

A man wearing a black cowboy hat and a dark jacket is kneeling on a gravel surface. He is looking down and writing on a piece of paper with a pen. The background shows a wooden structure, possibly a building under construction or a shed, with a metal pipe visible. The overall scene is outdoors and appears to be a construction or work site.

THE
New Era

NOVEMBER

2007

COVER STORY:
RAIN CAN'T WRECK
THIS TREK, P. 18

NEW CHURCH
LEADERS ANNOUNCED,
PP. 8, 10

TOO MUCH STUFF?
PP. 2, 17

IRISH RECORD
SETTER, P. 34

DO I HAVE A
CHOICE? P. 14

The First Presidency:

Gordon B. Hinckley,
Thomas S. Monson,
Henry B. Eyring

**The Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles:**

Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry,
Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H.
Oaks, M. Russell Ballard,
Joseph B. Wirthlin, Richard G.
Scott, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey
R. Holland, Dieter F. Uchtdorf,
David A. Bednar, Quentin L.
Cook

Editor: Jay E. Jensen

Advisers: Gary J. Coleman,
Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Gerald N.
Lund, W. Douglas Shumway

Managing Director:

David L. Frischknecht

Editorial Director:

Victor D. Cave

Senior Editor: Larry Hiller

Graphics Director:

Allan R. Loyborg

Managing Editor:

Richard M. Romney

Assistant Managing Editor:

Janet Thomas

Associate Editors:

David A. Edwards,

Paul VanDenBerghe

Editorial Staff: Susan Barrett,

Ryan Carr, Monica Dickinson,

Jenifer L. Greenwood, R. Val

Johnson, Adam C. Olson

Publications Assistant:

Sally J. Odekirk

Editorial Intern:

Janessa Cloward

Marketing Manager:

Larry Hiller

Managing Art Director:

M. M. Kawasaki

Art Director: Brent Christison

Senior Designer: Fay P. Andrus

Design and Production Staff:

Collette Nebeker Aune,

Eric P. Johnsen, Jane Ann

Peters, Randall J. Pixton, Scott

Van Kampen

Printing Director:

Craig K. Sedgwick

Distribution Director:

Randy J. Benson

© 2007 by Intellectual

Reserve, Inc. All rights

reserved. Periodicals Postage

Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah.

The *New Era* (ISSN 0164-5285)

is published monthly by The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-

day Saints, 50 E. North Temple

St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220,

USA.

POSTMASTER: Send address
changes to Distribution Services,
Church Magazines, P.O. Box
26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-
0368, USA.

Canada Post Information:

Publication Agreement

#40017431.

Just like the original pioneers,
these teens always had
enough energy left to dance.
See "Handcarts in Alaska," p. 18.



A Name on the List, p. 30



Waves of Deception, p. 40

**The Message:
More or Less** 2
Bishop H. David Burton
A prayerful, conservative approach is the key to successful living.

**Line upon Line:
Psalm 24:3-4** 7

**Called to Serve:
President Henry B. Eyring** 8
A new Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

**Called to Serve:
Elder Quentin L. Cook** 10
A new member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Up in Smoke 12
Marilyn Feik
I threw my cigarettes away. I wasn't going to let smoking stand in my way.

**Q&A:
Questions and Answers** 14
Church leaders are always giving us rules to follow. Isn't it taking away our agency when they tell us what to do all the time?

**New Era Poster:
Don't Buy It** 17

Handcarts in Alaska 18
Marlene Meyer and Patricia Auxier
Surviving the rain and mud, watching out for bears, Alaskan teens trek like pioneers.

Lost 24
John D. N. Davidson II
One minute we were just having fun; the next we were lost. But our leaders showed us the way back.

Me? Relief Society President? 26
Jade Swartzberg
You never quite know when the Lord might call on you to lead.

A Name on the List 30
Sedley Parkinson
Who was Bill? Our quorum found someone who needed us.

Sprinting to Success 34
Lindsey Phillips
Jason Smyth from Ireland overcame his poor eyesight and discovered a hidden talent for running.

The Extra Smile 37

What's Up? 38

Waves of Deception 40
Elder R. Conrad Schultz
If we are not careful, the sneaker waves in life can be deadly. Things are not always as they seem.

Instant Messages 44
Help, he's not breathing; listening to testimonies; earning an Eagle.

What's in It for You 47

We've Got Mail 48

**Poem:
The Forgotten** 49
Sharman Tullis Gill

Photo 49
Luis Pino

Text and visual material in the New Era may be copied for incidental, noncommercial church or home use. Visual material may not be copied if restrictions are indicated in the credit line with the artwork. Copyright questions should be addressed to Intellectual Property Office, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150, USA; e-mail: cor-intellectualproperty@ldschurch.org.

The New Era Magazine
Volume 37, Number 11
November 2007

Official monthly publication for youth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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

E-mail Address:
newera@ldschurch.org

To Change Address:
Send old and new address information to:
Distribution Services
P.O. Box 26368
Salt Lake City, UT
84126-0368, USA.
Please allow 60 days for changes to take effect.

Cover: Kyle DeVaney from Homer, Alaska, takes refuge from the rain. See "Handcarts in Alaska" on p. 18.

Cover photography:
Rob Meyer (front) and John Telford (back)

TO SUBMIT MATERIAL:
Please e-mail or send stories, articles, photos, poems, and ideas to the Editorial Offices address above. For return, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

TO SUBSCRIBE:
By phone: Call 1-800-537-5971 to order using Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card, or American Express. Online: Go to www.ldscatalog.com.
By mail: Send \$8 U.S. check or money order to Distribution Services, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

Visit us online at www.newera.lds.org

More or Less

BY BISHOP H. DAVID BURTON
Presiding Bishop



The meaning of more and less is not always crystal clear. There are times when less is in reality more and times when more can be less.

The current conventional wisdom is that more is better and less is usually undesirable. For some, the pursuit to acquire more of this world's goods and services has become a passion. For others, more of this world's wealth is necessary just to sustain life or raise living standards to a minimum level. The unbridled desire for more often has tragic consequences. The struggle to set limits, make do with less, and avoid the pitfalls of "more, more, more" has never been more difficult. It is hard to say no to more when you can afford to say yes. But if we constantly want more, we can forget to be grateful for what we do have.

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve warns us that: "We so easily forget that we came into life with nothing. Whatever we get soon seems our natural right, not a gift. And we forget the giver. Then our gaze shifts from what we have been given to what we don't have yet" ("Remembrance and Gratitude," *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 11).

Your parents are rightfully anxious about the future. It is difficult to say no to more sports equipment, electronics, lessons, clothes, team participation, et cetera, when parents believe more will help you thrive in an increasingly competitive world. The youth seem to want more, partly because there



is infinitely more to catch their eye. The American Academy of Pediatrics estimated that American children see more than 40,000 commercials a year.

Fewer and fewer of your parents ask you to do chores around the house because they think you are already overwhelmed by social and academic pressures. But if you're devoid of responsibilities, you risk never learning that every individual can be of service and that life has meaning beyond your own happiness.

In her book *My Grandfather's Blessings*, Dr. Rachel Remen tells of becoming good friends with a couple and their young son, Kenny. When she visited, she would sit on the floor with Kenny and play with his two Hot Wheels cars. Sometimes she would have the one without a fender and he had the one with a door missing and sometimes vice versa. He loved those cars!

When a gas station chain offered a Hot Wheels car with every fill-up, she recruited the staff at her clinic to go to that particular station and collect the cars. As soon as she had all of the models, she wrapped them in a big box to take to Kenny. She hoped she wouldn't offend his parents, who lived quite mea-



PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE BUNDERSON, POSED BY MODELS

The elder leaned forward and put his hand on the father's arm. He looked him straight in the eye and bore a humble and powerful testimony.

gerly. Kenny excitedly opened the big box and took out the cars one by one. They filled the windowsills and even extended to the floor. What a collection! Later, while visiting the family, Rachel noticed Kenny just staring out the window. When she asked Kenny, "What's the matter? Don't you like your new cars?" he looked down very sheepishly. "I'm sorry, Rachel. I guess I just don't know how to love so many Hot Wheels." (See "Owning" [2000], 60–61.)

Have you ever thought, after opening Christmas or birthday gifts, "Isn't there more?" With all the challenges present in this "more generation," there remains divine counsel to focus on the "doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, . . . to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord, . . . [and to] observe the Sabbath day [and] keep it holy" (D&C 68:25, 28–29).

The meaning of more and less is not always crystal clear. There are times when less is in reality more and times when more can be less. For instance, less pursuit of materialism may enable more family togetherness. More indulgence of children may result in less understanding of life's important values. More substance may mean less gratitude.

Some aspects of life can be significantly enhanced by the notion that more is better. The sacred hymn "More Holiness Give Me" (*Hymns*, no. 131) brings to our remembrance the virtues worthy of more of our attention.

Jesus Himself described what it requires to be "more, Savior, like thee." He said, "I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (3 Nephi 12:48).

Meekness is vital to becoming more Christ-like. Without it one cannot develop other important virtues. Mormon indicated, "None is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart" (Moroni 7:44). Acquiring meekness is a process. We are asked to "take up [the]

cross daily" (Luke 9:23). Our lifting should not be an occasional exercise. More meekness does not translate to weakness, but "it is the presentation of self in a posture of kindness and gentleness. It reflects certitude, strength, serenity; it reflects a healthy self-esteem and a genuine self-control" (Neal A. Maxwell, "Meekness—A Dimension of True Discipleship," *Ensign*, Mar. 1983, 70). More meekness will allow us to be tutored by the Spirit.

The virtues expressed in "More Holiness Give Me" fall into several groups. Some are personal goals, like more holiness give me; more strivings within; more faith, gratitude, and purity; more fit for the kingdom; more purpose in prayer; and more trust in the Lord. Others center on adversity. They include patience in suffering, meekness in trial, praise for relief, strength to overcome, freedom from earth stains, and longing for home. The rest firmly anchor us to our Savior: more sense of His care; more pride in His glory; more hope in His word; more joy in His service; more tears for His sorrows; more pain at His grief; more blessed and holy; and more, Savior, like Thee. More of these virtues is better. Less is not desirable, but gratitude for them is.

Many experience joy in His service by teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and its Restoration and testifying of the Savior and His life, ministry, and Atonement.

A missionary district leader was wondering why Elder Parker, who was about to conclude his mission, was successful in spite of his inability to memorize the discussions. To understand, he teamed with Elder Parker to give a discussion. Elder Parker's presentation was so disorganized that by the end of the formal lesson, the district leader was confused and surmised that the family being taught felt the same way.

It was then that "Elder Parker leaned forward and put his hand on the arm of the family's father. He then looked him straight in the eyes, told him how much he loved him and his family, and bore one of the most humble and powerful testimonies that the district leader had ever heard. By the time he finished, every member of the family, including the father, and both elders had tears running down their cheeks. Next Elder Parker taught the father how to pray, and they all knelt down while the father prayed that they might receive testimonies of their own and thanked Heavenly Father for the great love that he felt. Two weeks later the whole family was baptized."

Later, Elder Parker apologized to his district leader for not knowing the discussions. He said he struggled with memorization, even though he spent hours each day working on it. He said he knelt in prayer before teaching each family and asked Heavenly Father to bless him when he bore his testimony so that people would feel his love and the Spirit and know they were being taught the truth (see Allan K. Burgess and Max H. Molgard, "That Is the Worst Lesson I've Ever Heard!" in *Sunshine for the Latter-day Saint Soul* [1998], 181–83).

What can we glean from this simple story?

Do you think Elder Parker felt the need to strive more to learn the discussions? Is it possible Elder Parker came to understand the need to offer prayers with a purpose? Do you suppose his prayers were laced with pleas to gain more strength to overcome? Might the inability to memorize have brought patience in suffering and meekness in trial? Did he demonstrate great faith in the Savior and trust in the Lord? Most certainly he did! He showed gratitude for the Lord for what he didn't have, but also used the gifts that he did have to benefit others.

We show our gratitude by sharing with others. The 2005 hurricane season in the southern United States and the western Caribbean was the costliest and most devastating on record. Storm after storm lashed at homes and businesses from Honduras to Florida. Thousands of priesthood-directed volunteers were there each time a hurricane struck, providing the necessities to sustain life. Hygiene and cleaning kits, food, water, kitchen sets, bed linen, and other commodities helped clean homes and establish temporary housing.

Hundreds of letters of gratitude have been received. One woman, a nurse from Mississippi, wrote: "I was speechless. Had God answered my prayers so quickly? Tears immediately began to roll down my cheeks as men in hard hats and boots, with chainsaws of all shapes and sizes,





appeared out of the debris. It was absolutely, unequivocally, one of the most supreme sacrifices that has ever happened to me personally.”

One 92-year-old great-grandmother has produced several hundred blankets for the victims. In her case, both the creator and receiver have been blessed. As her son admired her handiwork, she asked, “Do you think anyone will ever use one of my blankets?” A letter from a young mother in Louisiana answers that question:

“I live in Louisiana, and I go to a local health unit for my children. While I was there, they gave me some outfits, diapers, wipes, and two beautiful baby blankets. One blanket has a yellow backing with footprints and handprints on the front, and the other blanket is tan with zebras. They are beautiful. My four-year-old loves the zebra one, and of course my seven-month-old can’t say much. I just wanted to say thank you to you and your Church members for your generosity. God bless you and your family.”

In discussing our various longings for more, I am suggesting that it is important for you young people to

Would the blanket ever be used? A letter from a young mother in Louisiana answers that question by saying “thank you for your generosity.”

aggressively seek more of the virtues which go beyond this mortal life and show gratitude for what you do have. A prayerful, conservative approach is the key to successfully living in an affluent society and building the qualities that come from waiting, sharing, saving, working hard,

and making do with what we have. May we be blessed with the desire and the ability to understand when more is really less and when more is better.

From an October 2004 general conference address.

CHURCH HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES

Humanitarian efforts continue to bless people around the world. Between the years 2001 and 2006, the Church has:

- Sent hygiene kits and medical supplies to victims of the tsunami in 2004.
- Rebuilt 902 homes, 15 schools, and 3 medical centers in areas damaged by the tsunami.
- Volunteered more than 400,000 man-hours of labor to areas affected by the hurricanes in 2005.
- Provided measles immunizations to six million children in 19 countries.
- Distributed more than 190,000 wheelchairs in 97 countries.
- Provided clean water for over 3.5 million people in 2,600 communities.
- Trained roughly 69,000 health-care workers in neonatal resuscitation.
- Treated vision problems for more than 40,000 people in 35 countries.
- Distributed 55,355 tons of food, 75,102 tons of clothing, 9,334 tons of medical equipment and supplies, and 5,859 tons of educational materials across the globe.

PSALM 24:3-4

This psalm teaches us what it means to stand in holy places.

Hill of the Lord

The hill of the Lord represents higher spiritual ground, which brings us closer to God. A hill or mountain also often symbolizes the temple (see, for instance, Isaiah 2:2).

When you climb a hill for the first time, it may seem difficult, but if you climb the hill regularly, you become stronger and better able to handle the climb. How is this like increasing your spirituality or going to the temple? What are you doing to strengthen yourself to “ascend into the hill of the Lord”? Read *For the Strength of Youth* for ideas.

Ascend

Ascend—to climb up

Holy place



“As we recall the commandment to stand in holy places, we should remember that beyond the temple, the most sacred and holy places in all the world should be our own

dwelling places. Our homes should be committed and dedicated only to holy purposes. In our homes all of the security, the strengthening love, and the sympathetic understanding that we all so desperately need should be found.”

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?” *Ensign*, Aug. 2001, 5.

Pure heart

Having a pure heart means having virtuous thoughts and righteous intentions.

Clean hands

Having clean hands means living righteously and repenting when we have sinned (see Isaiah 1:18). For a poster on this topic, see the January 1993 *New Era*, page 7.

Sworn deceitfully



“There is no substitute under the heavens for the man or woman, the boy or girl who is honest. No false

words besmirch his or her reputation. No act of duplicity colors his or her conscience. He or she can walk with head high, standing above the

crowd of lesser folk who constantly indulge in lying, cheating, and who excuse themselves with statements that a little lying hurts no one. It does hurt, because small lying leads to large lying, and the prisons of the nation are the best proof of that fact.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 52.

Vanity

The Hebrew word that the word *vanity* is translated from literally means “vapor” or “breath,” implying something that has no substance or permanence, such as the worship of idols or worldly things.

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

3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?
4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
5 He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness shall increase from his conversation.

PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING



During the opening session of general conference on Saturday, October 6, 2007, President Gordon B. Hinckley announced that the vacancy in the First Presidency created by the death of President James E. Faust would be filled by Elder Henry B. Eyring.

Born on May 31, 1933 in Princeton, New Jersey, Henry, or Hal as he was called, was the second of three sons born to Henry and Mildred Eyring. The family lived in New Jersey because his father, a renowned scientist, was teaching chemistry at Princeton University.

Growing up on the East Coast, he and his brothers were the only young people in his branch. Because of gas rationing in World War II which restricted unnecessary travel, the branch met in their home, and the dining table served as the pulpit.

President Eyring tells of an experience he had when

he took his turn reading from the Bible in his schoolroom. “Each morning our teacher would have us take turns reading out loud from the Bible. . . . When my turn came, I always chose to read the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians, which is about charity, the pure love of Christ. I had had a special experience as a little boy that impressed me that the scripture was true and was for me. Every time I read it, I had a strong feeling about my future, including my future family. It was a feeling of

kindness and love for them. That seemed like a strange thing for a little boy to feel, so I didn’t tell anyone about it. I didn’t tell my brothers; they probably would have laughed at me. I didn’t tell my parents, either.

“When I was 11, I received a patriarchal blessing from my great-uncle, whom I had never met. In the blessing, I was promised the very things I’d hoped for but had kept

hidden in my heart—that I would have the home and family I had always dreamed about. The promises in that blessing have since been fulfilled. I have an absolute testimony of priesthood blessings, and I know that those who are worthy to give blessings are inspired by God” (*Friend*, Apr. 1997, 6).

The Eyring family moved to Utah where President Eyring attended the University of Utah and studied physics. After the Korean conflict, he served in the Air Force and was assigned to Albuquerque, New Mexico. At the same time, he was called as a district missionary in the Western States Mission. He served for nearly two years.

After his military service, President Eyring attended Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he graduated with a master’s degree in business administration in 1959 and received a doctoral degree in 1963. While at Harvard he met Kathleen Johnson. They married in the Logan Temple in 1962, and their family was formed as they became the parents of six children—four sons and two daughters.

President Eyring followed his inclination toward teaching, which led to a position as a professor in the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University. After nine years, he accepted the opportunity to serve as president of Ricks College. He went on

to serve as the Church’s Commissioner of Education, in the Presiding Bishopric, and in the First Quorum of the Seventy. On March 31, 1995, he was called to become a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Since that time, President Eyring has continued to teach, often addressing the youth of the Church. In his talks he gives advice that, if followed, can help teens live happier and more successful lives. In a recent conference address, President Eyring said, “The best time to resist temptation is early. The best time to repent is now. The

***Newly sustained
Second Counselor
President Eyring
takes his seat next to
President Hinckley.***



enemy of our souls will place thoughts in our minds to tempt us. We can decide early to exercise faith, to cast out evil thoughts before we act on them. And we can choose quickly to repent when we do sin, before Satan can weaken our faith and bind us. Seeking forgiveness is always better now than later” (*Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 40). **NE**

ELDER QUENTIN L. COOK

On October 6, 2007, Elder Quentin L. Cook was sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles after serving as a Seventy for 11 years. He fills the vacancy left by President Henry B. Eyring, who was called to be the Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

Born in Logan, Utah, on September 8, 1940, Elder Cook was one of three children born to Bernice and J. Vernon Cook. In high school he was quarterback on the football team and earned all-region honors in both football and basketball. He also served as senior class president and participated in debate.

When he was 15, a defining moment came when his older brother, Joe, was deciding whether to go to medical school or serve a mission. The two of them stayed up one night discussing what Joe should do. Elder Cook has said of this experience:



“That evening was one of the most important times in my life. After Joe and I finished talking, I went into another room and prayed about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I got a very strong feeling that the things Joe and I had been talking about were true.

“Joe chose to serve a mission, and a few years later, I followed in his footsteps, serving in the British Mission.”¹ And Joe later did attend medical school.

Missionary work is near and dear to Elder Cook’s heart

today as well. He has served in Area Presidencies in the Philippines and the Pacific islands, and he has spent the last several years working with the Church’s Missionary Department, including overseeing the preparation and implementation of *Preach My Gospel*. He has said:

“Missionary work is not just one of the 88 keys on

a piano that is occasionally played; it is a major chord in a compelling melody that needs to be played continuously throughout our lives if we are to remain in harmony with our commitment to Christianity and the gospel of Jesus Christ.”²

After his mission, he married his high school sweetheart, Mary Gaddie, in the Logan Temple. He received a bachelor's degree in political science from Utah State University and then left Logan for California to study law at Stanford University. He and his family spent the next 33 years in California, where he served in various Church callings, including president of the California San Francisco Stake.

After earning his law degree, he applied for a job at a law firm and was invited to lunch by some of the partners at the firm. The senior partner asked him if he would like an alcoholic drink before lunch and later asked him if he would like wine. Elder Cook declined both times, telling him the second time that he was a Latter-day Saint. This incident was more important than Elder Cook thought at the time. He has said:

“I received an offer of employment from the firm. A few months later, the senior partner told me the offer of the alcoholic beverages was a test. He noted that my résumé made it clear that I had served an LDS mission. He had determined that he would hire me only if I was true to the teachings of my own church. He considered it a significant matter of character and integrity.”³

Elder Cook learned at a young age that such seemingly small acts are every bit as important as any large deed. He recalls:

“When I was young, I . . . wanted to prove myself through some heroic gesture. My great-grandfather David Patten Kimball

was one of the young men who helped carry the members of the Martin handcart company across the Sweetwater River. That sounded like the kind of consecration for which I was looking. Later, as I visited with my grandfather Crozier Kimball, he explained that when President Brigham Young sent the men on their rescue mission, he instructed them to do everything they possibly could to save the handcart company. Their consecration was specifically to ‘follow the prophet.’ My grandfather told me that consistent,

Elder Quentin L. Cook was called to be a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, filling the vacancy left by President Henry B. Eyring, who was called as the new Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

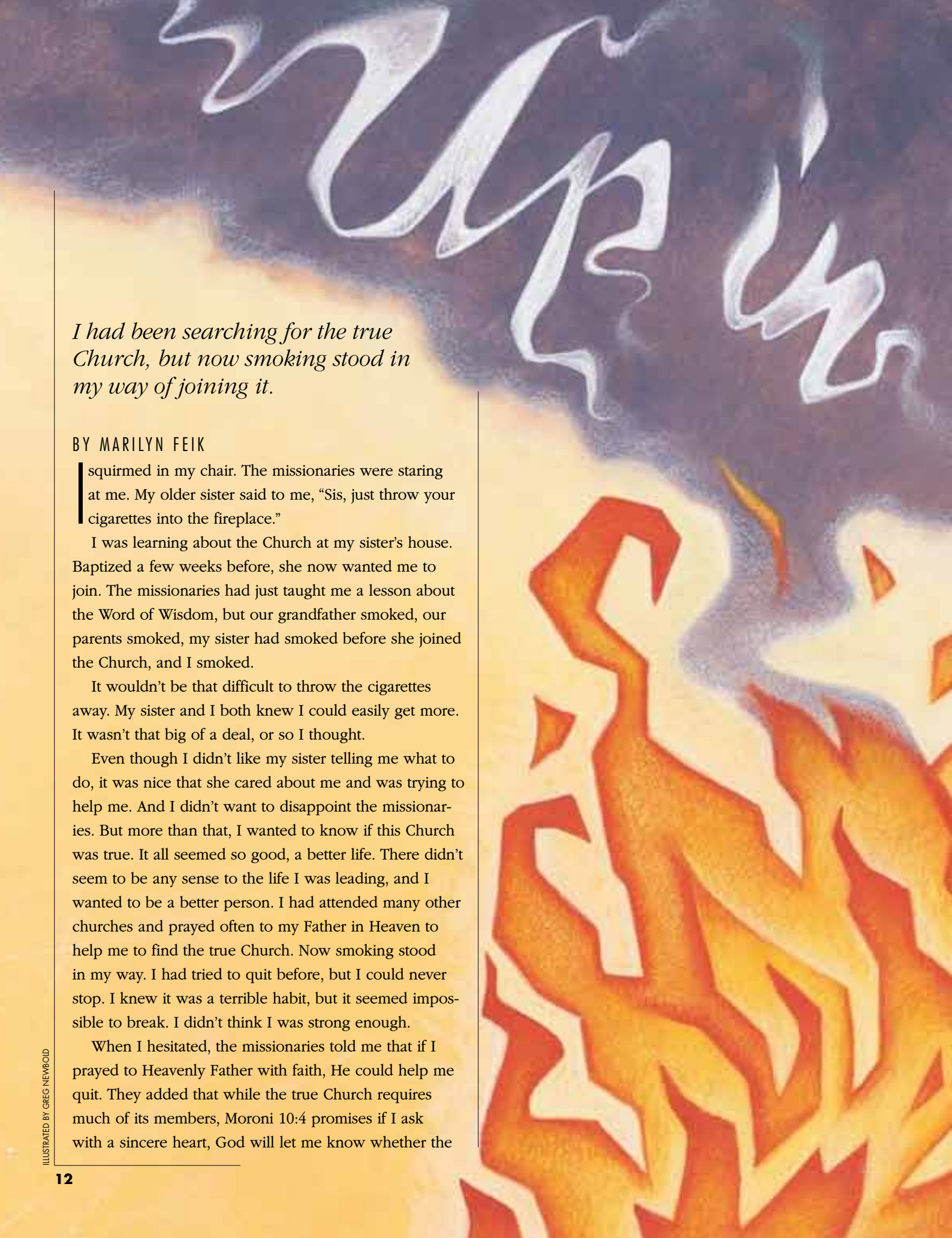


faithful dedication to one's duty or to a principle is to be much admired. As heroic as it was for David Patten Kimball to help rescue the pioneers, it might be equally heroic today to follow the prophet by not watching immoral movies or by refraining from using vulgar language.”⁴

The things Elder Cook has experienced have built his testimony of Jesus Christ and have prepared him to be a special witness of the Savior in all the world. **NE**

NOTES

1. “Friend to Friend,” *Friend*, June 1999, 7.
2. “Be a Missionary All Your Life,” *Brigham Young University 2006–2007 Speeches* [2007], 7.
3. “Lessons from the Old Testament: In the World but Not of the World,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2006, 54.
4. “Looking beyond the Mark,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2003, 40–44.



I had been searching for the true Church, but now smoking stood in my way of joining it.

BY MARILYN FEIK

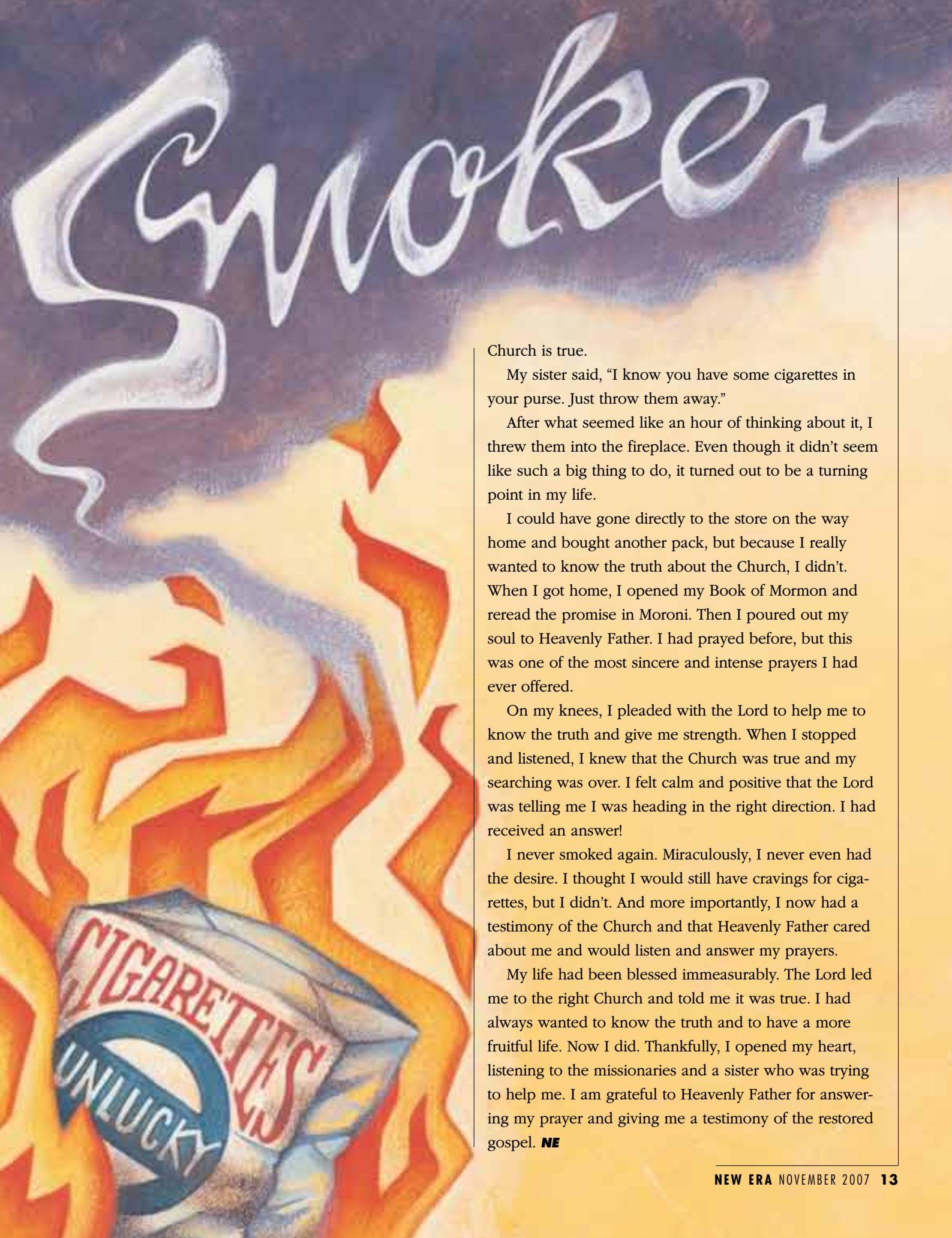
I squirmed in my chair. The missionaries were staring at me. My older sister said to me, “Sis, just throw your cigarettes into the fireplace.”

I was learning about the Church at my sister’s house. Baptized a few weeks before, she now wanted me to join. The missionaries had just taught me a lesson about the Word of Wisdom, but our grandfather smoked, our parents smoked, my sister had smoked before she joined the Church, and I smoked.

It wouldn’t be that difficult to throw the cigarettes away. My sister and I both knew I could easily get more. It wasn’t that big of a deal, or so I thought.

Even though I didn’t like my sister telling me what to do, it was nice that she cared about me and was trying to help me. And I didn’t want to disappoint the missionaries. But more than that, I wanted to know if this Church was true. It all seemed so good, a better life. There didn’t seem to be any sense to the life I was leading, and I wanted to be a better person. I had attended many other churches and prayed often to my Father in Heaven to help me to find the true Church. Now smoking stood in my way. I had tried to quit before, but I could never stop. I knew it was a terrible habit, but it seemed impossible to break. I didn’t think I was strong enough.

When I hesitated, the missionaries told me that if I prayed to Heavenly Father with faith, He could help me quit. They added that while the true Church requires much of its members, Moroni 10:4 promises if I ask with a sincere heart, God will let me know whether the



Church is true.

My sister said, "I know you have some cigarettes in your purse. Just throw them away."

After what seemed like an hour of thinking about it, I threw them into the fireplace. Even though it didn't seem like such a big thing to do, it turned out to be a turning point in my life.

I could have gone directly to the store on the way home and bought another pack, but because I really wanted to know the truth about the Church, I didn't. When I got home, I opened my Book of Mormon and reread the promise in Moroni. Then I poured out my soul to Heavenly Father. I had prayed before, but this was one of the most sincere and intense prayers I had ever offered.

On my knees, I pleaded with the Lord to help me to know the truth and give me strength. When I stopped and listened, I knew that the Church was true and my searching was over. I felt calm and positive that the Lord was telling me I was heading in the right direction. I had received an answer!

I never smoked again. Miraculously, I never even had the desire. I thought I would still have cravings for cigarettes, but I didn't. And more importantly, I now had a testimony of the Church and that Heavenly Father cared about me and would listen and answer my prayers.

My life had been blessed immeasurably. The Lord led me to the right Church and told me it was true. I had always wanted to know the truth and to have a more fruitful life. Now I did. Thankfully, I opened my heart, listening to the missionaries and a sister who was trying to help me. I am grateful to Heavenly Father for answering my prayer and giving me a testimony of the restored gospel. **NE**

Q & A

*“Church leaders are always giving us rules to follow.
Isn’t it taking away our agency
when they tell us what to do all the time?”*

NEW ERA

Church leaders do give us a lot of guidelines, but we shouldn’t mistake their counsel for an attempt to take away our agency. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained how he led the Church: “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves” (quoted by John Taylor, in “The Organization of the Church,” *Millennial Star*, Nov. 15, 1851, 339).

For example, you’ll find quite a few do’s and don’ts in the *For the Strength of Youth* booklet, but the first section, called “Agency and Accountability,” explains why we have agency and what it means:

“While you are here on earth, you are being proven to see if you will use your agency to show your love for God by keeping His commandments.

“While you are free to choose for yourself, you are not free to choose the consequences of your actions. . . . Wrong choices delay your progression and lead to heartache and misery. Right choices lead to happiness and eternal life” ([2001], 4).

Elder L. Aldin Porter of the Seventy said:

■ **We have agency, but we cannot choose the consequences of our actions.**

■ **Church leaders simply help us make choices that will lead us to happiness through God’s plan of salvation.**

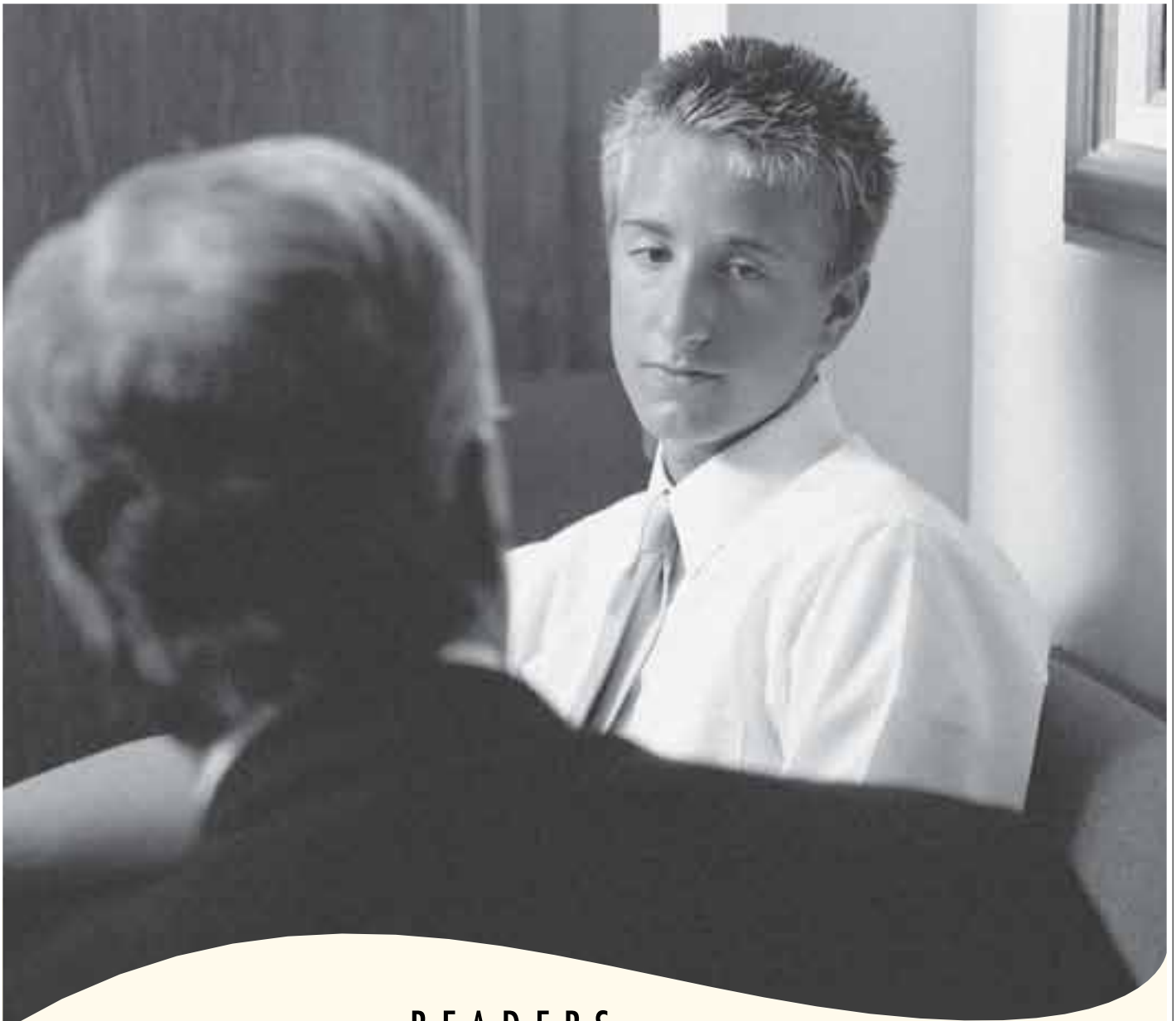
■ **Following the counsel of Church leaders brings us greater freedom through the Savior, as opposed to the captivity of the devil.**

■ **Choosing to obey brings spiritual growth.**

“Some complain that when the prophets speak with clarity and firmness they are taking our agency away. . . . The prophets do not take away our agency. They simply warn us of what the consequences of our choices will be” (“Our Destiny,” *New Era*, Oct. 2000, 46).

When Church leaders give “rules,” they are not trying to dictate how we should live every detail of our lives. They are simply teaching us gospel principles to help us make the choices that will bring us happiness. Far from restricting our agency, these guidelines lead us to much greater freedom than we would have if we were to make wrong choices (see John 8:31–32).

In the Book of Mormon, Lehi taught that the main choice before us is between “liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men,” and “captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil” (2 Nephi 2:27). Choosing to follow the counsel of God’s servants will lead us to greater freedom. Choosing to disobey will cut us off from God’s Spirit, leaving us open to the influence of the adversary, who “seeketh that all



READERS

men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27). God’s plan is a plan of happiness, and “wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). All of the “rules” our Church leaders give us can help us grow spiritually. Guidelines on dress or entertainment, for instance, aren’t just attempts to make us conform to old-fashioned standards; they help us avoid worldly influences that can dull our spiritual sensitivity and lessen our desire to draw near to God. Great blessings come from using our agency to obey. **NE**



The rules we are given by no means take away our agency but give us a clearer knowledge of what we can do to return to our loving Father in

Heaven. It’s hard to watch close friends make decisions that bring painful consequences to them. I have never before been more grateful for having the knowledge of the things that we need to do to live the commandments. I am blessed to be a member of the Church. People may see commandments as rules, but I see them as a doorway to the celestial kingdom.

Kate S., 18, Arizona



Church leaders do not make the rules; Heavenly Father does. Our leaders are there to help us make the right choices. They are looking out

for us and telling us which choice would be righteous. We get the final say in everything we do, and that is the responsibility and blessing of agency.

London B., 15, California

One of the purposes of our coming into mortality is to develop attributes of godliness. Obeying the commandments helps us

to do this. Obedience protects us from Satan and spiritual death, educates us on how to become gods, and governs us, which prepares us for eternal life. Cecil B. DeMille said, “[God] made man free—and then gave him the Commandments to keep him free.”

Josiah E., 17, New Zealand



Church leaders want what is best for you. They are inspired by Heavenly Father to help us achieve eternal life. You always have agency. Your Church leaders have experience and reasons

for what they tell you. They love you and want you to be happy. They also want to keep you safe, protect you from temptation, and guide you through the straight and narrow path.

Mariah W., 15, Massachusetts

I’ve been able to see in my own life that happiness and misery are a result of our choices. What might seem like rules that restrict choices are the guidelines that give us freedom (see John 8:32). As a missionary, we have many rules, but they are given to us by those who can see further than we do (see D&C 101:45–54). Following even the smallest rule can give us greater peace.

Elder Jashinsky, 21, Missouri Independence Mission



They don’t take away our agency. Agency is the freedom to choose. When our leaders give us rules, they are trying to prevent us from committing sins, freeing us from the

pangs of guilt and regret.

Alex D., 17, South Carolina

Although to some it may seem like the Church leaders are taking away our agency, they are really giving us more freedom if we choose to do as they say. One day, my friend was talking to me about her complicated “love life.” She had



“Some . . . do not readily see the relationship between obedience and agency. And they miss one vital connection and see obedience only as restraint. They then resist the very thing that will give them true freedom. There is no true freedom without responsibility, and there is no enduring freedom without a knowledge of the truth.”

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Agency and Control,” Ensign, May 1983, 66.

to deal with a lot of unnecessary stress because she had chosen not to wait until age 16 before dating. She felt very restrained in many ways that she wouldn’t have if she had waited. This friend told me, “You guys are so blessed! At church, when they tell you to wait until you’re 16, they mean it!” The more I thought about this, the more I realized she was right. Sometimes we don’t see the reason for things, but people who have been through it know a lot of things we don’t.

Name withheld



Rules are set in place ultimately by our Heavenly Father through our Church leaders. They are intended to protect us and give us more agency. For example, the Word of Wisdom

protects us from becoming addicted to drugs and alcohol. The commandments help us maintain our agency that Satan is trying so hard to take away.

Katie C., 19, Nevada

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

NEXT QUESTION

“My sister lies to our parents about where she is and who she is with. What should I do?”

**Send your answer by December 15, 2007 to:
New Era, Q&A, 12/07
50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA
Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org**

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter.

FULL NAME _____

BIRTH DATE _____

WARD (or branch) _____

STAKE (or district) _____

I grant permission to print response and photo.

SIGNATURE _____

PARENT’S SIGNATURE (if you are under 18) _____

DON'T BUY IT



THINGS OF ETERNAL WORTH CAN'T BE BOUGHT.
YOU CAME HERE WITH ONE LIFE TO SPEND. DON'T SPEND IT ALL ON STUFF.

(See Matthew 16:26.)



BY MARLENE MEYER
AND PATRICIA AUXIER

*Building hand-
carts, sewing
clothes, walk-
ing in mud
and rain—
maybe this
trek was too
realistic.*

HANDCARTS

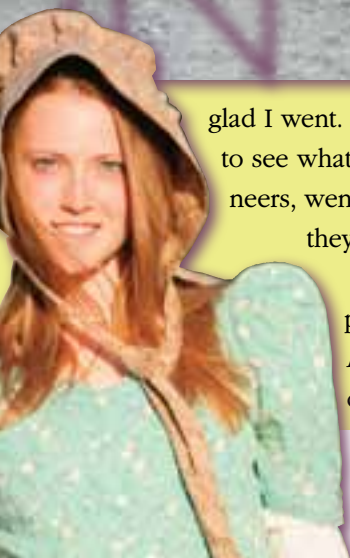
They came by boat, they came by ferry, and youth from Kodiak Island even came by plane. That's what you have to do for youth conference in the Soldotna Alaska Stake, located 150 miles south of Anchorage on the Kenai Peninsula. The stake takes in more than 10 cities and small communities, and the teens came

from near and far to pull handcarts in the shadow of the Ring of Fire volcanoes. But this reenactment was unique. It was a pioneer trek Alaska-style.

Traveling three hours by ferry, two hours by car, and another hour and a half by bus to get to the trailhead, one Laurel from Cordova, Aubrey Finch, said: "I am so



ALASKA



glad I went. It built me as a person to see what my ancestors, the pioneers, went through just for what they believed in.”

Like teens at most pioneer treks, these Alaskans pulled hand-carts, cooked their own

meals, and enjoyed devotionals. But this group faced its own challenges that gave this trek an Alaskan flavor—like keeping an eye out for bear warnings and dealing with nearly 24 hours of daily sunlight hours.

The first obstacle was finding a place for the trek. “We had no idea how hard it would be to find land that we would be



P rayer and scripture study were constant comfort.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROB MEYER



allowed to cross,” said Marlene Meyer, the stake Young Women president. “In some ways it reminded us of the feeling the pioneers had when they were driven out of every place they tried to call home.”

For months the leaders scoured the state looking for a suitable site that could handle 150 people pulling handcarts and camping along the way. Because much of Alaska is covered in wetland, they knew they needed to find an abandoned road with dry campsites every 12 miles. Fourteen days before the event was scheduled to begin, the leaders were contacted about the possibility of passing through some land in a small area called Anchor Point. Miraculously, it had oil pad sites, areas covered in gravel and suitable for camping, positioned every 12 miles along an old road. With only days to spare, stake leaders got the permits and the trek went forward.

Before the trek began, youth and adults spent hundreds of hours building handcarts, welding wagon wheels, sewing clothing, preparing food, and planning. The youth, wanting to make the trek their own, put much of their own effort into the preparations.

Kaylene Forbes, a Laurel of the Soldotna Ward, said, “I did a lot of sewing to prepare for the trek. The skirts and the aprons weren’t very difficult, but the bonnet was hard. After I was finished, though, especially on the trek, I was glad that I did everything myself.”

Each handcart “family” was led by a young man and young woman, called a Pa and Ma, and were also accompanied by adult leaders. The Mas and Pas even arrived early for special training.

“We worked hard,” Brother Forbes, Soldotna’s Young Men president, said. “Hundreds and hundreds of hours, but it was worth 100 times the effort that went into it. It was better than we could have ever dreamed.”

Throughout the trek, efforts to bring to life 19th-century pioneers included a mock Mormon Battalion march and a women’s pull, but no one could plan for one disheartening element they had in common with the pioneers—the weather. One of the original handcart pioneers, John Southwell, who traveled in the Haven handcart company crossing Iowa in 1856, records that they experienced hail, rain, wind, and ankle-deep mud.



150 years later, when the Alaska participants reached the trailhead on the first day of their trek, rain gushed down. The long, muddy trail wandered up tall hills, and the handcart wheels sunk in deep sand.

On the third day, the group awoke to a terrible storm with winds blowing more than 50 miles per hour. Pegs pulled loose, tents collapsed, the rain pounded down, and dark clouds covered the entire sky. Fearing that the weather would stop the trek, the leaders knelt in prayer. President Randy Eberline of the stake presidency asked the Lord to calm the storm. Throughout the camp, trek families also knelt and prayed for relief from the weather. Suddenly, the clouds parted and a bowl of warm sunlight shone down. Kelly Maxwell, a priest from Sterling, described the answer to their combined prayers: "President Eberline

prayed for there to be sunlight, and I was also hoping and praying that it



Left: Just like the pioneers, these youth were never too tired when it was time to dance. Above: Welding wheels, building the carts, and sewing appropriate clothing were part of the preparations.



Hauling all their equipment was hard on the hands and the bodies, but most came to appreciate the difficulties faced by the original pioneers. Above: A call was made to the young men to form the Mormon Battalion.



would work. Minutes later we saw a break in the sky, and we started to see blue and then the sun just came out of the clouds.”

Kaylene described it this way: “The wind stopped, and you could see the clouds parting and the sun coming out. It was like seeing Moses parting the Red Sea, except this time God parted the clouds for us.”

Brother and Sister Matt and Jodi Clark



arrived that evening to speak at a fireside. They reported that on the 100-mile drive from Anchorage it had been pouring rain. As they crested the last hill before reaching the camp, they saw the most incredible sight. Sunlight flooded the camp while the rest of the sky, as far as they could see in all directions, was full of dark clouds.

James Barrett, a priest from the Kenai Ward, said, “It was wonderful to feel the sun again, the warmth and the light that





brought encouragement and hope. It was a miracle. It was as if the Lord had stretched out his hand and protected us from the harsh weather by surrounding our camp with sunlight.”

The next day included special devotionals, a memorial fireside, and a testimony meeting, solidifying the spirit of the experience. It started with a devotional in the wilderness for each handcart “family.” At the devotional the youth received a letter written by their parents. Some of the youth later said that during this quiet time they received their first witness of the truthfulness of the gospel. Cyril Zufelt, 17, of Soldotna said, “When I got my letter, I was touched. That was a huge turning point in my life. I’m never going to forget it.”


Then, after walking for several miles, the group was halted by the trail boss who instructed each person to pick up a rock. In a valley between two large hills, they held a special memorial service dedicated to all of the pioneers left behind on the trail, especially those of the Martin and Willie handcart companies, who had lost so many to the early winter weather and starvation. Each

person placed their rock on a small memorial of the earlier pioneers. Sister Meyer remarked, “I couldn’t believe how hard it was to walk past that little memorial and think of the families that left loved ones behind. I don’t know how they had the strength to do it.”

As they packed up their tents, put away their bonnets and suspenders, and returned to inside plumbing, the youth took away more than blisters and soggy hiking shoes—they took with them an appreciation for the Saints who traveled 150 years ago and 3,600 miles away. Most of all, they took with them a stronger testimony of the gospel.

Lyssa DaVaney, a Laurel in the Homer Ward, said, “When I left for the trek, I knew that I would be coming back. The pioneers knew they would never go back to their homes again. The trek was such an awakening experience for me. I learned so much about the pioneers, Heavenly Father, and myself. I wouldn’t trade my experience for anything.” **NE**

For a history of handcart pioneers, read Linda Dekker, “Some Must Push and Some Must Pull,” *Ensign*, July 2006, p. 38.



BY JOHN D. N. DAVIDSON II

One winter my Scout troop went on an overnight campout in an area with huge rock formations.

The narrow crevasses between the rocks formed maze-like trails flanked by rock walls. We walked around the trails all day and discovered that we could slide on the steep ones by sitting down, tucking our feet up, and hoping the trail didn't rip out the seats of our snowsuits.

After dinner, our leaders let us go out on a night hike alone. They must have thought that with 13 of us they'd be able to keep track of our whereabouts by the noise we made. We grabbed our flashlights and hit the trails with the longest slides. When those got old, we searched for other, more exciting slides. We were steadily heading away from camp without realizing it.

The real problem came when everyone slid down a trail that was too icy to climb back up. The oldest boys thought we could simply take a detour around the rocks. We followed the trail farther, but it didn't turn back toward camp.

We weren't worried about getting too cold since everyone had enough winter clothing, but we were all getting tired. Hour after hour we walked around the trails, hunting for a familiar landmark that would point the way back to camp. The swish-swish of snowsuit legs rubbing together was only broken by the sounds of each boy taking his turn tripping and stumbling.

Exhausted and desperate, we finally thought to pray. Kneeling in a circle, we bowed our heads.

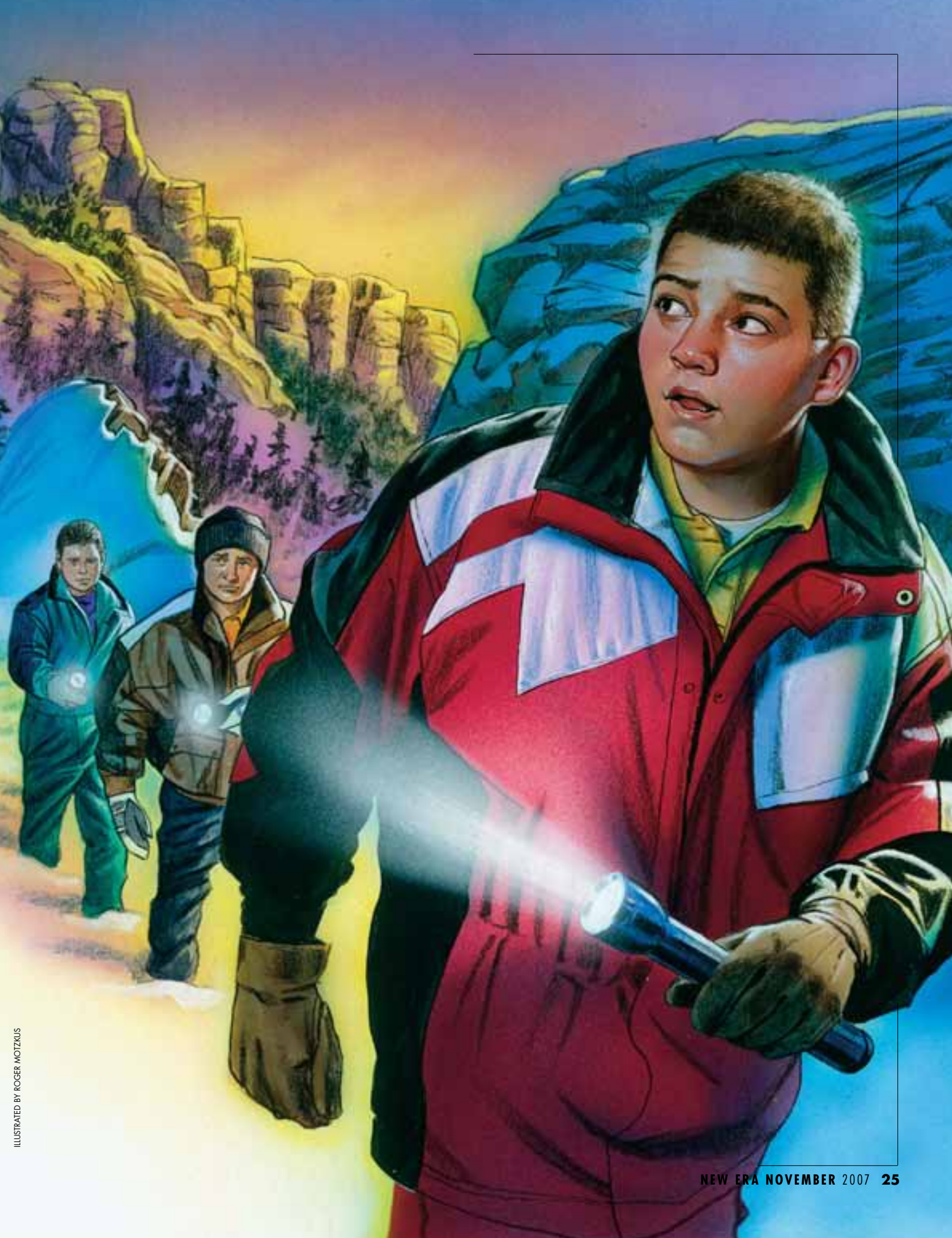
"Our Heavenly Father, we have tried to find our way, but we are lost. Please help us to find our way back to camp. . . ."

"Walk toward the light."

The voice was so faint I thought I had imagined it. I looked up and saw an illumination on the hillside. Now I knew it wasn't my imagination. It was the voice of one of our leaders. They had watched the telltale signs of our flashlights and noise get farther and farther away. When it appeared that we had no intention of turning back, they came after us. They took turns calling to us, but we couldn't hear them over the swish-swish of snowsuits. It turned out we were just over the hill from familiar territory.

From my experiences on overnight camping trips, I have learned to pitch a tent, start a fire, and take care of my physical well-being in the wild. But this time the lesson I learned was more important. None of us was in mortal danger. No one was injured or freezing to death, but that camping trip taught me the importance of prayer—not just prayer before a meal or before bedtime, but the importance of prayer for help with the challenges I face every day. And our answer on this camp came through wise leaders who could see the change of direction we needed to make. **NE**

To learn more about prayer, read Elder Russell M. Nelson, "Sweet Power of Prayer," *Ensign*, May 2003, p. 7.



ILLUSTRATED BY ROGER MOTZKUS

ME?



Relief Society PRESIDENT?

BY JADE SWARTZBERG

Imagine graduating from Young Women and a few months later being called as Relief Society president. Impossible, you say? Mallory Higginson and Macie Murphy could tell you otherwise.

Both 18-year-old freshmen at BYU–Idaho, Macie and Mallory are serving as presidents of the Relief Society groups in their student wards. They had hardly even attended Relief Society before they were each called to serve as president.

They smile confidently as they talk about their callings, but each admits being surprised and overwhelmed after her first meeting with the bishop. Neither of them had been attending Relief Society for very long before arriving at school. Now all of a sudden they were in charge. Despite their initial doubts and fears, Macie and Mallory have quickly come to see that they are not on their own. Their mothers, who have both served as Relief Society presidents, are only a phone call away with comfort and advice. Their bishop is also there to support them, and, of course, so is the Lord.

Although from very different parts of the country—Macie is from Columbus, Georgia, and Mallory is from Mesa, Arizona—they are both learning together that Relief Society is about women being united in the gospel.

At age 18, neither Macie nor Mallory expected this calling.

Sisters in the Gospel

Macie and Mallory are each responsible for about 60 young women, and they have learned a lot from it. Living in the dorms at BYU–Idaho as they experience being away from home, the girls in each Relief Society

group have become especially close-knit.

From her apartment Macie can see all the apartments in her Relief Society, which she likes because she can see the people she's looking after. When they come back from dates, she likes to go chat with them, or if she notices that someone is sad or lonely, she invites her over to talk and have fun.

This dorm setting helps to foster a sisterhood, and Macie has learned that sisterhood is what Relief Society is about. "I think it's really important to rely on each other," she says. "I know lots of these girls come from places where they don't have LDS friends, and it's cool that we can all be one, united in the gospel."

That is why things like visiting teaching are so important. Just before Mallory left for college, her mom asked her if she wanted to go visiting teaching. Mallory brushed off the offer by rolling her eyes and asking, "How hard could it be?" She admits that she didn't take it very seriously, but now she understands what a wonderful support system it is. "It is so important for women to check up on each other and to support each other," she says.

Macie Murphy and Mallory Higginson were just starting to attend Relief Society at college when, to their amazement, they were called as Relief Society presidents. They discovered that along with the calling came a great love for the young women in their charge.



Mallory goes the extra mile and has learned sign language to communicate more effectively with one Relief Society sister, Abby Brimhall.

Macie learned firsthand the reasons for Relief Society programs like home, family, and personal enrichment and visiting teaching.

Macie agrees and says she is encouraging her Relief Society sisters to reach out and serve each other, even if it's as simple as talking to someone who seems to be having a bad day. "It makes you feel better about yourself if you're serving others," she says. "We're all a little homesick and lonely, and this is a great strength." Away from their homes, the girls have become like family and look after each other, sharing cookies and conversations with neighbors.

Instruments in His Hands

"The moment I got this calling, I had this great love for the girls, and I didn't even know them," says Macie. She had heard other people say similar things about their callings but had never experienced it before. She compares this feeling to a small taste of what the Lord feels for us all. "He loves us all; we're His children," she says. "I feel a responsibility to help take care of the Lord's children."

Their bishop encourages this feeling of responsibility, and although he helps them and gives them guidelines, he encourages Macie and Mallory to pray for inspiration.

One way in particular that Mallory and Macie had to rely on the Lord was in recommending their counselors and others for callings in Relief Society. It was a rather daunting task at first, considering they were as new to the ward as they were to the calling and thus hardly knew anyone. Each of them prayed and then went door-to-door trying to get to know the girls in her Relief Society. Mallory

says, "I asked the Lord to help me seek those who would be able to grow in the callings and also be able to help the other girls grow." After that it was a matter of being in tune with the Spirit to know who felt right for the position. She was grateful to be able to counsel with her bishop, who holds the keys to approve callings in the ward.

Through her prayers, Macie has been able to touch the life of at least one girl through inspiration. "One of the girls I had recommended for a calling came up to me and was in tears. She told me that she had been praying for something and felt like she needed to get involved. This calling was what she needed. I know the Lord was the

one who called her, but it made me feel good that I could help her out."

A New Perspective

"One of my favorite things to do during Relief Society is to sit up at the front during the opening hymn and look at

each girl's face," says Mallory. "It's a different perspective. You see them all as equal—they are all great people. And I've learned that everyone has something to offer, which is a perspective that I have often prayed for."

Mallory considers being able to see the girls through the Lord's eyes as one of the biggest blessings of her calling. But she says that you don't need to be the Relief Society president to feel that. Anyone can pray and ask Heavenly Father for the ability to see people as children of God and appreciate what they have to offer.

"It's been really humbling," says Mallory of receiving this calling. "I look around and see so many great girls, and I realize any of



them could be a Relief Society president with the Lord's help, because we are instruments in His hands."

After all, you never know just when the Lord might call on you to lead, whether it be in your Young Women class presidency or as president of the Relief Society. Macie and Mallory admit they were surprised, but that hasn't stopped them from accepting the opportunity to serve.

And now both of them also have a new perspective on Relief Society.

When she first moved into Relief Society at home, Macie thought it was a challenge to fit in with the older women. Mallory's home ward tried to ease the transition by periodically inviting the Laurels to Relief Society lessons and activities, so she had a taste of what it was like, but in the back of her mind

she still had a fear that they were going to spend a lot of time sewing. However, both Mallory and Macie now understand the reasons for programs like home, family, and personal enrichment and are able to gear them toward the women their age.

"I have a greater appreciation for Relief Society now," Macie says. "I don't think it's just an old ladies society anymore."

And just as both girls turned to their mothers for words of advice and comfort in their new callings, Mallory says that with the right attitude, the younger women can learn from the older women. Then, that sisterhood she and Macie have come to embrace can be extended across the generations. **NE**

For help with the transition to Relief Society, go to www.lds.org and click on Serving in the Church, Relief Society, and then Transitioning into Womanhood.

Macie and Mallory pose here with some of their beloved Relief Society sisters from BYU-Idaho.



A NAME

on the

BY SEDLEY PARKINSON

How was I going to approach a total stranger and ask him to come to church?

He was just a name on a list until I got to know him.

My priests quorum was pretty much like any other quorum. We had an adviser, inspiring lessons by the bishop, assistants to the bishop, and then the rest of us. Our ward was neither huge nor small, but we had a number of members who seldom or never came to any meetings. In one particular quorum meeting we spent a lot of time discussing those young men who had not been to church in a while. Brother Wheeler, our quorum adviser, had prepared a list.

When I was young, many considered me shy and quiet, and I did not especially go out of my way to make noise or be seen. I was not the first to volunteer to visit the young men on Brother Wheeler's list. All he was asking was for us to pick a name, make a friendly visit, and invite them to our upcoming weekly activities.

Hands went up when Brother Wheeler called out names from this list. He said it was a plus if you were already friends, neighbors, or schoolmates. I started to feel guilty as the list grew smaller and smaller. Finally there was one name left. The other boys were chatting about their plans of how they were going to take care of this

assignment. Brother Wheeler looked at the name on the list and then at me. I lifted my hand. Smiling, he wrote down the boy's name and sketched a map for me. He said the family had moved in a while ago and a visit could really benefit the young man.

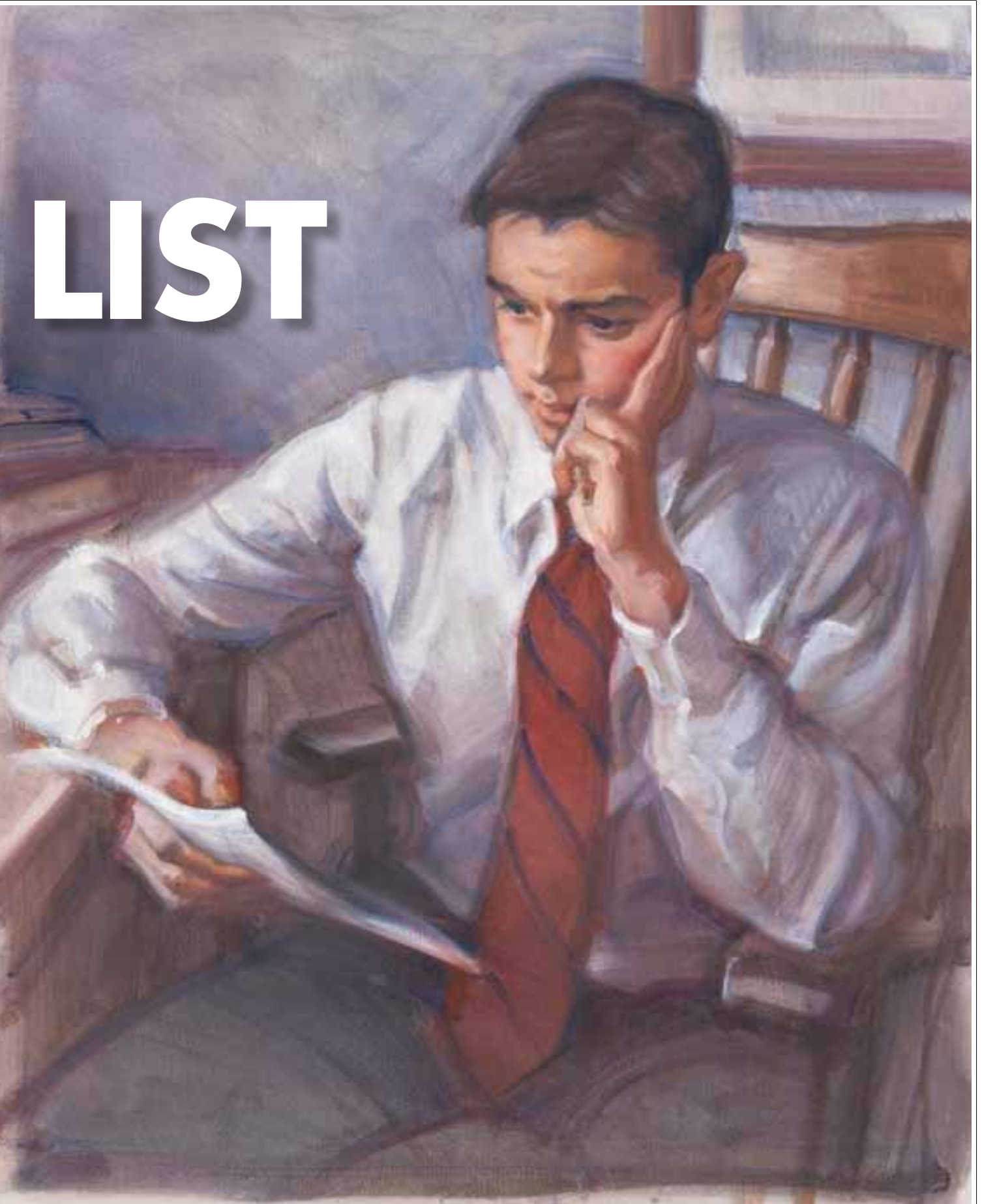
We lived in an area of southeast Idaho where it was a mixture of farms and homes. Many of the parents commuted to work in town. As in many communities like this, we were fairly close-knit, and everyone pretty much knew everyone else. But I didn't recognize the name I was given, nor did anyone else in our quorum.

Sunday passed, and I considered the name I'd received. Monday came and went. I still considered. Tuesday passed, and I considered with increasing gravity. How was I going to approach a total stranger and ask him to come to church?

Wednesday came, and my consideration began to change into worry. The week was already passing by, and all I could consider was a gut feeling of dread. This young man I was to visit had never been seen at church, he had never been seen at Scouts, he had never been seen at school, he had never even been seen, period.

The school bus dropped me off at my house. I pulled out the folded note I had been carrying with me since Sunday. The

LIST



young man's house was about two-and-a-half miles from mine. I wanted to get it over with and release this burden. I told my sister where I was going and, with grim determination, headed out.

Imagination fed on anticipation. I pictured a family where the dad answered the door with a shotgun in his hands and vicious dogs were ready to attack. I walked half a mile. I pictured a family that only spoke Russian. I walked along. I pictured a family with so much wealth that they only wore tuxedos and ball gowns. Was this how Nephi and Sam felt while they were on their way to get the brass plates? Or worse, perhaps this is how Laman and Lemuel felt. Suddenly, there I was in front of the house.

I rang the doorbell. I heard heavy footsteps. The door swung open, and an older man stood there. He looked at me. "Hello," he said.

A rush of relief came over me. He was not holding a shotgun, he spoke English, and he was not wearing a tuxedo. "Uh, can uh . . ." I looked at my note. I couldn't remember his name. ". . . Bill . . ." I couldn't think straight. ". . . play?" I finally blurted out. I felt like a little kid. What kind of word had I used? "Play?"

The man looked very surprised.

"Is Bill . . . available?" I corrected myself. Did I read the map wrong? Was I at the wrong house? "Does a Bill, Billy, or even a William live here?"

The man's expression changed from confusion to smiling enlightenment. "Oh, yes, of course. Come in. You must be from the ward. Brother Wheeler called last week and told me someone would be coming."

An entire flood of relief swept through me. I followed the man through the front room, past the kitchen, down a hallway, to a bedroom. The house was neat and modest. I saw a picture of the Salt Lake Temple on the wall. The *Ensign* magazine sat on the kitchen table, opened. I saw scriptures on the shelf. "But these people never come to church," I thought with more than a touch of confusion. And what about Bill, who was a total hermit apparently—and a very lazy one, because it appeared he was still sleeping.

The man softly knocked. "Billy?" he said as he gently opened the door.

Instantly everything was explained. I felt so small. A

wheelchair and a hospital bed sat in the center of the room.

An emaciated boy lay there staring out the window. He turned his head to look at us. His eyes widened. "Help me sit up, Father. Do I have company? What is your name?"

I did not have to worry about carrying the conversation; Billy was very good at assisting me with that. I returned regularly to his house for the next several weeks. I brought various games; he especially liked chess. I learned that he was actually a foster child and had not seen his birth parents for years. Billy's disease was critical, and the older couple he was now with had taken him in so that he wouldn't have to stay by himself in the hospital. He was a member of the Church but could only remember being baptized.

Brother Wheeler arranged for us to have our priests quorum meet for class at Billy's home. His bed had been moved to the front room to help accommodate the extra visitors. Our bishop came and even helped bless the sacrament for Billy and his foster parents.

I felt pretty good about the whole thing. Over the past few months I had made a friend, and I had helped this friend make other friends in our quorum. I did not anticipate the phone call I received from the bishop later that week. He told me he had interviewed Billy and found him worthy to hold the Atonic Priesthood. Billy had asked the bishop if I could ordain him.

We held our priesthood meeting again at Billy's house the following Sunday. I do not remember what I said during the ordination. I do remember Billy's smile and the tears he was pushing back—the tears Brother Wheeler, the bishop, and all of us were pushing back.

A few weeks later, Billy was not available for "playing" anymore. His condition had worsened, and he spent most of the time in the hospital. About six months from my first meeting with Billy, he died.

Now what I remember most about Billy is not what I did for him on my visits, but what he did for me. A young man whose name I came to know from a simple list had become one of the most treasured memories of my youth. **NE**

Read about the Atonic Priesthood in Boyd K. Packer, "The Unseen Power," *New Era*, May 2007, p. 2.



Our priests
quorum met
for class
at Billy's home. His
bed had been moved
to the front room to
help accommodate
the extra visitors.
Our bishop came and
even helped bless the
sacrament for Billy.

SPRINTING TO

BY LINDSEY PHILLIPS



Jason was willing to sacrifice the success he was having on the race track to serve a mission, but the Lord had other plans for him.

Jason's vision may be limited, but he hasn't lost sight of the need to serve.

Jason Smyth, a member of the Londonderry Branch, Belfast Northern Ireland Stake, never dreamed of becoming a star athlete. In fact, the Northern Ireland teen always considered himself an average sportsman, perhaps even more so because he suffers from Stargardt's disease, a hereditary condition that has destroyed all but his peripheral vision.

However, at 16, Jason's hidden talent emerged and a PE teacher encouraged him to attend a sprinting training day. Eighteen months later Jason qualified for the Junior Commonwealth Games in Australia. The competition would be a turning point in his life.

"It was there I began to understand and realize what this was all about. For training so little and to qualify already, I just kind of thought I would like to make a career out of this," says Jason.

Now, three years later, Jason has made quite the career. He has won the 100m and 200m races at both the 2006 Paralympic Games in Holland and the 2005 European

Paralympic Championships in Finland, setting record times for both races in each competition. He also holds the Junior Irish record times for the 60m (6.91 seconds) and the 100m (10.61 seconds) races.

Another Kind of Mission

Despite such success, as a 19-year-old, Jason heeded the prophet's counsel and applied to serve a mission. But, because of his visual impairment, his application was denied. Jason graciously accepted the decision and also accepted a new challenge: to find other ways to serve.

Jason's success as a sprinter has opened less conventional forms of missionary work.

"I now have an opportunity to be a missionary in a different way—through sprinting," says Jason.

He has found that rather than knocking on doors, he can bring the Church out of obscurity by sprinting past finish lines and setting new records, all the while setting a good example.

Already, Jason's success has created a buzz as others find out about the Mormon sprinter who doesn't train on Sundays and also abstains from tea, coffee, alcohol, and drugs.

SUCCESS





Jason has won the 100m and 200m races at both the 2006 Paralympic Games in Holland and the 2005 European Paralympic Championships in Finland, setting record times for both races in each competition. He also holds the Junior Irish record times for the 60m (6.91 seconds) and the 100m (10.61 seconds) races. As for the future, Jason's long-term goal is to qualify for the London Olympics in 2012.

His success has made him the subject of several media-related publications—including Ireland's biggest newspaper. Many mention his Mormon lifestyle.

"When they get to know me, they know the way I live my life is different," Jason says.

Balancing Act

Jason competes in both outdoor and indoor competitions, so he trains virtually all year. His practices usually last up to two hours and are twice a day.

Then there's the travel. In the last three years, Jason has visited countries such as China, Finland, Portugal, Sweden, Holland, and Hungary. Last spring he spent time training at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

With increased success, doors continue to open for Jason. Last year he received an Irish Sport Grant, which enabled him to employ a full-time coach and secure sponsorships.

With each success, Jason has to give more time and energy. He understands what is expected of him. "It is my career," he says.

Finding Strength through Church and Family

Though training and racing keep him busy, Jason makes sure that his free time is reserved for his family, which Jason says is the root of his success.

"My family had a big part to play in the start. They encouraged me to keep up sprinting and see how I do. They take me to training and watch me race," he says.

In addition, Jason also finds strength in the Church.

Although the Church is relatively small in Northern Ireland, Jason has inherited Irish

pioneer heritage. His grandparents were baptized in Ireland in 1957, and his parents have remained strong in their membership.

Jason continues to build on this heritage. Even though he was the only member in his school, he graduated from seminary through independent study. He also finds time to serve as a branch missionary.

He credits his strong testimony of the gospel to his family, especially his parents.

"My parents taught us by example the way to live our lives," he says.

Jason also mentioned that attending Church activities and socializing with friends who lived the same principles are another source of strength for him. "People at my branch are very supportive of me," Jason says. "They like seeing me do well."

Long-Term View

As for his future, Jason's long-term goal is to qualify for the London Olympics in 2012. But for now, Jason just wants to secure a second consecutive championship at the 2008 Paralympics in Beijing and to qualify for the Under-23 Championships in Hungary this July.

Jason says that one of his greatest achievements so far is making a life out of something he enjoys. He has learned to be self-sufficient and feels he has matured through his experiences.

"Being able to travel the world and getting paid to run—for me, nothing is better," he says.

For Jason, the experience has been a powerful lesson that with a lot of hard work and dedication, anyone can achieve their dreams. "You just have to work hard if you really want it—and enjoy it as well," he says. **NE**

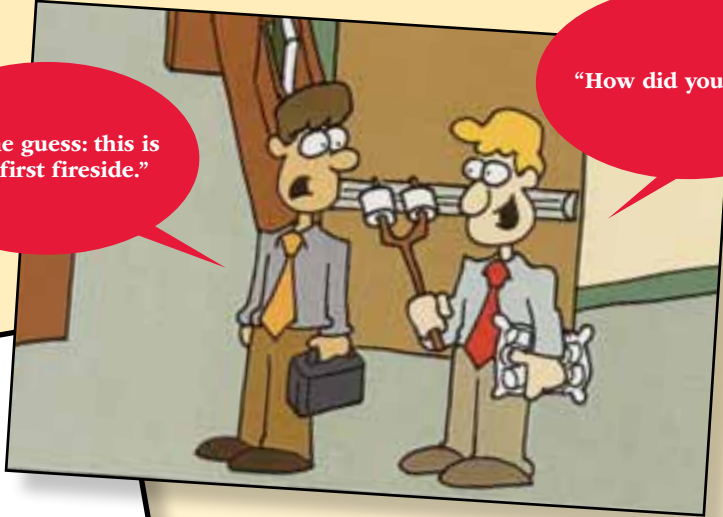
For more on serving despite challenges, read "Determined to Serve," *New Era*, Mar. 2007, p. 48.

THE EXTRA SMILE

"I need more time. Unlimited minutes aren't enough!"

"Let me guess: this is your first fireside."

"How did you know?"



ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF



RANDY GLASBERGEN

"I need more time. Unlimited minutes aren't"



RYAN STOKER

"Can't we just move?"



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

Finishing Strong

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JANET THOMAS



Danielle Menlove, a Beehive from Sandy, Utah, has running in her blood. Her parents, both runners, noticed something special when she beat her mother in a race at seven years old. Now she holds four USA national track and cross country titles and

numerous records.

Danielle started winning big races when she was just 10 years old. She now holds the USA Track & Field—Utah youth records for the 11–12 age group in the 800m, 1500m, and the 3000m. In the 13–14 age group, Danielle holds the records in the 1500m and 3000m.

Danielle has learned that track involves enduring to the end. And she learned it the hard way. At the USATF National Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships in 2005, she accidentally stopped a lap short. She says, “I was in first place, and I had a 100m lead, but I

stopped and started walking off the track.” When an official told her she had a lap to go, Danielle scrambled to rejoin the race. She still took second.

Recalling the event, Danielle says it helped her learn to finish strong. “It was a good thing to happen because I made the mistake once, and I’ll never make it again.”

ILLUSTRATED BY JERRY THOMPSON



You’ve heard all the jokes about “steak” dances and going to the “steak” house, right? So why do we use the word *stake* to describe a group of wards and branches? Most geographic areas where the Church is organized are divided into stakes. The term *stake* comes from the

prophet Isaiah, who prophesied that the latter-day Church would be like a tent, held secure by stakes (see Isaiah 33:20; 54:2). There are usually 5 to 12 wards and branches in a stake.

(See *True to the Faith* [2004], “Church Administration,” 34–37.)

A patriarchal blessing literally contains chapters from your book of eternal possibilities.

President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Your Patriarchal Blessing: A Liahona of Light," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 66.



BYU WRITING CONTEST FOR 2008

It's time to prepare your entry for the BYU English Department's writing contest for high school students (9th through 12th grades). Cash prizes will be awarded in the categories of fiction, poetry, personal essay, and critical essay. You can submit one entry per category.

Submit your entries between January 1, 2008, and January 31, 2008, to BYU English Department, 4198 JFSB, Provo, UT 84602-6701. You can get all the rules and an application form at the contest Web site: <http://english.byu.edu/contests>. If you have questions, call 801-422-4939 or e-mail english@byu.edu.



MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

Alma 36:3 is my favorite scripture because it teaches that even though I am young, my trials are real and difficult. I can be strengthened during trials and overcome them by trusting my Heavenly Father and continuing to grow in the gospel.

Rebecca B., 17, California

Tell us about your favorite scripture in one or two sentences. Send it to newera@ldschurch.org.



They Spoke to Us

Many general conference talks have messages directed to you, the youth of the Church. Here are just a few ways to apply the messages to your life. Read all the conference talks in the November *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines. You can also read, listen to, or watch them online at www.lds.org.

- See what President Hinckley says about the importance of controlling your temper and the blessings of forgiveness in "Slow to Anger."
- Elder L. Tom Perry gives some practical ideas of things to do now to prepare to be a better missionary in "Raising the Bar."
- How can you make a difference in strengthening your family? See what Mary N. Cook suggests in "Strengthen Home and Family."
- What quality defines us best as members of the Church? Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin gives the answer in "The Great Commandment."

For more quotes and stories for youth from general conference, go to www.newera.lds.org.

WAVES OF

BY ELDER R. CONRAD SCHULTZ
Of the Seventy

Why wear a life jacket on a calm sea? The answer came out of nowhere.



I shouted a warning before a huge wave hit us broadside. Somehow the boat stayed upright, but Gary was thrown overboard.

In this world, things are not always what they appear to be. We sometimes are unaware of the powerful forces pulling on us. Appearances can be deceptive.

A few years ago I had an experience with deceptive appearances where the results could have been tragic. My wife's cousin and family were visiting us from Utah. It was a calm summer day on the Oregon coast, and we were fishing in the ocean. It was pleasant, and we were having a good time catching salmon, when for some reason I turned around to see a huge eight-foot wave bearing down upon us. I had time only to shout a warning before the wave hit us broadside. Somehow the boat stayed upright, but Gary, our cousin, was thrown overboard. We were all wearing life jackets and with some difficulty

maneuvered the boat, half filled with water, to where he was floating and pulled him aboard.

We had been hit by what is called a sneaker wave. It doesn't happen often, and there is no way to predict it. Later we found that up and down the Oregon-Washington coast, five people had drowned that day in three separate boating accidents. All were caused by the same sneaker wave, which for no apparent reason had welled up off the ocean surface. At the time we went out, the ocean was flat and calm and gave no sign of any danger. But the ocean turned out to be deceptive and not at all what it appeared to be.

More Sneaky than Waves

As we make our way through this life's

DECEPTION



journey, we must continually be on guard and watch for those things that are deceptive and not what they appear to be. If we are not careful, the sneaker waves in life can be as deadly as those in the ocean.

One of the sneaky ploys of the adversary is to have us believe that unquestioning obedience to the principles and commandments of God is blind obedience. His goal is to have us believe that we should be following our own worldly ways and selfish ambitions. This he does by persuading us that “blindly” following the prophets and obeying the commandments is not thinking for ourselves. He teaches that it is not intelligent to do something just because we are told to do so by a living prophet or by prophets who speak to us from the scriptures.

Our unquestioning obedience to the Lord’s commandments is not blind obedience. President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught us about this in the April 1983 conference: “Latter-day Saints are

not obedient because they are compelled to be obedient. They are obedient because they know certain spiritual truths and have decided, as an expression of their own individual agency, to obey the commandments of God. . . . We are not obedient because we are blind, we are obedient because we can see.”¹

We might call this “faith obedience.” With faith, Abraham was obedient in preparing Isaac for sacrifice; with faith, Nephi was obedient in obtaining the brass plates; with faith, a little child obediently jumps from a height into the strong arms of his father. “Faith obedience” is a matter of trust. The question is simple: Do we trust our Heavenly Father? Do we trust our prophets?

God’s Wisdom

Another of the adversary’s deceptions is to have us believe that the wisdom and the learning of the world is the only source of knowledge we should follow. The prophet Nephi’s brother Jacob understood the adversary’s



plan and warned us about it:

“O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish” (2 Nephi 9:28).

Jacob did not say that we should not be learned. He went on to tell us that it is good to be learned if we hearken to the counsels of God (see 2 Nephi 9:29).

Some come to believe that you may pick and choose which of God’s commandments to follow. They conveniently label many commandments as little things that can be put off and that don’t appear to be life-threatening or too important. Things like saying our prayers, honoring the Sabbath, reading the scriptures, paying our tithing, attending our meetings, and the list goes on.

Our Heavenly Father communicates in a very clear way to His children. In the teachings of the gospel, there is no uncertain sound, of which the Apostle Paul speaks (see 1 Corinthians 14:8).

There is no question regarding the meaning of what is being said or of feelings prompted by the Spirit. We have not been left alone. We have the scriptures, the prophets, loving parents, and leaders.

How Not to Be Deceived

Why do we sometimes stray? Why do we let ourselves be influenced by the deception of the adversary? The solution to his deception is simple in its answer, but sometimes it is difficult in its application. President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) spoke of the Lord, the adversary, and the solution to the adversary’s power of deception:

“We have some tight places to go before the Lord is through with this church and the world in this dispensation. . . . The power of Satan will increase; we see it in evidence on every hand. . . . We must learn to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through his prophet. . . . There will be some things that take patience and faith.”²

Then President Lee added a warning when he went on to say that we may not always like what comes from



the authority of the Church because it may conflict with our personal views or interfere with some of our social life. However, if we will listen to and do these things as if from the mouth of the Lord Himself, we will not be deceived and great blessings will be ours.

Wear Your Life Jacket

It brings us back to obedience. It will always be so. It's part of the plan of eternal happiness. I know of no doctrine that is more critical to our well-being in this life and the next. All scriptures teach obedience, and every Apostle and prophet who has ever lived has taught the principle of obedience.

Sometimes it is necessary to be obedient even when we do not understand the reason for the law. It takes faith to be obedient. The Prophet Joseph Smith, in teaching obedience, said that "whatever God requires is right . . . although we may not

see the reason thereof till long after."³

I am grateful that we had on our life jackets that summer day on the ocean. I am thankful we were able to avoid the tragedy that came from that sneaker wave. It is my prayer that we will continue to wear our life jackets of obedience in order to avoid the tragedy that will surely come if we are deceived and follow the enticings of the adversary.

I witness to you that our Father in Heaven lives, that He loves us, and that by being unquestioningly obedient to His commandments, we can once again dwell with Him and His Son Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. **NE**

From an April 2002 general conference address.

For more on obedience and agency, see this month's Q&A on page 14 of this issue.

NOTES

1. *Ensign*, May 1983, 66.
2. In Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 152.
3. *History of the Church*, 5:135.

Our life jackets of faithful obedience can help us to avoid the tragedy that surely will come if we are deceived and follow the enticings of the adversary.



"GET HELP!"

BY CAROL ASHBY
SCHARNHORST

It was Friday night and football season at my high school. As drum major of the marching band, I was having a great time cheering with the band and directing stand tunes. Then things changed drastically when I heard a desperate cry: "Get help! Jeff has stopped breathing!"

I found Jeff, a tuba player, lying across a bleacher, slipping in and out of consciousness and gasping for breath.

Suddenly the all-important football game faded from significance. My number-one priority was to get help for Jeff. Paramedics arrived, and it wasn't until after Jeff was safely on his way to the hospital that I even thought about checking the scoreboard.

After the game I realized that too many times in my own life I have allowed myself to get so involved in a fun yet unimportant event of life that I failed to recognize someone's spiritual cry for help. During the football game it bothered me to watch Jeff struggle for breath and hear

the cheers and laughter of fans that had no idea that anything was wrong.

I wonder how Heavenly Father must feel seeing some of His children suffer while others carry on, oblivious of the need for assistance. Heavenly Father loves His children and wants them to look out for each other, but we cannot do that unless we tune in to others' needs. I pray that I will not let myself be so absorbed in the routines and events of life that I fail to hear a child of God's cry for help. **NE**

AN HONOR EARNED

BY JONATHAN PEREZ

Because my parents were busy providing for all five of my brothers and sisters, I developed at a young age a self-motivated attitude towards Scouting.*

As I entered high school, I faced the decision of whether to complete my Eagle Scout. As I talked to my friends, they ridiculed the idea of finishing my Eagle.

One day I watched President Thomas S. Monson give a talk on TV on the importance of achieving the rank of Eagle and how much it helps young men. His words motivated me to try my hardest despite what my friends thought about getting my Eagle. So from that day on I made a goal for myself. I knew from that moment on that with the Lord's help

I love seminary. I have often felt the Spirit there and have left feeling like a better person. On one particular day, however, I not only left feeling the Spirit, but I left with an answer to prayer.

The night before that particular day, I had asked Heavenly Father if the Church was true. After my prayer, I felt peaceful, but I was still not sure. I decided I would sleep on it.

The next day, my seminary teacher started the lesson with a video of some of the General Authorities bearing their testimonies. I felt the Spirit burning inside of me as we talked about testimonies and how little things can strengthen them.

He then put in another video of testimonies of kids who went to my

LOOKING UP

BY LINDA FROGLEY



school. I stared at the screen waiting for someone I knew. I saw some people I recognized, but I saw no close friends.

Then it happened. A girl I look

up to so much appeared on the screen. As I looked into her eyes, she bore her testimony about Christ's Atonement. Then she said these words: "I know this Church is true." The Spirit overcame me. I realized my prayer was answered, and it was answered by one of the people that I look up to the most.

Heavenly Father knew that I needed to hear someone very close to me share her testimony of the Church. I am so grateful for the strong testimonies my friends have. Heavenly Father does answer our prayers. **NE**

and my willingness to work hard, I would reach my goal.

Because my parents weren't forcing me to get my Eagle, it was something I decided in my heart that I was going to do. Even though Scouting wasn't popular in my particular culture, I followed the guidance of my counselor, and at the end I knew that sticking to this goal made me a better person.

If we follow what the Lord wants us to do and stick to positive goals,

He will help us through any situation. This experience taught me that no matter what obstacles or challenges come my way, the Lord will help me overcome my shortcomings and weakness (see Ether 12:27). It doesn't matter what background we come from or if we are rich or poor. We can achieve our goals because we have the Lord by our side. **NE**

*This young man is from the United States, but in many countries outside North America, Scouting is not an official Church program.

EVERYDAY SCRIPTURES

BY BETHANY E. WALKER

I never used to find time to read the scriptures daily, especially with waking up early to go to school and long hours of homework. The only times I read were at Sunday School, in Young Women class, and a couple of

times a week for family scripture study. Despite all the promised blessings of daily scripture reading, I always put off my personal study. That is, until my cousin came to visit.

My cousin, a student at Brigham

Young University–Idaho, was my roommate at our home while she worked at a Church ranch in Florida. Every night she would pray and read her scriptures and, since the light was on anyway, I would join her. Gradually, I developed the habit also, and when she went back to Idaho, I continued personal scripture study on my own.

I know there is a lot more I need to read and understand, but daily reading has truly blessed me. The scriptures have come to life for me, especially in Nephi, Mosiah, and Alma. Whenever I begin to murmur and complain, I can look back to what I have learned in the scriptures and make changes in my life.

It is fun to find the stories I learned when I was in Primary and read the complete versions from the sacred records of God's prophets. I am so thankful for the example my cousin set by studying the scriptures daily. I know scripture study has helped and will continue to help me throughout my life. **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 e-mail it to

newera@ldschurch.org

or send it to

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

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

Mutual Activity Idea

• Have a leaf raking marathon. In preparation, have the youth each bring a rake. Divide them into teams. Arrange in advance with ward members who need the most help that the youth will come and rake their leaves. Funny prizes or awards can be given to the teams that fill the most trash bags with leaves, create the largest pile, have the most fun, etc.



Personal Progress or Duty to God Idea

• Plan a personal budget. Download a copy of a budget worksheet from www.providentliving.org. Click on Family Finances and then on the new Family Finances pamphlet. (This worksheet was an insert in the September 2007 *Ensign*.) Keep good records of what you earn, spend, and save for three months.

Family Home Evening Idea

• Read all you can in Church magazines or online about the new Apostle. Cut out a photo and place it in an accessible place in your home.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in the May and November *Ensign*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these resources helpful in enhancing lessons 46–50.

Young Women Manual 2

Lesson 46: Financial Responsibility

- Kristi Linton, "Money Matters," *New Era*, Sept. 2004, 34.
- Danielle Nye Poulter, "Taking Credit," *New Era*, Aug. 2006, 10.
- Donald N. Hester, "Finances and Your Future," *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 40.

Lesson 47: An Uplifting Environment

- Clara Smith Webber, "What I Learned as a Corndog," *New Era*, July 2006, 24.
- Catherine Matthews Pavia, "How I Learned to Be Happy," *New Era*, Sept. 2006, 11.

Lesson 48: Communication Skills in Leadership

- Larry Hiller, "Me, a Leader?" *New Era*, May 2003, 28.
- Idea List: Charlotte Cachapero, "Teens Leading Teens," *New Era*, Jan. 2003, 29.

Lesson 49: Valuing and Encouraging People with Disabilities

- Jill B. Adair, "A Girl Called Nine," *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 44.
- Seth Adam Smith, "No Challenge Too Great," *New Era*, Jan. 2004, 48.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 2

Lesson 46: Avoiding Degrading Media Influences

- Idea List: "Choose the Right . . . Media," *New Era*, July 2005, 37.
- Arianne B. Cope, "Internet Café," *New Era*, Mar. 2005, 34.

Lesson 47: Clean and Appropriate Speech

- L. Tom Perry, "Thy Speech Reveals Thee," *New Era*, July 2007, 2.
- Robert S. Wood, "Is Your Talk Cheap?" *New Era*, June 2001, 46.
- Q&A (swearing), *New Era*, Mar. 2001, 16.

Lesson 48: Maintaining Righteous Standards

- Aaron L. West, "If a Bug Flies into Your Mouth," *New Era*, Sept. 2007, 24.
- Q&A (rules and agency), *New Era*, this issue, 14.

Lesson 49: Honesty and Integrity

- Robert M. Bogardus, "Did You Cheat?" *New Era*, July 2007, 6.
- Q&A (cheating), *New Era*, Sept. 2001, 16.

Lesson 50: Valuing and Encouraging People with Disabilities

- Lindsey Phillips, "Sprinting to Success," *New Era*, this issue, 34.
- Sedley Parkinson, "A Name on the List," *New Era*, this issue, 30.

CALLED IT VERY GOOD

I just thought I'd let you know that I loved the article in the Nov. 2006 issue titled "The Body is Sacred." The first four paragraphs are so profoundly true. I have been playing piano for a little over 12 1/2 years, and from hours of practicing and personal observation, I think the wonders of the world should actually be to see, to hear, to speak, to feel, to smell, to taste, and to love. The human body truly is amazing. God called every one of His creations "good," but it was only after He had created us that He called it "very good."

Elder Pulsipher, Canada

JOURNEY OF FAITH

I was having a hard day and had some troubling questions on my mind, so I decided to read my scriptures. Suddenly I felt like I should read the *New Era*, so I started reading the June issue and read "My Journey to Faith." The last sentence really stood out to me: "I know that Heavenly Father loves each one of us and answers our prayers if we have faith in Him." So I decided to pray about what was worrying me and trust that God would help me. Ever since, I've been at peace. Thank you so much!

Karen A., Wyoming

SERVICE

I enjoyed the story "Serve it Forward" (Jan. 2007) by Jordan Muhlestein. I think he really got the point of doing things for others. When someone helped them, he promised that the next time he had a chance to help someone, he would take it, and he helped a family with a flat tire. This really inspired me to do some service work.

Cody S., New Mexico

"My favorite part of the New Era is all the responses from readers and teenagers who feel the same way I do."

ANSWERS QUESTIONS

I just started reading the *New Era* and it helps me answer a lot of questions. I will share two. I wondered what Joseph Smith did with the plates after he was done with them. "What Did the Golden Plates Look Like?" (June 2007) said that he returned the golden plates to Moroni. My second question was about which group should I hang out with. One group got in trouble a lot, and the other group never got in trouble. After reading the *New Era*, I chose to go to the group that never got in trouble. It was hard for me because I had friends in both groups. I am happy with my choice.

Sydney Y., North Carolina

FAVORITE PARTS

My favorite part of the *New Era* was to look at the posters. They were fun to look at. I would open the magazine each month just to look at the new poster. But now I've started to read the stories. I found out more interesting things to look through in the *New Era*. My favorite part is all the responses from readers and teenagers who feel the same way that I do. Reading the stories in the *New Era* brings me joy and teaches me through others' experiences. The *New Era* has gotten better throughout the years to help the young men and women. It is great to see the awesome youth in the Church striving to do what's right. I love this Church and the gospel.

Nathan S., California

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

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

Or e-mail us at newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.

ILLUSTRATED BY SCOTT GREER



THE FORGOTTEN

BY SHARMAN TULLIS GILL

My ancestors fled persecution
and followed with a faith greater
than I can imagine.

They joined other Saints
pushing and pulling to a mountain
valley of saltwater and sage.

But before the unforgotten
reached their Promised Land,
many froze in early snows;
they all wept at graves,
they all prayed.

My comforts spill
about me—careless and consuming.
I labor to remember
that I journey too.



COMING NEXT MONTH

- *What's the best Christmas gift you've ever been given?*
- *Why is light such a meaningful symbol at Christmastime?*
- *Learn a new Christmas song.*
- *Read what Joseph Smith taught us about God.*

*Just a few of the articles waiting for you in the upcoming
December 2007 New Era.*

SEE US ONLINE AT WWW.NEWERA.LDS.ORG

