

# HOW COULD I RELATE?

BY RHETT WILKINSON

**F**or 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

**W**hile 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

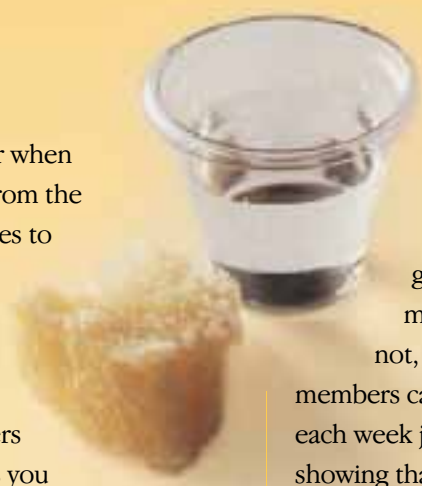
were against my standards and that I wouldn't want one anyway.

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



**L**ast 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

**M**y 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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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

