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This I Believe

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Abstract: A young man gave a Book of Mormon to his history teacher and told him that the American Indians were descendants of the people in the Book of Mormon.

This I believe

Fred William Erickson, born July 22, 1947, at Ontario, Oregon, is the son of President and Mrs. Dehlin Albin Erickson of Nyssa Stake. The family are members of the Ontario Second Ward. In May 1965 he was graduated from Ontario High School as an honor student and a member of the National Honor Society. He will attend Brigham Young University and participate in the Honors Program.

Fred is an Eagle Scout and is now serving as president of Explorer Post 425. He has been secretary of the YMMIA and has received his Duty to God award.



FRED W. ERICKSON

● The Boy Scout oath expresses one of the attitudes I have always been encouraged to maintain. It says, "On my honor I will do my best. . . ." I believe that only through hard work and performing to the best

of our ability can we achieve real joy in our accomplishments. Whenever I can, I want to direct my efforts in pursuit of what is best for me.

I have three goals in life which I feel to be the most important steps towards attaining the ultimate goal—the celestial kingdom and the realization of eternal life. Both the Church and my parents have helped me establish these goals, and the accomplishment of these goals is of prime importance in my life. They are: a good education, a mission, and a temple marriage.

The vast and overwhelming complexity of this technical age makes the ability to use our brains as well as our muscles a greater necessity every day. I am thankful to those who taught me the importance of mental work. I have felt the joy of its rewards. During my junior and senior years in high school, I have worked at a part-time job which has taught me the necessity of physical work and at the same time

This I believe

Gary D. Hinton was born in Logan, Utah, on June 13, 1950, but has lived in Duarte, California, since 1951. His parents are Delmar and Juanita Hinton. Gary is currently a freshman in high school and is an honor student.

He is president of the teachers quorum in the Monrovia Ward, Pasadena Stake, and has earned three Aaronic Priesthood Certificates of Achievement.

Gary is an Eagle Scout, has served as patrol leader, senior patrol leader, and den chief. He is presently an Explorer and is looking forward to going on a mission.



GARY D. HINTON

● My social studies teacher at high school is a very intelligent and well-educated person. A couple of months ago, I stayed after class because I wanted to talk to him. I had some important questions to ask. Did he know that there was a family that came across to America from Jerusalem? Then I told him that the American Indians are descendants of this family. Did he know that another family came across at the time

of the Tower of Babel? They came in ships like submarines, using special stones for light. He answered "no" to both questions. But he did say he would like to find out about those in the submarines who used stones for light. That night was MIA, and I made sure there was money in my pocket to purchase a copy of the Book of Mormon for my teacher.

Our priesthood assignment is to read the Book of Mormon. I've read only about half of it, and yet I believe that it is true, and this is why I want to tell other people. It would greatly strengthen my testimony to see my teacher converted, and I'm sure that he would be very thankful for having been shown the truth, because I do believe it is the truth and want to tell others.

My experience continued as I gave him the book and showed him the references for the two stories. He said, "I have other books I must read first—some long ones on psychology for a class I am taking. I'll probably get to reading this one by the end of summer."

The next day I asked the "Golden Questions." Then

enlarged my college and mission fund. I have also learned to budget my time and have realized how little of it we have here on earth.

When I am old enough I shall plan to go on a mission. This conviction has been a part of my plans since I was too young even to know exactly what a mission is. I am thankful to the Lord that I was born into the gospel, and I know that one of the best ways to show my thanks is to serve a mission. I believe there is a time and place for everything of importance in life; and when a young man in our Church becomes nineteen years old, the place for him is on a mission. I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true Church on earth and that its message and teachings are those of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of the world. It is our honor, privilege, and duty to carry this message to those who have not heard it.

When I am married, I want nothing but the best—

temple marriage. And when I go to the temple, I want to be sealed for time and all eternity to the best and most perfect girl I can find. I expect her to feel the same way about me, so I realize the importance of remaining close to the Lord and continually trying to perfect myself. I realize I must never waver in my devotion to maintaining the standards and obeying the teachings the gospel gives us.

The thirteenth article of faith states: "We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; . . . If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things." If we are seeking eternal life, this is our guideline. The gospel of Christ and the commandments and teachings we receive through it must come first. The Savior himself said, ". . . seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; . . ." If we do this, then shall all else be added unto us, and we shall receive full and everlasting joy. This I believe.

I found he had at one time lived near Palmyra, New York. Yes, he had heard of the Mormons, had the opportunity of seeing the pageant, and had talked with one of the other teachers at school who is LDS. The second question, "Do you want to know more?" was a failure. Or was it? His wife has strong convictions in her church, and so does he. But he repeated, "I will read the book."

About a month later my opportunity came again as we talked together following a class discussion of the American Indians. I told him again that the Book of Mormon tells how the people came across the waters and later became known as the Indians. He wanted to know why it was not recorded in the history books. Just then the LDS teacher walked in, and I was glad to let him finish the discussion as I went on to my next class.

A couple of days later, my teacher was telling the students that there was another group of people that came before the Indians. Later, I told him that the people he was talking about were the family that came across at the time of the Tower of Babel. Again,

he said he would be sure to begin reading the book.

I had another idea to share with my teacher, one that might help prove that the ancestors of the Indians came from Jerusalem. I said, "Take a good look at an Indian-head nickel. If you compare the nose of the Indian with the nose of the people of Israel, you will find that they are the same." He asked why I picked the Indian on the nickel instead of some other source. At that time I didn't know, but later I remembered that my Sunday School teacher had said, "To get the picture of the Indian, they compared many Indians and then took the common features for the image on the coin." My teacher agreed to look at the nickel and again said, "I will read the book."

During the time of this experience, I have thought a great deal about these things and talked to my mother several times. We decided I have done the right thing. I can only present the Book of Mormon to my teacher; he has to make the decision whether to accept it. I think he will read it and understand the wonderful message, history, and meaning of this book. This I believe.