



THE
New Era

JULY

2007

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The New Era Magazine
Volume 37, Number 7
July 2007

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

The *New Era* can be found
online at newera.lds.org.

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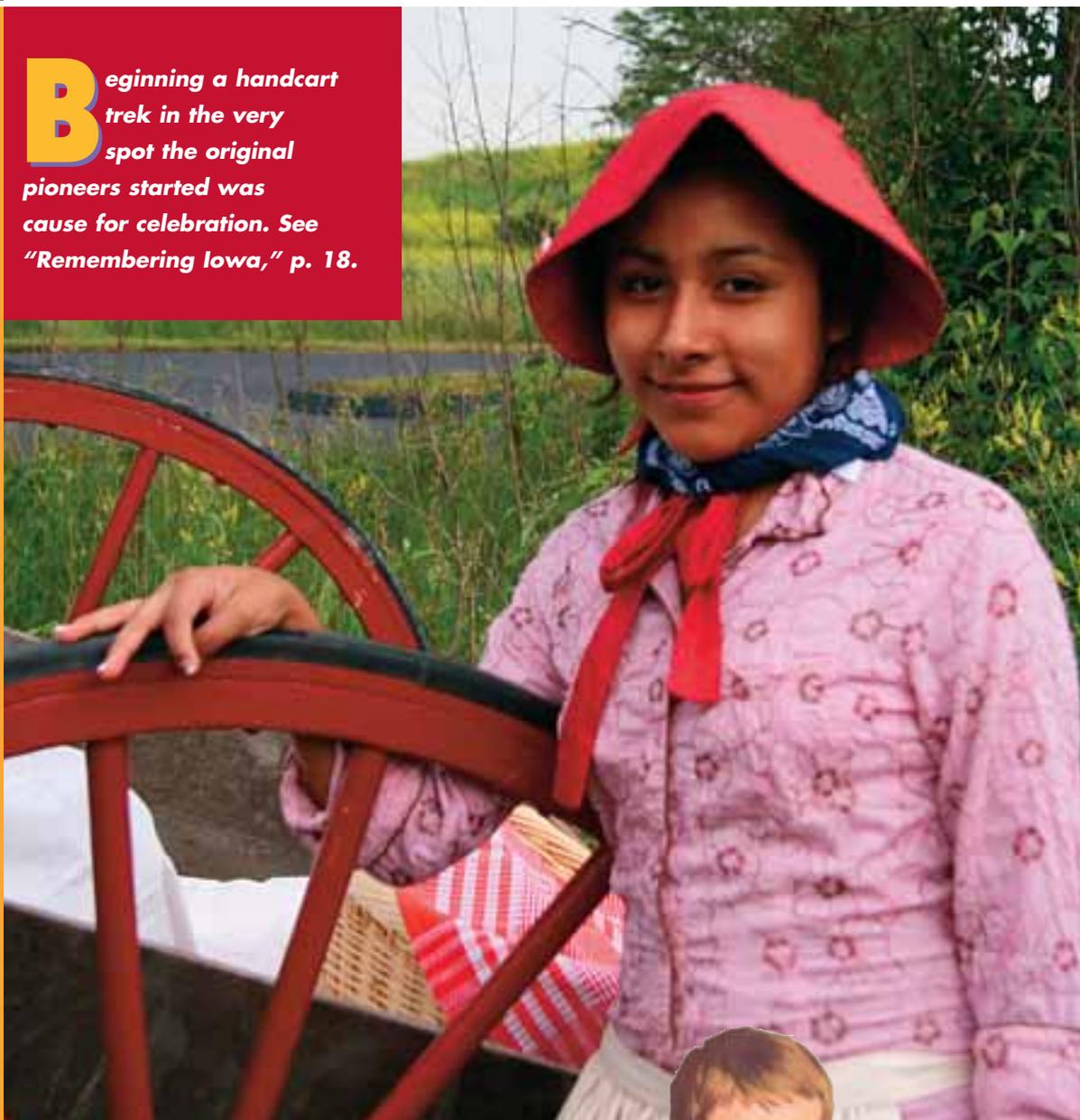
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character as a pioneer.*
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on p. 18.

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Riley M. Lorimer (front)
and Richard M. Romney
(back)

Beginning a handcart
trek in the very
spot the original
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Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah.

The *New Era* (ISSN 0164-5285)

is published monthly by The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-

day Saints, 50 E. North Temple

St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220,

USA.

POSTMASTER: Send address

changes to Distribution Services,

Church Magazines, P.O. Box

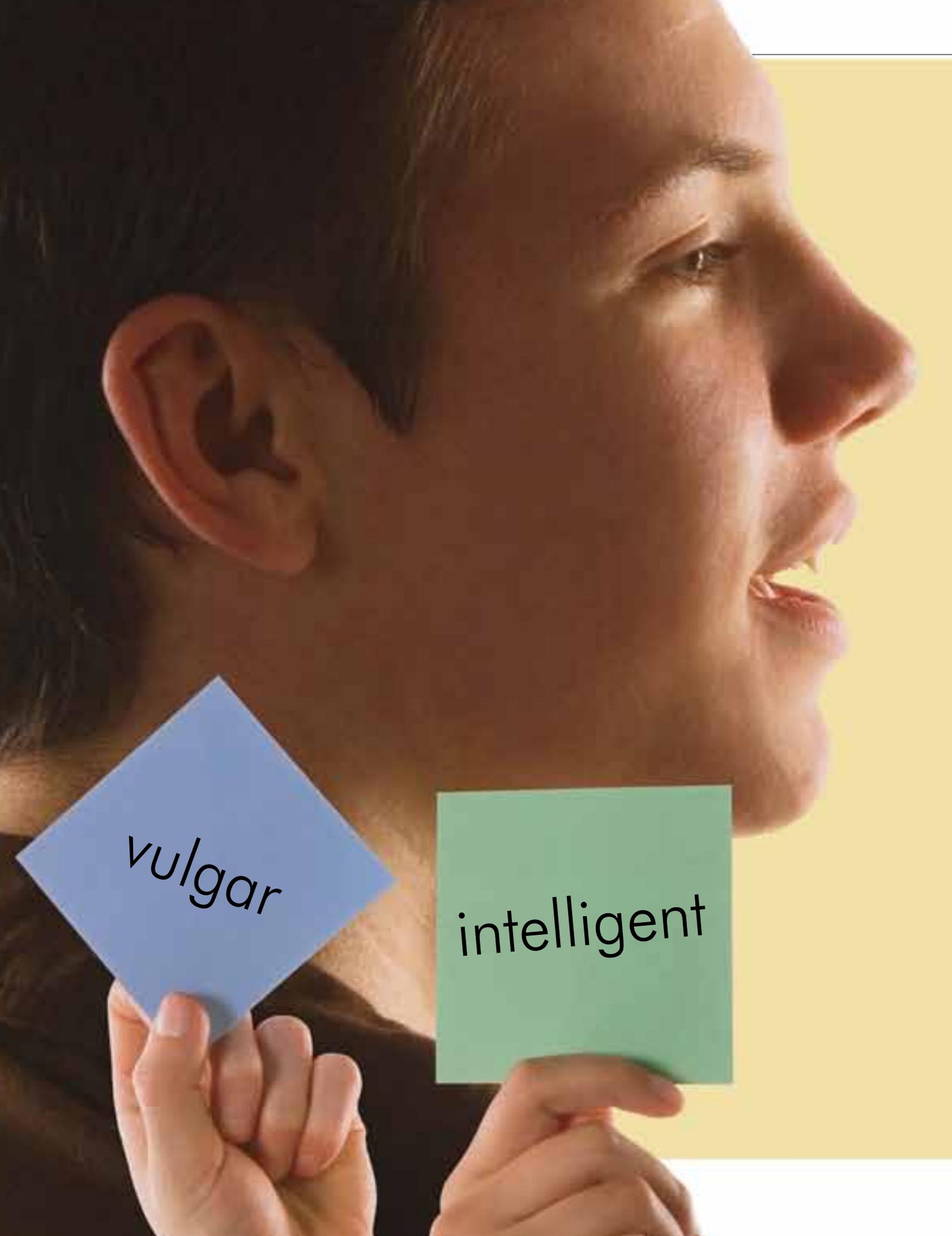
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Canada Post Information:

Publication Agreement

#40017431.



vulgar

intelligent

Thy Speech Reveals Thee

The words you speak can classify and categorize you.

BY ELDER L. TOM PERRY

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

One of the great characters of the New Testament who has always held a special fascination for me is Peter. Peter had to struggle so hard to overcome the things of the world and to prepare himself to be a witness and teacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is an interesting lesson to be learned in the relationship between the Savior and Peter during those final hours before the Savior's trial and Crucifixion.

"Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto

thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

"Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee" (Matthew 26:34-35).

Our Speech Reveals Who We Are

Then came those fateful hours when Peter did not identify himself with the Savior, but still his love for Him demanded that he be present at those trials to see what occurred.

"Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

"But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

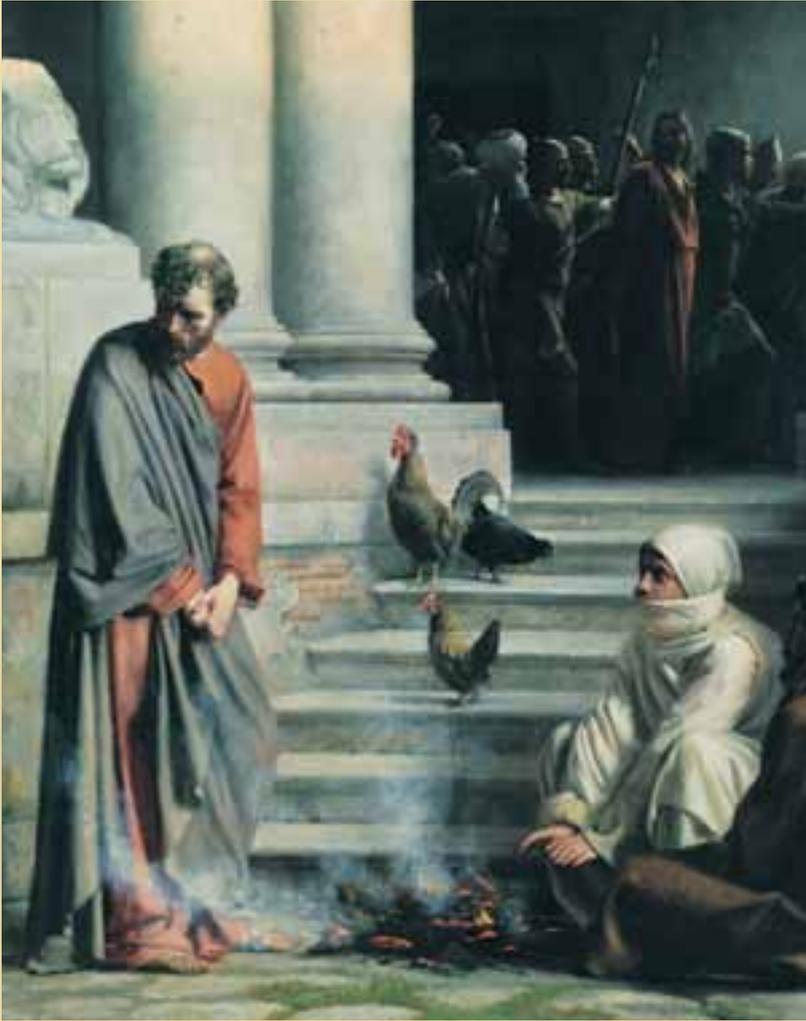
"And when he was



sensitive

caring

rude



Peter's speech revealed who he was and where he had been reared. Our speech reflects the kind of person we are, exposing our background and our way of life. It describes our thinking as well as our inner feelings.

gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

"And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

"And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth [reveals] thee.

"Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

"And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:69–75).

Just as a passport photo, a signature, or a thumbprint can identify individuals, Peter's

speech revealed who he was and where he had been reared. Just as surely are *you* classified and put in a special category by those who hear the words you speak. Our speech reflects the kind of person we are, exposing our background and our way of life. It describes our thinking as well as our inner feelings.

A Shocking Word

Today, probably more than in any other period of history, we find more profanity and vulgarity being used. I had a particular experience in my life that showed me how using the wrong word can shock those who do not expect such an utterance to come from you. I was in boot camp in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II. Of course, the language among my fellow Marines was not of the caliber that you would want to repeat. Being a recently returned missionary, I determined I should keep my language above the level they were using. I tried consistently to keep from saying even the simplest and most common of swear words.

One day we were on the rifle range firing for our final qualification scores. I had done well in the 100-, 200-, and 300-yard positions. Now we were back at the 500-yard position. All I needed was a reasonable score—just hitting the target without even having to hit the bull's-eye—and I would make Expert Rifleman. We had been charged up with the desire to excel and be the top platoon in firing for qualifications. I tensed up at the 500-yard standing position and on my first shot threw my shoulder into the rifle. Of course, the flag waved—I had missed the target. And likewise I missed the opportunity of being named Expert Rifleman.

Out of my mouth came a little four-letter

word that I had determined never to use. Much to my shock and chagrin, suddenly the whole range stopped firing and everyone turned and looked at me with their mouths open. Any other Marine firing from that position that day could have used the word I used without anyone paying attention. But because I had determined that I would carry the standards of the mission field into the Marine Corps, everyone was shocked when I forgot myself.

The Savior Himself instructed us concerning the use of our speech. He said, “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man” (Matthew 15:11).

Many times in our effort to refrain from improper speech, we find words to substitute. Sometimes they are so close to vulgar phrases everyone probably knows that we are substituting words and have not really improved our vocabulary.

I have been appalled at times as I have listened to returning missionaries speak in sacrament meeting. I have heard the words, phrases, or sentences they have picked up in the mission field that were really substitutes for vulgarity, demonstrating their inability to master a proper vocabulary and give the correct impression of what they had been doing on their missions.

How to Improve Your Speech

To anyone who has followed the practice of using profanity or vulgarity and would like to correct the habit, could I offer this suggestion?

1. Make the commitment to erase such

words from your vocabulary.

2. If you slip and say a swear word or a substitute word, mentally reconstruct the sentence without the vulgarity or substitute word.
3. Repeat the new sentence aloud.

Eventually you will develop a nonvulgar speech habit.

I think the instructions Paul gave to the Ephesian Saints would be of value to all of us:

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:29–30).

Have the courage to keep your speech clean and wholesome. Improve your vocabulary—it will place you among those who will be found serving the Lord.

The Savior taught, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh” (Luke 6:45).

May your mouth speak out of the abundance of that which is good in your heart is my prayer for all of you. **NE**



The two guys in front of me were quietly comparing answers to the test we were taking when one of them turned to me and asked, “What did you get for number six?”

DID YOU

My heart sank to the very bottom of my shoes. The words didn't register at first, with my head pounding so hard. “What was that?”

I stammered, all the while looking for an explanation.

“I said, did you cheat, Robbie?” The question came from one of my best friends, Darla. We'd grown up together and were now in our junior year of high school. Over the years we'd always talked about everything, but at this moment she was the last person in the world I wanted to talk to.

The day had started harmlessly enough. I got up, got dressed, went to school—all the usual things. Eventually it was time for French class to start. I'd forgotten it was a test day. I groaned inwardly as our teacher passed around the exams.

“Now class,” she said, “I have some things to do, but I expect you all to be finished when I get back.” With that, she left the classroom. Everyone in the class was silent as we struggled to pull knowledge from the dark recesses of our brains. It wasn't working for me.

After some time, two friends sitting next to me glanced up from their papers and looked around. Josh and Justin, two guys I had always admired and wanted

approval from, started comparing answers. They whispered back and forth, silently chuckling as they went through the questions.

Then it happened. Justin turned to me and asked, “What did you get for number six?” Almost without thinking, I started sharing my answers with them. An empty, guilty feeling lined my stomach, but I ignored it. I laughed along with them, pretending to be happy I had outsmarted the teacher and was going to get a good grade without studying.

After some time the teacher came back and collected the tests. She gave us some busy work and left the classroom again. Everyone started talking about the test they had just endured. Most of the class members weren't very happy with how they had done, but Justin and Josh wore big smiles.

“I think we did just fine, didn't we guys?” Josh said smugly. Justin laughed and nodded in agreement.

“What do you mean?” one of the other students asked.

“Oh, just that Justin, Rob, and I here pooled our resources. That test was a breeze with three doing it together!” The others didn't say much but gave us dark looks and went back to their work. That is, all but one



CHEAT?

went back to it.

There I was, Darla in front of me, her question aimed right at my heart. What could I tell her? I had cheated on a lousy French exam just to please my friends. I could see the look on her face, as if she didn't want to believe the possible answer. I respected Darla more than almost anyone. She wasn't a

It felt like Darla's question was aimed right at my heart. What could I tell her?

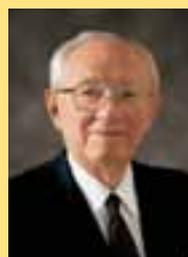
DID YOU CHEAT?

member of the Church but was active in her church and had strong values. She knew I was a member of the Church and respected that. We agreed on a lot of issues and found strength in each other's desire to do good. Usually.

"Yeah," was all I could say, lamely.

"Oh, Robbie," was all she said as she turned back to her work. I can't describe how much the disappointment in her voice and on her face hurt me. I had compromised my standards just to fit in with a couple of guys and ended up disappointing someone I really admired. Guilt washed over me. I kept thinking I had hurt the image of the Church in her eyes. I apologized to her for what I'd done and talked to the teacher afterwards. She wasn't pleased either, but we worked things out.

I'll never forget that day. I now know it isn't worth compromising your values just to please other people. Since then I've tried to be honest and am much happier with myself. Thankfully, I can say I haven't repeated that mistake again. I've felt the difference in doing what's popular and in doing what's right, and I know what makes me happy. **NE**



"The Lord . . . wants you to train your minds and hands to become an influence for good as you go forward with your lives. And as you do so and as you perform honorably and with excellence, you will bring honor to the Church, for you will be regarded as

a man or woman of integrity and ability and conscientious workmanship. Be smart. Don't be foolish. You cannot bluff or cheat others without bluffing or cheating yourselves."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Prophet's Prayer and Counsel for Youth," *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 5.

A Wonderful TRUTH

The answer to my prayer slipped into my mind.

BY LAURIE WALKER

I was baptized when I turned eight years old, though it wasn't until the summer after my junior year of high school that I found out what it meant for me to have a testimony of the Church and gospel.

We had a combined stake youth conference that year, and it was held in a beautiful valley. For two days we were given tasks to perform, helped around campsites, and played lots of games.

On the third day, we were given a packet and told not to open it until instructed. After a prayer, we each found a quiet spot not too far away where we would be alone. Once settled, we could open the large manila envelope.

There was a spot, serene and shaded, with a gorgeous view and a log to sit on. I perched on the log feeling like there was no one else around me. I opened the packet and pulled out all the papers inside.

The top sheet told me this was my very own opportunity to talk with my Heavenly Father. Then there was a white envelope, which held a letter from each of my parents. Tears sprung to my eyes as I read the loving words



my parents wrote me.

Next, I looked at my goal sheet. It listed a few suggestions for me to tell and ask my Heavenly Father in prayer. There was also space for me to write my own ideas.

There I knelt, eyes closed and hands clasped, and had a good talk with my Father in Heaven. I can't remember everything that I said or felt. One thing stands out clearly, though. A wonderful truth slipped into my mind.

"Heavenly Father," I said, "I know—I KNOW the Church is true. It just is."

At that moment, something warm crept over, around, and through me. I felt so light I could have been floating. Everything seemed bright, peaceful, and perfect. A feeling of love enveloped me so fully I almost couldn't breathe.

I remained on my knees, soaking in the Spirit for several minutes. When my eyes opened, the world around me didn't seem real. It was quite a shock to come back to dirt, bugs, and heat. I was happy, though. I gathered my pages and headed back to my group.

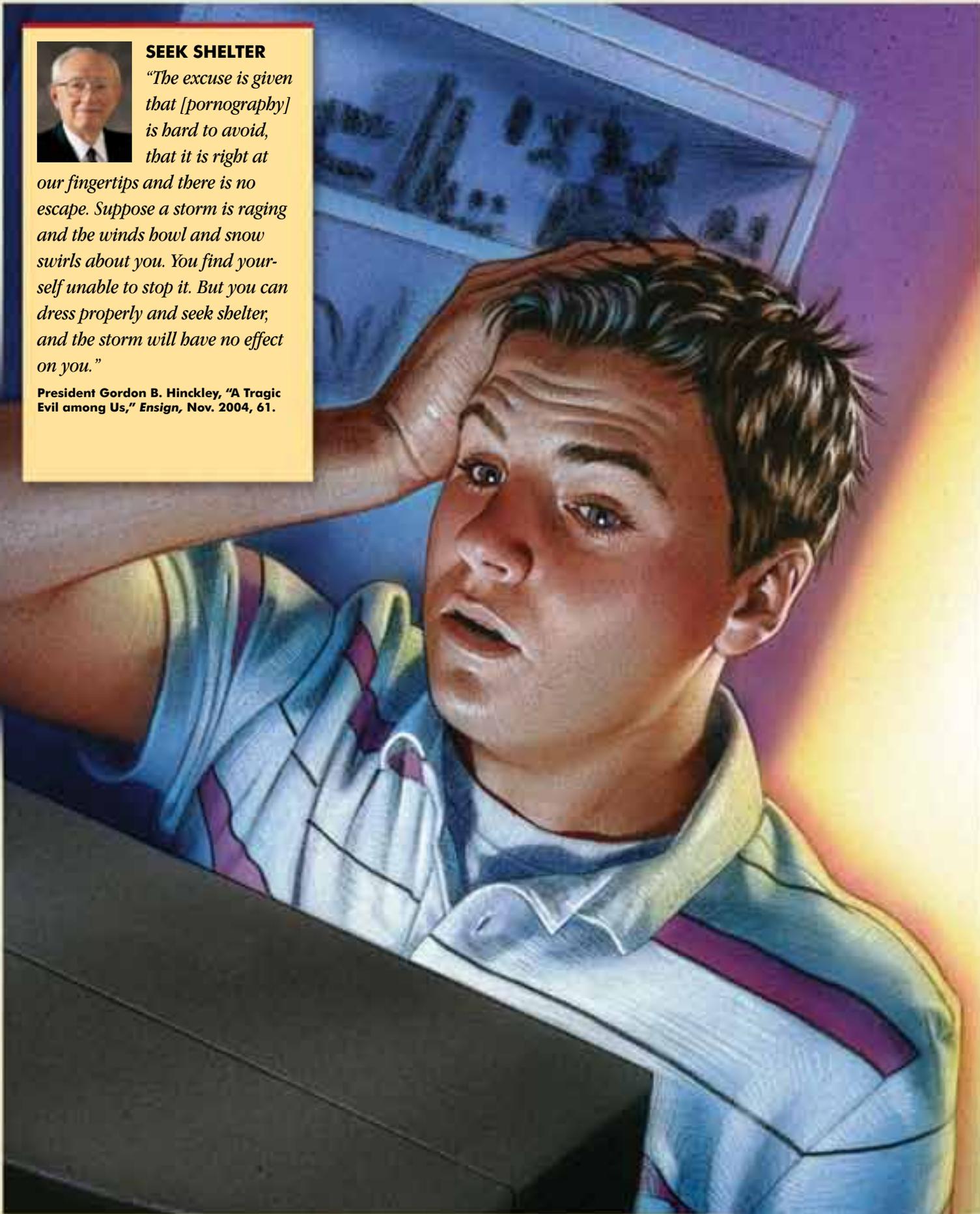
Yes, I was baptized when I was 8, but this experience at age 17 truly strengthened my testimony. **NE**



SEEK SHELTER

"The excuse is given that [pornography] is hard to avoid, that it is right at our fingertips and there is no escape. Suppose a storm is raging and the winds howl and snow swirls about you. You find yourself unable to stop it. But you can dress properly and seek shelter, and the storm will have no effect on you."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Tragic Evil among Us," *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 61.



My Battle with Pornography

NAME WITHHELD

I was just 10 years old the first time I encountered pornography. I was at an older friend's house, and we were watching television. He turned to his computer and said he had something to show me. When I asked what it was, he said, "Hot pictures of girls." I told him it was against my religion to look at those kinds of things, but he said, "Yeah, right. Everyone looks at this stuff—it's natural." I refused to look at it and left.

Two years later I was at my friend's house again. The difference this time was that I let curiosity and temptation get the better of me, and I agreed to look at what he had to show me. It was the biggest mistake of my life. I wish on a daily basis that I had not gone down the path I did.

I continued to look at pornography on my home computer. It was in a private place, but if anyone walked in on me, I said it was a pop-up or made some other excuse. For the next year I silenced the guilt I felt and didn't even try to stop looking at pornography. I convinced myself that it was natural and ignored any counsel from the Church that told me otherwise. I didn't realize it at first, but I had become addicted to pornography.

The way I looked at girls started to change, and I was ashamed of the thoughts I had.

At a youth conference my stake president spoke to us about how looking at pornography makes young men unworthy to exercise the priesthood. His talk convinced me that I needed to stop. At first I thought I could do it on my own. I didn't want to tell the bishop because I didn't want him to judge me for what I was doing. Instead, I just resolved not to look at it anymore. Unfortunately, my resolves never lasted long. I promised myself every time was the last time, but the addiction was so ingrained in me that I would find myself looking at it again and again.

Many other sins came as a result of this one. I continued to go to church but didn't pay attention. I let Satan gain power over my life and lost the influence of the Spirit. I lied about scripture reading in seminary. I lied about Boy Scout records. I even cheated in school. I became everything I had been taught not to be.

Five years passed while I tried to overcome my addiction with prayer and self-control. But I couldn't beat the addiction by myself.

No matter how hard I tried to break free from my addiction, I kept losing the battle. I finally learned I couldn't do it on my own.



PREVENTION

The best defense against pornography is to avoid it. The following tips will prevent you from taking the first step toward addiction and all of its problems:

- Many people who struggle with pornography were introduced to it by a friend. If anyone offers to show you pornography, leave immediately. Choose carefully the people you spend time with.
- Have the courage to turn off any media that displays or talks about immorality, regardless of the rating.
- Place televisions and computers in busy areas of the house. Do not use the computer when you are home alone.
- Make sure that any computer you use to access the Internet has a filter that will block pornographic Web sites. Protect yourself against the storm of pornography (see the quote by President Hinckley on page 10).
- Never open e-mail from someone you don't know. If you accidentally encounter pornography on the Web, immediately turn off the computer and tell an adult.
- Listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. He will warn you when you are in a dangerous situation.

RECOVERY



If you are caught in the snare of pornography, you must repent *and* overcome the addiction. Work through your repentance with the help of your bishop or branch president. LDS Family Services gives the following suggestions for recovering from an addiction:

- *Stop rationalizing.* You must stop justifying your addictive behavior.

- *Disrupt the addictive cycle.* Prevent the following cycle of addiction from repeating itself:

Phase 1: Preoccupation—dwelling on mental images that are sexually stimulating.

Phase 2: Ritualization—engaging in routines that lead to the use of pornography.

Phase 3: Viewing or using pornography.

Phase 4: Despair.

You can overcome the temptation to look at pornography by breaking the cycle at any of the four points. Here are ways to stop one phase from leading to the next:

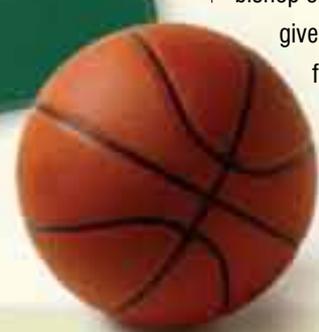
1. *Control your thoughts and desires.* Use faith, fasting, prayer, and scripture study to overcome impure thoughts. Replace unworthy thoughts as soon as they enter your mind by listening to inspirational music, reciting memorized scriptures, or thinking about wholesome things.

2. *Change your routines.* Do something different, like going for a walk, reading the scriptures, talking to a friend, or practicing a sport or musical instrument.

3. *Eliminate the opportunity.* Stop yourself from looking at pornography by preventing access to it.

4. *Pray for hope to replace your despair.* Do not allow setbacks to discourage you. Through repentance and forgiveness, you can feel hope instead of despair. Overcoming addiction is a process that takes time. Those who succeed are persistent.

- *Seek professional assistance.* Serious addictions may require professional counseling. In some areas, your bishop or branch president can refer you to the nearest LDS Family Services office, which has an addiction recovery program. Visit www.ldsfamilyservices.org for more information. The Church pamphlet *Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts* (item no. 00460) also has helpful information on overcoming pornography.





AVOID THE TRAP

“Pornography brings a vicious wake of immorality, broken homes, and broken

lives. Pornography will sap spiritual strength to endure. Pornography is much like quicksand. You can become so easily trapped and overcome as soon as you step into it that you do not realize the severe danger. Most likely you will need assistance to get out of the quicksand of pornography. But how much better it is never to step into it.”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Press On,” Ensign, Nov. 2004, 103.

I finally admitted to my parents that I had a problem with pornography. I told them, “I need help. I can’t do this alone.” Even though it was hard on them, they understood and tried to help me. My parents encouraged me to meet with the bishop.

I knew my parents were right, but I was afraid to talk to my bishop. I considered him a friend, and I didn’t want him to know about all the sins I had kept hidden. When I finally gathered the courage to meet with him, I was surprised by how understanding he was. I didn’t feel like he was judging me at all; he just wanted to help.

As soon as I confessed fully to the bishop and started to repent, my life immediately got better. I understood that to repent fully of my addiction to pornography, I needed to repent of *all* my sins. I turned in all of my seminary awards and Scouting merit badges, admitting that I hadn’t earned them. I also confessed to my schoolteachers that I had cheated.

With the bishop’s help, I realized how important it is to confess both to the bishop and to the Lord (see D&C 58:43). Before, I was trying to fight this addiction all by myself, but now I have my parents, my bishop, and most important, the Lord on my side. These are strong defenses against temptation.

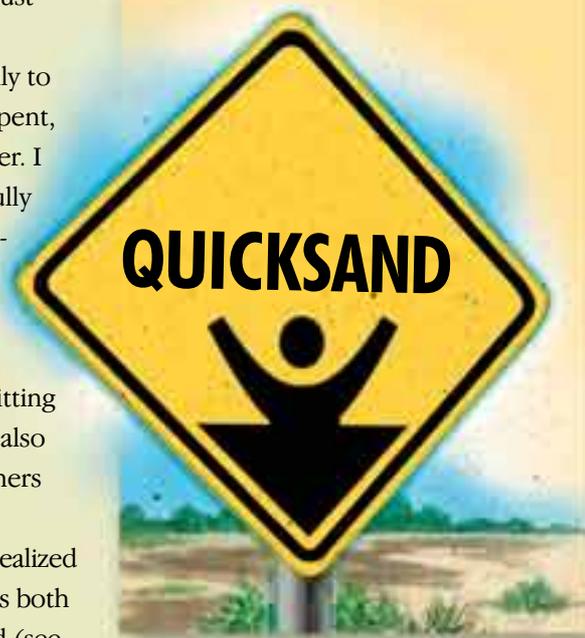
We got a parental lock on the computer, and I began to put pictures of the temple or the prophet nearby to keep my mind on sacred things. I discovered that daily

scripture study was one of the most helpful ways to build my spiritual defenses. When I was looking at pornography, I don’t think I even knew where my scriptures were. But now I know I need to read my scriptures every day in order to resist temptation.

I’ve also had to be more careful about what I watch and listen to. Many television shows and movies talk about immorality as if it were natural. I’ve realized it *is* natural to the natural man, an enemy to God (see Mosiah 3:19). Only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ have I been able to put off the natural man and be forgiven of my sins. I know that if anyone can understand the regret I have suffered for my sins, it is the Savior, who suffered all things.

I have now forsaken my addiction to pornography. I have come to understand that through the Atonement, there is eternal hope. Although I will have to be constantly on my guard, with the help of the Spirit in my life, I will win the war. I know the devil will still try to tempt me, but he will never prevail when I have the Savior on my side.

I learned the hard way that it takes only one time to spark the beginning of a long addiction that will bring nothing but misery. I let idle curiosity lead me to sin and despair, but I am motivated to stay away from this plague for the rest of my life. I look forward to serving a mission, marrying in the temple, and eventually living with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ again. **NE**



LEFT, FROM TOP: PHOTOGRAPHS BY JED CLARK, WELDEN C. ANDERSEN, JOHN LUKE, AND TAMARA RATTIETA

Q & A

“One of my friends, who is active in the Church, has some anti-Mormon literature and thinks we should read it so we know how to respond to it. But I find that literature disturbing. What should I tell my friend?”

NEW ERA

If the misrepresentations in anti-Mormon literature really disturb you, then tell your friend how you feel so that he'll leave you alone about it. Tell him you'd rather read something you trust, like the scriptures or Church publications.

Here are a couple of things to remember about anti-Mormon material.

First, it would be a waste to spend a lot of time and energy reading it. For one thing, it's incredibly repetitive. Most of its questions and claims have been brought up—and answered—time and time again for over 100 years. But because anti-Mormon authors want to discredit the Church, they keep writing the same stuff over and over in the hope that they can reach a new audience. For another thing, you may not have the knowledge and experience to successfully investigate and counter all of the arguments they make. If you do end up reading something that criticizes the Church, discuss it with someone you trust who is knowledgeable in the gospel, like your parents, bishop, or seminary teacher. They can help you find answers and, more importantly, put things in proper perspective.

■ **Say you would rather read something you trust, like the scriptures.**

■ **Spending a lot of time and energy reading anti-Mormon literature would be a waste.**

■ **If you run across it, discuss it with someone who is knowledgeable about the gospel.**

■ **Never take anti-Mormon literature at face value.**

■ **Honest inquiry is good, but everything needs a proper perspective and context.**

Second, you should never take the claims of anti-Mormon literature at face value. Although some critics of the Church may be doing what they sincerely believe to be right, too many of them are either misinformed about the Church or downright antagonistic toward it. This latter group is often all too willing to rely on deception and dishonesty to achieve their goals. The literature they produce often uses lies or half-truths; it distorts, sensationalizes, or misinterprets Church teachings and history; its intent is to tear down the Church and scare people away from it.

Think of how you feel when you read the Book of Mormon, pray, or bear your testimony. How do those feelings compare with the feelings that come from reading anti-Mormon literature? Which is guiding you to the truth?

We're not against honest inquiry in the Church. We welcome it. The Apostle Paul said, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "One of the grand fundamental principles of 'Mormonism' is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may" (*History of the Church*, 5:499). As we search for truth



in Church teachings and history, we should remember that it is faith in Christ that helps us to “lay hold upon every good thing” (see Moroni 7:15–25). And we should keep everything in its proper perspective and context. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: “We seem to have a host of critics. Some appear intent on trying to destroy us. They mock that which is sacred. They belittle that which we call divine. Some have said that we are trapped by our history, others have worked with great diligence seeking flaws in our early leaders. . . .

“My plea is that as we continue our search for truth, particularly we of the Church, that we look for strength and goodness rather than weakness and foibles in those who did so great a work in their time. . . .
 “. . . I hope that we will cultivate an attitude of looking for positive elements which lead to growth and enthusiasm. We are not trapped by our history. That history contains the foundation of this work. . . .
 “I do not fear truth. I welcome it. But I wish all of my facts to be in their proper context” (“The Continuing Pursuit of Truth,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1986, 4–6). **NE**

READERS



Reading anti-Mormon literature could deceive your friend, even if he or she has a strong testimony. The best way to know how to respond to opposing

views is to study the Book of Mormon. I know it is the word of God, and after all, it was written for our day! With the Holy Ghost to guide us as we read the Book of Mormon and other scriptures, we can learn to recognize deception and can have the Spirit to guide us when we may need to respond.

Alicia M., 18, Utah

Just tell your friend the truth, that you find that literature disturbing. If he or she is a true friend, he or she will have no problem with it. Stick with your feeling of not wanting to read it. If you do read it, it could open up a window of doubt. There are plenty of books (like True to the Faith) that have been written through inspiration. Pick up one of those so that you may know how to respond to questions.

Brian P., 16, Arizona



On my mission I have come across a lot of anti-Mormon literature. It is disturbing. I have seen honest seekers of truth fall away because of it. If you want to learn how to answer people's concerns, do two things: gain a strong testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, and know the doctrine by studying the scriptures. Then, when others come to you with concerns, you will have the power of the Holy Ghost to testify to you and to them of the truth.

Sister Holly Erikson, 23, Tennessee Nashville Mission

Anti-Mormon literature will be filled with scriptures or quotes that are taken out of context and twisted to serve the author's purpose of filling people's minds with doubt about the Church. The fact that you get an uneasy feeling when you read anti-Mormon literature should be proof enough. The best thing you can do to be prepared for questions is to be faithful and read the Book of Mormon daily. Also, most people who will ask you questions that come from the anti-Mormon literature are not interested in finding the gospel. They want you to argue with them so they can twist your words (see Alma 11).

Jenika W., 19, Washington



One day I was talking to a friend, who is not a member of our church, and we almost got to the point where we started putting each other's churches down, but I didn't want it to get to that point, so I just bore my



The present effort of trying to find some other explanation for the organization of the Church, for the origin of the Book of Mormon, and for the priesthood with its keys and powers will be similar to other anti-Mormon fads which have come and blossomed and faded. Truth will prevail. A knowledge of that truth comes by effort and study, yes. But it comes primarily as a gift from God to those who seek in faith."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "Lord, Increase Our Faith," *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 52-53.

testimony and stopped. A few weeks later I got some pamphlets and magazines in the mail from her. I could have kept them so that I would know what some writers think about our church, but I didn't. This experience made me want to be more prepared when things like this happen.

Alexandria M., 15, Oregon

What you read or watch has an effect on you. Part of the 13th article of faith says that "if there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things." I do not think reading anti-Mormon literature fits in the above statement. Plus you find the literature disturbing. That may be the Spirit sending you a message to stay away from this literature.

Martyn T., 22, Wakiso, Uganda



There is far greater benefit from searching the inspired words of prophets and apostles of the Lord, in the scriptures and Church magazines. That is when we receive the Spirit's direction, not when we are immersed in the adversary's filth.

Elder Calvin Oberly Jr., 24, New York New York South Mission

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

NEXT QUESTION

"I know it's important to study the scriptures, but I don't have the time to do it. How do I find the time?"

SEND YOUR ANSWER, along with your full name, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and photograph (including your parent's written permission to print the photo, if you are under 18) to:

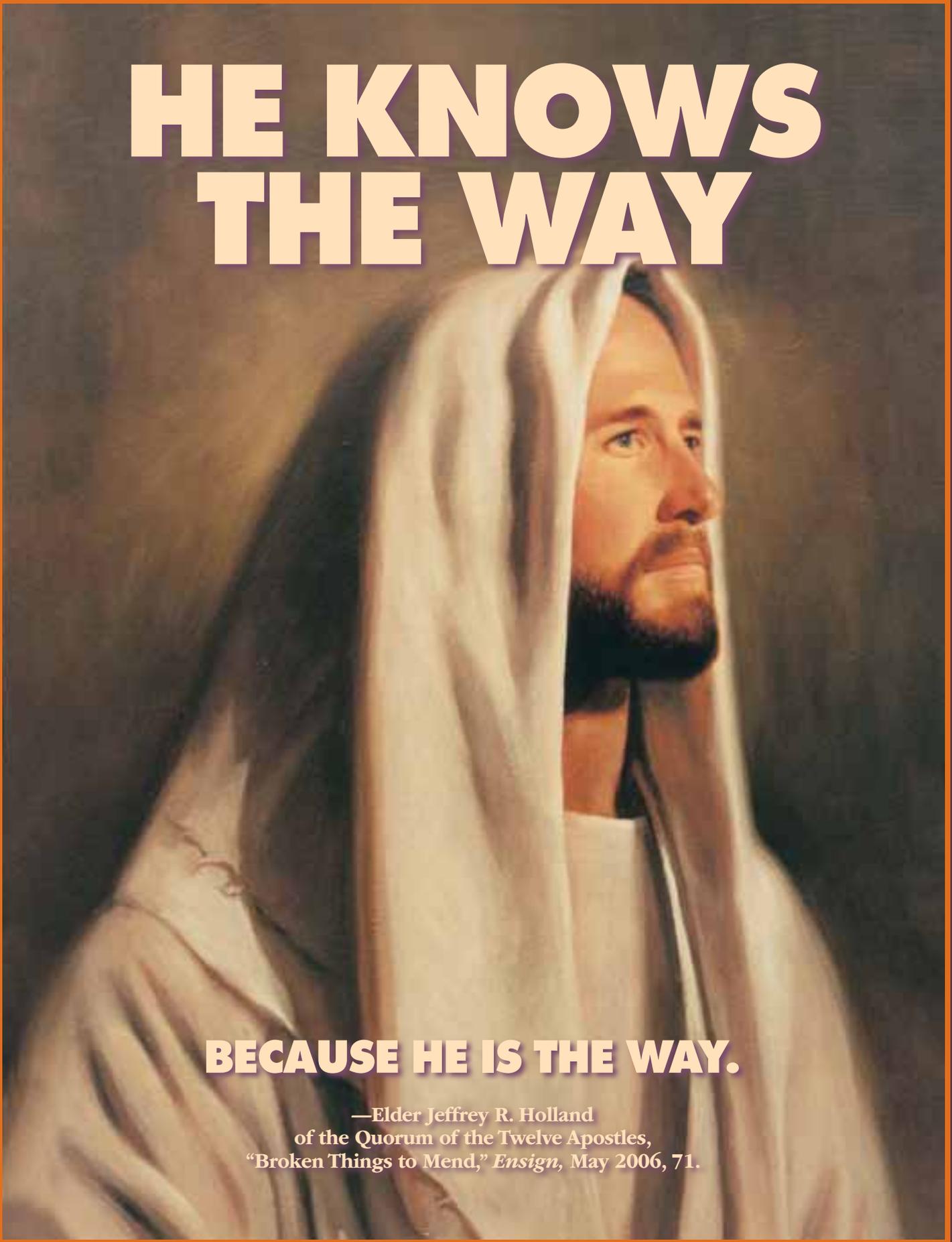
New Era, Q&A, 8/07

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

Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by August 15, 2007.

HE KNOWS THE WAY



BECAUSE HE IS THE WAY.

—Elder Jeffrey R. Holland
of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
“Broken Things to Mend,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 71.



REMEMBERING IOWA

Handcarts and the pioneers who walked to Zion have become a symbol of the Latter-day Saint migration and the building of the Church.

BY CAROLINE H. BENZLEY

One summer morning in 1856, 16-year-old Janetta McBride started walking from Iowa to the Salt Lake Valley.

Her journey had begun months earlier when she left England with her family and sailed across the Atlantic Ocean. Once in the United States, they continued by rail to Iowa City, Iowa, where a westbound railroad line ended.

In Iowa City Janetta's family joined the Latter-day Saints as they gathered their strength and supplies for the final part of the journey—a 1,300-mile (2,090-km) walk with handcarts. Janetta McBride was assigned to the Martin handcart company, one of seven companies that left Iowa City between 1856 and 1857.

Looking West

Now 150 years later, the date is June 9, 2006. One more handcart company is leaving Iowa City.

This time the company is made up of about 70 young men and young women from the Iowa City Iowa Stake.

Dressed in pioneer clothing, with their handcarts full of supplies, these youth are gathered at the Mormon Handcart Park just outside of Iowa City—the same place from which the first handcart company left exactly 150 years earlier on June 9, 1856. Looking west, they can't help but think of the original pioneers who stood here so long ago.

Kameron Hansen of the Iowa City First Ward thinks of his fourth great-grandmother, Janetta McBride. Kameron, 14, is almost the same age Janetta was when she started walking to Zion.

"I like to think how happy she would be to see me doing this," says Kameron. "I hope she is proud that her family is still faithful in the Church." Kameron knows his journey will be much shorter and easier than Janetta's, but he still feels grateful for this chance to remember and honor his ancestors.

Anna Shaner of the Fairfield Branch is also grateful to honor the pioneers. She is amazed they walked into the frontier not knowing whether they would live through the experience. Anna gains a lot of strength from the people who, as she puts it, "had faith in what they were supposed to do and the courage to do it."

This trek is a great opportunity for all the Iowa City youth to honor their ancestors. Whether they have handcart pioneers in their family line or not, the youth are members of the Church, so the handcart pioneers are their spiritual ancestors.



Teens in the Iowa City Iowa Stake start pulling their handcarts in the same spot the handcart pioneers started from in 1856. The trail is now protected as a state park.



Although their modern trek lasts just one day, it is enough for the youth to appreciate the struggles of the handcart pioneers. *Opposite page: Jeff Fillmore tries to replicate the clothing that a young pioneer his age might have worn. Allison Engle and Summer Burch give bonnets a try.*

Why Iowa?

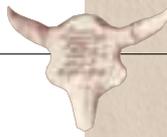
Today Iowa City, Iowa, is in the heart of the midwestern United States, but 150 years ago it was on the frontier—as far west as the train could take you. Most of the early converts who camped outside Iowa City in 1856 were emigrants from Europe. They had already traveled far and had little money to buy wagons and supplies. The people in Iowa City were tolerant of the Latter-day Saints, and pioneer journals recount the Iowans' acts of kindness.

When President Brigham Young announced handcart travel as a cheaper and faster option for traveling to Zion, these Saints were eager to try it. The first handcart company left Iowa City on June 9, 1856.

Most handcart companies made the exhausting journey safely to the Salt Lake Valley, but it was more difficult for Janetta McBride's group, the Martin company, and the Willie company. Both companies were caught in early snowstorms, and more than 200 people died. Their journeys required a great sacrifice, which was possible to endure only through faith in Heavenly Father and in His plan. This same faith motivated all the handcart companies that pushed and pulled their way to Zion.

In 2006 the handcart trek was part of a sesquicentennial celebration to honor this faith. Members of the Iowa City stake hosted events such as an academic symposium, a pioneer festival, and an interfaith devotional. These events honored not only the handcart pioneers but also the Iowans who helped them.





Following the Prophet

After a long day of trekking through the hills of Iowa, the youth now have a moment to reflect on their experience. Emma Pauley rereads Ether 12, a chapter on faith that she remembers learning about in seminary.

“I don’t know if I could have walked the whole way to Utah,” says Emma, “but the pioneers were able to do it, and I know that it was because of their faith. All great things are done by faith.”

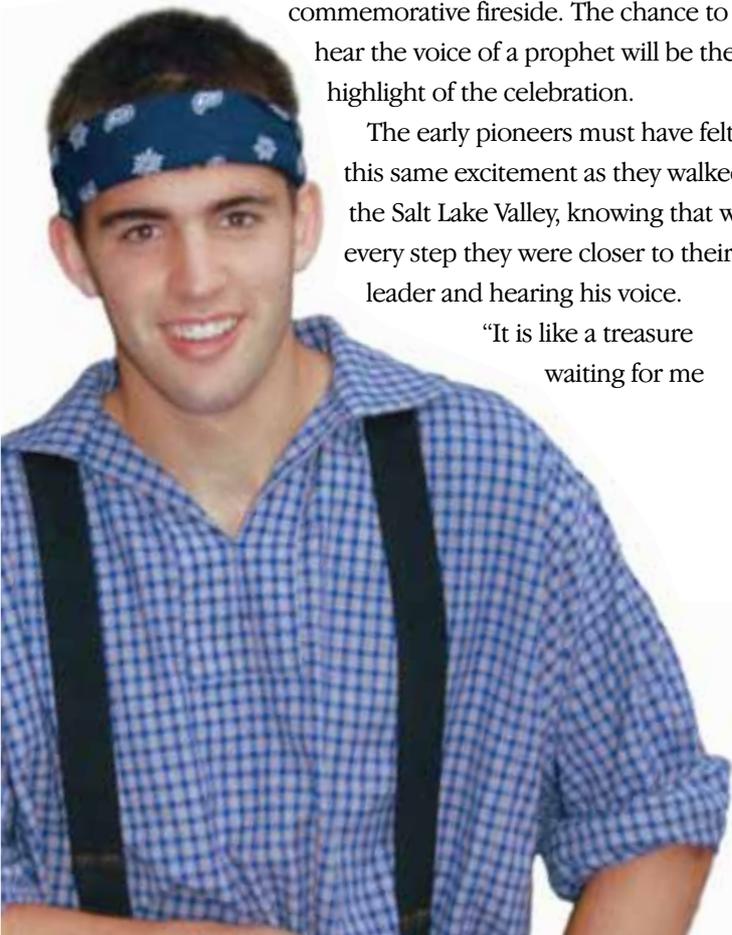
The faith of the handcart pioneers enabled them to respond to President Young’s call to gather to the Salt Lake Valley. Their example makes it easier for the Iowa City youth to follow the counsel of the prophet today.

One way young men like Kameron Hansen can follow the prophet is by completing the Duty to God program. As he explains, “When I think of the pioneers and their sacrifice, it makes me want to finish my requirements so I can follow the prophet too.”

Following the prophet is important to these youth, and they look forward to seeing him the following Sunday at a commemorative fireside. The chance to hear the voice of a prophet will be the highlight of the celebration.

The early pioneers must have felt this same excitement as they walked to the Salt Lake Valley, knowing that with every step they were closer to their leader and hearing his voice.

“It is like a treasure waiting for me



TELL ME A TALE

BY RILEY M. LORIMER

Church Magazines

The Beehives of the Iowa City First Ward were too young to participate in the youth handcart trek, but they were determined to be involved in the commemoration of the handcart pioneers. On a recommendation from one of their leaders, these young women volunteered to be storytellers at the Handcart Festival.



The girls decided to use this experience as a Personal Progress project. Each girl sewed her own bonnet as part of the authentic pioneer costume for the festival. They practiced for hours to memorize the story they had chosen—the story of Fanny Fry, who traveled with the George Rowley handcart company in 1859.

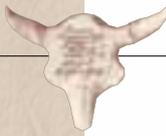


Fanny was separated from her family and endured hardships while crossing the plains. One day she fainted and was run over by her handcart. Thinking she was dead, the sisters began preparing her for burial. The Iowa Beehives love to tell how surprised those good sisters were when Fanny opened her eyes. Despite her injuries, Fanny pressed on and was later reunited with her sister.

“I love to think how brave Fanny was to have left her family and to survive,” says Summer Burch. “She was tough.”

“I admire her because she never had a bad attitude, even when things went wrong,” says Allison Engle.

On the morning of the festival, Summer and Allison, along with their fellow Beehives, Miranda Decker, Kendra Dawson, Lyssa Abel, and Jenna Abel, exhibited those qualities they admire in Fanny Fry. The day was windy, rainy, and cold. But they braved the chill with willing hearts and cheerful smiles. Every girl was at her post, dressed in full pioneer costume, ready to tell Fanny’s story to any and all who wanted to hear. **NE**



HANDCART HISTORY



Here's a little background on the handcart pioneers:

- President

Brigham Young directed the Latter-day Saints to travel to Zion by handcart because it was less expensive than covered wagons, and many more Saints

could make the journey.

- There were 10 handcart companies in all, from 1856 to 1860.
- The Saints traveled by railroad to Iowa City, Iowa. After being outfitted, 7 of the 10 handcart companies left from Iowa City. The others left from Florence, Nebraska.
- Most of the handcart pioneers were emigrants from Europe. They came from England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, and Italy.
- Except for the Willie and Martin companies (who left late in the season and were caught in early snowstorms), the handcart companies experienced relatively few deaths along the trail.
- Although handcart pioneers endured hardships, the faith of many remained firm. Priscilla M. Evans of the Bunker company said, "People made fun of us as we walked, pulling our carts, but the weather was fine and the roads were excellent and although I was sick and we were very tired at night, still we thought it was a glorious way to go to Zion." **NE**

From LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, Handcarts to Zion (1960).

at the end," says Skylar Hansen of the Iowa City First Ward.

Having finished their trek, the Iowa City youth are now getting closer to their treasure, but they are not there yet. The next day is Saturday, and there is a lot of work to do.

Saying Thank You

During 2006 members of the Iowa City Iowa Stake kept busy serving those in need throughout the area. It was the members' way of saying thank you to a community that gave assistance to those early Saints.



Today the youth got their chance to serve. Although 6:30 a.m. felt early, Marc Humbert of the Iowa City First Ward said the trek the day before actually made it easier for him to get up and start serving. "Going on the trek helped me remember what was important," he said, "and it was easy to serve."

Marc was not the only one eager to serve. Despite the pouring rain, excitement was visible as the youth took turns visiting rest homes, cleaning police cars, stocking food shelves at local shelters, and cleaning up a park.

Giving this service was the least they could do to thank a city that helped the early Saints.

LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH OF HANDCART BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN

Handcart History Is My History

After walking all day Friday and giving service on Saturday, the youth are happy it is Sunday—time to listen to the prophet in person. Now seated with their families at the commemorative fireside, the young men and young women feel grateful for their new understanding of the handcart experience. The words of President Gordon B. Hinckley inspire them to continue the legacy of faith left by the handcart pioneers. He tells them, “We must ever look back to those who paid so terrible a price in laying the foundations of this great latter-day work.”

The pioneers who left Iowa City in 1856 would have rejoiced to hear about the modern pioneers living in the Iowa City stake. Perhaps they would be inspired by the courage of today’s youth who strive to live the gospel in such a confusing world.

Anna Shaner, for one, works hard to be a righteous example to her friends and



President Gordon B. Hinckley speaks at a fireside. The teens are excited to hear the prophet after a day of giving service in their community.

family. Her faith gives her the strength she needs to stay the course. She says, “The experience of the pioneers means a lot to me because they did it for me. It is my history.” **NE**



THE LOST GOAT

BY MATTHEW B. PEARSON

From a young boy in Chile who herded goats, I learned a lot about the Savior's love for each of us.



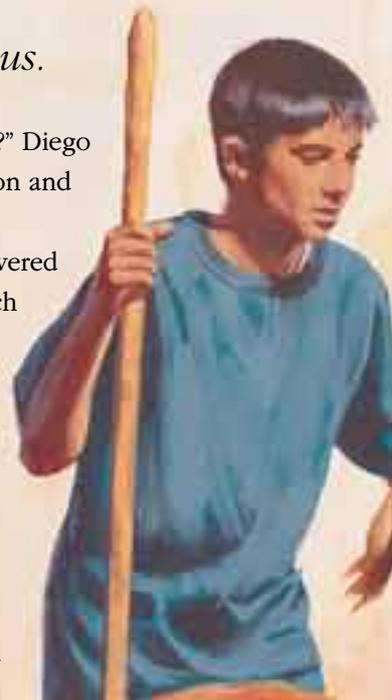
I'll never forget the day I met Diego. I was serving my mission in Chile when he approached my companion and me. He was so excited to see us because he wanted to learn about the gospel and knew he needed to be baptized. Diego amazed me because he was so pure—he didn't want to do one worldly thing. He introduced us to his mother, and we set up an appointment to teach them at his grandmother's house.

No sooner had we arrived to teach them than Diego's grandmother came into the room in a panic. "The goats are missing!" she cried.

"Can you help

me search for them?" Diego asked my companion and me, so we did.

The area was covered in rolling hills, which were rockier than I had thought. Diego explained that he was worried because the goats could hurt themselves on the treacherous terrain or be stolen by thieves. We had



searched for a while when Diego finally yelled, "I see them!"

I turned my head and could not see anything. I asked, "Diego, where are they?"

He replied, "They are on top of that hill."

As I tried to focus my eyes, I could see dots moving around on the hilltop. I couldn't believe Diego had spotted the flock of goats from that far away. He told us to wait at the bottom while he went up to get them.

I then witnessed something I had never seen before. As Diego climbed the steep hill, he began a distinct combination of clapping and yelling. The goats, recognizing the signal, perked up. Within five minutes, they grouped together and came galloping down the hill.

"This is too easy!" I thought.

I was right.

As we turned to herd the flock back home, I heard the distant cry of another goat. We looked back and saw one little goat bleating on top of the hill. Realizing it was alone, it started trotting toward us. I was feeling relieved to see that this goat was coming toward us when Diego began to race up the hill.

"What are you doing?" I called.

"It's a baby goat," he replied. "It could easily fall and get injured."

My companion and I quickly followed him.

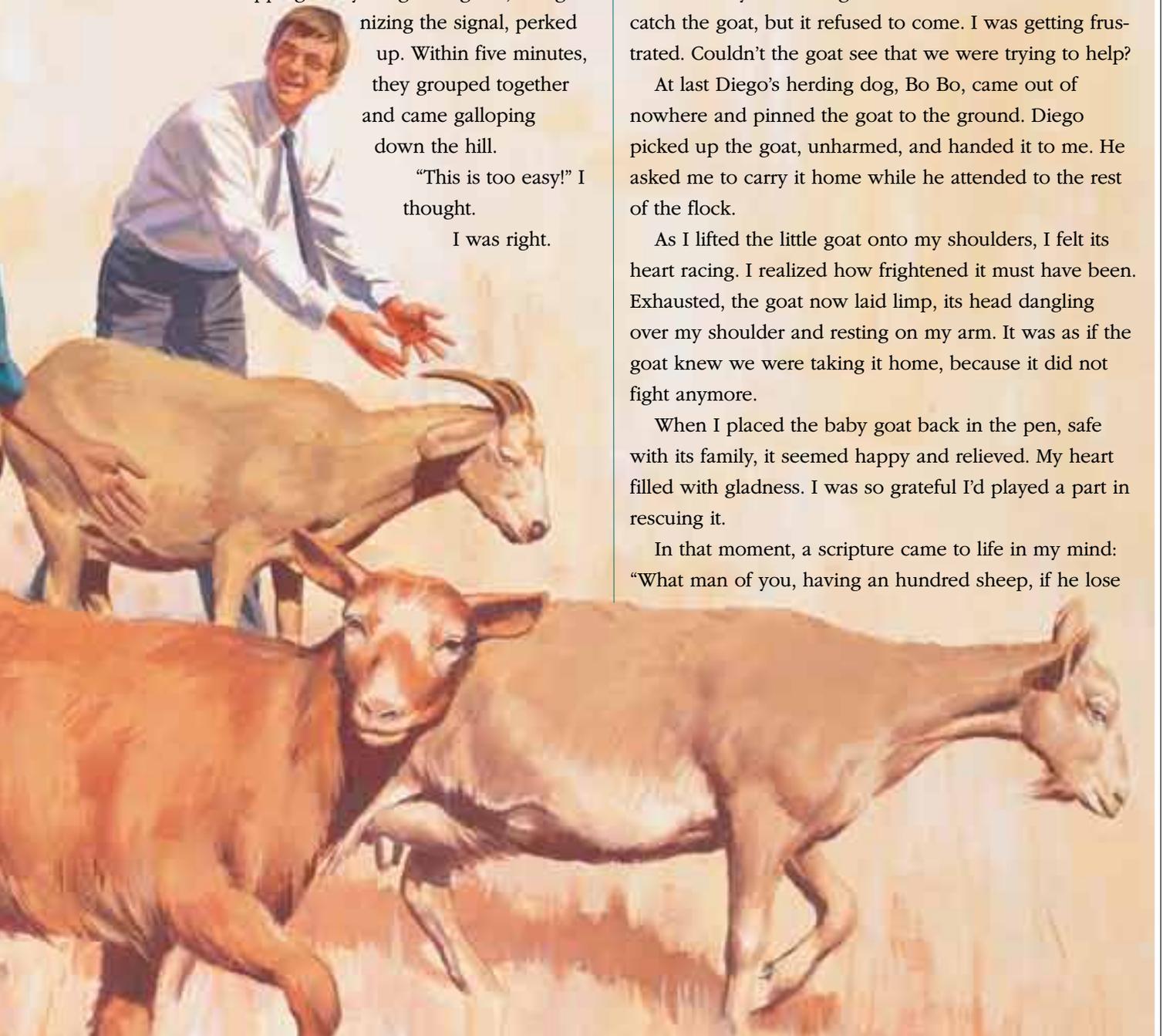
As Diego bent to pick up the baby goat, it dodged and ran away. For a long time the three of us tried to catch the goat, but it refused to come. I was getting frustrated. Couldn't the goat see that we were trying to help?

At last Diego's herding dog, Bo Bo, came out of nowhere and pinned the goat to the ground. Diego picked up the goat, unharmed, and handed it to me. He asked me to carry it home while he attended to the rest of the flock.

As I lifted the little goat onto my shoulders, I felt its heart racing. I realized how frightened it must have been. Exhausted, the goat now laid limp, its head dangling over my shoulder and resting on my arm. It was as if the goat knew we were taking it home, because it did not fight anymore.

When I placed the baby goat back in the pen, safe with its family, it seemed happy and relieved. My heart filled with gladness. I was so grateful I'd played a part in rescuing it.

In that moment, a scripture came to life in my mind: "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose



joined in the rescue of one small goat that brought to life some familiar scriptures (see Luke 15:4–5, 7).

one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

“And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. . . .

“ . . . Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:4–5, 7).

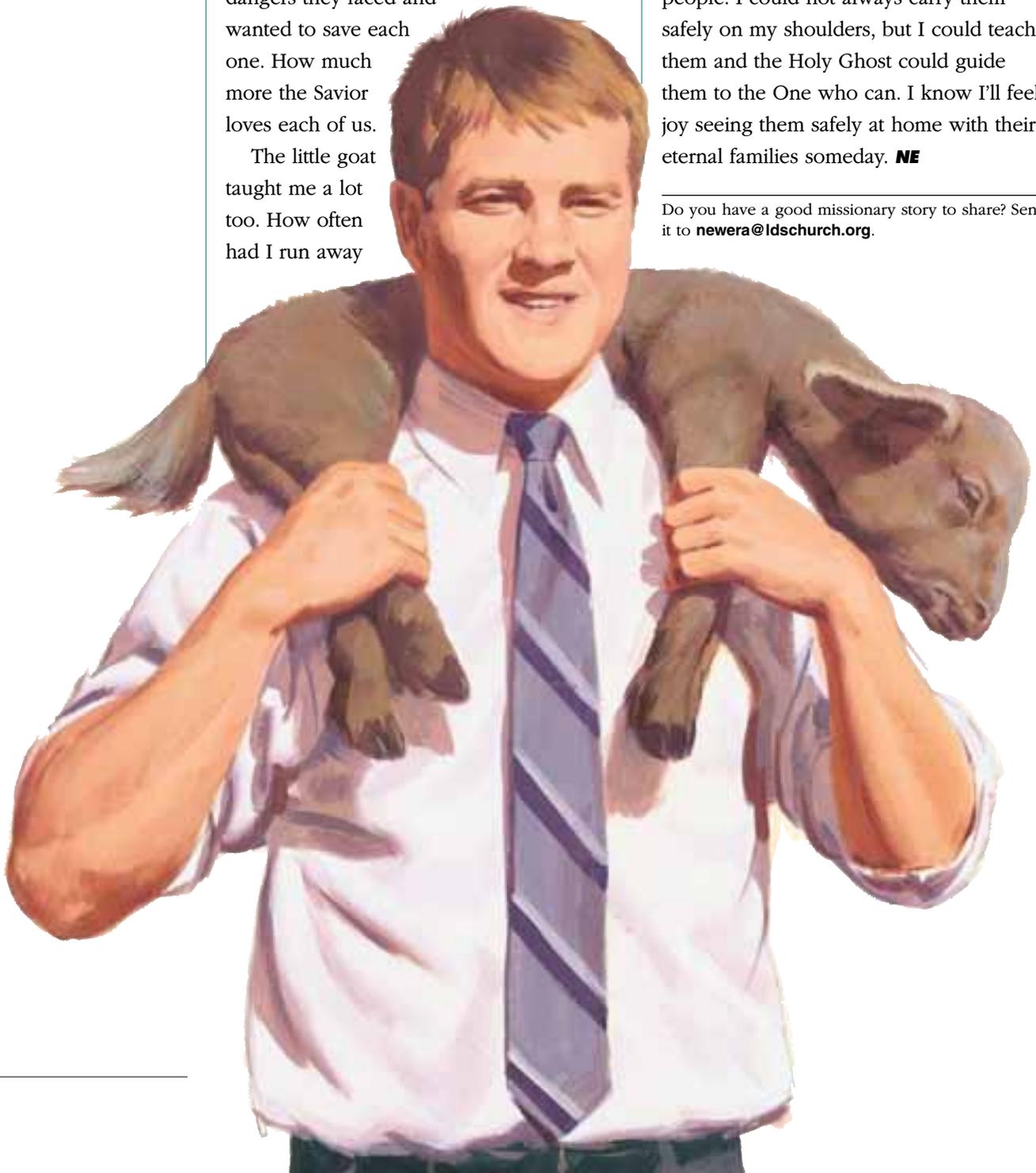
Diego taught me something about the Savior that day. Diego loved each member of his flock individually. He could see the dangers they faced and wanted to save each one. How much more the Savior loves each of us.

The little goat taught me a lot too. How often had I run away

from the Savior’s help? How many lost souls were shutting Him out of their lives because they were afraid?

As a missionary, I was privileged to serve others the way the Savior would if He were here. At first I had agreed to help Diego because I cared about him, but as I carried that goat, I came to feel I cared for it too. How much more I loved the Savior and wanted to seek for His children. As I did, love grew in my heart for the Chilean people. I could not always carry them safely on my shoulders, but I could teach them and the Holy Ghost could guide them to the One who can. I know I’ll feel joy seeing them safely at home with their eternal families someday. **NE**

Do you have a good missionary story to share? Send it to newera@ldschurch.org.



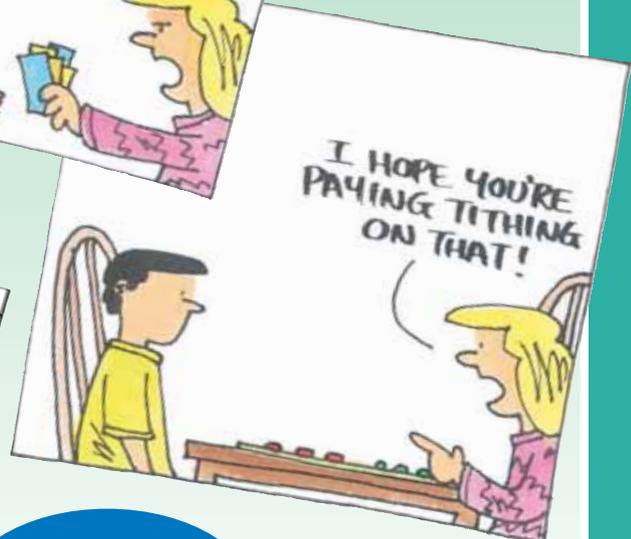
THE EXTRA SMILE



RYAN STOKER



JOSHUA SMEATON



"Don't you kids make me turn this cart around."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

Last year, our very first nephew, Nathan, left to serve a mission in Mexico. We explained to our children that Nathan was in the MTC to learn Spanish. One evening we decided to devote a family home evening night to writing letters to him. Although we were helping the youngest, all of the other children were writing independently. At one point, Stephen, age 7, asked, "How do you spell 'empty'?" We thought nothing of it at the time, but later as we were reviewing what the kids had written, we saw this question in Stephen's letter: "Dear Nathan, what do you do in the empty sea?"

—Meredith J., Colorado



WHAT DID THE GOLDEN PLATES LOOK LIKE?

BY KIRK B. HENRICHSEN



(Far left) This painting illustrates the Angel Moroni showing the golden plates to Joseph Smith (seated in the middle) and witnesses Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer.

The drawing (left) depicts Joseph Smith showing the plates to the Eight Witnesses, who included his two brothers Hyrum and Samuel, as well as his father, Joseph Sr.

When some people interested in the Book of Mormon ask to see the golden plates, they are disappointed to learn that Joseph returned them to Moroni. When told that several witnesses did see and handle them, they ask, “What did they look like?”

Joseph Smith was careful to obey the command from the Lord that he not show the plates to others. As he translated the Book of Mormon, Joseph learned that special witnesses would be called to bear testimony of the ancient record written on

metal plates. He was quite relieved when he was permitted to show the plates to several witnesses. Those witnesses were then commanded to testify of their experience to others and to write their testimonies concerning the Book of Mormon.

Three men, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris, were privileged to be shown the plates by the Angel Moroni. Then eight witnesses were shown the plates by Joseph Smith. Their testimonies are printed at the front of every copy of the Book of Mormon.



What Do We Know?

Although no single comprehensive description of the Book of Mormon plates has been preserved, the Prophet Joseph Smith and several people closely associated with him made various statements that include partial descriptions of the plates. When all of the available sources are considered, quite a detailed picture emerges of the physical characteristics of the ancient Nephite record.

What Were the Plates Made Of?

*“The appearance of gold.”*¹—Joseph Smith Jr., Eight Witnesses, Orson Pratt

*“Golden plates.”*²—David Whitmer

Neither Joseph nor any of the witnesses said that the ancient record was made from solid gold. Nor did they use the term “gold plates” or “plates of gold.” All Joseph said is that they had “the appearance of gold.”

The presumption that the plates were made of solid gold is curious but probably not correct. It was Joseph’s enemies that coined the phrase “Gold Bible.” It is more appropriate to refer to the ancient metal record as “the Golden Plates,” referring to their color, not the material they were made of.

How Much Did the Plates Weigh?

*“Weighing altogether, from forty to sixty lbs.”*³—Martin Harris

*“I moved them from place to place on the table, as it was necessary in doing my work.”*⁴—Emma Smith

People of that time period were accustomed to purchasing household supplies by weight. A farmer would have a good idea of what a 60-pound bag of grain would feel like. A woman working in her kitchen would be required to lift a heavy iron kettle filled with water that may weigh up to 60 pounds.

THE GOLDEN PLATES COULDN'T BE MADE OF PURE GOLD

Many critics have been quick to point out that if the record was made of solid gold it would have weighed much more than a person could lift. Besides being too heavy, thin plates of pure gold would not function well as a book. The metal would be so soft that it could easily tear from the rings, and engraving would be limited to one side.

The text of the Book of Mormon itself refers to Nephi’s seeking “ore” from which to make his plates. Metal ore usually has a mixture of various metals in it. Gold and silver are often mixed together in an alloy called electrum. Logically, the Book of Mormon plates could have been composed of these two metals. Some have suggested a combination of copper and gold.

The Lord promised that the plates would preserve their “brightness” (see Alma 37:5–7). Because gold does not corrode, objects made of gold can last thousands of years. When exposed to oxygen, silver tarnishes until it turns black. Copper turns a green color. Ancient American metallurgists familiar with this process were able to accelerate the oxidation of silver and copper and remove its residue, leaving an enhanced gold surface. Thus, a composite metal could be made to have the appearance of solid gold. (For details, see “How Witnesses Described the ‘Gold Plates,’ ” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 10, no.1 [2001], 21).

How Big Were They?

*“Six inches wide by eight inches long.”*⁵

—Joseph Smith Jr.

*“Seven inches wide by eight inches in length.”*⁶—Martin Harris

*“Of the thickness of plates of tin.”*⁷—Martin Harris

*“When piled one above the other, they were altogether about four inches thick.”*⁸—Martin Harris

*“About eight inches long, seven inches wide.”*⁹—David Whitmer

*“About as thick as parchment.”*¹⁰—David Whitmer

*“Each plate was not far from seven by eight inches in width and length.”*¹¹—Orson Pratt

*“Not quite as thick as common tin.”*¹²
—Orson Pratt

*“Something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed.”*¹³—Orson Pratt

*“They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book.”*¹⁴
—Emma Smith

In court, testimonies that vary slightly from each other are often seen as more truthful than when they match precisely. If all the statements are exactly the same, it can indicate that the witnesses have compared notes to fabricate a story that is too perfect.

The length of eight inches is given in all of these statements. Three give a width of seven inches. Memory of things like dimensions should be regarded as approximate and should not be assumed as exact. What is evident is that the page size was only slightly longer than it was wide.

How Were They “Sealed”?

*“What there was sealed appeared as solid to my view as wood. . . . About the half of the book was sealed.”*¹⁵—David Whitmer

“A large portion of the leaves were so securely bound together that it was impossible



*to separate them.”*¹⁶—David Whitmer

*“About two-thirds were sealed up, and Joseph was commanded not to break the seal; that part of the record was hid up. The plates which were sealed contained an account of those things shewn unto the brother of Jared.”*¹⁷—Orson Pratt

The plates were sealed by Moroni after he had separated from the rest of his people. He would have used materials that were readily available to him at that time. The descriptions say they were “securely bound” and “appeared solid.” The statements indicate a complete encapsulation of the plates to protect and preserve them for the future. None of the witnesses mentions metal bands around the plates. This seems to be an artistic creation of the mid-twentieth century that has no documentary basis.

What Shape Were the Three Rings?

*“They were fastened with rings thus [a sketch shows a ring in the shape of a capital D with six lines drawn through the straight side of the letter to represent the leaves of the record].”*¹⁸—David Whitmer

This painting (far left) depicts the Angel Moroni delivering the plates to Joseph Smith.

The box (left), or lap desk as it was called because of its sloping hinged lid, belonged to Hyrum Smith and was lent to his brother Joseph to use for a time to hold the plates. The box has been passed down through the Hyrum Smith family.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JED CLARK

This facsimile of the plates was made for a recent exhibit about Joseph Smith at the Museum of Church History and Art. Visitors to the exhibit were given a chance to lift and turn the leaves of a replica matching the description of the golden plates.

“Bound together like the leaves of a book by massive rings passing through the back edges.”¹⁹—David Whitmer

“Put together on the back by three silver rings, so that they would open like a book.”²⁰—Martin Harris

“Bound together in a volume, as the leaves of a book, and fastened at one edge with three rings running through the whole.”²¹—Orson Pratt

“Through the

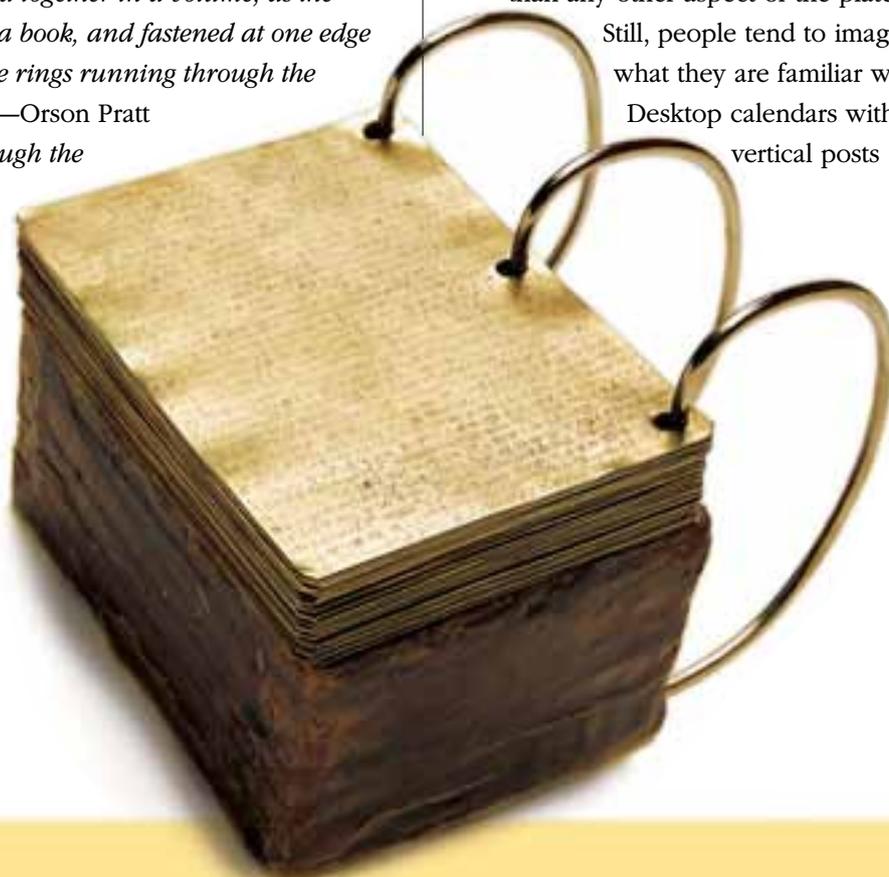
back of the plates were three rings which held them together, and through which a rod might easily be passed, serving as a greater convenience for carrying them.”²²

—Orson Pratt

We have more detail about the rings than any other aspect of the plates.

Still, people tend to imagine what they are familiar with.

Desktop calendars with vertical posts



A MODEL OF THE PLATES

Made by Steven Pratt

This facsimile of the plates was made for an exhibit at the Museum of Church History and Art. In an attempt to be as accurate as possible, all known statements about the plates were compiled and compared. Unfortunately, there was not space in this article to include all of the descriptions.

The process of making and using the model of the plates taught us more about them and led to some logical deductions. The difficulty in making the plates would encourage a scribe to be careful to fill the whole page and not waste any space. We learned how difficult it is to turn soft metal plates

over loose metal rings. You have to lift each one carefully or they bind against the rings. Pliable metal changes with the pressures of movement; it becomes brittle and breaks. The holes have to be an elongated shape larger than the rings and cannot be too close to the edges or they tear out.

Even though we have presented an image of what the plates may have looked like, many exact details are still lacking.

For more about the making of this replica of the plates, see “A Golden Opportunity,” *New Era*, Feb. 2006, 34.

sharply curved at the top were commonly used in the mid-twentieth century. It was only natural for people to transfer this image to the plates. But that is not what the witnesses describe. They use the term “massive rings.” Taken literally, “ring” describes a circular shape. David Whitmer approved of a sketch showing the rings shaped like a rounded capital “D” with the plates indicated on the straight side. We found that this design allows the plates to be turned along the ring smoothly and that the rings can be pivoted back to lay nearly flat against the stack of plates. It also fits Orson Pratt’s description of rings “through which a rod might easily be passed, serving as a greater convenience for carrying them.”

How Full Were the Pages?

*“[The plates] were filled with . . . characters . . . small, and beautifully engraved. The whole book exhibited many marks of antiquity in its construction and much skill in the art of engraving.”*²³—Joseph Smith Jr., Orson Pratt

*“There were fine engravings on both sides.”*²⁴—John Whitmer

*“We also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship.”*²⁵—Eight Witnesses

*“Upon each side of the leaves of these plates there were fine engravings, which were stained with a black hard stain so as to make the letters more legible and easier to be read.”*²⁶—Orson Pratt

What Was the Reading Order?

“I wish to mention here that the title-page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated, the language of the whole running the same as all Hebrew writing in general.” [The asterisk directs the reader to a note that says, “*That is, from right to left.”]*²⁷—Joseph Smith Jr.

Does It Really Matter What the Book of Mormon Plates Looked Like?

After Joseph Smith completed the translation of the Book of Mormon, the Three Witnesses and the Eight Witnesses were allowed to see and handle the plates.

Their signed statements are in the front of all copies of the Book of Mormon.

We have the full text of what Joseph Smith was instructed to translate. It is a message to us from the past, from a people who had the truth and then lost it. It is meant to instruct us.

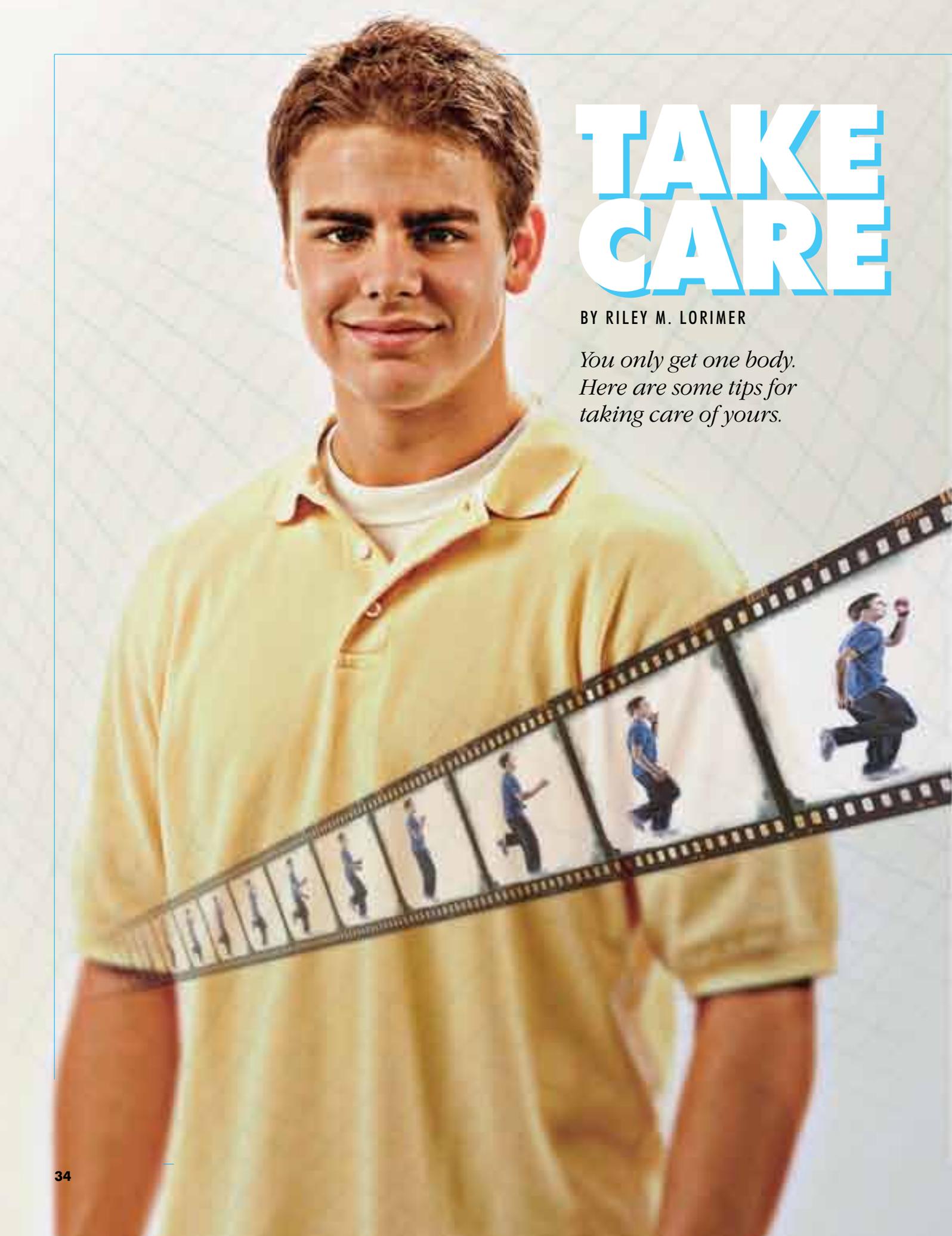
Seeing the plates would not necessarily motivate someone to accept the restoration of the gospel and make changes in his or her life. That motivation comes from reading and accepting the teachings of the Book of Mormon. What really matters is the spiritual witness that is promised to those who humbly seek to know the truth of these things. A true testimony of the Book of Mormon comes from reading it and, as counseled by Moroni in a promise he left to us in Moroni 10:3–5, praying about it. **NE**

NOTES

A longer version of this article was originally published by the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship as “How Witnesses Described the ‘Gold Plates,’” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2001), 16–21.

1. “Church History,” *Times and Seasons*, Mar. 1, 1842, 707 (also known as the Wentworth Letter); “The Testimony of Eight Witnesses,” Book of Mormon; and *An Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, and of the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records* [pamphlet, 1840], 12–13. Orson Pratt was not an eyewitness of the plates but gathered eyewitness accounts.
2. *Kansas City Journal*, June 5, 1881, in Lyndon W. Cook, ed., *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness* (1991), 60.
3. *Iowa State Register*, Aug. 1870, in Milton V. Backman Jr., *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration* (1983), 226.
4. “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *The Saints’ Herald*, Oct. 1, 1879, 290.
5. Wentworth Letter, 707.
6. Quoted in “How Witnesses Described the ‘Gold Plates,’” 18.
7. Quoted in “How Witnesses Described the ‘Gold Plates,’” 18.
8. Quoted in “How Witnesses Described the ‘Gold Plates,’” 18.
9. *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 24, 1888, in *David Whitmer Interviews*, 221.
10. *Kansas City Journal*, June 5, 1881, in *David Whitmer Interviews*, 64.
11. *An Interesting Account*, 13.
12. *An Interesting Account*, 13.
13. *An Interesting Account*, 13.
14. “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” 290.
15. *Deseret Evening News*, Aug. 16, 1878, in *David Whitmer Interviews*, 20–21.
16. *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 24, 1888, in *David Whitmer Interviews*, 221.
17. *Deseret News*, July 23, 1856, 154.
18. Edward Stevenson diary, Dec. 22–23, 1877, archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
19. *Kansas City Journal*, June 5, 1881, in *David Whitmer Interviews*, 64.
20. Quoted in “How Witnesses Described the ‘Gold Plates,’” 19.
21. *An Interesting Account*, 13.
22. *Deseret News*, Jan. 12, 1859, 190.
23. Wentworth Letter, 707; Pratt, *An Interesting Account*, 13.
24. John Whitmer to Theodore Turley, “in the presence of his anti-Mormon friends,” in Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (1981), 131.
25. “Testimony of the Eight Witnesses,” Book of Mormon.
26. *Deseret News*, Jan. 12, 1859, 190.
27. *History of the Church*, 1:71.

Look up the Neal A. Maxwell Institute at www.maxwellinstitute.byu.edu.

A young man with short brown hair and a slight smile, wearing a yellow polo shirt over a white t-shirt. A film strip is overlaid diagonally across the lower half of the image, showing a sequence of frames where the man is running in a blue shirt and dark pants. The background is a light, textured wall.

TAKE CARE

BY RILEY M. LORIMER

*You only get one body.
Here are some tips for
taking care of yours.*

Elliot Grow had it made. The summer before his senior year of high school, he was an aspiring lacrosse player with a promising future, and it looked like he just might land a starting spot on his school's basketball team as well. But calamity struck for Elliot one day in June when he tore the meniscus cartilage in his knee during a recreational league basketball game.

Surgery came shortly thereafter, followed by three months of intense physical therapy. It was a lot of hard work, but Elliot persisted. Eventually he made it off the crutches and back onto the basketball court. Some people would probably complain about the months of lost training and the pain, but Elliot feels a sense of gratitude.

"I feel blessed that I am still able to do what I love. I love playing lacrosse. I love playing basketball. I don't take that for granted anymore. When I am out there, I play as hard as I can and I don't only play for me. My little brother had a brain tumor when he was three, so he can't do some of the things that I've been able to do. Now I play for him.

"Before my injury, I would have thought, 'My body is mine. I can do whatever I want with it,' " he says. "But after this surgery, I have realized that my body is a gift and I should take care of it the right way."

A Gift from the Lord

The body *is* a gift from Heavenly Father. Doctrine and Covenants 88:15 states that "the spirit and the body are the soul of man." The body and the spirit are meant to work in harmony with one another. We should, therefore, take good care of our physical bodies as well as our spirits.

Prophets have often counseled us to take care of our bodies. But what does "taking

care of your body" really mean? And how do you do it? Consider these ideas:

Be on the Move

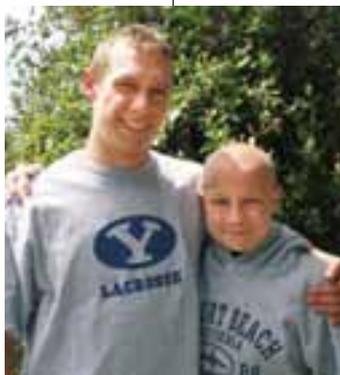
Exercise is essential to a healthy lifestyle. Not only does it build muscle and help maintain healthy weight, but it can also act as a stress reliever. Dr. George Van Komen, a leading physician and doctor of internal medicine in Salt Lake City, Utah, says, "Most people find that exercise can become very enjoyable. And that's the only way you continue with it." So, find a form (or several forms) of exercise that you enjoy, and stick to it!

For some teens, physical activity is already part of a daily routine, thanks to sports or just a fondness for exercise. But not everyone is an athlete, and that's perfectly all right.

What does Dr. Van Komen suggest? "You should do the type of exercise you enjoy for 30 minutes, four times a week. That's two hours of physical activity." And if you don't like running or active sports? "Walk. A good brisk walk is as good as anything. The heart doesn't care if you're playing soccer, running, or walking—just that you're exercising and getting your heart rate up. That's what's important." Whatever you do, get out and engage in physical activity. It will improve your health now and in the future.

Eat to Live

Equally important is giving your body the right fuel. Every day we are bombarded by different messages about nutrition. Everyone wants us to think that they have the answer to quick weight loss and better health. The truth is that there isn't a quick fix. Good nutrition is a lifestyle.



Find a form of exercise that you enjoy, and stick to it.



Elliot Grow (inset) with his younger brother, Spencer, have both experienced gratitude for their bodies even when working to overcome injury and disease.

Put in the time!



“Having a well-balanced meal three times a day is the way to maintain normal weight and good nutrition,”

says Dr. Van Komen. He also says that you need to keep your nutrition plan simple, rather than stressing over everything. As with exercise, if you make your plans for good nutrition too complicated, you are less likely

to continue with them. So, what is a well-balanced meal? “A meal that has a fruit or vegetable and has some starch and a reasonable-sized piece of meat, fish, or chicken is balanced,” says Dr. Van Komen.

As you try to eat healthily, beware of fad diets that advertise an easy way to get thin quickly. Very few of these diets are based on sound nutritional principles. And while some people may lose weight initially, it is often because these diets severely restrict the amount of food they eat. Few people actually maintain their initial weight loss from these diets. When considering nutrition, always remember the principles of judgment (see

D&C 59:16–20) and prudence (as set forth in the Word of Wisdom (see D&C 89:11).

Heed Wise Words

With many people around you—at school and in the media—who are doing drugs, smoking, and drinking, it can be very difficult to stand up for your beliefs and choose not to participate. But staying away from drugs and alcohol is vital in maintaining both your spiritual and physical well-being.

The Word of Wisdom prohibits Latter-day Saints from drinking any form of alcohol. Alcohol is addictive and habit-forming. When under the influence of alcohol, you lose your ability to reason clearly. When people drive drunk, they pose a great risk to themselves and others. Even if they never get behind a wheel while drunk, people who regularly consume alcohol are seriously endangering their own health. Drinking alcohol can lead to cancer, liver disease, and emotional problems. President Gordon B. Hinckley has counseled that you should “avoid alcohol as you would a loathsome disease” (“Why We Do Some of the Things We Do,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 54).

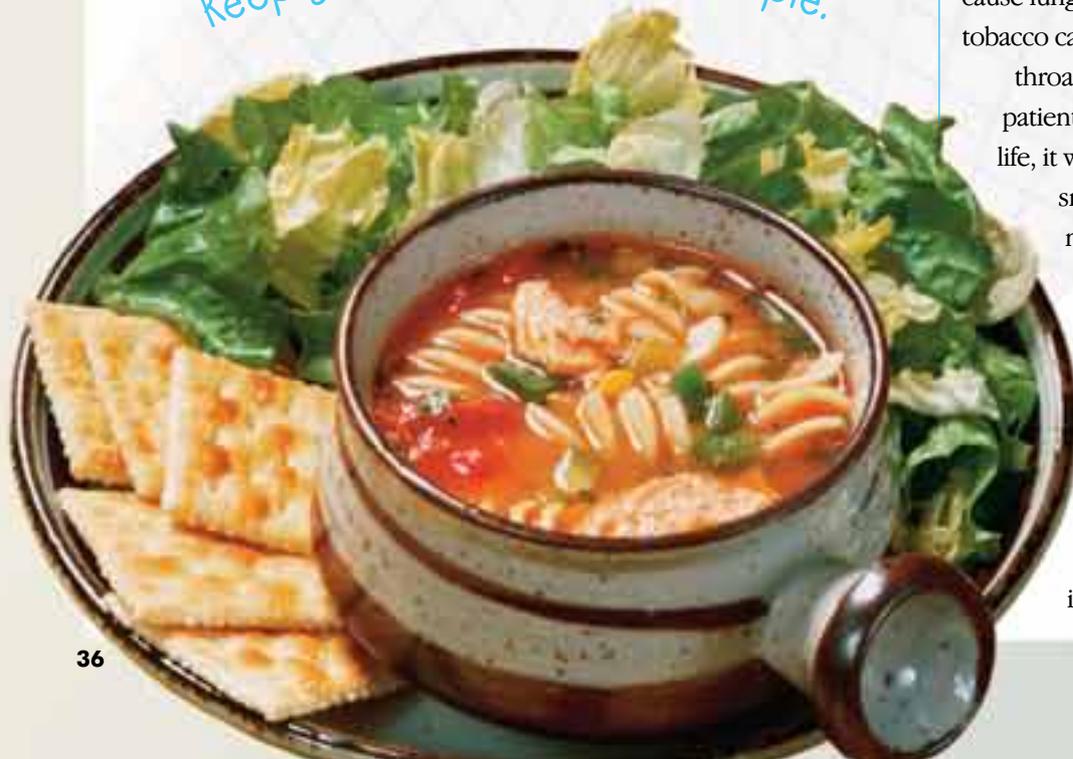
Tobacco is another addictive substance prohibited by the Word of Wisdom. Smoking can cause lung cancer and heart disease. Chewing tobacco can cause cancer of the mouth and throat. “If I could do one thing for my patients to help them live a long, healthy life, it would be to convince them not to smoke,” said Dr. Van Komen. “There’s no question that smoking is the one of the worst things someone can do for their health.”

Drugs of all kinds—including hard drugs, abused prescription and over-the-counter drugs, and household chemicals—are dangerous to the body. Use of such drugs has become widespread, but it is crucial for you to resist this

Take time for regular exercise. It's best if you choose something you like to do because you'll stick with it.

Eat well-balanced meals to maintain good nutrition.

Keep your nutrition plan simple.



trend. Some youth have excused their drug use by saying these things are not specifically listed in the Word of Wisdom. President Hinckley responded to them with this statement: "What a miserable excuse. There is likewise no mention of the hazards of diving into an empty swimming pool or of jumping off an overpass onto the freeway. . . .

Common sense would dictate against such behavior" ("The Scourge of Illicit Drugs," *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 50). The use of drugs is offensive to the Lord because we are defiling the body He gave us.

Latter-day Saints are also told not to drink coffee and tea. Both drinks are addictive and should be avoided. Another bit of wisdom from a different part of the Doctrine and Covenants stresses the importance of proper sleep: "Cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated" (D&C 88:124).

Stay Safe

One of the most important ways you can take care of your body is to keep it out of harm's way. This principle may seem simple, but it will do a great deal in assuring you a long and healthy life. In today's world, it is popular to take huge risks. People—and especially teenagers—do all sorts of dangerous things to get a thrill. Some teens participate in extreme sports without proper training or equipment and end up seriously injured. Others drive recklessly and hurt others, as well as themselves. Still others simply refuse to wear their seatbelts when riding in cars and sometimes wind up with permanent damage to their bodies as the result of an automobile accident.

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has said that we sometimes follow "delirious voices that spawn the desire for a 'high.' I refer not

to a drug- or alcohol-induced high, but to the pursuing of dangerous, death-defying experiences for nothing more than a thrill. Life, even our own, is so precious that we are accountable to the Lord for it, and we should not trifle with it. Once gone, it cannot be called back" ("Voice of the Spirit," *Ensign*, June 2006, 4).

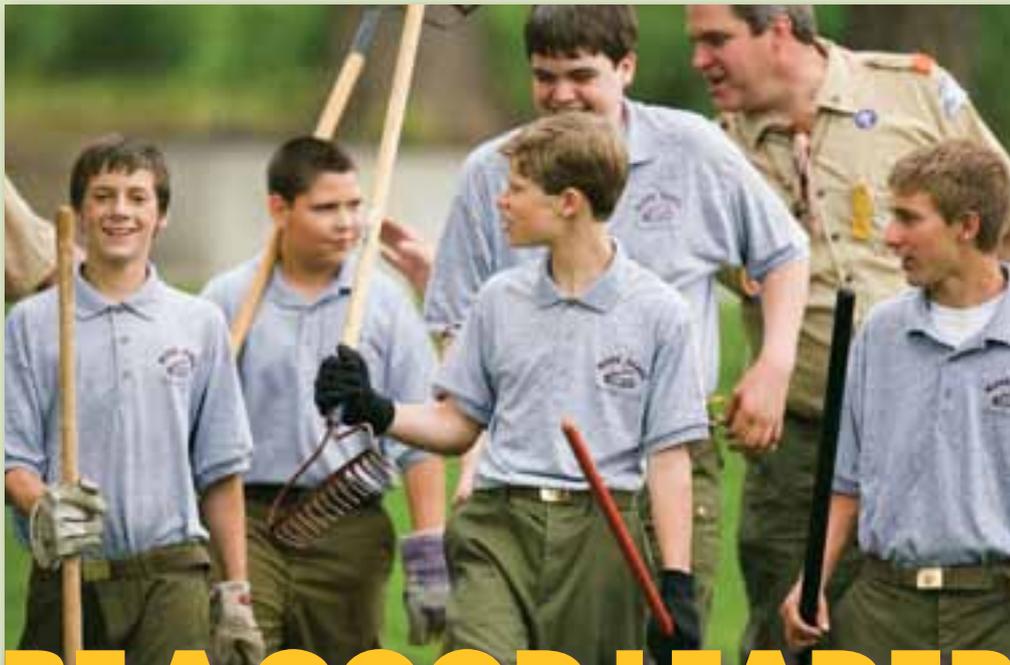
Your body and your life are gifts from Heavenly Father. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, "Your body is not your own; it is on loan from God" ("Ye Are the Temple of God," *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 18). Because the body is a gift from Heavenly Father, you have a responsibility to care for it well. Taking good care of your body doesn't just mean not jumping off cliffs; it involves abstaining from other things that pose a risk to your health, like unhealthy eating habits, drugs, and alcohol.

The leaders of the Church want you to be happy. President Hinckley has stated many times, "We want you to have fun" ("A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth," *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 14). At the same time, they care for your safety, health, and well-being. Use proper safety equipment. Get training, and take necessary precautions. Do not take unnecessary risks. And above all, follow the guidance of the Spirit and use common sense. As President Faust said, "Enough risks will come to you naturally without your seeking them out" ("On the Edge," *New Era*, Feb. 1997, 4).

Your Precious Body

Your body is an incredible gift from a Father who loves you. He allowed you to come to earth and receive your body so that you could experience this mortal life. You are responsible for caring for your body and treating it in a way that honors its Creator. So get some exercise, buckle your seatbelt, and eat your vegetables! **NE**





PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT CASEY

BE A GOOD LEADER

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) was the ninth President of the Church. In the October 1968 general conference, President McKay spoke about several traits that characterize a successful leader or teacher in the Church:

1. “IMPLICIT FAITH in the gospel of Jesus Christ as the light of the world,

and a sincere desire to serve him. This condition of the soul will make for companionship and guidance of the Holy Ghost.”

2. “UNFEIGNED LOVE for the . . . members, guided by determination to deal justly and impartially with every member of the Church. Honor the . . . member, and the . . . member will honor you.”

3. “THOROUGH PREPARATION. The successful leader knows his [or her] duties and responsibilities and also the members under his [or her] direction.”

4. “CHEERFULNESS—not forced but natural cheerfulness, springing spontaneously from a hopeful soul” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1968, 144).

LDS GEMS

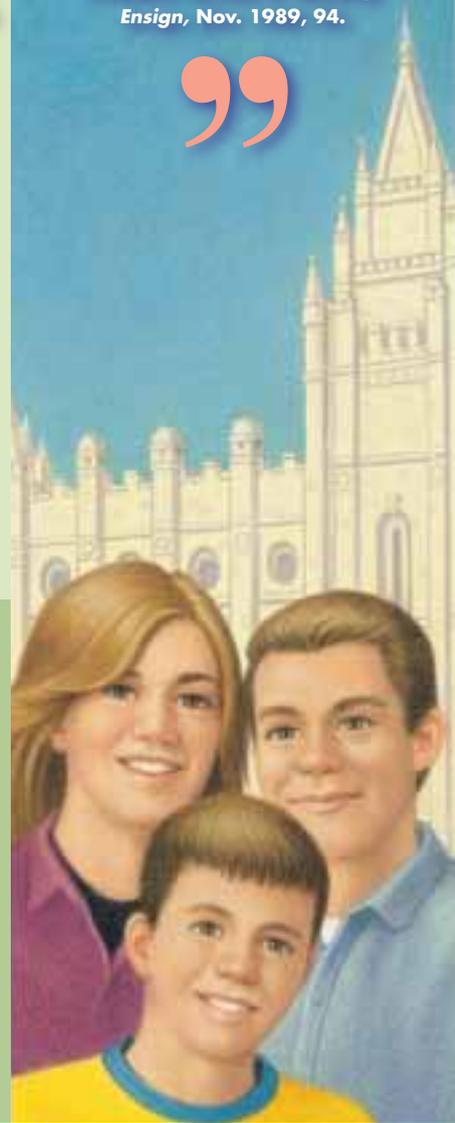
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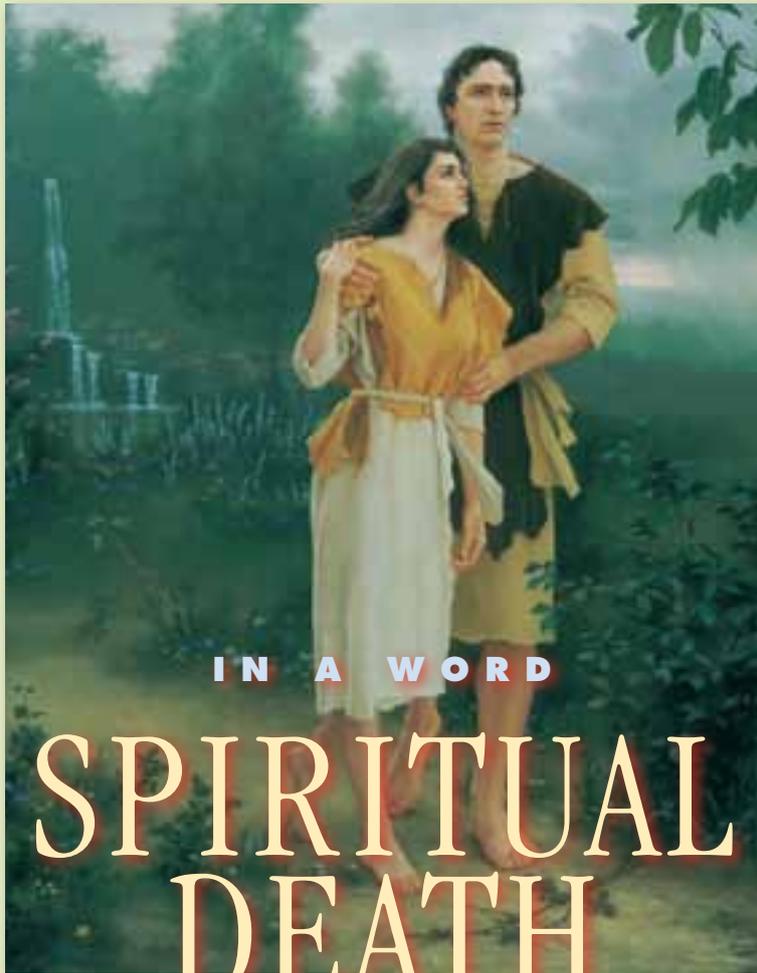
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“
RISE TO
THE STATURE
OF THE
DIVINE
WITHIN YOU.

President Gordon B. Hinckley,
Ensign, Nov. 1989, 94.

”





IN A WORD

SPIRITUAL DEATH

Spiritual death is separation from God. There are two sources of spiritual death: the Fall and our own disobedience.

“All mankind, by the fall of Adam being cut off from the presence of the Lord, are considered as dead, both as to things temporal and to things spiritual” (Helaman 14:16). During our life on the earth, we are separated from God’s presence. Through the Atonement, Jesus Christ redeems everyone from this spiritual death. “The resurrection of Christ redeemeth mankind, yea, even all mankind, and bringeth them back into the presence of the Lord” (Helaman 14:17).

Further spiritual death comes as a result of our own disobedience. Our sins make us unclean and unable to dwell in the presence of God (see Helaman 14:18). The Savior offers redemption from this spiritual death, but only when we exercise faith in Him, repent of our sins, and obey the principles and ordinances of the gospel (see Helaman 14:19). (See *True to the Faith* [2004], “Death, Spiritual,” 48.)

What’s up where you are? Let us know at newera@ldschurch.org.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE ROY UTAH CENTRAL STAKE

GOT SHOES?

The answer to this question from the Roy Utah Central Stake young women is a resounding, “Yes!” With a goal to collect 1,000 pairs of new or gently used shoes from the members of their stake, the young women organized a shoe drive. On the day of the drive, the young women collected, cleaned, polished, tied together, sorted, and boxed up 1,223 pairs of shoes. The week fol-

lowing the activity, shoes continued to trickle in. When the shoes were finally dropped off at the Church’s Humanitarian Center, there were nearly 1,500 pairs of shoes ranging from baby shoes to hiking boots to sneakers.

One person who donated shoes left a note for the young women that read, “Thanks for doing this. It is a super neat thing for you to do. You will bless many lives.”

I Believe in Christ

How did you gain a testimony of Jesus Christ? We want to hear from you about your testimony of the Savior and how the Spirit bore witness to you of Him. Was there a particular experience that helped build your testimony? Maybe it has come as you study His life in the scriptures, or as you serve others, or through your personal prayers. It’s often hard to put into words, but how do you feel about the Savior?

Send your submissions by November 30 to:

New Era, I Believe in Christ

50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420

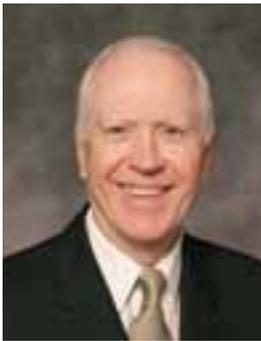
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail us at: newera@ldschurch.org

TO BE TO

BY ELDER LOWELL M. SNOW

Of the Seventy



I remembered that the Lord has said, “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27).

I trusted my parents, but I was a little bewildered as to why we really needed to move.

When I was 14 years old I was living comfortably as the youngest child in my family—the only one still at home with my parents. We lived in the southern Utah town of St. George, a place steeped in the traditions of its pioneer founders. With both my father and mother born of this stock, I grew up with a strong sense of our pioneer heritage. The stories I heard growing up all centered on our community and the people who lived there. This wonderful heritage was at the center of who my parents were.

So it was a great surprise to me when my parents announced their intention to move. My father didn’t have a new job to go to. He didn’t have business contacts where we were going. But we were going to move from a place that had anchored our family for generations. We were going to leave an extended family of aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors, and friends, and

we were going to move to a larger city.

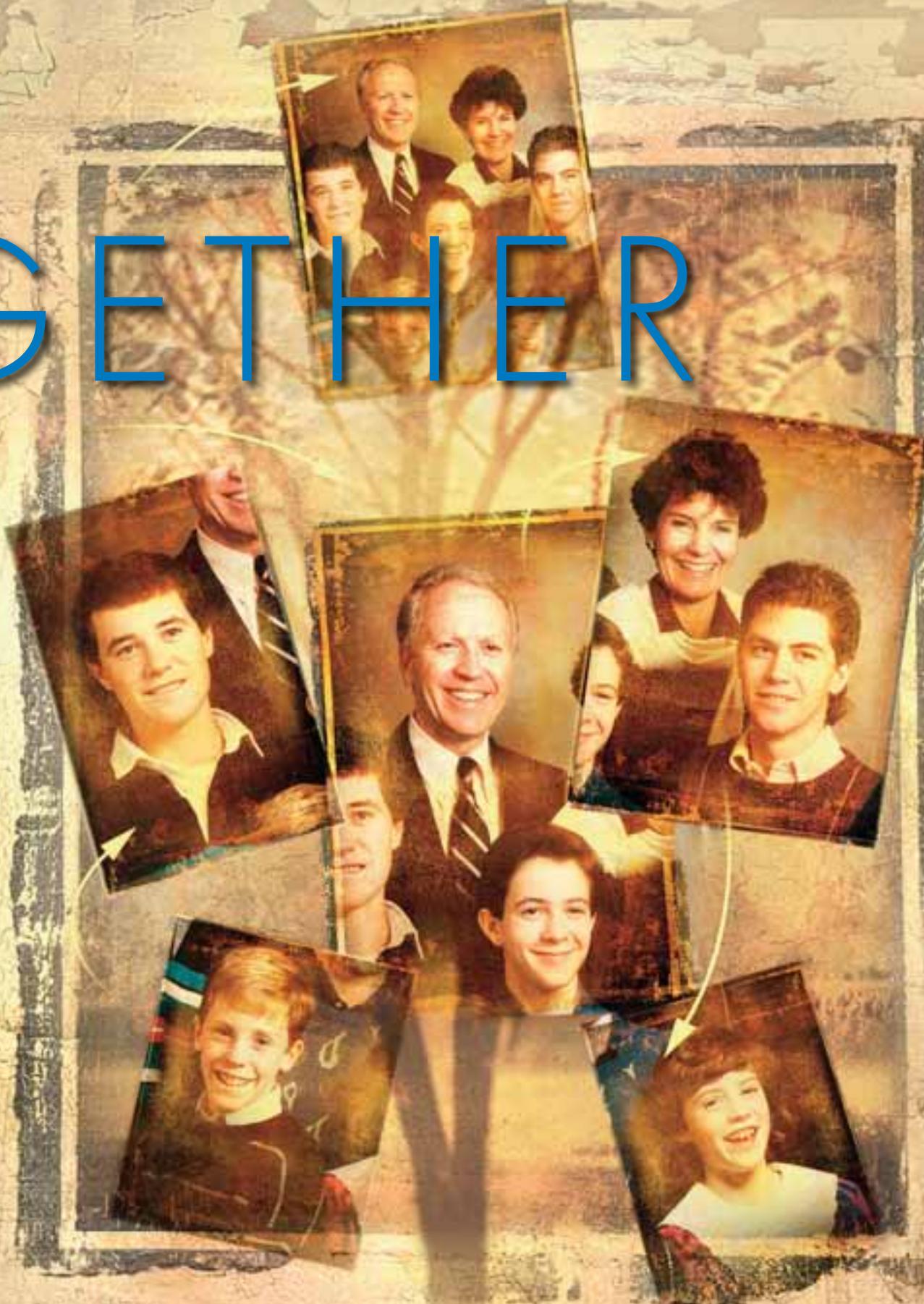
The reason my parents wanted to move was to live in the same city as their married children and grandchildren. They did it because my father and mother believed nothing was more important than being with and nurturing their immediate family.

A Difficult Move

We moved when I was a young teenager. I didn’t know anybody at school. I didn’t know anybody at church. I moved out of a small town into a big city. I trusted my parents, but I was a little bewildered as to why we really needed to move. Over time I came to see, and I see even more clearly since I’ve become a father, the great commitment my parents had to our immediate family.

Knowing how committed my parents were to our family made it easier for me to make this difficult transition as a teenager. I came to realize that many of the temporal things I thought were important to my father were not. I came to realize that

GETHER



nothing was as important to him as his family and the eternal covenants that bound us together. My father and mother would go wherever they needed to go and do whatever they needed to do to continue nurturing their relationships with children and grandchildren. Knowing this was of immense comfort to me.

In our small town, I had felt sheltered and protected. It was difficult leaving everything I knew, everything I was comfortable with. I felt lost moving into the city, but I trusted my parents. They had always given me every reason to know that they loved me, cared for me, and wanted me to be happy.

By the end of my first year, I decided I could make it in this new place, and I started to reach out to other people. I made good friends, and I started to fit in and feel comfortable. The best place I found help (besides my family) was at church. I started to come out of my shell because I started to participate more with the youth of the ward. They helped me feel good about who I was and what I was doing. They welcomed me and helped me feel a part of a church family—like the church family I had left in St. George.

The Need to Change

The lesson I learned from this experience became even more important many years later when I had five teenage children of my own. Like many families, we occasionally found our family relationships a little strained or uneven. On one such occasion I felt like the key to family harmony was for my children to see things my way and act in ways I thought were right. They were not doing anything bad, I just felt they should change their attitudes to conform more closely to mine. To me, that seemed like the answer, but as I pondered the solution, the Lord spoke to me through my feelings. In my heart and mind came the message, “It is better to be one than to be right.”

I wasn’t quite sure what that meant. But I heard and felt it. After a lot of thought and prayer, I began to understand that it was more important for our family to be one than it was for *me* to be right. That realization pierced

me to the core, and I could see that even if I were right about how things ought to be done, that knowledge alone would not bless my family. I remembered that the Lord had said, “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). I realized that the only way to gain what we all really wanted was for us to be one and that if I insisted on holding to what I perceived as the moral high ground, we would not likely resolve our differences.

Most importantly, the message implied that I shouldn’t be expecting my children to change: *I* needed to change. Suddenly I could see that if *I* would change and do the things that would make us one as a family, everything would work out. The Lord truly helped me, and almost overnight I began to change. I focused on loving my children without conditions, without expecting them to change. I simply wanted to love them—and for them to love me.

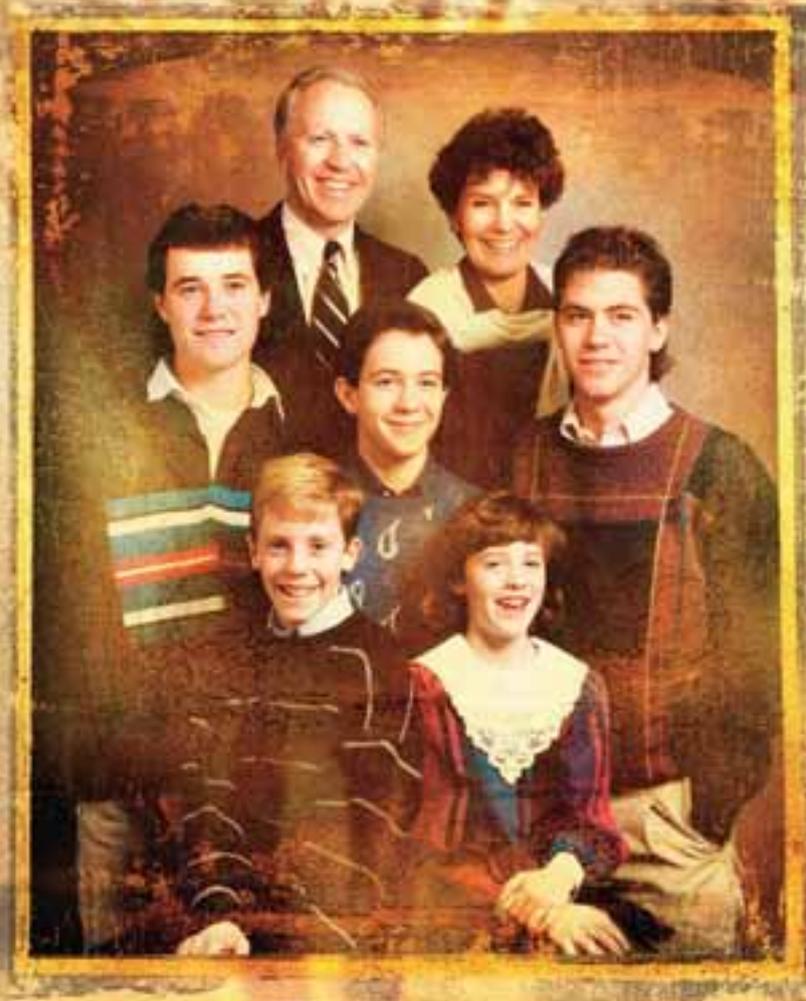
That was not a dramatic change, but it was an important change of heart and mind. As my children became aware of the transformation taking place in their father, it was surprising how quickly we became one again. The strains we were experiencing just melted away. Harmony returned. Once again our home became a place of love.

Since those long-ago days my children have all married and now have their own families, and as parents my wife and I take such delight in them. We are all such good friends—best friends. My prayers were answered. Not the prayer to change my children, which is what I prayed for at first, but for the change that came over *me* as a result of my prayers. The Lord answered my prayers by helping *me* change.

What My Father Knew

My father understood the importance of being one as a family, and he valued his relationship with his posterity above all other earthly pursuits. That was the reason we had moved from our longtime home in St. George. And that’s what I better understood when my children were teenagers. The tender mercies of the Lord helped me see that my relationship with my family would last forever, and that was more important than just being *right*. **NE**

came to understand the importance my father placed on being one as a family and why he valued his relationship with his posterity above all earthly pursuits.



SOMETIMES IT RAINS

BY CHRISTINA HOLT

It was the first night of girls' camp. It had started to rain lightly, but we figured it would pass by. As the night went on, though, the rain got harder and the wind blew stronger. The group in my tent tried to sleep, but because we had only staked the

four corners of our tent when we set it up, the sides were being pushed in and puddles started forming around the edges. It got so windy I was afraid the wind would take our tent with it!

Pretty soon our tent began to leak, and we were forced to move all of our things to the center of the tent. I huddled in a ball and started to silently cry. This was my first day of my first year at girls' camp, and already things were going wrong.

At this point, my tent leader started to sing the song that we had chosen for our camp song, called "Sometimes

He Lets It Rain.” The chorus says:

Sometimes He lets it rain

He lets fierce winds blow

Sometimes it takes a storm

To lead a heart where it can grow

He can move mountains of grief

And oceans of pain

But sometimes He lets it rain.

As we sang, we could hear the rain coming down on us, but we felt happier than before. We finally went and slept in the cars of the leaders. I only got four hours of sleep, but, amazingly, I felt energized and ready for our hike the next morning.

At our testimony meeting on the last night of camp, nearly all the girls who were in my tent bore their testimony about how that night strengthened us. He let it rain that night, but that storm led our hearts to where they could grow. **NE**

CRASH COURSE IN PRAYER

BY ANDREA CARTWRIGHT

The familiar 10-hour drive from southern California to Utah should have been uneventful. The roads were clear of snow, and I was awake and alert. But I didn't expect a 57-inch TV to suddenly appear in my lane. It had fallen from a pickup truck in front of us. I swerved, but not in time. We had hit the TV, and now I was struggling to get control.

My best friend, brother, and little stepsister were all in the car. My

FRIENDLY CONVERSATION

BY LAURIE WAGLEY

Our stake asked us to pray for missionary experiences, and I had a very special one when I was with my family on a vacation in the Florida Keys. One day I was out on the beach watching the waves when I noticed a lady sitting next to me reading a magazine. The magazine happened to be the *Friend*. Being shy, I was afraid to start a conversation with her. But I had a very strong feeling that I should. So I began by asking her if she was a



member of the Church. She said she was an investigator. Our conversation continued for at least 30 more minutes. She had many different types of questions. For example, she asked about Church

missions and what my family does for family night. I tried my very best to answer all of her questions. This experience strengthened my testimony. I also learned that I need to be ready to answer people's questions. **NE**

brother in the backseat woke up and started shouting that we were fine, but with the car still spinning, I wasn't so sure.

Eventually, we came to a stop in the median. It was only then that my stepsister woke up, confused and in shock. There was nothing around us but empty, black desert and an occasional semitruck whizzing by. The four of us sat in silence for a moment, realizing we were still alive. None of us knew what to say or think. Then my best friend asked, "Should we say a prayer?" The idea was a welcome relief. The Spirit was the only thing that could calm our nerves at that time. We bowed our heads and thanked our Heavenly Father for preserving our lives. We asked Him to comfort us and help us to get home

safely. My fear and shock from the accident wore off and I felt calm.

A police officer and the driver of the pickup came over, relieved to find everyone okay. The impact from the TV alone could have been fatal, even without the added danger of spinning. The car was damaged but drivable, and we got home safely. It amazes me to think of how much worse the outcome could have been. I am so grateful for my safety and the safety of my passengers. Before and since then, we start every long car trip with a prayer. I'm grateful that we can call on the power of the Lord to watch over us. But even with this added protection, accidents may happen. And if they do, we will have the Spirit to comfort us. **NE**

AN EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE

BY VIKTÓRIA MERÉNYI

In Hungary, when a class graduates from high school, we put on a grand ball. All teachers, parents, and friends are invited. The class members perform dances and give other presentations. When I graduated, I was asked to make such a presentation. I decided to play the piano. One of the two pieces I chose to play was a Church hymn. There are not many members of the Church in Hungary, so I didn't expect any Church members to hear my performance.

The Sunday after the ball, a sister at church excitedly approached me, congratulated me, and told me that she, other Church members, and some investigators had heard me perform. Less-active members had also

attended the ball and heard me play the hymn. The sister told me how wonderful it was to hear the hymn at an activity not sponsored by the Church and said that it had strengthened the testimonies of those who attended.

I learned that we never know when we are setting a good example and that even small actions can have a big impact on other people. **NE**

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

newera@ldschurch.org

or send it to

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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.

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS HAWKES

Mutual Activity Ideas

- It might be fun and educational to try Book of Mormon charades. Choose teams and have each team act out the stories or characters in the Book of Mormon using the methods used in charades. To help the teams, write out a brief paragraph on the person or event that they can read after drawing a slip before their turns.
- Have a physical fitness activity. Plans could include assigning each Young Women class or quorum a part of the body and having them present two or three exercises that will improve that particular part. Have the classes teach the exercises to the whole group.

Personal Progress Idea

- You could help plan a family home evening for

keeping the Sabbath day holy. Talk with your family about how it has strengthened their faith in that Church principle. Use the experience to help complete Faith experience #3.

Family Home Evening Idea

- Create a list of activities to help your family keep the Sabbath holy. Gather past issues of Church magazines into one storage spot. Make extra copies of coloring or activity pages from the *Friend*. Make a list of people in your family or ward who need visits. Schedule a time to take a walk together as a family. Keep adding to your list of ideas to encourage Sabbath day observance.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in the May and November *Ensign*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 27–31.

Young Women Manual 2

Lesson 27: Strengthening Testimony through Obedience

Elder Mervyn B. Arnold, “Make Your Life a Legacy,” *New Era*, June 2007, 40.

Q&A (sin seems to be fun), *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 14.

Lesson 28: Agency

Poster: “Choose,” *New Era*, June 2007, 17.

Idea List: “Overcoming Temptation,” *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 23.

Lesson 29: Exaltation

“Charting the Plan,” *New Era*, July 2006, 33.

Alexa Justesen, “The Long Wait,” *New Era*, Apr. 2007, 32.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, “What Is the Difference between Immortality and Eternal Life?” *New Era*, Nov. 2006, 8.

Lesson 30: Strengthening Testimony through Service

Carolyn J. LeDuc, “Where Are the Needy?” *New Era*, Apr. 2007, 8.

Mariam Kallon, “Learning to Hope,” *New Era*, Nov. 2006, 10.

Lesson 31: The Law of the Land

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

Elder William R. Walker, “Can You Be Trusted?” *New Era*, Nov. 2006, 40.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 2

Lesson 27: The Lord’s Law of Health

Riley M. Lorimer, “Take Care,” this issue, 34.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Body Is Sacred,” *New Era*, Nov. 2006, 2.

Idea List: “A Healthier You,” *New Era*, Nov. 2006, 23.

Lesson 28: The Sabbath

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

Q&A (working on Sunday), *New Era*, June 2004, 16.

Lesson 29: The Purpose of Life

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

Elder W. Craig Zwick, “Ponder, Pray, Perform, Persevere,” *New Era*, May 2007, 40.

Lesson 30: Charity

Mariam Kallon, “Learning to Hope,” *New Era*, Nov. 2006, 10.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Forget Yourself and Serve,” *New Era*, July 2006, 2.

Lesson 31: Forgiveness

Q&A (coming back to church), *New Era*, June 2007, 14.

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

MISSIONARY ISSUE

Before receiving the March 2007 *New Era*, I had been contemplating whether or not I should plan to serve a mission. This issue helped me to understand what missionary life is like and what it requires. So, to prepare to become a sister missionary I've started studying the scriptures, writing in my journal, exercising, cleaning my room, going to bed at 10:30 and getting up at 6:30. I've already noticed a wonderful difference in my life! You've been very helpful.

Aimee G., Missouri

I really enjoyed the March *New Era* about preparing to go on a mission. It helped me know what I must do to go on a mission and what might happen when I am out in the mission field. I especially liked the article "We've Got to Find Her." After reading that issue, it made me want to go out right now!

Ethan H., Idaho

I just received the Spanish *Liahona* for March 2007 and saw the table of contents for the March *New Era* at www.lds.org.

What a great idea! I just returned from serving a mission and always loved reading missionary articles in the *New Era*. But this whole magazine helps those preparing to serve the Lord full-time.

Vicki P., Australia

LIKE ME

I really loved "Harriet's Firm Foundation" (Nov. 2006). I, too, am the youngest of eight children, and the aunt of many nieces and nephews I love to be around. My family is a great support group and is very strong in the Church.

I think it's so neat to know that there are

"I love to read the New Era because it gives me faith and courage and helps me solve problems."

other people in the world like me.

Shay S., Arizona

GIVES ME FAITH

I love to read the *New Era* because it gives me faith and courage and helps me solve problems when others tease me. I especially liked the article "The Sound of Giving" (May 2006) because I cannot see very well. I learned that we are His children, no matter what we look like. Thank you very much.

Lesieli S., Tonga

JANUARY 2007 POSTER

The poster in the January 2007 issue is such a wonderful one! It tells what should be on our minds so that we can be in tune with the Spirit of God, and to direct our ways by letting virtue garnish our thoughts unceasingly. I like it because it fits our generation so that we can defend ourselves from the adversary.

Segu-baghabo P., Nigeria

NOT THE ONLY ONE

I would like to say how much I enjoyed the article "The Turnaround" (Feb. 2007). The article sounded exactly like my life, only without the trip to Japan. I really appreciate it because it teaches me that I'm not the only one who has been through such an experience. The article really opened my eyes. Thank you so much for all your wonderful articles—I love them all.

Ashley S., Nevada

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

*New Era
We've Got Mail
50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA*

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



SUMMER STEAM

BY SHAWNA SIMPSON

It was the kind of day that only comes once,
a kite flying day,
born late in July.
We ran with that day,
harvested freckles,
breathed the sun.
It caught us and held us
in the backyard of our memories.
It almost stayed forever;
it was magic . . .
but too real.
And as dreams conceived on front porch swings,
it passed like summer steam.



COMING NEXT MONTH

- *Mingling music and a mission for perfect harmony.*
- *Can drinking, smoking, or trying drugs just once really hurt you?*
- *When is text messaging too much?*
- *What to do when you don't have time for the important stuff.*

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