

CHANGE OF HEART

LEROY FISCUS

I was invited to go on a camping trip with all the priests in my stake the summer before I left for college. I had just recently come back to Church after three years away. I had an extremely small testimony when I arrived at the stake center ready

to go camping. I cared more about sleeping and remote-control cars than I did about the Lord. I had no clue what the trip was about, but I knew deep down I needed to go on it.

Through the entire trip my testimony kept strengthening. Every experience I had kept pushing me forward. I broke down in tears daily as I felt

the Spirit touch me. On the last day of the trip, all the dirty and smelly priests gathered in the smallest branch meetinghouse I had ever seen. One by one we all shared our testimonies. When it was my turn to stand up, I felt the Spirit so strongly I started shaking. I could not stop crying, but I knew I was doing the right thing. I needed to share the testimony I had gained on this trip.

All the boys from my ward turned around and looked at me as I shared the precious gift I had been given.



ON THIS SACRED SPOT

BY RACHEL BAGGIORE

I could see they felt the Spirit, and this made the Spirit feel even stronger within me. I then knew, without a doubt, I was a child of God, and I had made the right decision to be baptized into the true Church of God. I knew at that moment I needed to become the best person I could be, so I would be able to be a loyal servant in the hands of the Lord.

I will always remember the looks on the faces of the priests in my ward as I shared my testimony that day. Every time I look back at that moment, I am touched by the Spirit. I had never born my testimony before that day, nor had I received one I could share. But in that week I had grown more than I had grown since I was baptized six years earlier. I experienced the change of heart I had only read about. I had become fully converted. **NE**

A DEACON'S DUTY

BY HAO-CHEN WU

The first time I passed the sacrament as a deacon, I was nervous from start to finish. I was worried I would walk in the wrong direction or go to the wrong row. I had looked forward to passing the sacrament for as long as I could remember. I would watch the deacons every week. They looked so dignified.

I made it through my first week without messing up, and now I'm not nervous anymore. Instead, when

One summer I participated in the Hill Cumorah Pageant in upstate New York. What a blessing it was to go to the Hill Cumorah every day and feel the love of the Lord pour over me, testifying again and again that the Church is true, and that the things Joseph Smith said happened really did occur here on this sacred spot.

One night near the end of my stay, I drove over to the Palmyra temple and parked outside the gates, shut off

the engine, and just listened to the still, small voice of the Spirit. A cluster of stars winked in the sky above me, while just down the road lay the Sacred Grove.

A feeling of peace confirmed that I was truly on sacred ground. The Spirit testified to me that the Lord knew and loved me, just as He knew each individual star in the heavens. He knew me just as years ago He knew a seemingly insignificant 14-year old boy named Joseph Smith. **NE**



I pass the sacrament, I feel reverent and happy. I feel the Spirit when I'm passing the sacrament.

The sacrament is an important time when we think of Jesus Christ and what we can change or do better. A deacon can help others concentrate during the sacrament by dressing properly, being reverent, walking slowly, holding the sacrament trays carefully, and not joking around.

I have four younger brothers. Now that I have received the priesthood,

I try harder not to argue with my brothers. I help them more. It's very important to be a good example to them. If I'm not, they might think the priesthood isn't important. But it is. I have changed because of holding the priesthood.

To be a good priesthood holder, you need to keep the commandments, treat others well, and remember you're still a priesthood holder even at school and at home—not just on Sundays. **NE**

MY MISSIONARY SUMMER

BY TIFFANY ANNE DEMINGS

I had prayed strongly for a missionary experience ever since my first year at girls' camp. Each young woman was given a Book of Mormon to write our testimonies in and was encouraged to pray for a missionary experience. For four years, I looked to give someone my Book of Mormon.

One Sunday as we set up for Young Women, my leader asked me if I would befriend her niece who was coming from Texas to visit for the summer. I didn't know what to do, so I did just what she asked me to. I started being a friend. After a while, I forgot about giving away my Book of Mormon. I had a new

friend. The more I got to know Gianna, the better friends we became. It wasn't long until we started discussing our different religions. The more questions she asked, the more I wanted to share. I found myself turning to the scriptures all of the time. I could tell the things I read were truly words from God.

I started getting more out of the scriptures. Not only were those questions helping Gianna, they

were also helping me to gain a stronger testimony of truths I'd grown up with. It wasn't just my scripture reading that improved, I also had more meaningful prayers. I prayed fervently to find the answers, and be the friend she needed. As a result, I came closer to my Heavenly Father.

I never had to send in mission papers. I never had to go tracting or teach any lessons. Nobody even accepted the offer of the Book of Mormon. But I think I had one of the best missionary experiences anyone could have. Like many missionaries, I was strengthened in the gospel as I tried to share it. I became closer to Heavenly Father and learned to study the scriptures as I tried to answer questions. I came to appreciate people of other faiths. Best of all, I gained a friend I will always love while sharing the dearest thing to my heart. **NE**



I KNOW IT IS TRUE

BY PETER
AMO A-OHENAKWAH

Since my childhood I have heard members of the Church bear testimony of the Book of Mormon. I thought the words “I know it is true” were just traditional words that every member recited. It wasn’t until I entered the mission field to serve in Nigeria that I learned the truth behind the words.

One night my companion and I were returning home. We were riding our bicycles on a dark, untarred road that had deteriorated because of rain. Due to the water and the condition of the road, my companion crashed and fell off his bike. His clothing, his scripture bag—everything he had—was stained and wet.

When we finally reached our apartment, we carefully cleaned and dried

everything damaged in the accident—except for the two copies of the Book of Mormon that remained in his bag after our day of proselytizing. I thought we didn’t need to worry about those copies because we had so many more in our apartment.

Several months after the incident, I was looking for a way to fix my torn hymnbook cover. I came across the stained copies of the Book of Mormon we had abandoned on a shelf and saw

that the covers would be good for fixing my hymnbook. But as I was about to cut the covers off the books, I was pierced in my heart: “Is this not the book you are preaching about? Is this the way to treat it? What would your investigators think?” I sat down and pondered for a long time. Then, instead of cutting the covers, I cleaned them with soapy water, dried them, and carefully placed them back on our bookshelf.

From this experience I came to know that for a long time I had been living on a borrowed testimony of the Book of Mormon, even though I had attended seminary and institute. I have since come closer to this book, and I value it much more. I realize that our conviction of the sacredness of the Book of Mormon comes as we get to know it through experiences of the heart. By reading, pondering, and applying the teachings of the Book of Mormon, I have come to know it is true. **NE**

JUST SAY THANK YOU

Once I was arguing with my mom and felt pretty bad. So, I decided I would pray. Although I was in a bad mood and didn’t want to be spiritual, I knew praying would end up with me getting happy and less argumentative. So right there at the table, after my mom left, I started my prayer. “Dear Heavenly Father, I’ve come to you tonight because . . .”

No, I opened my eyes and

unfolded my arms. That sounded weird. I tried my second attempt. “Heavenly Father, I need . . .”

That also sounded strange. Now that I think of it, the opening to my prayers had only one problem, and I am glad I tried again because I felt Satan urging me to stop and give up my prayer to ask Heavenly Father for help. “Dear Heavenly Father—”

Suddenly I had a prompting to say thank you! So I did, and all the

many things I could thank my Father in Heaven for started spilling from my head. When I was done thanking Him, I then discussed the problem at hand. My prayer lasted 25 minutes. In the end I made sure to close in the name of Jesus Christ. After my prayer I felt a wonderful peace inside me, the warm spiritual feeling that I know our Heavenly Father and parents love me and that I am a child of God. **NE**

BY VONDA WINFREE