

AN AGNOSTIC'S JOURNEY TO FAITH

By Chris Artificavitch

My studies and an invitation by my friend brought me to the Church, but faith gave me my testimony.

My brother, Andrew, my twin sister, Stephanie, and I were all raised by parents who sacrificed for us, taught us right and wrong, and, most importantly, taught us strong moral values. Nevertheless, I started to doubt my parents' advice and beliefs around the beginning of my teenage years.

I made many poor choices, but one thing remained firm in my mind: a desire to know the truth in religion. I desired to know of God, so I turned to the intellectual pursuit of that knowledge and thought of myself as an agnostic.

One year I spent hours pondering the meaning of life and the nature of God. I pored over religious books and

websites, learning about different religions and forming my own theories about God and His workings in our lives.

I wasn't happy during that year, but I was too busy seeking more knowledge to realize it. I continued to make poor choices, which only widened the rift between my family and me. I felt lost.

I came to a point where I felt I had to make a life-ending or a life-starting decision. When I thought about making the life-ending choice, I remembered what a young man had given me almost four years earlier.

In the seventh grade, Sawyer had recognized my curiosity about God and had given me a Book of Mormon. Later, that Book of Mormon was sold in a garage sale. In tenth grade, he asked what I had done with the Book of Mormon. I had felt so bad about telling him it had been sold

An agnostic is someone who thinks we can't be certain about God's existence.



that when he invited me to go to Mutual or seminary with him, I agreed.

I went to seminary after having read all I could find about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with a notepad full of questions intended to disprove it. Once there, as I read them, they were answered with kindness and certainty. I exhausted all my questions and gave up, resigned to the fact that there was something special about the Church.

The next Tuesday, I went to Mutual with Sawyer. He asked if I minded if the missionaries came over to talk to me. I didn't fully understand the question, but I agreed to meet them.

During the discussion with the missionaries, I recounted the story of Joseph Smith and wanted to know the next step. It was a very Spirit-filled discussion, but I was lacking one thing. I told the missionaries I believed, and I thought I believed, but I didn't truly understand what it meant. I continued to have discussions with the missionaries and to learn about Jesus Christ's restored gospel.

There came a point, however, when I was overwhelmed with the storm of life,

and I went to the missionaries for help. They showed me 3 Nephi 14:24–25:

“Therefore, whoso heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock—

“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.”

Once I heard those verses, my heart rejoiced, and I felt the storm lessen. I asked the missionaries what that meant. They replied that it was the Holy Spirit confirming truth to me. After that moment, I had a testimony of the Book of Mormon, and since I had a testimony of the Book of Mormon, everything else fell into place. I knew that there is a living prophet, that Joseph Smith really was called of God and is the Prophet of the Restoration, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints really is the true Church.

My knowledge was gained through my faith; my faith was not gained by my knowledge.

Ever since I received a testimony

of the Book of Mormon, I have strived to live according to the commandments of God. It's a lifelong journey but one I look forward to.

I can't give thanks enough to the people who set me on this journey. I can, however, be the best disciple of Jesus Christ I can be and pray that my actions will invite others to join me on this journey back to our Heavenly Father. **NE**

The author lives in Texas, USA.



AVAILABLE TO ALL

“A testimony is a gift from God and is available to all of His children. Any honest seeker of truth can obtain a testimony by exercising the necessary ‘particle of faith’ in Jesus Christ to ‘experiment upon’ (Alma 32:27) and ‘try the virtue of the word’ (Alma 31:5), to yield ‘to the enticings of the Holy Spirit’ (Mosiah 3:19), and to awaken unto God (see Alma 5:7). Testimony brings increased personal accountability and is a source of purpose, assurance, and joy.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2012 general conference.

