

“Message from a Service Missionary”

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I am only one of many service missionaries assigned to BYU-Pathway Worldwide. We are thrilled to have Brother Brian Ashton as our new president and have already been blessed by his inspired leadership and divine preparation. President and Sister Ashton, on behalf of missionaries serving around the world, our faith and prayers are with you. I pray that I can adequately share a glimpse into the joy of a BYU-Pathway service missionary.

Alina lives in the country of Georgia. She works full time as a school director and has a young family. She enrolled in BYU-Pathway as a newly baptized member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Due to her circumstances, Alina had to virtually attend the weekly gatherings at 11:00 p.m. her time. One evening, I apologized to her for having to come so late after a long day. Alina replied sincerely saying, “Sister McGill, I would come at any time you told me to come.” Her words reflect deep desire and commitment. Alina completed PathwayConnect and is currently in an online degree program.

Zveki, from Croatia, shared her experience with me. “I came for the English, but I stayed because of the Spirit and the friends. I was in a dark time, but BYU-Pathway has helped me regain my testimony. I had such strong spiritual experiences the whole year. I felt the healing power through each assignment and gathering. I feel like a new person now.” Zveki is on track to complete her degree program next year.

Dorothy is a mother of four sons living in Kenya. She persevered through many challenges during her schooling. BYU-Pathway helped her craft a resume, practice interview skills, and complete a digital media marketing course that singled her out to an employer. She joyfully said, “Starting next month, I will be employed as a marketing manager in a big real estate development company. They are even buying a laptop to help me in my studies. This will help ease my family’s financial constraints, and I will keep my focus on my online degree. This year has been a blessing to me. In BYU-Pathway, we are inspired to believe in ourselves and have faith and trust in our Heavenly Father.”

Ajwoka is a friend of the Church living in Uganda. During the first semester, she said to me, “From what I am learning, I feel like I am missing something. What is the Doctrine and Covenants? How can I learn more about what I am studying?” She is now meeting with the full-time missionaries and is continuing her online degree program. Friends of all different faiths are enrolling in BYU-Pathway. Each brings important perspectives and experiences.

Elder Clark G. Gilbert has referenced 3 Nephi 6:12, which describes a people that were divided by “rank ... riches ... and chances for learning; yea, some were ignorant because of their poverty, and others did receive great learning because of their riches”¹ — the antithesis of Zion. He pointed out that BYU-Pathway Worldwide is removing these barriers to education and opportunity, which then assists in establishing Zion. Part of moving the mountains of poverty, educational disparity, and want is for everyone to grab a shovel and start digging. We missionaries are trying to do just that, and we are being changed in the process.

As missionaries, we have seen students who travel great distances to gather; students who go without food and other necessities to pay for internet access; students without laptops use smartphones to complete assignments; students standing outdoors, day or night, to find a clear signal. Some join from hospital beds or with a new baby; some students thought their educational ship had sailed — or even sunk — only to be given a new berth; some have only had dreams of attending a Church school, and now a Church school has come to them. We see young

¹ [3 Nephi 6:12](#)

adults finding direction and hope in their future. Many students started with no more than a desire to believe, a small seed of faith, and now are tasting the fruits of that faith and effort. And we have witnessed students in the same gathering group be a healing bridge for each other across political divides, upheavals, and personal challenges.

Toward the end of 2020, I was in a gathering with students from Central Africa. On the screen were seven men, priesthood leaders, and friends. Ukuch Mike had come prepared with the Spirit and was leading our discussion. All of a sudden, the Holy Ghost washed over me like fire and the words came clearly to my mind: "You are in the presence of great men." I could not hold back the tears and was humbled as the Spirit witnessed this truth to me. These men are and will become leaders in their communities, their families, and the Church.

The Lord is casting a wide net, and His power and arm are extending over the earth in a way that, for the first time, much more of humanity — regardless of race, age, station, creed, or standing, women and men alike — can choose to be educated academically and spiritually. It is stunning! Jesus Christ is the Savior of the whole world, and BYU-Pathway is one of the ways He is lifting souls worldwide. He has not forgotten anyone, regardless of the crack, or corner, village, or city in which they find themselves. I love Him, and it is a privilege and blessing to be part of the literal gathering of Israel and the establishment of Zion. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.