



THE
New Era
FEBRUARY 2006

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and *Melissa Römer* in
Switzerland. See
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Happy” on p. 28.

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Janet Thomas (front)
and *Christina Smith*
(back)

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PREPARING for a Heavenly Marriage

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

Temple marriage describes the place you go to have an eternal marriage performed. Celestial marriage is being true to the sacred covenants you make in that temple marriage ceremony—living celestial principles in the marriage relationship.

A celestial marriage requires, after the vows are taken, a continuing consecrated life of worthiness leading to happiness and exaltation. If we live the laws properly, we will, with another individual and with our family, be able to have a little heaven on earth.

Something as wonderful as a celestial marriage doesn't just happen.

In Lewis Carroll's story *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice approaches the Cheshire Cat and asks,

"Would you please tell me which way I ought to go from here?"

The Cheshire Cat replies, "That depends a great deal on where you want to go."

Alice says, "I admit, I don't much care where."

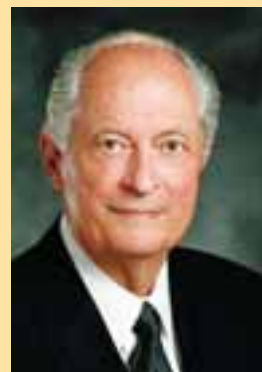
The Cheshire Cat then says, "Then it doesn't really matter much which way you go, does it?"

"Just so I get somewhere," responds Alice.

Then the Cheshire Cat reveals an interesting truth: "Oh, you're sure to get there if you keep walking long enough."

How many of us are going through life telling ourselves, "If we keep going long enough, we're going to get somewhere," but are not defining exactly where that place is we want to be? "Somewhere" is not good enough. We must know where we want to go and be firmly committed to getting there. And we should get that knowledge and commitment early.

Alma stated, "Remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy



Make sure that you know before you get married what that person really wants to be.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT CASEY, POSED BY MODELS



youth to keep the commandments of God” (Alma 37:35).
That says it all. Do it now.

Temple Recommends

Once we are committed to a celestial marriage, we should understand and do the things that lead to it.

To enter the temple, you will need what is called a recommend. A searching interview will be conducted first by your bishop or branch president and then by your stake or mission president. Here are some of the questions they will ask you:

“Do you have faith in and a testimony of God the Eternal Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost?”

“Do you have a testimony of the Atonement of Christ and of His role as Savior and Redeemer?”

“Do you have a testimony of the Restoration of the gospel in these, the latter days?”

“Do you sustain the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the prophet, seer, and revelator and as the only person on the earth who possesses and is authorized to exercise all priesthood keys? Do you sustain members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators? Do you sustain the other General Authorities and local authorities of the Church?”

“Do you live the law of chastity?”

“Is there anything in your conduct relating to members of your family that is not in harmony with the teachings of the Church?”

“Do you strive to keep the covenants you have made, to attend your sacrament and priesthood meetings, and to keep your life in harmony with the laws and commandments of the gospel?”

“Are you honest in your dealings with your fellowmen?”

“Are you a full-tithe payer?”

“Do you keep the Word of Wisdom?”

“Have there been any sins or misdeeds in your life that should have been resolved with priesthood authorities but have not been?”

Marriage
is like
climbing
a mountain. You
tie yourself to a
companion, and
you start up the
mountain of life.

“Do you consider yourself worthy to enter the Lord’s house and participate in temple ordinances?”

The importance of thinking of this recommend in connection with marriage is that, when you choose the companion you’re going to live with for time and all eternity, you should ask yourself, “Am I sure he or she is able to live within the confines of this recommend?”

After you obtain a recommend, you may then go to the temple and receive an endowment. Before a person can be married or sealed as husband or wife in the temple, he or she receives the ordinance of the endowment.

We have the privilege as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to plan for and prepare for a celestial marriage.

When you are choosing your companion, make sure that both of you have a desire for a celestial marriage relationship, a desire to have a family for eternity, a desire to have a companion for eternity and to live in the presence of our Heavenly Father.

Supporting Each Other

Marriage is like climbing a mountain. You tie yourself to a companion, and you start up the mountain of life. As a child comes along, you tie him to Mom and Dad and continue your journey. The ropes will hold all of the mountain climbers together. But there are many elements—the wind and the rain and the snow and the ice—all the elements of the world will tear at you to pull you off that eternal mountain. How do you reach the summit?

Someone has said it this way: “Thee lift me, and I’ll lift thee, and we’ll ascend together.” What does that mean?

I can remember an experience in my life that illustrates this idea. I was at Harvard Business School. I was stretched to my capacity. In a student’s first year at that institution, the teachers take away every bit of self-confidence you have, no matter what your background is before you get there, so that you learn what it’s like to have to achieve more than you’ve ever done in your life before.

At an important point in my schooling, a mission president asked me to be an elders quorum president.

It is the only time in my life that I ever questioned an assignment. For every one of you the question will come in life, “When is the time to serve?” The only answer I can give you is, “When you are asked.”

So I went home and said to my wife, “There is a chance of failing in my schooling if I become an elders quorum president.” She said to me the words which have helped for many years: “Bob, I would rather have an active priesthood holder than a man who holds a master’s degree from Harvard.” But as she put her arms around me, she said, “We’ll do them both.” That is eternal partnership.

In the Doctrine and Covenants (I would hope each one of you would write this verse down and put it in your pocket and have it with you at all times for those challenging moments), we read, “Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings” (D&C 108:7). In other words, every day you help one another as you speak, as you pray, in your exhortations, and in your doings.

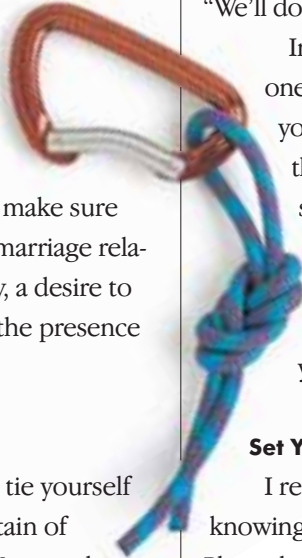
Set Your Eternal Course

I realize the importance of setting your course, of knowing where you are going. Please date extensively. Please know the kind of person you want to be with. Please make sure that you help those you come in contact with. Please point them in the direction of associating with many people.

Make sure that you know before you get married what that person really wants to be. You can do that by seeing if he or she goes to his or her meetings and has a testimony and can talk to you about eternal goals now.

I ask the Lord’s blessings to be with you. I know that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. I bear testimony to you that those moments in my life when I have been unhappy, depressed, or sad are when I have strayed, even in a minor degree, from the teachings of the Lord. That you might have true happiness and find the joy of a celestial marriage with a little heaven on earth is my prayer. **NE**

From a devotional address given on November 9, 1976, at Brigham Young University.



FINDING THE WORD OF GOD

BY TARA A. BRUNDICK

“We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.” —Articles of Faith 1:8

When I was six, I tried holding my own church services for my stuffed animals. I knew I needed a Bible, but the nearest thing to it that I had was an encyclopedia. It was all very frustrating.

The words *God*, *Heavenly Father*, and *Jesus Christ* were almost never mentioned in my home when I was growing up. My father didn't really believe in God, and my mother didn't attend the Christian church in which she had been baptized. When I was six, I wanted to go to church, but my parents decided not to allow me. To remedy my disappointment, I decided to hold my own church services on Sundays.

My knowledge of church and prayer was limited to what I knew from television and stories my friends had told me. The first thing I thought I needed was a Bible. I knew the Bible was a large book with a lot of important words and stories in it. We didn't have a Bible, so I used the thing we had that fit the description best—the *Encyclopaedia Britannica Junior*. My congregation consisted of my stuffed animals and dolls. However, my church eventually dissolved, as reading from an encyclopedia can be very frustrating for a six-year-old. Though my church was over, my prayers to God continued.

When I was 13, my mother decided to return to her church. I went with her every Sunday for several months and soon joined the church's youth group. I loved many things about this church, but I always felt like there was something missing. I continued to go until one day at a youth activity the other youth found out I was not a member of the church. The teenagers in the group began shunning me, and I eventually stopped going to church altogether.

Later, in high school, I took a comparative religions course. I learned a lot about many religions and realized there are a lot of good people with the best of intentions. But no religion ever seemed quite right.

I had convinced myself that no church was right and decided to live by my conscience, read the Bible (by this time I had bought my own), and do my best to live in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ. After all, no one in my family went to church, and they were all honest, good people.

In May of 2000, after seeing a movie about



The moment I saw a replica of the golden plates on display at the temple visitors' center, I felt drawn to them. In my mind I heard the words, "These are important. Learn about them."

the life of Jesus Christ, I was so deeply touched that I earnestly prayed to God. I knew if I was patient, while continuing to do my best to follow Christ, I would receive answers to my prayers. I faced many tests in the months that followed. Through these tests, I became better at receiving the Spirit's promptings.

Later that year I felt I should go to the visitors' center at the Washington D.C. Temple to see the Christmas lights. I had been to the visitors' center to see the lights before but had never inquired about the Church or its beliefs.

As I strolled through the visitors' center, looking at the many displays, I thought of my cousin and another friend who were planning to serve missions for this church. I had studied about many religions but never this one. I was a little curious.

In my head I asked, expecting no answer, "Why in the world would those two men, or anyone for that matter, give up two years to serve missions—and at their own expense?" Much to my surprise, I received a humbling response. The soft whispers of the Spirit pierced my heart as my eyes fell upon a replica of gold plates. I was drawn to them. As I looked at them, I felt a powerful feeling of love, safety, and comfort, and in my mind I heard the words, "These are important. Learn about them."

Immediately, I found a missionary and asked her about the plates. She told me about Joseph Smith translating the Book of Mormon. She also suggested I meet with the missionaries, but I declined.

The next day I went to the library to read all I could about the plates and the Church. I bought a copy of the Book of Mormon from a used-book store and began reading. I also read about the Church, but I wanted to learn more, so I decided to attend a church meeting.

I knew if I studied and prayed, God would confirm to me that this is the right church. So that's what I did. I watched and waited patiently. And sure enough, my prayers were answered. On March 25, 2001, I was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

This is the Church of Jesus Christ. There are many good churches with many good people, but The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the church of our Lord and Savior, and it is the church with which our Heavenly Father is well pleased (see D&C 1:30). Our Heavenly Father loves us, has a plan for us, and will guide us back to Him if we earnestly seek Him. **NE**

Cooling Your Anger

President Gordon B. Hinckley says, “If you have a temper, now is the time to learn to control it.

The more you do so while you are young, the more easily it will happen” (“Living Worthy of the Girl You Will Someday Marry,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 50). Here are some ideas you can use to better handle anger in your life.

✗ Read in the scriptures about the Savior’s patience, love, forgiveness, and self-control. Strive to follow His example.

✗ Be patient with others. “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Proverbs 16:32).

✗ Look for the good in others. Instead of pointing out their faults, compliment them on their good characteristics.

✗ Don’t blame your anger on others. Anger is a choice. Choose to stay away from contention. (See Lynn G. Robbins, “Agency and Anger,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 80.)

✗ Be a peacemaker. Remember the Savior said, “He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention. . . . Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that

such things should be done away” (3 Nephi 11:29–30).

✗ Cultivate the virtues listed in D&C 121:41–42 that righteous priesthood holders should have, such as long-suffering, gentleness, and kindness.

✗ Seek to understand others instead of becoming irritated with their behavior. Try putting yourself in their position and seeing things from their point of view. (See Gordon T. Watts, “Slow to Anger,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2003, 60.)

✗ Practice self-control. Counting to 10 or 100 or taking a walk can give you some time to think before you react in anger.

✗ If you are angry at someone, try praying for them or serving them with a pure heart (see 3 Nephi 12:44). It is hard to pray for someone and still remain angry at them.

✗ Have a good sense of humor, and try not to take yourself too seriously. You can laugh your anger away before it even appears.

✗ Say a silent prayer, asking Heavenly Father to help you react with love instead of anger or contention.

✗ Even if you are feeling angry, don’t raise your voice or retaliate in some other way. Remember, “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger” (Proverbs 15:1). **NE**



BY VAUGHN J. FEATHERSTONE

Living the Scout Oath will help you become the kind of man God can use in building His kingdom.

Several years ago at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, the participants were expressing gratitude to the ranch chairman, who happened to be me. They had asked my son, Scott, married with children, to say something. He came up on the stand, dressed in his Scout uniform, stood in front of me, raised his arm to the square in the Scout sign, and said:

“Dad, on my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; and to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight” (see *Boy Scout Handbook*, Boy Scouts of America [1998]). He said it with sincerity and as an oath, tears glistening, his voice filled with emotion. I knew he meant it with all his heart and soul.

The Scout Oath and Law

Before you take an oath, it’s important to know what it means. “**On my honor**” means that we will keep the oath—that our honor depends upon it. If we fail to keep the Scout

Oath, we are violating a solemn promise. It continues, “. . . **to do my duty to God.**” This means, from a Church point of view, that we attend Church, pay tithing, accept callings, honor the priesthood, keep God’s commandments, and keep the standards of dress and conduct. Then the oath states, “. . . **and my country.**” Wherever we live in the world we should do our duty to our country by obeying the laws, sustaining good leaders, honoring the flag, and being good citizens.

An important part of the oath states, “. . . **to obey the Scout Law.**” The Scout Law is a wonderful model for life.

Be Trustworthy and Loyal

A Scout is **trustworthy**. Imagine if every Scout practiced this first principle of the Scout Law with all his heart. There are millions of Boy Scouts and leaders around the world. What a dramatic impact we could have on those around us if we all were trustworthy.

Each principle of the Scout Law is a sermon and demands action if we would live and practice the oath we take: a Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

A Scout who takes the Scout Oath weekly should remember it is something he is

ON MY



The next time you raise your arm and recite the Scout Oath, think about the meaning of the words you are saying.





HONOR



In essence, when you take the Scout Oath at troop meetings, you are pledging to live a more Christlike life.

committing his soul to. Imagine what a blessing it is to be **loyal** to Scouting, family, Church, country, and friends!

Be Friendly and Obedient

We take an oath to be **friendly, kind, and courteous**. At a national jamboree a 12-year-old Scout got separated from his patrol. He was standing alone in a sea of Scouts and about to break into tears. An older Scout saw him and went over and introduced himself. “I have a gift for you,” the older boy said. “It is a hand-carved bolo tie. A great Scouter, Bill Burch, carved it. He numbers each one. He has carved over 40,000.”

The older Scout presented the tie to the young scared Scout. About that time the patrol found the boy. They gathered around him, and for a few moments he was the center of attention with his new bolo tie. The tears had disappeared; he felt important. The older Scout had truly been friendly.

Not one of the 12 points mentioned in the Scout Law is selfish; the prophets of God in the Book of Mormon and other scriptures have taught each point. I believe the Scout Oath is an inspired oath for all young men.

For example, to be **obedient** is a great and wonderful blessing. It is a privilege to be obedient. It is not a “have to do” because of the standards; it is a “get to do.” We really are free when we are obedient to God’s commandments and to the Scout Law.

Be Cheerful and Thrifty

It is a blessing, as well, to be **cheerful**. I recall Elder Loren C. Dunn (1930–2001) of the Seventy several years ago suggesting in a talk “that a certain man looked like he had been weaned on lemon juice through a dill pickle.” Cheerfulness is contagious and is a strong positive influence for good. People

enjoy being around others who are happy. In Proverbs we read, “A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance” (Proverbs 15:13). Also it states, “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine” (Proverbs 17:22).

If being cheerful is good for the soul, being **thrifty** is good for our financial well-being. Wastefulness and indulgence are not of God. They are negative influences and have serious consequences on us by and by. When we are thrifty we are self-reliant, able to be free to assist those in need. Scouting instructs us to be wise with our resources.

Be Brave, Clean, and Reverent

Profound knowledge and direction come from the Scout Law. A Scout is brave, clean, and reverent. **Bravery** is usually not sensational, although it may be. Bravery is manifest in many small acts, such as defending a young man against those who would mock or physically abuse him. It is standing up for an ideal and letting your voice be heard.

Bravery is a trait every young man can develop. It is based on love for others more than safety for self. One Venturer Scout who is blind signed up to go on a hike in southern California with his Scout troop. They hiked to Lord Baden Powell Peak over a steep trail. The young man held on to the shirt of a fellow Boy Scout every step of the way. It was a long hike and took two full days. This boy did not complain, did not seek pity, just kept grinding on and on until they came to the trail’s end. Equally as brave was the Scout who volunteered to lead his friend over a steep and challenging trail. He felt honored to help.

The traits of cleanliness and reverence complement each other. To be **clean** refers to body cleanliness, clean clothing, being



We do love those we serve. Imagine millions of men and boys helping other people at all times.

Be True to the Scout Oath

If we are true to the oath, we will also keep ourselves **“physically strong.”** We will eat wholesome foods, stay in good physical condition, and not abuse this wonderful body we have. Physical health brings happiness. It increases our capabilities in so many ways.

The Scout Oath includes being **“mentally awake.”** We must have good health to be mentally awake. Our eyes reflect whether we are awake or not. To be mentally awake we must see what is going on around us. We must be alert and aware.

The oath concludes with being **“morally straight,”** which means we do not deviate or compromise standards of chastity, virtue, or wholesomeness. We stand on higher ground and remain morally clean. A Scout who makes an oath that he will be morally straight is duty bound to live that way. The Scout Oath prepares us for the priesthood oath and covenant. Virtue is an essential part of our priesthood oath.

Think with me about President Gordon B. Hinckley, President Thomas S. Monson, and President James E. Faust taking the Scout Oath. Can you think of anything in the oath that they are not living daily? Do the other great men you know—your fathers, bishops, stake presidents, seminary teachers, and Scout leaders—live in harmony with the Scout Oath? They do.

Fellow Scouts, remember the sacredness of an oath. It is violated only to the detriment of your character. By living the Scout Oath and preparing for the oath and covenant of the Melchizedek Priesthood, you are truly preparing yourself to serve God, your fellow man, your family, and your community. Taking the Scout Oath is a sacred trust endorsed by the First Presidency. Living the Scout Oath will help you become the kind of man God can use in building His kingdom on earth. **NE**

Vaughn J. Featherstone served as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy from 1976 to 2001. He has received the Silver Beaver Award, Silver Antelope Award, Silver Buffalo Award, and is a Distinguished Eagle Scout.

well groomed and wearing appropriate attire.

To be **reverent** demands that we acknowledge God, that by our actions we express our devotion to Him. Reverence for the Lord has a profound impact on our conduct, our language, our personal prayers, and our standards. It is interesting that reverence is the 12th point in the Scout Law. It sums up all the others. Violating any of the other 11 points would be irreverent.

Help Others

We declare in the Scout Oath that we will **“help other people at all times.”** A 12-year-old Scout went to troop meeting at Mutual one Tuesday evening. When Mutual was over, he did not show up at home for about an hour and a half. His parents were concerned and were about to go look for him when he came through the door. “Where have you been?” the anxious father asked.

“One of the members of the bishopric was putting up the chairs all alone,” he replied. “You remember my patriarchal blessing states, ‘You were born to serve your fellow men.’ I stayed and helped him put away all the chairs. I sure love him.”

Q & A

*“My friend doesn’t feel that she fits in.
What can I do to make her feel welcome at church?”*

NEW ERA

You can better help your friend if you know why she feels that she doesn’t fit in. If she’s uncomfortable in a new environment, it may just take some time and some friendship before she feels comfortable. Just make sure you and others at church help her feel welcome.

However, if your friend feels that she doesn’t fit in because she feels unworthy or because someone at church has offended her, knowing that will help you know how to help her. Anyone, worthy or not, can attend church. All Church members are imperfect people, but we attend church so we can learn to be better people. If your friend feels unworthy, encourage her to speak with the bishop or branch president.

Unfortunately, some members offend others. If someone has hurt your friend’s feelings, you can teach her about the peace that comes from forgiving those who offend us. You can also pray that her heart will be softened.

■ **The Lord is pleased when we attend church, so it’s important that your friend feel welcome there.**

■ **Introduce your friend to ward or branch members, and invite her to Church activities.**

■ **Do the small things that will help her feel welcome, like saying hi when you see her and sitting with her in classes and meetings.**

■ **Tell your friend she will enjoy church if she makes an effort to feel the Spirit there.**

■ **If your friend has been offended, help her understand the need to forgive.**

No matter her situation, let the Golden Rule guide you: treat your friend as you would like to be treated (see Matthew 7:12). If you felt that you didn’t fit in at church, what would help you feel welcome? Would you like someone to sit by you? Show you around? Say hi? Those simple things may be all your friend needs.

Tell people in your ward or branch that your friend needs a special welcome. Introduce her to the bishop or branch president, Young Women leaders, her Sunday School teacher, your friends, and others she might share an interest with. They can help you show her around at church, explain the meetings, and let her know about upcoming activities. As you and others include her, she will begin to feel welcome.

These efforts are important because they will let your friend know she is in the right place. It’s the Lord’s Church, and He invites everyone to worship and learn of Him at church (see D&C 59:9–10).

Members of the Church are taught to have



“their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another” (Mosiah 18:21). When you and others help your friend feel welcome, you are helping her feel the Lord’s love. Remind her that nothing can separate her from His love (see Romans 8:35, 38–39), not even a feeling that she doesn’t fit in. Your efforts to welcome her and her efforts to worship the Lord at church will help her feel the Spirit and the Lord’s love, and that will help her know she belongs. **NE**

READERS



I would not only pray for her but also fellowship her by inviting her to activities such as sports and devotionals. I believe

that if you will do these things, she will feel that she fits in at church.

Kesaia M., 19, Tongatapu, Tonga

You and your friends need to invite this girl to spend time with you. I have

moved many times, and I almost never feel like I fit in. But when a group of people tries to be my friends, I feel like I fit in at church, school, Mutual, and almost everywhere else. Just invite her to spend time with you and your friends, and she will grow spiritually and get involved in the Church.

Nelsen W., 15, Utah

It’s natural for your friend to feel this way because she may be unfamiliar with Latter-day Saint services. As a friend who

has a testimony of the Church, you have to act fast and help her overcome her barriers. Try these ideas: (1) Arrange with members to always shake hands with your friend and sit with her during meetings. (2) Help her develop friends in the Church. (3) Ask teachers of the classes she will attend to help her feel welcome. (4) Pray for her to feel the Spirit.

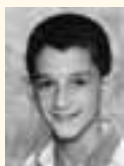
Elder Christian Oye, 23, Nigeria Port Harcourt Mission



Pray for her. Ask the Lord for advice as to how to act with her. I advise you to be with her the whole time she's at church. Maybe on Saturday you could get together

with some of the youth so that she can get to know them outside formal surroundings.

Beatrice T., 18, Quartu, Italy



One important thing is to invite her to come more often to Church activities. It's also important to ask your friends to accept her and to pray to Heavenly Father to

help her feel welcome at church.

Justin D., 13, Salon De Provence, France

Church activities are designed to help all members and investigators feel at home and bond together.

At activities she can gain more friends and she will feel a sense of belonging. Treat her as a special friend and introduce her to your friends, and your circle of friends will grow.

Gretchen M., 18, Leyte, Philippines



Pray for your friend so the Spirit touches her with your testimony, your example, and your love. Speak to her about the joy the gospel brings to your life. Your



“We members must help with the conversion process by making our wards and branches friendly places, with no exclusivity, where all people feel welcome and comfortable. . . . Teach the children, youth, and adults that being warm and friendly are Christlike qualities.”

—Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Hand of Fellowship,” Ensign, Nov. 1988, 29.

friend will have the desire to know the Church and to feel accepted there.

Vanessa T., 19, Tahaa, French Polynesia

I would talk to her and ask her why she doesn't feel accepted. I would ask my Heavenly Father in prayer to guide me with His Spirit so I could know how to help her. He loves us. When we give ourselves completely to Him, we will feel this marvelous love in our hearts that can help anyone to overcome the fear of not being accepted.

Meyling V., 19, Ciudad Dario, Nicaragua

I would make a special effort to reach out to her. Having a friend would help her feel accepted within the Church. I would encourage her to pray to Heavenly Father so He could help both of us. I would share my testimony.

Erika H., 19, Ahuachapan, El Salvador

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

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send your answer, along with your name, birth date, ward and stake, and a photograph (including your parent's written permission to print the photo if you are under 18) to:

New Era, Q&A

50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by March 15, 2006.

QUESTION

“My friend seems really depressed, and I'm afraid she might even be thinking about killing herself. What should I do?”

LIVING WATER



KEEP YOURSELF IMMERSSED IN THE LIVING WATER
OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. (See John 4:7-14.)

Ricardo

WALKED

Week after week Ricardo walked to church by himself. Then his example changed everything.

BY PAUL VANDENBERGHE
Church Magazines

It's Sunday, time for sacrament meeting, but nobody at your house wants to go except you. What do you do? If you're Ricardo Navas Ruiz of Los Jardines Ward, Trujillo Peru Primavera Stake, you put on your shirt and tie and walk to church on your own. In fact, you get there a little bit early so you can help the bishop get ready for the meetings.

"I'm very happy to be a deacon here in Trujillo," says Ricardo. "To hold the priesthood really means a lot to me."

Ricardo, who is now one of only three deacons in his ward, faithfully walked to church every week by himself for three years. Most of his family were members of the Church when Ricardo was two years old, but by the time he was around seven, they were no longer interested in attending. That didn't change Ricardo's desire to go to church.

"I wanted to prepare to be baptized. I wanted to feel the Spirit and leave everything else behind," he says. "My greatest desire is to be a missionary, which is one of the



Ricardo Navas Ruiz and his grandmother, Mavila, are the closest of friends. And because of Ricardo's example, they now walk together to church every Sunday.

reasons I keep coming to church."

In many ways, Ricardo has already begun his missionary service. "He was an example to me because he always went to church," says Ricardo's grandmother, Mavila Ruiz Cárdenas. For several years she had listened to the missionaries who came to visit with the family. And all the while Ricardo was there: sitting in and listening to the discussions, faithfully attending church each Sunday, even teaching his grandmother the hymns.

When he was eight years old and attending church by himself, he had not felt prepared for baptism. But, says Ricardo, "when my grandmother said she was ready to be baptized, then I was sure I was ready also."

So when Ricardo was 10, he and his grandmother were baptized on the same day.

"She's like my mom," says Ricardo of his grandmother. "She has been raising me since I was young." Ricardo lives with his grandmother and grandfather and four of his uncles. "My grandfather suffers from Parkinson's disease, so I do things like help him get in his chair," Ricardo says. Ricardo is constantly trying to teach his family by example. "I try to be an example when I go to church because when I'm on the right

ALONE

path, my family is watching me, and I want them to come to church too.”

Even though Ricardo and his grandmother are the only active members of the Church in their house, he says, “We all have family home evening together.”

Standing up front and teaching the lesson each Monday is young Ricardo. “I use the Book of Mormon and the Bible for family home evening lessons,” he says. “I read the story and then testify. Sometimes I use the lesson manual for deacons.”

Ricardo also testifies to his friends and neighbors. “In my neighborhood I tell my friends stories about Christ, about prophets, about Nephi,” he says. “I tell them stories I’ve heard in church about faith and about how prayer helps us in our lives. Some friends stay and listen, but others leave. That’s a way I can be an example.”

No longer does Ricardo walk to church alone. Now every Sunday he puts on his shirt and tie, takes his grandmother by the hand, and they walk together. Who knows? In time, Ricardo will probably be leading others to church with him. **NE**



TWICE



I will be forever grateful to my father and his quick actions that saved my life—twice.

BY ELDER W. ROLFE KERR
Of the Seventy

When I was a young boy, my father saved my life.

Although I do not remember the incident, it is a story that has been told many times in my family.

I was two years old at the time, and my brother was four. We were with our father as he was feeding the cattle on our family farm. He didn't notice that my brother and I had wandered off until my brother,

scared and out of breath, came running to him. My brother could hardly speak. He struggled to even say, "Rolfe's in . . . !" "Rolfe's in . . . !" Fortunately my father realized that my brother was trying to tell him that I had fallen in the irrigation ditch.

My father ran toward the ditch where I had slipped off the ditch bank into the running water. He ran along the ditch. When he saw my red sweater rolling in that deathly water, he jumped into the ditch and pulled me out. After administering first aid, my father was assured that I was breathing again.

I will be forever indebted to my



Me, at age 5 (left)

RESCUED

brother for having the presence of mind to alert my father. And I will be forever grateful to my father and his quick actions that saved my life.

Saved from Spiritual Danger

Later in my life, my father saved me again.

This time I was not facing physical danger, but my spiritual life faced a challenge.

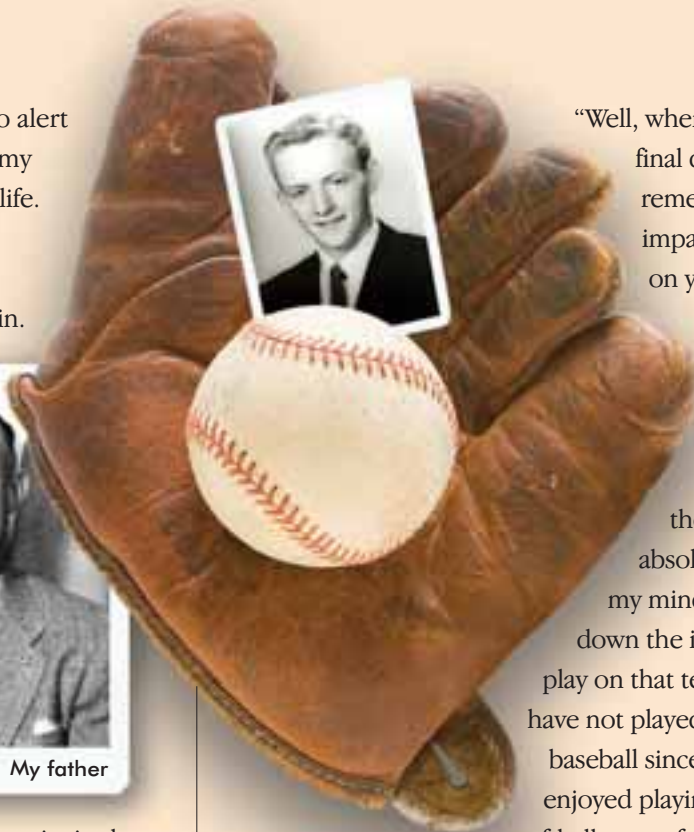
In high school I played sports, mostly football and baseball. During my last year, I was selected to play in an all-star baseball game at the end of the season. After that game, when the school year was ending, I was invited to play on a local baseball team. It wasn't a professional or even semiprofessional team, but I was flattered to be invited to play. The only problem was that most of the games were played on Sunday afternoons.

I did a pretty good job rationalizing. I thought I could play because my Church meetings were in the morning. I could attend my meetings and teach my Sunday School class before going to the games each Sunday afternoon.

With this in mind I spoke to my father. I told him about the baseball invitation and what I was thinking of doing. Although he was the stake president at the time, he wisely restrained himself and did not tell me to give up my baseball wishes, as he could have. Instead, he simply said,



My father



“Well, when you make the final decision, just remember the impact it will have on your Sunday School class.” Nothing more needed to be said. At that point the answer was absolutely clear in my mind. I turned down the invitation to play on that team, and I have not played a game of baseball since. Instead, I enjoyed playing on Church softball teams for many years, never having to play on Sunday.

I appreciated the way my father helped me make that difficult decision. He did it in such a way that allowed me to see the importance of such a choice and understand that the decisions I make can have a great impact on people other than myself. This decision also set the stage for a choice I had to make later about serving a mission.

Saying Good-Bye to Football

I had always planned on serving a mission when I turned 20, the age of missionaries at the time. After playing two seasons of football at Utah State University, I had a difficult decision to make. I knew that, at that

I told my coach that I could not wait another year to go on my mission. After all my hard work in football, I said good-bye to the team and left to serve the Lord.

time, very few returned missionaries played football after their missions. I had put a lot of effort into football, and I loved the game. I decided to delay my mission a few months so I could play one more season and then serve a mission. By the end of that season, I had won the starting quarterback position for the next year.

My coach was surprised and disappointed that after all my hard work in football, I was going to leave. He encouraged me to stay and play my final season. He couldn't understand why I would walk away from this opportunity. I listened to his comments and his logic, but I told him that I could not wait another year to go on my mission. If I did, I feared I would miss my opportunity to serve

a mission. After all my hard work in football, I said good-bye to the team and left for Great Britain to serve the Lord.

I never regretted that decision. I learned so many things on my mission. To witness people embracing the gospel was an incredible experience, which shaped the rest of my life in many important ways. My mission helped make me into the person I am today and had far greater impact on me than football ever could have.

As it turns out, when I returned from my mission, I got the chance to play football again. Although it was unexpected, I played my final year and achieved more than I believe I could have done before my mission. I was given incredible opportuni-

ties that probably would not have come about had I chosen to further delay or even forego my mission.

The decision I made after high school to keep the Sabbath day holy, rather than play baseball, set the standard for my leaving football to serve a mission. Saying good-bye to baseball and football was difficult, but I am grateful that I chose as I did. Those decisions established my priorities in life early on and led to my marriage in the temple and to my happiness in this life.

I am grateful to my father for saving my life two times. First, from the muddy waters of an irrigation ditch and, second, from the tempting

pools of worldly pursuits. **NE**

Playing football at Utah State University



My coach



LUNCH TABLE LESSON

By the end of lunch, my entire table had been fed on the standards of the Church.

BY CHRISTINA LYON KLINE

“What’s this for?” Jolene asked.

“Oh, that’s just something from church,” I answered as unenthusiastically as I could. The last thing I wanted was to have a huge church discussion.

We had been having one of those examine-each-other’s-wallets sessions at my lunch table. Jolene had been looking at the contents of my wallet when she found my *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet. I didn’t want to attract attention, so I did my best to make it sound as boring as possible.

Undaunted, she began to read the pamphlet to herself. The rest of the table grew curious and asked her to read it aloud. She began with the preface from the First Presidency and continued to read about standards, dating, and language. Then she paused and asked if this was why I acted differently than others at school. I looked at my friends who were all waiting for an explanation. I was worried that mocking and jokes about the Church would come next.

I replied, “Yeah, these are some guidelines the leaders of our church gave us to help us do what is right.”

Jolene finished reading the booklet to everyone. By the end of lunch, my entire table had received a lesson on the standards of the Church. Many of them asked if they could have a copy of their own.

I had thought that only a perfect member of the Church could be a missionary, and here I had been one by accident. Now, I always make sure wherever I go I have a *For the Strength of Youth* with me, plus two more to give away whenever I get the chance. **NE**



*All we could see
was swirling white
snow. How could
we find our way
down the mountain
in a blizzard?*

BY BREMEN LEAK

The view from the top of the mountain should have been breathtaking. But in a whiteout at 12,000 feet (3,600 m) above sea level, the only thing we saw was the faint silhouette of our disoriented guide catching his breath a few feet away. The blizzard winds had obscured our path down the mountain-side, while all around us sheer cliffs dropped down to unknown depths. The stinging snow whipped our frozen faces, and the roaring storm muted the question escaping from my friend's chapped lips: "Which way down?"

Lured by an advertisement placed in the student center at Brigham Young University, my friends and I had signed up for the Mt. Nebo expedition months earlier. The photograph, which featured climbers with crampons and ice picks, promised awe-inspiring scenery and unparalleled adventure. But upon reaching the summit of one of Utah's tallest mountains, our picturesque fantasy gave way to a terrifying reality. A blind step in the wrong direction could be fatal.

Although the weather forecast had been favorable, the weather was getting worse. Beginning our descent a few yards at a time, neither we nor our guide knew the direction we should take. We trudged through waist-deep snow, searching frantically for some sign of familiarity. The thick whiteness had erased





Our hopes of getting off that peak safely were disappearing. It was time to ask the Lord for help.

our landmarks, and our tracks made hiking up the slope had vanished. Our hopes of getting off that peak safely were disappearing. It was time to ask the Lord for help.

No vocal prayer could have been heard by mortal ears above the menacing winds that day. With strength expiring and morale turning cold, I offered my silent plea to God: “Please help us down this mountain. Please help us see the way.”

As I opened my eyes on that snowy slope, an unusual calmness filled the frosty air. The sky swirled above us. The clouds had lifted! I gazed heavenward in gratitude to an omnipotent Creator who knows and hears His children.

For 30 seconds, the storm clouds parted. A patch of blue appeared through the thinning mists, and the sun illuminated a fantastic landscape below and the path that would lead us home. Too exhausted to speak, we stood in stunned silence when we saw our location. The slope we had mistakenly descended led to an abrupt dropoff on three sides. We had barely corrected our course when the sky clouded over again.

“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10), the Master speaks to all who seek refuge and strength in times of trouble. “Though the earth may be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, . . . the Lord of hosts is with us” (Psalm 46:2–3, 11).

Through the marvelous power of prayer, Jesus Christ calms the storms in our lives. He opens our eyes when we are blind. He shows us the way when we are lost. He hears our prayers when we have no voice. I am grateful to the Lord for answering my prayer that day and always, for bringing me home through all life’s storms. **NE**



"We just had to wear matching ties today, didn't we."



JEREMY VANDEVEER

"Before I tell you what I did, Dad, I'd like to read you a few scriptures about forgiveness."



RYAN STOKER

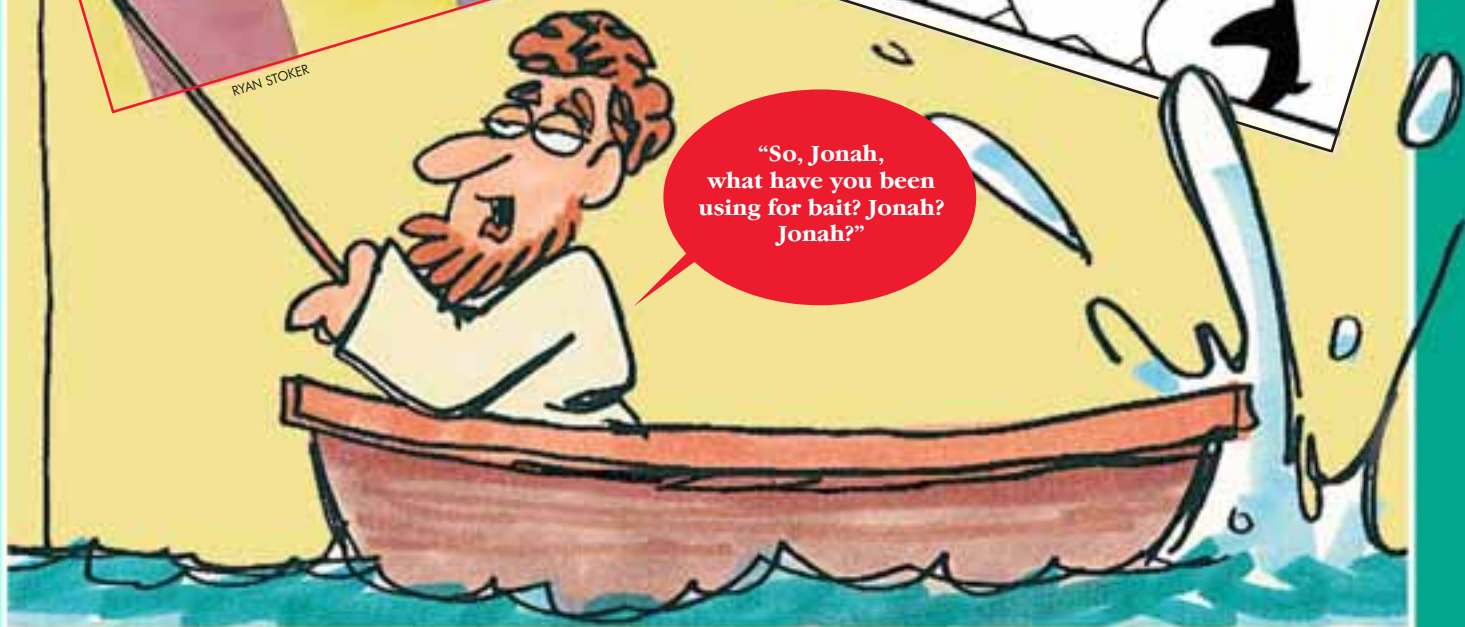
CONTROVERSY AT SOUTH POLE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL...

"Did you hear? They might make us wear uniforms to school next year!"



RANDY GLASBERGEN

"So, Jonah, what have you been using for bait? Jonah? Jonah?"



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



▼ **Josua Brunner:**
"I remember learning the scripture mastery scriptures. I still remember the first one I learned in my first year."



▲ **Naëmi Mauch:**
"Seminary gives you a reason to study in the scriptures. You may not do it that often on your own."



▲ **Elizabeth Nairz:**
"I went to seminary before I was baptized. If I'm not in seminary, I feel like something is missing."



▲ **Luca Merl:** *"You can talk about the scriptures with other youth, which you really can't do in other classes."*

▲ **Miriam Schenk:**
"If you do the most important things first and then you fill in with little things, everything fits."



SEMINARY

Seminary students in Austria and Switzerland find great satisfaction in studying the gospel together.

BY JANET THOMAS
 Church Magazines

Johannes Malzl was late for school again. The train had been too crowded and slow coming back from seminary, and he had raced to school. But he was still late. Every time he had been late, his teacher would ask what had happened. "At first I tried not to say that I was in seminary. I just said I overslept. Then one day, she asked, 'Please tell me where you have been.' I was in front of the whole class. Since we were working on our English, she said I had to tell her in English. All my classmates know that I'm a member of the Church, but they didn't know about seminary. I explained that I had to get up at 5:00 in the morning

and take the train to our Church house, then catch the train to school. They said, 'Whoa, are you crazy?'"

Johannes explains, "For me, being in seminary gives me power. When I go to school and all my friends talk about all kinds of stuff, it's good to have some spiritual strength in the mornings."

Seminary in Austria

Johannes is a member of the Salzburg-Flachgau Ward, Salzburg Austria Stake. Most of the teens in his stake go to seminary four mornings a week. Some brave the cold and dark to catch trains to the meeting-house. Others go to their own living rooms where their parents are their seminary teachers.



“My mother is my seminary teacher,” says Julia Grosz of the Linz Ward. “I always get breakfast at the same time as the lesson. We have seminary every morning. It helps me start the day in a better spirit. We’re more cheerful and happy.”

Julia and her sister, Carina, study together. They like being taught by their mother each morning at the breakfast table.

Ben Schenk of the Salzburg-Flachgau Ward really notices a difference when he goes to seminary. “When I go to seminary, I have better days. It really helps

me a lot, even in school. I just don’t seem to have as many problems. The basic things you learn in seminary help in everyday life. I tell the first-year

students it is worth going to seminary even though it’s dark and so cold it burns your face and you can hear the ice cracking under your feet. Seminary really helps.”

On the Saturday before school began, the Salzburg stake youth have gathered for the start of a new seminary year. It’s more like a big party than a Church meeting, even though a lesson will be taught. The fun atmosphere



MAKES ME HAPPY



PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE AUTHOR

comes because a lot of good friends who don't see each other often have gathered for the afternoon and will stay for dinner and a dance.

Marie Krenn of the Klagenfurt Ward remembers starting seminary four years ago. "They asked everyone to stand up who was there for the first time. I thought, 'Gee, I don't really know anybody.' But then I got to know everyone." She lists the other occasions when the stake youth get together, like youth temple excursions, youth conferences, Young Women camp, and Seminary Saturdays.

Just starting his first year, David Fuchs of the Wels Ward knows only what he has been told, but he's excited to start seminary. "I expect to learn the scriptures and prepare for a mission."

Stephanie Kafka of the Linz-Urfahr Ward is also excited for her first year. "I look forward to not having to study the scriptures by myself. I'll have other young people to talk to."

Seminary in Switzerland

In the neighboring country of Switzerland, seminary students in the Bern Switzerland Stake are also meeting to start a new seminary year. They have come from all over to the meetinghouse in Basel. Just as in Salzburg, there is a festive feeling to this get-together. The cultural hall is decorated for the dance, and dinner is being heated in the kitchen.

Most of the seminary students do a combination of home study and class work. Estelle Hansen of the Aarau Ward explains how seminary works for her. She lives in a small village, but fortunately a lot of members live nearby. About eight youth meet three times a week at their teacher's house. They also study at home one day, and on Wednesdays they have seminary in the evenings. "I especially like seminary videos. Things are so clear and easy to understand," Estelle says. "My brother Jen is starting seminary. He knows that it's important, and we are blessed for going. I have told my friends about seminary, but they don't understand. They don't like to read the Bible because it isn't important to them. They can't understand why I do."

Several students in the stake have the advantage of going to seminary every morning. Rebekka Wiesner of the Pratteln Ward and her sister, Noëmi, have their class come

to their home. Rebekka says, "When seminary is in the morning, you can think about the lesson during the day. Our teacher gives excellent examples, and she's funny and makes jokes. It is never boring. We laugh and we learn."

Back at the Basel Ward meetinghouse, two sisters, Annika and Sabrina Warncke, and their brother, Jan, wait patiently in a little park across the street for Seminary Saturday to start. They have just moved into the Basel Ward, but they already know and love seminary. All three study with their dad at home. They are sometimes a little amazed at how much their father knows about the scriptures. But best of all, they love the feeling that studying together gives them. Jan says, "In school, it's hard to feel the Spirit, but in seminary, it's like a warm touch in



your heart." Annika adds, "It's a feeling you can't describe. If you just read the scriptures, you can't feel it as often. But if you study, yes, you feel it."

Melissa Römer of the Biel Ward also talks about the feeling she sometimes gets in seminary. "You feel the Holy Ghost so strong, and you know you are doing what you should be doing."

One word that comes up over and over when talking about the feelings that seminary gives these youth in Austria and Switzerland is *happiness*. Yes, it is hard to get up so early. Yes, it is often cold and dark. But is it worth it? Oh, yes. Learning about the Lord and





▲ **Erich Stüssi:** *“The best part of seminary was scripture chasing.”* **Bodo Rückauer:** *“It’s much better to learn together.”*

Savior Jesus Christ and what is written in the scriptures makes them happy. And they will choose that kind of happiness. **NE**



▲ **Sara Schnyder:** *“My little sister is starting this year, and we study together. She likes it very much.”*

▼ **Thomas Fuchs:** *“I always learn something I can use in my life. It’s fun. We have a good teacher.”*



▲ **Alain von Allmen:** *“I like class because my friends are there. I like to study it out myself. I like it both ways.”*



◀ **Chantal Psota:** *“Taking seminary cheers you up. I feel better after I’ve read the scriptures.”*

Below: Seminary students in Switzerland outside the Basel meetinghouse. Previous spread: Austrian seminary students gather at the Salzburg-Flachgau Ward.





1. JOSEPH SMITH



2. BRIGHAM YOUNG



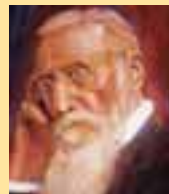
3. JOHN TAYLOR



4. WILFORD WOODRUFF



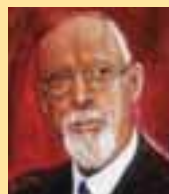
5. LORENZO SNOW



6. JOSEPH F. SMITH



7. HEBER J. GRANT



8. GEORGE ALBERT SMITH



9. DAVID O. MCKAY



10. JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH



11. HAROLD B. LEE



12. SPENCER W. KIMBALL



13. EZRA TAFT BENSON



14. HOWARD W. HUNTER



15. GORDON B. HINCKLEY

Test Your LDS I.Q.

Match the latter-day prophets above with the statement about them below, and see how many you can get right.

A. He spoke on the first radio broadcast of general conference in 1924.

B. He was a Methodist preacher in Canada before he joined the Church.

C. He was known as “T” in his youth.

D. He played football for the University of Utah, where he was the class valedictorian, before

-serving a mission in Scotland.

E. He was prophet for 30 years—the longest presidency in Church history.

F. As a missionary, he gave a copy of the Book of Mormon to Queen Victoria.

G. He shares his middle name, Bitner, with Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

H. He earned his teaching certificate at age 17 and was known throughout his

life as a master teacher.

I. He loved to read the scriptures and had read the Book of Mormon twice by the time he was 10.

J. In 1844, he was a candidate for President of the United States of America.

K. He asked Church members to “lengthen your stride” and become better people.

L. As a youth, he loved to sing and play his guitar.

M. At the age of 15, this prophet was called on a

four-year mission to the Sandwich Islands.

N. This prophet had many accidents and injuries. He was bitten by a rabid dog, pushed into a cauldron of boiling water, and nearly crushed by a waterwheel!

O. He gave up his music career to have a settled family life when he married Clara May Jeffs in 1931.

Answers: A7, B3, C13, D9, E2, F5, G15, H11, I10, J1, K12, L8, M6, N4, O14

“IF OUR THOUGHTS MAKE US WHAT WE ARE, AND WE ARE TO BE LIKE CHRIST, THEN WE MUST THINK CHRISTLIKE THOUGHTS.”

—President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), “Think on Christ,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1989, 4.

A LIGHT IN GALLATIN

Later-day Saint youth in Missouri, many of whom are Church pioneer descendants, are joining efforts with other Missourian descendants to create a new history for the Church in Gallatin. In an area where misunderstandings once led to the expulsion of the early Saints from Adamondi-Ahman, Gallatin, and Far West, youth today are coming together to build trust and friendships. These young men and women have become a light in their community.

Last March, LDS youth participated in an open house for the first Church-built meetinghouse in Gallatin, Daviess County. They worked with displays, moved furniture, invited their teachers and friends to attend, and tended the guest

book. Besides helping those who toured the new meetinghouse, many youth also sang in the building's dedication choir.

The Gallatin youth are active in community projects. For example, Gallatin City Hall now displays a new hand-carved city sign built and installed under the direction of Eagle Scout Sheldon Turley of the Gallatin Branch, Liberty Missouri Stake. Painting homes, cleaning out gutters, delivering holiday meals with members of other faiths, distributing handmade teddy bears to the Gallatin police and fire departments, and clearing and cutting down trees to help with beautification projects are just a few ways these youth are offering the light of the gospel to everyone in Gallatin.



ABOVE PHOTO OF SHELDON TURLEY, JAMES CHRISTENSEN, AND JON YOUNG COURTESY OF THE TURLEY FAMILY

IT HAPPENED IN FEBRUARY



ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT T. BARRETT

February 2, 1833: Joseph Smith completed translating the New Testament (left).

February 14, 1853:

President Brigham Young broke ground for



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

the Salt Lake Temple (right).

February 8, 1990:

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles dedicated Romania for the preaching of the gospel.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

February 3, 1992: The Russia St. Petersburg Mission (left) was organized.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT

Every time you sing this hymn you repeat the phrase “choose the right” 14 times (see *Hymns*, no. 239). The hymn was first published in 1909. The composer, Henry A. Tuckett, was a candy maker who wrote music as a hobby. The tune is named after his wife, Agnes.

Be careful when you sing it—sometimes congregations pronounce the line “Let no spirit of *digression*” (correct) as “Let no spirit of *discretion*” (incorrect). That changes the line’s meaning from “don’t get off course” to exactly the opposite.



ILLUSTRATED BY BRAD TEARE

BY SHANNA BUTLER
Church Magazines

Youth were able to feel a little like ancient Nephite historians as they helped create replicas of the golden plates to go on display at the Museum of Church History and Art.

A GOLDEN



Inside a stone box buried in the Hill Cumorah, golden plates and other artifacts lay hidden for nearly 1,500 years. In 1823, the ancient prophet Moroni showed Joseph Smith these buried plates for the first time. Four years later, in 1827, Moroni allowed Joseph to take the plates and begin translating them through the gift and power of God (see Joseph Smith—History 1:27–59).

In an effort to create replicas of the golden plates for the Museum of Church History and Art, historians have studied and compiled all the accounts from those who saw or felt the plates and then used that knowledge—and some educated guesses—to create three sets of golden plates for display. Each set varies a little in color, weight, and dimensions. The plates were created as part of the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Joseph Smith’s birth.

Few people ever saw the golden plates before Joseph Smith returned them to the angel Moroni, and even fewer gave accounts of what the plates looked like. The Prophet described the plates as having “the appearance of gold. Each plate was six inches [15 cm] wide and eight inches [20 cm] long, and not quite so thick as common tin. They were filled with engravings, in Egyptian characters, and bound together in a volume as the leaves of a book, with three rings running through the whole. The volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was

OPPORTUNITY

sealed. The characters on the unsealed part were small, and beautifully engraved. The whole book exhibited many marks of antiquity in its construction and much skill in the art of engraving” (“The



Wentworth Letter,” *Ensign*, July 2002, 28).

Other descriptions of the gold plates vary slightly from the Prophet’s or give additional details. For example, Mary Whitmer, David Whitmer’s mother, was shown the plates because of her faithfulness (see *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 57–58). She is reported to have said that the rings fastening the golden plates were in the shape of a capital D. Various other reports put the width and length somewhere between six by eight inches and seven by nine inches.

With all these descriptions, historians have little more than a general idea of what the plates look like. But they’ve done the best they can with the information they have.

Replicating the Golden Plates

The process to create the replicas of the plates was long and a little complicated. First, thin copper plates were created and coated in black acid-resistant paint. More than 150 volunteers, many of them youth,

then used sharp metal tools to scratch characters into the black surface, exposing the copper beneath. The museum provided examples of what the characters

might have looked like.

“This isn’t as much work as the ancient prophets did,” said April Rowbury, 15, of the Provo Eighth Ward, Provo Utah East Stake. “It was hard, but it wasn’t as hard as it was for them, because they had to engrave on the actual metal.”

Some historians think that a harder metal was coated in a softer metal to make the real golden plates. The ancient prophets would have then inscribed in the soft metal, and the hard metal would have stopped their writing from indenting the other side of the plate, allowing both sides to be engraved.

“This is all very speculative,” says Kirk Henrichsen, a senior exhibit designer for the Church museum. “We’ve made them as accurately as we could with the information that we have, but I’m sure if Mormon came to look at them he would just laugh!”

After the volunteers engraved the characters in the black paint, the next step was to soak the plates in a copper etching solution.



Samuel Monsivais (opposite page) is one of the many youth who helped engrave replicas of the golden plates. The process (above) to create the plates was time consuming, since it was all done by hand.

April Rowbury (below) helped her dad, Roger (opposite page), as he worked with others to turn the engraved plates into a finished product.



“I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”

—Joseph Smith, *Book of Mormon Introduction*



The solution ate away at the exposed copper, leaving the surfaces beneath the black paint intact. The solution was then rinsed off, and kerosene was used to clean off the remaining black acid-resistant paint. Soapy water cleaned off the kerosene, and then the clean copper plates were electroplated.

Electroplating coats the plates in a thin layer of a golden colored alloy of gold and silver, called electrum. Electrum is not as heavy or as precious as gold. Black ink will then be rubbed into the etched characters to make them more visible.

Some historians believe the real golden plates were also made from an alloy that included gold. A block of solid gold the size of the golden plates would weigh about 200 pounds (90 kg), but the weight of the gold plates, as estimated by the few people who lifted them, was somewhere between 40 and 60 pounds (18 and 27 kg). An alloy of gold and another lighter metal and the air pockets between the plates could account for this difference in weight, say some historians.

The Real Treasure

It is interesting to think about what the plates looked like or how they felt and what it might have been like to carry them. The precious part of the plates, though, was not the material they were made of—it was the fulness of the gospel they contained.

The Book of Mormon “has the absolute truth of the gospel,” testifies Kaytlyn Monsivais, 13, of the Provo 13th Ward, Provo Utah East Stake. Kaytlyn felt the Spirit as she helped engrave the replica plates, and she knows the Book of Mormon is the word of God.

Annette Rowbury, 17, of the Provo Eighth



Ward, also helped make the plates. She says, “It helped build my testimony about how much work and love was put into the plates by the prophets who made them and also by Joseph Smith who translated them.”

Unlike the process for making the plates, the process for gaining a treasured testimony of the Book of Mormon is simple. Moroni says it best in Moroni 10:4–5: “And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

“And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.” **NE**



AN ANCIENT RECORD FOR MODERN TIMES

“I do make the record on plates which I have made with mine own hands.

“And behold, I am called Mormon. . . .

“Behold, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I have been called of him to declare his word among his people, that they might have everlasting life.

“And it hath become expedient that I, according to the will of God, that the prayers of those who have gone hence, who were the holy ones, should be fulfilled according to their faith, should make a record of these things which have been done—

“Yea, a small record of that which hath taken place from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem, even down until the present time.

“Therefore I do make my record from the accounts which have been given by those who were before me, until the commencement of my day;

“And then I do make a record of the things which I have seen with mine own eyes.

“And I know the record which I make to be a just and a true record.”

—3 Nephi 5:11–18



BY JACK WEYLAND

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Christopher had a problem. He was addicted to pornography and couldn't break free. His prayer for help was answered in an unexpected way.

Christopher filled his plate with food in the kitchen and retreated to his room. His sister Kaitlyn, a freshman in high school, was having a party for her friends before the stake dance began.

Christopher, two years older, had decided not to go to the stake dance. Instead, he would stay in his room and play video games or go online.

His parents would be attending the dance as chaperones, so he would be alone. He could hardly wait for everyone to leave. Even so, he had a strange feeling. It was the feeling you'd have walking along the top of a steep, ice-covered roof, knowing that, if you start to slip, it would be very difficult to keep from sliding off the roof.

"Not this time," he said to himself.

He turned on his computer and checked his e-mail. He had two messages from friends he'd found on a chat line. He read each one and sent a reply. He had more online friends now than from school or church.

There was a knock at the door, and then Kaitlyn threw open the door and stuck her head in the room. Standing next to her was one of her friends. She was a good six inches shorter than Christopher, with a long narrow face and dark brown hair.

"Mom and Dad are about to leave. You coming with

us?" Kaitlyn asked.

"I don't think so."

The phone rang. "I'll get it!" Kaitlyn shouted, running down the hall.

Christopher stepped out of the room. He was relieved he hadn't been looking at anything inappropriate, but at the same time, he was embarrassed that he could have been.

"Why is your face so red?" Kaitlyn's friend asked.

"No reason."

"You should come to the dance," she said.

"Who are you?"

"I'm Hannah Banana Happy Piana."

"That's your name?"

"Not the Banana Happy Piana part, but my first name is Hannah."

"Well, it's always nice to meet one of Kaitlyn's little friends," he said sarcastically.

"How come you don't want to come to the dance?"

"I don't like to dance, and none of my friends will be there."

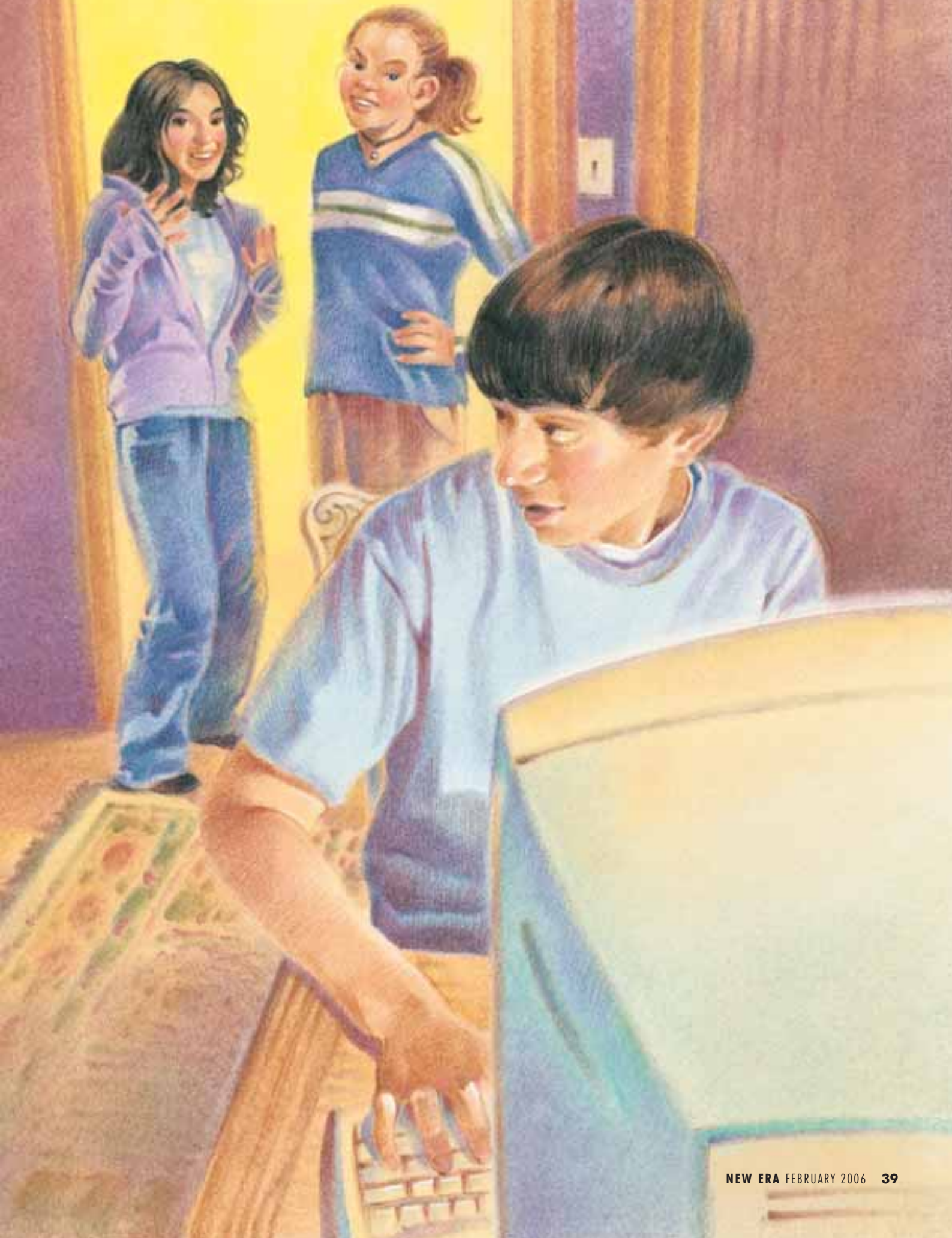
"I'll be there."

"So?"

"You could dance with me."

"No offense, but I'd rather stay home."

"Stay home and what? Watch a computer screen? Do you know what computer images are? I just learned about it. They're just a series of 1's and 0's. Would you rather spend time with 1's and 0's than talking to me?"



**“We’re here,
everybody!”**
Hannah
called out. She
grabbed Christopher’s
band. “I get the first
dance because I got
you to come.”

“Do you want an honest answer?”

She playfully slugged him on the arm.

“Can a bunch of 1’s and 0’s do that?”

“Go away. You’re bothering me.”

“Come to the dance with us. I’ll teach you not to be so boring all the time.”

“Who says I’m boring?”

“Kaitlyn says you scare girls away because you don’t know how to talk to them.”

“That’s not true.” But even as he said it, he realized it had been a long time since he had spent much time with girls.

“I say it is. I say you’re totally hopeless. Anyone can see that.”

“Look, I doubt if you could teach me anything.”

“I could teach you that staying in your room playing with your computer when you could go to a dance is lame. All I’m saying is think about it, okay? We won’t be going for a few more minutes, so you can still change your mind.” And with that, she was gone.

He was glad to get rid of her and could hardly wait for everyone to leave. But at the same time, he felt some dread at what might happen after everyone left—what had happened at other times when he’d been alone.

It was hard for him now to stay away from some Web sites. He had been introduced to pornography at a friend’s house two years earlier. What he saw there was both disgusting and degrading. When he finally got a computer in his room, he had gone to a pornographic Web site just out of curiosity. And now he found himself returning again and again, until it was as if he had no ability to stop himself.

More than once he had promised himself he would never look at those things again. Sometimes he went a day or two, but

eventually he found himself returning.

One Sunday, after his bishop had talked to the Aaronic Priesthood about the evils of pornography, he’d gone to his room and prayed. He had poured out his heart to God for help, but nothing seemed to change. And now everyone was about to leave for the dance, and he’d be alone again.

He closed his eyes. “Father in Heaven, please help me. I can’t keep doing what I’ve been doing.”

There was a loud pounding on the door.

“What?”

Hannah threw open the door. “It’s me again! Kaitlyn sent me here to get you for the dance. We worked it all out. You’ll dance every dance with one of us, except for Kaitlyn. She doesn’t want to dance with you. Come on, it’ll be fun.”

Suddenly he was looking at her in a new light, wondering if she could possibly be an answer to his prayers. One thing was for sure, he knew what would happen if he stayed at home.

He stood up. “Give me a minute. I need to change.”

Hannah called out into the hall. “He’s going! I won the bet, Kaitlyn!”

A few minutes later, he went into the living room, where six girls were waiting for him. They all ended up riding in the family van with Christopher’s parents. He sat in the middle with Kaitlyn on his right and Hannah on his left.

“What’s your favorite color?” Hannah asked him.

“I don’t know.”

“Come on, you’ve got to pick one.”

“Why?”

“It’s one of the first things I learn when I



meet somebody. You can learn a lot about people if you know their favorite color.”

“What can you learn?”

“Well, for one thing, you’ll know their favorite color!” She started laughing hysterically.

“It wasn’t that funny.”

“It was plenty funny. My favorite color is orange. My bedroom is painted orange. Sometimes I wake up and pretend I’m living inside a pumpkin, like I’m one of the seeds.”

“You are a very strange girl.”

“I like to think of colors as if they had a personality. Like serene green, or true blue, or cheery red. Do you ever do that?”

“No, I never do.”

The dance seemed to have been frozen in time until Hannah showed up with her friends, with Christopher in the middle of them all.

“We’re here, everybody!” Hannah called out. She grabbed Christopher’s hand. “I get the first dance because I got you to come.”

They went out on the dance floor and waited for the next dance to start. The music began. Christopher shuffled his feet.

“Okay, Christopher, start dancing,” Hannah said. “I am dancing.”

She smiled. “Well, that’s a start. Let me give you some pointers. Watch carefully.”

He watched her dance. It was totally unpredictable.

“You got it?” she asked.

“Got what?”

“Look, just do what I do, okay?”

A few minutes later they returned to the other girls. “Okay,” Hannah said, “now dance with Melissa. You’ve got 10 minutes, and then it’s Sarah’s turn.”

Melissa wasn’t as spontaneous as Hannah, so within a few minutes neither she nor Christopher was saying anything.

He realized he used to be better at talking with girls, but not anymore. Just after an episode with pornography, he felt such guilt that he avoided any wholesome interaction with a girl. But then as time went on and he became tempted again, he couldn’t look at a girl without thinking of her in ways he knew he shouldn’t. It was a vicious cycle that kept repeating over and over again with the net result being that he pulled into himself. Hannah was able to draw him out—but Melissa was a little shy, and he couldn’t seem to make the personal contact by himself.

“Time out!” Hannah shouted. She came out to them. “Melissa, I need to talk to Christopher for a minute, but I’ll get him back to you soon.”

Melissa returned to her friends.

“What’s the deal? You didn’t even talk to Melissa. Okay, we’ll practice. I’ll be Melissa, and you be you. Talk to me.”

“Don’t you think that Hannah is the strangest person in the whole world?” he asked.

Hannah wasn’t amused. “Very funny! Okay, you be Melissa, and I’ll be you.”

“It’s easy to be Melissa,” he said. “All I need to do is stare at the floor and not say anything.”

“Melissa, how many brothers and sisters do you have?” she asked, trying to mimic his voice.

“Four brothers, two sisters,” Christopher said in his highest voice.

“And what are their names?”

“Winken, Blinken, and Nod, Donner, Comet, and Blitzen.”

“Do you have any hobbies, Melissa?” Hannah asked Christopher.

“Yes,” he said in his high voice. “I collect boilers from condemned schools.”

Hannah tried her best not to laugh. “How interesting.”

“I have them in my room.”

“Big room, huh?”

“Yes, and it’s always warm.” They both laughed.

Hannah said, “Do you see how easy it is to carry on a conversation with a girl? You just keep asking questions about her life. But you need to be interested in the answers she gives. Okay, let’s go back in there and see how you do.”

For the rest of the evening, Hannah let him practice what she’d taught him. He danced with Hannah, Kaitlyn, and all their friends. Two hours later the dance was over.

On the way home Kaitlyn turned to Christopher.

“Thanks for being so good with my friends,” she said.

“I had fun,” Christopher responded.

At home they had family prayer and hugged each other, and then everyone separated to get ready for bed. A few minutes later, Christopher entered his room. The first thing he noticed was the computer on his desk. It seemed more like an enemy than a tool.

“Maybe I should check to see if I have any e-mails,” he thought. He sat on his bed and tried to decide what to do. In the past, something as innocent as checking his e-mails

late at night had led to him ending up on pornographic Web sites.

“How am I going to make it through the night?” he thought. “And what about tomorrow and the next day and the day after that?”

Out of nowhere, in his mind, he heard Hannah, in her upbeat, cheerful way: “What’s your favorite color?” The thought of asking one of the women on a pornographic site a question like that seemed ridiculous. They wouldn’t answer such a question, and he wouldn’t ask it. They existed in a one-dimensional world where only one thing mattered. And that one thing promised a thrill but gave nothing back but guilt and remorse.

He went to his desk and began to write in his journal:

“From now on I will spend my time with real girls, not with virtual images on a monitor. I’ll ask them what their favorite color is. I’ll ask how many brothers and sisters they have. I’ll ask them what their hobbies are. I’ll dance with them, joke with them, tease and get teased by them, and I’ll laugh with them. I will stay away from virtual girls for the rest of my life.”

He signed it, looked up, and glared at his computer on the desk. He quickly began disconnecting all the cables. A few minutes later, he had set up his computer in the kitchen where anybody coming into the room could see what was on the monitor.

His dad heard him moving about and came into the kitchen. “What are you doing?”

“Dad, do you have a few minutes? There’s something I need to tell you, something I need help with.”

“What is it?”

Christopher lowered his head. He wasn’t even sure he could say the word to his father. He fought to stay in control.

“I need to know so I can help,” his dad said.

Christopher sighed. “It’s pornography, Dad. That’s my problem. I’ve been looking at it in my room, but I want to quit. It’s tearing me apart.”

“Is that why you brought your computer in here?”

“Yes. At first I thought I could just tell myself I wasn’t

going to look at it anymore. But that hasn't worked. The truth is I can't seem to stop."

His dad put his hand on Christopher's shoulder. "I'm proud of you for telling me this."

"No, Dad. There's nothing to be proud of when it comes to me."

"I disagree. You could have gone your whole life trying to hide this from the rest of the world, but you knew you couldn't live a lie. To me that shows character."

"I'm out of control. I need help."

"I'll be glad to help."

"Thanks, Dad."

"You'll need to work with the bishop, too. Because of his calling, he can help you in ways I can't."

"He'll be really disappointed in me."

"I think he'll be pleased you want to get rid of this evil in your life."

They talked until two in the morning. They made a list of actions they could take. Christopher's dad made it clear that there were some things he would need to keep doing. Things like praying and reading the scriptures, filling his time with positive activities and positive thoughts. An addiction like his isn't overcome easily, and not without help.

Christopher asked, "Dad, you don't have to do this if you don't want to or if I'm too unworthy, but could you give me a priesthood blessing?"

"I would very much like to do that."

"I didn't know if I should even ask. I haven't felt much like praying either."

"Heavenly Father will never turn away from us, no matter what we've done."

After the blessing, they hugged each other and said good night.

Christopher returned to his room. It seemed a much safer place without the computer. He knelt once again in prayer and then, a few minutes later, slipped into bed.

He remembered Hannah's question, "What's your favorite color?" He smiled. "I know the answer to that question now. My favorite color is true blue." He felt better at that moment than he'd felt in a long time. **NE**

Christopher sighed. "It's pornography, Dad. That's my problem. I've been looking at it in my room, but I want to quit. It's tearing me apart."



INSTANT MESSAGES

TUNING IN TO HAPPINESS

BY ADAM M. SHORTER



When I turned 13, I became infatuated with the sound of metal music. The louder the singers and guitars were, the more I loved it. It wasn't the lyrics I liked; it was the sound that had me hooked.

Soon, I was buying clothes and products so I could mimic my favorite rock star guitarist. It seemed like my only source of happiness came from the most recent CD I bought.

When I was 17, I had the chance to see one of my favorite bands. I fought to get to the front row. Here came the moment I had dreamed of. I stood less than 10 feet away from my guitar hero. These guys played an awesome set, and I had so much fun. When they finished, they packed their instruments and walked offstage.

After that, I thought, "That was so awesome! But now what? I'm not as happy as I was when that band was jamming up on stage. Where will I go or what will I do to get my happiness back?"

A month later, I got the chance to go to Especially for Youth (EFY). The happiness I felt there was stronger than anything I had ever felt before, and it didn't pack up and walk off the stage.

At EFY I asked the Lord if what I was taught was the happiness I had been searching for. The Spirit bore witness to me, "It's true." And I felt an embrace from Heavenly Father saying, "Welcome back, my son."

Spotlights go dim, applause dies, musicians stop touring, but the love of God and the happiness of the message of the Restoration are eternal! **NE**

BLESSED TO PERFORM

BY NÉNA FAIRBANKS

Once when I was

chosen to be in a play, I had one of the lead roles.

I was very excited because it was my first chance to be a lead. One day before one of our performances, I got extremely sick to the point I couldn't even stand. I managed to go with my mother to see my director, and my mom explained my situation to her. The director told my mother to take me home with my costume and makeup and, if I felt better, to bring me back dressed and ready to go. Meanwhile, the director would try to find a replacement.

After I got home, I asked my father to give me a priesthood blessing. Even though I didn't feel better immediately, I did 20 minutes later after a good nap, and I was able to go on and perform. After that experience I always ask my dad for a blessing when I need help, and through the years my testimony of priesthood blessings has become stronger. **NE**

LEAD THOU ME ON

BY ALY ASAY

My favorite hymn is "Lead, Kindly Light" (*Hymns*, no. 97). I love the way this hymn sounds. One Sunday, when I was 14, I was playing the piano. I turned to this hymn and began to play and sing. It was then that I felt a great feeling of hope and peace. I later found out that

this hymn was one of my grandfather's favorites. So now when I play this song I feel my grandpa with me even though he is gone. My favorite line is, "The night is dark, and I am far from home; Lead thou me on!" That line just makes me glad for the opportunity to pray. **NE**

ONE-ON-ONE TESTIMONY

BY KRISTIN EGAN



For many years I've known a girl who has become a very good friend of mine. She isn't a member of the Church, but she respects it and what it stands for. We had never talked much about religion. I assumed that she believed what she wanted to believe and wouldn't change. However, I had prayed for a long time that the opportunity to teach her would come.

My prayer was answered at a sleep-over for my 16th birthday. When most of the other girls had fallen asleep, my friend and I moved to an adjacent room so we wouldn't wake them, since we planned on staying up a little longer talking. Eventually our discussion turned to who we are, what we are doing here on earth, and where we are going after this life. My friend was curious to know what our religion says about these questions. I was a little apprehensive, so I started

out slowly telling her a basic version of the plan of salvation.

As I talked, I started shaking. I couldn't help it. I felt the Spirit so strongly that I paused often to catch my breath. She seemed to sense something different and asked me what was wrong. I told her that this plan made me feel so happy inside. I then bore my testimony to her, and we were silent. All I could think about was how it felt to truly know for myself the truthfulness of the gospel. I had never borne my testimony like that before, and I will never forget the experience. **NE**

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

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

Or e-mail it to
newera@ldschurch.org

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

Mutual Activity Idea

- Using the article by Elder Robert D. Hales, "Preparing for a Heavenly Marriage," on page 2, have a Mutual activity in three parts. First, have a game or quiz that covers dating. (Check on page 34 of the October 2004 *New Era* for ideas.) Second, invite a recently married couple to talk about supporting and serving each other. For the final part, ask the bishop to review the temple recommend interview questions used in Elder Hales's article.

Personal Progress or Duty to God

- If getting angry is one of your bad habits, select one or two of the ideas in the Idea List on page 9 to help you overcome your anger habit. Follow your plan for at least two weeks, and report to your parents on your progress.

Family Home Evening Ideas

- Get a copy of *For the Strength of Youth* for each family member. Take turns reading about each standard. Point out the positive advice given in each section. Explain that younger children can practice the standards that apply to them to prepare for their teen years.
- Provide each family member with a pencil and paper. To demonstrate the translation process that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery went through in translating the golden plates, have one person dictate out of the Book of Mormon, and then have each person write down what is read aloud. Try writing at least four verses. Conclude by reading Words of Mormon 1:9–11.



SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November in the *Ensign*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 6–10.

Young Women Manual 1

Lesson 6: Finding Joy Now

Mormonad, "Spread Sunshine," *New Era*, Jan. 1999, 19.
 Joe J. Christensen, "A Reason to Smile," *New Era*, Nov. 1996, 4.

Lesson 7: Homemaking

Janet Thomas, "The Family Secret," *New Era*, Nov. 2004, 36.
 Gretel J. Backman, "Families Are Forever," *New Era*, Dec. 1994, 26.

Lesson 8: Attitudes about Our Divine Roles

Robert D. Hales, "Preparing for a Heavenly Marriage," this issue, 2.
 Margaret D. Nadauld, "What You Are Meant to Be," *New Era*, Oct. 2002, 42.

Lesson 9: Honoring Parents

Richard Moore, "My Trust Fund," *New Era*, Oct. 1999, 34.
 Shanna Butler, "How to Talk to Your Parents," *New Era*, June 2005, 30.

Lesson 10: Supporting Family Members

Q&A: ". . . How can I let them know I love them without saying it?" *New Era*, Nov. 2004, 16.
 Ashley Eggers, "Love, Anonymous," *New Era*, Feb. 2001, 26.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 1

Lesson 6: The Holy Ghost

Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Gift of the Holy Ghost," *New Era*, Jan. 2005, 4.
 Lindsay T. Dil, "If You Listen," *New Era*, July 2005, 8.
 Stephen Vincent, "Words of Warning," *New Era*, Jan. 2005, 48.

Lesson 7: "A Mighty Change of Heart"

Ken Merrell, "The Visitor," *New Era*, May 2000, 8.
 Q&A: ". . . I made fun of the Church. How can I show them I was wrong?" *New Era*, July 2004, 16.

Lesson 8: "Honour Thy Father"

Fraser Aumua, "Like Father, Like Son," *New Era*, Oct. 1999, 8.
 "I Call Him Dad," *New Era*, Sep. 2005, 10.
 Amanda Wallin, "All-Star Dad," *New Era*, July 2005, 46.

Lesson 9: Respect for Mothers and Their Divine Role

Russell M. Nelson, "Next to the Angels," *New Era*, Mar. 2005, 4.
 Brett M. Condon, "Murmuring and Mowing," *New Era*, July 2004, 8.

Lesson 10: Family Unity

Adam C. Olson, "Helping Home Evening Succeed," *New Era*, Sep. 2005, 30.
 Shanna Butler, "How to Talk to Your Parents," *New Era*, June 2005, 30.

GOOD PRINCIPLES AND MORALS

The *New Era* is a great way for Church members to learn good principles and morals that can help us in our everyday lives. The things we learn from it are remarkable. I should probably read it more often; my mom reads it a lot. I think that it could use more spiritually uplifting comics and fun stuff that we can do with our friends and family.

Kyle C., Washington

PEER PRESSURE

I really enjoyed reading “Get Me Out of This” (June 2005). I experience a lot of peer pressure—everything from dating before 16 to drugs. I want to thank the author, Brother Waters, for knowing that his bishop is his friend.

Breanna D., Utah

PENNY IN HIS SHOE

I appreciated your article “Penny for Your Prayers” (July 2005). I don’t often read the *New Era*, but one day I picked it up off the stack of magazines at our house and read that article. For about a month now, I have kept a penny in my shoe. I have shared your article with many friends and coworkers. I absolutely love the constant reminder to pray always. And I do! It’s much easier to be Christlike when meeting people during the day when I have just had a prayer for people who desperately need some divine help.

Isn’t it interesting that such a short, well-written article can have such a large effect on people?

Daren H., Utah

WORDS CANNOT EXPRESS

I cannot express how happy I am about the October 2005 issue of the *New Era*. I felt the article “Behind the Scenes” was directed to me! I have been contemplating a career

in dance as well as film/TV. When I read that article I just felt the Spirit so strong telling me that I needed to pray about my decision. Also, the article “You’re a Mormon?” applied to my life as well. I have had many problems lately with friends from my high school telling me that I was not Christian. This article made me realize that I am not the only LDS youth being told the same thing. Thank you so much for publishing those articles!

Danielle T., Ontario, Canada

A FEELING OF PEACE AND JOY

Reading the *New Era* as a missionary is helping me a lot in teaching investigators, new converts, and members. Its messages are clear and very inspirational. I feel peace and joy in my heart when I read its simple gospel messages.

Elder Ewudzie, Nigeria Port Harcourt Mission

PERFECT PATTERN

I’d just like to say how thankful I am to you for including “The Perfect Pattern” in the September 2005 *New Era*. I want to become a fashion designer when I’m older and I, too, would like to create modest designs that Heavenly Father would be pleased with. This article encouraged me more to pursue my dream career because I don’t feel alone in wanting to create modest designs.

Lydia J., Wales

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 St. Rm. 2420
 Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail us at

newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



“The New Era is a great way for Church members to learn good principles and morals that can help us in our everyday lives.”

ILLUSTRATED BY BILL MAYER



ICICLES

BY REBECCA VERNON

Bony icicles,
Like jutting pointing fingers,
Accuse the sidewalk.



*“One word that comes up over
and over when talking about the feelings
that seminary gives these youth in Austria
and Switzerland is happiness. Yes, it is hard
to get up so early. Yes, it is often cold and
dark. But is it worth it? Oh, yes.”*

See “Seminary Makes Me Happy,” p. 28.

