

## I FINALLY FOUND A CHURCH

For most of my life I felt an emptiness and longed for something solid to cling to. I suspected that what I was looking for might be found in a church, so from the time I was very young, I investigated a number of religions and philosophies. Many of them were good and filled with good people. Some of them were strange and offered nothing like what I was seeking.

After many years of searching, I became bored and discouraged, so I gave up. I determined to build a relationship with God on my own and stay away from organized religion.

Some time after I had come to this decision, I was watching a television program that focused on spirituality. The program's host was interviewing a Latter-day Saint family. As I listened to this family, I felt the love and solid faith that I had long been looking for. I was also impressed to learn that Latter-day Saints highly emphasize the family. Maybe I would investigate just one more church.

On the bottom

of the television screen was a phone number for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Milan area. I called it and spoke with some members at the stake center, who arranged for the missionaries to call me.



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This was a particularly busy time for me, so when the missionaries called to set up an appointment, I asked if I could call them back in a few weeks after things had settled down. They agreed and gave me the phone number of the local Relief Society president, who called and invited me to attend church on Sunday. I went, and I loved everything there: the lessons, the people, and the spirit. I left feeling very happy.

I went to church every Sunday for the next two months. Then, in October 2008, I was baptized. My search had not just ended; it had been completed. I no longer felt the thirst and the longing I once did.

I am immensely grateful to have found the truth, but in some ways I am sad that it took me so long to find the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, I am grateful for the experiences I had during my search. Because I looked in so many other places, I feel extra content knowing that I've found the right place—the place where I belong. ■

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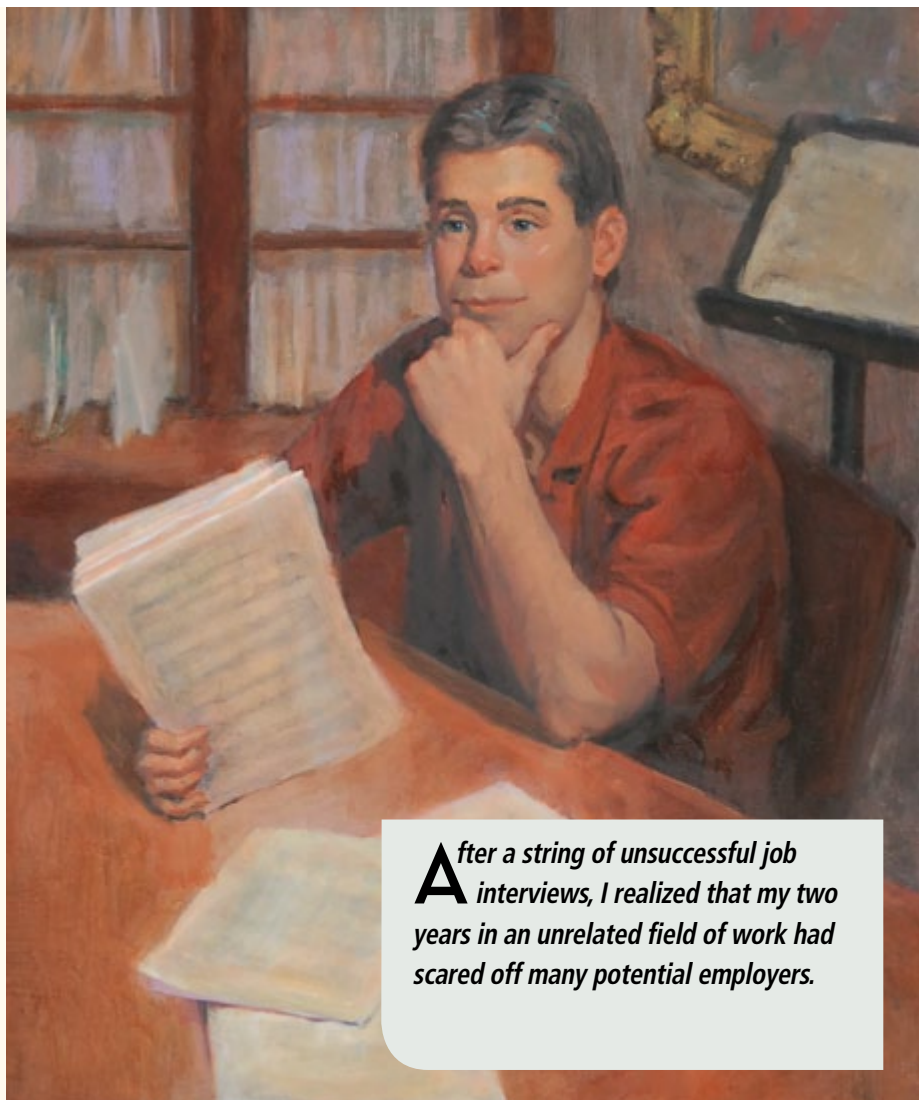
## WHAT ABOUT MY CAREER?

Everything was starting to work out perfectly. I had graduated from Oxford University with a degree in music and had started working for a professional orchestra in Edinburgh, Scotland. My career was progressing, and I was making lots of friends.

While studying, I had decided to delay full-time missionary service. Now the idea of serving was far from my mind. Fear of many things, especially the fear of stifling my career plans, made me think that I was an exception and that I didn't need to serve. The sacrifices involved seemed too great.

Good friends and sweet experiences with the Spirit, however, began to change my heart. The love of a caring, watchful bishop helped me gain a stronger, deeper testimony of the restored gospel. Soon I knew that I needed to accept a call to serve. I had no idea how I would pick up my career in a competitive environment after a two-year break, but I trusted that the Lord would bless me for my decision. I left my job not knowing how things would work out.

I was called to serve in the West Indies Mission, speaking French. The challenges were hard, but I loved serving the people and seeing their lives change. During those two years I focused solely on seeking the will of my Father in Heaven. Serving others



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selflessly brought me more joy than I had ever experienced.

After returning home, I saw the world from the perspective of new priorities and values, and I sought to keep my life centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ. I immediately sought employment, but opportunities were few. After a string of unsuccessful job interviews, I realized that my two years in an unrelated field of work had scared off many potential employers. Would my mission really cost me my career?

I'm thankful that the answer was no. Almost three months later I spotted a vacancy that was perfect for me. I had just the right set of skills for

the type of work involved. Not only that, but job candidates were required to speak fluent French! My mission opened the door for this opportunity. Three interviews later I was offered the job. My career was even further ahead than it would have been had I not served. I felt the Lord's mercy and love. I know that He prepares blessings for us when we do our part.

What the Prophet Joseph Smith taught is true: "Let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed" (D&C 123:17). ■

David Hooson, London, England

## I STOOD UP TO MY CO-WORKERS

One morning at work the factory bosses told all employees that in addition to our hourly wage, we would begin receiving piecework incentive pay. The more we produced, the more we would earn. This happened four months before I left on my mission, so now I could make more money to help pay for it.

Production went up significantly, and so did our pay. I worked on a three-man rubber-curing press, and every time I saw a mold come out of the incubator and trip the automatic counter, I imagined my bank account balance increasing.

The new pay incentive, however, created an incentive to cheat. A co-worker would often sneak beside the automatic counter, give its trip lever a few extra yanks, and return to his workstation. I grinned when I saw this happen, shook my head, and continued my work. I felt that as long as I wasn't messing with the counter myself, then my integrity was still intact.

But before long I realized that because I got paid the same amount as the other men on my team, then it didn't really matter who pulled on the counter. I was just as guilty of stealing from the company as the others were. Was I going to fund my mission with stolen money?



I agonized over what to do. The extra money in our paychecks wasn't much. A lot of people would say it wasn't worth troubling over, but I was troubled. I knew I had

to confront my co-workers.

"Are you kidding me?" asked Bob (names have been changed), the senior team member. "Everybody cheats. Even the management. They expect it."



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He saw no need to change. What else could I do? Even without inflating our production numbers, our press was the most productive on our shift. I often heard workers on other

presses say they wished they worked on our team.

“I could trade places with Jack at the other press,” I suggested to Bob.

“I think you’re being stupid,” he told me, “but I can work with Jack.”

After Jack and I switched teams, Bob often reminded me how much more money he was making than I was. Lyrics from “How Firm a Foundation” came to mind: “Fear not, I am with thee; oh, be not dismayed.” Those words helped me shrug off Bob’s taunts.

Not long afterward, Bob approached me. He said Jack was not working

out, and my team wanted me back. I was surprised. I told Bob that I would return but there couldn’t be any cheating. He agreed. My old team welcomed me back warmly, and the cheating stopped.

I expected to be tested before going on my mission, but I had no idea that my honesty and courage would be tried. I am grateful that when I needed strength to do what was right, the Lord upheld me with His “righteous, omnipotent hand.”<sup>1</sup> ■  
Kenneth Hurst, Alabama, USA

**NOTE**

1. “How Firm a Foundation,” *Hymns*, no. 85.

## WE TURNED TO PRAYER

**O**ne Sunday our stake received the wonderful news that Elder Carlos H. Amado of the Seventy would be coming to speak to our stake on Tuesday evening. My family and I were thrilled, but I worried about how we would make it to the meeting.

As a high school teacher, I had to teach a class Tuesday evening. Unfortunately, I was rarely granted time off. Not sure what to do but determined to hear Elder Amado speak, my family and I turned to prayer, hoping the Lord would provide a way.

The day before the conference, I felt prompted to talk with the principal about leaving 20 minutes early so my family and I could make it to the

meeting. I arrived in her office, and before I could say a word, she asked me if I would mind changing my Tuesday class starting time to two hours earlier than normal. This meant that my class would get out two hours early.

What a blessing this was to us. We arrived at the meeting in plenty of time and felt the Spirit in the presence of one of the Lord’s disciples. Our five-year-old son even had the wonderful privilege of sharing a hug and small conversation with Elder Amado before the meeting began. Together with the rest of the congregation, we enjoyed an outpouring of the Spirit. In addition, we gained a testimony as a family that Heavenly Father knows our desires and hears our prayers. ■  
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