

A male sprinter is captured in a starting crouch on a red running track. He is wearing a white singlet with black trim and a bib that reads 'FLU'. He is also wearing white shorts with red stripes on the side and black athletic shoes. The background shows a blurred outdoor track setting with trees and a clear sky.

THE New Era

MARCH

2004

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**BE A GREAT
MISSIONARY,
P. 10**

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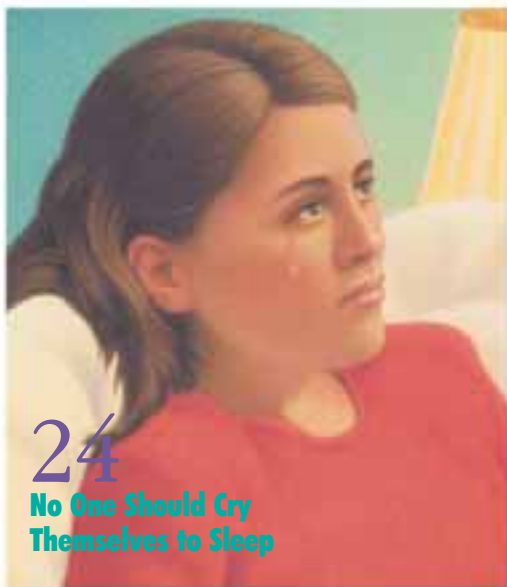
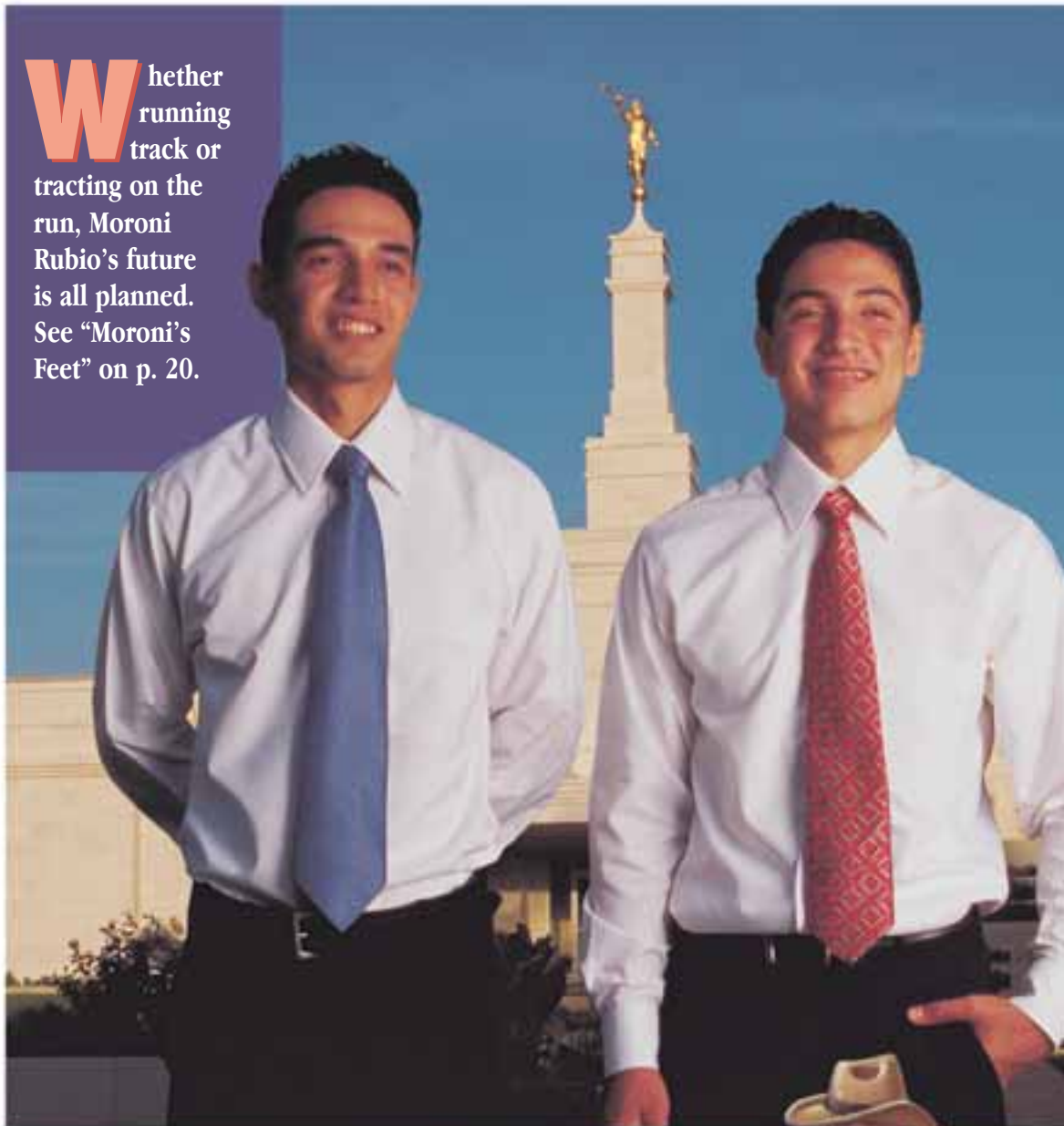
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Cover: Moroni Rubio
is on his way to being
Mexico's fastest man. See
"Moroni's Feet" on p. 20.

Cover photography:
Craig Dimond

Whether
running
track or
tracing on the
run, Moroni
Rubio's future
is all planned.
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GO FOR IT!

BY ELDER M. RUSSELL BALLARD
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



I would suggest that if you want to have success in the goal-setting process, you learn to write your goals down. I would even put them in a prominent place—on your mirror or on the refrigerator door.

Go for righteous goals like serving a mission, getting an education, and marrying in the temple. Then practice self-discipline as you work to obtain them.

What are your concerns in life at your age? Some of you have had questions on your minds about schooling, employment, marriage, and other general directions in life—about how to best fulfill the expectations of yourself as well as the expectations the Lord has for you.

If I were your age and thinking about life and its meaning, there is one characteristic that I would strive to develop. That characteristic is to have a *positive attitude*. I am a great believer that what you and I think about will ultimately come to pass. I believe if we think about committing a sin long enough, we will find ourselves entangled in that sin. I believe if we think about what it takes to be successful long enough and if we are willing to discipline ourselves to the principle of success, we will experience success. Yes, I am a great believer that “as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).

I have learned that I really do have control to a great degree over my circumstances. If I don’t like them, I’ve found there are certain things I can do to change them. If I want to move to higher ground, if I want to have more positive experiences, I must think about life in positive terms, not dwell on the negative.

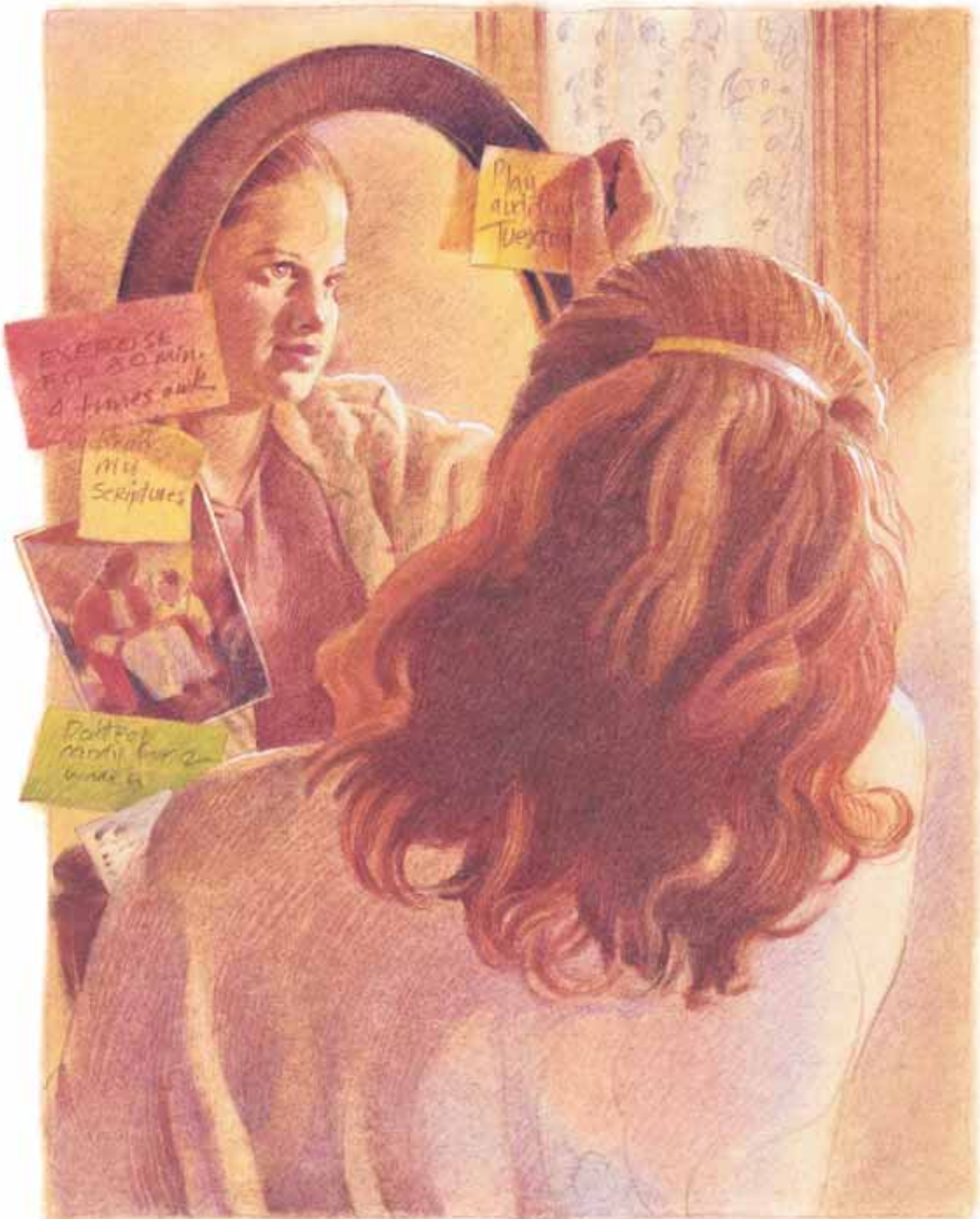
Set Worthy Goals

I believe you can train yourself to become a positive thinker, but you must cultivate a desire to develop the skill of setting personal worthy and realistic goals. I am so thoroughly convinced that if we don’t set goals in our life and learn how to master the technique of living to reach our goals, we can reach a ripe old age and look back on our life only to see that we reached but a small part of our full potential. When you learn to master the principle of setting a goal, you will then be able to make a great difference in the results you attain in this life.

I would suggest that if you want to have success in the goal-setting process, you learn to write your goals down. I would even put them in a prominent place—on your mirror or on the refrigerator door.

Develop Self-discipline

You control to a large degree your own destiny. You control your own life. Some of you might cop out by saying, “Well, Brother Ballard, you just don’t understand my environment. You just don’t understand my circumstances. You just don’t understand what kind of a father I have, or what kind of a mother I have, or what kind of a this or that.”





“No,” I would say to you, “put all of that in the back of your minds and bring forward to the front of your mind the worthy goals that you want to obtain. Then practice personal self-discipline.”

Benjamin N. Woodson had some good things to say about self-discipline:

“For my part, I have concluded that the quality which sets one man apart from another—the factor which lifts one man to every achievement to which he reasonably aspires while the other is caught in the slough of mediocrity for all the years of his life—is not talent, nor formal education, nor luck, nor intellectual brilliance, but is rather the successful man’s greater capacity for self-discipline.”

Mr. Woodson offers a great suggestion:

“All you need to do is this: Beginning this very day, stop doing some one thing you know you should not do.” After you have written this one thing down, stop doing it!

Some of you will have the necessary self-discipline and courage to do this. Others of you will just sit here and say, “Oh boy.” You won’t pay any attention to it, and so a month from now you will still be dragging behind you the same habit that is holding you back from being your best self.

A few of you will stop doing that one thing today. Why? Because you are going to write it down and then you are going to discipline yourself in such a way that you are going to take a problem out of your life.

Make Your Goals Happen

Now the second part of Mr. Woodson’s suggestion is this, “Start doing each day some one thing you know you should do!” Write down one thing that you are going to start doing that you have been meaning to do for a long time but that you just haven’t gotten around to. I don’t know what it might be, but place into your life, beginning

tonight, one thing that you are going to do that is going to make you a better person. I believe if you make this a regular practice, you will start to fulfill the Savior’s teaching when He asked us, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Perfection is a process and not an event, and you will come to appreciate that perfection is an internal matter, not external. It is a process by which you and I learn to eliminate the things in life that are not good, replace them with the things in life that are eternal in nature, with the objective and thought that perfection is obtainable, but it must be earned.

If your goals are righteous, of God-given perspective, eternal in their nature, then go for them. Pray for the inner strength to have the discipline to do those things that will guarantee through your activity and your life that you will reach your goals. Then, I think, perhaps as important as anything, we have to have faith. We have to have faith in God. We have to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And oh, how desperately we have to have faith in ourselves.

We all are the sons and daughters of God. Therefore, none of us, no not one, should ever have a low self-image. We belong to Him. We must struggle always to keep in our minds that our ultimate goal is to inherit eternal life.

Do Things That Make a Difference

Sometimes young people will say to me, “Brother Ballard, I have had this problem in my life, and I haven’t cleared it up.” Depending upon the nature of the problem, I counsel with that young person and teach this principle: You must clear the problem up and then not spend one more second worrying about it. Past problems are like a stream when you are standing on a bridge—the stream is rolling underneath you, and

If your goals are righteous, of God-given perspective, eternal in their nature, then go for them. Pray for the inner strength to have the discipline to do those things that will guarantee through your activity and your life that you will reach your goals.

Where do
you want
to get?

*You are trying to
get to the celestial
kingdom. We are
struggling to
become worthy to
some day go into
the presence of
God and Jesus
Christ and dwell
with Them.*



your problems have gone downstream. Regardless of how hard you try, you can't change the past. What I want you to learn to do is look upstream. Watch for the things that are coming down the river of life that you can change and control. Now if there are those of you who have committed transgressions that are of the nature that require a visit with your bishop, please get to your bishop. When? Immediately! Get it cleared up! Get and keep your feet planted on the straight and narrow way.

Set clear and specific goals. When you set a goal and commit yourself to the necessary self-discipline to reach that goal, you will eliminate most of the problems in your life. Spend your energies doing those things that will make a difference. Then you can become what you think about. If you just have the simple faith that God is in His heaven and He is your Heavenly Father and He does know that you are here and He does love you—and that Jesus is the Christ, that He is your Savior, that He is your Redeemer, and that you love Him with all your heart and are going to do all you can to keep His commandments—then peace comes.

Where do you want to get? You are trying to get to the celestial kingdom. We are

struggling to become worthy to some day go into the presence of God and Jesus Christ and dwell with Them. There is only one way that you can forfeit the blessings of eternity. You can forfeit them by unrepented sins.

Do the Right Things for the Right Reasons

Live a righteous, pure life. Do the right things for the right reasons, and in God's due time, all of the blessings of eternity will be yours. The key to this is personal self-discipline that leads to righteousness. The key is to do and to learn to master living the gospel for the right reason, to build the inner self.

You have a mighty spirit and so do I. The greatest education and the greatest thrust in our lives ought to be to build upon the things of the Spirit. You do that by practicing some of the principles I have suggested.

We cannot ignore keeping the commandments of God. We cannot excuse ourselves or rationalize or justify even the smallest things in our lives that we need to master. We must work to overcome them. We can become the masters of our own destinies by practicing self-discipline and by setting worthy goals that will lead to higher ground so that we can become what our Heavenly Father wants us to become. **NE**

From an address given to young adults in Salt Lake City on 18 October 1981.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

If you want to learn more about achieving your goals, these scriptures have some interesting insights: Proverbs 25:28; 1 Corinthians 9:24–27; Mosiah 4:27; D&C 10:5.

In site: See "The Message: In Control" (*New Era*, Sept. 1987) by Elder Robert E. Wells at www.lds.org in the Gospel Library.

BY BOBBY THURMAN

I couldn't believe I had actually made it. I stood at the entrance to the Sacred Grove, about to enter for the first time. I had always been taught that the Sacred Grove is where Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared after the young Joseph Smith had offered his heart in prayer to God. But I wondered: Was it really true? Did They really appear to Joseph? I had always believed it was true, but I wanted to know for sure.

I slowly walked into the grove and was struck by its beauty. The melody to "Joseph Smith's First Prayer" (*Hymns*, no. 26) began playing in my mind. Sitting on a bench, I saw rays of sunshine piercing through the trees. The Holy Ghost brought a calm witness that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ had truly appeared to Joseph Smith.

I got up, looking for a place to be alone. When I found one, I knelt down and offered my gratitude to the Lord for the witness I had just received. I don't know how long I prayed or if anybody saw me, but I do know that I was heard by the Lord.

I arose from my prayer with new life. My testimony had been strengthened, and I was filled with love for the restored gospel. I hadn't heard a booming voice or felt a burning in my bosom, but an overwhelming peace and assurance had come over me.

I longed to stay. But I left the safety of that sanctuary with the assurance that God hears and answers prayers and that any place I kneel can become sacred to me. **NE**

Elder Bobby Thurman is serving full-time in the California San Bernardino Mission.

Kneeling TO KNOW

My prayer was simply to know if what I had been taught about Joseph's vision was true.

BE ONE OF THE GREATEST



What can youth do today to become the kind of missionaries Heavenly Father expects them to be tomorrow?

In a conversation with Church magazines, Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Elder Charles Didier of the Presidency of the Seventy explained that there are many things that can help you be part of “the greatest generation of missionaries.”¹ You’re probably doing some of them already.

Obey the Promptings of the Spirit

“If ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach” (D&C 42:14).

It is essential that the greatest generation of missionaries have the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Having the Spirit is absolutely necessary to missionary work. We may share our beliefs or explain the doctrine, but it is the Spirit that touches hearts and converts people.

“A missionary must be living so that the Spirit can prompt him or her,” Elder Richard G. Scott tells Church magazines.

But recognizing and obeying the

promptings of the Holy Ghost aren’t things missionaries learn automatically at the Missionary Training Center (MTC). They have to be learned by experience, beginning as early as possible.

We also need to learn early on that if we disobey the promptings of the Holy Ghost, we sin and our ability to receive the guidance of the Holy Ghost is diminished (see Mosiah 2:36; Helaman 4:24).

“Young people preparing for missions must stay as far away from the boundaries of sin as they can,” says Elder Scott. “That gives them the fullest happiness as they prepare; it assures them the greatest capacity to be led by the Spirit.”

When we make mistakes, sincere repentance is necessary for us to enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost again. Unfortunately some sins will keep you from taking your place in the greatest generation of missionaries.



“There are some activities that will rule youth out from the privilege of being missionaries,” Elder Scott says. “They may have repented, but if they’ve done certain things, they are going to be asked to just get on with their lives.”

Obtain the Word

“Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men” (D&C 11:21).

Have you ever heard the saying “You can’t draw water from an empty well”? Obviously, a well isn’t much use without any water in it.

The same goes for missionaries. What good is a missionary who has nothing to say? The Holy Ghost can’t bring to your memory a scripture that will touch someone’s heart if you haven’t studied the scriptures yourself. And you won’t be able to testify about the blessings that come from keeping the Sabbath day holy if you haven’t

been living that commandment.

“Teaching by the Spirit means there needs to be an investment of time and effort,” Elder Scott says. “It isn’t saying, ‘Well, I’m just going to go out there and wait for the Spirit to tell me what to do.’ You have to store the gospel—especially the message of the Restoration—in your mind and heart.”

Before entering the MTC, missionaries should have read and gained a testimony of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. Prospective missionaries should understand the significance of the Atonement, the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel, priesthood authority, living prophets, and the ability to receive revelation. They should have developed a prayerful relationship with God.

“Before we can declare the word, we must obtain the word” (see D&C 11:21), Elder Charles Didier explains to Church magazines. “Some think that obtaining the word is going to happen in the mission field. It is very difficult to acquire a spiritual background based on the scriptures in the mission field because a mission is so demanding.”

TEACH WITH THE SPIRIT



“The sequence of steps to possessing the power of God in teaching the gospel is to first seek to obtain the word; then comes understanding through the Spirit, and finally the power to convince.

“How do you obtain the Spirit? ‘By the prayer of faith,’ says the Lord. Therefore, you must pray with sincerity and real intent. Pray for increased faith. Pray for the Spirit to accompany your teaching. Ask the Lord for forgiveness. Your prayers must be

offered in the same spirit and with the same fervor as were the prayers of Enos in the Book of Mormon. . . .

“To obtain the Spirit, you will have to search the scriptures daily. The Book of Mormon tells us about some of the most successful missionaries who have gone forth to preach the gospel—Ammon, Aaron, Omner, and Himni—the four sons of Mosiah. They were men of God who had prepared themselves to do the work.”

—President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), “Keys to Successful Member-Missionary Work,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1990, 4–5.





That kind of spiritual background comes from personal prayer and scripture study, obedience to the principles of the gospel, and attendance at Church meetings and Mutual. Seminary and the scripture mastery program are also priceless aids in understanding the gospel.

“We really wish and pray that the missionary would come with that kind of preparation,” Elder Didier says, “so we can add and supplement instead of creating a knowledge that is not there.”

Start Sharing Today

“I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his

neighbor” (D&C 88:81).

One of the best ways to learn to share the gospel tomorrow is to share it today.

“Everyone can do something,” Elder Didier says. “There are so many different ways to do missionary work. Write a letter; share a Church video; give pass-along cards to friends. Youth can fellowship or help in the activation process. If the youth can start thinking about missionary work now, when they go into the mission field, they will have so much the advantage because they have done it before.”

“Going out and working with the full-time missionaries is another way youth can prepare and learn to be more responsive to the Spirit,” says Elder Scott. “Teaching

Attending
Church
meetings,
seminary, and
Mutual is priceless
in helping you build
the gospel
foundation you
need as a
missionary.

You can prepare for your mission by sharing the gospel with your friends. Write a letter; share a Church video; give a pass-along card.

and testifying with the missionaries, in quorum meetings, or to their friends will help them feel the guidance of the Spirit. Those are all wonderful preparatory experiences.”

Just be warned: once you start, you might not be able to stop.

“Once you begin, missionary work is exciting,” Elder Scott says. “It’s stimulating. It’s not a burden. It is a thrilling experience.”

What to Look Forward To

“Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say; but treasure up in your

minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man” (D&C 84:85).

The Church is adjusting its approach to missionary work to emphasize teaching by the Spirit and focusing on individual needs.

“The curriculum has not changed,” says Elder Didier. “Missionaries still have the same six discussions. What we’re asking is for the missionary to prepare an outline during personal and companion study, personalized for who will be taught that day.”

“They’re going to teach the investigators



THE GREATEST GENERATION OF MISSIONARIES



“These are ‘perilous times.’ We battle literally for the souls of men. The enemy is unforgiving and relentless. He is taking eternal prisoners at an alarming rate. And he shows no sign of letting up.

“... And so, as the people of Ammon looked to their sons for reinforcement in the war against the Lamanites, we look to you, my young brethren of the Aaronic Priesthood. We need you. Like Helaman’s 2,000 stripling warriors, you also are the spirit sons of God, and you too can be endowed with power to build up and defend His kingdom. We need you to

make sacred covenants, just as they did. We need you to be meticulously obedient and faithful, just as they were.

“What we need now is the greatest generation of missionaries in the history of the Church. We need worthy, qualified, spiritually energized missionaries. . . .

“... We don’t need spiritually weak and semicommitted young men. We don’t need you to just fill a position; we need your whole heart and soul. We need vibrant, thinking, passionate missionaries who know how to listen to and respond to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.”

—Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Greatest Generation of Missionaries,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 47.



RIGHT: TWO THOUSAND STRIPLING WARRIORS, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

according to the investigator’s needs,” says Elder Scott. “And every investigator is different.”

Missionaries are now being encouraged to explain the gospel in their own words, and they can adapt the order in which they present gospel principles in the discussions.

“Missionaries aren’t just memorizing one message to be given all the time, like turning on a tape player,” says Elder Scott. “They are to fill their minds and hearts with the basic doctrine, the supporting scriptures, and how that relates to their own experiences that they can call upon. We now have missionaries who are much better equipped to introduce individuals to the magnificent message of the Restoration.”

In the MTC, missionaries are learning in their native languages how to prepare outlines, how to teach with their own words, and how to teach by the Spirit. Those who must learn other languages spend much of their time learning the content of the discussions in their native language.

“That means that when missionaries get to the mission field, a companion is much more important in helping them with their continued study of a language and in

beginning to adapt what they have learned to be able to teach portions of the message,” Elder Scott says.

You Can Do It

You can take your place among the greatest generation of missionaries the Church has ever had. It will take effort and dedication. It will take faith and sacrifice. Becoming the greatest generation of missionaries tomorrow begins with being the greatest generation of youth today. It is well within your grasp.

“Most of today’s teenagers have extraordinary capacity and spiritual acuity,” says Elder Scott. “The world is getting worse, but our capacity to teach the gospel is improving. And these youth are going to be part of that well-prepared group who go out and have an exciting time in the mission field, forging a path that will help them from now to eternity as they bring families and individuals securely into the kingdom of God on earth.” **NE**

NOTE

1. See M. Russell Ballard, “The Greatest Generation of Missionaries,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 46–49; see also Gordon B. Hinckley, “To Men of the Priesthood,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 56–59.

Q & A

“What should I do when friends ask about the Church but only want to debate?”

NEW ERA

You’ll never debate someone into the Church, even if you have a dozen logical arguments on your side.

“Intellectual things—reason and logic—can do some good,” taught Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85). “But conversion comes and the truth sinks into the hearts of people only when it is taught by the power of the Spirit” (quoted by Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 9).

Avoid Debate

The “spirit of contention . . . is of the devil” (3 Nephi 11:29). So if your friends only want to debate, you could excuse yourself from the conversation. Getting out of a debate with friends can be hard. Offer a quick prayer and ask the Lord for help. Then do your best, trusting He will guide you.

You might let your friends know that the way they debate your beliefs makes you uncomfortable and hurts your feelings. They may not realize this. You could tell them that if they’re really interested in knowing more, you’d be happy to invite them to a Mutual activity or to Sunday meetings.

Conversion comes through the Spirit of the Lord, not the spirit of contention.

If the Holy Ghost can’t be present, put off the conversation until He can.

Prepare yourself. The more you know about the gospel and the stronger your testimony, the better you’ll be able to answer others’ questions.

Visit www.mormon.org for answers to many of the questions you might be asked.

Pray for help to know what to say and that your friends’ hearts will be softened.

Let your example speak for you when others won’t listen to your words.

Prepare Yourself

If these situations happen regularly, spend some time praying about how you should handle them. Pray that your friends’ hearts will be softened. Pray to know when *you* should approach *them* at a time when the Holy Ghost can be there too. Trust and pray that the Lord will prepare your friends while you work to prepare yourself. Study scriptures and talks related to the questions they ask.

“Become lifelong students of the scriptures and the restored gospel of Jesus Christ so that you might always be prepared to courteously and respectfully help clarify misunderstandings about our Church as they occur with those of other faiths,” said Elder M. Russell Ballard (*Ensign*, June 1998, 68).

A good resource is www.mormon.org, where you can find the Church’s responses to many of the questions members often encounter.

Bear Testimony

No matter the situation, you can rely on your testimony. So be sure you’re doing everything you can to strengthen it. When you tell



friends about your beliefs, don't be afraid to stand up for what you know is right, but try not to offend. You can share how the gospel has blessed you without putting yourself above them or tearing down their beliefs.

"We bear testimony and witness of Him. But we need not do so with arrogance or self-righteousness," said President Gordon B. Hinckley (*Ensign*, May 1998, 5).

Be a Good Example

Never underestimate the power of your example. Don't argue, but don't be ashamed of the gospel. Your example will affect your friends long after they've forgotten what you've said. It can have a greater effect on them than you may ever know. **NE**

READERS



In my high school, my sister and I were the only members of the Church, and often our beliefs were ridiculed or misunderstood. When I realized that trying to explain my convictions wasn't effective with most people, I decided to speak by living my standards. When they noticed I was living differently, some of them

approached me to inquire about the Church.

Elder Daniele Bressan, 22, Italy Catania Mission



We should remember to pray for guidance to say the right things so that even if everything doesn't go exactly how we want, we will know that we said what the Lord wants.

Erica Lindley, 15, Shanghai Branch,
China International District

I grew up where there were a lot of misconceptions about the Church. No matter how wrong I proved them, people would never believe, because the Spirit wasn't there. I've found that the only thing to do is say, "This is what I know. If you want to know, you have to find out for yourself from firsthand experience."

Elder Jared Paredes, 19, Canada Montréal Mission



When I am placed in those frustrating situations, I have to step back and realize that I can't force the gospel on anyone. Maybe they just aren't ready to accept the truth.

All you can do is explain to them that you are happiest when you are choosing to be obedient to the principles of the gospel. Then hope you have helped plant a seed in their hearts.

Cara Scoville, 18, Parkway Eighth Ward,
South Jordan Utah Parkway Stake



Just bear your testimony and challenge your friends to find out what the Church and gospel are all about. The Spirit of the Lord will touch the hearts of your friends who have a desire to know. Even though people may twist your words, the truth shows and teaches them through your example.

Lisa Cannon, 18, Medford Sixth Ward,
Medford Oregon Stake



To argue or debate over sacred things usually generates much more heat than light."

—President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Peaceable Followers of Christ," *Ensign*, Apr. 1998, 65.



It's good that your friends are asking questions about the Church. Be positive, and tell them some of the blessings the gospel has brought into your life. Remember, the gospel is one of peace.

Elder Owofre Edem John, 22, Ghana Accra Mission

Ask your friends if you could talk to them later, after school or on the phone. This way you could prepare yourself for what they might ask. I believe that if you are prepared each day, you will be able to answer those hard and uncomfortable questions that arise.

Julianne Seegmiller, 15, Fairfield First Ward,
Fairfield California Stake



Sometimes you just need to walk away. The Spirit can't testify to someone when they are arguing. Talk about it another time when they really want to listen and learn.

Krisina Lewis, 13, Highland Ward,
Murray Utah Parkway Stake

The *New Era's* and readers' answers are intended as help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send us your answer to the question below, along with your name, age, and the names of your ward and stake (or branch and district), and photograph to:

Q&A, New Era

50 East North Temple

Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by 1 May 2004.

QUESTION

"Why does my room need to be clean?

Does a messy room make me a bad person?"

PUZZLED?

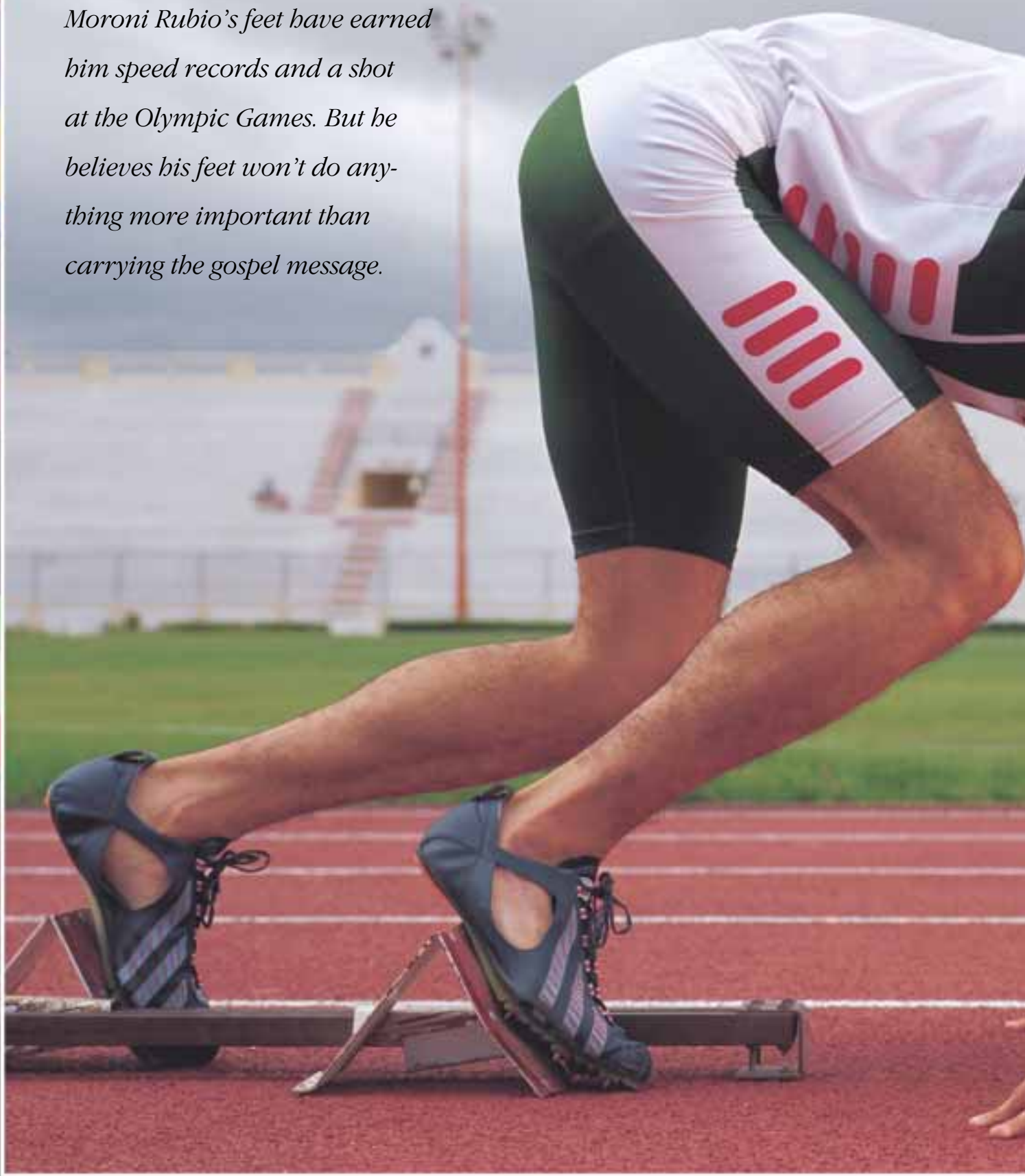


ask of God

IF YOU'RE MISSING PEACE AND SEEKING ANSWERS,
PRAYER MIGHT BE THE PIECE YOU'RE MISSING.

(See 3 Nephi 18:20.)

Moroni Rubio's feet have earned him speed records and a shot at the Olympic Games. But he believes his feet won't do anything more important than carrying the gospel message.



BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines

Moroni Rubio was only 16 when he earned the number one ranking among sprinters in Mexico, after breaking records in the 100- and 200-meter sprints. That same year, 2002, he took first place in the

100 meters at the Central American Junior Championships and was named athlete of the year in the state of Yucatán.

His dreams are pinned on his feet, which are expected to carry him all the way to the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China. But even if, for some reason, his feet don't take him to the Olympics, they will have already accomplished a great work.

His feet have put his unique name in the



After setting records in the 100- and 200-meter sprints in his division, Moroni Rubio faces high expectations for his athletic career.

MORONI'S FEET

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CRAIG DIMOND,
EXCEPT AS NOTED; BORDER
PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM C. OLSON



Despite a hectic schedule that includes school, church, training, and more, Moroni enjoys playing the guitar and being with his family.

spotlight, bringing him numerous missionary opportunities. Because of Moroni's success, he's been on television a number of times—each time with his name right there on the screen.

"I'm asked about my name a lot," says Moroni, a priest in the Mérida México Lakín Stake. "It's a great opportunity to talk about the gospel. And when I race, the members watching always know I'm a member too—by my name. I think it's something they're proud of."

His coaches have always told him he has a beautiful stride. But for Moroni, having "beautiful feet" is just as important—remembering Isaiah's words about missionaries: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings" (Isaiah 52:7).

Making the Sacrifice

Getting where he is now hasn't been easy. He's a sprinter with a marathon schedule. Moroni is off to school early. After school there's just enough time to wolf down a snack before heading off to training. By the time he's home, at around 8:00 P.M., he barely has time to

eat dinner and do homework. Then it's off to bed. Keeping up with Moroni isn't a challenge just on the track.

"It's a sacrifice," Moroni says. "A lot of times I want to do other things, like hang out with my friends or play the guitar. But there's no time."

The Juggling Runner

As Moroni tries to juggle his training schedule with homework, family, church, and friends, the scripture about a man running "faster than he has strength" takes on more than one meaning for him.

Like many Latter-day Saint teens, Moroni has had to be careful not to overload himself by doing too much. From his experience as a runner, Moroni knows that you can hurt yourself when you push too hard. As King Benjamin told his people, "It is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength" (Mosiah 4:27).

But to Moroni that scripture isn't an excuse to stay in his comfort zone; it's a challenge to increase his strength. When he began competing in the 100 meters at age 14, his top time was 11.9 seconds. Through

growth and training, he has increased his strength and improved his time. Now Moroni's best time in the 100 meters is 10.46 seconds—the Mexican record in the junior (minor) division.

"It's the consistency in training," he says, "every day without quitting. I know I have limits, but they can change. On the track there are times when I think I can't make it, but stretching that much farther is part of the sacrifice to get better."

Or in King Benjamin's words: "And again, it is expedient that he should be diligent, that thereby he might win the prize" (Mosiah 4:27). That lesson hasn't been lost on Moroni off the track.



"Trials that once seemed impossible aren't necessarily," Moroni says. "The Lord will never give us challenges we can't overcome. We can overcome them even if at first we think we can't. Never giving up is how we grow and get better. In the end, the sacrifices are worth it."

Fans in the Family

Moroni says that one of his greatest supports during trials—both on and off the track—is his family. He appreciates their support. They appreciate how he doesn't

think he's better than they are because of all the attention he is receiving. After all, they have their own talents.

His sister, Joycy, 20, has always been at the top of her class in school. Álvaro Jr., 19, is a talented artist and singer. Steven, 14, is energetic and also excels at running. And Marianna, 10, "will be great in business," says her father, Álvaro. "Even if they're not national champions in something, they can still have the satisfaction of having done their best."

In fact, Moroni says *he* looks up to *them*, especially to his older brother, Álvaro Jr., now serving in the México Puebla Mission.

"I've always known that without God's help I'd be nothing. He gave me the talent," says Moroni. "I always pray for His help. My life would be so much more difficult without the teachings of the gospel."

Feet Shod with the Gospel of Peace

Once Moroni's feet have helped him spread the gospel through track and field, he hopes they'll help him spread the gospel in the mission field.

"I believe the things I'm doing as a runner are important to the Lord," says Moroni. "But serving a mission is more important than running. Serving a mission is one of my goals, independent of whatever else happens in my athletic career."

So Moroni the sprinter would become Moroni the missionary—having his "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (D&C 27:16).

And just like that, Moroni will trade in his track shoes for his tracting shoes. **NE**



Moroni's brilliance on the track has put him in the public eye at an early age and brought opportunities to share the gospel even before he has traded his track shoes for tracting shoes.



NO ONE SHOULD CRY THEMSELVES TO SLEEP

BY ASHLEY MERRIAM

I was so homesick and miserable, I couldn't stop my tears. Then the Holy Ghost prompted someone to come to my aid.

August evenings are usually warm in Rexburg, Idaho. I knelt by my bed on such a night, the buzz of my fan chasing away the heat and drowning out the world. Two weeks of college had barely gone by. Each day I learned more about the other five girls I was living with, but my heart ached to be home with my family.

At home my family was having problems. I told my Heavenly Father how heavy my heart was. I did not ask for help; I just knew that He would listen. I finished my prayer and climbed into bed. I tried not to cry, but a few silent tears trickled down my face and onto my pillow. There was a knock at my door.

I quickly wiped away my tears.

"Come in," I said.

One of my roommates opened the door. The hall light showed her silhouette. I looked at her, waiting for her to ask to borrow my phone or a shirt. Instead, she made her way over to my bed and said, "No one

should cry themselves to sleep."

The tears I had been trying to hold back came rushing out. She wrapped her arms around me. I do not remember exactly what she said to me, but I remember how I felt. She reminded me that Heavenly Father was aware of my problems and that He loves me. She stayed by my side until I finished crying. She left, and I lay in bed thinking about the things I had learned.

I knew that my roommate had heard and followed the promptings of the Holy Ghost. I was grateful for her willingness to obey. I realized how much my Father in Heaven loves me. He knew I was sad and needed someone to comfort me. I know that He would have held me in His arms if He could. Instead, He sent someone close by to share His love with me. And I know that it is my job to reach out to others and share our Father's love with them. **NE**

Ashley Merriam is a member of the Middle Fork Ward, Huntsville Utah Stake.





CONFERENCE

Kevin Cope (above), 15, enjoyed seeing conference in person, but he said, "The same spirit we felt in the Conference Center today, teens everywhere can feel. As long as they're listening intently and trying to feel the Spirit, then they will."

Live!

Just before the meeting starts, President and Sister Hinckley enter from the side of the Conference Center stage. With great care, President Hinckley accompanies his wife to her seat and then takes his place between his counselors near the podium.

To show respect when the prophet enters, the audience stands.

When 15-year-old Amy Baadsgaard (left) of Spanish Fork, Utah, attended conference in person, she couldn't help noticing this moment:

"Even though I wasn't paying attention, I could just sense it as soon as he walked in.

Everyone was talking and trying to find their seats, but as soon as the prophet entered, everyone stood up, and it was completely silent."

Every six months, normally on the first weekends in April and October, the Church prepares for one of its most important events—general conference. Every Church member knows the importance of conference. Twice a year, we have the opportunity to be taught by our living prophets and General Authorities. Their messages need to spread around the world as quickly and accurately as possible, so members gather in the Conference Center or in stake centers, in front of televisions, at computers, or around radios to listen and learn.

To make sure that general conference is broadcast to every place possible, every type of technology—from broadcasting to digital recording to printing—is put to use. Hundreds and hundreds of people, each working to make things run smoothly, devote a lot of time and effort to this one event.

We thought you might like to see a few things that take place behind the scenes that enable you to watch and listen to conference in your homes or in your meetinghouses. We'll explain a few things that you might notice during the broadcast.

In many ways, small miracles happen with each broadcast of general conference. No matter where you watch conference or in what language you listen, the Spirit of the Lord accompanies the words of His servants and is carried in the music of the choirs to His people everywhere. **NE**





The stage of the Conference Center can be changed according to the event. For conference, the stage is set into tiers with chairs arranged for all the General Authorities and for the general presidencies of the Primary, Young

Women, and Relief Society. Of course, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir takes its place under the new pipe organ, like the one in the Tabernacle on Temple Square just across the street.

To make the stage and podium look beautiful, flowers and greenery are grown and arranged by those who take care of the Temple Square gardens. The flowers surround the podium, and greenery is placed on the tiers behind

the speakers. In addition, the Conference Center has a large foyer area where tables hold more bouquets of flowers.



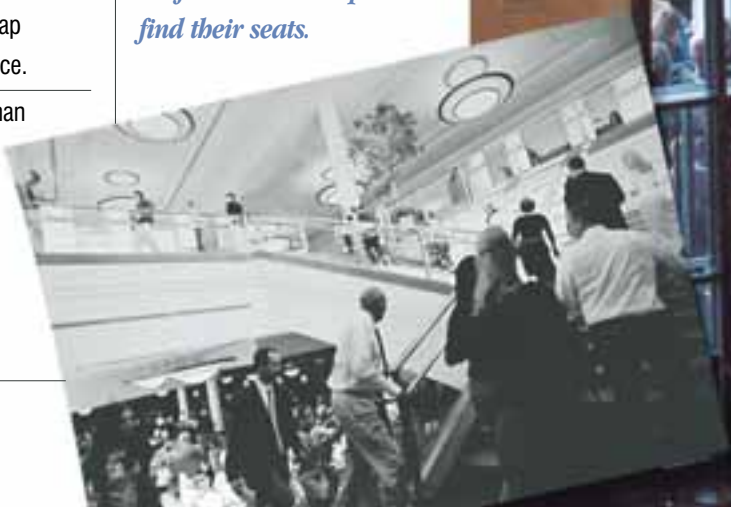


The foyer of the Conference Center displays paintings, sculptures, and other works of art. The beauty of the materials and the arrangement of the furnishings creates a feeling of reverence that those who attend conference can enjoy.

Many visitors enjoy attending conference in the Conference Center. Although it is one of the largest meeting places in the world, still only a small fraction of those who wish to attend in person are able to. Tickets are issued by stake presidents at no cost so people will not have to wait hours in long lines. Those without tickets can wait for seats not taken by ticket holders. The atmosphere is happy and polite, with members dressed in their Sunday best, most often with their families. It is not unusual for members to meet old friends. Volunteers greet those coming to conference and help them find their seats.

CONFERENCE CENTER FACTS

- The Conference Center is the largest religious indoor auditorium in the world.
- There are 21,000 seats in the main auditorium.
- The organ has 7,667 pipes.
- The Conference Center complex measures 1.5 million square feet (139,350 sq m) and covers 10 acres (4 ha).
- There are 50,000 miles (80,450 km) of wire in the building, enough to wrap around the equator twice.
- It took a little less than 1,000 days to build. Ground was broken on 24 July 1997, and the Conference Center was dedicated on 8 October 2000.



The television cameras need to be in the prime locations in front and to the sides of speakers. But normal, bulky television cameras with cameramen would block the view of many. The television cameras used in the Conference Center are much less noticeable. They are small and operated by remote control. Banks of hundreds of lights are also all handled by remote from a control room at the back of the Conference Center.



Inside the Conference Center is a big television center with control rooms and recording rooms. From

this station, the broadcast signal is sent to satellites that, in turn, send the signal around the world.





To assist the speakers in reading parts of their talks while still being able to look out at the audience, teleprompters (below, left) are provided. From the point of view of those watching the broadcast or those in the audience, the teleprompters appear to be clear sheets of glass held by stands. But speakers can easily see the words of their talks reflected onto the glass.

Making sure that people hear conference in their own languages takes elaborate preparation. Conference is translated into 58 languages by translators in soundproof booths, watching and listening to the speaker, and translating as the talk is being given. They have the help of language experts who can quickly explain unusual phrases or words. Their translation is recorded as well as broadcast, along with the video of the speaker. **NE**

GENERAL YOUNG WOMEN MEETING



SEARCH, PRAY, BELIEVE

“And all things shall work together for your good” (D&C 90:24).

Saturday, 27 March 2004,
in the Conference Center

All young women 12 to 18 years of age, their mothers, and Young Women leaders are invited.

LIVE BROADCAST

8 p.m. Eastern
7 p.m. Central
6 p.m. Mountain
5 p.m. Pacific

REBROADCAST

10 p.m. Eastern
9 p.m. Central
8 p.m. Mountain
7 p.m. Pacific

Also broadcast on the Internet at www.lds.org/broadcast.

The KBYU-TV rebroadcast will begin at 8 p.m. Mountain Standard Time.

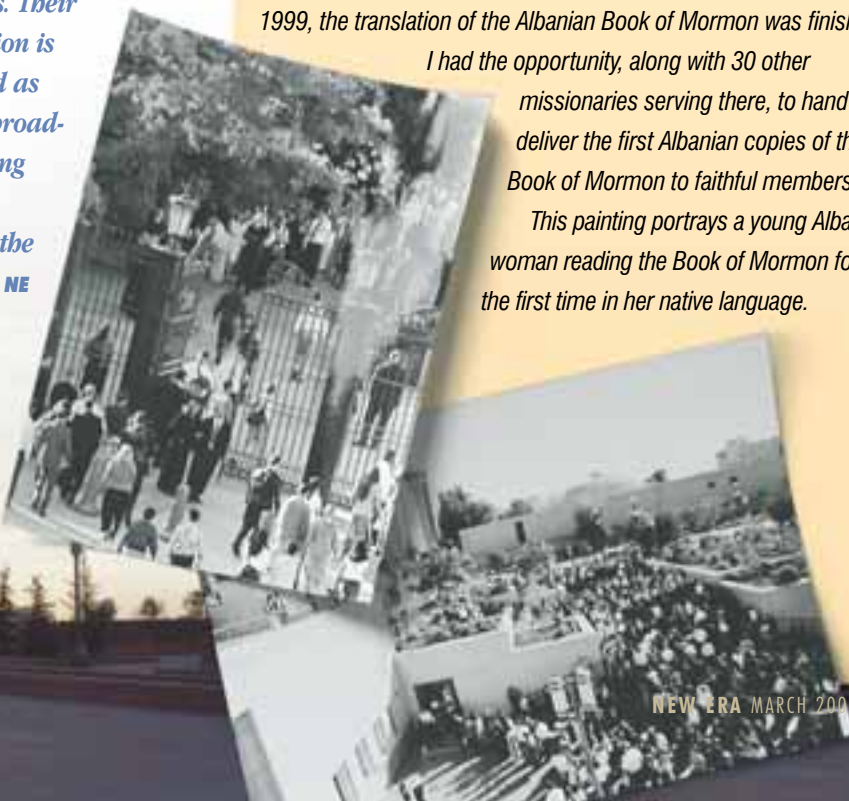
The artist Jeremy Winborg explains his painting above:

While under communist rule, the Eastern European country of Albania had a government that rigidly enforced atheism. But in 1991, the regime was replaced, and religion was welcomed back into the country. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints began sending missionaries to Albania.

Seven years later, I was called to the Albania Tirana Mission. In 1999, the translation of the Albanian Book of Mormon was finished.

I had the opportunity, along with 30 other missionaries serving there, to hand deliver the first Albanian copies of the Book of Mormon to faithful members.

This painting portrays a young Albanian woman reading the Book of Mormon for the first time in her native language.





ABOUT

PATRIARCHAL BLESSINGS

To receive a patriarchal blessing, you must (1) prepare for it by drawing closer to Heavenly Father through prayer, repentance, scripture study, and Church attendance; (2) meet with the bishop to determine your readiness; and (3) receive from your bishop a recommend for a patriarchal blessing.

What is it? How do I get one? Why is it important? Here are answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about patriarchal blessings.

Many members of the Church begin thinking about receiving their patriarchal blessings during their teenage years. The following information can help you understand and prepare to receive your patriarchal blessing.

What is a patriarchal blessing?

A patriarchal blessing has two main purposes. First, the patriarch will be inspired to declare your lineage—the tribe of Israel to which you belong. Second, guided by the spirit of prophecy, the patriarch will pronounce blessings and may also provide promises, cautions, or admonitions that apply specifically to you. Your patriarchal blessing may point out certain things you are

capable of achieving and blessings you can receive if you exercise faith and live righteously.

Why is lineage important?

Every member of the Church belongs to one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Those who aren't literal descendants are "adopted" into the house of Israel through baptism. Knowing your lineage can be a helpful guide in your life, because belonging to one of the twelve tribes brings the blessings and missions specific to each tribe. The blessings Jacob gave his sons (the heads of each of the tribes) can be found in Genesis 49.

Who may give a patriarchal blessing?

Patriarch is actually an office in the Melchizedek Priesthood, just like elder or high priest, and a patriarch is called and ordained specifically to give patriarchal blessings. You will receive your blessing from the patriarch in your stake or one nearby if



A STAR TO FOLLOW

“A patriarchal blessing from an ordained patriarch can give us a star to follow, which is a personal revelation from God to each individual. If we follow this star, we are less likely to stumble and be misled. Our patriarchal blessing will be an anchor to our souls, and if we are worthy, neither death nor the devil can deprive us of the blessings pronounced. They are blessings we can enjoy now and forever.”

—President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Priesthood Blessings,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 63.

your stake doesn't have a patriarch. If you live where there are no stake patriarchs, your bishop or branch president will know how to help you make arrangements to receive a blessing. If you are a direct descendant of someone who is a patriarch (such as your grandfather), you may receive your blessing from him even if he doesn't live in your stake.

Who may receive a patriarchal blessing?

All worthy members of the Church are entitled to and should receive a patriarchal blessing regardless of how long they have been members.

How old do I have to be for a blessing?

There is no set age. You should be old enough to appreciate the sacred nature of the blessing.

How is the blessing given?

The patriarch will place his hands on your head and give the blessing through inspiration. It will be revealed direction for you. The blessing will then be transcribed so that you can have a written copy to study throughout your life. The Church will also keep a copy of your blessing in case you ever lose yours.

How do I get a patriarchal blessing?

Make an appointment for an interview with your bishop. He will determine your readiness and worthiness and either give you a recommend or help you prepare to receive one. After receiving your recommend, you may contact the patriarch to schedule an appointment. Ask your bishop or the patriarch who may accompany you to your blessing, such as your parents.



A BLESSING FULFILLED

“Sometimes someone will worry because a promise made in a patriarchal blessing is not yet fulfilled. . . . That does not mean that the blessing will go unfulfilled. It is well to know that things happen in the Lord’s due time, not always in ours. Things of an eternal nature have no boundaries. From the premortal existence to our existence beyond the veils of death, our life is an eternal life.”

—President **Boyd K. Packer**, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Stake Patriarch,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 45.





And bring your recommend to the appointment.

How do I know if I'm ready?

The desire to receive a patriarchal blessing should come from a desire to know and live God's will for you. Curiosity or pressure from others isn't the right reason to get a blessing. The bishop will help determine if you are ready for the blessing.

How can I prepare?

You should do everything possible to draw closer to the Lord. Prayer, fasting, scripture study, meditation, and repentance can help. Concerns about worldly things should be left behind for such a sacred occasion.

What should I wear?

You should wear Sunday clothes.

When will the promises in my blessing be fulfilled?

Occasionally patriarchal blessings reveal things from our pre-earth life. But mostly

they are guides for present and future living. Because blessings are eternal in nature, they may include possibilities beyond mortal life.

Will all the promises in my blessing be fulfilled?

All blessings are based on your faithfulness and the Lord's timing. Blessings may also be fulfilled in a variety of ways throughout your life, depending on your growth, capacity, and circumstances.

Should I let others read my blessing?

Your blessing is personal, between you and Heavenly Father. You might share your blessing with family members or others who are close to you. But blessings should be guarded and never compared with those of others.

A patriarchal blessing can be of great value throughout your life. Preparing for and living worthy of the promises in your blessing can bring you closer to your Heavenly Father in this life and help you return to Him in the next. **NE**

After receiving your recommend, you should (4) contact the patriarch to schedule an appointment and (5) receive your blessing. The recorded blessing will be (6) transcribed, and copies will be (7) mailed to Church headquarters (8) for safekeeping and to you (9) to help guide you throughout your life.

Worthy OF MY BLESSING?

I had my recommend, but something kept bothering me. Had I really been forgiven of the things I had done so long ago? Would my bishop think badly of me?

BY RACHEL MURDOCK

As I walked down the hall from his office, my bishop's last question was on my mind.

After attending a fireside given by our stake patriarch, I was excited to receive my patriarchal blessing. I found out that to receive my patriarchal blessing, I needed to have an interview with my bishop. I called the executive secretary, and he set the appointment for after Mutual the next week.

The church was nearly empty when I walked down the hall to the bishop's office. I knocked on the door, and he let me in. We did the "How is school?" conversation; then he asked what he could do for me. He seemed pleased that I wanted to get a patriarchal blessing.

We talked about what a patriarchal blessing is, what it means to receive one, and if I thought I was ready. Then he asked about my personal worthiness. Did I obey the Word of Wisdom, attend my Church meetings, and have a testimony of the gospel? It felt good to honestly and wholeheartedly answer yes to his questions, even though

I felt I was far from perfect.

Then the bishop asked a final question, "Is there anything in your past that should have been cleared up with your priesthood leaders but hasn't been?"

I said no, got my recommend, and left—ready to make my appointment with the patriarch. As I walked down the dark hall, that last question started to weigh on my mind. Was there anything in my past?

A couple of visits I had made to a friend's house when I was very young came to mind. I had been uncomfortable with some games we played there. I had never done anything similar again. Still, I had wondered several times whether or not those small innocent infractions were something I needed to talk to the bishop about. Since I hadn't really done anything seriously wrong, I figured I would forget about it. Apparently, I had not forgotten.

If I was going to get only one patriarchal blessing in my life, I didn't want a cloud



My bishop told me I didn't have to worry about my concerns anymore. I felt so joyful as I walked out of his office the second time.

hanging over it. So I turned around and headed back to the bishop's office with my heart in my throat. I didn't want to be laughed at or have my concerns brushed aside. I forced myself to knock on the bishop's door again.

I could tell he was surprised to see me. I spilled out the story, much too quickly and without a lot of clarity. He didn't laugh or brush aside my concerns. Instead, he listened carefully, asked a few questions about then and now, and asked about the repentance I had done privately with the Lord. Then he said, "I think you can go ahead and get your blessing and not worry about this anymore."

I felt clean and joyful as I walked out of his office the second time. I felt like I could float as I bounced down

the hallway. I knew I was clean. I had been cleared by my priesthood leader of an uneasy feeling I had carried for several years.

I carried that feeling of cleanliness with me to the patriarch's home the evening I received my blessing. As he said his first words, "The Lord is pleased that you chose to keep His commandments as a way of showing your love for Him," I began to cry. I truly felt the Lord was speaking to me and that my life, as imperfect as it was, was pleasing to Him.

I have learned I can always go to my priesthood leaders if I ever have a question about my worthiness. I have learned how much they want to help. They don't think

badly of me when I am less than perfect, and they don't think it's a waste of time to discuss any problem, major or minor.

They are almost as happy as we are when we get that wonderful feeling of joy that comes from being forgiven. **NE**

Rachel Murdock is a member of the Janesville Ward, Madison Wisconsin Stake.



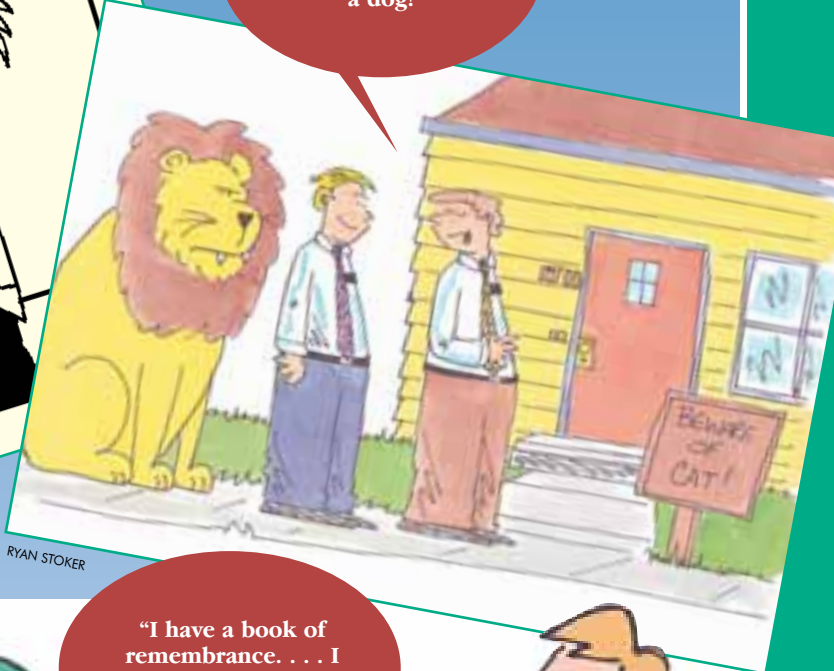
THE EXTRA SMILE

"This is the finest, most comprehensive and informative term paper I've ever read. But you were supposed to write about 'Plato,' not 'Playdough.'"



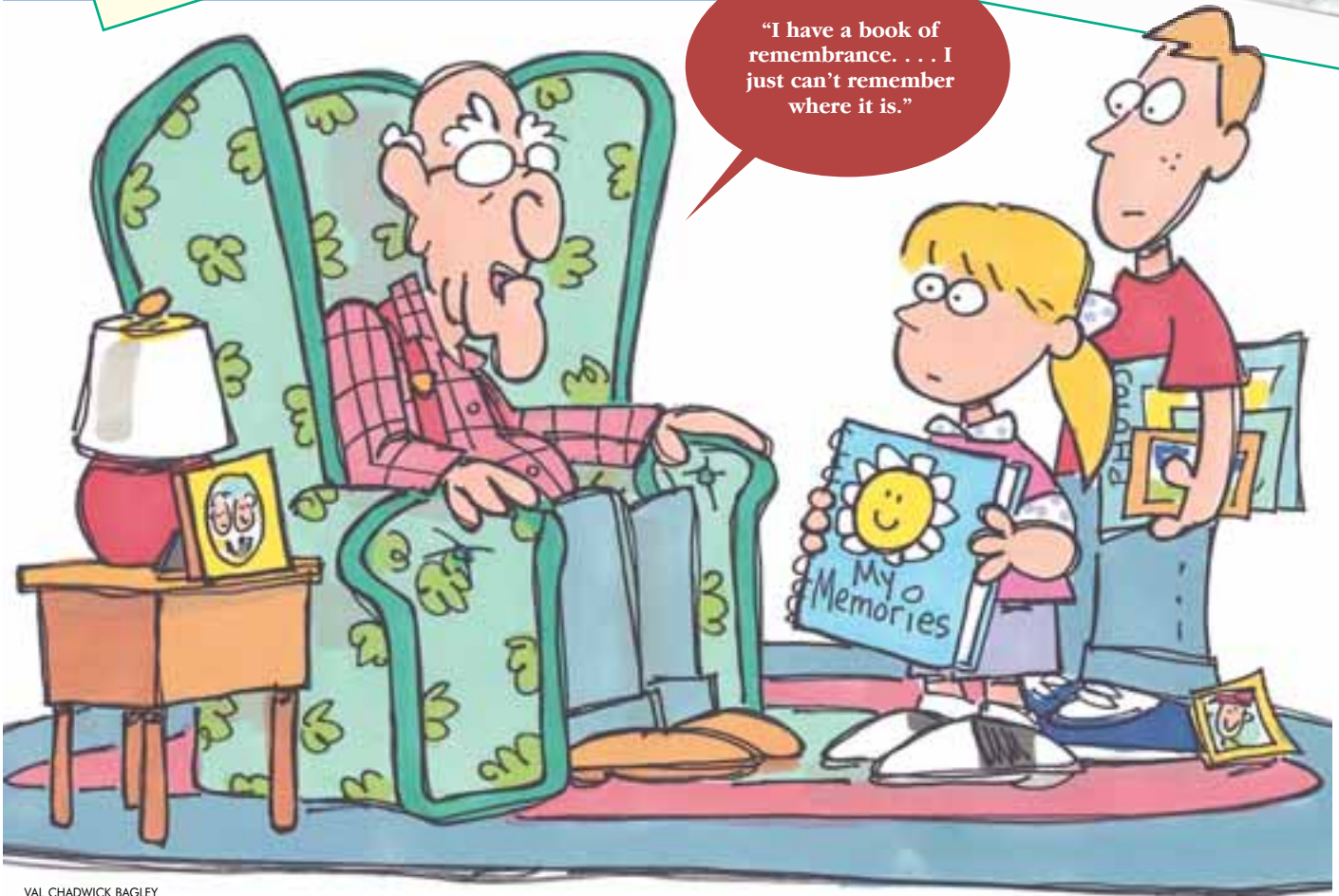
RANDY GLASBERGEN

"Heh, heh. Well, at least they don't have a dog!"



RYAN STOKER

"I have a book of remembrance. . . I just can't remember where it is."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

BE FEARLESS

You can be a leader. You must be a leader, as a member of this Church, in those causes for which this Church stands. Do not let fear overcome your efforts, for as Paul wrote to Timothy: ‘For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind’ (2 Timothy 1:7). Fear comes not from God but from the evil one. The adversary of all truth would put into your heart a reluctance to



make an effort. Cast that fear aside and be valiant in the cause of truth and righteousness and faith. If you *now* decide that this will become the pattern of your life, you will not have to make that decision again. You will put on the ‘armour of God’ and raise your voice in defense of truth, whatever the circumstances now and in all the years that lie ahead (see Ephesians 6:11).”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Be a Leader in Honorable Causes,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1998, 72.

BAPTISMS OF LATTER-DAY PROPHETS

Did you know that President Gordon B. Hinckley was the first latter-day prophet to be baptized in a baptismal font in a Latter-day Saint meetinghouse? It’s true. He was baptized on 28 April 1919 in the First Ward chapel, Salt Lake Liberty Stake. Here are some facts about the baptisms of the other 14 Church Presidents.

PROPHET	BAPTISM DATE	BAPTISM LOCATION
Joseph Smith	15 May 1829	Susquehanna River, near Harmony, Pennsylvania
Brigham Young	14 April 1832	A millpond near Mendon, New York
John Taylor	9 May 1836	A stream near Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Wilford Woodruff	31 December 1833	An icy stream near Richland, New York
Lorenzo Snow	3 June 1836	Chagrin River, near Kirtland, Ohio
Joseph F. Smith	21 May 1852	City Creek, Salt Lake City, Utah
Heber J. Grant	2 June 1864	A wagon box near City Creek, Salt Lake City, Utah
George Albert Smith	6 June 1878	City Creek, Salt Lake City, Utah
David O. McKay	8 September 1881	Spring Creek, near Huntsville, Utah
Joseph Fielding Smith	19 July 1884	Probably in City Creek, Salt Lake City, Utah
Harold B. Lee	9 June 1907	Bybee Pond, near Clifton, Idaho
Spencer W. Kimball	28 March 1903	Hog-scalding tub, Thatcher, Arizona
	5 October 1907	Union Canal, Thatcher, Arizona (rebaptized because of concerns about the appropriateness of the tub baptism)
Ezra Taft Benson	4 August 1907	Logan River Canal, Whitney, Idaho
Howard W. Hunter	4 April 1920	An indoor swimming pool, Boise, Idaho

(Information on baptisms courtesy of Michael D. Taylor, “The Baptisms of Latter-day Prophets,” *Religious Educator*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2002.)

SURF'S UP



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JUST WAVE AFTER WAVE OF PURE *NEW ERA*.
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THE WATER'S SAFE

Follow the

BY ELDER KEITH CROCKETT
Of the Seventy



Had we paid attention, we would not have lost any cattle and would have saved a lot of time.

This is a story about the importance of following the prophet. It took place on the Spear Ranch in the Gila Valley of Arizona. My good friend, Jim Bryce, was foreman of the ranch. Along with his father, Ross Bryce, who was a counselor in the Pima, Arizona, stake presidency, and four Mexican *vaqueros* (cowboys)—Pula, José, Chino, and Javier—we began the fall roundup.

Early in the morning before sunup, at the ranch headquarters we loaded the horses into trailers and hauled them out to Nuttall Canyon. After unloading and saddling the horses, we began riding up the canyon. We spotted the first cattle as the sun lit up the east side of Stowe Knoll.

Carefully, we made our way up the rugged slope above the cattle and moved them down toward the canyon floor, letting them make their way by themselves. We went higher up the canyon until we reached a fence at the edge of a forest. Spreading out, we searched the gullies, draws, and bottom brush and began to herd the cattle down and out of the canyon. Our goal was to drive them to a corral on the other side of Left Hand Canyon, where we would earmark, brand, and vaccinate the new calves.

My friend Jim took the lead and was riding

on higher ground than the rest of us so he could watch the herd of about 120 cows and calves we had gathered. Two *vaqueros* rode on each side, keeping the herd together, and President Bryce and I were bringing up the rear, keeping any stragglers from drifting away from the herd.

As we approached Left Hand Canyon, Jim rode up onto a knoll where he could look over the area and see what lay ahead. Since this was the first time these *vaqueros* had been in this part of the ranch, they did not know where the trail crossed the canyon. Jim kept motioning to move the herd of cattle towards him. The *vaqueros* didn't notice his motioning, so Jim began to wave his hat and yell to move the herd towards the knoll where he was. These gestures also went unnoticed or ignored by those of us with the herd.

We soon found ourselves in a thicket of mesquite and catclaw trees amid the boulders along the edge of the canyon. The cattle were spreading out in all directions; it was impossible to keep them together. We had to get off our horses, tie them up, and crawl on our hands and knees through the brush, trees, and rocks in order to get the cattle out. At the edge of the canyon was a cliff that dropped off 15 to 20 feet to boulders below.

Trail



After losing some of the cattle in the thick brush and getting the rest of the herd out of the thicket and back together, we again heard Jim calling from on top of the knoll. He motioned to us to drive the herd towards him where we would find the trail that went down the canyon and up the other side to the corral.

Once the herd got to the trail, they followed it easily as it wound down the side of the canyon, across the creek, and up the other side, right into the corral. How easy it was to follow the trail and cross the treacherous canyon to the safety of the corral. Had

we paid attention to Jim, we would not have lost any cattle and would have saved a lot of time and avoided having to crawl through the mesquite thickets and around rocks and catclaw trees to get the cattle out. It would have been easier to follow his directions and stay on the trail.

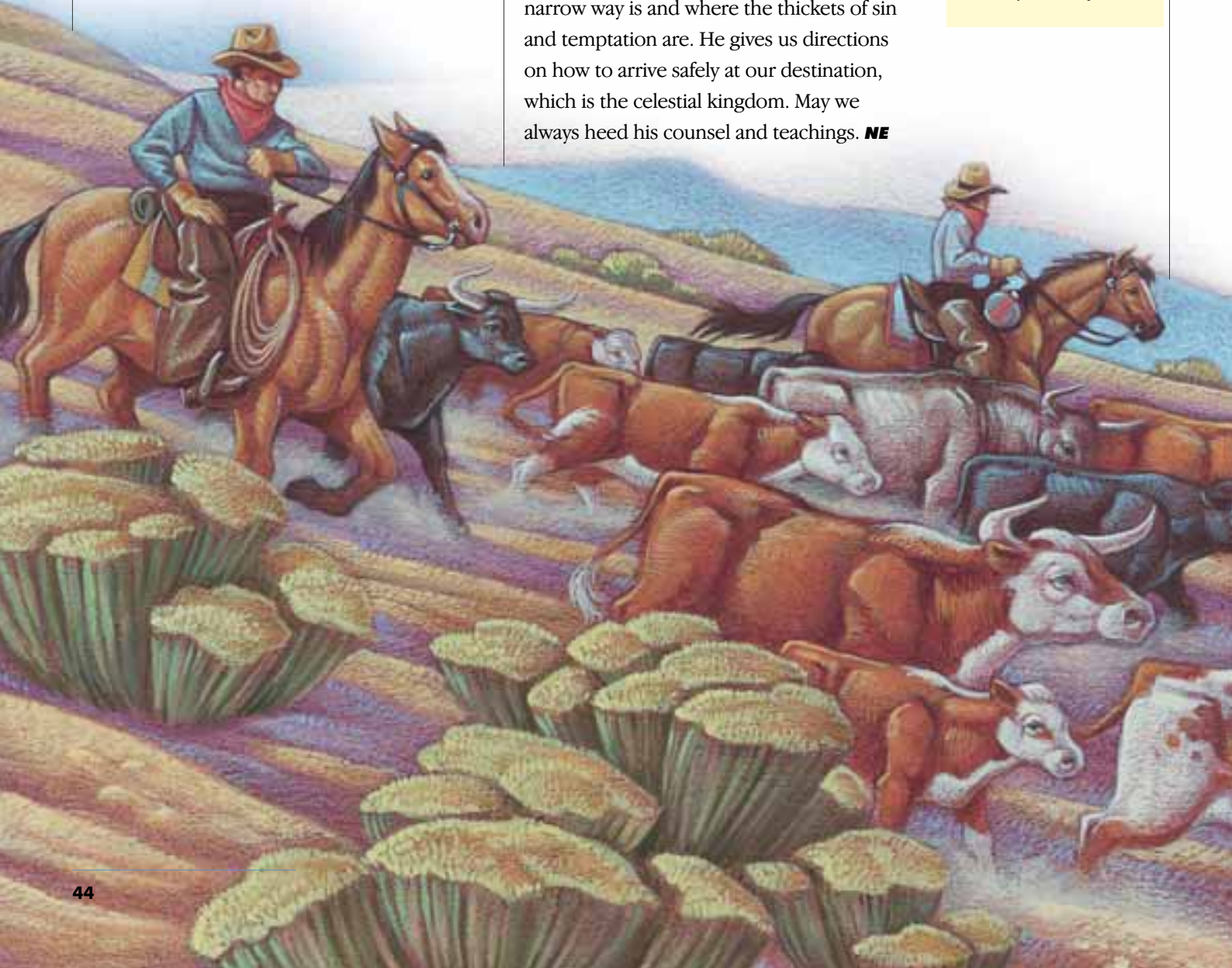
Are we like these cowboys who paid no attention to the foreman of the ranch, who knew where the dangers lay and where the trail was? We have a prophet, seer, and revelator to guide us, even President Gordon B. Hinckley. He directs the Lord's work here on the earth. He knows where the straight and narrow way is and where the thickets of sin and temptation are. He gives us directions on how to arrive safely at our destination, which is the celestial kingdom. May we always heed his counsel and teachings. **NE**

EXTRA! EXTRA!

If you want to learn more about the importance of prophets, these scriptures have some interesting insights:

Amos 3:7; Ephesians 2:19–20; 4:11–14; D&C 1:38; 43:1–6; 84:36–38.

In site: See "Divine Direction" (*New Era*, Apr. 1998) by Elder L. Aldin Porter at www.lds.org in the Gospel Library.



2 Nephi 31:20



steadfast=immovable or unchangeable

What does it mean to be steadfast in Christ?

Scripture chain:

To find out more about hope, start with 2 Nephi 31:20 and then read these related scriptures, marking them as you go along.

- Alma 7:24
- Alma 22:16
- Ether 12:4, 32
- Moroni 7:40–44, 48

The first great commandments:

Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself (see Matthew 22:35–40).

A feast is an elaborate, enjoyable meal. For the next week, make a commitment to try to get more out of the scriptures by feasting on them.

“The words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).

As you feast on the scriptures, look for if/then promises. In the scriptures, the Lord often tells us that *if* we fulfill certain commandments, *then* we will receive certain blessings. What is the blessing promised in 2 Nephi 31:20?

“If we are true and faithful in this life, we may obtain eternal life. . . . Eternal life is to gain exaltation in the highest heaven and live in the family unit.”

—Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, quoted in *Ensign*, Mar. 2002, 22.

“Patient endurance permits us to cling to our faith in the Lord and our faith in His timing when we are being tossed about by the surf of circumstance. Even when a seeming undertow grasps us, somehow, in the tumbling, we are being carried forward.”

—Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, quoted in *Ensign*, May 1990, 34.

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



ON AND OFF THE COURT

BY CALISTA GLENN

Play some defense! Make your free throws! Run harder!”

The smell of sweat and the sound of whistles filled the high school gym. Basketball tryouts came around quickly that November.

I wanted to quit the team. The previous year our team had gone to the California State playoffs, but this season would be much different. I reluctantly ended up as the only senior on the varsity team and was asked to serve as team captain. It was okay at first, but after a while, losing got really old, really fast. I started having a major attitude, and it was reflected in the way I performed.

It wasn't just about basketball though—I was struggling off the court as well. I hated the idea of having to stick to rules and schedules. Each day started with the dreaded five a.m. alarm clock, dark mornings in our broken-down Volvo, and early-morning seminary. Then it was off to school, with tons of hard classes and annoying people. Playing ball was not my first priority, when so many other things

seemed to be

weighing me
down.



After a few months, I was trying to decide if I should just quit the basketball team. I talked to my dad about it. “Your attitude can change everything if you let it,” he said. I didn’t know what he meant at first. I wasn’t the one making us lose! Then I heard a talk in Young Women class that really hit home. It was about having a positive attitude and how it not only affects your situation but also others around you.

From that point on, I decided to change the way I was looking at things both in and out of basketball. I started to go to Mutual again and tried to support other youth activities, and I prayed that I could be more optimistic in seminary and school.

Most importantly, I realized I could learn from trials and become better through them. Instead of complaining about losing, I started working harder at practice. Soon others noticed, and it helped the whole team become more unified because everyone saw that I was continuing to try even though we were still not winning.

Our basketball team didn’t win a single game that year, but it turned out to be one of the best experiences of my life. With a change in attitude, both on and off the court, I learned to be a more positive person in dealing with difficult things. I did

Recently, my study of the Book of Mormon impressed me with the great number of times prophets counseled the people to “remember.”

There are dozens of references where prophets counsel the people to “remember” or “bring to their remembrance” the covenants they had made and God’s love for them. Alma encouraged his son: “Remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth” (Alma 37:35).

Helaman counseled, “Remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation” (Helaman 5:12).

I am convinced that the problems we face today and the reason that we make bad choices is because we forget who we are. We are children of our Heavenly Father. We accepted His plan for our happiness and eternal progression, or we would not have been given the privilege of coming to earth in the first place! The problem is that too often we

not miraculously make our team better, but a change in my attitude really affected the younger players around me. The season was successful because of the friendships we

forget who we really are and make bad choices. We just don’t remember!

While thinking about this the other day, I glanced down at my CTR ring

CTR — CHOOSE TO REMEMBER

BY DOUG KNAPP



and thought, “If only we would remember to choose the right.” Then it dawned on me that CTR could also stand for “choose to remember.” If we remembered our true identities and divine potential, we would make better choices!

Then it hit me that CTR might also represent “Christ the Redeemer.” What power and strength would come when we were challenged with evil or temptation if we were reminded to choose to remember Christ the Redeemer.

My CTR ring took on new meaning that day. Now when I think about what these three letters can represent, I am reminded that I am not left alone to face my challenges if I choose to remember Christ the Redeemer.

Doug Knapp is a member of the Coltman Third Ward, Idaho Falls Idaho East Stake.

formed and the way we were still able to have fun when most people would have given up.

Calista Glenn is a member of the BYU 96th Ward, Brigham Young University 10th Stake.

AS WE SANG

BY ELIZABETH GILES NORTH

It was my second week in the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah. The opening hymn for sacrament meeting was “I Believe in Christ” (*Hymns*, no. 134). As we sang, the Spirit filled my whole body; tears of joy spilled down my cheeks. I was overcome by the unity and love that came by the Spirit. The building shook as each voice was combined with the firm belief and knowledge of our Savior Jesus Christ’s divinity. I shall never forget that day!

Elizabeth Giles North is a member of the Hazard Ward, Owingsville Kentucky Stake.

LOOKING OUT FOR ME

BY CHRISTA HUNTER

About a year ago I was going through a particularly hard time in my life. I was sitting in church and couldn’t stop feeling depressed. I was near tears by the end of the meeting, when the congregation started singing “Be Still, My Soul” (*Hymns*, no. 124). As I choked on the words, a strong feeling of peace came over me.

“With patience bear thy cross of grief or pain. . . . In ev’ry change he faithful will remain. . . . Thy God doth undertake / To guide the future as he has the past.”

I often look back on that experience when I feel upset, and I always remember my Heavenly Father is looking out for me.

Christa Hunter is a member of the Westchester First Ward, Westchester New York Stake.

SECRET SERVICE

BY CHRIS REYNOLDS

One of the things my family and I do to overcome challenges—or to keep from having them—is to have a family council during family home evening. My mom and dad take turns leading, and we discuss what we need to improve.

For example, recently my family and I haven’t been doing very much service. So my parents challenged us to write on pieces of paper “You have just been served. Now it’s your turn!” We left these pieces of paper after performing a secret service. These papers got passed along and made everyone happier and more willing to serve others.

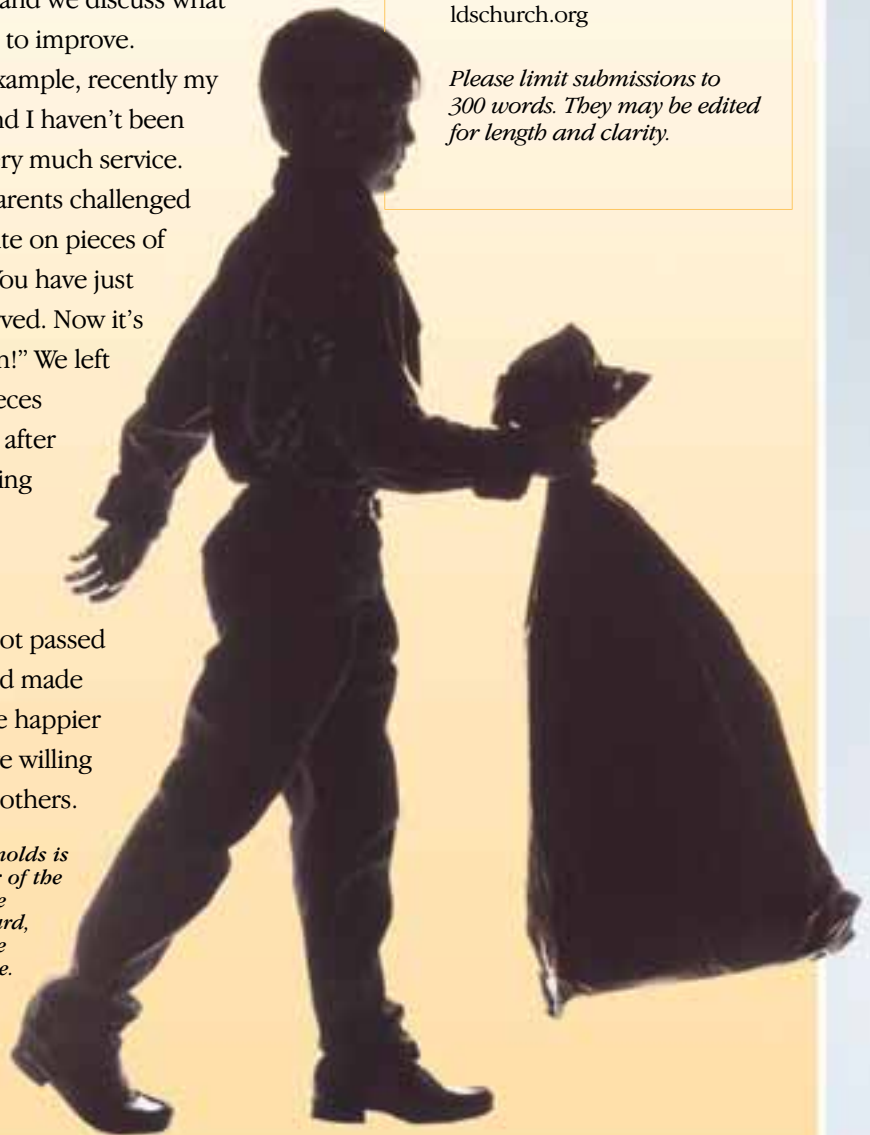
Chris Reynolds is a member of the Springville Fourth Ward, Springville Utah Stake.

INSTANT MESSAGES is a new section that features personal experiences, favorite hymns and scriptures, and other uplifting thoughts. If you have a personal experience that has strengthened your testimony and you’d like us to consider it for Instant Messages, please send it to

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*Or e-mail it to
cur-editorial-newera@
ldschurch.org*

Please limit submissions to 300 words. They may be edited for length and clarity.



Mutual Activities

- Read the article, “About Patriarchal Blessings,” on page 32. Invite the stake patriarch to a joint Mutual activity to introduce himself and explain about patriarchal blessings. If the patriarch agrees, allow time for questions and answers.

- Organize an activity around introducing the gospel to those who may be interested in learning more. With the permission of the bishop and ward mission leader, have some ward missionaries or members of the ward role-play as investigators. Use different classrooms in the meetinghouse to represent homes. Have the youth go to an assigned “home” and practice telling the Joseph Smith story in different situations. Gather and conclude by quoting from “Be One of the Greatest” on page 10 or from Q&A on page 16.

Service Project Suggestion

- Note the announcement of the general Young Women meeting on page 31. Make special invitations and arrange for rides for all the Young Women in your ward or stake.

Family Home Evening Idea

- Read together “About Patriarchal Blessings” on page 32. If your parents have received their patriarchal blessings, ask them to tell you how their blessings have affected their lives and what they have found encouraging about the things that were said.

- Read together “Conference Live!” on page 26. On the family home evening before general conference, give each family member some sheets of paper with each member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles’ and First Presidency’s names listed on them. Plan to take notes on each talk. On the family home evening after general conference, review together the things that were said.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November in the *Ensign* and *Liahona*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 10–13.

Young Women Manual 2

Lesson 10 The Priesthood:

A Great Blessing

Diane L. Mangum, “Young Women and the Blessings of the Priesthood,” *New Era*, May 1993, 20.

“Power Restored,” *New Era*, May 2003, 10.

Bruce R. McConkie, “Only an Elder,”

New Era, Jan. 2003, 36.

Lesson 11 Appreciating the Bishop

Rachel Murdock, “Worthy of My Blessing?” this issue, 36.

Henry B. Eyring, “Your Friend the Bishop,” *New Era*, Oct. 2002, 10.

Lesson 12 Fathers’ Blessings

Carlos E. Asay, “Write Your Own Blessing,” *New Era*, Oct. 1981, 4.

Charlotte ZoBell, “The Blessing,” *New Era*, Mar. 1990, 15.

Caroline Hinckley, “Leaving Home,” *New Era*, May 1999, 35.

Lesson 13 Patriarchal Blessings

“About Patriarchal Blessings,” this issue, 32.

Rachel Murdock, “Worthy of My Blessing?” this issue, 36.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 2

Lesson 10 Studying the Scriptures

Richard G. Scott and Charles Didier, “Be One of the Greatest,” this issue, 10.

“Hungry for Answers?” *New Era*, Nov. 2003, 9.

Lesson 11 Satan and His Temptations

Q&A: “Why doesn’t the Church make a list [of] what I can and can’t do?” *New Era*, Aug. 2003, 16.

Richard C. Edgley, “Satan’s Bag of Snipes,” *New Era*, Sept. 2001, 20.

Lesson 12 Prayer

Bobby Thurman, “Kneeling to Know,” this issue, 9.

Richard G. Scott, “Recognizing Answers to Prayers,” *New Era*, Aug. 2003, 4.

Lesson 13 Fasting

Esther Hansen, “The Real Fast,” *New Era*, May 2002, 11.

Q&A: “Do I really need to pay a fast offering?” *New Era*, May 2003, 16.

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HE STAYED TOO

I am so grateful for the article called “Staying Power” (Oct. 2003) by Elder H. Ross Workman. Reading of Elder Workman’s unrelenting desire to serve the Lord, I began to weep, knowing that I am not the only person who has been in this situation. Elder Workman has witnessed rejection in serving the Lord. As I read this article, a peaceful feeling came into my heart. I have made a resolution that I will endure to the end. The article gave me an increase of hope.

Sister Lucy James, Nigeria Lagos Mission

DIVING INTO IT

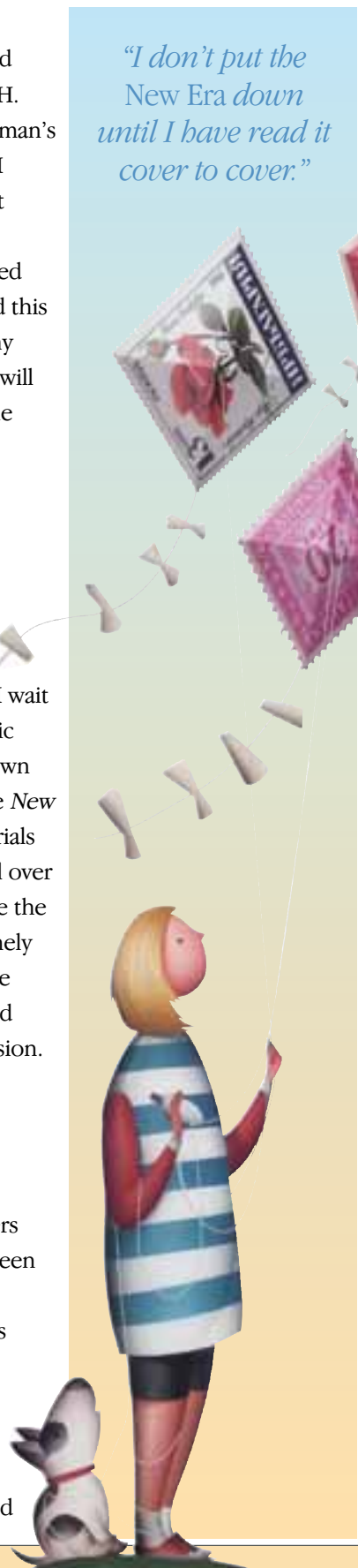
I joined the Church two years ago, and I am the only member in my immediate family. Since joining the Church I have received the *New Era*. I wait at the mailbox for it. I rip off the plastic wrap and dive into it. I don’t put it down until I have read it cover to cover. The *New Era* has helped me to know that the trials I face are also the same trials youth all over the Church face as we strive to choose the right. Every month the articles are timely and pertinent to my life. Thanks to the *New Era*, my testimony has grown, and I have been better prepared for a mission.

Cole J. Machado, Eureka Second Ward, Eureka California Stake

THANKS, PRESIDENT HINCKLEY

Thank you for the article “Daughters of the Almighty” (Nov. 2003). I have been struggling with the things President Gordon B. Hinckley mentioned in this article. Because I am one of the three Latter-day Saints in my high school, it has been hard on me to be in the world but not of the world. Each day I struggle, but this article strengthened

“I don’t put the New Era down until I have read it cover to cover.”



my testimony and showed me that I can achieve anything I put my mind to. The *New Era* has been a wonderful blessing to me. It brings me strength to know that I am not alone in the world and that others are fighting for what is right.

Bridgett Moss, Conrad Ward, Great Falls Montana Stake

THE LORD CALLED ME HERE

I find the *New Era* very helpful in my daily life. No matter what is going on, I can turn to the *New Era* for help. I really enjoyed “Somebody Had It Harder” in the November 2003 issue. I can relate to the author, Elder Preston. I am a new missionary. I entered the mission field unsure of what I was doing here. Then one night, while studying, I learned that the Lord knows why I am here. I know He put me in Nebraska at this time, and I will do His work.

Elder Brian Bodell, Nebraska Omaha Mission

DANCING

When I turned 14, I was excited about all the dances I could go to. The Church dances were fun. I could be myself in a place where everyone had the same standards I have. But school dances often made me feel uncomfortable. Thank you for Questions & Answers in the November 2003 issue. It was almost as if that section was written just for me. I appreciate the ideas and options that were suggested.

Brittany Hancock, San Jacinto Ward, Hemet California Stake

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

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cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



MAY NOT BE COPIED

BY AIMEE WILSON

SOARING

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY

It isn't wrong to want to fly,
To leave the earth, to soar up high,
To see yourself as someone who
Is worthy of a loftier view.

Then gaze down on the world below,
And in your gazing, somehow know
Our Father, from His high position,
Is blessed with even greater vision.



“The things I’m doing as a runner are important to the Lord,” says Moroni Rubio. “But serving a mission is more important than running. Serving a mission is one of my goals, independent of whatever else happens in my athletic career.”

See “Moroni’s Feet,” p. 20.