

# THE NewEra

NOVEMBER

2008

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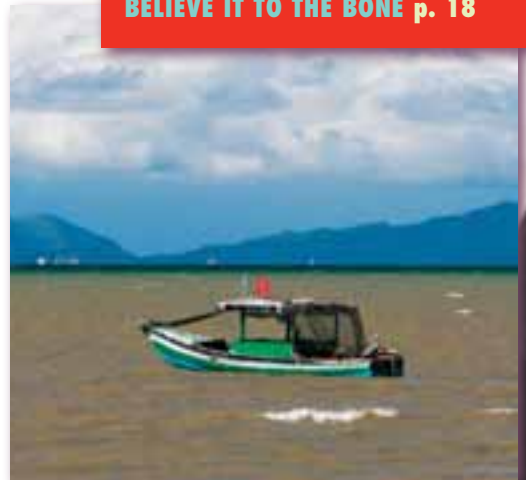
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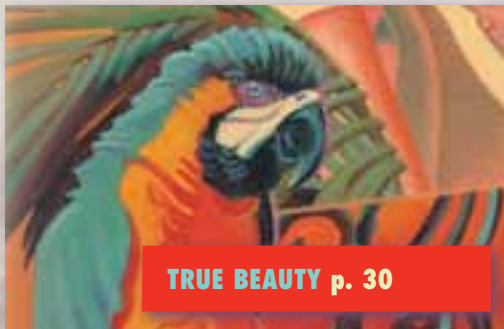
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**COVER STORY:  
RUN, SWIM, RUN** p. 24

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*Cover: Makena Madsen is at home on the beach. See "Run, Swim, Run" on p. 24.*

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# The Sanctity of Womanhood

BY ELDER RICHARD G. SCOTT  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

would speak of the sanctity of womanhood. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) eloquently captured what the Lord has repeatedly inspired His servants to say of His precious daughters:

“Woman is God’s supreme creation. Only after the earth had been formed, after the day had been separated from the night, after the waters had been divided from the land, after vegetation and animal life had been created, and after man had been placed on the earth, was woman created; and only then was the work pronounced complete and good.

“Of all the creations of the Almighty, there is none more beautiful, none more inspiring than a lovely daughter of God who walks in virtue with an understanding of why she should do so, who honors and respects her body as a thing sacred and divine, who cultivates her

mind and constantly enlarges the horizon of her understanding, who nurtures her spirit with everlasting truth.”<sup>1</sup>

Then President Hinckley warned us, “God will hold us accountable if we neglect His daughters.”<sup>2</sup>


## Satan’s Campaign against Womanhood

So many of our sisters are disheartened, even discouraged, and disillusioned. Others are in serious trouble because of the choices they make. Satan has unleashed a seductive campaign to undermine the sanctity of womanhood, to deceive the daughters of God and divert them from their divine destiny. He well knows women are the compassionate, self-sacrificing, loving power that binds together the human family. He would focus their interests solely on their physical attributes and rob them of their exalting roles as wives and mothers. He has convinced many of the lie that they are third-class citizens in the kingdom of God. That falsehood has led some to trade their divinely given femininity for male coarseness.

The growing success of Lucifer’s efforts was emblazoned on my mind when in Salt Lake City I turned my car in front of a pickup truck loaded with attractive young women. Their vehicle then swerved in front of me, cutting



*Each of us absolutely must help each daughter of God we can to realize what sacred characteristics Father in Heaven has given her.*



dangerously close. The girls vented their displeasure with multiple vulgar comments and obscene gestures. They were dressed predominantly in male attire, yet some had immodest clothing that left little to the imagination. My heart sank. These are daughters of God. I resolved that if I ever had the chance, I would enlist the righteous priesthood of God to help such misguided young women.

### **Help Young Women Overcome Worldly Trends**

We can and must help them. Each of us absolutely must help each daughter of God we can to realize what sacred characteristics Father in Heaven has given her. Many are being cheated of the rich, full life and the blessings God would have them receive. Will you help them understand what they are sacrificing as they are led as innocent, blind sheep by those who, for personal gain and self-justification, would rob them of their priceless womanhood?

Because it is their nature to give and please others, many women do not realize their intrinsic worth. That loss makes them vulnerable to those who would convince them that their major role is to be physically appealing.

So many of our own young women sacrifice their God-given endowment of femininity, deep spirituality, and a caring interest in others on the altar of popular, worldly opinion. Young men, let such young women know that you will not seek an eternal companion from those that are overcome by worldly trends. Many dress and act immodestly because they are told that is what you want. In sensitive ways, communicate how distasteful revealing attire is to you, a worthy young man, and how it stimulates unwanted emotions from what you see against your will.

Those young women who do embrace conservative dress standards and exhibit the

attributes of a devoted Latter-day Saint are often criticized for not being “with it.” Encourage them by expressing gratitude for their worthy example. Thank them for doing what is pleasing to the Lord and in time will bless their own husband and children. Many young women have returned to righteousness because of the example and understanding support of a worthy priesthood bearer. Perhaps a group of you could frankly discuss your concern in an appropriate setting such as a Sunday School or seminary class. Will you begin a private crusade to help young women understand how precious they are to God and attractive to you as they magnify their feminine traits and divinely given attributes of womanhood? You might even help mold the character and devotion of your own future eternal companion.

As a brother, you can have a powerful, positive influence in your sister’s life. Compliment her when she looks especially nice. She may listen to you more than to your parents when you suggest that she wear modest clothing. Simple courtesies like opening the door for her and building her self-esteem will encourage her to find her real worth.

As we honor womanhood, each daughter of God will be encouraged to do likewise.

### **Sacred Expressions of Love**

Now I would speak of something that is most sacred. When we were created, Father in Heaven put in our body the capacity to stir powerful emotions. Within the covenant of marriage, when properly used in ways acceptable to both and to the Lord, those emotions open the doors for children to come to earth. Such sacred expressions of love are an essential part of the covenant of marriage.

There is a great difference between love and lust. Pure love yields happiness and engenders trust. It is the foundation of eternal joy. Lust will destroy that which is enriching and beautiful.



*“Of  
all the creations  
of the Almighty,  
there is none more  
beautiful,  
none more inspiring  
than a lovely  
daughter of God  
who walks  
in virtue . . . ,  
who honors and  
respects her body  
as a thing  
sacred and divine,  
who cultivates  
her mind . . . ,  
who nurtures  
her spirit with  
everlasting truth.”*

*—President  
Gordon B. Hinckley*

## Destructiveness of Pornography

One of the most damning influences on earth, one that has caused uncountable grief, suffering, heartache, and destroyed marriages, is the onslaught of pornography in all of its vicious, corroding, destructive forms. Whether it be through the printed page, movies, television, obscene lyrics, the telephone, or on a flickering personal computer screen, pornography is overpoweringly addictive and severely damaging. This potent tool of Lucifer degrades the mind, heart, and the soul of any who use it. All who are caught in its seductive, tantalizing web and remain so, will become addicted to its immoral, destructive influence. For many, that addiction cannot be overcome without help.

The tragic pattern is so familiar. It begins with a curiosity that is fueled by its stimulation and is justified by the false premise that when done privately, it does no harm to anyone else. Lulled by this lie, the experimentation goes deeper, with more powerful stimulations, until the web closes and a terribly immoral, addictive habit is formed.

How can a man, particularly a priesthood bearer, not think of the damage emotionally and spiritually caused to women from such abhorrent activity? The participation in pornography in any of its lurid forms is a manifestation of unbridled selfishness.

Well did inspired Nephi declare, "And [the devil] will . . . pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, . . . and thus [he] cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell."<sup>3</sup>

Stake presidents and bishops invite any captured by this evil to come to them for help.

## "Be Ye Clean"

To each of you I solemnly declare as a servant of Jesus Christ that despite what is taught in the world, the violation of the law of chastity is a very grievous sin. Be ye clean. If there is even the slightest tendency to participate in immorality, eliminate it from your life. Where there has been any violation, talk to a bishop or stake president and clean up your life. Make it pure and righteous. I testify that the Redeemer will help you. If you seek it, He will lead you to that help so that through full repentance, the Lord can forgive you.

## Express Love for Daughters of God

I know what it is to love a daughter of God who with grace and devotion served with the full feminine splendor of her righteous womanhood. Tell your mother how you love her. It will give her great joy. Let us be grateful to our Father in Heaven for His precious daughters.

Let us help them as much as we can. Then let us encourage every woman who questions her value to turn to her Heavenly Father and His glorified Son for a supernal confirmation of her immense individual worth. I testify that as each woman seeks it in faith and

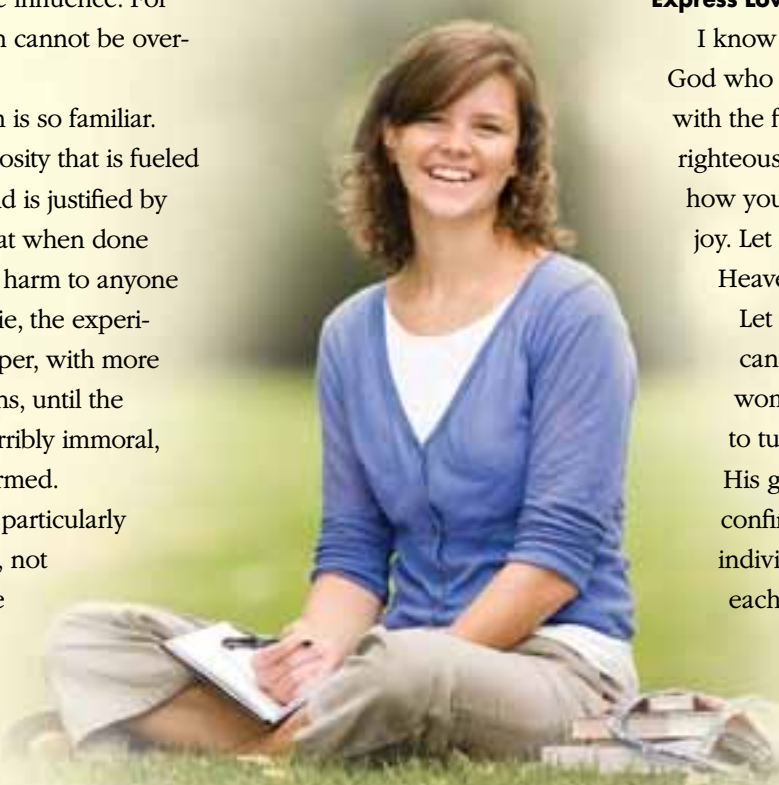
obedience, the Savior will continually prompt her through the Holy Ghost. That guidance will lead her to fulfillment, peace, and a consuming joy through magnifying her divinely

appointed, sacred womanhood. I know the Savior will do that. I testify that He lives.

*From an April 2000 general conference address.*

## NOTES

1. "Our Responsibility to Our Young Women," *Ensign*, Sept. 1988, 11.
2. *Ensign*, Sept. 1988, 11.
3. 2 Nephi 28:21.



# PUTTING OFF THE NATURAL YOUNG WOMAN

BY KERSTEN CAMPBELL

*My whole life changed, but would it make me happy?*

***After I found the gospel I started spiritual training by daily reading the scriptures and praying. Joining in this marathon of righteous living helped me overcome my natural self and brought me lasting joy.***

**W**hat was I thinking? Me? Run a half-marathon? No way! But there I was for the fourth week in a row, training to run a 13-mile race. Why was I pushing myself so hard to do something I had never been good at? Because I had to prove to myself that I could achieve a personal victory, symbolic of all the spiritual and temporal changes that had taken place in my life.

Before I found the gospel, I had always taken the easy road when it came to making choices. I never pushed myself. I never tried to become a better person, spiritually or physically. But things changed when I received the missionary lessons. Suddenly I was introduced to a whole new world of people striving to better themselves, working hard at self-mastery and education.

I was intrigued. My old friends were interested in parties and fun. My new friends were interested in experiencing joy by overcoming the “natural man”—a concept I didn’t quite understand. But I was awed by my new friends’ lifestyle. They worked hard in school, dressed modestly, didn’t drink or smoke, and they read scriptures every night!

At first I didn’t understand why they chose this righteous pattern of living. “Why would anyone want such a boring life?” I thought. I didn’t understand how regular scripture study and prayer could be better than watching a good movie.

Then I learned the meaning of the “natural man” when an institute teacher explained the concept in detail. From the scriptures he read, “The natural man is an enemy to God . . . and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord” (Mosiah 3:19).

True happiness, my teacher explained, comes only when our spirits learn to control our bodies, training them to be governed by the laws of God. When we live by the natural man’s principles, which is to do only what is easy and fun, we may feel good for the moment, but we will never find lasting peace or joy.

The words of my teacher struck me, and I decided that I should experiment. I would start working hard at being more like Christ would have me be. I would join in the marathon of righteous living, training daily by reading the scriptures and praying. Then I would decide if doing so could really bring me lasting happiness.

I began to read the scriptures. At first it was painfully boring. I didn’t understand a thing I read. But the institute teacher had planted a seed of faith in me, so I kept reading. And then, little by little, I started to understand the scriptures. Not only did I understand, but I also felt a real, lasting joy—different from





the temporary joy I experienced when I watched a movie or bought a new sweater. In training for this marathon of righteous living, I realized how badly I needed to drink the “living waters,” which represent the Atonement of Christ. I found answers to my deepest problems and anxieties.

The institute teacher was right. Now that I have tasted of the true joy that comes from living the laws of God, I will never be satisfied with the easy life and fleeting, feel-good moments. I no longer see myself as living in a body that is a slave to its desires. Instead, I see myself as a spirit daughter of Heavenly Father, able to make the right choices. I’ll always remember that there is a bigger marathon to run in life. I know if I endure to the end, having faith in Christ and keeping His commandments, I can attain the prize—eternal joy. **NE**

# I Couldn't Say No

BY ANDY CARGAL

*But one day,  
saying yes  
changed my life.*



**F**or many years I had a problem with a certain word—no. I couldn't say it.

Whenever anybody needed me for something—anything—I was there. And although I enjoy helping others, I've occasionally missed out on what seemed to be significant opportunities for my personal growth because I simply couldn't say that one word. But one summer, what seemed to be one of my biggest mental impairments turned out to be the greatest blessing of my life.

I had recently graduated from high school and planned to attend college away from home the coming fall. It would be my first time living away from family, and I was excited for the new experience. I had a well-paying job at a local grocery store, a brand new car, and I was saving a lot of money. My life was in order.

One afternoon I approached my supervisor to tell her that I needed to transfer to a store closer to where I'd be attending college. But before I could get the words out she was telling me about a position opening the following week that she wanted me to fill.

It would have been easy for me to say no. I was starting college in a month, and there were several other capable people who could do the job. But I didn't; I couldn't.

I felt frustrated. Like most teenagers, all I wanted was to move away and enjoy college life. But suddenly I found myself staying home and postponing college—because I couldn't say no to a supervisor.

I began my new duties, and, after a short time, settled into the new routine. As part of my responsibilities, I supervised a small group of people, including two high school students, Chris and Randa. After working with them for a while, I decided I liked Randa and asked her on a date. One of my

co-workers found out about it and said, "You know she's Mormon, right?"

Yes, I knew she was Mormon, but that meant little to me. At the time I was slightly misguided, thinking Mormons didn't use electricity and drove horse-drawn buggies.

As for myself, I had no religion. My parents grew up in different faiths, but neither practiced into adulthood. I was raised in a loving home, but spirituality was not part of my upbringing. However, I had always been interested in religion. In high school I had friends whom I would often ask about God, Jesus Christ, and religious principles and values. A faith-filled life was something I had always wanted, but something seemed to hold me back.

Randa and her family regularly asked me to listen to missionary lessons, but I kept putting it off. It seemed too mysterious.

Randa eventually moved out of state to attend college, and we continued our relationship long-distance. One day she called and said, "I was just talking to my mom, and she said she wants you to listen to the missionaries." This I knew, of course. But this time it was different.

Randa's parents hadn't wanted us to date because I wasn't a Church member, but Randa's mother said if I would take time to learn about the Church they'd accept our relationship. So I agreed.

The first few discussions were useless for me because I was simply going through the motions to get on the parents' good side. I didn't read the Book of Mormon or pray and was somewhat antagonistic toward the elders.

But the third discussion brought a change. I decided to read from the Book of Mormon, not so much for myself, but because I didn't

want to disappoint the missionaries again. Something surprising happened—I liked it.

In the next lesson I learned about the plan of salvation, the Word of Wisdom, the law of chastity, and how families can be forever. The principles being taught were ones I had always believed. Some religions teach that we shouldn't drink alcohol or have sexual relations before marriage, but they do nothing to back it up. Some religions teach that when we die we will be angels in heaven and servants to God but have no recollection of our experiences and associations on earth. I couldn't accept that. But here was a church that backed up what it taught. Here was a church teaching the same core values and beliefs I had always held.

Our next meeting was the clincher. Rather than teach a lesson, the missionaries showed *On the Way Home*, a film relating a story of a family who had a daughter die in an accident and later found peace through the knowledge that their family could be together forever through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As I watched the movie I felt as if my entire body were being filled with some unknown power—some sort of light, peace, and bliss—and I started to cry. I thought, "This is a Church movie; what are you doing?" It was then I knew what I needed to do.

*Something surprising happened after meeting with the missionaries several times and deciding to read the Book of Mormon—I liked it.*

I was baptized August 20, 1998. I met with the missionaries because I wanted to please my girlfriend's mother.

I was baptized because I wanted to please my Heavenly Father and my Savior.

I have come to learn that the Lord knows us much better than we know ourselves. Throughout my younger years the Lord blessed me with desires for righteousness, though I wasn't born a believer. Instilled within every human soul is the Light of Christ, "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9).

If we listen to the quiet voice inside that prompts us along the road of righteousness, we will be led to a life of happiness now and throughout eternity. We won't always know why we are making certain choices, and that's OK. We just need to obey.

I once had an idiosyncrasy that constrained me from saying no to people who needed me. It was annoying. Though I wanted to attend college (and eventually did), what if I had said no to my supervisor the day she asked me to fill a new position at work?

Sometimes what we see as our greatest impairments may actually be our greatest blessings. It was for me. **NE**



COME, LISTEN TO  
**A PROPHET'S  
VOICE**



(See *Hymns*, no. 21.)

**"I was asked out on a date, but I'm not 16 yet. What is the best way to turn this person down without hurting their feelings?"**

**D**ating and getting to know other people better is a fun time and something to look forward to. But the world is on a different timetable from that of Church members. Others think young dating is a harmless way for a boy and a girl to enjoy being together, but the Church advises that this type of relationship be postponed until age 16 or even later. As in *For the Strength of Youth*, it states: "Dating before [age 16] can lead to immorality, limit the number of other young people you meet, and deprive you of experiences that will help you choose an eternal partner" ([2001], 24).

Being asked on a date you cannot accept can be a difficult situation because sensitive feelings are involved. First, if someone asks for a date, they can easily have their feelings hurt if they feel rejected. However, you cannot modify your standards for someone else.

You will need to find kind words and actions to turn down the dating invitation. You can explain that your Church (and your family) have set a standard on dating. If you want to encourage a friendship, you might consider including the person in an upcoming Mutual activity. As it says in *For the Strength of Youth*, "Good friendships can and should be developed at every age" (24).

Waiting to date as the Church directs is always the best choice. **NE**



**Stick to Your Standards**

I was actually asked this question by my best friend. I told him that my church advised me not to date until I was 16, but that it was also a family guideline and my decision. He was impressed by this response and told me that it was my morals that had originally impressed him. He was glad that I stuck so strongly to my beliefs. He waited over 200 days until I turned 16 to take me on a date, and we are still best friends.

*Kristen L., 16, North Carolina*



**Tell Them about the Church**

If I were to get asked out on a date, I think I would tell them about the Church and that I am not allowed to date until the age 16. I would ask if it were OK to go with a group of friends or wait a few more years.

*Quaid H., 14, Western Australia*



**Be Friends**

I would say, "I wish I could, but my religion asked me not to date until I'm 16. I really would love to, but maybe we

can get to know each other and be friends.”

*Jacob S., 15, California*



### **Follow the Prophet**

I had something similar happen to me when I was 15. The boy didn't actually ask me, but a group of my friends told me they bought a bunch of stuff to help me ask a boy to a dance. I already told them I didn't want to go. This was hard, but I told them that is what I felt was right because I know when a prophet tells us to do something, we should do it.”

*Ashley M., 17, Utah*



### **Tell Them What You Believe**

Tell them what you believe, and why you shouldn't date before 16. Maybe suggest that you get a group of friends together and a fun evening instead of going on a one-on-one date.

*Casey T., 16, Hawaii*

### **Be Clear and Kind**

What I did in that situation was act as genuine as possible whether I liked them or not and briefly explain my religion and clearly state that my mind was set on that choice. Make plans casually with that person and friends, so you have the opportunity to be kind to them.

*Ashley L., 16, Alberta, Canada*



### **Talk Sweetly and Softly**

It is really hard to turn somebody down without hurting their feelings. Sometimes you just have to. I would talk to them sweetly and softly and tell them, “I'm really sorry! I've chosen not to date until I'm 16. It's a standard of my church.”

*Sarah Katherine Y., 15, Louisiana*



### **Explain**

I would say that I do not believe in dating before I turn 16. I would explain if they had questions. I would kindly say I would like to go out after I turn 16 if they still wanted to.

*Allyson W., 15, Louisiana*



### **Tell Them to Wait**

Just tell them, “You seem really nice, but because of my religion, I need to wait until I'm at least 16. So hold the gesture and when I'm old enough, I'd love to.”

*Shaam K., 15, Western Australia*

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

## NEXT QUESTION

**“My Christian friends believe in the Bible, but they don't understand why we have the Book of Mormon. What can I tell them?”**

**Send your answer by January 15, 2008, to:**

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### **WAIT TO DATE**

**M**aturity may vary from individual to individual, but we are convinced that dating should not even begin until you are 16. And then, ideal dating is on a group basis. . . . Steady dating is courtship, and surely the beginning of courtship ought to be delayed until you have emerged from your teens.”

**President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “You're in the Driver's Seat,” New Era, June 2004, 5.**

# Choosing





# Her Words

BY CHRISTA SKOUSEN

*This 14-year-old shares her language skills to bless the lives of others.*

**D**uring the week, Alba Fonseca lives a busy life as a high school student. Besides school and seminary, she manages to squeeze in time for violin, piano, soccer, and dance.

But on Sundays, Alba takes on a role unlike most other 14-year-olds. Stop by her Spanish-speaking branch in Ogden, Utah, and you may find her sitting in a side pew, whispering English words into a tiny microphone attached to headphones atop her head.

Even at 14 Alba isn't a newcomer to the world of interpreting. In fact, Alba has been interpreting for everything from sacrament meeting to stake conference since she was just 11 years old. And long before that, Alba was interpreting for parents, teachers, and students at her elementary school.

## Practice Makes Perfect

Talking with Alba, you probably wouldn't even consider that English is her second language. Even though she

has always lived in the United States, Alba's parents are from Colombia, and Spanish was the first language Alba learned as a child.

It wasn't until she attended preschool that Alba first started learning English. Even though she was very young, she remembers how frustrating it was at times. But she picked up the language quickly.

When kindergarten started, Alba's teacher knew she was bilingual, so she assigned her a seat next to a boy who couldn't speak any English. She asked Alba to translate basic phrases for him such as "write your name here."

One day, a mother who couldn't speak any English stopped by the office. The staff could not find anyone in the whole school to interpret for her. When Alba's teacher learned of the dilemma, she immediately recommended her five-year-old interpreter. From then on—from parent-teacher conferences to phone calls—the school asked young Alba for help whenever they needed an interpreter.

"At least three times a week they would call me out of class," she says. "It was exciting for me. I felt special," she said with a laugh, "and I could get out of class."

**A**lba found that she had to learn a whole new vocabulary when it came to religious terms or words used in the scriptures.

## STAYING FOCUSED

**R**ichard Hyer, Alba's current stake president, is regularly on the receiving end of Alba's interpreting. He says that even though there are other interpreters in the stake, he often requests Alba. "Alba is fabulous! She is so focused that I find myself watching her. She doesn't miss a beat. She is usually about four or five words behind the speaker, and follows along without any breaks. She is incredible." "As a person, she is very dedicated to the gospel, very focused on keeping the commandments, and has a pleasant disposition. She always seems to experience the joy of the gospel."



**I**n becoming a more effective translator, Alba finds that she has to really concentrate on what is being said. This focus on helping others to understand has increased her own knowledge and testimony.

### Tongue Tied

Eventually Alba started translating for her Spanish branch. In the beginning, she would sit behind English-speaking visitors (such as the stake Young Women presidency), and whisper the translation to them. It wasn't until a few years later that the branch started using headphones with microphones.

Learning Church words in English was like learning a whole new language for Alba. "It was totally new for me because as a child I had never read the scriptures in English. I had never done anything that had to do with the Church in English—only in Spanish," she says. "So it was really weird for me to learn all these English words—like the different levels of the priesthood—all these words I had never heard before."

For the first few years, Alba really struggled with some of the English terms. But now she is in an English seminary class and has read the Book of Mormon in English. She says this has really helped.

Even though she still makes mistakes once in a while, Alba has overcome a lot of the self-consciousness she used to feel. She says she still gets nervous for the big events, but mostly she thinks it's fun and exciting that she can help out.

### Translating Correctly

Now Alba is helping out wherever and whenever she can. Sometimes it's as simple as helping someone at the store, or sometimes it's for big events, such as the missionary conference she helped out with last year.

### FUTURE PLANS

**A**lba enjoys serving as an interpreter for her Spanish branch so much she has decided to learn five other languages in the future—Portuguese, Japanese, Russian, Italian, and American Sign Language. Even though she stays busy with school and other hobbies, she thinks she will try to learn at least two before finishing high school. Alba says she would like to one day get a job where she can use her language skills to serve others daily.



"I had to translate for all these people! So I prayed, and Heavenly Father helped me through it," she says. "Words I had never heard before, I just said them. It was really awesome, and I could feel the Spirit."

Even though it has often been challenging, Alba is grateful for the opportunities she's had to use her language skills to serve.

"It helps me to see that I can help other people," she says. "It has really strengthened my testimony of service."

Alba loves helping other people feel the Spirit and better understand the messages in sacrament meeting. She also thinks that interpreting for her Spanish branch has helped her stay in tune with the Spirit.

"It has really helped me a lot, because in sacrament meeting, sometimes it's easy for my thoughts to wander," she says. "But now I pay attention more, I am more focused, and I understand what the speaker is trying to say." **NE**

# LIFE IN THE ETERNITIES

*Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord restored significant truths regarding the afterlife.*

**O**n February 16, 1832, Joseph Smith saw in vision what happens to the souls of men after they die and are resurrected. This vision of the degrees of glory later became Doctrine and Covenants 76. Through this and other revelations, the Prophet Joseph Smith restored a correct understanding of what comes after this life. Here are some of his teachings about life in the eternities.\*

## THE CELESTIAL GLORY

*“[Those in the celestial world] are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized . . . and receive the Holy Spirit . . . and who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.”*

*“[The righteous who have died] shall be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. What is it? To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a god, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before.”*

## THE TERRESTRIAL AND TELESTIAL GLORIES

*“[Those in the terrestrial world] are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men. . . . These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus.”*

*“[Those in the telestial world] are they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus. These are they who deny not the Holy Spirit. These are they who are thrust down to hell. . . . These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.”*

## THE TORMENT OF THE WICKED

*“The great misery of departed spirits in the world of spirits, where they go after death, is to know that they come short of the glory that others enjoy and that they might have enjoyed themselves, and they are their own accusers.”*

*“There is no pain so awful as that of suspense. This is the punishment of the wicked; their doubt, anxiety and suspense cause weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth.”*

\* From *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 219–24.





# BELIEVE IT TO THE BONE



BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY  
Church Magazines

*Is your commitment to the gospel more than skin deep? Here are some tips from teens in Trinidad about how to live what you believe.*

*If you love Trinidad, they say you're "Trini to de bone." Mark, Peaches, and Curfew are also LDS "to the bone."*

**W**hen you really believe in something, when you know with all your heart that it's right and that you will defend it and live by it, how do you express that feeling? If you live in Trinidad and feel that way about your culture, they say you are "Trini to de bone."

A similar expression could apply to young Latter-day Saints in Trinidad. Because they know the Church is true and that they will stand up for it and live by its standards no matter what, you could say that they are Latter-day Saints "to the bone." They don't just live the gospel on the surface; it's in every thought and action.

### **Bone Builders**

Here are some of the things youth in the Arima



Branch, Port of Spain Trinidad District, recommend that you should do to build your own spiritual “bones.”

*Stay morally clean.* On billboards and TV, in videos and magazines, even in conversations with some friends, unclean thoughts seem to jump in anywhere you’ll permit them. The best way to beat them is to fill your mind with worthy thoughts instead. “My favorite scripture is D&C 121:45,” says Curfew Sherazade Ali, 17. “If we learn now

to have clean thoughts, then we will want to be around others who think the same way. And at the last day, when we meet the Savior, we won’t be ashamed. We will have the confidence to face Him



because we will be worthy to stand in His presence.”

*Choose good music.* “Music is an issue here,” says Curfew. “Dancing, too.” Every weekend in Trinidad, clubs blast loud beats into the streets, and people waiting to dance mill around outside in less-than-modest clothing. On the other hand, Curfew says, “Good music doesn’t degrade you or anyone else. It doesn’t use foul language or drive the Spirit away. Good music can help you feel calm, cheer you up, or help you get closer to your Heavenly Father.” So if you want to feel better, club hopping isn’t the answer. Instead, surround yourself with songs that are uplifting and inspirational, and go to—or organize—dances where standards are observed.



*Make good friends.* Peer pressure is another challenge for youth in Trinidad, according to Mark Christian Mangray, 17. “No matter what wrong things some of your peers might try to influence you to do, you need to choose the right. Good friends with high standards make that a lot easier. Be a good example yourself, and look for friends who will be a good example to you.” Peaches Clarke, 16, says that once you establish a reputation for being good, it gets easier and easier. “People know me, and they know I won’t do things that are wrong,” Peaches says. Though some will tease or make fun, most will respect your beliefs if you stand strong.

*Get an education, but also become wise.* Curfew dreams of working as a marine biologist, and Mark talks about becoming an environmentalist, surveyor, or maybe even a pilot. But they both agree that there is a difference between learning and wisdom. “We can study many things,” Mark explains. “But unless we also learn the gospel, we may have knowledge without understanding.”

*Build strength daily.* One of the best ways to build spiritual bones is through scripture study. “The



**P**eaches loves to talk with other LDS youth about the blessings that the gospel brings into her life. She was one of many who rejoiced on the day that Kimberly and Jenelle were baptized.



## DANCING TO A DIFFERENT BEAT

**P**eaches Clarke, 16, loves to dance. “Latin, mostly, or jazz. I dance all the time, just for fun.”

But when her school dance class in Port of Spain, Trinidad, received the costumes for their next performance, Peaches knew she had to make a move—not on the dance floor but straight to the instructor.

“They wanted us to wear strapless costumes, short dresses that I could not wear,” she says. “I

said, ‘No way!’ So I told the dance instructor. I was afraid he would dismiss me from the class or tell me I couldn’t perform. But instead he said, ‘Okay, you can wear whatever you want,’ and I gained the opportunity to wear a different costume.”

Peaches learned something important. “The standards in *For the Strength of Youth* have helped me many times,” she says. “But that day, they helped me in the classroom.”



stories in the scriptures help me know I'm not the only one who faces challenges and trials," Mark says. "I love the story of Alma. He was one of the high priests of wicked King Noah, but he listened to Abinadi and knew he must repent. The scriptures show me that it's happened before and these people found a way to learn from their mistakes." In Trinidad such scripture study takes place daily through home-study seminary. Then on Saturdays, all of the students get together and discuss what they have learned.

"What helps me be strong every day," Curfew says, "is thinking about the promises the Lord made to the prophets of old, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I have faith in those promises. Each day, I think about what the Lord would have me do in each circumstance I am facing. I try to act as if He is right beside me, and I try to be a good example to those around me, because they may want to come unto Christ, too."

#### **A Great Day**

Two other Arima Branch members who were influenced by that kind of example are Jenelle and Kimberly Phillip, who were recently baptized and confirmed along with their mother.

"I saw all the good things they are doing in the Church,

and I wanted to be a part of it too," says Jenelle, 12. The other youth, she adds, have really made her feel welcome.

Kimberly, 17, says a turning point came when their mother heard them talking about baptism. "She said that she liked the Church and that she wanted to be baptized, too! I really like it that she was baptized and confirmed at the same time and place that we were."

All of the youth came for the baptismal service, and Kimberly says that means a lot to her, too. "It feels nice being a part of the Church and learning about Heavenly Father and how He wants us to live," she says. "We know that in the Church the living prophets teach everyone the word of God. When I learned about that I said, 'This is right for me.'"

#### **Believers to the Bone**

With belief like that, both Kimberly and Jenelle are well on their way to becoming Latter-day Saints to the bone. It's a feeling well known to all of the LDS youth in Trinidad, a feeling Peaches sums up when she says, "I feel blessed. Before I understood the gospel, I didn't really have any idea of who I am. But now, I feel like I have purpose. I am a child of God, and He put me here for a reason, so I had better fulfill it." And she feels it, all the way to her bones. **NE**



# TO THE POINT

## Why do we use water instead of wine for the sacrament?

**T**he sacrament gives us the sacred opportunity to remember Jesus Christ and to renew our baptismal covenants.


Although the Savior gave His disciples wine when He first introduced this ordinance (see Matthew 26:23–24), the Prophet Joseph Smith received the following revelation in August 1830:

“It mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory” (D&C 27:2–3).

Today, of course, we also follow the Word of Wisdom. And since “it mattereth not” what we drink for the sacrament, Church leaders have asked us to use water, which is inexpensive and universally available.

No matter what is used for the sacrament, we should focus our thoughts on the Savior and our commitment to follow Him. **NE**





## Why do women still have to wear dresses or skirts in all our meetings?

Dressing appropriately is less about what our clothing looks like and more about what it means. While other clothing may still be perfectly modest, classy, or professional, women are counseled to wear dresses to promote a certain spirit of reverence. Dresses are generally reserved for special occasions. Modest, simple dresses show respect and invite the Spirit by how they affect our attitudes.

Similarly, men do not wear just a nice shirt and slacks to church. They wear dress shirts, ties, and dress pants. This is to show a spirit of reverence that is not communicated by more casual clothing. Missionaries and temple workers are also asked to follow certain dress standards to show respect for their callings and set a certain tone about their work.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson recently addressed this issue: “It is really not about us. Acting and dressing in a way to honor sacred events and places is about God” (“A Sense of the Sacred,” *New Era*, June 2006, 31).

As it says in *For the Strength of Youth*, dressing appropriately shows respect both for the Lord and for yourself, and “your dress before, during, and after church meetings should show respect for the Sabbath” ([2004], 16, 32).

Wearing formal clothing on the Sabbath sets Sunday apart from the rest of the week

in our minds and, thus, in our actions. The Lord has given us this counsel regarding our appearance to help us, and those around us, develop a sense of reverence and feel the Spirit. **NE**

## What things do I need to see my bishop about to be forgiven?

The short answer is that you need to confess “serious transgressions” to your bishop. These include (but are not limited to) serious violations of the law of chastity and acts of violence or dishonesty that cause serious harm or damage to others.

The long answer is that if you feel like you should talk to your bishop, do it. While the Lord is the only person who can ultimately forgive your sins, priesthood leaders play an important role in your repentance.

You might think that a bishop is there to deal with you only when you’ve done something seriously wrong, but a bishop is also there to counsel and help you in other matters. So even if you haven’t committed a major transgression, or if you just need someone to talk to, you can go to your bishop. He can help you. **NE**

# Run

BY DAVID A. EDWARDS  
Church Magazines

*No matter what gets in the way, Makena Madsen knows what it takes to finish the race.*

Running along the beaches near Santa Cruz, California, can be an invigorating experience—the pulse of the waves, the soft sand, the salty air, the boundless ocean. But when you reach the rocky point at end of the beach, you have to turn around and run back the other way.

Unless, of course, you swim around it.

And that's exactly what Makena Madsen does. Each year this 16-year-old from the Capitola Ward in the Santa Cruz California Stake participates in an event called a Run-Swim-Run. In this race along the coast from one pier to another, the sandy beach is interrupted by a harbor and two rocky points, which the racers must swim around.

All in all, the race amounts to about six miles of running and one mile of swimming. Makena can complete the strenuous course in just over an hour—one of the best times for her age group.

Though the race takes great athletic ability, for Makena, it represents more than just an athletic contest. For one thing, it raises funds for a local nonprofit group that sponsors positive and wholesome activities for youth. For another thing, it is a chance to learn lessons about life, the gospel, and herself.

## Lessons from the Race

The race has taught Makena about many things, including preparation, overcoming obstacles, and making good choices.

She has learned to look ahead for danger, as well. The run along the beach is relatively easy. But once you reach the point where you have to swim, there are a number of things to watch out for.

“Depending on the swell, the swim can be dangerous,” she says.



# IM Run



## MAKENA'S FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

**L**uke 1:37: "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

"I like that one because if you always have faith in God and keep the commandments, then you can pretty much do anything—then you'll be able to return to Him."



## DANGER AND SURPRISE

A race like the Run-Swim-Run can have its share of danger and surprise. Here are a few things to consider.

**Swell**—If the swell is too high, the waves can drive you into the rocks.

**High water**—If the water level is high, less sand is exposed on the beach, sometimes forcing you to climb on rocks.

**Seaweed**—Thick seaweed can slow you down and cut your skin.

**Seals**—Sometimes seals will pop up near you while you're swimming, which can be quite startling.

"Sometimes you have to make sure that the waves won't slam you into the rocks."

"One time I went through the seaweed," she says. "It probably would have been faster for me to go around. It's hard to get through it because it pulls on you and scratches you all up and you can't swim through it. And it hurts."

She compares this experience to choices that entangle us in worldly or destructive behaviors and cause us to get stuck instead of making progress. Such choices are like shortcuts that seem easy at first but aren't the right way to go.

### Good Coaching

Makena has many influences in her life that help her make good choices. She credits her parents with having taught her Heavenly Father's plan, which has helped her realize the importance of making choices on her own.

"I like learning about the plan of salvation, which is my dad's favorite thing to teach us," she says. "It shows you the whole picture, so



you actually know why you're here, and you have a reason to be good, not just because your parents told you to."

By following her parents' counsel, Makena, who is the oldest in the family, is also setting an example for her younger sister and brothers to follow. For instance, she has taken to heart what she has learned about personal prayer.

"I like to pray," she says. "That's a good thing. I like to be able to pray wherever I am, in any situation." Prayer even works in school, she says. Once she was intimidated by a history teacher who would ask questions and assign homework if you gave the wrong answer. "I prayed she wouldn't call on me or that I would know the answer," says Makena. She wasn't called on, but more importantly, she says, "I felt peace."

In seminary she has appreciated the lessons that have helped her better understand and relate to the scriptures—like the time the teacher had them carry some "golden plates"

around the neighborhood when they were learning about how Joseph Smith protected the Book of Mormon record.

Makena is also grateful for her youth leaders. “Our leaders do a lot for us,” she says. “They spend a lot of time to make fun activities on Mutual night. And I like the Young Women lessons. They have a lot to do with our daily lives.”

### Good Friends

In addition to parents and adult leaders, Makena says that her friends help her keep her standards high—both those who are Church members and those who aren’t.

“All the girls in our ward are friends,” she says. “It’s good to have friends who have the same standards as you.” And though there aren’t many LDS students at her school, that isn’t a big issue. “At school everyone knows I’m Mormon,” she says, “but a lot of them have similar standards.”

In this community, teenagers like Makena make a lot of friends across school boundaries, as well. And she feels that she and her friends all support each other and help each other make good choices.

### Racing On

Makena participates in several different clubs, sports, and other activities at school and in the community, including soccer, volleyball, and dance. And she keeps up on her studies, too. She’s already thinking about college, though she’s not exactly sure where she wants to go.

One thing is sure, though. No matter what challenges and obstacles may present themselves, Makena knows that with her faith in the gospel, she can overcome them—even if she has to swim around them. **NE**



# ANNA'S



**A**s Anna  
and I  
talked  
and crocheted  
week after week,  
I realized that  
our hearts were  
being knit together  
because she loved,  
accepted, and  
understood me.



# Afghans

BY LISA HARDMAN

*What was originally a short-term Personal Progress goal turned into a long-term friendship.*

Running my hand over the tight, even stitches of Anna's crocheted blankets still brings back those unhurried afternoons of my youth spent in her sparsely furnished apartment. Over 20 years have passed, but whenever I wrap one of Anna's afghans around me, I am once again enveloped in the warmth of her friendship.

My relationship with Anna began when I was a Mia Maid. My father, a member of the bishopric, went out of his way every Sunday to greet the widows in our ward by shaking their hands as they came into the chapel. He exhibited a special love for the elderly and taught me, through his example, to notice and nurture them.

One day my father introduced me to Anna, a widow in her 70s. At the prompting of my parents, I began to sit with her at church. At first, I felt awkward and unsure. What could we possibly talk about? What could we possibly have in common? Making friends with an elderly woman was new to me, but I felt that reaching out to Anna was what the Savior wanted me to do.

With time I became more comfortable approaching Anna at church. She would always listen attentively as I told her about my school and family activities. Seeing her face light up when I spoke to her made me realize how much she appreciated having someone care about her. In return, I looked forward to the grandmotherly affection she never failed to shower upon me. At times I slipped my hand into her wrinkled palm and she would squeeze it tenderly. Eventually I began to visit her weekly, bringing cookies or other things I thought she might enjoy.

One afternoon I asked Anna about the multi-colored

afghans draped over the back of her couch. With her ailing knees, crocheting was one of the few activities she could engage in during her hours of solitude. Her gnarled, arthritic hands were always busy making cheerful blankets for family, friends, or ward members. When I asked Anna if she would be willing to teach me her unique pattern, she was surprised that I would even show interest in her hobby. Week after week my mother would drop me off at Anna's apartment where the two of us would sit together, talking and crocheting.

Over the span of many years our friendship developed. What began as a Personal Progress goal evolved into a remarkable friendship. My nonjudgmental friend always offered me a warm heart and a listening ear. Our weekly visits gave Anna something to look forward to and broke up the monotony of her isolation and solitude. But visiting Anna did something for me, too. For one hour each week, the world didn't revolve around me. Anna gave me the opportunity to focus on someone else's needs, and she helped me to see that no matter what our age or circumstances, we are all children of our Heavenly Father.

This concept of fellowship and serving one another is expressed in Colossians 2:2, where it describes how "[our] hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding." I learned about those riches during the years of adolescence because Anna loved, accepted, and understood me. Our hearts were "knit together in love" through a process that only the Spirit could orchestrate. Although Anna's blankets were lovingly crocheted so long ago, they continue to remind me of the gentle and humble woman who made them and the lessons she taught me. **NE**

For a copy of the Personal Progress booklet or a listing of requirements, visit [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org) and search for "Personal Progress" in the A-Z index.

# True Beauty

BY ELDER LYNN G. ROBBINS  
Of the Seventy

*It isn't just about cosmetics or clothing. What makes a young woman truly attractive comes from her heart.*



*A young woman whose countenance is aglow with both happiness and virtue radiates inner beauty.*

**W**hat makes a woman beautiful? The world tries to convince us that cosmetics, perfumes, jewelry, fashionable clothing, diets, and even surgery are necessary for beauty. While some of these fashion aids are desirable and lovely, they can change only surface appearances.

The gospel teaches us that true beauty is more than skin-deep. A young woman whose countenance is aglow with both happiness and virtue radiates inner beauty.

**“Happiness is the most attractive accessory a young woman can have.”**

I came across this one-line sermon in an old magazine article. I thought it was profound. If happiness is the most attractive accessory a young woman can have, then a smile would have to be the most charming cosmetic. Make-up, if applied tastefully and in moderation, can enhance appearance. But no amount of eye shadow, lipstick, or mascara could possibly compete with the natural attractiveness of a genuine smile. It brightens the room. It cheers others. It communicates

friendship, love, and optimism so much more than any cosmetic ever could. It puts people at ease and is welcoming. Truly in the world of glamour, there is no close second to a genuine smile.

## **Is happiness a choice?**

One of the discoveries that our Father in Heaven would have us make is to learn that we have far more control over our happiness than we sometimes think we do. How we see life's glass—half-full or half-empty—is primarily a choice. And with our Father in Heaven's help, our faith, hope, and optimism can grow. The story of Nephi, Laman, and Lemuel in the Book of Mormon is an interesting case study in choosing or looking for happiness.

Laman and Lemuel seemed to always see the glass half-empty. They constantly murmured and complained. Their cynical nature blinded them to any blessings that might have been present. Consequently, the misery upon which they constantly focused was what life handed them. Nephi, by contrast,





**W**hen virtue is combined with obedience to the Lord's laws of health and respect for the human body, young people truly become temples in which the Holy Ghost dwells, giving them a beautiful aura.

always saw the very same glass as half-full, and happiness was his reward, even though he suffered the very same burdens and trials.

As Johann Wolfgang von Goethe put it, "A man sees in the world what he carries in his heart."<sup>1</sup> The world becomes a creation after our own image, a reflection of our own faith or lack thereof.

Even when trials come, the wise choose happiness. They are lovely people to be around. Conversely no cosmetic, perfume, or wardrobe can ever compensate for the unpleasantness of a complainer or pessimist. "But what if that is the way I am?" someone might ask. Or "what if I don't feel like smiling?" Ben Franklin referred to pessimism as a "bad habit" to be broken and advised avoiding people so "infected."<sup>2</sup>

Of course, there are times in everyone's life when it is difficult to smile, times of trial and tragedy, times of distress and misfortune. But even in such depressing times it is helpful and wise to look to the future with hope and optimism, just as Nephi did.

#### **Mirror, mirror on the wall . . .**

If you are discouraged about your appearance, it will help to see yourself through the eyes of those who love you. Hidden beauty seen by loved ones can become a mirror for self-improvements. This phenomenon of the person internalizing the expectations of others with subsequent positive change has become known as the Pygmalion effect, after the famous play in which the "guttersnipe," Eliza Dolittle, becomes the refined *My Fair Lady*. The beauty was always there; Eliza only needed help from others to discover it.

Our Father in Heaven provides the perfect example of this principle. He sees our divine nature. We are His children. The way He sees

us, because of His love for us, is perfect. The mirror which He holds constantly before us, if we will only raise our sight to look, is the one in which we should trust. Its image is always true and never distorted. He reminds us, as He did Moses, "Thou art my son [or daughter]" (Moses 1:4).

#### **Choosing the right leads to happiness**

Our Father in Heaven expects all of His children to choose the right, which is the only way to lasting happiness and inner beauty. We read in *For the Strength of Youth* that "wrong choices delay your progression and lead to heartache and misery. Right choices lead to happiness and eternal life" ([2001], 4).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve (1926–2004) said, "Though Christ was called a 'man of sorrows,' that description refers to His bearing of our sorrows. It does not describe His day-to-day bearing."<sup>3</sup>

Because our choices have so much to do with our happiness, the phrase "men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25) could be considered an expectation. Why would the Lord expect us to be happy? Because He has borne our sorrow that we might have joy, and He blesses us when we are obedient. The Savior atoned for our sins that we might be happy.

#### **There is a beautiful radiance in virtue**

It is not the smile alone that is beautiful. Delilah surely smiled at Samson, and Potiphar's wife at Joseph. These were women of the world whose smiles were devoid of inner beauty. "Tell me what you smile or laugh at, and I'll tell you who you are."<sup>4</sup>

The virtuous smile is truly beautiful as it radiates in a totally natural way. This true



beauty can't be painted on but is a gift of the Spirit. It is literally letting your light shine before men. When virtue is combined with obedience to the Lord's laws of health and respect for the human body, young people truly become temples in which the Holy Ghost dwells, giving them a beautiful aura. It is this beauty that is most becoming and enduring.

Truman G. Madsen expressed it well: "This Light of the Spirit cannot be faked. All of the theater lights and stages and camera trickery and Photoshop manipulation may convince the unaware that artificial light has the same effect. It does not. Artificial light ends with the flipping of a switch. It is merely a backhanded tribute to Light. Christ is the Life and the Light—the Light that lightens hearts through thick and thin."<sup>5</sup>

President Brigham Young said, "There is not a man or woman on this earth, whose peace is made with God, and who are associated with holy beings, and seeking after holy principles, but their countenances are lit up with a lamp of divine cheerfulness."<sup>6</sup>

Modesty is an outward sign and requirement for inward beauty. Without modesty, the radiance of *divine cheerfulness*, which is a gift of the Spirit, vanishes.

#### **A pure and cheerful heart**

The world prizes body-baring "beauty." Hollywood markets it, advertisers exploit it, and the media promote it. The Lord, however, "seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). The kind of a man a virtuous woman wants to marry also "seeth not" as the natural man seeth. He will be drawn to the true beauty she radiates from a pure and cheerful heart. The same is true for a young woman looking for a virtuous young man.

In pageants, there is only one declared the fairest of them all. But with the Lord there is no competition. All have an equal privilege to have His image engraven upon their countenance (see Alma 5:19). There is no truer beauty. **NE**

#### **NOTES**

1. *Faust*, Part I, line 179.
2. "Handsome and Deformed Leg," in *The Works of Dr. Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Richard Price (1853), 146–148.
3. *Even as I Am* (1982), 103.
4. Marcel Pagnol, quoted in *Reader's Digest*, Sept. 2007, 95.
5. "The Joy of the Lord Is Your Strength' (Nehemiah 8:10)," *Brigham Young University 2000–2001 Speeches* (2001), 7.
6. Quoted in "The Joy of the Lord Is Your Strength,'" 7.

SMALL THINGS,

# GREAT RESULTS

BY JOSHUA J. ACKER

*“Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise. And the Lord God doth work by means to bring about his great and eternal purposes; and by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls” (Alma 37:6–7).*

*By drawing closer to the Lord, I was able to play a small part in something great.*

**A**fter many days and nights of uncertainty and worry, I was slowly falling into a bout of depression. Once again my life was in a huge upheaval. Much of the problem was the typical teenage syndrome: struggles with dear friends, worries about the future, and the stresses of daily activities. Folded into the mix was the fact of a family moving across the country.

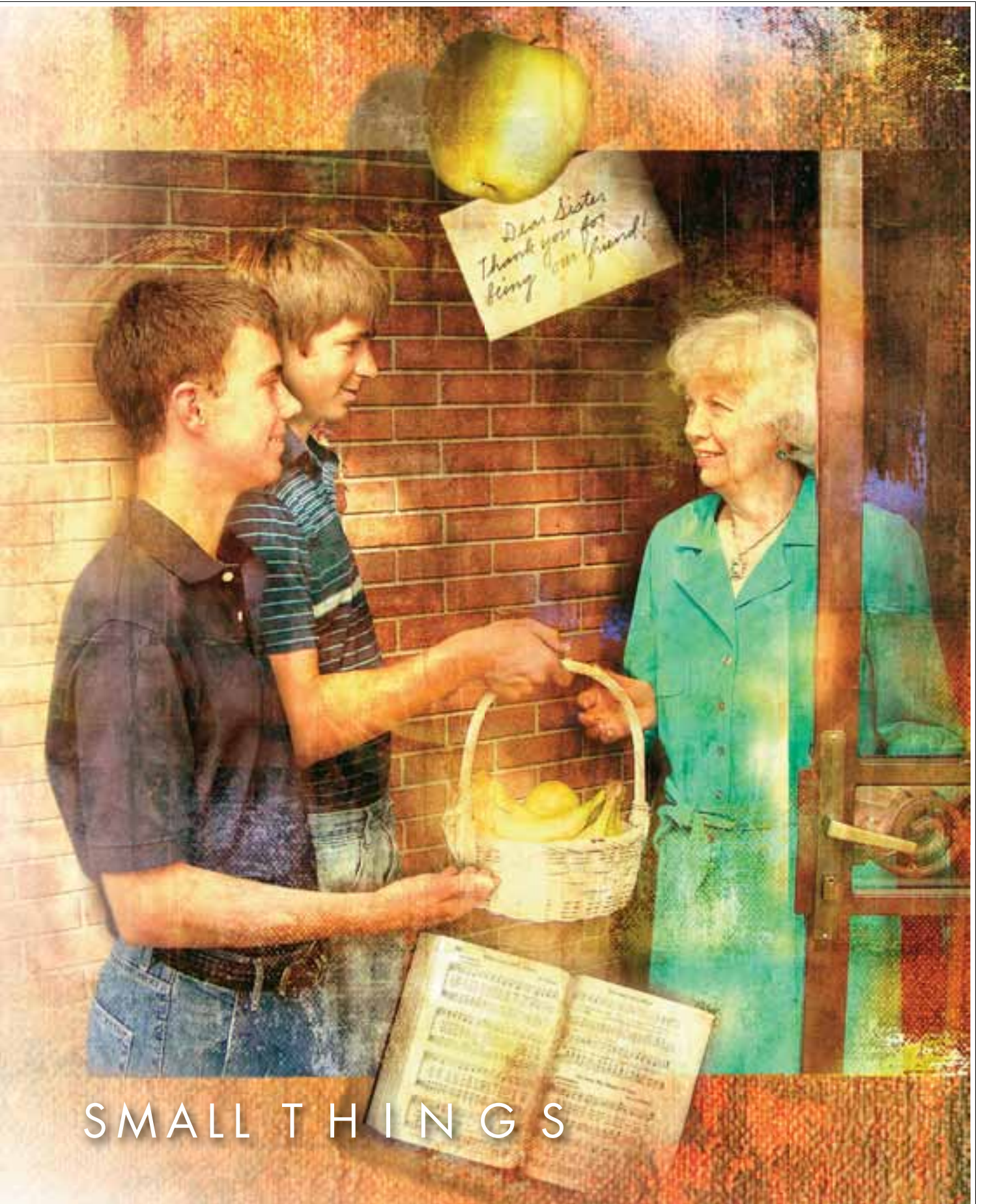
Nothing seemed good in my life, and I felt like I had nobody to turn to, until one friend asked me if I had prayed about my adversity and asked the Lord for help. The thought immediately came to my mind: “Why haven’t I thought of that?” So I began praying to Heavenly Father about my challenges. Little did I know that the Lord was about to change my life and the lives of others in a most unexpected way.

One evening after a long practice for a school play, I was dropping off a couple of my peers in the neighborhood when I felt the prompting to ask one friend if he

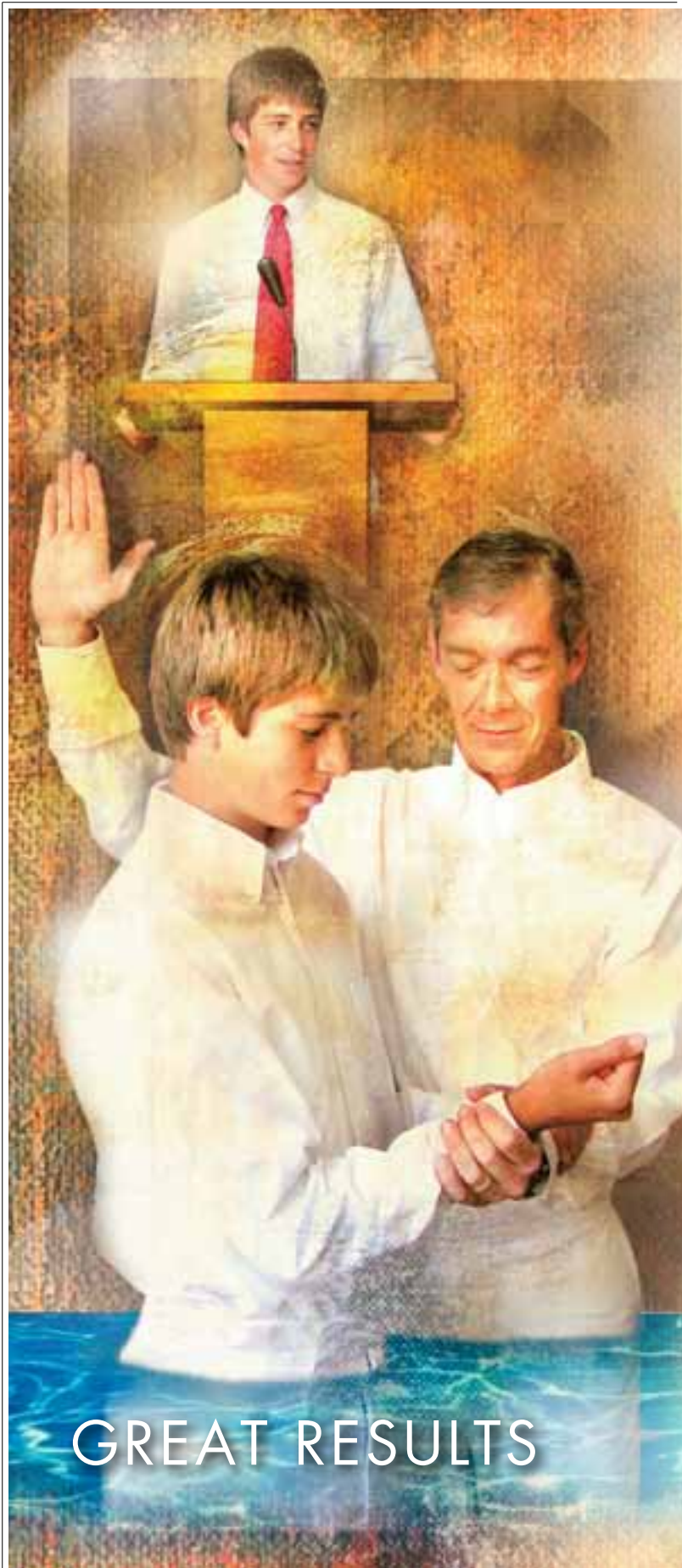
would like to come to a service project my stake was doing that night for Mutual. He had received the missionary lessons a few years before but had not chosen to join the Church. Immediately, I felt a slight embarrassment for asking him to a Church activity starting in only a few moments. To my complete surprise, he politely accepted the invitation, and after arranging for him to borrow some Church clothes, we were at the meeting with the other youth.

Known in my stake as the “Seminary Basket Project,” this popular activity consists of the youth’s visiting the lonely and elderly of the community during the holiday season. After visiting several homes, bringing them bags of fruit accompanied by a short message and hymn, my friend remarked on what a good time he had been having. Once again I felt awkward as I followed the prompting to invite him to the testimony meeting following the activity. He joked a little about people who cry when bearing testimony but agreed to go to the meeting to “check it out.”

At the meeting I again had a prompting, this time to bear my testimony. Unable to sit still, I walked up to the podium and



SMALL THINGS



## GREAT RESULTS

expressed how grateful I was for the help of the gospel in my challenges. Sure enough, I became one of the “criers” my nonmember friend and I had been joking about just a few minutes before! The meeting continued, with a tremendous feeling of the Spirit obviously present. Many uplifting testimonies were borne, and there was something miraculous still to come.

A complete shock hit me as I watched my friend stand up, slip out of the pews and approach the stand! The feeling I had as I watched my friend bear his testimony and say, “I’m gonna be a Mormon,” is indescribable. The thought of the enormity and importance of what had just transpired stuck with me throughout the rest of the evening.

Because of the support and example of good friends and the prompting of the Lord, my friend had ended his long internal struggle with the idea of becoming a Latter-day Saint. It was a relief for those who had pretty much given up hope. What a joyous day it was when only a few short weeks later my friend informed me of his baptism date! There was hardly enough room for the supportive friends who attended his baptism, and almost no one was without a tear in his eye. The same Spirit was present for his confirmation during the next day’s fast and testimony meeting.

Many bore testimony about how my friend’s decision to change his own life had changed their lives. It was evident that not only had many pleading prayers for my friend been answered, but many others’ testimonies had been strengthened. God had brought about His great and eternal purposes by bringing one precious soul into His Church while also strengthening those involved. If we rely on the Lord, pray, and strive to be a righteous example, He *will* make us an instrument in His eternal plans, better our lives, and bring about great things. **NE**

# THE EXTRA SMILE



RYAN STOKER



ROBERT PETERSON

I was playing the piano after Church when my five-year-old cousin walked up beside me and asked, "What are you playing?" I replied, "The piano." He said, "No. What song?" I told him it was "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief." Seeing that the title didn't really mean anything to him, I tried to clarify by saying, "It's a hymn." I finished playing the song and turned to a different one, to which he asked, "Is this one a her?"

—Natausha B., Texas



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

# THEY SPOKE TO US

Many of the general conference talks have messages relevant for the youth of the Church. Here are just a few examples. Read all the conference talks in the November *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines.

- President Henry B. Eyring teaches of building unity by speaking kindly of one another: "I can promise you a feeling of peace and joy when you speak generously of others in the Light of Christ." See "Our Hearts Knit as One."
- "Young people, [sacrament meeting] is not a time for whispered conversations on cell phones or for texting persons at other locations," says Elder Dallin H. Oaks. Read the rest of his counsel in "Sacrament Meeting and the Sacrament."
- Sister Elaine S. Dalton says, "I truly believe that one virtuous young woman or young man, led by the Spirit, can change the world, but in order to do so, we must return to virtue." Read how to change the world in "A Return to Virtue."

To read conference experiences by youth, go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org). You can also read, listen to, or watch these talks online at [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org).



## MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

**Genesis 1:26** is my favorite scripture because it talks about the creation of humankind as the crowning achievement in the creation of the earth. It says we are created in the image of God. It lets us know that the creation didn't happen by chance but was according to an eternal plan.

**Travis D., 14, Guadeloupe, West Indies**

Tell us about your favorite scripture in one or two sentences. Send it to [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)

"The first, the middle, and the last thing to do is to pray."

**President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "In the Strength of the Lord," Ensign, May 2004, 17.**

## BYU RE: WRITING CONTEST 2009

It's time to prepare your entry for the BYU English Department writing contest for high school students in 9th–12th grades (ages 14–18). 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, 2009, and January 31, 2009, to the BYU English Department, 4198 JFSB, Provo, UT 84602-6701. You can get all the rules and a cover sheet at the department Web site: <http://english.byu.edu>. Look for undergraduate writing contests. If you have questions, call 801-422-4939.



ILLUSTRATED BY BRAD TEARE





AN EGYPTIAN DOCTOR TRAINS LOCAL NURSES ON NEWBORN RESUSCITATION TECHNIQUES.

## SAVING LIVES WORLDWIDE

Did you know that just one of the projects carried out by LDS Humanitarian Services has saved the lives of more than 400,000 infants in developing countries? Newborn resuscitation—training medical staff how to resuscitate babies who are not breathing at birth—is just one of the initiatives Humanitarian Services focused on in the past year. Others are water projects, wheelchair distribution, and vision treatment training.

Newborn resuscitation courses were taught in 23 countries. “When just one physician is trained, he or she will go on to train others, which in the long run turns into thousands of lives being saved,” Dean Walker, manager of major initiatives for Humanitarian Services, said.

Three of the Church’s other major projects also helped thousands of people last year:

- 950,000 people benefited from clean water projects.
- 60,537 wheelchairs were distributed.
- 9,100 people received vision treatment.

In May, the Church shipped 142,000 pounds of medical and other supplies to Myanmar to aid those affected by a cyclone. The Church’s relief efforts for those areas affected by the 2004 tsunami in Asia are still continuing, where the Church has assisted in building 16 schools, 902 homes, and 3 community centers.



## THE CHURCH IN HONDURAS

Elders Spencer W. Kimball and Marion G. Romney of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited Honduras in the early 1950s. They left Church literature with a hotel waiter, who later was baptized and confirmed. Missionaries came to Honduras in December 1952. They baptized the first converts and organized the first congregation in March 1953.

In 1980, Church membership in Honduras was 6,300. Membership

today is 20 times larger. On June 9, 2007, ground was broken and the site was dedicated for the Tegucigalpa Honduras Temple, which is expected to be completed in late 2009 or early 2010.

Here are a few facts about the Church today in Honduras:

<b>Membership</b>	<b>120,259</b>
<b>Missions</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Congregations</b>	<b>218</b>
<b>Family History Centers</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Temples</b>	<b>1*</b>

\* Under construction.

Information from Newsroom at [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org).

## BY THE NUMBERS 750,900,000

Value (in US dollars) of humanitarian material assistance since 1985.

## HYMN VOCABULARY

Do you know what you just sang? Choose the correct definition for each of the following words that can be found in one or more of our hymns.

- A. **Dross** (*Hymns*, no. 85, 272)
1. Heavy woven cord
  2. Something considered worthless
  3. Patterned cloth
  4. Soft evening light
- B. **Sultry** (*Hymns*, no. 109)
1. Sleepy
  2. Hot and humid
  3. Timeless
  4. Calm and serene

C. **Hie** (*Hymns*, no. 284)

1. Ostentatious
2. Tall
3. Go quickly
4. To walk

D. **Diadem** (*Hymns*, no. 272)

1. Interlocking links
2. A brass musical instrument
3. Something dangerous
4. A jeweled crown

E. **Mote** (*Hymns*, no. 273)

1. A tiny piece of something
2. A deep, wide ditch
3. Forced to do something
4. An old-fashioned shirt

ANSWERS: A2, B2, B2, C3, D4, E1

GRACIAS



BY JAMES D. HIBBARD

**W**ith temperatures rising and hot wind blowing in seemingly every direction, my companion and I spent days biking from one end of Yuma, Arizona, to the other in search of people to teach. The heat of summer can be especially challenging, and for a new missionary, it's sometimes easy to get discouraged.

One day we had been visiting investigators and contacts, and none of them seemed to have the time or the interest to sit down and talk. As we rode our bikes, I began feeling a tinge of discouragement. I closed my eyes and silently prayed for help. The still, small voice of the Spirit whispered, "Pray with your companion."

After suggesting this to him, we turned our bikes into a park and stopped. As I said the prayer with my companion, pleading for guidance to know where we should go, a feeling of calmness and peace flooded my body. In that instant I knew that our Heavenly Father would place someone in our path who would listen. We ended the day with several good visits with some of our investigators. The answer to our prayers, however, came in full strength that evening as we planned for the following day.

We began our planning session with prayer, again asking for the Spirit to guide us. As we talked about what to do in the morning during those first few hours before lunch, both of us felt an impression to visit a small trailer park behind a commercial section of town. My companion brought up the fact that not many people lived there and that it might be a waste of time to ride our bikes all that way to talk to only a few people. At the moment, we couldn't decide if it would be worth our time, so we skipped that morning block of time and planned the rest of the day. The Spirit again whispered strongly to visit this area as we came back to plan the morning block. This time we acted upon the promptings and confirmed it with the Lord in prayer.

It was already hot as we left our apartment the next morning to tract in the small trailer park. By the time we got there, I was feeling fairly passive and indifferent

and was not expecting much. We locked our bikes to a wooden pillar and stepped up to the front door of the first trailer. I took a deep breath and knocked lightly on the thin wooden door.

Several seconds passed before the knob slowly turned and the door opened, revealing a short Hispanic lady. My first thought was of how tired and stressed she looked. Almost immediately, familiar words filled my mind, and I began to speak. "Hello ma'am," I started in Spanish. "How are you doing this morning?"

"I'm fine. Can I help you?" she replied.

"Actually, we're here to help you," I smiled. "We are representatives of Jesus Christ, missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

I slowly stopped speaking as tears welled up in her eyes. She raised her hand to her mouth, closed her eyes, and whispered her thanks: "*Gracias.*" She then took my offered hand and said, choking back sobs, "I have been praying all night for God to send me some angels, and you are here. How did you know?"

My voice trembled a little with emotion as I replied, "We were sent. I know we were sent to help you."

She told us she was undergoing intense family problems and had been floundering on the brink of depression and hopelessness. In her struggles she prayed and asked for help, for an assurance of love, and for a light in her darkening life. We knocked on her door only seconds after she had ended her prayer.

During the next 30 minutes we presented the basic principles of the gospel, and the Spirit testified to her that they are true. As we felt the Holy Ghost, we knew that she knew our message is true. It was in that instant that I witnessed the necessity of having the Spirit lead us in all we do.

The woman thanked Heavenly Father in the closing prayer, expressing heartfelt gratitude. We stepped off the porch and into the hot and dusty day, our eyes a little misty due to the witness borne by the Holy Ghost. I closed my eyes as we walked and whispered, "*Gracias.*" **NE**

## NO BASKETBALL ON SUNDAYS

BY BRAD GREEN

I eagerly glanced down at the basketball summer league schedule, and saw to my dismay that 8 of the 12 games were on Sunday. What was I going to do? I don't play on Sunday.

I looked across the room at my talented teammate. I had worked so hard to win the starting forward position, and if I didn't play, I was going to lose the job to him. But I had decided a long time ago to never play on Sunday, and that wasn't about to change now.

The coach finished up his speech by saying, "Congratulations on making the team. The first practice is tomorrow at five. See you then."

The team slowly filed out the door as I sat nervously in my seat. I knew my course of action, but that wasn't going to make this any easier. I hesitantly walked up to the front of the room and said, "Hey coach, I have a little problem."

"What's that Brad?" he asked.

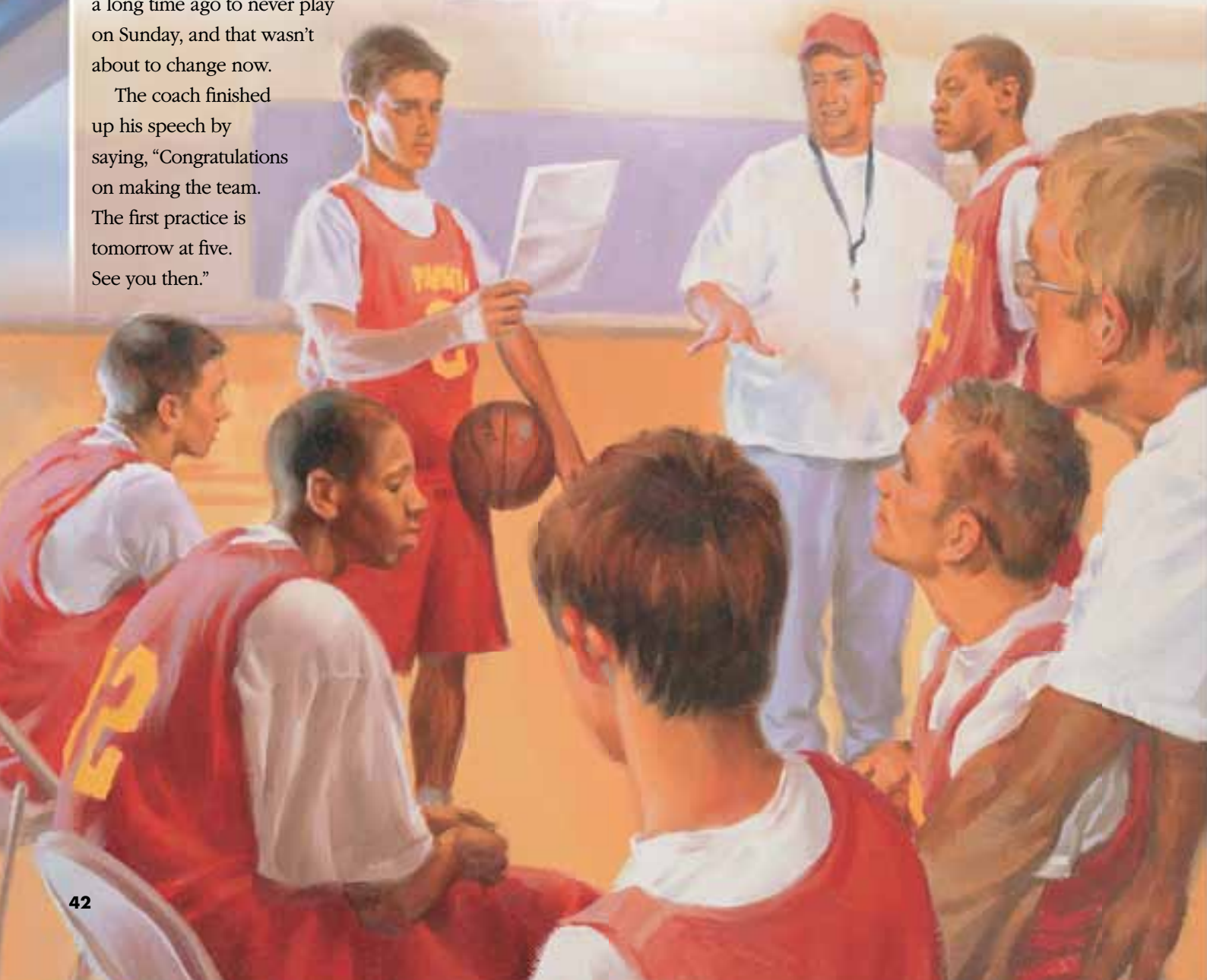
"Well, I was looking at the schedule, and I saw that there were eight games

on Sunday. I won't be able to play in those games," I said with a shaky voice.

"How come?" he asked with a surprised look on his face.

"It's a religious thing. I believe in keeping the Sabbath day holy and part of that is not playing sports on Sunday," I responded, feeling a little awkward with the situation.

"Okay, well listen. I would still love



to have you for the other games—that is if you still want to play,” he said with a smile.

“I would love to,” I said, and we shook hands as if to seal the agreement. I turned and walked out the door, feeling less awkward and more satisfied.

True, I wasn’t going to play for most of the league games and I might lose my starting position, but I felt good all the same. If I hadn’t made the decision early that I was never going to play on Sunday, I might have chosen differently. But I knew I would be blessed for keeping the Lord’s commandments. I confidently walked away from that room knowing that everything was going to be all right. **NE**

## THE BEST COACH

BY HAHNA DANZ

**D**uring my freshman year in high school, I decided to join the track team. This choice required a lot of commitment because we practiced running every day for two hours after school. We also had to give up weekends to attend track meets. It was a tough but invigorating and rewarding sport.

One Wednesday after school we traveled two hours on the bus to attend a track meet. I had packed all my things but felt uneasy. Had I eaten right? Did I have good form? Should I do something to help me run better today? Questions and uncertainty filled my mind. My friend, Hayley, and I were in the first event. We were both

## A CLOSE CALL

BY ANNA WAGNER

**T**wo weeks after I got my driver’s license, my parents let me take the car for the whole day. I was ecstatic! I couldn’t wait to go driving around town. That morning in my prayers I had a strong feeling to pray for safety and that the Holy Spirit would guide and direct me. I hopped into the car and headed to town to do some shopping with my sister. I was surprised at how comfortable I felt driving. But I was uneasy. I had a feeling that at sometime during the day some sort of obstacle would be in the road and I would have to stop suddenly. I wondered if I was just nervous because it was my first time driving alone. I decided to drive slower than usual. I drove all day without incident but still had that

feeling.

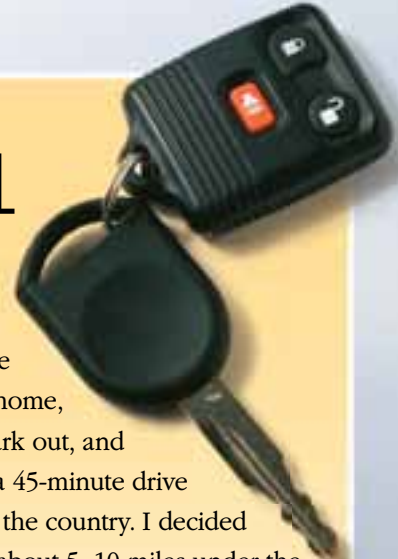
When we headed home, it was dark out, and we had a 45-minute drive home in the country. I decided to drive about 5–10 miles under the speed limit. Just as I came around a bend, I saw a deer standing in the middle of the road. I had to quickly slam on my brakes to stop. I stopped a couple of feet in front of the deer, which just walked off, leaving us with our hearts pounding. I couldn’t believe how close it was. I know if I had not been warned by the Holy Ghost and had been going faster, I would have hit that deer. I am so grateful to have the Holy Ghost guiding and protecting me. **NE**

nervous. Quickly we went to our coach and asked, “Is there anything we can do right now to make us better?” He smiled and replied, “You should have asked me that on Monday.”

Being a good track runner requires preparation, and we felt foolish for not having asked this question before the big day came.

Track practice is like prayer. Sometimes we don’t want to do it every day; it can seem inconvenient and tiresome. Perhaps we’d rather be doing other things, or we feel like we don’t need it. But when “meet day” comes and there are trials ahead that we need to be strong enough to encounter, it may be too late to prepare

for them. We should ask for the Lord’s guidance every day so that He can help us to prepare for any obstacle placed before us. We can get strength and guidance from the Lord while we train and prepare rather than only at the times we need Him most. Then, when the adversary sends his “shafts in the whirlwind,” he will have “no power over you to drag you down . . . because of the rock upon which ye are built” (Helaman 5:12). We can receive strength from the ultimate coach, our loving Heavenly Father. I know that through daily prayer, obedience, and endurance, the Lord will prepare us to leap over any obstacle. **NE**



# REFLECTIONS ON A HYMN

BY ELIZABETH ZIPPI

I attended the general Young Women broadcast in 2005 with my three sisters and our mom. Our family is from the Chicago area, and it was the first time we had been inside the Conference Center. I was amazed

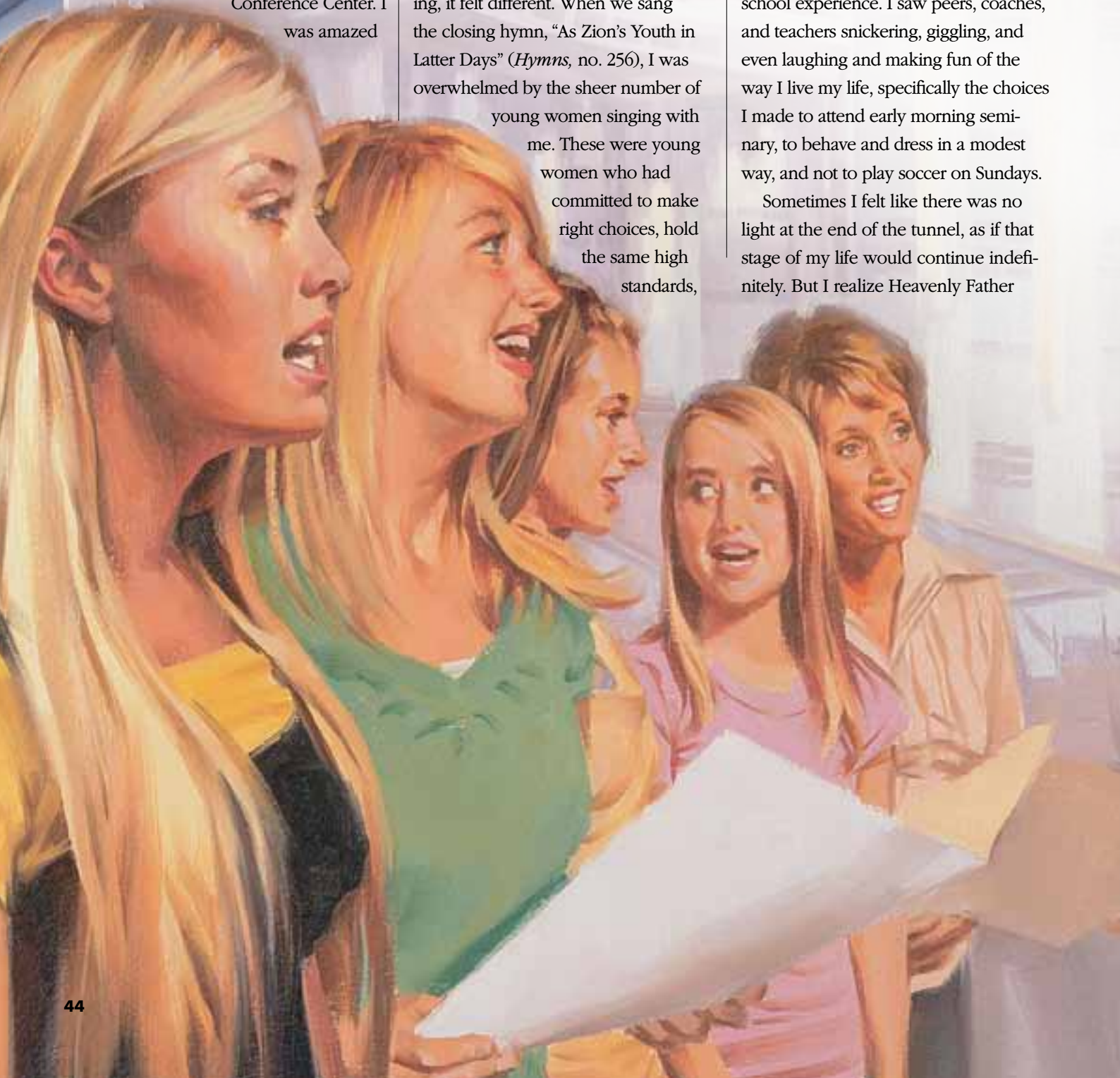
at how many young women were there together. I was used to watching the broadcast in a dark stake center with a few other young women and leaders.

This time, participating in the meeting, it felt different. When we sang the closing hymn, “As Zion’s Youth in Latter Days” (*Hymns*, no. 256), I was overwhelmed by the sheer number of young women singing with me. These were young women who had committed to make right choices, hold the same high standards,

and continue through life in faith.

The words of the second verse especially struck me. “The truths and values we embrace / Are mocked on ev’ry hand.” Immediately I thought of my high school experience. I saw peers, coaches, and teachers snickering, giggling, and even laughing and making fun of the way I live my life, specifically the choices I made to attend early morning seminary, to behave and dress in a modest way, and not to play soccer on Sundays.

Sometimes I felt like there was no light at the end of the tunnel, as if that stage of my life would continue indefinitely. But I realize Heavenly Father



gave me those experiences because He loves me, and that is enough. He knows what is best for me, and though I look back on my high school years with very few fond memories, I know it was when I built my own testimony. I learned to pray about anything and everything and to trust in my Savior. I decided for myself that the Lord and His Church are worth anything I have to sacrifice in order to stand up and be counted as a disciple of Christ. **NE**

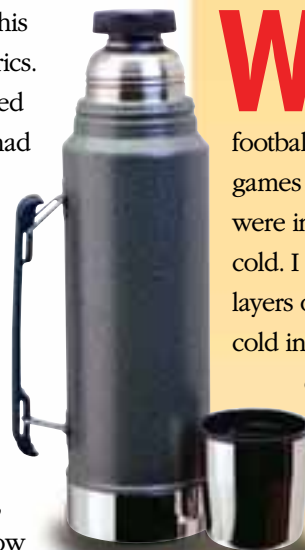
## BEFRIENDING OUR CHURCH LEADERS

BY ASHLEY BLISS

It wasn't long ago that Lem Guluka became our new bishop. I had never met him before, so I had no strong feelings about his being called. He was a smart-looking man and a convert from Africa. He started performing his duties the very day we sustained him. He'd come to our lessons in Young Women and hold youth activities at his house. The first time he did this, most of the youth were still in the "getting to know you" stage. One of us asked what his favorite animal was. He replied, "The rooster." The rooster? I was surprised at such an odd response, and the others seemed to share this reaction. Then he broke into an imitation

of a rooster's strut. By this time, we were in hysterics. It was then that I realized how much his calling had really affected me.

I grew to love this man, my bishop, who could make us laugh and who was always there when we needed him. It made me think of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and how getting to know Him, as a convert myself, made a big difference in my life. Bishop Guluka is the most Christlike person I know. As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we gain testimonies by drawing closer to God and His Son. Likewise, by befriending our Church leaders, we can receive guidance. I learned that lesson through one of my most reliable friends—the bishop. **NE**



## JUST ONE SIP

BY DAN BARKER

While in high school in Alberta, Canada, I went to watch our junior and senior football teams play back-to-back games in the city playoffs. The games were in late October, and it was very cold. I had applied a number of thick layers of clothes, but I became very cold into the second game. I was so cold that I was shivering.

The people behind me noticed I was cold and offered a hot drink of coffee from their thermos.

I was tempted as I saw the steam coming off the thermos and thought how good it would feel to warm my insides. It would only be one drink, and no one would know. Then I thought of my parents and teachers who had steered me straight and trained me to prepare for this situation. I could remember the lessons in family home evening, Sunday School, priesthood meetings, and seminary that taught me how freedom is gained by obeying our Father's commandments.

As the cup was being poured, I remembered previous mistakes, and the result of those mistakes on my life. I resolved to do the right thing. I thanked them for their offer but refused the coffee. As I walked home after the games, my heart felt light. I now understood better than ever the freedom gained from obedience to the commandments and what my parents, teachers, and the general authorities were trying so hard to teach me. **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](mailto: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.

# From BOND TO BAGUIO

Blake McKeown, popularly known as the “rookie,” publicly left his post on Bondi Beach last May as a lifeguard in the Australian reality television show *Bondi Rescue* to perform another kind of rescue. He accepted a call to serve in the Philippines Baguio Mission. He shared this news and his feelings with colleagues and audiences on the show.

“When I found out I’d be going to the Philippines I was stoked to be going somewhere overseas and different,” he said. “It’s a big step. I will miss the beach for sure, but going on a mission is important to me. It is something I have been working toward all my life.”

Blake is from Penrith, Australia, and has taken part in junior triathlons, so he is a strong swimmer and runner. He started lifeguarding at swimming pools in the Penrith area before he became the youngest and first trainee lifeguard to be hired at Bondi Beach when he was 18 years old.

When asked about his favorite sports, Blake says, “To watch I like a good game of rugby. But to participate in I like cycling, as it’s just me on the bike, and it’s about endurance—it’s full of little mind games. It’s not about who’s the best rider, it’s who rides the best.”

On being a lifeguard Elder McKeown says, “There’s nothing I’d rather have done for the past two years than work on the beach—it’s the best job in the world—but for the next two years there’s nothing better I want to do than serve a mission. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not a religion you can just say you’re part of; it’s a religion you have to live. It’s my life. I would be a very, very different person if it wasn’t for the Church.”

*Blake McKeown from the Australian reality TV show Bondi Rescue has accepted a call to serve a mission in the Philippines.*





**Mutual Activity Idea**

- Organize a tournament based on childhood recess games such as hopscotch, four-square, jacks, or marbles. Mark the lines needed for the games on the floor of the cultural hall with masking tape. Emphasize having fun over the competition.

**Personal Progress or Duty to God Idea**

- Read the article “Anna’s Afghans” on page 28. Choose someone in your ward that has a talent or skill you would like to learn. Ask them if they would agree to teach you.

Be dependable and on time in keeping appointments with them. You might discover a new friend.

**Family Home Evening Idea**

- Introduce a “That Was Nice” jar. Each time a family member does something nice (even simple things), write them on a slip of paper and put them in the jar. For children too young to write, have them ask an older sibling or a parent to help. Each week at the beginning of family home evening, open the jar and read the slips. Your family could start watching for the nice things done for each other.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (online at [www.lds.org/gospellibrary](http://www.lds.org/gospellibrary), in the Shortcuts section), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these resources helpful in enhancing lessons 43–46 in Young Women and 43–49 in Aaronic Priesthood.

**Young Women Manual 3**

**Lesson 43: Association with Others**

Q&A (friends don’t come to church) *New Era*, Aug. 2008, 14.  
 Russell Wilcox, “Is Anyone Laughing?” *New Era*, Feb. 2007, 34.  
 “You Mean the World to Me,” *New Era*, Apr. 2004, 40.

**Lesson 44: Avoiding Crisis Living**

President Thomas S. Monson, “Three Gates Only You Can Open,” *New Era*, Aug. 2008, 2.  
 Amelia Stone, “Something Had to Give,” *New Era*, Aug. 2007, 24.  
 Annie Valentine Tintle, “Too Busy to Care,” *New Era*, June 2007, 8.

**Lesson 45: Choosing a Vocation**

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 Q&A (what should I do with my life), *New Era*, July 2005, 16.  
 Robert D. Hales, “Called of God,” *Ensign*, July 2008, 8.

**Lesson 46: Money Management**

Danielle Nye Poulter, “Taking Credit,” *New Era*, Aug. 2006, 34.  
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**Lesson 43: Thoughts and Language**

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 Janet Thomas, “All for One,” *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 20.  
 Carl Webb, “Something Better to Do,” *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 14.

**Lesson 45: Strengthening Testimonies by Bearing Them**

“I Believe in Christ,” *New Era*, Mar. 2008, 18.  
 Paul K. Sybrowsky, “Gaining a Testimony,” *New Era*, Feb. 2008, 40.

**Lesson 46: Effective Home Teaching**

Sedley Parkinson, “Knock Again,” *New Era*, May 2007, 8.  
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**Lesson 47: Honesty**

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 Q&A (I lie a lot), *New Era*, Nov. 2006, 14.

**Lesson 48: Preparing to Serve through Education**

M. Russell Ballard, “Thinking Straight,” *New Era*, Mar. 1985, 44.  
 Paul VanDenBerghe, “Michael Knows,” *New Era*, May 2006, 20.

**Lesson 49: We Have a Wonderful Legacy**

Mandi Andre, “Because of the Restoration,” *New Era*, Dec. 2006, 36.  
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**SUDOKU PUZZLE**

Thank you so much for putting in a scripture-related Sudoku puzzle in the July 2008 issue. I love Sudoku puzzles, and I especially enjoyed this one. It helped me to memorize the scripture, and now I remember it every day. This little game has proved to be helpful in my life.

*Shaney W., Washington*

*Editor's note: To see the Sudoku puzzle and its solution, go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org).*

**A VALUABLE TOOL**

As a long-time leader and teacher of youth, I want to thank you for your many fine stories and articles. A week has rarely gone by when I have not used the *New Era* to supplement my lessons. It is a valuable tool for teaching gospel principles.

*Betty H., California*

**HIDDEN TREASURE**

Imagine my surprise as I read "My Family Treasure Hunt" (May 2008) to find that the author and I share the same relative, Joseph Argyle. Some of her information sent me on a treasure hunt of my own. I found information on relatives that were only names before. One never knows where treasure is hidden.

*Linda W., Utah*

**ALL OVER THE WORLD**

I appreciate how the *New Era* has been using comments from youth from all over the world in the magazine! It truly shows how widespread the Church is and that the true gospel of Jesus Christ is flooding the earth. But the gospel cannot spread without us—each member—doing our part. And with the *New Era* proving how far the gospel has traveled (that missionary work does spread the gospel), it encourages me to be a better missionary.

*Lori, Arizona*

*With the New Era proving how far the gospel has traveled, it encourages me to be a better missionary.*

**FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS**

I really enjoy reading the *New Era*. When I read them I am touched by the Spirit. I especially liked the article "Meeting Your Goliath" (June 2008). I liked how it relates to us teens: that even though we may not be fighting nine-foot-tall giants, every day we fight temptations that Satan throws at us.

*Steven S.*

**A NOTE TO THE GOOD GIRLS**

I would like to thank Rhett Wilkinson for writing "A Note to the Good Girls" in the May 2008 *New Era*. I moved to Korea a year ago, and it is still hard for me. There aren't very many members of the Church who speak English, and there are only about 300 students in my school. This note really touched me. It helped me realize my true worth and that I am a daughter of God. I taped it to my door to help remind me to do good, even if I think no one is looking.

*Aimee H., Seoul, Korea*

I really enjoyed the article "A Note to the Good Girls" (May 2008). This article totally explains my feelings about girls and our standards. I am glad that I could read this article and think about the girls in my ward and also the other girls that I know who belong to the Church who are living our standards and are a good influence. Thanks to all you young women out there who are setting a great example. I really appreciate and respect you and your efforts.

*Ethan G., Utah*

To read more letters, go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org).

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

ILLUSTRATED BY SCOTT GREER



## CHANGE OF SEASONS

BY DEAN L. LARSEN

This morning,  
Autumn coyly peered through crimson leaves,  
Reached forth her russet hand in soft caress;

And Summer,  
In a mellow mood,  
Promptly yielded to her touch.



### COMING NEXT MONTH

- *Play and sing a new Christmas song and listen to it being performed online.*
- *Read the prophecies of the coming of Christ from the scriptures.*
- *Find out what's wrong with energy drinks.*
- *Read about teens in one Alaskan branch that stay in touch and attend seminary by telephone.*
- *Discover a great story to read on the night before Christmas.*

*Enjoy these and more Christmas articles in the upcoming December 2008 New Era.*

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