

Drawing the Line

BY ANNE PETERSEN CREAGER

I found I had to learn how to push back the world.

Though I'd been in college for a year, I hadn't attended many activities sponsored by my university. I hadn't been avoiding them. I had just filled my time with institute activities, school, and work. One night when my friend, Stacy, asked me to go with her to a dance, I jumped at the chance. It would be great to meet some new people and get away from studying for a little while.

As we entered the ballroom where the dance was being held, Stacy introduced me to some of her friends, and I noticed a

few familiar faces from my classes. I felt comfortable and excited as we danced on the fringe of students. When one of my favorite songs began booming from the speakers, I grabbed Stacy's hand, and we plunged into a mass of people. We danced and sang along with the music. It was more fun than I'd had in a long time.

After a few more songs, a song I was not familiar with blared, loud and raucous. I wanted to hold my hands over my ears. I didn't know what the lyrics were saying exactly, but they weren't good. Everyone around me began dancing differently than they had moments earlier.

Suddenly, I realized something was terribly wrong. I was encircled by many young men I didn't know well. They closed in on me, pushing themselves against me inappropriately. I shoved one of them back, but others moved in. I screamed and pushed and shoved until one of them finally let me out of the circle, swearing and calling me a name. Tears streamed down my face as I fell into my friend's arms. I tried to explain what was wrong, but when I turned back to show her what had happened, I noticed another girl had taken my place. And she seemed to be enjoying her participation in their dance.

I was horrified. I stood back and watched the students dancing. The song changed again, and though it was familiar, I did not want to get back on that dance floor. I left the building and did not return.

After my experience at this dance, I spent a lot of time searching my own feelings about the situation. I had always been aware of the dark corners you avoided during school dances, but this dancing was right in the middle of the floor. Sure, my dancing had been enthusiastic, but it had not been inappropriate. I had done nothing to warrant such unwanted attention.

Then one day I came across an article by President James E. Faust called "The Devil's Throat." In this article President Faust taught, "There are so many shades of right and wrong that each of you has to decide where the line will be. . . . With all my heart I urge you to please help us push back the world. We must stand against the wind. Sometimes we must be unpopular and simply say, 'This is not right'" (*Ensign*, May 2003, 51-52).

When I read those words, I knew, all through me, they were meant for me. It didn't matter what other people thought. When I tried to "push back the world" by escaping

that kind of dancing, I had definitely been unpopular. But I didn't care. Drawing my line and saying, "That form of dancing is not right" had made me realize that to protect my standards, I have to take a stand.

Without difficulty I could see the need for me to apply President Faust's words in other areas of my life. I reevaluated the music I listened to and threw out CDs with unsuitable lyrics. I began to discard clothing that could cross the line into immodesty. I researched movies before going to see them. I decided I wanted to prepare myself in every way to live a life worthy to have the Spirit with me, guiding me, for that's the way I will find true happiness in life.

I know in my daily dance called life, I will be constantly surrounded and bombarded by sin readily accepted by the world. It isn't my fault that sin is out there, but it is my concern. To protect myself I must do as President Faust counseled and draw my line. Then and only then will I have the strength to listen to the Holy Ghost so I can know when to stand up and how to push back the world in defense of myself and my values. **NE**

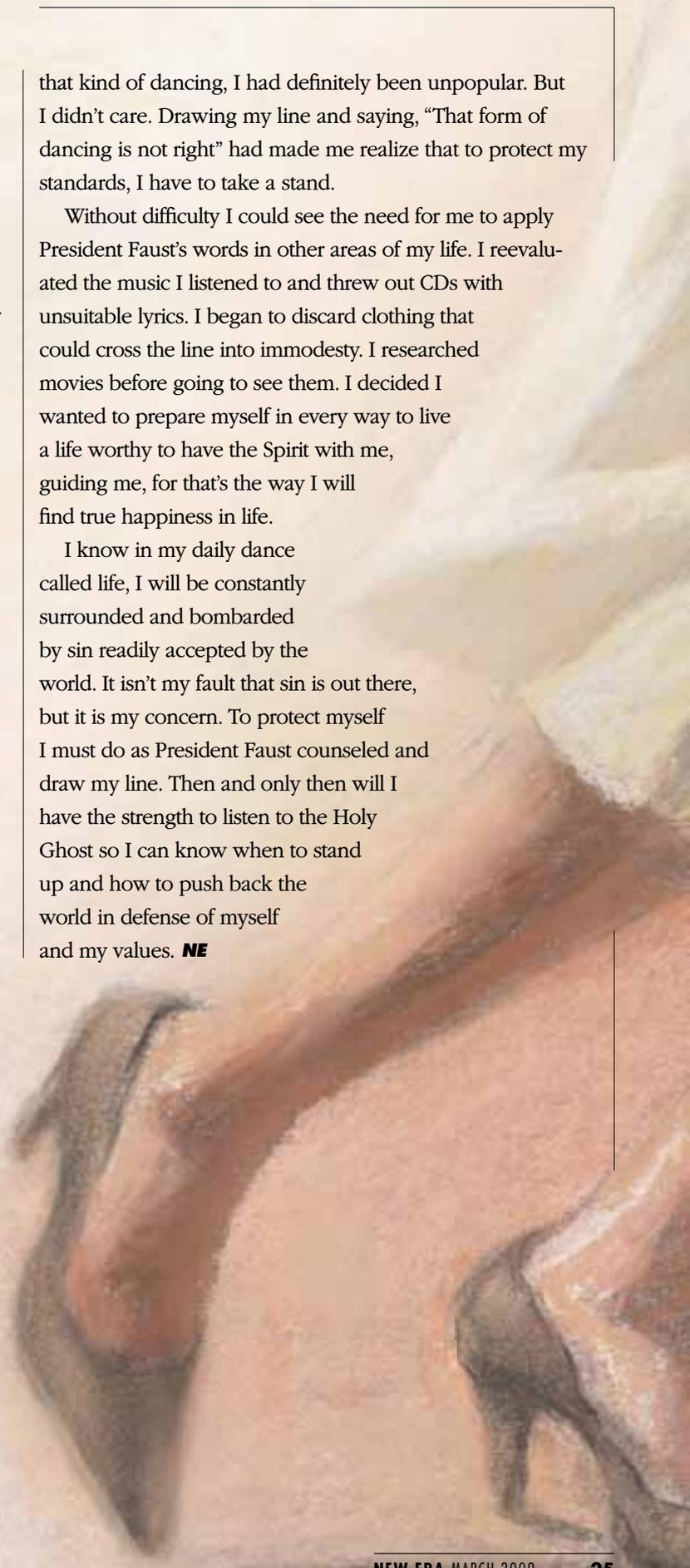


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