

# "WE'VE GOT TO FIND HER"

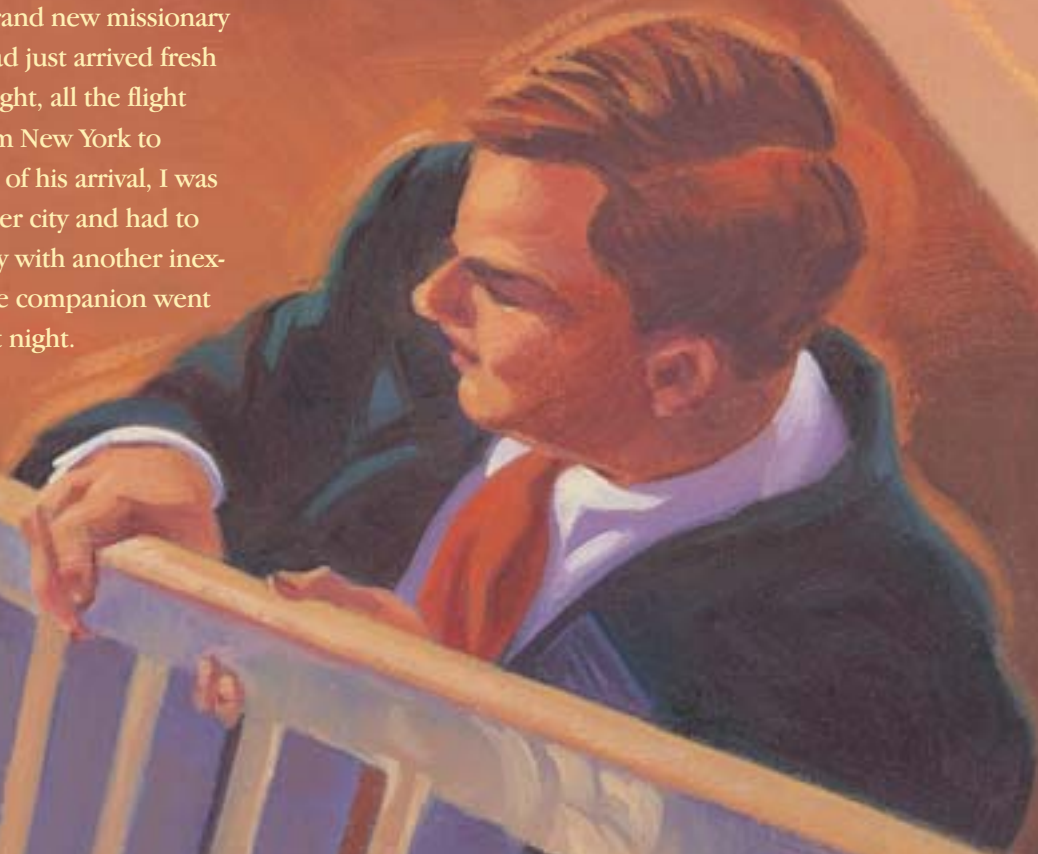
BY ELDER BRUCE C. HAFEN  
Of the Seventy



**I** said it was a waste of time, but my companion knew we had to keep going.



**W**hen I had been on my mission in Germany about a year, I was assigned to work with a brand new missionary named Elder Keeler, who had just arrived fresh from converting, so he thought, all the flight attendants on the plane from New York to Frankfurt. Within a few days of his arrival, I was called to a meeting in another city and had to leave him to work in our city with another inexperienced missionary, whose companion went with me. I returned late that night.





The next morning I asked him how his day had gone. He broke into an enthusiastic smile and said he had found a family who would surely join the Church. In our mission, it was rare to see anyone join the Church, let alone a whole family. I asked for more details, but in his excitement he had forgotten to write down either the name or the address. All he could remember was that the family lived on the top floor of a big apartment house. "Oh, that's great," I thought to myself as I contemplated all those flights of stairs.

He also explained that he knew so little German that he had exchanged but a few words with the woman who answered the door. But he did think she wanted us to come back—and he wanted to go find her and have me talk to her that very minute.

I explained that the people who don't slam the door in our faces do not necessarily intend to join the Church. But off we went to find her, mostly to humor him. He couldn't remember the right street, either, so we picked a likely spot and began climbing up and down those endless polished staircases.

After a frustrating hour, I decided I had to level with him. Based on my many months of experience, I said, it was simply not worth our time to try any longer to find her. I had developed a tolerance for the realities of missionary work and simply knew more than he did about it. His eyes filled with tears and his lower lip began to tremble. "Elder Hafen," he said, "I came on my mission to find the honest in heart. The Spirit *told* me that that woman will someday be a member of the Church."

**I** thought I would run him ragged to teach him a lesson. But in the end, he taught me that "being realistic" can inhibit the workings of the Spirit.

So I decided to teach him a lesson. I raced him up one staircase after another until he was ready to drop, and so was I. "Elder Keeler," I asked, "had enough?" "No," he said. "We've got to find her." I began to smolder. I decided to work him until he begged to stop—then maybe he would get the message.

Finally, at the top of a long flight of stairs, we found the apartment. She came to the door. He thrashed my ribs with his elbow and whispered loudly, "That's her, Elder. That's the one. Talk to her!"

So I did.

Not long ago, my wife and I were with this woman's family in the Frankfurt Germany Temple, where the father, now a temple sealer, performed the marriage for their youngest child and her husband. It was a sacred moment for all of us. Earlier he had been a bishop, and the mother was a Relief Society president. Three of their four children have served missions. All four have married in

the temple. They are raising righteous families and contributing their strength to the wards where they live. Their lives reflect the fruits that grow from 40 years of living the gospel.

That experience is a lesson I can never forget about the limitations of skepticism and the tolerance for ambiguity that comes with learning and experience. I hope that I will never be so aware of "reality" that I am unresponsive to the whisperings of heaven. **NE**

*From The Believing Heart: Nourishing the Seed of Faith, Deseret Book (1990), 67–68. Used by permission of the publisher.*

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