



ONE MAN'S TRASH IS ANOTHER MAN'S TREASURE

A book with gold letters on the cover became a treasure to one searching for the truth.

By Andrej Bozhenov

It was a hot summer day on my mission. My companion and I had been walking all over the streets of St. Petersburg, Russia, hoping to find new investigators. That evening we met an elderly man near our home and began talking with him. Although he did not express any interest in the gospel, we both felt impressed to give him a copy of the Book of Mormon. Inside the book we wrote our good wishes for him, our testimonies, and our contact information.

Later that same evening, unbeknownst to us, a young man by the name of Ilya was out with his brother. While walking along a dimly lit underground street, Ilya spotted a glimmer of gold on the cover of a book on the ground. Stooping down to get a closer look, he read the gold letters embossed on the book—The

Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ. He picked it up and carried it home.

The next day my companion and I were pondering how we could find new investigators. Thoughts flew through my mind: “We are trying our hardest searching for new opportunities. Where are the results? Maybe we need to change something we’re doing.”

A moment later the telephone rang. I picked up the receiver. The voice on the other end asked, “Is this an elder? I found your lost book in the subway crossing. I want to return it.”

I immediately glanced at the shelf where my scriptures lay. “I don’t think I lost my scriptures in the metro,” I answered. “No, I did not lose my copy of the Book of Mormon, but you can have it and read it.”

The young man said his name was Ilya and explained that he was

originally from Orsk, Russia, and had come to St. Petersburg to work.


“I would like to learn more about this book and your church,” he said. “May I meet with you?”

I jumped with excitement. It wasn’t every day that potential investigators called asking to set up a meeting to learn more about the Church.

“Of course we can meet, Ilya!” I responded joyfully.

When we met with Ilya, he listened attentively and asked questions. We were glad that he was so receptive to the gospel.

At one point during the lesson, I opened Ilya’s copy of the Book of Mormon. As I turned to the opening pages, I glimpsed some familiar handwriting—my own! I realized this was the same book we had given to the elderly man the day before. Apparently the man had discarded the book, which was soon discovered



by Ilya. I was filled with gratitude that my companion and I had chosen to leave the book with the elderly man, even though at the time we didn't understand why.

It wasn't long before Ilya chose to join the Church. He began to enthusiastically share the message of the gospel with his relatives and friends as well.

I have learned that Heavenly Father knows when a person is ready to receive His word. He requires us, as missionaries and members of His Church, only to fulfill His commandments and submit to His will as we seek to share the gospel. In this case God knew that although the original recipient of our Book of Mormon would overlook its value, Ilya would not (see 1 Nephi 19:7). ■