

Audrey Horn A Call to Return

As a child attending church camps, I was always excited to see and converse with the Book of Mormon Interns as they served in different capacities around the Odessa Hills Campground. I was so enamored with them and their cause that I decided I wanted to be an intern someday. Now, fast forwarding to 2011, my sophomore year in college, I realized my desire to serve as an intern was waning as I became curious about the worldly things. One year later, the summer before my junior year, several youth approached me and expressed their desire to see me apply for the upcoming internship. At first, I thanked them for their comments but declined due to the lack of desire in my heart. However, as additional people approached me, I became less patient and kind. One day, a previous intern approached me and shared her desire to see me join the internship. I replied somewhat abruptly “I have no desire to ever do the internship. God would have to put an overpowering desire in me as well as cause everything in my life to align just right for me to even admit the absurdity that this was God’s plan.” She replied excitedly, “Well, then pray that the Lord will give you the desire.” As this point all my frustrations towards all those who had been pressuring me to join the internship erupted. “I have NO desire, so why on earth would I pray for the desire to pray about it.” The past intern was taken aback by my response and I could see the hurt in her eyes at that my words had caused her. She softly apologized for bothering me and hurried away.

Now moving forward to the fall of 2014, a few months before my graduation, I realized that I had moved so far away from the church that I began to judge it in an effort to ease my guilt and justify the choices I was making in my life. However last November, the Lord woke me up and showed me how my life was not pleasing in his eyes. He chastised me for my attempts to justify my actions even through the use of scripture. This experience caused me to repent from the things that were not pleasing to him and to begin making needed changes in my life. As I was making these decisions and striving to better myself, people began to encourage me to attend the Book of Mormon retreat. At first, I found reasons not to go such as, I wasn’t really ready, and I had other things already scheduled. Then when I found out I would be able to go for a day and that my parents would pay for it, I was left with no excuses and I went. While there, I began to feel prompted that I was to do the internship. Like many years before, I began to list off the many excuses against it: I have no desire, I need to make money, my past, etc. However, the feeling I needed to join persisted. So I began to pray about it, and as I prayed I began to feel a burning desire to be an intern. However, my doubts and concerns were still holding me back, and so I prayed. “Lord you’ve given me the desire to be in your internship. If this is the year that I should be a part of it, I pray that you would please give me a job, a place to live, funding to move, and a curriculum to teach.” Over the course of the internship and a little before, the Lord has answered every one of my concerns. Each answer has been a testimony for me. Through these testimonies, the Lord affirmed his desire for me to be in the internship, and provided me with the assurance I needed. Throughout the internship this assurance has continued to be reaffirmed. What I have learned from this experience is, that there is nothing we can do that can keep God from completing his plan for our lives, except us. He is ever calling for us to return to him and stands ready to strengthen our desire to do the things he asks, all we have to do is be willing. Even if it takes four years.

The Music of God’s Prompts

In Belize, the interns get to teach classes to the church community through a Book of Mormon day in which we teach age level classes as well as music and crafts class for all ages. As an elementary music teacher I immediately knew I wanted to teach the music class. However, I did not want to just plan to have an hour long sing-along. Instead, I wanted to leave the people in Belize with tools and knowledge that they could use to create music independently of me and my fellow interns. This desire led James, the other music teacher, and I to come up with the idea to make straw woodwind instruments. While planning this activity a thought crossed my mind, wouldn’t it be great if I could take recorders to Belize for the children? I immediately squashed this idea as a ridiculous notion and continued to plan for the class. A

few days later while discussing the class with my parents my mother reiterated my previous thought, “wouldn’t it be great if you could take recorders to Belize for the children?” Again, I immediately squashed this as a ridiculous notion. Throughout our preparation, James and I had been praying that the Lord would lead us in a manner that would not only minister but actually teach the children about music and give them the tools and skills to use. Now fast forward to the day before our departure to right before our fasting service. I again began to think, wouldn’t it be nice if I could take recorders to Belize. However, instead of squashing the idea this time, I began to mull over the different ways that I could incorporate them into the class. At first, I thought I could take one of my extras and give it as a prize for some contest. Yet, this did not seem fair. I then thought, maybe I can take all my extra recorders and let God tell me which children should receive them. However, this also felt unfair. Then I had an epiphany, I will ask James if he has any recorders he would be willing to donate. Consequently, he had two. But, this still did not seem enough. So I asked the rest of the interns if they had any they could spare. Though none of them did I still felt that the Lord was prompting me to find more to take. We then began our fasting service. During the service, the Elder in charge asked each of us to say a prayer. When it became my turn, I felt prompted to pray for recorders. Thus followed one of my most ineloquent prayers I have ever prayed. “Lord, I feel like you are telling me to pray for recorders to take to Belize. I don’t know why, but here it goes. Lord, please bring me recorders.” Following the service I immediately called a local music store and asked if they would be willing to donate Recorders to take to Belize. To my utter amazement, they donated 15. This was followed shortly by 12 more from another donor. Between these two donations and my recorders and my mom’s recorders, God was able to help me gather 34 recorders within the course of three hours following my prayer. Only he could do that. Thus, the next day we all flew to Belize where the interns and the recorders all arrived safe and sound. Several days later, the interns put on our Book of Mormon day with the children. When the time came during the music class to hand out the instruments, the children’s faces immediately lit up. One boy couldn’t stop playing his recorder for hours. At the time, I felt that seeing their joy was the reason I was to bring and give recorders. However, the testimony does not end there. The following day as we were visiting in a local women’s house, I decided I would share my testimony with her daughter. Upon sharing it she then informed me that in Belize, they are required to either take a recorder or home economics class. Once she shared this, I immediately saw it as additional evidence towards God’s plan in having me bring recorders. It was so the children would be able to have the choice between the two classes without having to worry about the cost of a recorder. I truly felt that this was the end of my testimony of why God had prompted me to complete this task. However, there was still one last piece of evidence to the puzzle that the Lord wanted me to know. The night before our flight home, I stayed up to talk with the hotel owner’s son. Through the course of our conversation I felt prompted to inquire about the prices of recorders in Belize. He told me that more often than not, a recorder can cost about \$200 Belizean dollars or in other words, \$100 US. I was shocked. The recorders that were donated were only \$1.75 each. It was right then that I truly understood the power of God and his plan in having me bring recorders. In his greatness, he knew that these children whose clothes were torn and dirty would be faced with choice in school in which they would have to choose home economics due to the steep recorder prices. But, in God’s infinite wisdom, he planned for a way in which these beautiful children could receive a gift which would enable them to have a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the recorder past the little song I taught them. I feel truly blessed that the Lord chose to use me as his instrument to bring to pass this blessing in a way that my human mind could not have possibly fathomed. God truly loves all his children and there is nothing I or anyone else could do that can change his plan to bless his children in Belize with a future that would otherwise have been impossible.

A Team United

One of the main focuses of the Book of Mormon internship is teamwork. Teamwork that is built on trust in God and through shared experiences. To help aid in building teamwork, the interns travel to the Tucker institute in Liberty, Missouri where they are challenged both physically and mentally by outdoors

obstacles and challenges that require teamwork to complete them. The day our internship year was to visit Tucker, the forecast predicted a sunny humid day with high temperatures in the 90s. Now, many of us can agree that these conditions are not ideal for productive and efficient teambuilding. Thus I prayed, Lord, please help tomorrow to be cool and overcast with a dash of sprinkles and calm breeze to keep us refreshed. Upon arriving to Tucker the following day, the weather was just as I had prayed, cool, overcast, with a dash of sprinkles and a calm breeze. God blessed us with this weather up to the point in which we were preparing to leave when the sun came out. Due to this blessing, we were able to grow as a team and meet to finish every obstacle and challenge that we faced with minimal frustration. An outcome I believe would have been different without the grace of God.

Walk By Faith

As part of the internship we are required to select five songs that we would like to perform at our services upon returning from Belize. One of the songs we chose to perform was titled "By Faith." At first, we felt overwhelmed by the amount of material we needed to learn and memorize. Due to this, many of us carried a negative spirit towards it which was fed by us having to practice it in the evenings while in Belize when all we wanted to do was relax after a long day's work. Several days into our trip, we traveled to the home of one of the locals who has the interns over every Sunday afternoon when they are in Belize to share in a meal. While there, one of the residents imparted that they were suffering from a serious ailment. Now this individual was not a part of our church, but through faith, they chose to allow the elders present to administer to them despite them not believing in the ordinances of the RLDS faith. Following the laying on of hands, we interns chose to sing "By Faith" in an effort to provide comfort to this individual. As we began to sing the song, I started it with the same disinterested spirit that I demonstrated when being "forced" to practice it every evening while in Belize. Yet, as we continued to sing I began to pay heed to the words we were singing and how it related not only to use, but to this individual's situation. Through listening I became flooded with the spirit in so much that it became difficult to sing. Pieces of the text are as follows:

*We will stand as children of the promise
We will fix our eyes on Him our soul's reward
Till the race is finished and the work is done
We'll walk by faith and not by sight*

This individual believed in the Lord's promise and stepped out in faith and chose to serve God by opening their home out of love for God and his people. They continuously fixed their eyes on God and would strive do good works until the Lord's will be done and he calls them home.

*By faith this mountain shall be moved
And the power of the gospel shall prevail
For we know in Christ all things are possible
For all who call upon His name*

Through this final verse, I came to the understanding that by asking for the laying on of hands, this individual was through faith saying that God could indeed move this mountain of sickness in their life and that by calling on him for healing through this ordinance they were believing that all things were possible. The faith demonstrated that day blessed us interns in that it drew our hearts and minds to a centralized goal that we had yet to obtain. However, in our desire to give comfort and support to this individual, we were able to witness true faith in God he and his healing through the laying on of hands. For the first time, through our song, our attitudes changed from selfish thoughts of what we wanted to selfless thoughts of how to minister to this individual who had given so much love to us in a short period of time. To me, this was the turning point for this internship year. It was when we became a team and truly began to *walk by faith and not by sight*.

