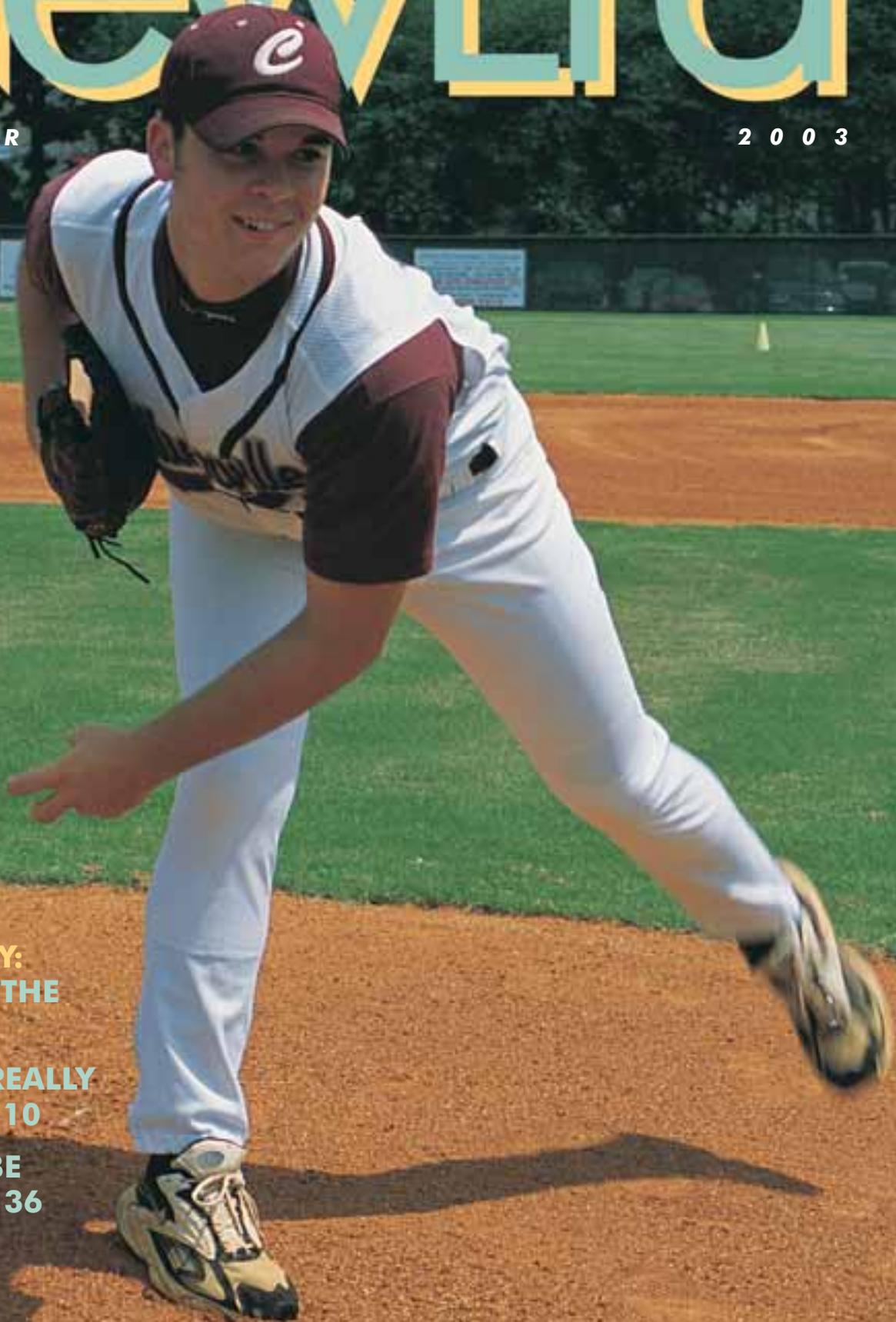


THE
NewEra

OCTOBER

2003



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PLACE, P. 20**

**DOES GOD REALLY
LOVE ME? P. 10**

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POPULAR, P. 36**

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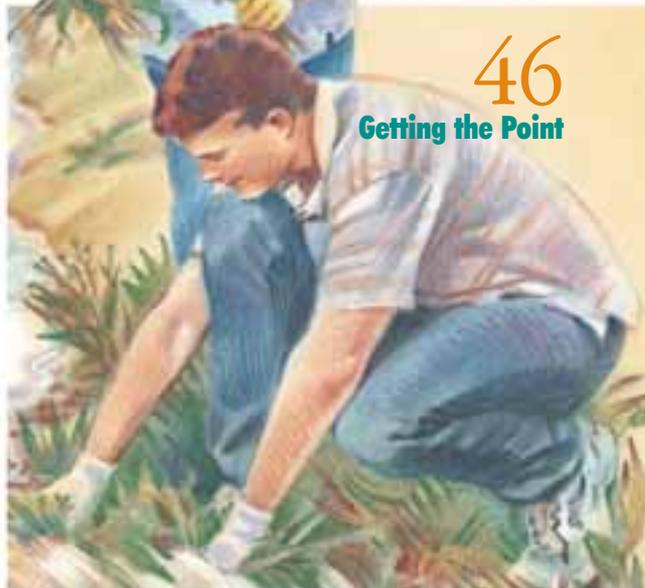
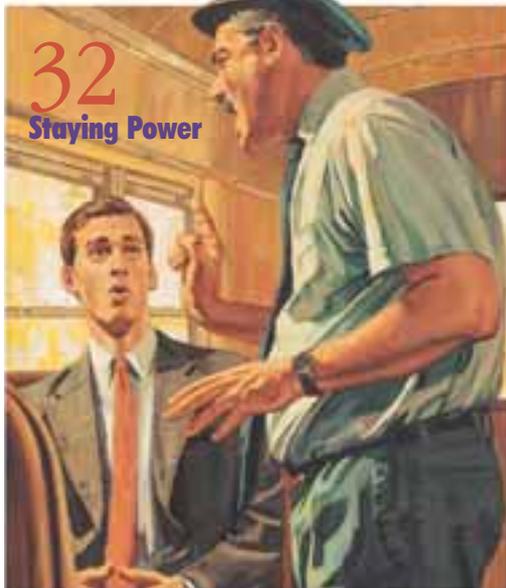
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what he believes is part
of everyday life for
Jonathan Stambaugh.*
See "Smiling in Memphis"
on p. 20.

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Shanna Ghaznavi (front)
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Questions
from
friends
are just part of
teaching the gospel
in Tennessee. See
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HOW DO I *Love* THEE?

Do you want capability, safety, and security in dating and romance? Be a genuine, committed, word-and-deed Latter-day Saint.

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



*Y*ou know, winning Sister Holland was not an easy thing to do. I worked at it until I finally had the courage to ask for her hand. In a romantic setting I said as meekly and humbly as I could, “Pat, will you marry me?”

To which she said, “Oh, dearest darling, dearest loved one, yes. Yes, yes, yes. When shall we set the date? Oh, we have got to reserve the temple. I know exactly what colors I want for the bridesmaids. Should we have the reception indoors or out? And someone must be at the guest book. And I can just see in my mind the cake that we want. . . .”

Then she stopped mid-sentence and said, “Oh, darling. You are so overcome you are speechless. Here I have just gone on and on. Wouldn’t you like to say something on this night of nights?”

To which I replied, “I think I have said too much already.”

She counters that story by reminding me

that when I arrived for our first date, her little brother shouted to her, “Hey, dreamboat, your barnacle is here!”

Actually neither of those stories is true, but who knows? Maybe you can use them someday when you have to speak about love and marriage.

Do let me now be serious. What I have learned of romantic love and the beauty of marriage I have learned from Sister Holland. As I once said of her, paraphrasing what Mark Twain’s Adam said of his Eve, “Wherever she was, there was paradise.”

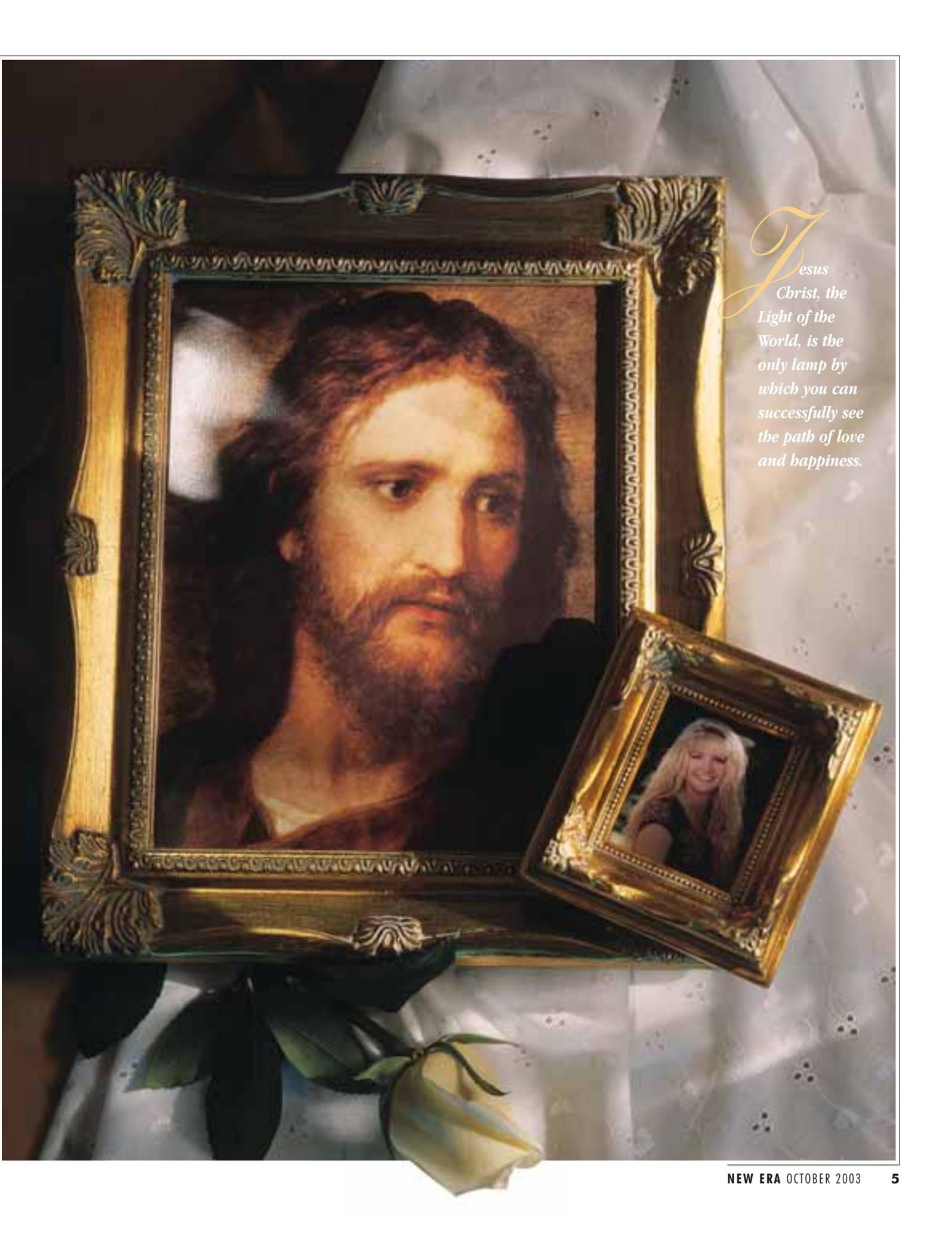
The Pure Love of Christ

I wish to speak to you about Christlike love and what I think it can and should mean in your friendships, in your dating, in serious courtship, and, ultimately, in your marriage.

After a long, wonderful discourse by Mormon on the subject of charity, the seventh chapter of Moroni tells us that this highest of Christian virtues is more accurately labeled “the pure love of Christ.”

“And it endureth forever; and whoso is

I wish to speak to you about Christlike love and what I think it should mean in your friendships.



*J*esus
Christ, the
Light of the
World, is the
only lamp by
which you can
successfully see
the path of love
and happiness.

found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him [and her].

“Wherefore, . . . pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons [and daughters] of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; . . . that we may be purified even as he is pure” (Moroni 7:47–48).

True charity, the absolutely pure, perfect love of Christ, has really been known only once in this world—in the form of Christ Himself, the living Son of the living God. As in everything, Christ is the only one who got it all right, did it all perfectly, loved the way we are all to try to love. But even though we fall short, that divine standard is there for us. It is a goal toward which we are to keep reaching, keep striving—and, certainly, a goal to keep appreciating.

Mormon explicitly taught that this love, this ability we all so want, is a gift. It is “bestowed.” It doesn’t come without effort, and it doesn’t come without patience, but, like salvation itself, in the end it is a gift, given by God to the “true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ.”

The solutions to life’s problems are always gospel solutions. Not only are answers found in Christ, but so is the power, the gift, the bestowal, the miracle of giving and receiving those answers. In this matter of love, no doctrine could be more encouraging to us than that.

Kindness

The first element of divine love—pure love—taught by both Paul and Mormon is its kindness, its selfless quality, its lack of ego and vanity and consuming self-centeredness. “Charity suffereth long, and is kind, [charity] envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own” (Moroni 7:45).

There are many qualities you will want to look for in a friend or a serious date—to say nothing of a spouse and eternal companion—but surely among the first and most basic of those qualities will be those of care and sensitivity toward others, a minimum of self-centeredness that allows

compassion and courtesy to be evident. There are lots of limitations in all of us that we hope our sweethearts will overlook. I suppose no one is as handsome or as beautiful as he or she wishes, or as brilliant in school or as witty in speech or as wealthy as we would like, but in a world of varied talents and fortunes that we can’t always command, I think that makes even more attractive the qualities we can command—such qualities as thoughtfulness, patience, a kind word, and true delight in the accomplishment of another. These cost us nothing, and they can mean everything to the one who receives them.

Christ Is the Great Example

I like Mormon and Paul’s language that says one who truly loves is not “puffed up.” Puffed up! Isn’t that a great image? True love blooms when we care more about another person than we care about ourselves. That is Christ’s great atoning example for us, and it ought to be more evident in the kindness we show, the respect we give, and the selflessness and courtesy we employ in our personal relationships.

In all that Christ was, He was not ever envious or inflated, never consumed with His own needs. He did not once, not ever, seek His own advantage at the expense of someone else. He delighted in the happiness of others, the happiness He could bring them. He was forever kind.

In a dating and courtship relationship, I would not have you spend five minutes with someone who belittles you, who is constantly critical of you, who is cruel at your expense and may even call it humor. Life is tough enough without having the person who is supposed to love you leading the assault on your self-esteem, your sense of dignity, your confidence, and your joy. In this person’s care you deserve to feel physically safe and emotionally secure.

If you are just going for pizza or to play a set of tennis, go with anyone who will provide good, clean fun. But if you are serious, or planning to be serious, please find someone who brings out the best in you and is not envious of your success. Find someone who suffers when you

suffer and who finds his or her happiness in your own.

Think the Best

The second segment of this scriptural sermon on love in Moroni 7:45 says that true charity—real love—“is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity.”

Think of how many arguments could be avoided, how many hurt feelings could be spared, and, in a worst-case scenario, how many breakups and divorces could be avoided if we were not so easily provoked, if we thought no evil of one another, and if we not only did not rejoice in iniquity but didn't rejoice even in little mistakes.

Think the best of each other, especially of those you say you love. Assume the good and doubt the bad.

Endure to the End

Third and last, the prophets tell us that true love “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things” (Moroni 7:45). Once again that is ultimately a description of Christ's love—He is the great example of One who bore and believed and hoped and endured. We are invited to do the same in our courtship and in our marriage to the best of our ability. Bear up and be strong. Be hopeful and believing. Some things in life we have little or no control over. These have to be endured. These are not things anyone wants in life, but sometimes they come. And when they come, we have to bear them; we have to believe; we have to hope for an end

True love blooms when we care more about another person than we care about ourselves. That is Christ's great atoning example for us.



Believe that your faith has everything to do with your romance, because it does. You separate dating from discipleship at your peril.



to such sorrows and difficulty; we have to endure until things come right in the end.

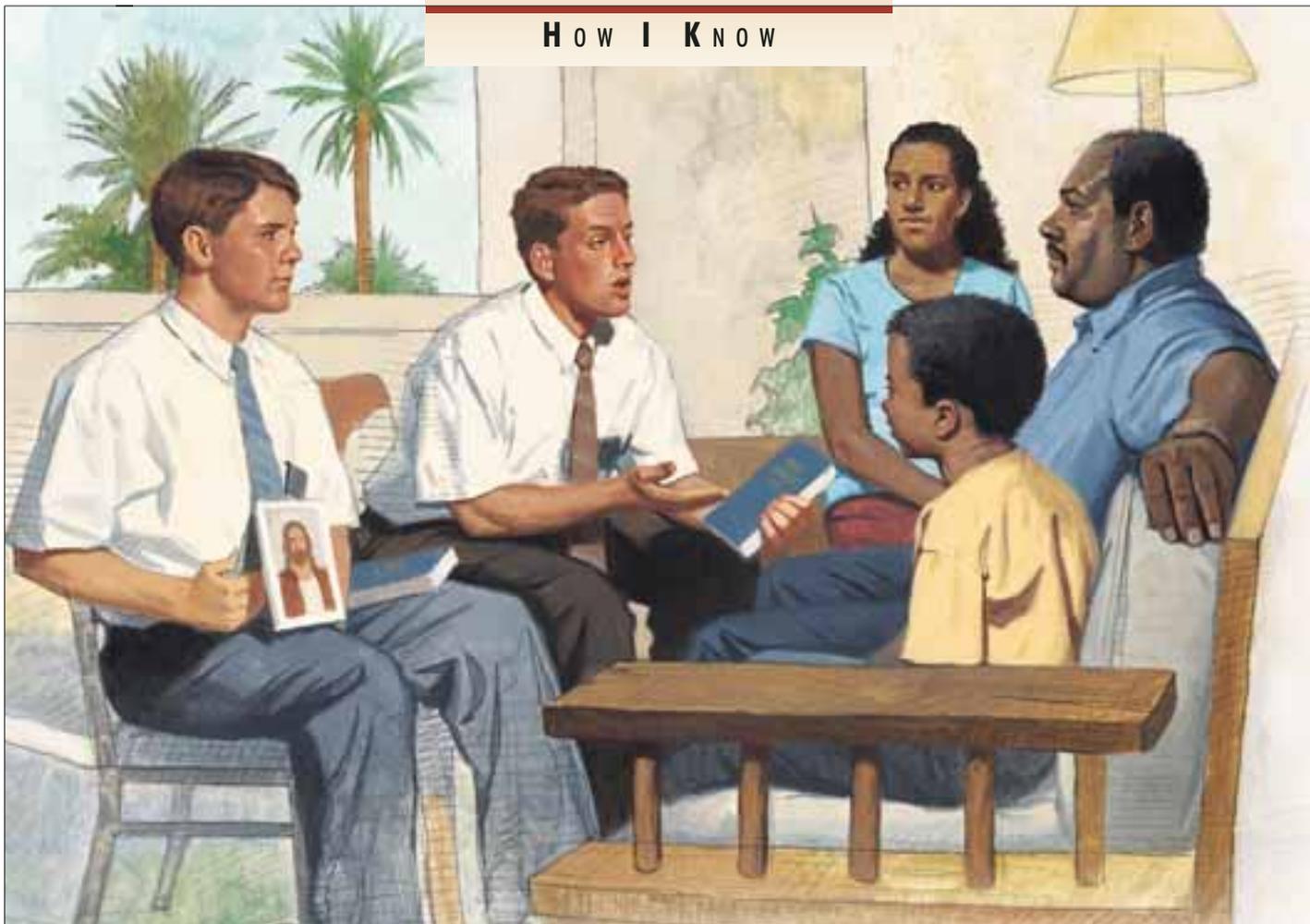
Want Dating Security?

In Mormon's and Paul's final witnesses, they declare that "charity [pure love] never faileth" (Moroni 7:46; 1 Corinthians 13:8). It is there through thick and thin. It endures through sunshine and shadow, through darkest sorrow and on into the light. It never fails. So Christ loved us, and that is how He hoped we would love each other.

In a final command to all His disciples for all time, He said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you" (John 13:34; emphasis added). Of course such Christlike staying power requires more than any of us really have. It requires something more, an endowment from heaven. Remember Mormon's promise: that such love—the love we each yearn for and cling to—is "bestowed" upon "true followers of Christ."

Do you want capability, safety, and security in dating and romance, in married life and eternity? Be a true disciple of Jesus. Be a genuine, committed, word-and-deed Latter-day Saint. Believe that your faith has everything to do with your romance, because it does. You separate dating from discipleship at your peril. Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, is the only lamp by which you can successfully see the path of love and happiness. How should I love thee? As He does, for that way "never faileth." **NE**

Adapted from a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on 15 February 2000.



TIME TO TESTIFY

BY CLAYTON LONDON

One of the greatest testimony-building experiences in my life came early in my mission. At the Missionary Training Center, I had finished reading the Book of Mormon, and I took the challenge given in Moroni 10:3–5 to pray about the Book of Mormon. As I prayed, I expected an overpowering revelation of the truthfulness of the book, but nothing came.

When it was time for me to fly to South Africa, still nothing had come. A few weeks into my service, I hadn't yet received an answer to those prayers. I was getting discouraged.

One night, my companion and I had an appointment to teach the first discussion to a preacher. He accepted everything we said



My prayers were answered when the Spirit touched my heart as I testified to the preacher.



until we taught about Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. As a new missionary, I didn't know what to do, but I felt prompted to simply testify. As I bore to him my simple testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith and of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, the Spirit touched my heart. I was filled with a sense of peace as I shared with this man a knowledge that I didn't know I had.

That was an answer to my weeks of prayers. Up to that point I had believed that the Book of Mormon contained God's word, but now I can say that I know that it is true; it is "another testament of Jesus Christ." **NE**

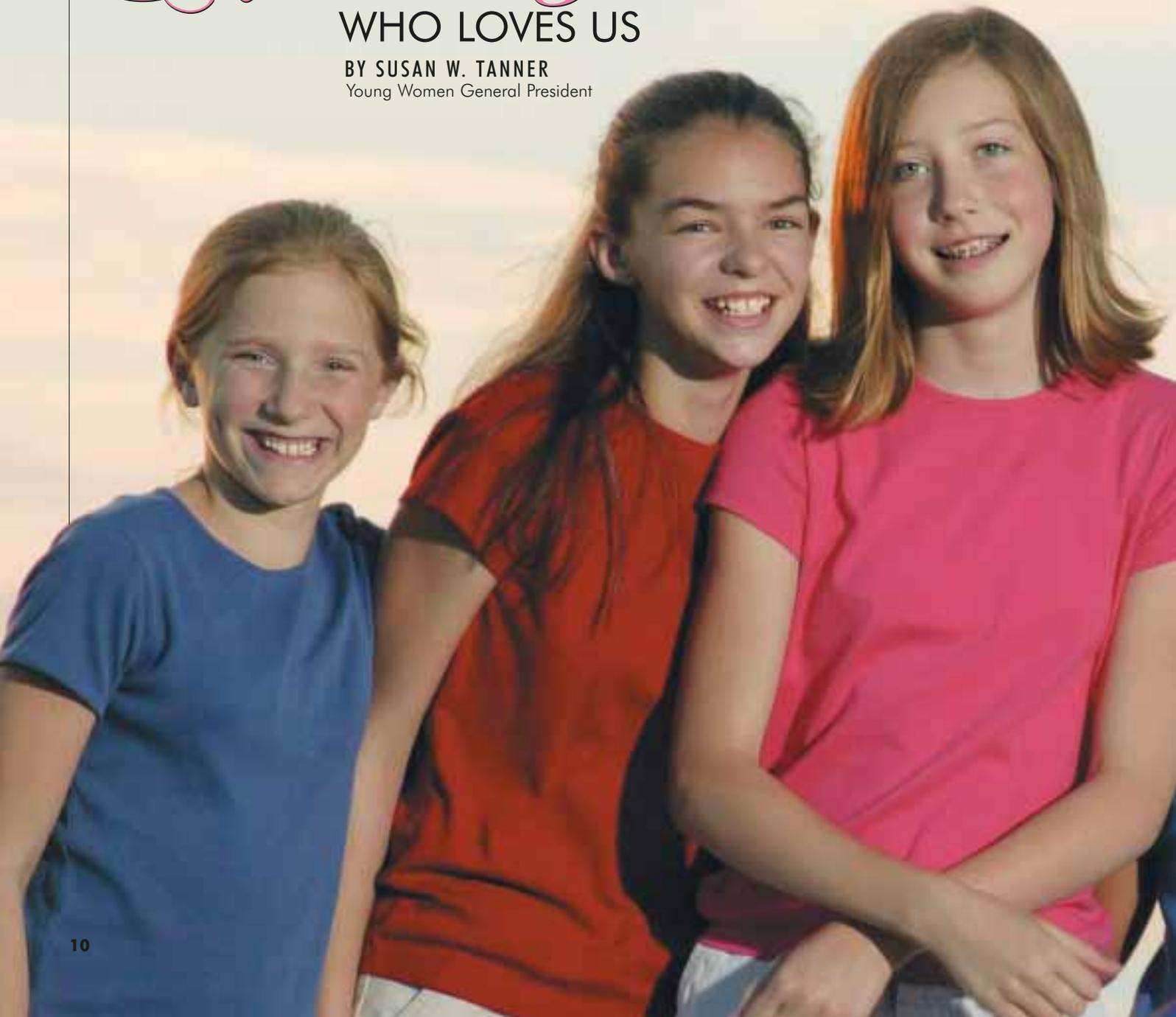
Clayton London is a member of the Shepard View Ward, Farmington Utah North Stake.

WE ARE
Daughters
OF OUR
Heavenly Father,

WHO LOVES US

BY SUSAN W. TANNER

Young Women General President



As I looked around the classroom into the faces of self-conscious but eager 12-year-old girls, I thought of the first line of the Young Women theme: “We are daughters of our Heavenly Father, who loves us.”

I wondered, “How do these young women know Heavenly Father loves them?” So I asked them.

Many bowed their heads or nervously shuffled their feet, not wanting to be called on. It was obvious to me they needed some time to think about the question and perhaps some privacy for their response. “Think about it throughout the lesson,” I said.

Finding His Love in Our Lives

At the conclusion, I handed out pieces of paper and had the young women write anonymously how they knew that Heavenly Father loved them. As they struggled to write, I heard such comments as “This is *so* hard” and “I’m not sure I *do* know.” I was particularly struck by Jocelyn, who had been in tears through most of the lesson. When I privately read their answers, I knew which crumpled paper was hers. She said simply, “Because He saved my mom.”

Her mother is one of my dear friends, and I too had been fervently praying for her. She had just successfully undergone surgery for a heart condition and was about to be released from the hospital when an artery in her spleen burst. Within minutes she was at death’s door. A team of doctors feverishly worked to revive her enough to prepare her for emergency surgery.



wondered how these young women knew Heavenly Father loves them. So I asked them.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT CASEY, POSED BY MODELS

***felt chilled by
Jocelyn's answer.
What if Heavenly
Father hadn't saved
her mother? Would
she still know that
Heavenly Father
loves her?***

Miraculous is the only way to describe her recovery. It was an answer to many prayers, including Jocelyn's and mine. It was a powerful witness of God's love.

Yet I also felt chilled by Jocelyn's answer. What if Heavenly Father hadn't saved her mother? Would she still know that Heavenly Father loves her? Would she be able to feel the Lord's love even amid life's inevitable sorrows and tragedies?

Then I thought of my niece Ashley. She too knows of the love her Father in Heaven has for her, yet her experience was quite the opposite of Jocelyn's.

About a year ago Ashley was walking with her father and mother across seaside boulders near their home in northern California. Her dad was photographing beautiful scenes for watercolors he would paint. Out

of nowhere and with no forewarning, a rogue wave engulfed the shore, carrying her father out to sea and dragging her mother along the boulders. Ashley was inland far enough that the killer wave missed her. Terrorized by what she had just witnessed, she ran for help.

Within minutes, a man with a cell phone called emergency numbers, and a rescue began. Her mother had landed in a precarious spot where she could be reached only by helicopter. She was in excruciating pain with a broken back and arm and with numerous cuts and gashes due to the vicious rocks and fierce ocean. Ashley's father was nowhere to be found. As Ashley's mother lay on the edge of the sea waiting for rescue, she felt her husband's presence, and she knew without a doubt that he was gone. His body never was recovered.





Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego had faith and were preserved in the fiery furnace. The prophet Abinadi likewise trusted the Lord, yet his life was not preserved. But they all knew the Lord loved them.

Heavenly Father didn't save Ashley's dad. Yet Ashley still knows that He loves her. She says: "During that time I felt comfort from the Holy Ghost. I knew I would see my dad again. And I felt the Lord's love through the kind care of others."

Each week young women and their leaders throughout the Church stand and declare, "We are daughters of our Heavenly Father, who *loves* us . . ." Do we *really* know this? Do we know it deeply enough that this knowledge strengthens and sustains us? How can we better know and feel His love? Jocelyn's and Ashley's examples suggest that we may come to know of God's love in our lives—both in our joys and in our sorrows.

Finding His Love in the Scriptures

As I considered these contrasting stories, a pair of comparable scriptural examples came to my mind—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego's deliverance from the fiery furnace versus Abinadi's martyrdom by fire.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were faithful servants of the Lord. They knew He loved them. They had faith that He could

preserve them in the fiery furnace, if it was His will. "If it be so," they said, "our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king" (Daniel 3:17). Not only did they have faith that the Lord could save them, but more important, they trusted in His will for them, whether they were protected or not. The astonished King Nebuchadnezzar witnessed their miraculous rescue and recognized the powerful love that God had for these "servants that trusted in him" (Daniel 3:28).

The prophet Abinadi in the Book of Mormon likewise trusted the Lord when faced with the threat of a fiery death. King Noah said, "Thou shalt be put to death unless thou wilt recall all the words which thou hast spoken evil concerning me and my people" (Mosiah 17:8).

Abinadi boldly refused. When it came time for him to be burned, he was not miraculously saved. "He fell, having suffered death by fire; yea, having been put to death because he would not deny the commandments of God, having sealed the truth of his words by his

Sometimes God blesses us by granting the desires of our hearts, and sometimes He blesses us with comfort and strength to bear the burden of unfulfilled or shattered desires.

death” (Mosiah 17:20). He trusted in the Lord’s love for him and His will for him.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were spared death by fire; Abinadi was not. Yet all were loved of the Lord, and all knew it.

The outcomes of these two stories suggest that the love of God transcends the earthly experiences we have. His love is greater than the good and the bad things that happen to us. Sometimes He blesses us by granting the desires of our hearts, and sometimes He blesses us with comfort and strength to bear the burden of unfulfilled or shattered desires.

Finding His Love in All Things

In my life I have known of God’s love for me. I have prayed for specific

blessings, and He has granted them to me. I feel His love in “mercies and [in] miracles” (“Bless Our Fast, We Pray,” *Hymns*, no. 138), in births and baptisms, in health and healings, in mornings and mountains, in friendships and family love, in timing and temples.

By contrast, I have also been sustained in my adversities. Some burdens weigh me down in spite of my desire to have this cup removed (see Luke 22:42). In fact, it is through such difficult experiences that I feel a greater dependence upon the Lord and an even richer outpouring of love from Him. I feel a closeness to Him, knowing that He is carrying me, comforting me, and giving me the courage to go on. I know as Paul taught the Romans that nothing, no matter how hard it is, can separate me from the love of God:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . .

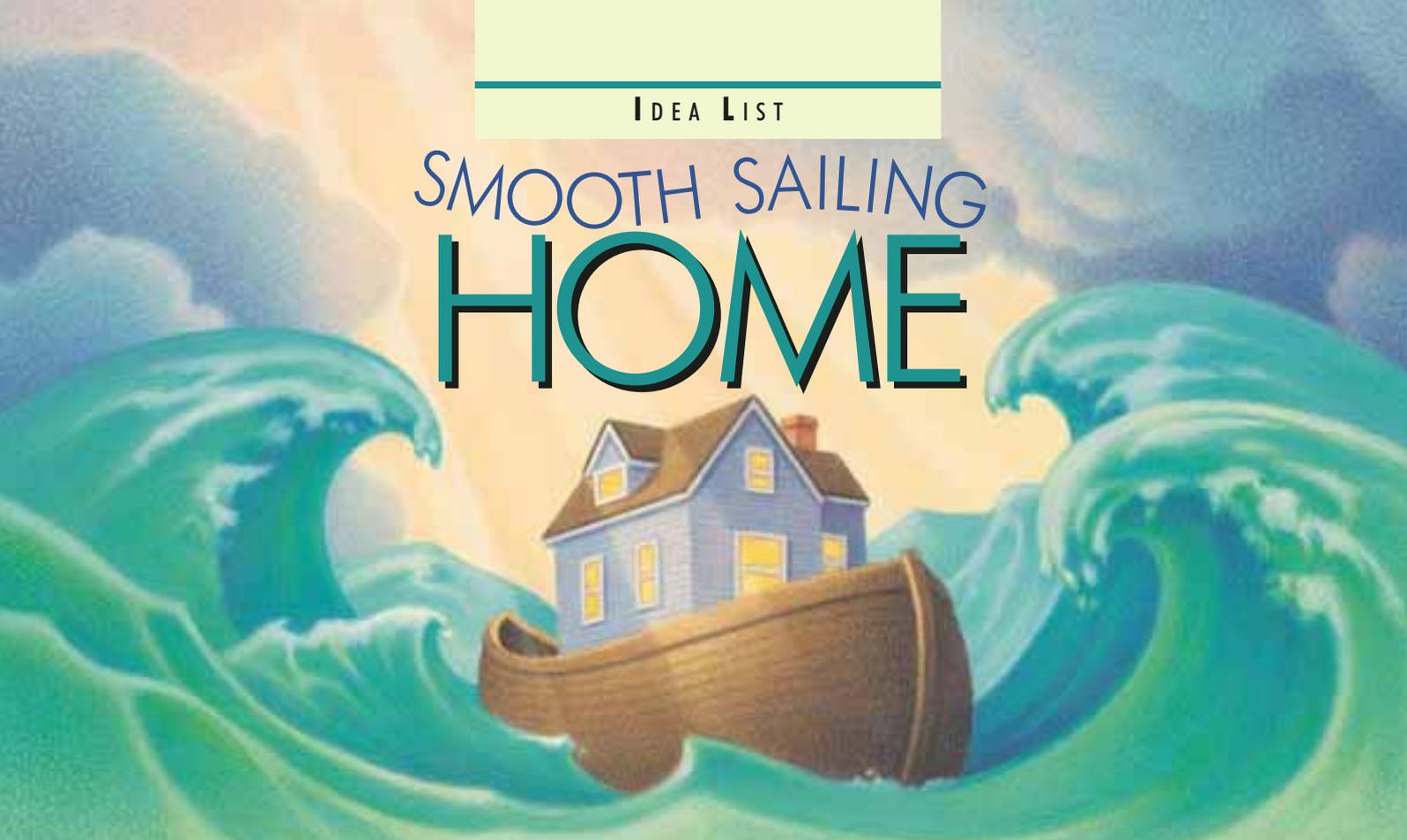
“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35, 38–39).

Jocelyn and Ashley could not be separated from the love of God, even though one’s parent was spared and the other’s was not. They recognize His love in all experiences—joyful and sorrowful. I desire that all young women the world over, in whatever circumstances they find themselves, can, like Jocelyn and Ashley, testify with conviction, “We are daughters of our Heavenly Father, who loves us!” **NE**



SMOOTH SAILING HOME



Even when every member on the family ship is pulling together to make the voyage of life as smooth as possible, there are going to be some storms. Here are some suggestions from Sister Karen Workman's Miami Shores, Florida, seminary class that will help make for smooth sailing on the journey home to our Heavenly Father.

- Preventing problems is easier than fixing them. Do things that will strengthen family relationships before arguments occur.
- The best way to get along better with your family is to pray, read scriptures, and have family home evening together. Don't miss these opportunities to bring the Spirit into your home. If you aren't having family prayers or scripture study, you can start the habit.
- Look for ways to show that you love your family. Often they will look for ways to return that love. This brings a spirit of peace and unity into the home.

What we do can help our families get through rough waters on our journey home to Heavenly Father.

- When things start to get heated, find a quiet place where you can calm down, pray, and read the scriptures. Give yourself a chance to cool off and think about things rationally.
- Even if you don't think you're the problem, pray that the Lord will soften your heart.
- Remember every argument has at least two sides. There isn't always a right and wrong side. Learning to be open-minded and flexible will help you not only with your brothers and sisters, but with missionary companions, co-workers, and your future spouse.
- Communication helps. Once things have calmed down, seek out the family member with whom you have a problem. Letting the problem go too long can allow bad feelings to grow. Talking about problems can help if you do it calmly.
- In the end, an apology can go a long way in patching hurt feelings. Be the first to say you're sorry. **NE**

Q & A

How can I best prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood?

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

NEW ERA

The Aaronic Priesthood is the lesser priesthood and holds “the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel; Which gospel is the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins” (D&C 84:26–27). The greater priesthood is named after Melchizedek, an Old Testament high priest, and holds “the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God” (D&C 84:19). Because the Melchizedek Priesthood includes the right to officiate in the higher ordinances and to administer spiritual blessings, your experiences after you receive the higher priesthood will expand upon what you have experienced as a deacon, teacher, and priest.

Among other things, deacons are able to pass the sacrament and collect fast offerings; teachers can prepare the sacrament and home teach; and priests may baptize, bless

Learning to fulfill your Aaronic Priesthood duties will prepare you for the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Aaronic Priesthood holders should keep themselves worthy in every way as they prepare for the higher priesthood.

Learn to be responsible. A lot of responsibility comes with the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Acting in the priesthood is acting in the name of Jesus Christ. Draw nearer to Him by praying, fasting, studying the scriptures, keeping the commandments, and serving others.

the sacrament, and ordain other priests, teachers, and deacons. Although these Aaronic Priesthood responsibilities are all spiritual activities, the ordinances and duties of the Melchizedek Priesthood are even more spiritual in nature. Therefore, as you prepare to receive the higher priesthood, you should prepare yourself spiritually for greater responsibilities, such as conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost and giving priesthood blessings.

A large part of your preparation should be to fulfill all your Aaronic Priesthood duties with diligence and to magnify any callings you receive. Your preparation should include any activity that will draw you closer to the Savior, since it is His priesthood you are preparing to receive and His authority you will use to bless others. These activities include praying, fasting, studying the scriptures, keeping the commandments, remaining free from the harmful influences of the world, and serving others. **NE**



READERS



Because you have received the Aaronic Priesthood, you have already begun to prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. You

need to fulfill the responsibilities in the Aaronic Priesthood that you now have, because you will have more responsibilities later.

Oyunsuren Bandi, 20, Old Darkhan Branch, Ulaanbaatar Mongolia North District



Consistent with both the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods is the idea of service. Priesthood is service. The Aaronic Priesthood

prepares those who worthily hold it for even greater service as holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood. To prepare, study Doctrine and Covenants 84. Be obedient to the commandments, and you will bring joy to others by your faithfulness.

Elder Jeffrey Jardine, 21, Argentina Salta Mission



The responsibility and experience we can have with the Aaronic Priesthood are remarkable and so is the Spirit we feel.

But through the Melchizedek Priesthood we become more mature and responsible and feel more love, joy, and goodness. To prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, we need to study and pray.

John Louie Ambrosio, 18, Catania First Branch, Catania Italy District



Attending seminary and other Church classes helped me understand the nature of the higher priesthood. I especially studied Doctrine and Covenants 13, 20, 84, and 107. These scriptures offer a broad knowledge of the two priesthoods. The more I try to honor the priesthood, the more of a difference it makes in my life.

Humberto Martins de Araújo Júnior, 22,
Coetés First Ward, Olinda Brazil Paulista Stake

If we study, pray, and keep the commandments, we will be ready to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. The Lord said, "I will give unto the children of men line upon line" (2 Nephi 28:30). This means we should work diligently but have patience in order to grow in the gospel.

Grigoryan Babken, 18, Komitas Branch,
Yerevan Armenia District



If you exercise your priesthood in charitable service and try to magnify your calling as a priest, you will naturally prepare yourself for the blessings of officiating in the Melchizedek Priesthood and serving as a missionary.

Elder Benny C. Smith, 20, Chile Santiago East Mission

When I think of the priesthood, I can feel how much our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love us. It is a great privilege to perform ordinances that are necessary for salvation, so it is important to be worthy. I like very much the words of the Savior: "What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

Nick Chemezov, 18, Kharkivs'ka Branch,
Kyiv Ukraine District



We look to you, my young brethren of the Atonic Priesthood. We need you. Like Helaman's 2,000 stripling warriors, you also are the spirit sons of God, and you too can be endowed with power to build up and defend His kingdom. We need you to make sacred covenants, just as they did. We need you to be meticulously obedient and faithful, just as they were."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Greatest Generation of Missionaries," *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 47.

The Atonic Priesthood is a preparatory priesthood. This suggests that some experiences will be different in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Ordinances such as celestial marriage are performed by those holding the higher priesthood. Meeting your responsibilities in the Atonic Priesthood will help you prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Ebers Raúl Alvarez Comesaña, 23, Montevideo 10th Ward, Montevideo Uruguay West Stake

There is nothing more sacred in the life of a young man than receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood. The responsibilities are greater but so are the blessings if we magnify our responsibilities. The best way to prepare is to live worthily each day.

Moisés Nefi Morales Gonzáles, 17,
Naval Ward, Ventanilla Perú Stake

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send us your answer to the question below, along with your name, age, and the names of your ward and stake. Please include a snapshot of yourself that is 1 1/2 by 2 inches (4 by 5 cm) or larger.

Q&A, New Era

50 East North Temple

Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

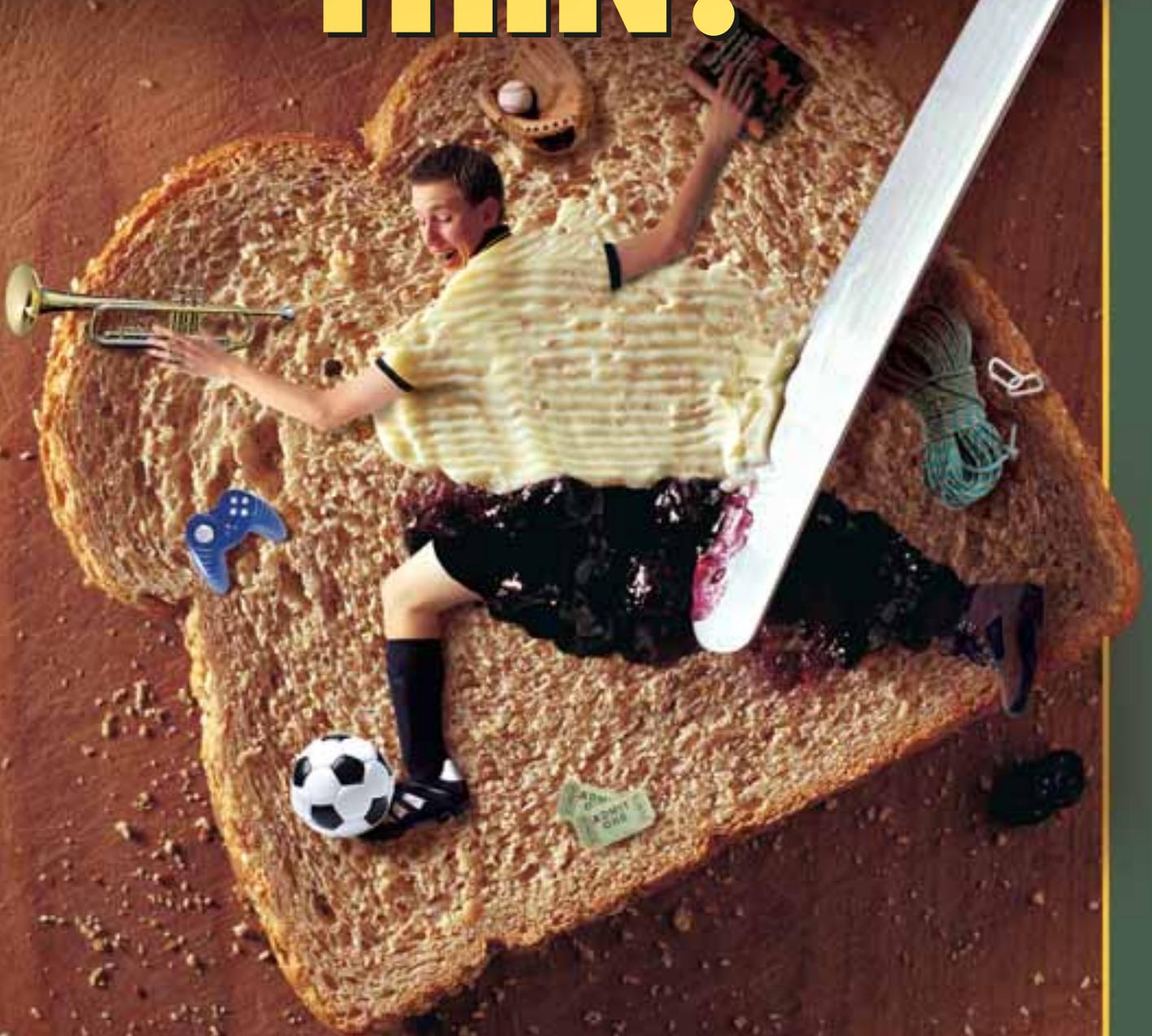
cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by 15 November 2003.

QUESTION

"I battle with the same temptations over and over, even though I decided against them years ago and have resisted them so far. Why doesn't the Lord acknowledge my commitment and take away the temptation?"

SPREAD THIN?



IF YOU HAVE TOO MANY THINGS TO DO
AND YOU FIND YOURSELF IN A JAM,
TRY A SMALLER SLICE OF LIFE.
(See Mosiah 4:27.)

SMILING IN

MEMPHIS

BY ARIANNE B. COPE
Church Magazines

Allison Bray (right) and Michael Sandridge (far right), along with many of their LDS friends, have to prepare themselves to answer many questions about the Church at their schools.



What do Latter-day Saints believe? The youth of Memphis, Tennessee, have had a lot of experience answering this question—for others and for themselves.

Take a walk in Memphis, Tennessee, and you'll know why they call it the blues capital of the world. Memphis is a music town, with music that's a little sad. A melancholy saxophone blares on Beale Street. And it always seems to be pouring rain here.

But Latter-day Saint teens prove there is plenty of sunshine in Memphis. They wear bright smiles, even when they stand alone. Most of the teens are the only members of the Church in their schools in an area of the United States known as the "Bible Belt," where churches of other faiths stand on nearly every corner.



Being around so many Christian religions creates questions for LDS youth about how Latter-day Saint beliefs fit into what other religions believe.

Buried in Questions

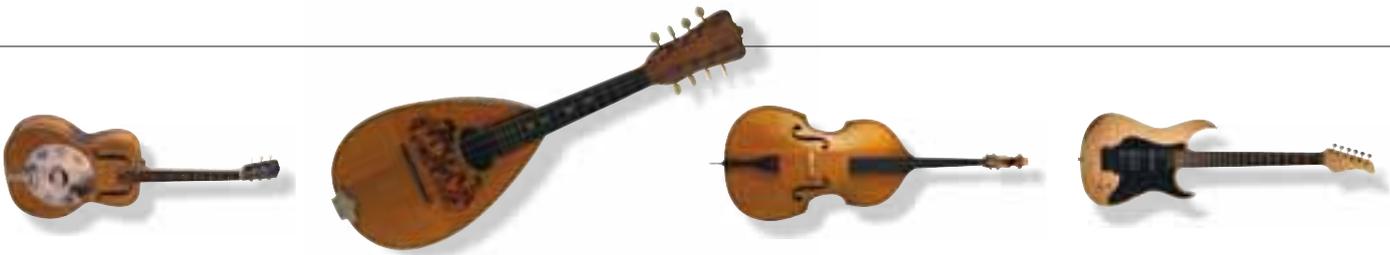
A lot of people living in the Bible Belt have heard something about the “Mormons,” but what they’ve heard isn’t always correct. Every day at school, teens in Memphis are bombarded with questions and misperceptions about the Church: “So what do Latter-day Saints believe?” “What makes your church better than mine?” “Why don’t you have a preacher?” “What is the sacrament?” “What is the Book of Mormon

about?” “How many moms do you have?” “Why do you always wear modest clothes?” “What do you do in temples?” And on and on. So how do the Memphis teens answer all these questions?

White Station High School’s Allison Bray, who has had a lot of practice answering questions, says, “It’s really hard to talk to them. Sometimes they’ll ask a question, but they don’t really want to know what I have to say,” she says. “I’ll stop and pray for help. And if I don’t know how to answer, I’ll go home and ask someone, read about it, or look it up in my scriptures and get back to them.”

With all the questions they get asked, the





her the most. “I try not to argue,” she says. “If I treat it like a discussion, focusing on what we agree on, as well as what’s different about our religions, then I never have a bad experience.”

Tracy Brumley of Southhaven High School tries to consider everyone’s point of view. “I explain the best I can, try to stay calm, and realize they were brought up in a different religion, so my beliefs might sound weird to them,” she says.

These teens have different ways of dealing with the questions that come their way about the Church, but they all rely on their testimonies and on the Spirit to guide them as they try to share the gospel. They also use the things they are taught by their ward leaders and their seminary teachers as background for their answers.

Bombarded with . . . Blessings?

The Memphis teens actually look at all the questions they get as blessings. It’s a chance to study and search out good answers. The search itself can lead them to some profound insights.

Memphis youth have thought of a lot of resources, like the scriptures, to answer people’s questions. Michael Sandridge of Christian Brothers High School has found a good way to answer a lot of questions. “It’s kind of hard sometimes, but I’ve found using the Articles of Faith to describe what we believe really helps,” he says.

Even when they have the resources, the youth realize they need to work on their attitudes too. Amanda Slauson, the only Church member in Craigmont High School, says being open to other students’ questions instead of getting defensive has helped



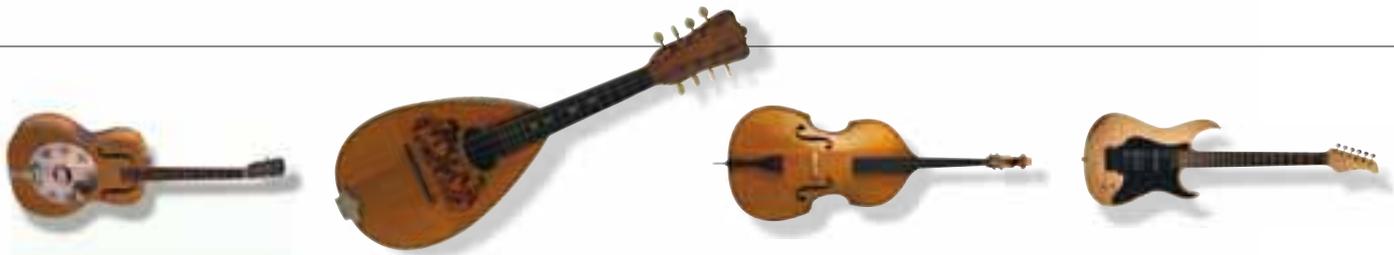


Amanda Slauson (far left) tries to be open when people ask her questions about the Church. Blaine Volstorf (left, with his mom) and Brett Barnett (below, left, with his parents) find their testimonies are strengthened when they ponder gospel questions. All the youth, including Tracy Brumley (below, far left, with her mom), find great strength in their families.

Blaine Volstorf attends White Station Middle School and says the questions he gets are the building blocks of his testimony. "Sometimes, because of their questions, I question myself. But finding the answers makes me have a stronger

testimony and helps me understand more about the Church," he says.

Brett Barnett of West Junior High says it's tough to face other students' criticism, but it's kept him strong. He says, "I may be the only member in my school, but I stay strong



P *prayer, scripture study, and seminary have been a vital strength to Allison McEwen (right) and Lenora Bendall (below, with her mother). Jonathan Stambaugh (far right, with his family) has found that good friends can also help his testimony.*

because I have the truth. Even when I'm physically alone, I'm never spiritually alone."

When your faith is questioned every day, you have to decide pretty quickly which side of the line you're on. Allison McEwen of Houston High School says, "When I was younger and my peers questioned things, I doubted too. But by going to the Lord in prayer, I found the answers that made me stronger. After I found out for myself that the Church was true, their questions didn't bother me anymore."

As the student body president, Allison gets a lot of questions about Church. "I like to be different," she says. "The Church is something positive that definitely puts me aside from the rest." Even in the face of difficult questions from friends, she knows that the Lord is aware of her and is willing to help her find the answers, and that has been a great blessing.



Lenora Bendall feels the same way. She is setting an example as the only member at Gateway Christian School. "Having to set an example, because I know everyone at school is watching me, has made me stronger," she says.

All the youth agreed attending seminary every morning gives them strength to face their



situations at school. Lenora says that taking her seminary teacher's challenge to read and pray about the Book of Mormon pulled her through a time of doubt and helped her gain her testimony.

Another blessing, the Memphis teens say, is good friends. Jonathan Stambaugh of Collierville High School says, "A couple of years ago I didn't go to seminary and didn't really like church. I only hung out with guys on the baseball team, and even though it was fun, it felt empty. Then I started hanging out with Church friends, and things were so much better. My Church friends help strengthen my testimony."

Jonathan is putting his chances at major league baseball aside for a mission. He says, "I would rather be a good guy than a good baseball player, because, without the gospel, nothing has a point."

Southern Testimony

It's scary to roam the school's halls knowing you're the only one who believes what you do. You don't know from one day to the next how you're going to be treated or what you'll be asked next. So how do these southern teens develop solid testimonies? Amanda Slauson answers, "I know a lot of teens wonder if they really know if the gospel is true. But down here you have to know one way or the other because people are asking you about it every day. Every time you answer a question, you share your testimony. And when you share your testimony, you get this feeling—you realize that you have the faith to make it."

It's no wonder why in the land of the blues, these teens are smiling. **NE**

Arianne B. Cope is a member of the Garland First Ward, Garland Utah Stake.

That Book

I ignored the book for a long time. But when I finally opened it, it changed my life forever.

BY SUWIT SAISAM-ANG

I had several opportunities to pick up that blue book. When I did, I wanted to read more and more. I found out that the Lord had a plan for my life.

When I moved into a college dormitory in Khon Kaen, Thailand, I noticed a blue book in the corner of the room. I never picked it up, and the book was still there when I moved out of the dorm many months later.

After graduating from college, I returned to my hometown of Kalasin. One day when I was visiting a friend, I saw a blue book on top of his TV—a book that reminded me of the one in my dorm room. “Where did you get that book?” I asked my friend. He said missionaries had given it to him. I said I had seen a similar book but that I didn’t know anything about it. My friend had not read it either.

Picking up the book, I finally read the words on the cover—“The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ.” Then, opening the book randomly and finding Jacob chapter 5, I began reading about a tame olive tree and a wild olive tree. Although I did not really understand the meaning of the allegory, reading it gave me a happy feeling.

As the days went by, I found that I wanted to read more of the book, so I returned to my friend’s house to borrow it. When I

arrived, my friend was talking to two missionaries. They introduced themselves as Elder Reid and Elder Haroldsen and made an appointment to visit me. They came as promised and shared with me their belief in Heavenly Father’s plan. As they spoke, I could feel the love of the Father.

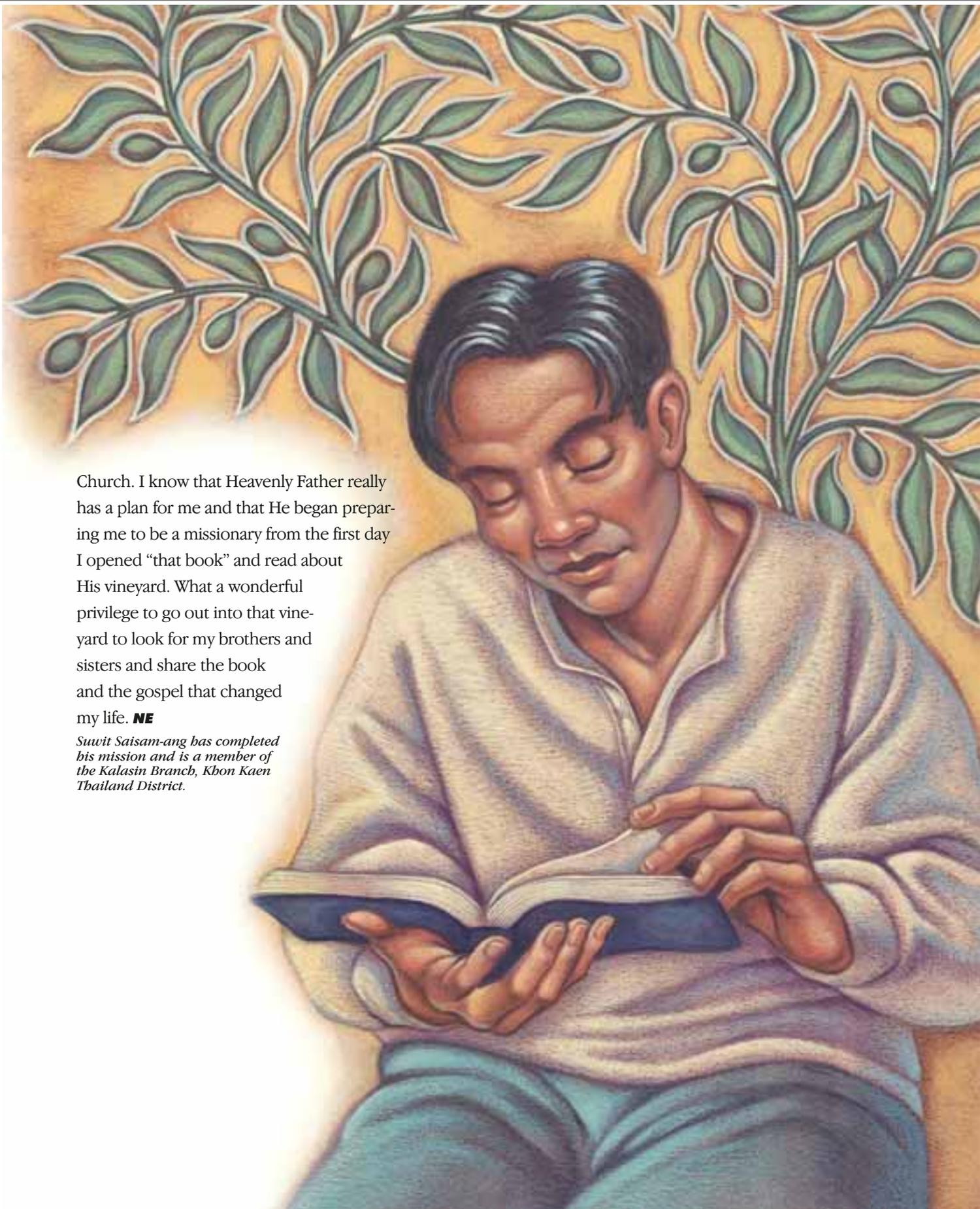
At their invitation, I attended church on Sunday. Although there were only 10 people in attendance, I felt a love for the Kalasin Branch, and I agreed to come again.

I was baptized on 21 March 1999 and soon began working with the missionaries. As I watched the missionaries trying to spread the gospel, I could feel God’s love for His children.

Two months after my baptism, my older sister gained her own testimony and was also baptized. A month later my niece was baptized too. With help from the members, our little branch soon tripled in size, with about 30 members attending church regularly.

A year after my baptism, I received a call to serve a full-time mission in Bangkok, Thailand. My older sister also received a call to serve in the same mission.

I know that it wasn’t luck or coincidence that I became a member of the Lord’s true



Church. I know that Heavenly Father really has a plan for me and that He began preparing me to be a missionary from the first day I opened “that book” and read about His vineyard. What a wonderful privilege to go out into that vineyard to look for my brothers and sisters and share the book and the gospel that changed my life. **NE**

Suwit Saisam-ang has completed his mission and is a member of the Kalasin Branch, Khon Kaen Thailand District.



January Winterton wants her future children to know and love her grandmother as much as she does. So she did something about it.

THE Story OF A LIFETIME

The best stories ever are the ones told by your family members.

BY CAROLINE H. BENZLEY
Church Magazines

Picture your grandmother at 16 years of age. What kind of clothes did she wear? Did she sing in the school choir or play on a sports team?

Can you imagine your grandfather on his first date? Do you think he was nervous? When did he first learn to drive a car?

If you are fortunate enough to have grandparents who are still living, you can ask them these sorts of questions. And if your grandparents haven't written their personal history, you can help them write it. It's a big job, but if you ask January Winterton, 18, of St. George, Utah, she will tell you it's worth the work.

January's grandma, Karen Vlam, is a

woman of great faith and courage. Confined to a wheelchair now, she has battled multiple sclerosis for more than 30 years. Despite her daily challenges, she is still smiling. Her dedication to the gospel and to her large family is a wonderful example to January.

"I want her to be more than just my kids' great-grandma that they see in an old picture," says January. "I want her to be a person that they know a lot about."

That's why January spent two-and-a-half weeks last summer living with her grandparents. Each day January asked her grandma questions about her life and typed the answers on a laptop computer. Once her notes are edited and compiled, January expects to have more than 50 pages of facts, stories, and pictures about her grandma's life.

Thanks to these stories, the children



For two weeks one summer, January devoted every day to recording her grandmother's memories. The result was a collection of stories that were funny and full of wisdom in the face of hardships. These family stories will become more precious as time passes.

January will have one day will know a lot about their great-grandmother. They will know, for one thing, that she loved animals. January laughed when her grandma told her about trying to take home a frightened little bat from the woods when she was five years old. "She wrapped it in toilet paper and took it to her parents," explains January. "Then her parents freaked out and told her to put it back."

She still loves animals. Though she has never had a pet bat, she now has at least 11 birds.

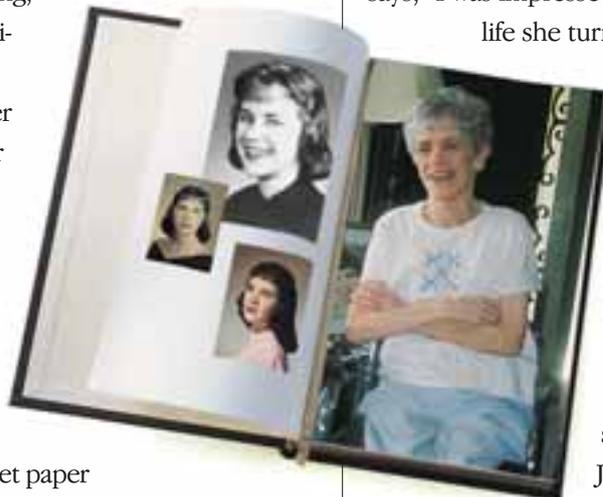
Along with funny stories, January's

grandma also shared her testimony and expressed her love for the Savior. January says, "I was impressed how throughout her life she turned to the Lord in her trials. She isn't resentful about her disease, but instead she has learned to have a good attitude and move forward.

"Talking to my grandma made me realize that my trials are so small," continues January. "If she can stay strong with all that she

has been through, I can too. It may take a little faith on my part, but I just have to follow her example, her example of faith."

After writing her grandma's personal history, January feels she knows her grandma



a lot better than before. "I know where she is coming from. I know her life experiences," she says. January also knows that writing a personal history is hard work. It isn't easy to summarize a life on paper. Because of this January suggests you help your grandparents or older relatives write their personal history, especially if they have health challenges that may prevent them from doing it themselves. She says the best thing to do is to get them thinking about their life by asking questions and just talking with them. Before you start, however, make sure you are ready to record their answers on tape, on video, on a laptop computer, or on paper.

With this preparation, you are ready to sit down and get comfortable. Your relative will enjoy reminiscing while you record the stories of a lifetime. **NE**

Caroline H. Benzley is a member of the Iowa City Second Ward, Iowa City Iowa Stake.



A PLACE TO START

The most important thing is to start. Everything you record will become more valuable with each year. Here are a few questions to get your family member talking.

- 1** *Where and when were you born? Name the members of your immediate family.*
- 2** *What is your earliest memory?*
- 3** *What do you remember about grade school or elementary school?*
- 4** *What are some of your memories of junior high and high school?*
- 5** *What are some special family activities or vacations you had as a child? as an adult?*
- 6** *Tell me about your Church experiences starting with Primary up to the present.*
- 7** *Did you attend college after high school? If so, what do you remember about it?*
- 8** *Tell me about your courtship and marriage.*
- 9** *Describe your work experiences throughout your life.*
- 10** *Tell me about your children and their personalities. Describe any special memories, problems, or joys you have had with them.*

STAYING POWER

Giving up everything for a mission seemed right until everything went wrong. But I would never quit. I would stay on my mission.



BY ELDER H. ROSS WORKMAN
Of the Seventy

I was in college, had a good part-time job, and was engaged to be married within a few months. My life was exciting, and the future looked bright.

I was surprised when my stake president approached me one Sunday morning. He said, “The Lord wants you to serve a mission.” I felt powerfully impressed that this was a call from God. I acted upon that impression and immediately committed myself to serve.

I was called to serve in the Southern States Mission, and I began my preparation with difficult tasks. I quit my job, left the university, postponed my wedding two years, and said good-bye to my loved ones. It seemed that I was leaving everyone and everything that mattered to me.

I traveled by train many hours with missionary companions to Atlanta, Georgia. Two missionaries picked us up and drove us to meet the mission president. He greeted me for a few moments and then told me

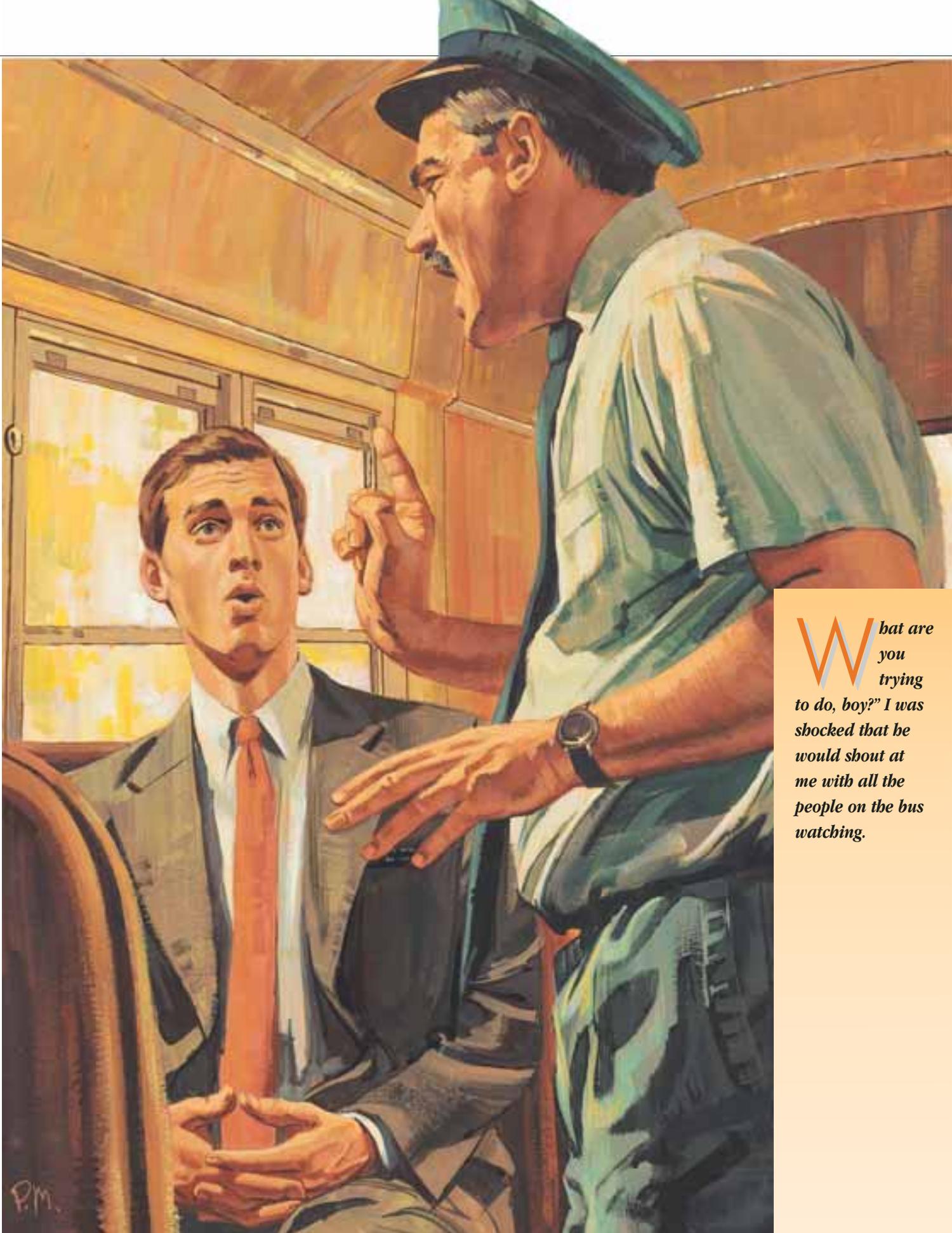
that I must leave immediately by bus to Montgomery, Alabama, where I would be given instructions about my field of labor. The same elders who had picked me up took me to the bus station and handed me a piece of paper with an address on it. They told me that the missionaries in Montgomery would tell me what to do.

I walked tentatively into the bus station, bought a ticket, and boarded the bus. It was getting dark, and I began to feel very alone. I found an empty seat next to a window and tried to ignore the growing discouragement from not knowing where I was going, whom I would be with, or what I would do.

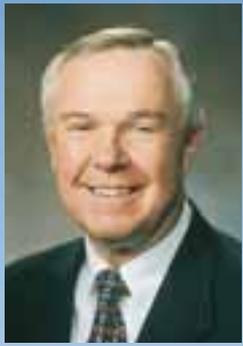
When the bus driver took his seat, he stared at me in the rearview mirror. He walked to where I was sitting and shouted, “What are you trying to do, boy?” I was shocked that he would shout at me with all the people on the bus watching. I had no idea why he was angry. I barely whispered, “I’m just riding the bus.”

He yelled, “Are you trying to start something here?” He pointed to a white line on

The Lord wants you to serve a mission.” I felt powerfully impressed that this was a call from God.



What are you trying to do, boy?" I was shocked that he would shout at me with all the people on the bus watching.



“The real success of a mission is not measured on a chart—it is etched in your heart and in the hearts of those whose lives are eternally changed because of you. Share your testimony often. I have seen nothing in a missionary that exerts more power and positive influence than the bearing of pure and simple testimony. Your testimony is the first step in the conversion of those whom you teach. Have courage to invite others to change their lives and come to Christ through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the gospel.”

—Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Presidency of the Seventy, “To a Missionary Son,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 43.

the floor of the bus that I hadn’t noticed before. He told me to sit in front of that line or he would put me off the bus. I was terrified and moved immediately. I did not know, until much later, that in those days white lines divided the areas where white and black people could sit. There had been a lot of dissension in the southern United States over segregation of whites and blacks, and the bus driver thought I was trying to start a protest.

I rode for several hours, huddled in the bus, trying to fight off fear, loneliness, and embarrassment. By the time I reached Montgomery, my trembling hands could hardly lift my suitcases. The bus arrived late at night, so the bus station was almost empty, and no one was there to meet me. The only information I had was the address the missionaries had given me in Atlanta. I had no idea how to find the address.

I awakened a taxi driver sleeping in his taxi and asked if he could take me to the address on the paper. He was irritated. He told me how much it would cost, and I

promised to pay the fee, even though it seemed very expensive. He drove me fewer than 100 yards (90 m) and announced, “This is it!” The driver demanded his fee and left me and my suitcases in front of a small white house.

The house was dark. I carried my suitcases to the porch and knocked on the door. Nobody came. I knocked more loudly. After a few minutes, a sleepy-eyed missionary opened the door.

“Who are you?” he asked.

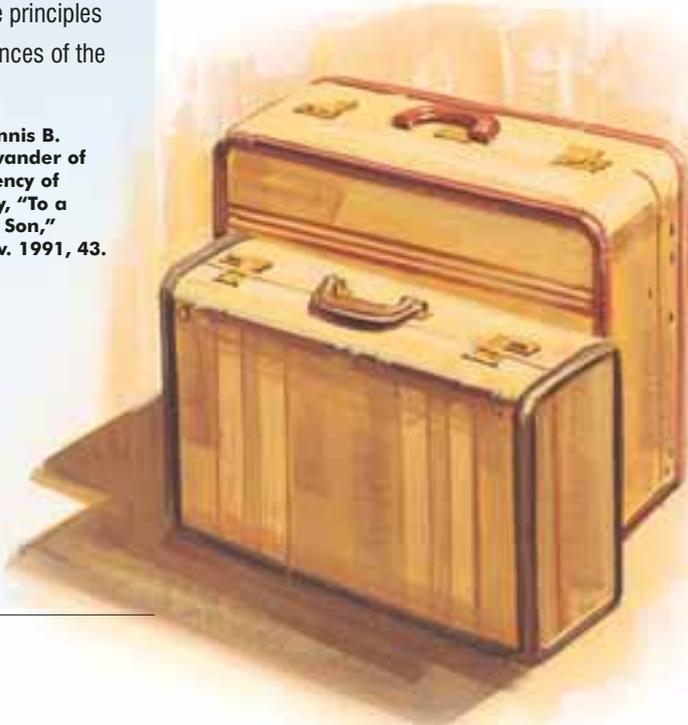
When I told him who I was and why I was there, he said that he didn’t know I was coming, and he didn’t invite me in. I apologized and told him I was doing only what I was told to do.

“We don’t have any room for you,” he said, still leaving me on the porch.

“What do you want me to do, Elder?” I cried. “I have been sent here, and I have nowhere else to go.”

He finally invited me into the house and told me I would have to sleep on the kitchen floor. Then he disappeared into his bedroom. Never had I felt so alone, unwanted, and discouraged.

I put my suitcases on the filthy floor and turned out the light. I was too discouraged to sleep, so I stood at the door and peered out the window. I could see the bus station that I had left only a few minutes before. I could easily walk there and buy a ticket for home. I had just enough money left. All of my joys, hopes, and dreams were at home. People there loved me. I could have my old job back, go back to school, see my family, and get married. Over and over again I thought, “Go home. Nobody here cares about you. Nobody here wants you.”



Then I asked myself, “Why did I come here in the first place?” My stake president’s words came back to me: “The Lord wants you to serve a mission.” I had felt a powerful impression when he said that to me. That feeling had been so strong that I postponed my wedding, quit my job, and left the university so I could serve a mission. I had known that the Lord wanted me to serve.

However, being in the mission field was not at all like I thought it would be. I had been sure once, but now, when I needed divine reassurance the most, those powerful feelings seemed a distant memory.

My introduction to the full-time mission field had been an unexpectedly difficult struggle for me. Yet I knew I was on the Lord’s errand. I had once known without doubt that it was His will that I serve a mission. The absence of a profound witness at that darkened window in the missionary apartment didn’t change that knowledge.

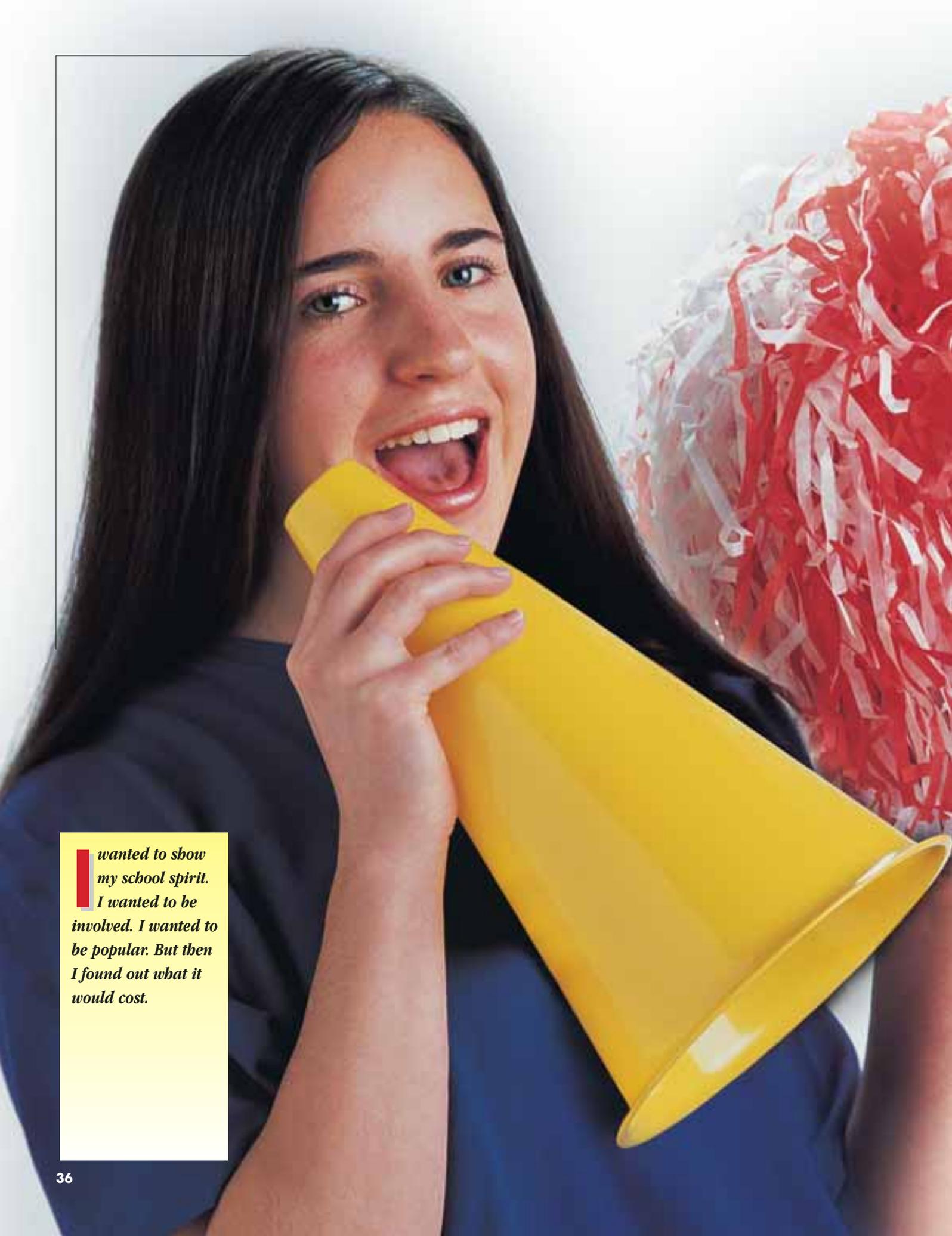
I was in the process of making a very important choice. It was a choice between what I wanted to do and what the Lord wanted me to do. It was the first time in my memory that I had ever recognized so clear a choice.

I spoke to myself: “I will never, never quit the calling I have accepted. No matter what happens, I will stay on this mission.” As I said the words, peace came to my heart for the first time since arriving in the mission field.

Now, many years later, I recognize that the Lord was guiding me through this experience. I learned that the Lord blesses us with confirming peace only after we demonstrate a willingness to obey. I shall always be grateful for the blessings of that choice. It changed my life forever. **NE**



put my suitcases on the filthy floor and turned out the light. I was too discouraged to sleep, so I stood at the door and peered out the window. I was in the process of making a very important choice.



I wanted to show my school spirit. I wanted to be involved. I wanted to be popular. But then I found out what it would cost.

IN CROWD OUT CROWD RIGHT CROWD

BY LORI ANNE RIES

Getting in the “in crowd” was like trying to thread the eye of a needle with a cob of corn. It felt impossible! I had tried out for cheerleading, the drill team, the school chorus group, and the art club—I failed at all of them. I really cared about how other people perceived me, so I continued my quest for popularity and decided to join a club my school calls the “Mice Squad.”

Mice Squad is for girls, and Rat Squad is for boys. Together they make up the Pep Club. They attend the games and cheer from the stands, giving the cheerleaders a boost to get the audience excited. All the “who’s



who” in the popular world of my high school were in this club.

On the way to the first meeting, my heart raced.

This was it. This was my chance to be among the elite, the faces that everyone knew.

And it didn’t even require singing or physical exertion. All it took to be in was school spirit, and I had plenty of that. I knew that beyond the door were all the popular faces, and I was about to become one of them.

Smiling, I pushed open the door only to see surprised looks when I walked in. Sarah [name has been changed], who was pretty popular, was leading the meeting.

After I made my choice, I knew that the only opinions that truly mattered were my own and Heavenly Father's. Now when I look through my autographed high school memory book with my children, I smile when I read, "Thanks for being a girl with good works and for sticking up for what you believe in."



I didn't know her very well, although during our sophomore year my father sometimes drove us to seminary together. I was glad to see her, as there were no other LDS girls in the room.

First Sarah shared with us how fun Mice Squad was going to be. As she talked, I became more delighted that I could be involved. I could just see myself at football games cheering, painting my face, and having fun with my peers.

After talking about the games, Sarah gave me an uncomfortable look and began talking about the parties. The first party was the initiation. She told us where and when it would be held. And then, to my horror, she explained that we had to drink alcohol to be in the Mice Squad. With this "requirement" so clearly stated, I sat there in shock.

I knew I had a choice. I felt impressed that I would have to leave them, or the Holy Ghost would leave me. A darkened feeling started in, but I waited to see if anyone else would leave.

Then Sarah looked straight into my eyes and said, "If anyone reports us, we'll come after you." Immediately, I left the room alone, but the Spirit was still with me. I knew I was saying goodbye to my dreams of popularity.

It took me a long time after that meeting to realize that I had value, even though I was invisible to most of my peers. I realized that while I had chosen the "out crowd," it was the *right* crowd. I knew the only opinions that truly mattered were my own and Heavenly Father's. And I knew we were both smiling at my decision.

Now, after marrying in the temple and having three children, I still sometimes look through my autographed high school memory book. I always smile when I read the short note that says, "Thanks for being a girl with good works and for sticking up for what you believe in. Don't let anyone sway you."

Perhaps I wasn't so invisible after all. **NE**

Lori Anne Ries is a member of the Tigard First Ward, Tualatin Oregon Stake.



THE EXTRA SMILE

"No seriously, what's for dinner?"



RYAN STOKER

One night for family home evening, we learned the song "Master, the Tempest Is Raging" (*Hymns*, no. 105) and discussed the story behind it. As we finished, my youngest son asked, "Mom, were they eating dinner when the storm came up?" I told him I didn't think so. Still perplexed, he asked, "Why would they keep saying, 'Peas, be still?'"

KIMBERLY LEBARON, CALIENTE WARD, PANACA NEVADA STAKE

"I've got a date with the captain of the girl's basketball team. Got anything that will make me smell taller?"



RANDY GLASBERGEN

"I just hope that when we get to the top there's someone home."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

THE FACES OF Pride

Pride can take many forms, all of them ugly. Pride leads us away from God and stops us from becoming the person we should be.



BY PRESIDENT EZRA TAFT BENSON
(1899–1994)

Thirteenth President of the Church

This sacred volume [the Book of Mormon] was written for us—for our day. Its scriptures are to be likened unto ourselves (see 1 Nephi 19:23).

The Doctrine and Covenants tells us that the Book of Mormon is the “record of a fallen people” (D&C 20:9). Why did they fall? This is one of the major messages of the Book of Mormon. Mormon gives the answer in the closing chapters of the book in these words: “Behold, the pride of this nation, or the people of the Nephites, hath proven their destruction” (Moroni 8:27). And then, lest we miss that momentous Book of Mormon message from that fallen people, the Lord warns us in the Doctrine and Covenants, “Beware of pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old” (D&C 38:39). . . .

Most of us think of pride as self-centeredness, conceit, boastfulness, arrogance, or haughtiness. All of these are elements of the sin, but the heart, or core, is still missing.

The Heart of Pride

The central feature of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. Enmity means “hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition.” It is the power by which Satan wishes to reign over us.

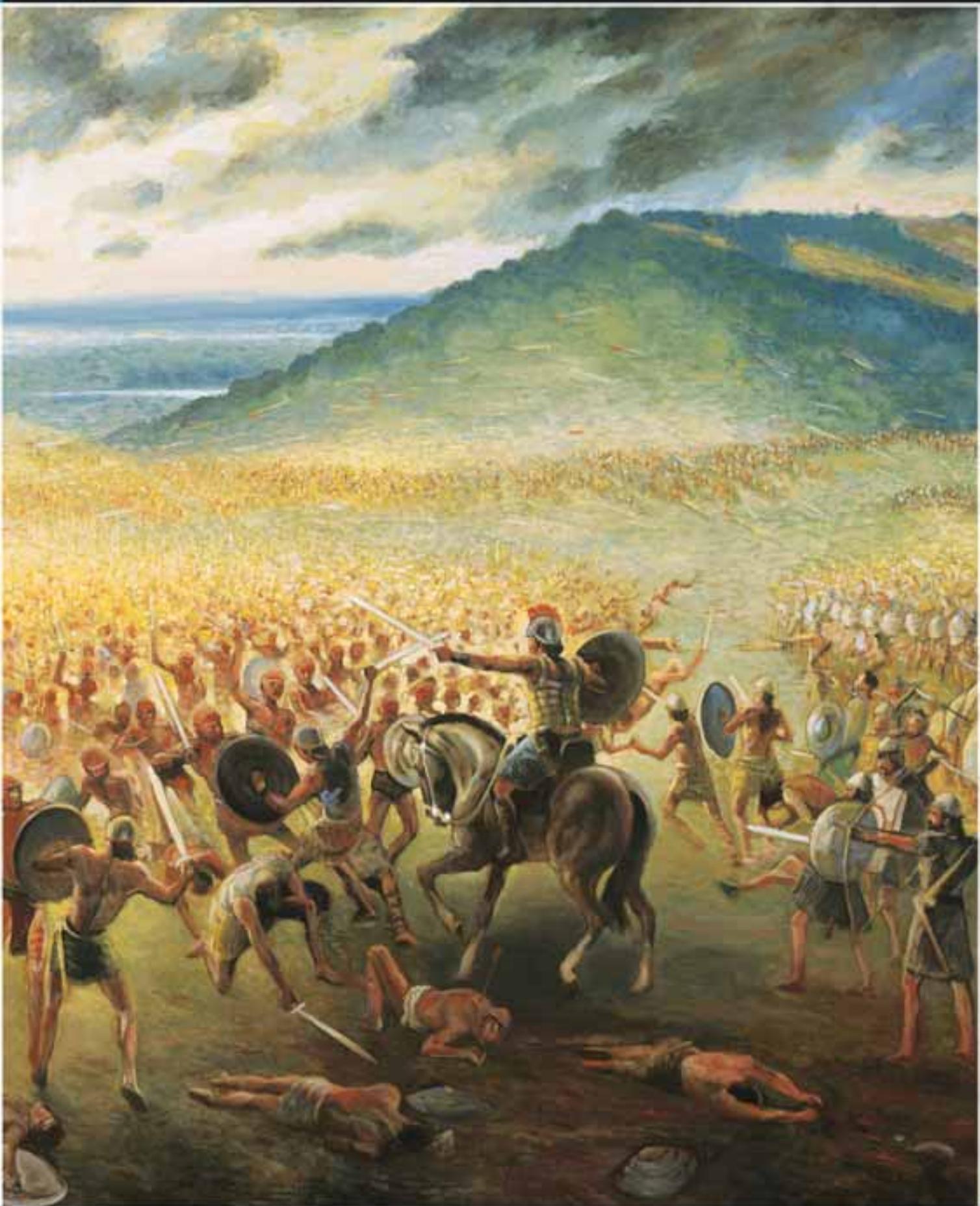
Pride is essentially competitive in nature. We pit our will against God’s. When we direct our pride toward God, it is in the spirit of “my will and not thine be done.” As Paul said, they “seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s” (Philippians 2:21).

Our will in competition to God’s will allows desires, appetites, and passions to go unbridled. (See Alma 38:12; 3 Nephi 12:30.)

The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives. (See Helaman 12:6.) They pit their perceptions of truth against God’s great knowledge, their abilities versus God’s priesthood power, their accomplishments against His mighty works.

Our enmity toward God takes on many labels, such as rebellion, hard-heartedness, stiff-neckedness, unrepentant, puffed up, easily offended, and sign seekers. The proud wish God would agree with them. They

Pride is enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. The pride of the Nephites “hath proven their destruction.”



NEPHITES' LAST BATTLE, BY GARY E. SMITH



aren't interested in changing their opinions to agree with God's.

Another major portion of this very prevalent sin of pride is enmity toward our fellowmen. We are tempted daily to elevate ourselves above others and diminish them. (See Helaman 6:17; D&C 58:41.)

The proud make every man their adversary by pitting their intellects, opinions, works, wealth, talents, or any other worldly measuring device against others. In the words of C. S. Lewis: "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. . . . It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone" (*Mere Christianity*, 1952, 109–10). . . .

The Praise of Men

The proud stand more in fear of men's judgment than of God's judgment. (See D&C 3:6–7; D&C 30:1–2;

D&C 60:2.) "What will men think of me?" weighs heavier than "What will God think of me?"

King Noah was about to free the prophet Abinadi, but an appeal to his pride by his wicked priests sent Abinadi to the flames. (See Mosiah 17:11–12.) Herod sorrowed at the request of his wife to behead John the Baptist. But his prideful desire to look good to "them which sat with him at meat" caused him to kill John (Matthew 14:9; see also Mark 6:26).

Fear of men's judgment manifests itself in competition for men's approval. The proud love "the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42–43). Our motives for the things we do are where the sin is manifest. Jesus said He did "always those things" that pleased God (John 8:29). Would we not do well to have the pleasing of God as our motive rather than to try to elevate ourselves above our brother and outdo another?

Some prideful people are not so concerned as to whether their wages meet their needs as they are that their wages are more than someone else's. Their reward is being a cut above the rest. This is the enmity of pride.

When pride has a hold on our hearts, we lose our independence of the world and deliver our freedoms to the bondage of men's judgment. The world shouts louder than the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. The reasoning of men overrides the revelations of God, and the proud let go of the iron rod. (See 1 Nephi 8:19–28; 1 Nephi 11:25; 1 Nephi 15:23–24.)

Pride is a sin that can readily be seen in others but is rarely admitted in ourselves. Most of us consider pride to be a sin of those on the top, such as the rich and the learned, looking down at the rest of us. (See 2 Nephi 9:42.) There is, however, a far more common ailment among us—and that is pride from the bottom looking up. It is manifest in so many ways, such as faultfinding, gossiping, backbiting, murmuring, living beyond our means, envying, coveting, withholding gratitude and praise that might lift another, and being unforgiving and jealous.

Disobedience is essentially a prideful power struggle against someone in authority over us. It can be a parent, a priesthood leader, a teacher, or ultimately God. A proud

person hates the fact that someone is above him. He thinks this lowers his position.

The Forms of Pride

Selfishness is one of the more common faces of pride. “How everything affects me” is the center of all that matters—self-conceit, self-pity, worldly self-fulfillment, self-gratification, and self-seeking. . . .

Another face of pride is contention. Arguments, fights, unrighteous dominion, generation gaps, divorces, spouse abuse, riots, and disturbances all fall into this category of pride.

Contention in our families drives the Spirit of the Lord away. It also drives many of our family members away. Contention ranges from a hostile spoken word to worldwide conflicts. The scriptures tell us that “only by pride cometh contention” (Proverbs 13:10; see also Proverbs 28:25).

The scriptures testify that the proud are easily offended and hold grudges. (See 1 Nephi 16:1–3.) They withhold forgiveness to keep another in their debt and to justify their injured feelings.

The proud do not receive counsel or correction easily. (See Proverbs 15:10; Amos 5:10.) Defensiveness is used by them to justify and rationalize their frailties and failures. (See Matthew 3:9; John 6:30–59.)

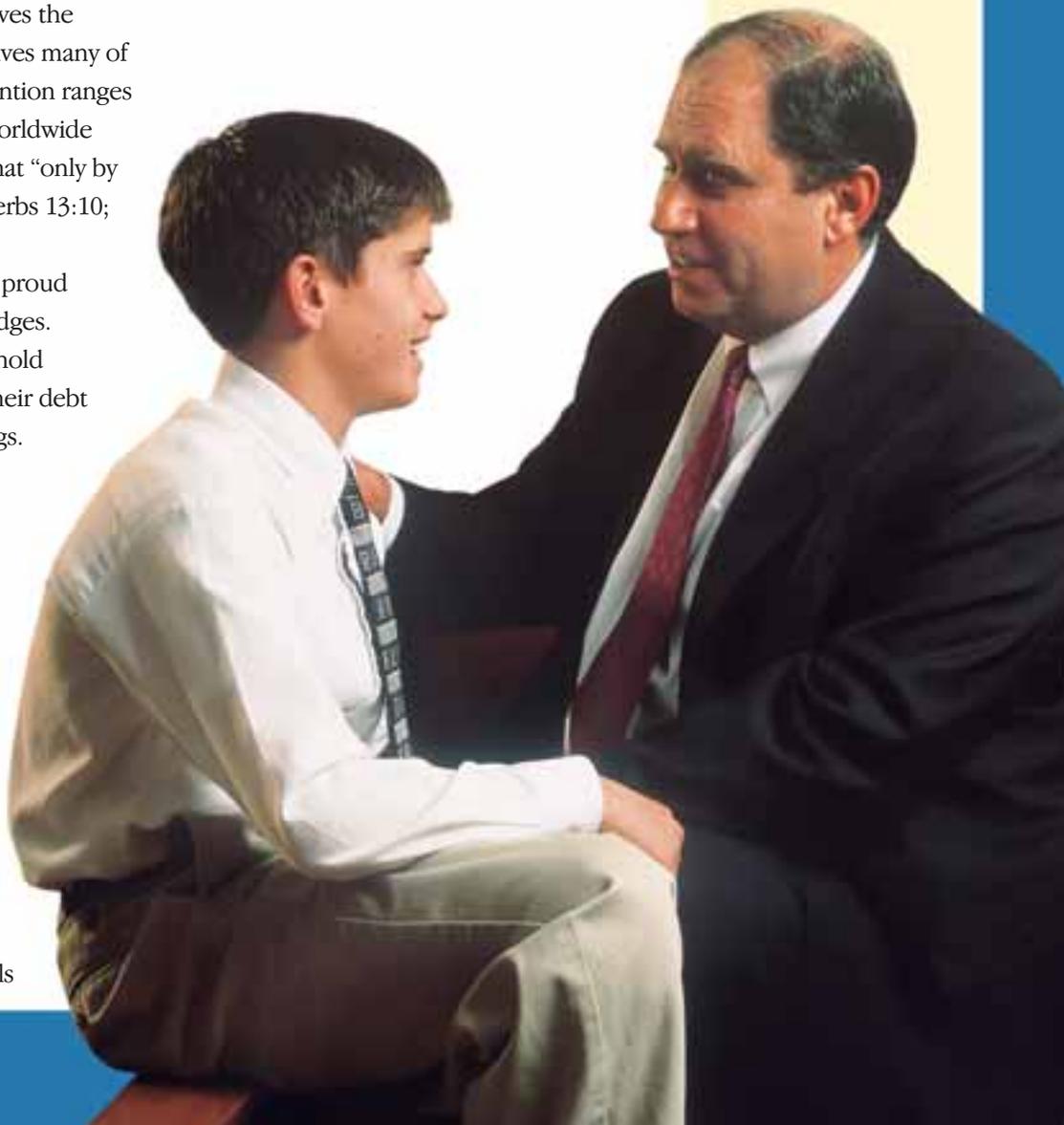
The proud depend upon the world to tell them whether they have value or not. Their self-esteem is determined by where they are judged to be on the ladders of worldly success. They feel worthwhile as individuals

if the numbers beneath them in achievement, talent, beauty, or intellect are large enough. Pride is ugly. It says, “If you succeed, I am a failure.”

If we love God, do His will, and fear His judgment more than men’s, we will have self-esteem.

Pride is a damning sin in the true sense of that word. It limits or stops progression. (See Alma 12:10–11.) The proud are not easily taught. (See 1 Nephi 15:3, 7–11.) They won’t change their minds to accept truths, because to do so implies they have been wrong.

King Noah
(far left) let
his pride keep
him from doing what
was right. Pride can
keep people from
receiving counsel
or correction easily.





The antidote for pride is humility. We can humble ourselves by accepting direction, by going on missions, and by submitting to God's will as the Savior did in setting the example for us.

Pride adversely affects all our relationships—our relationship with God and His servants, between husband and wife, parent and child, employer and employee, teacher and student, and all mankind. Our degree of pride determines how we treat our God and our brothers and sisters. Christ wants to lift us to where He is. Do we desire to do the same for others?

Pride fades our feelings of sonship to God and brotherhood to man. It separates and divides us by “ranks,” according to our “riches” and our “chances for learning” (3 Nephi 6:12). Unity is impossible for a proud people, and unless we are one we are not the Lord's. (See Mosiah 18:21; D&C 38:27; D&C 105:2–4; Moses 7:18.) . . .

Pride is the universal sin, the great vice. Yes, pride is the universal sin, the great vice.

The antidote for pride is humility—meekness, submissiveness. (See Alma 7:23.) It is the broken heart and contrite spirit. (See 3 Nephi 9:20; 3 Nephi 12:19; D&C 20:37; D&C 59:8; Psalms 34:18; Isaiah 57:15; Isaiah 66:2.) . . .

God will have a humble people. Either we can choose to be humble or we can be compelled to be humble. Alma said, “Blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble” (Alma 32:16).

Let us choose to be humble.

Ways to Be Humble

We can choose to humble ourselves by conquering enmity toward our brothers and sisters, esteeming

them as ourselves, and lifting them as high or higher than we are. (See D&C 38:24; D&C 81:5; D&C 84:106.)

We can choose to humble ourselves by receiving counsel and chastisement. (See Jacob 4:10; Helaman 15:3; D&C 63:55; D&C 101:4–5; D&C 108:1; D&C 124:61, 84; D&C 136:31; Proverbs 9:8.)

We can choose to humble ourselves by forgiving those who have offended us. (See 3 Nephi 13:11, 14; D&C 64:10.)

We can choose to humble ourselves by rendering selfless service. (See Mosiah 2:16–17.)

We can choose to humble ourselves by going on missions and preaching the word that can humble others. (See Alma 4:19; Alma 31:5; Alma 48:20.)

We can choose to humble ourselves by getting to the temple more frequently.

We can choose to humble ourselves by confessing and forsaking our sins and being born of God. (See D&C 58:43; Mosiah 27:25–26; Alma 5:7–14, 49.)

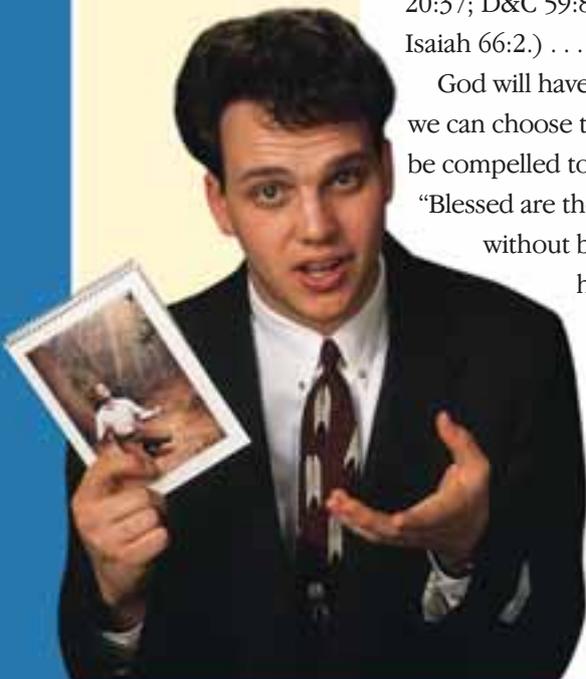
We can choose to humble ourselves by loving God, submitting our will to His, and putting Him first in our lives. (See 3 Nephi 11:11; 3 Nephi 13:33; Moroni 10:32.)

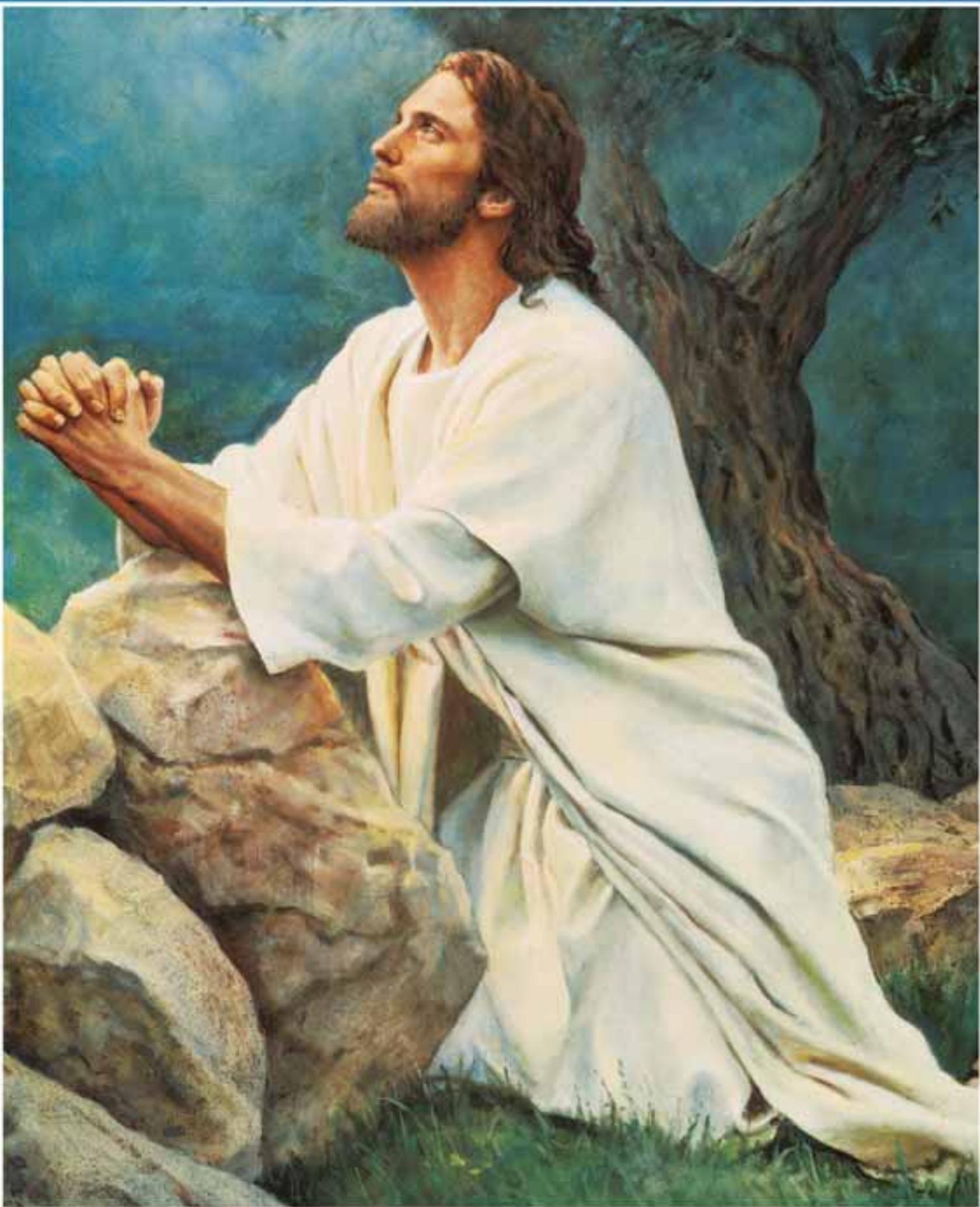
Let us choose to be humble. We can do it. I know we can. . . .

We must yield “to the enticings of the Holy Spirit,” put off the prideful “natural man,” become “a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord,” and become “as a child, submissive, meek, humble” (Mosiah 3:19; see also Alma 13:28).

That we may do so and go on to fulfill our divine destiny is my fervent prayer. **NE**

Excerpted from an April 1989 general conference address; subheads added; spelling, capitalization, and punctuation modernized.





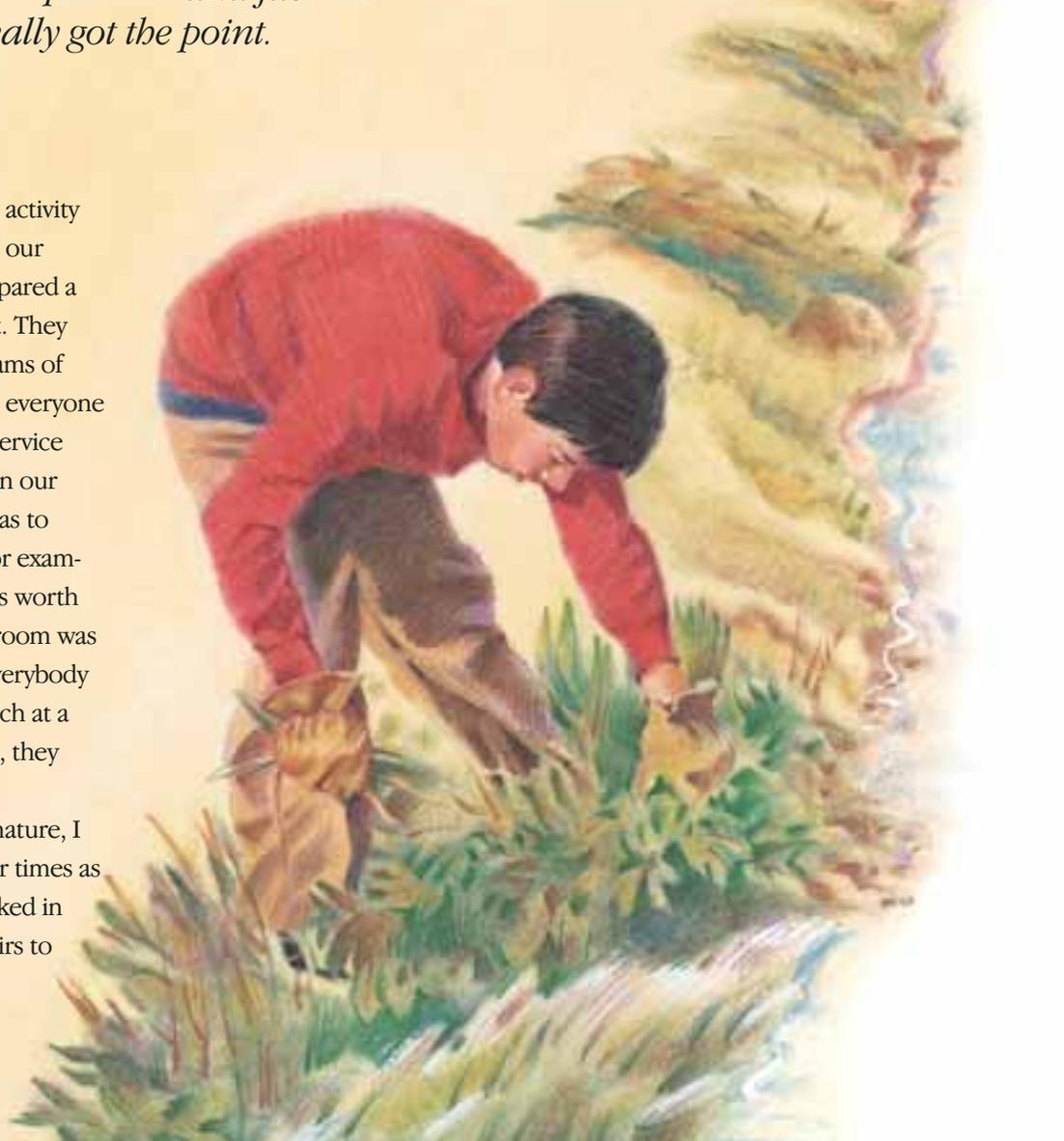
GETTING THE POINT

*To win, we had to earn points—and fast.
But in the end, we really got the point.*

BY TAYLOR WOODRUFF

For a combined Mutual activity one Wednesday night, our youth leaders had prepared a service project with a fun twist. They divided the youth into four teams of about eight people. They gave everyone a sheet of paper with a list of service ideas we could do for people in our ward boundaries. The game was to get points by doing service. For example, washing a person's car was worth 20 points, vacuuming a living room was worth 15 points, and so on. Everybody needed to be back to the church at a certain time. If a team was late, they lost all of their points.

Being very competitive by nature, I figured my team could get four times as much accomplished if we worked in pairs. I told the other three pairs to





make sure they got back to the church on time so we would not get penalized. I paired myself up with a deacon, and we headed off to his neighborhood.

We were efficient and really racking up the points. With 10 minutes left, we stopped at a widow's house. She was not a member of the Church but was a neighbor of the young man I was teamed up with. She was in her backyard trying to pull weeds along a canal bank. When we asked her if she needed help, she gladly let us help. Pulling weeds just happened to be on our list and was worth quite a few points!

We tried to hurry because we were racing the clock. If we came back to the church late, we would forfeit all the points our team had earned.

I will never forget what took place that night in a widow's backyard while engaged in a service

activity for Mutual. The deacon and I looked at each other, and one of us said, “If we don’t leave now, we won’t make it back in time.”

He could see in my eyes that I wanted to stay, and I could see in his eyes that he wanted to stay. So we stayed and helped with the weeding. It took us about a half hour to finish the job.

As we walked back to the church, we talked about how good we felt inside. We also talked about how appreciative the woman was for our efforts.

When we entered the church, members of our team were mad at us because we didn’t come back on time. The team that had tallied

Our team was upset when we lost, until they learned why we had been so slow.

up the most points was beginning to rub it in about their victory. Our leaders asked us why we were so late, and we told them what had happened. They gathered everybody around and told our story. Then they told us we were the real winners.

But we had already earned our prize in the widow’s backyard. That experience gave me a greater appreciation for serving others and still influences my life today. I am ever grateful for those Mutual leaders who helped two young men gain a testimony of serving others. **NE**

Taylor Woodruff is a member of the Fort Bridger Ward, Lyman Wyoming Stake.



Mutual Activities

- Try organizing a service activity similar to the one Taylor Woodruff's ward participated in as described in "Getting the Point" on page 46. Instead of awarding points for speedy service and before the teams leave the ward building, read Taylor's story aloud and encourage the youth to look for one person who really needs some extra help. Gather again at the chapel and ask each team to give a report.

- The youth in Memphis (see page 20) appreciate knowing the answers to tough questions. Invite a member of the stake presidency to hold a question-and-answer session about gospel subjects. With the permission of the bishop and under the direction of youth leaders, submit questions to the speaker in writing the week before.

Service Project

- Check with your local fire department. Many are involved in refurbishing toys prior

Sunday Lesson Helps

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 38–42.

Young Women Manual 1

- Lesson 38 Nutrition and the Word of Wisdom**
Gabriel Gonzalez, "Graduating with Honor," *New Era*, July 2003, 40.
- Lesson 39 Drug Abuse**
Caroline Benzley, "Be Clean," *New Era*, July 2002, 12.
Poster, "Keep Yourself Free," *New Era*, February 2003, 19.
- Lesson 40 Health Care in the Home**
Poster, "Spread Thin," this issue, 19.
Q&A, "A list of what I can and can't do?" *New Era*, August 2003, 16.
- Lesson 41 The Ability to Succeed**
Carolyn Argyle, "I Hope, I Wish, I Dream," *New Era*, January 2003, 40.
Jane H. Forsgren, "Sheena's Key to Success," *New Era*, March 2003, 28.
Lori Anne Ries, "In Crowd? Out Crowd? Right Crowd!" this issue, 36.
- Lesson 42 Courage to Try**
Gene R. Cook, "How to Discourage Discouragement," *New Era*, January 2003, 44.
Timothy Cobbley, "A Light in the Darkness," *New Era*, February 2003, 11.

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to the holiday season. See if they need help in gathering used toys or bicycles. Offer to hold a toy drive to gather items suitable for their projects.

Family Home Evening Ideas

- Invite family members to tell a significant, humorous, or memorable event from their childhoods. Include young children as well as older family members. If possible, have a tape recorder available to record the stories. Don't worry about doing a complete family history. Make it a night to tell the family's favorite stories and record them for posterity. See "The Story of a Lifetime" on page 28 for inspiration.
- Take your family home evening to a shut-in member of the ward. Arrange the time and place with your chosen ward member. Make sure everyone is assigned and prepared to participate in giving the lesson, leading the music, or making the refreshments.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 1

- Lesson 38 Magnifying the Calling of an Aaronic Priesthood Holder**
Q&A, "Prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood?" this issue, 16.
- Lesson 39 Missionary Work Through Example**
James E. Faust, "Ten Things to Know Before You Go," *New Era*, July 2002, 4.
Poster, "Fishing License," *New Era*, March 2003, 19.
- Lesson 40 The House of the Lord**
Katie Lea Brown, "Worth the Wait," *New Era*, February 2003, 46.
Spencer W. Kimball, "Live for the Future," *New Era*, November 2002, 10.
- Lesson 41 Sexual Purity**
Jeffrey R. Holland, "How Do I Love Thee?" this issue, 4.
Neal A. Maxwell, "Reasons to Stay Pure," *New Era*, March 2003, 42.
- Lesson 42 Honesty**
Sterling W. Sill, "The 10-Cent Solution," *New Era*, August 2003, 42.
Howard W. Hunter, "Be Honest with Yourself," *New Era*, July 2003, 36.

ORDINARY PEOPLE CAN SERVE

Thank you for "Following in Faith" (July 2003). Lately, I've been having so many trials. As I read Elder Wirthlin's words about the "ordinary people" who can serve in the kingdom, my eyes filled with tears. Reading of the Savior's empathy "for the temptations of earthly appetites," I began to weep. I will still struggle, but the article has given me an increase of hope.

Name withheld

FAMILY ADVICE

I was pleasantly surprised with the June *New Era*. Nearly every article related to my life. Many articles were on getting along with your family, and I have had a lot of trouble with this the past few months. I hadn't been getting along with someone in my family, but I really wanted to get along with her. So I am thankful for the June *New Era's* advice on getting along with my family. I will put these things into practice! Thanks heaps.

Emily Whaite, Mount Barker Ward, Adelaide Australia Marion Stake

MY OTHER FATHERS

I am so grateful for the June 2003 article called "My Fathers." My father is not a member of the Church, and our relationship is not a close one. That has always been hard for me. But I too have been blessed to find "fathers" at church who care for and protect me. My bishop and a member of my stake presidency have been there so many times to fill the father role in my life. I am grateful for these two men and for their testimonies and examples of fatherhood. I am also grateful to be a daughter of Heavenly Father, who has blessed me greatly.

Name withheld

"It was encouraging to read about sisters who love each other."

MY SISTER CONNECTION

Thank you for "Sister Connection" (June 2003). It was encouraging to read about sisters who love each other. I have four sisters and two brothers who are all younger than me. As I was reading this article, I was thinking "I know just what that's like." The article talks about a girl who says, when asked if she and her sister fight, "No, not really. If we do, we get over it in two seconds." This is what my sister and I are always saying. It was neat knowing that other girls feel the way we feel. I loved the advice at the end of the article encouraging sisters to get along. This article made me realize how great my relationships are with my sisters and what I could do to make them better.

Emily Hawryluk, Calgary 11th Ward, Calgary Alberta East Stake

IN BUT NOT OF THE WORLD

Thank you for the *New Era*. I never read it much until my bishop encouraged the youth in my ward to read it. It is comforting to read an article that isn't about the things of the world and doesn't have bad pictures or profane language. There is something at home I can do to get away from the things of the world. I can spend time with my family or read about the gospel in the *New Era* and the scriptures.

Alix Moseley, Parker Ward, Parker Colorado Stake

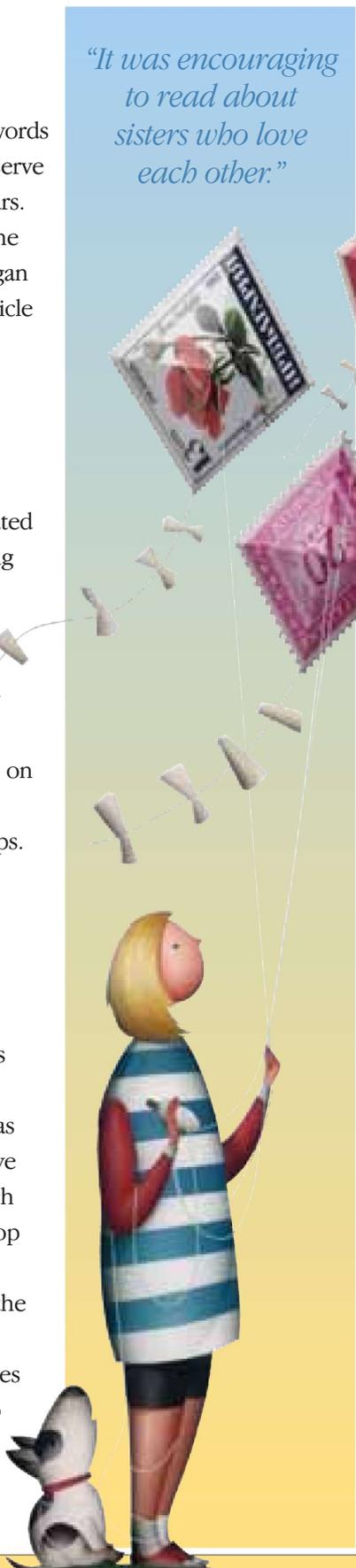
We love hearing from you. Write us at the following address. Please include the names of your ward and stake.

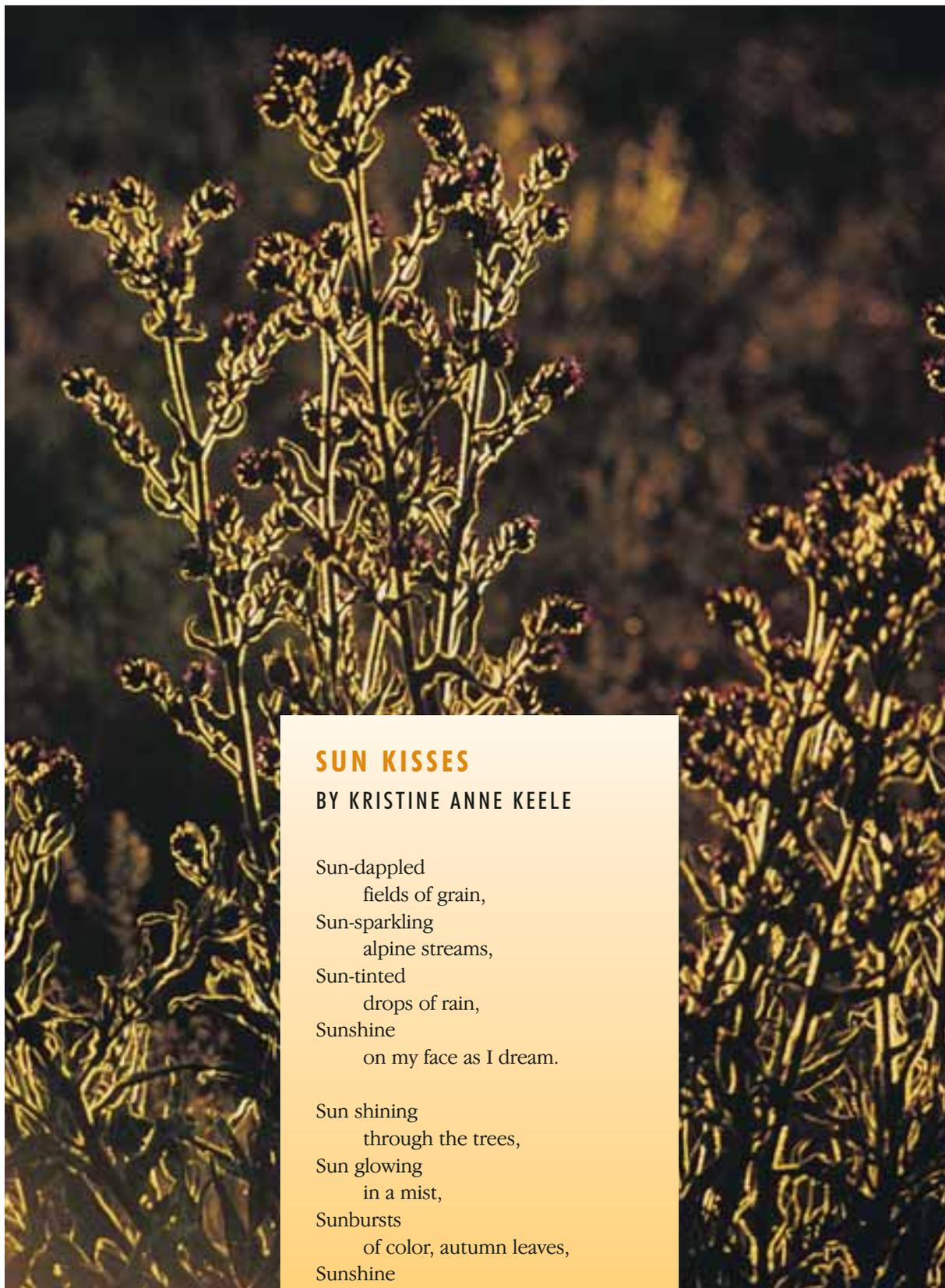
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84150*

Or e-mail us at

cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.





SUN KISSES

BY KRISTINE ANNE KEELE

Sun-dappled
fields of grain,
Sun-sparkling
alpine streams,
Sun-tinted
drops of rain,
Sunshine
on my face as I dream.

Sun shining
through the trees,
Sun glowing
in a mist,
Sunbursts
of color, autumn leaves,
Sunshine
touches me, warm as a kiss.

BY JIM HARRIS



***"A couple of years ago
I only hung out with guys
on the baseball team, and
even though it was fun,
it felt empty. Then I
started hanging out with
Church friends, and things
were so much better."***

**See "Smiling in
Memphis," p. 20.**