

T H E

New Era

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**YOU CAN
COUNT ON
THIS GUY,
P. 20**

**NEED A
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Cover: Maurice Navarro
of Miami, Florida, knows
that service freely given
really pays off. See
"Count on Maurice"
on p. 20.

Cover photography:
Laury Livsey (front),
John Luke (back)

This guy
knows that
when you
multiply service, the
dividends add up.
See "Count on
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Reach Out

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

It is not an easy thing to become a member of this Church. In most cases it involves setting aside old habits, leaving old friends and associations, and stepping into a new society which is different and somewhat demanding.

With the ever-increasing number of converts, we must make an increasingly substantial effort to assist them as they find their way. Every one of them needs three things: a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with “the good word of God” (Moroni 6:4). It is our duty and opportunity to provide these things (from *Ensign*, May 1997, 47).

Three ways to help

I am hopeful that a great effort will go forward throughout the Church, throughout the world, to retain every convert who comes into the Church.

The challenge now is greater than it has ever been because the number of converts is greater than we have ever before known.

A friend

I plead with you; . . . I ask of you, each of you, to become a part of this great effort. Every convert is precious. Every convert is a son or daughter of God. Every convert is a great and serious responsibility.

[Converts] come into the Church with enthusiasm for what they have found. We must immediately build on that enthusiasm. . . . Listen to them, guide them, answer their questions, and be there to help in all circumstances and in all conditions. . . . I invite every member to reach out in



It is our duty and opportunity to reach out to new members of the Church. Every convert is precious.

friendship and love for those who come into the Church as converts.

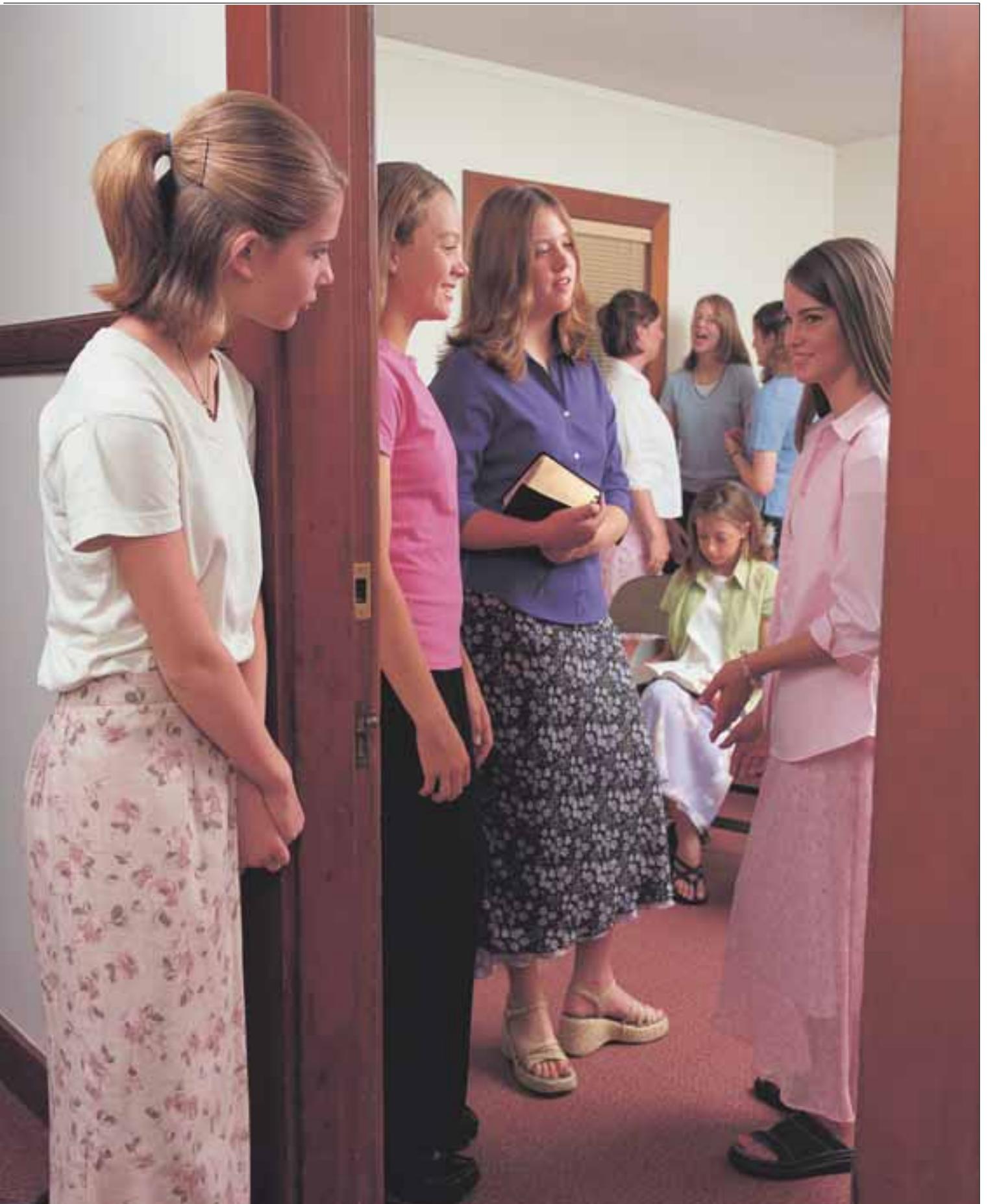
A responsibility

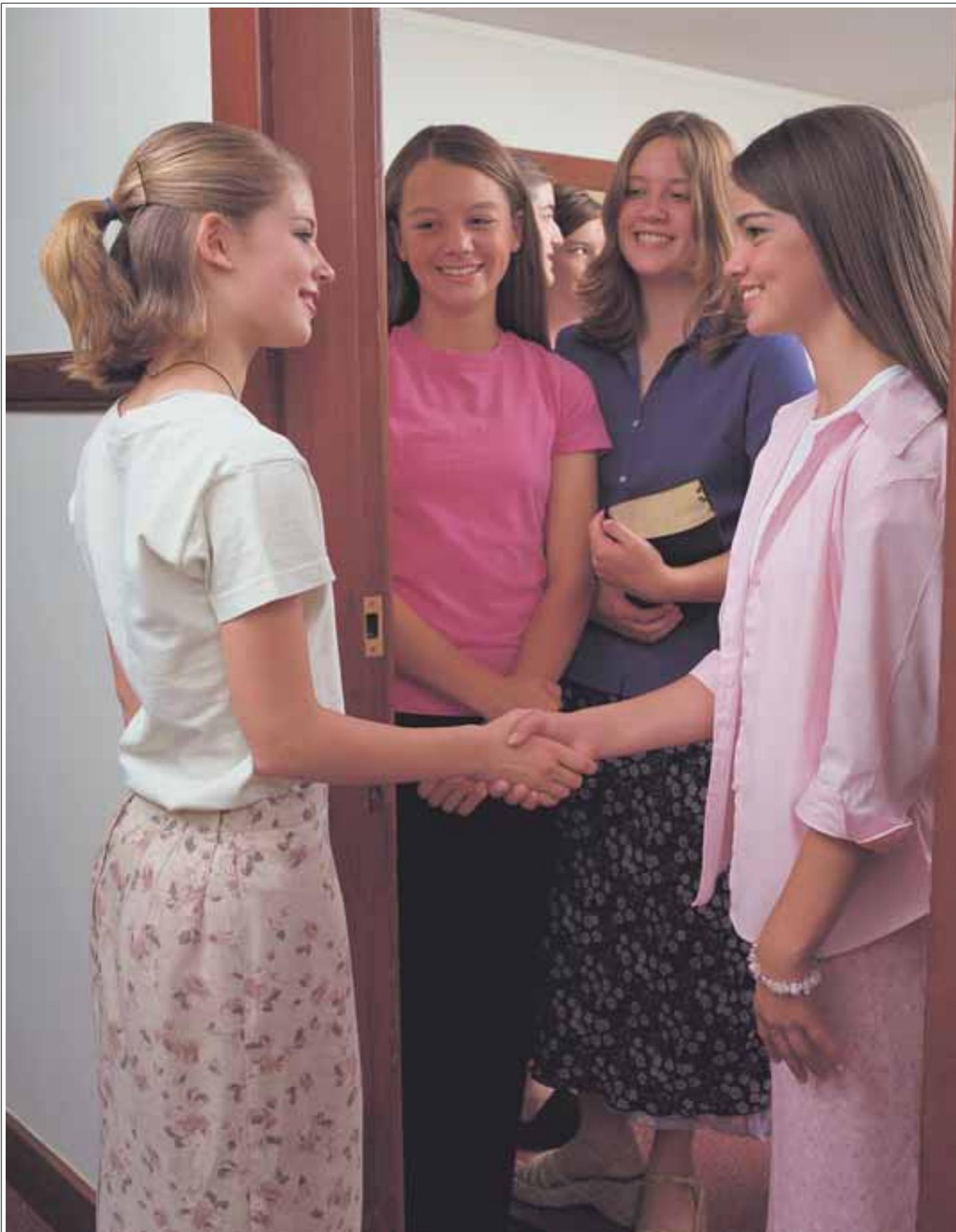
Every convert who comes into this Church should have an immediate responsibility. It may be ever so small, but it will spell the difference in his life. . . . I cannot understand why converts aren’t given more responsibility immediately when they come into the Church. The tendency is to say, “They don’t know enough.” Well, take a chance on them. Think of what a chance the Lord has taken on you. Give them something to do, be it ever so small, something that’s specific and by which they will grow.

Nurturing with “the good word of God”

Moroni [writes] concerning [new members]: “And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith” (Moroni 6:4).

In these days as in those days, converts are “numbered among the people of the church . . . [to] be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, . . .” Let us help them as they take their first steps as members.





This is a work for everyone. It is a work for home teachers and visiting teachers. It is a work for the bishopric, for the priesthood quorums, for the Relief Society, the Young Men and Young Women, even the Primary.

I was in a fast and testimony meeting only last Sunday. A 15- or 16-year-old boy stood before the congregation and said that he had decided to be baptized.

Then one by one boys of the teachers quorum stepped to the microphone to express their love for him, to tell him that he was doing the right thing, and to assure him that they would stand with him and help him. It was a wonderful experience to hear those young men speak words of appreciation and encouragement to their friend. I am satisfied that all of those boys, including the one who was baptized last week, will go on missions.

Finding the one lost

In a recent press interview I was asked, “What brings you the greatest satisfaction as you see the work of the Church today?”

My response: “The most satisfying experience I have is to see what this gospel does for people. It gives them a new outlook on life. It gives them a perspective that they have never felt before. It raises their sights to things noble and divine. Something happens to them that is miraculous to behold. They look to Christ and come alive.”

Now, . . . I ask each of you to please help in this undertaking. Your friendly ways are needed. Your sense of responsibility is needed. The Savior of all mankind left the ninety and nine to find the one lost. That one who was lost need not have become lost. But if he is out there somewhere in the shadows, and if it means leaving the ninety and nine, we must do so to find him (see Luke 15:3–7) (from *Liahona*, Feb. 1999, 8–12).

Serious business

With the increase of missionary work throughout the world, there must be a comparable increase in the effort to make every convert feel at home in his or her ward or branch. Enough people will come into the Church this

Let us reach out to new converts. Let us befriend them. Let us be kind to them. Let us encourage them. The Lord will bless you as you aid in this process.

year to constitute more than 100 new average-size stakes. Unfortunately, with this acceleration in conversions, we are neglecting some of these new members. I am hopeful that a great effort will go forward throughout the Church, throughout the world, to retain every convert who comes into the Church.

This is serious business. There is no point in doing missionary work unless we hold on to the fruits of that effort. The two must be inseparable (from *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 50).

Friendly hands, welcome hearts

Having found and baptized a new convert, we have the challenge of fellowshipping him and strengthening his testimony of the truth of this work. We cannot have him walking in the front door and out the back. Joining the Church is a very serious thing. Each convert takes upon himself or herself the name of Christ with an implied promise to keep His commandments. But coming into the Church can be a perilous experience. Unless there are warm and strong hands to greet the convert, unless there is an outreach of love and concern, he will begin to wonder about the step he has taken. Unless there are friendly hands and welcome hearts to greet him and lead him along the way, he may drop by the side (from *Ensign*, May 1999, 108).

Face up to it!

Every convert who comes into this Church needs work to do. Time and effort offer people growth. Every convert in this Church needs someone to answer his or her questions. . . . Face up to it! Let us reach out to these people! Let us befriend them! Let us be kind to them! Let us encourage them! Let us add to their faith and their knowledge of this, the work of the Lord (from *Ensign*, July 1999, 73).

I plead with you people that you will put your arms around those who come into the Church and be friends to them and make them feel welcome and comfort them and we will see wonderful results. The Lord will bless you to aid in this great process of retention of converts (from *Church News*, 14 Aug. 1999, 7). **NE**



GOING DUTCH

BY DEANN CAMPBELL

We came from different backgrounds and religions, but her kindness reminded me of all we had in common.

After surveying the many travelers in the closest coach section of the train and finding no empty seats, I decided to sit in the quiet solace of the luggage car. The solitude would give me a chance to reflect and prepare for my new assignment as a missionary in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Since leaving Sint-Niklaas, Belgium, I'd made several train transfers with armloads of luggage, and I was relieved this train would be taking me all the way to my destination. With a little more than four months left as a missionary, I anticipated this would be my last transfer.



My stomach growled as the train thudded along. I had left Belgium early and without breakfast. There were vendors on the train platforms selling snacks, but after crossing the border, I realized I had forgotten to change my money and carried only Belgian francs.

Lost in thought, I hardly noticed as the train lurched to a stop between stations until the luggage car door screeched open. I looked up to see a Muslim woman enter, followed by her three young children. Her scarf covered her hair, and her black dress reached the ground, covering everything but her hands. She found the orange vinyl seat

closest to me, flipped it down, and sat. Her children followed her lead and sat facing me. My secret hope that they would leave me to my pondering vanished. They were here to stay, so I smiled politely.

“Are you going to Amsterdam?” she asked.

I told her I was and learned they were going there as well to see her sister. Neither of us had been to Amsterdam before, and we were both curious about what we might find there.

Then she read my name tag aloud slowly: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

“Yes, I have heard of Him,” she told me,

Each of us wore indications of our faith— she, a scarf and a long black dress; I, a black name tag. But when she shared her food, I saw beyond the outward differences.



referring to Christ, “but we worship Allah and follow the teachings of Muhammad.”

“Yes, I know,” I answered, nodding. “I mean, I can tell.”

She smiled knowingly, turned to her children and then back to me. “Are you hungry?”

“No, I’m fine,” I answered as my stomach growled. She gave me a disappointed look, and I saw the faces of her children fall.

“My children are hungry,” she replied as she pulled bread, cheese, and juice from her bag. “And it is rude in our culture to eat without sharing with others,” she explained. “So you must eat with us. Otherwise, we do not eat. If you do not eat, we do not eat. And my children are hungry.”

The children looked at me with pleading eyes.

Then their mother laughed and added, “Why do you think we sit in here? We cannot share with so many,” she nodded toward the crowded coach section, “but with one, it is easy to share.”

I laughed too, her point well taken. I spent the rest

of the train ride accepting gifts of chewy chunks of Turkish bread and red, wax-covered pieces of Gouda cheese from her children. We sipped apple juice from cardboard cartons with Arabic writing and spoke both English and Dutch as we conversed. The children wanted to know if I wanted more bread, more juice, more cheese, more crackers, or more cookies.

When we parted on the platform we felt like old friends, wishing each other luck and hoping we would see each other again. We waved good-bye, and they disappeared into the crowd. As I watched them go, I was reminded of Matthew 25:35: “For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in.”

I felt enriched because of our brief encounter. Our differences of religion, culture, and race were overshadowed at the moment by our common destination, a common meal, and her common courtesy. **NE**

DeAnn Campbell is a member of the Ririe Third Ward, Ririe Idabo Stake.

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

I had left the path to happiness and felt totally lost. When I turned to the Lord, His love lit the way home.

BY TIMOTHY COBBLEY

There was a time when the gospel wasn't a part of my life. I walked down many other paths only to find dead ends. I didn't realize it at the time, but I was trying to find truth. Earlier, I had peace and happiness that just wasn't there anymore. I longed for hope again.

I went around like this for five years. My family, which once was close, became as distant as we've ever been. I lost some of my best friends from the Church, and I knew I needed to change. But I was scared—unbelievably scared. I tried many things, from counseling and week-long seminars to moving away and trying to start over. But nothing worked. My search for the peace I'd lost seemed hopeless.

I remembered both praying with my family when I was younger and having personal prayers. I remembered the closeness I had with my

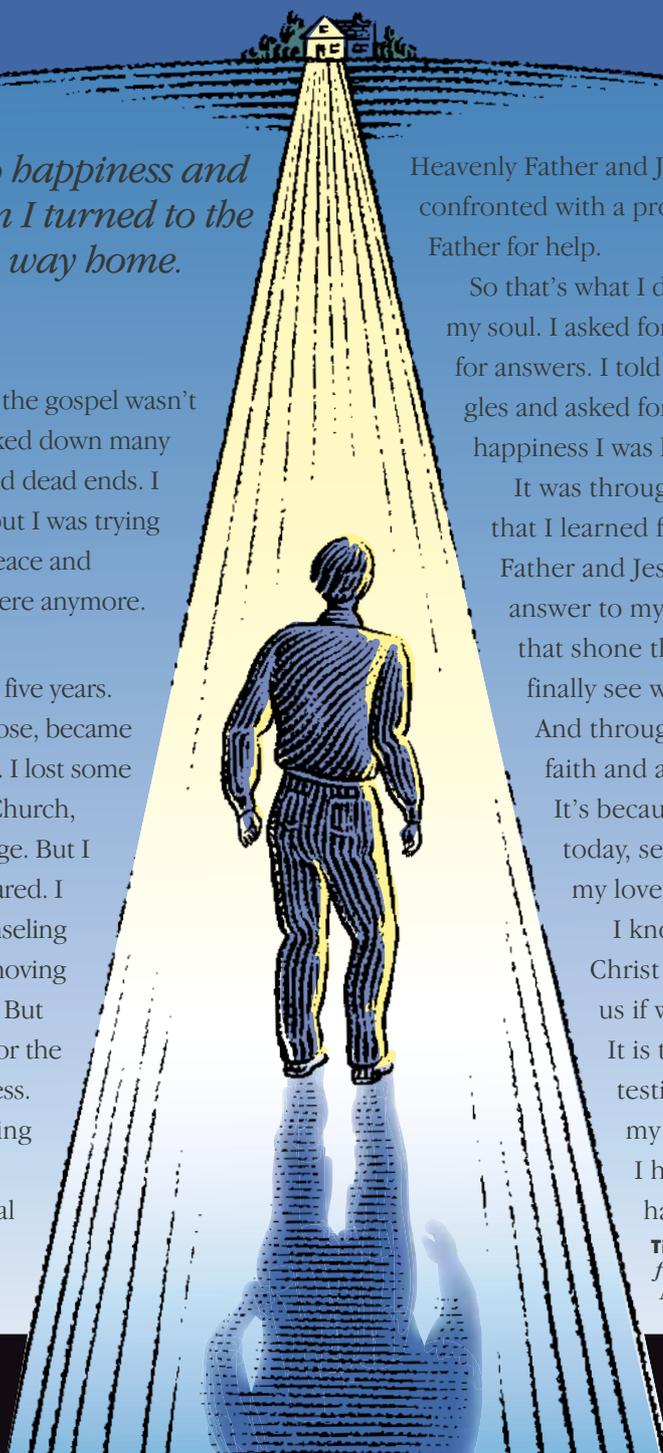
Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Whenever I was confronted with a problem, I turned to Heavenly Father for help.

So that's what I did again. I knelt and poured out my soul. I asked for help to guide me and pleaded for answers. I told the Lord of my trials and struggles and asked for help in finding the peace and happiness I was longing for.

It was through this and many other prayers that I learned for myself the love our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have for me. The answer to my prayer was like a beam of light that shone through my darkness. I could finally see what I was searching for—hope. And through that hope came increased faith and a greater love for the gospel. It's because of this that I am where I am today, serving a mission and spreading my love of the gospel to others.

I know Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are ready and willing to help us if we are ready and willing to ask. It is through this that I've gained my testimony, and it's through this that my testimony continues to grow. I have found my peace and happiness. **NE**

Timothy Cobbley is currently serving full time in the California Long Beach Mission.





DO YOU NEED A MIRACLE?

You may believe in miracles—like those the scriptures tell about—but do you believe the Lord can work miracles in your own life? He can and will if you do your part.

BY ELDER LARRY W. GIBBONS

Area Authority Seventy
North America Southwest Area



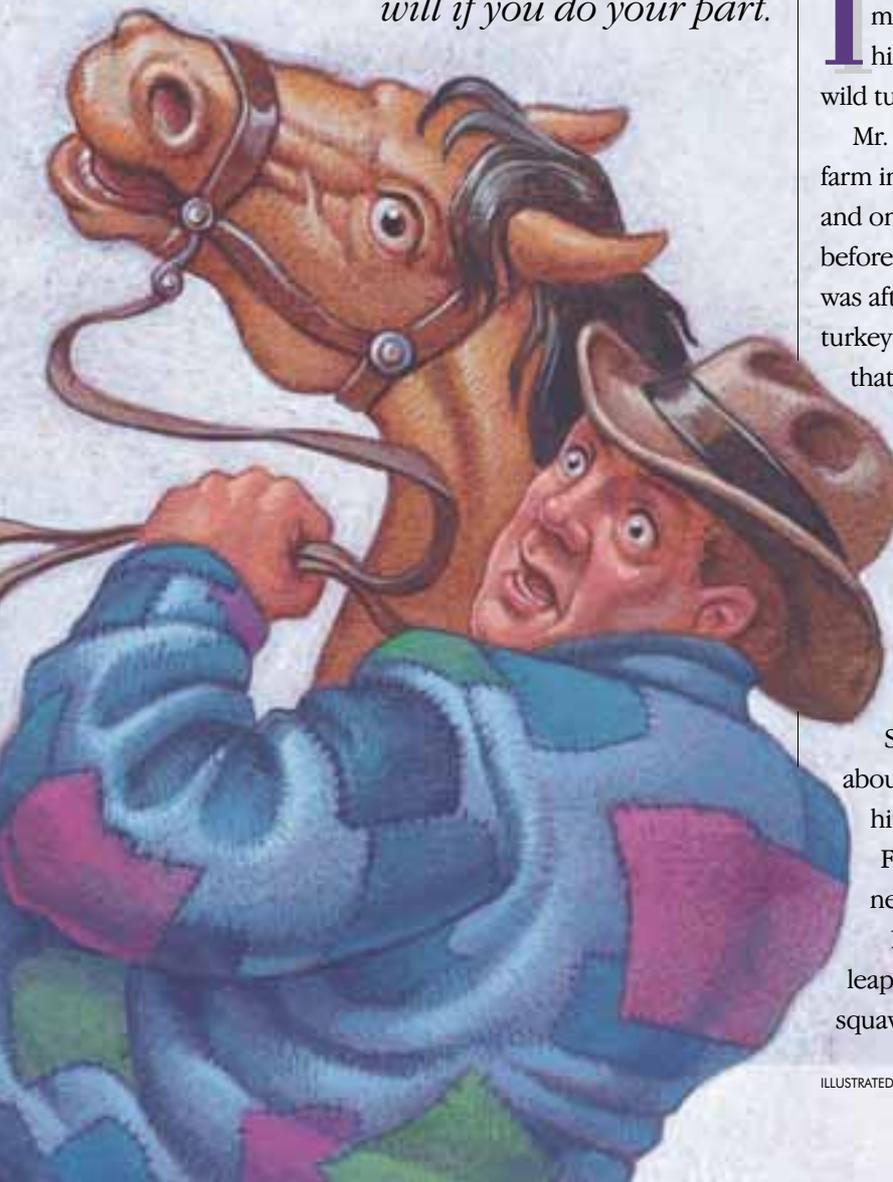
I once read a story about a man named Mr. Bogar and his experience with a giant wild turkey in 1925.

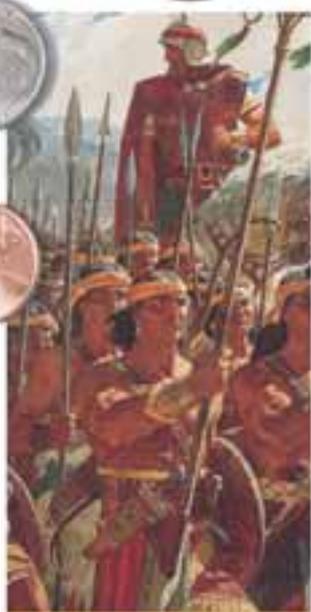
Mr. Bogar lived on a small farm in the Missouri foothills, and one year he decided to go turkey hunting on the day before Christmas. Now, it wasn't any ordinary turkey he was after. He went looking for Foots, a legendary wild turkey who left enormous tracks and who was so wary that no one had ever gotten close enough to shoot him.

Setting out on the hunt, Mr. Bogar hadn't gone far when he spotted gigantic turkey tracks in the freshly fallen snow. Only Foots could have left tracks that large, and Mr. Bogar began to follow them, higher and higher into the hills. There was no sign of Foots himself until Mr. Bogar was high up on a mountainside. Then he caught a glimpse of the giant bird.

Slowly, carefully, Mr. Bogar stalked Foots until he was about 60 yards away. At that range, this marksman could hit anything with his single-shot .22 rifle. He fired, and Foots dropped and lay still. There was Christmas dinner, just waiting to be carried home.

But, as Mr. Bogar approached the bird, it suddenly leaped up. The air was full of feathers and wings and squawks, and Foots soared out over the valley below.





Mr. Bogar never saw the big turkey again.

Out of the blue

The next summer, Mr. Bogar happened to be talking to a man who lived down in the valley and who was trying to raise a large family on a struggling farm with a few scrawny cattle. It was not an easy life, and the family didn't have much. The man wore a coat with so many patches you couldn't tell the original color.

"Do believe in miracles?" the man asked Mr. Bogar.

He then went on to tell Mr. Bogar about what happened the previous Christmas. Money was scarce, and it looked like Christmas dinner would consist of hominy corn and huckleberries. But as the man rode his old mare down to feed the cattle, a huge turkey crashed dead right in front of him. The man said he hadn't been praying for a turkey, but maybe his wife had.

Mr. Bogar never told the man about Foots, and the man never knew why a giant turkey had fallen out of the sky right at his feet.

Do you believe in miracles?

Of course you do. You are familiar with this scripture: "And if there were miracles wrought then, why has God ceased to be a God of miracles and yet be an unchangeable Being? And behold, I say unto you he changeth not; if so he would cease to be God; and he ceaseth not to be God, and is a God of miracles" (Mormon 9:19).

But do you believe in miracles *in your own life*? You should. There is no reason not to believe.

Modern miracles

Here are some of the miracles I have seen in the lives of members of the Church in the past few years:

- A young man who had been involved in serious transgression asked if it would be all right for him to read the scriptures just to feel the Spirit, even if he did not understand all the doctrine.
- A family torn apart by bitterness and contempt was healed by the power of love and repentance.
- A young man who was raised in the Church, but who had never had a testimony of the gospel, offered his first verbal prayer in many years and brought tears to the eyes of those around him.

These are real miracles

Do you have some challenges in your life that seem overwhelming at times? Would a miracle help? How can a miracle come about?

"For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them; wherefore, he showed not himself until after their faith" (Ether 12:12).

We must have faith to have miracles, specifically faith in Jesus Christ. "And neither at any time hath any wrought miracles until after their faith; wherefore they *first believed in the Son of God*" (Ether 12:18, emphasis added).

Gaining confidence

Trust in God is vital, as is confidence that He will do what He says He will do. For example, we pay tithing with faith. He says that He will open the windows of heaven (see Malachi 3:10), and we have confidence that He will.

have courage!
Have faith!
Remember
the sons of Helaman.
They had been taught
that if they did not
doubt, God would
deliver them.
What God says He
will do, He will do.
For example, if we
pay tithing with faith,
He will open the
windows of heaven.



Next, faith implies enough confidence to act on your belief and to conform your life to truth. I know a family who paid their last \$14 in tithing, fully confident the Lord would sustain them.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) taught that faith requires assurance that God will hear our prayers and answer them. No person can have this assurance when he knows he is not living in the way the Lord wants him to live. This is another key element in bringing about miracles. Faith requires repentance. Miracles require faith. So miracles require repentance. Therefore, faith and repentance (which result in righteous living) are the means by which miracles come into our lives.

Are there miracles you desire in your life?

Do you hope and pray you can overcome a habit that has a strong hold on your behavior? Live as you should, work hard at the things you know will help, leave it in the Lord's hands, have faith, and expect a miracle.

Do you have financial burdens? Live as you should, repent if need be, have faith to pay tithing and fast offerings, work hard, and expect a miracle.

The Lord's timetable

Now remember, the Lord's timetable may be different from yours. As Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles says, "When we seek inspiration to



help make decisions, the Lord gives gentle promptings. These require us to think, to exercise faith, to work, to struggle at times, and to act. Seldom does the whole answer to a decisively important matter or complex problem come all at once. More often it comes a piece at a time without the end in sight" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 32).

We don't know how long Alma prayed in faith before an angel visited his son and his son's friends (see Mosiah 27).

Having faith means doing our best to bring about a miracle, but it also requires having the patience to realize the Lord understands His eternal timetable better than we do.

Do you believe in

miracles in your own life? I hope you do.

You have some difficult battles to fight. It is easy to let fear overtake us. Have courage! Have faith! Remember the sons of Helaman. "Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death; . . . yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them" (Alma 56:47).

Have faith! Repent of those things that you need to change in your life. Do not fear. Work hard. Expect a miracle!

Remember the greatest miracle of all time. The Son of Man rose from the grave. He overcame death and hell! He lives. I know that He lives. Because of this, the greatest of miracles, we have no reason to fear, and we have every reason to have faith. **NE**

Q & A

“I’ve been through the repentance process, but how do I know if I’ve really been forgiven?”

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

NEW ERA

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) was in his office with President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988) when a young man asked them this same question. “I have made some mistakes in the past, and I have gone to my bishop and my stake president, and I have made a clean disclosure of it all; and after a period of repentance and assurance that I have not returned again to those mistakes, they have now adjudged me ready to go to the temple. But, brethren, that is not enough. I want to know, and how can I know, that the Lord has forgiven me, also.”

“What would you answer one who would come to you asking that question?” asked President Lee. “As we pondered for a moment, we remembered King Benjamin’s address contained in the book of Mosiah. Here was a group of people who now were asking for baptism, and they said they viewed themselves in their carnal state:

“ . . . And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive

Through the Atonement of Christ we can be forgiven of our sins if we are willing to go through the repentance process.

The Holy Ghost will help us feel that we are forgiven.

Just as the repentance process requires effort on your part, seeking the confirmation of the Spirit also takes effort.

True repentance will leave you with a feeling of hope and peace.

READERS



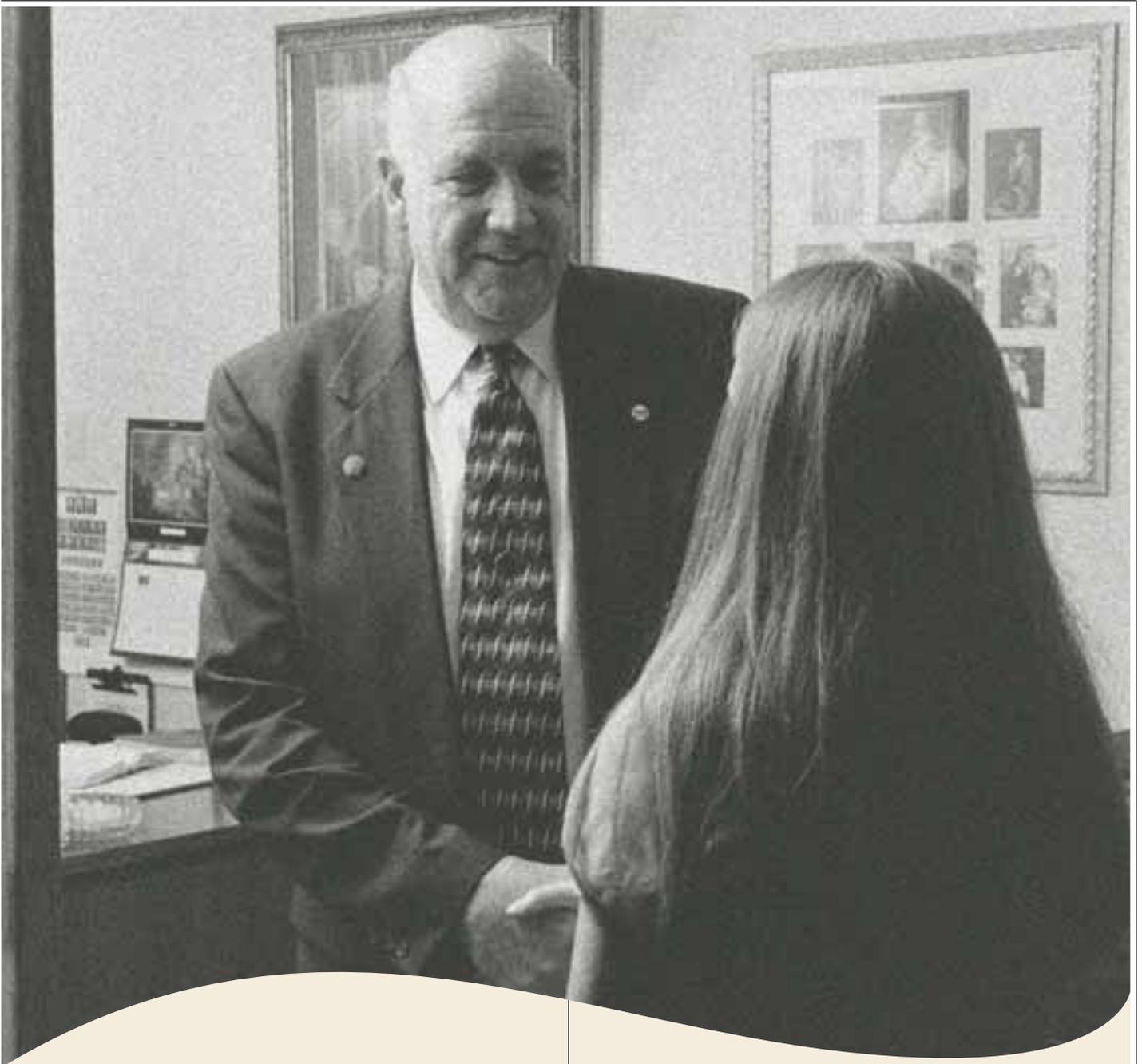
Knowing that you’ve been forgiven after going through the repentance process is more of a feeling than a direct answer. Forgiveness is between you and the Lord. When He feels you have finished your repentance, He will let you know somehow that you have been forgiven.

Andrew Reese, 17
Owasso, Oklahoma



If you don’t feel confident about whether you’re forgiven, you might have a little more to do. To truly repent of a sin you must first realize what you did wrong, and you must truly be sorry for doing it. Your Heavenly Father loves you even when you make mistakes. If He has forgiven you, He will give you a feeling of peace and a surety that you no longer have to feel that burden.

Katrina Voigt, 13
Fountain, Minnesota



A way to know if you have been truly forgiven is by how you feel when you get up from saying your prayer. You will feel happy and will love life. You will have a peaceful feeling and know everything is

going to be all right.

Matt L. Young, 17
Springville, Utah

If you have doubts about whether or not you've been forgiven, then you probably need to start over. Just

remember, sometimes it takes a while to get a response, but always know that Heavenly Father hears you and loves you.

Sara Crook, 18
Watkins, Colorado



I think that after you repent you will feel warm, safe, and relaxed. If you don't feel forgiven, then I would pray again.

Heather Lewis, 11
Orem, Utah

NEW ERA

forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified;

“ . . . after they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience. . . .” (Mosiah 4:2–3).

“There was the answer” (*Ensign*, July 1973, 122).

Through the Atonement of Christ we can be forgiven of our sins if we are willing to go through the repentance process. Through the Spirit we can feel that we are forgiven; we can feel that “peace of conscience” King Benjamin talked about.

President Lee said, “If the time comes when you have done all that you can to repent of your sins, whoever you are, wherever you are, and have made amends and restitution to the best of your ability; if it be something that will affect your standing in the Church and you have gone to the proper authorities, then you will want that confirming answer as to whether or not the Lord has accepted of you. In your soul-searching, if you seek for and you find that peace of conscience, by that token you may know that the Lord has accepted of your repentance. Satan would have you think otherwise and sometimes persuade you that now having made one mistake, you might go on and on with no turning back. That is one of the great falsehoods” (*Ensign*, July 1973, 122).

Once you have repented and felt the confirmation of the Holy Ghost, the Lord gives a wonderful promise: “Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more. By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:42–43). **NE**



The infinite Atonement is so vast and universal, but finally, it is so very personal! Mercifully, through the Atonement we can be forgiven and, very importantly, we can know that we have been forgiven—that final, joyous emancipation from error” (*Ensign*, May 2001, 61).

—Elder Neal A. Maxwell
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

READERS



It's sometimes tough to know that you are forgiven, but if you have faith that you will be, it will come. It may not come for a while, but when it does, you will feel the overwhelming love that our Savior has for us. It will be confirmed upon you that you are truly forgiven.

Jonathan Pardew, 18
Alpine, Utah



If you have done everything necessary to repent, pray to the Lord for assurance that you have been forgiven. The most important part, though, is to have faith in the Atonement. Christ made it so that we can be forgiven, but first we need to have faith that forgiveness is possible. Forget the transgression and move on with your life.

Charlotte Wood, 14
Lakewood, Colorado

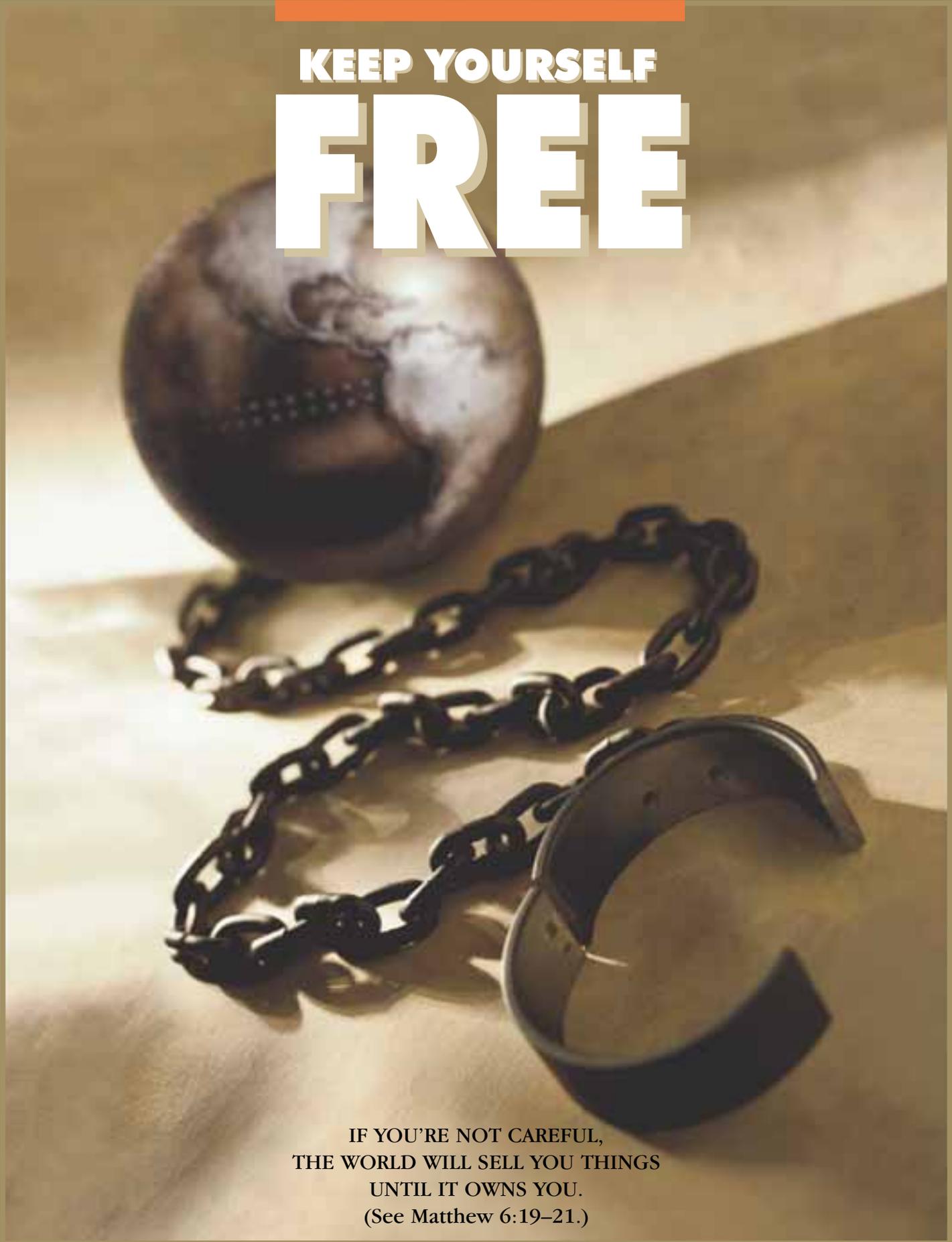
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send us your answer to the question below, along with your name, age, and where you are from. Please include a snapshot of yourself that is 1 1/2 by 2 inches (4 by 5 cm) or larger. Please respond by April 1, 2003.

**Q&A, New Era
50 East North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150**

QUESTION

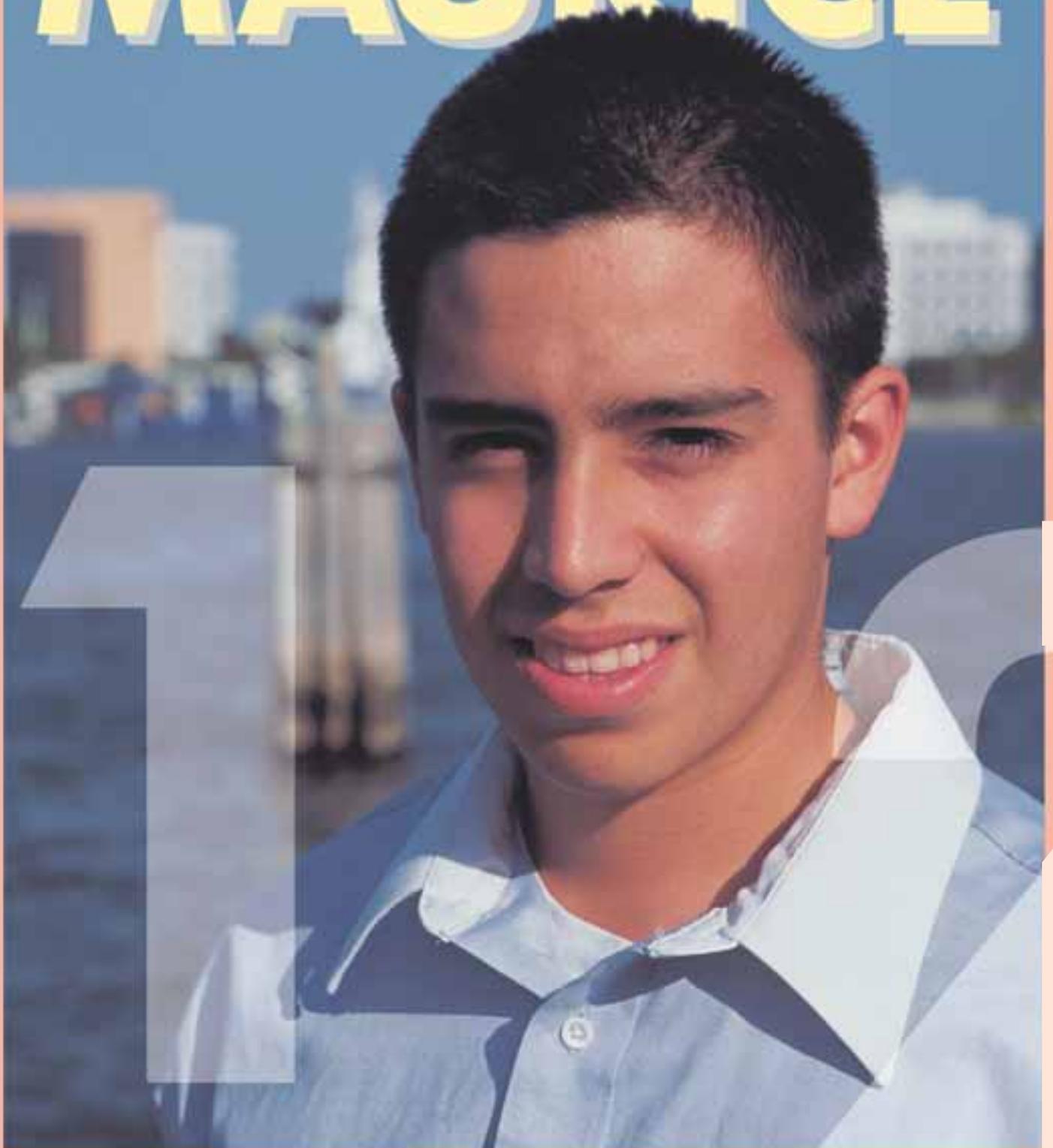
“My dad is always busy. With school, friends, and Church activities, I’m gone a lot too. What can I do to stay close to my dad and keep a good relationship when we hardly see each other?”

A photograph of a globe, a chain, and a broken belt buckle on a wooden surface. The globe is in the background, slightly out of focus. The chain is in the middle ground, and the broken belt buckle is in the foreground, broken into two pieces. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights.

KEEP YOURSELF **FREE**

IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL,
THE WORLD WILL SELL YOU THINGS
UNTIL IT OWNS YOU.
(See Matthew 6:19–21.)

COUNT ON MAURICE





BY LAURY LIVSEY

Associate Editor

The sophomore math whiz sat in the classroom after school waiting for the football star to come in for his weekly tutoring session. The guy who enjoys algebra, calculus, and trigonometry would spend an extra hour or so each week teaching polynomial expressions and practicing exponential equations with the football hero, whom many called the best high school running back in the country. Turning upfield for another 10-yard gain he could do. But algebra? Linear inequalities were something of a challenge. That's when the tutor came to the rescue.

When the school year ended, so did the tutoring sessions. The tutor had his junior year to look forward to while the tutor's "student" graduated and accepted an athletic scholarship to the University of Miami.

That's when the math whiz says, "Someday when he's a famous running back in the National Football League, I can tell my kids I taught him math."

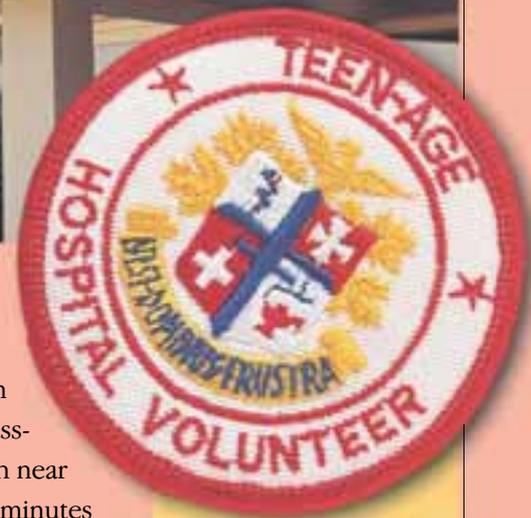
It's a year later, and once again Maurice Navarro is sitting in a classroom at Coral Gables Senior High near Miami, Florida. School ended 30 minutes ago, but, just like the year before, a group of students is gathered around Maurice as he teaches a math concept his fellow students aren't quite understanding.

That's Maurice Navarro. Still the math tutor. Still helping others.

A busy guy

"That comes from my mother," says Maurice. "She taught me that if I'm able to help others, it's important that I do. It's difficult for some of the kids to grasp some math things, so that's why I tutor. Since math does come pretty easily to me, I'm glad to help."

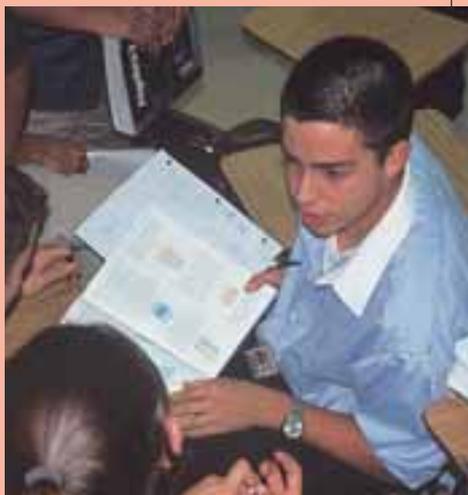
The same must go for his volunteer work at two area medical centers. Each Friday and Saturday, Maurice donates about nine hours doing numerous jobs at both hospitals.



Maurice Navarro is a busy guy. But not so busy that he can't find time to volunteer at two Miami-area hospitals.

“I work with patients, moving them in wheelchairs or in their beds through the hospital,” he says. “When I’m there, I get to see the smiles on the people’s faces when they see you’re doing something nice for them. I love meeting the patients, seeing their faces, and seeing their reactions.”

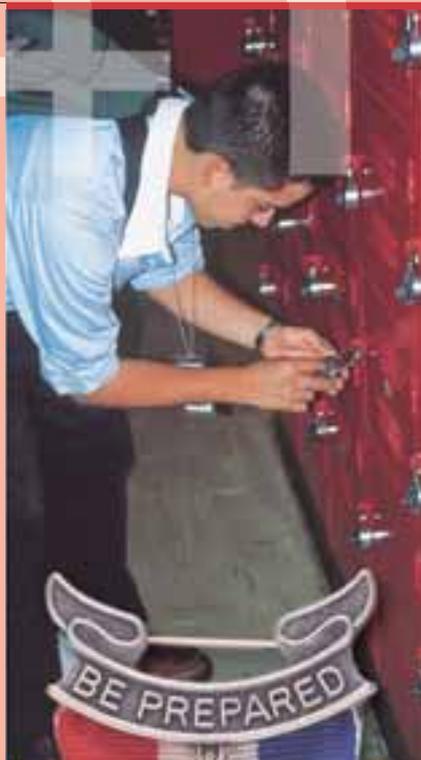
“It’s that way with tutoring,” he continues. “When I hear somebody say, ‘I got it!’ about a concept I’m teaching, I feel I’ve done my job. And it’s the same in the hospital with the patients, only with smiles.”



An example

In the Fountainebleau Ward, in the Miami Florida Stake, Maurice is the first assistant to the bishop in the priests quorum. Not long ago, he was a young deacon looking up to the priests who were preparing to leave on missions. Now it’s Maurice’s turn to lead. “Since I’m the oldest one in Young Men, I hope the deacons and teachers look at me as an example in the same way I looked to the older boys when I was that age,” he says.

Tangible evidence of Maurice’s



For his Eagle Scout project, Maurice

invited parents to attend an open house where they could fingerprint their children. Once or twice a week, he also tutors fellow students on the finer points of math.

example to other Aaronic Priesthood holders in his ward came in the way of service for his Eagle Scout project he completed last year. Maurice organized a child identification day where he invited people in his community to bring their children to the ward on a Saturday so the children could be fingerprinted and videotaped. After police gave a presentation on ways to protect children, the parents in attendance took the fingerprint cards and the videotapes home. Now, if ID information is ever needed,



it will be at the parents’ fingertips.

Maurice spent numerous hours coordinating this project that attracted close to 100 children. As a bonus, he also asked people who came to bring one or two cans of food that he could then donate to a food bank. He eventually filled three big boxes with canned goods.

“What I enjoyed about that project is that it was different,” Maurice says. “I really wanted to make a difference. I hope people never have to use their video or the fingerprint cards. I don’t

want it ever to come to that point. But they are a good safety net.”

Anxiously engaged

Maurice is 18 years old and will turn 19 in November. He will graduate from high school in four months, then he'll get his chance to perform some serious, long-term service.

He's received plenty of peculiar looks from classmates as he talks about the Church's missionary program. When it comes to Church subjects—confusion over what missions are or questions about the Word of Wisdom—Maurice is the one who students turn to. At Coral Gables Senior High, Maurice is the school's only Latter-day Saint.

“People at school ask me about missions all the time, and I'm glad to explain. For many of them, it's hard to comprehend that I would want to do this. They're amazed when I tell them we go for two years and that nobody's making us go. I'm definitely going on a mission.



“My dad was baptized when he was in his 20s, so he never went on a mission,” he adds. “The only person in my family who has gone on a mission is my uncle. So I see a mission as me starting a tradition in our family.”

Lots of small parts

Throughout his life, Maurice has played a small part in the lives of a lot of

people. Coral Gables students who have been tutored by Maurice are passing math tests, and Maurice can feel that he contributed to their successes. Parents have recorded information about their children on file—just in case. They can thank Maurice for that. And there he is, wheeling a patient from one room to another at the hospital. No big deal? Perhaps. But it's another small thing Maurice finds time to do.

Maybe it won't be exactly how Maurice envisioned it after all.

One day in the future, the football star might just turn to his children and talk about a guy he knew in high school. “Kids,” he'll say,

“Maurice is the guy who taught me math.” **NE**



He LOVES YOU *More*

I didn't like how I was feeling about myself. Then I thought of how Heavenly Father felt about me.

BY RACHELLE PACE CASTOR

I wasn't really stupid. I averaged B's. But I was certainly feeling dumb, especially as I sat in math class wondering why I was even there. My mood got continually darker—until I remembered what Dad had said.

It was a morning like most. I couldn't find two socks that matched. The pitcher of orange juice was empty. There were only quarters and nickels in the family lunch-money can. Like most mornings I was running late and could hear the school bus roaring up the street before I was ready. I grabbed my backpack, forced on shoes still tied from the last wearing, and raced to the front door.

And, like most mornings, Dad was standing at the door with a look that said, "You missed family prayer again. How *do* you make it through your day?"

So before he could say out loud what his face was already shouting, I said, "Bye, Dad. I love you."

"I love you more," he teased.

Then, as I raced past him, he grabbed my

hand, stopping me for a split second. "And your Father in Heaven loves you even more. Think about Him today, will you, sweetheart?"

"Sure, Dad," I grinned and ran to the bus.

It wasn't that I was the stupidest person at my high school. I averaged B's. If every class had been dance or drama I would have been a straight-A student. But they weren't, and I wasn't. Drama was only 55 minutes a day, and dance came *after* school. Except for those brief moments when my spirit could soar free, I found myself in a sort of academic prison camp.

I felt my jaw clamping tighter and tighter. By sixth hour I wasn't just ugly about school—I was ugly about me. As my math teacher began to explain a story problem that had no business being in a book, I sank even deeper. That's when the voice in my head started repeating: "Why isn't this mak-



**followed my
dad's advice.
Right there in
algebra, I closed my
eyes and let my mind
rest on my Father in
Heaven.**

ing sense? Is it just me or is this a math class death march? How will I ever make it to graduation? I hate this class. I hate this teacher. I hate this school. I hate math. I hate my brain for not getting this. Why can't I get this? Why am I so dumb?"

There, I said it, the thing I hated most about school. It made me feel dumb—worthless. So I sat there wanting to cry, but knowing if I did, I'd feel even more dumb. If I could have stood and recited Shakespeare or shown them my running split-leap in the air, then they would have known the real me, how talented I really was.

My whole day—okay the whole rest of the school year—would have been totally lame but for the strangest thing happening. Out of nowhere, my father's words came rushing into my head.

"And your Father in Heaven loves you even more. Think about Him today, will you, sweetheart?"

Now I wasn't the most obedient 15-year-old, but I knew undoubtedly that my dad loved me. And I knew I didn't like how I was feeling about myself, math, and my future in public education. So I listened to his words. I followed my dad's advice. And right there in algebra, I closed my eyes and let my mind rest on my Father in Heaven. I saw Him in some ways very much like my own dad—gentle and kind and

deeply caring about me as his daughter. He loved me.

The remarkable thing was that as I held on to that image, my stress vanished. I felt like what it talks about in the Book of Mormon, like I was "encircled . . . in the arms of his love" (2 Nephi. 1:15). I knew in that moment that I could do all things with God, even making it through algebra without causing permanent damage to my psyche. In fact I felt completely free from my stress. In that moment I felt His love. **NE**

Rachelle Pace Castor is a member of the Oak Hills Sixth Ward, Provo Utah Oak Hills Stake.

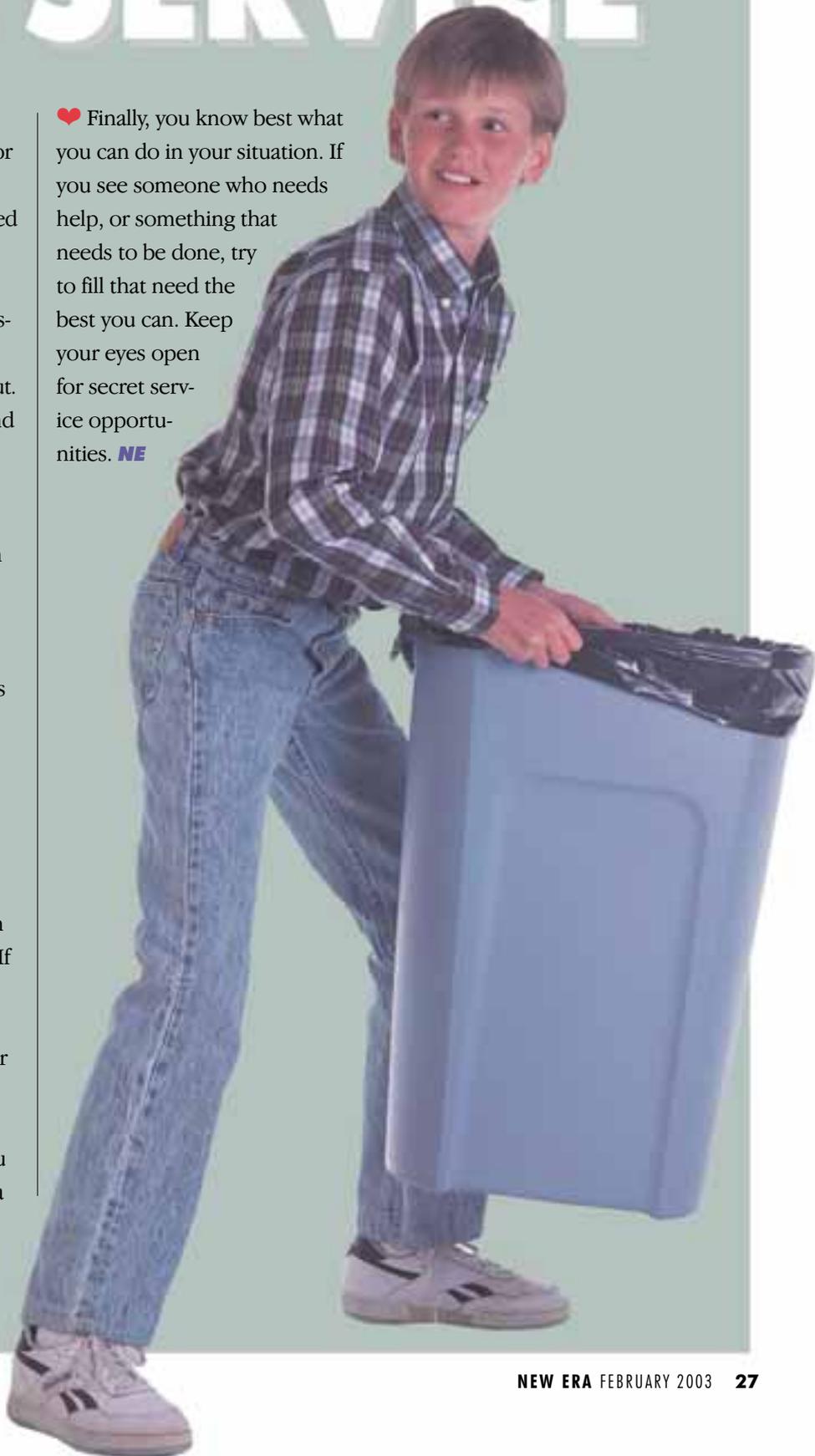


Secret SERVICE

You probably already know the thrill that comes from doing something for someone else, especially when your service is anonymous. The Savior encouraged us to “let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth” when we give to others (Matthew 6:3). Of course it is not always possible for service to be anonymous, but here are some secret service ideas for you to try out.

- ♥ Wake up early and wash your family’s and neighbors’ cars.
- ♥ If you are able, donate blood to a local blood bank.
- ♥ If the missionaries in your area live in an apartment where this is possible, make cookies and leave them on their doorstep with a thank-you note.
- ♥ Pick up trash in the park, at school, or as you walk along the sidewalk.
- ♥ Wash the dishes, vacuum, or do something that needs to be done around the house while your parents are out.
- ♥ Send an anonymous valentine to someone you think might need one this month.
- ♥ Shovel snow or rake leaves for people in your neighborhood who might need help. If you do it while they are at work or on vacation, you’re less likely to get caught.
- ♥ Organize a food or clothing drive in your neighborhood, and donate the items you collect to a local shelter.
- ♥ Do something nice for your siblings. You could clean their room, or just write them a note of encouragement telling them someone loves them.
- ♥ Pray for those who you know need a little extra help.

♥ Finally, you know best what you can do in your situation. If you see someone who needs help, or something that needs to be done, try to fill that need the best you can. Keep your eyes open for secret service opportunities. **NE**







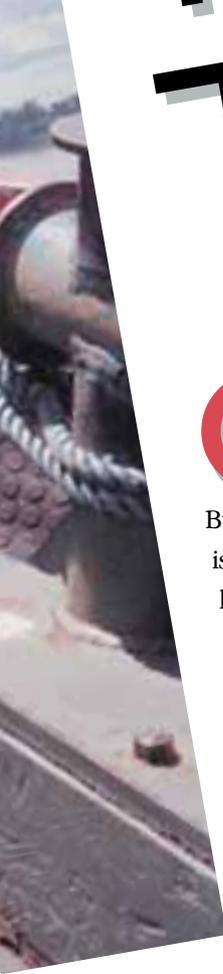
B i r t h d a y

TEMPLE TRIP

BY KRISTEN WINMILL SOUTHWICK



Fifteenth birthdays are a big deal to young women in Brazil. And Priscila Vital's celebration was even more special than a traditional party or dance—she was able to travel by boat and bus to the temple.



Over the years, Brazil has become famous for its skilled soccer teams, white beaches, and tropical climate. But the force behind this pulsating, vibrant culture is perhaps its greatest resource: its warm, fun-loving people. Having a good time and being with friends and family are the central components of most activities. And among the most important and anticipated days in any Brazilian young woman's life is her 15th birthday celebration. Families sometimes save money for years to put on an extravagant night of dining, dancing, and gift-giving for this coming-of-age celebration.

Priscila Vital, a member of the Rio Negro stake in Manaus, Brazil, had to make a difficult choice about how to celebrate her 15th birthday. Priscila's birthday would come while her mother, Francilene, was in

the middle of a 17-day stake caravan trip to the São Paulo Brazil Temple. Francilene had saved money for three years to go to the temple for the first time, and she had enough money to either take Priscila with her or throw a traditional 15th birthday party upon her return. Priscila's decision was further complicated because most of the relatives in her tight-knit family were members of other churches and had been eagerly anticipating her birthday for several years. They did not understand the importance of going to the temple.

"All of my aunts and uncles wanted me to stay and have the birthday party, especially because I'm the only girl in my family," says Priscila. "When I decided to go to the temple, it was a good opportunity for me to show them just how important this was to me."

Priscila's family joined the Church in 1991 but became less active shortly after their baptisms. In early 1998 Priscila's friend began investigating the Church and asked



Faithful Church members from Manaus (above, far right) travel a great distance by boat and bus to São Paulo (above) every year. Priscila was able to do baptisms for the dead at the temple, and she hopes to someday return there with her entire family (right).

Priscila to come with her to seminary.

“I had gone to another church, but

I could never understand what they were teaching. In seminary everything made sense, and I could understand the gospel. Eventually, the Spirit testified to me that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. When I learned he was a prophet it was so good and so sweet that I cried,” Priscila says.

Priscila’s mother enjoyed welcoming the ward’s young women into their home. She encouraged Priscila’s attendance at Church activities, and she soon began attending regularly herself. Francilene is now serving as her ward’s Relief Society president.

Witness of increasing faith

Priscila’s conversion to the gospel is one of the many miracles taking place in Manaus. The busy port city of 1.5 million people is the industrial and commercial center of the Amazon Basin. The first Latter-day Saint missionaries arrived in the jungle city 23 years ago. Since then, the Church in Manaus has grown to five stakes, one mission, and 14,000 members.

As a witness of the increasing faith of Manaus’s members, each year between 150 to

200 members in Manaus go on a multistake caravan to the temple in São Paulo, the most accessible temple in Brazil. Because of the dense forest that surrounds the city, the only way to travel from Manaus to São Paulo is by boat or plane. Plane tickets are very expensive, so eight years ago the stake presidencies in the city arranged a yearly temple caravan by chartering a boat and buses for those desiring to go to the temple. By sharing the costs, the members have enough money to travel to the temple with their families.

The caravan begins by traveling for four days by boat to Porto Velho, a Brazilian city near the borders of Peru and Bolivia. From there, members board chartered buses to take them an additional three days and nights to São Paulo, where they stay in Church-owned apartments next to the São Paulo Brazil Temple. For four days they do temple work, then make the reverse journey homeward.

Priscila prepared for her temple trip by studying general conference talks about the temple with her mother, reading Church magazines, and studying the scriptures. She also gathered the names of four generations on her father’s side of the family so she could perform vicarious baptisms for them. Priscila’s mom compiled the family history information for four generations of her



side of the family.

Once the 185 members departed Manaus by boat, Priscila and the five other young women in the caravan helped tend the Primary-age children and fixed meals. At night they slept in hammocks on the boat deck to try to stay cool in the hot jungle temperatures.

“Being on the caravan was so spiritual because everyone was so excited and anxious to go to the temple,” Priscila comments. “Most people had never been to the temple, so almost no one knew exactly what to expect. Everyone sang songs and read scriptures together. We were so united.”

The bus ride was the most difficult part of the journey because the buses traveled both day and night for three days, and the members were unable to move around much. As a result, many of the members had severe pain and swelling in their legs.

Finally there

When they arrived at the temple, Priscila immediately went to the baptistry to do baptisms for the dead, while her mother went to a different part of the temple to receive her endowment. Priscila spent every day in São Paulo in the temple, even though it was the first time she had been to the large metropolis.

“I spent my 15th birthday in the temple. When the baptismal font coordinator discovered it was my birthday, he told me he had a present for me,” Priscila explains.

“So many people come to the temple that most patrons can do the baptisms for only five people. He gave me a large stack of names of people who needed their baptismal work done for them. He couldn’t have given me a better present.”

Priscila’s mother comments about other changes that happened in Priscila’s life: “The caravan spiritually influenced her. She was a light for all of the other members. Everyone came back different. On the bus ride home, we felt that our appearances and faces had changed; we were all so happy.”

Priscila’s example and willingness to share the gospel



helped many of her family members and friends join the Church. One of them, her aunt, recently returned from serving in the Brazil Recife Mission. Now Priscila is encouraging her father and two brothers to prepare to go to the temple so they can be sealed as a family—something she

hopes will happen soon.

For Priscila, giving up her 15th birthday celebration was no sacrifice. “When it was time to come home, I didn’t want to leave,” Priscila remarks. “All I want to do is save money so I can go back to the temple as quickly as possible.” **NE**

Kristen Winmill Southwick is a member of the Weston Second Ward, Boston Massachusetts Stake.

THE ANGELS MAY

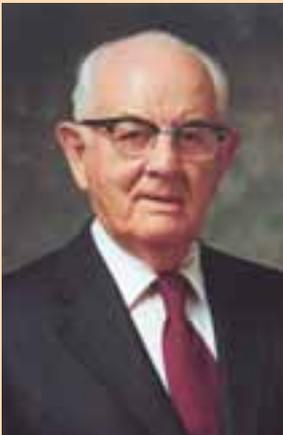
BY PRESIDENT SPENCER W. KIMBALL
(1895–1985)

Where would we be if Moses hadn't written his history of the world, those first five vital books of the Old Testament? He had the background, the data, the record, and the inclination, and he has blessed us throughout the eternities for the service he

rendered in writing the first five books of the Bible.

How grateful we are that Abraham wrote his own life story and that important segment of the history of the world and his own revelations, thoughts, feelings, and rich experiences.

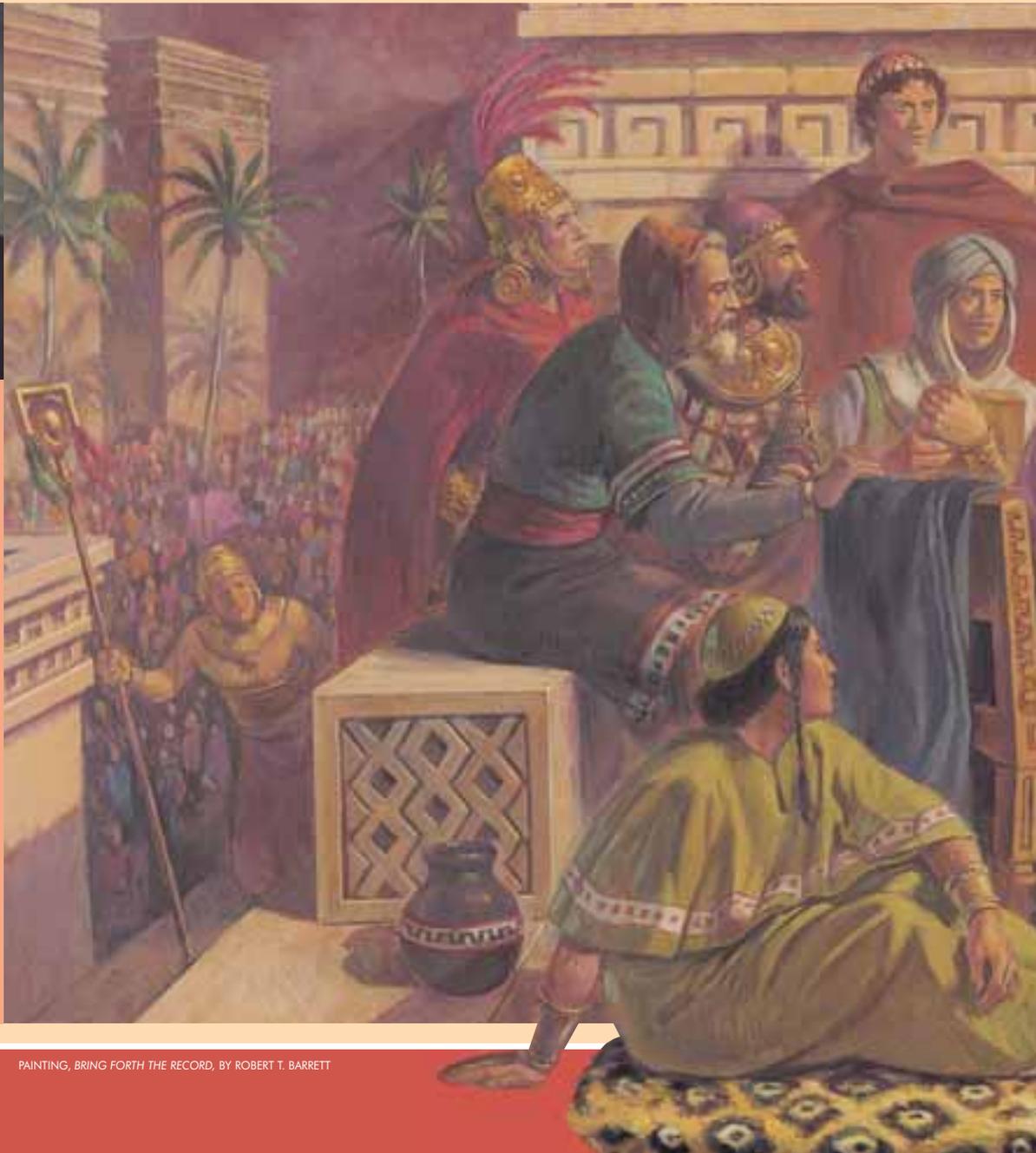
The Lord Jesus Christ Himself emphasized the great importance of record keeping to the Nephites and Lamanites.



The Savior emphasized the

importance of keeping records.

And one of the most valuable records is the one you keep of your own life.



QUOTE FROM IT

“Behold, other scriptures I would that ye should write, that ye have not.

“And it came to pass that he said unto Nephi: Bring forth the record which ye have kept.

“And when Nephi had brought forth the records, and laid them before him, he cast his eyes upon them and said:

“Verily I say unto you, I commanded my servant Samuel, the Lamanite, that he should testify unto this people, that at the day that the Father should glorify his name in me that there were many saints who should arise from the dead, and should appear unto many, and should minister unto them. And he said unto them: Was it not so?

“And his disciples answered him and said; Yea, Lord,



Samuel did prophesy according to thy words, and they were all fulfilled.

“And Jesus said unto them: How be it that ye have not written this thing, that many saints did arise and appear unto many and did minister unto them?”

“And it came to pass that Nephi remembered that this thing had not been written.

“And it came to pass that Jesus commanded that it should be written; therefore it was written according as he commanded” (3 Nephi 23:6–13).

I am glad that it was not I who was reprimanded, even though mildly and kindly, for not having fulfilled the obligation to keep my records up to date.

Early in the American life of the family of Lehi, his son, Nephi, said:

“Having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days. . . .

“And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge” (1 Nephi 1:1, 3).

This great record included not only the movements of his people but events from his own personal life.

And then we must not forget or minimize the great efforts of our modern prophet, Joseph Smith, to write the history of the Restoration of the gospel and also his own personal experiences in great detail. What a mass of confusion we would have without those authentic, personal, carefully written records!

Again, how happy we are as we find our grandparents’ journals and follow them through their trials and joys and gain for our own lives much from the experiences and faith and courage of our ancestors.

Your personal record

Accordingly, we urge our young people to begin today to write and keep records of all the important things in their own lives and also the lives of their antecedents in the event that their parents should fail to record all the important incidents in their own lives. Your own private journal should record the way you face up to challenges that beset you. Do not suppose life changes so much that your experiences will not be interesting to your posterity.

Experiences of work, relations with people, and an awareness of the rightness and wrongness of actions will always be relevant. The Royal Bank of Canada Monthly Letter made this point when it reported, “One famed bookman divided his big library into two parts—biography and ‘all the rest.’ ”

No one is commonplace, and I doubt if you can ever read a biography from which you cannot learn something from the difficulties overcome and the struggles made to succeed. These are the measuring rods for the progress of humanity.

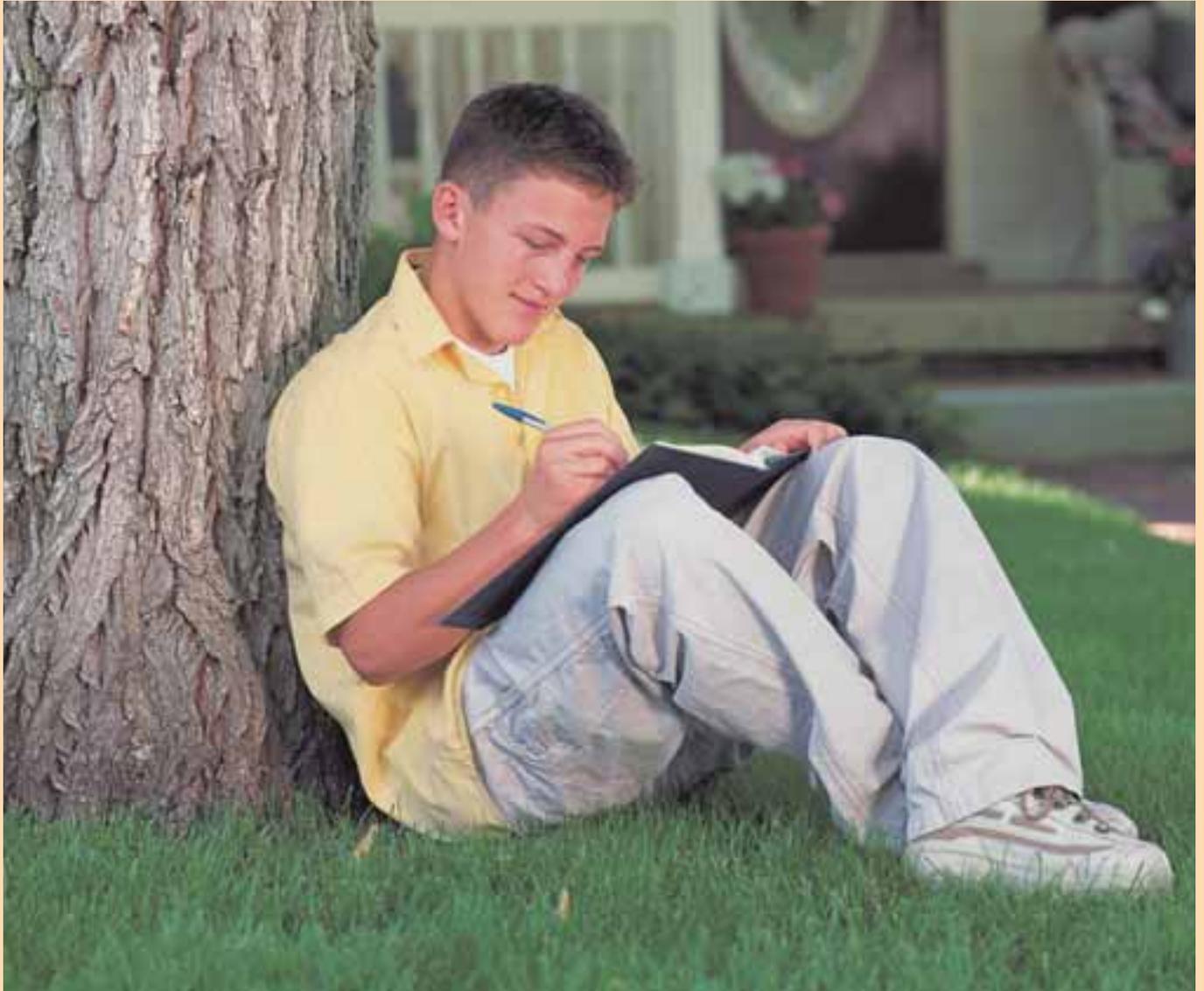
As we read the stories of great men, we discover that they did not become famous overnight nor were they born professionals or skilled craftsmen. The story of how they became what they are may be helpful to us all.

Your own journal, like most others, will tell of problems as old as the world and how you dealt with them.

Your journal should contain your true self rather than a picture of you when you are “made up” for a public performance. There is a temptation to paint one’s virtues in rich color and whitewash the vices, but there is also the opposite pitfall of accentuating the negative. Personally I have little respect for anyone who delves into the ugly phases of the life he is portraying, whether it be his own or another’s. The truth should be told, but we should not emphasize the negative. Even a long life full of inspiring experiences can be brought to the dust by one ugly story. Why dwell on that one ugly truth about someone whose life has been largely circumspect?

The good biographer will not depend on passion but on good sense. He will weed out the irrelevant and seek the strong, novel, and interesting. Perhaps we might gain some help from reading Plutarch’s *Lives*, where he grouped 46 lives in pairs, a Greek and a Roman in each pair. He tried to epitomize the most celebrated parts of their stories rather than to insist upon every slightest detail of them.

Your journal is your autobiography, so it should be kept carefully. You are unique, and there may be incidents in your experience that are more noble and praiseworthy in their way than those recorded in any other life. There may be a flash of illumination here and a story of faithfulness there; you should truthfully record your real self and not



what other people may see in you.

Your story should be written now while it is fresh and while the true details are available.

A journal is the literature of superiority. Each individual can become superior in his own humble life.

What could you do better for your children and your children's children than to record the story of your life, your triumphs over adversity, your recovery after a fall, your progress when all seemed black, your rejoicing when you had finally achieved?

Some of what you write may be humdrum

dates and places, but there will also be rich passages that will be quoted by your posterity.

Get a notebook, a journal that will last through all time, and maybe the angels may quote from it for eternity. Begin today and write in it your goings and comings, your deepest thoughts, your achievements and your failures, your associations and your triumphs, your impressions and your testimonies. Remember, the Savior chastised those who failed to record important events. **NE**

Originally printed in the October 1975 New Era.

Your posterity will be blessed when you record the story of your life and your triumphs over adversity.



LEADERSHIP TIP

Be humble and teachable. We are the most effective in our callings when we listen to the counsel of our leaders. The Lord has said, “Behold, I speak unto you, and also to all those who have desires to bring forth

and establish this work;

“And no one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things, whatsoever shall be entrusted to his care” (D&C 12:7–8).

The Apostle Peter also counseled, “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, . . . be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Peter. 5:5). Be willing to listen and learn.

SERVICE BLITZ

Armed with cleaning rags, needed supplies, and lots of heart, more than 400 youth in Nampa, Idaho, set out to do some good in their community. In a city-wide effort that included 20 wards and 1 branch in the 2 Nampa stakes, the youth committed a Saturday to serving. But they also spent weeks in preparation: mak-



ing quilts, practicing programs, and organizing food, clothing, and toy drives. On the day of the project they did everything from stacking firewood for the elderly in their wards to filling the supply closets at shelters. Following all their service the youth got a much-deserved rest, including a testimony meeting, dinner, and a dance.

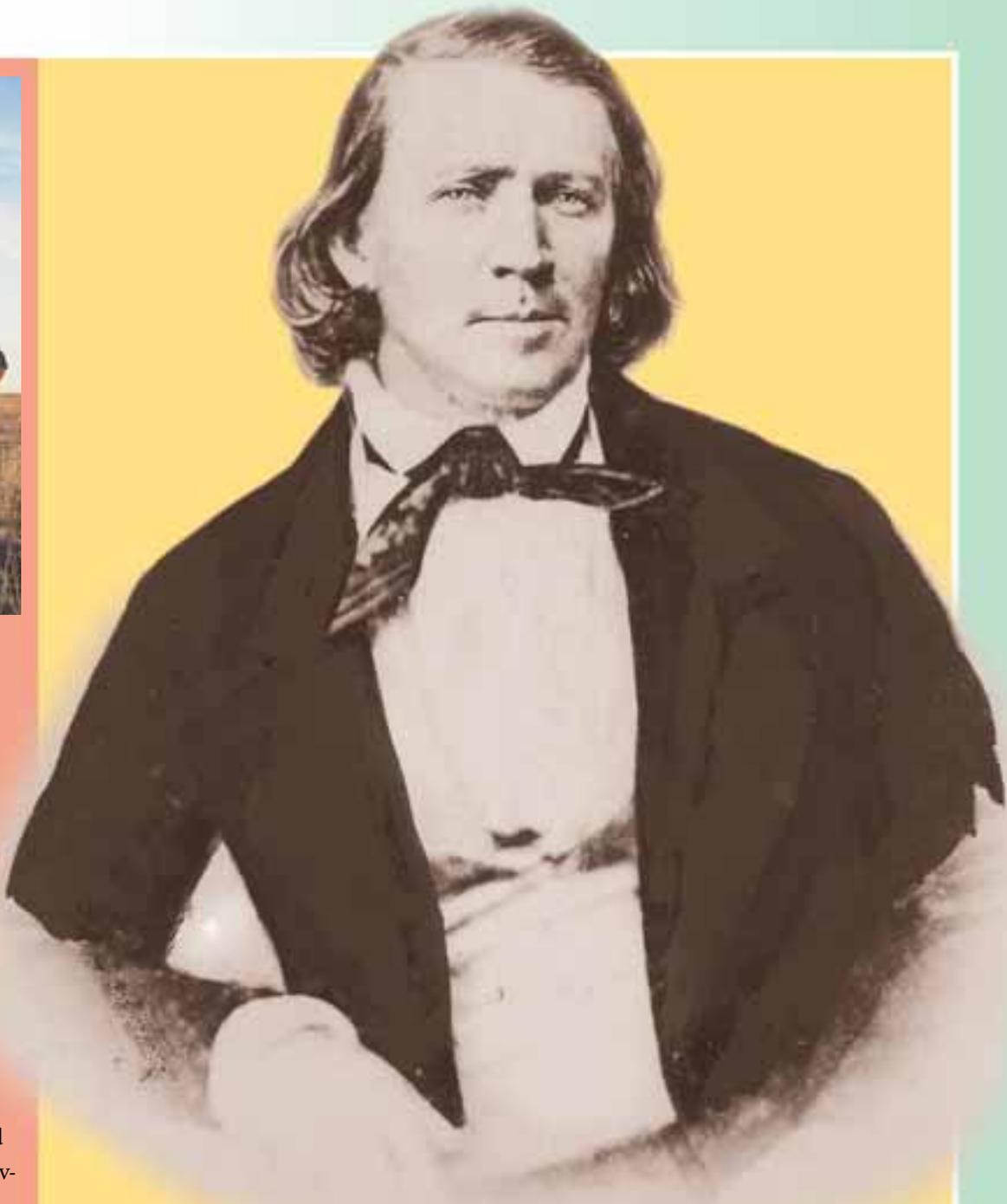
“I would rather walk barefoot from here to the celestial kingdom and back into the presence of my Heavenly Father . . . than to let the things of this world keep me out.”

—*President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982)*
(Improvement Era, Dec. 1966, 1136)



WRITE AWAY!

Be sure to keep the *New Era* in mind as you plan your ward or stake youth activities this year. We're always looking for new stories and ideas. Let us know at least three months in advance, if possible, of the major youth events in your stake. We might be able to cover your event if time allows and if your ward is having an activity that fits our editorial needs. But even if we are unable to cover your activity, we would still love to know what you are doing. Send a brief description of your activity plans to the *New Era*, 50 East North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150. Or e-mail us at cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org.



THE LION OF THE LORD

For someone who was called “The Lion of the Lord,” President Brigham Young was a remarkably humble man. On one occasion the Prophet Joseph rebuked Brigham Young severely. Everyone in the room waited for Brigham Young’s

response. He could have defended himself or been offended, but his reply was sincerely and simply, “Joseph, what do you want me to do?”

Later, when he was prophet, Brigham Young said, “We have to humble ourselves and become like

little children in our feelings—to become humble and childlike in spirit . . . then we have the privilege of growing, of increasing in knowledge, in wisdom, and in understanding” (*Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young*, 179).

Are You a

The name of the Church is more than a label, it is an invitation to a better life.



Just being a member of this Church is not enough. Peace has been taken from the earth, and there is temptation everywhere. The only safety lies in living the virtues we teach.

BY BISHOP KEITH B. McMULLIN

Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

To those who yearn for spiritual truth, some things become self-evident. I bear my witness of these things. God is in His heavens. We mortals are His spirit offspring. Jesus is our Redeemer. Joseph Smith was God’s prophet, and Gordon B. Hinckley is His prophet today. Revelations are pouring forth as in days of old. The kingdom of God, which is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is once more upon the earth.

Satan is real and is on the earth as well. He and his legions are wreaking havoc among the children of men. He speaks no truth, feels no love, promotes no good, and avows nothing but mayhem and destruction.

Therefore, I raise this day a “voice of warning” (D&C 1:4). It is an urgent, sobering reminder and invitation to good men and women everywhere. Listen to these words of revelation received on 1 November 1831:

“Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from

heaven, and gave him commandments; . . .

“For I am no respecter of persons, and will that all men shall know that the day speedily cometh; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion” (D&C 1:17, 35).

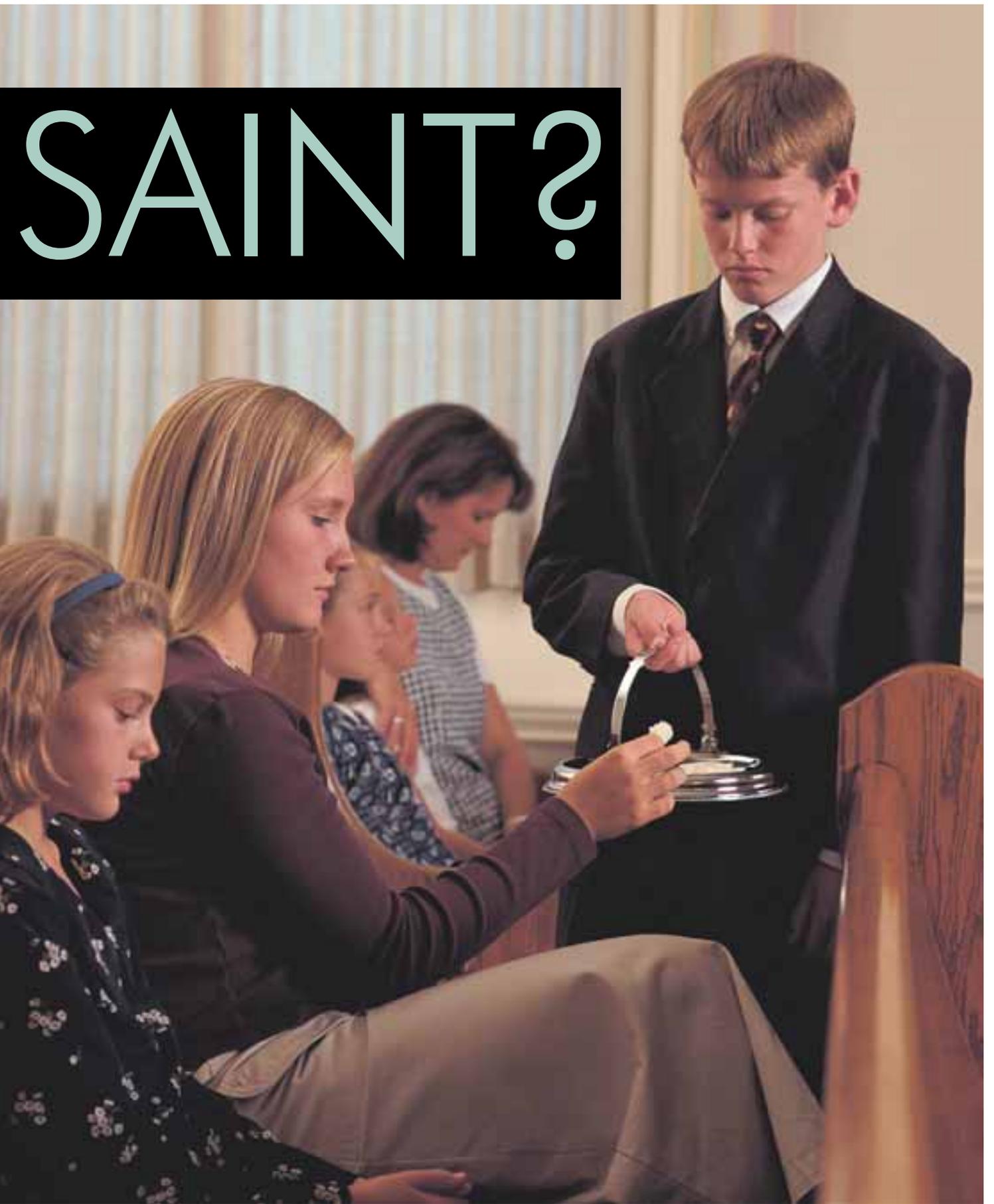
Beware of worldly ways

The Lord speaks of calamity to befall the inhabitants of the earth. Calamities come in different forms. From time to time the forces of nature convulse, and we are wrenched by their destructive powers.

Even more devastating, however, are the calamitous forces of evil. In accordance with the prophecy of 1831, peace has now been taken from the earth, and the devil has power over his dominion. His beguiling ways are mesmerizing the people. Temptation is on every hand. Crassness and wrangling have become a way of life. What was once considered awful is now considered tame; what at first titillates, soon captivates and then destroys.

This calamity of evil will continue to spread until “the whole world . . . groaneth . . . under the bondage of sin” (D&C 84:49).

SAINT?





Being saintly is to be good, pure, and upright. Latter-day Saints strive to become a little better, a little kinder, a little nobler in the daily affairs of life.

Therefore, this “voice of warning”:

- *Beware of worldly lusts.* They stimulate the senses but enslave the soul. Those caught in the web of sensuality find that it is not easily broken.
- *Beware of worldly wealth.* Its promises are enticing, but its happiness is a mirage. Wrote the Apostle Paul, “The love of money is the root of all evil” (1 Timothy 6:10).
- *Beware of worldly preoccupation with self.* The highs are counterfeit; the lows are despairing. Love, kindness, personal fulfillment, and genuine self-worth are found in service to God and others, not in service to oneself.

The Church provides a safe harbor

In the midst of these perils, there is a safe harbor. From the revelation cited earlier comes this assurance:

“And also the Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst, and shall come down in judgment upon Idumea, or the world” (D&C 1:36).

There is safety in being a Saint. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ today are known as Latter-day Saints. In addition to being the Lord’s designation of those who belong to His Church, this appellation also serves as His invitation to a better way of life.

This became clear to me some years ago when, as a young father, I needed to purchase some temple clothing. When I entered the store, my attention was drawn to a sign that read “For Latter-day Saints Only.” The message jolted me. In my mind an argument ensued. “Why does it say ‘For Latter-day Saints Only?’” I asked myself. “Why doesn’t it

say something like ‘For Endowed Church Members?’” Why does it raise this issue of being a “Latter-day Saint”?

The years since have tempered my impetuous nature. That argumentative encounter of long ago has become a treasured, defining moment. The experience taught me that just being a member of this Church is not enough. Nor is merely going through the motions of membership sufficient in this day of cynicism and unbelief. The spirituality and vigilance of a saint are required.

Becoming the Lord’s covenant people

Being saintly is to be good, pure, and upright. For such persons, virtues are not only declared but lived. For Latter-day Saints, the kingdom of God, or the Church, is not a by-line; rather, it is the center and the substance of their lives. Home is “a bit of heaven,” (David O. McKay, in *Improvement Era*, June 1964, 520) not a hotel. The family is not merely a societal or biological entity. It is the basic eternal unit in God’s kingdom, wherein the gospel of Jesus Christ is taught and lived. Indeed, Latter-day Saints diligently strive to become a little better, a little kinder, a little nobler in the daily affairs of life.

The Lord sets forth the way in which such progress is made. Said He, “Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness.” (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38; see Matthew 6:33, footnote a).

Holding to this course provides Latter-day Saints the means for avoiding the treacherous shoals of worldliness. Living this way enables members of the Church to become the covenant people of the Lord. For our time,

we have the following prophetic guidance from President Hinckley on how this can be done:

“We are a covenant people. I have the feeling that if we could just encourage our people to live by three or four covenants everything else would take care of itself. . . .

“The first of these is the covenant of the sacrament, in which we take upon ourselves the name of the Savior and agree to keep His commandments with the promise in His covenant that He will bless us with His spirit. . . .

“Second, the covenant of tithing. . . . The promise . . . is that He will stay the destroyer and open the windows of heaven and pour down blessings that there will not be room enough to receive them. . . .

“Three, the covenants of the temple: Sacrifice, the willingness to sacrifice for this the Lord’s work—and inherent in that law of sacrifice is the very essence of the Atonement. . . . Consecration, which is associated with it, a willingness to give everything, if need be, to help in the onrolling of this great work. And a covenant of love and loyalty one to another in the bonds of marriage, fidelity, chastity, morality.

“If our people could only learn to live by these covenants, everything else would take care of itself, I am satisfied” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 146–47).

Covenants help us resist worldly ways

Worldly lusts lose their allure as the holy sacrament assumes its proper place in our lives. This covenant enables the faithful to keep themselves “unspotted from the world” (D&C 59:9; see also verses 10, 12–13).

Worldly wealth loses its peril through conscientious adherence to the Lord’s tithing. Returning to Him a tithe of all He provides engenders in the giver a love of God above all else. It introduces the obedient to the higher law of giving without command. The fast and fast offerings are embraced, and power comes to loose the bands of wickedness, lift heavy burdens, bless the less fortunate, and strengthen family ties (see Isaiah 58:6–11). The covenant of tithing weans the faithful from the love of money and its attendant trappings.



Worldly preoccupation with self surrenders to sacrifice, consecration, and the other holy covenants of the temple. As the Redeemer of the world gave all that we might be saved, these covenants allow us to give our all in the accomplishment of Heavenly Father’s purposes for His children.

And so, fear not. The things deemed weak by the world overthrow evils that appear so mighty and strong. Righteous men speak in the name of God the Lord. Faith increases in the earth. The everlasting covenants blossom in the lives of Latter-day Saints. The fulness of Christ’s gospel is proclaimed by precept and example unto the ends of the world. And the Lord’s covenant people prepare this earth for His Second Coming (See D&C 1:19–23). This is our duty. May the Lord sustain us in it is my prayer. **NE**

Adapted from an April 2001 general conference address.

WAKE.

Through seminary, the Book of Mormon became easier to read and understand. It wasn't long before I received my own witness the book was true.

Get up at 4:30 A.M. to attend seminary? I wasn't even a member of the Church. Still, I had nothing to lose and a whole lot to gain.

BY ISAAC KOFI MORRISON

When I was 17, I went to live with my aunt and uncle in Sekondi, Ghana, who were sponsoring my education.

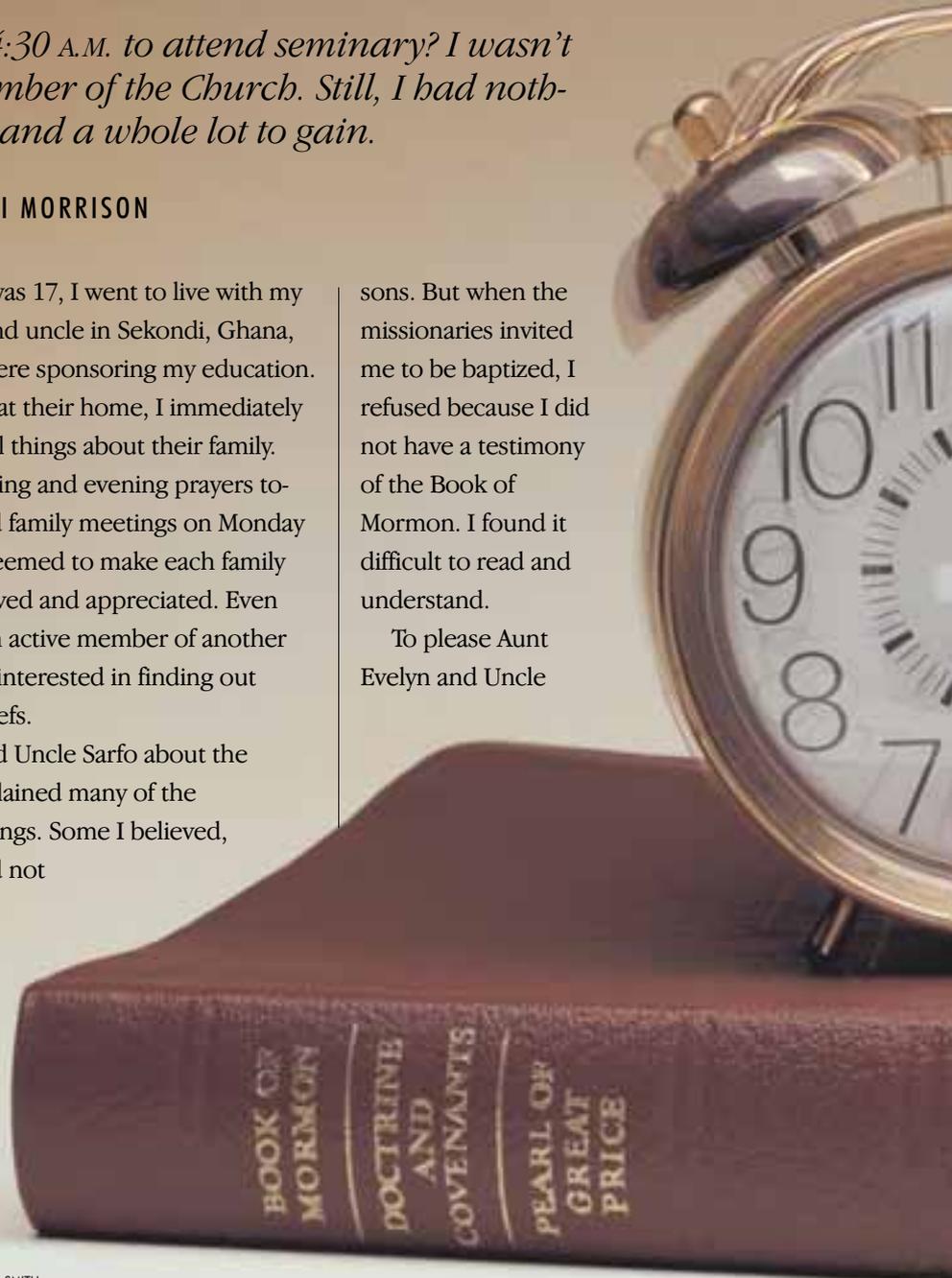
When I arrived at their home, I immediately noticed unusual things about their family. They had morning and evening prayers together and held family meetings on Monday evenings that seemed to make each family member feel loved and appreciated. Even though I was an active member of another faith, I became interested in finding out about their beliefs.

When I asked Uncle Sarfo about the Church, he explained many of the Church's teachings. Some I believed, and others I did not understand.

My uncle then asked the missionaries to teach me the discussions, and I received all six of the les-

sons. But when the missionaries invited me to be baptized, I refused because I did not have a testimony of the Book of Mormon. I found it difficult to read and understand.

To please Aunt Evelyn and Uncle



UP CALL



Sarfo, I had already been attending sacrament meeting. Now they encouraged me to enroll in the early-morning seminary course that was to begin in two weeks. Getting out of bed at 4:30 A.M. was no small matter for me, but the seminary teacher, Solomon Agbo, visited me, encouraged me to attend, and seemed already to care about me. I decided to go to seminary, and once I made that decision, I resolved not to be absent even for a single day. The

course of study was the Book of Mormon, and I wanted to see if I might gain a testimony of the book.

As I began studying the Book of Mormon for seminary, I experienced the feelings Elder Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described when he first found the Book of Mormon. “I opened it with eagerness, and read its title page,” he wrote. “I then read the testimony of several witnesses in relation to the manner of its being found and translated. After this I commenced its contents by course. I read all day; eating was a burden, I had no desire for food; sleep was a burden when the night came, for I preferred reading to sleep” (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* [1985], 18).

As I read, the Spirit of the Lord bore witness that the Book of Mormon is truly another testament of Jesus Christ. Through seminary the Book of Mormon became much easier to read. Whenever it was hard to follow, my teacher helped me understand. I received a testimony that the Book of Mormon is “the most correct of any book on

earth, . . . and a man [will] get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected by Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 194).

I was baptized on 5 March 1995. By the time I was 21 I was a seminary teacher myself, helping others know of the divinity and truthfulness of the book that changed my life. **NE**

Isaac Kofi Morrison is serving full time in the Nigeria Port Harcourt Mission.

I live in New South Wales, Australia, where we are blessed with some of the most beautiful beaches in the world. Golden sand and crystal blue waters grace our coastlines. A favorite pastime for me and my friends is walking along a nearby beach. While walking we talk and enjoy each other's company.

One afternoon, when we had enjoyed the day, a friend of mine noticed that a locket I usually wear was missing from around my neck. I was particularly fond of the locket since my grandmother had given it to me as a special birthday present.

I frantically searched up and down the beach looking for my prized possession but to no avail. Soon my friends realized my distress and joined in the search. After searching for a while, one of my friends suggested we have a prayer.

By now it was nearly dusk and the incoming tide was growing higher. Kneeling in the sand, we asked Heavenly Father to guide us to my locket. As we rose one

of my friends headed for a part of the beach we had already combed. "It can't be there," I said. "We've already searched every grain of sand." Still my friend continued on his way up the beach while the rest of us maintained the search.

The next thing I knew, my friend was running down the beach with a grin from ear to ear. He had found my locket and rescued it from the tide just in time.

It was a simple thing, maybe even a little bit trivial, but Heavenly Father knew it was important to me. Just after we found the locket, I realized something. If Heavenly Father answered a prayer about something as small as a piece of jewelry, surely He would answer prayers about more important things, like times when I need guidance to make good decisions or strengthen my testimony.

Now I know that when I pray, the answers will come. I just have to listen. **NE**

Jane Frater Jackson is a member of the Carlingford Ward, Sydney Australia Greenwich Stake.



LOCKET IN THE SAND

BY JANE FRATER JACKSON

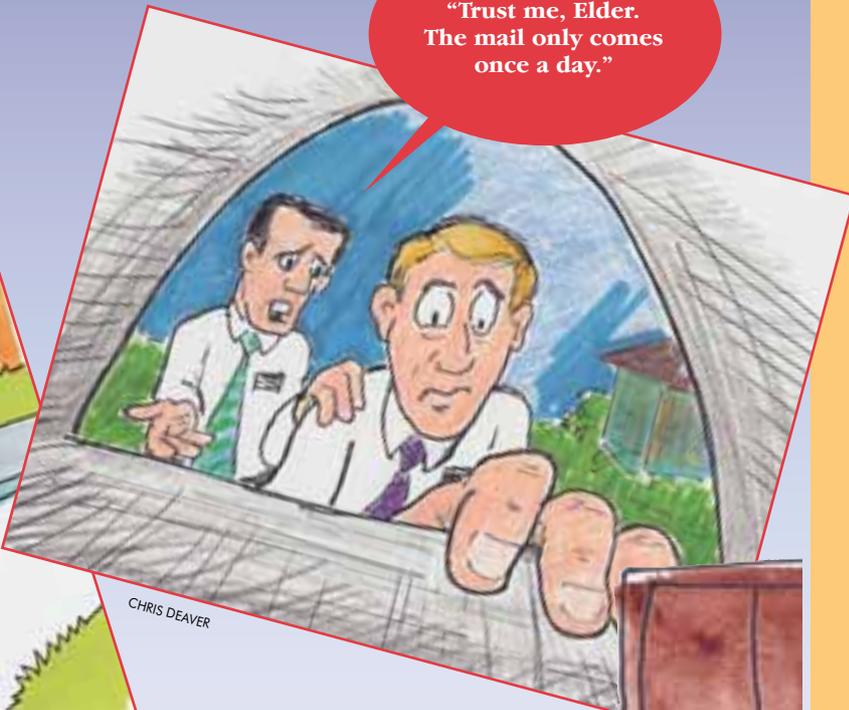
THE EXTRA SMILE

"My dad gave me this bike. He's in the circus."



ADAM KOFORD

"Trust me, Elder. The mail only comes once a day."



CHRIS DEEVER

One day my younger brother found a picture of my family that was taken before he was born. As he looked at the picture, he asked my dad why he (my brother) wasn't in the picture. Before my dad could answer, my brother said, "Oh, I know. I'm taking the picture."

JESSICA EMBLEY
FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY

"What do you mean *this* is the bathtub?"



RYAN STOKER

If you're smart. . .

Wash That Boy Right Out of Your Hair!



*He's a great guy,
but he can't take
you to the temple!*

Worth the Wait

Josh was going to break my heart. Would the hurt be temporary or eternal? It was my choice.

BY KATIE LEA BROWN

When I first met Josh, I fell for him—hard. In addition to his blue eyes and charm, he was different from any boy I had ever known. He was also the first boy to tell me I was funny and beautiful, the first boy to make me feel really important, and the first boy I loved.

Because Josh was not a Latter-day Saint and because we were both so young, my parents worried about us. My father was the bishop at the time, and every nightly conversation I had with him felt like a bishop's interview. "You're too young to date someone exclusively!" he would tell me. Josh and I weren't allowed to see each other much outside of school, so we talked for hours on the phone. I could tell him things I'd never been able to tell anyone, and I shared my testimony with him, hoping he'd feel the Spirit and want to accept the gospel.

Josh had taken some of the missionary discussions before, and we talked about religion often, but I could tell he never really cared. I hoped he would join the Church

and marry me. When I was a Beehive I placed my name in the cornerstone of the San Diego California Temple, promising to be sealed there, and I wanted Josh to be the one to help me keep that promise.

The stronger my relationship with Josh grew, the more my relationship with my parents deteriorated. Mom and Dad worried about me falling in love with someone who had closed the door to the Church. "He isn't any more interested in the Church now than he was three months ago, Katie!" they would argue. I knew they were right, but I loved Josh so much I couldn't admit it.

The day I received my patriarchal blessing I cried when the patriarch promised me: "Katie, in due time you will have the privilege of going to the house of the Lord, there to kneel at the altar of the holy temple to be sealed to your companion for time and all eternity." As he revealed to me the joy my husband and I would have serving in the Church together and teaching our children about the Savior—things I wanted more than anything—I realized the man he was describing could not be Josh.

Over the next few days I wrestled with my feelings. I desperately wanted the promises of my patriarchal blessing, but I knew I wasn't living in a way to receive them. In "due time" everything I ever wanted could be mine. All I had to do was be faithful and keep Heavenly

Bonds Families Like Nothing Else!

ETERNAL BOND

Outlasts, Seals & Protects!

Found Mr. Right? Then stick together.

Father's commandments. It seemed so simple! But I discovered it was not.

Within a few weeks of receiving my blessing, I broke up with Josh. To this day, it is the hardest thing I have ever done. We were together so much that I had distanced myself from most of my friends. As a result, after our breakup I spent many school lunch hours alone and miserable, watching him in the distance and feeling sorry for myself. I didn't believe I could ever love anyone as much as I loved him.

At night I sobbed to my Heavenly Father, asking Him why I had to endure this. Why couldn't Josh and I just love each other and

be happy? Although my choice hadn't been easy, I knew it would be worth it.

I began school the next day with a resolve to make new friends. My patriarchal blessing directed me to surround myself with people who held the same standards I did, so I got to know the girls in my ward and stake. Those girls soon became my best friends.

After high school, I attended BYU and made some wonderful LDS friends. Chad was one of them. Chad returned from his mission a few weeks before I met him, and we soon became the best of friends.

With him I started talking again, sharing my feelings. But our conversations were different.

We could talk about our testimonies and beliefs without having a debate because

Chad was a member of the Church with a strong testimony.

I felt peace and comfort with Chad.

After a year and a half of friendship we began to date, and we were married two years ago in the San Diego California Temple, fulfilling the Beehive promise I had made so long ago. I cried during our sealing, as I did when I received my patriarchal blessing.

This was the man I could have joy serving in the Church with, the one who would help me teach our children about Jesus Christ. Looking back now, my relationship with Josh seems hollow compared to my relationship with Chad. Love isn't how it appears in books and in the movies. Real love, the kind that lasts, is much deeper. **NE**

Katie Lea Brown is a member of the BYU 62nd Ward, Brigham Young University 17th Stake.

Breaking up with Josh was difficult.

Imagine the hurt if I had spent a lifetime loving him and then had to say good-bye for eternity.

Young Men and Young Women Activity Ideas

- Choose a favorite quote or two from President Spencer W. Kimball's article, "The Angels May Quote from It," (page 32) to share with your class or quorum. You may demonstrate ways to take an inexpensive notebook and art supplies to make personalized journals. Encourage everyone to make a personal journal entry that night.
- Being baptized for the dead is a wonderful experience (see "Birthday Temple Trip" on page 28). Ask several young men or young women to give short presentations to the group on an ancestor who has had his or her temple work done. Under the direction of your bishop and leaders, begin planning a temple trip in the near future to do baptisms. Challenge youth to bring family names, if possible.

Leadership Tip

- Are there members of your class or quorum who need "nurturing with the good word of God"? Read "Reach Out" by President Gordon B. Hinckley on page 4 at your next class or quorum presidency meeting, then consider ways to actively include every member of your group. Pay special attention to those who are new converts.

Family Home Evening Ideas

- Is your family facing what seems to be an impossible problem? Read "Do You Need a Miracle?" on page 12 for suggestions on ways to work miracles in your family. Read and discuss Mormon 9:19 together.
- Who would you most like to hear bear their testimony? How about someone in your family? Read "A Light in the Darkness" on page 11, and discuss the important elements of a testimony as a family. Ask your parents if your family could hold a family testimony meeting.

Seminary Devotional Idea

- Are students in your seminary class having trouble arriving on time? Bring an alarm clock to class and set it for the exact time class should start. Ask students how many were there to hear it go off. Then share an excerpt from "Wake-Up Call" on page 42 for a reminder of the importance of seminary. Discuss ways students can consistently arrive on time to get the most out of class.

Personal Improvement

- In "Count on Maurice" (page 20), Maurice Navarro uses his talents in mathematics to help others. Identify one talent you have that might benefit others and set a goal to share it five times in one week. Remember, talents come in all varieties and could be something simple, like giving others a friendly smile.
- You may not be able to put your name in the actual cornerstone of the San Diego California Temple, like the author did in "Worth the Wait" on page 46, but you can focus on living worthy of your name and a promise to be sealed there behind a picture of a temple you love. Place the picture where you'll see it often to remind you of your goal.

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JUST LIKE IN THE ARTICLE

My seminary teacher used the article "Extra Strength" (Jan. 2002) in one of her lessons. That very day, a friend from school was asking me questions about the Church while we were in the weight room. I tried to answer him the best I could but didn't feel my words were very influential. But I felt impressed to do as the young woman in the article did. The following day I gave my friend the new *For the Strength of Youth* and told him it contained the guidelines written for teenagers to follow. It felt good to have done this small missionary effort.

Marek de Savigny
Dunrobin, Ontario, Canada

PERFECTLY PUT TOGETHER

The *New Era* is one of the best influences in my life. Its articles always leave an impact on me every time I read it. The talks from Church leaders, the short stories that are very straight to the point, and all the contents are just perfectly put together. I'm forever grateful knowing there are people out there who care about the well-being of the young women and young men of the Church. I adore this magazine and can't wait to get hold of it.

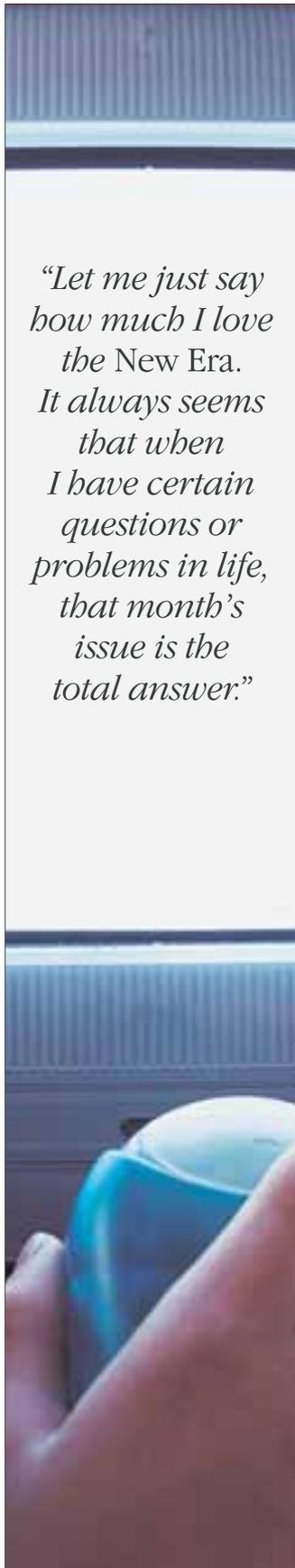
Ilisapesi H. Uipi
Hihifo, Tongatapu, Tonga (via e-mail)

RELATIVES

I would like to thank you for printing the story "The Nauvoo Temple: Cornerstones of Faith" (May 2002) because in the article it mentioned two girls, Lisa and Joanne Church, who were related to Hayden Wells Church.

I want them to know that he was my great-great grandpa, and I'm proud that one of my distant relatives is the temple engineer.

Loralynn Church
Glendale, Arizona (via e-mail)



"Let me just say how much I love the New Era. It always seems that when I have certain questions or problems in life, that month's issue is the total answer."

REALLY INSPIRED

I would like to say the article "Everyone But Me" (April 2002) really inspired me because it made me think back to when I felt alone and not needed. Thank you for the magazine. It's what I read when I feel down.

Joel Maldonado
Naples, Florida (via e-mail)

TOTAL ANSWER

Let me just say how much I love the *New Era*. It always seems that when I have certain questions or problems in my life, that month's issue is a total answer to me. I also love how you write so much about missionary work. A few years ago the *New Era* did a special magazine on missionaries and what goes on at the Missionary Training Center (June 2000). I have read and reread that issue. Good friends are starting to go on their missions, and it's so awesome to know what they are teaching and to know that they are helping to spread the gospel.

Kisa Caldwell
Washington, Utah

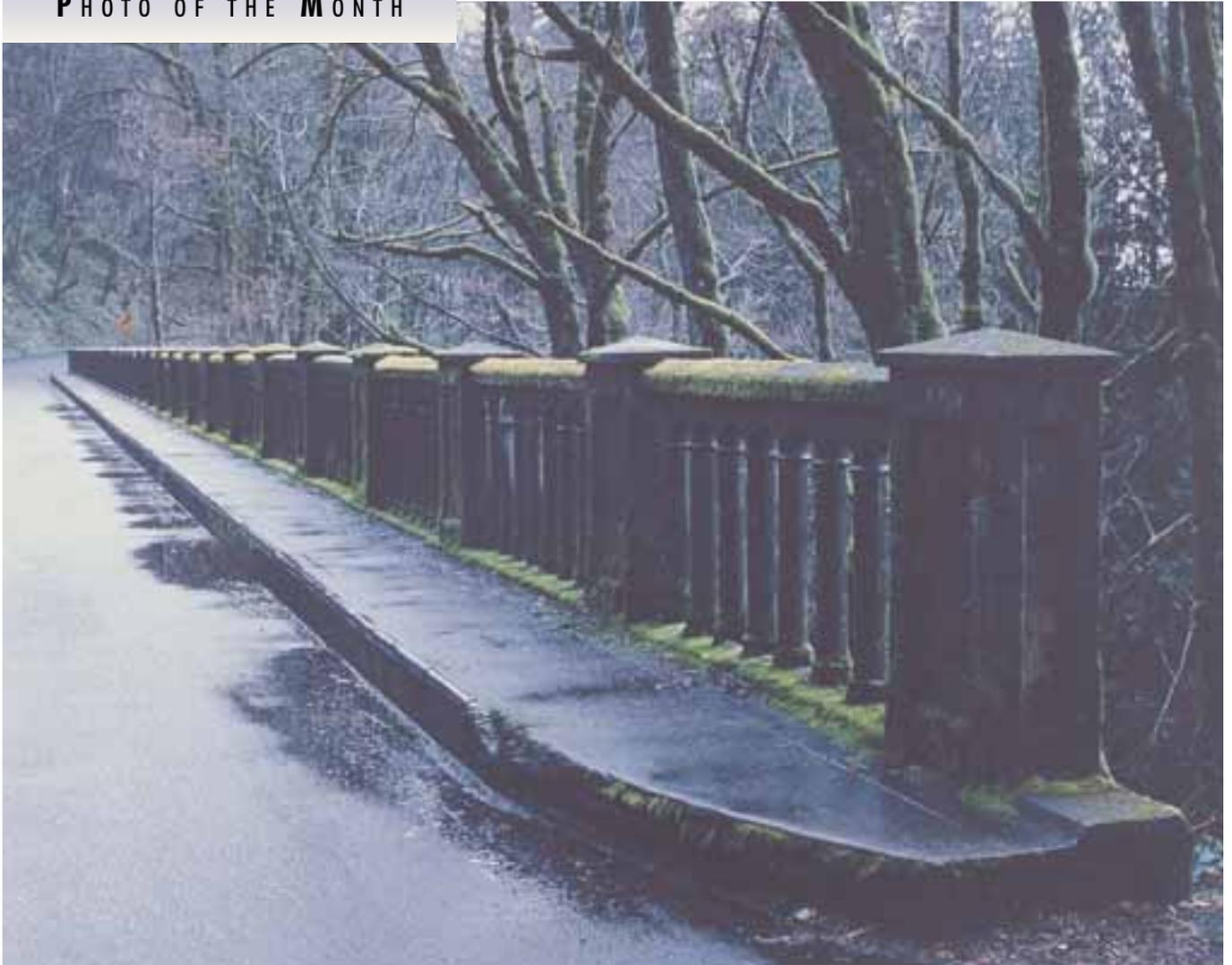
NOT THE ONLY ONE

I just want to say that I loved reading the article "Rising Above the Blues" in the April 2002 edition. It helped me feel that I wasn't alone. I have depression, and at times I feel so helpless and guilty that I don't want to exist. Now I realize I'm not the only one, and that if Jesus Christ suffered all things, I can survive. This article really made me feel better.

Name Withheld
Utah (via e-mail)

We love hearing from you. Write us at New Era We've Got Mail 50 E. North Temple Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

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



BY LANA LEISHMAN

SNOW

BY KAARIN NEVES ENGELMANN

Frozen crystals drift
downward upon silent streets
Forming white icing.



“Someday when he’s a famous running back in the National Football League, I can tell my kids I taught him math.”

See “Count on Maurice,” p. 20.