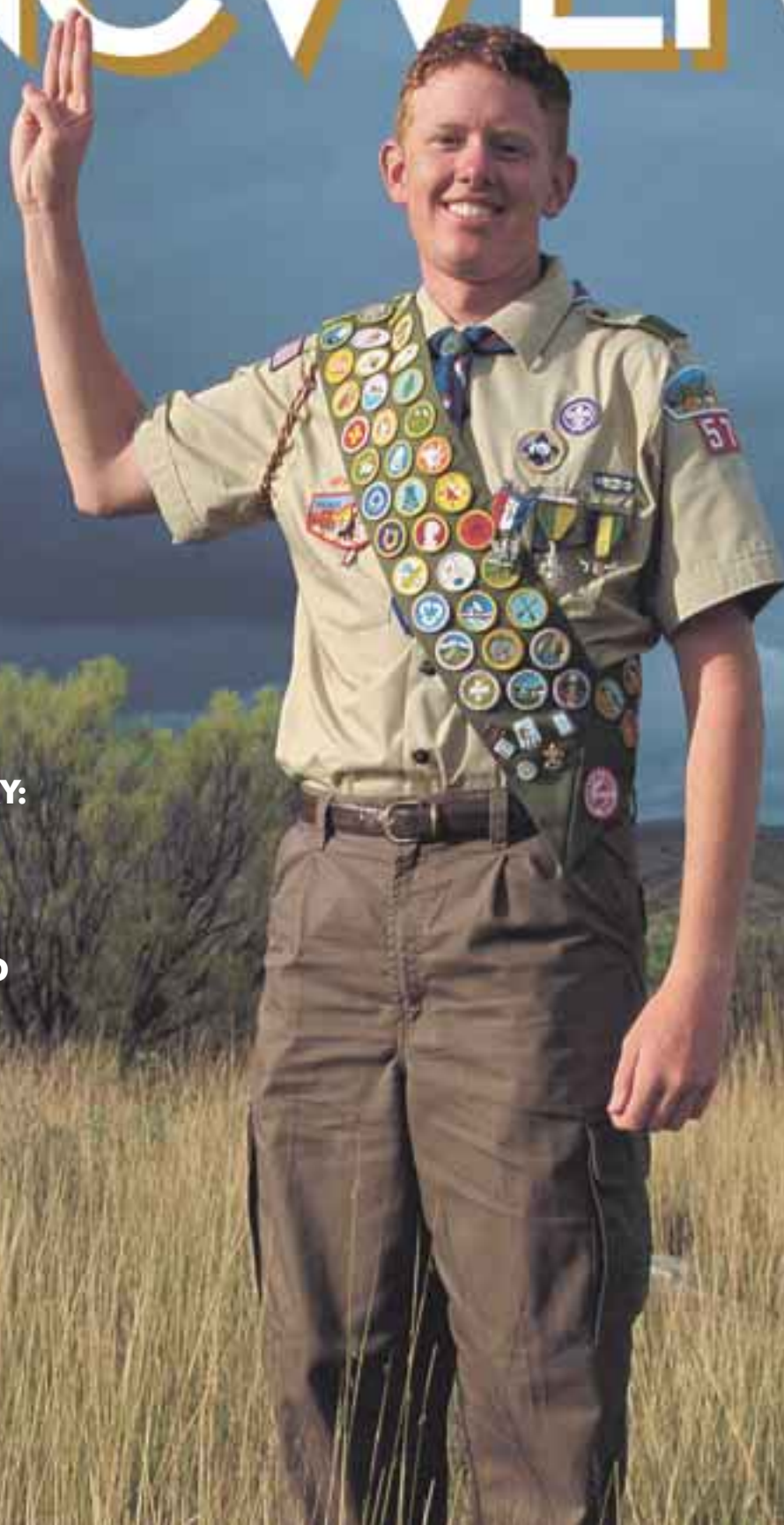


# THE New Era

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**COVER STORY:  
ON MY  
HONOR,  
P. 22**

**PRIESTHOOD  
BLESSINGS,  
P. 4**

**AWESOME  
DEACONS,  
P. 44**

**The New Era Magazine  
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**Cover:** *Erik Fagergren  
of Patagonia, Arizona,  
stands in the cemetery he  
helped restore. See  
“Badges of Honor,” p. 22.*

*Cover photography:  
Matthew Baker*

**T**his Eagle  
soared high  
enough to  
merit a national  
award. See  
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Honor,” p. 22.





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# Priesthood POWER

*The Aaronic Priesthood isn't a gift; it's an honor. It is a call to serve others.*

Some years ago, as our youngest son, Clark, was approaching his 12th birthday, he and I were leaving the Church Administration Building when President Harold B. Lee greeted us. I mentioned to President Lee that Clark would soon be 12, whereupon President Lee asked him, "What happens to you, Clark, when you turn 12?" This was one of those times when a father prays that a son will be inspired to give a proper response. Without hesitation Clark said to President Lee, "I will be ordained a deacon."

The answer was the one President Lee had sought. He then counseled our son, "Remember, it is a great blessing to hold the priesthood."

I hope with all my heart and soul that every young man who receives the priesthood will honor that priesthood and be true to the trust which is conveyed when it is conferred.

Should there be those who fail to resolve to do better because of that greatest of fears—the fear of failure—there is no more comforting assurance to be had than these words of the Lord: "My grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27).



by President  
**Thomas S. Monson**  
First Counselor in the First  
Presidency

**When faith  
replaces  
doubt,  
when selfless  
service eliminates  
selfish striving,  
the power of God  
brings to pass His  
purposes.**

## Replacing doubt with faith

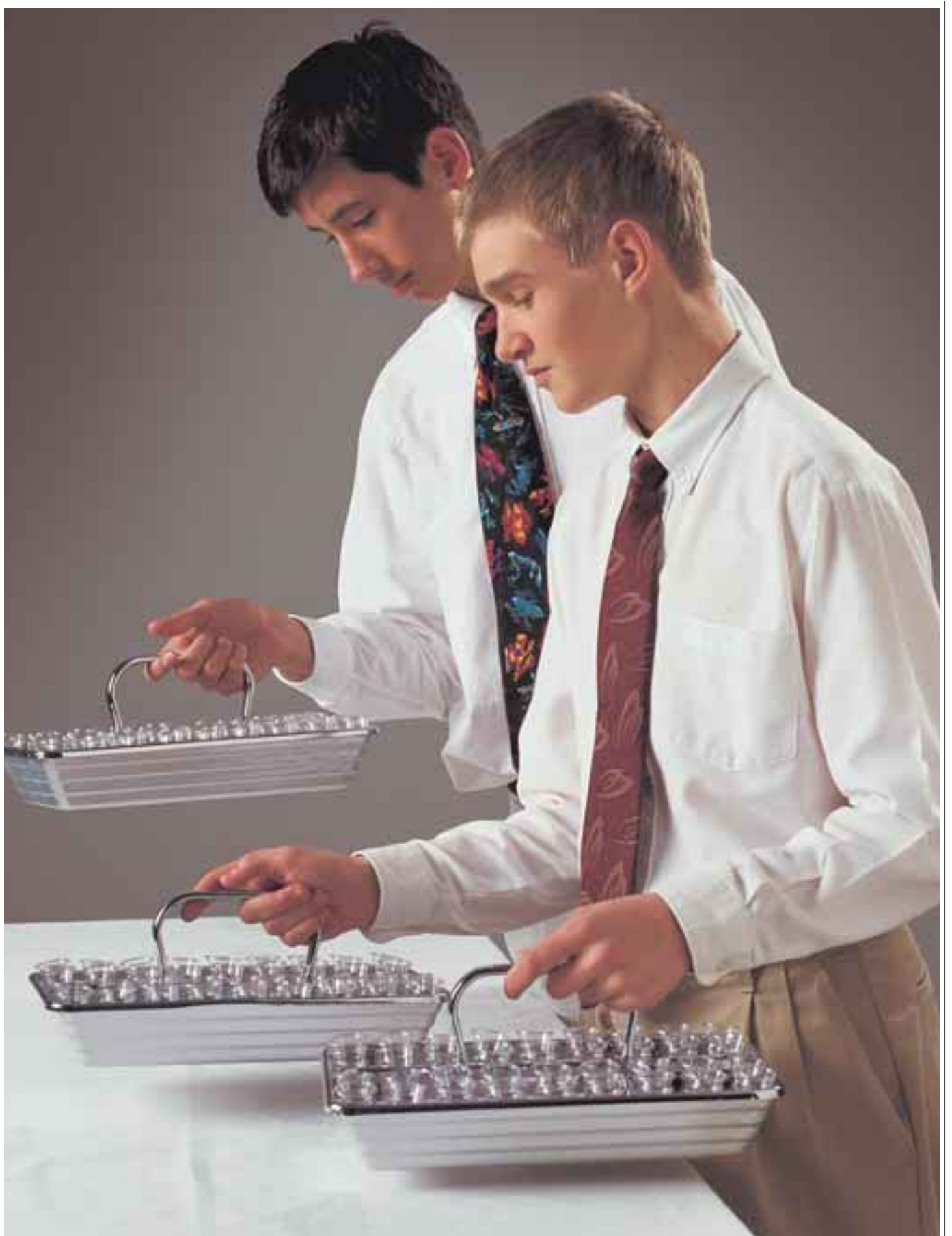
Miracles are everywhere to be found when priesthood callings are magnified. When faith replaces doubt, when selfless service eliminates selfish striving, the power of God brings to pass His purposes.

The priesthood is not really so much a gift as it is a commission to serve, a privilege to lift, and an opportunity to bless the lives of others. We are shepherds watching over Israel. The hungry sheep look up, ready to be fed the bread of life. Are we prepared to feed the flock of God? It is imperative that we recognize the worth of a human soul, that we never give up on one of His precious children.

I recently received a letter from a young man which reflects the spirit of love that helped to make firm a testimony of the gospel:

"Dear President Monson:

"Thank you for speaking to us at the National Scouting Jamboree held at Fort A. P. Hill, Virginia. On the tour that we took we saw a lot of famous places like Niagara Falls, the Statue of Liberty, the Liberty Bell, and many other places. The one I enjoyed the most was the Sacred Grove. Our parents had written us all letters to read by ourselves while in the grove. After I had finished the letter my parents had written to me, I knelt in prayer. I asked if the Church was really true and if Joseph Smith really did see a vision and is a true prophet of God, and also if President Hinckley is a true prophet of God. Right after I was done





praying, I felt this feeling of the Spirit that these things were indeed true. I had prayed before about the same things but never received such a powerful answer. There was no way that I could deny that this Church is true or that President Hinckley is a prophet of God.

“I feel so blessed to be a member of this Church. Thanks again for attending the Jamboree.

“Sincerely,

“Chad D. Olson

“P.S. We gave our tour guide and our bus driver a copy of the Book of Mormon with our testimonies in it. They are the greatest! I want to be a missionary.”

Like Joseph Smith, this young man had retired to a sacred grove and prayed for answers to questions phrased by his inquiring mind. Once more a prayer was answered and a confirmation of the truth was gained.

The call of duty can come quietly as we who hold the priesthood respond to the assignments we receive. President George Albert Smith declared, “It is your duty first of all to learn what the Lord wants and then by the power and strength of [your] holy Priesthood to

**T**he call of duty can come quietly as we who hold the priesthood respond to the assignments we receive.

magnify your calling in the presence of your fellows in such a way that the people will be glad to follow you” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 14).

What does it mean to magnify a calling? It means to build it up in dignity and importance, to make it honorable and commendable in the eyes of all men, to enlarge and strengthen it, to let the light of heaven shine through it to the view of other men. And how does one magnify a calling? Simply by performing the service that pertains to it. An elder magnifies the ordained calling of an elder by learning what his duties as an elder are and then by doing them. As with an elder, so with a deacon, a teacher, a priest, a bishop, and each who holds office in the priesthood.

#### **Doing instead of dreaming**

Brethren, it is in *doing*—not just *dreaming*—that lives are blessed, others are guided, and souls are saved. “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves,” added James (James 1:22).

May all of us make a renewed effort to qualify for the Lord’s guidance in our lives. There are many out there who



plead and pray for help. There are those who are discouraged, those who are beset by poor health and challenges of life which leave them in despair.

I've always believed in the truth of the words, "God's sweetest blessings always go by hands that serve him here below" (Whitney Montgomery, "Revelation," in *Best-Loved Poems of the LDS People*, 283).

Once I had a treasured friend, Hyrum Adams, who seemed to experience more of life's troubles and frustrations than he could bear. Finally he lay in the hospital, terminally ill. I knew not that he was there.

Sister Monson and I had gone to that same hospital to visit another person who was very ill. As we exited the hospital and proceeded to where our car was parked, I felt the distinct impression to return and ask whether Hyrum Adams might be a patient there. Long years before, I had learned never, never, to postpone a prompting from the Lord. It was late, but a check with the desk clerk confirmed that indeed Hyrum was a patient.

We proceeded to his room, knocked on the door, and opened it. We were not prepared for the sight that awaited us. Balloon bouquets were everywhere. Prominently displayed on the wall was a poster with the words "Happy Birthday" written on it. Hyrum was sitting up in his hospital bed, his family by his side. When he saw us, he said, "Why, Brother Monson, how in the world did you know that this is my birthday?" I smiled but I left the question unanswered.

Those in the room who held the Melchizedek Priesthood surrounded this, their father and my friend, and a priesthood blessing was given.

After tears were shed, smiles of gratitude exchanged, and tender hugs received and given, I leaned over to Hyrum and spoke softly to him: "Hyrum, remember the words of the Lord, for they will sustain you. He promised, 'I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you'" (John 14:18).

May each of us ever be on the Lord's errand and thereby be entitled to the Lord's help. **NE**

*Adapted from an October 1999 general conference address.*

## SACRED RESPONSIBILITIES



"You young deacons, teachers, and priests: Are you worthy to officiate in the preparation, passing, and blessing of the sacrament? These are sacred responsibilities. The bread and water are

emblems of our Savior's flesh and blood; they represent His atoning sacrifice.

"Think of that for a moment. The sacrament that you administer each week is in remembrance of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The wondrous gift of the Atonement overcomes physical death unconditionally, and it is infinite because it is for all who have lived or will ever live in mortality. Through the Atonement, we are all redeemed from the Fall of Adam and will be resurrected. . . .

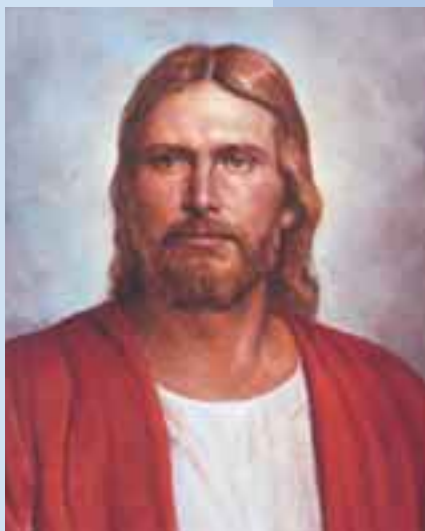
"Oh, how the Lord blesses worthy bearers of the Aaronic Priesthood who bless and pass the sacrament to faithful members of the Church in His memory! And how He blesses those who partake of the sacrament worthily! If you are worthy to participate in the administration of the sacrament, you will be worthy to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood at the appropriate time and enter the temple to take upon yourselves covenants with the Lord" (*Ensign*, May 1996, 35–36).

—Elder Robert D. Hales  
of the Quorum of the Twelve



*Oh, how the Lord blesses*

*worthy bearers of the Aaronic Priesthood who bless and pass the sacrament to faithful members of the Church in His memory!*







# THE TEMPLE AT 12

## *My mother's birthday present changed my life.*

I will be forever grateful to my mother, who taught me the importance of the temple. For years, she prepared us for the temple by having pictures of many beautiful temples hanging in our home. We also had family home evening lessons about temples. All of this was in anticipation of the long-promised visit to the temple after reaching the age of 12.

The words of the song my mother sang, often at the breakfast table before family prayers, still ring in my ears.

*I love to see the temple.*

*I'm going there someday*

*To feel the Holy Spirit,*

*To listen and to pray.*

*For the temple is a house of God,*

*A place of love and beauty.*

*I'll prepare myself while I am young;*

*This is my sacred duty.*

*(Children's Songbook, 95)*

For each of us five children, Mother's present for our 12th birthday was a trip to the temple. The closest temple—Johannesburg—was a long trip, a 16-hour, nonstop drive, and it cost a lot of money. It meant leaving at 4:00 A.M. and arriving after 8:00 P.M.—tired, hot, and sticky.

Yet my mother always made sure money for the temple trip was first in the budget, along with tithing. Each year, we made the journey to the temple to do work for the dead. By sacrificing so

**T**he culmination of all my mother's efforts came when I received my endowment before going on a mission. I will never forget the image of my parents standing arm in arm in the celestial room, waiting for me.

much, my mother helped me understand the beauty of the temple and the importance of the work done there.

When I think of my mother, beaming proudly, as she presented her two children, my sister and me, to the temple president and showed him our recommends, I am reminded of Hannah bringing Samuel to Eli in the temple and dedicating her son to the Lord. Although I didn't fully understand the importance of the temple at first, each successive temple trip left an indelible impression on me. My love for the temple grew each year as my mother sacrificed so much for our experiences there. To see her children in the temple, dressed in white and doing the Lord's work, meant more to my mother than anything she could have bought with the money she saved.

The culmination of all my mother's efforts came when I received my endowment before going on a mission. I will never forget the image of my parents standing arm in arm in the celestial room, waiting for me. I will never forget the importance of the temple and temple marriage they taught me. It is especially helpful as I serve as a missionary to bring souls to the knowledge of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and start them on the path that will ultimately lead them to be sealed eternally in the temple.

I am so thankful for my mother, who understood the importance of the temple, and who, through many years of patient teaching, was able to help me realize the importance of the beautiful ordinances performed there. **NE**

by Greg Burgoyne

# Feed MY SHEEP



**W**e're taught to leave the ninety and nine to go find the one lost sheep. What was true in the time of the Savior is still true today.

by Elder Ben B. Banks  
of the Presidency of the  
Seventy

*Those who are lost need our attention and loving care. We can help those who wish to return to the fold find their way back.*

**S**everal years ago my wife, Susan, and I had the opportunity to tour the New Zealand Christchurch Mission. As part of the mission tour we included a preparation day and took a bus trip to see the beautiful Milford Sound. Part of the trip involved stopping at several scenic sites along the way. At one of those stops, I became curious about a group of passengers standing in a circle on the road taking photographs. As I peered over the people, I saw in the circle a frightened baby lamb on wobbly legs. It appeared to be no more than a few hours old.

After all the passengers finally boarded the bus, the driver picked up the frightened lamb in his arms, held it tenderly against his chest, and brought it on the bus. He sat down, closed the door, picked up his microphone, and said to us: "Undoubtedly a band of sheep has gone through here this morning, and this little lamb has strayed. Perhaps if we take it with us, we might find the band of sheep farther up the road and return this baby lamb to its mother."

We drove through several kilometers of forests and finally came to a beautiful

meadow of tall, flowing grass. Sure enough, there in the meadow was a band of sheep feeding. The driver stopped the bus and excused himself. We all thought he would put the lamb down on the side of the road and come back, but he didn't. With the lamb in his arms, he carefully and quietly walked out through the grass toward the band of sheep. When he got as close as he could without disturbing them, he gently put the lamb down and then remained in the field to make sure the baby lamb returned to the fold.

As he returned to the bus, he once again picked up his microphone and said, "Oh, can't you hear that mother sheep saying, 'Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you for bringing my lost lamb back home to me!'"

## **"The ninety and nine"**

As I think of this wonderful teaching moment provided by the bus driver, my thoughts turn to the parable the Lord gave us of the lost sheep:

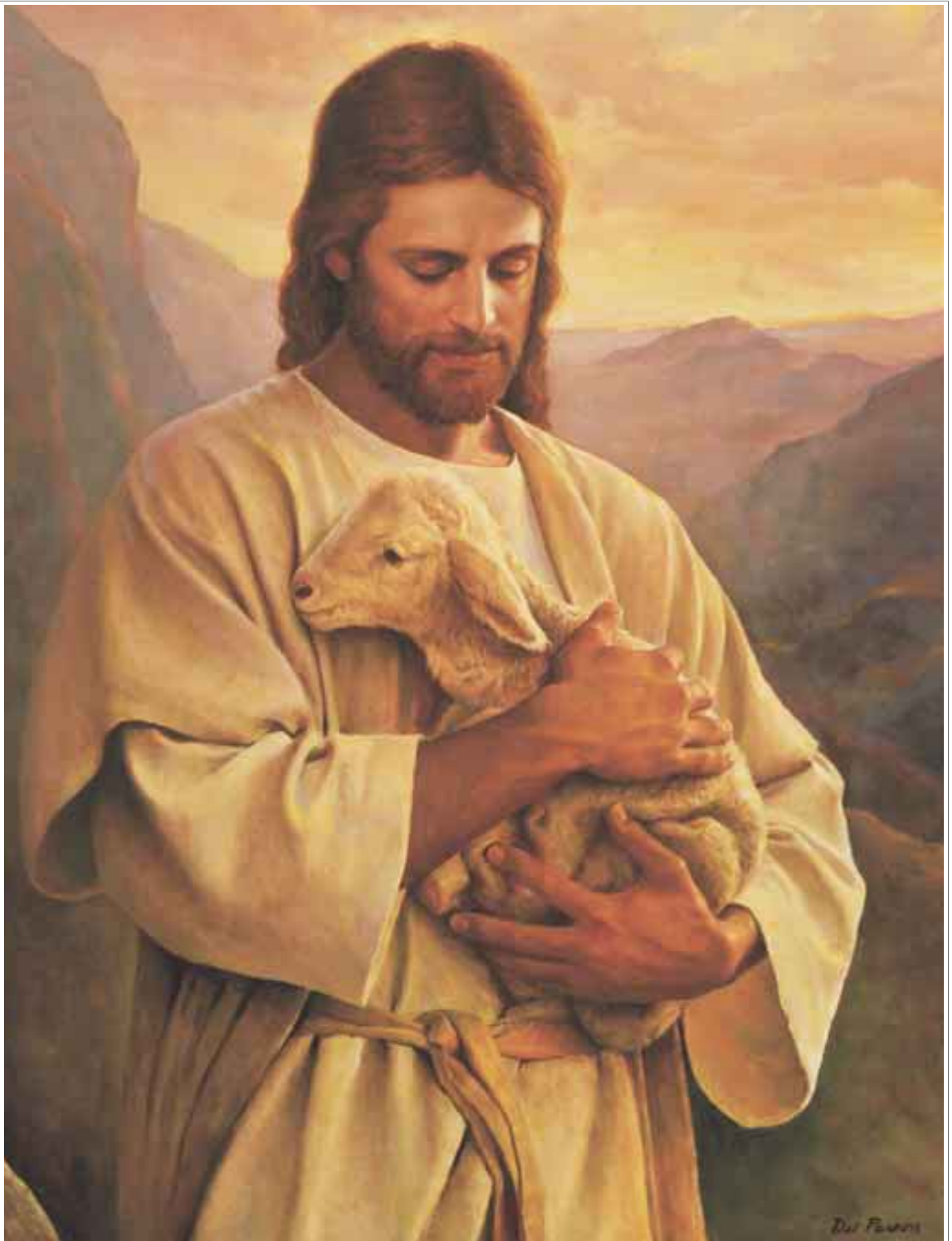
"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

"And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

"And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.



*Painting The Lost Lamb by Del Parson*



**E**very active member of the Church knows a lost sheep who needs the attention and love of a caring shepherd. The challenge before us is great. It will require us to exercise increased faith, energy, and commitment if we are to reach these brothers and sisters. But we must do it. The Lord is counting on us to do it.

“And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance” (Luke 15:1–7).

Our prophet today, President Gordon B. Hinckley, likewise shares with us his concern about lost sheep:

“There are so many young people who wander aimlessly and walk the tragic trail of drugs, gangs, immorality, and the whole brood of ills that accompany these things. There are widows who long for friendly voices and that spirit of anxious concern which speaks of love. There are those who were once warm in the faith, but whose faith has grown cold. Many of them wish to come back but do not know quite how to do it. They need friendly hands reaching out to them. With a little effort, many of them can be brought back to feast again at the table of the Lord.

“My brethren and sisters, I would hope, I would pray, that each of us . . . would resolve to seek those who need help, who are in desperate and difficult circumstances, and lift them in the spirit of love into the embrace of the Church, where strong hands and loving hearts will warm them, comfort them, sustain them, and put them on the way of happy and productive lives” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 86).

#### **Why has their faith grown cold?**

In light of our prophet’s concern, might we ask ourselves, Why is it that some who were once warm in the faith have grown cold in the faith?

If we are to succeed in the prophetic mandate to perfect the Saints, we must also succeed in our efforts to strengthen those who have grown cold in their faith. To begin this endeavor, it would be well for us to know the feelings and reasons why they do not attend meetings and participate in the fellowship of the Saints.

Most active members believe that less-active members behave differently because they don’t believe the Church’s doctrine. A study by the Church’s Research Information Division does not support this assumption. It shows that

almost all less-active members interviewed believe that God exists, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was a prophet, and that the Church is true.

As part of another study, a group of active members who previously had been less active were asked why they did not attend church. The most common reasons given were:

- ◆ Feelings of unworthiness.
- ◆ Personal or family problems.
- ◆ Parents or spouse were less active.
- ◆ Teenage rebelliousness or laziness.
- ◆ Conflicts with work schedules.
- ◆ Church too far away, lacked transportation.

They were then asked what had influenced them to return to activity in the Church. The most common answers were:

- ◆ Faced with crisis in life.
- ◆ Overcame personal problems.
- ◆ The example of a spouse or girlfriend/boyfriend.
- ◆ Influence of family members.
- ◆ Wanted the gospel influence for family.
- ◆ Fellowshiping from ward members, moved to a new ward where people cared about them.

(See Research Information Division comparison, Sept. 1999.)

I believe that every active member of the Church knows a lost sheep who needs the attention and love of a caring shepherd.

The challenge before us is great. It will require us to exercise increased faith, energy, and commitment if we are to reach these brothers and sisters. But we must do it. The Lord is counting on us to do it.

We must remember that change occurs slowly. We all need to have patience, offer fellowship and friendship, learn to listen and love, and be careful not to judge.

For those who have wandered away from the fold, I am hopeful you are reading this. You have in many instances formed new associations and no longer keep Church standards.

What a blessing it would be to your family if you would harmonize your life with the gospel. The decision to change your life and return to activity and come unto Christ is the most important



decision you could make in this life.

The Savior, in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, tells us in very personal terms how valuable each soul is:

“Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

“For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.

“And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him, on conditions of repentance.

“And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!

“Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

“And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!” (D&C 18:10–15).

The Good Shepherd willingly gave His life for His sheep, for you and me, yes, for all of us, that we might live eternally with our Father in Heaven. I pray that we will all follow the admonition our Savior Jesus Christ gave to Peter three times: “Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep” (John 21:15–17). **NE**

*Adapted from an October 1999 general conference address.*

# SUBMERGED



Charlee Ann Voorhees didn't get involved in service to get attention. But when she lost herself in the service of others, she ended up finding herself featured in the newspaper and speaking about service at youth conventions.

When Charlee's parents divorced, she felt overwhelmed. She was in the middle of a situation she couldn't do much about and needed something to take her mind off of her problems.

It was during that time she heard a



by Matthew Baker



# *in Service*



Young Women lesson about service. The teacher told her class that serving others is a good way to get through personal problems.

“I decided I needed to get more involved,” says Charlee, a Laurel in the Sioux Falls (South Dakota) First Ward. “I was involved in a lot of other things, but as far as service, I didn’t have much of that kind of involvement in my life.”

Once Charlee submerged herself in service, she found that many of her own problems were put into perspective. “My parents were divorcing, but I could help



**W**hen Charlee Ann Voorbees felt swamped with personal problems, she found that service helped her keep an even keel. Now that she feels she is headed in the right direction, Charlee leaves a wake of good deeds wherever she goes.

# FINDING OUR SOULS



“I have learned that it is by serving that we learn how to serve. When we are engaged in the service of our fellowmen, not only do our deeds assist them, but we put our own problems in a fresher perspective.

When we concern ourselves more with others, there is less time to be concerned with ourselves. In the midst of the miracle of serving, there is the promise of Jesus, that by losing ourselves, we find ourselves. (See Matt. 10:39.)

“Not only do we ‘find’ ourselves in terms of acknowledging guidance in our lives, but the more we serve our fellowmen in appropriate ways, the more substance there is to our souls. We become more significant individuals as we serve others. We become more substantive as we serve others—indeed, it is easier to ‘find’ ourselves because there is so much more of us to find” (*Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 2).

—President  
Spencer W. Kimball  
(1895–1985)



people even though I wasn’t exactly having the best time myself,” she says.

When Charlee was looking for service opportunities, she attended a volunteer fair where she signed up for nearly every service group represented. But one organization really caught her eye: Sioux Falls’ Promise, an organization that involves youth in community service and other activities.

Charlee applied for a position on the youth board for Sioux Falls’ Promise. She was accepted, and before long she was elected president of the board.

**A**s president, Charlee says her main goal was to create awareness of the concerns, problems, and issues that teens have in Sioux Falls. She served as an advocate for the youth of her community. One of the ways she did that was to hold a town meeting with the youth and the mayor. In that meeting, the teens raised their concerns about youth drug and alcohol abuse and a city curfew.

“Since that meeting, the mayor has actually come to us before making decisions and asked what we think about certain issues,” she says.

Charlee also organized a youth convention to discuss teens’ concerns. More than 1,000 teens attended the convention, where they discussed making friends, resolving conflicts, controlling anger, and using service to improve communities.

The success of the convention led to an invitation for Charlee and the youth board to attend a national youth convention. While there, Charlee discussed service with Colin Powell, chairman of America’s Promise and now United States Secretary of State.

As Charlee has worked to get the youth of Sioux Falls involved in service, she has seen what a dose of service can do for the giver as well as the receiver. “You get the chance to see that others are struggling, too. It’s a big eye-opener for how fortunate you are in your own life.” **NE**

# SCARED

*It was a dark, windy night, and I was alone in the house. I scare easily, and fear was beginning to get the best of me. Then I discovered the secret to overcoming fear.*

I get scared very easily. To make matters worse, I have an overactive imagination, and it doesn't take much to make me tense and nervous.

I remember a time when I had a hard time falling asleep at night because I was afraid. I would lie awake thinking about all the bad things that might happen: fires, car accidents, burglaries. Most of the things I worried about were things I had absolutely no control over.

One autumn evening, I found myself home alone. It was a dark, windy night, and my imagination was running wild. I tried watching television, but I couldn't concentrate on the show. Then I tried calling a few of my friends, but none of them were home.

Finally I realized I needed some help to calm down, so I went to my bedroom and got my scriptures. Before I began reading, I knelt down and prayed to Heavenly Father that He would help me get my mind off my fears and that I would be able to concentrate on the scriptures. After my prayer, I crawled into bed and opened my scriptures to the Doctrine and Covenants. I had been reading for only a few minutes when one of the verses suddenly caught my attention: "Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you" (D&C 68:6).

Immediately, I felt a calmness come over me as the realization came to me that, although I could not control the things that were troubling me, my Heavenly Father could. Now whenever I start to feel afraid, I recall the words to that scripture, and I always feel better. I find it comforting to know that the Lord loves me, understands my feelings, and will always be there for me when I need Him. **NE**

by Kimberly Hicken



# Q & A

*“I share a bedroom with my younger sister. Since we share the same space, we seem to have a lot of arguments. How can we resolve our problems and get along better?”*

## NEW ERA

Sharing a room with a sister or brother can be one of the most memorable growing-up experiences. It can be memorable because it was dreadful or because you became best friends. Only one of these outcomes takes effort.

Tiesha Benedict, from Derby, Kansas, shares a room with her younger sister. She says they weren't getting along until she realized that her goal was to spend eternity with her family, including her sister. When there are constant arguments and disagreements, living together for eternity can seem more like a punishment than a blessing. So Tiesha decided to treat her younger sister like her best friend. Tiesha says it just took a small change of attitude to make sharing a room with her sister an enjoyable experience.

Several teens who once shared bedrooms but now have rooms of their own wrote in to say how much they missed sharing with a brother or sister. Sam Boston, from Memphis, Tennessee, grew up sharing a room with his older brother. Sam says he didn't always get

**T**reat your younger sister like your best friend.

**Y**ou can't expect behavior from your roommate that you don't require of yourself.

**L**ook for ways to serve your sister.

**I**f you resolve your problems, you might find that sharing a room is much more fun than having a room to yourself.

**L**earning how to get along with a roommate now could help you avoid tension the rest of your life.

## READERS

*I've had to share my room for most of my life, and it's definitely something you have to deal with on a mission. One of the best tools is just common courtesy—keep your part of the room tidy, and put your things where they belong. Ultimately, remember to be the kind of roommate you would like to have.*

**Elder Steven Paradise, 21  
Indiana Indianapolis Mission**



*When my sister and I were sharing a room, we got together and made up some rules and promised to keep them. It worked very well.*

**Cammie Dodds, 13  
Riverton, Utah**





along with his brother. But since his brother left on a mission, Sam says he would like to have that time back. “If only I could live that time over again, I’d let him win every single fight,” he says. “It’s so terrible that we never appreciate people until after they’re gone.”

Many teens who share a bedroom wrote to tell us how they have tried to get along. Stories ranged from a strip of masking tape to a barricade made of drawers, shelves, and chairs to divide the room. Others wrote a list of rules that both siblings could agree on. But the idea that seemed to be most popular, and most successful, was to love their roommate by serving him or her. Ideas of service included making both beds, writing a note and leaving it under the pillow, cleaning the room, and just saying, “I love you.” In short, the solutions that divided up space seemed to fail, and the solutions that encouraged service, sharing, and respect succeeded.

One question you should ask yourself if you are having a hard time getting along with a roommate is: What kind of a roommate am I? You can’t expect behavior from your roommate that you don’t require of yourself. If you expect your sister to ask before she borrows something that belongs to you, you must do the same to her. If you want her to keep her part of the room clean, you must keep your side of the room clean. The more you strive to treat your sister the way you want to be treated, the more you will enjoy being together.

Growing up may not be the only time you share a room. Chances are you will share a room if you go on a mission, go to college, or get married. Learning how to get along with a roommate now could help you avoid tension the rest of your life. And, if you can resolve your problems, you might find that sharing a room is much more fun than having a room to yourself. **NE**

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



“**O**ccasionally, family members treat each other with less courtesy and kindness than they do acquaintances or even strangers. . . . The true greatness of a person, in my view, is evident in the way he or she treats those with whom courtesy and kindness are not required” (*Ensign*, May 1992, 86).

—Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve

*When arguments arise, remember Proverbs 15:1: “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.”*

Jenny Wheeler, 17  
Shanghai, China



*Missionaries have what is called companionship inventory. Once a week we sit down and resolve irritations we have with each other’s actions in a considerate and kind way.*

*When we eliminate the small irritations, it usually eliminates any major difficulties.*

Elder Nathan Petersen  
Oklahoma Oklahoma City Mission



*If you get to know your sister and hang out with her more often, you’ll find it harder to argue with her.*

Meagan Karch, 14  
Phoenix, Arizona



## HELP Q&A BE OF HELP

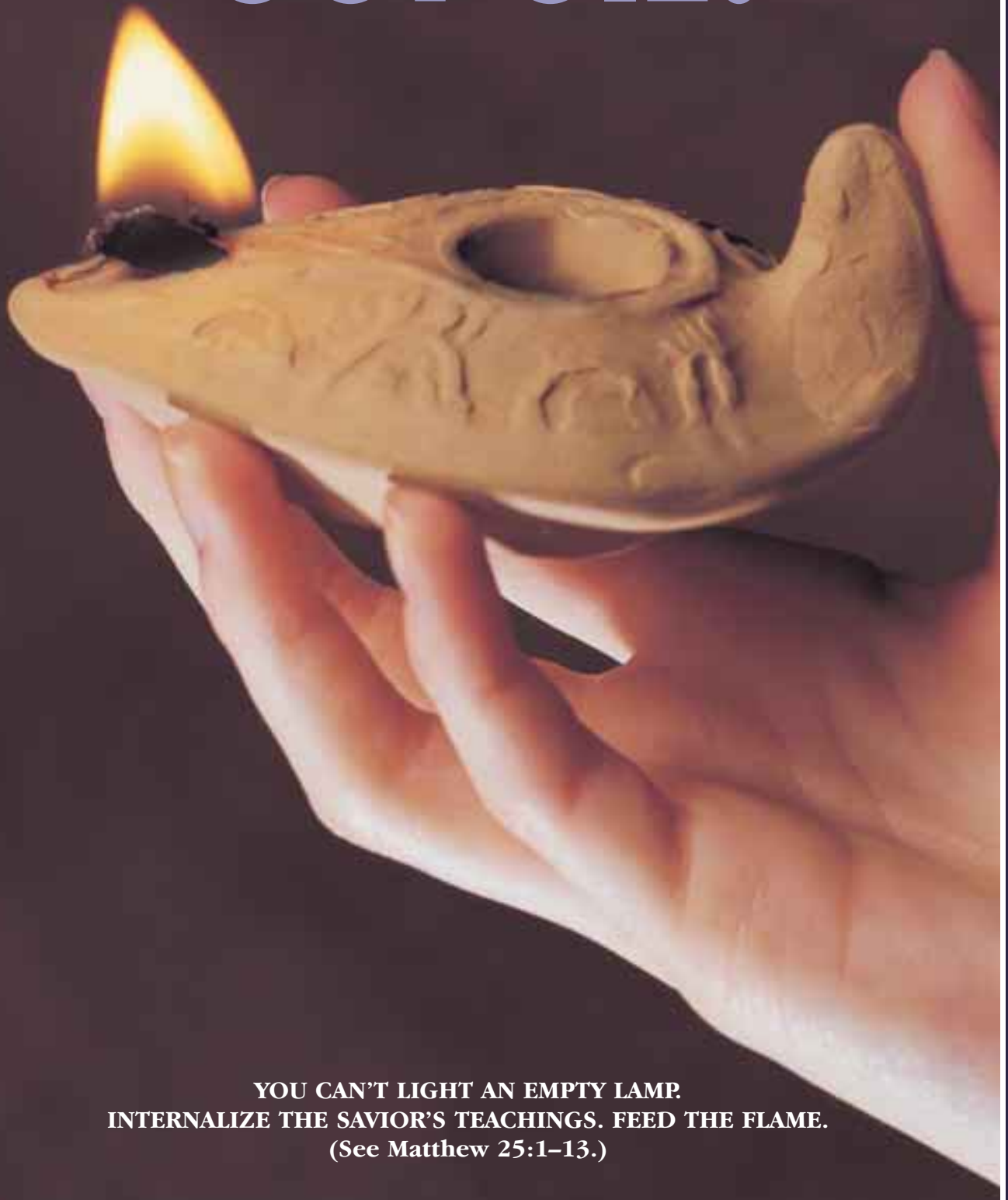
You can help make Q&A helpful by answering the question below. Please mail your answers before July 1, 2001, to Q&A, *New Era*, 50 East North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150. Print or type your name, age, city, and state with each answer. Also, please include a snapshot of yourself. This will not be returned. If your answer is of a sensitive nature, your name may be withheld from publication.

## QUESTION

*My best friend is not a member of the Church but recently attended a few activities with me and really enjoyed herself. Lately I have been feeling that I should talk to her about the Church. How can I do this without jeopardizing our friendship or making her feel uncomfortable?*



# GOT OIL?



**YOU CAN'T LIGHT AN EMPTY LAMP.  
INTERNALIZE THE SAVIOR'S TEACHINGS. FEED THE FLAME.  
(See Matthew 25:1-13.)**

# BADGES OF HONOR

**E**rik Fagergren sloshes along one of the dirt-turned-to-mud roads that crisscross the San Rafael Valley between his home in Patagonia, Arizona, and the United States/Mexico border. The rain has filled the usually dry washes that cross the road into ponds and filled streams and gullies into raging rivers. The four-wheel-drive Suburban plows through one of the small ponds, the exhaust pipe belching bubbles, and the tires churning muddy water.

Erik points through the rain-streaked windshield at the Patagonia Mountains that jut out of the desert. It was in those mountains that Erik led his dad, bishop, and three other Scouts on a 50-mile hike for his Backpacking merit badge.

Impaling the storm clouds to the east are the Huachuca Mountains. On a lake in these mountains, Erik earned his Rowing and Canoeing merit badges.

The road Erik is bumping along passes old film sets where the musical *Oklahoma* and many western movies were filmed. It is also the road Erik pedaled for 50 miles to finish his Cycling merit badge. Some of the other cycling trips he took for this merit badge took him on the highway that leads north out of Patagonia to Sanoita.

Traveling south on the highway out of Patagonia is Nogales, Arizona, where Erik attended church and Scout meetings. Being active in the Church and Scouting



*Scouting helped Erik decide what he wants to do with his life, but more importantly, it helped him figure out who he wants to be.*

by Matthew Baker

for so many years, and living 30 minutes from the church, means putting in a lot of miles—especially when there are six brothers and sisters in the family. The vehicle that has taken them to most of their meetings and activities has traveled more than 500,000 miles—the equivalent of about 20 times around the earth or just a little farther than to the moon and back.

But the Fagergren family's dedication to Scouting has done more than rack up miles on the family car. Erik says the standards of Scouting reinforce the standards he has learned in church.

Erik's decision to follow his family's legacy in Scouting earned him the title of Outstanding Eagle Scout of the Year, a national award given by the Sons of the American Revolution. The award came with a check for \$5,000—money Erik says will help pay for his mission. But his passion for Scouting has earned him something more valuable than mission money; it has helped him learn values that make good missionaries.

## **A love of Scouting**

Erik's love of Scouting and his goal to earn his Eagle Award came in part from his dad and two older brothers who were also Eagle Scouts. Their examples helped Erik get involved in Scouting earlier than most people. Before he turned 12, his dad was the Scoutmaster and his



Photography by the author



brothers were active in Scouting. Although he wasn't officially a Scout, Erik went camping with his dad and the troops and anxiously anticipated the day he would wear a uniform.

"I couldn't wait until I turned 12 so I could actually start earning my merit badges and ranks," Erik says. When he turned 12, he began walking in the footsteps of his dad and older brothers toward his Eagle Award. Along with the merit badges and rank advancements, Erik learned important values.

The Scout slogan is "Do a good turn daily," and service is a value that Erik has tried to internalize. During high school, Erik donated time at a farm for injured animals. The owners of the farm were getting old, and their health kept them from working as much as they wanted. So every day after school, Erik would spend time feeding the animals and doing other chores on the farm.

Erik has served in many leadership roles in Church and school. He has served in quorum leadership as a deacon, teacher, and priest. As the only priesthood-holding student in his school, he set an example by living up to Church standards.

When it was time for Erik's Eagle project, he found plenty of people willing to help. "I always went out helping the other guys with their projects, and they helped me in return," he says.

### **Eagle project**

The cemetery in Patagonia sits on a hill and overlooks the town. Although it is still used, the cemetery doesn't receive continual maintenance, and many of the headstones were buried, and weeds and trash had covered others. For his Eagle project, Erik, with the help of his family, ward members, and friends from the community, cleaned the cemetery.

But when he earned his Eagle Award, Erik didn't stop Scouting. "When I got my Eagle, I had about 60 merit badges, about half of the possible badges. My Scoutmaster would always joke around, 'So when are you going to finish them all?'" Although it was just a joke, Erik started to wonder if it really could be done. "I started out just wishing. Then I was talking to my dad and he said, 'Maybe you should try,' so I just started working on it."

Three weeks before his 18th birthday, Erik earned his Bugling merit badge. That brought the total number to 119, all that were available.

### **Life after Scouting**

"Through doing the merit badges, it helped me choose what I want to go into as a career. There is such a variety of merit badges. By doing each one and researching each field, I learned about what I would do in each job," Erik says. Inspired by the Engineering and Computers merit badges, Erik now studies mechanical engineering as a freshman at the University of Arizona.

As well as directing him in his career choice, Scouting helped Erik decide what kind of person he wants to be. He says Scouting teaches values, such as those in the Scout Law. "I haven't forgotten it," Erik says. "A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, reverent," he quotes it without hesitation.

Everybody who knows Erik comments on his high standards, and they often use words from the Scout Law to describe him. Erik believes these standards have helped him fulfill his priesthood responsibilities and prepare for a mission. "Keeping the standards of the Church and Scouting, I was prepared to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood," Erik says. "When you learn values, they help no matter what situation you are in."

When Erik turns 19, he plans to serve a mission, something he has looked forward to for a long time. Although he still has to wait a year, Erik says since he has been ordained an elder, he already has many of the responsibilities of a missionary; he just isn't set apart to do it full-time. "Being an elder means you are in the service of your fellow beings," Erik says. "I'm responsible to let people know the truth of the gospel."

Until Erik is called as a full-time missionary, the skills he learned in Scouting will keep him busy exploring caves, rafting rivers, and biking trails in the Sonora Desert. Once he goes on a mission the climbing ropes, backpack, bike, and raft will have to be put away. But the values he learned will stay with him and help him share the gospel as someone who is striving to live it. **NE**

**E**verybody who knows Erik comments on his high standards, and they often use words from the Scout Law to describe him. Erik is a freshman at the University of Arizona in Tucson (below), but he still finds time to visit his parents in Patagonia (right).





***“It is far better to build boys than to mend men.”***

—President Thomas S. Monson  
(*Ensign*, Apr. 1988, 77)

The Church adopted the Scouting program in 1913, and the support for this program that helps build boys continues today.

“I am pleased to stand firm for an organization that teaches duty to God and country, that embraces the Scout Law; yes, an organization whose motto is ‘Be prepared’ and whose slogan is ‘Do a good turn daily.’” (Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 48).

# THAT'S MY DAD

**W**hy doesn't that happen to my dad?" I found myself asking this question over and over again as I listened to teachers and new missionaries at the Missionary Training Center tell about family members who had been converted to the gospel. These missionaries and returned missionaries had received the promise—just as I had—that as they served the Lord, their families would be strengthened.

From the first time I prayed by myself as a child, I beseeched my Heavenly Father daily, "Please bless Dad that he'll want to go to church." But he hadn't gone. My older brother had served a mission, but it didn't seem to change Dad.

I really loved my father, and I knew he would do anything for me. I had always been his little girl. He had supported me in every good thing I had ever done, including my mission. But I was always sorry we didn't have family scripture study or family prayer. I had never received a father's blessing. I always felt I was being left out when teachers gave lessons on eternal families and the blessings of being together forever.

During my stay at the MTC, my parents went on vacation. When they returned home, my mom wrote a letter to me. Most of the letter described their trip home. As they were driving, they passed two teenagers standing by a car on the side of the highway. Dad

**M**aybe Dad isn't ready to join the Church. But Mom's letter helped me see him for who he really is.

by Dayna Shoell

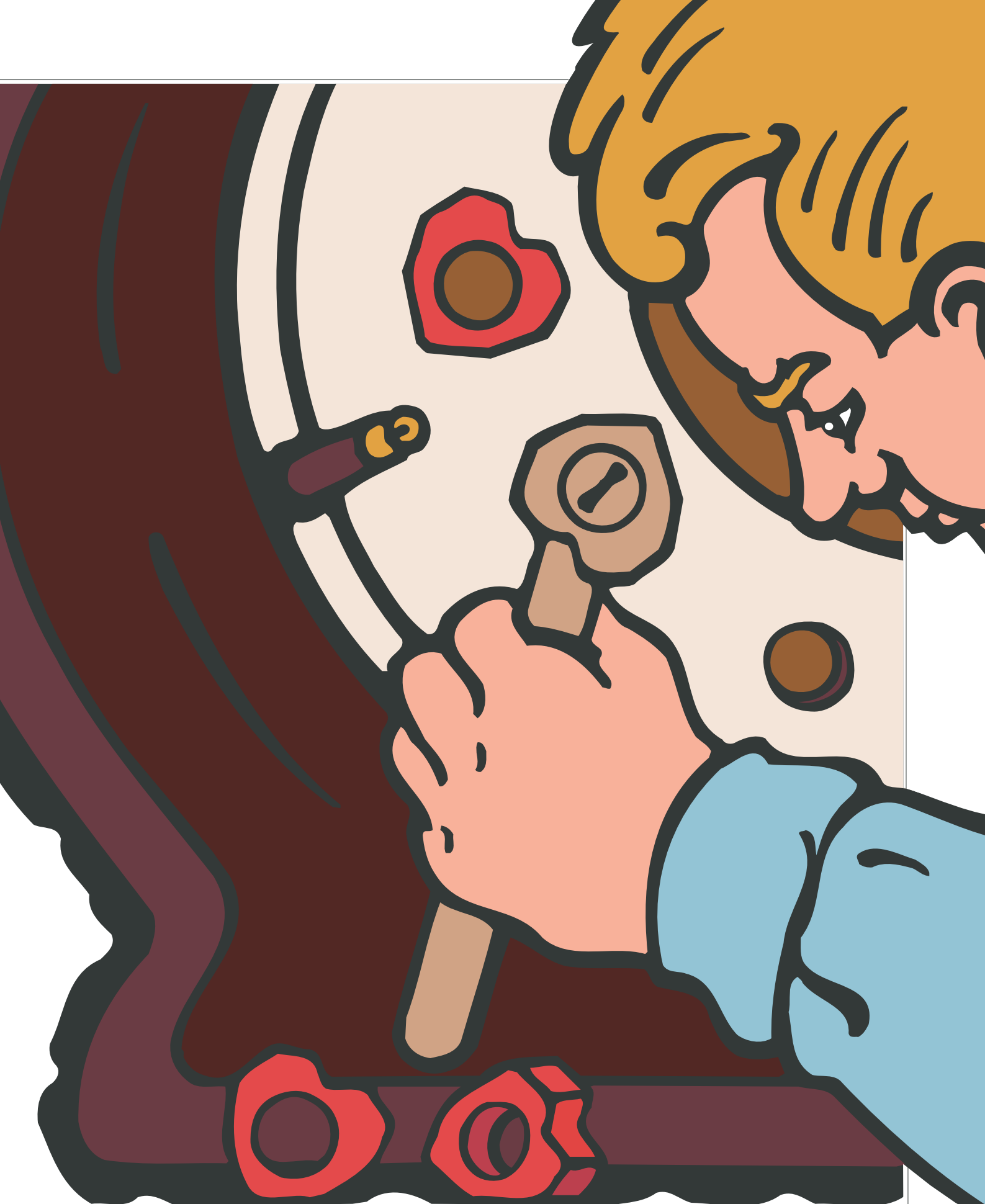
immediately turned around and went back to see if they needed help. He recognized the problem quickly. They had a flat, and a regular lug wrench would not fit the car's custom wheels. Dad pulled a spark plug wrench out of his trunk and solved the problem.

But he didn't stop at that. He discovered that two of the car's passengers had walked to the nearest town to find help, and that neither of the teenagers who were left behind knew how to drive the car, which had a manual transmission. So Dad drove them into the town and helped them find their friends.

After showing them how to repair their next flat tire, Dad and Mom went on their way without accepting any kind of compensation.

I was not surprised to read about Dad's kind act. He did, and still does, that kind of thing all the time. As I tried to finish reading the letter, tears blurred my vision. I began to understand that the Lord had blessed my family in ways I had always chosen to ignore. Perhaps Dad didn't perform all the outward actions of an "active" Latter-day Saint, but long ago he had been converted to many core principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was through his example that I learned about true service, charity, and love. I realized that while I was preaching the gospel in a strange place, my dad would quietly live it at home. **NE**





# Fields Ready to

**T**aking the opportunity to work with the full-time missionaries has helped Brandon Fields of Seattle, Washington, get ready to serve his own full-time mission.

by Shanna Ghaznavi

*His name tag may not be easy to see, but it's real. It says member missionary.*

**H**e blames it on a short attention span, but it's more likely the spirit of missionary service that doesn't allow Brandon Fields to sit still. He's always wanted to go on a mission, but just wanting to go wasn't enough. He needed to prepare. When he was 16, the constant urgings of full-time missionaries and a talk he had to give on missionary service in sacrament meeting prompted this Seattle, Washington, priest to do some thinking.

Brandon thought, You know, I should probably start praying for missionary experiences, because that's what I'm going to be doing for two years, so why not start now? He hasn't sat still since. And his prayers for missionary experiences have definitely been answered. Between visiting the less-active families in his ward, going team teaching with the missionaries, attending school, and working, it's a wonder his first assistant to the bishop even has time to breathe. He says he's able to fit it all in because he just never stops moving.

Brandon's momentum started to build when he and his best friend, Steve Wells, started to go teaching with the missionaries in their area. "We volunteered a couple of times, and it turned out we were the only priests who could go. So it was us for five months."

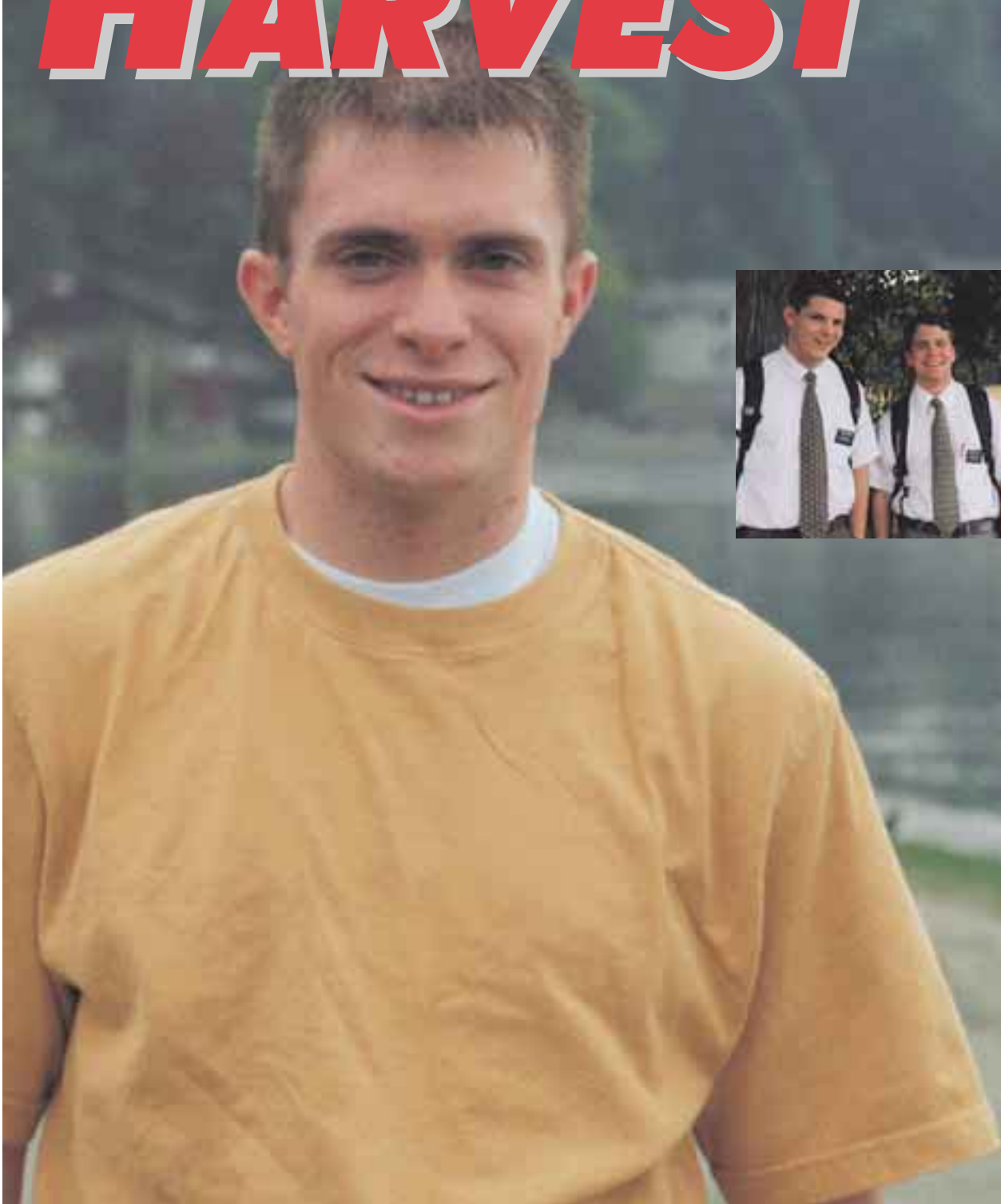
Now that he's only six months away from his mission, Brandon is still helping the missionaries, but he does get a break every once in a while, since there are now a few more priests to help out. Steve is now on a full-time mission in the Philippines.

The gospel is like a favorite recipe, Brandon says, because you want to share it with everyone. "I share it because it makes me happy. And why wouldn't you want to share what makes you happy?" His enthusiasm is contagious, says Marti Grisham, Young Men president of the Federal Way Washington Stake. "He's got a real missionary attitude about him."

But missionary work can sometimes be discouraging, and Brandon says he knows that. Team teaching with the missionaries helps him to overcome, or at least grow accustomed to, occasional setbacks. "It's showing me how they get disappointed—like appointments not showing up. Just seeing that will help me be able to cope like the full-time missionaries do." He's learned to laugh, even when people slam doors in his face. "I'm usually pretty calm and just let stuff go."

Though his attitude during hard times may be calm, his outlook on missionary work is pure excitement. Brandon has taught discussions with the missionaries a few times and is working hard to memorize as many discussions as he can before

# HARVEST







**H**aving the opportunity to see people change as they learn gospel truths is Brandon's favorite thing about teaching with the missionaries. As a member missionary, he has seen first-hand that the Church is the recipe for happiness in this life.

he goes into the Missionary Training Center. His study habits need some work, he says, but he hopes to improve with time and practice. “It makes you feel the Spirit and strengthens your testimony when you teach,” he says.

One of Brandon’s best experiences teaching the gospel happened when he was teaching with a full-time missionary. They were teaching a woman who was addicted to drugs and who was reluctant to live the lifestyle of Church members. One night she would not let Brandon and the missionary into her home to teach her, even though she had listened to discussions before and been

receptive to their message. They wouldn’t give up on her; so they stood outside her house and sang hymns. Finally, she came out to listen to them. She was baptized a short time later. “I loved seeing the change she made and seeing her baptized,” Brandon says.

“We come to know Christ by following Him,”

Brandon says as he teaches

a part of the first new-member discussion to Armand Nicholas, 22, who has just joined the Church. Brandon had previously taught Armand the fifth missionary discussion. Brandon flips to scripture after scripture about Christ as if he were in a seminary scripture chase. “He knows his scriptures,” says Elder Mithona Seng, one of the missionaries with whom Brandon works.

After teaching Armand, Brandon and the missionaries visit a young man who had seen a documentary about the Prophet Joseph Smith and wanted to know more about the Church. Brandon helped the missionaries teach the first discussion with the aid of some study cards he had made.

You might think all this future missionary does is race from house to house sharing the gospel. But he also finds time to earn money for his mission, working as a floor supervisor at a movie theater. When movies arrive at the theater, the film is on a few small reels. Brandon “builds up” or combines the smaller reels into one big reel and adds the movie previews. Normally, he might have to watch many R-rated movies as part of his job, but, he says, “I build up the movies, and you’re supposed to watch them. But the people I work with know I don’t, so someone else comes and does it.” And when he puts on his uniform at work, the mantle of member missionary remains firmly in place. He still tries to tell the people he works with about the gospel and has given copies of the Book of Mormon to some of them.

Although he has to get outside his comfort zone, he says trying to be a good example comes more easily when you don’t worry about what others think of you. “Yes, a mission is hard, but it’s fun, because the missionaries have fun. . . . Just try teaching with them and pray about it. It’s not like Heavenly Father’s going to say no, because we’re supposed to go.” Brandon says he’ll keep sharing his favorite recipe—for happiness that is—the gospel of Jesus Christ. **NE**



## BE A MEMBER MISSIONARY

“A most significant evidence of our conversion and of how we feel about the gospel in our own lives is our willingness to share it with others and to help missionaries find someone to teach. The likelihood of lasting conversion greatly increases when a nonmember has a friend or a relative who radiates the joy of being a member of the Church. The influence of members of the Church is very powerful. I believe that’s why President Hinckley asked us to see that everyone has a friend”  
(*Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 75–76).

—Elder  
M. Russell Ballard  
of the Quorum of the  
Twelve

# PUSH ME PULL YOU

**S**haring common values and encouraging each other are part of the push and pull of friendship.

by Brett C. Sanders

*He pulled ahead and I pushed to catch up, but I never won. Or did I?*

I never thought I would love a mountain. But I've grown to love the mountain overlooking Brigham Young University. My roommate, Josh, suggested we run the face of Y Mountain for exercise. The idea seemed a little ambitious, but we had been friends since high school, and I was not about to turn down his challenge.

At 6:00 A.M. Josh and I stumbled out of our beds, tired, groggy, and a little unsure of exactly what lay ahead of us. The trail to the top includes 11 switchbacks; sometime after the second, your body wants to go into shock—muscles cramp, lungs nearly collapse—and the steepest part of the trail is still to come.

To say the first time up the mountain was hard is an understatement. It was the cruelest form of punishment—slow and deliberate. We were not as fit as we had thought. We ran as fast as we could and then, when we could take no more, we stopped to rest. Slowly we made our way to the top.

The first few times, Josh and I stuck together. But after a few times up the mountain, it became a competition. Josh pulled ahead, and I doubled my efforts to keep up. Josh ran until he was tired, and

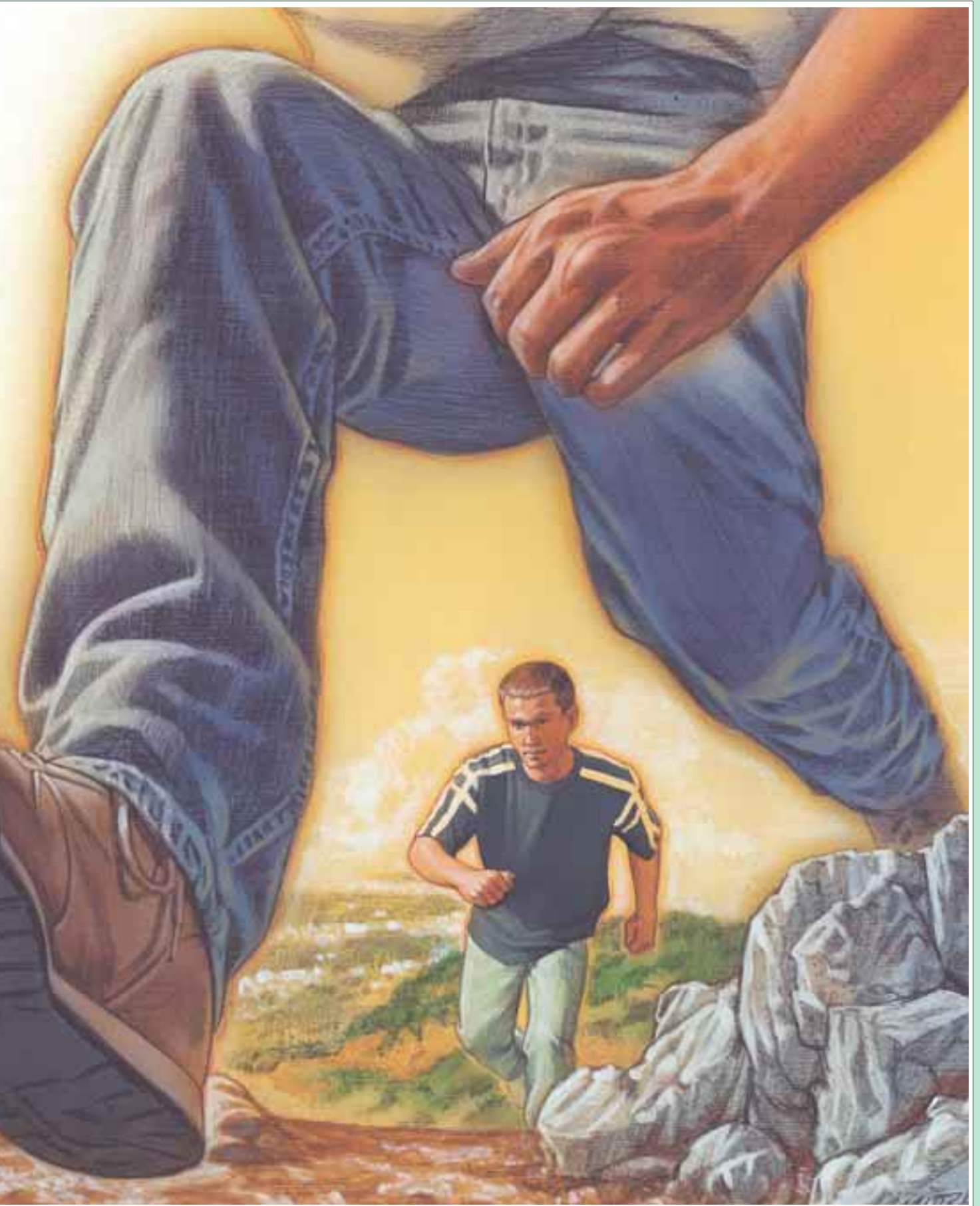
I ran until Josh stopped. No matter how hard I tried, he beat me to the top every time, not by much, but he still beat me.

I tried harder, but I still couldn't get closer. Josh continued to run until he was tired. But when he stopped, I pushed myself to keep running and try to narrow the gap. My time improved, but I was not satisfied because I had never won.

Once, after struggling and sweating my way up the mountain, I caught up to Josh. I asked him to slow down so I could stop and catch my breath. He replied that he could not slow down because if he did, "there would not be anyone to push you to become better." Although I doubt his motives were altruistic, there is truth in what he said.

The steepest and hardest part was at the end. I was always exhausted by the time I reached





the last switchback. It did not matter how fast I ran; Josh, as usual, was ahead of me. Still, I tried to keep the gap between us narrow even as the trail got harder. Josh ran just as hard to keep the gap wide.

Hard work and discipline were rewarded at the finish line. I could finally stop and rest. But often as I came over the hill, with the finish line in sight, I saw Josh scaling farther up the mountain. And I felt compelled to follow. When I finally caught up to him, I mentioned that it is perfectly acceptable to stop at the finish line. His reply was always, "You have to keep pushing yourself."

After another running experience, I apologized to Josh for slowing him down. He replied, "You didn't. You kept me

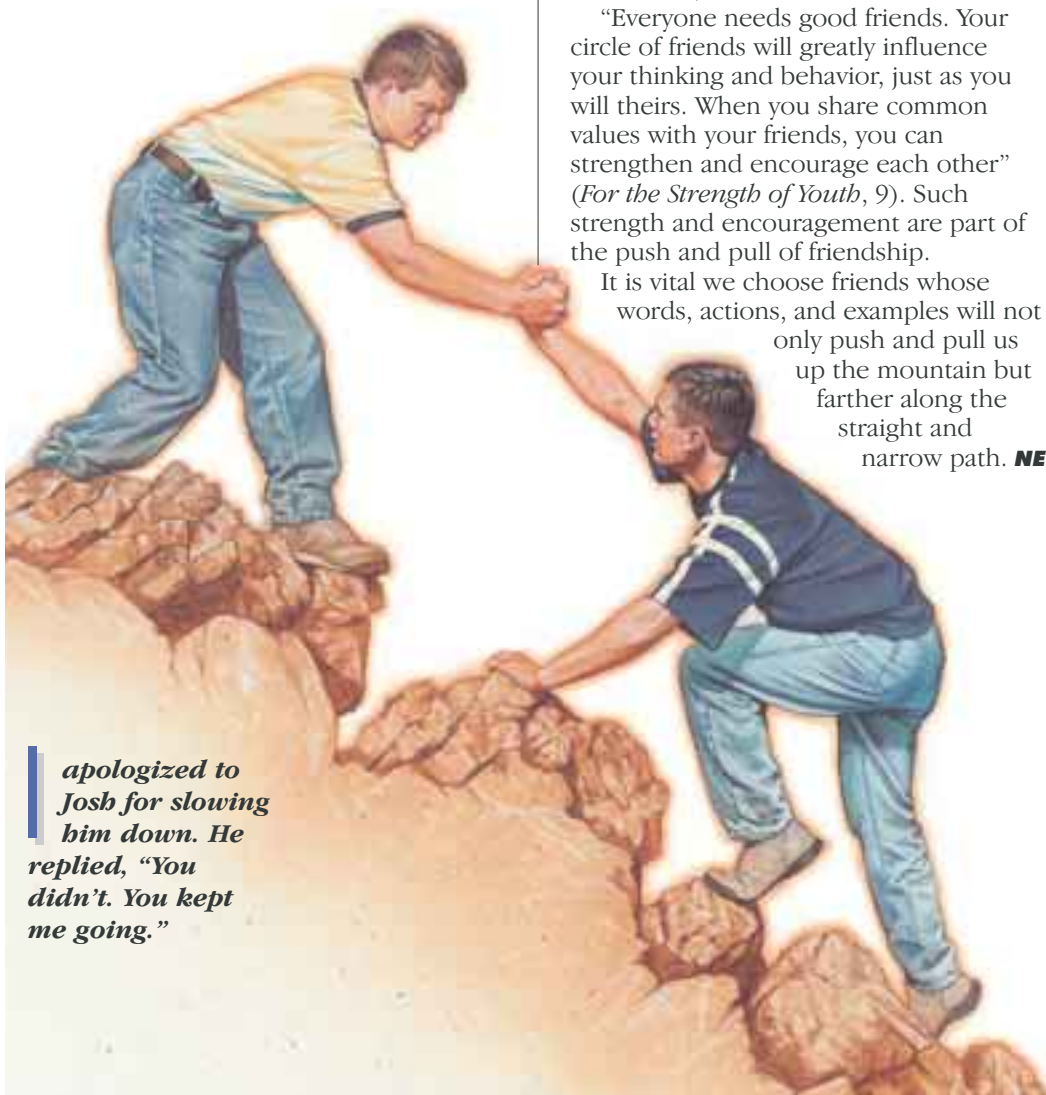
going." While his reply was not totally unexpected, the lesson I learned was. It was then that the "push and pull" of Y Mountain began to sink in. All this time I had thought that Josh had been pulling me up the mountain by refusing to let me stop and rest. But I realized that in my stretching and straining up the mountain, I had pushed him as well.

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve said, "You have felt a tug, maybe many tugs, to be someone better. And what sets those yearnings apart from all your daydreams is that they were not about being richer, or smarter, or more attractive, but about being better" (*To Draw Closer to God*, 45).

Sometimes those tugs come from parents, teachers, or even a roommate and friend. Whatever their source, as we heed them, we become better.

"Everyone needs good friends. Your circle of friends will greatly influence your thinking and behavior, just as you will theirs. When you share common values with your friends, you can strengthen and encourage each other" (*For the Strength of Youth*, 9). Such strength and encouragement are part of the push and pull of friendship.

It is vital we choose friends whose words, actions, and examples will not only push and pull us up the mountain but farther along the straight and narrow path. **NE**



**apologized to Josh for slowing him down. He replied, "You didn't. You kept me going."**



## CHOOSE GOOD FRIENDS

"The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that 'friendship is one of the grand fundamental principles of Mormonism.' That thought ought to inspire and motivate all of us because I feel that friendship is a fundamental need of our world. I think in all of us there is a profound longing for friendship, a deep yearning for the satisfaction and security that close and lasting relationships can give. Perhaps one reason the scriptures make little specific mention of the principle of friendship is because it should be manifest quite naturally as we live the gospel. In fact, if the consummate Christian attribute of charity has a first cousin, it is friendship" (*Ensign*, May 1999, 64).

—Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy





Val Chadwick Bagley

As the bishop announced that my sister Laura was advancing from Primary to the Beehive class in Young Women, our younger brother, Joey, became extremely upset. With a concerned look on his face, he said, "Oh, no. Laura is going to get stung."

Rachel Langford, Layton, Utah



Ryan Stoker



Alan Kenn Anderson



## WRITE AWAY!

**T**his is just a little reminder that we are looking forward to hearing about your hero in the scriptures, a scripture that is important to you, or your favorite hymn (see calls for entries in the July, August, and October 2000 issues of the *New Era*). Tell us why your hero, scripture, or hymn is important to you in 100 words

or less, and send your submission and a snapshot of yourself to—

**The New Era**  
**50 East North Temple**  
**Salt Lake City, Utah 84150**

Address your submission to “My Scripture Hero,” “Scripture Power,” or “My Favorite Hymn,” depending on the subject you choose.

## BECOMING A MAN

“**R**eally understand and use the priesthood you bear. Honor it; realize its power. Remember the Aaronic Priesthood that you bear is the preparatory priesthood leading to the Melchizedek Priesthood. By the power of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Only Begotten Son created worlds without number (see Heb. 1:2; D&C 76:24; Moses 1:33) as the premortal Jehovah and then performed many miracles on earth as our Savior, Jesus Christ. A wise priesthood leader taught that now is the time in your life for doing, so later you become the man you are to be. Heavenly Father trusts you. You have the very priesthood that Aaron bore honorably and that John the Baptist used when he baptized Jesus ‘to fulfil all righteousness’ (Matt. 3:15). . . .

“Heavenly Father loves you! Your priesthood leaders will call many, many of you and set you apart as members of quorum presidencies or as quorum secretaries. What great leadership lessons you learn as you lead others while you are young” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 40).  
 —Elder Hugh W. Pinnock (1934–2000)



## WHERE IN THE WORLD IS PRESIDENT HINCKLEY?

**S**eminary students in the New Canaan Ward in Connecticut have a new take on following the prophet. They follow him around the world with blue dots. A map covered in blue dots hangs on their seminary wall, each dot denoting a place President Hinckley has visited in the last five years. That’s more than 180 dots!

“It is apparent to the most casual observer that our prophet loves the people of the Church. We know that the time spent with the people will become

stories handed down from generation to generation,” says Katie Schneiber, a New Canaan seminary student.

Following the travels of the prophet and carefully studying his message or doings in each place has been a testimony-building experience for these students. “It has been uplifting and inspiring to follow the travels of our modern-day prophet along with the prophets of the Old Testament,” Katie says. “We try to follow his example by teaching and sharing our light of Christ with the world.”

## AVOIDING ANGER

Instances of violence in schools, on the road, and in the home have some teens worried about their safety. *USA Weekend* reports that 91 percent of students recently surveyed have seen others being picked on, and 30 percent have been threatened with violence themselves.

Most troubling is that three in four of the teens who responded to the *USA Weekend* survey said it was seemingly insignificant things that sparked violent reactions—an insult, bumping into someone, or even just a glance.

We cannot control the actions of others, but we can choose not to become part of the problem. As Latter-day Saints, we follow the Savior. He told us to be peacemakers, and He set the example by not responding to anger with anger.

Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy has given a warning about the dangers of anger: “A cunning part of [Satan’s] strategy is . . . making us believe that we are victims of an emotion that we cannot control. . . . Becoming angry is a conscious choice, a decision; therefore, we can make the choice not to become angry. We choose! . . .

“Anger is a yielding to Satan’s influence by surrendering our self-control. It is the thought-sin that leads to hostile feelings or behavior. It is the detonator of road rage on the freeway, flare-ups in the sports arena, and domestic violence in homes. . . .

“Understanding the connection between agency and anger is the first step in eliminating it from our lives. We can choose not to become angry. And we can make that choice today, right now: ‘I will never become angry again.’ Ponder this resolution” (*Ensign*, May 1998, 80–81).



## WATCH WHAT YOU WATCH

**A**nother way to avoid violence in your life is to avoid violence in the media—that includes television, movies, music, the Internet, and video games. Four national health associations in the United States have directly linked violence in entertainment to violent behavior in young people. Consuming media that has violent content

increases your perception that the world is a violent place and also makes your participation in violent behavior more likely; it also increases your fear of being a victim of violence. Making wise media choices is very important to your spiritual well-being. Choose to watch and listen only to uplifting things.

# YOU CAN'T FIT A CHICKEN IN AN ENVELOPE

*An old man in a strange house, and we were supposed to go there to collect fast offerings.*

**Y**ou haven't been going?" he said sadly.

"It takes too long," I said.

"But what's the big hurry?"

**B**rother Baron carried the blue fast offering envelopes into our deacons quorum meeting and set them on the table in the small classroom. He scanned our young faces with a serious scowl. After handing out all the envelopes but one, he patted it in his hand and looked at me and said, "Joey, for five months I've been giving you Brother Mumford Grossenheider's fast offering envelope, but he tells his home teachers that no one has come by. What's going on?"

I looked at my friend Reggie, who smiled innocently and folded his arms.

Brother Baron sat on the table in front of us and looked at me while tapping the envelope against his knee. "Joey, Brother Grossenheider hasn't been to church in more than 60 years. We finally got some home teachers that he'll talk to, and the home teachers asked him if someone could come by to collect fast offerings, and Brother Grossenheider said okay. Have you been going to his house?" he asked.

I leaned forward and looked down at the floor. "Well, yeah, but nobody answers the door."

"He's an old man," Brother Baron said. "He uses a cane. You've got to give him

time. How long did you wait at the door last month?"

I glanced at Reggie again. He was watching Brother Baron as if nothing was wrong.

"Last month?" I said slowly.

"You went to his house last month, didn't you?"

"Well, I went the first two months and nobody

answered, so . . ." I looked up into Brother Baron's disappointed face.

"You haven't been going?" he said sadly.

"It takes too long," I said.

by Mark E. Squires






Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
**Fast Offering**

THE CHURCH OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY  
SAINTS

Instructions to Atonic Priesthood  
This envelope is not to be left at the home  
We call back visits when necessary

Stake / Mission \_\_\_\_\_

31961 100% Printed in USA

An illustration of two young boys standing behind a white picket fence. The boy on the left has dark hair and is wearing a white shirt and a purple tie. The boy on the right has reddish-brown hair and is wearing a white shirt and blue pants. They are both looking at each other and appear to be in conversation. In the background, there is a large red feather on a purple wall. In the foreground, there is a pile of dirt and some green grass. A brown bag and a wooden handle are also visible in the foreground.

“But what’s the big hurry?” Brother Baron asked. “It would only take another five or ten minutes. You can sacrifice five minutes a month can’t you?”

“Well,” I said, “Reggie doesn’t have any hard ones like that, and he always beats me.”

“Beats you? This isn’t a race, Joey.” He

looked at Reggie, whose mask of innocence suddenly seemed removed. Brother Baron dragged his hand over his face, flattening his nose. He looked back and forth at me and Reggie. “You’ve been racing?”

**A**fter church Reggie and I walked together down Main Street until we reached house number 433, where Mumford Grossenheider lived. We looked at the house together. Brother Baron was waiting for us back at the church, and when we returned, he wanted a report on every house—something he said he probably should have been doing all along.

It was a strange old house. A fence, barely visible behind raggedy bushes and tall yellow grass, surrounded the weedy front yard. There a fat mulberry tree stood with its branches nearly touching the ground, and a shaggy hedge had begun to climb onto the raised front



porch, where posts and eaves had long since begun peeling their coats of faded brown paint. As we stood at the front gate, my eyes followed the straight sidewalk, narrowed by overgrown edge grass, to a broken screen door that leaned like a car with a flat tire. The house had a tall narrowness about it—a steep pitched roof with peaks pointing heavenward. The dark windows were covered with heavy closed curtains, concealing all evidence of who lived there.

“This is creepy,” Reggie said. “I’ll wait here.”

I lifted the latch and pushed the front gate forward. It squeaked loudly and wavered back and forth from its open position. Indeed, it was creepy, and I must now confess that I hadn’t actually ever knocked on Brother Grossenheider’s front door as I had told Brother Baron. I had rattled the gate and yelled, “Is anybody here?” then quickly left.

A few steps placed me halfway up the front walk. I hesitated. A breeze started the gate moving, and it slammed closed.

Suddenly the front door of the house opened, and a raspy voice yelled, “What are you boys doing in my yard?”

I froze on the walkway. I heard Reggie’s feet pound the pavement as he ran away. “Run!” he called from across the street. The daylight reflecting on the broken screen door left darkness behind it, and I could not see the angry man, though I imagined the worst.

“Answer up quick, boy,” the voice continued. “What do you want?”

The broken screen door swung suddenly open and out shot what looked like a six-foot arm, but later I realized was a normal arm pointing a cane at me.

I dropped the envelope and grabbed the top of the gate and heaved my body over it, landing on my knees on the other side. I jumped to my feet and ran down the street until Reggie and I met a block away, breathing heavily.

When we returned to the church with our other envelopes, Brother Baron was *not* very understanding. “Why didn’t you just tell him who you are and what you were doing?” Brother Baron asked. “He probably thought you were just a couple of kids.”

“We *are* just a couple of kids.”

“No,” Brother Baron said. “You’re Aaronic Priesthood holders on an errand from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Then he looked seriously into my eyes. Finally, he shook his head and said, “I’ll have the home teachers explain it to Brother Grossenheider.”

**T**he next Sunday in our priesthood lesson, Brother Baron told the story of President Spencer W. Kimball’s father, Andrew Kimball, who was called on a mission to the Indian territory in 1884. The summer of that year, both Elder Kimball and his companion got malaria and lay sick in bed for many weeks. Malaria had caused many missionaries to return home early from their missions. Some even died, so the Church sent word to Andrew Kimball that he and his companion could return home, which his companion did. But Elder Kimball sent this message back to Salt Lake: “I have the priesthood with me. I will get well and prefer to stay.” And he did stay for two more years.

“You see,” Brother Baron said, “the priesthood is a great, great privilege. It’s your enlistment into the army of God. And when you are given an assignment, I think the Lord watches as much to see how hard you try as He does to see whether you succeed or fail.”

After church I grabbed Reggie and said, “I’m going back to Brother Grossenheider’s to get the fast offering envelope, and you’re coming with me.”

“No way,” Reggie said. He argued all the way down Main Street until we stopped next to the gate. We stood to the side of the gate, behind the overgrown bushes, unseen by the silent house.

“The Lord gave us an errand,” I said. “Now let’s finish it.”

“It was *your* errand to start with, not mine.”

“Well, we’re both deacons. We both have the priesthood, and I need your help. Brother Baron made you my official companion.” I reached for the gate latch.

“Hold on a minute,” Reggie said.

“What?” I said, actually relieved to postpone our entry.

Reggie exhaled a great breath and looked around the vacant street. “We

**I** froze on the walkway. I heard Reggie’s feet pound the pavement as he ran away. “Run!” he called from across the street. I could not see the angry man, though I imagined the worst.







could call him on the phone from my house," he said and looked at me with a fresh smile.

I nodded. "But then we'd still have to come and get the envelope."

We looked at the raggedy house through the equally raggedy bushes.

"Let's just do it," I said.

"Well, what's the plan?" Reggie asked. "Walk up to the door and ask him for it?"

"I don't know," I said. "I guess so. It's like Nephi going to get the brass plates from Laban. We'll just have to let the way open up once we get there."

"Oh, brother. That won't work for us. We're just kids. Nephi was a prophet."

"We're deacons. And besides, Nephi *was* a kid, remember?"

"Yeah, but a 'large in stature' kid."

"Come on. Are you a Laman or a Nephi?"

"That's not a fair question. I'm kind of a Nephi-in-the-making, you know, but I'm not quite there yet. And besides," he mimicked me, "Nephi went alone, remember?"

"Well, I'm not going up there alone. You're coming with me. Now, let's go."

I grabbed the gate latch and Reggie's arm at the same time.

"All right," Reggie said, still resisting me as the gate swung open and I pulled him through. "But if he's passed out like Laban was, no way are we going to . . ."

"Shhh," I said.

We slowly moved up the narrow walk to the porch steps and stopped, looking at the shabby house.

"Boy, does this place need paint," I said.

"And a weed whacker," Reggie said.

As we carefully proceeded up the steps, the top step flexed and creaked louder than a doorbell when we put our weight on it, announcing our presence.

"You boys!" a voice suddenly said from behind us. As we turned, Reggie slipped,

sitting on the top step and bouncing his way to the bottom.

Brother Grossenheider was sitting in a lawn chair in the shade of the overgrown mulberry tree near the front gate. The bushes and weeds had kept him out of our sight. He had been there the whole time, even as we had been talking.

Reggie stood quickly and rubbed the back of his pants.

"H-hello, sir," I said from the top step.

The old man reached into the big pocket of his faded overalls, and Reggie motioned to the gate to run for it, but Brother Grossenheider pulled from his pocket the blue fast offering envelope. "You looking for this?" he asked.

He was a very old man. His cane leaned against his chair. The top of his head was bald, the sides covered with thin gray hair. Small wire-frame glasses rested on the end of a large hooked nose. With his chin down, he watched us over the tops of the glasses but beneath the bottoms of his bushy white eyebrows.

"I found this on my walkway," Brother Grossenheider said and shook the envelope at us as if it were evidence of our guilt.

"Y-yes, sir," I said nervously and came down the steps next to Reggie. "We, uh, left it for you last week, and, uh, we've come to—to get it back."

"So you're deacons, are you? From the Church? Why didn't you say so last week?"

I looked at Reggie, and we smiled sheepishly together, and I asked, "You didn't hear us talking outside the gate, did you?"

He nodded slightly and looked at the envelope.

"We didn't mean that you are like Laban, Brother Grossenheider. It's just that . . ." I shrugged my shoulders.

"I remember that story of Nephi," Brother Grossenheider said in his raspy old voice. "I was a deacon once, you know. But I was 16 or 17 years old. I didn't know they sent young bucks like yourselves to do this kind of work." He squinted at the sky. "I haven't been to church in 60 years. But I remember doing fast offerings a few times when I was a deacon."

He paused. "I'd forgotten all about that." He turned the envelope over and over in his hands and examined it. "That

used to be an important job, fast offerings. The bishop took us around in a wagon, and we loaded that wagon with eggs and tomatoes and carrots and meat, sometimes a chicken or two. And we drove right over to the people who needed it and gave it to them. They surely were glad to get it. Nineteen thirty-six, it was. Lots of people out of work. The Depression, you know."

He looked keenly at us over his glasses. "No, I guess you don't. But it was an important job back then. I suspect there's still people in need, eh." He looked at us sharply. "You boys look mighty young to be doing important business like this."

We didn't answer.

He shook the envelope at us again. "Can't fit a chicken in here. How does this work?"

Reggie and I exchanged glances. "You just put some money in it," I said and shrugged again. "Whatever you can afford."

"Yep," Reggie said and put his hands in his pockets. "And then the bishop takes care of it from there."

The old man nodded and thought for a moment. "So I'm Laban, eh?" he said and squinted his eyes at us.

We looked at the ground, embarrassed, and adjusted our feet.

He took a dollar bill from his pocket. "I don't have much," he said and slid the dollar into the envelope. Then he stood and slowly walked to us with the envelope, his cane supporting his left side.

"You'll be back next month?" Brother Grossenheider asked, handing me the envelope.

"Yes, sir, we will," I said.

He worked his way up the porch steps with his cane, groaning as his legs lifted his body to each level. At the top he turned around and paused as his hard breathing settled to a quieter mode. "You boys close that gate when you leave, will you?"

"Yes, sir," I said, and we did.

When we got to the street, Reggie said, "You know, I was thinking how the quorum needs a service project. Maybe next month we could ask Brother Grossenheider about helping with his yard. What do you think?"

"Yeah," I said. "Let's go tell Brother Baron." I turned and ran. "Last one there is a rotten egg!" **NE**

*" . . . was a deacon once, you know. But I was 16 or 17 years old. . . . That used to be an important job, fast offerings. . . . You boys look mighty young to be doing important business like this."*



*The*



# Hope of ISRAEL



***You are entitled to have inspiration and guidance in all phases of your life if you are honoring your priesthood.***

**by Elder Robert L. Backman**  
Emeritus Member of the Seventy

**O**n a trip to Japan it was my privilege to attend a sacrament meeting of the Naha Branch on the island of Okinawa. I was so impressed with the quality of the sacrament service and the reverence and dignity exhibited by the Aaronic Priesthood that when I was called to speak I asked one of the young men to join me at the pulpit. I asked him, “How do you feel knowing that you hold the priesthood of God?” Not tall enough to see over the pulpit, he raised on his toes so he could see the congregation, then with deep emotion responded: “It’s the greatest honor of my life!”

Some of us, because we receive the Aaronic Priesthood when we are very young, do not appreciate what an honor it is for us to be singled out from all of God’s sons to represent him with this sacred power and authority.

## **An honor**

Have you ever wondered what it would have been like to be with Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on the banks of the Susquehanna River on that spring day, May 15, 1829? Can you picture the miracle and majesty of that moment when John the Baptist, a resurrected being, appeared to those two young men, laid his hands on their heads, and granted them the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood?

Explaining that he acted under the direction of Peter, James, and John, the ancient Apostles who held the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, John pronounced these words to Joseph and Oliver, who had called upon God for

guidance and direction:

“Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness” (D&C 13).

Although we did not share that glorious event, when we are ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood we receive the same authority and powers that John the Baptist conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

This priesthood holds the keys to significant blessings that are essential to the accomplishment of the Lord’s work.

## **The priesthood keys**

Consider the keys conferred with the priesthood of Aaron.

The first key committed by John was the key of the ministering of angels.

What does it mean to you to be in a position to have angels minister unto you? It means that you are entitled to have inspiration and guidance in all phases of your life if you are honoring your priesthood. It provides protection to you from evil and danger.

Read about Elisha and his young servant, who saw their city surrounded by the mighty army of Syria. Fearful, the servant appealed to his master: “Alas, my master! how shall we do?”

The response of Elisha suggests what protection is given with the key of the ministering of angels:

**A**lthough your duties are defined as temporal, there is nothing more spiritual than your sacred calling. In fact, the two ordinances most directly related to the Atonement of Jesus Christ are Aaronic Priesthood ordinances—the sacrament and baptism.



“And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

“And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (2 Kgs. 6:15–17).

It seems to me that the ministering of angels is a pretty powerful blessing to enjoy as a young man. I pray you will recognize that it is.

The second key was that of the gospel of repentance.

Only Jesus Christ has made it through this life without committing sin. Without the principle of repentance, all would be lost. Think of the trust God has placed in granting to his deacons, teachers, and priests the responsibility and authority to preach repentance.

The third key was that of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.

When ordained to the office of priest, you are granted the authority to baptize.

### **A glorious sight**

Of all the experiences I enjoyed as a mission president, one of the most exciting was the glorious sight of seeing the missionaries baptize converts to the Church. The elders felt the same way about that privilege. One of my fine missionaries had been very adventurous. He loved to rappel cliffs, hang glide, and parachute jump. When I asked him how he felt when he stood in the baptismal font with a convert, he replied, “It’s as

exciting as jumping out of an airplane.”

Although your duties are defined as temporal, there is nothing more spiritual than your calling. The two ordinances most directly related to the Atonement of Jesus Christ are Aaronic Priesthood ordinances—the sacrament and baptism.

You are entitled to be sustained by the Lord and to have His sacred power manifest through you.

I have been reading of the tremendous missionary experiences of Wilford Woodruff, some occurring while he was still a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood. His testimony should be pondered by every Aaronic Priesthood holder. It will help you understand the magnificent power God has given you.

“I traveled thousands of miles and preached the Gospel as a Priest, and . . . the Lord sustained me and made manifest His power in the defense of my life as much while I held that office as He had done while I have held the office of an Apostle. The Lord sustains any man that holds a portion of the Priesthood, whether he is a Priest, an Elder, a Seventy, or an Apostle, if he magnifies his calling and does his duty” (“Obtain the Spirit of God,” *Millennial Star*, 28 Sept. 1905, 610).

Above all, the Aaronic Priesthood teaches you what real happiness is: not acquiring possessions, wealth, position; not giving in to the gang, appetites or passions, or to any other of Satan’s temptations, but rendering service to your fellowmen, learning to love as our Savior taught us to love.

With the Aaronic Priesthood as a schoolmaster to assist you in coming to know your Savior; to love him and his gospel, and to prepare you to receive the sacred oath and covenant of the Melchizedek Priesthood, you fit the description of your royal generation of which we sing in that mighty hymn “Hope of Israel”:

*Hope of Israel, Zion’s army,  
Children of the promised day,  
See, the Chieftain signals onward,  
And the battle’s in array!  
Hope of Israel, rise in might  
With the sword of truth and right;  
Sound the war cry, “Watch and pray!”  
Vanquish every foe today.  
(Hymns, no. 259) **NE***

## LISTEN TO THE MUSIC

**T**hrough the Prophet Joseph, the Lord told Emma Smith, “My soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads” (D&C 25:12). Since it is the “song of the heart” that is important, it is not necessary to have a great voice to worship with song. Here are some musical ways to draw the Spirit near, no matter how musically talented (or untalented) you might be.

Hum hymns or Primary songs to clear away unclean or unwanted thoughts.

Listen to your ward choir attentively. Focus on the music and the words. Thank the individual members for the time and effort they give to provide worshipful music.

Concentrate on the words of the sacrament hymn.

Put forth the effort to sing, even if you don't think you have a great voice.

If you are working, hiking, or traveling for a long time, see how many hymns and Primary songs you can remember and sing.

If you are asked to plan family home evening, always use a hymn or Primary song to invite the Spirit.

Ponder the messages of the songs you sing in Church meetings.

When you have a gloomy day or face disappointment, use a song like “Scatter Sunshine” (*Hymns*, no. 230) to lighten your mood.

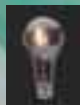
Think about hymns to help you fall asleep at night.

When you are working on a goal, choose a hymn or Primary song that will inspire you and sing it, hum it, or just think of the words and tune several times each day.

If you play an instrument, learn to play hymns and Primary songs.

Follow the First Presidency's counsel found in the front of the hymnbook: “Hymns can lift our spirits, give us courage, and move us to righteous action. They can fill our souls with heavenly thoughts and bring us a spirit of peace. . . . Let us use the hymns to invite the Spirit of the Lord into . . . our personal lives” (*Hymns*, x). **NE**

### GOT ANY BRIGHT IDEAS?



Choosing entertainment that fits your standards can be difficult. What are some of your criteria for choosing good music, movies, Web sites, and other media? Send your ideas to Idea List, *New Era*, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City Utah 84150. Or e-mail us at [cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org). Please send your ideas by July 1, 2001.

by **Tamara Leatham  
Bailey**





## Young Women Manual 2 (Use to update and enrich your lessons.)

### Lesson 25: The Law of Sacrifice

"The Price of Discipleship," President James E. Faust, *Ensign*, Apr. 1999, 2–4.

"The Law of Sacrifice," Elder M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 6–13.

"Time Off for Good Behavior," Laury Livesey, *New Era*, May 1997, 12–14.

"I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go," *Hymns*, no. 270.

### Lesson 26: The Sacrament

"That We May Be One," Elder Henry B. Eyring, *Ensign*, May 1998, 66–68.

"The Aaronic Priesthood and the Sacrament," Elder Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 37–40.

"Amazed," Melissa Ransom, *New Era*, July 1998, 9.

### Lesson 27: Strengthening Testimony through Obedience

"Building Your Testimony," President Gordon B. Hinckley, *New Era*, Apr. 1999, 4–7.

"Ye May Know That He Is," *Ensign*, Feb. 1997, 31.

"Feed the Flame," Valerie Munns, *New Era*, July 1997, 15.

"I Believe in Christ," *Hymns*, no. 134.

### Lesson 28: Agency

"On the Edge," President James E. Faust, *New Era*, Feb. 1997, 4–8.

"Agency—A Blessing and a Burden," Sharon G. Larsen, *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 11–13.

"Q&A: My youth leaders at church say we should follow the *For the Strength of Youth* booklet. Isn't it taking away our free agency when they tell us what to do all the time?" *New Era*, Sept. 1997, 16–18.

"Choose the Right," *Hymns*, no. 239.

### Lesson 29: Exaltation

"Search Me, O God, and Know My Heart," President James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 1998, 17–20.

"Don't Go Overboard!" Elder Russell M. Nelson, *New Era*, Mar. 1998, 4–7.

"Life—The Gift Each Is Given," Elder Alexander B. Morrison, *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 14–19.

### Lesson 30: Strengthening Testimony through Service

"Go, and Do Thou Likewise," Bishop H. David Burton, *Ensign*, May 1997, 75–77.

"I, Too, Must Give," Laury Livesey, *New Era*, Oct. 1998, 20–25.

"My Sunday Job," Kathi Jo Gardner, *New Era*, Mar. 1999, 9.

"Have I Done Any Good?" *Hymns*, no. 223.

### Lesson 31: The Law of the Land

"Youth of the Noble Birthright," Elder L. Tom Perry, *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 73–75.

"Standing for Truth and Right," Elder M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 37–40.

"Ready to Die?" Mauro Properzi, *New Era*, Apr. 1997, 44–45.

### Lesson 32: The Importance of Life

"We Are Children of God," Elder Russell M. Nelson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 85–87.

"Simple as a Sunset," Sarah Barton, *New Era*, Feb. 1997, 49.

"Bonnie's Song," Kevin Holgate, *New Era*, Dec. 1997, 12–15.

"I Am a Child of God," *Hymns*, no. 301.

### Lesson 33: The Sacred Power of Procreation

"Pure in Heart," President Gordon B. Hinckley, *New Era*, July 1999, 4–7.

"Personal Purity," Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 75–78.

"What a Blessing," Vanessa Moodie, *New Era*, Nov. 1999, 34–36.

### Lesson 34: Hold Fast to the Lord's Standards

"A Chosen Generation," President Gordon B. Hinckley, *New Era*, Jan. 1999, 4–7.

"Return with Honor," Elder Robert D. Hales, *Ensign*, June 1999, 6–13.

"But We Heeded Them Not," Elder L. Aldin Porter, *Ensign*, Aug. 1998, 6–9.

"The Iron Rod," *Hymns*, no. 274.

### Lesson 35: Wise Choices

"Do What Is Right," Elder Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, June 1997, 51–55.

"The Time to Prepare," Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, May 1998, 14–16.

"The Big Question," Rebecca Watson, *New Era*, Jan. 1999, 8–10.

### Lesson 36: Honesty

"Climb High," President James E. Faust, *New Era*, June 1997, 4–8.

"As Good As Our Bond," Elder Sheldon F. Child, *Ensign*, May 1997, 29–30.

"Building Integrity," Tamara Leatham Bailey, *New Era*, July 1999, 15.

### Lesson 37: Maintaining Chastity through Righteous Living

"How Near to the Angels," President James E. Faust, *New Era*, Mar. 1999, 4–7.

"Personal Purity," Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 75–78.

"What Prophets and Apostles Teach about Chastity and Fidelity," *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 38–49.

### Lesson 38: Physical Health

"I Resolve," Elder Joe J. Christensen, *New Era*, Jan. 1998, 4–8.

"Crossing the Finish Line," Virginia R. Scott, *Ensign*, Oct. 1997, 69.

"FYI: Picture Yourself, a Picture of Health," *New Era*, Jan. 1997, 34–35.

### Lesson 39: Preventing Disease

"I Have a Question: Where can I find accurate information on nutrition that is not faddish or inconsistent with Word of Wisdom guidelines?" Rodney Turner, *Ensign*, Feb. 1996, 64–65.

### Lesson 40: Self-Mastery

"I Resolve," Elder Joe J. Christensen, *New Era*, Jan. 1998, 4–8.

"A Celestial Connection to Your Teenage Years," Elder Richard J. Maynes, *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 30–31.

"Count on the Values," Denise Lindberg, *New Era*, Nov. 1999, 8–10.

"Be Thou Humble," *Hymns*, no. 130.

### Lesson 41: Optimism

"Hope, an Anchor of the Soul," President James E. Faust, *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 59–61.

"How to Be Happy," Elder Marlin K. Jensen, *New Era*, Aug. 1999, 4–7.

"Look to the Future with Optimism," Elder Jack H. Goaslind, *Ensign*, Apr. 1997, 22–27.

### Lesson 42: Gratitude and Appreciation

"A Grateful Heart," Elder Gordon T. Watts, *New Era*, Sept. 1999, 4–7.

"Count Your Blessings," Marissa D. Thompson, *New Era*, Oct. 1997, 39.

"With a Grateful Heart," *Ensign*, Aug. 1999, 53.

"For the Beauty of the Earth," *Hymns*, no. 92.

### Lesson 43: Wise Use of Leisure Time

"Life's Obligations," President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, Feb. 1999, 2–5.

"Measuring Up," Elder Rex D. Pinegar, *New Era*, June 1999, 4–7.

"Beat Summertime Boredom," *New Era*, Aug. 1999, 37.

### Lesson 44: Developing Talents

"Look to the Future with Optimism," Elder Jack H. Goaslind, *Ensign*, Apr. 1997, 22–27.

"Unearthing Your Talents," Marissa D. Thompson, *New Era*, Sept. 1998, 47.

"Come, Let Us Walk in the Light of the Lord," Mary Ellen Smoot, *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 89–91.

### Lesson 45: Participating in Cultural Arts

"Curtain Call," Larry A. Hiller, *New Era*, Oct. 1997, 28–33.

"At Home with Music," Paul Pollei, *Ensign*, Apr. 1999, 55.

"Stars under the Sky," Shanna Ghaznavi, *New Era*, July 1999, 20–25.

### Lesson 46: Financial Responsibility

"Greed, Selfishness, and Overindulgence," Elder Joe J. Christensen, *Ensign*, May 1999, 9–11.

"Paid in Full," April Anderson Gohier, *New Era*, Jan. 1998, 48–49.

"Teaching Teens about Credit," *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 61.

### Lesson 47: An Uplifting Environment

"Latter-day Counsel: Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, July 1999, 72–73.

"Q&A: Videos are a problem for my friends and me. We often seem to be renting videos we have to turn off and take back. Is there some way we can make good decisions about which movies to watch?" *New Era*, Feb. 1998, 16–18.

"Spiritual Power of Our Baptism," Carol B. Thomas, *Ensign*, May 1999, 91–93.

### Lesson 48: Communication Skills in Leadership

"A Teacher Come from God," Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, May 1998, 25–27.

"Are We Having Fun Yet?" Janet Thomas, *New Era*, May 1998, 20–25.

"My Best Calling Ever," Earl Stowell, *Ensign*, Aug. 1997, 68–69.

### Lesson 49: Valuing and Encouraging People with Disabilities

"Think to Thank," President Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 17–20.

"I Have a Question: My husband does not read very well and may have a learning disability. What can we do?" Response by Jon B. Fish, *Ensign*, Mar. 1999, 66.

"My Kind of Hero," Linda A. Peterson, *New Era*, Mar. 1999, 26–27.



**Rededicated**

I want to take the time to tell you how much I appreciated the article “What Will I Give Him?” in the December 2000 *New Era*. It made a definite impact on my life and set an example for me to improve myself. Although my testimony of gospel principles is strong, I have taken my testimony of Jesus Christ for granted. The story in the magazine inspired me to rededicate my life to the Savior.

*Amy Richards  
Roy, Utah*

**Youth conference memories**

I really appreciate the *New Era* recognizing how some of the stakes try to help the youth find a greater understanding of the Book of Mormon. I attended youth conference in Medicine Hat, and it will be a lifetime of memories. We almost left our shoes in the mud, and we also had other challenges such as a six-kilometer trek the first day while pulling our luggage on travois. But I guarantee that I will never forget those four days we spent reenacting the Book of Mormon in the “wilderness.” And I’m sure that anyone else who has experienced something similar to it will never forget it as well.

*Krista Livingstone  
Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada (via e-mail)*

**So fortunate**

I just wanted to thank you for publishing “Fear Not; Only Believe” by President Gordon B. Hinckley (Jan. ’00). It was so inspiring and true. I was touched by his words of love, and I felt they were meant for me. It was like reading a letter from someone who really cares. We are so fortunate to have a living prophet who speaks God’s will.

*Elder Selby M. Fauatea  
Philippines Manila Mission*

**Mood lifter**

Thank you so much for this wonderful magazine. A while ago, I was feeling really down. As I flopped onto my bed, I saw the September 2000 *New Era* sticking out of a

*“I must give credit to the New Era in contributing to my testimony and knowledge of the gospel.”*



pile of magazines. I felt impressed to read it, and since I was having such a hard time I picked it up and read the entire thing. My dark mood was lifted, and I felt refreshed. With all the filthy magazines out there, it’s good to know there is at least one that is uplifting and wholesome.

*Liesel Haubner  
Pleasant Grove, Utah (via e-mail)*

**Good fortune**

I will be forever grateful for the articles, stories, special features, and Idea Lists that have helped, encouraged, and strengthened me as I have progressed through my teen years. I must give credit to the *New Era* in contributing to my testimony and knowledge of the gospel. I know the things I have read and learned in the *New Era* will help me be a better missionary. As I read about other members of the Church who serve the Lord and who apply gospel principles in their lives, I desire to follow their example and be a light unto the world. I am so thankful I have had the good fortune of reading a quality, youth-focused, gospel-centered magazine that I can relate to. It truly has taken part in shaping my love and testimony of Jesus Christ and the gospel.

*John Salmon  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada*

**Every month**

I would like to say to the *New Era* how helpful this magazine is. I look forward to receiving it every month. Thanks a million.

*L’Erin Carmode  
Jacksonville, Alabama*

*We love hearing from you. Write us at  
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*Or e-mail us at  
cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org  
Submissions may be edited for length  
and clarity.*





*by Amy Bingham*

**The Sky**

by Shauntelle Augustine

The sky is a wonderful thing.  
It cries rainbows,  
And laughs sunsets.



*“Keeping the standards of the Church and Scouting, I was prepared to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. When you learn values, they help no matter what situation you are in.”*

*See “Badges of Honor,” p. 22.*