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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Distribution Services. Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431.



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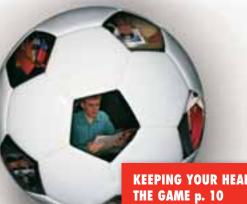
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The New Era Magazine Volume 39, Number 5 May 2009

Official monthly publication

for youth of The Church of

Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Editorial Offices: New Era

E-mail Address: newera@ldschurch.org

information to:

USA.

To Change Address: Send old and new address

Distribution Services P.O. Box 26368

Rm. 2420

50 E. North Temple St.

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024,

Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368,

Please allow 60 days for

changes to take effect.

Cover art and photography: Del Parson (front) and David A. Edwards (back)

TO SUBMIT MATERIAL:

Please e-mail or send stories, articles, photos, poems, and ideas to the Editorial Offices address above. For return, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUKE; JOHN THE BAPTIST APPEARS TO JOSEPH SMITH AND OLIVER COWDERY BY DEL PARSON

The **PRIESTHOOD**A Lifetime of Service



One who worthily uses his priesthood in service to others can magnify his calling in the priesthood.

BY ELDER M. RUSSELL BALLARD Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Ithough we speak of the Melchizedek Priesthood as the greater priesthood, we must not misunderstand the importance of the Aaronic Priesthood. The service given by a faithful bearer of the Aaronic Priesthood is just as important in the eyes of the Lord as the service given by one holding the Melchizedek Priesthood.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "if a Priest understands his duty, his calling, and ministry, . . . his enjoyment is as great as if he were one of the Presidency" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 111).

As part of what is known as the oath and covenant of the priesthood, the Lord declared: "For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining [of] these two priesthoods [Aaronic and Melchizedek] . . . , and the magnifying [of] their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit" (D&C 84:33; see also D&C 84:32–46).

To honor our priesthood, and to magnify our callings in both the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, is to receive the power of God in our lives.

Understanding the Offices

We need to understand the reason for offices within the Melchizedek Priesthood. Priesthood offices are not status symbols but opportunities for service. High priests and elders are equally responsible to serve faithfully in the offices to which they have been called. All priesthood holders assist our Heavenly Father in accomplishing His divine purpose: "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

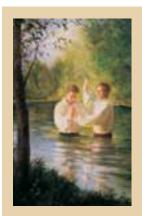
Consider these words of the sixth President of the Church, Joseph F. Smith: "There is no office growing out of this Priesthood that is or can be greater than the Priesthood itself. It is from the Priesthood that the office derives its authority and power. No office gives authority to the Priesthood. No office adds to the power of the Priesthood" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 11th ed. [1959], 148).

The priesthood itself cannot be magnified nor diminished. However, one who worthily uses his priesthood in service to others can magnify his calling in the priesthood.

All who hold the priesthood of God are joined together in a common bond of service. The resurrected John the Baptist expressed this concept on that sacred







fter receiving the priesthood from John the Baptist, the authority to baptize was returned to the earth.

The organization of the Aaronic priesthood with offices such as deacons, teachers, and priests was also restored.

occasion when he restored the Aaronic Priesthood to men on earth. This angelic messenger from God, the same who had been privileged to baptize the Savior, addressed the Prophet Joseph Smith and his associate in the work, Oliver Cowdery, as "my fellow servants" (D&C 13:1). What a marvelous model for humble service in the kingdom of God!

Each man or boy who holds the priesthood, regardless of his priesthood or his ordained office, is a fellow servant in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Although I hold the ordained office of Apostle in the Melchizedek Priesthood, my associates in that office and I are fellow servants in the work of the Lord with the most recently ordained deacon or elder in the Church.

While the Apostle Paul stated the truth

that "God hath set . . . first apostles [in the Church" (1 Corinthians 12:28), he also stated the truth that each member of the body is necessary. No one in any priesthood office can say of those in other offices, "I have no need of thee," because we all are fellow servants in the service of the Lord (see 1 Corinthians 12:14–28). Our common and most important objective is to do His work. Each priesthood bearer, acting within the duties of his calling, is needed to accomplish the work of the Lord.

I repeat, a priesthood office is bestowed not for status but for service. You and I are fellow servants in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Sharing Opportunities to Serve

In addition to holding an ordained office in the priesthood, most priesthood bearers also are called to a specific position in their



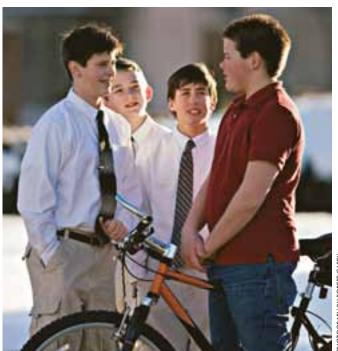
ward or stake. For example, you priesthood brethren may be called to serve in a quorum presidency, as a teacher in a Sunday School or Primary class, as a member of a ward or quorum committee, or as a stake officer. In each of these callings, you will serve for a time and then be released to give another an opportunity to serve where you have labored. You then will receive other opportunities for further service. Your callings may change, but the need for your constant and committed service in some Church capacity will continue. Remember, brethren, your responsibility to honor and magnify your priesthood is an eternal obligation. As we serve together, we must serve in humility, always being kind and considerate of one another.

Each of us, as holders of the priesthood, is under covenant to serve faithfully in any assignment to which we may be called. Remember the admonition given by the Savior: "And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:44-45). He who was the greatest of all came to be the servant of all.

From the time one is first ordained to any office in the priesthood, he should be committed to a lifetime of service in the kingdom of God. Young men should be taught by loving and sensitive fathers, bishops, and priesthood advisers that priesthood means service. One of the most meaningful service opportunities you young men will have will be to serve as a full-time missionary.

Shortly after returning from my first mission, I heard our faithful stake patriarch bear his testimony in our ward fast and testimony meeting. He was just over 90 years of age; he said, "I pray every night that God will see me safely dead with my testimony burning brightly." Seeking to comfort this righteous patriarch, I said to him, "Patriarch, I know of no one more prepared than you are." He responded, "My boy, no one is safe until he has endured to the very end of his life." To receive the priesthood is to make an eternal commitment to serving others.



President David O. McKay declared: "Priesthood means service. This is true even in its divine source, as we may infer from the sublime declaration: 'This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.' Emanating from Deity is the service that leads to the redemption of God's children" (Pathways to Happiness, 231).

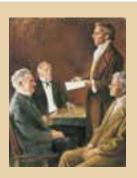
Where Can We Serve?

One major item of discussion on the agenda of every presidency meeting of Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood leaders should be service needs and opportunities. This also should be a regular item to consider in quorum business meetings. The question should be asked frequently: "Who among quorum members, ward members, or our neighbors is in need, and how can we, the brethren of the priesthood, assist?"

Individual quorum members do not need to wait for an assignment to serve. You priesthood brethren should be actively aware and should be looking for opportunities to reach out and help others.

We must always remember those stirring words of King Benjamin: "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17).

To hold the priesthood is to be engaged actively in God's work.



t is a cherished blessing to bear the priesthood of God and to have the opportunity of unlimited service to our fellowmen.

I invite you to ponder the following words of President Marion G. Romney: "Service is not something we endure on this earth so we can earn the right to live in the celestial kingdom. Service is the very fiber of which an exalted life in the celestial kingdom is made.

"Knowing that service is what gives our Father in Heaven fulfillment, and knowing that we want to be where He is and as He is, why must we be commanded to serve one another? . . . Service is what Godhood is all about" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 93).

It is a cherished blessing to bear the priesthood of God and to have the opportunity of unlimited service to our fellowmen. I know that the Lord Jesus Christ lives, and I pray that God may bless you, young and old, with a deep appreciation for the priesthood you bear and with an increased desire to serve your fellowmen and your Heavenly Father. **NE**

From an address given on May 3, 1992, at a satellite fireside commemorating the 163rd anniversary of the restoration of the priesthood.

THE RESTORATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

hen Jesus Christ was on the earth,

W He established His Church. After His Crucifixion and the deaths of His Apostles, the fulness of the gospel was taken from the earth because of widespread

May 15, 1829. Having learned about baptism from the gold plates, Joseph Smith

apostasy.



and Oliver Cowdery went to a secluded area to ask the Lord about it. There, on the banks of the Susquehanna River near Harmony, Pennsylvania, John the Baptist, a resurrected being, came to them as "a messenger from heaven . . . in a cloud of light." He conferred upon them the Aaronic Priesthood. Then, obeying his instructions, Joseph and Oliver baptized and ordained each other. (See Joseph Smith—History 1:68–72; see also D&C 13.)

May 1829. The ancient Apostles Peter, James, and John conferred the Melchizedek Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. (See D&C 128:20.)

From True to the Faith (2004), 137-38.



VALIANT IN THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Joseph Smith valiantly carried on Christ's work and taught others to do likewise.

rom the beginning of his ministry, the Prophet
Joseph Smith encountered a great deal of opposition and persecution. But he stood firm in the testimony of Christ and taught the Saints to do the same with boldness, cheerfulness, and a fixed resolve. Here are some of the Prophet's teachings on what it means to be a valiant follower of Christ.*

PERSEVERANCE AND CHEERFULNESS

"We hope to persevere on in every good and useful work, even unto the end, that when we come to be tried in the balance we may not be found wanting."

"Shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad."

BECOMING LIKE CHRIST AND RECEIVING OUR REWARD

"Strengthening our faith by adding every good quality that adorns the children of the blessed Jesus, we can pray in the season of prayer; we can love our neighbor as ourselves, and be faithful in tribulation, knowing that the reward of such is greater in the kingdom of heaven. What a consolation! What a joy! Let me live the life of the righteous, and let my reward be like his!"

"In the name of Jesus Christ, we entreat you to live worthy of the blessings that shall follow after much tribulation, to satiate the souls of them that hold out faithful to the end."

"Hold fast that which ye have received so liberally from the hand of God so that when the times of refreshing shall come ye may not have labored in vain, but that ye may rest from all your labors and have fulness of joy in the kingdom of God."

"A good man will endure all things to honor Christ, and even dispose of the whole world, and all in it, to save his soul."

* From Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 352–56.

LIUSTRATION BY DEL PARSON

Because I Was

If I had been home in bed, I would have missed it.

hated early-morning seminary. I was raised in Boulder, Colorado, and all we had was early-morning seminary. I tried every excuse why I should not go: "Teenagers need their sleep." "My life is too busy." "I'm too tired to pay attention, so I don't get anything out of it." Nothing worked. Every morning around 5:45, my mom would wake me, push me in the direction of the shower, and get me out the door for seminary.

This was my pattern all four years until the late fall of my senior year. I arrived at seminary, but the teacher had not shown up. A good friend of mine stood up in front of the class and said, "Since the teacher isn't here, I think we should just take turns reading aloud the assigned reading."

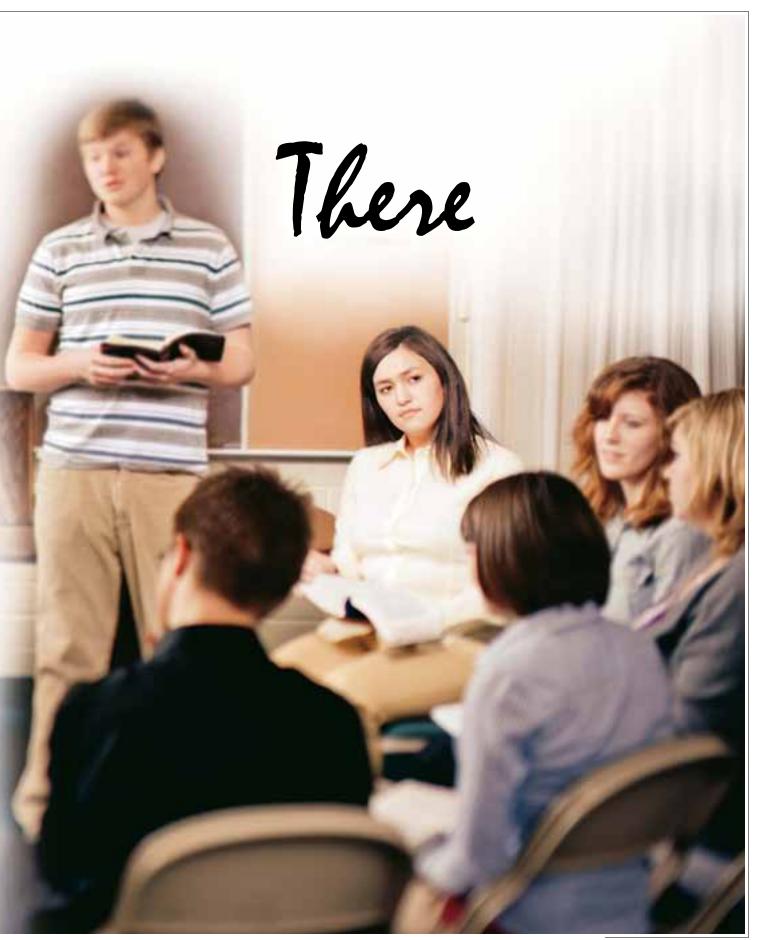
Someone started reading 2 Nephi 33:10-11: "Hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me; and they teach all men that they should do good.

"And if they are not the words of Christ, judge ye—for Christ will show unto you, with power and great glory, that they are his words, at the last day; and you and I shall

stand face to face before his bar; and ye shall know that I have been commanded of him to write these things, notwithstanding my weakness."

As I listened to these words, I thought, "I believe in Christ. If I believe in Him, then these words are true." As I completed that thought, the Spirit touched me more profoundly. I was so struck by it that I remember looking around the room to see if others were feeling the same thing. They didn't seem changed or appear as if they were feeling something different. This was a lesson that I was learning privately, just for me. The feeling didn't go away. I carried it with me for the rest of the day. It was the beginning of a strong testimony for me.

I have often thought about that event and contemplated the act of being diligent. I had been attending seminary reluctantly for almost four years. But because I was diligent and obeying my mother's desire that I attend, I was taught by the Spirit. If I had been at home in bed sleeping, I would have missed that opportunity. It is often when I least expect it, when I have been diligent day after day, month after month, and year after year attending church, reading the scriptures, or praying that the Spirit whispers to me and confirms the truth of the gospel. I am glad I learned that lesson at 17 while attending early morning seminary. **NE**



KEEPING YOUR HEAD (AND HEART) IN THE GAME

Prepare for your mission mentally and emotionally.

BY ROBERT K WAGSTAFF

efore they ever step out onto the playing field on the day of a big game, athletes spend a lot of time preparing. They master fundamental skills through daily practice. Strength training and conditioning also play a crucial role.

But the most successful athletes are not always those who are the physically strongest or the most gifted or skilled. More often they are those who are mentally and emotionally prepared for the challenging situations that arise in any athletic contest. They know how to work through difficulties, keep focused in the face of distractions, and stay positive when adversity strikes.

With Heart and Mind

If you are a missionary-to-be, you know that serving a mission takes a lot of preparation, too—study and prayer, interviews with Church leaders, appointments with doctors and dentists, and shopping for a missionary wardrobe. You should also get

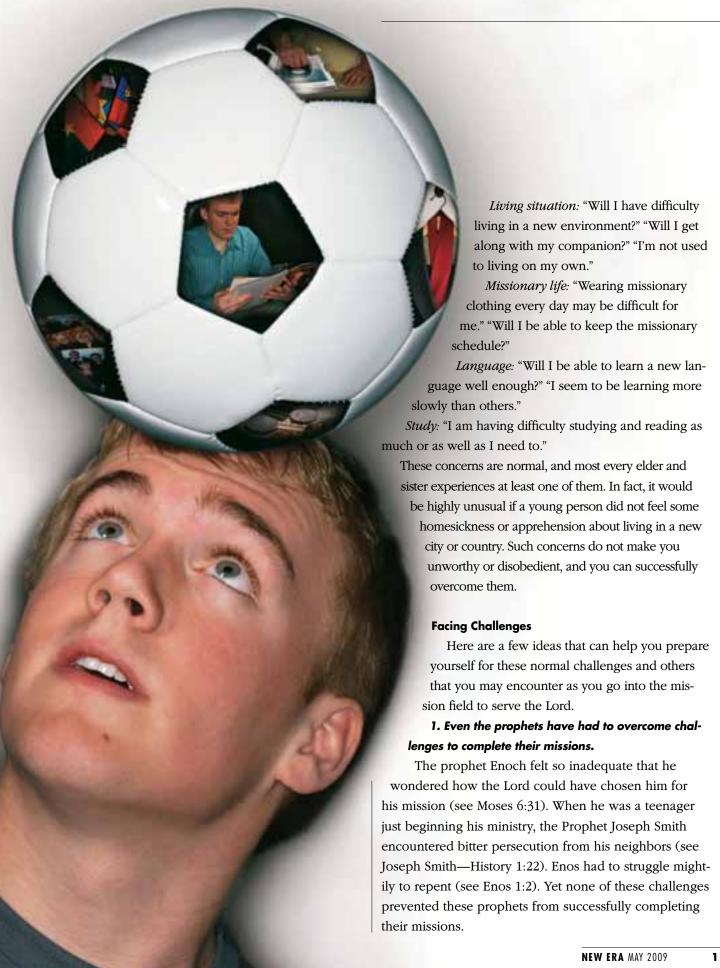
in physical shape for biking and walking, and brush up on how to cook a few simple, healthy meals, iron a shirt, sew on a button, and keep an apartment clean.

But serving a mission requires more than having a strong testimony, the right kind of clothing, and a few cans of SpaghettiO's. The Lord told Joseph Smith Senior, "Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your *heart*, might, *mind* and strength" (D&C 4:2; emphasis added). Like an athlete, you need to prepare both mentally and emotionally for the challenges you will encounter on a mission.

What are some of these challenges? While serving as president of the Philippines Missionary Training Center, I observed that most missionaries have concerns in the following areas:

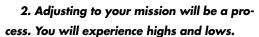
Finances: "Will I have enough money?" "Will my family have enough money to support me and themselves?"

Family: "I am homesick." "I miss my family and friends." "I worry about problems in my family." "My nonmember parents are not that happy that I'm serving a mission."



SEEK HELP IF NEEDED

be resolved when they are dealt with early. If needed, however, a doctor or professional counselor can help too. If you experience severe anxiety, obsessive thoughts, compulsive behaviors, or feelings of depression that interfere with your ability to function, your parents and priesthood leaders can help you get medical or professional help.



Initially, you should expect some stress as you adjust to being in a new and challenging environment. As your mission continues, other difficulties will inevitably arise. If you do not understand this, you may become frustrated or discouraged when you and your mission do not measure up to some imagined ideal.

3. Sharing a concern with another—a companion, district leader, or mission president can often help diminish your concerns. Keeping them bottled up magnifies them.

When I was serving as president of the Philippines Quezon City Mission, one day Elder Jones* arrived at the mission home wearing a T-shirt, jeans, and tennis shoes and carrying his suitcases. "I want to go home, President," he told me.

After listening to his concerns, I told him: "Leaving your mission is a reactive response, which will diminish the control you have over your life. And if you continue to be reactive, you will have problems dealing with difficulties you encounter after you return home." I also advised him to talk with other missionaries about his concerns.

After further discussion Elder Jones changed into his missionary clothing and returned to his area. He talked with other missionaries, and he prayed for strength to overcome his challenges. The next time I met with him, he expressed gratitude that he had persisted through his difficulties.

4. "Forget yourself and go to work."

You have probably heard this advice that President Gordon B. Hinckley's father sent to his discouraged missionary son. Work is good medicine. Sometimes just going to work can help your own problems diminish.



One wise mission president advised his missionaries to do a small kindness for their companions each day. Focusing on others' happiness also creates positive emotions.

Ammon and the sons of Mosiah, some of the great missionaries of the Book of Mormon, recorded: "Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: Go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give you success" (Alma 26:27). In other words, success would come only after they patiently persisted in doing the work they had been called to do.

5. The Lord is the wisest Counselor and the source of spiritual healing and strength.

By all appearances, Elder Clark* was an ideal missionary. He was obedient, baptized and confirmed many people, and was loved by his companions and Church members. During the last few months of his mission he served as my assistant in the mission office. So when I saw him following his mission I was surprised when he confided that he had had a very difficult time at the beginning of his mission. He was homesick, frustrated with learning the language, and having difficulty with the missionary schedule and rules. However, he knew he had been called by the Lord to serve his mission and that the Lord would support him. So he knelt to talk to the Lord, sharing his concerns and pleading for His help in overcoming them. "As I did this," Elder Clark told me, "I felt a real change in my being. I felt the Lord's support and strength. Ideas and good feelings



came to me, and I began to overcome my negative concerns. With God's help, I became a successful missionary."

Taking the Field

After a great athletic contest, we never hear athletes say anything like the following: "The whole game was easy and pleasant. I performed perfectly, and I encountered no challenges." Great games are hard-fought tests of character and resolve. We revere successful athletes for their strength in overcoming significant challenges.

missionaries who served early in this dispensation: "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). As the Lord's servant, you can be assured that He is not only aware of you but that He will be with you as you meet the great challenges and experience the great blessings that await you on your mission. **NE**

* Names have been changed.





"How do I avoid falling back into old habits such as swearing?"

abits are powerful and can be a good thing if they're positive. For example, it's great to develop the habit of smiling, praying daily, and exercising regularly. But, as you know, habits are harmful when they involve negative behaviors.

To avoid falling back into old habits, replace them with positive ones. That will take a lot of faith, effort, and conscious thought. To help you, use reminders, prayer, and the support of others. Plus, you'll need to change your thoughts.

"As you learn to control your thoughts, you can overcome habits, even degrading personal habits." That was the counsel of President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in the April 2008 issue of the New Era. He recommended the influence of good music, especially hymns, to help you control your thoughts. If you memorize a hymn, he said, you can think of its words and music when you need a worthy place for your thoughts to go.

In your efforts to change your habits, don't forget the Savior's promise: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you" (3 Nephi 18:20). With the Lord's help, you can change. NE



Make a Goal to Stop

To overcome a bad habit such as swearing, make a goal to stop. Write this goal in your journal or somewhere you can

see it daily. As soon as you catch yourself falling back into your habit, stop immediately. Realize that the devil wants you to continue your bad habit. Invite the Spirit by reading your scriptures and praying to Heavenly Father for guidance.

Kayla P., 14, Arizona



Four Things That Have Helped Me

Pray. Tell your Father in Heaven you want to avoid falling back into old habits. Second,

have faith. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ only want the best for you. Have faith that They will help you. Third, search and ponder. Read your scriptures, For the Strength of Youth, and your patriarchal blessing, for they will help you and guide you. Last, take action. Choose friends who use clean language, who support you in avoiding old habits. Heed the guidance of the prophets and apostles, for they will not lead you astray. I know this is true, mainly because I have had to fix my old habits as well. I don't regret that I heeded this counsel. It has truly helped me.

Allison H., 17, Arizona



Be Around the Right People

Hang out with people who don't have the habit you're trying to break.

Then you may not even think about it because you're around people who don't do it. If it's swearing, sometimes there's social pressure to use inappropriate language. The solution: don't hang out with people who swear! Not only will you no longer find a use for it, but you will feel spiritually uplifted. Gates K., 17, New Jersey

Use Incentives

I have found that incentives really worked when I have tried to guit old habits. You can start out by going a week or a month without doing whatever it is you are quitting. At the end of that time, do a little something you enjoy. You can even get a friend to help you. You and your friend can work on quitting something together. It's much easier to overcome a habit because you have someone checking up on you and encouraging you. At the end of the month, do something with each other like a party.

Theresa D., 17, New Mexico

Get Others to Help You

One way that works well is to have others help you, such as friends and family. Determine who you usually swear around. Then, with help from the Lord, build up enough courage to let those people know that you're trying to stop swearing. Tell them that you want them to catch you when you swear. If you feel you cannot ask those people, put your confidence in a close friend or family member who is often at your side. Most importantly, don't

forget to thank your friends, family, and especially the Lord for helping you once you've overcome your bad habit.

Jessie T., 18, British Columbia



Apologize and Repent

Whenever you feel like swearing, try to not say anything at that time, or say something good. If a

swear word accidentally slips out, then repent, apologize to the people you were around, and apologize to yourself. Sheleyse K., 13, Utah

The Wonderful Feeling of Doing What's Right

If you're afraid you might go back to old habits, stay close to the Church. Read your scriptures, pray daily, love your parents, go to church, and always smile. Hang out with friends who would always support you. There are times when I feel like going back to my old habits, but when I remember all the wonderful feelings of doing what's right, I know I don't want to go back. We don't have to be afraid as long as we're doing what's right. Remember, even if you're alone, there are thousands of youth in the world who are supporting you.

Marla O., 20, Micronesia

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

NEXT QUESTION

"How do I get to know people who are not Church members, be a good example to them, and invite them to church when I can't spend time with them because they hang out at places I shouldn't go?"

Send your answer by June 15, 2009, to:

New Era, Q&A, 6/09 50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420 Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org

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SIGNATURE

PARENT'S SIGNATURE (IF YOU ARE UNDER 18)

HOW TO CORRECT A HABIT " anyone who has followed the practice of using profanity or vulgarity and would like to correct the habit, could I offer this suggestion? "1. Make the commitment to erase such words from "2. If you slip and say a swear word or a substitute your vocabulary. word, mentally reconstruct the sentence without the vulgarity or substitute word.

"3. Repeat the new sentence aloud. "Eventually you will develop a nonvulgar speech habit." Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Thy Speech Reveals Thee," New Era, July 2007, 5.

A LETTER FROM MY

It couldn't have arrived at a better time.

BY COURTNEY HATCH

t had always been my dream to live in Germany, and at age 16 I left home for a year to be an exchange student abroad. Although my host family would not be Latterday Saints, I didn't think it would have a big effect on me and how I lived. It ended up being a little different than I had imagined.

My host family did not support my going to church on Sundays, and because I had to rely on other Church members for rides, I was only able to go to Church a few times during the first months that I was in Germany. I thought I could handle it, but with no seminary, no family home evenings, no home teachers, no family scripture study, and no family prayer, I felt myself slipping, and temptations became stronger.

I went to Berlin for a week to stay with some friends during the fall holidays. The week was packed full of fun and excitement, but I was sometimes with people who were smoking, drinking, and doing drugs. I never participated, but by the end of the week I had become accustomed to it all. I didn't realize it at the time, but during that week I didn't pray or read my scriptures. Instead, I let worldly things distract me, and I felt like there simply was not enough time for prayer and scripture study.

When I returned home there was a note from my host family informing me that they would be out of town for a few hours. I felt exhausted, confused, and alone. For the first time in my life no one understood how I felt, and there was no one I could talk to who could relate to how I was feeling. After such an amazing week in Berlin, how was it that I felt so unhappy?

When I went into my room, I noticed a letter from my dad had arrived earlier that day. I tore open the letter and began to cry as I read the message that he must have been

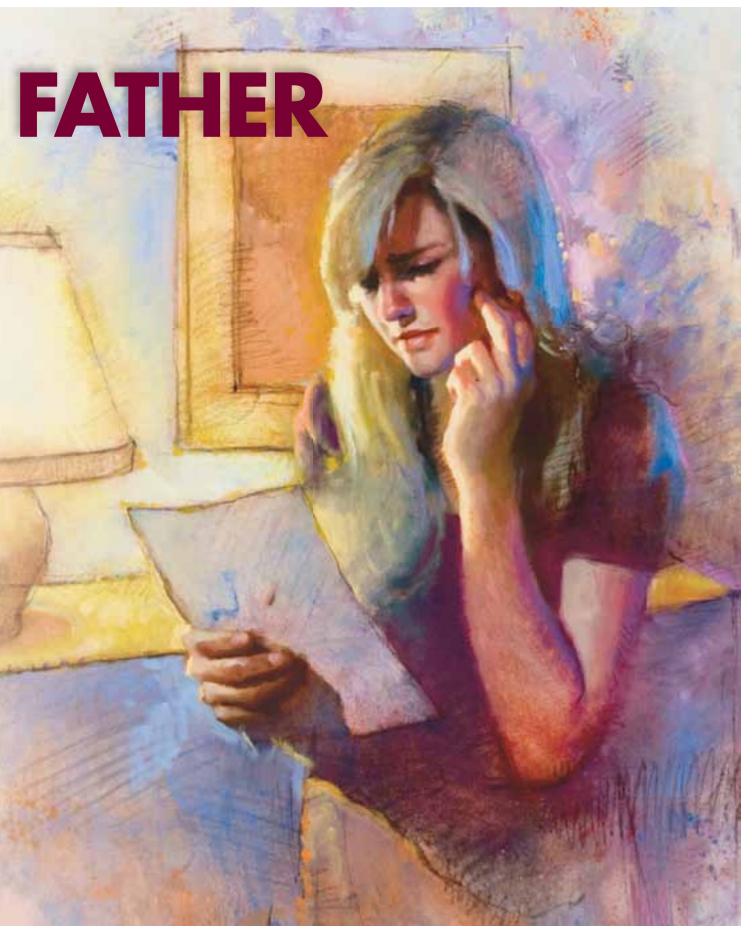
inspired to write. He wrote about the Church, the value of living the standards, and that he had full confidence that I was making good decisions on my own. How could he have known what I was facing? The message was brief, but it was the perfect thing for me to read. The letter concluded with: "Interesting how 16-year-olds can legally drink in Germany. . . . Just remember that freedom to do something means freedom not to do it as well."

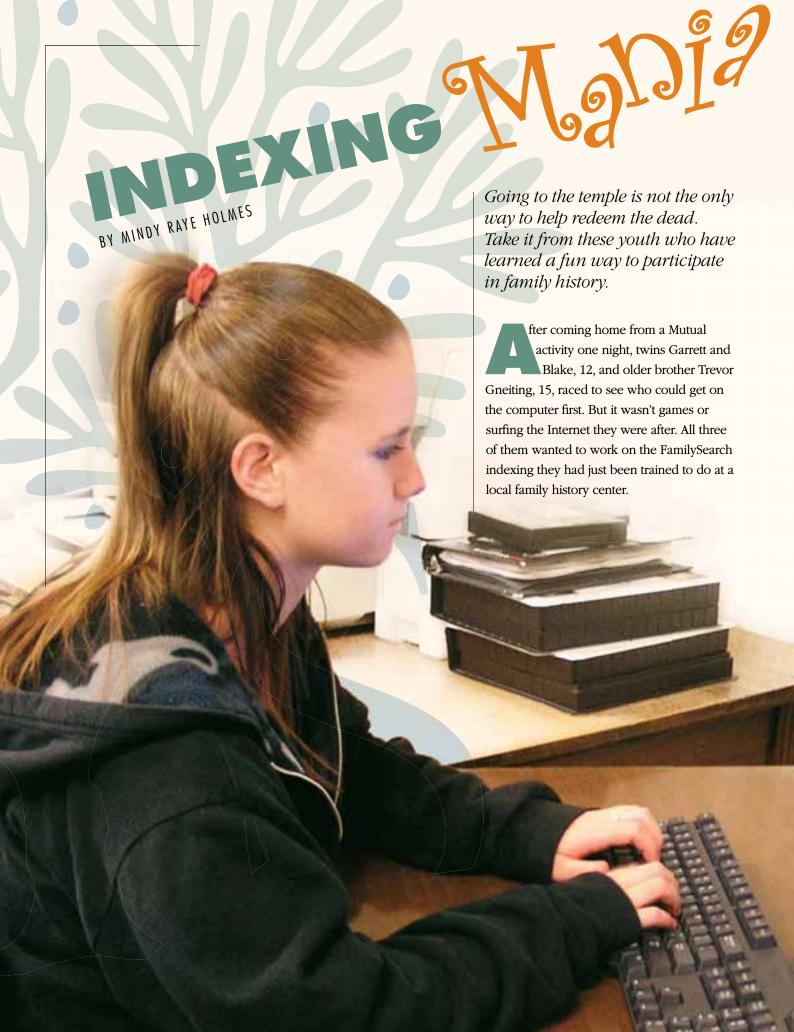
Dad's letter reminded me that just because something is "legal" doesn't mean that it isn't still wrong. It brings far more happiness to live the standards of the Church than to live the standards of the world.

After I read the letter, I realized my father knew me better than I thought he did. I was quickly reminded of another letter I had from my Heavenly Father. He had also written me a very personal letter in the form of my patriarchal blessing. It was, once again, exactly what I needed. My patriarchal blessing became more personal and special to me in that moment when I realized how it really was a "letter from my Father" as well.

Heavenly Father knows and understands our needs, and I am so grateful I had that letter to read, to remind me of who I am, and who my Father is. We are children of God, and although worldly things can be distracting at times, they don't bring true happiness. The week I spent in Berlin was fun, but I still felt alone, and that fun was only temporary. When I read my patriarchal blessing, I felt a joy and a closeness to God that was far better than the shortlived pleasures of the world.

I know that God lives, that He knows us personally, and that He truly wants us to be happy because He loves us more than we can imagine. He is our Father. **NE**





"We all enjoyed doing it," Garrett says.
"It was like a game we could always do because our mom couldn't get angry about it."

FamilySearch indexing is a way to help with family history by using a computer to get names off of records and make them available online for those searching for ancestors to find.

Providing this service is something that will affect many people because it helps those looking for their ancestors' information so that it can be submitted to the temple.

"I know that I'm helping to find people that maybe wouldn't have had the chance to have their work done," says Amanda Pace, 18. "It's cool to know that even if I don't go to the temple for them myself, I can help them get there."



WHAT IS FAMILY SEARCH INDEXING?

Basically, indexing is the process of turning written information into a form that computers can read and search. FamilySearch representatives have made digital images of historical documents such as books, census records, immigration registries, birth, marriage, and death certificates, and other records, which they have sent back to the Church.

When you log into the system and request a "batch," you are sent copies of those historical documents. You type in the information you see on the record into boxes the program provides. The batch is also indexed by a second person to make sure it is right. A third person checks to see if there are any inconsistencies and decides what is correct.

Then the information is sent back to the Church and put on the family history Web site. Then when someone searches for a name that has been indexed, the information that was on the record will come up.

"Doing indexing made me feel happy because I was helping others by writing down names so they could look up those names and do their family history," says Jason Trauntvein, 12.



Starting the Project

These youth and others from the Payson 20th Ward in the Payson Utah Mount Nebo Stake started indexing after their bishop challenged them to index 250 names each to qualify to go on a trip. He also extended the challenge to the leaders as well as the youth.

"We challenged them that we leaders could index more names than they could," says Bishop Steven Pace. "The losers had to serve the winners dinner . . . and the leaders ended up serving the youth dinner."

Four months after the challenge was issued, the youth had far surpassed the original goal of 250 names per person and had indexed more than 50,000 names altogether. The leaders realized the goal was too low and upped the challenge to 1,000 names, and they made the challenge not only between the leaders and youth, but also between the different quorums and classes.

"The priests quorum needs to pick it up," says Kendall Little, 17, who has indexed more names than any of the other teens. "We don't want to be one of the bottom two classes, because then we have to do dishes on the trip."

Peeking at the Past

The youth were originally motivated by the competition, but now they say they do indexing because it's fun, and they know they are helping those who lived before.

"I like to think about the people we are doing this for and how much they must





HOW CAN YOU BEGIN

etting involved in FamilySearch indexing is easy. All you need is a computer and an Internet connection. Go to www.family-searchindexing.org and click **Volunteer**. Everything you need is on the Web site, from installing the program, to step-by-step instructions on how to set up an account, to getting started and indexing each specific project. There is even a short video tutorial with time-saving tips. The program is easy to use and indexing a batch only takes 30 minutes, and you can save your work or quit at anytime if you don't finish.

For more information on FamilySearch indexing and how it works, see "FamilySearch Indexing," *Ensign*, Aug. 2007, 34–41.



appreciate it," says Miranda Hyer, 14. "When I first started indexing, I thought they were just old people who lived a long time ago, but they're not that different from us."

One of the big differences between the times of the people in the records and today is the writing style used. The youth said the only hard thing about indexing is trying to figure out how the names are spelled when the writing is hard to read.

"Some of the cursive writing is like hieroglyphics," says Jason Trauntvein, 12. "My mom would have to come and help me."

Being able to distinguish names that were difficult to read taught the youth that they were doing the work of the Lord and that He was helping them.

Amanda says there were times when she would think she knew what a name was while she was indexing and then

just have a feeling that it was something else. "Then I'd look at it again and I'd see that it clearly said the name I was feeling," she says. "Those were really good experiences."

Living in the Present

Having experiences helping those who lived in the past has also helped these youth strengthen their testimonies and live in the world today.

"Doing indexing helped show me the importance of temple work," says Kendall. "I also know that God is willing to help us and give us the answers if we'll just listen to Him."

The willingness to provide this service is something that has changed them. And it's also given them something worthwhile to do during their free time.

One time when Trevor had some extra time after taking a biology test in a class, he got on a computer and started indexing. Other students were on the computers playing games although the teacher told them not to. "The kids who were playing games got in trouble," Trevor says, "but the teacher just told me to finish up my batch."

The youth say being able to index names has been a satisfying endeavor, and counting the names they have indexed is way better than any score they could get on a computer or video game.

Looking to the Future

All of those names the youth indexed are real people who lived before, so there are thousands of Heavenly Father's children being affected by their efforts with indexing, people Kendall says he hopes to meet one day.

"If you think about it, you're kind of making lots of friends that you're going to go meet eventually when you die," he says. "Then they'll all come and say, 'Thanks for doing my name,' because without you their work may have never been done."

Receiving so many blessings has taught these youth and their leaders something many Church members have discovered: indexing is easy, fun, rewarding, and engrossing. **NE**



THE URGE TO INDEX

Rendall Little, 17, has led in his ward by indexing more than 18,000 names. He says when he started indexing, people told him it would be hard to put down, but he didn't believe them. "But I did get caught up in it, because I started doing it anytime I had free time," he says.

One of the great experiences Kendall had with indexing was once when he opened a batch that looked blank. He was about to send it back when suddenly he noticed very faded names. He decided to give it a try. "Somehow I was able to read them even though it looked like someone had

written them with lemon juice," Kendall recalls. "I know Heavenly Father helped me."

Experiences like that and other things he's noticed since he began indexing make Kendall an advocate for FamilySearch indexing. "I



would highly recommend participating in this marvelous work to anyone seeking comfort, an increased testimony, an increase of the Spirit in their lives, a greater understanding of the plan of salvation, a closer relationship to God, or a more tightly knit family," he says. "For me, indexing did all this and more."





PROMISE

arly during my freshman year of high school, I accepted my seminary teacher's challenge to read the Book of Mormon cover to cover. Now, a month before my 15th birthday, I knelt by my bed and took Moroni's challenge to heart:

"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" (Moroni 10:3).

I began to ponder how the Lord had been merciful to me that school year and counted the many ways my life had been blessed. I had earned better grades than ever. I had developed skills in both football and track, and next year's seasons looked promising. I had made some exceptional friends who showed me through their example the way I should try to live my life.

I pondered on all I had read about that year in the Book of Mormon—the courage of Nephi, the conversion of Alma, the faith of Helaman's 2,000 warriors, the sorrow of Mormon as his people destroyed themselves through sin. I asked myself if I believed what I had read and concluded that I did believe and that applying what I read had helped me to have a successful freshman year.

Then I put the final part of Moroni's promise to the test: "And when ye shall receive these things, I would





Michaela and the Marshmallows

I didn't just receive a treat; I received a reminder of my Savior's love for me personally.

t began as an ordinary day, but by second period I felt as if my entire life were coming apart at the seams. I didn't get a role in the school play, it seemed like all my friends were avoiding me like the plague, I felt incompetent in almost all of my classes, and I felt inferior to everyone I came in contact with.

I had no excuse to feel this way. I knew I was blessed with a happy family, a nice home, plenty of friends, and many talents. I have never been insulted or brutally teased; why should I feel so bad about myself now? I'd had other roles in school plays . . . why should this one matter? But for some reason, it *did* matter, and my head and shoulders slumped lower and lower as the day dragged on. Between classes, I wrote in my diary.

"I feel of so little worth. It's one of those days when you turn to people for sympathy, and they don't seem to care. They almost just shrug as if to say, 'You deserved it' or 'I have better things to care about.'"

By fifth period, I was still trying to pull myself together. I tried to remember a scripture that would help me, but it didn't work.

At the close of fifth period, I finally decided that I would be polite and friendly to everyone I saw. Just as I was about to leave the room, a girl entered with a sunny smile that I remembered from seminary that morning. Michaela had given a devotional in seminary about pulling through the rough times and the storms of life. She handed out treats: peppermint marshmallows. I mentioned the devotional to her, and how interesting I thought the homemade marshmallows were. She smiled and pulled a spare set of treats and a paper with a quote from her book bag, handing them to me. Her smile alone

brightened my day, but it went far beyond that.

As I walked down the hallway, reading the handout, I had trouble catching my breath. On that small sheet of paper was the scripture I had tried so earnestly to remember.

"Peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment" (D&C 121:7).

There was also this thought:
"Remember that no matter what you are going through, there will always be someone there for you!"

Tears sprang to my eyes. Those simple words brought me comfort and taught me something new. Logically, doctrinally, I suppose I'd always known that God loved and cared for me, but this time I felt it personally.

My heart felt full. I knew that He really does love me, and He wants me to be happy. Even though nothing was really and truly wrong, He still cared, and I could bring my problems to Him—great or small. **NE**





In Georgetown (below), the classroom is full and the seminary students are listening. In the nearby town of Patentia, Nikita Kubeer (riaht) takes a break outside her school's snack bar and talks about the positive influence of her sisters, including Diane (upper right).

It's a great day in the morning and all day long—now that seminary starts it off for these teens at the top of South America.

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY Church Magazines

ow do you get your day off to a great start? Teenage Latter-day Saints in Georgetown, Guyana, will tell you the answer is easy—go to seminary. Many of them have participated in homestudy seminary before, but the Church has



grown rapidly in this country at the top of South America, and now there are enough youth and teachers to hold early-morning seminary every weekday before school.

Start with Seminary

Visit the seminary class at the Prashad Nagar meetinghouse, and even though it's early, the room is full, and the students are listening. Xiann Kippins, 16, enjoys the class a lot, in part because her mother is the teacher.

"In seminary, we fill our hearts and minds with good thoughts," Xiann explains. "We learn about gospel principles and doctrines, and we see our Church friends every morning, too. My mother and I talk about the things we study together. I have also seen the examples of my older brother and sister, who went to seminary and who are both now on full-time missions."

Shelly and Telesha Seenaraine agree that starting the day with seminary means starting the day off right. "It helps me to begin on a good note," says 14-year-old Shelly, "and it prepares me to make correct choices as I deal with whatever the day holds." Telesha, 15, says seminary is a daily reminder "that the Lord will bless us and keep us safe as long as we are doing what's right."

And Simeon Lovell, 14, and Milena Embleton, 15, say that now that they are used to coming to seminary every morning, the day just wouldn't be complete without it.





BIG SISTERS ARE WATCHING

ikita Kubeer's big sister Dianne teaches in the same school system where Nikita goes to school in Patentia. Thrilled to be a teacher, she says, "Much of what I am right now is because of seminary and institute.

"At first I felt like I had so many things to do that I was tempted to put seminary aside, but my big sisters encouraged me to go, and now I'm glad they did. Seminary is a wonderful opportunity, and it's important to go and to pay attention. One of the best things I discovered in seminary is that I'll be learning my whole life. And now, as a teacher, I can help others to learn too."

She says that seminary taught her a pattern for learning and teaching. "There are so many examples in the scriptures," she says, "and you also see how your teachers teach. If you follow those examples, learning and teaching will become more natural for you."

Having been encouraged by her big sisters, Dianne is now returning the favor by encouraging Nikita in her seminary studies. They also have a younger brother who will be starting seminary next year.



Surrounded by
her seminary class
(above), Sister Kippins
says getting up early
to study the gospel
is a joy. Michael
Ramgobin (below
right) rejoices that he
is "part of something
real," and Clint
Callender (above right)
serves as a district
clerk.

For the Strength of Michael

In addition to the strength they find in seminary, youth in Guyana fortify themselves from other sources as well. For example, 16-year-old Michael Ramgobin of the Demerara Branch says that *For the Strength of Youth* is a great help to him.

"Everyone should have this," he says, holding up his copy of the pamphlet. "It really helps you make decisions that are right." He recommends reading it over and over again, "because it seems like every time you do, you find something new to help you."

The only member of the Church in his family, Michael says family members support his membership because they see such a difference in him since he became a Latter-day Saint. "I feel a lot more confident as I keep learning more and more about the gospel," Michael says. He particularly enjoys listening to general conference and attending youth conferences. "I feel I have become part of something real."

What else has strengthened Michael in the year since he joined the Church? "Reading the scriptures. As you read, the Holy Ghost helps you see things you didn't see before. Then with the faith you have in Jesus Christ,

you find your way. That's why my testimony keeps building every day."

The youth in the branch help each other, too. "We share our concerns and encourage each other," Michael says. In fact, he feels similar encouragement from everyone in the branch, and was particularly impressed when some of the missionaries presented him with a white shirt and tie.

"When I walked into church the next Sunday, everyone said, 'Wow, you look like a real missionary.' I feel a difference when I'm dressed that way." A full-time mission sounds exciting, he says. It would be a good way to continue the great day that dawned when he joined the Church.

Mark This Callender

Every day is busy for Clint Callender, another member of the Garden Park Branch. But being busy keeps him happy. The 17-year-old did so well on his exams that he is now teaching information technology at the Tutorial High School. He was recently sustained as district clerk, a calling that matches well with his interest in computers and his plans to study computer science at a university next year. He is also busy with Aaronic Priesthood and Mutual activities,

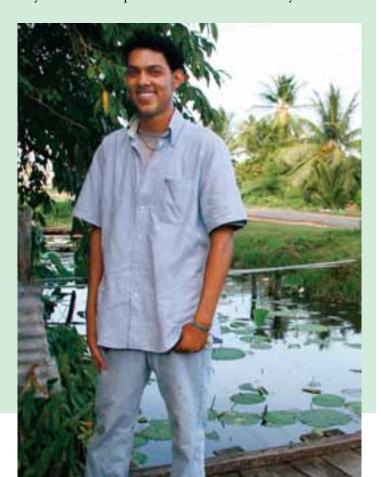


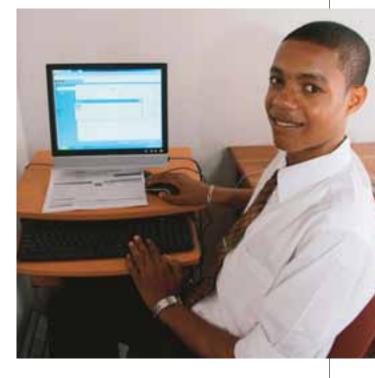
seminary, basketball, friends, and simply living the gospel day by day.

"I'm trying to be a light to my family and to other people," Clint says. For example, he encourages his family to pray and to hold family home evening. And with friends, he says, "I try to get them to take a look at what they're doing, to see what is right and what is wrong, to guide them if they want help." He also talks with friends about the Church's humanitarian efforts worldwide. "I tell them that in disasters, we provide food and clothing." And, he says, smiling, "We offer prayers, too."

Clint says his personal prayers lift his spirit. "It's wonderful to know that you can kneel down and speak directly to Heavenly Father sincerely, and you will receive an answer, not always right away, but eventually. Prayer helps you to be much closer to Heavenly Father. Just keep the channel open all of the time."

He looks to the future with hope. "When I'm 19, I see myself serving a full-time mission," he says. "That's another way to be an example." He believes that someday there will





OVERCOMING TEMPTATIONS

t isn't always easy to live the gospel, but it's worth it. And if you want to keep the commandments, the Lord will provide a way (see 1 Nephi 3:7, 1 Corinthians 10:13, and D&C 95:1).

Those are truths Clint Callendar lives by. "Every day I face trials and temptations, every single day," he says. "Being a member of the Church of Jesus Christ, more trials and temptations are there for you. But remember, Heavenly Father wants us to return to live with Him someday, and you can only do that if you keep the commandments.

"One thing that helps me is that normally I sing a hymn, and mostly I have a prayer in my heart or keep memorizing a scripture. In every thing I try to give praise and thanks unto God" (see Boyd K. Packer, "Worthy Music, Worthy Thoughts," *New Era*, Apr. 2008, 6).

"I have learned that commandments are not restrictions but guidelines that lead us to Heavenly Father. Trials and temptations help us become strong if we overcome them with faith. When you overcome one temptation, it makes you stronger to overcome the next one."



Learning the gospel together helps Michael Meredith and Selwin Lovell (above) follow in the footsteps of Dellon Murray (right), who says seminary is great preparation for a lifetime of service.

NEmore

For additional stories and photos about youth in Guyana, visit **newera.lds. org**.



be a temple in Guyana.

"Families will go there to be sealed, and I hope my family will be one of them," Clint says. "A temple in Guyana means many more Guyanese will be Latter-day Saints. The temple brings a feeling of peace and reverence, and I think all of Guyana will be blessed." What a great day that will be!

Patience in Patentia

In a smaller town on the outskirts of Georgetown, a place called Patentia, 16-year-old Nikita Kubeer pauses for a moment during her school day to count her blessings. It's something she does regularly, because it makes her feel good.

"I have a lot to be grateful for," Nikita says, and she lists many of the things you might think of—family, friends, food, shelter, and especially her testimony of the restored gospel. "The gospel means the most to me when I take what I study and use it in my life," she says. "Living the gospel has taught me that the Lord will bless us if we are patient, keep the commandments, and trust in His promises. I am particularly grateful to the Savior for what He has done for us."

With a list of blessings to count and an attitude of gratitude, Nikita, like the other Latter-day Saint youth in Guyana, knows that every day can be a great day when you trust in the Lord. **NE**

WHY GO TO SEMINARY?

hat advice would someone who has already completed seminary give to you? Ask Dellon Murray of Georgetown, Guyana, and he hesitates for just an instant. It isn't that he's at a loss for words, it's that he can think of so much to say that he doesn't know where to start.

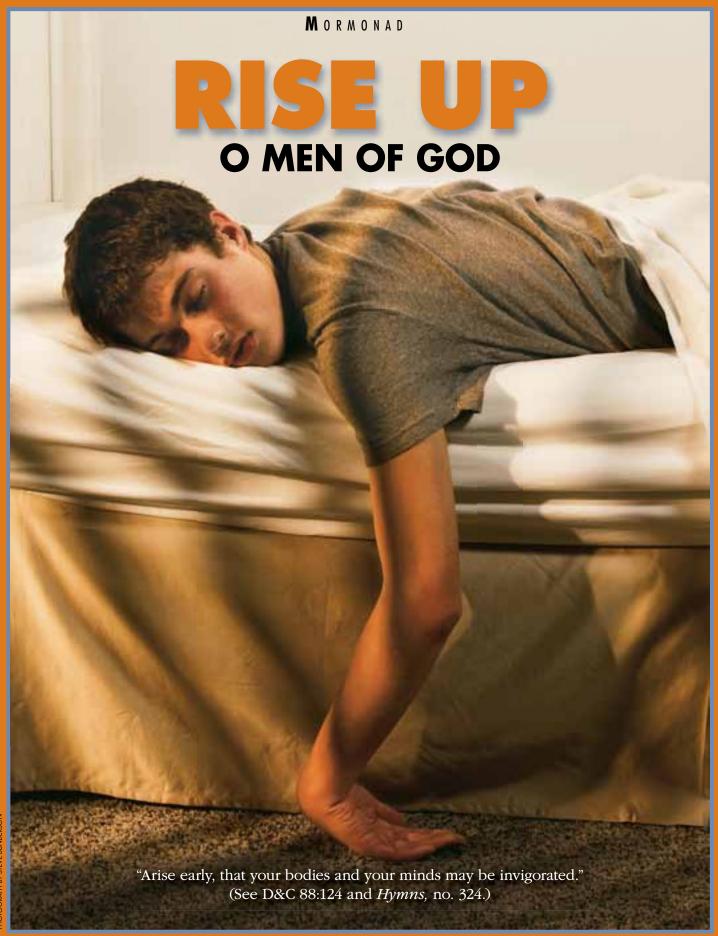


One of the best things about seminary, he says, is that it helps you build friendships with those who share your values. "At school, we didn't have a lot of friends who kept the same standards," Dellon recalls. "So with most students you try to be friendly and do school work with them, but when it comes to hanging out, you have to stay away. In seminary, though, you're around LDS friends who share the same ideals. It gives you a sense of hope."

A returned missionary who served in the Jamaica Kingston Mission, Dellon notes that all seven of his fellow home-study seminary students are still active in the Church, and that five of the seven have now served full-time missions. He says seminary also:

- Strengthens your testimony that God the Father and Jesus Christ did appear to Joseph Smith.
- Awakens a desire to feast upon the scriptures.
- Teaches you how to prepare for and receive personal revelation.
- · Increases your faith as you feel the Spirit.
- Prepares you to be a better missionary.

Dellon says he was a better full-time missionary "because of what I learned in seminary about the Book of Mormon and the Savior." He says he knew when he asked people to gain a testimony that they could, "because I had already done the same thing."



1 Had QUESTIONS

BY ELDER MICHAEL JOHN U. TEH Of the Seventy



I had always been active in the Church, but something was missing.

hen I was three years old my parents joined the Church as some of the pioneers in Davao City, down south in the Philippines. Like some people who grew up in the Church, I went through a time when I kind of took the Church for granted.

I was always active in the Church, but I didn't realize that I didn't yet have a true testimony of the gospel. I guess my beliefs were based on the testimony of my parents and my priesthood leaders and everyone else who helped me in the Church. They knew I participated in everything. I memorized the Articles of Faith when I was in Primary. I participated in the Young Men program. But something was missing.

I Asked

My search for a testimony was triggered when I was a teenager and my peers started asking questions about our beliefs and practices. Latter-day Saints are a minority in the Philippines, so most of my friends and peers were not Church members. I started wondering why I was required to do things or why I couldn't do some of the things they did.

I also had a question about going on a mission. When I was in Primary, my bishop asked me, "Are you going on a mission?" and my response was, "Of course." When I grew

to be a young man and started enjoying life and high school, "Of course" became "Yes," still with some excitement. And then in the later years of high school, with more peer pressure, I said, "I think I'm going on a mission," and I started to waver. And then finally, I actually didn't know. My response became "Maybe."

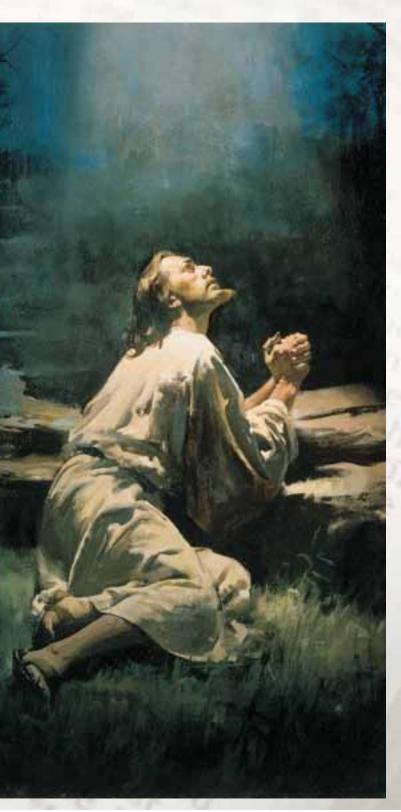
So I had these questions and went to my bishop and my parents. They challenged me to read the Book of Mormon. That is when I came to understand that it was time for me to get my own testimony. I'd been reading the Book of Mormon for seminary, but I decided to take the challenge and *really* read the Book of Mormon.

The Lord's Answer

I made it a point to pray before and sometimes during my reading—just to have a prayer in my heart and afterwards plead with my Father to let me know the truth about the Book of Mormon and what people had been telling me about gaining a testimony.

The first few times, of course, it was the same—they were just words on the page. But later on the scriptures began to be more understandable to me. And then I started to have particular feelings about some principles that were taught.

The next stage was that I was really



When I talked to my bishop, an understanding of the Atonement—what the Savior has done for us—came to me.

getting into it. I was looking for opportunities to read, because I was finding myself in there, and it was having a wonderful effect on me. The Holy Ghost was constantly helping me to feel good about the things I was reading, causing a sensation to come over me—a warm feeling in my heart.

Finally, in one of those prayers, I just knew—I just knew that it was true. It was that overwhelming feeling that, no doubt about it, the Book of Mormon is true, the Church is true. When that testimony came, all the questions went away, and I knew that this is the true Church and that I needed to serve a mission.

From Testimony to Understanding

As I desired to understand the scriptures and the doctrine, I started to learn things—things started to click. This had an effect on me and led me to start doing things differently and also to go to my bishop and talk to him about things I had been carrying around and good things I wanted to make happen in my life.

For me, this was a crossover between gaining a testimony and understanding what the Atonement can do for me. I worked pretty closely with my bishop. I'd always been close with him, but as soon as I got serious and got into the scriptures, I began to recall things that I had done and that I didn't want to carry with me. So I started talking to my bishop about certain things so that I could be free of the burden. I went to him, and we spoke and counseled together. Afterward, as I left the bishop's office, it was like I was free, a big burden was lifted off of me.

That's when an understanding of the Atonement—of

MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

"I'd like to share a favorite scripture. Everyone knows it: 1 Nephi 3:7—'I will go and do.' What a great promise in a world where everything is uncertain, where we're a minority, where people disbelieve and you wonder about your capacity and about how you can accomplish the things that the Lord has asked you to do.

"Just go and do, because the Lord provides a way. When you start having callings after you leave the youth program, that can be a guiding principle: It's not about me. I'll just be obedient, and whatever the Lord tells me through His leaders, I will go and do, because the Lord always opens a way.

"If you just follow
the counsel of the Lord
through your parents,
leaders, and the scriptures,
the Lord opens a way. That
continues to be a source
of strength for me and a
guiding principle in my
life—one of the first things
you learn in the Book of
Mormon, actually."



I did not have any hesitation in testifying of the Book of Mormon on my mission (top row, second from right).

what the Savior has done for us—came to me. And that's when I truly felt that He knew me, He did this for me, and He loved me. Having the courage to go to my priesthood leader and talk to him helped me so much. I had a very tender, sweet relationship with my bishop because he took the time to work with me. And the scriptures were the catalyst.

The Scriptures and a Testimony

I just loved the scriptures from then on. I did not have any hesitation in testifying of the Book of Mormon on my mission to bring the Spirit into what we were teaching. I felt that I knew and understood what it contains and what it could do for an individual and a family. I could tell them about particular verses in the scriptures that had helped me and that could help them in particular situations they were in. The scriptures and a testimony of the gospel help you through difficult times.

It's very important that you gain your own testimony. A borrowed testimony or just relying on the fun things you do in the Church will only get you through so much. I often use the illustration of the wise man who built his house on rock and the foolish man who built on sand (see Luke 6:47–49). Our

testimonies can be compared to that home. What will determine the strength of your testimony—or how you will survive, in the gospel sense—is whether you will continue to be strong and committed.

In Luke 6:48 it says that the wise man "built an house, and digged deep." We must dig *deep*. Also, digging down to rock is a lot of hard work. We need to invest time in reading, studying, and being involved in the Church so that we can dig that deep foundation and build upon that rock.

The verse then says that "the stream beat vehemently upon that house." Challenges will come to you *vehemently*, head-on. So if you're not prepared, your house will fall, and you will fall. You will not survive, you will not be as committed, you will not be as ready to do what the Lord wants you to do, and you will not be prepared for what He has planned for you. So it is terribly important that you invest the time to gain that testimony.

My experience has shown me that if you put forth the effort to sincerely study the scriptures and pray, Heavenly Father will bless you with a testimony, which can change your life and be a guide to you throughout your days. **NE**

PBFINK

BY DAN BARKER

s a young forest technician recently graduated from college, I was working with the project forester in the Porcupine With the Porc

As the two of us prepared for our days accept the forester noticed I had failed to pack water. I justified my decision by explaining to him that since justified my decision by explaining to him that since this was early spring, there would be plenty of water from streams and creeks flowing in the hills. By not carrying any water, I'd be saving weight and room in my day pack. He seemed to accept my reasoning in my day pack. He seemed to accept my reasoning just fine, and off we went for an exhilarating day of work in the bush.

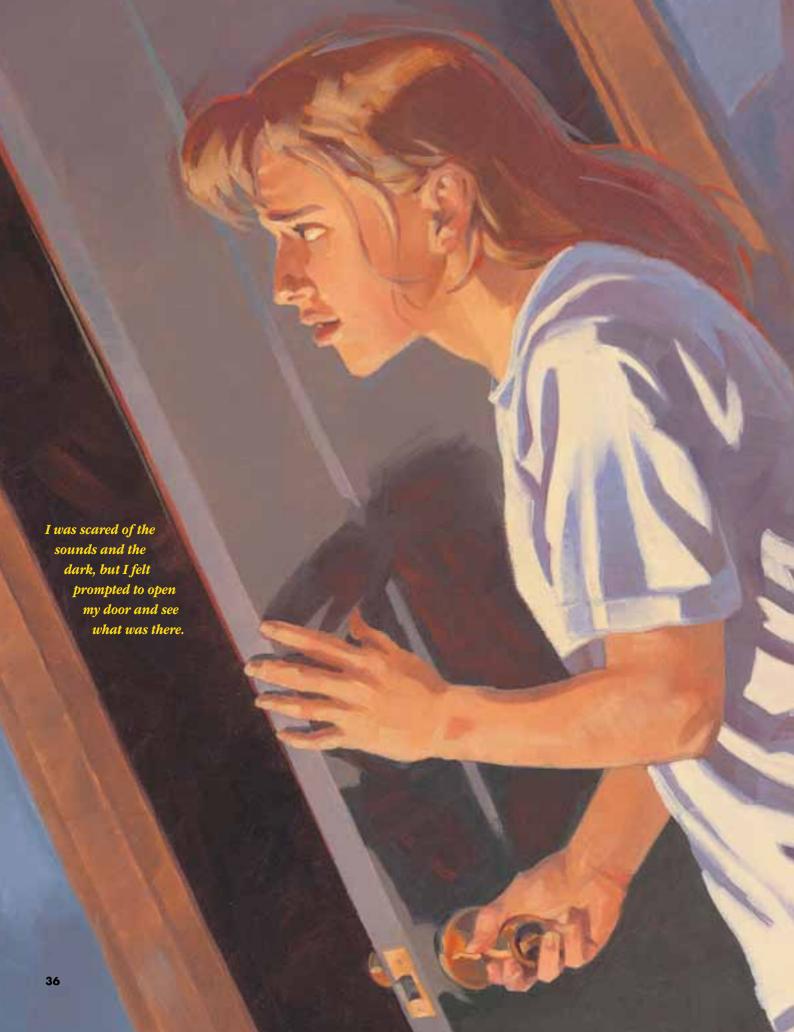
After we had worked for a few hours, I was startaged.

After we had worked for a few hours, I had ing to get thirsty. I could hear a creek flowing not too far distant from where we were, so I headed off through the forest to the creek. What I saw

intensified my thirst: crystal clear water flowing over white, pristine sheets of ice. It was beautiful to the sight, and I knew I was in for a treat. As I knelt by the creek's edge and cupped my hands, the forester said, "I wouldn't drink that if I were you."

I didn't pay any mind to him as I had a thirst to quench. The second the water wet my tongue, I knew I'd made a mistake. I immediately spit the water out. The forester had been right, and now he was having a pretty good laugh at my misfortune. What should have been pure heaven to my taste buds left me with the rancid and putrid flavor of a cow patty!

In the years since this incident, I have seen that same creek disguised in various settings throughout my life. You see, this is how Satan works. He makes sin appear pleasing. He uses various media, such as magazines, TV, the Internet, movies, and even some of our associations. He can make wrong look alluring and stimulating. It isn't until he fools us into partaking that we are then left with a stale and and anguish. **NE**



ast October my family moved from Minnesota to my grandmother's house in Utah. My father stayed in Minnesota to fix up the house before we sold it.

Things weren't going as quickly as we had hoped, so my mother traveled to Minnesota to help him. At 17 and the oldest, I was put in charge of my younger sister and three younger brothers until my parents got back. My grandmother was visiting my aunt, so it would be just us kids for a while.

I had been left in charge before, and it would be no big deal to take care of the children for a couple of weeks. It was summer, so I didn't have to worry about school or homework, and my parents left the minivan so I could bus my siblings around. The first night, we ate a quick dinner, watched some TV, and I finally managed to get them into bed. I was very tired

when I crawled into bed, but I couldn't sleep.

I lay there for almost an hour, staring at the ceiling and thinking about what I was going to do the next day. I heard a creaking sound, but houses always creak at night. Normally, I wouldn't have noticed, but I wasn't used to sleeping in this house. Not only that, but I was in charge of keeping my younger sister and brothers safe. After a few more creaks, I convinced myself that someone had opened the door and was walking around inside. I was wide awake now. I said a quick prayer and tried to dismiss the creaking sounds as regular house sounds.

After a few minutes I was on edge again. This time I sat up on my bed to bow my head and fold my arms. I prayed that my sister, brothers, and I would be safe while my parents were gone and that I would be able to feel peaceful that night. Afterward I was calmer, but I still couldn't sleep.

I prayed again, and this time I received the impression that I should check the house. I got up and went to the door of my room and stopped. I could picture myself opening it and finding a burglar with a gun. I did not want to open the door but, remembering my impression, I went into the hall and turned on the light. I opened every door and checked every room. Then I checked the door locks. Everything was fine. I went back to bed and fell asleep.

Later I realized the reason for my prompting. I felt that Heavenly Father wanted me to know that He was keeping us safe. He wanted me to know that my prayer had been answered. I have a testimony that God will answer our prayers, even over little things like being scared at night. He will take care of us if we trust Him. **NE**



HYMN VOCABULARY #3

Do you know what you just sang? Choose the correct definition for each of the following words that can be found in one or more of our hymns.

- A. Heather (Hymns, no. 232)
 - That girl in your science class
 - 2. An evergreen shrub
 - 3. A hearty stew
 - 4. A soft cushion
- B. Bulwark (*Hymns*, no. 35, 272)
 - 1 Alie
 - A leather harness
 - 3. A defensive wall
 - 4. A swift stream
- C. Dissemble (*Hymns*, no. 3)
 - 1. To sing or shout loudly
 - 2. To remove your shoes
 - 3. To take apart or break up
 - 4. To disguise or conceal the truth
- D. Rife (*Hymns*, no. 195 and 18 others!)
 - 1. Abundant or widespread
 - 2. A small insect
 - 3. Brightly shining
 - 4. Breakfast cereal
- E. Clime (*Hymns*, no. 16, 212, 262)
 - 1. A high hill or mountain
 - 2. A house or dwelling
 - 3. A region and its weather
 - 4. To ascend upward

Answers: A2, B3, C4, D1, E3



THE CHURCH IN HUNGARY

n 1885, two missionaries went to Budapest, Hungary, but after a month with little success they left the country. Two years later, Hungarian Mischa Markow was converted near Constantinople (Istanbul) and returned to preach in his native land the following year, but he was banished from Hungary after being imprisoned. In 1900, Elder Markow and his companion preached in Temesvar, Hungary, until the government forced them to leave. The day before they left, they baptized 12 people and appointed leaders for a congregation of 31 members. Prior to World War I, a total of 106 people were baptized.

In June 1988, Hungary gave the Church legal recognition. One year later, President Thomas S. Monson dedicated the county's first meetinghouse. The Hungary Budapest Mission was created in June 1990.

Here are a few facts about the Church today in Hungary:

Membership	4,253	
Missions	1	
Congregations	19	
Family History Centers	5	

Information from Newsroom at www.lds.org.





FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

D&C 25:12 This scripture teaches us that music is important to Heavenly Father. It is wonderful that music can be such a beautiful thing and can play a role in the gospel.

Laura S., 16, Miskolc, Hungary

Tell us about your favorite scripture in one or two sentences. Send it, along with a photo, to **newera@ldschurch.org**.

THEY SPOKE TO US

any general conference talks have messages directed to you. Here are just a few examples.

- Talking about the Internet,
 President Monson says, "On one hand,
 it provides nearly limitless opportunities
 for acquiring useful and important information." But he also warns of those who
 use the Internet for "evil and degrading
 purposes" that can "literally destroy the
 spirit." Read the prophet's counsel about
 the Internet in "Until We Meet Again."
- "You cannot do a Google search to gain a testimony," says Elder M. Russell Ballard. He explains that there is no new technology for getting a testimony. Read about gaining a testimony in his talk "Learning the Lessons of the Past."
- What kind of young women are young men really attracted to? Sister Elaine S. Dalton reveals one of the hidden "boy secrets" and talks about a return to the value of virtue in "Come Let Us Go Up to the Mountain of the Lord."
- What do you do as a junior home teaching companion? What do you do if one of your friends strays from the Church? Read what President Henry B.
 Eyring says about these situations in his talk "In the Bonds of the Priesthood."
- "Someone has called this the 'me' generation," says Elder Dallin H. Oaks. But he adds, "As a group, Latter-day Saints are . . . unique in the extent of their unselfish service." Read Elder Oaks's talk "Unselfish Service."

To read conference experiences by youth, go to **newera.lds.org**. Read all the conference talks in the May *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines. You can also read, listen to, or watch these talks online at **www.lds.org**.

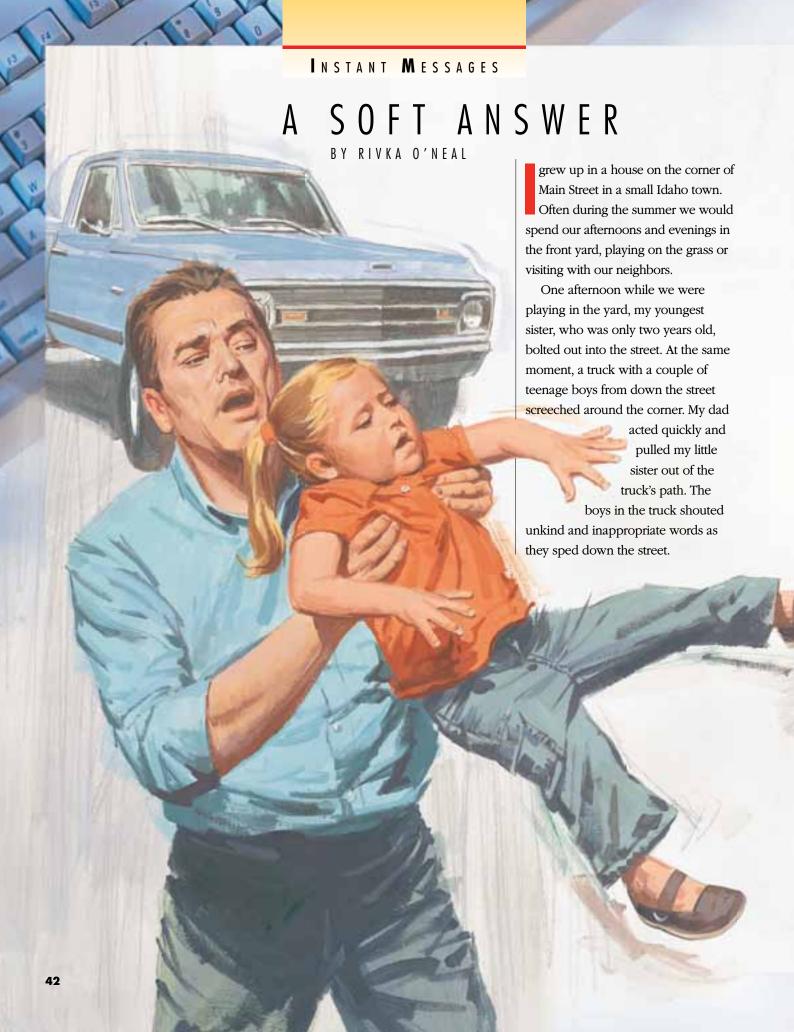
FROM THE FIELD

BY BRYANT MARCUM You never know who might be following you through the fog.

had been a missionary in southern Brazil for just over a year. My companion and I were driving to Florianopolis to pick up a sick missionary and bring him back to the mission headquarters for treatment. The fourhour trip south on the Winding, Pothole-riddled highway had been fairly uneventful. We enjoyed the bright day and beautiful forest scenery as we drove and talked, and soon we reached our destination. At about 4 p.m. we began the trip with the sick elder back to the mission office. After an hour or so on the road, though, the weather changed drastically. The clouds gathered and within 15 minutes our day had gone from sun to heavy fog and rain. I was driving at the time, and it became impossible to see where we were going.



NEW ERA MAY 2009



THE NEW ERA AT WORK

BY SARAH PENMAN

I was angry, to say the least. I remember thinking someone should go down to the boys' house and put them in their place. My sister could have been hurt or killed by their careless, dangerous driving.

I was glad when I saw my mother walking down the street, and I followed her. I was certain that the boys were going to be in big trouble. When we got to the house, the boy who had been driving answered the door. He was angry and defensive. He asked what we wanted and, to my surprise, my mother began to apologize. She said she was sorry that she had allowed her daughter to be so close to the street and told him she would watch my sister more carefully in the future.

Immediately the boy's countenance changed. He apologized for driving so fast and for putting my sister in danger. He vowed to be more careful as he drove.

After the short conversation, we returned home.

I still have never seen such an immediate change come over someone as it did over that boy that afternoon. We lived in that house for 11 more years, and in that time I never again saw the boy drive carelessly around the corner. As Proverbs 15:1 teaches, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." I imagine the outcome of the situation would have been very different if my mom would have approached angrily. Instead, two hearts were changed by the soft words of my mother. **NE**

took the *New Era* magazine with me to work to read during my break time. At one point during my shift, I went to the back to get some things from the freezer and found one of my friends flipping through my magazine while she was on break.

"This must be yours," she said as I smiled at her.

"Yeah," I replied. "It's the *New*Era magazine I receive each month through my church."

Later that evening, she asked if

she could borrow
the magazine for
the night and read
through it. Ever since
then I have brought
the *New Era* with me
to work each month
and have had quite a few
friends ask me questions
about my beliefs and about

different principles of the gospel.

I have also been able to give the friend
I mentioned earlier a copy of the
Book of Mormon.

I'm grateful for the chance to share the gospel in such a simple way. It has brought joy into my life. **NE**

A SMALL REMINDER

BY CAMERON NUCKOLS

xcept for a few cries from toddlers, everything was quiet. I stared forward and waited for the sacrament tray to make it to the end of the row so that I could pass it to the next row. I wondered how long it would take before it would reach me and I could continue on with my duty.

As I waited, a thought my priest-hood leader had shared came to my mind: "During the sacrament you should be thinking about the Savior," he had said.

I tried to follow his advice, but my thoughts soon switched to something that had recently happened to me. Giving up, I passed the tray to the next row and began waiting and wondering again.

Then I heard a soft voice behind me. I listened and realized that it was a girl speaking to her little brother. The girl said, "Do you know what the bread and the water mean?" The brother answered, "No." They were silent for a moment. Then I heard, "They represent the body and blood of Christ."

Immediately after she said that, my heart filled with the Spirit, and my thoughts didn't drift anymore from the meaning of the sacrament. I will never forget that small reminder from a young girl and her brother. **NE**

A HUG AND A KISS

BY ROSE VOIGT

y mom and I seemed to drift apart after I joined the Church. She didn't accept my new beliefs and resented me for leaving the church she had raised me in. I had prayed about what to do to help us become close again.

One Sunday, someone spoke about the need to let the people we love know how much they mean to us. The speaker suggested that we not only express it verbally, but also seal it with a hug and a kiss. I couldn't remember my family ever hugging, kissing, or expressing our love for one another. Everyone just sort of assumed they were loved and hoped they were right.

That day, I decided I would give it a try. It wasn't easy. In fact, it was a bit scary. But I did it.

I told my mom how much I loved her, gave her a kiss on the cheek, and hugged her. It was as though the balm of Gilead had somehow healed the cankering that was coming between us.

That act, inspired by prayer, seems to have had an effect on the entire family. Now when any relatives leave our home, they do so with a hug and a kiss. It gets quite interesting when a lot of family members are present, but I wouldn't change it for

the world. **NE**

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

newera@ldschurch.org

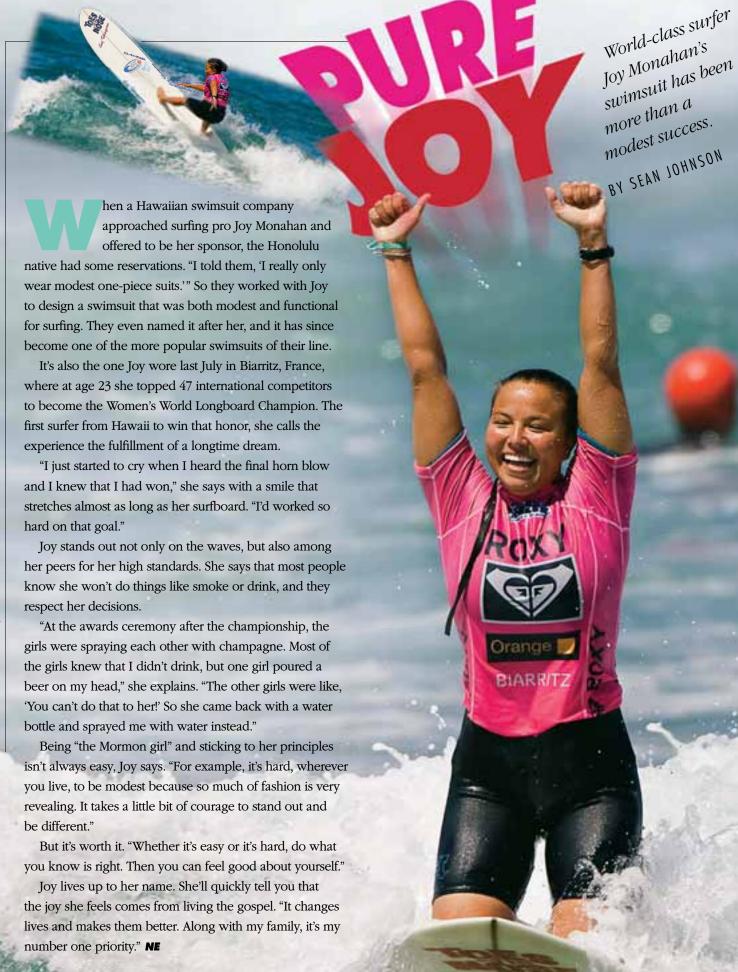
or send it to:

New Era, Instant Messages 50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420 Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

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



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY NEW ERA MAY 2009 45



NewEra.lds.org

What's New? Log on to the New Era online and find: • A new quiz on the Aaronic Priesthood. • New lyrics for the song "I Walk By Faith." Look at extra photos from the articles. · A link for you to sign up to do tamily history indexing.

TOP FIVE

When you are facing some hard decisions, read these five great articles on using your agency. Look them up in past issues online.

President Boyd K. Packer, "Spiritual Crocodiles," Oct. 2001.

Jed Layton, "Anger Bounces Back," Jan. 2006.

Barbara Anderson, "The Award We Didn't Win," Sept. 2006.

Keith R. Waters. "Get Me Out of This!" June 2005.

Matthew Holland, "Wrong Roads and Revelation," July 2005.

. **RESOURCE LINKS**

If teachers need additional articles to use in preparing lessons for Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood. look online under Lesson Helps for suggestions. Each month we'll add more

BEHIND THE SCENES

As we planned on using the article, "Michaela and the Marshmallows," it caused a discussion about just what homemade marshmallows would be like. We found a recipe for homemade marshmallows and tried it out. They were good, not as stiff as those you buy, but interesting especially if you roll them in a variety of toppings. We are posting the recipe



CALL FOR ENTRIES: WRITE FOR US!

We need you to write about things that have happened in your life. Do you remember the first time you paid tithing and what it meant to you? When did you learn the importance of paying tithing? How about fasting? Was it hard and when did you learn the value of fasting? Send your thoughts to newera@ldschurch.org.

Fiction

"The first thing is always beauty. Sorry, that's just the way it is. I mean, there are things you can do. I mean, you can help yourself out. . . . "

He is blushing, all six feet three inches of him, because he is in a Young Women meeting, not in the high school gym. He is our male expert for our dating lesson today, and I think the only reason Jodi asked, "What's the first thing that attracts a guy to a girl?" was to capture his brown-eyed attention. Only now he's not looking at her. He's staring at the floor, embarrassed to have been so open honest in church."

Read the rest online in "Beauty Tips," by Sheralee Bills (from Sept. 2001).

In the 2009 Mutual theme, the word *conversation* to me meant the way we speak. Only when I read about the Greek meaning of the word in the Jan. 2009 *New Era* did I know that it meant not only to be an example in what you say, but in all you do. I am grateful for the scriptures, a latter-day prophet, my Sunday School teacher, and especially my loving family, which teaches and guides me to become "an example of the believers."

Ryan G.

A BRAND NEW YEAR

Thank you for advertising A Brand New Year (Jan. 2009) in your magazine. I went to the site not sure what I would find, and I'm so glad I did. I downloaded every song and listen to them all the time. I love the spirit that each song brings. One day this week I was feeling very sad, and the words to a song came to mind: "Whatever comes, we'll rise above it, till we find our way back home." There are only two active members of the Church in my high school. I really enjoyed "Youth All over the World." It helped me feel much stronger and able to face the trials that come when there are so few members around me.

Emily R., Wisconsin

DECEMBER'S ADVENT CALENDAR

I really liked the advent calendar (Dec. 2008) and focused a family home evening on it. My family and I started planning and decided on a task: my sister and I made homemade mincemeat pies and took them to an elderly woman in our neighborhood. That made her very happy, and

Thanks for the great inspiration you have given me.

we decided to visit her more often. My mum, sister, grandmother and I also sang the song "Little Baby" at our ward's Christmas party.

Alice T., Scotland

WHY AM I LDS?

Thank you so much for printing the article "Why Am I LDS?" (Feb. 2009). I was wondering that very same question when I got the *New Era*. The article helped me gain a testimony of the gospel.

Rachel R., Georgia

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Thank you for the opportunity to learn about the Church in different countries.

When I get the *New Era* each month, I can't wait to read about whatever country's information is in the magazine. This is what gave me the desire to study different languages and countries. Right now I am learning German and Spanish. I recently bought a Book of Mormon and Bible in German. Thanks for the great inspiration you have given me.

Trishia T., California

DATING STANDARDS

Thank you for the article "My Secret Crush" (Feb. 2009). I really enjoyed it because I can apply it to my own life. I have some friends who are already "dating," and it's nice to know that there's something to show them when they ask me why I'm not dating.

Kristi H., Utah

MORMONADS

When I looked through the Feb. 2009 issue of the *New Era*, I saw a picture of a crocodile and wondered why it was there. When I was done looking at the Mormonad, I understood the connection

between the crocodile and pornography and why it's wrong. The Mormonads are great. Thank you for printing them.

Cade W., Ohio

To read more letters, go to newera. lds.org.

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

New Era

We've Got Mail

50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420 Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

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

SUNLIGHT

BY AUDREY K. CARLSON

Basking in the sun
I am not wet
But I am soaked to the bone
With happiness
As the colors of serenity
Weave through my skin.
Loftily I sing a song of praise
As the contentment that
was once mine
Is spread to those around me.





- How things look from a mile high.
- An impulsive gift by a missionary helps preserve a General Authority's freedom.
- Some good advice about dealing with Mom and Dad.
- When there's nothing left on your credit card.
- A young piano prodigy.
- Is it worth giving up a promotion?

These articles and more will be in the upcoming June 2009 issue.

SEE US ONLINE AT WWW.NEWERA.LDS.ORG