

MISSION OR

BY DEBBIE TWIGGER

Punting on the Cam River (below), Ben Twigger and friends enjoy the views of Cambridge University. Ben eventually served in the France Toulouse Mission (right).

He always dreamed of attending Cambridge, but another dream was more important.

Ben Twigger loves good things. Even from a young age, he received good grades in school, attended early morning seminary in his hometown in Northampton, England, and enjoyed studying the Book of Mormon. He also loved sports and became the 800- and 400-meter racing champion for his county, despite not taking part in the Sunday league trials.

Having been raised in the Church, Ben always planned on serving a full-time mission. “When I saw missionaries serving in

our ward and visiting in our home, I knew deep down that being a missionary was what I wanted to become,” he says.

However, it wasn’t until Ben started planning for college that everything he loved collided. Ben decided at an early age that he would like to attend Cambridge University, one of the world’s foremost universities. Ben achieved A levels in six subjects—well above the minimum requirement for admission to Cambridge. In fact, Ben was the top-performing student in his



ADMISSION?





Ben (above and below, with his parents) always planned on serving a mission. After his mission, he realized his dream of attending Cambridge.

city the year he applied. Yet despite his eagerness to learn from world-class scientists, Ben resolved early on to request a two-year deferment so that he could serve a mission. However, when he checked out the university prospectus for maths and maths-based subjects, he discovered that even a one-year deferment was strongly discouraged.

"I was not daunted and applied anyway," Ben says. He received an interview, even though he was informed that the university application system does not allow for such a deferment.

Despite his hopeful attitude, Ben was denied admission. Although the reason for the denial was not specifically stated in the letter, his tutor assumed it was a result of the two-year deferment he had requested and the subsequent loss of skills the university felt it would cause.

"When I received a letter from Cambridge informing me of their decision, I felt very disappointed, as it had been a long-term goal, but I felt determined to serve the Lord regardless of the sacrifices it would require."

Ben was called to serve in the France Toulouse Mission. He had a wonderful experience, bringing souls unto Christ and serving with other spiritually prepared missionaries. During his mission, Ben admits, he learned a valuable lesson about faith and about putting that faith into practice.

"However much God wants to help us, unless we believe and act accordingly, He cannot help us," Ben says. "But when we act in faith

and put in the necessary works, small and great miracles can occur."

Toward the end of his mission Ben started thinking about his future studies. He was initially nervous to reapply for admission to Cambridge after his mission. But he was reminded of the invaluable lessons he had learned on his mission, as well as a scripture he had learned as a child. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart" (Proverbs 3:5). Even though Ben could have applied to go straight to another university, he decided to take the time necessary to study and prepare so that he could apply again to Cambridge. Within two weeks of returning home, he was studying full-time to refresh his skills.

After successfully completing the verbal and written tests required for the interview, Ben received an offer to study natural sciences, specializing in physics, a four-year master's degree program at Cambridge starting exactly one year after his return from his mission.

"I do consider my acceptance as a direct result of putting the Lord first and obeying His commandments," Ben says. "I know that because I trusted in the Lord, I was blessed with the righteous desires of my heart." **NE**

Are you getting ready for a mission? Check out the March 2007 *New Era* issue on missionary preparation.

