

THE **New Era**

NOVEMBER 2010

**SPECIAL
SECTION—
GENERAL
CONFERENCE
AND YOU**

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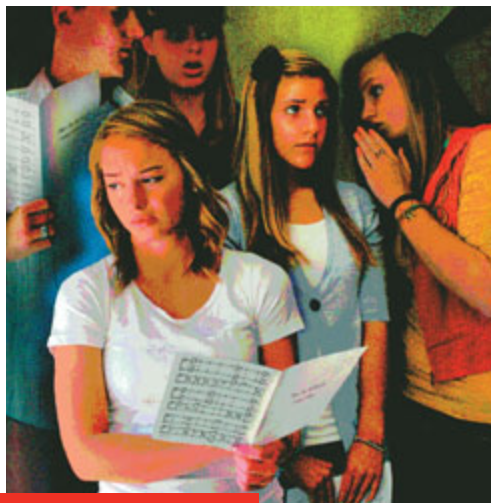


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Prophet

President Thomas S. Monson



President Monson said, “I hope that we will take the time to read the conference talks, . . . for they are deserving of our careful study.”

This section is intended to help and encourage you to read and learn from general conference. You can read all the general conference messages in this month’s Ensign magazine.

You can also view video, download MP3s, or read the text of the November 2010 general conference online at conference.lds.org.

Prepare for Service

“Young men, I admonish you to prepare for service as a missionary. Keep yourselves clean and pure and worthy to represent the Lord.

Maintain your health and strength. Study the scriptures. Where such is available, participate in seminary or institute. Familiarize yourself with the missionary handbook *Preach My Gospel*.

“A word to you young sisters: while you do not have the same priesthood responsibility as do the young men to serve as full-time missionaries, you also make a valuable contribution as missionaries, and we welcome your service.”

An Attitude of Gratitude

“We can lift ourselves and others as well when we refuse to remain in the realm of negative thought and cultivate within our hearts an attitude of gratitude. If ingratitude be numbered among the serious sins, then gratitude takes its place among the noblest of virtues. Someone has said that ‘gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all others.’ . . .

“Do material possessions make us happy and grateful? Perhaps momentarily. However, those things which provide deep and lasting happiness and gratitude are the things which

money cannot buy: our families, the gospel, good friends, our health, our abilities, the love we receive from those around us. Unfortunately, these are some of the things we allow ourselves to take for granted. . . .

“A grateful heart, then, comes through expressing gratitude to our Heavenly Father for His blessings and to those around us for all that they bring into our lives. This requires conscious effort—at least until we have truly learned and cultivated an attitude of gratitude.”

You Choose

“Decisions are constantly before us. To make them wisely, courage is needed—the courage to say no, the courage to say yes. Decisions *do* determine destiny.

“I plead with you to make a determination right here, right now, not to deviate from the path which will lead to our goal: eternal life with our Father in Heaven. Along that straight and true path there are other goals: missionary service, temple marriage, Church activity, scripture study, prayer, temple work. There are countless worthy goals to reach as we travel through life. Needed is our commitment to reach them. . . .

“No temptation, no pressure, no enticing can overcome us unless we allow it such. If we make the wrong choice, we have no one to blame but ourselves. President Brigham Young

once expressed this truth by relating it to himself. Said he: 'If Brother Brigham shall take a wrong track, and be shut out of the Kingdom of heaven, no person will be to blame but Brother Brigham. I am the only being in heaven, earth, or hell, that can be blamed.' He continued: 'This will equally apply to every Latter-day Saint. Salvation is an individual operation.'

100 Percent

"When he was 16 years old, Brother Christensen decided, among other things, that he would not play sports on Sunday. Years later, when he attended Oxford University in England, he played center on the basketball team. That year they had an undefeated season and went through to the British equivalent of what in the United States would be the NCAA basketball tournament.

"They won their games fairly easily in the tournament, making it to the final four. It was then that Brother Christensen looked at the schedule and, to his absolute horror, saw that the final basketball game was scheduled to be played on a Sunday. He and the team had worked so hard to get where they were, and he was the starting center. . . .

"He went to his coach, telling him how sorry he was that he wouldn't be playing in the final game. Then he went to the Sunday meetings in the local ward while his team played



without him. He prayed mightily for their success. They did win.

"That fateful, difficult decision was made more than 30 years ago. Brother Christensen has said that as time has passed, he considers it one of the most important decisions he ever made. It would have been very easy to have said, 'You know, in general, keeping the Sabbath day holy is the right commandment, but in my particular extenuating circumstances, it's okay, just this once, if I don't do it.' However, he says his entire life has turned out to be an unending stream of extenuating circumstances, and had he crossed the line just that once, then the next time something came up that was so demanding and critical, it would have been so much easier to cross the line again. The lesson he learned is that it is easier to keep the commandments 100 percent of the time than it is 98 percent of the time."

I loved how encouraging conference was. President Thomas S. Monson's talk on gratitude was revelatory for me. I never realized all that I could do. It's incredible to listen to conference. I love it and wish it happened more often.

Carol J., 16, Idaho, USA

During his opening remarks, President Thomas S. Monson announced the construction of a temple in Urdaneta City, Philippines. This is amazing! It will be just 30 minutes away. Truly no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing. Having a temple in our midst will be a source of strength and inspiration.

Richard S., Philippines

NEmore

For complete text of President Monson's conference addresses, go to conference.lds.org.

INVITING THE

Spirit

**Trust in God**

“More than any other people on earth, we have, through the glorious events of the Restoration of the gospel, felt the peace that the Lord offered His

people with the words ‘Be still, and know that I am God.’”

“If you trust God enough to listen for His message in every sermon, song, and prayer in this conference, you will find it. And if you then go and do what He would have you do, your power to trust Him will grow, and in time you will be overwhelmed with gratitude to find that He has come to trust you.”

Keep the Holy Ghost with You

“We all know that confirmation into the Church gave us the gift of the Holy Ghost. But the companionship of the Holy Ghost, the manifestations of it in our life and service, require us to put our lives in order to qualify.”

“Let us do whatever is required to qualify for the Holy Ghost as our companion and then let us go forward

President Henry B. Eyring reminded us that the Church leaders are called of God to give messages to us. While their talks are directed at the whole Church, I do believe that their messages were meant for me.

Maggie, 16, USA

**President Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in the First Presidency

fearlessly that we will be given the powers to do whatever the Lord calls us to do. That growth in power to serve may come slowly, it may come in small steps that are difficult for you to see, but it will come.”

Speaking in Church

“I urge all of us, young and old, who are called to speak in a meeting in the name of the Lord to dismiss our feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy. We don’t have to use soaring language or convey deep insights. Simple words of testimony will do. The Spirit will give you the words for you to speak and will carry them down into the hearts of humble people who look for truth from God. If we keep trying to speak for the Lord, we will be surprised someday to learn that we have warned, exhorted, taught, and invited with the help of the Spirit to bless lives, with power far beyond our own.”

Pondering the Scriptures

“Reading, studying, and pondering are not the same. We read words and we may get ideas. We study and we may discover patterns and connections in scripture. But when we ponder, we invite revelation by the Spirit. Pondering, to me, is the thinking and the praying I do after reading and studying in the scriptures carefully.”

NEmore

For complete text of President Eyring’s conference addresses, go to conference.lds.org.

Humility

AND BASIC TRUTHS

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor in the First Presidency



Back to Basics

“The holy scriptures and the spoken word of the living prophets give emphasis to the fundamental principles and doctrines of the

gospel. The reason we return to these foundational principles, to the pure doctrines, is because they are the gateway to truths of profound meaning. They are the door to experiences of sublime importance that would otherwise be beyond our capacity to comprehend. These simple, basic principles are the key to living in harmony with God and man. They are the keys to opening the windows of heaven. They lead us to the peace, joy, and understanding that Heavenly Father has promised to His children who hear and obey Him.”

“Let us simplify our lives a little. Let us make the changes necessary to refocus our lives on the sublime beauty of the simple, humble path of Christian discipleship—the path that leads always toward a life of meaning, gladness, and peace.”

Beware of Pride

“Pride is a deadly cancer. It is a gateway sin that leads to a host of other human weaknesses. In fact, it could be said that every other sin is, in essence, a manifestation of pride.”

“Humility directs our attention and



love toward others and to Heavenly Father’s purposes. Pride does the opposite. Pride draws its energy and strength from the deep wells of selfishness. The moment we stop obsessing with ourselves and lose ourselves in service, our pride diminishes and begins to die.”

Don’t Beat Yourself Up

“Some people can’t get along with themselves. They criticize and belittle themselves all day long until they begin to hate themselves. May I suggest that you reduce the rush and take a little extra time to get to know yourself better. . . . Learn to see yourself as Heavenly Father sees you—as His precious daughter or son with divine potential.”

“Some suppose that humility is about beating ourselves up. Humility

does not mean convincing ourselves that we are worthless, meaningless, or of little value. Nor does it mean denying or withholding the talents God has given us. We don’t discover humility by thinking less *of* ourselves; we discover humility by thinking less *about* ourselves.”

General conference was a great experience! I especially appreciated President Uchtdorf’s talk. I loved the part where he said that we shouldn’t criticize or belittle ourselves but should learn to see ourselves as Heavenly Father sees us. This helped me to have confidence in myself.

Caroline B., 13, Idaho, USA

NEmore

For complete text of President Uchtdorf’s conference addresses, go to conference.lds.org.

Faith and Wisdom

TO FOLLOW

THE STING OF THE SCORPION

As a seven-year-old boy living in the Arabian Peninsula, I was consistently told by my parents to *always* wear my shoes, and I understood why. I knew that shoes would protect my feet against the many threats to be found in the desert, such as

snakes, scorpions, and thorns. One morning after a night's camping in the desert, I wanted to go exploring, but I did not want to bother with putting on my shoes. I rationalized that I was only going for a little wander and I would stay close by the camp. So instead of shoes, I wore flip-flops. I told myself that flip-flops were shoes—of a sort. And anyway, what could possibly happen?

As I walked along the cool sand—in my flip-flops—I felt something like a thorn going into the arch of my foot. I looked down and saw not a thorn but a scorpion. As my mind registered the scorpion and I realized what had just happened, the pain of the sting began to rise from my foot and up my leg. I grabbed the top of my leg to try and stop the searing pain from moving farther, and I cried out for help. My parents came running from the camp.

As my father battered the scorpion with a shovel, an adult friend who was camping with us heroically tried to suck the venom from my foot. At this moment I thought that I was going to die. I sobbed while my parents loaded me into a car and set off across the desert at high speed toward the nearest hospital, which was over two hours away. The pain all through my leg was excruciating, and for that entire journey, I assumed that I was dying.

When we finally reached the hospital, however, the doctor was able to assure us that only small infants and the severely malnourished are threatened by the sting of that type of scorpion. He administered an anesthetic, which numbed my leg and took away any sensation of pain. Within 24 hours I no longer had any effects from the sting of the scorpion. But I had learned a powerful lesson.

I had known that when my parents told me to wear shoes, they did not mean flip-flops; I was old enough to know that flip-flops did not provide the same protection as a pair of shoes. But that morning in the desert, I disregarded what I knew to be right. I ignored what my parents had repeatedly taught me. I had been both lazy and a little rebellious, and I paid a price for it.

Elder Patrick Kearon of the Seventy

I thought conference was wonderful. Some of the emphasis was on following the prophet, following the Holy Ghost and His promptings, and not straying to the temptations of the world. The counsel was so direct and wonderful. There were many other lessons that I learned. When the November Ensign arrives, I look forward to reading the talks again.

Hannah T., 13, California, USA

I love the feeling I get when I listen to them testify. It gives me a glimpse of true happiness. It reminds me of what I can achieve at the end of this life if I stay on the path and do what is right. I have a testimony that the words spoken at conference are true. I know that the talks given really are inspired, and if we listen to them, we will be blessed.

Bailey F., 13, New York, USA

I noticed that a lot of the talks were about following the prophet and listening to his words and the words of the Apostles. This conference testified to me that President Thomas S. Monson really is a prophet of God and that God and Jesus Christ really do speak to him and inspire him.

Taylor S., 16, Idaho, USA



We teach a standard of moral conduct that will protect us from Satan’s many substitutes or counterfeits for marriage. We must understand that any persuasion to enter into any relationship that is not in harmony with the principles of the gospel must be wrong. From the Book of Mormon we learn that “wickedness never was happiness.”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In our day the prophet of God has told us to keep the commandments, to love our fellowman, to serve, to take care of the rising generation, to rescue the inactive or less active—to do many things that we call prophetic priorities. We need to understand that these priorities are God’s priorities and the prophet is His voice in communicating them to all of the Church and the world.

Elder Claudio R. M. Costa of the Seventy

Perfection does not come in this life, but we exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and keep our covenants. President Monson has promised, “Your testimony, when constantly nourished, will keep you safe.” We push our spiritual roots deep, feasting daily on the words of Christ in the scriptures. We trust in the words of living prophets, placed before us to show us the way. We pray and pray and listen to the quiet voice of the Holy Ghost that leads us along and speaks peace to our soul. Whatever challenges arise, we never, never leave Him.

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Withstanding

T E M P T A T I O N

CATCHING FISH

The goal of the fly fisherman is to catch trout

through skillful deception. The adept fisherman studies trout behavior, weather, the water current, and the types of insects trout eat and when those insects hatch. He will often craft by hand the lures he uses. He knows these artificial insects embedded with tiny hooks need to be a perfect deception because the trout will identify even the slightest flaw and reject the fly.

What a thrill it is to watch a trout break the surface of the water, inhale the fly, and resist until it is finally exhausted and reeled in. The test is the pitting of the fisherman's knowledge

and skill against the noble trout.

The use of artificial lures to fool and catch a fish is an example of the way Lucifer often tempts, deceives, and tries to ensnare us.

Like the fly fisherman who knows that trout are driven by hunger, Lucifer knows our "hunger," or weaknesses, and tempts us with counterfeit lures which, if taken, can cause us to be yanked from the stream of life into his unmerciful influence. And unlike a fly fisherman who catches and releases the fish unharmed back into the water, Lucifer will not voluntarily let go. His goal is to make his victims as miserable as he is.

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

So much of what the speakers were saying seemed especially for me. I received a greater testimony of the importance of the gospel in my life and the lives of my family. I especially loved Elder Ballard's talk about Satan's counterfeits, and avoiding addictive behaviors and media, as well as substances. I know that God loves me personally and that He has called prophets and apostles to help me return home to Him.

Emma G., 15, Missouri, USA

I noticed the word fundamentals a lot. I thought this was interesting because it means we need to pay attention to the basic and most important things. I also liked President Boyd K. Packer's talk because it covered lots of basic principles.

Ceana B., 15, Oregon, USA

When I was watching general conference, I was so very humbled. I learned a lot of great messages about young people and the problems we are faced with in everyday life. With all the temptation we are faced with, we must stay on the strait and narrow path to Heavenly Father.

Abigail C., 13, New York, USA

The old saying "The Lord is voting for me, and Lucifer is voting against me, but it is my vote that counts" describes a doctrinal certainty that our agency is more powerful than the adversary's will. Agency is precious. We can foolishly, blindly give it away, but it cannot be forcibly taken from us.

There is also an age-old excuse: "The devil made me do it." Not so! He can deceive you and mislead you, but he does not have the power to force you or anyone else to transgress or to keep you in transgression.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Parents can prevent a lot of heartache by teaching their children to postpone romantic relationships until the time comes when they are ready for marriage. Prematurely pairing off with a boyfriend or girlfriend is dangerous. Becoming a "couple" creates emotional intimacy, which too often leads to physical intimacy. Satan knows this sequence and uses it to his advantage. He will do whatever he can to keep young men from serving missions and to prevent temple marriages.

Elder Larry R. Lawrence of the Seventy



It is contrary to the economy of heaven for the Lord to repeat to each of us individually what He has already revealed to us collectively. The scriptures contain the words of Christ. They are the voice of the Lord. Studying the scriptures trains us to hear the Lord's voice.

David M. McConkie, first counselor in the Sunday School general presidency

Satan's increasing influence in the world is allowed to provide an atmosphere in which to prove ourselves. While he causes havoc today, Satan's final destiny was fixed by Jesus Christ through His Atonement and the Resurrection. The devil will not triumph. Even now he must operate within the bounds set by the Lord. He cannot take away any blessing that has been earned. He cannot alter character that has been woven from righteous decisions. He has no power to destroy eternal bonds forged in a holy temple between a husband, wife, and children. He cannot quench true faith. He cannot take away your testimony. Yes, these things can be lost by succumbing to his temptations. But he has no power in and of himself to destroy them.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Freedom and light have never been easy to attain or maintain. Since the War in Heaven, the forces of evil have used every means possible to destroy agency and extinguish light. The assault on moral principles and religious freedom has never been stronger.

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Freedom

AND CHOICE

THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ACTIONS

I felt really uplifted this conference. I realized that most of the talks were about agency and the consequences we receive, either good or bad, from our agency. I really am looking forward to taking these things I have learned and applying them to my life.

Elizabeth P., 14, Utah, USA

I felt like the people who were speaking knew exactly what I needed to hear. I felt like it was an absolute flood of spiritual information, and I'm so glad their talks will come in print, so I will have more time to absorb all of it.

Aaron S., 15, North Carolina, USA

This conference was truly amazing. I loved that all the talks had something that I could apply to my life or work harder on so I can become a better person.

Haley H., Georgia, USA

Shortly after my sweetheart, Devonna, and I were married, she shared with me a story about how she learned in her youth this important doctrine that we are free to choose but that we are not free to choose the consequences of our actions. With

the help of my daughter Shelly, I would like to relate Sister Arnold's experience:

"When I was 15 years old, I often felt that there were too many rules and commandments. I wasn't sure that a normal, fun-loving teenager could enjoy life with so many restrictions. Furthermore, the many hours spent working on my father's ranch were seriously dipping into my time with my friends.

"This particular summer, one of my jobs was to ensure that the cows grazing on the mountain pasture did not break through the fence and get into the wheat field. A cow grazing on the growing wheat can bloat, causing suffocation and death. One cow in particular was always trying to stick her head through the fence. One morning, as I was riding my horse along the fence line checking on the cattle, I found that the cow had broken through the fence and gotten into the wheat field. To my dismay, I realized that she had been eating wheat for quite some time because she was already bloated and looked much like a balloon. I thought, 'You stupid cow! That fence was there to protect you, yet you broke through it and you have eaten so much wheat that your life is in danger.'

"I raced back to the farmhouse to get my dad. However, when we returned, I found her lying dead on the ground. I was saddened by the loss of that cow. We had provided her with a beautiful mountain pasture to graze in and a fence to keep her away from the dangerous wheat, yet she foolishly broke through the fence and caused her own death.

"As I thought about the role of the fence, I realized that it was a protection, just as the commandments and my parents' rules were a protection. The commandments and rules were for my own good. I realized that obedience to the commandments could save me from physical and spiritual death. That enlightenment was a pivotal point in my life."

Elder Mervyn B. Arnold of the Seventy

*NE*more

For short video clips of conference messages for youth, go to youth.lds.org.



Remember, brothers and sisters, any kind of addiction is to surrender to something, thus relinquishing agency and becoming dependent. Thus, video-gaming and texting on cell phones need to be added to the list. Some gamers claim to spend up to 18 hours a day going through level after level of video games, neglecting all other aspects of their lives. Texting on cell phones can become an addiction, causing the important interpersonal human communication to become lost. Not long ago a bishop told me two of his youth were standing side by side texting one another rather than talking to each other.

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

The scriptures teach us that we do have agency, and our righteous exercise of agency always makes a difference in the opportunities we have and our ability to act upon them and progress eternally.

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

Young men, I challenge you to build your lives on a foundation of truth and righteousness. It is the only foundation that will stand the pressures of this life and endure through the eternities. The priesthood you bear is a special gift, for the giver is the Lord Himself. Use it, magnify it, and live worthy of it. I want you to know that I have a special and personal testimony of its power. It has blessed my life in so many ways.

I also challenge you to determine today that you will honor this great blessing and prepare to advance in each office of the Aaronic Priesthood—deacon, teacher, and priest. Prepare yourselves for the great blessing of receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood, which you will need to be worthy to receive before you serve as a full-time missionary. The Lord needs you to prepare yourselves for His service, especially the great responsibility you will have of declaring His gospel to the world. I promise you if you will prepare to receive His holy priesthood, He will literally pour out blessings upon your heads.

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Yes, faith is a choice, and it must be sought after and developed. Thus, we are responsible for our own faith. We are also responsible for our lack of faith. The choice is yours.

Bishop Richard C. Edgley, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric



Repentance,

PEACE, AND FORGIVENESS

PAINTING YOURSELF INTO A CORNER

Hearing conference helped me. It reminded me of my life and my duty here on earth. Pres. Thomas S. Monson stated, “Endure to the end,” and I plan on following his counsel.

Alec M., 13, Arizona, USA

I love listening to the prophet. I feel like I’m listening to the Savior when he speaks. My impression is this is the true Church. It is a feeling of peace and surety that I feel in my soul. I cannot deny this. I am so happy to know that there is a way back to my Heavenly Father, no matter the mistakes I have made. The Savior is there for me, and all I have to do is reach out, have faith, and follow the teachings of Jesus.

Robyn B., Texas, USA

Conference was amazing. The Spirit was so strong, and I loved listening to all the speakers and the great things they had to share! I feel like I become a better person and I am encouraged to do what is right. They remind me of my Savior’s love for me and how much He wants me to return to Him, worthily.

Julia I., 15, Utah, USA

One day my father assigned me to varnish a wooden floor. I made the choice to begin at the door and work my way *into* the room. When I was almost finished, I realized I had left myself no way to get out. There was no window or door on the other side. I had literally painted myself into a corner. I had no place to go. I was stuck.

Whenever we disobey, we spiritually paint ourselves into a corner and are captive to our choices. Like repentance, turning around and walking across a newly varnished floor means more work—a lot of re-sanding and refinishing! Returning to the Lord isn’t easy, but it is worth it.

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



Every soul confined in a prison of sin, guilt, or perversion has a key to the gate. The key is labeled “repentance.” If you know how to use this key, the adversary cannot hold you. The twin principles of repentance and forgiveness exceed in strength the awesome power of the tempter. If you are bound by a habit or an addiction that is unworthy, you must stop conduct that is harmful. Angels will coach you, and priesthood leaders will guide you through those difficult times.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Savior extend[s] His arms to embrace us during our times of true repentance.

He teaches us to become “a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord.” And then we will reconcile ourselves to God, and we will become friends to God. I bear witness of the reality and power of the Savior’s Atonement to cleanse, purify, and make us and our homes holy as we strive to put off the natural man and follow Him.

Elder Juan A. Uceda of the Seventy

NEmore

For more information about the new Duty to God program, go to DutyToGod.lds.org.



RETURNING WHAT WAS STOLEN

Many years ago when I was practicing law in California, a friend and client who was not a member of our faith came in to see me and with great enthusiasm showed me a letter he had received from an LDS bishop of a

nearby ward. The bishop reported that a member of his congregation, a former employee of my client, had taken materials from my client's work site and had rationalized that they were surplus. But after becoming a committed Latter-day Saint and attempting to follow Jesus Christ, this employee recognized that what he had done was dishonest. Enclosed in the letter was a sum of money from the man to cover not only the cost of the materials but also interest. My client was impressed that the Church through lay leadership would assist this man in his effort to be reconciled to God.

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

I enjoyed conference this year because it help to build my faith. It seemed like every talk was directed to me. Each person telling me a different way to put my trust in the Lord. I know that what was said in conference is modern revelation. I know that as I strive to do what I have been taught, I will receive strength from the Lord.

Caleb W., 16, Utah, USA

My feeling towards the conference is, I want every member of my family to hear with me everything that our leaders say, so it can be something to change their hearts and minds to join us as part of this Church.

Penisimani M., 13, Tongatapu, Tonga

I really enjoyed general conference. The Spirit was extremely strong throughout the meetings. I know that the speakers are truly called of God. The talks focused on the youth I really enjoyed. It reminded me that I am loved and that I have people watching out for me and all of the other youth!

Abby O., 13, Utah, USA

NEmore

For more information on Personal Progress, go to PersonalProgress.lds.org.

FINDING

Answers

It seemed like everything was going wrong with every attempt I made to tune in to conference. Finally, I took a train to the nearest stake center with some of the missionaries in my city and got to watch the last session in peace. That session was truly perfect for me. Every question I had prepared beforehand, hoping to find answers in some of the talks, was addressed and answered powerfully with the Spirit there speaking peace to my soul and helping me know exactly what I needed at that time.

Brooke L., 17, Massachusetts, USA

In my ward, all of the young women were able to use this general conference to complete a value project for Personal Progress. We each decorated a general conference notebook and took notes on each speaker, paying special attention to those who spoke on the value we were completing. I used this for my faith project, and it strengthened my faith so much! I was assured by the Holy Ghost that the men who spoke to us are truly prophets of God.

Emily P., 15, California, USA

Why is it so important to gain my own testimony?

We all need a personal testimony of truth. As our faith develops, we necessarily rely on the words and faith of others, like our parents, teachers, or priesthood leaders (see D&C 46:14). But if we are solely dependent on one particular priesthood leader or teacher for our personal testimony of the truth instead of getting that testimony through the personal line, we will be forever vulnerable to disillusionment by the action of that person. When it comes to a mature knowledge or testimony of the truth, we should not be dependent on a mortal mediator between us and our Heavenly Father.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

What should I say when people ask me about the Church?

Let your response be warm and joyful. And let your response be



relevant to that individual. Remember, he or she is also a child of God, that very God who dearly wants that person to qualify for eternal life and return to Him one day. You may be the very one to open the door to his or her salvation and understanding of the doctrine of Christ.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Can I still repent?

Not one of you has thrown away your last chance. You can change, you can come back, you can claim mercy. Come unto the only One who can heal, and you will find peace.

Elder Patrick Kearon of the Seventy

Do I have to be so different from others?

Some ask, “Do I have to be so different from others?” “Can’t I be a disciple of Christ without thinking so much about my behavior?” “Can’t I love Christ without keeping the law of chastity?” “Can’t I love Him and do what I want on Sunday?” Jesus gave a simple answer: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Seventy

How do we keep the Holy Ghost with us?

Our invitations for the companionship of the Holy Ghost occur in many ways: through the making and keeping of covenants; by praying

General conference messages often hold answers to the questions that you or your peers may have.



sincerely as individuals and families; by searching the scriptures diligently; through strengthening appropriate relationships with family members and friends; by seeking after virtuous thoughts, actions, and language; and by worshipping in our homes, in the holy temple, and at church. Conversely, casualness about or the breaking of covenants and commitments, failing to pray and study the scriptures, and inappropriate thoughts, actions, and language cause the Spirit to withdraw from or to avoid us altogether.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

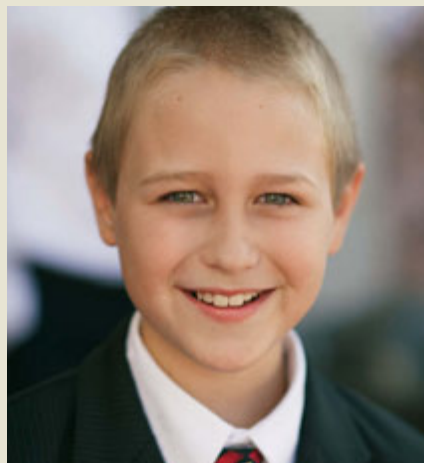
Why is chastity so important?

To be entrusted with the power to create life carries with it the greatest of joys and dangerous temptations. The gift of mortal life and the capacity to kindle other lives is a supernal blessing. Through the righteous

exercise of this power, as in nothing else, we may come close to our Father in Heaven and experience a fullness of joy. This power is not an incidental part of the plan of happiness. It is the key—the very key.

Whether we use this power as the eternal laws require or reject its divine purpose will forever determine what we will become. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Why don't I get answers to my prayers?

With even your strongest faith, God will not always reward you immediately according to your desires. Rather, God will respond with what in His eternal plan is best for you, when it will yield the greatest advantage. Be thankful that sometimes God lets you struggle for a long time before that answer comes. That causes your faith



to increase and your character to grow.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Why do we have so many rules and commandments?

Our kind, wise, and loving Heavenly Father has given us commandments not to restrict us, as the adversary would have us believe, but to bless our lives and to protect our good name and our legacy for our future generations—just as they had for Lehi and Nephi. Just like the cow that received the consequences of her choice, each one of us must learn that the grass is *never* greener on the other side of the fence—nor will it ever be, for “wickedness never was happiness.” Each one of us will receive the consequences of our choices when this life is over. The commandments are clear, they are protective—they are not restrictive—and the wonderful blessings of obedience are numberless!

Elder Mervyn B. Arnold of the Seventy

Answers

I liked David A. Bednar's talk when he said that the Spirit makes you want to act, not be acted upon. Richard G. Scott said: "We become what we want to be by consistently being what we want to become." If we want to be a person who has the Spirit, and therefore have an attitude of gratitude, then we must be constantly worthy of the Spirit, who will help us have a more grateful heart.

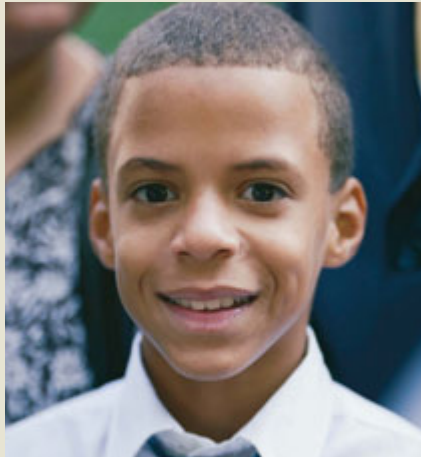
Marina S., 16, Pennsylvania, USA

My seminary teacher challenged my class to write down the things troubling us and then pray. I was touched, because during general conference every single problem I had listed on my paper in seminary, and others that I hadn't, were all addressed. I received guidance for each and every one of my problems.

Tiffany E., 17, Utah, USA

I always love general conference. In each session I felt the Holy Spirit. One of my favorite talks was the one by Elder Costa. I thoroughly enjoyed what he said on prophets and how we need to obey and heed their counsel. I also liked the talk that Elder Scott gave and how the greater faith we have will bring us greater joy.

Emily H., 15, Washington, USA



Why do we call ourselves the only true church?

The Lord has declared that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (D&C 1:30). This restored Church is true because it is the Savior's Church; He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). And it is a living church because of the workings and gifts of the Holy Ghost. How blessed we are to live at a time when the priesthood is upon the earth and we can receive the Holy Ghost.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

I don't really know if I have a testimony. What can I do?

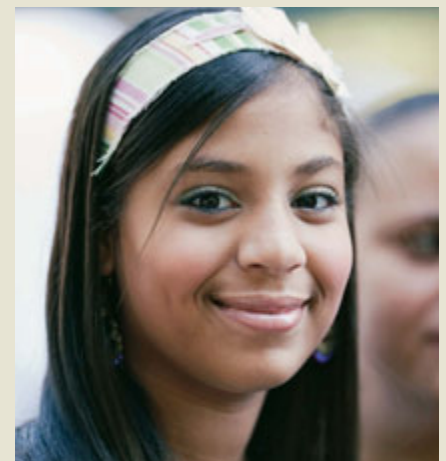
A strong testimony gives peace, comfort, and assurance. It generates the conviction that as the teachings of the Savior are consistently obeyed, life will be beautiful, the future will be

secure, and there will be capacity to overcome the challenges that cross our path. A testimony grows from understanding truth distilled from prayer and the pondering of scriptural doctrine. It is nurtured by living those truths with faith anchored in the secure confidence that the promised results will be obtained.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

If confusion and hopelessness weigh on your mind, *choose* to "awake and arouse your faculties" (Alma 32:27). Humbly approaching the Lord with a broken heart and contrite spirit is the pathway to truth and the Lord's way of light, knowledge, and peace.

If your testimony is immature, untested, and insecure, *choose* to "exercise even a particle of faith"; choose to "experiment upon [His] words" (Alma 32:27). The Savior explained, "If any man will do his



will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17).

Bishop Richard C. Edgley, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric



Is there anything wrong with having sleepovers?

May I express my personal warning about a practice that is common in many cultures. I am referring to sleepovers, or spending the night at the home of a friend. As a bishop I discovered that too many youth violated the Word of Wisdom or the law of chastity for the first time as part of a sleepover. Too often their first exposure to pornography and even their first encounter with the police occurred when they were spending the night away from home.

Elder Larry R. Lawrence of the Seventy

Should I change friends?

Often, becoming prey to sin starts with someone choosing friends

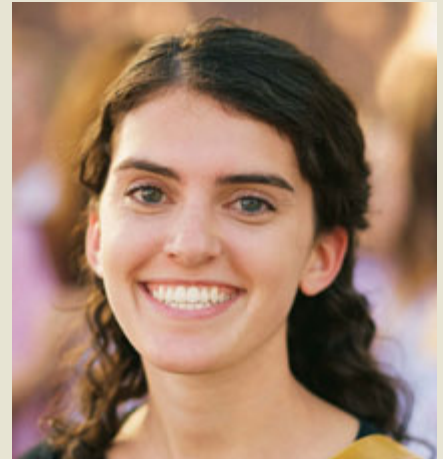
whose standards are not consistent with the gospel; and in order to be popular or to be accepted by peers, the person then compromises gospel principles and laws, going down a path that will bring only pain and sadness to this person and to his or her loved ones.

Elder Jairo Mazzagardi of the Seventy

Should I be the one who decides what I can do with my body?

Those who believe that our bodies are nothing more than the result of evolutionary chance will feel no accountability to God or anyone else for what they do with or to their body. We who have a witness of the broader reality of premortal, mortal, and postmortal eternity, however, must acknowledge that we have a duty to God with respect to this crowning achievement of His physical creation. In Paul's words:

"What? know ye not that your



body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19--20).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

What's so wrong about staying out really late?

When I was a teenager, my curfew was 10:00 p.m. Today, that is the time some go out in order to have fun. Yet we know that it is at night that some of the worst things happen. It is during the dark hours that some youth go to places with inappropriate environments, where music and lyrics do not allow them to have the companionship of the Holy Ghost. Then, under these circumstances, they become easy prey to sin.

Elder Jairo Mazzagardi of the Seventy

Go and Do

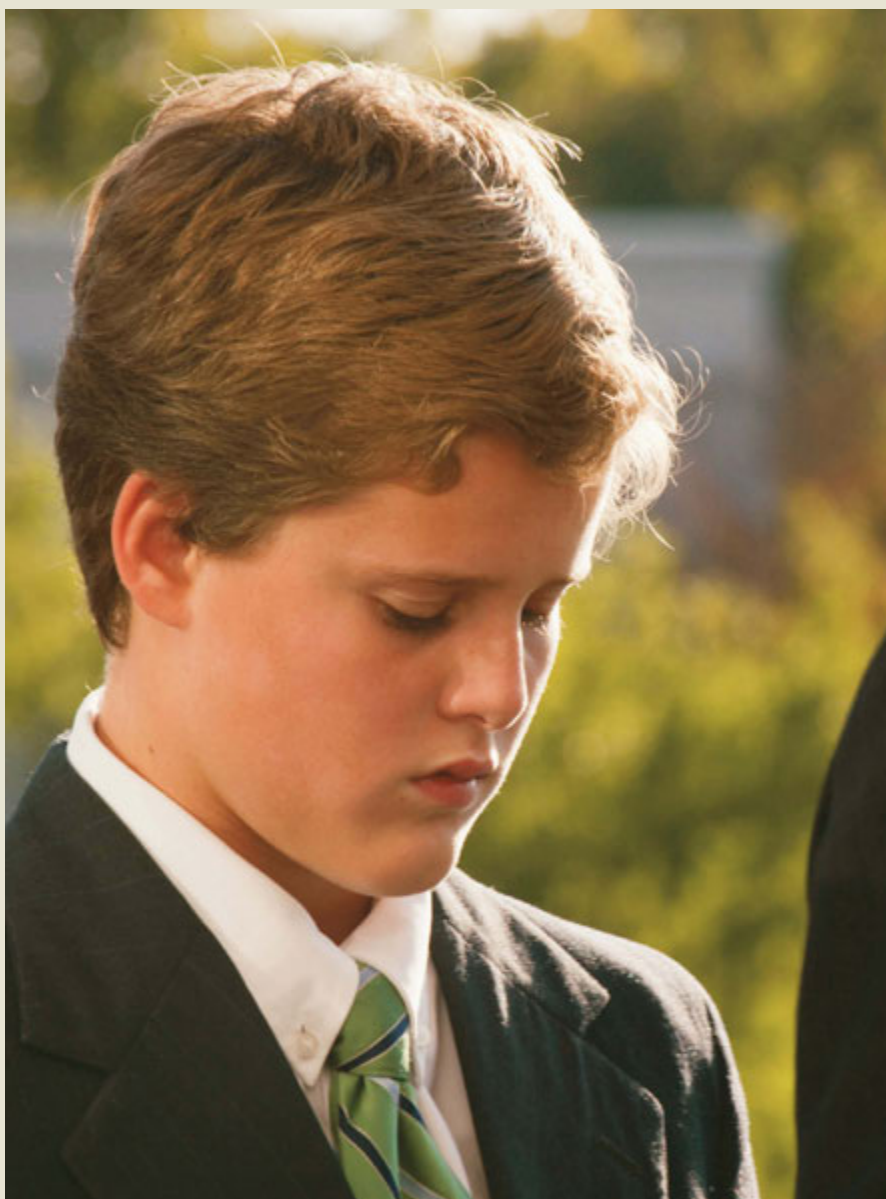
A CALL TO YOUTH

We all know there are special keys, covenants, and responsibilities given to the presiding officers of the Church, but we also know that the Church draws incomparable strength, a truly unique vitality, from the faith, devotion, and contribution of *every* member of this Church, whoever you may be. In whatever country you live, however young or inadequate you feel, or however aged or limited you see yourself as being, I testify you are individually loved of God, you are central to the meaning of His work, and you are cherished and prayed for by the presiding officers of His Church. The personal value, the sacred splendor of every *one* of you, is the very reason there is a plan for salvation and exaltation. Contrary to the parlance of the day, this *is* about *you*.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

God has designed this mortal existence to require nearly constant exertion. I recall the Prophet Joseph Smith's simple statement: "By continuous labor [we] were enabled to get a comfortable maintenance" (Joseph Smith—History 1:55). By work we sustain and enrich life. It enables us to survive the disappointments and tragedies of the mortal experience. Hard-earned achievement brings a sense of self-worth. Work builds and refines character, creates beauty, and is the instrument of our service to one another and to God. A consecrated life is filled with work, sometimes repetitive, sometimes menial, sometimes unappreciated, but always work that improves, orders, sustains, lifts, ministers, aspires.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Young women in the Church learn to set goals through the . . . Personal Progress [program], which focus them toward the temple and their future responsibilities. In Relief Society they continue to progress toward the blessings of the temple and eternal life by increasing their faith and personal righteousness, strengthening their families and homes, and seeking out and helping those who are in need.

Sister Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president

Young men and young women, *you* can start today by being an "example of the believers" in faith and in purity. Strengthen your faith and testimony daily through scripture study and prayer. Keep your baptismal covenant which will keep you pure and worthy of the guidance of the Holy Ghost. You can start today to be that example for others to follow.

Sister Mary N. Cook, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency

Learning

FROM CONFERENCE

THE SCRIPTURES IN GENERAL CONFERENCE

Speakers in general conference taught us from the scriptures. You can learn a lot by simply looking up the scriptures they used. The following scriptures were referred to most often:

- 2 Nephi 2:27*
- D&C 20:77
- Mosiah 3:19*
- John 14:15*
- Ephesians 2:19–21
- 1 Timothy 4:12
- 2 Nephi 2:26
- Mosiah 18:9
- Alma 41:10*
- 2 Nephi 28:21–22
- 3 Nephi 19:9
- D&C 1:38*
- D&C 4:2
- D&C 58:42*
- D&C 81:5
- D&C 121:36–37*
- Moses 1:39*

Here are some other scriptures that were referred to more than once:

- Psalm 46:10
- Isaiah 53:5*
- Amos 3:7*
- Matthew 22:37
- Matthew 5:16*
- Luke 2:49
- Luke 23:34
- John 5:39
- John 6:67
- John 14:6
- John 14:26
- John 15:16
- 1 Corinthians 3:16
- 1 Corinthians 10:13*
- 1 Corinthians 13:8
- 1 Nephi 8:12
- 1 Nephi 8:33
- 1 Nephi 11:25
- 2 Nephi 26:33
- 2 Nephi 32:3*
- 2 Nephi 32:5
- Alma 5:14
- Alma 13:28
- Alma 29:8
- Alma 32:27
- 3 Nephi 19:21
- 3 Nephi 28:11
- Ether 12:6*
- Moroni 7:16*
- Moroni 7:47–48
- D&C 1:19
- D&C 1:30
- D&C 12:8
- D&C 19:16*
- D&C 21:5
- D&C 29:36
- D&C 42:14
- D&C 88:11
- Moses 4:1–3
- Abraham 3:25

A LIST OF LISTS

If you look for lists in general conference, you can find some simple truths and effective counsel to follow. Here are some lists that were given by speakers in general conference:

- Three Rs of choice (President Thomas S. Monson, priesthood session)
- Becoming a successful teacher (David M. McConkie)
- What forms your character? (Elder Richard G. Scott)
- Four lessons from the book of Daniel (Elder L. Tom Perry)
- Because of my faith . . . (Bishop Richard C. Edgley)
- Christ teaches ways to bring peace (Elder Juan A. Uceda)
- Following the prophet (Elders Claudio R. M. Costa and Kevin R. Duncan)

*N*Emore

Watch, read, or listen to conference talks at conference.lds.org.

* Seminary scripture mastery verses

Here are some things that can enhance your study of general conference.

I'm very grateful to live in a world where I can listen to the prophet's voice so easily. Radio, television, live on the Internet. It's everywhere. If I happened to miss one session, I can go online and watch and listen to all of the talks. That in itself is a testimony to me of how far we've come since Joseph Smith's First Vision. I'm grateful for this Church, the gospel, and all of the prophets, seers, and revelators of our time. I'm grateful for the opportunity I had to hear God speak through these people so that I may know that I am a daughter of God and know what I need to do to prepare myself for these last days. With this technology we can listen to them again whenever we need to.

Callie H., 15, Utah, USA

The talk given by Sister Cook really reached out to me. It made me think how much we are blessed and the blessings we receive when we live our lives on the guidelines of the Spirit and prophets.

Allison R., Texas, USA



ARE YOU LDS?

By Caitlin Anderson

Often it's the small, subtle things that help define who and what we are.

Blending in isn't always easy when you're one of only a handful of Latter-day Saint kids in a high school of 2,000, but I managed somehow. I grew up mostly quiet, content to go with the flow and see where life took me rather than firmly planting my feet on any convictions. At 17 I knew I was nearing the precipice of big life changes, but I didn't know how to commit to any direction. People often smiled knowingly at me, kindly telling me that I had it made and had the world at my fingertips. But I wasn't so sure. I wasn't sure of anything, because I still wasn't sure who I was.

No one from the outside looking in would have known how little confidence I had in myself. I did a good job of hiding it. Though I was quiet and hardly popular, I still played on two sports teams, participated in several clubs, and sat securely at the top of my class academically. I enjoyed Church activities and seminary. I seldom realized how truly at peace I felt during those early mornings before school, poring over my scriptures before the chaos of the world set in. But the chaos always came. Though I smiled and laughed in the school hallways, none of

those things seemed to really matter—I wasn't happy. It's hard to be truly happy when the very essence of your being is a mystery to you. I knew I was a child of God, but so was everyone else. Did I really matter in the big picture? Was I willing to put the gospel principles I'd always been taught at the center of my life and face whatever questions or mockery might arise? Who was I, really? Instead of having enough faith in myself to find the answers, I chose to almost fade away.

Just before my junior year ended, a small thing happened that would change all that. I decided to throw an after-school job into the mix of my already busy schedule, and I was very nervous about it. Working retail, I had to approach strangers and ask how I might help them, which was a daunting task for someone as shy as I was. With practice, however, I eventually came out of my shell and no longer felt butterflies each time I approached a customer. One evening just before closing I found myself helping

ILLUSTRATIONS BY G. BJORN THORKESSON

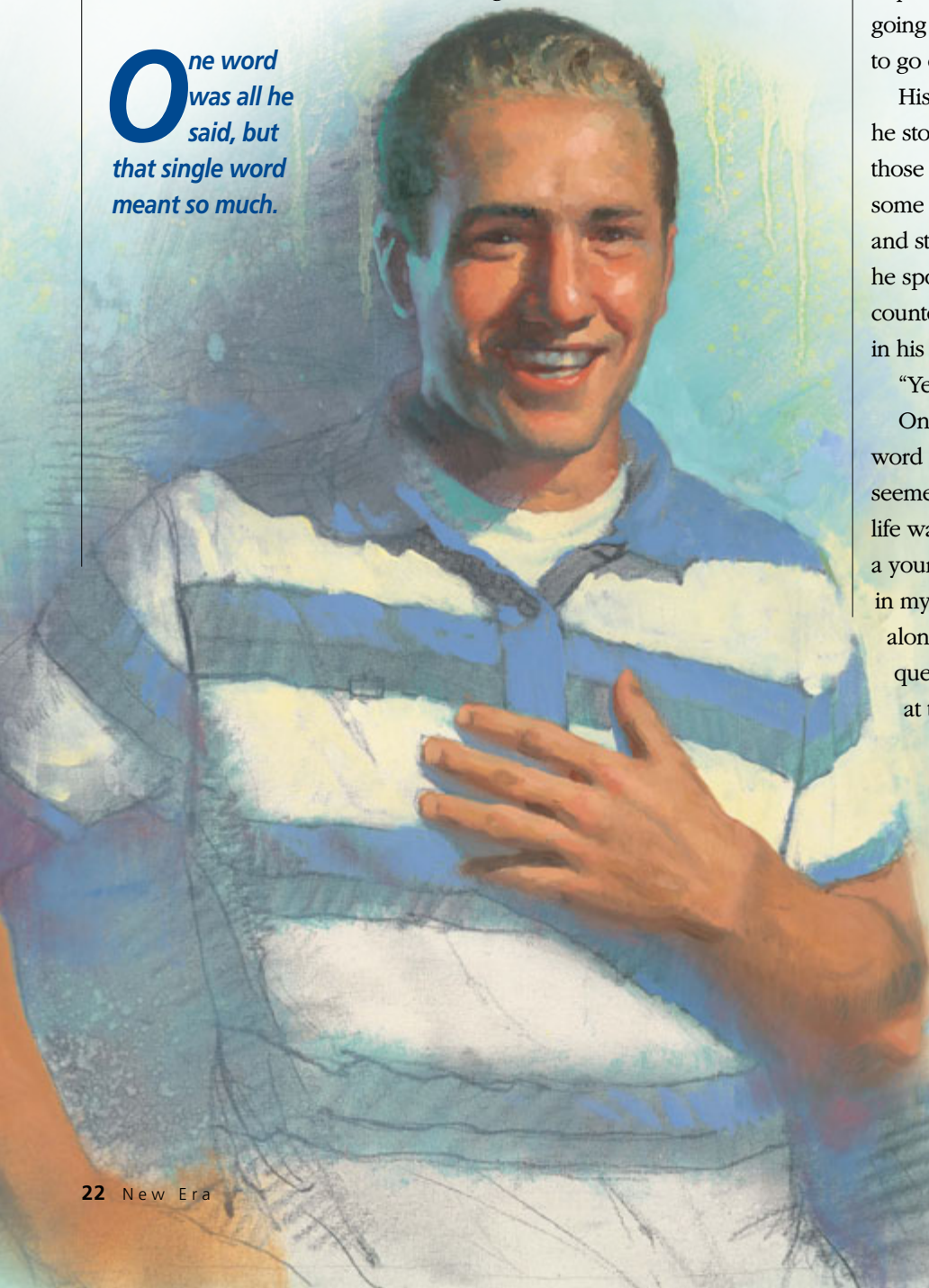


a young man who had recently had his hair buzzed off. My town was home to a couple of military bases, and it was not uncommon to see young men with freshly-shaven heads.

After we found the item the young man was looking for, we walked to the counter so he could pay for it. As he opened his wallet, I noticed on his finger a shiny silver ring with a familiar design. I smiled at the sight of it, thrilled as always to discover another member of the Church in a place where we were so few.

“Are you LDS?” I asked, gesturing toward the CTR ring.

One word was all he said, but that single word meant so much.



The young man froze, almost flinched, and his eyes then snapped up quickly to mine as though to analyze the meaning behind my words. After a moment I remembered that the young LDS marines often had it rough trying to find their place in a new town and lifestyle. I had heard stories of new LDS recruits and how hard it was to stand strong when surrounded by things a Latter-day Saint would find demoralizing. Drinking, profanity, and immorality were common, and more than one recruit suffered his share of scorn and ridicule for choosing not to participate. Did this young man think I was going to mock him or that he was going to have to go on the defensive?

His hands shook almost imperceptibly, and he stood silent. It was obvious that during those few prolonged seconds, he was making some kind of decision. At last he lifted his head and straightened to his full height, and when he spoke, a resounding conviction flooded his countenance while an undeniable light shone in his eyes.

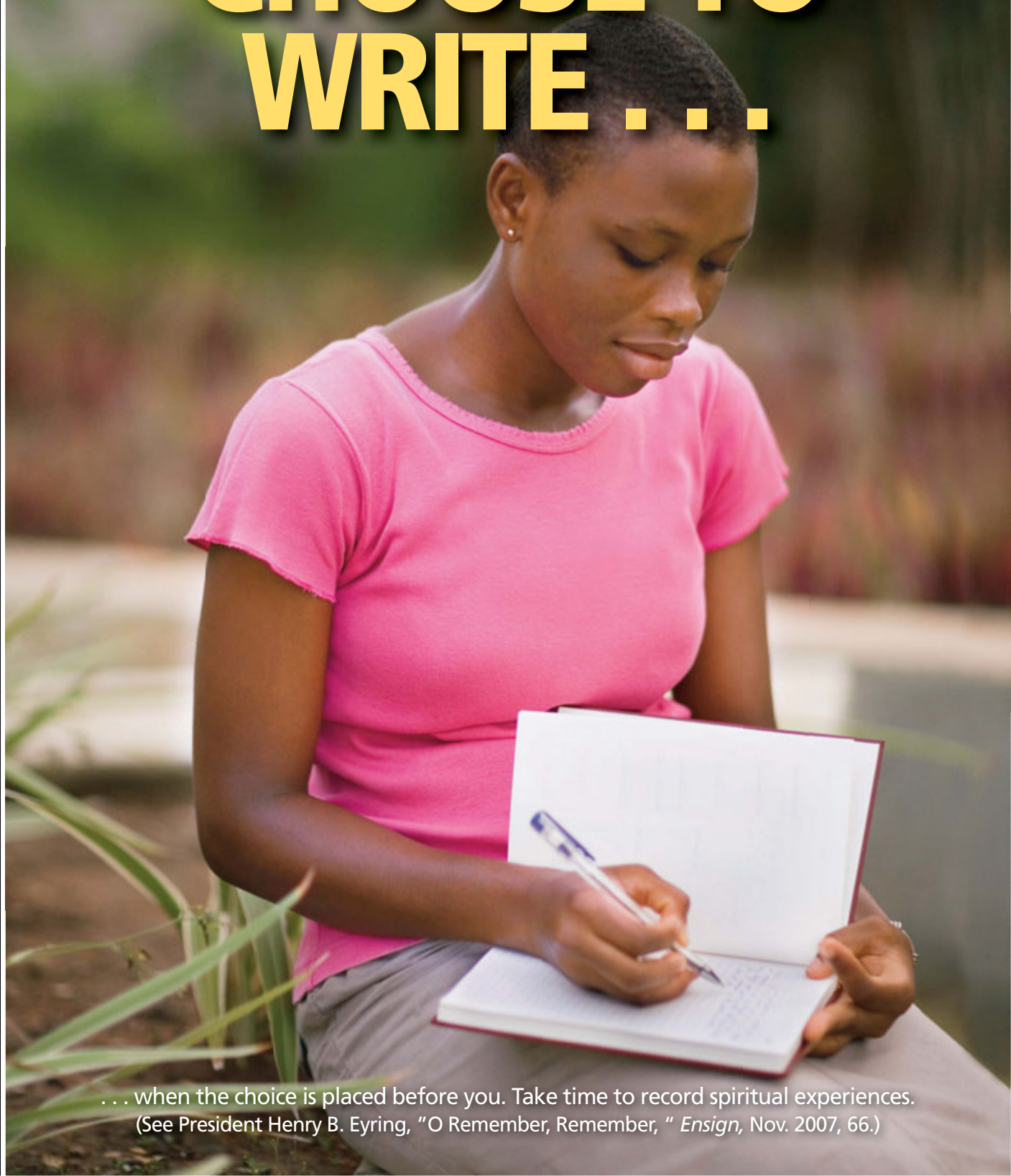
“Yes.”

One word was all he said, but that single word meant so much. In that moment, he seemed to know who he was and what his life was all about. The example of a stranger, a young man I had never seen before, stays in my mind to this day. Whenever I feel lost, alone, or uncertain, I pose to myself the same question I so casually asked that young man at the check-out counter: Are You LDS?

Yes.

I am a child of god. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I am a Latter-day Saint. I serve the Lord, and I am neither frightened nor ashamed. I know who I am, without a doubt. This was a small moment that changed my life. There are moments like this in everyone's life—moments that help define you and put everything into focus. Some are monumental and easy to recognize, but many more are small, subtle, and unexpected. **NE**

CHOOSE TO WRITE . . .



. . . when the choice is placed before you. Take time to record spiritual experiences.
(See President Henry B. Eyring, "O Remember, Remember," *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 66.)

A Solid Routine



Name: Jackson Payne

Age: 18

Hometown: Edmonton,
Alberta, Canada

Accomplishments: Placed first in gymnastics at the 2007 Canada Winter Games and first in the 2008 Junior National Championships; recently earned a bronze medal at the Montreal World Cup and competed in the Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in London in October 2009. He plans to compete in the World Championships again this year in the Netherlands and hopes to be on the 2012 Olympic Canadian team, after which he plans on serving a full-time mission.



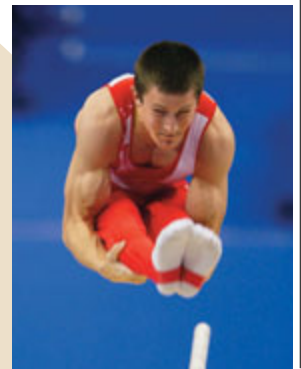
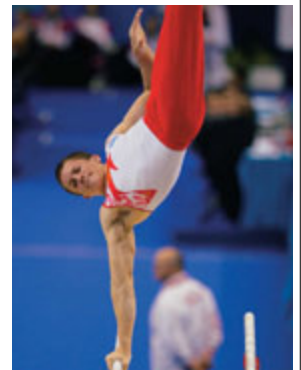
By Charlotte Wood Wilson

Jackson Payne's life is busy and wouldn't seem to leave much room for early-morning seminary or priesthood responsibilities, but he knows where his priorities are. Hailing from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, 18-year-old Jackson started participating in artistic gymnastics when he was 6 or 7 and has since made it to several national and international championships. The high bar is his best event, but he's decided to reach for something even higher.

Instead of spending his time before school at the gym squeezing in extra practice time, Jackson attends early-morning seminary. This daily routine is just as important to him as his gym routines. "I think if I disrupted my routine by not going to seminary for a couple of days, it would really mess up my day. It's important for me to stick to that routine." He observes that "if you keep messing up your gymnastics routine, you don't gain any confidence or consistency for competition. In the same way, if you don't go to seminary or church, you're more likely to fail in the real world."

When it comes to gymnastics, precision is key. "You're judged on everything you do; everything affects your score," Jackson says. He also says that the better you perform a routine or skill, the easier it is to execute and the more it becomes second nature. No one can perform a perfect routine in gymnastics, just as none of us lives a perfect life in mortality. But Jackson says that unlike in gymnastics, we have a perfect example to strive toward: Jesus Christ. And in our paths to perfection we're given commandments like tithing, the law of chastity, and the Word of Wisdom, commandments we can execute with exactness right now.

Gymnastics teaches Jackson about dedication and faith, principles he can directly apply to the gospel. "I go into the gym every day and have certain things I have to do. It gives me a test of my dedication and faith in knowing that if I do all the things I'm supposed to do, I can get better at gymnastics. In the same way, if I do things I'm supposed to do with church and Mutual and fulfilling my priesthood duties, my testimony will strengthen and I'll learn more about the gospel." **NE**



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE PAYNE FAMILY

“How can I know when I am being guided by the Holy Ghost?”

The main role of the Holy Ghost is to testify of God the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. In addition, in 2 Nephi 32:5 it says, “If ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.”

In other words, we are promised that if we are faithful to the covenants we have made at baptism and confirmation, then the Holy Ghost will testify of the Father and the Son, give us comfort, help us make righteous decisions, influence us to do good, and protect us from danger. Perhaps most important, though, is that the Holy Ghost can help us to know the truth of all things (see Moroni 10:5) and gain a testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that His Church has been restored to the earth.

In the scriptures it is written that the influence of the Holy Ghost is like a still, small voice (see 1 Kings 19:12; 1 Nephi 17:45). For some, the guidance of the Holy Ghost is a feeling or a prompting. No matter how you sense it, the Holy Ghost leads you to do good, brings you peace, and is associated with positive, unselfish feelings (see Moroni 7:13; Galatians 5:22–23). As you learn to follow these promptings, you will come to understand how this gift works in your life. **NE**

A Sense of Peace



Whenever I’m trying to sense the Spirit, I look for the one emotion that Satan can’t imitate—that is an overwhelming sense of peace. If I’m experiencing this feeling because of my actions, then I know that the Holy Ghost is prompting me in such actions.

Jayden G., 17, Washington, USA

Warm Fuzzy Feeling



When the Holy Ghost guides me, I feel like my heart will burst from my chest. In my seminary class, we call it the “warm fuzzy” feeling. Never doubt that the

Holy Ghost is with you. You’ll know by the sense of peace and joy that overcomes you, even in a tough situation.

Amanda D., 18, Oregon, USA

Pray If in Doubt



The Holy Ghost may speak to us each differently. We just need to learn what the Spirit feels like to us. The Lord has also given us prayer. We can always pray for a confirmation that we are being directed by the Holy Ghost when we are in doubt.

Ashley L., 14, Texas, USA

Overwhelming Good Feeling



Oftentimes I’ll feel an urge to go do something. Usually that something involves some random act of kindness, and it’s something that hasn’t crossed my mind before.

When I'm done, I have this overwhelming good feeling. That feeling helps me know that I'm being guided by the Holy Ghost.
Austin V., 18, Iowa, USA

Positive Things



I know I am being guided by the Holy Ghost when I do positive things and stay away from negative peer pressure. I know whenever I do what is positive, I receive great blessings.

Damien D., 14, Arkansas, USA

Speaks Softly



If you have a problem you need help with, and if the decision you make feels right and you are at peace with it, the Holy Ghost has just guided you. Most of the time the Holy Ghost speaks softly to you, and when you are in a peaceful place, you can hear Him.

Kimberly B., 15, Utah, USA

Contentment and Optimism



If you honestly and faithfully ask, the Lord will direct you in the right direction through the Holy Ghost. Once you do that, you should consider, ponder, and pray about all aspects of the decision you are making or guidance you are seeking.

In the scriptures it says you can feel a "burning in your bosom," but for me, I usually get the "still, small voice" effect and feel contentment and optimism about whatever answer I receive.

Sarah A.

Helps You Understand



I pray to Heavenly Father to know if I should make the choice I'm prompted to do. Most of the time, the feeling

becomes stronger, and then I know it's the right thing to do. I know that if you pray to Heavenly Father for help, He will help you understand the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

Rachel B., 14, Utah, USA

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



PURE INTELLIGENCE

"A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas, so that by noticing it, you may find it fulfilled the same day or soon; (i.e.) those things that were presented unto your minds by the Spirit of God, will come to pass; and thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus."

Joseph Smith (1805–1844), Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 132.

NEXT QUESTION

"How do I get over feelings of loneliness?"

Send your answer and photo by December 15, 2011.

Go to newera.lds.org, click Submit Your Material, and then select Questions and Answers.

You can also write to us at newera@ldschurch.org

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New Era, Q&A, lonely
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

HE WANTED TO BE A MISSIONARY

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

Inspired by the example of one young man, youth in Alberta, Canada, have made missionary work a priority.

Chris Yokoyama was 17, and he wanted to be a missionary. Everyone knew it, and if you asked him, he told you so.

Some months earlier, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had visited a stake conference in Chris's hometown, Taber, which lies in the vast farming plains of Alberta, Canada. Elder Nelson had blessed the stake, saying that, with fasting and prayer, the missionary work in the area would flourish.

Chris had taken this message to heart, and so had his semi-inary teacher, Steven Scott.

PHOTOGRAPHS DAVID A. EDWARDS AND COURTESY OF THE YOKOYAMA FAMILY



Taking the Challenge

"After Elder Nelson's talk, I told my students that the Lord needed us," says Brother Scott. "Our goal that year was to know the Savior—to understand the Atonement—and to do missionary work. The students invited non-LDS friends to seminary, to lunch, or to dances and activities, and things started to change."

Chris enthusiastically shared the gospel and invited friends to seminary. He spoke openly of his desire to serve a full-time mission. As he did so, his family noticed a change in him.

"He made up his mind he wanted to serve a mission," says his father, Rod Yokoyama, "so he wanted to change his life and do all the things a missionary would be doing. It seemed like he was giving us more hugs and telling everyone about the gospel."

If you ask other teens what they remember about Chris (nicknamed "Beans"), you'll hear the same things over and over: "He was friends with everyone." "He was such a great example." "He loved everyone."



His 16-year-old sister, Aniko Yokoyama, says, "He cared about me just like a best friend. He showed me how to love everyone. And he included everyone in everything. With everyone he met,

he tried to make their day or make them laugh."



Cody-Lynn Jensen, 17, recalls, "I had English class with him, and when he would show up to class, we'd all be like 'BEANS!!' And we'd all gather around him. Everyone sat on the side where Beans was, and there were a couple of rows of empty desks on the other side of the room. He was just that kind of kid."



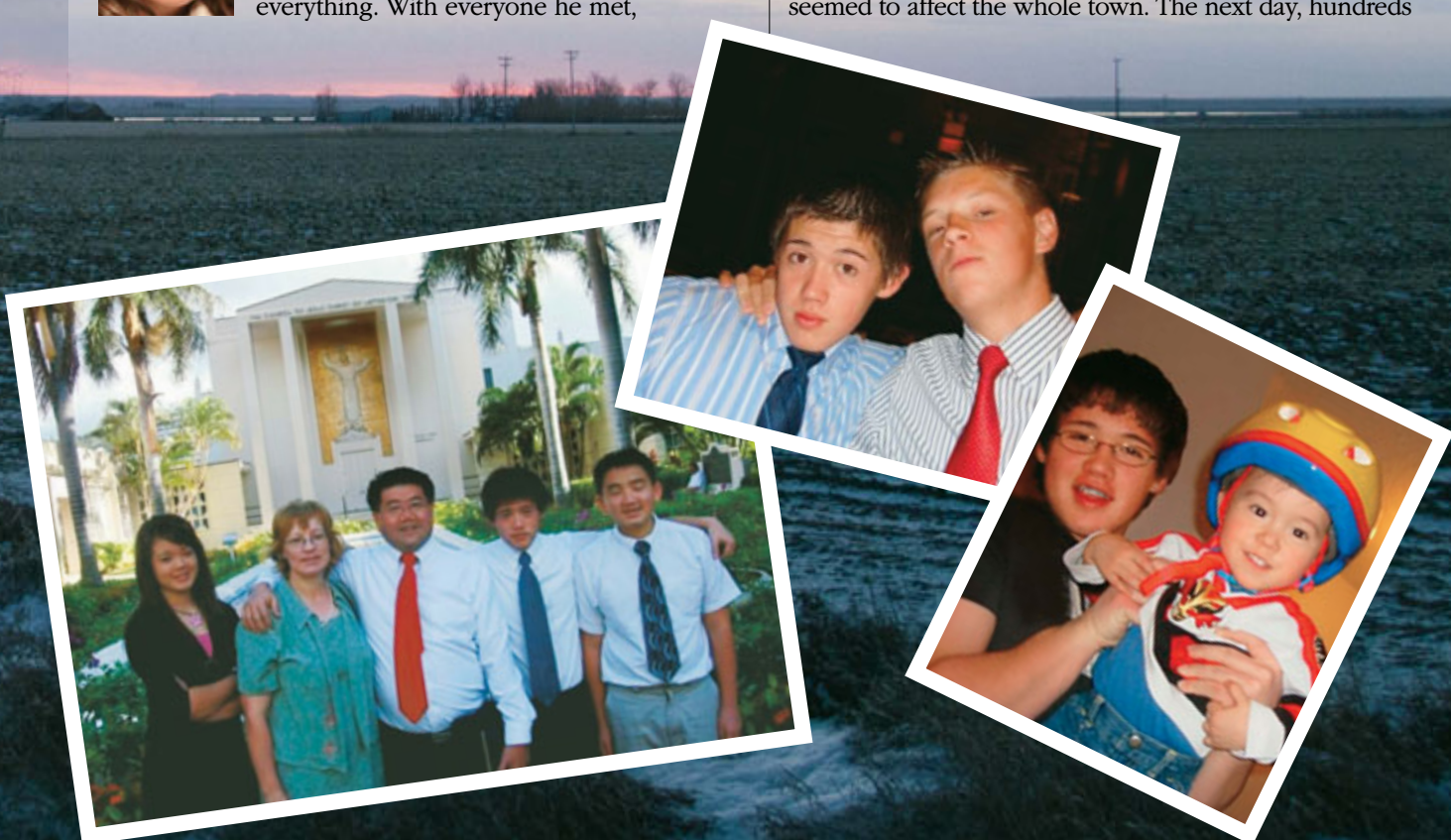
Laura Campbell, 16, says, "If I said, 'Hi, Beans,' I'd get the best, 'Hi, Laura!' with the most enthusiasm. He'd just make your day by saying your name and giving you a smile. Everyone knew how good Beans was."



"I think he was one of the greatest examples of a Christlike person," says Reid Walters, 18. "He'd go out of his way completely to help everyone and make everyone happy."

Heartbreak and Comfort

One Friday night in December 2008, after a Christmas shopping trip with two of his friends, Chris was killed when the car he was riding in slid on some ice and crashed into a truck. News of the accident spread quickly and seemed to affect the whole town. The next day, hundreds



Below: Jennifer Phillips (16), Darrilynn Row (18), and Brett Phillips (15), from nearby Vauxhall were also inspired to do missionary work, and they were motivated by the students in Taber.

“Once we started seeing people in Taber actually doing missionary work, then we wanted to,” says Jennifer.

Darrilynn says, “It’s a good experience because it helps you to strengthen your testimony.”

“And studying the scriptures in seminary motivates you, too,” says Brett.

of (mostly non-LDS) teens gathered at the stake center, seeking comfort. On Monday those same young people also crowded into the seminary building.

Faced with so many grieving teens, Brother Scott simply told them the truth—that Heavenly Father has a plan, that death is part of that plan, and that Christ’s Atonement makes it possible to return to our Heavenly Father. He taught them that the work of bringing souls to Christ continues even in the spirit world and that perhaps Chris was now doing that work.

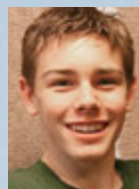


Liz Shimbashi, 17, remembers that time well. “Lots of people came to the seminary building after the accident. It was hard at school, but then people would come here, and they realized, ‘Hey, seminary is a good place.’ So we invited them to return, and lots of them did.”

A Mighty Change

For many of the non-LDS teens, the need to be comforted grew into a desire to know more. And the seminary students, who had already been enthusiastic about sharing the gospel, now did it with a more serious purpose and deeper understanding.

“The biggest reason people came was because they saw how much Beans loved people, and through that they saw his testimony,” recalls Rachel Bennett, 16. “I think they wanted to know what he knew.”



Luke Nelson, 16, says, “Beans’s death made me notice how other people didn’t know what we know and that we’re so comforted because of what we know about the Atonement. I want to share that with everybody so they can be comforted and be peaceful and happy.”



“People wanted to know the answers to questions like ‘Is he going to heaven?’ So they came to seminary to learn just because of his example,” says Megan Fajnor, 17.

Seminary: It’s Not Just for Mormons

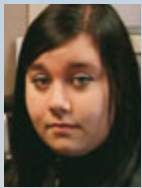


Chris’s cousin, Jarred Haynes, 17, who is not LDS, started coming to seminary at that time “because it’s something that he really would have liked me to do. I wanted to learn more about what he believed, and I wanted to do something for him.”





Another non-LDS student who visited the seminary at that time, Shandyn Nakamura, 17, says, “I know Beans wanted us in seminary. He tried so many times to get so many people to come here. He asked me to come. When you come here, you have a whole different feeling. You feel the Spirit, and you feel like you’re in a completely different place. I just feel loved.”



Ashley Meisner, 17, agrees. “I came over because of Beans—at first. I was kind of unsure of where I stood from a religious perspective. So I think I needed to enhance that perspective. Then I came over, and the feeling was amazing. It was so loving. The lessons were just what I needed to hear. It helped me through a lot of things that were hard to get through.”

Having been to other Church activities with her



THE ACCIDENT THAT CHANGED THEIR LIVES

Chris Yokoyama was with two of his friends when their car crashed and Chris died. Darren Haslam, 18, was driving the car and escaped mostly unharmed. The other pas-

senger, Christopher Evanson, 18, received a severe head injury and was in a coma.

“When Chris Yokoyama died, it was really tough for me,” says Darren. “It was tough that I had nothing wrong with me, just a fractured elbow, and they—one was in critical condition just trying to survive and one had passed away. I was the driver. It was tough to see [Chris’s sister and brother] Aniko and Derrick at school because it brought the whole experience back.”

Darren received a lot of help and counsel from his family, his seminary teacher, and others. “The one thing that bothered me the most is I didn’t die in that accident, so I must be here for a reason, but what is it? I didn’t want people to feel bad for me. I wanted to serve them.”

Meanwhile, Christopher Evanson remained in a coma at a hospital in Calgary, over three hours away. He had regular visitors, including a steady stream of peers from school. After about a month he came out of the coma, but he did not regain full consciousness until a few months later.

“They had to teach me how to walk, how to talk again, to do everything,” says Chris. “That took six months, and then I got released. That was a happy day.”

While he was recovering in the hospital, Chris, like Darren, began to think about others. “Faces would flash in my mind, and I would think, ‘I want to share the gospel with them. Maybe I could talk with them once I get back to Taber.’ My desire for sharing the gospel has increased.”

During this time, many non-LDS teens were visiting the seminary in Taber, and they kept coming back. “A lot of these kids were lost,” says Darren. “A lot of them came to the seminary building, and they just broke down. I think they felt the love of Jesus Christ. They started to understand the Atonement.”

As more people kept coming, Darren was able to fulfill his desire to serve. “I’m a little shy,” he admits. “I’m scared that if I talk to my friends about the gospel, they’re going to reject me, but more and more I’m trying my best to reach out and invite people to activities and make them feel included.”

Christopher Evanson feels that he has a stronger testimony as a result of his experiences. “I just love our Savior so very much. I felt His constant love, and I built a love for Him within me. I forgot a lot of things up in the hospital, but not once did I ever forget how true the gospel is, and how much I love my family. Every part of the gospel makes sense and is true.

“Chris Yokoyama was the perfect example to me. Ever since he’s passed away, I’ve tried my best to be like him. I can say, ‘Hey, come to seminary.’ ‘Hey, let’s go to church.’ I believe it’s just a matter of time before others will start to understand the whole meaning of the Church and the gospel. They will want to be a part of it and have the Holy Ghost with them all the time.”

Though the accident brought sadness and trials into the lives of Darren Haslam and Christopher Evanson, they have chosen to turn their experiences into a blessing for others.



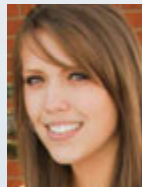
Students in the Taber seminary (top) have faced the heartbreak of losing their friend. And by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, they have brought healing and hope to others.

NEmore

To see a video about Chris Yokoyama and the teens from Taber, Alberta, Canada, go to youth.lds.org.

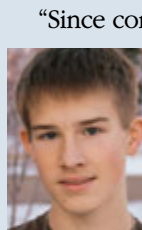


friend Liz Shimbashi, 16-year-old Jessica Stoddart knew the feeling. “It’s a great feeling. I just feel like I know it’s the Holy Ghost.”



Cassie Hull, 18, puts it this way: “I feel the Holy Ghost there. I could tell that’s it, because everywhere else it’s like, sure, you can feel happy, but this is a different happy.”

These and other non-LDS teens who came to seminary experienced long-lasting changes in their lives. Many have continued to attend seminary. Some have even been baptized. “I’m taking the missionary lessons,” says Jarred Haynes. “And if I know that my friends who are members are not praying, I encourage them to pray or to read their scriptures. I guess I’m being a good example to them, even as a nonmember.”



“Since coming to seminary, I don’t get as annoyed or angry as easily anymore,” says Mitchell Geeraert, 15. “I just feel a lot better throughout my days.”



And Chelsea Orsten, 15, says, “Seminary’s really made me think of who I want to be and how I want to change. It’s encouraged me and helped me get through a lot of hard things.”

What Now?

For the seminary students in and around Taber, sharing the gospel is now not only a way to serve Heavenly Father and their fellowmen but also a way to remember and honor their friend Chris. And they believe that in spite of their sadness and grief, Heavenly Father has blessed them in unimaginable ways because of their faith and trust in Him.

“I believe sharing the gospel is why we’re here on this earth,” says Aniko, thinking of her brother. “Chris spent his time well by being an example. Now that he’s gone, we all have to be an example like that. He was an example of Christ. Sharing the gospel is just sharing happiness. If you want your friends to be happy, then you invite them to learn about the gospel.”

Liz Shimbashi agrees. “It’d be amazing to have the love that Beans did and to be that example. That’s how I want to be.”

As she reflects on the events in Taber over the last couple of years, Laura Campbell echoes the thoughts of many others: “Heavenly Father must have had something really important for Chris to do. But at the same time, so many people’s lives have changed because of him.”

Chris Yokoyama was 17, and he wanted to be a missionary. Everybody knew it. And for those who knew him, one thought has brought more comfort and inspiration than perhaps any other: *Chris is a missionary.* **NE**



RYAN STOKER

"No, Joan of Ark was not Noah's wife."

"My term paper is almost finished. I updated my software, defragmented my hard drive, bookmarked an online dictionary, and installed new ink cartridges. Now all I need are some words and a topic!"



RANDY GLASBERGEN



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

NEmore
See a different Extra Smile online every week at newera.lds.org.

The CHALLENGE That Changed My Life

By LaNelle Sheridan Simons

The lump in my throat continued to grow as I slowly walked to the front of the room. I was a senior in high school, and this was my last Young Women in Excellence presentation. As I faced the audience of young women, parents, and leaders, I realized that my years of theater and speech experience were not going to help that night.

What I was about to repeat was different from some script or prepared speech. This was when I had to demonstrate that I had completed the challenge that was more difficult than I could have ever imagined.

The challenge began about six months earlier on a Wednesday night as the young women in my ward sat in the gym at our building and focused on Personal Progress. The excitement I had about Personal Progress as a Beehive had faded, and as a 17-year-old Laurel, I had adopted the belief that I had better things to do. I just wasn't interested in picking my last two value projects, but that didn't stop my Young Women president, Sister Widener, from trying to motivate me to get them done.

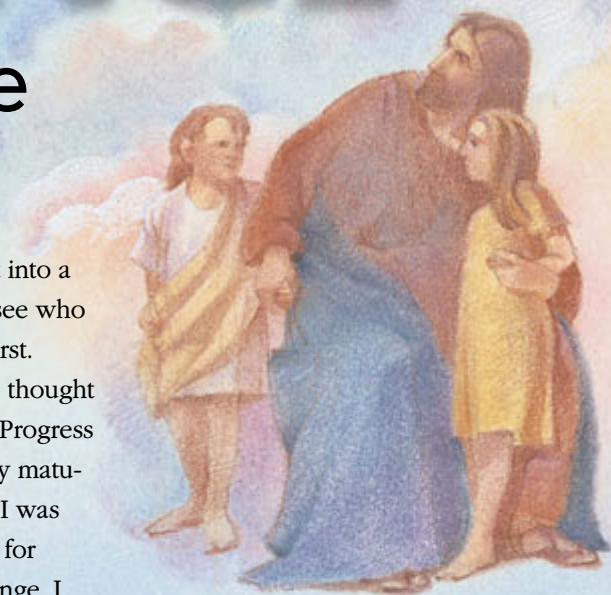
As I flipped through the Personal Progress book just to make Sister Widener happy, I came to the suggested projects under Faith. I read the suggestion to memorize "The Living Christ" and explained to Sister Widener that I could easily do that. I had memorized plenty of lines to plays in my life, so memorizing "The Living Christ" would be easy. It would never take 10 whole hours. My dedicated Young Women president took this as an opportunity to challenge me. She told me that it might not be as easy as I thought it would be. I would do it, she would do it too, and we

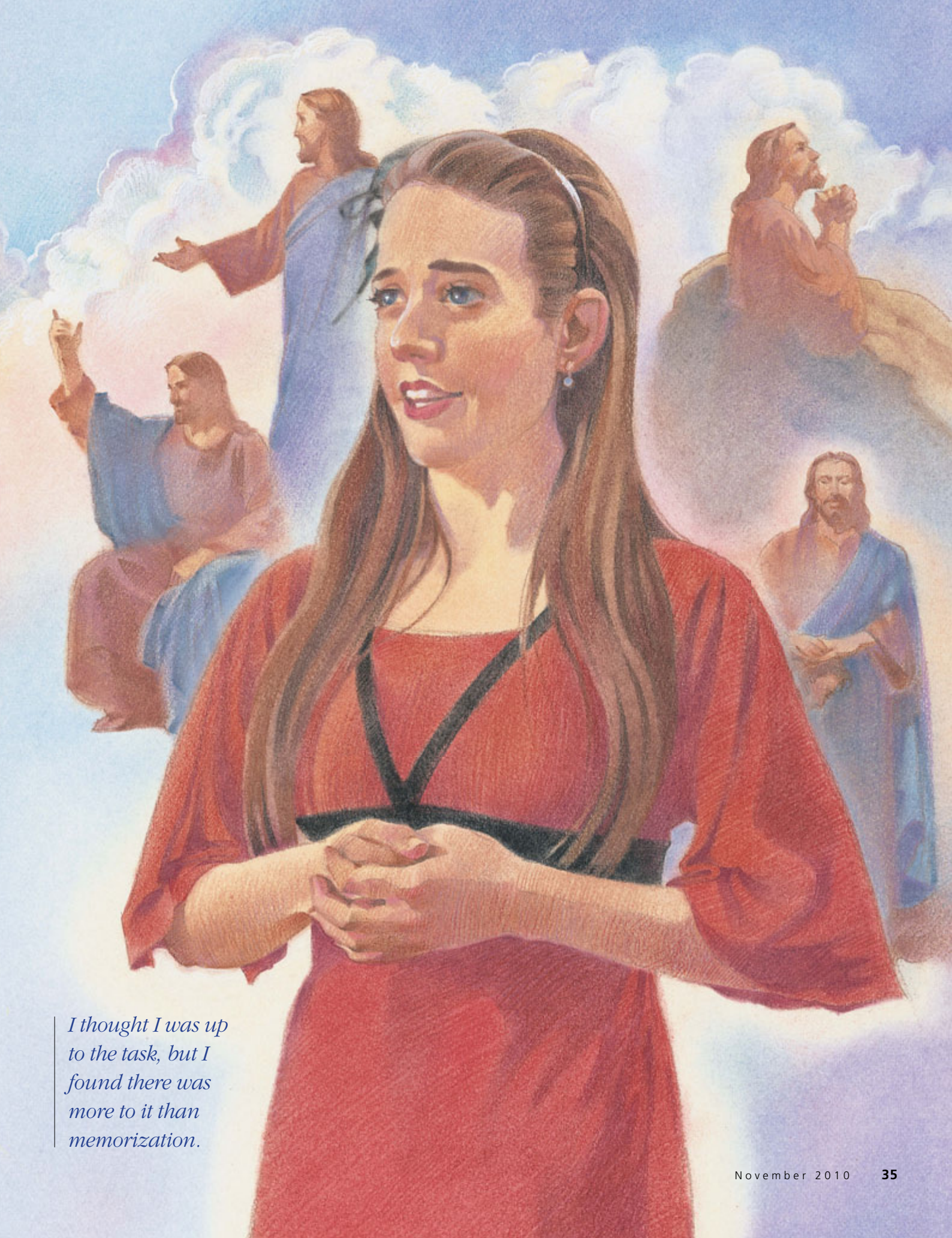
could make it into a challenge to see who could finish first.

I may have thought that Personal Progress was below my maturity level, but I was never too old for a good challenge. I agreed to the challenge and memorized the first paragraph by the end of Mutual that night.

Though I never forgot the challenge, I got distracted during the summer months and put memorizing at the bottom of my list. Sister Widener stayed focused and completed the challenge in a just a few months. Sister Widener promised me that if I would commit myself again to finishing the challenge, it would change my life. I didn't really believe her, but I didn't want to be viewed as a loser either. So I decided that reciting "The Living Christ" would be my final Young Women in Excellence presentation.

As I stood before the audience that night, I was confident that I knew the words well enough to recite them. It had taken many more hours than I had expected, and I was happy that I would finally be able to prove that I could do it. As I got to the third paragraph, I began to realize that this was not going to be as easy as I had expected. Tears filled my eyes as I repeated the words:





I thought I was up to the task, but I found there was more to it than memorization.

After I fulfilled the challenge to recite "The Living Christ" from memory, my Young Women president gave me a framed copy as a remembrance of that momentous night.

"He was arrested and condemned on spurious charges, convicted to satisfy a mob, and sentenced to die on Calvary's cross. He gave His life to atone for the sins of all mankind. His was a great vicarious gift in behalf of all who would ever live upon the earth."

The tears began to fall, and though I knew the words, in front of the audience that night I stopped and couldn't say a thing. Those words truly meant something to me. I wasn't just reciting lines to complete a challenge—I

was testifying of Jesus Christ. I was testifying of His life, love, and sacrifice for me and for everyone else in that room. And I knew it was true, because I could feel the Spirit stronger than I ever had before as I bore that testimony.

I looked at Sister Widener, who smiled as she wiped away her own tears. I finally understood what she meant when she told me that if I would just finish the challenge, my life would be changed. I took a deep breath and completed my presentation. The tears didn't stop falling until I had finished speaking and was back in my seat.

The simple challenge extended to me by a loving Young Women president had changed my life. That night I gained a testimony of Personal Progress. I realized that the challenges presented to me as a young woman could provide me with experiences to learn and grow through the Spirit. I had felt the Spirit in a way that I had never experienced as I recited the testimony of Jesus Christ given to us by our prophet and Apostles. That testimony became my own. I had gained a real and true testimony of my Savior Jesus Christ. I better knew and loved Him, and I knew that He knows and loves me.

Sister Widener gave me a framed copy of "The Living Christ" that night. Six years later it still hangs on my wall and reminds me of the night that I came to better know my Savior and the love He has for me. And I still know, just as surely as I did when I repeated the words that night, that "He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come." **NE**



Name
Withheld

or popular

I wasn't good at sports

but I still

earned a

with my classmates,
special award.

I enjoyed reading the *New Era* in high school, but in some ways it made me feel discouraged and inadequate. It was always telling stories about talented youth, and I thought I could never be like them.

It seemed I wasn't talented in anything. I was uncoordinated and bad at sports. I was extremely shy and self-conscious, and I was made fun of in school, often because of my high standards. I did make pretty good grades—mainly because I worked hard at it.

I figured that maybe there was still something I could do, even if I couldn't be a real star like the people highlighted in the magazine. I read the scriptures about loving others and decided I would try to do that.

One day as I came out of Mutual class, I saw a girl standing at the end of the hall. She was slouched over. The thought came to me that this girl needed a friend, so I walked over and started talking to her. More accurately, I started listening to her. She talked very softly, but I showed interest in what she had to say.



We were friends from then on. She was four years younger than I was, and she was not a member of the Church; her neighbors had started bringing her to Church. A few months later, I was able to go to her baptism. She was 13 years old and the only member in her family.

I made friends with other people too. Sometimes I would think that a person wouldn't want to be friends with me, but I found that these people seemed happy to have someone who cared about them.

When it was time to graduate, our high school had an awards assembly to honor students' achievements. My name was not called, but my friend who had gotten baptized made a little award for me and had my friends sign it. I felt I had really achieved something too.

I also realized that everyone has their place and purpose in this world. I know that those talented and popular people had an influence on others. But perhaps if I had been very talented or very popular, I might have been too busy for my new friends, and those friendships have become rich treasures to me. **NE**

By Elizabeth S. Stiles

The very first Sunday I attended church with the full-time missionaries, I recognized people I had grown up with and knew from the community. One of my best friends from middle school, whom I admired and who often invited me to attend dances at her church, was surprised to see me in the chapel. I was equally surprised to find that she was a Mormon.

The elementary and high school secretaries from my schools both turned out to be members of the Church too. I thought it was cool that of all the students they dealt with every day, they still remembered me. A girl that I had not been exceptionally nice to throughout our childhood was there, also. She was friendly and welcoming to me. I ran into a young man on whom I had had a crush in my early teen years as well.

Each individual that I knew before coming to church that first time had a lasting impact on me. My best friend was a young woman of great integrity. I always admired her values and was invited to follow them with her, though I never felt I was capable of following her good example. She had always been open and inviting to me. Because of her attitude, I chose to continue to investigate the Church.

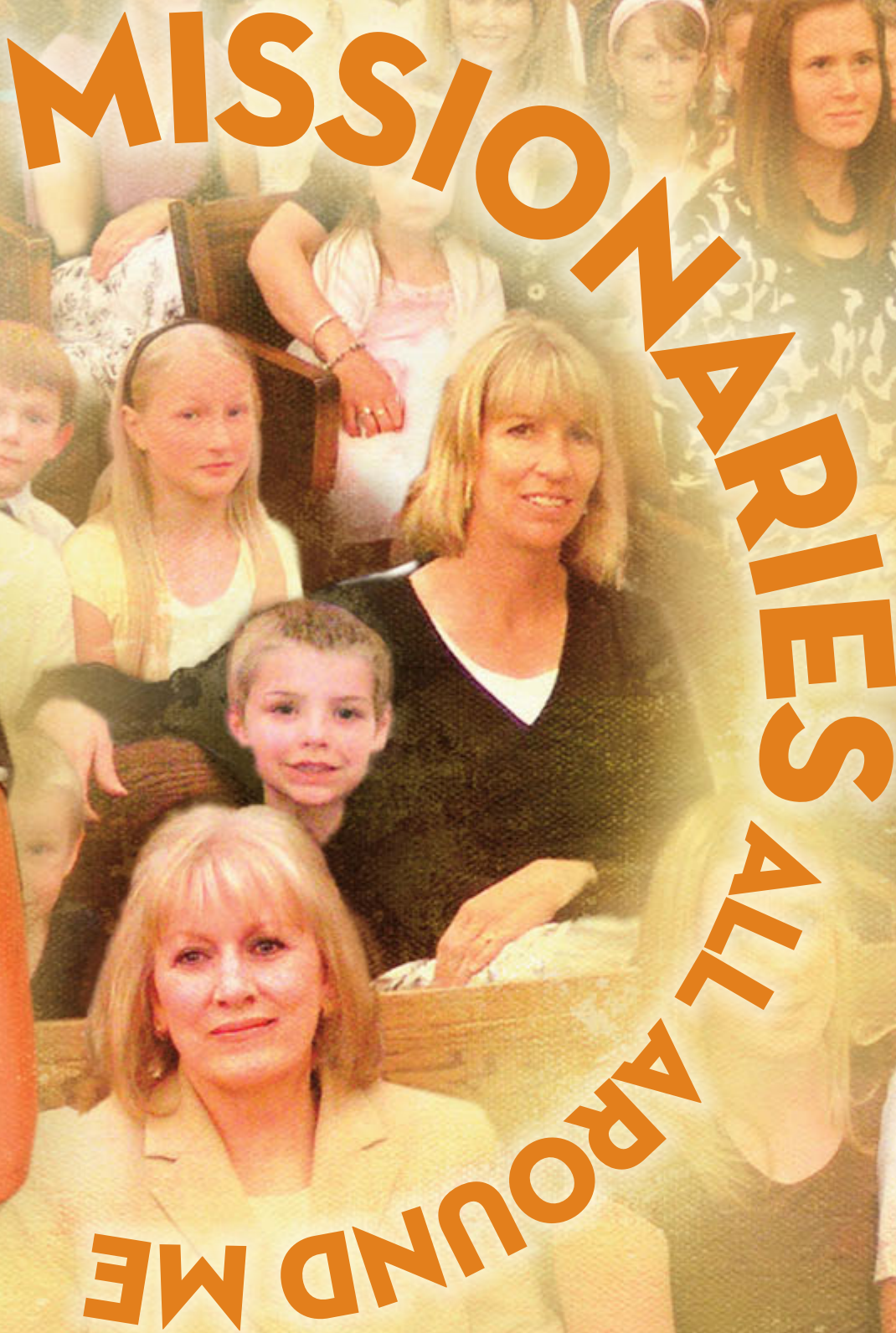
The secretaries who remembered me helped me to know that I am important. I learned that I am a daughter of God and that He knows me personally and loves me.

I learned about godly love and charity from the young woman who embraced me despite my less-than-kind behavior toward her in the past. She extended fellowship as I learned about the Church. Forgiveness was a byproduct of her Christ-like love.

My early teenage crush brought back memories of years of my calling him, writing him, and asking him out, while he always turned down these hasty invitations. He was such a good person. I recognized his light and wanted to bask in it.

These experiences helped me to learn that, even before my first exposure to the missionaries, Heavenly Father had prepared me to receive the gospel through the people He placed around me. I have learned to not be afraid to keep inviting someone to church. I have learned that every human being is a child of God and deserves my attention. I have learned that even the seemingly unlovable have a place prepared at Heavenly Father's feet. I have learned not to waste opportunities to invite someone to church. I have learned that missionary work starts with me. **NE**





MISSIONARIES ALL AROUND ME

The way members of the Church treated me while I was growing up helped me to eventually accept the gospel.

By Jeff B. Marler

Finding My SECOND WIND

An artistic illustration of a runner's arm and leg in a field. The runner is wearing an orange shirt and blue shorts. The background shows a green field under a blue sky with white clouds. The runner's right arm is raised in a fist, and their right leg is bent, showing a blue and white running shoe.

Just like physical exercise, we must exercise our spiritual muscles if we want to stay strong.

I was a senior in high school and had joined the cross-country team mainly to get in shape for track and field events that took place later in the year. As part of our training, every morning before school our coach would have us run to his home, which was four miles from the school, and then run back again.

Several times after having made the eight-mile run my coach asked me if I'd "found my second wind yet?"

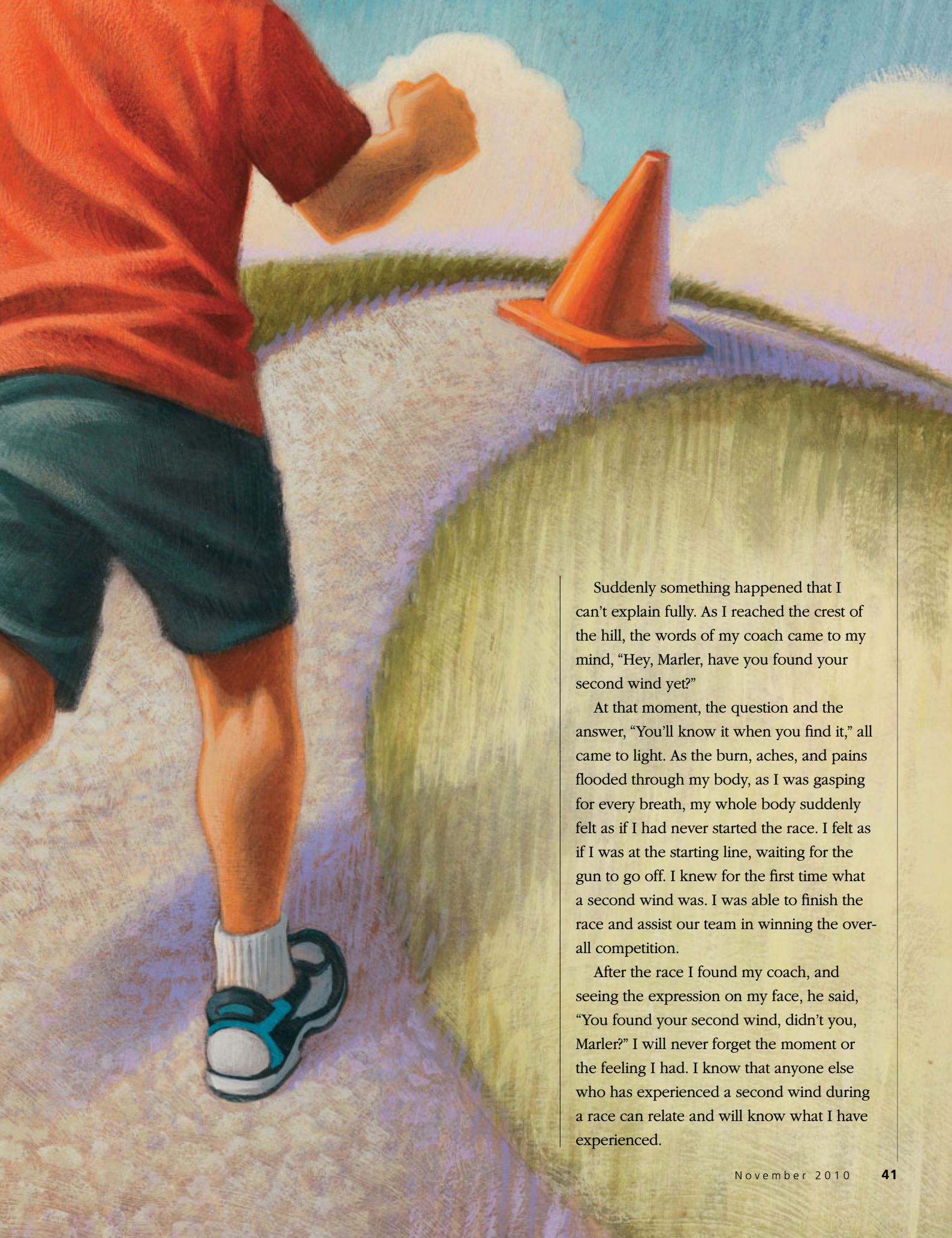
I'd always ask, out of breath, "What's a second wind?"

To which he would reply, "You'll know it when you find it."

After several weeks of arduous training we finally had our first cross-country meet. It was well over eight miles long, with no stops and only an orange cone indicating the halfway mark. Knowing how difficult the last four miles had been for me every morning, I

began to doubt myself even before the race began. But out of respect for my coach and with my competitive spirit, I positioned myself at the starting line.

The gun went off and we were on our way, trying to pace ourselves so we would have enough energy to finish. As usual, I could feel the burn and fatigue starting to build up with every stride I was taking. Well into the race I wobbled around a corner looking up a hill that seemed to be Mount Everest, only to see the halfway sign marked by the orange cone. I was exhausted. By this time I was feeling the temptation to quit. But relying on competitive drive still left in me, I made it to the top, with a weak, staggering run.



Suddenly something happened that I can't explain fully. As I reached the crest of the hill, the words of my coach came to my mind, "Hey, Marler, have you found your second wind yet?"

At that moment, the question and the answer, "You'll know it when you find it," all came to light. As the burn, aches, and pains flooded through my body, as I was gasping for every breath, my whole body suddenly felt as if I had never started the race. I felt as if I was at the starting line, waiting for the gun to go off. I knew for the first time what a second wind was. I was able to finish the race and assist our team in winning the overall competition.

After the race I found my coach, and seeing the expression on my face, he said, "You found your second wind, didn't you, Marler?" I will never forget the moment or the feeling I had. I know that anyone else who has experienced a second wind during a race can relate and will know what I have experienced.

I was in Scotland as a missionary when I found my spiritual second wind, my sure witness of the Book of Mormon. I was kneeling by my bed in prayer when the Holy Ghost bore witness to my soul that the Book of Mormon was true.

I compare gaining a sure witness of the Book of Mormon to that experience of finding a second wind during a race. There is a parallel between hard physical exercise and hard spiritual exercise that eventually helps us reach a goal. I had trust and faith in my coach and knew that something good would come from his instruction. The same applies during our spiritual exercise and training. We don't have to have a perfect knowledge of the things related to our study of the gospel; we put our faith and trust in the Lord through prayer, scripture study, attending our meetings, and worthily partaking of the sacrament. We also hearken to the words from His chosen servants.

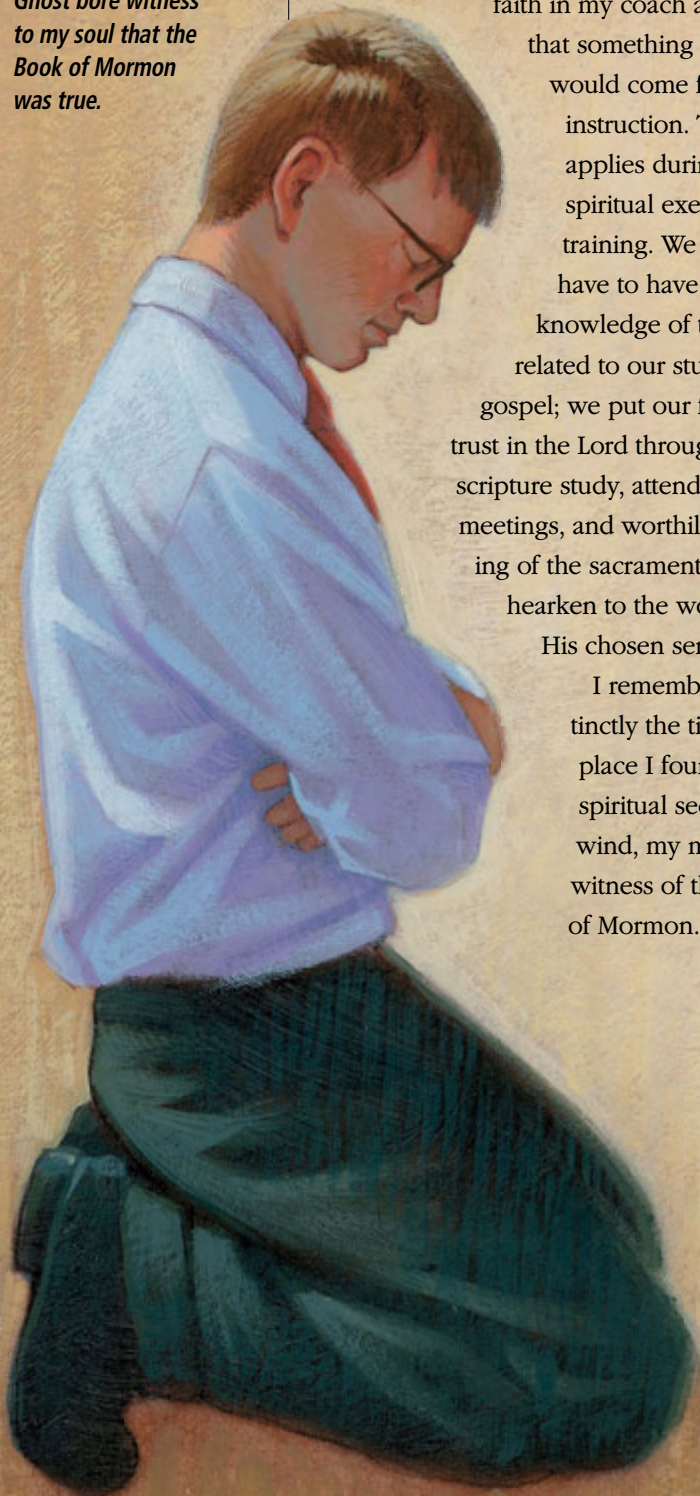
I remember distinctly the time and place I found my spiritual second wind, my more sure witness of the Book of Mormon.

I was in Scotland in my first assignment as a missionary in a little town called Barrhead just outside of Glasgow. I had been challenged by a Scotsman asking me how I knew the Book of Mormon was true. It was at that point I realized I had never received a sure witness or even put the book to the test as Moroni challenges us in Moroni 10:3–5. You first have to have a sincere desire to read the Book of Mormon; then you study and ponder the message with real intent and pray in faith, asking the Lord if it is true—something I had not yet done.

It was later one evening as I was kneeling by my bed in humble prayer that I received a feeling so powerful, so sweet, and so warm that it was as if I had just reached the crest of a hill in my spiritual race for truth and understanding. The Holy Ghost bore witness to my soul that the Book of Mormon was true. Like my physical second wind, no one can tell me that I imagined this witness. It was real! I knew it, and no one could take it away from me. From that point on, I had no problem bearing testimony of the Book of Mormon, living prophets, and the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. I could never deny it!

With physical exercise, you must continue working or your body becomes weak and endurance becomes a challenge. The same applies with spiritual exercise; it must be constant. If you stop, your spiritual endurance will become weak.

We all need to be persistent in our desire to know for ourselves the truth of the living Church restored in these the latter days. My spiritual second wind continues to be just as invigorating now as the day I received my first witness of the Book of Mormon in Scotland. I will never forget that moment in my life. **NE**



*My friend's choice left me
no choice.*

By Deborah Moore

LOSING A FRIEND



Amy* was my best friend growing up. That all changed in junior high school. One day near the beginning of my eighth-grade year, I saw Amy standing with a few of her acquaintances. I went up and chatted with them. We were having fun talking and being silly when one of the other girls started to talk about getting drunk. To my horror, Amy chimed in about how excited she was to join them that night. I wish I could say that I stood up then and there and said that I didn't believe they should be drinking. Instead, I stood quietly in shock, unsure of what to do.

The bell rang, and Amy and I went to class. On our way I asked her if she was serious about getting drunk. She said that she was and seemed excited. I could tell it didn't bother her the way it bothered me.

Again I stayed quiet. I was afraid that she would be mad at me if I told her how I felt. As the day went on, I felt worse and worse. I knew I had to do something, but I wasn't sure how I should go about it. I didn't want to sound self-righteous or condescending. Plus, there was the overwhelming fact that I was scared.

Although I had made friends with a few other students at the beginning of junior high, I had lost touch with them. I

didn't want to lose the only friend I had. I finally decided to pray about it. As I did, I felt a peaceful feeling that it would be all right. I also knew what I needed to do. After school got out, I talked to Amy. I told her how much I cared about her and that I didn't think that she should be drinking. She listened to me, but when I was done, she said goodbye. I couldn't tell if she was mad or not.

I'd love to say that we hugged and that she told me she was glad that I told her how I felt. However, that's not what happened.

Amy got drunk that evening and many other evenings after that. She stopped being friends with me.

The first day of ninth grade was terrifying. I was lonelier than I had ever been. It was at that time that some girls I had once been friends with signaled me over to their table. They were all LDS or had high standards.

Even though it took me a while to muster up the courage to talk to Amy, I'm glad that I did. I know that the friends I made that year influenced my life for the better and helped me stay on the path that I knew was right. **NE**

* Name has been changed.

HE IS MY

Savior TOO

I couldn't believe

*I actually com-
mented out loud.*

*What would the
choir members
think?*

During my junior year of high school, I moved to live with my dad. I found it very difficult to make friends in my new town. Since I had arrived half-way through the school year, I was at a disadvantage. I felt rejected and lonely.

Because I love to sing, choir class is where I thought I could find my niche of friends. No one was particularly cold to me; however, I found it challenging and awkward to interact with the other choir kids. This made me feel even more isolated and alone.

In stark contrast to the way I was feeling, one girl in choir class seemed to have it all. I will call her Anna. She was stylish, witty, and very popular. She was outspoken with a great sense of humor. Although I didn't really know her, I found her very likable. Nevertheless, she had one exceedingly offensive and disturbing habit. She frequently took the Lord's name in vain. She would say His name in a casual and flippant manner. I would cringe when she would say it, but I didn't know what to do. I thought about asking her to stop, but I was worried that she would laugh at me and mock me in front of the others. I couldn't stand the thought of feeling even more out of place.

One day our choir class was standing on risers, practicing for a school assembly. While singing, we unexpectedly squawked out a note that was way off pitch.

Anna laughed and yelled, "We sound bad!" punctuated by using the Lord's name.

Right then and there I decided that I couldn't take it anymore. The thought came to my mind: "How can I continue day after day to deny my Savior by saying nothing as

His name is blasphemed? I have got to speak up now!"

At that moment, I was amazed to hear my voice—loud and firm—saying, "Please don't say His name that way anymore. He is my Savior."

Instantly, the room was silent. There was no doubt that the whole class had heard me. I was as shocked as anyone that I had spoken up so boldly. I held my breath and got ready for the repercussions.

After a brief pause, a voice from directly behind me whispered, "Thank you for saying something. I can't stand it when she says that." Immediately, I heard another classmate quietly agree. Surprisingly, many in the class seemed to be relieved that I had spoken up.

Anna was silent for a moment. Then she turned to me with tears in her eyes and said softly, "I am so sorry. I didn't even realize what I was saying. He is my Savior too."

I am thankful that the Spirit touched me that day in choir class to open my mouth to defend the sacred name of the One who has redeemed me. The Holy Ghost gave me courage to stand up for what is right, and by doing so, I could finally let my light shine (see Matthew 5:14–16).

After that day, I definitely held my head a little higher. Even though I didn't become popular, I was able to make one first-rate friend in that choir class who joined the Church soon after this experience. As for my other classmates, they seemed to respect me more. One thing I am certain of is that standing up for my Savior gave me more self-respect and confidence. I am eternally grateful for Jesus's sacrifice. I feel blessed to have been able to do something meaningful to show my love for Him. **NE**



BEING THE NEW KID

I was having a hard time feeling like I fit in. My family had recently moved to the East Coast from California after living there for the first 15 years of my life. The ward we moved to had a good-sized youth group, but this was the first time that I would be the “new kid.” I figured that since I had been friendly with the new people in

our ward back in California, this new youth group would be the same way with me. It was a lot tougher than I had imagined. The worst part was going to a new school. I worried about who I would sit with at lunch. Maybe I’d see someone from church, but then again, I didn’t want to barge in on someone else’s lunch table, especially since I didn’t know if they would want me there to begin with.

The first day of school seemed to drag on forever. I kept feeling as though everyone was staring at me. Then the lunch bell rang. As I slowly entered into the lunch room, I prayed to Heavenly Father to help me find someone I knew. I glanced around to see if I could

recognize anyone. No one. So I made my way to a table on the far side of the lunch room and ate my lunch.

Later that day during my math period, there was a familiar face. I had seen David at seminary that morning. At the beginning of class he and a couple of people around him asked to see my schedule. He discovered that we both had the same lunch period.

“Hey where were you at lunch today?”

“I was there. I ate on the far side of the room,” I responded.

He thought for a second trying to remember seeing me. Then he said, “Well, tomorrow come and sit with me at lunch.”

I’m grateful for a loving Heavenly



Father, who knows each of our needs individually and who answers each of our prayers. I'm so grateful for someone who was willing to extend a hand of friendship. Something as simple as an invitation can make all the difference in the world.

Matthew O., Kansas

MY DAD, MY EXAMPLE

Dad made each of us kids feel special. He would look after each of us and talk to us like an equal. He loved us unconditionally and would forgive easily if we said we were sorry. He did his best to make sure that each of us was happy, and he made it clear that he wanted the best for us. I loved him so much.

When I was in sixth grade my dad died in a car accident. My family and I were totally devastated. There was a big hole in our family. I was totally lost. Dad was the one I leaned on, the one I went to if I was having problems. I felt that he had no right to leave me. Instead of seeking help, I let the anger and hurt stay. I finally decided it was God's fault. I stopped reading my scriptures and saying prayers. I only went to church because Mom wanted me to. I tried to stay far away from my Heavenly Father.

Then I had my first year of girls' camp. Mom made me go, and I had fun. I liked meeting new friends, but I still didn't really read my scriptures. On the last night we had a testimony meeting. I felt something I hadn't in a long time—the Spirit. I admired the girls who got up and bore their

TURN BACK

On the second day of young women's camp, we went on a five-mile hike. We had to climb over a cattle gate to continue on the trail, which led up a hill. Climbing through the gate, we found a dying cow at the bottom of the hill. One of our leaders went back to find a rancher as the rest of us continued our hike.

On the way back, I was in a slower group, five girls and our leader. They were busy taking pictures, so I decided to go ahead. As I walked down the hill I heard a cow. My first thought was that it was the dying cow. A warning voice, firm yet silent, said "Turn back." I almost ignored it, but it came again. This time I listened and returned to the group. As we started down, we saw two enormous black bulls walking fast and angrily up the hill. The biggest one started pawing the ground as he stared at us, possibly angered by the dead cow at the bottom of the hill. We were

testimonies, but I stayed seated because I thought I didn't have one. All of a sudden I felt like I had to get up. It took a while, but I did get up. I opened my mouth wondering what to say, because I didn't know that the Church was true or anything like that. So I started like the other girls did. I said I was glad for girls' camp, which was true. Then I found myself saying that I knew Jesus died for me and that my Heavenly Father loved me and that the Church was true. And the most amazing thing was that I knew what I was saying was absolutely true.

I was filled with a remarkable

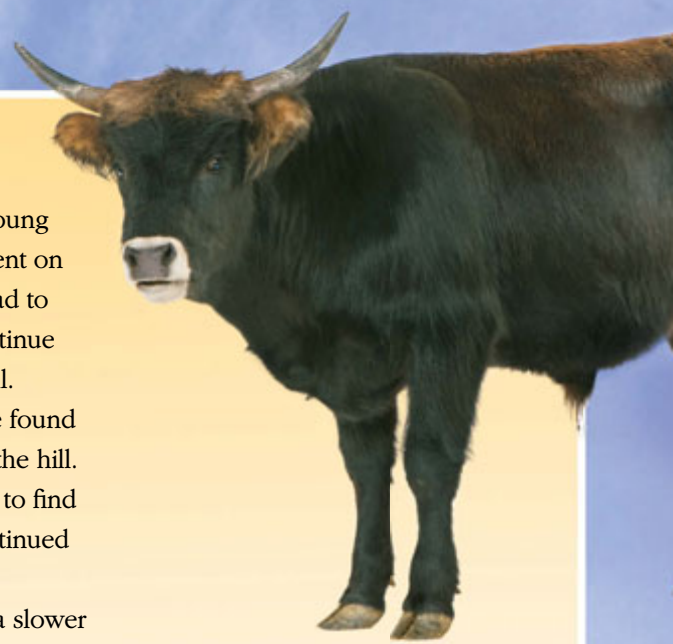
scared out of our minds, but our priesthood leader distracted it, and we were able to climb over a fence to safety.

As we entered camp again, I realized that if I hadn't listened to the warning from the Spirit, I could have been badly hurt or even killed. I knew that Heavenly Father cared about me personally and had kept me safe. I am so thankful to the Lord for that warning. This experience strengthened my testimony and gave me a greater love for the Lord.

Marissa W., Utah

peace that I hadn't felt in a long time. Then I realized that all the things I loved about my dad were attributes of Christ and that my dad was trying to show me not just how much he loved me but how much Jesus and Heavenly Father loved me. I was so grateful for that. Because of this experience I can really say that this is the true Church, that I have a Heavenly Father who loves me more than I could ever imagine, and that Jesus loves me and died for me. I also know that I will see my dad again because of the Atonement and Resurrection.

Morgan W., Florida



WHAT BAPTISM MEANS

The main reason I went to church my junior year of high school was because my parents never gave me any other option. But I had an experience that changed my life. One Sunday a new girl was in our Sunday school class. I felt prompted to slide over a few chairs and introduce myself. As we talked, I realized that Kristeen was very shy, so I took it upon myself to introduce her to our class. I assumed she had just moved into the ward, and she and I became fast friends.

A month and a half after she joined our class, I received a phone call from our ward mission leader. He told me that Kristeen and her mother were getting baptized and that Kristeen wanted me to speak at her baptism. I was floored; I thought Kristeen was a member all along. I also felt like I was the wrong person to speak on baptism, but I accepted the invitation.

To prepare for the talk, I used some scriptures on baptism, the fourth article of faith, and a good-sized chunk out of *True to the Faith* and called it good.

The day of Kristeen's baptism was beautiful. She looked so confident and cheerful. I could tell she was excited and ready for baptism. Then it came time for me to speak. I've always felt comfortable speaking in front of large groups, so the talk seemed cohesive. Things were going well until I read Romans 6:4: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

I could feel the Spirit, and I knew that I had not been keeping my baptismal covenants fully. I started crying and did my best to finish my talk. I was jealous of Kristeen, that she was going to be baptized and have the slate of her life wiped clean and renewed. But I was even more overcome by feelings of happiness for her and for her strength. She wanted to follow Christ.

How wonderful it is to know that we can be made pure by baptism and that if we fall even a little short, we can repent and be made whole again through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. I am so thankful for my Heavenly Father's plan and for Jesus Christ and His eternal sacrifice for me. I know that if I keep trying my best and continue to repent, I can also "walk in newness of life."

Hannah G., Texas

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If

By Carma Salvesen

If I could go to Galilee
And walk where Jesus walked
And sit in tender grasses
On the hillside where He taught.

If I could sit and ponder
On a rock that knew His hand,
Or walk along the seashore
Where His feet had touched the
sand.

My spirit yearns within me,
But it doesn't seem my fate.
I'll never walk where Jesus
walked.
I'll never see . . . but wait.

I worship in His temple
Where I know He's walked
before.
Have His feet been down this
hallway?
Have His fingers touched this
door?

Has He stood here in this very
room
And looked at what I see?
In the beauty of His temple
I can feel His love for me.

I close my eyes and picture Him,
My worries melt away.
I don't need to go to Galilee
Or travel far away.

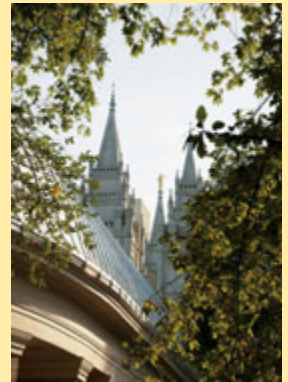
For my tender heart is filled
With what He wants me to be
taught
And my testimony burns within—
I've walked where Jesus walked!

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