

AN OLD BOOK OF MORMON

Several years ago, I received a voice mail on my phone: “Is this Dan Hobbs who lived in Idaho Falls and served a mission in Washington in 1974? This is Tom Janaky. I think you taught my mom and dad.”

I was surprised. I had served in Texas, USA, not Washington, but I recognized the name. I immediately thought of the book on my dresser—a 1948 edition of the Book of Mormon. I opened it to a handwritten message on the cover page: “May God be with you. God bless you! Frank and Virginia Janaky, 1974.” Suddenly my mind went back 35 years.

I was 21 and close to the end of my mission in Houston, Texas. My companion and I were tracting without much success when we knocked on a door that was answered by a man who warmly invited us in. He introduced himself as Frank Janaky and introduced us to his wife, Virginia. We visited with them briefly.

On subsequent visits, we taught

them the gospel. They weren’t interested in baptism, but they were always friendly. During one discussion, I noticed an old copy of the Book of Mormon on a bookshelf. I can’t remember how it came to be in their possession, but I do remember mentioning how much I admired it.

Shortly before I returned home, my companion and I stopped by to say goodbye. Before we left, Frank signed the old Book of Mormon and gave it to me as a parting gift. He asked if I would sign his family Bible with my name and address. That was the last time I saw the Janakys, but I have always treasured their gift.

I returned the phone call that evening. Tom asked again if I had served a mission in Washington in 1974. I told him I had served in Texas and asked if his parents were Frank and Virginia.

He told me his parents had moved from Texas to Washington. He had assumed the missionaries who visited

his parents were in Washington. He said he had found my name and address in the family Bible.

“I am calling you to tell you that my brother and I have both been baptized, partly because of how nice the missionaries were to our parents,” he said. “They were so fond of all the missionaries who contacted them through the years.”

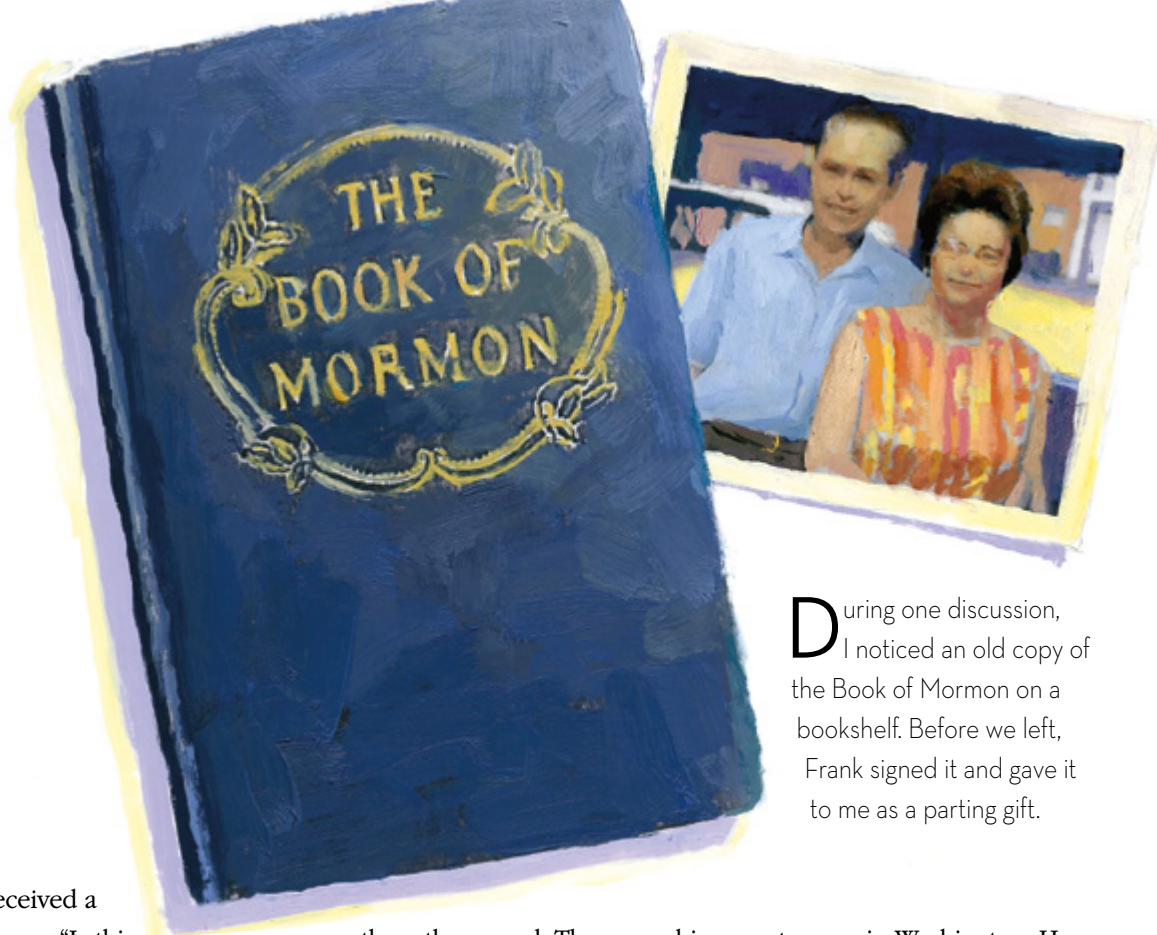
Tom then informed me that they had both passed away.

“But we are now completing their temple work,” he said.

With tears in my eyes, I thanked Tom for his call.

For years I felt that my mission wasn’t much of a success. Sometimes I wondered if I had touched anyone’s life while serving. Tom’s phone call was a tender mercy from the Lord. I am grateful for my mission and the small part I played in bringing the gospel to the Janaky family. ■

Dan Hobbs, Idaho, USA



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