

Missionary story of Francis Ray Brown:

Ruth, Ray's sister told of a missionary experience Ray had while growing up:



"My brother, Ray was a boy scout. He used to help my uncles during the summer. Once when he was going back home to go to school, he had to take a train. When he got on the train, he was sitting by a lady and they talked quite a bit. When they got into Winslow, Arizona, there were Indians all around. The Indians were selling things-pots, beads and Indian blankets. The Indian women were dressed up in their long Indian dresses. We used to see them along the road all the time. Velvet dresses were one of the most popular fabrics they wore. The men dressed in their Indian clothes as they sold things.

The woman said to Ray, "Isn't it odd that we do not know where these people came from? Ray looked surprised because he knew where they came from. He had already read the Book of Mormon and so he talked to the woman as they went along. He told her about the Indians and the Lamanites and the Nephites, and about how they had come to America 600 years before Christ had come. The woman was so interested in what this young boy was telling her, she finally asked, "Do you have a book about it?"

"Oh, yes, it's the Book of Mormon." She was so excited to learn more, and she knew this young boy was so sure that what he told her was true. Soon they came to Prescott where he had to change trains to go to Mesa. So he told her goodbye. She remembered the name of the book.

After Ray's mission, at a stake conference in Mesa, a general authority told the story of a woman who had been converted to the gospel in California. She said a boy scout that she had ridden with on the train had told her about the Book of Mormon, and she could not wait until she could finally find one. She read the Book of Mormon and was converted to the gospel and was baptized. After that she became the Relief Society President."

"I met a man once on a boat trip over to Sweden. [He gave the man a Book of Mormon.] Twenty years after returning from my mission, I received a letter addressed to me in "Arizona, U.S.A." from his wife. Remarkably it reached me. The contents of the letter follows:

"Very honored Mr. Brown:

Nearly twenty years have passed since you, Mr./ Brown wrote the enclosed cordial letter to my now deceased husband. I do not know whether my letter will reach you or whether you will remember him but I want to write you anyway.

It appears to me to be a dispensation of providence, since we have lost everything through the Russians and only the most important documents were saved, to find your letter among my husbands effects. Now I feel it necessary, Mr. Brown, to write and thank you for the strength and comfort which we have received from the Book of Mormon during the hard years we have had and still have in the Russian zone.

My husband was at that time wholly inspired from his trip, when he made your acquaintance, and he busied himself a great deal with your teachings, so that we also, through the understand of this truth in the hard times have received strength therefrom to overcome the hardships and tribulations. Frieda Schmidt."

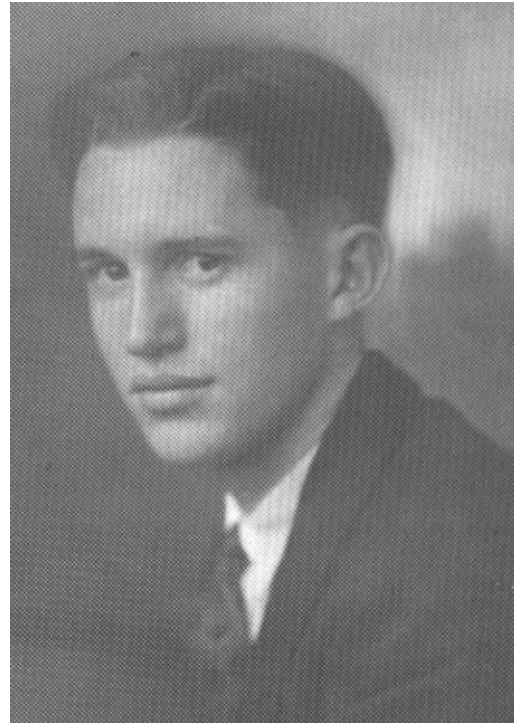
We had one young fellow, Kurt Snyder, who lives in Salt Lake now. His father was a Nazi officer before the Nazi's took over Germany and Hitler was elected. He wanted his boy to be an atheist. His mother was a Lutheran and she wanted him to believe in God. He wanted to get an education so that he could help rebuild Germany after the First World War. He was working in a hardware store.

My companion went in this store to buy some ice skates just before I got [transferred] there. Well, he got in this hardware store and he felt kind of guilty for buying so he passed out some tracts to some of the clerks. They stood around listening to him for a few minutes and he was getting nervous for fear the police would come and arrest him for disturbing the business so he excused himself after he passed out the tracts and left with his skates.

This kid came (he was just about my age, 19). He tried to find the place where the meeting was. He thought he knew where it was, but it wasn't the right church so he looked it up again and tried it the second time and then I had been transferred there and he sent a note up to my companion (he was a few minutes late) and said he wanted to talk in church--he had something he wanted to say and my companion whispered to me "Shall I let him talk?" and I whispered, "What harm can he do?"

This is what he said. "I've been raised to be an atheist by my father who is a Nazi. I had been reading the lives of great men that had accomplished things in the world. I had decided that I wanted to believe in God," just when he got this tract from my companion. So he figured he could kill two birds with one stone by learning English from us as well as learning something about God. He said "Last week I was talking to my landlady which I almost never do and I heard a voice and it said to me, "Go to your room."

So I went to my room and I found out the wood box was on fire and it would have burned the house and all my belongings and some of the people there if I had not got there and grabbed the wood box and threw it out of the second story window. So I know there is a God because he spoke to me." He sat down. Well, eventually he began to come to all our meetings that were not on weekends. He wouldn't come on weekends because he used to go skiing. He paid the way for me to go to the city about a hundred miles away or so where his father lived (he was the only son) to try to get him to give his consent for Kurt to join the church. But we didn't get his father's consent. But his father finally did say, "I just think you are being influenced by these foreigners and I think that if you'll quit talking to them for six months until you're 21 then I'll give my consent."



During that 6 months I didn't see him again except once. We happened to meet by pure accident in the park. We sat on a bench and I told him a little about Nebuchadnezzar's dream and some of the other things to indicate that there was a God who knew history in advance and told us what would be (thou oh king are the golden head and after you a kingdom of brass in the shoulders and arms and iron in the legs and a mixture of iron and clay in the feet.) The vision told him about these kingdoms which did come. The Medes and the Persians were the golden head and the Babylonians were the brass and then the Romans and the kingdoms that came out of Rome. There were about ten kingdoms that came from the break up of Rome.

Then the Bible says in the day of those kingdoms the Lord God will cut a stone from the mountains and roll it forth until it fills the whole earth. I told him it was the Lord and He knew then what was going to happen and knows now what is going to happen and bore my testimony to him again. Several months later, I had moved to another city, not too far away. We were holding our little meeting and we just got it started and here comes Kurt on a motorcycle. He drove up there and he came in and again he said that he had something that he would like to say. I said, "Fine."

He came up and said that he had been baptized and how happy he was. And of course I was happier than he was. Eventually he filled two missions for the church and became head of all the Church for southern Germany. By then he was head of a company that he worked for. He eventually came to America after a long time and lives in Salt Lake now. At one time he told me about sixty-four members of the Church that had been brought into the church by people that he had brought into the Church.