

FINDING MY WAY BACK TO THE CHURCH



I tried to find answers outside the gospel, but all I found was emptiness.

By Doug Boyack

I was raised in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but in college I decided that I didn't need the Church anymore. I began a shallow, selfish search for "truth" in other places. Finding no answers that brought me peace or joy, I fell into a deep spiritual darkness. I felt that I would never be happy again.

However, I could still see that I had been happier when I was active in the Church. I began to go through the motions of Church activity, hoping to find some deliverance from the gloom that controlled my life. But my halfhearted efforts did not accomplish much. I focused on my studies, hoping they would distract me from the emptiness I felt. This helped temporarily, but it provided no real answer.

After stumbling around and realizing I was going nowhere, I decided to take a break from school and to travel. I had saved a little money but not enough to last very long. Before leaving, I resolved to exercise some real faith and pay tithing on my modest savings. This wasn't easy. I would be far from home, and soon I would be broke. Still, I hoped there was a God, and I knew that I would need His help.

I wrote a check for my tithing, sent it to my bishop, packed my Book of Mormon, and set off. Almost immediately I felt the warmth of the Spirit. I was amazed to feel my doubt and sorrow replaced with understanding and optimism. From Idaho to Washington, D.C., members of the Church reached out to me and, more

important, helped me to develop faith and righteous desires. It seemed like home was all around me.

After a short time, I knew I would be cutting my travels short—not for lack of money but because a much better journey awaited me. Returning home, I met with my bishop and stake president. With their help, I was soon serving the Lord as a missionary.

Now each time I pay my tithing or meet with Church leaders, I remember the "beginning" of my true conversion. Since then I have experienced ups and downs, but I have worked to remain spiritually strong. I will always be grateful for Heavenly Father's accepting my meager offering of faith and extending His loving arm to me. ■

The author lives in California, USA.