

PURE RELIGION

Of Washcloths and Watchwords

To the returning Kosovar refugees, Debbie Barry was an enigma. She was a project manager for European Children's Trust, working to restore schools that had been damaged or destroyed. She was 25 years old and from Wales, she had served a mission in Guatemala for her church, and she didn't drink tea or coffee.

"What is the name of your church?" they asked her.

But Sister Barry didn't know the name of her church—at least not in Albanian. They looked up *Mormon* in the dictionary, but the words only confused them more. All anyone knew about Sister Barry was that she was "different."

That prompted her to pray that somehow Heavenly Father would help her explain who she was and what she believed. The next morning the answer to her prayers arrived in the form of 4,000 hygiene kits that had been prepared by members of the Church in Salt Lake City and shipped for distribution to refugee families in Kosovo. In each kit was a bar of soap, two washcloths, a toothbrush and toothpaste, and a card that read, in English and in Albanian, "A gift from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

Throughout the next week, as they distributed these kits, translators said over and over, "This is from the church Debbie Barry belongs to."

Two months later, school began once again and another member of the Church was teaching English. A group of Kosovar women attending class asked the teacher if she believed in God and if she went to church.



This good sister explained that indeed she did believe in God. "Do you remember the hygiene kits you received two months ago? That is the church I belong to. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

The next day, each of the women arrived in class, each holding a white card.

"Is this the church?" they asked. And each raised her hand. Each was holding the white card that had been included in the hygiene kits they had received.

Months later, as Debbie Barry was preparing to leave Kosovo and return to Wales, several of the women approached her.

"Will you be going to your church next Sunday?"

Sister Barry assured them that she would.

"It would be wonderful," they said quietly, "if when you go there, you would thank the people for remembering us in our time of need."

Sister Barry nodded and promised she would. It would be her pleasure to tell those of her ward that the words, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," are spoken in Kosovo with love and affection.