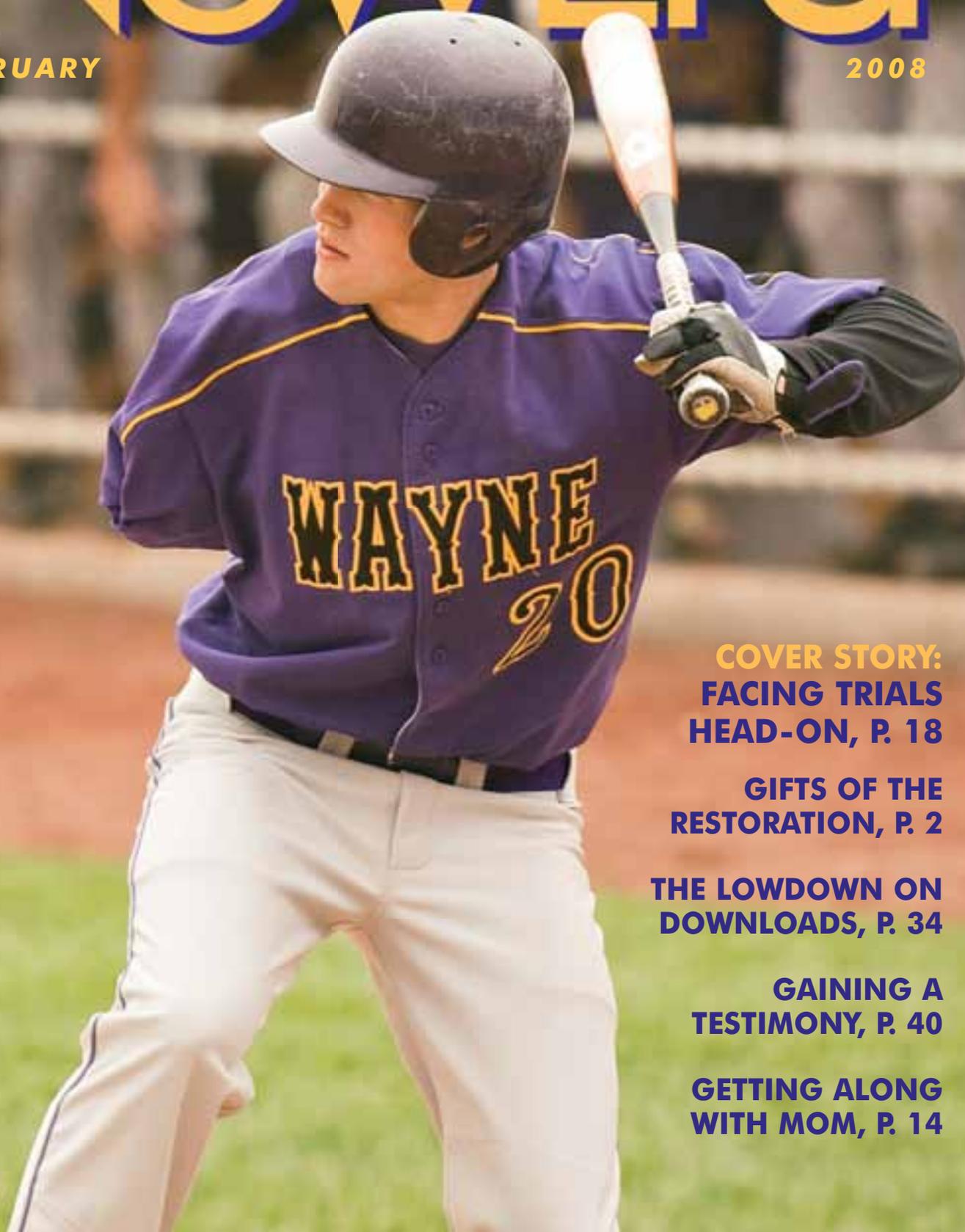


THE

# New Era

FEBRUARY

2008



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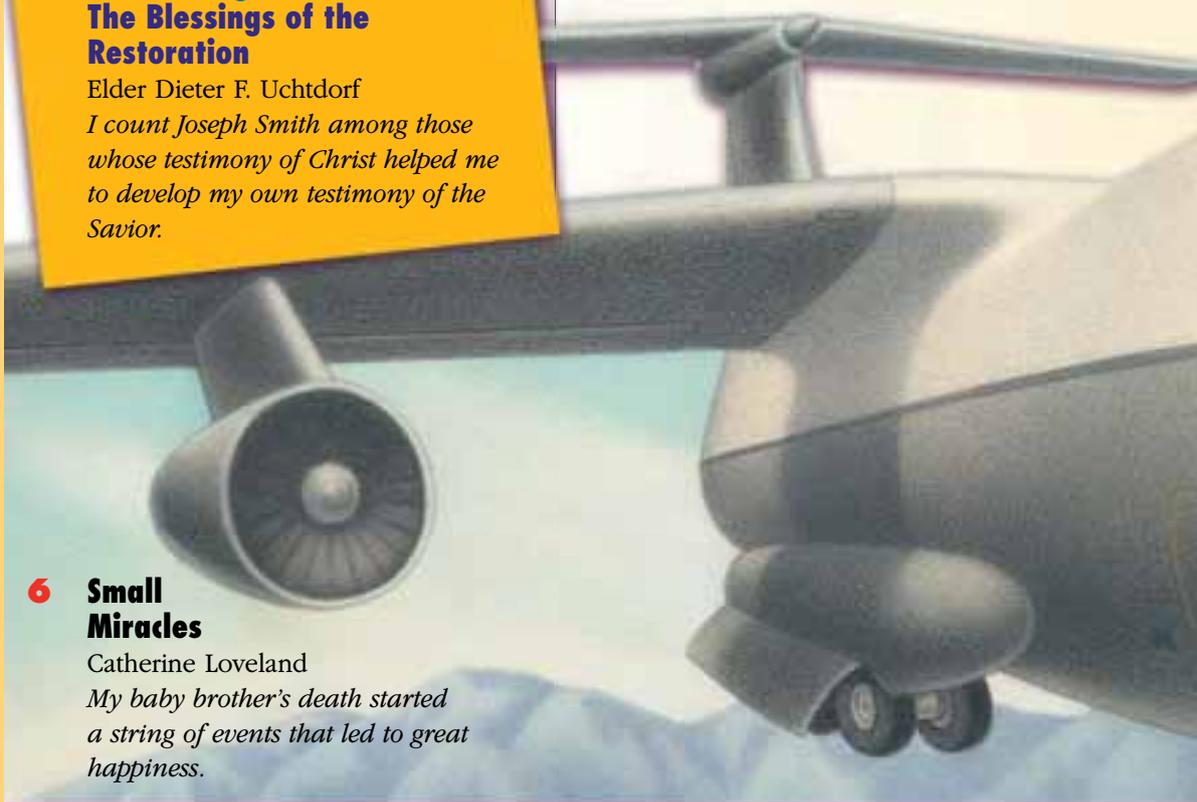
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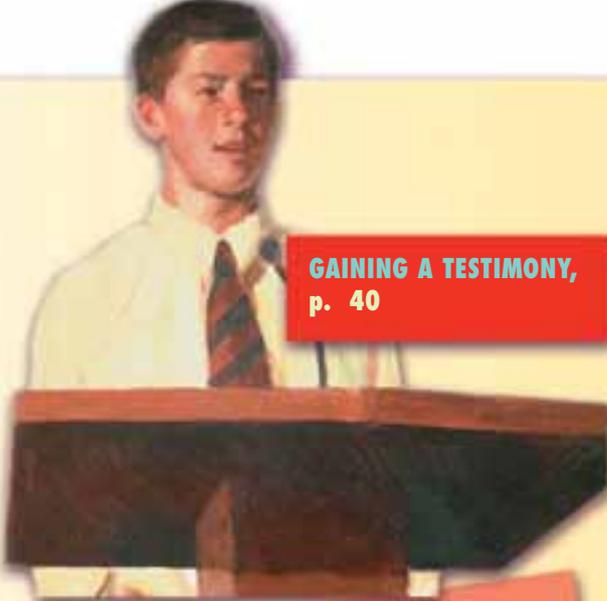
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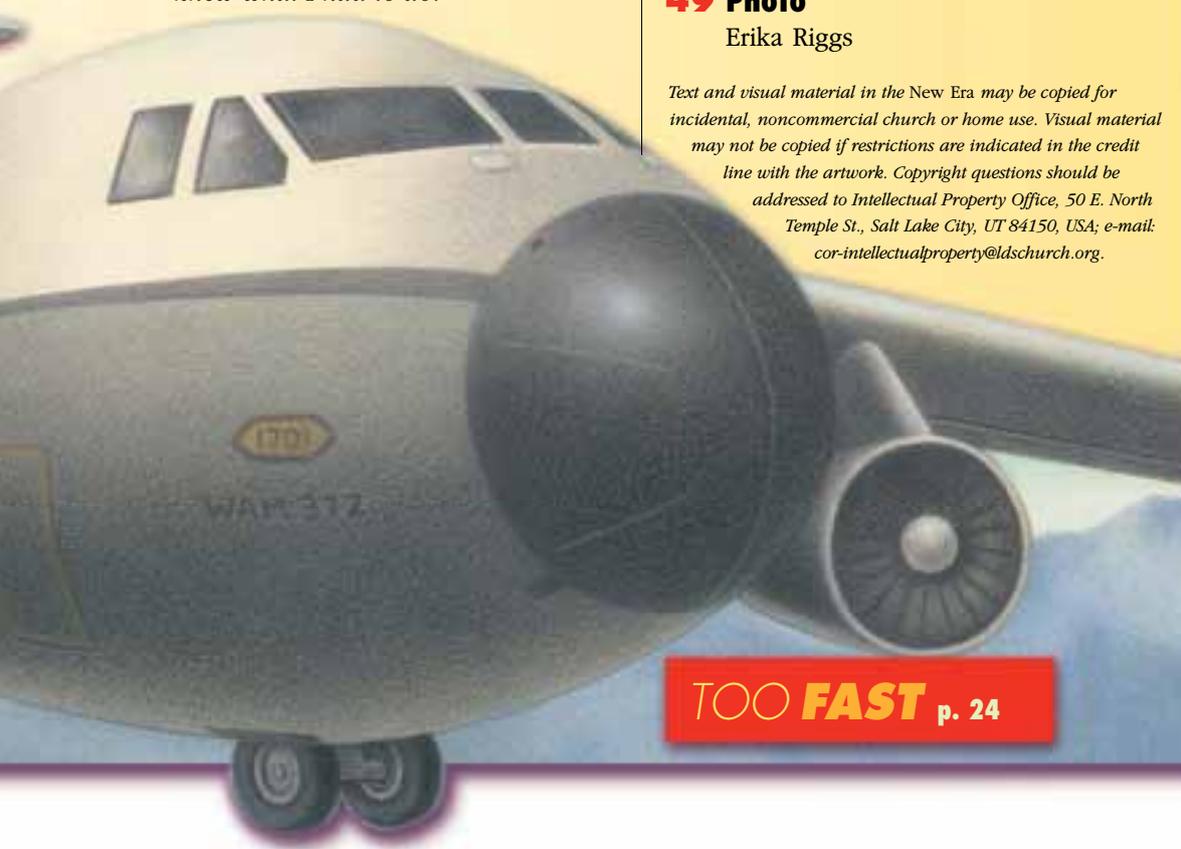
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an arm slow him down.  
See "Face Trials with  
Smiles" on p. 18.

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# BLESSINGS OF THE RESTORATION



*In my mind's eye I saw Joseph receiving knowledge, witness, and divine instructions as he became a blessed instrument in the hand of our Heavenly Father.*

BY ELDER DIETER F. UCHTDORF  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

*I count Joseph Smith among those whose testimony of Christ helped me to develop my own testimony of the Savior.*

**I**n my growing-up years in Germany, I attended church in many different locations and circumstances—in humble back rooms, in impressive villas, and in very functional modern chapels. All of these buildings had one important factor in common: the Spirit of God was present; the love of the Savior could be felt as we assembled as a branch or ward family.

The Zwickau chapel had an old air-driven organ. Every Sunday a young man was assigned to push up and down the sturdy lever operating the bellows to make the organ work. Even before I was an Aaronic Priesthood bearer, I sometimes had the great privilege to assist in this important task.

While the congregation sang our beloved hymns of the Restoration, I pumped with all my strength so the organ would not run out of wind. The eyes of the organist unmistakably indicated whether I was doing fine or needed to increase my efforts quickly. I always felt honored by the importance of this duty and the trust that the organist had placed in me. It was a wonderful feeling of accomplishment to have a responsibility

and to be part of this great work.

There was an additional benefit that came from this assignment: the bellows operator sat in a seat that offered a great view of a stained-glass window that beautified the front part of the chapel. The stained glass portrayed the First Vision, with Joseph Smith kneeling in the Sacred Grove, looking up toward heaven and into a pillar of light.

During the hymns of the congregation and even during talks and testimonies given by our members, I often looked at this depiction of a most sacred moment in world history. In my mind's eye I saw Joseph receiving knowledge, witness, and divine instructions as he became a blessed instrument in the hand of our Heavenly Father.

I felt a special spirit while looking at the beautiful scene in this window picture of a believing young boy in a sacred grove who made a courageous decision to earnestly pray to our Heavenly Father, who listened and responded lovingly to him.

Here I was, a young boy in post-World War II Germany, living in a city in ruins,



**T**hrough the Prophet Joseph Smith's work and sacrifice, I now have a true understanding of our Heavenly Father and His Son, our Redeemer and Savior, Jesus Christ, and I can feel the power of the Holy Ghost and know of Heavenly Father's plan for us, His children.

thousands of miles away from Palmyra in North America and more than a hundred years after the event actually took place. By the universal power of the Holy Ghost, I felt in my heart and in my mind that it was true, that Joseph Smith saw God and Jesus Christ and heard Their voices. The Spirit of God comforted my soul at this young age with an assurance of the reality of this sacred moment that resulted in the beginning of a worldwide movement destined to “roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth” (D&C 65:2). I believed Joseph Smith's testimony of that glorious experience in the Sacred Grove then, and I know it now. God has spoken to mankind again!

#### **A Testimony of My Own**

Looking back, I am grateful for so many friends who helped me in my youth to gain a testimony of the restored Church of Jesus Christ. First I exercised simple faith in their testimonies, and then I received the divine witness of the Spirit to my mind and to my heart. I count Joseph Smith among those whose testimony of Christ helped me to develop my own testimony of the Savior. Before I recognized the tutoring of the Spirit testifying to me that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, my youthful heart felt that he was a friend of God and would therefore, quite naturally, also be a friend of mine. I knew I could trust Joseph Smith.

The scriptures teach us that spiritual gifts are given to those who ask of God, who love Him, and who keep His commandments (see D&C 46:9). “All have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.

“To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby” (D&C 46:11–12).

Today I know that my young testimony benefited greatly from the testimony of the



Prophet Joseph Smith and many friends in the Church who knew “by the Holy Ghost . . . that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world” (D&C 46:13). Their good examples, caring love, and helping hands blessed me to receive another special gift of the Spirit described in the scriptures as I was yearning for more light and truth: “To others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue [faithfully]” (D&C 46:14). What a wonderful and precious gift this is!

As we truly humble ourselves, we will be blessed with this gift to have faith and to hope for things which are not seen but are true (see Alma 32:21). As we experiment upon the words given to us by the scriptures and the living prophets—even if we only have a desire to believe—and do not resist the Spirit of the Lord, our souls will be enlarged and our understanding will be

enlightened (see Alma 32:26–28).

The Savior Himself explained this merciful principle clearly to all the world in His great intercessory prayer, given not only for His Apostles but for all the Saints, even for us today, wherever we might be living. He said:

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:20–21; emphasis added).

This is how Joseph Smith’s First Vision blesses our own personal lives, the lives of families, and eventually the whole human family—we come to believe in Jesus Christ through the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Prophets and apostles throughout the history of mankind have had divine manifestations similar to Joseph’s. Moses saw God face-to-face and learned that he was a son of God “in the similitude of [His] Only Begotten” (see Moses 1:1–6). The Apostle Paul testified that the resurrected Jesus Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus and made Paul one of His great missionaries (see Acts 26:9–23). Hearing Paul’s witness of his heavenly vision during the trial at Caesarea, the powerful King Agrippa admitted, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28).

And there were many other ancient prophets who also bore powerful testimony of Christ. All of these manifestations, ancient and modern, lead those who believe to the divine source of all righteousness and hope—to God, our Heavenly Father, and to His Son, Jesus Christ.

God has spoken to Joseph Smith for the purpose of blessing all of God’s children with His mercy and love, even in times of uncertainties and insecurities, of wars and rumors of wars, of natural and personal disasters. The Savior said, “Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive” (3 Ne. 9:14). And all who accept this invitation will be “encircled about with the matchless bounty of his love” (Alma 26:15).

Through our faith in the personal witness of the Prophet Joseph and the reality of the First Vision, through study and prayer, deep and sincere, we will be blessed with a firm faith in the Savior of the world, who spoke to Joseph “on the morning of a beautiful, clear

day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty” (JS—H 1:14).

Faith in Jesus Christ and a testimony of Him and His universal Atonement is not just a doctrine with great theological value. Such faith is a universal gift, glorious for all cultural regions of this earth, irrespective of language, race, color, nationality, or socioeconomic circumstance. The powers of reason may be used to try to understand this gift, but those who feel its effects most deeply are those who are willing to accept its blessings, which come from a pure and clean life of following the path of true repentance and living the commandments of God.

### Remembering the Prophet Joseph Smith

As we remember and honor the Prophet Joseph Smith, my heart reaches out to him in gratitude. He was a good, honest, humble, intelligent, and courageous young man with a heart of gold and an unshaken faith in God. He had integrity. In response to his humble prayer, the heavens opened again. Joseph Smith had actually seen a vision. He knew it, and he knew that God knew it, and he could not deny it. (See JS—H 1:25.)

Through his work and sacrifice, I now have a true understanding of our Heavenly Father and His Son, our Redeemer and Savior, Jesus Christ, and I can feel the power of the Holy Ghost and know of Heavenly Father’s plan for us, His children. For me, these are truly the fruits of the First Vision.

I am grateful that early in my life I was blessed with a simple faith that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, that he saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, in a vision. He translated the Book of Mormon by the gift and power of God. That testimony has been confirmed to me over and over again.

As one of the least among you, but in my calling as one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, I testify that He truly lives, that He is the Messiah. I do have a personal witness of Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. I received this knowledge by the unspeakable peace and power of the Spirit of God. The desire of my heart and of my mind is to be pure and faithful in serving Him now and forever. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. **NE**

*From “The Fruits of the First Vision,” Ensign, May 2005.*

# SMALL MIRACLE

*My baby brother didn't live long, but because of him, our family is now stronger.*

BY CATHERINE LOVELAND

*When we went to the temple together as a family to be sealed to Ronnie and Candace for time and all eternity, I knew Michael was there with us too.*

If you had told me I would be standing inside a temple sealing room at only 17 years old, I would have laughed. No, wedding bells didn't chime, but there I was, inside the sealing room of the house of the Lord. It's amazing how life has a way of turning out.

In January 1995 my second baby brother was born. We called him Michael Jon Loveland. He was beautiful with tiny hands, an adorable little nose, and eyes you couldn't stop smiling at. There was an instant connection between us.

As I looked around the hospital room at my mom, dad, older sister, and two younger brothers, I remember thinking nothing could ever change the serenity I then felt knowing that this was my family. This was the family I would be spending eternity with.

In the weeks that followed, however, it became clear that something wasn't right. My mother began noticing things about Michael Jon that only a mother could notice. Her concerns were soon justified only a few weeks later.

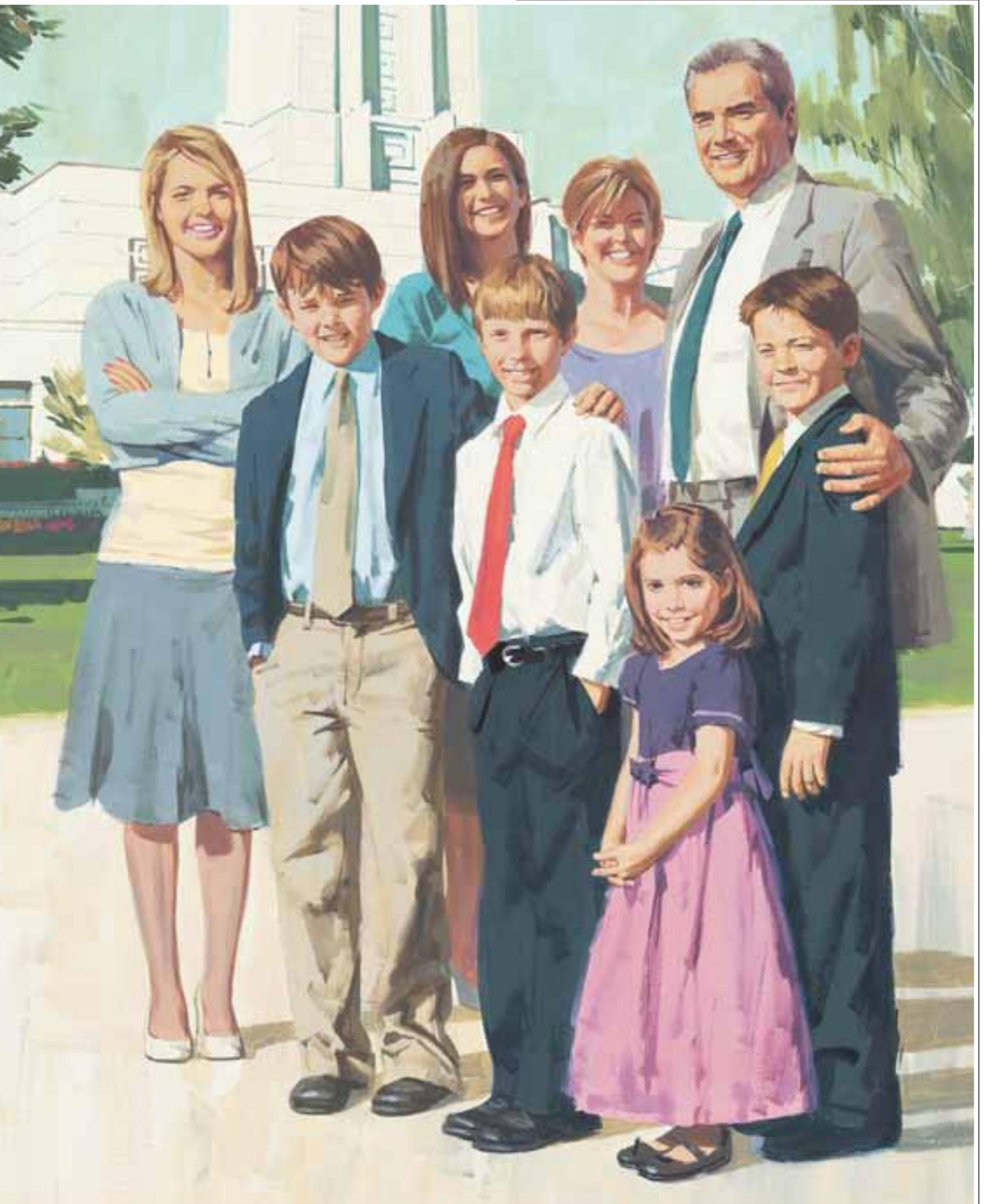
I can still clearly remember the night my

parents reluctantly told us the news. I'm still not sure how they managed to get it out, but somehow through tears and quiet sobs, we soon discovered what the problem had been. Michael Jon, my new infant brother, had been diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor.

The days that followed are now fairly hazy. I can't even begin to describe the countless emotions that ran through me. Fear, confusion, anger. How could this be? He was only six weeks old! How could something so vile and destructive be inside my baby brother, so beautiful and pure?

The doctors said he had weeks, maybe a month. After prayerful consideration, my parents decided that bringing Michael home would be the best decision. In order to do this, however, my parents would need to be trained and aided by a team of home doctors and nurses who provided hospice care.

Having Michael spend time at home, as opposed to the hospital, was a quiet blessing in more ways than one. I still have fond memories of silently going into his room at night and just holding him, holding and rocking the small miracle that God had



placed in our lives and would just as quickly be taking away. But aside from the fact that we all got to spend time with him, there was another small miracle that was slowly taking place.

The rest of my story, however, generally revolves around one of the hospice nurses in charge of taking care of Michael. As the weeks passed and Michael's health began taking a dramatic plunge, she was constantly at our house, doing everything she could to relieve the strain my parents were feeling.

In April 1995, on my mom's birthday, which was also Easter Sunday that year, Michael's last day came. It's one of the few times in my life that I have ever seen my father cry. It seemed so unreal! Yet this valiant spirit had

slipped in and

out of our  
lives in  
only  
three  
months.

The impact  
his life had  
left, however,  
will never be  
forgotten.

At the time,  
though, it still  
seemed pointless.  
Why would Heavenly  
Father allow  
Michael to go

through such tremendous amounts of pain and suffering? It all seemed so unfair. I had lost my baby brother, and all for what? I would never get to tease him about his first-grade crush, never get to congratulate him on making the high school baseball team, and never write letters while he served a mission. But, oh, how shortsighted earth life can leave us. At the time, I could not even fathom the remarkable mission Michael had already been called to serve.

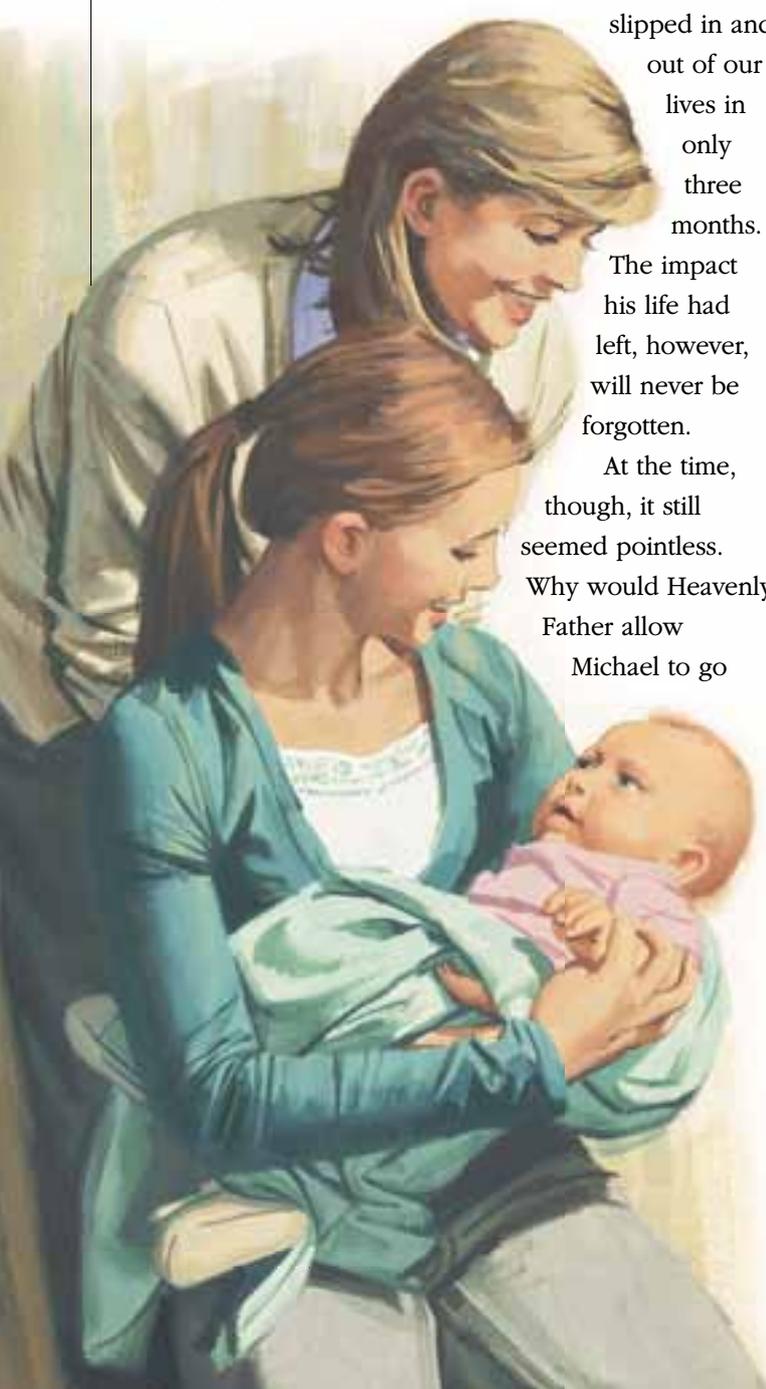
With Michael gone, it was time the team of hospice nurses moved on. For whatever reason, however, my mother and the head nurse remained in contact, frequently bumping into each other at the grocery store or other activities. Of course, it was viewed as merely coincidence.

Then it happened, one of those rare occasions when you can actually step back and see the pieces begin to fall into place. Two years after Michael's death, my mother received a call from the hospice nurse. Due to some unusual circumstances, two of her grandchildren were in need of a stable home.

I came home from Mutual to find a new baby girl, only 10 weeks old, lying on the sofa. "Where did she come from? How long will she be staying?" Within the next four weeks, we received her brother. Two children had suddenly been dropped into our lives without certainty as to how long they would be staying. Well, five years later, that question was answered. They'll be staying for eternity.

We ended up adopting both David and Candace in February 2002, and five months later I found myself stepping inside the sealing room of the Idaho Falls temple. The temple sealing was incredible. Words can hardly describe the spirit that was present. I couldn't stop crying as I witnessed David and Candace sealed to our family for all of time and eternity. I have no doubt that Michael was there as well. After all, had Michael not been born into our family, we never would have had these two children introduced into our lives.

It's amazing how life has a way of turning out. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Even the hardest trials are placed in our lives to serve as an anchor to strengthen us. We just need to have the faith and courage to endure to the end, trusting in the Lord. **NE**



BY KATHY C. WEBB

Last year's Mutual theme, "Arise and Shine Forth," reminded me of a girl I went to high school with named Lisa. She was a cheerleader. It was a large school, and I didn't know her well.

One Saturday night I went to a farewell party for Lisa and her younger sister, who were moving to Idaho. Some kids were drinking alcohol, and they repeatedly offered beer to Lisa and her sister. I even heard one person shout, "Come on, just one drink! It's your party, just one drink for us!"

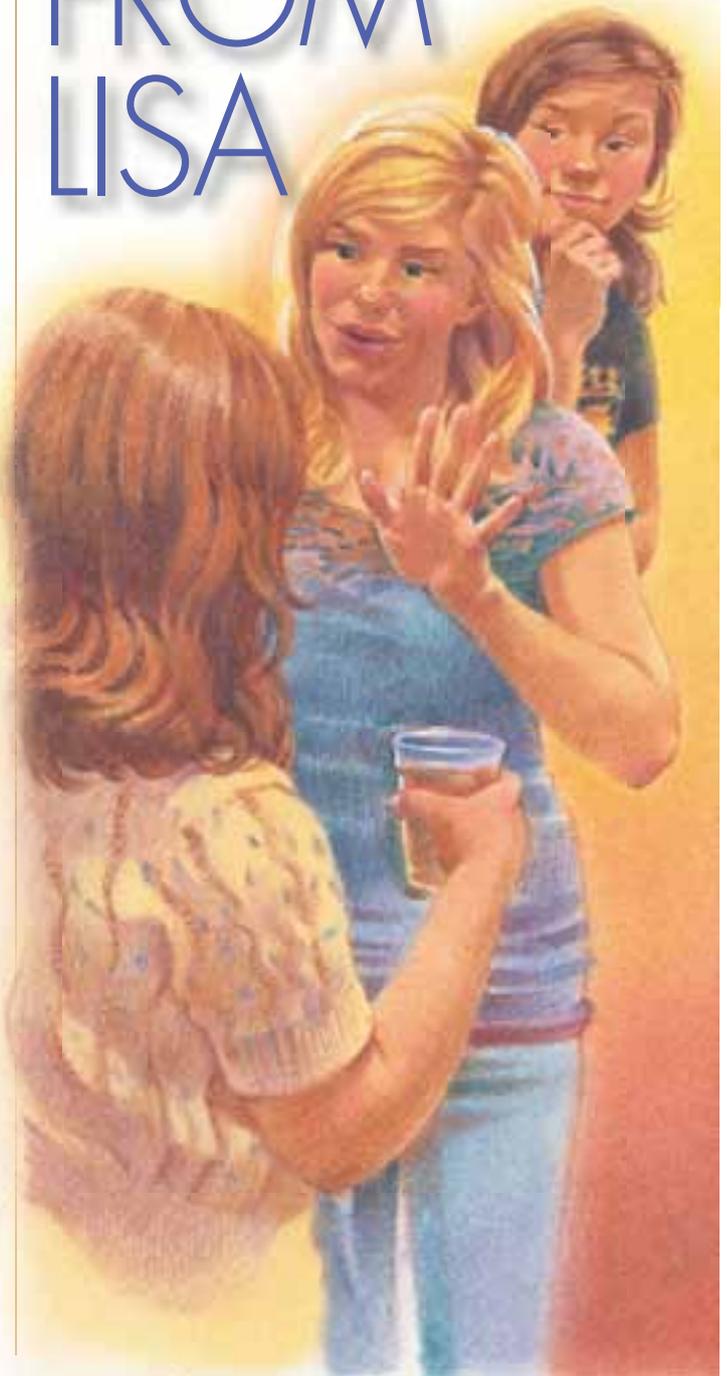
But Lisa and her sister both refused the drinks. They just smiled and said no. I thought being a popular cheerleader meant that you did the "popular" thing—drink. I wasn't a member of the Church then, but their strength and courage surprised me.

Four years later, when I was 20, I was introduced to the Church through a scuba-diving friend of mine. After being taught the missionary lessons for six weeks, I gained a strong testimony and was baptized by one of the missionaries.

One Sunday morning at church, in the rented meeting hall where our branch met, I overheard a conversation about a name that sounded familiar. Someone mentioned a man named President Gurr, the former branch president. I asked about him and learned that he and his family had moved to Idaho a few years earlier. His daughters were the girls I remembered from school. Even though I hadn't known either of them well, their example of strength and courage had impressed me. They had truly shone forth by choosing to be true to their religion and living righteously.

After serving a mission to Sweden, I moved to Provo to attend BYU. I worked part time at the MTC. One day I passed a young woman in the hall who looked familiar. I glanced at her nametag and saw that her name was Sister Gurr. I was surprised to see Lisa, the former cheerleader from my high school! I stopped her and told her who I was, and she was equally surprised. I then thanked her for living true to her standards and keeping her covenants at that party so long ago. She was truly a wonderful example and affected my life for good by staying true to who she was and what she believed. **NE**

# WHAT I LEARNED FROM LISA





# Talking with Dad

BY KJERSTEN JOHNSON

**W**e had just finished dinner at my grandparents' cabin, and I was outside playing with my five little brothers when my dad walked out and called to me.

Of course when your dad calls you like that, you're afraid you may be in trouble. So I trudged over and mumbled, "Yeah, Dad?"

Surprisingly, he said, "How would you like to go on a motorcycle ride with me?" I'm sure my eyes must have widened to the size of golf balls as I quickly responded, "Yes, of course I want to go."

Soon my dad was leading the way as we each drove a motorcycle down a path that winds through the majestic forest surrounding our cabin and then climbs to the top of a hill. As we rode, I was so excited that I could barely keep the throttle on low. Once or twice my dad had to tell me to slow down.

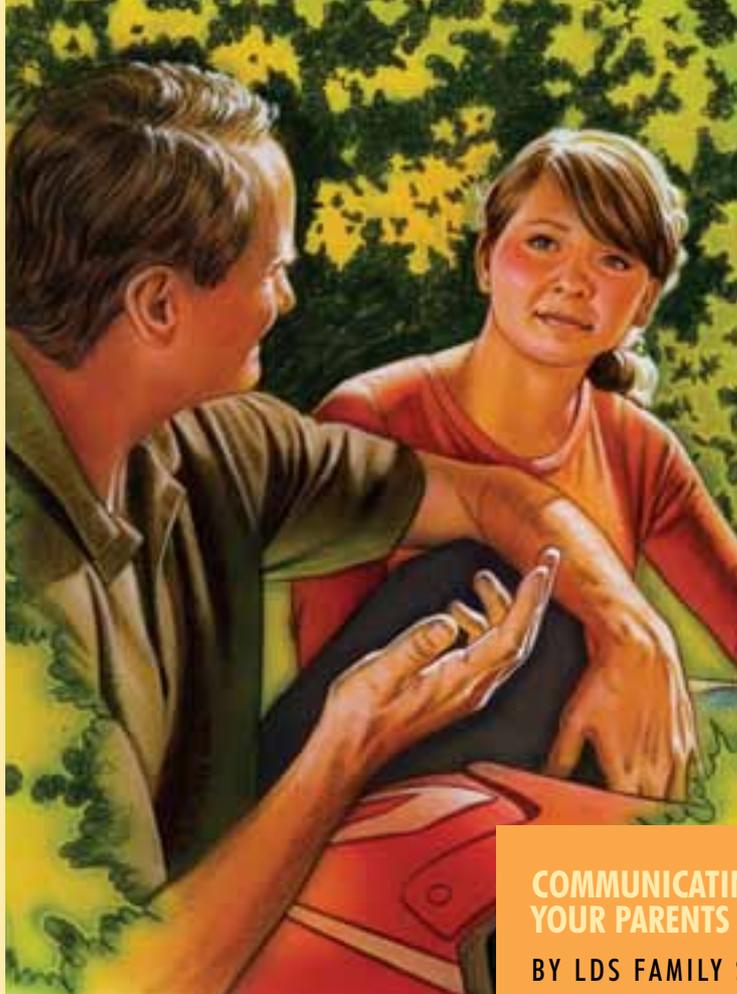
My mind wandered as we rode. I was curious why I had been given this special treat and my brothers hadn't. When we reached the top of the mountain, Dad said, "This looks like a nice place to stop and rest." So we parked our motorcycles and sat down

on some rocks overlooking the forest. We were both quiet for a moment, enjoying the beauty around us. As I glanced over at my dad, I noticed his thoughtful stare and knew something was coming.

He and I had never really talked a lot. I guess it was just too hard for him to express himself to anyone but my mom. Then he interrupted my thoughts and said, "Kjersten, your mother and I have been talking, and we have decided you are now mature enough to know some of the details concerning our marriage and family." I could tell by the words he used and by the way he said them that he had been planning this talk for a while.

His voice was soft as he began. "Your mother and I first met at the fire station where I was a student firefighter, and she worked in the office. We began dating, and I realized she was different from the other young women I had dated before. I was a carefree young man who had been brought up in another church. But I hadn't really paid too much attention to religion.

*I was so excited to go on a ride with just my dad. We ended up talking in a way we never had before.*



“I had very few values or goals at that time,” he continued, “and I really didn’t care.” He leaned forward and intently confided in me. “Kjersten, your mother set the most shining example of righteous living I had ever seen.” As he said this, a warm feeling swept over me.

My dad told me details concerning their marriage, my birth, and our family that I had never before heard. He told me the story of his conversion to the Church and how because they were first married civilly, they had to wait a year before they could be sealed in the temple. He also shared with me some of the adventures he and Mom went through in that first year of marriage. For the first time, pieces to a few little puzzles fell

into place. I finally understood why my parents’ marriage and sealing dates are different and why they say that the first year of their marriage was the hardest they ever had.

As he related these things to me, his eyes would sometimes flicker with sadness and other times crinkle with laughter. I don’t remember exactly how much I understood back then, but I distinctly remember the feelings of surprise, confusion, and love that alternately came over me.

This experience really made an impact on me. I realized

what a miracle families are, and it gave me a greater understanding of God’s plan. I also gained a greater faith in the gospel and an appreciation for the effects it can have on people’s lives. We discussed many things on that mountain, but there is one thing I will not forget. I have never felt so much gratitude and thankfulness in my heart as I did when my father told me of his strong love for God, the gospel, my mother, and our family. I realized the numerous ways the gospel had touched his life, as well as mine.

My father and I became very close that day. For the first time, I saw him as a real person with feelings and emotions and not just some ruling body who had to give me permission to have fun. I also think my dad learned more about me too. I will never forget that special talk with my dad and the feelings of love and understanding we shared. **NE**

## COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR PARENTS

BY LDS FAMILY SERVICES

These tips can help you have positive communication with your parents and others.

- **Be open to opportunities for talking.** Sometimes opportunities for good communication arise when you’re least expecting them.
- **Listen with your heart.** Try to understand the motive and intent of what your parent is saying.
- **Show interest.** An attentive listener helps others feel safe enough to share their feelings.
- **Periodically summarize what you hear.** This shows that you’re sincerely listening to what your parent is saying.
- **Ask questions.** Questions can help both of you know that you’re on the right track.
- **Remember that parents are people too.** They have feelings, and they want to be close to you.

As you and your parents practice good communication skills, you can have a closer relationship that blesses you both.

# REPENTANCE

*The Savior said we must forsake our sins. Joseph Smith taught the same truth—that we must repent to become more like God.*

**A**s a prophet of God, Joseph Smith was called to preach repentance to all people (see D&C 6:9). Throughout his life he learned how important it is to repent in order to draw closer to God and receive forgiveness (see JS—H 1:28–29; D&C 3), as well as what is required for sincere repentance (see D&C 58:42–43). Here are some of his teachings on this topic.

## BY REPENTING, WE BECOME MORE LIKE GOD

*“If you wish to go where God is, you must be like God, or possess the principles which God possesses, for if we are not drawing towards God in principle, we are going from Him and drawing towards the devil. . . . Search your hearts, and see if you are like God. I have searched mine, and feel to repent of all my sins.”*

## DO NOT PUT OFF REPENTANCE

*“We should take warning and not wait for the death-bed to repent . . . , for it is the will of God that man should repent and serve Him in health, and in the strength and power of his mind, in order to secure His blessing, and not wait until he is called to die.”*

## TRULY FORSAKE YOUR SINS

*“Repentance is a thing that cannot be trifled with every day. Daily transgression and daily repentance is not that which is pleasing in the sight of God.” **NE***

*From Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 72, 73.*

# Q & A

*“Sometimes my mom and I don’t get along. We say things we shouldn’t and end up with hurt feelings. I pray to love her, but the good feelings last only so long. What can I do to improve our relationship?”*

## NEW ERA

**T**hat’s great that you want to improve your relationship with your mother. A good relationship with her will be a blessing. But a good relationship doesn’t mean you will agree with her on everything. And that’s OK. What isn’t OK is hurting one another as you express your differences of opinion.

As a first step to improve your relationship with your mom, try to understand her. That will be hard to do when you have hurt feelings, so talk when you are both calm. You could start by reading this article together and then talking about the issues you argue about—one issue at a time. When you have understood her, take your turn to share your thoughts and feelings, without accusing her.

You and your mom could even agree on a few basic rules such as speaking kindly, talking about things before they become a huge issue, and taking turns listening to one another. The Lord taught, “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger” (Proverbs 15:1), and, “Let one speak at

■ **Talk to your mother when you are both calm, and try to understand her.**

■ **Make sure the Holy Ghost can be with you and your mother as you talk.**

■ **Think about what you could change in yourself to have a better relationship with her.**

■ **Pray for humility, charity, and a change of heart.**

*The New Era’s response assumes that you and your mother are not abusive to one another. If abuse is involved, please talk to your bishop or branch president.*

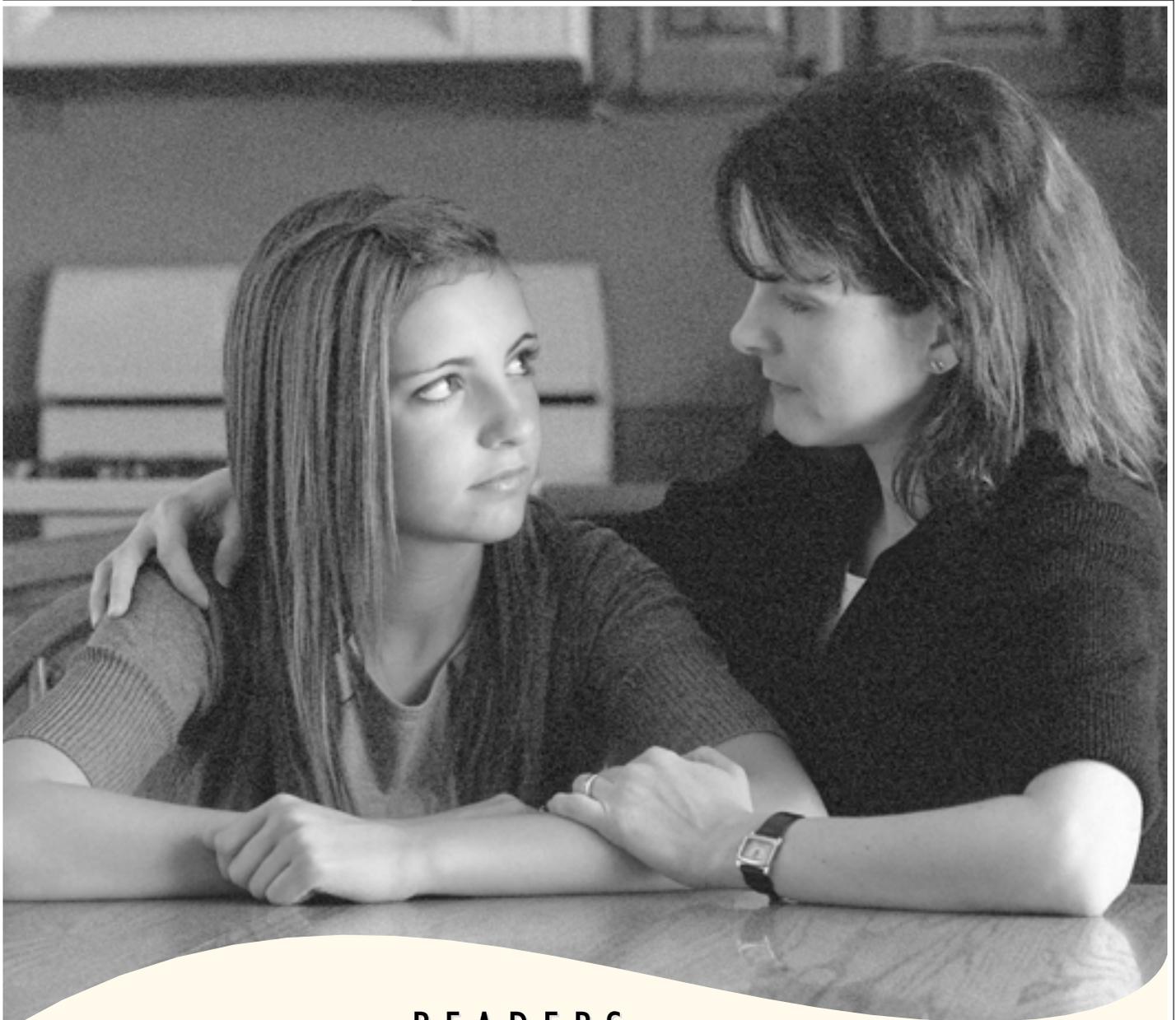
a time and let all listen” (D&C 88:122). The Spirit leaves when there’s contention—doing these things will help keep the Spirit with you.

Also, take an honest look at yourself. What are you doing that is keeping you from having a better relationship with your mother? Are you obeying the family rules? Do you need to open up more? Do you need to be more respectful?

Families are important to Heavenly Father, so prayer will help. You can pray for a change of heart toward your mom. Thankfully, we can become better people with the Lord’s help. With a change of heart, you can talk to your mom with more love and understanding, and then she may be more likely to talk to you that way too.

You can pray to see her good qualities. Compliment her. Tell her you love her. Thank her for the things she has done for you.

You can also pray for humility. Being humble will help you see that your mom really does care about you, that it’s important to listen to her, and that she is saying things that could



## READERS

help you. Being humble will help you see that *what* is right is more important than *who* is right.

Finally, remember that the Lord has asked parents to guide and teach their children, and He has asked children to honor their parents. Keep this in mind, especially when your mother talks to you about family rules or right and wrong.

In time, if you are prayerful and loving and try to honor your mother, your relationship with her will improve. **NE**



***Continue to pray to love your mom, and pray that Heavenly Father will help you keep your thoughts and words positive and uplifting.***

***If you want loving feelings to last, you need to develop "the pure love of Christ" (Moroni 7:47). When I have trouble getting along with a missionary companion, I have found that serving him helps me develop charity toward him and improves our relationship.***

Elder Toby Pontious, 21, California  
Arcadia Mission



***Do things that will let your mother know that you love her and that she is important to you. Help her with chores. Invite her to come with you***

***to a fun activity. Be humble, and always pray to our Heavenly Father for her. The most important thing is to say, "I'm sorry."***  
Gena G., 19, Basilan, Philippines

***I recently learned some things that help me not to fight with my mother. I learned that a hard word arouses anger, but a loving word can resolve the problem or at least***

**improve it. I learned that a mother is always "right," for even when she errs, she is trying to do the best for her child. Pray to have the Spirit, and this will become easier.**

Fernando V., 18, São Paulo, Brazil



**One day I talked back to my mother. Each of us yelled at the other. Our words were hurtful. Later, I opened my scriptures and read about love. I decided to ask my mother to forgive me. She had left, and when she returned, she put a note on my pillow. She said she was sorry. She just expected me to help her more with household chores. After reading her message, I hurried to tell my mother how sorry I was and how much I loved her, while giving her a big hug. It was a wonderful moment. Since that time, the message of love revealed to me in the scriptures has stayed with me, and I have tried to avoid quarreling by speaking to her with kindness. Tell your mother you love her, and she will do the same. Control yourself when something she does irritates you, and instead think about all of her good qualities. Seek to know what she expects of you. I am certain that by your doing this, the situation will resolve itself.**

Raquel L., 21, Bourgogne, France



**Pick a day to go out for a mother-daughter day. Spend the day together, doing anything that will help you see the good qualities in each other. Tell her how much you love her. Soon you will start to agree more and find things you have in common.**

Lydia H., 14, Iowa

**I didn't want my conversations with my mother to always end with an argument, so I decided to**



**Y**ou are precious to your parents. You may not think that sometimes, when you get a little careless about what you think of your father and your mother. All of their hopes and dreams rest in you. They pray for you. They worry about you. They think of you. They love you. Be good to your parents. Treat them with love and respect and kindness. It won't hurt you once in a while to tell them that you love them."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "Inspirational Thoughts," *Ensign*, Aug. 2000, 4.

**change how I communicated. I tried to say a prayer before we were about to engage in a fight. I also tried to think ahead about what to say or not say. My mother and I have been getting along much better ever since.**

Lin H., 17, Taichung, Taiwan



**Try spending quality time with your mom. Do something you both enjoy, something where you can interact with each other. Or try something new so you can both learn it together. Also, put yourself in her shoes. She might be under stress. Ask her how her day went. Most of all, keep praying.**

Kyelee S., 12, Utah

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

## NEXT QUESTION

**"I'm afraid that someone might offer me alcohol or drugs. I don't like to say no to people or make them mad at me. How can I make sure I won't give in?"**

**Send your answer by March 15, 2008, to:**

**New Era, Questions & Answers 3/08**

**50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420**

**Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA**

**Or e-mail: [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)**

**The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter:**

FULL NAME \_\_\_\_\_

BIRTH DATE \_\_\_\_\_

WARD (or branch) \_\_\_\_\_

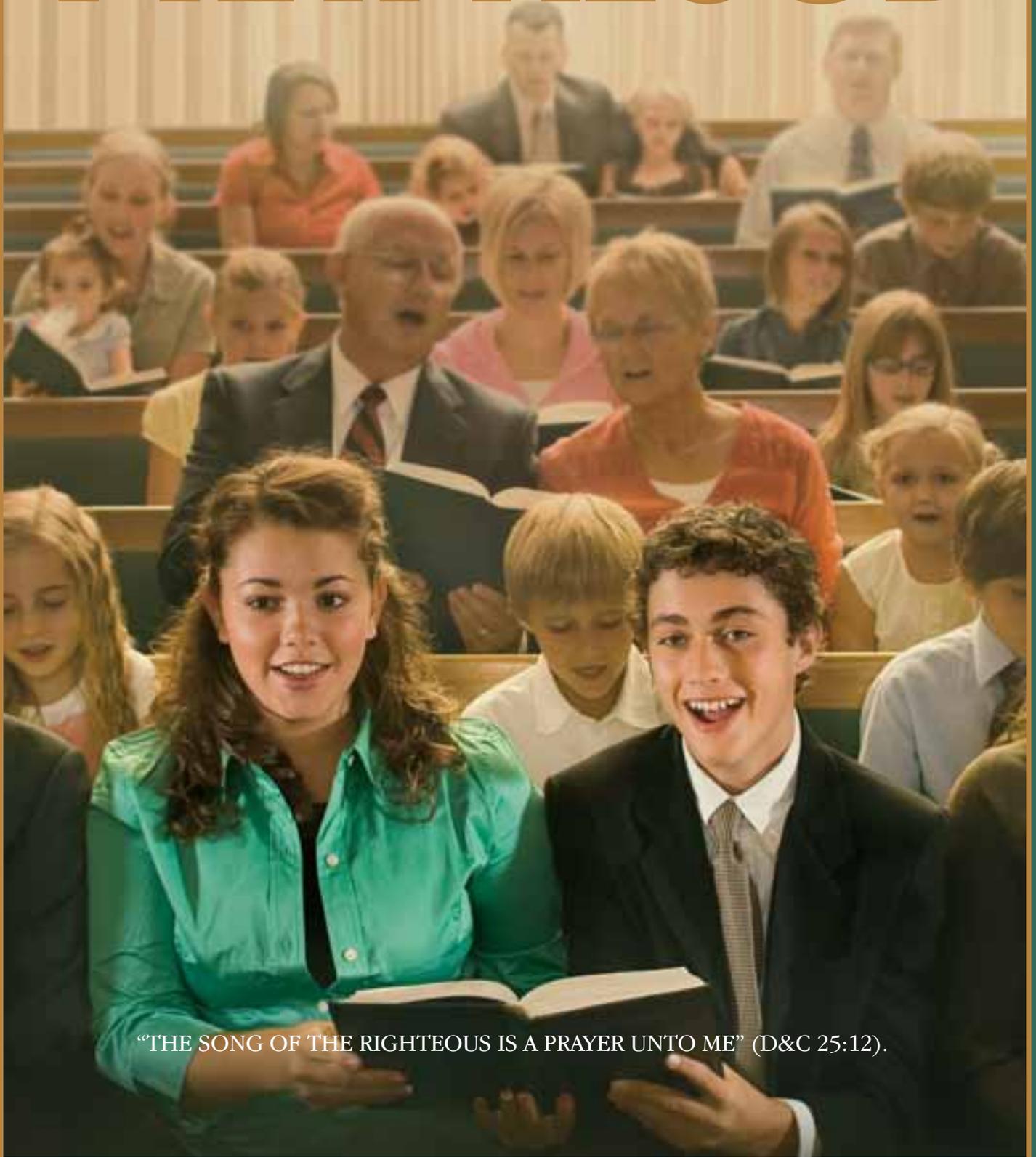
STAKE (or district) \_\_\_\_\_

**I grant permission to print response and photo:**

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

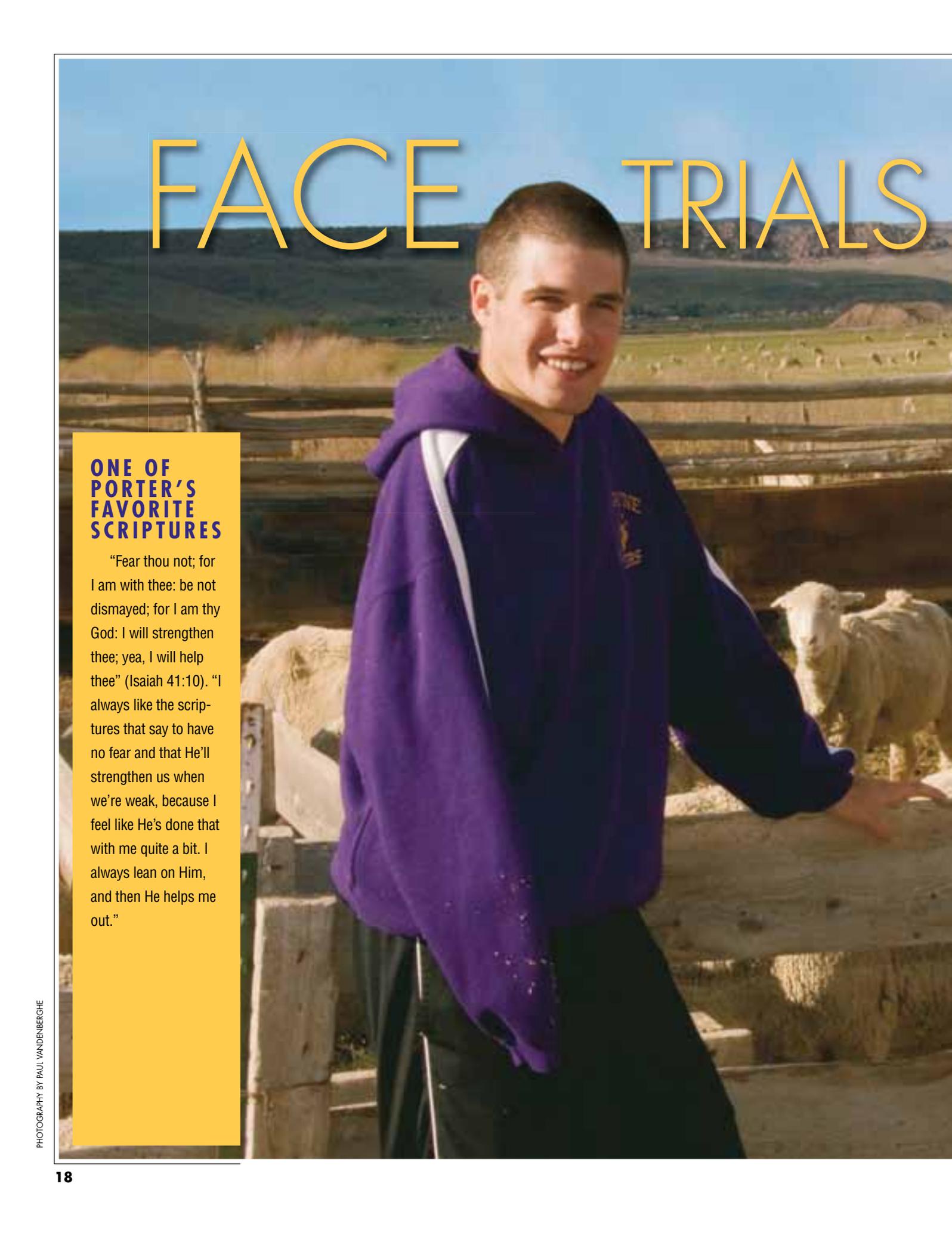
PARENT'S SIGNATURE (if you are under 18) \_\_\_\_\_

# PRAY ALOUD



“THE SONG OF THE RIGHTEOUS IS A PRAYER UNTO ME” (D&C 25:12).

# FACE TRIALS

A young man with short brown hair, wearing a purple zip-up hoodie with white stripes on the sleeves, is smiling and looking towards the camera. He is standing in a field with a wooden fence in front of him. In the background, there are several white sheep grazing in a field under a clear blue sky. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

## ONE OF PORTER'S FAVORITE SCRIPTURES

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee” (Isaiah 41:10). “I always like the scriptures that say to have no fear and that He’ll strengthen us when we’re weak, because I feel like He’s done that with me quite a bit. I always lean on Him, and then He helps me out.”

# WITH SMILES

*That's the advice from a young man who knows a lot about overcoming obstacles.*

BY DAVID A. EDWARDS  
Church Magazines

When Porter Ellett of Loa, Utah, sets his mind to something, he usually accomplishes it—whether it's perfecting his curveball, reading the Book of Mormon all the way through, or even doing something as daunting as learning to tie his shoes.

Tying shoes? Well, try doing it one-handed.

You see, when Porter was four years old, he was in an auto accident and lost the use of his right arm. Eventually it was surgically removed. But he hasn't let that slow him down.

His athletic feats are impressive: He was most valuable player for Utah Division 1A baseball; he was a member of the state championship baseball team and his school's basketball and track teams, including the first-place squad in the 4x400-meter relay; and he completed a mini-triathlon.

He has also received his Eagle Scout award, and in the summer he works as a lifeguard.

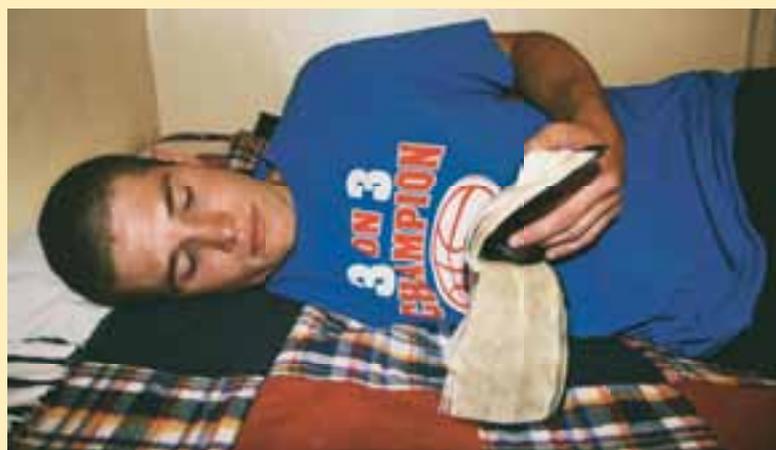
Although having only one arm may make his accomplishments seem all the more extraordinary, Porter just shrugs it off.

"Sometimes I wonder if having two arms would be confusing," he says. "To me, it's just weird to comprehend that—moving two at the same time. It would just be kind of awkward."

His friends treat him as though he were no different from anyone else, and that suits him just fine.

"My friends forget all the time," he says. "They'll ask me to do something, and I'll say, 'You've got to have two hands to do

**P**orter Ellett places his trust in the Lord and doesn't let having one arm slow him down.





**P**orter plays several sports, including basketball, baseball, and track.

that.' It's a compliment, kind of. I think it's neat."

Of course, it took a great deal of patience, practice, and determination for Porter to get where he is now. "When I was younger," he says, "I just wanted to be even with everyone else or better. I didn't want to be the kid who was picked last."

His drive to excel was magnified by the fact that he had to overcome unusual obstacles, like learning to tie those shoes.

"That took forever," he says. "I didn't tie my shoes until I was about 10. I'd just walk up to people and say, 'Will you tie my shoe?' Now I can do it pretty easily."

Of course, his parents offered him an incentive. They told him that if he wanted the new pair of sneakers he was so eager to get, he would have to learn to tie them. So, though it wasn't easy, he did it.

Porter is grateful that his parents weren't easy on him. "They wouldn't always just help me when I felt like I couldn't do something," he says. "I eventually had to do it myself. That's better than anything."

His parents didn't let him off the hook with chores, either. And when your family runs a sheep farm, that means lots of hard

work, including moving large sprinkler pipes in the alfalfa fields, feeding the sheep, and helping out during lambing season.

"The first time I moved pipe," he says, "I got so tired I thought I was going to faint. I got halfway through and just set the pipe down and laid down in the middle of the field. My back was sore for a week, but I was OK from then on."

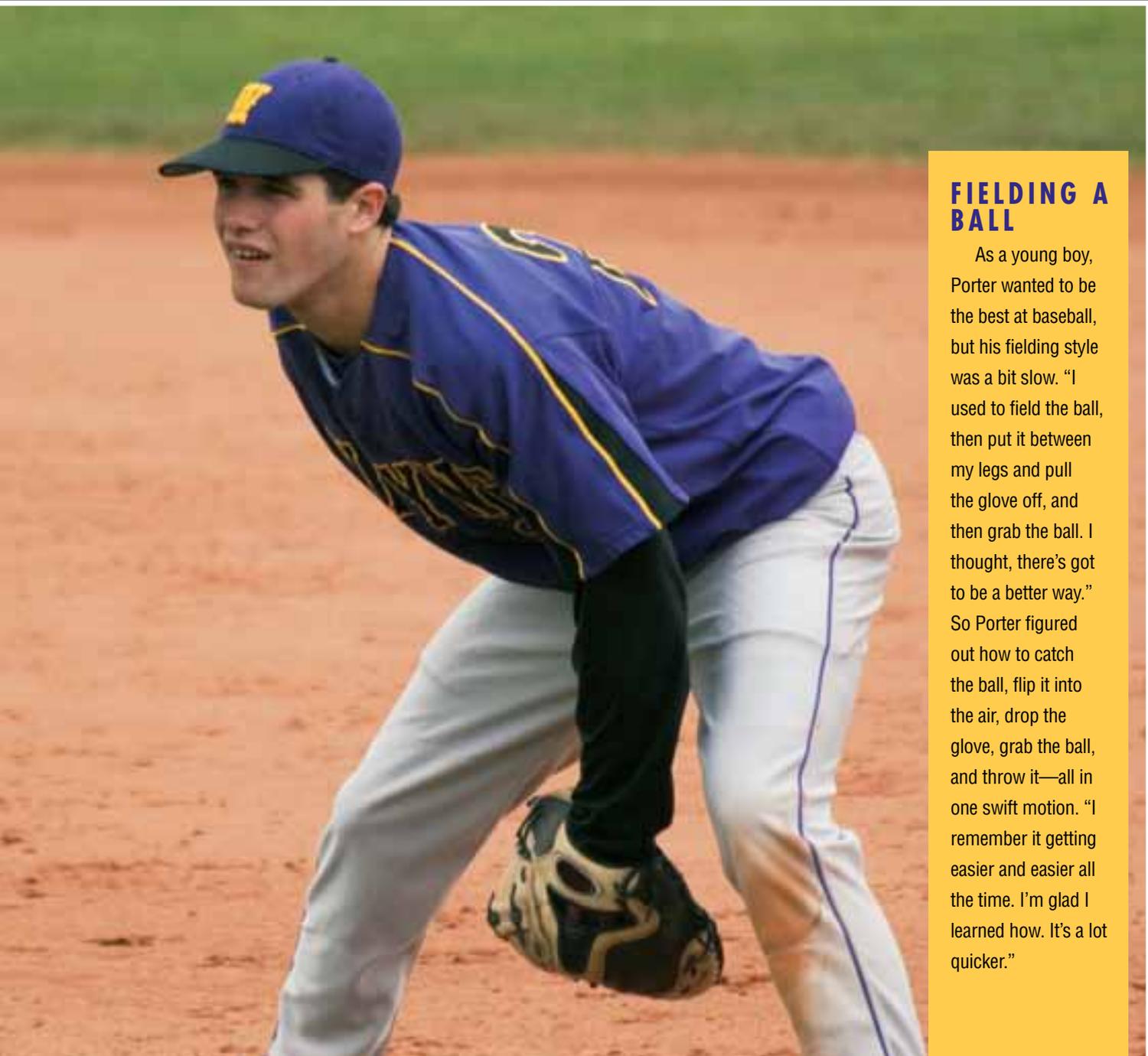
Another thing he has learned to do by himself is to gain a testimony of the gospel.

"Some people live off what other people believe," he says, "but you have to find out for yourself. The feeling you get when you study and pray—there's no way you could deny it, really. You can't change what you felt. It's built upon solid teachings and solid feelings."

As with his other goals, Porter has shown determination in reading the scriptures. "When I first started reading the Book of Mormon a few years ago, I'd get most of the way through it, but then I'd stop," says Porter. "But the last couple of times I actually read the whole thing, and it's amazing how it all fits together—how everything is part of God's plan."

To Porter, the central message of the





## FIELDING A BALL

As a young boy, Porter wanted to be the best at baseball, but his fielding style was a bit slow. “I used to field the ball, then put it between my legs and pull the glove off, and then grab the ball. I thought, there’s got to be a better way.” So Porter figured out how to catch the ball, flip it into the air, drop the glove, grab the ball, and throw it—all in one swift motion. “I remember it getting easier and easier all the time. I’m glad I learned how. It’s a lot quicker.”



**P**orter's family has always supported him and set high standards for him. Porter has five sisters, whom he loves a great deal. He says his older sisters, Sarah, Nancy, and Monique, left a legacy for him to follow because they were exceptional students, athletes, and overall examples. "They go on and do great stuff;" Porter says, "so there's not much you can do but follow up. You can't let down. None of the kids around school will ask me to do anything bad, because they know I'll say no, just because all my sisters were so good."

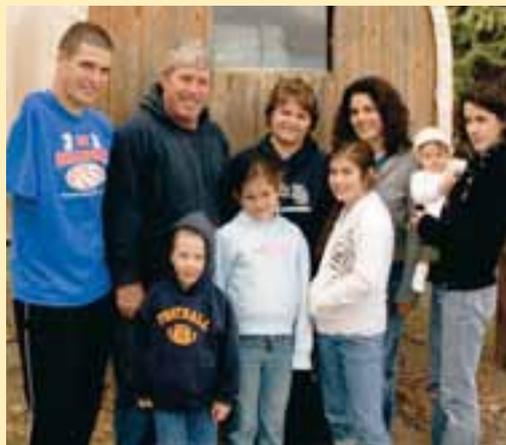
Book of Mormon is "that Jesus Christ came and atoned for us and that God cares for all His children. He looks out for us and watches over us, especially when we search Him out."

His own experience has taught him these lessons as well. "Some of the things that I've been through—I know that there's no way I could do it alone," he says. "I can't do anything without God."

Porter plans to continue relying on God when he serves a full-time mission. "I plan on just being a tool in the Lord's hands," he says. "When I go on a mission, I just want to let the Spirit teach. What better way is there to teach? The Spirit can do much more than I ever could."

Although he's endured many trials, Porter says his biggest challenge has been simply accepting that he's different.

"I don't know if you could call it a gift—losing an arm. But when you're different, why would you try to change it? I see it as a blessing, almost. I wonder if sometimes God allows others to see you overcome your weaknesses so that your example can help make them stronger. I think that people see me and what I've gone through and how it doesn't hold me back, and it



## PORTER ON DATING

"Sometimes I'll just look at a girl, and I can tell if my arm bugs her or not. There are girls who are scared of me, and there are girls who want to talk to me just because I have one arm and because they want to be different. No offense, but those are the two kinds of girls I don't want to hang out with too much. But the girls who just don't even see it—that's cool."

Porter says a sense of humor helps too. For instance, he once gave a girl a rather creative invitation to a dance: he took his prosthetic arm (which he doesn't wear much because "it feels like wearing a toy") and delivered it to the girl's house, attaching a note that said "I'd give my right arm to go to the dance with you." Luckily for Porter, she said yes.

inspires and strengthens them."

Also, because of who he is and what he's accomplished, Porter recognizes that he sets an example.

"Whether I want to or not, I'll be an example to others," he says. "I pray for strength that I can be a light to those around me."

So what's his advice to people who want to learn something from him?

"Tackle your biggest trials with your biggest smiles," says Porter. "Do everything happy. When I'm happy and I'm enjoying what I'm doing, I do better at it. No matter how rough the road gets, you can always make it a happy situation. Just put it in the Lord's hands, and then do everything you can." **NE**



## FEED MY SHEEP

Porter feels that working with sheep gives him an understanding of the scriptures. "It reminds me of how Christ is the Shepherd of His flock. When you're working, you just think about it, and you're the one that makes it possible for them to live, kind of how God makes it possible for us to live."

In addition, Porter feels that working with sheep has given him another insight. "Now I understand how frustrated God probably gets with us sometimes."



*At this rate the plane would crash. But the pilot felt prompted to hold his speed.*

It was a beautiful, clear day, and 28-year-old Aircraft Commander Brent Young was doing what he loved best: flying a C-141 for the United States Air Force. He and his crew, including his copilot, a flight engineer, and two load masters, were on a routine run from North Dakota to Utah.

The flight was uneventful until Commander Young began his approach to Hill Air Force Base. Then, out of nowhere,

the thought came to him, "Hold 20 knots above approach speed."

"Why would I do that?" he wondered. "It goes against everything I know about flying."

As the plane sped toward its destination, he agonized over the decision he must make in the next 60 seconds. "If I drop 20 knots now," he reasoned, "the plane will be at just the right speed for the approach. I

# TOO FAST!

BY HEIDI HOLFELTZ PARKER



can't hold 20 knots. I'll overshoot the runway."

But the impression persisted. "Hold 20 knots above approach speed."

Was the Spirit trying to guide him? He remembered the day, years earlier, when he flew out of Singapore. It was very hazy. He was just 1,000 feet above the runway when an Australian fighter plane almost collided with him. He saw the look of terror on the other pilot's face. And that wasn't the only time he'd felt that someone was watching over him, protecting him.

"What are you doing?" his copilot suddenly blurted out. "You're going too fast!"

"We need to hold 20 knots above approach speed. I can't explain it," Commander Young replied.

The plane hurtled toward the runway. Beads of sweat rolled down his face. His heart beat wildly, and his hands clenched the steering column. "Will we overshoot the runway? Will we survive?" he thought.

At that moment, with the plane just 250 feet above the ground, the speed suddenly dropped 20 knots.

Commander Young stared at the gauge in disbelief. It had dropped to 145 knots. What had happened?

Within seconds the plane touched down, and Commander Young completed the landing.

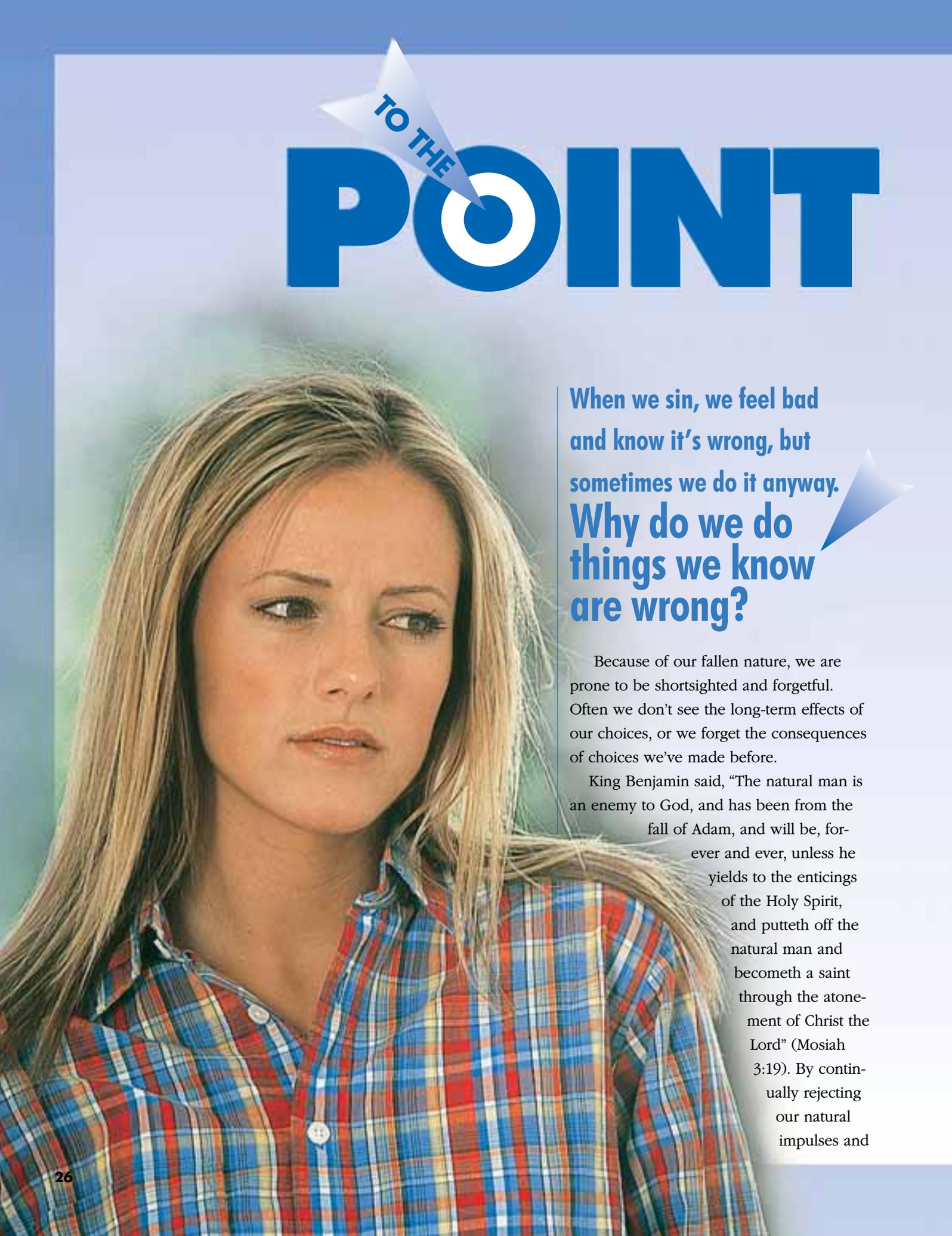
The flight was over, but he couldn't leave the cockpit yet. He sat in stunned silence, trying to make sense of what had just happened. But he could find no logical explanation. Without the extra air speed, he and his crew probably wouldn't be alive. If he hadn't held 20 knots above the approach speed, the plane would have dropped to 125 knots—stall speed. He wouldn't have had time to fly out of the stall. Likely the plane would have crashed.

"Why'd you let me do it?" Commander Young quizzed his copilot.

"I've flown with LDS pilots before," he replied. "I know they are guided by a force I don't understand."

Commander Young uttered a silent prayer. "Thank you, Heavenly Father. Thank you for the gift of the Holy Ghost." **NE**





# TO THE POINT

When we sin, we feel bad and know it's wrong, but sometimes we do it anyway. **Why do we do things we know are wrong?**

Because of our fallen nature, we are prone to be shortsighted and forgetful. Often we don't see the long-term effects of our choices, or we forget the consequences of choices we've made before.

King Benjamin said, "The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord" (Mosiah 3:19). By continually rejecting our natural impulses and

embracing the Atonement, we can lose the desire to sin and gain the desire to do good continually (see Mosiah 5:2).

One of the most frequent injunctions in the scriptures is “remember.” Both ancient and modern prophets frequently remind us where our choices will lead. Their words can help us realize that even if sin feels good at the moment, we will be much happier in the long run if we are obedient. **NE**

## How do I know

what I am feeling is the Spirit and not just my own emotions?

We sometimes hear stories in which the Spirit speaks audibly or through visions or strong impressions. But more often, revelation comes quietly (see D&C 6:23; 8:2–3; 1 Kings 19:11–12).

President Brigham Young (1801–1877) said: “The Spirit of God filling the creature with revelation and the light of eternity, cannot be mistaken” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 319).

Search your own experience. Remember how you’ve felt when you’ve prayed, studied the scriptures, or had other experiences with the Spirit. Continue to do those things and seek out those experiences. Learn to recognize those feelings that enlighten and speak peace to your mind and that encourage you to believe in Christ, love others, and do good. As you do so, you will learn what President Young was talking about. **NE**



Do I pay tithing on my income before taxes are taken out **OR** on what I receive after taxes?

The First Presidency has answered this question in this way: “The simplest statement we know of is the statement of the Lord himself, namely, that the members of the Church should pay ‘one-tenth of all their interest annually,’ which is understood to mean income. No one is justified in making any other statement than this” (First Presidency letter, Mar. 19, 1970).

In other words, the way you define your income, and consequently your tithing, is a matter between you and the Lord. Prayerfully seek the Lord’s guidance on issues like taxes, gifts, scholarships, and other matters to determine what qualifies as a full tithe. **NE**

# A SPLIT-SECOND

*Playing soccer taught me to make split-second decisions. Then in one moment, I had to decide between my dream and the Lord's.*

BY HUGO DA CUNHA SILVANTOS RODRIGUES

As long as I can remember, I have had a soccer ball at my side and a dream to be a professional player. My parents supported me as I pursued this dream. They also encouraged me to go to church. But as I got older I was at church only when I didn't have a game. I knew that the gospel, Church activities, and my friends would help me a lot in life, but what I was really looking for was to fulfill my dream of playing soccer.

As I trained I began to have important friends inside the great soccer clubs. I had opportunities to play and even train with some of these clubs. I traveled throughout various countries to participate in tournaments, and I was very excited and happy with the possibility of living the life of a professional soccer player. On one of these trips to Asia, my dream was about to come true. A large club liked what they saw when they watched me play and wanted me to join the team. But my agent found some obstacles during the negotiation, and we ultimately didn't close the contract.

At home my friends were filling

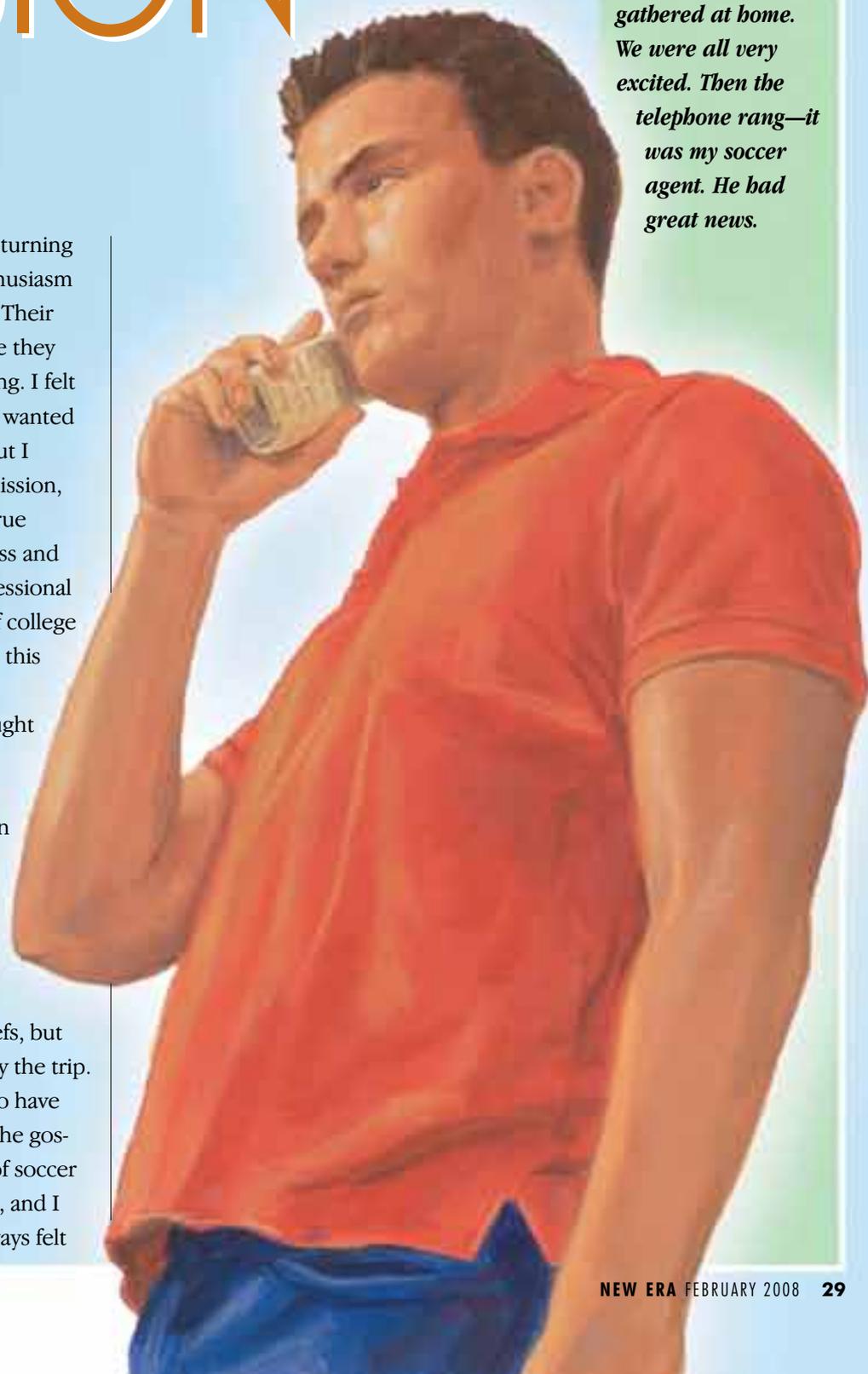


# DECISION

**W**hen my mission call arrived, my family gathered at home. We were all very excited. Then the telephone rang—it was my soccer agent. He had great news.

out mission papers; others were returning from missions and telling with enthusiasm what it was like to be a missionary. Their eyes shone with emotion each time they spoke, and the Spirit was very strong. I felt the desire to serve a mission too; I wanted to have these same experiences. But I worried that if I chose to serve a mission, my soccer dream wouldn't come true because I would lose physical fitness and agility. My desire to become a professional player was enormous; I had put off college and worked and lived only to fulfill this dream.

On my soccer trips I always brought a copy of the Book of Mormon. I loved the words of the prophets, their way of life, their determination to obey the commandments, and their good example for their people. I felt ashamed of not being an example for the other players and not putting the things of God first. Sometimes I tried to share my beliefs, but what I always heard was "Let's enjoy the trip. Forget about this nonsense. Let's go have fun!" I started to get irritated with the gossip, dishonesty, and other aspects of soccer life. Many times I felt alone and sad, and I knew there was a place where I always felt



***n my mission I learned that the best way to be happy is to do what Heavenly Father wants us to do. My mission was the best choice I have ever made.***

happy and had friends who cared about me—friends who were together at activities and dances, in seminary and institute classes—celestial friends. I missed these things very much.

One Sunday when I wasn't traveling, I went to church in my home ward in Brazil. At the end of the meetings, the bishop called me into his office to talk. I knew that we were going to talk about a mission because everyone my age was returning home. The bishop challenged me to serve a mission, and I tried to change the subject, saying that I wasn't prepared. I tried to put off the bishop in every possible way, but he persevered and convinced me of the value of a mission. We ended the conversation with a goal for my preparation.

Some months later I turned in my papers, and I also continued with my training. For the moment, I had managed to reconcile soccer and the Church in my mind. But little did I know that it couldn't last for long. I would have to choose.

When my call arrived, my family gathered at home. We were all very excited. Then the telephone rang.

On the other end of the line, my soccer agent told me that he had obtained a good contract with a European club. My imagination soared! I could see the stadium full of people coming to watch the games. I thought of the beautiful house and car and salary I could have. My dream was about to be fulfilled. It was within my grasp—and then I

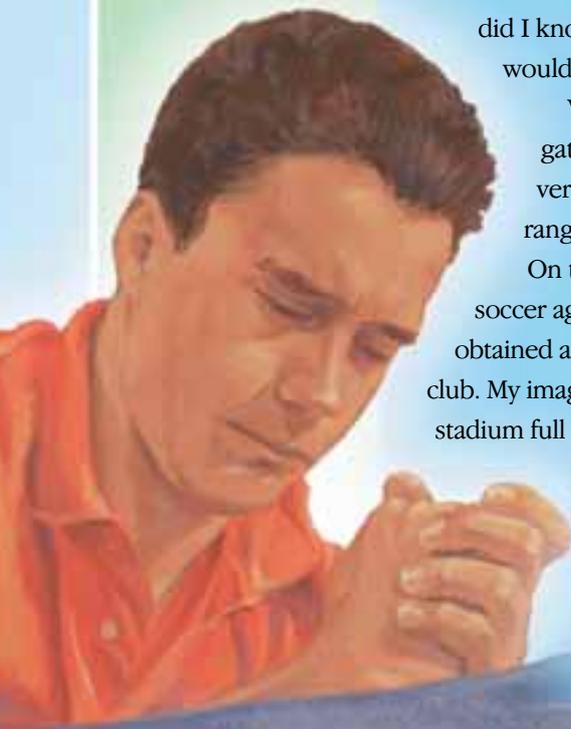
looked at the envelope with the call sitting beside the phone.

My eyes began to fill with tears. For a moment my life passed as if it were a movie. On the phone, my agent asked me what I thought of the news. I was silent. I couldn't talk, and my legs were shaking. I didn't want this moment to be real, but it was! I had to make a decision, the most difficult of any decision in my life.

With my voice shaking, I finally told him that I had already obtained a better contract. I would be a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for two years. I thanked the agent for the opportunity and for his work and effort on my behalf. Then I hung up the phone and went to my room, where I cried for a long time. I knew that the opportunity wouldn't wait for two years, and my soccer dream would not be realized.

I knelt and prayed to Heavenly Father, asking for comfort. I felt a quiet and sweet voice respond, comforting my heart by saying, "My son, you are already part of the best team in the world." I reflected on these words and still reflect on them today.

Today, home from serving in the Brazil Fortaleza Mission, I don't regret my choice in any way. The true Church of Jesus Christ is available to anyone who wants to be happy. And on my mission I learned that the best way to be happy is doing what Heavenly Father wants us to do. My mission was the best choice I have ever made in my life. It taught me that all who seek first the kingdom of God will have a place on the Lord's team (see Matthew 6:33). **NE**



# STILL CALLED TO **SERVE**

*Even though I was honorably excused from a full-time mission, I was able to serve in a meaningful way.*

BY PETER JAMES MARRELLI

As a boy and a young man, I prepared to serve a full-time proselytizing mission for the Church. Like Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled us, I wanted to *be* a missionary, not just to *go* on a mission.<sup>1</sup> But because of my medical challenges, the Missionary Department informed me that it was not in my best interest to face the stress of a full-time mission. Although it would have been easy to become bitter, I had prepared to serve my Savior, and I was prepared to accept His will for me.

## **My Opportunity**

What happened to me is called being honorably excused. That means that Church leaders saw my worthiness and my desire to serve but encouraged me to serve in other ways. Like many others who cannot serve a full-time mission, I felt prompted to do more than just “get on with my life.” I wanted to serve, so I did—as a local Church-service missionary. With help from my bishop and stake president, I found a way to serve the Lord while living at home.

There was a need at the Church’s Audiovisual Department, and since

I live near the Church Office Building in Salt Lake City, I could help. My stake president extended a call, set me apart, and developed special rules for me during my year of service. Though the rules seemed strict to me, I learned that I was blessed when I followed them. While other service missionaries with different stake



**Whether I was winding cable or helping with broadcasts, my Church-service mission helped me build confidence and a sense of respect. I felt the Lord's influence and help in doing difficult and demanding things.**

presidents may have different rules, these were the ones I followed:

1. Stick to a daily schedule: arise at 6:30 a.m.; study the scriptures and *Preach My Gospel* for two hours each day; exercise for 30 minutes each day; go to bed at 10:30 p.m.
2. Follow the Church's dress code.
3. Listen to classical or Church music only.
4. Limit computer use to e-mail; limited television viewing; no video games.
5. Participate only in group activities—no dating.
6. Have monthly interviews with my bishop.

Sometimes when I was down in a crawl space under a building in 100-degree heat (38°C) winding up cable all day, I found

myself wondering what it had to do with bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of man (see Moses 1:39). Was I really part of the team sharing the gospel around the world? I knew that Mosiah 2:17 says that



when we are in the service of our fellow beings we are in the service of God, but it took me a while to believe that was true.

I learned that just like a proselytizing mission, a service mission isn't about you. It is about learning to do what the Lord needs done. During my service, I helped set up and take down lights, run sound for meetings, and transport equipment. It was hard, dirty work, and I will never take general conference for granted. In fact, now when I watch any broadcast, my whole body aches because I know the intense work involved.

#### **It's about Work**

During my Church-service mission, I learned the importance of punctuality, responsibility, doing the job right, and giving my best effort. While my parents had tried to teach me these things, I didn't understand until I saw how wasting time and effort can directly affect the work of others. Before my mission, it was easy to focus on just having fun. But once you are on your mission, you realize it will not be fun to be the companion who doesn't know how to work. Part of preparing to serve is learning how to work.

#### **What Else I Learned**

I also learned to appreciate those who work behind the scenes. I saw how hard Church leaders work without drawing attention to themselves or expecting special treatment. I saw others serving who had



## OTHER WAYS TO SERVE

Because of health problems or other circumstances, some people cannot serve a full-time proselytizing mission. If you have been excused from full-time missionary service but would like to serve the Lord in some other way, ask your bishop or branch president to discuss the possibilities with you. He and the stake or district president can help you find Church-service mission opportunities in your area. Some places you might serve include:



- **A seminary or institute**, working in an office, at a reception desk, or as computer support.
- **A welfare facility**, such as a cannery, bishops' storehouse, Deseret Industries, employment center, or other welfare facility.
- **A Church-owned farm or ranch**, doing chores or clerical work.
- **A meetinghouse**, helping with building maintenance.

Outside of your Church-service mission hours, you can also serve by performing baptisms for the dead.

By serving in the Church, you show your love for the Lord and your commitment to your baptismal covenant. And service helps build the Lord's kingdom on earth.



greater challenges than I did, teaching me that everyone can serve in some way.

I realized that I have been blessed with strengths and abilities and that through hard work I could do more than I had been doing. I learned that as I respect other people, I like myself better. It's easy to get in the habit of looking down on people in order to try to feel better about ourselves. But respect works both ways, and those who represent Jesus Christ must be respectful.

The most important lesson I learned, however, was that the Lord will help you do difficult things. It was hard

to stay home, hard to do menial chores, hard not to be the center of attention, hard to obey mission rules, and hard to hear people tell me I wasn't on a "real" mission. But the Lord helped me. I know He will help you do the things you need to do to be happy, to feel good about yourself, to grow, and to be a better person. Get down on your knees, bow your head, and be honest with yourself as you pray. Then get ready to serve wherever and whenever you are called. **NE**

### NOTE

1. See "Becoming a Missionary," *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 44.



# IT'S JUST a COPY! Right?

BY JANESEA CLOWARD

*What's wrong with "free" downloads?  
The cost is too high.*

Imagine walking into a store and seeing the new CD from your favorite band. You've wanted to buy this for weeks, but when you look at the price tag, you know you can't afford it right now.

Now imagine you're back at home, surfing the Internet, and you come across a file-sharing program. This software would let you download millions of songs for free—including the ones on that new CD you want. What do you do?

For honest Latter-day Saint youth, walking off with that CD without paying for it isn't even an option. But in a world with millions of free songs only a mouse-click away, the line between legal and illegal sometimes seems blurry, and some of the same youth think file sharing is different from everyday stealing.

But think about it for a minute. No matter what you call it—file sharing, pirating, free downloads, peer-to-peer networks—taking something you should have paid for is stealing, and stealing is wrong.

## **A Dangerous Web**

So how do some of the youth of the Church get tangled up in music pirating? After all, file sharing software is not inherently evil. It allows people to share their own creations with other users around the world. For instance, if you are in a band and want to test your music, you could upload songs to a peer-to-peer network. Or if you just love music, you could listen to unpublished songs posted by artists from across the globe.

But peer-to-peer networks cross legal boundaries when copyrighted material is involved. When a musician releases a song or album as a commercial product, it is copyrighted, so no one can legally use it without paying for it first. If you download a commercially released song from a file-sharing Web site, you are stealing it from the musician just as much as you would be if you shoplifted a CD.

These days, with digital music players gradually replacing CD players, fewer people buy CDs. Instead, they download their music from online music stores. Many of these stores offer music downloads for a small fee—usually about a dollar or less per song. But many

**I**t doesn't matter if everyone else is doing it; stealing is always wrong, whether it's downloading copyrighted songs or taking a newspaper from a vending machine without paying.

people still bypass these sites in favor of file-sharing networks, where they can get the same songs for free.

### My Story

I discovered file-sharing software as a college freshman, and, however innocently, I quickly got caught up in the world of free downloads. I thought that since it was so easy, and seemingly without penalties, it was harmless. Before long, my hard drive was jammed with almost 1,000 of my favorite songs.

Then I started to wonder about the collection of songs on my computer. Every time I listened to them, I felt guilty for enjoying something I hadn't paid for. As much as I loved my music, I just couldn't feel right about keeping it. I finally deleted the software.

A few months later, I heard rumors that the record labels were filing lawsuits against people who used the same file-sharing software I had just removed. Some people were being fined more than \$100,000! I couldn't believe it.

After the shock wore off, I realized just how serious music pirating is. Fortunately, I had removed all my files before the legal battles began, so I didn't have to worry about paying monetary damages. But I realized that I hadn't gotten away without damaging my spirit. I had known stealing was wrong since I was a child, and yet I had convinced myself that somehow this was different.

### How Much Is Your Integrity Worth?

Like me, a lot of people think downloading a song or two for free is no big deal. Would a dollar even make a difference to the millionaire musicians who recorded those

songs? Probably not, but a better question is, "Is my integrity worth so little that I would give it up for a dollar a song?" The answer, of course, is no.

Bishop Richard G. Edgley, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, told of an experience where his integrity was similarly tested:

"Some 30 years ago, while working in the corporate world, some business associates and I were passing through O'Hare Airport in Chicago, Illinois. One of these men had just sold his company for tens of millions of dollars—in other words, he was not poor.

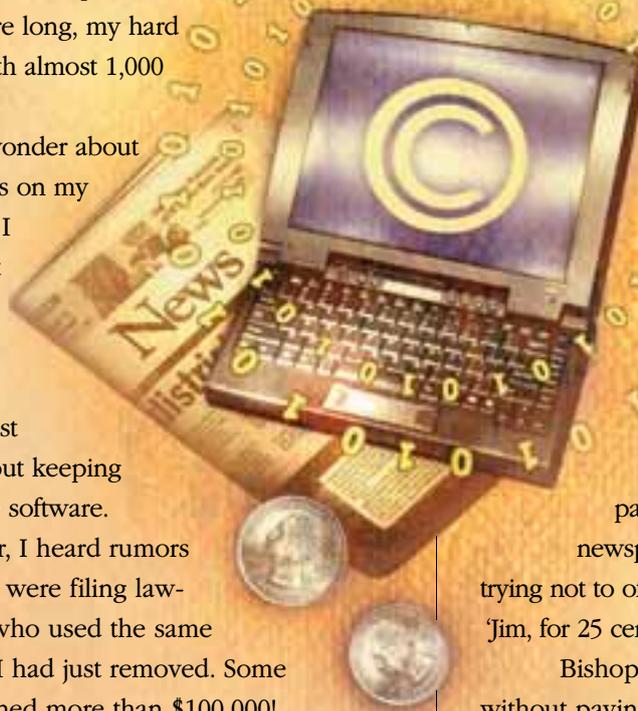
"As we were passing a newspaper vending machine, this individual put a quarter into the machine, opened the door to the stack of papers inside the machine, and began dispensing unpaid-for newspapers to each of us. When he handed me a newspaper, I put a quarter in the machine and, trying not to offend but to make a point, jokingly said, 'Jim, for 25 cents I can maintain my integrity.'"<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Edgley could have easily walked away without paying for that newspaper. After all, 25 cents would have hardly made a difference to the publishers. But he knew it would make a difference to his integrity.

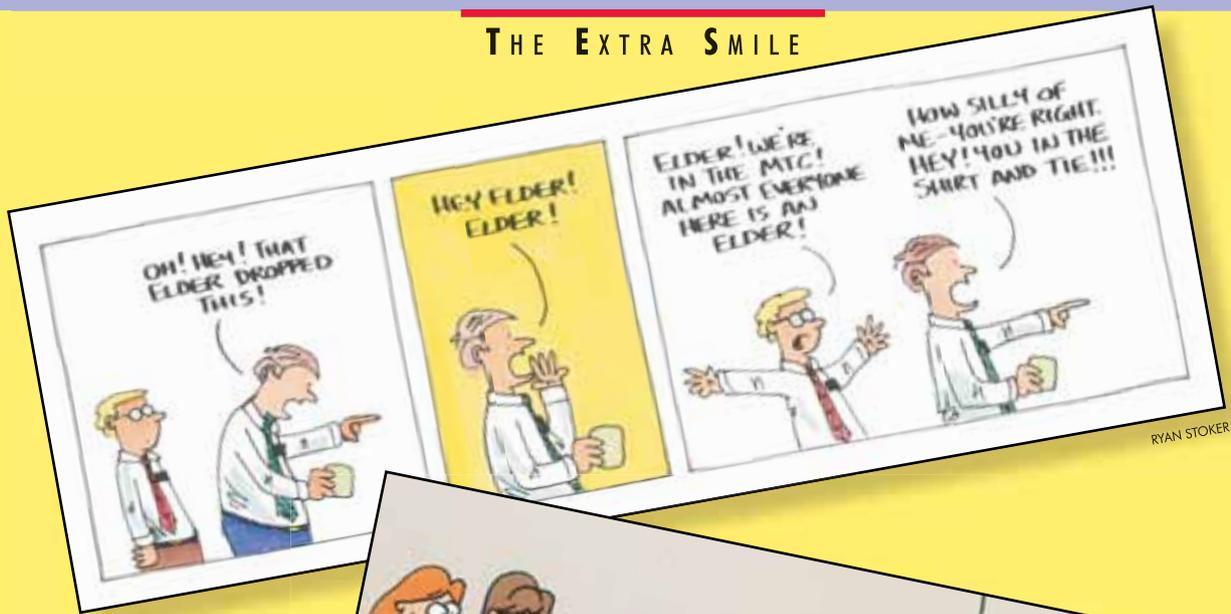
President Gordon B. Hinckley has said, "How rare a gem, how precious a jewel is the man or woman in whom there is neither guile nor deception nor falsehood!"<sup>2</sup> We can all be that kind of man or woman by being honest in everything we say and do. When we come across a tempting situation—like illegally downloading music—we can remember how much our integrity is worth, and that for just a dollar we can maintain it. **NE**

### NOTES

1. "Three Towels and a 25-Cent Newspaper," *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 73.
2. "An Honest Man—God's Noblest Work," *New Era*, Oct. 1976, 49.



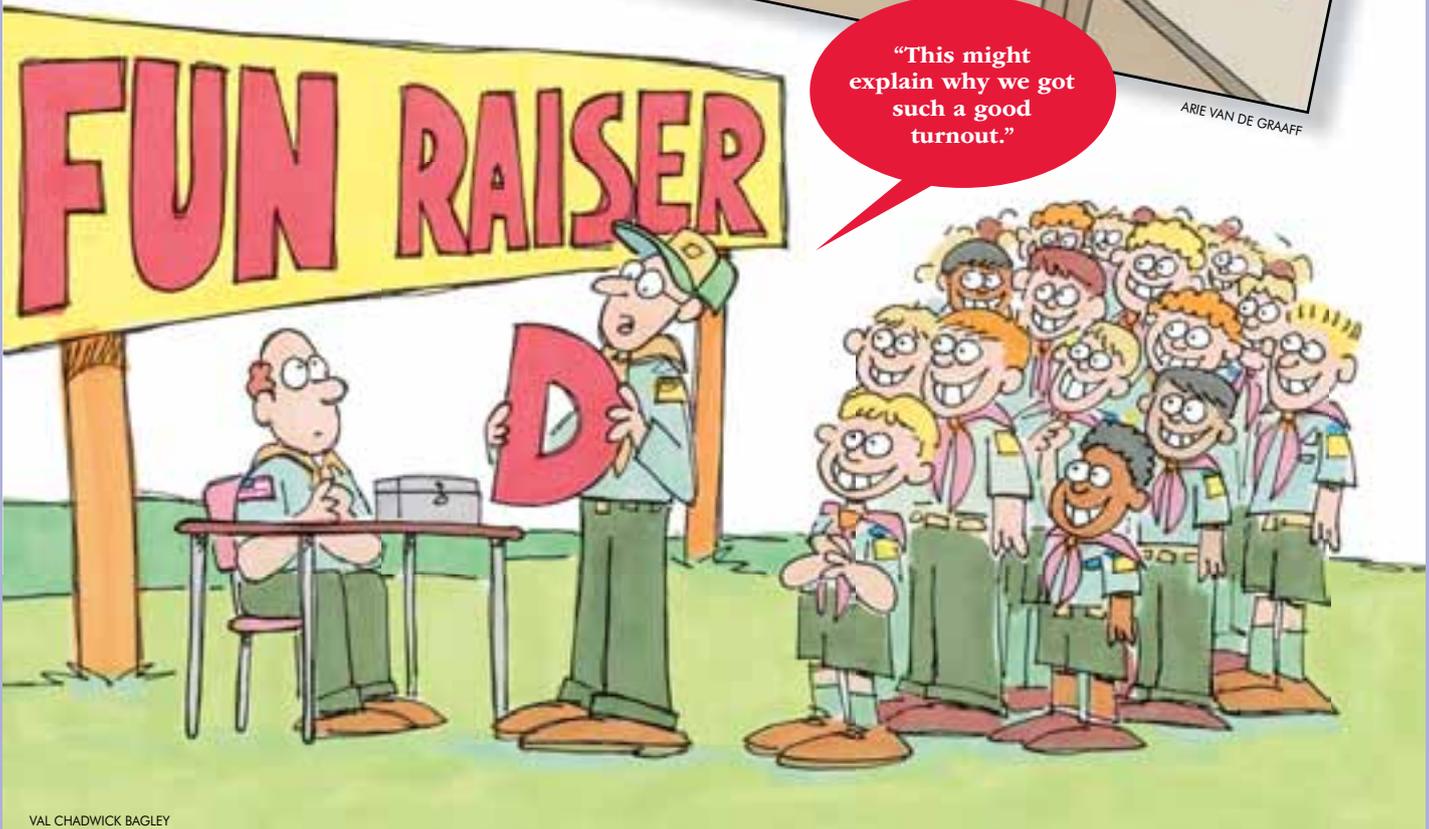
THE EXTRA SMILE



"It's a Personal Progress service activity. She's teaching the Young Women advisers how to text message."



"This might explain why we got such a good turnout."



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE VINGOE FAMILY



## Queen's Gold Medal

**C**hristopher Vingoe of the Kings Lynn Ward, Norwich England Stake, overcame severe brain injuries in his childhood to achieve six grade A's at A-level last year. That's like doing well on the college entrance exams and placement tests in six different subjects. This incredible feat earned Christopher the Queen's Gold Medal for Academic Achievement.

Queen Elizabeth II presented Christopher with the award. "She was lovely and very easy to chat to," says Christopher, who is now serving a mission in Leeds, England. He even told her a little about missionary service for the Church.

When he was six, Christopher was hit by a car while crossing the street. He spent five days in a coma and had a blood clot on his brain. His recovery has amazed doctors. When Queen Elizabeth was told about Christopher's accident and how he has recovered, she joked, "Perhaps it knocked some sense into him."



## GENERAL YOUNG WOMEN BROADCAST

**O**n Saturday, March 29, 2008, thousands of Young Women around the world will come together to be taught by prophets and leaders. Be a part of this great gathering and gain strength and hope from this special meeting.

All young women ages 12 to 18 are invited to attend with their mothers and Young Women leaders.

The theme will be "Be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works" (Mosiah 5:15).

### March 29, 2008

The meeting will be broadcast to meetinghouses. For those who receive KBYU or BYUTV, note times for the initial broadcast and later rebroadcast:

#### Live broadcast

8 p.m. Eastern time

7 p.m. Central time

6 p.m. Mountain time

5 p.m. Pacific time

#### Rebroadcast

10 p.m. Eastern time

9 p.m. Central time

8 p.m. Mountain time

7 p.m. Pacific time

This meeting will also be broadcast on the Internet at

[www.lds.org/broadcast](http://www.lds.org/broadcast).

# Successful Leaders

**P**resident N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982), a counselor in the First Presidency for many years, taught that to be a successful leader, we must follow the example of Christ. He gave nine suggestions to

help us be great leaders:

1. Look to our Savior as the perfect leadership example.
2. Accept the role of teacher and servant.
3. Search the scriptures for correct principles.
4. Pray for guidance, listen,

and respond.

5. Help the individual to develop self-government.
6. Hold individuals accountable for their work.
7. Express appreciation.
8. Set a personal example consistent with that which

he or she teaches.

9. Listen to the voice of the President of the Church, who is a prophet of God, and follow his counsel and example. (See “Leading As the Savior Led,” *New Era*, June 1977, 7.)

“Somehow forgiveness, with love and tolerance, accomplishes miracles that can happen in no other way.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Forgiveness,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 84.



## MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

**1 Nephi 3:7.** I like it mostly because of the end where Nephi puts his trust in the Lord that He would not put him through trials he couldn't deal with. I've taken that into my own life a lot.

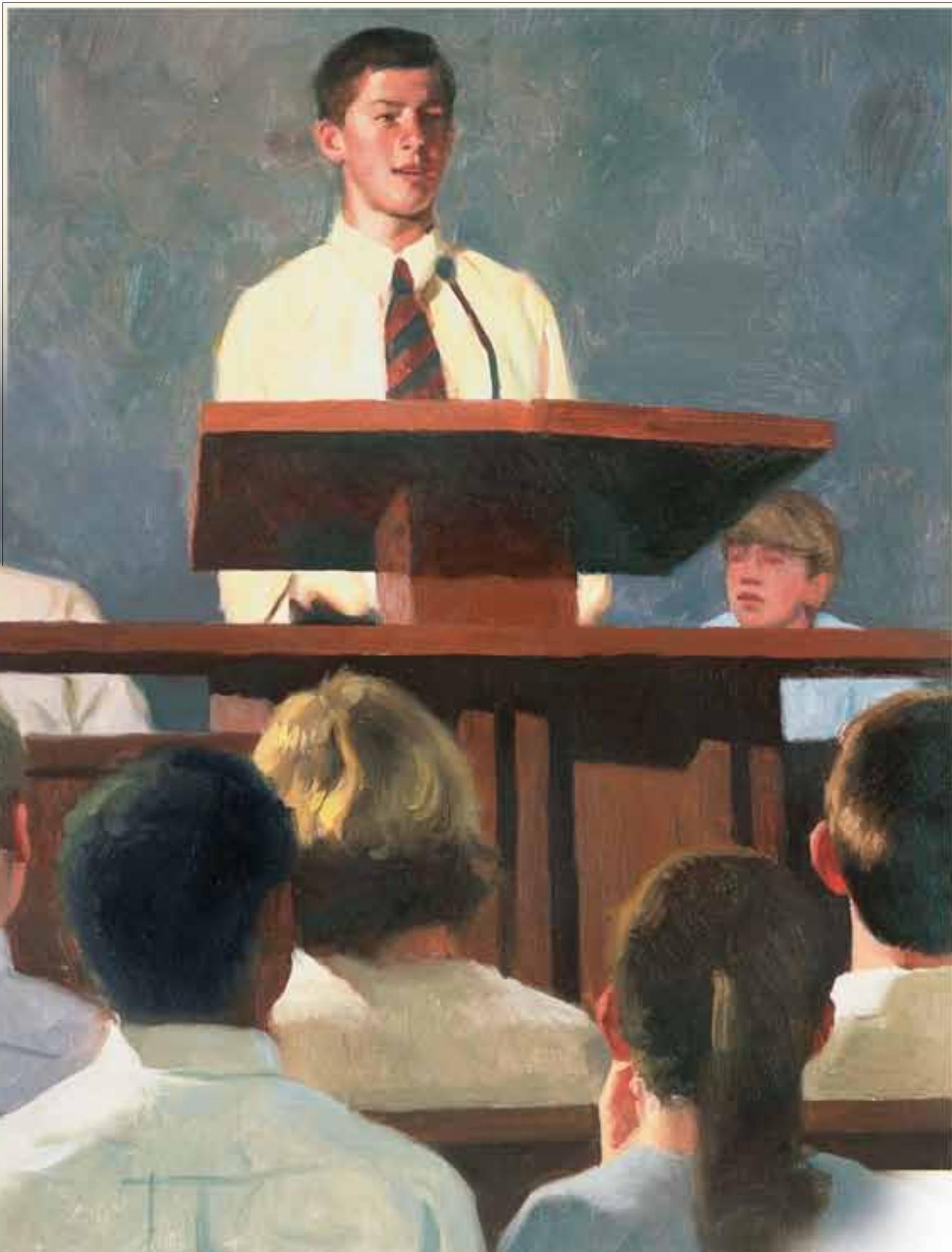
**Matthias O., 18, Hafnarfjörður, Iceland**

Tell us about your favorite scripture in one or two sentences. Send it to [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org).

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 190,862,000

Number of sacrament meeting cups produced by the Church in 2006.



# Gaining a TESTIMONY

BY ELDER PAUL K. SYBROWSKY

Of the Seventy

I was raised in a wonderful but less-active family. I wasn't accustomed to hearing testimonies borne of the truthfulness of the gospel within my home. So even though I grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah, in a predominantly Latter-day Saint environment, I didn't grow up in a typical Latter-day Saint family. We didn't hold family home evening or gather for family prayer. Many of the Church practices that my friends were used to were a little foreign to me.

By virtue of this home environment, I was probably one of the least likely to stand and bear my testimony in front of a large seminary gathering. I was also a rather shy 15-year-old, so I was quite surprised when I found myself standing at a microphone in front of 300 seminary students. But I was comfortable because of what I felt deep inside. Even today, I still remember the overwhelming prompting by the Spirit to stand and bear my testimony in that seminary meeting.

I don't remember the exact words I spoke, but I will never forget the burning in my heart, the sure witness I received that the Church is true. I remember well the feeling of the Spirit of the Holy Ghost that

descended upon me as I bore witness to the truthfulness of this Church.

## I Knew

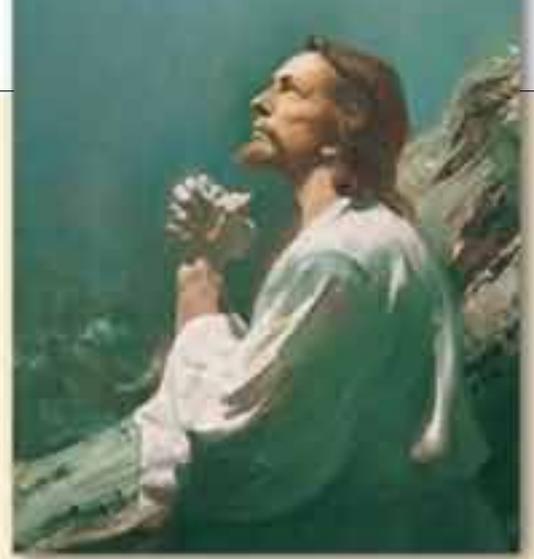
Before that day I *believed* the Church was true. I liked the Church. I thought it was good, and I participated in it. But at that defining moment in my life, I *knew* the Church was true. I couldn't deny it, and no one could take that testimony away from me.

Since that day in seminary, I have shared my testimony thousands of times. I remember some of these other occasions, but none have been quite so dramatic for me or have been so influential in shaping my future as that first instance when I was a teenager. One of the reasons this event made such a lasting impression on me is because I was about the same age as the Prophet Joseph Smith when he saw Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and learned that he would be instrumental in restoring the true Church to the earth.

The experience of bearing my testimony and gaining a sure witness was a turning point in my life in many ways. When instruction comes from the Lord to you, it is the greatest thing you will ever learn. Because of this testimony, I wanted to serve, to become



*I can remember many instances of bearing my testimony but none more vividly than the time I stood as a shy teenager in front of 300 classmates.*



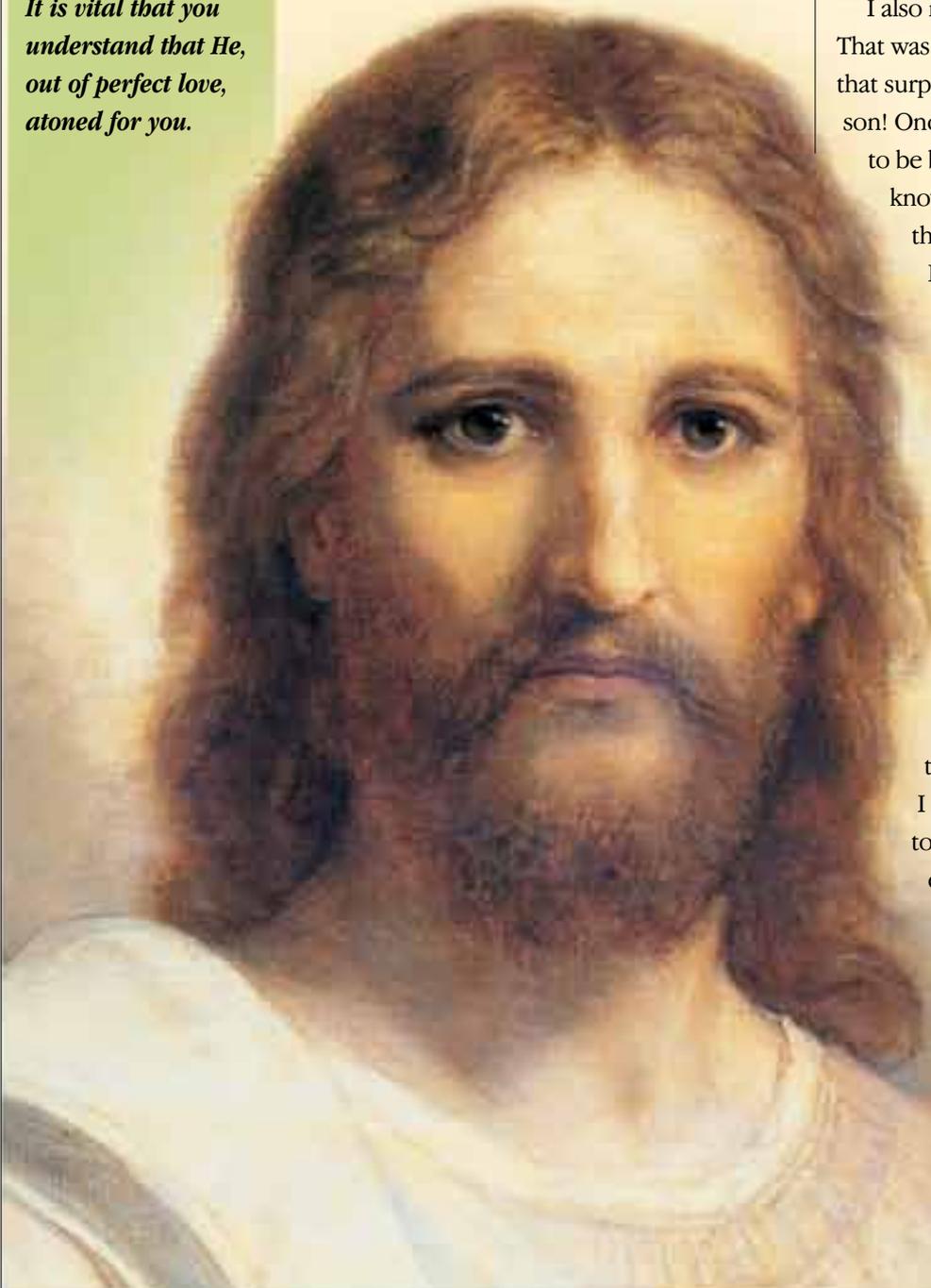
I also realized that God knew who I was. That was one of the really important things that surprised me and changed me. I was His son! Once you know who you are, you want to be better. There comes a power in that knowledge—a power you can get only through the inspiration of our Heavenly Father.

As I look back on this experience, I believe that Heavenly Father wanted to give me an opportunity to develop some attributes and skills so He could work with me a little easier. I think He also wanted to get me thinking about serving a mission, which was not something that was encouraged in my home. As a young teen, I hadn't thought much about a mission. But through my testimony experience, I knew for the first time that I wanted to serve a mission. Many other experiences reinforced that desire, but that was the first instance that I knew I wanted to go. I knew my Father in Heaven wanted me to serve a full-time mission to share what I now knew with His children.

***It is vital that you build a testimony and have faith that Jesus Christ is your Savior and your Redeemer.***

***It is vital that you understand that He, out of perfect love, atoned for you.***

a better student, and to develop better social and personal skills. My desire to learn more about the scriptures was greatly increased. I had more purpose in life. I knew that as I kept myself worthy, I would be permitted to preach the gospel.



## Open Your Heart

Gaining a testimony is like what the Nephites went through when the Savior came to visit them. At first they did not understand God's voice because they were hearing with their ears only. But when they opened their hearts, then they understood His voice.

"And again the third time they did hear the voice, and did open their ears to hear it; and their eyes were towards the sound thereof; and they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from whence the sound came.

"And behold, the third time they did understand the voice which they heard" (3 Nephi 11:5–6).

Opening your heart to the inspiration of our Father in Heaven is a crucial element in life. You will need His inspiration.

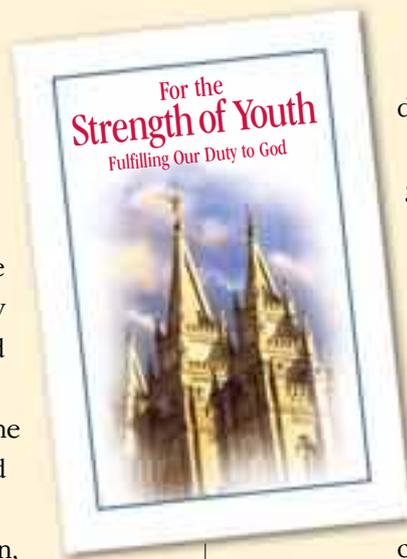
You face some unique challenges, and the way to overcome these challenges is to allow the Holy Ghost to distill upon you. Let Him guide you. Strength from our Heavenly Father comes to us spirit to spirit and heart to heart. And it is in the strength of the Lord that we can move forward. The Lord will provide that strength in our individual testimonies.

## Enjoy Being a Teen

Strengthening your testimony will help you enjoy your teenage years, which can be one of the most exciting times of your life. That doesn't diminish anything in terms of serving a mission or getting married in the temple or any of the wonderful experiences you will have later in your life, but I encourage you to enjoy life as a teenager. So how do you do that? By keeping all the Lord's commandments; they are not multiple choice! Each is given for a wise purpose—to keep you safe.

Part of the First Presidency's message in *For the Strength of Youth* reads:

"Your Heavenly Father wants your life to be joyful and to lead you back into His presence. The decisions you make now will determine much of what will follow



during your life and throughout eternity.

"Because the Lord loves you, He has given you commandments and the words of prophets to guide you on your journey."<sup>1</sup>

President Gordon B. Hinckley, our prophet and President, has said: "Let us be a happy people. The Lord's plan is a plan of happiness."<sup>2</sup> Let us follow the prophet, and let us have happy lives. This time of your life is exciting—it should be fun. Activity in the Church can help you truly enjoy your youth.

Have the courage to follow what you feel in your heart. Hold on to those feelings and enlarge them. It is vital that you build a testimony and have faith that Jesus Christ is your Savior and your Redeemer. It is vital that you understand that He, out of perfect love, atoned for you.

With that knowledge, you have the wonderful privilege of combining your faith in Jesus Christ with repentance to ensure that your covenants are in effect. Then you can receive direction and guidance from a member of the Godhead, even the Holy Ghost. What a gift that is! That great gift comes as a result of having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and enjoying the fruits of repentance.

When I was a teenager, I received another gift: a living, growing witness, a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As I nourished that testimony, it continued to grow. I began to understand the Lord's pattern—His plan to lead me back to my Father in Heaven. "That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day" (D&C 50:24).

I bear my solemn witness that God is our Father and that His Son, Jesus Christ, is the Savior of all mankind. You too can have that witness. You too can have that testimony. You can have it even now as a teenager, just as I did. You don't have to wait. **NE**

## NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (2001), 2.
2. "Each a Better Person," *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 99.

# VISITS FROM NATHAN

BY MELANIE KENNY

**W**hen I was 12, I felt invincible, but my carefree life came to a screeching halt when I was diagnosed with spinal meningitis. Back then I had no idea what spinal meningitis was or how it would cripple my life; all I knew was that I was in the worst pain I had ever experienced. For a whole week I stayed curled up in a ball with an excruciating headache. The pain was so debilitating that I couldn't see or even walk straight.

I was given a blessing that told me the Lord was watching out for me, He had a plan for me, and I just needed to trust Him. I kept going because I knew the Lord was testing my

faith. But eight months later I still wasn't able to get out of bed. One day, as I was struggling to just make it to the bathroom, I concluded that I was never going to be able to be a normal kid again. I fell into a deep depression; I felt that my life meant nothing.



# MOVIE NIGHT

BY SARAH SWICK



One day while I was sitting on the couch feeling miserable and day-dreaming about what life could have been like, my mom brought in my friend Nathan. When he saw me for the first time, he was shocked. Before, I had always been well-groomed, but now my eyes were dead and seemed to blend right in with my pale skin, my hair looked like a bird's nest, and I was weak. My voice was almost too soft to hear.

After a few failed attempts at conversation, we gave up. I was just too exhausted within only a few minutes, and it was hard to concentrate on him and what he was saying. Finally, with nothing more to say, he left. Even though this had been extremely hard on me, I was strangely uplifted. Nathan's visit had cheered me up, and it felt good to know that someone was actually thinking of me.

When he left, I was pretty sure he wouldn't come back. To my surprise, though, he came the next week, and then the next. With each visit I felt a little bit of joy added back into my life. Soon Nathan brought over his friend, and we all laughed and talked together. Amazingly, I began to get up every day and have enough energy to accomplish things.

When I was going through the most difficult moments of this illness, the Lord sent me help. Nathan's initial visit was painful, and I hated every minute of it, but it was what I needed most. Before his visit I was miserable and was giving in to depression, but the kindness of a friend saved me. **NE**

It was Saturday night, and we were bored, so my brother and I decided to go pick up a movie. As I was browsing through an aisle in the electronics department, my brother pointed to a movie and told me his friend had really liked it. I read the description on both the back and front covers. It looked innocent enough, so I told him to go ahead and purchase it.

When we came home with the movie, I opened the case and went to turn the movie on. As I did, I picked up the case, turned it over, and was shocked to find—as I had failed to notice at the store—that the movie was rated R. My mother came in a few seconds later to call us together for family prayer.

During the prayer, my mind was racked with the decision of watching the movie or putting it away. My brother had just spent all this money on the movie, and I had already opened the case, thus eliminating the

possibility of returning it! Why hadn't I checked the rating? I couldn't possibly tell him he had just wasted his money and I was not going to watch the movie. Maybe I could watch it once and never again.

Suddenly, I was reminded of an upcoming youth temple trip. I knew what I needed to do—keep the standards and be worthy to attend the temple. I could not willingly disobey the words of the prophets. I told my mom and brother of my dilemma and surprisingly, my brother said it was fine to get rid of the movie and would not ask me to pay him back for it. I am glad I made the right choice, and I am thankful that I upheld the Lord's standards. **NE**

## HE LIVES

BY CAMILLE SHOSTED

I had the opportunity to sing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives" (*Hymns*, no. 136) at the General Young Women's Meeting in March 2000. As we practiced this hymn, it began to take on a different meaning to me, and the words have touched my life.

The beginning of the hymn says, "He lives, who once was dead." That

is a powerful statement because so many people don't believe in Christ's Resurrection. I feel so blessed because I do. The hymn goes on to say, "He lives to wipe away my tears." It doesn't say He will take them away, but to me it means He will stand by us, listen, and comfort us in our times of need.

There is power and strength in the words of this hymn. It has strengthened my testimony. I know that Jesus Christ lives and loves us and that He will always help us. **NE**

# AN HONEST GRADE

NAME WITHHELD

It was a big assignment, and I had received an A+. My teacher explained that this assignment had the power to change our overall grade in the class. At the time, I had no worries. After all, I had passed with flying colors.

However, when my teacher told us that six students had received zeros on the assignment for plagiarizing, my sense of ease melted away. Not only had I plagiarized, but I had also received a perfect score for it.

At first my guilt was small. But then I read Doctrine and Covenants 1:31 and 3:10, and I felt the pain sink deeper and deeper: “For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. . . . But remember, God is merciful; therefore, repent of that which thou hast done which is contrary to the command-

ment which I gave you.”

It was then that I felt the utmost shame for my sin, but I rejoiced over the fact that I could repent. I promised myself that I would e-mail my teacher the very next day.

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

[newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)

*or send it to*

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

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

But I didn't. I thought that repentance could wait in my busy life. I put off e-mailing my teacher for three days. Satan worked hard on me for those three days, telling me that my grade was more important. I almost gave in to the temptation, but I prayed to the Lord for courage.

I finally sent the e-mail. My teacher replied and emphasized that honesty is more important than my grade and that I had wonderful parents who taught me what is right. She also said she would change my grade.

As I read the e-mail, I cried. Not for my grade, but because I had earned my teacher's trust. By being honest, I know that I will also gain the trust of my Heavenly Father. **NE**

**Mutual Activity Idea**

- Plan an activity that explores the challenges of different physical disabilities. Borrow a wheelchair and check out your meetinghouse for accessibility and ease of movement. How difficult is it to open doors while in the chair? What challenges does someone face if confined to a wheelchair? If you have ward members that have disabilities, invite them to come and talk about ways they appreciate being helped. Have someone research about the correct ways to offer help to someone who is blind.

**Family History Idea**

- Make a date with your father and mother. Go for a walk or a drive with your parents and ask them about

their memories when they first met and while they were dating. Ask them to tell you about decisions they were glad they made. Record the things that impressed you in your journal.

**Family Home Evening Idea**

- In preparation for family home evening, read the article on page 34, "It's Just a Copy, Right?" Together as a family talk about being honest in all things including sharing music or computer games without paying for them. Together review the section on honesty in the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (online at [www.lds.org/gospellibrary](http://www.lds.org/gospellibrary), in the Shortcuts section), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these resources helpful in enhancing lessons 7–11.

**Young Women Manual 3**

**Lesson 7: Our Purpose in Life**

John Bytheway, "Three Little Questions," *New Era*, July 2006, 30.

"Charting the Plan," *New Era*, July 2006, 33.

**Lesson 8: Eternal Families**

Scott Bean, "The Truth about My Family," *New Era*, Mar. 2003, 26.

Courtney Harrison, "My Best Days," *New Era*, Apr. 2003, 36.

**Lesson 9: Encouraging Family Unity**

Adam Olson, "Pulling Together," *New Era*, Sept. 2007, 32.

Lowell M. Snow, "To Be Together," *New Era*, July 2007, 40.

**Lesson 10: Encouraging Enjoyable Family Activities**

Ryan Carr, "Making Monday Memories," *New Era*, Apr. 2004, 20.

Sarah Hart, "Family Time," *New Era*, Sept. 2005, 45.

**Lesson 11: Extended Family Relationships**

Caitlin Jenkins, "Making Grandpa Proud," *New Era*, Feb. 2007, 41.

Emma E. Sánchez Sánchez, "Mama's Refrigerator," *New Era*, Feb. 2007, 22.

**Aaronic Priesthood Manual 3**

**Lesson 7: The Atonement Brings Victory over Death and Hell**

Clate W. Mask Jr., "Spotless before the Lord," *New Era*, July 2006, 42.

Rachel R. Stephenson, "A Few Extra Inches," *New Era*, June 2007, 22.

**Lesson 8: The Resurrection and Judgment**

Ezra Taft Benson, "The Greatest Event in History," *New Era* Apr. 2004, 44.

Poster: "When the Son Arose," *New Era*, Apr. 2002, 19.

**Lesson 9: Justice and Mercy**

Amy Weir, "Getting Even," *New Era*, Aug. 2007, 43.

Idea List: "Letting Grudges Go," *New Era*, July 2006, 46.

**Lesson 10: A Mighty Change**

Nathan Richardson, "Road Rash and Repentance," *New Era*, Apr. 2007, 34.

Q&A (how to repent when I don't feel sorry), *New Era*, July 2006, 14.

**Lesson 11: Faith Sufficient to Obtain Eternal Life**

Q&A (faith in Jesus Christ), *New Era*, Oct. 2007, 14.

Paul K. Sybrowsky, "Gaining a Testimony," *New Era*, this issue, 40.

Mike Gordon, "Faith in His Plan," *New Era*, Oct. 2006, 46.

**CORRECTIONS**

I am writing about a small photograph on page 22 of the June 2007 *New Era*. It shows a young man with two fingers up. I am not sure about other countries, but in Britain it is a sign of swearing. In the future can you please not have a picture of this type of thing? I would appreciate that very much. Thank you.

Marene E., Great Britain

Thanks for your publication and the good that you do with it. I am writing to you for the first time, and I am sorry that it is potentially critical. You probably realize that your illustrator of the very nice story in the October 2007 issue about the young brother from Armenia illustrated the story as if the author were from Africa. I enjoyed the story but felt the illustration was inaccurate.

John P., Iowa

*Editor's note: In a worldwide Church, the need to be sensitive to the variety of people, customs, and cultures is increasingly apparent. We appreciate your comments. We'll keep trying.*

**TALKING ABOUT THE CHURCH**

I think that the *New Era* is a wonderful blessing. Every month I read each story the first week and can't wait for the next magazine to come. In almost every issue there is an entry about a missionary experience. I used to be afraid of being asked about the Church, but after reading these entries, I've felt a lot more comfortable. My cousin asked me recently about the afterlife. She was afraid that after this life, there was nothing left. I was so happy telling her about what I knew. It wasn't a perfect explanation, but I know that if I keep talking to her, she'll get the desire to ask some missionaries about it. I'm

so glad the Lord gave me that experience.

Kylee H., Utah

*"The New Era has given me a better understanding of the gospel and strengthens me every time I read it."*

**ART DESIGN**

The graphic design for "Not Even Once" (Aug. 07) enticed me to read this wonderful article. Thank you for the fresh design.

Vivian D., South Africa

**IN TUNE**

I am so grateful for the "In Tune" section in the August *New Era*. Music is a very important to me. I love to sing and play instruments and to listen to the songs from Especially for Youth or the hymns. The words to the song "If the Savior Stood Beside Me" are very appropriate and really made me think. I am so glad that I can open up the *New Era* and sing and play a song that helps me feel closer to the Savior.

Hannah S., Georgia

**SEEK LEARNING**

I appreciated "Seek Learning" (Sept. 07) by President Gordon B. Hinckley. I'm grateful for the prophet's counsel to girls that we are given equal opportunity to educate ourselves and get as much education as we can.

Mereadani R., Fiji

**THANKS FOR THE MAGAZINE**

The *New Era* has given me a better understanding of the gospel and strengthens me every time I read it. I love the feeling the Spirit gives you as you read each article and I know that my testimony has grown because of the great, uplifting stories told in each issue.

Austin B., Montana

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

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We've Got Mail  
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Or e-mail us at [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)

*Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.*

## SONG OF WINTER

BY ANDREW SMITH

The cold winds of February blow  
Through the sleeping trees.  
The slumbering giants hear the songs  
Sung through the winter breeze.

The gray clouds blanket all the sky  
In the halting, chilling veil,  
And the winter song sings through it all  
In its otherworldly wail.

All can feel, but fewer know  
The frozen melody  
From hidden sky to silent earth  
And across the icy sea.

But soon the breathing sky will warm,  
And soon the trees will wake.  
The song will fade to memory,  
And all its splendor take.





### COMING NEXT MONTH

- *It was a dark Friday and bright Sunday during the first Easter season.*
- *Read what teens around the world say about believing in Christ.*
- *Not so identical twins find ways to support one another.*
- *One young girl tells how the young women in her ward brought her back from inactivity.*

*These are some highlights coming up in next month's March 2008 issue of the New Era.*

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