

REWARDS of Rebuilding

As I saw the ruins from the earthquake, I was sad. But then I realized that God loves those who died as well as those who survived.

By Ashley Dyer

Because I live in Shanghai, China, I had the opportunity to go with a school group to Sichuan Province in southwestern China to help build houses for victims of the earthquake that devastated the area a few years ago. We worked hard laying bricks, shoveling mortar, pushing wheelbarrows full of bricks, and handing bricks down “assembly lines” of people. By the second day my back ached, and my gloves were filled with holes. However, the trip was an unforgettable experience for me and strengthened my testimony of my own and each person’s individual worth, one of the Young Women values.

As I worked hard each day, I noticed that my belief in my own worth grew. I felt good about myself because I was doing things to improve the living situation of those less fortunate than I am.

We also had the opportunity to visit a school in the area. When we arrived, a crowd of cute little children came running toward us. When I saw all these wonderful little children, I recognized their individual worth also. They are all beautiful children of God, and I felt strongly that He loves and knows each of them.

Near the end of my trip we had the chance to go to a resort, where we were going to eat lunch. When we got there, however, we found that it had been destroyed in the earthquake. It was the worst destruction I have ever seen. It made me want to cry. The ceilings and walls of the buildings were caved in, the trees nearby had fallen,

and there was rubble everywhere. A huge boulder had rolled down the mountain and crashed into the side of one building, causing the ceiling and the wall to cave in. There was a single shoe lying on one of the doorsteps.

As I thought about this and the fact that people had been killed in this disaster, I struggled to understand how Heavenly Father would let this happen. Didn’t He love them? Then I thought back to what we had discussed in Young Women class and realized that yes, He did love them. He knew and loved them each individually. Those who died that day were all children of God. Initially, it made me even sadder thinking about that. But then I realized that these people were in the spirit world and they could return to Heavenly Father again. This thought comforted me and gave me a feeling of peace.

I know that I am a child of God, with great individual worth. We are all children of our Heavenly Father, who knows us personally. He loves us with a love that is deeper and stronger than any of us could ever imagine. This understanding was planted deeply in my heart as I worked with and served among the people who had suffered so terribly in the Sichuan earthquake. **NE**

Ashley Dyer (right) helped rebuild homes for local residents after the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, China.

