







COVER STORY:

WHAT DID THE PROPHET REALLY LOOK LIKE? P. 28

WE THINK OF CHRIST, P. 12

WE SING OF CHRIST, P. 10

A YEAR OF CELEBRATING, P. 20

GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP, P. 26







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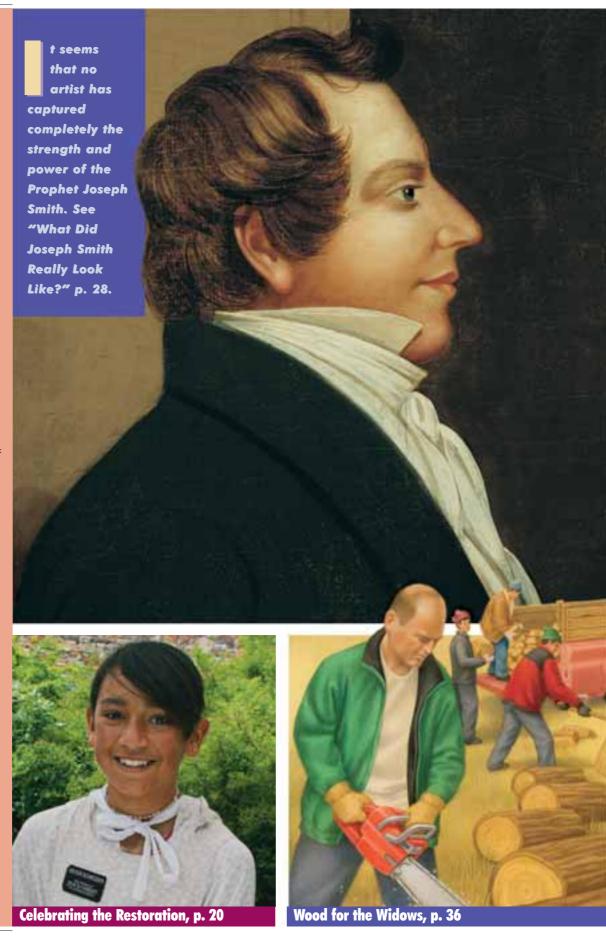
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Joseph Smith Really Look
Like?" on p. 28.

Back cover sculpture: Dee Jay Bawden



CONTENTS

Prophet really looked like.

The Message: By Example President Thomas S. Monson The Prophet Joseph Smith taught the	4	Joseph Smith's Family Tree An overview of the Prophet's ancestry. Wood for the Widows	34 36	Quorum of the Twelve: Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Richard G. Scott, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland, Henry B. Eyring, Dieter F. Uchtdorf, David A.
principles of the gospel by his example.		George Brewer Dad taught us to think of others, even		Bednar Editor: Jay E. Jensen
How I Know: Where Was My Answer? Daniel Lowell Brown I desperately wanted an answer. It came—but in the Lord's own time.	9	on Christmas Day. Idea List: The 12 Reading Days of Christmas Learn more of the Savior's life and	39	Advisers: Monte J. Brough, Gary J. Coleman, Yoshihiko Kikuchi Managing Director: David L. Frischknecht Planning and Editorial Director: Victor D. Cave Graphics Director:
In Tune: Would I Know My Savior?	10	ministry by reading these special scriptures at Christmastime. Articles of Faith:		Allan R. Loyborg Magazines Editorial Director: Richard M. Romney Managing Editor: R. Val Johnson
Sally DeFord Always Remember Him Elder Henry B. Eyring If we always remember Christ and pray	12	Church Organization How well do you know the sixth article of faith? Try out this fun puzzle.	40	Editorial Staff: Collette Nebeker Aune, Susan Barrett, Shanna Butler, Ryan Carr, Marvin K. Gardner, Jenifer L. Greenwood, Carrie Kasten, Sally J. Odekirk, Adam C. Olson, Roger Terry, Janet
continually, we will find safety.		The Extra Smile	41	Thomas, Paul VanDenBerghe Managing Art Director: M. M. Kawasaki
Q&A: Questions and Answers My friend says he would be interested in joining our Church if he just didn't have to believe the Joseph Smith story. How do I answer him?	16	Instant Messages No more angry words with Mom; caring about the Sabbath; service with a star; knowing, not just believing. What's Up?	42	Art Director: Brent Christison Senior Designer: Fay P. Andrus Marketing Manager: Larry Hiller Printing Director: Craig K. Sedgwick Distribution Director: Kris T Christensen
New Era Poster: 10 Percent Plus All Your Heart	19	The 2005 New Era Index Poem:	45	© 2005 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah, and at additional mailing offices.
Celebrating the Restoration Shanna Butler Reports on a year of celebrating the life of Joseph Smith and the Restoration.	20	What But the Promised Savior Anna M. Bunker Art	51 51	The <i>New Era</i> (ISSN 0164-5285) is published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA.
Caroling with Chrslyn Nancy Checketts Giving Chrslyn a little time and attention changed my view of her.	26	Minerva K. Teichert		POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Distribution Services, Church Magazines, PO. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA. Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431.
What Did Joseph Smith Really Look Like? Janet Thomas Different artists produce different views, but we do have some clues to what the	28	Text and visual material in the New Era may be copied for incidental, noncommercial church or home use. Visual matemay not be copied if restrictions are indicated in the credit with the artwork. Copyright questions should be addressed to	line	

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

THE MESSAGE

BY PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

First Counselor in the First Presidency

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught us by example the meaning of faith, courage, and integrity.

et us go back to the year 1805, on the 23rd day of December, in the town of Sharon, Vermont. Will you accompany me as we look back on those dramatic events taking place on that day? As Joseph Smith Sr. and his wife, Lucy Mack, proudly looked down upon the little baby who had come into their home, I'm certain they were pleased and most grateful. A choice spirit had come to dwell in its earthly tabernacle.

Some have asked, "Did he have an unusual childhood or boyhood?" "Was the Prophet Joseph different from me or my brothers?" I think we could gain insight into the childhood of the Prophet by reading the words of his mother. She said, "I am aware that some of my readers will be disappointed, for . . . it is thought by some that I shall be likely to tell many very remarkable incidents which attended his childhood; but, as nothing occurred during his early life except those trivial circumstances which are

common to that state of human existence, I pass them in silence." This is all we have from the boy's mother concerning his early childhood activities.

A Courageous Boy

During his early youth, however, ill health and ill fortune seemed to pursue the family. When young Joseph was seven years old, he and his brothers and sisters were stricken with typhus fever. The others recovered readily, but Joseph was left with a painful sore on his leg. The doctors, doing the best they could under the conditions of the time, treated him—and yet the sore persisted. Finally the doctors were afraid they were going to have to amputate his leg.

Thankfully, however, one day the doctors came unexpectedly to the home and told the family they were going to try a new operation to remove a piece of the bone, hoping this would permit the sore to heal. They had brought with them some cord and planned to tie Joseph to the bed because they had no anesthetic, nothing to dull the pain, when they cut into his leg to remove the piece of bone.

Young Joseph, however, responded,
"I will not be bound, for I can bear
the operation much better if
I have my liberty."

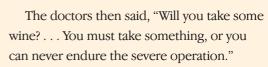


bis father bold him

in bis arms.







Again the boy prophet said, "No, . . . but I will tell you what I will do—I will have my father sit on the bed and hold me in his arms, and then I will do whatever is necessary in order to have the bone taken out."

So Joseph Smith Sr. held the boy in his arms, and the doctors opened the leg and removed the diseased piece of bone. Although he was lame for some time afterward, Joseph was healed.² At seven years of age, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught us courage—by example.

A Faithful Young Man

When Joseph was in his 11th year, his family, which now consisted of 11 souls, left Vermont and moved to Palmyra, New York. Four years later they moved to Manchester, located in the same county. It was here that Joseph described the great religious revival that seemed everywhere present and of prime concern to every heart.

These are his words: "So great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong. . . .

"While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the

Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (Joseph Smith—History 1:8, 11).

The Prophet said that after reading this verse he knew for a certainty he must either put the Lord to the test and ask Him or perhaps choose to remain in darkness forever. He declared that as he retired to the grove to pray, this was the first time he had attempted to pray vocally to his Heavenly Father. But he had read the scripture, he had understood the scripture, he had trusted in God his Eternal Father; and now he knelt and prayed, knowing that God would give him the enlightenment which he so earnestly sought. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught us the principle of faith—by example.

A Man of Honesty, Patience, and Diligence

Can you imagine the ridicule, the scorn, the mocking that all of his young friends, his older friends, and his foes alike must have heaped upon him as he mentioned that he had seen a vision?

I suppose it became almost unbearable for the boy, and yet he was honest with himself, for these are his words: "I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it,

and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it" (Joseph Smith—History 1:25).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught honesty—by example.

A Faithful Missionary

The Prophet Joseph was truly blessed with the ability to inspire faith. One bright morning Joseph walked up to John E. Page and said, "Brother John, the Lord is calling you on a mission to Canada."

John E. Page was rather astonished and said, "Why, Brother Joseph, I can't go on a mission to Canada. I don't even have a coat to wear."

The Prophet Joseph took his own coat from his back, handed it to John Page, and said, "Here, John, wear this, and the Lord will bless you." Brother Page took the coat, went to Canada, and in two years walked 5,000 miles and baptized 600 souls, because he trusted in the words of a prophet of God.³

The Prophet Joseph believed in missionary work. While he and Sidney Rigdon were proselyting at Perrysburg, New York, October 12, 1833, having been long absent from their families and feeling concerned for them, they received the following revelation:

"Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you, my friends Sidney and Joseph, your families are well; they are in mine hands, and I will do with them as seemeth me good; for in me there is all power. . . .

"Therefore, verily I say unto you, lift up your voices unto this people" (D&C 100:1, 5).

Joseph and Sidney continued their missionary labors.

Joseph Smith not only inspired men to volunteer for missions, but he also taught the importance of missionary work—by example.



Dutiful son, obedient follower of God's word, faithful servant of Christ; Joseph Smith exemplified all these good attributes and more.



An Obedient, Loving Prophet

I think one of the sweetest lessons taught by the Prophet, and yet one of the saddest, occurred close to the time of his death. He was required to leave his plan and vision of the Rocky Mountains and give himself up to face a court of supposed justice.

These are his words: "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men" (D&C 135:4). That statement of the Prophet teaches us obedience to law and the importance of having a clear conscience toward God and toward our fellowmen. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught these principles—by example.

There was to be one great final lesson before his mortal life ended. He was incarcerated in Carthage Jail with his brother Hyrum, with John Taylor, and with Willard Richards. The angry mob stormed the jail; they came up the stairway, blasphemous in their cursing, heavily armed, and began to fire at will.

Hyrum was hit and died.

John Taylor took several balls

of fire within his bosom. The Prophet Joseph, with his pistol in hand, was attempting to defend his life and that of his brethren, and yet he could tell from the pounding on the door that this mob would storm that door and would kill John Taylor and Willard Richards in an attempt to kill him.

And so his last great act here upon the earth was to leave the door and lead Willard Richards to safety, throw the gun on the floor, and go to the window, that they might see him, that the attention of this ruthless mob might be focused upon him rather than the others. Joseph Smith gave his life. Willard Richards was spared, and John Taylor recovered from his wounds.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught us love—by example.

I pray we may learn from his example, that we might incorporate into our lives the great principles he so beautifully taught. NE

From an article in the June 1994 Ensign.

NOTE

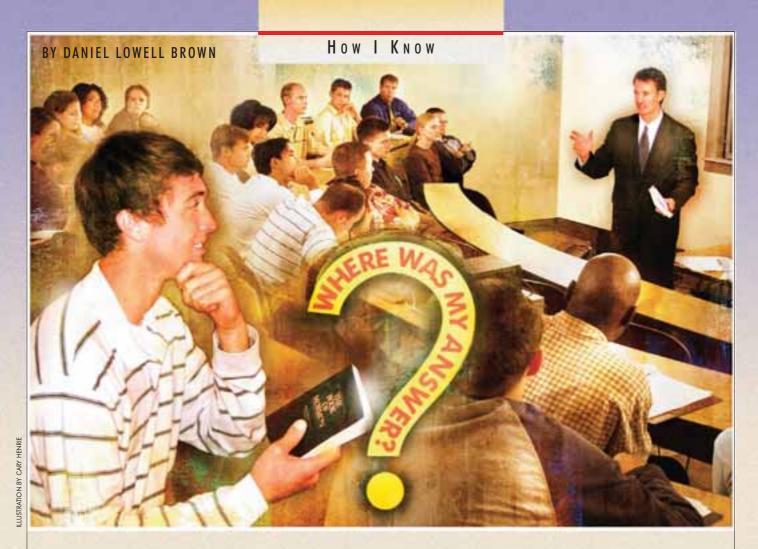
1. History of Joseph Smith by His Mother, Lucy Mack Smith (1979), 67. 2. See History of Joseph Smith, 54–58. 3. See The Historical Record, vol. 5, no. 5 (May 1886), 57.

of the gospel through the revelations he received and shared and by the life he lived.

The Prophet Joseph

the great principles

Smith taught us



rom the time I was born, the gospel has been a part of my life. My parents taught me right from wrong, all three of my brothers served missions, and my family was active in the Church. I was active too, or at least I went to church every Sunday. I wanted to believe, but I didn't have a testimony of my own. I didn't think I would ever find the truth for myself—but I'm glad I did.

In August of 2000 I submitted my mission papers. Not long after, I was invited to attend Education Week at Brigham Young University with some friends. I had been praying for a testimony of the Book of Mormon for a long time, and I was starting to get discouraged. Sometimes I even felt like Heavenly Father wasn't listening to me. I decided to go to Education Week, hoping that I would receive an answer to my prayers about the Book of Mormon.

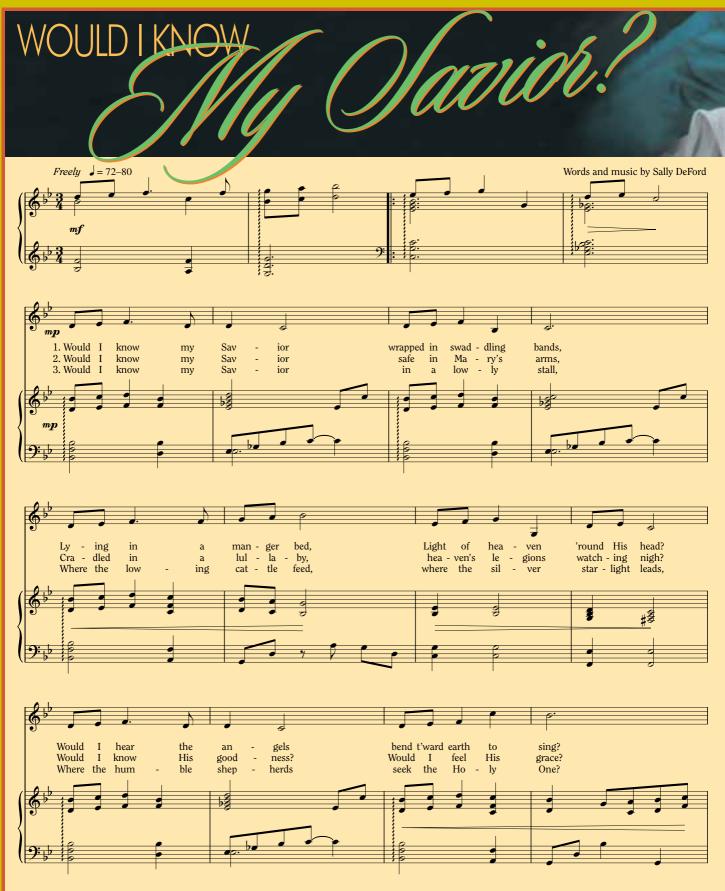
During my week at BYU I had many wonderful experiences. However, I still didn't feel I had received an answer to my prayers. I remember wishing there was a phone I could just pick up and use to call Heavenly Father. I didn't know what to do differently. I felt like my prayers were

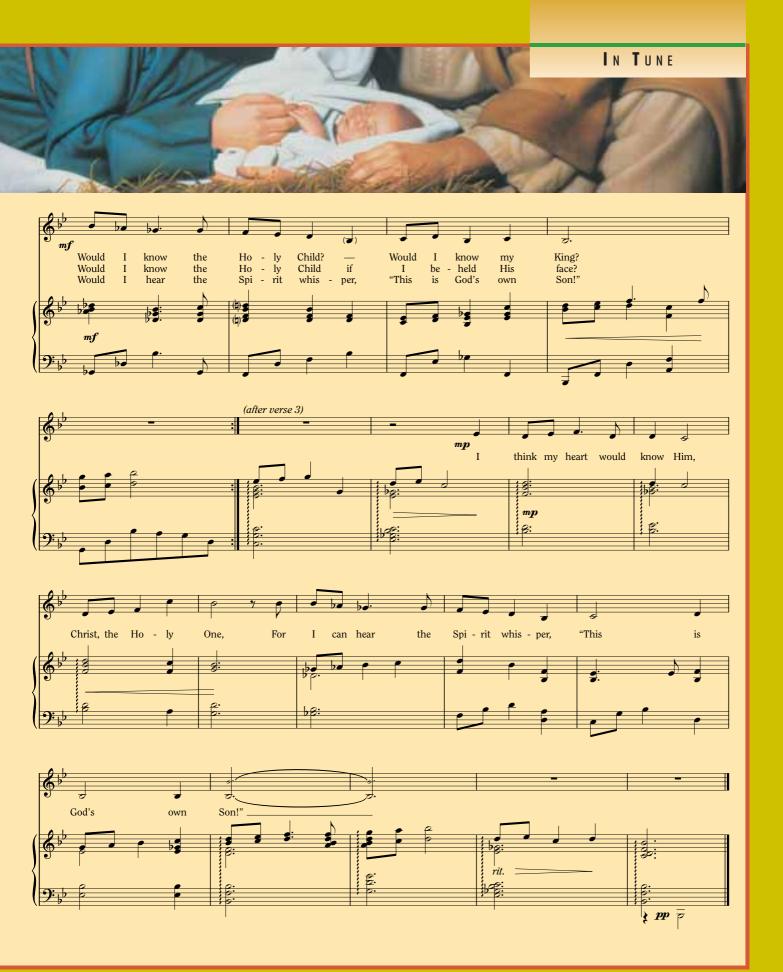
sincere. I had read the Book of Mormon all the way through. I read my patriarchal blessing over and over, and I was working on repenting of my sins. I could not figure out why Heavenly Father was not answering me.

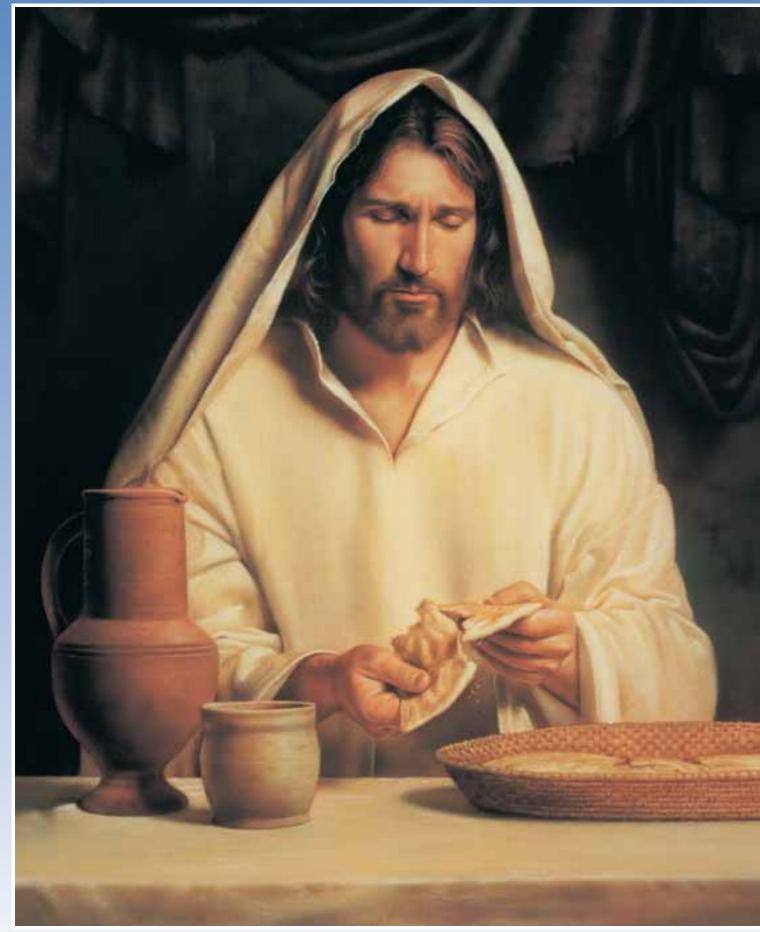
Thursday afternoon found me in a large lecture hall. I was listening to a speaker whom I had already heard several times during the week. The speaker closed his remarks with his testimony. My eyes were riveted to the man as he spoke. He finished his testimony, and he closed with amen. No one moved. I looked down at my hands, which were holding my Book of Mormon. The most comforting feeling I have ever experienced fell over me. I felt the Spirit's gentle affirmation that the Book of Mormon is true.

That testimony has never left me. I carried it into the mission field, and it carried me through my mission. I am so grateful for our Heavenly Father, who loves us and listens to us. He answered me. It was in His own time, but He answered me. I knew the truth. **NE**

Daniel Lowell Brown is a member of the Rigby First Ward, Rigby Idaho Stake.







ALWCJ/S REMEMBER HIM

BY ELDER HENRY B. EYRING

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

n every sacrament meeting the word always is used in a covenant, a sacred promise with God that you are making. This is what you hear, read by authorized servants of God: "That they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them" (D&C 20:77; emphasis added).

You promise to "always remember him." You may have wondered, as have I, why He used the word always, given the nature of mortality as it weighs upon us. You know from experience how hard it is to think of anything consciously all the time.

I am not wise enough to know all of His purposes in giving us a covenant to always remember Him. But I know one. It is because He knows perfectly the powerful forces that influence us and also what it means to be human.

Opposing Forces

You and I can see evidence of the acceleration in the two great opposing forces around us. One is the force of righteousness. For instance, temples of God are being built at a rate across the earth that just a few years ago would have been unthinkable. Missionaries are being called in numbers and

to new places which change so rapidly that I have learned not to try to give the numbers or the places because my knowledge will have fallen behind the reality.

As has always been true, there is an opposing power. It is the power of sin, and it is visibly accelerating. I will not try to bring examples to your minds. The media and what you see in the lives of those around you present you with tragedy enough. And even in your experience, you surely must sense the ominous increase of toleration and even encouragement of the powers of sin to corrupt and torment.

The Master not only foresees perfectly the growing power of the opposing forces but also knows what it is like to be mortal. He knows what it is like to have the cares of life press upon us. He knows that we are to eat bread by the sweat of our brows and of the cares, concerns, and even sorrows that come from the command to bring children to the earth. And He knows that the trials we face and our human powers to deal with them ebb and flow.

He knows the mistake we can so easily make: to underestimate the forces working for us and to rely too much on our human powers. And so He offers us the covenant to "always remember him" and the warning to "pray always" (3 Nephi 18:18) so that we will



promised that if we always remember Him and keep His commandments, we will always bave His Spirit to be with us.

place our reliance on Him, our only safety. It is not hard to know what to do. The very difficulty of remembering always and praying always is a needed spur to try harder. The danger lies in delay or drift.

Move Forward Spiritually

My message is a plea, a warning, and a promise: I plead with you to do the simple things that will move you forward spiritually.

Start with remembering Him. You will remember what you know and what you love. The Savior gave us the scriptures, paid for by prophets at a price we cannot measure, so that we could know Him.

Lose yourself in them.

Decide now to read more, and more effectively than you have ever done before.

Several Decembers ago I learned again the power that comes from trying harder to have the scriptures opened to our hearts. It began when I noticed the scriptures of a man sitting next to me in a meeting. I could see that he had marked them, as I had done, but with a difference. He had placed colored tags on the edges of pages, keyed to the colors with which he had marked the scriptures so that he could study all the scriptures that were helpful to him on a particular topic.

Within a day I had purchased an inexpensive set of scriptures. But it took more than a few days and more than a few prayers for me to know the topics that would open the scriptures anew for me. I chose the topics that would teach me of my call to be a witness of Jesus Christ. The first topic was the witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the next was that He is risen, and the third was that He is the head of His Church.

I would not urge you to buy a new set of scriptures nor to get colored tags and colored pencils nor to choose the topics I chose. But I plead with you to return to the scriptures in some way that opens your mind and heart to be taught.

Many of the scriptures have become familiar to us. Yet

in just a few weeks what I remembered about the Savior and what I felt about Him were enriched.

I began to read with purpose. Perhaps it was because of the Christmas season, perhaps it was because I wanted always to remember Him, but I found myself drawn to the accounts of His birth. I read again His words, spoken to a prophet named Nephi, recorded in the Book of Mormon, familiar to us all. And yet it seemed new to me:

"Behold, I come unto my own, to fulfil all things which I have made known unto the children of men from the foundation of the world, and to do the will, both of the

Father and of the Son—of the Father because of me, and of the Son because of my flesh. And behold, the time is at hand, and this night shall the sign be given.

"And it came to pass that the words which came unto Nephi

were fulfilled, according as they had been spoken; for behold, at the going down of the sun there was no darkness; and the people began to be astonished because there was no darkness when the night came" (3 Nephi 1:14–15).

Later, as I had never done before, I saw in my mind and felt in my heart the fulfillment of Samuel the Lamanite's prophecy that the sun would set without darkness (see Helaman 14:3–4). I saw it at His birth, as if I were somewhere among the people in those lands of promise. And I saw it as it will be when He comes to stand, in resurrected glory, on the Mount of Olives. The darkness will be dispelled when the promised Messiah comes with healing in His wings. Knowing how much I need that healing, I feel my heart nearly burst with joy and love for Him at the thought of that light. I believe I will never see the dawning of a new day, as the sun banishes the darkness, without the sight triggering love in my heart for Him.

A Warning

I must add to my pleading a warning. You have the right and the obligation to choose for yourselves. You can search the scriptures or not. You can choose to work

hard enough, to ponder, and to obey His commandments so that the Holy Ghost can be your companion. Then you will come to know the Savior better and better, and your heart will swell with love for Him. Or you can choose to delay. You can choose to drift, deciding past efforts will be enough.

My warning is a simple matter of cause and effect. Jesus Christ is the light and the life of the world. If we do not choose to move toward Him, we will find that we have moved away.

"For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance;

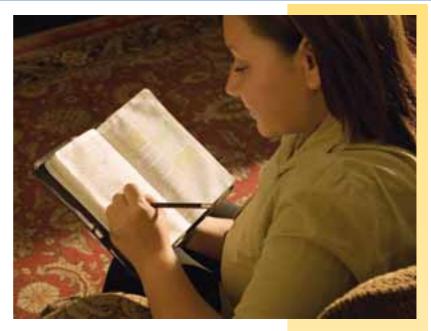
"Nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven;

"And he that repents not, from him shall be taken even the light which he has received; for my Spirit shall not always strive with man, saith the Lord of Hosts" (D&C 1:31-33).

We are promised that if we always remember Him and keep His commandments, we will always have His Spirit to be with us. That light to our feet will grow dim if we choose to delay or to drift.

Promises

Now for the sure promises. First, if you will let your heart be drawn to the Savior and always remember Him and if you will draw near to our Heavenly Father in prayer, you will have put on spiritual armor. You will be protected against pride because you will know that any success comes not from your human powers. And you will be protected against the thoughts which come rushing in upon us that we are too weak, too inexperienced, too unworthy to do what we are called of God to do to serve and help



save His children. We can have come into our hearts the reassurance recorded in Moroni: "Christ truly said unto our fathers: If ye have faith ye can do all things which are expedient unto me" (Moroni 10:23).

There is another sure promise. It is this: Whether or not you choose to keep your covenant to always remember Him, He always remembers you. I testify that Jesus Christ, born in Bethlehem, was and is the Only Begotten of the Father, the Lamb of God. He chose from before the foundations of the earth to be your Savior, my Savior, and the Savior of all we will ever know or meet. I testify that He was resurrected and that because of His Atonement we may be washed clean through our faith to obey the laws and accept the ordinances of the gospel.

I promise you that you will feel the influence of the Holy Ghost touch your heart as you search the scriptures with new purpose and as you pray earnestly. From that, you will have the assurance that God lives, that He answers prayers, that Jesus is the living Christ, and that He loves you. And you will feel your love for Him increase. NE

From a Church Educational System fireside address given at Brigham Young University on January 3, 1999.

would not urge you to buy a new set of scriptures nor to get colored tags and colored pencils nor to choose the topics I chose. But I plead with you to return to the scriptures in some way that opens your mind and beart to be taught.

"My friend says he would be interested in joining our Church if he just didn't have to believe the Joseph Smith story. How do I answer him?"

NEW ERA

hat would the Church be like without Joseph Smith? Would we have the priesthood or a prophet today? Would we have the Book of Mormon, temples, eternal families, modern revelation, or an understanding of the nature of the Godhead?

It appears that your friend enjoys and believes some things about the Church.
Remind him that if he believes the Church is good and of God, then Joseph Smith must have been called of God. Without the Prophet Joseph we wouldn't have the Church and its blessings in our lives.

Does your friend understand the Apostasy and the need for a restoration of the Church, priesthood, and gospel of Jesus Christ? Does he understand that the Church is always led by prophets, such as Moses and Abraham? If so, testify that Joseph Smith was the prophet of whom the Lord said, "Unto him will I give power to bring forth my word" (2 Nephi 3:11) and to bring the Church "out of

- When the gospel is on the earth, a prophet leads the Church. Joseph Smith was the first latter-day prophet.
- Many blessings come from Joseph Smith's efforts: he translated the Book of Mormon, he received the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, and the priesthood was restored through him.
- Believing that these blessings came from God helps us know that Joseph Smith was called of God.
- Share your testimony with your friend, and invite him to study the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith's history and pray about them.

obscurity and out of darkness, the only true and living church" (D&C 1:30).

Another evidence of Joseph Smith's divine calling is the Book of Mormon. As your friend reads it, he could prayerfully ask, "Did Joseph Smith write the Book of Mormon, or did he translate it by the power of God?" The Lord said that He gave Joseph Smith "power to translate . . . the Book of Mormon" (D&C 1:29). If the Book of Mormon is true, then Joseph Smith was a true prophet.

Your friend's testimony can be strengthened by hearing others' testimonies. You could invite him to meet with the missionaries, if he hasn't done so already. Your friend can read Joseph Smith's own testimony in Joseph Smith—History (in the Pearl of Great Price). These testimonies can invite the Spirit to confirm the truth of Joseph Smith's experience to your friend.

Finally, invite your friend to pray with faith, as Joseph Smith did. As he sincerely seeks the truth, a confirmation of the Spirit will come. **NE**



READERS



I believe our Church exists because of Joseph Smith and his incredible vision of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Pray for your

friend that his heart may be softened. Tell him to pray with his whole heart. God will hear him and answer his prayer.

Katlyn Birdwell, 19, Naches Ward, Selah Washington Stake

Those who choose to join this Church will have to have a strong testimony about Joseph Smith's work. We should understand that the gospel of Jesus Christ was restored through the Prophet Joseph and that the truthfulness of the Church is based on his First Vision. To help your friend, I suggest that you bear your testimony about Joseph Smith and show him a good example of love and friendship.

Anna Lavrentyeva, 18, St. Petersburg Tsentralny Branch, St. Petersburg Russia District

Joseph Smith's mission is one of the foundations of our testimonies as members of the Church, because the Restoration of the gospel came to us from him. If his story is false, then our Church is false. On the other hand, if his story is true, it would follow that our Church and its teachings are true. An investigator, therefore, must first accept the story of Joseph Smith as true before he could join the Church.

Christina E. Baliao, 21, Baguio University Ward, Baguio Philippines Stake



God used a modern prophet to restore the gospel of Christ. By doing that, He showed us again that He is the same today, tomorrow, and forever.

Andreas Stokholm Baxter, 17, Ballerup Ward, Copenhagen Denmark Stake

Try bearing your testimony of the truthfulness of Joseph Smith's story. It will surprise you how big of an effect a testimony can have on your friends. Tell your friend to read Joseph Smith—History and to ask God if it is true. Also, if your friend believes the Book of Mormon to be the word of God, then the Joseph Smith story must be true. Joseph Smith must have translated the Book of Mormon with the power of God. If your friend believes the other doctrines of the Church to be true, then this belief means that the Joseph Smith story is true.

Jordi Hunt, 13, Sugar City Third Ward, Sugar City Idaho Stake



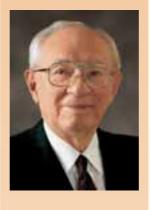
It is impossible to believe that this is the true Church without having a testimony of the First Vision, of the Restoration of the true Church, and of Joseph Smith as a prophet of God.

If anyone has any doubt, that person can ask God, and He will answer the prayer as He promises in James 1:5 and Moroni 10:3–5.

Elder Javier Pulido, 21, Florida Fort Lauderdale Mission

Our faith in the restored gospel is based on the reality of Joseph Smith's vision. Without Joseph Smith we would not have the Book of Mormon and we would not have the Church, for he was the one through whom the Lord restored the Church. If your friend does not believe in it and does not have a testimony of it, he should pray about it.

Fabiola Erlacher, 15, Linz-Urfahr Ward, Salzburg Austria Stake



"We declare without equivocation that God the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, appeared in person to the boy Joseph Smith...

"... Our whole strength rests on the validity of that vision. It either occurred or it did not occur. If it did not, then this work is a fraud. If it did, then it is the most important and wonderful work under the beavens."

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Marvelous Foundation of Our Faith," Ensign, Nov. 2002, 80.



Bear your testimony of Joseph Smith to your friend. Tell your friend to read the story for himself and pray about it. He will get an answer, as Joseph Smith did.

Rebecca Burk, 16, Globe First Ward, Globe Arizona Stake



The Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, is the pinnacle of our religion. Without it, the necessary authority to organize the Church of Christ

wouldn't be on the earth. God doesn't change.

He has always called prophets and will continue
calling them so that His designs may be achieved.

Stephan Cerqueira Levita, 18, Ilhéus Centro Branch, Itabuna Brazil Stake

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

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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

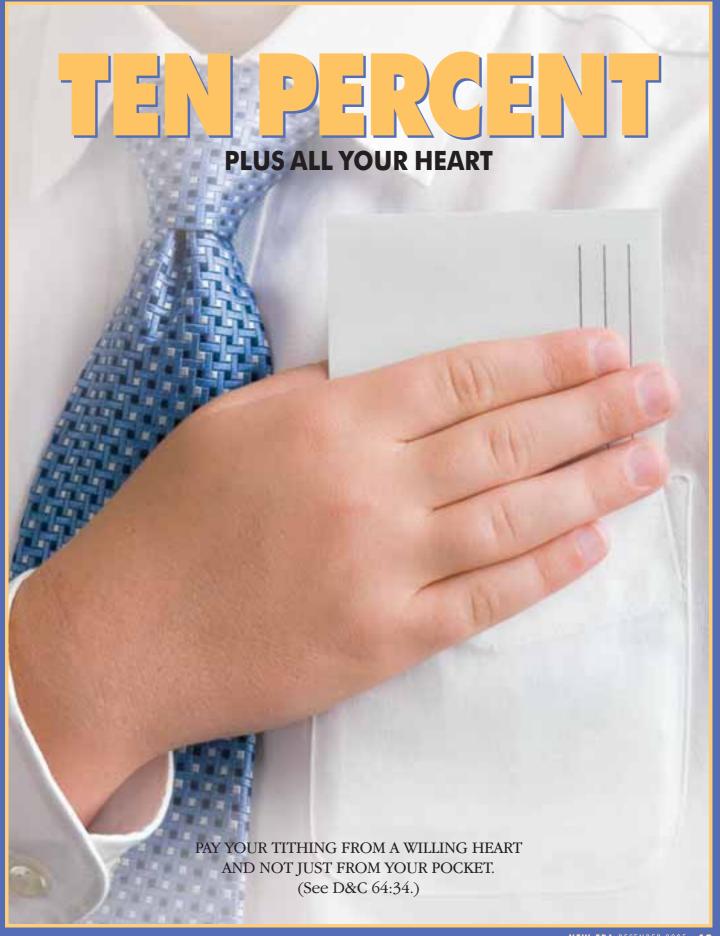
Q&A, New Era

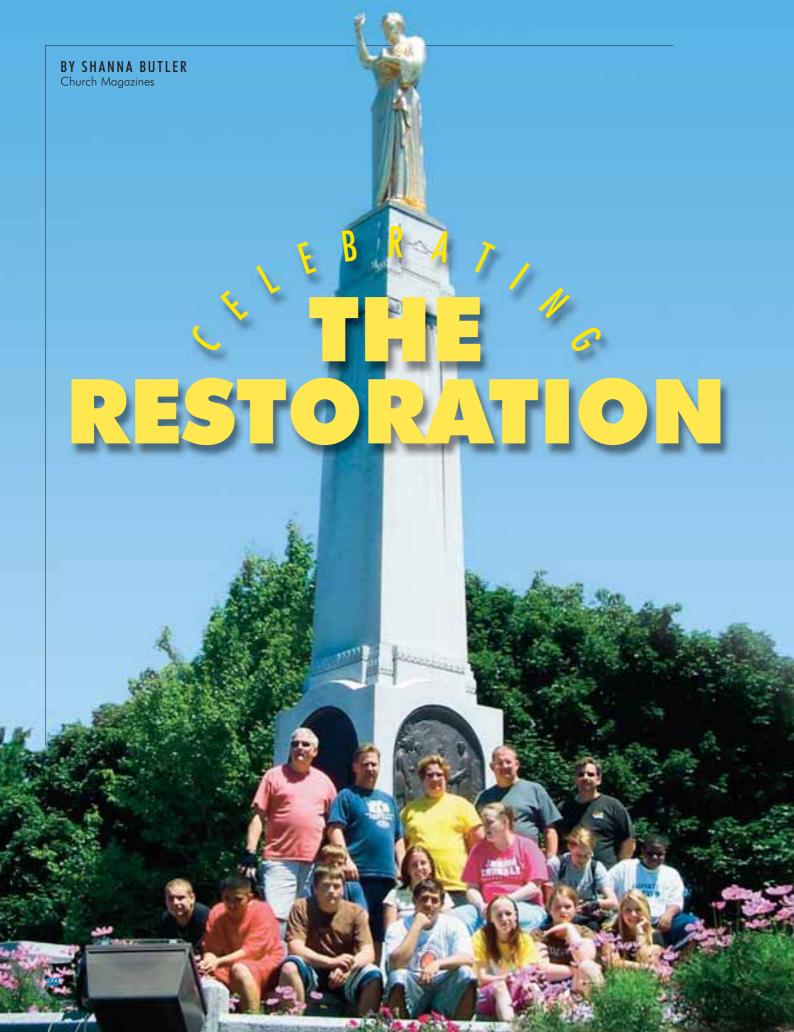
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420 Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org
Please respond by January 15, 2006.

QUESTION

"My parents are divorced, and sometimes I feel like we aren't a 'real' LDS family because we aren't sealed in the temple. I'm beginning to feel alienated from the Church. How can I deal with these feelings?"







any youth from stakes around the world responded to the First Presidency's invitation to hold special activities to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the organization of the Church and the 200th anniversary of the Prophet Joseph Smith's birth. Here is a sampling of what youth did this year to commemorate these great events.

"Bike to the Beginning, Endure to the End" was the motto of the youth of the Rochester First Ward, Rochester New York Stake, when they commemorated the bicentennial of the Prophet Joseph Smith's birth with a 30-mile (48-km) bicycle ride (above, below, and opposite page). The riders began at the Rochester stake center and headed east along the Erie Canal. Twenty-four miles and a few rest stops later, the riders arrived in Palmyra and left the canal for a ride south to the Hill Cumorah. At the Hill Cumorah Visitors' Center, they saw the Church movie *The Restoration*, then rode to the top of the hill

Finally, the group rode to the Joseph Smith farm and the Sacred Grove, before being driven home.

to enjoy the view and a hard-earned lunch.

Mia Maid Heather Petherbridge said, "It's comforting to know that Joseph Smith was as young as we are when he had the First Vision. He had to overcome similar kinds of temptations that we do. He had to withstand all kinds of pressure and stand for what he believed in. It gives me the courage to do the same thing."



The Gwangju Korea Stake celebrated the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Prophet at Gwangju City Hall (below). About 400 people gathered to watch performances from youth and adults who had been preparing for three months. The program included music, testimonies, and scriptures.

Hye Seon Choi, a young woman, played the violin with her mother (below right inset). Jeong Hun Choi, a young man, played the cello. "I greatly appreciate that I could use my small talent to help the Church," he says.

The stake president, Yong Hyun Cho, said, "We wanted this special gathering to teach people that Jesus Christ called the Prophet Joseph Smith as a part of preparing the world for His Second Coming."



JOSEPH SMITH QUILT

Angela Feller, 17, of the St. George Utah Morningside Stake, designed and pieced together this quilt (above) in honor of the Prophet Joseph Smith. She finished it in just over three weeks. "While working on this quilt I have realized that one small boy with a tremendous amount of faith brought about the whole Restoration of the Church," she said.









DRAWING OF JOSEPH SMITH

Brittany Benson, 13, of the Santaquin Utah Stake, drew this picture of the Prophet Joseph Smith as part of her ward's effort to commemorate the Prophet's 200th birthday.





NA GUATEMAL

The young women of the Guatemala City Guatemala Mariscal Stake (left and below) celebrated the 175th anniversary of the organization of the Church with an open house teaching about the history of the Church.

As visitors stopped at each station, representing different locations in the Church's move westward, the young women explained and bore testimony about events during that time period. Stations started with the upstate New York area and included Kirtland, Ohio; Missouri; Nauvoo, Illinois; and Salt Lake City, Utah.

Afterward, the young women showed handicrafts and other projects related to the anniversary of the Church's organization. Each ward performed a pioneer dance and play to show the cheerfulness of the Saints even in the face of adversity.

"I learned a lot about the history of the Church for this activity," says Bárbara Rivera, of the Jerusalén Ward. "I enjoyed it very much."





The Coventry England Stake (above) performed a musical by Kenneth Cope called My Servant Joseph for members and investigators.

The part of the Prophet's wife Emma was played by Lara Mayfield, 17, of the Solihull Ward. She was impressed as she learned about Emma's life and how she helped build the Lord's kingdom. Lara says, "We have the same responsibilities to use our talents to build His kingdom on the earth. I am grateful for the chance I had to do that in My Servant Joseph."

Ben Gaughran, 17, of the Chelmsley Wood Ward, was the assistant music director and pianist. Through participating in the production he says, "I was able to receive a personal witness of the severity of Joseph's trials and just how special he was-truly a prophet of God."





The youth of the Idaho Falls Idaho Eagle Rock Stake (left and below) shared their talents and their testimonies as they performed a musical called *One Life* to celebrate the Prophet Joseph Smith's birth and life. The musical

was so successful that they performed it multiple times for audiences in Idaho.

Krista Klingler, 14, who participated in the ensemble, said, "Doing this play was one of the best experiences of my life. It showed me how great a man Joseph Smith truly was. I am still amazed that at 14 years old he acted upon the principles Heavenly Father revealed to him. From birth to death he lived a remarkable life."





REPLICA OF THE **SMITH CABIN**

Mitchell Wilcox (above), a teacher in the Provo Utah Grandview Stake. built this replica of the Smith family home after doing some historical research.





A DAY FOR JOSEPH SMITH

Vanessa Murphy and Aaron Tucker (above), of the Fresno California North Stake, served as co-chairs for "Catch the Vision," a stake youth activity that included workshops, games, a dinner, and dance. The day focused on the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Restoration of the Church. The day was just one of four such events held throughout the year in the Fresno area.

As Vanessa and
Aaron worked with
members of a student
council and their stake
leaders, they found
their testimonies of the
Prophet Joseph Smith
strengthened.

COLBAY AREA

Nearly 1,000 youth from 10 stakes covering a stretch of more than 100 miles (160 km) of California coast gathered for an all-day youth conference at a large inter–stake center on the



grounds of the Oakland temple (left and below).

Using the Mutual theme in 1 Nephi 14:7 as their guide, the youth participated in various activities, including watching The Testaments: Of One Fold and One Shepherd

and learning about the history of the Church in their area. Youth could attend a variety of workshops and a tour of the temple grounds. They ended their day with a testimony meeting and a dance.



Youth in the Manly Ward, Sydney Australia Greenwich Stake (above), celebrated by researching the Prophet's life and teachings and then compiling a book about their findings. They used Mutual time to do the project.

The book has 13 chapters, each based on an article of faith, and is titled *Praise to the Man* (see *Hymns*, no. 27). The youth and their families plan on using their copies of the completed work to share the gospel with friends. They will also send copies of the book to missionaries serving from the Manly Ward.

The youth learned more than facts from writing their book. "I learned that when we have trials we need to trust in God like Joseph Smith did," says Losi Motuliki, a teacher.

"Joseph Smith was a really great man," says Antoinette Hilario, a Mia Maid. "He was able to translate the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ. We are so blessed to have this scripture in our lives today."



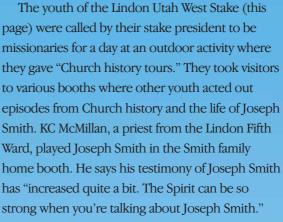












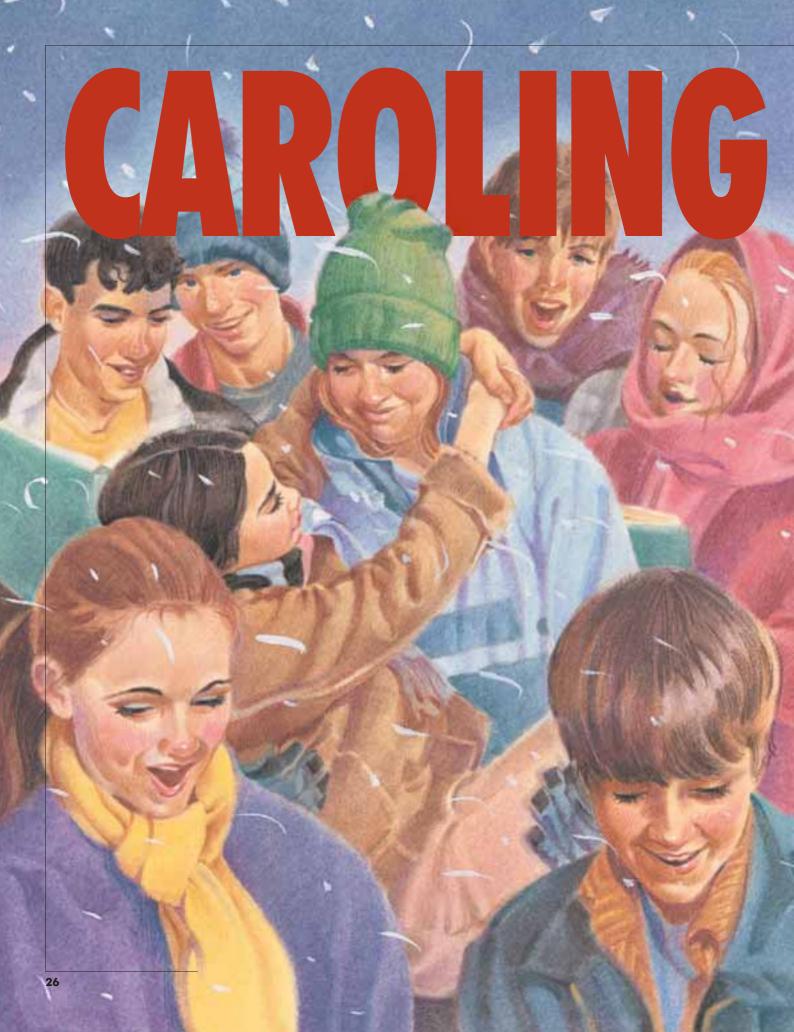
Following the tour, visitors eventually arrived in an area that represented Nauvoo, where they could play pioneer games and participate in other activities. Youth and other stake members also helped construct a large replica of the Nauvoo Temple.

Braden Sweeten, 18, from the Lindon 18th ward, helped youth and other stake members build the replica of the temple. He said while he was building, "It really sunk into my heart how much the Prophet and the Saints really sacrificed to build the temple." **NE**



NEW ERA DECEMBER 2005





LLUSTRATED BY DILLEEN MARSH

with

BY NANCY CHECKETTS

A girl in my ward couldn't walk, but I had a disability too. I wasn't seeing her as a daughter of God.

had won the race. The prize seat in the minivan was mine. As I squeezed in between my best friend and the guy I had a crush on, I thought, "Life is great." Soon I would be caught up in the normal chatting that accompanies any Mutual Christmas-caroling activity. Only this time, by some chance, I saw Chrslyn—left behind in our mad dash for the vehicles.

I knew Chrslyn from passing conversations in school. I may have even called and invited her to a few Church activities. But in the previous months I had failed to bring her into my circle of friends because she was in a wheelchair.

On that winter night, squashed into a minivan, as I watched her skillfully yet slowly struggle to catch up with us, I realized I also had a disability, and I knew I must change. I must treat Chrslyn as the daughter of God that she was. I decided to help her when she needed it.

As I tried to be of aid, I felt a little frustrated because I was being left out of the fun of the evening. No one even noticed that I was no longer with the group. At one stop, as I was helping Chrslyn to her wheelchair, I begged Jared, one of the more outgoing young men, to wait for me. He complied, and soon the other youth began to notice Chrslyn and offer their help in various ways.

The quest to help Chrslyn soon

became a game, as we each fought for a turn in pushing her wheelchair. We rotated the privilege of sitting in the truck with our new friend and generally kept her at the center of attention the whole night.

We soon had a system set up. I was responsible for lifting Chrslyn from the vehicle while one of the young men reassembled her wheelchair, and then we were off. Even as we walked up and down the dirt roads that were becoming more mud than dirt, we were not daunted. This was our new mission, and nothing would stop us from helping Chrslyn have the caroling experience of her life.

At the last home we visited, we were able to park close to the house, so instead of reassembling her wheelchair, I just carried Chrslyn to the door. I was surprised at how light she felt. As strains of "Away in a Manger" (*Hymns*, no. 206) filled the night air, I looked down and saw Chrslyn smiling. Holding her in my arms, I thought of the Savior's message: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

In my mind I saw the picture of the Savior healing the lame man near the pool of Bethesda, and I knew this night another miracle had been performed. Only this night it was not the physically lame who had been made whole: it was I, the spiritually blind. I now saw Chrslyn as a person and a friend who had feelings and desires similar to mine.

That night ended, and months passed. Chrslyn and her family left our branch, but I know that through Chrslyn my life was changed. Even now, when I think of this experience, I am reminded to follow the Savior, loving and serving all men, no matter their circumstances, for we are all children of God. **NE**

Nancy Checketts is a member of Alma Ward, Fort Smith Arkansas Stake.

WHAT DID JOSEPH SMITH REALLY LOOK LIKE?

BY JANET THOMAS

Church Magazines

"No painting of him could catch his expression, for his countenance was always changing to match his thoughts and feelings."
—Emma Smith





he most famous painting of the Prophet Joseph Smith shows him seated, looking straight ahead, dressed in a dark suit with a white shirt and cravat. His hair is dark—too dark as it turns out—since locks of his hair still exist and show that he had light brown, almost blond, hair. This painting may be the image we are most familiar with, but it is not entirely accurate.

The Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum were martyred in June 1844. At that time, photography was just beginning to be used but was not widespread. The most common form was daguerreotype, a type of photography done with light-sensitive chemicals on glass that reverses the original image. Daguerreotypes of the Prophet Joseph from that time most often have been taken of this famous painting, not of the real person. However, there may yet be a daguerreotype, taken of the Prophet, come to light that is authentic.

We do, however, know quite a bit about what he looked like because people who knew him wrote down descriptions of Joseph. Of course, these descriptions varied depending on how the writers felt about him personally.

A neighbor to the Smith family knew Joseph when he was a teenager. The neighbor wrote, "He was a big-bodied, flaxenhaired youth, with small hands for his size, large feet, . . . a heavy growth of very light hair, and striking blue eyes, half hidden by long light lashes. Even then he was considered handsome. To everybody he was known as 'Young Joe Smith,' to distinguish him from his father, who was 'Old Joe Smith.' "1

A reporter from a St. Louis newspaper interviewed Joseph Smith and wrote a detailed description of his appearance. He said Joseph was a large man with a broad, muscular chest. The reporter also mentioned that the Prophet had small hands and big feet. He wrote, "The shape of his head is a very oblong oval. . . . His forehead is white, without a furrow, and notwithstanding the small facial angle, somewhat symmetrical. His hair is quite light and fine—complexion pale—cheeks full—temperament evidently sanguine—lips thin rather than thick. . . .

"But the Prophet's most remarkable feature is his eye. . . . The hue is light hazel, and is shaded, and, at times, almost veiled, by the longest, thickest light lashes you ever saw belonging to a man. . . .

PAINTING OF JOSEPH SMITH, COMMUNITY OF CHRIST VERSION The artist who painted this famous painting of the Prophet Joseph Smith is unknown. The Prophet recorded sitting for a portrait being done by a Brother Rogers.

This is a lock of Joseph Smith's bair. It is in the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum in Salt Lake City.

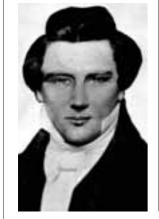
Opposite page: The Prophet's death mask was made just hours after his martyrdom.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND, PROVIDED COURTESY OF DAUGHTERS OF THE UTAH PIONEERS MUSEUM

PAINTING OF JOSEPH **SMITH, COMMUNITY** OF CHRIST VERSION It is unclear if the painting Brother Rogers painted still exists or if this is the painting. When this painting is compared with the death mask, you can see that the artist misplaced some features: the eyes are too close together, the mouth is too small, and the upper lip is not long enough. Daguerreotypes said to be taken of the Prophet in life, like the one below.

actually seem to be taken of this painting.

considered good looking and dignified; athletic and strong with long legs and large feet. He had: an oval-shaped face; a prominent nose, long and straight; a rather long upper lip; a light complexion; deep-set hazel or blue eyes; thick eyebrows; long eyelashes; fine, straight, light brown or dark blond hair. But there are a few things that we often forget about Joseph. First, he limped slightly. Remember, a piece of infected bone was



"His voice is low and soft, and his smile, which is frequent, is agreeable."²

None of the descriptions gives a complete picture. His wife, Emma, wrote: "No painting of him could catch his expression, for his countenance was always changing to match his thoughts and feelings."

However, if we pick individual phrases from a lot of different descriptions, we can make a list. Joseph was:

a little over six feet tall;

surgically removed from his leg when he was seven. Although it didn't seem to cause much problem as he grew—one leg was slightly shorter than the other—he had a slight limp as an adult. Also, after he was tarred and feathered by a mob in Ohio, one of his front teeth was chipped, which made him whistle slightly at times when he spoke.

After the martyrdom, death masks were made quickly of Joseph and Hyrum. Death



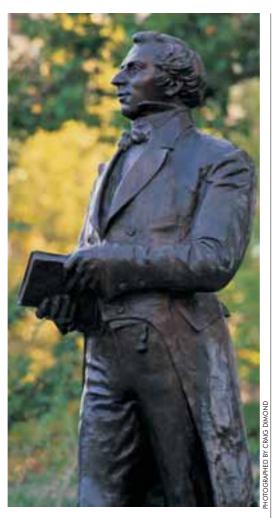


PROFILE OF JOSEPH **SMITH BY SUTCLIFFE MAUDSLEY** The Prophet Joseph Smith posed for the artist. To create an accurate profile, some bave suggested that Maudsley used a light source to cast a shadow on the wall. Then the Prophet's profile was traced. Maudsley's drawings of the Prophet match the proportions of Joseph's death mask very well. Above: The death mask is superimposed on the painting.

masks were made of plaster of paris, and in this age before photography was common, a death mask was one way to preserve what a person looked like. The death masks accurately preserve the facial bone structure of these two important men. If precise measurements are made of the death masks and similar measurements are made of paintings, drawings, and sculptures done since that time, it is possible to tell how accurate the

BRONZE STATUE BY MAHONRI YOUNG In 1908 Mabonri Young, a grandson of Brigham Young, made a life-sized bronze statue of Joseph Smith that now stands on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. He based the face and bead on the death masks and on descriptions of the Prophet by those who knew bim personally and were still alive to advise the sculptor.

BRONZE STATUES BY DEE JAY BAWDEN The bodies of Hyrum and Joseph had been exbumed in Nauvoo in 1928 because of some confusion as to where they were buried. At that time, their skulls were photographed and measured. This information, along with the death masks, made it possible many years later for Dee Jay Bawden to attempt an accurate likeness. Bawden's sculpture of the Prophet Joseph Smith and bis brother, Hyrum, done in 1981, stands outside the Carthage Jail in Illinois.



artwork is as far as the placement of features.

Ephraim Hatch, an author and professor at Brigham Young University, wrote a book called *Joseph Smith Portraits: A Search for* the Prophet's Likeness for the Religious Studies Center at BYU. In it he compares many paintings and drawings of the Prophet Joseph to measurements from the death mask. Others have used computer generated studies to gain additional insight into what the Prophet Joseph Smith looked like.

We know at least one artist had the Prophet himself pose for paintings and drawings. That artist, Sutcliffe Maudsley, produced art that was not particularly realistic in style, but his profile drawings fit very well with the measurements from the Prophet's death mask. Maudsley's drawings of the Prophet have since been copied and used as inspiration for other artists.



Over the years, members of the Church have wanted paintings or sculptures that capture an accurate image of the Prophet. But no matter how many times his image is painted or sculpted, the emotional power of the foremost leader of this dispensation is elusive. We know that he was kind and enjoyed being around children. We know he was inspired and inspiring, and he had a deep intellect. And we know he was cheerful and loved people and cared about their wellbeing. The part he played in the Restoration of the gospel was of such significance that John Taylor wrote, "Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it" (D&C 135:3).

If we had known him, we would be tempted to say as Brigham Young did, "I feel



CRAYON STUDIES BY THEODORE GORKA In preparing for painting a scene from the Prophet's life, Theodore Gorka researched the Prophet's appearance and expressions. His conté crayon studies are an effort to represent the Prophet's face with life and emotion that seem authentic.

like shouting Hallelujah, all the time, when I think that I ever knew Joseph Smith, the Prophet whom the Lord raised up and ordained, and to whom He gave keys and power to build up the Kingdom of God on earth and sustain it."4 NE

NOTES

- 1. John Henry Evans, Joseph Smith: An American Prophet (1946), 37.
- 2. Joseph Smith: An American Prophet, 178-9.
- 3. Stories about Joseph Smith the Prophet, comp. Edwin F. Parry (1934), 160.
- 4. Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 458.

resident Brigham Young (1801–77) said: "The Lord had his eyes upon [Joseph Smith], and upon his father, and upon his father's father, and upon their progenitors clear back to . . . Adam. He has watched that family and that blood as it has circulated from its fountain to the birth of that man. He was fore-ordained in eternity to preside over this last dispensation."

Joseph Smith learned much from his ancestors and his upbringing in New England, including hard work, devotion to God, and patriotism. This family tree will tell you a little more about his ancestors.²

NOTES

- 1. Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young (1997), 96.
- 2. This information comes from *Church History in the Fulness of Times* (2000), 15–27.
- 3. Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, ed. Preston Nibley (1958), 182.
- 4. Quoted in Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Joseph Smith's New England Heritage* (1971), 112.
- 5. See John Henry Evans, *Joseph Smith: An American Prophet* (1989), 23–24; see also 19–30.

1 Robert Smith

Robert was the Prophet's third-great-grandfather. He left England when he was a teenager to move to America. He arrived in Boston in 1638.

2 Mary French

The Prophet's third-great-grandmother, Mary, had 10 children. She and her husband spent most of their married lives in Topsfield, Massachusetts.

3 Samuel Smith Sr.

Samuel was born to Robert and Mary in 1666. He was known as a "gentleman" in Topsfield's town and county records.

4 Rebecca Curtis

Rebecca had nine children. Her first son was Samuel Jr.

5 Samuel Smith Jr.

Samuel was well known as a Christian, a community leader, and a supporter of the American War of Independence.

6 Priscilla Gould

Priscilla died after having five children. After she died, Samuel married her cousin, who then raised Priscilla's children.

9 Joseph Smith Sr.

Joseph was a good man who believed in God. He met his wife, Lucy, at her brother's store in Tunbridge, Vermont, and they were married in 1796. Several times, Joseph had dreams that prepared him for the coming of the gospel and to support his son in his calling. Lucy said he was "an affectionate companion and tender father as ever blessed the confidence of a family."

He was one of the first baptized when the gospel was restored, and he became the first patriarch of the Church in this dispensation.

8 Mary Duty

Mary had 11 children. She moved with her husband from Massachusetts to Vermont as they looked for new farmland. In her later years, Mary had a strong testimony that her grandson was a prophet. In 1836 Mary went to Kirtland, Ohio, to gather with the Saints. She died 10 days after arriving there.

JOSEPH SMITH, BY ALVIN GITTINS

7 Asael Smith

Asael, born in 1744, was the Prophet's grandfather. He was elected to many offices during the 30 years he lived in Tunbridge, Vermont, and was known for his community service. He believed in a loving God and in life after death. He also had a testimony of the Savior. Asael predicted that "God was going to raise up some branch of his family to be a great benefit to mankind."

In his old age, Asael read the Book of Mormon. And when he died in late 1830, he knew the Book of Mormon was true and that his grandson was a prophet.

10 Lucy Mack

Lucy came to a decision when she was about 19 that Christ's Church was no longer on the earth. Once, when Lucy was very ill, she pleaded with the Lord for her life and promised Him that she would serve Him the best she could if He would spare her. She heard a voice giving her comfort, and she kept seeking for a religion that would bring her closer to Christ. Joseph Smith Jr. was her fifth child, and the gospel he restored was an answer to her prayers. Her children were an unnamed child, who died shortly after birth, Alvin, Hyrum, Sophronia, Joseph, Samuel, Ephraim, William, Catherine, Don Carlos, and Lucy.

15 John Mack

John was Joseph Smith Jr.'s great-great-grandfather. When he was 16, he left Inverness, Scotland, and arrived in New England in 1669.

16 Sarah Bagley

Sarah and her husband spent much of their lives in Lyme, Connecticut. They had 12 children.⁵

13 Ebenezer Mack

Ebenezer was John and Sarah Mack's eighth child. He and his family lived on the Mack estate but had very hard economic times there.

14 Hannah Huntley

Hannah married Ebenezer when he was 30.

11 Solomon Mack

Born in 1732, Solomon was only four when he was apprenticed to a nearby farmer. He was an apprentice until he was 21. After that, he enlisted in the French and Indian War and was a merchant, a land developer, a shipmaster, and a farmer, among other things. He had many unfortunate incidents during his lifetime, including being hit by a falling tree. Later in his life, he read the Bible and was converted to a life of service and devotion to God.

Solomon died a few months after Joseph received the First Vision.

9 10

Joseph Smith Jr.

The Prophet Joseph was born on December 23, 1805, the 5th of 11 children. Joseph married Emma Hale in 1827. They had 12 children, including 2 adopted children. He was martyred on June 27, 1844. "[He] left a fame and name that cannot be slain. He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people" (D&C 135:3).

12 Lydia Gates

Lydia was a schoolteacher. She married Solomon in 1759 and taught her eight children, and probably her husband, to read and write and also about religion.



Dad's act of kindness not only helped a widow, it also set an example for us to follow and eventually helped our family.

Couldn't cutting firewood wait? I wanted to stay in the warm house and play with my new race cars.

ne Christmas morning I woke early. To my joy, the tree was surrounded with presents. The excitement of discovering what treasures waited inside the wrapping paper made up for the lack of snow.

We were quite poor, and most Christmases were meager. We lived on a farm and always had chores to do, even on Christmas Day. Right after we opened our gifts, my father left to do his chores.

I was praying that my mom wouldn't make me stop playing with my new race car set to do my chores. When my dad returned, he told me he had done our chores for us.

I was excited to spend the entire

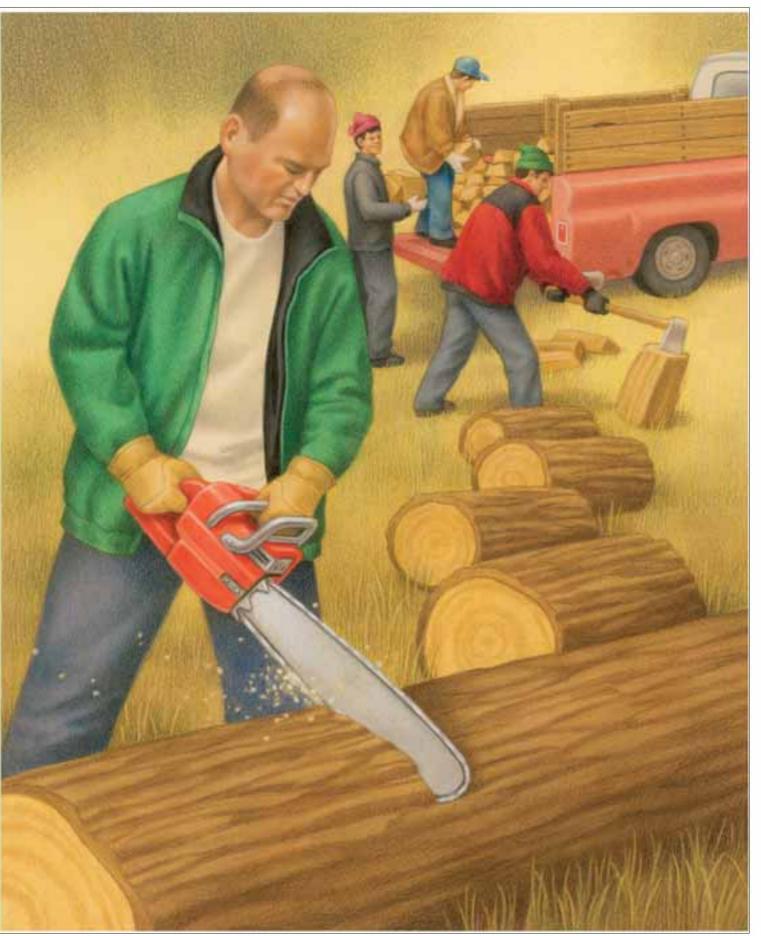
day in the warm house.

He then said something to my mother about
Blanche, an elderly widow down the street who was looking for firewood. That was my dad, always caring for others. It seemed like everybody in town depended on him.

The next thing I knew my father was asking my brothers and me if we wanted to get some wood with him. I couldn't believe it.
On Christmas? I knew that wood was the only way Blanche could cook her food and heat her house. But couldn't someone else get her firewood? Couldn't we wait until tomorrow? Or couldn't we just take her a little from our woodpile? Surely she had enough wood to last until then. But no. My father wanted to go into the woods and get a whole truckload. I complained, but it didn't do any good.

My dad was very good at getting his boys to help him, and we each had our jobs. My dad would run the chain saw, Grant, my next-to-oldest brother, would split the wood, I would load it into the truck, and another older brother Ron would stack the wood in the back of the truck.

Eager to get back to our toys, we all worked hard. Dad had cut a big tree, and we almost had it loaded. I thought we had plenty of wood, but my dad cut into another big tree.





2>

3>



December 14: The prophet Isaiah foretold and testified of the Savior's divine mission and birth in Isaiah 7:14–15: 9:6-7; 53.

December 15: Nephi saw in vision the Savior's birth and ministry before and after the Lord's Crucifixion. Read Nephi's account in 1 Nephi 11:9-33:

12:4-8.

December 16: King Benjamin testified of the coming of the Savior in Mosiah 3:1-12.

20-21.

December 17: The Lamanite prophet Samuel prophesied to the wicked Nephites about Christ's birth and death in Helaman 14.



12

December 25: Read and ponder "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles." You can find it at www.lds.org, in For the Strength of Youth (2001), or in the April 2000 Ensign. Write your testimony in your journal.

77 A

December 24: On the eve of Christ's birth, the prophet Nephi prayed in behalf of his people who were about to be slain by the wicked. Read the Lord's response and the fulfillment of the prophet Samuel's prophecy in 3 Nephi 1:9-22.

DEA LIST



READING DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

You can make this Christmas special by learning more about the Savior. Here are some scriptural selections to help you. Study one on each of the days leading up to Christmas.

December 18: Read the Prophet Joseph Smith's testimony of the Savior in D&C 76:19-24, 40-42.



December 19: The prophet Alma testified of the Savior and the power of His Atonement in Alma 7:7–13.

10

December 23: Read Matthew's account of the Savior's birth in Matthew 1:18-25; 2.

49

December 22: Read Mark's account of the Savior's baptism and ministry in Mark 1-2:13.



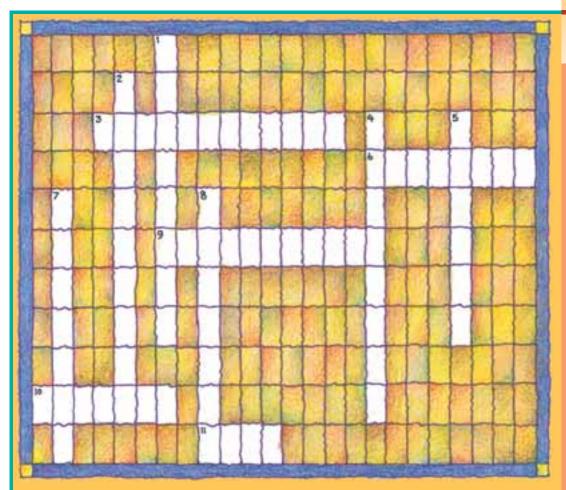
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December 21: Read Luke's account of the Savior's birth and childhood in Luke 2.



December 20: Read about Mary's and Elisabeth's experiences before Christ's birth in Luke 1.





CHURCH ORGANIZATION

"We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth."—Articles of Faith 1:6

Use words from the sixth article of faith to fill in this crossword puzzle.

ACROSS

- 3. A way of grouping people
- 6. "God will do nothing until he revealeth his secret unto his servants the _____"

 (Amos 3:7).
- 9. Another word for patriarchs
- 10. To have faith or consider as true
- 11. Resembling in every respect

DOWN

- 1. Priesthood holders in this quorum usually prepare the sacrament
- 2. Original; in the past
- 4. Special witnesses of Christ (see D&C 107:23)
- 5. Congregation; an organized group of believers
- 7. Was; past mode of being
- 8. Another word for bishops

Answers: Across—3. organization; 6. prophets; 9. evangelists; 10. believe; 11. same. Down—1. teachers; 2. primitive; 4. apostles; 5. church; 7. existed; 8. pastors.

ARTICLES OF FAITH



"The Bible helps us understand that Jesus organized His Church with apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and other Church officials who held the priesthood, which is the authority to act in God's name. . . .

"We declare that the great restoration that the ancient prophets spoke of began in 1820, when the Lord called a young man named Joseph Smith to reestablish the Church. . . .

"In time Joseph received the priesthood of God, giving him the authority to organize the Church once again. The Church now exists with apostles, prophets, and others who have authority to administer the ordinances of the gospel."

—Elder John B. Dickson of the Seventy, "A Brief Introduction to the Church," Ensign, May 2000, 82.

Next month in this series, read about a missionary in the Philippines who was blessed with the gift of tongues.





any teenagers have trouble getting along with their parents at some stage during their teen years. As a 16-year-old, I started to think that my mom and I would never have a conversation that didn't end with tears and slammed doors.

During one particular argument, I shouted some angry words, stormed into my bedroom, and slammed the door as hard as I could. I threw myself onto my bed with hot, angry tears streaming down my cheeks. Thoughts ran through my head: "How can I fix this? What can I do to stop this constant arguing?"

Then as clear as if the Mormon Tabernacle Choir were in my room, I heard these words: "He lives to comfort me when faint. He lives to hear my soul's complaint. . . . He lives to calm my troubled heart. He lives all blessings to impart" ("I Know That My Redeemer Lives," *Hymns*, no. 136). I felt the Holy Ghost's presence and the love of my Heavenly Father encircling me, and I knew that everything would work out.

That day was a turning point for me. Heavenly Father knew what I needed. Music is a huge part of my life, and I was blessed by listening to and learning the words of the hymns. They gave me comfort and strength when I really needed it, and they can help us through hard times.

Today my mom and I are the best of friends. We are both serving in the Primary in our ward, and I love that we can work together in our callings as well as at home. **NE**

Nicole Lerios Randall is a member of the Springs Ward, Benoni South Africa Stake.

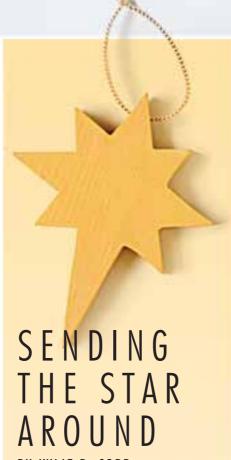
NOW I LOVE SUNDAYS

BY LUCILE SAUTRON

hen I was a teenager, I set the goal of getting a degree in sports. I prayed a lot, asking the Lord to make it so practices would be on Saturdays. However, my team's practices were scheduled on Sundays. I had to make a choice: give up on my goal or skip church. Since both were important to me, I compromised. I would go to practices for two Sundays and then go to church on the third Sunday. Unfortunately, this little deviation from my faith led to sin, causing much suffering.

It did not take me long to realize my mistake. I asked to be on a different team. However, it was too late; the wrong had been done. I had half opened the door, and Satan had pushed it wide open. Eventually I gave up competitive sports.

I learned two valuable things. The first is that when we seek to compromise with the Lord, we are in great danger. The second is that I had made the mistake of believing my faith was strong enough that I could do without Sunday meetings. Our spirit needs nourishment just as our body does. If we were to eat only one meal and then skip the next two meals, we could not remain in good health.



BY KYLIE R. COBB

y family strives to come to know Christ through service. Every Christmas season, we "send the star around." Whoever has the star does a secret service for a member of the family and at the same time leaves the little gold wooden star with that person.

I have found that our home is filled with a wonderful spirit when we constantly show our love to each other. The spirit of service is valuable far beyond presents and money. NE

Kylie R. Cobb is a member of the Kuna Fourth Ward, Kuna Idaho Stake.

I love Sundays now. The Lord has blessed me in my studies and my health above measure. **NE**

Lucile Sautron is a member of the Basel Ward, Bern Switzerland Stake.

I KNEW IT WAS TRUE!

BY LAUREL C. HULME

or the last few years, I have participated in the Oakland Temple Pageant. This play depicts the miracles of the Savior in America and the history and Restoration of the Church. My first year, I sang in the balcony chorus for the last two nights only. I had seen the pageant a few times in previous years but never felt touched the way I did when I sang in it, especially on the first night.

When the person playing Joseph Smith received the plates from Moroni, he sang a song titled "I Would Exhort You" (see Moroni 10:4). Never before have I felt the way I did that night. There was nothing left to wonder. I knew it was true!

Now, on tech crew, I get to stand below him and watch him sing his exhortation. I know he is singing to me and to the audience, testifying that the Book of Mormon is true. I know that the true Church was restored. I can feel it. Nothing matters more than my knowledge of Christ and the truthfulness of the gospel. Joseph Smith restored the gospel to the earth and, by the power of God, received and translated the Book of Mormon. This great Prophet and many of the Saints sacrificed so we could have that knowledge. NE

Laurel C. Hulme is a member of the Los Gatos Ward, Saratoga California Stake.





DEA'S PLAINS"

his is the only Christmas song in the hymnbook written by a Latter-day Saint author. In 1869, John Macfarlane of St. George,

LEADING WITH LOVE

fter you've planned, prayed, and delegated responsibilities to your class or quorum members, you, as a leader, need to offer your

help and support. Tell them you have confidence in their abilities,

and let them know you love them. Encourage them to use their own ideas; don't insist that things always be done your

way. By leading with love, you'll help every member develop his or her skills and talents.

"At this time of Christmas, this season when gifts are given, let us not forget that God gave His Son, and His Son gave His life, that each of us might have the gift of eternal life."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Son of God." Ensian, Dec. 1992, 6.

Utah, wanted his choir to sing a new carol for their Christmas program. After struggling to write one with no success, John awoke from a dream one night and wrote the lyrics and melody to "Far, Far Away on Judea's Plains." Even

though most shepherds in Judea herded their sheep on rocky hills, not plains, the song is still a beautiful addition to our Christmas carols and is popular both in and out of the Church. (See Hymns, no. 212.)

NEW ERA INDEX 2005

	ATONEMENT	Why Wo Ask Poople to Pood the	Dalmyra, Birthplace of the
A	Always Remember Him, Apr, 9	Why We Ask People to Read the Book of Mormon, <i>Jay E.</i>	Palmyra: Birthplace of the Restoration, May, 10
ADVERSITY	Are You Saved by Grace or		Cartwright, Andrea
Hope of a Missionary, The,	,	Jensen, Aug, 40	
Tafadzwa Tanjani, Jul, 34	Works? Mar, 38	Worth More Than Its Weight in	Living Proof, Nov, 32
Learning to Stand, Marcus E.	Girl in the Mirror, The, Aug, 12	Gold, (poster), Aug, 9	Caviale, Berengere
Price, Feb, 48	Now There Is Hope (poster),	Brannen, Stephen L.	My Prayers Became Blessings,
Living Proof, Andrea Cartwright,	Apr, 19	Mighty Priesthood of God, The	Feb, 37
Nov, 32	Price I Couldn't Pay, The, Shelly	(song), Apr, 10	Celebrating the Restoration, Shanna
Typhoons and Trials, Percival	L. Johnson, Sep, 26	Breakdown, Daryl A. Scott, Feb, 12	Butler, Dec, 20
Tommy, Jul, 48	Questions and Answers (know	Brewer, George	Center Stage in New York, Nicole
You'll Be Tested and Taught,	you're forgiven), Nov, 16	Wood for the Widows, Dec, 36	Oakeson, Apr, 24
Christoffel Golden Jr., Feb, 42	Room for Hope, F. Melvin	Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness,	Checketts, Nancy
AGENCY	Hammond, Jun, 42	The, Boyd K. Packer, Apr, 4	Caroling with Chrslyn, Dec, 26
Count the Ripples, Feb, 26	ATTITUDE	Brodegard, William	Chicken Bones, April Anderson,
D&C 9:7–9, Mar, 48	Develop a Good Attitude	Remember (poem), Aug, 51	Aug, 19
	(poster), Jul, 19	Broome, Brianne	CHOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY
Deciding on a Mission, <i>Isaí</i>	Like Laman No More, <i>Lurana</i>	Taking Both Roads, Nov, 11	(see AGENCY)
Límon Torres, Jun, 7	Kuuipo Teshima, Apr, 48	Brown, Daniel Lowell	CHRISTMAS (see December issue)
Get Me Out of This! Keith R.	Not So Cool, <i>John Lattin</i> , Nov, 26	Where Was My Answer? Dec, 9	Christoffel, Golden Jr.
Waters, Jun, 8	Wearing Millicent, Rebecca M.	Brown, Janelle	You'll Be Tested and Taught, Feb,
Making Hard Decisions, Richard	Taylor, Jul, 44	Get to Know Your Sisters, Nov,	42
G. Scott, Jun, 4	Austin, Laura A.	38	Church Organization, Dec, 40
Right Thing at the Right Time,		_	Churchill, Ginger M.
The, <i>Dallin H. Oaks</i> , Jul, 4	Following My Father, Oct, 47	Brown, Nad Richard	, 0
Room for Hope, F. Melvin	В	Two Dawns (poem), Nov, 51	Walking with Kasha, Oct, 26
Hammond, Jun, 42		Build on the Basics, H. Aldridge	Cobb, Kylie R.
Time for Eternal Things, Adam	Back on Track, <i>Kadie Sharp</i> , Sep, 45	Gillespie, Sep, 36	Sending the Star Around, Dec,
C. Olson, Aug, 36	Bak, Krissie	Bunker, Anna M.	43
What's in a Name? Rachel C.	Zipping My Lip, Feb, 46	What But the Promised Savior?	Code to Live By, A, <i>Thomas S.</i>
Murdock, Jun, 24	Bardsley, Ruth	(poem), Dec, 51	Monson, Sep, 4
Wrong Roads and Revelation,	Hidden Fruit, Jan, 46	Burton, Kellieann	COMFORT
Matthew Holland, Jul, 26	Be Honest, David A. Bednar, Oct, 4	In Carthage Jail, May, 49	Gift of the Holy Ghost, The,
Your Right to Choose the Right,	Beatty, Chris	Butler, Shanna and Adam C. Olson	Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 4
Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Aug, 4	What a Feeling! Apr, 47	Preparing to Preach His Gospel,	COMMUNICATION
Allred, SalliJune Anderson	Becker, Jocelyn M.	Sep, 20	How to Talk to Your Parents,
Tears for the Prophet, May, 42	Learning to Love, Mar, 46	Butler, Shanna and Ryan Carr	Shanna Butler, Jun, 30
All-Star Dad, Amanda Wallin, Jul, 46	Bednar, David A.	Called 2 Serve, Aug, 20	CONVERSION
Alveal, María Espinoza	Be Honest, Oct, 4	Butler, Shanna	Staying Converted, Vaclava
Rescued at Camp, Jul, 24	Behind the Scenes, Shanna	Behind the Scenes, Oct, 20	Svobodova, Oct, 35
* ' - '	Butler, Oct, 20	Celebrating the Restoration,	What Was I Missing? Donald
Always Remember Him, Apr, 9	Believe (poster), Jan, 19	Dec, 20	McClellan, Mar, 15
Always Remember Him, <i>Henry B.</i>	Believing Is Seeing, Debra J.	How to Talk to Your Parents, Jun,	Cooper, Scott Reed
Eyring, Dec, 12	Workman, Mar, 24	30	Right Beside Me, Nov, 45
Andersen, Welden C.	Bell, Darillyn	Independence: Living in Zion,	Cope, Arianne B.
Wagons (photo), Jul, 51	Every Single Cent, Nov, 45	May, 28	Internet Café, Mar, 34
Anderson, April	Benson, Jacquelyn, Mary Lee	Penny for Your Prayers, Jul, 29	Count the Ripples, Feb, 26
Chicken Bones, Aug, 19	Call, and Emily O. Jennings	Playing Joseph Smith, Nov, 24	Cumorah Connection, The, <i>R. Val</i>
Any Good? Merry Smith Watt,	Cute and Modest, Jan, 36	True Strength, Feb, 20	Johnson, May, 8
Oct, 48	Benzley, Caroline H.	By Example, <i>Thomas S. Monson</i> ,	Cumorah Crew, The, <i>Harriet</i>
APOSTASY	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	1 *	
What Happened to Christ's	Watching over the Church,	Dec, 4	Sutherland, Jul, 30
Church? Feb, 8	Feb, 30	C	Cute and Modest, Jacquelyn
Are You Saved by Grace or Works?	Better World, A, <i>Lindsay</i>		Benson, Mary Lee Call, and
Mar, 38	Petersen, Feb, 48	Call, Henry and Jeneal	Emily O. Jennings, Jan, 36
ARTICLES OF FAITH	Bitton, Camille	Young Pioneers in Malaysia, Jul,	D
Called of God, Robert S. Wood,	Modest Rewards, Sep, 45	20	
Nov, 28	Bjorklund, Robert and Shirley S.	Call, Mary Lee, Jacquelyn Benson,	Dahlquist, Charles W. II
Church Organization, Dec, 40	Swenson	and Emily O. Jennings	Four Heavenly Helps, Aug, 44
Father, the Son, and the Holy	Saving Chris, Oct, 46	Cute and Modest, Jan, 36	DATING
Ghost, The, Gordon B.	BOOK OF MORMON	Called 2 Serve, Shanna Butler	Questions and Answers
Hinckley, Jul, 10	Especially for Her, Brittany	and Ryan Carr, Aug, 20	(boyfriend or girlfriend before
Girl in the Mirror, The, Aug, 12	Moore, Sep, 44	Called of God, Robert S. Wood,	16), Sep, 16
If This Is True, Sally S. English,	Hidden Fruit, Ruth Bardsley, Jan,	Nov, 28	De Lima, Adriana C.
Oct, 32	46	Caroling with Chrslyn, Nancy	Power of My Testimony, The,
Know What We Believe, Spencer	Like Laman No More, Lurana	Checketts, Dec, 26	Oct, 48
W. Kimball, Jun, 10	Kuuipo Teshima, Apr, 48	Carr, Ryan and Shanna Butler	Deacon with the Big Smile, The, Fay
Price I Couldn't Pay, The, Shelly	Where Was My Answer? Daniel	Called 2 Serve, Aug, 20	Waldemar McCracken, Jul, 14
L. Johnson, Sep, 26	Lowell Brown, Dec, 9	Carr, Ryan	Deacons of Coventry, The, Christine
At the Center of the Earth, <i>Marvin K</i> .		One and Only, The, Jan, 42	Reid, Jan, 12
in the oction of the Darth, mar vill It.		İ	İ

Gardner, Jun, 18

DEATH Four Heavenly Helps, Charles W. Helping Home Evening Succeed, Adam C. Olson, Sep, 30 Missing Andy, Steven Tuitupou, Dahlquist II, Aug, 44 FAITH Freedom (poem), Tara P. Kleman, HERITAGE Believing Is Seeing, Debra J. Code to Live By, A, Thomas S. Tears for Ashley, Katie Laird, Feb, Apr, 51 Workman, Mar, 24 FRIENDSHIP Monson, Sep, 4 Don't Be Afraid, David O. Deciding on a Mission, Isaí Límon At the Center of the Earth, Treasures of Testimony, L. Tom McKay, Oct, 10 Torres, Jun, 7 Marvin K. Gardner, Jun, 18 Perry, May, 44 What a Feeling! Chris Beatty, DECISIONS (see AGENCY) Strong Roots in Small Branches, Hinckley, Gordon B. Apr, 42 DeFord, Sally Jeniann Jensen, Apr, 34 Father, the Son, and the Holy FAMILY Would I Know My Savior? (song), Tears for Ashley, Katie Laird, Feb, Ghost, The, Jul, 10 All-Star Dad, Amanda Wallin, Jul, Dec, 10 Gift of the Holy Ghost, The Valiant in Venezuela, Marvin K. Denison, Amanda Jan, 4 Family Time, Sarah Hart, Sep, 45 It's Hard to Forgive, Jul, 47 Gardner, Jan, 20 Praise to the Man, May, 4 Getting Along with Mom, Nicole Dil, Lindsay T. What Was I Missing? Donald Hinckley, McKay Lerios Randall, Dec, 42 McClellan, Mar, 15 Snowy Day in February, A, If You Listen, Jul, 8 How to Talk to Your Parents, DISABILITIES May, 26 Shanna Butler, Jun, 30 HISTORY, CHURCH Deacon with the Big Smile, The, I Call Him Dad, Sep, 10 Fay Waldemar McCracken, Game Over, Stephen F. Powell, Independence: Living in Zion, FAMILY HISTORY Jul, 14 Shanna Butler, May, 28 Aug, 26 599 Baptisms, Wilson Arley Walking with Kasha, Ginger M. Gardner, Marvin K. Kirtland: School of the Prophets, Ocampo, Aug, 10 Churchill, Oct, 26 At the Center of the Earth, Jun, Paul VanDenBerghe, May, 20 Joseph Smith's Family Tree, Dec, Diving into Seminary, Adam C. Nauvoo: On the Banks of the Olson, Oct, 28 Valiant in Venezuela, Jan, 20 Mississippi, Janet Thomas, May, My Great-Great Temple Trip, Don't Be Afraid, David O. McKay, Get Me Out of This! Keith R. Waters 36 Rachelle Simonsen, Jan, 47 Oct, 10 Jun, 8 Palmyra: Birthplace of the FAMILY HOME EVENING Driven to Prayer, Lynita K. Get to Know Your Sisters, Janelle Restoration, Ryan Carr, May, 10 Helping Home Evening Brown, Nov, 38 Restoration: Truth Comes Again, Newswander, Sep, 14 Succeed, Adam C. Olson, Sep, Getting Along with Mom, Nicole The, Apr. 12 30 Lerios Randall, Dec, 42 Times of the Prophets, The, Jan, Questions and Answers EASTER Gift of the Holy Ghost, The, Gordon 28 (encourage family home Always Remember Him, Apr, 9 B. Hinckley, Jan, 4 Holland, Matthew evening), Oct, 16 Gillespie, H. Aldridge **EDUCATION** Wrong Roads and Revelation, Jul, Farrington, John Questions and Answers (What Build on the Basics, Sep, 36 Singing a New World Record, should I do with my life?), Girl in the Mirror, The, Aug, 12 HOLY GHOST Oct, 38 Jul, 16 **GOALS** Called of God, Robert S. Wood, Father, the Son, and the Holy Elders in My English Class, Anette Finish (poster), Sep, 19 Nov, 28 Ghost, The, Gordon B. Hinckley, Malzl Knapp, Sep, 9 Questions and Answers (What Driven to Prayer, Lynita K. Jul, 10 English, Sally S. should I do with my life?), Newswander, Sep, 14 Faust, James E. If This Is True, Oct, 32 Jul, 16 Father, the Son, and the Holy Your Patriarchal Blessing, Nov, 4 Ghost, The, Gordon B. Erickson, Lane V. Right Thing at the Right Time, Featherstone, Vaughn J. Leaf (photo), Jun, 51 The, Dallin H. Oaks, Jul, 4 Hinckley, Jul, 10 They All Came through in Glory Sunset (photo), Oct, 51 **GODHEAD** Four Heavenly Helps, Charles W. (poem), Jul, 51 Father, the Son, and the Holy Especially for Her, Brittany Moore, Dahlquist II, Aug, 44 FIRST VISION Ghost, The, Gordon B. Gift of the Holy Ghost, The, Sep, 44 Great and Marvelous Day, A, Hinckley, Jul, 10 Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 4 Eternity (poem), Jaana Olsen, Howard W. Hunter, Jan, 8 Sep, 51 Gift of the Holy Ghost, The, If You Listen, Lindsay T. Dil, Jul, Praise to the Man, Gordon B. Gordon B. Hinckley, Jan, 4 Every Single Cent, Darillyn Bell, Hinckley, May, 4 Nov, 45 Gonzales, Joseph Words of Warning, Stephen Restoration: Truth Comes Again, Example to the World, An, Janice I Object, Mar, 47 Vincent, Jan, 48 The, Apr, 12 Treasure, May, 49 **GOSSIP** HOME TEACHING Sacred Grove, The (poster **EXAMPLE** Zipping My Lip, Krissie Bak, Feb, Home Teacher to the Prophet, A, insert), May By Example, Thomas S. Monson, May, 23 599 Baptisms, Wilson Arley Dec, 4 Grainge, Diana Watching over the Church, Ocampo, Aug, 10 Count the Ripples, Feb, 26 Wake Up! Jun, 47 Caroline H. Benzley, Feb, 30 Following My Father, Laura A. Example to the World, An, Janice GRATITUDE HONESTY (see INTEGRITY) Austin, Oct, 47 Treasure, May, 49 Next to the Angels, Russell M. Hope of a Missionary, The, Tafadzwa FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH Notes from Fleur, Ryan Carr, Nelson, Mar, 4 Tanjani, Jul, 34 At the Center of the Earth, Nov, 20 Great and Marvelous Day, A, HOPE Marvin K. Gardner, Jun, 18 Teaching My Teacher, Prince Better World, A, Lindsay Howard W. Hunter, Jan, 8 Four Heavenly Helps, Charles W. Ihenkoro, Feb. 24 GRIEF (see DEATH) Petersen, Feb. 48 Dahlquist II, Aug, 44 You'll Be Tested and Taught, Room for Hope, F. Melvin **FORGIVENESS** Christoffel Golden Jr., Feb, 42 Hammond, Jun, 42 Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness, Eyring, Henry B. Hammond, F. Melvin Soaring above Trials, Kimberly The, Boyd K. Packer, Apr, 4 Always Remember Him, Dec, 10 Room for Hope, Jun, 42 Webb, Jul, 47 It's Hard to Forgive, Amanda Hart, Sarah How to Talk to Your Parents, Denison, Jul, 47 Family Time, Sep, 45 Shanna Butler, Jun, 30 Questions and Answers (know

you're forgiven), Nov, 16

Howells, Sera Pack Your Bags, Elder, Brian You're a Mormon? Ana Lee D&C 9:7-9, Mar, 48 Nearer to Thee, Mar, 47 Kiley, Feb, 40 Graniela López, Oct, 42 Malachi 3:10-11, Sep, 25 Saving Chris, Robert Bjorklund Your Right to Choose the Right, LINEAGE Hulme, Laurel C. I Knew It Was True! Dec, 43 Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Aug, 4 You Have a Birthright, R. Val and Shirley S. Swenson, Oct, Hunter, Howard W. Johnson, Kenneth Johnson, Nov, 8 Your Patriarchal Blessing, James Proof Is in the Doing, The, Mar, Great and Marvelous Day, A, Jan, Stop Right Here, Gabriel Middleton, Apr, 26 E. Faust, Nov, 4 HYMNS You'll Be Tested and Taught, Johnson, Kristi M. Living Proof, Andrea Cartwright, Any Good? Merry Smith Watt, Christoffel Golden Jr., Feb, 42 Master Designer, The (poem), Nov. 32 Oct, 48 INSTITUTE Mar, 51 López, Ana Lee Graniela I Need Thee, Hanna Jardine, Place to Be, The, Janet Thomas, Johnson, R. Val You're a Mormon? Oct, 36 Feb, 47 Cumorah Connection, The, Aug, 30 Nearer to Thee, Sera Howells, INTEGRITY May, 8 Learning to Love, Jocelyn M. Mar, 47 Be Honest, David A. Bednar, You Have a Birthright, Nov, 8 Becker, Mar, 46 Wake Up! Diana Grainge, Jun, 47 Right Beside Me, Scott Reed Oct. 4 Johnson, Shelly L. Cooper, Nov, 45 This Recruit Does Not Swear, Price I Couldn't Pay, The, Sep, 26 Jonathan's Perspective (poem), Sir! Brian D. Stenquist, Oct, 12 Anna Marie Mecham Murdock, Internet Café, Arianne B. Cope, Making Hard Decisions, Richard G. I Am Not Ashamed, Luis Ubaldo Scott, Jun, 4 Mar. 34 Ian. 51 Padilla Ortiz, Jul, 48 INTERNET Joseph Smith's Family Tree, Dec, 34 Markiewicz, Izabela I Call Him Dad, Sep, 10 My Baptism (poem), Feb, 51 Choose the Right . . . Media, Jul, **JUDGING** I Knew It Was True! Laurel C. Proof Is in the Doing, The, MARRIAGE Hulme, Dec, 43 Internet Café, Arianne B. Cope, Kenneth Johnson, Mar, 42 Questions and Answers (What I Need Thee, Hanna Jardine, Feb, 47 Mar, 34 should I do with my life?), It Starts in the Heart, Joseph B. Jul, 16 I Object, Joseph Gonzales, Mar, 47 I Took the Challenge, Millicent Wirthlin, Feb, 4 Kiley, Brian MARTYRDOM In Carthage Jail, Kellieann Lawrence, Feb, 47 It's Hard to Forgive, Amanda Pack Your Bags, Elder, Feb, 40 IDEA LIST Denison, Jul, 47 Kimball, Spencer W. Burton, May, 49 Jazz up Your Journal, Jan, 15 Know What We Believe, Jun, 10 Tears for the Prophet, SalliJune Ready to Serve? Feb, 15 KINDNESS Anderson Allred, May, 42 Practically Prepared, Mar, 33 Jardine, Dee Any Good? Merry Smith Watt, Master Designer, The (poem), Always Remember Him, Apr, 9 On Top of Old Mossy, Mar, 26 Oct, 48 Kristi M. Johnson, Mar, 51 Wake Up to Seminary, Jun, 39 Jardine, Hanna Room for Love, Kelly Anne Matheson, Mark Choose the Right . . . Media, Jul, I Need Thee, Feb, 47 Sansom, Nov, 46 Salt Lake Temple (photo), 37 Jazz up Your Journal, Jan, 15 Service with a Wink, Megan Mar, 51 Seminary Scripture Power, Sep, Jennings, Emily O., Jacquelyn Willis, Jan, 26 McClellan, Donald Benson, and Mary Lee Call Kleman, Tara P. What Was I Missing? Mar, 15 13 Temple Blessings Now and Later, Cute and Modest, Jan, 36 Freedom (poem), Apr, 51 McCracken, Fay Waldemar Jensen, Jay E. Knapp, Anette Malzl Deacon with the Big Smile, The, Progressing Together, Nov, 12 Why We Ask People to Read the Elders in My English Class, Jul, 14 Twelve Reading Days of Book of Mormon, Aug, 40 McKay, David O. Sep. 9 Christmas, The, Dec, 39 Knight, Cynthia Don't Be Afraid, Oct, 10 Jensen, Jeniann If This Is True, Sally S. English, Strong Roots in Small Branches, Stellar Missionary, Apr, 46 McMurry, Lacey Perfect Pattern, The, Sep, 46 Know What We Believe, Spencer W. Oct. 32 Apr, 34 If You Listen, Lindsay T. Dil, Jul, 8 **JESUS CHRIST** Kimball, Jun, 10 Me? Give a Blessing? Brad Ihenkoro, Prince Always Remember Him, Apr, 9 Larsen, Jan, 40 Teaching My Teacher, Feb, 24 MEDIA Always Remember Him, Henry In a Holy Place, Lance B. Wickman, B. Eyring, Dec, 12 Laird, Katie Choose the Right . . . Media, Jul, Apr, 42 Father, the Son, and the Holy Tears for Ashley, Feb, 34 37 In Carthage Jail, Kellieann Burton, Ghost, The, Gordon B. Lancaster, Sandy Meeker, Karen Eager May, 49 Hinckley, Jul, 10 Why I Believe, Apr, 38 No Need to Fear, Jun, 46 In His Debt, Lizzie Mills, May, 48 Great and Marvelous Day, A, Larsen, Brad Middleton, Gabriel Howard W. Hunter, Jan, 8 Me? Give a Blessing? Jan, 40 Stop Right Here, Apr, 26 IN TUNE (see MUSIC) INCLUSION It Starts in the Heart, Joseph B. Lattin, John Mighty Priesthood of God, The Caroling with Chrslyn, Nancy Wirthlin, Feb, 4 Not So Cool, Nov, 26 (song), Stephen L. Brannen, Lawrence, Millicent Apr, 10 Checketts, Dec. 26 Now There Is Hope (poster), To the Point, Nov, 36 Apr, 19 I Took the Challenge, Feb, 47 Mills, Lizzie Independence: Living in Zion, Questions and Answers (always Learning from Joseph Smith, Apr, 29 In His Debt, May, 48 Shanna Butler, May, 28 remember Him), Jan, 16 Learning to Love, Jocelyn M. Becker, Missing Andy, Steven Tuitupou, INDIVIDUAL WORTH Twelve Reading Days of Mar, 46 Feb, 28 Questions and Answers (How Christmas, The, Dec, 39 Learning to Stand, Marcus E. Price, MISSION PREPARATION can I gain confidence), Apr, 16 What a Feeling! Chris Beatty, Build on the Basics, H. Aldridge Feb, 48 INSPIRATION (see also HOLY Apr., 47 Lesson on Talents, A, Jean Luker Gillespie, Sep, 36 What But the Promised Savior? Wirthlin, Jun, 48 Preparing to Preach His Gospel, Back on Track, Kadie Sharp, Sep, (poem), Anna M. Bunker, Dec, Like Laman No More, Lurana Shanna Butler and Adam C. Kuuipo Teshima, Apr, 48 Olson, Sep, 20 Especially for Her, Brittany Would I Know My Savior? (song) LINE UPON LINE

D&C 135:3, May, 47

Sally DeFord, Dec, 10

Moore, Sep, 44

President, I'm Ready for My Missionary Interview! William D. Oswald, Jun, 36 Practically Prepared, Mar, 33 Ready to Serve? Feb, 15 All-Star Dad, Amanda Wallin, Jul, MISSIONARY WORK Called 2 Serve, Shanna Butler and Ryan Carr, Aug, 20 Cumorah Crew, The, Harriet Sutherland, Jul, 30 Deciding on a Mission, Isaí Límon Torres, Jun, 7 Elders in My English Class, Anette Malzl Knapp, Sep, 9 Hope of a Missionary, The, Tafadzwa Tanjani, Jul, 34 My Prayers Became Blessings, Berengere Caviale, Feb, 37 No Need to Fear, Karen Eager Meeker, Jun, 46 Pack Your Bags, Elder, Brian Kiley, Feb, 40 Place to Be, The, Janet Thomas, Aug, 30 Questions and Answers (overcoming fear), Feb, 16 Stellar Missionary, Cynthia Knight, Apr, 46 Stop Right Here, Gabriel Middleton, Apr, 26 Typhoons and Trials, Percival Tommy, Jul, 48 Wake Up! Diana Grainge, Jun, 47 Walking with Kasha, Ginger M. Churchill, Oct, 26 You'll Be Tested and Taught, Christoffel Golden Jr., Feb, 42 Modest Rewards, Camille Bitton, Sep, 45 MODESTY Cute and Modest, Jacquelyn Benson, Mary Lee Call, and Emily O. Jennings, Jan, 36 Modest Rewards, Camille Bitton, Sep. 45 Perfect Pattern, The, Lacey McMurry, Sep, 46 Monson, Thomas S. By Example, Dec, 4 Code to Live By, A, Sep, 4 Moore, Brittany Especially for Her, Sep, 44 Murdock, Anna Marie Mecham Jonathan's Perspective (poem), Jan, 51 Murdock, Rachel C. What's in a Name? Jun, 24 MUSIC Mighty Priesthood of God, The (song), Stephen L. Brannen, Apr, 10 Notes from Fleur, Ryan Carr,

Some Music Can Hurt You (poster), Mar, 19 Swingin' Choir, A, Janet Thomas, Jun, 26 Would I Know My Savior? (song), Sally DeFord, Dec, 10 MUTUAL 2005 Mutual Theme, Jan, 11 My Baptism (poem), Izabela Markiewicz, Feb, 51 My Great-Great Temple Trip, Rachelle Simonsen, Jan, 47 My Prayers Became Blessings, Berengere Caviale, Feb, 37 Nearer to Thee, Sera Howells, Mar, 47 Nelson, Russell M. Next to the Angels, Mar, 4 Nephites in Georgia, Heidi Owen, Jul, 40 Newman, Samantha Stepping into Service, Apr, 47 Newswander, Lynita K. Driven to Prayer, Sep, 14 Next to the Angels, Russell M. Nelson, Mar, 4 No Need to Fear, Karen Eager Meeker, Jun, 46 Not So Cool, John Lattin, Nov, 26 Notes from Fleur, Ryan Carr, Nov, 20 Now I Love Sundays, Lucile Sautron, Dec, 43 Oakeson, Nicole Center Stage in New York, Apr,



Oaks, Dallin H. Right Thing at the Right Time, The, Jul, 4 OBEDIENCE Chicken Bones, April Anderson, Aug, 19 Making Hard Decisions, Richard G. Scott, Jun, 4 Now I Love Sundays, Lucile Sautron, Dec, 43 On Top of Old Mossy, Dee Jardine, Mar, 26 Proof Is in the Doing, The, Kenneth Johnson, Mar, 42 Ocampo, Wilson Arley 599 Baptisms, Aug, 10 Olsen, Jaana Eternity (poem), Sep, 51 Olson, Adam C. and Shanna Butler Preparing to Preach His Gospel, Sep. 20 Olson, Adam C. Diving into Seminary, Oct, 28

Helping Home Evening

Teaching from the Heart, Sep, 24

Time for Eternal Things, Aug, 36

We Love to See the Temple, Mar,

Succeed, Sep, 30

Youth at Work in Fiji, Apr, 20 On Top of Old Mossy, Dee Jardine, Mar, 26 On Trails Unknown (poem), Matthew Wright, Jun, 51 One and Only, The, Ryan Carr, Jan, 42 ORGANIZATION, CHURCH Church Organization, Dec. 40 Ouestions and Answers (the only true church), May, 16 Restoration: Truth Comes Again, The, Apr, 12 Ortiz, Luis Ubaldo Padilla I Am Not Ashamed, Jul, 48 Oswald, William D. President, I'm Ready for My Missionary Interview! Jun, 36 Owen. Heidi Nephites in Georgia, Jul, 40 Pack Your Bags, Elder, Brian Kiley, Feb, 40 Packer, Boyd K. Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness, The, Apr, 4 Palmyra: Birthplace of the Restoration, Ryan Carr, May, 10 PATRIARCHAL BLESSINGS Your Patriarchal Blessing, James E. Faust, Nov, 4 PEACE In a Holy Place, Lance B. Wickman, Apr, 42 It Starts in the Heart, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Feb, 4 Questions and Answers (know you're forgiven), Nov, 16 PEER-PRESSURE Chicken Bones, April Anderson, Aug, 19 Get Me Out of This! Keith R. Waters, Jun, 8 Questions and Answers (having a boyfriend or girlfriend before 16), Sep, 16 What's in a Name? Rachel C. Murdock, Jun, 24 Penny for Your Prayers, Shanna Butler, Jul, 29 Perry, L. Tom Treasures of Testimony, May, 44 PERSONAL PROGRESS Progressing Together, Nov, 12 Petersen, Lindsay Better World, A, Feb, 48 **PIONEERS** Snowy Day in February, A, McKay Hinckley, May, 26 Soaring above Trials, Kimberly Webb, Jul, 47 Young Pioneers in Malaysia, Henry and JeNeal Call, Jul, 20 Place to Be, The, Janet Thomas, Aug, 30

PLAN OF SALVATION Four Heavenly Helps, Charles W. Dahlquist II, Aug, 44 Playing Joseph Smith, Shanna Butler, Nov. 24 PORNOGRAPHY Get Me Out of This! Keith R. Waters, Jun, 8 Internet Café, Arianne B. Cope, Mar, 34 Questions and Answers (pornography), Aug, 16 POSTER Believe, Jan, 19 Don't Be Fooled, Feb, 19 Some Music Can Hurt You, Mar, Now There Is Hope, Apr, 19 In One Small Moment, May, 19 Free Filter, Jun, 17 Develop a Good Attitude, Jul, 19 Worth More Than Its Weight in Gold, Aug, 9 Finish, Sep, 19 Mental Floss, Oct, 19 Joke's on You, The, Nov, 19 10 Percent Plus All Your Heart, Dec, 19 Powell, Stephen F. Game Over, Aug, 26 Power of My Testimony, The, Adriana C. De Lima, Oct, 48 Practically Prepared, Mar, 33 Praise to the Man, Gordon B. Hinckley, May, 4 PRAYER Breakdown, Daryl A. Scott, Feb, 12 Don't Be Afraid, David O. McKav, Oct, 10 Driven to Prayer, Lynita K. Newswander, Sep, 14 I Need Thee, Hanna Jardine, Feb. 47 My Prayers Became Blessings, Berengere Caviale, Feb, 37 Notes from Fleur, Ryan Carr, Nov, 20 Penny for Your Prayers, Shanna Butler, Jul, 29 Rescued at Camp, María Espinoza Alveal, Jul, 24 Something Better to Do, Carl Webb, Nov, 14 Wrong Roads and Revelation, Matthew Holland, Jul, 26 President, I'm Ready for My Missionary Interview! William D. Oswald, Jun, 36 Price I Couldn't Pay, The, Shelly L. Johnson, Sep, 26 Price, Marcus E. Learning to Stand, Feb, 48 PRIESTHOOD Deacon with the Big Smile, The, Fay Waldemar McCracken, Jul, 14

Nov. 20

Singing a New World Record,

John Farrington, Oct, 38

Deacons of Coventry, The, Christine Reid, Jan, 12 Mighty Priesthood of God, The (song), Stephen L. Brannen, Apr, 10 Questions and Answers (the only true church), May, 16 Storming into Service, Sep, 40 Watching over the Church, Caroline H. Benzlev, Feb, 30 We Stick Together, Don Searle, Mar. 20 PRIESTHOOD BLESSINGS Believing Is Seeing, Debra J. Workman, Mar, 24 Living Proof, Andrea Cartwright, Nov, 32 Me? Give a Blessing? Brad Larsen, Jan, 40 Progressing Together, Nov, 12 Proof Is in the Doing, The, Kenneth Johnson, Mar, 42 **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS** Always remember Him, Jan, 16 Overcoming fear, Feb, 16 Need a clean room, Mar, 16 How can I gain confidence, Apr, 16 The only true church, May, 16

Personal scripture study, Jun, 14 What should I do with my life? Jul, 16 Pornography, Aug, 16 Having a boyfriend or girlfriend before 16, Sep, 16 Encourage family home evening,

Oct, 16

Know you're forgiven, Nov, 16 Joseph Smith story, Dec, 16

Ram Phantom, The, Laurie Walker, Nov. 44 Randall, Nicole Lerios Getting Along With Mom, Dec

Ratieta, Tamra Child on Sled (photo), Jan, 51 Ready to Serve? Feb, 15

Reid, Christine

Deacons of Coventry, The, Jan, 12

Reinhold, C.

Garden Tomb, The (art), Apr, 51 Rejoice (poem), Kimberly Webb, May, 51

RELIEF SOCIETY

Get to Know Your Sisters, Janelle Brown, Nov, 38

Remember (poem), William Brodegard, Aug, 51

REPENTANCE

Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness, The, Boyd K. Packer, Apr, 4 Girl in the Mirror, The, Aug, 12

On Top of Old Mossy, Dee Jardine, Mar, 26 Questions and Answers (know you're forgiven), Nov, 16 Room for Hope, F. Melvin Hammond, Jun, 42 To the Point, Nov, 36 Rescued at Camp, María

Espinoza Alveal, Jul, 24 Restoration: Truth Comes Again, The, Apr, 12

RESTORATION

2005 Mutual Theme, Jan, 11 Celebrating the Restoration, Shanna Butler, Dec. 20

Great and Marvelous Day, A, Howard W. Hunter, Jan, 8 Questions and Answers (the

only true church), May, 16 Restoration: Truth Comes Again, The, Apr, 12

REVELATION (see HOLY GHOST and INSPIRATION)

Right Beside Me, Scott Reed Cooper, Nov. 45

Right Thing at the Right Time, The, Dallin H. Oaks, Jul, 4

Room for Hope, F. Melvin Hammond, Jun, 42

Room for Love, Kelly Anne Sansom, Nov, 46

SABBATH DAY

Now I Love Sundays, Lucile Sautron, Dec, 43

SACRAMENT

Deacons of Coventry, The, Christine Reid, Jan, 12

Questions and Answers (always remember Him), Jan, 16

Sacred Grove, The (poster insert), May

Sansom, Kelly Anne

Room for Love, Nov, 46 Sautron, Lucile

Now I Love Sundays, Dec, 45 Saving Chris, Robert Bjorklund and Shirley S. Swenson, Oct, 46

Scott, Daryl A.

Breakdown, Feb, 12

Scott, Richard G.

Making Hard Decisions, Jun, 4

Not So Cool, John Lattin, Nov, 26 SCRIPTURES

Always Remember Him, Henry B. Eyring, Dec, 12

Driven to Prayer, Lynita K. Newswander, Sep. 14

I Took the Challenge, Millicent

Lawrence, Feb. 47 Questions and Answers (per-

sonal scripture study) Jun, 14 Seminary Scripture Power, Sep,

Twelve Reading Days of Christmas, The, Dec, 39 Why We Ask People to Read the Book of Mormon, Jay E. Jensen, Aug, 40

Searle, Don

We Stick Together, Mar, 20 Seminary Scripture Power, Sep, 13 SEMINARY

Diving into Seminary, Adam C. Olson, Oct, 28

One and Only, The, Ryan Carr, Jan, 42

Seminary Scripture Power, Sep, 13

Taking Both Roads, Brianne Broome, Nov. 11

Time for Eternal Things, Adam C. Olson, Aug, 36

Wake Up to Seminary, Jun, 39 Young Pioneers in Malaysia, Henry and JeNeal Call, Jul, 20

Sending the Star Around, Kylie R. Cobb, Dec, 43

Service with a Wink, Megan Willis, Jan, 26

SERVICE

Called 2 Serve, Shanna Butler and Ryan Carr, Aug, 20

Caroling with Chrslyn, Nancy Checketts, Dec, 26

Following My Father, Laura A. Austin, Oct, 47

Ram Phantom, The, Laurie Walker, Nov, 44

Room for Love, Kelly Anne Sansom, Nov, 46

Sending the Star Around, Kylie R. Cobb, Dec, 43

Service with a Wink, Megan Willis, Jan, 26

Something Better to Do, Carl Webb, Nov, 14

Stepping into Service, Samantha Newman, Apr, 47

Storming into Service, Sep, 40 Wood for the Widows, George Brewer, Dec, 36

Sharp, Kadie

Back on Track, Sep, 45 Simonsen, Rachelle

My Great-Great Temple Trip, Jan,

Singing a New World Record, John Farrington, Oct, 38

SMITH JOSEPH

A Home Teacher to the Prophet, May, 23

Believe (poster), Jan, 19 By Example, Thomas S. Monson, Dec, 4

Celebrating the Restoration, Shanna Butler, Dec, 20 Cumorah Connection, The, R.

Val Johnson, May, 8 D&C 135:3, May, 47

Great and Marvelous Day, A, Howard W. Hunter, Jan, 8

In Carthage Jail, Kellieann Burton, May, 49

In His Debt, Lizzie Mills, May, 48 In One Small Moment (poster), May, 19

Joseph Smith's Family Tree, Dec, 34

Learning from Joseph Smith, Apr, 29

Playing Joseph Smith, Shanna Butler, Nov. 24 Praise to the Man, Gordon B.

Hinckley, May, 4 Questions and Answers (Joseph

Smith story), Dec, 16 Restoration: Truth Comes Again,

The, Apr, 12 Tears for the Prophet, SalliJune

Anderson Allred, May, 42 What Did Joseph Smith Really Look Like? Janet Thomas, Dec, 28

Snowy Day in February, A, McKay Hinckley, May, 26

Soaring above Trials, Kimberly Webb, Jul, 47

Something Better to Do, Carl Webb, Nov, 14

Sometimes (poem), Mieka Wenner, Oct, 51

STANDARDS

Cute and Modest, Jacquelyn Benson, Mary Lee Call, and Emily O. Jennings, Jan, 36 I Object, Joseph Gonzales, Mar,

Modest Rewards, Camille Bitton, Sep, 45

Perfect Pattern, The, Lacey

McMurry, Sep, 46 This Recruit Does Not Swear,

Sir! Brian D. Stenguist, Oct, 12 Valiant in Venezuela, Marvin K. Gardner, Jan, 20

Staying Converted, Vaclava Svobodova, Oct, 35

Stellar Missionary, Cynthia Knight, Apr, 46

Stenguist, Brian D.

This Recruit Does Not Swear, Sir! Oct, 12

Stepping into Service, Samantha Newman, Apr, 47

Stop Right Here, Gabriel Middleton, Apr, 26

Storming into Service, Sep, 40

Strong Roots in Small Branches, Jeniann Jensen, Apr, 34

Sutherland, Harriet Cumorah Crew, The, Jul, 30

Svobodova, Vaclava

Staying Converted, Oct, 31 Swenson, Christopher Jon

Missionaries (photo), Aug, 51 Swenson, Shirley S. and Robert

Bjorklund Saving Chris, Oct, 46

Swingin' Choir, A, Janet Thomas, Jun, 26

Taking Both Roads, Brianne Broome, Nov, 11 **TALENTS** Lesson on Talents, A, Jean Luker Wirthlin, Jun, 48 Ouestions and Answers (How can I gain confidence), Apr, 16 Tanjani, Tafadzwa Hope of a Missionary, The, Jul, 34 Taylor, Rebecca M. Wearing Millicent, Jul, 44 Teaching My Teacher, Prince Ihenkoro, Feb, 24 **TEACHING** Elders in My English Class,

Anette Malzl Knapp, Sep, 9 Helping Home Evening Succeed, Adam C. Olson, Sep, Know What We Believe, Spencer W. Kimball, Jun, 10 Teaching My Teacher, Prince Ihenkoro, Feb, 24 Tears for Ashley, Katie Laird, Feb, 34 Tears for the Prophet, SalliJune Anderson Allred, May, 42 Teichert, Minerva K. Christ with Children (art), Dec, Temple Blessings Now and Later Oct, 15 TEMPLE MARRIAGE In a Holy Place, Lance B. Wickman, Apr, 42 TEMPLE WORK 599 Baptisms, Wilson Arley Ocampo, Aug, 10 My Great-Great Temple Trip, Rachelle Simonsen, Jan, 47 Temple Blessings Now and Later, Oct, 15 We Love to See the Temple, Adam C. Olson, Mar, 30 **TEMPLES** Build on the Basics, H. Aldridge Gillespie, Sep. 36 Center Stage in New York, Nicole Oakeson, Apr, 24 TEMPTATION Chicken Bones, April Anderson, Aug, 19 Code to Live By, A, Thomas S. Monson, Sep, 4 Don't Be Fooled (poster), Feb, Four Heavenly Helps, Charles W. Dahlquist II, Aug, 44 Girl in the Mirror, The, Aug, 12 Questions and Answers (pornography), Aug, 16 Teshima, Lurana Kuuipo Like Laman No More, Apr, 48 TESTIMONY 2005 Mutual Theme, Jan, 11 Cumorah Connection, The, R. Val Johnson, May, 8

I Knew It Was True! Laurel C. Hulme, Dec, 43 Learning from Joseph Smith, Living Proof, Andrea Cartwright, Nov, 32 One and Only, The, Ryan Carr, Jan, 42 Power of My Testimony, The, Adriana C. De Lima, Oct, 48 Proof Is in the Doing, The, Kenneth Johnson, Mar, 42 Staving Converted, Vaclava Svobodova, Oct, 35 Teaching My Teacher, Prince Ihenkoro, Feb. 24 Treasures of Testimony, L. Tom Perry, May, 44 What Was I Missing? Donald McClellan, Mar, 15 Where Was My Answer? Daniel Lowell Brown, Dec. 9 You're a Mormon? Ana Lee Graniela López, Oct, 42 Your Right to Choose the Right, Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Aug, 4 They All Came through in Glory (poem), Vaughn J. Featherstone, Jul, 51 This Recruit Does Not Swear, Sir! Brian D. Stenquist, Oct, 12 Thomas, Janet Nauvoo: On the Banks of the Mississippi, May, 36 Place to Be, The, Aug, 30 Swingin' Choir, A, Jun, 26 Ward of Wisdom, Mar, 12 What Did Joseph Smith Really Look Like? Dec, 28 Thorpe, Don O. Palmyra (photo), Nov, 51 **THOUGHTS** Mental Floss (poster), Oct, 19 To the Point, Nov, 36 Time for Eternal Things, Adam C. Olson, Aug, 36 Times of the Prophets, The, Jan, 28 Malachi 3:10-11, Sep, 25 Proof Is in the Doing, The, Kenneth Johnson, Mar, 42 Ten Percent Plus All Your Heart (poster), Dec, 19 Tommy, Percival Typhoons and Trials, Jul, 48 Torres, Isaí Límon Deciding on a Mission, Jun, 7 Treasure, Janice Example to the World, An, May, Treasures of Testimony, L. Tom Perry, May, 44 True Strength, Shanna Butler, Feb, 20 Tuitupou, Steven

Missing Andy, Feb, 28

Christmas, The, Dec, 39

Twelve Reading Days of

Two Dawns (poem), Nad Richard Brown, Nov, 51 Typhoons and Trials, Percival Tommy, Jul, 48 Uchtdorf, Dieter F. Your Right to Choose the Right, Aug, 4 Valiant in Venezuela, Marvin K. Gardner, Jan, 20 VanDenBerghe, Paul Kirtland: School of the Prophets, May, 20 VIDEO GAMES Game Over, Stephen F. Powell, Aug, 26 Vincent, Stephen Words of Warning, Jan, 48 Wake Up to Seminary, Jun, 39 Wake Up! Diana Grainge, Jun, 47 Walker, Laurie Ram Phantom, The, Nov, 44 Walking with Kasha, Ginger M. Churchill, Oct, 26 Wallin, Amanda All-Star Dad, Jul, 46 Ward of Wisdom, Janet Thomas, Mar, 12 Watching over the Church, Caroline H. Benzley, Feb, 30 Waters, Keith R. Get Me Out of This! Jun, 8 Watt, Merry Smith Any Good? Oct, 48 We Love to See the Temple, Adam C. Olson, Mar, 30 We Stick Together, Don Searle, Mar, 20 Wearing Millicent, Rebecca M. Taylor, Jul, 44 Webb, Carl Something Better to Do, Nov, 14 Webb, Kimberly Rejoice (poem), May, 51 Soaring above Trials, Jul, 47 Wenner, Mieka Sometimes (poem), Oct, 51 What a Feeling! Chris Beatty, Apr, 47 What But the Promised Savior? (poem), Anna M. Bunker, Dec, What Did Joseph Smith Really Look Like? Janet Thomas, Dec, 28 What Had to Happen, Mar, 8 What Happened to Christ's Church? Feb, 8 What Was I Missing? Donald McClellan, Mar, 15

What's in a Name? Rachel C.

Where Was My Answer? Daniel

Why I Believe, Sandy Lancaster, Apr,

Lowell Brown, Dec, 9

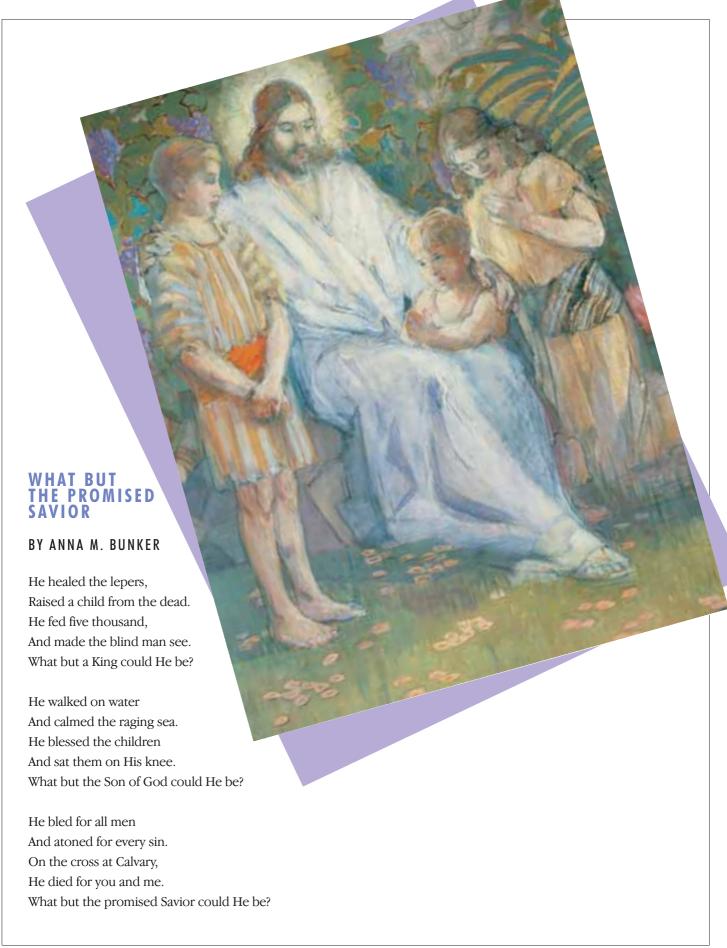
Murdock, Jun, 24

Why We Ask People to Read the Book of Mormon, Jay E. Jensen, Aug, 40 Wickman, Lance B. In a Holy Place, Apr, 42 Willis, Megan Service with a Wink, Jan, 26 Wirthlin, Jean Luker Lesson on Talents, A, Jun, 48 Wirthlin, Joseph B. It Starts in the Heart, Feb, 4 Wood for the Widows, George Brewer, Dec. 36 Wood, Robert S. Called of God, Nov, 28 Words of Warning, Stephen Vincent, Jan, 48 Workman, Debra J. Believing Is Seeing, Mar, 24 WORTHINESS Me? Give a Blessing? Brad Larsen, Jan, 40 We Love to See the Temple, Adam C. Olson, Mar, 30 Would I Know My Savior? (song), Sally DeFord, Dec, 10 Wright, Matthew On Trails Unknown (poem), Jun, Wrong Roads and Revelation, Matthew Holland, Jul, 26 You Have a Birthright, R. Val Johnson, Nov, 8 You're a Mormon? Ana Lee Graniela López, Oct, 42 You'll Be Tested and Taught,

Christoffel Golden Jr., Feb, 42 Young Pioneers in Malaysia, Henry and Jeneal Call, Jul, 20 YOUNG WOMEN Get to Know Your Sisters, Janelle Brown, Nov, 38 Progressing Together, Nov, 12 Rescued at Camp, María Espinoza Alveal, Jul, 24 Room for Love, Kelly Anne Sansom, Nov, 46 Your Patriarchal Blessing, James E. Faust, Nov, 4 Your Right to Choose the Right, Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Aug, 4 Youth at Work in Fiji, Adam C.

Zinser, Evan Temple (photo), Sep, 51 Waterfall (photo), Feb, 51 Zipping My Lip, Krissie Bak, Feb, 46

Olson, Apr, 20





"No matter how many times his image is painted or sculpted, the emotional power of this foremost leader of this dispensation is elusive."

See "What Did Joseph Smith Really Look Like?" p. 28.