

THE New Era

JANUARY

2001



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SPEAKS TO YOU,
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Editorial Offices:

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

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

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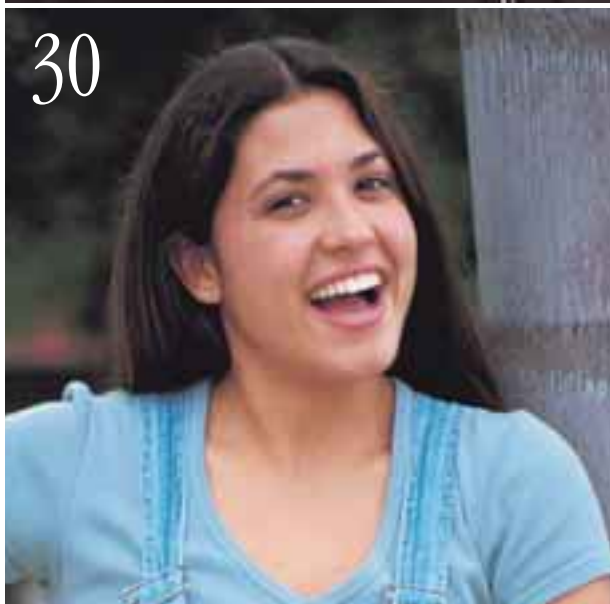
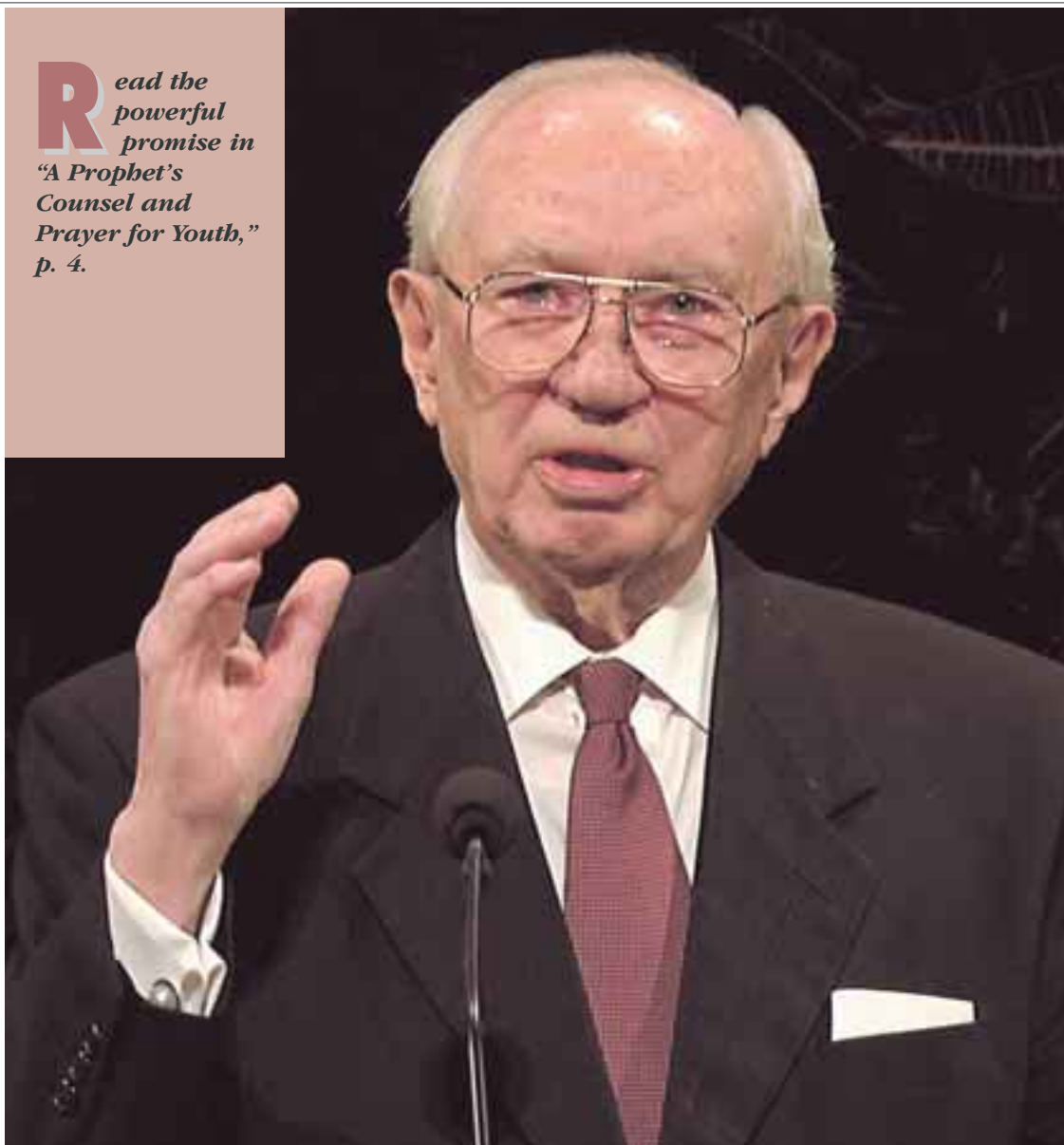
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Hinckley reaffirms the
standards that bring
peace and happiness. See
the Message on page 4.*

*Front cover photography:
Jed Clark*

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powerful
promise in
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A PROPHET'S COUNSEL *and* PRAYER *for*



by President
Gordon B. Hinckley

I make you a promise that God will not forsake you if you walk in His paths with the guidance of His commandments.

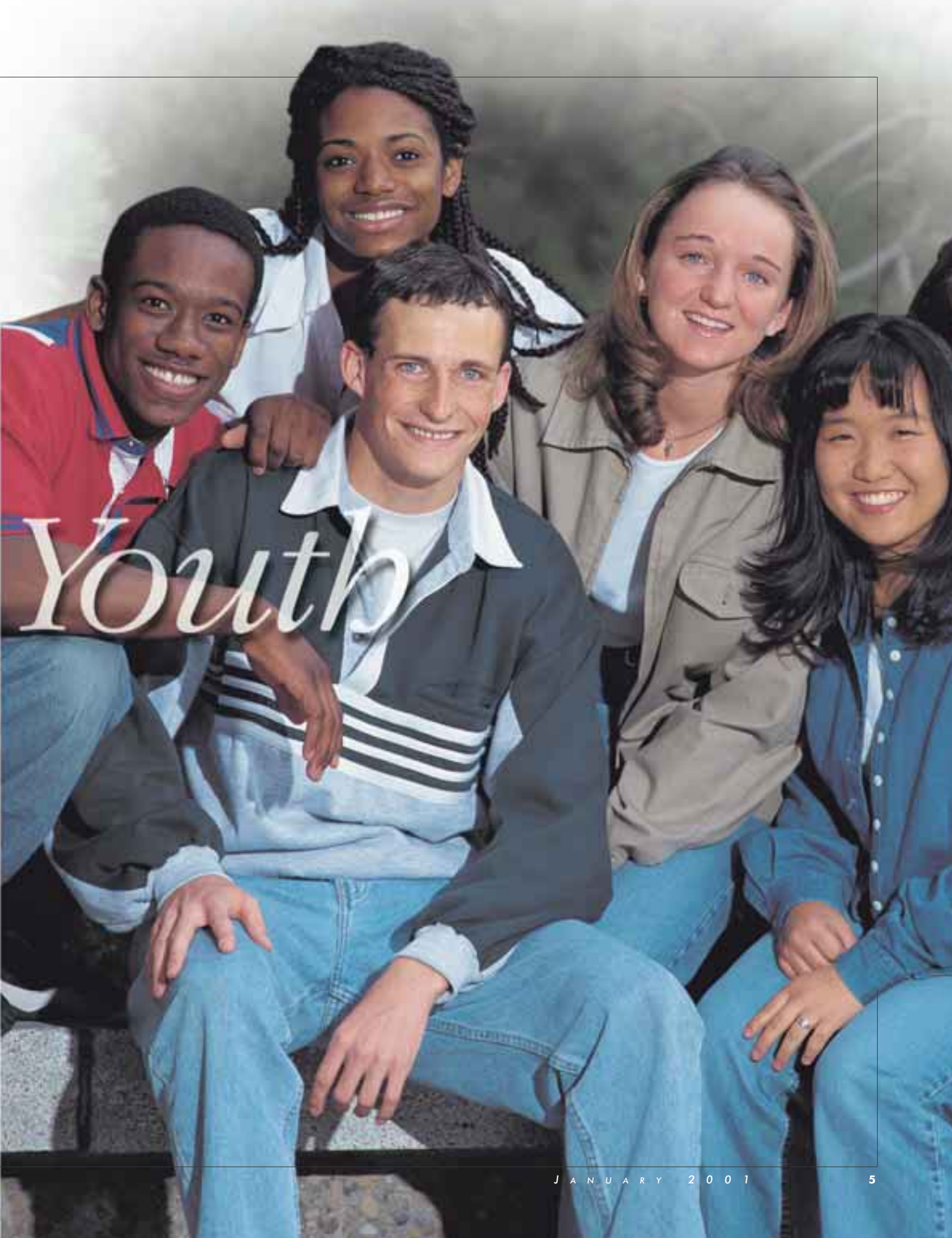
I think there never before was a meeting anything like this in this Church. There are so many of you here tonight. How good you look.

Some of you have come with doubts. Some have come with high expectations. I want you to know that I have been on my knees asking the Lord to bless me with the power and the capacity and the language to reach into your hearts.

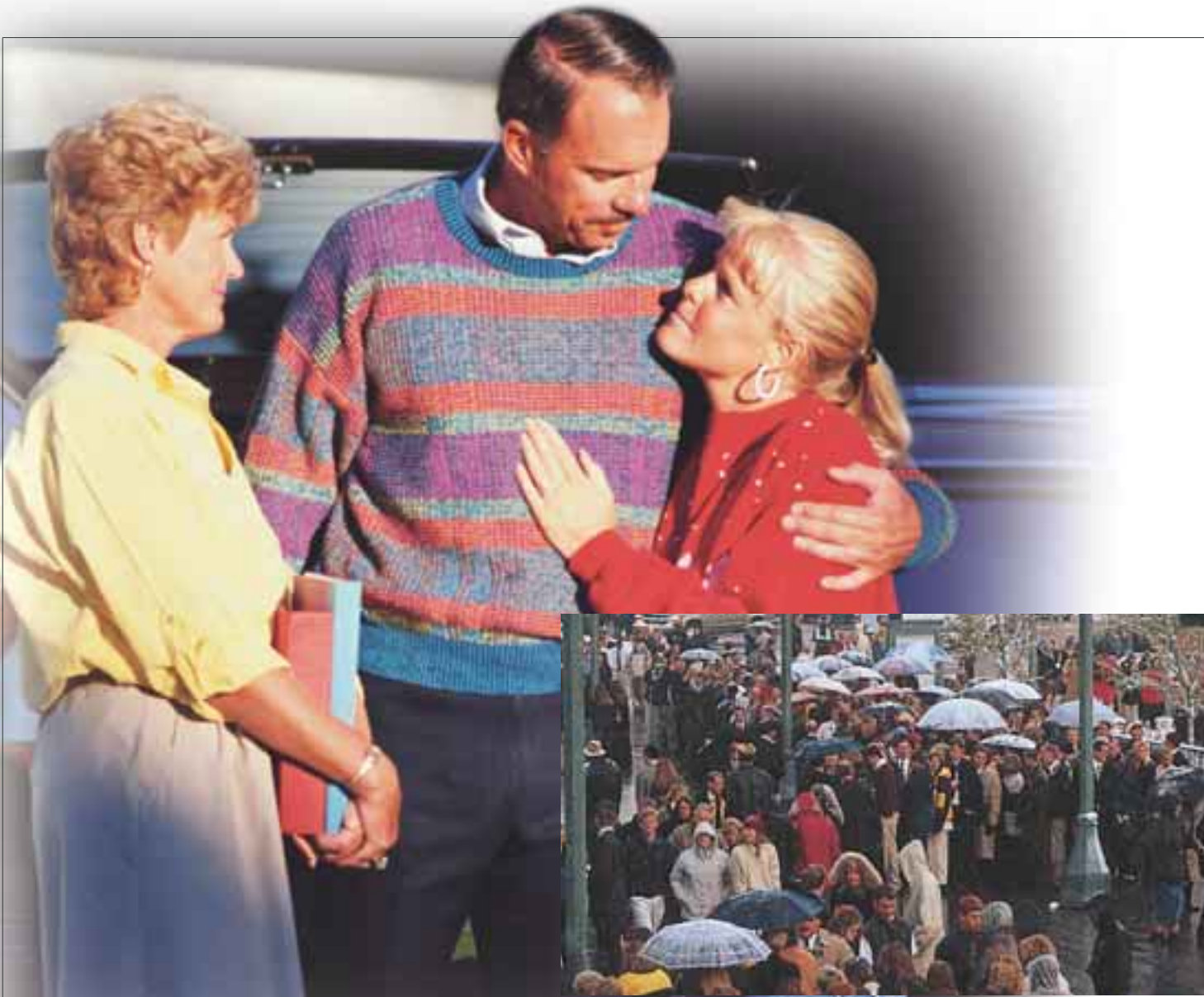
Beyond this hall are hundreds of thousands of others who are participating with us. To each of you I say welcome. I am glad for this tremendous opportunity to speak to you, and I recognize how important it is.

I am now old in years—90 plus. I have lived a long time, and I have lived with great love for the young men and young women of this Church. What a truly wonderful group you are. You speak various languages. You are all part of a great family. But you are also individuals, each with his or her problems, each wishing for answers to the things that perplex you and worry you. How we love you and pray constantly for the genius to help you. Your lives are filled with difficult decisions and with dreams and hopes and longings to find that which will bring you peace and happiness.

Once upon a time, a very long time ago, I was your age. I didn't worry about drugs or pornography because they were not available then. I worried about school and where it would lead. It was the season of the terrible economic depression. I worried about how to earn a living. I served a mission after I finished the university. I went to England. We traveled by train to Chicago, made a bus transfer across that city, and went on to New York,



Youth



Be Grateful

Thank the Lord for His marvelous Church. Thank Him for friends and loved ones, for parents and brothers and sisters, for family.

where we caught a steamship for the British Isles. While riding the transfer bus in Chicago, a woman said to the driver, "What is that building ahead?" He said, "Ma'am, that is the Chicago Board of Trade Building. Every week some man who has lost his fortune jumps out of one of those windows. He has nothing else to live for."

Such were the times. They were mean and ugly. No one who did not live

through that period will ever understand it fully. I hope with all my heart we never have anything like it again.

Now, here you are on the threshold of your mature lives. You too worry about school. You worry about marriage. You worry about many things. I make you a promise that God will not forsake you if you will walk in His paths with the guidance of His commandments.

This is the age of great opportunity.



Be Smart

You are so fortunate to be alive. Never in the history of mankind has life been filled with so many opportunities and challenges. When I was born, the average life expectancy of a man or woman in the United States and other Western countries was 50 years. Now it is more than 75 years. Can you imagine that? On average you may expect to live at least 25 years longer than someone who lived in 1910.

This is the season of an explosion of knowledge. For instance, when I was your age there were no antibiotics. All of these wonderful medicines have been discovered and refined in more recent times. Some of the great scourges of the earth are gone. Smallpox once took whole populations. That is gone entirely. It is a miracle. Polio was once the dreaded fear of every mother. I remember going to visit a man with polio in the county hospital. He was in a great iron lung that moved his own lungs as it pumped up and down. There was no hope for him; he couldn't breathe on his own. He died, leaving his wife and children. This terrible disease is now gone. That too is a miracle. And so it is with other matters.

Of course you face challenges. Every generation that has ever walked the

earth has faced challenges. We could spend the entire evening talking about them. But of all the challenges that have been faced in the past, the ones we have today, I believe, are most easily handled. I say that because they are manageable. They largely involve individual behavioral decisions, but those decisions can be made and followed. And when that happens, the challenge is behind us.

I suppose that most of you are in school. I am pleased that you have that opportunity and that desire. I hope that you are studying diligently and that your great ambition is to get A grades in your various courses. I hope your teachers will be generous toward you and that your studies will yield top grades and an excellent education. I could wish nothing better for you in your schoolwork.

Tonight I am going to let your teachers give you the A's that I hope you earn. I want to talk about some B's. You get the A's; I will give you the B's.

1. *Be grateful.*
2. *Be smart.*
3. *Be clean.*
4. *Be true.*
5. *Be humble.*
6. *Be prayerful.*

Why don't you repeat these B's with

The Lord wants you to educate your minds and hands, whatever your chosen field. Whether it be repairing refrigerators, or the work of a skilled surgeon, you must train yourselves. . . . Become a workman of integrity. . . . You will bring honor to the Church and you will be generously blessed because of that training.



Of all the challenges that have been faced in the past, the ones we have today, I believe, are most easily handled. They largely involve individual behavioral decisions.

me, and then we will talk about each of them, all right?

1. *Be grateful.*
2. *Be smart.*
3. *Be clean.*
4. *Be true.*
5. *Be humble.*
6. *Be prayerful.*

Be grateful.

There are two little words in the English language that perhaps mean more than all others. They are “thank you.” Comparable words are found in every other language, such as *gracias*, *merci*, *danke*, *obrigado*, *domo*.

The habit of saying thank you is the mark of an educated man or woman. With whom is the Lord displeased? He names “those who confess not his hand in all things” (D&C 59:21). That is, those who walk without grateful expression. Walk with gratitude in your hearts, my dear friends. Be thankful for the wonderful blessings which are yours. Be grateful for the tremendous opportunities that you have. Be thankful to your parents, who care so very much about you and who have worked so very hard to provide for you. Let them know that you are grateful. Say thank you to your mother and your father. Say thank you to your friends. Say thank you to your teachers. Express appreciation to everyone who does you a favor or assists you in any way.

Thank the Lord for His goodness to you. Thank the Almighty for His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who has done for you what none other in all this world could do. Thank Him for His great example, for His tremendous teachings, for His out-

reaching hand to lift and help. Think about the meaning of His Atonement. Read about Him and read His words in the New Testament and in 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon. Read them quietly to yourself and then ponder them. Pour out your heart to your Father in Heaven in gratitude for the gift of His Beloved Son.

Thank the Lord for His marvelous Church restored in this great season of history. Thank Him for all that it offers you. Thank Him for friends and loved ones, for parents and brothers and sisters, for family. Let a spirit of thanksgiving guide and bless your days and nights. Work at it. You will find it will yield wonderful results.

B number two—be smart.

You are moving into the most competitive age the world has ever known. All around you is competition. You need all the education you can get. Sacrifice a car; sacrifice anything that is needed to be sacrificed to qualify yourselves to do the work of the world. That world will in large measure pay you what it thinks you are worth, and your worth will increase as you gain education and proficiency in your chosen field.

You belong to a church that teaches the importance of education. You have a mandate from the Lord to educate your minds and your hearts and your hands. The Lord has said, “Teach ye diligently . . . of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms—that ye may be prepared in all things” (D&C 88:78–80).

Mind you, these are not my words. These are the words of the Lord who loves you. He wants you to train your minds and hands to become an influence for good as you go forward with your lives. And as you do so and as you perform honorably and with excellence, you will bring honor to the Church, for you will be regarded as a man or woman of integrity and ability and conscientious workmanship. Be smart. Don’t be foolish. You cannot bluff or cheat others without



Be Clean

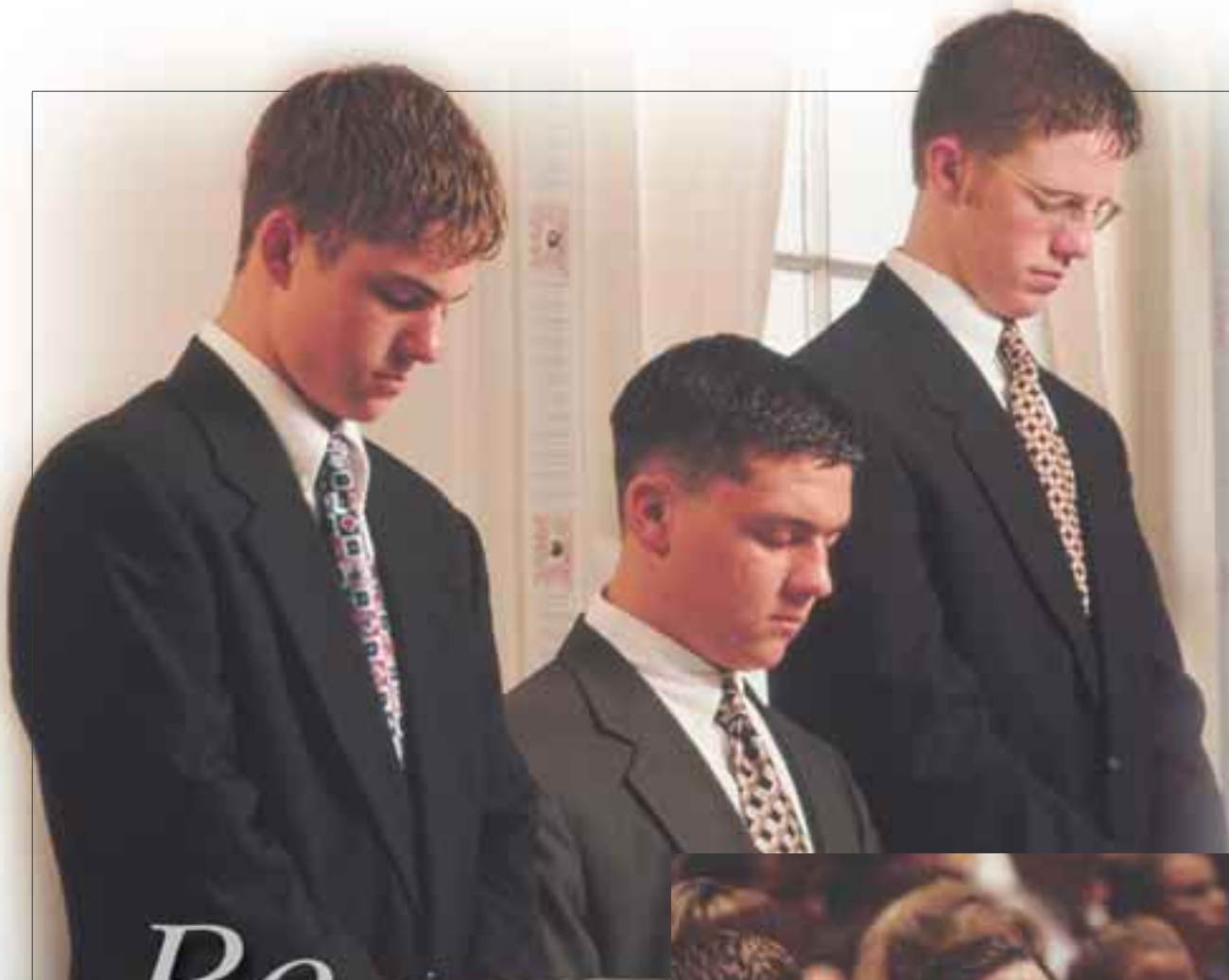
bluffing or cheating yourselves.

Many years ago I worked for a railroad in the central offices in Denver. I was in charge of what is called head-end traffic. That was in the days when nearly everyone rode passenger trains. One morning I received a call from my counterpart in Newark, New Jersey. He said, "Train number such-and-such has arrived, but it has no baggage car. Somewhere, 300 passengers have lost their baggage, and they are mad."

I went immediately to work to find out where it may have gone. I found it had been properly loaded and properly

trained in Oakland, California. It had been moved to our railroad in Salt Lake City, been carried to Denver, down to Pueblo, put on another line, and moved to St. Louis. There it was to be handled by another railroad which would take it to Newark, New Jersey. But some thoughtless switchman in the St. Louis yards moved a small piece of steel just three inches, a switch point, then pulled the lever to uncouple the car. We discovered that a baggage car that belonged in Newark, New Jersey, was in fact in New Orleans, Louisiana—1,500 miles from its destination. Just the three-inch

Choose your friends carefully. It is they who will lead you in one direction or the other.



Be True



You who are members of this Church must have a loyalty to it. This is your church. You have as great a responsibility in your sphere of action as I have in my sphere of action.

movement of the switch in the St. Louis yard by a careless employee had started it on the wrong track, and the distance from its true destination increased dramatically. That is the way it is with our lives. Instead of following a steady course, we are pulled by some mistaken idea in another direction. The movement away from our original destination may be ever so small, but, if continued, that very small movement becomes a great gap and we find ourselves far from where we intended to go.

Have you ever looked at one of those 16-foot farm gates? When it is opened, it swings very wide. The end at the hinges moves ever so slightly, while out at the

perimeter the movement is great. It is the little things upon which life turns that make the big difference in our lives, my dear young friends.

Be smart. The Lord wants you to educate your minds and hands, whatever your chosen field. Whether it be repairing refrigerators, or the work of a skilled surgeon, you must train yourselves. Seek for the best schooling available. Become a workman of integrity in the world that lies ahead of you. I repeat, you will bring honor to the Church and you will be generously blessed because of that training.

There can be no doubt, none whatever, that education pays. Do not short-circuit your lives. If you do so, you will pay

for it over and over and over again.

The third B—be clean.

We live in a world that is filled with filth and sleaze, a world that reeks of evil. It is all around us. It is on the television screen. It is at the movies. It is in the popular literature. It is on the Internet. You can't afford to watch it, my dear friends. You cannot afford to let that filthy poison touch you. Stay away from it. Avoid it. You can't rent videos and watch them as they portray degrading things. You young men who hold the priesthood of God cannot mix this filth with the holy priesthood.

Avoid evil talk. Do not take the name of the Lord in vain. From the thunders of Sinai the finger of the Lord wrote on tablets of stone, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (Ex. 20:7).

It is not a mark of manhood to carelessly use the name of the Almighty or His Beloved Son in a vain and flippant way, as many are prone to do.

Choose your friends carefully. It is they who will lead you in one direction or the other. Everybody wants friends. Everybody needs friends. No one wishes to be without them. But never lose sight of the fact that it is your friends who will lead you along the paths that you will follow.

While you should be friendly with all people, select with great care those whom you wish to have close to you. They will be your safeguards in situations where you may vacillate between choices, and you in turn may save them.

Be clean. Don't waste your time in destructive entertainment. There was recently held in the Salt Lake Valley a show put on by a traveling band. I am told that it was filthy, that it was lascivious, that it was evil in every respect. The young people of this community had paid \$25 to \$35 to get in. What did they get for their money? Only a seductive voice urging them to move in the direction of the slimy things of life. I plead with you, my friends, to stay away from such. It will not help you. It can only injure you.

I recently spoke to your mothers and your fathers. Among other things, I talked with them about tattoos.

What creation is more magnificent

than the human body? What a wondrous thing it is as the crowning work of the Almighty.

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, said: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:16–17).

Did you ever think that your body is holy? You are a child of God. Your body is His creation. Would you disfigure that creation with portrayals of people, animals, and words painted into your skin?

I promise you that the time will come, if you have tattoos, that you will regret your actions. They cannot be washed off. They are permanent. Only by an expensive and painful process can they be removed. If you are tattooed, then probably for the remainder of your life you will carry it with you. I believe the time will come when it will be an embarrassment to you. Avoid it. We, as your Brethren who love you, plead with you not to become so disrespectful of the body which the Lord has given you.

May I mention earrings and rings placed in other parts of the body. These are not manly. They are not attractive. You young men look better without them, and I believe you will feel better without them. As for the young women, you do not need to drape rings up and down your ears. One modest pair of earrings is sufficient.

I mention these things because again they concern your bodies.

How truly beautiful is a well-groomed young woman who is clean in body and mind. She is a daughter of God in whom her Eternal Father can take pride. How handsome is a young man who is well-groomed. He is a son of God, deemed worthy of holding the holy priesthood of God. He does not need tattoos or earrings on or in his body. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve are all united in counseling against these things.

And while I speak of such matters I want to give emphasis again to the matter of pornography. It has become a 10 billion dollar industry in the United States, where a few men grow rich at the expense of thousands upon thousands

You know when you are walking on dangerous ground, when it is so easy to stumble and slide into the pit of transgression. I plead with you to be careful, to stand safely back from the cliff of sin over which it is so easy to fall. Keep yourselves clean from the dark and disappointing evil of sexual transgression. Walk in the sunlight of that peace which comes from obedience.



Be Humble



If we are humble and obedient, then the Lord will lead us by the hand and answer our prayers. What greater thing could we ask for?

who are their victims. Stay away from it. It is exciting, but it will destroy you. It will warp your senses. It will build within you an appetite that you will do anything to appease. And don't try to create associations through the Internet and chat rooms. They can lead you down into the very abyss of sorrow and bitterness.

I must also say a word concerning illicit drugs. You know how I feel about them. I don't care what the variety may be. They will destroy you if pursued. You will become their slave. Once in their power, you will do anything to get money

to buy more.

I was amazed while watching a television program to learn that parents introduced drugs to their children in 20 percent of the cases. I cannot understand what I regard as the stupidity of these parents. What future other than slavery for their children could they see in them? Illegal drugs will utterly destroy those who become addicted to them.

My advice, my pleading to you wonderful young men and women, is to stay entirely away from them. You don't need to experiment with them. Look about you and see the effects they have had on others. There is no need for any Latter-day Saint boy or girl, young man or young woman, to even try them. Stay clean from these mind-altering and habit-forming addictions.

And now just a word on the most com-

mon and most difficult of all problems for you young men and young women to handle. It is the relationship that you have one with another. You are dealing with the most powerful of human instincts. Only the will to live possibly exceeds it.

The Lord has made us attractive one to another for a great purpose. But this very attraction becomes as a powder keg unless it is kept under control. It is beautiful when handled in the right way. It is deadly if it gets out of hand.

It is for this reason that the Church counsels against early dating. This rule is not designed to hurt you in any way. It is designed to help you, and it will do so if you will observe it.

Steady dating at an early age leads so often to tragedy. Studies have shown that the longer a boy and girl date one another, the more likely they are to get into trouble.

It is better, my friends, to date a variety of companions until you are ready to marry. Have a wonderful time, but stay away from familiarity. Keep your hands to yourself. It may not be easy, but it is possible.

You young men who plan to go on missions must recognize that sexual sin may keep you from that opportunity. You may think that you can hide it. Long experience has shown that you cannot. To serve an effective mission you must have the Spirit of the Lord, and truth withheld does not mix with that Spirit. Sooner or later you will feel compelled to confess your earlier transgressions. Well did Sir Galahad say, "My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure" (Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Sir Galahad* [1842], st. 1).

My dear young friends, in matters of sex you know what is right. You know when you are walking on dangerous ground, when it is so easy to stumble and slide into the pit of transgression. I plead with you to be careful, to stand safely back from the cliff of sin over which it is so easy to fall. Keep yourselves clean from the dark and disappointing evil of sexual transgression. Walk in the sunlight of that peace which comes from obedience to the commandments of the Lord.

Now, if there be any who have stepped over the line, who may already

have transgressed, is there any hope for you? Of course there is. Where there is true repentance, there will be forgiveness. That process begins with prayer. The Lord has said, "He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more" (D&C 58:42). Share your burden with your parents if you can. And by all means, confess to your bishop, who stands ready to help you.

My next B—be true.

Said Shakespeare, "To thine own self be true; and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man" (*Hamlet*, I, iii, 78–81). You have a tremendous inheritance. You have a great background of noble ancestry. Many of you are descendants of the pioneers, who died by the hundreds and thousands in testimony of the truth of this work. If they were to look down upon you, they would plead with you: "Be true. Be loyal. Be 'true to the faith that our parents have cherished, true to the truth for which martyrs have perished.'" They would say, "Faith of our fathers, holy faith, we will be true to thee till death" (*Hymns*, nos. 254 and 84).

And those of you who may not be descended from pioneer ancestry, you belong to a church which has been made strong by the loyalty and unwavering affection of its members through the generations. What a marvelous thing it is to belong to a society whose purposes are noble, whose accomplishments are tremendous, whose work is uplifting, even heroic. Be loyal to the Church under all circumstances. I make you a promise that the authorities of this Church will never lead you astray. They will lead you in paths of happiness.

You who are members of this Church must have a loyalty to it. This is your church. You have as great a responsibility in your sphere of action as I have in my sphere of action. It belongs to you just as it belongs to me. You have embraced its gospel. You have taken upon yourselves a covenant in the waters of baptism. This you have renewed each time you have partaken of the sacrament. These covenants will be added to when you are married in the temple. You cannot hold them lightly. They are too great a thing. This is the very work of God designed to

could wish for you nothing better than that your lives be fruitful, that your service be dedicated and freely given, that you contribute to the knowledge and the well-being of the world in which you live, and that you do it humbly and faithfully before your God. He loves you. We love you. We want you to be happy and successful.



So very much depends on you. You are so very precious. You mean so much to this Church. It could not be the same without you. Stand tall, proud of your inheritance as sons and daughters of God. Look to Him for understanding and guidance. Walk according to His precepts and commandments.

bring about the immortality and eternal life of His sons and daughters.

Walk in faith before Him with your heads high, proud of your membership in this great cause and kingdom which He has restored to the earth in this, the last dispensation of the fulness of times. Why? To bring you happiness.

Be true to your own convictions. You know what is right, and you know what is wrong. You know when you are doing the proper thing. You know when you are giving strength to the right cause. Be loyal. Be faithful. Be true, my beloved associates in this great kingdom.

The fifth B—be humble.

There is no place for arrogance in our lives. There is no place for conceit. There is no place for egotism. We have a great work to do. We have things to accomplish. We need direction in the pursuit of our education. We need help in choosing an eternal companion.

The Lord has said, “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10).

What a tremendous promise is given in this statement. If we are without conceit and pride and arrogance, if we are humble and obedient, then the Lord will lead us by the hand and answer our prayers. What greater thing could we ask for? There is nothing to compare with this.

The Savior, in the great Sermon on the Mount, declared, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5).

I believe the meek and the humble are

those who are teachable. They are willing to learn. They are willing to listen to the whisperings of the still, small voice for guidance in their lives. They place the wisdom of the Lord above their own wisdom.

And this leads to my final B—be prayerful.

You cannot do it alone. I look at this vast congregation, and I know that you are young people who pray, who get on your knees and speak with the Lord. You know that He is the source of all wisdom.

You need His help, and you know that you need His help. You cannot do it alone. You will come to realize that and recognize that more and more as the years pass. So live that in good conscience you can speak with the Lord. Get on your knees and thank Him for His goodness to you and express to Him the righteous desires of your hearts. The miracle of it all is that He hears. He responds. He answers—not always as we might wish He would answer, but there is no question in my mind that He answers.

You have such a tremendous responsibility, you young men and young women. You are the products of all of the generations that have gone before you. All that you have of body and mind has been passed to you through your parents. Someday you will become parents and pass on to succeeding generations the qualities of body and mind which you have received from the past. Do not break the chain of the generations of your family. Keep it bright and strong. So very much depends on you. You are so very precious. You mean so much to this Church. It could not be the same without you. Stand tall, proud of your inheritance as sons and daughters of God. Look to Him for understanding and guidance. Walk according to His precepts and commandments.

You can have a good time. Of course you can! We want you to have fun. We want you to enjoy life. We do not want you to be prudish. We want you to be robust and cheerful, to sing and dance, to laugh and be happy.

But in so doing, be humble and be prayerful, and the smiles of heaven will fall upon you.

I could wish for you nothing better than that your lives be fruitful, that your



Be Prayerful

service be dedicated and freely given, that you contribute to the knowledge and the well-being of the world in which you live, and that you do it humbly and faithfully before your God. He loves you. We love you. We want you to be happy and successful, to make significant contributions to the world in which you will live and to the on-rolling of this great and majestic work of the Lord.

Well, my brothers and sisters, those are my B's—be grateful, be smart, be clean, be true, be humble, be prayerful.

Now, in conclusion, I offer a word of prayer concerning you.

O God, our Eternal Father, as Thy servant I bow before Thee in prayer in behalf of these young people scattered over the earth who are gathered tonight in assemblies everywhere. Please smile with favor upon them. Please listen to them as they lift their voices in prayer unto Thee. Please lead them gently by

the hand in the direction they should follow.

Please help them to walk in paths of truth and righteousness and keep them from the evils of the world. Bless them that they shall be happy at times and serious at times, that they may enjoy life and drink of its fulness. Bless them that they may walk acceptably before Thee as Thy cherished sons and daughters. Each is Thy child with capacity to do great and noble things. Keep them on the high road that leads to achievement. Save them from the mistakes that could destroy them. If they have erred, forgive their trespasses and lead them back to ways of peace and progress. For these blessings I humbly pray with gratitude for them and invoke Thy blessings upon them with love and affection, in the name of Him who carries the burdens of our sins, even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. **NE**

So live that
in good
conscience
you can speak
with the Lord. . . .
The miracle of it
all is that He
bears. He
responds.

Text of a talk given to youth and young single adults on November 12, 2000, at the Conference Center in Salt Lake City and broadcast by satellite throughout the Church.

Q & A

“I have a lot of friends who are not members of the Church. How can I do what is right and still be accepted by my friends?”

NEW ERA

“Just be yourself.” You’ve probably heard that advice countless times when discussing friendships, especially friendships that take you out of your comfort zone. Friendshipping nonmembers can be just that kind of challenge.

Being confident about who you are and what you stand for is one of the best ways to be in the world but not of it. When you are well grounded and know who you are as a person, others are attracted to you. In addition, that kind of integrity can help keep you safe from temptations and bad influences by giving you a finely tuned internal warning system.

The advice to be yourself might seem hard to follow. How can you be yourself when you’re developing and changing rapidly?

Your tastes in matters like music, clothing, and hairstyles will almost certainly change over the years. Even your opinions on more important subjects may evolve as you learn more about the world around you. But think about the things that are at the core of

Be your best self.

Treat others how you would like to be treated.

Keep your standards high.

Seek out friends who have high standards.

Remember that when you live in a manner pleasing to the Lord, it might not be pleasing to all people.

Work to earn the approval of the Lord, not your friends.

Pray for guidance.

READERS

Try to set a good example for your friends. Be kind and honest, as the Savior would be. It’s a sure way to impress them and do what’s right. Doctrine and Covenants 121:9 says, “Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands.” If you look for people with those qualities, you’re sure to find true friends.

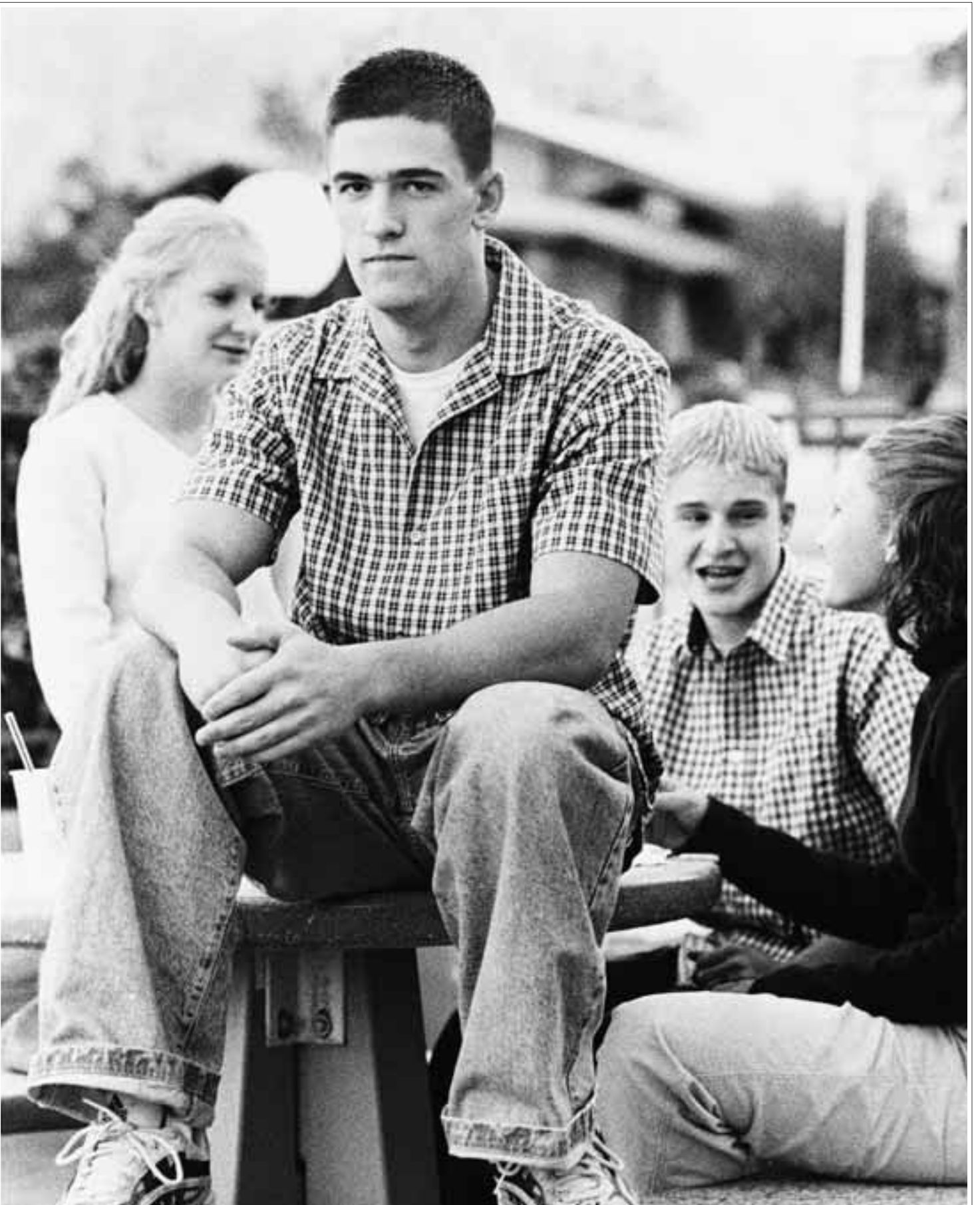
Spencer Cope, 13
Midland, Michigan



In the process of teaching your friends about your standards, don’t act as if you are better than your friends. Always work to maintain an equal relationship with them. Remember, the Spirit is with you if you are choosing the right.

Sister Rebecca Esi Essiakoh, 21
Nigeria Lagos Mission





who you are. Think about the traits you want to stay with you always. Are you kind? Are you honest? Can people trust you? Are you helpful? Do you strive to keep your testimony strong? If you can remember all those important things that make you who you are, it won't matter if one year you are friends with your soccer teammates and the next year you are spending all your free time practicing with the jazz band. No matter what changes you make, you'll have an internal center, a guide to keep you strong no matter who you're friends with.

If you are struggling in this area, it would be a wise idea to spend some time alone to think about who you are and where you're going in your life. If you have a journal, write your thoughts and feelings. Make a list of the core traits you need to preserve. If you don't keep a journal, this problem would be a prime reason to begin one. Don't be afraid to include traits on your list that you don't yet have; use your list to set goals for self-improvement.

Once you have a firm idea in your mind about the kind of person you are, it should be easier to make decisions about keeping your standards, even when others think your standards are a bit strange. However, you may not always get the acceptance you desire. After all, having integrity sometimes means it will be necessary to turn down an invitation or even end a friendship. When you live your life in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord, it might not be pleasing to all people. You won't fit in where you don't belong. In fact, your friends may be glad to have a good example to follow, a person who will show them the way to be happy.

When you think about your nonmember friends, don't worry too much about their approval. Instead, earn the approval of the Lord and yourself. Your friends can't help but notice what an attractive quality that is.

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



“You don't need to compromise your standards to be accepted by good friends. The more obedient you are, the more you stand for true principles, the more the Lord can help you overcome temptation. . . . No one intends to make serious mistakes. They come when you compromise your standards to be more accepted by others” (Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 37).

Many of my friends aren't members of the Church, so I do my best to live the gospel so they can learn more about it. If they are about to do something wrong, I nicely encourage them not to. When I am kind in my approach, they remain my friends.
Shalinee Bisnath, 15
Trinidad, West Indies



I have friends who aren't members of the Church, but they like me because I set a good example and stand up for what I believe in.
Bryce Clark, 12
Denver, Colorado



In my hometown there aren't very many members of the Church. But I find that if I show others who I really am, they respect me. Remember, what's right isn't always popular, and what's popular isn't always right.
Stacie Ann Christensen, 16
Valdez, Alaska



HELP Q&A BE OF HELP

You can help make Q&A helpful by answering the question below. Please mail your answers before March 1, 2001, to Q&A, *New Era*, 50 East North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150. Print or type your name, age, city, and state with each answer. Also, please include a snapshot of yourself. This will not be returned. If your answer is of a sensitive nature, your name may be withheld from publication.

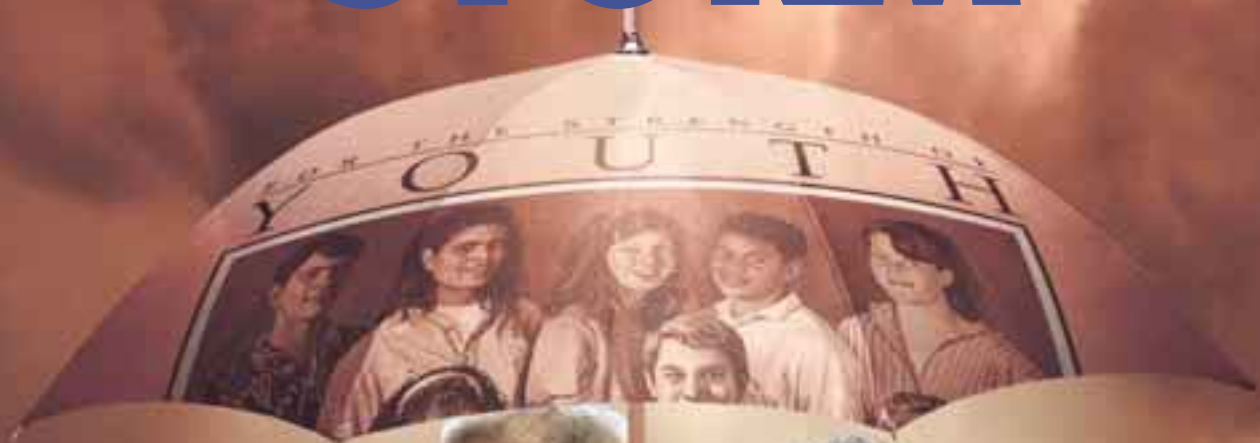
QUESTION

My younger brother tags along with me everywhere I go. I know we should get along, but he often says and does things that embarrass me when we're together. How can we resolve this problem?

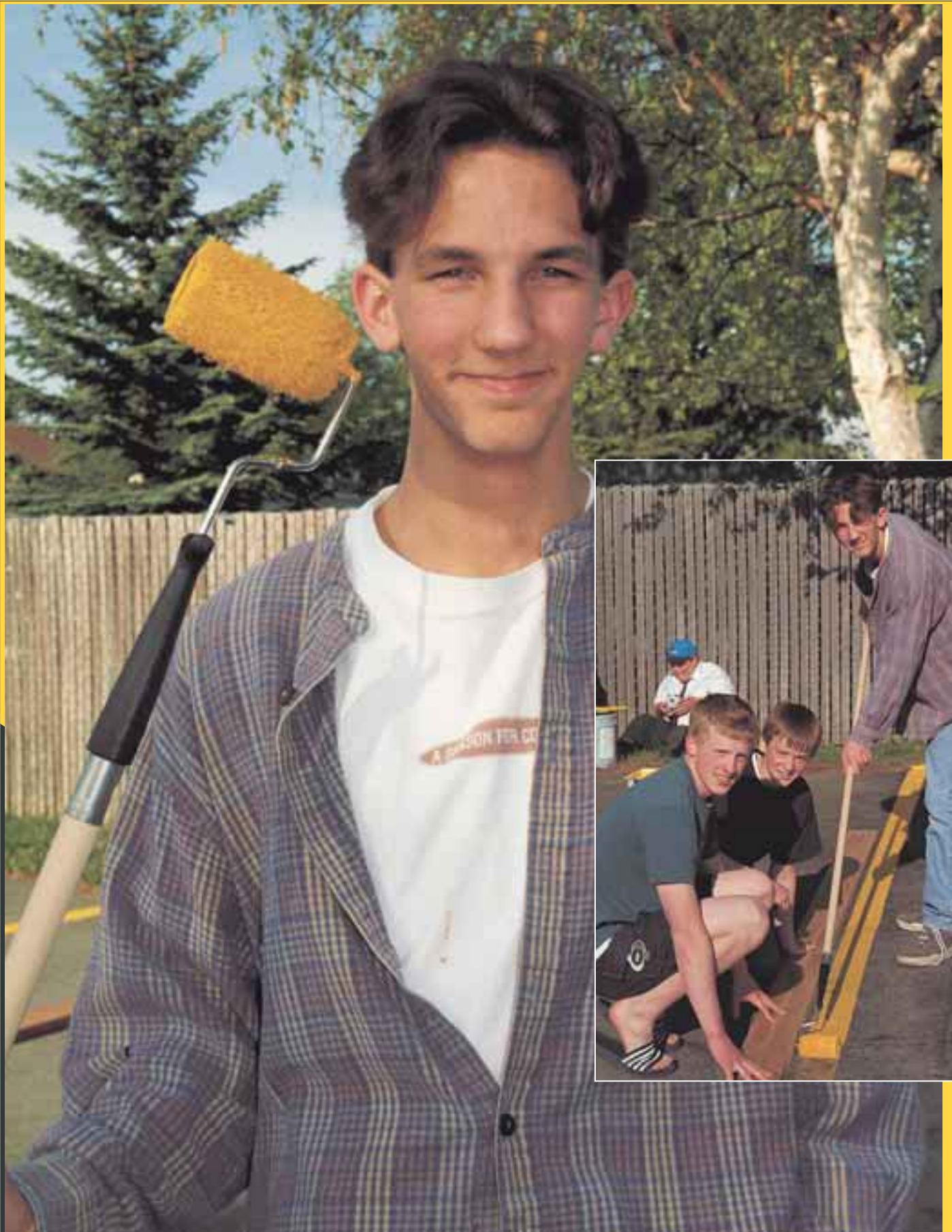
SHELTER

FROM THE

STORM



THERE'S COMFORT AND SAFETY IN THE STANDARDS,
AND THEY COVER EVERYONE.
(See Matt. 7:24-25.)



ALL FOR ONE

Through the long summer days, through the bitter cold of winter, the members of a priests quorum in Anchorage, Alaska, keep each other on track by being friends and brothers first.

Dressed in old clothes—pants and shirt that bright yellow paint can't ruin—James Bridges is sitting with nine of his closest friends saying the following sentence: "Service is fun."

He says it with absolute sincerity, and the other nine nod in agreement. They are gathered at their church in Anchorage, Alaska, getting ready to restripe the parking lot. Perhaps very few will actually notice their work, but, still, it's a job that needs to be done. And they were happy to volunteer.

Looking from one to another, waiting for someone to break ranks about what James just said, is useless. No one is going to suddenly say, "Just kidding." They mean what they say. For the priests quorum of the Anchorage Sixth Ward, service is right up there with playing rugby in the snow and going fishing on

Ship Creek. It's fun.

How can it be? Why would these 10 young men be willing to give up time on their computers or playing their music or practicing for basketball season to do things for people just because they need to be done? And then how can they actually call it fun, no matter how dirty or hard the work?

"Even the most mundane service projects can be fun," says Nick Anderson, "if you have enough people."

One service that needs to be performed repeatedly in Alaska is snow shoveling. "We do drive-by shoveling," says Mike Killary. "We each grab a shovel and pile into a van." Then they pick someone in the ward or neighborhood who hasn't been shoveled out from the latest storm. They quietly sneak out of the van, shovel like crazy, and try to make their getaway before they are discovered. In the meantime, if they throw a little snow at each other, all the better.

They also remember with great enjoyment the day they had to dig an old car out of the ice to get it ready to be donated to a family in the ward. They had to literally chip it out of a winter's worth of snow that had hardened to ice. Even though the temperature was below zero, they remember being warm—warm from hard work and the satisfaction of doing something good.

How did the members of this quorum get to this point where they feel a sense of unity, where they are spending time together doing good things?

Giving service regularly, while having lots of fun doing it, is the secret. Members of the Anchorage Sixth Ward priests quorum know all about a job well done. Here Nick Anderson (opposite page) holds the paint roller while others pitch in to paint new stripes on the ward parking lot.

by Janet Thomas
Assistant Managing Editor

A rough-and-tumble game of rugby in the snow (below) is an annual Thanksgiving weekend event. Digging a donated car out of the ice (right) is just plain hard work but has become a favorite quorum memory.

It starts with friendship

When someone moves into the ward, or young men are advanced, they automatically have friends. “Friendship is built in,” says Mike. “You move in and you become our friend, and eventually you’re friends with everybody.”

No one is left out. Jacob Christensen explains how it happens on the first Sunday someone new comes to church. “Brother Derrell Smith, our Young Men president, lets us know if someone is coming into the ward. He clues us in.”

Then Aaron Ekstrom adds, “We go from there.”

Jacob continues, “We make them feel welcome. We make them feel like we want them to be there. We do want them there.”

“Brother Smith told us to invite them to other activities besides church,” says Aaron, “like to football games or going to play basketball. We work our way from there to church.”

And they call before every activity to let everyone know what’s happening and

when. “It’s pretty irresistible when you keep getting called every week,” says Nick.

“We’re just all friends,” says Zach Milliman. “We have a leader who keeps us in line. He doesn’t let people make fun of other people. We get to know each other without any animosity getting in the way.”

My brother’s keeper

“I came here about four years ago,” says Neal Lefler. “It’s become like our family. This place is small compared to a lot of places, but we’re just like brothers. We keep track of each other.”

Indeed, that is true. James remembers his first Sunday. “I shook everybody’s hands. They wanted to know who I was. It made me feel better because I’d moved from a place I had lived for 16 years. They were trying to get me to go out and do things with them. I was kind of shy at first.”

Neal recalls an event when James wasn’t with them. “I remember one time we were playing basketball. The only person who wasn’t there was James. We called him up and dragged him out of bed. We took him to play basketball. It was fun.”

“When a bunch of guys call, it makes you feel good. Since then, I’ve become friends with all of them. It has helped me grow a lot spiritually.”

“It helps when you have a support group of LDS friends you can go hang out with,” says Mike.

“We’re all just friends,” says David Sullivan, “It’s pretty natural for us to be one big group of friends.”

Leading the quorum

Aaron and Jacob were recently released from the leadership of the priests quorum. They learned one big lesson about how to make a quorum work effectively. “It’s a big commitment,” says Aaron. “You have to show up and be there to everything.”







“Even stuff you don’t want to go do,” adds Jacob. “If it doesn’t sound like fun, you go and make it fun. You show the others it can be fun. You mess around a little, but you get the job done. Make it fun for everyone.”

Mike is now the new first assistant. He’s just learning about his assignment. “I call people, get a count of who is coming, and help plan activities. Actually we all sit in and plan activities.”

But more than that, this priests quorum leadership knows what’s going on in each other’s lives. On the night of the parking lot painting project, they know that one of the priests is out of town to attend his grandfather’s funeral. They know that two new priests are attending one last activity night with the teachers quorum. They know who’s sick or injured. They know who has a concert or game or match going on. And sometimes they will choose to attend to show their support. “Anything is fun to go to,” says Zach, “if you go together to support someone.”

Their hand of fellowship and brotherhood is extended to a special member of their quorum. Nick Schwan was recently baptized. He is mentally challenged and attends the special education classes at their high school. Both at school and at church, he’s one of them. They treat him with kindness and listen to what he has to say. “At first,” says Joe Carson, “we didn’t think Nick really knew what was going on around him, but after a while we realized that he picked up on things and he doesn’t really forget anything. He’s just a normal guy. He’s just a little . . .” Joe is at a loss for words. He knows how the quorum feels about Nick, and the feeling is good and supportive.

Best service is missionary service

Right now there are 20 full-time missionaries serving from the Anchorage Sixth Ward.

Okay, just 19 of the them are elders, but the Young Men claim the young lady serving from their ward because they suspect that their good example helped



encourage her to consider a mission.

And there are 10 to 12 priests getting ready to follow in their footsteps in the next couple of years. They readily admit there are other wards in the Church with as many or more full-time missionaries serving, but for a relatively small ward away from a large LDS population, they feel pleased with the tradition of service they are setting. They know just as they progress from deacon to teacher to priest, the next step is a mission.

Bishop Wesley E. Carson says, “We’ve put a positive spin on peer pressure. Serving a mission has become a family tradition; it’s become a ward tradition; and it’s become a quorum tradition.”

Staying on course

Back to the parking lot. “It’s a serious activity,” says Brother Smith. “I don’t want to see anyone’s initials out there. I want you to be proud that when you drive in on Sunday, the stripes are straight.”

The yellow stripes will be straight. Members of this priests quorum know all about following guidelines and doing a good job. They know where service leads—to feelings of worth. And they know the ones that have set the example for them are now in the mission field. The lines are straight, and they’ll follow. **NE**

Painting becomes entertaining when everyone shows up to help (opposite page), or when the group tests the capacity of a recently painted closet (opposite page, insert), or while making and donating blackboards (above) for a Humanitarian Services assignment.

THE ART OF



Juggling, whether it's several objects or different activities or tasks, takes skill and careful thought.

When everything feels like it's up in the air, choosing to stay grounded in the gospel makes all the difference.

This is a juggling test. Put this magazine on a table in front of you, open so you can still read it.

Okay?

Now, place your right hand on your stomach and your left hand on top of your head.

So far so good.

Move your right hand in a counter-clockwise motion on your stomach, and at the same time use your left hand to pat the top of your head.

You're not finished yet.

Now, without stopping your right or

by Chris Crowe

A stylized illustration of a person with red hair, wearing a white shirt and a teal jacket, juggling. One hand is holding a book with an orange cover, while the other is open. A ball with orange and white segments is in the air above. The background is yellow with black motion lines.

JUGGLING

left hand, tap your right foot in $\frac{3}{4}$ time and say *floccinaucinihilipilification* (the estimation of something as valueless) three times as fast as you can.

It's hard, isn't it?

Of course it is. Juggling, whether it's tossing and catching several tennis balls or managing several different tasks or activities at the same time, isn't easy.

Both kinds of juggling have a long history. One kind, the tossing and catching of objects, can be traced as far back as ancient Egypt. The other kind of juggling, managing several different tasks at the same time, has been around even longer.

Evaluate your activities

A dynamic Latter-day Saint high school girl named Tami was one of the best jugglers I've ever known. She juggled family, softball, track, homework, church service and activities, seminary, school,

Choosing what to drop isn't always easy. If your responsibilities and activities only bring frustration, then you need to change your juggling technique.



The secret to being well balanced is to include activities from four basic groups: spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical.

cheerleading, student government, a part-time job, and an active social life with amazing skill.

You don't have to be involved in as many activities as Tami to still need to juggle your various responsibilities. And your juggling skill has a lot to do with the measure of success and happiness you'll receive from what you do.

No matter how successful you are, or think you are, it's a good idea to sit down once in a while and evaluate how well you're managing the various activities and responsibilities in your life. For most of us, attempting to juggle as many activities as Tami would not be wise. If you feel overwhelmed, if nothing seems fun or fulfilling anymore, or if your activities are only a frustration, then maybe you need to change your juggling technique.

Watch a really great juggler sometime. You'll notice that if he takes on too many objects, concentrates too much on one thing, or has unsteady footing, he's liable to drop what he's juggling. Successfully juggling time with family, church and school activities, and a social life requires the same basic approaches. To keep everything moving smoothly, you have to be like a professional juggler and limit your activities and responsibilities, divide your attention among them, and work from a solid base.

Elder M. Russell Ballard said, "A life that gets out of balance is much like a car tire that is out of balance. It will make the operation of the car rough and unsafe. . . . So it is with life. The ride through mortality can be smoother for us when we strive to stay in balance" (*Ensign*, May 1987, 16).

Being well balanced

Limiting your activities isn't always easy. Life's smorgasbord is so varied that no one can possibly sample everything. The best way to fill your plate is to select a well-rounded diet of activities from the four basic groups: spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical. A balanced life includes activities from each of these areas, with a special emphasis on those that are important or interesting.

When deciding which activities you'll juggle, it's important to become involved

in things that *you* like. One high school senior said, "I picked out activities that were important to other people. I guess I was just looking for social recognition. Being a cheerleader was fun, and I don't regret doing it, but I wish I would have taken the time to get involved with art too. None of my friends liked art, and I suppose that's why I didn't get more involved in it, even though art is important to me."

Dividing your attention

The surest way to overload your juggling ability is to take on more activities than you can handle. It isn't always easy to eliminate items from your circle of juggling, but there are times when you simply have to. For example, if you're already overwhelmed with school activities, it wouldn't make sense to get involved in one more thing, no matter how much you'd like to. The world is loaded with interesting, exciting, and profitable things to do, but some are low priority and others you just don't have time for right now.

Planting your feet

Finally, the most important juggling principle of all is working from a rock-solid base built on an eternal perspective—a perspective that helps you remember who you are and why you're on earth. "Of all the things I did and learned in high school," one graduate said, "I'm glad I held on to my values." Elder Ballard counseled, "Think about your life and set your priorities. . . . Our main goal should be to seek 'immortality and eternal life' (Moses 1:39)" (*Ensign*, May 1987, 14, 16). If you can manage to keep your feet firmly planted in the straight and narrow path, you'll have a much easier time juggling life's other responsibilities.

Of course, there may be times when you stumble on that straight and narrow path and drop something you've been juggling. When that happens, just pick it up and get right back to work.

Use the basic principles of juggling to help you manage life's responsibilities and before you can say *floccinaucinibilibilification* three times, you'll be on your way to a happier, more balanced life. **NE**

MEANINGFUL PRAYER

We read in the scriptures that we are to cry unto the Lord, to pour out our souls to Him, and to let our hearts be drawn out in prayer to the Lord (see Alma 34:26–27). But making prayers meaningful all the time can be difficult. So how do we open the doors to spiritual power through real prayer and not merely “say our prayers”? Some *New Era* readers share how they make their own prayers more heartfelt and effective:

- ❖ Pray in faith and sincerity. God answers faithful prayers (see D&C 5:24).
- ❖ Ponder your day, your needs, and what you are grateful for before you begin to pray (see D&C 9:8). Your thoughts will be more collected, your prayer more focused.
- ❖ As you ponder, think of the things you need to repent of, and ask the Lord’s forgiveness. Ask Him to help you know what you need to repent of.
- ❖ Ask Heavenly Father if there is anything specific you should pray about, and be sensitive to the guidance of the Spirit in your prayers (see Matt. 6:8).
- ❖ Give thanks for all your blessings. Ask the Lord to help you remember them.
- ❖ Be sure that you allow two-way communication when you pray. Listen for answers and be worthy of the guidance of the Holy Ghost.
- ❖ Try to use appropriate prayer language. Use the pronouns *Thee*, *Thou*, and *Thine* instead of *You* and *Yours*.
- ❖ Pray out loud. Vocalize your prayers as if Heavenly Father were sitting beside you.
- ❖ Pray for the Holy Spirit to be with you, and express your love for your Heavenly Father and His Son (see 2 Ne. 32:8).
- ❖ Try to find a clean, quiet place to pray.
- ❖ Read about prayer in the scriptures. The Savior taught us the pattern for prayer in Matthew 6:9–13, and His own prayer in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39–44) teaches that our prayers should be in accordance with God’s will.
- ❖ Take time to pray. Don’t rush. Make prayer a part of your life and not an afterthought.
- ❖ Instead of being completely absorbed with your own problems and needs, lay your desires at the Lord’s feet and pray for others who need the Lord’s help. **NE**



AARIKA'S COURAGE

Sometimes you just have to open your mouth.

Palm trees line the streets, the Pacific Ocean is a five-minute walk away, and the temperature has—brrrr—dropped below 60 degrees Fahrenheit. It's December in Manhattan Beach, California, a suburb of Los Angeles, and Christmas is in the air. Okay, chestnuts aren't exactly roasting on an open fire, and nobody's dashing through the snow. But Aarika Anvaripour is feeling that feeling you get at Christmas just the same.

"Just meet me at 6:30 tomorrow night," she tells her friends, being purposefully vague about what she's planning. Aarika has invited 20 nonmember friends to participate in something she promises "will get you into the Christmas spirit."

That something is a night of caroling to people in a rest home and a visit to the Los Angeles Temple grounds. Aarika thought this would be a great missionary tool to help introduce her friends to the Church.

It isn't her first missionary experience, and it certainly won't be her last. If there's one thing Aarika knows, it's how to tell people about the gospel. Then again, she'd never done anything like this with this many people.

One December night

So Aarika went to work. A week

before Christmas she arranged for her friends to meet at the home of Bruce and Kathryn Ghent. He is Aarika's stake president, and Sister Ghent volunteered to prepare a light dinner in her home.

Of the 20 friends invited, 12 came, and none of them knew what they'd be doing. They showed up because they were curious and because they liked Aarika.

"I had prayed before I did this. I was scared to death," Aarika recalls. "You have to know how scared I was to do this. I had fasted and prayed that the girls would feel the Spirit, so I knew I needed something to get them in the spiritual zone." That's where the caroling came in.

After dinner, the group drove to a rest home to sing to the residents. But instead of "Jingle Bells" and "Winter Wonderland," Aarika borrowed hymnals from her ward, and the girls sang Christmas hymns about the Savior's birth. "Some of my friends had never been caroling. We sat with the people; we sang to them. And my friends were saying, 'I love this.'"

Aarika was too.

After the rest home visit, it was time to go to the Los Angeles Temple to see the grounds decorated with Christmas lights. Aarika gave a short explanation about why the Church has temples; then she took them into the visitors' center to watch *The Lamb of God*.

The group also saw another short film, *Luke 2*, followed by a walk around the temple while drinking hot chocolate and looking at the lights.

Aarika had told friends about the gospel before. But she'd never done anything this big. "You have to know how scared I was to do this. I had fasted and prayed that the girls would feel the Spirit."

by **Laury Livsey**
Assistant Editor

The best part was seeing my friends look at the Church in a different way. I think that night they actually felt why I love the gospel so much," Aarika says.

"My friends asked me tons of questions and kept asking me, 'What am I feeling? I love this feeling.'" It was then that Aarika took the opportunity to bear her testimony.

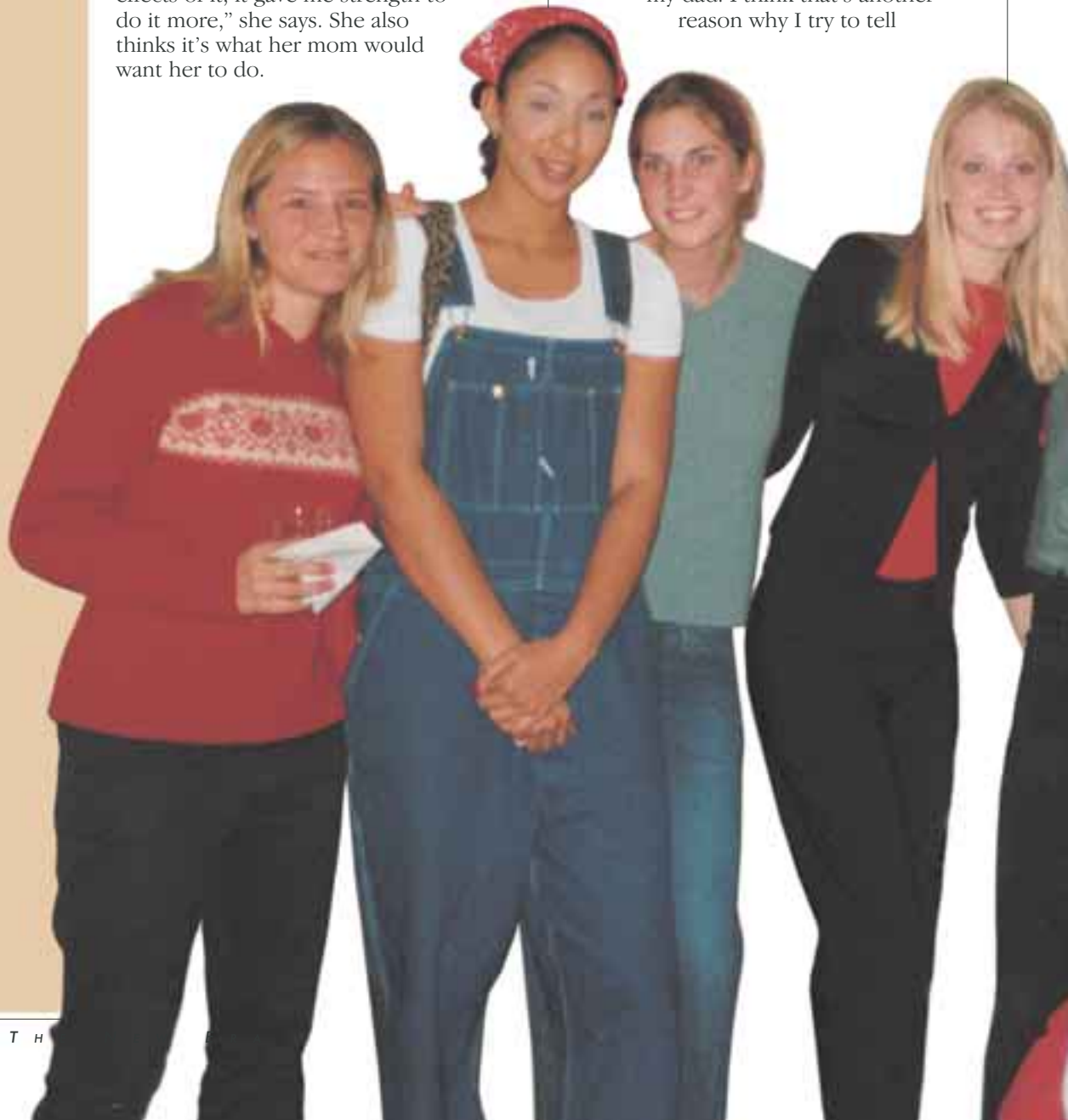
"The best part was seeing my friends look at the Church in a different way. I think that night they actually felt why I love the gospel so much," she says. "We grew close that night, and it strengthened my testimony."

Remembering Mom

Aarika loves to talk about the gospel. She started when she was in junior high and hasn't quit. "Once I started sharing the gospel with others and I saw the effects of it, it gave me strength to do it more," she says. She also thinks it's what her mom would want her to do.

When it comes to life-shaping events, Aarika can point to one that happened nine years ago. It was the day her mother was killed by a drunk driver. "I remember her very well, and I had a really close relationship with her even at a young age," she says of her mom. "My dad always tells me how my mom would want me to be a strong member of the Church." This is an interesting statement since Aarika's dad, Jamie, when he first said that, wasn't a member himself.

"I want to be good because my mom was a convert to the Church, and my dad finally joined, too, after my mom died. People helped bring my mom into the Church, and I saw how people helped my dad. I think that's another reason why I try to tell



people about the gospel.”

“After my mom died,” she continues, “the gospel was there at the perfect moment in my life. I have realized that I can still feel close to my mom and that she is here. I know I will see her again someday.”

A month before her visit to the Los Angeles Temple grounds, Aarika and her brother were sealed to their parents.

“I have seen how the Church changed my life and has made negative things into positive things. I have such a testimony of Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father, and I feel like I have a really close relationship with them,” she says. “I’ve had moments in my life where I’ve felt the Holy Ghost to where I’m just in tears. I love my friends so

Grandparents’ Story

For years, Aarika’s grandparents Raymond and Marilyn Perez supported Aarika and her brother, Aaron, as they went to church. But becoming members themselves wasn’t in the Perez’s plans. “I’m not going to become a Mormon,” Marilyn would tell her granddaughter. And the granddaughter would just smile because she had other ideas.

When Aaron left as a missionary to the Chile Santiago West Mission, Aarika began inviting her grandparents to church, and the Perezes accepted the invitations. Meanwhile Aaron wrote them letters from the mission field.

“And when Aaron got home from his mission, things got more and more serious about the Church,” Aarika recalls. Not long after that, what they said wouldn’t happen did. Raymond and Marilyn were baptized in December 1999.



She says her life is so much better because of the gospel. That's why Aarika bears testimony to her friends. "I have a testimony of courage and what it takes to stand up for what is right."

much that I want them to feel that, to feel that comfort, and to feel the love that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have for them."

Attending seminary

It's six in the morning at the Redondo Beach chapel. The cultural hall is filled with chairs. Slowly, seminary students begin filing in. Only today it's not a normal seminary morning. Something is different. Sure, you can smell the French toast cooking in the kitchen. Breakfast is in about 30 minutes. What's out of the ordinary, though, is that not all of the teenagers in the room are Latter-day Saints. Some have never even been in an LDS church building before.

On this Monday, it's the monthly version of Bring a Friend to Seminary, an idea hatched by Linda O'Brien, the seminary teacher who challenged her students to invite nonmember friends to seminary once a month. This morning, Aarika and many other students are enthusiastic participants.

Today, four of Aarika's friends have come for the lesson—and the food. "Once you get them to come, they have a great time. They have so much fun, and then they tell another person. But I do kind of mumble the six-in-the-morning part," Aarika says, laughing. "They're not sure what to expect, but they've told me their days have been so great because it started out with a prayer and talking about the scriptures."

When Aarika was attending her first year of seminary, she was unsure about the program. "I thought, Who am I going to ask? But now I'm really comfortable, and it's a lot easier now."

Sharing the gospel is so much a part of Aarika's life that she can't remember a day when she didn't talk about the Church with someone.

As seminary ends, Aarika and her four friends leave. They're all smiling.

The courage to try

Aarika is now standing at the pulpit during the Redondo Third Ward's sacrament meeting, and she's talking about courage. "I have a testimony of courage and what it takes to stand up for what is right," Aarika says.

"But as members of the Church," she continues, "we need to have courage and show people how we live. My friends joke around with me because everyone at school knows I'm a Mormon. They tease me about things sometimes. But they say, 'Aarika, we tease you, but we have a respect for you that we don't have for a lot of people.' I tell them I'm not perfect and I don't have the perfect life. But because I have the gospel, I have a better life, and it makes it easier for me to get through my trials."

Yes, sharing the gospel takes courage. It also takes a testimony.

And Aarika has both. **NE**



“Those girls are my sisters.”

Aarika Anvaripour spends a lot of her time telling others about the Church. But she finds much of her strength when she's with the seven other girls her age from the Redondo Third Ward in the Torrance California North Stake.

“I have my friends from school, but my Church friends are like my sisters. I know everyone is your sister and brother, but those girls are my sisters,” says Aarika. “They're my foundation. I love them so much.”

Kristin Bell agrees. “We've never all gone to the same school, so we hang out on weekends mostly. We have the same goals, and we have the same future in mind for ourselves,” she says. “We can talk openly because we understand each other and we know what we want. We've just been really close ever since we were little.”

That means Aarika (below, with lei) and (from left) Kristin Bell, Candice Moriyama, Kristin Moriyama, and Carly Brandt, along with Kendra Dean, Tracy Smith, and Nikki Baird (not pictured) really care about each other. And now that they've moved out of Young Women, they can look back on their years in Young Women with fondness.

“With my Laurel friends, they know what I want to do or what I don't want to do, and you just good to know that people have the same values.”

do or what I don't want to do, and you just good to know that people have



JUNIOR

My buddies were going home teaching with active priesthood bearers. My assigned companion was less active. Did I dare take the lead?

by John Haueter

I wanted to be a good home teacher, but my companion, well . . .

What possible effect can a 14-year-old have on home teaching? I'm just a kid. Who am I to be telling an elder to do his home teaching? Not just an elder, but an elder that I have never met or even seen at church. The only thing I knew about him was his name and that he was an ex-athlete.

I had been called to be a junior home teaching companion three months earlier and still had not visited anyone. It didn't help that my two best friends were already active home teachers. One was assigned with his father and the other to a member of the elders quorum presidency. My own father was in the bishopric and at that time was not assigned as a home teacher. What could a 14-year-old companion do?

My feelings of guilt had to be Brother Jensen's fault, I decided. He had been my deacons quorum adviser who taught us how important home teaching was. He also explained that as a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood, it was our duty to be faithful home teachers. He had warned us that we might have to remind and encourage a senior companion to do home teaching.

Well, my options were really very simple. I could continue to wait for my

senior companion to call and do my best not to feel guilty, or I could go to his house, introduce myself, and arrange to go home teaching.

On the one hand, he was the senior companion. He was supposed to take charge, not me. Wouldn't I be assuming too much authority by contacting him? He might even get offended. Better to wait, I thought. Then Brother Jensen's words would come back to me again.

"If your senior companion doesn't contact you," he said, "then you must contact him and let that brother know you are ready to go home teaching." He explained that if the senior companion still didn't go home teaching, the responsibility would rest on that senior companion. Until we made the effort to go, we had to share in that failure.

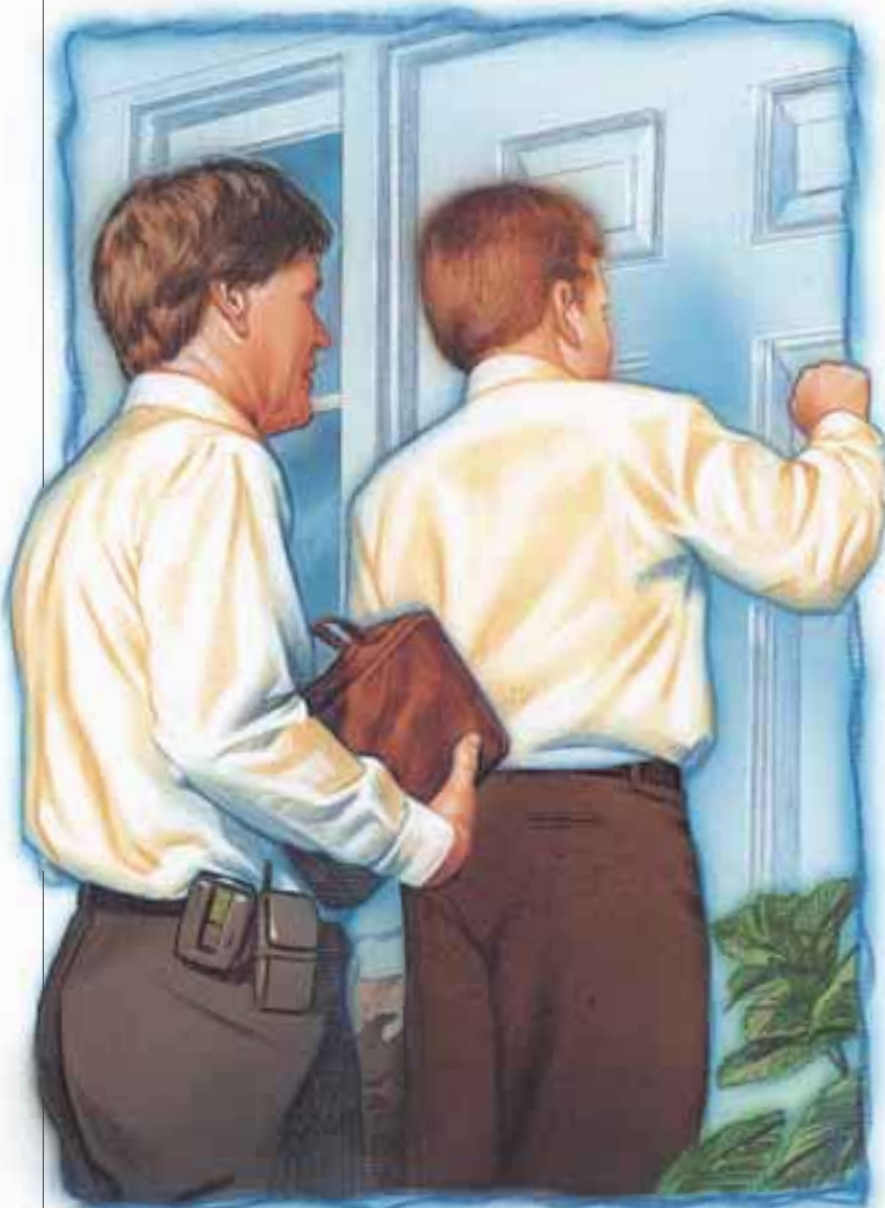
I finally committed to go to my companion and introduce myself.

As I went to church that Sunday, I began to feel more and more nervous. What would my companion think? Would he laugh at me? Maybe he would get mad and run me off. I didn't feel I could do it, but I had promised to follow through and make the attempt. If he responded negatively, then I would have at least done my part.

I normally walked home from church, passing my companion's house on the way. As I neared his house, I forced myself up the driveway and said a prayer, very simple, very direct. "Lord, please help me." My fears left me for the moment, and I quickly climbed the steps to the front door and knocked. I knew

COMPANION





We rarely missed anyone in the two years we were companions. We also became pretty good friends.

someone would answer because I could hear what sounded like a party going on inside. The fear was coming back, but it was too late to run. I had already knocked.

The door opened, and a woman asked me what I wanted. She may have been polite, rude, sensitive, or even abrupt. I don't know because I was trying hard to remember what it was I was there for.

"Is Brother Johnson here?" I finally asked, timidly.

"Just a minute, please." I thought I could hear laughter but wasn't sure. I didn't have time to breathe before a very

tall man stepped to the door. He seemed none too friendly.

"Yeah?" he asked.

My eyes must have been big enough to cover my face. I'm sure he noticed I was scared because he started to smile a little. I calmed down just enough to utter my little prayer in my mind one last, desperate time.

"My name is John," I began in a voice that didn't sound scared to me, "and I'm your home teaching companion. I was wondering when we could go home teaching?"

I don't know if he was amused or surprised, but he didn't throw me off the porch. Good start, I thought.

He just smiled and said, "Give me your phone number, and I'll call you back."

I went home feeling pretty good. I felt that I had made a good effort, and if he didn't call back, I could say I had tried. When I arrived home, I told my parents what had happened. I don't think they expected me to get a call.

Later that night, I received a call from Brother Johnson, my companion.

"Can you go home teaching Tuesday at seven?" he asked.

"Uh, sure," I stammered.

"I'll pick you up then. Bye." He hung up.

Tuesday night we went home teaching. I found out later he had called the elders quorum president after I had left his house that Sunday to get the names and phone numbers of the families we were assigned. He then called the families and made appointments.

That became our routine. On the third Sunday I would stop by his house, and then he would set up appointments. We rarely, if ever, missed anyone in the two years we were companions. We also became pretty good friends. Brother Johnson even came to church a couple of times. He said he just wanted to see the quorum president faint.

I learned two very important lessons. First, an Aaronic Priesthood holder can have a positive influence on home teaching. Second, a less-active brother can be the most active home teacher.

As a home teacher, Brother Johnson taught me a lot. **NE**

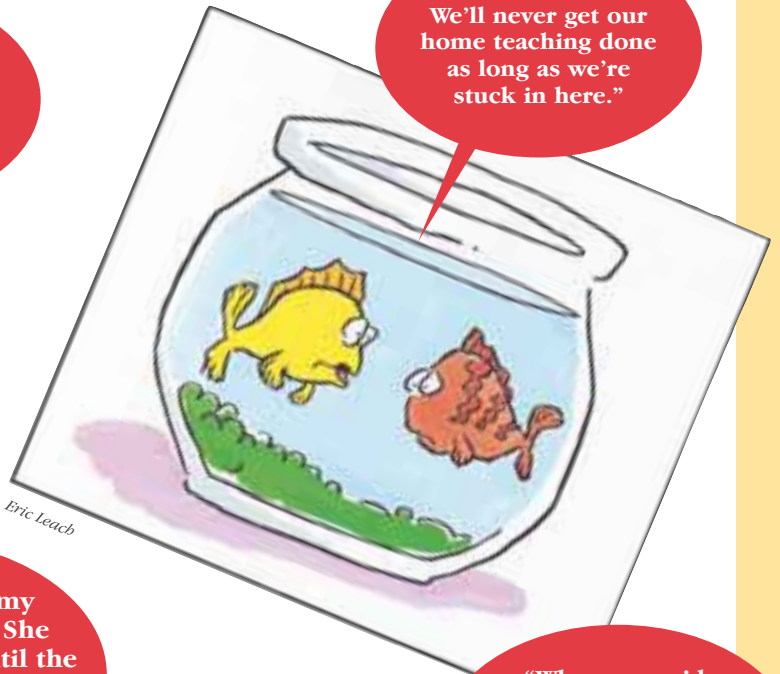
T H E E X T R A S M I L E

"I only iron the parts of my shirt that aren't covered by my suit coat."



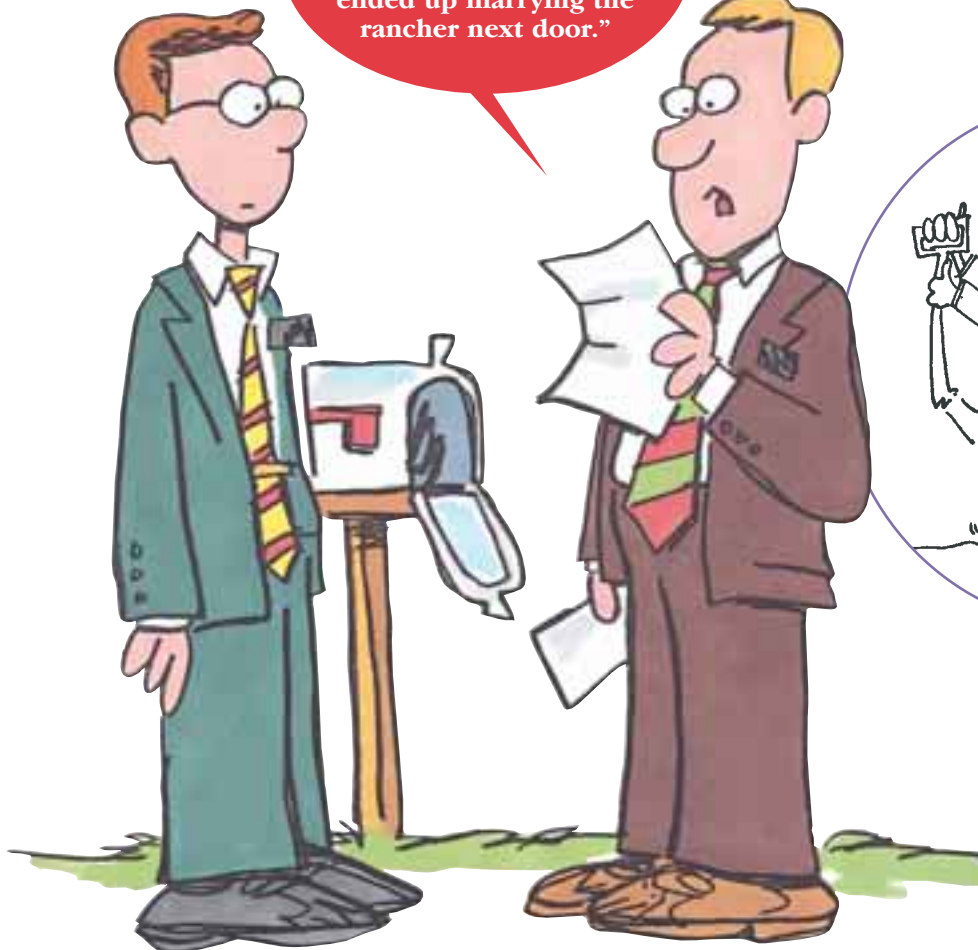
Adam Koford

"Let's face it. We'll never get our home teaching done as long as we're stuck in here."



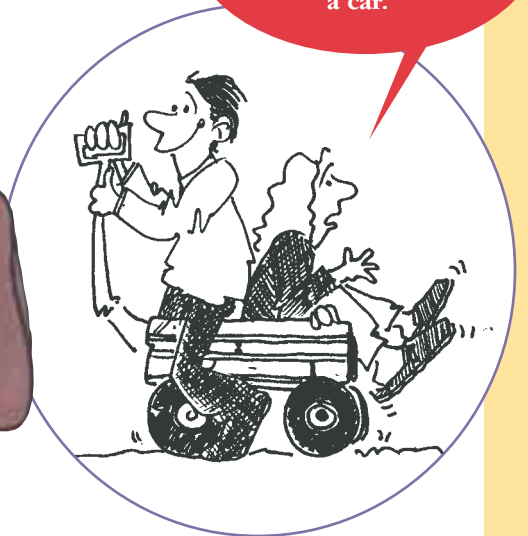
Eric Leach

"It's a letter from my girlfriend in Idaho. She said she'd love me until the cows came home. She ended up marrying the rancher next door."



Val Chadwick Bagley

"When you said you had to borrow your brother's wheels for our date, I just assumed you were talking about a car."



Calleen Jensen

GET SOME ZZZZs

Beauty sleep actually works. The old saying “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise” isn’t just folklore; and, when it comes to sleep, eight is not always enough. The National Sleep Foundation says teenagers need between eight hours and 30 minutes and nine hours and 15 minutes of sleep a night to function at their best. Most teens only get seven hours and 15 minutes a night. The dangers of sleep deprivation include irritability, difficulty concentrating, greater risk for accidents, and a reduced energy level.

Here are a few tips from the NSF for healthier sleeping habits:

- ✦ Establish a consistent schedule for the time you go to bed and wake up.
- ✦ Learn how much sleep you need to awake feeling refreshed, and be sure to get it.
- ✦ As soon as you get out of bed, get into some daylight. Light helps our bodies know when it’s time to wake up.
- ✦ Schedule some “down time” before you go to bed, so you can be relaxed enough to fall asleep.
- ✦ Don’t fall asleep with the TV on. The flickering light will interfere with your restful sleep. Better yet, don’t delay bedtime to watch TV or surf the Internet.
- ✦ Always avoid all-nighters. A good night’s sleep will be of more use to you on a test than last-minute cramming will.
- ✦ **Never** drive when you are sleepy.

LEADERSHIP TIP: DELEGATE

“One of the first principles we must keep in mind is that the work of the Lord goes forward through assignments. Leaders receive and give assignments. This is an important part of the necessary principle of delegating. No one appreciates a willing volunteer more than I, but the total work cannot be done as the Lord wants it done merely by those doing the work who may be present at meetings. I have often wondered what the earth would look like if the Lord in the Creation had left the work to be done only by volunteers. . . . Assignments always should be given with the greatest love, consideration, and kindness” (James E. Faust, *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 34).



GOLDEN GIFT

A call to his high school principal’s office did not mean trouble for Kelter Stenzel Fittipaldi, of the Curitiba Brazil São Lourenço Stake. Kelter did not have the best grades in school, but his principal said he exhibited good behavior and good fellowship. He had been selected to represent his school. He would be going to Chile with the possibility of meeting the president of that country.

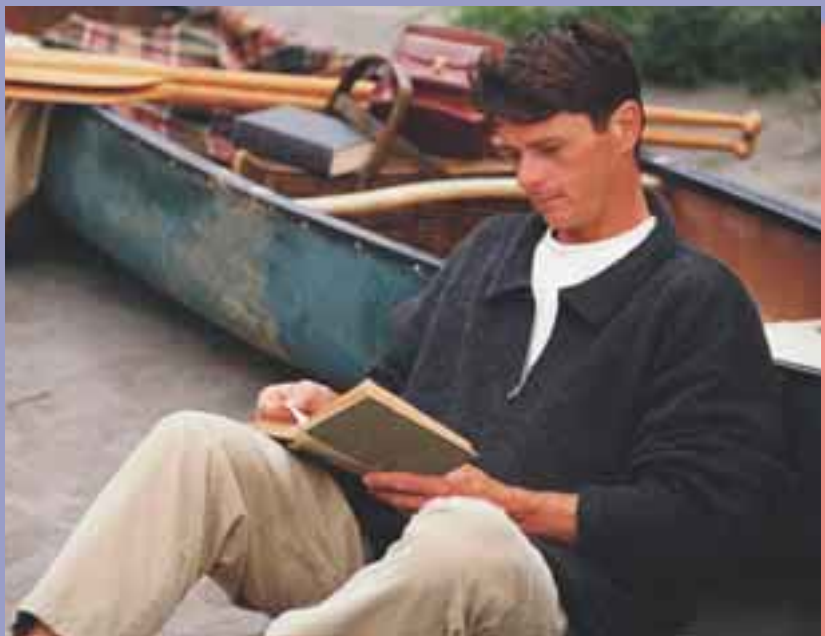
Besides the gifts the school had prepared for the Chilean president, Kelter and his mother wrapped a special gift in gold paper for him—a Book of Mormon. But only four out of the fifty high school delegates from various countries would actually get to meet the president. Kelter prayed he would be able to give his gift, and his prayers were answered. He was one of the four. “Of the gifts I presented to the President of Chile, the golden gift was the most precious of all,” he said.

WORD FIND

The Lord counsels us to “seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118).

Here’s another reason to turn off the television and pick up a good book: In 1950, the average number of words in a 14-year-old’s vocabulary was 25,000. But today? Only 10,000, according to an MSNBC poll. Students who read every day have better vocabularies and higher reading scores than those who don’t. And a higher reading level leads to better grades and better jobs (National Assessment of Educational Progress).

If you’re already a good reader, you could volunteer at a literacy program near you, where you can help others with their reading skills.



No More

An essay on racial harmony, done with real thought and insight, seemed like the straw that broke the camel's back. But that was before I realized there were living examples all around me.

by Pamela J. Reid

One look at my fellow seminary students, and a tough assignment became easy.

“Okay, class. You have two weeks to complete this assignment. Remember that it is a research essay. You must present detailed observations and a conclusion, not just an opinion.”

Miss Lambert’s instructions were clear enough, but my brain was rejecting them. Another assignment! Don’t teachers ever coordinate assignments, or is it just part of a giant plan to keep students so overworked that they don’t have the strength to fool around in class?

I took the typewritten sheet from Wendy Baker as she passed them out to the class. She was positively glowing with enthusiasm. Why do some people thrive on schoolwork?

“It’s a tough one, Matt.” She smiled brightly. “We can work in groups if we want.”

I attempted a smile, then pretended to get engrossed in the essay question: “Racial Harmony. Is it possible in our community, and what are some ways we can achieve it?”

I glanced around the class to see if the reactions of others were the same as mine. With the exception of Wendy, they looked pretty similar—heads down, tired and disgruntled expressions, a few hands being run through already ruffled hair as if the movement could generate some

extra brain power.

My sociology class in New Zealand is quite diverse, a mixture of European, Maori, Polynesian, South African, and Asian. We share a few classes, but most people stick with their own group at lunch time and after school. No disharmony but no great harmony either.

“What’s the frown for, Matt?” Miss Lambert stood beside my desk. “Do you have some questions about the assignment?”

“Uh, no . . . not really.” I always felt a bit flustered around Miss Lambert. “I was just looking around the class, and I figure we all get on pretty well.”

She tapped at her chin with the tip of her pen; then she smiled with a sort of faraway look. “Okay, Matt. That answer’s fine for now, but I want you to be able to tell me how different you feel when you’ve finished making your observations. How much better do you think it could be?”

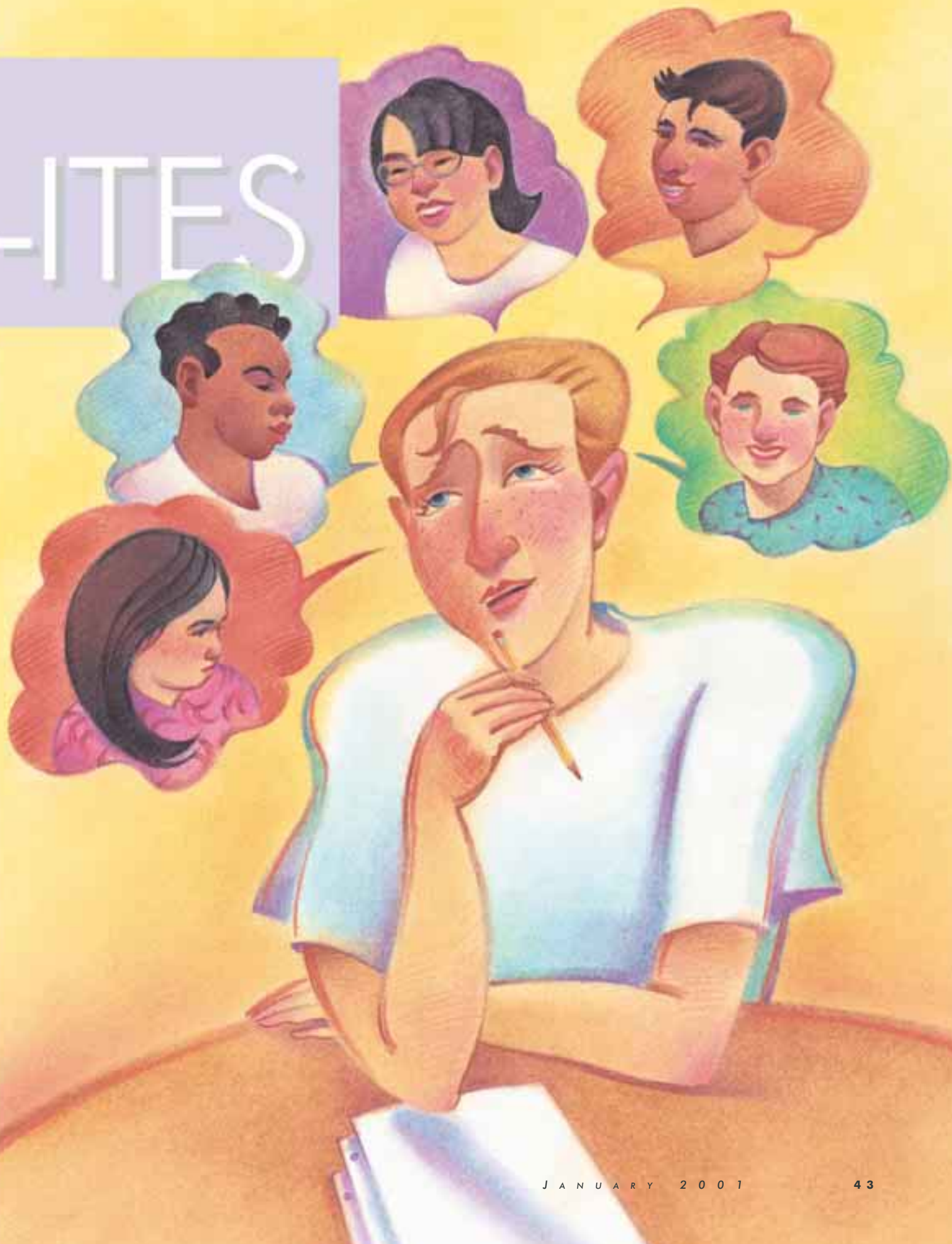
I guess I was wrong to expect Mum’s sympathy with my lack of enthusiasm for the assignment. I read it out to her after she’d watched me inhale a reasonable quantity of cake and milk after school.

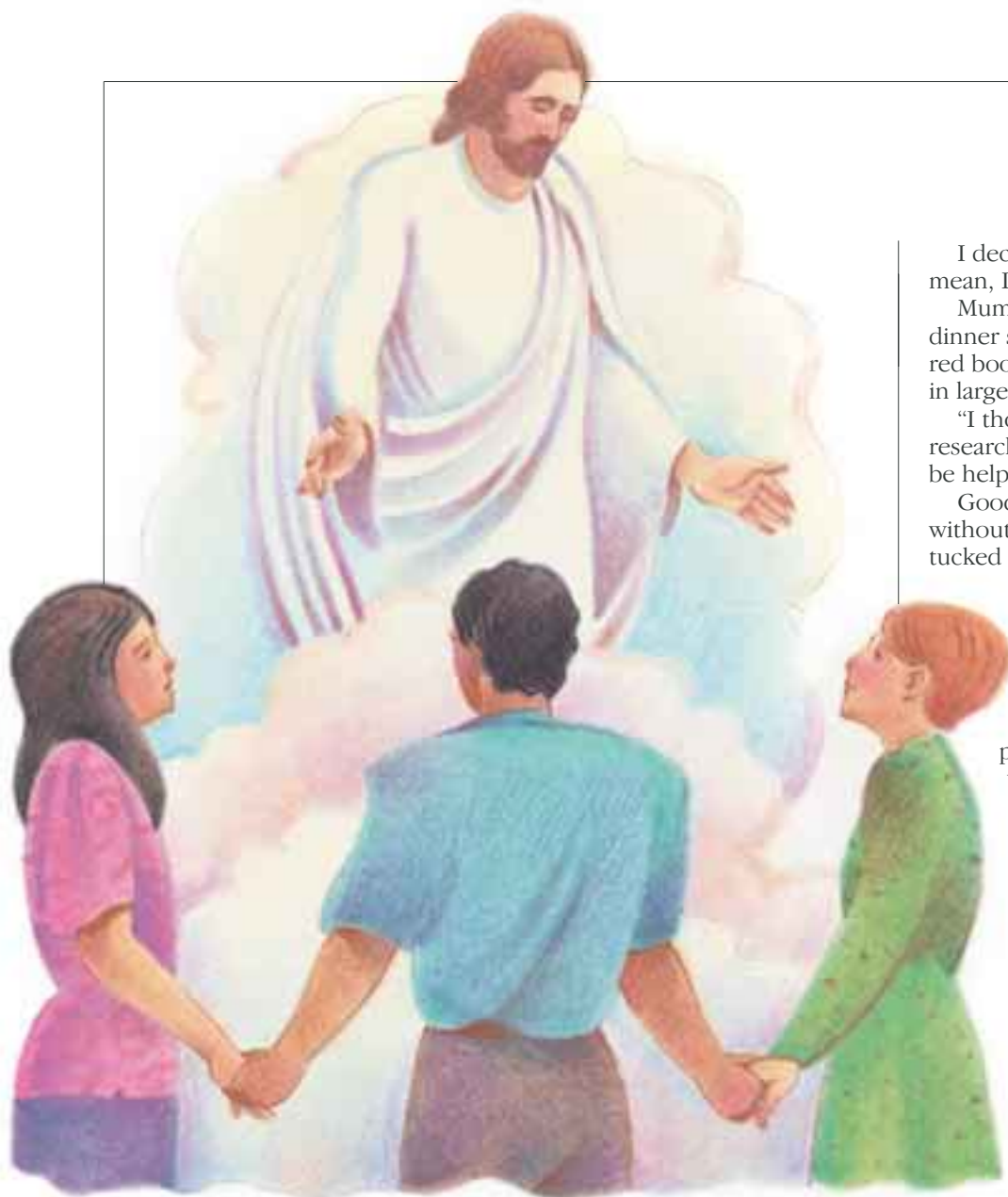
“What’s the problem?” She rescued the last bit of cake for my sisters. “You’ve got plenty of places to gather information right around you.”

I must have stared blankly because she took a deep breath and started speaking more slowly and carefully, like when I had a project to do in primary school.

“Think about it, Matthew.” I know she’s being serious when she says my whole name. “You have to find examples

-ITES





No “-ites” among us? Did that mean there were no different cultural groups?

of racial harmony. I’m just suggesting you look closer to home first.”

Then came the classic closing statement. “You know I’m happy to help you, Matthew, but you have to make an effort. Now I have to go and do some shopping. Don’t eat all the cake.”

I did make an effort. I looked at some newspapers and some magazines and found some pretty negative articles about the crime rate and unemployment being higher in some racial groups in New Zealand, and some other articles about the country being inundated with immigrants. The one thing I did notice as I searched was that there really wasn’t anything particularly positive written about racial harmony. Did that mean it didn’t exist, or wasn’t it worth writing about?

I decided to think about it later. I mean, I had two weeks.

Mum did her shopping all right. After dinner she presented me with a small red book with “4 Nephi 1:15–17” written in large print on the front.

“I thought you could use this as your research notebook. The scripture might be helpful as well.”

Good old Mum. Trying to be helpful without helping. I gave her a hug, tucked the notebook into my back pocket, and went to check out some new CDs.

The notebook fell on the floor as I got ready for bed. I guess my conscience got the better of me, because when I picked it up, I felt I should look up the scripture.

“And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.”

No contention. No disharmony. That sounded fair enough; then, as I kept reading, the last part of verse 17 really stood out.

“... neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God.”

Nor any manner of *-ites*. No *-ites* among us? Did that mean there were no different cultural groups or that they “were in one, the children of Christ”? In one? As in unity?

I was actually sitting back on my bed pondering the scripture when Mum tapped on the door.

“Any inspiration yet?” She gave my scriptures a quick glance.

“I’m not sure, maybe.”

“Don’t forget to look close to home or church.” She smiled and blew me a kiss goodnight.

Next morning when I arrived early at seminary, my teacher, Sister Fisher, was already there with some of the Korean students. I hadn’t really noticed before that they

were always there early. Today I watched quietly and found that Sister Fisher was teaching them the main words and ideas from the lesson in English so they could understand better during class.

Later on in class, I noticed other things for the first time. Out of 20 students we had nine different nationalities—French, Maori, Filipino, Korean, South African, Chinese, Niuean, Tongan, and Samoan.

I watched a girl from South Africa helping a Korean boy read aloud. A Filipino boy was helping a Chinese boy three years younger with scripture mastery, and a Maori girl was helping a Niuean boy. Everyone was helping everyone else to learn about Jesus Christ, and “there was no contention in the land.”

When I got home I wrote a few observations about seminary into the notebook. As I stopped to think for a bit, I noticed Mum had put a photo on my dresser. It’s one of her favorites of my older brother on his mission in Australia. He is with two little Aboriginal children and their mum, whom he was teaching the gospel to.

I made more notes as the week went on.

—The visit of the stake Young Men presidency—three men from three different cultures encouraging us all to serve missions.

—The regional basketball team—12 players from five cultures, all united in a team effort to win the championship.

—Our stake service project—youth from 10 cultures helping clear roadside rubbish.

—A ward fireside with 38 people and 14 cultures, listening to advice from the scriptures on how to build stronger families.

And at every activity, there was no contention. We were just Latter-day Saints worshipping and working together. I couldn’t see any -ites at all.

“How’s the assignment going?” Mum asked one morning. Mum and I do most of our talking in the kitchen on either side of the breakfast bar. I juggled a handful of cookies and pulled the red notebook out of my jeans pocket. It was

looking pretty ragged, and I could tell Mum was impressed when I flipped through my pages of notes.

“Plenty examples of racial harmony—no contention and ‘no -ites among us.’” I started to say it in an almost glib, gloating way until my throat suddenly tightened, and I got the most amazing feeling in my chest and behind my eyes all at once. I couldn’t even look at Mum. I just kept staring at my little red book until the scripture on the front blurred.

“Do you think you understand your assignment now?” Mum asked quietly.

When I handed my assignment to Miss Lambert, she looked briefly at the number of pages and raised one eyebrow slightly higher than the other.

“You’ve been working hard, Matt.” It was a statement rather than a question. “Do you think you’ve learned something from it all?”

“Plenty, Miss Lambert,” I grinned. “It wasn’t as boring as I thought it would be.”

“And did you decide how we could make things better?”

“Uh, yeah.” I felt a bit awkward. “I think it’s got a lot to do with having a common goal.”

The eyebrow went up again.

“I mean, if we’re working together and helping each other reach the same goal—well, there’s less room for contention, and people are more unified.” I felt myself trailing off, but Miss Lambert smiled and nodded.

“You’ve done well, Matt. You’ve seen that you can make a difference.”

As she turned away to gather up the other assignments, I found myself silently reciting the scripture that I had memorized in the last two weeks.

“Neither were there . . . any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ.”

“Did you get the assignment done okay, Matt?” Wendy bubbled up beside me. “Wasn’t it awesome?”

I couldn’t believe my answer as I smiled back. “Yeah, Wendy, it was awesome.”

And I meant it. **NE**



ut of a class of 20 seminary students, we had nine different nationalities, all helping each other to learn about Jesus Christ. Yes, I thought, the answer was right in front of me.

A PROMISE

The healing I expected was denied. In its place was a greater blessing.

My 13-year-old mind whirled as the nurse pushed the electronic button to raise the head of my hospital bed. The induced stupor of pain-killing drugs numbed my awareness. Flickers of pain shot through the right side of my body. I closed my eyes, grimacing to endure the discomfort.

As the nurse adjusted the pillows and bedcoverings to make me more comfortable, I relaxed my facial muscles and opened my eyes. Looking down, I realized that the nurse had pulled back the yellow blanket and sheets that had covered my lower body.

“No!” I screamed. I yanked the bedcoverings back down and yelled again, “No!” Dropping my head into my hands, sobs shook my body as I realized what I had seen: my right leg had been amputated.

Continuing to cry, I reviewed in my mind the promise I had been given in my patriarchal blessing just two weeks before. “You will have the faith to be healed,” Patriarch Kimball had said. When this blessing was given, I felt an overwhelming sense of joy. My parents and I interpreted this statement to mean that the malignant bone tumor in my knee would be healed and my leg would not be removed.

“No!” I screamed as I yanked the bed coverings back down. Sobs shook my body as I realized what I had seen.

by Jana Bouck Remy

Patriarch Kimball’s remarkable words were a testimony to all of my family and friends that a miracle would occur. As my doctors prepared me for the amputation surgery, they assured my parents that they would check one last time to see if the tumor was there. If it was gone, they wouldn’t perform the surgery; I would awaken with two intact legs. However, if the tumor was still there, an immediate amputation was necessary to prevent the spread of the cancer cells to the rest of my body.

My mother looked in the door to my hospital room. I could see she was crying and guessed she had heard my outburst. I couldn’t control the anger I was feeling, so I closed my eyes and lowered the head of my bed. I didn’t want to see the nurse, my mom, or anyone else. I felt betrayed. Lying there on the bed, alone and miserable, I cried bitterly in anger at everyone I had trusted.

For several days, I refused to look down where my leg used to be. When a physical therapist came in to help me take my first steps with an artificial leg, I refused to cooperate. I fell into a depression. I just couldn’t believe that life could continue without my leg.

About a week after the surgery, my father insisted



Kept



that I take a wheelchair ride outside the hospital. I sat in the chair, slumped over, gritting my teeth in pain as my father pushed me outside for the first time. Dad took me into a rose garden that spread out in front of the hospital. I looked over at the lovely rose bushes growing around me, and I felt so ugly, so deformed.

As I sat there feeling miserable, the desire grew within me to reach out for the roses, to smell the individual flowers. I expressed this to my dad, and he tried to move the wheelchair close enough for me to do so. But the chair was too awkward over the grass and dirt around the bushes. I started to cry again in frustration that I couldn't accomplish one simple task. Dad knelt down at the side of my wheelchair and stroked my hair. When I stopped sobbing, he took my hands in his and looked straight into my eyes.

"You can do it, you know," he said. "It won't be easy. Everything—even smelling roses—will be harder from now on. But I know, and you know, that you can do it." We were both silent for a long time as I looked into his eyes. In that moment I realized that I had no choice about the loss of my leg. It was gone, and I needed to accept it. I also understood that I would need all of my strength and determination to do the things I would want to do. *I will do it*, I thought to myself.

I spent many hours learning to manipulate my artificial leg. It was awkward and painful, and I often fell down. At the same time, I still had chemotherapy treatments every two weeks. Because of the treatments I was bald, weak, and severely underweight. At one point about six months after my surgery, I was so discouraged that I told my oncologist (the doctor who was treating my cancer) that I wouldn't continue my treatments. She explained to me that if I didn't finish the prescribed course of treatment, the cancer had a high chance of returning, and she urged me to continue. I was

The old discouragement began to return, but this time I remembered all I'd accomplished. And as I realized just how I had been blessed, I bowed my head in grateful prayer.

emotionally and physically exhausted, but in the back of my mind I remembered my father's words and I felt renewed strength to continue with my treatments.

Six months later, the chemotherapy treatments were over. I still felt discouraged about losing a leg, and I was overwhelmed with fear about facing the future as a one-legged person. My mind turned again to the promise given in my patriarchal blessing. I wasn't healed, I thought to myself. Why wasn't I healed? I wondered if it was a lack of faith on my part. Maybe I hadn't prayed hard enough or believed that Heavenly Father could heal me as was promised in my blessing.

As these thoughts ran through my mind, I started to cry. I curled myself up into a fetal position and sobbed for a long time. As I did so, I remembered all I had accomplished in the year since my surgery. I had adjusted to my disability and learned to walk again. I had completed my full course of chemotherapy treatments and was gaining weight and strength again. My hair was even beginning to grow back. Then it came to my mind, with a small and simple whisper, that I *had* been healed. I was healed of the overwhelming pain and anguish that came when I realized my leg was gone. I was given the physical and emotional strength to tackle the challenges of life following the surgery. Most importantly, I was in remission from the cancer.

With that realization, I bowed my head in prayer. I thanked my Heavenly Father for the fulfillment of the blessing of healing. I thanked Him for my father's wise counsel and for the support of my family and friends who had helped me through the most difficult months of my life. Most of all, I thanked Him that I was still alive—for I realized that with or without my right leg, my life was worth living. **NE**



Creative ideas for using this issue of the New Era.

Family Home Evening Ideas

□ Choose three or four points from President Hinckley's message on page 4 and discuss them as a family. Copy your favorite quotation from the talk, and place it in a prominent spot in your home, like the refrigerator door, where everyone will see it often.

□ Read the story "Junior Companion" on page 36 and tell it to your family in your own words. Ask your brothers and sisters to help brainstorm ways you can help your parents or other members of the ward fulfill their callings.

□ Ask your parents to review the Idea List about prayer on page 29 and evaluate your own family prayers. Set a family goal to go one month without missing a day of family prayer, even if it means getting up extra early. When the month is up, talk about how the feeling in your home has changed.

Personal Improvement

□ Write out the six B's listed by President Hinckley in his article on page 4. Put the list on your mirror where you'll see it in the morning or carry a small copy in your wallet or purse. Review the list every day for a week and see how it improves your way of thinking and your actions.

□ If your personal to-do list seems too long every day, read the article "The Art of Juggling" on page 26. Make room for scripture study and prayer first on each day's list of activities. Sometimes you have

to choose between two good activities, but this article can help you leave room for fun and relaxation, a must for a well-balanced life.

Young Men and Young Women Activity Ideas

□ In "Aarika's Courage" on page 30, Aarika invited her nonmember friends to an activity centered on the Church. Help your leaders plan a great joint Young Women/Young Men activity and have everyone invite their school friends to come and meet their Church friends.

□ Read the story "All for One" on page 20, paying special attention to the ways the young men have built strong friendships with fellow ward members. If you aren't feeling that same bond in your own ward, plan a night of getting-to-know-you games or a "this is your life" night for a classmate or two.

Seminary Devotional Idea

□ Turn out all the lights in the classroom, draw the drapes, and have a pair of dark sunglasses handy. Place the Bible in front of one of your class members, have him put on the sunglasses, and ask him to read it. When he explains that he can't, pull out a flashlight and shine it on the book. Have him read Matthew 5:16, which talks about letting your light shine. Ask the class for ideas on how you can share the light of the gospel as a group.

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An overwhelming idea

Thank you for publishing “The Long and Short of It” in the March 2000 issue. Just two days before I received my copy, I was flipping through my favorite clothes magazine, and I noticed some long capri pants. I felt overwhelmed by the idea that I needed to dress more modestly. I dress pretty modestly as it is, but my shorts are pretty short in the summer. I have been working with the idea of dressing modestly since I’ve been going to Especially for Youth. But after the week at camp, I quickly changed into my old habits as did the girl in the story. When I read the story, I got that overwhelming feeling again, and I decided I’m never going to wear anything that doesn’t meet Church standards.

*Lauren Hagee
Cheshire, Connecticut (via e-mail)*

Still following and sharing

I am writing to thank you for your article “Sage’s Story” in the February 2000 issue. Having read the *Ensign* article (Aug. 1989) about her, I appreciated so much this follow-up article. I enjoy reading about people who, against all odds, live life to the fullest and inspire others to do the same. I am glad to know that she is still following her dreams and sharing her testimony.

*Debbie Anderson
Yerington, Nevada*

Read it often

I would just like to thank you for putting “He Was a Stranger” (July 1999) in the *New Era*. Just a month before, my brother was critically injured in a car accident that left him in a coma for several months. We, too, received the love, warmth, and kindness from those in our stake, along with other members around the country (thanks to the Internet). My parents read the article to my brother often because we loved it so much and it really touched our hearts. It’s nice to know there are people all around us to turn to in times of need.

*Lauren Whitlock
Lancaster, Pennsylvania (via e-mail)*

“I’m writing to tell you how much of an inspiration the New Era is to me.”



Testimony has grown

Thanks for the Message in every month’s *New Era*. “Fear not; Only Believe” (Jan. ’00) is a special notification given by our Latter-day prophet Gordon B. Hinckley. I can testify to all who read this that that message is true. I’ve experienced it, and my testimony has grown since then. I read the *New Era* more and feel the Spirit, and it helps me to better prepare myself to go on a mission. There isn’t a better magazine out there with such truth and warmth than the *New Era*.

*Kurt Adison
Castle Dale, Utah (via e-mail)*

A guiding inspiration

I’m writing to tell you how much of an inspiration the *New Era* is to me. In my ward there are not many members, and I’m the only young woman. So I feel I have no one my age to talk to. Sometimes I feel very lonely, but the magazine is such a help to me. It guides me and inspires me to become a better person in so many ways. It helps me understand that I’m not the only person in this situation. I am so thankful that there is a magazine like this in the Church.

*Elaine Reynolds
Wrexham, Wales (via e-mail)*

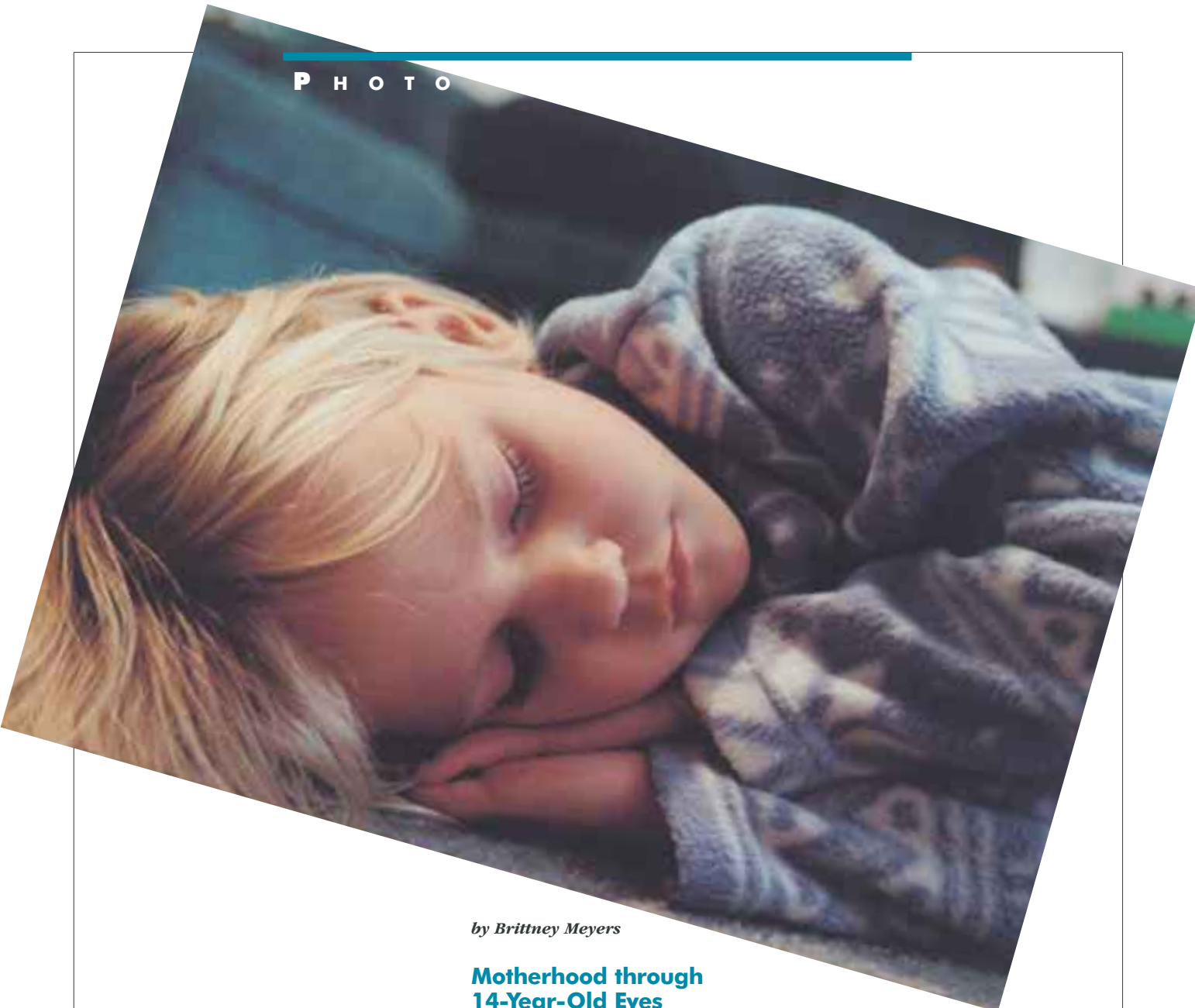
Correction

In the October 2000 Photo of the Month, the photographer’s name was misspelled. The correct spelling is Tim Davis. The *New Era* apologizes for the error.

The New Era welcomes your letters. Send them to We’ve Got Mail, New Era Magazine, 50 E. North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150 or via e-mail at:

*cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org
Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.*

P H O T O

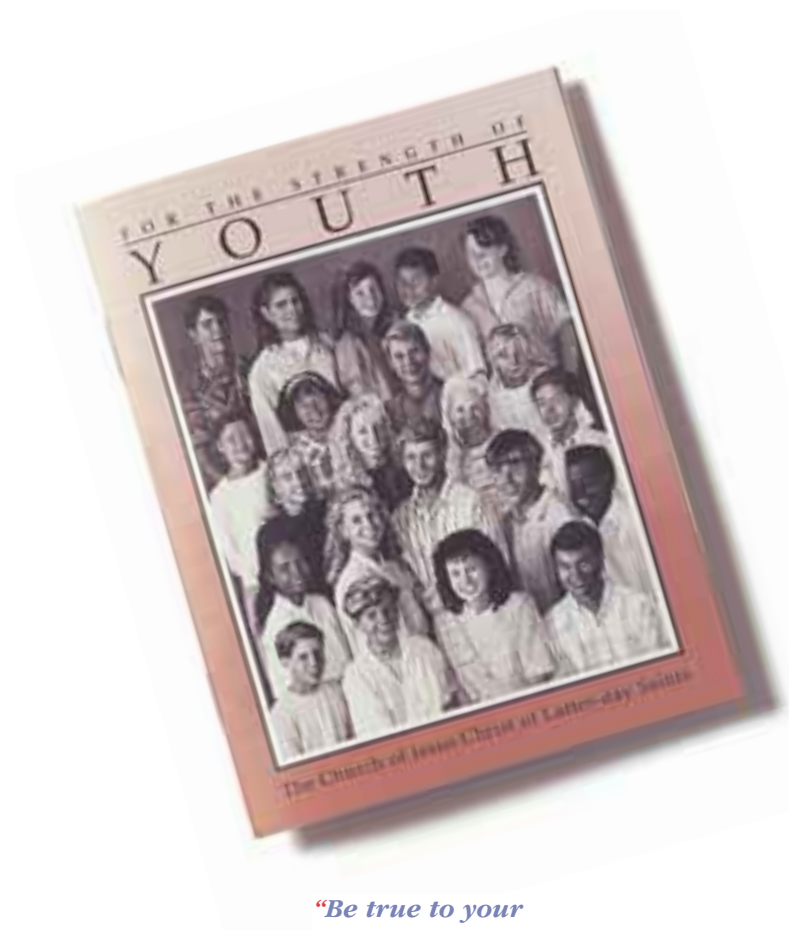


by Brittney Meyers

Motherhood through 14-Year-Old Eyes

by Annette Woodruff Reil

There is something
Incomprehensibly sweet
In your trusting eyes
And tiny hands.
They reach out
And touch
Something
Inside me:
Anticipated joy.
And there is something
Immeasurably pure
Within the love
In your mother's eyes.
It makes this painstaking growth
And nearly endless waiting
Worthwhile.



“Be true to your own convictions. You know what is right, and you know what is wrong. You know when you are doing the proper thing. You know when you are giving strength to the right cause. Be loyal. Be faithful. Be true, my beloved associates in this great kingdom.”

See “A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” p. 4.