

Pioneers around the World

American Samoa

“God Said Yes”

Leva ‘aia Levao lived with severe health problems. In 2015, she developed boils on her eyes. The boils were healed after missionaries gave her a priesthood blessing. They began reading the Book of Mormon with her.

Some people in the island’s small community were unhappy to see Levao considering a new religion. They mocked her efforts and belittled her. Still, she remained firm and was soon baptized. Her husband, Tui, and her three children soon followed her into the faith, and Levao later served in her branch as Relief Society president. Others, influenced by her example of dedication, called her the heart of the Church on Olosega.

South Korea

“I Shall Never Again Be Truly Cold”

Choi Dong Sull was a Presbyterian minister who felt it was his responsibility to protect members of his congregation from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. However, he began meeting with missionaries and finding clarity to doctrinal issues that had troubled him. He knew his new convictions would require a career change and jeopardize his relationship with his father, who was chairman of the Presbyterian Church of Korea at the time.

Dong Sull chose to be baptized in the Han River. “I wanted my baptism to be an experience as much like Jesus Christ’s as possible,” he explained. On the foggy morning of September 5, 1981, the water of the Han River was cold, but when he came up out of the water, Dong Sull described an inner warmth. “Now I belong to God’s true Church,” he said. “I shall never again be truly cold.” Two weeks later, his wife and two sons were also baptized—this time in a warm meetinghouse. Joining the Church didn’t make life easy for Dong Sull and his family, but it made new blessings possible. “The persecutions and sufferings . . . after my baptism are beyond my ability to tell,” said Dong Sull. “We lost much in the process [of joining the Church], yet we have gained more than we ever dreamed of.”

Côte d’Ivoire

“Doors of Life and Happiness”

Lydie Zebo Bahie was the last child of her family living at home when both her parents died. This loss led to severe depression. Her nephew, Faet Nadege, introduced her to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When she went to church for the first time, Lydie felt great love from the sisters of the Relief Society and Young Women organizations. Though she had stopped reading during her period of depression, she found herself able to focus once again as she studied the Book of Mormon. She was baptized on November 18, 1995.

Not long after her baptism, she received an opportunity to return the love that had been shown to her by serving in the Relief Society and Young Women organizations. She also served as a branch missionary, inviting others to discover the same fellowship and peace she had recently found. “All of these callings strengthened me and helped me progress, both spiritually and mentally,” Lydie said.

Lydie became one of the first sister missionaries to serve in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Kinshasa Mission.