

# THE New Era

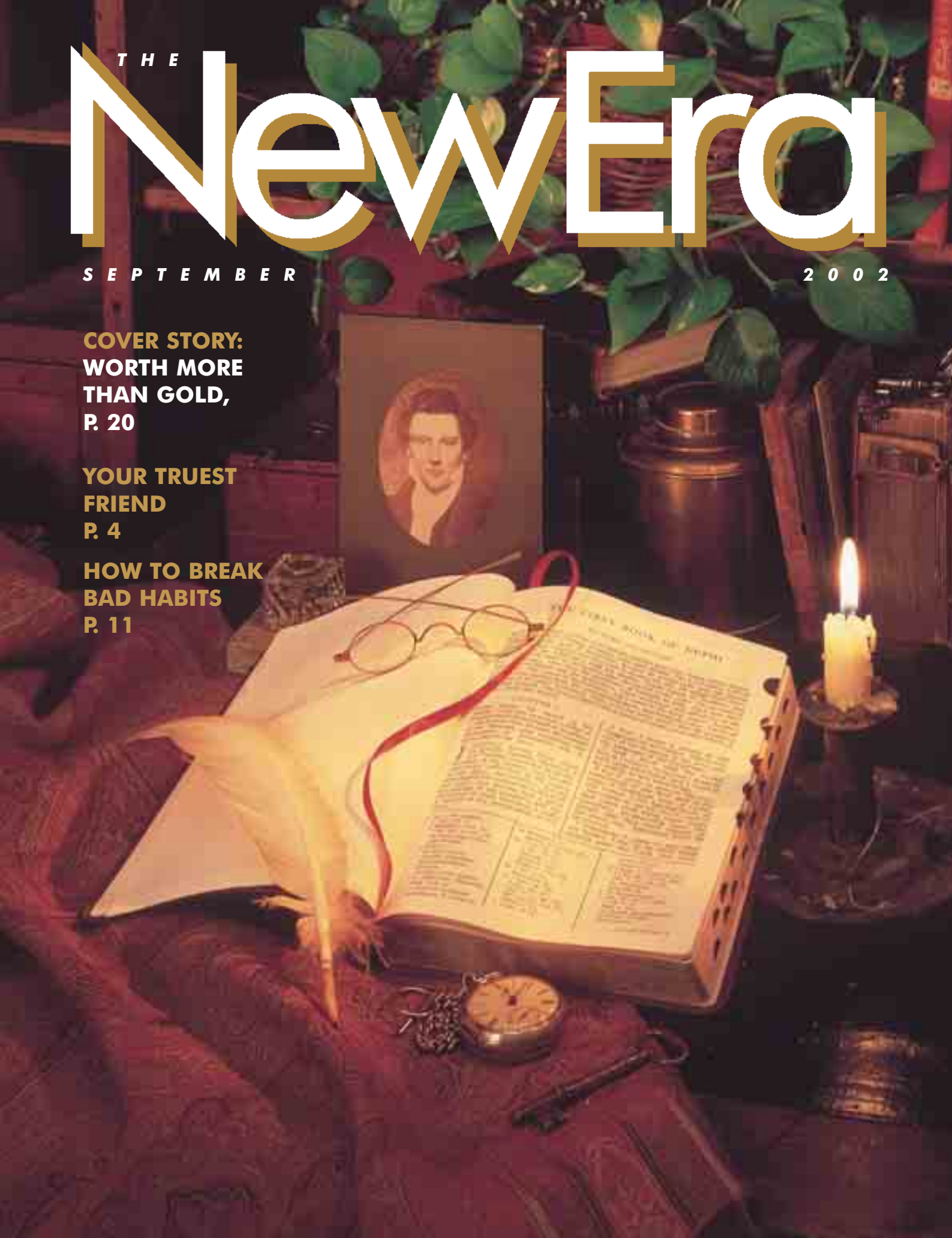
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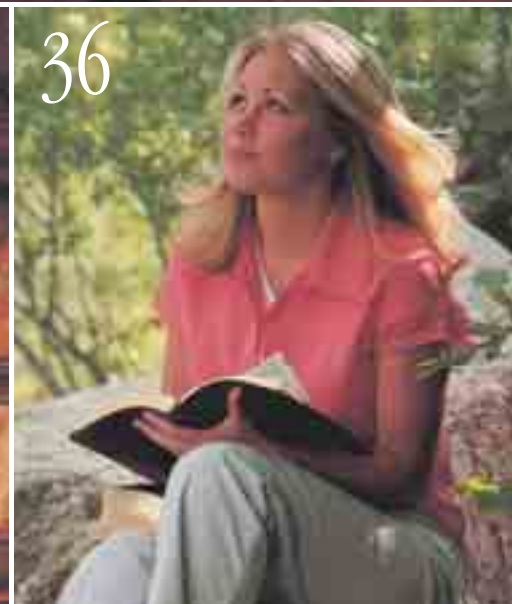
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**Cover:** *The Book of  
Mormon is essential to  
our understanding of  
eternity. See "More  
Precious than Gold" on  
p. 20.*

*Cover photography:  
John Luke*

**T**his is no  
ordinary  
book report.  
See "More  
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# HE WILL NEVER LET YOU DOWN



*No matter how difficult things are, or how alone you feel, you always have someone to turn to.*

I wish to thank you, the faithful members of the Church, for your sustaining vote. It is no small thing to “sustain” another person. The word literally means to “uphold” or, if you prefer, to “hold up.” When we sustain life, we nourish it, we keep it going. When we sustain a friend or a neighbor or a stranger in the street, we give support, we share strength, we provide help. We hold each other up under the weight of present circumstance. We bear one another’s burdens under the heavy personal pressures of life.

## **Jesus provides sustenance**

As with all else in our experience, the Lord Jesus Christ is our exemplar and



**By Elder  
Jeffrey R. Holland**  
Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve



**L**ife has its share of some fear and some failure. Sometimes people fail us, or economies and circumstance fail us.



ideal in this very important matter of providing sustenance. His is the ultimate arm of strength and His the endurance which endures all things. At no time did He demonstrate that unfailing devotion more clearly than during the final moments of His earthly life, hours when He might well have wished that others could have been sustaining Him.

As the sacred supper of that ultimate Passover was being prepared, Jesus was under the strain of deep and profound emotion. Only He knew what lay immediately ahead, but perhaps even He did not fully anticipate the depth of pain to which He must go before it could be said, "The Son of Man hath descended below them all" (D&C 122:8).

In the midst of this meal and such thoughts, Christ quietly arose, girded Himself as a slave or servant would, and knelt to wash the Apostles' feet (see John 13:3–17). This small circle of believers in this scarcely founded kingdom were about to pass through their severest trial, so He would set aside His own increasing anguish in order that He might yet once more serve and strengthen them. It does not matter that no one washed His feet. In transcendent humility He would continue to teach and to cleanse them. He would to the final hour—and beyond—be their sustaining servant. As John wrote, who was there and watched the wonder of it all, "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1).

So it had been, and so it was to be—through the night, and through the pain, and forever. He would always be their strength, and no anguish in His own soul would ever keep Him from that sustaining role.

In the moonlit silence of that Near Eastern night, every acute pain, every heartfelt grief, every crushing wrong and human hurt experienced by every man, woman, and child in the human family was to be heaped upon His weary shoulders. But in such a moment, when someone might have said it to Him, He rather says to us, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

"Ye shall be sorrowful," He said—sad, lonely, frightened, and sometimes even persecuted, "but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. . . . Be of good cheer; I

have overcome the world" (John 16:20, 33).

How can He speak that way? Of good cheer and joy? On a night like this? With the pain He knew was just ahead? But those are the blessings He always brought, and that is how He always spoke—to the very end.

### **Jesus endured and triumphed**

We cannot know to what extent His disciples fully understood the approaching events, but we do know that Christ faced His final moments alone. In one of the truly candid comments He would make to His brethren, He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. 26:38). And He left them to do what only He could do. The Light of the World stepped away from human company and entered the garden grove to wrestle with the prince of darkness alone. Moving forward, kneeling, falling forward on His face, He cried with an anguish you and I will never know, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matt. 26:39). But He knew, for our sakes, that it could not pass and that He must drink that bitter cup to the dregs.

His disciples, understandably, were weary and soon fell asleep. What of Christ's sleep? What of His fatigue? What rest or slumber will sustain Him through such an agonizing ordeal? That is simply not His concern here, nor does it ever seem to be. He will endure. He will triumph. He will not falter nor fail us.

Even in crucifixion He would reign with the benevolence and bearing of a King. Of those who rend His flesh and spill His blood He says, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). And to the penitent thief at His side He gently promises paradise. To His beloved mother He is unable to make any caring gesture with His hands. So He simply looks at her and says, "Woman, behold thy son!" Then commending to John her future care, He declares, "Behold thy mother!" (John 19:26–27). He would be concerned for others—but especially for her—to the very end.

Because He must ultimately tread this winepress of redemption unaided, can He endure the darkest moment of them all, the shock of the greatest pain? This comes not with thorns and with nails, but



with the terror of feeling utterly alone: “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? . . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). Can He bear all of our sins and our fear and loneliness too? He did and He does and He will.

We do not know how such great sorrow can be borne, but it is no wonder the sun hid its face in shame. No wonder the veil of the temple was rent. No wonder the very earth convulsed at the plight of this perfect child. And at least one Roman centurion who saw all of this sensed something of what it had meant. In awe, he uttered the declaration for all eternity, “Truly this was the Son of God” (Matt. 27:54).

### **Pure love of Christ never faileth**

Life has its share of some fear and some failure. Sometimes things fall short, don’t quite measure up. Sometimes in both personal and public life, we are seemingly left without strength to go on. Sometimes people fail us, or economies and circumstance fail us, and life with its hardship and heartache can leave us feeling very alone.

But when such difficult moments come to us, I testify that there is one thing which will never, ever fail us. One thing alone will stand the test of all time, of all tribulation, all trouble, and all transgression. One thing only never faileth—and that is the pure love of Christ.

“I remember,” Moroni cries to the Savior of the world, “that thou hast said that thou hast loved the world, even unto the laying down of thy life for the world, . . . Now I know,” he writes, “that this love which thou hast had for the children of men is charity” (Ether 12:33–34).

Having watched a dispensation die and an entire civilization destroy itself, Moroni quotes his father for any who will listen in some later (“latter”) day, “If ye have not charity, ye are nothing” (Moro. 7:46). Only the pure love of Christ will see us through. It is Christ’s love which suffereth long, and is kind. It is Christ’s love which is not puffed up nor easily provoked. Only His pure love enables Him—and us—to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things (see Moro. 7:45).



*Oh, love effulgent, love divine!  
What debt of gratitude is mine,  
That in his off’ring I have part  
And hold a place within his heart.*  
 (“God Loved Us, So He Sent His Son,”  
Hymns, no. 187)

I testify that having loved us who are in the world, Christ loves us to the end. His pure love never fails us. Not now. Not ever. Not ever. **NE**

*From an October 1989 general conference address.*

**O**ne thing alone will stand the test of all time, of all tribulation, all trouble, and all transgression. One thing only never faileth—and that is the pure love of Christ.

# AN *Enduring Example*



By Elder  
Claudio R. M. Costa  
Of the Seventy

***When I first saw Luan, I noticed he was quite thin and did not have even a single hair on his head. I also noticed that he had many friends.***

*Luan had cancer and his leg needed to be amputated. But before his surgery, there were a few things he wanted to do.*

Whenever I think of the Savior's parable of the sheep and the goats, and of His wonderful promises to those who serve Him (see Matt. 25:31–46), I picture a young boy named Luan.

I first met Luan in February 2001 at a Young Men camp in Recife, Brazil. In Brazil, it was the time of carnival—a holiday that has become four days of unruly partying. During carnival, stakes often hold youth conferences and camps to give Latter-day Saint youth a fun and wholesome alternative. In my assignment as president of the Brazil North Area, I was visiting one such Young Men camp in the Recife Brazil Boa Viagem Stake.

When I first saw Luan, I noticed he was quite thin and did not have even a single hair on his head. I also noticed that he had many friends. And I learned that he had just turned 12 and was going to be ordained a deacon during the camp.

I also learned Luan had bone cancer in his left leg. In fact, just before camp, he had learned the cancer was progressing so rapidly that his leg needed to be amputated immediately. But because Luan wanted so badly to receive the



Aaronic Priesthood at camp and to play soccer with his friends one last time, his doctor had agreed to postpone the surgery for a week.

Now, surrounded by his brothers in the Church, Luan beamed with happiness. After his priesthood ordination on Sunday, Luan bore a beautiful testimony about his faith in the gospel and his gratitude for the Savior's love.

I approached Luan, and we became fast friends. After his surgery, I visited him in his home, along with his bishop, Ozani Farias, and his stake president,







**E**lder Costa explained to Luan that death is not a closing door but a door that opens for us as we go back to the presence of God. Bishop Ozani Farias (back row, right) also provided comfort to Luan and his mother (front row, right).

Mozart B. Soares. These good leaders were a blessing in Luan's life. They were always there to comfort, support, and help him.

I felt the Spirit very strongly in Luan's home. Luan, along with his mother and sisters, had joined the Church eight months earlier. There was no father in the home, and Luan's mother worked hard to provide for the family. Their small house was tidy and clean, and I knew that simple home sheltered a very special family.

During our visit, we noticed the family lacked many basic things. Luan had to sleep on an uncomfortable couch because he had no bed. But when we asked what the family needed, they replied, "We have the gospel, our friends at church, and a happy family. Thank you, but we need nothing else."

A short time after our visit, Luan's condition worsened, and his doctors found a large tumor at the base of his spinal cord. It could not be removed surgically, so Luan went to the hospital for another round of chemotherapy.

One night when President Soares and I visited Luan in the hospital, we found him in a lot of pain. He asked us several questions, including, "What is death?" and "What is dying like?"

I explained that dying is part of eternity and that death is not a closing door but a door that opens for us as we go back to the presence of God. Luan understood and smiled. He said he was prepared. Then he asked us to give him a priesthood blessing, and we did so.

In the bed next to Luan was a 14-year-old boy named Pedro. Pedro asked us to bless him too. I asked if he had faith in Jesus Christ, and he said he did. We explained what the priesthood is and that we would be blessing him in the name of Jesus Christ. He closed his eyes and smiled as we blessed him. Next an 18-year-old young woman asked us to give her a blessing too.

I found out Luan and his mother had comforted Pedro and many of the other young cancer patients and their parents. As I left the hospital that night, I was edified to see that Luan and his mother, though suffering themselves, found the strength to visit others and minister to their needs.

When President Soares asked Luan what he would like to do when he left the hospital, Luan said he would like to perform vicarious baptisms in the Recife Brazil Temple. After Luan left the hospital, President Soares and Bishop Farias helped him fulfill this desire. Luan performed as many baptisms as his strength would allow. At the end of his day at the temple, even though he was in great pain, he was happy he could do something for others.

Luan Felix da Silva died on August 20, 2001. Whenever I think of my friend and fellow servant, I am reminded of the Savior's words:

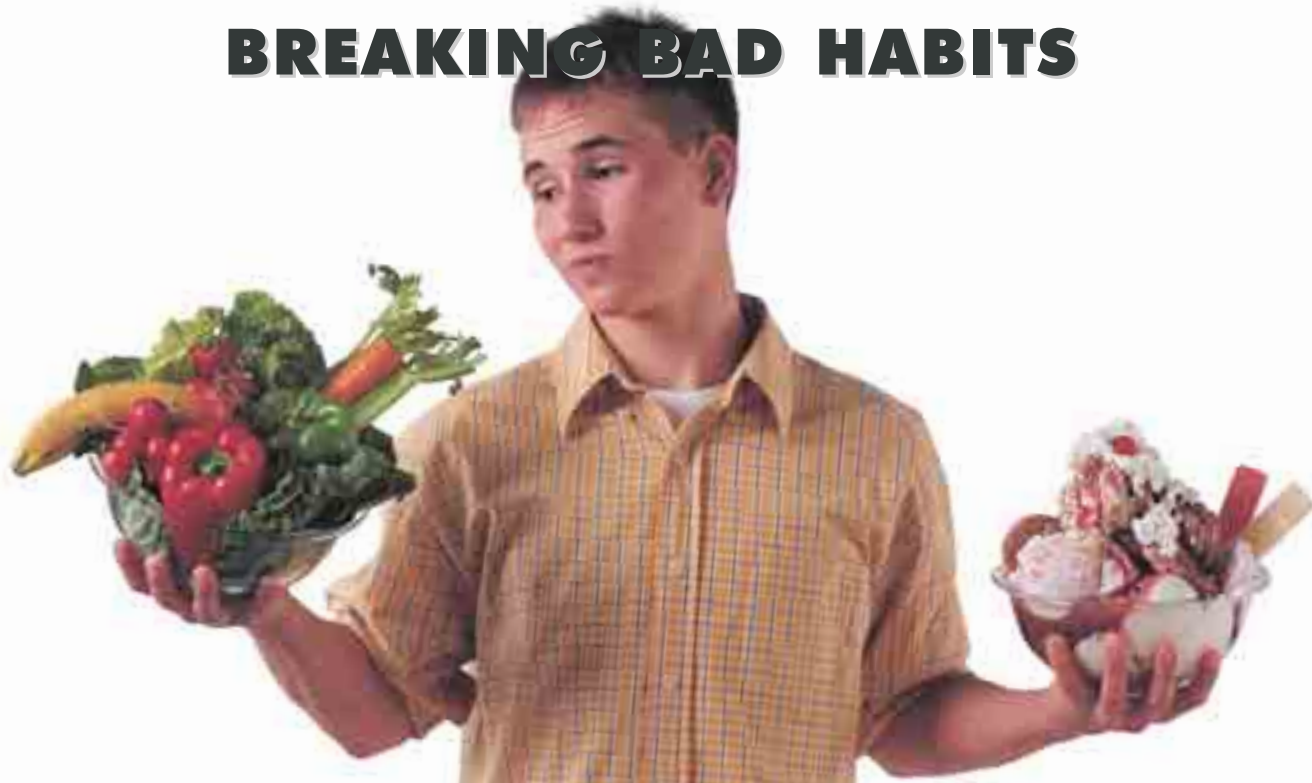
"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you . . .

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

"Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: . . .

"And the King shall . . . say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:34-36, 40). **NE**

# BREAKING BAD HABITS



**K**nowing bad habits can sometimes be hard to break, students at the West Lynn High School Seminary in West Lynn, Oregon, came up with ideas on how to overcome bad habits.

- Choose just one behavior you would like to change and work on that first. It can be overwhelming to try to be perfect all at once.
- Substitute something wholesome, positive, and enjoyable for the bad habit. It's easier to slide back into old habits if we don't have something new to replace them.
- Quit your bad habit for the right reasons. Love of God and a desire to do what is right are more motivational and lasting than fear or duty or anything else.
- Ask family members and friends to help keep you in line and to support you when you are trying to make the right choices.
- Do your best to kick your habit and pray for help to make it the rest of the way. Gain extra spiritual strength through fasting.
- Write your goals down, step by step, and read them regularly as a reminder of

**F**eeling not quite in control of yourself? Here are some great tips for breaking those habits that are weighing you down.



West Lynn High School Seminary

what you want to accomplish and why.

- Stay far away from tempting situations.
- Believe in yourself. Remember, as you sincerely try to do what is right, Heavenly Father will give you the strength you need to overcome your bad habits (see Ether 12:27).
- Work. Work. Work. A habit—good or bad—is something we have practiced over and over until it becomes second nature. It will take work to overcome the bad habits we have been practicing.
- Overcoming some habits requires professional help. Seek that help if necessary.
- Remember that habits are hard to break. Heavenly Father loves us despite our mistakes. He will not give up on you; so don't give up on yourself if you falter. Keep trying.
- Set up a reward system for yourself to encourage you to stay on track.
- If you just need to forget yourself and to stop obsessing about giving up on a bad habit, try serving someone else. There is great power in serving others.
- Turn to your bishop and your family for more ideas on conquering a bad habit. **NE**



# ARE YOU ON THE LORD'S SIDE?



By Elder  
Stephen A. West  
Of the Seventy

*David had the faith to slay Goliath, but later he lost the Spirit. How can you keep this from happening in your life?*

**A**t the time of the Civil War, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln said, “It is my constant prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord’s side” (*Abraham Lincoln: Man of God*, 385).

Are you on the Lord’s side?

First Samuel 17 deals with a battle we almost all learn about as we are growing up. It is a dramatic story. It is the story of David and Goliath.

Here are all the troops—the Israelites on one mountain and the Philistines on the other. Goliath is coming down the hill to meet David, and David is coming

down his hill to meet Goliath. Goliath has his armor, his spear, and his sword. David is armed with only his sling and a little bag with five smooth stones in it.

“And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

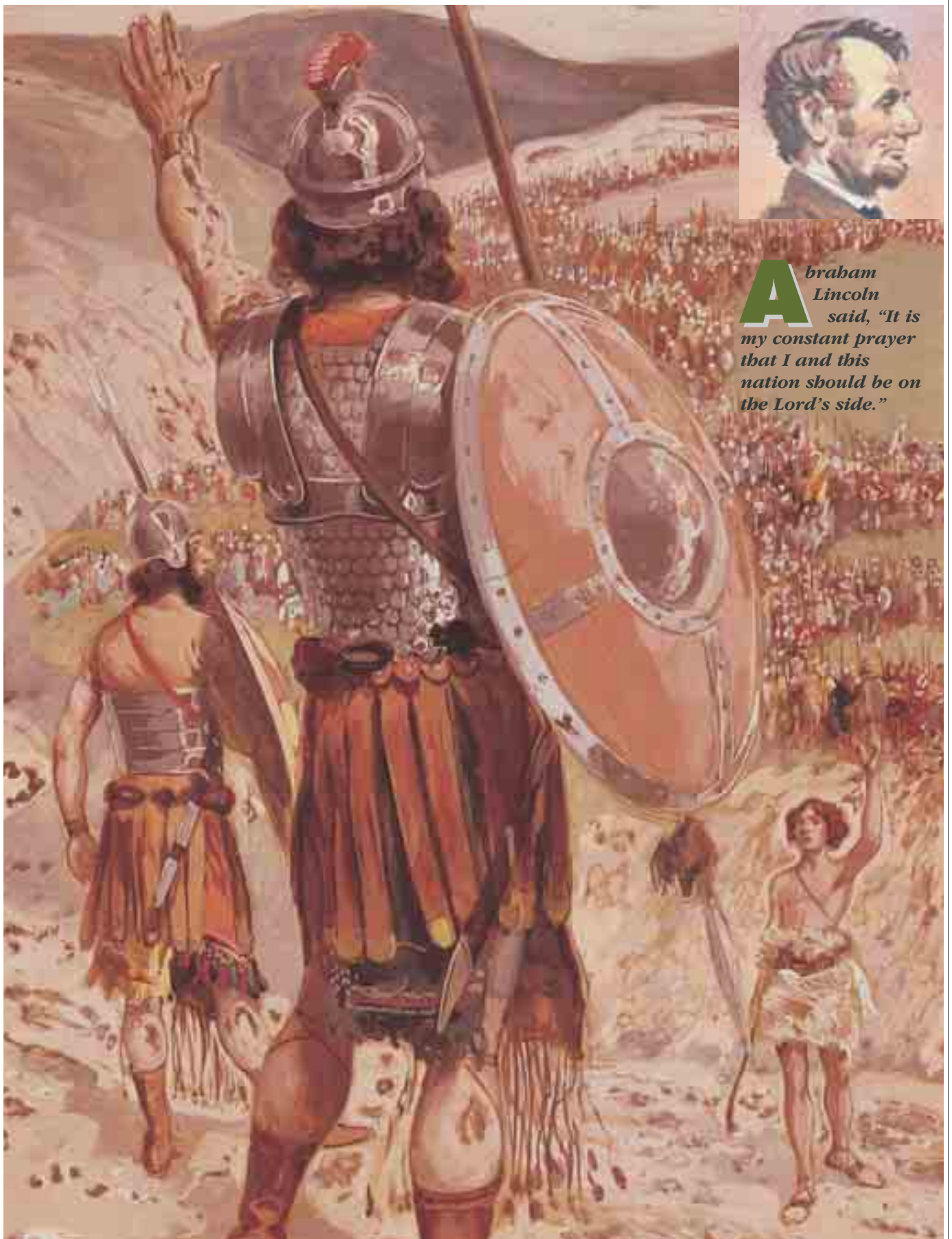
“Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

“This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; . . . that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel” (1 Sam. 17:43, 45–46).

David was strengthened by the Lord. He became a great king and a great religious leader.

## **Keeping the Spirit**

David was a good man for much of his life. He had great accomplishments. But David went out on his balcony and



**A**braham  
Lincoln  
said, "It is  
my constant prayer  
that I and this  
nation should be on  
the Lord's side."



**L**osing the Spirit can happen to anyone. Even the Prophet Joseph temporarily lost the Spirit and was unable to translate after a disagreement with his wife.

glanced at Bathsheba. He could have turned away, but instead he continued to look. He wanted Bathsheba, and he ultimately had her. Then he sent her husband, Uriah, into battle where he felt Uriah surely would be killed. In fact, he was killed. That freed David to marry Bathsheba, and he did. David realized he had done wrong. In his heart, he knew he had sinned.

This man who as a boy was the slayer of Goliath, who later was a great warrior, who was king, who united all Israel, pleaded with the Lord for mercy. He petitioned the Lord saying:

“Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

“Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me” (Ps. 51:9–11).

David, a great man of such tremendous ability and potential, recognized that through his wrongdoing as a mature man he had lost the relationship he had with his Father in Heaven. That relationship allowed him to have sufficient faith to personally challenge Goliath, sufficient faith to lead great armies, and sufficient faith and the Spirit of the Lord to compose beautiful psalms and to do all the things which he had done in an otherwise seemingly great life. Now, by his sin, he had cast away his ability to call upon the Spirit. It reminds us of the New Testament verse: “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36).

If we know the symptoms of losing the Spirit, and if we watch what is happening to us, we can guard against it; and we can protect ourselves from falling into that situation.

### **Quench not the Spirit**

When I was a missionary, as my companion and I were studying, we came across a four-word verse: “Quench not the Spirit” (1 Thes. 5:19). We thought that was an intriguing verse and that *quench* was an interesting word. As we

would walk along tracting, if we found ourselves being somewhat light-minded, one of us would say to the other, “Quench not the Spirit.” It became a phrase that would come up whenever we found ourselves beginning to say or do things we felt we shouldn’t. That phrase has continued to come to my mind at such times throughout the rest of my life.

There are a number of verses that deal with the opportunity or problem of losing the Spirit.

“For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance;

“Nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven;

“And he that repents not, from him shall be taken even the light which he has received; for my Spirit shall not always strive with man, saith the Lord of Hosts” (D&C 1:31–33).

Applying this verse in the Doctrine and Covenants to David, with all the things David had done, the time came when the Spirit quit striving with him. He realized what he had lost in his life.

Nephi warned Laman and Lemuel that Jerusalem could lose the Spirit and what the results would be in these words: “For behold, the Spirit of the Lord ceaseth soon to strive with them; for behold, they have rejected the prophets, . . .” (1 Ne. 7:14).

The inhabitants of Jerusalem lost the Spirit because they were rejecting the prophets. How might we find ourselves rejecting them? By failing to follow the guidance and direction of the prophets.

Today we can likewise harden our hearts against the Holy Spirit by doing things in our lives we know are wrong. We can reach a point where the Holy Spirit is prompting us so we will recognize we are doing wrong, yet we don’t want to hear that, so we let the Spirit have no place in us.

### **Can it happen to you?**

It can happen to anybody. It happened to Joseph Smith. Over a very small thing, he temporarily lost the Spirit. He found he couldn’t translate unless he was worthy to be guided by the Spirit of God. David Whitmer recounted this situation. He said “something went wrong about the house and [Joseph] was put out about it. Something that Emma,





his wife, had done. Oliver and I went upstairs and Joseph came up soon after to continue the translation, but he could not do anything. He could not translate a single syllable. He went downstairs, out into the orchard, and made supplication to the Lord; was gone about an hour—came back to the house, and asked Emma's forgiveness and then came upstairs where we were and then the translation went on all right. He could do nothing save he was humble and faithful" (*A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:131).

Joseph Smith must have felt he had lost the Spirit. He had to go and think about it, ponder it, pray about it, come in and apologize to Emma, and then he could translate again.

Every day we have to work to keep the Spirit. Every day there are things that can happen in our lives. Like David, we may see something that we were not looking for: a poster, a magazine, or something on the street. It may cause us

to lose the Spirit. We have to work to keep it, to bring it back, to have it in our lives. To be on the Lord's side, as Lincoln said, is what is important.

Each week as we listen to the sacrament prayer, we can consciously place ourselves among those who "witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them" (D&C 20:77).

As we look around us today, we can see men and woman of accomplishment who in a moment of temptation have fallen as did David. Let that not be the case with any of us. We must work hard to be on the Lord's side and have His Spirit in our lives. **NE**

*Adapted from a September 12, 2001 devotional address at LDS Business College.*

**J**ust like  
the  
Prophet, we  
must work to  
keep the Spirit in  
our lives.

# Q & A

*“How can I follow the counsel in For the Strength of Youth to ‘avoid going on frequent dates with the same person?’ It’s hard for me to ignore my feelings for one person and date others. What should I do?”*

## NEW ERA

Doing what is right isn’t always easy. Luckily, you aren’t alone. There are people who want to help you.

Your parents, teachers, and bishop are all there to talk to if you have problems. They have experienced many of the same emotions you are feeling.

It may help you to know some of the reasons Church leaders say you should “avoid going on frequent dates with the same person” (*For the Strength of Youth*, 25) while you are a teenager. As a teen you should be meeting and spending time with a variety of people. It’s a time to develop social skills and figure out what qualities you value in other people. If you spend all your time with one person, you could miss out on important friendships.

Not long ago, President Gordon B. Hinckley said relationships you have with peers of the opposite sex are “the most common and most difficult of all problems for young men and young women to handle. . . . You are dealing with the most powerful of human instincts. Only the will to live possibly

**Y**our parents, teachers, and bishop are all there to talk to if you have questions or problems.

**A**s a teen you should be meeting and spending time with a variety of people.

**D**ating a variety of people will help you develop social skills and figure out what qualities you value in others.

**S**pending too much time with one person can lead to serious moral sins.

**T**hrough prayer you can share your burdens with Heavenly Father.

## READERS

***We are always going to have feelings for other people. It is normal. But Alma 38:12 tells us to control our passions, not ignore them. When we begin to pair off we are submitting our will to our passions, and our feelings begin to control us.***

**Kristine Smith, 18**  
Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia, Canada



***Pray for help to do what is right. Avoid situations that can lead you to compromise your standards as a member of the Church. Satan uses many ways to deprive us of eternal happiness with our Heavenly Father.***

**Njoku Mathew Ugochukwu**  
Accra, Ghana







exceeds it" (*New Era*, Jan. 2001, 12–13).

Because your relationships with others can create such powerful emotions, President Hinckley gives powerful advice for how to stay safe when faced with these feelings.

"Steady dating at an early age leads so often to tragedy. Studies have shown that the longer a boy and girl date one another, the more likely they are to get into trouble.

"It is better, my friends, to date a variety of companions until you are ready to marry. Have a wonderful time, but stay away from familiarity. Keep your hands to yourself. It may not be easy, but it is possible" (*New Era*, Jan. 2001, 13).

This counsel is not new. It may surprise you to learn that your parents probably received the same counsel when they were dating. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said, "Dating and especially steady dating in the early teens is most hazardous. It distorts the whole picture of life. It deprives the youth of worthwhile and rich experiences; it limits friendships; it reduces the acquaintance which can be so valuable in selecting a partner for time and eternity" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 96).

Another reason for not dating the same person is that there are sexual dangers. Spending too much time together can lead to serious moral sins.

If you have a firm testimony that the Church is true and that Church leaders are called by God, it is easier to do what they say. If you have that basic testimony, you don't have to wonder about every bit of counsel you receive from Church leaders.

A major part of growing up is learning to control your feelings. If it is difficult for you to follow this counsel, and you truly want to do what is right, ask for help. Through prayer you can share your burdens with Heavenly Father. **NE**

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



**T**he Lord has made us attractive to one another for a great purpose. But this very attraction becomes as a powder keg unless it is kept under control. . . . It is for this reason that the Church counsels against early dating. This rule is not designed to hurt you in any way. It is designed to help you, and it will do so if you will observe it" (*New Era*, Jan. 2001, 13).

—President  
Gordon B. Hinckley

*Before you make any decisions, ask yourself if you are following the prophet's counsel, which will lead to eternal, true happiness. Or are you following Satan's counsel, which will lead to temporary, so-called happiness.*

Aspen Paige Owen, 16  
Ogden, Utah



*One of the important aspects of dating is social—being with friends, learning to get along with different personalities, and developing conversation and other social skills. Later, the time will come for choosing just one.*

Sister Afaha Udeme Tames, 21  
Ghana Accra Mission



*The counsel we are given on dating does serve a purpose. High school tends to bring on feelings and emotions that have never before been experienced. I justified that the feelings I felt were stronger than the rules. Little did I know that is exactly why I should have heeded the counsel given.*

Name Withheld  
Arco, Idaho

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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

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

## QUESTION

*Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?*

*Please respond by November 1, 2002.*

# ARE YOU A **MISSING PERSON?**



IS YOUR FAMILY ALWAYS PRAYING *FOR* YOU,  
BUT SELDOM *WITH* YOU?  
MAKE TIME FOR ETERNAL THINGS.  
(See *Hymns*, no. 298.)

# MORE PRECIOUS THAN

*In September 1827, Joseph Smith received the Book of Mormon plates. The rest is amazing history.*

**W**hat would be the most important thing ever printed in a book? Wouldn't it be the words of our Heavenly Father spoken to His prophets here on earth and the truth taught about His Son Jesus Christ's life and teachings?

The Bible is a record kept by the people who lived in the Middle East, and the Book of Mormon is a record kept by another group of people as they left that area, crossed the ocean, and lived on the American continent. The Book of Mormon records the Lord's instructions to them and the visit of Jesus Christ to the Americas.

The Bible is a testament or witness of Christ, and the Book of Mormon is, as the subtitle of the Book of Mormon says, "Another Testament of Jesus Christ." The two books support each other.

## **Where did the Book of Mormon come from?**

Joseph Smith's First Vision occurred when he was 14. Three years later, in 1823, Joseph Smith was visited and taught by an angel, the Book of Mormon prophet Moroni. Joseph was told where to find the gold plates that Moroni had buried 1,400



## **The Hill Cumorah**

*The top photograph of the Hill Cumorah was taken in 1907.*

*A more modern view of the hill at the bottom is the present site of the Hill Cumorah Pageant staged each summer just a few miles from Palmyra, New York.*



# GOLD



## **Hyrum Smith's Box**

*After Joseph Smith had received the plates, he needed somewhere to keep them. He kept them in this box lent to him by his brother Hyrum.*

*Joseph Smith described the plates: "These records were engraven on plates which had the appearance of gold, each plate was six inches wide and eight inches long, and not quite so thick as common tin. They were filled with engravings, in Egyptian characters, and bound together in a volume as the leaves of a book, with three rings running through the whole. The volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed" (History of the Church, 4:537).*

years earlier. Joseph was shown the plates at the Hill Cumorah not far from his home in Palmyra, New York, but was not allowed to take them until he had grown and matured.

In 1827, Moroni gave the gold plates to Joseph with instruction to protect them and translate them. Moroni also instructed Joseph regarding the use of the Urim and Thummim, sometimes referred to as interpreters, to aid in the translation process. Anciently there was more than one Urim and Thummim, but the Urim and Thummim, or translators, that Joseph Smith used were the same ones given to the Brother of Jared when he spoke face to face with the Lord (see “Urim and Thummim” in the Bible Dictionary).

During this same time, people in and around Palmyra heard rumors that Joseph Smith had found gold plates, and several attempts were made to steal them from him—even to the point of attacking him. He was able to keep them safe by following promptings of the Spirit (see JS-H 1:60).

### **Why is it called the Book of Mormon?**

About 345 A.D., the prophet Mormon, who was also the leader of the Nephites in the last battles of his people against the Lamanites, was told by the Lord to record the history of the people of his day. Prophets, kings, and wise men before him had kept many records about their prophecies, revelations, and civilization for 1,000 years. He read through these writings and, guided by the Spirit of the Lord, took the most important sections of the records and copied them into one shorter book, an abridgement. In other words, he acted as the editor. Mormon sometimes made comments on the things he was writing. He also added the small plates of Nephi to his abridgement.

Since Mormon was the one who made the abridged gold plates, it is called the Book of Mormon. Mormon gave the plates to his son, Moroni, who finished the work after his father’s death and also







### **The Dictated Manuscript**

*The manuscript of the Book of Mormon was dictated by the Prophet Joseph Smith to Oliver Cowdery who wrote it down. The ink has faded, yet it is still obvious that as Joseph Smith dictated and Oliver Cowdery wrote, there were very few words crossed out or changed. This photo is of the manuscript in First Nephi chapter 8 verses 12 through 20. Long sections were not divided into verses like we have now until many years later. Dividing the sections into chapters and verses made it easier to refer everyone to an exact place in the scriptures.*



### **Printing Press**

*This is the press used in printing the Book of Mormon. Setting type and printing was laborious. Each letter had to be picked out of the type case, set up in lines by hand, and placed in a form. Then each*



*sheet of paper was hand printed, 16 pages at a time. It is estimated that the printers worked 11 hours a day, six days a week, for more than seven months to print the almost 600 pages in each of the Book of Mormon's first 5,000 copies.*



added the book of Ether to his father's abridgement. He also added another section, a vision of the Last Days, which the Lord told him to seal. Joseph Smith was not allowed to translate the sealed portion of the gold plates. Moroni was the one who buried the plates and later came to Joseph Smith with instructions about the plates.

### **How did Joseph Smith translate the Book of Mormon?**

At first, the Prophet Joseph asked his wife, Emma, to write the words he spoke as he translated. Others, such as Martin Harris, also helped. But the translation was going too slowly. Joseph Smith needed to devote all his time to the work with a scribe who could also commit all his time. Oliver Cowdery was guided by the Lord to offer to help the Prophet in this work. In a matter of a few months, the translation of the book was finished.

While it was being translated, several prophecies concerning the book were fulfilled. A section of the book, 116 pages, was lost by Martin Harris and never recovered, making it clear why Nephi was commanded to make two versions of his records (see 1 Ne. 19:1–3). Also, a copy of some of the translation was taken to a “learned” man (see 2 Ne. 27:15–21), Professor Charles Anthon in New York City, who verified that it was an accurate translation. Then, when he was told where the writing came from, the professor tore up the certificate of authenticity he had written.

People were anxious to read this new book of scripture, so arrangements were made with Egbert B. Grandin, a printer in Palmyra, to print 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon in 1830.

Over 10 years later, the Prophet Joseph bore this testimony of the Book of Mormon to the Council of the Twelve Apostles in Nauvoo: “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (*History of the Church*, 4:461). **NE**





### **First Edition of the Book of Mormon**

*At first, the text on the pages was not divided into chapters or verses. It was divided by the printer into paragraphs. The text was not*

*arranged into chapters and numbered verses as we know them until 1879. The verses were then put in double columns on a page in 1920.*



### **The Book of Mormon Floods the Earth**

*In the 172 years since the first printing of the Book of Mormon, millions of copies of the book have been printed. It has also been translated into 103 languages (including American Sign Language on video) and been carried by missionaries and members throughout the earth. It continues to stand with the Bible as a witness of the divinity of our Savior, Jesus Christ.*



# WALKING



*I should have had the lead in this movie, but my friend took that role.*

“I feel uncomfortable; let’s get out of here,” Autumn whispered to me in the dark theater. I had never walked out of a movie before, and by normal standards, was this PG-13 movie *that* bad? Besides, we weren’t even 15 minutes into the show.

Two seats down, I could almost see our friend John rolling his eyes as he said, “Don’t be stupid. This is nothing!”

Autumn persisted, “Dane, this isn’t good; let’s leave.” What I *should* have done at that point is admit she was right and get up and walk out. Instead, I sat and thought about what to do. This had never happened to me before. I felt like everybody in the theater was watching me. They weren’t, of course, but two good friends were. John was planning on a mission. He was the one who chose the movie in the first place. If it were that offensive, wouldn’t he feel it too? I wondered what would happen to our friendship if I decided to walk out.

Then there was Autumn. We had been close friends for a few years, and

By Dane R. Rowley



An illustration of a movie theater audience. In the foreground, several silhouettes of people are seated in rows of chairs. A young man in a purple shirt is standing and holding a red cup of popcorn. In the background, a large, glowing, reddish-orange face with a wide, toothy grin is projected onto the screen. The word "OUT" is written in large, white, bold letters across the upper right portion of the face.

# OUT

I really didn't want to offend her—not just because she was my friend and fairly sensitive, but at the time, she was also investigating the Church. I felt a bit guilty that she was the one asking to leave.

Autumn was right. The movie made us both feel uneasy, but she had been the one to speak up. Her quiet but firm resolve was admirable, even though it sent me packing for a guilt trip. The fact was I didn't want to watch the movie either. As I continued to decide what to do, Autumn became more agitated. She then sent me an unforgettable look. I knew exactly what that look meant. It said, "Dane, you are

one of my best friends, but with or without you, I'm leaving this movie!"

She didn't care what others thought. Why should I? For all the right reasons, Autumn and I stood up and walked out of the movie theater. We walked right past John, and right past my notions that it is the member of the Church who always sets the example. It felt great. There was no regret, but so much more respect for Autumn, and for all those who stand up and walk out. I vowed never again to risk offending the Spirit for entertainment's sake whether I was alone or with a friend. **NE**



# *MCKENZIE'S*

By Laury Livsey

# BIG IDEA

*They were seniors. School was just about over. So naturally McKenzie McNaughton decided it was the perfect time for a service project.*

**“Y**ou want us to do what?” they asked. “For how long? Why?” When she heard those questions, McKenzie McNaughton knew this project might be a challenge.

At the beginning of the school year, McKenzie, a senior and member of the student council at Washington Township High School in Deptford,



New Jersey, hatched an idea. She wanted the entire senior class to spend one school day providing service in the community. Nothing too elaborate. Just a few hours sprucing up the place.

“I started thinking about what I wanted to give back to the school and what we could do,” she says. “I thought this would be a good way.”

And that’s how Washington Township’s Senior Service Day began.

Things got a little tricky when she presented the idea to her fellow students, however.

“In September, when I told the student body of my idea at the beginning of an assembly, they were excited,” McKenzie says. “But then what I was saying started to sink in. Before the assembly was over, a lot of guys were saying, ‘You’re not going to





**O**n the last week of school, McKenzie found herself back in her old second-grade classroom at The Birches Elementary School. There she read to seven- and eight-year-olds who eagerly crowded around the chair to listen to her. "It was so much fun being back in that classroom," she said.

get us all to go and clean a park. We're not going to do this."

"And I'm still in the EFY, youth-conference mode," McKenzie adds. "I'm thinking, 'We're going to get to clean together, guys. We get to rake. And we're doing it for free!' I had to finally realize that maybe everybody wouldn't be as excited just to spend a day working."

Those few negative responses didn't diminish McKenzie's enthusiasm for the project, though. It was now McKenzie's job to get those naysaying students into, as she says, "the mode."

Nine months later, and a week before they all graduated, approximately 500 of the senior class's 600 students shuffled out of the school holding rakes and shovels to board buses headed for nearby parks and schools.

### Service projects

If there is one thing McKenzie knows, it's service projects. If you're a Latter-day Saint, they kind of come with the territory. Since McKenzie turned 12 and joined Young Women, she's helped paint a preschool building, and she's gone on her ward's annual Christmas caroling excursions to local hospitals. "We also regularly visit nursing homes, and we've given Easter baskets to the Ronald McDonald House," she says. And McKenzie isn't even including her Young Women Value Experiences which consisted of—among other things—acquiring donated fleece and using it to make toys and pillows she then donated to the local women's shelter.

### Making it work

Senior Service Day was a little different from those activities in one big way. This was McKenzie's idea, and she had to make it happen. There was no Laurel adviser to coordinate everything. So to accomplish her goal, McKenzie had to inspire a bunch of students not experienced in service projects to pitch in. "I think my high school is full of good kids. This will work," she said confidently the day before the event.

"When I do service, it makes me more grateful for what I have. It's a ton

of work, but I think you learn how to work. It's so fun. You really like to work," she adds.

McKenzie was also only one of two Church members in her senior class. She knew she was perceived as being different by her classmates. And coming up with the idea of Senior Service Day didn't necessarily change their opinions. "Because I don't go to the parties on Fridays, other kids will ask me what I like to do. Then they become curious. Once I went on a picnic with a couple of kids who I kind of knew but wasn't really good friends with. We were just talking about stuff, and we ended up talking for an hour-and-a-half about the Church." Serving others was one of the topics that



day. Senior Service Day would give McKenzie the opportunity to practice what she preached.

Still, there was the little issue of instilling excitement in the other students about—ahem—the prospect of raking. There was also a lot of planning necessary to make the whole thing happen. “I didn’t realize how much work had to be put into it,” she says.

With the help of teachers and counselors who offered their help, and after postponing the day twice, June 1 finally came and everything was in order. McKenzie made sure of it, checking off each item one by one:

- √ The school district had furnished the buses to transport the students.
- √ Bus drivers volunteered their time.
- √ The township had approved the work in several different parks.
- √ The elementary and middle schools’ principals were enthusiastic about the service the students would provide.
- √ A local pizza restaurant had donated pizzas for the party afterward, and grocery stores had provided soda pop.

“I think it’s going to be great,” she said, the day before Senior Service Day would actually happen. Pizzas and cases of soda as enticements certainly couldn’t hurt.

### Senior Service Day

Even with all the planning, the next morning McKenzie drove from place to place to make sure everything was coordinated and going according to plan. She found students who had descended on the

sites, and she thought back to that first assembly. “I think they kind of didn’t get what we were trying to do in the very beginning. But after they thought about it, they realized it could be fun,” she says.

At one school, several girls hemmed the bottom of the frayed stage curtain. Outside, another group was picking up litter along a fence line. At a middle school, kids were spading and weeding a garden while others were—yes!—raking the courtyard lawn.

And later that morning at The Birches Elementary School sat McKenzie. She was reading to the second-graders who had crowded around a wooden rocking chair. Eleven years earlier, McKenzie had been in this classroom. Her teacher from back then was still teaching. As McKenzie looked at the new batch of seven- and eight-year-olds, she fondly remembered her days in the school.

The kids were attentive, listening as McKenzie read from a children’s book.

“It was so much fun being back in that classroom,” she says afterward. “This has gone so well.”

A few hours later, the students were back at the high school sitting around listening to music, eating pizza, and smiling about what they had accomplished.

“You want us to do what? For how long? Why?”

They now had their answers.

### Today

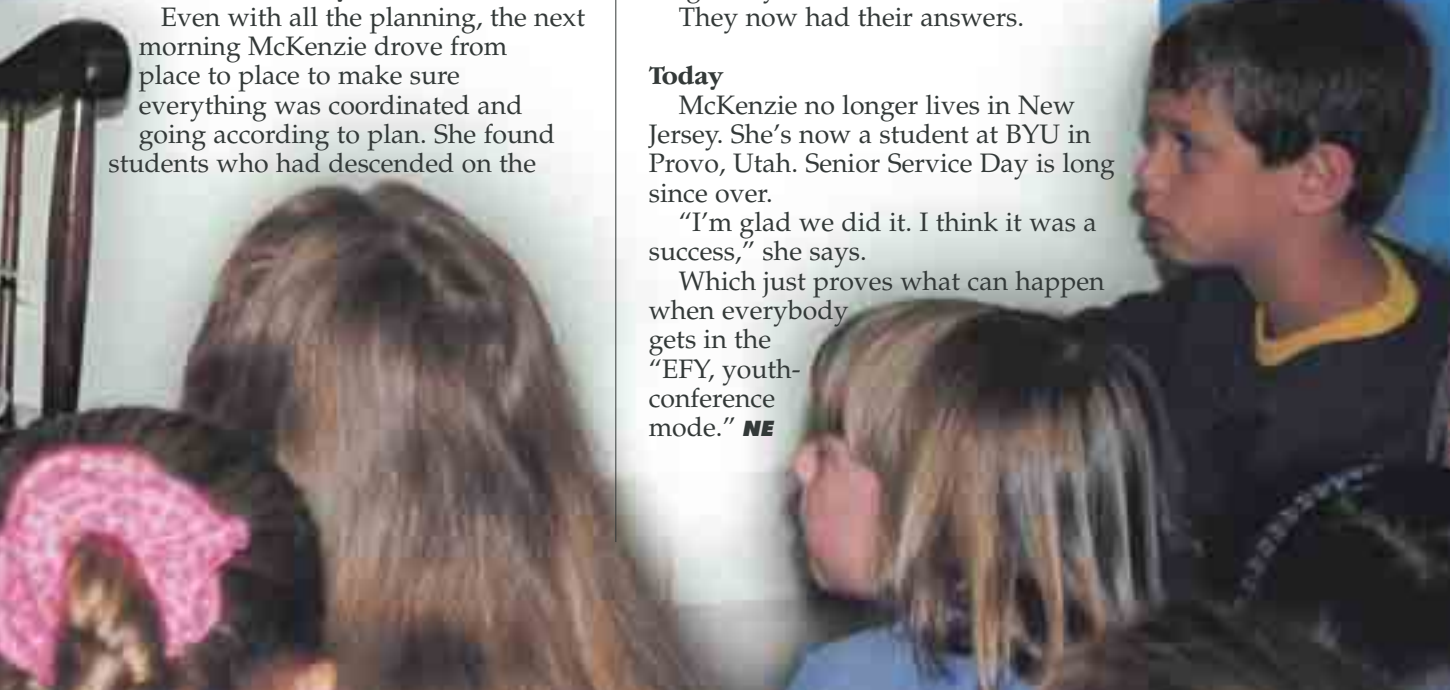
McKenzie no longer lives in New Jersey. She’s now a student at BYU in Provo, Utah. Senior Service Day is long since over.

“I’m glad we did it. I think it was a success,” she says.

Which just proves what can happen when everybody gets in the “EFY, youth-conference mode.” **NE**



**N**ot only did McKenzie participate in the service project she organized, but she convinced 500 of her fellow students to join her in sprucing up their New Jersey city. McKenzie was also a good example to her younger sister, Elise, who learned the value of service, (above).



# FARE ENOUGH

*I wanted to pay a fast offering and attend sacrament meeting, but I couldn't afford both.*

I remember the day my tenth-grade English teacher announced she had some exchange-student applications. Though I had never considered applying before, it felt right. I was thrilled to learn I would spend a year in Denmark. My ancestors had emigrated to Zion from Denmark well over a century ago.

My new home was in Nakskov, on the island of Lolland. Unfortunately, the nearest ward was several hours away.

After two months in Denmark, however, I learned about a small group of Saints who met closer to my home. To get there, I would have to ride a private railway. The train fare was around 40 crowns, nearly all my spending allowance for the week. It was fast Sunday, and I scraped together all the money I had—about 43 Danish crowns. I figured it would be sufficient if I got the round-trip discount. There would not be any money left over for a fast offering, but I felt the Lord would understand why.

As the train moved away from the station, the conductor came by and said, “Two crowns.” My fledgling Danish had to be mistaken—I knew the trip cost more than two crowns. After offering him most of what I had, he took a bill and gave me change. The fare was only two crowns! I

knew the Lord was watching out for me.

In a little attic apartment above a store was a tiny room containing a group of elderly women. One of them smiled, motioned me inside, and knocked on an adjoining door. I was greeted into priesthood meeting. There were about five older brethren and two young missionaries.

I couldn't understand much of what went on, but some hymns were familiar. There were tears as testimonies were shared.

When I told the missionaries my train fare was only two crowns, they couldn't believe it. I soon discovered the return trip was also just two crowns. I realized I could pay my fast offering after all. Later, I learned that in celebration of the centennial of the train system the fare had been reduced to two crowns for just that one day.

That was the beginning of my church experiences in Denmark. I was ordained a priest there, and the first time I ever blessed the sacrament was in Danish. As my language improved, I even spoke in church. Eventually, I was called on a mission to Denmark. I attended church with those members again, four years after my first visit. I watched as the man who ordained me a priest was sustained as president of the newly organized branch.

In Denmark I received spiritual depth, both as an exchange student and as a missionary. It began with my miraculous fast offering and a train ride to church one bright Sunday morning. **NE**

**O**nly two crowns? Either my fledgling Danish had led me to misunderstand the conductor, or the Lord was watching out for me.

By Kendall Crookston







## A MESSAGE FOR ME

In 1898, President David O. McKay (1873–1970) was Elder McKay, and he was homesick while serving as a missionary in Scotland. He had been in the city of Stirling for a few weeks and was discouraged. One day, on their way into town, he and his companion noticed an unfinished building. “Over the front door,” President McKay later said, “was a stone arch, something unusual in a residence, and what was still more unusual, I could see from the sidewalk that there was an inscription chiseled in the arch.

“When I approached near enough, this message came to me, not only in stone, but as if it came from One in whose service we were engaged: ‘Whate’er Thou Art, Act Well Thy Part’ ” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1956, 91).

Elder McKay took this message to heart, and he made his mind up to act his part well as a missionary and throughout his lifetime of service.

Today, the original stone from Scotland is in the Church Museum of History and Art in Salt Lake City, Utah, while a replica is in the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah.

## WRITE AWAY!



**D**o you know who any of your great-great grandmothers were? Have you ever done baptisms for the dead? The *New Era* wants to hear about your experiences while doing family history and temple work for the dead. Send your true stories to:

*New Era*  
50 East North Temple  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
84150

or e-mail us at

cur-editorial-  
newera@ldschurch.org

## TEST YOUR LDS I.Q.

If you haven’t already memorized the Articles of Faith in Primary, now would be a good time to do that. But even if you have, these questions might be tricky to answer.

### 1. Why did Joseph Smith write the Articles of Faith?

- a) As a summary of Latter-day Saint beliefs to be added to the Pearl of Great Price.
- b) As a response to Church critics in Missouri who requested a statement of beliefs.
- c) As a response to a request from a newspaper editor in Chicago.

### 2. In what year did the Prophet write and publish the list that is now known as the Articles of Faith?

- a) 1842
- b) 1847
- c) 1880

### 3. Which Church newspaper first published the Articles of Faith?

- a) *LDS Messenger and Advocate*
- b) *The Evening and The Morning Star*
- c) *Times and Seasons*

### 4. In what year were the Articles of Faith added to the standard works of the Church?

- a) 1842
- b) 1880
- c) 1924

### 5. How many words long are the Articles of Faith?

- a) About 250 words
- b) About 400 words
- c) About 550 words



## FIND YOUR LIFE

“**T**here is a power in [The Book of Mormon] which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called ‘the words of life’ (D&C 84:85), and nowhere is that more true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 7).

—President Ezra Taft Benson  
(1899–1994)

**“We bear testimony not only through our words but also through our lives.”**

—President James E. Faust  
(*Ensign*, March 1997, 2)

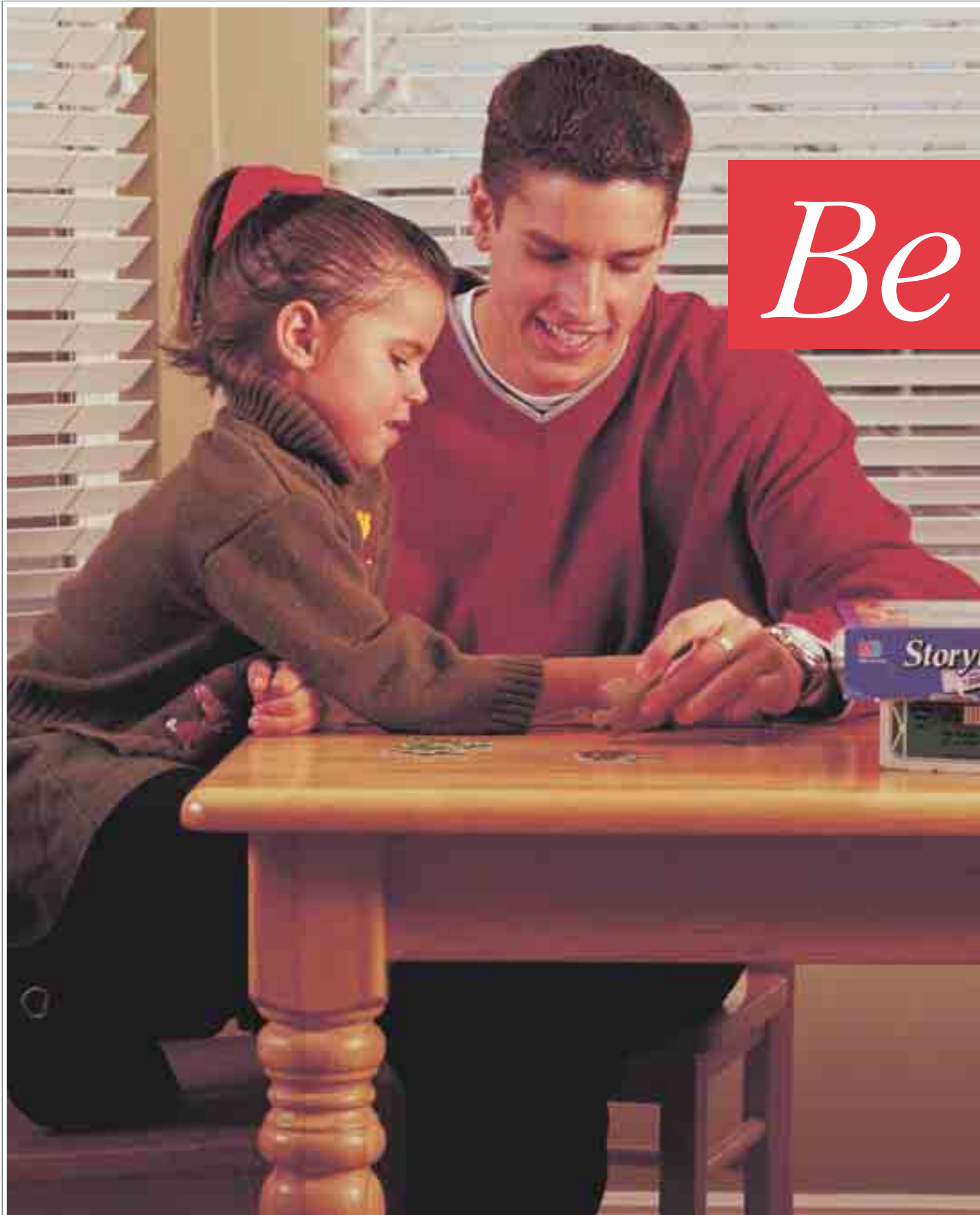


## BUILDING FOR ETERNITY

**W**hen their bishop challenged them to read the Book of Mormon in a year, the youth of the Spring Creek Ward in Mendon, Utah, got right to work—building a temple. For each five chapters they read, each young man or woman would write his or her name on a craft stick to be attached to a model temple built of foam board. The Young Men and their leaders completed two of the walls, the Young Women and their leaders completed the other two, and the bishopric covered the roof. They all got together to celebrate finishing the Book of Mormon and the temple at the end of the year.







*Be*

# HUMBLE

*Looking for lasting happiness? Want better relationships with others? Need more of the Spirit in your life? Then here's an important key.*

**B**e humble," President Gordon B. Hinckley said in his November 2000 address to youth (see *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 4). "Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answers to thy prayers" (D&C 112:10).

## **Recognizing God's hand**

There is nothing wrong with feeling pleased with the results of our hard work. But it is also important to recognize God's hand in the things we are able to accomplish.

"Recently I have had a lot of personal accomplishments that have helped me feel good about my abilities," wrote 18-year-old Brian Whitmer. "One night,

though, I was reading Alma 26:12 where Ammon gives God credit for everything, and I realized I hadn't been doing so. Then President Hinckley's words reinforced my decision to give God credit—to thank Him for His help and blessings in my personal life. Since then I've noticed a change in my life as I've become more spiritual and more grateful."

## **There is no place for arrogance**

"There is no place for arrogance in our lives," President Hinckley stated. "There is no place for conceit. There is no place for egotism."

Arrogance, conceit, and egotism will stifle our ability to receive personal revelation, and may also damage our relationships with others.

"Whenever I find myself becoming self-righteous, proud, or distant from God and His love, I remember President Hinckley's words and they help me see things as they really are again," says Erin Knutsen from Idaho Falls, Idaho.

Just as humility helps us in our relationship with our Heavenly Father, being humble can also help us in our relationships with friends and family.

"Being more humble has gotten me more friends and improved the



**G**iving thanks for blessings brought even greater blessings to one girl.

By Caroline H. Benzley

**T**he Savior was without conceit, pride, or arrogance. In this, as in everything else, He is our great example.



friendships I already have,” wrote Cody Wagoner from Middleton, Idaho.

One young woman found that being humble helped her in her relationship with her brother.

“As I was sitting there listening to President Hinckley, I was sitting by my mom and by my brother, who was preparing for a mission at the time. I heard President Hinckley tell the youth to be humble.

“We have never had a great relationship, my brother and me. We never got along because we let things get in the way—friends, age, school, and our actions. We never cared; we thought we were better than each other. We literally went days without talking or saying something nice to each other. So, after I heard President Hinckley, I made a promise that I would always bite my tongue, say nice things to him, and do nice things for him. For the next little while I did everything I could for him. Then it rubbed off, and he was nice to me; and now we are the closest ever.”

#### **A great work to do**

Being humble helps us in relationships, but it also gives us the opportunity to receive direction and guidance from our Heavenly Father.

In his talk, President Hinckley emphasized the importance of receiving counsel from our Father in Heaven. “We have a great work to do,” he said. “We have things to do. We have things to accomplish. We need direction in the pursuit of our education. We need help in choosing our eternal companion.”

One young woman found that when she was humble the Lord helped her make the type of decision the prophet spoke of.

“When I first heard these marvelous words by our prophet, it was during the time when I was struggling,” she wrote. “I was currently dating a nonmember friend, and I could see my life changing—and not for the better. As I

took the dear prophet’s advice, I got down on my knees and humbly prayed to my Father in Heaven. A few weeks later my Sunday School teacher gave me the answer I needed as we were talking about our choices and consequences that follow. I knew right then that I was going to stop dating this good friend.

“I know with all my heart that the Lord humbled me enough so I could receive the answer I needed. Through this powerful experience I have been able to give this great young man a copy of the Book of Mormon, and within a few short weeks he is going to be baptized.”

#### **The greatest example**

The Savior was a man without conceit, pride, or arrogance. Because of this He can be our example as we strive to be humble.

William Linares from Los Angeles, California, uses the example of Jesus when he is striving to be more humble. “I’m trying to be humble just like Jesus was,” he wrote.

President Hinckley described a humble person as one who looks to the Lord for guidance in his life. “I believe the meek and the humble are those who are teachable,” he said. “They are willing to learn. They are willing to listen to the whisperings of the still, small voice for guidance in their lives. They place the wisdom of the Lord above their own wisdom.”

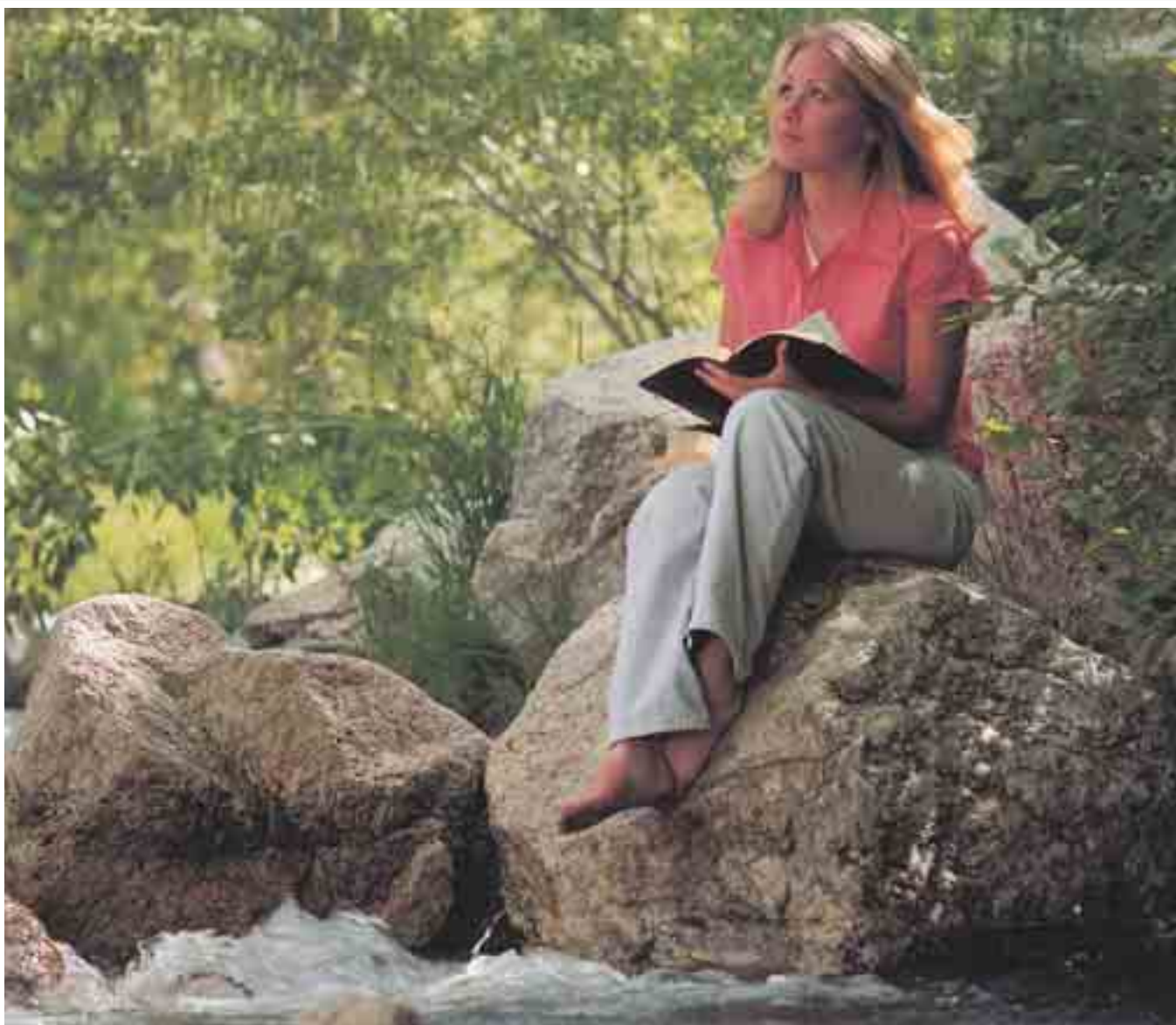
The prophet promised the youth great blessings if they follow his counsel to be humble.

“If we are humble and obedient, then the Lord will lead us by the hand and answer our prayers,” said President Hinckley. “What greater things could we ask for? There is nothing to compare with this.”

#### **A prophet’s promise**

As many young men and women have found, there is great peace in listening to





and following the counsel of the prophet. This peace may come to all of us if we follow the commandments of the Lord.

"I make you a promise," said President Hinckley, "that God will not forsake you if you will walk in His paths with the guidance of His commandments."

Coretta Neugebauer found this promise to be true: "The six B's have helped my life. They aren't some huge thing, but rather a reassurance, a gentle, guiding hand that reminds us. I think how simple life can be when we follow God and His counsel."

President Hinckley ended his address to the youth with a prayer in their behalf. In this prayer he asked the Lord to "Please smile with favor upon them. Please listen to them as they lift their

voices in prayer unto Thee. Please lead them gently by the hand in the direction they should follow."

As Rebecca Pingree stated, "The prophet said that if we stay on the right path and keep the commandments, God will not forsake us. He recognized how the times have changed and how we have challenges, but we are Zion's youth of latter days, and we need to stand strong and tall."

With the Lord's help each of us can learn to stand strong and tall as we are more grateful, smart, clean, true, humble, and prayerful. By following these guidelines we may attain those "dreams and hopes and longings to find that which will bring [us] peace and happiness"—peace and happiness in this life as well as the life to come. **NE**

**B**eing more humble has gotten me more friends and improved the friendships I already have."

# ROADSIDE



**C**an you really walk 10 miles of highway wearing bright orange vests and remain anonymous? These teens did it for 10 years. But now their secret's out.

*Who do you thank for this litter-free stretch of highway? Anonymous.*

A sign on the highway that cuts through the boundaries of the Mink Creek Ward in southeast Idaho near Pocatello reads, "This section of highway cleaned by 'anonymous.'" Those doing the cleaning wanted to keep their service a secret. And for 10 years, mum was the word. But now the word is out.

Although they wanted to do their service in secret, when the Idaho Transportation Department named the Mink Creek Ward youth the outstanding highway cleanup group of the year (an award the youth had resisted), the secret was over. Now, newspapers in and around the community are running articles and pictures of the youth cleaning the highway. The 10 years of efforts to remain anonymous have been in vain.

The youth had never really cared to receive any credit for picking up litter. And the leaders thought it was a good project to teach responsibility.

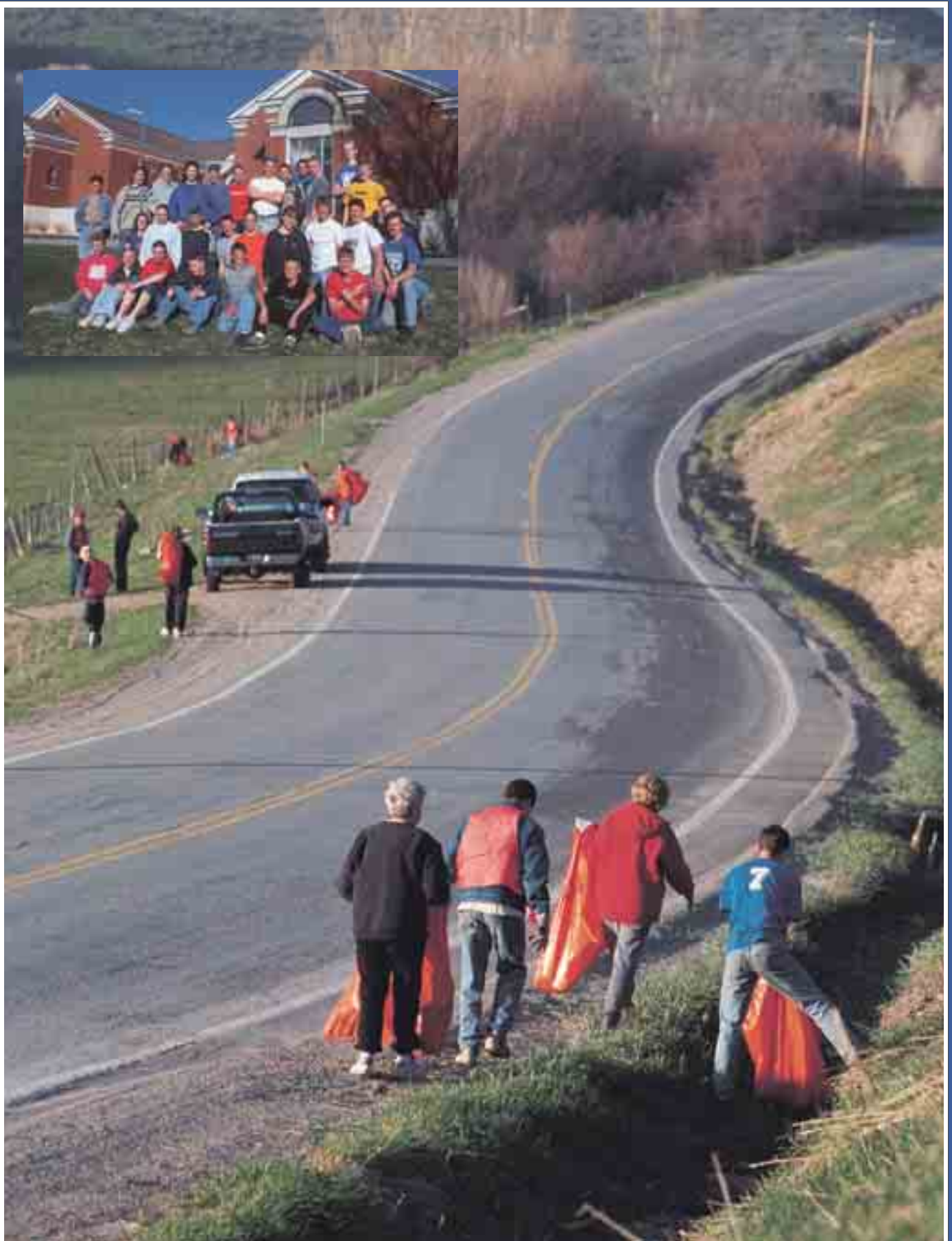
Most groups who adopt a highway usually take on a one- or two-mile stretch. But the Mink Creek youth adopted 10 miles. State officials estimate the youth picked up more than 12,000 pounds of trash last year.

Although the sign still says, "anonymous," now everyone knows who to thank for that litter-free stretch of highway that cuts through the mountains of southeast Idaho. **NE**



By Jim Harrison





Photography by Rod Boam



# FINDING

# MR. CHAN

By Michael D. Call



*The book we found in a drawer was old and tattered and hadn't been read for a long time. It led us to Mr. Chan and another well-worn book.*

**E**lder Peterson and I took the Star Ferry to Hong Kong Island. From there we boarded a bus that would take us to our area on the back side of the island. Elder Peterson was a new missionary, and I wanted him to see, as soon as possible, how the gospel brings new joy into a person's life. We chatted for a while; then we each drifted off in thought.

I don't know what Elder Peterson was thinking about. Maybe the hot, humid August weather. Maybe the strange foods. But I clearly remember my thoughts.

Our pool of investigators was average in size, but we didn't have anyone who was ready for baptism. As I prayed silently, I had a calm understanding within my heart that the Lord would guide us to people who were prepared for the truth. I hardly expected a miracle, though.

We set out that day tracting through



**T**his is your church, isn't it?" he asked, handing us the book.

Shek Pai Wan—one of the many government housing complexes that crowd entire families of six or eight people into one-room apartments the size of a small living room. For being in Hong Kong only two days, Elder Peterson did remarkably well speaking Cantonese during his door approaches. But we had little success.

The next few days we worked hard and followed the Spirit. Although we found one or two new investigators, no one seemed to really be catching fire.

Then it happened.

I was looking through the drawers in our bedroom and found an old notebook. I opened it and saw a book of contacts and investigators from years before. The pages were torn and soiled.

The writing was faded. But the Spirit whispered that I should read through the scores of names. I sat on my bed and began reading the book. As I slowly skimmed the lists of faceless names, my eyes and fingers stopped at a Mr. Chan.

The notes indicated that he had been taught the first discussion but that he wasn't interested.

The burning in my heart was distinct and comforting. At once I knew we should visit this man. That afternoon we found the apartment listed in the old notebook. I said a silent prayer as we knocked on the door. The burning of the Spirit deep within us intensified as we waited for Mr. Chan. We waited.

No answer. We

knocked again. Still no answer.

"I guess no one's home," I said to Elder Peterson. "Let's try later."

We were a few feet away when the door opened.

"Matyeh a?" The man was asking us what we wanted.

"Hou ma?" We responded with the traditional Chinese "How are you?" greeting.

A minute later, this man was introducing himself as Mr. Chan.

"May we tell you a little about our church?" we asked.

"Please do," Mr. Chan said.

The Spirit of the Lord was with the three of us as we discussed the Prophet Joseph Smith and the First Vision. We testified of Christ and of His atoning sacrifice. As we testified, the Spirit told us Mr. Chan believed our words.

"How do you feel about what we've said?" we asked.

"I know what you tell me is true," Mr. Chan replied. "Wait here a minute." He walked to a chair and stood on it while reaching for some books on a shelf. Finally he found the Book of Mormon.

"This is your church, isn't it?" he asked, handing us the book.

"Yes, it is. Where did you get this?"

"Some missionaries like you came to my home three or four years ago," he explained. "I bought this book from them, but they never came back."

Elder Peterson and I looked through the well-worn Book of Mormon.

"Have you read this book?" I asked.

"Yes, many times. It is the word of God. Can you baptize me?"

"Why do you want to be baptized?"

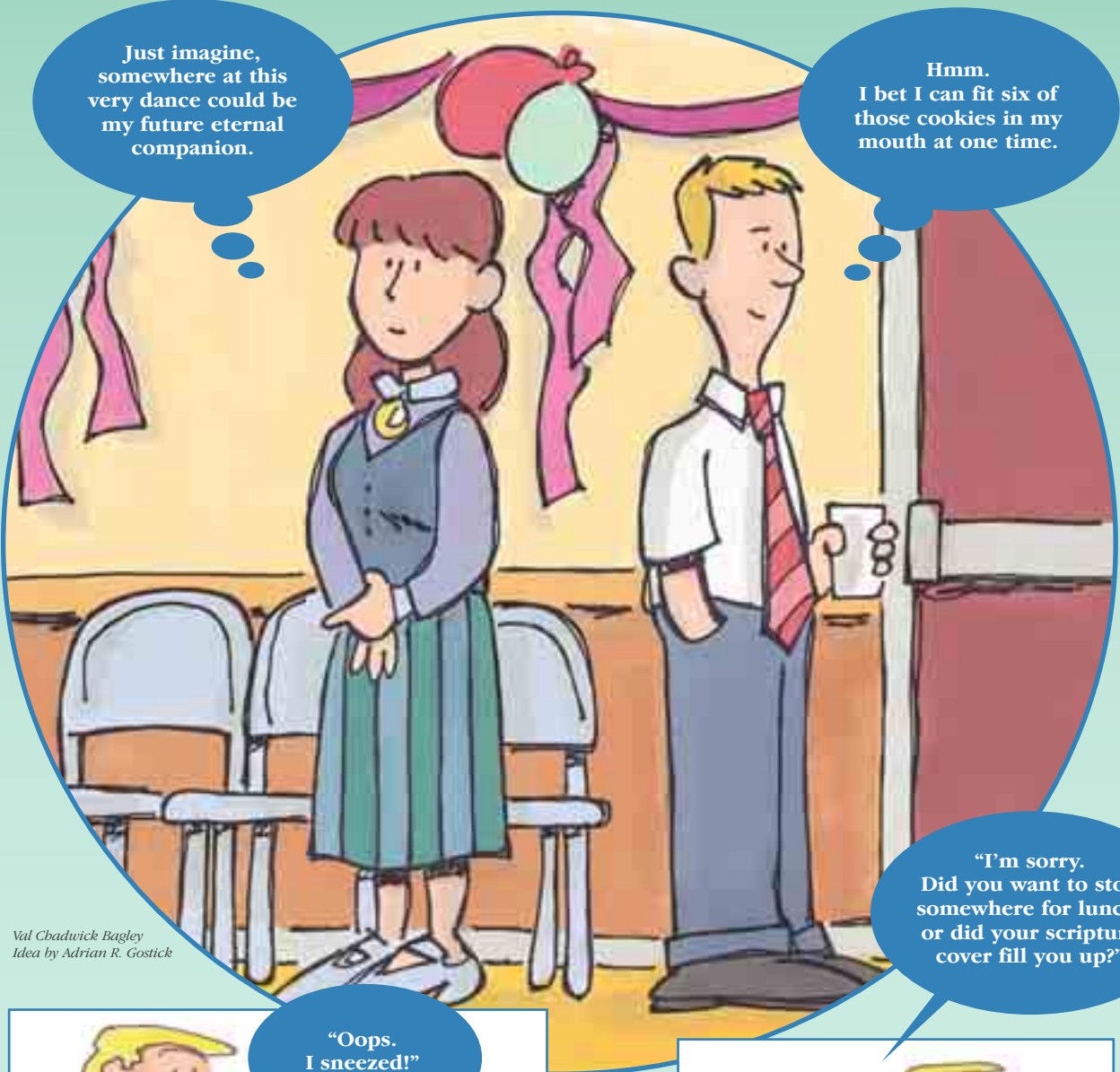
"So I may return to live with God and Jesus Christ," he said.

The Spirit was strong as we knelt in prayer with Mr. Chan. He had truly been prepared by the hand of God for baptism into His kingdom.

The words of Alma to his son Helaman in Alma 37:9–10 now have more meaning to me: "These records and their words . . . brought them to the knowledge of the Lord their God, and to rejoice in Jesus Christ their Redeemer. And who knoweth but what they will be the means of bringing many thousands . . . to the knowledge of their Redeemer?" **NE**



# T H E E X T R A S M I L E



Val Chadwick Bagley  
Idea by Adrian R. Gostick



Ryan Stoker



Ryan Stoker

IN ABRAHAM'S

FOOT



# STEPS

*He lived a few thousand years ago. But because of what Abraham did, you are blessed and have a family duty to perform.*



**T**he great prophet Abraham lived in a time of awful wickedness. It was a period of worshipping false gods and offering human sacrifice. For example, we are told of three young women who were killed upon an altar because they would not bow down and worship gods of wood and stone (see Abr. 1:11). But Abraham desired



By Elder  
**F. Melvin Hammond**  
Of the Seventy

righteousness and the blessings of the priesthood because he found they brought him “greater happiness and peace” (Abr. 1:2). Because he resisted the evil around him, Abraham was also placed upon the altar as a sacrifice to a false god. But God heard the prayer of His faithful prophet, loosed his bands, and smote the wicked priest of Elkenah.

Because of Abraham’s great faithfulness, he was promised that he would take the name of God, would have His priesthood, and that his descendants would “bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations” (Abr. 2:9). Furthermore, through Abraham’s seed or posterity “shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of . . . salvation, even of life eternal” (Abr. 2:11).

It is significant that every person who is born into the Church and everyone who receives the gospel by conversion becomes the literal seed of Abraham. All who are baptized are born again into the family of Christ and accept the covenant established through Father Abraham. We are a part of this family. The believing blood flows through our veins. The covenant of priesthood and duty to God is a part of our heritage.

Every young man who receives the Aaronic Priesthood and goes on to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood also becomes a son of Moses and of Aaron (see D&C 84:34). To be the son of someone implies that you will follow his



**Y**ou also live in a time of wickedness, but if you will be faithful like Abraham, you too will receive the greatest blessings the Lord offers.

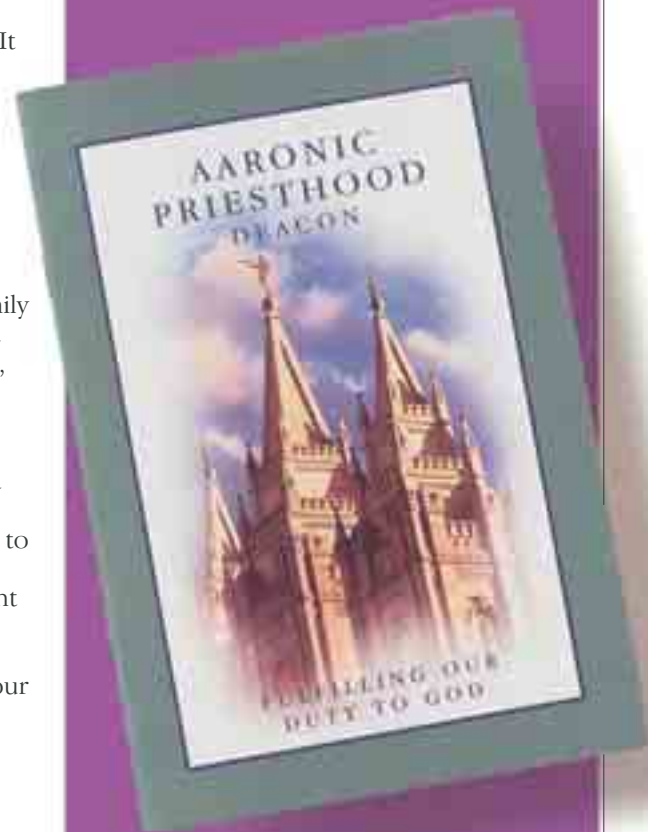
righteous example—that you carry his name with proper dignity and respect. It also means that the blessings he receives from Heavenly Father may become yours as well. The greatest promise is that the priesthood entitles us to receive the Father and the Son into our lives. Therefore, “all that my Father hath,” said the Savior, “shall be given unto him” (D&C 84:38).

All of this means that you have a family duty to perform. Your life is committed to keeping the commandments of God, preparing yourself to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, receiving an endowment of power in the sacred temple, serving a full-time mission, and passing these blessings on to your posterity by being sealed in the temple to a worthy companion. Abraham’s covenant with God is also your covenant with God. You could do nothing worse than to break that commitment.

If there has ever been a time when our youth needed to carry forward the ministry of Abraham, it is now. If your leaders speak strongly to you, it is because we share the feelings of the prophet Alma, who said, “And now my beloved brethren, I have said these things unto you that I might awaken you to a sense of *your duty to God*, that ye may walk blameless before him, that ye may walk after the holy order of God, after which ye have been received” (Alma 7:22; emphasis added).

In the great family of Christ, there should never be any empty chairs. Doubts should never linger in our minds. The knowledge that we have of Jesus Christ should carry on through generations yet to come. And so, onward, young men of the covenant! How can we fail if we stand together—one family, united in our resolve to be worthy sons of God?

I bear you my testimony of the Savior, Jesus Christ, that we are members of His divine Church, and that there is a living prophet on earth today. **NE**



**T**he Aaronic Priesthood Duty to God program has been prepared to strengthen your sense of duty and to help you progress in every way as one of God’s covenant sons. As a deacon, teacher, and priest, you will be able to establish goals, meet the requirements God has given young men, and become more like the Savior. As you complete your desired objectives, you will receive certificates of achievement, culminating with your receiving the much-desired Duty to God Award. You will work hard to earn it, but it will be worth the effort. This is an award you will treasure all your life as a reminder of your duty to God.

The Scouting program will also strengthen you. As you advance until you achieve the highest rank, you will grow in stature and in spirit. You will learn skills that will develop your body, your character, and your intellect. Every boy, whether he enjoys athletics or literature, can find a welcome niche in Scouting.

—Elder F. Melvin Hammond



*Creative ideas for using this issue of the New Era.*

### Family Home Evening Ideas

□ After reading “He Will Never Let You Down” on page 4, find a picture of Jesus Christ for each member of the family. Have each family member take a small strip of paper and write the words “I will never let you down” and attach it to the bottom of the picture. Encourage them to put their picture somewhere they will see it often.

□ Have each family member bring a copy of the Book of Mormon to family home evening. Read together parts of the article, “More Precious than Gold” on page 20. Read together the Introduction page of the Book of Mormon. Also read the Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith just following the testimonies of the witnesses at the beginning of the Book of Mormon.

### Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women Activity Ideas

□ Under the direction of your bishop or branch president and your adult service leaders, organize a ward or branch service day. If appropriate, you could invite the older Primary children to join you. With the help of ward members, make a list of people who need specific help around their homes such as yard upkeep, window washing, or painting. Make sure that the people assigned have the right equipment for the jobs. Meet in a central place for refreshments after everyone is finished.

### Personal Improvement

□ Do you have a bad habit you would really like to change? You can do it if you follow some of the suggestions in the Idea List, “Breaking Bad Habits” on page 11. After identifying the habit you would like to change, place reminders, like a note on the inside of your bedroom door or a string or ribbon tied around your wrist, to stick with your goal. Or to keep track of the number of days you have avoided your bad habit, make a paper chain with a link for each day you have succeeded.

### Seminary Devotional Idea

□ Ask the students to stand and turn around, facing the back of the classroom. While their backs are to you, explain briefly about the principle of repentance. You may want to use the information in the Bible Dictionary. Explain that true repentance means turning towards our Savior. Ask the class to turn around while you hold up a picture of the Savior.

### Value Project Idea

□ After reading Q&A on page 16, prepare a booklet of group-date suggestions. Have your Young Women class brainstorm for ideas. Ask your parents about fun activities they remember doing. Ask your seminary class to participate. Make a list of the best ideas and offer to share them with your Young Women or your seminary classes.

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*"The New Era is one of the best influences in my life as a teenager."*



#### Stayed up late reading

I look forward to hearing President Gordon B. Hinckley speak during general conference broadcasts, and reading in the *New Era* what he said. I was especially thankful for his message in the January 2002 *New Era* titled "God Will Make a Way." I had come home one night and stayed up late reading my scriptures and *New Eras*. I picked up the January 2002 issue and saw President Hinckley had this talk in the beginning of the magazine. While reading it, I could feel the Spirit in my room. It is such a wonderful feeling to have. I'm so thankful to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ and especially for our modern-day prophet who receives revelation to lead and guide us.

*Jeana Hoffman  
Gresham, Wisconsin (via e-mail)*

#### Total answer

Let me just say how much I love the *New Era*. It always seems that when I have certain questions or problems in my life, that month's issue is a total answer to me. I also love how you write so much about missionary work. A few years ago the *New Era* did a special magazine on missionaries and what goes on at the Missionary Training Center (June '00). I have read and reread that issue. Good friends are starting to go on their missions, and it's so awesome to know what they are teaching and to know that they are helping to spread the gospel.

*Kisa Caldwell  
Washington, Utah*

#### Relatives

I would like to thank you for printing the story "The Nauvoo Temple: Cornerstones of Faith" (May '02) because in the article it mentioned two girls, Lisa and Joanne Church, who were related to Hayden Wells Church. I want them to know that he was my great-great grandpa, and I'm proud that one of my distant relatives is the temple engineer.

*LoraLynn Church  
Glendale, Arizona (via e-mail)*

#### Just like in the article

My seminary teacher used the article "Extra Strength" (Jan. '02) in one of her lessons. That very day, a friend from school was asking me questions about the Church while we were in the weight room. I tried to answer him the best I could but didn't feel my words were very influential. But I felt impressed to do as the young woman in the article did. The following day I gave my friend the new *For the Strength of Youth* and told him it contained the guidelines written for teenagers to follow. It felt good to have done this small missionary effort.

*Marek de Savigny  
Dunrobin, Ontario, Canada*

#### Perfectly put together

The *New Era* is one of the best influences in my life as a teenager. Its articles always leave an impact on me every time I read it. The talks from Church leaders, the short stories that are very straight to the point, and all the contents are just perfectly put together. Every volume teaches me a lesson. I'm forever grateful knowing there are people out there who care about the well-being of the young women and young men of the Church. I adore this magazine and can't wait to get hold of it. I only wish it came out twice or more a month.

*Ilisapesi H. Uipi  
Hibifo, Tongatapu, Tonga (via e-mail)*

*We love hearing from you. Write us at  
New Era*

*We've Got Mail  
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*Or e-mail us at*

*cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org*

*Submissions may be edited for length  
and clarity.*





## Cycles

By Arianne Baadsgaard

I reach the bottom of a hill  
each time  
September  
lets go of August  
and have to start  
pedaling again.

*By Marjorie Huff*



*“I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”*

*See “More Precious than Gold,” p. 20.*