

A dozen years ago, in one of the countries of Africa, we had faithful members of the Church who had been meeting in their homes for several years. I went to that country to see if we could receive permission from the government to bring in missionaries and establish the Church. I met with a high-ranking government minister. He gave me 20 minutes to explain our position.

When I finished he said, "I do not see where anything you have told me is any different from what is currently available in our country. I see no reason to approve your request to bring missionaries into our country."

He stood up to usher me out of his office. I was panic-stricken. I had failed. In a moment our meeting would be over. What could I do? I offered a silent prayer. Then I had an inspired thought. I said to the minister, "Sir, if you will give me five more minutes, I would like to share one other thought with you. Then I will leave." He kindly consented.

I reached for my wallet and removed this small *For the Strength of Youth* booklet, which I have always carried.

I said, "This is a little booklet of standards we give all of the youth in our Church."

I then read some of the standards I have mentioned tonight. When I finished he said, "You mean to tell me you expect the youth of your church to live these standards?"

"Yes," I replied, "and they do."

"That is amazing," he said. "Could you send me some of these booklets so that I could distribute them to the youth of my church?"

I replied, "Yes," and I did.

Several months later we received official approval from the government of that country to come and establish the Church.

(Earl C. Tingey, Ensign, May 2004)

A young man I know well was elected to be the student body president at a large university. The university sent him to a leadership seminar where student leaders from across the United States gathered in Chicago, Illinois, to be trained and educated. They participated in an initial game outdoors on the college campus so that they could become acquainted with each other. The students were presented with current issues facing today's youth and were asked to take a position. In response to the issue presented, they were directed to run to several trees in the grassy area marked "strongly agree," "partially agree," "strongly disagree," or "mildly disagree."

Toward the end of this exercise, the leader asked, "Do you believe in premarital sex?" Without hesitation, this young man ran to the tree marked "strongly disagree." To his amazement, he was the only one there! All the other student leaders were laughing and pointing at him and saying, "Oh, Jess, you are so funny. We all know you're not really serious." At that moment Jess said he knew exactly what he must do and so he loudly declared, "I'm not funny. I'm serious!" There was a stunned silence, and then the group dispersed, leaving Jess standing alone by the tree. He felt out of place and, yes, weird. But he wasn't weird. He was right. And he was not alone. During the week, many of the student leaders came to him privately and said that they wished they had known years earlier what he knew. Jess later said, "It was easy because I knew that I represented not only the university but my family, the Church, and the Savior."

A testimony that Jesus Christ is the Savior and Redeemer made Jess firm and quick to respond. You can gain that same confidence as you pray daily, search for answers in your scriptures, and obey the commandments. As you sincerely seek to gain a testimony, the knowledge that will come through the Holy Ghost will assist you with your challenges, with questions, and with living the standards. And it will be easy for you also to commit to be steadfast and immovable at all times and in all things and in all places.

(Sister Elaine S. Dalton, Ensign, May 2008)

Let me encourage you by telling you a story. It was told to me by my father. He told it with the intent to chuckle at himself. It was a story about his trying to do his duty, just the way you try to do your duty.

Now you have to know a little bit about my father. His name was Henry Eyring, like mine. He had done some of the things students of this university are preparing to be able to do. His work in chemistry was substantial enough to bring the honors some of you will someday have, but he was still a member of a ward of the Church with his duty to do. To appreciate this story, you have to realize that it occurred when he was nearly eighty and had bone cancer. He had bone cancer so badly in his hips that he could hardly move. The pain was great.

Dad was the senior high councilor in his stake with the responsibility for the welfare farm. An assignment was given to weed a field of onions, so Dad assigned himself to go work on the farm.

Dad never told me how hard it was, but I have met several people who were with him that day. I talked to one of them on the phone the other night to check the story. The one I talked to said that he was weeding in the row next to Dad through much of the day. He told me the same thing that others who were there that day have told me. He said that the pain was so great that Dad was pulling himself along on his stomach with his elbows. He couldn't kneel. The pain was too great for him to kneel. Everyone who has talked to me has remarked how Dad smiled, and laughed, and talked happily with them as they worked in that field of onions.

Now, this is the joke Dad told me on himself, afterward. He said he was there at the end of the day. After all the work was finished and the onions were all weeded, someone asked him, "Henry, good heavens! You didn't pull *those* weeds, did you? Those weeds were sprayed two days ago, and they were going to die anyway."

Dad just roared. He thought that was the funniest thing. He thought it was a great joke on himself. He had worked through the day in the wrong weeds. They had been sprayed and would have died anyway.

When Dad told me this story, I knew how tough it was. So I said to him, "Dad, how could you make a joke out of that? How could you take it so pleasantly?"

He said something to me that I will never forget, and I hope you won't. He said, "Hal, I wasn't there for the weeds."

*Henry B. Eyring was the first counselor in the Presiding Bishopric of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this fireside address was given at Brigham Young University on 30 September 1990.*