I was in trouble and realized I couldn't save myself.

UNDER *the* WAVES

By Ryan H. Law

During the summer between my sophomore and junior years of high school, I attended a leadership camp along with a number of other high school students across the state. After a day of classes and workshops, the next activity was to go to the town's new wave pool. It was a hot day, so the pool was crowded.

I had taken swimming lessons for a number of years and was a pretty strong swimmer, so when the waves stopped, I decided to swim down in the deep end of the pool to check out where the waves originated. Everything was fine until the buzzer sounded, indicating that the waves were going to start. I pushed off from the side to start swimming back toward the more shallow water when I suddenly felt myself being pulled under. I realized quickly that the waves were made as water was pulled from the bottom of the pool and then pushed out at the top. As the machine pulled water in, I got pulled under the surface. Then, as the machine pushed the water out, I would be pushed to the surface, where I could get a little breath and start to call out for help. Then I would again get pulled under.

After this happened a few times, I felt myself getting weaker from not getting enough air. No matter how hard I tried, I was not strong enough to get out of this cycle. Then, as a wave pushed me back up, I felt an arm go around me, and a big man pulled me over to safety. I was so weak I could hardly pull myself out of the pool. I was gasping for breath. The man who saved me asked if I was all right, and then he swam away and has probably never thought of the incident since. I don't know this man's name, but he literally saved my life. He did for me what I could not do for myself.

I have reflected on this incident often and have learned many lessons from it.

The main lesson I have reflected on is about the Atonement of Jesus Christ. All of us sin, and, therefore, we cannot enter the celestial kingdom on our own merits (see Alma 11:37). We literally cannot save ourselves. Jesus Christ, in His infinite love and grace, paid for our sins and died for us so that we can live with our Heavenly Father again. He does for us what we cannot do for ourselves—He saves us from physical death through the Resurrection and spiritual death through the Atonement if we repent and follow Him. *NE*

THROUGH THE ATONEMENT

"Jesus suffered willingly so that we might all have the opportunity to be washed clean—through having faith in Him, repenting of our sins, being baptized by proper priesthood authority, receiving the purifying gift of the Holy Ghost by confirmation, and accepting all other essential ordinances. Without the Atonement of the Lord, none of these blessings would be available to us, and we could not become worthy and prepared to return to dwell in the presence of God."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Atonement and the Value of One Soul," *Ensign,* May 2004, 85.