

I'm Sorry Argentina

by Paul Barker | Aug 6, 2015 | Book of Mormon, Featured, LDS Missions, Standard Works | 44 comments



I'm sorry Argentina. I taught you incorrectly. When I served my mission in Rosario, Argentina 94-96 I misled the people I taught. I feel terrible because I fell in love with the people there. I was treated with kindness and respect. They welcomed me into their homes, we ate together, sung together, prayed together and cried together. I am forever changed because of the love they showed me.

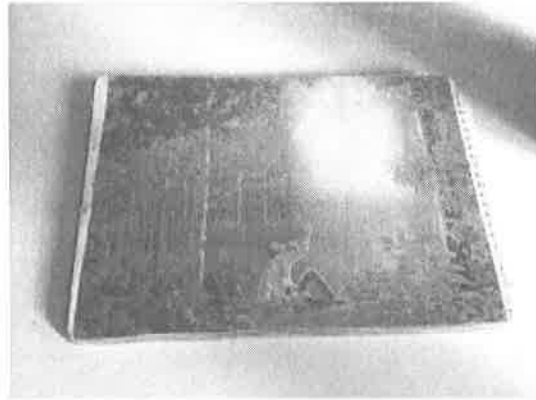
When I was a young missionary I wanted to improve the discussions or "charlas" as we called them. We were provided a flip chart that had illustrations so that the investigator could better understand. I'm sure it was hard enough to understand with our American accents. In the flip chart, there weren't many images to relate to during the teachings. Especially in the first charla. So I took the liberty to add more. My resource was old Liahona and Ensign magazines that every missionary apartment had. I began my search with scissors and a glue stick in hand. I found some great ones and the investigators, I felt were getting a better idea of what was being taught.

So instead of just this image:



I also included this:





My actual flip chart

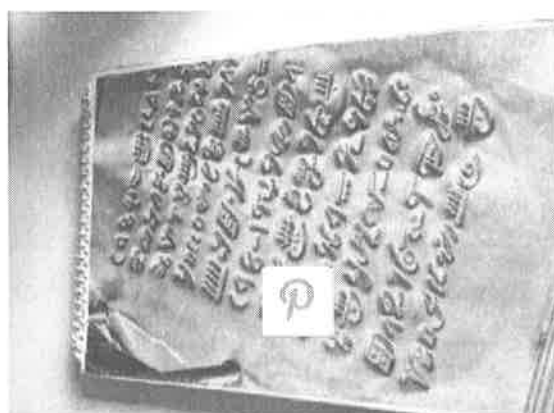
See how much better the story is told with these images? You get Joseph studying... and then God the Father and Jesus appeared while I recited "Vi una columna de luz, mas brillante que el sol...".

There were no images that explained the Book of Mormon in the flip charts so I went to the Church's publications to find a picture of how the translation happened. This is where I totally went wrong. I searched for images of the Urim and Thummim, but I couldn't find any. I remembered one from my youth, but I couldn't find it any of the hundreds of magazines that were stacked in my apartment. I did, however, find a ton of Joseph with him studying/reading the plates with either him writing or a scribe writing.

I settled for these images:



Actual flip chart with Joseph receiving the plates



During the lesson, I would explain how Joseph Smith used the Urim and Thummim. I also included pictures of Lehi and family on the boat, Mormon editing the scrolls/plates and Jesus appearing to the Nephites. My flip charts gave my investigators a better, more complete picture of the Book of Mormon story.

But little did I know of my errors. Even teaching the Urim and Thummim was incorrect. Sure he used those for the first 116 pages that were later lost and never published, but what the Book of Mormon is today was dictated while Joseph put his head in a hat and looked at a stone. While he used this technique the plates were sometimes not even in the same room or house. Why were the plates then needed? I mean look at Nephi who killed for a set of plates for crying out loud!



What is hung at the visitors center

I wasn't trying to deceive or to take advantage of people, I was just teaching what I was taught. I went to all four years of seminary and had really good attendance. I even won the scripture chase battles. I also took a year of the Book of Mormon at Ricks College before I left to Argentina. I can not remember any time where Joseph looking into a hat at a brown stone was taught, ever. Why would I dig any deeper when I trusted the narrative that was found everywhere I looked when I studied? Maybe I could have studied more. Maybe if I dropped by temple square and see what was at the visitors center, I could find a more accurate portrayal.

So maybe the people I taught will now see the image of the seer stone that the Church released this

week and maybe they will be upset with me for teaching them incorrectly. I was a part of this cover-up of sorts. And for that I truly apologize. I deeply love you and care for you, and I am so, so sorry I misled you. If I would have known, I would have taught you correctly. Please accept my most sincere apology.

PS

I'm still waiting for that image from the church with Joseph looking into a hat, only then will my flip chart be complete.

556

3

1

Tweet
 Share
 Share
 Pin
 Mail
 Share

You may also like:

Special Broadcast: The Work of Salvation en VIVO!

Prejuicio de la revelación... justo y equilibrado, parte 3: El libro de Abraham

Särskild sändning: Den arbete för frälsning en VIVO!

Eriytyinen lähetys: Pelastus työtä en VIVO!

Missionary March Madness: Craziest Missionary Moment?

Revelation Bias...Fair and Balanced, Part 3: The Book of Abraham

Viés de revelação...Justo e equilibrado, parte 3: O livro de Abraão

Enthüllungs-Neigung...angemessen und ausgeglichen, Teil 3: Das Buch von Abraham

Share This Post! Because Sharing Really is Caring!



Paul Barker

Born and raised in Northern California, Paul received his education at Ricks College and BYU with a BA in Spanish, minor in PE Coaching. Paul served his LDS mission during the years 94-96 in Rosario, Argentina. He now runs a skate shop in Provo, UT. He's married and has 4 boys.