

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MISSIONARY

Tag along and sneak a peek at the ups and downs of mission life.

BY ADAM C. OLSON
Church Magazines

Hey, wake up,” someone says, poking you.

Groggily, you look at the clock next to your bed. It’s 6:30 a.m.? What’s going on? Wait, that’s not your clock. And this isn’t your bed. Where are you?

“Hey,” the voice says, “you’re the one who wanted to follow us around. It’s time to get the day started.”

As you peer up at the missionary standing over your bed, you finally remember what’s going on. Church magazines offered you the opportunity to follow a missionary companionship around for a day, and you jumped at the chance to see what missionary life is really like.

You just didn’t realize it would start this early.

“Hi, I’m Elder Jesse Ward, from Utah,” the tall missionary says as you sit up. “Welcome to Spain. This is my companion, Elder Pierrick Triplet.”

Elder Triplet is from France, and he isn’t learning just Spanish but English too. Despite the challenge of having to learn two languages at once, Elder Triplet is grateful to be on a mission.

“I’m a convert,” he says. “I’ve had a

great change in my life, and I’d like others to have it too. A mission can be hard work, but seeing someone change his or her life is worth it.”

They’ve got your attention. You’ve always heard that a mission can be



6:41 a.m.



the best two years of your life. Today you get a chance to find out why.

6:41 a.m. After taking time to pray, the missionaries spend some time working out. Push-ups, sit-ups, even a little light weight lifting are the usual for Elder Ward. Breakfast follows a shower and shave. Cold cereal is a favorite.

8:07 a.m. Missionaries spend a good deal of time studying individually and as a companionship so they can obtain the word before declaring it (see D&C 11:21). After language study and personal scripture study, it's time for companionship study using *Preach My Gospel*.

9:55 a.m. Missionaries dedicate a lot of time to planning, at the beginning of the day, throughout the day, and at the end of the day. They talk not just about what they're going to do but about what each investigator needs.

Today the elders are talking about



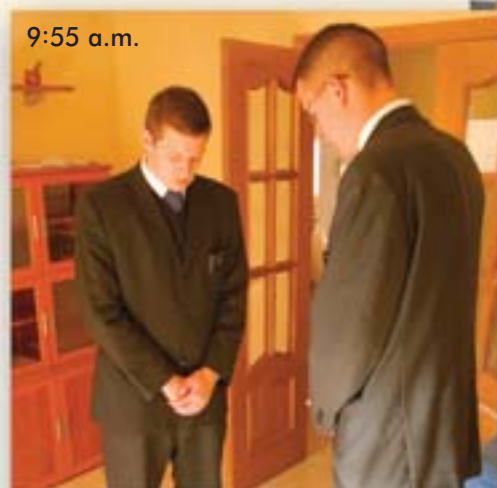
a man from France, an investigator they're going to invite to be baptized.

"He's worried," Elder Triplet says. "He doesn't feel worthy."

"Let's talk about repentance and how God remembers sins no more," Elder Ward suggests after the companions think it over. "Why don't you

teach it in French to make sure he understands?"

The last thing the elders do before leaving is pray—again. This is one of many prayers they'll offer today. Missionary work requires a lot of heavenly help. Then it's out the door and off to the bus stop in a hurry.



11:09 a.m.



2:06 p.m. The missionaries jump on another bus, this time to El Casco, the historic quarter of Toledo, Spain. They stop by an investigator's business to invite him to an activity that night.

"You can get lost in here really quick if you aren't paying attention," Elder Ward says of the maze of narrow streets lined with buildings that seem to lean over those walking below.

2:24 p.m. While navigating the tight streets, the missionaries stop to offer help to a woman carrying a heavy

11:09 a.m. Missionaries talk to anyone anywhere anytime about the gospel, because they never know who is going to be interested. While waiting for the bus, the missionaries chat with a young man and give him a pamphlet with their phone number on it.

He thinks it's true. He wants to pay tithing. But he doesn't believe he needs to be baptized again. He was a little argumentative."

"He's a great guy," Elder Ward says, shaking his head. "Maybe he'll be ready to talk about baptism next time."

11:21 a.m. A 10-minute bus ride and a short walk later, the missionaries arrive at a rented meetinghouse at the same time as their investigator. The meeting begins well, but the investigator's concerns push the 45-minute lesson they had planned on to more than an hour.

"That was the most frustrating lesson I've ever been in," Elder Triplet says afterward. "He likes the Church.



11:21 a.m.

load. They spend a moment explaining who they are and what they do, but the woman isn't interested.

2:47 p.m. It's siesta time in Spain, so the missionaries catch a bus back to their apartment, or *pisos*, for lunch. "Everything shuts down between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m.," Elder Ward explains. "Some people get mad if you knock on their doors."

"This is *chorizo*, or sausage," Elder Triplet says poking at lunch. "It's typical food. We eat a lot of noodles and *chorizo* because it's cheap and easy to make."



2:06 p.m.

"The mission is great preparation for marriage," Elder Ward laughs as he mixes his Kool-Aid. "You have to learn to get along, cook, clean, do laundry, budget, and take care of yourself."



2:24 p.m.





4:59 p.m.



4:24 p.m. Back in El Casco, the missionaries meet with a counselor in the mission presidency about current activation efforts.

“This is a great area,” says Elder Ward, who explains that Church attendance has gone from about 15 to 80 members each week because one family set the example of fellowshipping.

4:59 p.m. The elders end up with a little unexpected free time on their hands, but missionaries are used to doing some planning on the fly. Their backup plan was to do some tracting.

5:42 p.m. In El Casco, where so many people live above street level, knocking on doors often means carrying on conversations with people on their balconies. And even in historic tourist towns, a missionary has to look out for dogs.

The elders have some success: “We found some great people,” Elder Ward says. “There were some youth from Paraguay. They invited us back tomorrow.” And some failure: “We had a half-hour conversation with one man,” Elder Triplet says. “It was like talking to a wall.”



7:45 p.m. Two buses later the elders make it to the activity they had planned with the sister missionaries who work in the same city, Sister Kathleen Bonifay and Sister Brittany Hofman.

The people they were expecting to come didn't. “That's the way it goes sometimes,” Elder Ward says. But after a little footwork, the missionaries are able to gather a handful of other investigators living nearby. After a hymn and a video, you can feel the influence of the Holy Ghost as the missionaries bear testimony of the Book of Mormon as another witness of Jesus Christ. The activity is a success.



5:42 p.m.

“The Lord takes care of you when you put forth your best planning and best effort,” says Sister Bonifay.

9:13 p.m. After a hike to the bus stop, the elders and sisters have made it back to their respective apartments, where they’ll call their leaders, review the day and their long-range plans, and make plans for the next day.

“Well, this is what we do,” Elder Ward tells you. “It doesn’t change much.”

Elder Triplet laughs. “We are the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.”

Things didn’t go exactly as the



9:13 p.m.



7:45 p.m.

elders had planned, but the day went well anyway. They made some good contacts, pulled off a powerful activity, bore testimony of Christ, and did their best to follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

“I’ve heard people say these are the best two years of their lives,” Elder Triplet says. “The two years are great, but that doesn’t necessarily

mean they’re the best 730 days of my life. There are some days I thought would never end. But I have loved being a missionary.”

Elder Ward agrees. He has mixed emotions about leaving. “I always thought I’d be excited to go home,” he says. “But I see life differently now. I love my life. I’m a missionary. I’m speaking to people about Christ every

day. Leaving will be bittersweet.”

You’ve enjoyed getting a taste of missionary work as well. As exciting as it is, missionary work can be exhausting. Now it’s time to get some rest and prepare yourself for *your* day as a missionary. It has a way of coming faster than you think. **NE**

Preach My Gospel is a part of every missionary’s day. You can get a copy at a distribution center or at www.ldscatalog.com.

