



FROM Rescued TO Rescuer

My life was a downward spiral until I met a man who claimed to have the solution to my troubles.

By Betsy Doane

One evening in 1978, I was at the Logan Airport in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, waiting for some friends to arrive. A man struck up a conversation with me, and we talked a little about our lives. I told him I had returned three months earlier from a trip to Central America.

I had gone to escape the painful realities of my life, I told him. Nine years earlier my brother had died. The following year my parents were killed in a car accident. A year later to the day, my grandmother died. Within a short time, I had lost several of the most important people in my life. I was devastated.

I inherited a large sum of money upon my parents' death, and I used it to try to escape my grief. I spent it on expensive clothes, cars, drugs, and trips to faraway places.

On my most recent trip I climbed a pyramid in Tikal, Guatemala. There, even though I was physically on a high place, I remember feeling the lowest I'd felt in a long time. I couldn't live the way I'd been living anymore. "God," I said, "if You're there, I need You to change my life." I stood there for several minutes, silently pleading for help from a being I wasn't sure was real. When I climbed back down the pyramid, I felt at peace. Nothing had changed in my life, but somehow I felt that things were going to be all right.

And so it was that three months later I found myself telling all of this to the man at the airport. He listened patiently and then asked if I knew that Jesus Christ had appeared in the Americas.

At that time I still didn't think much of God. What kind of God would

take away my family? I told the man as much, and he responded that the God he believed in had made a way for me to be with my family again. *Now* he had my attention.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Have you heard of the Mormons?" I didn't know much about them, but the man proceeded to explain the plan of salvation to me. And despite my initial disbelief, something about what he was sharing rang true.

My new acquaintance and I exchanged phone numbers, and over the next several months, we dated a bit. We also talked about the gospel. He gave me a copy of the Book of Mormon, and we discussed it and other scriptures for hours over the phone. He told me about Joseph Smith restoring the Church of Jesus Christ. It was an



amazing time of hope and growth.

Our friendship waned a little bit, but after several more weeks, my friend told me he'd like to send some friends to talk with me. The friends he sent were, of course, the missionaries. And with the full-time elders came Bruce Doane, a stake missionary who would later become my husband.

After several weeks of formal discussions, the missionaries asked if I would be willing to be baptized. I told them sure. Then they told me that before I could be baptized, I needed to be living the Word of Wisdom.

I hadn't been drinking or abusing drugs as much as in the past. Things were changing in my life; I felt more hopeful than I had in ages—but surely those habits would be impossible to break *completely*. Besides, I had already

given up so much in embracing the gospel—including several friends who thought I was crazy for showing interest in the Mormon Church. I had persisted because I felt that the gospel was true. But could I completely abandon long-standing addictions?

The missionaries offered to give me a priesthood blessing to help me. Immediately afterward, I threw away all the drugs and alcohol I had. And that night the desire to partake of anything that was against the Word of Wisdom left me. It was a true miracle.

I was baptized in June 1978. A little more than a year later, Bruce and I were married in the Washington D.C. Temple.

The gospel literally rescued me from despair. Before, I was lost in every sense of the word. My parents and brother and grandmother were gone,

but I felt as though I were gone too. After their deaths I no longer knew who I was. Now I have found my identity. I know that I am a child of God and that He knows me and loves me. As I was sealed to my parents, grandmother, and brother, my grief turned to joy with the assurance that we can be together forever.

The gospel of Jesus Christ also rescued me from my addictions. For the past few years my husband and I have served as LDS Family Services addiction-recovery missionaries, working with members of our stake who are struggling with different types of addictions. I am so grateful to be able to help these brothers and sisters. I feel blessed that I can share my story with them to help them understand how we can all be rescued by the gospel. ■