



THE
New Era

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Cover photography:
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FORGET YOURSELF AND SERVE

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

I believe in the obligation and blessing of service. I speak of that service which is given without expectation of monetary reward. Most of the troubles of the world come because of human greed. What a therapeutic and wonderful thing it is for a man or woman to set aside all consideration of personal gain and reach out with strength and energy and purpose to help the unfortunate, to improve the community, to clean up the environment and beautify our surroundings. How much greater would be the suffering of the homeless and the hungry in our own communities without the service of hundreds of volunteers who give of their time and substance to assist them.¹

Forget Yourself

I remember visiting a friend in southern India. This man worked as an accountant in a cement plant. His salary was meager. His house was small; it would fit into the front room of many homes. But his heart was large and overflowing. Out of a great love for



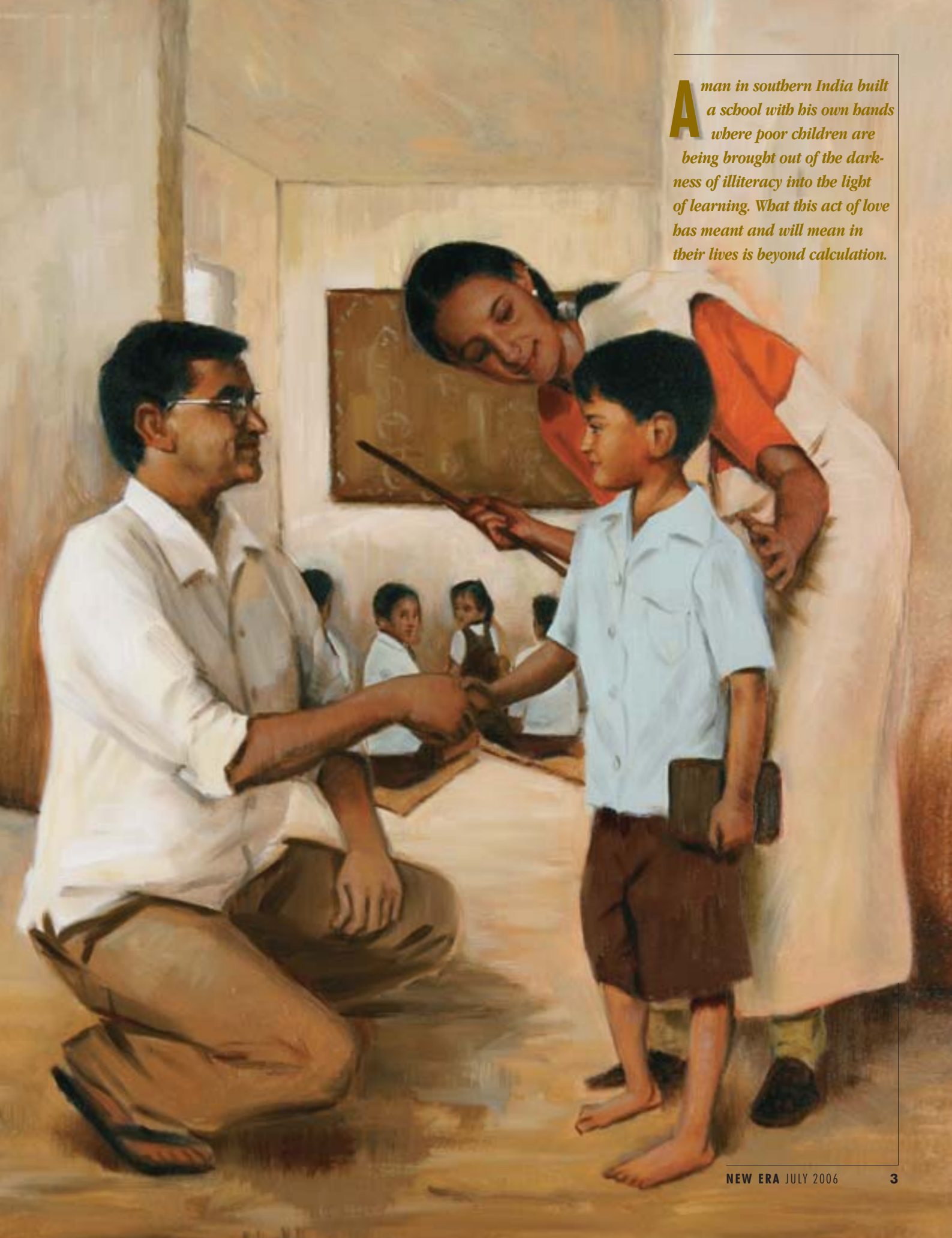
If we want joy in our hearts, if we want the Spirit of the Lord in our lives, let us forget ourselves and reach out.

others that came from his understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, he built a school with his own hands on a piece of ground he bought from his savings. It was a simple, rough building; but studying there were some 400 poor children, each being brought out of the darkness of illiteracy into the light of learning. What this act of love has meant and will mean in their lives is beyond calculation.

Through this one man's efforts, there were established five small branches of the Church in the rural villages of southern India. The members constructed three or four little buildings, neat and clean. Over the door of each was a sign, in both English and Tamil, that read, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." The floors were of concrete and without benches where the people sat together as we met, shared our testimonies, and partook of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Someday, someone will write the story of the Church in India. That story will be incomplete unless there is a chapter on my friend who lost himself in the service of others.²

A man in southern India built a school with his own hands where poor children are being brought out of the darkness of illiteracy into the light of learning. What this act of love has meant and will mean in their lives is beyond calculation.





Effective Medicine

I recall visiting a college campus where I heard the usual, commonplace complaining of youth: complaints about the pressures of school—as if it were a burden rather than an opportunity to partake of the knowledge of the earth—complaints about housing and about food.

I counseled those youth that if the pressures of school were too heavy, if they felt to complain about their housing and their food, then I could suggest a cure for their problems. I suggested that they lay their books aside for a few hours, leave their rooms, and go visit someone who is old and lonely, or someone sick and discouraged. By and large, I have come to see that if we complain about life, it is because we are thinking only of ourselves.

For many years there was a sign on the wall of a shoe repair shop I patronized. It read, “I complained because I had no shoes until I saw a man who had no feet.” The most effective medicine for the sickness of self-pity is to lose ourselves in the service of others.³

The Gift of Self

Let us now in our time, each one, reach out more generously to love those around us in the spirit of the Christ. It is not enough even to give alms to those in need. For as important as that is, it is as Sir Launfal, worn and old, learned from Him who shared his crust, “the gift without the giver is bare; / Who gives of himself with his alms feeds

three, / Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me.”⁴

May the real meaning of the gospel distill into our hearts that we may realize that our lives, given us by God our Father, are to be used in the service of others.

If we will give such service, our days will be filled with joy and gladness. More important, they will be consecrated to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to the blessing of all whose lives we touch.⁵

Let the Church be your dear friend. Let it be your great companion. Serve wherever you are called to serve. Do what you are asked to do.

Church Service

Let the Church be your dear friend. Let it be your great companion. Serve wherever you are called to serve. Do what you are asked to do. Every position you hold will add to your capacity. I have served in many responsibilities in this great organization. Every service brought its own reward.

You will serve in many capacities before your lives are complete. Some of them may seem small, but there is no small or unimportant calling in this Church. Every calling is important. Every calling is necessary to the advancement of the work. Never demean a responsibility in the Church.

The Church may call upon you to make sacrifice. It may call upon you to give of the very best that you have to offer. There will be no cost in this, because you will discover that it will become an investment that will pay you dividends for as long as you live. The Church is the great reservoir of eternal truth. Embrace it and hold fast to it.⁶



Your Opportunity

How lucky can you be to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints! Here you find choice and wonderful friends. Here you find able and faithful teachers. Here you find opportunities for service. For instance, where else is there any service to compare with being baptized for the dead? You, each of you, may have that opportunity of going to the Lord's holy house, there to be baptized in behalf of someone who is helpless to go forward in the world beyond without the service you can give. That individual might have been a woman of great power and influence when she was upon the earth. But without the ordinance of baptism she is stopped in her eternal progress. Yours is the opportunity to free her. What an unselfish and wonderful thing this is. You, through a little effort, can become the one to unlock the gate that will permit that individual to move forward on the way of immortality and eternal life. There is not another organization in all the world that offers you this opportunity. It affords the means by which to give the most unselfish kind of service. You will receive no thanks in this life for that which you do in being baptized for the dead. But you will receive a satisfaction in your heart of having done something totally unselfish and much appreciated.⁷

Find Your True Selves

There are opportunities all around to stretch our lives and our interests in behalf of others.

My plea is—if we want joy in our hearts, if we want the Spirit of the Lord in our lives, let us forget ourselves and reach out. Let us put in the background our own personal, selfish interests and reach out in service to others. In so doing, we will find the truth of the Master's great promise of glad tidings:

“Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; or whosoever will save his life, shall be willing to lay it down for my sake; and if he is not willing to lay it down for my sake, he shall lose it.

“But whosoever shall be willing to lose his life for my sake, and the gospel, the same shall save it” (Joseph Smith Translation, Mark 8:37–38).

I testify that these words are as true today as when He first spoke them. I testify that God, our Eternal Father, lives. I testify that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of this world. And I testify that as each of you reach out to help others, you will find your true selves and bless greatly the world in which you live.⁸ **NE**

You will serve in many capacities before your lives are complete. Some of them may seem small, but there is no small or unimportant calling in this Church. Every calling is important. Every calling is necessary to the advancement of the work.

NOTES

1. From “I Believe,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1992, 5.
2. From “Whosoever Will Save His Life,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1982, 4.
3. From “Whosoever Will Save His Life,” 5.
4. James Russell Lowell, “The Vision of Sir Launfal,” part 2, stanza 8.
5. From “Giving Ourselves to the Service of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1987, 5.
6. From “Life's Obligations,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1999, 4.
7. From “Stand True and Faithful,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 93.
8. From “Whosoever Will Save His Life,” 6.

BY SHERILYN FARNES

DO YOU WANT TO COPY MY



“We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.”
—Articles of Faith 1:13

At my school, it was common to copy each other’s homework. I didn’t know that what I chose to do would be setting an example.

I sank into my seat for geometry just before the bell rang. That was close. I was still learning how to navigate the halls of my new high school. I pulled out my math homework and began rummaging through my backpack for a pencil.

“Psst . . . Sherilyn,” the guy behind me hissed.

I turned around to face Gary, a guy I had talked to only a few times since the beginning of the school year. We were in the same Spanish class later in the day, but I didn’t know him well.

“What?” I asked.

“Do you have your Spanish book with you?” he inquired.

A sinking realization hit me as I pictured my Spanish book where I had left it on my bedroom floor.

“Sorry, I don’t have it with me,” I replied. “I left it at home.”

“Oh, okay.”

“You know, I totally forgot to do the homework,” I remarked, frowning.

My Spanish teacher consistently checked to see if everyone had done the homework.

“There goes another zero for me,” I thought.

“Just what I need at the start of the year.”

“Do you want to copy mine?” he asked.

Copying homework was common at this school, and no one thought anything of it. You could walk down the halls and see people sprawled on the floor, blatantly copying their friends’ work. He was trying to be friendly, I’m sure, but I couldn’t do that. It would be dishonest, and I wouldn’t feel right doing it.

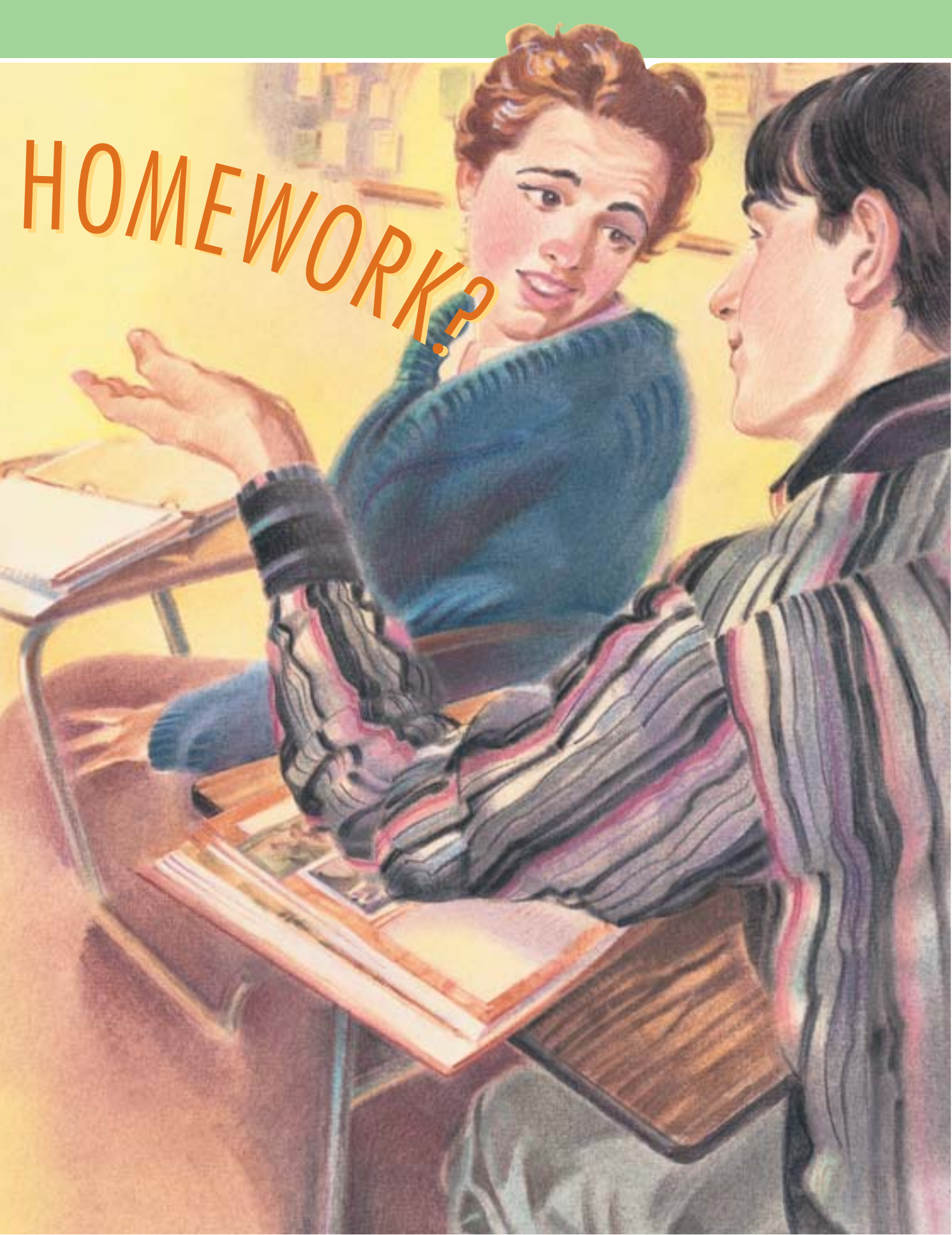
“Thanks, but no thanks. I wouldn’t really feel comfortable doing that,” I said.

He paused for a moment, smiled at me, and then he said something I will never forget: “I didn’t think you would. Actually, I didn’t even do mine.”

So what was he doing? Trying to test me? I was actually surprised that he would know enough about me to know I wouldn’t copy his work. It was only the second week of school, and I hadn’t known him the previous year.

“You’re Mormon, aren’t you?” he asked.

I said yes. We talked for a few minutes, and then our teacher started the class. I reflected on this incident for the rest of the day. I’d only talked to this guy a few times,



HOMEWORK?

What if I had chosen to cheat? What would my friend have thought?

yet somehow he knew that I, a new freshman in a school of more than 2,000, was a member of the Church. How?

Then I had another thought. What if I had accepted his offer? Not only would it have made me look stupid, because he hadn't even done the homework, but how would

that have affected his idea of how Mormons behave?

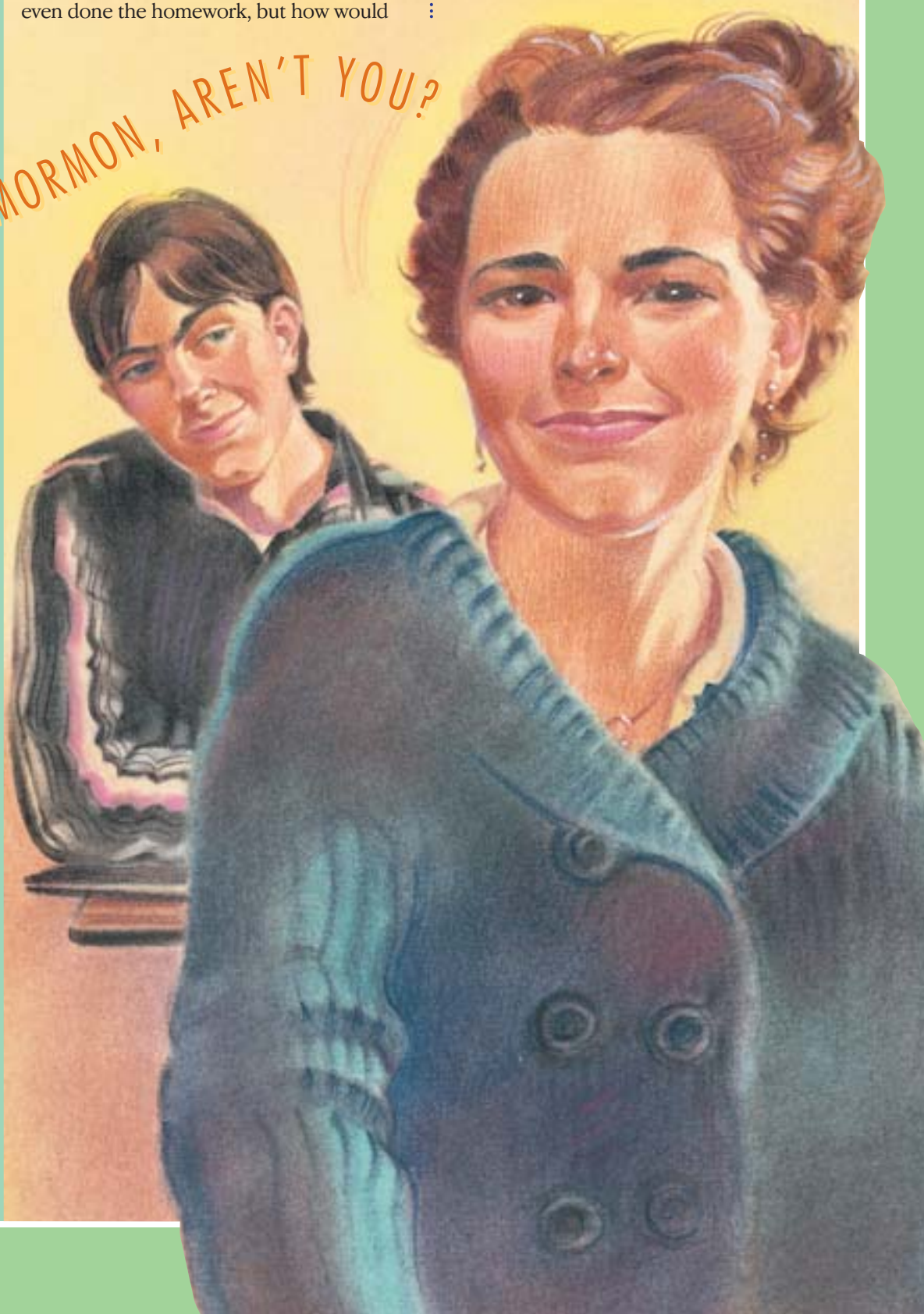
That experience made me sit a little taller the rest of the year. I knew he was watching me and that other people I didn't even know were watching as well. **NE**

YOU'RE A MORMON, AREN'T YOU?



“Surely we live in troubled times, but we can seek and obtain the good despite Satan’s temptations and snares. He cannot tempt us beyond our power to resist. (See 1 Corinthians 10:13.) When we seek ‘anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy,’ we are seeking to emulate the Savior and follow his teachings. Then we are on the path that can lead us to eternal life.”

—Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Seeking the Good,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 88.



BY ANNE PERKINS

When my parents divorced, I thought nothing could heal my broken heart—until I turned to Christ.

I was eight years old when my parents divorced. I remember the day my dad moved out. It seemed like everything I knew about life fell to pieces after that. I was confused, lonely, and sad. It felt like a big part of me had been ripped out. While the other members of my family seemed to move past the divorce, I still felt empty inside.

Being so young, I couldn't understand why my family had to be broken up. I came to believe that I must have been deficient. I figured I wasn't worthy of an intact family. I thought that if I had had enough faith, God would have put my family back together.

As I got older, the hole inside me became a deep pit of sadness. I tried to fill it with all sorts of things: relationships, school, rebellion, even too much food. None of those things worked. I had read the scripture where the Apostle Paul tells a man who has been healed that "Jesus Christ maketh thee

whole" (Acts 9:34). But I doubted that Christ could fill the hole inside me. After all, if I was not worthy enough for Him to fix my family, why should I expect Him to fix the hole in me? I thought those types of miracles were only for happy, faithful people who came from intact families.

Still, I had nowhere left to turn except to Christ. Night after night I knelt in prayer and asked my Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, to heal my emptiness.

I cannot point to an exact day when it happened, but little by little Heavenly Father intervened in my life to show me that Christ's love *was* healing me. Heavenly Father also let me know He loves me, He knows me, and He wants me to have an eternal family.

I know, unmistakably now, that my Savior was aware of my pain and sadness. He never gave up on me.

I can see now that He strengthened me and carried me through those difficult times. Christ is the only one who can heal our pain. It was Christ who healed my heart. **NE**

I FELT

BROKEN

PHOTOGRAPH BY GETTY IMAGES; ELECTRONIC COMPOSITION BY PAT GERBER



TORPEDOES, TYPHOONS, AND WAR STORIES

BY RACHEL FAAS TRIM WITH DANIELLE NYE POULTER

Arizona youth got a taste of wartime life when they recorded experiences of WWII veterans in their stake.

Brian Urry and Ashley Taysom of the Tempe Arizona Stake interview and video Henry Taysom, a World War II veteran. Over 100 teens participated in preserving the wartime experiences of stake members as part of their youth conference.

Expectant silence fills the living room where 80-year-old Ronald Bowles sits surrounded by teenagers.

“I’ll never forget my first trip as an officer in the South Pacific,” Brother Bowles begins, recounting an experience he had on a ship as a U.S. Marine during World War II. “It was a moonlit night, and I was on watch. Off the bow, on the starboard side, three torpedoes were coming straight for us.”

Now at full attention, the young men and women of the Tempe Arizona Stake listen anxiously as Brother Bowles continues: “I was just about to reach for the general alarm bell . . . when two or three porpoises swerved right by the bow and took off.”

The teens laugh with relief that the threatening torpedoes turned out to be nothing more than porpoises.



Experiences like this one recounted by Brother Bowles, including some with less happy endings, opened the eyes of about 120 teens from the Tempe Arizona Stake to a different world than the one they know. The young men and women gained a personal appreciation for the sacrifices of an older generation as they interviewed 52 stake members who served in the military in





WWII. The interviews were part of a stake youth conference to honor veterans and preserve their experiences.

“I deeply appreciate those who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of human

liberty. . . . There are no better Latter-day Saints anywhere on earth than many of those in uniform, and there are faithful representatives of this church in the armed forces of many nations.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, “In Grateful Remembrance,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1971, 20–21.

Christie Shumway, a Laurel, says, “Hearing personal experiences of WWII veterans made it real and helped me understand what life was like during that day.”

For almost six months, youth and adults worked

together to videotape the veterans involved in the project. Youth, leaders, and veterans also gathered for an evening of 1940s-style entertainment and swing dancing, with many participants dressed in wartime-era clothing.

Throughout the project, the youth production team gathered video clips

of veteran interviews and created a 30-minute DVD to honor the veterans at a youth conference fireside. The result was a combination of old photos, historic WWII footage, special effects, and live interviews.

“Because of the interviews, I appreciate the veterans so much more,” says Leah Hollingsworth, a Laurel. “We learned about the sacrifice they made for all of us and the importance of it. We shouldn’t take things for granted.”

Daniel Winters, a priest, enjoyed his service as a member of the stake youth conference committee. He says, “I was able to participate in five interviews. This experience really opened my eyes. You see people walking down the street each day, but you don’t know their history. These WWII veterans impacted our future. They were once average kids like us. They are among the bravest and brightest who answered the call to serve.”

But the veterans aren’t the only ones whose service is being recognized. “The service and effort given by our youth was tremendous,” says navy veteran David Clark. “I am so proud of them. Their efforts made a differ-



Gale Mortenson (above) flew a P-38 Lightning during World War II. He shared with the youth of the Tempe Arizona Stake (right) his memorabilia and heroic war story of feeling the calming assurance of the Spirit as his airplane burst into flames.

VETERAN WISDOM

In the final interview question, the veterans were asked what advice they would give to the youth of today. Their responses included:

- ★ Be loyal in all that you do.
- ★ Take your time when making choices.
- ★ Enjoy the journey.
- ★ Get a good education.
- ★ Obey the commandments.
- ★ Stay close to the Church.
- ★ Love the Lord.



ence to those of us they interviewed. Now I have such fond feelings for the youth.”

The veterans shared some amazing experiences with the youth, such as Brother Henry Leigh’s experience of being caught in a typhoon on Okinawa, Japan, or the time Brother Gale Mortenson was calmed by the Spirit when the plane he was flying caught on fire. Listening to the stories of these veterans’ war-time battles helped the youth

see that they could fight and win their own spiritual battles.

“The youth of today battle against evil as well,” says Sonya Acedo, a *Mia Maid*. “In Ephesians 6:10–13, it speaks of putting on the whole armor of God and fighting a war. It may be hard, but if we fight on the Lord’s side, we will prevail, and it will be worth the fight.” **NE**

Q & A

“How can I repent and be forgiven if I don’t really feel sorry for what I’ve done?”

NEW ERA

You’re right. To truly repent, you must feel sorry for what you’ve done. Without “godly sorrow” (2 Corinthians 7:10), you can’t even start the process of being forgiven. So how can you find what’s missing in your heart?

The most important thing you can do is open yourself to the influence of the Holy Ghost. As you feel the Lord’s Spirit, your heart will soften and your mind will open. You will understand the consequences of your actions, and you will experience that “broken heart and contrite spirit” necessary for repentance (2 Nephi 2:7).

Placing yourself in a position in which you can feel the Spirit will involve sincere and humble prayer. It may involve fasting. It will certainly include pondering the scriptures and trying to understand why you need to repent. Begin by considering three important truths.

The first is that sin is a dead end. It leads you away from all that makes your life joyful, both here and in eternity. It destroys peace of mind, pushes the Spirit away from you, and

■ **Open yourself to the influence of the Spirit by praying sincerely, fasting, and pondering the scriptures.**

■ **Think about how sin holds you back, destroys your peace of mind, and keeps you from feeling the Spirit. Think about how it hurts people you love.**

■ **Think about the terrible suffering the Savior willingly endured to pay for your sin.**

■ **Draw near to the Lord so that He can be near you through the repentance process.**

impedes your spiritual progression. Sin causes you pain, and it hurts others too, including those you love the most. It’s impossible to protect others from the harmful effects of your sin.

Second, Someone else *has already* suffered because of your sins—your Savior, Jesus Christ. As you learn more about the Atonement, you can’t help but feel sorrow for your sins. You’ll realize that your sins have added to the terrible price He had to pay in Gethsemane and on the cross. His Atonement for you caused Him so much physical and spiritual pain that He bled from every pore and asked His Father to take “the bitter cup” from Him (see D&C 19:15–19).

We are blessed beyond understanding that the Father did not release His Son from the atoning sacrifice only Jesus Christ could make. But because of that sacrifice, we can be cleansed of sin and enter into God’s presence. And that is the third truth you need to understand. Because Christ paid for your sins, all is not lost. Repentance is possible. You don’t have to carry the burden



of your sin alone. God loves you and is waiting for you to accept the Savior's Atonement and turn away from the sins that are holding you back. "Draw near unto me," says the Lord, "and I will draw near unto you" (D&C 88:63). As you seek to draw near to the Lord and gain a deeper appreciation of His love and sacrifice for you, He will send His Spirit to help you feel not only sorrow for your sin but also the peace that comes from forgiveness. **NE**

READERS



Sorrow comes when you know you have hurt or disappointed another person with your behavior.

Although sometimes it may seem as if you are not hurting anyone else, the Savior feels the pain. It is important to remember Christ's atoning sacrifice. Repentance requires a broken heart and a contrite spirit. When you experience this sorrow, you are ready to repent.

Charlotte S., 18, Ontario, Canada

Feeling remorse is the first step in repentance. I remember times in my own life when I couldn't sense that remorse for something I had done. But I knew it was wrong because of what I had been taught. Simply knowing the sin was wrong helped me search for the desire to be better. One way is to ponder the seriousness of the sin. Picture the way your life would go if the sin were to continue. Ponder where you want to be in life in the future. Study the scriptures and pray for the desire to repent. As you build the Spirit in your life,

you will feel the difference when you sin and will feel a deeper desire to become more Christlike.

Danielle H., 20, Utah



Remember what the Savior did for you. Do your best to immerse yourself in things such as the scriptures, the Church, and good music that testifies of Christ. Do this and

remember that our sins caused Him pain and suffering. As you grow close to the Savior, you too will not be able to look upon sin with the least degree of allowance and will feel sorrow that leads to repentance (see D&C 1:31–32).

Elder Tensmeyer, 20, Montana Billings Mission

You cannot repent or be forgiven if you don't feel sorry about what you have done. You have to know what you did, pray about it, and ask forgiveness from the Lord. Then go to the person you have hurt and ask forgiveness.

Sarah B., 11, Oregon



Be sincere. Satan likes it when people don't feel sorrow for sin because then sin becomes easier to brush off (see 2 Nephi 28:20–24).

If you don't want to be a follower of Satan, make an effort to correct the sin, big or little. Don't take the easy way out. This will show Heavenly Father that you love Him and are striving to be a good Latter-day Saint.

Jill O., 16, Utah

There is no way repentance can be effective in our life when we don't feel sorry for what we've done wrong. We can be forgiven when we feel deeply sorry, regret in our heart our mistake, and make restitution for what we've taken from others. Then we must not do it again.

Elder Akosah, 23, Nigeria Ibadan Mission



T **True testimony fosters faith; it promotes repentance and obedience to God's commandments. . . . Conversion is a turning from the ways of the world to, and staying with, the ways of the Lord. Conversion includes repentance and obedience. Conversion brings a mighty change of heart. Thus, a true convert is 'born again,' walking with a newness of life."**

—Elder Russell M. Nelson, "Jesus Christ—the Master Healer," *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 86.

Being a teenager in today's world is hard. The best thing is to be true to yourself and honest about your mistakes. Have faith that Heavenly Father will help you no matter what happens. Pray, read the scriptures, repent, and know that everything will turn out right in the end. Everyone makes mistakes, but we can overcome them.

Fiona A., 15, Louisiana



Part of repentance is feeling sorry for what we've done, but sometimes we don't feel sorry because we don't fully understand the Atonement.

Review the scriptures in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon and ask Heavenly Father to help increase your testimony. When you do, you will come to realize how much Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have done for us and the importance of godly sorrow in order to be truly forgiven and receive the Lord's blessings.

Brianna S., 15, Utah

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

NEXT QUESTION

"One of my friends who is active in the Church has some anti-Mormon literature and thinks we should read it so we know how to respond to it. But I find that literature disturbing. What should I tell my friend?"

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

New Era, Q&A, 8/06

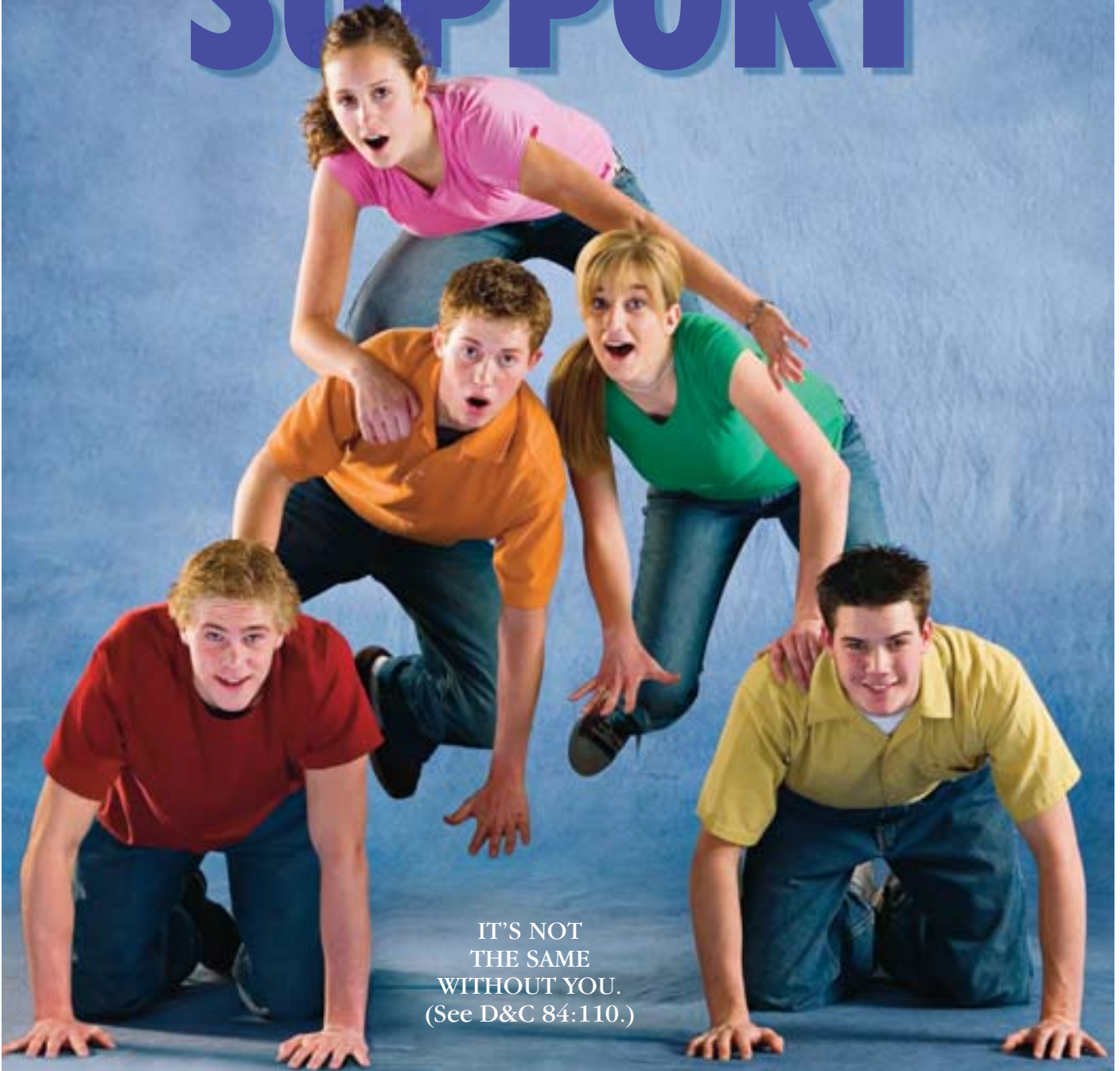
50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by August 15, 2006.

MUTUAL SUPPORT



IT'S NOT
THE SAME
WITHOUT YOU.
(See D&C 84:110.)

A PLACE IN THEIR

BY KATHLEEN "CASEY" PETERSEN

Teens in Southern California waited patiently for four years until they could celebrate the dedication of the Newport Beach California Temple.

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD



HEARTS



Orange County, California, is considered by many to be the ultimate vacation destination. With Disneyland, orange groves, miles of beaches, and waves perfect for bodysurfing, it's easy to see why. But for the youth who call it home, Orange County now has a destination much dearer to their hearts.

In April 2001, the First Presidency announced that a temple would be built in Newport Beach. Now, more than four years of fasting, praying, and sacrificing later, the Newport Beach California Temple finally became a reality in August 2005. Now the youth have a temple they can call their own, a place where they can regularly go to find peace and take part in sacred ordinances.

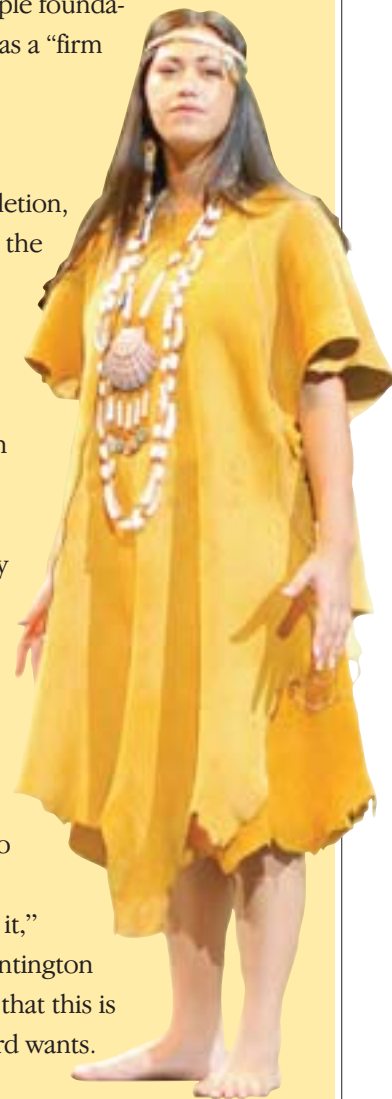
Many of the youth were in Primary when construction on the temple began. Children from the 16 stakes in the temple district painted rocks with their favorite scriptures. These rocks went into the temple foundation just beneath the baptism as a "firm foundation."

Serving from the Heart

As the temple neared completion, a youth celebration to precede the temple dedication was announced. Could the youth give up jobs, sports, surfing, and sleeping in on Saturday mornings for this? Even though some wondered at first if they could, they answered with a resounding yes! And soon, they knew it was the right choice.

At first Jennifer Stowell of the Garden Grove First Ward thought she wouldn't be able to take part because of other obligations. But somehow, because of her sincere desire to participate, it all worked out.

"I'm so glad I decided to do it," said Krista Monteros of the Huntington Beach Sixth Ward. "You realize that this is the temple; this is what the Lord wants. Your mind-set changes."



Thousands of youth played, smiled, and danced for joy through three performances before the temple dedication. Their personal connection to this temple is strong.



In addition to spending evenings and Saturday mornings in rehearsals, the youth also served at the temple open house. Imagine spending five weeks of your summer vacation putting on and taking off slippers, hauling water and cookies, and smiling for 150,000 open-house visitors. That's exactly what these faithful youth did between July 23 and August 20, 2005. "People would comment on how the young people were always smiling. That's what they noticed," recalls Alicia Bremmer of the Garden Grove First Ward.

"I felt really special because they noticed us. It is just cool because people really appreciated it," Krista agrees. "The visitors were really interested and curious—nonmembers and members alike."

Celebrating Together

Before the temple dedication, several thousand enthusiastic youth took part in a special celebration titled "A Sacred Place." Kevin Wheeler of the Westminster Third Ward loved the exhilaration of being surrounded by thousands of other dancers. "It was just a blast. I loved it," he said. He also made lots of good friends through the experience.

The youth performed three times before the dedication, but the final performance was most special because it was for the prophet. President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke to the youth between their performances, which filled the Arrowhead Pond arena. He said, "How thankful I am for you, for your courage, for your faith, for your determination to stand against the world in this age of so much that beckons you to do the wrong thing." President James E. Faust was also in attendance.

For Jennifer Stowell, this was the highlight of the whole event. "When President Hinckley and President Faust both came in," she remembers, "you could feel the Spirit, and that was a testimony-builder right there—just as soon as they entered the room."

For Jerry Wilson of the Garden Grove First Ward, the experience was a significant turning point. "When President Hinckley spoke to us, it made me make my final decision to serve a mission and start teaching my friends and inviting them to come to the temple and church," he recalls.

A Personal Connection

Ryan Gleason of the Garden Grove First Ward summed up the feelings of many of the youth. "Any temple is still really special, but visiting this one was just kind of more personal. It's my temple now."

The youth feel a personal connection with this temple, and they appreciate that they no longer have to get up early to travel to Los Angeles to perform baptisms for the dead. The temple is extra special to Krista Monteros, whose family was sealed in October 2005. "Going through that process really made me want to strive toward a temple marriage and being sealed to my future family forever," Krista says.

After receiving his mission call, Kevin Wheeler began attending the temple in preparation for his mission. "The temple is just so amazing. It's our connection with our Heavenly Father and with heaven," he said. "Heaven just got a little spot of ground, 17,000 square feet on earth, and it's our opportunity to go to it. And now that I'm endowed, it's just so exciting."

"I feel the Spirit," Jerry Wilson says. "It's exciting to ride by the temple on the freeway and see the angel Moroni statue."

Alicia says going to the temple to perform baptisms helps her find perspective in a troubled world.

"There are so many bad things out there, and you go to the temple and forget about all of the bad things. It's so peaceful. It's a great place."

To the youth of Orange County, California, it's the most special place on earth. **NE**



Handcart History



How long did it take for pioneers to pull a handcart across 1,300 miles of plains, rivers, ravines, and mountain passes to finally arrive in the Salt Lake Valley? Well, it took an average of about 11 weeks; that's nearly three months of cross-country walking. Over a span of 23 years, at least 70,000 Saints traveled the Mormon Trail to Utah. Of those Saints, about 3,000 came by handcart.

Handcarts were made of wood, with wheels as far apart as regular wagon wheels. They were usually pulled by at least two people. Since they had to pull their supplies, adults were allowed only 17 pounds of baggage each; children were allowed 10

pounds. Some of the larger handcarts could be loaded down by as much as 400 to 500 pounds of food, bedding, clothing, pots, and pans. About one ox-drawn wagon for every 20 handcarts went along with the handcart companies to carry additional supplies.

Between 1856 and 1860 there were 10 handcart companies. Eight of these companies made the journey to Utah with little trouble, often traveling faster than wagon trains. Two of the most well-known groups, the Willie and Martin companies, became stranded in early snowstorms. The suffering of these two companies was severe, and of the 1,076 pioneers in these companies who left Iowa City in July 1856, at least 212 died along the trail.

When Brigham Young learned about the two stranded handcart companies, he stood at the podium in general conference and made an impassioned plea for horses, mules, wagons, and men to bring the stranded Saints to Zion. What started with 16 eventually grew to 200 wagons. The rescuers left Salt Lake on October 7 and reached the Willie Company on October 21 and the Martin Company on October 28. The Saints in these two companies had suffered agony, deprivation, and death. Nearly all the survivors were starving and suffering from the extreme cold. The rescued Saints of the Willie Company finally arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on November 9, and those of the Martin Company on November 30.

“WE ARE ALL BOUND TOGETHER—19TH- AND 20TH-CENTURY PIONEERS AND MORE—IN OUR GREAT JOURNEY TO FOLLOW THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND TO ALLOW HIS ATONING SACRIFICE TO WORK ITS MIRACLE IN OUR LIVES.”

—Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “You Have Nothing to Fear from the Journey,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 61.



PROGRESSING IN MONGOLIA

In March of last year, B. Bilgee, 18, and M. Oderdene, 17, from the Mörön Branch, Mongolia Ulaanbaatar Mission, became the first young women in northern Mongolia to receive their Young Womanhood Recognition. Both girls started Personal Progress two years earlier, when it was first introduced in their country.

Bilgee fulfilled some of her requirements by tutoring children at the local school, planning a Halloween party for the branch with activities for both adults and children, and

studying culinary arts. Oderdene's projects included working as a branch missionary, studying first aid at the local Red Cross and then teaching the skills to her fellow young women, and helping branch members prepare for the bitter Mongolian winter by chopping wood and preparing food storage.

Furthering their bright examples, Bilgee and Oderdene are now Young Women teachers, helping the 20 other young women in the branch complete their Personal Progress requirements.

COMPOSE AWAY!

The *New Era* is looking for original hymns and gospel-related songs to be printed in the magazine. Go ahead and send your lyrics and music in to us. You might just be a budding Beethoven

or Mozart in the making. Send your submission to: *New Era*, In Tune
50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA
Or e-mail us at:
newera@ldschurch.org



Help Create a *New Era* Poster

Here's a potential poster with no title or text.

Help us turn this picture into a *New Era* poster. What gospel truth does this picture seem to illustrate? Write a short title (1–6 words) for the top of the poster and some text for the bottom of the poster—including a possible scripture reference. Aaah, you know what a

New Era poster looks like. Just remember, we're not looking for a cartoon caption.

We need your ideas by September 20. Please send them to:
New Era, Poster
50 E. North Temple St.
Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT
84150-3220, USA
Or e-mail us at:
newera@ldschurch.org

**WHAT
I LEARNED
AS A**

Crumb

BY CARA SMITH WEBBER



How in the world was I going to get out of this? I was 16 years old and had my first job in the food court of a local grocery store. Pretty safe job—or so I thought—until my boss asked me to dress up as a corn dog to promote a sale we were having. A corn dog!

Next thing I knew, I was in a costume walking around the store with a basketful of candy. I couldn't hold the basket with two hands because the corn dog suit was so huge my arms couldn't reach around to the front. Not only that, when kids would run up to the giant corn dog to get some candy, I couldn't look down to see how many pieces of candy they were taking. I think they caught on quickly. I was under strict orders not to talk while in this horrible costume. So when people asked if I was a banana, I couldn't say anything to correct them. I came up with a solution. I put a nice big sign on my front stating, "I am a corn dog!" I was already beyond humiliation. At least no one could see my face.

Around the store I walked. I'm sure the kids thought I was pretty strange—a giant, silent, walking corn dog with an empty basket. But hey, I wasn't a banana, so it could have been worse.

Then came the cruel laughter and the jabbing kicks from behind. I turned around and saw no one.

Kick! I turned around again. No one. Kick! Kick! I whirled around as quickly as a corn dog could manage. No one again. Now the laughter was

hysterical. Kick! Kick! Kick! Why was no one coming to rescue a poor, persecuted corn dog! Couldn't they see the kids torturing me? I was miserable. I had to get out of there! So I waddled as quickly as I could back to the food court.

It was then that I saw him. A guy I liked was standing at the counter of the food court. I could hear him asking for me. No!

Then I saw my fellow employee, a girl who I thought was my friend, point in my direction. I turned around as quickly as I could and waddled back to where I had been so rudely kicked. Somehow that seemed so much better than being approached by the guy I liked and had tried so hard to impress. I moved as quickly as I could, cutting through the aisle and making my way back to the food court from the other direction. I had to get out of this thing. Just a few more waddles and I would be there.

I struggled to pull the giant corn dog off of my body. I was so completely miserable, so completely humiliated. I couldn't go out there again.

How long had I been in the corn dog costume? An hour? Two hours? Three? I looked at the clock. Twenty minutes! How could so much misery, so much humiliation, so much horror fit into just 20 minutes?

I saw my boss approaching me. I pleaded with her to let me be finished. Couldn't she

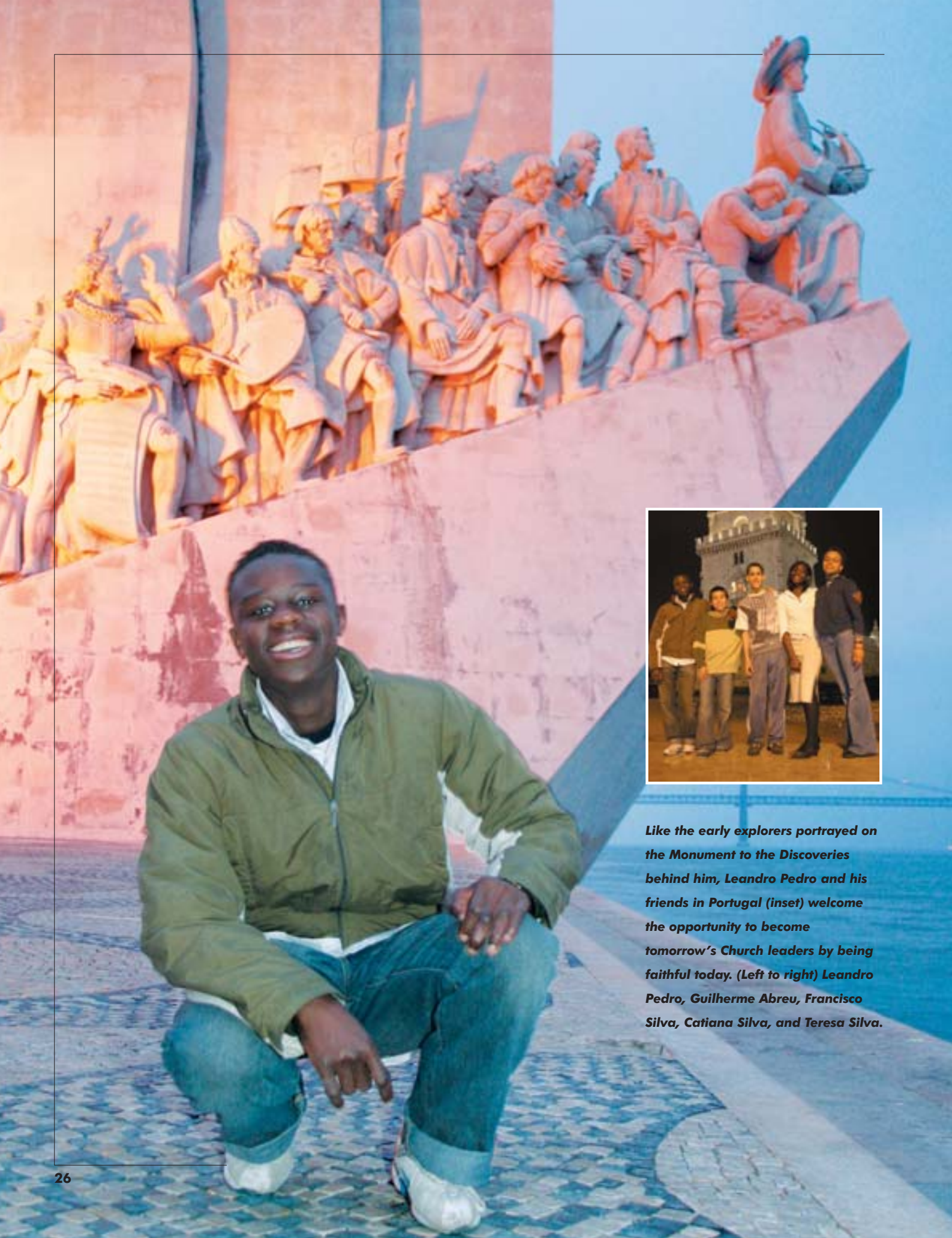
see how tortured I was? She informed me that if I could find a replacement then I was off the hook. Who in their right mind would actually want to do this? But it was my only hope. I had to at least ask.

I approached the girl who had previously blown my cover. I tried to act like it hadn't been that bad. I thought if she knew what she was getting into, she'd never agree. But she did. "It'll be fun," she told me. "She won't last long," I thought.

Three hours later, she came back smiling. I couldn't believe it. She actually enjoyed being a corn dog. I didn't think it was possible. I learned something valuable that day: I learned that we can choose to be happy, or we can choose to be unhappy. We were in the same situation, and she chose to enjoy it. I could have done that too. I could have laughed along with everyone else. I could have seen the humor in the situation and had an enjoyable time. Instead I chose to be miserable.

It's the same thing with life. Our circumstances don't choose for us. We choose. Even in the midst of challenging school assignments, lack of friends, chronic illness, or parents divorcing, we can choose to turn to Heavenly Father and discover that we can still find peace, even joy, in this life. I learned that day that choosing to be cheerful is much more enjoyable, even for a corn dog. **NE**

I should have relished my assignment, but instead I learned a lasting lesson.



Like the early explorers portrayed on the Monument to the Discoveries behind him, Leandro Pedro and his friends in Portugal (inset) welcome the opportunity to become tomorrow's Church leaders by being faithful today. (Left to right) Leandro Pedro, Guilherme Abreu, Francisco Silva, Catiana Silva, and Teresa Silva.

BY SHIP, HANDCART, OR TENNIS SHOE

Inspired youth in Portugal are charting a course to Christ and setting a good example too.

BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines

Leandro Pedro, 16, has heard stories in Sunday School about the faith of the pioneers who crossed the plains. He has always admired the courage they had to walk into the unknown. It reminds him of some of the men who played a part in the history of his own country, Portugal.

Before the pioneers could cross the vast, uninhabited plains of North America, routes to the New World had to be discovered by courageous explorers such as Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, and Ferdinand Magellan during the Age of Exploration in the late 1400s and early 1500s. Many of these explorers were educated as navigators in Portugal or were sponsored by the Portuguese government.

Leandro and his friends from the Lisbon Portugal Stake look out across the Tagus River toward the Atlantic Ocean. It was from

near here at the Monument to the Discoveries that many of these great explorers sailed into unknown waters that were believed by many at the time to take a man to the edge of the earth or grow hotter and hotter until the sea boiled.

But like the pioneers, these explorers were courageous.

“It was dangerous,” says Guilherme Abreu, 13. “They had to be valiant.”

“Not everyone believed they could do it,” agrees Catiana Silva, 14.

“The explorers led and others followed,” Leandro says. “They had a purpose, and others followed their dreams.”

Just like the pioneers of 1847. Just like many of the youth in the Church today.

Modern Explorers

In a dangerous world where so many sail blindly through life with no compass or map, who will lead? Who will be the brave explorers with vision?

“We will be,” says Guilherme, speaking of the youth of the Church. “We have the faith of the explorers. We search. We explore. We have found the



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADAM C. OLSON; ILLUSTRATED BY SCOTT GREER



word of the Lord.”

These Portuguese youth understand that the courage and faith they have will inspire others to follow them.

“Our family will follow us through our example,” says Teresa Silva, 15.

“Our friends will follow us,” says Guilherme.

And in a few short years, today’s youth will be tomorrow’s Church leaders.

“We must prepare to be the future,” says Catiana.

Dangerous Seas

Being an explorer during the fifteenth century was not the safest occupation in the world—Old or New. It required courage. Many suffered from poor nutrition, faced mutinous crew members, survived shipwreck, or were killed in unfamiliar lands.

Today’s world harbors dangers as well. Satan’s influence often strengthens the storms of life.

“Wherever we go, there’s always something dangerous waiting for us,” says Catiana.

She and her friends suggest a number of important instruments that every youthful explorer should rely on to navigate life’s storms. Prayer and scripture study top the list.

“We must follow the prophet,” Leandro adds.

“We need to be brave, too,” says 14-year-old Francisco Silva as he looks up at the long line of explorers portrayed along the Monument to the Discoveries. “It’s not always easy to stand up for what you believe when your friends are making fun of you.”

But what would have happened if



COURAGE TO LEAD

“God bless you, my dear young friends. You are the best generation we have ever

had. You know the gospel better. You are more faithful in your duties. You are stronger to face the temptations which come your way. Live by your standards. Pray for the guidance and protection of the Lord. He will never leave you alone. He will comfort you. He will sustain you. He will bless and magnify you and make your reward sweet and beautiful. And you will discover that your example will attract others who will take courage from your strength.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, “An Ensign to the Nations, a Light to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 84.

Columbus had been more worried about being accepted than about doing what he was prompted to do?

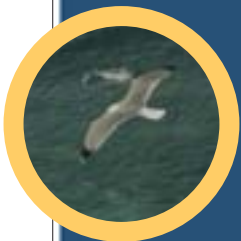
The Promised Land

The Book of Mormon prophet Nephi foresaw the Age of Exploration, that it was inspired by God:

“I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land.

“And it came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters” (1 Nephi 13:12–13).

These explorers helped prepare the way for the Restoration of the gospel. They were





part of God’s plan to put the right 14-year-old boy in the right place at the right time. The results are the blessings and promises enjoyed by members of the Church all over the world because of the Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Leandro and his friends feel like they have been “wrought upon” by the Spirit as well, inspiring them to set a course, with faith in Christ, for another promised land—

an earth “full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9) and, beyond that, returning to live with God.

“If we are faithful, we will have more people who are humble and righteous,” says Leandro.

“If we are faithful,” Guilherme concludes, “we will find eternal life.”

It’s a course that the Savior will help anyone travel, whether by ship, handcart, or tennis shoe. **NE**



PORTUGUESE EXPLORERS

There were a number of famous explorers who had ties to Portugal during what historians call the Age of Exploration. Some were Portuguese; others studied navigation in Portugal or sailed under the Portuguese flag. Among them were:

Christopher Columbus—This famous Italian explorer’s historic voyage that connected the Eastern and Western Hemispheres in modern times was based on learning he gained while living in Portugal.

Amerigo Vespucci—Sailing under the Portuguese flag, this Italian mapmaker showed that the Americas (a name based on his own) were continents rather than islands.

Ferdinand Magellan—This Portuguese explorer led the first circumnavigation of the globe, charting the Straits of Magellan at the tip of South America.

Bartholomeu Dias—This Portuguese explorer was the first from

Europe to round the Cape of Good Hope at Africa’s southernmost tip in search of a shipping route to the Far East.

Vasco da Gama—Also from Portugal, he built on Dias’s success and was the first from Europe to make it to the Far East by sea.

Pedro Álvares Cabral—This Portuguese explorer firmly established Portuguese settlements in what would become Brazil.

Today, a new generation of explorers is growing among the more than 37,000 members of the Church who live in Portugal. The Portugal Lisbon Mission was formed in November 1974 with four missionaries who were transferred from Brazil. The Portugal Porto Mission was created in 1987, and the Cape Verde Praia Mission was formed in 2002, covering the Azores and Madeira Islands, Portuguese territories. The Lisbon Portugal Stake, the first of the country’s six stakes, was created in June 1981.

THREE *Little* QUESTIONS

BY JOHN BYTHEWAY

He had questions, and, because we knew about the plan of salvation, we had answers.

Occasionally, we are given a reminder of how precious a gift it is to understand the plan of salvation. While serving as missionaries in the Philippines, my companion and I were given a referral for a man named Johnny Sajonas. He was about 75 years old and had become frustrated with religion. The investigator who gave us the referral said he was afraid Johnny was almost ready to completely abandon his belief in God.

After we knocked on the fence just outside his door, a partially bearded old man with a cane in his hand and a frown on his face appeared and asked what we wanted. We told him we were missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and that we wanted to share a message with him about the gospel.

He stood silent, examining us from head to toe for a moment and then observed, “You’re very young. I doubt you can teach me anything.”

Smiling, I responded, “Oh, sir, we have great confidence in our message. Please let us share it with you.”

He took a minute to think about it and finally mumbled, “You come back tomorrow at ten o’clock.” Then he turned and walked in the house.

At ten o’clock sharp we arrived at Brother Sajonas’s house. He invited us inside and seated us in front of a small table. We began, as was customary at that time, with

Where did I come from?

Thanks to the restored gospel we know our spirits lived before we were born into this mortal existence.

a discussion about the Restoration. As we began to teach, we noticed that our investigator was rather anxious and fidgety. He'd look at the floor, then at the ceiling, then off to the side. We tried desperately to follow his eyes with our flip-charts to keep his attention. To make things even more challenging, he didn't seem to be listening to what we were saying. After a few moments, he interrupted us in midsentence, looked straight at me, and asked almost angrily, "Who created evil?"

We sat for a moment in shock. I cleared my throat and responded like any good senior companion, "Well . . . uh . . . you see, it's uh . . . uh . . . Elder Warren, you want to take that one?" After a few seconds, I finally began to understand Brother Sajonas's real question: Did God create evil?

I picked up my Bible, and we began to tell Brother Sajonas about the premortal existence. I doubt he'd ever heard anything like this before, since the belief in a pre-earth life is unique to our faith. We referred to Isaiah and told him about Lucifer, who, by his own choice, rebelled against God and fell from heaven, becoming the father of evil.

He paused, then nodded slowly as if to say, "Okay, I'll buy that for now."

Hoping we had answered him adequately, we tried to continue where we had left off in the discussion. But again our investigator was off in another world.

Again he stopped us, loudly demanding, "Why are there so many wars?"

"Uh . . . well, you see, it's uh . . . Elder Warren, you want to . . . uh." Then the answer came to me again. "You see, sir, it has to do with something we received in the premortal existence. It's called moral agency."

We explained how people seem to have a hard time getting along. Often they are selfish. Occasionally, a leader will send his country to war for selfish reasons, and the countries attacked must defend themselves. We said that God helps us a lot, but He wants us to learn to solve our own problems so we can learn and grow, which is what life is for. Our response seemed to start him thinking, and we continued with the discussion. After another minute, he stopped us a third time and asked, "Why do so many children starve?" What a good question. I had asked myself similar questions on many occasions.

In silent prayer, I begged the Spirit to teach us what to say. "Heavenly Father has a different perspective than we do," I began. "When we see a child die, that's how we see it—a child dying. I believe that Heavenly Father, on the other hand, sees one of His own spirit children being set free and coming home to Him. Of course, we need to do all we can to prevent suffering. God expects us to. But when death comes, we return to the peace and love we knew in God's presence before this life."

It was at this point we realized we were teaching the wrong lesson. Every question he asked was answered in the Purpose of Life discussion. The introductory visual aid for this discussion listed three questions. I opened my flip-chart and began to explain. A change of expression came over Brother Sajonas's face, and we watched him in silence as he read and reread each question on the flip-chart:

Where did I come from?

Why am I here?

Where will I go when I die?



Why am I here?

We are here to grow and learn by obtaining a mortal body and by demonstrating our faith and obedience.



His eyes moistened, and tears fell from his face. I had never had this reaction with this picture or any other in our flip-chart, and I wasn't sure what was happening. I looked at Elder Warren, looked back at Brother Sajonas, and then the Spirit spoke to my mind: "Elder, testify."

Sitting up on the edge of my chair, I testified that we knew where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going.

He sat sobbing for a moment, then he stood up and walked slowly to the back of

the room. Picking a little red book from the shelf, he returned to where we were sitting. He opened the book to the back inside cover, held it up in front of our faces, and said tearfully, "You are so young!" Written in old man's shaky handwriting, I read:

My Eternal Questions

1. Where did I come from?
2. Why am I here?
3. What do I need to accomplish?
4. Where will I go when I die?

After we read the words, I looked back into Brother Sajonas's teary eyes as he marveled, "You are so young, and you've come from so far to teach me these things."

The next day we explained the entire plan of salvation to him with little cardboard visual aids. In the middle of the lesson, Brother Sajonas bowed his head, covered his face with his hands, and cried: "I have been looking for this for 40 years." Who would have guessed that three little questions on a flip-chart could bring a 75-year-old man to tears? He was an educated man who only wanted answers to three simple questions: who was he, where was he from, and what did God expect him to do? And one day a couple of 19-year-old elders walked in and taught him simple gospel truths.

Elder Warren and I walked back to our apartment in silence that day, struck with the power of the tremendous knowledge we possessed and had possessed since we were in Primary. I had taken that knowledge for granted. I felt the joy of sharing the plan of salvation and a profound awareness that in every country we have brothers and sisters who are "only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it"

(D&C 123:12). **NE**

Where will I go when I die?

When we die, our spirits go to the spirit world, and our bodies return to the elements of the earth until the resurrection.

CHARTING *the* PLAN



In the Grand Council in Heaven, we accepted Heavenly Father's plan of salvation and chose to come to earth, gain bodies, and be proved so we could become more like Him.

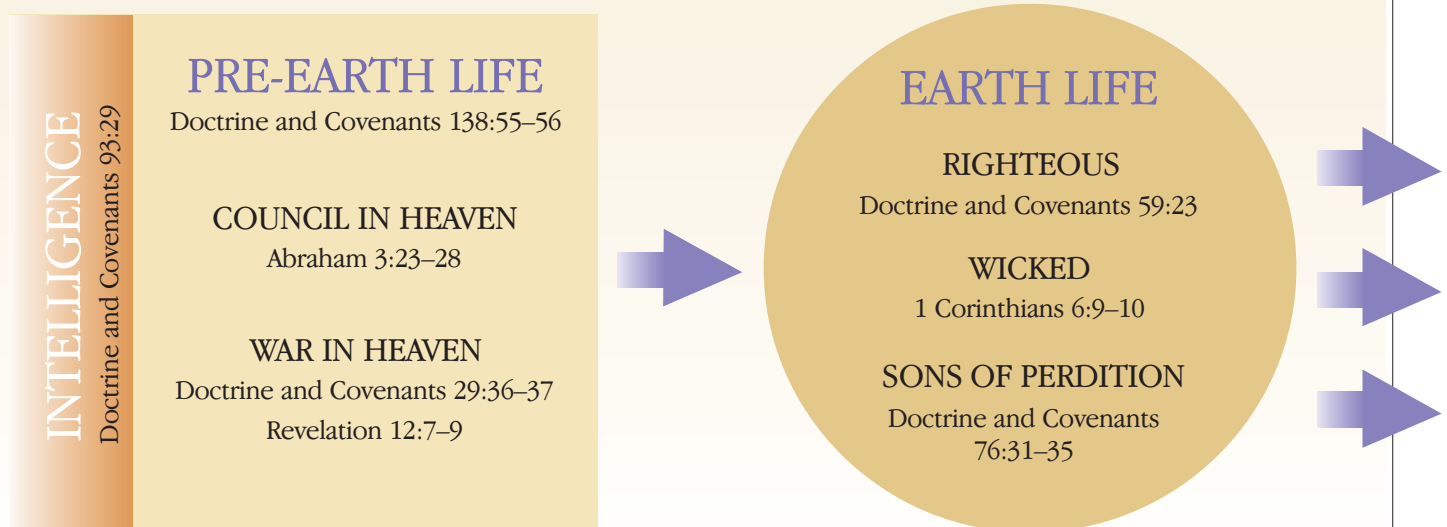
What is the plan of salvation?

As spirit children of God, we lived in our pre-earth life with our Heavenly Father. He presented the plan by which we could continue our progression and experience mortality on earth. In the Grand Council in Heaven, we accepted Heavenly Father's plan of salvation and chose to come to earth, gain bodies, and be tested so we could become more like Him (see Abraham 3:25). As part of the

plan, Heavenly Father provided His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, to overcome death and to atone for our sins. By faithfully following His plan, we can return to Heavenly Father.

Where did I come from?

We lived with our Heavenly Parents in our pre-earth life. Unfortunately, one-third of our Father in Heaven's spirit children did not accept His plan. They chose to follow Satan, then known as Lucifer (see 2 Nephi 24:12; D&C 76:26), who rebelled and sought to take away our agency. Lucifer wanted God's power and glory for himself. A war of ideas was fought in heaven between Satan's followers and God's. Satan and his followers were cast out. You are on earth because you chose Heavenly Father's plan.





“You elected to have this earth experience as part of His plan for you. The prophets call it ‘the plan of mercy,’ the ‘eternal plan of deliverance,’ ‘the plan of salvation,’ and, yes, ‘the great plan of happiness.’ You were taught this plan before you came to earth and there rejoiced in the privilege of participating in it.”

—Elder **Richard G. Scott** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 73.

Why am I here?

When we come to earth, we forget our heavenly home and who we were before we came here. The Lord created the earth to be a dwelling place and a testing place (see Abraham 3:25) for Heavenly Father’s children. He also granted us agency. Earth life is a time when we are tried to see if we will use our agency to do God’s will. Earth life is also a time when we gain bodies, live in families, and experience joy as we follow Heavenly Father’s plan for us. We are accountable for how we take care of our bodies and how we use our agency. The Light of Christ and the Holy Ghost help guide us while we are away from our heavenly home.

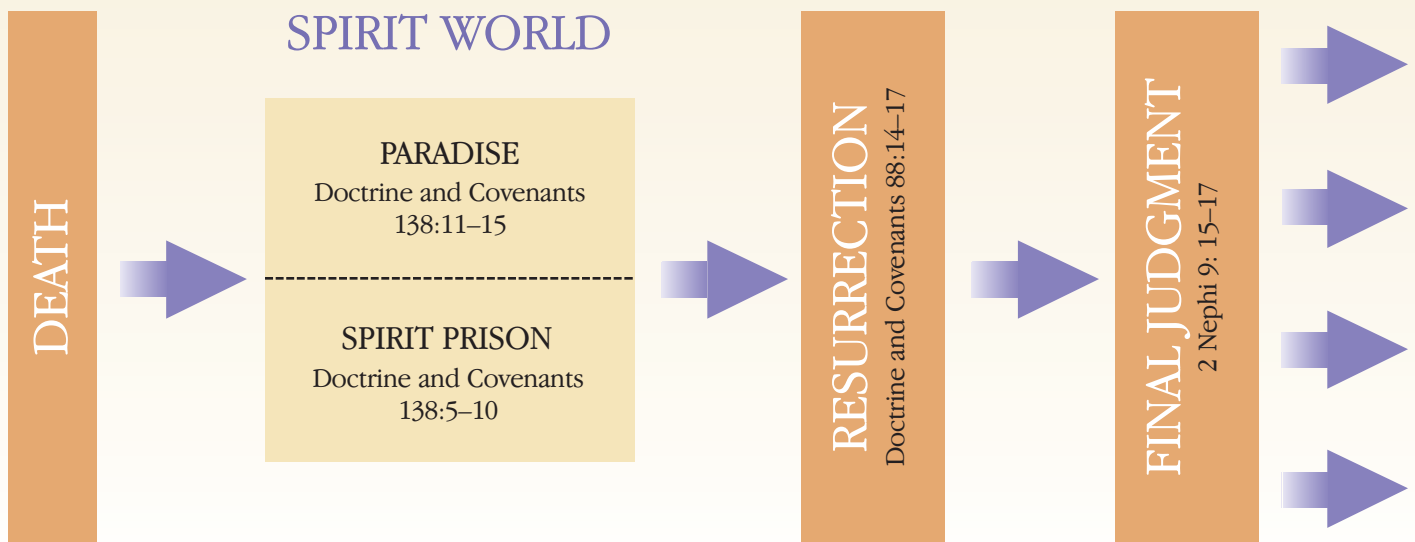
Also, while we are here, and if we have the opportunity to hear the gospel, we need to receive those ordinances that will help us return to God’s presence: baptism, confirmation, certain temple ordinances, and celestial marriage. Ultimately, we are here so we can progress and become more like our Heavenly Father.

Where will I go when I die?

Death is a separation of the body from the spirit. It is a part of God’s plan. When you die, your spirit will go to the spirit world, and your body will return to the elements of the earth until the resurrection.

The spirit world consists of paradise and spirit prison. In paradise are righteous souls of those who were baptized and were faithful to their testimony of Jesus on earth (see 2 Nephi 9:18). In spirit prison are those who have not yet accepted God or who were unfaithful to their knowledge of Him in this life. Because of the Savior’s Atonement, those in spirit prison have the opportunity to be taught and to accept the gospel. To learn more about the spirit world, read Doctrine and Covenants 138.

At some future day, the Lord will return to the earth, and the Saints will be resurrected and caught up to meet Him. Resurrection is the reuniting of body and spirit through the power of Christ’s Atonement. The Lord will also judge all people. After a period of peace



called the Millennium, terrestrial inhabitants (see D&C 45:54) will be resurrected. Those of the telestial kingdom will go through hell and suffer before being released to the telestial kingdom (see D&C 76:81–86). Those who have been faithful to their covenants and have been cleansed from their sins through the Atonement of Jesus Christ will enter the celestial kingdom, where God dwells. The very most wicked, called the sons of perdition—those who continue to fight against Christ—will be sent to outer darkness, where there is no glory. To learn more about the kingdoms of glory, read Doctrine and Covenants 76 and 88. **NE**

EXTRA! EXTRA!

To find out more about the plan of salvation, read the book of Moses and Abraham 3 in the Pearl of Great Price. You can also go to mormon.org and click on the Purpose of Life link.

CELESTIAL KINGDOM

Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–70

TERRESTRIAL KINGDOM

Doctrine and Covenants 76:77–80

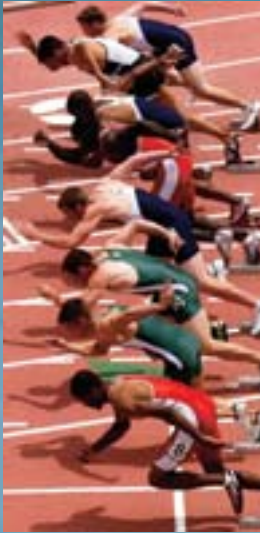
TELESTIAL KINGDOM

Doctrine and Covenants 76:98–105

OUTER DARKNESS

Doctrine and Covenants 88:24





EVERY RACE I GOT **FASTER**

BY DON SEARLE
Church Magazines

After his mission, Nate Soelberg wondered if he could still compete as a runner. He got a quick answer.

Nate is fourth from the bottom (above) at the start of a race. Elder Soelberg (below, center) in Norway with two companions, Elder Russ Andrews (left) and Elder Dan Abenroth.

If you're involved in sports, you've probably heard this: You can't afford to take two years off for a mission. You'll lose your scholarship, you'll lose your skills, and you'll lose your edge. You won't have the fire for the sport anymore.

Nate Soelberg can tell you that those warnings are not true.

Nate was a standout in track and football while he was in high school. In college he not only ran, he also worked hard to eventually earn a spot on the football team—and then he left it behind so he could serve as a missionary in Norway for two years.

Some people wondered if he would be able to get back into form again when he came home. Nate wondered a bit too. But, he says, "I knew if I followed the Lord, He would bless me, that it wasn't going to be a major setback."

After his mission, he was able to earn a starting spot as cornerback on the Brigham

Young University football team and a scholarship. On the track, the spring after he returned from his mission, he kept cutting his times in the 100 meters until he ended the season winning the conference championship. "Every single race I got better," he says.

So was there some connection between the spiritual strength he gained while serving a mission and recapturing his physical ability? Nate thinks so: "I believe it was one of the blessings I had from going on a mission and serving the Lord."

Starting Young

The successes came at a price, of course: hard work. Staying in shape for competitive sports "takes a toll on your body," Nate says. After workouts, "it's really hard to come home and do anything. You just want to rest." He has developed the habit of doing his homework between classes during the day to keep up. "I've learned to manage my time wisely."

Nate started in sports at age five when he played on a T-ball team. Later, he enjoyed playing basketball. He started track competition in junior high school and joined the football team his first year in high school.

He started preparing for his mission at a young age, too. "Sometimes in my life, I felt







Nate was back on top (below) at a conference meet. He is also using his speed (above) on the BYU football team.

nervous about going, but I always knew I wanted to go.”

Warmth in Norway

Norway was cold, in more than one way. He remembers looking at his reflection in a window and seeing frost in his eyebrows and ice on his eyelashes. He remembers serving for two years and having just one baptism, near the end. And he remembers how much he enjoyed it all.

“Most people think it’s just hard work, which it is.” But Nate was surprised at how good it made him feel to serve others. It made him happy to work with members. They “just embrace the missionaries,” he said. Their friendship was warm when it was cold everywhere else.

Did he ever get discouraged? “It’s hard not to,” Nate says. “I just kind of stuck it through. I don’t really hold on to things that discourage me. I put them in the past and move on.” And if a week was hard, he knew things would be better on Sunday when the missionaries could meet with members. “It was never a bad day at church.”

A Real Winner

Nate’s dad, Steve Soelberg, says his son learned a lot about hard work from winning and losing when he was younger. “He knows that to get the wins you have to work for them.”

Nate also knows that you don’t win, no matter what the scoreboard says, if you’re not living the way the Lord wants you to. “If your mind isn’t in tune with the Lord, it is hard for the Lord to help you, and I know athletes need the help.”

Everyone needs help, he says. Nate prays often, for help in life, for help in doing his best on the field, for protection from injuries. He prays not just for himself, but for those around him too.

“I feel like I have help from the Lord. I just try to live so I’ll be worthy of it.”

Now Nate prays also for the family he is just beginning. He married Jessica Ashcroft in April this year.

Just because he prays, he doesn’t always win—at least not on the scoreboard. “There are things sometimes that don’t go my way, and I know I need to learn from those.” When that happens, he does what he did in the mission field: he learns, he puts the hard times behind him, and he moves on. **NE**



THE EXTRA SMILE

"No, as a matter of fact, we are not from another planet. But it sure feels like it sometimes."



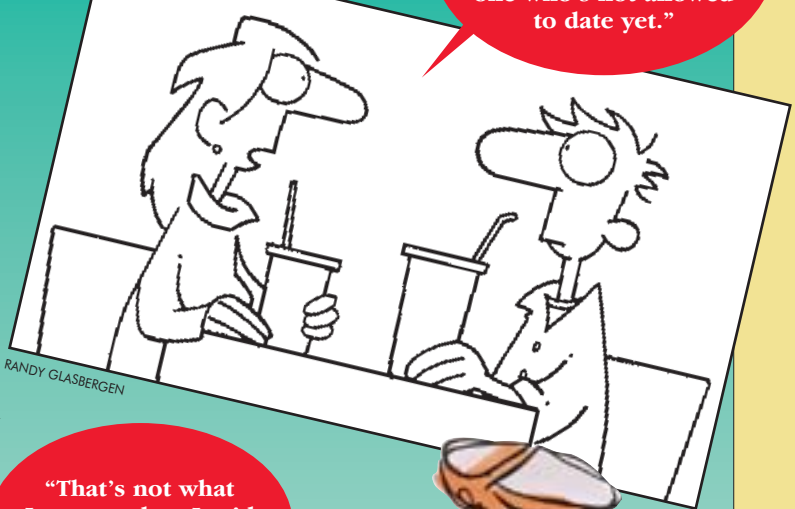
RYAN STOKER

"It saves on paper, and they're too small to fold into paper airplanes."



ERIC LEACH

"It's kind of like Cinderella. If I'm not home by midnight, I'll turn back into someone who's not allowed to date yet."



RANDY GLASBERGEN

"That's not what I meant when I said I needed a cart wheel."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

SMILES DESPITE MY TRIALS

BY MARÍA LUISA GONZÁLEZ HARO

When I was 17, I left my home in Guadalajara to study at Benemérito de las Américas, a Church institution for young people in Mexico. I was very happy there, even though I wasn't in the best of health. I always had people who were willing to help and encourage me, but my illness kept getting more and more serious, and I didn't know what was wrong with me. Finally, I was given a week off school to go back to Guadalajara for some tests.

When I got home, I suffered total facial paralysis. I was hospitalized in very serious condition with kidney failure. I don't remember what happened for the next two weeks. My mother told me I couldn't see or hear or eat anything. The doctors had no hope for me because my vital levels indicated I couldn't survive.

My mother called the bishop, who came and gave me a blessing. I could feel the power of the priesthood, and I started to recover. I was in a wheelchair for a while, but I wasn't able to hold my head up, and I couldn't see or hear. With the help of my ward members and their fasting and prayers, I continued to recover. I was put on dialysis. My mother donated a kidney, and the doctors performed a transplant. However, five months later my body rejected the kidney, and I am now on dialysis again. I am on the waiting list for another kidney transplant.

Despite these trials, Heavenly Father has given me the opportunity to graduate from seminary and to



COME, COME, YE SAINTS

BY KRISTEN GIBBY WALTON



complete my Personal Progress, which gives me a great deal of satisfaction. I know I still have a long way to go before I'm healthy again, but I'm grateful to the Lord for this experience because I've gained a stronger testimony and it continues to grow every day. I think we all have different trials to overcome before we can obtain our eternal reward. "I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; . . . then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27).

What I want more than anything else is to be able to return to the presence of my Heavenly Father. I know I can achieve this if I'm faithful and obedient. Sometimes it's not very easy to accept the will of the Lord, but I try to face my trials with a smile and remember that we're not here on earth very long when compared to eternity.

When I get discouraged I remember the hymn "Count Your Blessings" (*Hymns*, no. 241), and then I feel happy again. That hymn gives me peace and a feeling of gratitude. I remember the people who love me, including a loving Heavenly Father who has blessed me with strength. **NE**

BEING THE NEW GUY

BY ZACHARY Z. BASSETT

When my ward was split, I went from being in a ward where all my best friends

I never truly appreciated the hymn "Come, Come, Ye Saints," (*Hymns*, no. 30) until I was on tour with an institute choir in Wyoming and Montana. One of our last stops was at Martin's Cove. We spent time looking around the visitors' center and then went on a handcart pull. When we reached the top of the cove, we gath-

ered and sang a beautiful arrangement of this sacred hymn. As I contemplated the sacrifices made for us by our forebears, I could not hold back the tears. This hymn taught me that each of us has the same responsibility to move forward with faith, trusting in the Lord. If we do this, we too will be able to proclaim, "All is well!" **NE**

were with me to a ward where the other young men seemed completely different from me. I didn't get along with them very well, but I didn't want this to change the way I viewed the Church or to affect my Mutual attendance. So I stuck it out and tried to talk with the new guys. We didn't agree on much, but we did find common ground—camping. I used this one common interest in our conversations and gradually improved our relationships by building on our similarities.

Sometimes we base our desire to go to Mutual or Sunday meetings on who else is going and whether we like them. But I learned that if you open up and try to make friends with others, you can make it fun, no matter who you're with. It's all about your attitude. **NE**

EVERYONE BUT SARAH

BY SARAH HALL

I moved to a small town at the beginning of the school year. I was at lunch with a group of kids when they started talking about an inappropriate word. They were saying that if a teacher heard them say it, they would get in trouble.

Then one of them said, "Everyone says it . . . everyone but Sarah." I looked up in surprise. I was glad they recognized that I do not say that type of word. And they respect that I am different.

This happened before those people really knew my standards or which church I belonged to. I know I have to watch what I say because others are listening to me, and I want to be a good example. **NE**

SPOTLESS BEFORE THE

Lord

Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can all stand spotless, pure, and white before the Lord

BY ELDER CLATE W. MASK JR.

Of the Seventy



Years ago, my adventurous son Jeff and I were traveling on an old bus bouncing along on a dirt road in Central America at 1:00 a.m. We took the early, early bus because it was the only bus that day. A half hour later, the driver stopped for two missionaries. When they got on, we asked them where in the world they were going so early. Zone conference! And they were determined to do whatever it took to get there. At 2:00 a.m. two more elders boarded the bus and enthusiastically greeted their fellow missionaries. This scene repeated itself every half hour as the bus climbed the remote mountain road. By 5:00 a.m. we had 16 of the Lord's finest as fellow passengers and were basking in the spirit they brought on board.

Suddenly, we screeched to a halt. A massive mud slide had buried the road. Jeff said, "What do we do now, Dad?" Just then, the zone leader shouted, "Let's go, elders. Nothing is going to stop us!" And they scrambled off the bus! We looked at each other and said, "Follow the elders," and we all sloshed through the mud

slide, trying to keep up with the missionaries. There happened to be a truck on the other side, so we all hopped aboard. After a mile, we were stopped by yet another mud slide. Once again the elders plowed through, with the rest of us close behind. But this time there was no truck. Boldly, the zone leader said, "We will be where we are supposed to be even if we have to walk the rest of the way." Years later, Jeff told me how those missionaries inspired and motivated him tremendously as he served the Lord in Argentina.

Mud Slides of Life

Although we overcame the mud slides, we were all spotted with mud. The missionaries were somewhat nervous about standing before their president on zone conference day when he and his wife would be carefully checking their appearance.

As you and I slosh through the mud slides of life, we can't help getting a few mud spots on us along the way either. And we don't want to stand before the Lord looking muddy.

When the Savior appeared in ancient



“For they became a righteous people; they did lay down the weapons of their rebellion, that they did not fight against God any more, neither against any of their brethren” (Alma 23:7).

America, He said, “Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day” (3 Nephi 27:20).

Alma warns us about some of the ways we become spotted with mud: “For our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us” (Alma 12:14).

Alma also said:

“There can no man be saved except his garments are washed white; yea, his garments must be purified until they are cleansed from all stain. . . .

“How will any of you feel, if ye shall stand before the bar of God, having your garments stained with blood and all manner of filthiness?” (Alma 5:21–22).

He then asks us how we are doing as we cross through the mud slides of life: “Have ye walked, keeping yourselves blameless before God?

Could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time, . . . that your garments have been cleansed and made white through the blood of Christ?” (Alma 5:27).

Because of repentance and the Atonement of Jesus Christ, our garments can be spotless, pure, fair, and white.

Moroni pleads, “O then ye unbelieving, turn ye unto the Lord; cry mightily unto the Father in

the name of Jesus, that perhaps ye may be found spotless, pure, fair, and white, having been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, at that great and last day” (Mormon 9:6).

You Can Be Spotless

We come to this world in many colors, shapes, sizes, and circumstances. We don’t have to be rich, tall, thin, brilliant, or beautiful to be saved in the kingdom of God—only pure. We need to be obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ and keep His commandments. And we can all choose to do that regardless of where we live or what we look like.

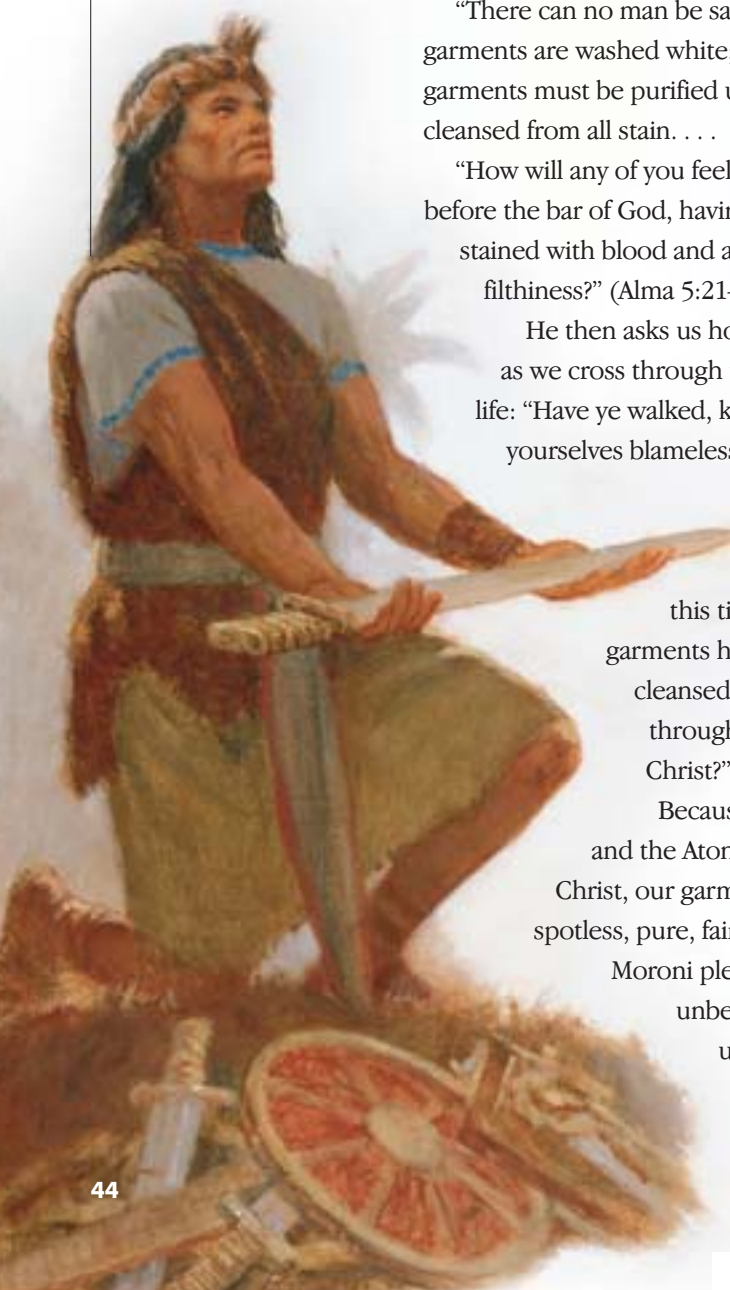
When the four sons of Mosiah taught the gospel to the wild, ferocious Lamanites, a mighty change of heart occurred:

“As many of the Lamanites as believed in their preaching, and were converted unto the Lord, never did fall away.

“For they became a righteous people; they did lay down the weapons of their rebellion, that they did not fight against God any more, neither against any of their brethren” (Alma 23:6–7).

Today, many of their descendants are reading about this in their own copies of the Book of Mormon and are choosing to follow Christ. I love meeting the children of Lehi in spotless white in the numerous temples in the Mexico South Area, where I am currently serving. Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can all stand spotless, pure, and white before the Lord.

With great gratitude, I lift my voice with Nephi: “And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26).



My wife and I love this scripture so much that she painted it on a wall in our living room, below a beautiful white porcelain Christ. They are a constant reminder for us to live Christ-centered lives.

On one occasion, we were at the visitors' center on Temple Square with our grandchildren. Two-year-old Ashley was tired and wanted to leave. Sister Mask asked her if she wanted to see a big Jesus like the one on our wall. She asked, "Is He as big as me?"

"Even bigger," Sister Mask replied. When that tiny, little girl looked up at the majestic Christ, she ran and stood at the feet and gazed up reverently for several minutes. When her father indicated it was time to go, she said, "No, no, Daddy. He loves me and wants to give me hugs!"

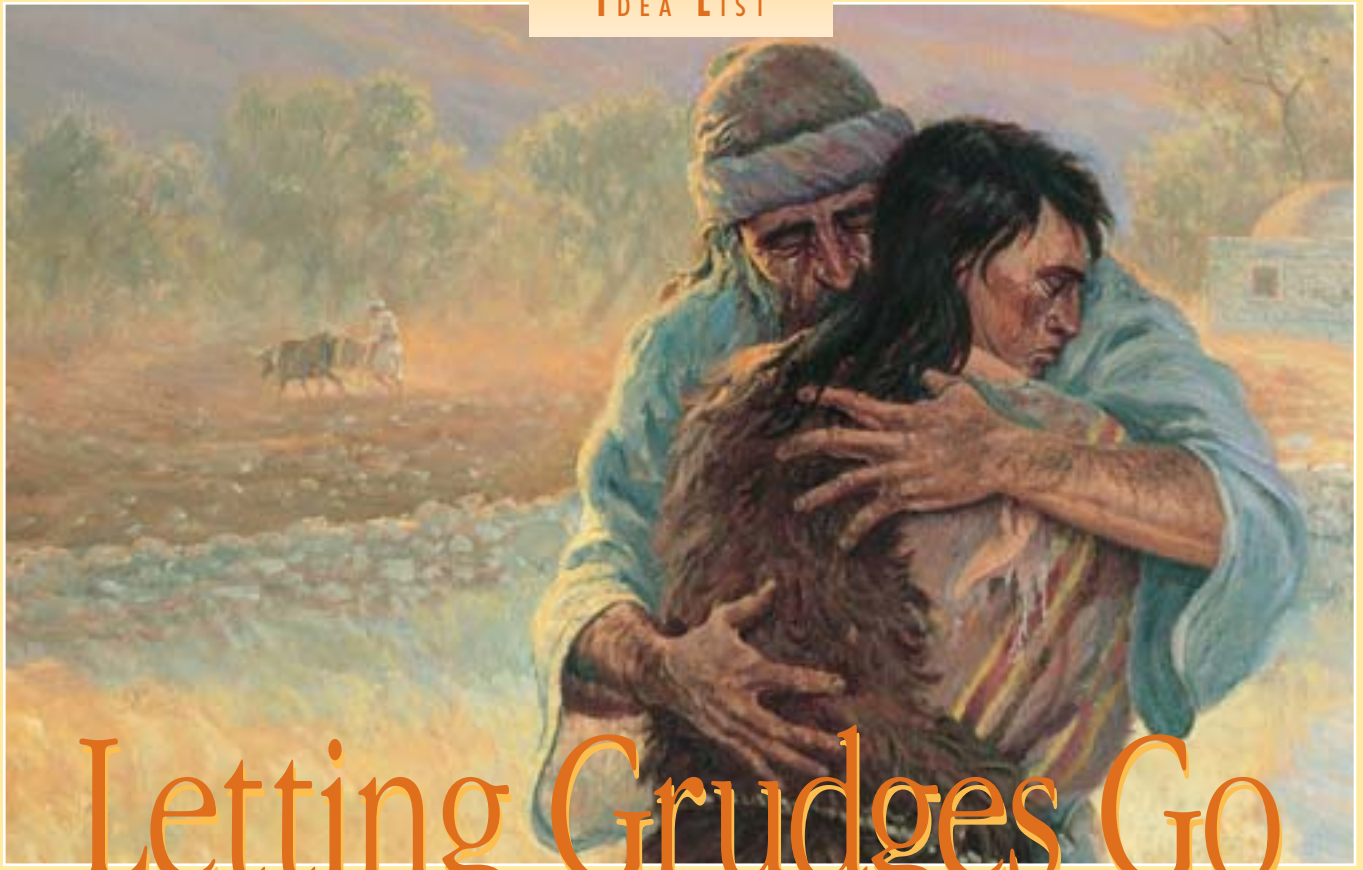
The road of life is strewn with spiritual mud slides. Whatever our sins and imperfections, may we attack them with the same missionary zeal that those elders attacked their mud slides. And may we thank our Father daily for sending us His Son, Jesus Christ, to make it possible for us to be forgiven of our mud spots so that we may stand spotless before Him. Ashley was right. He does love us and will say to us at that great day, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21). **NE**

From an April 2004 general conference address.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

For more on this topic, see the following articles in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org: "The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness" (*New Era*, April 2005), by President Boyd K. Packer; and "Peace of Conscience and Peace of Mind" (*Ensign*, Nov. 2004), by Elder Richard G. Scott.





Letting Grudges Go

BY TAMARA LEATHAM BAILEY

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said, “To forgive one who is mean and offensive is the act of one near to perfection, and especially if the offender is not repentant” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 204). Bring yourself a little closer to perfection by using some of the ideas in this list to help you forgive others.

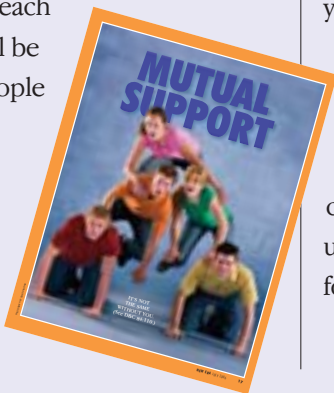
- ✘ Be slow to condemn others, and forgive them as quickly as possible, especially family members. Forgiving can bring you peace.
- ✘ Repent of the grudges you hold, even if the person who has offended you is not repentant.
- ✘ Avoid thinking of revenge or feeling bitter, and instead try to think of good things about the person who has offended you.
- ✘ As you repent for your own sins, think of the Lord’s mercy to you and show this same mercy to others. Remember that to receive forgiveness for your sins, you need to be forgiving (see 3 Nephi 13:14–15).
- ✘ Pray for the Lord’s help as you strive to forgive. Forgiving isn’t always easy or fast, especially for serious

offenses, but you can do it with the Lord’s help. Read Luke 15:11–32 and Genesis 45:4–16 for good examples of forgiving others.

- ✘ If you are trying to forgive and you still feel anger or resentment, keep praying for the strength to forgive. It takes time—and often the Lord’s help—to forgive serious offenses. The scriptures say that not forgiving someone is a greater sin than what the other person did to offend you (see D&C 64:8–11).
- ✘ Try to forget about the offense and build a positive future instead of reliving the past. Telling the story repeatedly or gossiping about what someone has done to offend you or someone else only keeps you experiencing the pain you felt.
- ✘ Take steps to prevent future abuse or other kinds of intentional injury. Also, tell your parents or someone else you trust. Forgiving does not mean allowing others to harm you again or approving of their wrongdoings. But while you need to protect yourself, try to do it without hatred or anger. **NE**

Mutual Activity Idea

- Check out the article “Tornadoes, Typhoons, and War Stories,” on page 10. Consider organizing the youth and doing a similar project with the older members of the ward. They might even interview the former bishoprics that have served in the ward and create a ward history.
- Show the poster on page 17 to each class. Plan some activities that will be of particular interest to young people who are not attending Mutual regularly. Make invitations and hand them out or create a calling tree where one person calls another until everyone is contacted about where to meet and what is planned.



Personal Progress or Duty to God

- After reading President Gordon B. Hinckley’s words on service (page 2), think about people in your life who could use your help. Add a request in your prayers for guidance about who or where your service is needed. Listen for the promptings of the Holy Ghost in answer to your prayers.

Family Home Evening Idea

- Do members of your extended family need your help? Spend your family home evening running errands, cleaning, or doing yard work for grandparents, aunts and uncles, or cousins whose circumstances make it difficult for them to do these things for themselves.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November in the *Ensign*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 31–35.

Young Women Manual 1

Lesson 31: Group Activities: A Basis for Wise Dating

Boyd K. Packer, “You’re in the Driver’s Seat,” *New Era*, June 2004, 4.

Idea List: “Great Group Dates,” *New Era*, Oct. 2004, 33.

Lesson 32: Personal Purity through Self-discipline

Gillian Campbell, “Away from the Edge,” *New Era*, Mar. 2006, 12.

Aubree Nielsen, “Running on Faith,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 42.

Cecil O. Samuelson, “What Does It Mean to Be Perfect?” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 10.

Lesson 33: Avoiding Degrading Media Influences

“Who’s It Hurting?” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 34.

Stephen F. Powell, “Game Over,” *New Era*, Aug. 2005, 26.

Lesson 34: Worthy Thoughts

Kenneth McKinney, “Rolling without Rock,” *New Era*, Nov. 2004, 14.

Poster: “Some Music Can Hurt You,” *New Era*, Mar. 2005, 19.

To the Point: “How do I get rid of inappropriate thoughts?” *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 36.

Lesson 35: Living Righteously amid Pressures

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Bright as the Sun,” *New Era*, June 2006, 2.

Sherilyn Farnes, “Do You Want to Copy My Homework?” this issue, 6.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 1

Lesson 31: Continue in Prayer and Fasting

Matthew Holland, “Wrong Roads and Revelation,” *New Era*, July 2005, 26.

Bremen Leak, “Lost in a Whiteout,” *New Era*, Feb. 2006, 24.

Lesson 32: Tithing

Poster: “Ten Percent Plus All Your Heart,” *New Era*, Dec. 2005, 19.

Spencer W. Kimball, “Will a Man Rob God?” *New Era*, Mar. 2002, 42.

Lesson 33: Scripture Study

Idea List: “Creative Scripture Study,” *New Era*, May 2006, 15.

David A. Bednar, “Because We Have Them before Our Eyes,” *New Era*, Apr. 2006, 2.

Lesson 34: Obedience

Poster: “Don’t Try Bending the Rules,” *New Era*, Oct. 2002, 19.

W. Rolfe Kerr, “Twice Rescued,” *New Era*, Feb. 2006, 20.

Lesson 35: The Sacrament

John W. Yardley, “Happiness Every Week,” *New Era*, May 2004, 12.

Ron Frandsen, “Passing Up Passing the Sacrament,” *New Era*, May 2006, 30.

NOT ALONE

Thank you for the inspirational article "Alone" (Mar. 2006). I too am the only LDS member at the university I attend in Georgia. Sometimes it is hard to have the reassurance that the gospel is true when you are not surrounded by LDS friends at school, and it really tests your standards. But I have also found that when I really feel alone Heavenly Father always seems to find a way to tell me that He is there to help me. Thank you again for reminding me that I am never truly alone.

Candice S., Georgia

TATTOOS

I add a caution to our young ladies also. For years I have worked doing sewing alterations. Lately I have had quite a few young ladies wanting a prom or wedding dress altered so their tattoos would not show. When they got a tattoo, they thought it was cool but now wish it would disappear. It won't, and some are located in very hard-to-hide places. Think twice about it; follow the prophet's counsel and don't get one!

Viva M., California

NOT JUST GIRLS

I was glad to see an article about anorexia in the April 2006 issue, and I just wanted to mention that it is not just a "girl" problem. Recently when one of my sons was struggling with his weight, our doctor mentioned that he had three patients hospitalized with anorexia and two of them were boys. My son would have appreciated a picture of a teenage boy as well as a girl in the anorexia article.

Name Withheld

PERFECT COMEBACK

Thank you for your fantastic article "The Perfect Comeback" (Apr. 2006). I really enjoyed reading a story about how to act when people make fun of others and make them feel bad. I love all of your fantastic, well-written articles, but I especially appreciated this one. Thank you very much.

Zach G., North Carolina

NEW ERA ONLINE

I noticed a mention of an article that seemed interesting in the "We've Got Mail" section of the *New Era*. I wanted to read it, and since I didn't have that issue, I looked it up on Google. I saw the Gospel Library, where all the magazines are online. I am really grateful that you set up a place like that. I hope to read all the magazines you have there. I know that your magazine is appreciated by many people, and I feel like it speaks to some of the problems I have and to problems that may come up in the future. Thank you for creating this magazine and the chance to read all of them online.

Caitlin B., California

Editor's note: The *New Era* can be found at www.lds.org. Click on "Gospel Library" and "Church Publications."

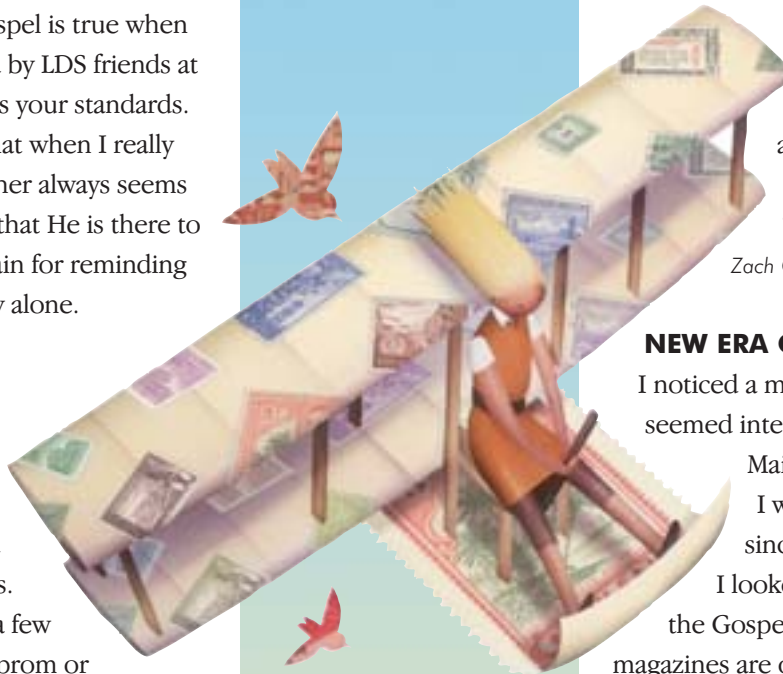
We love hearing from you. Write us at the following address. Please include the names of your ward and stake (or branch and district).

*New Era
We've Got Mail
50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA*

Or e-mail us at

newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



"I saw the Gospel Library, where all the magazines are online. I am really grateful that you set up a place like that."



HAPPINESS

BY LISA S. INOUE

Happiness would be . . .
pinks and yellows,
swirled with white,
flecked with gold.

Happiness would be . . .
radiant,
bursting beams
streaking across the sky.

Happiness would be . . .
warm,
comforting,
like a blanket on a winter's day.

Happiness would be . . .
sweet
rolling off your tongue,
satisfying.

Happiness would be . . .
the scent of flowers,
ten thousand gardens full,
fresh and overflowing with life.

Happiness would be . . .
indescribable,
unexplainable,
perfect.



“I feel like I have help from the Lord. I just try to live so I’ll be worthy of it.”

See “Every Race I Got Faster,” p. 36.

