

After interviewing me to serve a mission,
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in your life to try to get you to change your mind."

OPPOSITION TO MY MISSION

By Alcenir de Souza

I joined the Church at age 15, and four years later I submitted my missionary application. At the interview with my stake president, he complimented me for deciding to serve the Lord as a full-time missionary. Then that inspired leader said something that made a profound impression on me: "Brother, from now on, strange things will happen in your life to try to get you to change your mind about your decision to serve the Lord."

While waiting for my mission call, I was working as a trainee at Xerox. This work made it possible for me to obtain some of the things that I would need for the mission field and to help my mother with expenses at home. Things were going very well.

Unfortunately, "strange things" did begin to happen. First, my mother was assaulted and almost died from her injuries, but a kind Heavenly Father miraculously spared her life.

At that time, my mother, two younger sisters, and I were living in a rented house. We lived off my income and a small benefit that my mother received because of my father's death years before.

Some people, including Church members, would ask, "Are you going to have the courage to leave your mother like this and go on a mission?" Hearing this question over and over began to cause doubts in my heart.

One day my stake president called and told me that my mission call had arrived and

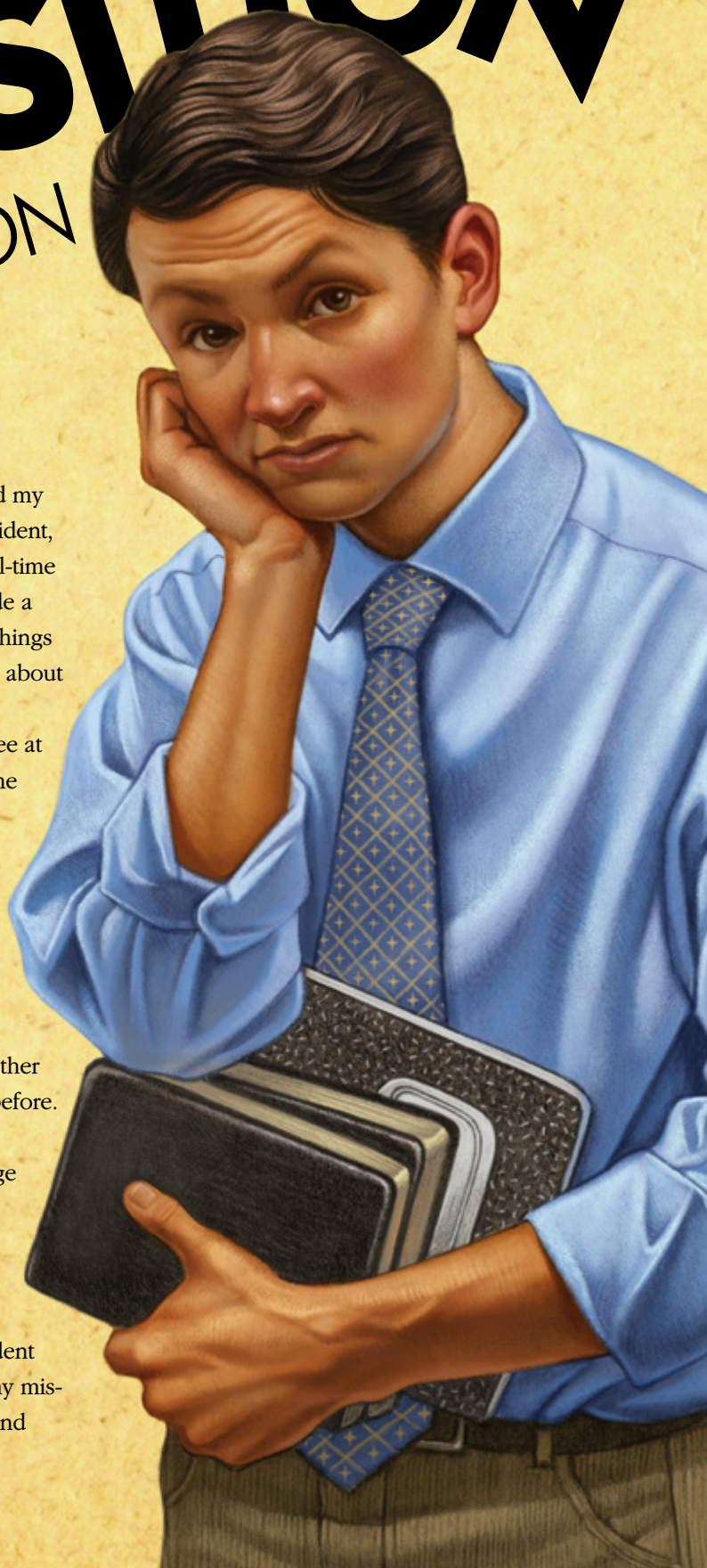
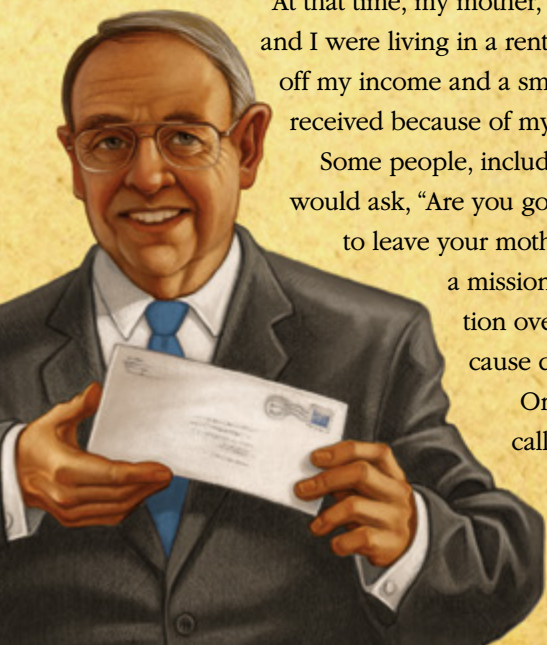


ILLUSTRATION BY GREG NEWBOLD



asked me to come to his office that evening so he could give me the much-awaited envelope from Church headquarters. I was both nervous and happy at the news.

On the same day, my manager at work asked to talk to me before lunch. When I entered his office,

I was greeted in a friendly manner, and we talked for a few minutes about my training and what I had learned at the company. Then, that powerful man in the organization said something that was the dream of most of the people in the city: “You have done a good job here as a trainee, and we want to hire you and keep you on the team. What do you think?”

This was one of the most difficult decisions of my life. The seconds felt like eternity. It seemed that I could hear people asking me if I was going to abandon my mother without my financial support and go to the mission field.

Nevertheless, I remembered the things I had learned from the

scriptures and my Church leaders, and in a very sacred way, I knew with an unshakable certainty that God wanted me to serve as a full-time missionary of His Church. I knew that He would take care of my family, that I could trust Him, and that everything would be fine.

I explained the situation to my manager, and his reply still echoes in my mind: “I thought that you were such a level-headed young man, and here you are throwing away the opportunity of your life.”

I thanked him from the bottom of my heart for his offer, and 28 days later I reported to the missionary training center in São Paulo, Brazil.

During my mission, the Lord provided for my family’s needs through Church friends and in miraculous ways. My mother’s health was restored and new job opportunities arose for my sisters and her.

“Strange things” really do happen when we decide to serve the Lord. Yet I would humbly add my testimony to the testimonies of thousands of others who have embarked in the service of God that missionary service has profoundly affected my life. ■

The author lives in Manaus, Brazil.



DON'T GIVE UP

“Opposition turns up almost anyplace something good has happened. It can happen when you are trying to get an education. It can hit you after your first month in your new mission field. . . .

“With any major decision there are cautions and considerations to make, but once there has been illumination, beware the temptation to retreat from a good thing. If it was right when you prayed about it and trusted it and lived for it, it is right now. Don’t give up when the pressure mounts.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Cast Not Away Therefore Your Confidence,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2000, 9; *Liahona*, June 2000, 38.

