

ARE YOU A MORMON?

I was far from home attending an international conference for my job. Hundreds of people attended, but I was the only one from my state and region.

One evening a dinner was hosted for all the attendees. As we entered the dining hall, each of us received four tickets to use at the bar to order free alcoholic beverages. It occurred to me how easy it would be for someone far from home to be tempted by such an opportunity, thinking that no one would ever know. It was a fleeting thought, and I handed the tickets back to the person at the door.

During dinner I sat with seven strangers. I drank water as we ate, talked, laughed, and exchanged information that would help us in our employment.

The next morning at breakfast I greeted a gentleman who had been seated at my table. I was excited to notice by his name tag that he was from my hometown—a town I had not lived in for 35 years. After high school I had left home for college, married, and moved away.

As we discussed places and community events we both knew, he asked me if I still had family there. I replied that I did not but that I had many good friends there and that we kept in touch. He asked who they were, and I began to name some of them.

After the first few names he stopped me and said, “Wait, are you a Mormon? All the people you have named are Mormons.”

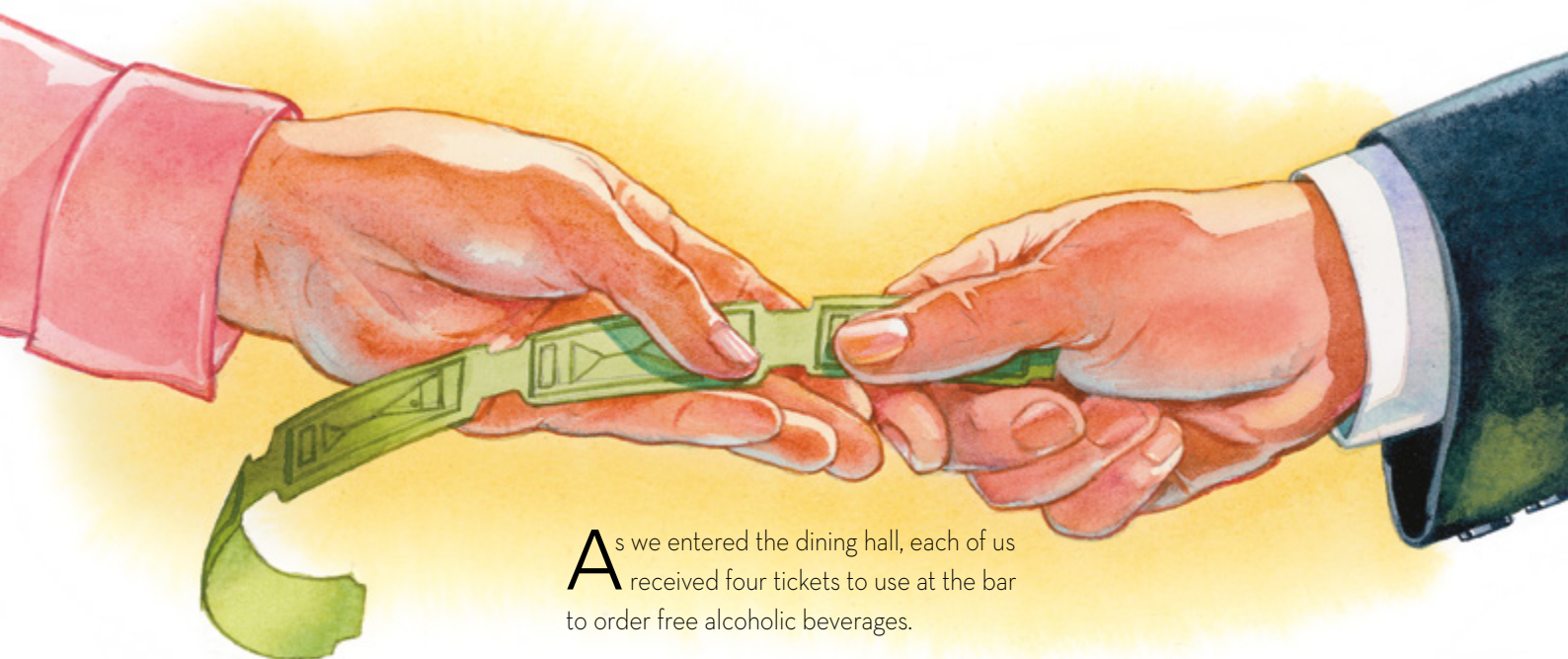
When I acknowledged that I was a

Latter-day Saint, he told me what fine citizens those friends were and how they had served the community and been good examples to all. For several minutes he shared his admiration for the Church and my friends, telling me how they had been advocates for good in the community.

As we parted, I could not help but think what might have happened had I chosen to use those drink tickets. I had been taught to choose the right by those very people we spoke of. I would have been uncomfortable and ashamed to admit that I was a member of the Church had I used the tickets.

How grateful I am for the example of those worthy, active, serving friends—35 years later and 2,000 miles (3,220 km) away from the home of my youth. ■

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