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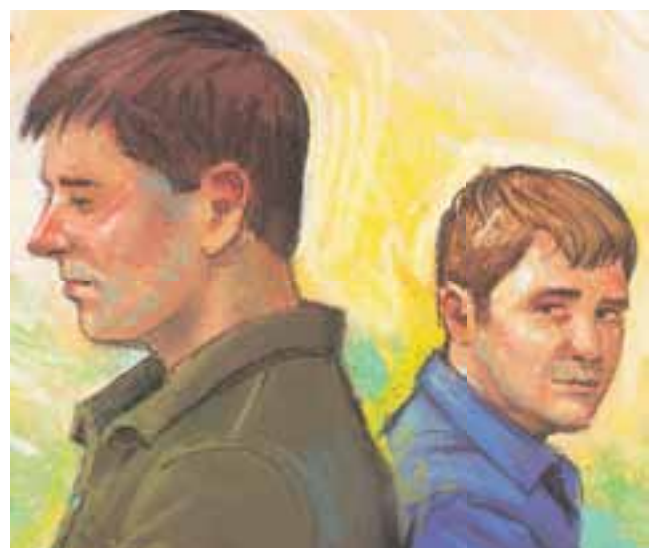
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Moroni is
a striking
example of
someone who
is steadfast. See
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STEADFAST AND IMMOVABLE

ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN GOOD WORKS

BY ELDER DAVID A. BEDNAR
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



The Lord Jesus Christ is the sure foundation, and you and I cannot and will not fall if we build upon Him as our foundation.

If you and I desire to become steadfast and immovable disciples of the Master, we must build appropriately and effectively upon Him as our foundation.

The Mutual theme for 2008 is taken from a prophetic and powerful sermon contained in the Book of Mormon. Approximately 124 years before the birth of the Savior, King Benjamin taught his people an essential truth that is important for us to understand today.

“Therefore, I would that ye should be *steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works*, that Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal you his, that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life, through the wisdom, and power, and justice, and mercy of him who created all things, in heaven and in earth, who is God above all” (Mosiah 5:15; emphasis added).

Note how the promised blessings of everlasting salvation and eternal life, made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, are predicated upon being *steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in good works*—the central elements in the 2008 theme.

Following the example of Nephi, let us “liken [this scripture] unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi

19:23) by considering three basic questions.

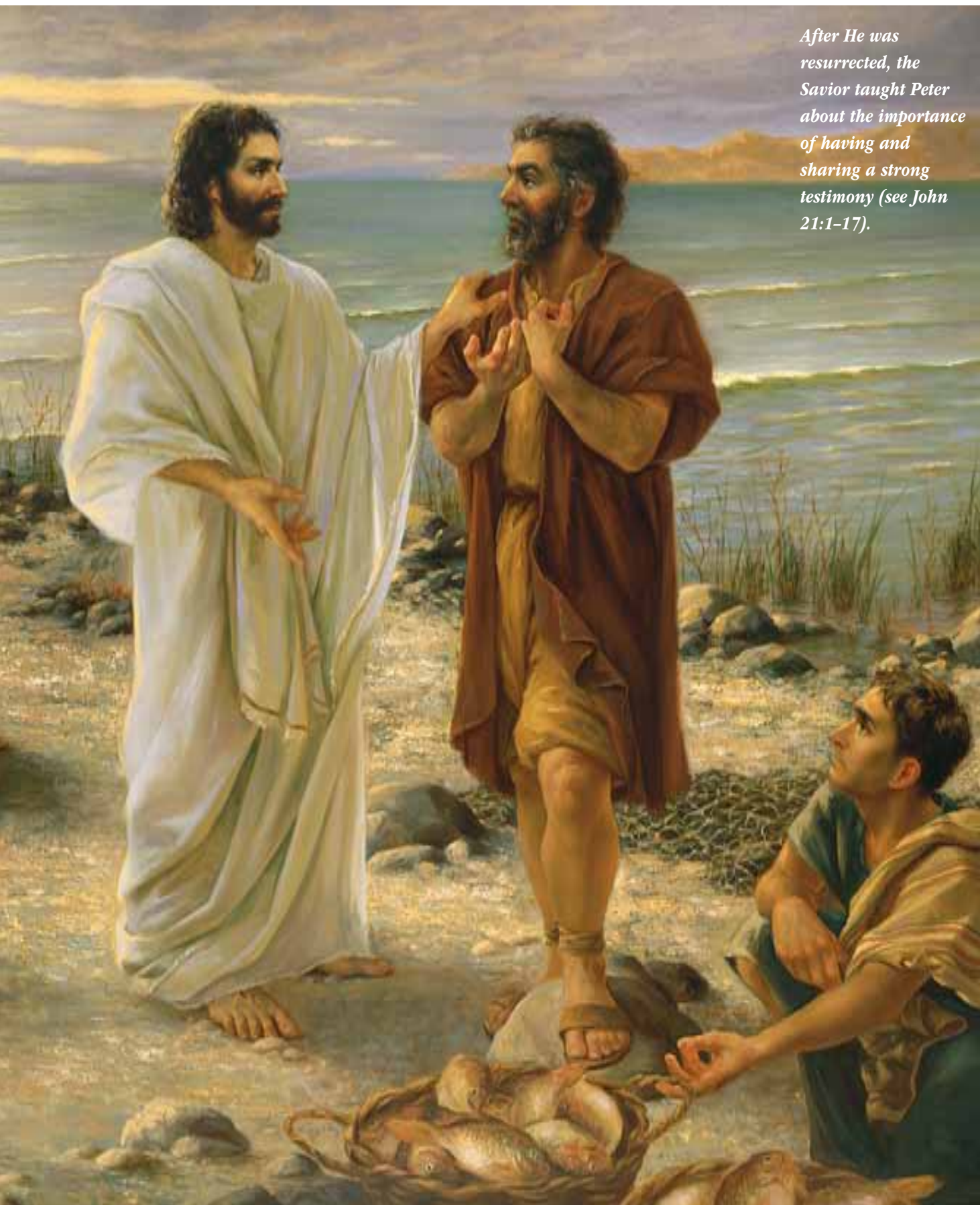
1. What does it mean to be steadfast and immovable?
2. How can we become steadfast and immovable?
3. What blessings are associated with being a steadfast and immovable disciple of the Savior?

What does it mean to be steadfast and immovable?

The word “steadfast” is used to suggest fixed in position, solid and firm, unshaken and resolute (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2nd ed. [1989], “Steadfast”). The word “immovable” is used to indicate that a person or thing is unalterable, firmly secured, and not subject to change. It also signifies the quality of being unyielding and incapable of being diverted from one’s purpose (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, “Immovable”). Thus, a person who is steadfast and immovable is solid, firm, resolute, firmly secured, and incapable of being diverted from a primary purpose or mission.

In the scriptures we find many

After He was resurrected, the Savior taught Peter about the importance of having and sharing a strong testimony (see John 21:1-17).





noteworthy examples of individuals who are steadfast and immovable. Captain Moroni is one such striking example. He was strong and mighty, a man of perfect understanding. He did not delight in bloodshed but found joy in the liberty and freedom of his country and his people. Therefore, he labored exceedingly to secure their welfare and safety. His heart was full of thanksgiving to God for the privileges and blessings bestowed upon the Nephites (see Alma 48:11–12). Captain Moroni is described as “a man who was firm in the faith of Christ” (Alma 48:13).

The 2,000 stripling warriors also can accurately be characterized as steadfast and immovable. They were all young men who were exceedingly valiant and courageous. They were also “men who were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted. Yea, they were men of truth and soberness” (Alma 53:20–21).

Many young women and men in the Church today are blessed with spiritual strength and courage equal to or greater than that exemplified by Captain Moroni or the stripling warriors. They stand firm against the mocking and scorn of the world and live and defend principles

of virtue, integrity, chastity, worthiness, and obedience. Thus, in Captain Moroni, in the stripling warriors, and in so many Latter-day Saint youth of today, we find the characteristics of firmness, of resoluteness, and of an absolute focus upon a compelling and correct purpose.

How do we become steadfast and immovable?

A building or structure that is stable and immovable must be built upon a strong foundation. If you and I desire to become steadfast and immovable disciples of the Master, we must build appropriately and effectively upon Him as our foundation.

“And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon *the rock of our Redeemer*, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must *build your foundation*; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a *sure foundation*, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12; emphasis added).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the sure foundation, and you and I cannot and will not fall if we build upon Him as our foundation. This is a truly remarkable and faith-promoting promise.

The steps we must follow in building our devotion to and our character upon the foundation of Christ are identified simply and clearly in Helaman 15:

“And behold, ye do know of yourselves, for ye have witnessed it, that as many of them as are brought to the knowledge of the truth, and to know of the wicked and abominable traditions of their fathers, and are led to believe the holy scriptures, yea, the prophecies of the holy prophets, which are written, which leadeth them to faith on the Lord, and unto repentance, which faith and repentance bringeth a change of heart unto them—

“Therefore, as many as have come to this, ye know of yourselves are *firm and steadfast in the faith*, and in the thing wherewith they have been made free” (vv. 7–8; emphasis added).

Please notice the specific steps outlined in these two verses. The first step is (1) *belief in the teachings and prophecies of the holy prophets as recorded in the scriptures*. Such belief (2) *fosters faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*.

Faith in the Savior leads to (3) *repentance*. Faith in Christ and repentance bring about (4) *the mighty change of heart*. As many as have diligently and faithfully followed these steps are (5) *firm and steadfast in the faith*. That is the Lord's blueprint for becoming steadfast and immovable. I testify that as we ponder and follow in faith the building blocks described in these verses, we will be strengthened and blessed to become steadfast and immovable.

What blessings are associated with being a steadfast and immovable disciple of the Savior?

As we become more spiritually mature and increasingly steadfast and immovable, we focus upon and strive to understand the fundamental and foundational doctrines of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Disciples who are steadfast and immovable do not become fanatics or extremists, are not overzealous, and are not preoccupied with misguided gospel hobbies.

President Joseph F. Smith emphasized: "We frequently look about us and see people who incline to extremes, who are fanatical. We may be sure that this class of people do not understand the gospel. They have forgotten, if they ever knew, that it is very unwise to take a fragment of truth and treat it as if it were the whole thing" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 122).

Let me repeat and reinforce this first great blessing associated with being a steadfast and immovable disciple of the Savior: such a follower of Christ consistently is focused upon and striving to understand the fundamental and foundational doctrines of the restored gospel.

Second, as we become more spiritually mature and increasingly steadfast and immovable, we are less prone to zealous and exaggerated spurts of spirituality followed by extended periods of slackness.

In order to better understand this principle, please consider Aesop's fable "The Hare and the Tortoise." After being taunted repeatedly for being slow, the Tortoise challenged the Hare to a race. As the race began, the two started off together. However, the Hare ran rapidly towards the goal and, seeing that he could easily win, lay down and fell asleep a short distance in front of the finish line. The Tortoise maintained a slow but steady and consistent pace toward the finish line. When the Hare awoke from his nap, he started running as fast as he could, only to find that the Tortoise had won the race. The Tortoise is a classic illustration of steadiness and persistence. The Hare, on the other hand, is an example of a "spurter"—one who is given to short bursts of spectacular effort followed by frequent and lengthy periods of rest.

A spurt may appear to be impressive in the short run, but steadiness over time is far more effective, far less dangerous, and produces far better results. Consecutive days of fasting, ultimately, may not be as spiritually edifying as successive months of appropriate fasting and worship on the designated fast Sunday. An attempt to pray one time for several hours likely will not produce the same spiritual results as meaningful morning and evening prayer offered consistently over several weeks. And a single scripture-reading marathon cannot produce the spiritual growth of steady scripture study across many months.

The importance of steadiness and consistency in our spiritual development and progress is beautifully illustrated in the parable of the ten virgins (see Matthew 25:1–13). Ten virgins took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Five of the virgins were wise and took oil in their vessels with their lamps. They were prepared to welcome the bridegroom. The five



THE SECOND COMING, BY HARRY ANDERSON

The steps we must follow in building upon the foundation of Christ are simple and clear.

1. *Believe in the teachings and prophecies of the holy prophets as recorded in the scriptures.*
2. *Let belief foster faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.*
3. *Repent.*
4. *Have a mighty change of heart.*
5. *Remain firm and steadfast in the faith.*



The oil of preparedness and steadiness is accumulated each day through consistent, wise choices.

foolish virgins took their lamps but took no oil with them. The foolish virgins knew they should have oil but procrastinated, were unprepared, and were shut out from the wedding feast.

The oil of preparedness and steadiness is accumulated each day through consistent, wise choices. President Spencer W. Kimball described it this way: “Attendance at sacrament meetings adds oil to our lamps, drop by drop over the years. Fasting, family prayer, home teaching, control of bodily appetites, preaching the gospel, studying the scriptures—each act of dedication and obedience is a drop added to our store. Deeds of kindness, payment of offerings and tithes, chaste thoughts and actions, marriage in the covenant for eternity—these, too, contribute importantly to the oil with which we can at midnight refuel our exhausted lamps” (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1972], 255–56).

The key lesson for us to learn from this statement by President Kimball is that deliberate, consistent, and reliable preparation and performance provide essential oil for our lamps. Furthermore, steadfastness is a prime indicator of spiritual maturity.

You and I can also learn much about steady spiritual development from the technique of drip irrigation that is used in many agricultural areas throughout the world. Drip irrigation is sometimes called trickle irrigation and involves dripping water onto the soil at very low rates from a system of small plastic pipes fitted with outlets called emitters or drippers. Unlike surface and sprinkler irrigation, which involves flooding, gushing, or spraying large quantities of water where it may not be needed, drip irrigation applies water close to a plant so that only part of the soil in which the roots grow is wetted. With drip irrigation, applications of water are more focused and



FIVE OF THEM WERE WISE, BY WALTER RANE

more frequent than with the other methods. The steady drips of water sink deep into the ground and provide a high moisture level in the soil wherein plants can flourish.

In like manner, if you and I are focused on receiving consistent drops of spiritual nourishment, then gospel roots can sink deep into our souls, can become firmly established and grounded, and can produce extraordinary and delicious fruit. In a gospel sense, you and I need to implement constant spiritual drip saturation and avoid sporadic and shallow spiritual spurting. Sturdy gospel roots that go deep into rich spiritual soil strengthen and steady us in times of trial and difficulty.

I testify and witness that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. May you and I build our lives upon the foundation of Christ. May we apply correct principles to become steadfast and immovable—solid, firm, resolute, firmly secured, and incapable of being diverted from the path of righteousness—keeping and honoring our covenants and commitments, living worthy and pure lives, and becoming valiant disciples of the Savior. **NE**

MOSIAH 5:15

This year's Mutual theme teaches us how to stay firm in the gospel.

Steadfast

Stead means place; it is related to the word *stand*.

Fast means fixed or firm; think of the word *fasten*.

So, *steadfast* means something like “standing firmly in place.”



Immovable

“Those who stand firm, steadfast, and immovable are given great inner hidden powers and unseen strengths. They will be endowed with full

and potent spiritual resources.”

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Stand Up and Be Counted,” *New Era*, Aug. 1990, 6.

Abounding

Abounding—having in large numbers or great quantity

Good Works

How can your life be “always abounding in good works”? Here are a few ideas:

- Pray for opportunities to serve others, and then look for those opportunities.
- Write in your journal each day the things you did that were kind, helpful, or spiritually uplifting.
- On a Sunday, make a list of good things you think you could accomplish that week. Put the list where you can see it every day to remind yourself of your goals, and then review the list on the following Sunday to see how you did.

Good Works

“When faith springs up in the heart, good works will follow, and good works will increase that pure faith within them.”

President Brigham Young (1801–77), *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 57.



15 Therefore, I would that ye should be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works, that Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal you his, that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life, through the wisdom, and power, and justice, and mercy of him who created all things, in heaven and in earth, who is God above all. Amen.

Omnipotent

Omnipotent—all-powerful

Seal you his

In ancient times, a seal (usually a signet ring or small stone with writing on its surface) was pressed into soft clay or wax to leave a mark of ownership or authenticity on an object or document.

King Benjamin used this image in Mosiah 5 after discussing how we can become the children of Christ and take upon us His name through covenant (like we do when we are baptized or partake of the sacrament). He then says that our faith and good works will enable Christ to “seal [us] his.” The Apostle Paul taught that the Holy Spirit gives us this seal of approval (see 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).

Editor's note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected scripture verse, only a starting point for your own study.

STEADFAST & IMMOVABLE

“Be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works” (Mosiab 5:15).



BY THE YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN GENERAL PRESIDENCIES

What does it mean to be steadfast and immovable? To be steadfast is to be firmly fixed and not subject to change, to be firm in belief and determination, and to be loyal and faithful. Likewise, to be immovable is to be unyielding and incapable of being moved or diverted. Being steadfast and immovable in the gospel of Jesus Christ is committing to follow Him, thereby always abounding in good works.

Examples of Those Who Are Steadfast and Immovable

Jesus Christ is the rock and sure foundation upon which we must build. He is our perfect example of one who stands steadfast and

immovable, always abounding in good works.

We also have living prophets and apostles who stand firm. In a world that some see as increasingly dark and uncertain, our prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, sees this as a good time to be alive. He continues to be a mighty example of one who is steadfast and immovable.

There are also wonderful men and women throughout the scriptures who stood steadfast and immovable in living what they believed. In the Book of Mormon we learn that Captain Moroni was “a strong and a mighty man; he was a man of a perfect understanding; . . . a man whose soul did joy in the liberty and the freedom of his

country . . . ; a man whose heart did swell with thanksgiving to his God . . . ; a man who did labor exceedingly for the welfare and safety of his people. . . . He was a man who was firm in the faith of Christ” (Alma 48:11–13).

What would the world be like if all of us could be like him? The scriptures tell us, “If all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni, behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea, the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men” (Alma 48:17).

Moroni served with Helaman and other brethren who “were no less serviceable unto the people” (Alma 48:19). Helaman stood at the head of an army of 2,000 stripling warriors who, like the valiant youth of this day, were “true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted . . . , for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him” (Alma 53:20–21). These young men were true and committed.

Esther is another example of a person who was firm and unyielding. She knew that she had been divinely moved to a place and circumstance to save her people. As Mordecai told

her, “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14). She is a great example of faith and determination.

We have great examples around us who are steadfast, immovable, and abounding in good works. Many of us see our parents

cheerfully keeping their temple covenants. We see missionaries throughout the world who are strictly obedient and faithful in their service. Leaders, advisers, brothers, sisters, and friends can also exemplify these qualities.

How can you follow their examples and be steadfast and immovable? Each of us can be determined and unyielding in our obedience and worthiness. We must strive to be completely faithful in praying, studying our scriptures, paying our tithing, living the Word of Wisdom, attending our meetings, being pure in our thoughts and actions, honoring the priesthood, and being kind to our families and friends.

Blessings of Being Steadfast and Immovable

The 2008 Mutual theme scripture comes at the end of King Benjamin’s last sermon (see Mosiah 2–5).

The people were so moved by his words that they had a mighty change in their hearts: they had no more disposition to do evil but to do good continually (see Mosiah 5:2). Because of this



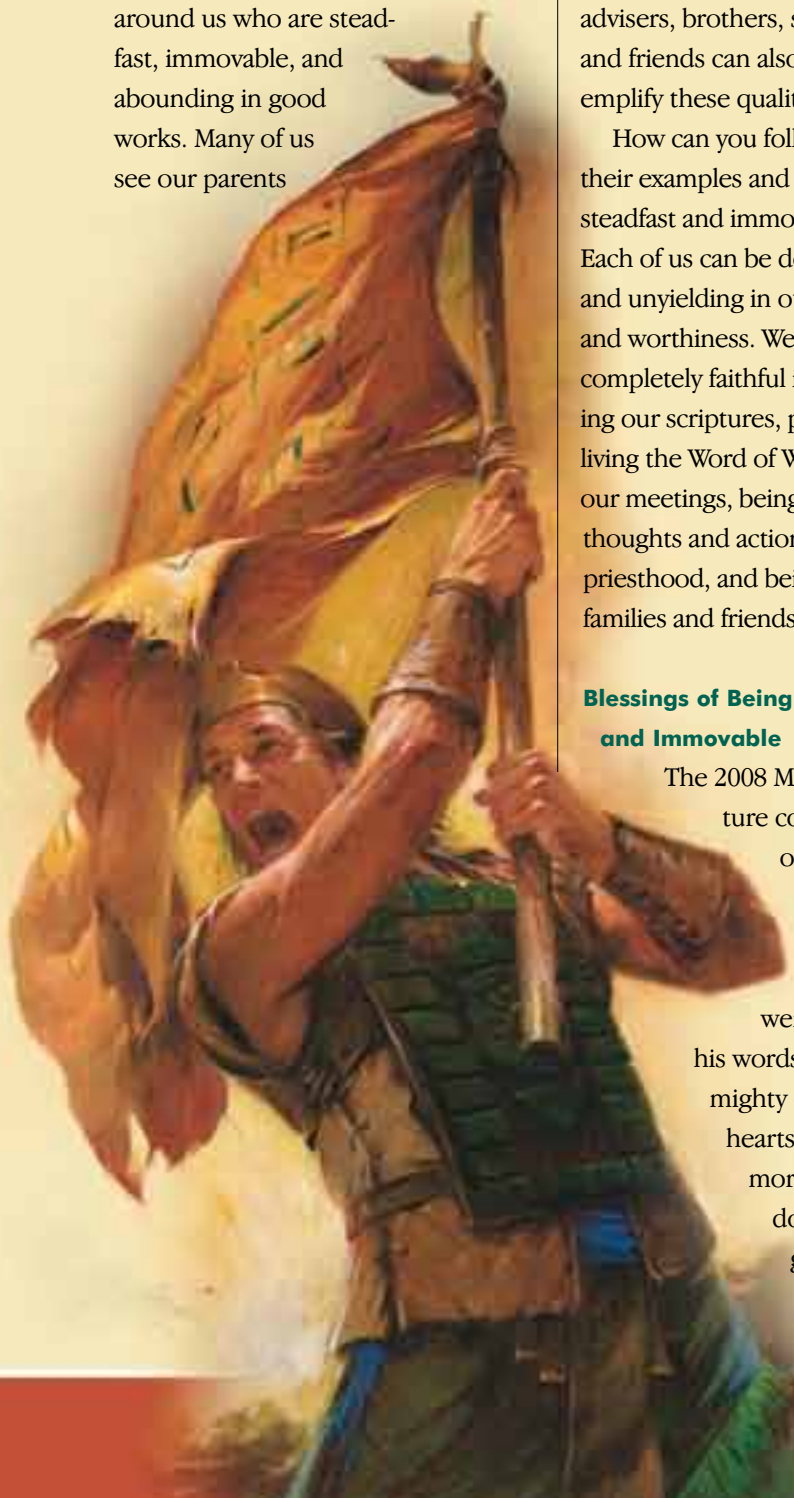
change, King Benjamin told the people that the Lord would “seal [them] his, that [they] may be brought to heaven [and] have everlasting salvation” (Mosiah 5:15).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that the word *seal* refers to “the ratifying power of the Holy Ghost. . . . Receiving this ‘stamp of approval’ from the Holy Ghost is the result of faithfulness, integrity, and steadfastness in honoring gospel covenants.”¹

As we build on the sure foundation of the Savior Jesus Christ, we too can be the recipients of such a great blessing. We can have a mighty change of heart, be sealed unto eternal life through the ratifying power of the Holy Ghost, and eventually receive all that the Savior has. **NE**

NOTE

1. “Ye Must Be Born Again,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 22.



WAS LEHI Here?

BY DAVID A. EDWARDS
Church Magazines

The Book of Mormon paints a vivid picture of the trials and triumphs Lehi and his family experienced after they left their home in Jerusalem and journeyed through the wilderness. As you read, you feel that you can understand and relate to their experiences. While we can't trace their exact route, we can still get a sense of the general areas where Lehi and his family traveled and, by doing so, gain an even greater appreciation for what they went through. Recent research gives us a clearer picture of some of these areas and the conditions Lehi's group would have encountered.¹

NOTE

1. Information in this article came from the following sources published by the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship (see www.maxwellinstitute.byu.edu):
 - S. Kent Brown and Peter Johnson, eds., *Journey of Faith: From Jerusalem to the Promised Land* (2006).
 - *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2 (2006).
 - *Journey of Faith* (DVD, 2005).
 - George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the 'Valley of Lemuel,'" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1999), 54–63.

Mediterranean Sea

Jerusalem

IRAQ

JORDAN

The valley of Lemuel
and the river Laman

KUWAIT

SAUDI ARABIA

Nahom

YEMEN

Arabian Sea

EGYPT

SUDAN

Red Sea

ERITREA



After Lehi's family left Jerusalem, they stopped in a place they called the "valley of Lemuel" (1 Nephi 2:14), which was a three-day trip from the north-east tip of the Red Sea (see 1 Nephi 2:5–6). The valley was "by the side of a river of water," which Lehi named Laman and which was "continually running" (1 Nephi 2:6, 9). Lehi called the valley of Lemuel "firm and steadfast, and immovable" (1 Nephi 2:10).



Above and below: This wadi, or small valley, called *Tayyib al-Isim*, is typical for the area and contains perhaps the only stream that flows year-round in the region today. This canyon's solid granite walls are an impressive sight, and they offer plenty of shade in an area where the temperature in the summer is usually over 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43°C).

**Above: The river Laman emptied into the Red Sea (see 1 Nephi 2:8).
Right: Here we see where the *Wadi Tayyib al-Isim* meets the Red Sea.**



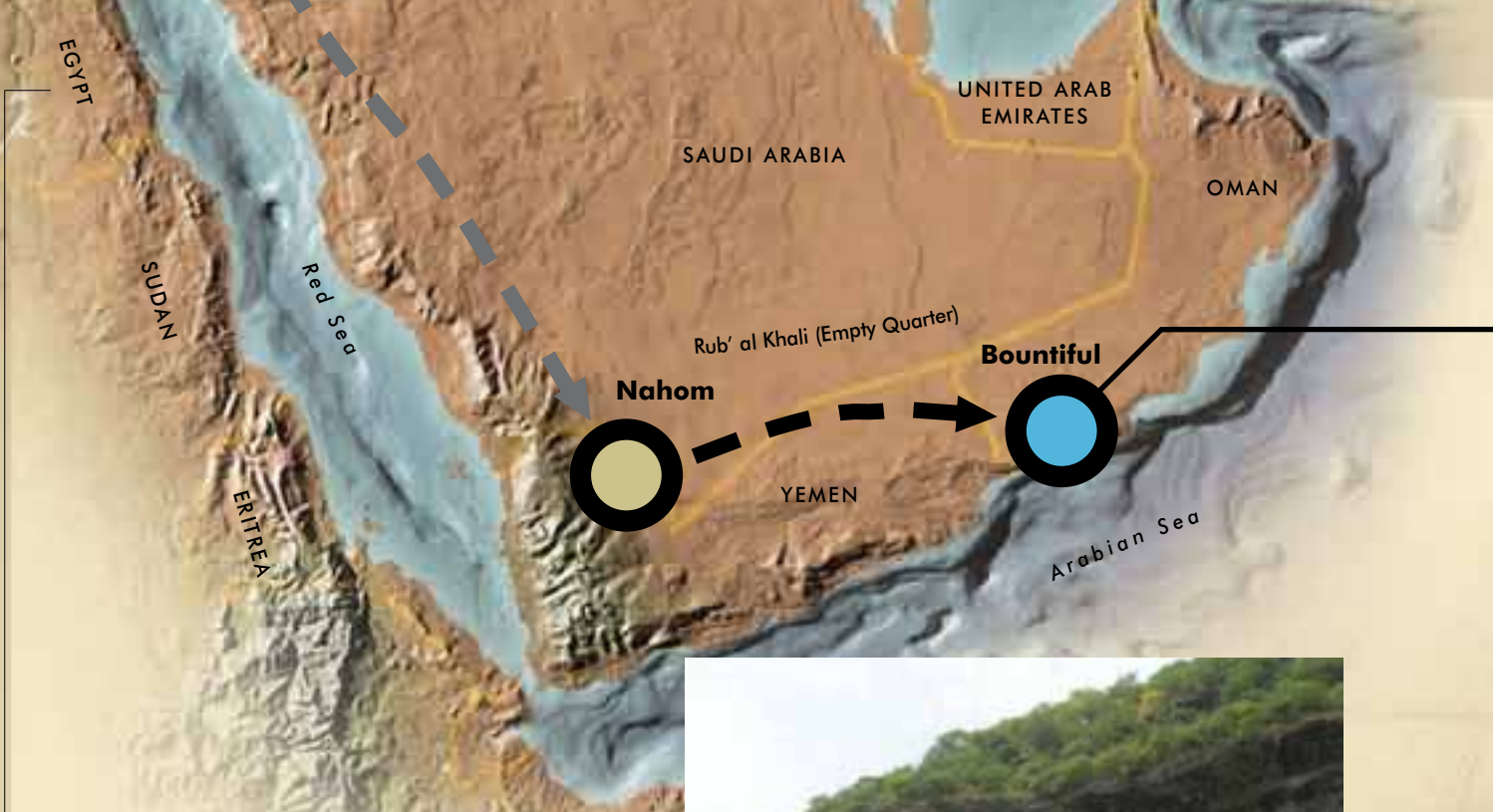
Lehi's family continued their journey, "traveling nearly the same course as in the beginning" for "many days" (1 Nephi 16:33). Then Ishmael died and "was buried in the place which was called Nahom" (v. 34). The place pictured here lies in the general area where the group traveled and for many years has had variations of the name *Nahom* associated with it.



Right: In recent years archaeologists have discovered these stone altars, which have a form of the name *Nahom* inscribed on them (see inset with letters electronically emphasized) and date back to the sixth or seventh century B.C., during Lehi's day.



MAPS BY MOUNTAIN HIGH MAPS, EXCEPT AS NOTED; LEFT: ILLUSTRATION BY JOSEPH BRICKEY; INSET: MAP BY JERRY THOMPSON; PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUSTIN ANDREWS, WARREN ASTON, S. KENT BROWN, KIM HATCH, DAVID LISONBEE, AND GEORGE POTTER, EXCEPT AS NOTED



THE WITNESS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

“The power of the Holy Ghost . . . must ever be the chief source of evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon. All other evidence is secondary to this. . . . No arrangement of evidence, however skilfully ordered; no argument, however adroitly made, can ever take its place. . . . [However,] secondary evidences in support of truth, like secondary causes in natural phenomena, may be of first-rate importance, and mighty factors in the achievement of God’s purposes.”

Elder B. H. Roberts (1857–1933) of the Seventy, *New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. (1909), 2:vii–viii.



The cliffs pictured here have hives of honeybees in them.



Although the precise route of Lehi’s family is not known, they would likely have crossed such a sandy waste while traveling in the desert between Nahom and Bountiful. This part of the journey would have been especially difficult.



At Bountiful, Nephi “did go into the mount oft, and [he] did pray oft unto the Lord” (1 Nephi 18:3). The peak shown here is representative of where Nephi may have gone to pray to the Lord and to receive instruction.

After leaving Nahom, Lehi’s family traveled “nearly eastward from that time forth. And [they] did travel and wade through much affliction in the wilderness” (1 Nephi 17:1).

Following an eastward course, Lehi’s group would have reached the southeastern shore of the Arabian peninsula. Some locations along that coastline are shown here. Since they had just traversed a barren wasteland, it’s no wonder they would call such a place Bountiful, “because of its much fruit and also wild honey” (1 Nephi 17:5). **NE**



Some spots along the southeastern coastline of the Arabian peninsula have pockets of vegetation, which stand out in the surrounding desert.



Fruit trees, including fig trees, still grow in this area.



A modern example of shipbuilding in this region. Bountiful is where Nephi built his ship using tools made of “ore which [he] did molten out of the rock” (1 Nephi 17:16). The ship was made of “timbers of curious workmanship” (1 Nephi 18:1). In this area there are two iron ore deposits, as well as many trees that could be used for shipbuilding.

LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH OF REPLICA OF PLATES BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN; ILLUSTRATION OF BOAT BY JOSEPH BRICKEY; INSETS: PHOTOGRAPH OF BEES BY IROCHKA © FOTOLIA; DETAIL OF NEPHI’S VISION, BY CLARK KELLEY PRICE; PHOTOGRAPH OF FIG TREE BY RICHARD L. W. CLEAVE

Q & A

“I always feel good at church, but I don’t feel the Spirit as much throughout the week. How can I feel closer to God at home, school, and work?”

NEW ERA

In the sacrament prayer, the covenant to keep the commandments and always remember the Lord comes with a promise: “That [you] may always have his Spirit to be with [you]” (Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79). What an incredible blessing!

But how do you remember the Savior? You can apply the principles you learn at church to your life. To have the Spirit with you through the week, you need to do more than just hear the speakers and teachers on Sunday. Here are some suggestions:

1. Prayer. Prayer helps bring the Spirit into our Church meetings; it will do the same during your week. How many times do we pray at church? There are opening and closing prayers for each meeting, along with sacrament and individual prayers—a minimum of eight! Just as talking frequently on the phone helps you recognize the voice of friends, speaking to Heavenly Father through prayer helps you recognize the voice of the Spirit. Increasing the frequency and sincerity of your prayers during the week will invite the

■ **Pray often during the week and during each day.**

■ **If you don’t have a chance to bear your testimony, write it in your journal.**

■ **Always remember to do your scripture reading.**

■ **Make a special effort to be obedient to the commandments and your parent.**

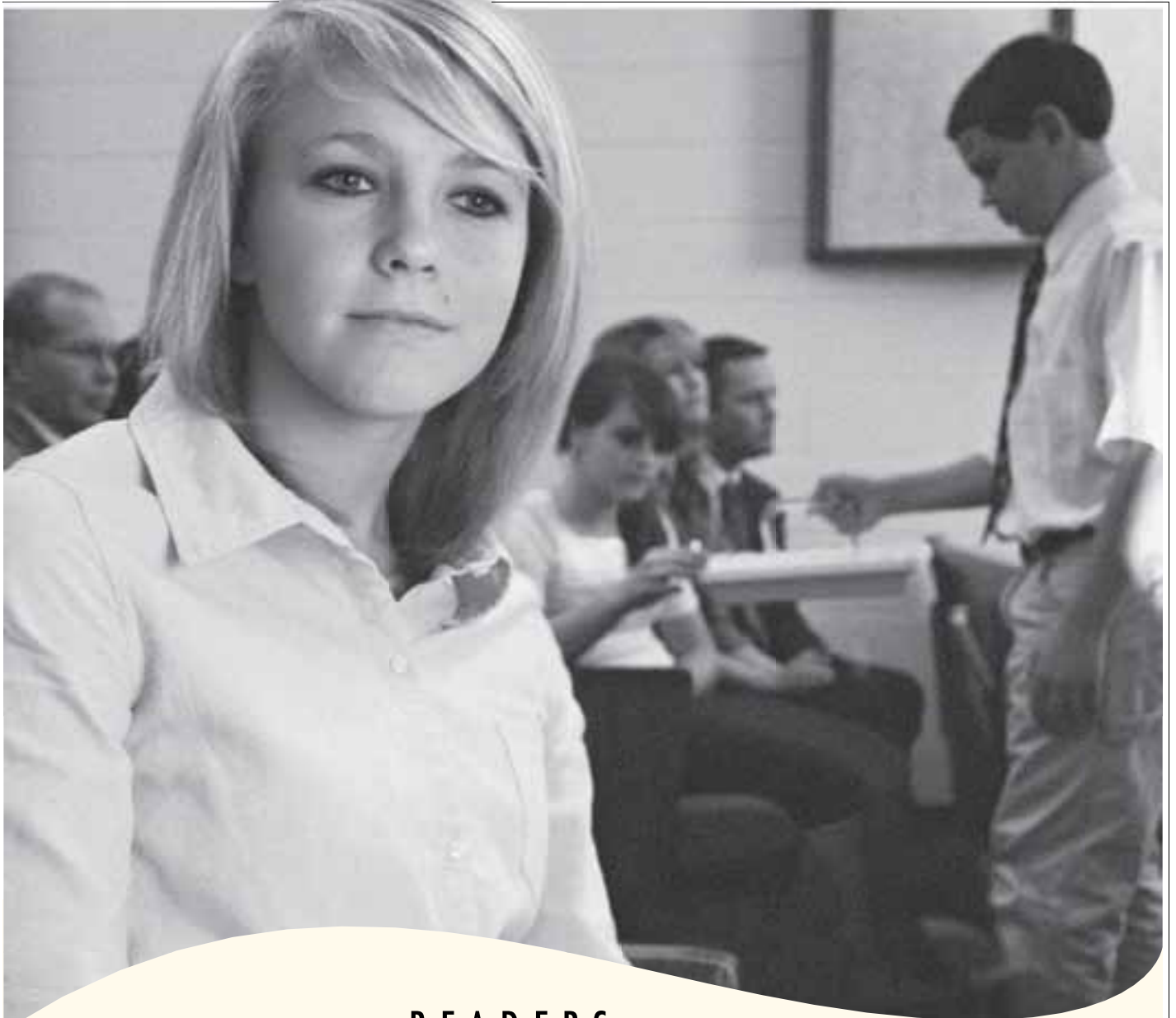
■ **Surround yourself with good music in a good atmosphere.**

same Spirit that accompanies you on Sunday.

2. Testimony. Along with increasing your prayers, continuing to share your testimony will also increase the Spirit you feel, and there are many opportunities to do so. For example, you can share your feelings about the gospel during home evening or write about the Savior in your journal. Bearing testimony brings spiritual power.

3. Daily scripture study. President Henry B. Eyring, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “The Holy Ghost will guide what we say if we study and ponder the scriptures every day. . . . With daily study of the scriptures, we can count on this blessing even in casual conversations or in a class when we may be asked by a teacher to respond to a question.”¹

It takes more than glancing over a few verses. It takes serious study, reading not just cover to cover, but over and over. If you’re studying for an algebra exam, you don’t just glance over the material. You review notes, work out practice problems, and memorize formulas. So if you want to study the scriptures, look up references,



READERS

write down what you learn, memorize passages, and so on.

4. Obedience. If you keep the commandments and honor the covenants you have made, the Lord has promised that you will have His Spirit with you.

5. Worthy music and thoughts. Uplifting music invites the Spirit. So do thoughts that are “virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy” (Articles of Faith 1:13). Surround yourself with a spiritual environment, and the Spirit can accompany you wherever you go. **NE**



When you get home from church, reflect upon what you learned, and pray. Ask Heavenly Father to help keep the Spirit with you throughout

the week. Participate in uplifting activities such as reading the scriptures, giving service, giving a family home evening discussion, or reading the Ensign or New Era. Don't participate in activities that drive the Spirit away such as listening to bad music, watching bad movies, using bad language, or being immoral or unclean.

Ashton B., 15, Texas



From Monday to Saturday you can feel the same Spirit by saying your personal prayers, reading the scriptures, attending

seminary, being obedient to your leaders, and reading the words of God in the Church magazines. In this way you can feel much closer to God. I also remember what my dad used to tell me: that the Spirit dwells in a pure heart and that you should be humble and do what your leaders ask.

Mele T., 17, Tonga



I often participate in activities that help bring the Spirit. These activities happen at school, home, work, and also church. Some of these activities include going to church, Mutual, and seminary, and reading scriptures, praying morning and night, listening to good music, and always having a positive and outgoing attitude.

Braun B., 16, Utah

To feel closer to God, I go to seminary and try to read the Book of Mormon every night. At school, when I have problems, I pray in faith and love, and I know the Spirit of God will always be with me. Try reading the scriptures and praying for guidance. You will feel the comfort and love of God.

Wichada W., 16, Bangkok, Thailand

What makes me feel the Spirit is singing hymns. Also, when I'm alone or in a quiet place such as in the car, I think about gospel topics or what I learned in church on Sunday. Missionary experiences with my friends or family always bring the Spirit to me also. I recommend taking a few minutes just to think about spiritual things.

Tia L., 14, Colorado

Instead of blasting the radio in your ears or turning on the TV, sing a hymn, memorize scriptures, or just reflect on your day. Keep good friends close to you who'll invite the Spirit instead of drive Him out. Keep a picture of the Savior with you, in a place you will see it, like in a purse, locker, or in your bedroom. And if possible, attend seminary regularly.

Kathryn B., 17, Utah



Starting my day with a prayer, scripture study, and a spiritual seminary lesson changes my outlook on life. I work harder, feel happier, and act kinder when I take the time to do these things as I start my day.

Jesse M., 15, South Carolina



T*he ordinances of baptism and the sacrament are bound together inseparably. Through baptism we receive a remission of our sins. Through the sacrament we 'retain a remission' of sins (see Mosiah 4:11-12). . . . In both instances, based upon our obedience to the ordinances, God extends the promise, or covenant, that we would have His Spirit to be with us. Understanding the nature of the covenant and living in accordance with its requirements give life and meaning to the ordinance itself."*

Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Seventy, "Ordinances and Covenants," *Ensign*, Aug. 2001, 20.

The best way I've learned to keep the Spirit with me throughout the week is to read my scriptures. I ask specific questions and then look in the scriptures for answers. Daily prayer, going to seminary, writing in my journal, reading my patriarchal blessing, and trying to let virtue garnish my thoughts unceasingly (see D&C 121:45) are also great ways to keep the Spirit with me the whole week.

Chelsea Cole, 15, Oklahoma



Try praying at least three times a day during the week. Stay away from anything unholy, and try to think about good, worthy things throughout the day. Keep your mind focused on your schoolwork during and after school. Set goals to read the scriptures for a certain amount of time each day. Doing these things should keep you closer to the Spirit.

Ashley S., 13, New York

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

NEXT QUESTION

"Some of my friends are dropping out of high school to get jobs. I don't really like school either, but I know education is important. What should I do?"

Send your answer by February 15, 2008 to:
New Era, Q&A, 2/08
50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA
Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter.

FULL NAME _____

BIRTH DATE _____

WARD (or branch) _____

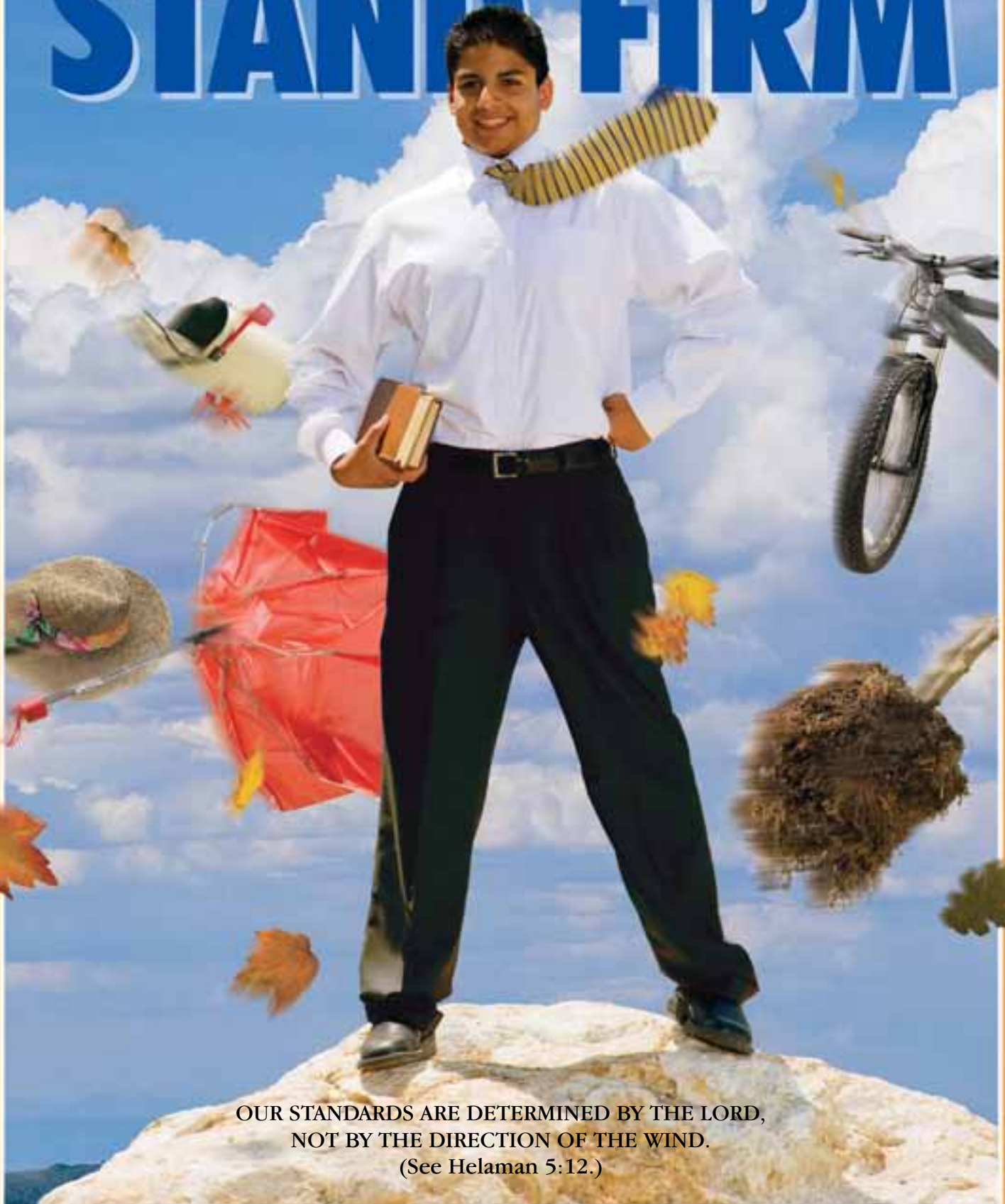
STAKE (or district) _____

I grant permission to print response and photo.


SIGNATURE _____

PARENT'S SIGNATURE (if you are under 18) _____

STAND FIRM



OUR STANDARDS ARE DETERMINED BY THE LORD,
NOT BY THE DIRECTION OF THE WIND.
(See Helaman 5:12.)



SEMINARY MAKES YOU A MORNING PERSON

BY JANET THOMAS
Church Magazines



Seminary makes me a morning person.” At least that’s what Patrick Hildoer of the Acworth Ward in Atlanta, Georgia, says. And for him, it’s just one of the real pluses about regularly attending early-morning seminary. “There is something about seminary that energizes me.”

He’s not the only one in his class who feels that way. Kittye Bowen says, “If you start the day off uplifted, it’s going to be hard to bring you back down the rest of the day at school.”

Amy Caldwell of the Mars Hill Ward really noticed a difference when she had to give up seminary for several weeks. “I had a basketball practice every morning. I missed four days of seminary each week. It was horrible. When I went to seminary, I could feel the Spirit so much more throughout the day.”

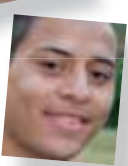
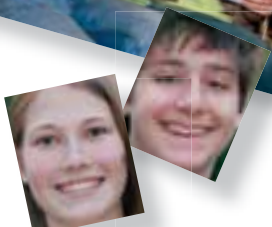
“I had a friend tell me once,” said Kerilyn Graham of the Acworth Ward, “‘Oh, that’s why you get such good grades. You start your day with the Lord.’ That’s true. We start our day with the right attitude and the right perspective.”

Being Prepared for Any Question

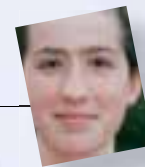
Getting a good start to the day is just one reason to go to seminary. Most of the students in the Cartersville Georgia Stake seminary classes talk about what a boost it gives to their testimonies.

Brian Collier of Mars Hill Ward said, “When I have missionary experiences at school, I can always remember what I learned in seminary and the good lessons I’ve been taught. It makes talking to people about the Church a little easier.”

Brian goes on, “My favorite lesson was when we got a chance to bear our testimonies of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The whole year, my testimony has become stronger. I just felt a peace that I had knowledge of the truthfulness of the gospel. I don’t remember



S^{tu} Atlanta start the day off right with seminary. (Far left, left to right) Heidi Hetzer, Curtis Clinch, Rachel Chase, Stephen Chase. (Right, top to bottom) Four-year seminary graduates of the Acworth Georgia Stake. Searching the magazine for an answer; participating in a New Era bowl; relaxing after class.



everything that I said, but I do know that I know.”

For Tyler Weeks, also of the Mars Hill Ward, learning of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon made for a memorable seminary year. “I’d read the Book of Mormon before, but reading it again, knowing how it is from God, gave me a new perspective.”

All Four Years

Each year seminary provides the chance to study a new set of scriptures. And each year it gives students a chance to build on their previous knowledge. Memorizing scripture mastery verses each year gives them a pool of great scriptures to remember and apply to situations that come up in their lives. The goal to attend all four years is a worthy one.

When Rachel Chase started seminary, she had her older sister, Jessica, to take her and get her up on time. Rachel tried persuading her sister to be a little late and get five minutes’ more sleep. “But she told me,” said Rachel, “that it’s so important to be there on time, to be there for the whole thing. When she

graduated, I had my third year by myself until my little brother was old enough to go. I found out you need every year to build up your testimony.”

Shelby Hailstone has a little sister who will be starting seminary soon. “She says she’s glad she doesn’t have to go to seminary because it’s so early. I call her every morning after class and talk to her about the lesson. She thinks it’s the neatest thing. Although she’s not looking forward to waking up, but she loves the lessons. That’s what she can’t wait for—the Spirit of the Lord she knows she is going to feel every day.”

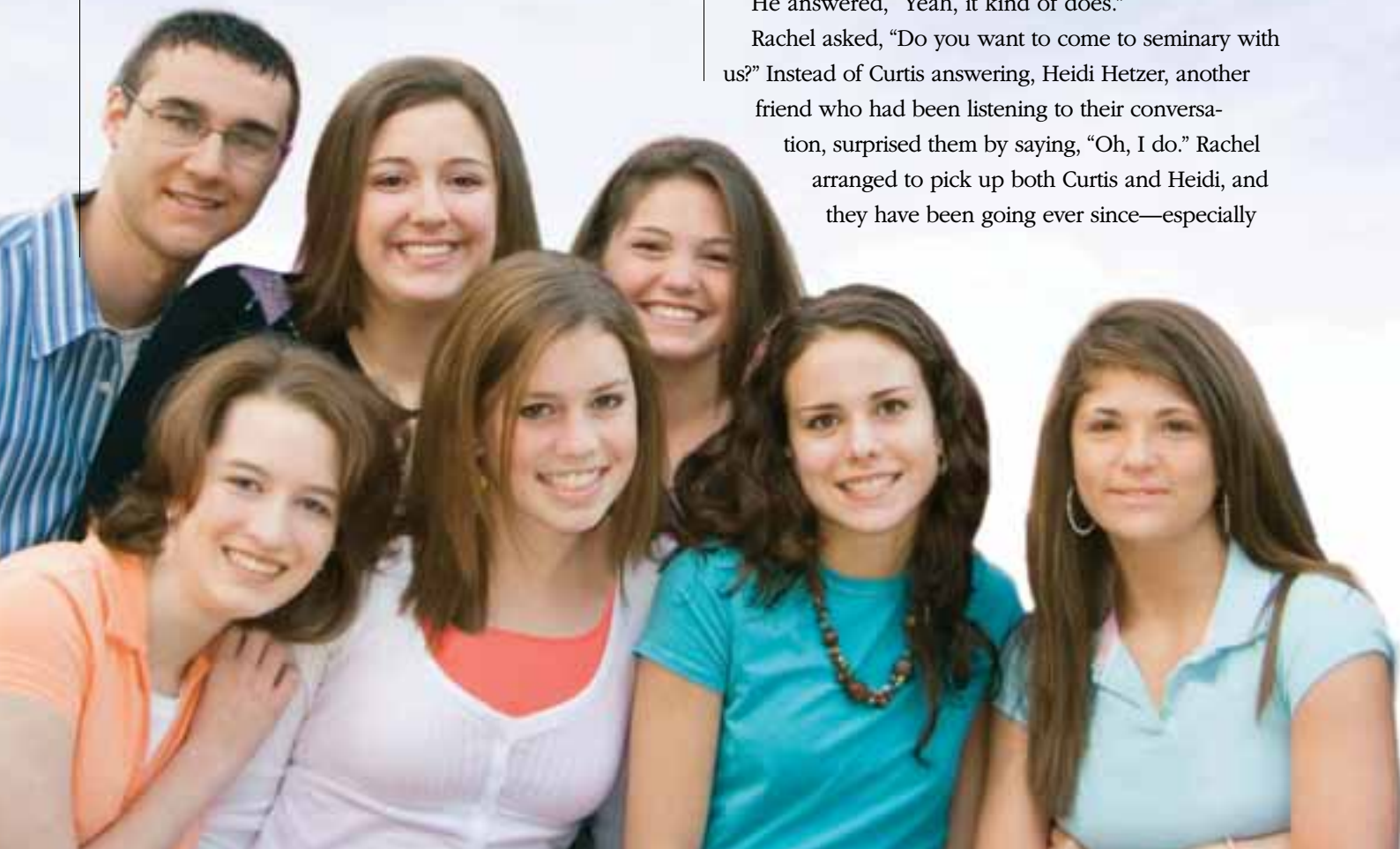
Inviting Friends to Seminary

One day on the school bus, Rachel Chase and Lauren Smith, both in the Acworth Ward seminary, were talking about what a good seminary lesson they had that day. Curtis Clinch repeated something his pastor had told him about the Latter-day Saints being one of the fastest growing religions.

Rachel agreed and said, “It kind of makes you think, doesn’t it, Curtis?”

He answered, “Yeah, it kind of does.”

Rachel asked, “Do you want to come to seminary with us?” Instead of Curtis answering, Heidi Hetzer, another friend who had been listening to their conversation, surprised them by saying, “Oh, I do.” Rachel arranged to pick up both Curtis and Heidi, and they have been going ever since—especially





after their baptisms a couple of months later.

Heidi said, “I’ve known Rachel and her brother, Stephen, since they moved to Georgia. I’ve seen how close their family is. And I’ve known other members. They all seem happier than the rest of us. I’ve been interested in the Church for a while, but I didn’t have the opportunity to learn more. So when Rachel was talking to Curtis and invited him to seminary, I just said I wanted to come. After that first day in seminary, I went to school with a newfound happiness. Since then, it’s been lasting.”

In fact, on her baptism day, Rachel’s dad noticed her happy attitude. And her friends asked if she was wearing different makeup or something because she had a glow about her.

Heidi said, “Rachel invited me over to talk to the missionaries, and I went to a fireside that same night. I dove right into the Church.”

Curtis had a similar experience, although he thought Rachel was kidding when she invited him to seminary. “She asked me again and came and picked me up. I really liked it. The lessons are powerful and very detailed. Everyone is really welcoming. I didn’t mind waking up early.”

Curtis’s mother didn’t think he would keep it up. When he continued to get up by himself, she came and checked out seminary. “She said it was good and supported me.”

Other class members have invited friends. Mostly they want to see what their friends do every morning so early instead of getting an extra hour of sleep. The seminary students report that their friends really enjoy visiting class.

Memorable Lessons

Most seminary students have a favorite lesson that somehow connected with them and affected the decisions they are making in their lives.

Kelly Cadogan remembers how impressed she was by the great sacrifices made by the pioneers. Stephen Chase remembers the folk dancers from BYU–Idaho coming to their class and reading scriptures about happiness. Tyler Graham remembers the lesson on the Word of Wisdom. Chris Erni can remember the lesson on Joseph Smith and the Spirit that testified of the Prophet. Riley McRae remembers the lesson about showing compassion for others and going out of your way to be kind.

Frank Wheat’s favorite lesson was more personal. He said, “Our teacher asked about our full names and what each of our names came from and what they stood for. I was named after both my grandfathers. Even though one died before I was born and the other died shortly after my birth, it made me think about how I live my life. Maybe they are looking down on me and asking, ‘What are you doing with my name?’ I’m trying to live a good life because of that.”

So why become a morning person? For teens in Georgia, seminary is worth getting up for each morning, and the payoff for their time and energy is a big one—a testimony of their own. As Kitty Bowen said, “After four years of waking up every morning and studying the scriptures and growing to know that the gospel is true for yourself, it’s like that one final leap of developing your own testimony before you have to go off to college. It’s like a prep class for the real world.” **NE**

For more on seminary, go to www.ldsces.org/seminary.

A *fe d*
from the
Acworth
Ward early-morning
seminary class
(far left).

(Right, top) Sister
Cadogan teaching
one of the Mars Hill
Ward seminary
classes.

JESUS CHRIST, THE REDEEMER

Joseph Smith was a witness of the Savior and understood His role in the plan of salvation.

Joseph Smith knew the Savior Jesus Christ and His gospel, and he bore firm and valiant testimony of them. In the scriptures we read of his First Vision and the revelations he received from the Lord. After one of the Savior's appearances, Joseph declared: "And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!" (D&C 76:22). Here are some of the things Joseph Smith taught about the Savior Jesus Christ.

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR RELIGION

"The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it."

THE RESURRECTION

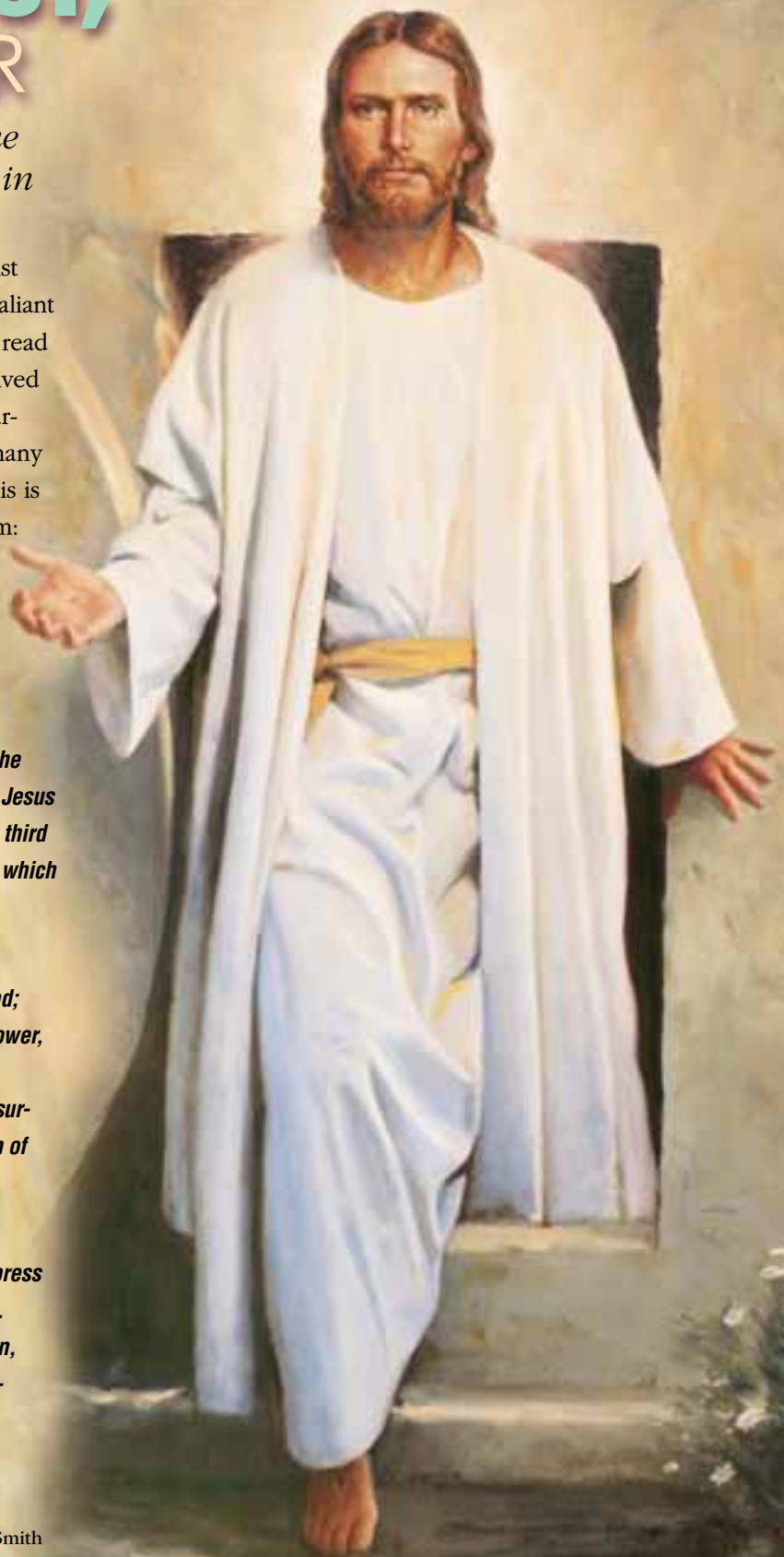
"Christ Himself has assuredly risen from the dead; and if He has risen from the dead, He will, by His power, bring all men to stand before Him."

"All your losses will be made up to you in the resurrection, provided you continue faithful. By the vision of the Almighty I have seen it."

THE ATONEMENT

"Christ, who is the image of man, is also the express image of his Father's person [see Hebrews 1:3]. . . . Through the atonement of Christ and the resurrection, and obedience to the gospel, we shall again be conformed to the image of his Son, Jesus Christ [see Romans 8:29]; then we shall have attained to the image, glory, and character of God."

From Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 48, 51, 52.



The BOOK IN MANY LANGUAGES

BY DUANE E. HIATT

For Clara Leticia Cruz Cano of Puerto Rico, her love of the Book of Mormon started when she was about four. She noticed that her older brother got to take a turn reading in their family's nightly scripture study, and she wanted a turn also. She asked her parents to help her, and soon she was part of the reading circle.

At age 12, Clara took on a new challenge. Instead of reading in her native Spanish, she read the Book of Mormon in English. At age 14, she read it in French; at age 15, in Portuguese; and at 16, in Italian.

In August 2005, when President Gordon B. Hinckley asked Latter-day Saints to read or reread the Book of Mormon, Clara was already into it in German.

"This is harder, but I will get through it," she said.

Her reading in various languages has expanded her vocabulary.

"When I come to a word I don't know, I look

it up. Soon I get tired of looking it up, so I memorize it," she explains. Her study of languages has also helped in her schoolwork. Last year, at 17, Clara became the top public school graduate on her island.

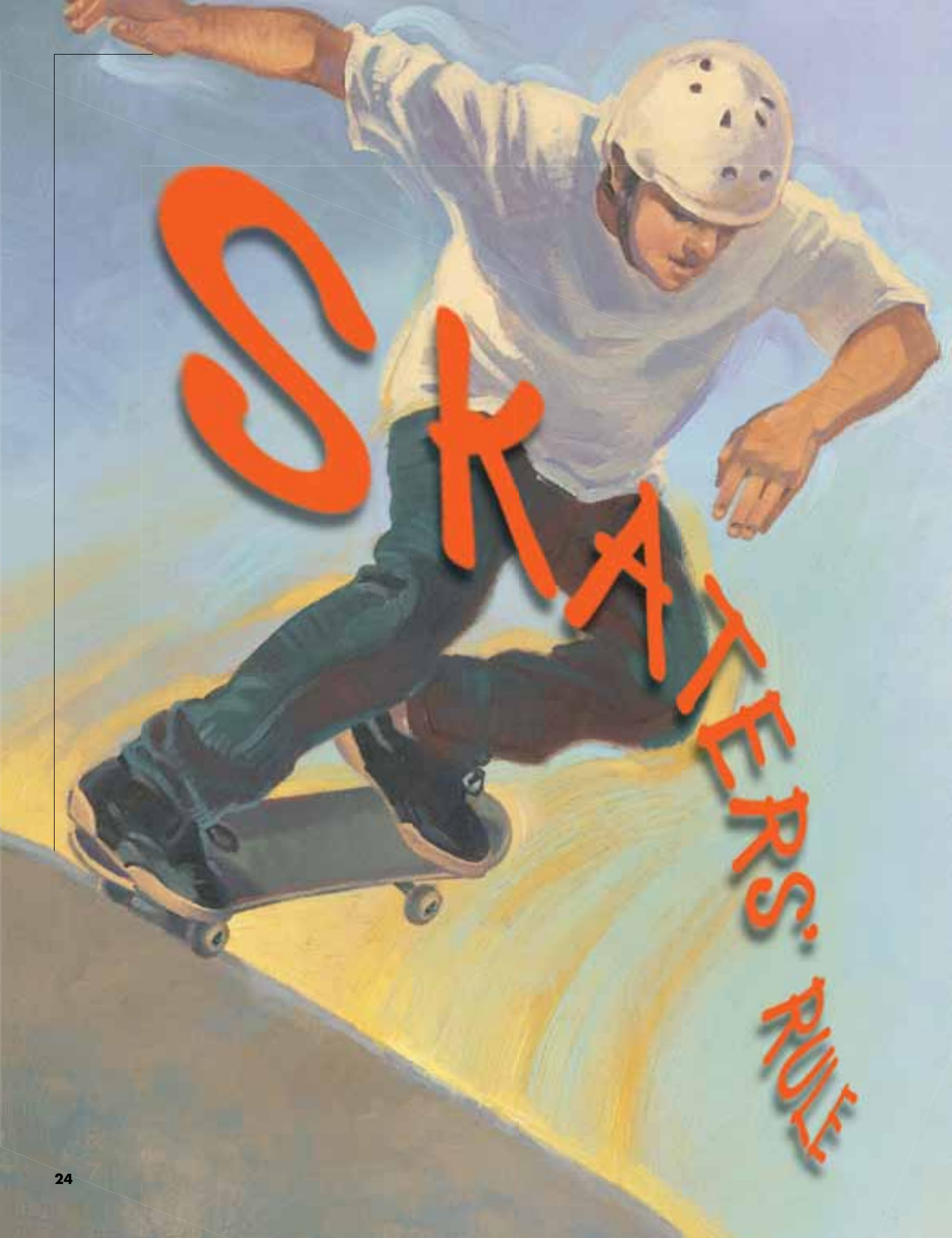
Clara has uncovered some gems in her multilingual study. She even found that her middle name, Leticia, means "gladness" in the Italian translation (see 2 Nephi 1:21; 8:3).

Like some others, Clara has a collection of copies of the Book of Mormon in several languages. But, she says, "I decided I wouldn't have any copies of the Book of Mormon I can't read."

That means her next project is already on her bookshelf. Her bishop, Hector Alvarez, saw her perusing a copy of the Book of Mormon in his home and gave it to her. She now has the self-assigned opportunity to learn not only another language but also a new alphabet. The book is in Russian. **NE**



PHOTOGRAPH BY DUANE E. HIATT



SS

SKATE

THE R'S RULE

We were supposed to yell “free” before entering the half-pipe, but we were too cool.

BY VINCE VAUGHN

It was a hot, humid summer day, and I was hanging out with my friends at the local skate park, riding on the half-pipe. This ramp was huge—11 feet tall, with the top 2 feet completely vertical. We’d ride back and forth between the walls, trying out tricks as we soared over the top of each side.

While we always had a lot of fun skateboarding, we knew it could be a dangerous sport and we’d have to be careful to avoid injury. The skate park enforced rules to ensure the skateboarders’ safety. We knew about the park rules, which were posted on a sign at the front gate, but we generally ignored them.

One of the rules was that only one skater was allowed on the ramp at a time. This rule was easy to obey, because no one wanted to collide with another skater while on the half-pipe. It was just common sense. Another rule, however, seemed so ridiculous that my friends and I refused to follow it. This rule stated that skaters must yell “free” before dropping onto the ramp. No way were we going to do that!

Of course, the idea behind this second rule was to get others off the ramp and out of the skater’s way. The rule existed to help us obey the first rule. Together, both of these rules nearly guaranteed skaters would never collide. But those of us who were advanced skaters considered yelling “free” to be beneath us. So we ignored the rule and created our own method of clearing the ramp.

Skaters would line up on either wall and wait for whoever was on the ramp to finish. Then, whoever was next would push his board into the “drop-in” position, glance around to make sure he was the only one going, and drop in. This wasn’t as foolproof as yelling “free,” but it was much more cool.

On this particular day, about 20 of us were taking turns on the half-pipe. Because there were so many of us on the ramp, there was very little time between the skaters who were finishing their rides and the skaters who were dropping in. Once a skater was done, three or four others would be ready to drop in. The skaters jockeyed for position, each one wanting to be next.

In spite of the crowd on the half-pipe, everything went smoothly for about an hour. Then tragedy struck.

Those of us still on top of the ramp watched in horror as two skaters, Bill and Donnie, dropped





into the half-pipe at exactly the same time from opposite walls. Neither of them had looked to ensure the ramp was empty.

Descending an 11-foot skateboard ramp can generate a lot of speed, especially if the skater knows what he's doing. Both of these skaters were sponsored by a national skateboarding company and were very talented in their sport. They both had bright futures ahead of them as professional skateboarders.

But those futures came to a sickening halt as they collided at the bottom of the ramp.

Bill, who weighed about 200 pounds, came out of the crash with only a few bruises. But Donnie was very short and thin and weighed only about 125 pounds. He lay unconscious on the ramp for several minutes, and we could tell he had been hurt quite badly. The paramedics arrived quickly, and Donnie was whisked away to the emergency room.

We found out the next day that Donnie's leg was shattered in multiple places, and it would take several surgeries and months of physical therapy before he could walk again. His skateboarding career was over.

As the paramedics and park staff helped Donnie, they asked us, "Did either of them yell 'Free?'" Only then did we realize how foolish we had been to ignore that simple rule. We thought it was ridiculous and beneath us, but if we had obeyed this rule, it would almost certainly have saved two boys from a terrible accident.

I have thought a lot about that day and the sign we ignored. It contained principles and guidelines that would both protect us and help us enjoy our skateboarding experience. But we were more concerned with looking cool than following the rules, and we put our safety at risk.

As youth, we have been given principles similar to the sign at the skate park in the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet. Following the guidelines in this book will keep us out of dangerous situations and bring joy and fulfillment to our lives. Disobeying the counsel in *For the Strength of Youth* can bring both physical and spiritual consequences that are much more serious than a skateboarding career cut short.

I have watched, over the years, as my friends from the skate park chose to heed or ignore the rules in *For the Strength of Youth*. Those who obeyed the rules—even the rules they thought were silly or beneath them—have gone on to lead happy lives. I can tell the Lord has blessed them for their obedience.

Unfortunately, some of those friends thought the guidelines in *For the Strength of Youth* simply didn't apply to them. By choosing to ignore these guidelines, they have stepped away from the blessings of the Lord and placed themselves in unsafe situations. For some, the consequences have ranged from powerful addictions to damaged careers to broken marriages.

Even those without obvious consequences live without the constant companionship of the Holy

Ghost

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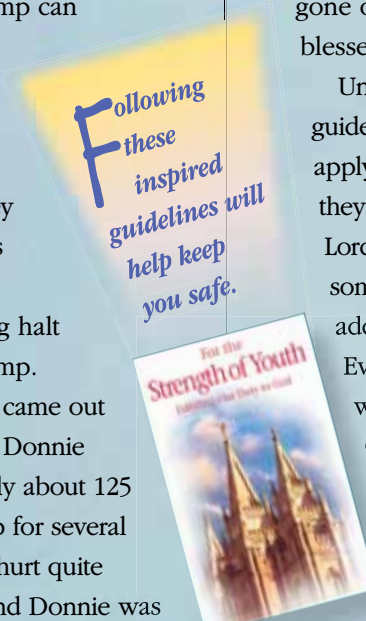
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In

with us to

and most importantly, our joy. **NE**

To review Church standards online, read *For the Strength of Youth* at www.lds.org (click on Gospel Library>Support Materials>Youth Support Materials).



HEALTH AND STRENGTH

You already know that inactivity and a bad diet can leave your physical body weak, more prone to illness, and with less capacity for work and enjoyment. The same is true for your spirit. The difference is, while God will give you a perfected, glorious body in the Resurrection, the spirit that inhabits that body will be whatever *you* have made it to be (see Alma 34:34). So here are some suggestions for developing spiritual health and strength:

Diet

- Acquire a taste for spiritual food. Keep consuming the scriptures, general conference addresses, lessons in Church and seminary, and other spiritual foods, and they will begin to be delicious to you (see Alma 32:28).

- Feast instead of nibble. With spiritual food, you can eat a lot and become more fit, not fat.

- Limit junk food. Just as too many snacks can spoil your appetite for a nourishing dinner, too much time spent on video games, the Internet, TV, and so on, can leave you with little or no time for spiritual feasting.

- Don't eat rotten food. Anything that offends the Holy Spirit is toxic for your own spirit. Pornography, crude or violent entertainment, and unwholesome music are just plain poison.

- It's amazing how much spiritual nourishment there is in one small piece of bread and one sip of water when you take the sacrament thoughtfully and prayerfully in a spirit of repentance.

Exercise

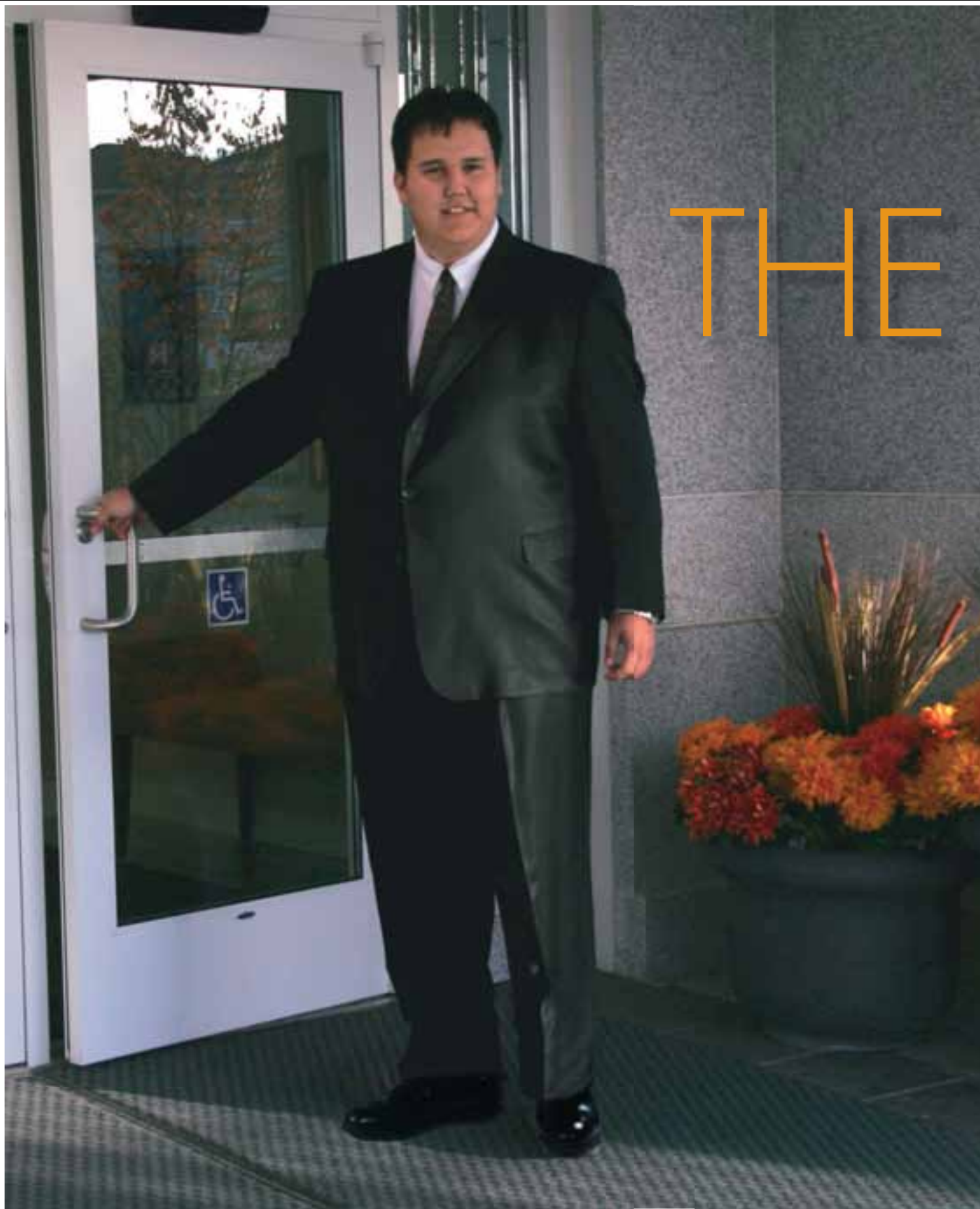
- Give service and show kindness. Lifting other people is great exercise.

- Do knee bends at least twice a day. Regular prayer is essential for spiritual fitness.

- Bear your testimony often. It's like a muscle that just keeps getting stronger with regular use. **NE**



ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT GREER



THE



GO-TO GUY

BY MELVIN LEAVITT
Church Magazines

*Whatever needs to be done,
Chad is willing to do it.*

Most people who stand six-foot-six and weigh over 300 pounds get some respect. Chad O'Watch is no exception. But in his case, there is no fear involved.

People in the Carry-the-Kettle First Nation (a native reservation) in Saskatchewan, Canada, and far beyond respect the 17-year-old Latter-day Saint because he is a genuinely good person. An honor student at the Nakoda Oyade Education Centre, where he serves as the student president, Chad has earned the school's citizenship award three years in a row. He is the school's go-to guy. He has been put in charge of the drink machine at sporting events because of his well-known honesty. If the school needs a representative at a conference, they send Chad. He attended the First Nations and Inuit National Science Camp as one of 5 students from Saskatchewan and only 50 or 60 from all of Canada.

"I love to go to school. I like to learn and be with my friends," Chad says. "I like


to help people. I can't bear to see someone in need and not be helping."

This helpfulness seems to be an inherited trait. Chad's father, who maintains and drives the school's busses, is known as a kind and generous man, always ready to share with those in need. Though a member of the Church, Brother O'Watch has not attended for many years. That's why it's so amazing that he did what he did one afternoon in April when Chad was 11.

Brother O'Watch and Chad were returning in an empty bus from the last run of the day. Instead of turning down his own lane as usual, Brother O'Watch made a surprise right turn into the parking lot of the Carry-The-Kettle Branch of the Regina Saskatchewan Stake. "The missionaries are waiting for you," he said.

Chad was not a member of the Church and had no wish to be one. He refused to get off the bus. His dad, uncharacteristically, insisted. "There are other kids here," he said. "You'll have fun, and it will be good for you."

So Chad obeyed, steaming and fuming. "I thought my dad was the worst guy alive," he recalls. He met the missionaries and



attended his first Primary meeting. He was astonished to find that he kind of liked it, and he went again the next week.

“After going a few times, I found that I just loved being there. There was a feeling of the Spirit. The missionaries lived next to the chapel, and before long I was there almost every day helping them and being taught.”

In November Chad was baptized and confirmed. “I had a warm, good feeling, like coming home to a place where I belonged.” He felt even more at home as he accepted callings and was eventually ordained a deacon. At the age of 13 he was called to serve as branch clerk and has fulfilled that assignment ever since. “From the first day, serving as a clerk was a joy. The Lord has called me specifically to do this, and it’s a privilege to do His work. When I started, balancing a checkbook was not one of the things I knew how to do. I had to learn that and lots of other things. But the Lord has blessed me with the ability to do my duty. Because of the challenge, I think I’ve grown in both mind and spirit.”

Whenever something needs doing, Chad steps forward. When no one in the branch knew how to lead the music, he taught himself and volunteered for the job. He has since led the singing in a tri-stake youth conference.

Serving Jesus Christ

Chad’s outward devotion stems from inward conviction: “I know that Jesus Christ is my Savior. I know that He died for me. I love Him, and I know that He loves me. Knowing that I can return to live with Him and Heavenly Father changes everything. It makes me want to bring people to Him. Everyone’s life would be so much better if they had Jesus Christ in it.”

For Chad, serving a mission is a no-brainer. “It says in my patriarchal blessing that there are people waiting specifically for me. I owe it to them to bring them the gospel. I love to serve the Lord, and I just can’t wait to put on the armor of God and go do that.”

Although Chad never preaches to his friends, he has been a missionary since the day of his baptism. Elder

and Sister Dudley, full-time missionaries serving on the reserve, have seen him in action. “He teaches the things he believes, but he does it in a fun way,” Sister Dudley says.

“Chad has had a tremendous influence on his non-member friends just by being himself,” Elder Dudley explains. He sets such a good example that people see the difference between his standards and the standards of the world. One of Chad’s best friends is coming to seminary this year and has attended youth conferences.”

Chad is an easygoing person and fun to be around, but his standards are firm. “If I know in my heart that a thing isn’t right to do, I don’t do it. It’s as simple as that. It’s just not going to happen. I guess I’m hardheaded that way.”

Do his peers have a problem with this? “They respect the fact that there are things I don’t do. If they do those things, they do them somewhere else.”

“There’s a zone around Chad where things like that stop,” Elder Dudley says.

He does put himself in places where right things will be happening. He faithfully attends every meeting, youth conference, service project, fireside, baptism—you name it. He helps his dad maintain the buses. He gives people rides in his car when they need transportation. He pitches in to help make and mend. He embraces every chance to use his priesthood in blessing the lives of others. “When I bless or pass or prepare the sacrament, I think about the Savior and all He has done for me. It is such an honor to serve Him.”

Remembering the Past

Chad is committed to extending the blessings of the gospel to his ancestors. He does research with his grandmother and has been baptized in the Regina Saskatchewan Temple for several hundred of his ancestors—70 of them in one memorable session alone. “I love the temple,” he says. “There’s a feeling you get there that’s just unreal.”

Another source of inspiration is the Book of Mormon.

“Reading the stories and applying them to my life have made me a much happier and better person.”

Loving Home

Practical as well as spiritual, Chad is determined to earn a college degree. But unlike some, he does not see it as a means of leaving behind the poverty and problems of the reserve. “I know deep down inside that my people need me. It’s my responsibility to help bring them to Christ. I really don’t know what my career path needs to be—a teacher might be one possibility—but I’m not looking to escape this place.”

Besides, the reserve can be beautiful. It lies amid low wooded hills on the vast Saskatchewan prairie. It’s a quiet, peaceful landscape that Chad loves. “When I was visiting Edmonton, I felt out of place. It was so noisy and busy. Here it’s quiet and laid-back. It’s just home.”

There are other attractions too. Chad likes to ski, skate, and snowmobile in the winter. He and his dad hunt deer in the fall and ducks and geese in the spring. They always share their game with the elderly.

Though perfectly willing to share his possessions, Chad’s dad is not so comfortable sharing his feelings. He has never explained why he chose to drop his son at the chapel that life-changing day in April. But a fair guess might be that the bus driver was driven by love. If so, the feeling is mutual. Chad has set a firm goal of being sealed to his family in the temple someday. He seeks an eternal bond with the man who made the crucial right turn at just the right time. How could any son show greater respect? **NE**



THE LEAST OF THE LEADERS?

A new deacon taught me—his bishop—what the Savior meant when He said, “For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great” (Luke 9:48).

BY CARLOS WILMER MENDOZA VÁSQUEZ

Our ward needed a new deacons quorum president. My counselors and I knelt in our bishopric meeting, as we always do, to seek the Lord’s approval on this and other callings.

Feeling a confirmation of the Spirit, I set up an interview with Víctor Leonardo Jiménez Gonzáles, a young man who had recently turned 12 and was already serving as the deacons quorum secretary.

During the interview, I asked Víctor about his current calling and how he was feeling.

“I’m worried, Bishop,” he answered. “I’m really concerned.”

“Why are you concerned?”

“Well, I want all the deacons to be at church. So today on my way over here, I went to Nicholas and Anthony’s house and woke them up, and then I went over to Jimmy and Luis’s to get them to come. I really get worried, Bishop,” Víctor said.

I was amazed by what he was saying and that a 12-year-old deacons quorum secretary could be so concerned about the other members of his quorum.

“I’m here to serve,” he went on, “and I want to do it right, but I’m one of the lowest leaders.”

“What do you mean ‘one of the lowest leaders?’” I asked.

“Because I’m the secretary. I’m not the president or a counselor. I’m a secretary, and that makes me one of the lowest leaders. But the deacons should be here and they’re not, so I have to go get them because this is where they’re supposed to be. I don’t know why they don’t come. But I have to go get them, Bishop!”

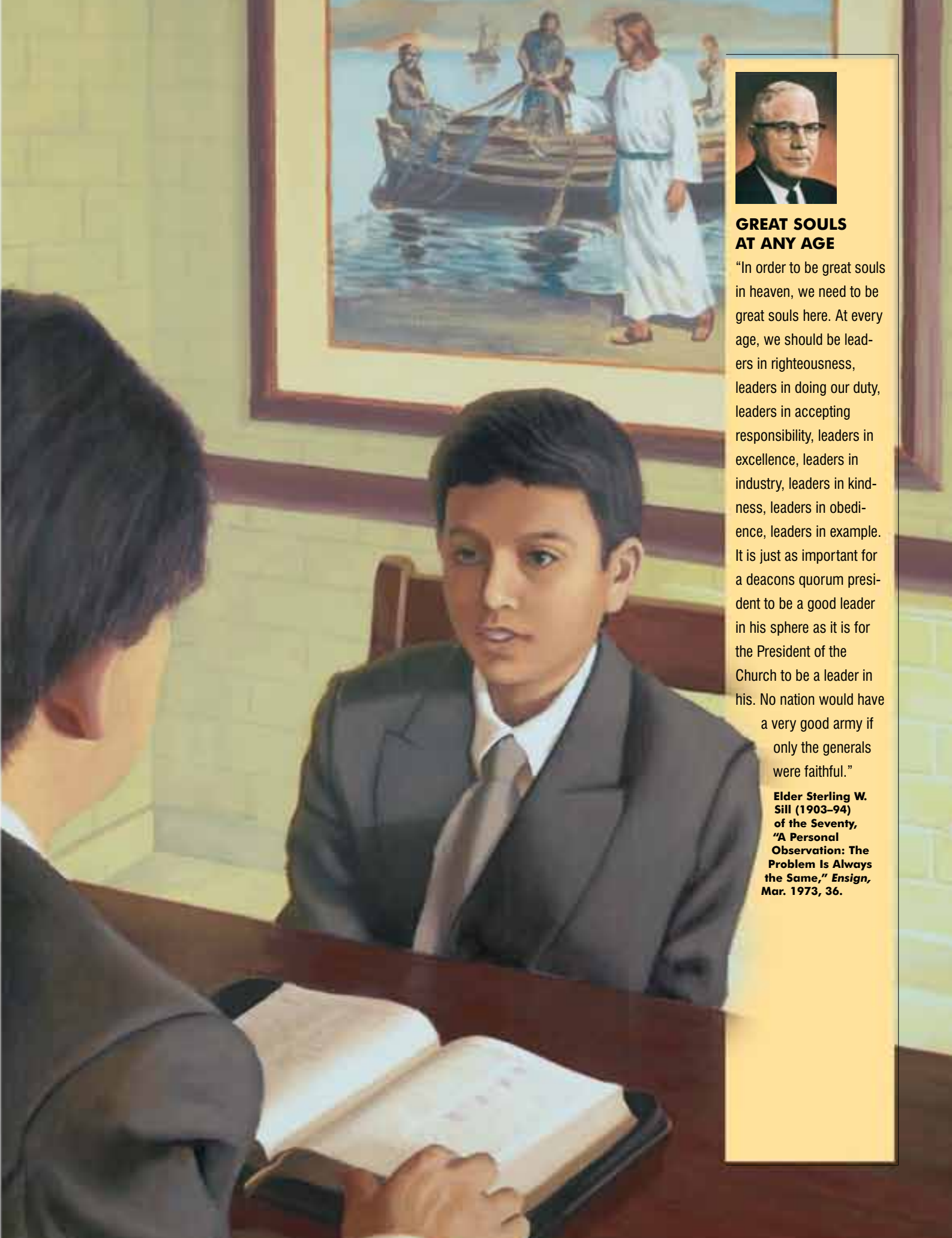
My tears could no longer be restrained, and they spilled from my eyes. Choked with emotion, I said, “You have made me remember why I was called as the bishop. It’s to be concerned about others, to visit and serve them as King Benjamin did. We need to be in the service of others, and then we will be in the service of God. You are not the lowest leader. Everyone who serves plays a role important to our Heavenly Father and His Church.”

To this, he said, “That’s what I learned from my dad. And now when I see you crying, I remember this one time when he talked to me—he was crying and he told me, ‘When you have a responsibility, you have to do it right.’”

The tears refreshed my soul, and the young man’s words refreshed my memory. I remembered the great worth of our Heavenly Father’s children when I saw the worth this young man placed on each of the members of his quorum.

I extended a calling as president of the deacons quorum to Víctor. In response he said, “Now I’m *really* going to work hard. I’m not going to disappoint you, Bishop.”

Even now, some time later, the tears return as I remember this unforgettable interview. I know the divine potential this young man has. He has the future firmly in sight, and his vision of what is important is clear. **NE**



GREAT SOULS AT ANY AGE

“In order to be great souls in heaven, we need to be great souls here. At every age, we should be leaders in righteousness, leaders in doing our duty, leaders in accepting responsibility, leaders in excellence, leaders in industry, leaders in kindness, leaders in obedience, leaders in example. It is just as important for a deacons quorum president to be a good leader in his sphere as it is for the President of the Church to be a leader in his. No nation would have a very good army if only the generals were faithful.”

Elder Sterling W. Sill (1903–94) of the Seventy, “A Personal Observation: The Problem Is Always the Same,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1973, 36.

DON'T CHANCE IT

BY RYAN JENKINS

Like most bad habits, gambling can seem harmless at first, but there are no real winners.

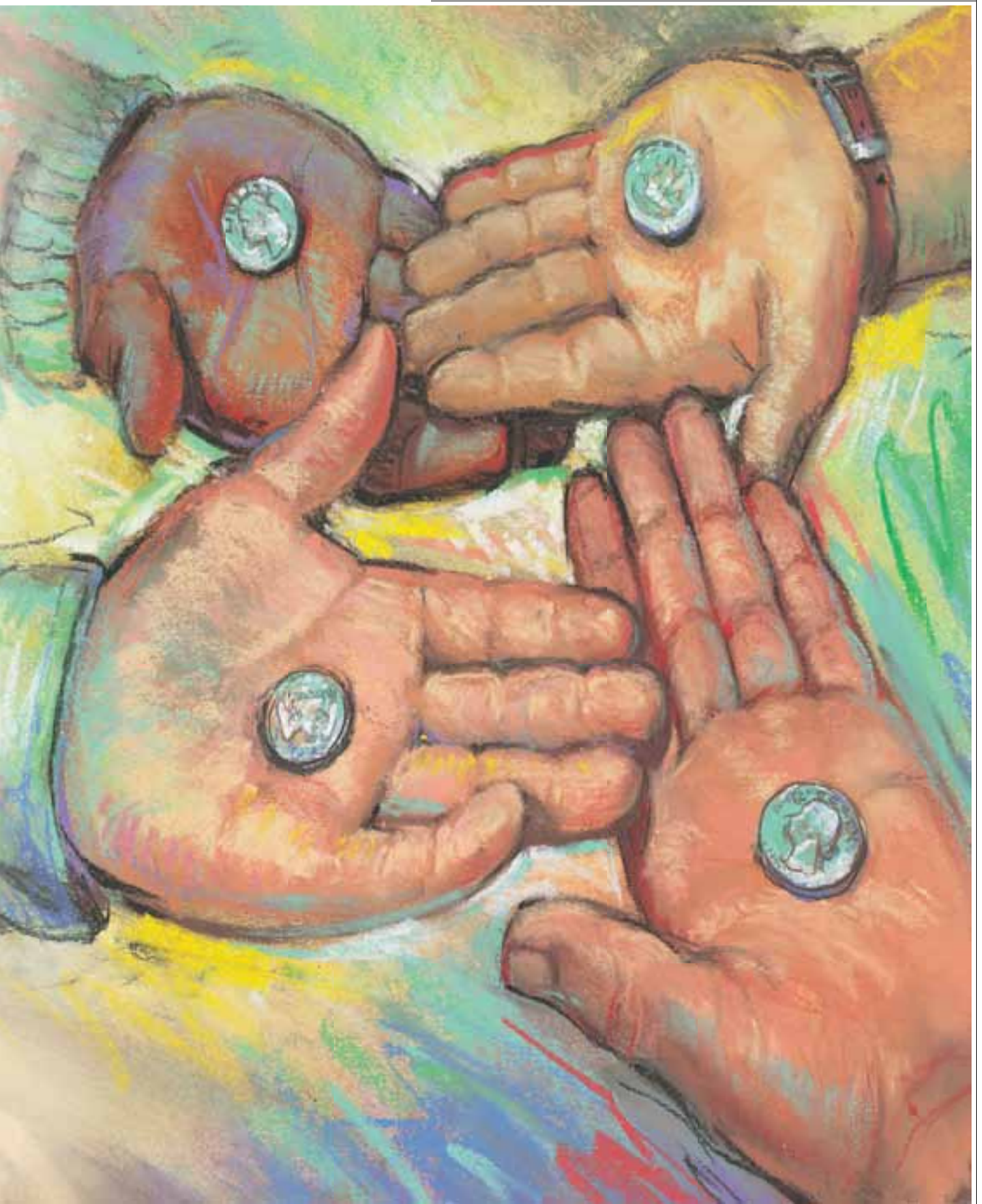
How bad could pitching quarters be? I remember people who lost several days' lunch money in a matter of a minute. Five or six bad tosses and you were one broke eighth grader.

Growing up in Las Vegas, Nevada, exposed me to the alluring gimmicks of gambling. It infiltrated the halls of our junior high and high school in various forms that many thought were harmless. Some youth created their own games of chance, while many imitated the casino games. Like most habits, gambling invites you to experiment in small doses before indulging in alarming measure.

In junior high school, pitching quarters was the game that dominated the perimeter of the schoolyard, always out of view of adults. However, our fetish with this game eventually found its way into the classroom. As soon as the teacher turned his or her back, our quarters would fly toward the wall, and the person with the quarter closest to the wall won, taking everyone else's quarter. This game became very detrimental not only to our studies but also to our relationships. Friends were pitted against friends, and fights occasionally broke out. I remember people who lost several days' lunch money in a matter of a minute. Five or six bad tosses and you were one broke eighth grader.

In high school, quarters became merely small change. Our attention was drawn to larger sums of money with bigger wagers, usually around big-ticket sporting events. Every week there seemed to be a big game, and betting circles were frequently established. Obviously, the more people there were contributing to a pot, the greater a winner's takings would be. I remember one student who kept a notebook with the particular bets, the odds, and the individuals involved. Between and sometimes during classes he would approach you, asking if you would like to bet.

Unfortunately, the gambling scene pervaded other high school activities and went beyond school boundaries. While traveling with my baseball team, both on the bus and in the hotel rooms, card games took over much of our spare time. I recall watching a card game where two teammates had \$120 on the line, with the luck of a particular card deciding the fate of the game. Someone won that day, but I don't remember who. What I do remember is the chaos, the screaming and vulgar language, the laughing at someone else's expense. Most





“One of our young men recently said, ‘Pay five bucks to see a movie; pay five bucks to play poker—it is the same idea.’

“It is not the same idea. In one case you get something for which you pay; in the other case, only one picks up the winnings and the others are left empty-handed. . . .

“ . . . The Church has been and is now opposed to [gambling]. If you have never been involved in poker games or other forms of gambling, don’t start. If you are involved, then quit now while you can do so.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Gambling,”
Ensign, May 2005,
59–60, 61.

importantly, I remember feeling void of the Spirit. It’s a dirty, ugly feeling.

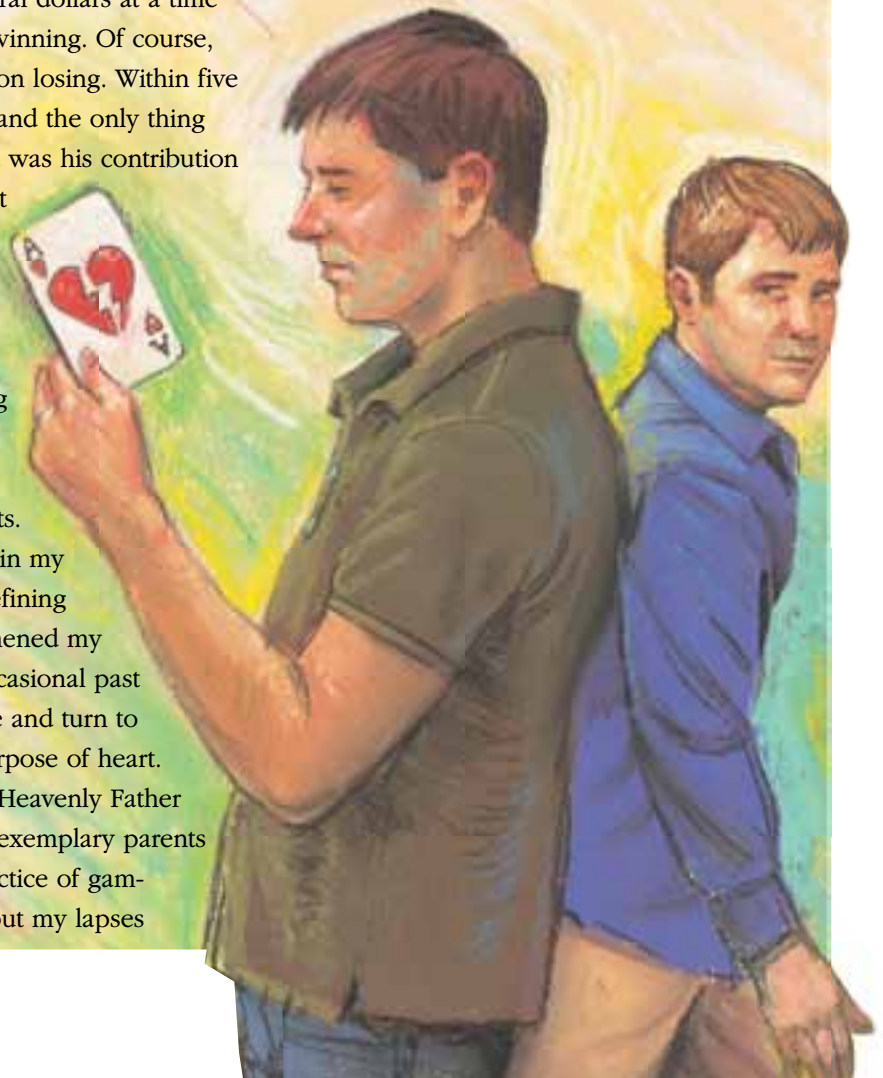
Near my home was a hotel we often went to that had an arcade, a bowling alley, and a good restaurant. I spent many fun times bowling with my brothers and our friends. To get to the bowling alley, we had to go through the hotel’s casino. There is a distinct image in my mind to this day of the smell of cigarette and cigar smoke and the dropping of coins into the metal basins from the slot machines. The image of countless people sitting in the same place for hours playing cards or pulling levers on slot machines seems to be a constant reminder to me of the shallow habit of gambling.

One day a friend of mine, while leaving the bowling alley, tried his luck at a game of chance they called “Megabucks.” The winnings were well over a million dollars. You had to play several dollars at a time to have a chance at winning. Of course, he lost, and he kept on losing. Within five minutes he lost \$60, and the only thing he had to show for it was his contribution to the grand total that would eventually go to someone else. My friend lost \$60, yet I gained a greater distaste for the gambling habit and a greater resolve to keep the Lord’s commandments. Like other occasions in my life, this became a defining moment that strengthened my resolve to put my occasional past blemishes behind me and turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart.

Through a loving Heavenly Father and the guidance of exemplary parents who avoided the practice of gambling, I was able to put my lapses

with games of chance behind me. Far too many friends and acquaintances didn’t stop at pitching quarters or playing cards. Gambling and the other bad habits it leads to are overtaking far too many of Heavenly Father’s children. With an unresolved determination to avoid it, you can become a victim very quickly. Gratefully, two years before I became “legal” in the eyes of the state of Nevada, I was “about my Father’s business” preaching the gospel in the Washington D.C. South Mission.

You may need courageous fortitude as the world thrusts the acquisition of riches and the madness of materialism upon you before you’ve even graduated from school. Understanding true doctrine and living by the principles taught in the scriptures and by living prophets will strengthen you. With this strength, you can refuse and conquer any behavior offensive to the Spirit. **NE**



THE EXTRA SMILE



RYAN STOKER

"It's a common condition among teenagers. You have acknee."



RANDY GLASBERGEN

"Why did I ever teach you to point?"



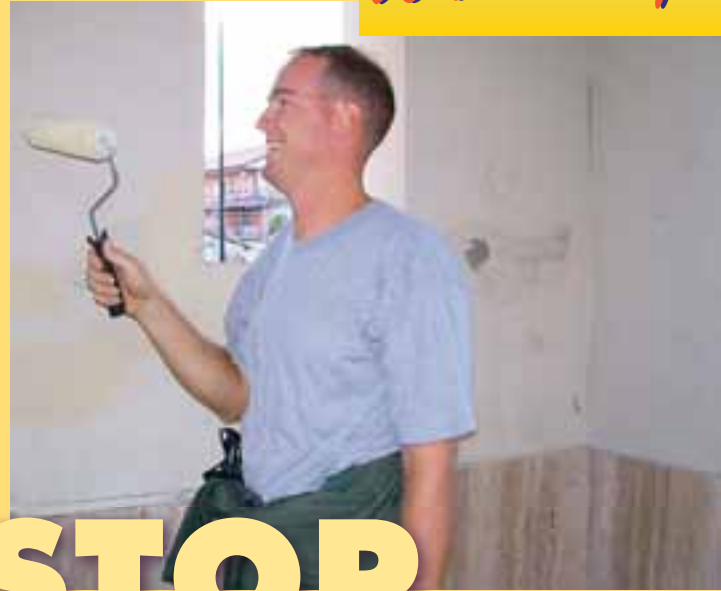
RYAN STOKER



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

"Well of course everyone was looking at you when you sing. . . You're the ward music director."

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CAMRON STEWART AND JAMES DECKER



BUS STOP

Teachers Camron Stewart (right) and James Decker of the Sigonella Branch painted the bus stop at the Navy Air Station Sigonella in Sicily, Italy. With a little help from

their youth leaders and a few of the boys' friends who stopped by to help out, the bus stop looked great after the service project.

The young men had fun

painting. Camron summed it up in these words: "It made me feel good, like I was making a difference in my community."

Branch president Brian

Stewart says this project, along with other activities the youth have recently participated in, has opened many doors for the young men to share their beliefs with friends and teachers at school.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE TITUSVILLE WARD



Fill Your Life with Service

The big glass jar had the words "Fill Your Life with Service" on the side. Each week the young women and their leaders from the Titusville Ward in Florida anonymously wrote down the acts of service they had given during the week. The slips of paper were then rolled, taped,

and placed in the jar. The young women used yellow paper, and the leaders used green. Plus, on one Mutual night for each of the six months of the project the young women held a service activity.

The first month focused on service to family, week

two on friends, and then the priesthood, neighbors, community, and the world. The slips of paper revealed all kinds of service: "I helped my brother with his homework," "I baked my friend a cake," "I volunteered at the animal shelter," "I sent some mail to missionaries from our ward."

Jessica Crook, a Beehive, said, "I think the activities helped all of us understand more about helping and serving others." In the end there were more yellow papers than green, so the young women were rewarded with a dinner prepared and served by their leaders.

THE
 ATONEMENT
 WAS AN
 INTIMATE,
 PERSONAL
 EXPERIENCE
 IN WHICH
 JESUS CAME
 TO KNOW
 HOW TO
 HELP EACH
 OF US.

Elder Merrill J. Bateman
 of the Seventy,
 "A Pattern for All,"
Ensign, Nov. 2005, 76.

DO YOU KNOW?

When you're talking about more than one Book of Mormon, what's the correct way to say you have three of them?

1. "I have three Books of Mormon."
2. "I have three Book of Mormons."

Answer: Neither of these answers is correct. You should say, "I have three copies of the Book of Mormon."



MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 1:7 is one of my favorite scriptures because it reassures me that when I have faith, Heavenly Father will help me.

Jane S., 18, Ontario, Canada

Tell us about your favorite scripture in one or two sentences. Send it to newera@ldschurch.org.



THE CHURCH IN CANADA SASKATCHEWAN

G. Gordon Whyte of Moose Jaw was the first member of the Church in Saskatchewan. He was baptized in August 1923 and later moved to Regina. Whyte and John G. Allred preached in a street meeting in Regina where they placed 16 copies of the Book of Mormon. The Church sent missionaries to Regina in 1925, organized a congregation there, and dedicated

a meetinghouse in 1939. Church membership in Saskatchewan grew from 145 in 1930 to 4,200 in 1990. In November 1999 the Church completed a temple in Regina.


Membership	5,313
Temples	1
Congregations	15
Family History Centers	5

Information from Newroom at lds.org.

BY THE NUMBERS

20,008,743

Number of Church magazines printed in 2006.

A photograph of a stream with a series of large, rectangular, light-colored stepping stones laid across it. The water is clear and shallow, reflecting the light. In the background, there are green plants and more stones. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Picture yourself
on one side
of a stream,
and on the other
side is your eternal
happiness. You
need to have some
stepping-stones in
your life to get
across.

SETTING PRIORITIES

BY ELDER WON YONG KO

Of the Seventy

I was born and raised in Korea in a loving family, and I joined the Church while in my teens. I would like to share the experience of my conversion with you.

My classmate and I were working together in the school library just after winter vacation when he asked me if I was interested in going to church with him. I asked him what kind of church he was talking about, and he told me it was near our school. He said it was a lot of fun, and there were many girls. I was 16 at the time, and that description of church appealed to me. I decided to go. I had gone to a Presbyterian church for a couple of years in elementary school, and I had good memories of church.

My friend and I went to a Saturday activity, and everyone came to greet me and welcome me. I was impressed that they would be so kind to welcome a small guy they didn't know. I went to church the next day, and I was introduced to the missionaries.

The missionaries taught me about basic gospel principles, about Jesus Christ, and

about the Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith. All the lessons I was taught were reasonable and logical, and I was impressed by eternal progress and the plan of salvation. I had often thought about why I was here on earth and what things were waiting for me after death. It was comforting to know that if I would do all I could for myself, the Savior would do the rest.

Two months later I wanted to be baptized and confirmed, but I needed permission from my parents. They were Buddhist, but they trusted me. I decided it would be best to ask my mother first, so I asked the missionaries to come to my home during the day. Before I went to school, I told my mother that she might have some foreigners come to ask her something and that she should just say yes. And then I ran out the door to school. When I returned, my mom said she had two handsome American visitors. She said they spoke wonderful Korean, and she was so impressed that she said yes. So I got permission from my parents to join the Church.



It was comforting to know that if I would do all I could, the Savior would do the rest.



When we are baptized, we make a covenant, and that is the start of our gospel life. Our life is covenant based. Heavenly Father expects us to be faithful to covenants we make, and as we do so, He will be faithful to the covenant He made to bless us.

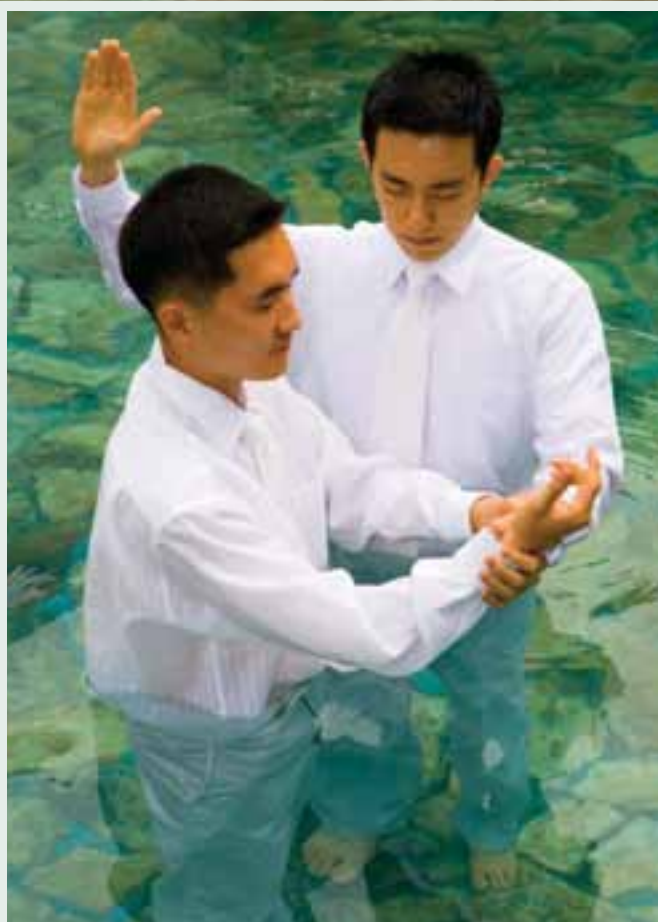
A Covenant-Based Life

When we are baptized, we make a covenant, and that is the start of our gospel life. We make and renew other covenants throughout our lives, such as taking the sacrament or, for young men, receiving the priesthood. Our life is covenant based. Heavenly Father expects us to be faithful to covenants we make, and as we do so, He will be faithful to the covenant He made to bless us.

The message I would like to give to you young people is to set priorities, understand the covenants you are making, and be faithful to those covenants even when you are required to sacrifice. As you are faithful and have an eternal perspective, the Lord will bless you, not only in the future but during your time on earth.

For example, in my high school days I chose not to study on Sundays. I would study until midnight on Saturday and then ask my mom to wake me up early on Monday morning. I kept the Sabbath day holy. Sometimes I felt a little uncomfortable because I knew that my classmates were spending the whole day studying. In Korea, getting into a good university is a serious goal. But even if I had a test on Monday, I did not study on Sunday. Because I had one day fewer to study, I really had to focus my attention. I think I made better use of my study time because of this focus. In the end I was one of the top students in my high school, and I got into one of the most prestigious universities in Korea.

Once we focus on Church and gospel



principles, then we can apply those same principles in whatever we do, and we can have support from the Lord and be blessed.

An Eye Single to God's Glory

One of my favorite scriptures is D&C 4:5, which talks about leadership qualities. It mentions having “an eye single to the glory of God.” Whenever I do Church-service work, I always ask myself, Where is my focus? Am I looking to the glory of God and nothing else?

For 28 years I worked for IBM in Korea. During that

time I also served in many Church positions, including stake executive secretary, stake high councilor, stake president, regional representative, and Area Seventy. I always tried to balance the priorities of family, work, Church callings, and time for myself. And I was always able to do what I needed to do.

As a regional representative and Area Seventy, I had to visit Salt Lake twice a year for general conference, and as an executive at work, I found that leaving the office for more than a week was not easy. I was determined to make the trip, and the president of the company knew me and trusted me when I said I would manage it. When we set priorities, we can manage our problems. I don't like to compromise my beliefs for work advancement. Once you have that mindset, then your heart is peaceful because you are doing what is right. Keeping our commitments or covenants is not easy and requires a lot of sacrifice, but when we do, the blessings we get will be a lot more than what we sacrificed.

Stepping-Stones

Picture yourself on one side of a stream, and on the other side is your eternal happiness. You need to have some stepping-stones in your life to get across. For example, choose to go on a mission, to be married in the temple, and to have a family. As you prepare for each of these events, you will be on track to reaching your ultimate goal.

When the Seoul Korea Temple was announced, we were all delighted. We knew that without the temple, we could not complete our gospel life. It took a while for the temple to be completed, but the blessings from the temple deepened the root of testimony and faith in the people. As they attend the temple, they become more committed to the gospel, and they are on track to their ultimate goal.

So I urge you young people to set intermediate stepping-stone goals in your lives. They will give you help and protection. I know that as we are faithful to our covenants, then our lives will be more worthwhile, and we will be blessed. **NE**

HOW COULD I RELATE?

BY RHETT WILKINSON

For a long time, I had not been interested in family history.

Why did I need to learn about people who lived so long ago? Yes, they endured a lot, but they did not go through the same challenges that today's world presents. How could I learn from people whom I simply could not relate to since they lived in an entirely different world?

Then my dad gave a family home evening lesson about one of our ancestors. I expected to be bored, but it was one of the most interesting and informative family nights that we'd had for a long time.



He told us about Edward Ashton, a grandfather several generations back. Edward grew up in England, where the missionaries taught his family the gospel. His father then wanted to move the family to America, so they sailed across the Atlantic to New Orleans. A few years later they moved to Iowa. When Edward grew to be an adult, he trekked to Utah as a member of the Willie and Martin handcart companies. Like the other pioneers in that group, he endured snowstorms and near-starvation on his way to the Salt Lake Valley, but he pressed on in spite of it. Once he got to Utah, he became a missionary himself.

While his hardships weren't exactly like the things I experience today (since I don't have to voyage across an ocean or pull a handcart through the snow), I realized that he and his family had to endure trials and challenges just as I do right now. Even though our trials came in different forms, I could see how the Lord helped Edward grow through these experiences. I realized the Lord helps me grow through my trials, too. **NE**

NO NEED FOR TATTOOS

BY JAMES DECKER

While holding a sign for a car wash fundraiser for my high school band, I was hit by a car going over 60 miles per hour (96 kph). I was rushed to the hospital. All

three bones in my arm were broken, and I had to have metal plates and screws put in my arm. I have three long scars on my arm, small ones on my elbow and shin, and another long one over my knee.

The first day I went to therapy to help recover my damaged nerves, the therapist told me that when I got older I would be able to get tattoos to cover my scars. My mom and dad both said, "You don't know James very well." I told her that tattoos

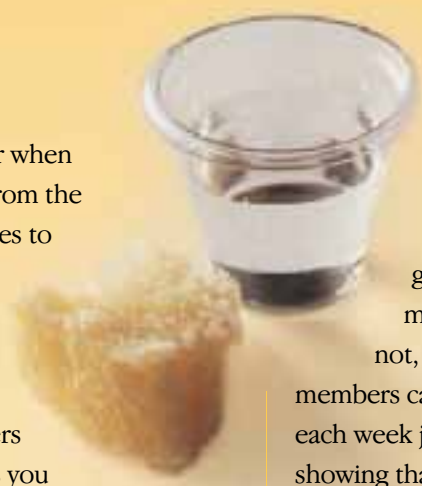
were against my standards and that I wouldn't want one anyway.

I know my body is a gift from God, and I am not supposed to mark it up. I am grateful that I have been taught that my body is a special gift and that I do not need to put tattoos on it. I know the scars aren't pretty right now, but they will fade. For now, they are a reminder to me that God watches out for me. **NE**

For more on tattoos, read "Tattoos and Your Mission," *New Era*, Mar. 2006, p. 44.

THERE ARE NO STRANGERS

BY JESSICA BEST



Last summer when I traveled from the United States to Orkney, one of Scotland's northern islands, I learned strangers are only friends you haven't met yet. When my group visited the small branch in the main city of Kirkwall, we more than doubled the attendance numbers from the usual 5 to 11. At the end of sacrament meeting, the branch president asked my friends and me to bear our testimonies.

As I stood in that small room so far from home, I felt the unity of the gospel family surround me, and I felt the Spirit testify to me

of the truthfulness of the gospel. Their strength in living the gospel, even when so many around them did not, amazed me. These five members came faithfully to church each week just as I did at home, showing that they knew how precious the gospel is. They knew the importance of unity in the gospel and of keeping each other strong. As I bore my testimony, I realized what an example these members were to me in showing me love and how to be a faithful Latter-day Saint. I was so grateful for the Spirit testifying of the importance of the gospel to me and that so many around the world had the strength to live the gospel. **NE**

DAWN OF HOPE BY A. D. SHAW; PHOTOGRAPH BY MATT REIER

MY DAY OF REST

BY TAMMY MCPHERSON CHAMPO

My cousins Erica, Kristin, and I had moved into a trailer park in Montana to work for the summer. We paid too much money to live in a trailer that rattled every time a truck zoomed past the highway outside our front door. The vibrations woke us up at 6 a.m.—that is, if our neighbor, “Mad Jack,” didn’t wake us first by chopping firewood.

For three months I had two jobs. I cleaned cabins during the day and waited tables at night. Being on my feet from 8:00 in the morning until

10:30 at night was enough to make even a mattress on the shag carpet floor seem inviting.

Through the hard work and exhaustion, I gained a new appreciation for the Sabbath. Sunday was a day of blissful peace in a dismal week. It was something I could look forward to. One day a week I could be with people who knew the truths I knew, people who could strengthen me and lift me and prepare me for one more week of scrubbing toilets.

I understood why Sunday was set aside—not only to learn of the goodness of the gospel of Jesus Christ but also as a time to

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newera@ldschurch.org

or send it to

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

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

be strengthened by the good saints of the Church who believe as I believe. The Sabbath is the one day in seven to rest from the pressures of the world and to remember Christ and the blessings He has given me. **NE**

ILLUSTRATED BY KRISTIN YEE



Mutual Activity Ideas

- With permission from your bishop, invite the stake patriarch to come and discuss how each person can prepare to receive his or her patriarchal blessing.

Seminary Devotional

- Choose a story—such as the baptism of Jesus—in the New Testament. Look it up in the Harmony of the Gospels (the baptism is referred to about nine lines down on page 685) in the Bible Dictionary. Have you and three friends read from each of the gospels for a more complete version of the story.

Family Home Evening Idea

- During the week before family home evening, prepare a what-if jar. (For the article about a family who had such a jar, see Shirley Bock Testi, “The What-If Question,” in the November 2003 *New Era*). Have each family member pull out a slip describing a difficult situation or temptation, and discuss good ways to handle it.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (online at www.lds.org/gospellibrary, in the Shortcuts section), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these resources helpful in enhancing lessons 1–6.

Young Women Manual 3

Lesson 1: God the Father

- What Joseph Taught: “God the Eternal Father,” *New Era*, Dec. 2007, 10.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Grandeur of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 70.

Lesson 2: Coming to Know the Savior

- What Joseph Taught: “Jesus Christ, the Redeemer,” this issue, 22.
- Ezra Taft Benson, “Five Marks of the Divinity of Jesus Christ,” *New Era*, Dec. 1980, 44.
- Q&A (always remember Christ), *New Era*, Jan. 2005, 16.

Lesson 3: Living the Gospel Daily

- Amelia Stone, “Something Had to Give,” *New Era*, Aug. 2007, 24.
- W. Craig Zwick, “Ponder, Pray, Perform, Persevere,” *New Era*, May 2007, 40.

Lesson 4: Preparing to Become an Eternal Companion

- To the Point (education or marriage), *New Era*, Sept. 2007, 30.
- Special issue on courtship and marriage, *New Era*, Oct. 2004.

Lesson 5: Creating a Spiritual Environment in the Home

- Melody Warnick, “Dear Dad Notes,” *New Era*, June 2007, 10.
- Idea List: “Getting Along,” *New Era*, Feb. 2007, 9.
- Sherrie Mackelprang, “What I Learned from Doing the Dishes,” *New Era*, June 2007, 20.

Lesson 6: A Woman’s Responsibility to Teach

- Shanna Butler, “You’re a Teacher Too,” *New Era*, Sept. 2006, 44.
- Idea List: “Learn to Share,” *New Era*, Sept. 2006, 7.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 3

Lesson 1: The Godhead

- Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,” *New Era*, July 2005, 10.
- “The Fulness of the Gospel: The Nature of the Godhead,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2006, 50.

Lesson 2: The Plan of Salvation

- John Bytheway, “Three Little Questions,” *New Era*, July 2006, 30.
- “Charting the Plan,” *New Era*, July 2006, 33.
- L. Tom Perry, “The Plan of Salvation,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 69.

Lesson 3: Sons of the Living God

- Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Grandeur of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 70.
- Boyd K. Packer, “The Unseen Power of the Aaronic Priesthood,” *New Era*, May 2007, 2.

Lesson 4: I Have the Ability and Freedom to Choose

- Dallin H. Oaks, “Where Will It Lead?” *New Era*, Aug. 2007, 2.
- Q&A (rules versus agency), *New Era*, Nov. 2007, 14.
- R. Conrad Schultz, “Waves of Deception,” *New Era*, Nov. 2007, 40.

Lesson 5: “How Art Thou Fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer!”

- Daniel H. Ludlow, “Moral Free Agency,” *New Era*, Nov. 1976, 44.
- David O. McKay, “The Test of One,” *New Era*, Aug. 2007, 34.
- Aaron L. West, “If a Bug Flies into Your Mouth,” *New Era*, Sept. 2007, 24.

Lesson 6: The Fall of Adam

- Jess L. Christensen, “The Choice That Began Mortality,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2002, 36.

LET HIM IN

I would like to express my gratitude for the article "Let Him In" (Aug. 2007). I had been having some complications in my life that I didn't know how to deal with. I looked down at the table next to me and saw the *New Era* lying there. I thought that reading it would help me, so I opened it right to this article and read it. It helped me realize that when I am having troubles like I was having, all I need to do is to let Him in and He will help me with what I need. All I need to do is ask. This article helped me realize this fact even more than I had known it before.

Kelly B., Washington

ARTS FANS

Thank you for the stories about William Joseph (May 2007) and Zack Clark (Aug. 2007). Since my children are more interested in the arts than sports, I have long been concerned about the messages they receive when they read story after story about athletes. Thank you for stories about people my children can relate to.

Ann J., Idaho

UNDERSTANDING MORE

Every month, as soon as the *New Era* arrives in the mail, I begin to read it. I read it all the way through and try to get as much out of it as I possibly can. This habit has helped me a great deal through a lot of challenges. By reading the *New Era*, I've come to understand gospel principles more clearly, and I've been able to better recognize the great blessings and happiness that come from living the gospel. I would like to express my appreciation for the hard work

that you have put into making this magazine.

Amberly R., Maine

"The New Era is a blessing to all youth in all parts of the world. I always learn something whenever I read it."

EDUCATION AND SPORTS

For a long time I have been debating the possibility of college sports after, of course, my mission. However, I failed to realize that first of all, the purpose of going to college is to get a good education. After reading what President Hinckley had to say ("Seek Learning," Sept. 2007), I have decided to focus on education, and then on physical activities.

Isaac W., Colorado

CLEAN SPEECH

The *New Era* is a blessing to all youth in all the world. I always learn something whenever I read it. I liked the article "Thy Speech Reveals Thee" (July 2007), and I am thinking of showing it to some friends so they will know that our Savior is always happy when we are clean in our speech.

Daniel-wise O., Nigeria

SPIT IT OUT

I really enjoyed the September 2007 *New Era*. I especially enjoyed the article "If a Bug Flies into Your Mouth." I had troubles with bad music and language before I became a deacon. One thing that my mom taught me is that if you can't imagine one of the prophets doing it, then neither should you. I think you should have more articles like this in your magazine because I've noticed that some people have had struggles with language, music, and bad computer sites. I hope we can get them to spit the bug out!

Jakob M., Utah

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

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Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA*

Or e-mail us at newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



AT DAWN

BY KARA DIXON HOUSER

In the quiet hour—
the steady minutes moving,
the only things unsilent
are the deer feeding,
their small rustles moving
outside my window.

The black hills crouch
and glower at the sky growing
from dark to dawn,
and the cool air
smells of mornings camping—
dew-damp pine needles,
the lazy, drifting smoke
from a daybeak campfire.

Kneeling before my window
I press my cheek against
the smooth windowsill.
Who else is waking at this moment?
Who else, strangely restless,
knows this quiet hour
as I do, at dawn,
in this silent place?



COMING NEXT MONTH

- *Succeeding in everything with one arm is Porter Ellett's goal.*
- *The Restoration makes our religion unique.*
- *What did the Prophet Joseph Smith say about repentance?*
- *Downloading music can be a wrong choice.*

Just a few of the articles waiting for you in the upcoming February 2008 New Era.

SEE US ONLINE AT WWW.NEWERA.LDS.ORG

