

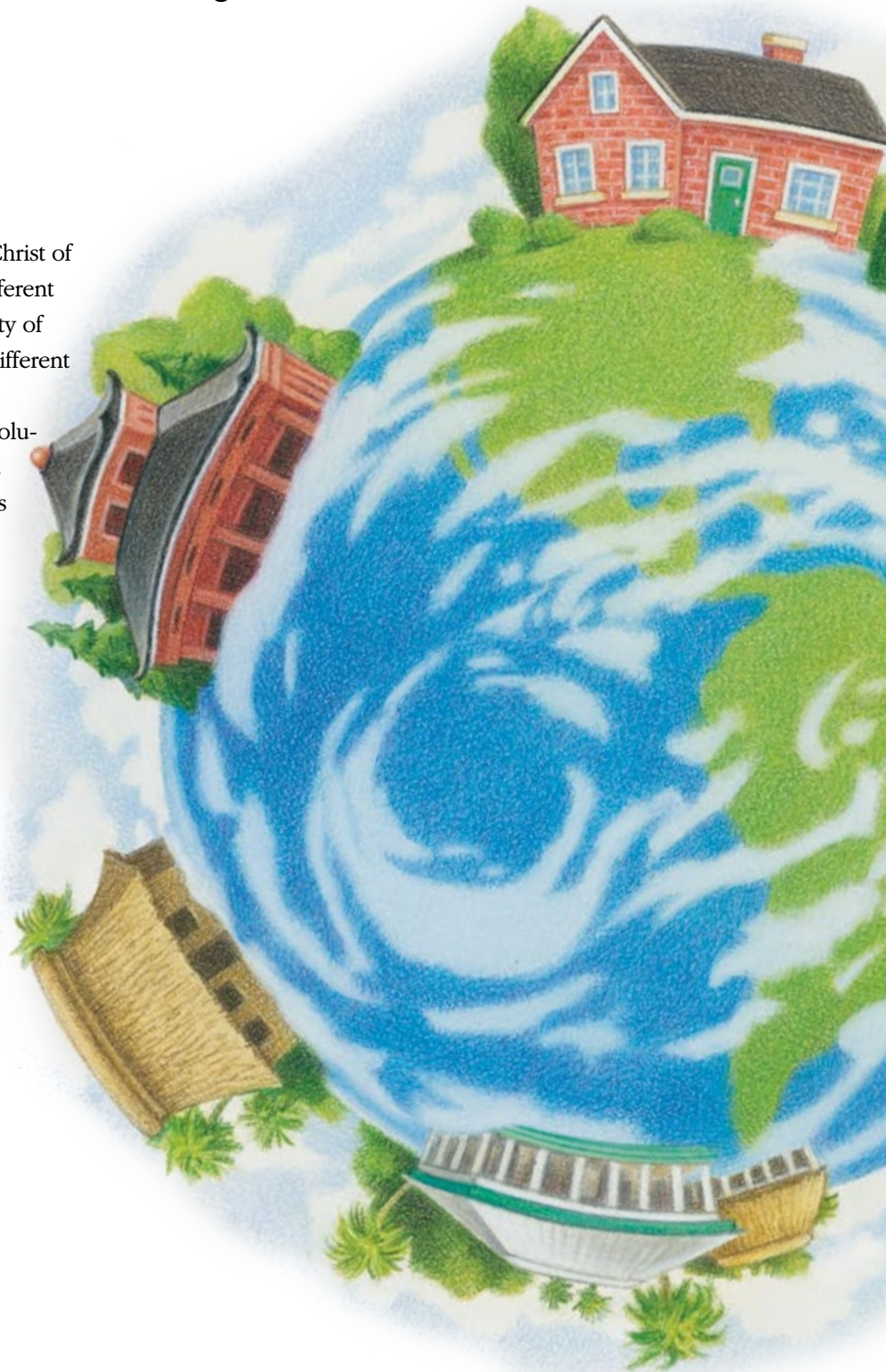
# A GREAT Community of Saints

**M**embers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are found in different countries, are engaged in a variety of occupations and callings, and face many different challenges.

But the Savior and His gospel provide solutions to our problems, unite us in love and common purpose, and bring us together as a worldwide community.

Whether you meet with 13 others in a small branch in Ukraine or with 200 in a ward in Mexico, you belong to something much grander. Our shared faith in the Savior makes us literally “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19).

As you get to know some of your neighbors from around the world in this article (and through each issue of the Church magazines), we hope you find assurance that the gospel of Jesus Christ offers what you need to face your own challenges.





**Vi'iga Faatoia of Samoa**

Age 60  
Mayor  
First counselor  
in bishopric

**T**he tsunami that struck Samoa in September 2009 took my grandson. It took my sister's son. I lost my home, two cars, and almost everything I owned. Nearly our entire village is moving into the hills so that this doesn't happen again.

I know God loves those who survived because, through the Church, He has given us new homes, food, and water. I know He loves those who did not survive because, through His power, we can be together again. We have been blessed.



**Lucia Leonardo of Guatemala**

Age 23  
Student  
Second counselor in stake  
Young Women presidency

**T**he problems I face are the same that everyone my age has. What should I do with my life? What should I study? Whom should I marry? How do I deal with pressure from nonmember friends to lower my standards? Sometimes it is easy to get down or feel sad or nervous.

The gospel has directed my life in every way. Even though I still have to work out some of the details, I know what I want, and I know where I'm going because of the gospel. I'm grateful for that. It really makes me happy. It helps me stay strong and help others, because I know that when I need help, I can pray to my Heavenly Father.



**Valerina M. of Utah, USA**

Age 10

**B**eing an older sister isn't always easy. Sometimes I get frustrated. But I've learned to be a good friend to my little sister and brother by watching my mom and the relationship she has with her sisters. She teaches me to set a Christlike example for those around us. I can do these things to show how much I appreciate the love of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, as well as the love of my mom and dad.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEVE KROPP



**Elizabeth Kangethe  
of Kenya**  
Age 27  
Freelance journalist  
Ward Relief Society president

**B**efore I received the gospel, my world was a dark place. I was slow to forgive and harbored ill feelings against anyone I felt had wronged me. I was disillusioned with marriage, seeing all around me husbands who were drunk and women who were battered.

Embracing the gospel of Jesus Christ changed me. It was wonderful to go to church and find families sitting together, to be taught about love, mutual respect, and understanding. I found myself abandoning traditions not in harmony with the gospel.

I felt compelled to make peace with a perceived enemy. We now keep in touch often. I met a wonderful returned missionary and will be married in the temple soon.

I am convinced that I am in the right place. The love and concern the members have for each other gives me a sense of belonging. My life has become more meaningful. I know it is absolutely essential that I remain faithful to the end by avoiding backward glances toward the darkness and remorse of the past.

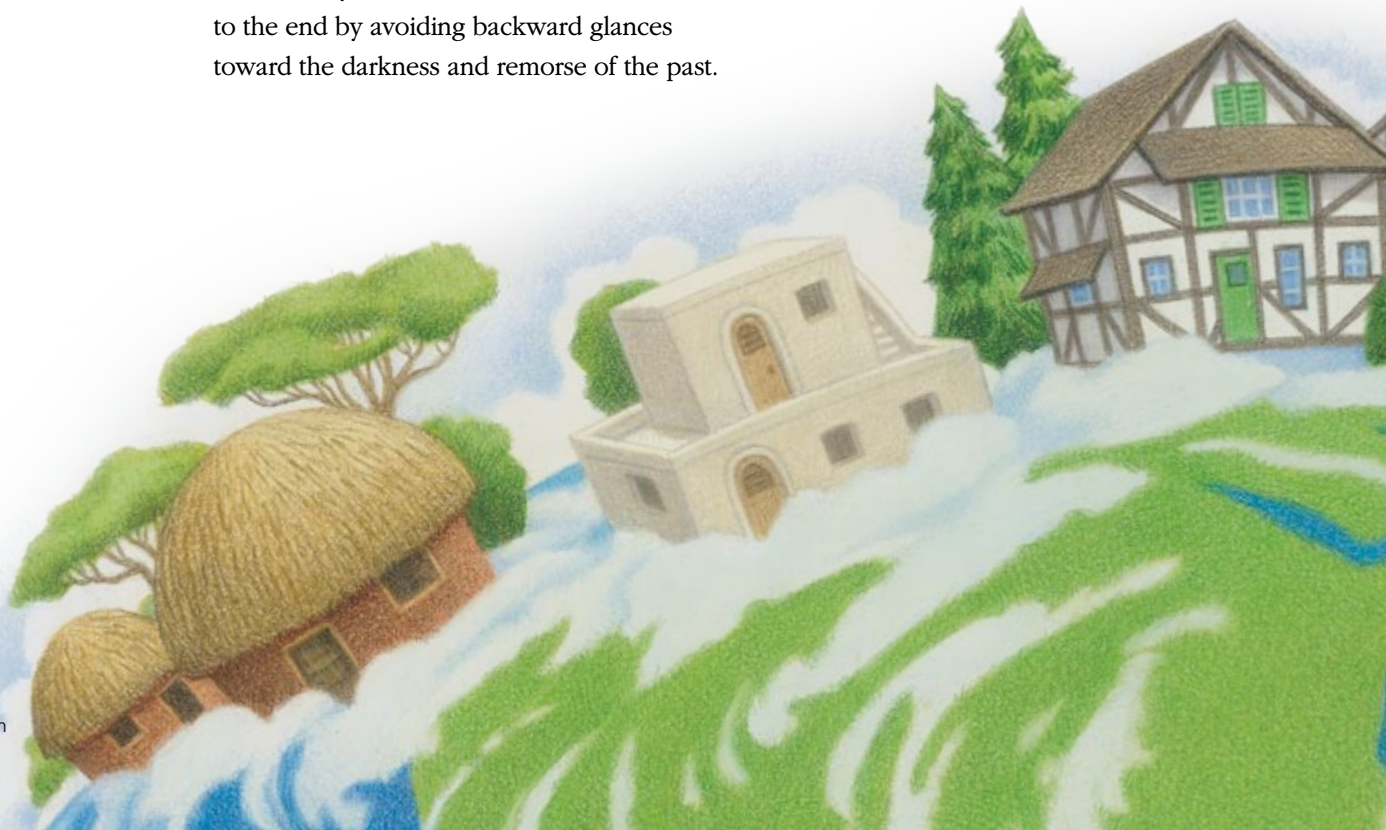


**Harrison Lumbama  
of Zambia**  
Age 46  
Officer in a charitable non-  
governmental organization  
District president

**J**ust making ends meet has been one of the greatest trials of my life. The cost of living is high compared to my earnings. Each day my mind is busy thinking about how the rent is due, food is running out, the children have school fees, and so on.

The gospel that I now know has really helped to keep me sane in spite of the challenges. By my keeping the commandments and my covenants, somehow things seem to be bearable. By our keeping the law of tithing, Heavenly Father has blessed us that we never go hungry, and by His grace we manage to hurdle the obstacles of life. The gospel has become a soothing remedy for life's perils. It has given us hope for a better future if we are obedient and faithful.

Whatever trial I've faced, the gospel has had an answer for me. Without it, my life would simply have been without direction or purpose.





**Varvara Bak  
of Russia**  
Age 25  
Student  
Seminary teacher

I want to be more Christlike—not that I expect perfection, but I want to remember who I am and be better today than I was yesterday. That can be difficult when the standards of the world around us are so low. It would be easy to let my standards slip.

But in a way, it's not that hard to keep the Church's standards. I think people appreciate those with high standards. I have always liked people who don't smoke or drink and who have good morals. So when I investigated the Church, I was already living many gospel standards, and because I was keeping those commandments, I gained a testimony of them quickly.



**Chhoeun Monirac  
of Cambodia**  
Age 18  
First counselor in Young Men  
presidency, seminary teacher

We all face unanticipated problems in life. After my family returned from being sealed in the Hong Kong China Temple and just before one of my sisters was to leave on a full-time mission, my older brother and sister lost their jobs and my father's salary was cut in half. It was a difficult time for the 11 of us in our small home, but we held to the promises made in the temple.

In that time the Holy Ghost reminded me of a scripture: "But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God" (Jacob 2:18). It brought me hope. I trusted that God would bless me and my family.

My brother and sister have now found jobs that allow our family to eat, and I've had several promising interviews. It's a miracle that has increased our faith in Christ. I know the Lord loves us and knows us. He knows our needs. If we'll keep His commandments, we'll prosper in the land (see Mosiah 2:22). ■

