

Faith Rewarded in Galapagos

Though few in number, Saints in the Galapagos Islands, located off the coast of Ecuador in the Pacific Ocean, are strong in faith. In September 2009 the members saw the completion of the islands' first meetinghouse.

Emma Bastidas remembers when she and her family had to travel to the mainland of Ecuador to be baptized in 1985. She and her family watched the Galapagos Islands Branch form, and she cried when the first missionaries arrived in the islands.

"Now they have built a chapel close enough I can walk to it," Sister Bastidas said.

The Church is relatively new in the islands. Before the formal organization of the branch, four families began meeting in the town of Puerto Ayora on the island of Santa Cruz. In 1998, Church leaders organized the branch within the Guayaquil Ecuador South Mission, and the members began meeting on the island of San Cristobal.

Now, about 120 members attend every week in the new meetinghouse on the island of Santa Cruz.

The rented building where the branch previously held services wasn't large enough.

Aside from providing a

meeting place for the little group of Saints, the new chapel has brought other blessings. Leonor Machua heard of the new meetinghouse and asked someone about the new building and the religion it represented. The stranger answered her questions and suggested she meet with the missionaries. A few days later she saw the missionaries on a street corner and accepted the invitation to be taught. In October 2009 Sister Machua was the first person to be baptized in the new meetinghouse's baptismal font.

Though the branch is small and far from the mainland, the Saints in the Galapagos Islands have been blessed, said Daniel Calapucha, branch president.

"I truly don't feel isolated because we have the guidance of our Father in Heaven," he said. ■

Liberian Young Women Learn About Personal Progress

Young women in Liberia, Africa, learned about their divine nature and the Young Women Personal Progress program with the help of young women on the other side of the world during a special district Young Women conference in August 2009.

Training and preparation began three months in advance for the young women, who live in the Bushrod Island District of the Sierra Leone Freetown Mission. The theme for the conference was “Princess for a Day, Queen for Eternity.” Each branch in the district was responsible to present a workshop on a value and create a short skit teaching another value, emphasizing how a daughter of God would treat others and herself.

“These young women are the future of Africa, the pioneers of their country in this glorious gospel,” said Sister Belinda Wire, a full-time missionary who participated in the conference with her husband, Elder Bill Wire.

After the workshops, skits, and other activities, organizers presented each young woman with a letter sent by a young woman from a different country, sharing her testimony of the gospel and Personal Progress.

“Hearts were united all across the world,” Sister Wire said. “As these young sisters held the letters, they knew that those young women believe as they do, read the same books, follow the same programs, are guided by the same prophet, and are loved by the same God.” ■

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA Turns 100

February 2010 is the 100th birthday of the Boy Scouts of America.

An American named W. D. Boyce was in London, England, when an unknown British Scout helped him cross a street. Mr. Boyce offered him a tip, but the Scout refused, saying he was only doing his duty, and gave Mr. Boyce the address for Scout headquarters.

Upon his return to the United States he incorporated the Boy Scouts of America program on February 8, 1910.

The Church became the organization’s first institutional sponsor in 1913. While the Church maintains strong affiliations with Scouting all over the world, the vast majority of Latter-day Saint Scouts live in the United States and Canada.

Scouting is a part of the Aaronic Priesthood activity program. “I am pleased to stand firm for an organization that teaches duty to God and country [and] that embraces the Scout Law,” said President Thomas S. Monson. “Scouting helps our boys to walk uprightly the priesthood path to exaltation” (“The Upward Reach,” *Ensign*, November 1993, 47). ■