

STRANDED IN LIMON

During a trip to see our extended family one summer, our 12-year-old, high-mileage minivan died and coasted to a stop. We were stuck. Fortunately, we were only five miles (8 km) from the small town of Limon, Colorado, USA.

The local mechanic gave us bad news. Our transmission needed to be replaced, and we would need to wait at least five days for parts. We were short on cash but did have our tent and some camping gear, so we opted to stay in the local campground.

Hundreds of miles from family and friends, we contemplated how we might get to a store to buy the groceries we'd need to survive. We decided to look up the local branch president in hopes of finding transportation. We

called President Dawson, and within half an hour we received two calls from members of the small branch's Relief Society. We happily discovered that one family lived within a block of the campground; they came to meet us within a few hours of our call.

Over the next week, the love and care we received from that small branch on the windy plains of Colorado overwhelmed us. The family who lived close by invited us to their home for dinner that first day, and we enjoyed a great evening of conversation with the parents while our children played with their daughter. The next morning we hitched a ride with another member to go shopping for food and supplies for our stay.

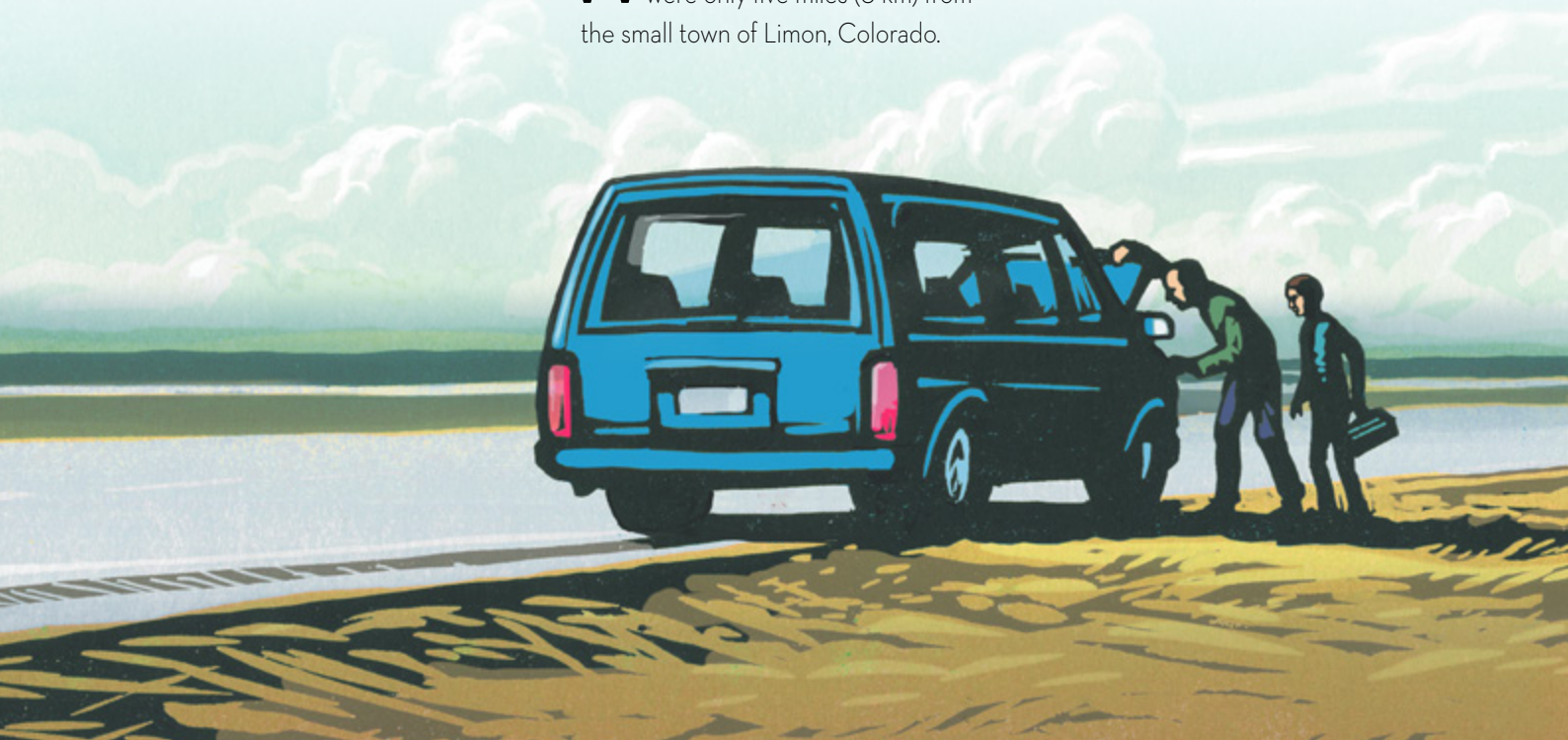
The generosity of branch members

continued beyond our original request. They picked us up for church on Sunday. They helped us make memories at the town's historic train museum. Our children took shelter in their homes during a passing hailstorm. One of the members even employed my husband for a few days to help us pay for car repairs.

Every evening, members of the small branch fed us and entertained our children in their homes. Toward the end of our stay, another family took us to their ranch, where our children learned to ride horses.

When we left Limon a week later, we left with prayers of thanks for a new group of dear friends who took us in and made us feel at home in Limon. ■
Christina Wadley, Missouri, USA

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WHAT I NEEDED TO LEARN

After my first year of university studies, I began a project to better understand the Bible. I decided to study the teachings of a few religious groups I had heard were not Christian and then compare them to the teachings of the Bible.

As the next semester began, I started studying The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One of my classes required laboratory work with a partner, and I prayed for someone with whom I could learn what I needed to learn.

I chose a lab bench, and soon a student approached and asked if I had a partner. He introduced himself as Lincoln. I didn't remember seeing him at school the year before and asked if he had transferred.

"Actually," he said, "I just returned from serving as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

I told Lincoln I had begun studying his church and had some questions. He happily agreed to answer them.

During the next three months, I asked questions about the Book of Mormon, temples, latter-day prophets, and modern revelation. Although I learned a great deal during this time, I still thought that Mormons weren't Christians.

One weekend our school lost a big game. Some teachers in the lab vigorously discussed the loss, repeatedly using the Lord's name in vain. Lincoln approached the teachers and asked them if they would please stop speaking about Jesus Christ that way.

"Does that really bother you?" they asked with some doubt.

"Yes," Lincoln replied. "Jesus Christ is my best friend."

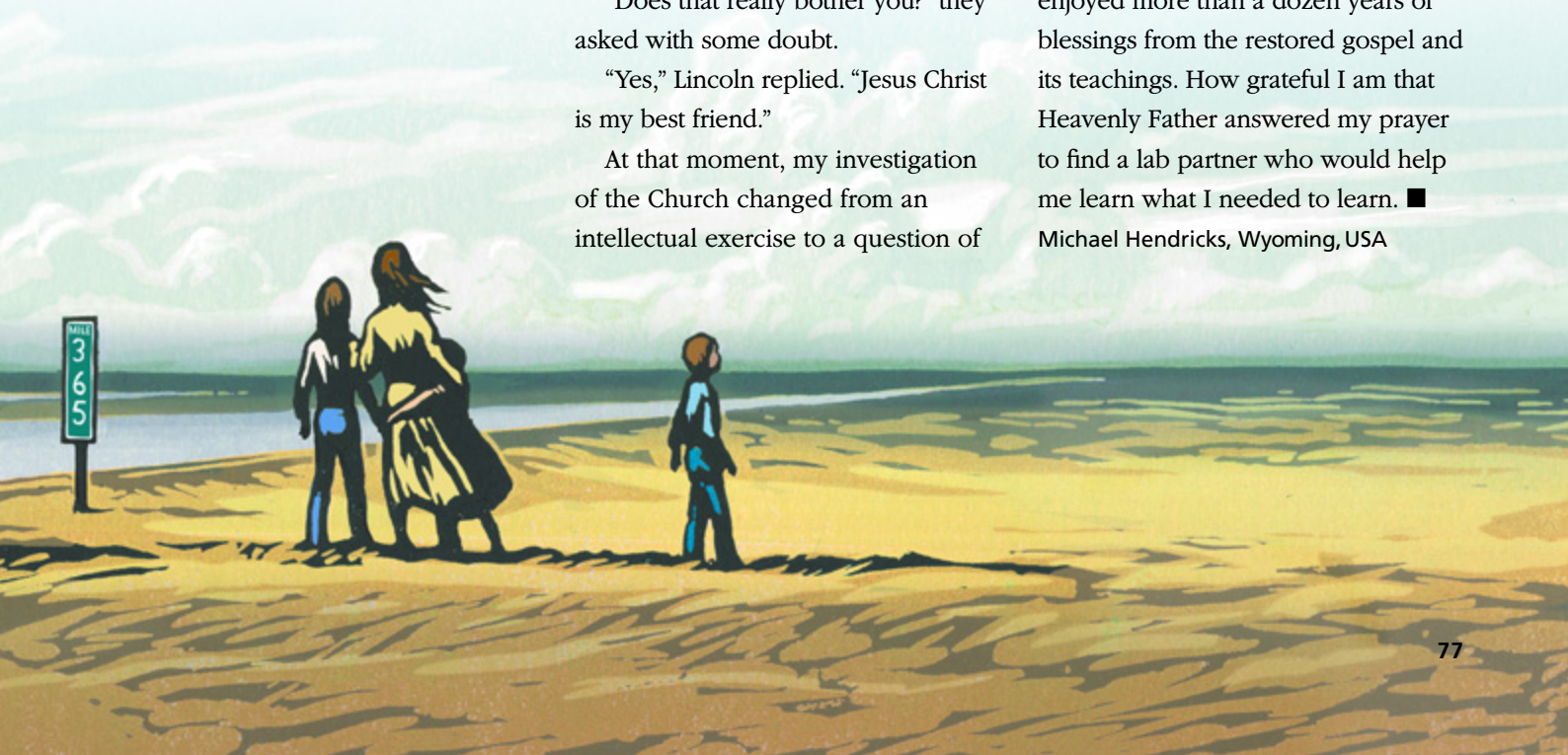
At that moment, my investigation of the Church changed from an intellectual exercise to a question of

faith. If this religion produced men like this, it was Christian in every way that mattered.

As Lincoln and I left that night, I asked if I could attend church with him sometime. After going to church, I asked him if I could have a copy of the Book of Mormon and if I could meet with the missionaries.

For two years I investigated the Church and spent time with its members. I saw a consistent pattern of sincere men and women diligently striving to be disciples of the Master. On numerous occasions the Holy Ghost confirmed to me that Jesus Christ, whom I had always tried my best to serve, really had restored His Church in our day. It was overseen by prophets and apostles and led directly by Him.

I was baptized and have now enjoyed more than a dozen years of blessings from the restored gospel and its teachings. How grateful I am that Heavenly Father answered my prayer to find a lab partner who would help me learn what I needed to learn. ■
Michael Hendricks, Wyoming, USA





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SUNDAY SOWING

A few years ago, just before Easter weekend, it rained all week long. I had been in Benin, West Africa, but was coming home to spend Easter in Togo. It didn't rain on Saturday, the day I arrived, but that night it began raining again.

I knew that church started at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, but because it had been raining so much and I'd only just arrived, I decided that was too early for me.

I thought to myself, "I'll go a little bit late to church and get there at 10:00 a.m." Then I went to see my brother. "Instead of going to church at 9:00," I told him, "let's go over to that patch of land on the side of my house."

When we arrived, we noticed that the

ground was nice and wet from all the rain. I thought, "It's Sunday, and we're waiting until 10:00 to go to church. Why not plant some beans before we go?"

So my brother and I planted a little patch of land that was about 65 square feet (6 m²). Then we went to church, an hour late. The next day we went to a nearby town where I had another plot of land. There we planted corn and more beans.

Two months later when I returned home again, I went to check that little patch of land next to my house. It was empty except for a little clump of weeds that I tripped over as I walked into the field. "Oh, yeah," I said to myself, "we planted beans here on Easter Sunday!"

Out of all the seeds we sowed, the only thing that grew was a clump of weeds. The beans and corn we planted in the other field the Monday after Easter, however, grew just fine. Since that time everything we have planted in the patch of land next to my house has grown normally.

I hadn't kept the Sabbath day holy that Easter Sunday, and I tripped over a clump of weeds to remind me that I hadn't. Since then, I have remembered that I can't just do whatever I feel like doing on the Lord's day. Instead, I always remember to keep the Sabbath day holy. ■

Desire Koami Gbedjangni, Togo,
West Africa

I STARTED PRAYING FOR RUTH

After experiencing some unexpected financial obligations as a single woman, I knew I needed to find a second job. Soon afterward, Marty, a sister in my ward, approached me and asked for my help. She and her husband were going on a mission, so she had to give up her job. She explained that every Saturday she helped an elderly woman, Ruth, who lived in an assisted-living complex. Marty offered me her job and told me that Ruth would pay me for my work.

The following Monday, Marty and Ruth explained my tasks, and I began my work a few days later. I started by

gathering Ruth's laundry and carrying it upstairs to the laundry room. Soon after I began, Ruth rushed in and shouted at me. She told me that I was never to wash her clothes without first asking.

I was doing only what she and Marty had asked me to do. Frustrated and hurt, I fought back the tears. I told myself that I didn't need any more stress or problems in my life. I would have walked out that very moment had I not promised Marty that I would care for Ruth while she was away.

Week after week Ruth shouted angrily at me over everything I did. It seemed that I could never please

her no matter how hard I tried.

I started praying for strength to endure Ruth and her harsh words, but nothing changed. I continued to resent having to help her.

Then one day I changed my prayers. I stopped praying for myself and started praying for Ruth. I asked Heavenly Father to help me understand her needs and how I could help her.

From that day forward everything changed. My heart softened, and my love for Ruth grew. Ruth changed as well. She opened up and shared her life, her joys, and her sorrows. She told me she missed her family. She told me of the wonderful things she had done in her past but could no longer do. She told me she was lonely and sad.

I began to look forward to seeing Ruth each week, and she looked forward to seeing me.

My experience with Ruth taught me a valuable lesson. When I truly served with my whole heart, I came to understand President Spencer W. Kimball's (1895–1985) teaching that "in the midst of the miracle of serving, there is the promise of Jesus, that by losing ourselves, we find ourselves" ("Small Acts of Service," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 2). ■

June Foss, Utah, USA

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