

PURE RELIGION

A Leader Finds Work

René felt ashamed. He was a leader of the Church in Chile. He had more than 20 years of management experience. He had a wife and six children. He had often been the one others came to when they needed help.

He had also been out of work for over a year.

The economic situation was difficult in his country, and it wasn't uncommon to hear of people being laid off, but René never thought it would happen to him. When it did, he assumed his background of logistics and international commerce would serve him well and that he would be back on his feet quickly.

But he wasn't. And every day that passed took a little more out of him, made him feel a little more discouraged, a little more defeated.

One evening, during a priesthood leadership meeting, he heard a report on the LDS Employment Resource Center in Santiago. The speaker claimed that those seeking employment could find real help there, that many had found new and better jobs as a result of attending the seminars.

"I felt very skeptical," René writes. And he also felt humiliated. He felt humiliated that he—a man who was supposed to be a leader, someone people looked up to as an example—didn't have a job. "Even now, it makes me feel like crying," he said. "I felt so ashamed that when I finally made the call to the employment resource center, I disguised my name and my voice so they wouldn't know it was me."

The job counselors at the employment center told René about the job search seminars they conducted and invited him to attend. But René couldn't bring himself to commit. But another week passed without income, and René knew he had to seek help. Even after he had made the decision, he found himself circling the employment center over

and over again before finally getting up enough courage to go in.

René's first impressions of the center were nothing like what he had anticipated. "When I finally entered the center," he said, "everyone there treated me with such love and with such warmth. I knew that I was in a place that would be good for me."

René began attending classes where he felt strongly the Spirit of the Lord. He realized that in spite of his extensive management experience, there were a number of things he was doing wrong when it came to finding a job. During the seminar he learned how to write a resume that would grab an employer's attention and he learned how to set up interviews and how to present himself during an interview. He was so excited that the following Monday he couldn't wait to apply the new skills he had learned. He spent the day working at finding job leads, and by the time he was finished, he had set up eight interviews.

Although he did not find new employment immediately, René did not allow himself to become discouraged. He continued to apply what he had learned until he finally accepted a management position with a large construction firm.

Today, René still visits the employment resource center once a week where he teaches job finding skills to those who are now facing what he had experienced himself. The feelings of embarrassment he once felt have long since turned to gratitude—gratitude that he could overcome his feelings of inadequacy and embarrassment, gratitude that he found a group of people who truly loved him and cared for him, and gratitude that he discovered the tools that helped him find a job that finally would allow him to become self-reliant and to support his family.

