

THE New Era

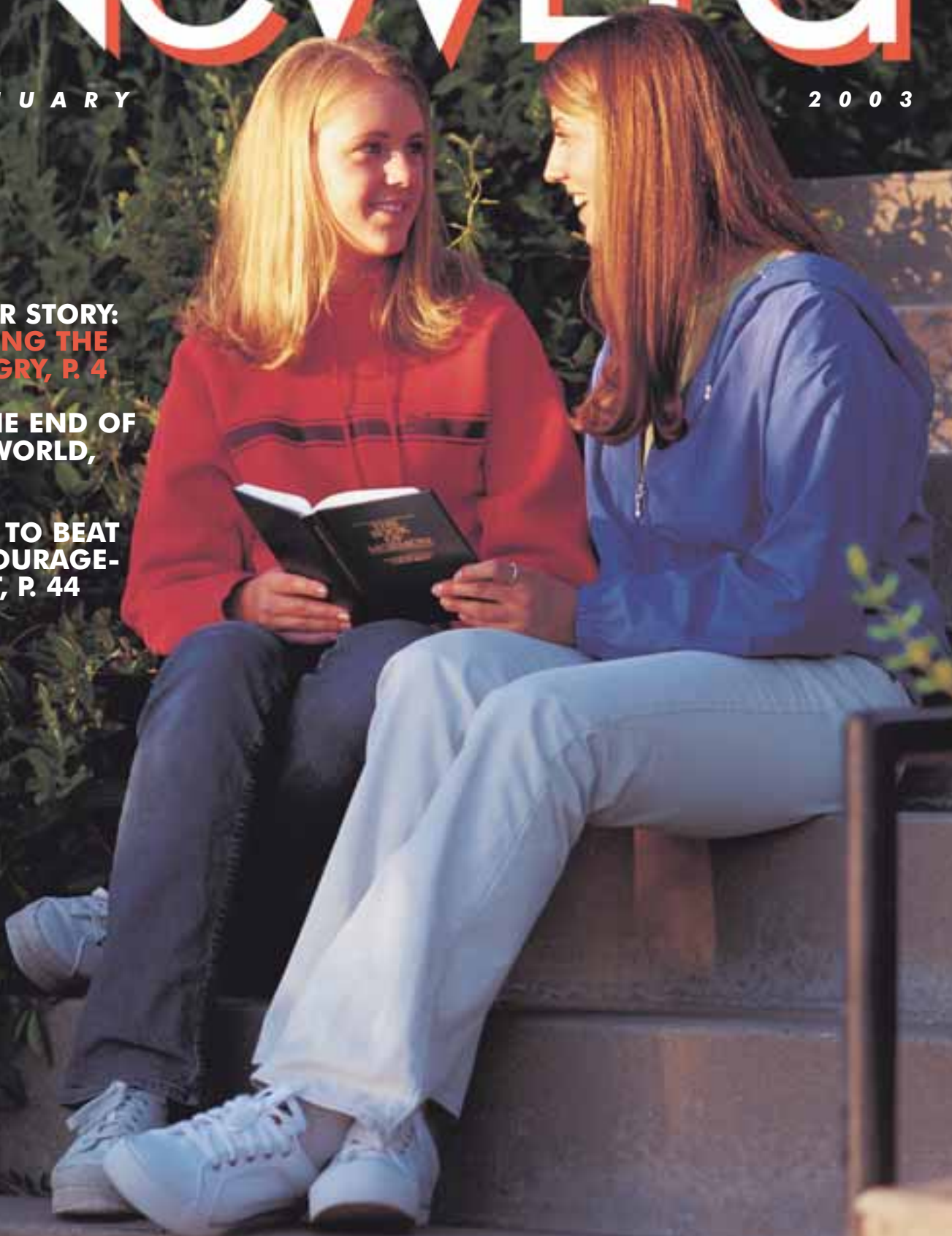
JANUARY

2003

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HUNGRY, P. 4

AT THE END OF
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HOW TO BEAT
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MENT, P. 44



The New Era Magazine
Volume 33, Number 1
January 2003

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

Editorial Offices:
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50 E. North Temple
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220

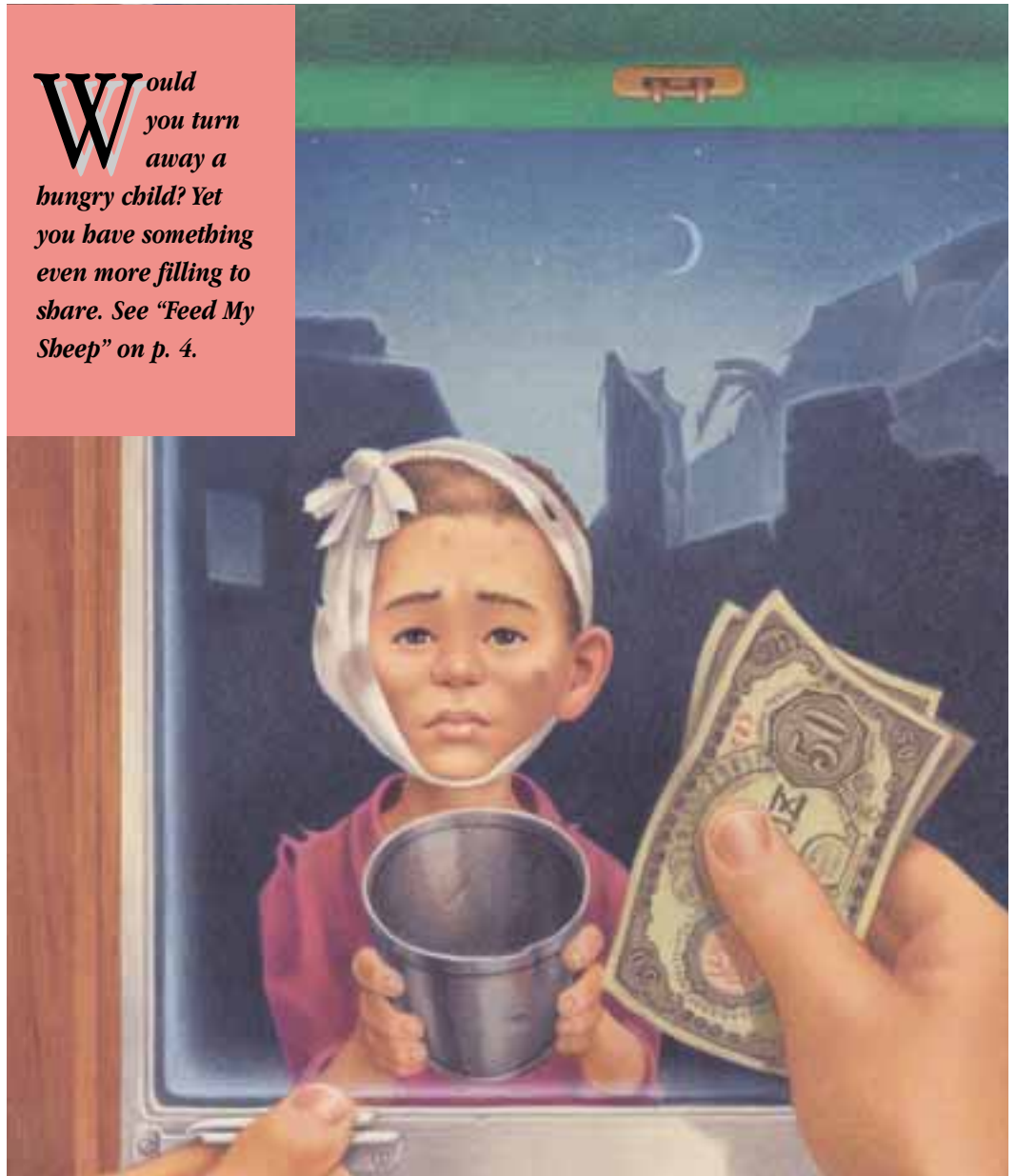
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order for the *New Era* to
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Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368

Subscription helpline:
1-800-537-5971.
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Cover: *Sharing the
gospel is like offering
food to the hungry. See
"Feed My Sheep" on p. 4.*
Cover photography:
*Robert Casey (front and
back)*

Would
you turn
away a
hungry child? Yet
you have something
even more filling to
share. See "Feed My
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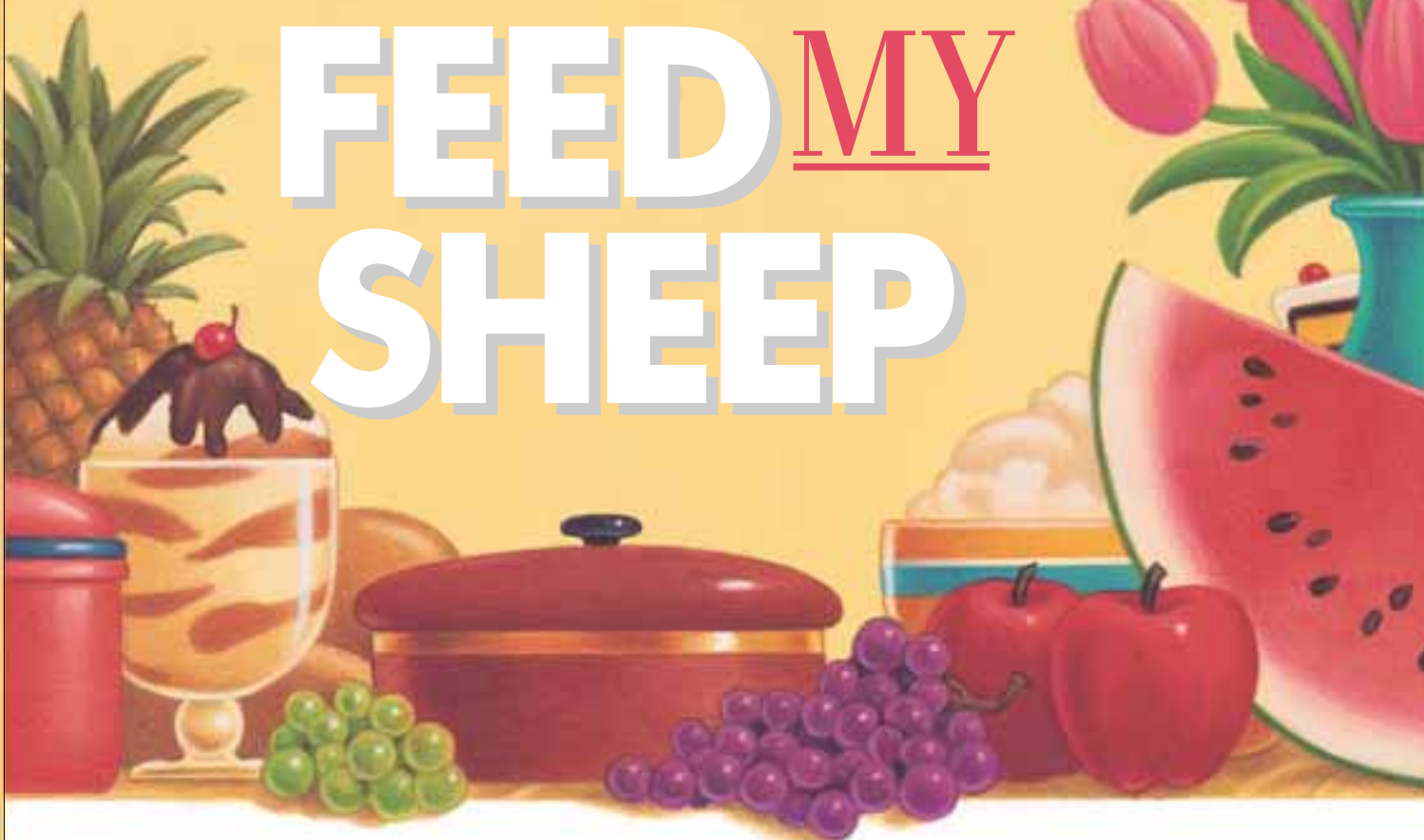
© 2003 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah, and at additional mailing offices. The *New Era* (ISSN 0164-5285) is published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3225.

To change address: Sixty days' notice required. Include old address as well as new.

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

Canada Post Information:
Publication Agreement
#40017431.

FEED MY SHEEP



The Lord has placed a gospel feast before us. But can we enjoy it while others around us are starving spiritually? We must share!

BY PRESIDENT BOYD K. PACKER

Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Let's go and invite them to join us.

Imagine that our bishop has appointed you and me to plan a picnic for all of the ward members. It is to be the finest social in the history of the ward, and we are to spare no expense.

We reserve a beautiful picnic ground in the country. We are to have it all to ourselves; no outsiders will interfere with us.

The arrangements go very well, and when the day comes, the weather is perfect.

All is beautifully ready. The tables are in one long row. We even have tablecloths and china. You have never seen such a feast. The Relief Society and Young Women have outdone themselves. The tables are laden with every kind of delicious food: grapes, cantaloupes, watermelon, corn on the cob, fried chicken, hamburgers, cakes, pies—you get the picture?

We are seated, and the bishop calls upon the patriarch to bless the food. Every hungry youngster secretly hopes it will be a short prayer.

Then, just at that moment there is an interruption. A noisy old car jerks into the picnic grounds and sputters to a stop close to us. We are upset. Didn't they see the "reserved" signs?

A worried-looking man lifts the hood; a spout of steam comes out. One of our



brethren, a mechanic, says, “That car isn’t going anywhere until it is fixed.”

Several children spill from the car. They are ragged, dirty, and noisy. And then an anxious mother, leaving the car, takes a box to that extra table nearby. It is mealtime. Their children are hungry. She puts a few leftovers on the table. Then she nervously moves them about, trying to make it look like a meal for her brood. But there is not enough.

We wait impatiently for them to quiet down so we can have the blessing and enjoy our feast.

Then one of their little girls spies our table. She pulls her runny-nosed little brother over to us and pushes her head between you and me. We cringe aside, because they are very dirty. Then the little girl says, “Ummm, look at that. Ummm, ummm, I wonder what that tastes like.”

Everyone is waiting. Why did they arrive just at that moment? Such an inconvenient time. Why must we interrupt what we are doing to bother with outsiders? Why couldn’t they have stopped somewhere else? They are not clean! They are not like us. They just don’t fit in.

Three choices

Since the bishop has put us in charge, he expects us to handle these intruders. What should we do? Of course, this is only a parable. If it really happened, my young friends, what would you do?

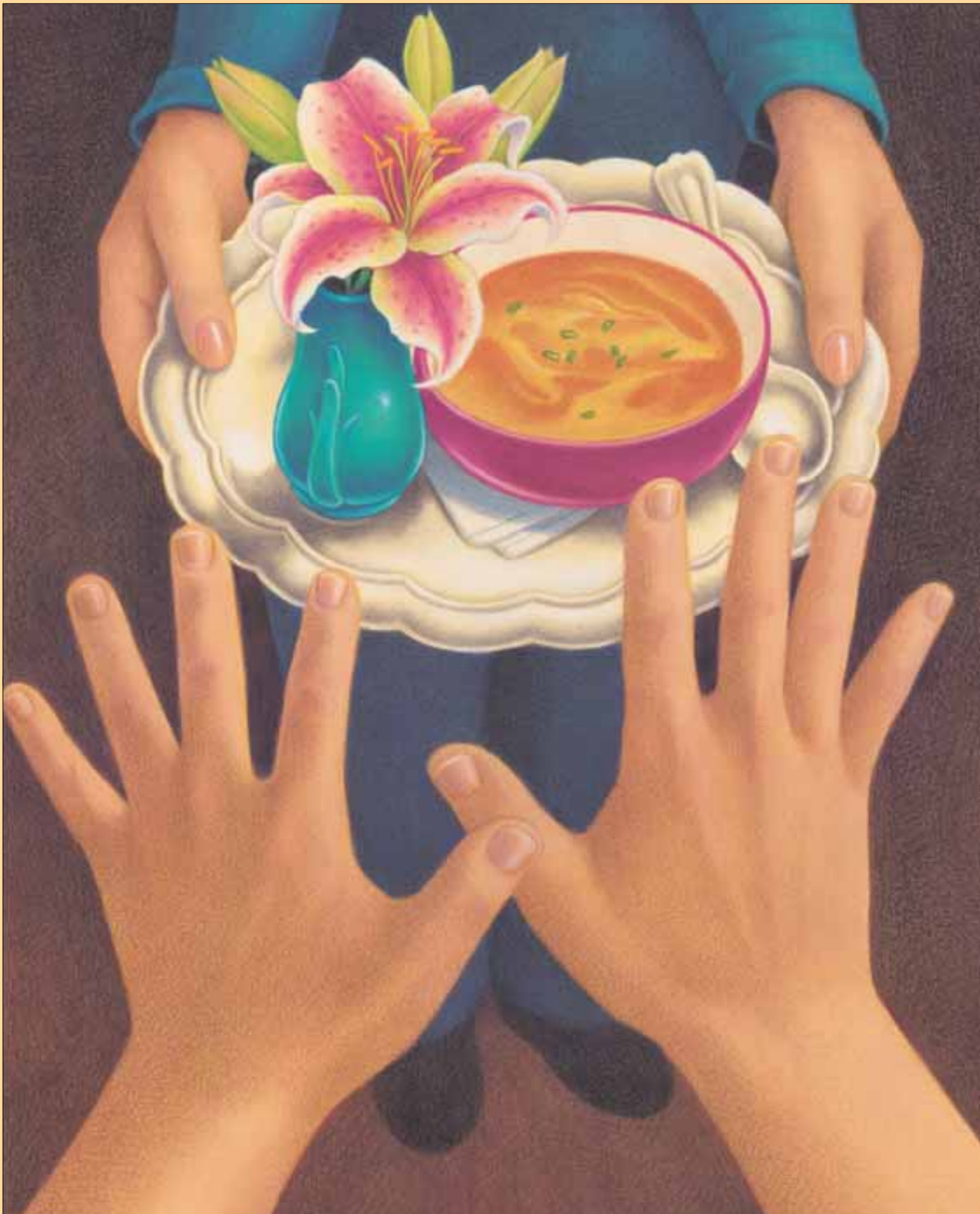
I will give you three choices.

First, you could insist the intruders keep their children quiet while we have the blessing. Thereafter we ignore them. After all, we reserved the place.

I doubt that you would do that. Could you choke down a feast before hungry children? Surely we are better than that! That is not the answer.

The next choice. There is that extra table. And we do have too much of some things. We could take a little of this and a little of that and lure the little children back to their own table. Then we could enjoy our feast without interruption. After all, we earned what we have. Did we not obtain it by [our own] industry, as the Book of Mormon says? (see Alma 4:6).

I hope you would not do that. There is a better answer. You already know what it is.



We should go to them and invite them to come and join us. You could slide that way, and I could slide this way, and the little girl could sit between us. They could all fit in somewhere to share our feast. Afterward, we will fix their car and provide something for their journey.

Could there be more pure enjoyment than seeing how much we could get those hungry children to eat? Could there be more satisfaction than to interrupt our festivities to help our mechanic fix their car?

Is that what you would do? Surely it is what you *should* do. But forgive me if I have a little doubt; let me explain.

Called to be missionaries

We, as members of the Church, have the *fulness* of the gospel. Every conceivable manner of spiritual nourishment is ours. Every part of the spiritual menu is included. It provides an unending supply of spiritual strength. Like the widow's cruse of oil, it is replenished as we use it and shall never fail (see 1 Kings 17:8–16).

And yet, there are people across the world and about us—our neighbors, our friends, some in our own families—who, spiritually speaking, are undernourished. Some of them are starving to death!

If we keep all this to ourselves, it is not unlike feasting before those who are hungry.

We are to go to them and invite them to join us. We are to be missionaries.

It does not matter if it interrupts your schooling or delays your career or your marriage—or basketball. Unless you have a serious health problem, every Latter-day Saint young man should answer the call to serve a mission. Even mistakes and transgressions must not stand in the way. You should make yourself *worthy* to receive a call.

The early Apostles at first did not know the gospel was for everyone, for the Gentiles. Then Peter had a vision. He saw a vessel full of all kinds of creatures and



Some will not eat when first invited. Not all who are hungry will accept the gospel. And some are so near spiritual death that they must first be spoon-fed on the broth of fellowship.

was commanded to kill and to eat. But he refused, saying they were common and unclean. Then the voice said, “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common” (Acts 10:15). That vision, and the experience they had immediately following, convinced them of their duty; thus began the great missionary work of all Christianity.

Almost any returned missionary will have a question: “If they are starving spiritually, why do they not accept what we have? Why do they slam the door on us and turn us away?”

One of my sons was serving in Australia and was thrown off a porch by a man who rejected his message.

My son is big enough and strong enough that he had to be somewhat agreeable to what was happening or the man never could have done it.

Be patient if some will not eat when first invited. Remember, all who are spiritually hungry will not accept the gospel. Do you remember how reluctant you are to try any

new food? Only after your mother urges you will you take a little, tiny portion on the tip of a spoon to taste it to see if you like it first.

Undernourished children must be carefully fed; so it is with the spiritually underfed. Some are so weakened by mischief and sin that to begin with they reject the rich food we offer. They must be fed carefully and gently.

Some are so near spiritual death that they must be spoon-fed on the broth of fellowship, or nourished carefully on activities and programs. As the scriptures say, they must have milk before meat (see 1 Corinthians 3:2; D&C 19:22). But we must take care lest the only nourishment they receive thereafter is that broth.

But feed them we must. We are commanded to preach the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. That message, my young friends, appears more than 80 times in the scriptures.



Feeding the hungry

I did not serve a regular mission until my wife and I were called to preside in New England. When I was of missionary age, young men could not be called to the mission field. It was World War II, and I spent four years in the military. But I did do missionary work; we did share the gospel. It was my privilege to baptize one of the first two Japanese to join the Church after the mission had been closed 22 years earlier. Brother Elliot Richards baptized Tatsui Sato. I baptized his wife, Chio. And the work in Japan was reopened. We baptized them in a swimming pool amid the rubble of a university that had been destroyed by bombs.

Shortly thereafter I boarded a train in Osaka for Yokohama and a ship that would take me home. Brother and Sister Sato came to the station to say good-bye. Many tears were shed as we bade one another farewell.

It was a very chilly night. The railroad station, what there was left of it, was very cold. Starving children were sleeping in the corners. That was a common sight in Japan in those days. The fortunate ones had a newspaper or a few old rags to fend off the cold.

On that train, I slept restlessly. The berths were too short anyway. In the bleak, chilly hours of the dawn, the train stopped at a station along the way. I heard a tapping on the window and raised the blind. There on the platform stood a little boy tapping on the window with a tin can. I knew he was an orphan and a beggar; the tin can was the symbol of their suffering. Sometimes they carried a spoon as well, as if to say, “I am hungry; feed me.”

He might have been six or seven years old. His little body was thin with starvation. He had on a thin, ragged shirt-like kimono, nothing else. His head was shingled with scabs. His one jaw was swollen—perhaps from an abscessed tooth. Around his head he had tied a filthy rag with a knot on top of his head—a pathetic gesture of treatment.



could not reach the begging child in time. My only comfort is that I did want to help him. The memory reminds me of my duty to help the Lord feed His lambs.

When I saw him and he saw that I was awake, he waved his can. He was begging. In pity, I thought, “How can I help him?” Then I remembered. I had money, Japanese money. I quickly groped for my clothing and found some yen notes in my pocket. I tried to open the window. But it was stuck. I slipped on my trousers and hurried to the end of the car. He stood outside expectantly. As I pushed at the resistant door, the train pulled away from the station. Through the dirty windows I could see him, holding that rusty tin can, with the dirty rag around his swollen jaw.

There I stood, an officer from a conquering army, heading home to a family and a future. There I stood, half-dressed, clutching some money which he had seen but which I could not get to him. I wanted to help him, but couldn't. The only comfort I draw is that I did want to help him.

That was years ago, but I can see him as clearly as if it were yesterday.

Perhaps I was scarred by that experience. If so, it is a battle scar, a worthy one, for which I bear no shame. It reminds me of my duty!

I can hear the voice of the Lord saying to each of us just as He said to Peter, “Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep” (John 21:15–17).

I have unbounded confidence and faith in you. You are the warriors of the Restoration. And in this spiritual battle, you are to relieve the spiritual hunger and feed the sheep. It is your duty!

We have the fullness of the everlasting gospel. We have the obligation to share it with those who do not have it. God grant that we will honor that commission from the Lord and prepare ourselves and answer the call. **NE**

From an April 1984 general conference address.

CALLED HOMIE

I had a feeling the answer was no, but why wouldn't the Lord want me to serve a mission? Wouldn't I make a good missionary?

BY LORALEE BASSETT LEAVITT

I sat in the temple waiting to do baptisms for the dead, and I prayed. I was 20 years old, and I wanted to know: Should I serve a full-time mission? I had been feeling that the answer was no, but I wanted to ask once and for all.

Suddenly I shivered all over, as if a bucket of cold water had been poured over me. *No* was the impression I felt. No mission for me.

Although I knew the expectation for young women to go on missions is not the same as for young men, I was confused. Why did the Spirit encourage me not to serve? Wouldn't I be good at spreading the gospel?

As some of my friends received mission calls, I sometimes wondered what my future would hold. My 21st birthday was approaching, and I couldn't help thinking, "There's still time to be interviewed and submit my mission papers."

I was studying in England when my parents called me. I could hear my mother crying as she told me the devastating news. She had been diagnosed with cancer.

By the time I came home to the United States a month later, chemotherapy was making Mom weak. I started helping around

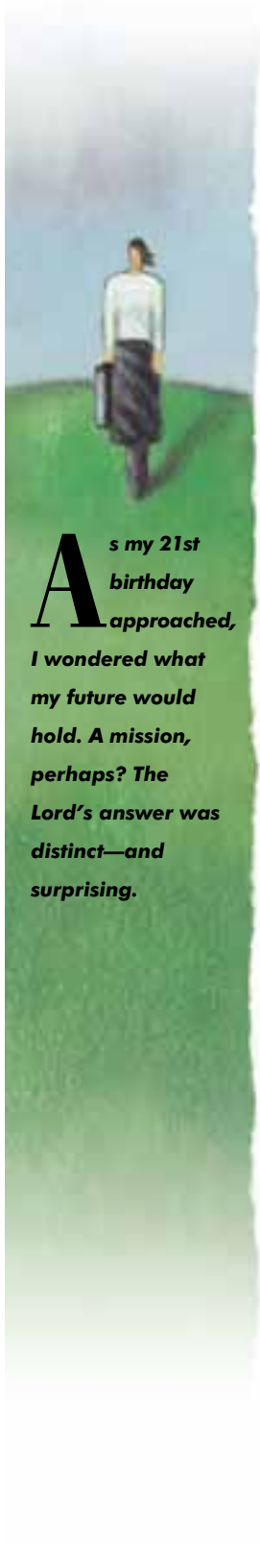
the house, learning to manage chores and meals. I also spent hours talking to Mom, fearful that I might lose her. I learned that managing a household is complicated, time-consuming work, and I gained a new appreciation for Mom's efforts over the years. I barely managed to put decent dinners on the table.

Fortunately, our ward members and others in the community gathered to help us.

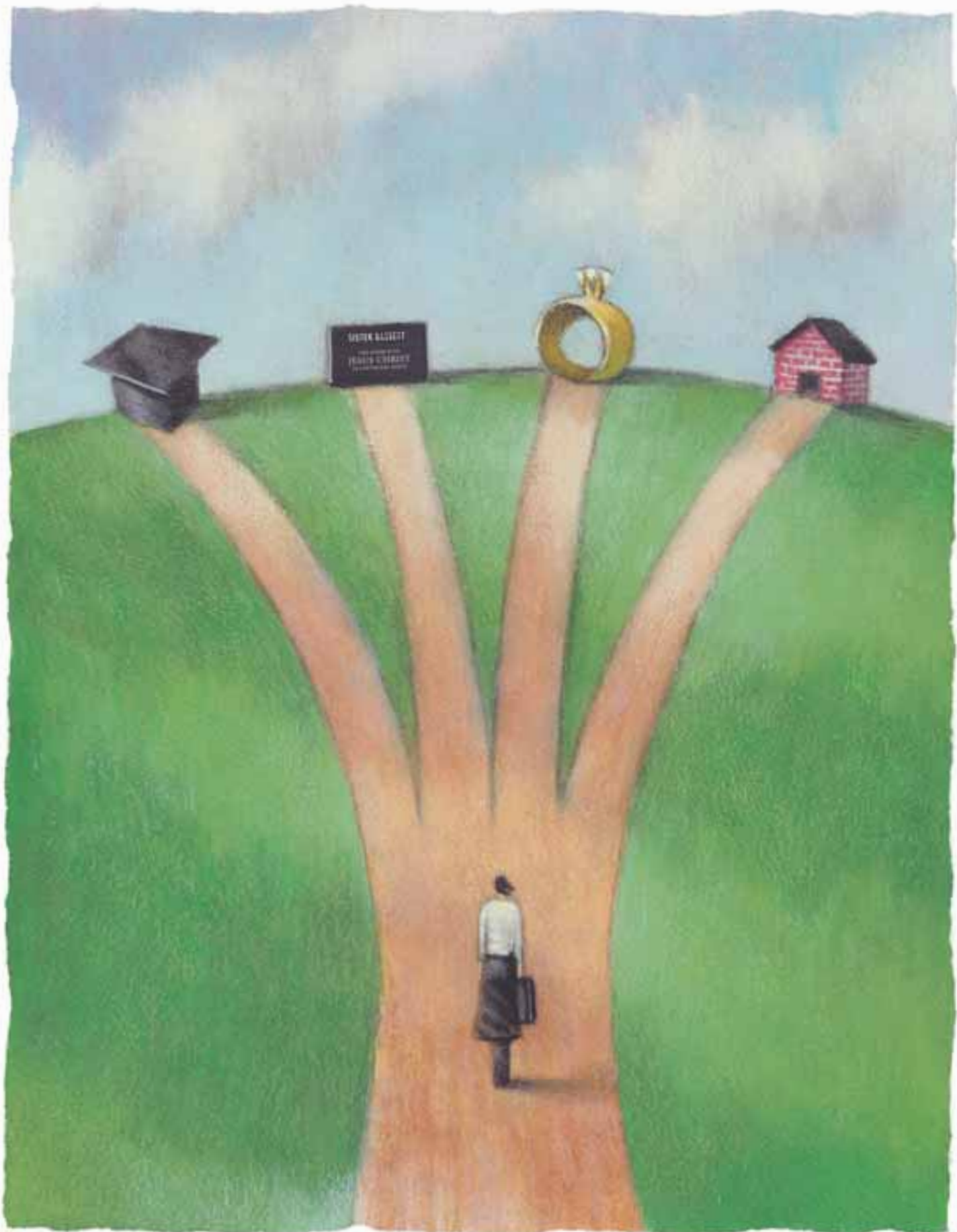
Mom's treatment went on, and meanwhile our family grew closer. Mom told us stories about her youth, and we played lots of board games. We talked about the scriptures. My dad shared his fears with me as well as his testimony.

That summer, I learned eternal lessons. I knew my place for now was at home. My testimony grew as I felt Heavenly Father's love all summer long. I became better friends with the ward members I had known all my life. My family grew closer, comforted by the knowledge that our family ties would last beyond death. I thanked the Lord for answering my question about serving a mission, guiding me to be with my family. **NE**

Editor's note: Since her treatments, the author's mother has recovered her health.



As my 21st birthday approached, I wondered what my future would hold. A mission, perhaps? The Lord's answer was distinct—and surprising.







We Thank Thee

BY ELDER STEVEN E. SNOW
Of the Seventy

Isn't it ironic that we will focus our hopes and prayers on the things we do not have, but forget to give thanks for the countless blessings we already have?

Growing up in southern Utah, some of us sought employment at the many gasoline service stations that lined Highway 91, which ran through downtown St. George. My younger brother Paul, then 18, worked at Tom's Service, a station located about three blocks from our home.

One summer day a car with New York license plates pulled in the station, and the driver asked for a fill-up. (For you under the age of 30, in those days someone actually came out and filled your car with gas, washed your windows, and checked your oil.) While Paul was washing the windshield, the driver asked him how far it was to the Grand Canyon. Paul replied that it was 170 miles.

"I've waited all my life to see the Grand Canyon," the man exclaimed. "What's it like out there?"

"I don't know," Paul answered. "I've never



***Y**ou mean to tell me you live two and a half hours from one of the seven wonders of the world and you've never been there?"*

been there.”

“You mean to tell me,” the man responded, “that you live two and a half hours from one of the seven wonders of the world and you’ve never been there?”

“That’s right,” Paul said.

After a moment, the man replied, “Well, I guess I can understand that. My wife and I have lived in Manhattan for over 20 years, and we’ve never visited the Statue of Liberty.”

“I’ve been there,” Paul said.

Isn’t it ironic that we will often travel many miles to see the wonders of nature or the creations of man, yet ignore the beauty in our own backyard?

It is human nature, I suppose, to seek elsewhere for our happiness. Pursuit of career goals, wealth, and material rewards can cloud our perspective and often leads to a lack of appreciation for the bounteous blessings of our present circumstances.

“Let thy heart be full of thanks”

It is precarious to dwell on why we have not been given more. It is, however, beneficial and humbling to dwell on why we have been given so much.

An old proverb states, “The greater wealth is contentment with a little.”

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul wrote, “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:11).

Alma instructed his son Helaman, giving him counsel that all fathers should teach their children: “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day” (Alma 37:37).

Alma said, “Let thy heart be full of thanks unto God.” The Lord desires that we give thanks. In Thessalonians we read, “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).



ILLUSTRATED BY FARRELL R. COLLETT

Express gratitude in all prayers

We should always strive to increase our gratitude. Gratitude may be increased by constantly reflecting on our blessings and giving thanks for them in our daily prayers.

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) said: “The young man who closes the door behind him, who draws the curtains, and there in silence pleads with God for help, should first pour out his soul in gratitude for health, for friends, for loved ones, for the gospel, for the manifestations of God’s existence. He should first count his many blessings and name them one by one” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1961, 8).

A constant expression of gratitude should be included in all our prayers. Often prayers are given for specific blessings which we, in our incomplete understanding, believe we need. While the Lord does answer prayers according to His will, He certainly must be pleased when we offer humble prayers of gratitude.

The next time we pray, instead of presenting the Lord petition after petition for some action in our behalf, give Him thoughtful thanks for all with which He has blessed us.

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) has instructed us that “the spirit of gratitude is always pleasant and satisfying because it carries with it a sense of helpfulness to others; it begets love and friendship, and engenders divine influence. Gratitude is said to be the memory of the heart” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 262).

Pioneers’ gratitude in spite of difficulty

In October 1879, a group of 237 Latter-day Saints from several small southwestern Utah settlements was called to blaze a new route and colonize what is today known as San

Juan County in southeastern Utah. The journey was to have taken six weeks but instead took nearly six months. Their struggles and heroics are well documented, particularly their seemingly impossible task of crossing the Colorado River at a place called Hole-in-the-Rock. Those who have visited this place marvel that wagons and teams could have been lowered through this narrow crack in the red-rock canyon walls to reach the Colorado River far below. Once the Colorado was crossed, however, many other severe tests awaited them on the trail to San Juan County. Tired and worn out, early in April 1880 they faced their final obstacle, Comb Ridge. The Comb is a ridge of solid sandstone forming a steep wall nearly 1,000 feet high.

One hundred and twenty years later, our family climbed Comb Ridge on a bright spring day. The ridge is steep and treacherous. It was difficult to imagine that wagons, teams, men, women, and children could make such an ascent. But beneath our feet were the scars from the wagon wheels, left as evidence of their struggles so long ago. How did they feel after enduring so much? Were they bitter after the many months of toil and privation? Did they criticize their leaders for sending them on such an arduous journey, asking them to give up so much? Our questions were answered as we reached the top of Comb Ridge. There inscribed in the red sandstone so long ago were the words, “We thank Thee, O God.”

I pray that we might keep our hearts full of thanks and appreciation for what we have and not dwell on what is not ours. Let us adopt an attitude of gratitude in all we do. **NE**

From an October 2001 general conference address.

A journey that was to take six weeks took six months of toil and hardship. But as they faced the last great obstacle, the pioneers had no criticism for their leaders—only thanks to their God.



Q & A

“I argue with my parents all the time. I love them, but we just don’t seem to get along. What can I do?”

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

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The thought of families being forever can seem like more of a headache than a blessing if you are constantly arguing with your parents. But if you get along with your parents, the idea of eternal families can seem like the greatest blessing. The secret is figuring out how to get along.

When you get angry with your parents, remind yourself that you love them and they love you and want you to be happy. Getting along with your parents can be easier if you understand the sacrifices they have made for you. “You are precious to your parents,” said President Gordon B. Hinckley. “You may not think that sometimes, when you get a little careless about what you think of your father and your mother. All of their hopes and dreams rest in you. They pray for you. They worry about you. They think of you. They love you. Be good to your parents. Treat them with love and respect and kindness. It won’t hurt you once in a while to tell them that you love them” (*Ensign*, Aug. 2000, 4).

Show appreciation for your parents by doing your best to make your home a

When you get angry with your parents, remind yourself that they love you and you love them.

Talk to your parents often, not just when you have a problem or when you want something.

Don’t be too proud to say you’re sorry, and be quick to forgive.

Through service, show your parents you love them.

Do your best to understand where your parents are coming from.

READERS



My mom likes to say that we are all on the same team. It is a lot easier to get along with your parents if you remember you are all trying to return

home to our Heavenly Father.

Mallory Newberry, 14
Sardinia, Ohio



It’s good you are concerned for your relationship with your parents. You’ve noticed the contention in the home and want to do something about

it. Try sitting down with your parents and discussing the issues you fight about. Do it calmly and politely. Remember to talk with them not at them. Starting your discussion with a prayer would help too.

Andy Dilts, 18
Salt Lake City, Utah

I used to fight a lot with my parents too. But then I started just talking to them. When bad things happened to me, I realized that they

NEW ERA

pleasant place. Show them your love through service. Volunteer to do the dishes, fix a meal, clean the car, or work in the yard. Remember to say “please” and “thank you.” Pray to know how to handle disagreements and difficult situations.

Talk to your parents often, not just when you have a problem or when you want something. Let them know about your interests, what’s going on at school, and who you hang out with.

Learn to listen too. Ask for their advice. Try to learn more about your parents. Ask them about their interests and goals. Find out what problems they faced when they were your age and what challenges they face now.

Even if you and your parents do your best to communicate with each other, you may still have disagreements. Do your best to understand where your parents are coming from. Realize they want what is best for you. And be patient.

Don’t be too proud to say you’re sorry, and be quick to forgive. Everyone makes mistakes.

“I urge you children to be patient with your parents,” said Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve. “If they seem to be out of touch on such vital issues as dating, clothing styles, modern music, and use of family cars, listen to them anyway. They have the experience that you lack. Very few, if any, of the challenges and temptations you face are new to them. If you think they know nothing about the vital issues I just mentioned, take a good look at their high school and college yearbooks. Most important, they love you and will do anything they can to help you be truly happy” (*Ensign*, May 1987, 32). **NE**



You must ensure that there is nothing in your relationship with family members that is out of harmony with the teachings of the Church. We especially encourage you to obey your parents in righteousness” (New Era, Apr. 1995, 8).

—President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95)

READERS

are always there for me. Now we have a close relationship, and although we still fight sometimes, it’s gotten to be less and less. You’ll learn to love and understand your parents and realize that they know a lot more than you think.

Cassidy Kremin, 16
Papillion, Nebraska



Tell your parents that you love them and care for them. Talk about subjects you know will bring peace to your conversation. This will help prevent any arguments that you know may be starting.

Sterling Weed, 15
Salt Lake City, Utah



When I was having trouble getting along with my parents, it helped to read Church magazines and the scriptures. I felt the Spirit more than ever as I read the scriptures daily, and all of my relationships began to improve.

Danielle Stacy, 16
Fulton, New York

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send us your answer to the question below, along with your name, age, and where you are from. Please include a snapshot of yourself that is 1 1/2 by 2 inches (4 by 5 cm) or larger. Please respond by March 1, 2003.

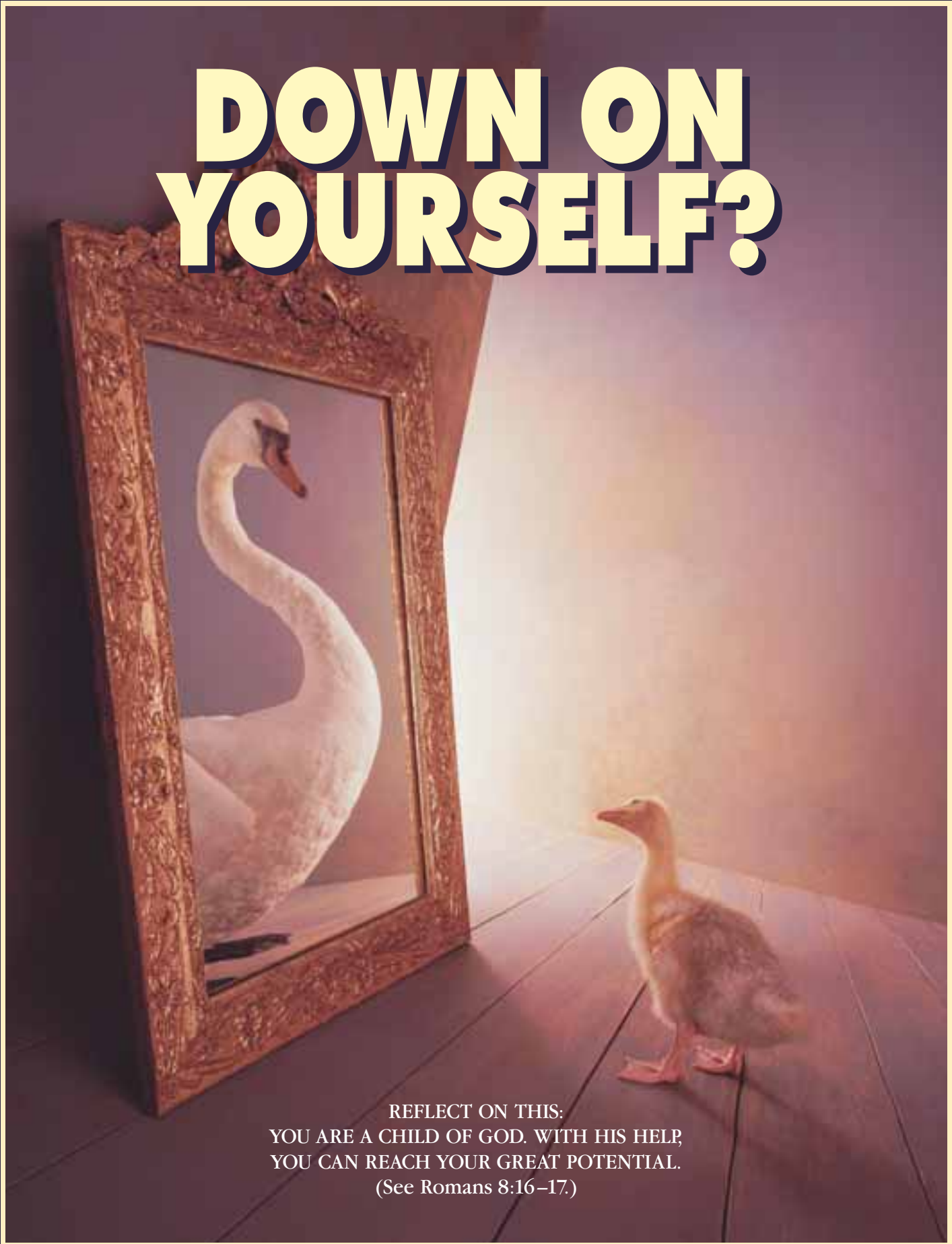
Q&A, New Era

**50 East North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150**

QUESTION

“Why all the fuss about dress standards? If we make a big deal about the way people dress, isn’t that judging them by their outward appearance?”

DOWN ON YOURSELF?



REFLECT ON THIS:
YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD. WITH HIS HELP,
YOU CAN REACH YOUR GREAT POTENTIAL.
(See Romans 8:16–17.)

To the Ends of the

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY

*They live in the “southernmost town on earth.”
Next stop—Antarctica. But the distance from
everything else just brings them closer together.*

Go to Argentina. Then head south. Keep going. Keep going. When you run out of land at the Straits of Magellan, cross the water to the island Tierra del Fuego. Keep going. When you get to the far side of the island, stop. Now you’re at Ushuaia, what’s billed as the southernmost city in the world. It’s so far south that residents commonly refer to it as

“the end of the world.”

This place of glaciers, where jagged mountains plunge to the sea, is pleasant for two or three months, with lengthy days. Then it is cold, stormy, and dark the rest of the year. Ushuaia is probably not the first location you’d think of as a home for young Latter-day Saints. But the Church is alive—and thriving—here. And LDS youth in



Earth



The common bond of the gospel brought the Martinez and Moressi families together in a loving blend. (Below, from left) Ximena, Micaela, and Gonzalo Martinez and Manuel and Micaela Morresi. (Above) The kids with their parents Susana and Ruben.

The Quiroga children (below, from left) Matias, Patricia, and Paola have found happiness in the Church while many of their peers in the isolated town have turned to drugs and other destructive behaviors.

Ushuaia know they are part of the fulfillment of prophecy, that the gospel shall “roll forth unto the ends of the earth” (D&C 65:2).

‘Finding my mother a husband’

Consider the story of Ximena Martinez. A few years ago, Ximena, her sister Micaela, and her brother Gonzalo were living with their divorced mother in Buenos Aires. Ximena was 15 at the time. She had been assigned the responsibility of taking care of the yard, “but I had neglected it,” she explains. “Daniel Garrido, a nice neighbor who lived across the street, offered to help. A few days later he came, accompanied by full-time missionaries. They worked hard and made everything look beautiful. But this was only the beginning. Daniel and his wife,

Elisabet, continued to be faithful friends, and the missionaries offered to teach us about the restoration of the gospel. How could we say no?”

That was the beginning of a journey to understanding. After studying with the missionaries, Ximena’s mother was baptized. The children soon followed her example. “I decided to change my life, to have the kind of freedom only Christ can give,” Ximena continues. “More and more, I wanted to live the gospel. But there was something missing—we needed a father and we wanted to be sealed in the temple.

“One day at a Church dance, I talked to a friend named Martin Morresi. He mentioned that his father was a widower. Jokingly I said, ‘Well, my mother needs a husband! We



A GREAT JOY IN MY HEART

In an area as isolated as Ushuaia, life can seem lonely. Some young people turn to drinking, drugs, or immoral behavior, and eventually end up in despair. LDS youth have found happiness in following the guidance of their Father in Heaven. Listen to three members of the Quiroga family, who were baptized two years ago:

“Being a member of the Church makes me very happy,” says Matias, 14. “I feel deep inside me that I really am in the true church, that Heavenly Father helps me at every moment. I have learned a great deal as a new member. My teachers have taught me a lot, and the members have been very kind.”

His 18-year-old sister, Patricia, agrees. “Being a Latter-day Saint has changed my life in every aspect,” she says. “I have always had faith in God, but I had never felt His presence like I do in the Church. I love being in Young Women and working on my Personal Progress.”

“Before I was baptized, I asked in prayer if I was doing the right thing,” says 16-year-old Paola. “I felt a great joy in my heart. After that, I was baptized and felt the Spirit dwelling inside me. I know this is the true church. I do not doubt it. I feel happy when I do what is right.”

ought to get them to meet.’ We only had one problem—his father lived 2,000 miles away.

“I began to tease my mother that I had found a husband for her. Then, at a stake choir rehearsal, Martin told me, ‘My father is coming to visit Buenos Aires, and he wants to have dinner with your mother!’ I was stunned, but I won’t even tell you my mother’s reaction. However, she accepted. Martin accompanied his father, Ruben, and I

accompanied my mother, Susana, and we had a wonderful evening. Ruben Morresi was attentive and respectful. I could see he was upright and faithful, a man of God.”

Three and a half months later, Ruben and Susana were married in the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple. Ximena, Micaela, and Gonzalo Martinez were sealed to them and moved with them to Ushuaia, where they joined Manuel and Micaela Morresi as new brothers and sisters. (Three



A RAY OF LIGHT

The Morresi and Quiroga families aren't the only ones in Ushuaia with multiple teenagers. There are also four teens in the Cabanillas family, and their testimonies are strong.

"I have been a member of the Church since I was eight," says Florencia Cabanillas, 14. "I know that Jesus Christ lives and that the scriptures are the word of God. I also know that Joseph Smith was a prophet. I am very happy to have the gospel in my life, and to be able to achieve our goal as a family to be sealed in the temple."

"I know that we have a prophet, seer, and revelator today, and that he receives revelation from God," says Andrea, 15. "I know the Book of Mormon is a miracle, translated during difficult times. Joseph Smith prayed with great faith and received answers."

"Not long ago, I had the opportunity to teach about the Book of Mormon in Sunday School," says Estefania, 17. "I had to search the scriptures, and as I did, I felt I was part of these stories. I imagined myself there. I will never forget how Mormon felt as he saw the destruction of the Nephites. I will not forget the testimonies of the prophets. If you have not searched the

scriptures, I recommend that you start today!"

Sabrina, 18, remembers the sister missionaries coming to home evening when she was 10. "They taught me simply but firmly that God reveals truth through prayer. They said I needed to kneel down and ask Heavenly Father in humility to give me a testimony. 'Me kneel down?' I thought to myself. A few days later, Mom wanted to go for a walk with my sisters and me. Even though the sun was shining and I wanted to go with them, something stopped me. I knew it was the perfect time. I knelt down in the dining room. I pleaded with Heavenly Father to let me know if the Book of Mormon was true. I asked Him if the principles I was taught in church were true. Five minutes went by. After I ended my prayer I remained on my knees. Suddenly, a ray of light illuminated my face. I could not understand this, because the house was dark. But there was a small window in the kitchen without a curtain, and the light was coming from there.

"I felt so happy. I realized that my Father had answered my prayer in this way. Now I have a testimony of all these things, and I know they are true. I know that prayer has tremendous power."



older children live away from home.)

“Now I live at the end of the world,” says Ximena. “I am working with all my might to help Zion to grow here. I know the Lord’s kingdom will extend to the four corners of the earth, and this is why He has guided us to one of them.”

Caring means sharing

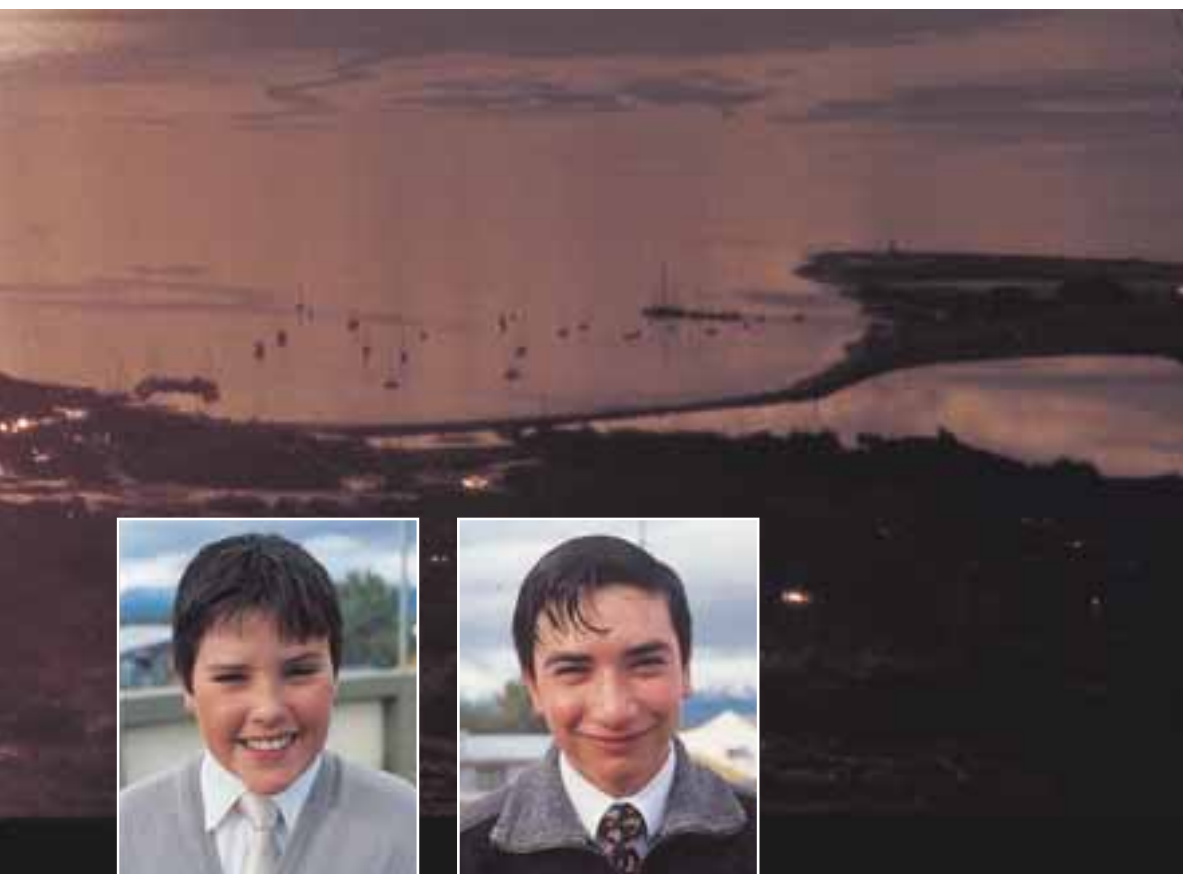
Talk to other youth in Ushuaia, and you’ll also find they have a deep love for the Church and the blessings it brings to them. Boris Zapata, 12, says the gospel has taught him, as Moroni said, to “hope for a better world” (Ether 12:4). Juan Frau, 16, talks about his appreciation for seminary. “It’s a wonderful thing to be able to study the scriptures every day,” he says.



“I had the opportunity to share the gospel with one of my school friends, Elena Ayala,” says Micaela Martinez, 18. “When she was baptized, it filled me with happiness. If we know that Jesus Christ lives, it is beautiful to share our feelings with others.”

Here at the end of the earth, the youth of Ushuaia have received the great light of the gospel. They gladly share it with each other and with anyone else who will receive it. **NE**

The LDS youth group in Ushuaia also includes (below, from left) Florencia, Andrea, Estefania, and Sabrina Cabanillas, as well as Boris Zapata and Juan Frau. Their unity protects them from more than just the unpredictable elements in their town at the end of the earth.





Book of Mormon STORY

I was feeling alone and mixed up. But when I cried out to the Lord for guidance, a gentle but insistent voice told me to read a book I had already given away once. Still, I had asked for help. Could I ignore the answer?

BY JAIME WIESE ARNOLD

It was not a good time. Questions swirled in my head that seemingly didn't have answers. For months I had been struggling with who I was and what direction my life was taking. To remedy this problem I began attending many different churches, searching for the truth. But it seemed I always ended up at the church my family went to. Somehow, though, it never felt quite right. As I thought about my feelings, I just assumed I felt this way because my life was so mixed up. I was also associating with the wrong crowd and allowing these people to influence my life, which didn't help matters. Deep inside, all I felt was utter loneliness.

I realized I needed to change my life. I stopped hanging around with people who were a bad influence on me, and I stopped putting myself in situations that would force me to choose between God and my friends. Even with these changes, I didn't feel like I was receiving any answers or encouragement from God, and I sometimes wondered if He

really was there.

In December I graduated from college, and I decided to move back in with my family in Utah. Those plans changed when my dad took a job in another state. Since I had already accepted an internship in St. George, Utah, I decided to stay. In St. George, I began going to my church, but once again felt alone and desolate. It was as if part of me were dead or missing.

One night in my room, I cried out to the Lord and asked Him for guidance and direction. I started to tremble and cry because I so desired to have Him in my life.

At that moment, I heard something or someone say, "Read the Book of Mormon." It wasn't a booming voice; it was gentle, quiet, and peaceful. This prompting confused me. I had been exposed to the LDS Church before and had no desire to learn about it. In fact, a high school friend had given me a copy of the Book of Mormon, and I had given it away.

I tried to brush off the voice, but it came

I was not a Latter-day Saint, and I had no desire to learn about the Church. Now here I was desperately looking for a copy of the Book of Mormon.



At the visitors' center, as Sister Pang talked with me, I felt the Spirit so strongly I had to fight back the tears. I was on the verge of discovering something wonderful.

again: "Read the Book of Mormon."

"Why would I want to read the Book of Mormon?" I thought. The prompting came again. "It's the perfect time. You're on your own now." As crazy as this seemed, I suddenly felt a strong desire to get a copy of this book, and I figured the visitors' center at the St. George Utah Temple was a good place to start. I went on a tour with Sister Pang, a missionary serving in the center, and afterward we watched a movie and talked. The feeling of a presence—a holy presence—was so apparent that I had to fight back tears. It was like I was on the verge of discovering something wonderful. Sister Pang gave me a Book of Mormon as I left.

I went straight home and immediately began reading. As I studied 2 Nephi 27, I began to feel very tired. I almost closed the book, but again I knew I had to press on. I said a prayer that I would be able to understand what I was reading, and I continued. As I re-read the passage I decided

to compare it to Isaiah 29 and 30. For me, these scriptures were the key that unlocked knowledge and understanding of the gospel. I knew then without a doubt that the words in the Book of Mormon were true. They were another testimony of Jesus Christ.

I rushed out of my room and told my roommates the Book of Mormon was true. To see the shock and excitement on their faces was great. I rushed to the visitors' center, but Sister Pang wasn't there. So I met Sister Taylor, and we talked for hours about the gospel. I asked the missionaries to teach me the discussions, and I set a baptism date after the first discussion.

It wasn't all easy after that. For the next couple of weeks I received letters and phone calls from my family and friends telling me what to do—and what not to do. I didn't mind giving up my friends and my lifestyle. But my family's dislike of my decision made this time in my life very difficult. I decided to stop taking the discussions, to stop praying, and to stop reading. For a week I turned away from everything. I felt so alone and confused. Then one day I called my dad and told him I was determined to be baptized. He told me he loved me and then he hung up the phone.

The joy and peace I felt at that moment cast out everything else. I immediately prayed that Heavenly Father would comfort my family. I began the discussions again, and soon I received a letter from my father. He again told me he loved me no matter what, and I would always be his daughter.

The Lord had taken care of my family and led me to a new life. I'm so thankful for the missionaries, and I'm thankful for my friends who strived to live the gospel principles. Mostly, though, I'm grateful to be a child of God. Every day I'm amazed at the love and the comfort the Lord brings to me. To be recognized by Heavenly Father is so precious. **NE**

Teens **LEADING** Teens

BY CHARLOTTE CACHAPERO

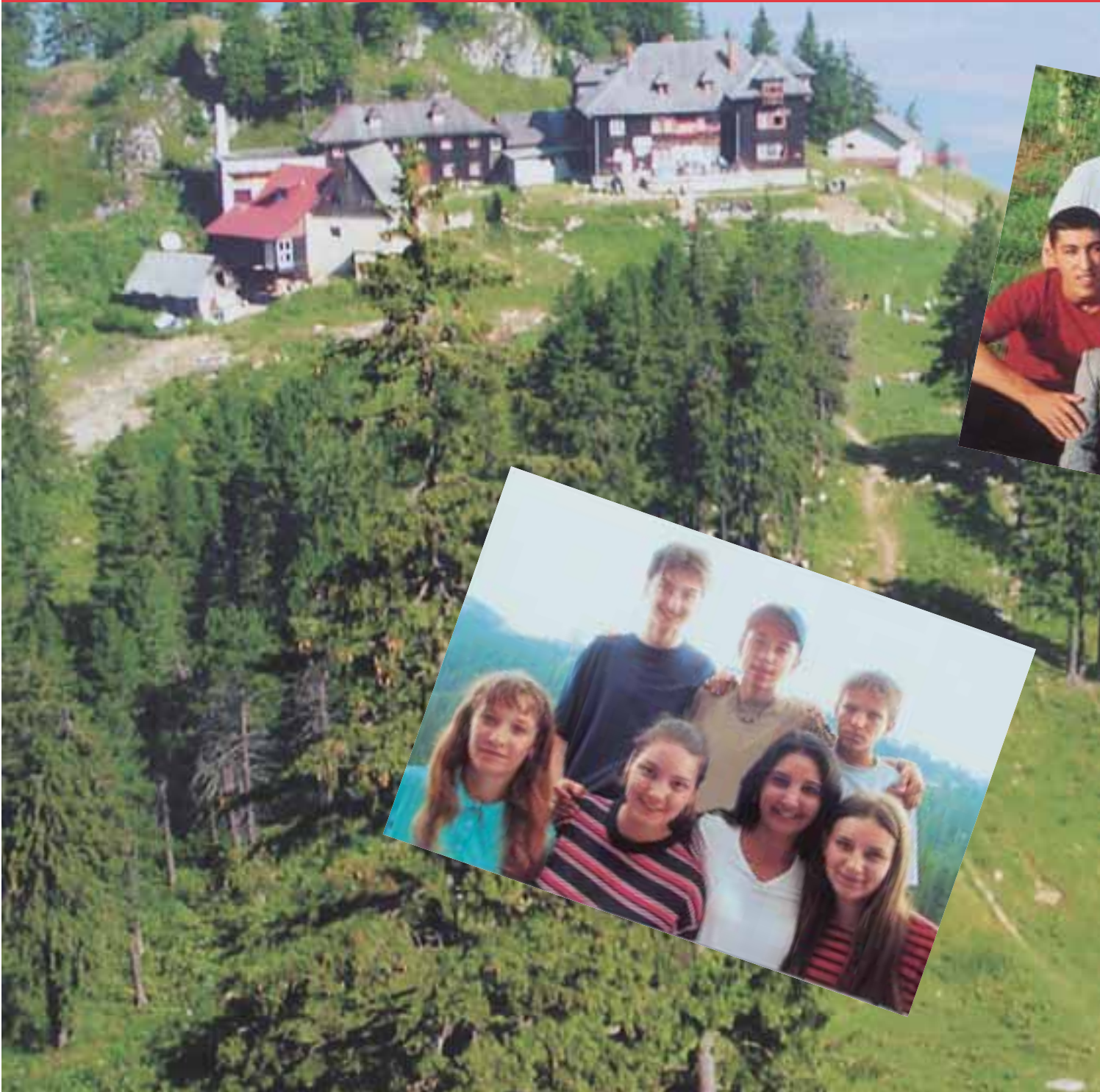
The following ideas have helped me as I have served in Young Women class presidencies in my ward in the Philippines. Perhaps these principles will be helpful to you in your leadership callings.

- * *Give time.* Devote time to your responsibility, and you can accomplish almost anything.
- * *Be kind.* Treat others as you would like to be treated. Be calm and patient. Develop a spirit of friendship. Let others know they are important to you by seeking to understand their challenges and successes.
- * *Respect others.* Treat those you lead with respect. Remember that each individual is a unique child of God with potential to become as He is.
- * *Sacrifice.* Try to make decisions that take into account others' needs and opinions instead of considering only
- * *Study.* Study the gospel regularly and consistently. The scriptures and other good books can help you share gospel insights with those you are called to lead.
- * *Share talents.* Don't hide your light under a bushel (see Matthew 5:14–16). Share your talents and abilities, and find ways to help others share theirs.
- * *Seek counsel.* Ask the other members of your presidency as well as your parents, adult leaders, and especially Heavenly Father for guidance and support as you fulfill your calling.
- * *Do your best!* Don't let yourself become overwhelmed. The Lord called you, and He will qualify you. You will not fail if you do your best and trust in Him. **NE**

Charlotte Cachapero is a member of the Plaridel Second Ward, Malolos Philippines Stake.



ROMANIAN



RHAPSODY



High on a mountain top in Romania, Latter-day Saint teens draw strength from each other in their largest youth conference ever.

BY MIHAELA STAN

If you flew over the Transylvanian Alps recently, you may have seen a gathering of more than 100 Romanian youth atop a mountain called Cristianul Mare (the Great Christian). At their largest youth conference ever, youth, ages 14 to 18, from all the branches of the Romania Bucharest Mission, drew strength from each other for three days.

The youth were happy to meet other Church members who shared the challenge of being only one among hundreds of people of other faiths in their schools and communities.

They also found other things they had in common.

Ioana Ene, 14, of the Victoria Branch, and Amalia Epure, 15, of the Arad Branch, had never met before the conference but became friends almost instantly. Amalia investigated the Church for two years. She wanted

It didn't take long for these teens to form new friendships with youth from other cities and branches.



located in southeast Europe on the Black Sea, Romania has about 2,000 Saints living among a population of more than 23 million. When you are so few among so many, you really treasure those times together.

very much to be baptized, but initially her parents would not give her permission. Now that she is a member, there are still challenges having a nonmember family. Ioana's cheerful spirit and kindness helped Amalia to see another side to things. Ioana's siblings are all members of the Church. The two girls spent a lot of their free time at the conference roaming the woods and talking about their families. They came to the conclusion that all families face challenges, whether they are Latter-day Saints or not.

Besides enjoying the beauty of the Romanian countryside, the young men and women went to workshops, performed in a talent show, danced, played games and sports, and ended their conference with a testimony meeting.

"I know the Lord is looking out for each one of us," says Petruta Simion, a Mia Maid in the Ploiesti Branch. "He loves us and wants the best for us. Let's walk tall and give our best every day."

When the Romanian youth first arrived on Christianul Mare, they arrived as strangers and clustered in the familiar groups from their cities. But by the time they left the Great Christian mountain, there were no boundaries. They were united, spiritually renewed and ready to share their faith with the world. **NE**



THE EXTRA SMILE

"I baked you these brownies when you left. Then I figured I'd save on postage and just give them to you when you got back!"



"And you said I couldn't get all my laundry to fit in one load."



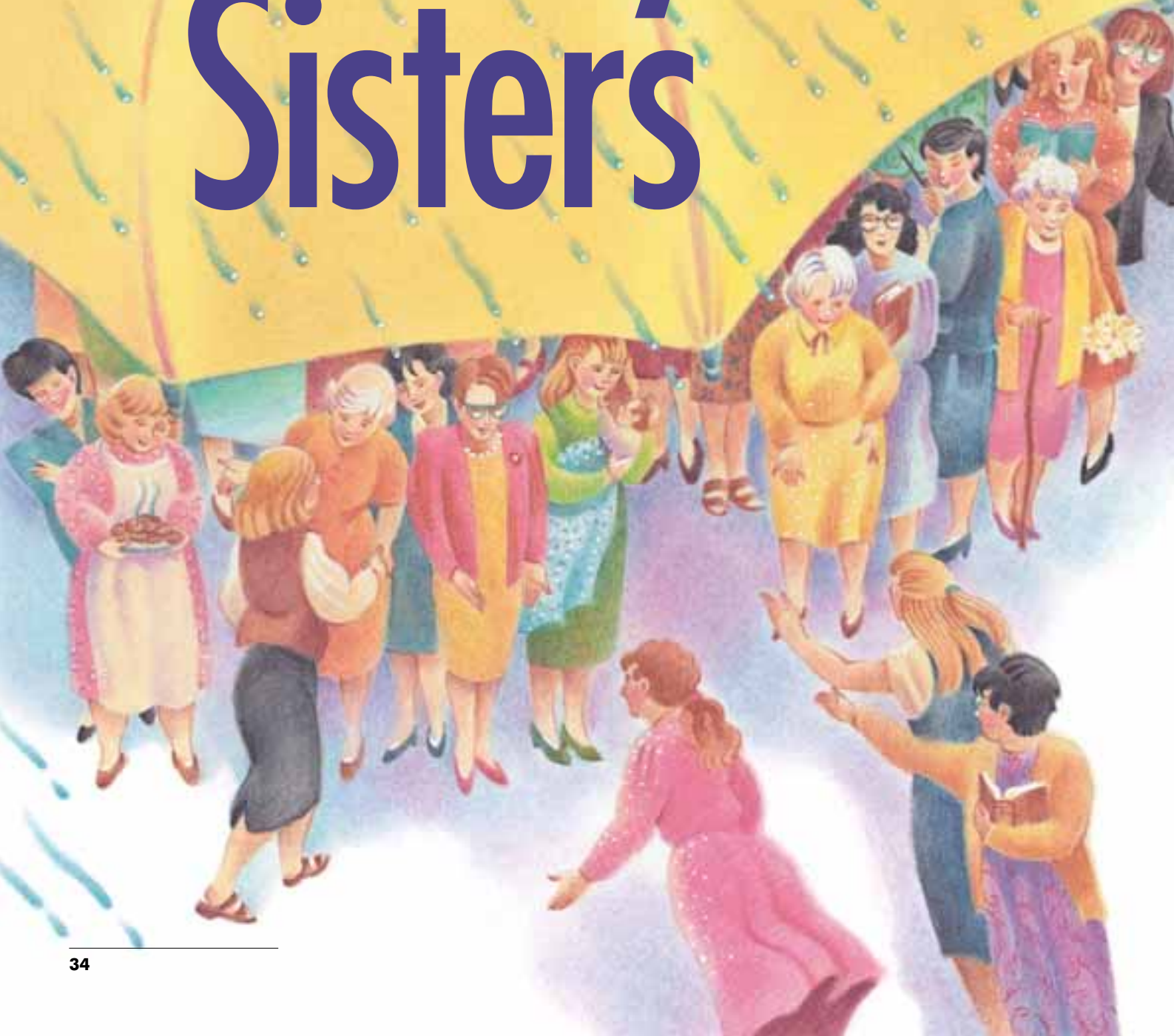
BERT, PASS ME THE HAMMER! THERE'S SOME MERCENARIES AT THE DOOR!
NO, MA'AM, I SAID MISSIONARIES



"Today in Sunday School we learned that in the Bible when someone was upset they would rent their clothes—or lease them with an option to buy."



All My Sisters



I found a lot of new sisters under the Relief Society umbrella. You will, too!

BY ANDREA NIXON

Near the end of my senior year of high school, I knew it would be time to move to Relief Society. I loved Young Women, and the thought of spending Sunday mornings with a group of older ladies just didn't sound appealing. Relief Society was for mothers and grandmothers, I thought.

The day came. The Relief Society sisters were halfway through the opening hymn when I slipped in the back of the room. At the time, my mother was serving in the Primary, and my married sister had just been called to the Young Women presidency. My grandma was ward librarian, so she would be a little late. I was all alone. After the opening prayer, a counselor in the presidency stood to give the announcements, but I only half-listened as she read off what I considered useless information about cannery dates and ward temple night. My mind wandered during the lesson about a topic that surely didn't pertain to me.

I went to Relief Society faithfully each week but with the same not-for-me attitude. The sisters in my ward were nice people, but they were so much older and led such totally different lives. I was excited when the summer ended, and I could go away to college and attend Church meetings with people my own age.

As we settled in the chapel that first Sunday, I was surprised when the bishop of my student ward announced that after sacrament meeting and Sunday School we would separate for priesthood and Relief Society. *Relief Society?* I thought I had left that back home.

I was even more surprised to discover that the form wasn't all that different from what I had observed in my home ward. Instead of my friend's grandma leading the music, it was a sophomore who lived in the apartment across the street. My roommate, rather than my old Primary teacher, offered the opening

prayer, and I recognized the sister who gave the lesson from my biology class.

Once again I attended Relief Society every Sunday. However, it wasn't until the second semester that I truly began to appreciate what Relief Society had to offer. I decided to get more involved. I began to really pay attention to the lessons and was amazed when I got so much out of them. My companion and I set a goal for 100-percent visiting teaching, and we accomplished it, forming lasting friendships along the way. As the year progressed, I could feel us drawing closer as ward members and friends but more importantly as sisters in the Lord's Church.

When the school year ended, I was a little reluctant to return home for the summer. I had grown to love Relief Society at college, and I was hesitant to return to my home Relief Society where I felt I didn't fit in. But I was surprised to feel the Spirit—the same familiar, comfortable feeling I had felt so many times in Relief Society in my student ward—engulf me as I walked in the door. I took a look around. Instead of seeing distant mothers and grandmothers, I saw fellow sisters. At college, I had learned to love and appreciate sisters of all different personalities, backgrounds, and circumstances. I realized the sisters in my home ward were no different; they were just at different stages in their lives—stages that I, too, would eventually experience. I know Relief Society was divinely organized for all women, young and old, married and single. We may lead different lives, but we are united in the gospel. We are all sisters in Zion. **NE**



invite the young adult women of the Church, wherever you are, to look at Relief Society and know that you are needed there, that we love you, that together we can have a grand time. Please come and be with us" (Ensign, May 2002, 84).

Bonnie D. Parkin
Relief Society
general president

Only an

As you prepare for the Melchizedek Priesthood, consider this: Every elder in the Church holds as much priesthood as the President of the Church.

BY ELDER BRUCE R. MCCONKIE

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
(1915–85)



An elder
is a shepherd
serving in the
sheepfold of the
Good Shepherd.

Someone asks: “What office do you hold in the Church? What is your priesthood position?” An answer comes: “Oh, I’m only an elder.”

Only an elder! Only the title by which a member of the Council of the Twelve is proud to be addressed; only the title which honors the President of the Church, who is designated by revelation as the first elder (see D&C 20:2); only the office to which millions of persons are ordained in the vicarious ordinances of the holy temples.

Only an elder! Only the office which enables a man to enter the new and everlasting covenant of marriage and to have his wife and children bound to him with an everlasting tie; only the office which prepares a man to be a natural patriarch to his posterity and to hold dominion in the house of Israel forever; only the office required for the receipt of the fulness of the blessings in the house of the Lord; only the office which opens the

door to eternal exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world, where man becomes as God is.

Only an elder! Only a person ordained to preach the gospel, build up the kingdom, and perfect the Saints.

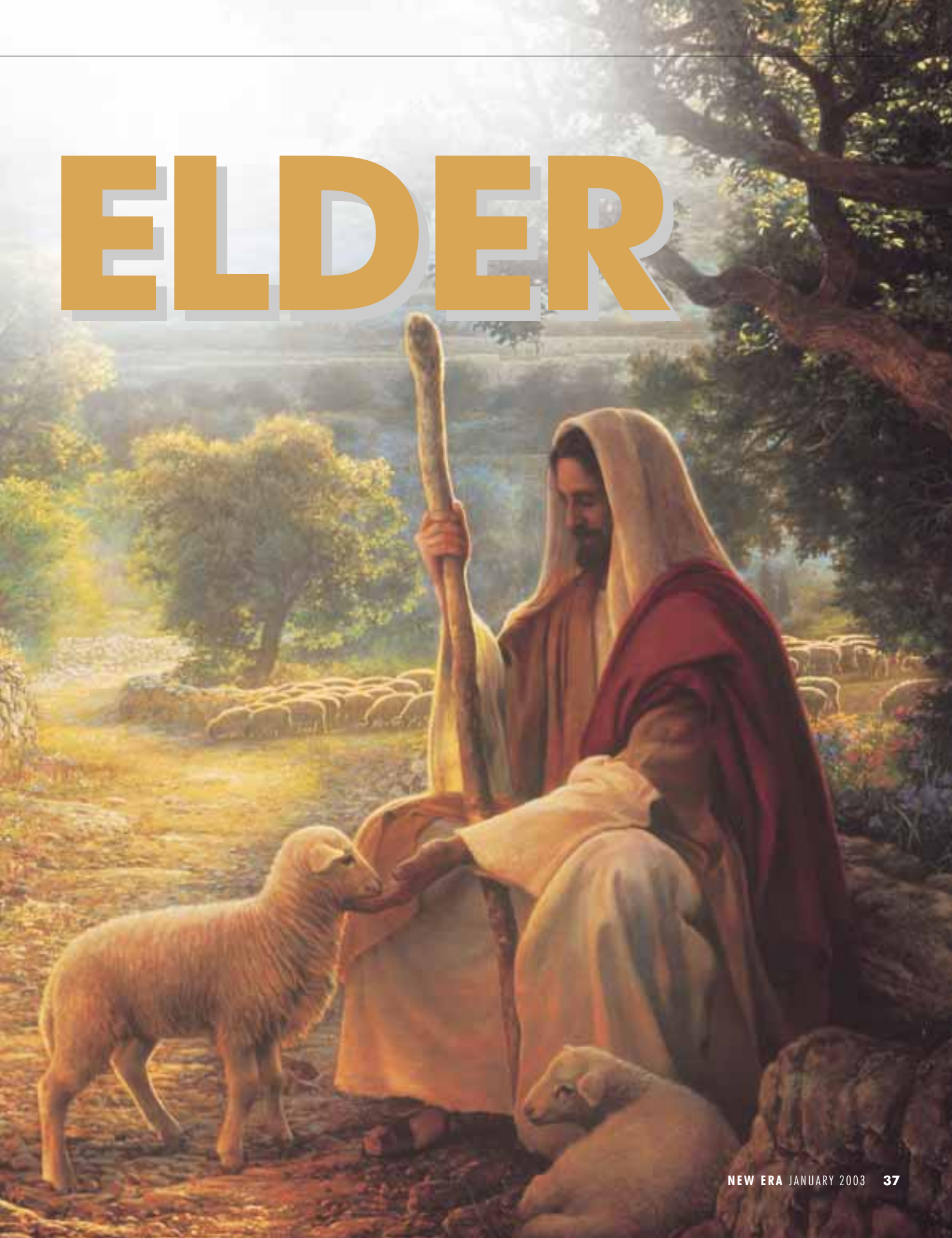
Every elder in the Church holds as much priesthood as the President of the Church. No Apostle can or will rise higher in eternity than the faithful elder who lives the fullness of the gospel law.

Ministers of Jesus Christ

What is an elder? An elder is a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. He holds the holy Melchizedek Priesthood. He is commissioned to stand in the place and stead of his Master—who is the Chief Elder—in ministering to his fellowmen. He is the Lord’s agent. His appointment is to preach the gospel and perfect the Saints.

What is an elder? He is a shepherd, a shepherd serving in the sheepfold of the Good Shepherd. It is written: “And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God” (Ezekiel

ELDER





The Church has need of every elder. There is no way to teach the gospel to more than six billion people without more missionaries.

34:31). It is also written, and that by Peter, the first elder in his day: “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, . . .

“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

“Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:1–4). Know this: elders, who are standing ministers in the Lord’s kingdom, are appointed to feed the flock of God, to take the oversight of the flock, to be examples to the flock.

The Lord’s representative

What is an elder? “And now come, saith the Lord, by the Spirit, unto the elders of his church, and let us reason together, . . .

“Wherefore, I the Lord ask you this question—unto what were ye ordained?

“To preach my gospel by the Spirit, even the Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth” (D&C 50:10, 13–14).

An elder is the Lord’s representative sent forth to teach His gospel for the salvation of men.

Who can measure the worth, the infinite worth, of a soul, a soul for whom Christ died?

Every elder is needed

The Church has need of every elder. None can be spared. The Church must be perfected and the gospel taught to every creature. There is no way to teach the gospel to more than 6 billion people without

more missionaries.

“Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

“And he that reapeth receiveth wages” (John 4:35–36).

“Behold, the field is white already to harvest; therefore, whoso desireth to reap, let him thrust in his sickle with his might, and reap while the day lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God” (D&C 6:3).

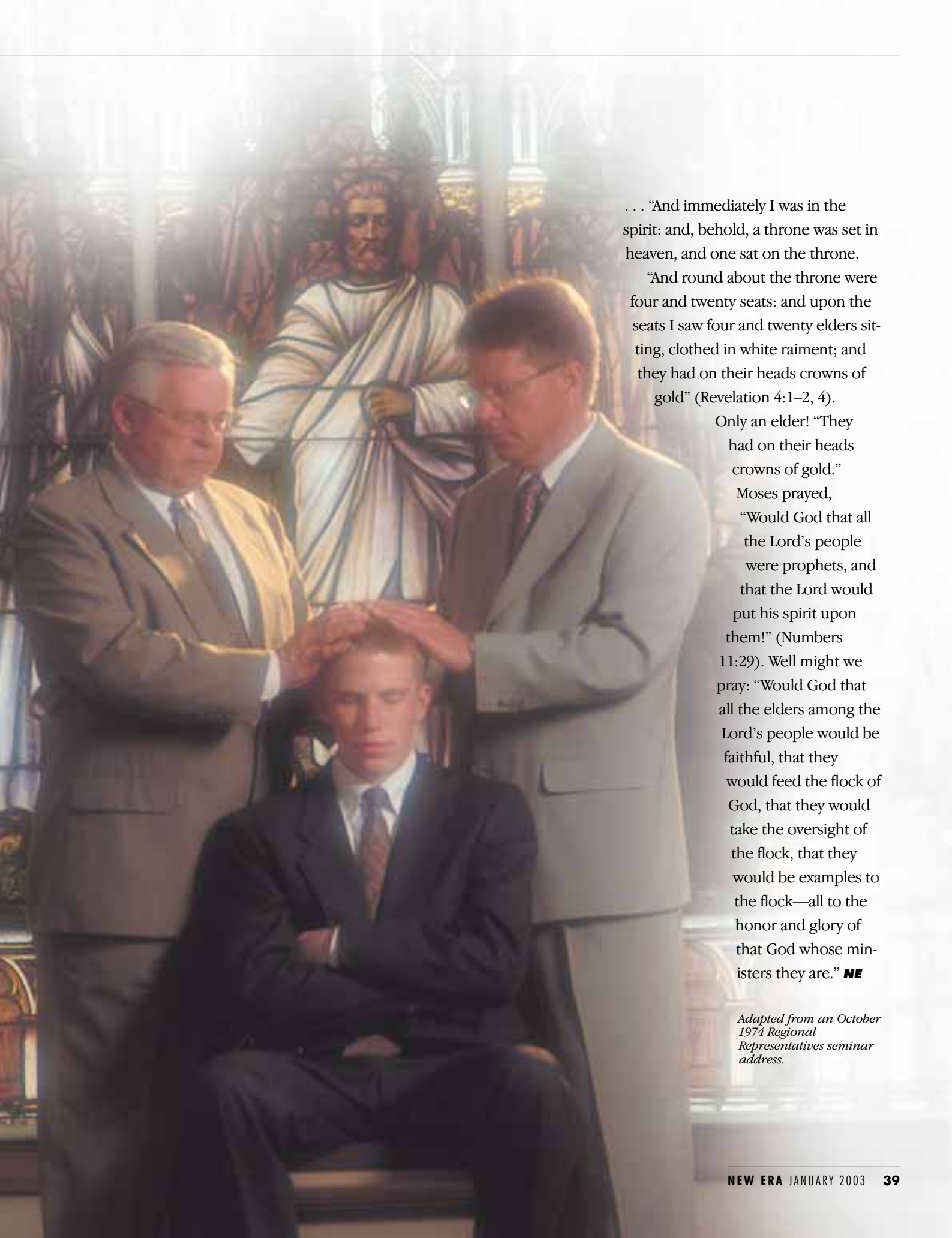
“And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father” (D&C 15:6).

Hymn

Let us now, however, return to our theme, which is: “Brethren, what think ye of the office of an elder?” Only an elder! Only the office held by apostles and prophets in this life; only the office that they will have when they come forth in immortal glory and enter into their exaltation; only the open door to peace in this life and a crown of glory in the life to come.

Only an elder! Only an elder in time and in eternity! What are we to understand by the four and twenty elders, spoken of by John? The revealed answer: “We are to understand that these elders whom John saw, were elders who had been faithful in the work of the ministry and were dead” (D&C 77:5). Now, let us hear the words which John wrote relative to those who were faithful elders while in this life and who are exalted elders in the realms ahead:

“Behold, a door was opened in heaven:



. . . “And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

“And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold” (Revelation 4:1–2, 4).

Only an elder! “They had on their heads crowns of gold.” Moses prayed, “Would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!” (Numbers 11:29). Well might we pray: “Would God that all the elders among the Lord’s people would be faithful, that they would feed the flock of God, that they would take the oversight of the flock, that they would be examples to the flock—all to the honor and glory of that God whose ministers they are.” **NE**

Adapted from an October 1974 Regional Representatives seminar address.



BY CAROLYN ARGYLE

I was a 13-year-old Latter-day Saint young woman living in Gilbert, Arizona, and each year our stake held its yearly girls' camp in the mountains of Prescott, Arizona.

That year, at the beginning of camp, our leaders gave us each a small spiral notebook. On the inside cover of each was written our name, the name of the camp, and "Summer of '76." On the first page of the notebook was the heading, "I hope, I wish, I dream."

We were instructed to write in this notebook our hopes, our wishes, and our dreams for the future. We were also told to put our notebooks somewhere safe. Our leaders hoped that when we were grown up, we would take our notebooks out and see what our dreams had been and if we had achieved them.

I took our leaders' words to heart. I filled page after page with my hopes for the future. When I came home from camp that year, I unpacked my suitcase and took out the little spiral notebook and set it carefully inside my hope chest.

Years went by, and I gave little thought to the notebook. Over the next 20 years, I went through many moves. I transferred the contents of my hope chest to a cardboard box, which I labeled "Mementos," and that box followed me wherever I went.

One day, 20 years from the day that I wrote in that notebook at camp, I walked into my garage and saw the box labeled "Mementos." I decided to get it down and see what was inside. I began pulling out items. Then I came across the little spiral notebook. I opened it to the first page and read, "I hope, I wish, I dream."

I began to read and ponder what I had written—of my desire to be married to a good man in the temple and my desire to have a big family and a happy home. I had written of my desire to keep the commandments. I continued reading about how important it was for me to not compromise my principles and to keep the light of the gospel in my life.

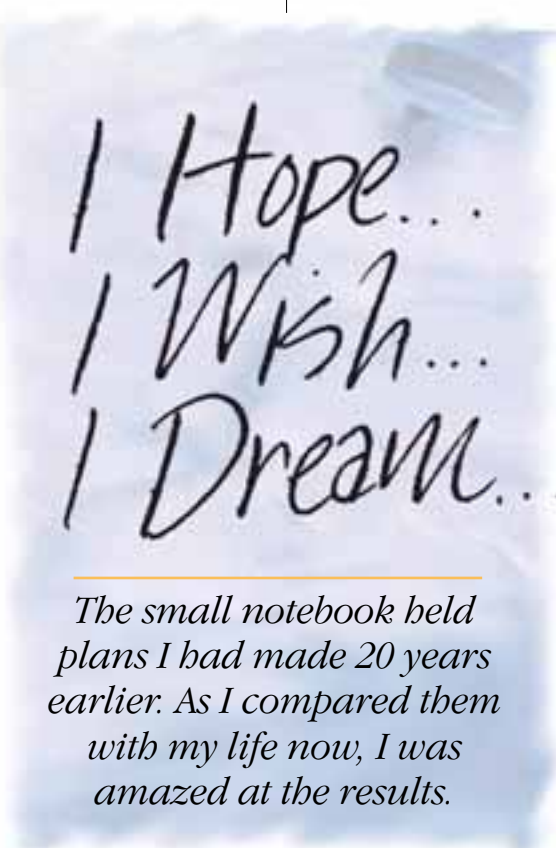
I paused for a moment from my reading and thought about how my life had turned out. I had not compromised my principles. I had married a good man in the temple. We had three children at that time. We were a happy family, and we taught our children the gospel. All that I had read had come true or was coming true.

I then went on to read of a more specific dream I had. The last sentence I had written was, "I want to write a book."

After reading this, I found myself standing perfectly still, in awe. Then my heart began pounding, and I smiled as my entire being was filled with a warm tingly feeling. I closed the little notebook and held it close to me. A publishing company

had just accepted my manuscript for publication.

I received a strong testimony that day of the power of goal setting. I received a testimony that our Heavenly Father loves us and will help us in achieving our hopes, our wishes, and our dreams. I believe that when I was 13, I knew what I wanted to do in my life, and I knew what Heavenly Father wanted me to do. I believe in the importance of setting righteous goals now and not compromising your principles. If you do set righteous goals, they will become reality. **NE**



The small notebook held plans I had made 20 years earlier. As I compared them with my life now, I was amazed at the results.



WRITE AWAY!

We want you to share all your great ideas for seminary devotionals. If you have an idea or six, send them to New Era 50 East North Temple Salt Lake City, Utah 84150 Or e-mail us at [cur-editorial-newera@lds church.org](mailto:cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org).



IT HAPPENED IN JANUARY

Following are a few significant events that happened in Church history during the month of January.

January 18, 1827: The Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. married Emma Hale in New York state. The couple met while he was working in Pennsylvania and boarding with Emma's family.

January 19, 1841: A revelation given at Nauvoo, Illinois, instructed the Saints to build a temple in Nauvoo (see D&C 124).

January 21, 28, 1900: The Salt Lake Stake, that included 55 wards, was divided, and the Jordan and Granite Stakes were created. This was the first stake division in the Salt Lake Valley since the pioneers arrived in 1847.



CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

I feel the Lord has placed . . . within our circles of friends and acquaintances, many persons who are ready to enter into His Church. We ask that you prayerfully identify those persons and then ask the Lord's assistance in helping you introduce them to the gospel. And in your conversations, if you can't think of anything you feel is important, you can say, 'I know that God lives.' That is the greatest testimony in the world" (*Ensign*, Feb. 1983, 4).
—President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985)

**// You are
good.
But it is
not enough
just to be
good. You
must be
good for
something.
You must
contribute
good
to the
world. //**

(Ensign, Jan. 1998, 72)
—President
Gordon B. Hinckley



LEADERSHIP TIP

Serve and genuinely love those whom you are called to serve. “Those who are called to lead in the ministry of the Master are not called to be chiefs or dictators. They are called to be good shepherds. They are to be constantly training others to take their place and become greater leaders than their teachers. A good leader expects much, inspires greatly, and sets on fire those he is called to



lead,” says President James E. Faust. President Faust suggests reading Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–43, where he says the keys of leadership can be found (Ensign, Nov. 1980, 35).



TEACHER FEATURE

When the teachers in Kaiserslautern, Germany, begin to wonder if all the days of classes, grading papers, school lunch, and noisy students are worth it, the youth of the Landstuhl Ward like to remind them of their value. Each year for the last six years, the youth have honored their teachers with a teacher appreciation night.

The theme the Landstuhl youth chose for this year was “For the Strength of Youth.” They made a memory and quote book for their teachers and thanked them for their guidance, knowledge, and service. The youth also treated them to dinner in the cultural hall, which they decorated especially for the occasion, and they put on a show that kept them entertained. On each dinner table were copies of *For the Strength of Youth* for the teachers to take home with them. Their teachers really appreciate being appreciated.



How to Discourage DIS

If you want to be happy most of the time, do the things that bring happiness. Here's how.

BY ELDER GENE R. COOK

Of the Seventy



When we have the Spirit of the Lord with us in abundance, we will have the power to shun discouraging feelings.

If the Lord were speaking to you, I am confident of one thing He would do. He would throw His arms wide open, and He would tell you how much He loves you.

I hope you are not really down on yourself or think you are not worth very much. That is the devil speaking. He is the one who keeps pounding away to make you feel that you are not worth much. That is not the Lord speaking.

Discouragement is a pretty common ailment. We all struggle with that to some degree, but I want to tell you how to remove discouragement.

In Moroni, the Lord says, “If ye have no hope ye must needs be in despair” (Moroni 10:22). Or in other words, you must be discouraged. If you have little hope about something, you are in despair and discouragement.

And then comes this great conclusion in that same verse: “despair [or discouragement]

cometh because of iniquity.” In other words, we have not yet learned to have the Spirit of the Lord with us in such abundance that we are able to be like Christ and shun discouraging feelings all the time.

So, how are we going to fix it? Well, you have to have more of the Spirit of the Lord.

In Helaman chapter five, Nephi and Lehi are in a prison. There is a dark cloud hanging over the Lamanites and they are asking, “How do we get rid of this dark cloud?” Discouragement is like a dark cloud when it is hanging over you. How do you get rid of it?

The simple answer in Helaman 5:41 is, “You must repent, and cry unto the voice [meaning unto the Lord, to pray], even until ye shall have faith in Christ, . . . and when ye shall do this, the cloud of darkness shall be removed from overshadowing you.”

The Lord is teaching here that the reason we are down is that we have sinned. And if we will repent and humbly ask the Lord to forgive us, in faith, His sweet Spirit will come back. So here are some specifics on how to do that.

COURAGEMENT



If you want to chase discouragement away, find some nonmembers and bear your testimony to them, or maybe just to a friend who's a little disheartened today.

1. Prayer

You need to pray. If you really want to not be discouraged, one of the best solutions I know of is to pray. Have a prayer in your heart always. To the degree you will learn to pray your way through a day, you will find that Satan and his evil influence will leave, the Spirit of the Lord will come, and you will be on top and be able to go through the trials that come your way.

2. Scriptures

Read in the scriptures prayerfully every day. Do not set aside your scripture study or you will be inviting in the devil who will try to discourage you. There is great power in reading the words of the Lord every day. You may have some times when all you can read is five or ten minutes. That's better than nothing. Just don't skip it. If you will trust in Him and let the words of the Lord come into your heart to humble your heart, you will open the door to the Spirit of the Lord.

3. Cleanliness

Be especially careful to keep yourself clean. One thing that can surely discourage you very quickly is to get involved in some kind of sin. Be very careful, because the devil is really anxious to get hold of someone about your age. He knows if he can corrupt you when you are young, that it will have great impact on you later when you are a husband or wife, and upon your children.

Be careful when you are dating to not be alone with a member of the opposite sex.

Stay more in groups. Be in settings where you're not totally alone because the devil will go to work on you if you are. Be

careful if you find yourself in any setting where it is starting to heat up. You know what I mean by that. Maybe those around you are starting to drink or smoke or swear, or somebody puts on a bad video. What ought you to do? Run! Leave immediately. Don't sit there and debate in your mind about it because the devil will win.

Guard yourselves by keeping the Word of Wisdom 100 percent.

Avoid pornography 100 percent.

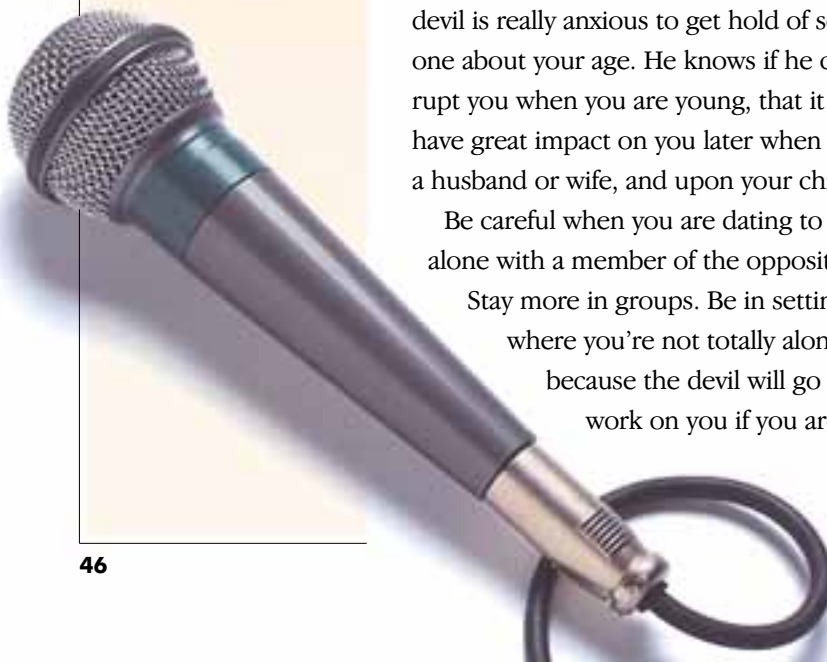
Pornography is a destroyer. Please, young men, just trust us. Pornography is every bit as bad as drinking alcohol, and worse. It will become an addiction that will pull you down, down, down, until the devil will take you. Your only safety is not to get into it.

Some of you may be struggling with that right now, and you know what discouragement is, because that is what pornography will bring with great severity. If any of you are involved in any of those kinds of things, go to your bishop right now—immediately. Honestly talk it through with him. Don't be embarrassed about it. Remember, the devil loves to keep things in secret.

Sisters, dress modestly. You know what the Brethren have taught about that. You are beautiful young women. The Lord made your bodies such that they are attractive to men. It is supposed to be that way. That attraction is not wrong; it is right. A woman is supposed to be attractive to a man. That is what will cause you to be married later. What a great blessing.

But be careful, sisters, that you dress modestly. Don't attract some young man to your body. You want to attract him to your soul, to your spirit, so he falls in love with the real you, not just with your body.

Be very careful, young men, of pairing off too early with one young woman, especially





before your mission. After your mission it is different because you are trying to get married.

Avoid petting 100 percent. It is totally against the commandments.

I've just given you a pretty long list of what can really bring you down. Your answer to that must be, "I will not do any of those." And if you will be true to that, you will not need to worry about being discouraged.

4. Testify

Look for opportunities to bear your testimony. If you want to chase discouragement away, find some nonmembers and bear your testimony to them, or maybe just to a friend who's a little disheartened today. You don't have to say, "I'm going to bear my testimony, Susie." That would not work too well. But you could say: "You know, Susie, let me tell you something I was reading yesterday in the scriptures. I was really touched by something. May I share it with you?"

That is bearing your testimony, which will bring the Lord into Susie's life, as well as your life.

5. Hymns

Use the hymns of the Church. This is a great way to stay above discouragement. I used to think when I was younger that I would sing when I got discouraged. To me, that is a good way to get free of discouragement, but it's a little late. A better way is to sing all the time. And if you will do that, you won't go down into one of those troughs. Get in the habit of singing hymns every day. Sing in the shower. You will sound better there.

Beware the music of the world, too. Make sure you have some good music to listen to, and it will carry you through some of those tougher days.

6. Love and gratitude

Express love and gratitude to God and men. You can truly express your love to someone and have the Spirit of the Lord come right now, and discouragement will leave. If you are feeling down, go find someone to cheer up. If you are down, go and tell someone how much you love them. I'm thinking of some of your dads and moms who

A priesthood blessing has great power in keeping Satan away from you and gives you the strength to turn him away when he does come.



need that from you. Go throw your arms around them.

Remember, too, that if you don't like the way you are feeling, you need to correct the way you are thinking. When you first have a bad thought come, or a discouraging thought such as, "I'm not worth much," or "I'm going to flunk this test," or "People won't like me," cast it out immediately.

7. Share spiritual experiences

If you are down, go tell someone about something positive that happened to you yesterday. Share a spiritual experience, and the Spirit will come right away.

The Lord is in all of His creations, and especially in you. If you will watch carefully, you will have plenty of experiences to share.

8. Priesthood blessings

If you are really struggling with discouragement of some depth, seek a priesthood blessing now. Ask your dad to give it to you, or the bishop, or someone close to you. Be humble enough to ask.

A priesthood blessing has great power in keeping Satan away and gives you strength to turn him away when he does come.

I bear witness to you that if you will adopt a pattern similar to this, it will take the dips out of your lives. I testify that a man can be happy most of his days, most every hour of every day. The key to it is to have the Spirit of the Lord with you, to love people, to give your heart to others, to seek to build them up, to lift and strengthen them. This will bring true happiness and true peace. I testify that there is no other way to receive that happiness and peace except by keeping the commandments of the Lord. **NE**

Adapted from a September 2000 LDS Business College devotional address.

Personal Improvement

Resolve to be a better missionary in 2003. In "Feed My Sheep" on page 4, President Boyd K. Packer tells us to "go to [those who are not members of the Church] and invite them to join us." Accept his challenge. Make a list of friends you could invite to family home evening, Mutual, seminary, or a fireside sometime this year. Pray for guidance, then have the courage to act.

Hymns can hold back discouragement, according to Elder Gene R. Cook in "How to Discourage Discouragement," page 44. Keep yourself out of the dumps by memorizing a favorite hymn every week, one verse at a time. Make it a contest with your family or friends with a reward such as ice cream.

Family Home Evening Ideas

As a family, read Elder Steven E. Snow's article, "We Thank Thee," on page 12. Designate one spot as the family "Thank Tank." Before family prayer every evening, family members can take turns sitting in the chair and sharing one thing he or she is thankful for. Sit and thank!

Young Men and Young Women Activity Ideas

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, "There is no way to teach the gospel to more than six billion people without more missionaries" (see "Only an Elder," page 36). Under the direction of your leaders, invite the ward missionaries to help the young men in your ward become acquainted with the first discussion, and discuss how to prepare to serve a mission. Have a real missionary meal afterward—rice and beans, pasta, baked potatoes, cold cereal, etc.—and a button-sewing contest.

Andrea Nixon says she began to appreciate what Relief Society had to offer when she got involved (see "All My Sisters," page 34). As a Laurel, you can get involved. Talk to your Young Women leaders about having the Laurels in your ward attend a Home, Family, and Personal Enrichment night, or offer to help plan one.

Seminary Devotional Idea

Jazz up early-morning seminary with an idea that comes from the Young Women general board. Working with your teacher, divide the class into equal groups, then give each group two minutes to write a jingle on missionary work, gossip, reverence, etc. Have each group sing its new words to the Primary tunes, "Smiles," or "Give Said the Little Stream."

Personal Progress and Duty to God

Read "I Hope, I Wish, I Dream" on page 40. In your journal write your goals. Be honest. Next, choose the goals you could work toward this year. Prepare a step-by-step plan to accomplish at least one of those wishes in 2003. Match your plan with a Personal Progress value experience or project or a Duty to God requirement.

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AMAZED BY THE INSPIRATION

Thank you for so many wonderful articles and stories. I really felt that the articles in the April 2002 *New Era* were inspired. They were very helpful to me. The Q & A helped me answer a question that a friend of mine had. The "Rising Above the Blues" article helped me realize that a lot of people go through depression. I have gone through some hard times, and it really helped me to know what to do and how I can help others. Every article from the beginning to the end of that *New Era* really made a big difference in my life.

Camille Soren

Boise, Idaho (via e-mail)

EASY TO RELATE

I just wanted to thank you for this wonderful magazine. It is nice to have a magazine geared toward the youth of the Church. The stories are uplifting and very informative. I really appreciate all the wonderful articles it contains. It is easy to relate to some of the problems the articles counsel about, and you give such wonderful solutions that I may, in turn, use in my life. I especially enjoy the messages you give us from the General Authorities. Thank you for your wonderful efforts.

Zeynep Husrevoglu

Brantford, Ontario, Canada (via e-mail)

GOOD FEELING

I would like to thank you for the articles, "Cold Feet, Warm Heart" and "No One Will Know" (Feb. '02). They really gave me a good feeling.

Tracey Goodwin

Adelaide, Australia (via e-mail)

IT REALLY DOES

I would just like to congratulate you all on the wonderful effort that is put into the *New*

"I really cherish reading the magazine, for it presents real-life issues and gives us insights on how to deal with them from a Church perspective."

Era each month. Each article in the *New Era* gives an encouragement to each and every one of us who read it. We are very lucky to have people as yourselves care about us so much as to come up with inspiring articles and give us the opportunity to hear from our beloved prophet and General Authorities. I absolutely enjoy reading The Extra Smile. It really does give me an extra smile.

Jacqueline Zinck

Sydney, Australia (via e-mail)

A CHURCH PERSPECTIVE

Today, reading materials like the *New Era* are so few. I really cherish reading the magazine, for it presents real-life issues and gives us insights on how to deal with them from a Church perspective. The youth of today must be thoroughly guided given such a degrading society, and the magazine is really a big help.

Nick P. Buscato

Bohol, Philippines

FELT STRONGLY

After reading "What's Best for My Baby" (Nov. '01), I felt strongly that I needed to write and say thank you. Thank you to the author of this article for sharing her story as well as her baby. Thank you to all birth mothers who have courageously chosen adoption when they knew it was the right thing for their baby. Thank you to three wonderful birth mothers who placed their babies with our family. I think of you, pray for you, and thank our Father in Heaven for you every day.

Juli Boyd

Salt Lake City, Utah (via e-mail)

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

We've Got Mail

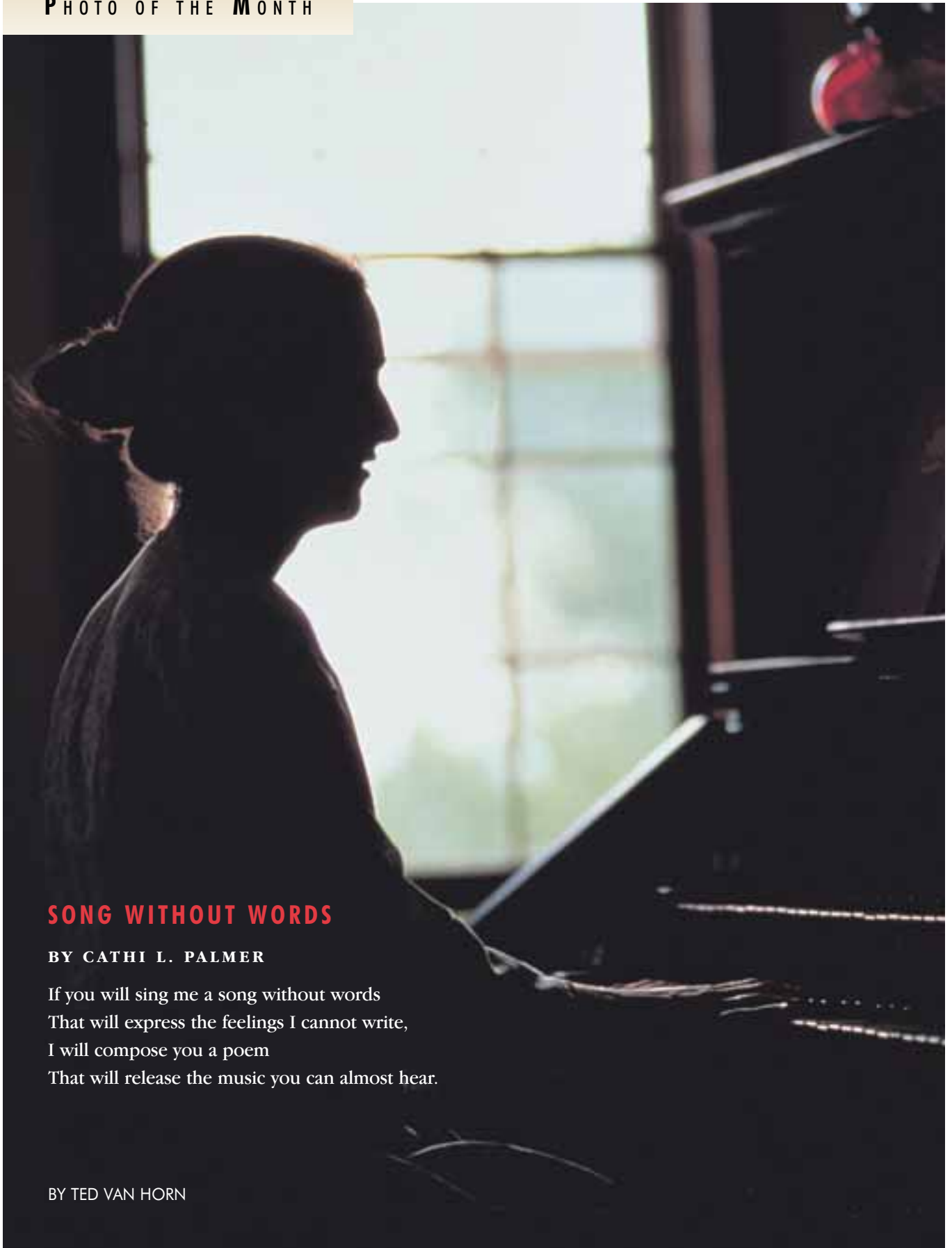
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Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



SONG WITHOUT WORDS

BY CATHI L. PALMER

If you will sing me a song without words
That will express the feelings I cannot write,
I will compose you a poem
That will release the music you can almost hear.

BY TED VAN HORN



***“You are the warriors
of the Restoration. And
in this spiritual battle,
you are to relieve the
spiritual hunger and
feed the sheep. It is
your duty!”***

See “Feed My Sheep,” p. 4.