

THE New Era



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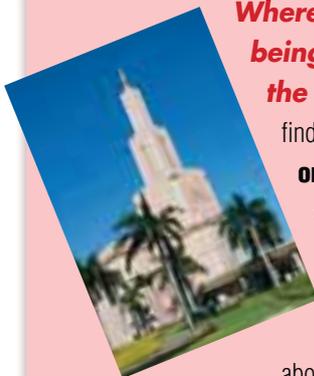
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Want to learn more about President Monson's life of service? You can get biographical information, look at videos, and see photos at thomassmonson.org.

Did you know there's a place to sign up for free Church RSS feeds, e-mails, and audio and video podcasts? Just go to rss.lds.org and you'll get a whole list to choose from.



Where are temples being built around the world? You can find out at temples.lds.org. You can also find a chronological list of which temples were built in what year and a link to a video about why the Church builds temples.

What's on the New Era Web page? This month at NewEra.Lds.org you'll find an audio file of our In Tune song, to be sung as a round. You'll also find other music, Q&As, access to Mormonads and articles, games, downloads, cartoons and more.



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THE JOY OF SERVICE

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON



A stalwart grandson spent most of the summer away from his university studies, that he might serve his grandmother's needs.

I said to him, "You will never regret your decision. Your grandmother feels you are heaven-sent, an answer to her prayers."

He replied, "I chose to come because I love her."

"Love thy neighbor" is more than a divine truth. It is a pattern for perfection.

While driving to the office one morning, I passed a dry-cleaning establishment which had a sign by the side of the front door. It read, "It's the Service That Counts." I suppose in a highly competitive field such as the dry-cleaning business and many others, the differentiating factor which distinguishes one store from another is, in actual fact, service.

The message from the small sign simply would not leave my mind. Suddenly I realized why. In actual fact it is the service that counts—the Lord's service.

My message to the young men and women of the Church is begin now to learn in your youth the joy of service in the cause of the Master.

Following Thanksgiving time some years ago, I received a letter from a widow whom I had known in the stake where I served in the presidency. She had just returned from a dinner sponsored by her bishopric. Her words reflect the peace she felt and the gratitude which filled her heart:

"Dear President Monson,

"I am living in Bountiful now. I miss the people of our old stake, but let me tell you

of a wonderful experience I have had. In early November all the widows and older people received an invitation to come to a lovely dinner. We were told not to worry about transportation since this would be provided by the older youth in the ward.

"At the appointed hour, a very nice young man rang the bell and took me and another sister to the stake center. He stopped the car, and two other young men walked with us to the chapel where the young ladies took us to where we removed our wraps—then into the cultural hall, where we sat and visited for a few minutes. Then they took us to the tables, where we were seated on each side by either a young woman or a young man. Then we were served a lovely Thanksgiving dinner and afterward provided a choice program.

"After the program we were given our dessert—either apple or pumpkin pie. Then we left, and on the way out we were given a plastic bag with sliced turkey and two rolls. Then the young men took us home. It was such a nice, lovely evening. Most of us shed a tear or two for the love and respect we were shown.

"President Monson, when you see young people treat others like these young people did, I feel the Church is in good hands."

I reflected on my association with this lovely widow, now grown old but ever



serving the Lord. There came to mind the words from the Epistle of James: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

I add my own commendation: God bless the leaders, the young men, and the young women who so unselfishly brought such joy to the lonely and such peace to their souls. Through their experience they learned the meaning of service and felt the nearness of the Lord.¹

Decide to Serve

Acts of selfless service are performed daily by countless members of the Church. There are many which are freely given, with no fanfare or boasting, but rather through quiet love and tender care. Let me share with you the example of one who made such a simple yet profound choice to serve.

A few years ago, Sister Monson and I were in the city of Toronto, where we once lived when I was the mission president. Olive Davies, the wife of the first stake president in Toronto, was gravely ill and preparing to pass from this life. Her illness required her to leave her cherished home and enter a hospital which could provide the care she needed. Her only child lived with her own family far away in the West.

I attempted to comfort Sister Davies, but she had present with her the comfort she longed to have. A stalwart grandson sat silently next to his grandmother. I learned he had spent most of the summer away from his university studies, that he might serve his grandmother's needs. I said to him, "Shawn, you will never regret your decision. Your grandmother feels you are heaven-sent, an answer to her prayers."

He replied, "I chose to come because I love her and know this is what my Heavenly Father would have me do."

Tears were near the surface. Grandmother told us how she enjoyed being helped by her grandson and introducing him to each employee and every patient in the hospital. Hand in hand, they walked the halls, and during the night he was close by.

Olive Davies has passed on to her reward, there to meet her faithful husband and together continue an eternal journey. In a grandson's heart there will ever remain those words, "Choose the right when a choice is placed before

you. In the right the Holy Spirit guides" (*Hymns*, no. 239).

Such are foundation stones in building one's personal temple. As the Apostle Paul counseled, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16).

May I leave with you a simple yet far-reaching formula to guide you in the choices of life:

Fill your minds with truth.

Fill your hearts with love.

Fill your lives with service.²

Reach Outward

As we look heavenward, we inevitably learn of our responsibility to reach outward. To find real happiness, we must seek for it in a focus outside ourselves. No one has learned the meaning of living until he has surrendered his ego to the service of his fellow man. Service to others is akin to duty, the fulfillment of which brings true joy. We do not live alone—in our city, our nation, or our world. There is no dividing line between our prosperity and our neighbor's wretchedness. "Love thy neighbor" is more than a divine truth. It is a pattern for perfection. This truth inspires the familiar charge, "Go forth to serve." Try as some of us may, we cannot escape the influence our lives have upon the lives of others. Ours is the opportunity to build, to lift, to inspire, and indeed to lead. The New Testament teaches that it is impossible to take a right attitude toward Christ without taking an unselfish attitude toward men:

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

We may think as we please, but there is no question about what the Bible teaches. In the New Testament there is no road to the heart of God that does not lead through the heart of man. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that a true Latter-day Saint "is to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to provide for the widow, to dry up the tear of the orphan, to comfort the afflicted, whether in this church or in any other, or in no church at all, wherever he finds them" (*Times and Seasons*, Mar. 15, 1842, 732).

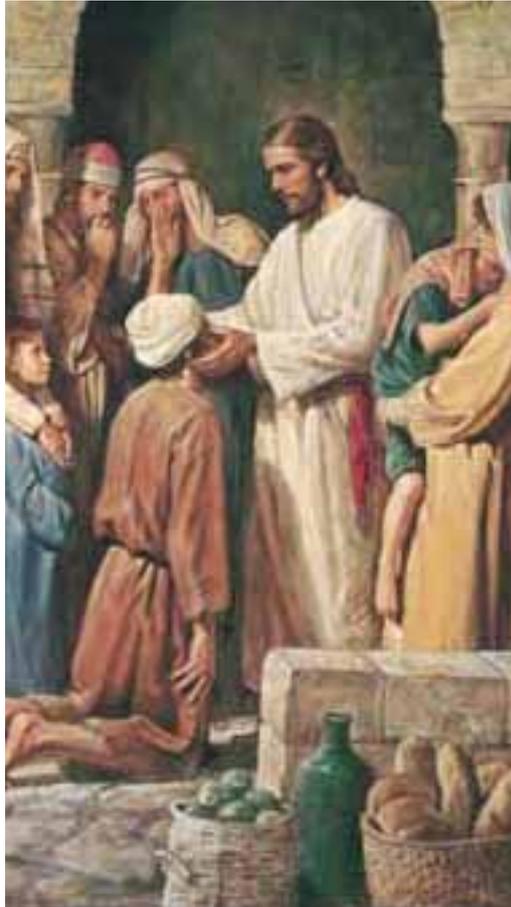
I have many memories of my boyhood days. Anticipating Sunday dinner was one of them. Just as we children hovered at our so-called starvation level and sat anxiously at the table with the aroma of roast beef filling



would hand Old Bob the plate of food from my mother. He would present me with the clean plate from the previous Sunday and offer me a dime as pay for my service. My answer was always the same: "I can't accept the money. My mother would tan my hide."

We look
to the
Savior

as our example of service. Although He came to earth as the Son of God, He humbly served those around Him. He blessed the sick; He caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He even raised the dead to life.



the room, Mother would say to me, “Tommy, before we eat, take this plate of food I’ve prepared down the street to Old Bob, and then hurry back.”

I could never understand why we couldn’t first eat and later deliver his plate of food. I never questioned aloud but would run down to his house and then wait anxiously as Bob’s aged feet brought him eventually to the door. Then I would hand him the plate of food. He would present to me the clean plate from the previous Sunday and offer me a dime as pay for my services. My answer was always the same: “I can’t accept the money. My mother would tan my hide.” He would then run his wrinkled hand through my blond hair and say, “My boy, you have a wonderful mother. Tell her thank you.”

You know, I think I never did tell her. I sort of felt Mother didn’t need to be told. She seemed to sense his gratitude. I remember, too, that Sunday dinner always seemed to

taste a bit better after I had returned from my errand.³

Look to the Savior

We look to the Savior as our example of service. Although He came to earth as the Son of God, He humbly served those around Him. He came forth from heaven to live on earth as mortal man and to establish the kingdom of God. His glorious gospel reshaped the thinking of the world. He blessed the sick; He caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He even raised the dead to life.

In the 25th chapter of the book of Matthew, the Savior tells us this concerning the faithful who will be on His right hand at His triumphal return:

“Then shall the King say unto them . . . , Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

“Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”

“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

“When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

“Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:34–40).⁴ **NE**

NOTES

1. From “The Service That Counts,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 45.
2. From “Choose You This Day,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 67.
3. From a talk given at BYU–Idaho commencement August 22, 2003.
4. From “The Bridge Builder,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 67.

NE more

Looking for ways to serve? Check out “Nifty Ways to Serve Your Brother or Sister” at newera.lds.org.

WORTH *the* WAIT

BY VALERIA SALERNO

When I entered the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple with the youth of my ward to do baptisms for the dead, we waited a few minutes in a reception room. Then the temple workers asked us to go down a hall where there were several chairs and to wait again.

Because it was a Saturday, many people had come to the temple from all over Argentina. We waited there for two and a half hours, just sitting quietly. Some not very pleasant thoughts began to run through my mind: "How can they make us wait all this time? I'm tired, and apparently it would have been better if I hadn't come, because this is a waste of time."

I got up and started walking down the hall. Soon one of the workers came out and said: "Young people, please don't be impatient. I understand that you have been waiting for a long time, but do you know something? In the spirit world millions of people have been waiting for this moment for centuries, and I can assure you that they are very anxious for their turn to come. The brethren are baptizing and confirming, and they cannot do more than they are doing."

When he said these words, I felt embarrassed. I realized that I was being selfish because I didn't want to give hours for those people who had waited such long years and who did not have the opportunity I had to hear about the true Church and be baptized on earth.

The worker came out again, and he began to call names

from our ward. A sister gave us white clothing that more or less fit. After we got dressed, she pulled back our hair and tied it with a white tie.

Then, barefoot, we walked to the benches in the baptistry. The carpets were so soft and high it was as if we weren't even walking on the ground.

When it was my turn, I was as nervous as if it were the day of my own baptism. But the workers were so nice and they had such patience with each of us that it felt incredible.

When I came out of the font, a sister was waiting for me with a big white towel and a huge smile. I changed my clothes and went into a room where I was confirmed. The same sister who had given me the towel went with me and thanked me for being willing to do the Lord's work.

When I left the temple, I realized it had been one of the best experiences of my life. The temple is a holy place and the Lord's Spirit is there, directing His great work. It is worth any wait. **NE**



Pocket-Sized STRENGTH

BY RHYAN CHASE-SEYMOUR

When the going got tough, we read the Book of Mormon.

I was one of 12 high school students selected from Fairfield College in Hamilton, New Zealand, to participate in a program called Project K. The first part involved a three-week wilderness adventure, including canoeing, exploring caves, rock climbing, mountain biking, and sleeping and cooking our meals in all sorts of conditions. We spent most of our days in torrential rain and cold.

Sometimes spirits were low, and there were tears of frustration. We learned about team work and endurance. We encouraged each other through the challenges that came to us every day. One person chose to go home—it was just too much.

Halfway through the adventure, we got to write a letter home. As I wrote my letter, the tears welled up as I expressed my love and appreciation to my family. I realized just how much I missed the simple things in life like family prayers, scripture reading, family home evening, seminary, and attending church. I was saddened because I couldn't picture my baby sister's face in my mind.

I was thankful that I'd brought my pocket-sized Book of Mormon with me.

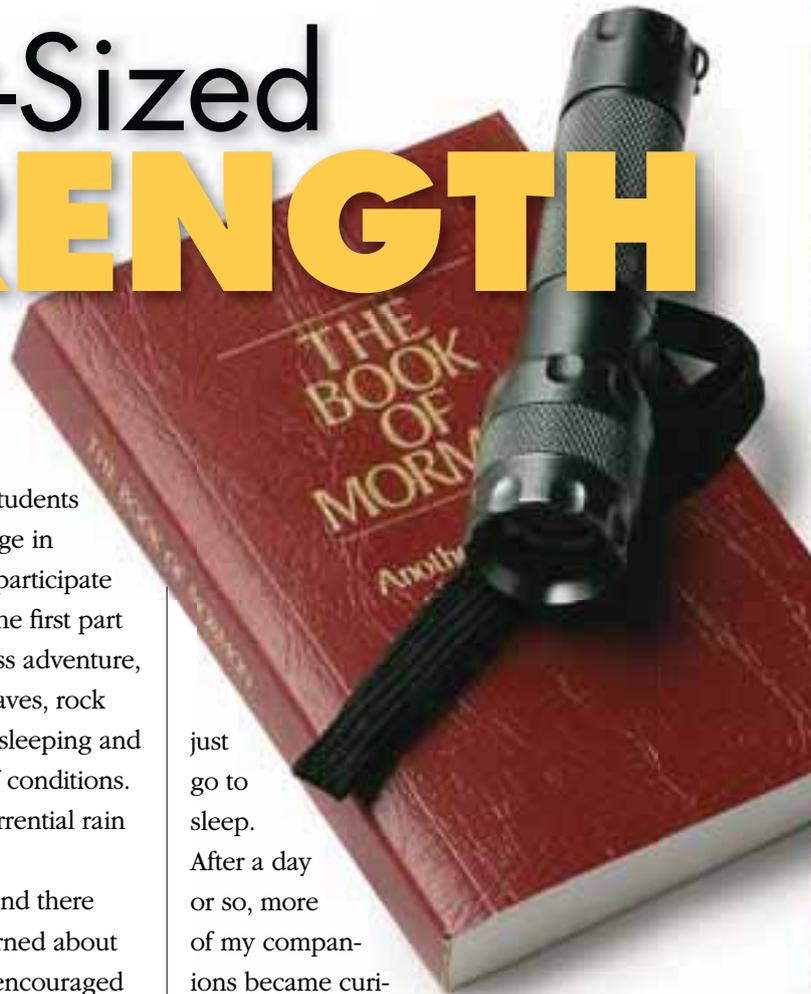
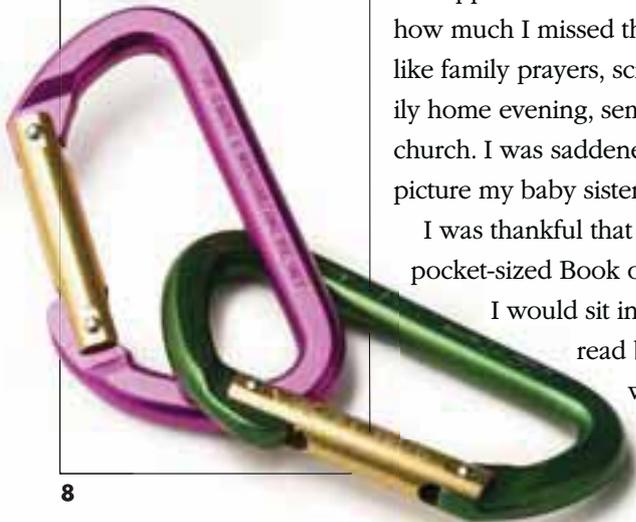
I would sit inside my bivouac and read by flashlight. Everyone was pretty tired after each day, and they'd

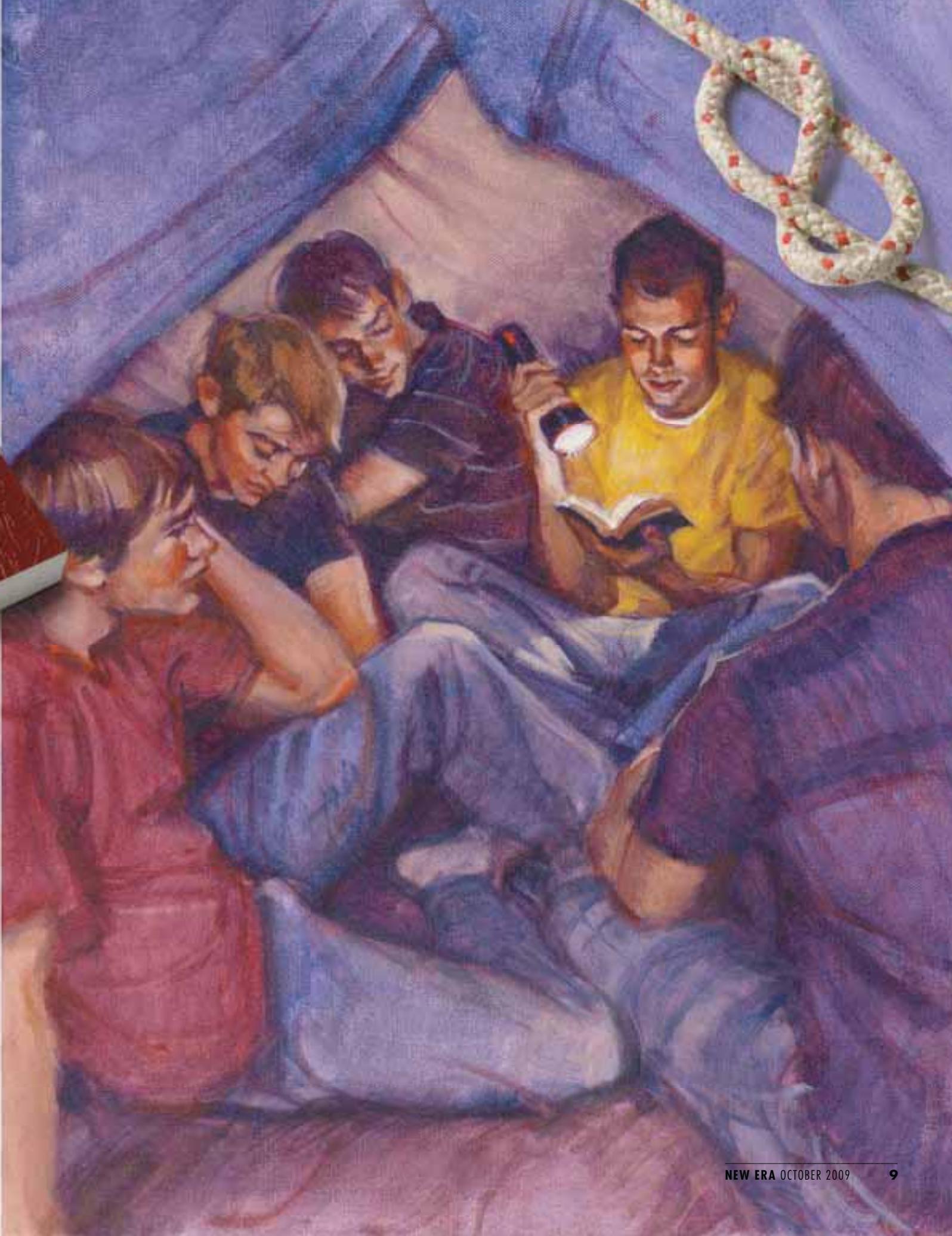
just go to sleep. After a day or so, more of my companions became curious about what I was reading. They became interested when I told them about the stripping warriors, Nephi and Laban, Ammon, and especially Nephi and his broken bow. Everyone could relate to the challenges of the wilderness.

By the end of our adventure, every night before sleeping, all 12 of us would huddle under my bivouac and listen as I read from the Book of Mormon. I know that the prophets of old were able to speak to us all on those cold, dark, rainy nights. I know that I gained strength to endure the difficult challenges during that time. I never felt the need to cry or to quit. I owe that to prayer and my pocket-sized Book of Mormon. **NE**

NEmore

To read the scriptures online, go to scriptures.lds.org.





Begin with

Searching for answers? These teens in Ottawa, Canada, say prayer is the place to start.



Above: Bridgitte Leger, Jenni Holt, Dawson Lybbert, Dayna Conway, Rebekah Wagoner, and Alexander Richer-Brulé, along with other youth from the Ottawa Ontario Stake (left), know that help from Heavenly Father is just a prayer away.

PRAYER

BY JANET THOMAS
Church Magazines

When 15-year-old Jenni tells about having a prayer answered, she starts with an apology. She is sorry to admit that she hadn't been praying regularly for almost a year. Things in her life had not been going well—not at school, not with her friends, not even at church.

One night, Jenni explains, she wanted to watch a movie. She bent down to look at the movies on the lowest bookshelf when she caught sight of a photo of her uncle who had tragically passed away not too long before. Suddenly, the weight of everything she was worried about made her want to cry. "I just knew in that instant that I had to pray," says Jenni. She knelt where she was and prayed.

Jenni describes receiving her answer: "As soon as I was done, I had the answers to my questions. I felt that everything was all right again. Everything is going to be OK. Everything with my uncle is OK. I realized that I love school and my friends. As soon as I finished praying, I knew that I had to go to church because it is for me. It really hit me, and I felt so comfortable and so warm. I know my Heavenly Father loves me and He will help me through things."

For Jenni, this prayer was one she had been wanting to say but somehow couldn't. Now, even thinking about it, she gets that same feeling of comfort over again and the same assurance that her answer was from the Lord.

Jenni Holt is from Ottawa, Canada's beautiful capital city built on the wooded banks of the Ottawa River. She and friends from the Ottawa Ontario Stake talked with Church magazines about how prayer affects their lives.

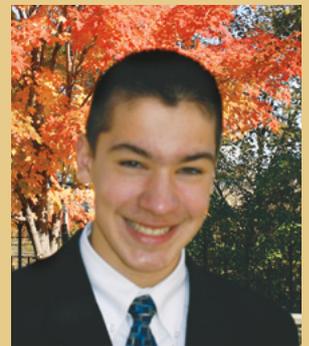
Where Do Answers Come From?

One of the most interesting things the Ottawa teens discussed was how their prayers were answered. First, Susan Brook said, "If you want an answer, you have to listen for it."

Susan said her answers sometimes come by reading the scriptures. She had a good example: "One day, I was just really tired, and I was being mean to everyone. I didn't want to talk. I remember reading in the scriptures, I don't even remember where, and it said, 'Be humble.' It hit me. That's my answer." (See D&C 112:10.)

Ariana Keith listens carefully at church. "I think many of our prayers are answered by speakers at church," she said. "There was a time when I wanted my patriarchal blessing. Then the week before I was scheduled to get it, our stake patriarch actually came to our ward and spoke. I had been praying about it so hard, and hearing him was great."

Mackenzie Loftus said her prayers are often answered through her family. She prayed about a family decision, and "I felt the



Above, from top: Fred King and Ronan Filamont agree that the sacrament prayer is sacred and should be said with reverence. Kyffin de Souza is grateful for family prayers.

Youth in Ottawa pray for comfort during tough times, for help with schoolwork and friends, and for blessings they desire. They know that Heavenly Father answers their prayers. “Sometimes you don’t get the answer you expect,” says Dawson Lybbert, “but you’ll get the answer you need.”



Above: Matt Larson reads a scripture tacked on his wall before he prays, and Nick Moolenbeck says prayer requires effort.

Spirit right away, knowing the decision we were making was the right thing.”

Sometimes the answer literally walks right up to you. When Thomas Francis and his family moved to Ottawa, he needed to make new friends at a new school. He prayed to find good friends. “One day,” said Thomas, “this person in my class comes up to me and says, ‘You want to come and meet my friends?’ Ever since then, we’ve been friends. It helped me a lot.”

Dawson Lybbert had something quite important to say about answers to prayers. He said, “Sometimes you don’t get the answer you expect, but you’ll get the answer you need.” He said sometimes you can’t really see it right away, but you can when you look back.

Someone To Talk To

Several of the teens said how nice it is to have a family that prays together. Kyffin de Souza especially likes knowing that her family prays together each evening. “We have sort of a schedule to take turns. I feel the Spirit, and I know that if I am away from home, they are praying for me to be safe.”

Another teen loves praying with her parents every morning. “I go to their room, and we pray,” she said. “I have a testimony that the Holy Ghost is with me, and if I ever need His help, I will ask Heavenly Father for it.”

Her friend Ruth Decady said, “It’s really important that when we say our prayers, we know that Heavenly Father is listening. There is someone there for you.”

Katie Cameron loves how prayer makes her feel. “When I talk to the Lord, it feels like someone is actually wanting to talk to me. I know I can tell Him anything.”

Prayers Given for Others

The young men—especially those of priest age like Ronan Filamont, Fred King, and Dawson and Davin Lybbert—spoke about the significance and sacred duty of giving the sacrament prayers for the members of their wards and branches.

Dawson said, “Praying over the sacrament makes you think more clearly about its significance. I have this priesthood authority, and I feel that I can’t abuse it.”

Fred remembers saying the sacrament

prayer when he was first ordained a priest: “It was hard at first, and I kept making mistakes. Once I had to start over again and again. But the Spirit whispered to me that it didn’t matter how many times I had to try; I would eventually get it right. It was a nice feeling.”

Prayer Takes Preparation

Several of the teens talked about the important things they have to do to prepare to pray. Matt Larson has a scripture reference tacked to the wall of his bedroom, Doctrine and Covenants 78:19: “He who receiveth all things with thankfulness shall be made glorious; and the things of this earth shall be added unto him, even an hundred fold, yea, more.” It reminds him to be grateful for the things the Lord has given to him. He knows gratitude needs to be part of his prayers.

Nick Moolenbeck said, “Prayer doesn’t work if I just ask without giving serious thought and putting my heart and soul into it.”

The Miraculous Power of Prayer

Sierra Lybbert has a great story about prayer. When she was two, a horse stepped on her hand. Her thumb was severed, and several fingers split open. Her parents rushed her from one hospital to another to find a surgeon willing to take on the seemingly impossible repair. She said, “One doctor told my parents that the surgeon didn’t have a prayer of being successful. My mom told him that the surgeon didn’t have one prayer with him—he had many. My mother had called the temple to add my name to the prayer roll.”

Now, at 13, Sierra has a functioning hand. Her thumb works just fine, and she raised it for a few other girls from her ward to see. They had never really heard the story. All they could see on Sierra’s hand was a thin, hardly noticeable scar encircling the base of her thumb. The result seemed truly amazing.

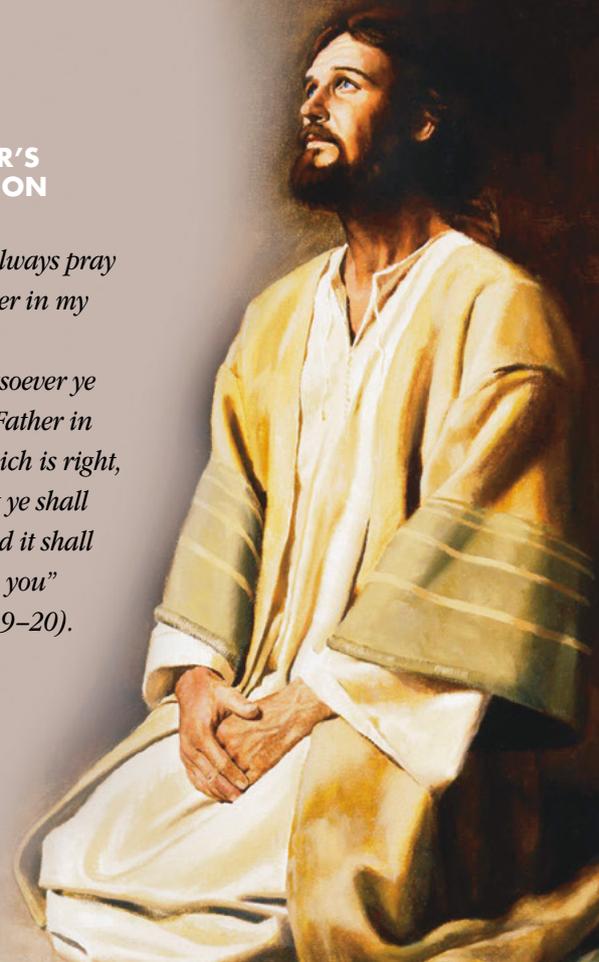
Sierra said, “It makes me feel happy to know what prayer can do for me. It is a wonderful thing in my life.”

Everyone seemed to agree with Kale Loftus when he said, “Prayer is a great habit to acquire.” **NE**

THE SAVIOR’S TEACHING ON PRAYER

*“Ye must always pray
unto the Father in my
name;*

*“And whatsoever ye
shall ask the Father in
my name, which is right,
believing that ye shall
receive, behold it shall
be given unto you”
(3 Nephi 18:19–20).*



Katie Cameron, Carolyn Albers, and Sierra Lybbert love the feeling they get when they pray.

“In my family I am the youngest by many years. I always feel left out of my siblings’ activities and conversations. What can I do to improve our relationship?”

This challenge can be an opportunity to let your brothers and sisters know that you want to feel more involved in their lives. Maybe they don’t know you feel left out. You could also talk to your parents about this. They will have some good ideas.

Suggest to your siblings some activities that you can do with them, and think of topics that you can talk to them about. Keep in mind their schedules and interests as you plan ways to spend time with them. Listening to them and showing interest in their activities will not only improve your relationship with them but help you learn. They are going through things you might go through in a few years.

Remember how important families are in Heavenly Father’s plan. If you pray for His help, He can inspire you with ideas for improving your relationship with your siblings. Have the courage to act on the promptings you receive. **NE**

Talk with Them



In my family, I too am the youngest by many years, but what I found out is that my siblings want to get to know me as much as I want to get to know them.

Your siblings would probably be thrilled if you called them up just to talk or invited them to go out for lunch sometime. Tell them what is going on in your life. It will mean a lot to them that you feel comfortable enough to share your thoughts and feelings with them. Also talk to them about spiritual topics. It will help you become closer not only with them but with your Heavenly Father.

Kelsey H., 16, Alberta, Canada

Be a Good Example



I have also experienced this difficult situation. I think the best thing that we can do is be an example to our older brothers and sisters. This way, love and peace can dwell among us. We should tell them how much we love them, and we should try to be united as a family. Sooner or later they will realize how much we love them. I know these things will work out step-by-step.

Ádám B., 16, Győr-Ménfőcsanak, Hungary

Spend Time Together

It's sometimes hard to spend time with older brothers and sisters because of school and other daily activities. But when you can, just go and talk with them, tell them about your day, and see how they are doing. If you are having troubles with something, you can ask for their opinion so that they know you value their ideas. Treat them the way you would want them to treat you. You can play games and spend time together—it helps a lot. You should also tell them how much you love them. But most importantly, pray. Heavenly Father will always help you.

Katherine M., 14, Idaho, USA

Treat Them with Kindness



As the youngest child of my family, sometimes I feel left out of my siblings' activities and conversation, and for me it is hurtful. But when I think of Jesus Christ, I realize that by sharing common values with my family, we can strengthen and encourage each other. Treat everyone with kindness and dignity. Show interest in them, and let them know you care about them.

Joseph M., 16, Leyte, Philippines

Enjoy Every Moment Together



Sometimes I feel forgotten because my sisters have their own activities, just as my parents do. As time has gone by, I have come to understand that they all love me and that it isn't that they don't want to spend time with me but that to everything there is a time. It is important to enjoy every moment you can be with

them, to laugh, be kind, be affectionate, and above all to show them your love. It is important for you to pray and ask our Father to help you to be close to your brothers and sisters. He will hear you and will help you.

Roberto S., 18, Santiago, Chile

Take Time to Talk



I am the youngest of seven children. When I was younger, I felt left out, but I also realized that they do love me, even more than I thought. Perhaps you cannot relate to them right now, but the best times I had with my siblings were talking. I realized that they trusted in me a lot, and it's still that way. In order to talk with them, I would try to help them in their duties, be kind to them, avoid getting angry at them, and team up with them so they could help me. That helped me feel included and loved.

Maria H., 19, Mexico City, Mexico

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

NEXT QUESTION

“What does it mean to ‘stand as a witness of God at all times’ (Mosiah 18:9)?”

Send us your answer and photo by November 15, 2009.

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

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TRY TO LOVE THEM MORE

“It is likely that some of you may not always get along with your brothers and sisters. Remember that even though you squabble and argue with them, they are very important to you. Hopefully, they will be your best friends one day.

“We should treat our families with love not only because it is a commandment to love one another but because this is the way to be happy. If you are having difficulty with someone, the best way to solve the problem is not to try to get the other person to change, but to try to love him or her more.”

Elder Cecil O. Samuelson Jr. of the Seventy, “Friend to Friend,” Friend, June 1996, 6.

Ugly Duckling or Majestic Swan? It's Up to You!



You are a chosen son or daughter of God. Choose to live up to the divine potential that lies within you.

BY ELDER ERROL S. PHIPPEN

Served as an Area Seventy from 2004 to 2009

As a young child, I remember my mother reading to me the story “The Ugly Duckling,” by Hans Christian Andersen. Maybe it was because I was shy and felt like I didn’t fit in, but the memory and the moral of that story have always remained with me.

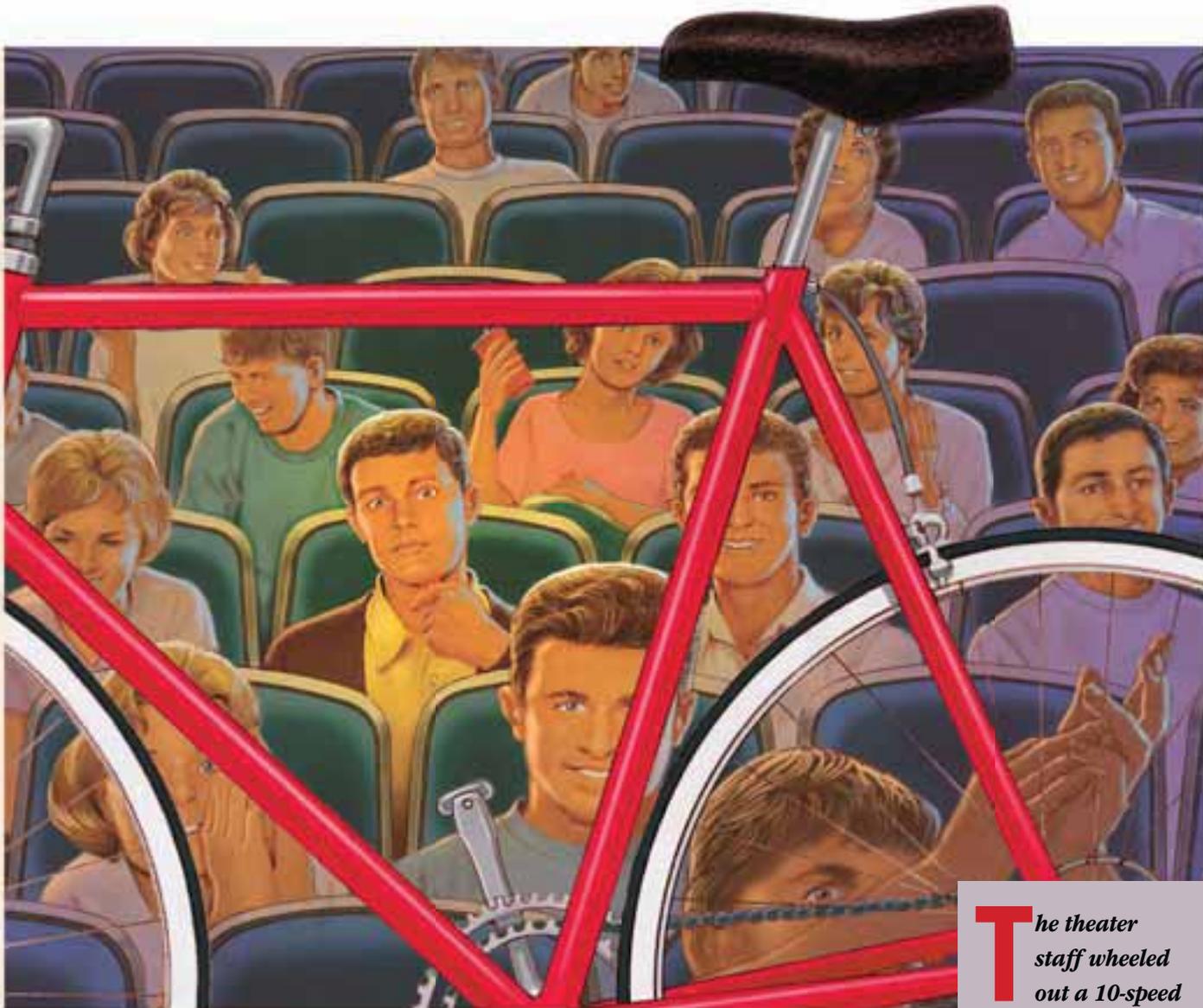
In the version that I remember, a mother duck waits patiently for her eggs to hatch into little ducklings. Before long, the fuzzy, yellow ducklings emerge to the delight of the mother duck. However, there is one slightly larger egg that still has not hatched. The mother and her ducklings wait and watch. When the egg finally cracks open, the yellow ducklings notice that this new member of the family looks different. They gather around him and declare to their mother and father, “He’s not like us. He’s ugly.” They leave him alone in the nest and swim away. The ugly duckling wanders away from the nest and tries to hide.

Every encounter he has is negative and discouraging. He would often think to himself, “Everyone hates me because I’m ugly.”

Then a miracle takes place in his life. He sees others who look and act just like he does! He becomes friends with them, and they take him to their mother and ask,

DOWN ON YOURSELF?

REFLECT ON THIS: YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD. WITH HIS HELP YOU CAN REACH YOUR GREAT POTENTIAL. (SEE ROMANS 8:16–17.)



The theater staff wheeled out a 10-speed bicycle. It was red, it was beautiful, and they were going to give it away. Oh, how I wanted that bicycle!

“Mother, Mother, we’ve found a little brother! Can he stay with us forever?” The beautiful, graceful swan mother folds her white wing around the ugly duckling and says to him in a gentle voice, “You’re not a duckling at all! You are a little swan, and someday you will be the king of the pond.”

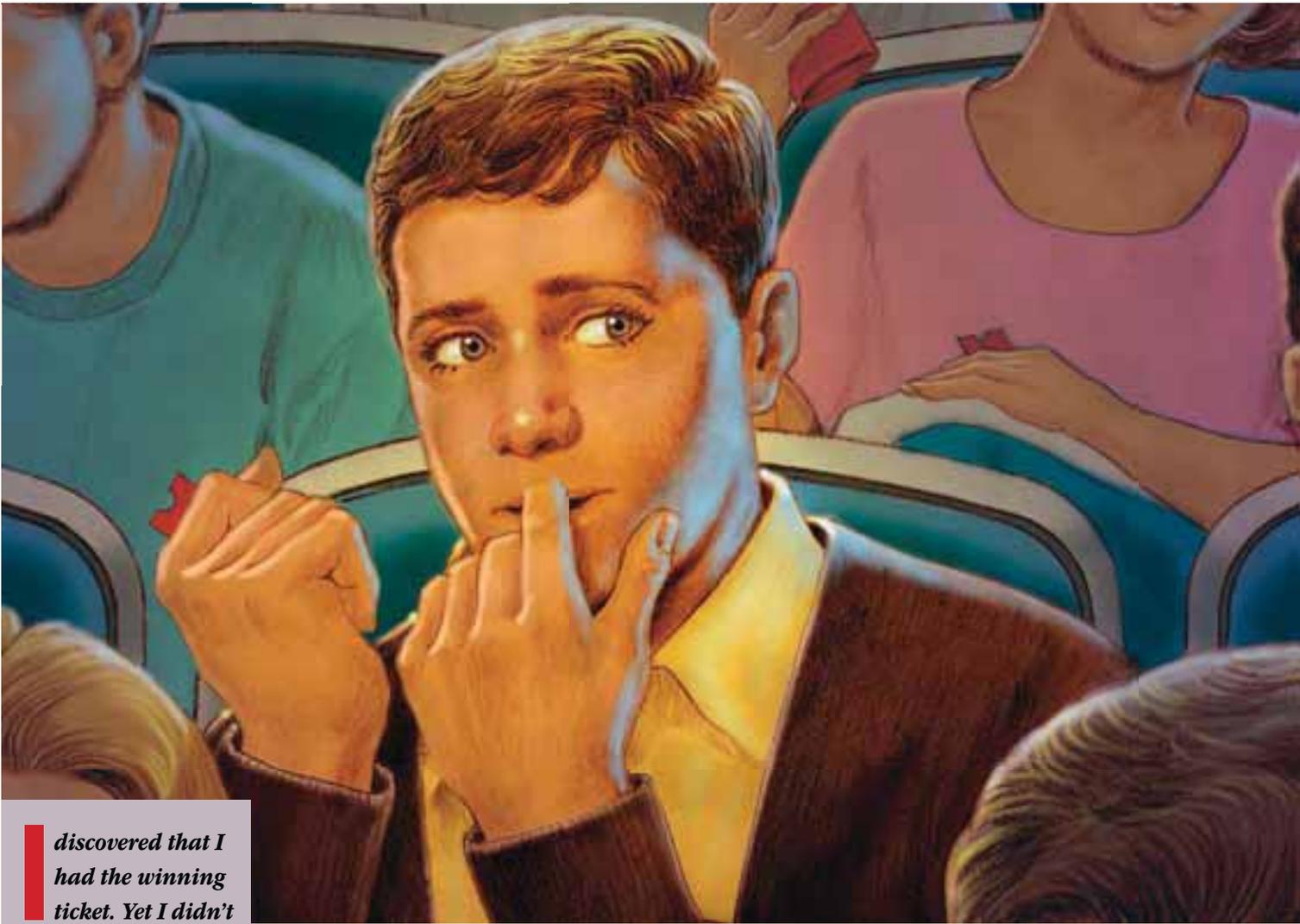
I loved hearing this story as a child. I didn’t realize that the lessons I learned from it would help me through my difficult teenage years. I was baptized a member of the Church when I was eight, but gradually my family became less active.

In the small town in Idaho where I grew up, there was a movie theater that featured

an afternoon matinee every Saturday. I would always go with two or three of my friends. The theater would show a short movie about sports and another about current events. The main feature was usually a cowboy movie with lots of action.

One Saturday during intermission, the staff wheeled out a 10-speed bicycle. It was red, it was beautiful, and they were going to give it away to the person in the audience who had the winning ticket stub! Oh, how I wanted that bicycle!

The announcer reached into the container and pulled out a ticket. As he read the number on the ticket, I discovered that I had



discovered that I had the winning ticket. Yet I didn't move or say anything. I was too shy and embarrassed.

the winning ticket. Yet I didn't move or say anything. I was too shy and embarrassed. I did not have enough confidence in myself to stand and let everyone know that I had the winning ticket. He announced the winning number two more times, and each time I held the ticket down so that no one could see it. Finally, the announcer read another number. One of the friends I came to the movie with happened to have the new number. He jumped up, screamed, and ran to the stage to claim his bicycle. That bicycle could have been mine!

As I walked home alone from the movies that Saturday, I thought of the story of the ugly duckling. I was feeling a lot like that

little swan. I felt like I was wandering around in the woods trying to hide and that no one liked me. I didn't realize who I was or what I could become. By the time I arrived home, I knew something had to change. I remember thinking, "It's time to grow up. That will never happen to me again."

I began to discover that there were others around me who loved and cared about me. My ward bishopric took an interest in me, as did my stake president, who lived just down the street from me. They taught me the gospel. They bore their testimonies to me of the reality of the Savior and His precious Atonement and what it could do for me. They read to me repeatedly the story of Joseph Smith and his

vision in the Sacred Grove. From that experience I have developed the wonderful habit of reading Joseph Smith—History every week. By doing so, I know that I can have the strength to overcome anything placed before me that week.

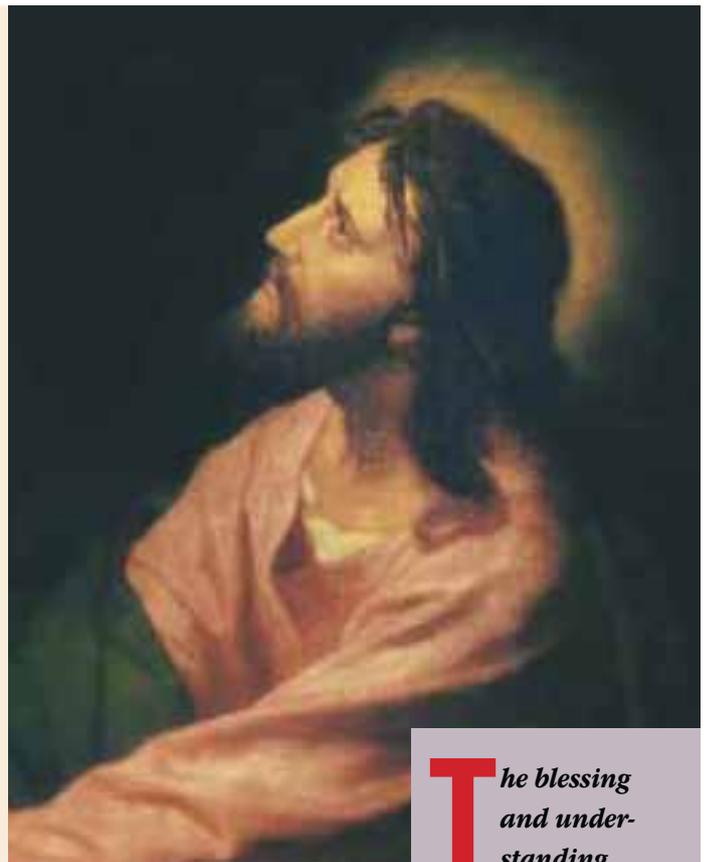
At that time in my life, when I needed someone so badly, my Heavenly Father blessed me. He knew who I was, and He sent His servants to help me discover that for myself. They wrapped their arms around me and told me by their actions that I wasn't an ugly duckling at all and that if I was worthy and kept the commandments of God, I could become "the king of the pond." The blessing and understanding of the Atonement began to give me added strength and confidence.

When I reached the age of 16, these good men encouraged me to receive a patriarchal blessing. After I received my recommend, I got on my old bike and rode several miles to the patriarch's home. He explained once again what a patriarchal blessing is and how it would bless my life. He laid his hands on my head. After that experience, my life was never the same.

I accepted a mission call to Scotland and had a wonderful experience. A few weeks after I returned home, I met my future wife at a Church meeting. We dated, and I proposed marriage. We were married in the Salt Lake Temple.

One sentence in my patriarchal blessing indicates that I would be permitted to live in mortality with an angel. At the time the patriarch gave me that blessing, I didn't know what an angel was, let alone the meaning of the phrase. As I left the temple the day my wife and I were sealed, I knew what it meant. She has been the light of my life. Thanks to her, I have been permitted to live in an environment of light. She has brought joy and happiness to our 8 children, 25 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren. My children have all come to call her blessed. I give thanks to God for the blessings of the gospel and the eternal blessings of the covenants and ordinances of the holy temple.

Satan would have us believe that we are ugly ducklings with no chance of becoming like our Heavenly Father and His holy Son. I bear witness that God loves each of us in special ways. As Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004)



The blessing and understanding of the Atonement began to give me added strength and confidence.

of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said so often, "God's personal shaping influence is felt in the details of our lives."¹ We are His children. I have come to know that we can rise above our current environment and become "kings and queens of the pond" by following the gospel commandments.

I know something else. I know who you are and where you came from. The revelations remind us of our faithfulness in the premortal life (see Revelation 12:7–11; D&C 138:56; Abraham 3:22–23). As we tie our testimonies to that great truth, each day becomes a wonderful blessing for each of us.

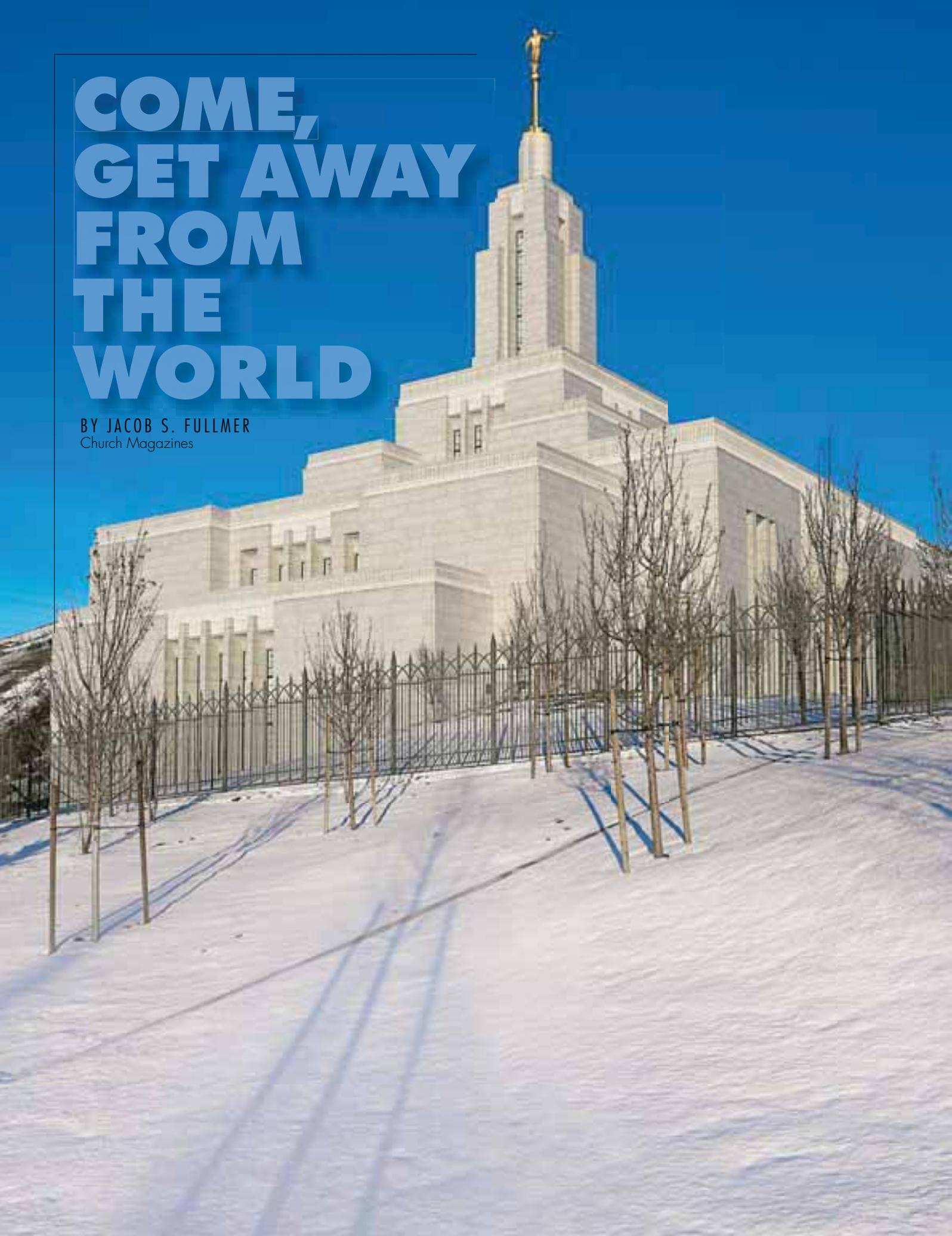
Stay on the Lord's side of the line. If He can take care of a bashful, shy boy like me, He will take care of you now and in the future. You are a chosen son or daughter of God. Choose to live up to the divine potential that lies within you. **NE**

NOTE

1. Neal A. Maxwell, "Becoming a Disciple," *Ensign*, June 1996, 17.

COME, GET AWAY FROM THE WORLD

BY JACOB S. FULLMER
Church Magazines



Temples offer peace the world can't provide. A recent temple open house gave these youth a deeper look inside.



Why prepare for the temple? After attending an open house for the Draper Utah Temple, some 60 teens from the Bluffridge and Whisperwood Wards of the Syracuse Utah South Stake have plenty of answers.

And they also have a one-word definition of their experience: "Cool."

Yes, *cool*. And it's not because they got to see the beautiful windows, carpets, and paintings. It's because they know the feeling of the temple comes from a remarkably rare peace available inside.

"You get the coolest feeling and know that it's a holy place," says Tyson Clark, 14.

The Syracuse youth laughed and talked together as they arrived. But noise dropped to whispers as they entered the lower level of the temple itself, through polished brass-and-glass doors that lead to the baptistry. Their eyes were as wide as their smiles.

"When you come through the door, everyone stops talking," Tyson says.

Ryan Tucker, 16, says, "I noticed the peace and serenity the moment I walked in." It helped him to leave worries of the world behind.

"I noticed the peace and serenity the moment I walked in."



Service Counts

Looking at the exterior of a temple can often provide a feeling of peace. But many of these youth, who have already participated in baptisms for the dead in other temples, know that one of the great things that goes on inside is serving others. "I know that I'm helping people who can't be baptized for themselves," Ryan says.

Tyson's sister, McKenna, 16, remembers feeling nervous her first time doing baptisms for the dead. But at the open house, when she saw the Draper temple font supported by 12 white oxen, it reminded her of the blessings of temple service.

"Just entering the temple helps you feel a little calmer," she says. "But as you do baptisms, the feeling gets even better."

Leaving the baptistry, the Syracuse youth walked up a wide staircase to the second floor. Their heads kept swiveling as their long line slowly progressed past images of the Savior and paintings of local landscapes.

"It was nice looking around and noticing things by yourself," says Megan Skidmore, 15. "It's nice to get away from the world. It helps me feel like I have someplace to go if I ever feel alone."

As they stepped into the celestial room, quiet awe replaced already softened whispers. They craned their necks just enough to take in the detailed glass chandelier hanging in midair, with a high, vaulted ceiling overhead.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACOB FULLMER, EXCEPT AS NOTED; TEMPLE PHOTOGRAPHS BY RAVELL CALL AND AUGUST MILLER, © DESERT NEWS

“It’s important to stay worthy so I can be married in the temple. It’s what I’ve wanted to do my whole life.”

Reflections on Eternity

Their final glimpse inside the temple included a short stop in one of its five sealing rooms. This was the favorite room of recently ordained deacon Stockton Stoker, age 12.

“When you look at the mirrors on either side of the altar, the reflections just keep going,” he says. “It represents that families can be together forever.”

McKenna says, “It’s important to stay worthy so I can be married in the temple. It’s what I’ve wanted to do my whole life.”

Perhaps the most important understanding the open house reinforced, however, was that the temple can already be a very real part of their lives. They each have their own ways of keeping an eye on the temple. Megan and Ryan like keeping pictures of a temple on their walls because it helps them remember what it’s like when they are there. McKenna suggests setting aside time to read the scriptures and what they say about the temple.



PREPARE

“As temples are prepared for our members, our members need to prepare for the temple.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings,” Ensign, May 2001, 32.

Stockton keeps it simple: “Keep being holy. Repent if you do something wrong. Just prepare to go to the temple.”

“It’s definitely worth it to go to the temple. You just have to remember what you’re on earth for,” says

Tyson. “The temple is a place that can help us learn where we’re at spiritually and how to be a better person.”

In other words, by getting away from the world, we gain the perspective we need to get along in the world. And after all, isn’t that what we’re really after in life? **NE**

“Keep being holy. Repent if you do something wrong. Just prepare to go to the temple.”

NEmore

To see the video that was shown at the Draper temple open house, follow our link at newera.lds.org.

Teens from the Syracuse Utah South Stake made an appointment to tour the Draper Utah Temple during its open house.

(Far right) Artist’s rendering of the Helsinki Finland Temple and photos of the open house and spire of the completed Finland temple.



TOP LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA SMITH; BACKGROUND PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND

CELEBRATING THE TEMPLE IN FINLAND

BY ANNA CULP

The Helsinki Finland Temple was dedicated on October 22, 2006. Janna Koivu, 18, and Alekski Kiiikko, 17, were asked to share how they felt about the temple.

Janna says, “When the temple was finished and I went to the open house, I said it was the most beautiful building in Finland. I began to understand how very blessed we are to have our own temple.”

Alekski notes that even during construction, the workers (who are not always Latter-day Saints) honored the temple grounds by not cussing, not drinking, and not listening to inappropriate music.

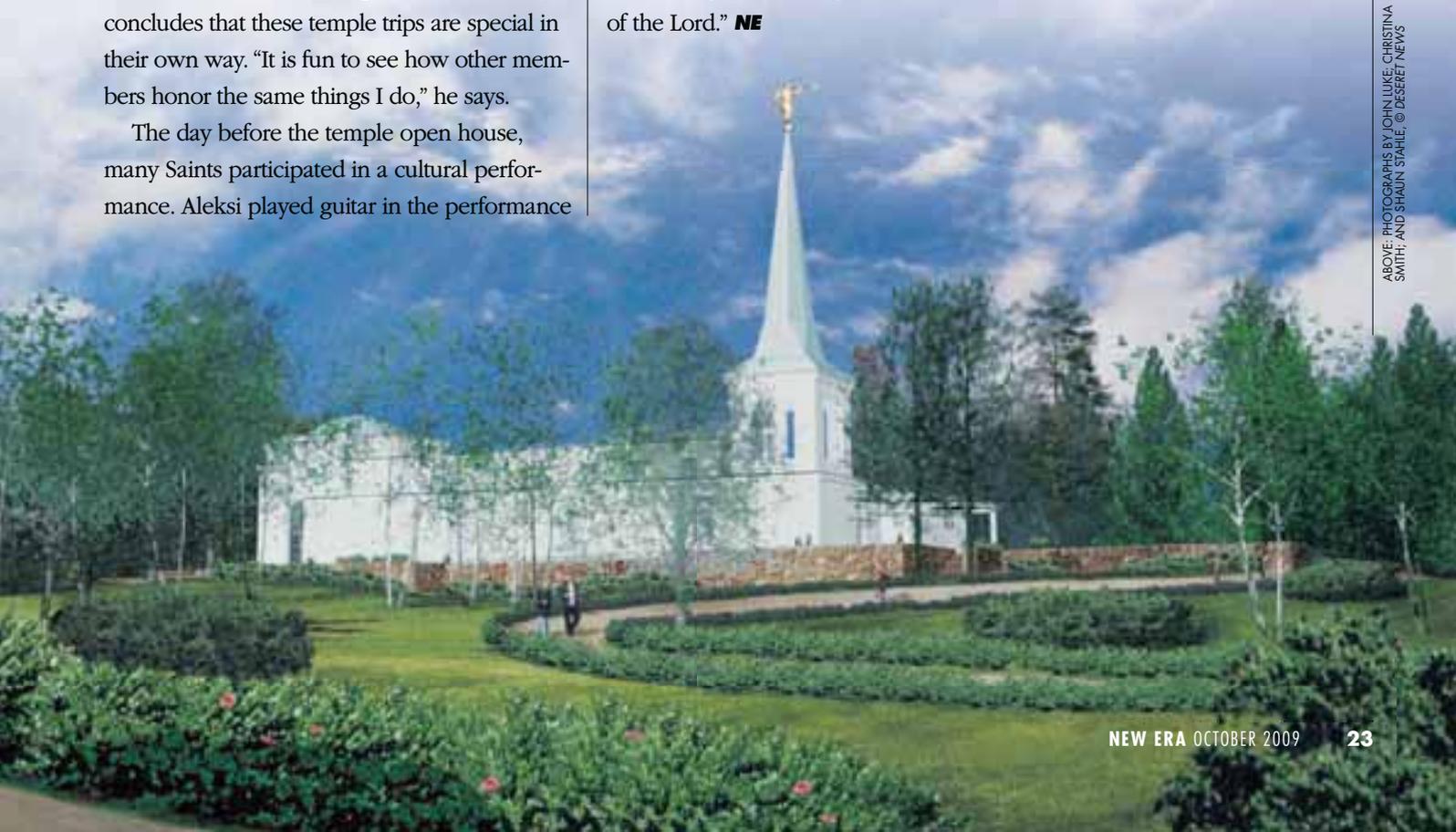
Before the Helsinki temple was dedicated, members of the Church traveled to the Stockholm Sweden Temple, which sometimes included a two-hour bus ride and an 11-hour overnight ship ride. Alekski says that at first, he was disappointed to lose the fun youth trips to Sweden, but after attending the Helsinki temple, concludes that these temple trips are special in their own way. “It is fun to see how other members honor the same things I do,” he says.

The day before the temple open house, many Saints participated in a cultural performance. Alekski played guitar in the performance

and listened to the speakers, including President Gordon B. Hinckley. He also participated in the open house, and his mother sang in a choir. “My best experience was to hear the prophet and to see him with my own eyes. My testimony was strengthened,” Alekski said.

Janna describes her favorite experience of the dedication: “I was grateful and very moved, and also felt great peace. My eyes moistened when I got to raise my hand and wave the small white handkerchief three times in the air with everyone else and with the prophet.” She keeps the handkerchief as a reminder of that day.

Janna and Alekski have strengthened their testimonies through temple attendance. Janna says, “I believe temples are a small piece of heaven on earth. Temple attendance inspires me to repent and live so that I can enter worthily into the temple to perform baptisms for the dead and, later in my life, other covenants.” Alekski says, “I believe temples are the Lord’s house. I try to honor temples as well as I can and try to live so that every time I go to the bishop for a temple recommend, I can without a doubt say I am worthy to step in the house of the Lord.” **NE**



ABOVE: PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN LUKE, CHRISTINA SMITH, AND SHAUN STAHL, © DESERTNEWS

BY WENDY KENNEY

An *Open House*



Opened My Heart

Eternal marriage just felt right to me.

I was 14 years old when I moved from California to the Salt Lake Valley, and I was more than a little worried about how I was going to fit in with all those Mormons I had heard about. One of the few things I knew about Latter-day Saints was that they didn't let people from other churches into their temples. That had been a big disappointment to me when my family stopped at Temple Square on our way through Salt Lake City on vacation. My parents had warned me that we wouldn't be allowed inside the temple, but I thought maybe they had changed the rules. "Sorry. Because the temple is so sacred, only people with a current temple recommend can go inside," the missionary told me.

A couple of years later the Jordan River Temple was nearing completion, and my LDS friends were excited to have a new temple close by. I didn't pay much attention to it until a man my father worked with invited our family to the temple open house. I hadn't realized that during an open house the temple is open to the public and that anyone could go inside. In a way, the rules had changed for me, at least until the temple was dedicated.

From the moment I stepped into the Jordan River Temple, I could tell there was something special about this new building. It was more than the physical beauty of the exterior or the lovely decor inside. Instead, it was the unique work that went on inside that most intrigued me.

At one point our guide led us into a sealing room and

showed us an altar where couples would kneel across from each other to be married for time and all eternity. As I gazed into the mirrors hanging on opposite walls in that room and saw countless images of my face, I knew in my heart that God intended for marriage to last forever. I was at the age when I was beginning to envision my future as a wife and mother, but I had never even considered that marriage could last longer than "till death do you part." My whole philosophy of marriage changed that day, and I decided then and there that I would marry someone for eternity.

There was one small problem. I didn't belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Fortunately, my LDS friends recognized a "golden opportunity," and began slowly teaching me about the Church. Though it took me a few years to feel comfortable meeting with the missionaries, I eventually overcame my anxiety, took the missionary lessons, and was baptized.

As I look back on the many people and events that led to my conversion, one event stands above the rest—the tour of the Jordan River Temple. That open house opened my mind to the sacred sealing ordinances performed in the temple and opened my heart to the dream of eternal marriage. A few years later when I went to the Salt Lake Temple to be married, I looked again into the endless succession of mirrors and knew my dream had become a reality. **NE**

ENOUGH!

BY SEDLEY PARKINSON

We had endured their taunts every day. What would happen when we finally faced them?

My companion's patience had come to an end. He decided to finally confront the motley band of punk rockers. "Who said 'Mormoner'?" he firmly asked.

I could hear my heartbeat during that eternal, silent pause.

Then he confidently said, "Do you really want to know who we are and what we do?"

I was the brand-new missionary given to Elder Leavitt, who had only arrived in Sweden two months earlier. My eight weeks in the MTC had only partially prepared me for the culture transition I was experiencing. My language skills were still, you could say, developing, and my senior companion's were not much more progressed. We had learned several door approaches and discussions by heart, but this memorized speaking was the easy part. Understanding what the people said and then responding correctly was the hard part.

Every day, as we left our apartment, we would ride our bicycles past a school where there was a group of loitering youth. Being from the farmlands in Idaho, I had only heard about "punk rockers," their elaborate clothing, and their unpredictably wild lifestyles. There in Sweden, I was given the opportunity to gain a real firsthand experience. School was out for the summer, and a group of 10 to 15 of these punkers would gather every day and do nothing except harass the passers-by. Guess who stood out as prime targets in our white shirts and ties? Day after day, they yelled "Mormoner" (Mormons), followed by words which had not been included in our MTC Swedish vocabulary lists. I could tell that we were becoming a prime source of entertainment as we cycled past. Over my first week in the field, these foul incomprehensible phrases

had become an afflicting plague, growing in length, volume, and intensity.

Being a new missionary, I thought my whole two years would follow this pattern. I was ready to resign myself to bowing down and suffering in silence. One day we were approaching the group again, and Elder Leavitt and I began again to pedal faster to help limit our exposure to the embarrassing harassment. A new set of phrases spewed forth as we rapidly passed. I, of course, did not understand what was verbally hurled, but my senior companion apparently did. We rode 30 or 40 meters farther while he hesitated and thought. "Enough!" was his response.

Elder Leavitt jumped on his brakes, abruptly slamming to a sharp stop. I swiftly swerved to keep from crashing into his bike and halted on the other side. Gathering myself, I looked over my shoulder. My companion had turned back and was heading straight for that motley band as fast as he could pedal! Only a few seconds had passed, but visions of poor Elder Leavitt being slugged, kicked, clubbed, and knifed flew threw my mind. I had to get over there to save him. I turned back and pumped furiously on my bike to catch up.

Missionaries diligently offer prayers each morning for help in bringing souls to Christ. We too prayed to be given teaching opportunities. We prayed to be led to those who



Later that summer, the same group still gathered outside the school, and they still called out to us, “Mormoner!” But then they added phrases such as “How are you doing?” “Where are you going today?” or “Please come over here. We have another question.”



were spiritually suffering, those who were searching for the light of the gospel. We prayed for humility and for the ability to hear the Spirit’s promptings. Up to that point, however, I had never thought about praying for safety. Perhaps our mothers’ prayers would be answered.

A line of black rubber was left behind Elder Leavitt’s back tire as he skidded his bike sideways right up to the center of the bewildered cluster. With wide eyes, they had fallen silent as he confidently placed his kickstand and stepped off toward them. I was right behind.

Elder Leavitt firmly stood, peered around, and said in English, “Who said ‘Mormoner?’”

I could hear my heartbeat during that eternal, silent pause. It was like the eye of a hurricane. One of them pointed his finger at one of the others, and a different one pointed to another, saying, “He did.” And yet another pointed at someone else.

“Do you really know who we are and what we do?” Elder Leavitt said with confidence, again in English.

We got various responses from these

youths. The winds of the hurricane had indeed shifted; we had taken control. The mood quickly changed from aggressive to friendly as we began to answer questions about the Church, about Mormons, and especially about us and why we had come so far to their country.

We left with smiles and our traditional handshakes.

The few days remaining of that summer found the same kids still gathering at the school.

“Mormoner!” they would still call out, but they added phrases (which I did understand) such as “How are you doing?” “Where are you going today?” “Please come over here. We have another question.”

In a not-so-subtle way our prayers had been answered. Through those teens, we had been given teaching opportunities; we were bringing light to those who were searching; we were indeed being ambassadors of Christ’s Church by following the promptings of the Holy Ghost. I will always thank my first companion as he helped set the stage for the remainder of my mission. **NE**

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught us how to stand fast through trials.

Throughout his life the Prophet Joseph Smith was no stranger to adversity. He endured illness, injury, persecution, the loss of loved ones, and many other hardships. Through all of his trials he remained steadfast and true to the Lord, and he taught the Saints how to bear their difficulties. Here are some of Joseph Smith's teachings on overcoming adversity.*

WE PROVE OURSELVES THROUGH TRIALS

"[Jehovah] will not deliver us unless we prove ourselves faithful to him in the severest trouble. For he that will have his robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb must come up through great tribulation [see Revelation 7:13–14], even the greatest of all affliction."

"Men have to suffer that they may come upon Mount Zion and be exalted above the heavens."

TRUST IN THE LORD

"The power of the Gospel will enable us to stand and bear with patience the great affliction that is falling upon us on all sides."

"My only hope and confidence is in that God who gave me being. . . . He is my comforter, and he forsaketh me not."

"Having confidence in the power, wisdom, and love of God, the Saints have been enabled to go forward through the most adverse circumstances."

"Stand fast, ye Saints of God, hold on a little while longer, and the storm of life will be past, and you will be rewarded by that God whose servants you are."

George A. Smith once received counsel from the Prophet: "He told me I should never get discouraged, whatever difficulties might surround me. If I was sunk in the lowest pit of Nova Scotia and all the Rocky Mountains piled on top of me, I ought not to be discouraged but hang on, exercise faith, and keep up good courage and I should come out on the top of the heap at last."

NEmore For more about Joseph Smith, go to JosephSmith.net.

* From *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 230–35.

PLACE *of* PEACE

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY

Church Magazines

Dilcia Soto, 16, still remembers the day the temple was dedicated in her hometown of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic: “I was only nine then, but I said, ‘Wow! A temple here!’ I was used to seeing people go to other countries to be sealed and to make covenants. I thought, ‘Now my family and I will not have to go to another country

because we have our own temple nearby.’”

Today that temple stands majestic and tall in the capital

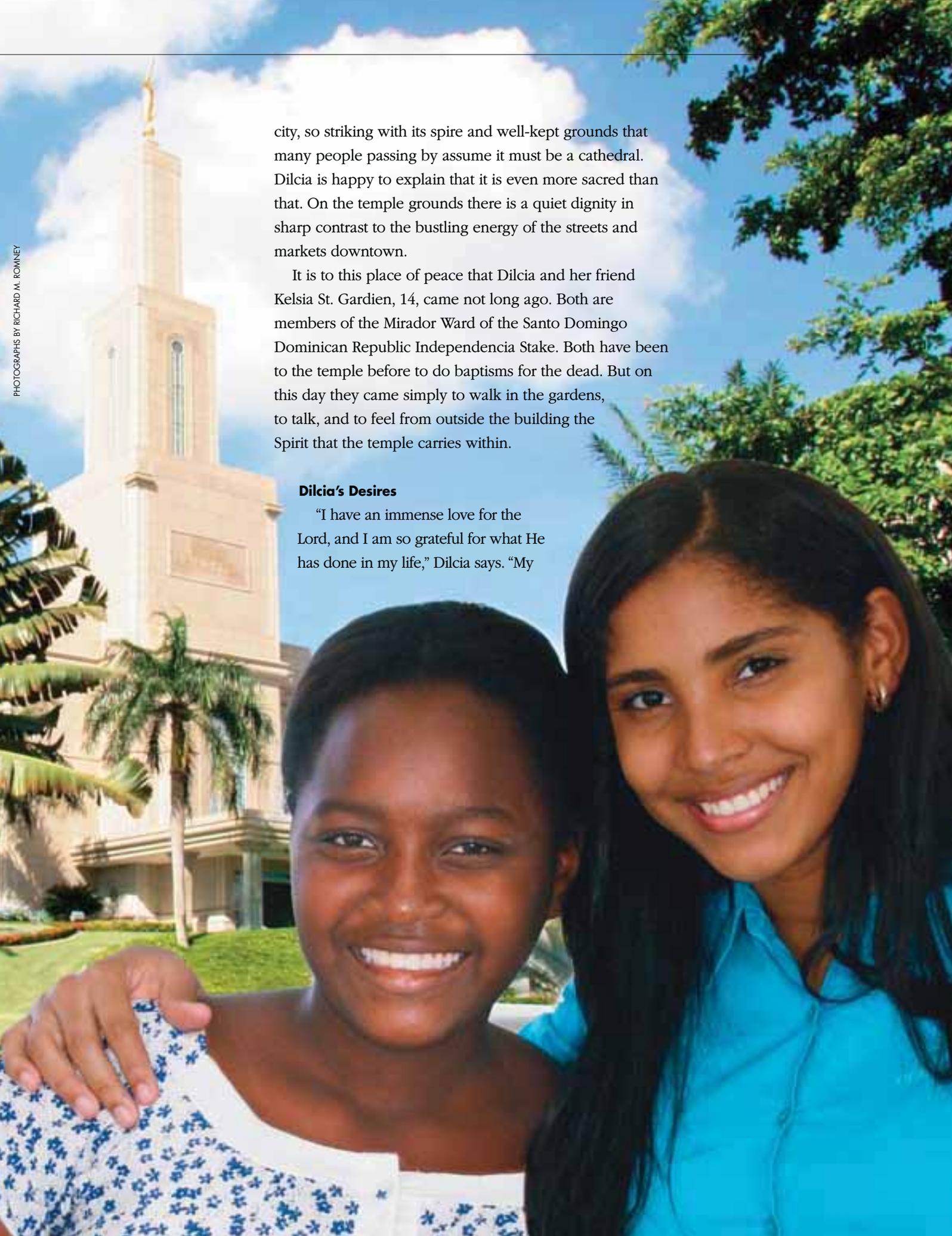
For these two young women in the Dominican Republic, the temple is far more than a beautiful building. It is also a vivid reminder of their fondest hopes and dreams.

city, so striking with its spire and well-kept grounds that many people passing by assume it must be a cathedral. Dilcia is happy to explain that it is even more sacred than that. On the temple grounds there is a quiet dignity in sharp contrast to the bustling energy of the streets and markets downtown.

It is to this place of peace that Dilcia and her friend Kelsia St. Gardien, 14, came not long ago. Both are members of the Mirador Ward of the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Independencia Stake. Both have been to the temple before to do baptisms for the dead. But on this day they came simply to walk in the gardens, to talk, and to feel from outside the building the Spirit that the temple carries within.

Dilcia's Desires

“I have an immense love for the Lord, and I am so grateful for what He has done in my life,” Dilcia says. “My





immediate family are members of the Church, but my aunts, uncles, and cousins are not. When they come to my house, I always have a Book of Mormon ready because there might be an opportunity to share the gospel with them.” She also shares the gospel with friends and “with any person I might meet who is truly interested.” And every time she does, she says, “I feel the Spirit so strongly. Every time I share my testimony, I feel the truthfulness of the Church all over again.”

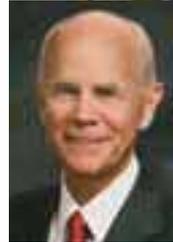
She remembers a seminary lesson about the plan of salvation. “Before this world was, we were in a great Council in Heaven, and we chose to follow our Heavenly Father and accept the sacrifice that Jesus Christ would make on our behalf,” she says. “Our teacher explained that we could tell we obeyed Heavenly Father *then* because we are here



Dilcia quotes 1 Corinthians 3:16: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

on earth *now* with bodies of flesh and bones. When he said that, I knew it was true. That night in my prayers, I cried and gave thanks to God for that knowledge.”

Dilcia quotes 1 Corinthians 3:16: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” “If I am also a temple,” she says, “I need to be as clean and beautiful as the temple. What a marvelous blessing it is to be in this Church



THE TEMPLE IN US

“When we visit the temple as often as distance and individual circumstance permit, the temple will be in us. Then, despite the buffetings of life, we will always be in a holy place.”

Elder Lance B. Wickman of the Seventy, “In a Holy Place,” *New Era*, Apr. 2005, 45.

and to be a virtuous young woman!”

She says her greatest desire is to live with her Heavenly Father again someday. “I am so grateful that He has given us the temple so that we can do all we need to do to return to Him,” she says. “The best form of thanking Him is to live the way He asks us to live.”

Dilcia says, “The Lord wants us to enter His house, to learn about Him, and to work our way toward eternity with Him.” She says she enjoys participating in baptisms for the dead because “it is a way to help those who are waiting on the other side of the veil, to do something for them that they cannot do for themselves.”

Kelsia’s Commitments

Kelsia agrees. “Our ancestors need us to do the work, and I know they are going to be grateful to us,” she says. “In particular I am looking forward to seeing my grandmother whom I never got to know in this life. We are going to make sure all her temple work is done for her.”

Talking about the temple brings out

strong emotions for Kelsia. "I am committed to making decisions that will help me to be sealed to my family," she says. "We have to respect the gospel and observe the commandments *al pie de la letra* [to the letter of the law]," she says. "We do it because we love our Heavenly Father, and obedience is how we show our gratitude to Him."

Her family joined the Church in December 2006, six years after her parents moved to the Dominican Republic from Haiti. "I'm so grateful for the missionaries who knocked on our door. It was great to feel the Spirit and to learn about Heavenly Father's plan for us. Since the gospel came into our lives, our family is much closer. I am grateful that He gave me a family that is so united, even in the most difficult moments. To think that we can have the privilege of being sealed eternally seems like one of the greatest blessings of all."

Her parents are taking a temple-preparation class right now, and that reminds her to prepare for the day when she will be married in the

temple. "That is my main goal, that my future husband and I will be worthy for each other and worthy to be an eternal family."

SANTIDAD AL SEÑOR
LA CASA DEL SEÑOR

Sharing Serenity

The two friends walk past the pole where the flag of their nation unfurls in a gusting breeze. "Even the flag at the temple reminds us to be faithful," Dilcia says. "It is more than just colors. It contains the motto *Dios, patria, libertad* [God, country, liberty] and shows a Christian cross and the Ten Commandments. It reminds us that our country was founded by people who believed in God and that God is still important here."

They also walk past the entrance to the temple, where the words *Santidad al Señor, la Casa del Señor* (Holiness to the Lord, the House of the Lord) are inscribed above the doorway, as they are at every temple.

"Whenever I read those words, I am filled with a powerful witness that they are true," Dilcia says. "I remember coming here with our Mutual group one evening, just to visit the grounds. After we were done, the bishop asked us what we felt here. We talked about it and came up with a one-word answer: peace."

And Kelsia and Dilcia walk away thinking of that perfect one-word answer . . . perfect because the temple is *the* place of peace. **NE**

For more about the youth of the Church in the Dominican Republic, see "Search and Rescue" in the March 2009 issue.



VIRTUE

THE GOLD STANDARD



FILL YOUR THOUGHTS WITH VIRTUE, AND CONFIDENCE WILL FILL YOUR LIFE. (SEE D&C 121:45.)

TRUE AIM

Meet Seneca Francis, whose life is right on target.

Seneca Francis is a straight shooter in more ways than one. Her archery skills have led to great accomplishments. And when it comes to her commitment to gospel standards, she'll let you know that she's aiming for eternity. Find out a little more about her.

You're a relative newcomer to archery, yet you compete at a world-class level. How did it all start? I've been doing archery for about four years. My brother had a bow, and I started shooting and liked it more than he did. I would go into the backyard and shoot at the tree stump. I started competition about three years ago. At first I went to a youth league. Then they sent me to JOAD [Junior Olympic Archery Development] because it's more advanced.

What was it like competing in the Youth World Championship in Turkey? It was fun. My mom went with me. It was my first time going anywhere outside of the states around us. It was a totally different culture. It was fun and interesting to see how other people live. I met some good friends on other teams, and we keep in touch.

Did you have any experiences that strengthened your testimony? We were about the only Church members at the competition, so that was kind of weird for me. But it makes you stronger. Others would ask, "Why don't you want to go and drink with us?" or "Why don't you want to wear the short shorts?" And I would say, "We don't do that." I'm glad for what we have. Also, my mom and I were happy that we were safe the whole time. We prayed a lot. My grandma prayed every day that we'd be OK. Prayer works.

How do you relate archery to the gospel? It takes a lot of hard work and sticking with it. You have to always believe you can do it, even if you think you can't. You also need a lot of concentration. If you lose concentration, you miss the shot. A tiny jerk can throw it off. In the gospel, you need to be steadfast and sure.

Would you like to share a favorite scripture? 1 Nephi 3:7. You can go and do anything you're supposed to. You can do whatever the Lord wants you to. If He wants you to do it, you can do it. **NE**

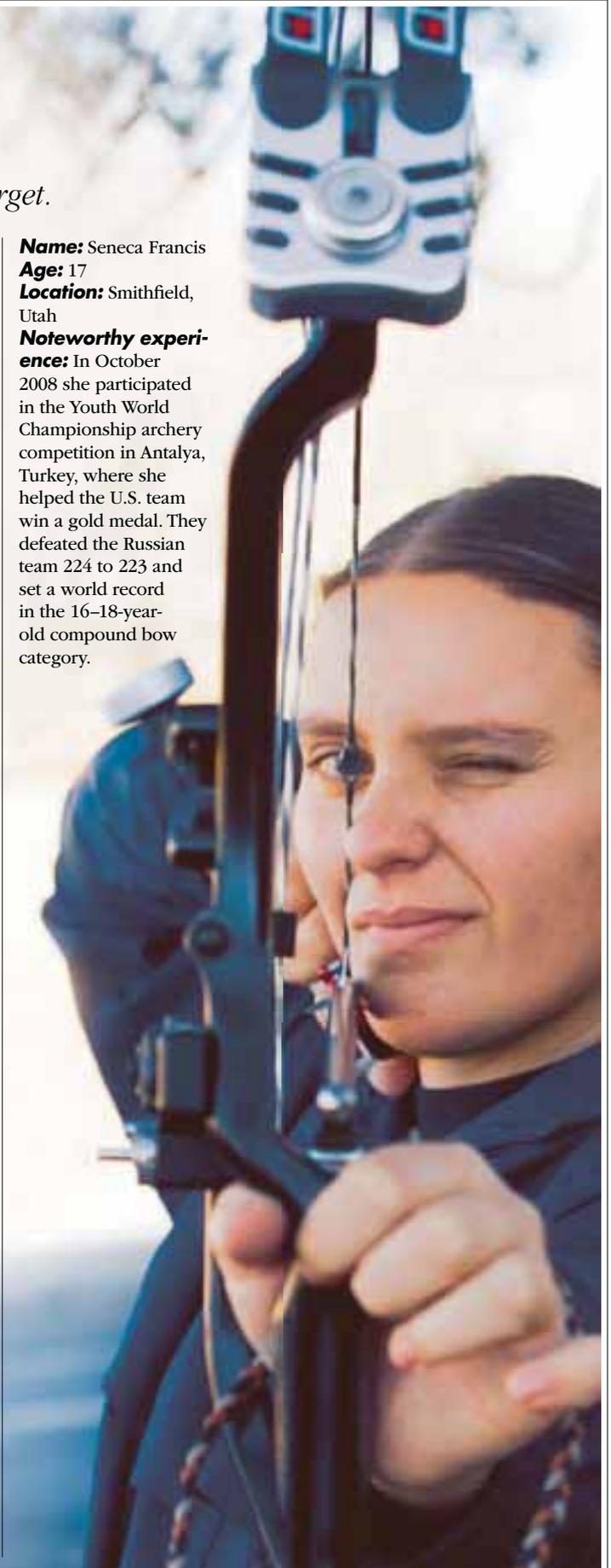
—As told to David A. Edwards, Church Magazines

Name: Seneca Francis

Age: 17

Location: Smithfield, Utah

Noteworthy experience: In October 2008 she participated in the Youth World Championship archery competition in Antalya, Turkey, where she helped the U.S. team win a gold medal. They defeated the Russian team 224 to 223 and set a world record in the 16–18-year-old compound bow category.



“The friends we choose to associate with are main contributing factors in the formation of our character.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Good Friends,” *New Era*, Feb. 1993, 4.

CATCHING CONFERENCE

There was a heightened feeling of excitement as members in the Bulawayo Zimbabwe Stake prepared to watch last April’s general conference live for the first time. Two satellite dishes were installed in two of the stake’s four chapels, and there was a big turnout, especially in the Nkulumane chapel.

Nolan Kumbirayi Chigede, a young man from the Nkulumane First Ward, said, “I am very happy to be here.” He later added that he came “with an open heart, because I knew the servants of the Lord would be speaking to me.”

Commenting on the success of this first satellite broadcast, and what it means for the stake to see general conference live, stake president Tasara Makasi said that members have been drawn closer to the Church leaders and hence feel more a part of this one big gospel family.



THE CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE

Missionary work began in what was then Southern Rhodesia in the early 1930s and was mostly being done by missionaries from South Africa making short visits. In 1950, eight missionaries were sent to Salisbury and Bulawayo, and the first convert was baptized in February 1951. The first services were held in a preschool building, and prospective members sat on tiny chairs. Later they met in the cloak room of a primary school.

In 1980 the government changed and the nation of Zimbabwe was formed. Membership was a little more than

1,000, but missionary work increased as local missionaries began serving full-time missions there. In January 1997 there were 6,360 members in Zimbabwe, and in just nine months the Church had grown to 7,100 members.

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

Membership	17,241
Missions	1
Wards & Branches	44
Family History Centers	1

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE BULAWAYO ZIMBABWE STAKE

BY THE NUMBERS

1,750,000

Number of linear feet of paper used to print all copies of this month’s issue of the *New Era* (that’s about 330 miles [531km] of paper).

WHAT'S UP?

GET A GRIP

Hold to the Rod; Get a Grip. That was the theme of this year's two-day youth conference in the Tupelo Ward in Mississippi. There were great speakers, activities, and some surprises as well. There was an actual "iron rod" constructed in and around much of the meetinghouse. The youth began their journey of Lehi's dream in the darkened cultural hall. As they followed the rod, there were many distractions including people, a mist of darkness, the filthy river, the great and spacious building, and finally the tree of life with delicious fruit.

"It was really neat to see a life-sized rod of iron and the whole experience really helped me to understand Lehi's dream and how it applies to me," said 15-year-old Hannah Murphy.

There was also a "carnival of life," where the youth not only enjoyed games and activities, but they also learned out of *Preach My Gospel*. Then they held a service project at a local home for abused, abandoned, and neglected children and spent time with the children as well. Finally, they had lunch in the park, where they also participated in team-building activities to help unify the ward youth.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE TUPELO WARD

SCRIPTURAL NAMES ABC

Can you list the first name of a person in the scriptures for every letter of the alphabet?

There are many correct answers. If you get stuck, look in the Bible Dictionary and the Index. (We've helped you with Q, X, and Y.)

A _____

B _____

C _____

D _____

E _____

F _____

G _____

H _____

I _____

J _____

K _____

L _____

M _____

N _____

O _____

P _____

Q **Quartus (see Romans 16:23)**

R _____

S _____

T _____

U _____

V _____

W _____

X **Xerxes (a form of Ahasuerus)**

Y **Yahweh (a form of Jehovah)**

Z _____

IDEA BY SHAUNA WHEELWRIGHT

MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE



Jacob 6:12 became my favorite scripture the instant I read it. This scripture also brings a peace of mind to me whenever I am in need.

Dawson L., 17, Ontario, Canada

Tell us about your favorite scripture in one or two sentences. Go to newera.lds.org and click on Submit Your Material.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JANET THOMAS

CLEANING

NAME WITHHELD

While getting ready to leave the house for a four-week summer vacation, my family and I set out to make the house completely spotless. That meant it was the time of year again for me to clean everything out from under my bed—the accumulation of a year’s worth of junk that I had put out of sight and subsequently forgotten. I dreaded the task, but it had to be done. So after cranking up my music and setting it on “shuffle,” I got to work.

I spent the next few hours on my stomach, reaching as

far as I could underneath my bed and pulling out handfuls of old school papers, Halloween candy wrappers, my sister’s doll accessories, and countless other knickknacks. I dragged everything out onto my bedroom floor. When I was satisfied that not a crumb was left under my bed, I turned and found I had thoroughly trashed the rest of my room.

Exasperated, I began the seemingly impossible task of sorting the trash from the keepsakes. Near the bottom of the pile, I found three papers stapled together and folded into fourths. I unfolded the bundle to see if it was something I wanted to keep or something I wanted to toss into



ILLUSTRATIONS BY DILLEEN MARSH

UP

I started cleaning up my room. When I found my dad's letter, I started cleaning up my life.

the recycling bin.

Immediately I recognized the letter I was holding. I sat on the edge of my bed to read it. The date at the top of the first page was my 12th birthday—the day I became old enough to enter the Young Women program, the day I became old enough to go to the temple and perform baptisms for the dead. My dad had written the three-page letter and given it to me along with my presents. At the time I received the letter, I didn't even read the whole thing through, I admit. But now, reading it five years later, I knew that it was the best gift I had been given that year.

Lately I had started to feel a decline in my desire to read

the scriptures and to go to Church activities. Sometimes at night I would collapse on my bed and go right to sleep rather than take just a minute to pray. It wasn't that I didn't believe in the gospel; I did believe. But I wasn't acting on my beliefs. I wasn't going out of my way to serve others or to do the things I had been taught to do. I was struggling in my decisions, in limbo between following the world's ways and following God's ways.

Finding my dad's letter again made the pathway clear. Two things about the letter really jumped out at me. First, after expressing his own love and testimony of the gospel—and adding that he knew I loved the gospel too



Dad's letter showed me that just as I needed to clean the junk out from under the bed, I needed to clean out the worldly things in my life.

and wanted to live righteously—my dad shared this advice:

“You become what you think about. If you spend your entire day thinking about the things the world thinks about, you will become like the world. It's impossible to become anything that you don't think about. If you want to become a righteous daughter of God who understands the Savior and His mission, you must study and think about those things.”

When I read that passage, it hit me that I hardly spent any of my time thinking about the eternal plan. I would think more often about what was going to happen in the next chapter of the novel I was reading than about the words of the scriptures.

When I daydreamed, it wasn't about the celestial kingdom or about serving others but about what I would do with my friends that weekend.

The next thing my dad wrote also hit me:

“The captain on the biggest ship in the ocean needs three things if he wants to get his cargo to the port: he needs to have a reliable map that shows him the way; he needs to believe that the map is reliable; and he needs to actually drive the ship in the direction indicated on the map. It's the same for you. You have the map already. You need to have faith in Heavenly Father's plan for achieving eternal life (belief in the map), and you need to work every day toward your destination (follow the map).”

At the moment that I finished reading those words, my music, still set on “shuffle,” switched to an Especially for Youth album. The lyrics to one song, “Stand in Holy Places,” brought tears to my eyes.

The song and the words of the letter, combined with the sudden sense of the Spirit, made me realize that, just as I needed to clean the junk out from under the bed, I needed to clean out the worldly things in my life and live in the uncluttered, spotless ways of the Lord. Like my chore that day, it would be difficult and would take time, but in the end it would be worth it.

Who knew that such a spiritual awakening could occur because of housework? The Lord works in mysterious ways. As I went back to cleaning my room, I made a silent covenant with the Lord that I would clean up my life, too, and strive to live how he would have me live. **NE**

NEmore

For ideas on setting and reaching righteous goals, look in the Personal Progress booklet, Individual Worth, Value Experience 2. You'll find a link at newera.lds.org.



THE PRIESTHOOD OF OUR LORD

(Optional round)

Boldly ♩ = 100-120

[Ⓐ] 1. Breth-ren, pow'r by earth - ly stan-dards Comes by rank or wealth or sword;
 2. It is ours, the to - tal ar - mor— Priest-hood held by Christ, our Lord—
 3. Let us ven - ture forth in free - dom With the priest-hood as our guide—

[Ⓒ] But the pow'r a - bove all oth - ers [Ⓓ] Is the priest - hood of our Lord.
 If, as breth - ren, we are wor - thy Of the Spir - it's whis-pered word.
 Dea-cons, teach - ers, priests, and el - ders, Seek - ing vir - tue side by side.

Optional Round

For the music director: Divide singers into four groups. When the first group reaches a circled letter, have a new group start from the beginning of the song. Sing unaccompanied or with the accompaniment below.

For the accompanist: Repeat the first ending until all groups have finished. Then play the second ending.

Round accompaniment

Text and music: John Craven, 1929-93. © 1985 IRI

Doctrine and Covenants 121:34-46
 Doctrine and Covenants 107:1-4

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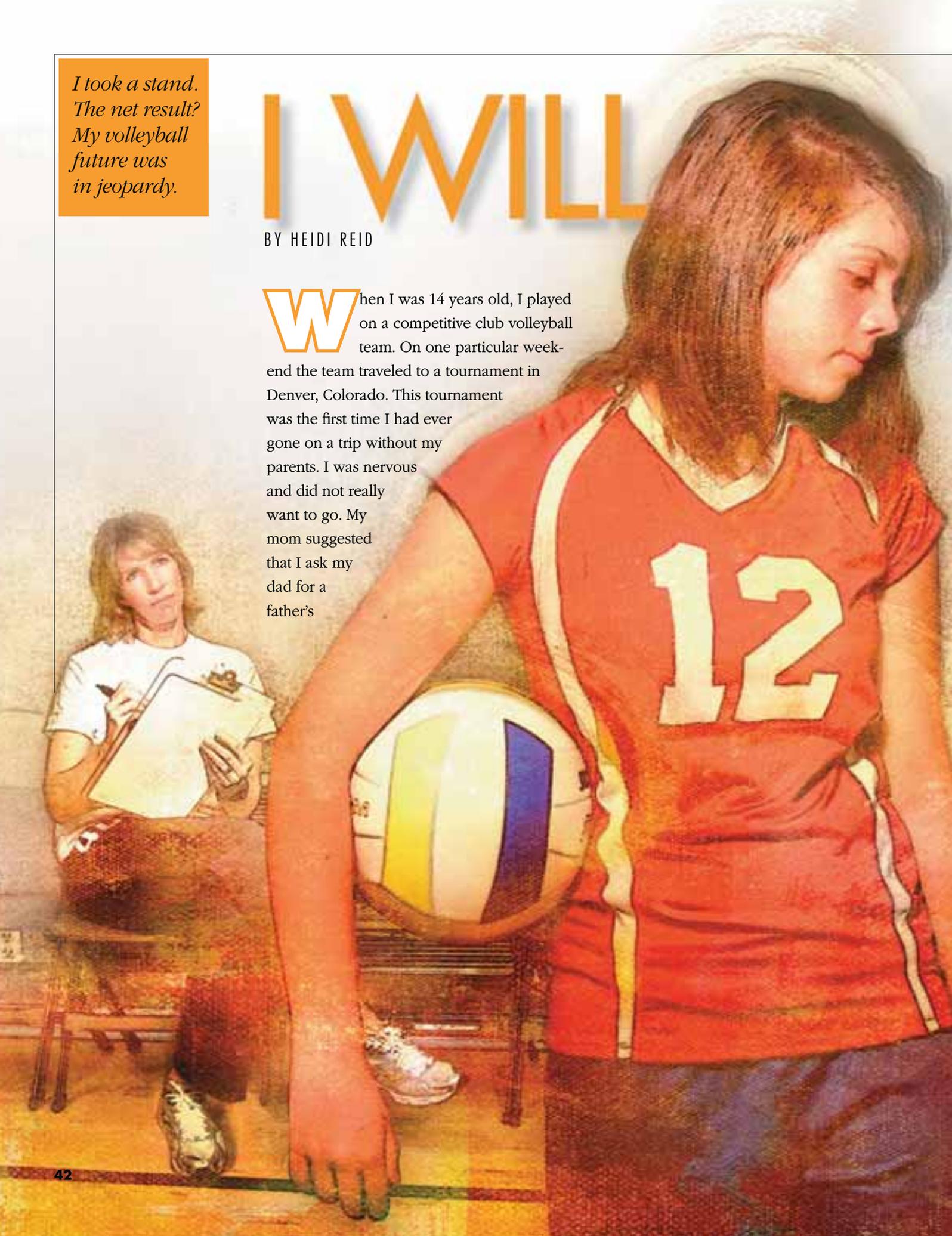
To download a recording of this song, go to newera.lds.org.

*I took a stand.
The net result?
My volleyball
future was
in jeopardy.*

I WILL

BY HEIDI REID

When I was 14 years old, I played on a competitive club volleyball team. On one particular weekend the team traveled to a tournament in Denver, Colorado. This tournament was the first time I had ever gone on a trip without my parents. I was nervous and did not really want to go. My mom suggested that I ask my dad for a father's



NOT PLAY

blessing the night before I left, and my dad gave me a blessing of peace.

My team drove to Denver on Friday, and then on Saturday morning the tournament began. My team played really well and had a great position going into the championship matches the next day. On Saturday night I reminded my coaches that I did not play volleyball on Sundays. Due to the importance of the Sunday championships, my coaches were not happy being reminded of my decision.

Later that night, my coaches and the director of the club called me to a meeting and said that if I did not play on Sunday, I would be eliminated from the team. The director of the club told me that if I chose not to play volleyball on Sundays, I would never play college volleyball because the college scouts only watched the Sunday championships. I was sad and felt completely alone in my decision. I had been taught all of my life to keep the Sabbath day holy, and living this commandment had always been simple until then. I loved volleyball and had dreams of playing in college. This was a lot for me to handle, but I told them, “No, I will not play.”

After the meeting, I went to my room and cried. I decided that in order to stand strong in my beliefs I needed to understand why keeping the Sabbath day holy was so important. I looked in the Bible Dictionary under “Sabbath” and found my answer. It read, “The Sabbath was a holy day . . . even from the earliest times. . . . The Sabbath is an eternal principle” (p. 765). After reading this, I knew I would have the strength not to play on Sunday. The Lord rested on the seventh day, and I would rest as well and worship Him.

Nonetheless, it was a difficult Sunday. My team did not play well, and I was blamed for their poor performance. My teammates and coaches were not friendly; many did not talk to me, and some taunted me. When I arrived home, my parents gave me big hugs and said that they were proud of me. The next week at practice I was asked to leave the team.

Over the next four years, I continued to play volleyball for the same club but never on the competitive traveling team. After I had decided on a college to attend, I received a phone call from the director of the club I had played for. She was the new head volleyball coach for the college I was going to attend. She was calling to ask me to play volleyball for her. This was the same woman who four years earlier had told me that if I did not play volleyball on Sundays, I would never play college volleyball. Now she was giving me that opportunity.

The Lord works in mysterious ways. I know that I was truly blessed by making the decision not to play on Sunday. I also know that the Lord will always bless us for keeping the commandments—maybe not in the ways we think, but we will be blessed. **NE**

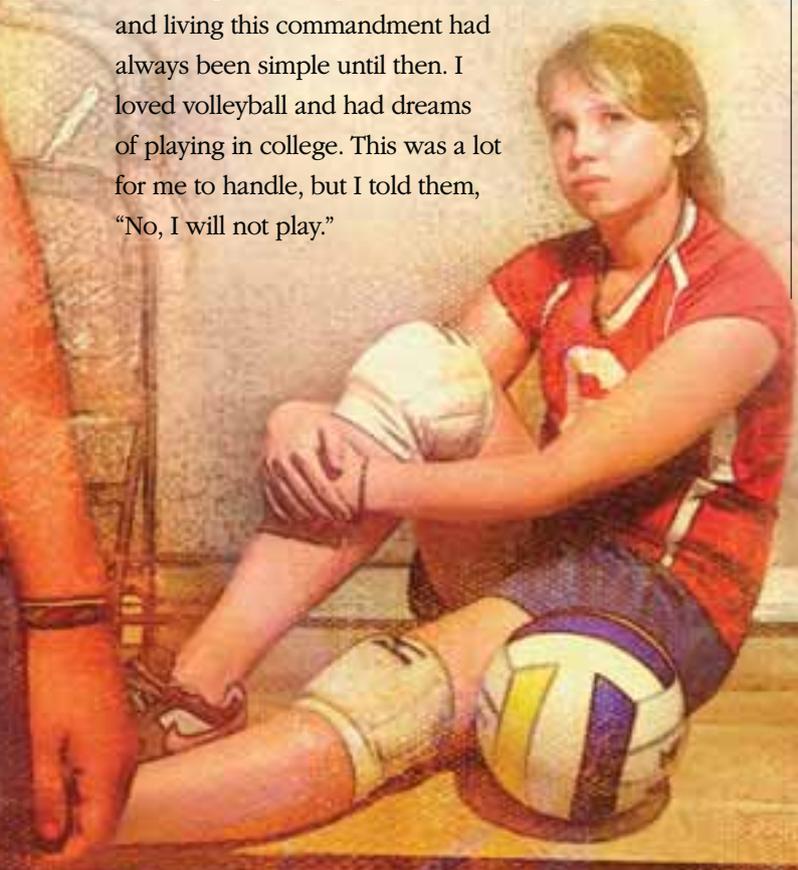


ILLUSTRATION BY CARY HENRIE

TRUE FEELINGS

BY ANGELA JORGENSEN

In D&C 45:10, the Lord says, “Wherefore, come ye unto [the gospel] and with him that cometh I will reason as with men in days of old, and I will show unto you my strong reasoning.” The very idea that the Lord wants to reason with me on an intellectual level opened my mind and understanding.

When I was 15, my Sunday school teacher, Brother Adams, challenged us to read the Book of Mormon. I took this challenge to heart and read the entire book. I prayed about it as Moroni instructed in chapter 10, verse 4. And nothing happened.

“So now what?” I asked myself. “Is this book really true?”

I began to ponder what I had read. I remembered how the words of the prophet Jacob had inspired me. Also, King

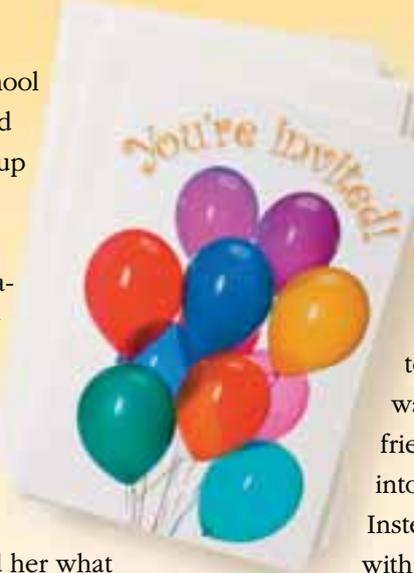
SURPRISED PARTY

BY KAMRI COLLINS

Benjamin had spoken as a mighty leader. I had felt the Spirit as I read the words of both these prophets. As I read, the Holy Ghost had moved me to believe the principles of the gospel in these stories. Surely the whole of it has to be true. One cannot accept a part to be true and deny the rest. It is not reasonable. As the stories unfolded, the whisperings of the Holy Spirit were real. The Book of Mormon is true. It would also mean that the boy Joseph really did see the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ. This is the power of reasoning that our Savior Jesus Christ speaks of unto each and every one of us, the power of truth. **NE**

One day at school my very good friend came up to me and handed me an envelope. Inside was an invitation to her birthday party! I couldn't wait to go. The card said, "We will be watching a movie!"

At lunch I asked her what movie we would be watching. She told me the name of the film, and I answered that I wasn't allowed to



watch R-rated movies. She told me she would rent something else for me. But when the day of the party came, my friend had forgotten a movie for me to watch. So, she and my friends tried to talk me into watching the movie. Instead of watching it with them, I went into her little sister's room and watched a G-rated movie and really enjoyed myself. **NE**

SHY NO MORE

BY RAINA NIBARGER

I have always been a naturally shy person around people I don't know very well. While I am outgoing and loud around my friends and family, I clam up around others. The summer before my sophomore year, my two best friends moved out of the state.

School started, and it seemed as if Satan knew my weakness and set out to intensify it. I had a group to hang out with at school but didn't feel included. I figured everyone noticed how often I was alone. I became insecure about my status at school.

One night before bed, I was

reading in Ether 12. I love the scriptures, because I so often come across answers to my prayers. That night was no different. I read verse 27: "And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them." I had read this scripture mastery verse before but never had it been such a direct answer to my many prayers.

Tears filled my eyes. I knew that what I felt was my desire to come unto Christ. Suddenly I understood that the Lord had a plan for me. I also realized that the Lord wanted to help me make good friends. If I

just had humility and faith, the Lord would help make my weakness a strength. As He said to Moroni in verse 37, "And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong."

Lately I have seen how the Lord has kept His promise. I realized that it doesn't matter where I stand on the high school social ladder, because Heavenly Father loves me for who I am. That is the most humbling thing about it all. He has billions of children, but I know that He loves us individually, for our own unique qualities. How grateful I am for the lesson I learned that night and for all the peace and serenity that comes with knowing God lives, He loves us individually, and He wants to help His children. I love Him with all my heart. **NE**

MATH MIRACLE

BY MARGARET LI

It was the hardest algebra homework I'd ever faced. I struggled most of the afternoon with variables buzzing in my head. When my mom asked me to babysit for a couple wanting to attend the temple that night, I agreed reluctantly. I reasoned with myself that I wouldn't understand this homework anyway, so why not watch five kids for a few hours? Knowing the children had an early bedtime, I brought my math book with me.

As my mom drove me to the house, she told me I shouldn't take their money that night. Startled, I asked her why.

She answered, "They're going to the temple. It wouldn't be right if they had to pay to go and perform sacred ordinances there."

I thought it over and agreed. Seeing my hesitation, my mom added, "I know you're frustrated with your homework and everything, but you'll have Heavenly Father's help if you do this service."

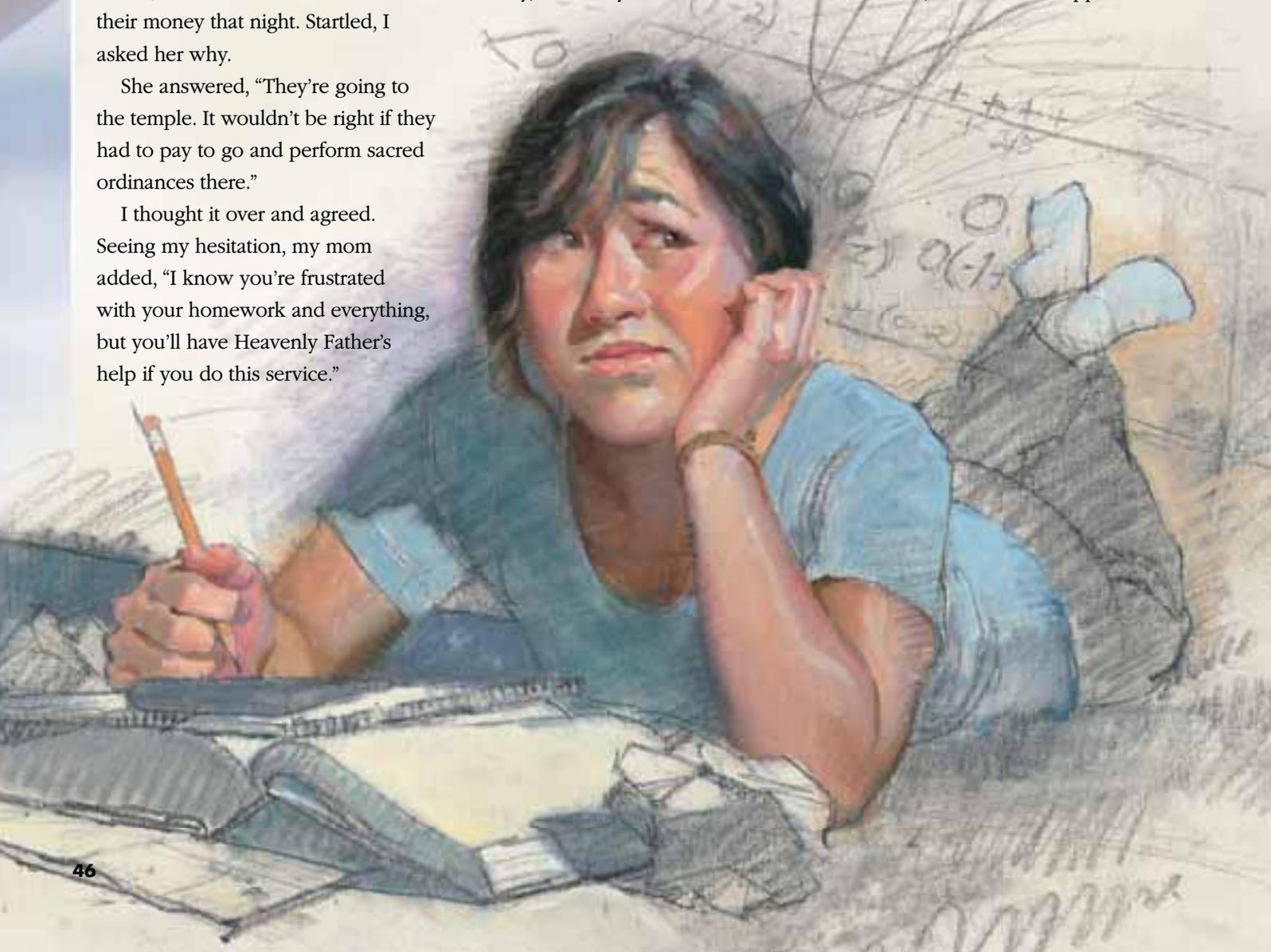
I was thankful for Mom's encouraging words, but I was still doubtful.

That evening went unusually well. The children didn't quarrel, and they helped me clean the playroom. I even got them to bed fairly early. Then I started doing my math homework. After taking several deep breaths, I tackled a few problems and found that I could solve them. Right before I finished the assignment, the couple got home.

When the wife handed me some money, I took my mother's advice

and told her to keep it. "You guys deserve to go the temple for free," I said. She thanked me and told me that it was hard to find babysitters on school nights.

I finished the rest of my algebra homework easily when I arrived home. But more than that, I felt truly content. The reality of miracles struck me that day. My mom's words had come true. I did have the Lord's help when I served. I know now that when we do what is right and do it with love, miracles can happen. **NE**

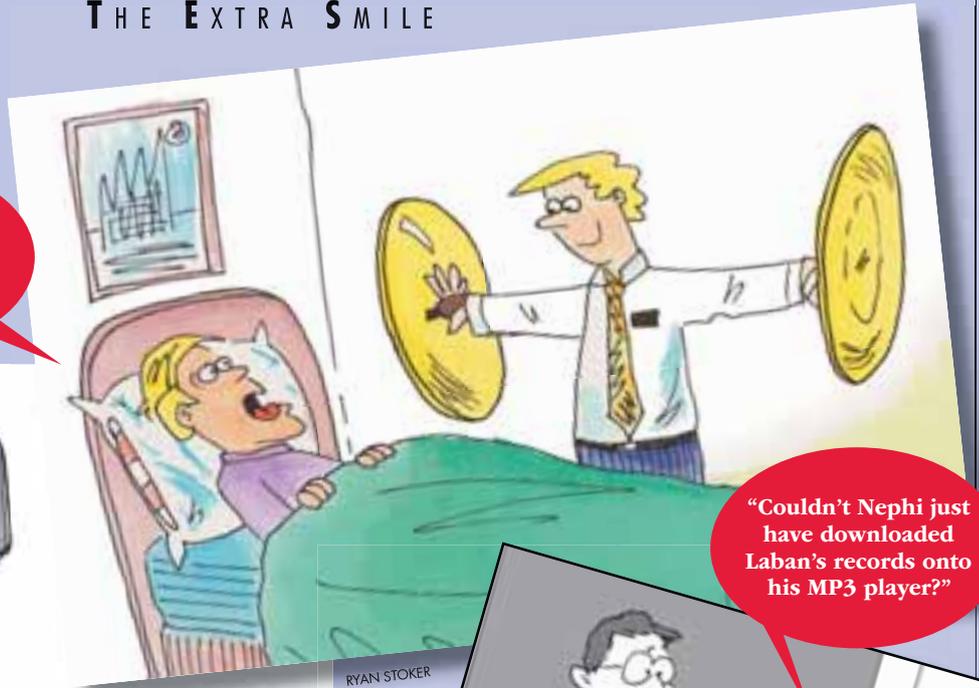


NEmore

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

THE EXTRA SMILE

“Okay! I’m up!
I’m up!”



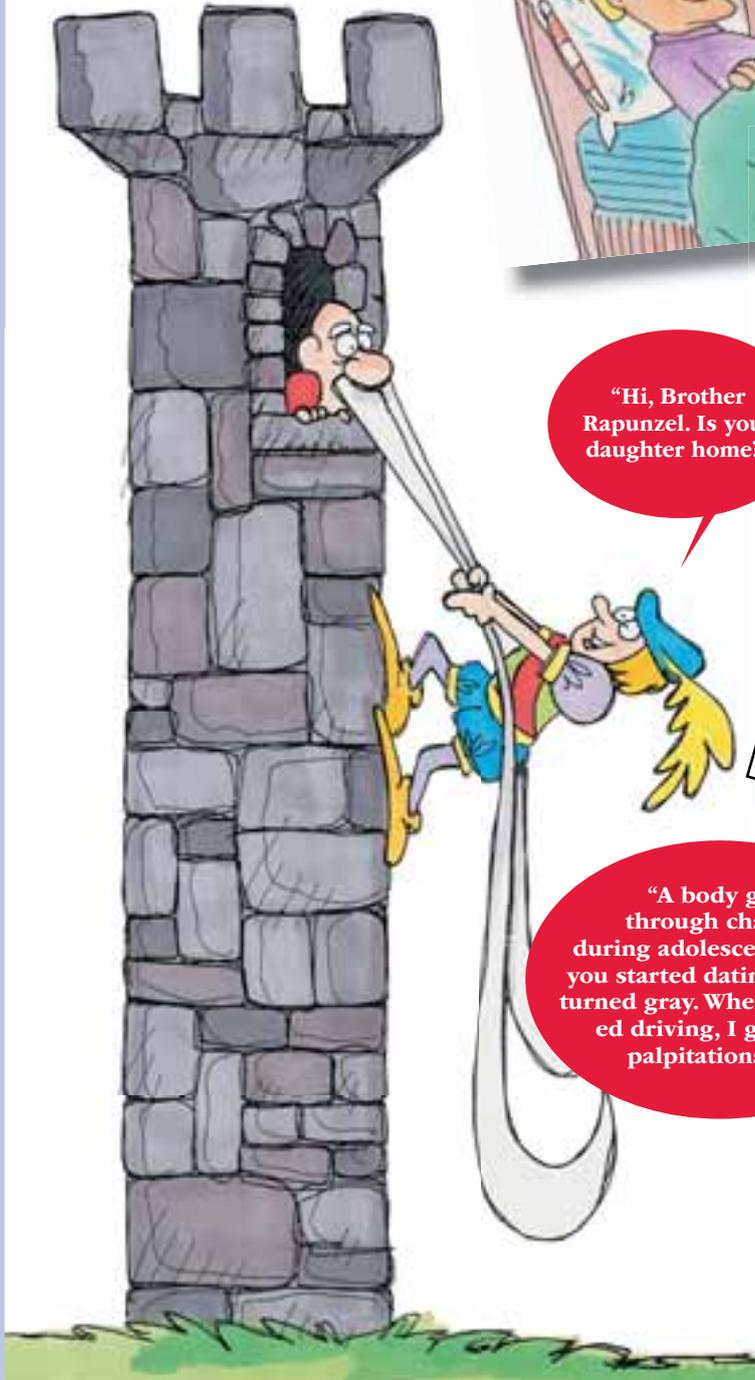
RYAN STOKER

“Couldn’t Nephi just have downloaded Laban’s records onto his MP3 player?”



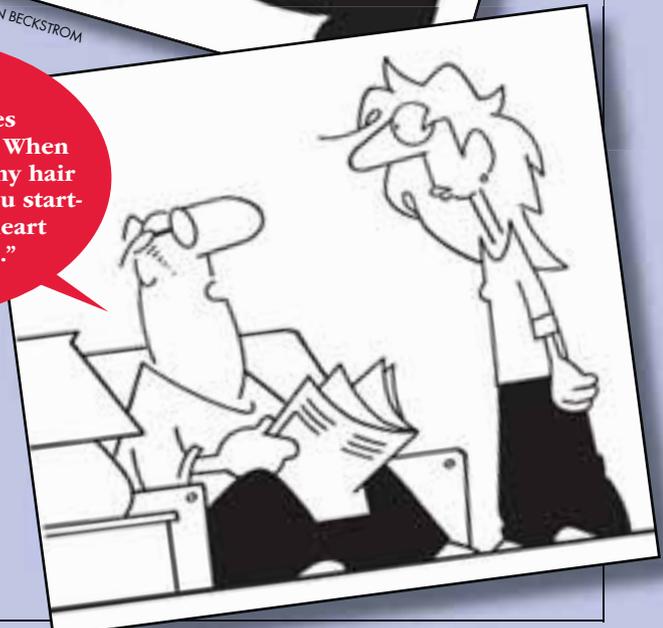
KEVIN BECKSTROM

“Hi, Brother Rapunzel. Is your daughter home?”



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

“A body goes through changes during adolescence. When you started dating, my hair turned gray. When you started driving, I got heart palpitations. . . .”



RANDY GLASBERGEN

MORMON BATTALION

I enjoyed the July 2009 article "Marching with the Battalion." It really helped me to realize how much the pioneers sacrificed for all of us. It touched me how the men were willing to leave their families just because President Young asked them to. They all set a great example for me that gives me strength to follow the prophet's counsel today.

Jessica P., Washington

STRENGTH FROM OTHERS

The *New Era* has been a source of inspiration. I especially like reading the Instant Messages. Every experience shared by people and every testimony they bear strengthens mine. It adds more power and transforms my inmost being.

Mitzi G., Doha, Qatar

CHRISTIAN COURAGE

Thank you for the article "That Is Christian Courage" in the July 2009 issue. I've been having some trouble with a girl who doesn't like me. "That Is Christian Courage" has helped me to forgive her and see past her mistakes. I love receiving the *New Era* every month and reading it cover-to-cover.

Isabelle H., Utah

PURE JOY

I always like reading the *New Era*, and I enjoy the good spirit it brings. The articles are an inspiration for my life. I came across the article "Pure Joy" (May 2009) and really liked that Joy chose to stand up for what is right. She is a great example of the believers by choosing to keep the Church standards even when her peers aren't.

Brandon H., Virginia

The articles in the New Era teach valuable lessons that help me in my everyday life.

TEACHING ENGLISH

I am a senior missionary and have, among other things, taught English in India, Japan, and now Germany and have used the *New Era* as a basis for many of my English lessons. I have found that the *New Era* has some wonderful moral stories that teach good principles as well as providing new vocabulary words and a scriptural reference. Thank you for the wonderful magazine and the good you are doing.

Elder Rex Beazer, Germany
Hamburg Mission

A WAY OUT

Thank you for the July 2009 article "There's Always a Way Out." Several days before I read it I had an experience similar to the one described in the story. Reading this served as confirmation that what I had done was right, even if it wasn't easy at the time.

Jason R., North Carolina

LESSONS

I really enjoy the articles in the *New Era*. They are interesting and spiritual, especially the ones on prayer. A bench fell on my leg at camp, and the medic said I ruptured my Achilles tendon. I said a prayer and received a priesthood blessing. When we got to the hospital I found out my Achilles tendon was only bruised. I needed crutches for less than a week, and then I was running again. I know prayer works.

Dylan T., New Jersey

The articles in the *New Era* teach valuable lessons that help me in my everyday life. My favorite articles are the ones about people who are lost or hurt and use prayer to help guide them back. They show that we can never lose hope when we're lost or feel unsafe. I also like the Extra Smile because it connects humor with the Spirit.

Logan J., Arizona

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MOONWALKING

On the farm with my sister.

BY DIXIE PARTRIDGE

It's your child face I see,
blonde and pale, that ghostly light
slipping in with the moon.
And the chants of childhood,
 "Run sheep run" and
 "No bears out tonight."
The farm, changed yet familiar,
Like negatives of photographs.

Long limbs of pale shadow
reach toward us from the trees,
across the milky distance between barn
and pasture, shouts still float,
 "What time is it, moon?"
And from some deep well
our child voices want to answer.





BEHIND THE SCENES

The Young Women presidency explained how they decided on gold as the color for virtue, the value recently added to the Young Women theme. Sister Dalton said that when the Young Women presidency met for the first time, they climbed Ensign Peak, a hill overlooking the Salt Lake Temple, and waved a banner made from a gold-colored shawl attached to a long stick. Sister Dalton said that when they were asked what color the value of virtue should be, they remembered that day and thought that gold would be the perfect color. She went on to explain that gold is precious because it is pure and refined. We then created a Mormonad adding the gold banner of virtue to the other value colors.

To see the Mormonad about the virtue value, go to page 34.

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