

THEY LIVED What They Believed

BY ARIEL ARON TORAYA

I wasn't sure if true happiness was really attainable—until I met a group of young Latter-day Saints.

I was born into a Christian home with two loving parents. They were good people who taught me many virtues, including optimism, hard work, honesty, and kindness.

I grew up knowing there was a God but had little idea who He was. I knew He wanted me to be good, but I often fell prey to my weaknesses. Whenever I reflected on where my life was going, I had to admit I wasn't really happy about the results. I wasn't sure being truly happy was even possible.

Fellowshipping with the Saints

Then I moved to Utah, where I felt as if I were jumping back in time. I had come from a big city, and now I could see fields and cows from my kitchen window. Struggling to fit in with the people in my new area, I wondered why I had moved to such a quiet place. After a year or two I grew to love the beauty of the land, and

the stress of my previous nonstop life slipped from my shoulders. But inside I was still unfulfilled.

Then one of my neighbors, Daniel, began inviting me to Latter-day Saint single adult activities. I always declined, but he was persistent. Finally I felt I wasn't being a good friend in always turning him down, so I accepted his invitation to attend a dance, dinner, and campout.

I went with some trepidation, wondering how I would fit in with a large group of Latter-day Saints. I also feared they might bombard me with their ideas.

The young adults I met that night were very friendly. Not only were they fun; they were also true followers of their religion. There was no drinking, smoking, or drugs. Nor was there the contention, slandering, and coarse language I had often found in other social settings. Instead, I found singles enjoying each other's company in a spirit of love and friendship.

The following morning as Daniel and I were driving home from the campout, I felt impressed to ask him about



these wonderful people I had met. I asked if these people were representative of Latter-day Saints as a whole. He asked if I would like to see what other Latter-day Saints were like. I accepted.

A Different Lifestyle

That Sunday I attended sacrament meeting, Sunday School, and priesthood meeting with Daniel, and the friends I had made at the activity openly welcomed me. I had previously attended a few sacrament meetings but had never felt the spirit of it until that Sunday as I mingled with those young singles. Already in life I had seen so much of what the world had to offer young adults—drinking, drugs, coarse language and behavior, sexual impropriety, gambling, pornography, and other wicked practices. I had never seen and felt a testimony so moving as that of these singles, who were determined to live the standards of their faith.

Coming to Know the Truth

Many years earlier I had had a Latter-day Saint friend who tried to share truths about our Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

I remember how closed my heart was to the gospel then. I had doubted that anybody had the authority to speak to me for God.

Now, however, I read the Book of Mormon and prayed to know whether it was true. I placed hope and faith in my Eternal Father that He would fulfill His promise to answer my prayer. There was no angelic visitation, but my conversion was equally powerful. I cannot doubt the sure witness given by the Spirit of the Lord.

Many people feel as I once felt about the gospel. I know the key to my conversion was a testimony provided not by the words of the Lord alone but by those who had faith enough to live by those words. Their actions were a key to my conversion. ■

