

A Robbery, a Book, and a Testimony

By Mailin Espinoza Mira

I live in Chile and have been a member of the Church since I was eight. I have always known that I was in the true Church, and I felt I had a testimony of the Book of Mormon, but it was a borrowed testimony. Although I wanted to, I had never read the Book of Mormon all the way through. I had never read further than 1 Nephi.

On the night of July 4, 2002, my friend and I attended our Book of Mormon institute class. We stayed after class talking until we noticed that it had gotten late. We began walking home around 10:15, and when we got to the place where we were to split up, we stopped and continued to talk.

Two men passed by and asked us what time it was, but we were so involved in our conversation that we barely heard them. Suddenly they came back. One of them threw his arms around me, putting a knife to my neck. Then he let me go and threatened my friend. The other man asked us for money, and when we said we didn't have any, they were furious. They demanded our jackets and backpacks.


I had wanted this jacket for a long

time and had finally been able to buy it a month before. And I loved my backpack, which my older brother had given me. My friend had homework assignments in her backpack that she needed to turn in. I was really scared—almost frozen in place. It was the first time I had ever been robbed.

Without hesitation we gave them our things. But suddenly I said, “Wait! Please let me take out my Book of Mormon! It’s the only thing of value I have.” The thief gave me a strange look and let me take it out. Then they fled.

I hugged the book and didn’t care about anything else. I felt peace because I had rescued this precious book from two criminals.

That night I decided to show greater appreciation for this treasure of mine and for all the sacrifices made by the people who had brought it to light. I started to read it, and I began to feel an indescribable peace and a spectacular joy. All of a sudden it was worth so much more to me. I finished it two months later, and I finally gained a testimony of the book for myself.



We gave
the
robbers
our belongings. But
then I remembered
the Book of
Mormon inside
my backpack and
asked if I could
remove it.

I still don't know where I got the courage to ask for my book back, but I'll never be sorry that I did. I don't harbor any ill feelings toward the men because through that experience I gained the testimony I desired.

That testimony helped motivate me to serve a mission. I am now home from serving in Argentina, where I was able to tell people about the Book of Mormon and share with them how marvelous this work truly is. ■

The Suit

By Lori Ries

It was just before Christmas, and I knew I had things others could use. Room by room I went through the house, finding items we could donate to Deseret Industries. When it was finally time to go through our bedroom, my husband and I headed for our closet. We looked through our clothing.

"I don't have anything this time," I told him. "Do you?"

David put a number of shirts in a pile and found some shoes he no longer wore.

"What about this suit?" he asked. I had helped him pick it out years ago for a job interview. It still looked brand new.

"Honey, what do you think? It doesn't fit anymore."

"But it's still like new," I said.

"I really feel this suit needs to go,"

With the missionaries at my door, a sudden knowledge came to me, and I knew what to do with the suit.

David said. He took it from the closet.

As much as I liked the suit on him, he did have another, and after he tried this one on, I could see that it barely fit him now. I carefully laid it across the donation pile, but I didn't feel right. Something was nagging at me. The suit didn't belong there, and I knew it.

David went to his ties. He was ruthless in his weeding. He pulled out several and laid them with the suit, but that didn't feel right to me either.

The suit in the pile interrupted my sleep. I wondered what was wrong with me to worry so much about a suit that didn't fit and a bunch of old ties.

The following morning I looked at the pile of clothes. Again so strongly came the feeling that the suit didn't belong. I took it off the

pile and laid it on the bed along with some ties. After putting everything else into bags, I again looked at the suit. "Whom is it for?" I didn't know.

I knelt beside the bed and prayed. I went to my desk and tried to think. My husband and I were the young adult leaders in the ward, so we knew who the next missionary was. It would be a while before he left. He also had a steady job, so getting a new suit wouldn't be a problem. I called my bishop but got the answering machine.

Then there was a knock at the door. Opening the door, I was startled.

"Hi, Sister Ries," the missionaries serving in our ward smiled.

A chill of sudden knowledge ran through me. "I don't believe this" was all I could say. "Please stay here. I'll be right back."



Excitedly, I raced up the stairs while the elders laughed at my strange greeting. Such joy filled me as I brought down the suit.

“It’s a size 40 jacket,” I said, “and the pants are 33–32.” I looked at one elder, hoping.

The missionary’s face lit up. “I’m a size 40 and a 33–30 in slacks.” His face softened. “My parents and I had been praying that I’d find a

suit to finish out my mission. I’ve got a little time left, and I’ve nearly worn this one clear through.”

The faithful elder accepted Heavenly Father’s gift of the suit and ties gratefully, and after I closed my door, I again went to my bedroom to kneel and thank Heavenly Father for the love He has for His children. He always listens to prayers. ■

of the universities where he had obtained his degrees, both academic and ecclesiastical. The speaker began his talk by briefly summarizing the history of Christianity from the time of Jesus Christ and His Apostles until the year 1830, when the world first began to hear of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, organized in America.

The speaker was not too severe in his appraisal of our faith. It was obvious he had read many of our books because he frequently quoted verses from the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. He also read extensively from the Prophet Joseph Smith’s account of the First Vision. It appeared he intended to lead his listeners to the conclusion that if Mormonism were indeed a sect, as he believed, it was not one of the more dangerous ones.

I took notes of all the things I thought to be in error, such as when he said that Mormons were not Christians and that Joseph Smith had copied the Book of Mormon from an old American novel. The lecture was quite detailed and ended after more than 90 minutes, at which time the hall erupted into resounding applause.

When the applause was over and the discussion began, the first person to get to his feet was Brother Quirce, who introduced himself as a member of the Church. He explained how Joseph Smith had obtained the golden plates and what his

“Dad, I’m Proud of You!”

By Marcelino Fernández-Rebollos Suárez

Because my wife and I knew of no schools in Madrid, Spain, that were run by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and because we wanted our children to receive a religious education, we registered them in a school sponsored by another religion. Because our children were the only members of our Church attending this school, we hoped they wouldn’t become targets of religious discrimination.

One day in October 1999, our son Pablo, 16 at the time, brought us an invitation from school to attend a lecture and discussion titled “Religious Sects: Mormonism.” The lecture was to be given by a prestigious authority known for having devoted a good part of his life to the study of religions, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in particular.

Fearing that an inaccurate impression of our beliefs might be given, I got in touch with our stake president and informed him of the meeting. He took note of the date and place and asked me to speak with the Church’s Public Affairs Department to see if a representative could attend and answer any questions that might arise.

When the date arrived, my wife, my son, and I went to the school. The hall where the lecture was held seated 500. Once we had taken our seats, our eyes sought any other Church members who might be in the large crowd that was filling the room. Soon we discovered Brother Quirce of Public Affairs. He gave us a friendly wave from the other side of the room.

The meeting started, and the director of instruction introduced the speaker, heaping praise upon him and giving a detailed accounting

contribution had been as the Prophet of the Restoration.

As I listened to Brother Quirce, I suddenly felt the need to get up also and clarify certain concepts so that everyone present might know the truth about our doctrine and our beliefs.

When I told my family I wanted to speak, Pablo was frightened and said, “No, Dad, please. Don’t say anything, because everybody here knows me, and I could have problems with my teachers.” I thought it cowardly for me to let Brother

Following the lecture, I felt the Spirit direct me to stand up and clarify what had been said about our beliefs.

Quirce be the only one to speak, but I didn’t want my son to

have problems, so for the moment I remained silent. As time passed, however, I could feel the increasing insistence of the Spirit.

I again told my family what I was feeling, and my son continued to express his opposition to my getting up. Finally, no longer able to resist the influence of the Spirit, I slowly got up and made my way around the rear of the auditorium to join Brother Quirce. A murmur of surprise arose from the crowd: “It’s another Mormon.”

As Brother Quirce concluded his remarks, I put my hand in my pocket to draw out the notes I had taken, but to my surprise my pockets were empty. I had left the notes at my seat. At just that moment it was my turn to take the floor.

I didn’t know where to begin. Everything I had intended to say disappeared from my mind. I began by saying that I had been a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for 26 years and that I knew it is the only true Church on the earth, that Jesus Christ had restored it through the Prophet Joseph Smith, that Jesus is the Son of God—our Savior and Redeemer.

I don’t remember how long I talked or all the words I said. I just remember that the silence was overwhelming and that I could feel the gaze of 500 pairs of eyes upon me. When I was finished, I thanked those present for giving me an opportunity to express my beliefs and turned and left the hall. I was at peace, but my legs were shaking.

When the meeting was over and I was able to rejoin my family, my son came up to me and said, “Dad, you did the right thing. You bore a beautiful testimony, and you spoke

with power and authority. Dad, I’m proud of you!”

Pablo knew he might have problems at school because of what I had done, but it was more important to him to know his father has a testimony he is willing to stand up for. ■

