

WHERE IS YOUR CHURCH?

During my years in the military, it was sometimes a challenge to find a Latter-day Saint chapel. With little notice, I could find myself in a new city or even a new country.

One Sunday I found myself in Amsterdam, Holland. At 8:30 a.m. our colonel unexpectedly announced that we had the day off. Already in uniform, I convinced a friend to drop me off at church. In his rental car, we had the following conversation:

Friend: "So where is your church?"

Me: "I don't know because I've never been to this city before. But if you can get us to the city center by

quarter to nine, we can find it."

Friend: "Why? What happens at quarter to nine?"

Me: "That's when we'll see the Mormon missionaries heading to the chapel."

Friend: "I thought you said you've never been here before?"

Me: "I haven't."

Friend: "So how do you know there's a chapel here?"

Me: "There's a chapel here all right *and* Mormon missionaries."

Friend: "OK, here we are in the city center. It's quarter to nine, and I don't see any missionaries."

Me: "There they are."

Friend: "Where? You mean those small figures way up there crossing the street? We can't even see who they are from here."

When we caught up to the missionaries, I jumped out of the car and had an animated conversation with them, shaking hands, cracking jokes, laughing, and smiling.

Me: "Thanks for dropping me off."

Friend: "I thought you said you didn't know those guys?"

Me: "I don't. We just met."

Friend: "People don't talk like that unless they already know each other."



Me: "I'll explain later."

Friend: "I'm not sure I can find this place again, and you haven't told me what time to pick you up."

Me: "The meetings will last three hours. Then a family will invite me to dinner. After we eat and talk a while, they'll drive me back to headquarters."

Friend: "You don't know that someone is going to invite you to dinner and drive you back."

I reassured him that I would be well taken care of and thanked him again.

The meetings were inspiring. I accepted the first of three invitations to dinner. During dinner we had an enlightening conversation about the growth of the Church in Holland.

I have been blessed to find Church members many times during my life. Sometimes we have met in royal palaces and sometimes in humble huts. Sometimes we have met in abandoned, dusty barracks. Sometimes we have met in hospital chapels. Sometimes we have met in large tents or outside under the open sky.

Wherever we have met, I am always glad I made the effort to find the Church. For as the Lord has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). ■

Dee Jepson, Idaho, USA

"If you can get us to the city center by quarter to nine," I told my friend, "we can find a chapel."

A PRAYER IN THE FAMILY HISTORY CENTER

After I was called as the family history consultant for our branch in Ushuaia, Argentina, I came to feel a deep need to search for my ancestors. The task was difficult, and scarcely a day went by that I did not try a new strategy to discover who they were and where they had come from in Italy.

In 2006 I was called to oversee the family history center. I continued to feel frustrated, however, by my failure to find information about my family. My frustration grew after my husband's search for his ancestors paid off. That year, Ruben identified the names of more than 5,000 of his ancestors who had lived in San Ginesio, Macerata, Italy.

One afternoon in the family history center as Ruben found ancestor after ancestor on microfilm, he joyfully and repeatedly cried out, "Another one!" Feeling discouraged, and with tears in my eyes, I expressed my sadness, adding that I didn't know what to do to find my family members. Seeing my pain, he suggested that we pray. We did so, pleading for the Holy Ghost to enlighten us so that we could accelerate the work on behalf of my family.

During our prayer, Ruben suddenly remembered a certain website that featured Italian surnames. Immediately after our prayer, we checked it out. Within minutes we had found four people with my maiden name, Gos, in the telephone directory of the small Italian

town of Iutizzo, in northern Italy.

Immediately I sent letters to each of them. One wrote back, saying that her husband had the same surname, but he didn't belong to the family. However, she had known one of my grandfather's deceased sisters, and she offered to put me in touch with another relative, still living.

A few months later, in December 2006, we received a long-distance telephone call.

"Is this Susana Gos?" a distant male voice asked.

"Yes," I replied.

"This is your cousin from Italy," he said.

The caller, Giovanni Battista Tubaro, was the son of my grandfather's sister Maria!

In March 2008, Giovanni and his wife, Miriam, came to visit us in Argentina. We introduced them to the gospel and family history work, and for several days we talked of those who had preceded us. Now each of their names going back to six generations had a face and a history.

Family history has allowed me to contribute to an important part of the Lord's work. It has also brought me closer to my ancestors—children of our Heavenly Father whom I never would have known of had it not been for a prayer of faith in the family history center. ■

Susana Magdalena Gos de Morresi,
Tierra del Fuego, Argentina

GET HER TO THE HOSPITAL!

I was single and self-employed when I was new in the Church, so I had days when I had extra time. On one of those days I called the Relief Society president and asked if anyone needed help that afternoon. She mentioned an elderly sister named Anita (name has been changed) who had recently come home from the hospital and was lonely. I had met Anita before and was happy to visit her.

I called and then went to her apartment. She asked me to make lunch for her, and afterward we had a great visit. She had a good sense of humor and

loved to laugh and tell stories about her life.

After lunch she said she was tired and asked me to help her from her wheelchair to bed. Soon I had her tucked in. Suddenly, the still, small voice I had heard so much about spoke to me: “Get her to the hospital now!”

Anita hated hospitals and had just returned home. I asked her if she felt OK. She said she was fine but felt tired.

I moved away from her bedside and knelt. As soon as I started to pray, the voice repeated, “Get her to the

hospital, and get her there now!”

I hesitated, asking myself, “What am I going to tell the doctor at the hospital?”

I called a friend, who also prayed and then told me to follow my prompting.

Anita was angry that I would even mention taking her to the hospital, but I called an ambulance anyway. When it arrived, two paramedics entered and took her vital signs. Without asking questions, they put her on a gurney and sped off in the ambulance.

I followed in my van. After arriving at the hospital, I sat and waited. Soon a doctor came out. He asked me, “She didn’t tell you that she had fallen before you came to her apartment, did she?”

“No,” I responded.

He told me that Anita had injured her spleen and was bleeding internally. Without immediate medical attention, he said, she might have died.

I felt a mixture of remorse and exultation—remorse that I had hesitated and exultation that ultimately I had listened to the Holy Ghost. Most of all, I felt grateful to know that the Lord had trusted me to help this injured sister and had inspired my Relief Society president to send me to her.

My own health has deteriorated since this experience, but the Lord still prompts me. I pray always for the strength to follow those promptings. ■

Gayle Y. Brandvold, California, USA

Anita said she felt fine, but I moved away from her bedside, knelt, and prayed.





I unloaded my purse, and there on the bottom with my boarding pass, was an issue of the *Ensign*.

CAN I GET A BOOK OF MORMON?

As I entered the airport on my way home from a visit with old friends, I felt discouraged that I hadn't shared the gospel on this trip. I always carry a Book of Mormon in my purse to remind me to pray for someone I can give it to, but too often it stays in my purse. This trip was yet another miss.

I took a deep breath and prayed a silent apology. I felt like a terrible member missionary.

As I shuffled through the security line, I felt prompted to speak to the woman ahead of me. We chatted about our destinations and then separated to different lines. As I headed toward my gate, however, I saw the same woman. "Oh, hi again," she said. "Good to see you!"

I asked her when her flight was leaving. "Oh, not for hours—I'm early."

"Well, come and sit with me!" I said.

I still had 45 minutes before my flight boarded, so we sat at my gate and talked about our work. I mentioned some of the writing I do for Latter-day Saints, and suddenly she lit up.

"You're a Mormon?" she asked. "I've been wanting to know more about Mormons. How can I get a copy of the Book of Mormon?"

"Well," I said, opening my purse, "I have one right here."

"Oh, my," she said. "I think maybe we were supposed to meet today."

Gratitude flooded my heart. When she asked what makes Latter-day Saints different from other religions, I felt guided in what to say.

I told her I'd have the missionaries contact her, and then boarding was announced. I opened my purse to get my boarding pass but couldn't find it.

I unloaded my purse. There, on the bottom with the pass, was a general conference issue of the *Ensign*! I gave it to her and thanked the Lord that I had to search for my boarding pass. She mentioned that she usually brings reading material with her but felt she shouldn't this time.

"Maybe it's so I can read this," she said. With my boarding pass in hand, I gave her a hug and said good-bye.

Now we talk each week, and she tells me about her visits with the sister missionaries. It has been a year, and I hope to someday see her baptized. I don't know if that will happen, but I still marvel at the workings of Heavenly Father to help our paths cross. I thank Him for hearing my prayer and granting me the simple opportunity to share a Book of Mormon. ■

Joni Hilton, California, USA