

T H E

# New Era



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Editorial Offices:  
*New Era*  
50 E. North Temple St.  
Rm. 2420  
Salt Lake City, UT  
84150-3220, USA

E-mail Address:  
[newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)

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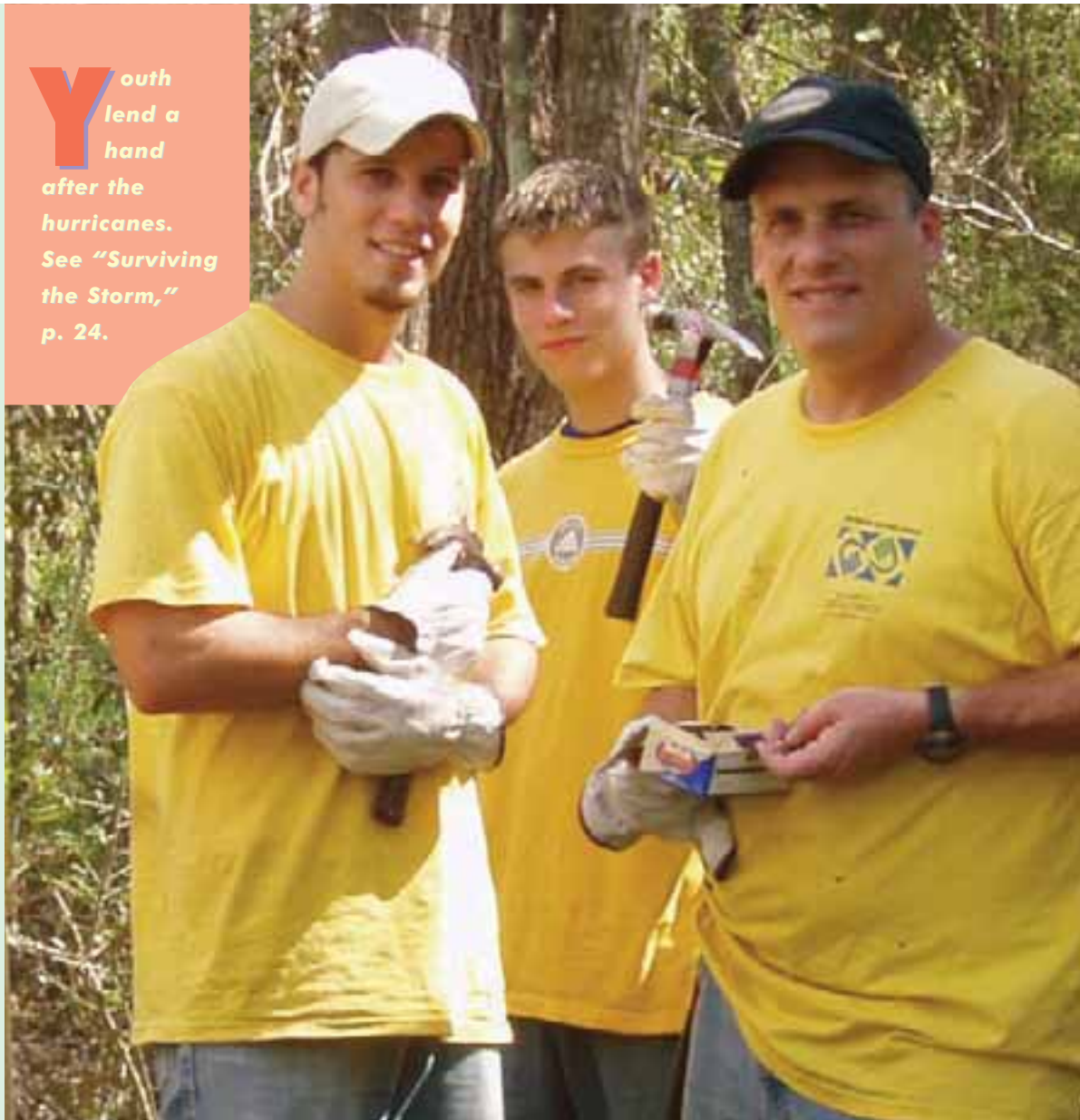
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# BE READY



BY ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



*As 18-year-old Bryce Reynolds watched CPR being administered to A. J. Edwards, struck moments earlier by lightning, he had an impression: to use the Melchizedek Priesthood he had recently received and bless his stricken friend.*

*“Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.”*  
—Joshua 3:5

On the afternoon of Wednesday, September 30, 1998, a Little League football team in Inkom, Idaho, was on the field for its midweek practice. The team had completed its warm-ups and was starting to run a few plays from scrimmage. Dark clouds were gathering, as they sometimes do in the fall, and it began to rain lightly, but that was of no concern to a group of boys who loved playing football.

Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, a deafening crack of thunder split the air, inseparable from the flash of lightning that illuminated, literally electrified, the entire scene.

At that very moment a young friend of mine, A. J. Edwards, then a deacon in the Portneuf Ward of the McCammon Idaho Stake, was ready for the ball on a handoff that was sure to be a touchdown in this little intersquad bit of horseplay. But the lightning that had illuminated earth and sky struck A. J. Edwards from the crown of his football helmet to the soles of his shoes.

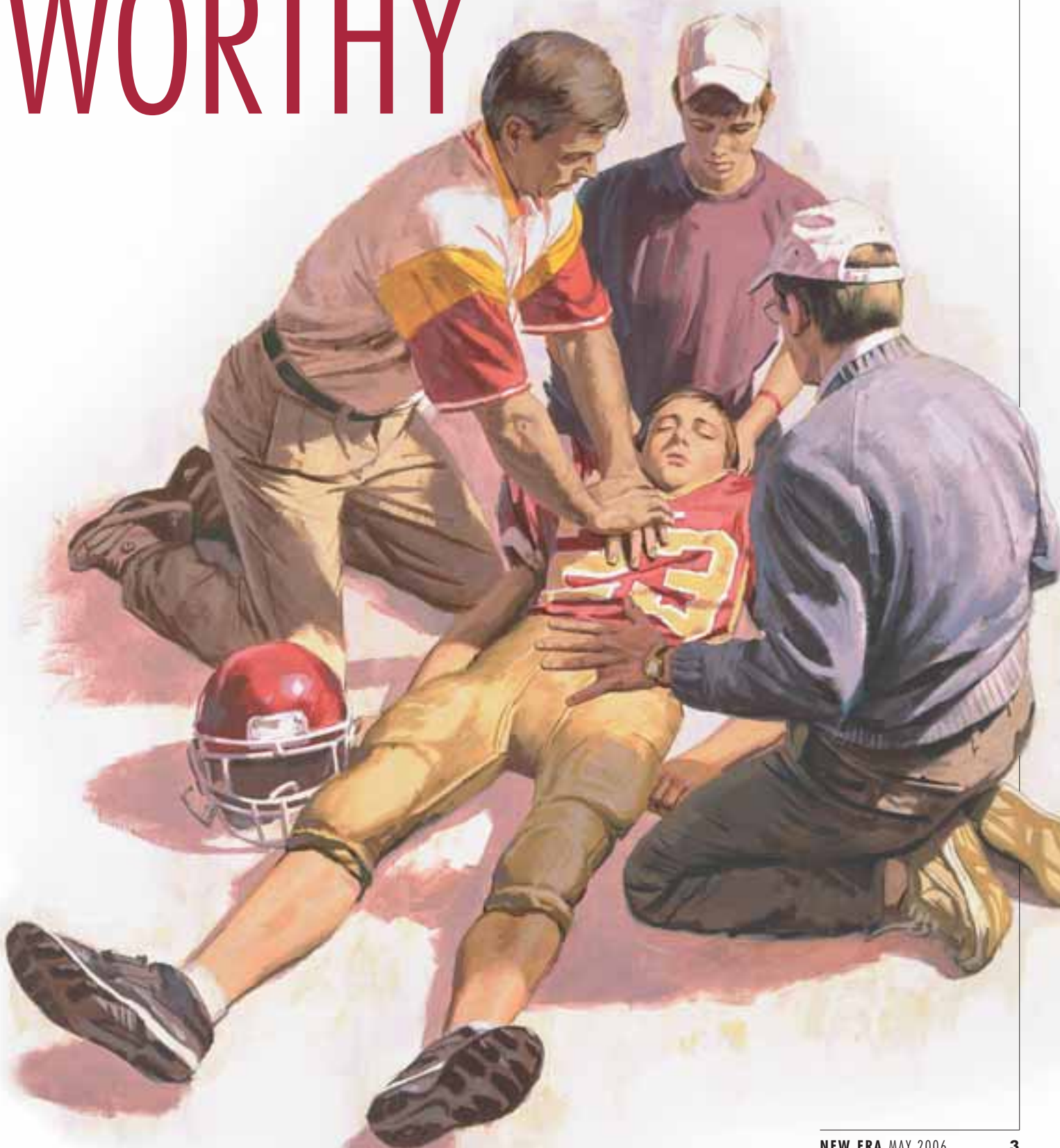
The impact of the strike stunned all the players, knocking a few to the ground,

leaving one player temporarily without his sight and virtually all the rest of the players dazed and shaken. Instinctively they started running for the concrete pavilion adjacent to the park. Some of the boys began to cry. Many of them fell to their knees and began to pray. Through it all, A. J. Edwards lay motionless on the field.

Brother David Johnson of the Rapid Creek Ward, McCammon Idaho Stake, rushed to the player’s side. He shouted to coach and fellow ward member Rex Shaffer, “I can’t get a pulse. He’s in cardiac arrest.” These two men, rather miraculously both trained emergency medical technicians, started a life-against-death effort in CPR.

Cradling A. J.’s head as the men worked was the young defensive coach of the team, 18-year-old Bryce Reynolds, a member of the Mountain View Ward, McCammon Idaho Stake. As he watched Brother Johnson and Brother Shaffer urgently applying CPR, he had an impression. I am confident it was a revelation from heaven in every sense of the word. He remembered vividly a priesthood blessing that the bishop had once given his grandfather following an equally tragic and equally life-threatening accident years earlier. Now, as he held this young deacon in his arms, he realized that for the first time in his life he needed to use his newly conferred

# WORTHY



**Y**oung men, in frightening, even perilous moments, your faith and your priesthood will demand the very best of you and the best you can call down from heaven. If you do not feel fully worthy, you can become worthy through repentance and the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Melchizedek Priesthood in a similar way. In anticipation of his 19th birthday and forthcoming call to serve a mission, young Bryce Reynolds had been ordained an elder just 39 days earlier.

Whether he audibly spoke the words or only uttered them under his breath, Elder Reynolds said: “A. J. Edwards, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the power and authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood which I hold, I bless you that you will be okay. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.” As Bryce Reynolds closed that brief but fervent blessing offered in the language of an 18-year-old, A. J. Edwards drew his first renewed breath.

The ongoing prayers, miracles, and additional priesthood blessings of that entire experience—including a high-speed ambulance drive to Pocatello and a near-hopeless LifeFlight to the burn center at the University of Utah—brings to us today a very healthy and robust A. J. Edwards. I also talked on the telephone with Elder Bryce Reynolds, who was serving faithfully in the Texas Dallas Mission. I love these two wonderful young men.

#### **Worthy to Act**

Now, not every prayer is answered so immediately, and not every priesthood declaration can command the renewal or the sustaining of life. Sometimes the will of God is otherwise. But, young men, you will learn if you have not already, that in frightening, even perilous moments, your faith and your priesthood will demand the very best of you and the best you can call down from heaven. You Aaronic Priesthood boys will not use your priesthood in exactly the same way an

ordained elder uses the Melchizedek, but all priesthood bearers must be instruments in the hand of God, and to be so, you must be ready and clean, worthy to act.

We live in an age when that cleanliness is more and more difficult to preserve. With modern technology even your youngest brothers and sisters can be carried virtually around the world before they are old enough to ride a tricycle safely across the street. What were in my generation carefree moments of moviegoing, TV watching, and magazine reading have now, with the additional availability of VCRs, the Internet, and personal computers, become *amusements* fraught with genuine moral danger.

I put the word *amusements* in italics. Did you know that the original Latin meaning of the word *amusement* is “a diversion of the mind intended to deceive”? Unfortunately, that is largely what “amusements” in our day have again become in the hands of the arch deceiver.

Recently I read an author who said: “Our leisure, even our play, is a matter of serious concern. [That is because] there is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan” (C.S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper [1967], 33).

#### **Your Only Real Control**

Part of my warning voice is that this will only get worse. It seems the door to permissiveness, the door to lewdness and vulgarity and obscenity swings only one way. It only opens farther and farther; it never seems to swing back. Individuals can choose to close it, but it is certain, historically



speaking, that public appetite and public policy will not close it. No, in the moral realm the only real control you have is self-control.

If you are struggling with self-control in what you look at or listen to, in what you say or what you do, I ask you to pray to your Father in Heaven for help. Pray to Him as Enos did, who wrestled before God and struggled mightily in the spirit (see Enos 1:2–10). Talk to your mom and dad. Talk to your bishop. Get the best help you can from all the good people who surround you. Avoid at all costs others who would tempt you, weaken your will, or perpetuate the problem.

If anyone does not feel fully worthy, he can become worthy through repentance and the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Savior wept and bled and died for you. He has given everything for your happiness and salvation. He certainly is not going to withhold help from you now!

Then you can help others to whom you are sent, now and in the future, as one holding the priesthood of God. You can then, as a missionary, be what the Lord described as “a physician [to] the church” (D&C 31:10).

Young men, we love you. We worry about you and want to help you every way we can. Nearly 200 years ago William Wordsworth wrote that “the world is too much with us.” What on earth would he say about the encroachments pressing on your souls and sensibilities today? In addressing some of these problems facing you, we are mindful that a multitude of young men is faithfully living the gospel and standing resolutely before the Lord. But the cautions we give to the few are important reminders even to the faithful.

Be strong. Always be clean. Be ready to respond in righteousness at a moment’s notice, or even when no warning is given. Always respect and revere the priesthood that you hold. **NE**

*From an October 2000 general conference address.*

# *An Invitation to*



“We can respect other religions, and we must do so. We must recognize the great good they accomplish. We must . . . be toler-

ant and friendly toward those not of our faith. . . .

“Let us be true disciples of the Christ, observing the Golden Rule, doing unto others as we would have them do unto us. . . . Love and respect will overcome every element of animosity. Our kindness may be the most persuasive argument for that which we believe.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley,  
“We Bear Witness of Him,” *Ensign*,  
May 1998, 4–5.



# PASSOVER

BY JONI M. NEWMAN

*“We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.”*  
—Articles of Faith 1:11

“What exactly is a . . .” I struggled to remember the word.

“*Seder*. It’s an important part of Passover. A ceremonial dinner on the first day of Passover to remind us of the struggles that Moses and the children of Israel had while they tried to leave Egypt,” Sarah explained.

Sarah and I walked down the halls of our high school, our usual chatter of movies, classes, and rehearsal schedules interrupted by the invitation to a formal dinner at her house. I had invited friends to Church activities many times, but this sudden turn of events unsettled me. I was the one who usually extended invitations to religious activities! I wasn’t expecting Sarah to invite me to one of hers!

“My mom said that your whole family could come if they want to. The normal service lasts for hours, but we’ll do the abridged version for you. There’s even this game that Alli can play. We hide matzo, and she has to find it.” I could see my little sister shrieking with laughter as she tore around the house, looking for the cracker-like bread.

“I’ll ask my mom,” I replied.

I had moved from Utah to Iowa when I was seven and was startled to find no members of the Church in my class

at school. Where once I had found many Church friends at school, I now led a split sort of life with school friends on one hand and Church friends on the other. I had been able to balance the two separately for quite some time, but this invitation had upset that balance.

That night, I presented the idea to my mother, who was more than willing to accept Sarah’s invitation. My mother taught seminary, and with the school year drawing to a close, she was looking ahead to teaching the Old Testament, which contains the history of Passover.

Later that week, my family found ourselves settled around a table that was set as formally as one we might have had for a Christmas or birthday celebration. There were a few differences: a traditional plate that was ornately decorated with various scenes contained different foods to accompany each painting. Parsley and salt water, hard-boiled eggs, horseradish, and matzo each represented the pain, bitterness, and other experiences of the children of Israel. Throughout the meal, our families were able to discover various religious similarities and differences. I was really glad Sarah had invited me to this special occasion in her home.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) said, “Every truth found in every church in all the world we believe. But we also say this to all men—Come and take the added light and truth that God has restored in our day” (see Russell M. Nelson, “Teach Us Tolerance and Love,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 70).

As members of the Church we have the fulness of the gospel, but we can still learn much from our brothers and sisters outside our faith: The service shown by Mother



**J**ust as we ask those outside our faith to respect our religious beliefs, we should show proper respect for their sacred places, items, and customs.

Teresa, the strength shown by Gandhi, and the examples of many other people and organizations around the world that give time and money to those in need. We are truly blessed to have the privilege to worship “how, where, or what [we] may” and we should allow others to do the same (see Articles of Faith 1:11). While we may not agree with all their beliefs, we can search for the good in every faith, respect it, and use it to strengthen ourselves. **NE**

## RESPECTING OTHER RELIGIONS

President Hinckley has asked us to be friendly and understanding to those who are not of our faith. Here are a few ways you can do that.

- Respect their sacred places and items. You would not be pleased if someone littered temple grounds or defaced a Book of Mormon. Similarly, other religions hold things sacred, such as their own temples or religious items such as rosaries, icons, or certain items of clothing.

- Respect others' religious customs. For instance, it is respectful to remove your shoes upon entering certain holy places, just as it would be respectful to remove your hat while praying in a Latter-day Saint setting. However, some religious customs could be in violation of our own, such as drinking tea or wine. In cases such as these, you should kindly decline to participate.

- Avoid contention. Even if others attack your beliefs, remember to always respond with friendship and love. Contention drives away the Spirit, but bearing your testimony of the gospel and the Savior can invite the Spirit to the situation.

- Don't make fun of other religions' practices, doctrines, or culture. You might be hurt if someone made fun of you for going to seminary or performing baptisms for the dead. Be considerate, even if you don't agree with the practices of other religions.

- Be kind to missionaries of other faiths. Treat representatives from other churches the same way you would want Latter-day Saint missionaries to be treated.

- Be a representative of the Savior in all you do. The more people see your Christlike example, the better view they will have of the Church and its teachings. **NE**

BY ANDREW M. WRIGHT

A few years ago my family and I took a vacation from our home in Arizona to the Midwest. We drove through many states, including Kansas, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, and Illinois.

Our vacation was going very well, and we were learning to enjoy each other's company during the long van rides from place to place.

One evening we pulled into a fast-food restaurant in Missouri, all anxious to grab a bite to eat. As we got out of our van, I suddenly had a silent but powerful impression that I should look at the back tire on our van. I started to walk toward the restaurant, but I couldn't shake the feeling. I looked back over my shoulder and then stopped. Again the impression came to my mind: "Check the back tire." It was so forceful I couldn't ignore it.

As I approached the rear of the van, I heard a hissing sound. Sure enough, our right rear tire had a leak and was quickly

*The impression from the Holy Ghost was so powerful that I couldn't ignore it.*

going flat. I ran to get my dad, who had already gone in with the rest of the family.

My father took the van to a gas station down the road before the tire went completely flat. Since the tire wasn't damaged, the repair was inexpensive and quick. We were able to have the flat fixed just minutes before the service station closed for the night. I don't know what would have happened if I had ignored the prompting. But I do know that because I responded, we were able to continue our trip safely and conveniently.

Ever since that incident, I've always felt reassured of the power of the Holy Ghost and how truly blessed we are as members of the Church to have that special line of communication. I am grateful for that experience, for it will stay with me, forever reminding me that our Father in Heaven

loves, cares about, and watches

out for all of His

children. **NE**



BY LACEY MCMURRY

ARISE AND SHINE FORTH

# THE LAUGHTER NEVER CAME

*I didn't think I could read my scriptures without being made fun of. My co-workers had made it clear what they thought of Latter-day Saints.*

The last rays of the sun dipped behind the mountain. I was miles from home, sitting on a cot in a faded green tent, wondering how I was going to solve the dilemma I was in.

It was the end of the first day of my summer job as a forest ranger in eastern Utah. That morning, I had met the two women I would be working and camping with. I was only 19; they were both in their 30s. But our differences



were deeper than age. On the hike to base camp, I had hung back and listened to them talk about how strange they thought members of the Church were.

Now it was night, and my co-workers were both slipping into their sleeping bags. “Are you ready to turn the lantern off?” one of them asked me.

I had a decision to make. I hadn’t done my scripture reading for the day. But I also knew how the two women felt about members of the Church. I didn’t want them to laugh at me.

I silenced my conscience and nodded my assent. The light was extinguished, and soon the even breathing of my co-workers told me they were asleep.

But sleep evaded me. After tossing and turning, I grabbed a flashlight and my Book of Mormon and headed down to a meadow just below our campsite. “This is the perfect solution,” I said to myself. “I can read my scriptures without being made fun of.”

Happy with my plan, I turned to Mormon 8. The contentment I felt ended

when I reached verse 38 and read, “Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ? Why do ye not think that greater is the value of an endless happiness than that misery which never dies—because of the praise of the world?”

That night, as I sat under the brilliant stars in a mountain meadow, I knew the Lord was speaking to me. I had been too afraid of ridicule to show my co-workers what I believed, and the Lord was disappointed in me. Armed with this knowledge, I resolved I would change.

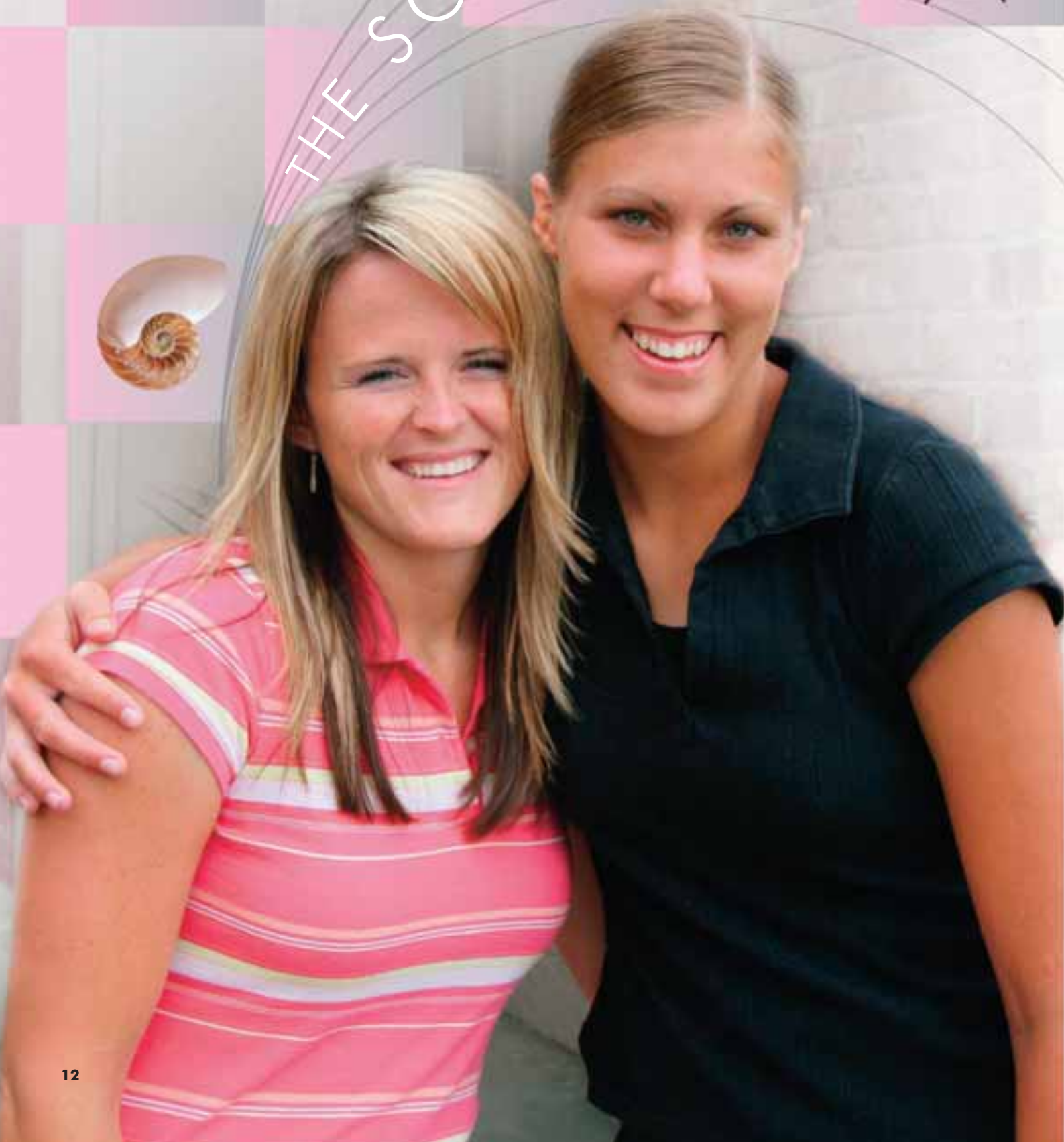
The next night, when my co-worker asked if I was ready to put out the lantern, my answer was different. I cleared my throat and said, “Actually, if you don’t mind, I’m going to read the Book of Mormon for a few minutes.”

I steeled myself for her laughter, but it never came. “Oh, that’s fine,” she said. “Just turn the light off when you’re done.”

I’ve never forgotten the lesson I learned that night. For the first time, I understood how relentlessly Satan tries to make us feel that we won’t fit in if we do what we’re supposed to. Often, the ridicule we are so afraid of hearing never comes. We can never be examples for good unless we let the things we believe show through our actions. **NE**



# THE SOUND OF



BY JANET THOMAS  
Church Magazines

*One girl with  
determination  
changed the  
life of a teacher.*

The sound of raindrops on the car windshield. The chirp of crickets on a summer night. The distressing cry of a baby. The ringing of the telephone down the hall. All everyday sounds, but they are sounds that are becoming part of Shellee Carrick's life now that she no longer lives in silence.

Shellee has been deaf since she lost most of her hearing during a case of meningitis when she was 18 months old. But now, thanks to the efforts of Kristina Coleman, a student at Pleasant Grove High School in Utah, where Shellee is the American Sign Language teacher, Shellee has received a cochlear implant and is now being introduced to the noisy, musical, thumping sounds that surround her.

But the sounds that motivated her, that made her go along with the amazing offer made by one of the student-body officers at the high school, the sounds she wanted to hear more than anything, were the sweet voices of her little children.

The story of how these two young women met and became friends is a great one with a happy ending. As she prepared to graduate from high school, Kristina was required, as were all others in her class, to complete a project during her senior year. She heard some friends

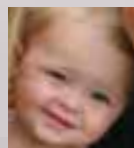


**Austen**

who were taking Shellee's sign language class talking about cochlear implants. These devices are surgically implanted in the inner ear with a microphone and digital processor worn outside, under the hair. At first, Kristina was only going to write a paper about the technology. But because Shellee wanted the implant so badly, Kristina's plans soon became more elaborate. What is even more remarkable about Kristina's determination is that she really did not know Shellee well and wasn't one of her students.

Looking back, Kristina says, "I do think Heavenly Father inspired me to do this project. I think several things prepared me for this."

Kristina was serving as student body historian. Just being on student council and having to plan events and speak to strangers prepared Kristina for the work she would do to help Shellee get a cochlear implant.



**Kylee**

The implants and accompanying surgery are expensive, and Shellee's insurance would not cover them. At first, Kristina thought it would be easy to raise the money. She planned to e-mail many places explaining the need, and then the funds would pour in. Kristina says, "That didn't work at all. I didn't get one donation that way. I was going to have to call personally. The first phone call was hard; then it just got easier."

Kristina found a grant program where Shellee could apply to get the device donated. Then it was just the cost of the surgery, a much more attainable amount, that needed to be raised. When news that Shellee qualified for the grant arrived, she called Kristina to her classroom and announced the news to Kristina and her students at the same time. Between the cheering and the crying, it was a great day.



**Sam**

Shellee underwent the operation, and her family and Kristina gathered on the day the implant was turned on for the first time.

Shellee had been warned not to expect too much. Then her daughter, one-year-old Kylee, started crying, wanting to be held. Shellee turned to the small crowd in the room and asked incredulously, "Is that Kylee crying? I can hear her!"

Although implants are not the answer for everyone, Shellee has been intrigued with learning to figure out what



**A**usten, Shellee's son (above), rings the doorbell for his mother to hear. Shellee (below, left), holding Kylee is delighted and touched by the efforts of her new friend Kristina (below, right).

the sounds she hears mean. "There are so many sounds I've never heard," said Shellee. "I don't know what they are. I have to learn like a baby does." Austen, her four-year-old son, is delighted to demonstrate noises for his mom. He opens the front door and rings the doorbell or claps. Daily life has become both adventurous and frustrating. Shellee says that she didn't realize how much Austen talks while she is driving.

Naturally, the relationship between Shellee and Kristina is a special one. During the months arranging everything, the two became close. "We e-mailed every day. We talked all the time," said Shellee. "We became good friends. She will be part of my life forever."

Kristina was excited with the outcome of her senior project. "I've cried so many times over this. Not only has Shellee received an implant, but I have a new friend. It's changed my life. I learned what the power of one person or a group of people can do. Just to know that you can do things that seem impossible at first is great." **NE**



## MAKING THE COVER

About 12 years ago, Shellee was a cheerleader at the same high school where she is now a teacher.

A deaf cheerleader! That sounds like the subject for a *New Era* story. And in fact it was.

Shellee appeared on the cover of the October 1993 issue. She was a happy teen with many friends, a successful student, and proud to be part of the deaf community. After high school, she went on to college then served a full-time mission, teaching the gospel to the deaf in Nebraska, California, and New York.

When Shellee first met Sam Carrick, the man who would become her husband, she thought he was arrogant and stuck-up because he wouldn't talk to her. He defends himself now by explaining, "I had never met a deaf person. I didn't know how to talk to her." It took him just days to find out that Shellee was easy to talk to. She was fun and outgoing, and she could read lips.

When they met, Shellee was serving a mission to the deaf and was assigned to the California Riverside Mission for a few months. Sam was her zone leader. He was impressed, he says, "with her ability to succeed." After their missions, they found they had a lot in common. Sam found that Shellee loved the outdoors like he did. Now Shellee and Sam live in Utah with their two children, Austen and Kylee. **NE**





# Creative Scripture Study

BY ANDREA CARTWRIGHT

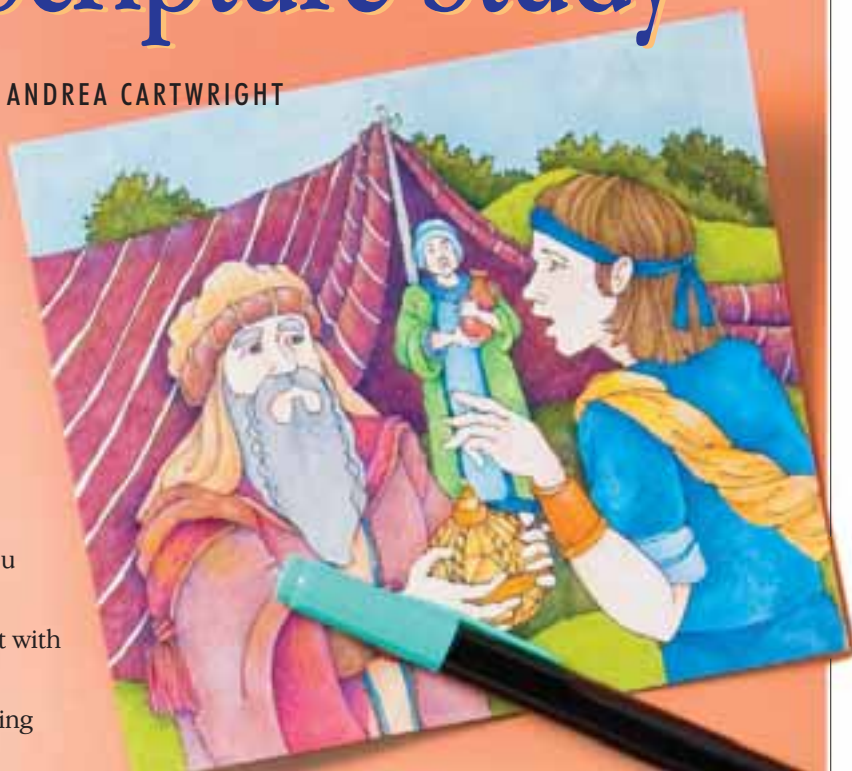
**Y**ou can find great stories and learn terrific lessons from the scriptures, but sometimes it's hard to concentrate on what you're reading or to find the time for scripture study. Here are a few tips for getting more out of your scripture study.

## Want to try something new?

- Read a lot of chapters quickly. This will help you get the big picture of what is going on.
- Make the stories come alive by acting them out with your family.
- Make a list of the main characters you are reading about and some things you learn about each of them. You could draw pictures of what you think they might have looked like.
- Organize a family scripture chase. Learn one another's favorite scriptures, and then race to look them up. Have each person tell why that scripture is their favorite once you've looked it up.
- With a friend, make a reading schedule, and read the same verses or chapters each day. Talk about what you have read.

## Don't want to mark your scriptures?

- Write on sticky notes. These give you room to put your thoughts next to certain scriptures, but you can take them off or move them later.
- Buy an inexpensive copy of the Book of Mormon and write your thoughts in it. Later, you can transfer to your other scriptures only what is valuable to you.
- Tack a scripture of the week to your wall or mirror or, each Sunday, pick a new scripture and write it on an index card to look at throughout the week.
- Find a notebook that fits in your scripture case.



Decorate the notebook's cover to make it unique, and use it to write your thoughts in as you read.

## Can't find the time?

- Get a small, military-size copy of the Book of Mormon. It fits just about anywhere—in your locker, backpack, or purse. Read it during your break at school or work, on a bus, or in a long line.
- Read while you're eating breakfast. Instead of staring at the back of the cereal box, pull out your scriptures and start your day out right.
- Make an "appointment" with your scriptures. If you have a specific time picked out for scripture study, it is easier to follow through. **NE**

# Q & A

*“How do I prepare for the Second Coming?”*

## NEW ERA

**T**he short answer is, “By living the gospel today.” The way you prepare for the Second Coming is the same way you prepare for baptism and confirmation, for the priesthood, for womanhood, for the temple, for a mission, for this life, and for the next life. You do all that you can each day to follow the Spirit, to become more like the Savior, and to prepare to return to live with Him and with Heavenly Father.

You prepare for the Second Coming by doing the simple things you know you should each day, the things that keep you in the strait and narrow way (see Matthew 7:13–14). As the scriptures say, you keep at it. You continue to “press forward” (see 2 Nephi 31:19–21). Repent when you need to so you can be worthy each week to partake of the sacrament.

Since no one knows the hour of the Second Coming, it is silly to guess when it might be (see Matthew 24:36, 42, 44). You also shouldn’t worry that there isn’t enough time remaining to live a full life. Even though there will be trials and difficult events prior to the Savior’s return, “if ye are prepared ye shall not

■ **Ask yourself, “If the Savior were to come tomorrow, what would I do to prepare?” Then, each day, do the simple things you know you should.**

■ **Repent daily so you can be worthy to partake of the sacrament each week. Do all you can to feel and follow the promptings of the Spirit.**

■ **Since no one knows the hour of the Second Coming, it is silly to speculate about when it might be or to give up because of worry.**

■ **Even though trials and difficult events will precede the Savior’s return, there is no need to fear if you are prepared. Be happy, work hard, and keep the commandments.**

fear” (D&C 38:30; see Gordon B. Hinckley, “If Ye Are Prepared Ye Shall Not Fear,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 60).

Among the things the Savior gave to guide us in preparation for His return are His parables. In the parable of the ten virgins, five were prepared because they had oil in their lamps, and five were unprepared (see Matthew 25:1–13). We need to be like the wise women who were prepared with oil in their lamps, rather than assuming we can prepare at the last minute.

In another parable, the Savior said that those living just prior to His Second Coming would see indications that His return was near, the same way that those looking at a fig tree can tell what season it is (see Matthew 24:32–33). And in another parable, the Lord tells of a faithful servant who was simply doing his duty when his master came (see Matthew 24:45–46).

If we do our duty—if we live the gospel, keep the commandments, and listen to and follow the living prophets—then we will be prepared for the Second Coming. Through our righteous actions, we will become more like the Savior so that “when he shall appear, we



## READERS

shall be like him” (1 John 3:2). Then, with the faithful, we will “be looking forth for the great day of the Lord to come,” and will see “signs and wonders, for they shall be shown forth in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath” (see D&C 45:39–44).

Jesus Christ has promised, “I will come; and they shall see me in the clouds of heaven, clothed with power and great glory; with all the holy angels” (D&C 45:44). It will be a great day for those who follow Him. **NE**



***“I can live worthy to always have the Holy Ghost guide me. I can look to the prophet for guidance and follow his counsel. Then***

***I will look forward to the Savior’s coming with happiness and not with fear. As a missionary I teach my investigators to prepare for the Savior’s Second Coming by accepting the teachings of the gospel and making them part of their lives.”***

*Sister Eno-obong Umoren Wilson, 21,  
Ghana Accra Mission*



***“I always strive to emulate the actions, thoughts, and motives of the Savior.***

***I pray for His love, that I can feel that same love for***

***others. I try faithfully and willingly to do what He asks, and to live with the eternal goal in mind.”***

*Kaylie C., 17, California*

***“A great way to know what’s going to happen during the Second Coming is to simply read all you can find in the***

scriptures and in the words of the prophets and apostles. To prepare yourself personally for it, you must keep the commandments, so when you find the Savior has come, you will be numbered with the righteous."

Andrea M., 14, Arizona



"The most important thing we can do in this short time of our lives here on earth is to prepare. We must do this by being baptized, repenting, preparing for the temple, spreading His words, having knowledge of the scriptures, and serving Him."

Megan R., 15, Pennsylvania



"Start preparing today. Imagine that the Savior will come tomorrow, and ask yourself, 'What would I want to do to prepare for and be worthy of the celestial kingdom when Christ comes again?'"

Alec B., 14, Utah



"Remember the parable of the ten virgins. Collect oil as much as possible by studying the scriptures, praying always, and listening to the General Authorities. If we apply all the things we have learned from the gospel in our lives, we will be prepared. Just look forward to it."

Elder Mark Hancock, 19, Michigan Detroit Mission



"We should let go of any activities that take us away from the Church and the gospel of Christ."

Levi B., 18, Washington



**W**hat if the day of His coming were

tomorrow? . . . what would we do today? What confessions would we make? What practices would we discontinue? What accounts would we settle? What forgivenesses would we extend? What testimonies would we bear?

"If we would do those things then, why not now?"

—Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Preparation for the Second Coming," *Ensign*, May 2004, 9.



"Since we don't know the exact time when Christ will come, we should live worthily, so that if He comes tomorrow, we will be ready. Don't worry so much about when He will come, but instead about whether you are ready for Him to come."

Maren E., 15, Utah



"When we have the Holy Ghost with us, we will not have the spirit of fear, but the spirit of courage and faith. We need to make sure that we are clean and worthy so that we can be ready at any time for the Savior to come. By studying the Savior's life in the scriptures, we will know Him when He comes."

Brigham N., 18, Arizona

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

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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

New Era, Q&A about patriarchal blessing

50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)

Please respond by June 15, 2006.

## QUESTION

"I just received my patriarchal blessing. What do I need to learn from it?"



WHAT GOES  
**AROUND**  
COMES  
**AROUND**

(See D&C 38:24.)

# MICHAEL

BY PAUL VANDENBERGHE

Church Magazines

*He's not just another smart kid.*



*As a sophomore in high school, Michael Haycock aced both standardized college entrance exams and still found time to play piano and trombone, sing in the choir, run cross-country, and make it on time to early-morning seminary.*

**D**o you want to do better in school? How would you like to ace your college entrance exams? Well, then work on your sense of humor and on having fun. That's what Michael Haycock, a priest in the Lima Ward, Toledo Ohio Stake, says. And Michael knows something about taking tests and doing well in school. As a sophomore in 2004, Michael aced both standardized college entrance exams; he scored a perfect 36 on the ACT and a 1570 on the SAT (just 30 points away from a perfect 1600). He ranks at the top of his class with a 4.17 grade point average. He also says to "Learn to love to learn."

"With a zany sense of humor, you can have fun with everything from verbs to imaginary numbers," says Michael. That's easy for him to say. Maybe it's just because he's so smart that things come so easily. After all, he is one of only two sophomores in the entire nation to get a 36 on the ACT out of about 218,000 students. He is the final winner of the Ohio University-sponsored U.S. history contest, in which he competed with 7,400 other entrants for a full-tuition, four-year scholarship. He is the star on the high school quiz bowl team. And he still makes it to early-morning seminary every day.

## Comparing Yourself to Others

That's why it's so surprising to hear this

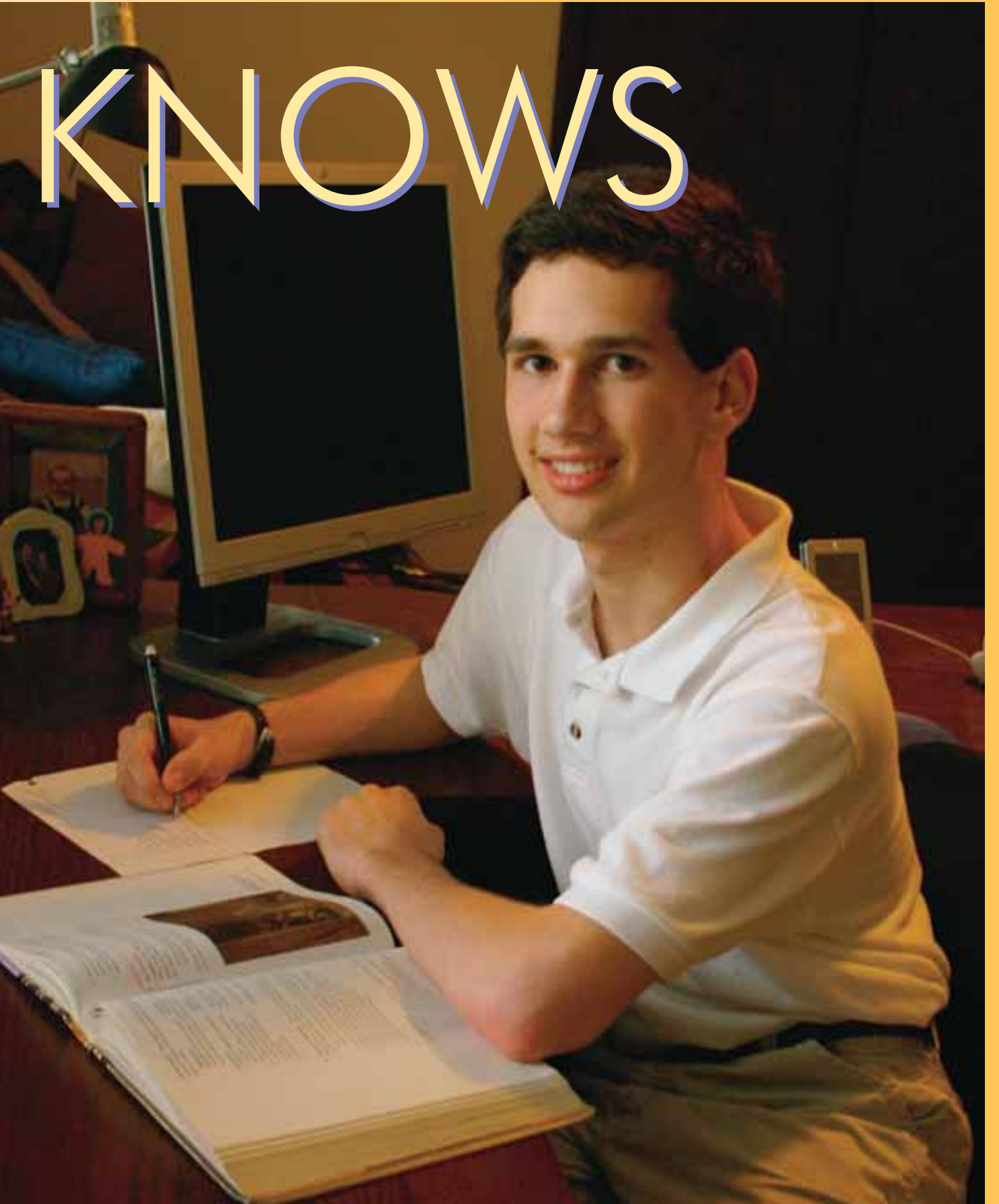


bit of advice from Michael: "Don't feel you're a failure due to others' successes. I feel this quite a bit. It's a weakness of mine." Michael explains that when he hears about the latest 12-year-old neurosurgeon, or the college-attending 13-year-old Nobel Peace Prize nominee, he thinks he should have done just a little more or a little better. "Everyone can do at least one thing another cannot," Michael adds. "Every child of God is truly unique."

So what makes Michael Haycock unique? There are lots of things. He certainly doesn't fit the standard mold of



# KNOWS





**M**ichael enjoys playing the trombone in the symphonic band. But the harmony, love, and support he feels at home mean a lot more to him than band. Michael (far right) with his family: (left to right) Taylor; Alexis; mom, Linda; Victoria; and dad, Darryl.

the “brainiac.” When asked if others ever bother him for being a good student, Michael says that has happened on occasion, “but that’s only been at the beginning. When they get to know me they stop.” He plays the trombone in the marching band and the symphonic band. He sings in the school choir and even auditioned for and made it into the all-state choir. He runs cross-country. “My best time for the 5K is 20 minutes, 10 seconds,” Michael says, “which is not spectacular, but it’s not bad either.” This year he improved his time; it’s now 19 minutes, 32 seconds. But what really makes Michael stand out among his peers is that he’s a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

#### Strength in (Small) Numbers

“We have more LDS students in our school than in any other school in the county.” That number translates into nine members of the Church in his high school. Michael says he doesn’t get a chance to interact with them much outside of early-morning seminary, because they don’t have classes together. In fact, even at church, Michael is in a quorum of only four boys, and each of them lives in a different school district. “I can’t say if it’s hard or easy, because I don’t have anything to compare it to,” Michael says.

So Michael’s group of friends is quite diverse. “We have a Baptist, a Lutheran, a Methodist, and Catholics,” he says. What brings them together is years of friendship and similar interests. They all like learning and science fiction and fantasy. Having many friends of other faiths gives Michael a chance to let them know about his beliefs. “We sometimes have religious discussions—pretty much compare beliefs. I’ve gone to my friend’s church recently for Palm Sunday, and she came to general conference with me.”



When he has the chance, Michael likes to get together with other LDS youth. Like when he sang in the choir for the dedication of Church history sites in historic Kirtland. He talks warmly about the three- to four-hour drives to Kirtland for practices. But he remembers most the wonderful experience of the dedication and the fireside the night before where he saw President Gordon B. Hinckley and other General Authorities speak.

“We see these people in general conference. But this was live. And at the end of the dedication everyone got up and spontaneously sang ‘We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet,’ ” Michael remembers (*Hymns*, no. 19). “It was surreal almost. It was an amazing feeling throughout the



## TEN TESTING TIPS

Here are 10 tips Michael says he uses to do his best when studying, preparing for, and taking a test.

1. Attend class every day and pay attention.
2. Have a good sense of humor so you can have fun learning.
3. Develop a good relationship with your teachers.
4. Do all your assignments, and do them on time.
5. Ask questions about things you don’t understand.
6. Review your study material with friends.
7. Do all review assignments.
8. Define your own academic identity: don’t let yourself be labeled.
9. Check your answers on quizzes and tests at least once—twice if you have time.
10. Learn to love to learn.





whole dedication. It was neat.”

Living close to some of the Church history sites has helped Michael’s testimony grow stronger. He’s gained respect and admiration for what the early Saints accomplished. He’s had the chance to attend four temple dedications. And he’s come to feel a connection with the Prophet Joseph Smith. “One thing I know is that the Book of Mormon is true,” says Michael. “I’m reading it through my second time. There’s just no way one person could have put down all the wisdom on paper that is in those pages. There’s no way.”

#### **Future Plans**

What does the future hold for Michael Haycock? Service. “I’m preparing for college the best I can by taking

AP [advanced placement] classes,” says Michael. “After that I’m going to head off to college for a year and then go on a mission. I’ll come back and finish up school.” He says he’s pretty sure he’ll pursue more degrees than just a bachelor’s. Michael has thought about becoming a Spanish professor, but right now he is planning on going into political science, with the hopes of getting into politics. He wants to make a difference in the world.

Michael doesn’t see himself as smarter than everyone else. But sometimes that’s how others look at him. “They see the stereotype of the smart kid, but I try to break that stereotype,” says Michael. And he’s done it. Michael Haycock is not just another smart kid; he’s a smart kid with a strong testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. **NE**

# SURVIVE THE STORM

BY NORMAN C. HILL AND RICHARD M. ROMNEY

Photography by Richard M. Romney and courtesy of members in affected areas



# NG

A massive hurricane is bearing down on you and your family. Winds exceed 150 miles per hour. Flooding and wind damage are certain. Survival may depend on how well you respond to two questions: What should I do before the hurricane arrives? What should I do after it passes?

For Latter-day Saint youth and their families who live along the Gulf Coast of the United States, dealing with both questions became a terrifying reality in August and September 2005. First, Hurricane Katrina slammed ashore, devastating the New Orleans area and the Mississippi coast. Just weeks later, Hurricane Rita ripped through southeastern Texas and western Louisiana. Both storms damaged homes and businesses for hundreds of miles and created the need for massive clean-up. Youth who had to deal with the devastation will remember it for a lifetime.

### Take Warnings Seriously

"No one ever believes it will happen to them, and neither did we," says Kim Dohm, 17. Hurricane warnings come so often here they seem routine. "We evacuated, but we didn't think much about what we took with us, because we expected to be back in a few days. We thought it was just another false alarm." It wasn't. The storm smashed through Kim's hometown of Slidell, Louisiana. Winds tore roofs from buildings and snapped trees like toothpicks. Rapidly rising water flooded major portions of the city.

"The damage seemed so random," Kim says. "In the same neighborhood some houses were torn apart, while others were mostly undamaged. The main thing I learned



*Brittany and Danielle Crossley (top) of Vidor, Texas, and Thomas Clarke of Slidell, Louisiana, found that in the midst of turmoil they could rely on faith and serve members in need, like the Trabans of Cameron, Louisiana (left), standing on the foundation of a house carried by waves to the trees behind them. They also found a watch, still ticking, in the mud.*





*Asley Clarke (top), Emily Smith (middle), and Samantha Adams (showing areas affected by hurricanes) spent hours helping in the bishops' storehouse. Measuring spoons were among items salvaged in a home destroyed by winds and flooding.*

was to prepare for the worst and hope for the best. If you have to evacuate, leave early and plan to be gone for a while." Her family had to stay away not just for days, but for weeks.

"No one can predict exactly where and when a hurricane will come ashore," says Nolan Moore, 15, of Vidor, Texas.

"But if officials say you should leave, then leave. And do it as soon as you can." Nolan and his family caravanned with other Latter-day Saints and found shelter in an LDS meetinghouse a safe distance away.

#### **Pray for Guidance**

Seventeen-year-old Brittany Crossley and her thirteen-year-old sister, Danielle, live in Vidor, Texas. Their father is an emergency room doctor at a hospital in Port Arthur, directly in the projected path of Hurricane Rita. Dr. Crossley prayed and felt impressed that if he would spend the day before the storm evacuating patients, he and his family would be all right. Since the Crossley's home was in an area of potential danger, he obtained permission from his bishop for the family to stay in their ward building during the storm. "The ward is far enough north to be safe," Brittany explains.

"When Dad said, 'We're going to the church and we're going to be okay,' I thought, 'Trust the inspiration and follow him to higher ground,'" Danielle recalls. Soon they received calls that the mass evacuation had resulted in gridlock on the freeway. "It's good that we listened to our father," Brittany says. "Otherwise, we would have been stuck in traffic all through the storm."

So they "hunkered down" at the church, in an inside room with no windows. "We had food and water. We played a board game to pass the time. At 11:00 p.m., the power went out, so we read scriptures by flashlight and had family prayer," Danielle recalls. They listened to the



wind rattling like a freight train. "At one point someone held a flashlight high so we could all see each other," Brittany says. "I remember how grateful we were for the light. It made me think of the Savior, the Light of the World."

#### **Seek Peace**

Kim Dohm was comfortable at her grandparents' house in Fort Worth, Texas, 500 miles from her home and parents. Her father and mother were helping with relief efforts in Slidell. But when she heard the news that evacuees wouldn't be allowed back home for weeks or possibly months, it was more than she could bear. "One day at school, I just started to sob," Kim says. "Everyone told me things would be okay, but I couldn't stop crying." Anxious and uncertain, she prayed. "I felt the most overwhelming peace in my heart," she says. "I remembered how the Savior calmed the storm and reassured the disciples on the Sea of Galilee. My heart was raging, but His example calmed and reassured me."



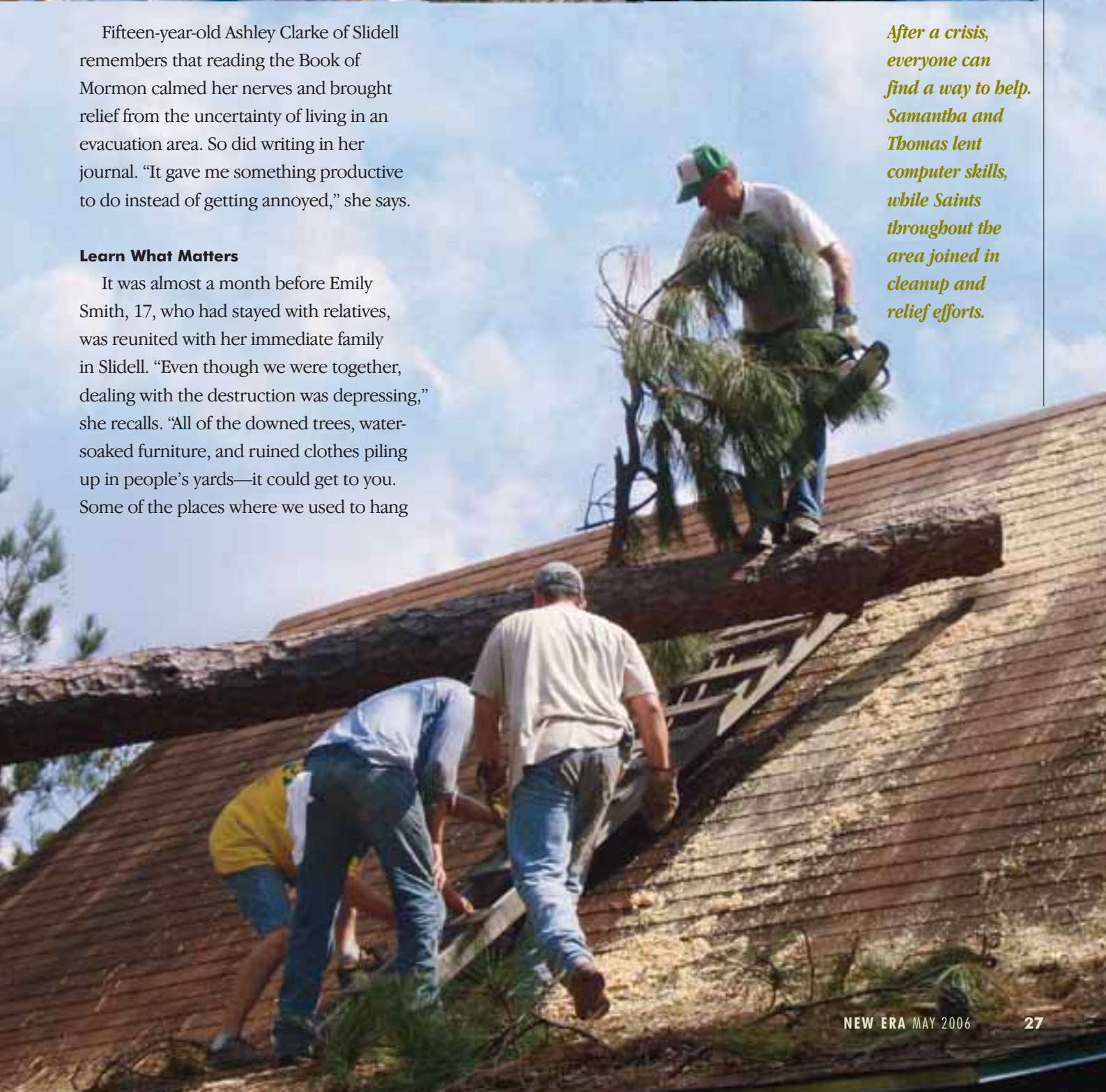


Fifteen-year-old Ashley Clarke of Slidell remembers that reading the Book of Mormon calmed her nerves and brought relief from the uncertainty of living in an evacuation area. So did writing in her journal. “It gave me something productive to do instead of getting annoyed,” she says.

#### **Learn What Matters**

It was almost a month before Emily Smith, 17, who had stayed with relatives, was reunited with her immediate family in Slidell. “Even though we were together, dealing with the destruction was depressing,” she recalls. “All of the downed trees, water-soaked furniture, and ruined clothes piling up in people’s yards—it could get to you. Some of the places where we used to hang

*After a crisis, everyone can find a way to help. Samantha and Thomas lent computer skills, while Saints throughout the area joined in cleanup and relief efforts.*





*“No one ever believes it will happen to them,” says Kim Dohm. She learned to take warnings seriously, “to prepare for the worst and hope for the best.” She was impressed at how quickly help arrived and by the number of people who responded. One young Latter-day Saint found her friend’s piggy bank in the mud outside what used to be her home.*

out had vanished like they never existed.” Now, 9 months after the storm, things are slowly getting back to normal. “Each day it seems a little better,” Emily says. She and her friends are back in school, back in seminary, and finding new places to have fun.

“We saw that designer clothes, furniture, and even nice houses can be ruined. Material things don’t matter much,” says Samantha Adams, 17. Following the hurricane, she spent a lot of time working in the bishops’ storehouse. “When I saw people come in who had lost practically everything, it didn’t seem important to worry about how my hair looked or if I had makeup on. I was just glad to help them.”

**Lend a Hand**

Samantha, along with Ashley Clarke, and her brother Thomas, 17, worked day after day in the storehouse. “They knew the landmarks and locations, and they understood computers,” explains Mike Dohm, field operations coordinator for the command center that was set up there. “We gave them responsibility for mapping out locations so work crews could get where they needed to go. They saw a need, recognized they could do it, and showed up every day to get it done. There’s just no way we could have done as much as we did without them.”

In anticipation of the hurricanes, the Church had moved food, bottled water, generators, chain saws, and other equipment to safe sites near the coast. As soon as the storms passed, supplies and equipment were quickly moved to locations like the storehouse for use and distribution. Stakes and wards in surrounding areas organized thousands of



LDS volunteers into work groups that came each weekend from September to November to put tarps on roofs, cut up trees lying across roads, and pull up water-soaked carpets.

Ben Bradley, 13, was on one of these crews. He and his father, sister, and brother drove

seven hours each way from Albany, Georgia, to Gulfport, Mississippi, making the trip several times. “We wanted to help,” Ben says. “I learned that all it takes is a willingness to pitch in, and Mormons are good at that.” Often crews would complete a work order at a member’s house and then perform similar tasks in other houses or yards in the neighborhood. The Church was widely recognized for its ability to help its own members and its willingness to help others, too.

**EXTRA, EXTRA**

To learn more about preparing for emergencies, go to [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org) and click on “Provident Living” and then on “Food Storage and Emergency Preparedness.” There you’ll find advice on topics such as how to prepare for the future, both spiritually and temporally; preparing for home emergencies and natural disasters; and a list of emergency preparation resources.

**Remember**

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita left reminders of their fury that will endure for a decade or more. But they also left a memory in the minds of these teens who survived the storms. “Sometimes people ask if living through Katrina has made me worried about the future,” Ashley says. “I tell them just the opposite is true. Now I know I can handle emergencies. All I need to do is hold fast to gospel principles and rely on a little help from my family and friends.” **NE**





## BE PREPARED, NOT SCARED

Natural disasters are a possibility no matter where we live. The best way to prepare is to have emergency plans in place, survival supplies prepared, and training completed where it is available. Here are some other lessons learned by those who survived the hurricanes:

1. Make sure you have fresh batteries and flashlights.
2. Refrigerators and freezers will provide food for a few days.
3. Store water, both for drinking and for bathing.
4. Have important papers in a place where you can easily grab them.
5. Get to know your neighbors, and have a contact list for emergencies.
6. Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women camping experience can prepare you for living in emergency conditions.
7. Remember, "If ye are prepared ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30).

**T**he time has come to get our houses in order. . . There is a portent of stormy weather ahead to which we had better give heed."

—President Gordon B. Hinckley ("To the Boys and to the Men," *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 53).



# PASSING UP PASSING THE SACRAMENT

BY RON FRANDBEN

*No one else knew he was speaking to me when the bishop said, “I hope all of our young men will be willing to fulfill any priesthood assignment given them, even if it seems small or unimportant.”*

***When the deacons quorum president came to the back of the chapel and asked if one of us could help pass the sacrament, I told him to buzz off and find someone else.***

It was my first Sunday as a member of the teachers quorum. I had served as a deacon for two years, and now I was ready for new challenges.

My first assignment was to stand by the doors during the sacrament. Our building had an entry at the rear of the chapel with a set of glass-paned double doors. As the sacrament was being passed, two of the teachers would stand at the doors to discourage unnecessary traffic that would disturb the reverence of the ordinance.

To me, this assignment was a sign of acceptance. Such a visible responsibility showed that I had the trust of the teachers quorum. I eagerly took my place at the back of the chapel. As our ward members began filing into the chapel, several of the other teachers stopped to shake my hand and offer words of welcome. It was a thrilling time for me. I was now one of the “big” boys. I felt much more grown up than I had just the week before when I had been *only* a deacon.

Shortly before the sacrament meeting

began, someone in the deacons quorum realized there were only five of them. They needed six to pass the sacrament. The deacons quorum president came to the back of the chapel and asked if one of us could help. It really only took one teacher to watch the doors. In fact, as a deacon I had often asked the teachers to help pass the sacrament.

This time, however, I was concerned that I wouldn't be able to perform my new role on my first Sunday as a teacher. I told the deacons quorum president to buzz off and find someone else. He gave me a disappointed look and returned to his seat by the sacrament table.

During the opening hymn he returned and asked for help again. This time I was ready. I looked at him with a triumphant smile and said, “You are the president of the quorum. I think you should get busy and activate some of those who don't come every Sunday. Then you wouldn't have to come back here begging for help.” I felt pretty smug. I was glad no one mentioned





**T**he deacons lined up in front of the sacrament table. Sure enough, there was a vacant space. I was shocked when my bishop stood up and filled the vacant space. He led the tiny band of deacons as they passed the sacrament to the congregation.

that I had been the deacons quorum president only one week before.

Finally it came time for the sacrament. How would the deacons pull this off? There would be confusion because there weren't enough of them to fill all the assignments. The deacons lined up in front of the sacrament table. Sure enough, there was a vacant space. The priests finished breaking the bread. It was almost time for the sacrament prayer.

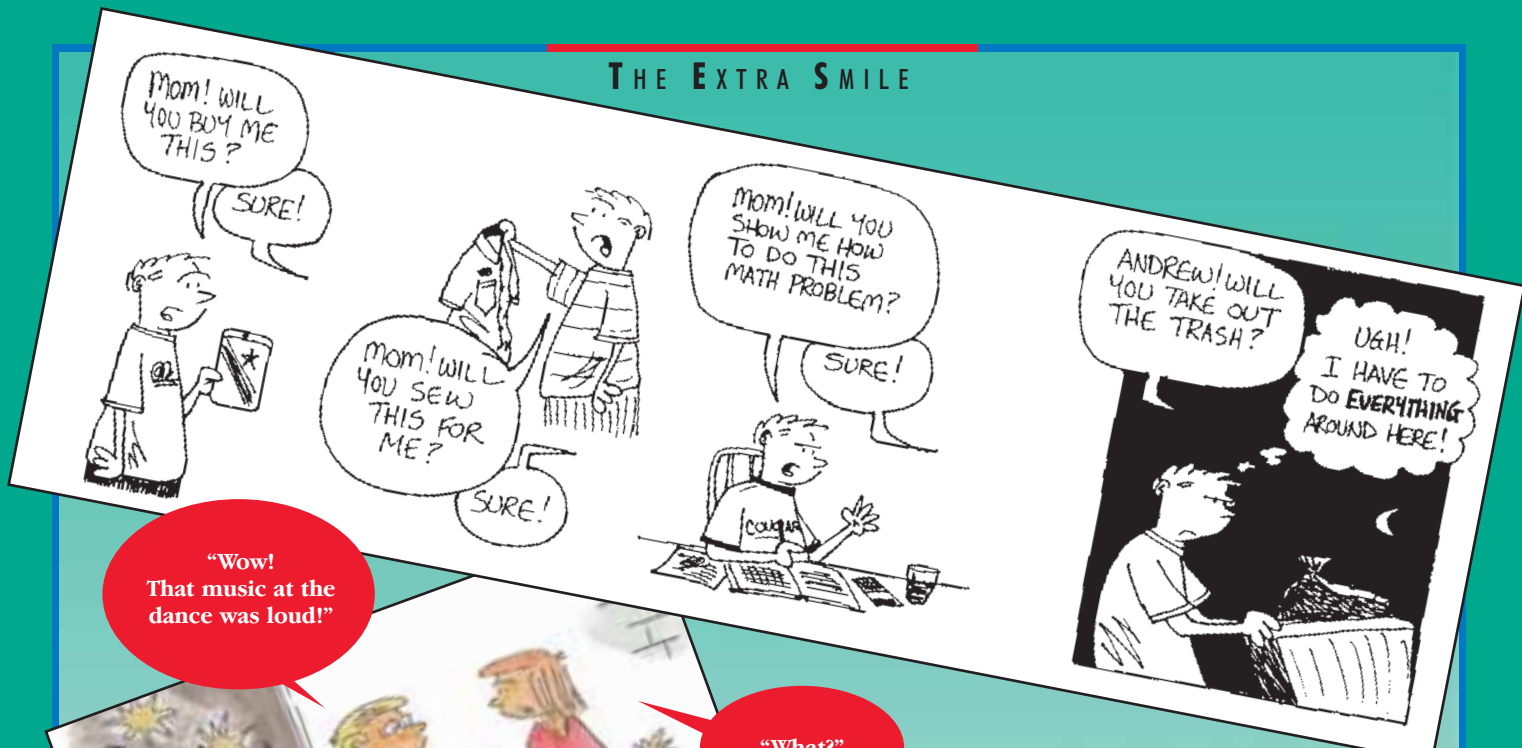
I was shocked when my bishop stood up and filled the vacant space. My bishop! A man I admired and wanted to please. He led the tiny band of deacons as they passed the sacrament to the congregation. In full view of the ward he passed the bread to everyone seated on the

stand. Then he stepped off the stand and began serving those in the middle part of the chapel, in the same pattern any deacon would have done. He reverently walked back to the sacrament table and repeated the assignment with a tray of water.

At the end of the sacrament service, Bishop Cook stepped to the pulpit and spoke of the sacred ordinance of the sacrament and the importance of the Aaronic Priesthood. No one else knew he was speaking to me when he said, "I hope all of our young men will be willing to fulfill any priesthood assignment given them, even if it seems small or unimportant."

Many times since then I have been grateful for a powerful lesson taught by a loving bishop. I am humbled that those who hold the priesthood are given the privilege of participating in the holy ordinance that reminds us of the atoning sacrifice of the Savior and allows us to renew our sacred baptismal covenants. **NE**





RYAN STOKER

“Wow! That music at the dance was loud!”



“What?”

RYAN STOKER

“Looks like Mom and Dad are running out of places to keep our food storage.”



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

# TO THE POINT

**“My friends tell me that swear words aren’t bad unless you’re using them to offend someone. Are there times when swear words are okay?”**

Swear words are never okay. The truth is that they are always offensive. Saying that they won’t offend someone is just an excuse.

Think about it. What is worse than offending God? And one of the most common ways of swearing is to use God’s name with disrespect. Many people think that’s no longer a big deal, but it is. How do you think Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ feel when we use Their names or titles in a hateful or casual way?

Swearing isn’t just about certain words. It’s about your attitude. Unclean speech is bad because it fills your mind with unclean things. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “The language we use projects the images of our hearts, and our hearts should be pure.” He added that profanity and vulgarity “are sins that separate us from God and cripple our spiritual defenses by causing the Holy Ghost to withdraw from us” (“Reverent and Clean,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 49). On the other hand, using clean language sends a signal to people that you want to be clean.

The language you use also says a lot about how you deal with other people. Does what you say make it easier for those around you to live the gospel? Shouldn’t you use language that will lift them up, whether or not they share your beliefs? In the Bible, Paul said it this way: “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29).

So don’t use language that is vulgar, unkind, sarcastic, or rude. It dulls your spiritual sensitivity. It has a bad effect on you and on those around you.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “Conversation is the substance of friendly social activity. It can be happy. It can be light. It can be earnest. It can be funny. But it must not be salty, or uncouth, or foul if one is in sincerity a believer in Christ” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 494). **NE**

**“Counsel is often given to parents with wayward teenagers, but what about teenagers with wayward parents? What should they do?”**

This situation is particularly difficult to deal with because parents are the ones we usually look to for guidance and direction. It’s painful to see them making wrong decisions when we’re supposed to honor them and follow their example. But there are things you can do.

Continue to pray for them. Heavenly Father hears your prayers and will answer them in His own way.

Turn to other relatives or ward members for the example and support that you may need. For example, ask your home teachers

or bishop for a priesthood blessing if there are no worthy priesthood holders in your home.

Continue to be a good example to your family. You can strengthen your siblings and parents by the example of your faith. You can hold family home evening, family prayer, or family scripture study with your siblings.

Most importantly, continue to love your parents. Do not judge them. Rather, be kind and patient. They still need your love and support, just as you need theirs. **NE**

Your situation has probably helped you realize that steady dating at too early an age can cause lots of problems. No wonder the prophets have warned against it. It can lead to feeling pressured into doing things you don't want to do. And it is never right to do something you know in your heart is wrong. (See *For the Strength of Youth*, 24–28.) **NE**

▶ **“My boyfriend is pressuring me to **kiss** him.**

**I don't feel ready, but I don't want him to get mad at me.**

**What should I tell him?”**

If you don't feel ready, then don't do it. Kisses are precious, and your boyfriend might not care about you as much as you think he does if he's trying to make you do something that goes against what you feel is good. His reaction should not dictate your decision. So what if he gets mad? At least you'll know you did what was right.

Heavenly Father will bless you for choosing to do what is right, but it sounds like this boy will only be your friend if you do what he wants. Decide what you will do, judging from what you feel and know is right. If you need some more advice, ask your parents, bishop, or youth leader.





# UNEXPECTED

BY KELLY M. SMURTHWAITE

*Michael's appearance was awkward and uncool, but that day he showed me he was a hero where it mattered.*

Michael was more than six feet tall, with long arms, skinny legs, thick glasses, and hair that looked as though it had been styled by a brisk wind. Michael had a passion for reading. In middle school, I'd often pass the library on my lunch break and see him with his nose in a book. We had some classes together, but I didn't consider him a friend. I suppose the only token of friendship we shared was an occasional hurried hello or nod in the hallway between classes.

Often, I heard others say things about Michael that were anything but complimentary. He was an easy target because he was different. He was tall but not athletic. And he was always reading. I didn't really care about him, and from what I could tell none of my peers did either.

But I began to see Michael differently one day when I least expected it—at work, teaching second-graders the basics of basketball.

Every Saturday during the fall and winter, I coach basketball and soccer for first- and second-graders. I've learned how to develop patience and a positive attitude because, if I'm not enthusiastic, they won't be.

One second-grade girl in particular really knew how to test my ability to have a positive attitude. She tested the other coaches as well. We were getting ready for the day's activities when one of the other coaches let out a huge

sigh and said, "Oh, brother! She's here." Another coach said, "It's going to be a long day whenever Wendy is here."

Standing in the doorway was Wendy. She was autistic and didn't fit in well with other children. Wendy often yelped and grunted, and she couldn't stand still for very long. She had the habit of touching other children's hair, which made them uncomfortable and caused disruption. Sometimes she pushed and even slapped other people, both children and coaches. I had to agree. It was going to be a long day.

Wendy walked to the middle of the gym floor, lay down, and started crying. It looked as though one of us was going to have to spend our whole day on "Wendy Patrol."

Then something unexpected happened. In came Michael. He walked to Wendy and gently picked her up. In a voice hardly above a whisper, he calmly said, "Come on, Wendy, I'll do the warmups with you so you won't be alone."

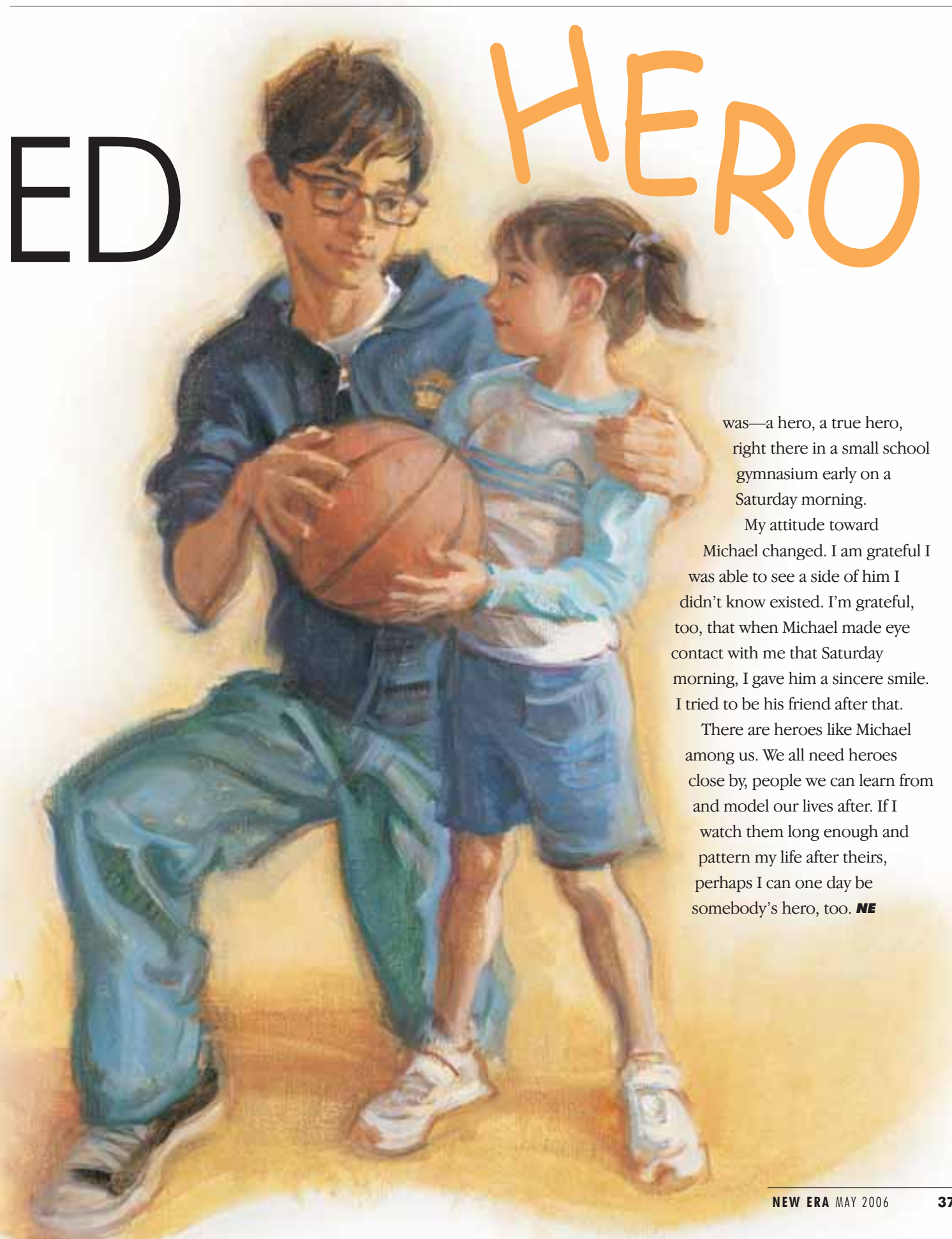
Michael was Wendy's big brother. For the rest of the morning, he never left Wendy's side. He was so patient and caring. I could tell that Michael loved his little sister and wanted her to fit in and be happy. Maybe he wanted those same things for himself.

I started to think about Michael's trials. All day at school, he heard put-downs and snide comments from people who thought they were being clever. And then I thought about his home life, dealing with a sister who had a difficult condition. Yet these trials brought out the best in him. He was compassionate and Christlike.

It was at that point I recognized Michael for what he

# ED

# HERO



was—a hero, a true hero, right there in a small school gymnasium early on a Saturday morning.

My attitude toward

Michael changed. I am grateful I was able to see a side of him I didn't know existed. I'm grateful, too, that when Michael made eye contact with me that Saturday morning, I gave him a sincere smile. I tried to be his friend after that.

There are heroes like Michael among us. We all need heroes close by, people we can learn from and model our lives after. If I watch them long enough and pattern my life after theirs, perhaps I can one day be somebody's hero, too. **NE**



# Real Friends?

**F**riends have a lot of influence in our lives. Are your friends helping you be your best self, or are they leading you away from living the life you should? This quiz can help you see what kind of influence your friends have on you, and it might even help you be a better friend. Choose the answer that best describes how you think your best friend might respond in each of these situations. Use the key at the end to find your score.

**1.** You're at a fun party, but then people start to drink. You want to go home, and your friend says:

**a.** You're right, we'd

better go home. I'll call my mom to pick us up.

**b.** Don't be such a goody-goody. A little drink never hurt anyone.

**c.** Why don't you stay and have a little fun? You don't have to drink.

**2.** You're asked on a date, but you won't turn 16 for another few months. When you explain why you're not going, your friend says:

**a.** Are you crazy? You have to go! This is the biggest dance of the year!

**b.** Okay, but you'll regret not going. Can't you make an exception this time?

**c.** All right, if that's what you really want to do. It's nice that you stick by what you believe.

**3.** At school you have a geography assignment due,

and everyone is sharing answers before class. You forgot all about the assignment, and your friend tells you:

**a.** Don't worry about it. One assignment won't matter.

**b.** If you hurry, you can finish it before class.

**c.** Quick, here's my assignment. You can copy from mine.

**4.** You and your friend are at a video store picking out a movie to watch. She picks a movie with bad content, and you explain why you don't watch inappropriate media. She says:

**a.** That's fine; let's pick another one.

**b.** We'll watch it at my house. Your parents won't know.

**c.** Come on, just this

once. There's nothing really that bad in this movie.

## SCORING:

- |    |     |     |     |
|----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. | a=3 | b=1 | c=2 |
| 2. | a=1 | b=2 | c=3 |
| 3. | a=2 | b=3 | c=1 |
| 4. | a=3 | b=1 | c=2 |

**10–12 points** You have a great friend who supports you in your beliefs. Try to be a good friend too as you support each other in living righteously.

**7–9 points** Your friend seems to care about you but really doesn't understand what it means to live the gospel. Take the opportunity to explain your beliefs, and your friend will probably be understanding.

**4–6 points** Your friend is not encouraging you to live the gospel and become a better person. Make friends with those who uplift you, respect your beliefs, and encourage you to stick to them.





PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

## IT HAPPENED IN *May*

**May 8, 1831**

After the birth and death of their own newborn twins, Joseph and Emma Smith adopted

A FATHER'S GIFT, BY LIZ LEMON SWINDLE



the twins of John and Julia Murdock. Julia Murdock had died as a result of giving birth to the twins.

**May 18, 1958** The first stake outside of North America and Hawaii was organized—the Auckland Stake in New Zealand.

**May 1, 1966** The first stake in South America was organized—the São Paulo Brazil Stake (below, left).

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND



PHOTOGRAPH BY MATT REIER



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

**May 26, 1996** President Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated the Hong Kong China Temple (above, right).

**May 7, 1998** The Church announced plans to build temples in Halifax, Nova Scotia; Fukuoka, Japan; Suva, Fiji; Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico; and Kona, Hawaii (below).

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN TELFORD



## SO MANY GIFTS

**Y**ou know how much you appreciate feeling healthy after you've been sick for a long time? So did Grace Noll Crowell, the author of "Because I Have Been Given Much," (*Hymns*, no. 219). She wrote the words to this hymn after a long and serious illness. After the pain went away, she realized how grateful she was for what she'd been given. This hymn, new to the 1985 hymnbook, was written to be sung in unison—the left hand is for accompaniment only.

“Simply stated, testimony—real testimony, born of the Spirit and confirmed by the Holy Ghost—changes lives. It changes how you think and what you do. It changes what you say. It affects every priority you set and every choice you make.”

—Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Pure Testimony," *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 40.

## THEY SPOKE TO US

**T**his is filler text. The actual text will come when we receive the conference talks. General conference talks have messages for you. See "They Spoke to Us" in the May Ensign and Liahona for talks like these:

- ◆ Elder Someone talks about something in "A Really Good Conference Talk."
- ◆ Read what President Gordon B. Hinckley says about about another topic that he addressed in "Another Really Good Conference Talk"
- ◆ Maybe an auxiliary leader talks about something else in another talk entitled "Yet Another Really Good Conference Talk."
- ◆ Elder Someone talks about something else in yet another talk entitled "Still Another Really Good Conference Talk."

You can also read, listen to, or watch these talks online at [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org).

# DECIDE

## WHO YOU'LL BE

BY ELDER WAYNE S. PETERSON  
Of the Seventy



*I glanced at the car parked in front of me. It was full of children, and they were looking at me. My eyes caught the eyes of a small boy, six or seven years old. As our eyes met, he immediately stuck his tongue out at me.*

*The decisions we make and the way we behave shape our character.*

Many years ago, while on vacation with my family, I had an experience that taught me a great lesson. On a Saturday, my wife and I decided to take the children for a drive and to do some shopping. During the drive the children fell asleep, and not wanting to wake them, I volunteered to stay in the car while my wife ran into the store.

While waiting, I glanced at the car parked in front of me. It was full of children, and they were looking at me. My eyes caught the eyes of a small boy, six or seven years old. As our eyes met, he immediately stuck his tongue out at me.

My first reaction was to stick my tongue out at him. I thought, “What have I done to deserve this?” Fortunately, before I reacted, I remembered a principle taught in general conference the week before by Elder Marvin J. Ashton.<sup>1</sup> He taught how important it was to act instead of react to the events around us. So I waved at the little boy. He stuck his tongue out at me again. I smiled and waved again. This time he waved back.

Soon he was joined in his enthusiastic waving by a little brother and sister. I

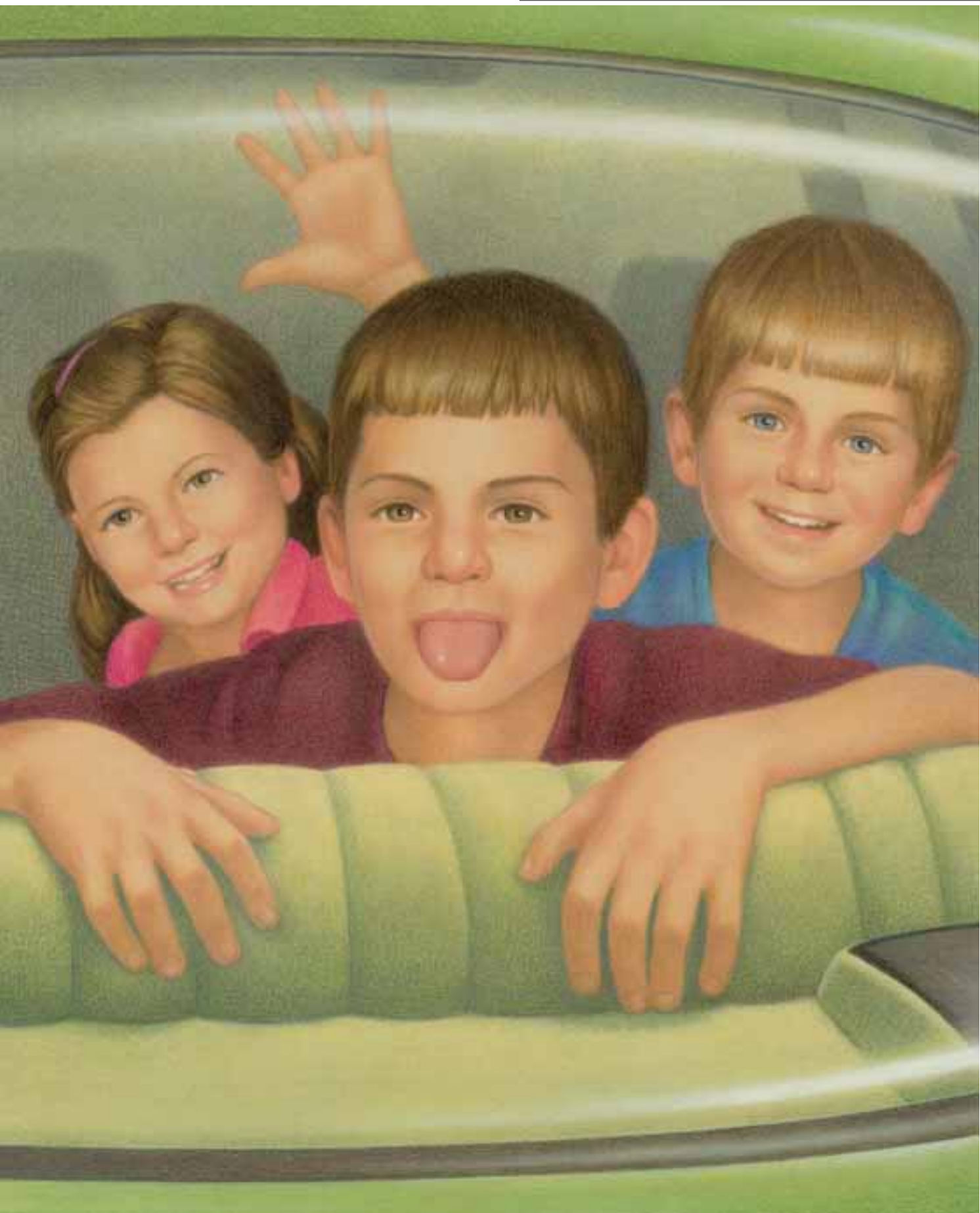
responded by waving this way and that until my arm became tired. Then I rested it on the steering wheel and continued with every creative wave I could muster, all the time hoping their parents would quickly return or that my wife would soon come back.

The parents finally did come, and as they pulled away, my newfound friends continued to wave for as long as I could see them.

That was a simple experience, but it demonstrated that in most encounters we can determine the kind of experience we are going to have by how we respond. I was grateful that I chose to act in a friendly way rather than react to my young friend’s childish behavior. In doing so I avoided the negative feelings I would have felt had I followed my natural instinct.

In His instructions to the Nephites, the Savior taught, “Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (3 Nephi 14:12).

Imagine the effect it would have in the world if everyone practiced this Golden Rule. But to do so seems contrary to human nature. King Benjamin declared that “the natural man is an enemy to God,” and will remain such



*Christ set a perfect example of maintaining emotional control in every setting.*

*Appearing before Caiaphas and Pilate, He was buffeted, slapped, spat upon, and mocked by His tormentors. The great irony was that they demeaned their Creator, whose suffering was undertaken out of love for them.*

until he “yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man” and learns to be “submissive, meek, humble, patient, [and] full of love” (Mosiah 3:19).

#### **We Reap What We Sow**

In today’s fast-paced world there seems to be a greater tendency for people to act aggressively toward each other. Some are quick to take offense and respond angrily to real or imagined affronts, and we’ve all experienced or heard reports of road rage or other examples of rude, insensitive behavior.

Unfortunately, some of this spills over into our homes, creating friction and tension among family members.

It may seem natural to react to a situation by giving back what is given to us. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Reflecting on his horrendous wartime experiences, Viktor Frankl recalled: “We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”<sup>2</sup>

That is noble behavior and a high expectation, but Jesus expects no less of us. “Love your enemies,” He said, “bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

A favorite hymn reinforces this teaching:  
“School thy feelings, O my brother;  
Train thy warm, impulsive soul.  
Do not its emotions smother,  
But let wisdom’s voice control.”<sup>3</sup>

The decisions we make and the way we behave are what ultimately shape our character. Charles A. Hall aptly described that process in these lines: “We sow our thoughts,

and we reap our actions; we sow our actions, and we reap our habits; we sow our habits, and we reap our characters; we sow our characters, and we reap our destiny.”<sup>4</sup>

#### **A Soft Answer**

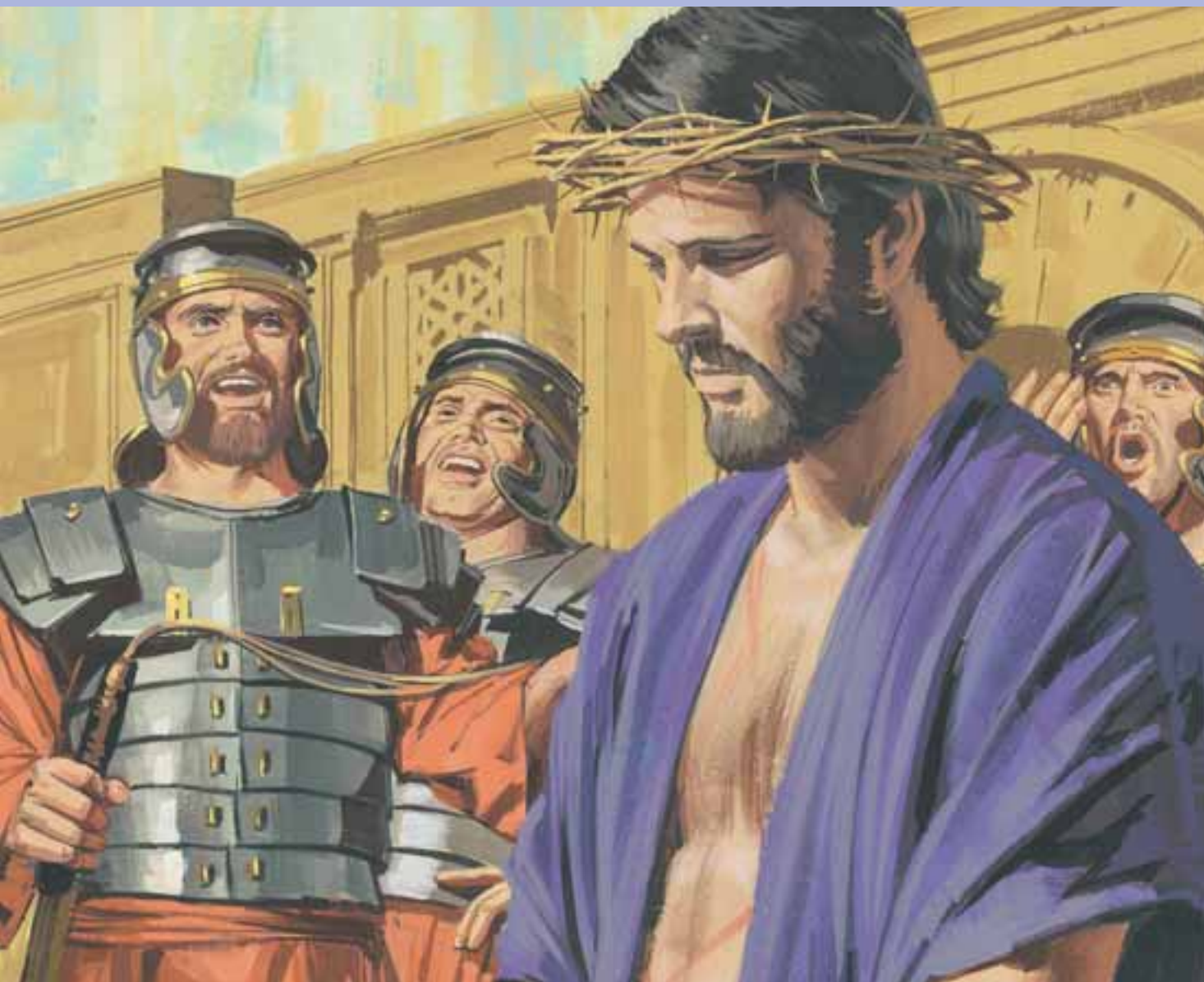
It is in the home that our behavior is most significant. It is the place where our actions have the greatest impact, for good or ill. Sometimes we are so much “at home” that we no longer guard our words. We forget simple civility. If we are not on guard, we can fall into the habit of criticizing one another, losing our tempers, or behaving selfishly. Because they love us, our families may be quick to forgive, but they often carry away in silence unseen injuries and unspoken heartache.

There are too many homes where children fear their parents or where wives fear their husbands. Our leaders have reminded us that “fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness,” and warned “that individuals who . . . abuse spouse or offspring . . . will one day stand accountable before God.”<sup>5</sup> The adversary knows that if he can foster an atmosphere of contention, conflict, and fear in the home, the Spirit is grieved, and the cords that ought to bind the family are weakened.

The resurrected Lord Himself declared, “For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another” (3 Nephi 11:29).

When we feel anger or contention in our homes, we should immediately recognize what power has taken control of our lives and what Satan is endeavoring to accomplish. Solomon provided us this wise formula: “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger” (Proverbs 15:1).

Our home should ideally be a refuge where each member feels safe, secure,



loved, and insulated from harsh criticism and contention that we so often encounter in the world.

### Follow Him

Christ set a perfect example of maintaining emotional control in every setting. Appearing before Caiaphas and Pilate, He was buffeted, slapped, spat upon, and mocked by His tormentors (see Matthew 26; Luke 23). The great irony was that they demeaned their Creator, whose suffering was undertaken out of love for them.

In the face of this unjust abuse, Jesus maintained His composure, refusing to act unkindly. Even on the cross, in the midst of that unspeakable agony, His plea was, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

He expects the same of us. To those who would follow Him, He said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

May we evidence our discipleship by strengthening our homes in kind and loving ways. May we remember that “a soft answer turneth away wrath” and strive through our relationships and encounters to shape a character that will meet with the Savior’s approval. **NE**

*From an October 2001 general conference address.*

### NOTES

1. See *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1970, 59–60.
2. *Man’s Search for Meaning* [1985], 86; emphasis added.
3. “School Thy Feelings,” *Hymns*, no. 336.
4. Quoted in *The Home Book of Quotations*, sel. Burton Stevenson [1934], 845.
5. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.

# FINDING PLUTO

BY HARTT WIXOM

In 1905, there were eight known planets in our solar system. But astronomers were certain there was a ninth, unnamed planet out there somewhere. Yet no one had ever seen it.

Astronomers could have dismissed the planet as nonexistent because it could not be seen. But based on the evidence they observed in the motion of other planets in our solar system, the planet had to be there.

In 1915, U.S. astronomer Percival Lowell concluded that everything fit harmoniously if the planet was located in a certain place in the sky. He predicted approximately where it would be found. But still, no one had

ever seen it. (See *Encyclopedia Americana* [1995], vol. 22, 260.)

Did science give up because the planet's existence could not be proven by observation? Not at all. When more powerful telescopes were built in 1930, astronomers were able to gaze at Pluto for the first time.

Faith works in the same way. We find harmony in our lives by studying the scriptures, following the commandments, praying, and living as if God were there. Even though we can't see Him, we see evidence of Him everywhere (see Alma 30:44).

Of course, the day will come when we will see God (see 3 Nephi 26:4). But until that day, if we exercise faith by obeying His commandments, we will be better prepared to meet Him. **NE**



# PREPARED FOR HIS COMING

BY HEATHER DURRANT

**O**ne ordinary Sunday I was sitting with my family in sacrament meeting. We heard the announcements and listened to the prayer; then as we were singing the opening hymn, something very out of the ordinary happened. Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife walked into our chapel! Sister Perry sat in the congregation as her husband walked up and sat on the stand. It was a complete shock to everyone. Elder Perry explained to us that he had planned to attend a different ward but had become lost and decided to attend our ward instead.

Although we were surprised that an Apostle of the Lord had come to our sacrament meeting, we were prepared. The priesthood holders blessed and passed the sacrament reverently. The girls in the congregation were dressed modestly. Our meeting was being run with order. Our building was clean and was a place where the Spirit could be present, and the speakers were ready with well-prepared, inspiring talks.

On a more personal level, I felt that my family and I were prepared. We had been taught by my parents to be reverent, to listen, and to sing the hymns. We didn't need to change our

# GETTING TO KNOW JOSEPH

BY GARRETT STONE



**I**n a recent ward conference, our stake president advised us to choose one area of doctrine that we wanted to gain a testimony of and to fast and pray about it. I chose to pray for a testimony of Joseph Smith as a true prophet of God.

I kept praying and waiting for an answer, but nothing came. I grew impatient. I was sincere in my desire, so why wouldn't an answer come?

After several weeks, my seminary teacher approached me with an assignment. All the institute and seminary classes in our area were to give monthly lessons on Joseph Smith. My seminary teacher asked me to be the one to give a different lesson each

routine because Elder Perry was there.

The surprise visit of an Apostle to our ward made me think of the Second Coming of the Savior. When He comes, we won't be expecting Him. But we can prepare for His coming right now. Mark 13:32–33 says, "But of that day and that hour

month on "A Day in the Life of Joseph Smith."

I didn't really want this extra responsibility, but I accepted the assignment.

As I began to read the material on the Prophet Joseph Smith, I realized that this assignment was the

answer to my prayers. This opportunity helped me to really learn who the Prophet was and what he had done for the Church.

Also, the personal testimonies I read from people who had known Joseph Smith strengthened my own testimony of his divine calling. Because of this experience, I am so thankful for the Prophet Joseph Smith, and I am gaining a stronger testimony every day. **NE**

knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."

I hope I can be as prepared for the coming of Christ as my ward was for the unexpected visit of an Apostle. **NE**

# HELP ME, RHONDA

BY RACHEL A. PORTER

It was late on a Saturday night, and everyone in my family was tired after a long weekend. To make things worse, my dad was once again out of the country for his job.

I was about to go to bed when I realized that my mom was cleaning! As she worked, she began to sing a song by the Beach Boys: “Help me,

Rhonda; help, help me, Rhonda.” A bit puzzled, I asked my mom why she was singing that song. She explained that since no one else would help her clean our house, maybe Rhonda would.

I suddenly realized that I was being completely unfair to my tired and overworked mother. I dropped what I was doing and said, “Mom, what can I do?” She replied, “Well, if you could rinse and put the dishes in the dishwasher, I would really appreciate it.”

When I finished the dishes, I did a few other small jobs. By the time everything was done, it was about 11:00 p.m. My mom was sitting on the couch for a minute to get some energy back, so I walked over to her and asked if there was anything else I could do.

She shook her head. Then with a tired but grateful smile she said, “Thank you . . . Rhonda,” and gave me a hug. Though I had helped lift my mom’s burden that night, I knew that I had given her just an hour of my time, compared to the thousands she willingly gives to my family. It was one hour I wouldn’t have wanted to spend any other way. **NE**

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

*New Era*, Instant Messages  
50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150-3220, USA

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

Please limit submissions to 400 words or less. They may be edited for length and clarity.



**Mutual Activity Idea**

• Have the group create a list of questions similar to those answered in To the Point on page 34. Ask the bishop if he, or someone he recommends, would be willing to come to Mutual to discuss the questions he feels are appropriate. Submit the list of questions in advance.

**Personal Progress or Duty to God**

• Use one or more of the suggestions for scripture study in the Idea List on page 15. Set a goal to read a certain number of chapters, and use your study to fulfill one of the Personal Progress or Duty to God requirements.

**Family Home Evening Idea**

• As a family, create a plan in case of emergencies. Figure out an escape route from each room in your house in case of fire and practice these escape routes together. In addition, get a container, and place copies of family photos and other important documents inside. Put the container in a place where it will be easy to grab and take with the family. In addition, make sure each member of the family has telephone numbers to call and a place to meet if an emergency should happen while away from the home.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November in the *Ensign*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 21–25.

**Young Women Manual 1**

**Lesson 21: A Righteous Example Influences Others**

Kelly M. Smurthwaite, “Unexpected Hero,” *New Era*, this issue, 36.

“Count the Ripples,” *New Era*, Feb. 2005, 26.

**Lesson 22: Repentance**

Jed Layton, “Anger Bounces Back,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 24.

Rachel C. Murdock, “What’s in a Name?” *New Era*, June 2005, 24.

**Lesson 23: Forgiveness**

Q&A: (How do you know you’re forgiven . . .) *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 16.

Amanda Denison, “It’s Hard to Forgive,” *New Era*, July 2005, 47.

**Lesson 24: Prayer and Meditation**

Dallin H. Oaks, “The Special Language of Prayer,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 2.

Shanna Butler, “Penny for Your Prayers,” *New Era*, July 2005, 29.

**Lesson 25: Sabbath Day**

Marlene Nolte, “I Chose the Sabbath,” *New Era*, June 2004, 26.

Q&A: (. . . jobs require Sunday work?), *New Era*, June 2004, 16.

**Aaronic Priesthood Manual 1**

**Lesson 21: Pure Thoughts: Clean Language**

To the Point: (swearing), *New Era*, this issue, 34.

To the Point: (inappropriate thoughts), *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 35.

Brian D. Stenquist, “This Recruit Does Not Swear, Sir!” *New Era*, Oct. 2005, 12.

**Lesson 22: Covenants Guide Our Actions**

Jeffrey R. Holland, “Be Ready and Worthy,” *New Era*, this issue, 2.

Carlos Ernesto Agüero, “The Price for Good Things,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 30.

**Lesson 23: Pray for Guidance**

“Line Upon Line: Matthew 6:9–18,” *New Era*, Mar. 2006, 11.

Dallin H. Oaks, “The Special Language of Prayer,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 2.

**Lesson 24: Christ-Centered Repentance**

Jed Layton, “Anger Bounces Back,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 24.

F. Melvin Hammond, “Room for Hope,” *New Era*, June 2005, 42.

**Lesson 25: Forgiveness**

Richard D. Hawks, “The Perfect Comeback,” *New Era*, Apr. 2006, 8.

Q&A: (How do you know you’re forgiven . . .) *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 16.



**PERFECTIONISM**

Thank you so much for the article called “What Does It Mean to Be Perfect?” (Jan. 2006). Lately, I have been unhappy with who I am and what I am achieving. I didn’t realize this was due to my perfectionist personality. As I read this article I knew that the Lord was watching out for me and blessing me. I am now learning how to deal with this perfectionism. Whenever I lose heart, I read this article again. I now know that I don’t have to be perfect immediately, but it is a process. Thank you for printing this article.

Name withheld

**FICTION**

Yea! I am so glad to see some fiction stories finally being published in the *New Era*. I noticed that the story “Independence Day” (Feb. 2006) is written by Jack Weyland. On another subject, I absolutely love the *New Era*. I love the stories, especially since they are of teenagers (a.k.a. people my age); I love the comics and funny anecdotes; I love the messages from both the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. I also love the poem/photograph that is always published on the last page—sometimes we are just simply daughters or sons or athletes or students or just inspired.

Suzanne S., Colorado

**KEEPING STANDARDS**

I would like to thank you for the article “This Recruit Does Not Swear, Sir!” (Oct. 2005). It expresses how easy it is to lower your standards so as to fit in or so you don’t get in trouble. We often rationalize by telling ourselves, “I’ll just do it this once.”

I especially like the part at the end where it says, “If you try to do what’s right you’ll



*“I learned that the New Era wasn’t published just to inform you. It was published to entertain as well as to teach important principles for life.”*

have the Lord on your side.” Thank you for all the time you spend on this magazine.

Sam D., Washington

**ENTERTAINS AND TEACHES**

I used to think that the *New Era* was just a magazine the Church published to inform people about what they should be doing. After I started reading it, though, I learned that it wasn’t published just to inform you. It was published to teach important principles for life as well as to entertain. Reading the *New Era* has made me a better person ever since I started reading it.

Daniel B., Texas

**I FOUND HOPE AGAIN**

I spent two weeks in the hospital. I was bored, had bad headaches every day, and was afraid while waiting for the diagnosis. But one good friend of mine sent me some *New Eras*, and when I was reading them, I forgot about the pain and fear, and I felt peace in my mind and knew that everything will be okay.

I want to give my thanks to all the people who prepare the *New Era* because it’s a good way to spend time and find peace and hope in all the wonderful stories and talks and answers we are looking for.

Tereza R., Czech Republic

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

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

Or e-mail us at

[newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)

*Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.*





## CRUMBS

BY ANNIE ERICKSON

Looking down—  
my finger brushes across your eyelashes,  
grouped in little points from  
your fight with sleep.  
I gently wipe the crumbs  
from your parted lips and  
kiss the streaks on your cheeks.  
I smooth your stringy hair  
from your forehead  
and place my finger in yours, curled.  
Such a beautiful little person,  
your face so innocent,  
though for how long, I do not know.  
Perhaps I should have left  
the crumbs.



*“No one ever believes it will happen to them,  
and neither did we.”*

*See “Surviving the Storm,” p. 24.*

