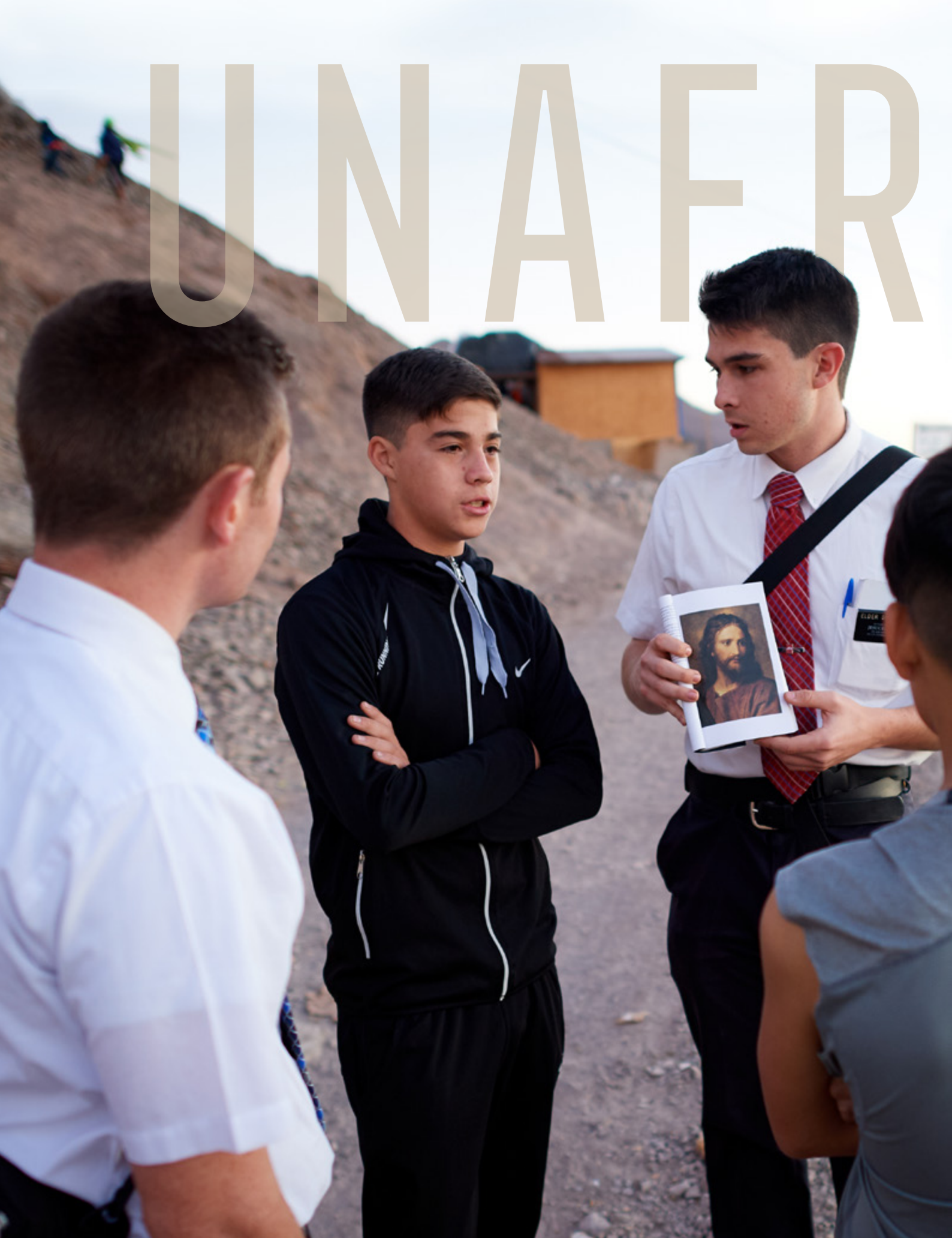


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TO SHARE THE TRUTH

Armed with a testimony of the gospel and its blessings, Fabian H. hasn't let his young age stop him from becoming a powerful, fearless member missionary.

By Michael R. Morris
Church Magazines



The sun is setting on Las Tomas, a neighborhood built on the sandy slopes overlooking Antofagasta. Below, lights are beginning to shine as the day closes on this port city in northern Chile.

It's Saturday night, and 13-year-old Fabian H. could be hanging out with his friends. But Fabian, a new member of the Church, chooses to spend the evening with the full-time missionaries instead. It's time "to help gather Israel."¹

Of all the dedicated member missionaries that Kellen VanNatter and Jordan Shelton worked with during their full-time missions in Chile, Fabian stands above the rest.

"If he was free, he was out with us doing missionary work," says Kellen.

"When summer vacation ended, he was sad not just because he had to return to school but also because he didn't have as much time to go out with us."

Jordan, who spent several months as Kellen's companion, adds, "Fabian probably went out with us four or five times a week—every week—while we served together in Antofagasta. He was the best member missionary we ever worked with."

What makes a young man so willing to do missionary work despite contempt from classmates and snubs from strangers? For Fabian, the answer lies in the blessings he and his family have received since accepting the gospel—blessings he wants to share with others.

OF ALL THE DEDICATED MEMBER MISSIONARIES THAT KELLEN VANNATTER AND JORDAN SHELTON WORKED WITH DURING THEIR FULL-TIME MISSIONS IN CHILE, FABIAN STANDS ABOVE THE REST.



“HE’S ALWAYS SHARING HIS OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES—LIKE THE WAY HE FELT WHEN HE WENT

“Inexplicable Joy”

Fabian began taking the missionary lessons shortly after the full-time missionaries came knocking. He still remembers his first sacrament meeting.

“I didn’t know anyone when I entered the chapel, so I was a little nervous,” he says. “But I felt something marvelous. I felt that I had been in the Church for months or years.”

During his baptism a few weeks later, “I felt an inexplicable joy upon being immersed in the water and coming out again. I felt like a new person, knowing that I was going to follow Jesus Christ and do my best to keep His commandments.”

As Fabian’s unmarried parents, Leonardo and Angela, joined their son during the missionary lessons, they learned about temple marriage and eternal families. “A week later, my father set a wedding date,” says Fabian. “My mother was very happy.”

Four months after Fabian joined the Church, Angela followed him into the waters of baptism. “That was a wonderful blessing,” he says.

Other blessings quickly followed.

Leonardo, who had been baptized when he was young, returned to activity in the Church. Gospel study became a staple in their home. Family members grew closer. Leonardo found steady work. And Fabian received the Aaronic Priesthood.



“I love holding the priesthood so that I can pass the sacrament to ward members and help them renew their covenants,” says Fabian. “I’m especially happy when I get to pass to my family and to the elders who taught me. The proud look my father gives me as he sees me pass the sacrament makes me very happy.”

“That Would Be Great”

Fabian began doing member missionary work before he was even baptized.

“I told three of my friends I was getting baptized. Two of them came,” he says. “I like to share the gospel so that my friends understand what we believe and what we do at church and so that they can learn the gospel, get baptized, and lead happier lives. I would be very happy if one of them got baptized and became one of my quorum members. That would be great.”

Fabian keeps a Book of Mormon with him at school, and he carries missionary pamphlets to hand out to friends. He’s happy to answer questions about the Church and invite friends to Sunday meetings and youth activity night. And he’s unafraid to approach people on the street and, as the missionaries taught him, invite them to learn about the Church and prepare for baptism.

“Fabian doesn’t care if someone thinks he’s weird for sharing his testimony,” says Kellen. “He knows he is doing the right thing. He knows that spiritual things are more important than anything else.”



“I Always Feel Better”

For Fabian, sharing the gospel brings another blessing.

“Sometimes bad things happen to me at school, but then the missionaries come knocking on my door and ask if I would be willing to help them teach,” he says. “After going out with them, I feel as if I don’t have any problems. I always feel better when I go out with them, read the scriptures with them, and help them share the gospel. Sharing the gospel and my conversion story strengthens my testimony. And teaching the gospel gives me

an opportunity to be an example to others, including my little sister.”

It’s no surprise that one of Fabian’s biggest goals is to become a full-time missionary himself after he graduates from high school.

“I want to share the truth with those who don’t know it,” he says. “I want to invite them to wash away their sins. I want to teach them how they can be an eternal family. I want to invite them to be happy now and to live in a state of never-ending happiness after this life.” **NE**

NOTE

1. See Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), HopeofIsrael.Ids.org.

TO CHURCH FOR THE FIRST TIME AND HOW HE FEELS WHEN HE READS THE BOOK OF MORMON.”

When Fabian shares his testimony, Jordan says, he draws power from his conversion, his love of the gospel, and his blessings.

“He saw the blessings that came to his family, which is what inspires him to be so brave and straightforward in sharing the gospel with his friends,” Jordan says. “Once he was testifying to an investigator about what a big blessing it was for his parents to get married but how hard it was for him to wait four months after his baptism for his mother to get baptized. His emotions overcame him, and he was moved to tears. He then testified that if we keep the commandments, God will take care of us.”

Fabian’s testimony makes him a powerful member missionary, adds Kellen.

“He isn’t like, ‘Oh, I heard someone say this in church.’ Instead, he’s always sharing his own personal experiences—like the way he felt when he went to church for the first time and how he feels when he reads the Book of Mormon. It’s all very authentic and real.”



ABOVE AND BELOW: “FABIAN PREPARES FOR AN EVENING OF PROSELYTING WITH ELDERS KELLEN VANNATTER (BELOW, CENTER) AND JORDAN SHELTON (BELOW, RIGHT).”



NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT

“My dear extraordinary youth, you were sent to earth at this precise time, the most crucial time in the history of the world, to help gather Israel. There is *nothing* happening on this earth right now that is more important than that. There is *nothing* of greater consequence.

Absolutely *nothing*.

“This gathering should mean *everything* to you.

This *is* the mission for which you were sent to earth.”

President Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional), June 3, 2018, HopeofIsrael.Ids.org.