

Even more testimonies

Written by Administrator

Monday, 26 April 2010 12:29 - Last Updated Sunday, 16 May 2010 19:20

My name is Hunter Swift, and I am 26 years old from Orange County, California and am currently serving a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saint aka. Mormon in Antofagasta Chile for 2 years. I will be returning July 14th, 2004. I would like to tell you a little about me. I have been a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints since August, 1999. My mom, Marcia Recendez is also a member of the church, she joined the church in 1998. I am an only child. My mom and I are the only members in our family.

Our conversion story is actually quite interesting. After my parents divorced, my mom who was raised a non-denominational Christian-remarried a Catholic, and became Catholic. After about a year she met a couple that were members of the church. They tried to share the gospel with her, but she had the misconception that Mormons considered Joseph Smith to be the center of their church (instead of Jesus Christ). She thought Joseph Smith was a competitor of Jesus Christ instead of being a messenger from him. My mom then became Anti-Mormon to save them. Her friends had invited her to Church, which she attended, however she went to try to find the truth from within. She ended up reading the Book of Mormon to prove it wrong, trying to find an error or something that was contradictory to the Bible. After reading The Book of Mormon she had the Spirit bear record of its truthfulness and she knew that it was true. My mom ended up

being baptized. She now works in the San Diego Temple.

My mom in turn wanted to share the gospel with me but I was young and not interested in anything like that, and I told my mom, "I don't care what you do just don't bother me with it." I didn't even know anything about Mormons or the church, except they couldn't do all the things that I was doing that I thought was fun.

About this time I joined the United States Army. The day I left I was hugging my mom good bye, and she said that I should start to going to church. I told her that I probably would, but it would be Protestant or Catholic, it would never be Mormon, because I could be a good Protestant or Catholic and still do all the things that I was doing. That first night away they put us in a motel for the night before we got shipped off to basic training. It was our last night of freedom for 18 weeks. We were all leaving to go party when I one of the guys just sat on his bed and started to read The Book of Mormon. I questioned why he didn't want to go with us, and tried really hard to deter him from reading and to go out with us. Never before have I met someone with as high morals and with as much strength to resist my temptations-and trust me, I didn't make it easy.

Well, he happened to be stationed at the same basic training; in the same platoon as I was. He and another member of the church were really the only two friends I made in all of basic training. I was attending a Protestant religious service, but I had many questions, I was confused, and I had too many excuses not to believe (i.e. the Bible was so old, I had no proof, no prophets or miracles, etc.). As our friendship grew, one day they invited me to attend the church. It was a great meeting. All these guys were bearing their testimonies, they were going through the same problems that I was going through. And hearing there testimonies really helped. I felt the Spirit, and I enjoyed it. The missionaries were there and they gave me one of the missionary discussions. They taught beliefs that were similar to mine, they taught me about our Heavenly Father, a plan that he has for us and the role of Jesus Christ in this plan as our

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Saviour, they taught me about the church of Christ with apostles and prophets, and about the Apostasy when the prophets and apostles were killed, and then about the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ through living prophets. The excuses I had, were becoming irrelevant. I decided that I was going to go back, I continued with the discussions.

They invited me to use my faith and confidence and pray and ask God about the truthfulness of their message. I prayed long and hard to know that it was true.

Just like it says in The Book of Mormon: "Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts. And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost." I received an answer from the Holy Ghost and I knew that it was true but I procrastinated the day of my repentance, and I went back to doing the things I used to do. In with the bad, out went to the good. I did not get baptized. I knew it was true but just continued to live my life worldly.

A year and half later I was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, and hit a low part in my life. I was dealing with my problems in ways that was just making them worst and I made some foolish decisions because of them, which had some severe consequences. The next day, I was looking for help and was discussing the matters over with a sergeant of mine, the next day he came over bringing two missionaries. My sergeant was a member of the church I didn't even know. It was answer to a prayer, the day before I had made a decision to talk to the missionaries if they ever came around. I really appreciated his courage to invite the missionaries over. I retook the discussions and got baptized, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

To keep me on the right path I was to reading the Book of Mormon. I finished it in 13 days. And trust me I am not a fast reader. I think I have only read a handful of books in my life. But once I started reading it, I couldn't put it down. "A careful examination of this book may overwhelm the reader who relishes uncertainty, for little of that is left. It provides a powerful independent witness of the reality of Jesus Christ and his divine mission. The Book of Mormon restores plain and beautiful truths about the Gospel of Christ which have been obscured for centuries by the teachings of men. It proves that the heavens are not sealed, that truth and revelations yet remain for us to feast upon. And it indirectly confirms that the translator of this monumental ancient record, Joseph Smith, Jr., was indeed a prophet of the living God."

I came to learn that I was tired of the way I was living my life. I wasn't happy. There was something missing in my life. I came to realization that when I was the farthest away from God, that was when I was the most unhappy. I have heard if you don't like your life, to change it. So I decided that I was going to turn my life around. It wouldn't be easy, I had to dig myself out of a pretty big hole. I had tried before but always gave up when I saw the obstacle before me. Thinking that there was no way I could do it. The truth is I couldn't do it, at least not by myself. But Jesus Christ helped me. He took my hand and help me through it. I know I couldn't have done it with out His help.

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There were times in my life that I thought God didn't love me, and that if he did, why would he have me going through this or that ordeal? But I look at it now like this: God loved me so much that he put me through all that so I can be where I am now. I can trace everything good in my life back to Christ and I am

so thankful for everything that he has done for us. The Holy Ghost has given me a solid testimony that burns inside of me.

I have completely changed my life for the better. Friends and family could see a change in me. I was able to draw closer to God-closer than I had ever come before.

Since I have joined this church it has been incredible, and a lot has happened to me. I love going to church every Sunday, and I look forward to Sunday all week. I love everything about this church. It has allowed me to grow spiritually, and has allowed me to experience many wonderful things. I have come to know that this is the same church that Christ formed when he lived on the earth, only now restored personally by Jesus Christ.

I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the Lord. In 1820 at 14 years of age he was trying to find a church to join but was confused by the many churches and differences in their beliefs, when one day he was reading in the Bible in James 1:5 which says, "if any of us lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally." So he decided to do just that. One day he prayed and received a visit of our Heavenly Father and his son Jesus Christ. In response to his prayer, they said that there was not a true church of Jesus Christ in the world. That the other churches were in error because of the Apostasy. Joseph Smith was then called of God to be a prophet, like Moses or Noah, but in our days. Through Joseph Smith, Jesus Christ personally restored his gospel and his church to the world for the preparation of his second coming.

We now have a living prophet with 12 apostles. I was able to see the Prophet and the General Authorities, hear them speak. I was filled with the Spirit, and I know what they were speaking was truth, for if it wasn't I know that I would have felt the spirit as much as I did when I heard them speak. It strengthens my testimony so much that I can't even explain. It is reassuring to know like it says in the Bible in Amos 3:7 "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." How fortunate are we to know, that there is a living prophet on this earth, and that God speaks to him.

I know for some it is hard to accept these things but God has given us a way to know. The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ. We know that before us lived people here in the Americas. These people were also sons of our Heavenly Father. They too had the need to know about God, his son, his plan, the commandments, etc. God used the same method of revealing these things to them as did he in Jerusalem, through living prophets. These prophets brought down their stories, experiences, and dealings with God, in books called scriptures which contain the word of God, for example the Bible. The Book of Mormon contains the writing of these ancient prophets who live here in the Americas.

Joseph Smith translated these writings and now we have The Book of Mormon, and a fruit of Joseph Smith; as it says in the Bible, "for their fruits you will know them".

We can read it, we can think about what we have read and then we can ask our Heavenly Father if it is true. We can receive an answer from the Holy Ghost, feelings of peace, joy,

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happiness, tranquillity or love. I have received a witness many times. I invite all to do as I have done and use your faith and confidence in the Lord and ask him personally. Don't take my word for it, trust in him. When we gain a testimony of these things we will have the desire to share it with other. I am now serving a mission in Antofagasta Chile, and have seen many people receive a testimony of these things, and seen their whole lives change.

It was hard for me to decide whether to go on a mission or not. I was 24, I had a career job, I hadn't started school yet, and I would miss my family and friends. A mission is without pay, actually you pay for your own expenses. It is 2 years of no tv, beach, no girls, nothing but the Lords work for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in a foreign place not speaking the language, etc. But I prayed long and hard on this decision and I know that this is what God wanted me to do. I love serving a mission, to serve God. I love missionary work. It is so great to see men and women come into the waters of baptism. And be able to see a change in them, and to see them walk in the light of Christ. I have had so many wonderful experiences. I will be finishing the mission in July, 2004, but I know that the mission never ends.

I love to be an instrument in God's hand. I know that there is a lot of work to do. I work hard, and I have a lot of love for the people in Antofagasta, Chile. I joined this church because it is true. I know that Jesus Christ lives. He lives in me. I bare you my testimony that I know that God the Father and Jesus Christ visited Joseph Smith and that he was a Prophet of God, and that by the power of the Holy Ghost he translated The Book of Mormon. I know that The Book of Mormon is true, and that it is the word of God. I know that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true and living church on this planet. This church is Christ's church. It is the same church that he established when he walked on the earth; established again in this dispensation. It has the same simple principles and ordinances; Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is organized with the foundation of Apostles and Prophets. I know that Gordon B. Hinckley is a Prophet, seer, and revelator. I know that the Priesthood, to act with the power and authority and of God has been restored once again to this earth and that I hold it. I know that our Heavenly Father loves us, and wants us to return to him. I KNOW that all these things are TRUE because I HAVE PRAYED AND ASKED GOd IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST AND HAVE RECEIVED ANSWERS TO MY PRAYERS FROM THE HOLY GHOST.

May God bless you find the truthfulness of all things. In the name of his Son, and our saviour Jesus Christ, Amen.

Elder Hunter Swift (Chile Antofagasta Mission)

My name is James Graham and after reading the tesitimony of another on conversion I felt compelled to tell mine. I am new to the church, Feb 2003, and I must say that it has been the best thing in my life. I was raised a Southern Baptist by my family and somewhere along the line Billy Graham is a cousin, never understood all that twice removed stuff. So I was used to

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collection plates, paid preachers, fire and brimstone, heathens burnin, etc... It is not a very accomodating faith to be sure. I was actually kicked out of a Southern Baptist church for not having dress clothes, I had just moved out on my own and only had jeans and stuff. After several

instances, Jim and Tammy Faye, Jimmy Swagart, Jerry Falwell, etc, I became very anti religion. I just gave up and looked at it as a money making enterprise as most of the bigger preachers always had gold rings, watches, big houses and all the trappings to go along with wealth. So for 10 years I had zero faith in all of the "religion crap" that went on. In the meantime I joined the Army, since medically retired after breaking a knee, got married and had kids. I always believed that there was some divine being yet I thought that everyone had to have it all wrong about how God worked. Well my daughter Lillian had just turned 2 and was having chronic trouble with ear infections and what have you. Her doctor decided to remove her tonsils, adinoids, and put tubes in her ears in hopes of eliminating the problems. So the big day came for her and I must say

that it tore me apart for them to take her out of my arms screaming and crying to go into surgery. Everything went well enough, but they decided to keep her overnight due to having performed so much at once with her. I elected to stay with her in the hospital so my wife could stay with our infant son. That night before I went to sleep, I said a very general prayer, even a plea if you would, that if God or whoever could hear me and cared at all to just talk to me. I was really tired of not knowing! Being so frightened for my daughter had really affected me and I wanted to know what was right as far as God goes. Losing her would have just killed me and I wanted to say thanks, yet I didn't know who or what to thank or anything. That night while I was sleeping, at least I think I was, I was visited by God the Father and Jesus the son. Don't ask me what they looked like, it was like a human outlined brilliant light that is very hard to explain. God

said "This is my beloved son. Hear Him" and motioned to his right. Jesus then told me " You have much to learn from to personages named Nephi and Moroni. They can answer thy questions and you be troubled no more.". I had never heard these names before and remembered them with clarity unlike most of my dreams. Now after this I will truthfully say that I was terrified. Did it mean the end of the world was coming? Was I about to die? Well, even if thats what it means, it doesn't matter. What it did, after an afternoon of searching the internet for the names Nephi and Moroni, is bring me into the Gospel. I have found the truth of what it means to be alive and to love, really love. My wife and oldest son are members now. I have the priesthood, am an Assistant Ward Clerk and am getting ready to go to the temple for my endowments and sealing to my family. Missionaries are currently talking to my parents and I plan on bushwhacking my sister when she visits in January, lol. So in short, I bear witness that this church is THE true church, God has given us profits, the priesthood hold the keys, and that there is no place else that I would be. I leave this with you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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I am writing this on April 9th 2002. One day after I got home from the Best Weekend I ever had spiritually.

I would like to first start off by saying, I am living proof of how powerful becoming a priest in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints can be. Before I became a priest, I was a sinner. I was a sinner in the ways of the world like listening to bad music and spending too much time letting the temptations of the world get to me. I was not happy nor was I at peace with who I was. I knew some things I was doing were wrong but I guess it didn't matter cause I thought the things of the world made me happy. I never did anything major but it all will make you feel the same hopelessness and guilt. The reason I did not become a priest at age 16 was my choice. And I thank God for that cause I would have not honored it then, because I knew in my heart I was not really ready. But at 17 even though I was still not perfect, I said to Bishop Mealey "I am ready to become a priest". And even though we both knew I still made some mistakes, I think both of the Holy Ghost said to us that this was the step I needed to have happen in order for me to cure my mistakes. So we shook hands and it was set, and I felt So GOOD!! Sunday came, and I was nervous but felt the spirit and I was called to go up and I felt a release of all those sins. It was like being baptized again. I raised my hand along with all my brothers and sisters and my NEw LIFE began. I changed the music I listened to, to uplifting songs. I still get temptations sometimes, but the power of the Priesthood helps me stay in control and I don't want to follow them because I know I can't. I have a new found reason to do GOOD but I still knew there was something that was missing. At the time I did not know it was a trip to Temple Square in Utah that I needed but as I look back it was. And here are a few of the reasons.

One month prior the Temple trip Brother Cook asked the Priest Quorum, who was going on the trip. I was the only one that did not raise my hand. I thought I couldn't go because one of my worst fears is traveling in groups and being in long car rides like the one to Utah which was 11 Hours. So I said I am not driving 11 Hours with 8 Guys in a Van. Nothing against the guys but this is problem I have. Well Brother Cook said "Well your going Mike". I said we will talk about it later. We did and he understood but said that this would be the greatest experience I would ever have. At the Temple Square that is. But I said no... again . 2 Weeks to go and I said no again. Now the next week came and the time to have permission slips turned in . It was time to go home and it was 3 Minutes until the deadline and I said to myself " Mike, you cannot compromise this, you need to go to this, you are a hypocrite if you don't go. And I knew if I did not go, I would feel BAD and Satan would have won that war.

So I hurried, and my Mom signed the forms and now I had committed to go.

I must explain that whenever I agree to do something good for the church or with the church, bad things happen to me, and I know who they are coming from. I was sick the week I was supposed to go. I injured myself on things I never have before. Bad occurrence after bad occurrence. And on Thursday I said "Mom, I am not going. My stomach hurts , I feel weak, and overall just in bad shape. But I said and she said, we both agreed, that this is the Devil that was making me feel this way, which he has the power to do. Dave called and told me that the spirit has told him that I really need to go on this trip. So I said, " Guess what , Satan, I am going and there is nothing you can do about it", I try to do this a lot and make myself think I am defeating the Devil or something like that. And I felt a pain in my stomach, but I just prayed and acted.

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Friday came and it was time to leave and surprisingly the day I leave was not as bad as the previous 4 Days of Pain. The car ride up had its ups and downs in my personal battle with Satan but I must have prayed 50 times and every time I did, I felt very good about myself. We finally arrived late at the house where we were staying and I got to sleep. When morning came this was the start of a 14 Hour Church day which Satan was going to try to do whatever he could to make me not go knowing this would totally change me. I felt so much stomach pain that I was almost panicking. I have stomach pains a lot everyday because it's a physical trial I have been given, but nothing like this day. On the way to Temple Square in the car my stomach felt so bad I thought I was about to die. For me, this was my worst pain I ever felt. But I get there on Temple Square and we are in line, and the first things I see beside the glorious Temple are the Anti-Mormon Hecklers. This was a good experience for me. They would hold signs saying we are a cult, and we choose the Book of Mormon over the Bible. They say Joseph Smith was a Bad Man, and a lot of other bad things.

But right there, it made me stronger cause I saw in their eyes the Evil.

Those are Satan's ways-- trying to make you second-guess or re-evaluate what is true and what isn't. But I can testify that the Lord is much stronger and if you believe in the Mormon Church, you will see what I saw in them.

As we walked around, I could not believe all the Men and Woman I saw who were Mormons and all the diverse cultures. It was the closest thing to heaven on this earth inside Temple Square. I was in attendance to all 3 General Conference Sessions and when I saw President Hinkley. I started to weep because I felt the spirit so strong. I listened to his every word and knew it was true.

Sunday morning came and this is a day I will never forget. I felt the worst stomach pains yet, but I still went. As I got there, we had to watch the General Conferences in the old Conference Building. It was a great 2

Sessions of Conference. But as I sat there, I would just look around and look at things and it was paradise for me to see all the Husbands and Wife's with their Children and how they could share that together. You just don't forget things like this. And I can't wait myself when the time is right to share these feelings with a Girlfriend, then a Wife and then Kids. I will be able to feel the things Brother Weight, Cook, Anderson and Mealey have talked about when they were able to do it. It can't get much better than that.

As we got home that night about 6 pm, we scheduled a Testimony meeting with the entire priest quorum, and Bishop Mealey and his son, Brother Cook and Brother Newey. And I had said to myself, I am not bearing my testimony.

That I should just keep it to myself. And as the Testimony meeting was underway. Bishop Mealey gave a great opening testimony, which he said he wanted to say a few words, but took 5 minutes. And already I could feel the spirit so strong. My right eye started to water and the left. Then Mike Pickett got up and gave great thanks for all he is thankful for. Then Carl Harline got up, being the sweet guy he is, and he really touched me, because he seemed to be so innocent and not really knowing much about him, I learned a lot from his testimony. Then Chris Mealey got up and by this time both eyes had a like stream of water flowing down them and he gave a great testimony on how you need to follow your heart and a great spiritual experience he had and as he got done and went to sit down. My heart was so full and I felt so Much spirit I cried

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out loud hard and kindly said to everyone " I have to go", so I ran downstairs into a empty room, closed the door and starting crying louder than I ever had before. I felt the spirit so much and it felt so good. About one minute into my prayers, I felt a feeling like a GREAT BIG HUG of Warmth around my upper body. And I knew right when it happened that the spirit was in the room I was in and I said that out loud not knowing how loud and I started crying. I then gave thanks for my life, my blessings; I said a special prayer for my Best Friend Josh that he could find his way back to the good side. I even quoted a scripture word for word that I could never do. After that I said a part of another one which was "I shall go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded.

For I know he gives me no commandments that I cannot do. " That's how I said it. I went on and said more thanks. I said I wanted to make a Difference, I know that I have a very big purpose in life. And I knew it before that something big is in store for me but I knew it to be 100 percent sure this day. I said " I know I need to honor the priesthood or I cannot do the things which only one who honors the Priesthood can. Then when I was done I just stood downstairs regrouping myself and Sister Mealey came down and gave me a hug and we went back upstairs.

I was down there for about 10 Minutes or so and I came up and everybody except 2 were crying and feeling the spirit which made me feel great. I don't think anyone was crying when I went down except 2 then it turned around. The power of the spirit prevails again. What really impressed me was Skyler Bagley. His heart softened and I felt so good for him cause earlier like myself, he said I won't do a testimony out loud either, but he did , and he cried he felt the spirit along with most of the other brethren. After the Testimony meeting we all gave each other hugs and that was one great experience and I am sure everyone else thought so too.

The rest of the night was spiritual and we had a great time. The next morning comes and feeling the pains again, but I spirit was very strong so it was much easier and we went to see the movie "The Testaments" at the Joseph Smith Memorial and it was just as good and even better than everyone had said it would be. It gave me even stronger faith and it was a blessing. That Whole Temple square was great.

Then it was our time to go home, this car ride was pretty bad for me but I prayed about 100 Times so that helped.

Then I shared everything with my Mom and Mike Weight. I am so emotionally drained, , I never felt this. It feels good, its not stress but I am weak physically.

I would do it all over again and again cause this was my first spiritual experience like that and nobody can ever take that away.

I would just like to say that I know this church is true and without leaders like Brother Cook, Weight, Mealey and Anderson, I would not be feeling what I feel at this exact second. I would have not have had a brief 20 second spirit hug. I am grateful to them. They are the best examples of the kind of man I want to be

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I am thankful for the Prophet, for Joseph Smith and for all the Faithful Mormons.

I am thankful for the Lord Jesus Christ and the sacrifices He made for us.

I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen

Tradeguy

Phyllis Kirk Henley - January 5, 2000

My Conversion Story to The Church of Jesus-Christ of Latter-Day Saints

I am the only member of the Church in my extended family. My four daughters and grandson are all members. My husband goes every Sunday and will join some day! I am the eldest of five children and we all were raised in a little town of Colora, Maryland. The majority of my family still live there. They are all very kind and caring and loving people.

When I was a small child I used to play in the woods. The woods were so very thick and plush with undergrowth many times I would get lost but enjoyed finding my way to the light! When I read the story of Joseph Smith and his first prayer in the woods I felt very close to him.

I love the song "Joseph Smith's First Prayer":

Oh, how lovely was the morning! Radiant beamed the sun above.

Bees were humming, sweet birds singing, Music ringing through the grove, When within the shady woodland Joseph sought the God of love, In the Book of Mormon the "Testimony of Joseph Smith" later touched my heart and the "spirit" of truth became sure knowledge.

My Aunt Anna would take my brothers and sisters and myself to the West Nottingham Presbyterian Church which was very close to our house.

My mother and father never went to church but supported us going to church.

I joined the West Nottingham Presbyterian Church when I was twelve. At that time I remembered I really tried to have a "spiritual" experience and really wanted to feel something strong but did not.

I went on with my life and when I was in my teens I was sitting inside our hayloft and looking out over the blue sky I felt that I would go West. The feeling come to me very strong. I did not know why I was to go West.

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I married at the age of nineteen and had a child. I was divorced about two years later. I lived by myself for about 4 years. I was a working Mom and my life was somewhat lonely and a struggle. I had a very strong feeling that I was searching for something but did not know what. I started reading the Bible.

In the meantime I remarried at the age of 25 and my husband and I were getting ready to move to Kalispell, MT (THE WEST!). I worked for the Department of Army as a secretary and about one year before my marriage I was given a pamphlet and small discussion about Joseph Smith and the Church. It was really my first information concerning the Church!

I worked around many military and civilian people for about 10 years. The person who gave me a Joseph Smith pamphlet and some discussion was a Captain in the Army. I put this pamphlet into my middle desk drawer and each time I pulled the drawer out I would see Joseph Smith's face on the front of this pamphlet. He literally watched me for a year!

I told this Captain later that "Joseph Smith" sounded fishy to me because the name was just too common and simple! One day I heard another military Captain and Colonel speaking about death and life etc. One said to the other "don't kid yourself, when you die that is it - you are in the ground and all is over!"

These words hit me very hard as I felt that they were so very wrong. I had never really thought about life after death or death very much. I felt that what this man had said just had to be wrong but I didn't know why. His words put a very heavy feeling in my soul!

I remember asking the Captain about going to church and he told me how to get there and told me to come. However, I felt very uncomfortable going by myself even though I was very outgoing and not shy! So I did not pursue going to church.

Just before our move to Kalispell, MT, I had stayed home from work as I was very sick with a very bad cough. There was a knock at my door. I open the door and there stood two young boys in suits! They were very scared as they were being chased by a man who was mad at them. I let them come in. They were so scared that they did not answer any of my questions nor did they return? I just remember the missionaries sitting in my house and that they were very nice.

My husband and daughter and myself lived in Kalispell, MT for about one year and we decided to buy a house. Our first house to visit belonged to Church members and the lady of the house told me a story about her child being born dead and how their church had helped. I asked "the golden question" what CHURCH? She invited me to Stake Relief Society Meetings and to Church etc. These meetings were very special to me and I felt the "spirit" so very strong there.

At one Relief Society meeting a lady shared her testimony and she encouraged anyone to pray to find their testimony about the truthfulness of the Church. This was very informative for me and I did follow her advice. I did pray! I did get good feelings about my prayer!

During this time I also applied for a job at a Health Spa in Kalispell. On the counter was a Book of Mormon! I asked who it belonged to and this cute little white haired blue-eyed lady (Bobbi

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Johnston) said it was her book and she would be happy to take me to Church. She became my friend.

That very day that I saw the Book of Mormon on the counter in the health spa Bobby told me about another book "The Marvelous Work and A Wonder." It sounded like a wonderful title and I just forgot about it!

We had just bought a nice new home in Kalispell in the woods. It had a few bedrooms and I had not gotten things organized. Well, I went home and went downstairs to this room where I had stuff stored and there on the top of this pile of whatever was the book "A Marvelous Work and A Wonder!"

What a wonder this book was to me! I had this book in my house for three years and had never seen it before!! I was and am a very avid reader. My husband had received this book on his ski trip to Salt Lake about three years before he met me. He had visited the Visitor Center and William Bradshaw (he started the Family to Family Book of Mormon Program) had written his name inside of this book "A Marvelous Work and A Wonder."

My husband has not read the book and said he did not get rid of it because William Bradshaw had signed his name in the book. Well, I started reading "A Marvelous Work and A Wonder" and I was glued to it for days! I had been watching General Conference on TV and listening to the General Authorities speak. I did not know really what I was watching at first but was so impressed with their quiet "spirit" that really touched my heart. At this same time I went to the local library and studied books on different religions as I really did not know what other religions were about. I needed to have an understanding of the whole picture! I did much reading and studying and praying! I found my answers!

I was always concerned about the fact that there were so many religions and only ONE GOD and ONE BIBLE. How could we have only one source and yet so many different ideas and beliefs about one GOD? How could all these religions be correct? What was the correct right way? I was confused. My big question was "Who is God?" I had always been told he was a "Spirit", A "Cloud", and/or Jesus Christ who had come to earth. Well, I could not believe these ideas and so I felt I did not know who God was. It was in this book that I found who God was and is!! He was a man like us that became so very perfected. He had a body like us and feelings like us. God is someone! This information came to me like lightning! It was like I had always knew this information but didn't know that I knew it!!

I later went to Church for about one year and decided to be baptized. My daughter was ten at that time and we were baptized together Nov 1975. Since I have joined the Church I have constantly gained a stronger testimony of its truthfulness. In 1997 I went to the Temple in Denver, CO for the first time. I have been very active and have many Church jobs. I presently teach Seminary and am the Stake Media person in the Public Affairs Program.

I guess the area that has impressed me so much since I joined the church is missionary work. I truly love it.

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I found out later that in my home town(Colora, MD) I had lived only 30 minutes from a Church building! All those years growing up I had never met a member nor heard of seen anything about the Church. The Public Affairs Program in the Church has opened all the doors of the Church to people everywhere. We now have articles in newspapers and information on TV and the Church has come out of obscurity!

Due to the fact that I had to struggle so long and wait so long to find the Church I desire to share it with whomever will listen.

I know it is true and I am so happy to have The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in my life! It has made a great difference in my life! It is truly wonderful!

Phyllis Henley 734 E. Rio Blanco Avenue
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We were referred to the missionaries by our Aunt, My Mom's first cousin. I was in grade school at that time. My Mom used to hide at that time, we even lied telling the missionaries that Mom had gone out.

I don't know what happened, when my Mom decided to be baptized. What I only knew was that she felt secure and difference, the church is true. My Mom asked her sister-in law if her decision was right. Her in law replied, " When you're baptized, you are not allowed to convert any of us nor bring your missionaries.

It was 8 August 1991, when my Mom, my 2 brothers and I were baptized. It was 5 in the afternoon, raining.

I was so excited, because of the water, I received the confirmation at that time. I was so happy during that time. From that time I was I was an active member of The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints.

My Mom received a calling as RS President and I enrolled to seminary (early). Our relatives had forsaken us and said we were cursed, because after our baptism my Mom got sick for weeks. But because of our faith she recovered.

It was 1994 April when we went to Manila Philippines Temple. My family were sealed, and my Father 's

baptism for the dead. The church helps us a lot, I don't know where am I now and my family if we are not

baptized in the true church. Despite of the trials we have in our lives, we are still firm. Specially me far from my family and from the church. I love the church so much.

Even more testimonies

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Edna

My name is Debora Spurr. I was baptized into the LDS faith on June 26, 1971 at the age of 15. I came from a diverse religious background. We had everything from Baptist to Pentecostal to ashiest beliefs in our family. I was raised in basically a non religious household and from the earliest times that I remember, I always was searching for the truth. At the time of my conversion I had been going to a local Baptist church for a few years. I believed much of what I was taught there. I attended church and Sunday school regularly. I have to tell you I realize this is a touchy subject with many people as religion is a very personal thing. It is a very real and personal thing in my life. I many times would get into discussions with my elders at church. I had one Sunday school teacher try to explain to me why people who never had the privilege of knowing Jesus through no fault of their own had to go to hell. This bothered me deeply. I knew in my heart that there was something wrong with that logic. It seemed to me that a God that loved us unconditionally would not just abandon his children. There had to be another answer and I was bound and determined to find it.

Its funny when I look back at my life. The LDS faith although not a common faith in our part of the country was all around me throughout my life. As a very small child, I had attended church with a neighbor a few times. Only a month ago did I find out that she is a member of our church and has been a life long member. It was the LDS church that she had taken me to. While in grade school, I lived next door to the "Mormon" missionaries for our town. I had always talked to them but never went to church with them. They proved to be a strong influence in my life as a memory of very nice and helpful young men. They were always willing to help my family and those around us.

As a teenager, I met a girl that lived on my street. She was my best friend. She introduced me to the elders. She didn't actually realize that I was searching for the truth. She didn't know if I'd be interested in what they had to say but I was. Her family had recently been baptized into the religion. I was curious to say the least. They asked me if I wanted to hear about the church and I said yes. One of the things that most people have trouble believing when they hear about the "Mormon" religion is that Joseph Smith actually had visitations from not just angels but also from Jesus and Heavenly father himself. I can't explain why I immediately wanted to hear more except that there was something inside of my heart that I knew to be something powerful and good urging me to hear more. At this moment, I can feel the same feeling that I felt over 25 years ago when my journey started....or better said.....when my search for the truth was coming to an end. I listened intently to what the elders said as they explained the truths that had been revealed to Joseph Smith and to the prophets since him. I KNEW I had found the truth. When they explained to me that people that didn't hear the words of Christ and his teachings in this life were not forever condemned to the pits of hell because of something they had no control over I knew this was truly the word of God. They gave me a "Book of Mormon" and asked me to study it, which I did. I was probably one of the easiest converts that they had ever dealt with during their missions. Everything made perfect sense to me that they were teaching me. All of the missing pieces of the puzzle were being put in place. I could go on and on with the different things that make sense and fill in the holes that other churches had in their

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teachings. They had the concept right but I had finally found the true church. I thank Heavenly father for allowing me to have these people in my life through different times. Through all of them, I eventually was able to see the truth for what it was at the time in my life when I needed it desperately. I am very grateful for that wonderful summer day in 1971 that I was baptized in the LDS church. I am not the best member of the church by any means. I have character flaws that I am working on and will continue to struggle with, but I have the knowledge in my heart that the church that I belong to is truly the restored church of Christ. It is the church that Jesus Christ himself set in motion 2000 years ago. Over the years, important parts were lost but through Heavenly fathers plan, all pieces are back in place and we have indeed, a wonderful gift from him.

If I have at all inspired you to know more, please by all means pray about it with an open heart. I will never regret having done so. I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

~*~Sandy Shardlow~*~

I was born and raised within the church. However, as a lot of those in my position know, I spent most of my childhood relying on my parents' testimonies and not my own. True, I loved the church, and I had a very simple testimony of my own, but mostly I relied on my parents. All that changed when I was 14 years old.

The summer before my 15th birthday, my family took our final vacation together to Nauvoo, IL (my brother was to be leaving for his mission within the year). We had never seen any of the church history sites, except those in Utah, and we didn't visit Utah very often. So we packed up and spent 2 weeks driving from Southern California to Illinois and back. While on our vacation, we visited many historic sites such as Far West, Adam-Ondi-Ahman, Nauvoo, Winter Quarters, Liberty Jail, and Carthage Jail. I didn't know very much about church history outside what they teach in Primary, so Far West and AOA weren't very important to me. However, Carthage Jail was an entirely different story. On the way, we watched a movie about Carthage that gave the basic story. When we arrived, we took a short tour of the building and went into the room where the Prophet Joseph was shot. Nothing in my life has ever compared to the emotions that I felt that day. They (the tour guides) played a tape in which you hear what happened. You hear a voice singing "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief" while the mob outside is making a ruckus. You hear the crash of the front door being beaten in and the pounding of the steps as the mob ran up the stairs. Once I heard the gunshots, there was no controlling the tears that were pouring down my face. The warmest feeling I've ever had came over me as the tears ran. I didn't even know there was that much liquid in my body. I sat, listening to the tape of the mobs killing the dear Prophet Joseph, and my testimony grew a hundredfold. The tape ended, and I continued to sit and cry. I wished that I could have been there to give up my life for the prophet. As we

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began the drive back to California, I sat and pondered my life. I pondered how I could have possibly spent the last 14 years NOT getting a stronger testimony. I vowed that day that I was going to gain a testimony, for myself, of the church. I began reading the Book of Mormon again, but didn't even wait for Moroni. The first night I started praying for the truth. I got my answer immediately and continued reading. I knew, for myself, that the church was true.

I know that it was inspiration for my parents to take me to Nauvoo that year. Had they waited another year, it would have been too late. About 6 months after this vacation, I was sexually assaulted to the point that I feared the male was going to rape me. This was very traumatizing to me because it was some one I had trusted. The next few months were very difficult for me as I tried to come to grips with what had happened. I blamed myself for the incident and was often so depressed that I wanted to commit suicide. On several occasions, I had considered suicide pretty seriously and was almost to the point of getting up to get a knife to slit my wrists. That is when my testimony kicked in. I remembered my trip to Nauvoo, my love for my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and my love for the Prophet Joseph. I remembered sitting in Carthage, wanting to give my life for the prophet. I realized that by killing myself, I would never be able to fully serve the Lord, and I knew that Satan would win. This alone was enough for me to push the thoughts of suicide out of my head yet again, and to raise my head to the light. The more I thought about how much I loved the Lord, the stronger I became. I eventually pulled myself out of my depression and was able to forgive the male who had caused me so much grief. I thank the Lord every day for my life and for my testimony, for without my testimony, I wouldn't have a life to live. I truly love the church for all that it has done. I have seen several family members (extended) fall away from the church, and I praise the Lord for looking out for me. I know that He knows who I am, and I know that He loves me. There are times when I think that I am insignificant in His sight, but I know that I am not. I am very grateful to President Hinckley. He has, on many occasions, said things that I personally needed to hear. I know that he is a prophet of God, and that he leads the church by God's will. I love the Prophet Joseph, and I am very grateful for his sacrifice. I am grateful to the early pioneers, my ancestors, that gave up homes, loved ones, and even their lives so that I may have the gospel in my life. I am grateful to loving parents for bringing me up in the church. I am grateful to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for suffering for all the stupid mistakes that I have made, and those that I will make in the future. I love this church. I only wish that I had the words to express how much I love it. I say these things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

~*~Sandy Shardlow~*~

I have just been reading some of the testimonies and have decided to share my conversion story with you. Feb. 18, 2001 will be five years for me and I can truly say that I have never doubted, not one time, that I made the right choice.

I was a manager of a Stuckey's store and lived in a four room apartment on the back side of the store building. Every day at lunch time I would go back to the apartment and watch my favorite soap opera while having lunch, and everyday at the same time one of the church's advertisements would come on. It was the one with the lighthouse and the lady walking along a bluff overlooking the ocean. I could hear the sound of the water and I think that is what got my

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attention. Water and seagulls will get my attention every time.

Everyday I would notice this and each day notice it more then the day before. Then one day I thought to myself that the Book of Mormon sounded like an interesting book to read. Couple of days later I thought I would like to read that book. Couple of more days and I thought I would order that book. Then a few more days and I thought I need to order that book so I wrote the 800 number down.

Having to pass through my office to go back to work, I laid the piece of paper down on my desk that I had written the number on. For some reason or another I was up until midnight and when I went to bed, as soon as my head hit the pillow, I remembered that I had not called that 800 number and ordered the book. So I got up, went to my office and called.

The person on the other end asked me if missionaries could delivered the book to me or would I prefer it was mailed. I said okay to the missionaries bringing it to me. I forget at this time how long she said it would take for me to get it but time went really fast and it was no time when two young men in suits, white shirts and ties came walking in the store. They told me who they were and that they were there to deliver the Book of Mormon and to tell me a little about it.

They also told me at that time that I was out of their boundary and asked if missionaries from another ward could call on me and tell me more. For some reason I agreed to that. It was just a few days and they were there. I listened to them and read the Book of Mormon like they asked. Before the discussions were over I told them that I wanted to be baptized. They laughed at my impatience and explained that I had a couple of more discussions and had to be interviewed. I agreed to be good and do it the way they wanted, but I knew I wanted to be baptized.

Not having been raised in any church and living a very worldly life I knew it was time for me to make changes. I was involved in a dead end relationship, felt very alone, doing things that weren't right and I knew it was time for something different. I knew it was time. I didn't understand all the teaching of the church, but I had never been taught much anyway so I was willing to learn. I remember when they were talking to me about the three glories that I told them it sounded like Star Trek. But they were more then willing to show me everything they said was in the Bible and I excepted it.

To this day Satan works overtime trying to get me back on his side. He keeps me in a rut financially and my living conditions are not the best, but he will never break my spirit because I know this church is true. I know the book of Mormon is true. I know that Pres. Gordon B. Hinckley is a true Prophet of God. I know that the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints are the true gospel teachings of Christ.

If anyone ever feels the spirit reaching out to you from your tv, please know that the best thing you can ever do for yourself is to call that 800 number and let the missionaries come to you. It will be the most important decision in your life and you will never regret it. I think and write these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Thelma Sorrell

Stones River Ward Murfreesboro, Tn.

My Testimony

I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I joined the church in 1975 after I tried to prove its doctrine false. After reading the book of Mormon and praying about its origin the Holy Ghost bore witness to me that it was a true book and that Joseph Smith was

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indeed a true Prophet of God. I have since dedicated my life to the building up of the Lord's Kingdom here on earth. I have raised sons and daughters unto the Lord. All that I am or that I may ever become is because of the doctrines of this church, which are based on the true teachings of Jesus Christ. I testify to anyone who made be reading this message now that this is the only church on the earth that has the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all its fullness and glory. I testify that this church has a Prophet of God at the head of it that instructs this people on how to live righteously, to serve one another, to bear one another burdens. I was taught that I am personally responsible for my own relationship with God. I was taught to be more respectful and loving to parents, spouse, children, and other family members and friends. I was taught that my body is a sacred temple, which houses my spirit and that I should keep it holy. That meant not to let anything impure into it. I was taught a code to live by, called the Word of Wisdom. This is described in the 89th chapter of the Doctrine and Covenants. I was taught to pray for every needful thing, not only for me, but for my family also. I was blessed with the Priesthood of God and use it to bless those around me. I bear witness that Jesus is the Son of God and only by Him can we be save

Tim Dunahee