



Where is Your BOOK OF MORMON?



When we tried to offer a copy of the Book of Mormon to the Korean shopkeeper, he drew back a curtain covering a bookcase with at least 12 copies. Obviously, someone had been there before us.

BY ELDER DAVID E. SORENSON

Served as a member of the Seventy from 1992 to 2005

If you want peace—if you want understanding—get the Book of Mormon off the shelf and into your heart.

Some years ago I was working with the missionaries in Korea. We walked into a furniture store in downtown Seoul and were soon introduced to the proprietor. He was very kind to the elders. I listened to them encouraging him to accept a copy of the Book of Mormon. I do not speak Korean, but I understood enough to know the proprietor was friendly and open to the missionaries. In a few moments he invited us upstairs to his apartment. He walked over to what we thought was a window, where he drew back the curtain to reveal a bookshelf. It held at least 12 copies of the Book of Mormon in the Korean language. Obviously, someone had been there before us. My thought at that time was, “We need to place a copy of the Book of Mormon in this man’s heart, not on his bookshelf.”

Place the Book of Mormon in Your Heart

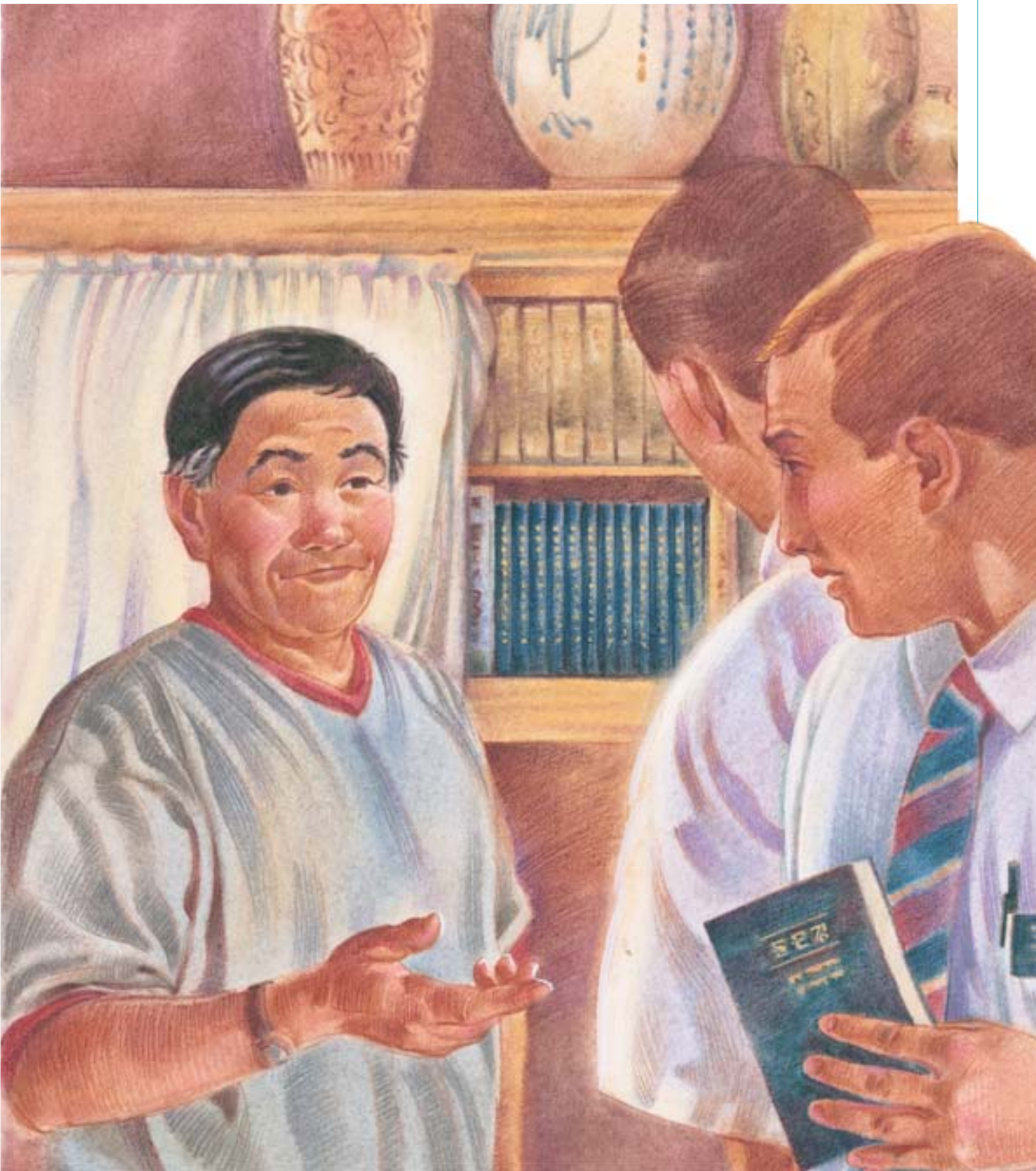
The Book of Mormon is one of the greatest sources of spiritual power given to men and women on earth to guide us on our quest for eternal life. We have a challenge with our neighbors, family, and friends to help them overcome misinformation,

doubts, and incorrect traditions that keep many from reading or understanding the Book of Mormon. Most people in the world and many in the Church do not realize that the Book of Mormon will help a person “get nearer to God . . . than . . . any other book” (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:461). It will help us obey the laws and ordinances of His gospel. It shows us how, through grace, we can be saved in His kingdom, “after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23), and helps us endure to the end (see 2 Nephi 31:15–21).

When we take the Book of Mormon into our hearts, we have more love for our Father in Heaven and His Only Begotten Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

The Challenge to Help Others

I know that the challenge of placing the Book of Mormon in the heart of a person is not easy. Some years ago Sister Sorenson and I were preparing to go to Eastern Canada on a mission. We were in a restaurant in Salt Lake City just prior to going to the airport. A young man walked up to us and introduced himself. He was originally from Halifax, but





Raymond wouldn't accept a visit from the missionaries, but he invited me to walk in the park with him several times a week to talk religion. It wasn't long before I asked him to be baptized.

had joined the Church and moved to Salt Lake City. He was married, with a small family.

He said, "My father, Raymond Gaetz, lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He is not a member of the Church. He does not understand the Church. He does not seem happy with me for having joined the Church. I would like to help him. I have sent him all kinds of information over the years. Some he has accepted, others he has sent back either unopened or marked 'not interested.'

"I have here a copy of the standard works in a recently published quad. I think he might accept it if you would take it to him."

We accepted the challenge. When we arrived in Halifax, I called Mr. Raymond Gaetz and told him who I was and that I had a gift from his son. I asked if I could present it to him. He asked me a little about his son and then said, "I have no interest whatsoever in the Book of Mormon. Please pass it on to someone else."

I told him I couldn't; it had his name engraved on it. I asked if he would please accept it from his only son.

He said, "No," and hung up.

Soon thereafter I decided to pay Mr. Gaetz a visit. I was met at the gate of his apartment by a guard. The guard was kind enough to connect me with Mr. Gaetz on the intercom. I told him I would like to give the gift to him and bring him greetings from his fine son. He said I could leave the book with the guard but not to bother him further.

A few days later he called me and said, "I noticed this is an expensive book. I'm a frugal Scotsman, and I can't stand to see it go to waste. Please come and get it. We can have my name removed and you can give it to someone else."

I made an appointment to see him. When I arrived, the guard told me I was to take the book with me. I took the book, returned to the office, and put it on my desk to remind me that I had a work yet to complete.

A Different Approach

Sometime later my wife, Verla, came into the office, saw the book on my desk, smiled, and said, "My goodness, what kind of a missionary are you? Haven't you delivered those scriptures to Mr. Gaetz yet?"

"Sweetheart, I've been trying, but without much success."

She responded with, "Oh, come on now. You're just too busy."

I was a little irritated, so I said, "Well, Verla, why don't you try?"

She said, "All right, I will."

She took a different approach entirely. She called their home, and fortunately Mrs. Gaetz answered the phone. After a friendly conversation, Verla invited Mrs. Patricia Gaetz and her husband to the mission home for dinner. She accepted Sister Sorensen's invitation. About halfway through the dinner I was getting anxious to present the book. Sister Sorensen gently nudged me under the table, so I knew better. After the dinner we had a lovely discussion, but we never mentioned the Book of Mormon.

A few days later Mrs. Gaetz called and invited us to their apartment. We had a delicious lunch and talked. This went back and forth for some weeks. Then one day I again mentioned to Raymond, "Remember that wonderful book your son has given you? I surely would like to present it to you." This time Raymond accepted the book.

Talking Religion

We continued to meet together socially, and then one day I said, "Raymond, it's time for you to receive the missionary discussions."

"No, I'm not interested. But I'll tell you what I will do. I walk every day at noon in the park for my health, and I would be happy to hear about the Book of Mormon through your lips. We'll talk religion."

So I arranged my schedule during the

lunch hour to walk in the park two or three times a week with this good brother.

Our friendship deepened during these discussions. I soon asked him to be baptized. He said, "No, I'm not interested in being baptized."

"Well, you've heard the gospel, you know it's true, you need to accept it. You've been reading the Book of Mormon; now take it into your heart."

"I haven't the faith yet to accept the Mormon Church."

A Rare Possession

One day a video came to the mission office entitled *How Rare a Possession*. You may have seen it. It's about a man who found a copy of the Book of Mormon without a cover or introductory pages in a trash can in Italy. The man read the book, accepted it, lived its principles, and spent almost a lifetime trying to find out more about the Church. He eventually found the missionaries, was baptized, and came into full fellowship. The video projects him later in his life going to the temple in Switzerland. It is a true story.

I gave the video to Raymond. A few days later, during our usual walk, it was obvious that he had changed. He said, "You know that man that found the Book of Mormon was not unlike me. I do have hope in eternal life. I've

changed my mind. I'm ready to be baptized."

"Do you have a testimony of Jesus Christ?"

"You know I have."

"Are you willing to give up smoking?"

"I can do it."

"Are you willing to give up drinking?"

"I will."

"Ray, you're a wealthy man. You're a captain of industry. You're a man of influence, a man of substance and means. Are you willing to pay a full tithe on all that money you make?"

"I certainly am."

"Good. Have you told your wife, Patricia?"

"No. That's your job."

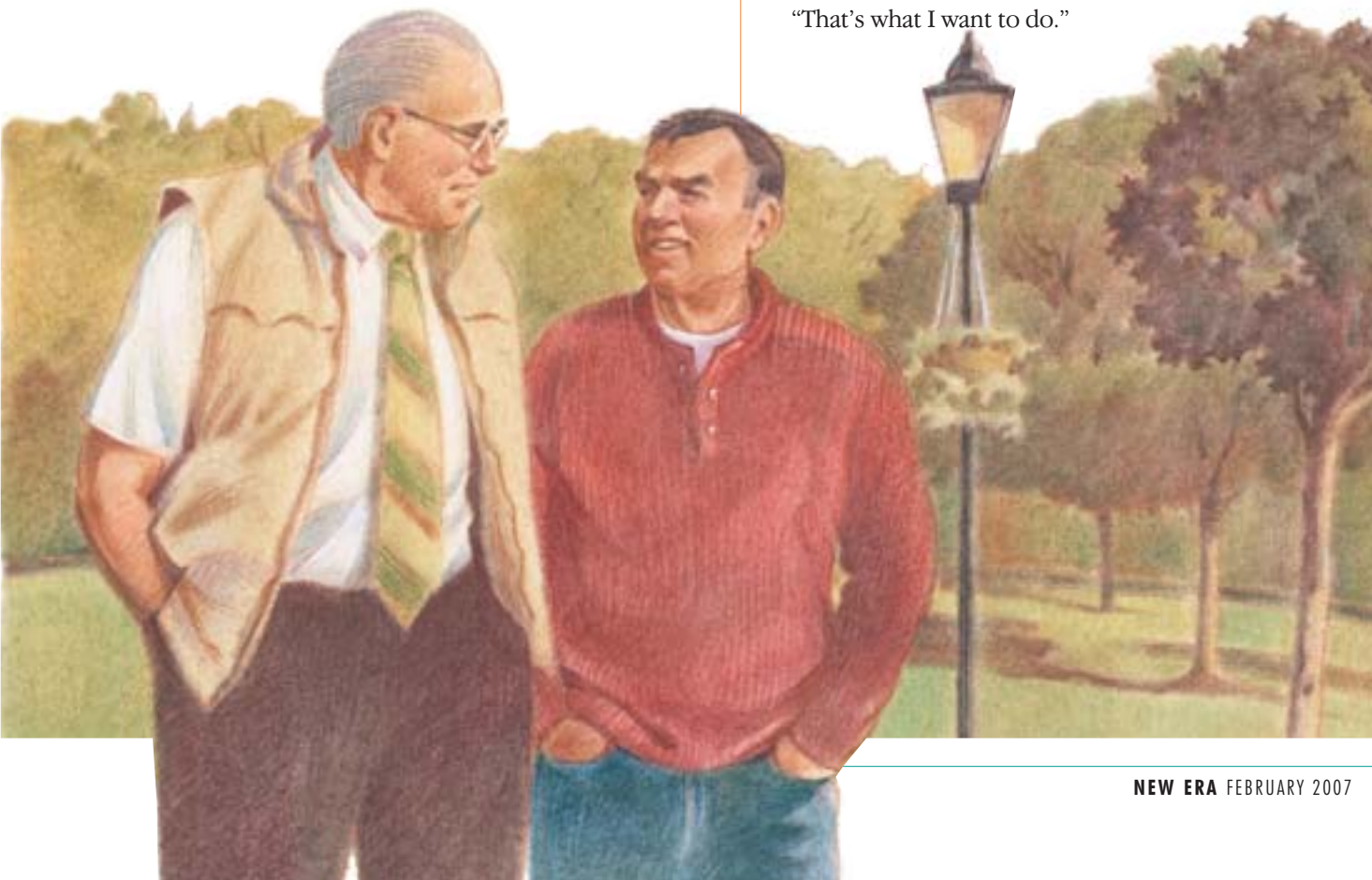
We went right to his home. I told her of his decision and invited her to join him in baptism.

She said, "I can't be baptized. You know I'm a good Catholic. Neither can he. He still smokes and drinks, and he won't pay all that tithing."

You know something; he did. He gave up his coffee, tea, alcohol, and tobacco, and he paid his tithing and rejoiced. When he came up out of the waters of baptism, he said, "Now I want to go to that temple."

"Brother Gaetz, the temple is a year away. You'll have to work hard and prepare yourself spiritually."

"That's what I want to do."





Outside the temple, Raymond gave me news that should have been heartbreaking. But he was one of the happiest men I have even known.

The Last One In and the First One Out

A year later Sister Sorenson and I had completed our mission. We flew to Washington, D.C., to meet Raymond at the temple. As we walked out of the temple after several sessions, he looked up at those beautiful spires and made an unusual remark.

“I feel like I’m the last one in and the first one out.”

“Brother Ray, what do you mean?”

“Well, recently I have contracted terminal cancer. I don’t know how long I have to live. I am just so grateful that I have been able to come here to the house of the Lord. I feel very much like the man that was portrayed in the film who lived out his life and finally found the temple.”

Sometime later I was at Raymond’s side when he died, one of the happiest men I have ever known.

Recently a note written by Ray Gaetz to his young grandson fell into my hands. It is dated October 5, 1989, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada:

“My Dear Grandson,

“I am sending you this Book of Mormon that I hope will be your lifelong companion. The teachings of this book will have a pro-

found influence on your life. If you follow these teachings, you will be the recipient of many blessings. May our Father in Heaven bless and care for you.

“With love, Grandad.”

Take It into Your Heart

So it is that Brother Raymond Gaetz came to understand that “come unto Christ” is not a nondescript, lovely phrase. The Book of Mormon teaches us of the power and glory and gift of God and the desire to come unto Christ.

If you want to know and understand the doctrines of this Church, read the Book of Mormon. If you want to understand salvation, read the Book of Mormon. Would you like to have a little peace in your life and eternal salvation in the life to come? Read the Book of Mormon and then follow the rest of the formula outlined in Moroni 10:4. Pray about it, ponder it, take the book into your heart!

From a devotional address given on March 19, 2002, at Brigham Young University.

