



THE
New Era

S E P T E M B E R

2 0 0 4

COVER STORY:
THE RIDE OF HIS
LIFE, P. 26

REMEMBERING
ELDER NEAL A.
MAXWELL, P. 10

SEVEN MONEY TIPS
YOU CAN BANK ON,
P. 34

PROPHETS OR POP
STARS: WHO DO
YOU HEAR? P. 42

**The New Era Magazine
Volume 34, Number 9
September 2004**

*Official monthly publication
for youth of
The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints*

The *New Era* can be found
in the Gospel Library at
www.lds.org.

Editorial Offices:
New Era
50 E. North Temple
Salt Lake City, UT
84150-3225, USA

E-mail address:
cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Please e-mail or send stories,
articles, photos, poems, and
ideas to the address above.
Unsolicited material is wel-
come. For return, include a
self-addressed, stamped
envelope.

To Subscribe:
By phone: Call 1-800-537-
5971 to order using Visa,
MasterCard, Discover Card,
or American Express. Online:
Go to www.ldscatalog.com.
By mail: Send \$8 U.S.
check or money order to
Distribution Services,
P.O. Box 26368,
Salt Lake City, UT
84126-0368, USA.

To change address:
Send old and new address
information to Distribution
Services at the address
above. Please allow 60 days
for changes to take effect.

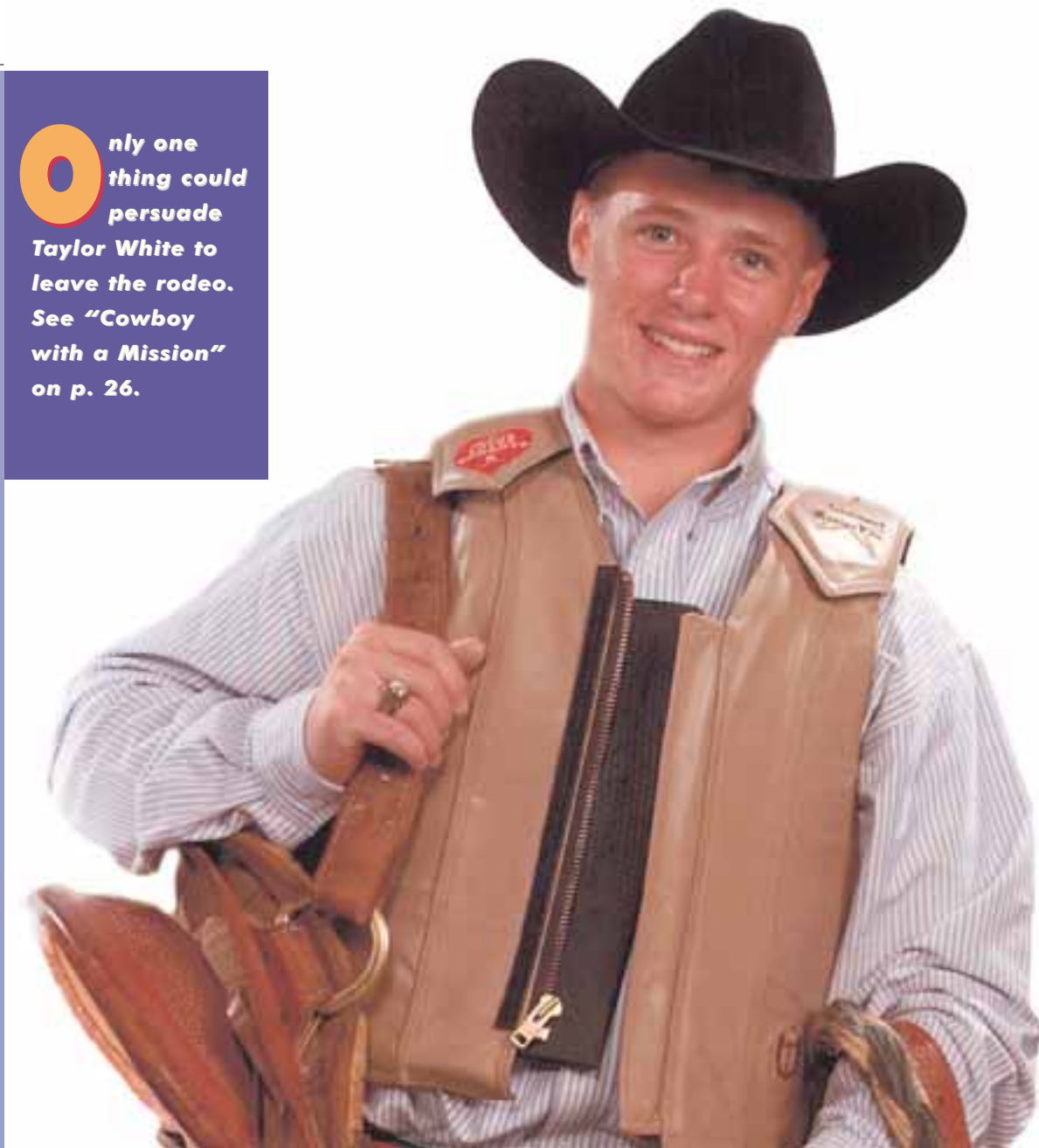
Cover: Taylor White from
Richfield, Utah, gives up
rodeo for a mission. See
"Cowboy with a Mission"
on p. 26.

Cover photography:
David Jennings (front)
and Christina Smith
(back)

**Only one
thing could
persuade**

**Taylor White to
leave the rodeo.**

**See "Cowboy
with a Mission"
on p. 26.**



Voice Lessons, p. 42



Sing out Strong, p. 20

**The Message:
Eight Ways God Can Speak to You** 4
Elder Dallin H. Oaks
*You have already received revelations,
and you can receive many more.*

**Line upon Line:
Moroni 10:3–5** 9
*A promise to you from a Book of
Mormon prophet.*

Elder Neal A. Maxwell: A Devoted Life 10
*Elder Maxwell served faithfully
as an Apostle for 23 years.*

The First Latter-day Missionary 12
Ryan Carr
*Samuel Smith, the Prophet Joseph’s
younger brother, went on the first
latter-day mission.*

**Q&A:
Questions and Answers** 16
*After a spiritual experience, the feeling
fades so soon I begin to wonder if
what I felt was real. How can I be
sure that feeling came from the Spirit?*

**New Era Poster:
Lift Your Thoughts** 19

Sing out Strong 20
Janet Thomas
A stake choir festival makes a splash.

The Gift and Guide 24
Elder Jorge L. del Castillo
*The Holy Ghost can give warnings and
help protect against sin.*

Cowboy with a Mission 26
Paul VanDenBerghe
*Taylor White, all-around high school
champion cowboy, is turning in his
boots for missionary shoes.*

Now I Understand 32
Fábio Henrique N. da Silva
*The answers came when I learned the
Book of Mormon is true.*

Money Matters 34
Kristi Linton
Saving and spending—some good advice.

Not Really Homeless 39
Loucas Soares Nobre
In finding a home, I found Christ.

Of All Things 40

Voice Lessons 42
Shanna Butler
Whose voices do you recognize?

**Idea List:
Ten Terrific Teaching Tips** 44
*How do you teach a great lesson? Here
are some teaching ideas that work.*

The Extra Smile 45

Instant Messages 46
*Remembering Christ; overcoming fear;
getting a wake-up call; dealing
with moving; including others.*

What’s in It for You 49

We’ve Got Mail 50

**Poem:
The Gardener** 51
Ellen Fagg

Photo of the Month 51
Eric Swenson

Text and visual material in the New Era may be copied for incidental, noncommercial church or home use. Visual material may not be copied if restrictions are indicated in the credit line with the artwork. Copyright questions should be addressed to Intellectual Property Office, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150; telephone: 801-240-3959; e-mail: cor-intellectualproperty@ldschurch.org.

The First Presidency:
Gordon B. Hinckley,
Thomas S. Monson,
James E. Faust

Quorum of the Twelve:
Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry,
David B. Haight, Neal A.
Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson,
Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell
Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin,
Richard G. Scott, Robert D.
Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland,
Henry B. Eyring

Editor: Jay E. Jensen
Advisers: Monte J. Brough,
W. Rolfe Kerr
Managing Director:
David Frischknecht
Planning and Editorial
Director: Victor D. Cave
Graphics Director:
Allan R. Loyborg

Magazines Editorial Director:
Richard M. Romney
Managing Editor:
R. Val Johnson
Editorial Staff:
Collette Nebeker Aune,
Susan Barrett, Shanna Butler,
Ryan Carr, Marvin K. Gardner,
Jennifer L. Greenwood, Carrie
Kasten, Lacey McMurry, Sally J.
Odekirk, Adam C. Olson, Roger
Terry, Janet Thomas, Paul
VanDenBerghe

Managing Art Director:
M. M. Kawasaki
Art Director: Brent Christison
Senior Designer: Fay P. Andrus

Marketing Manager:
Larry Hiller
Printing Director:
Craig K. Sedgwick
Distribution Director:
Kris T Christensen

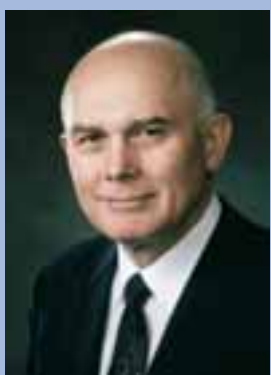
© 2004 by Intellectual
Reserve, Inc. All rights
reserved. Periodicals Postage
Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah, and
at additional mailing offices.
The *New Era* (ISSN 0164-5285)
is published monthly by The
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-
day Saints, 50 East North
Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT
84150-3225, USA.

POSTMASTER: Send address
changes to Distribution
Services, Church Magazines,
P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City,
UT 84126-0368 USA.

Canada Post Information:
Publication Agreement
#40017431.

8 WAYS GOD CAN SPEAK TO YOU

BY ELDER DALLIN H. OAKS
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



I know that God lives and that revelation to His children is a reality.

As a young girl, my grandmother Chasty Olsen Harris was tending some children who were playing in a dry riverbed near their home in Castle Dale, Utah. Suddenly she heard a voice that called her by name and directed her to get the children out of the riverbed and up on the bank. It was a clear day, and there was no sign of rain. She saw no reason to heed the voice and continued to play. The voice spoke to her again, urgently. This time she heeded the warning. Quickly gathering the children, she made a run for the bank. Just as they reached the bank, an enormous wall of water, originating with a cloudburst in the mountains many miles away, swept down the canyon and roared across where the children had played.

Revelation is communication from God to man. It can occur in many different ways. Some prophets, like Moses and Joseph Smith, have talked with God face to face.

Some persons have had personal communication with angels. Other revelations have come, as Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described it, “through the dreams of sleep or in waking visions of the mind.”¹

In its more familiar forms, revelation or inspiration comes by means of words or thoughts communicated to the mind (see Enos 1:10; D&C 8:2–3), by sudden enlightenment (see D&C 6:14–15), by positive or negative feelings about proposed courses of action, or even by inspiring performances, as in the performing arts. As President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has stated, “Inspiration comes more as a feeling than as a sound.”²

Purposes for Revelation

Search your own experience. You have already received revelations, and you can receive more revelations because

communication from God to men and women is a reality. President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) declared that it is “the grand privilege of every Latter-day Saint . . . to have the manifestations of the spirit every day of our lives.”³

As I review the following eight purposes of revelation, I hope you will recognize the extent to which you have already received revelation or inspiration and resolve to cultivate this spiritual gift for more frequent use in the future.

1. *The testimony or witness of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ and that the gospel is true is a revelation from God.*

When the Apostle Peter affirmed that Jesus Christ was the Son of the living God, the Savior called him blessed, “for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:17).

2. *Prophecy is another purpose or function of revelation.*

Speaking under the influence of the Holy Ghost and within the limits of his or her responsibility, a person may be inspired to predict what will come to pass in the future. The one who holds the office of the prophet, seer, and revelator prophesies for the Church, as when Joseph Smith prophesied concerning the American Civil War (see D&C

87) and foretold that the Saints would become a mighty people in the Rocky Mountains.⁴ Prophecy is part of the calling of a patriarch. Each of us is also privileged occasionally to receive prophetic revelation illuminating future events in our lives, like a Church calling we are to receive.

As a girl, my grandmother and the children she was tending would have been lost except for impelling revelation.



ILLUSTRATED BY JUSTIN KUNZ

3. A *third purpose of revelation is to give **comfort**.*

Such a revelation came to the Prophet Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail. After many months in deplorable conditions, he cried out in agony and loneliness, pleading for the Lord to remember him and the persecuted Saints. The comforting answer came:

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes” (D&C 121:7–8).

In that same revelation the Lord declared that no matter what tragedies or injustices should befall the Prophet, “Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7).

A revelation of comfort can also come in connection with a blessing of the priesthood, either from the words spoken or simply from the feeling communicated in connection with the blessing.

Another type of comforting revelation is the assurance received that a sin has been forgiven. This revelation, which comes when a person has completed all the steps of repentance, gives assurance that the price has been paid, that God has heard the repentant sinner, and that his or her sins are forgiven.

4. *Closely related to the feeling of comfort is the fourth purpose or function of revelation, to **uplift**.*

At some time in our lives each of us needs to be lifted up from a depression, from a sense of foreboding or inadequacy, or just from a plateau of spiritual mediocrity. Because it raises our spirits and helps us resist evil and seek good, I believe that the feeling of uplift that is communicated by reading the scriptures or by enjoying wholesome music, art, or literature is

a distinct purpose of revelation.

5. *The fifth purpose of revelation is to **inform**.*

This may consist of inspiration giving a person the words to speak on a particular occasion, such as in the blessings pronounced by a patriarch or in sermons or other words spoken under the influence of the Holy Ghost. The Lord commanded Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to lift up their voices and speak the thoughts that would be put into their hearts, “for it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say”



(D&C 100:6; see also D&C 84:85; 124:97).

In other circumstances, needed information is communicated by the quiet whisperings of the Spirit. A child loses a treasured possession, prays for help, and is inspired to find it; an adult has a problem at work, at home, or in family history research, prays, and is led to the information necessary to resolve it; a Church leader prays to know whom the Lord would have him call to fill a position, and the Spirit whispers a name. In all of these examples, familiar to each of us, the Holy Ghost acts in His office as a teacher and revelator, communicating information and truths for the edification and guidance of the recipient.

6. *The sixth type or purpose of revelation is to **restrain** us from doing something.*

The revelation that restrains is one of the most common forms of revelation. It often comes by surprise, when we have not asked for revelation or guidance on a particular subject. But if we are keeping the commandments of God and living in tune with His Spirit, a restraining force will steer us away from things we should not do.

7. *A common way to seek revelation is to propose a particular course of action and then to pray for inspiration to **confirm** it.*

The Lord explained the confirming type of revelation when Oliver Cowdery failed in his efforts to translate the Book of Mormon:

“Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.

“But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within



you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right” (D&C 9:7–8).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stressed our responsibility to do all that we can before we seek a revelation: “We’re expected to use the gifts and talents and abilities, the sense and judgment and agency with which we are endowed. . . . We’re expected to do everything in our power that we can, and then to seek an answer from the Lord, a confirming seal that we’ve reached the right conclusion.”⁵

8. *The eighth purpose or type of revelation consists of those instances where the Spirit **impels** a person to action.*

This is not a case where a person proposes to take a particular action and the Spirit either confirms or restrains. This is a case where revelation comes when it is not being sought and impels some action not proposed. This type of revelation is obviously less common than other types, but its rarity makes it all the more significant.

Except for this type of impelling revelation, my grandmother and the children she

Revelation comforted the Prophet Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail: “My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment.” Closely related to the feeling of comfort is the feeling of uplift—communicated by reading the scriptures or enjoying wholesome music, art, or literature.



Where we are living in tune with the Spirit and seeking its guidance, we can be sure that we will receive the guidance we need to attain our goal. The Lord will not leave us unassisted when a choice is important to our eternal welfare.

was tending would have been lost in the river.

When You Don't Receive Revelation

Before concluding, I will suggest a few ideas about revelations that are not received.

First, we should understand what can be called the principle of "responsibility in revelation."

When one person purports to receive revelation for another person outside his or her own area of responsibility—such as a Church member who claims to have revelation to guide the entire Church or a person who claims to have a revelation to guide another person over whom he or she has no presiding authority according to the order of the Church—you can be sure that such revelations are not from the Lord.

We do not always receive inspiration or revelation when we request it. Sometimes we are delayed in the receipt of revelation, and sometimes we are left to our own judgment. We cannot force spiritual things. It must be so. Our life's purpose to obtain

experience and to develop faith would be frustrated if our Heavenly Father directed us in every act, even in every important act. We must make decisions and experience the consequences in order to develop self-reliance and faith.

Even in decisions we think very important, we sometimes receive no answer to our prayers. This does not mean that our prayers have not been heard. It means only that we have prayed about a decision that, for one reason or another, we should make without guidance by revelation. Perhaps we have asked for guidance in choosing between alternatives that are equally acceptable or equally unacceptable.

Similarly, the Spirit of the Lord is not likely to give us revelations on matters that are trivial.

If a matter appears of little or no consequence, we should proceed on the basis of our own judgment. If the choice is important for reasons unknown to us, the Lord will intervene and give us guidance. Where we are living in tune with the Spirit and seeking its guidance, we can be sure that we will receive the guidance we need to attain our goal. The Lord will not leave us unassisted when a choice is important to our eternal welfare.

I know that God lives and that revelation to His children is a reality. I pray that we will be worthy and willing and that He will bless us to grow in this principle of revelation. **NE**

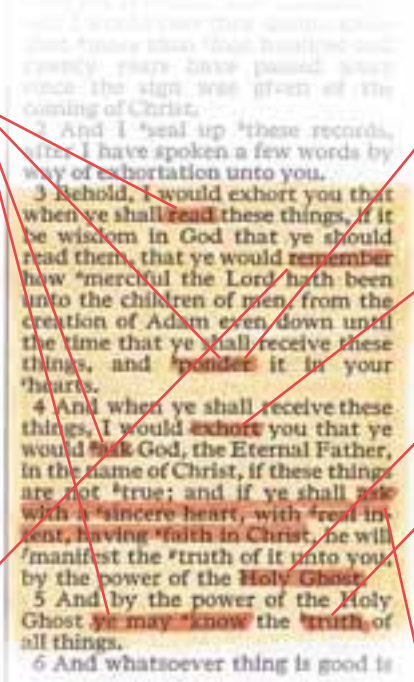
From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on 29 September 1981.

NOTES

1. *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. (1924), 229.
2. "Prayers and Answers," *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 20.
3. In Conference Report, Apr. 1899, 52.
4. See *History of the Church*, 5:85.
5. "Agency or Inspiration—Which?" in *Speeches of the Year, 1972–73* (1973), 108, 113.

MORONI 10:3-5

Moroni's promise is to all who read the Book of Mormon.



The pattern Moroni gives us shows up again and again in the scriptures.

1. Read.
2. Remember and ponder.
3. Ask.

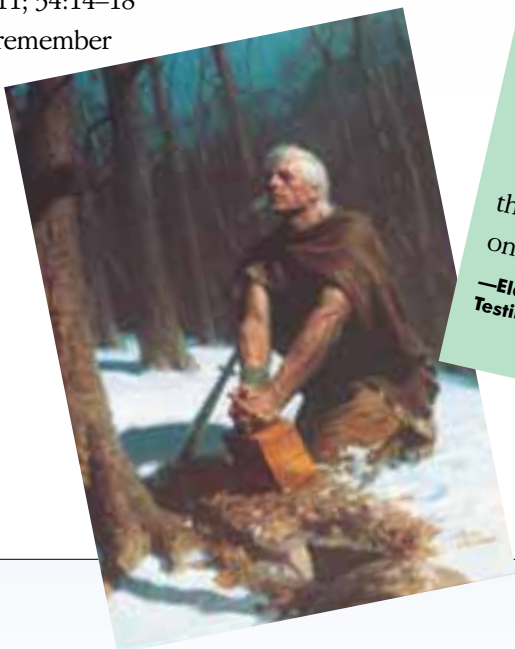
Lehi, Nephi, and Joseph Smith all read, pondered, and asked before they knew the truth.

The next time you read the scriptures, look for this pattern, and apply it in your life to strengthen or gain your testimony of the Book of Mormon.

Moroni asks us to remember how merciful the Lord has been. You can read about God's mercy to His children throughout the scriptures. Here are a few verses to get you started:

- 2 Nephi 4:20–26
- Mosiah 29:18–20
- Alma 33:3–11; 34:14–18

You can also remember times in your own life when the Lord has been merciful to you and record them in your journal.



To ponder—to think about, consider, or reflect on something for a time

To exhort—to make an urgent appeal; to use reasoning to encourage good works

See 1 Nephi 10:17–19.

See D&C 93:24.

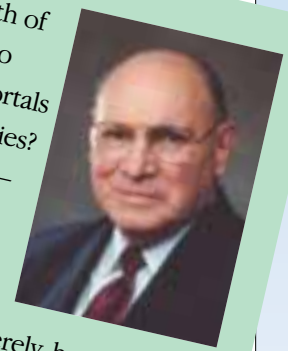
Editor's note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected scripture verses, only a starting point for your own study.

“Do you want to know the truth of the holy scriptures? Do you wish to break the barriers that separate mortals from the knowledge of eternal verities? Do you wish to know—really know—the truth? Then follow Moroni’s counsel and you will surely find what you seek.

“Be sincere. Study. Ponder. Pray sincerely, having faith.

“If you do these things, you too will be able to stand with the millions who testify that God once again speaks to man on earth.”

—Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Pure Testimony,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 23.



ELDER NEAL A. MAXWELL: A DEVOTED LIFE

On 21 July 2004, Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, passed away after an eight-year battle with leukemia. At the time of his death, he was with his family at his home in Salt Lake City. Elder Maxwell was 78 years old and had served as a General Authority for more than 30 years. He served as an Assistant to the Twelve, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of Seventy, and as an Apostle.



experience while in a fierce battle on Okinawa, Japan. During a battle, Neal’s mortar position was under fire. Three shells in a row had exploded, each closer to his foxhole than the previous one. He realized the enemy had determined his position. The next shell would land on top of him. He prayed “one of those selfish, honest prayers,”³ asking for protection from the next bomb. In his pocket he carried a copy of his patriarchal blessing that said his life would not be shortened and that he

Born on 6 July 1926 in Salt Lake City, Utah, Neal Ash Maxwell was the oldest of six children. He grew up in a loving family with five uncles determined to make their first nephew into an all-state basketball player. Hoping to play on the famous Granite High School team, Neal worked very hard practicing his basketball skills. Unfortunately, he stopped growing at a critical time and would not reach his adult height until after high school. As he described later, not making the team was his “first real disappointment in life.”¹

In his teen years, Neal also suffered from severe acne and was teased because he raised pigs, a project he had participated in since a young boy. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, also of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said the compassion evident in Elder Maxwell’s speaking and writing was developed in his teenage years. “What scarred the skin,” Elder Holland said, “seems to have softened the heart.”²

After graduating from high school towards the end of World War II, Neal joined the army. He had a life-changing

would not be deprived of fulfilling every assignment that was given to him in the premortal existence.

The shelling stopped. He later wrote: “I am sure the Lord answered my prayers. . . . The following night they began to pour shells in, but almost all of them were duds—either the ammunition had gotten wet or they



Displaying ribbons for his prize pigs.



In the army.

After serving successfully, he returned to attend college and prepared to enter a career as an educator. He married Colleen Hinckley, and their family grew to include four children (Cory, Becky, Nancy, and Jane) and 24 grandchildren.

He was executive vice president at the University of Utah at the time of his appointment as the commissioner of education for the Church Educational System in 1970. He held that position for six years. He was called as an Assistant to the Twelve in 1974.

In 1976 he was called to the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and in July 1981, he was called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.



At conference after undergoing treatment for cancer.

were not exploding in the very thick, oozing mud. . . . I felt preserved, and unworthily so, but have tried to be somewhat faithful to that promise that was given at the time.”⁴

After fulfilling his enlistment in the army, Elder Neal Maxwell was called to a full-time mission in the Canadian Mission, with headquarters in Toronto.



Serving a mission in Canada.

Known for his extensive vocabulary and elegant writing style, Elder Maxwell has always presented a challenge to translators. During one general conference, the translators had categorized each talk in levels of difficulty. All of the talks fit in levels one through four except Elder Maxwell’s. His talk was alone at level five.⁵

President Gordon B. Hinckley said Elder Maxwell spoke “differently



Elder Maxwell and his wife, Colleen.

from any of the other General Authorities. He just has a unique style all his own. We all admire it.”⁶

Towards the end of his life and while struggling with leukemia, Elder Maxwell had a sacred experience that he could only compare with what happened half a century before on Okinawa. The Spirit whispered, “I have given you leukemia that you might teach my people with authenticity.”⁷

Elder Maxwell will be remembered for his stirring words as he acted as a special witness for Christ. **NE**

NOTES

1. Bruce C. Hafen, *A Disciple’s Life: The Biography of Neal A. Maxwell* (2002), 85.
2. *A Disciple’s Life*, 91.
3. *A Disciple’s Life*, 110.
4. *A Disciple’s Life*, 110.
5. *A Disciple’s Life*, 521.
6. *A Disciple’s Life*, 520.
7. *A Disciple’s Life*, 562.



At the Lick Observatory during the filming of Special Witnesses of Christ.

The FIRST

BY RYAN CARR
Church Magazines



In 1830 Joseph Smith's younger brother Samuel, carrying copies of the recently printed Book of Mormon, spent the first night of his mission under an apple tree.

What if you had to go on a mission alone—no companion, no training at the Missionary Training Center, no missionary lessons to teach from, and only your testimony, the Spirit, and the Book of Mormon to help you? How would you do?

Samuel Smith—the first official missionary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—did just that. Samuel, the Prophet Joseph's younger brother, was 22 at the time of his first mission. As he walked alone into towns near Palmyra, New York, he carried only a knapsack full of copies of the recently printed Book of Mormon.

As Samuel was growing up, the Smiths studied the Bible and had family prayers. During his teenage years, Samuel knew the Restoration was in progress. In the evenings he gathered with his family to hear Joseph talk about the plan of salvation and “the great and glorious things which God had manifested to him.”¹

When Samuel was 21, he went to Harmony, Pennsylvania, where his brother Joseph and Oliver Cowdery were translating the Book of Mormon. On 15 May 1829, just days before Samuel arrived, Joseph and Oliver had received the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist and had baptized each other with that newly conferred authority.

In Harmony, Joseph showed Samuel part of the Book of Mormon that he had

translated and “labored to persuade him concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which was now about to be revealed in its fulness.”

Joseph wrote that Samuel wasn't “very easily persuaded of these things,” so Samuel “retired to the woods, in order that by secret and fervent prayer he might obtain of a merciful God, wisdom to enable him to judge for himself. The result was that he obtained revelation for himself.”²

On 25 May 1829 Samuel was baptized, the third person in this dispensation—following Joseph and Oliver—to receive that ordinance. Later that year Samuel was one of the Eight Witnesses privileged to examine the gold plates. The next spring, on 6 April 1830, he was one of the six original members when the Church was formally organized. Others were also working to share the gospel, but in June 1830, Joseph set Samuel apart to be the Church's first officially called missionary.

Into the Mission Field

The first day of his mission, Samuel walked 25 miles (40 km). He visited four homes, but no one wanted to buy a copy of the Book of Mormon. Hungry, tired, and discouraged, he stopped that night at an inn. Samuel asked the innkeeper if he would like to buy a copy of the Book of Mormon.

“I do not know,” said the innkeeper. “How did you get hold of it?”

Latter-day Missionary

Samuel Smith, the first latter-day missionary, didn't know it at the time, but his efforts ended up bringing into the Church two of its greatest leaders.



ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT T. BARRETT



Samuel visited a farmhouse in New York, where he testified to Rhoda Greene (Brigham Young's sister) of the Book of Mormon.

"It was translated by my brother, from some gold plates that he found buried in the earth," Samuel explained.

"You liar! Get out of my house—you shan't stay one minute with your books," said the innkeeper. So the Church's first missionary slept that night under an apple tree on the cold, damp ground.³

The next morning Samuel gave a copy of the Book of Mormon to a poor widow who fed him breakfast. Then he walked 8 miles (13 km) and shared the Book of Mormon with John Greene, a Methodist minister, who took it only to see if others he knew might be interested in buying a copy. Mr. Greene's wife, Rhoda, was Brigham Young's sister, but Brigham had not yet been introduced to the Church.

When Samuel returned to the Greens' home in two weeks, he learned that Mr. Greene hadn't found anyone who was interested in the Book of Mormon. So

Samuel agreed to return in a few months. When he did, Mr. Greene wasn't home, but Mrs. Greene told Samuel that she had read the book "and was much pleased with it." The Spirit prompted Samuel to leave the book with her. She was so grateful "she burst into tears." Samuel then "explained to her the most profitable manner of reading the book . . . which was, to ask God, when she read it, for a testimony of the truth of what she had read, and she would receive the Spirit of God, which would enable her to discern the things of God."⁴

Later Mrs. Greene urged her husband to read the Book of Mormon too. He did, and they were soon baptized.

Converting a Future Prophet

In 1830 Samuel also sold a copy of the Book of Mormon to Brigham Young's brother: Phinehas (or Phineas) Young, a Methodist preacher. When he first met

Samuel, Phinehas was returning home on horseback from his preaching circuit. He had stopped at a farm for dinner. As he and the family were visiting, a young man, dressed in rough clothes, entered the room. Book in hand, the young man said to Phinehas, "There's a book, sir, I wish you to read."

"Pray, sir, what book have you?" Phinehas asked.

"The Book of Mormon, or, as it is called by some, the Golden Bible."

"Ah, so then it purports to be a revelation?" Phinehas asked.

The young man opened the book to the testimonies of the Three and Eight Witnesses and said, "Here is the testimony of the witnesses to the truth of the book."

Phinehas read their testimonies. When Phinehas looked up from his reading, the young man said, "If you will read this book with a prayerful heart and ask God to give you a witness, you will know the truth of the work."

Phinehas promised to read the book. Then he asked the young man's name.

"My name is Samuel H. Smith."

Phinehas had seen that name! "Then you are one of the witnesses."

"Yes," Samuel said. "I know the book is a revelation from God, translated by the power of the Holy Ghost, and that my brother, Joseph Smith, Jr., is a Prophet, Seer, and Revelator."

After arriving home Phinehas told his wife, "I have got a book here called the Book of Mormon, and it is said to be a revelation, and I wish to read it and make myself acquainted with its errors, so I can expose them to the world."

True to his promise, he read the Book of Mormon—



CONVERSION TO THE BOOK OF MORMON

"Conversion to [the Book of Mormon] is conversion to

Christ, because this book contains the words of Christ. . . .

"Additionally, conversion to this inspired book is conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ, because it contains the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. . . .

"Finally, conversion to the Book of Mormon is conversion to the divine, prophetic calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith. [The Book of Mormon] is the divine evidence of the truthfulness of Joseph Smith's calling."

—Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Book of Mormon: The Heart of Missionary Proselyting," *Ensign*, Sept. 2002, 14.

twice in two weeks. Rather than finding any errors, he became convinced the book was true. On Sunday, when his congregation asked for his opinion of the book, "he defended it for ten minutes, when suddenly the Spirit of God came on him with such force that in a marvelous manner he spoke at great length on the importance of it. . . . He closed by telling the people that he believed the book."⁵

That summer, the Young family, including Brigham, and their friends the Kimballs read the Book of Mormon and believed it.

Fill Your Knapsack

The first official latter-day missionary baptized no one and shared only a few copies of the Book of

Mormon. Samuel didn't know then that two of those copies would bring into the Church many faithful members, including Brigham Young, who presided over the Church from 1844 to 1877, and Heber C. Kimball, an Apostle from 1835 to 1868.

Like Samuel, you can fill your knapsack with copies of the Book of Mormon. Then share them, along with your testimony. As Samuel's brief mission shows, you may not always know who will be touched by reading the Book of Mormon. But you can count on Moroni's promise: if people pray sincerely about the Book of Mormon, God "will manifest the truth of it unto [them], by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Moroni 10:4). **NE**

NOTES

1. Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, ed. Preston Nibley (1958), 82.
2. *History of the Church*, 1:44.
3. The description of Samuel Smith's first mission comes from *History of Joseph Smith*, 168–71, 187–88.
4. *History of Joseph Smith*, 187.
5. The description of Phinehas Young's experience comes from S. Dilworth Young, "Here Is Brigham . . ." (1964), 50–52.

Q & A

“After a spiritual experience, the feeling fades so soon I begin to wonder if what I felt was real. How can I be sure that feeling came from the Spirit?”

NEW ERA

There’s a reason the Spirit is called “a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12). Most people learn to recognize the influence of the Spirit by effort and experience. Even some people in the scriptures had a hard time recognizing spiritual experiences (see 3 Nephi 9:20; 11:3–7).

Learn How the Spirit Speaks

The Lord told Oliver Cowdery two ways the Spirit speaks: “Thou hast inquired of me and I did *enlighten thy mind*; and now I tell thee these things that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth; . . .

“Cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

“Did I not speak *peace* to your mind concerning the matter?” (D&C 6:15, 22–23; emphasis added).

Have you also at times felt an enlightened mind? Have you also felt peace? Those are ways God can speak to you through the Holy Ghost. Other ways include feeling inspired to

■ **Learn about the Holy Ghost from the scriptures and Church leaders.**

■ **The Spirit enlightens your mind and gives you a feeling of peace.**

■ **The Spirit may also warn, teach, testify, fill your soul with joy, or inspire you to be good.**

■ **Do what invites the influence of the Spirit to be with you: pray, attend seminary, take the sacrament worthily, and so on.**

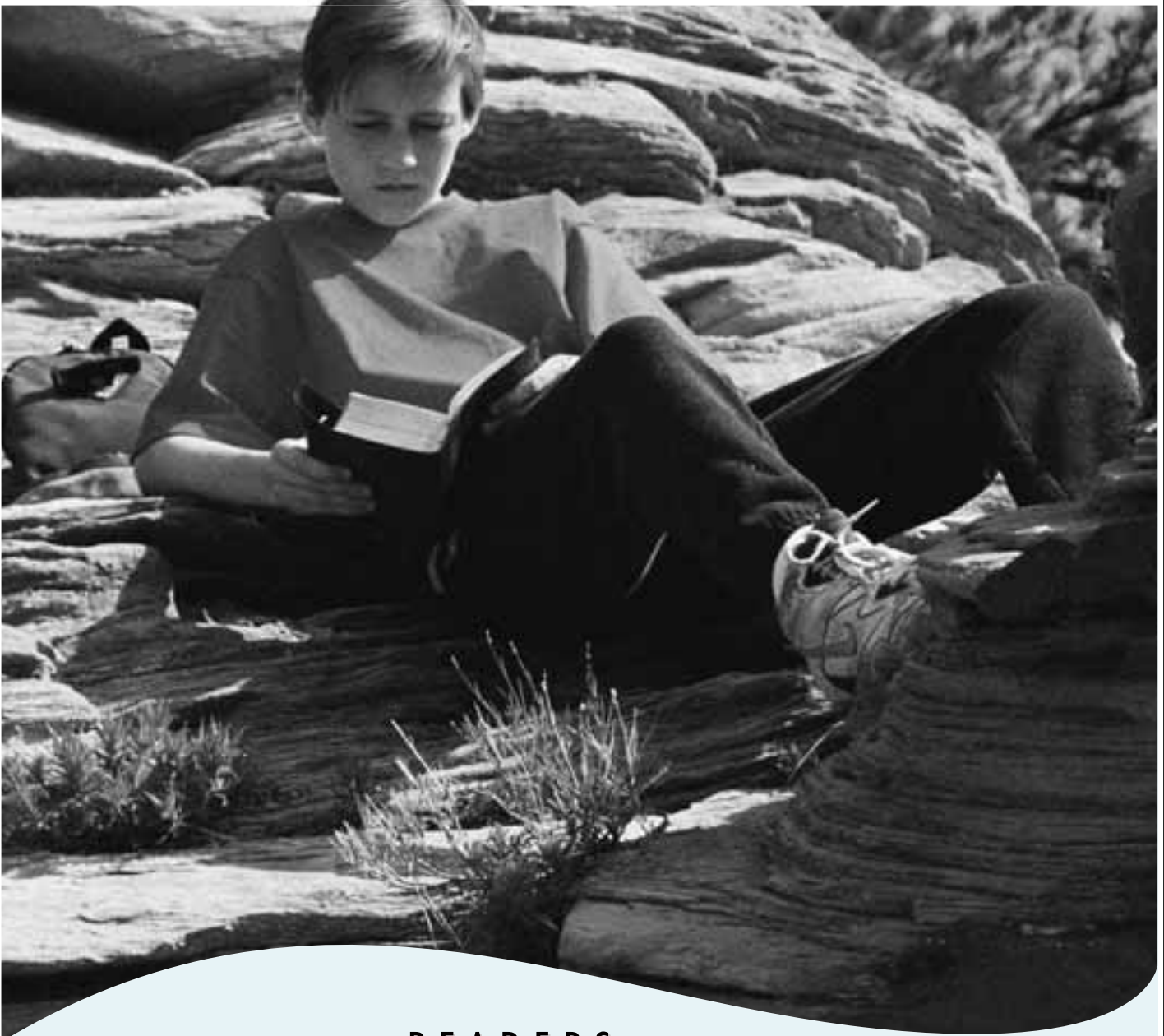
believe in Christ, to be humble or patient, or to do something good. (See Galatians 5:22; Moroni 7:12–17; D&C 11:12–13.)

Two recent *New Era* articles can help. In this issue, study “Eight Ways God Can Speak to You” on page 4. In July’s issue, see “Is It Revelation?” on page 44. They will teach you how to know if what you felt came from the Spirit.

Seek the Spirit

You can also learn to recognize spiritual experiences by doing things that invite the Spirit into your life. The Spirit testifies of Heavenly Father, so you may feel the influence of the Holy Ghost as you pray. The Spirit testifies of truth, so you may feel the Holy Ghost as you read the scriptures. The Spirit accompanies priesthood ordinances, so you may feel the Holy Ghost as you attend sacrament meeting. As you recognize the Spirit at these times, you can learn to recognize His promptings in your daily life.

Recognizing spiritual experiences can be hard because the devil wants you to forget or



READERS

doubt what you felt. Fortunately, spiritual experiences, though quiet, are unmistakable. Brigham Young said: “The Spirit of God filling the creature with revelation and the light of eternity, cannot be mistaken—the revelation which comes from God is never mistaken” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 319).

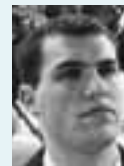
Recall the feeling you had. If you are honest with yourself and with Heavenly Father, you will know if that feeling came from God or not. **NE**



I can tell if what I am feeling is the Spirit by how I want to be during and after a spiritual experience. When I am filled with the Spirit,

I want to be righteous and return to my Father in Heaven. After a spiritual moment, I pray to see if my feelings were real. So far, Heavenly Father has answered my prayers every time.

Ashli Booth, 14, El Centro Ward,
Sacramento California North Stake



Spiritual experiences fade from us for a reason. If we had a spiritual experience that never faded, would we ever try to seek for others?

Compare it to the sun: when the sun sets, you don't give up hope. You remember it until it comes back.

Elder Devin Baker, 19, Illinois Chicago North Mission

The feelings were true if (1) you felt the joy and happiness the Spirit can give you; (2) you felt you were being blessed;

(3) you felt relieved of the troubles that were around you before the spiritual experience; and (4) joy replaced the troubled feelings.

Adrienne Lambert, 15, Saco Branch, Augusta Maine Stake



Pray about your feelings. Ask Heavenly Father if what you felt was real. Write your spiritual experiences in your journal. When you read them again, you will remember what you felt and why you felt that way. It has worked for me.

Kara Morris, 15, Grandview Second Ward,
Mesa Arizona Central Stake

One way I know that I have felt the Spirit is that I have a peaceful, calm feeling. If I have a prompting and I'm not sure it came from the Spirit, I think about it for a minute. If it is a prompting to do something good, I just do it.

Caitlyn Wright, 15, Kirkland First Ward,
Kirkland Washington Stake



When I am blessed with a spiritual experience, the first thing I do is write it in my journal. I try to write down every detail and feeling. That way, when I am struggling, I can remember the Spirit I felt, and it is a testimony to me.

Maddison DeWolf, 14, Lakeside 10th Ward,
Provo Utah West Stake



To recognize revelation, do the good things you are prompted to do. As you exercise faith and act on the feelings you receive, you become acquainted with the Holy Ghost.

Elder Josiah Umeh, 20, Nigeria Uyo Mission

All good things come from the Lord. I have discovered, however, that Satan is real as well. Every time you feel the Spirit and peace comes into your soul, Satan is doing his best to push the peace out.



The voice of the Spirit is a still, small voice—a voice that is felt rather than heard. It is a spiritual voice that comes into the mind as a thought put into your heart.”

—President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Cloven Tongues of Fire,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 8.

But you have the Lord on your side. Never give up, and continue to pray to have the Spirit with you.

Melissa Peay, 19, Morgan Sixth Ward, Morgan Utah Stake



Sharing your experience can bring back the Spirit. It can also help the other person to feel the Spirit. Prayer is another way. I believe the more you pray, the more spiritual

experiences you will have and the more your testimony will grow.

Kari Vanzanten, 17, Crockett Ward,
Logan Utah Mount Logan Stake



If you start to wonder if the feeling was real, you should try to continue to do things that will help you feel the Spirit. As you feel the Spirit more often, you will begin to more easily

recognize those feelings.

Annie Tanner, 18, Kirksville Second Ward,
Nauvoo Illinois Stake

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

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send your answer to the question below, along with your name, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and a photograph to:

Q&A, New Era

50 East North Temple Street, Floor 24

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail:

cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by 15 October 2004.

QUESTION

“I’m only 14, and I know we aren’t supposed to date until we’re 16. But a lot of friends my age at school have a girlfriend or boyfriend, even though they don’t really date. Is anything wrong with this?”

LIFT YOUR THOUGHTS

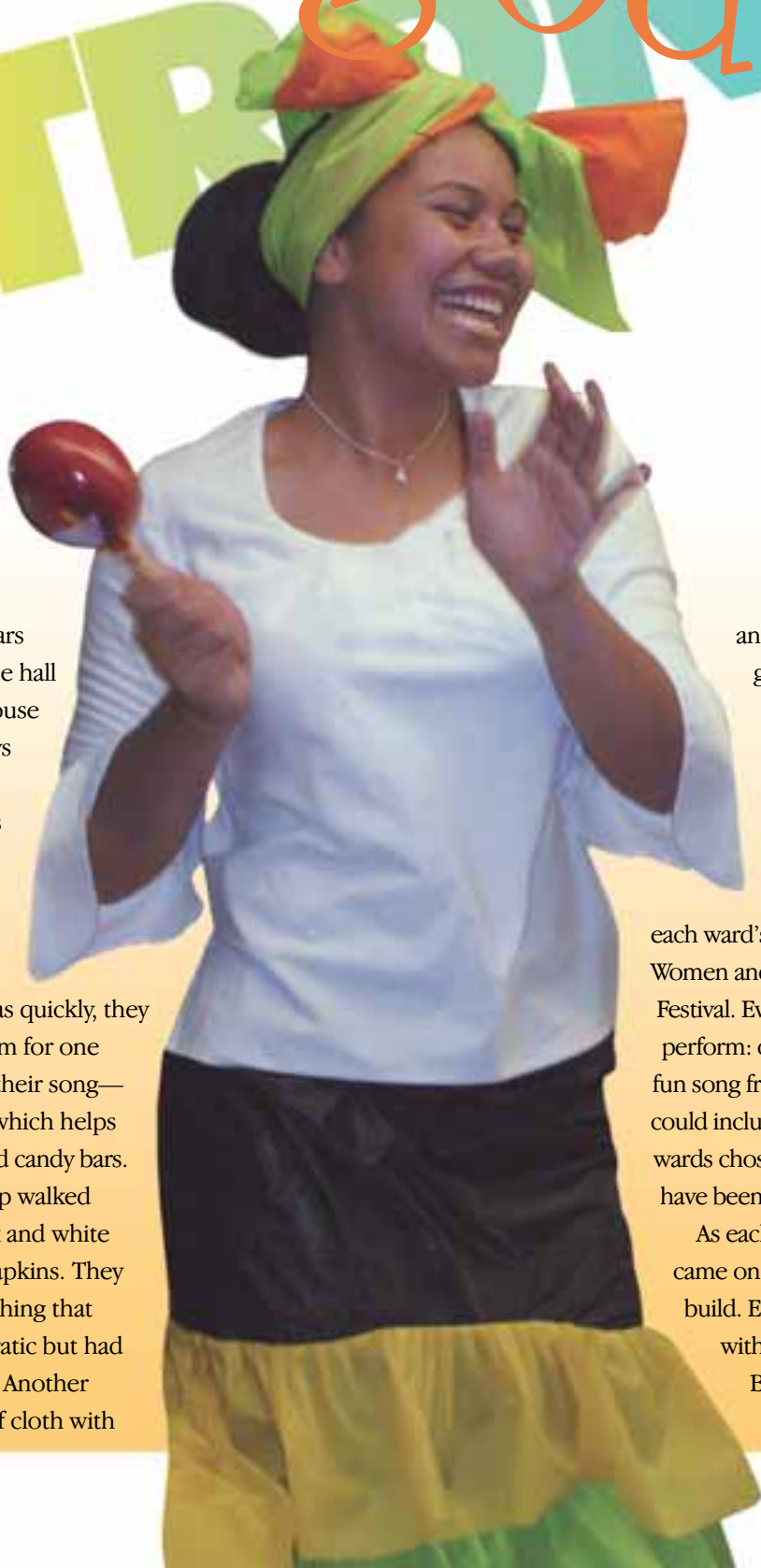


CHOOSE TO ELEVATE YOUR
THOUGHTS TO A HIGHER LEVEL.
(See Philippians 4:8.)



Sing Out

STRONG



BY JANET THOMAS
Church Magazines

Suddenly, the cars arrived, and the hall of the stake house was crowded with boys in straw hats covered with cookies, and girls in neon yellow, green, and orange skirts with big bows holding giant candy bars as hats. And just as quickly, they gathered in a classroom for one more run-through of their song—“Buy Me Chocolate,” which helps explain the cookies and candy bars.

Then another group walked by, all dressed in black and white with red-checkered napkins. They were humming something that sounded vaguely operatic but had tongue-twisting lyrics. Another group had swatches of cloth with

an African print. They were going over some steps in a dance.

The cultural hall of the Salt Lake Hunter Stake was filled wall to wall with families from nine wards, all waiting to see each ward’s performance in the Young Women and Young Men Choral Festival. Every ward had two songs to perform: one serious song and one fun song from another country that could include some dance steps. The wards chose from religious songs that have been printed in the *New Era*.

As each well-rehearsed ward came on stage, the energy began to build. Everyone was ready to sing with volume and enthusiasm.

But when the Mapusaga (Samoan) Ward came on

The participants of the Hunter stake choral festival crowd the stage after singing to a packed house.



(they were the ones with the chocolate song), the Caribbean rhythm had everyone moving. After that, there was no stopping them. Each ward put everything they had into their performances before an appreciative audience.

What was the best thing about holding a choral festival? “The practices were fun,” said Ashley Auva’a of the Mapusaga ward, “especially when we got into it. The best part was being with friends and

family and dressing up and dancing and having fun.”

Kiyana Aiono said, “We did our costumes together for a Young Women activity.” Ashley added, “They look like fabric, but they’re really plastic tablecloths, so they were inexpensive. And they looked great on stage.”

Vini Purcell said, “It was fun to get to know a song from a different country.”

The teens in the Hunter 18th Ward felt the same way. They really liked learning a song from another culture. Their song had African origins. Kori Coombs said, “When I heard it I thought it was a great song. I liked the beat. Then we added some choreography, and we were grooving.”

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Hear all about it. The Church has a new music Web site. Visit www.lds.org/churchmusic to listen to hymns, download songs, or learn about music.





They also really liked their serious song. Jaynie Baker said, “I like the lyrics that say, ‘Our trust remains in Thee.’ It was a good song.”

Working together during practices, it seems, was everyone’s favorite part of the festival. The Hunter 25th Ward had a song with complicated words all about pasta. The Young Women leader worked out some actions to help everybody remember the words. Laura Buckner confesses, “I thought it was the worst song in the world at first, but it ended up being fun. And yes, every time we have pasta for dinner, I just start singing it.”

Their serious song left a similar impression. Eric Manwill said, “Every day I catch myself singing ‘Behold, the Field Is White’ in my head”—a good choice for a young man preparing for a mission.

The printed program identified which Personal Progress value experiences or Duty to God requirements participation in the festival helped fulfill. Singing in a program even fills a requirement for the music merit badge.

Why have a choral festival? The youth in the Hunter stake now know it means some fun times at practices and an even better time at the performance. And the audience agreed. **NE**



NOTE THIS

Participating in a choir or choral festival helps you fulfill requirements for Personal Progress, Duty to God, or the Boy Scout music merit badge.

■ **Personal Progress:** Value Experience in Individual Worth

■ **Duty to God:** *Deacon*—Educational, Personal, and Career Development write-in goal; *Teacher*—Educational, Personal, and Career Development write-in goal; *Priest*—Physical Development goal 6; Educational, Personal, and Career Development goal 11.



The **GIFT** *and* **GUIDE**

BY ELDER JORGE L. DEL CASTILLO

Area Authority Seventy
South America South Area



Cultivating the Holy Ghost as our guide can protect us as well as lead us to a testimony of the truth.

Where I grew up, just outside Buenos Aires, Argentina, soccer is very popular. When I was 10 or 11 years old, the boys in my neighborhood would get together to play in an empty lot on a corner where the truck and bus traffic was heavy.

One day as I sat on my bike at the curb watching some older boys play, I heard a voice say, “Jorge, scoot over.” I looked around, but there wasn’t anyone there with me. I was alone.

But I paid attention. I moved my bike just around the corner of the lot and went on watching the game from the curb of the other street. No more than a minute later, two trucks collided in the intersection and slid into the curb where I had been standing.

If I had stayed there, they would have smashed me. But someone told me—and I know who it was—that I should move just around the corner.

As members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we are blessed to have the gift of the Holy Ghost. If we will obey His promptings, we will be protected—not just physically, as I was at the soccer game, but spiritually as

well. Doing what is right isn’t always as easy as pedaling your bike a few feet, but cultivating the Spirit as our guide can protect us as well as lead us to a testimony of the truth.

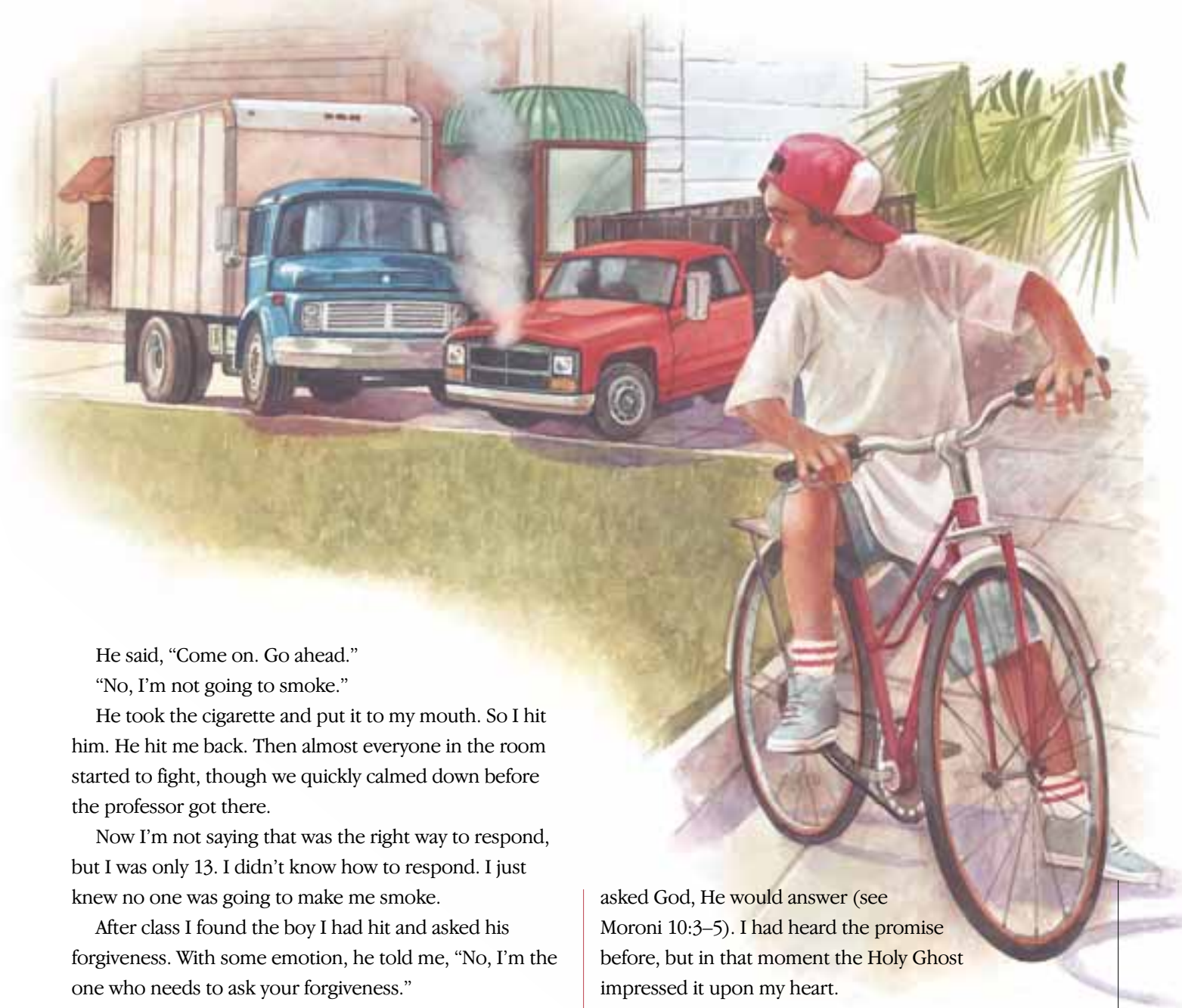
Standing Firm

As a teen I studied in a technical school for young men. It was hard to be a member of the Church in an atmosphere where there were other beliefs or no beliefs at all. Being the only member in school was difficult because I felt alone; I felt different. My classmates were relatively good, but many didn’t share my principles.

I remember well one time when they wanted to get me to smoke. They didn’t say it directly. Instead, one of them lit a cigarette while we were in our classroom waiting for the professor. We weren’t supposed to smoke inside the school.

I was sitting in the back. The guys at the front of the room lit the cigarette, and they each took a puff and passed it on. Everyone was watching to see it get to me. Finally the guy in front of me took a puff and turned around.

I didn’t take the cigarette.



He said, “Come on. Go ahead.”

“No, I’m not going to smoke.”

He took the cigarette and put it to my mouth. So I hit him. He hit me back. Then almost everyone in the room started to fight, though we quickly calmed down before the professor got there.

Now I’m not saying that was the right way to respond, but I was only 13. I didn’t know how to respond. I just knew no one was going to make me smoke.

After class I found the boy I had hit and asked his forgiveness. With some emotion, he told me, “No, I’m the one who needs to ask your forgiveness.”

If I had lowered my standards, would the Holy Ghost have stayed with me? Or would I have lost my guide?

By choosing the right, I allowed the Holy Ghost to be my companion. With Him as my guide, I had help making the right decisions, and my testimony was strengthened.

With the Help of the Holy Ghost

When I was 14 or 15 years old, I worked for my father in the family dry cleaning business during what free time I had. That summer, business was slow. So I said, “Okay, I want to read the entire Book of Mormon—from the first page to the last.” And I did. The reading excited me.

In the edition of the Book of Mormon I had, Moroni’s promise was printed on one of the opening pages. That promise struck me. If someone read the book and then

asked God, He would answer (see Moroni 10:3–5). I had heard the promise before, but in that moment the Holy Ghost impressed it upon my heart.

After finishing the last page of the book, I knelt in a small private room at work and prayed to Heavenly Father. And through the Holy Ghost I received the testimony I sought. From the tip of my toes to the last hair on my head, I felt that the Book of Mormon was the word of God and that Joseph Smith was a prophet.

Over the years I have had other sacred experiences with the Holy Ghost, but I have always remembered these first experiences. The Holy Ghost has helped me make good decisions. He guided me as I tried to live the gospel. He guided me in my decision to serve a mission. He guided me in finding a wonderful spouse—one of the most important decisions anyone will make in this life.

If you will strive to live worthy of His companionship, the Holy Ghost will guide you too. **NE**



Overlong

WITH A MISSION

BY PAUL VANDENBERGHE
Church Magazines

*Hanging on to a bucking bronco can be tough.
Hanging on to what you believe in can be just as hard.*

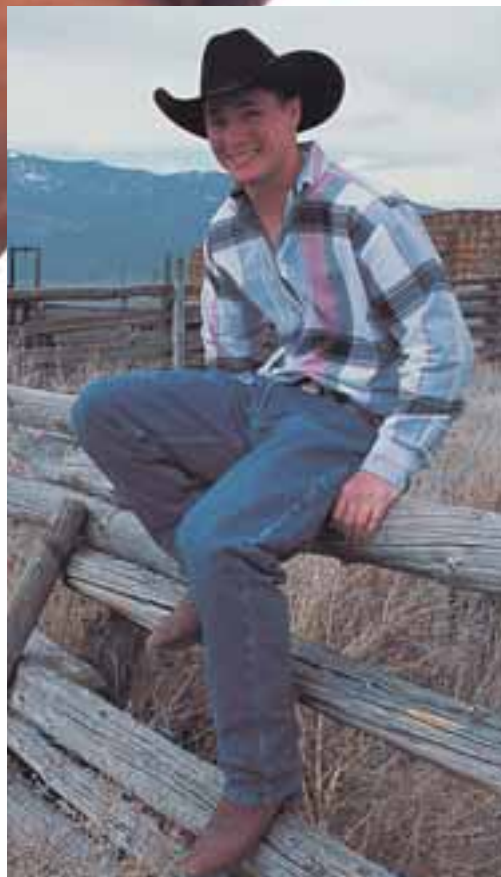
What would it be like to climb atop a 2,000-pound (907 kg), snorting, stomping Brahma bull and try to stay on for an eight-second ride? Just ask Taylor White. That's what he does, and he does it well. In fact, during his junior year in high school, he did it better than anyone else his age in the United States. Competing in just two roughstock events—saddle bronc and bull riding—he won the National High School Best All-Around Cowboy award at the national high school rodeo championship.

“I’ve put everything I’ve had into rodeo, and that’s why I’ve done what I’ve done,” says Taylor. “And now I’ve done the same thing preparing for a mission. While I’m out in the mission field, I’ll get so much more out of it because I’ve put everything I have into preparing for it.”

Taylor doesn't seem to do anything halfway. His rodeo successes earned him a scholarship to one of the top rodeo colleges in the U.S., Southwest Oklahoma State University.

It was in Oklahoma that Taylor's priorities shifted from rodeo to serving the Lord. At college, Taylor found himself immersed among people with different beliefs. It was quite a change from his hometown of Richfield, Utah, where it seemed everyone around him was a member of the Church. “I got to thinking, ‘There’s got to be something about these different religions and beliefs that these people have that makes them believe it’s true.’ And I thought, ‘I’ve got to find out for myself.’”

Just as Joseph Smith did, Taylor turned to the scriptures and prayer to find the truth. “I really started studying the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon,” Taylor says. “The



Rodeo was everything to Taylor White, but he was willing to give it up for two years to serve the Lord. At the family ranch (left) in Richfield, Utah, Taylor has climbed off the broncs and bulls to ride a missionary's bicycle in Cambodia.

PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR, EXCEPT AS NOTED; RODEO PHOTOGRAPH BY HIRSCHMAN PHOTOS



gospel just made so much sense once I started reading and once I really started focusing and trying to understand what I wanted. It took me going out to Oklahoma and having all those people question my faith. I had to find out for myself.”

Overcoming Fear

So what is it like to ride one of those hulking bulls? “I’m scared every time I get on a bull,” Taylor says. “There’s always that little bit of fear inside of you. But that’s the neat thing—being able to overcome that fear.” And it’s preparation that helps him overcome the fear. Because Taylor has trained since he was only four or five years old, he knows what to do. “Everything happens so fast when you ride,” explains Taylor. “It’s not like when you’re playing football, where you can read what different players are doing and know what to do. I still think when I’m riding, but it’s more of a reaction than it is thinking

about what you’re doing.”

Also, there’s never been a time when Taylor has climbed on a bull or a bronco without first saying a prayer. “I put my trust in the Lord,” Taylor says. “Whether it’s at practice or at a rodeo, I’ve always prayed that I’d be safe and that I’d have the Lord’s Spirit with me. God will answer your prayers. He doesn’t guarantee that you’re not going to get hurt, and He doesn’t guarantee that you’re going to ride and win, but He’s always there with you.”

Does Taylor have any fear about going on a mission? “I’m a little nervous,” he says. “I don’t know what it’s going to be like in Cambodia. I don’t know the challenges I’m going to have, but that’s what the Lord has asked me to do. I’ve heard how difficult the language is. And as time draws near, there are a lot of things I think about leaving behind, like rodeo and family. But I know I’m going for the right reason.”

The right reason is the Savior. “Jesus Christ came here and gave His life so we could have eternal life,” Taylor says emphatically. “I could spend every day of my life serving Him, and I still wouldn’t be able to repay Him for all He’s done for me. And all He’s asking is that I live my life right and serve a mission now. And that’s what I’m going to do.”

Taylor hopes the same things that have made him successful in rodeo will help him be a successful missionary: prayer, relying on the Lord, overcoming fears, and not letting anyone discourage him from his goals. He’s already done a lot of things many people have told him he’d never be able to do.

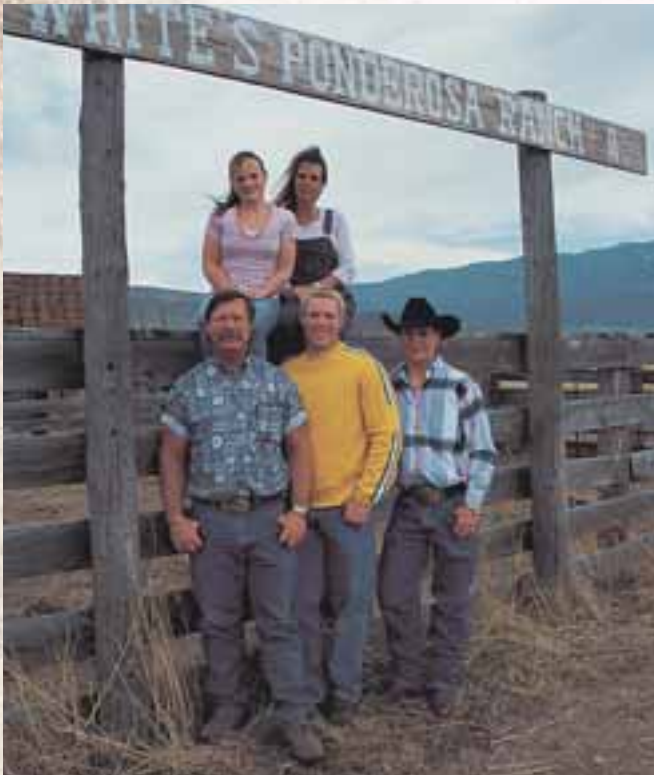
Putting Important Things First

Along with setting goals, it’s important to Taylor to keep his priorities straight. He tells about one of his teachers at school who brought a glass jar to class one day. Taylor explains: “She filled it up with pretty good-sized rocks and held it up and asked, ‘Is this jar full?’ And we all said, ‘Yeah, it’s filled right to the top.’”

The teacher then filled the jar with smaller pebbles, shook it a bit to let them settle, then poured in more pebbles until they filled the jar. Again she asked the



*R*iding a one-ton bull can teach you a lot about yourself. Taylor has also learned about responsibility and caring for animals as he helped raise bulls at his family's ranch.



class, “Is the jar full?”

They said yes.

She then poured sand into the jar. Letting the sand sift to the bottom, she finally filled the jar to the top. Now it was full.

Her point was that the large rocks are the important things in life; you must put them in first, or they won't fit. The smaller rocks and the sand—the less important things—can fit around them.

“To me, those important things in life are my family, the gospel, and my friends,” says Taylor. “The smaller ones are still important, like your schooling, your house. If we put the important things into our life first, and that's our priority, then everything else will fall into place. If we put the other things in first, we won't have room for the important things in life. And for me right now, the first one is serving a mission and living worthy to serve.”

Taylor's priorities include serving a mission and one day being sealed in the temple. “I know helping someone understand and accept the gospel will be more exciting

than my best rides,” says Taylor. “Serving a faithful mission is my top priority right now. I want to return to school and ride when I get home, but I know the day will come when I'll need to give up riding and all the time I spend on rodeos. Having a family is more important.”

What would it be like to climb on a bicycle and pedal through the Cambodian countryside, stopping to tell the people there about Jesus Christ, the plan of salvation, and the Restoration of the gospel? Just ask Taylor White when he gets back home in two years. He'll probably tell you it was the most rewarding ride of his life. **NE**

WHAT'S IN A RODEO?

Rodeos have seven events: saddle bronc riding, bull riding, bareback riding, team roping, steer wrestling, calf roping, and barrel racing. Taylor does saddle bronc and bull riding. Saddle bronc cowboys need finesse and a good sense of timing to stay on the horse, while bull riders rely more on strength, balance, and courage to hang on to the bull for eight seconds. In both events, riders hold on to the bucking animal with one hand.

The events are scored by two judges. They rate the animal's bucking ability and the rider's skill.

Some people are concerned that rodeo events hurt the animals. Actually, because the animals are so important to their owners, they are well taken care of and usually live longer than most livestock.

Cowboys use spurs, but only for balance. The spurs are small and dull. Sharp spurs are not allowed.

The bulls and broncos buck because a padded strap is placed around their hind quarters just loose enough that they try to buck it off. (See <http://rodeo.about.com>.)



*Opposite page:
When it comes to important things in life, family has always been at the top of Taylor's list. At their ranch are (clockwise from top) Taylor's sister, Maegen; mom, Danielle; Taylor; brother, Chet; and dad, Max. From champion cowboy to dedicated missionary, Elder White knows how important it is to keep the Lord first in everything he does.*

TOP: PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE WHITE FAMILY; LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINA SMITH

NOW

I UNDERSTAND

BY FÁBIO HENRIQUE N. DA SILVA

I first learned about the Church in June 1995, when I was 13 years old. I had always had the desire to know where I came from and where I would go when I died, but I had never sought the answers in any religion. I thought I would learn these things in time.

One night some friends and my older brother and I gathered to talk. While we talked, two missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints passed by us. The topic of our conversation changed to religion. My cousin said she was hearing the discussions from the missionaries and finding it very interesting. She told us about the Book of Mormon and someone named Joseph Smith. When she said, “Book of Mormon,” I was interested and asked to see the book. She said, “If any of you want to see the book, the missionaries will be at my house tomorrow. You can get a copy from them.” That was exactly what my brother and I did.

At the appointed time we were there to hear the discussion. We asked many questions. I felt so good hearing that message, and I was certain that what those missionaries said was true. The Spirit testified to me

When I heard about the Book of Mormon, I was intrigued. When I prayed about it, the Spirit told me it was true.

of the truthfulness of their words. On that same night my brother and I received a copy of the Book of Mormon.

After that, the missionaries came to our home and gave us the first discussion. Then came the invitation: “Will you pray to Heavenly Father to know if the Book of Mormon is true?” We both agreed to do it.

On the first night I prayed before sleeping, but I was so tired that I fell asleep without waiting for a response. On the second night I prayed again, but I didn’t receive an answer. The next night I prayed once again. I wanted to feel what the missionaries had taught me: “Your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right” (D&C 9:8). I prayed and waited, but I didn’t receive a response. Still, I went to bed certain that one day I would receive it.

The next day was the first Sunday of the month, and we went to church. It was then that it happened. During class I began to feel something I had never felt before—something that made me feel so happy. When sacrament meeting began I had a desire to bear my testimony, but I didn’t have the courage. However, I was certain that the

Book of Mormon was true.

My brother and I accepted the gospel without reluctance. We had testimonies of the Book of Mormon, and we knew that everything else the missionaries taught us would be true too.

We needed these testimonies to remain strong in the Church, for we faced many trials. My mother would not allow us to be baptized, but she did not stop us from going to church. We faithfully attended church and seminary. I also suffered persecution at school from people I thought were my friends. It was difficult, but these experiences strengthened my testimony.

After seven months a missionary challenged us to fast with him for the purpose of being baptized. When we ended the fast, the missionaries came to my house and spoke with my mother. To our great joy, she gave her permission for my brother and me to be baptized.

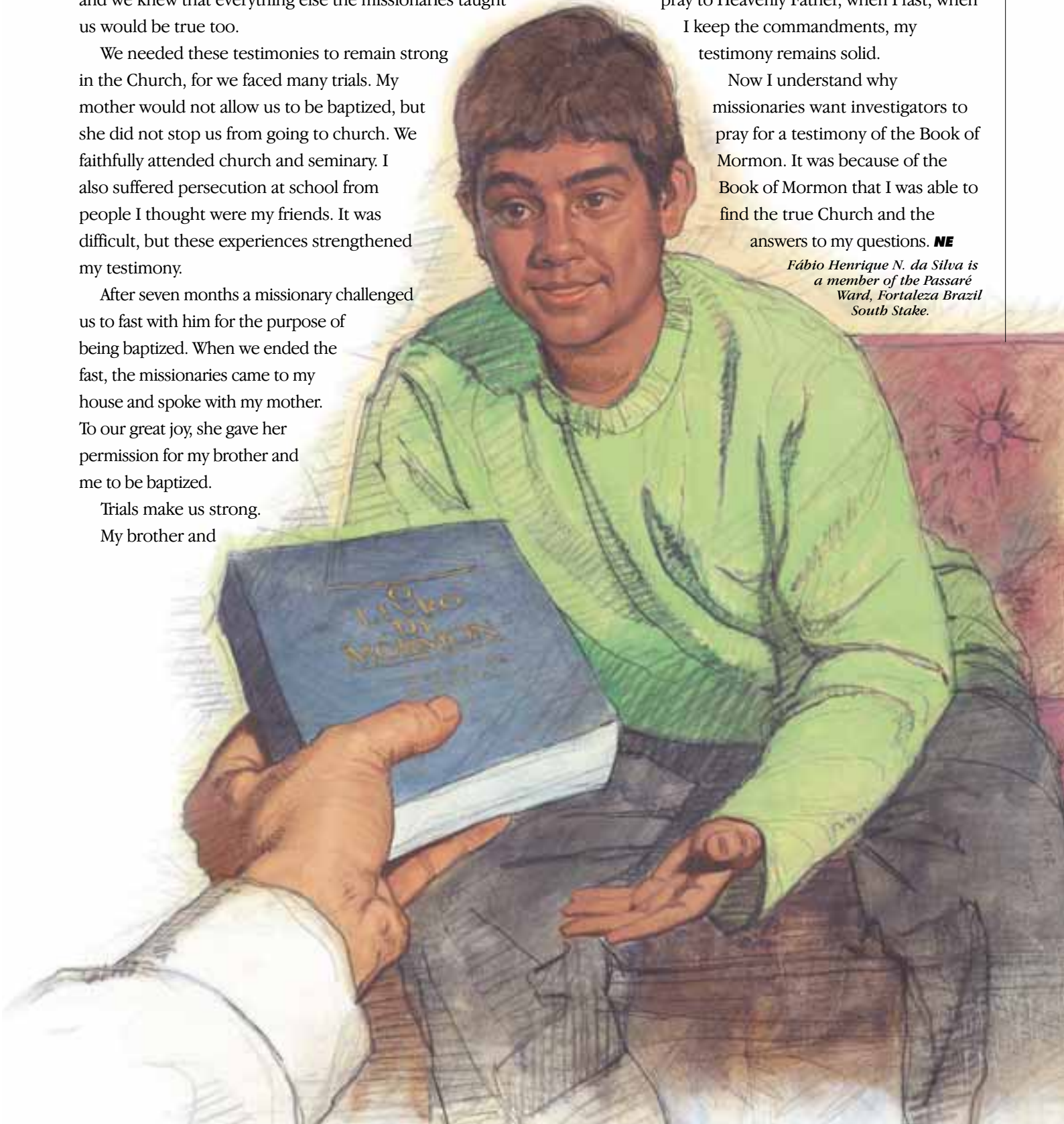
Trials make us strong.

My brother and

I are still strong in the Church. We have both served full-time missions. When I read the Book of Mormon, when I go to church, when I attend institute, when I pray to Heavenly Father, when I fast, when I keep the commandments, my testimony remains solid.

Now I understand why missionaries want investigators to pray for a testimony of the Book of Mormon. It was because of the Book of Mormon that I was able to find the true Church and the answers to my questions. **NE**

Fábio Henrique N. da Silva is a member of the Passaré Ward, Fortaleza Brazil South Stake.



MONEY MATTERS \$

BY KRISTI LINTON

Church Magazines

\$ *even ways
to put
money
in its place.*

I used to keep all my money in my sock drawer. It was really simple to budget: when I ran out, well, I ran out. But managing my money from my dresser drawer forever just wasn't realistic. I found that out when I got my first job and then again when I went away to college. My expenses seemed to skyrocket, and keeping track of my money was no longer an easy task. I wanted to be better at managing my money, but setting up a budget at that point appeared overwhelming. If only I had known how easy and important it is.

Seven Tips for Financial Success

You may not have a lot of money right now, but learning how to take care of money now can keep you out of financial trouble

later. Although there is no set way to manage your money, there are set principles to guide you. Here are seven valuable tips:

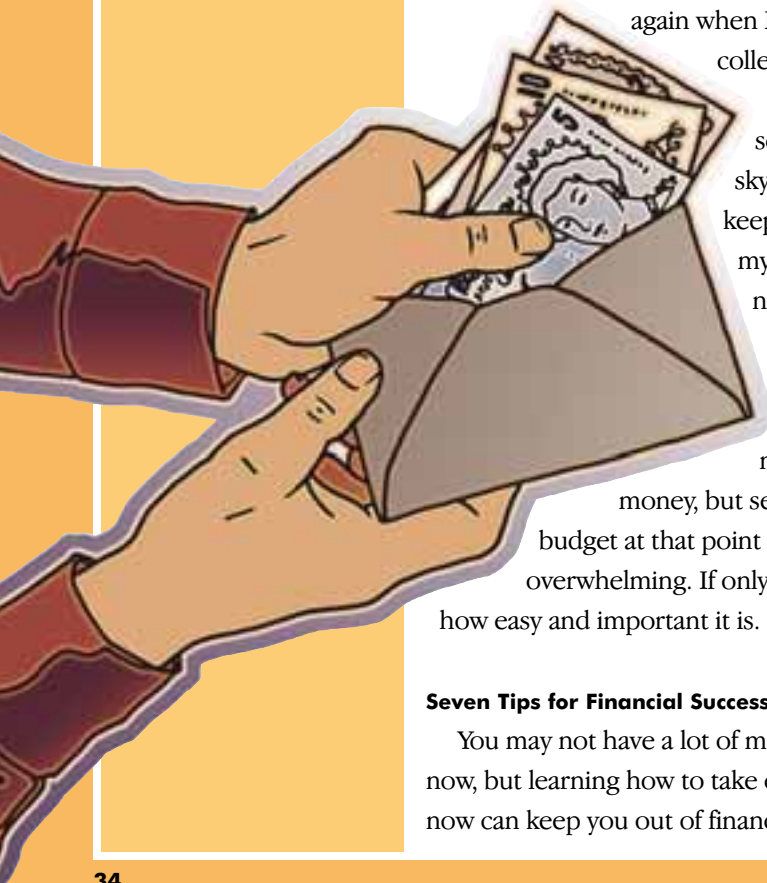
1. Pay your tithing first.

Paying tithing tests your faith and obedience. You will be blessed for paying it. The Lord may not send you a check in the mail, but He has promised that when blessings do come, they will be so great that there will not be room enough to receive them (see Malachi 3:10).

2. Spend less than you earn.

"The key to spending less than we earn is simple—it is called discipline,"¹ said President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982), of the First Presidency. Many people think the key to having more money is making more money. But more often than not, the more money they make, the more they spend. You'll save more by spending less, and that takes discipline.

Spending less than you earn is especially important if you have a credit card. Make sure you have enough money to pay for whatever you charge on a credit card. Keep a small limit on your credit card. And try not to buy things on credit when you're upset or



not in the right frame of mind to evaluate your spending. The interest you'll pay can really hurt.

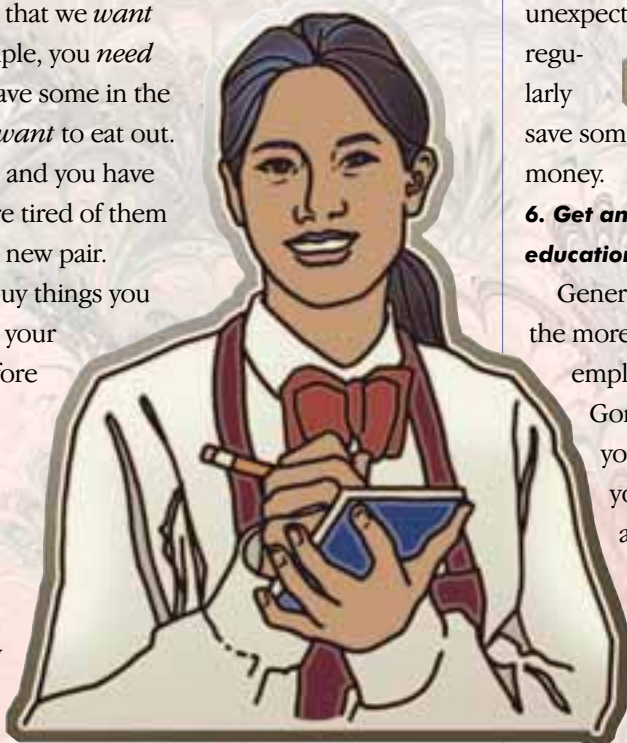
3. Learn to distinguish between wants and needs.

Take a moment to think about the things you cannot physically survive without: water, food, clothing, shelter. Most often, the problem is not that we need more, but that we *want* more. For example, you *need* food and you have some in the fridge, but you *want* to eat out. You *need* shoes and you have some, but you're tired of them and you *want* a new pair.

It's okay to buy things you want, but when your wants come before your needs, it's easy to fall into debt.

4. Learn how to work.

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) said, "The *privilege to work* is a gift, the *power to work* is a blessing, the *love of work* is success."² If you want to be financially stable, be willing to work.



5. Pay yourself.

First pay tithing, then save some money. After paying 10 percent to the Lord's Church, it is wise to set aside at least 10 percent for yourself in savings. Rainy days occur more often than you may think—and usually come without warning.

Say you buy a used car. At first it runs well. Then

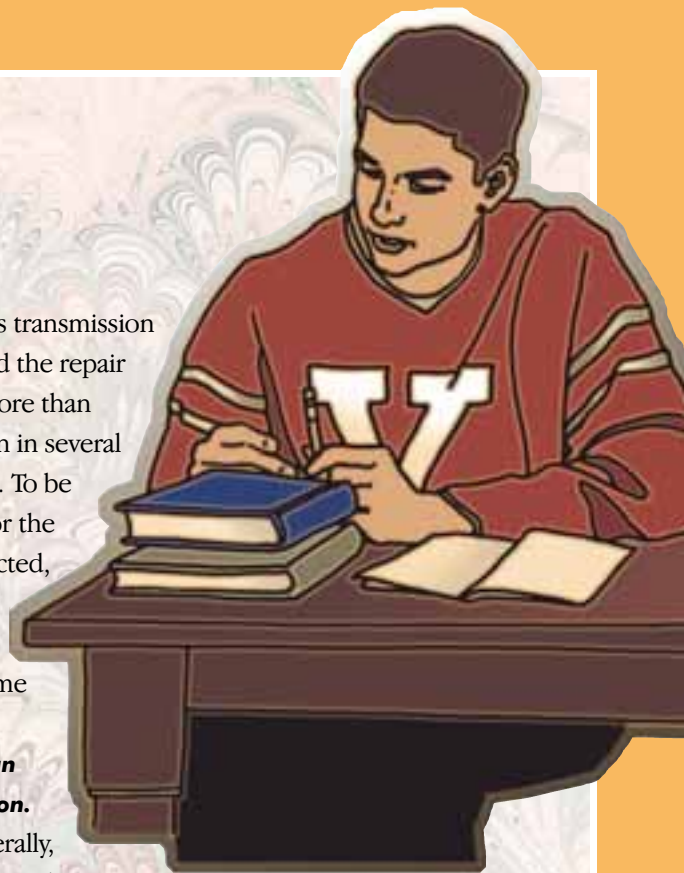
the car's transmission fails, and the repair costs more than you earn in several months. To be ready for the unexpected, regularly save some money.

6. Get an education.

Generally, the more education employees have, the more they get paid. President Gordon B. Hinckley reminds us that "the Lord wants you to educate your minds and hands, whatever your chosen field. Whether it be repairing refrigerators, or the work of a skilled surgeon, you must train yourselves. . . . There can be no doubt, none whatever, that education pays."³

7. Follow a budget.

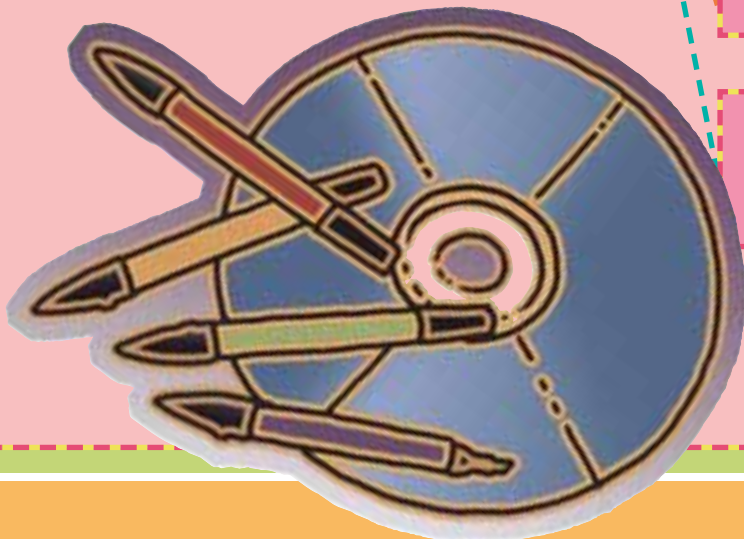
Finally, create and follow a budget—a spending plan. Though this may seem a little overwhelming at first, making a budget is easier than you think, and if you follow it, it will give you more financial freedom. Here are four steps to making and maintaining a simple budget:



PERSONAL BUDGET SHEET FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

	Expected	Actual
Income	<u>\$330.00</u>	<u>\$336.00</u>
Expenses		
<u>Contributions</u>		
Tithing	<u>\$33.00</u>	<u>\$33.60</u>
Fast offerings	<u>\$10.00</u>	<u>\$10.00</u>
<u>Fixed Expenses</u>		
Savings	<u>\$33.00</u>	<u>\$33.00</u>
Mission fund	<u>\$100.00</u>	<u>\$100.00</u>
<u>Variable Expenses</u>		
Clothes	<u>\$15.00</u>	<u>\$25.00</u>
Personal care (haircut, hygiene products)	<u>\$10.00</u>	<u>\$14.00</u>
Transportation (paying for bus or gas I use in the family car)	<u>\$15.00</u>	<u>\$11.00</u>
Recreation (eating out, movies, school dances, sports events, etc.)	<u>\$12.00</u>	<u>\$15.25</u>
*Christmas/Birthdays/Special occasions	<u>\$15.00</u>	<u>\$15.00</u>
*School (books, class supplies)	<u>\$10.00</u>	<u>\$12.75</u>
Other	<u>\$30.00</u>	<u>\$33.00</u>
Balance (income minus expenses)	<u>\$47.00</u>	<u>\$33.40</u>

*Some expenses do not come monthly, but you need to plan for them.



shoes = \$25

hair cut = \$9
shampoo = \$2.25
deodorant = \$2.75

bus rides = \$3
gas in family car = \$8

movie = \$6
dinner with friends = \$5.25
bowling = \$4

CD for a friend = \$15

poster paper = \$3
markers = \$3.75
field trip = \$6

\$pending money wisely starts with keeping track of it. Use these budget sheets as a guide. During the month, record your expenses on the Actual Expenses form. At the end of the month, transfer those expenses to their categories on the Personal Budget Sheet.

“Discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage.”

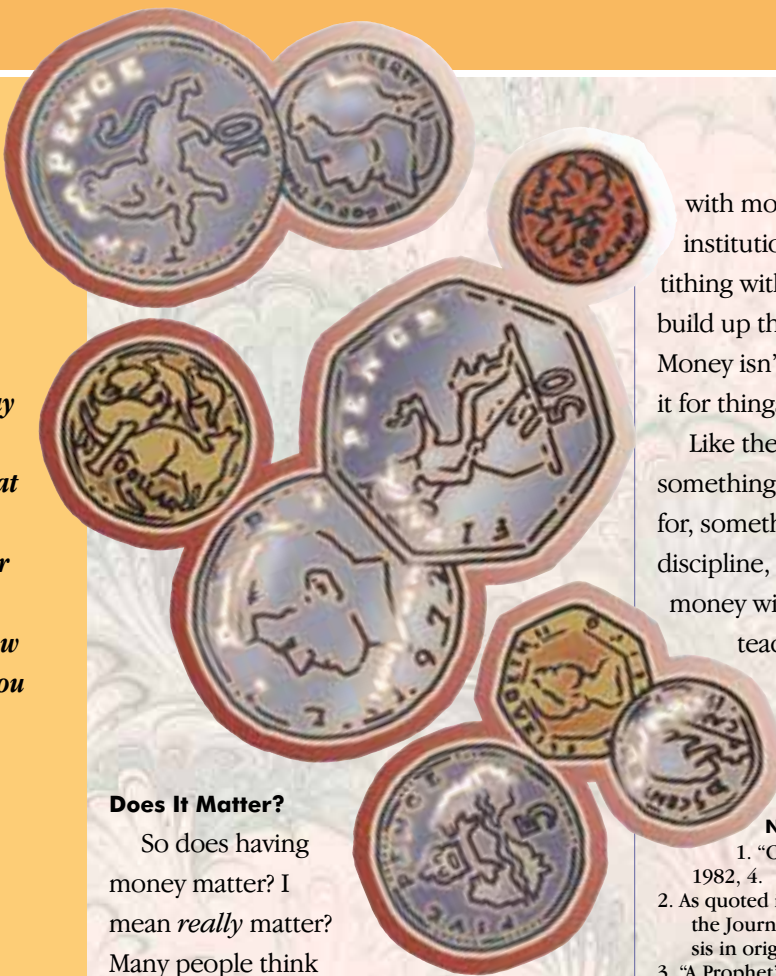
—President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 54.

“We must not allow our earnings to exceed our earnings.”

—President Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 54.

“Wherefore, do not spend money for that which is of no worth, nor your labor for that which cannot satisfy” (2 Nephi 9:51).

Create and follow a budget—a spending and savings plan. Though this may seem a little overwhelming at first, making a budget is easier than you think. And if you follow it, it will give you more financial freedom.



Does It Matter?

So does having money matter? I mean *really* matter? Many people think money is evil and worldly, but remember these two things:

First, all things are spiritual. In D&C 29:34 the Lord says, “All things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal.”⁴ The Apostle Paul taught that the *love of money* is evil, not money itself (see 1 Timothy 6:10).

Second, money is a medium of exchange. Elder Sterling W. Sill (1903–94) said, “If there is anyone who can’t buy happiness with money it must be that he just doesn’t know where to shop. We can build temples with money, we can send out missionaries

with money, we can erect educational institutions, operate hospitals, and pay our tithing with money. . . . In many ways we can build up the kingdom of God with money.”⁵ Money isn’t everything, but we can exchange it for things that can help bring us joy.

Like the things of this earth, money is something we have been given responsibility for, something that can teach us sacrifice, discipline, and work. Learning to manage money wisely can increase your freedom, teach you eternal gospel principles, and bring peace and happiness into your life. **NE**

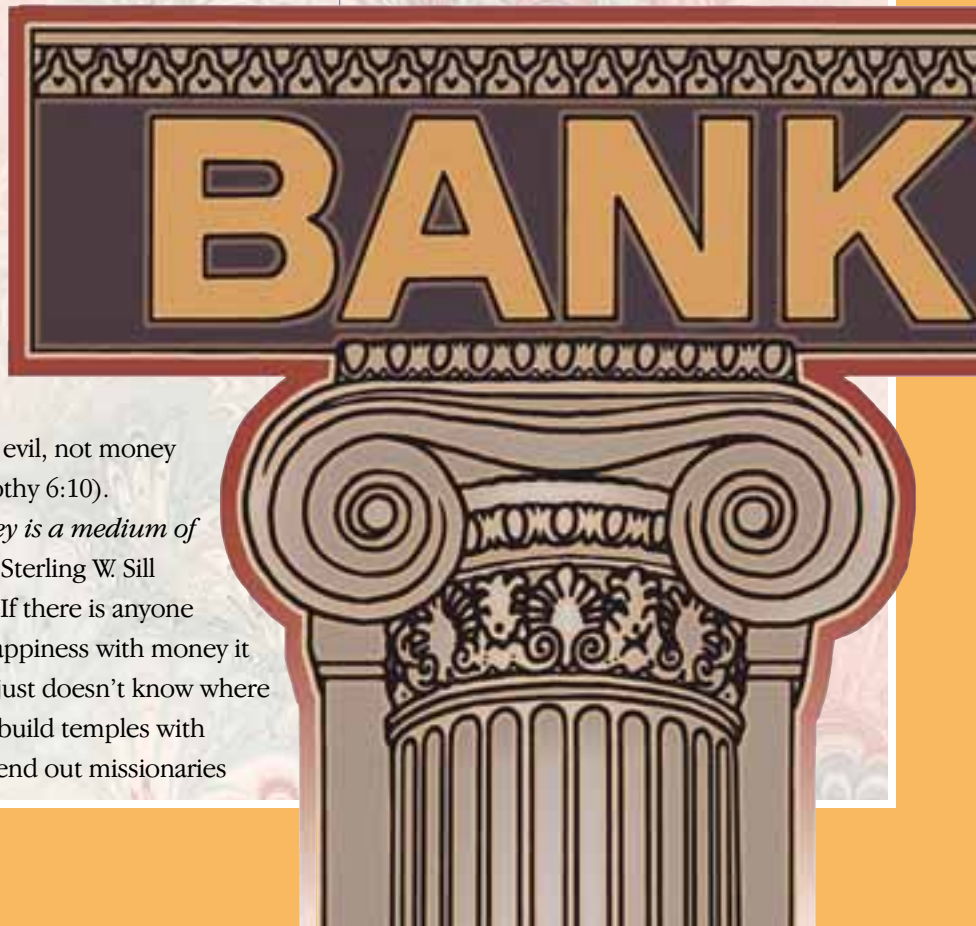
NOTES

1. “Constancy amid Change,” *Ensign*, June 1982, 4.
2. As quoted in Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Lessons Learned in the Journey of Life,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2000, 10 (emphasis in original).
3. “A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 7.
4. See also D&C 104:11–17; D&C 136:27; Marion G. Romney, “Principles of Temporal Salvation,” *Ensign*, April 1981, 3.
5. “A Fortune to Share,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 60.

“If there is any one thing that will bring peace and contentment into the human heart, and into the family, it is to live within our means.”

—President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945), Seventh President of the Church, *Relief Society Magazine*, May 1932, 302.

In site: To find more information on budgeting, click on Resource Management at www.providentliving.org.



Not Really HOMELESS

Through a member's good works, I found a home in the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

BY LOUCAS SOARES NOBRE

When I was 12 years old, my mother died, leaving my father with six children. There were few educational opportunities in our area, and many people were satisfied with a fourth-grade education. But I wasn't. I held on to a dream of finishing my studies.

My opportunity came when I moved to the city of Santarém, Brazil, at age 17. My father arranged for me to live with some people he knew, and I began taking a few classes. My work barely paid for the school materials I needed.

During my first year there, the people I lived with asked me to affiliate with their church. I repeatedly refused their request. The third year came, and I still hadn't joined their church. Then one day they asked me to find another place to live. I was devastated.

The next day I didn't go to work or to school. I remembered my stepmother's friend who lived close by and resolved to talk to her.

When I arrived, Maria Jose welcomed me. After I explained my situation, she

asked that I go and get my things and come stay at her home. There seemed to be something extraordinary about her kindness.

After a few days, as she was preparing food, she told me that missionaries from her church were coming to eat lunch. Her goodness made me curious about her beliefs.

I spoke with Elder Riggs and Elder Marcio during lunch and set up a time to hear a discussion. By the appointment the next day, I had read the Book of Mormon and prayed about it but hadn't felt anything unusual. But before the missionaries began, they promised me that if I would open my heart I would know that the things they would teach were true.

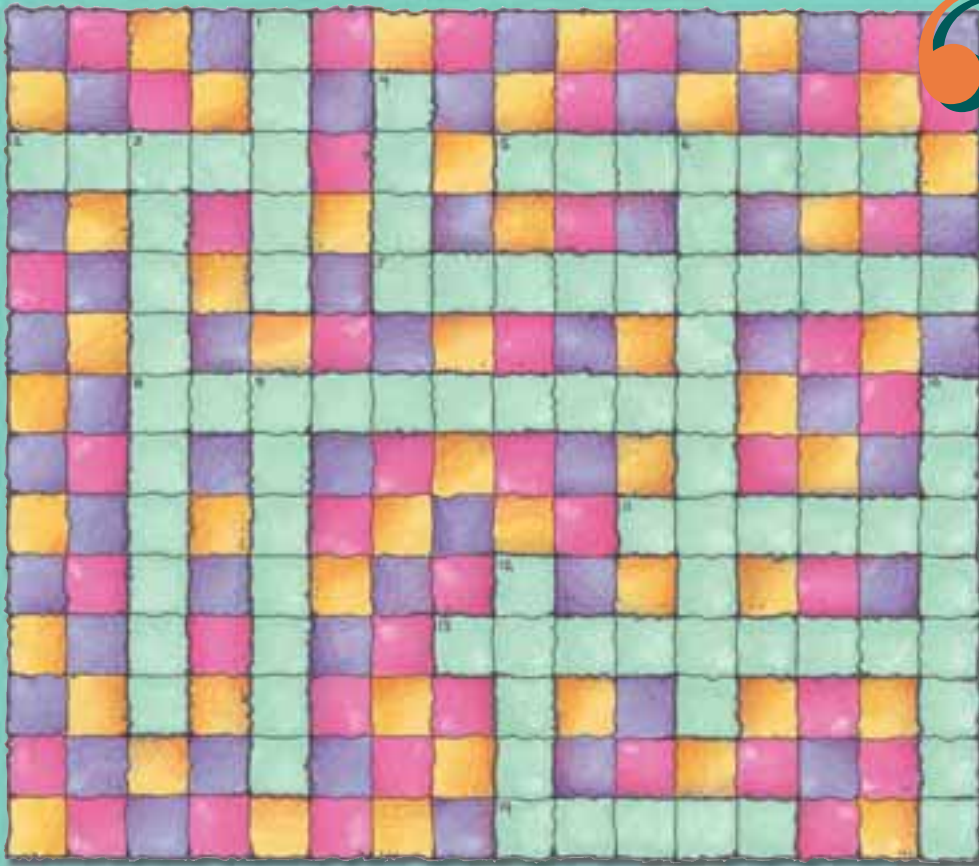
They didn't need to say anything more, because while they spoke I knew by a strong feeling that this was the Church of Jesus Christ. Three weeks later I became a member.

I later served full time in the Brazil Curitiba Mission. I love this gospel and the opportunity I had to do for others the same work those missionaries did for me.

I couldn't join one church—even when my decision left me homeless. But in finding a home and Christlike friend, I found the true Church of Jesus Christ. **NE**

Loucas Soares Nobre is a member of the Tapajós Branch, Santarém Brazil Pará District.





TEST YOUR LDS I.Q.

Villains abound in the Book of Mormon—and in this crossword. Fill in the blanks with Book of Mormon bad guys. If you get stuck, the answers are in the scripture references. You can also read the scripture references to find out more about these villains and the Book of Mormon heroes who fought them.



ACROSS

- 2** Zoramite leading a Lamanite army
Alma 52:33–35
- 5** Wicked lawyer turned missionary
Alma 11:21; 14:6–7; 31:5–6
- 7** His downfall was a tree
3 Nephi 4:26–29
- 8** Became Lamanite king through intrigue
Alma 47
- 11** Alma's persecuting priest
Mosiah 24:8–11
- 13** Had his own band
Helaman 6:18
- 14** Nephite priestcraft introducer
Alma 1:12–15

DOWN

- 1** Brass record guardian
1 Nephi 3:3–14
- 3** Moronihah's nemesis
Helaman 1:14–33
- 4** Second-to-last Jaredite, lost his head in battle
Ether 15:28–30
- 6** Only lost his scalp
Alma 44:12
- 9** Brother of 8 across
Alma 52:3–4
- 10** King Limhi's dad
(*Hint: Use his title and his name.*)
Mosiah 7:9; Mosiah 11:29
- 12** Often seen with Lemuel
1 Nephi 2:12, 18

“THOUGH WE LIVE IN A FAILING WORLD, WE HAVE NOT BEEN SENT HERE TO FAIL.”

—Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Encircled in the Arms of His Love,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 17.



WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

Want simple explanations of gospel topics from Aaronic Priesthood to Zion? Now you can access the Church's new guidebook *True to the Faith* online. Issued in April 2004, this gospel reference was written specifically for teens, young single adults, and new members. It's a collection of short

statements on gospel doctrine and principles and is designed to accompany *For the Strength of Youth* and help explain why we have those standards.

To find *True to the Faith*, go to www.lds.org, click on Gospel Library > Church Publications > HTML > Curriculum > Home and Family > True to the Faith: A Gospel

BE PREPARED . . . FOR CONFERENCE

Try this method for finding personal answers to your questions and individual help for your challenges during general conference. You'll be amazed at how much you can hear when you're really listening.

1. Write down a list of questions, concerns, or problems you want Heavenly Father's help with.

Be specific and list anything that is important to you. (For example: How can I get along with my brothers and sisters better? or How can I do better in school?)

2. Pray every morning and night about the things on your list. Ask specifically to find answers during conference.

3. Arrange your schedule so you can watch or listen to all of the sessions of conference without being distracted.

4. Listen for the answers. Many times direct answers will come in a talk, but other times they may come as you listen to the music or prayers. Be open to the promptings of the Spirit.

IT HAPPENED IN SEPTEMBER

12 September 1830

Elmina Shepard Taylor (left), the first president of the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association, was born in New York.

30 September 1949

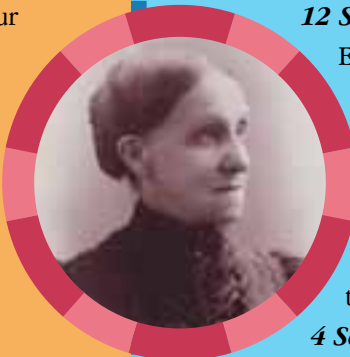
General conference was broadcast on television for the first time.

4 September 1950

In southern California, the first early-morning seminary was organized.

28 September 1976

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) dedicated the first buildings at the Provo Missionary Training Center (right).



VOICE LESSONS

BY SHANNA BUTLER

Church Magazines

Brother Carroll walked into seminary with a giant grin on his face. We knew he had something interesting planned for our lesson today. After the hymn and prayer, he pulled out a cassette tape and explained what we were to do.

He wanted us to identify all the songs or singers we heard on the tape. I was really excited to do this since I knew every song on the radio. He started playing the tape, and as I predicted, I knew all the songs. The rest of the class did well too.

But Brother Carroll had planned a second half to this activity. He was impressed with our knowledge of popular singers, but he wanted to know what other voices we recognized. He then played a recording of short clips of general conference talks given by the Twelve Apostles and members of the First Presidency. He wanted us to identify who they were by their voices.

My excitement about getting the previous questions right quickly disappeared.

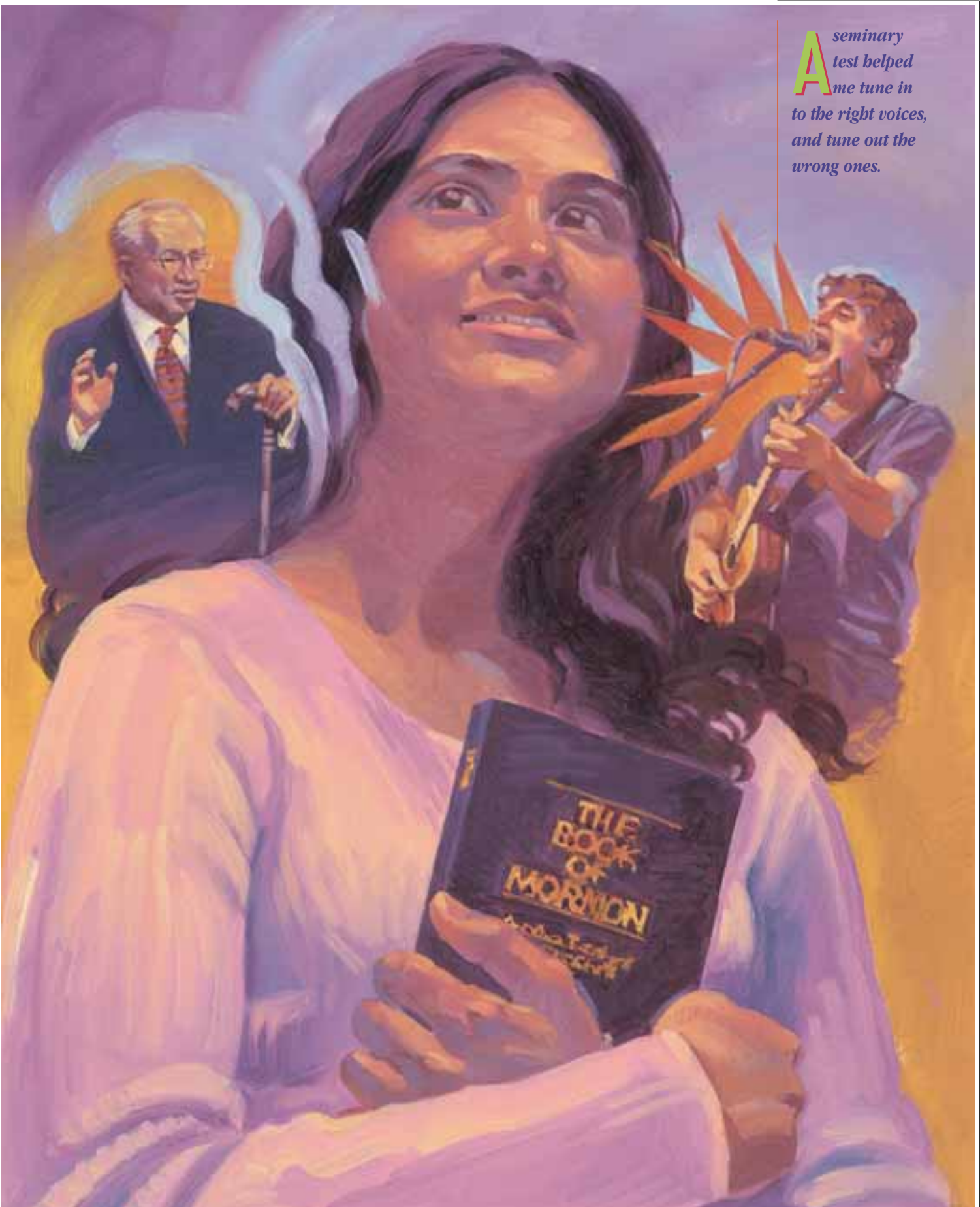
President Gordon B. Hinckley's voice was easy to recognize. So was the voice of President Thomas S. Monson. But on the others I could only guess. My score was miserable.

Brother Carroll did not need to say anything to us except, "Whose voices are *you* listening to?"

I glanced over at the wall across from me to see the pictures of the 15 prophets and apostles at that time. I could not even put names with all the faces. I knew I needed to make a change.

I made up my mind to start listening to what Church leaders said. I also decided to memorize all the Apostles' names and what they looked and sounded like. I started watching every general conference session and taking notes on the talks. Before, I would only watch one or two sessions of conference, and I had a short attention span even for those.

As I listened and obeyed the counsel I received at conference, watching it was no longer a chore. I really enjoyed it. Doctrine and Covenants 1:38 says, "Though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same." Now I recognize the voices of the prophets. But even more important than that, when I am obedient to their words, I also recognize the voice of the Lord. **NE**



A seminary test helped me tune in to the right voices, and tune out the wrong ones.

Ten Terrific

TEACHING TIPS

Whether you are asked to teach a Sunday School lesson or you have a friend who wants to learn more about the gospel, chances are you're going to have many teaching opportunities. Here are some suggestions on being an effective teacher. (For ideas on preparing lessons, see *New Era*, Aug. 2004, 15.)

- 1.** Be worthy of and pray for the guidance of the Spirit. The key to being an effective teacher is having the Holy Spirit with you (see Mosiah 18:26).
- 2.** Try to encourage reverence and make the place where you teach inviting to the Spirit.
- 3.** After you have prepared well and prayed for guidance, be flexible during

the lesson and willing to teach what the Spirit whispers to you.

- 4.** Use the scriptures, and follow the lesson plan in the manual.
- 5.** Pray that those you are teaching will have the Spirit with them, so they can learn, understand, and remember.
- 6.** Encourage participation. Ask questions that don't just have yes or no answers, and give the class a chance to answer before you do. You can also have class members read scriptures or stories related to the lesson.
- 7.** Be respectful to those you are teaching.
- 8.** If helpful, use props, hymns, activities, visual aids, the chalkboard, or Church magazines to make your lessons more interesting.
- 9.** Testify. You are giving the lesson, but the Spirit is the

real teacher. As you bear testimony, the Spirit will confirm the truths you are teaching.

10. You can get more ideas from Church teaching manuals:

Teaching Guidebook and *Teaching, No Greater Call*.

Find them at www.lds.org in the Gospel Library database (in the Curriculum section of Church publications), or buy them at a Church distribution center or at www.ldscatalog.com. **NE**



THE EXTRA SMILE

"Someone forgot to remind Robby not to salute so hard."



BRANDON DORMAN



ERIC NELSON

"So that's why they say it is 'as one crying from the dust.'"



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

I had suspected my younger brother was becoming kind of a computer geek. My suspicions were confirmed one family home evening as he read James 1:5 for part of the lesson: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upgradeth not; . . ."

—Dylan Hudson, Spruce Grove Ward, Edmonton Alberta Riverbend Stake

MY WAKE-UP CALL

BY ROBERT NIELSEN

For several months I didn't attend seminary. It was hard for me to get up early, and I thought it was all right not to go because it didn't help me much in school.

One day my friend told me that the teacher had taken my name off the attendance roll. I thought about the valuable things I had missed in seminary.

So the next day at 5:45 a.m., I made myself get up to go to seminary.

For the next couple of mornings it was hard for me to get up, but I put the effort into making it there. After that, I noticed I felt rested and alert, had a better attention span, and was able to absorb more information at school and actually remember it when it counted.

Seminary has been a good experience for me because it has made my days at school go more smoothly. Seminary has also given me a better understanding of the gospel and the Church, which will help me when I serve a mission. **NE**

Robert Nielsen is a member of the McKinney Second Ward, McKinney Texas Stake.



A MOVING EXPERIENCE

BY JULIE GOLDTHORPE

Recently my family and I moved to a different state. About a month before the move, I was having some concerns and uncertainties about it. My parents felt that it was the right thing to do, but I wanted to know for myself that all would work out for the best.

I asked Heavenly Father to help me feel at peace. Then one night I received an answer to my prayer. I was reading in Doctrine and Covenants 98. Verse 18 stood out to me. It reads: “Let not your hearts be troubled; for in my Father’s house are many mansions, and I have prepared a place for you; and where my Father and I am, there ye shall be also.” Immediately I was overcome with love and peace. All my fears seemed to melt away as the words *let not your hearts be troubled* filled my mind. I knew that Heavenly Father was aware of what was going on in my life and that He would not leave me alone.

Looking back now, I see that moving has helped my testimony grow stronger. It wasn’t easy, but I have learned that if I put my trust in the Lord, He will direct my paths (see Proverbs 3:5–6). I know that Heavenly Father hears and answers prayers. No matter where we find ourselves in life, He will always be with us. **NE**

Julie Goldthorpe is a member of the Cedar City 16th Ward, Cedar City Utah West Stake.

IF YOU LOVE ME

NAME WITHHELD

Standing as a witness for the truth of the gospel and the Church can be a challenge. I once felt forced into a situation that was against Heavenly Father’s commandments. I now know why teenagers’ dating relationships should be kept on a just-friends basis.

There was a young man I cared about very much, but he felt that the ways of the world were more important than God’s ways. I was faced with the statement, “If you love me, you’ll do it.” How cold. How cruel. How different that trap of Satan sounds when compared to the statement of One who *really* loves us: “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

So, like Joseph of old, I ran away from the situation, never to return (see Genesis 39:7–13). Even though I know I contributed to that situation, I am so thankful I decided to stand as a witness for what I know is right, true, and good. **NE**



STRONGER THAN FEAR

BY RENEE SOMMERCORN

A scripture that comforts me and motivates me to conquer my fears is 2 Timothy 1:7: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and

of a sound mind.” When I read this scripture, I imagine the Savior telling me not to fear. Fear comes from someone else. Through the Spirit we receive gifts more powerful than fear: power, love, and a sound mind. With the help of the Spirit, I have been able to share my testimony with others. **NE**

Renee Sommercorn is a member of the BYU 92nd Ward, Brigham Young University Ninth Stake.

INCLUDING OTHERS

BY CECILIA A. BRUCE

Last year was a scary time for me. I had just entered Young Women, and I was going to attend a new ward. I worried that I wouldn't make any friends, and since I was a new member of the Church, I didn't understand much about Young Women.

I remember the first day I went to Young Women in my new ward. I went to opening exercises and sat down by myself because I didn't know anyone. This made me feel uneasy and alone. Then I looked up, and there was a young woman standing in front of me. She said, "Hello, Cecilia" and sat down next to me. This made me feel great, and I wasn't scared anymore.

It was from her example that I learned what fellowshipping is all about. This has helped me to reach out to other new or lonely people who need their spirits lifted.

Here are a few things you can do to fellowship people who are lonely or feeling left out:

—Introduce yourself and try to make them feel wanted.

—Sit with them and help them feel more comfortable.

—Write them a letter or note.

—Invite them to your home for a movie and snack or a board game.

It really doesn't matter what you do. The most important thing is just doing something to let people know that someone cares about them and they are needed, too. We should all follow the Savior's example to reach out to others and help them feel included and loved. **NE**

Cecilia A. Bruce is a member of the Greenville Third Ward, Greenville South Carolina Stake.

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

New Era
Instant Messages
50 E. North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150, USA

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

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



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT REIER

Mutual Activity Ideas

- Plan a musical activity. Read “Sing out Strong” on page 20 for encouragement. Ask the music specialist in your ward to suggest some songs, both fun and serious, to learn. Perform the best ones at a ward social or, if appropriate, in sacrament meeting.
- Try the suggestion described in “Voice Lessons” on page 42. To prepare for the activity, arrange to have an audio copy of the previous general conference. You could post pictures of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles where everyone can see them. Play excerpts of each General Authority speaking in random order. See who can match voices with faces and names. Challenge the group to watch the upcoming conference and take notes on what is said.

Service Project Suggestion

- Contact the full-time or ward missionaries. Ask if you can arrange to supply them with several copies of the Book of Mormon to give away. Be sure to write your testimony inside each one. Read “The First Latter-day Missionary” on page 12 to understand more about the power of the Book of Mormon to convert.

Family Home Evening Idea

- Using the article, “Money Matters,” on page 34, review together the budgeting system outlined. Make enough photocopies of the blank forms so each family member has some. Have each person who earns money keep a record of his or her spending for a month. Then in family home evening a month later, using information based on the first month’s record of spending, plan budgets for the upcoming month.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November in the *Ensign* and *Liahona*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 34–37.

Young Women Manual 2

Lesson 34 Hold Fast to the Lord’s Standards

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Eight Ways God Can Speak to You,” this issue, 4.
- Poster: “Lift Your Thoughts,” this issue, 19.

Lesson 35 Wise Choices

- Jorge L. del Castillo, “The Gift and Guide,” this issue, 24.
- Rosalyn Collings Eves, “What Was I Missing?” *New Era*, Apr. 2004, 42.

Lesson 36 Honesty

- D. Rex Gerratt, “Finding a Fortune,” *New Era*, Sept. 2003, 8.
- Sterling W. Sill, “The 10-Cent Solution,” *New Era*, Aug. 2003, 42.
- Arianne B. Cope, “Crunch Time,” *New Era*, Apr. 2003, 26.

Lesson 37 Maintaining Chastity through Righteous Living

- Q&A: “. . . I think he might be more interested in me than in the gospel,” *New Era*, Aug. 2004, 16.
- Brenda Burr, “The Best Date I Never Had,” *New Era*, Aug. 2004, 40.
- Bruce C. Hafen, “The Gospel and Romantic Love,” *New Era*, Feb. 2002, 10.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 2

Lesson 34 The Power of Example

- Paul VanDenBerghe, “Cowboy with a Mission,” this issue, 26.
- Jeremy Robertson, “The Sign on the Wall,” *New Era*, Aug. 2004, 30.
- Adam C. Olson, “Standing on Faith,” *New Era*, June 2004, 20.

Lesson 35 Obeying, Honoring, and Sustaining the Law

- Spencer V. Jones, “The Stench of Sin,” *New Era*, Aug. 2004, 26.
- David O. McKay, “Dandy,” *New Era*, Apr. 2003, 10.
- Poster: “Don’t Try Bending the Rules,” *New Era*, Oct. 2002, 19.

Lesson 36 In Everything Give Thanks

- Caroline H. Benzley, “Be Grateful,” *New Era*, Mar. 2002, 36.
- Steven E. Snow, “We Thank Thee,” *New Era*, Jan. 2003, 12.

Lesson 37 Understanding Women’s Roles

- Gordon B. Hinckley, “Daughters of the Almighty,” *New Era*, Nov. 2003, 4.
- Janet Thomas, “The Playmaker,” *New Era*, Nov. 2003, 20.

Index of Topics

- Book of Mormon 9, 12, 32
- budgeting 34
- example 26
- general conference 42
- guidance 24
- Holy Ghost 4, 16, 24
- Jesus Christ 4
- missionary work 12, 26
- money 34
- music 20
- prayer 9, 32
- prophets 42
- revelation 4
- talents 20
- teaching 44
- testimony 32, 39
- thoughts 19
- trials 39

NO SUPPLEMENTS HERE

Thank you for your Q&A article in the May 2004 *New Era*. I play football and considered taking supplements but was leaning against it. This helped to solidify my decision against using the supplements, and I have now found that a well-prepared diet makes a world of difference and that supplements are not needed as long as you work hard.

Thank you for having such good articles every month. It is reassuring to know that I can always turn to the *New Era* for wholesome reading whenever I want.

*Christian Weaver, Golden Hills Ward,
Bakersfield California East Stake*

LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUNG WOMEN

I would like to say how much it is appreciated in my home when each of us takes our turn to read the *New Era*. When I first realized I was going to leave Primary soon and go into Young Women, it scared me a little. But then my parents subscribed to the *Friend*, *New Era*, and *Ensign*, and I couldn't (and still can't) wait to go to Young Women. When I first read the *New Era*, I knew Young Women was not something I should be scared of but something I should look forward to.

*DJ Crisanto, Fairgrounds Ward,
Keizer Oregon Stake*

SHARING SMILES

Thank you so much for the Extra Smile cartoons. Every time I feel let down, I always love looking up the Extra Smile section. The comics make me laugh and feel great! I always share the messages with my friends, and they laugh too.

I found a special one about dating in



"I took the courage to put into practice the message I got from the article, and I have been successful."

the January 2004 issue. I really loved that one, and I'd like to thank you. I'm trying to enlarge the painting of that cartoon to stick it up in my classroom. Now I know how it feels to share a piece of the gospel with others.

*Asenaca Vuikadavu,
Tamavua Ward,
Suva Fiji North Stake*

SINGING MISSIONARY

I loved the article "Practice Makes Possible" (Feb. 2004) by President Heber J. Grant. The influence this article had in my life was so great I decided to write to express my appreciation immediately.

A few months ago my mission president encouraged us to sing hymns during our discussions with investigators, but I was hesitant because I felt that I did not have a nice voice. As I read this article, I realized that my voice plays only a little role in carrying the hymn's message to the heart of my investigators as compared to singing the hymn in the spirit in which it was written. I took the courage to put into practice the message I got from the article, and I have been successful these few times.

*Elder Aristotle Fokuo,
Nigeria Port Harcourt Mission*

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

*New Era
We've Got Mail
50 E. North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150, USA*

*Or e-mail us at
cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org
Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.*



BY ERIC SWENSON

THE GARDENER

BY ELLEN FAGG

Like a gardener
with a green thumb,
 You made me grow;
 You planted me in good soil;
 You watered me when I was thirsty
 and fed me with Thy love.
Even though I made
mistakes,
 and grew
 lopsidedly,
 You gave me support.
And when it was
harvest time,
 You rejoiced,
 even though all I had to offer was
 humble fruit.
Thank you, Father.



“I’ve put everything I’ve had into rodeo, and that’s why I’ve done what I’ve done. And now I’ve done the same thing preparing for a mission. While I’m out in the mission field, I’ll get so much more out of it because I’ve put everything I have into preparing for it.”

See “Cowboy with a Mission,” p. 26.