



# WHAT ONE PERSON CAN DO

*This young man from Suriname doesn't do dramatic things. But the simple things he does make a dramatic difference.*

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**Y**ves Verwey is quiet, maybe even a little shy. But that doesn't stop him from seeing things that need to be done and doing them.

## **Music Makers**

For example, Yves, an 18-year-old from the Tamenga Branch, Paramaribo Suriname District, saw that when he played the keyboard at Church meetings and activities, lots of people were interested in learning how to play. So he started teaching free classes for children, teens, and adults.

The classes are taught at several branches and are open to anyone who wants to come. Most evenings when Yves teaches, there are at least a half dozen students in attendance, both Latter-day Saints and others who heard about the class from members of the branch. He also teaches flute when someone is interested. He leads the branch choir, and he directed a special presentation by the district choir. He says his musical involvement is a way of showing thanks for the missionary couple who taught him how to read notes and make music.



**Like the star on Suriname’s flag, Yves shares his light with others. He teaches keyboarding to Latter-day Saints and community members who have an interest. He also meets regularly with friends to study the Book of Mormon.**

### **Scripture Readers**

Yves also found a way to help several of his friends who wanted to share with each other what they were learning in the scriptures. They were attending church



and seminary or institute, speaking when assigned and participating in lessons. But they wanted to talk with each other, youth to youth. So once a week they started reading the Book of Mormon together for about half an hour, and they started inviting others, especially some youth who were less active, to join them. Now they’ve been reading together for months, sometimes at one person’s house, sometimes at another’s.

“It started with my friends Larry Roseval, who’s in the Wanica Branch, and Saffira Zeegelaar from my branch. But now there are eight of us,” Yves says.

“We read a chapter, talk about it, bear our testimony about it, and share something we learned during the week.”

These scripture readers have also encouraged each other in additional ways. For example, they challenged themselves to make fast Sundays more meaningful by fasting with a purpose. “Last fast Sunday we thought about specific people who are less active and fasted and prayed that they might return to full activity in the Church,” Yves explains.



The missionaries seem to have the same feeling about being with him. Yves generates an upbeat energy that lifts everyone, and they also know he is willing to share his testimony of the truth. Yves will soon turn 19, and he is eager to serve a full-time mission himself.

**Missionary Friends**

Full-time missionaries need support from members, and Yves has done something about that too. He goes with them to teaching appointments as often as he can. “I just love to be with the missionaries,” he says. “It makes me feel positive and happy.”

**HELP FROM THE BOOK**

**Y**ves says the Book of Mormon helps him in many ways. “It gives me a better knowledge of things that *will* happen,” he says. “And I get gospel questions answered when I read about things that happened to other people long ago.”

He says the Book of Mormon, as another testimony of Jesus Christ, helps us to better understand the importance and purpose of the Bible. He quotes the eighth article of faith: “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.”

“The Bible has had some plain and precious things taken out of it,” Yves says, “but the Book of Mormon fills in those holes. You need to study both of them, as well as the other scriptures.”





“Ever since I was in Primary,” Yves says, “I have repeated 1 Nephi 3:7, and I have sung the song about the same thing: ‘I will go; I will do the thing the Lord commands,’ so there’s no question about whether or not I will accept the call.”<sup>1</sup>

### Blessing Counters

Yves first became aware of the Church when his mother joined. He was seven years old at the time and was baptized and confirmed a year later. He has remained active, even through tough times like his parents’ divorce and seeing his family’s home sold to pay debts. He has endured being taunted by people as he walked to church on Sundays wearing a suit and tie. “I know why I dress that way to go to church, so it doesn’t really bother me,” he says. He has turned away when others tried to get him to smoke or drink. “I’ve never had trouble saying no. Obeying the Word of Wisdom brings me physical health and spiritual strength. Can they offer me something better than that?”

Through it all Yves has been a blessing counter. He encourages others to count their blessings too.

“As you learn about the gospel and how you should obey the commandments,” he says, “you understand more and more that Heavenly Father wants to bless us all. Happiness isn’t about being cool; it’s about having standards and living them. Happiness is about being grateful to God and to others for all the good things in life.”

Having such an attitude is just one more thing Yves sees that needs to be done. And so he’s doing it, and he’s encouraging others to do the same. ■

#### NOTE

1. See “Nephi’s Courage,” *Children’s Songbook*, 120–21.

**Excited about missionary work, Yves reminisces with his mother about his baptism and prepares for his own full-time mission. He loves to mingle with members at meetings and to visit the historic district in Suriname’s capital, Paramaribo.**

## LEARNING TO GET ALONG

Suriname, found in the northern part of South America, is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world.

Major population groups include East Indians (originally from India), Creoles (originally from Africa), Javanese (from Indonesia), Maroons (descendants of escaped slaves), Native Americans (many from the Carib tribe), and Chinese. The people speak Dutch (the official language), English, Sranan Tongo (a Creole language), Hindustani, Javanese, and some other dia-



lects. Suriname became independent in 1975. Before that it was Dutch, and before that it was British.

“In Suriname, everybody learns to get along with everybody,” Yves explains. “That helps when you’re sharing the gospel, because Surinamese are used to hearing about what other people believe.”

The first convert baptisms in Suriname took place in 1989. Today there are about 700 members attending six branches: Blauwgrond, Nickerie, Paramaribo, Tamenga, Uitkijk, and Wanica.

