
MY TRUE PURPOSE AS A MISSIONARY


By Denise Barfuss

I had been serving as a full-time missionary in Argentina for only two months when word arrived that my younger, and only, sister was engaged. Rebecca and I were close growing up and had dreamed of each other's weddings, but now I would miss hers.

My parents sent me plans, pictures, menus, and schedules, but I still felt left out, alone, and far away. Missionary work was hard and slow. I found myself wondering what I was doing so far from home, and I became confused about what I was supposed to accomplish.

Nevertheless, I knew that the Lord had called me to serve, and I had a strong testimony of prayer and the power of the priesthood. I received a blessing of comfort that promised me I was where I needed to be.

As missionaries we often shared the exhortation found in Moroni 10:4–5. I believed firmly in the promise of those verses—that if I asked God, my Eternal Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, I could know the truth of all things by the power of the Holy Ghost. I prayed diligently to know whether I had done the right thing by coming to Argentina instead of remaining at home, where I would



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her wedding. As her wedding drew closer, my prayers became increasingly heartfelt. I felt the reassuring influence of the Spirit, but I still hoped for an answer.

Two weeks before the wedding, my companion and I were walking home from a lunch appointment with members of the branch in which we served. The branch was in a little town in central Argentina, where people observed the midday custom of siesta. At that time of day there was usually no one about.

As we walked along, however, a young man called to us. Because many young men teased us, we ignored him and continued walking.

have been helping my sister prepare for

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His name was Horacio, and he wanted to know if we were friends with two young women who had been reading the Book of Mormon with his cousin. He told us he had felt something special while the sisters, who also served in our branch, were reading. He wanted to know if he could come to our church.

As we taught Horacio with the help of local members, he quickly grew to love the gospel. He changed his life as he grew in the gospel, but his family raised objections and his friends rejected him. Nevertheless, Horacio felt the love of the Lord and desired to follow Him. I had some of the most special experiences of my mission teaching Horacio.

As my family sat in the Oakland

California Temple watching my sister complete one of the ordinances that would help prepare her for the celestial kingdom, I sat in a little chapel in General Pico, Argentina, waiting for Horacio to complete an interview in preparation for receiving his first saving ordinance—baptism. My sister had been able to prepare for her ordinances without my help, but Horacio might not have been able to do the same. He needed my companion and me to teach him the gospel, and I needed him to remind me of my true purpose as a missionary—helping bring souls to Christ.

As I prepared to leave Argentina at the end of my mission, Horacio was preparing to serve his own mission. Through him, Heavenly Father had answered my prayers and then sent Horacio to answer the prayers of others. ■

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HE MUST BE HERE!

By Paul Culbert

One Saturday morning I received a phone call from a friend, another young single adult in our ward in Wiltshire, England. Her stepmother, who lived in the same village as I, was ill at home in bed. She could hardly move and, though not a member of the

Church, had asked if I could give her a blessing.

I had been a member of the Church for just a few months, but because of training in priesthood meeting, I felt reasonably prepared to give a blessing, though a little apprehensive. I said I would find a companion and come as soon as possible.

I immediately thought of the nearest elder in the ward and drove to his abode. His wife answered and reminded me that the endowed brethren in the Swindon Ward had gone to the temple that day. As I drove away, somewhat despondently, I stopped the car and asked Heavenly Father for direction.

As I prayed, I asked if there was a Melchizedek Priesthood holder available to go with me. The name of Stuart Ramsey immediately came to my mind. I didn't have his phone number, but he and his wife, Gill, lived on an air force base about six miles away.

Arriving at their home, I knocked on the door with full confidence that Stuart would be able to accompany me. "He's not here," Gill said to my surprise. "He had to go to the base."

Undeterred, I asked if I could contact him. She explained that Stuart, a



mechanic, was helping a friend with his car in a secured area of the base. He couldn't be contacted by phone, and I wouldn't be allowed past the security gates.

Why would I feel such a strong impression to seek Stuart's help, only to find out he was unavailable? Had I misunderstood the answer to my prayer? "No," I thought to myself, "he *must* be here."

At that very moment I heard a cheery voice call out from behind me. "Paul, what are you doing here?" It was Stuart! He had been struggling to repair his friend's car and had felt impressed that he should return home. I explained my predicament, and he readily agreed to assist me in administering a blessing.

I was grateful to have Stuart's experience. He anointed, and as I sealed the anointing, I felt prompted to pronounce a blessing of healing. As I drove Stuart home, he rejoiced in being led by the Spirit to leave his work in time to meet me at his house.

I was overjoyed the next morning to learn that my friend's step-mother was feeling much better. I have administered blessings on many occasions since, but I am grateful that I learned early on that no matter how inexperienced we are in our priesthood duties, when we rely on the Lord, keep His commandments, and do our best to magnify our callings, He will guide us in the path we should take. ■

ELDERS, NEED A LIFT?

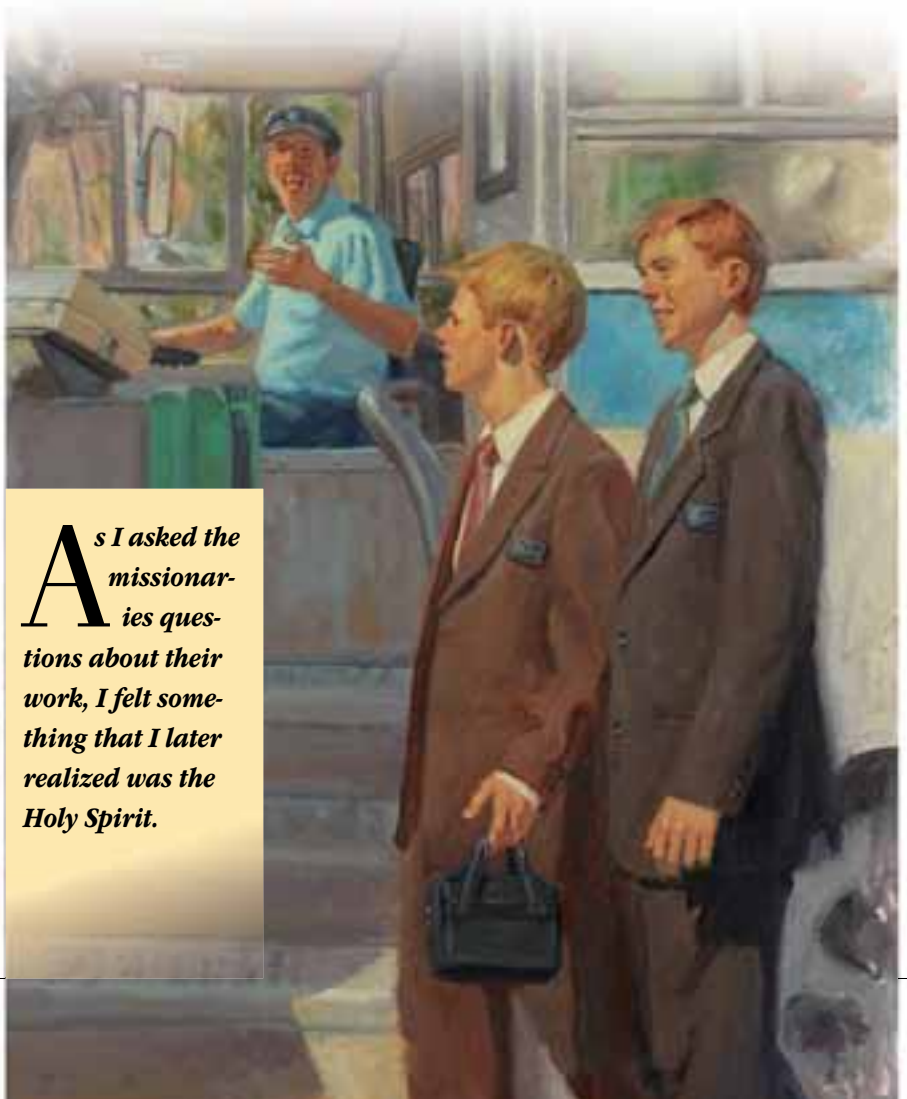
By Errol Fernando

After a long day of driving my bus in Victoria, Australia, I was making my last trip of the evening, heading home. On the way I saw two well-dressed young men walking. I decided to stop the bus and ask them if they needed a lift.

I asked them why they wore name tags, white shirts, and ties.

One of them explained that they were missionaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As I asked questions about their work, I felt something fill the bus that I later realized was the Holy Spirit. When I asked them to tell me more about Jesus Christ, I couldn't help but become excited by their answers.

Unfortunately it was getting late, so I dropped off the missionaries in Dandenong. Afterward, I was sad when I realized that I did not get their phone number. For weeks I prayed



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that I could meet them again. As I drove my bus route, I even looked for them. Months went by, and then an unbelievable thing happened on my birthday, August 19, 2002.

As I was eating lunch with my wife, Camelia, a knock came at the door. When she answered it, I heard familiar voices. It was the missionaries I had met on the bus! They were just as surprised to see me as I was to see them. They had been tracting on our street and were led to our house. My prayers had been answered.

Elders Jason Frandsen and James Thieler immediately began teaching us. The Book of Mormon and the Prophet Joseph Smith were new to us, but we easily understood the gospel because we had a Christian background. The missionaries asked us to pray about and ponder what we were learning. As we did so, we felt the Spirit, a desire to attend church, and a prompting to be baptized. We have been blessed ever since.

Today, several years later, I still drive a bus, and I still give rides to missionaries. But now I help them carry out missionary work by introducing people to them and by sharing the Book of Mormon and other Church materials with my passengers.

People on my bus can't help but notice how happy I am. When they ask why, I simply say, "The Lord has done this for me. He can change your life too." ■

HAVE A CUP

By Eleanor F. Williamson

Not long after we joined the Church, my husband and I were vacationing in Bermuda. While there I took advantage one day of a midafternoon social held in our hotel. As I was eyeing the delicious pastries, I caught a whiff of the smell of tea. I found it so inviting that in my mind I seemed to hear a voice say, "Have a cup."

I had faithfully lived the Word of Wisdom since my baptism. In my mind I said, "No, I will not."

"Oh, come on," a soothing voice seemed to say in reply. "You don't know anybody here, and you are far from home."

With even more conviction, I once again responded in my mind, "No, I will not!"

Again that enticing, reasoning voice came: "No one will *ever* know."

Firmly I responded, "I will know!"

At that point I was standing by a waiter who was pouring tea. Resolutely I passed by. As I looked for a table, I was surprised to hear someone call out my name. To my amazement I saw the smiling face of a former boss whom I had not seen for many years. He came up to me, and as we walked toward a table he said, "I heard that you joined the Mormon Church. Tell me all about it."



Again that enticing, reasoning voice came: "No one will ever know."

I was happy to oblige, sharing with him some principles of the gospel, my happiness as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and my testimony. My former boss told me that he had been researching his family name and that he had documented many generations of family history. He was sincerely interested in what I had to share about the Church, and I felt a great outpouring of the Spirit as we conversed.

During our visit a thought came into my mind: "Could you have had this conversation had you put a cup of tea on your tray?" I knew the answer. Had I given in to temptation, I would have missed out on a memorable spiritual experience and a chance to share my testimony. ■