



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CODY BELL

The Book of Mormon Changes Lives

*These converts developed faith through
reading the Book of Mormon.*

The Book of Mormon is indeed a gift intended to bring us, God's children, to a knowledge of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Enrique Serpa Bustamante, a member from Lima, Peru, thinks of the Book of Mormon as letters from a loving parent: "Our Heavenly Father wrote 'letters' through the prophets, giving counsel, comfort, and guidance for our good and blessing us at all times. He is so wise in His plan that He knows how to give us those letters of love precisely when we have our hearts prepared to understand His blessings and His gospel."

Here are some testimonies from several converts around the world on what it was about the Book of Mormon that stood out to them when they were learning about the Church.

Another Testament of Jesus Christ

I saw a copy of the Book of Mormon in my niece's house in Ibadan, Nigeria. Being an avid reader, I was curious to understand why the book says it is "Another Testament of Jesus Christ," so I took the book and read it.

The subtitle "Another Testament of Jesus Christ" opened my mind to the possibility of a universal Savior rather than just the Savior of the Israelites, which at that time was a great concern to me. His visit to the Nephites and the establishment of His laws and

ordinances among those people got me wanting to know more about His ministry.

That subtitle led me to learn more about the Church. I started feeling the Spirit as I obeyed the admonitions written in the Book of Mormon, like praying to know the truth for myself (see Moroni 10:4). Now I know that the Savior lives and loves all of us.

Ezekiel Akeh, Idaho, USA

1 Nephi 8—Fruit "above All That I Ever before Tasted"

In 1 Nephi 8:11–12, Lehi describes the fruit of the tree of life as "most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted. . . . It filled my soul with exceedingly great joy." When I read these verses, I felt strongly that this fruit was very special, and I desired to have it too.

I felt a lot of empathy for Lehi. I thought about how if I were Lehi and this fruit did exist, I'd feel the same as him and would desperately want my family to eat it too. This felt especially true for me because my parents are not yet members of the Church; so even when I read these verses now, they seem to speak what is in my heart.

I knew that this fruit was special, even before I knew that it represented God's love and His gospel. Later on, once I understood the meaning of the fruit, I thought about how accurately it is described in the scriptures.

The scriptures are truly records of truth from the prophets and contain God's word.

Eun Jin Yeom, Gyeonggi, South Korea

Jacob 5:74—A Desire to Serve God

When I was learning about the Church, I read Jacob 5:74. It stuck with me from the moment I read it. I was a very active member of my previous church for my whole life and had always had a desire to serve God. I even hoped to one day study philosophy and theology in order to serve Him. I had already passed my entrance exams to study philosophy.

But I will never forget when I first read that scripture. I remember that it was the night after I had first attended an LDS Church service. During one of the breaks between classes, I saw on the bulletin board the revelation received

by President Thomas S. Monson concerning the lowering of the missionary age.

When I read Jacob 5:74 that night, I knew that I had to serve God. And somehow, looking at the missionaries—those two young men who were the same age as me—giving their lives for Him, I knew that this was how I could do so. The night before that Church service, I had decided to get baptized. The night after the service, I decided to go on a mission. Now I have returned home honorably after serving the beautiful people of the Philippines Cebu East Mission.

Josef Gutierrez, Batangas, Philippines

The Book of Enos—Forgiveness for Sins

When I first read the Book of Mormon, I didn't know where to start. I was struggling with forgiveness, especially in forgiving myself and knowing whether I was worthy of being forgiven. One of the sister missionaries told me that I would get the answer in the scriptures and that if I didn't know where to start, I should pray about it and the scriptures I needed would be there. I decided to flip through and read where I stopped—the book of Enos, verses 4–6. I knew the Book of Mormon was true at that very moment after reading it.

Jennifer Andreski, California, USA

Mosiah 27—The Opportunity to Change

When I first read the Book of Mormon, the section of the Book of Mormon that I liked the most was in Mosiah when Alma's son was renouncing the Church and trying to destroy it. But there was a huge change in him—he felt the Holy Ghost and he was transformed into a believer. I really loved that because the opportunity to change should be given to everyone.

Maria Gracia Henrique Gonzalez, Maule, Chile

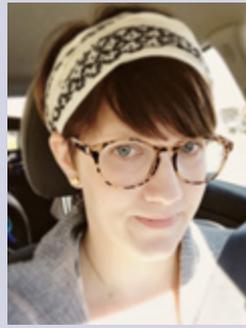




Ezekiel Akeh



Josef Gutierrez



Jennifer Andreski



Marie-Chantal Hogue



Venu Bhaskar Nakka

Mosiah 27:28–29—Happiness and Redemption

As a new member, I was impressed by Mosiah 27:28–29. I was—and I am still—so thankful that the Lord had mercy on me and redeemed me from a life of sin. Before my baptism, I thought I was happy, but nothing could compare to the happiness I felt once I accepted the restored gospel. I had never felt so confident and so certain that a bright future was in store.

After accepting Alma’s invitation to “come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye also may be partakers of the fruit of the tree of life” (Alma 5:62), I experienced the same comforting and peaceful deliverance as Alma the Younger when he wrote: “I was in the darkest abyss; but now I behold the marvelous light of God. My soul was racked with eternal torment; but I am snatched, and my soul is pained no more” (Mosiah 27:29). This passage helped me understand that my new lease on life and my newfound happiness was established upon the acknowledgement that Jesus Christ is my Savior and my Redeemer. Now I am infinitely grateful that my Savior paid the price of justice and allows me, over and over, to feel that same redeeming love each time I repent.

Marie-Chantal Hogue, Ontario, Canada

That Small Blue Book

I grew up in India, where I met the missionaries and first attended church. That Sunday happened to be Easter Sunday. Because of my work schedule, I came to church late and attended a youth Sunday School class, where one

of the missionaries taught the lesson. He quoted some scriptures from a blue book that I had never seen before but that sounded like the Bible. As he was teaching, I felt a strong feeling in my heart and knew that I too should possess this book.

I went directly to him after class and told him, “I need that book.” Since the book was his own set of scriptures, he could not give it to me, but he let me look at and feel it. I could see golden words embossed on the front: “The Book of Mormon.” I got the same feeling again that I needed the book for myself. The missionary got my address and promised to bring me one. Sure enough, the missionaries came to my house soon after and presented me with my own copy of the Book of Mormon. They then started teaching me the discussions.

That year, Easter brought an unbelievable blessing into my life: the Book of Mormon. That small blue book has brought a spirit of life into my life, and I am so thankful that I had the privilege to learn from it. ■

Venu Bhaskar Nakka, California, USA



POWERFUL TRUTHS IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

“Something powerful happens when a child of God seeks to know more about Him and His Beloved Son. Nowhere are those truths taught more clearly and powerfully than in the Book of Mormon. . . .

“My dear brothers and sisters, I testify that the Book of Mormon is truly the word of God. It contains the answers to life’s most compelling questions.”

President Russell M. Nelson, “The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like without It?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 61, 62.