

## Policy Changes for Couples Help Make Mission a Reality

Throughout their marriage Brent and Suzanne Romig had talked about serving a mission together after their six children were grown. Both had a love for missionary work—Brother Romig served in Holland as a young man, and Sister Romig’s father was a mission president in Tahiti just before she was born.

But last year, when they started researching their options to serve as a senior missionary couple, they began to realize that, due to the slow economy and falling housing prices, they would be limited in when and where they could serve.

Then, during summer 2011, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles approved changes in senior missionary policies to encourage more couples to serve full-time missions. As of September 1, 2011, couples may now serve for 6, 12, 18, or 23 months. In addition, a cap of \$1,400 USD per month has been established for housing costs. Previously, mission costs varied depending on location, ranging from hundreds to thousands of dollars per month.

The policy changes will allow more senior couples to answer the call President Thomas S. Monson made during October 2010 general conference: “To you mature brothers

and sisters: we need many, many more senior couples. . . . There are few times in your lives when you will enjoy the sweet spirit and satisfaction that come from giving full-time service together in the work of the Master” (“As We Meet Together Again,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 6).

Now the Romigs, along with other couples, are realizing that because of the recent changes, serving a mission may become a reality sooner than they thought possible.

On October 10, 2011, the first six-month welfare missionaries—Lyle and Roslyn Archibald, from Ogden, Utah, USA—entered the Provo Missionary Training Center to begin preparations for a humanitarian medical mission in Chuuk, one of the four island states that comprise the Federated States of Micronesia.

As the Archibalds were considering serving a medical mission to Micronesia—Brother Archibald is a retired physician—they were concerned about the effect 18 months or two years in tropical conditions would have on Sister Archibald, who is very sensitive to heat.

“We hadn’t found anything that fit us, but when we heard ‘six months,’ we immediately felt good about it,” Brother Archibald said. “I’m not sure we would have found a mission that



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***For Roslyn and Lyle Archibald, the change in length of service required for senior missionaries enabled them to serve a six-month humanitarian mission to Micronesia.***

would have worked for us otherwise.”

Brother Romig added that now there are more opportunities to serve in different locations. “The changes allow us now to put our names in and say, ‘Wherever He wants us to go, we can do that.’”

Right now the Romigs are house-sitting for family members who are serving a two-year couples mission in Billings, Montana, USA. Shortly after they return, the Romigs will leave on their mission.

“I truly feel more than anything it’s a chance to pay back my Heavenly Father in some kind of service,” Sister Romig said. “Before, it was a wish and a desire. Now it’s just a matter of saying yes when the time is there. It’s a reality.” ■

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