

# Taste the World in South Africa

By McKenna Johnson

It's a sunny Saturday morning at the Neighbourgoods Market. You walk under the colorful umbrellas strung up outside the entrance and listen to live music while you search for today's perfect meal. Traditional South African fare served from a potjie pot—pesto, oysters, vegetables, bags of spices, terrines—you want to try everything.

Welcome to Johannesburg.

"It is a very warm, welcoming place," says Ross Mpye, 28. The bubbling energy of "Joburg" sometimes surprises visitors, who might not expect skyscrapers. "You won't find lions roaming the streets," Ross says.

A university student studying communications and divorced mother of a five-year-old son, Nate, Ross works as a production support analyst. From her bold palate to her efforts to serve others, she is adventurous, welcoming, and faithful in her daily life.

The Saints in Johannesburg reach out to each other and to those around them. For example, when the house of Ross's friend Tumi flooded, many friends from church helped clean

up the water and cheer up the family. "This was a turning point for Tumi's mom, who wasn't a member," explains Ross. "She started seeing the missionaries, and today she is a member and a Relief Society teacher." Such loving watchcare is fairly typical, as the South African members see each other as brothers and sisters. "We involve ourselves as though it was our problem," Ross says.

As Ross knows, this empathy is exemplified by Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. "This is the kind of love that Heavenly Father blesses us with. He understands and knows my joys and sorrows as a young person today going through the challenges that He makes sure I prevail against," she says.

Ross's relationship with the Savior affects her life in many ways, from her interactions with others at work to her personal study. "Work environments can be hostile," she says. "Some people swear and some make dishonest decisions, thinking they don't matter. I'm blessed to have gospel principles and the teachings

**Different backgrounds and cultures don't keep the South African Saints from watching out for one another.**

of the prophets in my life. When I start my day with scripture study and a prayer, it helps me keep the Spirit with me at all times. When I am faced with temptations, the still, small voice reminds me who I am and what I stand for. This helps me to stay true to my standards."

The Neighbourgoods Market represents Johannesburg's cosmopolitan spirit. For Ross, the truth of the gospel represents something much deeper—the promise of eternal life. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA*



## MORE ABOUT ROSS

*What is your favorite aspect of your culture?*

Africans do not forget their ancestors, and neither do Mormons. We do family history and baptisms for our ancestors, and that resonates with Africans.

*What is one of your favorite South African dishes?*

Prawn masala. I love hot, spicy dishes. It's prawn in a curried sauce served with white basmati rice—it's very tasty.

## THE CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

- 62,600 Latter-day Saints
- 168 congregations
- 71 family history centers
- 3 missions
- 1 temple (and 1 other announced)

## FACTS

**Official name:** The Republic of South Africa

**Capitals:** Pretoria, Cape Town, and Bloemfontein

## BY THE NUMBERS

- 51.8 million people
- 1,553 miles (2,500 km) of coastline
- 11 official languages

