

T H E

New Era

O C T O B E R

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COVER STORY:
FOCUSING IN
ON A CAREER, P. 20

**HOW TO ANSWER
THE QUESTION: ARE
YOU CHRISTIAN? P. 42**

**SETTING A WORLD
RECORD, P. 38**

**ARE YOU REALLY
HONEST? P. 4**

**SEMINARY
IN TAHITI, P. 28**

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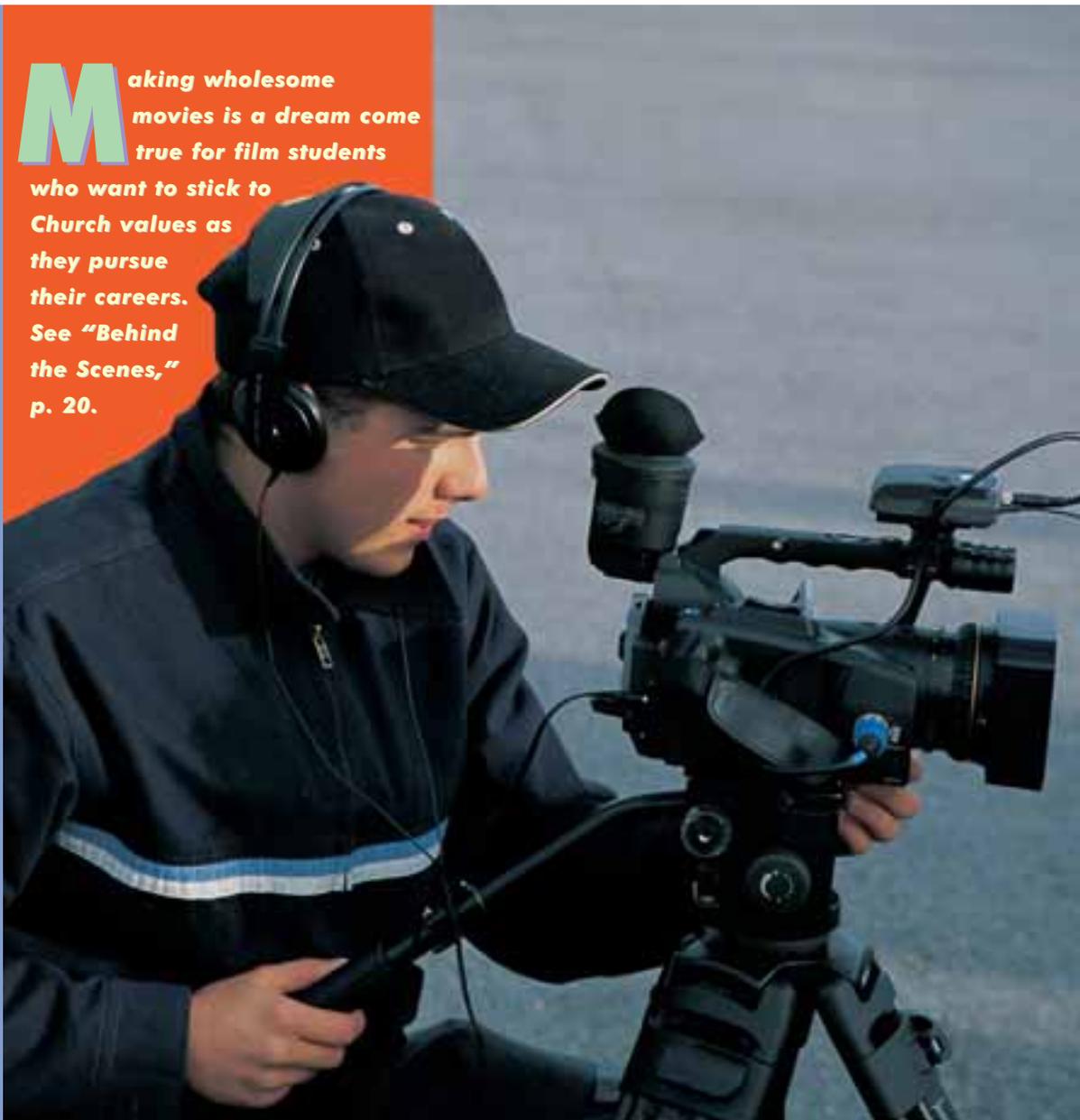
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Cover: Cammon Randle
puts his talents to good
use. See "Behind the
Scenes" on p. 20.

Cover photography:
Shanna Butler and Excel
Entertainment (front)
and Christina Smith
(back)

Making wholesome
movies is a dream come
true for film students
who want to stick to
Church values as
they pursue
their careers.
See "Behind
the Scenes,"
p. 20.



You're a Mormon? p. 42



Temple Blessings Now and Later, p. 15

**The Message:
Be Honest** 4
Elder David A. Bednar
People of integrity and honesty not only practice what they preach, they are what they preach.

**Gospel Classics:
Don't Be Afraid** 10
President David O. McKay
Unable to sleep because of his fears, young David turned to prayer.

This Recruit Does Not Swear, Sir! 12
Brian D. Stenquist
I promised my mother I wouldn't swear.

**Idea List:
Temple Blessings Now and Later** 15
Stay temple worthy now, and blessings will come to you.

**Q&A:
Questions and Answers** 16
How can I help encourage my family to have family home evening, family prayer, and family scripture study?

**New Era Poster:
Mental Floss** 19

Behind the Scenes 20
Shanna Butler
Movie makers see ways to stay faithful to Church values when behind the lens.

The Extra Smile 25

**From the Field:
Walking with Kasha** 26
Ginger M. Churchill
Every step hurt, but teaching the gospel was worth every moment of pain.

Diving into Seminary 28
Adam C. Olson
LDS teens in Tabiti find out that seminary makes a big splash.

**Articles of Faith:
If This Is True** 32
Sally S. English
I asked the question and got an answer from the Lord.

Staying Converted 35
Vaclava Svobodova
Leaving the Czech Republic, one young woman finds a whole new way of life.

Singing a New World Record 38
John Farrington
A choir from Ottawa, Canada, singing hymns day and night, set a new world record.

What's Up? 40

You're a Mormon? 42
Ana Lee Graniela López
My friend just wanted to argue, but I felt comfort knowing the truth.

Instant Messages 46
Saving a friend from bleeding to death; my father's example; my testimony helped my mom; doing good.

What's in It for You 49

We've Got Mail 50

**Poem:
Sometimes** 51
Mieka Wenner

Photo 51
Lane V. Erickson

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Thomas S. Monson,
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Be HONEST

BY ELDER DAVID A. BEDNAR
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Become people of integrity and honesty—people who are true and trustworthy when no one is watching and when no one else is around.

I want to begin with a brief test and a self-evaluation. The following episode was presented in a general conference address in 1966 by President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982), a counselor in the First Presidency of the Church.

“A young man came to me not long ago and said, ‘I made an agreement with a man that requires me to make certain payments each year. I am in debt, and I can’t make those payments, for if I do, it is going to cause me to lose my home. What shall I do?’

“I looked at him and said, ‘Keep your agreement.’

“‘Even if it costs me my home?’

“I said, ‘I am not talking about your home. I am talking about your agreement; and I think your wife would rather have a husband who would keep his word, meet his obligations, keep his pledges or his covenants, and have to rent a home than to have a home with a husband who will not keep his covenants and his pledge.’”¹

Now for the self-evaluation and the test. Carefully and thoughtfully and honestly answer the following questions. Did President Tanner’s counsel seem old-fashioned, outdated, and unreasonable to you, or did it seem appropriate? Would losing the

home be more important to you than keeping the agreement, or would keeping the agreement be more important to you than keeping the home? Is the counsel President Tanner gave in 1966 equally applicable today?

What Are Integrity and Honesty?

The words *integrity* and *honesty* are closely associated and often used interchangeably. We must remember, however, that these terms are related but are not exactly the same.

Integrity is the quality or condition of being whole, complete, unbroken, and undivided. The word *integrity* is related to other words with the same root such as *entire* and *integrate*. These expressions share the notion of being intact, sound, uncorrupted, and perfect. As Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained: “Integrity means always doing what is right and good, regardless of the immediate consequences. It means being righteous from the very depth of our soul, not only in our actions but, more important, in our thoughts and in our hearts. Personal integrity implies such trustworthiness and incorruptibility that we are incapable of being false to a trust or covenant.”²



Honesty is the quality or condition of being truthful, sincere, candid, and worthy of honor. The word *honesty* is related to other words with the same root such as *honor* and *honorable*. These expressions share the notion of being genuine, trustworthy, upright, respectable, and decent. As President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught: “We all need to know what it means to be honest. Honesty is more than not lying. It is truth telling, truth speaking, truth living, and truth loving.”³

An Example of Integrity

Albert Frehner and Matilda Reber were married in 1888, in the St. George Utah Temple. They then established their humble home in Arizona. To provide for his family, Brother Frehner hauled freight between El Dorado

Canyon and Bonelli’s Ferry. Sister Frehner nurtured their growing family and took care of the household chores.

Albert and Matilda had been married for 10 years when Albert was called in 1898 by President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) to serve as a missionary in Switzerland, his native land. At the time Albert received the call to serve, Matilda was expecting their fifth child. However, it never entered their hearts or minds to refuse the call. Both gladly accepted the challenge.

Matilda assumed the total responsibility for the care of her young family, for their cotton farm, and for running the post office out of a small room in her home. Five months after Albert left on his mission, Matilda gave birth to twin girls, Edith and Ethel.

One day Matilda was attending to her duties in the post office. A man, as he was ready to depart after completing

Matilda simply refused to use something for which she could not pay—even something as small as a stamp.

his postal business, gave her 25 cents to send to Albert in the mission field. I know 25 cents does not sound like much today, but to Matilda it meant a great deal! Matilda thanked the good brother, and then asked him if she could use 2 cents of the money to buy a stamp. She explained that she had written a letter to Albert a week or two earlier but did not have the 2 cents to purchase the necessary postage. The man agreed, and the letter was mailed.

Matilda was the manager of the post office. She easily could have borrowed and used a stamp—fully intending to repay the two cents when she was in a position to do so. And no one would have known. In her dire financial situation, it would have seemed reasonable to go ahead and mail her letter at the time she wrote it. But Matilda would have known! And she was a woman of

integrity and honesty. She simply refused to use, in any way, something for which she could not pay. She also was careful to seek the man's permission to use a portion of the money for a purpose other than that which he had intended.

The integrity and honesty of Matilda, my great-grandmother, have had a profound and lasting impact upon my life. She is an example of integrity and honesty with God, of integrity and honesty with herself, and of integrity and honesty with other people.

Honesty in Schoolwork

Cheating in academic work is unprincipled, dishonest, and a form of self-deception and betrayal. No student can hope to ultimately succeed in a career or profession if he or she builds upon a foundation of fraud. Please read carefully the following story told in a session of general conference in 1996 by President James E. Faust:

“A friend related this experience her husband had while attending medical school. ‘Getting into medical school is pretty competitive, and the desire to do well and be successful puts a great deal of pressure on the new incoming freshmen. My husband had worked hard on his studies and went to attend his first examination. The honor system was expected behavior at the medical school. The professor passed out the examination and left the room. Within a short time, students started to pull little cheat papers out from under their papers or from their pockets. My husband recalled his heart beginning to pound as he realized it is pretty hard to compete against cheaters. About that time a tall, lanky student stood up in the back of the room and stated: ‘I left my



hometown and put my wife and three little babies in an upstairs apartment and worked very hard to get into medical school. And I'll turn in the first one of you who cheats, and you better believe it!' They believed it. There were many sheepish expressions, and those cheat papers started to disappear as fast as they had appeared. He set a standard for the class which eventually graduated the largest group in the school's history.'⁴

The young, lanky medical student who challenged the cheaters was J. Ballard Washburn, who became a respected physician. He also served as a General Authority and as the president of the Las Vegas Nevada Temple. Elder Washburn provides all of us with a powerful example of integrity and honesty with God, of integrity and honesty with himself, and of integrity and honesty with other people.

Honest in All Things

The thirteenth article of faith begins, "We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men." It is significant to me that the first trait listed in this inspired summary of basic Christian virtues is honesty. Indeed, the very fountain and foundation of our daily discipleship are integrity and honesty.

People of integrity and honesty not only practice what they preach, they are what they preach. And the Savior stands as the finest example. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). It is not just that the Son of God brought light into a darkened and fallen world; He is the Light (see 3 Nephi 11:11). It is not just that our Savior showed us the way; He is the Way. It is

not just that Christ made the resurrection available; He is the Resurrection (see John 11:25). And it is not just that Jesus of Nazareth restored the truth and taught the truth; He is the Truth.

Integrity with God, Self, and Others

I want to share two more examples of integrity and honesty involving students at Brigham Young University—Idaho. I believe the simplicity and seemingly ordinary nature of these events make them extraordinary.

The first episode was described in a letter from a local business owner that I received while serving as president at BYU—Idaho.

"A girl living in one of the dorms stopped in, shopping for a tie to send to her boyfriend who is serving a mission. She took a close look at the ties and found a great looking one. We stepped over to the check-out counter, and I rang up the sale. She paid



A young medical student challenged the cheaters and became a powerful example of integrity and honesty.



A girl returned to the store and handed the clerk her check that had accidentally been put into her bag with the receipt.

with a check and left. I went about my work, and about an hour later I looked up and saw the same girl walking into the store. She had an interesting smile on her face as she walked up to me. She handed me a check and explained that I had accidentally put the check she had written back into the sack along with the cash register receipt and the tie. I really did slip up on this one! We laughed, and I thanked her and told her that I really did admire her honesty.”

This young woman clearly exhibited integrity and honesty with other people. She is also increasing in integrity and honesty with God and with herself.

The second example comes from a letter I received from a student.

“I recently attended an outdoor dance. Just before the dance, my friends and I were sitting on the grounds eating pizza. I took my wallet out of my pocket to show my friends some pictures, and then I forgot to put my wallet back as we got up and left for the dance.

“Later that evening I realized what had happened. I proceeded toward what I thought should be the location of my wallet. I quickly realized that my wallet was no longer there. I knelt down right there in the grass and began to pray to my Father in Heaven to help me find my wallet.

“I then returned to my dorm room with a very optimistic attitude. I walked into my room fully expecting the wallet to be sitting right there, but it wasn’t. So I proceeded to check my telephone messages. And there was a message from the Lost and Found saying that someone had returned my wallet and I could pick it up any time.

“I am so grateful to be here at a university where I can trust my fellow students. I never found out who returned my wallet, but I have thanked him or her many times in my prayers. I have thanked them for helping me to have a spiritual experience, one that I will never forget.”

The unknown person at BYU—Idaho who returned this young man’s wallet is an example of integrity and honesty with God, of integrity and honesty with herself or himself, and of integrity and honesty with other people.

How to Gain Integrity

You and I must strive to become people of integrity and to be honest with God, honest with ourselves, and honest with other people. Integrity and honesty with God result from knowing and understanding who He is and our relationship to and kinship with Him as our Eternal Father.

Integrity and honesty with ourselves result from knowing and understanding who we are as sons and daughters of God. And

integrity and honesty with other people result from knowing and understanding they are sons and daughters of the Eternal Father and are our brothers and sisters. All unprincipled and dishonest thoughts and actions are a betrayal of God, a betrayal of self, and a betrayal of other people.

Becoming people of integrity and honesty does not occur quickly or all at once, nor is it merely a matter of greater personal discipline. It is a change of disposition, a change of heart. And this gradual change of heart is one that the Lord accomplishes within us, through the power of His Spirit, in a line-upon-line fashion. For example, in Philippians 2:12, Paul encourages the Saints to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” But how are we to do that? Note the answer that follows in verse 13: “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” That is, we give ourselves to the Lord and choose to be changed. He is working on us and in us.

Remember that becoming people of integrity and honesty is not simply a matter of more personal determination, more grit, and more willpower; rather, it is accomplished through the enabling power of the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe the best test of our integrity and honesty is when we personally enforce in our own lives that which ultimately cannot be enforced. There are so many aspects of being honest and of living the gospel that simply cannot be enforced in our lives by anyone else. You and I bear the responsibility to become people of integrity and honesty—people who are true and trustworthy when no one is watching and when no one else is around.

May we seek and qualify for the enabling and strengthening power of the Savior’s Atonement. And may each of us become and contribute to the latter-day light that will literally “chase darkness from among you” (D&C 50:25).

I testify that God the Eternal Father lives. Jesus Christ is His only Begotten Son. And I witness that as we yearn to and become people of integrity and honesty, we will increasingly become like Them. **NE**

From a devotional address given on September 10, 2002, at Brigham Young University—Idaho.

NOTES

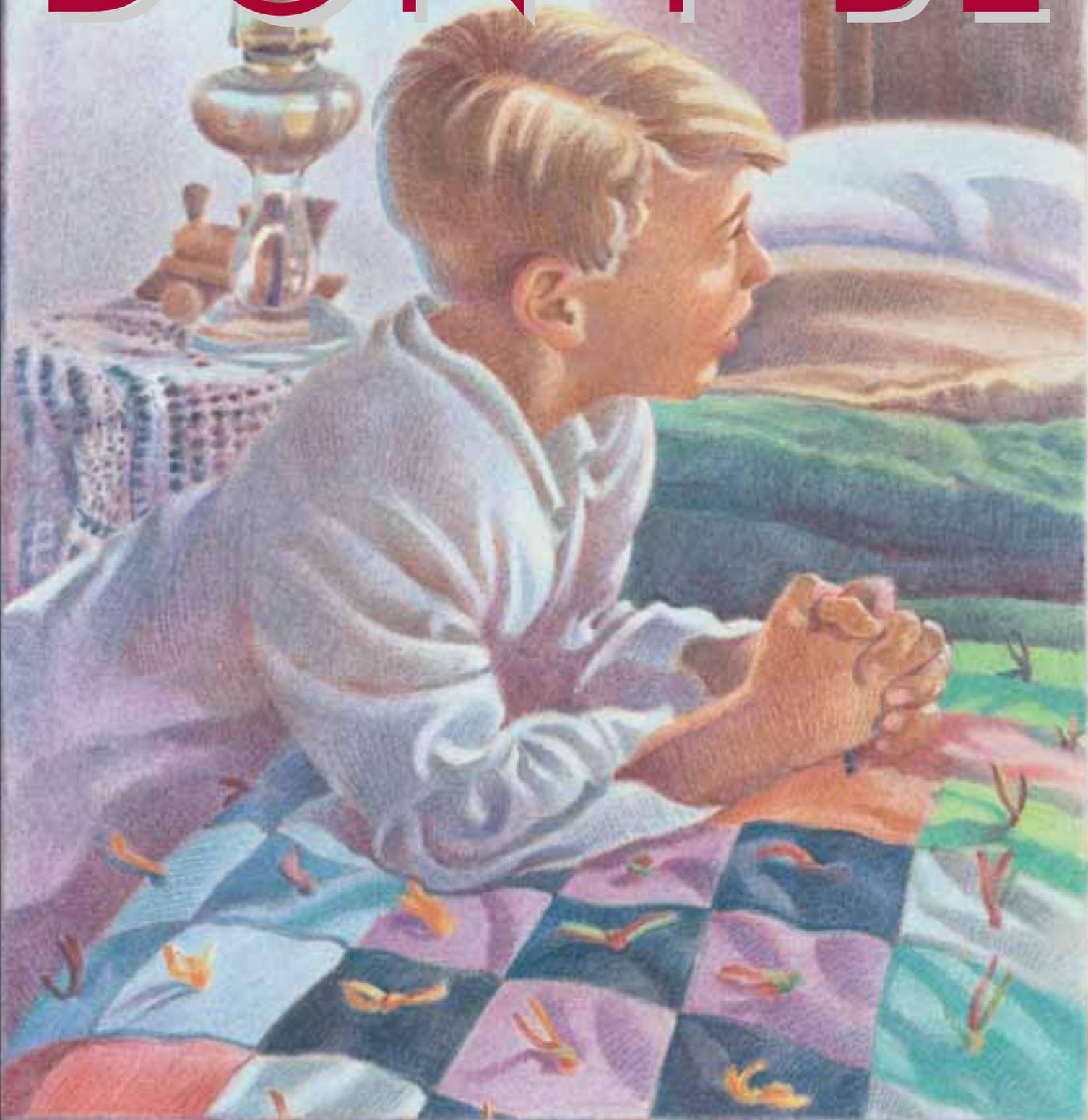
1. “Keep Your Covenants,” *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1966, 1137.
2. “Personal Integrity,” *Ensign*, May 1990, 30.
3. “Honesty—A Moral Compass,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 41.
4. *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 42.

A student at BYU—Idaho returned another student’s lost wallet. Upon receiving his wallet, the young man was grateful to be in a place where he could trust his fellow students.



GOSPEL CLASSICS

DON'T BE



AFRAID

BY PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY (1873–1970)

Ninth President of the Church

Since childhood it has been very easy for me to believe in the reality of the visions of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

When a very young child in the home of my youth, I was fearful at night. I traced it back to a vivid dream when two [Native Americans] came into the yard. I ran to the house for protection, and one of them shot an arrow and hit me in the back. Only a dream, but I felt that blow, and I was very much frightened, for in the dream they entered the house and frightened Mother.

I never got over it. Adding to that were the fears of Mother, for when Father was away, Mother would never go to bed without looking under the bed; so burglars were real to me, or wicked men who could come in and try to take advantage of Mother and the young children.

One night I could not sleep. I was only a boy, and I fancied I heard noises around the house. Mother was away in another room. My brother Thomas by my side was sleeping soundly. I could not sleep, and I became terribly fearful, and I decided that I would do as my parents had taught me to do—pray.

I thought I could not pray without getting out of bed and kneeling, and that was a terrible test. But I finally did bring myself to get out of bed and kneel and pray to God to protect Mother and the family. And a voice as clearly to me as mine is to you said, “Don’t be afraid. Nothing will hurt you.” Where it came from, what it was, I am not saying. You

may judge. To me it was a direct answer, and there came an assurance that I should never be hurt in bed at night.

I say it has been easy for me to understand and believe the reality of the visions of the Prophet Joseph. It was easy for me in youth to accept his vision—the appearance of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, to the boy praying. I could not think otherwise—the vision is a reality. It was easy for me to believe that Moroni came to Joseph there in his room. Heavenly beings were real from my childhood on, and as years came those impressions were strengthened by reason and strengthened by the inspiration of God directly to my soul.

I know that those visions were real, and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. This being true, it follows that Jesus lives, that Christ is our Redeemer, that this is His Church. We are merely His representatives, and when we acknowledge that this is His Church, the reality of God the Father, the Father of our spirits, is very easy to accept.

These things being real, we cannot do anything else but try our utmost to do what Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, asks us to do, for He has given us the gospel that bears His name, and in the words of Peter, “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). **NE**

From an address delivered at the general priesthood meeting on October 6, 1951; capitalization modernized.



A MISSIONARY PROPHET

David O. McKay was raised on the family farm in Huntsville, Utah. When he was eight, his father was called on a mission, and David was left to help his mother care for the farm and his younger brothers and sisters.

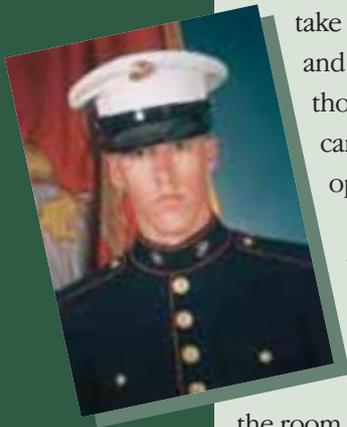
When David turned 24, he was called to serve a mission in the same place his father had served—Scotland.

He was sustained as the ninth President of the Church in 1951. As President, he worked hard to strengthen the missionary program. One of his most well-known sayings is “every member a missionary.”

THIS RECRUIT DOES NOT SWEAR, SIR!

BY BRIAN D. STENQUIST

Lance Corporal Brian Stenquist now goes by Elder Stenquist as he serves a full-time mission.



I guess you could say I have always been patriotic. I was brought up that way. My dad is a retired infantry officer. One important thing I've learned from him is that our freedom is not something we should take for granted. I've come to respect and honor those who have fought and those who have given their lives so we can enjoy the blessings and opportunities we have.

My mom is also as patriotic as they come. For example, when we're watching a football game on TV and they play the national anthem, she makes everyone in the room stand up and put their hands over their hearts. Between the two of them, I've inherited a feeling of gratitude for the freedoms of my country.

That is why on July 24, 2001, I joined the U.S. Marine Corps reserves. Because I was still in high school, I was in the delayed-entry program and didn't actually go to boot camp until June 2002, after I had graduated.

Quite often my mom and I sat up late at night talking about anything and everything. Right before I left for boot camp, we were

having one of those late-night talks. We discussed how important it was that I keep my standards high and not give in to some of the temptations I might face. She asked me right then if I would promise her that I would not pick up swearing while at boot camp. I made her that promise, even though I knew it might be hard to keep because of the environment I would be in.

On June 12, I arrived at the San Diego, California, Marine Corps recruit depot. Right from the start, any identity we had was taken away. We all wore the same uniforms, wore the same brown horn-rimmed glasses, and had the same haircut, which was no hair! We were not allowed to refer to ourselves as "I" or "me." We were to say "this recruit" when speaking about ourselves.

We got about five hours of sleep a night. We were on the go 19 hours a day. Part of the time we were in classes. Other times we were running or learning to march, and the rest of the time we were in the field learning things like martial arts, takedowns, and bayonet training. I had three drill instructors and one senior drill instructor, who was as big as a horse. His neck and biceps were the size of tree trunks.



I fought the enemy, got control of my rifle, pointed it at him, and yelled, "Get down!"

Brian (middle row, second in line) stands at attention with his fellow recruits.



One day my platoon of 83 recruits was in the field doing a drill. One recruit, who was the “enemy,” tried to take our rifles away. We had to fight to prevent him from getting it. Once we had control of our rifle, we were told to point it at the enemy and yell, “Get down, _____!” calling him a profane name.

As I stood there in line waiting for my turn and watching one recruit after another do the drill, I thought about the promise I had made to my mom. It would be easy to give in just this once and talk like a “real” marine. But I knew it would be wrong. I had made a promise, and now I was being put to the test. It was finally my turn. I fought the enemy, got control of my rifle, pointed it at him, and yelled, “Get down!”

My drill instructors stopped the drill and yelled at me to do it again the right way and say what they told me to say. I did the drill again, pointed the rifle at the other recruit, and yelled, “Get down!” Suddenly I had two drill instructors in my face, yelling and screaming at me. My senior drill instructor came over and stood half an inch from my face and yelled at me to obey the order I was given and do the drill the way I was ordered to do it.

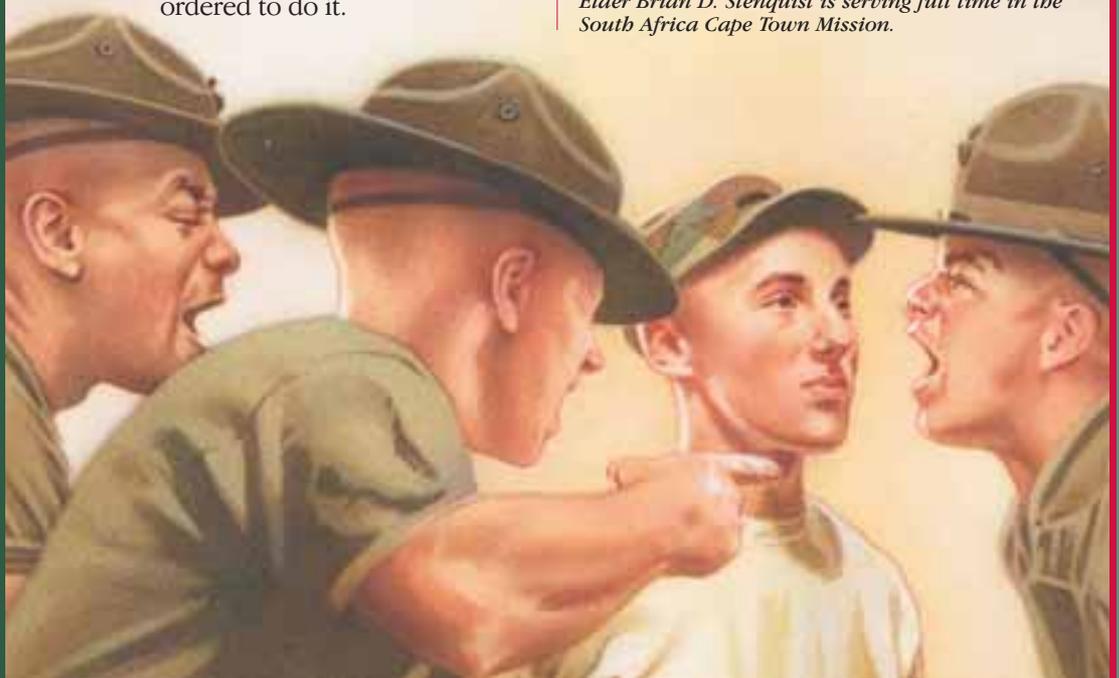
It was now crunch time. Do I give in or stand up for what I know is right and keep the promise? I stood at attention and said, “This recruit does not swear, sir!” Everyone went silent.

There was not a sound as all eyes went back and forth between me and my four drill instructors. I didn’t know what would happen to me next. I wondered if I’d be harassed by all the recruits or commanded to do 5,000 push-ups. Finally my senior drill instructor burst out laughing. Everyone else started laughing as well. The drill instructors began joking with me and coming up with other words that I could say instead. I didn’t get in any trouble for keeping my promise. When it was all over, I felt relieved and thankful that I had done the right thing.

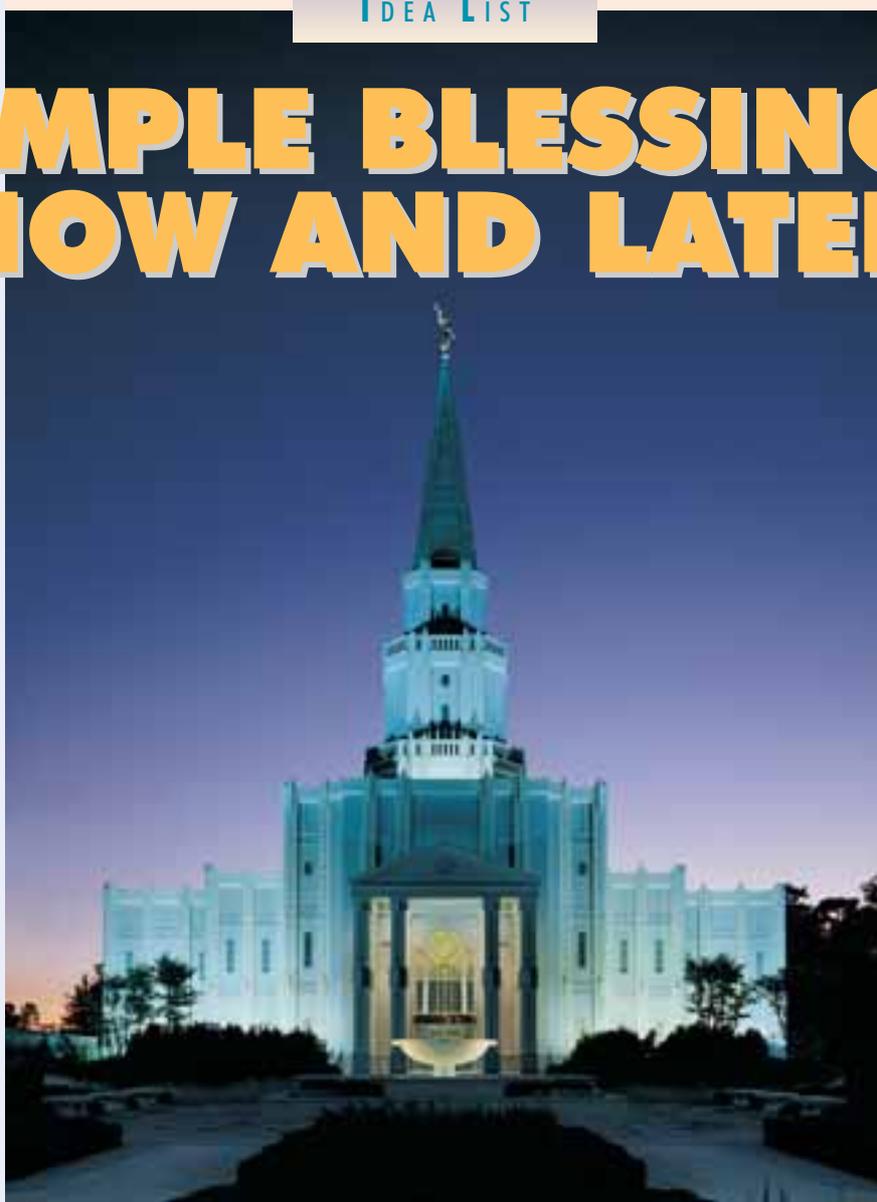
In 2003 I received orders from a higher-ranking commander in chief. I received a mission call to serve the Lord full time in South Africa. My experiences with the Marine Corps have taught me how important it is to keep my standards. No matter how hard some things might seem at the time, if you try to do what’s right, you’ll have the Lord on your side. And with Him on your side, nothing is impossible. **NE**

Elder Brian D. Stenquist is serving full time in the South Africa Cape Town Mission.

My senior drill instructor came over and stood half an inch from my face and yelled at me to obey the order I was given and do the drill the way I was ordered to do it.



TEMPLE BLESSINGS NOW AND LATER



The temple can bless you now and for the rest of your life, no matter where you live. Here are a few ideas from Sister Becky Schultz's early-morning seminary class in Katy, Texas, on how to receive temple blessings.

✦ Learn to recognize the Spirit. As you go to the temple and remain worthy, you will be blessed with the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

✦ Listen to the prophet. He will tell you what you need to do to stay worthy of temple blessings.

Blessings Now

- ✦ Go to the temple with your youth group when you have the chance. You will feel the Holy Spirit as you participate in baptisms for the dead.
- ✦ Seek for answers. You can fast and pray before you go to the temple if you are looking for certain blessings or answers to prayers.
- ✦ While in the temple, make commitments to improve your behavior and thoughts.
- ✦ Serve your ancestors and bring many blessings to them by working on family history and being baptized in their behalf.
- ✦ Read scriptures about the temple to prepare yourself for the blessings of the temple endowment.

Even More Blessings Later

- ✦ Always plan on a temple marriage. If you decide now to be married in the temple, you will want to live your life worthy of that blessing.
- ✦ Keep all the commandments so you can stay worthy of a temple marriage. If you and your future spouse are worthy, you can be sealed for eternity in the temple, and your children will be sealed to you.
- ✦ If you are worthy to go to the temple, you will be worthy to go on a mission. Start preparing for a mission now by being temple worthy.
- ✦ Obtain and read a copy of the booklet *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple*, which you can get from your bishop or branch president. **NE**

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE HOUSTON TEXAS TEMPLE BY BRYAN KUNTZ

Q & A

“How can I help encourage my family to have family home evening, family prayer, and family scripture study?”

NEW ERA

You’re doing the right thing by wanting to have family prayer, home evening, and scripture study. These activities build faith, improve communication, create a good feeling in the family, and can be fun too.

Few things in families are more important than family gospel study and prayer, but they can be hard to do, even if your whole family is active in the Church. To encourage your family, set a good example. Have prayer, scripture study, or home evening by yourself if necessary or with a brother or sister if the entire family isn’t participating. Your example in fulfilling these commandments will encourage others.

As family members join you for home evening, try to make it fun for them. At first, you could play a game or watch a Church movie. Prepare treats and activities they enjoy. In the lessons, show them how the gospel can apply to their lives. Later, they may want to give a lesson

■ **Set a good example by having your own prayer and scripture study.**

■ **Encourage your family members to participate, and make home evening enjoyable for them.**

■ **Help your family feel the Spirit by being reverent and loving.**

■ **Be patient with your family, and keep trying. The blessings of family prayer, scripture study, and home evening will be worth it.**

themselves. Let them know you can help.

If your parents are members of the Church, they probably want to do these things and may just need a little help. Offer to prepare a lesson. Encourage your siblings to participate with a positive attitude. Be prompt when your parents call you for these activities. If your parents aren’t members, they would probably support a weekly family night. Plan one or two so they can see how good home evening can be for your family.

Most important, invite the Spirit of the Lord during prayer, scripture study, and home evening. You can do that by being reverent, sharing your testimony, and expressing your love and gratitude for the gospel and for your family. When family members are impressed by the Spirit, they will want to continue these activities.

At times, you might get frustrated with your family, but try to be patient. Being upset is the opposite feeling these activities are intended to create. Instead, do your best to



encourage your family—invite them, fast and pray for them, plan fun and spiritual home evenings—and then let your family choose. As you patiently and lovingly set a good example, they may join you.

Whether you do these activities by yourself, with a brother or sister, or with your whole family, you will be blessed for your efforts. Family prayer, scripture study, and home evening will strengthen your family and lead you closer to the Lord. **NE**

READERS

When it is time for family scripture study and prayer, I tell my siblings and parents, “Scriptures and prayer in five minutes.”

This gives them time to finish up what they are doing. For family home evening, we take turns giving the lesson. Maybe you can bring up this idea to your parents and offer to make a calendar and remind the person giving the lesson in advance.

*Courtney Moss, 15, Hidden Springs Ward,
Moreno Valley California Stake*



The key is prayer, love, and faith. Thus, in time, your family will become sensitive to your efforts to maintain family unity and your desire

to have an eternal family.

*Diana Martins, 18, Lisboa Fifth Ward,
Lisbon Portugal Stake*

To help our family get excited about home evening, my sister and I hand out home-made invitations to our family members, saying when and where the lesson is going

to take place. Then we get on www.lds.org and plan a lesson. Once my sister and I did a skit and sang a song. Sometimes we make treats for the end of the lesson.

Autumn Reese, 13, Woodhaven Ward,
Idaho Falls Idaho Taylor Mountain Stake



A great incentive that we can all give to have family home evening, prayer, and scripture study is to be an example. If we do our part, the Spirit of Christ will enter our homes and there abide.

Érika Patrícia Gomes da Silva, 15,
Guarujá Ward, Guarujá Brazil Stake



My family has struggled with family home evening. I always knew it was important, so I decided to do something everyone enjoyed and invite my family to join in. From that simple gesture, it turned into a structured family home evening every Monday. This has strengthened my family a great deal.

Ashley Atkinson, 17, Bracebridge Ward,
Sudbury Ontario Stake



I can help my family by praying that everyone can receive inspiration to do these things. I am going to try to be a good example in my family by being diligent in reading the scriptures and praying that my family members will be influenced.

Lotomua Lealaisalanoa, 16, Pesega Third Ward,
Pesega Samoa Stake



I've helped motivate my family by asking my parents what we are going to do. I try to offer fun and original ideas that the entire family will enjoy. I offer to give the lesson for family home evening. Preparing special treats



“Monday nights are reserved throughout the Church for family home evenings. We encourage members to set aside this time to strengthen family ties and teach the gospel in their homes.

“Earlier this year we . . . counseled parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities.”

—The First Presidency,
see Gordon B. Hinckley,
“Family Home Evening,”
Ensign, Mar. 2003, 4.

works well to bring the family together for an evening. Try to make home evening something that your family wants to come to, not something they dread each week.

Jarrett Lever, 15, Holladay Fourth Ward,
Salt Lake Holladay South Stake



I made a chart that says personal prayer, family prayer, daily scripture reading, and so on. As we complete each activity, we put a sticker on the chart, and the one who gets

the most is given a prize.

Francisco Javier Domínguez Lubiano Hdz., 15,
Pedregal Ward, Monterrey Mexico Libertad Stake

We must continue to motivate our families by bringing the Spirit of the Lord into our homes. Pray, study the scriptures, and speak gently with each other so that you are living in harmony. Ask the Lord to help you so that you can attain eternal happiness in your family.

Vanessa T. Teupoorautoa, 18, Hipu Branch,
Raromatai Tahiti Stake

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

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send your answer to the question below, along with your name, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and a photograph (including your parent's written permission to print the photo) to:

Q&A, New Era

50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

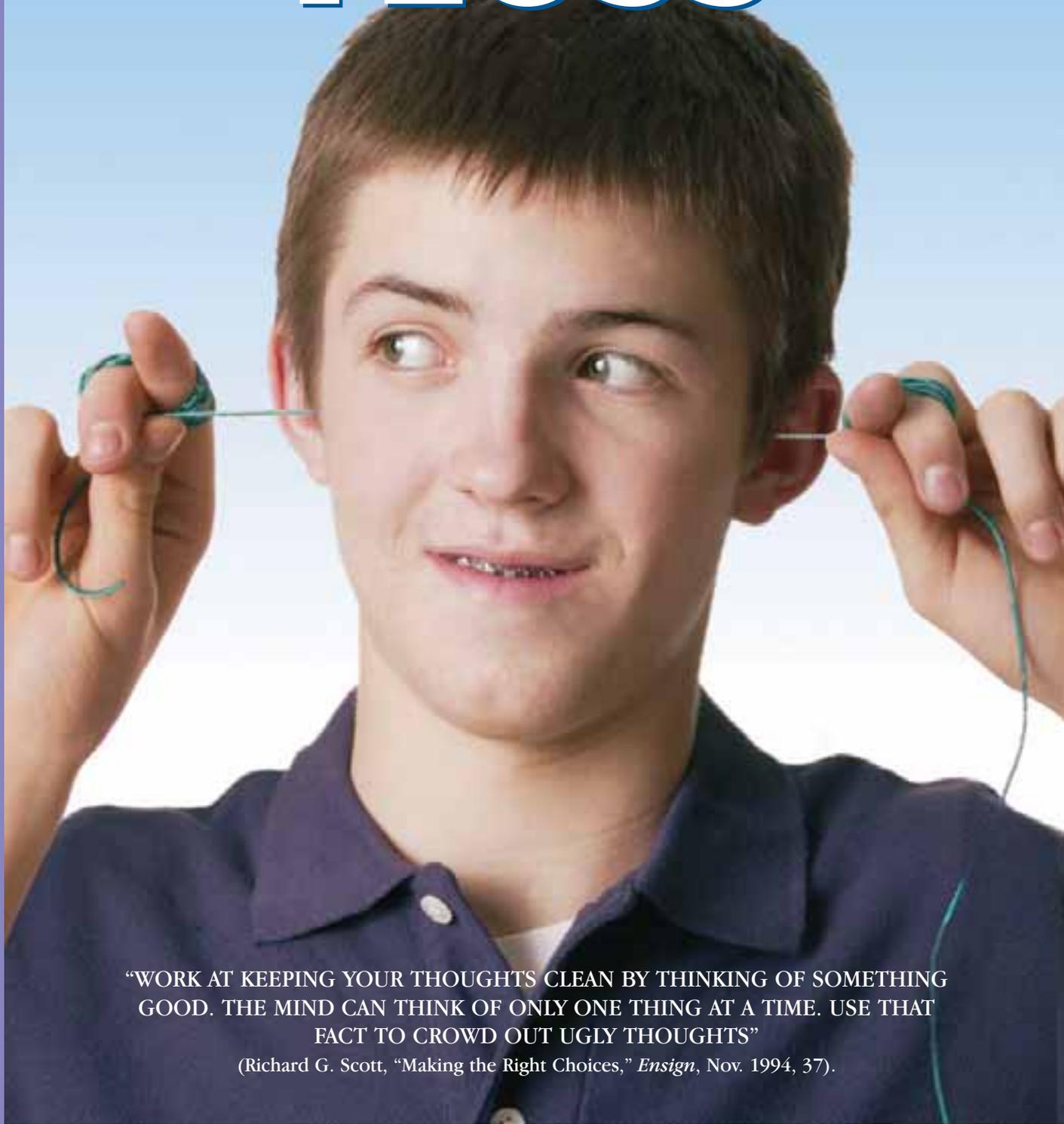
Or e-mail: cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by November 15, 2005.

QUESTION

“I know I should serve a mission, but I would feel like a hypocrite because I don't know if the Church is true. What should I do?”

MENTAL FLOSS



“WORK AT KEEPING YOUR THOUGHTS CLEAN BY THINKING OF SOMETHING GOOD. THE MIND CAN THINK OF ONLY ONE THING AT A TIME. USE THAT FACT TO CROWD OUT UGLY THOUGHTS”

(Richard G. Scott, “Making the Right Choices,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 37).

BEHIND THE SCENES

BY SHANNA BUTLER
Church Magazines

Three movie interns have a little advice for you as you choose your future career.

Some people want to be famous movie stars—on the big screen, in front of all the lights, cameras, and action. But others prefer to be behind it all instead.

Consider Cammon Randle, Chantelle Squires, and Jimmy Anderson. These three are Brigham Young University media arts majors working behind the scenes to build their careers and to improve the media industry in their own small ways. And they have some advice to help you choose a career in any field—a career where you can not only succeed but also have an influence for good.





Give It a Try

Cammon Randle got his first video camera when he was only eight years old. Now that he's at BYU, he's doing what he has always wanted to do—tell stories.

"I've always been interested in movies and how you can tell a story by showing it," he says.

So how did this enterprising student go from an eight-year-old with a camera to a film student with his own production company? Well, first he tried.

Starting with small Claymation projects when he was nine, Cammon kept filming and editing through high school. He eventually decided to go to BYU and major in media arts. He has worked on films like *The Best Two Years*, a film about missionaries in Holland, and on some commercials and TV shows. Recently, he worked on *The Work and the Glory*, a film based on Church history, with Chantelle and Jimmy.

He says the secret to getting where you want to go is hard work. "People can see when you're working hard and you're doing

your best, and they like that."

In going into his line of work, Cammon realized he would face some challenges.

Not the least of these is that the movie industry can be morally challenging. He says to stay spiritually strong in any working environment, you have to do a few key things: First, he says, "Know you are a son or daughter of God."

Second, Cammon knows that, no matter what career you go into, you will likely face some faith-challenging situations. "Be prepared for it," he says. "You have to decide beforehand what you're going to do and stick it out. You just have to follow the Spirit, as always."

Put First Things First

Chantelle Squires realized she was interested in film editing when she edited a documentary in high school.

"I didn't know what I wanted to do at first, but someone told me once, 'Figure out what you love doing the most, and then figure out how to make money doing it.'"

She realized she loved film editing,

Jimmy Anderson, Chantelle Squires, and Cammon Randle (opposite page, left to right) are learning the movie trade as interns. Along with all the practical experience they have gained, they are learning a lot about how to direct their careers. Above: Cammon runs the lights, camera, and action on set. He has always wanted to tell stories through film.

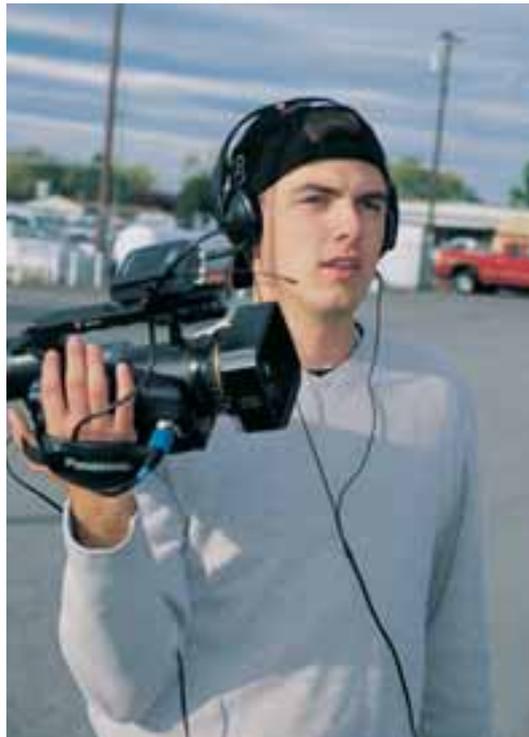


YOUR FUTURE WORK

“These are the great days of your preparation for your future work. Do not waste them. Take advantage of them. Cram your heads full of knowledge. Assimilate it. Think about it. Let it become a part of you.

“But with all of this, in choosing a vocation you should bear in mind that there are other things in life that are of tremendous importance also. The greatest task of all, the greatest challenge, and the greatest satisfaction lie in the rearing of a good family. There must also be time for service in the Church. Otherwise these very important dimensions of your life will be relegated to a back burner.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Life’s Obligations,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1999, 2.



so she went into film and recently graduated from BYU. She liked how editing is something she will be able to do from home when she eventually gets married and has a family.

So far, she has worked on projects like the *Joy to the World* DVD, which was sent out with the December 2003 *Ensign*, and a 3-D Sesame Street film. She’s also filming her own documentary about U.S. Marines.

Chantelle’s dream is to edit a feature film and make documentaries on the side. She realizes that being in the film industry can be spiritually challenging, but she likes the missionary opportunities she receives. Not only does she have the opportunity to share her testimony often, she also has the chance to create uplifting media.

“Media touches lives,” she says. “It can have an influence for good, or we can let other people who

don’t make the most uplifting films fill the world with that.” She would rather “balance it out, so people have some entertainment that’s clean.” Using media to further the Lord’s work is her ultimate career goal.

Although the tide of bad media is almost overwhelming, Chantelle has realized one important thing in her quest for a career: “If you put God first, He’s going to help you.” She knows this applies in all areas of life and definitely in a career.

Know What You Stand For

Jimmy Anderson is intent on directing films and has already had a taste of working on a few as a production assistant. Choosing this career was hard for him and for his wife, Mary, though. They did not know if he could support his family in this line of work. But they turned often to prayer and their patriarchal blessings, and now they feel good about Jimmy’s career choice.

“It was actually a lot less glamorous than I thought it would be,” admits Jimmy, smiling.

But Jimmy isn’t in this line of work for the glamor: “I’ve always wanted to do productions that are not only good films but that would also help people and maybe help them see the light of the gospel.”

In high school, when he was involved in theater, Jimmy would make sure people knew his values: “There have been some times when I’ve had to change something I was supposed



to do in theater class because I didn't approve and didn't feel like it met my standards.

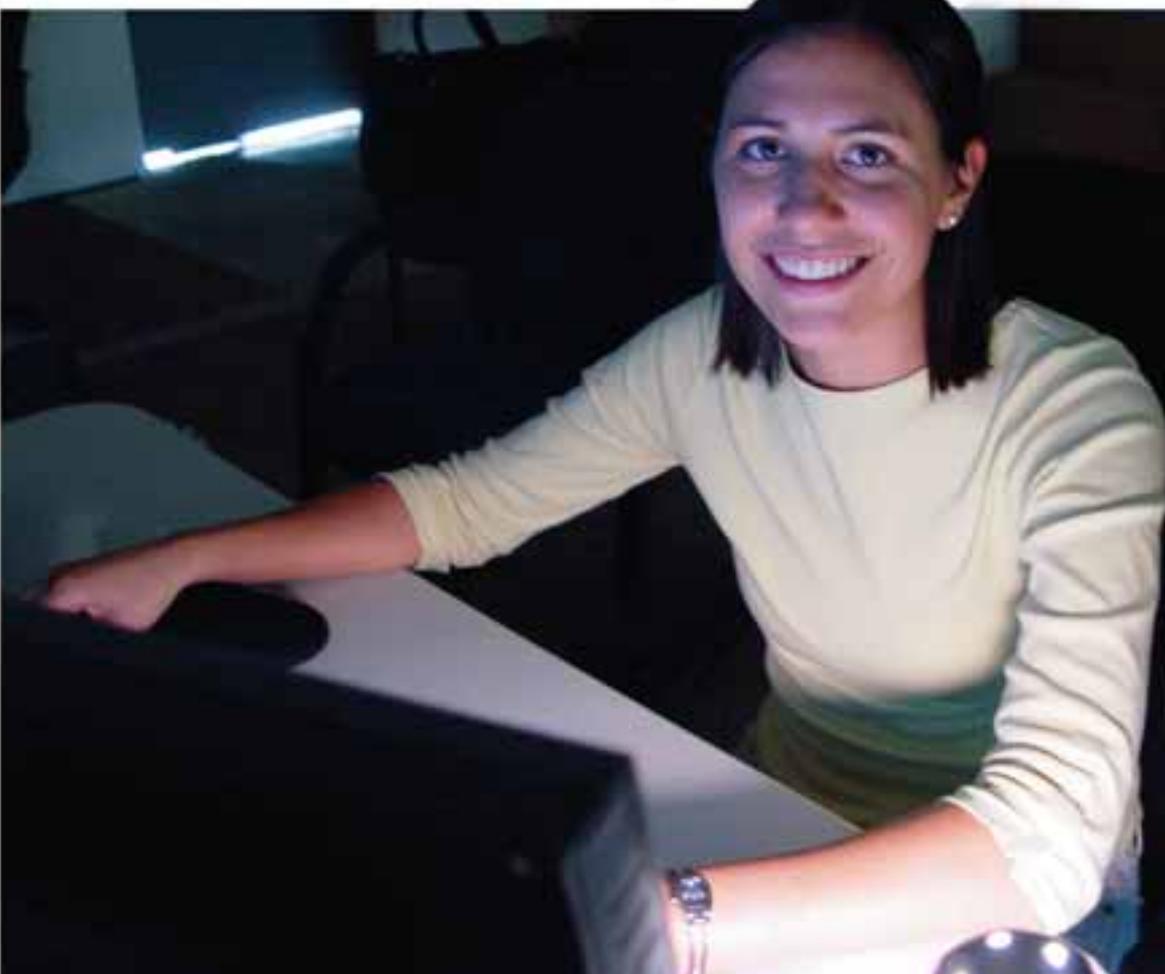
"Whatever you're doing, you have to know what you stand for. You have to live your morals and your standards. There's a certain part of religion that you have to put into everything you do. And I think that's certainly the case with films."

Some Advice

Cammon, Chantelle, and Jimmy have all approached their careers in different ways, but one thing they have in common is their dedication to the gospel. They each have some advice for you as you plan for your future career.

Cammon has learned that you need to "always include the Church in your life. Pray over your flocks. That's something I've always done" (see Alma 34:25).

Chantelle says, "When you're choosing



Opposite page: Cammon films a commercial. Left: Chantelle's strength is film editing. Her dream is to use media to touch people's lives for good.

BESMART.COM

“Be smart,” says President Gordon B. Hinckley. “The Lord wants you to educate your minds and hands, whatever your chosen field. . . . You will be generously blessed because of that training” (“A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 4).

BeSmart.com, a Church Web site, is a great resource to help you prepare for your future. You can get all kinds of information about Church schools and institutes and what you need to do to prepare for further education.

- Learn about common scholarship myths.

- See the difference a degree can make to an average yearly income.

- Register to get e-mails targeted to your specific needs, age, interests, and location.

- Check out the institute of religion options in your area.

You can even apply to Brigham Young University, BYU—Idaho, BYU—Hawaii, or LDS Business College at this site.

a career, put God and family first. Keep them in the forefront of your mind, instead of whatever you are working on.”

And finally, Jimmy knows from experience: “Whatever you do, do it prayerfully. Do it under the influence of the Spirit. And ask those who know to give you more information. Talk to your parents, talk to your bishop, talk to counselors, and especially talk to people in the field you want to go into. Find out as much as you can about it, and then prayerfully take it to the Lord. If it’s right, you’ll know.”

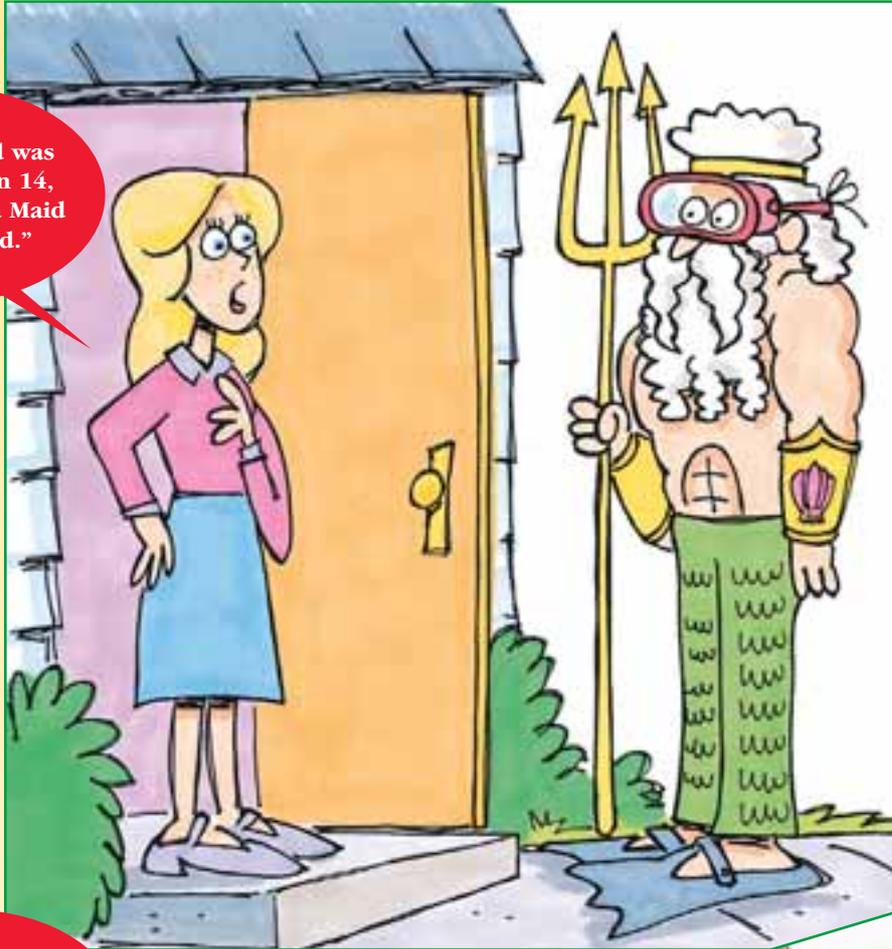
These three have found that—even when they’re working behind the scenes—they can put the Lord’s work on center stage. **NE**



Jimmy has already done directing work on many projects. Here he is an intern on the set of *The Work and the Glory: Pillar of Light*.



"No, what I said was that when I turn 14, I would be a Mia Maid not a mermaid."



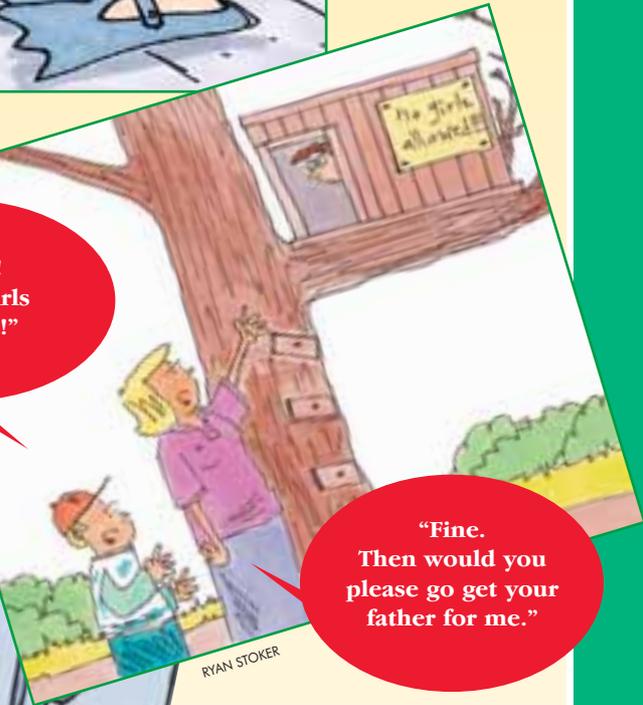
VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

"I wish the school would give us a place to put our books and stuff."



ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

"Mom! It's no girls allowed!"



RYAN STOKER

"Fine. Then would you please go get your father for me."

BY GINGER M. CHURCHILL

Every step was painful for Kasha, but as we supported her, the Lord supported us.

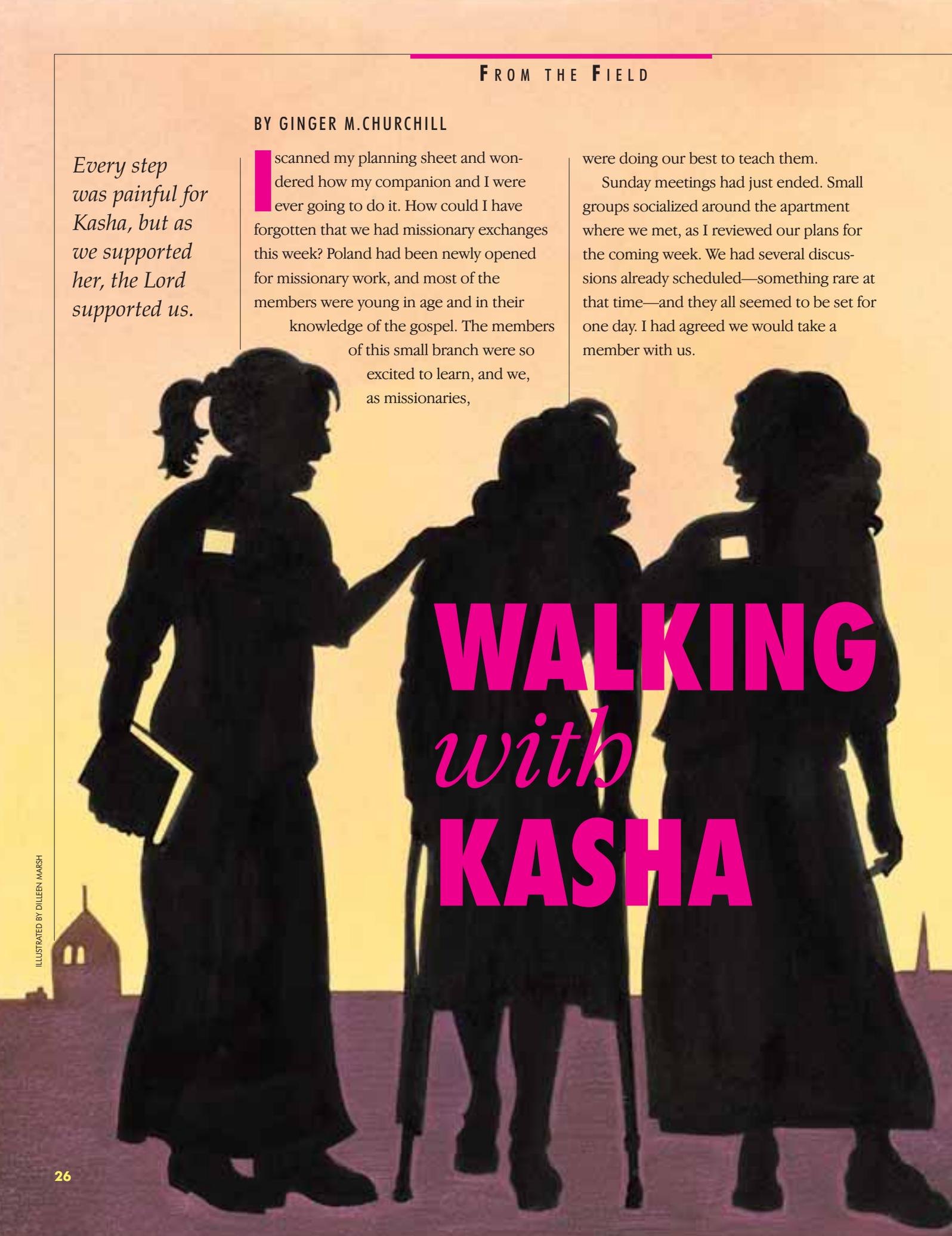
I scanned my planning sheet and wondered how my companion and I were ever going to do it. How could I have forgotten that we had missionary exchanges this week? Poland had been newly opened for missionary work, and most of the members were young in age and in their knowledge of the gospel. The members of this small branch were so excited to learn, and we, as missionaries,

were doing our best to teach them.

Sunday meetings had just ended. Small groups socialized around the apartment where we met, as I reviewed our plans for the coming week. We had several discussions already scheduled—something rare at that time—and they all seemed to be set for one day. I had agreed we would take a member with us.

WALKING *with* KASHA

ILLUSTRATED BY DILLEEN MARSH



I remembered back to a month ago when Kasha, a member with cerebral palsy, approached me so hopefully. She wore a big grin as she walked over on her crutches.

“Sister McGregor, would you please take me out to do missionary work for a day?” she had asked.

I adored Kasha and would have done anything for her, but I wondered how we would get around. No missionaries or members had cars, so our main mode of transportation would be our feet or the bus. If walking was painful for her, wouldn't climbing bus stairs all day be worse? But there she stood, waiting for a reply. I had picked a date out of the air. The day fell in our busy week, and I desperately wanted to change it.

I picked my way over to Kasha and showed her our schedule. Her eyes glowed with excitement. I explained to her how all these appointments were scattered throughout the city and asked her how we were going to get around. She looked at me as if I had forgotten something obvious and explained that the bus was usually a pretty good way. I quickly decided that if she wasn't worried about it, then I shouldn't be either—but I wasn't entirely convinced.

We picked her up in the morning and practically hoisted her onto the bus while the driver glared at us for slowing him up. There were no seats, so on our way to our first appointment, we supported Kasha on the swaying bus. Getting off wasn't much better, and walking was slow and tedious over broken sidewalks and cobblestones. As we sat through our first discussion, Kasha taught two young women with love,

testimony, and the Spirit. She was an incredible missionary.

Obstacles other than cobblestones arose as the day continued. Bus drivers had agreed to strike that day, and around noon buses, parked end to end, began to fill the streets of the city. The bus drivers refused to move them.

We walked slowly from place to place, and Kasha did her best to be cheerful. We caught taxis on the edges of the city when we could, and my companion and I physically supported her as much as she would let us.

It was getting late as we inched up the walk to Kasha's apartment after the long day. Our discussions had been wonderful, but I was looking forward to bed. Kasha suddenly stopped on the walk, forcing me to stop also.

“Oh no!” my mind raced. “I'm going to have to carry her!”

“I'm not tired, Sister McGregor,” Kasha said. “At the end of every single day I'm tired and hurting. I'm usually in bed by now. But today, walking all over the city doing the Lord's work, I feel like I could keep going and going.”

She continued her labored walk home.

I learned a great lesson walking to Kasha's apartment that night. When we are doing the Lord's work, He will assist us no matter our weaknesses or disabilities. My disabilities are not the same as Kasha's, but when I worry that I'm not quite up to what the Lord wants me to do, I think about Kasha.

She had all she needed on her day of missionary work and a little more. **NE**

Ginger M. Churchill is a member of the Lakeside 10th Ward, Provo Utah West Stake.

DIVING INTO SEMINARY

BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines



Teens in Tahiti immerse themselves in scripture study.

Somewhere, in the middle of the ocean, on a beautiful tropical island where the breeze can smell like flowers and the palm trees stretch toward heaven, Latter-day Saint teens are discovering the power of the scriptures.

On the island of Tahiti, a word meaning “the gathering place,” many of these young men and women are gathering every morning as early as 5:15 a.m. to study the scriptures and learn how the gospel can change their lives.

Seminary in Tahiti, as on several of the other 117 islands that make up French Polynesia, is well attended. Sure it’s a challenge to get up that early, but these youth are finding that the blessings outweigh the sacrifices.

“It isn’t easy,” says Vaitiare Timo, 17, of the Mahina Ward, Arue Tahiti Stake. “But there’s no way to escape. I have to come. I have to serve the Lord after all He’s done for me.”

Each of the youth has his or her own reasons for attending. They come to learn, to understand, to apply, to find friends, to gain daily help with life’s problems, to prepare for

a mission and marriage, to be converted, to serve the Lord, to feel good, and to find safety. They’re finding out that seminary helps them accomplish all that and more.

Getting into the Scriptures

“I come to learn,” says Raymonde Chapman, 15, of the Orofero Ward, Paea Tahiti Stake, “to know more about the scriptures and the lives of the prophets. I want to understand.”

If Raymonde wants to learn more about the scriptures, seminary is the right place. It’s not uncommon to hear a seminary teacher say something like, “We try to get the students into the scriptures so that the scriptures get into the students.”

It’s obvious that these students are getting into the scriptures and that the scriptures are becoming part of them.

Eighteen-year-old Karere Teiho’s latest favorite scripture is D&C 10:5: “Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work.”



Orofero Ward. “The lives of the prophets are an example to us.”

“I liked the part where Joseph forgave his brothers,” says Benjamin’s classmate Rumia Temauri, 14, speaking about when Joseph was sold into Egypt. “It’s a good example about how to have good relationships with your family. It’s helped me.”

Sister Ariiotima Mahirava, Benjamin’s and Rumia’s seminary teacher, asks her students to learn one scripture mastery

For Rumia Temauri (left) and Karere Teiho, Vaitiare Timo, Kent Manarani (bottom), seminary doesn’t help them just to understand the scriptures but also to apply them in life.

“Satan is very strong,” says Karere, a member of the Mahina Ward. “Every morning before seminary I pray to receive help to be protected from temptations. It works.” He shrugs. “I’m not perfect, but so far I’ve been blessed to find the strength to resist.”

When students like Karere begin to put into practice what they’ve learned, the power of the scriptures really begins to change lives.

“Seminary helps us apply the gospel in our lives,” says Benjamin Tuahiva, 14, of the



each week. On the back of each scripture mastery card is a suggestion for how the student can apply in his or her life what the scripture is teaching. Sister Mahirava challenges the students to live that personal application during the week, then share their testimonies in class of how it blessed them.

“I think the students are realizing that the gospel isn’t something you live only on Sundays,” Sister Mahirava says. “It’s neat to watch the light come on.”

The Blessings of Seminary

Seminary students in French Polynesia are grateful for the opportunity to attend seminary. They recognize the many blessings they’re receiving for their faithfulness.

“It’s such a blessing to know the Book of Mormon is the word of God,” says Karere. “It’s the keystone of our religion. It will help us be converted to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I have come to love Them so much.”

The students have also come to appreciate the words and experiences of the prophets.

“The stories we learn about in the scriptures help us every day,” says Vaitiare. “What the prophets did then can help us today. Experiences from the lives of modern prophets help me too, especially Joseph Smith.”

“I know seminary will help me,” says Karere. “I know going every morning to learn about the gospel will help me when I go on my mission to know how to teach and how to testify.”

Finding Someone to Lean On

Not only is seminary helping to strengthen the students individually, but the students are finding strength together as well.



SEMINARY FRIENDS

“Thank you for your efforts in . . . going to institute, going to seminary, partaking of the blessings that are to be had there, not only in the teaching of the gospel but in the society in which you can mingle. I want to say to you, look for your friends among members of the Church. Band together and strengthen one another. And when the time of temptation comes you will have someone to lean on to bless you and give you strength when you need it.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” *Ensign*, July 1997, 73.

“There are a couple of classes that meet at the same time,” says Vaitiare. “So we get to know students from the other classes and other wards. Because most of us go to the same school, it helps us to find friends at school who are members.”

Having friends who share the same standards helps these students of the scriptures stand up for their beliefs as students at school.

“We do a lot with our friends who aren’t members,” Vaitiare says. “But sometimes it’s nice to have someone to lean on who you know believes what you do.”

Safety in the Latter Days

Vaitiare has a favorite scripture too. At least until she finds another one in her studies that helps her just as much. It’s Revelation 1:3: “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”

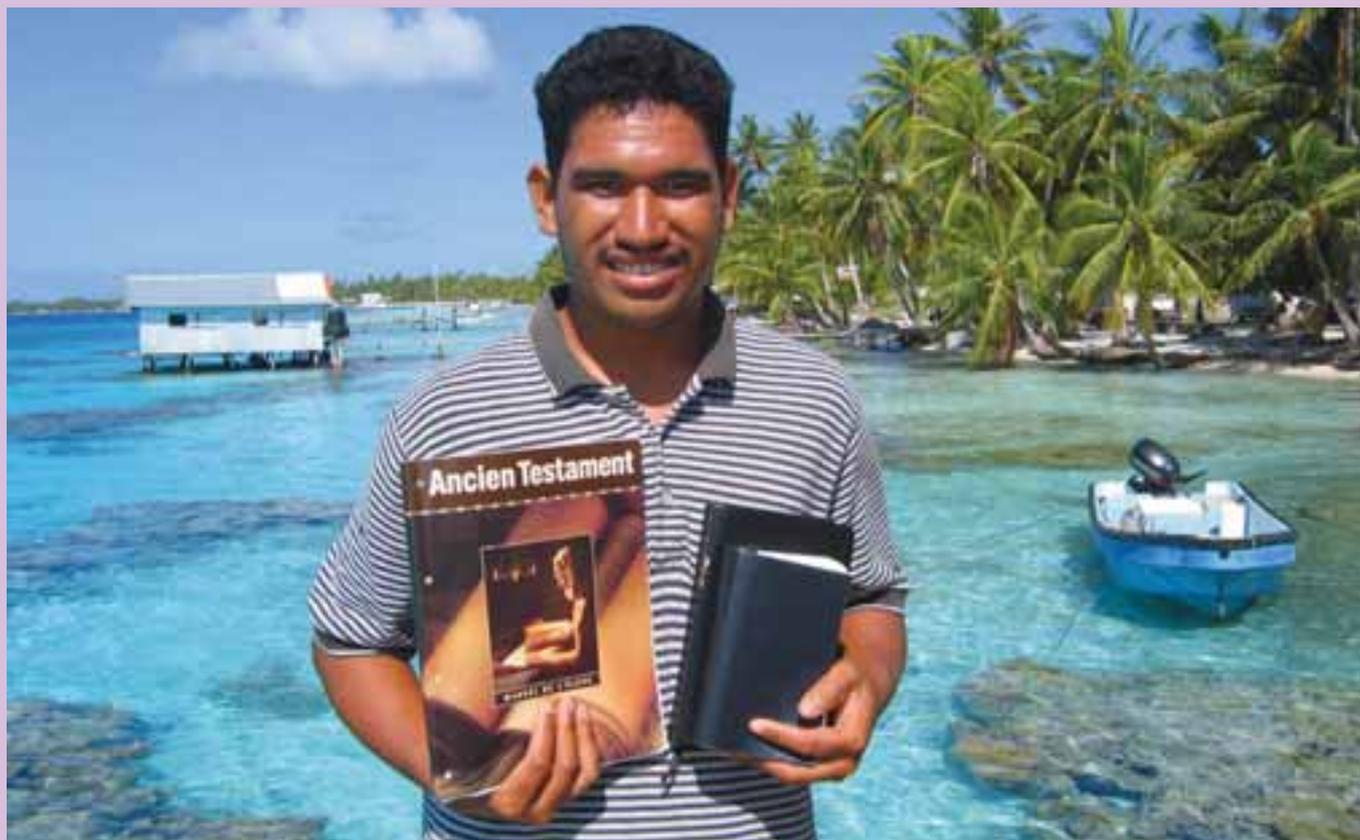
“The scriptures will teach us the truth if we will read them,” she says.

“What the prophets say is a guide for us. If we follow the scriptures and the words of the prophets, we will be safe during these last days.”

That’s just one more reason to gather at seminary and get into the scriptures. **NE**



Raymonde Chapman enjoys studying the scriptures during seminary.



SEMINARY AFTER DARK

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY

Church Magazines

On the island of Takaroa, 400 miles (600 km) northeast of Tahiti, seminary isn't an early morning activity, but an evening one. Once each week on Wednesdays, as the sun is going down, Sister Hina Garbutt teaches her students about the restored gospel. She's following a pattern of study established in the 1850s when Latter-day Saint missionaries first began teaching here. In fact, the seminary class meets next to a chapel built in the 1890s.

For teenagers living on Takaroa, seminary is the only formal education available. While elementary education exists, the only option for secondary students is to go to a boarding school on another island far away.

"We have only priests here among the young men," says Tetuarere Temahaga (above), 17, of the Takaroa Second Branch, Takaroa Tuamotu District. "The deacons and

teachers have all gone away to school. But the six priests and three young women who remain come to seminary. Everyone believes it's like our school for us, and so they come. We learn a lot, and we enjoy being together. Seminary allows us to keep learning."

Like most of the youth on Takaroa, Tetuarere works on the pearl farms. He has to get up as early as 4:30 a.m., and he spends the day diving and swimming, lifting heavy strings of oysters into boats. Others, like young women (right) Hinanui Tehina, 14, and Tapiu Tino, 15, work all day long tying oysters to nylon strings so that others can put them back in the water. That's how the pearls are grown, and that helps keep the economy alive on Takaroa. "We are needed here," Tapiu explains. She went to boarding school for a while but found there were a lot of negative influences, so she returned to be with her family, surrounded by those she loves.

After a long day of labor, what do teens on Takaroa do to unwind? "Not much," laughs Tetuarere. "We watch television, although there isn't much to watch, or we go

swimming. Most of all, we go fishing. We go fishing to get food, but we go for fun too."

Sundays and Wednesdays are especially welcome. "Sunday, of course, we go to church, and Wednesday night is seminary," Hinanui explains.

"We learn a lot about the gospel."

Tetuarere talks about one of the many principles he has studied:

the importance of the temple. "You cannot go there taking with you the things of the world. It is the house of the Lord, and no unclean thing can enter there."

In fact, one of the exciting goals for seminary students here is to save money they earn and go with other branch members to the temple in Tahiti. "We will perform baptisms for the dead," says Hinanui. "It's a good goal. Everything we learn in church and everything we learn in seminary points us to the house of the Lord." **NE**



IF THIS IS

True

BY SALLY S. ENGLISH

“We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
—Articles of Faith 1:4

It was late at night, and the house was dark and quiet. I knelt beside a fold-out camp cot, my bed while visiting at my sister’s house. My arms rested on the rough woolen blanket of the bed, and I closed my eyes, pouring all my effort into a fervent and determined prayer.

I was there because I had to learn the truth. I needed an answer to my prayers.

My search for the truth had begun almost a year before. At that time, I was a senior in high school, active in my own church, and happy with my family and my life. I didn’t know the Lord had greater things in store for me.

My sister and her husband had joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They were filled with missionary zeal and had come to visit us, hoping to share the joy they had found. My family and I were not receptive. We were very happy just as we were. But we did agree to accompany them to the Los Angeles Temple Visitors’ Center for a tour.

That was the beginning for me. The story of Joseph Smith and the translation of the Book of Mormon sounded terribly far-fetched, and yet, I thought, “If this is true,

what an incredibly wonderful thing!”

So I decided to do a little research. Throughout that year, in my English class, we were assigned to write a series of research essays on a topic of our choice. I decided to compare and contrast my religion with the Latter-day Saint faith. My research included attending several ward meetings, interviewing members of the Church, reading the Book of Mormon, and writing many letters filled with gospel questions to my sister.

Although I was active in my church, I never felt the personal connection with God that the LDS people I met seemed to possess with such ease. As I spoke with them, I realized it was their understanding of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ that gave them such profound faith. I felt not envy but a great desire to believe and understand that what they testified to me was true.

After eight months, my sister invited me to visit her during my Easter vacation. I agreed, and we spent a week baking and laughing, cleaning and visiting, and discussing gospel principles. I didn’t realize it then, but the Spirit dwelt in that house. I



EXTRA! EXTRA!

To learn more about the fourth article of faith, you can read these scriptures: 2 Nephi 31:11–12, 17; Alma 34:17; 3 Nephi 11:38; 27:30; Moroni 8:25–26.

You can also read these articles at www.lds.org in the Gospel Library: “Finding Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ” (*Ensign*, Nov. 2004), by Elder Robert D. Hales; “Three Choices” (*Ensign*, Nov. 2003), by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin; and “The Cloven Tongues of Fire” (*Ensign*, May 2000), by President Boyd K. Packer.

After weeks of learning and praying about the gospel, I was baptized. I felt overpowering joy as I came out of the water.

Next month in this series, read how Elder Robert S. Wood of the Seventy explained to ministers and preachers what it means to be called of God.

was amazed at her ease in answering my questions. No matter what I asked, no matter how complex, she gave me a good understanding of that principle. I felt her love for me, and I felt God’s love for me. I did not know whether Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, but I desperately wanted to know.

So there I was, kneeling on the cold, hard floor, my eyes tightly shut, begging the Lord to answer my prayer, to tell me whether Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. I felt if I could just know that, then everything else would fall into place. It would follow that he translated the Book of Mormon, that he received the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, and that he helped establish the Lord’s Church on the earth.

As I prayed, I felt loving arms surround me. I felt great warmth and joy flood my heart. And I heard a voice in my mind say, “Yes, Joseph Smith is a prophet of God.”

I wept for joy as I knelt there, feeling infinitely important

to my Heavenly Father, important enough that He would listen to my stumbling, pleading prayer and answer me

with such tenderness and compassion.

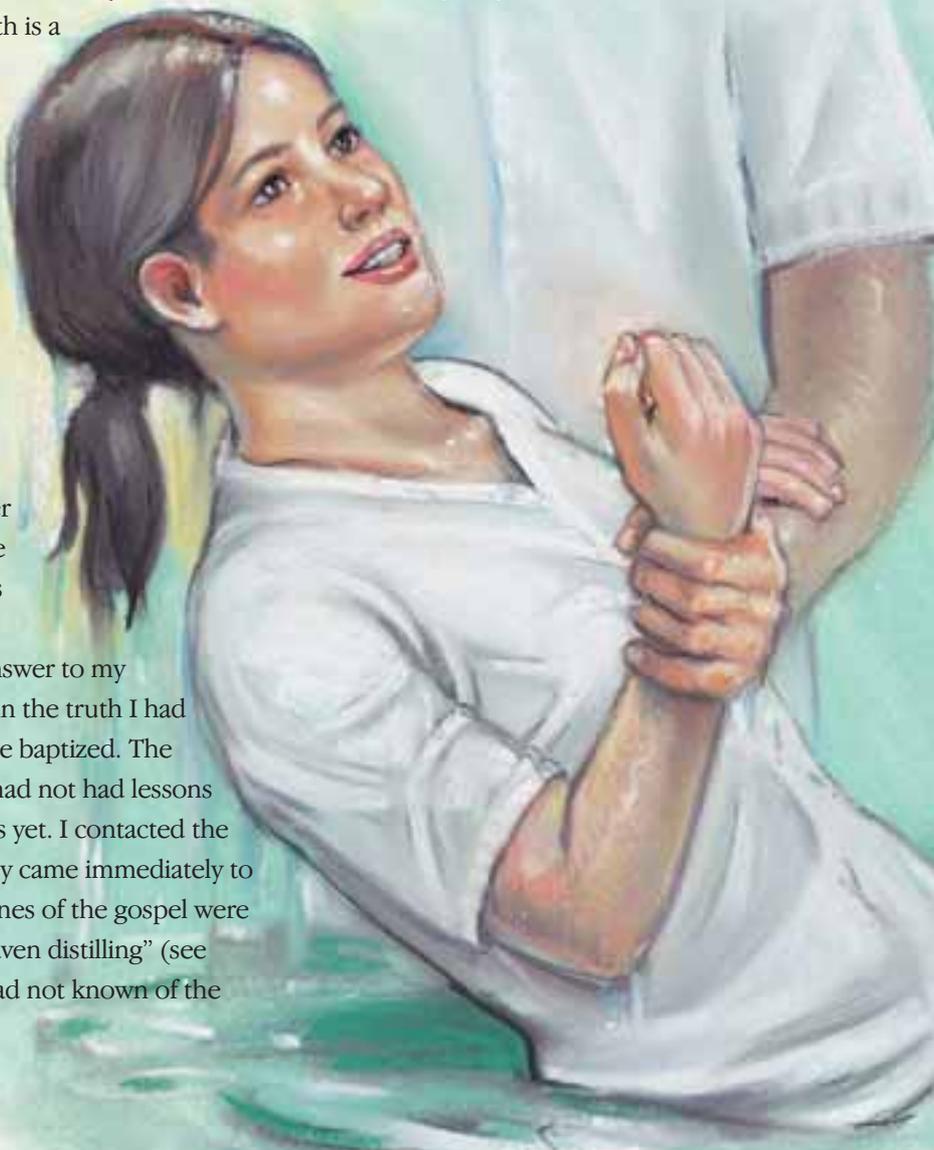
Grateful for the answer to my prayer and rejoicing in the truth I had found, I decided to be baptized. The only snag was that I had not had lessons from the missionaries yet. I contacted the missionaries, and they came immediately to teach me. The doctrines of the gospel were “as the dew from heaven distilling” (see *Hymns*, no. 149). I had not known of the

Savior’s great love for me. I felt unworthy and began fervently to repent of the things I had said and done and thought that were out of harmony with the Lord’s teachings.

The change was gradual, but after six weeks of learning and praying and striving, I was baptized. I felt such overpowering joy, such purity as I came out of the water, that I knew my sins were forgiven, and I was worthy to be given the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Although the night I had prayed so fervently was long ago, because I knelt in faith before the Lord and received an answer from Him, I have a great testimony of prayer and of a loving Father in Heaven, a testimony that our Savior lives and loves us and that the Holy Ghost is always there to guide, strengthen, and comfort all who seek Him. **NE**

Sally S. English is a member of the Downey First Ward, Downey California Stake.



STAYING CONVERTED

BY VACLAVA SVOBODOVA

I began as a nonbeliever, but that all changed when I learned about the truthfulness of the gospel.

All my life I was taught that there was no God. Little did I know how that would change when I applied to be a high school exchange student in the United States, representing the Czech Republic. When I filled out the application, one question was “What is your religious preference?” I knew most Americans were Christian, so that was what I wrote down. But I was a nonbeliever.

With anticipation, I awaited the outcome of my application. Where would I live?

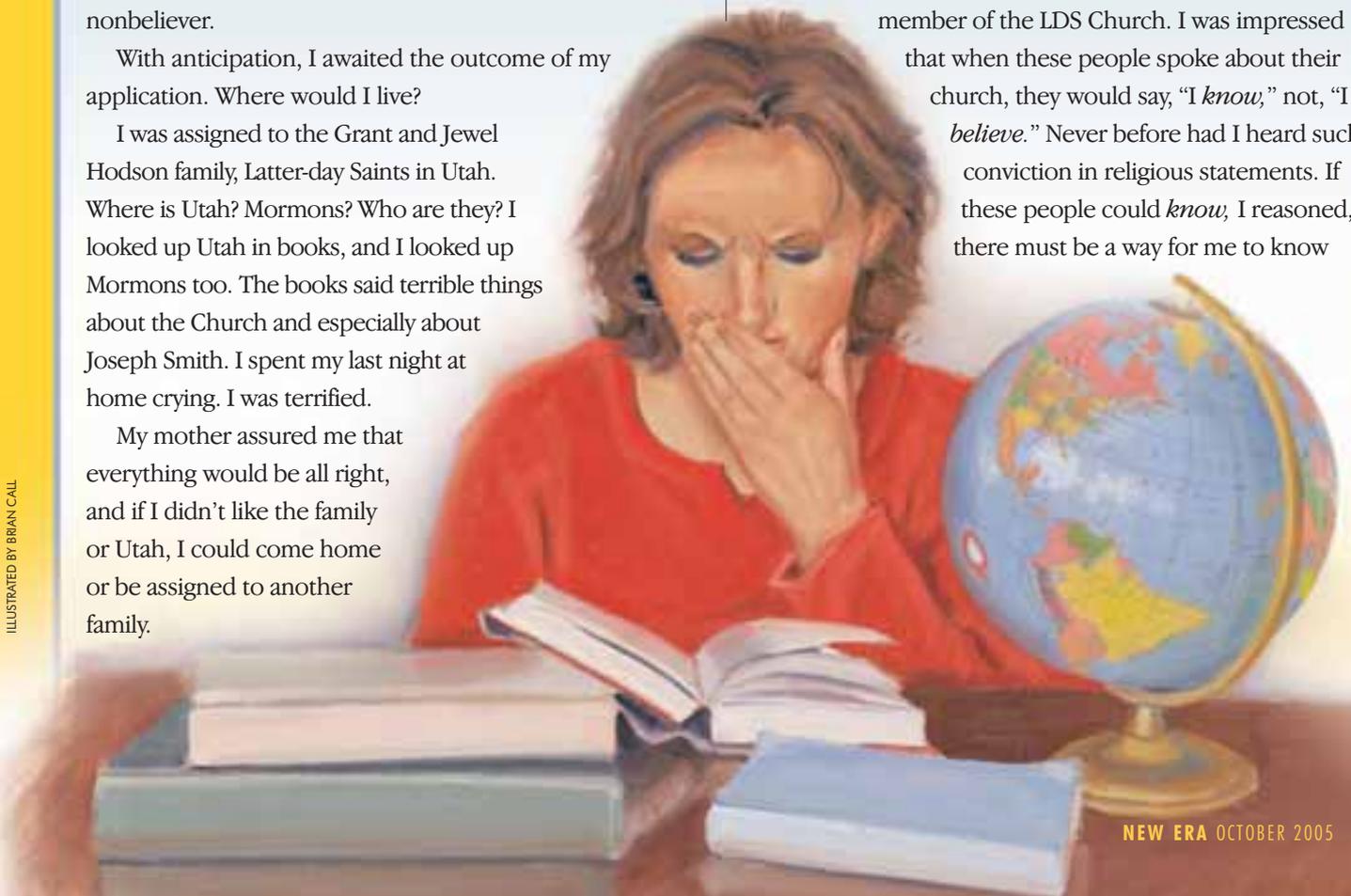
I was assigned to the Grant and Jewel Hodson family, Latter-day Saints in Utah. Where is Utah? Mormons? Who are they? I looked up Utah in books, and I looked up Mormons too. The books said terrible things about the Church and especially about Joseph Smith. I spent my last night at home crying. I was terrified.

My mother assured me that everything would be all right, and if I didn't like the family or Utah, I could come home or be assigned to another family.

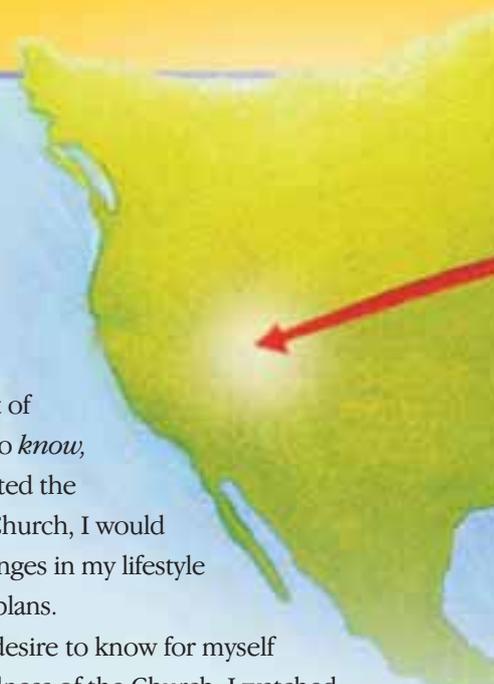
When I arrived in Utah, Emily, one of the daughters, came to pick me up. She was 16 years old, wearing normal, casual clothes, and she was so nice. I thought, “Wow! This might not be that bad after all!” The whole family was warm and welcoming to me.

I experienced quite a cultural adjustment. I saw that my host family prayed before every meal and before they went to bed. They didn't drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes. They lived moral lives. Everything was totally opposite of how the teenagers I had known lived.

And it seemed that almost everybody I met was a member of the LDS Church. I was impressed that when these people spoke about their church, they would say, “I *know*,” not, “I *believe*.” Never before had I heard such conviction in religious statements. If these people could *know*, I reasoned, there must be a way for me to know



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN CALL



too. I was the sort of person who had to *know*, because if I accepted the teachings of the Church, I would have to make changes in my lifestyle and in my future plans.

With a strong desire to know for myself about the truthfulness of the Church, I watched the example of my host family. They didn't proselytize, but the way they lived made me want to know what was behind their actions. I had never seen such faith.

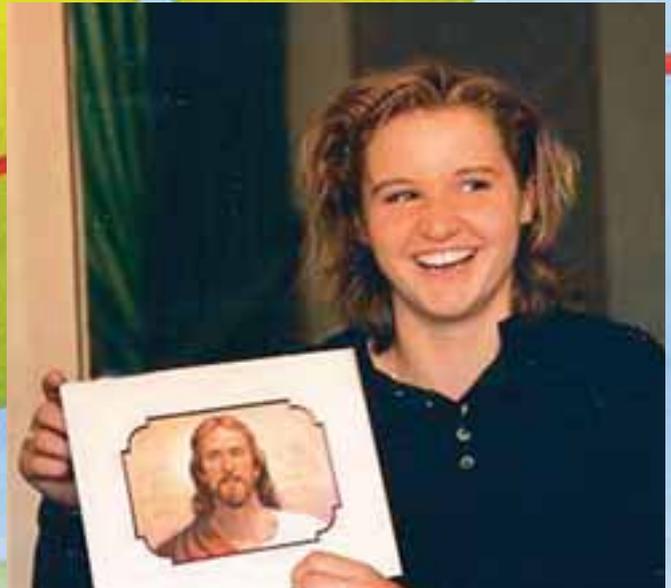
I heard a Church leader say, "People will want to know Christ because they know you." I wanted to know Christ because I knew the Hodsons. They were a great example to me of the way a family should live.

I began praying. I prayed for three weeks and nothing happened. I was a little discouraged. I thought that maybe I was not worthy to feel God's love.

That same week I decided to join the Hodsons' traditional family testimony meeting on the first Sunday of the month. The mother, Jewel, asked me if I would like to say anything. I said, "Sure." But I thought, "What am I going to say?"

Since everybody had expressed appreciation, I thought I could at least express my appreciation to the Hodsons for all they had done for me. They had been so patient with me. They treated me as their own daughter and had never pushed me into anything. I would express my true gratitude.

I was the last to speak. I stood up and started saying how grateful I was for their kindness and patience and also for their desire to teach me about God. All of a sudden, a strong, overwhelming feeling came over me. The language barrier was gone; I had no problem speaking English. I was fluent for the first time! I had never felt anything like this before. I spoke as I was inspired. It was such a warm, beautiful feeling. I was quietly being taught, "You *know* what you are saying is true. You *know* I exist. You *know*."



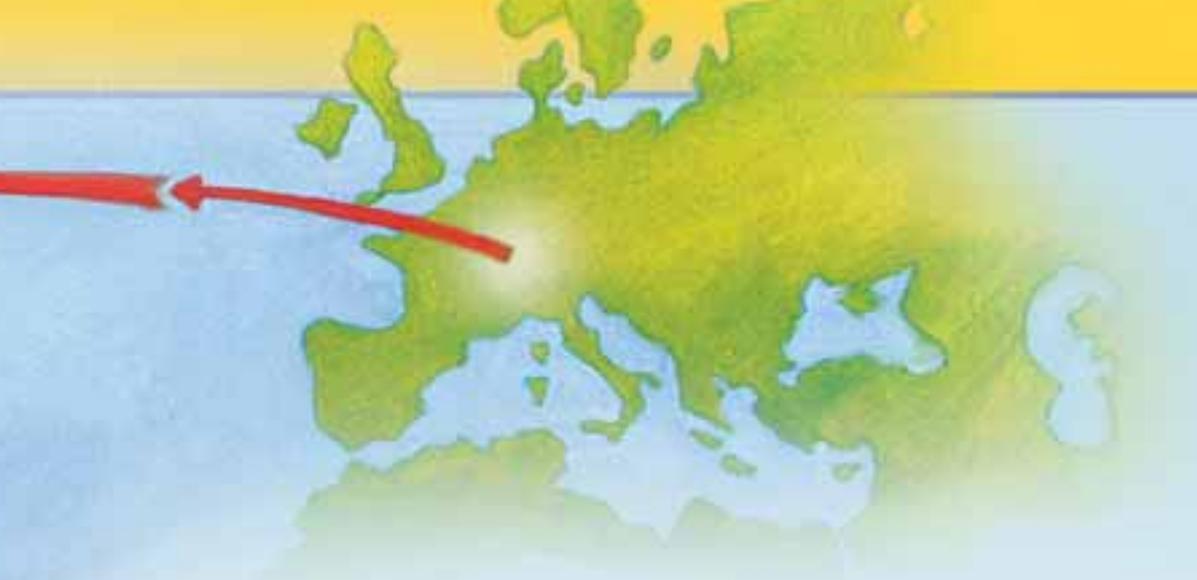
And I did know! With tears in my eyes, I sat down. I thought, "What was that?" Answering as though she had heard my question, my host mother quietly spoke, "What you are feeling is the Spirit." All I could think was "Wow! It is true!"

With my parents' permission, I asked my host father to baptize me into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was a happy day for me. I felt so clean and fresh! In addition to my host family, I was surrounded by many members from my ward who came to support me. I appreciated that so much.

When I returned to the Czech Republic from Utah, I was the only member of the Church not just in my town, Chrastava (population 8,000), but also in Liberec (population 120,000), a city about six miles (10 km) from Chrastava. I worked as a hotel receptionist and taught English in a private high school. I was desperately seeking to find my new place at home. I was close to giving up. Nevertheless, I continued to kneel every night and pray for a miracle that would bring me out of my despair. I also tried very hard to stay away from my old habits and friends.

Finally my prayers were answered. The missionaries came to Liberec, where I was teaching. (I later learned that Brother Hodson had contacted the mission president for the Czech Republic and told him about me. Now there is a growing branch of about 40 Latter-day Saints in my hometown.)

I have since attended Brigham Young University—Idaho and finished my fine arts degree at BYU—Hawaii. One of



When I decided to join the Hodsons' family testimony meeting, the mother, Jewel, asked me if I would like to say anything. I said, "Sure." But I thought, "What am I going to say?"

the highlights of being at BYU—Hawaii was playing on the volleyball team. On that special campus, my testimony grew.

I have now returned to my home in the Czech Republic. I want to spread the gospel message. At first, my father and mother thought I was totally crazy to have made such a conversion. Now they support me completely, and they are grateful for my education.

Maybe I can also have an influence as a teacher in the arts.

The people here need the gospel, and they need the arts. I wish they knew what I know. I want to teach them the true plan of happiness. I know Heavenly Father wants my people to have the gospel and all the really good things in life. I know my Heavenly Father loves me and will help me to do my best, even though I have imperfections. I continue to desire to be guided by Him always. **NE**

Vaclava Svobodova is a member of the Liberec Branch, Prague Czech District.



SINGING A NEW



WORLD RECORD

BY JOHN FARRINGTON

This Canadian choir sang its way into the record books.

The audience cheered as the large clock at the front of the stage neared the 22-hour mark. The teens in the Ottawa Ontario Stake youth choir were exhausted. After all, they had been singing for almost an entire day.

Finally, the clock read 22 hours and three minutes. The 53 young men and young women had just broken the world record for the longest concert performed by a choir.

Even though the record was officially broken, the youth didn't stop singing. They had a hymn to finish. They filled the gym with the jubilant strains of the fourth verse of "The Spirit of God" (*Hymns*, no. 2).

The quest to break a world record began as an idea from Ben Lowater, a counselor in the Young Men presidency in the Riverside Ward. Brother Lowater gets the book *Guinness World Records* every year as a Christmas gift, and when he saw the entry for longest choir concert, he knew it was a record the Ottawa youth could break.

The youth were excited about his idea. Riley Jones, 17, says, "I always wanted to be a world-record holder. But before this activity, I could never figure out what record I could break."

But in the end, the teens gained more from the activity than a spot in the record book. For their record-breaking concert, the youth sang all 341 Church hymns, and they even learned to sing some of their favorite hymns in parts. The choir began practicing for the concert two months in advance so they could learn the hymns they weren't familiar with.

The youth were even given a CD so they could listen to all the unfamiliar hymns at home or in the car. Katarina de Savigny, 15, is a country music fan, but because of her experience with the choir, she has been switching her favorite country CDs for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Spring Pruner, 18, says she learned to love a lot of hymns that she hadn't heard before. Of the new hymns she was introduced to, her favorite is "The Wintry Day, Descending to Its Close" (*Hymns*, no. 37). She says, "I sort of found hymns bland before, but as I got to learn them, I got to like them."

Kenny Kyle, who plays the piano in priesthood meeting, says that learning all the songs in the hymnbook will help him on his mission. He also says the youth choir helped the youth in the Ottawa stake get to know each other better. "We grew a lot closer together because of this experience," he says.

The Ottawa youth are different because of their experience with the stake choir. Some have cut down on the rock, country, or rap music they listen to. Many say they have a greater appreciation for the hymns of the Church, and several youth even joined their ward choirs.

What's the reason for all of these changes? As chorister Rachele Wride explains, "When you have taken part in a choir that sang hymns for 22 hours, you don't look at the hymnbook the same way anymore." **NE**

John Farrington is a member of the Oakville Ward, Mississauga Ontario Stake.

IT HAPPENED IN OCTOBER

October 21, 1855:

The first branch in Germany was organized in Dresden.

October

12, 1892:

The Relief Society filed its articles of incorporation. The organization was then known as the National Women's Relief Societies until 1945, when the name was changed to Relief Society of The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

October

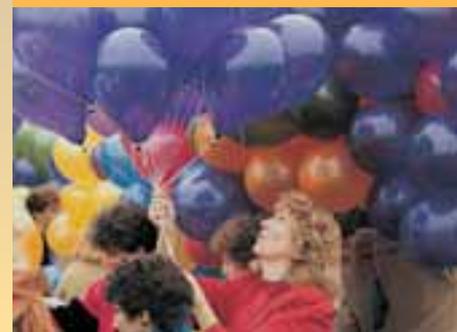
3, 1924:

General conference was broadcast for the first time

on a Church-owned radio station.

October 11, 1986:

About 300,000 young women participated in the first worldwide Young Women activity. From sites all over the world, they released into the air helium-filled balloons with personal messages in them.



ILLUSTRATED BY NADINE B. BURTON
PHOTOGRAPH BY PHOTOSPIN
PHOTOGRAPH BY JED CLARK



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

ON THE WRITE TRACK

One of the best ways to clarify your plans and ideas is to write them down. Writing things down will not only help you stay organized, but it will help you be more effective. Here are just a

few ways writing down your plans and ideas can help:

Writing an idea will help you express it more clearly to others.

Writing your plans will help you stay on track.

Writing something

down will help you remember it.

Writing a plan provides a record of the plan.

Writing a thought helps you clarify it in your own mind and can help you come up with new ideas.

TEST YOUR LDS I.Q.

You've probably heard these scriptural phrases before, but do you know who said them? Draw lines to match these scriptural quotes with the prophets who spoke them. Check the references to see if you came up with the right answers.

“Wickedness never was happiness.”



Joseph Smith
(See D&C 76:22.)

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.”



Nephi, son of Lehi
(See 1 Nephi 3:7.)

PAINTING BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

“Put on the whole armour of God.”



David
(See Psalm 23:1.)

ILLUSTRATED BY GARY KAPP

“I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded.”



Moroni
(See Moroni 10:5.)

PAINTING BY TOM LOVELL

“By the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.”



Alma the Younger
(See Alma 41:10.)

PAINTING BY GARY KAPP

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”



Lehi
(See 2 Nephi 2:25.)

PAINTING BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.”



Isaiah
(See Isaiah 9:6.)

ILLUSTRATED BY TED HENNINGER

“This is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!”



The Apostle Paul
(See Ephesians 6:11.)

ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL MANN

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”



John the Beloved
(See John 3:16.)

ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL MANN

“Men are, that they might have joy.”



Moses
(See Genesis 1:1.)

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT T. BARRETT



SCULPTURES BY SHAJINA MOONEY KAWASAKI

IN A WORD

Telestial: When the Apostle Paul wrote of the three degrees of glory in the Bible, he mentioned the celestial and terrestrial by name, comparing their glories to that of the sun and the moon (see 1 Corinthians 15:40–41). But when he talked of the glory of the stars, he did not mention a name associated with this glory. The word *telestial* is found in the scriptures only in the Doctrine and Covenants (see D&C 76:88, 98, 109; 88:21). It is the name for the lowest degree of glory. Those who are wicked and unrepentant and commit serious sins like murder will live in the telestial kingdom.

YOU'RE A Mormon?

BY ANA LEE GRANIOLA LÓPEZ

A coworker had some bad information about Latter-day Saints. How could I help him understand we really are Christians?

During my second year of college, I worked at the university library as a student assistant. One day in December I was assigned to work with another student assistant. I had never met him before, so as we worked I tried to strike up a conversation. We talked about school, work, and our families.

Later in the afternoon he started to sing songs that mentioned God. I asked him about his religion. I hoped he would ask me the same thing so I could talk to him about the Church, and he did. I was so excited, because this was a great missionary opportunity. With a big smile, I told him I was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He looked surprised and, in a not-very-pleasant tone of voice, replied, “The Mormons? You’re a Mormon? Those people don’t believe in Jesus Christ.”

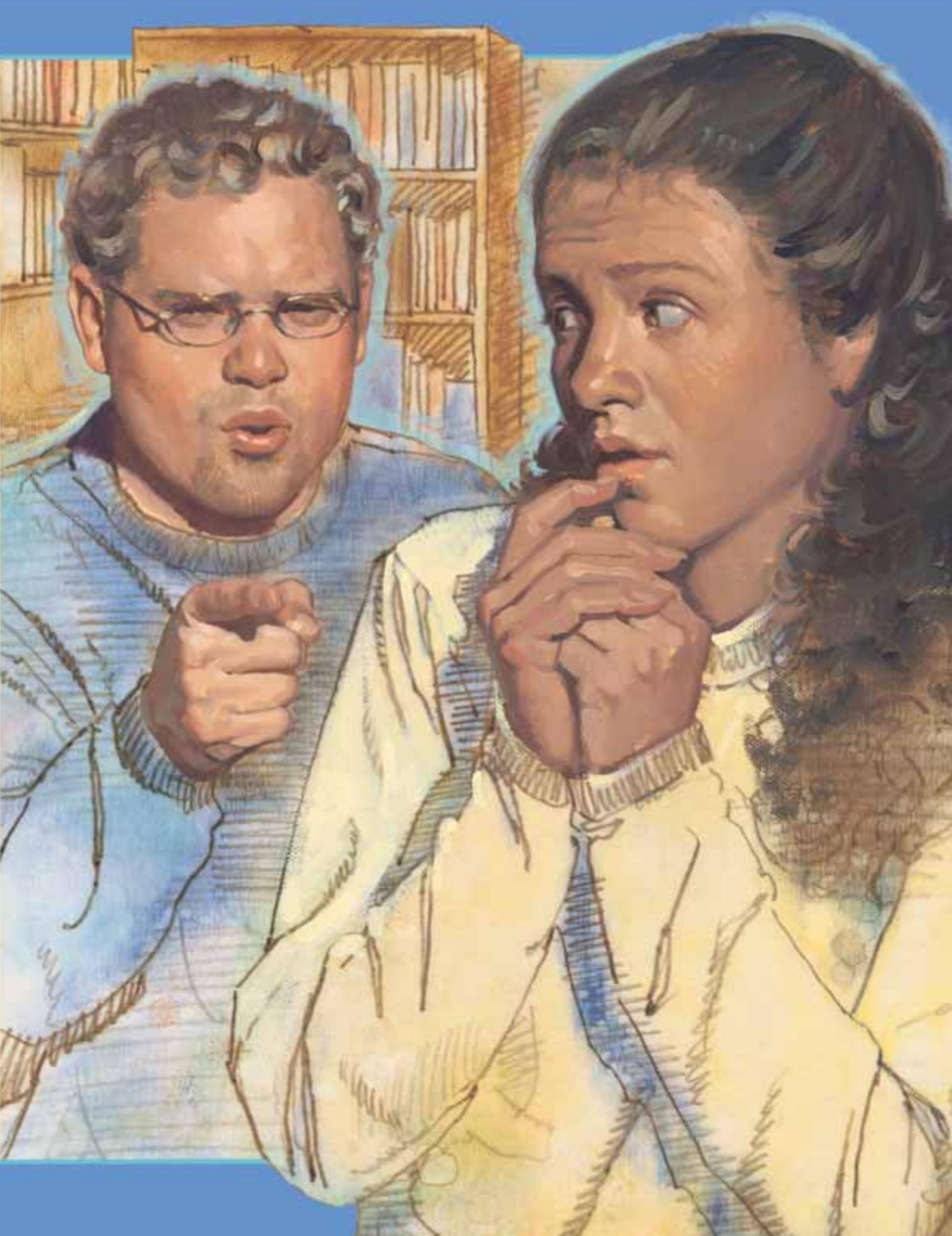
His words were hard for me to hear. Whatever I was expecting, it certainly wasn’t to hear that I didn’t believe in Jesus Christ. I had heard stories like this, but now it was

happening to me. What should I say? How could I respond to such a remark? The only thing that came to mind was, “But it’s the Church of Jesus Christ!”

I knew I had to repeat in my mind the Young Women motto—“Stand for Truth and Righteousness”—and put it into action. But how?

I proceeded to tell the other assistant that our church is the Church of Jesus Christ, that we believe in Him as our Savior, and that He loves all of God’s children. I expressed from the depths of my soul that I believed in Jesus Christ, that I was a member of His Church, and that I had been taught to love Him and to follow His example.

My coworker did not want to listen anymore. He responded reproachfully to the things I said even while I kept trying to explain. He also talked about the Book of Mormon in the same manner as he had spoken about the Church. I could tell he didn’t want to listen. I didn’t want to listen to what he was saying either because he was trying to contend with me. I knew I shouldn’t go





WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

“Some people erroneously believe that The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints and its members are not Christian. We have difficulty understanding why anyone could accept and promote an idea that is so far from the truth. . . .

“A dictionary defines a Christian as ‘one who professes belief in Jesus as the Christ or follows the religion based on [the life and teachings of Jesus],’ and ‘one who lives

according to the teachings of Jesus.’ Thus two characteristics identify Christians: (1) they profess belief in a Savior, and (2) they act in harmony with the Savior’s teachings. Faithful members of the Church, called Saints or Latter-day Saints, qualify clearly in both characteristics. In our belief and our action, we demonstrate that ‘Jesus Christ himself [is] the chief corner stone’ [Ephesians 2:20] of our faith.”

—Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Christians in Belief and Action,” Ensign, Nov. 1996, 70.

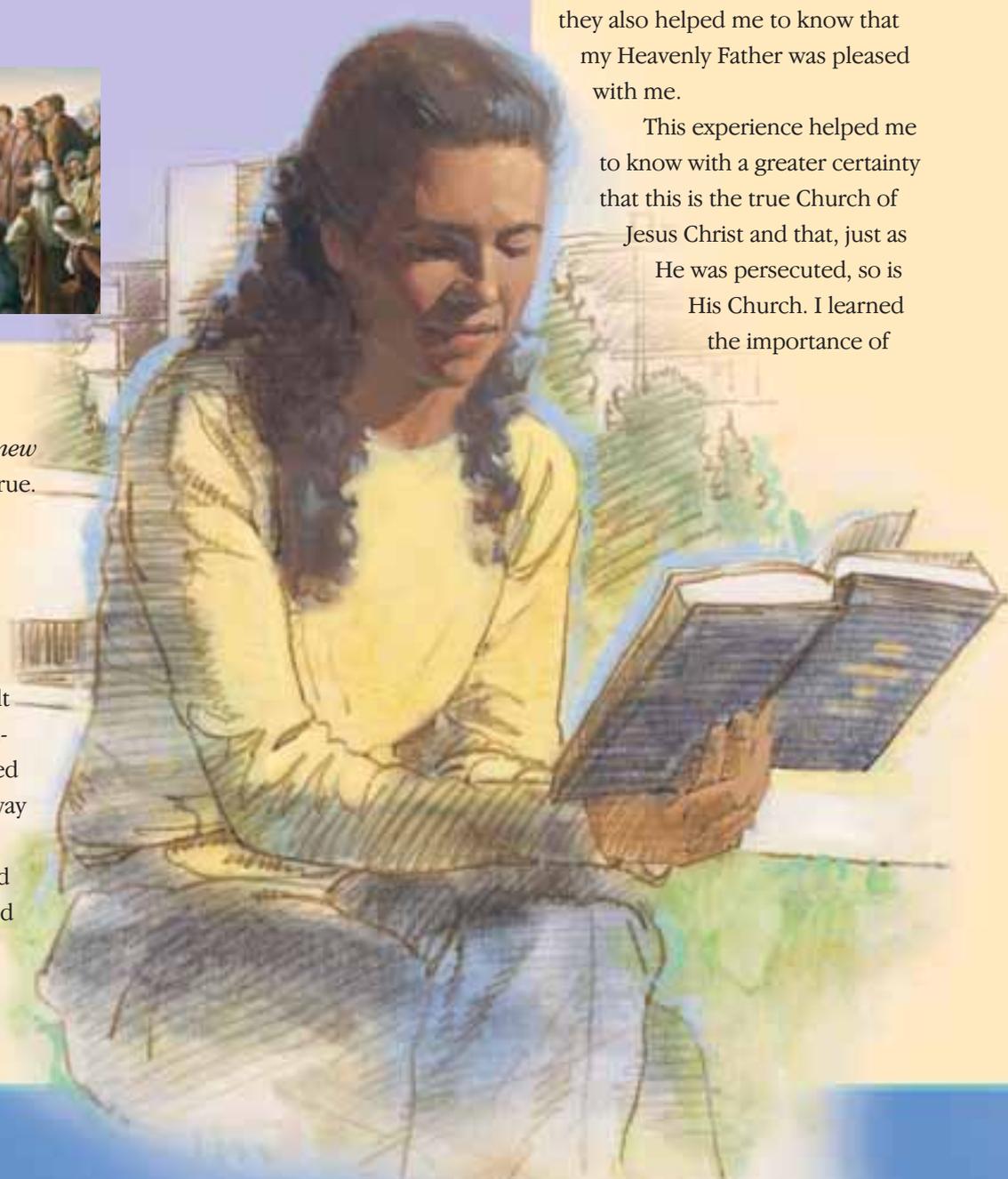


on explaining, so I bore my testimony. I told him that I *knew* everything I was saying was true. I could feel it in my heart.

As I left the library, I wondered how anyone could possibly talk about the Church that way. I thought about what I had felt as I testified to him and wondered if I should have allowed him to express himself the way he did. I felt anger and fear and thought of things I could have said. I felt frustrated and doubted my own level of spirituality because he had not changed his mind. Had I failed?

On the way home, I prayed. I wanted to get rid of my negative thoughts. I wanted to feel sure of what I had been taught my whole life, and I wanted to feel that Heavenly Father was pleased with me for what I had done. Prayer was the best tool I had. Prayer and the Holy Ghost had helped me know what to say and how to testify to my coworker, and they also helped me to know that my Heavenly Father was pleased with me.

This experience helped me to know with a greater certainty that this is the true Church of Jesus Christ and that, just as He was persecuted, so is His Church. I learned the importance of



having a firm testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ and His Church.

I think that every young member of the Church should seek to gain a firm testimony so that he or she can testify to others, regardless of whether we are successful in changing someone's mind. When we bear our testimonies, our testimonies will, in turn, be strengthened, and we can at least plant a seed in the hearts of others. Even if they

don't show interest at the moment, they can know more about what we believe. **NE**

Ana Lee Graniela López is a member of the Cabo Rojo Second Ward, Mayaguez Puerto Rico Stake.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

For more on this subject, see these articles in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org: Richard C. Edgley, "A Disciple, a Friend" (*Ensign*, May 1998); Stephen E. Robinson, "Are Mormons Christians?" (*New Era*, May 1998); and Robert E. Wells, "We Are Christians Because . . ." (*Ensign*, Jan. 1984).



WHY DON'T WE USE CROSSES?

President Gordon B. Hinckley was once asked by a

minister why Latter-day Saints do not wear crosses or display them in their buildings.

President Hinckley said to him:

"I do not wish to give offense to any of my Christian colleagues who use the cross on the steeples of their cathedrals and at the altars of their chapels, who wear it on their vestments, and imprint it on their books and other literature. But for us, the cross is the symbol of the dying Christ, while our message is a declaration of the Living Christ."

"[The minister] then asked: 'If you do not use the cross, what is the symbol of your religion?'"

"I replied that the lives of our people must become the most meaningful expression of our faith."

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, see "The Symbol of Christ," *New Era*, Apr. 1990, 4.

HOW TO RESPOND

Remember the Lord has said, "Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men" (D&C 11:21).

After you have studied and know the basic doctrines of the Church concerning the Savior, here are a few suggestions on how you can explain to others that you belong to a Christian church.

- Explain that the full name of the Church is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Other names are just nicknames.
- Tell them that Church members believe in the Bible and show them passages in the Book of Mormon that testify of Jesus Christ.
- Explain the Restoration of the gospel—that Joseph Smith was a great prophet and that he restored Christ's Church to the earth.

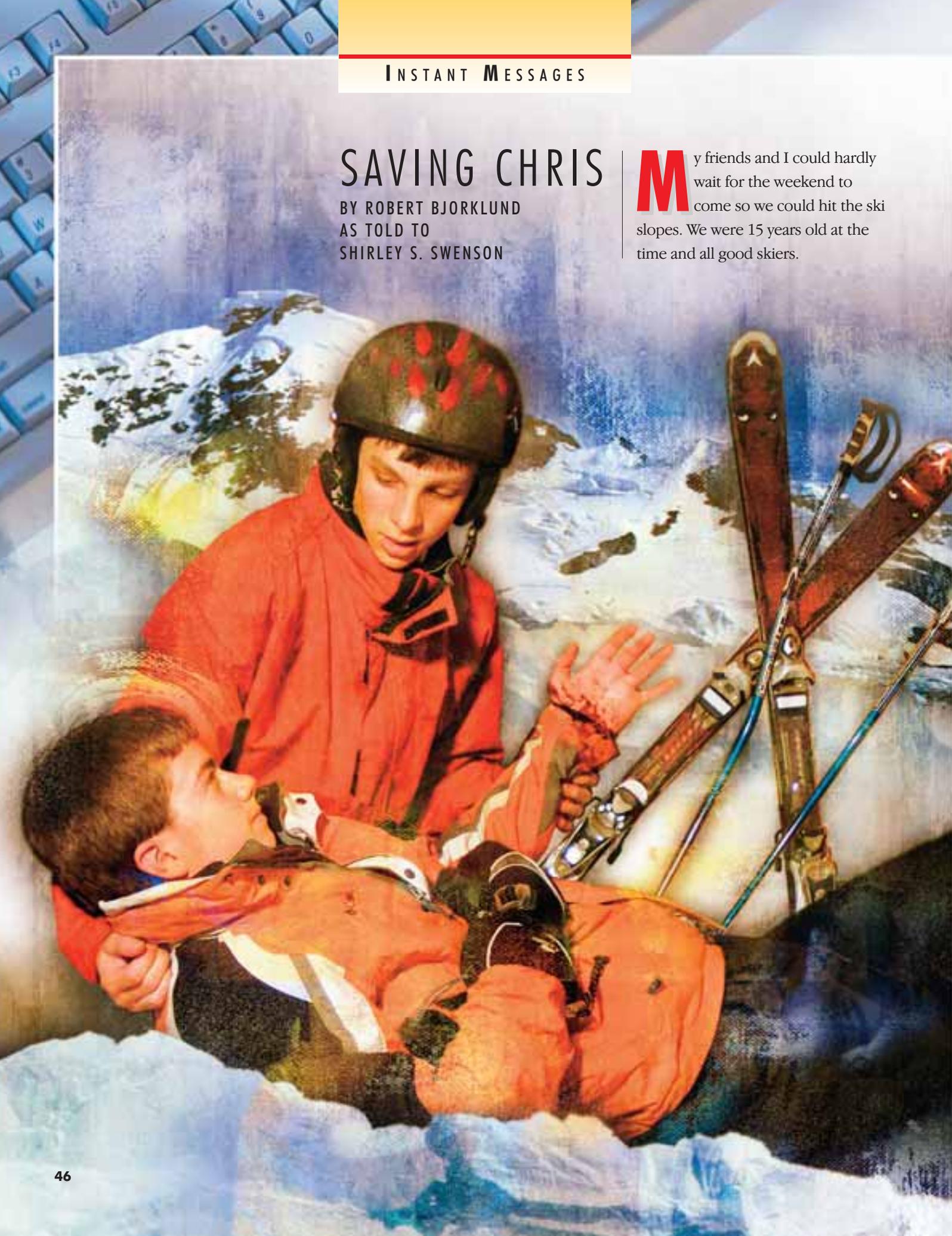
- Take them to a local visitors' center, if possible. Have them view the paintings and statues of the Savior and talk to the missionaries.
- Invite them to church with you so they can see for themselves that Church members believe in the Savior.
- Direct them to the "Beliefs and Doctrines" link under "Frequently Asked Questions" at www.mormon.org for a great explanation of the Church's basic doctrines.
- If they are not receptive to what you are saying, don't argue. Bear your testimony of the Savior, and tell them what you know to be true.

Don't feel rejected if people do not believe your testimony. Remember, the things you know are still true and this is God's true Church. Let the way you live testify that you are Christian.

SAVING CHRIS

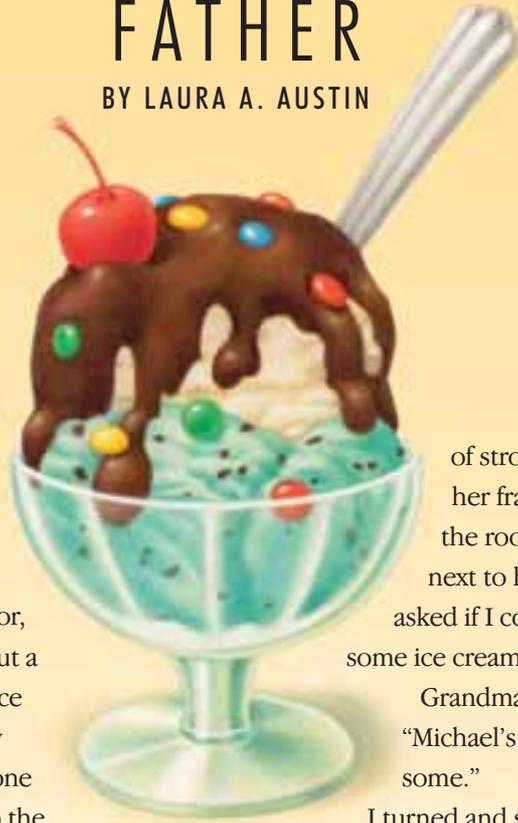
BY ROBERT BJORKLUND
AS TOLD TO
SHIRLEY S. SWENSON

My friends and I could hardly wait for the weekend to come so we could hit the ski slopes. We were 15 years old at the time and all good skiers.



FOLLOWING MY FATHER

BY LAURA A. AUSTIN



One Saturday, we had been skiing for about half the day on some pretty steep slopes. The weather was crisp. The sky was blue. All around us there was beauty, and we were having fun on the ski jumps.

As we were coming down one of the jumps, my friend Chris slipped and fell on one of his skis. His bindings popped out, and he took a hard fall. Chris took off his glove, and we were both alarmed to see blood dripping from his arm. As Chris rolled up his sleeve, I could see that he was badly cut. I asked for one of our friends to find the ski patrol.

I helped Chris take off his sweater and removed my cotton shirt with long sleeves and made a tourniquet above the deep cut. At the same time I was prompted by the Holy Ghost to have Chris hold his arm up above his head.

The ski patrol finally arrived, but they did not know that Chris had cut a main artery in his arm because the tourniquet was so well placed that it had stopped the bleeding.

Chris was rushed to the hospital. When the doctors discovered the damage to the main artery, they said Chris would have bled to death if the tourniquet had not been placed on his arm the right way and his arm held above his head.

The accident had happened fast, so I had to act quickly. I told Chris that I had been prompted by the Spirit to do the right thing. I later realized I had also followed instructions from my first-aid training as an Eagle Scout.

After the closing prayer at my cousin's Eagle Scout court of honor, somebody rolled out a cart with bowls of ice cream and a variety of toppings. I was one of the first to get to the refreshments. As I poured chocolate syrup over my ice cream, I laughed with my brothers and cousins.

While eating, I looked around the room. We were in the gym, and metal folding chairs had been set up for the audience. Most of the chairs were empty now. People were gathered in small groups talking and laughing. My great-grandma Clark sat alone.

Grandma Clark had once been an energetic world traveler, but a couple

of strokes had left her frail. I crossed the room, sat down next to her, and asked if I could get her some ice cream.

Grandma simply said, "Michael's getting me some."

I turned and saw my father, Michael, walking towards us with an ice-cream sundae. He was always thinking of others.

My father often encouraged me to serve others, but it was through his example that I really learned how to serve.

I have another Father who wants me to follow His Son's perfect example. All He asks is that I do what He would do Himself. **NE**

Laura A. Austin is a member of the Elk Ridge Fifth Ward, Payson Utah East Stake.

That evening Chris's parents called my home and thanked me for saving their son's life. I hope to always remember to listen to the still, small

voice that directed me at that crucial time. **NE**

Robert Bjorklund is a member of the Holladay 11th Ward, Salt Lake Holladay Stake.

THE POWER OF MY TESTIMONY

BY ADRIANA C. DE LIMA

Saturday night, I prayed that my mom would have an open mind about going to church with me the next day since she didn't usually come. I had gone to church by myself

for a year, and I felt like I needed my mom to be part of that.

The next day I woke up bright and early, not because of my alarm clock, but because my mom was getting ready to go to church. I had a big smile on my face as I got ready.

That day was fast and testimony meeting, and I took the opportunity to bear my testimony. I was more nervous than I had ever been. I felt like a little girl going up there. As I gave my testimony, I looked upon my mom's face, and tears filled our eyes at the same time. I knew that was where the Lord wanted us to be. She must have felt the same way, because after that she slowly became active again.

I thank the Lord for giving me the power to not be scared to share my testimony with others. Now

every opportunity I get, I bear my testimony because I know the impact it can have on people. **NE**
Adriana C. De Lima is a member of the Peninsula Park Ward, Portland Oregon East Stake.

ANY GOOD?

BY MERRY SMITH WATT

Have I done any good?" (see *Hymns*, no. 223). I ask myself that question every time I hear that hymn. When I'm not having a good day and I'm feeling down, I realize I'm feeling that way because I've focused on myself and no one else.

After cheering up the sad and making someone feel glad, I find that "doing good is a pleasure, a joy beyond measure, a blessing of duty and love." **NE**

Merry Smith Watt is a member of the Pleasant Valley Ward, El Dorado California Stake.

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

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

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

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

Teaching Tip

One of the most important additions to a lesson that you give should be your testimony. Often, the most powerful spiritual witness students will receive will come as you describe the process you went through to gain a testimony of the principle you are teaching. Never underestimate the power of the Holy Ghost to confirm your words. Just bearing testimony could be the most powerful lesson you give.

Mutual Activity Ideas

- Read over the blessings listed on page 15 that come from staying worthy to attend the temple. If possible, plan a trip to the nearest temple. Encourage those who have never attended the temple to plan to go with the group. Make specific goals for getting recommends and planning transportation. Make sure as many youth as possible are involved.
- Plan a record-breaking event. Read about the youth in Ottawa, Canada, setting a world record singing

hymns, on page 38. You may not be able to plan an event on that scale, but you'll find smaller events just as much fun. Perhaps you could have a huge hula hoop contest or checkers tournament with dozens of people playing at the same time. You can even expand the evening to include parents, younger siblings, and friends.

**Family Home Evening Ideas**

- Spend an evening with your family putting together an emergency plan for evacuating the house. Or decide which person your family members should call or where they should meet if away from the home during an emergency. Conclude by reading together the story from President David O. McKay on page 10, and discuss how prayer can help calm your fears.
- Instead of carving pumpkins, try carving other vegetables or fruit. If children are too young to handle knives, provide colored markers.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November in the *Ensign* and *Liabona*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 41–45.

Young Women Manual 3**Lesson 41: Being Dependable**

David A. Bednar, "Be Honest," this issue, 4.
Poster: "Finish," *New Era*, Sept. 2005, 19.

Lesson 42: Preparing for Change

Thomas S. Monson, "A Code to Live By," *New Era*, Sept. 2005, 4.
Dallin H. Oaks, "The Right Thing at the Right Time," *New Era*, July 2005, 4.

Q&A: "I'm 18 and I just graduated. But I don't know what my next step should be. . . ." *New Era*, July 2005, 16.

Lesson 43: Associations with Others

Keith R. Waters, "Get Me Out of This!" *New Era*, June 2005, 8.
Katie Laird, "Tears for Ashley," *New Era*, Feb. 2005, 34.

Lesson 44: Avoiding Crisis Living

Articles of Faith: "The Girl in the Mirror," *New Era*, Aug. 2005, 12.
Richard G. Scott, "Making Hard Decisions," *New Era*, June 2005, 4.

Lesson 45: Choosing a Vocation

"Behind the Scenes," Shanna Butler, this issue, 20.
"The Perfect Pattern," Lacey McMurry, *New Era*, Sept. 2005, 46.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 3**Lesson 41: Becoming More like Our Savior**

Q&A: "How can I help motivate my family to have family home evening, family prayer, and family scripture study?" this issue, 16.

"Four Heavenly Helps," Charles W. Dahlquist II, *New Era*, Aug. 2005, 44.

Lesson 42: Being Humble and Teachable

Lindsay T. Dil, "If You Listen," *New Era*, July 2005, 8.
Caroline H. Benzley, "Be Humble," *New Era*, Sept. 2002, 36.

Lesson 43: Thoughts and Language

Brian D. Stenquist, "This Recruit Does Not Swear, Sir!" this issue, 12.
Poster: "Mental Floss," this issue, 19.

Q&A: "Pornography is ruining my life. . . ." *New Era*, Aug. 2005, 16.

Poster: "Free Filter," *New Era*, June 2005, 17.

Lesson 44: Service to Others

"Storming into Service," *New Era*, Sept. 2005, 40.
Brett M. Condon, "Murmuring and Mowing," *New Era*, July 2004, 8.

Lesson 45: Strengthening Testimonies by Bearing Them

Vaclava Svobodova, "Staying Converted," this issue, 35.
W. Rolfe Kerr, "Soapbox Convert," *New Era*, June 2004, 42.

PIONEER POEM

I'd like to thank you for the poem in the July 2005 *New Era*, "They All Came Through in Glory," by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone. This poem gave me an appreciation for the pioneers in the Martin and Willie Handcart Companies.

Nicole Martin, Raymond First Ward,
Raymond Alberta Stake

TEACHING RESOURCE

Whenever I help teach the Sunday School lesson, the *New Era* is my first source for ideas because it always has stories that relate to my topic. Plus it answers my questions. I am grateful to the people who send their inspiring stories to the *New Era* and to those who put the magazine together. The *New Era* Posters are great too. My favorite one is the November 2004 poster ("Be Loyal to the Royal Within").

Olivia Searle, Laconia Ward,
Concord New Hampshire Stake

MORE FUN THINGS

The *New Era* is a great magazine that teaches us good principles and morals. I would like to suggest that if it is possible, put more uplifting comics and fun things in the magazine to make it even better. I appreciate what you're doing and hope the *New Era*, *Ensign*, *Liabona*, and *Friend* stay around for a long time.

Seth Young, Picture Rocks Ward,
Tucson Arizona North Stake

AN ANSWER TO PRAYER

Before I opened the June 2005 *New Era*, I said a silent prayer that there would be an article that would help me improve my

family relationships. "How to Talk to Your Parents" was a direct answer to my prayer. I have been praying for help in my relationship with my parents, and this article

helped open my eyes to the fact that I need to look at the mistakes and misinterpretations that I am making before I can expect an improvement in our communications.

The article described exactly how I feel, and that helped me be open-minded so I could accept your explanation of how my parents must feel too. Thank you for answering my prayer.

Aubrey Palmer, Canyon Crest Ward,
Provo Utah Edgemont Stake

WHAT WE BELIEVE

The *New Era* always helps me learn and has so much good advice to help me in my life. I especially liked the article on using the Articles of Faith ("Know What We Believe," June 2005) to help us with those hard questions that others ask about the Church and what we believe. Whenever I get the *New Era*, I always go to the The Extra Smile and the Q&A page, and then I read it from cover to cover. Thank you and keep up the good work!

Holly Thomas, Berwick Ward,
Melbourne Australia Pakenham Stake

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

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"Whenever I help teach the Sunday School lesson, the New Era is my first source for ideas because it always has stories that relate to my topic."





SOMETIMES
BY MIEKA WENNER

Sometimes I feel like thunder,
But I have to wait
For a rainstorm to be heard.

Sometimes I feel like falling snow,
But a blizzard is too far away,
And I have to wait to dance.

Sometimes I feel like an autumn leaf,
But I have to wait for the breeze
To help me up when I fall.



*“You have to decide beforehand
what you’re going to do and stick it
out. You just have to follow the
Spirit, as always.”*

See “Behind the Scenes,” p. 20.

