



# IT STARTED WITH GIRLS' CAMP AND AN ENSIGN

BY PENNY HAGENBUCH

In May 2000, my daughter, Breanna, was invited to go to Young Women camp. Since we were not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I was reluctant to allow her to attend. Coincidentally, the same week I began attending a three-day seminar on Latter-day Saint beliefs presented by my own church. I left the first session with more questions than when I walked in. The ideas presented at the seminar were not favorable to the Church, and this made me even more curious, since I had LDS friends whom I respected and admired.

I decided to call a Latter-day Saint neighbor, and I invited her over to talk about the Church. Though she had not attended church in a while, she shared her testimony and offered me a copy of the general conference issue of the *Ensign*. Immediately after she left, I began to read the magazine. I read the entire issue straight through that afternoon. The conference talks spoke to me in a way that I had not experienced before, except when reading the Bible.

The next day I telephoned the mother of the girl who had invited my daughter to girls' camp. I told her I was afraid Breanna might feel uncomfortable being the only non-LDS girl at camp. She reassured me, explaining that at camp the girls have fun learning life skills and participating in lots of activities. If Breanna expressed a desire to go home, she would take her home immediately. During our conversation, I mentioned that I had read an issue of the *Ensign* and liked it.

She said she had some back issues that she could bring over to me. I told her, "Yes, please. I would love to read more!"

The next day she brought me two years of neatly boxed issues of the *Ensign*. I began reading them and couldn't get enough. I felt the Spirit with me as I read, and I began to pray before and after reading each issue. I finished reading them all in one week!

I didn't attend the remainder of the seminar sessions at my church. After receiving spiritual guidance while reading the *Ensign*, I didn't feel the need to return there at all. A few days later, my daughter went to Young Women camp and returned with her own testimony. She began taking the missionary lessons from two wonderful sister missionaries, while I eavesdropped from the kitchen. Each time the missionaries left, I scoured the pamphlets they left and searched for cross-references in my Bible. Soon I began taking the missionary lessons too.

In October 2000 my daughter and I were baptized members of the Church, and now we have our own subscription to the *Ensign*. Our lives changed forever thanks to an invitation to Young Women camp, an *Ensign* general conference issue from a less-active member (who is now active again), two years of back issues of the *Ensign* magazine, and the testimony of two faithful missionaries. ■

PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW REIER

