



THE
New Era

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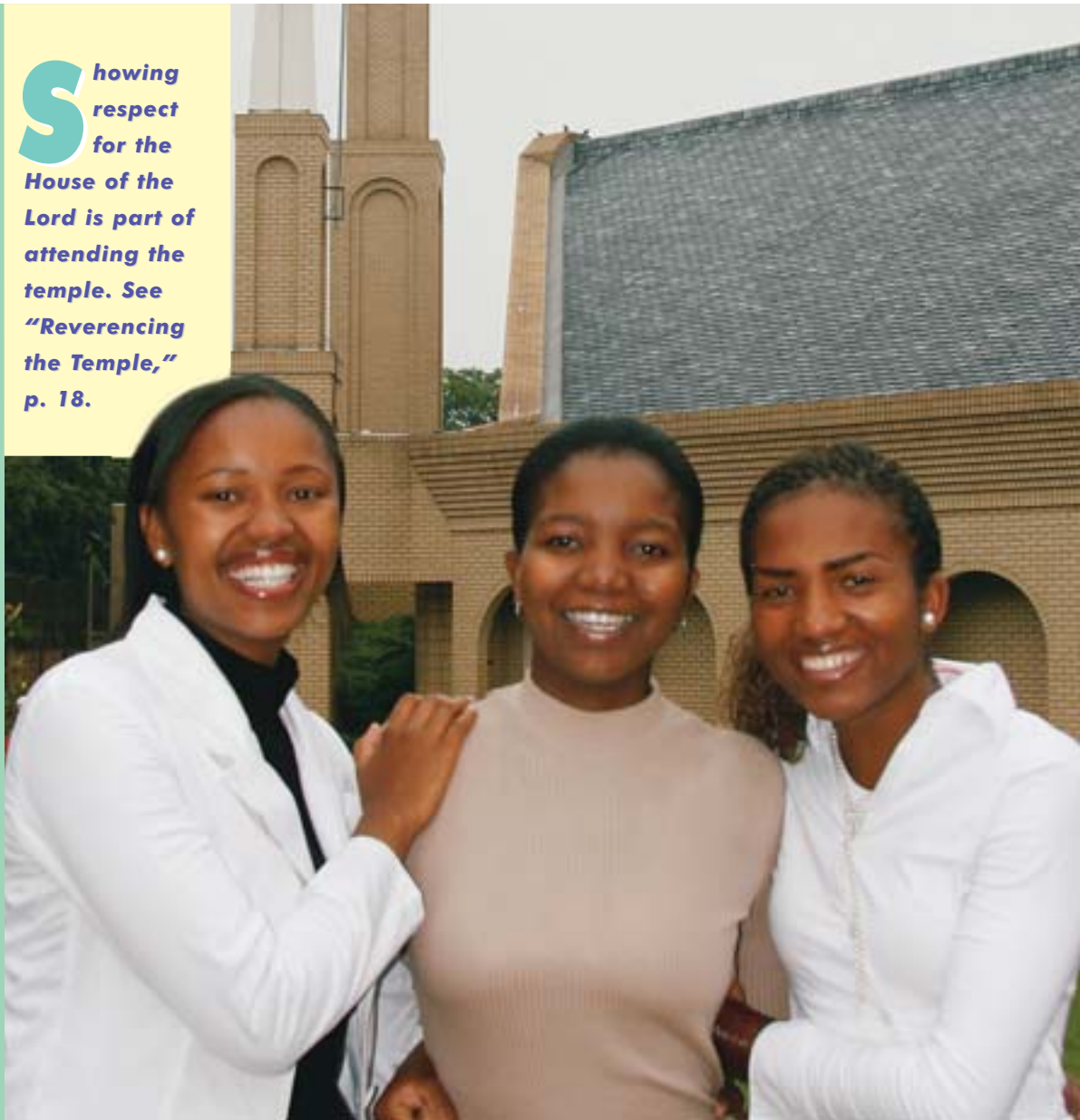
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DON'T FACE THE WORLD ALONE

BY ELDER RICHARD G. SCOTT

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



T*rust in the Lord. He knows what He is doing. He already knows of your problems. And He is waiting for you to ask for help.*

For a piece of wood to catch fire, it must first be heated to a temperature at which it ignites, then burns by itself. The initial heating requires energy from outside. When it is ignited, it becomes self-sustaining and gives beneficial light and heat.

For you young people, the early years of life are often spent in absorbing help from parents and others as you prepare for the time you can be more self-sufficient. I want to help you catch fire spiritually, that you may enjoy the marvelous experience of radiating strength to others while you continue to grow and develop yourself.

There is a more intense fire than that of burning wood. It is produced from a mixture of aluminum powder and metal oxide. By itself, it is cold and lifeless, but when heated to the ignition temperature, it becomes a self-sustaining source of brilliant light and intense heat.

Once it ignites it cannot be put out by ordinary means. It will burn under water or in other environments that extinguish an ordinary flame. When it burns, it does not depend on its surroundings for support. It is self-sustaining.

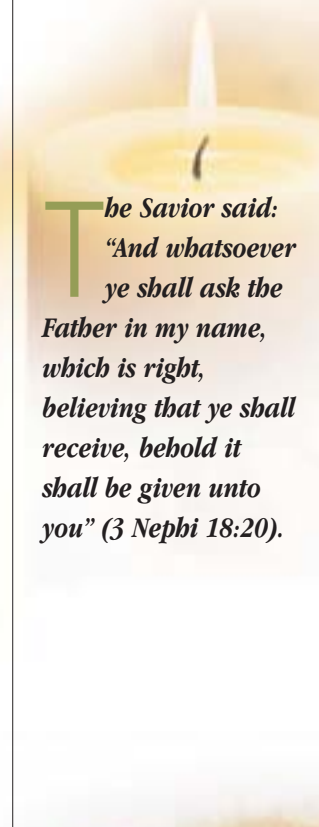
Lighting a Spiritual Flame

The spiritual flame in some is easily quenched by the world around them. Yet others live so as to be strengthened and nurtured by the Lord. They not only overcome the temptations of the world, but their unquenchable spirit also enriches the lives of others around them.

Two missionaries who were aflame spiritually had spent an active day establishing a branch of the Church in a remote village. At 5:30 that morning, they had taught a family before the husband left for the fields. Later they had struggled to plaster their adobe walls to keep out blood-sucking insects. During the week they had laid a small cement floor and had hung a five-gallon can with a shower head to keep clean. They had begun a sanitation facility and put new gravel and sand in their water filter. For part of the day they had worked beside men in the fields to later teach them. They were exhausted and ready for welcome rest.

There came an anxious knock at the crude wooden door. A small girl was crying. She had been running and was gasping for air. They struggled to piece together her





The Savior said:
“And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you” (3 Nephi 18:20).

message, delivered amid sobs in a torrent of words. Her father had suffered a severe head injury while riding his donkey in the darkness. She knew he would die unless the elders saved his life. Men of the village were at that moment carrying him to the missionaries.

The seriousness of their desperate situation began to engulf them. They were in a village with no doctors or medical facilities. There were no telephones. The only means of communication was a rough road up a riverbed, and they had no vehicle.

The people of the valley trusted them. The missionaries were not trained in medicine. They did not know how to care

for a serious head wound, but they knew someone who did. They knelt in prayer and explained their problem to an understanding Father in Heaven. They pled for guidance, realizing that they could not save a life without His help.

They felt impressed that the wound should be cleansed, closed, and the man given a blessing. One companion asked, “How will he stand the pain? How can we cleanse the wound and bless him while he is in such suffering?”

They knelt again and explained to their Father, “We have no medicine. We have no anesthetic. Please help us to know what to do. Please bless him, Father.”

As they arose, friends arrived with the injured man. Even in the subdued candlelight, they could see he had been severely hurt. He was suffering greatly. As they began to cleanse the wound, a very unusual thing occurred. He fell asleep. Carefully, anxiously, they finished the cleansing, closed the wound, and provided a makeshift bandage. As they laid their hands on his head to bless him, he awoke peacefully. Their prayer had been answered, and his life saved. The trust of the people increased, and a branch of the Church flourished.

The missionaries were able to save a life because they trusted the Lord. They knew how to pray with faith for help with a problem they could not resolve themselves. Because they were obedient to the Lord, the Lord trusted them and answered their prayer. They had learned how to recognize the answer when it came as a quiet prompting of the Spirit. You have that same help available to you if you live for it.

The Savior said: “And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right,



believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you” (3 Nephi 18:20).

I know that each one of you faces overwhelming challenges. Sometimes they are so concentrated, so unrelenting, that you may feel they are beyond your capacity to control.

Don't face the world alone. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5).

Surviving in a Worldly Jungle

In many ways, the world is like a jungle, with dangers that can harm or mutilate your body, enslave or destroy your mind, or decimate your morality. It was intended that life be a challenge, not so that you would fail, but that you might succeed through overcoming. You face on every hand difficult but vitally important decisions. There is an array of temptations, destructive influences, and camouflaged dangers, the like of which no previous generation has faced. I am persuaded that today no one, no matter how gifted, strong, or intelligent, will avoid serious problems without seeking the help of the Lord.

I repeat: Don't face the world alone. Trust in the Lord.

If one of you has seriously sinned, repent—now. It is not good to violate the commandments of the Lord. It is worse to do nothing about it. Sin is like cancer in the body. It will never heal itself. It will become progressively worse unless cured through the medicine of repentance. You can be made completely whole, new, purified, and clean, every whit, through the miracle of repentance.

Trust in the Lord. He knows what He is doing. He already knows of your problems. And He is waiting for you to ask for help.

Developing a Righteous Character

Getting through the hazards of life requires understanding, skill, experience, and self-assurance like that required to sink a difficult basket under pressure. In the game of life, that is called righteous character. Such character is not developed in moments of great challenge or temptation. That is when it is used. Character is woven

quietly from the threads of hundreds of correct decisions (like practice sessions). When strengthened by obedience and worthy acts, correct decisions form a fabric of character that brings victory in time of great need.

Righteous character provides the foundation of spiritual strength that enables you to make difficult, extremely important decisions correctly when they seem overpowering.

Be honest. Righteous character is based on integrity.

Never lie to yourself. A lie can give temporary advantage, but it brings with it long-term difficulties. Make no premeditated plans to do wrong, no lies to gain advantage, no falsehood to cover mistakes. When you are completely honest with yourself and measure your acts against what you know is right, you will not be dishonest with anyone. Moreover, you will make sure the Lord can bless you when you need it.

When you are tempted to break a commandment and hide it from others, don't do it. It will always hurt you. Satan will see to that. He'll make it known because he wants to destroy you.

You have observed how some of your friends try to live a double standard of life. They want to appear to their parents and church leaders as though they are doing the right things, but secretly they do otherwise. They may have moments of excitement they consider pleasure, but they can never be at peace or truly happy. They fight against themselves internally and run the risk of destroying mind and body.

You know what is right and wrong. Be the leader in doing right. At first, you may not be understood. You may not have the friends you want right away, but in time, they will respect you, then admire you. Many will come privately to receive strength from your spiritual flame. You can do it. I know you can do it.

The Lord needs you for His purposes. Live His commandments. Learn to follow the promptings of the Spirit. Keep your spiritual flame burning brightly. I testify that the Lord lives. He loves you and will help you.

From "Trust in the Lord," Ensign, May 1989.

THE Turnaround

BY KAYLA CASPER

After years of wandering down the wrong path, I finally found my way back.

It was amazing to experience sacrament meeting in Japanese, and I realized that the gospel was just as strong halfway across the world as it was at home. Many of these members didn't have the support from friends and family that I did, but they still believed.

My falling away from the Church was gradual. It began in the fifth grade, when I met some new friends. We used bad language and got into all the wrong things. Once junior high came around, we entered into all the wrong groups, and by high school, things started to get really bad.

I became really depressed. I was wearing more and more black and kept insisting on thickly layering dark eye makeup. To me, life became something just to get through and not to enjoy. My thoughts were often suicidal, and I had no confidence. I almost completely shelled up. I never really talked to anyone, never told people what was going on. I knew I was loved, but I just didn't care.

I almost completely fell away from the Church. I say almost because I was never allowed to skip church, and my parents always expected me to take seminary during high school. But I wanted nothing more to do with the gospel or the LDS Church.

My family and loved ones saw this downward spiral, and they tried to help. I often spent time on Sundays in the bishop's office, and just as many days trying to avoid the

bishop. He showed a lot of support and interest in me, looking into the things I believed in so that he could better understand me. My parents kept trying to help, but they didn't know what to do. There were times when my dad and I were near tears trying to talk about our differences.

During my sophomore year, I hit a turning point when a foreign exchange student from Japan came to live with us. She was a softball player, and she convinced me to play that year. That experience alone did a great deal of good for me. The coach helped me raise my self-esteem, and the experience of belonging to and working on a team gave me the blessed feeling of belonging somewhere.

That summer I went to Japan to stay with the family of our foreign exchange student for five weeks. During my stay, I went four weeks without going to church. Finally, in the very last week, we stopped by the Tokyo Japan Temple to take pictures. In a strange country where the language and customs were so foreign to me, it was the most comforting feeling to finally be in a familiar place. The Spirit there was so strong.



I'm not sure when the transition took place, but I began to pray regularly again. It was hard at first, but I stuck with it. I read my scriptures and knew that they spoke truth. I had more confidence, and I felt better about the new friends I began associating with.

That Sunday we found a ward building, and I attended church. It was amazing to experience sacrament meeting and Sunday School in Japanese, but what hit me most was when I went to Young Women. Seeing those few Japanese girls rise and say the theme, I realized that the gospel was just as strong halfway across the world as it was at home. I knew that many of these members didn't have the support from friends and family that I did, but they still believed. Again, I felt at home.

Shortly after I returned to Utah, my brother Richard came home from his mission. Richard noticed my struggles and made it apparent that we would be having a lot of talks. He got me to pray with him.

But what really hit home was seminary. My dad found out I wasn't enrolled for

my junior year and was surprised. It wasn't long before I was called to meet with the seminary principal. It was very nonconfrontational; he just talked to me, conveyed friendship, and expressed concern that I wasn't enrolled. Finally I agreed to take seminary. I met my teacher, went to class, and that was it. I never skipped and rarely begrudged going.

I'm not sure when the transition took place, but I started to feel comfort. I began to pray regularly again. It was really hard at first, but I stuck with it. I read my scriptures and knew that they spoke truth. Life began to look up. I had more energy, confidence, and ambition. I felt better about the new friends I began associating with. I tried out for plays, immersed myself in my artwork, and started singing again. I tried out for my school's select choir group and made it. I was no longer the shy, introverted girl I had been for so long.

I was also called to serve on the seminary council, and that was when I knew that I would be okay. If someone had told me a year ago that I would be where I am now, I never would have believed it could happen. I'm a completely different person. And I'm grateful to my friends, family, and teachers, who gave me their love and patience. Their faith in me was the constant in my life that I could always fall back on in my darkest hours. And now I'm so grateful for the gospel. I feel it really has saved my life. If I hadn't made the turnaround when I did, who knows how far off the path I would have gone. I'm grateful I've never had to find out.

The Church is true; I know that with all of my heart and mind. Heavenly Father loves His children, and Jesus Christ is our Savior. Having the restored gospel on earth is one of our greatest blessings, and I pray that someday all of God's children will come to know the truth and feel the same gratitude and love for Him that I have in my heart. **NE**

GETTING ALONG

The family night activity is in full swing at the Pardo home in Santiago, Chile. The matchsticks are piled high on top of the soda pop bottle on the table. It's 16-year-old Andrea's turn, and all eyes are focused on her hand as it slowly, carefully reaches to place another matchstick on top of the precarious stack. Silence reigns.

"Careful!" 13-year-old Javier yells, startling everyone and nearly causing Andrea to knock over the swaying stack.

For a moment, it looks like Javier might be in trouble, but after catching her breath, Andrea joins in the laughter.

With nine people living under the same roof, there are bound to be some problems from time to time. No matter what your family is like, getting along isn't always easy.

Francisco and Vivian and their children—Andrea, Francisco, Vivian, Javier, Sebastian, Elizabeth, and Augustin—recently took time to share what they do to strengthen their relationships.

Relationships Take Time

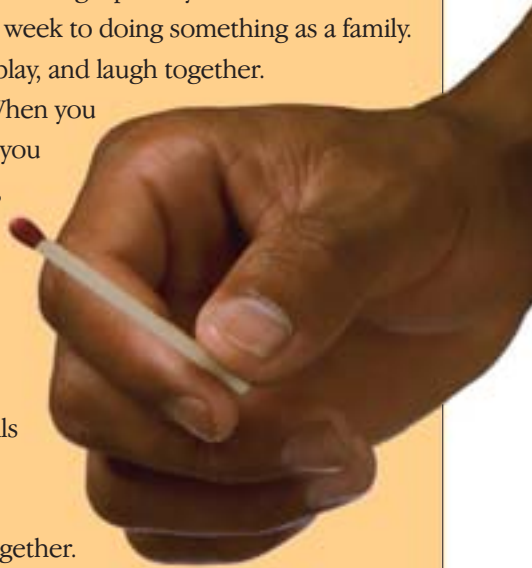
- Make time for each other. Support your brothers and sisters at their games, events, or performances.
- Eat as many meals together as you can.
- Make family home evening a priority.
- Dedicate a day per week to doing something as a family.
- Cook, clean, pray, play, and laugh together.
- Be spontaneous. When you find time together you hadn't planned on, do something fun.

Relationships Take Communication

- Make time to talk. Have family councils and parent-child interviews.
- Study scriptures together. This can start great conversations.
- Watching TV or movies together can be enjoyable, but it's a poor substitute for interaction.
- When there is friction, it may help if someone who isn't involved acts as peacemaker.

Relationships Take Service

- When one person has a problem, everyone shares it.
- Find ways to serve each other, especially anyone you're having problems with.
- Find ways the family can serve together.
- "For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?" (Mosiah 5:13). **NE**



PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW REIER; PHOTOGRAPH OF FAMILY BY ADAM C. OLSON



THE SIMPLICITY

BY DAVID A. EDWARDS
Church Magazines

Why do we use symbols the way we do? The reasons, like the symbols themselves, are simple but profound.

Since the earliest days of the Church, critics have tried to uncover flaws in its teachings or history. Over the years, for example, they have tried to discredit the Prophet Joseph Smith by suggesting that he copied the ceremony and symbols used in the temple from other sources. Some have also found it strange that the Church uses such symbols and ceremonies at all.

But there are simple answers for those who are suspicious or uneasy about how we use symbols in the Church.

A World of Symbols

Have you ever considered just how common symbols are?

Imagine a 17-year-old boy walking through a school. He passes by two young women he knows. Each young woman hands him a piece of paper. The first hands him an envelope with a heart-shaped sticker on it, and the second hands him a flyer with an image of a red cross on it. Without reading either one, he starts thinking about asking the first girl to a dance and giving the second girl a donation for recent flood victims. He has a different reaction to the images because each one holds a different meaning for him; in other words, they are symbols.

We live in a world of symbols. We use them all the time not only to help us communicate complex ideas quickly but also to add deeper meaning to what we say. The symbols in our lives can define who we are, what we stand for, and what groups we belong to. Almost anything can be used as a symbol: images, shapes, colors, objects, actions, gestures, words. From architecture, to art, to corporate logos, to computer icons, to national flags, to civic and religious ceremonies, symbols are all around us.

One of the greatest virtues of symbols is that they stimulate our minds and help us learn. And they are especially valuable when they make us think more clearly and deeply about things that truly matter, such as the gospel.

Symbols and the Spirit

We can't comprehend the things of God by ourselves. We need His Spirit to teach us. The Apostle Paul taught:

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:9–10).

Symbols help with this spiritual communication. Through symbols, the Lord forges a link with us by using the things of this earth to represent the things of heaven. He has given us revelations, prophecies, teachings,

OF SYMBOLS

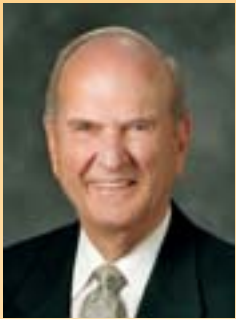
ordinances, and ceremonies filled with symbols that can give us spiritual insights if we are prepared to receive them.

Think about baptism. We put on white clothes, which represent purity.¹ Then we enter the water, which represents the washing away of our sins through the Atonement.² After the words of the ordinance are spoken, we are immersed in the water. Going under the water imitates the death and burial of Jesus Christ, and it also represents the death of the natural man within us. Being raised again from the water imitates the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and it also represents being born again as disciples of Christ under covenant to follow Him.³

The symbolism of baptism draws our thoughts to Christ and causes us to ponder the connection between the symbol and what it represents. Our minds are then more focused on spiritual matters, so the Holy Ghost is better able to bridge the gap and teach us “the deep things of God.”

The Lord’s Way from the Beginning

The scriptures tell us that the Lord has used symbolism from the very beginning to teach people about Christ’s Atonement. He commanded Adam to sacrifice animals, but at first Adam didn’t know why, except to be obedient. An angel then came to him and explained that the sacrifice was “a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of



“Each temple is a house of learning. There we are taught in the Master’s way. His way differs from modes of others. His way is ancient and rich with symbolism. We can learn much by pondering the reality for which each symbol stands. The teachings of the temple are beautifully simple and simply beautiful. They are understood by the humble, yet they can excite the intellect of the brightest minds.”

**Elder Russell M. Nelson
of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles, *Ensign*,
May 2001, 33.**

the Father, which is full of grace and truth” (Moses 5:7). In other words, the angel taught Adam that the animal he sacrificed represented the Savior, who, though He would be without sin, would freely give His life to atone for the sins of the world.

Later, the Lord taught Adam about baptism and explained its symbolism of rebirth. Afterward He told Adam that “all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me” (Moses 6:63).

Nephi also learned this truth, and he showed his people that “all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of [Christ]” (2 Nephi 11:4).

This is why gospel symbols are so powerful—not because they are mysterious or exotic, but because they point our minds to literal realities about the plan of salvation and our relationship to our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. They teach us about the Savior’s Atonement and what we have to do to be saved and exalted in the celestial kingdom.

Symbols and Ordinances

So how does the temple figure in all this?

First of all, for those who have doubts about the origins of temple symbols and ceremonies, we have a simple answer. Gospel ordinances and symbols, including those found in the temple, are as old as Adam and Eve, but because people fell away from the truth, only scattered fragments of

the original ordinances were passed down among them. So it is not at all surprising that various other religions and groups throughout the world use some of those symbols, though not with their original meaning and purpose.⁴

Secondly, for people who feel uncomfortable about temple symbols and ceremonies, we simply point out that symbols are a familiar part of our everyday lives to begin with. The particular symbols we use may be unfamiliar to some people. Even something as common to us as bowing our heads for a prayer may appear strange to someone seeing it for the first time. If people are properly prepared, however, attending the temple can be a familiar experience. They will see that it follows the pattern the Lord has used from the beginning of mankind, teaching us through symbols and the influence of the Spirit so that we can gain an eternal perspective on our lives.

The temple ordinances are sacred. Holding them sacred means that we don’t talk about them outside the temple. But the Savior invites *all* people to come unto Him, and anyone who comes unto Him and remains faithful in the Church is eventually invited to go to the temple to be taught in the Lord’s way.

By restoring the ordinances of the temple through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord has reached out to mankind as He has always done, revealing things through symbols that are simple enough for us to recognize but profound enough to allow the Spirit to give us a glimpse of things that “eye hath not seen.”

¹ See Alma 5:21; 13:12.

² See Alma 7:14.

³ See John 3:1–6; Romans 6:3–9.

⁴ See Robert L. Millet, “The Eternal Gospel,” *Ensign*, July 1996, 48–56.



EXTRA! EXTRA!

To find out more about gospel symbols, you can look up the following articles in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org: “Why Symbols” (*Ensign*, Feb. 2007, 16); “Understanding Scriptural Symbols,” by Gerald N. Lund (*Ensign*, Oct. 1986); “All Things Testify of Him,” by Lenet Hadley Read (*Ensign*, Jan. 1981); “Symbols from the Scriptures That Testify of Christ,” by William O. Nelson (*Ensign*, June 1973).

To learn more about the temple, you can read the booklet “Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple,” available through www.ldscatalog.com or on www.lds.org in the Gospel Library under Lessons and then Optional Courses.

Q & A

“My friend seems really depressed, and I’m afraid she might even be thinking about taking her own life. What should I do?”

NEW ERA

Your friend’s situation is a serious problem, one that you and she can’t handle alone. In addition to the Lord’s help, your friend needs professional help, which may include counseling and medication.

Those who experience depression feel hopeless and helpless. So they often hesitate to get help. Even if your friend has asked you not to tell anyone, telling someone who can help is one of the best things you can do for her. At the very least, talk to her parents. You can even get advice from a doctor, school counselor, or your bishop or branch president. Letting them know about her problem is especially urgent if she has mentioned suicide.

As she gets help, continue to be her friend. People who are going through depression often think that they don’t matter. So let your friend know you care about her, and remind her of the many others who care about her. Sincerely tell her what you appreciate about her. Invite her to do fun and uplifting activities with you. Service is especially good because it can help her focus on others, and physical

■ **As soon as possible, talk to your friend’s parents and other adults who can help, such as a doctor, counselor, or priesthood leader.**

■ **Continue to be a good friend by spending time with her and being a good listener.**

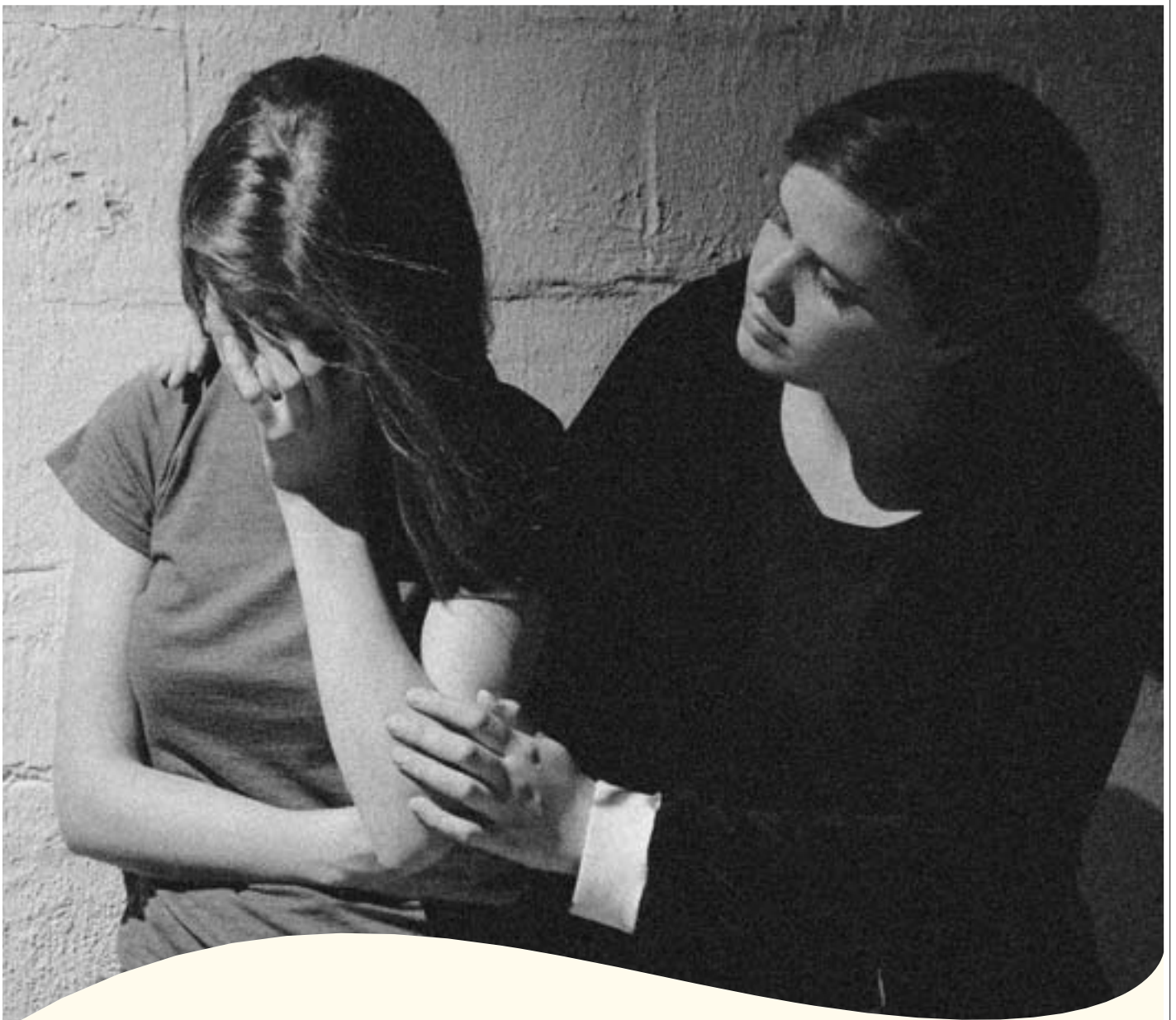
■ **Let your friend know that she is important, that you care about her, and that, with help, she can feel better.**

activities can lift her mood. Pray for guidance to know what would be best for her.

Your friend might feel depressed because she doesn’t think her life has a purpose. But Heavenly Father has a special plan for each one of us. He sent us here to have joy, to overcome trials, and to fulfill a purpose. You can share this testimony with your friend and give her hope that, in time and with the right help, she can enjoy life.

Remind her that it’s normal to have some worries. President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “It was meant to be that life would be a challenge. To suffer some anxiety, some depression, some disappointment, even some failure is normal. . . . There is great purpose in our struggle in life.”¹ But it’s not normal to dwell on problems to the point that we lose our perspective. It’s best to work through them and try to become stronger because of them.

Also remind your friend that she has many sources of help. Depression is a symptom of mental or emotional illness. Just as she



READERS

would go to a doctor to be treated for a physical illness, she can talk to a professional who can help her understand the nature of depression and teach her ways to cope with it. Whether she is a member of the Church or not, she can get spiritual help. She can pray, get a priesthood blessing, and find comfort by reading the scriptures. Testify to her that the Lord loves her and can bless her with peace (see John 14:27).

NOTE

1. "Solving Emotional Problems in the Lord's Own Way," *Ensign*, May 1978, 93.



I would help her realize that her life is valuable, not only to me as her friend but also to our Father in Heaven, by

sharing my time with her. I would also help her realize other ways to relieve her depression by encouraging her to join in youth activities. This way she may be able to find other friends.

Lastly, I would pray to our Heavenly Father to help her.

Ryan S., 17, Philippines



This is the time when you can help. Instead of overly worrying about her, you should just talk to her and be a good listener.

I am grateful for my Church friends, who always lovingly rallied around me when I felt depressed, frustrated, angry, or sad. I know I am loved because they are always there to lend a listening ear. Usually, I felt much better about the situation and about myself after I talked it out. So be supportive and

encouraging, and help her regain her confidence. Also, ask Heavenly Father to bless her with more faith and happiness.

Yue-Min L., 16, Taiwan



Tell her you see a marvelous future for her, and tell her how much Heavenly Father loves her and that He has a plan prepared for her. He has given her some work before

she came to this life, and she is the one to do it and fulfill His will. There are so many souls waiting to listen to the gospel from her and receive her warm love for them. I would especially tell her that she's one of God's beloved daughters.

Elizabeth B., 20, Andhrapradesh, India



If you think that she may actually take her own life, ask someone for help, such as a bishop, branch president, or another trustworthy adult. Next, let your friend know

that her family, friends, and her Heavenly Father care about her. Pray that she might feel that love, and pray for guidance that you might be able to help her. Also, talk to her and let her know that you are always there to listen, and invite her to uplifting activities that can help take her mind off of her feelings of depression.

Olivia C., 19, Ontario, Canada



The first thing you should do is tell someone. Tell an adult whom you know and trust. He or she can help you to figure out what to do. You can also help your friend. Sometimes the

best thing to do is just to listen; don't be the talker. People just want someone to listen to them.

Alexandra M., 17, Quebec, Canada



“I have dealt myself with the debilitating effects of depression. But I have learned from my own experience, and I learn from those I meet, that we are never left to our own resources. We are never abandoned. A wellspring of goodness, of strength and confidence is within us, and when we listen with a feeling of trust, we are raised up. We are healed. We not only survive, but we love life.”

Kathleen H. Hughes, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, “Blessed by Living Water,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 13.

As one who was depressed, I can give you advice from my experience. Let your friend know you are always there for her to talk to, and let her know you don't judge her. Let her know she is important to you. Having a roommate who listened to me and was willing to help me made the biggest difference to me. Priesthood blessings also helped.

Name withheld



Pay your friend a visit, and take her out to have fun, to help her feel happy and accepted in your circle of friends. Also pray for her, and sometimes pray and read scriptures

with her. Attend Church meetings and activities with her. Let her know how important she is to you and to our Father in Heaven. Encourage her to be fit spiritually and physically.

Grace A., 20, Ghana

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

NEXT QUESTION

“Sometimes my mom and I don't get along. We say things we shouldn't and end up with hurt feelings. I pray to love her, but the good feelings last only so long. What can I do to improve our relationship?”

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

New Era, Q&A, 3/07

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, 2007.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS



DRESS APPROPRIATELY. DON'T LET A BAD CHOICE TRIP YOU UP.
(See *For the Strength of Youth* [2001], 14–16.)

REVERENCING

Latter-day Saint youth in South Africa know the house of the Lord is worthy of their deepest respect.

BY PAUL VANDENBERGHE
Church Magazines

Naledi Mqokozo has been coming to the temple grounds since she was small. And now that she is older and often in the temple, you could say the temple is in her—in her heart and in her thoughts. “I have a picture in my room of the Johannesburg temple,” says Naledi, 17. “I put the picture up on my wall so I can always think clean thoughts and help keep the presence of the Spirit.”

It’s a little rainy on this morning in Johannesburg, South Africa. But the rain has not dampened the happy mood of Naledi and the other youth from the Ennerdale Branch, Johannesburg South Africa Stake, who have come to the temple to perform baptisms for the dead. Naledi is here because she “wanted an opportunity to see the temple again and to experience the Spirit of the Lord.” To Naledi, a day at the temple is not just another day. “This is a special occasion and a special moment,” she says, “so we should dress and act in a special way.”

Naledi understands that the temple is a sacred place: “We should be very reverent in the temple because it is the house of God and it has the Holy Spirit inside. So we should prepare ourselves and carry ourselves in a moral way and be very clean and respectful.”



Holiness to the Lord

Temples are literally houses of the Lord. In fact, inscribed on every temple are the words, “The House of the Lord, Holiness to the Lord.” They are the most sacred places of worship on earth. Because the temple is holy and because the work that is performed there is holy, everyone who attends the temple must be clean and worthy. In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Savior promised:

“Inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, . . . my glory shall rest upon it;

“Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God” (D&C 97:15–16).

Does this mean that everyone who goes to the temple will see God? Elder David B. Haight (1906–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

“It is true that some have actually seen the Savior, but when one consults the dictionary, he learns that there are many other meanings of the word *see*, such as coming to know Him, discerning Him, recognizing Him and His work, perceiving His importance, or coming to understand Him.

“Such heavenly enlightenment and blessings are available to each of us.”¹

Louis Groenewald, president of the Johannesburg temple, says that the youth of the Church can expect to learn more about the Savior and more about themselves

THE TEMPLE



Opposite page: Letsoalo Tumi stands outside the Johannesburg temple. Above: Henry Mkhonza sets a good example of reverence. Inset (left to right): Henry Mkhonza, Grace Nkosi, Palesa Mqokozo, and Lindiwe Morei meet with temple president Louis Groenewald.

in these holy buildings. “The temple not only provides a sacred opportunity to do work for the dead,” he says. “It also helps prepare our youth to have a fulness of life in this life and in the next.” The blessings from serving in the temple are many.

Four Great Blessings

First, says President Groenewald, as youth attend the temple they will have the privilege



Youth who attend the temple have the privilege of coming closer to the Savior in His house.



of coming closer to their Father in Heaven and the Savior in His house. This is what Elder Haight spoke about when he said that the temple is a place to come to know the Lord.

Second is the opportunity of serving unselfishly. President Groenewald says that this kind of service “is the basis of charity and the Spirit of Christ.” He goes on to say: “Hopefully the youth will have many experiences of coming to do baptisms for the dead, and then this will eventually lead them to receive their own endowment and the sacred sealing opportunity. These ordinances open the portals to unlimited blessings in the eternities.”

Temple ordinances are the third great blessing President Groenewald points out: “Without these ordinances we cannot obtain a fulness of life or exaltation.” The endowment and celestial marriage are two of these ordinances. The endowment consists of a series of instructions and includes covenants, or promises, we make to live righteously and follow the Savior’s teachings. Celestial marriage is the temple



Top: Naledi Mqokozo keeps a picture of the Johannesburg temple in her room to help her feel the Spirit. Above (clockwise from left): Roxanne Cockrell, Vincent Maiete, Kyle Zeeman, and Jimmy Plaattjes enjoy the temple grounds.

ordinance that seals a husband and wife together with their children for eternity.

And fourth, “the temple puts everything together,” explains President Groenewald. He says that everything the youth are taught in the Church is reinforced and brought together in the temple. And all those teachings revolve around the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation. In the temple, “the gospel becomes one great, whole experience.”

Temple Peace

“This is the Lord’s house, so we need to show respect and be at peace,” says Vincent Maiete, 17, of the Ridgeway Ward. Vincent

came to the temple early in the morning along with other youth from his ward, including Roxanne Cockrell, Jimmy Plaatjies, and Kyle Zeeman.

Roxanne, 14, says, “It was my choice to come to the temple instead of sleeping.” But getting up early was worth it. She’s glad she chose to perform baptisms for the dead along with her friends. “I helped people. It was a good experience.”

Kyle, 17, looks around at the beautiful grounds of the temple. Everything is lightly damp after the early morning rains. “There is a serenity here that you don’t feel anywhere else,” he says. “Sometimes you have to make small sacrifices to come here, but it’s good to come. I want to marry in the temple.”

“Having a temple here in South Africa means a lot,” says Jimmy, 20. “We are able to perform these special ordinances, being baptized for our family members who have passed on. It’s a big blessing for us. The Spirit, especially when you are inside the temple, is strong. Even when you are outside, you can just feel the peace.”

Dressed for Respect

Palesa Mqokozo, 14, of the Ennerdale Branch, always wears her best clothing when she comes to the temple. “I dress this way out of respect for our Heavenly Father,” she explains. She has that respect because of the way she feels when she comes to the temple. “When you enter the house of the Lord, you feel no temptation and you know that everything is right here. You are not going to go wrong.”

President Groenewald smiles as he says, “The youth come to the temple dressed appropriately. What is proper dress? It is your best Sunday dress.” It is the same clothing you would wear to sacrament meeting. “Their dress should be neat, appropriate for Sunday, the best they have,” he says. “That is the standard.”

Henry Mkhonza, 18, also from the Ennerdale Branch, stands with his hands folded as he talks about the temple. Henry looks the part of a missionary—a calling he has



“Take advantage of the opportunity of being baptized in behalf of the dead. And then let that sacred experience become an anchor to

your lives, that you so conduct yourselves at all times and in all circumstances that, at the proper time, you may secure a special and restricted credit card with the Lord, even a recommend to His holy House, there to enjoy all of its blessings and privileges.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Keeping the Temple Holy,” *Ensign*, May 1990, 49.

been preparing for for a long time. “Reverence is what people see—the way you dress, the way you act. It reflects a lot upon who you are,” he explains. “If you are reverent in the way you dress, you don’t really have to say much. People can tell from that what is important to you.”

“There is a significance in the way we dress,” agrees Stephanie Madhav, 16, of the Ennerdale Branch, “because the temple is so magnificent. It is the house of the Lord, and so we dress as if we were in the presence of the Lord.”

What these youth have come to understand is that proper dress and grooming show their respect and reverence. “It all becomes symbolic of a great heritage,” says President Groenewald. “For example, it’s not about the white shirt; really it’s about the symbol of purity. Those who don’t see clearly see the *symbol* as the *substance*. A white shirt is simply a symbol of purity. It’s not a case of fashion or style; it’s a case of my indicating outwardly that in my heart and mind I want to follow the living prophets.”

Prepared for the Future

The peace in heart and mind, the joy from service, the confidence in self are clear in the faces of these young men and young women from Johannesburg. Because they have a firm sense of the sacred nature of the temple and the blessings that are available in these holy houses, they are examples of righteousness to others.

The blessings of the temple are evident in the lives of the youth in South Africa, just as President Groenewald promised. “The youth are developing a sense of their chosen sisterhood and brotherhood,” he says. “They are becoming more confident to go out and do the work of the Lord. This feeling will carry them through thick and thin. Yes, at the temple, the Lord is preparing the youth for their future.” **NE**

NOTE

1. “Temples and Work Therein,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 59.

Mama's REFRIGERATOR

How did my mother use a strange yellow refrigerator to teach us? By allowing it to show us what matters most.

BY EMMA E. SÁNCHEZ SÁNCHEZ

I don't remember seeing my father cry during my mother's funeral or at any other time during her last few days. He seemed to be the one in charge of consoling everyone else. But one night after the burial, I saw my father weep in front of our old refrigerator, as he looked at all that Mama had put there. The refrigerator was covered with mementos of my mother's life.

When my parents got married, they bought the refrigerator secondhand. My mother took it upon herself to paint it a strange yellow color I have never seen on any other refrigerator. (She also ended up painting the floor, some of the other furniture, and a new dress.) But we actually saw the strange yellow color only when the refrigerator broke down, had to have a new part, and Mama took everything off of it.

Its color was hidden because my mother covered it with all sorts of things: a good cartoon from the newspaper, a well-known saying, my dad's picture, scriptures to be memorized, the ticket from the cleaners, an ad for some product, a letter to be answered, a recipe, the shopping list, the ward telephone directory, and even our report cards. As we got older, she put up lists of weekly assignments, schedules, and messages for the family. We didn't have a chalkboard or a bulletin board, so

our parents also posted gospel pictures on the refrigerator.

In February, my mom would put up a big heart with all our names written on it; in March, her wedding picture and a list of some things she would like for her birthday. June she dedicated to Dad, because it was the month of his birthday—she did the same in the month each of us was born. In September, a Mexican flag was displayed. In November, the month in which my parents remembered their ancestors, Mom put up pictures of loved ones, providing an opening to talk about them. In December, she displayed a small nativity scene she had fashioned out of cloth.

Each time one of us went on a mission, Mom stuck a missionary photo on the fridge and didn't take it down until our return. When Mom's only brother died, she displayed on the refrigerator a picture of the two of them together and never took it down. She didn't ever mention it, but to see her so profoundly contemplating that picture, we knew how much her brother meant to her.

Together, the refrigerator and my mother united the family.

Today in my own home there is a refrigerator that, although new and not a strange yellow color, is learning its duty of uniting and teaching the family. The old photo of my parents' wedding, another of my aunt, and the formless artwork made by my little children hang there. And when I see these objects, I think of my mother and thank her for teaching me to understand how a refrigerator can nourish in more ways than just keeping food cold. **NE**



IN HIS OWN BACK-YARD

BY SARA FAUST

Digging up the past meant finding a future career.

A narrow dirt path leads into the trees and down a steep hill. At the bottom, the sound of a fast-moving creek rumbles in your ears. Sunlight winds its way down to the tall grasses and shrubs along its bank. A perfect place to spend your summer. Actually, 14-year-old Abram Sorensen does spend almost all summer here. It's his backyard, but he's not just playing. He's working on an archaeological dig. This is the place where he made his first big discovery.

For as long as he can remember, Abram has loved to dig. He can't say exactly why, but he's been digging and collecting since he was four. His official project began when he was nine. He saw something poking out of the ground in his backyard. He dug a little and found some bits of pottery, metal, and glass. Not much, but it was enough to spark his curiosity. "I just wanted to know why the stuff was there in the first place. I thought it was pretty cool," he says. So he kept digging. "He dug all summer," Abram's dad, Roger, recalls.

Eventually Abram found more than pieces of glass—lots more. After four years



Abram's interest in archaeology started in his backyard but led him to volunteer with Ron Rood (right), Utah's assistant state archaeologist.





The Book of Mormon is one of Abram's favorite books. He found that digging deep applies to scriptures as well as the ground.

of digging, Abram has collected over 10,000 objects. "That's when I stopped counting," he says.

What has he found? Marbles, buttons, farm tools, glass medicine bottles, dishes, nails, even a toy car. "This is the first thing I found—this lock," Abram says as he holds up the dark gray pieces. "I found all the pieces, and I fit them together. It had broken up while it was in the ground."

Where did it come from?

Why was all this stuff in his backyard? "It's an old pioneer dump site," explains Abram's mom, Rebecca. "The early settlers used to dump along the creek banks." In 1869, pioneers began developing the area of the Salt Lake Valley where Abram's home now stands. Some of the objects Abram has found come from those first pioneers.

From the beginning, Abram wondered about the stories behind some of his discoveries. He tried looking in the library for information—nothing. He asked other people—no luck. His mom then called a professional archaeologist. Ron Rood, the assistant state archaeologist, came to Abram's house. He was so impressed with nine-year-old Abram's questions and notes about the discoveries that he invited Abram to a state dig site where he put Abram in charge of sketching. Abram has continued to work with Rood on other projects. This past summer, while working on a dig, Abram found a 1,000-year-old arrowhead. Now

Abram regularly helps in Utah's state archaeology lab.

Digging into the Book of Mormon

In addition to digging, Abram has another great love—the Book of Mormon. When his younger sister passed away in 2005, Abram read the Book of Mormon for comfort. He says, "As I started reading it more, I really got interested, and now I'm studying more and more."

Abram has learned a lot while studying. "It gave me a stronger testimony when Christ came to teach the people. And it talked about a lot of things that He taught that we still do today. That was a big leap in my testimony. It was really special," he says.

Luckily, Abram gets to combine his two passions: there's a strong connection between the Book of Mormon and archaeology. The Book of Mormon talks about changes in the land before Jesus Christ visited the Nephites. And there are a lot of fascinating archaeological details in the Book of Mormon. Maybe Abram can help make connections between the two in the future.

All this has helped Abram realize that he wants to be an archaeologist in Central America when he grows up. For teens trying to figure out what they want to do or study, he suggests, "Just follow your inspiration and do what you're interested in at the time. If it changes, then change with it. And if you really like something, then stick with it and work more." In other words, dig deep. **NE**



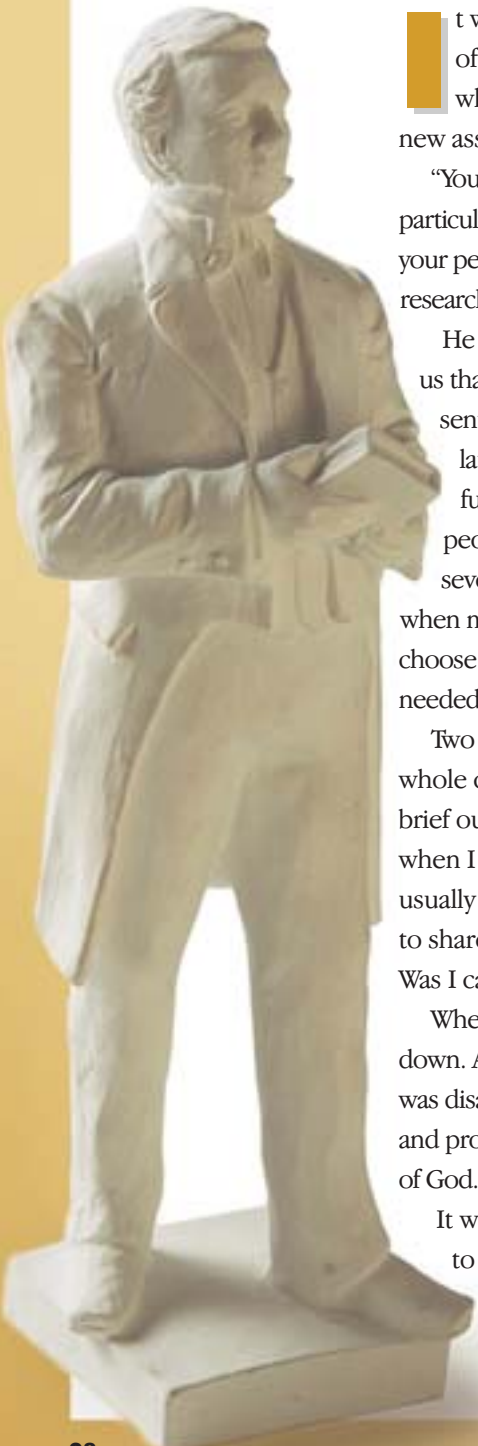
8 WAYS TO FIND WHAT YOU LIKE TO DO

1. Identify what you like to do. What are your favorite classes? What clubs do you belong to? What are you interested in?
2. Learn about what kinds of jobs go along with your interests. Check out career books from the library.
3. If you're having a hard time finding something, try out different things.
4. Think about your personality. Would you like a fast-paced job? Do you like helping others?
5. Ask adults you know about the jobs they have.
6. Have your parents, teachers, or Church leaders help you meet someone who works someplace where you'd like to work.
7. If possible, spend time at that person's workplace.
8. Take a work interest test at a career center at your school or elsewhere.

3 QUESTIONS TO ASK ADULTS

1. What do you do for a living?
2. Do you like it? Why?
3. How did you get there?

O F G R E P O R T



It was near the end of the first semester of my sophomore year in high school when my English teacher announced a new assignment to the class.

“You will each be doing a research paper on a particular person,” he stated. “You may choose your person, but you will need to do some research on them, so they must be real people.”

He passed around the guidelines and told us that we were to give brief preliminary presentations in two days, and then, two weeks later, we were to present our papers in full. We brainstormed different ideas for people to report on, and my list included several great presidents and authors. But when my teacher mentioned that we could also choose “great religious leaders,” I knew that I needed to do my paper on Joseph Smith.

Two days later, I had to get up and tell the whole class who I was reporting on and give a brief outline of who he was. I felt so shaky when I got up to speak, even though I am usually a good public speaker. I was terrified to share my knowledge about Joseph Smith. Was I casting pearls before swine?

When my brief presentation was over, I sat down. And even though everyone applauded, I was disappointed in my inability to speak clearly and proudly about a man I knew was a prophet of God. My throat had been tight the entire time.

It was then that I realized that if I wanted to teach my class the truth about Joseph Smith, I needed to learn more about him for myself and truly come to know who he was.

I began researching the life of Joseph Smith at home, first in *Joseph Smith—History*, and then in an institute manual called *Church History in the Fulness of Times*. I found out many things concerning the life, First Vision, and martyrdom of Joseph Smith. After days of study and prayer I began to realize just how great a man Joseph Smith really was, and my testimony of him was greatly strengthened. As I began writing my report, my heart and mind were full of a greater knowledge of Joseph Smith, which gave me courage as I typed out my report. I titled my report “Joseph Smith: Seeker of Truth, Defender of Righteousness.” My heart swells with the power and truth in that title, even to this day.

The night before my project was due, I called the missionaries to ask them if I should tell my class about Joseph Smith’s First Vision and was comforted by their words of encouragement and approval. They even said that they would pray for me in my efforts.

The next day in class, I said many silent prayers—prayers for the Spirit to be there, prayers for me not to be weak in my speech, prayers for me to convey the power of my message through my voice. Finally, my name was called, and I got up to give my presentation.

I gathered my courage and told my classmates all about Joseph Smith’s search for truth and his First Vision. I recounted how the Prophet was persecuted throughout his life and even martyred for his testimony, but how he could not deny what he knew. The Spirit was very strong in the room as I ended by

BY AUBRI J. POPE

Who would have thought that a class project would help me come to know the Prophet Joseph Smith?

bearing my testimony that if we want to find out the truth of something, all we have to do is ask God with real intent.

When I was done, I sat down and silently thanked my Heavenly Father for the strong presence of the Spirit and for the strength that He put into my words. At the end of class, my teacher asked if there were any students who wanted to leave their reports for his other classes in the coming years, and I decided to leave mine, asking for the Spirit to be with those who would read it.

Now I realize that even if no one in that class joins the Church or changes their opinion about the Prophet Joseph Smith, my testimony was strengthened because I stood “as [a witness] of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9). **NE**

**I knew
I had to
learn all
I could about the
Prophet Joseph before
I could share my testimony
with the class.**



Joseph Smith: Seeker of
Many people have heard
of the Christ of Latter-day Saints
The purpose of my report is to show
for the truth. My report
of his life defending
that no matter how
with always stood
Joseph Smith was born
one children. When he was
York, which was then on the
Manchester.
his story as he tells it himself: "Some time in the second
Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an un-
religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but so-
in that region of country. Indeed, the whole dis-
ed no small stir and division amongst the peo-
there? Some were contending for the Baptist
some for the Baptist
of their conversion, and the great re-
ve in getting up and promoting
have everybody converted, as
pleasant, yet when the conver-
it was seen that the seem-
more pretended than
contending against
one for another, if it
about opinions.

A NIGHT *to Remember*

BY JANET THOMAS
Church Magazines

Something was missing at this prom—and everyone was glad it was gone.

It's prom night: girls in fancy hairdos and beautiful dresses; guys looking their best, some in tuxedos or suits. There's music, decorations, good food, and lots of new people to meet.

But there are a few things missing from this particular prom, like crude dance moves, offensive song lyrics, girls in immodest dresses, and guys who have been drinking.

The reason? Instead of being sponsored by a local high school, this prom is being held at the Grand Blanc Michigan Stake Center and is sponsored by five stakes in the area.

While there is a lot of good in the whole idea of going to a prom where everyone is dressed up, using

their best manners, and learning how to dance properly, what isn't so great is what many proms sponsored by the public schools have become.

The solution: put on your own prom, but with Church standards as the guide.

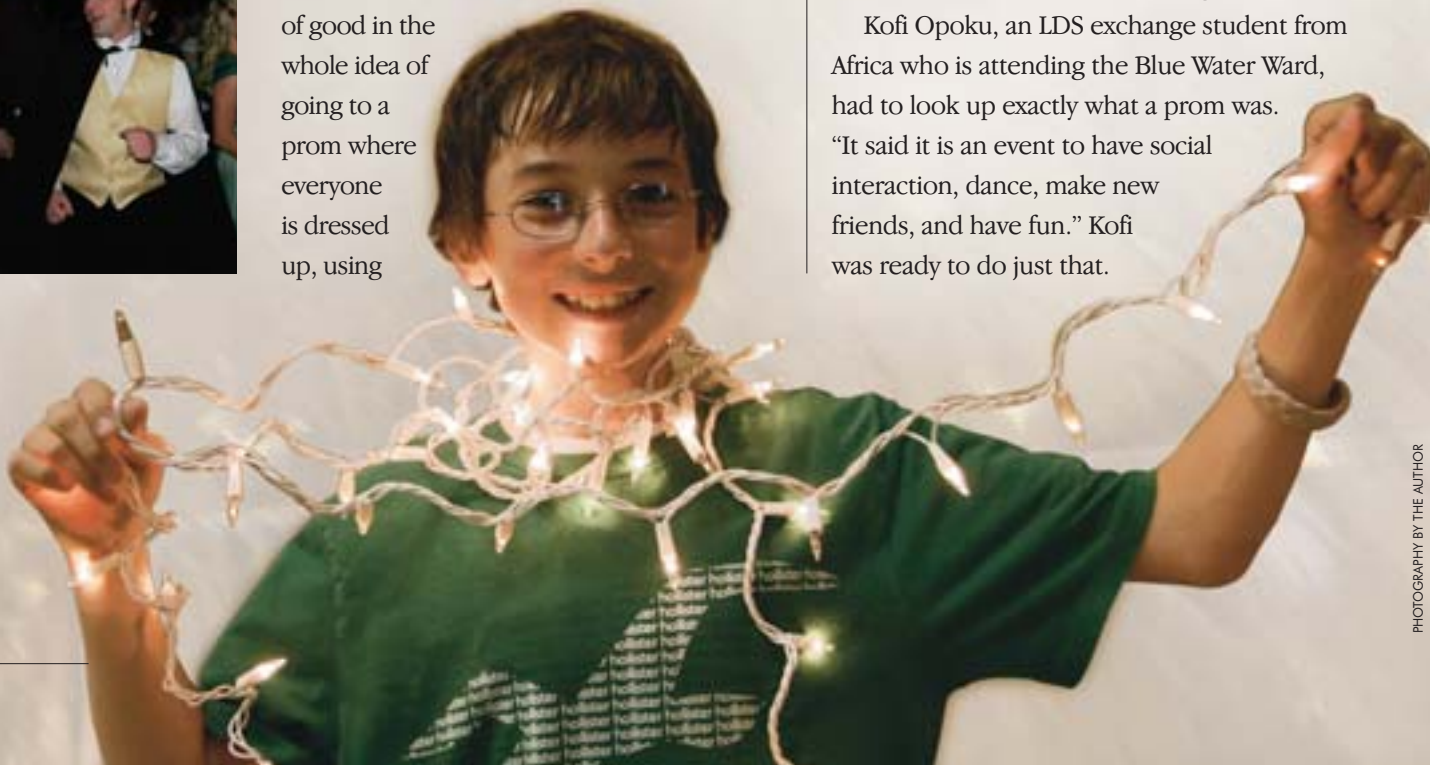
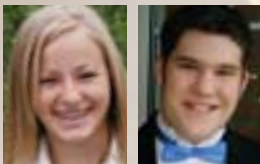
Five stakes in Michigan got together and went all out to plan and pull off the best prom ever, where LDS teens didn't have to worry about anything but who they wanted to dance with next.

And how did the teens respond to the whole idea of a Mormon prom?

Abby Clough of the Rochester Ward said, "Every time our leaders talked about it, it got bigger—three stakes, then four, then five. There were going to be so many people there."

Having more new people to meet became a huge draw. "Awesome," said Eric Griffin of the Blue Water Ward, "three times the girls to meet."

Kofi Opoku, an LDS exchange student from Africa who is attending the Blue Water Ward, had to look up exactly what a prom was. "It said it is an event to have social interaction, dance, make new friends, and have fun." Kofi was ready to do just that.





The Grand Blanc Michigan Stake was lit up for the evening. In preparation, Alysse Wright was busy gathering balloons to be used as decorations. Max Nichols got caught up in stringing lights. Teens from the Rochester and Blue Water Wards and the Lexington Branch were also on hand.



Taking Care of the Music

To make this Mormon prom happen, a few items needed to be addressed.

First, the music. Jake Anderson of the Fenton Ward remembered a bad experience with music at his school prom. He said, "They had one line in one song with cuss words in a row. They quieted the music so everyone could scream out the line. The songs were degrading." But he knew he didn't have to worry about that happening here. The disk jockey was a member of the Church and was sensitive to what would be appropriate. Plus, he had help in picking out the songs.

Right on the Money

School proms can be very expensive. As Brad Roemmich of the Clarkston Ward said, "You buy the tickets. Some people want limos. You have to pitch in for that. There's the corsage and tux rental and dinner. It ends up in the hundreds."

The stake prom used plenty of volunteers including adult leaders and the youth committees from all the stakes to decorate, fix food,

and even act as photographers and coat-check attendants. Volunteers also manned the doors as security, patrolled parked cars in the parking lot, and created and distributed party favors. And, of course, because it was held at the stake center, there was no location rental fee.

Finding a Modest Dress

For prom, girls want to look pretty. They want a great dress and the fun of dressing up. And the guys actually appreciate the dresses more when they are modest. When Briton Moffitt of the Rochester Ward was asked if the girls looked good, he answered firmly, "Most definitely."

Tiffany Morris of the Bloomfield Hills Troy Ward commented, "Here the guys say, 'You look beautiful,' instead of 'You look hot.' It seems like a real compliment."

But modest dresses are hard to find. So where did all these hundreds of girls find modest prom dresses for this dance?

They were inventive and persistent.

"I went online and found a store that sold modest dresses."

"My mom made it for

Good friends were together having fun and having their photos taken. The style included fun to fancy, but all were modest. The dancing was traditional, and that's the way everyone wanted it.



Welcome!

Star Light Prom 2006

me, and it turned out really well.”

“I got mine at the Salvation Army. It’s vintage . . . and inexpensive.”

“Mine is actually a costume from a musical I was in.”

“I bought one and then made a cute jacket to go over it.”

“I borrowed from my friend and bought a short sweater to go with it.”

“I found a cute top, and I already had a long skirt.”

One ward even paired up each girl with a Relief Society sister who could sew, and they made dresses that were nice for a dance and could be worn as a Sunday dress as well.

Groups of girls had great fun gathering to get ready. Lacey Paulson of the Bloomfield Hills Troy Ward said, “We came about two hours early. We were all curling each other’s hair and eating pizza and listening to music.”

Doug Jackson from the same ward was listening to Lacey and shrugged, “I got ready in 15 minutes.”

Brian Henson of the Midland Second Ward was even faster. He jokingly said, “The girls get ready together. Guys, we just shower, play some video games, and five minutes before you have to leave, you brush your teeth and get dressed.”

And how did the guys dress? Some came in tuxedos, but many of them confessed that they had tuxedos because they played in orchestra or sang in school choirs. Brad Jones of the Midland Second Ward said one lady in his ward had some tuxedos she had bought at garage sales. He borrowed one of those.



Many looked great wearing their Sunday suits or nice dress slacks and a shirt and tie.

Shall We Dance?

The dancing at this prom was going to be something everyone could enjoy. Jake Anderson of the Fenton Ward had just attended his school prom and was acutely aware of the difference between the Mormon prom and his school prom. “It’s nice not to worry about the dancing. You don’t have to be in the uncomfortable situation where someone wants to dance with you, and you really don’t want to because you know how they want to dance and you have to say no.”

Many wards had prepared the teens by giving dance instruction during midweek activities before the prom. Most felt prepared to have fun and dance ballroom style. Amanda Rosenhan of the Grand Blanc Ward said, “We dance kind of old-fashioned, and I like that.”

No Regrets

At the end of the night, the teens in Michigan went home with some nice dance photos, a few treats to eat in the car, and memories of a fun evening. This prom was a night to remember, not a night to regret.

Faran Clark of the Lansing Holt Ward said, “A lot more people came than in past multi-stake dances. I guess it’s about dressing up and having a nice night out. You get to primp and look nice.”

And, as her friend Andrea Brown of the Lansing Owosso Ward added, “It’s a good chance for us to realize that we can have fun together and still keep our standards.” **NE**

Old friends and new
were pulled into
group photos.

*Dancing was energetic,
and everyone felt
comfortable and relaxed
where both the dress
and the dance styles
were modest.*

IS ANYONE

BY RUSSELL WILCOX

*Putting someone down is
no way to build a friendship.*

Not long ago
I attended
a dance at a

stake that was not my own. The friend who invited me began introducing me to a group of girls standing near the door as we entered. Since I didn't know anyone, I was anxious to make some points with the ladies, so I said, "Wow. There sure are a lot of beautiful girls in your stake." My friend looked around the group and, trying to be funny, said loudly, "Where? Where? I don't see any." Needless to say, we were not the most popular guys at the dance that night.

If the above experience had been a scene on a TV show, my friend's "clever" comment would have been followed by laughter. In real life, the girls were offended and avoided us the rest of the evening. What many don't realize is that those producing TV shows use a laugh track—prerecorded laughter that can be turned on and off at the touch of a button. That's why laughter always follows sarcastic put-downs or mean jokes. It sounds like everyone enjoys the negative humor. In real life, there is no

LAUGHING?

People might put up with put-downs, but underneath the mask, they may be hurting.

laugh track. People might put up with put-downs and manage a chuckle for the sake of saving face, but deep down, negative humor hurts. No matter how perfect the timing or how smoothly executed the joke, usually the only ones laughing are those who are afraid they may be your next targets.

Keeping a sense of humor helps us endure the trials of life. It is truly medicine to the soul (see Proverbs 17:22). However, not all humor is good humor. Elder Robert E. Wells of the First Quorum of the Seventy wrote: "For some people, sharp questions or quick rejoinders are habits. Criticism is a form of humor



ILLUSTRATIONS BY DILLEN MARSH

A true friend allows others to be at ease, without fear of belittling barbs. And a true friend doesn't have to follow up every comment with "just kidding."

for them, and they enjoy feeling superior when they see someone else's discomfort. This is a tragic, sinful attitude that must be changed" ("Overcoming Those Differences of Opinion," *Ensign*, Jan. 1987, 60–61).

I know one young woman who goes home feeling deflated and unimportant almost every night after being around a certain young man in her group of friends. He constantly makes fun of, criticizes, and belittles her. I asked her why she continues to spend time with him, and she responded, "He says I have to learn how to take a joke. I figure it's not worth losing friends over." I'm concerned

about her decision to continue to be around this guy, and I wonder why he thinks he's so funny in the first place. How sad that she tries to cope with him rather than genuinely enjoying his company.

Brigham Young said that sarcastic and negative people "have little sense, and know not the difference between a happy smile of satisfaction to cheer the countenance of a friend, or a contemp-

tuous sneer that brings the curses of man upon man" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 89).

We should be able to joke around with our friends, but there is a big difference between *having* fun with joking and *making* fun through joking. True friends help you feel better about yourself. They don't try to make themselves feel better at your expense. True friends enjoy mutual trust as much as they enjoy a good laugh. True friends allow you to let your guard down instead of always requiring

you to keep your defenses up.

How do you know if your comments are building or hurting, just plain fun or crossing the line? Here is a test: How many times do you have to follow your comments up with the words *just kidding*? People think they can say whatever they want and then excuse their insensitivity with a quick, "Just kidding." It's a cop-out.

God did not send us here to degrade each other, but to bless each other. The scriptures instruct us to strengthen one another in all our conversations (see D&C 108:7).

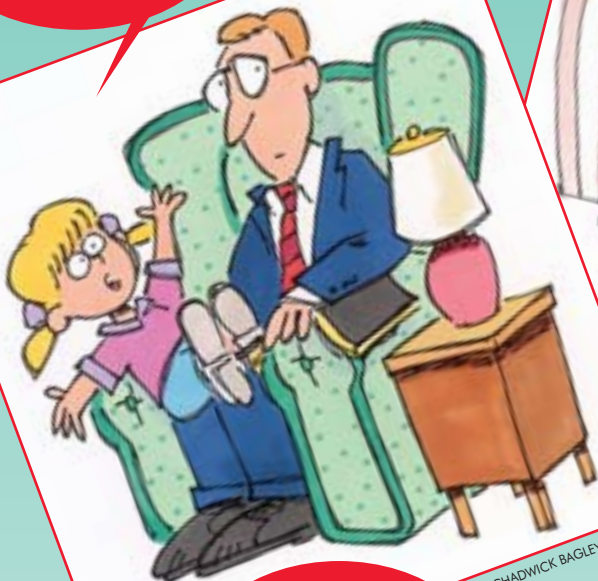
Most people realize that what they see on many TV programs is not real. They are able to recognize fake backdrops, fake snowflakes, and fake characters. So why is it so hard to recognize fake laughter? Negative humor hurts, and the resulting wounds go deep. In real life no one is laughing. Not really. Many remember careless comments for years.

It's time to use humor in positive ways to build those around us, and I'm not just kidding. **NE**



THE EXTRA SMILE

“Mom said that because you’re in the bishopric you ‘sit on the stand.’ . . . How do you sit when you stand?!”



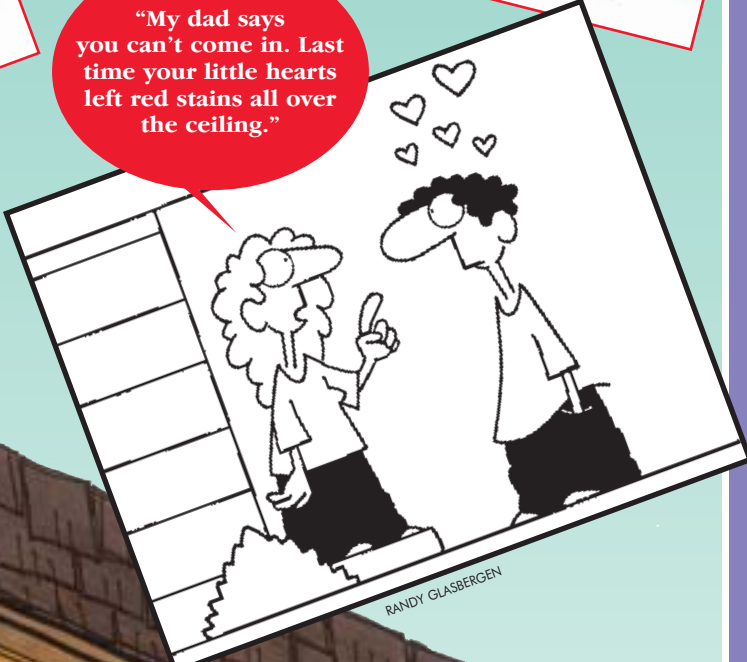
VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

“A-HA!”



RYAN STOKER

“My dad says you can’t come in. Last time your little hearts left red stains all over the ceiling.”



RANDY GLASBERGEN

“I guess I shouldn’t have put the elephants, rhinos, and hippos all together.”



I N A W O R D

Hope

In our everyday language, the word *hope* often has a hint of uncertainty. For example, we may say that we hope for a change in the weather or a visit from a friend. In the language of the gospel, however, the word *hope* is sure, unwavering, and active. When we have hope, we trust God's promises. We have a quiet assurance that if we do "the works of righteousness," we "shall receive [our] reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23).

We increase in hope as we pray and seek God's forgiveness. In the Book of Mormon, a missionary named Aaron assured a Lamanite king, "If thou wilt repent of all thy sins, and will bow down before God, and call on his name in faith, believing that ye shall receive, then shalt thou receive the hope which thou desirest" (Alma 22:16). We also gain hope as we study the scriptures and follow their teachings.



ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL MANN

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE PLEASANT SECOND WARD



Arise and Rocket Forth

Youth and leaders witnessed an awesome spectacle in the morning sky of Arizona last February. Two high-powered, nine-foot-tall, fiberglass rockets launched into the sky with spectacular results.

Three months of design and construction culminated in a friendly competition between the young men and young women of the Pleasant Second Ward in Chandler, Arizona. Guided by Mia Maid Mara Egolf and her father—both members of the Arizona High Power Rocketry Association—the youth

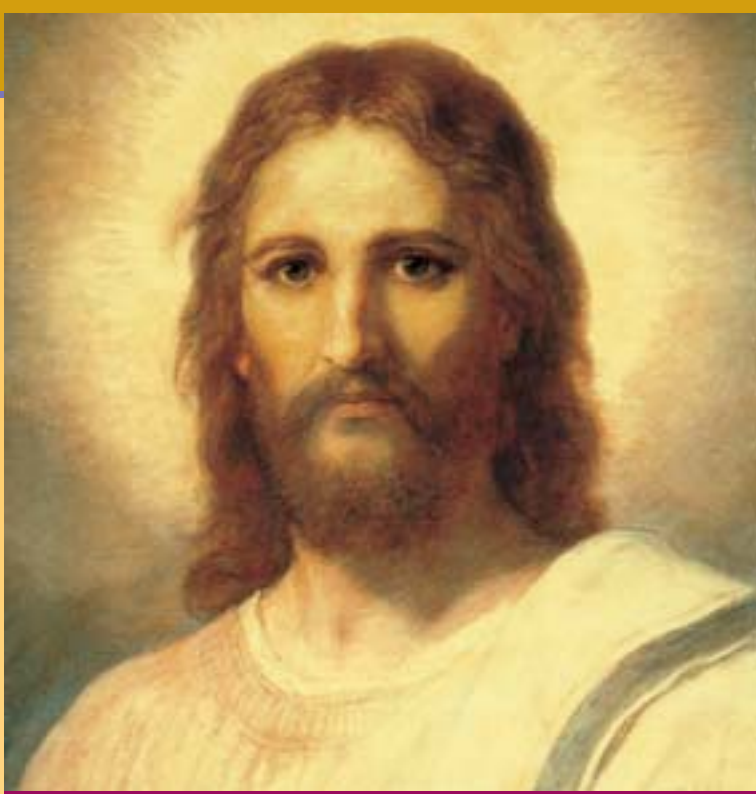
spent several Saturday mornings learning about rocket construction.

The youth each wrote down goals to help them arise and shine forth in the coming year. The young men put their goals in their red-and-gold "Sons of Helaman" rocket, and the young women put theirs in their purple-and-white "Integrity" rocket. Then both rockets were launched into the heavens.

As for the competition, there is some controversy over which rocket won. In a flight faithful to the name she bears, "Integrity" functioned flawlessly, and

according to onboard readings reached an altitude of 11,619 feet before parachuting gracefully back to earth.

There's a saying in model rocketry, Brother Egolf told the youth, "When things go according to plan, it's cool. When things go bad, it's way cool." "Sons of Helaman" arced at just under 12,000 feet before a malfunction caused the rocket, traveling at nearly the speed of sound, to crash into the desert floor. At the impact crater the young men were able to salvage only two tail fins and a piece of the nosecone.



GENERAL YOUNG WOMEN BROADCAST

On March 24, 2007, join with hundreds of thousands of young women, who will come together to be taught by prophets and leaders. You will be part of this gathering of young women assembled in meetinghouses across the world. All young women ages 12–18 should attend with their mothers and Young Women leaders.

You can prepare by reading your scriptures, praying, and by doing the following:

- ❖ Look through your copy of *For the Strength of Youth*, and circle each reference to the Spirit, or highlight the promises found in the booklet, or choose one standard, study it, and make and carry out goals for living this standard.
- ❖ Memorize D&C 121:45.
- ❖ Review the 13th article of faith.
- ❖ Memorize “As Zion’s Youth in Latter Days” (*Hymns*, no. 256).

For those who receive KBYU or BYUTV, note the following times for the initial broadcast and later rebroadcast:

Live broadcast	Rebroadcast
8 p.m. Eastern time	10 p.m. Eastern time
7 p.m. Central time	9 p.m. Central time
6 p.m. Mountain time	8 p.m. Mountain time
5 p.m. Pacific time	7 p.m. Pacific time

This meeting will also be broadcast on the Internet at www.lds.org/broadcast.

EXTREME NEIGHBORHOOD MAKEOVER

Getting up early on a Saturday morning to shingle roofs, paint houses, and mow lawns after being soaked in a mountain downpour the day before might deter some people, but not youth from the Alpine Utah Stake.

Nearly 400 youth and 100 leaders and adults joined forces on June 10, 2006, to work on a huge fix-up project as part of their stake’s three-day youth conference. The stake’s “Extreme Neighborhood Makeover” literally transformed a small neighborhood in Provo, Utah: 5 houses were reroofed, 15 were painted, and a few new lawns were put in. In all, 25 houses in the neighborhood had at least one type of repair performed.

“It’s a party,” “This is fabulous,” “It’s amazing,” and “I can’t believe how early they were here,” were some of the comments by residents as they watched the youth descend on their neighborhood with scrapers, paint, and ladders.

“It’s just been amazing to watch how hard these kids have worked,” said Joseph Nilson, stake president of the Alpine Utah Stake. “To me, you don’t have to go too far to find service opportunities, and it’s wonderful for them to get out and see their religion in action.”



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF ALPINE UTAH STAKE

REMEMBER ME?

BY JEANNETTE MCQUEEN-NOBBS

My parents were baptized members of the Church just before I was born. We went to church every Sunday, and we would pray together. But after my ninth birthday, my family moved from Toronto, Canada, where the Church was strong, to a rural area with few members.

A few months later my family fell into some difficult financial times and became less active. For many years I lived in a home that did not have the gospel. I heard anger and even bitterness towards the Church expressed in my home.

When I was 17, some missionaries came to see us. At that time most of my siblings and I were caught up in worldly lifestyles and had no desire to change. We were disrespectful and rude to this missionary and his companion.

A year later I moved back to Toronto to work. I was lonely, so I looked up some members of the Church who had known me as a child.

I visited them on Saturday, and before I left they had asked me to go to church with them the next day. I agreed.

When I arrived, they introduced me to a young woman about my age, who took me to the Gospel Principles class. A missionary was teaching the lesson. I kept thinking I had met him before, but I didn't know where. At the end of class, I remembered. He was the missionary who had visited my family a year earlier.

After the closing prayer, I went up to him and described the day I had met him. He remembered me and my family. I told him that my parents had become less active when I was a child and had fought about the Church. My mother said the Church was true, but my father said it wasn't. I asked to be taught the discussions so that I could learn for myself if the Church was true. He

arranged for some missionaries from my area to teach me.

The missionaries came and taught me the discussions.

They challenged me to read the Book of Mormon. I agreed, and once I began reading, I couldn't put the book down. I read the Book of Mormon everywhere and could barely eat—I had such a desire to read the book. My soul hungered for it.

I didn't know right away if the Church was true. I continued reading the scriptures and attending Church meetings. I repented of my worldly ways. My testimony grew as I kept the commandments.

I felt the influence of the Spirit in my life. I realized that Christ had died for me so that I could repent. I began living a righteous life and have continued to do so. I became born of God in my heart, mind, and spirit. It's been a hard, long road, but I've overcome many obstacles, and now I rejoice in my testimony of the gospel. **NE**

VALUED FRIENDS

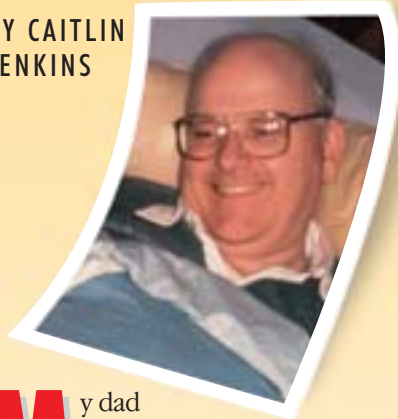
NAME WITHHELD

Because my school has only six members of the Church, it was extremely hard for me to find friends with the same values. I felt lost and confused. The youth in my ward were nice people, but we never really hung out. I didn't know the other youth in my stake very well because it was so spread out.

At the peak of my confusion, my stake put on a dance festival. I love to dance, so I immediately signed up for the dance team. I think that was the best thing I ever did. I got to know

MAKING GRANDPA PROUD

BY CAITLIN JENKINS



My dad tells us stories about my grandpa all the time. My grandpa was very strong in the Church, and so is my dad. The stories my dad tells us help me to stay strong in the Church because I can feel how strong my grandpa's testimony was. My grandpa's strength helps me to overcome challenges because it gives me the desire to make the right choices so that we can be together again in eternity. I want to make my grandpa happy, and I want to make him proud of me. **NE**

most of the youth in my stake that I never would have known otherwise. These people have been welcoming and friendly, and best of all, they have the same values I do.

Since making these friends, I have been so much happier. The people I hung out with before didn't have my values, and I felt so trapped and weak. The people in my stake have made me a stronger person, and I'm grateful for them. **NE**

WHAT I TAUGHT MY TEACHER

BY LAWRENCE J. WYNDER

My English teacher has a habit of taking the Lord's name in vain whenever there is a distraction in the class. One day I approached her privately after class and said, "I feel very uncomfortable when you say God's name when someone disturbs you while you're talking. Maybe you could use other words, but I feel very uncomfortable when people say His name that way around me."

My English teacher thanked me for coming to talk to her, but she said she would have to think about it. After that week, she didn't profane the Lord's name for a long time, except once or twice when the word would just come out of her mouth, but I understood how hard it is not to make a mistake again when it is a habit. I realized how important it is to spend time with people to let them know what your standards are. Never be ashamed of doing what is right, because there's always someone that stands on your side. I was so grateful to see this change in my English teacher. Not only does she not use the Lord's name, but I realized that her attitude has changed, too.

As it says in Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." I won't ever feel ashamed of asking people to not misuse our Heavenly Father's name, because it is sacred. We should always stand up for our standards, and for our Heavenly Father, because of the blessings and courage that He gives us. **NE**



Where is Your BOOK OF MORMON?



When we tried to offer a copy of the Book of Mormon to the Korean shopkeeper, he drew back a curtain covering a bookcase with at least 12 copies. Obviously, someone had been there before us.

BY ELDER DAVID E. SORENSON

Served as a member of the Seventy from 1992 to 2005

If you want peace—if you want understanding—get the Book of Mormon off the shelf and into your heart.

Some years ago I was working with the missionaries in Korea. We walked into a furniture store in downtown Seoul and were soon introduced to the proprietor. He was very kind to the elders. I listened to them encouraging him to accept a copy of the Book of Mormon. I do not speak Korean, but I understood enough to know the proprietor was friendly and open to the missionaries. In a few moments he invited us upstairs to his apartment. He walked over to what we thought was a window, where he drew back the curtain to reveal a bookshelf. It held at least 12 copies of the Book of Mormon in the Korean language. Obviously, someone had been there before us. My thought at that time was, “We need to place a copy of the Book of Mormon in this man’s heart, not on his bookshelf.”

Place the Book of Mormon in Your Heart

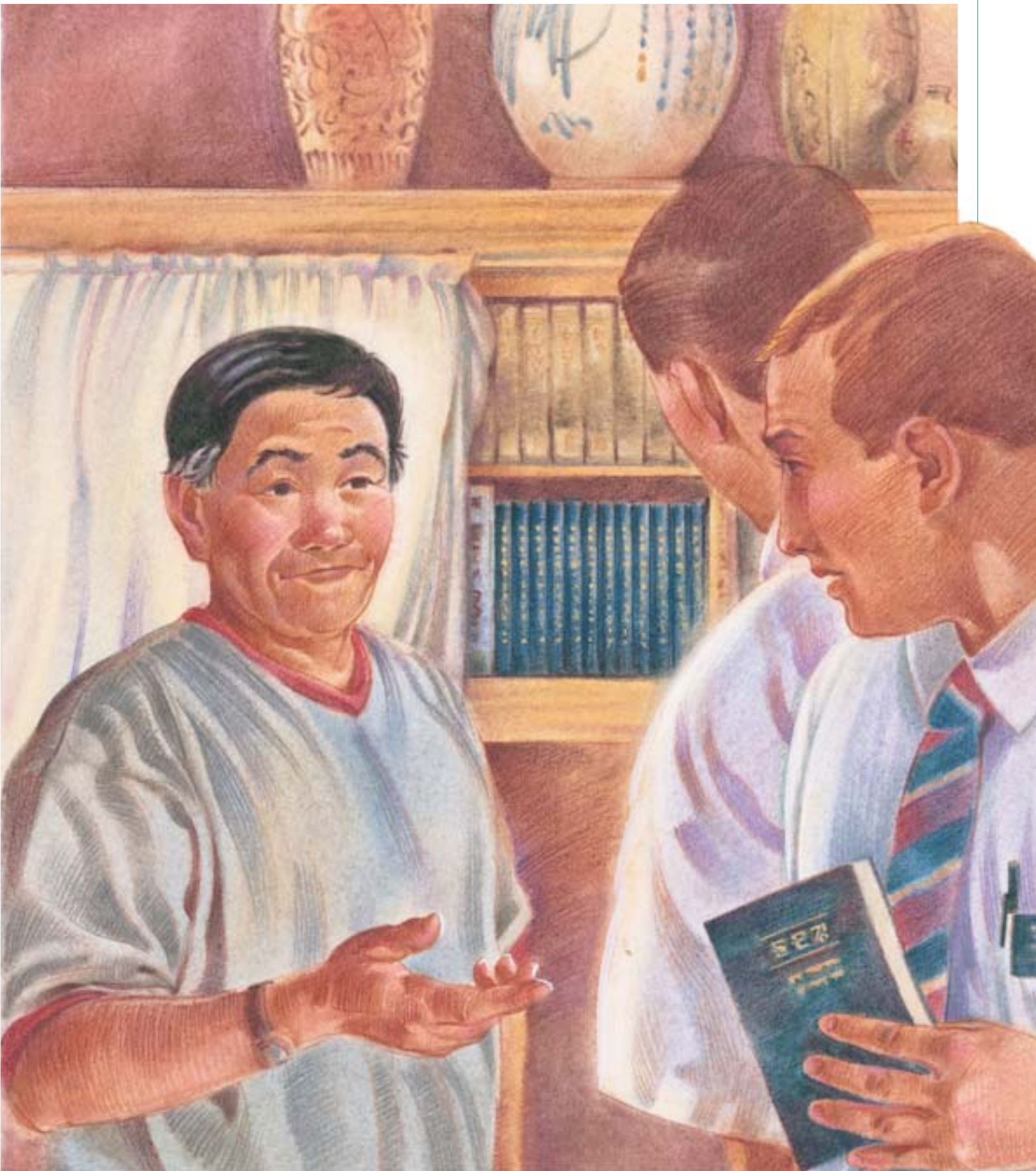
The Book of Mormon is one of the greatest sources of spiritual power given to men and women on earth to guide us on our quest for eternal life. We have a challenge with our neighbors, family, and friends to help them overcome misinformation,

doubts, and incorrect traditions that keep many from reading or understanding the Book of Mormon. Most people in the world and many in the Church do not realize that the Book of Mormon will help a person “get nearer to God . . . than . . . any other book” (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:461). It will help us obey the laws and ordinances of His gospel. It shows us how, through grace, we can be saved in His kingdom, “after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23), and helps us endure to the end (see 2 Nephi 31:15–21).

When we take the Book of Mormon into our hearts, we have more love for our Father in Heaven and His Only Begotten Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

The Challenge to Help Others

I know that the challenge of placing the Book of Mormon in the heart of a person is not easy. Some years ago Sister Sorenson and I were preparing to go to Eastern Canada on a mission. We were in a restaurant in Salt Lake City just prior to going to the airport. A young man walked up to us and introduced himself. He was originally from Halifax, but





Raymond wouldn't accept a visit from the missionaries, but he invited me to walk in the park with him several times a week to talk religion. It wasn't long before I asked him to be baptized.

had joined the Church and moved to Salt Lake City. He was married, with a small family.

He said, "My father, Raymond Gaetz, lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He is not a member of the Church. He does not understand the Church. He does not seem happy with me for having joined the Church. I would like to help him. I have sent him all kinds of information over the years. Some he has accepted, others he has sent back either unopened or marked 'not interested.'

"I have here a copy of the standard works in a recently published quad. I think he might accept it if you would take it to him."

We accepted the challenge. When we arrived in Halifax, I called Mr. Raymond Gaetz and told him who I was and that I had a gift from his son. I asked if I could present it to him. He asked me a little about his son and then said, "I have no interest whatsoever in the Book of Mormon. Please pass it on to someone else."

I told him I couldn't; it had his name engraved on it. I asked if he would please accept it from his only son.

He said, "No," and hung up.

Soon thereafter I decided to pay Mr. Gaetz a visit. I was met at the gate of his apartment by a guard. The guard was kind enough to connect me with Mr. Gaetz on the intercom. I told him I would like to give the gift to him and bring him greetings from his fine son. He said I could leave the book with the guard but not to bother him further.

A few days later he called me and said, "I noticed this is an expensive book. I'm a frugal Scotsman, and I can't stand to see it go to waste. Please come and get it. We can have my name removed and you can give it to someone else."

I made an appointment to see him. When I arrived, the guard told me I was to take the book with me. I took the book, returned to the office, and put it on my desk to remind me that I had a work yet to complete.

A Different Approach

Sometime later my wife, Verla, came into the office, saw the book on my desk, smiled, and said, "My goodness, what kind of a missionary are you? Haven't you delivered those scriptures to Mr. Gaetz yet?"

"Sweetheart, I've been trying, but without much success."

She responded with, "Oh, come on now. You're just too busy."

I was a little irritated, so I said, "Well, Verla, why don't you try?"

She said, "All right, I will."

She took a different approach entirely. She called their home, and fortunately Mrs. Gaetz answered the phone. After a friendly conversation, Verla invited Mrs. Patricia Gaetz and her husband to the mission home for dinner. She accepted Sister Sorensen's invitation. About halfway through the dinner I was getting anxious to present the book. Sister Sorensen gently nudged me under the table, so I knew better. After the dinner we had a lovely discussion, but we never mentioned the Book of Mormon.

A few days later Mrs. Gaetz called and invited us to their apartment. We had a delicious lunch and talked. This went back and forth for some weeks. Then one day I again mentioned to Raymond, "Remember that wonderful book your son has given you? I surely would like to present it to you." This time Raymond accepted the book.

Talking Religion

We continued to meet together socially, and then one day I said, "Raymond, it's time for you to receive the missionary discussions."

"No, I'm not interested. But I'll tell you what I will do. I walk every day at noon in the park for my health, and I would be happy to hear about the Book of Mormon through your lips. We'll talk religion."

So I arranged my schedule during the

lunch hour to walk in the park two or three times a week with this good brother.

Our friendship deepened during these discussions. I soon asked him to be baptized. He said, "No, I'm not interested in being baptized."

"Well, you've heard the gospel, you know it's true, you need to accept it. You've been reading the Book of Mormon; now take it into your heart."

"I haven't the faith yet to accept the Mormon Church."

A Rare Possession

One day a video came to the mission office entitled *How Rare a Possession*. You may have seen it. It's about a man who found a copy of the Book of Mormon without a cover or introductory pages in a trash can in Italy. The man read the book, accepted it, lived its principles, and spent almost a lifetime trying to find out more about the Church. He eventually found the missionaries, was baptized, and came into full fellowship. The video projects him later in his life going to the temple in Switzerland. It is a true story.

I gave the video to Raymond. A few days later, during our usual walk, it was obvious that he had changed. He said, "You know that man that found the Book of Mormon was not unlike me. I do have hope in eternal life. I've

changed my mind. I'm ready to be baptized."

"Do you have a testimony of Jesus Christ?"

"You know I have."

"Are you willing to give up smoking?"

"I can do it."

"Are you willing to give up drinking?"

"I will."

"Ray, you're a wealthy man. You're a captain of industry. You're a man of influence, a man of substance and means. Are you willing to pay a full tithe on all that money you make?"

"I certainly am."

"Good. Have you told your wife, Patricia?"

"No. That's your job."

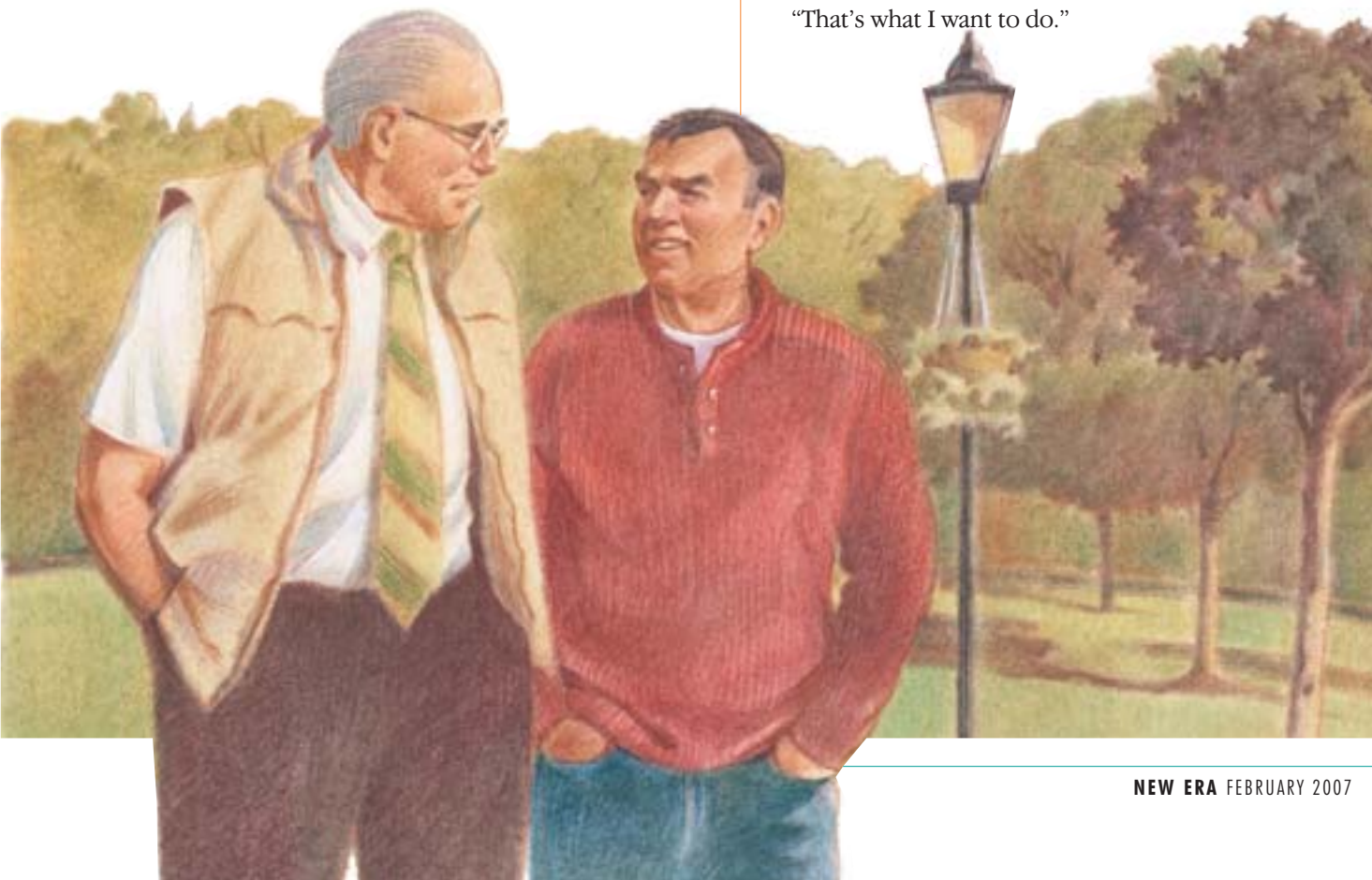
We went right to his home. I told her of his decision and invited her to join him in baptism.

She said, "I can't be baptized. You know I'm a good Catholic. Neither can he. He still smokes and drinks, and he won't pay all that tithing."

You know something; he did. He gave up his coffee, tea, alcohol, and tobacco, and he paid his tithing and rejoiced. When he came up out of the waters of baptism, he said, "Now I want to go to that temple."

"Brother Gaetz, the temple is a year away. You'll have to work hard and prepare yourself spiritually."

"That's what I want to do."





Outside the temple, Raymond gave me news that should have been heartbreaking. But he was one of the happiest men I have even known.

The Last One In and the First One Out

A year later Sister Sorenson and I had completed our mission. We flew to Washington, D.C., to meet Raymond at the temple. As we walked out of the temple after several sessions, he looked up at those beautiful spires and made an unusual remark.

“I feel like I’m the last one in and the first one out.”

“Brother Ray, what do you mean?”

“Well, recently I have contracted terminal cancer. I don’t know how long I have to live. I am just so grateful that I have been able to come here to the house of the Lord. I feel very much like the man that was portrayed in the film who lived out his life and finally found the temple.”

Sometime later I was at Raymond’s side when he died, one of the happiest men I have ever known.

Recently a note written by Ray Gaetz to his young grandson fell into my hands. It is dated October 5, 1989, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada:

“My Dear Grandson,

“I am sending you this Book of Mormon that I hope will be your lifelong companion. The teachings of this book will have a pro-

found influence on your life. If you follow these teachings, you will be the recipient of many blessings. May our Father in Heaven bless and care for you.

“With love, Grandad.”

Take It into Your Heart

So it is that Brother Raymond Gaetz came to understand that “come unto Christ” is not a nondescript, lovely phrase. The Book of Mormon teaches us of the power and glory and gift of God and the desire to come unto Christ.

If you want to know and understand the doctrines of this Church, read the Book of Mormon. If you want to understand salvation, read the Book of Mormon. Would you like to have a little peace in your life and eternal salvation in the life to come? Read the Book of Mormon and then follow the rest of the formula outlined in Moroni 10:4. Pray about it, ponder it, take the book into your heart!

From a devotional address given on March 19, 2002, at Brigham Young University.



Mutual Activity Idea

- Under the direction of your bishop and youth leaders, plan a service scavenger hunt in the neighborhoods near your church building. For a list of services that could be offered, read the article by JeaNette Goates Smith called “Scavengers Welcome” on page 22 in the March 1988 *New Era*. This *New Era* can be found online in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org.

Personal Progress and Duty to God Idea

- Prepare a short personal history listing places you have lived, schools you've attended, and members of your

family or friends. If you have a particular memory of each place or person, record that as well. Add a special touch by taking photos of your home, school, family, and friends.

Family Home Evening Idea

- Read the article “Mama’s Refrigerator” on page 22. Have family members suggest some meaningful items to put on your refrigerator. Or use the back of a door or a bulletin board to post photos, quotes, and other memorable things. Use family home evening as the time to talk about what each item means.

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 7–12.

Young Women Manual 2

Lesson 7: Living in Love and Harmony

Idea List: “Getting Along,” this issue, 9.

Catherine Matthews Pavia, “How I Learned to Be Happy,” *New Era*, Sept. 2006, 11.

To the Point (My brother is driving me crazy), *New Era*, Aug. 2006, 31.

Lesson 8: Improving Communication Skills

Russell Wilcox, “Is Anyone Laughing?” *New Era*, this issue, 34.

Q&A (Motivate family), *New Era*, Oct. 2005, 16.

Lesson 9: A Young Woman as a Peacemaker in Her Home

“Peace at Home,” *New Era*, May 2006, 20.

Q&A (Teasing hurts my feelings), *New Era*, Sept. 2006, 14.

Lesson 10: The Priesthood: A Great Blessing

Jeffrey R. Holland, “Be Ready and Worthy,” *New Era*, May 2006, 2.

Dallin H. Oaks, “Your Sacred Duty,” *New Era*, May, 1999, 4.

Lesson 11: Appreciating the Bishop

Henry B. Eyring, “Your Friend the Bishop,” *New Era*, Oct. 2002, 10.

H. David Burton, “Your Bishop and You,” *New Era*, May 1998, 4.

Lesson 12: Fathers’ Blessings

Caroline Hinckley, “Leaving Home,” *New Era*, May 1999, 35.

Brenda Williams, “My Terrible Horrible Day,” *New Era*, Sept. 2001, 34.

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Lesson 7: The Eternal Importance of Families

Caitlin Jenkins, “Making Grandpa Proud,” this issue, 41.

Emma E. Sanchez Sanchez, “Mama’s Refrigerator,” this issue, 8.

Lesson 8: Spirituality

Q&A (Spiritual feeling fades), *New Era*, Sept. 2004, 16.

Boyd K. Packer, “A Few Simple Lessons,” *New Era*, Aug. 2002, 4.

Lesson 9: Repentance and the Atonement of Jesus Christ

Clate W. Mask Jr., “Spotless before the Lord,” *New Era*, July 2006, 42.

Q&A (How to know if you’re forgiven), *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 16.

Lesson 10: Studying the Scriptures

Janet Thomas, “Who Are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?” *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 18.

David E. Sorensen, “Where Is Your Book of Mormon?” this issue, 42.

Lesson 11: Satan and His Temptations

Q&A (People doing wrong having fun), *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 14.

Idea List: “Overcoming Temptation,” *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 23.

Lesson 12: Prayer

Lynn A. Mickelsen, “Don’t You Pray?” *New Era*, Dec. 2006, 38.

Dallin H. Oaks, “The Special Language of Prayer,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 2.

Idea List: “Pray with Power,” *New Era*, Aug. 2006, 7.

SPECIAL ISSUES

I love reading the *New Era*. It is always cool that I can find something useful in there, and something that applies to me. I really like the special issues—for example, the October 2004 issue on eternal marriage. I think it would be good if there could be one on education.

Kinga W., New Zealand

PERFECT COMEBACK

I was interested in the article “The Perfect Comeback” (Apr. 2006) because I have sometimes been in a situation where someone picks on another person, and I felt like I needed to do something. This article shows how other people in the same situations have done the right thing, and it makes me want to do right. I thank you for putting this article in your magazine.

Joseph A., California

MODESTY FOR GUYS

I would like to thank you for putting articles in your magazine regarding modesty and dating. However, I feel that you are too lenient on the guys. I would appreciate it if there were articles on dating and modesty that included that a guy should also dress modestly. We shouldn't have to avert our eyes because of the way they dress, either. I would like an article about how modesty and grooming for guys affects young women.

Kourtney W., Texas

“I like to hear stories about other LDS young men. It helps me to focus on keeping myself worthy to go on a mission and not following the crowd.”

LISTENING

I just wanted to thank you for the article “Time to Listen.” Jeremy Pownall is a good example to a 13-year-old boy like me. He has goals for his future and is a good example to other people. He is willing to give up body-boarding to serve a mission. He is willing to listen to those a few years ahead of him in life and take their advice. I like to hear stories about other LDS young men. It helps me to focus on my goal of serving a mission and being a good example to those around me. It also helps me focus on keeping myself worthy and not following the crowd.

Jeremy P., Utah

WANTED TO READ MORE

I enjoyed reading the July 2006 *New Era* very much. For our fifth Sunday of July we were all in class together and played a quiz game with the July *New Era* stories. The stories were very appealing to me; there was a feeling of spirituality because it was the first time I really read the whole magazine. One story I really liked was “Do You Want to Copy My Homework?” It was about principles and self-control to do the right thing. When I was done, I wanted to read more!

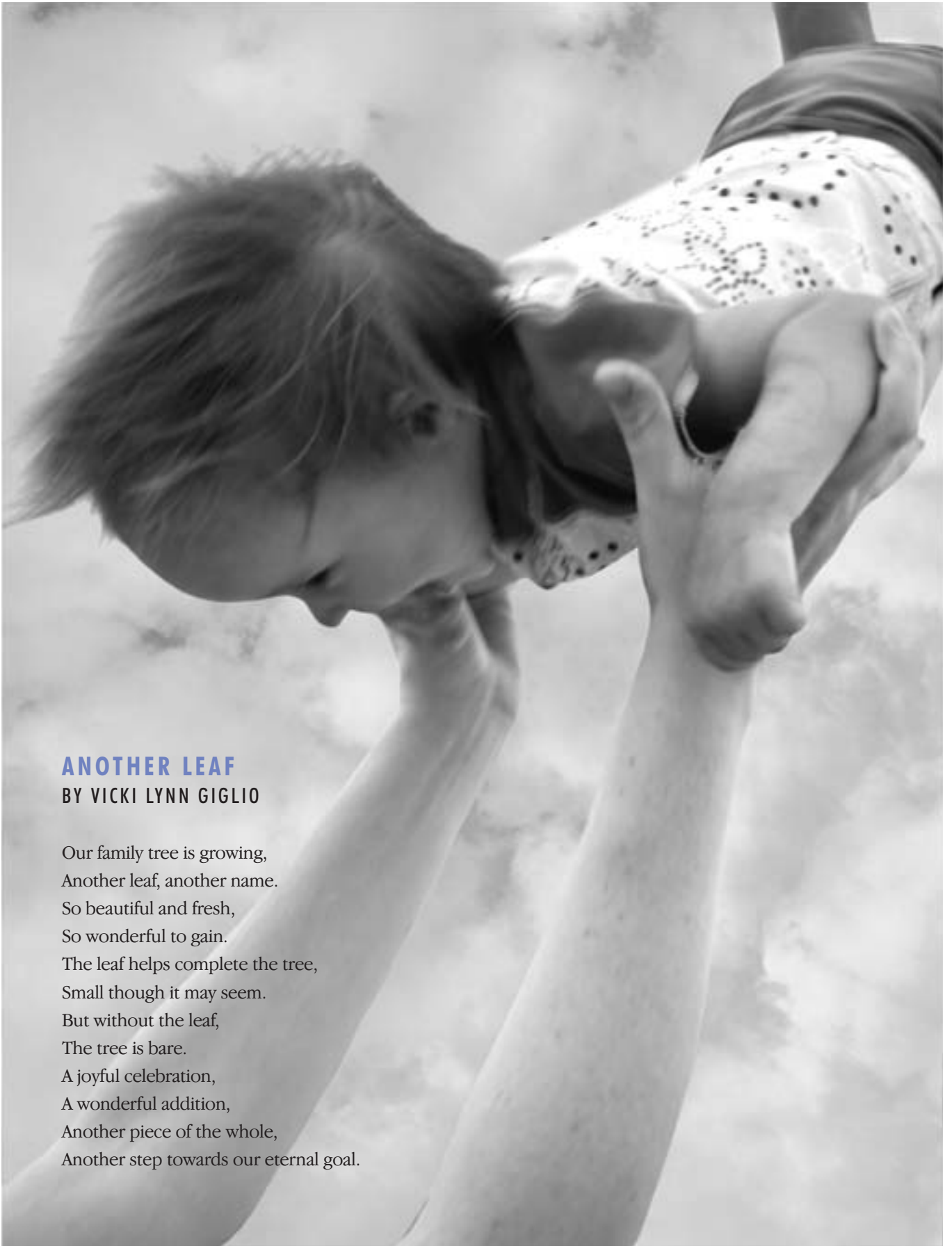
Eric G., Texas

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
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Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA*

Or e-mail us at newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



ANOTHER LEAF

BY VICKI LYNN GIGLIO

Our family tree is growing,
Another leaf, another name.
So beautiful and fresh,
So wonderful to gain.
The leaf helps complete the tree,
Small though it may seem.
But without the leaf,
The tree is bare.
A joyful celebration,
A wonderful addition,
Another piece of the whole,
Another step towards our eternal goal.



COMING NEXT MONTH
SPECIAL ISSUE: PREPARING
FOR YOUR MISSION

- *Get practical advice on becoming a missionary from President Hinckley and other General Authorities.*
- *Take an insider's tour through the Provo MTC.*
- *Follow along with two elders on a regular mission day in Spain.*
- *Find out just how the process of receiving your mission call works.*

You'll get all this and a whole lot more in the March 2007 special issue of the New Era.