool to use against good people. It is distraction. He would have good people fill life with 'good things' so there is no room for the essential ones. Have you unconsciously been caught in that trap?"

—Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "First Things First," *Ensign*, May 2001, 7.

Since I was a little girl I have accompanied my father on various errands. He sometimes takes my sister and me to school, and we chat about many topics. We plan time for "dates" together, we go shopping as a family, and we often call each other at home or at work.

Patricia María del Carmen Fuentes Rodríguez, 12, Panorama Ward, Guatemala City Guatemala Mariscal Stake



Set aside at least one night every week for you and your dad. Spend time together playing games.

Sunday would be a good day to share some quiet activity. Try to

learn more about your dad. Find out what he likes. Do something nice for him like making him breakfast.

Jessica Lee Jensen, 12, Alpine 10th Ward, Alpine Utah Stake

The New Era's and readers' answers are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send us your answer to the question below, along with your name, age, and the names of your ward and stake. Please include a snapshot of yourself that is at least 1.5 by 2 inches (4 by 5 cm).

Please respond by 15 March 2004.

Q&A, New Era

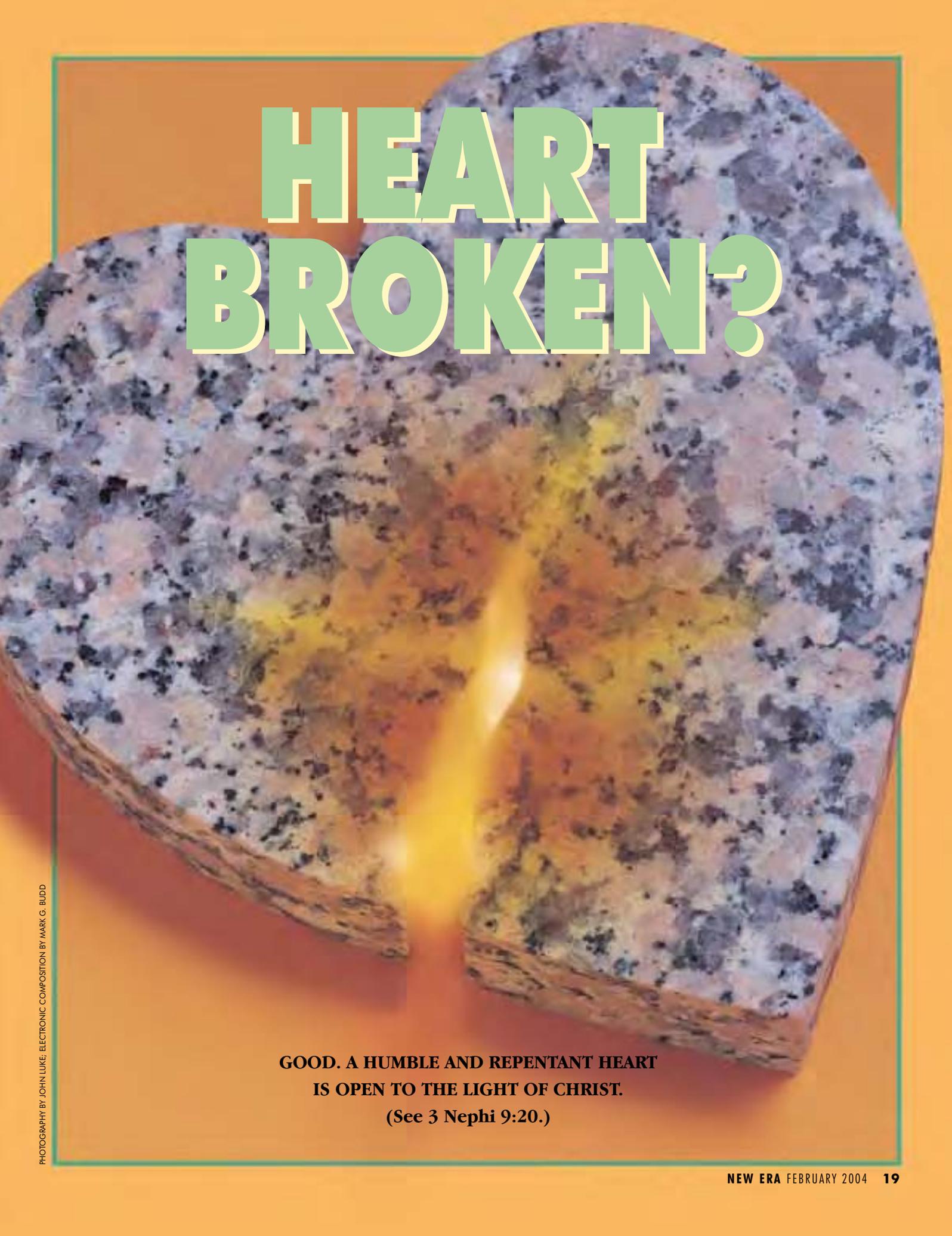
50 East North Temple

Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

QUESTION

"I love the gospel, but talking about it with others terrifies me. How can I overcome my fear?"

A heart-shaped rock, possibly granite or a similar igneous rock, is shown in a close-up, slightly angled view. The rock has a mottled texture with shades of grey, black, and reddish-brown. In the center of the heart, there is a vertical opening or crack. Through this opening, a bright, glowing light emanates, transitioning from a warm yellow at the bottom to a bright white at the top. The background is a solid, warm orange color. The entire image is framed by a thin green border.

HEART BROKEN?

**GOOD. A HUMBLE AND REPENTANT HEART
IS OPEN TO THE LIGHT OF CHRIST.
(See 3 Nephi 9:20.)**

STANDING THE TEST OF

TIME

Preserved through the centuries for our day, the Book of Mormon is helping Mexican youth build the testimonies they'll need to weather the storms of life.

Ruins of ancient civilizations can be found throughout Mexico and Central America. The Pyramid of the Sun (right) at Teotihuacán, near Mexico City, is well known for its majesty. LDS youth, such as Carmen Hernández (top inset) and her brother Samuel (middle inset) of Mérida, Mexico, enjoy visiting Dzibilchaltún, Chichen Itza (bottom inset), and other ruins near their homes.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADAM C. OLSON,
EXCEPT AS NOTED

BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines

Resting on the stone steps of the ancient ruins of Dzibilchaltún in Mexico, Sandra Hernández and Meily Tolosa quietly consider the scattered ruins of a city nearly 1,500 years old. The silence around them is almost as heavy as the humid tropical air. But the peaceful moment doesn't last long.

The silence shatters as Samuel Hernández comes hooting and hollering out of the thick jungle, which grows right up to the edge of the small pyramid. His friends Jorge Tolosa and Wilbert Agosta follow right behind him.

“Oh, I thought I was going to die,” he laughs as he throws himself down onto the steps and tries to catch his breath. Picking their way through the jungle, Samuel and his friends had been making their way toward a partially overgrown structure when they startled a flock of hidden birds. The birds weren't the only ones startled. “Oh, my heart,” Samuel says, laughing.

Testimonies Preserved

Samuel, Meily, and other youth from the Canek Ward, Mérida México Centro Stake, are spending the day exploring some of Mexico's ancient ruins. Dzibilchaltún is just



Meily Tolosa (below) and Erika Poot, Wilbert Agosta, and Carmen Hernández (opposite page) explore the ruins and ancient water holes, or cenotes (middle inset), at Dzibilchaltún. Ruins at Teotihuacán include the Court of the Priests (top inset) and the symbol of the feathered serpent (bottom inset).

one of the thousands of crumbling settlements left throughout the Americas by ancient inhabitants.

The land from central Mexico to Honduras (also called Mesoamerica) has been home to many thriving civilizations. On this trip to Dzibilchaltún, the youth are grateful that ruins of some of their ancestors' cities have been preserved so they can explore where their ancestors lived. "It's interesting to learn what my ancestors

did and what happened to them," says Jorge, a deacon.

In the same way, these youth are thankful that the record of the family of Lehi has been preserved so they can learn from its teachings and experiences. "I'm grateful the Lord preserved the Book of Mormon for us to learn from," Jorge says.

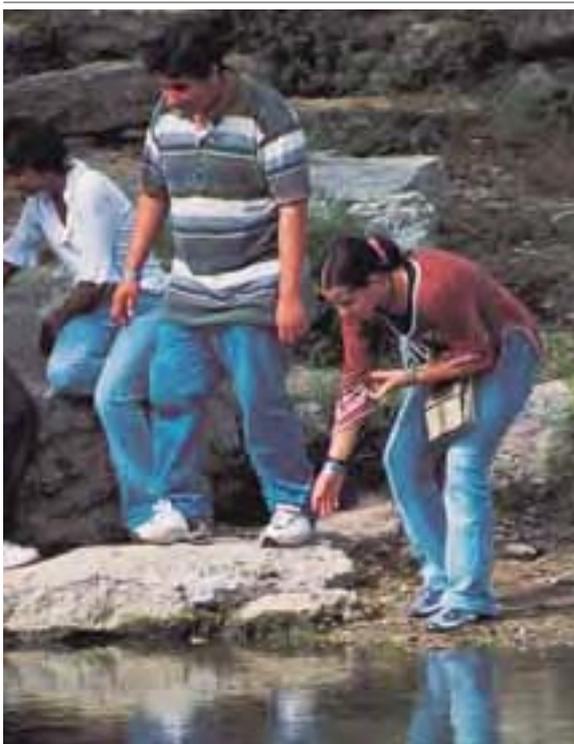
Many Nephite prophets, such as Nephi, Enos, and Mormon, prayed that the Lord would preserve their testimonies of Jesus Christ to



help their descendants (see 2 Nephi 25:21; Enos 1:16–18; Words of Mormon 1:8).

As He promised, the Lord preserved their records and brought them to light again through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Now the Book of Mormon is bringing the descendants of Book of Mormon peoples—and other people from all around the world—to Jesus Christ.

“I’m so grateful for the Book of Mormon,” says Carmen Hernández, a



THE BOOK OF MORMON ADDS UP

239 chapters in the Book of Mormon

77 verses in the longest chapter, Jacob 5

2 verses in the shortest chapters, 3 Nephi 30 and Moroni 5

3,925 references to the Savior in the Book of Mormon, or one reference every 1.7 verses

5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon made in the first printing (March 1830)

108,936,922 copies printed from 1830 to 2002

103 languages in which all or part of the Book of Mormon is available

1,353 times the phrase “it came to pass” appears in the Book of Mormon

Mia Maid who hopes to thank the Book of Mormon prophets someday. “When I meet them,” she says, “I will say, ‘Thank you for helping so many people find answers and come to Christ.’” (See 2 Nephi 33:11; Jacob 6:13; Ether 12:38.)

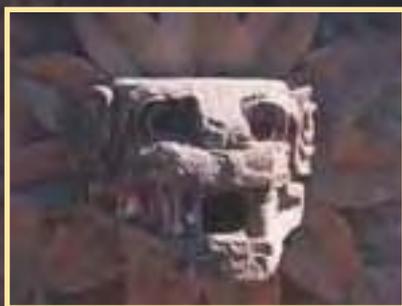
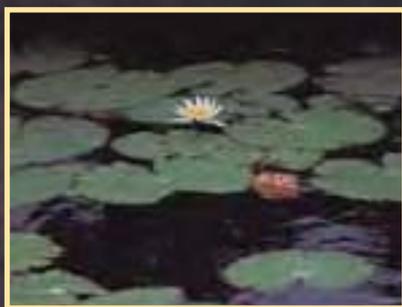
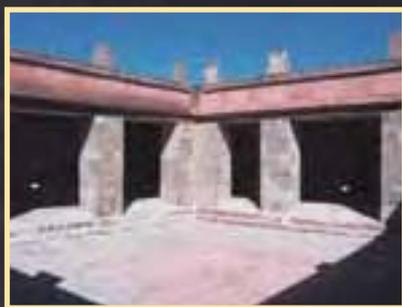
Strengthening Testimonies

While the testimonies of Christ recorded in the Book of Mormon were preserved by the hand of the Lord against the ravages of time, the ancient cities of Mesoamerica haven’t fared as well. Time, the elements, and other factors have reduced some of the once-great civilizations to rubble.

Still, the youth—such as the group from the Canek Ward—enjoy visiting the ruins and imagining them bustling with people and wondering what it was like back then.

“It’s awesome to see structures like those the people of the Book of Mormon may have built and lived in,” Carmen says.

Through their studies in seminary and Sunday School, the youth of the Canek Ward are trying to build testimonies of Christ that won’t

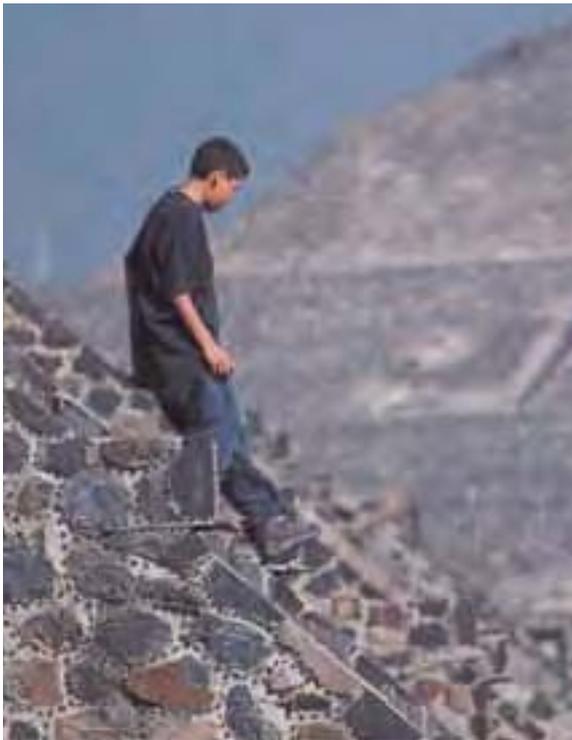




BOOK OF MORMON PROMISES

As members of the Church all over the world study the Book of Mormon this year in Sunday School, each of us can gain, or renew, our testimony of the book's truthfulness through prayer (see Moroni 10:3–4).

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: "Without reservation I promise you that if you will prayerfully read the Book of Mormon, regardless of how many times you previously have read it, there will come into your homes an added measure of the Spirit of the Lord. There will come a strengthened resolution to walk in obedience to his commandments, and there will come a stronger testimony of the living reality of the Son of God" ("The Power of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, June 1988, 6).



crumble and decay like the ruins around them.

"As we've studied the Book of Mormon, my love for the book and my testimony of the Savior have grown," says Carmen.

According to these youth, another major factor in strengthening their testimonies of Christ is going to the temple.

Temples Ancient and Modern

Many tourists come to southern Mexico—dubbed "the land of temples"—to explore the ancient ruins called "temples" because of their apparent religious uses. But for all the ancient temples surrounding them, the youth of Mexico are most excited about having their own Latter-day Saint temples—where they will make covenants with God and be married for all eternity.

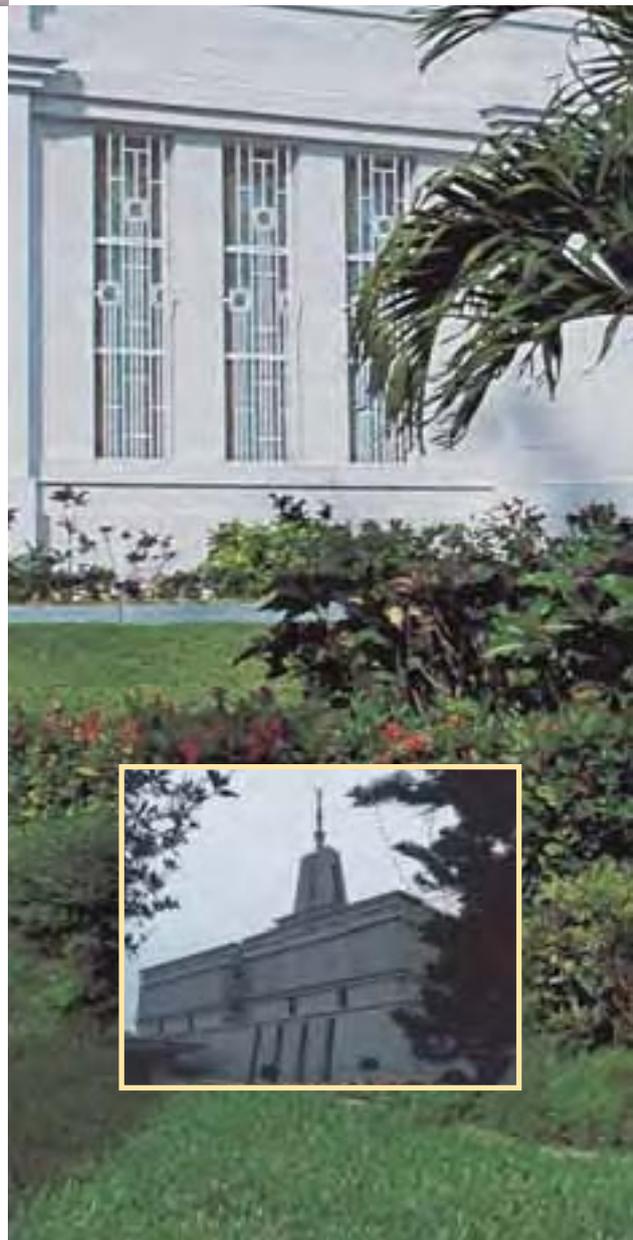
One of these is the Mérida México Temple, completed in July 2000. It is only a 10- or 15-minute drive from where the youth in the Canek Ward live.

"Everyone was so excited to find out we were going to get a temple," says Ismael Herrera, a priest. "Before, we had to travel to Mexico City."

The youth had made the trip to the Mexico City temple to perform baptisms for the dead, but that temple is located more than 16 hours away.

"Our temple is so close," says Jorge. "There are so many more opportunities to go."

"In all the times we've been able to go to the Mérida temple, we could have gone to the Mexico City temple only once or twice," agrees Carmen. "Having a temple here allows us to help a lot more people."



FAR LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUKE

Whenever the Lord has had a people, He has commanded them to build temples (see D&C 124:39). In the Book of Mormon, Nephi and his followers built a temple soon after leaving the families of Laman and Lemuel (see 2 Nephi 5:16). King Benjamin taught his people at a temple (see Mosiah 1:18). Alma and Amulek taught in temples (see Alma 16:13). And Christ appeared to the people gathered at the temple in Bountiful (see 3 Nephi 11:1).

These Mexican youth have read about the temples of the Nephites. They've visited the ruins of ancient temples. Now they have a dedicated temple in their own area. They love going to their modern temple. It's peaceful. It's quiet.

Like the ruins of ancient temples, it seems untouched by the outside world. But in this temple, they can feel something they don't feel anywhere else.

"This is the house of the Lord," says Jorge. **NE**

In a land of ruins, such as Teotihuacán's Temple of the Moon—behind Luis Chávez Jr. of Mexico City (far left)—Mexican youth are grateful for 12 modern temples in their country. Youth of the Canek Ward now visit the Mérida México Temple (below). They had earlier attended the temple in Mexico City (inset).



CHURCH-BALL CHAMP

BY TONY ANDERSON

How can losing feel like winning? When I played basketball the way a priesthood holder should play.

As my body hit the gym floor, a flood of mixed feelings swept through me. A numbing pain throbbed in my left temple, and I wanted to punch something . . . or somebody—number 11 in the black jersey, to be specific.

It had been a great game, the kind of Church basketball game that you look forward to telling college roommates about years later. We were the undersized, undermanned underdogs. Our opponents were priests, but they looked like men, sporting beards and bowling-ball-sized biceps. For three quarters they had manhandled us, and yet somehow the scoreboard showed us deadlocked at 33. Our pint-sized crew was still in the game.

After making a quick layup to tie the game, I was tightly guarding an opponent to prevent him from catching the inbound pass when I saw number 11—all six feet four, 225 pounds of him. Suddenly, a massive elbow crashed into my head, sending me sprawling onto the carpeted gym floor.

And now, every fiber of my being wanted to hit him back. I got up quickly and glared at the giant, with every intention of sending

a message of my own. He stood there, stone-faced, ready for a fight if that were the case. My natural inclination screamed at me to deck him.

But my eyes then focused past him to a poster on the wall. Our stake president had requested that a scripture be placed on the gym wall during the basketball season. The poster had part of Mosiah 18:9 on it: “To stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in.”

The words hit me harder than his elbow had. I, a priesthood holder, was responsible to stand as a witness of God at *all* times and in *all* places, not just on Sunday, not just at the sacrament table or in seminary. My actions portrayed my beliefs, no matter where I was or who was watching me.

We ended up losing that game. But before I left the court, I found number 11. I reached out my hand, and he shook it briefly. “Good game,” I told him, and I headed down the hall. We lost that game, but for the first time I felt I had truly won. **NE**

Elder Tony Anderson is serving full-time in the Bulgaria Sofia Mission.



CALLED TO

Play

BY ARIANNE B. COPE

Music fills the lives of the Willeys—(left to right) Anthony, Elizabeth, and Kristina.



While just in their teens, the Willeys serve the Church by making music with the Orchestra at Temple Square. The orchestra often accompanies the world-famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

They don't get chased by dogs or have companions. They don't write letters home on preparation days because they still live at home, in Pleasant Grove, Utah. But the Willeys—Anthony, 18, Elizabeth, 16, and Kristina, 14—are still missionaries, music missionaries, actually. They were set apart in the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

"When I was set apart," Elizabeth says grinning, "I was told, 'Now you're the youngest sister missionary.' It made me feel special." And she enjoyed being the youngest sister missionary until a year or so

later when her little sister Kristina was set apart and took over as the youngest.

Orchestrating Missionary Work

As music missionaries, Anthony, Elizabeth, and Kristina can share the gospel without ever opening their mouths. Anthony says music missionaries can reach people that regular missionaries might not be able to.

"Music reaches people who wouldn't hear about the Church any other way. It isn't like knocking on a door and going into someone's house; it's more subtle," he says.





It's a sacrifice, having to give up time with friends, but playing in the orchestra is one of their favorite things to do.



A *Note* FROM THE WILLEYS



Anthony, Elizabeth, and Kristina are not the only members of their family involved in music. Their younger siblings Alexander, Catherine, and Rebekah (also pictured above) have also been playing

instruments nearly as long as they've been able to walk. The Willeys agree that music helps bind their family together. They also say that good music can bless everyone's life, whether they play an instrument or not. Elizabeth says, "Anyone can enjoy music on some level. You don't have to be a professional musician."

Anthony says, "There are lots of opportunities for teens to learn music. You can sing in a ward youth choir or join your school band, choir, or orchestra."

Alexander, 13, says listening to good music helps him with his schoolwork. He says, "Listening to Mozart before a test can help you perform well. Good music can clear your mind so you can learn or remember things better."

Kristina listens to uplifting music when she's sad because it makes her feel better. She says, "Good music can invite the Spirit. It's like a prayer" (see D&C 25:12). **NE**

Elizabeth says, "People listening to good music will feel the Spirit, and when they feel the Spirit, they're willing to learn more."

So do the Willeys lug their violins, violas, and basses from door to door playing inspirational music for people? Not exactly. If you've ever seen a Church music broadcast or attended one on Temple Square, you've probably seen how Anthony, Elizabeth, and Kristina share the gospel through music. They are some of the youngest members of the Orchestra at Temple Square.

Orchestra at Temple Square

Being so young compared to the other members of the orchestra doesn't bother these teens a bit. They actually love it. Elizabeth says, "Even though there are only a few members under 20 in the orchestra, I feel like I fit in. I think it's great because there isn't any goofing off. Everyone had to work so hard to get here."

How did they get to be in such a prestigious orchestra at such a young age? "Lots and lots of practice," Anthony says.

To be in the Orchestra at Temple Square you have to be one of the top musicians in the Church, able to play whatever difficult piece might be put in front of you. And it's a huge time commitment.

Kristina says, "Being a part of the Orchestra at Temple

Square is my favorite thing I've ever done, but it's been a sacrifice. It's hard to find time for homework and friends because we have to practice every day and rehearse several times a week."

But Anthony, Elizabeth, and Kristina all say the hard work is worth it.

"It's neat to be able to see the audience's reaction when we perform," Elizabeth says. "The Spirit is always there. It makes me feel like all my hard work has paid off."

The teens' mom and dad go to their concerts and sit up in the balcony where they can see all their children. Their mother, Denise, says, "When the music gets going, the Spirit sweeps over me and over the whole audience."

The beautiful music the orchestra plays on Temple Square helps many people feel the Spirit. After the concerts are over, members of the audience can learn more about the Church from the full-time and Church service missionaries standing at the doors.

Anthony loves the missionary opportunities that being a member of the Orchestra at Temple Square has given him. "Being a member of the orchestra has made me want to be a better person," he says, "and it has prepared me to be a better full-time missionary." **NE**

Arianne B. Cope is a member of the Garland First Ward, Garland Utah Stake.



NOT JUST ME

While sailing to the Americas, Nephi was tied up and beaten by his brothers. His problems made mine seem small.

Nephi's experiences taught me that it wasn't just me—everyone has troubles. And we can handle them.

BY RENÉE HARDING

When my dad left and my parents divorced, I was devastated. I felt abandoned. Everything changed, including my attitude and my outlook on life.

Money, or the lack of it, became a major issue. My mom worked two jobs. When my best friend wanted me to go shopping, I was too ashamed to tell her we barely had enough money for food—let alone clothes.

Seeing how bad I felt, my mom taught herself to sew and made me a few outfits.

As good as her intentions were, none of the outfits turned out very well. She made me a pair of pants that were not only too short, but they were such a bright color that I felt self-conscious. As much as I didn't want to

wear them or any of my homemade clothes, I also didn't want to hurt Mom's feelings.

The day I wore those pants to school still stands out in my mind as one of the most humiliating experiences of my life. Mike, one of the most popular guys at school, always took time out of his busy schedule to make fun of my homemade outfits. The day I wore those pants I gave not only Mike but everyone else something to laugh about.

As bad as things were at school, they were worse at home. With Dad gone and Mom working so many hours, my brothers and I were left in charge of the house, inside and out. To my horror, even though we were doing our best, we got anonymous notes about what a mess our yard was and what a disgrace we were to the neighborhood. I had to agree. Our home and yard did not look as good as the others. I was ashamed to invite friends over.

When I started early-morning seminary, things changed. They got better. I was introduced to someone I could relate to—someone who had problems worse than mine. The difference was that while I felt sorry for myself, he stayed close to the Lord and





Walter Reuther



FOR OUR PROFIT

Nephi explained, “I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23).

refused to complain. The person I’m talking about is Nephi.

Sister Mortensen, my seminary teacher, pointed out that no one escapes heartbreak or pain in life—not even Nephi. What made Nephi great was that he never lost hope or his testimony while he battled one problem after another. Nephi helped me realize that my biggest problem in life was not my parents’ divorce or my bright pants or things and people beyond my control. My biggest problem was my attitude, something I have complete control over.

Nephi’s family had their world turned upside down. Unhappy that their dad led them away from their home and possessions, Nephi’s brothers began to murmur and complain. Nephi, on the other hand, prayed for understanding.

Nephi’s brothers took a lot of their frustrations out on him. They hit him with a rod, bound him with cords, and even plotted

to kill him. Hearing how violent they were toward Nephi made me realize how insignificant Mike and the bullies in my life were. What’s amazing is that while I felt nothing but contempt for those who were unkind to me, Nephi was patient and loving and “did frankly forgive them all that they had done” (1 Nephi 7:21).

While most of my friends didn’t say much about my family situation, one friend called to say her mother no longer wanted her to be friends with me. Her mom said people like me who came from families with problems were a bad influence. I burst into tears and after that spent many nights crying myself to sleep.

Nephi also admits to crying himself to sleep. He said, “Mine eyes water my pillow by night” (2 Nephi 33:3). The difference was that Nephi, during the day, continually prayed for

his family, something that hadn’t occurred to me because I was too busy wallowing in my tears.

While Nephi came from a family with many problems, he remained true. His way of dealing with pain and anguish was to lean upon Heavenly Father.

Nephi never fell into Satan’s trap of thinking Heavenly Father’s love could be measured by how well things were going for him. Nephi proved that while we don’t always have a

choice about the bad things that happen to us, we always have a choice about how we respond to these problems. **NE**

Reneé Harding is a member of the Sugar Land First Ward, Houston Texas South Stake.

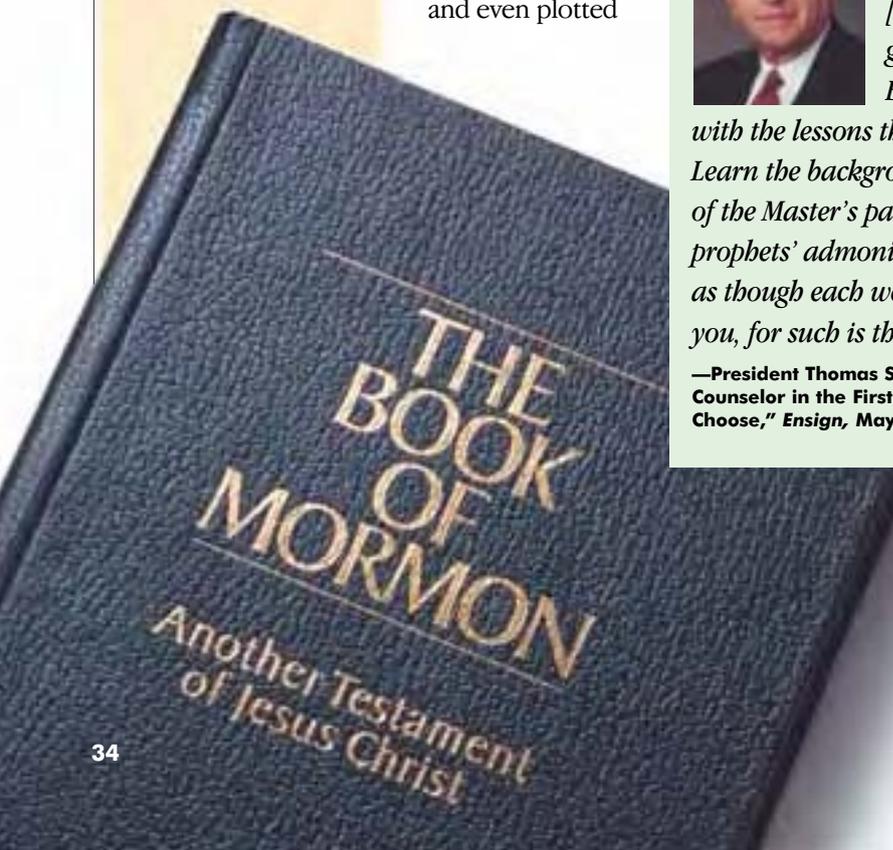


AN UNFAILING GUIDE

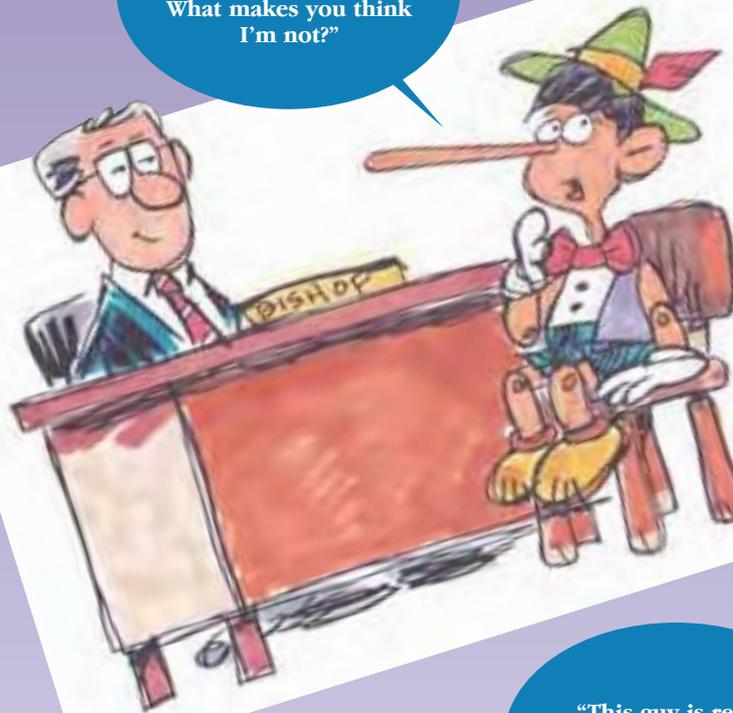
“The holy scriptures [are] an unfailing guide in our lives. Become acquainted

with the lessons the scriptures teach. Learn the background and setting of the Master’s parables and the prophets’ admonitions. Study them as though each were speaking to you, for such is the truth.”

—President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “A Time to Choose,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 97.



"Of course I'm telling you the truth, Bishop. What makes you think I'm not?"



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

"I'm sorry it took me 60 years to call you for a date. My sister has been hogging the phone."



RANDY GLASBERGEN

"This guy is really giving me the cold shoulder."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



RACTICE

MAKES POSSIBLE

BY PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

(1856–1945)

Seventh President of the Church

Heber J. Grant's music teacher said President Grant would never learn to sing. The teacher gave up in despair. President Grant did not.

My mother tried to teach me when a small child to sing but failed because of my inability to carry a tune. When I joined a singing class taught by Professor Charles J. Thomas, he tried and tried in vain to teach me when 10 years of age to run the scale or carry a simple tune, and finally gave up in despair. He said that I could never, in this world, learn to sing. Perhaps he thought I might learn the divine art in another world. Ever since this attempt, I have frequently tried to sing when riding alone many miles from anyone who might hear me, but on such occasions could never succeed in carrying the tune of one of our familiar hymns for a single verse, and quite frequently not for a single line. . . .

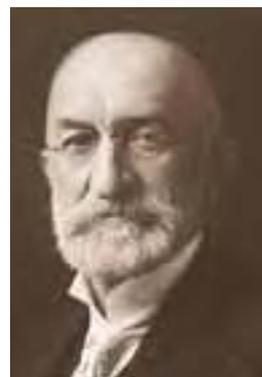
Just a Little Flat

While listening to Brother Horace S. Ensign sing, I remarked that I would gladly give two or three months of my spare time if

by so doing it would result in my being able to sing one or two hymns. He answered that any person could learn to sing who had a reasonably good voice and who possessed perseverance and was willing to do plenty of practicing. My response was that I had an abundance of voice and considerable perseverance. . . . I would take my first music lesson of two hours upon the hymn, "O My Father." Much to my surprise, at the end of four or five days, I was able to sing this hymn with Brother Ensign without any mistakes. At the end of two weeks, I could sing it alone, with the exception of being a little flat on some of the high notes. . . .

The Secret of My Singing Success

One Sunday, at the close of a meeting, upon telling Professor Charles J. Thomas that Brother Ensign informed me that I could sing, he said: "Didn't you tell him I said no?" I answered, "Yes." He said, "Why, you can't even run the scale." I said, "I am aware of that fact, having tried for half an hour this morning and failed." My voice at 10 years of age must have made a deep impression upon Brother Thomas, seeing that he had remembered it for 33 years.



President Heber J. Grant was fond of this wise saying: “That which we persist in doing becomes easier for us to do; not that the nature of the thing itself has changed, but that our power to do is increased” (see James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 2000, 45).



Noticing that he seemed quite skeptical, I asked him to walk over with me into the corner of the building, so as not to disturb the people who had not yet left the meeting-house when I sang to him in a low voice, “God Moves in a Mysterious Way.” At the close he said, “That’s all right.”

At the end of two or three months, I was able to sing not only “O My Father” but “God Moves in a Mysterious Way,” “Come, Come, Ye Saints,” and two or three other hymns . . . (*Hymns*, nos. 292, 285, 30).

It required a vast amount of practice to learn, and my first hymn was sung many hundreds of times before I succeeded in getting it right.

Today, my musical deafness is disappearing, and by sitting down to a piano and playing the lead notes, I can learn a song in less than one-tenth the time required when I first commenced to practice. . . .

The Singing Missionaries

President Brigham Young once remarked that the Spirit of the Lord would do more to convert people than the eloquence of man. The same is true of singing. It is not always the ability that a missionary has to sing in a creditable and entertaining way that will aid him most in his missionary work; but on the contrary, if he can sing some of our beautiful hymns with the spirit in which they were written, he will be able to carry conviction to the hearts of his hearers as to the truths of the gospel. As an example of this: Elders J. Golden Kimball and Charles A. Welch, neither of whom claim to sing well, while on a mission in the southern states, were about to baptize some converts; a mob had assembled, and the brethren were given to

understand that if they carried out their intentions of baptizing, the mob would throw them into the river. The brethren determined to go ahead no matter what the result might be. Before doing so, however, they sang a song. The song seemed to have such an effect upon the mob that they were almost transfixed. The brethren proceeded with their baptisms, and then went some distance to attend to confirming the baptized. A message came from the mob asking them to come and sing that song again, and the request was complied with. The leader of the mob, Joseph Jarvis, afterwards joined the Church, and he stated to Elder Kimball that the sentiments of the hymn and the inspiration attending the singing converted him to the gospel. . . .

A Prayer unto Him

The Lord says in a revelation given to Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet: “For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads” (D&C 25:12).

My soul has always delighted in listening to singing, having been passionately fond of it all my life, and I am delighted to be able today to pray unto the Lord “in the songs of the heart.” It is my opinion that if we will all remember the words of the Lord, that the song of the righteous is a prayer unto Him and shall be answered with a blessing upon our heads, and will frequently supplicate our Heavenly Father in the sweet songs of Zion, earnestly and honestly echoing in our hearts the sentiments of our beautiful hymns, that we are bound to have the promised blessings. . . .

Learn to Sing

I am confident that the hymns of Zion, when sung with the proper spirit, bring a peaceful and heavenly influence into our homes and also aid in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. I recommend to the youth of Zion, that they go to work with determination and learn to sing; particularly is this recommendation made to the young men, because, next to a familiarity with the scriptures, the ability to sing will assist them when they are called to the nations of the earth to preach the gospel. . . .

I have learned to sing; you can do the same; will you make the effort? **NE**

From Improvement Era, vol. 3, 1900, 886; subheads added; punctuation and capitalization modernized.

I am confident that the hymns of Zion, when sung with the proper spirit, bring a peaceful and heavenly influence into our homes and also aid in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.





FEBRUARY FACT FINDER

2 February 1833: The Prophet Joseph Smith finished translating the New Testament.

8 February 2004: The Boy Scouts of America organization turns 94.

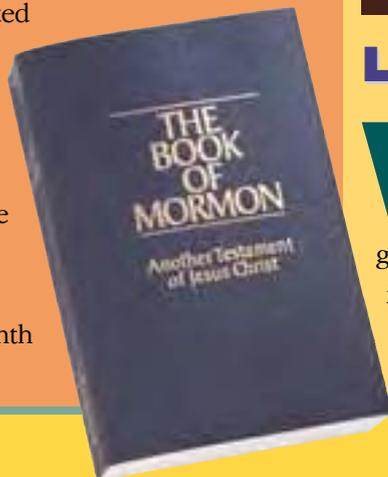
14 February 1853: President Brigham Young broke ground for the Salt Lake Temple, and President Heber C. Kimball, First Counselor in the First Presidency, dedicated the site. Excavation began that day.

18 February 1979: In Nauvoo, Illinois, President Ezra Taft Benson organized the Church's 1,000th stake.

29 February 2000: The Church printed the 100 millionth copy of the Book of Mormon.



Salt Lake Temple groundbreaking.



CHECK US OUT ONLINE

Did you know you can read the *New Era* online? At www.lds.org, you can access all the *New Eras* ever printed, even the one you're reading right now! At the Church's Web site, just click on "Gospel

Library." And while you're there, you can also subscribe to any Church magazine or to the *Church News*. Church magazines are great gifts for your friends or your family, so check us out online!



LEADERSHIP TIP

When our desire to receive instruction is a greater force than our comfort in remaining as we are, we become teachable," says Elder Robert R.

Steuer, of the Seventy (*Ensign*, May 2002, 31). Great leaders always strive to become better by learning new things and following the counsel of their Church leaders.

WHY AM I?



BOOK OF MORMON HERO

Read about my life and try to figure out who I am, and then discover more about me from the scripture references below.

1. My father was a prophet of God.
2. I came from a large family.
3. I was born in the wilderness.
4. Growing up, I played with the children of a man named Zoram.
5. When I was very young, my mother and father almost died.
6. Some of my older brothers often picked on me.
7. In a father's blessing, I was taught that "there is an opposition in all things."
8. My father died when I was in my midteen years.
9. I became a priest and teacher to my people in my 20s.
10. The Book of Mormon contains four of my sermons.

11. I wrote more of the Book of Mormon than all but three of its authors.

12. I wrote the longest chapter in the Book of Mormon.

13. During a sermon, I once took off my coat and dramatically shook it before my people.

14. Near the end of my life, a wicked man challenged me to show him a sign from God. The power of God struck him down, and he died a few days later.

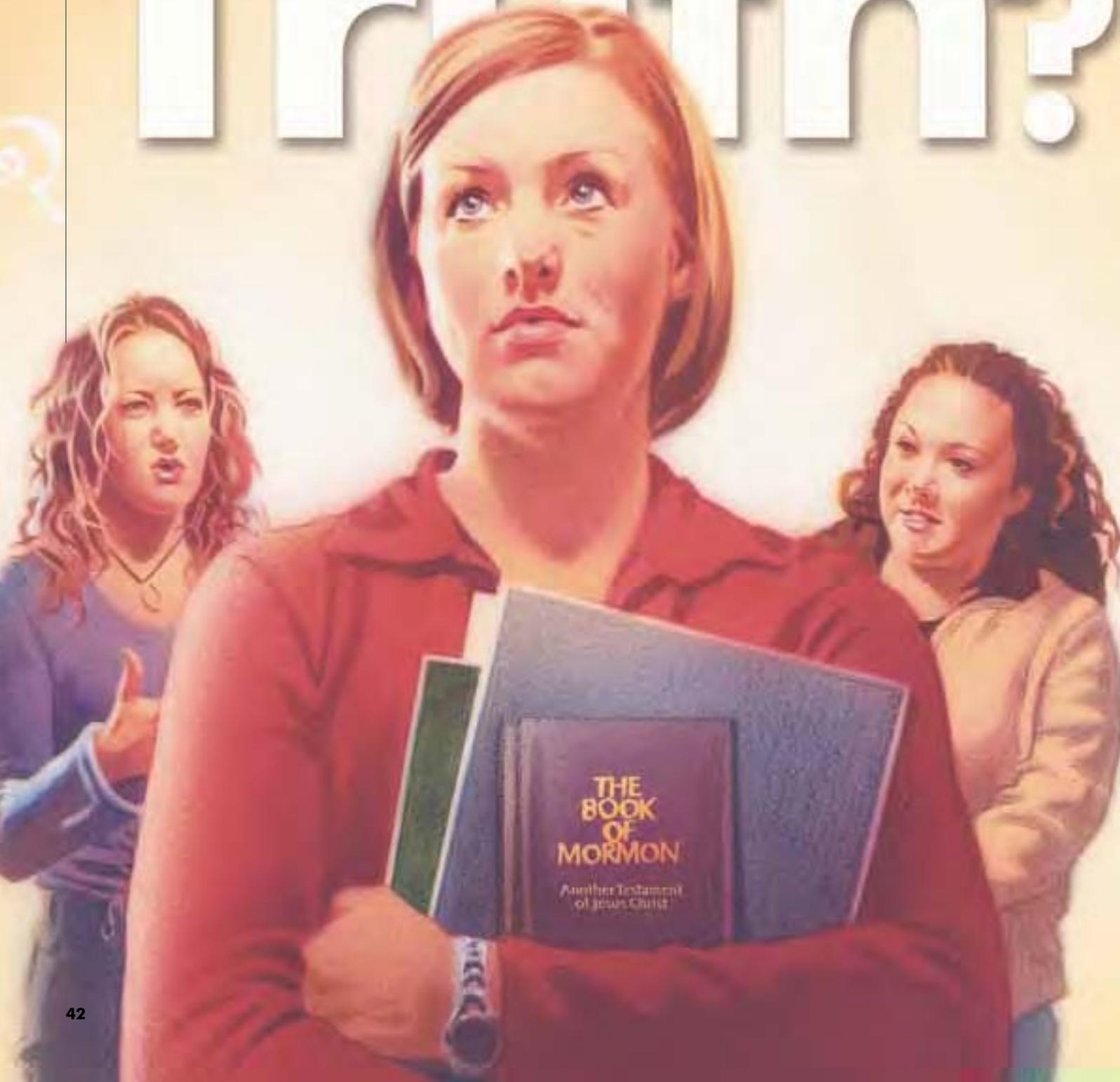
15. During my life, I saw my Redeemer. I also saw angels, and they ministered unto me.

16. The last word I wrote in my book was translated as "adieu," a French word that means "I will see you again when we meet before God."

*Answer: Jacob, son of Lehi
(See 1 Nepht 1:5-20; 2:5; 16:7;
18:7, 17-18; 2 Nepht 2:1, 4, 11;
4:12; 5:6, 26; 6-10; 11:3;
Jacob 1-7)*

How I Know

WHO'S TELLING The Truth?



The only way I could find out was by acting on what I believed.

Oh no, not again,” I thought, as I saw the familiar face walking toward me in the hallway of my college dorm.

“What this time?”

Angela [names have been changed] had accosted me in the hallway before, and each time I talked to her she left my stomach tied up in knots. I had been investigating The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints for a month, and Angela had taken it upon herself to prove that I was making a big mistake.

Angela invited me to her dorm room for a talk, and I accepted warily, knowing from past experience that she would not leave me alone until I’d heard what she had to say.

“How are you feeling about the Mormons at this point?” she asked me, as I sat on her bed, folding my arms defensively.

“Fine. Actually I think what they believe is quite beautiful. I haven’t decided if I believe it yet . . .”

“Beautiful?” Angela choked on the word, her face turning red. “I’m sorry, but I can’t let you go on. Not after what I’ve found out about the Mormon religion.”

She handed me a pamphlet filled with lies and twisted truths about the Church. “Read this,” she confided, “and you’ll never want to talk to those missionaries again.”

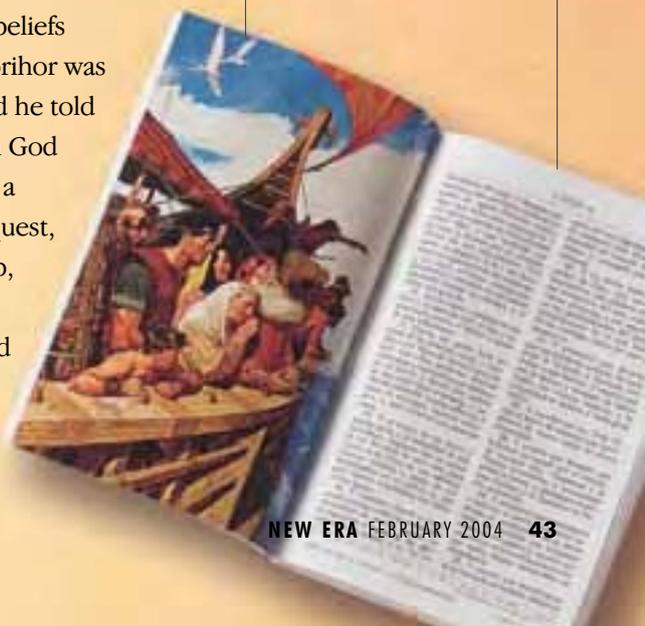
I read it and the other things well-meaning people gave me to try to show me “the truth” about the Church. I always ended up feeling confused and sick to my stomach. How could I ever know what was right? The missionaries seemed so peaceful about what they believed. Yet Angela was convinced they

were wrong. How could I find my own testimony of what was true? And why did there seem to be silence from the heavens when I prayed about my questions?

Ten years later, I sat in an LDS chapel looking at a young woman in my ward. She sat next to me, her hands folded in her lap and tears streaming down her face, asking me the same questions I had asked 10 years before. How could she know for sure if the things she had been taught were true? Why hadn’t she received any spiritual confirmations or found answers to her many questions about the Church?

This young woman had a boyfriend who had been trying to convince her the Church wasn’t true. He had been telling her the same things about the Church that had confused me so long ago.

I decided to write her a letter, telling her about a prophet who faced a similar situation. During the time of Alma the Younger, Korihor, an anti-Christ, came among the Nephites telling them Christ would not come and that their beliefs were false. Eventually, Korihor was brought before Alma, and he told Alma he would believe in God only if Alma showed him a sign. In answer to his request, Korihor was struck dumb, and he finally admitted that he had been deceived and had always known there was a God. (See Alma 30.)



GAINING AND KEEPING A TESTIMONY

1. Pray regularly and sincerely about your questions.
2. It may help to write your questions in a journal. When you receive answers, write them down so you can remember and read them often. You will begin to see the hand of God in all things, just as Alma did (see Alma 30:44).
3. Live the gospel and keep the commandments. Attend your meetings, activities, seminary classes, and service projects. Stay away from things that take away the Spirit.
4. Regularly study the scriptures and the teachings of latter-day prophets, because you can't have a testimony of something you don't know anything about.



Both Alma and Korihor knew the words of the prophets, but Alma acted on those words and obeyed the commandments. Alma knew that blessings come from following the ways of the Lord. (See Alma 32:21–43.)

Korihor refused to act on the word of the Lord and wanted to see a sign before he would believe and act. Alma believed first, acted upon that belief, and then received a confirmation of the truth.

We can have an unshakable testimony like Alma's by following his example. Then we can stand before people and testify of the truths of God, and no clever words or temptations will convince us to deny what we know is true.

I believed the missionaries instead of the clever words of those who opposed the

Korihor demanded that Alma show him a sign that God exists. Alma's answer to Korihor teaches us how to strengthen our testimonies.

Church. Then I acted upon that belief. I was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When I rose up out of the waters of baptism, a warm feeling of peace enveloped me. I knew the Holy Ghost was telling me that what I was doing was good. I had found the truth. Even though I faced much opposition from my parents and friends, I was able to stand strong because of the testimony I had received from obeying the commandments of God.

When we ask in faith, we will receive answers from the Lord as we experiment upon His words. Testimonies do not come from seeing signs, as Korihor believed. They come from doing and obeying. **NE**

Kersten Campbell is a member of the Pullman First Ward, Pullman Washington Stake.

GET THE MESSAGE

RU up 2 speed?
U2 can LOL.
GR8 stories!
GR8 articles!

BION, it's all on the
Church's Web site.*

www.lds.org

Find 32 years of
past and present
New Era magazines.

- Go to www.lds.org.
- Click on Gospel Library.
- Under Church Publications, choose HTML for searchable text or PDF for magazines with artwork and photos.

(*Translation for adults:
Are you up to speed?
You too can laugh out
loud. Great stories!
Great articles! Believe
it or not, it's all on the
Church's Web site.)

CLEANED-UP ATTITUDE

BY SARAH J. SHERANIAN

Okay, here are the trash bags,” the bishop said. “Let’s get to work.”

This year for our yearly stake service project we were cleaning up a middle school by our stake center. When we arrived at the school, we saw that the fairly small campus was covered in trash. The wind had blown piles of garbage along a chain link fence. The grass was yellow and dying in patches.

Flowers and plants had been planted in an obvious effort to beautify the school,

but they had not been maintained, and a field of weeds grew as high as my elbows. The paint in the bathrooms was peeling away from the walls, and spitballs covered the ceiling. I held my nose in disgust as I looked around.

I started picking up garbage along the fence. “This is gross,” I thought. “Why should I pick up someone else’s mess?” I turned to a girl who was working next to me and said, “I have never seen so much trash before. Yuck!”

After a few minutes of filling my trash bag, I thought, “It’s so hot out here. My back hurts, and my hands are getting dirty. I’m sure there are germs all over them! Maybe I can paint the bathroom instead. That would be easier, and I could get out of picking up trash.”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN, POSED BY MODELS, LOST NO MORE, BY GREG OLSEN

But there were enough volunteers painting already. I walked as slowly as I could back to the hot asphalt near the fence.

Then, as I looked around, I thought, "If this were my school I would be so happy to know that people were cleaning it. I wonder if the students will be surprised on Monday? I bet they've never seen this chain link fence completely free of trash."

I began working harder, making sure I picked up every piece of garbage around the fence and all the trash stuck in the links. My dad mowed the field of elbow-high weeds, and I helped trim bushes and paint an exterior wall.

When we were finished, I looked back at the school and the clean area along the fence and thought, "These students will be so happy!" Then I thought of what I had accomplished and how I had changed. Alma was right: "By small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6).

Sarah J. Sheranian is a member of the *BYU 185th Ward, Brigham Young University Fourth Stake.*



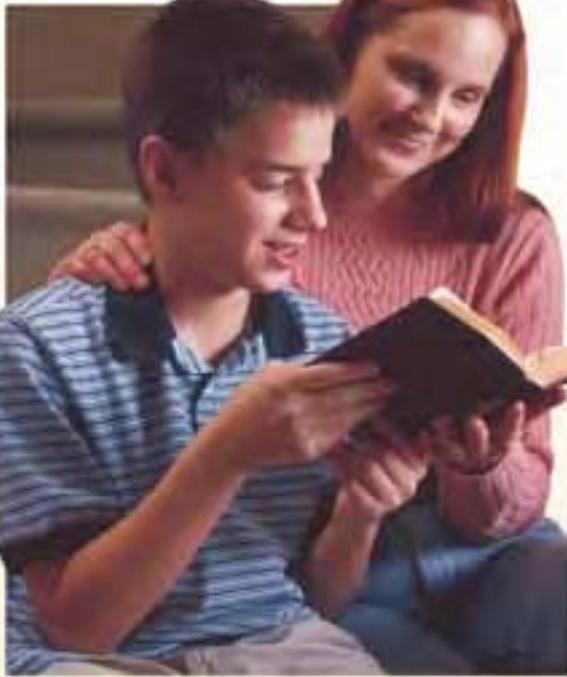
WITH HIM

BY KAREN BURNINGHAM

The Atonement of Jesus Christ was a marvelous sacrifice. Christ not only atoned for the sins of the world, but He experienced the pains, sicknesses, and emotions we all have during this mortal life. Alma 7:11–12 has helped me understand that I am never alone in my trials. The Savior took upon Himself my pains, afflictions, and temptations—

the ones I encounter every day. This knowledge assures me that He will always be there for me as long as I invite Him into my life. With Him, I know that I can endure my physical and spiritual trials.

Karen Burningham is a member of the *BYU 91st Ward, Brigham Young University 21st Stake.*



“LET YOUR HEARTS BE COMFORTED”

BY SCOTT D. ODELL

A few years ago my older brother was on a foreign exchange trip in Moscow, Russia. At that time, a prominent Russian political leader had been saying things against the Church. My mom and I were worried for my brother’s safety. He was staying with a family we didn’t know much about, and we worried what they would think. We didn’t know what the Russian people’s reactions toward the Church and toward my brother would be.

We decided to pray. In fact, we said many prayers that night. When it was time for me to go to bed, I said one more prayer for my brother. I had the feeling that I should read my scriptures. When I opened them, the first scripture that I saw was D&C 98:1–3. The verses read:

“Verily I say unto you my friends, fear not, let your hearts be comforted; yea, rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks; “Waiting patiently on the Lord, for your prayers have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and are recorded with this seal and testament—the Lord hath sworn and decreed that they shall be granted.

“Therefore, he giveth this promise unto you, with an immutable covenant that they shall be fulfilled; and all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good, and to my name’s glory, saith the Lord.”

This scripture was a definite answer to prayer. It seemed like Heavenly Father was talking directly to me—that the scripture was written just so that I could find it more than 150 years later. I went upstairs to show my mom. When she read it, tears welled up in her eyes. We both knew that everything would be okay. We knew that Heavenly Father had control over the situation.

Sure enough, the president of Russia defended the Church, and the Russian government leader apologized for what he had said. Soon afterwards, my brother returned home safe and sound.

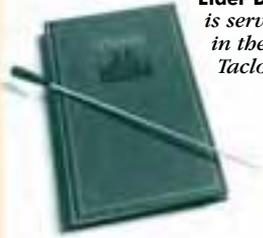
I am so grateful to Heavenly Father for helping me find that scripture and for giving my mom and me comfort in our time of need.

Scott D. Odell is a member of the Quailbluff Ward, Logan Utah Mount Logan Stake.

I’VE BEEN GIVEN MUCH

BY DAVID GUMMERSALL

On my first day in the mission field, I was homesick, hot, and questioning if I had what it takes to serve for two years. Why was I here at all? At church that day, the opening hymn was “Because I Have Been Given Much” (*Hymns*, no. 219). After singing that hymn, I knew why I was here. That hymn was the answer to my prayer.



Elder David Gummersall is serving full-time in the Philippines Tacloban Mission.

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 us at:
cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

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

Mutual Activities

- Both the Young Women and the Young Men have themes that they use as a guide. Bring the posters with the themes to a joint Young Women and Young Men activity. Have everyone repeat both themes, together and aloud. Ask some of the girls to explain the seven values and some of the boys to talk about the six points of their theme. This experience can help each group know what the other is striving for.

- Invite a referee or sports specialist to a joint activity and have the specialist go over the rules of basketball or volleyball or whatever sport your ward likes to participate in. The specialist could even demonstrate some of the moves that are illegal or cause

problems in games. Just knowing the rules can improve sportsmanship. Then read aloud "Church-Ball Champ" on page 26.



Service Project Suggestion

- Read Elder Robert D. Hales's article, "Channeling Your Creativity," on page 4. Under the direction of the bishop, obtain a list of people who need help in your ward. Get together and brainstorm ways to serve or solve some of the problems faced by these fellow ward members. Use your creativity. Some interesting and inventive solutions may result in enjoyable and effective service projects.

Family Home Evening Ideas

- Tell the story of President Heber J. Grant on page 36. Suggest learning some

hymns, then practice singing them together. You can suggest songs from the *Children's Songbook* as well as hymns that are less familiar.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November in the *Ensign* and *Liahona*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 5–9.

Young Women Manual 2

Lesson 5 Home Environment

New Era, June 2003, special issue on the family.
Julie Baker, "Monday, Monday," this issue, 14.

Lesson 6 Sharing Work in the Home

D. Lee Tobler, "Homegrown Happiness," this issue, 10.
Gene R. Cook, "Homemade Christmas," *New Era*, December 2003, 34.

Lesson 7 Living in Love and Harmony

Kirk J. Faulkner, "Out of the Mouth of Blake," this issue, 8.
Lois Zurligen Jorgensen, "Ten Things I Love about You," *New Era*, December 2003, 26.
Scott Bean, "The Truth about My Family," *New Era*, March 2003, 26.

Lesson 8 Improving Communication Skills

Q&A "What can I do to stay close to my dad. . .?" this issue, 16.
Q&A "My brother isolates himself. . . How can I reach out to him?" *New Era*, June 2003, 16.

Lesson 9 A Young Woman as a Peacemaker in Her Home

Idea List: "Smooth Sailing Home," *New Era*, October 2003, 15.
Mamie Hunsaker Hammer, "What a Brother," *New Era*, June 2003, 24.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 2

Lesson 5 Agency

H. David Burton, "Who's Asking?" *New Era*, December 2003, 38.
Shane Hamilton, "The Other Side of the Fence," *New Era*, September 2003, 34.
David O. McKay, "Dandy," *New Era*, April 2003, 10.

Lesson 6 Christlike Service

Kirk J. Faulkner, "Out of the Mouth of Blake," this issue, 8.
Taylor Woodruff, "Getting the Point," *New Era*, October 2003, 46.

Lesson 7 The Eternal Importance of Families

Gordon B. Hinckley, "Your Family," *New Era*, June 2003, 4.
"Our Greatest Happiness," *New Era*, June 2003, 12.
Scott Bean, "The Truth about My Family," *New Era*, March 2003, 26.

Lesson 8 Spirituality

Poster, "Be a Strong Link," *New Era*, September 2003, 34.
Richard L. Evans, Gospel Classics: "Why All the Rules?" *New Era*, November 2003, 44.

Lesson 9 Repentance and the Atonement of Jesus Christ

Thomas S. Monson, "The Search for Jesus," *New Era*, December 2003, 4.
Charity Brunson, "Saving the Bees," *New Era*, November 2003, 10.

Index of Topics

Atonement 8
change 19
choice 4
communication 16
family 10, 14, 32
family home evening 14
fathers 16
Heber J. Grant 36
Jesus Christ 8, 42
Mexico 20
music 28, 36
problems 4, 32
relationships 16
repentance 26
righteousness 26
talents 28, 36
television 13
temples 20
testimony 20, 42
truth 42
work 10

ASPIRING AUTHOR

I have been a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for about two years. The *New Era* has helped me through struggles that I have been having. I want to thank all those who have put a story in the *New Era*. The stories have really helped me and probably other people. I hope some day I will be able to put a story in, but right now I am just enjoying reading them!

Autee Tweedy, Willow Ward, Wasilla Alaska Stake

A WONDERFUL BOOK

I liked the article "Book of Mormon: Read All about It" (Sept. 2003). I was so touched by the Spirit when President Hinckley said, "Read the Book of Mormon itself. Read it again and again. . . . Pray about it, and the Holy Ghost will bear record to you." I have just finished reading the Book of Mormon, and I am going to read it again. The Book of Mormon is such a wonderful book.

David Remington, Tendring Branch, Ipswich England Stake

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CROWD

I loved the article "In Crowd? Out Crowd? Right Crowd!" in the October 2003 *New Era*. Sometimes I'm tempted to dress certain ways at school, even though most of the people at my school are members of the Church. This article taught me that I need to stand up and be counted as a part of the "right crowd." Thanks!

Heidi Callister, Mueller Park Third Ward, Bountiful Utah Mueller Park Stake

STORY ON JOURNALS

I love keeping a journal. And I am always trying to get my friends into the healthy habit of keeping a journal.

"The story helped me understand that my Heavenly Father does love me and will always love me."



I have loved the way the *New Era* has recently been having quite a few articles on keeping journals. I also really loved reading the Q&A about keeping a journal (Sept. 2003). I think it would be really cool if you would do a journal-joggers Idea List to give ideas on what to write about when you can't think of anything else. Please keep on printing more articles relating to keeping a journal.

Susan Story, Price College Sixth Ward, Price Utah College Stake

HE LOVES US

Thank you for the article called "We Are Daughters of Our Heavenly Father, Who Loves Us" (Oct. 2003). Our branch has only four youth, two young women and two young men. It was very nice to hear the stories of those girls who had gone through trials and still know that they are loved by their Heavenly Father. The story helped me understand that my Heavenly Father does love me and will always love me.

Katie Farr, Hervey Bay Branch, Bundaberg Australia District

BEFRIENDING BROTHER

I want to thank you for "What a Brother" (June 2003). It reminds me of my brother and me. We also tease each other all the time. Reading this article helped me understand how much I love my brother, even though we don't get along all of the time.

Corey Redd, Lolo Ward, Stevensville Montana Stake

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

*New Era
We've Got Mail
50 E. North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150*

Or e-mail us at

cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



NOT TO BE COPIED

BY LANE V. ERICKSON

FROSTY WINTER

BY CALLIE TAGGART

Lofty trees
overpowered by the
winter snow
laced with a thousand
sparkling diamonds
the towering treetops
create a canopy
of exquisite white
a sheet of ice
lies beneath
their frozen trunks
a numbing cold air
stings even the earth
and yet
this snowy frost is only
a prelude
to the fierce storm
that will follow.



“These Mexican youth have read about the temples of the Nephites. They’ve visited the ruins of ancient temples. Now they have a dedicated temple in their own area. They love going to their modern temple.”

See “Standing the Test of Time,” p. 20.

