



THE New Era

MARCH

2002

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**The New Era Magazine
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phone.

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Christel and Annelise
Nielsen, set good
examples of faithful LDS
teens in Denmark.
See "Three Faces of
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Cover photography:
Laury Livsey (front),
Jed Clark (back).

These Danes
really are
great.
See "Three Faces
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WHICH WAY ARE YOU Facing?

God's commandments serve as a standard against which priorities can be measured.

I am reminded of military days long ago when our platoon heard shouts from a sergeant: "Attention!" "Right face!" "Left face!" "About face!" We learned to respond to those orders with instant precision. In retrospect, I don't recall ever having heard his command to "face upward." Yet scriptures tell us to "look to God and live" (Alma 37:47).

In the first of the Lord's Ten Commandments, it says: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). This commandment may be better known than obeyed. May I share a suggestion that I have found useful in testing my own allegiance to this commandment? When confronted with a challenging choice, I ask myself, "Which way do you face?"

Life without God

Sadly, many individuals don't know where to find God, and exclude Him from their lives. When spiritual needs arise, they may look to the left, the right, or round about. But looking to other people on the same level cannot satisfy spiritual shortages. When the immortal



by Elder
Russell M. Nelson
of the Quorum of
the Twelve

Even when material success comes, there is a hollow ache if living well falls short of living worthily. We grow in the process of reaching up. Facing upward provides a loftier perspective than facing right or left.

spirit is starved, hunger persists for something more filling. Even when material success comes, there is a hollow ache if living well falls short of living worthily. Inner peace cannot be found in affluence accompanied by spiritual privation.

Invitation to come to the Lord

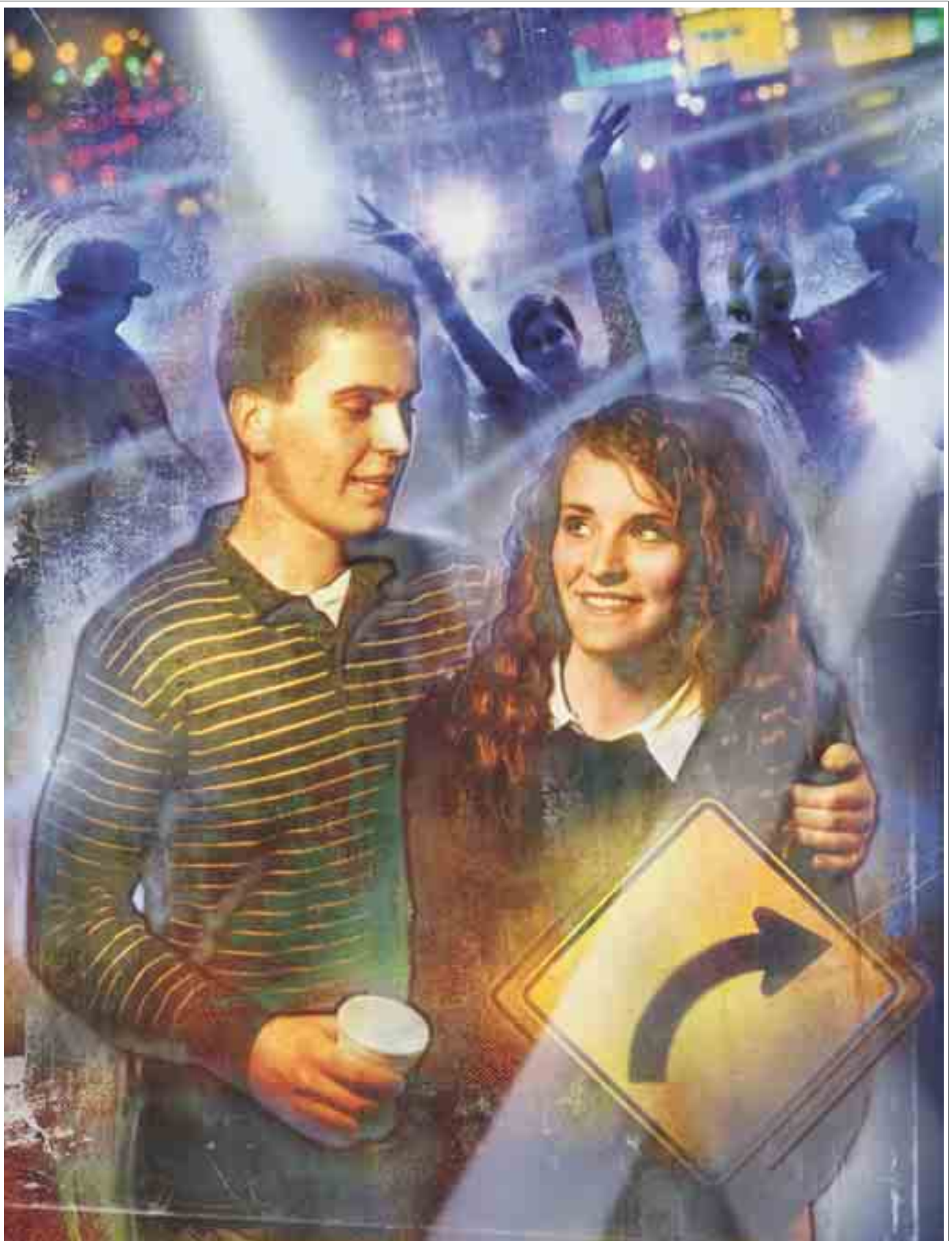
Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints invite all to come unto Christ and enjoy the spiritual feast that His gospel provides. The Saints savor a sweet spiritual nourishment that sustains them through life. This sustenance comes because they have made covenants to take upon themselves the name of the Lord and strive to obey His precepts. Strength comes in recognizing and in being grateful for the Lord's gifts of immortality and the opportunity for eternal life.

Loyal citizens

These gifts are available to all. Citizens of many countries claim membership in the Church. Regardless of their flag or form of government, they find that allegiance to the Lord does not preclude their being loyal citizens of their nations. Fidelity to God enables one to develop a more profound patriotic allegiance and become a better citizen.

Representatives of the Lord

I perceived such confusion in the mind of a newspaper reporter who asked



one of our leaders when a representative of such-and-such a country would become a General Authority. While that question was being answered, I thought about our beloved General Authorities born in the countries of Asia; of Europe; of North, Central, and South America; and of the islands of the sea. Though these Brethren come from many nations and speak several tongues, not one of them was called to represent his native country. Presiding quorums of the Church are not representative assemblies. Each leader has been called to face the people as a representative of the Lord, not the other way around.

General Authorities are “called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority” (A of F 1:5). They are called as special witnesses (see D&C 107:25) unto all the world, to teach and testify of the Lord Jesus Christ (see D&C 68:4).

Obeying commandments

No matter where we live or in what position we serve, all of us need to determine which way we face. God’s commandments serve as a standard against which priorities can be measured. Our respect for the first commandment fashions our feelings for all the others. Consider the commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy, for example (see Ex. 20:8). We live in a time when many people throughout the world have transferred their allegiance on the Sabbath from places of worship to places of amusement. Again I ask, “Which way do you face?”

Scriptures give us encouragement to do right: “If thou turn away . . . from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, . . . and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, . . . Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord” (Isa. 58:13–14).

Controlling our desires

Self-esteem is also earned by obedience to God’s commandments

Service to neighbors takes on new stature when we first look to God. From the right or the left, we can only push or pull. We can lift only from a higher plane. To reach it we don’t look sideways; we look up to our Master.

regarding chastity. Yet in our day those commands have been attacked and trivialized. The morality of self-discipline with appropriate “denial or restraint has been popularly depicted as unhealthy and dehumanizing.” The truth is, “it is dehumanizing to define ourselves by our desires alone” (Report of the Ramsey Colloquium, *Wall Street Journal*, 24 Feb. 1994, A-18).

Each human being is a child of God—created in His image—with natural appetites to control.

If we break God’s first commandment, we cannot escape retribution. If we allow any other person or cause to come before allegiance to Him, we will reap a bitter harvest. Paul foresaw “destruction” for those “whose God is their belly” (Philip. 3:19). (I might include all forms of anatomical affection.) Any who choose to serve “the creature more than the Creator” (Rom. 1:25) deprive themselves of spiritual reward.

Thus, our priorities should be honestly evaluated in terms of that first commandment. If change in direction is needed, we may want to issue a self-command to “about face!” Doing so would please the Lord, who said, “Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations” (Ezek. 14:6).

Looking to the Lord

Trees reach up for the light and grow in the process. So do we as sons and daughters of heavenly parents. Facing upward provides a loftier perspective than facing right or facing left. Looking up in search of holiness builds strength and dignity as disciples of Deity. The importance of looking up to the Lord is also emphasized in a vision to the Prophet Joseph Smith, dated January 21, 1836: “I saw the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, who are now upon the earth, who hold the keys of this last ministry, in foreign lands, standing together in a circle, much fatigued, with their clothes tattered and feet swollen, with their eyes cast downward, and Jesus standing in

their midst, and they did not behold Him. The Savior looked upon them and wept” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 107).

That the Twelve were subsequently vindicated is apparent as we read further in the Prophet’s record: “And I finally saw the Twelve in the celestial kingdom of God. I also beheld the redemption of Zion, and many things which the tongue of men cannot describe in full” (*Teachings*, 108).

Facing our families

Facing upward is crucial for successful parenting. Families deserve guidance from heaven. Parents cannot counsel children adequately from personal experience, fear, or sympathy (see Prov. 3:5). But when parents face children as would the Creator who gave them life, parents will be endowed with wisdom beyond that of their own. Wise mothers and fathers will teach members of their family how to make personal decisions based upon divine law. They will teach them that “this life is the time . . . to prepare to meet God” (Alma 34:32). They will teach them that decisions of a moral and spiritual character cannot be based on freedom to choose without accountability to God for those choices (see D&C 101:78). With that understanding, parents and children will be rewarded with strength of character, peace of mind, joy, and rejoicing in their posterity. The Joseph Smith Translation adds this insight: “When thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy” (JST Gen. 9:22).

Facing our neighbors

Similarly, relationships with neighbors, friends, and associates will be enhanced



as we approach them with “the pure love of Christ” (Moro. 7:47). A desire to emulate the Lord provides powerful motivation for good. Our craving for compassion will cause us to act in accord with the Golden Rule (see Matt. 7:12). By so doing we will find joy in feeding the poor, clothing the naked, or doing volunteer work of worth.

Service to neighbors takes on new stature when we first look to God. In the Church, when priesthood and auxiliary leaders face their congregations, quorums, and classes as would the Lord, they learn that it does not matter where they serve, but how. Position in the Church does not exalt anyone, but faithfulness does. On the other hand, aspiring to a visible position—striving to become a master rather than a servant—can destroy the spirit of the worker and the work.

Occasionally confusion exists regarding servants and masters. The Bible reports that a group of men “had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest” (Mark 9:34) among them. Jesus said, “If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all” (Mark 9:35). Jesus also said in a similar way: “He that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matt. 23:11). In these scriptures, the word *servant* comes from the Greek noun *diakonos*, which means “one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master.” *Diakonos* is the Greek word from which the English word deacon is derived.

Was Jesus asking His disciples to respond to random requests from the crowd or to serve tables? (see Acts 6:2) No! He was asking them to serve in His way. The people were not to be masters of His disciples. The Lord is their Master.

In rendering service to others, which way do we face? From the right or the left, we can only push or pull. We can lift only from a higher plane. To reach it we don’t look sideways; we look up to our Master. Just as we must look to God to live well, so we must look to God to serve well.

Families deserve guidance from heaven. Facing upward is crucial. Decisions of a moral and spiritual character cannot be based on freedom to choose without accountability to God for those choices. With that understanding, parents and children will be rewarded with strength of character, peace of mind, joy, and rejoicing in their posterity.

Attitudes of effective disciples

If we are called to positions of leadership, we are accountable to the Savior for the acts we perform in that office. Those actions are shaped by attitudes, and attitudes are elevated while lowering our heads in humble prayer. So state words in the hymn “Before Thee, Lord, I Bow My Head”:

Look up, my soul; be not cast down.
Keep not thine eyes upon the ground.
Break off the shackles of the earth.
Receive, my soul, the spirit’s birth.
And now as I go forth again
To mingle with my fellowmen,
Stay thou nearby, my steps to guide,
That I may in thy love abide (*Hymns*, no. 158).

Praying helps us to face trials in life. Prayer centers our attitudes precisely. With that focus we do not wander to the right or left through land mined with traps of temptation. Disciples do not flirt with danger at the jagged edge of disaster. Experienced mountain climbers do not lean toward the dangerous edge but toward safety, with ropes and other safeguards to secure them to those they trust. So it is with us. When we climb mountainous challenges of life, we should lean toward our Master and be yoked with Him, clinging tightly to the iron rod of the gospel, to family, and to trusted friends.

President David O. McKay taught this about edges: “Many of us through selfishness are lingering near the edge of the animal jungle where Nature’s law demands us to do everything with self in view” (*Conference Report*, Apr. 1957, 7).

President James E. Faust issued this solemn warning: “Living on the edge can also mean being perilously close to the Bottomless Pit. . . .

“Some of you may think that you will discover your strengths and abilities by living on the edge. . . . There will always be enough risks that will come to you naturally without your having to seek them out” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 46).

The Lord said, “Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not” (D&C 6:36). I have learned that such faith gives

emancipating power. Facing God first lets us decide firmly what we shall not do; then we are free to pursue what we ought to do.

President Gordon B. Hinckley declared: "Love of God is the root of all virtue, of all goodness, of all strength of character, of all fidelity to do right. Love the Lord your God, and love His Son, and be ever grateful for their love for us. Whenever other love fades, there will be that shining, transcendent, everlasting love of God for each of us and the love of His Son, who gave His life for us" (*Church News*, Mar. 2, 1996, 2).

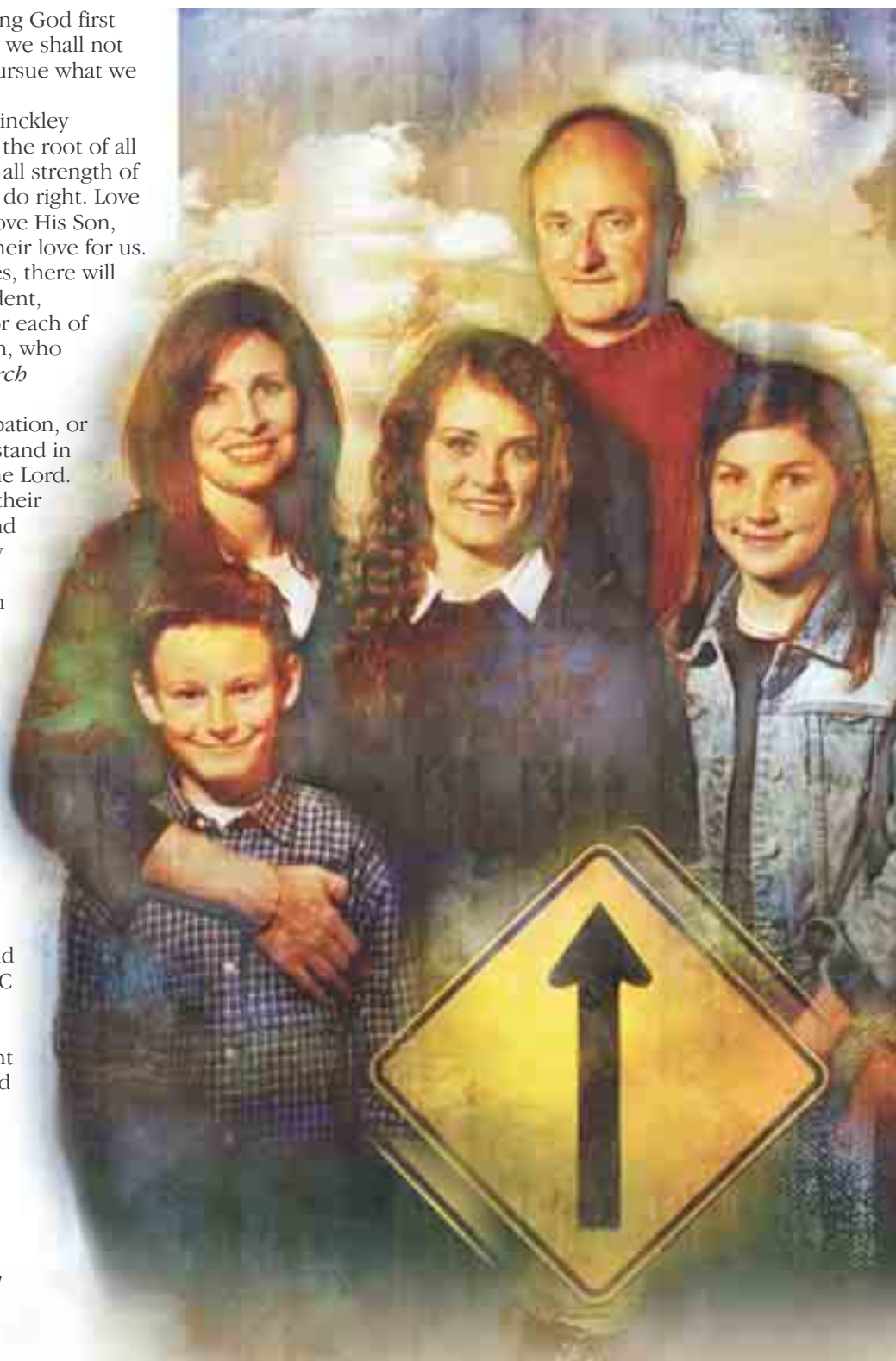
Race, nationality, occupation, or other interests need not stand in the way. All can look to the Lord. All can place Him first in their lives. Those who do so and remain faithful will qualify for His sublime promise:

"Every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am" (D&C 93:1).

He has also given many other promises, among which are: "Blessed are you; for as you now behold me and know that I am, even so shall ye come unto me and your souls shall live" (D&C 45:46).

"I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88). This glorious destiny can be ours. **NE**

Adapted from an April 1996 general conference address.



I N T U N E

Words and music by
Sally DeFord

Earnestly ♩ = 64-80

mf

1. Ho - ly tem - ple, hal - lowed walls, ____
2. Ho - ly tem - ple where we learn cre -
3. Ho - ly tem - ple where we bless our

mf *rit.* *a tempo*

filled with heav - en's light, Where the Spir - it teach - es truth and tes - ti - fies of Christ. There with - in that
a - tion's grand de - sign, Where our souls will be en - dowed with pow - er from on high. There we kneel, our
loved ones gone be - fore, Where e - ter - nal ties are sealed by sa - cred priest - hood pow'r. There we turn our

ho - ly place our hearts are made as one, U - nit - ed by the pow'r of God in pure e - ter - nal love.
hearts pre - pared, to cov - nant with our Lord, And there His Spir - it binds our lives in love for - ev - er more.
hearts to those who gave us life and birth. How beau - ti - ful that ho - ly place where heav - en dwells on earth.

In That Holy Place

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f

House of learn - ing, house of faith, house of peace and prayer. House of glo - ry, house of God—I'll feel His pres - ence
 House of faith, house of prayer—I can feel His pres - ence
 (Sing harmony last time only.)

f

there. I will stand with heart and hands kept clean and pure each day, wor - thy of the bless - ings found in that ho - ly
 there. Heart and hands—kept clean and pure each day, wor - thy of the bless - ings found in that ho - ly

1. 2. 3.
 place. place, that ho - ly place.

rit. *rit.*



THE BEAT DIFFERENT

I played in a successful rock band, living my dream. Why was I so miserable? And why were those two guys standing in the rain so happy?

I was an average Latter-day Saint in high school. I was involved in sports and music and Boy Scouts. And I was quite interested in music. I played the drums in band, and my favorite kind of music at the time was punk rock. I used to practice drumming to CDs until the day came when I formed my own band with three nonmember friends.

Our band started innocently enough. Soon we became quite popular around town, which led us to believe we were the best. I soon found myself skipping Church functions to practice. Then I began ditching church on Sundays to play. During this time we got a phone call from a band we idolized. Members of that band said they saw us play, thought we were good, and offered to help us record our first CD. This sounded too good to be true. We were on our way to the top, and my commitment to the Church dwindled even more. I hardly attended, and I didn't associate with my LDS friends

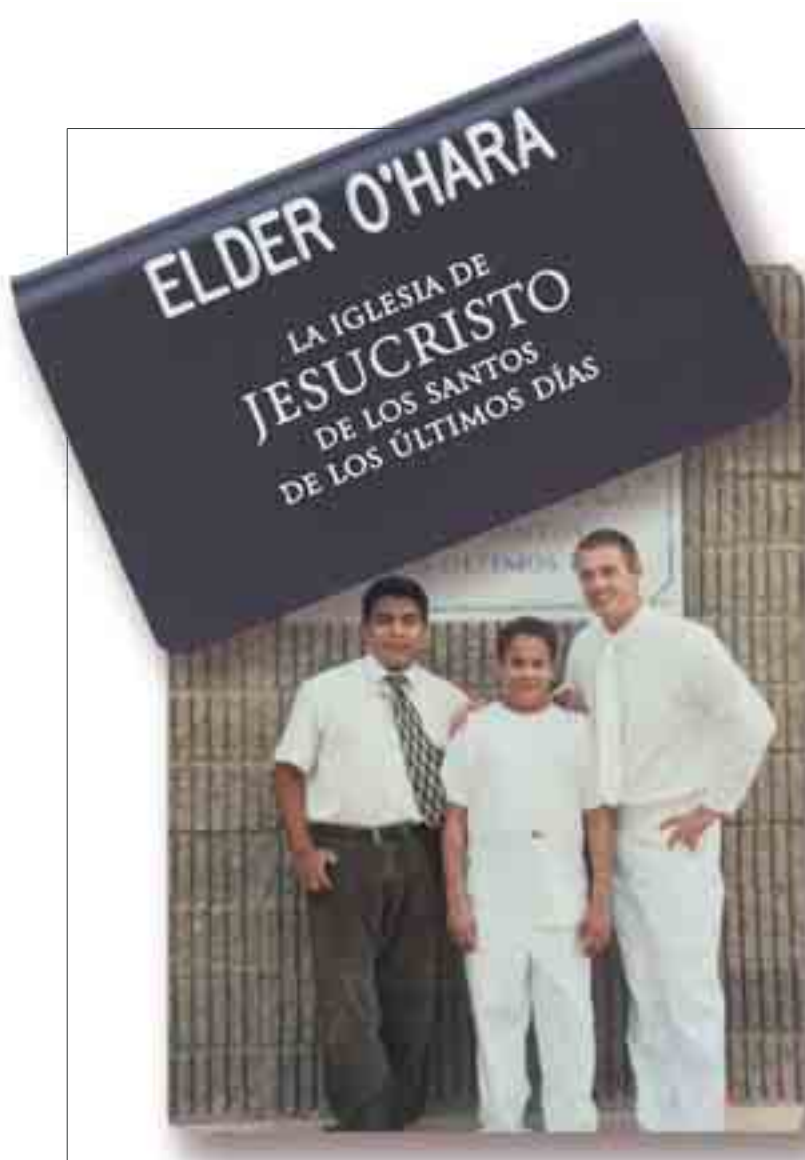
Before, success brought money but not happiness. Now, as a missionary, every success brings happiness money couldn't possibly buy.



by Timothy O'Hara

OF A DRUM





Now the music that's sweetest to his ears is hearing one of his investigators accept the invitation to come to Christ through the waters of baptism.

anymore. I was slipping away.

As the months went on, our band grew more popular, and I quit going to church all together. I started partying all the time and hanging out with a bad crowd. I got to meet every music hero I had. I traveled throughout the United States and Canada. You could walk into any music store and find our CDs on the racks. I thought it was great! If God didn't want me to be doing this, I rationalized, He wouldn't have allowed the band to get so big. In the band, I didn't have to have an outside job; all I had to do was play. We made enough money from our playing to live.

During my four years of playing with the band, I became really unhappy. I didn't have any direction in life. I was lacking something. I hadn't stepped inside a church for four years, and I didn't have a clue about my beliefs anymore. I was really living a life of sin. Serving a mission was the last place I thought I would end up.

The band was on tour, finishing the last couple of shows before we went home. The moment when everything changed for me came in Portland, Oregon, on our way to a show. I was sitting in the passenger seat of our tour van. I was a little homesick, and it was a gray day, raining as it often does in Oregon. We pulled up to a stoplight, and, out of the corner of my eye, I saw two figures in trench coats standing there. There were two missionaries standing on the corner waiting to cross the street. They didn't notice me, but they must have been sharing a joke because they were smiling and laughing even though it was a miserable day. Before I knew it, I found tears streaming down my cheeks, just like the rain running down the window of our van. These two elders had something about them—a "glow" if you want to call it that. I felt they had what I was looking for.

As I was watching them and trying to conceal my tears from the other band members, I suddenly felt something familiar. I felt the Spirit of the Lord strong within me. I knew what I had been missing. I realized I hadn't had Heavenly Father or Jesus Christ in my life for five years! This was my wake-up call.

I was very confused about what to do. So I did something I should have done sooner. I got on my knees one night in my apartment and prayed to my Heavenly Father for help. Help came in the form of great Church leaders who worked with me through my repentance.

I quit the band, came back to the Church, and served as a second counselor in the presidency of my young single adult branch. Now at the age of 23, I'm devoting the next two years of my life to serving a mission. Those two missionaries in Portland will never know that just by being there, happy to serve their missions, they helped turn around the life of a desperate person. They didn't speak a word to me, but their example changed me forever.

God lives and He answers prayers, sometimes on a street corner in Portland in the rain. **NE**

Editor's note: Elder Tim O'Hara is serving in the Honduras San Pedro Sula Mission.

TUNING IN

Whether you attend at the Conference Center, watch on TV, or view the videos, you can participate in general conference in a personal and meaningful way. Here are some how-to's.

April's general conference is fast approaching. If you begin to prepare for it now, you can benefit more from the counsel of the prophets, Apostles, and other Church leaders. Here are a few ideas to try.

Before:

- ❖ Start thinking now about questions or concerns you have. Write them down, and pray that you will find solutions and guidance during conference.
- ❖ Do those things which invite the Spirit into your life so you will have a better understanding of what will be taught.
- ❖ Have a willing heart, ready to obey the words of the prophets.
- ❖ Be awake for conference. Get a good night's sleep.
- ❖ Prepare a notebook, pens, your scriptures, and anything else you might need.
- ❖ Be on time.

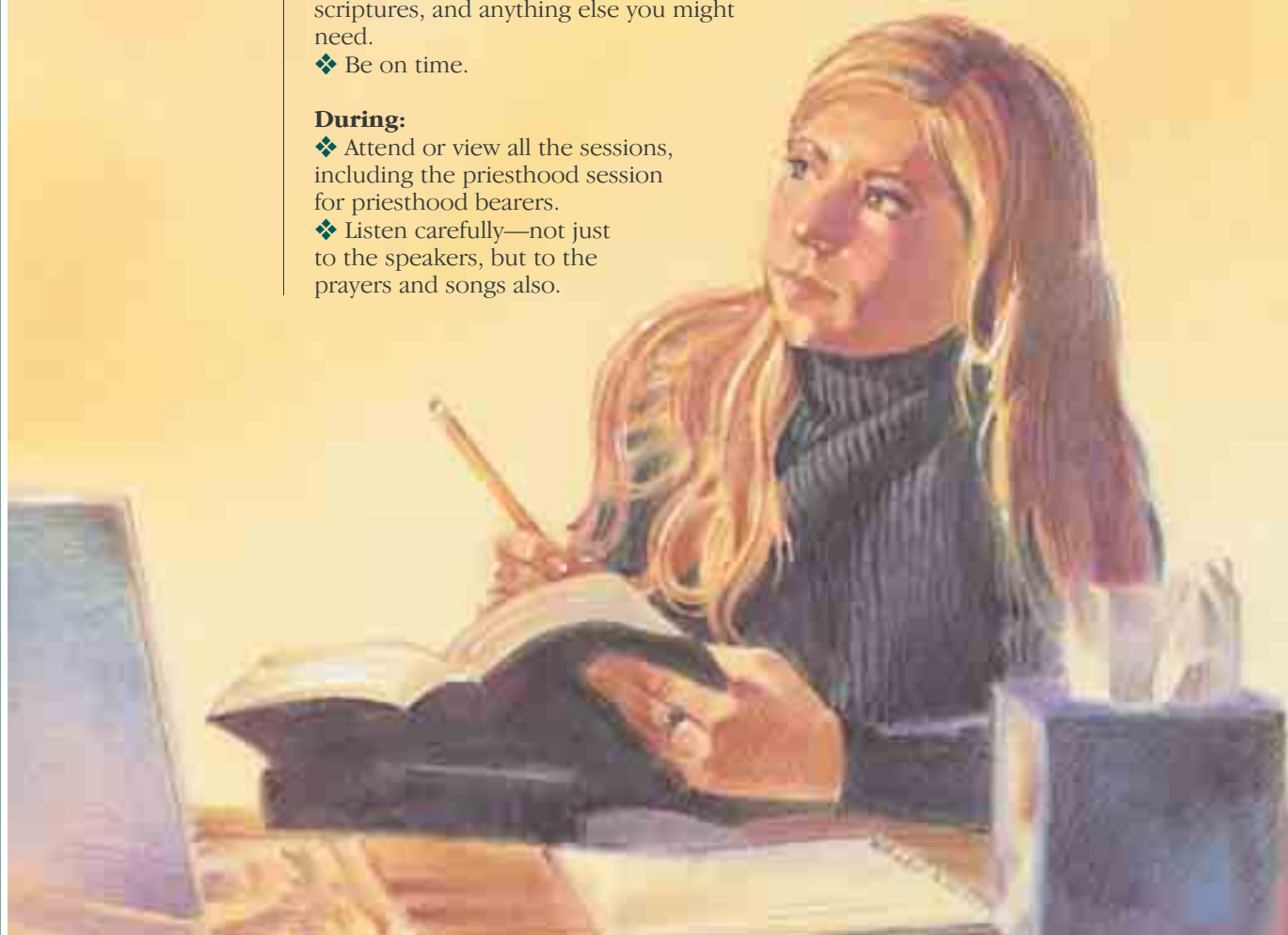
During:

- ❖ Attend or view all the sessions, including the priesthood session for priesthood bearers.
- ❖ Listen carefully—not just to the speakers, but to the prayers and songs also.

- ❖ Keep notes, including any inspiration you might receive during conference.
- ❖ Listen earnestly for answers to the questions you have.
- ❖ Between conference sessions, participate in activities that will invite the Spirit.

After:

- ❖ Follow the prophets by obeying their counsel.
- ❖ Remember the inspiration you had while you were listening to conference. Make goals right away to motivate you to do what you felt inspired to do.
- ❖ Reread the conference talks in the May *Ensign*. Studying the words of the prophets again will help you remember their most current counsel for you.



Q & A

“My best friend is not a member of the Church, but recently she attended a few activities with me and really enjoyed herself. Lately I have been feeling that I should talk to her about the Church. How can I do this without jeopardizing our friendship or making her feel uncomfortable?”

NEW ERA

Being kind and inviting your friend to Church activities are the first steps to sharing the gospel. If you have felt impressed to talk to your friend about the Church, the Spirit is prompting you to take the next step.

Sharing something important to you can be intimidating. Elder Robert C. Oaks of the Seventy said he believes “the fear of rejection or the fear of hurting a friendship are the more common restraints to sharing the gospel.

“But are these fears valid? When you extend to a friend an invitation to meet with the missionaries, you are offering to share something that is most valuable and cherished. Is that offensive? . . . When we offer to share the gospel, friendships are strengthened, even though the friends may not embrace the gospel message” (*Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 81).

Sharing the gospel is one of the most important things you can do in this life. You shouldn’t assume that talking to your friend about the Church will make her uncomfortable. Give it a try. Share how you feel and ask her what she thinks.

Sharing something important to you can be intimidating.

If you assume your friend will be uncomfortable, and make the decision not to talk to her about the Church, you may miss out on an opportunity to help her learn about the gospel.

Sharing the gospel is one of the most important things you can do in this life.

If your friend is uncomfortable talking about the Church, that doesn’t mean you can’t still be her friend.

READERS

Just keep being a good example and keep bringing your friend to church. Sooner or later, she will see that what you have is awesome and want the same for herself. Don’t be afraid to share the greatest gift that you have with others.

Lesha Froberg, 17
Bellingham, Washington



Be loving and compliment your friend for her efforts to choose the right. She will be able to feel the Holy Ghost more easily if she knows you love and respect her. Remember, Christ’s gospel is all about love.

Jed Henry, 17
Angola, Indiana





Remember, you aren't forcing her to learn about the Church; you are inviting her.

Accepting or rejecting that invitation is a decision you should let your friend make for herself. If you assume she will be uncomfortable, and make the decision not to talk to her about the Church, you may miss out on an opportunity to help a friend learn about the gospel. If she accepts your invitation, you may have the opportunity to help someone embrace the gospel.

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!" (D&C 18:15).

If your friend is uncomfortable talking about the Church, that doesn't mean you can't still be her friend. Continue to invite her to activities and try to make her feel comfortable. And just because she rejects your invitation this time doesn't mean she has completely rejected the gospel or your friendship. She may just need more time.

Elder Oaks further illustrates what it's like to hesitate to share the gospel with our friends:

"Consider that you are invited to a friend's house for breakfast. On the table you see a large pitcher of freshly squeezed orange juice from which your host fills his glass. But he offers you none. Finally you ask, 'Could I have a glass of orange juice?'

"He replies, 'Oh, I'm sorry. I was afraid you might not like orange juice, and I didn't want to offend you by offering you something you didn't desire.'

"Now, that sounds absurd, but it is not too different from the way we hesitate to offer up something far sweeter than orange juice. I have often worried how I would answer some friend about my hesitancy when I meet him beyond the veil" (*Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 81–82). **NE**

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



I encourage you to build personal, meaningful relationships with your nonmember friends and acquaintances. Interest in the gospel may come later as a natural extension of a good friendship . . . If they are not interested in the gospel, we should show unconditional love through acts of service and kindness, and never imply that we see an acquaintance only as a potential convert" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 30).

—Elder
M. Russell Ballard
of the Quorum
of the Twelve

When you want your friends to know how you feel, remember to just be yourself. When they see that you are comfortable and happy about sharing your ideas with them, they are able to feel comfortable as well.

Elder David Doncouse, 20
Australia Sydney South Mission



My best friend also is not a member of the Church. I wrote her a note with my testimony and stuck it in a copy of the Book of Mormon. I now pray and fast that her heart will be touched and she'll want to know more.

Genevieve Bonner, 16
Springville, Utah



Obviously these feelings are promptings from the Holy Ghost, and we should never ignore them. Tell her that you care about her. Tell her about your religion, and bear your testimony.

Joey Price, 12
Kayenta, Arizona



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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

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

QUESTION

I fight with my parents all the time. I love them, but we just don't seem to get along. What can I do?

Please respond by May 1, 2002.



SOFTEN YOUR HEART, LET THE SPIRIT WARM YOU,
AND RISE TO YOUR FULL POTENTIAL.
(See James 4:10.)

Three Faces of



Thanks to the loving persistence of members and missionaries, Pia's mom became active again and her daughter was baptized.

by Laury Livsey

Denmark's a small country, but what's happening there is causing some big smiles.

Forty-eight hours in Copenhagen isn't enough time to tell all the stories of the young men and women in Denmark's largest city. But it is enough time to tell about Pia, Rebecca, and Annelise. After all, everybody has a story to tell, and the three young women are ready to talk.

Pia is going to share the story of her conversion, Rebecca will discuss an anti-pornography program she's involved in, and Annelise will handle the topic of fasting and prayer and how her ward is holding a fast so that the Danish government will allow the Church to build a new chapel.

Three girls. Two days. One story.

Pia's Story

Pia Hentsen slowly walks down the hall and sits down in the living room of her home. A visitor has stopped by, and his Danish leaves a lot to be desired. So two missionaries are there to translate for him. As she begins talking, she realizes there is some confusion and it has nothing to do with language. Instead, it's math that's the problem.

So she turns to the missionaries to try to help her visitor understand.

Pia is a 16-year-old Laurel in the

Frederiksberg Ward in a Copenhagen suburb, her mom is a life-long member of the Church, Pia can remember going to Primary when she was younger, yet Pia has only been a Church member for—are you ready?—exactly one year.

The visitor still looks puzzled, as if he's trying to do the math in his head without a satisfactory result. Pia senses this and clarifies.

“My mom and dad are Church members, so when I was young, I went to Primary. But I never was baptized,” Pia says.

After Pia's parents divorced, Pia's mother, Pia, and her two brothers stopped going to church. Pia turned eight but wasn't baptized after her birthday. She turned 12 and didn't join Young Women. For about 10 years there was very little church involvement in her life. Home teachers still came, and visiting teachers called on her mom, yet the Hentsens stayed home on Sundays.

But when a Young Women leader called Pia and invited her to start attending activities, Pia's life began changing. “My leader would write me letters inviting me to go to church. So I went once and thought it was so boring. I didn't want to go back. But the missionaries changed my mind about church,” she says, laughing.

Those missionaries had already determined that Pia had never been baptized, so they scheduled an appointment to visit her. At that first appointment, the missionaries brought a short spiritual message. That pattern





To make her homeland a better place, Rebecca decided to make a difference as a community activist against pornography. Her resolve was strengthened by what her patriarchal blessing told her.

continued for several weeks until one day they tried something different, bringing with them something every missionary has: a flipchart.

“They asked me if they could give me the first discussion, and I said, ‘Okay.’ It didn’t take long—probably a few weeks—before I finished all the discussions and agreed to be baptized.” At about this same time, Pia’s mother started becoming active again, as did her two brothers.

Today, in the small group that makes up the Young Men and Young Women program of the Friedriksberg Ward, Pia is right at home. Making the change to join the Church and then becoming active took some getting used to. Now it’s a way of life. “I’m the only Laurel in the ward. We also have two Mia Maids and two Beehives. That’s our Young Women,” she says before she stops and thinks further about how the Church has changed her life. “I think my life is better now. I have something to believe and something I know is true.”

Rebecca’s Story

The big sheets of stamps are waiting to be affixed to the pile of envelopes. But Rebecca Pedersen is only one person. A Laurel in the Allerød Ward, Rebecca has a few thoughts about pornography and its damaging influence, and she’s doing something about it. But the work—stuffing envelopes with literature—is tedious and time-consuming.

As she addresses the envelopes, she begins talking of her involvement with a program organized to protest the prominence of pornography in Denmark.

“Pornography has such a large effect on our values, but Denmark is quite a liberal country and I can see where people almost get used to the pornography. But instead of getting used to it, we should be startled by it,” Rebecca says.

At Rebecca’s school, a fellow student started this protest against pornography and enlisted Rebecca’s help. As they educate, they are also gathering signatures for a petition they hope will

gain them a voice in the government—especially with Denmark’s minister of culture, who oversees public television in the country.

“We can’t stop people from looking at pornography,” Rebecca explains, “but we’d like to see pornography removed from public places where kids can easily see it. You can’t just put kids to bed early and expect them not to see those things on television.”

As she thinks about her Young Women values and considers what she represents as a member of the Church, Rebecca is glad to be involved in something she hopes will effect a change.

“You have to make a statement in your life. I think it’s important for us, especially as members of the Church who have the truth that we have, to do something to make the world a better place,” she says. “That thought has always struck me, but a couple of months ago when I received my patriarchal blessing, I realized even more that I had to do something.”

When Rebecca’s group completed the project and sent off the petition to the government, she allowed herself to think about the small part she did in getting more than 22,000 people to sign and how it strengthened her resolve to make Denmark a better place. She also smiles. They easily exceeded the goal of 15,000 signatures







Annelise (far right; with younger sister Christel) took fasting and prayer seriously when all ward members were asked to fast for a new site to build a chapel.

they set before they began.

Rebecca knows things are not going to change overnight. But you have to start somewhere, right? “I think there are a lot of people out there who hate pornography and its effects. But I think many people are willing to not do or say anything, or they’ll buy the magazines and watch the TV shows. Sometimes I think people maybe just need a little reminder once in a while.”

Annelise’s Story

Annelise Nielsen is a third-generation member of the Church. Her grandma and grandpa converted, her dad grew up in the Church and married a member, and they had Annelise. They’re all now members of the Frederiksberg Ward, and Annelise, a Beehive, is, along with Pia, one of the few young women in the ward.

And the ward currently meets in a rented building. There is an elevator in the building, but it’s pretty slow so Annelise takes the stairs. Up three flights gets her to the top floor of the building, where she enters the chapel. The building is clean and nice, but Annelise says there is a temporary feeling about where the Frederiksberg Ward meets. She looks out the window of the chapel and points.

“That’s our old chapel right there,” she says. She’s looking at a beautiful brick building one block away, the first the Church built in this country. And it sits empty—for good reason.

“That is where our temple is going to be,” Annelise says.

The Frederiksberg Ward chapel is in the process of being converted into a temple that will serve the members in Denmark and other parts of Scandinavia. So to get a temple 10 minutes from her house opposed to the 12 hours it takes by car to get to the Stockholm Sweden Temple is a real blessing and worth the sacrifice.

But there’s still the issue of the Church building a new chapel. The lease on the temporary chapel will expire soon. So on this Sunday, the members of

the Frederiksberg Ward are holding a fast, praying that the Danish government will approve building a chapel on property the Church has purchased. Annelise joined other ward members in fasting and prayer for this special purpose.

This morning, Annelise admits she’s hungry. “But when I fast I feel close to God and I feel more humble,” she says. “I don’t feel like fasting is that much of a sacrifice, and I believe if everybody in this ward prays for the same thing then our Heavenly Father will help us.”

After sacrament meeting, with her fast almost complete, Annelise doesn’t make a mad dash home to get some food. Instead, she walks out the door holding the arm of Kristel Pedersen, a 96-year-old member of her ward. Sister Pedersen joined the Church in 1958 and taught Annelise’s father in Sunday School. Each month, Annelise gets to know her better by taking time to visit with her.

“Sister Pedersen is nice to talk with. I think she’s a strong woman because she’s the only member of the Church in her family. Her husband never joined, and her children were already grown up when she was baptized,” Annelise says. “She’s 96 years old, and she still comes to church each Sunday.

“I admire people like Sister Pedersen,” Annelise adds, “who are close to Heavenly Father. And when I do things like fasting, it brings me closer to Him too.”

In Copenhagen stands the original, well-known statue of Jesus Christ, the Christus, carved by 19th-century Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen. In that same city, three Copenhagen young women stand tall also, emulating the Savior in all they do. **NE**

Editor’s Note: A few months after the fast, the Church received government approval to construct a new building for the Frederiksberg Ward.



OUT OF

Why was Allison so together while my life was in chaos? She tuned in to what was real.

I was a junior in high school when Allison befriended me. She had moved from Boise, Idaho, that year, but to me it seemed she was from another planet. We sat next to each other in seminary, and I had never met a teenager who was so dedicated to her religion.

On the other hand, I was struggling with my testimony, slowly becoming inactive in Church and seminary activities. My parents were at a loss. They offered to answer any gospel questions I had, but I didn't want their help. I wanted to find the truth on my own.

Despite our differences, Allison and I became good friends. We spent many weekend nights staying up late, lying on her trampoline. Sometimes I would bring up questions I had about the Church.

Her answers always made sense to me, and as our talks continued, the gospel began to make more sense to me, too. Still, there was one vital thing I lacked: the Spirit. It seemed the world always called to me much louder than the Spirit did.

by Holly K. Simmons





WORLD

One school day, I noticed Allison sitting on the floor in front of her locker. She was eating her lunch and wearing headphones. She looked up at me and smiled.

“What are you listening to?” I asked, trying to shout over the noise of the hallway. Lockers slammed. Students laughed and yelled. I wondered if she liked any of the same groups I liked.

“Listen and see,” she said.

I put on the headphones and suddenly the world melted away. The music played serenely. The singer sang of Christ, His life, His death, His love for us. This wasn’t what I had expected.

Amid the chaos, I felt peace enter my heart. I felt my Savior’s love.

I looked at Allison with tears in my eyes. I didn’t want to give back her headphones. I wanted to keep that feeling forever. For a brief moment, I felt what it meant to be in the world but not of it.

It wasn’t a lightning strike, and I can’t say my life changed overnight. But that day, a seed began to grow in my heart. I had felt the Spirit, and I hungered to feel it again. As time went by, I gained a testimony that our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are there, and they love all of us so much. I now know that if I seek the Spirit and follow God’s plan, I can have the peace of the Holy Spirit with me always, and I can leave the chaos and confusion of the world behind. **NE**

THEY'RE **NOT** REALLY **HAPPY**



by Elder Glenn L. Pace
of the Seventy

Those in the great and spacious building look like they are having a great time. But all they have to offer is short-term gratification that is inseparably connected to long-term sorrow and suffering.

Want excitement? I'll give you excitement. Put on the full armor of God and help to build His kingdom on earth.

When our children were younger and we would be on our way to Sunday church meetings, occasionally we would pass a car pulling a boat. My children would become silent and press their noses against the windows and ask, "Dad, why can't we go waterskiing today instead of to church?"

Sometimes I would take the easy but cowardly way out and answer, "It's simple; we don't have a boat." However, on my more conscientious days, I would muster up all the logic and spirituality available to a patriarch of a family and try to explain how much happier our family was because of our Church activity.

I first realized I wasn't getting through when on a subsequent Sunday we saw a family laughing and excited as they loaded their snow skis onto their car. One of my teenage sons said with a sly grin, "They're not really happy, huh, Dad?" That statement has become a

family joke whenever we see someone doing something we cannot do. When I see a teenager driving a beautiful, expensive sports car, I say to my sons, "Now there's one miserable guy."

A lesser and lower life

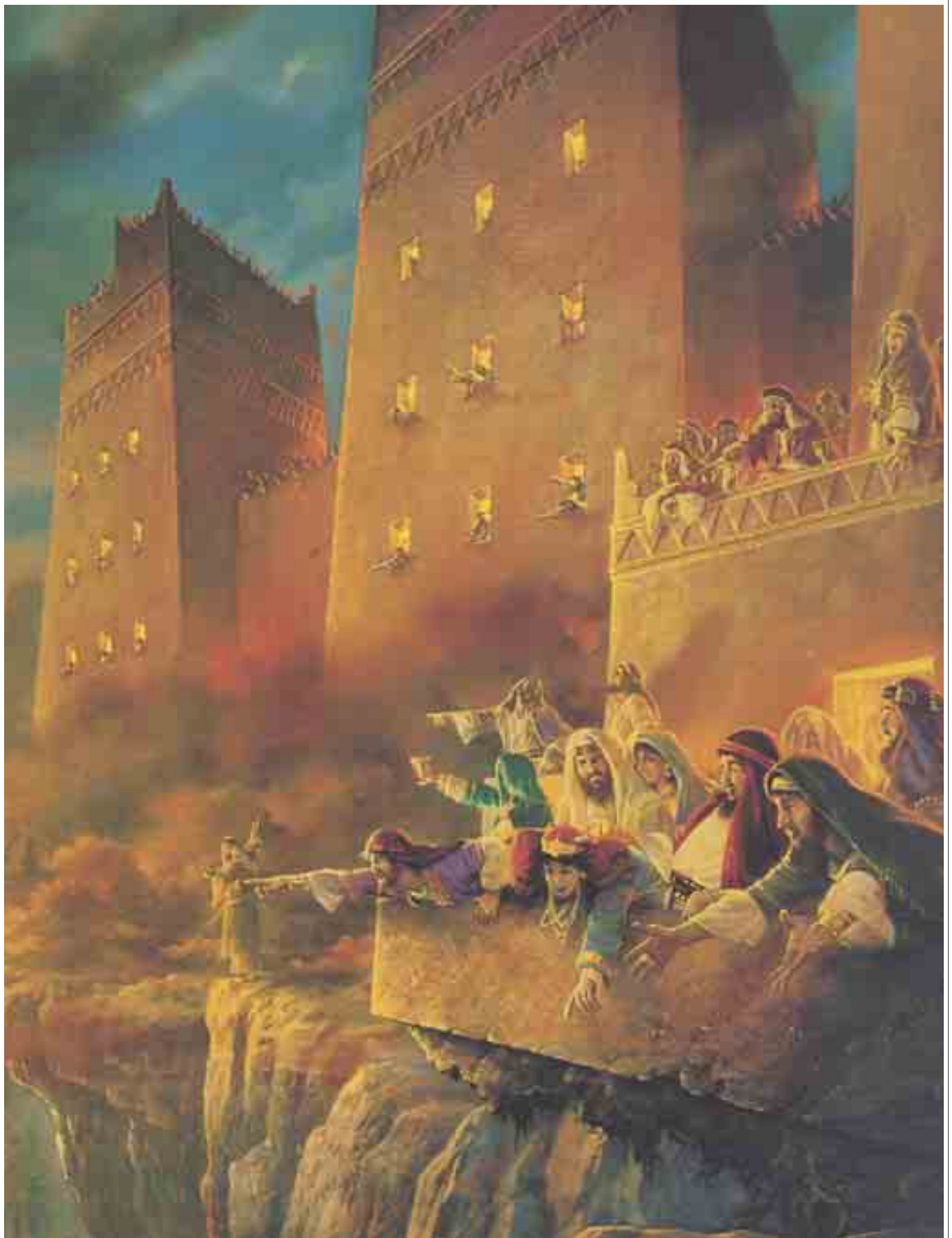
You young people are growing up in a most challenging and confusing world. Activities always forbidden by the Lord and for many years frowned upon by society are now accepted and promoted by that same society. The media serves up these activities in such a fashion as to make them look very desirable. Add to acceptability and desirability the power of peer pressure, and you have an extremely explosive situation.

Lehi's vision of the tree of life is appropriate for our day. In that vision, he saw a great and spacious building, which represents the pride and temptations of the world:

"And I . . . beheld . . . a great and spacious building; . . .

"And it was filled with people, both old and young, . . . and their manner of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who . . . were partaking of the fruit" (1 Ne. 8:26–27).

Even though you have a testimony



Don't envy a lesser and lower life. On cold winter mornings the family cat occupied the heat vent while I went off to school. But after the joys and sorrows of the school day, I would come home glad that I wasn't a cat.

and want to do what is right, it is difficult not to be drawn to the great and spacious building. From all appearances, the people in the building seem to be having a great time. The music and laughter are deafening. You would say to me what my children have said, "They're not really happy, huh, Dad?" as you watch them party.

They look happy and free, but don't mistake telestial pleasure for celestial happiness and joy. Don't mistake lack of self-control for freedom. Complete freedom without appropriate restraint makes us slaves to our appetites. Don't envy a lesser and lower life.

When I was in junior high school, I would get out of bed on cold winter mornings and head for the heat vent to get warm. The family cat would always beat me there, so I would gently shoo her away and sit down. Soon my mother would tell me it was time to leave for school. I would look out at the icicles on the house

and dread going out into the cold, let alone beginning another day of school.

As I kissed my mother good-bye and went out the door, I would look at my comfortable spot in front of the heat vent and find that the cat had repossessed it. How I envied that cat! If that weren't enough, she would look up at me with heavy eyelids and an expression as if to laugh at me and say, "Have fun in school, Glenn. I'm sure glad I'm not a human!" I hated it when she did that!

However, an interesting thing would happen as the day went on. I would come home after experiencing the joys and sorrows of the school day and see that lazy cat still curled up in front of the vent, and I would smile and say to her, "I'm sure glad I'm not a cat."

Absolute and eternal truths

To those of you who are inching your way closer and closer to that great and spacious building, let me make it completely clear that the people in that building have absolutely nothing to offer except instant, short-term gratification inescapably connected to long-term sorrow and suffering. The commandments you observe were not given by a dispassionate God to prevent you from having fun, but by a loving Father in Heaven who wants you to be happy while you are living on this earth as well as in the hereafter.

Compare the blessings that come from living the Word of Wisdom to those available to you if you choose to party with those in the great and spacious building. Compare the joy of intelligent humor and wit to drunken, silly, crude, loud laughter. Compare our faithful young women who still have a blush in their cheeks with those who, having long lost their blush, try to persuade you to join them in their loss. Compare lifting people up to putting people down. Compare the ability to receive personal revelation and direction in your life to being tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. Compare having the blessings of the priesthood of God with anything you see going on in that great



and spacious building.

The members of many churches in the world have been putting pressure on their leaders to change doctrine to fit the changing lifestyle of the members. Many have been successful, and more and more we see churches made up of the doctrines of men. There are absolute truths of eternity. They do not change as a society drifts from them. No popular vote can change an absolute, eternal truth. Legalizing an act does not make it moral. Don't be fooled by the argument "Everybody's doing it." Your spirit should be offended and your intelligence insulted by such reasoning.

When all of the evidence is in, the world's graduate school of hard knocks will teach what you were taught in the kindergarten of your spiritual training, "Wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10). Why wait for finite man to prove what his infinite Creator has already revealed to his prophets?

The whole armor of God

I know how much you like thrills, adventure, and excitement. Do you want excitement? I'll give you excitement. Do you realize you are outnumbered in the world 1,000 to 1? The sons of Helaman didn't face those odds. As the winds of popular opinion intensify and the mocking increases from those who are trying to justify their own unrighteous actions, you will be required to put on the full armor of God. You will need to fight with all of your strength to keep unspotted from the world. We plead with you to stay true—not for us, but for you.

With odds of 1,000 to 1, shall the youth of Zion falter? I give a firm testimony. No! Never! The youth of the kingdom will emerge victorious. Now that's exciting! What adventure in that great and spacious building would you trade for the thrill and excitement of building the very kingdom the Savior will come to the earth to govern?

We love you, the youth of the Church, and we know you will collectively succeed. However, we have great anxiety



for individuals we may lose along the way. Speaking as a father, I can tell you the loss of one of you is too many. We want each and every one of you to succeed, not just the majority.

To those of you who are struggling and losing ground, you who have been lured into that building through one of its many doors and now find no doors going out, you who feel trapped and defeated, we assure you there is hope, and all is not lost. Through His Atonement, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has provided a way for you to escape that awful place. He knows you intimately. He knows your name, and He knows your pain. If you will approach your Father in Heaven with a broken heart and contrite spirit, you will find yourself miraculously lifted out of that great and spacious building and into the loving and comforting arms of the Savior of mankind.

At your earthly home, you will find your father's arms have always been open for you and that during your absence your mother never stopped setting your place at the table in front of your empty chair. You will see clearly the difference between telestial happiness and celestial happiness, and you will experience and savor celestial joy through this life and throughout all eternity.

*Adapted from an October 1987
general conference address.*

Do you realize you are outnumbered in the world 1,000 to 1? Put on the full armor of God. You will need to fight with all your strength.

Thanks, CANDACE

I was wallowing in anger and self-pity after a miserable day. It took a brave four-year-old to knock on my door and announce that it was time for family prayer.

by Catherine Loveland

It was a Thursday night, and I was not exactly in the best mood. The day had gone from bad to worse. Not only was I late for seminary because I had slept in, but in the bustle of getting to the car, I managed to forget my math homework. The whole day continued in this miserable pattern until I came home, pounded upstairs to my room, and slammed my door, daring anyone to disturb me. No one did.

Now with chemistry homework half complete, I slammed shut my book and sat against the bed I had not even had time to make. I felt nothing but empty frustration and anger. What did I do to deserve this? Why was everything going so wrong? I thought wallowing in self-pity.

I glanced at my scriptures and suddenly remembered I had forgotten to read. I flipped them open. I stopped and felt rebellion building within me. Why should I bother? I thought. I had dragged myself out of bed at a ridiculous 5:30 A.M., to get to seminary and all for what? So I could forget my homework and have one of the worst days ever?

I was at my breaking point. Deep down I knew my troubles and poor attitude were my own fault. It was just so much easier to blame someone else. I was contemplating what to do next when a brave soul dared to knock on my door.

"Time for prayer!" shouted Ronnie's sweet four-year-old voice while still pounding with all his might. I groaned and unlocked my door, emerging from my cave of self-pity.

"Hello, beautiful!" my dad said, kissing

my cheek. I only scowled as we walked into my parents' bedroom where the family had begun to congregate—all seven of us.

"There you are, Catherine. I have hardly seen you all day," Mom said to me just as Baby Candace, as we like to call her, entered the room. I was greeted by the adorable two-year-old with a bubbly, "Hi, Ratren," and a hug around the knees. I always find it amazing how much love is stored in that tiny body of hers. I felt slightly better, but I was still annoyed with the way my day had been going. Then I began to think of all the tests waiting for me Friday. I turned to my dad and, with a touch of that attitude which accompanies most 15-year-olds, asked, "Can we just get this over with?" (Luckily, my father was in a better mood than I was.)

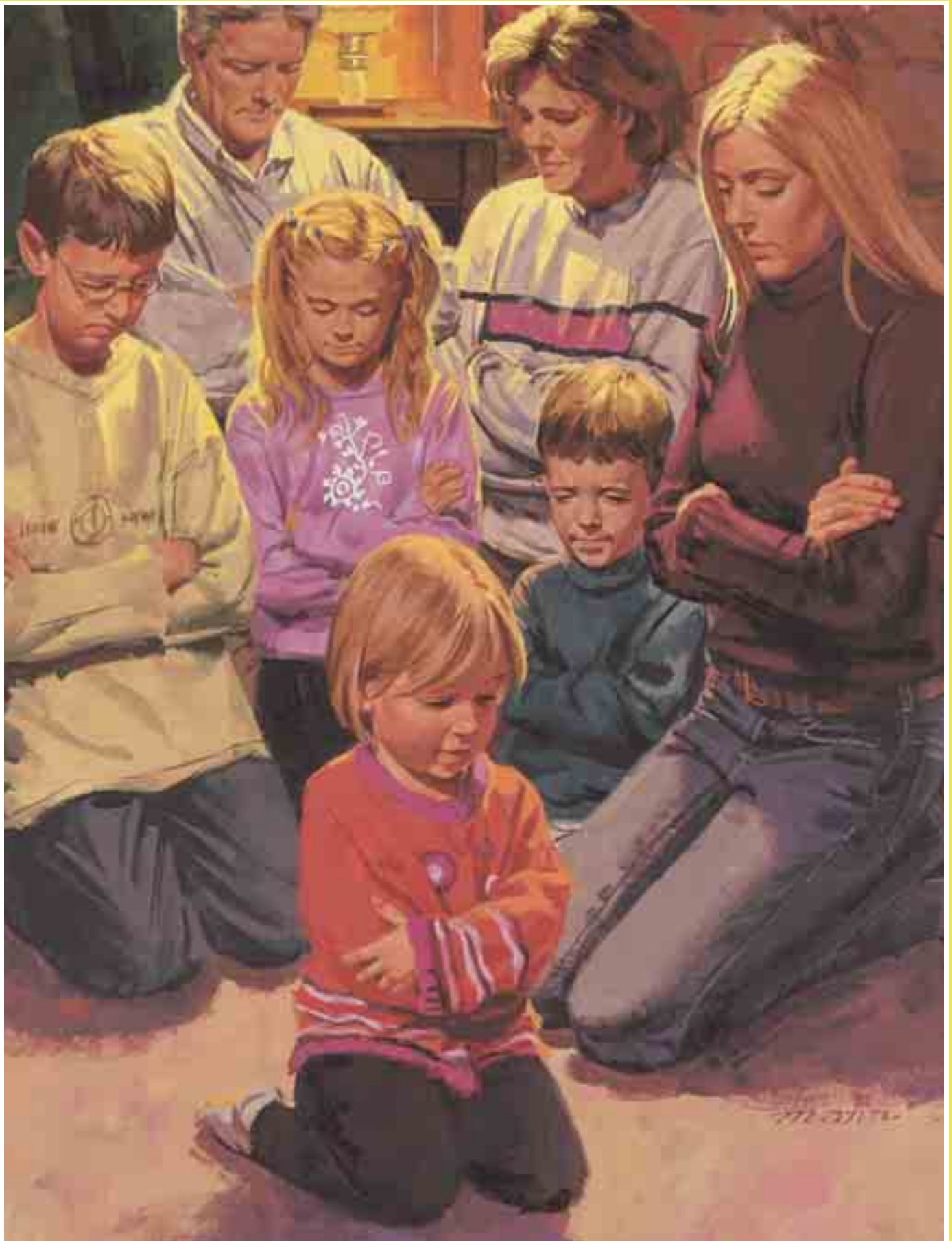
"All right then, let's see," Dad said looking around the circle and counting as he went, "Where's Steven?"

"Steven!" Ronnie shouted, cupping his small hands to his mouth as though his 11-year-old brother were across the street rather than in the next room. With that, Steven came bounding in, did a half-somersault, and took his place in the family circle. I only rolled my eyes.

"Now," Dad began again, "whose turn is it?" I sat back on my heels hoping he would not call on me. The last thing I felt like doing was praying.

"Me turn, me turn!" shouted Candace, waving her hand wildly in the air.

"I guess it is your turn, Candace," Dad said, smiling. "Do you want Mommy to help you?" Candace nodded and scooted



Illustrated by Paul Mann

It was
Candace's
turn to pray
and my turn to
be humbled.
From her two-
year-old mouth
came one of the
purest prayers
I've ever heard.



closer to Mom.

"All right then, fold your arms, Candace," Mom said gently. The small girl glanced around the circle to make sure all eyes were properly closed before she began. I was totally unprepared for what followed.

Before Mom began her usual whispered prompts, Candace started all on her own: "Heavenly Father, tank dee for Mommy, Daddy, Tistine, Ratren, Steben, Nonnie, and me, Tandace. Dat we are a family togeder. Help us choose da right." The room was silent, except for the voice of a small girl speaking with her Heavenly Father. She had no thoughts of personal gain, only asking a blessing for Daddy at work and to help us "choose da right." From the mouth of a two-year-old came one of the most humble and pure prayers I have ever heard. I was filled with shame as she closed, "Name of Jesus Christ, amen!"

We gave hugs and praises for the wonderful job Candace had done. After good-night kisses, I once again departed for my room. I gently closed the door and walked over to the corner where my scriptures lay waiting.

In Matthew 18:1–4, I read, "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

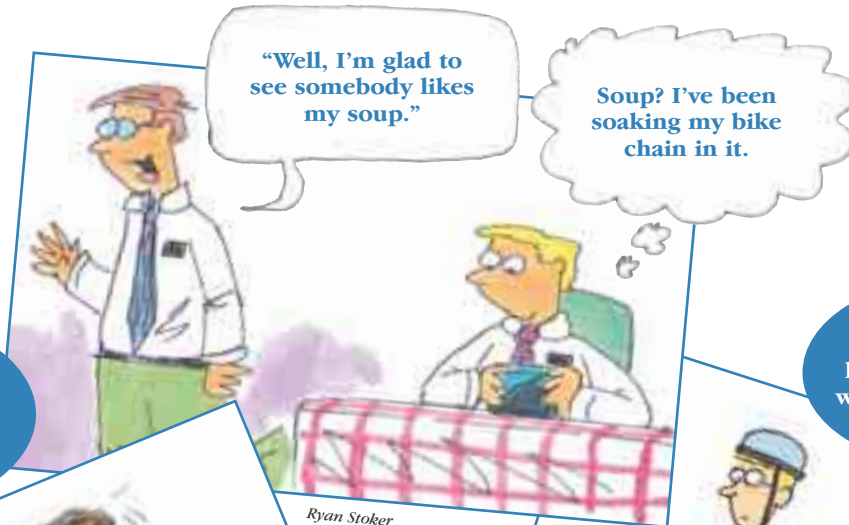
"And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Tears gathered in my eyes. For the first time, I knew the meaning behind this scripture. Yes, my day had been tough, but only because I had allowed it to be. I realized that throughout life, trials would come and go, but if we humble ourselves to become "as little children," the Lord can help us get through anything.

After kneeling by my bed to pray, I opened my door and crept into the room where Baby Candace was supposed to be sleeping. "Hi, Ratren!" she shouted as she jumped out of bed, throwing her small arms around my neck. "Shhhh. I love you, Baby," I said to her, as I tucked her under her sheets. **NE**

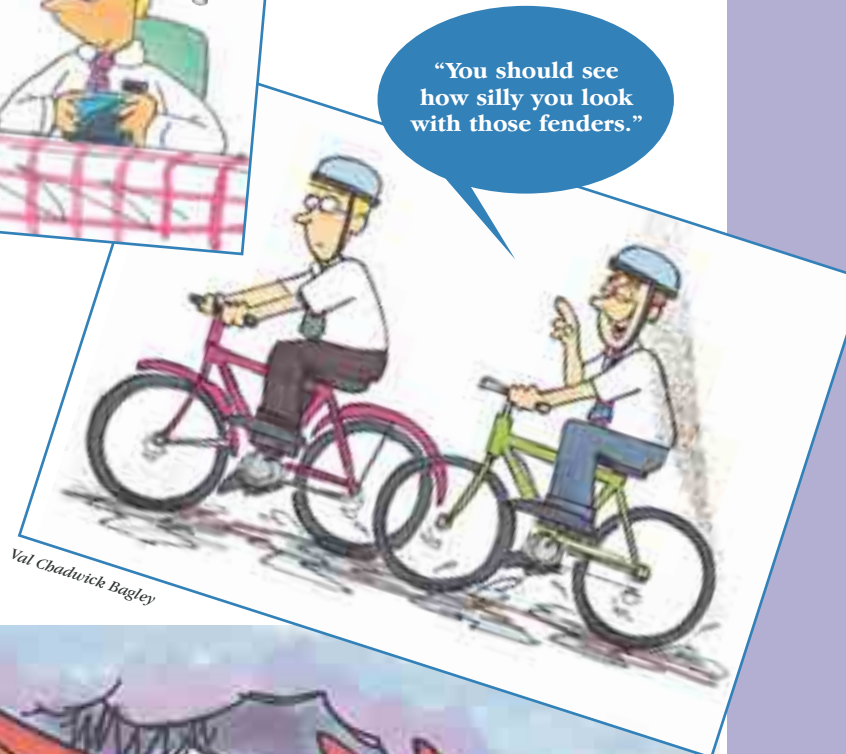
THE EXTRA SMILE



Ryan Stoker



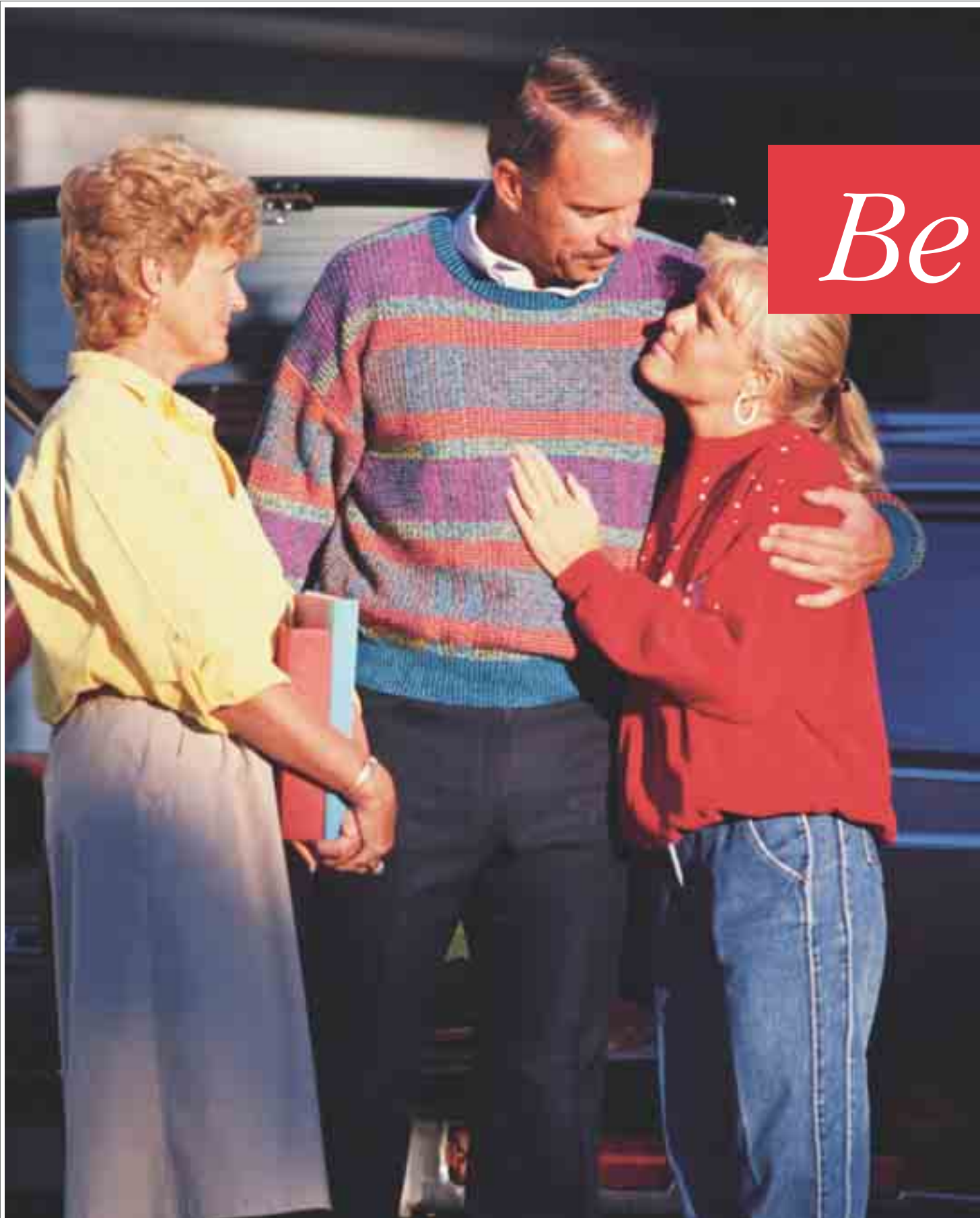
Chris Deaver



Val Chadwick Bagley



Val Chadwick Bagley



Be

GRATEFUL

How have you responded to President Gordon B. Hinckley's six B's? This is the first in a series of articles where Latter-day Saint youth tell of the blessings they've received by putting the prophet's counsel to work.

by Caroline H. Benzley

Being grateful—and showing it—pays big dividends as teens apply a prophet's counsel.

In November 2000, President Gordon B. Hinckley gave a special fireside to the youth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Single youth and young adults between the ages of 12 and 25 were invited to attend. Some gathered in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City where President Hinckley spoke. Others met in stake centers throughout the world. It was an unprecedented event when the youth of the Church had the prophet's attention all to themselves.

Caroline Wright was able to attend the meeting in the Conference Center. "It was so amazing to see all these young people in the right place at the right time doing what was right. You could just feel the Spirit so strong, the strongest I have ever felt it in my life. When President Hinckley walked into the room, you could feel the respect we all have for him, and the love that I felt he had for us and that we had for him."

Similar feelings were experienced wherever young men and women had gathered to listen to the words of their prophet.

"Your lives are filled with difficult

decisions and with dreams and hopes and longings to find that which will bring you peace and happiness," President Hinckley said. He told the youth how they could attain these dreams of peace and happiness.

First it is necessary to overcome the challenges of life. Speaking of our modern-day challenges he said, "Never in the history of mankind has life been filled with so many opportunities and challenges. But of all the challenges that have been faced in the past, the ones we have today, I believe, are the most easily handled. I say that because they are manageable.

They largely involve individual behavioral decisions, but those decisions can be made and followed."

To help us make these decisions President Hinckley presented his list of six B's—*Be grateful, Be smart, Be clean, Be true, Be humble, Be prayerful.*

“Since that talk I have tried hard with a prayer in my heart to reform my life,” Katie Wood wrote. “Being grateful for each day that I live—each breath. Realizing that I am not the perfect person or as nice to others as I could be.”

Katie had the right idea.

“Let a spirit of thanksgiving guide and bless your days and nights,” said President Hinckley. *Be grateful* was the first of his six B’s. He encouraged the youth to incorporate gratitude into their daily lives. “Work at it,” he said. “You will find it will yield wonderful results.”

Walk with gratitude in your hearts

Sometimes it is easy to miss the wonderful blessings that surround us. But as we live with a spirit of thanksgiving we will be able to see how the Lord has blessed us.

“Walk with gratitude in your hearts,” President Hinckley said. “Be thankful for the wonderful blessings which are yours.”

Brittany Winberg, from Idaho Falls, Idaho, followed President Hinckley’s counsel soon after the fireside. She found that living with a spirit of gratitude does in fact yield wonderful results.

“My mother had prepared a special Sunday dinner after the fireside, and I went into the kitchen to help her with the dishes afterward. While in the kitchen I felt a stinging prompting, remembered the prophet’s words about gratitude, and humbly said, ‘Mom, thank you so much for everything; you are the greatest.’ She looked at me and tears welled up in her eyes and she grabbed me in a tight embrace. She then told me how horrible her day was and that I had done exactly what she had been praying for.”

Express appreciation

Just as Brittany had found, saying “thank you” is a wonderful way to express gratitude to those around us. “There are two little words in the English language that mean more than all others,” President Hinckley said. “They are ‘thank you.’”

In this fireside he encouraged the youth to say thank you often.



“Express appreciation to everyone who does a favor or assists you in any way,” President Hinckley said.

Seventeen-year-old Brandon Frampton shared an experience about simply saying thank you.

“At my high school, I usually eat in the cafeteria. Every day I get in line, buy my lunch, eat, and leave. One day I felt impressed to say thank you to the lady who was serving me my lunch. I didn’t think much about it at the time, but later I learned that because of my remark she had a much better day. I still always say thank you, and I have noticed others doing the same now. Everyone can make a difference.”

Let them know you’re grateful

President Hinckley reminded us that saying thank you to parents is also very important. Our parents deserve to hear that we are grateful for them and for their efforts in our behalf. Expressing gratitude will not only help our parents feel appreciated and loved, but also it will increase our love for them. One young woman applied President Hinckley’s advice to her relationship with her mother.

“In my life it is hard for me to understand my mom. Sometimes I don’t feel like she truly loves me. I know she does, but sometimes I do not feel it.

“Well, as I was listening to President Hinckley speak he said, ‘Be grateful.’ It was like he stepped out of the TV, grabbed me by the shoulders, and said, ‘Show your mom you are thankful for her!’ I thought to myself, No we are doing fine. The feeling stayed there, so I got on my knees and cried. I asked for so much strength. I decided I needed to be more humble. I got up my courage and saved my money. Then I bought some flowers and on the card I wrote: ‘You’re the greatest mom in the world. I love you.’

“My mom really is the best. She does everything for me and only wants the best for me, and now I feel like we are real friends. We can talk about most things. It is going to be a long road, but I know that I will make it and all because I was thankful.”

Sixteen-year-old Jacob Maughan found that it just takes a moment of reflection to realize how much our parents do for us.

“After hearing President Hinckley’s talk I realized that my parents have given me all that I now have. I need to thank them daily and love them for what they have done for me. I need to tell them now that I love them. Being grateful means not only being thankful but also being respectful and responsible for the things that I have. It means cleaning up my mess and respecting not only my parents, but all my brothers and sisters. I need to be more grateful for God the Eternal Father and for Jesus and all He has done.”

His outreaching hand

As Jacob mentioned, it is also important to be grateful for our loving Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

“Thank the Almighty for His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who has done for you what none other in all this world could do,” President Hinckley said. “Thank Him for His great example, for His tremendous teachings, for His outreaching hand to lift and help. Think about the meaning of His Atonement.”

When Trace Harding from Spanish Fork, Utah, heard President Hinckley, he decided he wanted to show his gratitude to his Father in Heaven by serving a mission.

“I have been deciding whether or not to go on a mission. When President Hinckley talked about being grateful it changed my outlook on a mission. I feel that I owe two years to the Lord. He has been so kind to offer me many blessings.”

We all have many things to be thankful for. We are a blessed people because we have the knowledge of the true gospel. As we strive to follow President Hinckley’s suggestion to *Be grateful*, our relationships with others, as well as our relationships with our Heavenly Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, will greatly improve. **NE**

Above all, we
need to be
grateful
to the One who is
the source of all
of our blessings
and who gave us
the greatest gift of
all—His beloved
Son, Jesus Christ.



MARCH THROUGH TIME

The month of March has seen some important events in Church history through the years. Here are just a few.

March 26, 1830: The Book of Mormon was first published in Palmyra, New York. Five thousand copies were printed, and the Church was organized shortly afterward on April 6, 1830.

March 27, 1836: The Kirtland Temple, the first temple built in this dispensation, was dedicated after being

under construction for nearly three years.

March 1, 1842: The Articles of Faith were published for the first time in the *Times and Seasons* in Nauvoo, Illinois.

March 17, 1842: The Prophet Joseph Smith organized the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo to look after the poor and the sick.

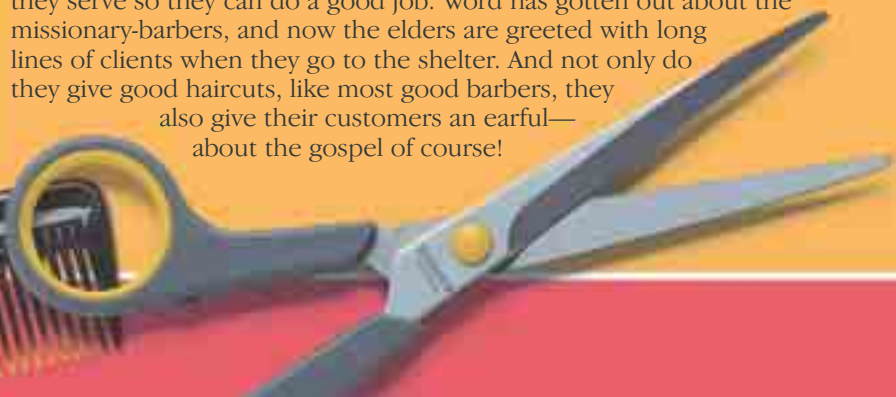
March 12, 1995: President Gordon B. Hinckley was ordained and set apart as the 15th President of the Church.



LESSONS IN SERVICE

Missionaries in El Paso, Texas, know the Spirit can teach you how to do anything—even how to cut hair. The elders wanted to help a local homeless shelter by giving haircuts to the people there, but they didn't know how. A few ward members volunteered to show them the basics and then the elders went to work.

They aren't professionals, but they believe the Spirit guides them as they serve so they can do a good job. Word has gotten out about the missionary-barbers, and now the elders are greeted with long lines of clients when they go to the shelter. And not only do they give good haircuts, like most good barbers, they also give their customers an earful—about the gospel of course!



TEST YOUR LDS I.Q.

- 1** How many hymns are in the current Church hymnal?
 - a. 387
 - b. 341
 - c. 278
 - d. 250
- 2** How many of the hymns in our hymnal were written by Latter-day Saints?
 - a. 223
 - b. 255
 - c. 160
 - d. 131
- 3** Which hymn did President Gordon B. Hinckley write?
 - a. "My Redeemer Lives" (no. 135)
 - b. "On This Day of Joy and Gladness" (no. 64)
 - c. "Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise" (no. 41)
 - d. "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" (no. 19)
- 4** Whom did the Lord call to compile the Church's original hymnal?
 - a. Brigham Young
 - b. Eliza R. Snow
 - c. Emma Smith
 - d. Parley P Pratt
- 5** How many songs are in the *Children's Songbook*?
 - a. 362
 - b. 321
 - c. 299
 - d. 268

Answers: 1. b; 2. c; 3. a; 4. c (see DGC 25); 5. d.

"The Church needs you. President Hinckley cannot walk down the halls of your school and teach your friends, but you can, and the Lord is counting on you" (Ensign, May 2001, 64).

—Carol B. Thomas
First Counselor in the Young Women general presidency



COPYCAT DESIGNERS

Last year, Lyndsey Payzant and her mom, of the Rancho Cucamonga California Stake, searched in vain for a modest dress at a department store near their home in Alta Loma. After being approached by a store manager to see if they were finding what they needed, Lindsey and her mom explained that they were having trouble finding modest clothing in the store.

The store manager was interested in what they had to say and helped set up a meeting with Lyndsey, her mom, and the store's managers and buyers. Having read about some forward-thinking Kansas young women, Lyndsey went to her Young Women group for help on what to propose at the meeting (see *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 28).

The meeting was a success, and Lyndsey was invited to help put on a fashion show of appropriate and modest clothing. Lyndsey got to pick most of the clothes, and she already has plans to meet with the store's designers to have a spring fashion show as well. Strike one up for modesty . . . again!

"WILL A MAN ROB GOD?"

The law of tithing is for the blessing and protection of the Lord's people. It is our honor and privilege to live this great law.

I remember as a youth walking with my mother up the dusty road to the bishop's house in a day when we often paid tithing from our animals and produce. As we walked, I said, "Why do we take the eggs to the bishop?" She answered, "Because they are tithing eggs and the bishop receives the tithing for Heavenly Father." My mother then recounted how each evening when the eggs were brought in, the first one went into a small basket and the next nine

went into a large basket. I first learned the law of tithing from my beloved mother.

To the west of our home was our garden plot. Part of the garden was in potatoes. One day my father said to my sister and me, "There are more potatoes than we can use. If you would like to sell some, you may do so." My sister Alice and I dug some up and hauled them down to a hotel and sold them. When we showed the money to our father, he asked what we were going to do with it. We said we would divide it before buying some things we wanted. Then he questioned, "What about your tithing?" He said, "The Lord has been good to us. We planted and cultivated and harvested, but the earth is the Lord's. He sent the moisture and the sunshine. One-tenth we always give back to the Lord for His part." My father made no requirement; he merely explained it so convincingly that we felt it an honor and privilege to pay tithing.



by President
Spencer W. Kimball
(1895–1985)



It may take great faith to pay tithes when funds are scarce and demands are great. But we remember the promise from the Father to Malachi: "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

In these times of economic concern and worry, we must forcefully remind ourselves that the Lord has given us a spiritual and economic law which, when fully obeyed, will bring promised blessings so great that "there shall not be room enough to receive" them (Mal. 3:10).

Malachi's promise

It has always been impressive to me that of all the teachings from Old Testament prophets that the Lord could have given anew to the Nephites when He visited them, He gave Malachi's stirring promise regarding tithing:

"And these are the words which he did tell unto them, saying: Thus said the Father unto Malachi—. . . Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say: Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

"Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the fields, saith the Lord of Hosts.

"And all nations shall call you blessed" (3 Ne. 24:1, 8–12).

It takes faith

In the latter days the Lord has said that if the Saints keep the commandments and "offer thine oblations" that "the fulness of the earth is yours, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air. . . . Yea, all things which come of the earth . . . are made for the benefit and the use of man" (D&C 59:12, 16, 18).

The prophets of all dispensations have clearly taught the law of tithing for the blessing and protection of the Lord's people. On this subject, we may read the word of the Lord in our dispensation:

"Verily, thus saith the Lord, I require . . . that, those who have thus been tithed shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them forever, for my

holy priesthood, saith the Lord" (D&C 119:1, 4).

The Lord makes clear that tithing is His law and is required of all His followers. It is our honor and privilege, our safety and promise, our great blessing to live this law of God. To fail to meet this obligation in full is to deny ourselves the promises and is to omit a weighty matter. It is a transgression, not an inconsequential oversight.

Yes, it may take great faith to pay tithes when funds are scarce and demands are great. But we remember the promise from the Father to Malachi. We also remember the Lord's promise in our day: "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise" (D&C 82:10).

Where did it come from?

I have related before my experience with a friend who took me to his ranch. He unlocked the door of a large new automobile, slid behind the wheel, and said proudly, "How do you like my new car?" We rode in luxurious comfort to a beautiful new landscaped home, and he said with no little pride, "This is my home."

He drove to a grassy knoll. The sun was setting behind the distant hills. Pointing to the north, he asked, "Do you see that clump of trees yonder?"

With a wide sweeping gesture, he boasted, "From the clump of trees to the lake, to the bluff, and to the ranch buildings and all between—all this is mine. And the dark specks in the meadow—those cattle are also mine."

And then I asked from whom he obtained it. The chain of title of his abstract went back to land grants from governments. His attorney had assured him he had an unencumbered title.

"From whom did the government get it?" I asked. "What was paid for it?" There came into my mind the declaration of the Psalmist, boldly restated by Paul: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (1 Cor. 10:26).

And then I asked, "Did title come from God, Creator of the earth and the owner thereof? Did He get paid? Was it sold or leased or given to you? If a gift, from whom? If a sale, with what exchange or currency? If a lease, do you make proper accounting?"

And then I asked, "What was the price? With what treasures did you buy this farm?"

"Money!"

"Where did you get the money?"

"From my toil, my sweat, my labor, and my strength."

And then I asked, "Where did you get your strength to toil, your power to labor, your glands to sweat?"

He spoke of food.

"Where did the food originate?"

"From sun and atmosphere and soil and water."

"And who brought those elements here?"

I quoted the Psalmist: "Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary" (Ps. 68:9).

"If the land is not yours, then what accounting do you make to your landlord for his bounties? The scripture says: 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's' (Matt. 22:21). What percentage of your increase do you pay Caesar? And what percent to God?"

I said again: "I seem to find no place in holy writ where God has said, 'I give you title to this land unconditionally.'"

"I cannot find such scripture, but I do find this from Psalms: 'Those that wait upon the Lord, . . . shall inherit the earth' (Ps. 37:9).

"It seems more of a lease on which a rental is exacted than of a simple title. This does not seem to convey the earth but only the use and contents which are given to men on condition that they live all of the commandments of God."

But my friend continued to mumble, "Mine—mine," as if to convince himself against the surer knowledge that he was at best a recreant renter.

That was long years ago. I later saw him lying in his death among luxurious furnishings in a palatial home. And I folded his arms upon his breast, and drew down the little curtains over his eyes. I spoke at his funeral, and I followed the cortege from the good piece of earth he had claimed to be his grave.

Later I saw that same estate, yellow in grain, green in lucerne, white in cotton, seemingly unmindful of him who had claimed it.



Windows of heaven

I testify to you that tithing is indeed a great blessing and a law for our benefit. Read the promise that the Lord testified came from the Father—a promise none of us can afford to be without: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

Let this, then, be our watchword: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15).

If we will do so, and keep the commandments with all our heart, the Lord will guide us through troubled times, and we shall gratefully see His help in our behalf, and we will give deep love and appreciation to Him for His many kindnesses and goodnesses. He is our Lord and our Great Strength. If we are worthy, He will be there in our time of need. Of that I have a sure understanding. **NE**

Adapted from an October 1980 general conference address.

The Lord makes clear that tithing is His law and is required of all His followers. To fail to meet this obligation in full is to deny ourselves His promises.

COMING

I had changed a lot in Brazil—from my deep tan to my Brazilian clothes. But the biggest change was one my friend couldn't see right away. And it was major!

by Jessica McAdam

I brought more than souvenirs. My surprise had her laughing and crying at the same time.

Such a long absence seemed impossible now that I was home. Behind me was a year spent in Brazil as an exchange student. And here was Marcia, as pretty, smart, and fun to be with as ever. A year away at college had agreed with her, and I was glad we would have a few weeks together before she returned to BYU.

I had never known a Church member until I met Marcia. She puzzled and fascinated me. With our days full of schoolwork, school plays, and more, I found out she attended a religion class before school each morning. When our group of friends planned Sunday activities, she went to church instead of picnics, shopping, or parties. Despite our differences, our friendship deepened.

Marcia once gave me a Book of Mormon, but after reading only a few pages I returned it. I occasionally went to church with her—more frequently to church dances. I considered Marcia my best friend.

“What do you have in this suitcase?” Marcia grunted as we swung the enormous case onto my bed.

“Brazilian candy and a soda called Guarana. You’ll love it. Also, I brought some goiabada. I want to cook some



Illustrated by Scott Greer

HOME



Brazilian foods.”

“Are you telling me this thing is full of food?”

“Hardly. I’ve got tons of pictures, and some music, and . . .” I snapped the locks up, “presents for my friends!” I flipped the case open and began rummaging for Marcia’s gift.

“Jessica.” Something in Marcia’s voice startled me. Looking up I saw she was holding a Book of Mormon. “Where did you get this?”

I took the book gently from her hand and rubbed my thumb over the gold-embossed title. At the airport Marcia had remarked on the changes she saw in me. I was deeply tanned—a true first for my fair and freckled skin. My hairstyle and clothes had taken on a distinctly Brazilian quality, and I was having trouble completing sentences entirely in English. But the changes she hadn’t yet detected were lasting changes. I’d kept this information close to my heart, waiting for the right moment to share it with her. This was my biggest surprise.

“There’s something I haven’t told you,” I said, tears stinging my eyes. “I was baptized three weeks ago on July 10th.”

I was unprepared for her scream. She fell back on the bed and screamed a second time. She jumped up and, with tears streaming down her face, grabbed me. Hugging, laughing, and crying we spun together in circles.

I was really lost before I found the gospel. In Brazil the legal drinking age is 18. My host family offered me membership to their country club and a nightclub. It sure was exciting. But the

Coming home took on a whole new meaning. I had discovered that I had yet another home, and a Father who really wanted me to come back.

excitement wore off. I got tired of the meaningless social scene and started craving spiritual things.

The only churches I knew of were Catholic, and so I started attending Mass regularly. About two months later a couple of elders showed up at my host home. My host sisters were wild with excitement and dragged me to the front gates so I could talk to another American.

On the day I was supposed to have the first discussion, I got cold feet. I was with a friend and told her I didn't want to go home because some missionaries were coming to see me. She invited me to go

to her house to avoid them, but we needed to go to the post office first. We got our mail and were leaving when the missionaries walked in. That was the day they taught me about the plan of salvation.

In telling Marcia about my conversion, I saw clearly that Heavenly Father had gone to great lengths to give me the gift of His gospel. God really wants us to return to Him. And Heavenly Father had provided opportunities through the missionaries for me to receive the gospel. He really wants us to find our way home to Him. **NE**



Creative ideas for using this issue of the New Era.

Young Men and Young Women Activity Ideas

□ The Q&A question (page 16) this month talks about ways to comfortably share the gospel with friends. Invite the ward mission leader to give a short presentation on how you can be a better member-missionary. Plan to have some free time at the end of the evening to practice his suggestions.

□ With general conference coming up, now's a good time to recap what we learned last conference. Select five or six talks and distribute copies a few weeks in advance of your activity. Have everyone read them. Divide into teams to see who is most familiar with the messages in the talks. Don't forget prizes for the winners. See the Idea List on page 15 for other ideas about preparing for conference.

Personal Improvement

□ "Be Grateful" focuses on the first of President Hinckley's six B's (page 36). Tonight, try saying a prayer of gratitude, one in which you don't ask for anything but simply express your appreciation to Heavenly Father for all He has given you. Read Luke 17:11–19.

□ Are you always ready and willing to participate in family prayer? Make a personal goal to cheerfully come when you're called to pray with your family. Read "Thanks, Candace" on page 32 for inspiration.

Value Project

□ Music can have a great effect on your thoughts and mood. In "Out of This World" on page 26, the author tells how listening to a wonderful song helped her feel encouraged and comforted. Go through your music collection and choose to listen to music that has positive lyrics and uplifting melodies. Report to your parents or Church leaders how choosing this kind of music made you feel.

Family Home Evening Ideas

□ In "They're Not Really Happy" on page 28, Elder Pace gives examples of worldly counterfeits for true happiness. Together as a family, make a list of goals that will bring the family real joy. Then choose one or two of the goals to work on, and outline a plan for how those goals will be achieved. Discuss John 14:27.

Seminary Devotional

□ Bring 10 small pieces of candy or 10 small cookies to class. Ask one person to come forward. Give all 10 of the items to that person. Then ask if you can have one of the items back. Explain that this is all that the Lord asks of us. After He has given us everything, He only asks a tenth be returned. Read an excerpt from President Kimball's article on page 42. You may want to bring additional treats for the whole class to remind them of the sweet blessings of paying tithing.

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Trusting in the Lord

I loved the article "Playing A Different Tune" (Aug. 2001). I thought it was so awesome how Stephen Beus decided to serve a mission even though he has the opportunity to become somebody famous. I think all guys should have that type of attitude. Stephen is an excellent example of this, as he trusts in the Lord to take care of him during and after his mission.

Becca Aisen

Maryville, Tennessee (via e-mail)

A great story

Thank you for printing "A Letter from Brett" in the August 2001 *New Era*. When I read it I just started to cry. Once I was finished reading it, I had my mom read it. And she started crying too. Thank you for printing a great story. It meant a lot to me.

Kassi Jones

Buena Vista, Virginia

In her suitcase

I recently attended a week-long program in my state capital learning about government. I was far away from home and knew no one. I didn't bring my scriptures along, but I did pack my June 2001 *New Era*. I didn't know why at the time, but the magazine became a blessing to me. I read it each night. As I did, the comfort of the Spirit would wash over me. I also was prompted to pray for missionary experiences and had the opportunity to share the gospel with a few people I met. Thank you for publishing such a wonderful magazine. It truly is a blessing in my life.

Clare Plesbek

Gresham, Wisconsin (via e-mail)

Optimism

I want to thank you for your article in the July 2001 *New Era*. "The Spirit of Optimism" brought tears to my eyes because of the trials and tribulations I've had. I had never read this wonderful magazine until now, and I never thought it would give me such a good direction in life. The only reason I read the *New Era* was because one of the sister missionaries gave me the magazine and

"Being young and a Church member is the best thing that can happen to someone."



suggested I read it. I want to thank President Gordon B. Hinckley for his heartfelt words.

Jonathan Miller

Wath upon Dearne, England (via e-mail)

Every day

I think youth is the best time in our lives. Being young and a Church member is the best thing that can happen to someone. Every day I am so thankful I'm a member of this perfect gospel.

Elaine Cristina R. da Rosa

Montenegro, Brazil (via e-mail)

Oceans and mountains

I just wanted to point out that in "Changing Places" (July 2001), the author didn't have to cross any oceans to find a place where, as he put it, "not only would my siblings and I be the only Latter-day Saints in the school, but we would also be among the small group of non-Catholic students." At my public school, my brother and I have this same problem. A lot of my Church friends are also the only members in their schools—or even school districts. I just wanted to make sure you knew that you don't have to cross any ocean to find this problem, just a couple of mountains.

Brynne Hannon

Wexford, Pennsylvania

Better understanding

Thank you so much for making this magazine! Although I have been a member all of my life, it's like I am a new convert. It teaches me so much. Now I have a better understanding of the gospel.

Kezia Carter

Topeka, Kansas (via e-mail)

We love hearing from you. Write us at
New Era

We've Got Mail

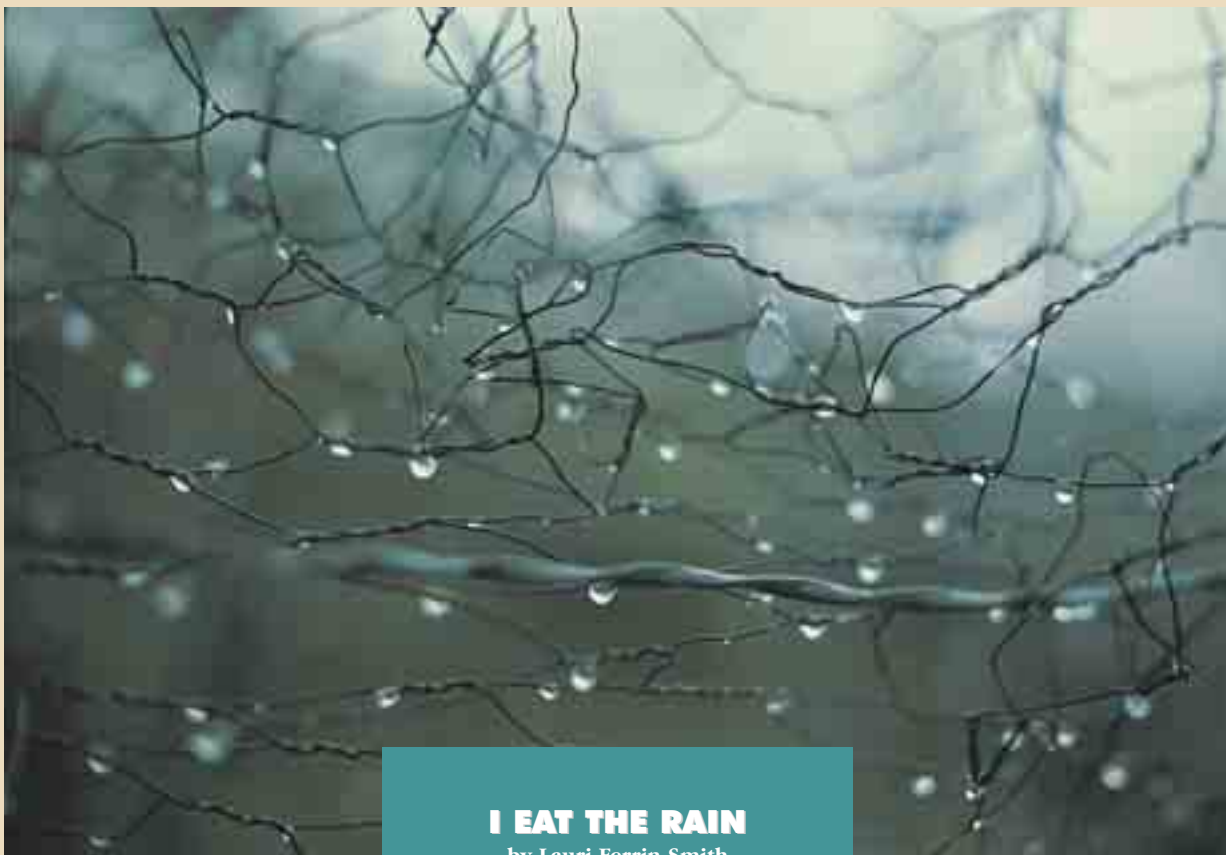
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Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



by Laird Roberts

I EAT THE RAIN

by Lauri Ferrin Smith

I hear the steady drizzle
of rain on my roof
and cannot sleep.
Thinking I will
walk around
and maybe peek out to see
the wondrous flood,
I get up and go
to the window.
The pane is cold against my nose.
Watching, I can almost
feel the cool rain running down
my face.

Suddenly,
imagining is not enough.
I throw open the door,
run out into the wet,
squish the mud between
my toes,
drink in the fresh-washed air,
tip my face up
to the clouds.
And now,
I eat the rain.



***“You have to
make a
statement in
your life. I
think it’s
important for
us, especially
as members
of the
Church . . .
to do
something to
make the
world a better
place.”***

***See “Three
Faces of
Faith,”
p. 20***