

FOR ONE AND FOR ALL

Youth in the Frankfurt Germany Stake know how to stand together and, when necessary, how to stand alone.

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

When Charlotte Baumann stood to bear her testimony at the end of the Frankfurt Germany Stake's youth conference, she shared an experience that many of the other teens could relate to.

"My biology class was discussing the effects of alcohol on the body," she said. "I noted that alcohol is poison, nerve poison, and people drink it only because they think it's fun. The class couldn't understand that, and then I gave my opinion on it, and that led to the question of why. One boy asked me if my ideas were like the Mormons', and then I said, 'Well, I am a Mormon.' At first he didn't believe me, and I thought that was pretty funny."

The questions continued, even into the hallway after class, which is when a thought occurred to Charlotte. "I suddenly remembered that I had the

shortened version of *For the Strength of Youth*, and I passed it around and had people read it. I think some of them did understand me then, and maybe that will have some effect on one or the other of them."

Like Charlotte, other youth in the Frankfurt Germany Stake always look forward to youth conference and other activities that give them opportunities to share experiences like these. It is here that they can come together, have fun, and strengthen each other spiritually, because at other times most of them must stand alone.

Standing Together

At the youth conference, which was held near the Frankfurt Germany Temple, everyone acknowledged that the highlight of the conference was the spiritual uplift they received through gospel instruction, temple attendance, and sharing testimony.

Benjamin Uhlig feels that the youth need to stand together in this way. "We are a community, and we are fighting together in a time that is very bad. We go to school, and we're torn in all directions. Evil influences are everywhere. But the youth are our



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Standing Alone

The strength these youth receive from each other adds to their testimonies of the gospel, which are tested sometimes daily in school and at other times. It is common for them to have to stand up for Church standards.

"I'm the only Church member in my grade," says Jonatan Fingerle. "And now everywhere I go, I'm always 'the Mormon.' I got to talk about it and bear my testimony in class, in front of my ethics class, where absolutely nobody believes in any gospel. The nice thing about it was that afterward, even during the break, people came and asked me questions, and I could really show the testimony that I have."

Sometimes maintaining Church standards can be a lonely experience. Vincent Newsome often has to stand alone in keeping the law of chastity. "My friends from school think it's strange that I stay chaste, because that's not part of their lives, and very early on they're taught differently about it by their parents. Some mothers simply take girls to the

support. We're fighting together here as youth for the work of the Lord, and to me that's something very beautiful."

When Ida Uhlig thinks about her friends in the Church, she also thinks about the temple. Her ward is not far from the temple, so they do baptisms for the dead there regularly. "I think when you choose friends, you need to choose real friends who are also an example to you. Friends go with you to the temple, and you have spiritual experiences together there."

"It's always nice to do baptisms

for the dead," says Michael Fiedler, "because, of course, you help all those people. The temple is always the high point of youth conference because everything points toward it."



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gynecologist when they're 14 and get them a prescription for birth control."

But Vincent knows the power that comes from keeping the Lord's commandments. "Living the law of chastity makes me stronger. You could just give in, but it doesn't help at all, because if you were to give in and act the way people usually act in the world, then you'd just be going with the flow and not thinking about what you're doing. I know that it's better if you live chaste, because otherwise you'd just go under."

In standing up for Church standards, sometimes it's possible to turn opponents into allies. When she



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started at her school, Carina Schultes was bullied and put down by others. "They couldn't accept that I had my religion, my standards, that I didn't smoke, didn't drink alcohol. At first they couldn't cope with it, but luckily after four years they accepted it so they thought it was really cool and really supported me and got others to leave me alone."

Finding Strength

Strength can come to us in many different ways. Benjamin Rumbach finds strength in his favorite scripture, 1 Nephi 3:7. "That just shows the determination of Nephi and the courage that he was willing to have for the gospel. It helps me when I need the strength to be obedient to the commandments and to withstand temptations better. I know that I can keep every commandment if I really want to."

For Charlotte Baumann, strength came in the form of a wallet-sized *For the Strength of Youth* card: "Sometimes you don't know how you should explain something, but it says something in there about all topics that are relevant to youth. And that's just a great help. I definitely noticed

that it's important that I always stand up for my principles, even when people think it's weird or don't understand, and that makes me stronger."

The strength that Ida Uhlig feels at youth conference and in the temple buoys her up. "I feel the Holy Ghost often. Right at this youth conference, the Spirit is with you, and you can feel it in the temple. I'm thankful for Jesus, and I'll be glad to be with Him again," she says.

And for Carina Schultes, steadfastness and prayer have kept her strong: "I've learned that even when many

A view from Friedrichsdorf, Germany, near Frankfurt.





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temptations are all around you, you simply can't give up. You have to stay steadfast, to hold fast to the word of God so that you don't fall. In Doctrine and Covenants 88:126, it says that we should always pray. When we have problems or need help, we'll receive an answer."

Whether standing together or standing alone, the youth of the Frankfurt Germany Stake are gathering strength in the gospel of Jesus Christ. And this strength will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives. ■



I SAW A LIGHT, BY JON MCNAUGHTON

PREPARING FOR A MISSION

The young men in Frankfurt are thinking about their future missionary service and how to prepare for it. Pasquele Picket says: "I'm going on a mission after my education. You don't know where you'll go, to what country, but approaching people, seeing if they're interested in the Church, is something I need to prepare for. Most important for me are prayer and faith."



Pasquele

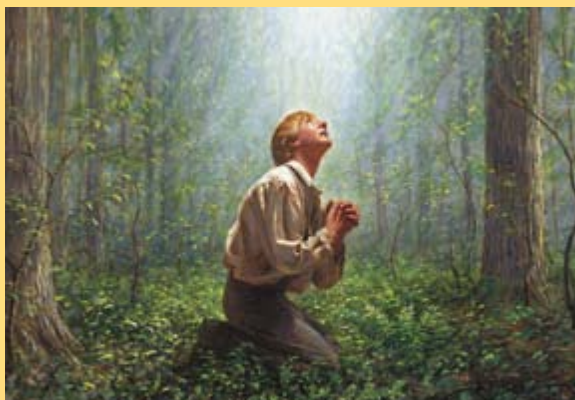
Benjamin Rumbach is also preparing in a number of ways: "Sometimes when my classmates have a question, they already know that I belong to the Church. I don't always bear my testimony directly, but sometimes I do. I've also had some experiences at street displays with the missionaries. I liked that."

He says spiritual preparation is most important. "You need to get a strong testimony and bear testimony and develop this joy in the gospel so that you can also show it to other people, because then they say, 'He's happy. I want to be like him; he has something.'"



Benjamin R.

In his own preparation, Benjamin has gained some experience relevant to missionary service. He recalls: "As I sat in a train on my way home, I entered into a conversation with a neighboring passenger. As I told her about the gospel, the scripture from Joseph Smith—History 1:15–24 came to me as a way to explain to her how the Church has been restored. As I read it to her, tears came to my eyes, and I felt that what I was talking about was something very special. I think she felt it too, and we definitely wanted to talk with each other about it later. In any case, it was an experience that strengthened my testimony, especially of the Restoration."



Reading about the First Vision in Joseph Smith—History 1:15–24 helped Benjamin explain the Restoration to someone.