

THE



GO-TO GUY

BY MELVIN LEAVITT
Church Magazines

*Whatever needs to be done,
Chad is willing to do it.*

Most people who stand six-foot-six and weigh over 300 pounds get some respect. Chad O'Watch is no exception. But in his case, there is no fear involved.

People in the Carry-the-Kettle First Nation (a native reservation) in Saskatchewan, Canada, and far beyond respect the 17-year-old Latter-day Saint because he is a genuinely good person. An honor student at the Nakoda Oyade Education Centre, where he serves as the student president, Chad has earned the school's citizenship award three years in a row. He is the school's go-to guy. He has been put in charge of the drink machine at sporting events because of his well-known honesty. If the school needs a representative at a conference, they send Chad. He attended the First Nations and Inuit National Science Camp as one of 5 students from Saskatchewan and only 50 or 60 from all of Canada.

"I love to go to school. I like to learn and be with my friends," Chad says. "I like

to help people. I can't bear to see someone in need and not be helping."


This helpfulness seems to be an inherited trait. Chad's father, who maintains and drives the school's busses, is known as a kind and generous man, always ready to share with those in need. Though a member of the Church, Brother O'Watch has not attended for many years. That's why it's so amazing that he did what he did one afternoon in April when Chad was 11.

Brother O'Watch and Chad were returning in an empty bus from the last run of the day. Instead of turning down his own lane as usual, Brother O'Watch made a surprise right turn into the parking lot of the Carry-The-Kettle Branch of the Regina Saskatchewan Stake. "The missionaries are waiting for you," he said.

Chad was not a member of the Church and had no wish to be one. He refused to get off the bus. His dad, uncharacteristically, insisted. "There are other kids here," he said. "You'll have fun, and it will be good for you."

So Chad obeyed, steaming and fuming. "I thought my dad was the worst guy alive," he recalls. He met the missionaries and





attended his first Primary meeting. He was astonished to find that he kind of liked it, and he went again the next week.

“After going a few times, I found that I just loved being there. There was a feeling of the Spirit. The missionaries lived next to the chapel, and before long I was there almost every day helping them and being taught.”

In November Chad was baptized and confirmed. “I had a warm, good feeling, like coming home to a place where I belonged.” He felt even more at home as he accepted callings and was eventually ordained a deacon. At the age of 13 he was called to serve as branch clerk and has fulfilled that assignment ever since. “From the first day, serving as a clerk was a joy. The Lord has called me specifically to do this, and it’s a privilege to do His work. When I started, balancing a checkbook was not one of the things I knew how to do. I had to learn that and lots of other things. But the Lord has blessed me with the ability to do my duty. Because of the challenge, I think I’ve grown in both mind and spirit.”

Whenever something needs doing, Chad steps forward. When no one in the branch knew how to lead the music, he taught himself and volunteered for the job. He has since led the singing in a tri-stake youth conference.

Serving Jesus Christ

Chad’s outward devotion stems from inward conviction: “I know that Jesus Christ is my Savior. I know that He died for me. I love Him, and I know that He loves me. Knowing that I can return to live with Him and Heavenly Father changes everything. It makes me want to bring people to Him. Everyone’s life would be so much better if they had Jesus Christ in it.”

For Chad, serving a mission is a no-brainer. “It says in my patriarchal blessing that there are people waiting specifically for me. I owe it to them to bring them the gospel. I love to serve the Lord, and I just can’t wait to put on the armor of God and go do that.”

Although Chad never preaches to his friends, he has been a missionary since the day of his baptism. Elder

and Sister Dudley, full-time missionaries serving on the reserve, have seen him in action. “He teaches the things he believes, but he does it in a fun way,” Sister Dudley says.

“Chad has had a tremendous influence on his non-member friends just by being himself,” Elder Dudley explains. He sets such a good example that people see the difference between his standards and the standards of the world. One of Chad’s best friends is coming to seminary this year and has attended youth conferences.”

Chad is an easygoing person and fun to be around, but his standards are firm. “If I know in my heart that a thing isn’t right to do, I don’t do it. It’s as simple as that. It’s just not going to happen. I guess I’m hardheaded that way.”

Do his peers have a problem with this? “They respect the fact that there are things I don’t do. If they do those things, they do them somewhere else.”

“There’s a zone around Chad where things like that stop,” Elder Dudley says.

He does put himself in places where right things will be happening. He faithfully attends every meeting, youth conference, service project, fireside, baptism—you name it. He helps his dad maintain the buses. He gives people rides in his car when they need transportation. He pitches in to help make and mend. He embraces every chance to use his priesthood in blessing the lives of others. “When I bless or pass or prepare the sacrament, I think about the Savior and all He has done for me. It is such an honor to serve Him.”

Remembering the Past

Chad is committed to extending the blessings of the gospel to his ancestors. He does research with his grandmother and has been baptized in the Regina Saskatchewan Temple for several hundred of his ancestors—70 of them in one memorable session alone. “I love the temple,” he says. “There’s a feeling you get there that’s just unreal.”

Another source of inspiration is the Book of Mormon.

“Reading the stories and applying them to my life have made me a much happier and better person.”

Loving Home

Practical as well as spiritual, Chad is determined to earn a college degree. But unlike some, he does not see it as a means of leaving behind the poverty and problems of the reserve. “I know deep down inside that my people need me. It’s my responsibility to help bring them to Christ. I really don’t know what my career path needs to be—a teacher might be one possibility—but I’m not looking to escape this place.”

Besides, the reserve can be beautiful. It lies amid low wooded hills on the vast Saskatchewan prairie. It’s a quiet, peaceful landscape that Chad loves. “When I was visiting Edmonton, I felt out of place. It was so noisy and busy. Here it’s quiet and laid-back. It’s just home.”

There are other attractions too. Chad likes to ski, skate, and snowmobile in the winter. He and his dad hunt deer in the fall and ducks and geese in the spring. They always share their game with the elderly.

Though perfectly willing to share his possessions, Chad’s dad is not so comfortable sharing his feelings. He has never explained why he chose to drop his son at the chapel that life-changing day in April. But a fair guess might be that the bus driver was driven by love. If so, the feeling is mutual. Chad has set a firm goal of being sealed to his family in the temple someday. He seeks an eternal bond with the man who made the crucial right turn at just the right time. How could any son show greater respect? **NE**

