



SERVING FOR THE

By Rasem Maluff

In 2011, I made one of the most important decisions in my life. It has brought me the greatest treasures I have ever had. I decided to serve a mission, but it was not an easy decision.

The Lord gave me the opportunity to enjoy soccer during my childhood and my youth. I represented Paraguay in international tournaments, traveling with my country's national youth soccer team, Libertad, to countries in Europe, Asia, and South America.

Fortunately, my parents always coupled my sporting activities with a proper education and a spiritual upbringing. My mother's faith and testimony definitely were the seeds from which my own faith and testimony grew. Because of her faithfulness, I participated in seminary despite my busy sports schedule.

Although I had heard about full-time missions ever since I was a child, I could not make up my mind about serving a mission. That changed when my father accepted a call to serve in the bishopric of our ward. This was a difficult decision for my father, since he was deeply involved in my sporting career. He was always at my soccer practice and matches, and we spent a lot of time together. For this reason, accepting a call to serve in the bishopric would mean giving up time supporting my career.

During the sacrament meeting when my father was sustained, a powerful thought came into my mind, telling me that the sacrifices of others would be in vain if I was not willing to sacrifice important things for the right reasons. During the

testimonies, someone spoke about the idea that if we are obedient, our families can be eternal. That thought touched my heart, and I decided that I would do whatever was in my power to be with my family forever. During the classes that Sunday, the importance of obeying the commandments was brought up numerous times. So strongly did I feel the Spirit prompting me to serve the Lord that during family home evening, I informed my family of my decision to serve a mission.

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YOUR DAY FOR A MISSION

To watch a video about the New Zealand rugby player Sidney Going, visit lds.org/go/GoingNE7.

RIGHT REASONS

My decision meant that I would have to interrupt my college education as well as resolve the five-year contract that I had with my soccer club. From the start, the Lord opened doors and touched hearts so the contract could be resolved.

After I submitted my missionary papers, I listened to the April 2011 general conference, in which Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared the missionary experience of Sidney Going, who had been a professional rugby player and a member of New Zealand's national team. The fact that Brother Going served a mission and later returned and continued his professional career taught me a lesson. Throughout my mission and until this very day, listening to that

talk time and time again has blessed me and brought peace to my heart. The countless testimonies that family, ward, and stake members shared with me at different times not only strengthened my decision to serve but also sustained me during the difficult moments on my mission.

An additional source of satisfaction in my life was that my decision to enter the mission field helped my three closest friends also decide to serve a mission. They later served as zone leaders, as an assistant to the mission president, and even as a branch president. We now have our eyes set on the course that will allow us to return to Heavenly Father's presence.

I am not the same person I was three years ago. My greatest desire is

to do the Lord's will. The Lord blessed me "an hundredfold" (Matthew 19:29). I have a living and real testimony of the divinity of Heavenly Father, His Beloved Son and His Atonement, the purifying power of the Holy Spirit of God, and the marvelous work and wonder of these latter days, when the gospel has been restored to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith (see Isaiah 29:14).

My heart overflows with love and gratitude for this sacred time and for knowing and loving so many brothers and sisters in the Uruguay Montevideo Mission. Few blessings are as great as serving among them. Nothing else has given me such great joy and peace or brought me so many miracles as has my missionary service. **NE**

Rasem Maluff lives in Paraguay.