

THE
New Era

A young man with short brown hair, wearing a white dress shirt and a dark patterned tie, is smiling broadly. He is holding a large, dark brown cello in front of him with his left hand. In his right hand, he holds an open book, likely a Bible, which is resting on his lap. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and white, suggesting an outdoor setting with light filtering through trees.

AUGUST

2007

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P. 8**

The New Era Magazine
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uplift in the scriptures
as well as his cello. See
"Symphony of One" on
p. 18.

Cover photography:
Richard M. Romney
(front) and Janet Thomas
(back)

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keeping up on his
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WHERE WILL IT LEAD?

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

What seem to be only small deviations can result in huge differences down the road.



An error of only two degrees in the course set on the 4,500-mile, direct-line flight from Chicago to Hilo, Hawaii, would cause the plane to miss that island by more than 145 miles to the south.

I wish to speak about some lessons of life, hoping to help each of us with choices we all make along the road of life.

Which Direction Am I Headed?

A good news/bad news story introduces my subject. An airline pilot on the intercom gave his passengers this in-flight message: “I have good news and bad news. The good news is that we’re making good time. The bad news is that we’ve had an equipment failure, and we’re not sure we’re headed in the right direction.”

The direction in which we are headed is critically important, especially at the beginning of our journey. I have a friend who concluded his career as a pilot flying long routes across the Pacific for a major airline. He told me that an error of only two degrees in the course set on the 4,500-mile, direct-line flight from Chicago to Hilo, Hawaii, would cause the plane to miss that island by more than 145 miles to the south. If it were not a clear day, the pilot could not even see the island, and there would be nothing but ocean until you got to Australia. But of course you wouldn’t get to Australia, because you wouldn’t have

that much fuel. Small errors in direction can cause large tragedies in destination.

All of us—and especially young people—need to be very careful about the paths we choose and the directions in which we set our lives. What seem to be only small deviations in direction or small detours from the straight and narrow path can result in huge differences in position down the road of life.

Potentially destructive deviations often seem so small that some find it easy to justify “just this once.” When that temptation arises—as it will—I urge you to ask yourself, “Where will it lead?”

Where Will Spiritual Impressions Lead?

I recall a story told by Elder Harold B. Lee in 1952. His story has had a significant impact on me for several reasons. I quote Elder Lee:

“I was around ten or eleven years of age. I was with my father out on a farm away from our home, trying to spend the day busying myself until my father was ready to go home. Over the fence from our place were some tumbledown sheds that would attract a curious boy, and I was adventurous. I started to climb through the fence,



and I heard a voice as clearly as you are hearing mine, calling me by name and saying, 'Don't go over there!' I turned to look at my father to see if he were talking to me, but he was way up at the other end of the field. There was no person in sight. I realized then, as a child, that there were persons beyond my sight, for I had definitely heard a voice. Since then, when I hear or read stories of the Prophet Joseph Smith, I too have known what it means to hear a voice, because I've had the experience" (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* [1974], 139).

Consider some of the effects of that experience. First, it taught the reality of revelation to a young boy who was to become a prophet. Second, it may have protected young Harold from some hidden danger in those old sheds. That was the way I interpreted the story for many years, and perhaps that is true. We will never know. But perhaps the warning he heard was not to protect him from danger. Perhaps it was to test his willingness to be obedient to heavenly guidance. Surely he passed the test, and where did that lead? It kept the channel of revelation open for further guidance, and it was a formative experience in the life of one of our greatest teachers. Following an impression may seem a small thing now, but where it leads can be immensely important.

Following an impression once saved my life. It was dark, I was alone, and I was high in the mountains several miles from the nearest road. Though I had never been on this particular mountainside, I was not lost. I knew the general location, and I knew that all I had to do was keep walking down and eventually this would lead me to a familiar road. The problem was the pitch darkness of the moonless night.

I chose a gully and started to feel my way down through the brush and deadfall. It was slow going, so I was relieved when

the gully flattened out to a sandy bottom beneath my feet. I picked up my pace for about 10 steps and suddenly had a strong impression to stop. I did. Reaching down, I took a rock and tossed it out into the darkness ahead of me. I heard no sound for a few seconds, and then there was a clatter on the rocks a long distance away. I knew immediately that I was standing on the lip of a sheer drop-off.

I retraced my steps and eventually got down the mountain by another gully. I phoned my worried family close to midnight, just before they called for a search party. The next day I revisited that spot in daylight and saw my tracks, which stopped just two or three feet from a drop-off of at least 50 feet. I was glad I had heard and heeded a warning. Where did that lead? It saved my life.

Where Will My Choices Lead?

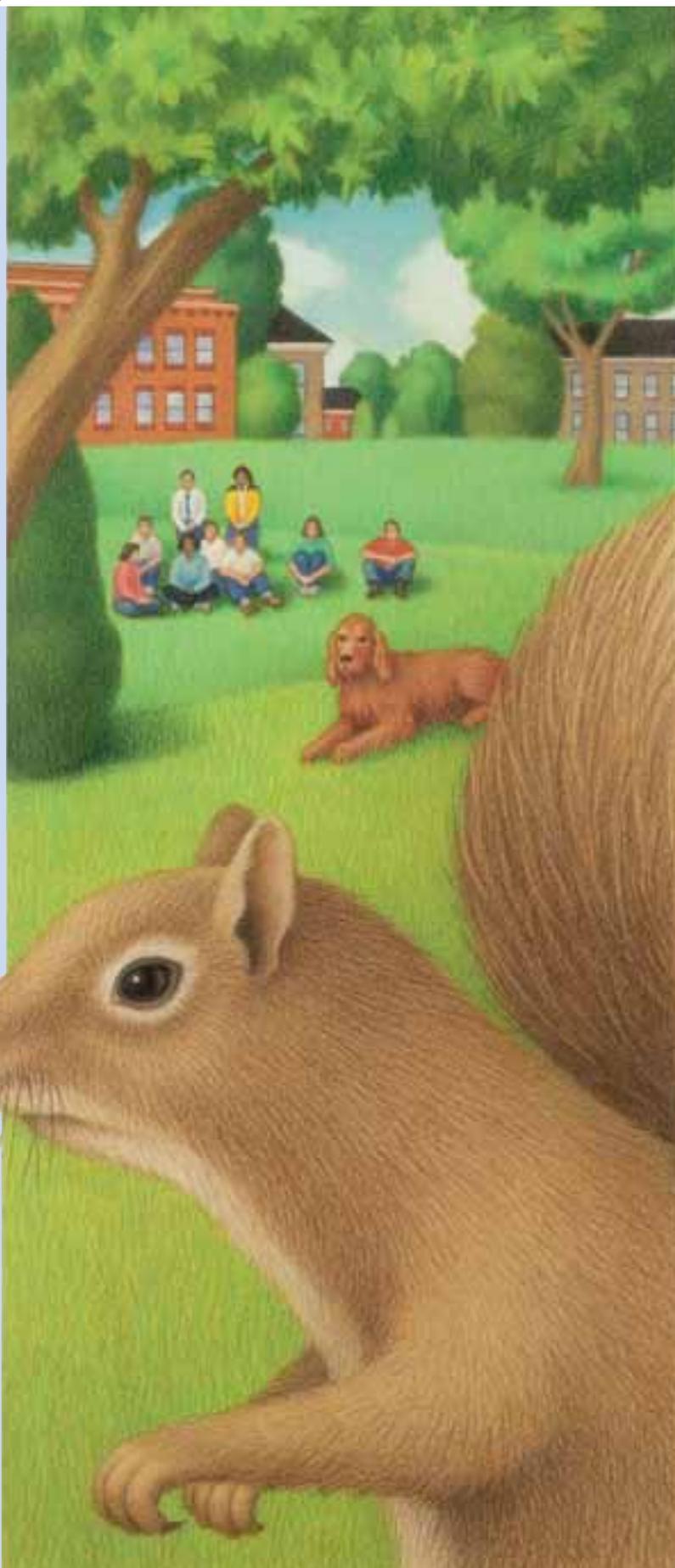
I invite you to think about some seemingly small decisions you are making in your life that would benefit from your asking “Where will it lead?”

We often hear about the choice between good and evil. For example, most students will have to choose sometime between plagiarism or cheating to get a higher grade or relying on honest personal efforts to get what we deserve from our own preparation and qualifications.

Other choices are not between good and evil. The most familiar choices we face are between two goods, and here, too, it is desirable to ask where it will lead. We make many such choices in what we will do on the Sabbath, which television programs we will watch, which job offer to accept, what to read, and—on a very broad front—how to spend our time. All of these will profit from thoughtful and habitual measurement against the standard of “Where will it lead?”

Sometimes the choice is not between two different actions but between action and inaction. Should I speak up or remain silent? Should I allow my loved one to pursue a course I know to be injurious and let them learn by experience or should I intervene to save him or her from that experience? Again, it is useful to ask ourselves, “Where will it lead?”

I recall an event described by a man I met at a stake conference in the Midwest more than a decade ago. The setting was a beautiful campus in central Illinois.



My informant, a participant in a summer workshop, saw a crowd of young students seated on the grass in a large semicircle about 20 feet from one of the large hardwood trees that are so common and so beautiful there. They were watching something at the base of the tree. He turned aside from his walk to see what it was.

There was a handsome tree squirrel with a large, bushy tail playing around the base of the tree—now on the ground, now up and down and around the trunk. But why would that beautiful but familiar sight attract a crowd of students?

Stretched out prone on the grass nearby was an Irish setter. He was the object of the students' interest, and, though he pretended otherwise, the squirrel was the object of his. Each time the squirrel was momentarily out of sight circling the tree or looking in another direction, the setter would quickly creep forward a few inches and then resume his apparent indifferent posture. Each minute or two he crept closer to the squirrel, and the squirrel apparently did not notice. This was the scene that held the students' interest. They were silent and immobile, attention riveted on the drama—the probable outcome of which was becoming increasingly obvious.

Finally the setter was close enough to bound at the squirrel and catch it in his mouth. A gasp of horror arose, and the crowd of students surged forward and wrested the beautiful little animal away from the hound, but it was too late. The squirrel was dead.

Anyone in that crowd of students could have warned the squirrel at any time by waving their arms or crying out, but none had done so. They just watched while the inevitable consequence got closer and closer. No one asked "Where will this lead?" and no one wished to interfere. When the predictable outcome occurred, they rushed

to the defense, but it was too late. Tearful and regretful expressions were all they could offer.

That true story is a parable of sorts. It has a lesson for things we see in our own lives, in the lives of those around us, and in the events occurring in our cities, states, and nations. In all these areas we can see threats creeping up on things we love, and we cannot afford to be indifferent or quiet. We must be ever vigilant to ask "Where will it lead?" and to sound appropriate warnings or join appropriate preventive efforts while there is still time. Often we cannot prevent the outcome, but we can remove ourselves from the crowd who, by failing to try to intervene, has complicity in the outcome.

Where Does the Gospel Lead?

Where will it lead? I've suggested this as a valuable question against which we can measure many personal and private decisions. It is also a way of bearing testimony. Where does faith in the Lord Jesus Christ lead? Where does the gospel lead? I quote from the Doctrine and Covenants the word of the Lord to His people in this dispensation:

"Seek to bring forth and establish my Zion. Keep my commandments in all things.

"And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:6–7).

I testify of Jesus Christ, who is our Savior. I testify of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which will lead us to eternal life. I testify that we are led by a prophet. This is the Lord's Church and His gospel, in which we can place trust that it will lead us to eternal life.

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on November 9, 2004.

Next month look for President Hinckley's story about the misdirected baggage car in "Seek Learning," *New Era*, Sept. 2007, p. 2.

Each time the squirrel was momentarily out of sight, the Irish setter would quickly creep forward a few inches and then resume his apparent indifferent posture.

Rejoice!

BY JADE SWARTZBERG

I knew the gospel was true, but I had never felt like jumping for joy until now.

The raw wind stung my legs, and I was certain that my nose—the only part of me that was exposed—would get frostbite and fall off as I waited for the bus that would take me to church. I was in Voronezh, Russia, as an English teacher, and although I had quickly fallen in love with the country and the people, the notorious Russian winter threatened to freeze my enthusiasm.

When the old bus pulled up, I paid my four rubles and squeezed myself uncomfortably into the fur-covered mass of people. As I stood there, it became utterly apparent how far from everything familiar I was.

And yet, when I finally made it to the chapel, after trudging through more snow, I felt at home just as I did in my ward back in Canada. I could not understand more than a few words of what the speakers said in sacrament meeting, but I understood the spirit they spoke with. From my first Sunday in the Voronezh Levoberezhny Branch, the members welcomed me with warm smiles when words failed because of our language barrier. And activities with the ward members warmed my spirit even more than my Russian grandmother's soup could warm my insides.

One Saturday evening in April, my fellow teachers and I attended a fireside that the branch had organized to celebrate the Prophet Joseph Smith's birthday and the restoration of the Church. Members shared messages about the Prophet's life and bore their testimonies and expressed their love for him. I would have felt the strength of their testimonies even without the help of the missionaries who sat behind us to translate.

As I listened, I reflected on how hard it must be to accept the story of a young American boy who knelt in a grove of trees so far across the world and spoke to God.

And yet these faithful members felt the power of this message and embraced it.

I had been practicing with the branch choir, and I joined with them as they sang “Faith in Every Footstep” in Russian. There in front of me as I sang was proof of this marvelous work coming forth among *all* the children of men. With tears in my eyes, I added my testimony to theirs through music in their native language.

After the meeting, Evgeni Kharin, a member of our branch presidency, came bounding towards us American teachers and exclaimed with joy in his Russian accent, “Sisters, rejoice! The Church is restored!” It was as if I had heard the news for the first time.

The Church is still very young in Russia, and these members, who did not always have access to the gospel, understood what a privilege it was to know that Heavenly Father restored the gospel to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith. I realized then how much I had taken that knowledge for granted. I had a testimony of the gospel, but I had not felt like jumping for joy because of it—until now.

Since then, in times of spiritual weakness I think of the love of the Russian people and the light in Evgeni’s eyes as he told me to rejoice, for the gospel truly has been restored. **NE**

For stories of Russian teenagers’ faith in the restored gospel, read “Russian Pioneers,” *New Era*, July 1998, p. 28.

ILLUSTRATED BY DILLEN MARSH

IF THE SAVIOR STOOD BESIDE ME

Thoughtfully ♩ = 84-100

Words and music by Sally DeFord

Unison *mf*

If the Sav - ior stood be - side me, Would I
Sav - ior stood be - side me, Would I

do the things I do? Would I think of His com-mand-ments and try hard - er to be true? Would I
say the things I say? Would my words be true and kind if He were ne - ver far a - way? Would I

Soprano (and Alto for verse 1)

fol - low His ex - am - ple? Would I live more right - eous - ly if I could see the Sav - ior stand - ing nigh,
try to share the gos - pel? Would I speak more rev - 'rent - ly if I could see the Sav - ior stand - ing nigh,

Alto (verse 2 only)

try to share the gos - pel? Would I speak more rev - 'rent - ly? See the Sav - ior stand - ing nigh,

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1. watch-ing o - ver me? If the me?
 watch-ing o - ver me?

2. watch-ing o - ver me?

Unison *mf*
 If the Sav - ior stood be - side me, would my thoughts be clean and

pure? Would His pres - ence give me strength and hope and cour - age to en - dure? Would His coun - sel guide my

ac - tions? Would I choose more worth - i - ly if I could see the Sav - ior stand - ing nigh

div.

Soprano watch-ing o - ver me? Watch - ing o - ver me, watch - ing o - ver me, *mp* He is al - ways

Alto Watch - ing o - ver me, o - ver me, watch - ing o - ver me, He is al - ways

somehow slower, and freely

tempo 1

near me, though I do not see Him there, And be-cause He loves me dear-ly, I am in His watch-ful care, *mf* So I'll

near me, though I do not see Him there, And be-cause He loves me dear-ly, I am in His watch-ful care, So I'll

be the kind of per-son that I know I'd like to be if I could see the Sav-ior stand-ing nigh

be the kind of per-son that I know I'd like to be, See the Sav-ior stand-ing nigh

watch-ing o-ver me. I will be the kind of per-son that I know I'd like to be if I could

watch-ing o-ver me. I will be the kind of per-son that I know I'd like to be,

see the Sav-ior stand-ing nigh watch - ing o - ver me. *(hold as desired)*

See the Sav-ior stand-ing nigh watch - ing o - ver me. *(hold as desired)*

Forgiving My Father

NAME WITHHELD

My father and I hadn't always gotten along perfectly, but things were getting better. Then one day he confessed to our family that he'd been unfaithful to my mother for some time.

I couldn't believe what I was hearing—the words wouldn't register in my mind. For the next several weeks I felt sick every time I thought about my dad. I was mad at him for doing such a horrible thing, for disrespecting my mom so completely. I often couldn't even fall asleep at night, wondering how I could ever trust a person again after this.

Anger was all I could feel, and I realized that it was making me think of everything in my life negatively. I began to pray, asking Heavenly Father to help me deal with this situation. I knew my dad was wrong and that I deserved to be upset with him, but I also knew that I couldn't keep obsessing about it.

An account early in the Book of Mormon came to me as I was thinking about how to handle the problems in my family. Nephi's brothers Laman and Lemuel got angry with him and then tied him up and planned to kill him. Only a few verses later, Nephi says that he "did frankly forgive them all that they had done" (1 Nephi 7:21). Nephi was able to quickly forgive his brothers for treating him maliciously.

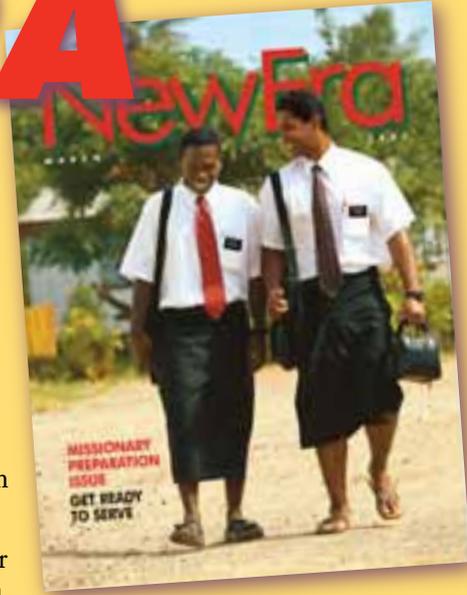
I also thought about the Savior, who said

on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Both Nephi and Jesus didn't hold on to anger over what had been done to them—instead they forgave.

It didn't happen overnight, but as I wanted to forgive my dad and prayed for help doing it, I stopped thinking about his sins all the time. I felt sorry for him for making such a terrible decision, and I felt a desire to support my mom. Heavenly Father softened my heart and helped me forgive him instead of being torn up by anger and revenge. **NE**

Read President James E. Faust, "The Healing Power of Forgiveness," *Ensign*, May 2007, p. 67.

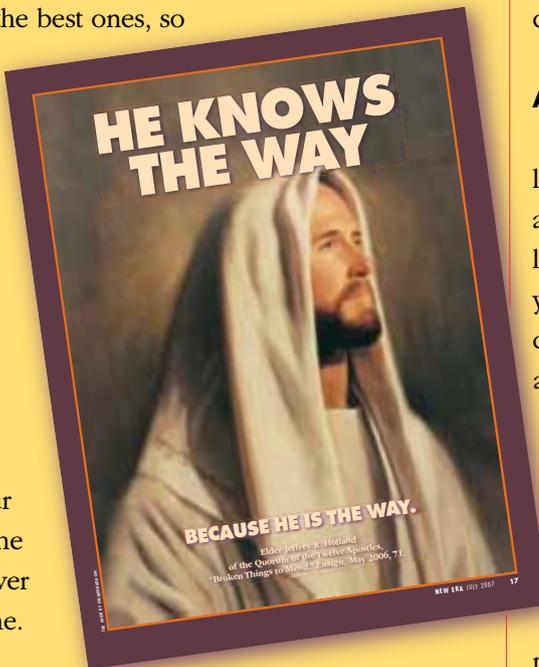
GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR **NEW ERA**



Sure it's wonderful to read all the interesting articles in the *New Era* each month, but did you know there are lots of other ways to have fun and gain spirituality through using the *New Era*? And you can contribute to the magazine too. Here are some suggestions on how you can use the *New Era* and help make the magazine even better.

Poster Parties

You and your friends can have a great time creating your own posters. The *New Era* would welcome having you share the best ones, so go get those markers, sketch pads, and treats ready; then invite a few friends over. Illustrate your favorite gospel principle, and send all your ideas to us. Our address is on the inside front cover of this magazine.



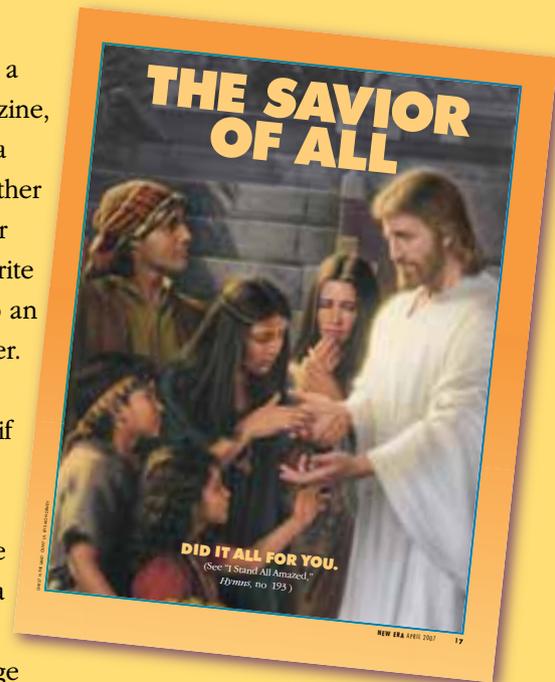
Talks and Lessons

Ever wonder why the bishop always assigns you the one topic you know nothing about to speak on in sacrament meeting? The *New Era* has dealt with many of the subjects your bishop may surprise you with, so LOOK

IT UP! It just might be there. But, please, don't read the article or story as your talk; use it as a resource to supplement your own inspiration. You can find many topics from *Adversity* to *Zion* in the indexes at the back of our December issues. Special issues can also be of help since they cover topics in depth. So go ahead and prepare a great talk!

Art Files

Our artists put a lot into the magazine, and you can get a lot out of it. Whether you photocopy or cut out your favorite art, you can keep an art file to use later. Your file could come in handy if you ever have to teach a lesson or if you're putting together a scrapbook. You could even enlarge your favorite poster to tack to your wall or scan your favorite art onto a computer. (Just be sure to pay attention to any copyright notices.)



New Era Bowls

They take a little planning, but they're a load of fun. Have the contestants (friends, classmates, etc.) read the current issue of the magazine before you get together for the bowl. When they come to play, split them into teams, and then you can fire away with questions to see how well they've read. You may even want to have a few small prizes for the winners so the contestants will be motivated.

Family Home Evenings

The December indexes can help you there, too. If you want to find a song for your night to teach, "In Tune" always has songs your family can learn together. And check out the great variety of art, stories, and articles to illustrate your lesson.

Service Projects and Activities

Need new Wednesday night activities? Strapped for a service idea? If you need a gold mine of ideas, go treasure hunting in "What's in It for You,"

"What's Up?"

or in a year's worth of *New Eras*. You might want to get someone to help you find all the neat activities others have done or suggested so you can fill your idea bank more quickly.

Q&A

If you have either an answer or a question for Q&A, we want to hear from you, so write to us. To find out

what the question of the month is, look at the end of the current Q&A. Remember to include your name, age, city, state, and parent's permission along with your answer and a photo of yourself.



We've Got Mail

It's like the *New Era's* suggestion box. If you've ever read the letters at the back of most issues of the magazine and wanted to send a letter in yourself, what's been stopping you? We want to hear all your comments and suggestions. Go ahead and send them to us.



Submissions

We read every submission that comes to the *New Era*, so if you feel you've written something we might publish, please send it in.

Spiritual Growth

Even though there are many interesting and useful things you can gain from the *New Era*, the most

important is spiritual nourishment. You can become a better person and grow closer to your Savior if you apply in your life the gospel principles found in the *New Era*.

We hope you can use some of the suggestions given here to enrich your activities and to have some fun. **NE**

Q & A

“How do I keep the Sabbath day holy? I’ve been focusing on things I can’t do. How do I make it a day I look forward to instead of a day when I can’t do anything fun?”

NEW ERA

The Lord set apart the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship. Because the Sabbath is not like other days of the week, we choose not to do the same things on the Sabbath day that we do on other days of the week. But that doesn’t mean there isn’t a lot that you can do. As you learn to put the Lord first on the Sabbath day, you will “call the sabbath a delight” (Isaiah 58:13). Here are some suggestions of what you can do to keep the Sabbath day holy and look forward to it at the same time.

Focus on what you can do. During Jesus’s time, there were many rules about what you could or could not do on the Sabbath. People even questioned Jesus when He healed people on the Sabbath. Jesus taught and showed by His example that it is more important to do good on the Sabbath than to think about what you can’t do.

Plan ahead. First, think of things you want to do on the Sabbath—such as working on

■ **Focus on the good things you can do.**

■ **Plan ahead, and you will start looking forward to the Sabbath.**

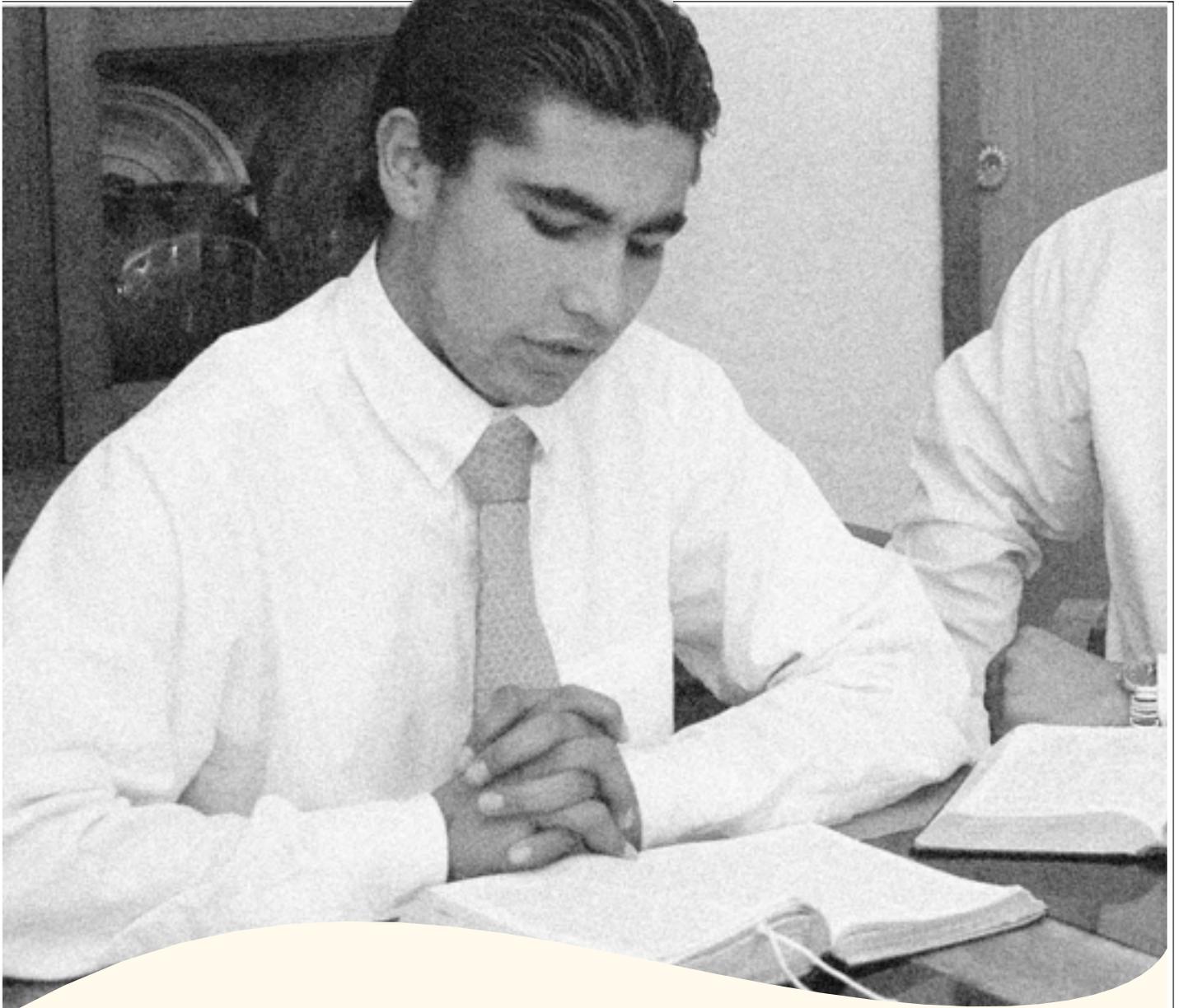
■ **Enjoy time with your family on Sunday.**

■ **The Sabbath day was made for you; you will be blessed as you keep it holy.**

goals for Personal Progress or Duty to God—and then make plans to do them. Second, take care of schoolwork, chores, and other tasks during the week so you can focus on spiritual things on the Sabbath. By planning ahead you will start looking forward to the Sabbath day.

Spend time with your family. President Gordon B. Hinckley explained an important way to keep the Sabbath day holy: “Stay home and gather your family about you. Teach them the gospel, enjoy yourselves together on the Sabbath day, come to your meetings, participate.”¹ By spending time with your family, you can feel joy on the Sabbath.

Pray for help. If you aren’t sure what to do on the Sabbath or if you find that you are having a hard time looking forward to the Sabbath, pray. The Lord has commanded us to keep the Sabbath day holy, and He doesn’t give us commandments without providing a



READERS

way for us to keep them (see 1 Nephi 3:7). If you pray to Heavenly Father, He will help you know what to do on the Sabbath and will help you change your feelings.

The Sabbath was made for us (see Mark 2:27). As you do your best to keep the Sabbath day holy, you will be blessed and look forward to each Sunday. **NE**

NOTE

1. "Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, Aug. 1996, 61.



The Sabbath day is special to me because it's a time to learn more about the Savior and the gospel and to become closer to my

Heavenly Father. I am also able to feel the quiet and peace of His Spirit better because I am not distracted by the commotion of the world. If you seek the Lord diligently through fasting, prayer, and scripture study, you will find Him and He will bless you with His Spirit (see Jeremiah 29:13). His Spirit will help you put aside your worldly cares

and become a better person (see Isaiah 58:13-14).

Moriah M., 15, Idaho



I know how you feel. But in time I was able to realize how marvelous the Sabbath day is. We can forget about the things we can't do if

we pray to Heavenly Father and ask for strength. By our praying for strength, the Sabbath becomes a day you are excited for. On the Sabbath day you can rest, pray,

serve, receive blessings, nourish your spirit, and develop tremendous spiritual strength.

Richard R., 16, Nariño, Colombia



Make the Sabbath day different from other days of the week. You may think you are missing out on spending time with friends or having an extra day to do homework. But if you choose those worldly things over true Sabbath day observance, think of the eternal blessings and joy you are missing out on. By keeping the Sabbath day holy, you will not only feel spiritually filled and ready to face the upcoming week, but you will show Heavenly Father reverence. I have a strong testimony that you can come to honestly say that Sunday is the best day of the week.

Sophia W., 16, Maine



I find keeping my mind on the Sabbath becomes easier as I fulfill my Church and priesthood callings. As I do my duties as a priest and help the teachers and deacons with their duties, I find I am not thinking about the things I can't do but remembering everything I need to get done.

Andrew S., 17, Montana

I always joyfully await the Sabbath day. On this day I feel the great love of our Heavenly Father. On the Sabbath, all the hardships in my life are forgotten. When I partake of the sacrament, my mind turns to the great sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for us. I remember the awful suffering He endured so that we can be with our Heavenly Father again. My heart is filled with charity. I want to share this feeling with my neighbors, especially those who are not members of the Church.

Anna R., 20, Ukraine



The Sabbath is . . . a day for consistent attendance at meetings for the worship of the Lord, drinking at the fountain of knowledge and instruction, enjoying the family, and finding uplift in music and song.

“The Sabbath is a holy day in which to do worthy and holy things. . . . To observe it, one will be on his knees in prayer, preparing lessons, studying the gospel, meditating, visiting the ill and distressed, writing letters to missionaries, taking a nap, reading wholesome material, and attending all the meetings.”

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), “The Sabbath—A Delight,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1978, 4–5.



Look at the Sabbath as a day of opportunities. Think of all the family activities you can do. Sundays at my home consist of going to church, reading uplifting material, watching

Church-related movies, going to firesides, and playing games with my family. It is a day to spend more time with my family and become closer to our Heavenly Father.

Justin D., 18, Washington

Since I decided to sanctify the Lord’s day, it has been my favorite day of the week. I made a mental list of things that help me keep a spirit of reverence and worship on the Sabbath. For example, my list includes getting up early, reading the scriptures, working on Personal Progress, writing in my journal, and writing letters. As I do these and other spiritual activities, I feel the wonderful spirit and joy that are within me. I also notice that I don’t have time left over for less spiritual activities.

Sílvia M., 18, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

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

NEXT QUESTION

“I have a couple of friends who don’t come to church anymore. What are some ways to help them return?”

SEND US YOUR ANSWER, along with your full name, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and photograph (including your parent’s written permission to print the photo) to:

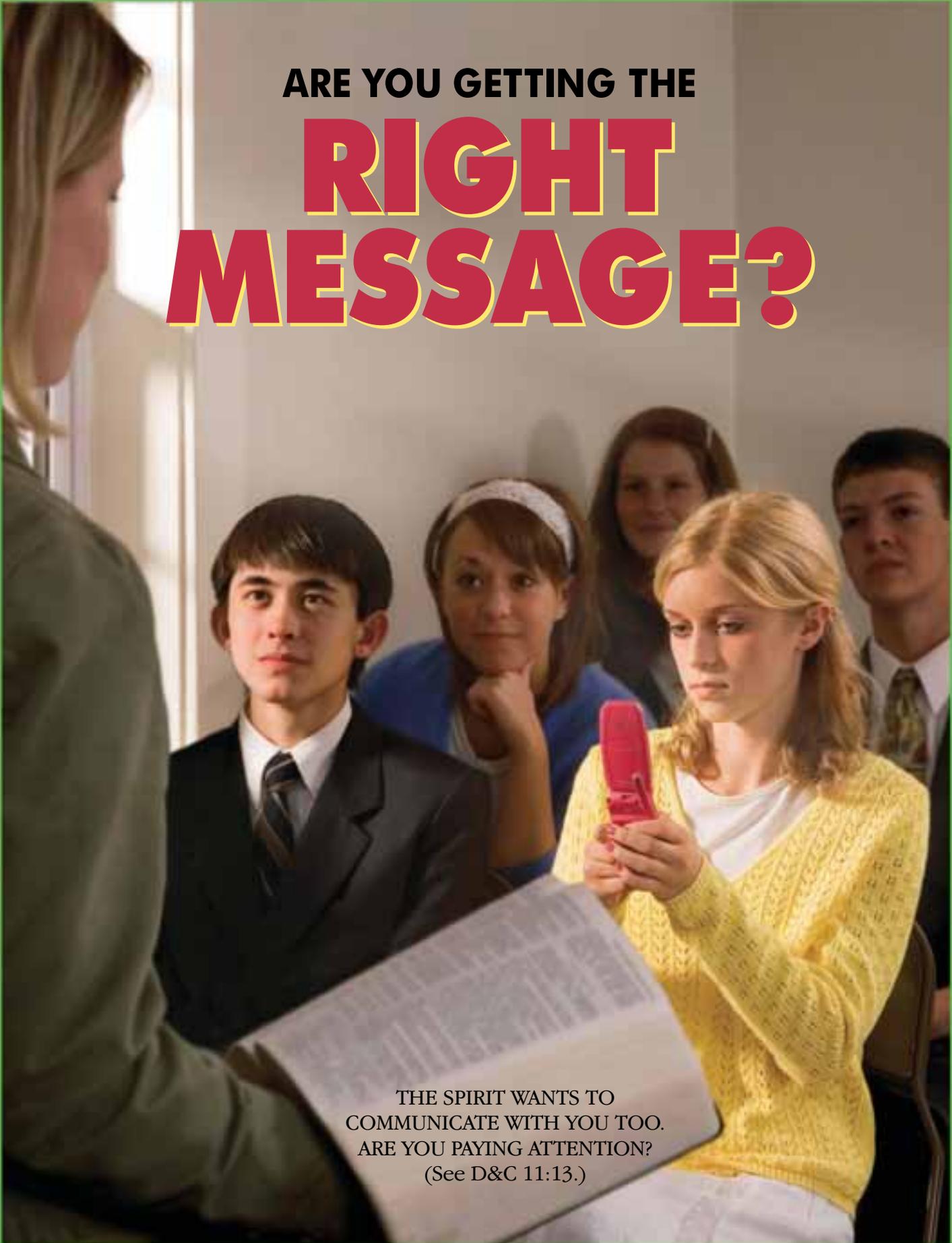
New Era, Q&A, 9/07

50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by September 15, 2007.

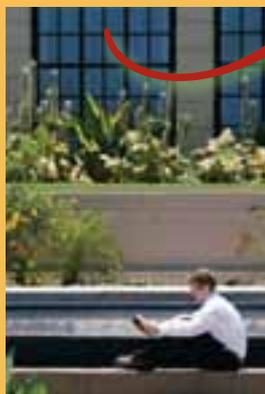


ARE YOU GETTING THE
**RIGHT
MESSAGE?**

THE SPIRIT WANTS TO
COMMUNICATE WITH YOU TOO.
ARE YOU PAYING ATTENTION?
(See D&C 11:13.)

Symphony OF ONE

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY
Church Magazines



Zack is impressed with what he learns by studying the scriptures (above). At a young age (below, right) he found it's similar with music: "You always want to learn from a master, someone with a higher knowledge than you." Such study, along with practice (far right), makes him a master cello player.



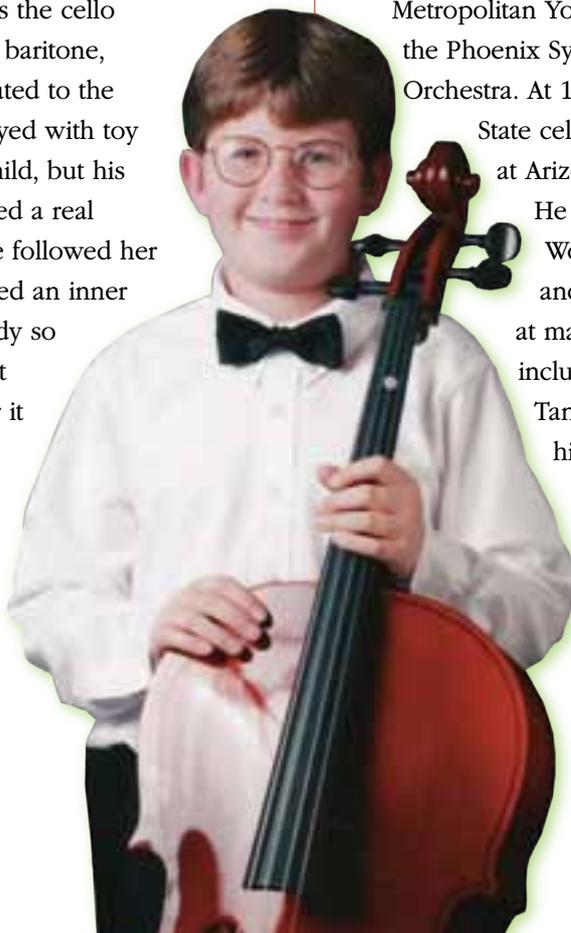
Ever since he was a child, Zack Clark heard music in his heart. But it was through obedience that he learned to hear the music in his soul.

The first time Zack Clark of Phoenix, Arizona, played the cello, magic happened. His fingers pressed awkwardly upon the neck of the instrument as he pulled the bow across the strings. He was nine then and the notes he played were simple. But as the cello replied in its raspy baritone, Zack's heart resonated to the sound. He had played with toy instruments as a child, but his sister Maegan played a real cello, and when he followed her example, it unlocked an inner symphony, a melody so complex and sweet he yearned to hear it again and to share it with others.

He quickly learned, however, that the notes of such a symphony do not migrate from the mind to

the fingers without hard work. Under the guidance of a teacher who saw his potential, Zack was soon devoting four to seven hours each day to practice, immersing himself in a demanding discipline. He became principal cellist of school orchestras, the Metropolitan Youth Symphony, and the Phoenix Symphony Guild Youth Orchestra. At 14 he was named All-State cellist and performed solo at Arizona State University.

He was invited to the World Cello Conference and was principal chair at major music camps including Brevard and Tanglewood. With his high school orchestra, he played at Carnegie Hall in New York City. At 18 he was selected principal cellist for the National High School Honors Orchestra. He auditioned for and







Music isn't Zack's only interest.

He loves yo-yos, Rubik's Cube, and his mom and dad. He remembers finding peace at the Mesa Arizona Temple (far right), the same peace he carries with him today as a missionary in Scotland (bottom right) and that he and his companion shared with a man who was baptized (page 22).



ZACK'S FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

“In the Book of Mormon there’s a scripture I just can’t get out of my head. Moroni has been addressing the unbelievers. He confirms that there is a God; he says that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever; that miracles were done in ancient times and still are done today. All of that is very logical. Then there’s this statement in Mormon 9:21: ‘Behold, I say unto you that whoso believeth in Christ, doubting nothing, whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ it shall be granted him.’”

“To me that scripture says that if you are righteous and have unwavering faith in the Lord, He’ll do anything for you if it is according to His will. On my mission, if He needs me to move a mountain to find somebody, I’ll be able to do that because of Him. When I get back, if He really wants me to play my cello again, then He’ll allow me—with the right determination—to get back in shape with my instrument.”

received instruction from some of the best cellists in the world.

Music wasn’t everything, though. He had rhythm on a skateboard and an aptitude for folding origami birds. He remembered the birthdays of his family and friends, and he volunteered at a museum. Like many musicians, he was also good at math and found he could make most computer software sing. As a freshman at the Cleveland Institute of Music and Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, he began a double degree program in cello performance and computer engineering.

But it was while playing the cello that he could hear the symphony in his heart, and





he kept perfecting his performance so that those listening could hear it too. And now as he performed, in the back of his mind he kept hearing another theme, quiet but constant. It sang of restoration, truth, angels, and light, of prophets, revelation, and the Holy Ghost. And even though his love of music had already filled him with a personal symphony, this new refrain brought clarity and fire to his soul. It reminded him of a favorite song:

*We are as the army of Helaman.
We have been taught in our youth.
And we will be the Lord's missionaries
To bring the world his truth.*

("We'll Bring the World His Truth,"
Children's Songbook, 172)

The symphony in his heart was swelling, and as he heard the music in his soul, he knew the time for a full-time mission had come.

Many at school thought Zack was crazy. Other students studying with the same teacher had graduated to become the principal or assistant principal cellist with



THE BAREFOOT SYMPHONY FOR SHOES

Imagine a concert featuring 20 of the best young musicians in a major metropolitan area, all performing barefoot! That's what happened during Zack Clark's Eagle Scout service project. He organized a concert to benefit children in need of footwear, and the musicians decided to emphasize the point by going without shoes or socks while they were on stage.

Admission to the concert was a pair of new shoes or socks, and 235 pairs of socks, 91 pairs of shoes, and other articles of clothing were donated for a local children's home. Scouts from Zack's troop distributed flyers promoting the event, served as ushers, prepared snacks, set up for the concert, and delivered items to the shelter, contributing more than 700 hours of service.



MUSIC IN YOUR MUSCLES

By studying music, Zack learned something that is now helping him in the mission field.

“Hard work is the key,” he says. “In music, you work on techniques and basics. Through practice and repetition, you learn obedience. You rehearse so much that when you perform, musicians say, ‘You have the music in your muscles.’ That means you’ve studied it so much it just pours out of you; you’re free to do your best. It’s the same way with the gospel. You study until you are so full that the Spirit can guide you to say the right things. Then when you teach, you know what to say.”

symphonies in Chicago and Seattle. Was Zack now abandoning a similar future for a strange cause?

It wasn’t strange to Zack. “For my entire life I’ve wanted to go on a mission,” he said. “It’s not a sacrifice, because I know I’ll be blessed. I keep thinking of the power of that phrase—‘to bring the world his truth.’ Sure, I’m setting aside the cello for two years, but I know it’s what the Lord wants me to do.”

Soon he received his call to the Scotland Edinburgh Mission, and as he read the letter from the prophet, the symphony sounded again. This time the melody reminded him of the Savior. “When you study music, you always want to learn from a master, someone with a higher knowledge than you,” Zack said. “As I read my call to serve, I realized that on my mission I would be serving the true Master, and that in His service, there is always much to learn.”

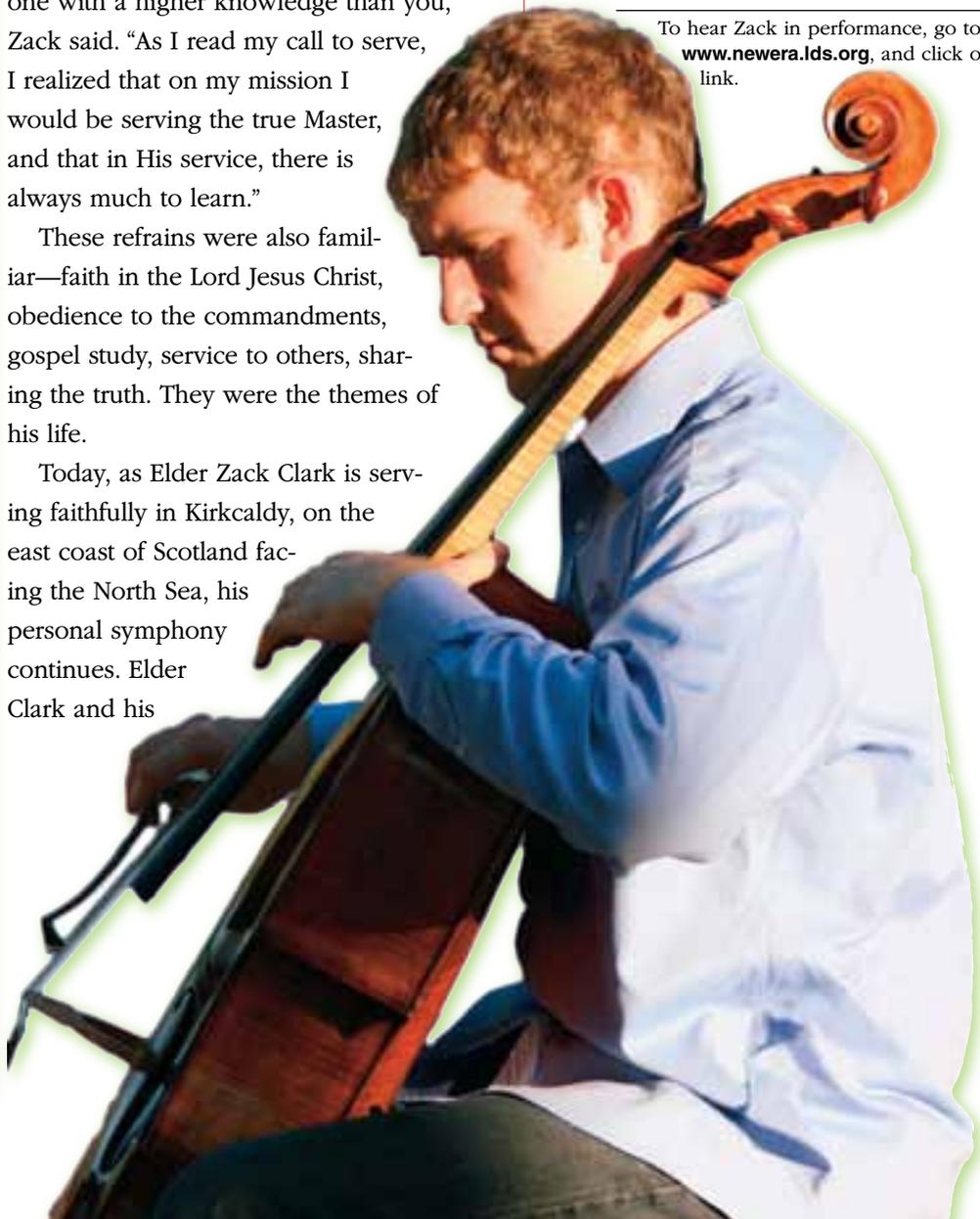
These refrains were also familiar—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, obedience to the commandments, gospel study, service to others, sharing the truth. They were the themes of his life.

Today, as Elder Zack Clark is serving faithfully in Kirkcaldy, on the east coast of Scotland facing the North Sea, his personal symphony continues. Elder Clark and his

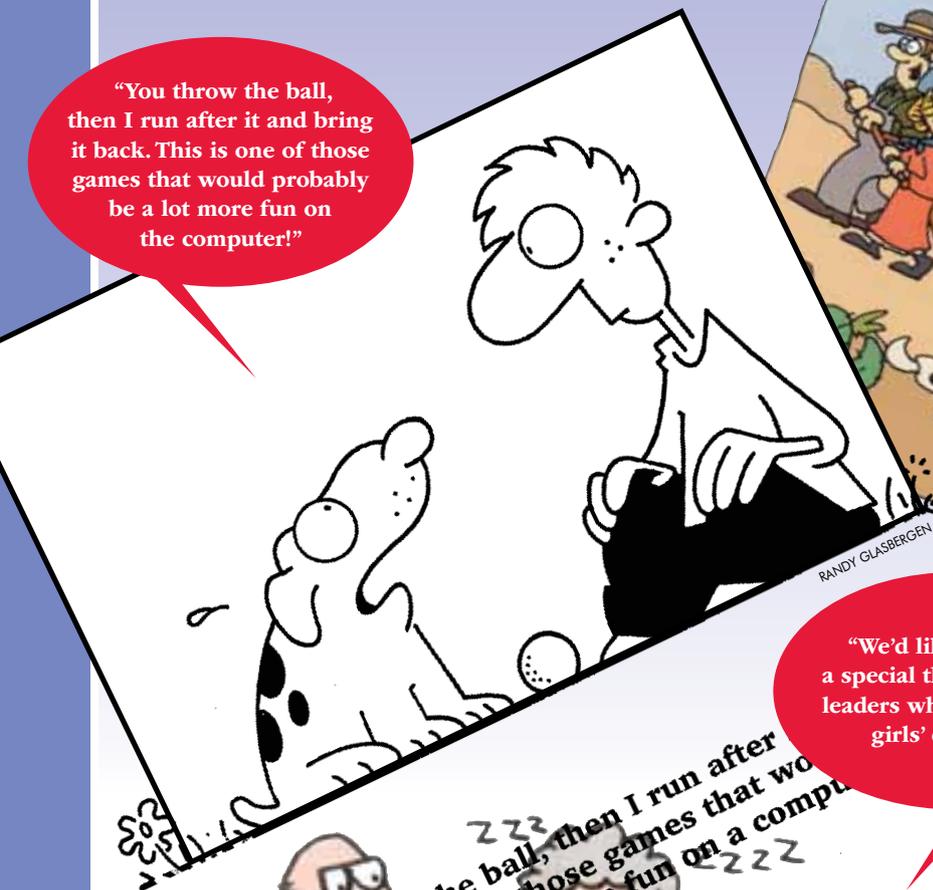


companion, Elder Stoddard, just taught a husband and wife who both chose to be baptized. “If you want to hear music in your soul,” Elder Clark says, “just share the gospel. Watch someone embrace it, and as they learn and grow, the melody in your own heart will be sweet.” **NE**

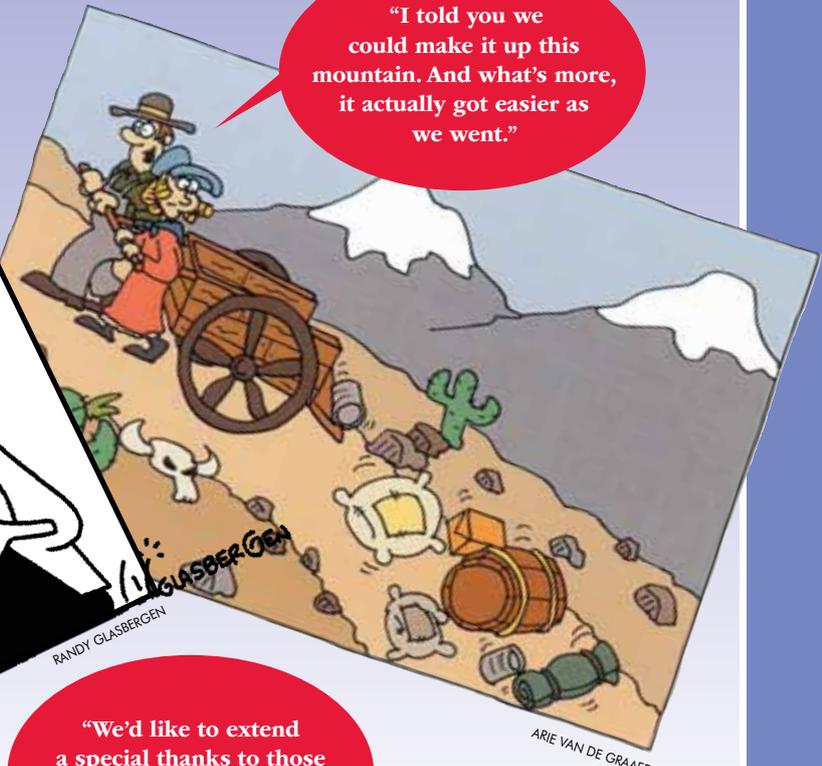
To hear Zack in performance, go to www.newera.lds.org, and click on the link.



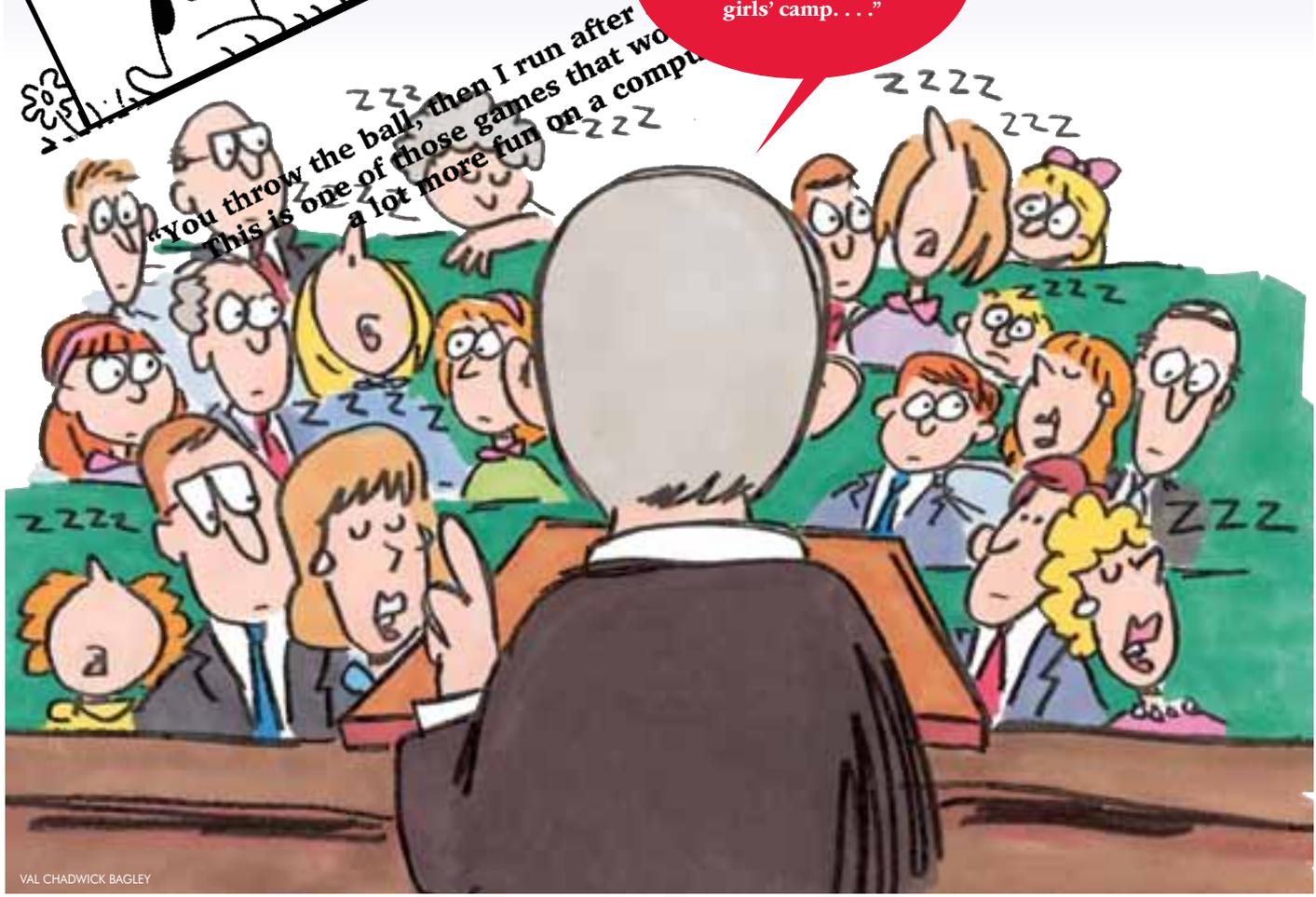
"You throw the ball, then I run after it and bring it back. This is one of those games that would probably be a lot more fun on the computer!"



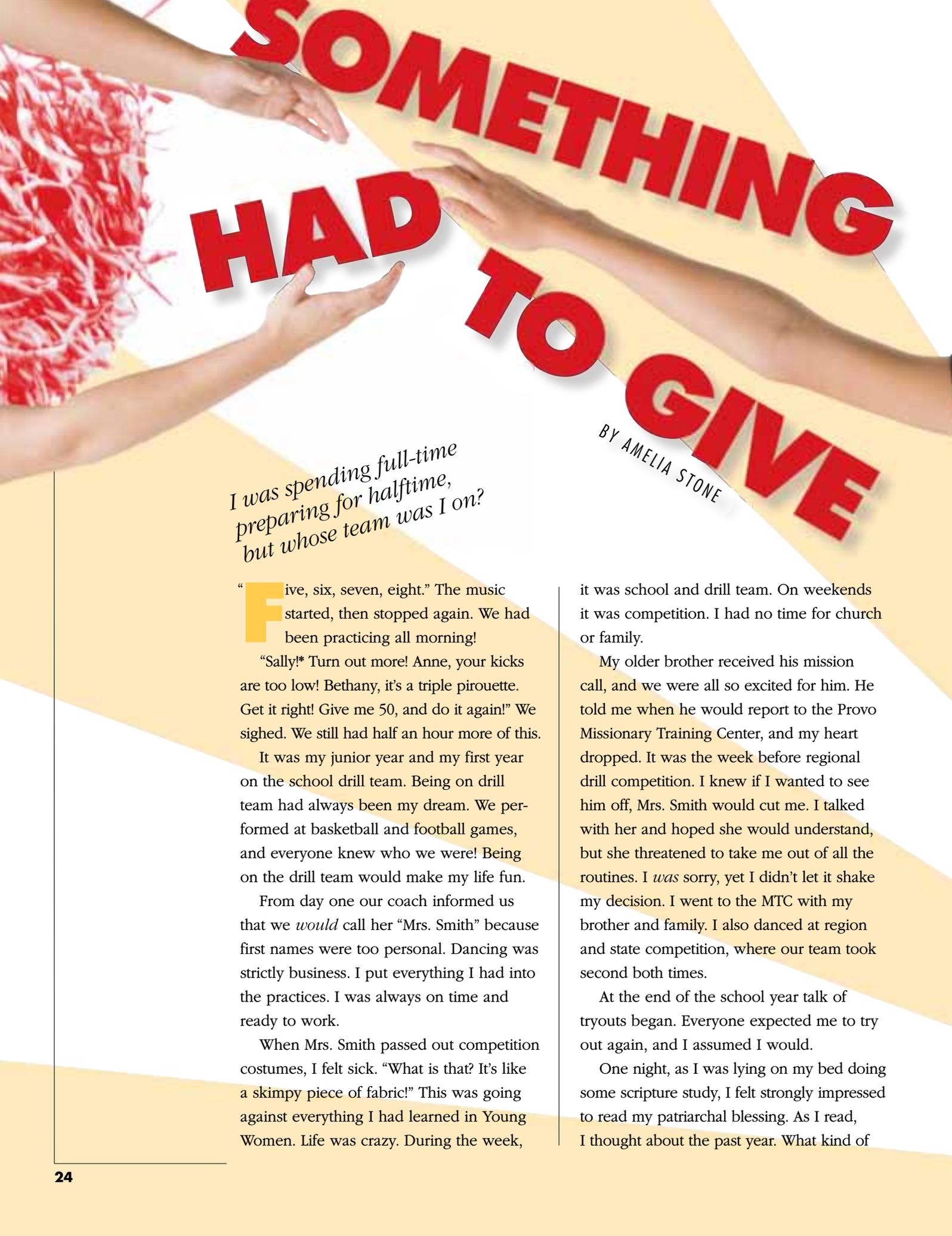
"I told you we could make it up this mountain. And what's more, it actually got easier as we went."



"We'd like to extend a special thanks to those leaders who helped with girls' camp..."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



SOMETHING HAD TO GIVE

BY AMELIA STONE

I was spending full-time preparing for halftime, but whose team was I on?

“Five, six, seven, eight.” The music started, then stopped again. We had been practicing all morning!

“Sally!* Turn out more! Anne, your kicks are too low! Bethany, it’s a triple pirouette. Get it right! Give me 50, and do it again!” We sighed. We still had half an hour more of this.

It was my junior year and my first year on the school drill team. Being on drill team had always been my dream. We performed at basketball and football games, and everyone knew who we were! Being on the drill team would make my life fun.

From day one our coach informed us that we *would* call her “Mrs. Smith” because first names were too personal. Dancing was strictly business. I put everything I had into the practices. I was always on time and ready to work.

When Mrs. Smith passed out competition costumes, I felt sick. “What is that? It’s like a skimpy piece of fabric!” This was going against everything I had learned in Young Women. Life was crazy. During the week,

it was school and drill team. On weekends it was competition. I had no time for church or family.

My older brother received his mission call, and we were all so excited for him. He told me when he would report to the Provo Missionary Training Center, and my heart dropped. It was the week before regional drill competition. I knew if I wanted to see him off, Mrs. Smith would cut me. I talked with her and hoped she would understand, but she threatened to take me out of all the routines. I *was* sorry, yet I didn’t let it shake my decision. I went to the MTC with my brother and family. I also danced at region and state competition, where our team took second both times.

At the end of the school year talk of tryouts began. Everyone expected me to try out again, and I assumed I would.

One night, as I was lying on my bed doing some scripture study, I felt strongly impressed to read my patriarchal blessing. As I read, I thought about the past year. What kind of



person had I become in the past year? I was wearing immodest clothing for performances. I wasn't going to church anymore. My relationships with my family had deteriorated. I had forgotten who I was. Where was my testimony? What were my priorities?

I went to my mom's room and flopped onto her bed. We talked about what I had just discovered. We made a list of pros and cons, but she told me the decision was up to me.

That night many thoughts swirled inside my head. I knew what the right decision was, but I didn't want to give up the popularity, the status, and the prestige of drill team. Did family and church mean enough to me to change?

I didn't go to tryouts the next day. Never had I felt such relief and comfort about a decision. Although Mrs. Smith and my team accused me of abandoning them, I didn't regret my decision. I had abandoned *myself* for too long and was ready to straighten out my priorities. **NE**

*Names have been changed.

Check out the Idea List "Managing Time and Staying Balanced," *New Era*, Apr. 2003, p. 39.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUKE, POSED BY MODELS



NOT EVEN ONCE

BY SHANNA BUTLER

**"Stay away from illegal drugs.
They can absolutely destroy you.
They will take away your powers of reason."
—President Gordon B. Hinckley**

It's shaped like a walnut but weighs about three pounds. And it controls everything your body does from breathing to calculus. It's your brain.

Your brain is as high-tech as it gets. The various parts of your brain work in a miraculous combination to run your entire body. But drug abuse can seriously alter how your brain and body work. Harmful narcotics change the way you think and feel by posing as unhealthy substitutes for chemicals that help your brain run normally. These mind-altering drugs can cause addictions that are not easily overcome. And even one-time use can be harmful.

Just Once Does Hurt

Glen Hanson, director of the Utah Addiction Center and a senior adviser for the National Institute on Drug Abuse at the National Institutes of Health, says one-time drug abuse can be harmful, and in the few cases where people are sensitive to the drug, it can be lethal. Continued recreational use of drugs causes brain damage and increasingly compromises your ability to make decisions, he says.

Habit-forming drugs not only affect your body, but as you surrender your body and will to them, they will also destroy the other command center of your body—your spirit. Choosing to disobey the Word of

Wisdom will lead you away from the Lord.

Trying drugs “just once” can physically harm you in some cases. But “just once” will *always* harm you spiritually. President George Albert Smith (1870–1951), eighth president of the Church, said: “If you cross to the devil’s side of the line one inch, you are in the tempter’s power, and if he is successful, you will not be able to think or even reason properly, because you will have lost the spirit of the Lord.”¹

Elder Boyd K. Packer put it this way: “Narcotic addiction serves the design of the prince of darkness, for it disrupts the channel to the holy spirit of truth. . . . Addiction has the capacity to disconnect the human will and nullify moral agency. It can rob one of the power to decide. Agency is too fundamental a doctrine to be left in such jeopardy.”²

Drugs Can Destroy You

Although harmful drugs are not mentioned by name in Doctrine and Covenants 89, modern-day prophets have warned against them repeatedly. President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “Stay away from illegal drugs. They can absolutely destroy you. They will take away your powers of reason. They will enslave you in a vicious and terrible way. They will destroy your mind and your body. They will build within you such cravings that you will do anything to satisfy them.”³ The same goes for abusing prescription drugs or any other addictive substance, including alcohol and tobacco.

There is hope, however. Those who are addicted can find help, and through the Atonement of Jesus Christ they can also find healing and comfort.⁴



“Keep the Word of Wisdom. Seek worthy companions. Attend church faithfully. Never fail daily to seek for help through prayer. And I promise you that the way will be easier and you shall have a composure of mind and a confident attitude toward life and the future. . . . [H]ave faith. The Lord will be with you; you will be guided. I bear witness of Him and of His sacrifice and of His Atonement and of His love for you.”

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Word of Wisdom: The Principle and the Promises,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 19.

Shane’s Story

Shane (name has been changed) knows what it’s like to be a slave to drugs. He was experiencing major amounts of stress and depression in his life and wanted relief. He smoked his first marijuana joint when he was 16, only a week after he took his first drink of alcohol with some friends on New Year’s Eve.

“We thought it would be fun. And we wanted to be cool with each other and feel important and stuff,” he says. “I really didn’t know what I wanted. I should have stuck to my standards.”

His first experience with marijuana led him to other drugs like prescription pain killers and cocaine. In less than a year, Shane went from being an active Church member and a good student and worker to being a heroin addict, alienated from the Church and failing in school and at work. “In the end I was doing heroin seven or eight times a day. It went pretty fast.”

“I had a job, but I was stealing money, robbing houses, trying to rip off kids. I started selling drugs to make more money.” His health started to go downhill, too. “I got skinny, and I just really didn’t care about myself. I damaged my heart and lungs and other organs.”

His life was falling apart physically and spiritually. His family was suffering as well.

**“Addiction has the capacity to disconnect the human will and nullify moral agency.”
—President Boyd K. Packer**

“Watching Shane suffer emotionally, physically, and spiritually was very painful,” says his mother. “When one person struggles,



HOW TO HELP YOURSELF OR A LOVED ONE

Shane and his mother say they feel that not many people understood what their family went through. Many people ignored them and only a few talked directly about their struggles. Shane's mother says, "The most wonderful thing anyone can do is to be open and honest. Ask how they are doing. Honest concern will help."

LDS Family Services can help you or a loved one recover from addictions. Counselors are available in many places in the United States and Canada. LDS Family Services also sponsors recovery support groups in some areas. No referrals are necessary.

The Social and Emotional Strength link at ProvidentLiving.org can lead you to more resources, including *A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing*, a new booklet that is also available from distribution centers or at www.ldscatalog.com (item #36764). The booklet is both a workbook and a guide to go along with the addiction recovery support groups run by LDS Family Services.

Preach My Gospel, pages 187–190, has some excellent advice on how to support those struggling with addictions and how to overcome them yourself.

Talk to your parents, bishop, doctor, or other trusted adults if you need help. They can point you to the resources you need.

Go to www.drugfree.org for more information on the signs of addiction.



the entire family is affected. It can also have devastating repercussions, even outside the immediate family. It was a very sad thing for all who knew Shane to experience."

He was caught abusing prescription drugs and attended a treatment program. "I came back, and I got right back into it," he says. He was suspended from school for a year and court-ordered to another treatment program. For Shane, getting caught and forced into treatment saved him.

His family stood with him through the treatment program, and they continue to support him as he struggles to get his life back. As they do this, they rely on the gospel and on the Savior's Atonement.

"Without our Savior and His Atoning sacrifice, what hope would there be for somebody like Shane who has completely stripped themselves of all the survival keys the gospel gives?" Shane's mother says.

"It's hard to repent," says Shane. "You go through a lot."

Confessing to his priesthood leaders and others he had wronged was difficult. But Shane learned a new level of honesty as he worked through the process that will serve as a foundation for recovery throughout his life. He feels good about where he is now and is hopeful about the future.

For others, Shane has a warning: "Those kids that try to get you into drugs don't really care about you. They just care about the drugs. You have to realize where drugs are going to lead you. Just never get yourself in that situation."

**"Obedience brings peace in decision making."
—President James E. Faust**

Addiction can start with the first pill, smoke, or sip. The only way to protect your mind, body, and spirit is to stay away from dangerous substances.

Don't forget there are people and places to turn to if you need help to beat an addiction. Talk to your parents and bishop. Professional counseling is also available through LDS Family Services.

“It definitely has changed my life,” Shane says. “I will always struggle with it.” But he is quick to point out that recovery and healing is possible for anybody caught up in drugs and that it’s never too late to stop.

Stick to Standards

Many young people try drugs to fill voids in their lives, but this decision always leads to broken hearts and bodies. Whether they feel a need for friends, or peace, or happiness, or love, these teens, like Shane, always find drugs to be an unfulfilling substitute for what they really need. Turning to the Lord and to our families, instead of to other sources, will truly fill our needs. Abusing drugs can never do that.

Brother Douglas LeCheminant, a licensed clinical social worker and program specialist at LDS Family Services, says, “Continue to nurture your connections with trusted peers and trusted adults. That is critical. Develop the self-awareness to recognize the connection between being tempted and feeling a need for acceptance. When you feel that need, it is important to fill it in healthy, gospel-centered ways. Stay close to your family and the Church.”

Use Your Brain

President James E. Faust says, “Obedience brings peace in decision making. If we have firmly made up our minds to follow the commandments, we will not have to redecide which path to take when temptation comes our way. That is how obedience brings spiritual safety.”⁵

Obedience to the prophets and the Word of Wisdom will bring you spiritual as well as physical safety. Your miraculous brain

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Find more information on keeping the Word of Wisdom and dealing with addiction in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org. “When a Loved One Struggles with Addiction,” by Corrie Lynne Player (*Ensign*, Jan. 2005); “The Enemy Within,” by President James E. Faust (*Ensign*, Nov. 2000); “Shake Off the Chains with Which Ye Are Bound,” by Elder Marvin J. Ashton (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986); “Ye Are the Temple of God,” by President Boyd K. Packer (*Ensign*, Nov. 2000).

The following non-Church resources may also be of some help: www.InterveneNow.org; National Drug Information, Treatment and Referral line, at 1-800-662-HELP.

and spirit should be telling you one important thing right now: The only safe road to a healthy mind, body, and spirit, is through obedience to the commandments. **NE**

NOTES

1. In *Sharing the Gospel with Others*, sel. Preston Nibley (1948), 43.
2. “Revelation in a Changing World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 14.
3. “Living Worthy of the Girl You Will Someday Marry,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 49.
4. *A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing* (2005), vi.
5. “Obedience: The Path to Freedom,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 47.

**“Develop the self-awareness to recognize the connection between being tempted and feeling a need for acceptance.”
— Douglas LeCheminant**



HELLO ...

Hey!

Keep
Texting
from
Taking
Over



BY RUSSELL AND BRAD WILCOX

"I am so excited to see my friend again," one young woman kept telling her parents as she prepared for the special reunion. She had recently returned home after having lived far away. She had looked forward to this moment for a long time.

When the two friends saw each other, they were all smiles. They hugged and laughed as they left together to enjoy becoming reacquainted. However, the parents were surprised when their daughter returned home much earlier than expected.

"What's wrong?" they asked.

"I was so excited to talk the way we used to, but she just spent the whole time text messaging her other friends." Her hurt and disappointment were apparent as she declared, "I wish texting had never been invented."

Like all communication tools, cell phones with text messaging capabilities can be positive or negative depending on how they are used. Stories can be told of a texted birthday greeting that made someone's day or a disaster that was avoided because someone was warned quickly and effectively in a text message. Still, not-so-positive stories can also be told of teenagers texting their friends during Sunday School or seminary lessons, of people being hurt by the content of a message received, or, as in the example above, of people avoiding or disregarding those around them in favor of texting someone else.

Like e-mailing, texting can be a wonderful way to communicate and build relationships, but it's not the relationship itself. If texting is managed and kept in control, it can have positive results. However, if it is allowed to take over, it can be disruptive and even damaging.

Disturbing Trends

We asked several recently returned missionaries about text messaging. These friends who spent their missions in a "text-less" environment commented on some disturbing trends they have noticed upon returning home. They spoke of how text messaging can create a false sense of security and poor communication skills and how it can be a detached and emotionless activity.

"It is pretty easy to feel like you have a protective wall around you when you are texting," said one. "It is easy to fire off a thoughtless invitation or biting response because you feel safe." Such a feeling is not always healthy. It is like yelling at another driver from the safety of your own car. The distance makes you feel comfortable in saying things you would never say in a face-to-face encounter. Have you ever had a teacher write some harsh and even cruel comments on an essay or short story on which you have spent hours? From a distance, the teacher felt safe in giving feedback that may not have been uplifting. Had he or she faced you in a one-on-one conversation, the feedback would probably have taken on a much softer and more tactful tone.

Another returned missionary commented that, in his view, texting does not teach good communication skills. "When do you learn to carry on a conversation that lasts more than a few minutes?" he asked. "When do you learn to listen to verbal and nonverbal messages that are being expressed?" He mentioned how

Is texting good or bad? It depends on how you use it.



Take opportunities to talk and make new friends. When you reach out in person, you can work on a friendship with more depth and understanding.

it seems almost funny to walk across a college campus or airport seeing everyone on cell phones communicating with someone “out there” and totally ignoring the people “right here.” The returned missionary said, “It seems as mixed up as the self-absorbed superstar who is consumed with communicating to his or her audience in the movie or on the CD, while mistreating other cast members, helpers, or fans.”

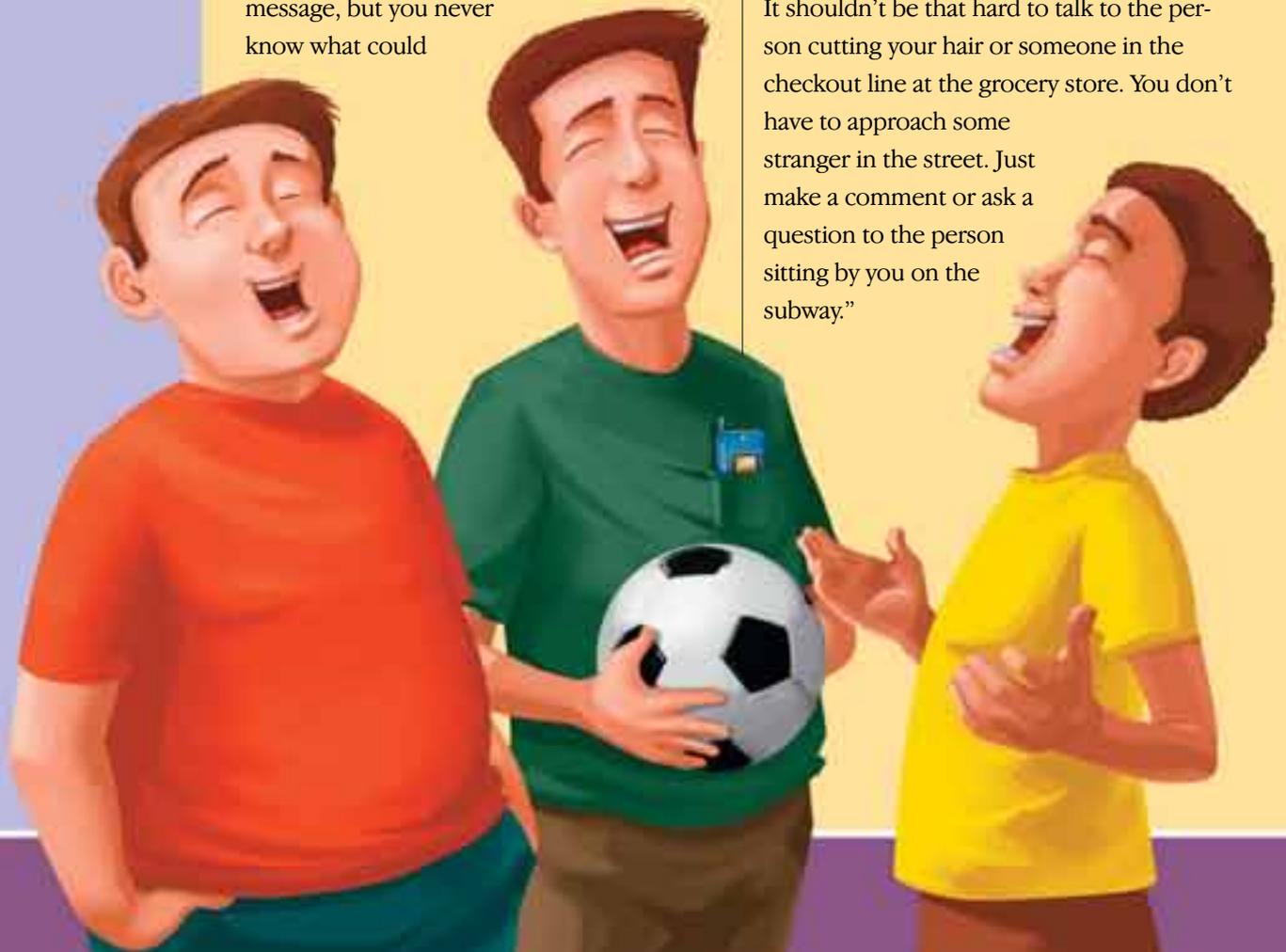
“Perhaps the biggest drawback of texting is that it allows you to remain detached from people,” said another returned missionary. Relationships are like bank accounts: no deposit, no return. If you invest little in your efforts to reach out and interact with others, you get very little back. This former missionary said, “It’s like with investigators. If you withhold your heart and don’t care, you may save yourself a lot of pain if they reject your message, but you never know what could

happen if you had really invested your all.” Texting can easily take the emotion out of the interactions that are so important in our lives. “It is like eating food without any spices. You sure miss a lot.”

Taking Control

How can we avoid the drawbacks and use text messaging appropriately? These returned missionaries offered some excellent advice: text in private, maintain a balance between electronic and nonelectronic forms of communication, and seek a variety of entertainment.

“Talk to people,” one returned missionary said. “Learn how to start a conversation with someone you don’t know. Ask, ‘Where are you from?’ or, ‘Have you always lived around here?’ That is one of the hardest things for new missionaries to do, and it shouldn’t be. It shouldn’t be that hard to talk to the person cutting your hair or someone in the checkout line at the grocery store. You don’t have to approach some stranger in the street. Just make a comment or ask a question to the person sitting by you on the subway.”



Another former missionary says, “Texting, listening to messages, and even taking phone calls can wait. Do it in your private time rather than in front of others.” He said, “My mission president had a cell phone, but he kept it on silent and never answered it in a conference or interview. We always knew we were his priority at the moment.”

Texting can actually be a form of entertainment for many people. “It’s pretty sad if that is as good as it gets for you,” said a returned sister missionary. What are you going to tell your kids one day about what you did for fun in the “good old days”? Do you really want to admit that all your entertainment centered on videos, computer games, and text messages? The sister missionary asked, “What about creative dates, playing games, or just sitting around telling funny stories and laughing till it hurts?”

Russell’s Experience

When Russell got home from his mission he was excited to get a cell phone. He had used one before but without the games, cameras, and text messaging capabilities. On one of the first weekends after his return, he was asked to help out at a neighborhood garage sale. As people wandered among the various items spread out on the lawn, Russell played with his new cell phone and began texting a friend about how much he missed his mission. Suddenly, he noticed a lady who appeared a little confused as she looked at several of the items. He put his cell phone away and approached her. He soon discovered she was new in the area and spoke Spanish but little English. Having served in Spain, he delighted her by speaking Spanish. Before long, he had not only helped her pick out a few items, but he had also taken her name and address with the intent of sending the missionaries.

Russell says, “Here I was texting my friend about how much I missed my mission, and I almost let a missionary opportunity pass me by. When I put the cell phone away, I actually ended up getting a missionary referral. I was happy to have my new cell phone, and texting my friend was fun, but nothing made me happier than getting this referral for the missionaries.”

Is there a place for cell phone text messaging? Of course. We just need to keep it from taking over. **NE**



Text messaging can also be used as a tool for good. Three students at Skyline High School Seminary in Salt Lake City, Utah, shared these examples of ways they and others have put their thumb muscles to good use.

- Mitch got a text message thanking him for something he did, and it made him feel good. Sending simple, positive messages doesn’t take long, but it can brighten someone’s day.

- Mary-Martha’s Sunday School teacher used text messaging to remind her class about a Church activity.

- Bridger sent his friend a text message asking if he was coming to seminary. You can use texting to invite people to seminary or Mutual activities without putting pressure on them. You can also send a message telling someone that you missed him or her at an activity and inviting him or her to come next time.

- Mitch’s friend downloaded the scriptures onto his cell phone. Sending your favorite scripture in a text message could change someone’s day and touch his or her heart.

- Bridger likes to send his mom and dad a message asking them how their day is going. Instead of isolating you, that kind of text messaging could actually strengthen your relationship with your parents.

It’s up to you to use text messaging wisely. It can be a useful tool, but don’t let it replace face-to-face communication.

THE TEST OF

BY PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

(1873–1970)

Ninth President of the Church



The testimony of Jesus abides in the soul, and strength comes to each individual to withstand the evils of the world.

Zion is the pure in heart, and the strength of this Church lies in the purity of the thoughts and lives of its members.

I was with a party of friends, driving over a beautiful valley. We passed a beautiful wheat field. . . . One of the party expressed his admiration of the luxuriant growth in the field. There it stood apart from the sagebrush and barren surroundings.

But he was not satisfied with looking at it in the aggregate. We stopped, and he looked at individual heads of wheat and exclaimed, “Look what large heads.” Just one; it was the individual stalk that gave him that impression. He then broke the head, shuffled it in his hand, blew the chaff away, and examined each kernel. “The kernels,” he continued, “are plump and solid.” After all, the test of that wheat field was the individual kernel of wheat, and so it is in a community; so it is in the Church.

The test, after all, of the efficiency of

God’s people is an individual one. What is the individual doing? Each one should ask, “Am I living so that I am keeping unspotted from the evil of the world?” . . .

Three Types of Temptation

Zion is the pure in heart (see D&C 97:21), and the strength of this Church lies in the purity of the thoughts and lives of its members. Then the testimony of Jesus abides in the soul, and strength comes to each individual to withstand the evils of the world.

These evils present themselves subtly in our daily associations. They come in the shape of temptations, and they came to the Savior after His baptism (see Matthew 4; Luke 4). What were those temptations? When Satan said, “Command these stones to be made bread,” he was appealing to the appetite. He knew that Jesus was hungry, that He was physically weak, and thought that by pointing to those little lime stones that resemble somewhat a Jewish loaf of bread, he could awaken a desire to eat. He

One





failed in that when he received the divine word: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Satan then tried Him in another way. He dared Him—an appeal to His pride, to His vanity—and quoted scripture to support his temptation, for the devil can find scripture for his purpose. But the Savior answered him in terms of scripture, “It is also written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”

What was the third temptation? An appeal to His love of power, domain, wealth: “All these [the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof] I will give you,” said the tempter, “if you will only fall down and worship me.”

“Then Jesus saith unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.”

Nearly every temptation that comes to you and me comes in one of those forms. Classify them, and you will find that nearly every temptation that makes you and me spotted, ever so little maybe, comes to us as (1) a temptation of the appetite, (2) a yielding to the pride, fashion, and vanity of those alienated from

the things of God, or (3) a gratifying of the passion or a desire for the riches of the world or power among men.

When do temptations come? They come to us in our social gatherings; they come to us at our weddings; they come to us at work. In our dealings in all the affairs of life, we find these subtle influences working, and it is when they manifest themselves to the consciousness of each individual that the defense of truth ought to exert itself.

*It may not be on the mountain height
Or over the stormy sea,
It may not be at the battle's front
My Lord will have need of me.
But if, by a still, small voice he calls
To paths that I do not know,
I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in thine:
I'll go where you want me to go.*
(Hymns, no. 270)

When that still, small voice calls to the performance of duty, insignificant though it seem, and its performance unknown to anyone save the individual and God, he who responds gains corresponding strength.

Withstanding Temptation

Temptation often comes in the same quiet way. Perhaps



yielding to it may not be known to anyone save the individual and his God, but if he does yield to it, he becomes to that extent weakened and spotted with the evil of the world.

Let me cite an instance: A young [man] was invited to a wedding in a foreign country, at which two of his acquaintances were joined together in the bonds of matrimony, the ceremony being performed by a minister of another church. This young man was the only Latter-day Saint present among the 100 or more guests at the table in the hotel. By each plate was a wine cup, filled to the brim, and also a glass of water.

After the ceremony, as the guests were all in their places, the minister arose and said, "Now I propose that the company drink the health of the newly married couple." They all arose. Politeness suggested that he take the wine cup. He was a missionary; he belonged to the Church that preaches the Word of Wisdom, revealed directly from God to the Prophet Joseph. Science since then has proved it to be indeed a word of wisdom. He was preaching that, and he was living it. Yet here was a time when he could indulge, no one would know. But he resisted. Now was the time to defend his Church, and that is what he did.

He took the glass of water, and some of his friends by him, dropping their wine cups, followed his example, and at least half a dozen wine glasses remained untouched. Others saw it, and the circumstance gave an excellent opportunity to talk with these guests about the Word of Wisdom.



Was he humiliated? No, he was strengthened. Were the guests embarrassed? No. Did they feel to condemn him? No. Condemnation was replaced by admiration, as it always is in the hearts of intelligent and God-fearing men and women. . . .

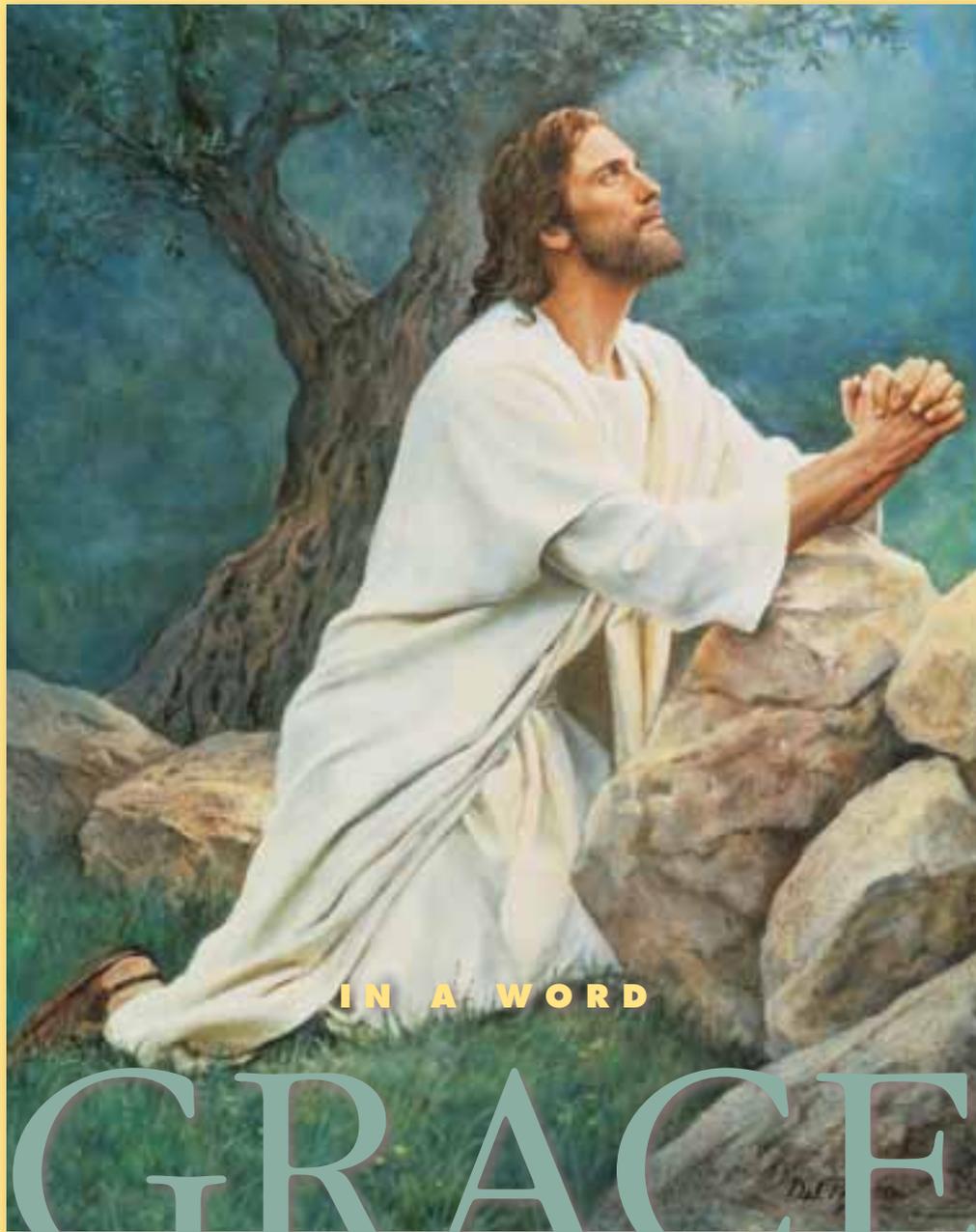
They are unspotted from the world. Then we shall become as God would have us, because we are preaching the gospel by our acts. "If ye love me," says the Lord, "keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

May He help us to do it, keep us pure and free, our homes pure and true, that our youth may breathe the atmosphere of purity and virtue, and we be ever true to the testimony of God that we have in our hearts. **NE**

Excerpted from an October 1911 general conference address; punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing modernized; subheads added.

To learn more about withstanding temptation, read "Up to the Challenge," *New Era*, Sept. 2006, p. 24, and "Overcoming Temptation," *New Era*, Jan. 2007, p. 23.

Nearly every temptation that comes to you and me comes in one of three forms. First, a temptation of the appetite; second a yielding to the pride, fashion, and vanity of those alienated from the things of God; and third, a gratifying of the passion or a desire for the riches of the world or power among men.



IN A WORD

GRACE

PRAYER, IN GETSEMANE, BY DEL PARSON

The word *grace*, as used in the scriptures, refers primarily to the divine help and strength we receive through the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because of the Fall, everyone will experience temporal death. Through grace, made available by the Savior's atoning sac-

rifice, all people will be resurrected and receive immortality (see 2 Nephi 9:6–13). But resurrection alone does not qualify us for eternal life in the presence of God. Our sins make us unclean and unfit to dwell in God's presence, and we need His grace to purify and perfect us "after all we can do" (2 Nephi

25:23).

The phrase "after all we can do" teaches that effort is required on our part to receive the fulness of the Lord's grace and be made worthy to dwell with Him.

(Adapted from *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference*, which you can read online at lds.org in the Gospel Library.)

“
LET YOUR
MINDS BE
FILLED WITH THE
GOAL OF BEING
LIKE THE LORD,
AND YOU WILL
CROWD OUT
DEPRESSING
THOUGHTS AS
YOU ANXIOUSLY
SEEK TO KNOW
HIM AND DO
HIS WILL.

”

President Ezra Taft Benson
(1899–1994), "Do Not Despair,"
Ensign, Oct. 1986, 5.

TOP TEN LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY CHURCH MEMBERS



1. English	5,828,000
2. Spanish	3,681,000
3. Portuguese	907,000
4. Tagalog (Philippines)	165,000
5. Cebuano (Philippines)	126,000
6. Japanese	117,000
7. Ilokano (Philippines)	109,000
8. Samoan	102,000
9. Tongan	76,000
10. Korean	75,000

(Estimates only, based on year-end 2003 data.)

What's an Air Potato?

It's a weed, that's what. If you're really interested, air potatoes are a member of the yam family that get their interesting name from their distinctive, miniature potato-like appearance. They're non-edible plants that invade native vegetation by out-competing them for sunlight and water, and they eventually take over.

Approximately 50 youth and leaders from the Pompano Beach Florida Stake came together last November for a community service project to remove the invasive weed from Barwick Park in Delray Beach Florida. These young men and women got to know the air potato up close and personal in the process of removing enough of the noxious weeds to fill a dump truck.

"It was fun helping the community," said Maria Claudia Cabrejos, a Laurel in the West Palm Beach Ward. After picking weeds for over four hours, the youth ended the project with a pizza luncheon in the newly cleaned park—no potatoes on the menu, they had seen enough of those for one day.

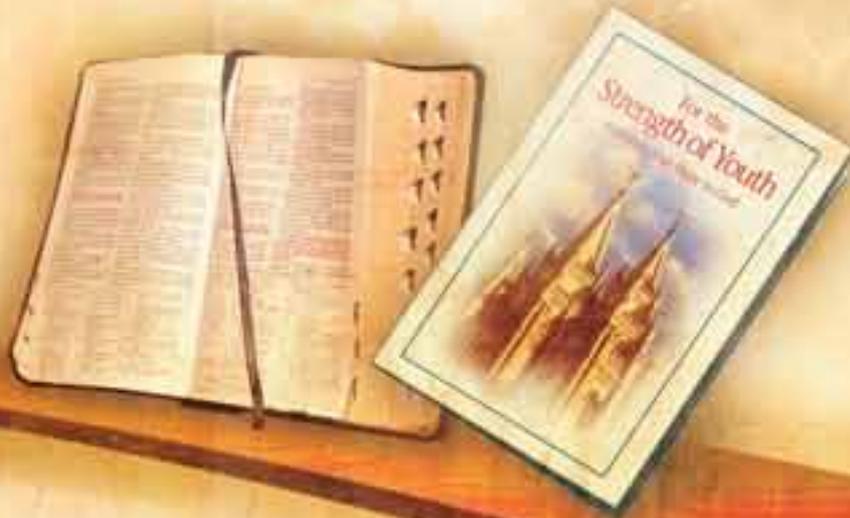


PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE POMPAÑO BEACH FLORIDA STAKE



Reading for Leading

What's one of the best ways to encourage others to follow you as a leader? Elder Spencer J. Condie of the Seventy suggests looking to the scriptures for examples of how to lead. "After Solomon's forty-year reign, his son Rehoboam went to Shechem to be made the king. He sought the counsel of the elders regarding how he should rule. 'And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve *them*, and answer *them*, and speak good words to *them*, then *they* will be *thy* servants for ever.' (1 Kings 12:7; italics added.) The Savior gave his disciples similar counsel when he taught them, 'If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.' (Mark 9:35.) Within the kingdom of God, *to lead is to serve*" ("Some Scriptural Lessons on Leadership," *Ensign*, May 1990, 27).



How much could media violence affect me? I was surprised.

NAME WITHHELD

“Come on, Dad,” I pleaded. “It’s only rated that bad for violence. A little fake fighting isn’t going to hurt us.”

My 16-year-old cousin and I weren’t in the habit of asking to see movies rated for older audiences. We were good kids, active in seminary and our priest quorums. But we had both heard how great this movie was and how many awards it would win. Besides, we’d been told there was no sex, no innuendo, no nudity, and very little swearing. That’s all of the bad stuff, right?

My dad wasn’t seeing it that way. Finally he changed tactics. “Fine,” he said. “You know what’s right and wrong. You do what you feel is right.”

Church leaders have told us not to watch inappropriate movies, and in our family the rule was we could not watch R-rated movies. (In the United States an R rating requires an adult to accompany anyone under 17.) I guess I had been trying to get my dad to say it was all right for my cousin and me to see the movie so I could do what

I wanted and not feel guilty. Instead, he had placed the decision squarely on my shoulders.

Well, he didn’t say no. And besides, it was only a little violence.

After my cousin and I saw the movie, I felt awful. I thought I felt bad because of the movie’s rating, so I promised myself I would never watch another R-rated movie again. But later after watching a somewhat violent movie (though its milder rating allowed teen audiences), I realized I had



Just a Little VIOLENCE?

that same awful feeling.

What happened? Hadn't I done the right thing by choosing a movie with a milder rating? Maybe it wasn't just a movie's rating that mattered. Maybe it was the violence itself. But could violence really affect me that much?

When I pulled out my wallet-sized *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet, I was surprised I had missed such an important point before. Under "Entertainment and the Media," it says, "Avoid anything that is vulgar, immoral, violent, or pornographic in any way."



STAYING NEAR THE SPIRIT

“The standard is clear. If something we think, see, hear, or do distances us from the Holy Ghost, then we should stop thinking, seeing, hearing, or doing that thing. If that which is intended to entertain, for example, alienates us from the Holy Spirit, then certainly that type of entertainment is not for us.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “That We May Always Have His Spirit to Be with Us,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 30.

Still, I resisted. “OK,” I told myself, “maybe there are people who are affected by violence, but I know it’s not real. And yes, some movies are pretty graphic, but a little bit never hurt anybody, right?” All of a sudden I wasn’t so sure.

Then came the stinger. Right after telling us to avoid violence, the pamphlet says, “Commit to keeping God’s standards.”

Ouch. I was guilty. Sure, I could rationalize that I was choosing the right by avoiding vulgarity, immorality, and pornography. But was keeping *most* of God’s standards good enough? Was I truly committed if I wasn’t willing to keep all of them?

It didn’t matter what the movie was rated, and it didn’t matter that there was only a little violence. It had been enough to offend the Spirit. And if that’s the case with movies, could the same principle hold true

with other things? Maybe there are some words that offend the Spirit even if they aren’t swear words, and maybe some music offends the Spirit even if the lyrics aren’t bad.

When I committed to being more selective about the things I watched, played, read, said, and listened to, within days I could feel a difference. I didn’t realize how desensitized I had become to the influence of the Spirit.

When I cut back on my diet of violence, I found it was easier to control my temper, and I didn’t fight as much with my brothers. I noticed that, while my language wasn’t foul, cleaning it up made a big difference. Best of all, I could feel the Spirit more strongly.

It taught me that “just a little violence” is more than the Spirit wants to see. **NE**

MEDIA VIOLENCE

Watching violent movies and television shows can affect you no matter what they’re rated. For more than 30 years, Church leaders have been warning against watching violence. In 2000, leaders in the United States’ medical community also spoke up with the following statement:

“Well over 1,000 studies . . . point overwhelmingly to a causal connection between media violence and aggressive behavior in some children. The conclusion of the public health community, based on over 30 years of research, is that viewing entertainment violence can lead to increases in aggressive attitudes, values and behavior” (“Joint Statement on the Impact of Entertainment Violence on Children” [July 26, 2000], <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/jstmtevc.htm>).



GETTING EVEN

BY AMY WEIR

I wanted revenge, but it wasn't sweet.

“Pizza face!”

I winced and sunk down into the bus seat, trying to disappear. The 20-minute ride home from school every day was pure torture for me. Lance and Sean always took the seat right behind me, and thought up as many names for me as they could. My face, full of acne since the fifth grade, provided them with such entertainment that they acted like I should be proud to receive so much verbal creativity.

I would run home from the bus stop, sit in the corner of my room with a blanket over my head, and cry. This experience was detrimental to a young girl's self-esteem, but after a few months the boys moved on to some other poor soul with a visible affliction.

My self-esteem seemed to recover at the same rate my acne cleared—slowly. By high school a pimple was rare for me. On the other hand, both Lance and Sean, whom I still avoided, had acne problems of their own. They were much more withdrawn and had few friends.

“Serves them right,” I would think. “Now they've got exactly what they made fun of me for.” I felt inclined, even entitled, to some revenge of my own.

My chance came one day when Sean and I were alone in a large school hallway. He didn't see me walking his way,

and when I judged he was close enough for maximum damage, I said in a most disgusted way, “Pizza face!”

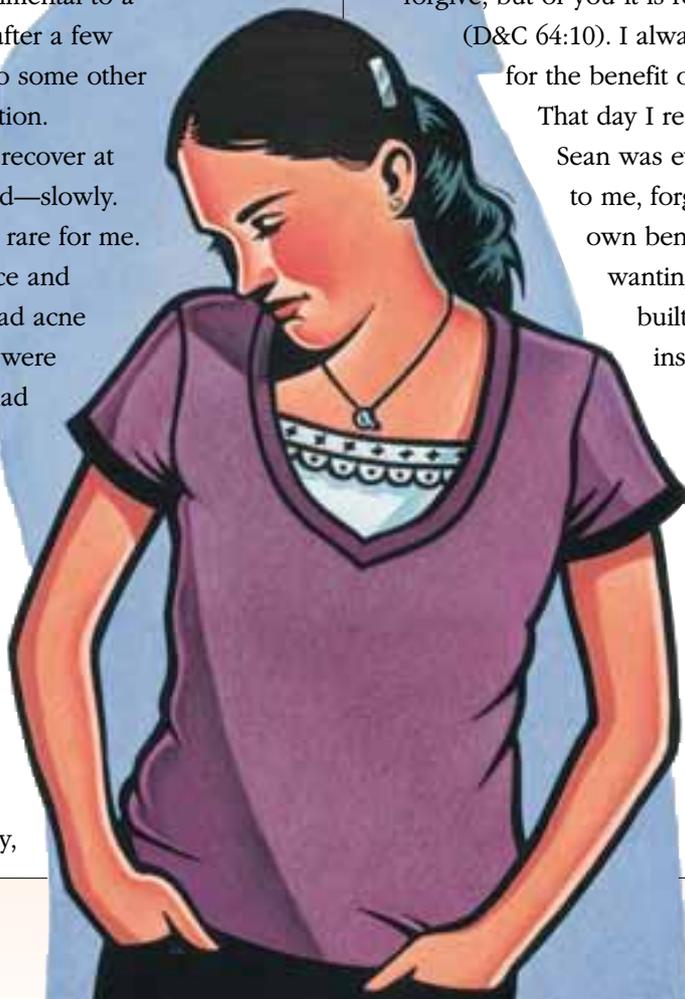
He winced, hung his head, and quickened his pace. As I watched him fleeing my torment, looking so alone in the huge hallway, I was astonished at what I felt. I had expected to feel triumphant. Instead I felt guilty and small.

Revenge had seemed like the clear answer for me, but standing there in the hall, I realized that revenge was empty. I felt worse than I'd ever felt in my life. I wanted to apologize. I learned my lesson that day: revenge is not the way to heal your inner injuries.

The Savior said, “I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men” (D&C 64:10). I always thought forgiveness was for the benefit of the one being forgiven.

That day I realized that whether or not Sean was ever sorry for what he said to me, forgiveness is required for our own benefit. I had torn myself up wanting revenge when I could have built myself up with forgiveness instead.

Forgiveness is the salve for the soul that the Savior made available to us through His atoning sacrifice. We don't need to pay the high price revenge demands to feel whole again. We only need to hand over our pride to gain the forgiveness that the Savior has already paid for. **NE**



BLOCKING THE WIND

BY RUSSELL HITCHCOCK

It was a beautiful day in the hills of Tennessee, and I was on a two-hour training ride for cycling with my uncle. For the first half of the ride the wind was at our back, and we flew right along without any difficulty. When we changed direction, however, we found out why our ride had been so easy. Now the wind, which was blowing hard at about 20–30 miles an hour, was in our faces.



In cycling there is a technique, called drafting, where one person rides in the front and uses the most energy to break the wind for the person who rides right behind.

My uncle is a big guy—about 6 foot 3 inches tall and 240 pounds—so he was having a horrible time trying to keep up with a little 17-year-old on a road bike. About half-way home the wind was at its worst, so I accelerated ahead and slid in front of my uncle.

The next day at church he talked about how much of a difference it made. “You’re little, but the amount of wind you blocked made such a significant difference.” He then made a comparison that has changed my life. He said, “It’s almost like when you are having trouble in life, you let the Savior slip in front of you and you get behind Him. You still have to work to stay behind Him, but the wind He blocks makes a world of difference.”

After that ride I was worn, hurting, and beat, but after hearing my uncle, I realized that all I have to do is let the Savior lead and then do the work to stay behind Him, and He will take the wind for me. **NE**

THE LAST CHAPTER

BY CAMERON NUCKOLS

When President Hinckley announced his challenge to Church members to read the Book of Mormon by the end of

THAT GLORIOUS FEELING

BY MEGAN LUNDBERG

It was the end of the assembly on Joseph Smith at our seminary, and our teachers had left the last 15 minutes for testimonies. I knew



I had felt something during the program, and I realized I had to go up and bear my testimony even though I wasn’t sure if I had one.

I had recently turned 15, and I was questioning everything. I had prayed and read my scriptures, but the answer hadn’t yet come. I began to think Heavenly Father had abandoned me. I didn’t know if it was right to bear a testimony I wasn’t sure I had.

But as soon as I got up there, peace came over me, and I realized that I did know. I knew Christ was my Savior, I knew that Joseph Smith was a prophet, and I knew Heavenly Father was there, listening. I began crying for joy. Heavenly Father hadn’t abandoned me, and He had answered my prayer through my own testimony.

I know that if I live the gospel and do my best, then I will never lose that glorious feeling of knowing what I’m doing is right. **NE**

the year, I went to work. I read the scriptures every single night, even if it was only one or two verses at a time. The more I kept reading, the more I noticed the difference it was making in my life.

I prayed and felt closer to the Savior each time I read. I also started doing better in school and other things. December was coming quick, and I was going to turn 12 and receive the Aaronic Priesthood. I tried as hard as I could to be done by my birthday, but I didn’t make it. Sometimes I

forgot to read, but my Primary teachers encouraged me to keep choosing the right and to finish the Book of Mormon.

On Christmas Day I woke up and read the final chapters in the Book of Moroni. I felt the Spirit, and I knew the Book of Mormon was true. I know with all my heart that we can become more like our Savior, Jesus Christ, by reading and following the scriptures. **NE**

For other experiences see “Accepting the Challenge,” *New Era*, Dec. 2006, p. 10.

LET HIM IN

NAME WITHHELD

Ipounded on the door as the tears streamed down my face. I tried turning the doorknob again, but it was locked. “Please let me in,” I begged. My sister had been struggling with an eating disorder, and I knew that behind the door she was doing something that was harmful, both physically and spiritually.

I knocked on the door again. She knew I was out here. After waiting in silence, I heard her muffled response. “Please go away,” she said. “I don’t want your help.”

Her words broke my heart. My parents knew about my sister’s problem, and they had been taking the right steps to help her. All she needed now was someone she could talk to, someone who could help her find the strength to fight her addiction. I wanted so much to be that person, but she refused to let me in. Overwhelmed with emotion, I lay on the ground and began to sob.

At that moment, I understood a little bit better how our Heavenly Father feels when He sees His children participating in acts that bring them pain. More than anything, all He wants is for us to let Him in so that He can help. He has said, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

Just like my sister, in life we



JESUS KNOCKING AT THE DOOR, BY DEL PARSON

experience many problems and weaknesses we cannot overcome alone. But often we turn away the only person who can help us. Through the Savior’s help, we have the power to overcome sin and temptation. He is outside the door, waiting for us to open up and invite Him into our lives. **NE**

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

newera@ldschurch.org

or send it to

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

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

Mutual Activity Idea

• It might be fun to hold a skit night. Use the *New Era* posters from past issues as a place to start for ideas then build a skit around a poster's theme. Give each group about half an hour to plan and practice. If your Mutual is too small, pass out large sheets of paper and create your own posters. Send the best in to the *New Era*.

Personal Progress or Duty to God Idea

• Try creating a work of art that captures how you feel about testimony. Even though you may not have a refined ability, take the challenge. Try writing a poem, drawing a picture, taking a photo, composing a song, or choreographing a dance. Use these experiences to fill a

Duty to God goal in Educational, Personal, and Career Development or a Personal Progress goal as a Faith project.

Family Home Evening Idea

• Turn to page 12 of this issue and read through some ideas on using the *New Era*. Create a file with some of your family's favorite stories, poems, photos, or art from the *New Era*. When a family member needs to give a lesson or talk, your file may be of help. If you don't want to tear up your back copies, you can print off articles or artwork from the magazine online at newera.lds.org.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in the May and November *Ensign*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 32–36.

Young Women Manual 2

Lesson 32: The Importance of Life

Neal A. Maxwell, "Reasons to Stay Pure," *New Era*, Mar. 2003, 42.

Richard G. Scott, "Serious Questions, Serious Answers," *New Era*, Oct. 1995, 4.

Lesson 33: The Sacred Power of Procreation

Q&A (the law of chastity), *New Era*, Dec. 2000, 16.

To the Point (was it love or lust), *New Era*, Aug. 2006, 30.

Lesson 34: Hold Fast to the Lord's Standards

"Just a Little Violence," this issue, 40.

Q&A (friend is not living some gospel standards), *New Era*, Apr. 2007, 14.

Idea List: "Stay Safe," *New Era*, June 2001, 30.

Lesson 35: Wise Choices

Dallin H. Oaks, "Where Will It Lead?" this issue, 2.

Amelia Stone, "Something Had to Give," this issue, 24.

Lesson 36: Honesty

Robert M. Bogardus, "Did You Cheat?" *New Era*, July 2007, 6.

Q&A (lying), *New Era*, Nov. 2006, 14.

David A. Bednar, "Be Honest," *New Era*, Oct. 2005, 4.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 2

Lesson 32: Cultivating Gifts of the Spirit

Eric J. Greenhalgh, "Inspired to Bless," *New Era*, Mar. 2007, 21.

Q&A (gain a testimony), *New Era*, Mar. 2007, 22.

Lesson 33: Seek Ye Learning

Idea List: "Getting the Most out of Sacrament Meeting," *New Era*, June 2007, 13.

Q&A (what should I do with my life), *New Era*, July 2005, 16.

Idea List: "Learning Matters," *New Era*, Nov. 2002, 9.

Lesson 34: The Power of Example

David O. McKay, "The Test of One," this issue, 34.

Jordan Muhlestein, "Serve It Forward," *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 28.

Lesson 35: Obeying, Honoring, and Sustaining the Law

Shanna Butler, "Not Even Once," this issue, 26.

David C. Campbell, "Riot!" *New Era*, June 2006, 10.

Lesson 36: In Everything Give Thanks

Jade Swartzberg, "Rejoice!" this issue, 6.

John H. Groberg, "I Feel Sorry for Him," *New Era*, Nov. 2001, 22.

PAST ISSUES

I read the article “Good Friends” by Elder L. Tom Perry (*New Era*, Feb. 1993). This article was a good lesson for me. It made me think that I should start making more friends. I’m grateful that Elder Perry used his time to write this for the people who need to learn this lesson. I think everyone should be kind to each other. I know I need to start being nicer.

Jason B., Idaho

Editor’s Note: You can read past issues of the New Era at newera.lds.org by clicking on “Past Issues.”

ROAD RASH AND REPENTANCE

I was touched by the article “Road Rash and Repentance” (Apr. 2007). Sometimes it is hard for me to comprehend God’s love, and this article clarified it for me. What a blessing it is for Brother Richardson to have a father who is patient and loving. Had he said “I told you that you’d get hurt,” a spiritual experience would have been lost. This article helps me remember that as my husband and I show Christlike love to our children, they will be able to believe that the charity Heavenly Father and our Savior extend to them is real. Thank you for this article.

Jolynne D., Pennsylvania

ANYONE LAUGHING?

I was very interested in your article “Is Anyone Laughing” (Feb. 2007) because I have to deal with the hurting jokes that people often say to make others laugh. I now realize these kinds of jokes make others feel uncomfortable. After seeing this article, I am now trying to keep myself from hurting others’ feelings. I know now that if I want to be a true friend to those around me, I need to let people

feel comfortable around me. Recently I sent a copy of this article to my

“I like to read, and when I read the New Era, I learn something new every time.”

friends and family, and I am already noticing a change in how they treat others. Thank you for this article that allows us to realize how much our actions affect others.

Taetem S., Idaho

ENCOURAGED BY ARTICLE

I really enjoyed reading the article “Cape Town’s Record-Setting Scout” (Apr. 2007). It helped me realize that I can earn my Eagle and my Duty to God award just like Rocco du Plessis. I also want to read the Book of Mormon and gain my own testimony. Thank you for this magazine and especially this article!

Ryan W., Washington

SCRAPBOOKS

I just wanted to say that because of all the *New Eras* that I have received, I decided to start making a scrapbook out of all the things that really catch my eye. I just started, and I have a lot of things from just one issue of the magazine. Thank you!

Brittany R., California

STRENGTHENS TESTIMONY

I am thankful for the *New Era*. I am a 14-year-old boy who kind of likes to read, but when I read the *New Era*, I learn something new every time. I am thankful for the article “The Body Is Sacred” (Nov. 2006). This is a perfect example of how we should live our lives as teens.

Steven S., Maryland

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

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



IMAGINE

BY ADRIANNE THOMAS ERICKSON

. . . where fingers and sticks are people.
. . . where five-year-olds are radiant queens,
or lovely homemakers with bright red lips
and dozens of babies.
. . . where tea parties are held daily.
. . . where important-looking books
can be read upside-down.
. . . where all endings are happy.
. . . where all may rest from cares and woes.
Imagine . . . a little child's world.



COMING NEXT MONTH

- *Fasting for each other helps make fast friends in Ketchikan, Alaska.*
- *The prophet advises teens to seek learning.*
- *What about work on Sundays?*
- *Do we have to be perfect?*

Just a few of the articles waiting for you in the upcoming September 2007 New Era.