

THE
NewFra

MAY

2004

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**The New Era Magazine
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Cover: *Tori Gross sifts
through the remains of
her family's burned
house. See "Out of the
Ashes," p. 20.*

Cover photography:
*LaRene Porter Gaunt
(front) and courtesy of
the California Carlsbad
Mission, LaRene Porter
Gaunt, and Larry Porter
(back)*

Fire destroyed
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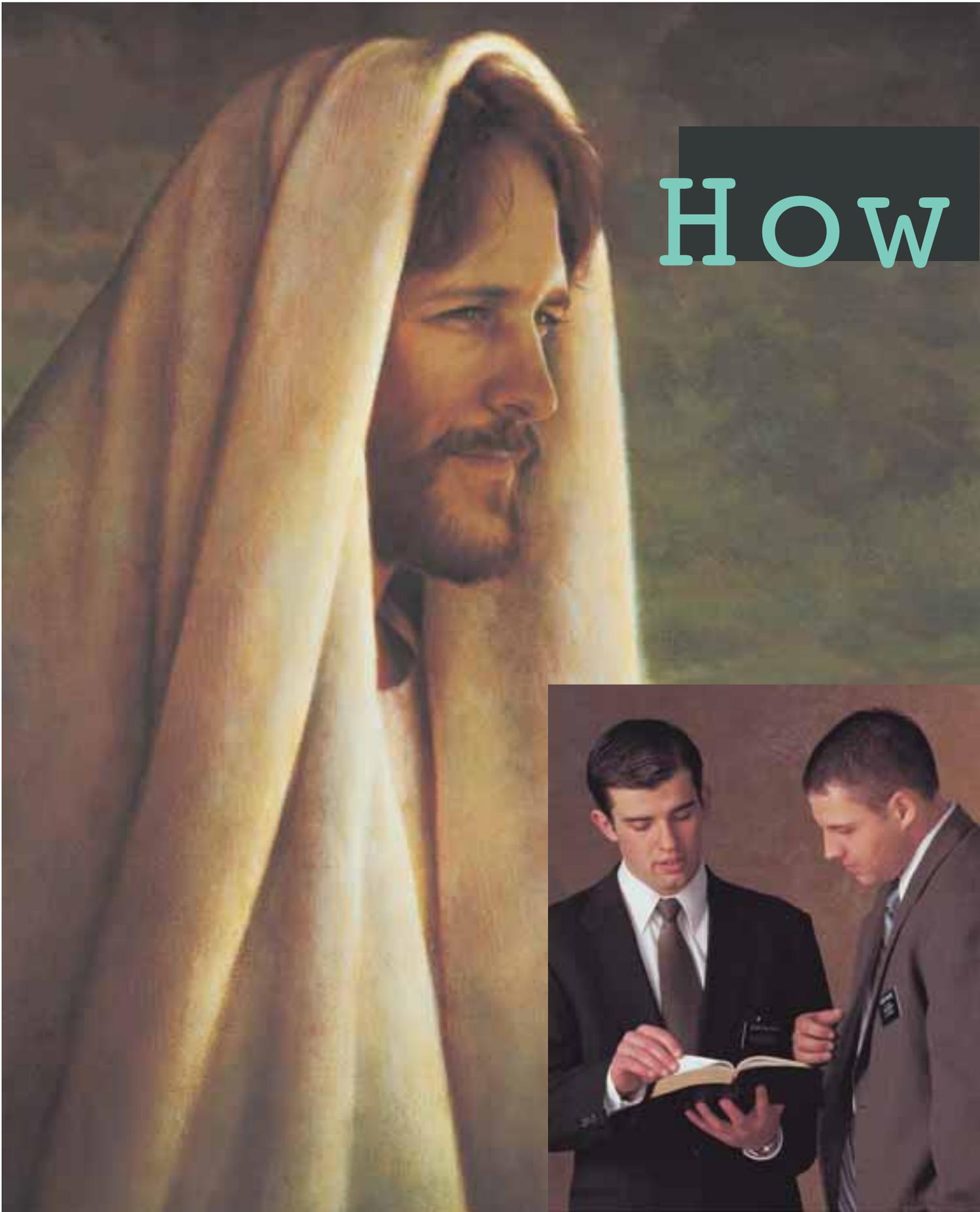
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How



TO KNOW THE TRUTH

BY ELDER HENRY B. EYRING
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

At least one great tool will help you find the truth: the Book of Mormon. Its power stems from one important fact. The Book of Mormon is a testament of Jesus Christ.

Once was the student of a great seminary teacher. He was a part-time seminary teacher who had been a missionary in Czechoslovakia before World War II. He said that they had no missionary lesson plan then. The missionaries wrote their own discussions.

The man who became my seminary teacher and his companion prepared carefully what they would teach each day. Each evening they prepared a first discussion for the next day. On one day, in the morning, they went out tracting. Late in the day, they finally found a woman who reluctantly allowed them into her home.

My future teacher's companion began to present their prepared discussion. The junior companion watched the woman's face

and her eyes. He could sense anger and almost hatred. He became puzzled and then alarmed enough to speak.

He interrupted his companion and said, "Excuse me, I sense . . .," and then described what he felt was her anger and irritation. She said something like this: "Yes, I'm angry. I hate you, and I hate all ministers of religion."

She said that she'd had a child born, and the child had died as an infant. Her priest had told her that the child would go to hell because of not having been baptized. Then she said, "I hate all religion, and I hate you."

The young junior companion said, "We're here to help you." Then he opened the Book of Mormon to Moroni, the eighth chapter, verse 14. He read to her: "He that supposeth that little children need baptism is in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; for he hath neither faith, hope, nor charity; wherefore, should he be cut off while in the thought, he must go down to hell."

The woman was interested.

"For awful is the wickedness to suppose that God saveth one child because of



I promise you that when you ponder and pray about the messages in the Book of Mormon, the Holy Ghost will testify of the Savior.

The Holy Ghost is charged to testify that Jesus is the Christ. That is the reason I can promise missionaries and the people they teach that the Holy Ghost will come to them as they read in the Book of Mormon.

baptism, and the other must perish because he hath no baptism” (Moroni 8:15).

And on to verse 22: “All little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law. For the power of redemption cometh on all them that have no law; wherefore, he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, cannot repent; and unto such baptism availeth nothing.”

When I heard this story more than 50 years ago, I was impressed. Think of the miracles that came to that young missionary! He sensed her heart. He acted on her need. He remembered the message of the scriptures. The Spirit told him which scriptures would help her and where they are in the Book of Mormon. What miracles! If it could happen then, it can happen again, and often.

Inviting the Holy Ghost to Be Your Companion

For missionaries to have the Holy Ghost as a companion, they must find a way to keep the covenant they make every time they take the sacrament. It is that they must always remember Christ and keep His commandments that they might have His Spirit to be with them.

Now I can promise you that if missionaries find a way to think of Him with faith and gratitude, the Holy Ghost will be their companion in a practical and constant way.

There is at least one great tool provided by the Lord that will be a major force in allowing missionaries to have that experience. It is this: the Book of Mormon. That power stems from one important fact. The Book of Mormon is a testament of Jesus Christ.

I have felt the effect that brings. Since I

was very young, I’ve read the Book of Mormon regularly. I have never picked it up and read more than a verse or two when the Holy Ghost did not come again and testify of truth to me.

The Holy Ghost is charged to testify that Jesus is the Christ. That is the reason I can promise missionaries and the people they teach that the Holy Ghost will come to them as they read in the Book of Mormon. It is a witness of Jesus Christ. If they will study with faith, the Holy Ghost will come to them.

Here, then, is a simple summary: the Holy Ghost’s mission is to testify of the Savior. The Book of Mormon is a testament of Jesus Christ. So the Holy Ghost always comes to those who read and ponder the message of the book that Jesus is the Christ.

New, Yet Familiar

Turn to the very beginning of the book, to the title page, written by Moroni. If I were introducing the gospel to someone, I would find a way at least to read these last words written by Moroni: “Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers.”

Now, I realize that we may often be presenting the book to someone who doesn’t believe in God, who knows nothing about Jesus Christ, and who has no religious experience. But read these words: “and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever.”

I promise you that even the most worldly, sinful person that our missionaries will encounter will have had a feeling of being cast off. They may not know that’s what they feel. They may not even recognize what the



Spirit of Christ is. But they will have a feeling of being lost and cast off. Unforgiven sin has that effect. And so they will respond with at least a feeling of hope to the assurance that they are not cast off forever.

“And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God.” Again, you may be going to serve a mission in a place where they hardly know the Savior. They don’t know His name. Saying “*Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God*” alone will bring the Holy Ghost. He will testify, even to someone who does not understand the words.

“Manifesting himself unto all nations—And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found *spotless* at the judgment-seat of Christ” (Book of Mormon title page; emphasis added).

The people our missionaries meet don’t know the doctrine of being cleansed. Some missionaries may not be very clear about the doctrine. But when they read the Book of Mormon carefully, time and time again, they will have the Holy Ghost tell them things are true which are new to them and yet will not seem new, but rather familiar.

A Witness of Jesus Christ

Read from the introduction of the Book of Mormon. The introduction was written by members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and was issued by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. It says the Holy Ghost will confirm that the Book of Mormon is of divine origin, and then it promises: “Those who gain this divine witness from the Holy Spirit will also come to know by the same power that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, that Joseph Smith is his revelator and prophet in these last days, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s kingdom once again established on the earth, preparatory to the second coming of the Messiah.”

Count how many times the Savior is mentioned in that passage, and then you’ll know exactly why—even to someone to whom the words will be strange—there will be a

testimony of the Holy Ghost come to them that there is truth in the book and in the Church and in what the missionaries teach.

Moroni's Promise

Read more of the 10th chapter in the book of Moroni. Missionaries may miss understanding what the promise is. And they may not know how to tell the people what the promise is.

I had always thought that the promise was about the Book of Mormon, as a book. But it is far more than about the book. It is about the message of the book. Listen carefully to these words from Moroni:

“I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

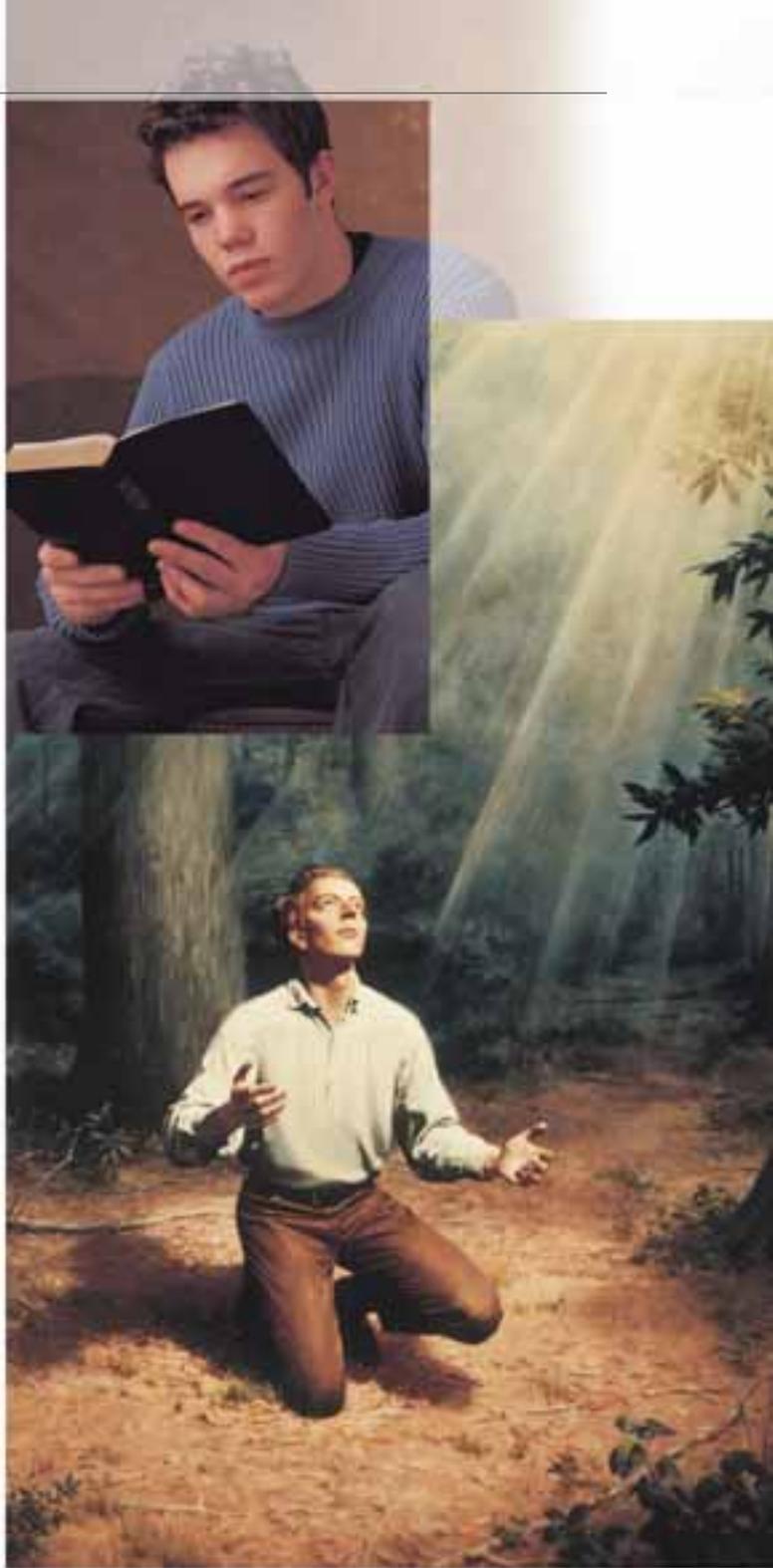
“And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

“And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:3–5).

It is a promise that you would have all truth manifest to you by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Moroni goes on: “Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

“And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father



unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.

“And now I bid unto all, farewell. I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, until my spirit and body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead. Amen” (Moroni 10:32–34).

The truth confirmed to me, as I read that, was to see a picture of the future, of the day I meet my judgment. I see myself coming before the Savior. I have been called as His witness. I have tried as best as I could so far to be His faithful disciple. I imagine Him calling my name and then taking me to the Father and saying words I long to hear: "He is mine. He is mine. He has been faithful."

For me that happy picture comes when I read that verse. It is the Holy Ghost telling me that the Savior is real, that He lives, and that I will come before Him to be judged. For someone else it might be another verse, and the Spirit might convey something else. The Holy Ghost will teach each of us in individual ways. But I promise you that when you ponder and pray about the messages in the Book of Mormon, the Holy Ghost will testify of the Savior, you will remember Him, and the Holy Ghost can in time become your companion. It will bring truth to your remembrance. If you are a missionary teaching the gospel, it will reveal the hearts of people to you.

The Power of the Book of Mormon

Any time truth is confirmed to you by the Holy Ghost, there comes with it some obligation to obey. If I know the Book of Mormon is the word of God, if I know Joseph was a prophet, I must be baptized. I will know that by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost will confirm to you truth, and with it, always, if you ask for it, an obligation of what you should do.

It's not the book alone. It is its testimony of Jesus Christ that the Holy Ghost comes and confirms. I testify to you in the name of Jesus Christ that is true.

Some missionaries may wonder whether they are in the right place, in the right mission. It is no accident for them to be where they are assigned. The Lord knows the missionaries. He knows their mission presidents. I think He knows who their companions will be. I don't know the detail to which He knows the future, but my impression is He knows a great deal. He calls missionaries to the places they are assigned. So, even when it's difficult, you can have confidence that the Lord knew the difficulty in advance, and just as He assured Nephi that He wouldn't give a commandment save He prepared a way for it to be accomplished, missionaries can have that same assurance, tough as it may be, whatever the situation, that the Lord knew the difficulties would be there. He has prepared a way. Have faith. Go forward.

One of His preparations is the Book of Mormon. I am grateful for the Book of Mormon. I am convinced that I have survived as well as I have survived to this day and been blessed beyond my fondest expectations by having received the Book of Mormon. I am so grateful that early in my life I began to read it every day—and every day had the Holy Ghost come and confirm that it was true, not just the book, but the message, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph was His prophet, and that this is His Church.

Which testimony I leave with you as a witness. He lives. He will send the Holy Ghost to all those who always remember Him and remember Him for who He was, which is better described in the Book of Mormon than anywhere else in scripture. **NE**

From a talk given to new mission presidents on 25 June 2003.

Any time truth is confirmed to you by the Holy Ghost, there comes with it some obligation to obey. If I know the Book of Mormon is the word of God, if I know Joseph Smith was a prophet, I must be baptized. I will know that by the Holy Ghost.



YOUNG MEN OF ZION

With conviction ♩ = 100–116

Commissioned for the 175th anniversary of the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood, May 15, 2004

1. Young men of Zi - on, all who bear The priest-hood Aa - ron bore, Who watch and teach, ex -
 men of Zi - on, let us do Our du - ty to our God And mag - ni - fy our
 men of Zi - on, let us live That we may soon ob - tain The priest - hood of Mel-

pound, ex - hort As an - cients did — be - fore. Re - mem - ber John the Bap - tist Who con -
 call - ings as We walk where Christ — has trod; Ad - min - is - t'ring the sa - cra - ment And
 chiz - e - dek And tem - ple bless - ings gain. We'll go and teach the na - tions all, En -

ferred this pow'r of old; Let us pre - pare the way of Christ As he did, strong — and
 min - is - t'ring with love, We bap - tize to un - lock the gate That leads to heav - en a -
 dowed with heav'n - ly pow'r, And lead our fam - lies un - to Christ As watch - men on — the

bold.
 O be strong in the Lord, In the pow - er of his might, Then come, put on his
 towe'r!

ar - mor And stand up for — the right. For — we bear his priest - hood And he gives our

call; With faith in his pow - er, We give the Lord our all! 2. Young
 all! 3. Young all!

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Happiness EVERY WEEK

BY ELDER JOHN W. YARDLEY

Area Authority Seventy
Utah South Area



Since attending sacrament meeting to participate in the sacrament is so important, how can you be prepared for this sacred ordinance?

On a typical Sunday morning, you may find yourself hurrying to get ready for church, trying to decide what to wear, and feeling worn out and tired from a busy and late Saturday night.

Sometimes you may even wonder if you want to attend church at all. On such mornings, perhaps it would be wise to consider several important questions.

First, why should I go to sacrament meeting? The answer is simply that it is a commandment. In the Doctrine and Covenants we learn that “it is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of the bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus” (D&C 20:75). Of course, the bread and wine refer symbolically to when the Savior instituted the sacrament with His Apostles while He was on the earth. Modern revelation allows us to partake of bread and water (see D&C 27:2 and the introduction to Section 27).

Our primary purpose in attending sacrament meeting is to partake of the sacrament. We certainly can and should enjoy our fellowship with other Church members, but that is not the central role of sacrament meeting in the lives of Latter-day Saints.

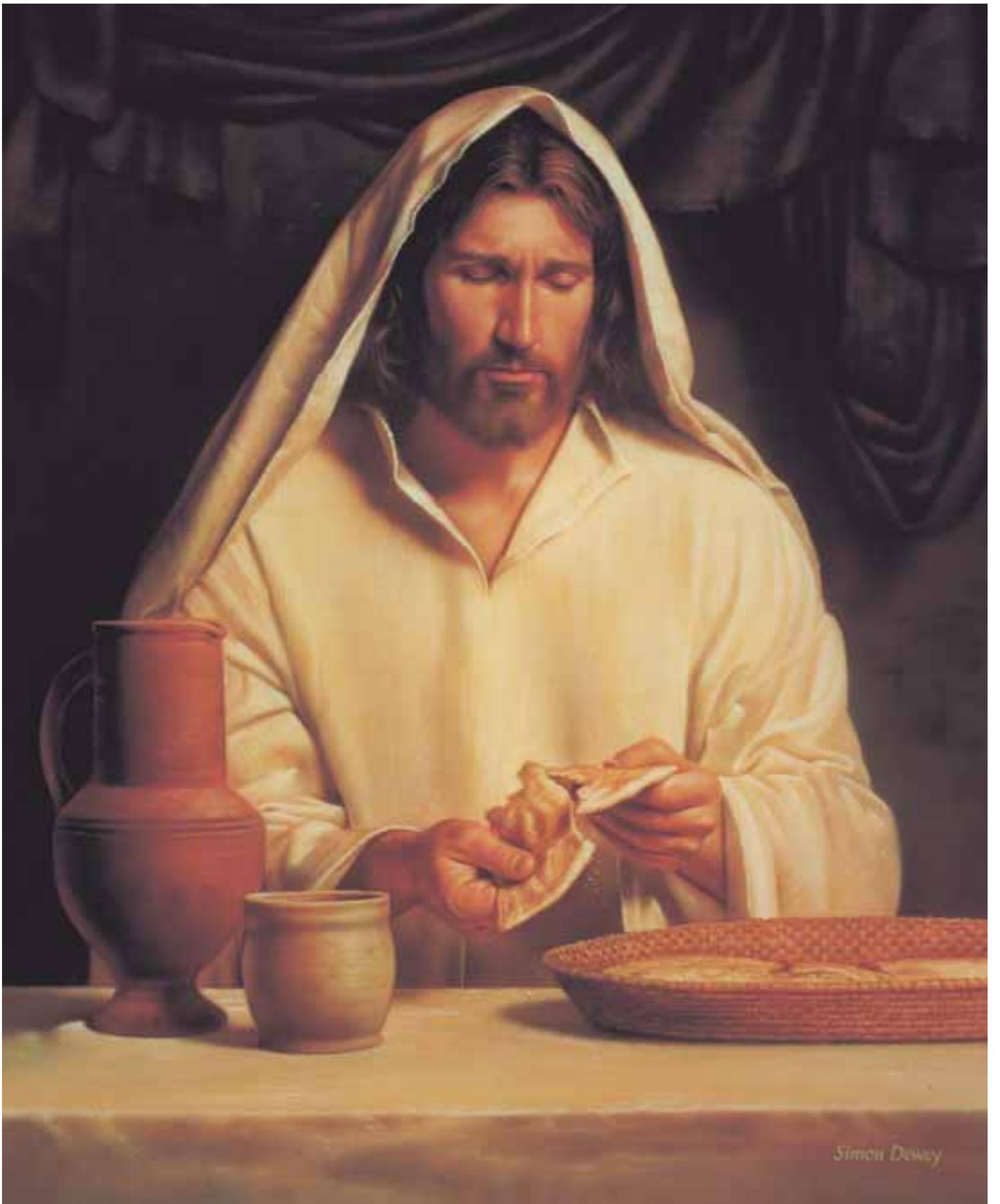
Getting Ready

Since attending sacrament meeting to participate in the sacrament is so important, how can you be prepared for this sacred ordinance?

To dash in to the meeting at the last minute or even after the sacrament has been passed defeats the purpose of being there. If you were playing in a ball game or going to a special dance, would you go to the event after it started? Would you expect the coach to put you into a game if you missed the first quarter? Would you wear a basketball uniform to a football game?

Naturally, the answer to these questions is a resounding “No way!” Why then would we not be on time to participate in something the Lord has commanded? Why would we not dress appropriately to be in tune with what He wants us to do? The sacrament has eternal significance. Ball games and dances come and go. They mean so much at the time, but in the long run, they just become part of our memories.

Here is a suggestion. If your meeting schedule allows it, plan to be at least 10 minutes early for sacrament meeting. This is the same counsel your priesthood leaders are given. Encourage family members to be



Simon Dewey



ready to go with you. Find a place to sit together. Dress in neat and clean clothes, your Sunday best. Next, listen quietly and thoughtfully to the prelude music. President Boyd K. Packer has said that music invites reverence, and reverence invites revelation.¹ In this process you become ready to listen to the Spirit and to hear with spiritual ears and see with spiritual eyes the things the Lord would want you to see and hear. Now you are ready to spiritually participate in sacrament meeting and partake of the Lord's sacrament.

Partaking of the Sacrament

Why do we partake of the sacrament?

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught

that the sacrament bears record of the Savior's atoning sacrifice. We partake "in remembrance of this great act of infinite love. . . . Those who profess his name show their *gratitude* . . . by observing this holy ordinance."² We come to understand that participating in the sacrament is just as important as any other ordinance, such as baptism or receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. Taking the sacrament also teaches us to be even more grateful for what the Savior has done.

We are under covenant or promise with the Lord as we partake of His holy sacrament. We promise to remember His flesh and blood, as He willingly gave His life for each one of us. Next, we take upon ourselves His name and promise to remember Him. Finally, we promise to keep

the commandments of God.

In turn, our Savior promises us that we shall have His Spirit to be with us and that we have the promise of eternal life, if we will only remain worthy. These are truly remarkable promises. Is it any wonder then that we should “search diligently in the light of Christ” and “lay hold upon every good thing” (Moroni 7:19) so we might truly become children of Christ? We are not His children in a physical sense, but in a pure and wholesome I-want-to-be-like-Him sense of following His example (see Mosiah 5:7; D&C 25:1).

We made covenants when we were baptized. We renew those covenants each week as we take the sacrament and remember our Savior. We literally can “have his Spirit to be with [us]” (D&C 20:77). This Spirit guides us in our daily living. It helps us make critical decisions and right choices.

Sometimes young people choose not to partake of the bread and water. Some think they are being cool or smug or do not feel like they have to conform. Truthfully, it is a show of immaturity or rebellion. The only time we do not partake of the sacrament is when we are unworthy. If you are unworthy, go and see your bishop. He will give you guidelines and counsel that will help make you worthy.

You need to take the sacrament every week. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) has told us: “Worthy partakers of the sacrament put themselves in perfect harmony with the Lord.”³

Do not slip into the habit of letting the sacrament trays pass by without tasting of the bread and lifting the cup of water to your lips. It may seem like a small thing to you, but it really does matter. You need His Spirit. You need to be in harmony with Him.

Harmony means “in tune.” Participate as you know you should.

Failure to attend meetings to partake of the sacrament may lead to serious problems. Paul explained to the Corinthians that many members were weak and sickly in spirit and body because they failed to show their love for the Lord Jesus Christ in keeping this commandment (see 1 Corinthians 11:20–34). Physical and spiritual blessings come from participating in the emblems of the sacrament.

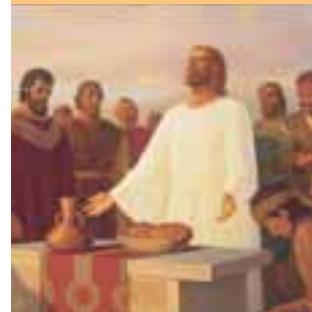
Jesus Christ came into the world to “redeem his people” (Alma 11:40). The path “is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course” for those who truly want to be His. It is not a complicated path, as He points the way. He is “the keeper of the gate.” He is the “Holy One of Israel” (2 Nephi 9:41).

You are of divine origin. As you make your way back to God’s presence, by following His uniquely perfect yet simple plan, you can be very happy.

This happiness can be found every week as you remember the Savior by partaking of the sacrament. He can divinely guide your life, if you will just let Him. As you attend your meetings and renew your covenants with Him every Sunday, you will find the inner peace and contentment that is missing for most of those in the world today. Sadly, many do not know where to find that peace, but you do. You will find answers to many questions about life as you ponder and take seriously your worship in regards to the sacrament. **NE**

NOTES

1. See “Reverence Invites Revelation,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 21.
2. *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 2:339.
3. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 660.



“It is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of the bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus” (D&C 20:75).

Q & A

“I play football and know that some of the other players take supplements to enhance their performance. I feel like I can’t compete unless I do too. Is it bad to take supplements?”

NEW ERA

Supplements like anabolic steroids or other human growth hormones are banned by various organizations for good reasons. Not only is taking them a form of cheating, but they’re also a serious risk to your health. Some athletes turn to dietary supplements instead, thinking they must be safe because they are “natural.”

But just because a supplement isn’t banned doesn’t mean it isn’t dangerous. Many legal supplements sold off the shelf or over the counter at your local supermarket or health food store can still damage your body. Some supplements can even kill you.

Ephedrine (or ephedra, ma huang, or epitonin), a key ingredient in a number of supplements, was recently banned in the United States because of health risks such as high blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, nerve damage, seizures, heart attack, stroke, or death.¹ Creatine, another widely used

Even a legal supplement can be harmful to your body.

Never take a dietary supplement without carefully studying its ingredients and their potential side effects and checking with your doctor.

Getting a temporary edge in athletics isn’t worth risking your physical or spiritual health.

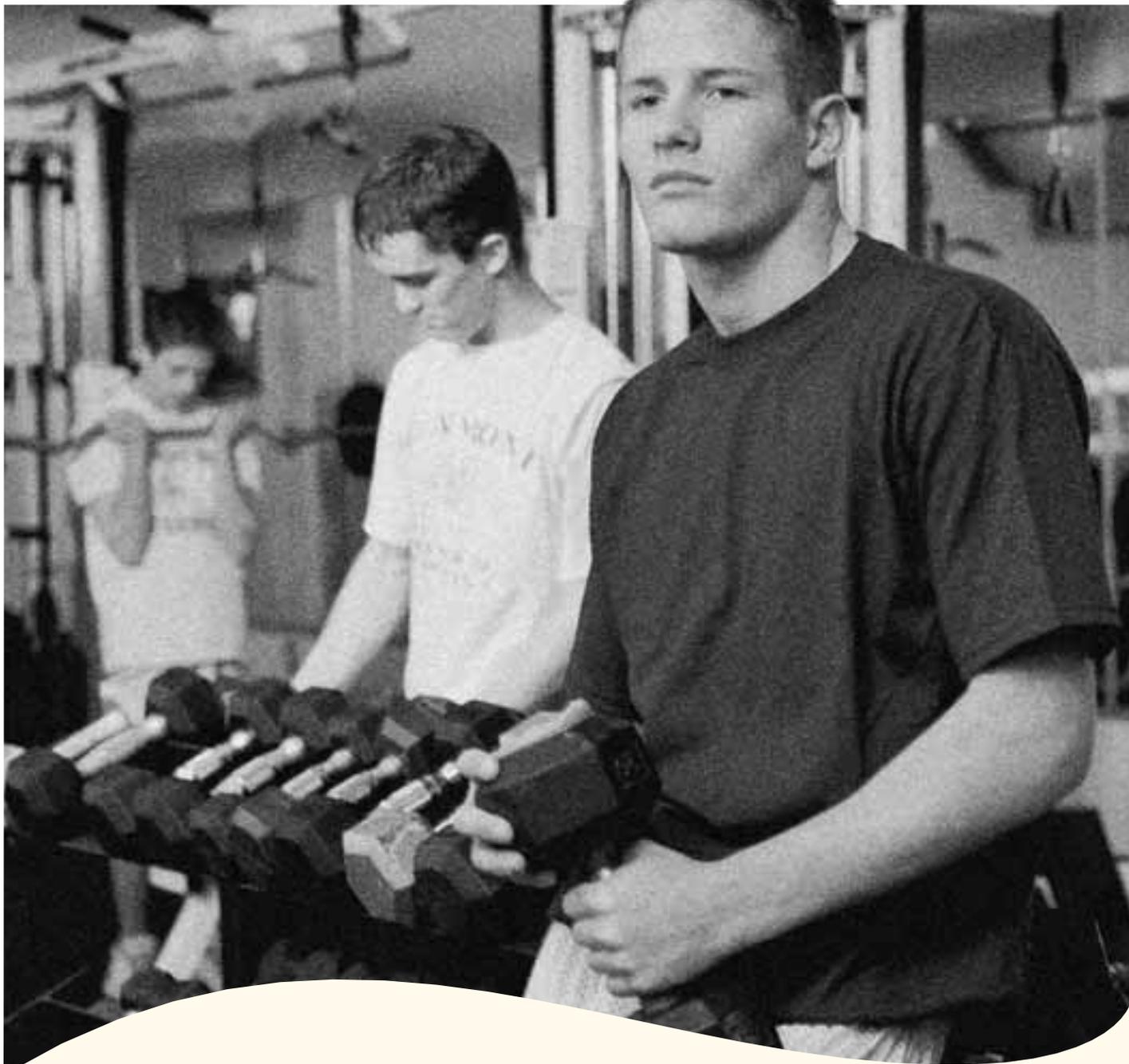
The Lord promises physical and spiritual strength to those who keep the Word of Wisdom and do all they can to care for their bodies.

The Lord will bless those who make sacrifices to keep His commandments. That’s the best way to succeed.

ingredient, can cause dehydration, cramping, and diarrhea if doses are not carefully monitored.² Creatine’s long-term effects are still being studied, but it may damage the kidneys, according to a number of reports.³

Unfortunately, most youth, and even a lot of coaches, don’t know that the supplements they take might be harmful. Nutritional supplements are only loosely regulated in the United States by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), so many supplements have never been objectively tested for harmful side effects or interactions with drugs.⁴ If you’re considering taking a supplement, check with your doctor.

On top of exercise and training, the best and safest way to enhance your performance is to rely on the promises of the Lord, who says that those who take care of their bodies by obeying the Word of Wisdom will “run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint” (D&C 89:20).



Are supplements against the Word of Wisdom? Section 89 doesn't mention them by name, but if something is harmful to the body Heavenly Father created for you, you shouldn't use it, eat it, drink it, touch it, or do it—not just because of the physical risk, but because the Spirit will not dwell in unclean temples. And without the Spirit, we will be like the Nephites who, in their wickedness, became “weak, like unto their brethren, the

Lamanites, and . . . the Spirit of the Lord did no more preserve them; yea, it had withdrawn from them because the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples” (Helaman 4:24).

The good news is you *can* compete with those using supplements by working hard to build your body *and* your faith. And by keeping the commandments and striving to keep your physical temple clean and healthy, you are inviting the Spirit. **NE**

READERS



A lot of my football teammates took supplements, but rather than take them, I pushed myself to work harder and was named

the best wide receiver in my state high school classification.

Elder J.D. Horlacher, 20, South Dakota Rapid City Mission



Many become restless when involved in competitive sports. We want to be bigger, faster, and stronger. Unfortunately, this compels many to take harmful supplements into their bodies. Our bodies are temples, literally gifts from our Heavenly Father. Don't allow any questionable substance to enter. The Lord will bless us for our obedience and dedication.

Elder Brandon Rammell, 20,
North Carolina Raleigh Mission

A healthy, working body usually keeps itself in check and runs flawlessly as long as we take care of it. It doesn't need supplements to improve athleticism. The best thing is to follow the Word of Wisdom, exercise, eat a properly balanced diet, and get plenty of rest. Treat your body as the temple it is, then we'll see who feels like they have to "keep up."

Kate Watkins, 19, Arcadia Ward,
Scottsdale Arizona Camelback Stake



If you follow the counsel of the Word of Wisdom you can have the strength you need, but it will be because of your faith in Heavenly Father.

Mekenzie Burton, 14, Oquirrh Third Ward,
West Jordan Utah Oquirrh Stake

My friend started on the varsity team as a junior because he went to the weight room or the track every day after school to work out. He has never taken any supplements.

Garrett Strong, 17, Northridge 14th Ward,
Orem Utah Northridge Stake



Everything your friends do isn't always the right way to go. You can complete all your goals without supplements. Pray to Heavenly Father that He will help you in your performance.

Jaycee McCain, 14, Jackson Branch, Columbus Ohio Stake



There are many habit-forming, addictive things that one can drink or chew or inhale or inject which injure both body and spirit which are not mentioned in [the Word of Wisdom].”

—President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Word of Wisdom: The Principle and the Promises,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 17.



This question caught my eye because I am a nutrition major at BYU. All supplements have side effects, and most supplements don't even improve performance. Any

possible short-term benefit could never be worth the expense of long-term health damage. The Lord understands how the body works and has told us through the Word of Wisdom how to fuel it to receive maximum performance. We are blessed by following the Lord's commandments.

Sister Holly Judkins, 21, Oklahoma Oklahoma City Mission

New Era and reader responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

NOTES

1. “FDA Consumer: Supplements Associated with Illnesses and Injuries,” Internet, <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fdsupph.html>.
2. “Young Athletes Try Creatine,” *New York Times*, 10 Dec. 2000.
3. G. Benzi, A. Ceci, “Creatine as nutritional supplementation and medicinal product,” *Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness* (Mar. 2001), 41 (1):1–10.
J.R. Poortmans, M. Francaux, “Adverse effects of creatine supplementation: fact or fiction?” *Sports Medicine* (Sept. 2000), 30 (3):155–170.
J.E. Bailes, R.C. Cantu, A.L. Day, “The neurosurgeon in sport: awareness of the risks of heatstroke and dietary supplements,” *Neurosurgery* (Aug. 2002), 51 (2):283–288.
4. Paula Kurtzweil, “FDA Consumer: An FDA Guide to Dietary Supplements,” Internet, <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fdsupph.html>.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send your answer to the question below, along with your name, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and a photograph to:

Q&A, New Era

50 East North Temple Street, Floor 24

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail:

cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by 15 June 2004.

QUESTION

“What do we mean when we say this is the only true Church?”

NEED TO TALK?



**PRAYER IS YOUR DIRECT LINE TO HEAVENLY FATHER.
WITH HIS PLAN YOU HAVE UNLIMITED MINUTES, NO ROAMING CHARGES, AND
YOU'LL NEVER GET A BUSY SIGNAL. USE IT ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.
(See Psalm 55:16–17.)**

OUT OF THE Ashes

B

*In a crisis, the gospel brings you through.
Latter-day Saint youth
in southern California tell how.*



Just after 2:00 a.m. on October 26, 2003, Daniel Olsen, 17, hears his mother telling him that a wildfire is less than a mile away. "I jumped out of bed, but the

power was out, so I couldn't find my shoes," he remembers. "My younger sister, Kelli, yelled, 'What good are shoes if you're dead?'" He grabbed his gym bag and ran out of the house barefoot.

Outside, Daniel can smell the smoke, see the oak trees silhouetted against the orange sky, and feel the ash in 50-mile-per-hour (80-km-hr.) winds swirling around him. "We started driving down Wildcat Canyon and said a prayer," he says. "My mom honked the horn to wake others. I sang, 'We are the armies of Helaman'¹ as loud as I could. It made me feel better."

A few hours later, the fire is burning 12,000 acres (4,800 ha) an hour, creating its own weather system of wind and fire tornados. The 150-foot-high (46 m) flames consume the dry brush and trees as the fire climbs uphill to 12-year-old Matthew Porter's home. He and his family had left earlier.



The flames roll in the wind against the wooden eaves of the roof until they take hold. Soon the ceiling collapses into the house.

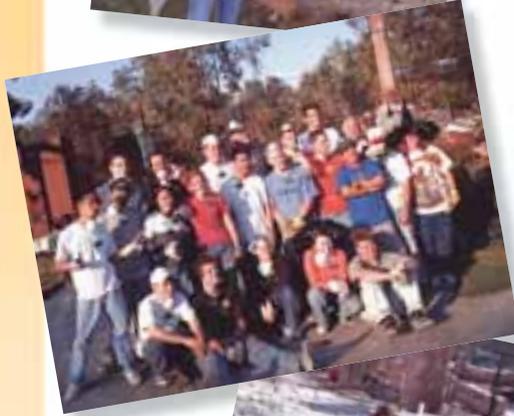
The curtains, bedding, furniture, piano, and books burn. The walls fall inward. The metal garage door sags, and the tires on an ATV melt. Amid the inferno, a wrench hangs on the fire hydrant at the end of the driveway, unused.

Daniel's and Matthew's houses were among the 2,232 lost during 11 days as this fire, named the Cedar Fire, burned more than 280,000 acres (113,300 ha)

Daniel Olsen (top), Matthew Porter (center), and Megan and Joe Tidwell (bottom) all lost their homes on Sunday, October 26, 2003, as strong winds propelled the huge flames (opposite page) of the Cedar Fire forward. Matthew and his mother (top) look at the fire before evacuating.



Missionaries and San Diego youth (right) worked long hours to clean up after the fires. The fire destroyed the Gross's house (below).



and killed 14 people, most of whom died in Wildcat Canyon. Twelve other fires were burning at this time in southern California, forcing more than 100,000 people to evacuate.

Feeling Closer to the Lord

Daniel and Matthew, like other LDS youth affected by the fires, are emerging stronger as they learn that the gospel eases suffering during a crisis.

“Our relationship with the Savior survives everything,” says Daniel, who found comfort in the words “He that is righteous shall be righteous still; he that is happy shall be happy still” (Mormon 9:14).

“When you realize your home is gone, it’s overwhelming,” says Matthew. “You don’t think you can do it, but you do it anyway.”

Joe Tidwell, 16, is in the same ward as Matthew. “Our family decided on the day after we lost our house to focus on the good,” Joe says. “We’ve tried to do that every day since.”

A week later the fire was still burning when Latter-day Saints gathered to hear President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, speak. He pronounced an apostolic blessing upon them. After the meeting, he shook hands with every person, including 16-year-old Tori Gross.



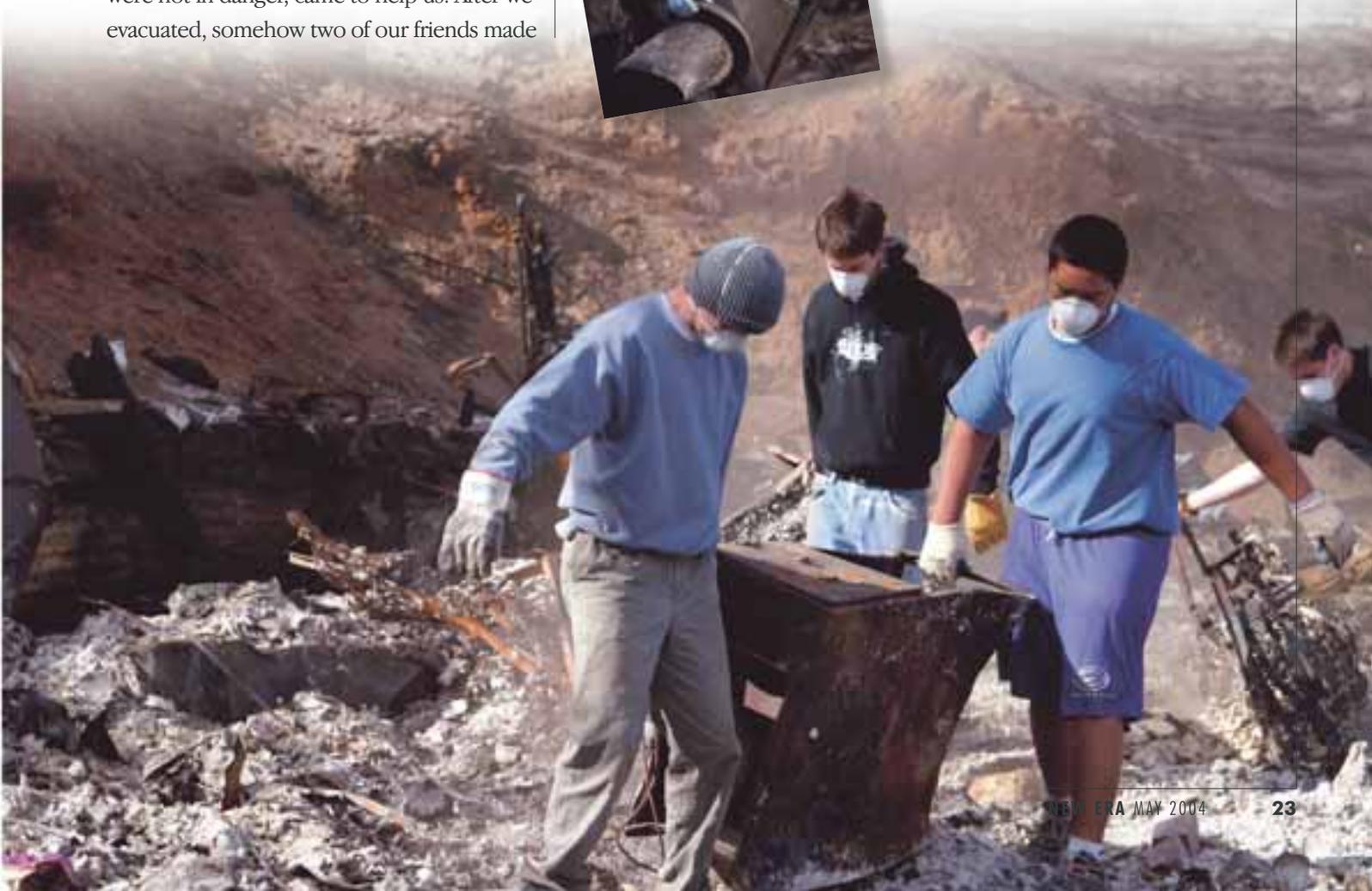
“President Packer reminded us that we lost our houses, not our homes,” Tori says. “When a boy at school said he was homeless, I said, ‘You’re not homeless, you’re houseless.’ Our house burned to the ground and so did part of the new house we are building. But our family survived. Since the fire, I feel closer to Heavenly Father, and I rely on the gospel more.”

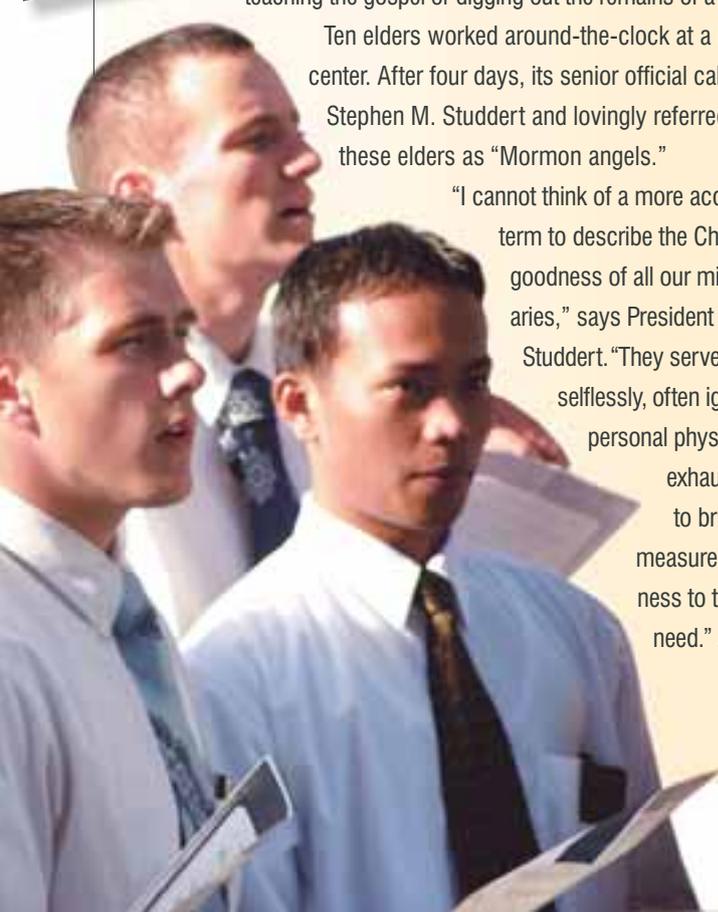
Elsie Smith, 17, whose house didn’t burn, spent nearly every Saturday for several months helping clean up sites where houses were burned. “Kids from other stakes came every week to help,” she says. “Only 2 of the more than 600 homes that burned in our ward area belonged to members, but we helped everyone.”

A. J. Schumann, 17, spent six hours helping his dad and neighbors clear a 30-yard firebreak in an effort to save his and other houses. “It’s amazing to see how people rally together in a crisis,” he says. “Ward members, whose homes were not in danger, came to help us. After we evacuated, somehow two of our friends made



Melinda Smith (left, top) helped evacuate horses as the fire moved toward her home. A. J. Schumann and Elsie Smith (left) worked nearly every Saturday for months with youth from other San Diego stakes (below).





AN ARMY OF MISSIONARIES

About 180 missionaries in the California Carlsbad Mission divided their time between proselyting and helping fire victims. For a month they shoveled ash and debris, hefted sandbags, and helped at evacuation centers.

One elder said, “My shoulders are sore, my back hurts, and my fingernails are dirty from dirt and ash, but my heart is full.”

The reputation of the missionaries’ hard work grew. An engineering official, assessing his needs for a sandbagging project, said with a smile, “We’ll need 195 men or 5 Mormon missionaries.”

In one area where more than 300 homes burned, the residents honored the firemen and the missionaries.

One resident said, “These missionaries worked longer and harder than anyone else.” Then the missionaries sang, “Because I Have Been Given Much,” (*Hymns*, no. 219). After the song, the missionaries and residents hugged one another with tears in their eyes.

Said one elder, “We showed others that though we are young, the gospel guides our lives whether we are teaching the gospel or digging out the remains of a home.”

Ten elders worked around-the-clock at a Red Cross evacuation center. After four days, its senior official called mission president Stephen M. Studdert and lovingly referred to these elders as “Mormon angels.”

“I cannot think of a more accurate term to describe the Christlike goodness of all our missionaries,” says President Studdert. “They served selflessly, often ignoring personal physical exhaustion, to bring a measure of gladness to those in need.” **NE**

their way back and hosed down our burning fences. All eight houses survived, but I’ve learned people matter more than things.”

Smoke and ash filled the air, turning the sun red. Parker Boyack, 15, could see the smoke and orange glow in the sky. After seeing on television damage caused by the fire, he wanted to help. The next day he went with his mother to the evacuation center, where hundreds of families had spent the night.

“People were so shocked and scared,” he says. “I took down cots and folded blankets, then I sorted the donated food. I played with the children, fed the birds and cats, and took a big dog to the park to run. I think I made some difference. I knew we should help people, but this changed my life.”

Comfort from the Scriptures

Daniel, Matthew, Tori, Elsie, and A. J. all faced the fire and had moments when they were scared and not sure they were going to make it. Though the outcomes varied, these LDS youth dealt with the challenge in the same way—they drew upon prayer, family, and the scriptures.

Elsie came to the understanding that we all have good and bad things happen to us. “Your

Father which is in heaven,” the Lord taught, “maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45). Elsie says, “It’s how we handle what happens that is important.”

Matthew bears testimony of

PREPAREDNESS TIPS FROM SAN DIEGO TEENS

1. Have cash on hand.
2. Send copies of family pictures to friends.
3. Keep your shoes by the bed.
4. Keep your preparedness kit in your car.
5. Have a plan. Know where you will go if you need to evacuate.
6. Take photos of your home, inside and out.



what is said in D&C 68:6: “Be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you.”

Matthew says, “This experience brought out strength in me. I feel closer to Heavenly Father and have a better understanding of how He works. Even though we felt the Spirit when we prayed together in the garage before we left, our house still burned. I learned Heavenly Father moves in mysterious ways. He loves us. I never doubted that. I don’t blame Him for what happened.”

As these youth learned, no trial is beyond the Lord’s healing touch. The Savior will “bind up the brokenhearted,” give “comfort to all that mourn,” and give us “beauty for ashes” (Isaiah 61:1–3).

Putting the gospel into practice really does work. These LDS youth drew upon their faith in Jesus Christ and came out stronger. We can do the same. **NE**

NOTE

1. See “We’ll Bring the World His Truth,” *Children’s Songbook*, 172–73.



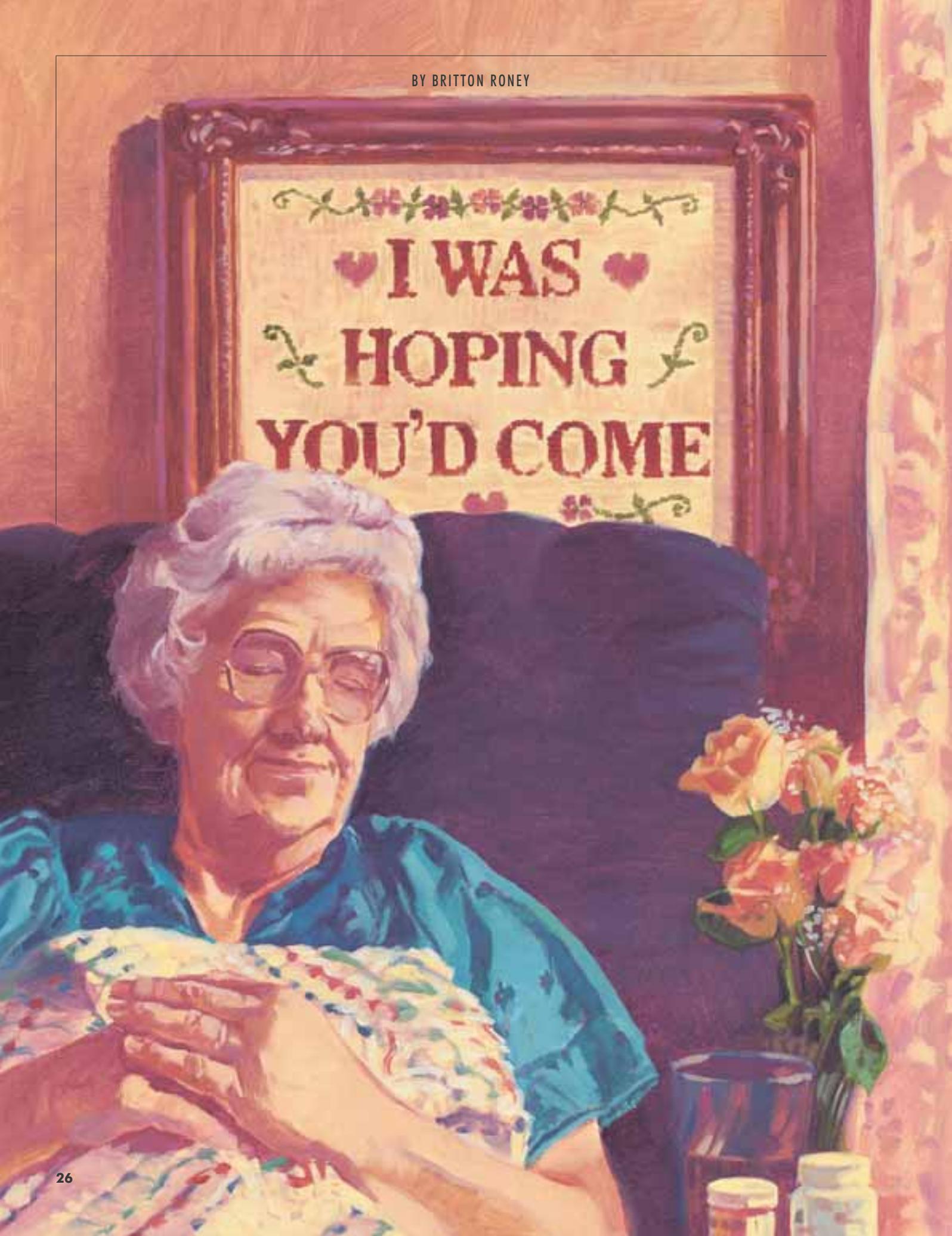
Tori Gross (below) helped with her family’s new home. Parker Boyack

(left) helped at an evacuation center; he also worked with Latter-day Saint youth as members of the community dropped off thousands of Christmas decorations (above) at an LDS stake center. The next day, LDS youth helped fire victims of all faiths gather up decorations for the holidays.

Opposite page: More than 360 homes burned in Scripps Ranch. Residents honored missionaries for their help with the cleanup. New grass was sprouting in Wildcat Canyon, 10 weeks after the fire.



BY BRITTON RONEY



Shaking Sister Turner's hand was like handling a delicate antique. [Names have been changed.] We had come as we did every Sunday.

"My, your hands are like ice!" she exclaimed for the 10th time in 10 visits. I smiled as I set the sacrament bread and water on the bedside table.

"It's a cold walk from the church to here," I explained, sweeping snow off my white shirt for effect.

"Well, where's your jacket then?" came the quavery accusation, to which I could only shrug as usual. The slow rasp of some medical machine was the only sound as my companion priest opened the Doctrine & Covenants to find the sacrament prayers (see D&C 20:77, 79).

I thought back to when, as a new priest, I had been assigned "home sacrament." With some embarrassment, I had had to ask who these homebound members were and where they lived. How long had I lived in this ward? Twelve years without even meeting these members?

After blessing and passing the bread, my companion handed me the open scriptures. Clearing my throat, I read the prayer with what I hoped was a voice powerful enough to match the furrowed concentration on Sister Turner's face.

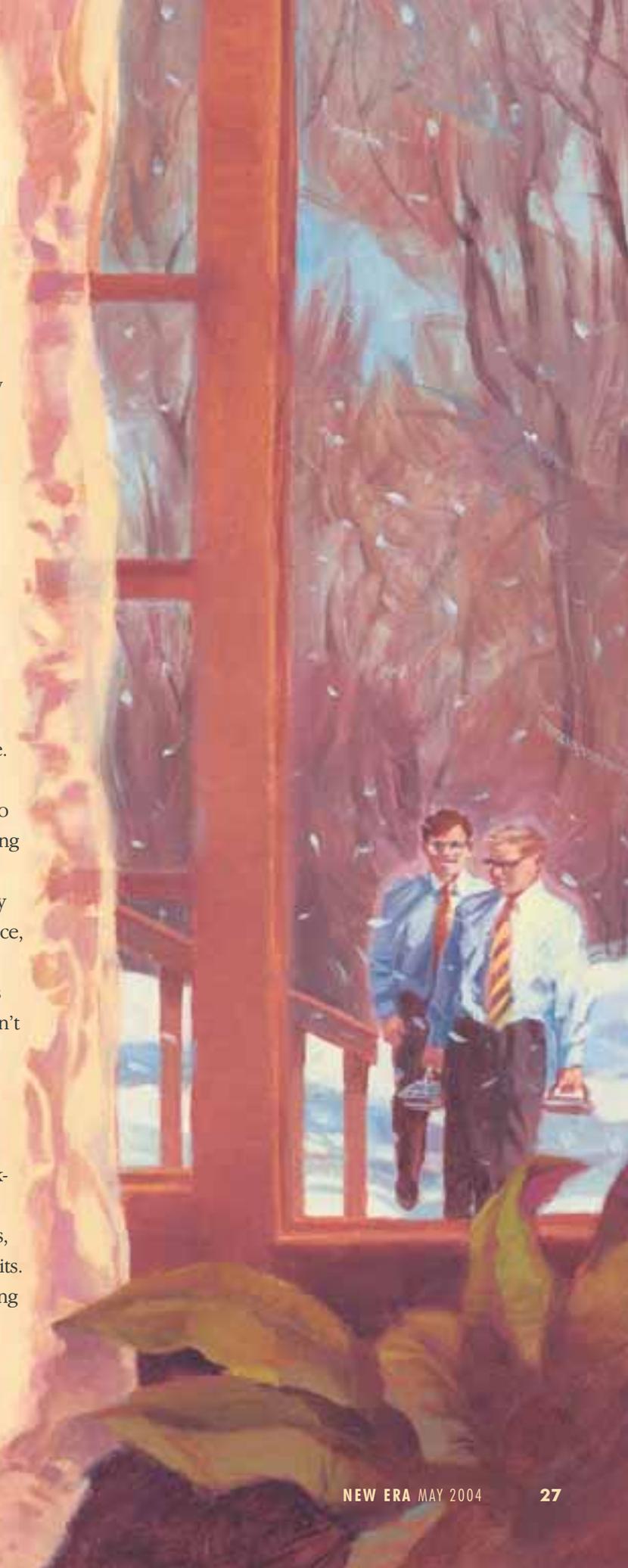
Watching Sister Turner struggle to raise the cup of water to her lips, I ached in sympathy. How did this fragile sister do it? How could she stay so pleasant after suffering immobilizing pain as long as she had? My thoughts turned to the others we would be visiting. Each of them, despite suffering terribly from the effects of sickness or old age, exemplified endurance, compassion, and love. Each of them had a treasure trove of stories, studded with gems of wisdom. But most of them, as the beeping machines attested, had little time left. Why hadn't I discovered these treasured brothers and sisters long ago?

As we rose to leave, Sister Turner predictably joked, "You have to be 102 to get this sort of service." We chuckled and wished her a fond "See you next week," with a silent "we hope." We stepped out into the snow with the fervent thank-you from Sister Turner's daughter still in our ears. We sometimes doubted whether or not Sister Turner remembered us, but we never doubted that she sincerely appreciated our visits.

We knocked at another door. "Come in, boys! I was hoping you would come today!"

I smiled again as I shook the snow out of my hair. "Sister Holt! It's a pleasure to see you!" And it was. **NE**

Britton Roney is a member of the BYU 12th Ward, Brigham Young University 10th Stake.



ILLUSTRATED BY DILLEEN MARSH

"HAVING BEEN COMMISSIONED..."

BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines

What has been the most important moment in your life so far? You could probably come up with several answers if you thought about it. But few events are as important as being baptized.

Baptism is a saving ordinance, meaning we must be baptized to return to our Heavenly Father and live with our families forever. What's more, it's only after being baptized that you can receive the other saving ordinances such as receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, receiving your

Baptizing someone when you're 16 or 17 years old is an honor and a big responsibility, according to Daniel Kirkpatrick (left), who baptized his friend, Jeron Fosjord (right).

endowment, or being sealed to your spouse in the temple.

So for a 16- or 17-year-old Aaronic Priesthood holder to perform this first of all saving ordinances, it can be both a humbling responsibility and a privilege, as several youth in the Billings Montana Stake will testify.

Eternal Echoes

"It was a great opportunity to strengthen my testimony," says Daniel Kirkpatrick, who baptized his friend Jeron Fosjord after

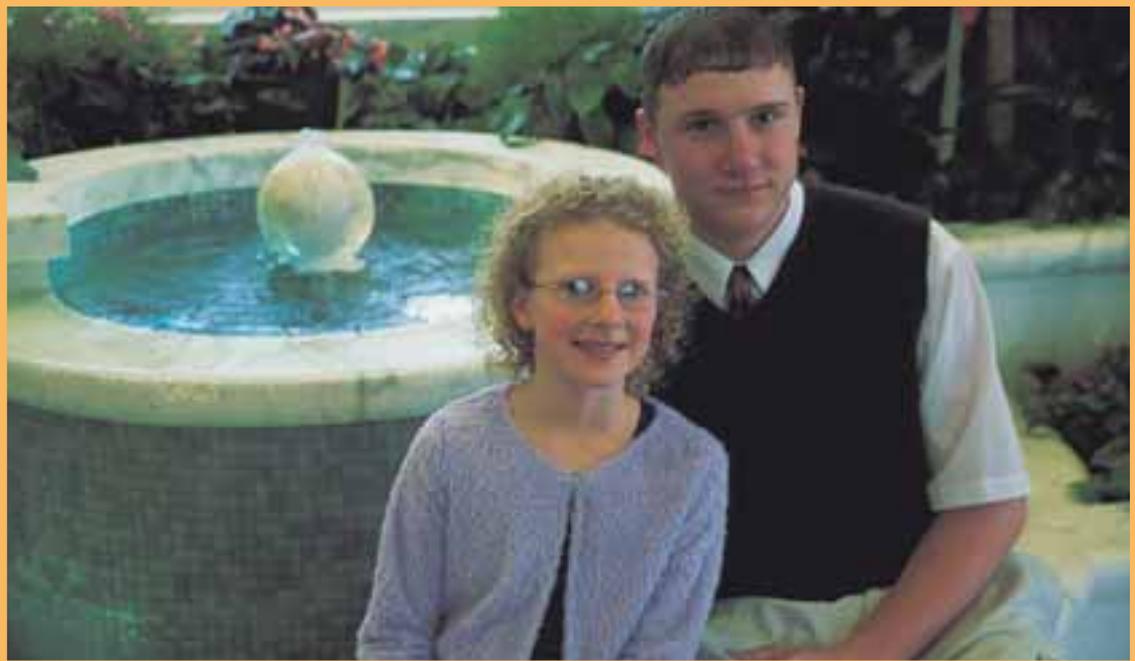






“Baptism is the primary ordinance of the gospel. It is the gate through which all come into the Church. . . . I want to emphasize, boys, that the holding of the Aaronic Priesthood, and the exercise of its power, is not a small or unimportant thing. The bestowal of these keys in this dispensation was one of the greatest and most significant things incident to the entire Restoration. . . . It is the priesthood of God, with authority to act in the name of the Savior of mankind. . . . We must be worthy to do so.”

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Aaronic Priesthood—A Gift from God,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 46.



helping the missionaries teach him. “It helped me appreciate the priesthood more because it wasn’t my dad performing the ordinance. It wasn’t one of the older adults or even my older brother. It was me. I had the priesthood, and I could use it.”

Daniel, a priest in the Pioneer Park Ward, was struck by the eternal consequences of performing Jeron’s baptism. “Jeron is going to be a missionary some day. He’ll affect others, and they’ll affect others. It was a sobering thought, a wake-up call, that what I was doing will have eternal echoes.”

When the day finally came, naturally Dan was nervous about performing an ordinance in front of other people. “I was a little scared,” he says. “I probably asked Jeron his middle name a thousand times to make sure I got it right.” It didn’t help that the font hadn’t filled all the way.

“The water didn’t even reach our knees,” Dan says.

He got the name right, but the water was so low that it took him four tries before Jeron was completely submerged. “I just about drowned him one time because as he was coming up I saw that he hadn’t gone all the way under, so I panicked and pushed

him down again.”

After the third try, they went ahead with the talks and musical number while the font filled some more. By Dan’s fourth and final try, the water was up to their waists. “It was easy then,” he says.

Despite it being a “rough first time,” Dan loved the experience: “It was awesome.” Not only did it strengthen his testimony and help him appreciate the priesthood more, the experience excited him about serving a mission.

“I’ve felt the fears and tasted the successes of a full-time mission,” he says. “I’m excited to get out there and serve.”

Commissioned of Jesus Christ

Cole Negebauer, a priest in the Shiloh Ward, knows all about being nervous to perform such a sacred ordinance. When he was asked to baptize his younger sister, Corie, he had been a member for only three years. His own baptism and the baptism of his parents and younger brother were still fresh in his mind, and he remembered how important it was to him.

So when it came time to baptize his sister, he was more than a little nervous about

doing it right. The baptismal prayer isn't a long prayer, but like the sacrament prayer, it must be said word for word. "I prayed about it a lot. I prayed that I'd not be nervous and that I'd be able to remember the words."

It helped. But like Dan, Cole was in for a surprise when his family arrived at the church the day of the baptism. "It was packed," he says. "We had to move into the chapel."

When the important moment came, though, as Cole recited the words "having been commissioned of Jesus Christ," he learned that when you're acting worthily in the name of the Lord, you're not alone. "I felt calm. I could feel the Holy Ghost there with me. It felt right. I knew I was doing something Heavenly Father wanted me to do."

Honoring the Priesthood

To Cole, blessing the sacrament and baptizing are important, but there's more to holding the priesthood than that. Holding the priesthood means living right and being an example so he can perform those ordinances worthily.

"Some of my friends at school don't understand why I don't do some of the things they do, like watching R-rated movies or drinking and stuff like that. It's hard to explain the priesthood. But they know I won't do those things. Some think it's cool. Some think it's weird. But everybody knows."

Honoring the priesthood has helped Cole prepare for his mission. Through Cole's example and friendship, one friend and his two brothers were baptized. Another friend is playing basketball every week with some of the young men in the ward.

"I'm glad I have the priesthood and can use it more than just every Sunday," he says. "It has strengthened my testimony. It's given me confidence to do what's right."



When Cole Negebauer (opposite

page) baptized his sister Corie, he was nervous. But as the important moment came, he knew he had the help he needed.

The opportunity to baptize his neighbor, Kailey Lewis (left), helped Aaron Getz prepare spiritually for his mission.

Priesthood Privilege

Baptism is a blessing not only for the person being baptized but in many ways for the person baptizing as well.

"I was really flattered," says Aaron Getz of being asked to baptize a neighbor in the Monad Ward. "I was honored. It was a real spiritual booster in my life at that time."

Now a returned missionary, Aaron says the experience helped him in many ways. "I had to do a self-check to make sure I was really worthy. And then I wanted to stay worthy after. It became a constant reminder when I was faced with decisions or temptation."

Eternal Moments

These priesthood holders were blessed as they fulfilled their duty as priests "to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament" (D&C 20:46). The baptisms were experiences they'll never forget. Not only were they sharing in one of the most important events their family members or friends will ever have, but they themselves were growing as they acted in the name of the Lord and with His authority. **NE**

R FIGHT

BY ELISE FISHER

We knew what we stood for. So we took a stand against R-rated movies, and others joined our fight.

When we found out that young children could check out R-rated material from our library, my friend and I felt we needed to do something. And we did.

The Corona California Public Library is a family-oriented, wonderful place to be. That's why I was so surprised to find R-rated movies on the library shelves.

I had become aware that the library's policy allowed access to any material by any library patron of any age. Although this sounds wonderful at first glance, when you look closely, there is a slight problem. Children can get a library card as soon as they can write their names. That meant any child with a library card could check out an R-rated movie. I never really considered that there was anything I could do to change this. But the summer before my junior year in high school, I decided maybe there was something I could do.

I felt two people would be more effective than one, so I called my friend Meggie Winn. I explained the situation, which shocked her, and asked her if she wanted to help me do something to change it. She eagerly agreed.

First, we made a petition to get support from city residents. Our petition read: "We, the undersigned, request that the Corona Public Library limit access of R-rated videos, DVDs, etc., to those of age 17 years and

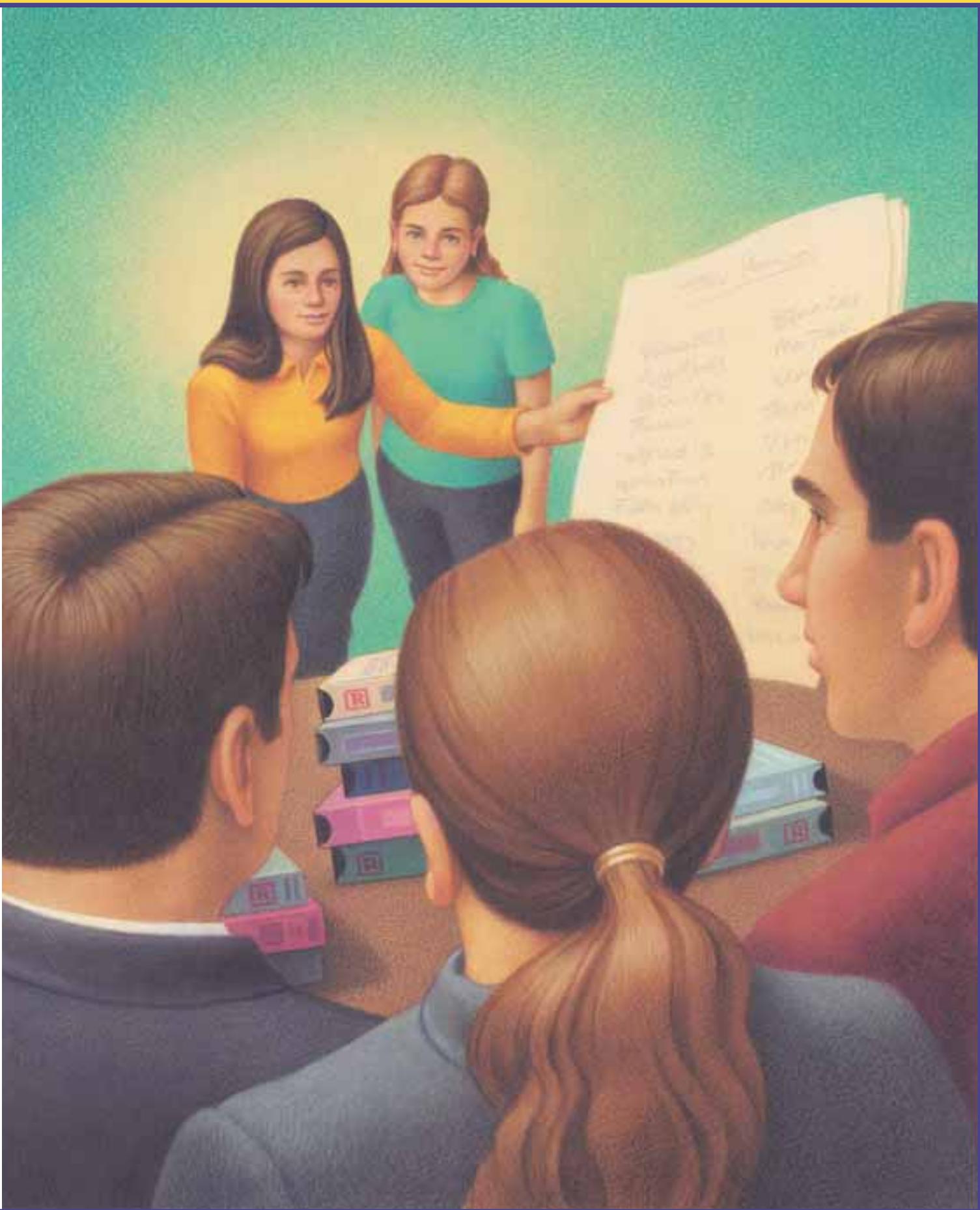
older, as is the commonly accepted practice of all other organizations offering such items in our community." In less than a week, we collected over 1,000 signatures.

What was supposed to be a 20-hour Laurel project ended up lasting over six months. During that time, we participated in meetings with the city council and the library board of trustees.

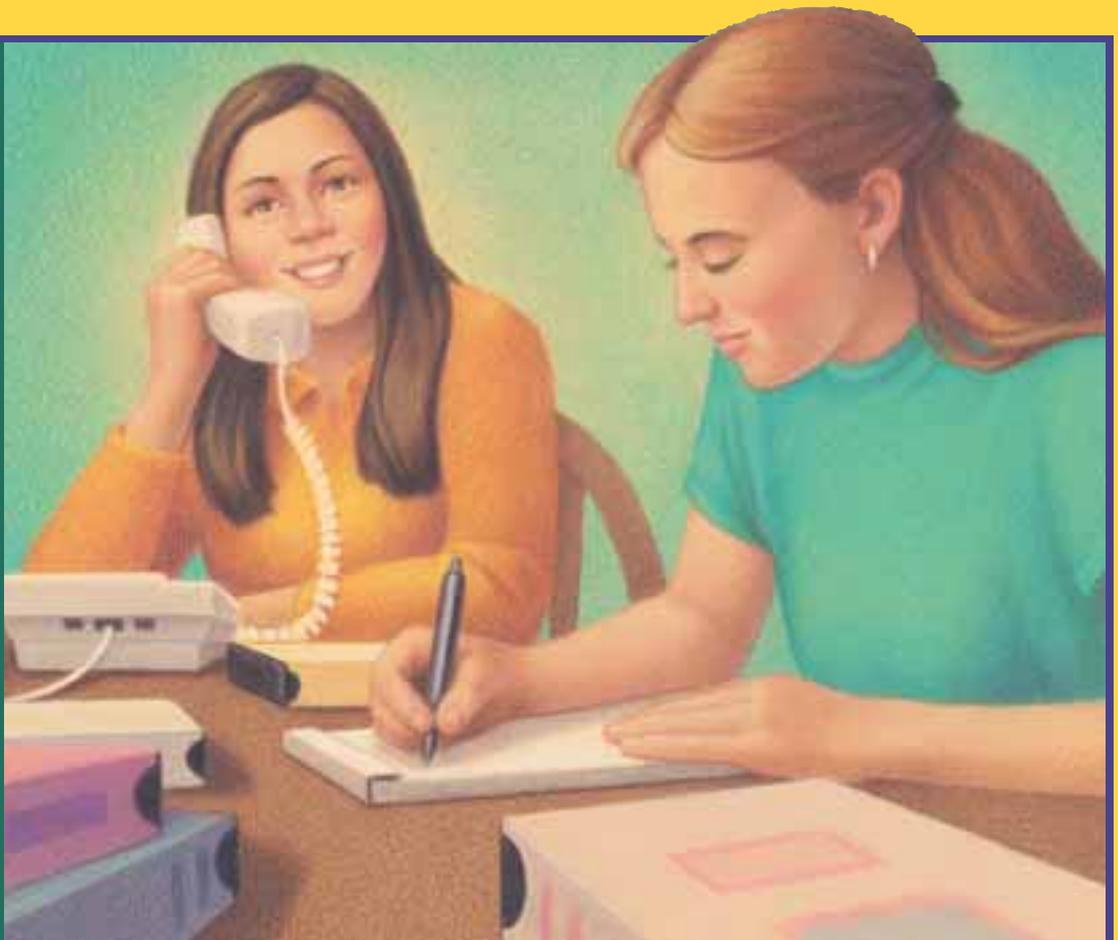
At the first library board of trustees meeting, Meggie and I were a little nervous. We presented our petition and expressed our concerns regarding the library's current policy, but we received no more than a "thank you."

Also attending this meeting was a couple who had become aware of the library policy and had attended the meeting to find out more. Meggie and I were excited to see others concerned about the same issue and were pleasantly surprised when they offered to help us. By the next library board meeting they had collected almost 500 more signatures. They were also a big help in making people in the community aware of this issue.

A few months into this project we received a call from a woman who had read



It turned into a six-month-long project, but we never gave up. We were amazed that our efforts actually caused people to listen and stand for truth and righteousness with us.



an article in the newspaper about our presentation. She offered to help make people aware of this issue. As a result many other people sent e-mails and made phone calls to the library and city council. It felt odd to have these adults following the lead of two teenage girls.

Although we did have an overwhelmingly positive response, there was opposition as well. Meggie and I always tried to respect those in authority and work within the system. We felt our request was such a simple moral decision that was consistent with every other place that offered videos. However, others didn't think so.

As the months went by, the opposition stood firm. Soon Meggie and I were being verbally attacked, and false statements were made about the way we had conducted our campaign. A couple of times, we were asked if we wanted to continue with this project. We replied that we would see it through to an acceptable resolution.

We achieved our objective the day before the deadline given to the library board of trustees by the city council. The mayor of Corona was kind enough to help us arrive at an acceptable solution. We finally decided on a policy that allows parents to either restrict or permit their children's access to R-rated movies. All children's cards will expire on a certain date, requiring parents to visit the library and choose the level of access they desire for their children.

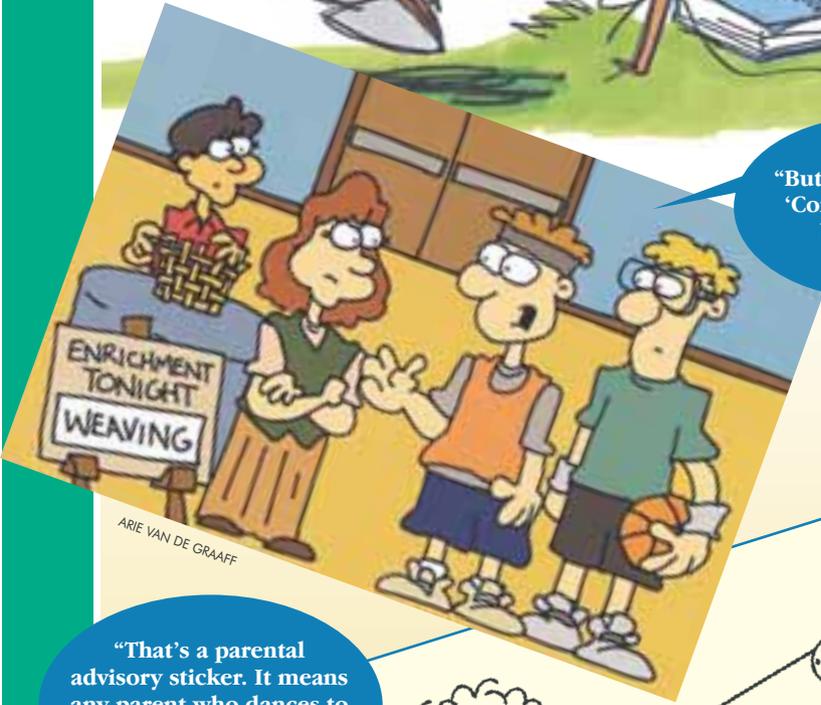
I found it amazing that with all the emotion, controversy, and delays, the effort of two high school students actually caused people to listen and ultimately change library policy. It took a lot of time and energy to accomplish what we did. But it was worth it all to know that we had persisted and stood for truth and righteousness. In doing so, we found many others were willing to stand with us. **NE**

Elise Fisher is a member of Corona Fourth Ward, Corona California Stake.

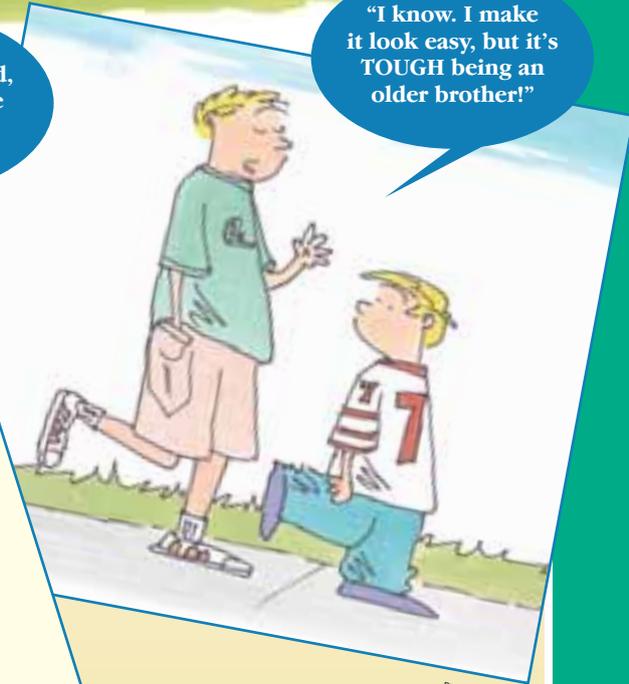
THE EXTRA SMILE



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

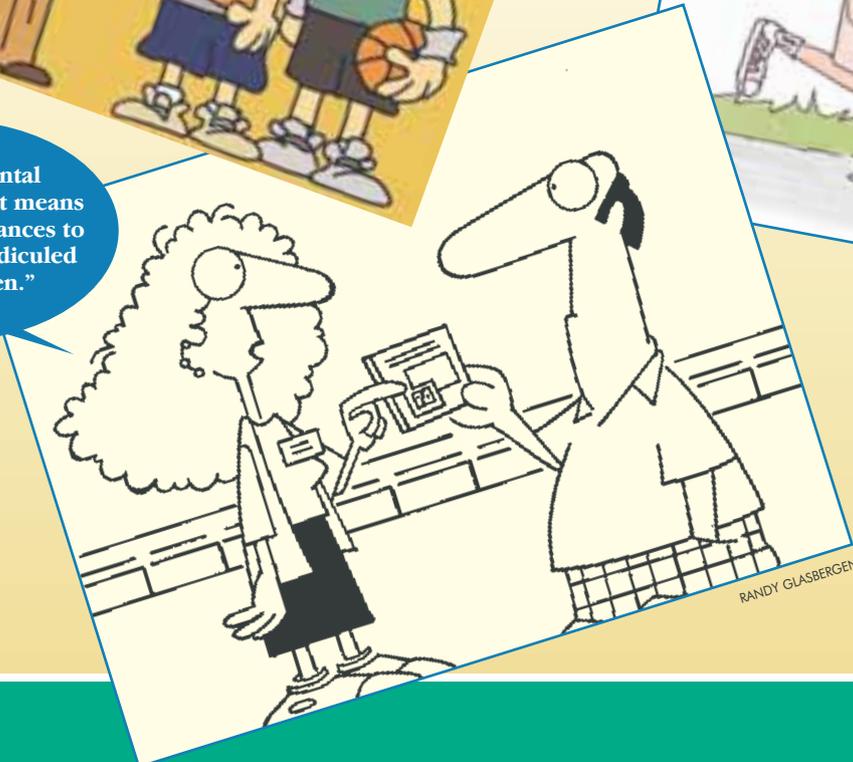


ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF



RYAN STOKER

"That's a parental advisory sticker. It means any parent who dances to this CD will be ridiculed by his children."



RANDY GLASBERGEN

My Answer to **EVOLUTION**

NAME WITHHELD

When your biology teacher says the facts point to evolution, what do you say?

Do you believe in God?" "Yes," I stammered. I couldn't believe it. Here I was sitting in front of four of my best friends and my high school biology teacher, and not one of them believed in God.

"But what about evolution?" my friends asked.

My biology teacher, who had a reputation for being stubborn and persistent, turned his head momentarily from his papers and said: "Now, let's be logical here. Look at the facts. Where does the evidence point?"

I was tongue-tied. I have known the Church is true since I was very young. I felt it was true. However, at the same time, logic and reason were driving forces in my life.

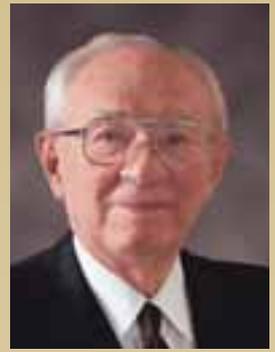
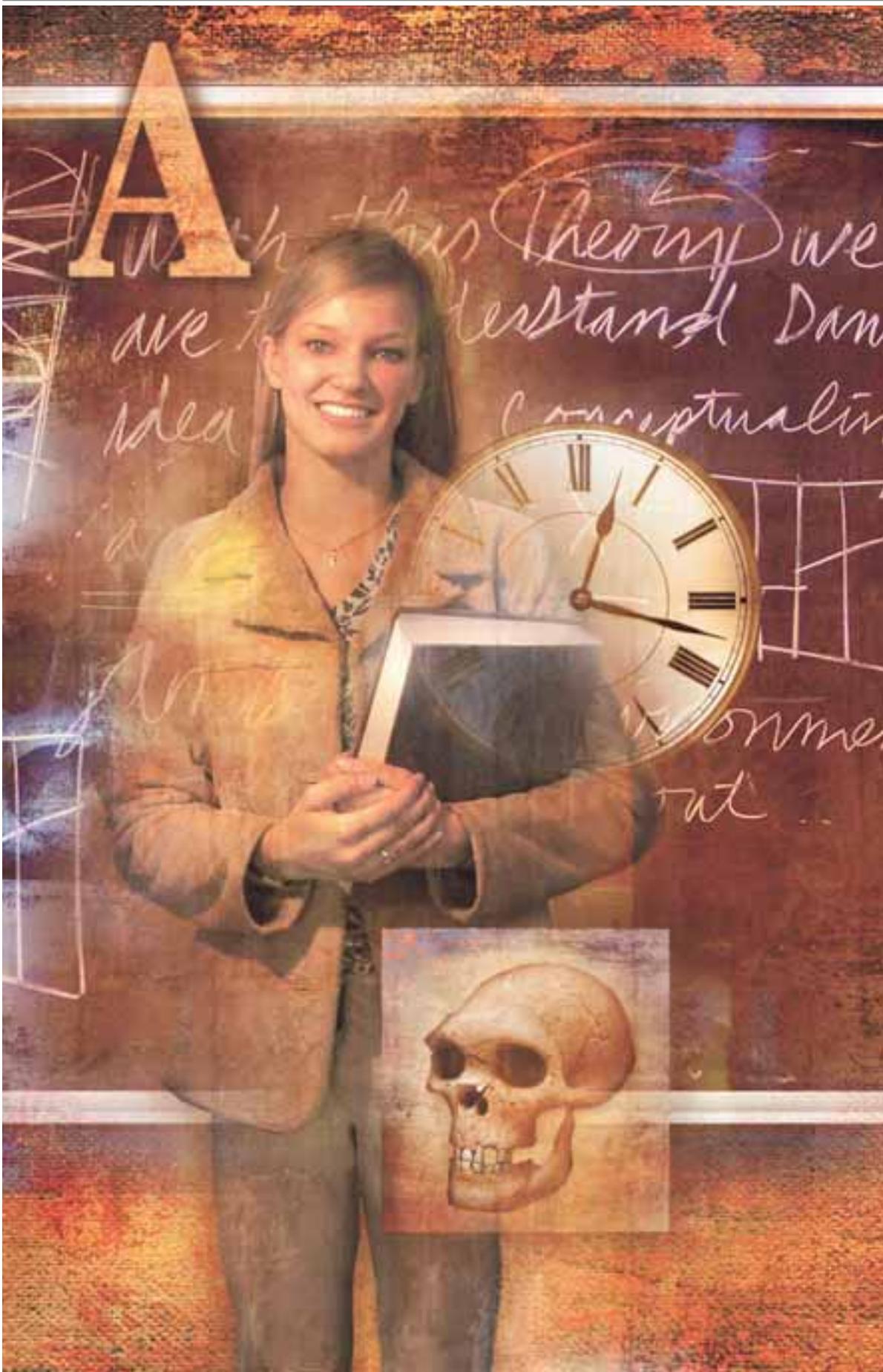
As I sat there, trying to come up with an answer to their questions, the awkward silence gave them satisfaction. They thought I had hit a dead end in my reasoning, as they expected I would. Thinking of no arguments to counter their position, I silently said a quick prayer, pleading with God to direct my words toward these five people. Within seconds a thought crossed my mind: "It is not you who converts, but the Spirit."

Upon hearing those simple words, I began to share my testimony with my friends. I said, "I know there is a God, and He has a Son who created the world and saved us all. Whether or not we have all the answers now doesn't discredit the fact that there is a God. God works line upon line and precept upon precept. Until we prove our faith, God will not reveal more to us." I finished by confirming my testimony of the Church and its leaders, forgetting to even address the original questions posed.

After I finished, they all sat in silence, staring at me. I could feel my face getting hot. Just then, the bell rang. I grabbed my bag, thankful for this escape route, and headed for the door. As I opened the door, my biology teacher swung his chair around and called my name.

I turned, anticipating a rebuttal and, to my shock, found a sincere face staring back at me. "Thank you," he said.

My simple testimony had conveyed more convincing truth than any logical debate could have. I know that *I* did not dissolve their accusations and criticisms that day, but the Holy Spirit did. **NE**



A GREATER EVOLUTION

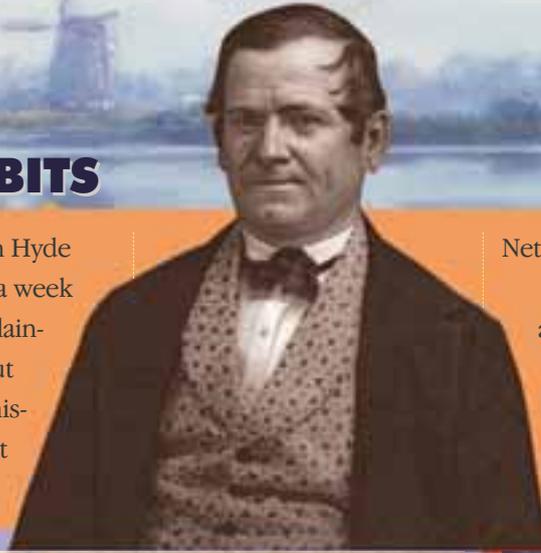
"I remember when I was a college student there were great discussions on the question of organic evolution. I took classes in geology and biology and heard the whole story of Darwinism as it was then taught. I wondered about it. I thought much about it. But I did not let it throw me, for I read what the scriptures said about our origins and our relationship to God. Since then I have become acquainted with what to me is a far more important and wonderful kind of evolution. It is the evolution of men and women as the sons and daughters of God, and of our marvelous potential for growth as children of our Creator."

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, "God Hath Not Given Us the Spirit of Fear," *Ensign*, Oct. 1984, 5.

NETHERLANDS NEWSBITS

The first converts to the Church in the Netherlands were baptized on 1 October 1861, near a village called Broek bij Akkerwoude. On his way to Jerusalem in

1841, Elder Orson Hyde spent more than a week in Rotterdam explaining the gospel. But Latter-day Saint missionaries were not assigned to the



Netherlands for another 20 years.

Now there are three stakes and about 7,900 Church members in the Netherlands. The Hague Netherlands Temple was dedicated on 8 September 2002.



SIGNING UP FOR MODESTY

Frustrated with how hard it is to find modest clothing, young women in the Harris First Ward, Mesa Arizona Central Stake, gathered more than 1,500 signatures from like-minded friends and classmates in just three weeks. What started as a Laurel project for Lisa Prince and Julie Despain grew to include the other 30 or so young women in the ward and became front

page news. The petition drive earned them a lot of attention, both from the media and from a couple of national clothing retailers.

The youth stood as witnesses in interviews with two Arizona newspapers, radio shows in Ireland and Arizona, and magazines in Germany and Australia. They also got to talk with vice presidents of two major department stores. The girls were invited to

submit their ideas, participate in focus groups, and try out new fashions. Representatives of both department stores said more modest fashions were on the way.

“We had no idea we’d get the response we did,” said DeLynn Bodine, the Young Women president.

In the end the young women realized that living their values could bless people all over the world.



THEY SPOKE TO US

Looking for a way to get more from general conference? In May’s issue of the *Ensign* and *Liahona*, look for a new feature called “They Spoke to Us.”

You’ll be directed to specific talks that answer questions like these:

▼ *Why is an education so important? President Gordon B. Hinckley tells why in “Stay on the High Road.”*

▼ *How do you know the Church is true? Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Seventy tells you how in “When Thou Art Converted.”*

INSPIRATION AT YOUR FINGER- TIPS



Did you know that 30 years of the New Era is available on the Internet? Inspiration when you want it. Inspiration when you need it. Check us out: www.lds.org

TEST YOUR LDS I.Q.

The Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood by John the Baptist on the banks of the Susquehanna River, near Harmony, Pennsylvania, on 15 May 1829. You've probably known that since Primary, but can you answer these questions about the story of the restoration of the priesthood?

1 Who was the third person baptized in this dispensation, after Joseph and Oliver?

- a) Lucy Mack Smith
- b) Emma Smith
- c) Samuel Smith

2 Why did Joseph go to Harmony to begin the translation of the plates?

- a) He and Emma wanted to visit Emma's parents, Isaac and Elizabeth Hale
- b) To escape persecution in New York
- c) To be closer to Ohio, where the Church would be moving soon

3 Which friend of Oliver Cowdery asked Oliver to



write and tell him about Joseph Smith when Oliver met Joseph in Pennsylvania?

- a) Martin Harris
- b) David Whitmer
- c) Parley P. Pratt

4 What were Joseph and Oliver praying about when John the Baptist appeared to restore the Aaronic Priesthood?

- a) How to baptize for the remission of sins
- b) How to receive the priesthood

c) How to proceed in the translation of the gold plates

5 Where does the Susquehanna River begin and end?

- a) Pennsylvania and Maryland
- b) New York and Maryland
- c) New York and Virginia

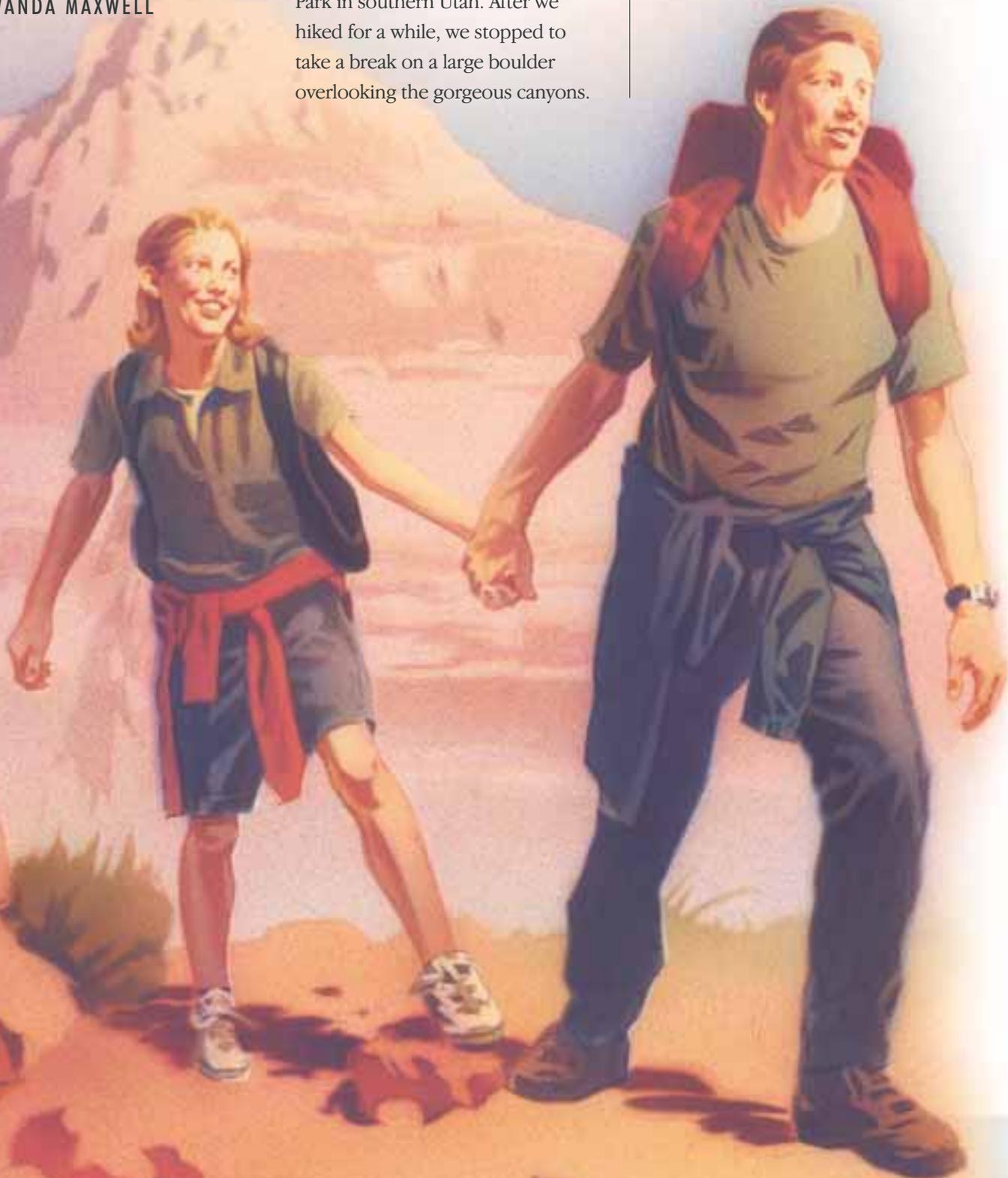
Answers: 1c; 2b; 3b; 4a (They had been translating 3 Nephi 11); 5b.

GOD'S GREATEST MASTERPIECE

BY WANDA MAXWELL

One of my most memorable days included a 13-mile hike, great scenery, and some one-on-one time with my dad. The day started early as we headed off to hike the west rim of Zion National Park in southern Utah. After we hiked for a while, we stopped to take a break on a large boulder overlooking the gorgeous canyons.

In that tranquil moment my dad related to me the story of the Creation. I sat there listening to him and basking in the beautiful workmanship of my Heavenly Father's hands. Dad finished



the story and told me to really look at the masterpiece in front of me.

He then explained that no matter how wondrous and beautiful this place might be, I was God's greatest masterpiece. I am His daughter, and He loves me. He made this world for me, for all His children, and gave us dominion over it (see Genesis 1:26–28; Moses 2:26–28). So, my dad told me, in those moments when I was discouraged, when I felt I had no worth, when I didn't want to go on, I needed to remember how much I am loved.

Dad's little sermon couldn't have come at a better time. I had been so blue and so discouraged. As I walked down the trail, I was filled with a sweet peace and a sure knowledge of my Heavenly Father's love for me. That day I gained a greater appreciation for this world, a deeper love for my dad, and a stronger testimony of the love of my Father in Heaven and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Wanda Maxwell is a member of the Bloomington Fourth Ward, Bloomington Utah Stake.

HELP ON MY EXAM

BY JARREL N. MACARIOLA

When I was in grade four, the day of our exam came. I was nervous that I might not pass the exam. While waiting for the school bus, I reviewed what I had studied the night before.

After I had reviewed, I gathered with my family to read a passage from a scripture mastery card. The verse was about prayer and the power of priesthood blessings. While I was listening, I was prompted to ask my father to bless me so I could pass the exam. As he blessed me, I calmed down and had peace of mind.

At school, I saw my classmates studying for the exam. The bell rang, and our teacher gave us the test. Before I started it, I went to a room, knelt down, and prayed. I went back to my classroom confident I could pass the exam. When I had finished the exam and was walking out of the classroom to go home, a classmate asked me, "Jarrel,

do you think you'll pass the exam?"

I said, "Let's just find out tomorrow when we check the papers."

When I got home, my mother asked me, "How was the exam?"

I said, "It went fine. I answered all the questions."

The next day, I saw my scores—I passed the exam. I was very happy and thankful. I went home, knelt down, and thanked Heavenly Father for the wisdom and guidance He had given me during the exam. I then thanked my mother for helping me in my studies and my father for giving me a blessing.

I am thankful for priesthood blessings because they have helped me and so many members of the Church.

Jarrel N. Macariola is a member of the Tangub Ward, Bacolod Philippines South Stake.



I love the Savior and Heavenly Father, and I know they love me. I know if I follow God's commandments I will be blessed. And I know that the gospel and Church standards help me in my life every day.

Amy Dallan is a member of the Millard

SHORT EXAMPLE

BY AMY DALLON

For the Strength of Youth has really helped me understand why I need to dress modestly. It states: "Prophets of God have always counseled His children to dress modestly. . . . Show respect for the Lord and for your-

self by dressing appropriately" (14, 16).

During the second week of school, I realized that people actually noticed how I dressed. A teacher was going over the school's dress code. She said the girls in the class should wear longer shorts. She then said, "Everyone look at Amy's shorts. This is how long your shorts should be." She had me stand up. None of the other girls looked as if they cared, but it sure made me feel good. I am glad I was able to be a good example to my class.

PRAYER IN THE A.M.

BY AMY BOYLAN

I was good at saying my evening prayers. But morning prayers were a different matter. I always managed to find an excuse for not praying when I left my room in the morning. The Spirit would often prompt me to think, “I really should be saying prayers every morning.” I tried but often failed after a few poor attempts.

For about a year, I had been praying for an answer to a question. I was planning to go to university, but with just a few weeks to go before my application forms had to be finished, I still didn’t know what to study. I couldn’t work out why I had not received an answer.

My nervous and often desperate feelings of confusion became so bad that on one particular night I lay awake in bed, tears in my eyes, unable to sleep. Why hadn’t Heavenly Father answered my prayers? I had patiently prayed for a year about various courses and options, but I felt I still hadn’t received an answer.

One night while reading the scriptures I came across Alma 37:37: “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the

morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God.”

I had read that scripture before in Primary, Young Women, seminary, and Sunday School lessons, but this time I really understood what I was reading. I made up my mind to pray every morning. I left little notes everywhere to remind me, and sure enough they began to work.

A few days later, I received an answer to my prayers about what to study. I knew what I had chosen was wrong, and I knew what I had to do instead. The cloud of uncertainty that had hung above me lifted, and the prospect of university became much brighter. I was even excited.

Heavenly Father did answer my prayers, just as the scriptures said He would. I know He loves us and listens to our prayers. I had to listen to what the Spirit was telling me to do and exercise a little extra faith and effort before my prayer was finally answered.

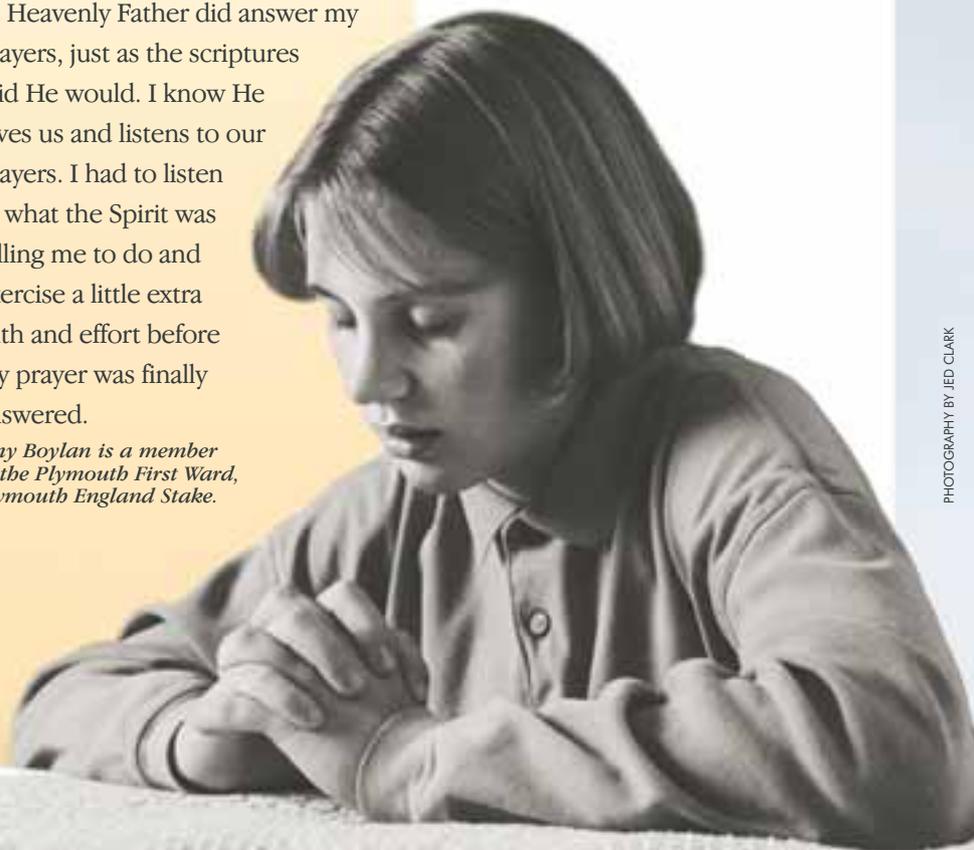
Amy Boylan is a member of the Plymouth First Ward, Plymouth England Stake.

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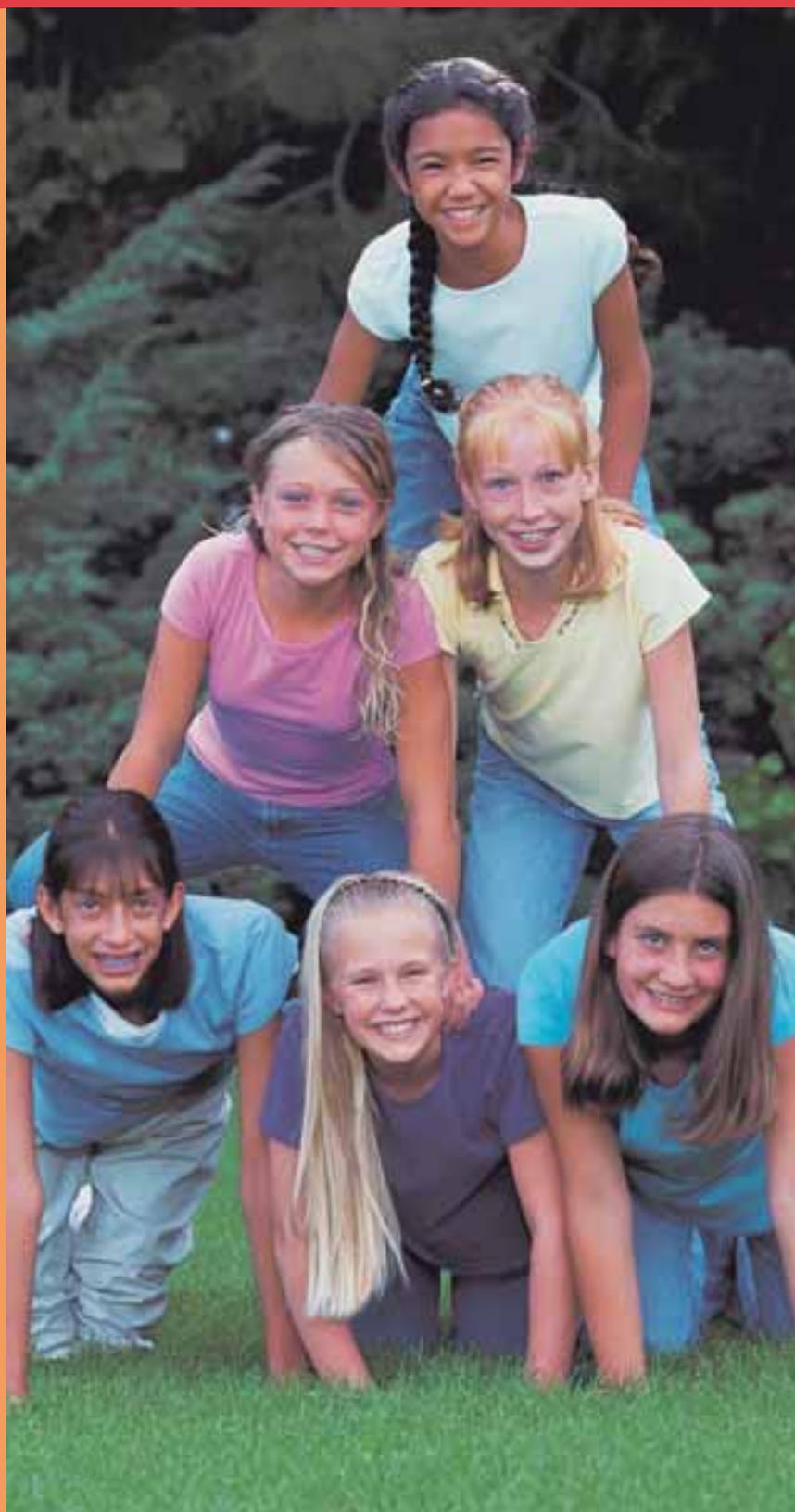
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JED CLARK

MAKING CHURCH FRIENDS

Next time you're at church or Mutual, look around. Are you with friends? You should be. If you don't feel like you get along with the youth in your ward or branch, you've got some work to do. The Lord has commanded us to be united: "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

What can you do to build friendships in your youth group? Here are some ideas that have helped the youth of the Ridgecrest Third Ward, Ridgecrest California Stake.

- 🌸 Smile when you see each other.
- 🌸 Don't let hate or anger color your thoughts about anyone.
- 🌸 Learn to love everyone. You can pray for this love (see Moroni 7:48).
- 🌸 When problems arise, don't overreact. Most problems aren't worth losing a friendship over.
- 🌸 Talk about problems before they get too big. We can't draw nearer to Christ when we are pushing others away (see 3 Nephi 12:24).
- 🌸 Spend time getting to know each other. Get-to-know-you activities can be the start of lasting friendships.
- 🌸 Have fun together. Sports, games, or outdoor activities can be good ways to enjoy each others' company.
- 🌸 Support each other through hard times.
- 🌸 Stand up for each other.
- 🌸 Never gossip. Few things will divide you as quickly.
- 🌸 Do service together.
- 🌸 Do secret acts of kindness for one another.
- 🌸 Set goals together.
- 🌸 Find common interests.
- 🌸 Accept differences.
- 🌸 And remember you all have a love for the gospel in common. **NE**



A WORLDWIDE

Bishop Lu Ming-De (right) of the Neibu Ward, Taipei Taiwan East Stake, instructs the deacons on looking neat and tidy before passing the sacrament.

Gerardo Bagnati (opposite page) of the Floresta Ward, Buenos Aires Argentina Liniers Stake, looked forward to becoming a deacon.



Following the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Church, as established by the Savior, continued to be led by His Apostles. Gradually, however, early Church members fell into disbelief, and the priesthood—the authority to lead the Church—was eventually taken from the earth. When the Prophet Joseph Smith received his First Vision and the Restoration began, the priesthood needed to be given again to mankind.

In May 1829, the Aaronic Priesthood was conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by John the Baptist. A short time later, Peter, James, and John, three of Christ's

Apostles from ancient days, appeared and conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery the Melchizedek Priesthood.

The Aaronic Priesthood is often called the preparatory priesthood, meaning that those who hold it are preparing to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. Those who hold Aaronic Priesthood offices have the authority to administer important gospel ordinances such as baptism and preparing, blessing, and passing the sacrament. They also collect fast offerings, do home teaching, and care for the ward's needs.

The four offices in the Aaronic Priesthood are deacon, teacher, priest, and bishop. Every holder of the Aaronic Priesthood shares the same duty: to invite all to come unto Christ (see D&C 20:59).

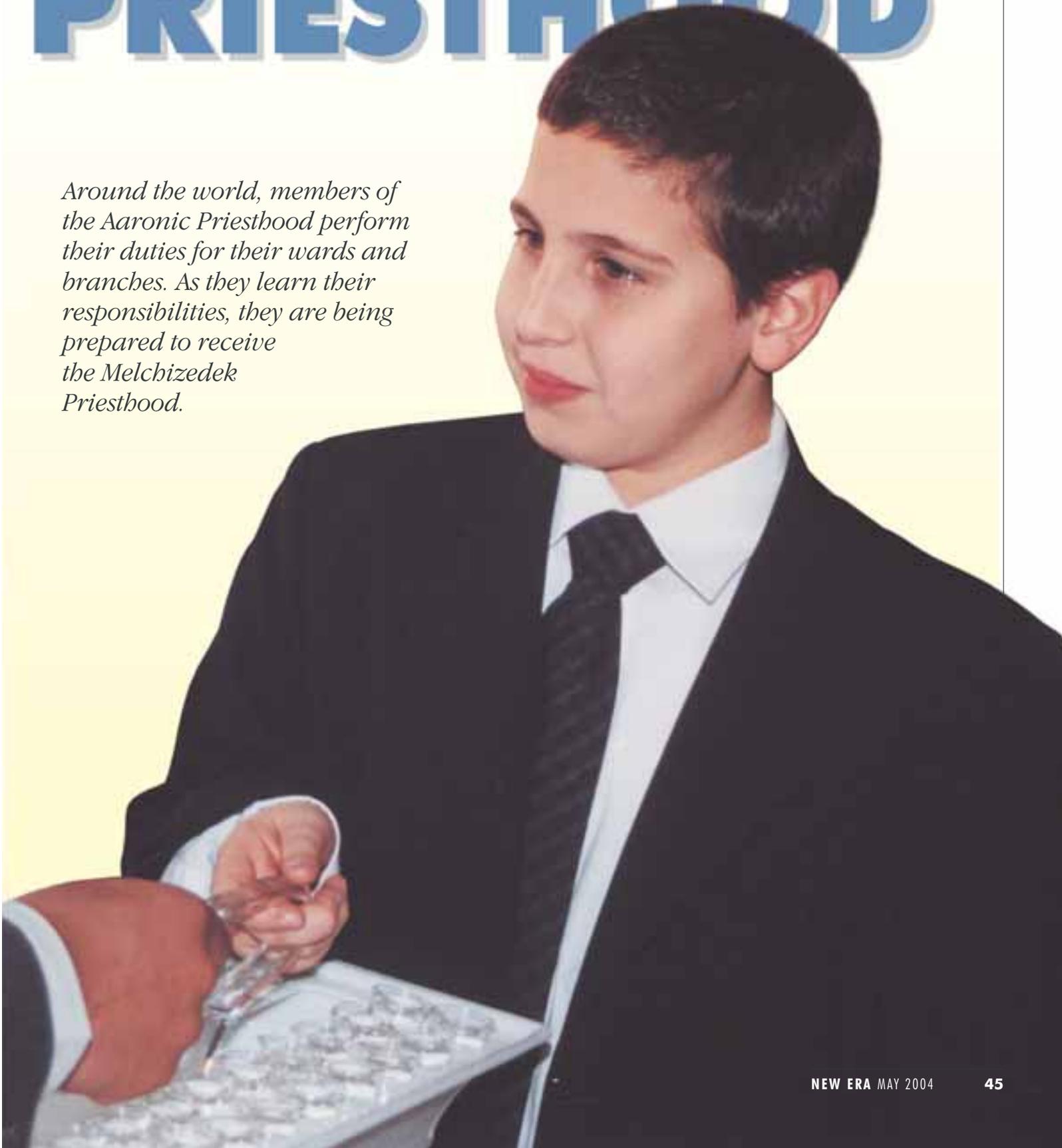
Deacons

At the age of 12, worthy young men may receive the Aaronic Priesthood and be ordained deacons, continuing in that priesthood office until age 14. From their bishops, deacons receive assignments like passing the sacrament to the congregation, serving as messengers, collecting fast offerings, helping the elderly or disabled, and caring for the chapel and grounds.¹

Gerardo Bagnati practices four days a week with his basketball team, hoping to play one day for the Argentina national team. He also spends a lot of time practicing the

PRIESTHOOD

Around the world, members of the Aaronic Priesthood perform their duties for their wards and branches. As they learn their responsibilities, they are being prepared to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood.



Desmond Gaisie-Amoah (below, left) and Elvis Ayltey, both deacons in the Adenta Ward, Accra Ghana Christians-borg Stake, take the bread to their sacrament meeting in Ghana.

Joel Bader (opposite page, left) and David Wichtermann, priests in Switzerland, take responsibility for blessing the sacrament, and they desire to be good examples of priesthood holders.

violin. And then there's soccer, tae kwon do, and, of course, school. But nothing Gerardo does is as important as his priesthood duties, especially passing the sacrament.

"It's a privilege to perform an ordinance so sacred that Jesus performed it personally. When it's my turn, it's as if the Lord were at my side watching me. I'm happy to be a little more like Him by doing what He did."

Gerardo Emmanuel Bagnati, Floresta Ward, Buenos Aires Argentina Liniers Stake

When asked how he felt about the opportunity to hold the priesthood, Jorge Gutiérrez told of the happiness it brought to his family. He plans to serve a mission like his older brother.

"I'm happy I can hold the priesthood. I can have the blessings of the priesthood for myself and my family, at home and in school."

Partaking of the sacrament means we can renew our covenants and repent of our sins. My mother told me she is grateful to have sons who hold the priesthood."

Jorge Benjamin Cervantes Gutiérrez, Libertad Ward, Guadalajara México Reforma Stake

Dressed neatly in ties and white shirts, deacons in Ghana, West Africa, take their duties concerning the sacrament seriously. They understand the symbolism of the bread and water and the significance of remembering the Savior each Sabbath day.

They also are diligent in collecting fast offerings, and they support each other as members of the deacons quorum.

"When I pass the sacrament, I think about Jesus Christ sacrificing Himself for us. He remembers me, and I remember Him."

Cornelius Williams, Abura Ward, Cape Coast Ghana Stake



“I feel happy because I’m doing the Lord’s work. When you do the Lord’s work, you get blessings from our Heavenly Father.”

Gorsb Quarthey, Adenta Ward, Accra Ghana Christiansborg Stake

Teachers

At age 14, a worthy young man may be ordained a teacher. Teachers can do all the duties of a deacon. They also prepare the sacrament, are an example of integrity and honesty, go home teaching, usher or speak in Church meetings, care for the poor, and help take care the meetinghouse and grounds (see D&C 20:53–59).

“Preparing the sacrament every Sunday means a lot to me. It is a privilege to become part of the Lord’s work. I also feel it is the time for me to prepare to receive other responsibilities.

“Home teaching the families assigned to me and my companion is another way of blessing others through the priesthood we hold. Every month, we share with those families the message of the First Presidency. Home teaching provides an opportunity for us to become close to the families we visit and teach.

“Honoring my priesthood helps me to know the Savior better. He is there to stand by me, guide me, and help me fulfill my duty as a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood.”

Joshua Adurru, Bagbag Ward, Quezon City Philippines Stake

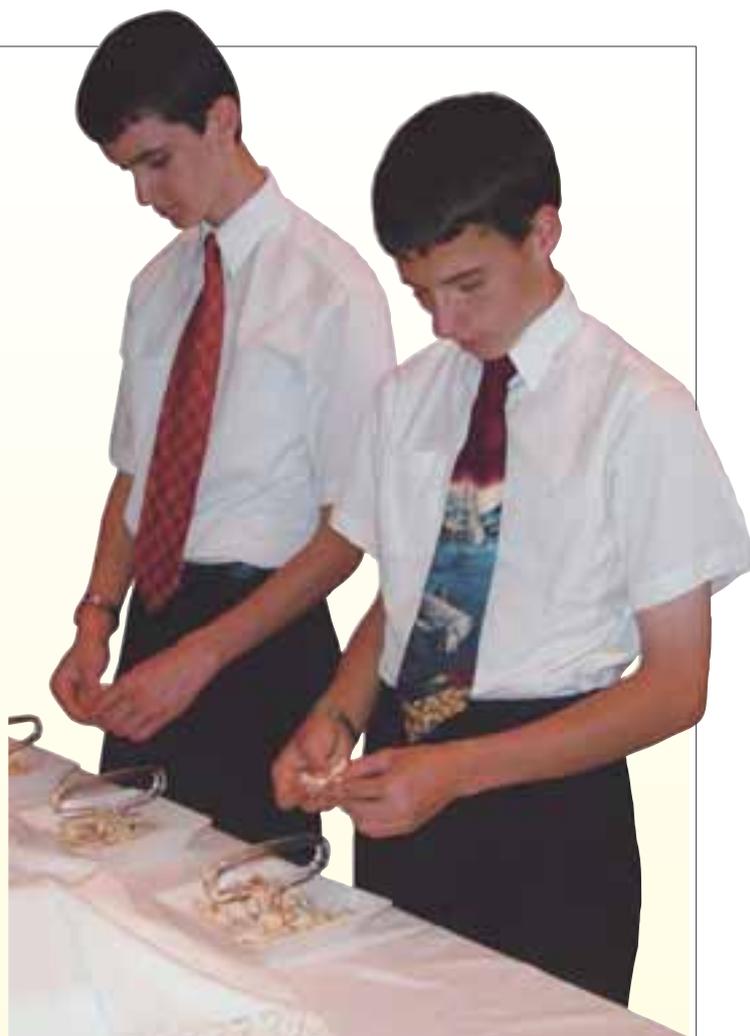
Luka Pečnik’s life changed when he and his family were baptized as members of the Church. He remembers the happiness of that day. He takes his priesthood responsibilities seriously and is eager to learn more about these responsibilities.

“I am very happy to help with the sacrament. I try to live a worthy life so that the Lord will be pleased with me and the Holy Ghost will be my companion.”

Luka Pečnik, Celje Branch, Ljubljana Slovenia District

Priests

Upon reaching the age of 16, worthy young men may be ordained to the office of priest. While they can continue fulfilling the duties of a deacon and teacher, they also have the authority to baptize, to bless the sacrament,



and to ordain other priests, teachers, and deacons under the direction of the bishop (see D&C 20:46–52).

Having his family join the Church when he was six, Alexandr Masenkov looked forward to the day he would receive the priesthood. Now, as a priest, he is finding that each office in the Aaronic Priesthood prepared him for the next.

“I was ordained to the office of priest when I turned 16. I realized the weight of my responsibility to bless the sacrament because of how important this ordinance is for every Church member. I prepared for it all week. As I blessed the sacrament the first time, the Spirit touched my heart. Once, my father and I were assigned to take the sacrament to a man who was blind and paralyzed. It was the first time I had blessed the sacrament outside of the meetinghouse. I felt I had a responsibility to be a servant and a witness of Jesus Christ and to do what He would do if He were there.”

Alexandr Masenkov, Nevsky Branch, St. Petersburg Russia District

Alexandr Masenkov (right), a priest in the Nevsky Branch, St. Petersburg Russia District, has the authority to baptize, a privilege he values.



Joel Bader was baptized by his older brother, who was a priest at the time. And when Joel was ordained a priest, the bishop let Joel ask a good friend, who was already a priest, to help in the ordination.

Joel feels that blessing the sacrament is a great service to the members:

“The sacrament gives me a chance every week to think about what I have to do here. Renewing my baptismal covenant helps me to always remember that I should be worthy of the covenant I entered into.

“When you’re together in a quorum, you can learn a lot about getting along with others and how to plan and run meetings. The most important part about the priesthood is serving others—and receiving blessings through the priesthood.”

Joel Bader, Pratteln Ward, Bern Switzerland Stake

David Wichtermann was on the receiving end of priesthood service:

“I was sick and in a lot of pain. When my father gave me a blessing, the pain went away immediately. I look forward to the time when I can also use the priesthood

to give blessings.”

David Wichtermann, Schwamendingen Ward, Zürich Switzerland Stake

The bishop of the ward is the presiding high priest and has the authority to preside over the whole ward. He also presides over the Aaronic Priesthood and serves as president of the priests quorum.

Because the duties in all offices of the Aaronic Priesthood include serving the poor and those in need of physical assistance, the bishop often directs Aaronic Priesthood holders in helping ward members with their physical needs.

The Aaronic Priesthood offers young men the chance to learn how to serve and follow through on their priesthood duties. If worthy, they are then prepared to take the next step and be ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood. **NE**

This article was adapted from “Priesthood Restored” (Ensign, Apr. 2004), 18.

NOTE

1. In Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), 1:361.

Mutual Activities

- Ask the bishop for the names of the older members of your ward. Match teens with these members as “adopted” grandparents. Plan at least one activity where the youth interview their “grandparent” and write up a brief life history. Hold a social evening where teens and “grandparents” sing some of the older members’ favorite songs or present highlights from their histories, perhaps in skits or in a quiz form.

- Read the article, “I Was Hoping You’d Come,” on page 26. Ask the Young Men to tell about their experiences in taking the sacrament to shut-ins. Under the direction of the bishop, assign each shut-in to a quorum or class, and make plans to visit or serve them as appropriate. Your quorum or class could dedicate the next fast Sunday to fasting and praying concerning the people you have been assigned.

Service Project Suggestion

- When looking for ways to serve your community, check with your local public library. Could you help out with their used book sales? Or perhaps you could offer your services in book repair or cleaning books or shelves.

Family Home Evening Idea

- Read as a family the article, “Out of the Ashes,” on page 20. Discuss and plan escape routes from every room in your house. Practice using emergency ladders, especially if children may have to use them without an adult helping. Take photos of what is in every room, but be sure to keep the photos somewhere other than in your home. Gather items for an emergency kit to be kept in each car.

SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

In addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November in the *Ensign* and *Liahona*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 18–21.

Young Women Manual 2

Lesson 18 A Heritage of Righteous Traditions

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

D. Lee Tobler, “Homegrown Happiness,” *New Era*, Feb. 2004, 10.

Q&A: “. . . Do I need to keep a journal?” *New Era*, Sept. 2003, 16.

Lesson 19 Preparing to Teach Others

Henry B. Eyring, “How to Know the Truth,” this issue, 4.

Idea List: “Open Your Mouth,” *New Era*, July 2003, 29.

Lesson 20 Sharing the Gospel

Q&A: “. . . when friends ask about the Church but only want to debate?” *New Era*, Mar. 2004, 16.

Kersten Campbell, “Who’s Telling the Truth?” *New Era*, Feb. 2004, 42.

Stefania Postiglione, “Con Amore,” *New Era*, Sept. 2003, 26.

Lesson 21 Sustaining Missionaries through Letters

Dallas H. and Marjorie Bradford, “Helping from Home,” *Ensign*, July 2003, 48.

Lois Zurligen Jorgensen, “Ten Things I Love about You,” *New Era*, Dec. 2003, 26.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 2

Lesson 18 Duties of a Teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood

John L. Haueter, “Junior Companion,” *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 36.

Thomas S. Monson, “Home Teaching—a Divine Service,” *New Era*, Nov. 1998, 4.

Lesson 19 A Broken Heart and a Contrite Spirit

Name Withheld, “I Was the 100th Sheep,” *New Era*, Apr. 2004, 8.

Poster: “Heart Broken?” *New Era*, Feb. 2004, 19.

Q&A: “. . . how do I know if I’ve really been forgiven?” *New Era*, Feb. 2003, 16.

Lesson 20 Administering the Sacrament

John W. Yardley, “Happiness Every Week,” this issue, 12.

Britton Roney, “I Was Hoping You’d Come,” this issue, 26.

Lesson 21 Preparing for the Melchizedek Priesthood

Q&A: “How can I best prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood?” *New Era*, Oct. 2003, 16.

Bruce R. McConkie, “Only an Elder,” *New Era*, Jan. 2003, 36.

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FOLLOWING THE PROPHET

I really love reading the *New Era*. I look forward to it every month. I can always find something to apply to my life. I especially liked the article titled “Monday, Monday” (Feb. 2004). It reinforces the idea that sometimes we may need to make sacrifices to follow the counsel of the prophet. Thank you so much, and I look forward to future issues.

*Mindy Meeks, Ventura Fourth Ward,
Ventura California Stake*

AN IMPERFECT FAMILY

Thank you for the article “Not Just Me” (Feb. 2004). I’m sort of in the same position as Reneé Harding. I have been a member for about two and a half years; I also often cry myself to sleep. I don’t have a “perfect” Mormon family; in fact, I often go to church on my own. Even though no one has the perfect family, it still helps to know that there are others who have problems like mine.

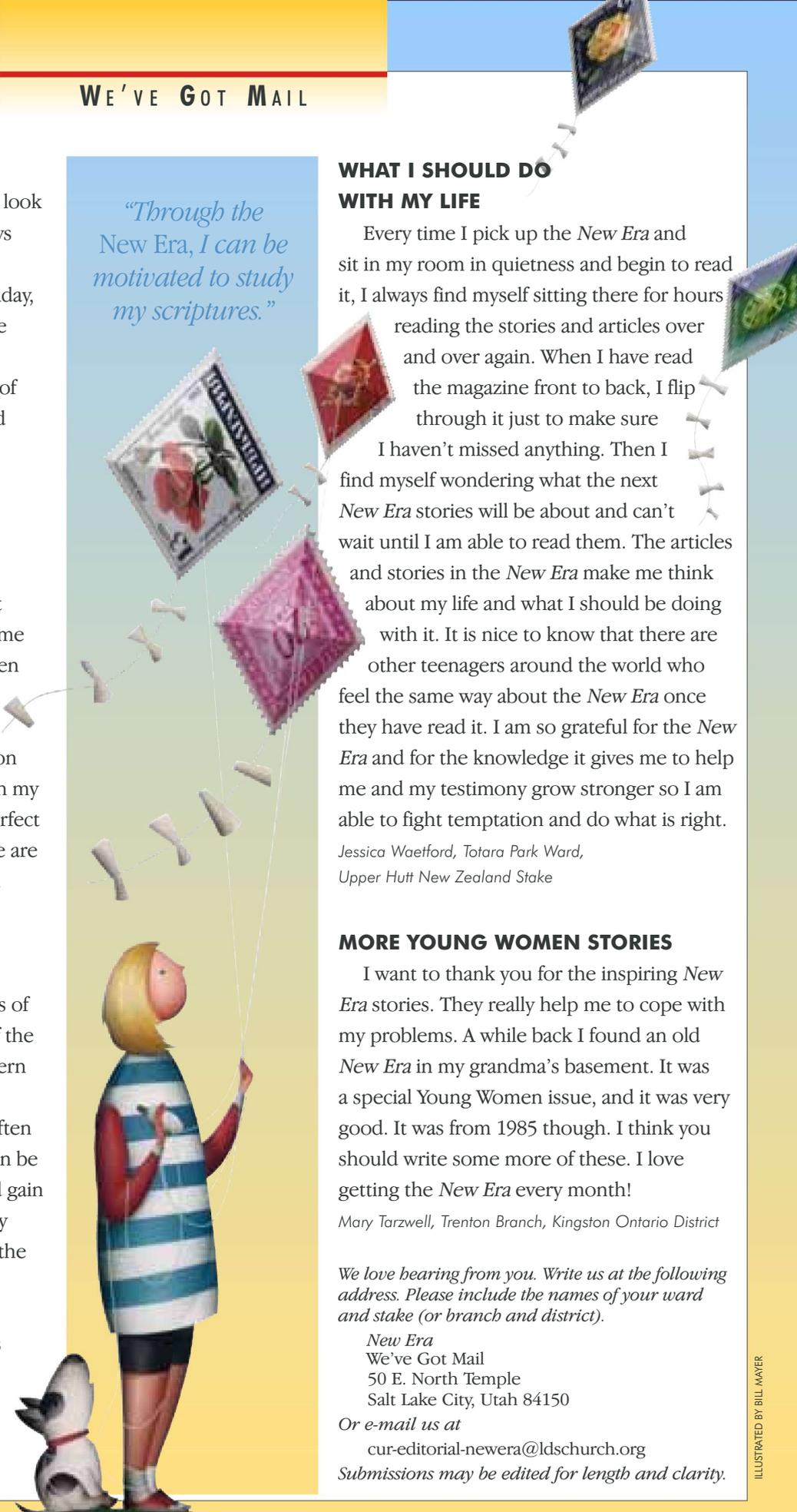
Name withheld

MOTIVATED

I was greatly touched by the words of Elder L. Tom Perry, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in his article, “A Pattern for Living” (Jan. 2004). As I read the *New Era*, I find that trials I face can often be solved. Through the *New Era*, I can be motivated to study my scriptures and gain a stronger testimony of Christ. I enjoy trying many of the suggestions from the wonderful leaders of this, the Lord’s Church. I am forever grateful for the *New Era*’s great words. I hope that as many others read it, they too can be blessed by its great teachings.

*Paul Benson, Aldershot Ward,
Staines England Stake*

*“Through the
New Era, I can be
motivated to study
my scriptures.”*



WHAT I SHOULD DO WITH MY LIFE

Every time I pick up the *New Era* and sit in my room in quietness and begin to read it, I always find myself sitting there for hours reading the stories and articles over and over again. When I have read the magazine front to back, I flip through it just to make sure I haven’t missed anything. Then I find myself wondering what the next *New Era* stories will be about and can’t wait until I am able to read them. The articles and stories in the *New Era* make me think about my life and what I should be doing with it. It is nice to know that there are other teenagers around the world who feel the same way about the *New Era* once they have read it. I am so grateful for the *New Era* and for the knowledge it gives me to help me and my testimony grow stronger so I am able to fight temptation and do what is right.

*Jessica Waefford, Totara Park Ward,
Upper Hutt New Zealand Stake*

MORE YOUNG WOMEN STORIES

I want to thank you for the inspiring *New Era* stories. They really help me to cope with my problems. A while back I found an old *New Era* in my grandma’s basement. It was a special Young Women issue, and it was very good. It was from 1985 though. I think you should write some more of these. I love getting the *New Era* every month!

Mary Tarzwell, Trenton Branch, Kingston Ontario District

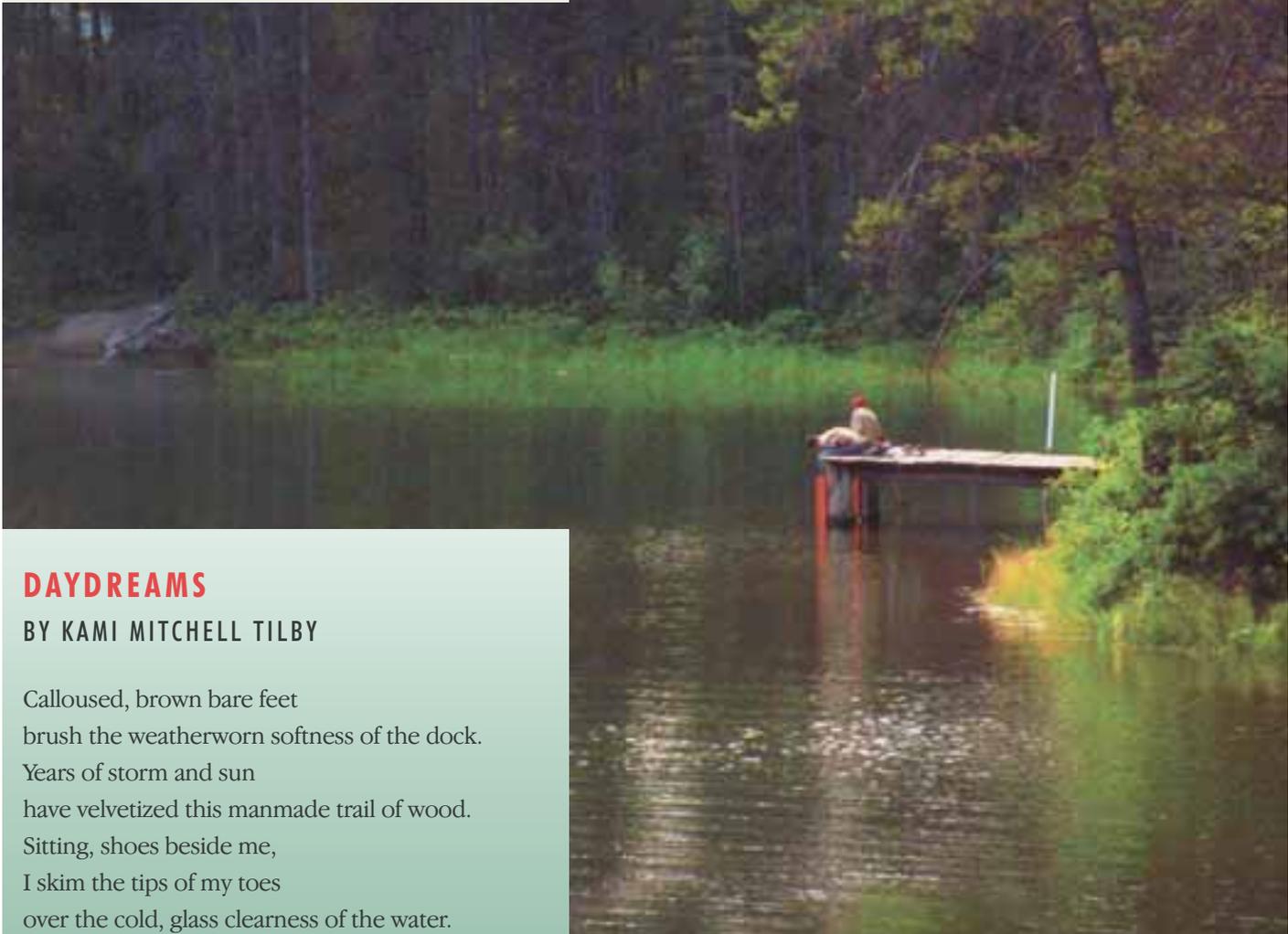
We love hearing from you. Write us at the following address. Please include the names of your ward and stake (or branch and district).

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Or e-mail us at

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Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



DAYDREAMS

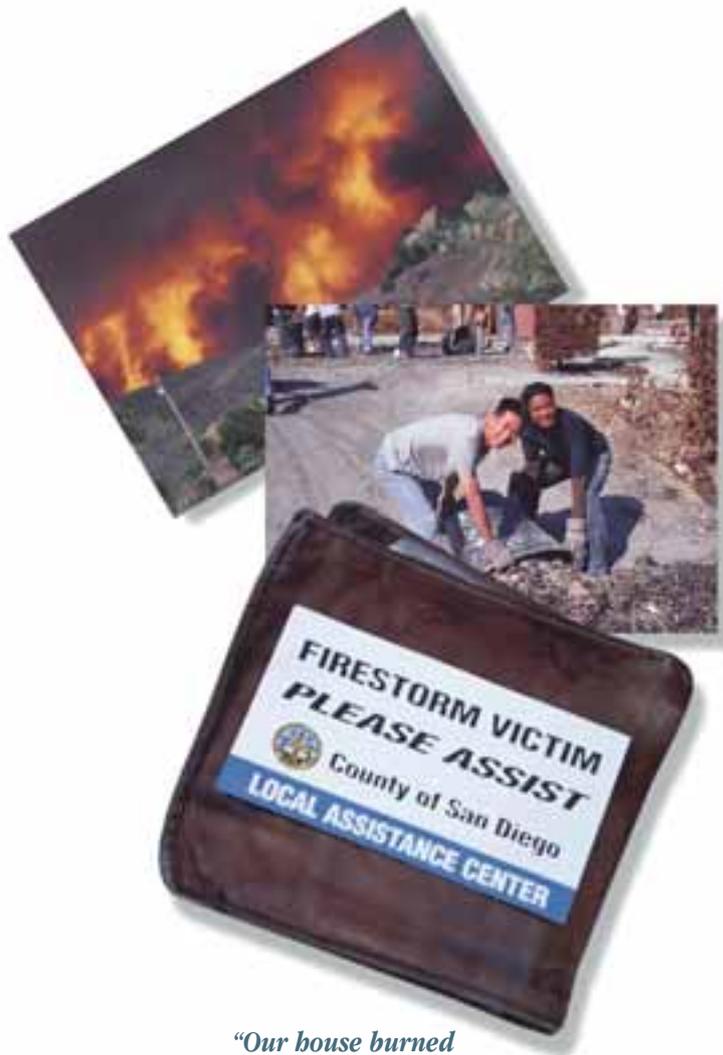
BY KAMI MITCHELL TILBY

Calloused, brown bare feet
brush the weatherworn softness of the dock.
Years of storm and sun
have velvetized this manmade trail of wood.
Sitting, shoes beside me,
I skim the tips of my toes
over the cold, glass clearness of the water.
A warm breeze carries me gently from my
dreamless day . . .

Now, here I sit,
dangling my feet over the edge,
the feathery breeze
whispers through my toes
and tickles the backs of my knees.
A white bird flew past,
brushing the tips of its wings across my cheek.

That was a memory,
sparked by the high, crystal blueness of the sky.
Its rays burn fiercely,
cooling on the long journey from heaven to earth.
The warmth of my sun-drenched face
has been given the essence
of summertimes long since past and nonexistent.

BY LANE V. ERICKSON



“Our house burned to the ground and so did part of the new house we are building. But our family survived. Since the fire, I feel closer to Heavenly Father, and I rely on the gospel more.”

See “Out of the Ashes,” p. 20.