

BLUEBERRIES AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

A few years ago our family moved from a fast-paced, congested metropolitan area to a small, rural property outside a quiet little village. Nearby was an abandoned blueberry farm, and through friends of the owner, we obtained permission to pick all the blueberries we wanted.

Several mornings each week that summer we piled into the car with buckets and bags and spent a delightful, delicious hour gathering

blueberries. One morning our youngest son, Hyrum, seemed reluctant to accompany us. He was sure we had picked every blueberry and that it would be a waste of time to go again. How surprised he was to find as many blueberries as ever. There were clusters in places he had overlooked, and some of the juiciest berries were growing on branches he was sure he had explored earlier.

At this same time, ward youth

leaders challenged our teenagers to read the entire Book of Mormon before school started that August. Our children brought the challenge home, and our family committed to join them in their efforts.

No sooner had we finished the Book of Mormon when our August 2005 *Ensign* arrived, with the challenge of President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) to read the entire Book of Mormon by the end

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of the year. Hyrum and his brother Joseph were thrilled—to think that we had already obeyed the prophet! Then their older siblings, Seth and Bethany, reminded them that President Hinckley had asked us to read it again, regardless of how many times we had already done so.

“But why?” the boys asked. “We have read every word, and what else is there to learn besides what we have already read?”

After a few moments of silence, somebody mentioned the blueberries. “Remember when we thought we had picked every blueberry? But when we went back, there were always more blueberries—always! No matter how many times we went, no matter how recently, there were always blueberries by the bunches.”

We quickly recognized the connection. Like the nearby farm and its abundant supply of delicious blueberries, the Book of Mormon is a constant source of spiritual nourishment with new truths to be discovered. So we began once again to read the Book of Mormon.

As I accepted the prophet’s challenge, I read things in the Book of Mormon that I had read many times before, but I saw them in a different way or understood them as they applied to new circumstances or challenges. I know that each time we sincerely read the Book of Mormon, we can receive new insights and come closer to the Savior. ■

Suellen S. Weiler, Georgia, USA

I FELT I SHOULD COME

Two and a half years after my baptism in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the words of one of the elders who had taught me still resounded in my ears: “I know you’re a missionary.” I also remembered the powerful answer I had when I prayed to know if the feeling that had pierced my heart was really true. At age 20, I knew I should be preparing for a mission.

But how could I be a missionary? I was nothing like the angelic young men who had taught me the gospel. And how could I leave my job? Where would I live after I came home? It had been very difficult to find the place I had, even though it was just a little room at the back of someone’s house.

On my way home one evening, these feelings and doubts again came to mind. When I got home, I tried to make a decision. I decided to kneel down and offer a prayer for help. As I did so, I had a strong impression that I should go see Leandro, a friend who had been a great strength to me in sad times.

But the thought of waking him up at midnight caused me to resist the idea. I knew he got up early to go to work, and I didn’t dare knock on his door at that hour. I struggled against the thought but continued to feel the impression to go see him. Still, I chose to ignore it.

Instead, I decided to walk around the block for some fresh air. When I



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remembered that I had left my door open, however, I started back home. As I entered, I saw Leandro sitting in my room. The Spirit fell upon me, and I felt breathless. With a voice somewhat choking with emotion, I asked him, “What are you doing here?”

“I don’t know,” he said. “I just felt I should come to see you.”

I told him about the doubts I’d been having about a mission. He bore his testimony to me and encouraged me. Then he helped me fill out my mission papers, which I took to my bishop the next morning. Two months later I received my call to the Argentina Salta Mission.

I know my friend was an instrument in the hands of the Lord that night, and with all my heart I know that Heavenly Father listens to and answers prayers that are uttered with a sincere heart and with real intent. ■

Aldo Fabio Moracca, Nevada, USA

I'M GOING TO DIE!

As a nurse of a busy post-surgical recovery unit, I received a call one day regarding a patient named Bill who had just undergone surgery. He should have gone to a critical care unit but was diverted to me because that unit was full.

The patient soon arrived with his family. I was relieved to see that he was alert, oriented, and in no apparent distress.

After taking his vital signs and familiarizing him and his family with his room, I stepped into the hall to make a note on his chart. Just as my pen hit the paper, I heard a voice say, "Go back into his room." I stopped

writing and looked behind me. There was no one there. I thought I had imagined the voice, when suddenly I heard it a second time—only louder.

I ran back into Bill's room to discover that his neck had doubled in size, and he was having trouble breathing. Thinking that his carotid artery had been perforated, I applied direct pressure to his neck with my right hand while using my left hand to call the neuroradiologist who had performed his procedure. The surgeon said he would send a team up to get Bill as soon as possible. "And do not remove your hand!" he said.

As I continued applying pressure, I noticed a familiar Church book near Bill's bed. "You're a member of the Church?" I asked.

The surgeon said he would send a team up to get Bill as soon as possible. "And do not remove your hand!" he said.

He tried to nod and then told me he was an ordinance worker in the Atlanta Georgia Temple. He then blinked back tears and said, "I'm going to die!"

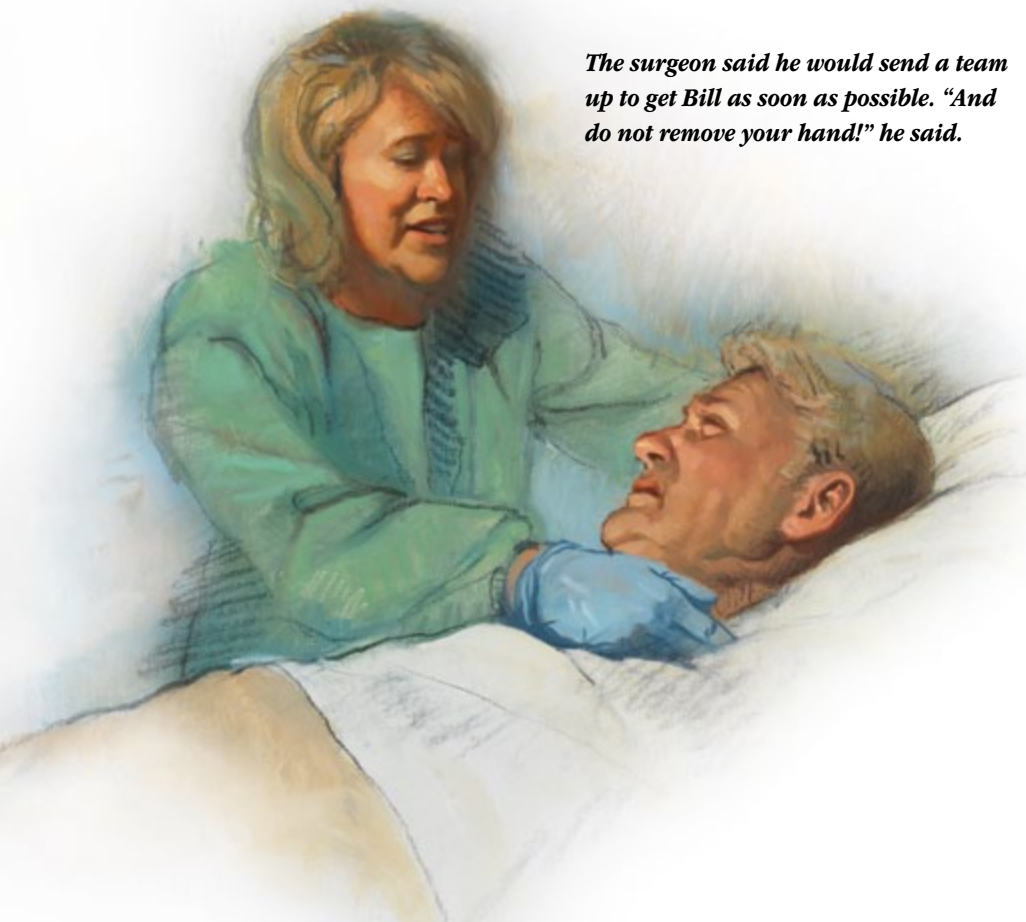
I told him he was not going to die, stating adamantly, "I'm getting married in the Atlanta Temple next month, and you are going to be there." The surgical team then arrived and whisked Bill away.

In the excitement of my wedding plans over the next month, I nearly forgot about Bill, who it turns out had had a reaction to medication. But as the matron led me to the sealing room on my wedding day, I saw a familiar face: Bill's wife, Georgia. When I told her I was about to be married, she went to find Bill. Moments before the ceremony began, the door opened and he entered. After weeks of headaches, nausea, and fatigue, Bill had felt well enough that day to travel to the temple, not realizing it was my wedding day.

Two years later my husband and I were called to be ordinance workers in the Nashville Tennessee Temple. When we arrived at the temple to be set apart, a gentleman held the door open for me and said, "Welcome to the Nashville Temple!" It was Brother Bill.

We served together for three years. Bill told everyone I had saved his life, but I knew that the Lord had saved him. In the process, He had taught me the importance of heeding promptings from the Spirit. ■

Ramona Ross, Tennessee, USA




MAYBE WE SHOULD PRAY

In the spring of 1975 my family and I were living among beautiful green farmland in the Rheinland-Pfalz area of West Germany. Driving home from church one rainy Sunday, we stopped to have a look at an automobile that had rolled onto its side in the wet roadbed at the edge of a forest. Inside the forest it was already dark because of the thick canopy created by the trees and the oncoming night.

After looking at the wrecked vehicle, we returned to our car and discovered it was stuck in the mud. I couldn't back up, but I could drive forward—into the forest. We had previously driven through the forest and found that many forest roads were interconnected and would eventually lead back out, so I decided to move forward into the blackness.

I quickly realized that I had made the wrong decision. The narrow, wet road was filled with deep ruts of mud and kept leading farther and farther into the dark forest. I tried to keep up speed, fearing that if we stopped, we would become mired. I saw a high spot just ahead that looked firm enough to sustain the weight of the car. My plan was to get the car out of the mud to give myself time to think. The car lunged up and out of the mud.

I turned off the car and climbed out. With the headlights off, I couldn't see a thing. I turned the headlights back on, grabbed our



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flashlight, and after looking the car over, decided that my best bet was to back into the forest and then make a mad dash out the way we came.

I backed as far into the forest as possible, revved the engine a little, lunged back onto the road, and sank deep into the mud. Now we were really in trouble. Outside the car it was total darkness and silence. Inside the car my wife and I sat with three terrified children.

I asked my wife for any ideas. After a moment she said, "Maybe we should pray." The children calmed down almost immediately. I offered a humble but desperate prayer for help. As I prayed, a thought came clearly

into my mind: "Put on the tire chains."

Standing in 10 inches (25 cm) of mud in her Sunday dress, my sweet wife held the flashlight while I cleaned the rear tires with my bare hands and put the chains on. With faith and confidence, we prayed again and started the engine. Slowly we drove through the mud and eventually back onto the pavement.

In the excitement of being freed from the mud and the darkness, I almost forgot who had helped us out of the forest. Our five-year-old daughter reminded me when she said, "Daddy, Heavenly Father really does answer prayers, doesn't He?" ■

Scott Edgar, Utah, USA