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**MISSIONARY
PREPARATION
ISSUE**

**GET READY
TO SERVE**

CONTENTS

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Cover: In Fiji and
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missionaries are preach-
ing the gospel. This issue
is devoted to missionary
preparation.

Cover photography:
Welden C. Andersen
(front) and Craig
Dimond (back)

TO BRING THE WORLD HIS TRUTH

Whether your mission is close or a few years away, this issue is for you.
In it we answer questions like:

How should I prepare? (p. 6)

What is the process? (p. 14)

What happens at the MTC? (p. 26)

Where does the temple fit in? (p. 18)

What is mission life like? (p. 36)

What if I can't serve full-time? (p. 48)

You'll also find many stories of faith and encouragement, as well as advice from General Authorities and New Era readers.

The Message:

Gifts to Bring Home from the Mission Field

2
President Gordon B. Hinckley
Ten gifts that I would hope every missionary brings home.

Line Upon Line: D&C 4

How to Prepare to Be a Good Missionary

5
Elder M. Russell Ballard
Young people need to commit themselves early in life to the idea of a mission.

From Friends to Sisters to Companions

12
Rebecca Mills and Brad Wilcox
Starting as friends, then converts, two young women finally served as mission companions.

Your Call to Serve

14
David A. Edwards
What happens before the white envelope comes in the mail?

I Took the Temple with Me

18
Cory Keate
Before my mission I entered the temple, and it entered my heart.

Inspired to Bless

21
Eric J. Greenhalgh
Through the power of the priesthood, I could help my companion.

Q&A: Questions and Answers

22
I want to serve a mission, but I feel that my testimony should be stronger. What should I do?

New Era Poster: Missionary Training Center

25



Inside the MTC

Danielle Nye Poulter

What is the MTC like? What can you expect? How should you prepare?



"We've Got to Find Her"

Elder Bruce R. Hafen

He couldn't remember her name or where she lived, but he knew she would join the Church.

Idea List: Fit to Serve

Get your body and mind in shape as well as your spirit.

A Day in the Life of a Missionary

Adam C. Olson

What is a typical day like in the life of a missionary? Follow these missionaries in Spain to catch a glimpse.



The Five M's of Missionary Work

President Thomas S. Monson

Five aspects of a successful mission.

26

Me? A Sister Missionary?

Taryn Salmon

Promising not to talk about religion gave me the desire to serve a mission so that I could.

Determined to Serve

Richard M. Romney

Jacob and Jeff Balls couldn't serve full-time, so they found alternatives.

To the Point

How do I gain a desire to serve; how do I handle challenging questions; how do I talk to my best friend?

If I Had Known at 19 . . .

Roger Terry

Looking back, I can see what I would have done differently on my mission.

The Extra Smile

Missionary Mail

Connie Myers

What should you send to a missionary and how do you get it there?

Instant Messages

Members make great missionaries; whose name is on your badge; just a few notes made all the difference.

What's Up?

Poem:

To J. E. H. and Many Others

Peter B. Ball

Photo

Ryan Kunz

46

48

52

54

57

58

62

64

65

65

The First Presidency:

Gordon B. Hinckley,
Thomas S. Monson,
James E. Faust

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Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry,
Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H.
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Gifts

TO BRING HOME FROM THE MISSION FIELD

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY



Here are 10 great, enduring, wonderful gifts that I hope every missionary would bring home from the mission field.

Quite a few years ago I was in an airport and happened to meet some returning missionaries. Their families were there. They were picking up their baggage, and I said to one of them, “What’s all this you have?” He said, “These are gifts I am bringing home.” And that has given me the title of what I would like to share: “Gifts to Bring Home from the Mission Field.”

1. A knowledge of and love for God our Eternal Father and His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). There is no greater gift that comes to anyone in this world than a certain, reassuring conviction that God, our Eternal Father, lives and that Jesus is the Christ. I believe that. I think it is so very, very important.

2. A knowledge of and love for the scriptures, the word of the Lord.

As a missionary, I read each evening before going to bed a few chapters of the Book of Mormon, and there came into my heart a conviction which has never left: that

this is the word of God, restored to the earth by the power of the Almighty, translated by the gift and power of God to the convincing of the Jew and the Gentile that Jesus is the Christ. I thank the Lord for the testimony which I have of the truth of the word of God as found in these sacred revealed books. And I would hope that every missionary would leave his or her field of labor with a conviction in his or her heart that these things are true.

3. An increased love for parents.

I have attended hundreds of missionary meetings over the years. I love to hear missionaries speak of their love for the Lord, but I also love to hear them speak with great appreciation and love concerning their parents. Boys who had been careless and indifferent stand on their feet and with tears in their eyes thank the Lord for their fathers and their mothers. In these days, what a salutary and wonderful thing it is to hear a strong young man stand up and speak with great feeling concerning his father and his mother, saying things he would never have said before in all of his life. Every boy and girl ought to come home with an increased love for parents.



4. A love for the people among whom they labor.

I love the English people. No one can sell the English short in my mind because I labored with them, I lived with them, I was in their homes at their firesides, I learned to know their hearts, and I learned to love them.

I have learned to love the people of Asia. I spent 11 years among them, and I love them. To me, I love them as much as I love anybody because of the experience I have had as a missionary, as it were, among them.

There's something wrong if a missionary doesn't come back with a great love for the people among whom he labored.

5. An appreciation for hard work.

Every missionary ought to come to realize that work, work, work is the key to getting things done, the key to success in life. There is no substitute



for work, for getting up in the morning and getting at it and staying with it to get the job done. I don't know of a greater asset for whatever lies ahead in life than the capacity to discipline oneself to work.

6. The assurance that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is available to each of us when we live for it.

The availability of inspiration—each of us, if we live for it, if we cultivate it, can have it. I love these great words of revelation, these words of promise: “God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost” (D&C 121:26). What a precious gift to bring home—the assurance, the certainty that if we live for it, we have available to us that which comes by the power of the Holy Spirit.

7. An understanding of the importance of teamwork.

No one can do this work alone. We work in pairs. “In the mouth of two or more witnesses shall [all things] be established” (2 Corinthians 13:1). We work together. There is no place for prima donnas in the mission field. Our efforts are largely team efforts, and what a marvelous thing it is to learn to work with other people.

8. The value of personal virtue.

I think there is no greater thing concerning future integrity that a missionary can learn than the value of personal virtue. I think there are fewer words greater than the promise given under the inspiration of the Lord as set forth by the Prophet Joseph Smith: “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly.” That’s the commandment. And then the promise: “Thy confidence [shall] wax strong in the presence of God” (D&C 121:45). That’s the promise to those who walk in virtue.

9. The faith to act.

“I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way . . . that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth” (1 Nephi 3:7).

We ask tremendous things of missionaries. It is so hard for shy and diffident young people to do the things we sometimes ask them to do. But what a marvelous thing that they try. They have the faith to do, the faith to act, the faith to go forward and make the effort. And what a marvelous gift that is to bring home.

10. The humility to pray.

Recognize that there is a power greater than ours, that no matter how good a man is, he is not good enough, that no matter how wise he is, he is not wise enough, that no matter how strong he is, he is not strong enough for all of the things which he will face in life, and that there is a source of power to which he can go with the assurance that he will be listened to and that there will be a response.

These are 10 gifts that I would hope every missionary would bring home with him or her—not a lot of tinsel, not a lot of dolls, not a lot of rugs or furs or dresses or plates, but these great, enduring, wonderful things. God bless you to keep the faith, and while doing so, enjoy with great happiness that which you are called to do. **NE**

For more on this subject, read “Ten Things to Know before You Go” by President James E. Faust, *New Era*, July 2002, p. 4.

D&C 4

In February 1829, Joseph Smith's father came to visit the Prophet as he worked on his small farm in Harmony, Pennsylvania. At that time, section 4 was revealed to the Prophet for his father, but this revelation is for all who desire to serve the Lord.

Marvelous—astonishing; miraculous; of the highest quality

In the scriptures, the Lord asks us to do only one other thing with all our heart, might, mind, and strength. Read D&C 59:5 to find out what it is, and then read Mosiah 2:17 to see what it has to do with missionary service.

Learn more about callings and the desire to serve God in these *New Era* articles at www.lds.org:

- “Why Should I Go?” by Russell Tolley Giles, May 2003, 8.
- “Called of God,” by Elder Robert S. Wood, Nov. 2005, 28.

Wheat looks a lot like grass when it first sprouts. Near harvest time, the green wheat turns golden or white. It is important to watch the wheat to make sure it is ripe, but it can't be left there too long or it might be ruined by a wind-storm, hail, or other elements.

“Combined with the Spirit of the Lord, the Book of Mormon is the greatest single tool which God



has given us to convert the world. If we are to have the harvest of souls that [the President of the Church] envisions, then we must use the instrument which God has designed for that task—the Book of Mormon.”

President Ezra Taft Benson, “A New Witness for Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 7.

Now behold, a ^amarvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men.

2 Therefore, O ye that embark in the ^sservice of God, ^{see} that ye ^sserve him with all your heart, mind, and strength, that ye may stand ^bblameless before God at the last day.

3 Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God ye are ^ccalled to the work;

4 For behold the ^ffield is white already to ^hharvest; and he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in ^sstore that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul;

5 And ^ffaith, ^hhope, ^ccharity and ^llove, with an ^eeye single to the ^gglory of God, ^qqualify him for the work.

6 Remember faith, ^vvirtue, knowledge, ^ttemperance, ^ppatience, ^bbrotherly ^kkindness, ^ggodliness, charity, ^hhumility, ^ddiligence.

7 ^aAsk, and ye shall receive; ^kknock, and it shall be opened unto you. Amen.

A sickle is used to harvest wheat by hand. If it is not razor sharp, it won't do a very good job. How do you plan on becoming sharp and staying sharp as a missionary?

Spend 10 days looking up in the scriptures each of the 10 qualities listed in verse 6. Write in your journal how each of these qualities, along with those listed in verse 5, will help qualify you for the work of the Lord and how you will try to develop those qualities in your life.

Editors' note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected scripture verse, only a starting point for your own study.

How to **PREPARE** to Be a Good Missionary



Commit yourself early in life to the idea of a mission. Focus on becoming a servant of the Lord.

The Church magazines asked Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles how youth can prepare for a full-time mission and what blessings come from serving.

Why does the Church ask every worthy young man to serve a mission?

The Lord has given no greater charge to His people than sharing the gospel with our Heavenly Father's children. Missionaries take people out of the darkness of the world and lead them to the safety and light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To find and teach and baptize and confirm someone who has never paid much attention to God or to Christ and His great atoning sacrifice is one of the greatest services a priesthood holder can provide.

We know the purpose of life. The rest of the world doesn't. It rests on the shoulders of every young man to prepare himself to declare that message to the world. It is exciting work.

And young women?

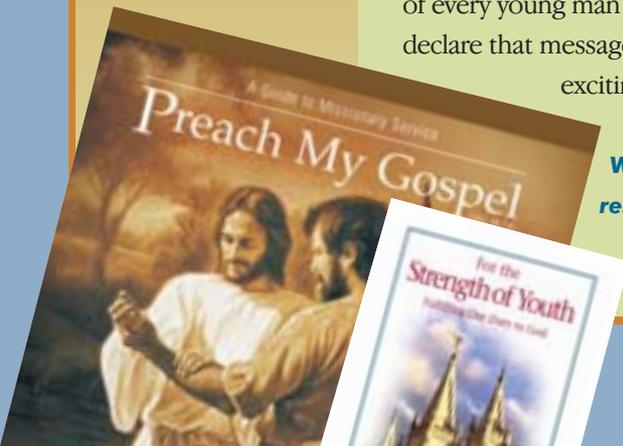
What is their responsibility?

A full-time mission is totally

appropriate for a young woman, if that is what she wants to do and she is worthy. Holding the priesthood comes with the obligation for young men to carry the message of the Restoration to the world. Young women are invited to participate in missionary work as it is appropriate to their circumstances. If they have prospects for marriage, that is a higher calling. But young women who are in a position to serve make great missionaries. They are good teachers, they have empathy, and they can relate particularly well to women. I don't think that we have a mission anywhere in the world where the mission president wouldn't be thrilled to get more sister missionaries.

How do young men and young women best prepare for a mission?

Attitude is the key. Young people need to commit themselves early in life to the idea of a mission. That way, when they get older and begin to face some of the world's temptations, those temptations will be less likely to penetrate their hearts or minds. They will resist the temptations because they are focused on becoming a servant of the Lord. It helps if they live in a gospel-sharing home.







share it. You can't take water out of an empty bucket. When missionaries know the gospel and how to teach it, they don't want to do anything else. They know they can teach anybody, anywhere, anytime, under any circumstances, using their own words accompanied by the power of the Spirit. They have self-confidence and inner strength. There's great power in that kind of preparation.

For this reason, I encourage every young man and every young woman to get acquainted with *Preach My Gospel*. Young people have the obligation to enlighten themselves, to

Missionaries need to be self-reliant. Young people ought to learn to take care of themselves and not be so dependent on their mother or father.

A missionary spirit is generated in a home where parents and children share the gospel with one another.

What I tell new missionaries is that they need to lock into their minds that the 18 or 24 months they are on their missions are not theirs. That time is the Lord's. They are going to devote their skills and talents full-time to help build His kingdom. When missionaries think that way, they don't have trouble following the mission rules. They don't resist the counsel of the mission president, the guidelines in *Preach My Gospel*, and the counsel of the General Authorities. They embrace that counsel because they don't want to waste one minute of the Lord's time.

What else could prospective missionaries do to prepare?

Missionaries need to understand the doctrine, and they need to know how to

understand for themselves the doctrines of the Restoration. That preparation is every bit as important for a girl as it is for a boy. Whether the young woman gets married or serves a full-time mission, the gospel has to operate in her life.

Youth ought to get acquainted with what goes on in missionary work. They would find it helpful, if possible, to assist the missionaries and get a feel for the work.

I also recommend that youth study and follow the guidelines in *For the Strength of Youth*. Missionaries need to be morally clean and spiritually ready. If they live the principles in *For the Strength of Youth*, they will be spiritually prepared to be great missionaries.

What about physical, financial, and emotional preparation?

Missionaries need to be self-reliant. Young people ought to learn to take care of themselves and not be so dependent on



their mother or father.

They need to be able to handle the physical demands of missionary work. Young people should keep their weight under control and be physically fit. The missionary daily schedule has built into it a 30-minute-a-day exercise program. Being physically tuned up enhances mental capacity.

Prospective missionaries need to learn to work. They ought to have a job and save money for their missions. Every mission president would concur with me that the missionary who has worked and saved and helped pay for part or all of his or her mission is a better-prepared missionary. Working and saving for a mission generates enthusiasm for serving and gives a young man or a young woman a good work ethic. Whatever else missionary work is, it is work!

Working toward a mission and being accountable for their own lives helps young men and young women emotionally as well. They know within themselves that they can succeed no matter where they are sent and no matter the circumstances. They know they are tough

enough to handle anything in a world that is becoming less interested in the things of God. We need missionaries with that kind of self-assurance.

What about learning a second language?

Most secondary schools require learning a second language, and students should work hard to do that. Now, they may learn Spanish and get sent to Taiwan, but that's all right. It's the discipline that comes of learning how to learn that is important. Having learned a second language, they will find it easier to learn the language of the people in the mission to which they are called.

How is that call determined?

First, the bishop or branch president interviews the young man or young woman and makes a recommendation. Then the stake or mission president interviews the person. Most missionary applications are sent electronically to Church headquarters. A photo accompanies the application. When the application arrives, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles looks at the photo and carefully reviews the prospective missionary's attitude as

What If You Can't Serve Full-Time?

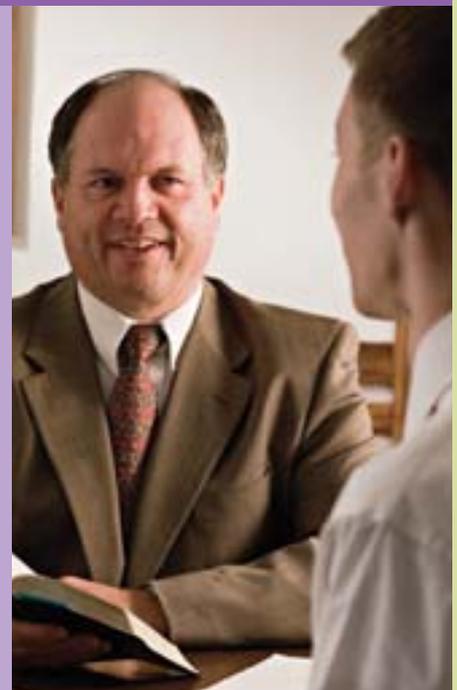
Young men and young women with serious mental, emotional, or physical limitations are excused from full-time missionary service. They shouldn't feel guilty about that. They are just as precious and important to the Church as if they were able to go into the mission field.

But while they don't serve full-time, they can take every opportunity to find and help people join the Church. They can be member missionaries in college, at work, and in their neighborhoods. They ought to go forward, have a wonderful and full life, and help build the kingdom wherever they are. Not all of the Apostles serving today

were able to serve a full-time mission in their youth, some because they were required to serve in the military. But they all did missionary work. They all brought people into the Church.

Priesthood leaders are encouraged to help every faithful, righteous young man and woman serve. For example, they can assist the bishop as ward missionaries. They could work at a bishops' storehouse. If they live near a temple, they can serve in many ways there. Priesthood leaders need only think of ways and then move forward.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.



evidenced by what the local priesthood leaders have written, the young person's grades, and any expressed willingness to learn a language. The Apostle also considers the needs of all 344 missions around the world and then receives a spiritual impression of where the missionary should serve. All this is done under the direction of the President of the Church, and the call comes from him.

Why are some missionaries called to serve in their own countries?

Let me assure you that calls are a matter of revelation. Missionaries serve where the Lord wants them to serve. We need good, capable missionaries in every mission. For example, let's say there's a young man, a leader in school, living in Virginia in the United States. He opens his mission call and is shocked to learn he is being sent to Salt Lake City. But he isn't there long before he knows precisely why the Lord called him to serve there.

Let me assure you that calls are a matter of revelation. Missionaries serve where the Lord wants them to serve. We need good, capable missionaries in every mission. For example, let's say there's a young man, a leader in school, living in Virginia in the United States. He opens his mission call and is shocked to learn he is being sent to Salt Lake City. But he isn't there long before he knows precisely why the Lord called him to serve there.



What would you say to young people who may feel, for whatever reason, they don't have what it takes to serve a mission?

In 2002 we raised the bar for missionary service. That means the requirements to be a worthy missionary need to be understood and lived by young people early on. They need to avoid the mischief of the world. Of course, repentance is possible and is a great blessing. But those who stumble must make their repentance true and complete, and that could take time. It may even require First Presidency clearance before they can serve. Raising the bar doesn't exclude anyone; it just requires more thorough—and sometimes very difficult—repentance. I plead with the youth, don't get into that! Don't put yourself through that. Just stay worthy to serve.

Now, there may be some young people who consider themselves unworthy or incapable of serving in spite of

what they hear from their bishops or branch presidents. But here's the reality: priesthood leaders have the keys of endorsement. If the priesthood leaders indicate that a person is worthy and he or she is called, then he or she should exercise faith in that call and serve the Lord in full confidence that he or she is worthy and able.

How does a missionary receive the spiritual power he or she needs to be successful?

When missionaries first come into the field, they usually lack self-confidence. So we put them with good companions, and those companions teach them the way of missionary work. In a few months they are filled with the Spirit. They are filled with the joy that comes from bringing souls to Christ. They understand that they are

helping Heavenly Father and the Savior in the great work of redemption. When they realize that, they are on fire.

This empowerment comes from their obedience, dedication, hard work, and enthusiasm. If they are not obedient, if they are not working hard doing the best they know how every day, they won't have the same impact as those who radiate the spirit of the gospel.

You know, oftentimes I'll ask new converts when they knew for the first

time that the Church is true. It is not unusual for them to say, "I came to know the Church is true when I was taught by the elders or sisters and felt the power of their belief and saw the radiance of their countenance." If you're not actively and anxiously engaged, the Spirit won't be empowering your missionary service as it will if you are.

What blessings come to those who serve missions?

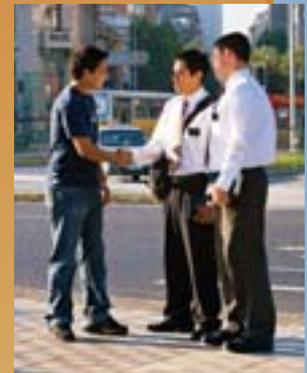
Dedicated missionaries who do their very best learn lessons as important or even more important than anything they can learn in university study. I'll give you an example. Missionaries learn how to relate to people, how to talk to people, how to help people. Whether they are going to be doctors, lawyers, merchants, or something else, the ability to relate to people can be the difference between being successful or not in that career.

A second great blessing is that missionaries become doctrinally anchored to the reality of the Atonement. There comes to them a love for and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ that will absolutely bless them and their families in mortality and on into eternity. The most powerful learning experiences we can have are when we teach someone else. And that is what missionaries do. They internalize the doctrine; they internalize the reality of the Atonement. And this will bless them in all future Church assignments.

Another great blessing is that as missionaries reach out to rescue and pull into the light of the gospel families who are wandering in the darkness, they see what they don't want in their own lives. The experience clarifies for them the values they want to live by, the kind of family they want, the way they want to teach their children, and the goals they need in order to claim the promised blessings of the temple. A mission is the greatest education in the world.

You know, President Gordon B. Hinckley has said many times that his mission is the foundation of his lifetime of service. He credits his mission for putting him on the course that brought him to lead the Church. I think you'll agree that he is doing so in a magnificent way.

We're at a time in the Church's history when young men and young women all over



Dedicated missionaries learn how to relate to people, how to talk to people, how to help people. A mission is the greatest education in the world.

the world need to rise up and serve as missionaries. They can't assume there are enough young people in the United States to do all that the Lord needs. He needs the youth everywhere the Church is organized to prepare themselves to bring souls to Him. As they do, they will bless the entire earth and bring heaven's blessings to themselves and their families now and forever. **NE**

For more counsel from Elder Ballard, read "The Greatest Generation of Missionaries," *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, p. 46.



FROM *Friends* TO *Sisters* TO *Companions*

BY REBECCA MILLS HUME
AND BRAD WILCOX

Valeria led Paula to the gospel through friendship, example, and always being there to help.

Valeria Pontelli of Río Gallegos, Santa Cruz, Argentina, didn't set out to convert her friend. She simply lived her standards with conviction. Because she is a member of the Church, there were certain things she did and certain things she didn't do, and all her friends knew it. One of those friends was Paula Alvarez, who always watched Valeria closely and was impressed with how faithfully and consistently she lived her beliefs.

Paula had a wonderful family, but they didn't have the gospel—at least not until Valeria came on the scene. Paula remembers, "Valeria was not ashamed of the testimony she had. She knew who she was. She knew she was a daughter of a royal and eternal King, a daughter of God."

That knowledge and confidence impressed Paula's uncle, Moises. He began investigating the Church and meeting with the missionaries. The day he announced he was getting baptized, Paula was a little shocked. She hadn't expected her uncle to be willing to make such big changes in his life.

The whole family was invited to the baptism, but Paula was hesitant to attend. She didn't know what to expect. Finally, her

family convinced her to accompany them to her uncle's baptism. Paula remembers, "As we witnessed my uncle entering the waters of baptism, the Spirit touched my heart. The impact was deep, even undeniable. In that moment I also wanted to commit myself to God and do whatever He might ask of me."

"May I speak to you?" Paula said, pulling Valeria aside. "I felt something special at my uncle's baptism," she explained quietly.

Valeria told her friend she had felt the promptings of the Spirit. "He's telling you that you need to follow your uncle's example."

"But I can't do it alone," said Paula.

"Don't worry. I'll help you," assured her friend. Before long, Paula and her whole family were meeting with the missionaries and accepting the invitation to be baptized. Their lives changed forever.

Paula says, "The standards I always saw my friend live were now mine. My friend's testimony was now mine." Not long after, Paula began to feel an intense desire to share with others what she had been given. When she had been a member for one year, she filled out her mission papers, met with her priesthood leaders, and received a call to



serve in the Chile Santiago East Mission.

Valeria says, “As I watched my friend prepare to serve her mission, the Spirit touched my heart. I wanted to commit myself to serve God the way she was.”

“May I speak to you?” This time it was Valeria who had pulled Paula aside. “I’ve felt something special as you have been preparing to leave on your mission.”

Paula told her friend the same thing her friend had once told her: “It’s the Spirit telling you what you need to do.”

Valeria’s plans hadn’t included a full-time mission. She wasn’t quite sure how to proceed. “I can’t do it alone,” she told Paula.

“Don’t worry. I’ll help you,” her friend assured.

Later, when Valeria opened her call, she was surprised to be going to the same mission as her friend. Paula began serving in October 2002; Valeria joined her in February 2003.

During their missions they saw each other quite often at conferences and activities. They enjoyed catching up and sharing news from their separate areas. They never dreamed that in November 2003 they would be assigned as companions. Their friendship bloomed into a relation-

ship that will last forever. They have gone from being friends to sisters in the gospel to missionary companions.

Sister Valeria Pontelli says, “At first I was afraid that working together might damage our friendship, but that fear faded the first day. This chance to work together has only strengthened our relationship, and our friendship has helped us in the work.”

Others agree. One woman, who used to be less active but has come back to church because of the efforts of these two missionaries, says, “You can’t help but love them because you can see the love they feel for each other and for everyone around them. They are my angels.”

It was hard for these two companions to say good-bye in March 2004, when Sister Paula Alvarez’s mission came to an end. She was nervous about returning to Argentina and all that the future might bring. These two sisters talked about her concerns as they walked to their appointments together. “I can’t do it alone,” said Sister Alvarez.

“Don’t worry,” came the familiar words from her companion, Sister Pontelli. “I’ll help you.” **NE**

If you like this story, you might also like “Sister Sisters,” *New Era*, Sept. 1996, p. 28.



YOUR CALL TO SERVE

Get ready. Get set. Go!
Here's a guide to the application process, from your first talk with the bishop until the envelope arrives.

BY DAVID A. EDWARDS
Church Magazines

Elder Ryan Morrison and his family will never forget the exciting moment when he opened that white envelope and learned he had been called to serve in the Pennsylvania Pittsburgh Mission. But a lot had to happen before that envelope arrived in their mailbox. Here's a look at what you'll need to do when you go through the same process from beginning to end.

Preparing to Apply

Of course, you need to prepare to serve a mission long before you submit an application.

Prepare temporally and spiritually. You prepare temporally by saving money, staying healthy, and learning to be independent. You prepare spiritually by building a testimony of and commitment to the Savior and His restored Church. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles summed it up this way:

"You can increase in your desire to serve God (see D&C 4:3), and you can begin to think as missionaries think, to read what missionaries read, to pray as missionaries pray, and to feel what missionaries feel. You can avoid the worldly influences that cause the Holy Ghost to withdraw, and you can grow in confidence in recognizing and responding to spiritual promptings. Line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, you can gradually become the missionary you hope to be and the missionary the Savior expects" ("Becoming a Missionary," *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 46).

Remove any obstacles. Make sure that you have properly resolved anything that could prevent you from serving or from becoming the kind of missionary the Lord wants you to be (such as unpaid debts, legal entanglements, weight problems, bad habits, and so on). If you need to clear

Ryan Morrison's family joined him when he opened his call to serve in the Pennsylvania Pittsburgh Mission. It was an exciting moment for everyone and the culmination of a lot of preparation, which included studying Preach My Gospel and working closely with his bishop. If you're getting ready to do what Ryan did, here's a step-by-step review of how to get from where you are to where you want to be.

something up, it's best to do it now.

Do not delay seeking help from your bishop or branch president if needed. An unresolved transgression will impede the Spirit and hinder your work as a missionary. If you put off a confession until later in the process or after you're in the mission field, your mission call could be postponed or canceled or you could be sent home in order to allow time for full repentance.

Completing Your Recommendation

Once you're ready to begin the formal application process, here are some things to remember.

Start early. At least four months before you're able to leave on a mission, set an appointment with your bishop for a personal interview. He will explain the steps to you and will give you the information you need to log on to the online missionary recommendation system, or, if the online system is not available in your area, he will give the recommendation forms to you. The online system speeds up the whole process. It allows you to give more complete and accurate information up front by automatically calling your attention to any required information you haven't filled in or any problems you need to resolve.

Make appointments right away with your dentist and doctor for evaluations. If you see them early, you'll have more time to

GET READY!



resolve any problems that may arise during the evaluations.

Be thorough. In your recommendation you'll fill out background information about yourself, including your desire and ability to learn a language, your schooling, and how your mission will be financed. To make sure you portray yourself thoroughly and accurately, fill out this information yourself—don't just have your mom or dad do it. Be open and honest about your desires and abilities, and make sure you and your doctor are thorough and frank about your health.

Get a good photo. The recommendation asks that you attach a photo of yourself. Make sure that in this photo you are dressed and groomed according to missionary standards. Keep in mind that a member of the Quorum of the Twelve will look at this picture, along with the other information you fill in, as he seeks inspiration on where you are to be called. Also, this photo will be sent to your mission president.

Set the last appointment. After all of these forms are completed and any health problems resolved, set another appointment with your bishop for your last interview with him before your application is sent in. If he feels that you are worthy and ready, he'll refer you to your stake president for an interview.

Using the online system helped speed up Ryan's application. Following through on medical evaluations ensured that there were no unnecessary delays. And meeting with the stake president helped Ryan feel even more enthusiastic about becoming Elder Morrison. By taking care of the steps in a systematic way, Ryan always knew what he had done and what was left to accomplish.



Processing Your Recommendation

After your bishop and stake president have confirmed that you're worthy and ready to serve, they'll complete their part of the recommendation and send it to the Missionary Department at Church headquarters. After you've completed your end of the recommendation process, continue preparing for your mission. Read and study the Book of Mormon and *Preach My Gospel*, pray for the Lord's Spirit, attend your meetings, and follow the counsel of your leaders.

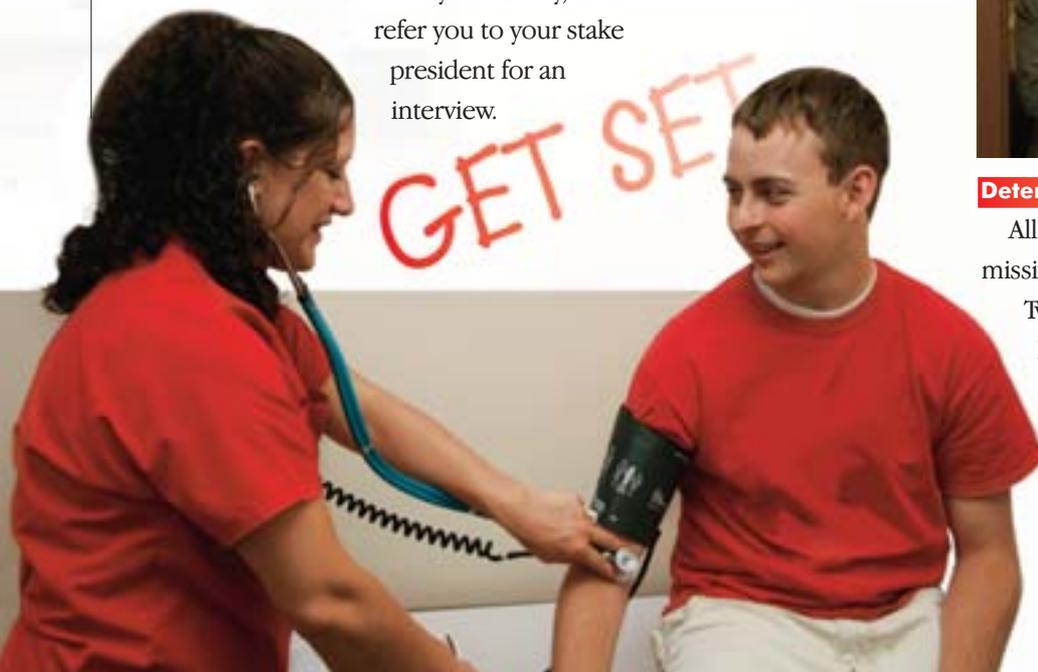
At Church headquarters a committee of doctors will review your health and dental records to confirm that you are physically and emotionally prepared to handle the rigors of a full-time mission. Once this is done, the next step is for you to be assigned to a mission.



Determining Your Assignment

All missionaries are assigned to specific missions by members of the Quorum of the Twelve, who have been authorized by the President of the Church.

Each week, depending on the number of calls to be assigned, two to four members of the Quorum of the Twelve go to separate rooms at



GO!

Church headquarters. There, after kneeling in prayer and asking for divine guidance, each sits down before a computer screen. On that screen, one at a time, prospective missionaries' pictures and personal information appear, along with the current needs of all of the missions of the Church. Each missionary is then personally assigned to a specific mission and given a date on which to enter a missionary training center.

Receiving Your Call

After you are called as a missionary and assigned to a mission, your call letter and call packet are prepared and mailed to you. The personalized call packet is the authoritative set of information on your assigned mission and what you need to do before you arrive there. It includes a mission map, a picture of your mission president and his wife, and a list of specific items you should bring with you to the mission. If something isn't listed in the call packet, you probably shouldn't bring it.

The call letter bears the signature of the President of the Church and extends to you the honor and opportunity of being called to serve as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It then informs you of the specific mission in which you are called to labor and explains some of the expectations and blessings associated with full-time missionary service.

Elder Morrison still remembers the excitement he felt all during the time he was preparing to serve. "There is a lot of anticipation," he recalls. "But wait until you're actually in the mission field. That's where you really learn that your call was inspired." **NE**

For more on this subject, see "Ready to Serve?" *New Era*, Feb. 2005, p. 15.



EACH CALL IS INSPIRED

"All my life, from the time I have been a young boy and as far back as I can remember, I have had experiences feeling of the Holy Ghost. . . . But I've never felt what I have felt as I have . . . participated in the assigning of missionaries. . . .

"We go into a room, and . . . it will be a two- or three-hour session and sometimes longer. Because of technology, it is possible for us to have your picture and the information about you displayed. And then quickly, on that same screen, all the missions of the Church with all of their needs are displayed. Within minutes, and sometimes less than a minute, the impression comes so powerfully that it would be, if it were a single instance, something that you would never forget. Can you imagine sitting there for hours at a time, having that happen time after time without interruption? I testify to you that it is real. . . .

". . . In a world so large, the Creator . . . somehow not only knows you but loves you enough to ensure that your call is where He needs you to go to teach the children of our Heavenly Father."

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Called of God" (devotional address delivered at the Provo Missionary Training Center, Aug. 26, 1997).

I TOOK THE TEMPLE

BY CORY KEATE

One of the most important things you can take on your mission is the understanding you gain in the house of the Lord.

“Well, Cory, based on what we’ve talked about, I would be pleased to recommend you for full-time service as a missionary,” my bishop said, nearing the end of the interview.

“So, I guess I’m pretty well on my way to the mission field after this,” I said. I was already picturing myself in an exotic land, saving lost souls. But the bishop interrupted my daydreams.

“Actually, there’s one more very important thing I wanted to talk about before we end this evening,” he said. “Far too often potential missionaries are so involved in checking off items on their ‘to do’ list that they don’t keep their temple ordinances in the right perspective.” I felt like the bishop was describing me as he went on, “For some missionaries, receiving their endowment is sandwiched between checking the dimensions of their luggage and hitting next weekend’s two-pant suit sale.” My bishop’s words made me realize that I needed to consider the temple with the importance it deserved.

During the rest of the interview he explained the sacred nature of the endowment. By going through the temple, he told me, I would be making sacred covenants with my Heavenly Father that go far beyond the mission and are essential to my exaltation. “Not only that,” he

continued, “your temple experience will fill you with the desire to serve. You will want those you teach to receive the same blessings of the temple that you have received. The strength you’ll receive from your temple covenants will benefit you as a missionary, but they also have eternal significance.”

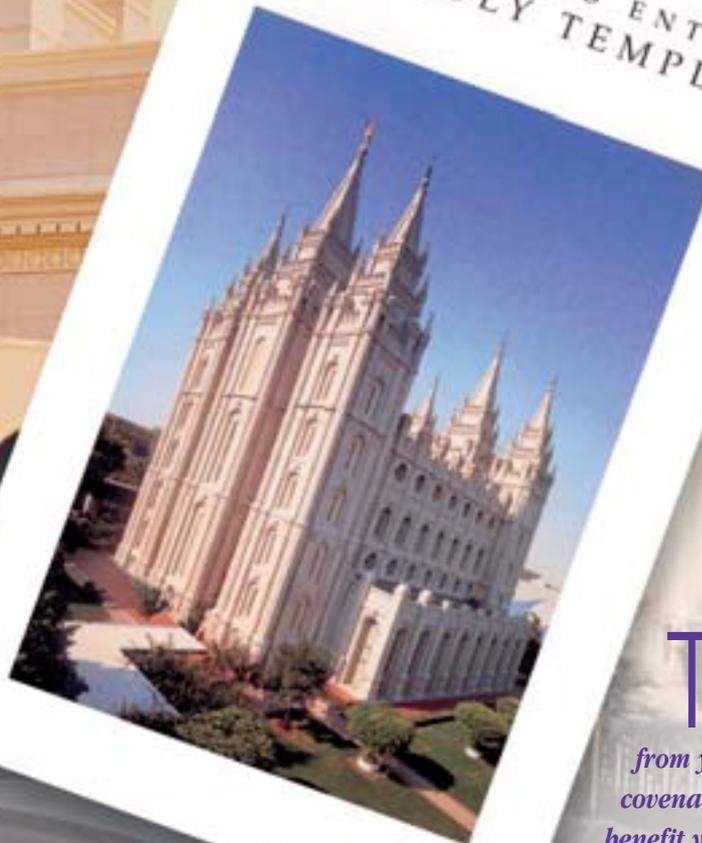
The bishop’s words weighed on me as I walked slowly home. I began to feel nervous. I had looked forward my whole life to the time when I would enter the temple, but now I was especially eager to be ready.

A few weeks later I received my mission call. With excitement I read the words “Brazil Porto Alegre North Mission.” I could hardly wait to be among the Brazilian people, sharing the message of the restored gospel. I shared the news of my call with my extended family, ward members, and friends. I also noticed how many people were just as eager to know when I would go through the temple. Many had words of advice to offer me on how I should prepare myself mentally and spiritually before entering the house of the Lord.

During the next few months I made sure to attend temple preparation classes. I read my scriptures and prayed for a continuing reassurance of my decision to receive my endowment. The Spirit comforted me again and again. I also read the pamphlet *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple*, written to assist those preparing to attend the temple for the first time. I was so grateful for the statements about the reverence and peace that prevail in the temple. During this time of preparation I gained a much

WITH ME

PREPARING TO ENTER
THE HOLY TEMPLE



The strength you receive from your temple covenants will benefit you not only as a missionary but throughout your entire life.

was so thankful for having attended the temple each week at the MTC. The blessings of the temple fortified me and gave me strength through difficult times.

stronger testimony of the sacred nature of the Lord's house and the work that is performed inside.

I will always remember the sight of the temple the day I arrived to receive my endowment. I was filled with deep respect and reverence. I was humbled by the thought that I would go inside and make sacred covenants with my Father in Heaven.

I had arrived dressed in my Sunday best, knowing that my outward appearance reflected my inward respect for the house of the Lord.

"Welcome to the temple," I was greeted as I showed my recommend and walked inside. Everything about the temple was beautiful. It felt like a piece of heaven on earth, and the friendly temple workers seemed like angels.

I remained in awe at the Spirit I felt.

While I didn't immediately understand everything that was taking place, I did realize the importance of the covenants I was making. It was clear to me why my bishop had spoken of the temple the way he had. The endowment I was receiving would extend not only far beyond the two years of my mission but even into the eternities. More meaningful to me than any of the advice I had received from various people was a scripture I had read as part of my preparation, "And that all people who shall enter upon the threshold of the Lord's house may feel thy power, and feel constrained to acknowledge that thou hast sanctified it, and that it is thy house, a place of thy holiness" (D&C 109:13). I knew that the temple was the Lord's house, sanctified and holy. I went expecting to feel God's love, and I did.

Throughout my mission I frequently reflected on my first temple experience. I was also thankful for having attended the temple each week at the MTC. The blessings of the temple fortified me and gave me strength through difficult times. I was filled with the desire to serve and bring others to a knowledge of God's plan. I wanted everyone I taught to have the same opportunity to make covenants with Heavenly Father and receive a greater understanding of His infinite love.

I am grateful for having realized that the temple will be a part of me forever and not something to simply check off before leaving on my mission. Since returning home from my mission, I have made temple attendance a priority in my life. The temple is a place of clarity and renewal for me. It is a place of holiness where I can feel God's love for me and for all His children. **NE**

Want to know more about temples? Go to www.lds.org/temples.

PHOTO BY DAVID STOKER

INSPIRED TO BLESS

BY ERIC J. GREENHALGH

I had a wonderful time laboring as a full-time missionary in the Hawaii Honolulu Mission. It was filled with experiences I will remember for the rest of my life. One in particular showed me how our Heavenly Father knows each of His children and their needs.

One night I was working with my district leader. We had returned to my apartment after a hard but satisfying day of proselyting and were having my monthly interview.

Following the interview, he asked me, “Would you give me a blessing?”

I was shocked, and my heart began to pound. I wasn’t used to being asked to give a blessing. I asked him why he wanted one. He confided that he was having a bit of difficulty and needed some help.

Still not knowing exactly what his concerns were, I agreed to give him a blessing. Before I laid my hands on his head, I said a silent prayer that I would be inspired to

know what to say to help my missionary friend.

As I placed my hands on his head, the most amazing feeling flowed from the top of my head to the soles of my feet. I cannot remember the words I spoke, but I was the instrument through which Heavenly Father spoke to one of His sons who needed wisdom.

When I took my hands from his head, he turned to me with tears rolling down his cheeks and expressed his gratitude. What he told me next was as much a surprise as when he asked me to give him a blessing: I had spoken words that had also been pronounced in his patriarchal blessing.

They provided him with the comfort he needed.

The Lord truly does know each of His children, and through the power of the priesthood, we can be instruments in blessing the lives of our brothers and sisters as we all strive to return to His presence in the celestial kingdom. **NE**

President Thomas S. Monson had a similar experience. Read “Priesthood Profiles” in the June 1987 *New Era* in the Gospel Library at www.lds.org.

Q & A

*“I want to serve a mission,
but I feel that my testimony should be stronger.
What should I do?”*

NEW ERA

What will help you gain the testimony you’re looking for? Remember the words of the Book of Mormon: “Even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you” (Alma 32:27). Follow Joseph Smith’s example, of turning to the scriptures and praying. He read, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God” (James 1:5), and then prayed for an answer. Your answer may not be as dramatic as his, but the pattern is important. Studying the scriptures and prayer are essential in gaining a testimony. Ask with real intent, and the Holy Ghost will confirm to you that the Book of Mormon is true (see Moroni 10:3–5). If the Book of Mormon is true, Joseph Smith was a prophet and was directed by God to restore His true Church.

Preach My Gospel is designed to help missionaries help investigators to gain testimonies. But it also helps missionaries, members, and families to learn the gospel.

■ **Follow the pattern of reading the scriptures and praying.**

■ **Study *Preach My Gospel* to learn the gospel and be converted.**

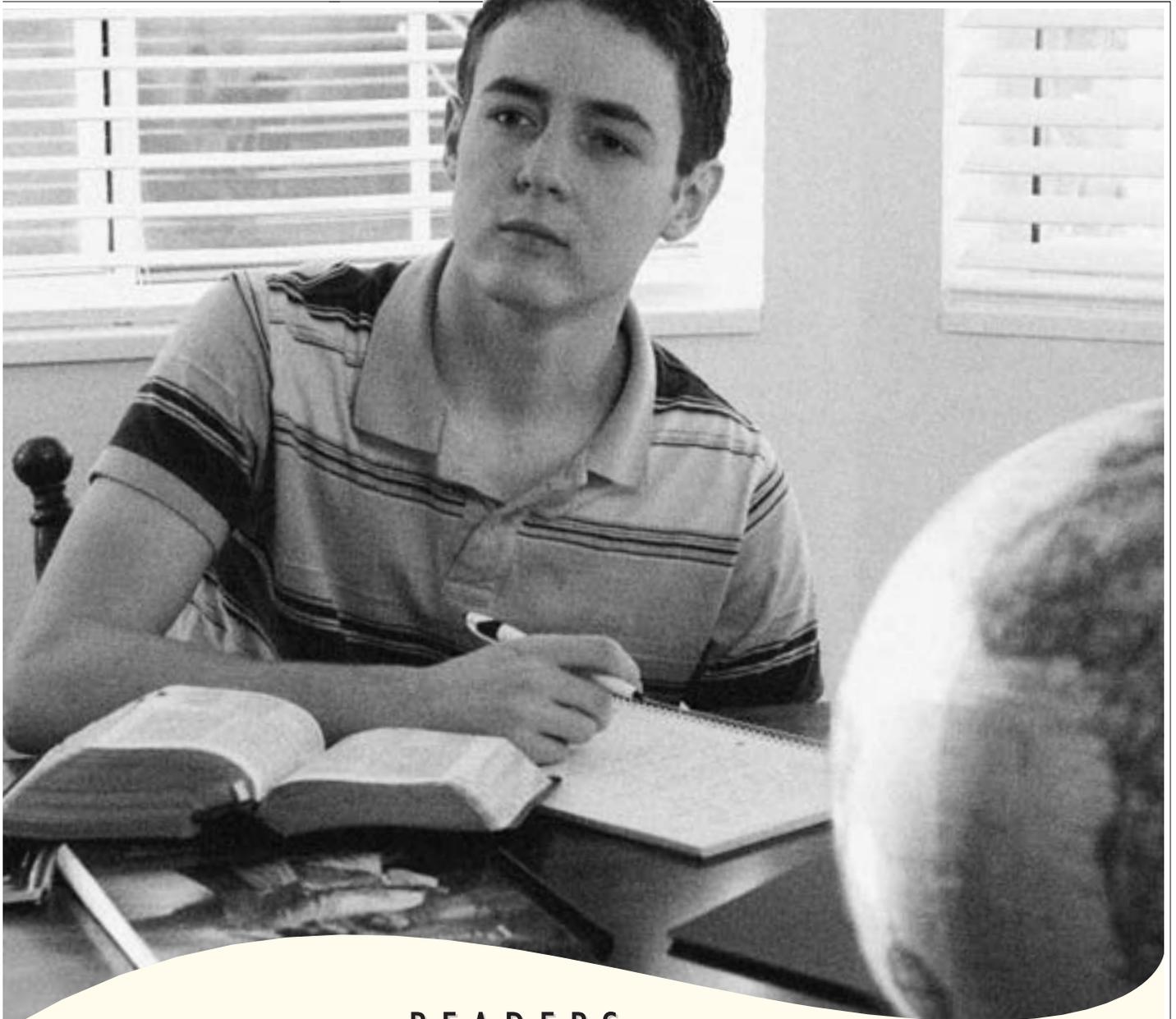
■ **Live the commandments. As you do, your testimony will grow.**

■ **Listen to the Spirit, and let it guide you.**

You can be your own first investigator and convert. Study *Preach My Gospel* as you work to receive your own testimony.

Another important part of gaining a testimony is being obedient. The Savior said, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17). If you want to know the Church is true, do the things it teaches. As you do, you will come to know “whether [they] be of God.” Go to your meetings, say your prayers, keep the commandments, repent. Do the things the Lord has asked you to do, and it won’t be long before you feel blessed for doing them. That will also strengthen your testimony.

Through living prophets, the Lord has told us that all worthy and able young men should serve a mission. He has also told us that missionaries need to enter the mission field fully prepared to serve. You are right to feel humbled by the challenge, but you can be equal to it.



READERS

Do all in your power to live the gospel, to prepare yourself to serve, and to listen intently to the Spirit. As you do these things, your testimony of the Church and of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost will grow. You will know the gospel has been restored in its fulness, and you will then be prepared to share what you know. As you teach the gospel and bear testimony of it on your mission, your testimony will continue to grow even stronger. **NE**



I overcame such feelings by realizing the testimony I already have. Each general conference I felt the love our leaders have for us. This was

the beginning of owning my testimony. I also realized that when you know the Book of Mormon is true, you will also know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true. Once you receive your testimony, share it so it will grow, and you will know with all your heart.

*Elder John Hyrum Gedeborg, 20,
Argentina Buenos Aires South Mission*



If you do not really know if the Church is true, pray to Heavenly Father with faith. Ask Him if the Church is true, and search the scriptures every day,

and He will answer you.

Thelimo W., 19, Haiti

If you know that you should serve a mission, then you at least have the beginnings of a testimony. You should sincerely ask the Lord to know if the Church is true. If you don't receive an answer right away, persevere. Show the Lord that you really want to know,

for “ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith” (Ether 12:6).

Christina H., 16, Virginia



I know that missionary work is important. It is God’s work. Those who go on a mission should have faith and strength that comes from prayer, reading the scriptures, and

personal worthiness. If they do these things, then they will do missionary work so effectively. I know that this Church is true. I know what I say because I have had answers to my prayers. If you doubt, ask God. He will answer you.

Sureselty N., 17, India

Lack of confidence in the truthfulness of the gospel is one of the best weapons Satan has to slow down the growth of the Church. Nephi taught that we should “pray always and not faint” (2 Nephi 32:9). I believe that when we take our doubts to Heavenly Father, He will open our understanding and impart peace to our souls.

Ana Camila A., 16, Brazil

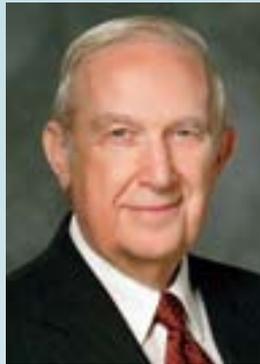


I have been able to confirm that the Church is true by accompanying the missionaries. When you listen to the missionaries share the message of the First Vision, a feeling of peace will come to you, the Spirit will fill your heart, and you will know that the vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith is true and, thus, the Church is true.

Ivan A., 18, Mexico

I had the same problem not too long ago. My parents encouraged me to pray, and I did. I found a quiet, peaceful place and prayed with intent to receive my answer. When the answer came, it was powerful that the Church is true and that I need to serve a mission. My testimony of missions is very strong, and now as I prepare for one, I’m excited and can’t wait to go.

Brian M., 17, Ontario, Canada



“Obtain a personal conviction that the Church of Jesus Christ has been restored to earth and that His doctrines are true. There are different paths to that treasured gift. They begin with your sincere desire to know. The flickering flame of faith can die if you do not nurture it. But that tiny flame can grow into a brilliant, unquenchable fire through sincere prayer and consistent study of the Book of Mormon and other scriptures. Such faith will be sustained as you apply the principles you learn. . . . Be one of the army of remarkable, well-prepared, devoted missionaries.”

Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Realize Your Full Potential,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 43.

As my bishop says, if we want to have a testimony of Jesus Christ, we must center our studies on His life and ministry. When we pray, we will obtain this testimony. I know it is very important to have a testimony while we are still on the list of future missionaries.

Kra N., 21, Ivory Coast



Before I came on my mission, I had similar feelings. I decided to meet with my bishop. Through his inspired direction, I was able to learn to recognize the Spirit more fully and realize that I truly did have a testimony of the restored gospel. Now I get to help others recognize that Spirit and come to know those same truths.

Elder Chris Stevenson, 21, Indiana Indianapolis Mission



My advice to all who have this concern would be don’t wait to find your testimony. Seek now! The blessings of serving a mission are incredible and will change your life. Doubt will leave your

mind, and you will gain a stronger testimony of the restored gospel. I know, because it happened to me.

Elder Josh Mojica, 21, Nevada Las Vegas West Mission

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

NEXT QUESTION

“I feel overwhelmed. I’m taking music lessons and competing in sports and trying to serve in the Church and get good grades. How do I find balance?”

SEND YOUR ANSWER, along with your full name, birth date, ward and stake (or branch and district), and photograph (including your parent’s written permission to print the photo, if you are under 18) to:

New Era, Q&A, 4/07

50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420

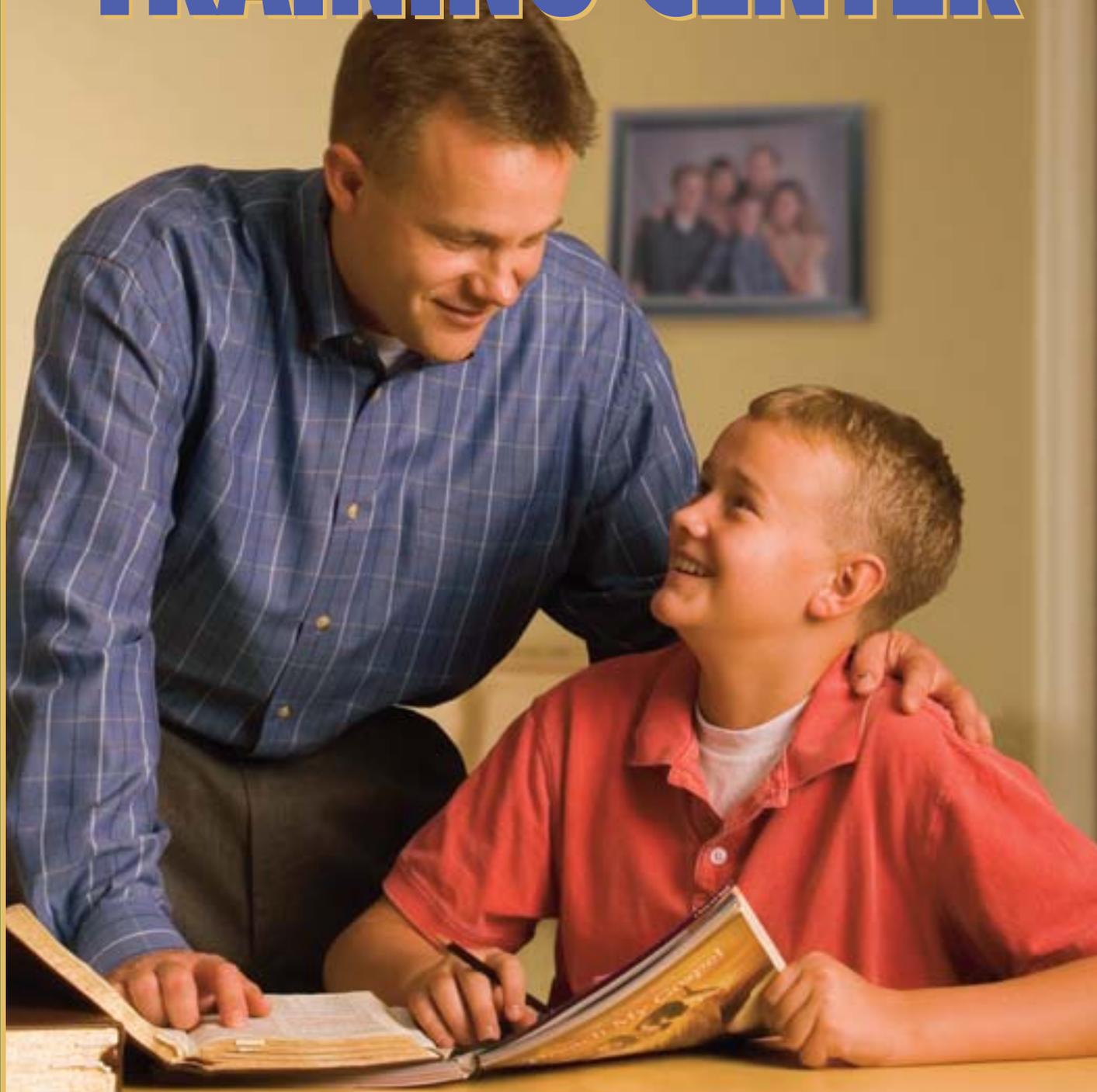
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org

Please respond by April 15, 2007.

For more about gaining a testimony, read “The Quest for Spiritual Knowledge” by President Boyd K. Packer, *New Era*, Jan. 2006, p. 2.

MISSIONARY TRAINING CENTER



NOW IS THE TIME TO PREPARE. HOME IS THE PLACE TO START.
(See D&C 38:40.)

MTC

INSIDE THE

BY DANIELLE NYE POULTER

A missionary training center is the first stop for most missionaries. Here's what to expect at the biggest one of all in Provo, Utah.

“Dear Mom, here’s a picture of my MTC district” (above right).

In the MTC bookstore, missionaries can get just about anything they’ll need—from shampoo to scripture cases (opposite center).

The cafeteria is one of the MTC’s most loved locales (opposite lower center).

The MTC president greets two elders in the hallway (lower right).

Today, the familiar tune of “Called to Serve” (*Hymns*, no. 249) holds special meaning for you as you hear its strains echo through the halls. You have been called to serve as a full-time missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and now you’re about to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of that calling as you report to the Provo Missionary Training Center, or one of the other 16 missionary training centers around the world.

Your First Day

You arrive at the missionary training center (MTC) in missionary attire, perhaps accompanied by your family if they want to be there and can make the trip with you. You check in and receive a name badge with your new title: “Elder” or “Sister.” Sounds good, doesn’t it?

Next is a short orientation meeting. The MTC president and his wife speak, welcoming you and reassuring your family that you’ll

be well taken care of. A video presentation then gives you a glimpse of how the MTC can refine and prepare you to be the best missionary possible. At the end of this meeting, it’s time to tell your family good-bye and continue your orientation with the other missionaries. Of course, there are hugs and tears at this point, but as the speaker reminds you, saying good-bye is like pulling off a bandage: the quicker it’s done, the less it hurts.

You are then led to another area of the MTC. At the first stop, you receive your information packet. In it you find a card with your mailing address, your companion’s name, your residence hall and district assignment, and your branch president’s information. You also receive your schedule, which tells you when and where to be for your entire stay in the MTC. A volunteer explains all the information in the packet and answers any questions you have.

Next, you check some forms with your personal information and report any special



dietary or medical needs. Then a volunteer goes over your immunization record with you. Depending on where you're going, you might receive some additional shots at this point.

You then head to the MTC bookstore. You've taken a peek at your schedule and realize that a lot of your day will be spent in class. That means you'll need textbooks—just like in school. You're given a copy of *Preach My Gospel*

both in English and, if needed, in your mission language. Everything you do in class and during personal study will be connected to this book. Missionaries learning a language also get their workbooks here.

After you pick up your luggage, you find your room. There you meet your companion and other members of your district. Depending on your mission language, your district has between 8 and 12 missionaries, who could all be going to the same mission or several different missions.

In the afternoon, the MTC presidency hosts an orientation meeting for new missionaries. Here you get additional information on the organization of the MTC and the resources available to you.

After dinner in the cafeteria, you meet your branch presidency. While in the MTC, your branch president will conduct Sunday meetings, hold personal interviews, and be available to answer questions and help you solve





Classes at the MTC are very interactive (above).

After teaching a lesson to volunteer “investigators” at the TRC, missionaries review their video recording (right).

At the TEC, missionaries fine-tune their teaching skills (lower right).

In the LRC, missionaries learn about their mission language and culture from native-speaking volunteers (opposite left).

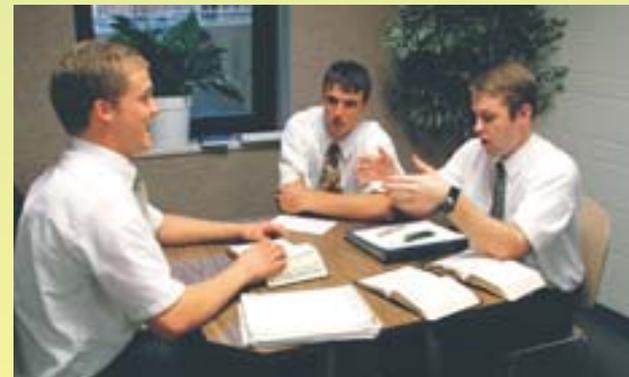
At the TALL lab, interactive computer programs help with language skills (opposite right).

problems. There are 56 branches at the MTC, divided into two districts with district presidencies (the equivalent of stake presidencies). The districts are presided over by the MTC presidency. After you meet your branch president, it’s lights out at 10:30 p.m.

The Training Begins

The purpose of the MTC is, after all, *training* missionaries, so a lot of what you do here takes place in classes with your district, or in larger meetings. The biggest blocks of time on your schedule say “classroom instruction.” Classes are very interactive, and your two teachers, both returned missionaries, share their enthusiasm and testimony with you. At least two to three hours of your classroom time each day is used at your discretion, so you can get help just where you need it. You and your companion decide together where to spend your missionary-directed time, or MDT. Here are some of your options.

* You can get hands-on teaching experience at the **Teaching Resource Center (TRC)**. In a living-room setting, you and your com-



panion teach a lesson you’ve prepared to a volunteer acting as an investigator. A video recording of the lesson helps you see ways to improve.

* For some extra teaching help, you can go to the **Teaching Evaluation Center (TEC)**. The teachers in the TEC are available to assist you in fine-tuning your teaching skills.



You can practice teaching, contacting, testifying, resolving concerns, or planning a lesson.

* If you're learning one of the several languages taught using the **Technology-Assisted Language Learning (TALL)** software, you spend up to two hours a day in the TALL lab. Interactive computer programs help you work

PREPARING FOR THE MTC

To help you prepare for the MTC experience, Steven D. Kohlert, former president of the Provo MTC, offers the following tips:

- 1. Gain a knowledge and testimony of the Restoration and the Atonement.** Begin studying *Preach My Gospel* now, especially chapter 3. Gain your own testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and of His Atonement.
- 2. Get to know the scriptures.** As a missionary, your lesson material comes from the scriptures, so be familiar with them before you come.
- 3. Gain missionary experiences.** Don't wait until you're set apart to start talking about the gospel. Look for opportunities to share what you know and volunteer to go out with the missionaries in your area.
- 4. Take every opportunity to teach.** Accept invitations to prepare and present lessons in family home evening, seminary, and Sunday meetings.
- 5. Leave the world behind.** Don't justify bringing things with you to the MTC that aren't important for a missionary, whether objects or attitudes. Clear up any past sins or legal or financial problems before you come. Strictly avoid any situation where your worthiness could be endangered.
- 6. Start looking and acting like a missionary right now.** Avoid the attitude that you "just go" on a mission. You must *become* a missionary—starting now.



on vocabulary, grammar, tasks (like setting up appointments in your mission language), and phrases.

* In the **Learning Resource Center (LRC)** a volunteer, usually a native speaker of the language you're learning, can do language role-playing with you. Other LRC services include a learning lab, language and reading tutoring, and language films.

PROVO MTC BY THE NUMBERS

- 2,443**—Missionaries in the Provo MTC the day the *New Era* visited. The number ranges from 1,700 to 2,700.
- 4,300**—The most missionaries the Provo MTC has had at one time.
- 3, 8, or 12**—Weeks a missionary will spend in the MTC, depending on the language he or she is learning.
- 324**—New missionaries who reported to the MTC the day we visited. Between 200 and 500 arrive each Wednesday.
- 300**—Average number of missionaries who participate in the MTC choir.
- 50**—Languages taught at the Provo MTC, including Icelandic and Malagasy.
- 26**—Languages MTC meetings are translated into for missionaries learning English as a second language.
- 2,700**—Service people, including employees, service missionaries, and volunteers, who keep the MTC running.
- 15**—The smallest number of missionaries in a branch. The most is 75.
- 40%**—Percentage of investigators who call the Referral Center who then agree to have missionaries visit them.
- 25,000**—The most calls the Referral Center has received in one week.



* When people call the Church in response to TV ads or pass-along cards, those calls go straight to the **Referral Center (RC)** at the MTC. Here you're not role-playing; you're doing the real thing. As you answer calls, you have the opportunity to testify and to invite the caller to meet with missionaries in their area. Many baptisms result from referrals received in this way.

Additional Learning Experiences

To help you master important doctrinal topics, such as faith in Jesus Christ, the Restoration, and the Book of Mormon, you attend a total of eight Large Group Meetings while at the MTC. These meetings of 80–500 missionaries are taught by the most experienced teachers at the MTC and correlate with the gospel topic you're studying in the classroom that week.

Every Tuesday evening you attend a devotional presented by a General Authority or another special speaker. You sit with your branch at the devotional and then meet afterward as a district to talk about what you learned. Some of your most powerful spiritual experiences in the MTC can take place in these devotionals.

On the Sabbath, you will meet with your branch for

Relief Society or priesthood meetings, as well as sacrament meeting. Other Sunday activities include priesthood interviews, personal study, a leadership meeting, and a fireside with the MTC presidency.

MTC Services

There's a lot of learning going on in the MTC, but there are also some practical matters to take care of. During your weekly preparation time you can use any of the MTC services. The bookstore has writing supplies, backpacks, clothing, and hygiene products. You can also get photos processed here and mail letters and packages. Two doctors and several nurses are on site if you need medical care, and a barbershop is available for both elders and sisters.

You can use coin-operated washers and dryers once a week during your preparation time, and there are dry-cleaning facilities available if you need them.

You also attend the Provo temple each week. It's just a short walk from the MTC.

Every week your district helps with a cleaning or maintenance assignment to keep the MTC at its best. You also go to the gym four to five times a week for athletic games



Missionaries gather in a Large Group

Meeting to study doctrinal topics (opposite).

Every Tuesday evening there is a devotional presented by a General Authority or other special speaker (far left).

Preparation time each week is often used to visit and write letters while doing laundry (left).

The Brazil MTC (below).

with your district or for your own physical exercise.

Ready, Set . . .

Above all, there's a powerful spirit at the MTC. It's a place of training and anticipation, to be sure, but it's also a place where your energy and ability can continue to grow. **NE**

Visit the Provo MTC at www.mtc.byu.edu.

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

The first MTCs outside the United States were established in Brazil and New Zealand in November 1977. There are now 16 international MTCs located in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, England, Ghana, Guatemala, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, and Spain.

These centers train missionaries in Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Italian, Samoan, Japanese, Korean, English, Tongan, Tagalog, and Cebuano.

The different types of training programs at international MTCs are:

- * For missionaries from that country or other countries in the area who all speak the same language.
- * For North American missionaries who do not attend the Provo MTC and receive all of their pre-mission training at the international MTC.
- * For North American missionaries learning Spanish who receive three weeks of initial training at the Provo MTC and then transfer to the international MTC for an additional five weeks of training.

The training curriculum and daily schedule at international MTCs are based on those at the Provo MTC, so they are organized similarly, use the same materials and programs, and have the same objectives.

Each MTC is presided over by an MTC president. He and his wife are called to serve for two years. A professional staff with other administrators and teachers assist the president.

Staff at international MTCs receive training from Church headquarters via video conference each month.

Missionaries at international MTCs can attend a nearby temple each week, and they receive frequent instruction from General Authorities in Area Presidencies.



"WE'VE GOT TO FIND HER"

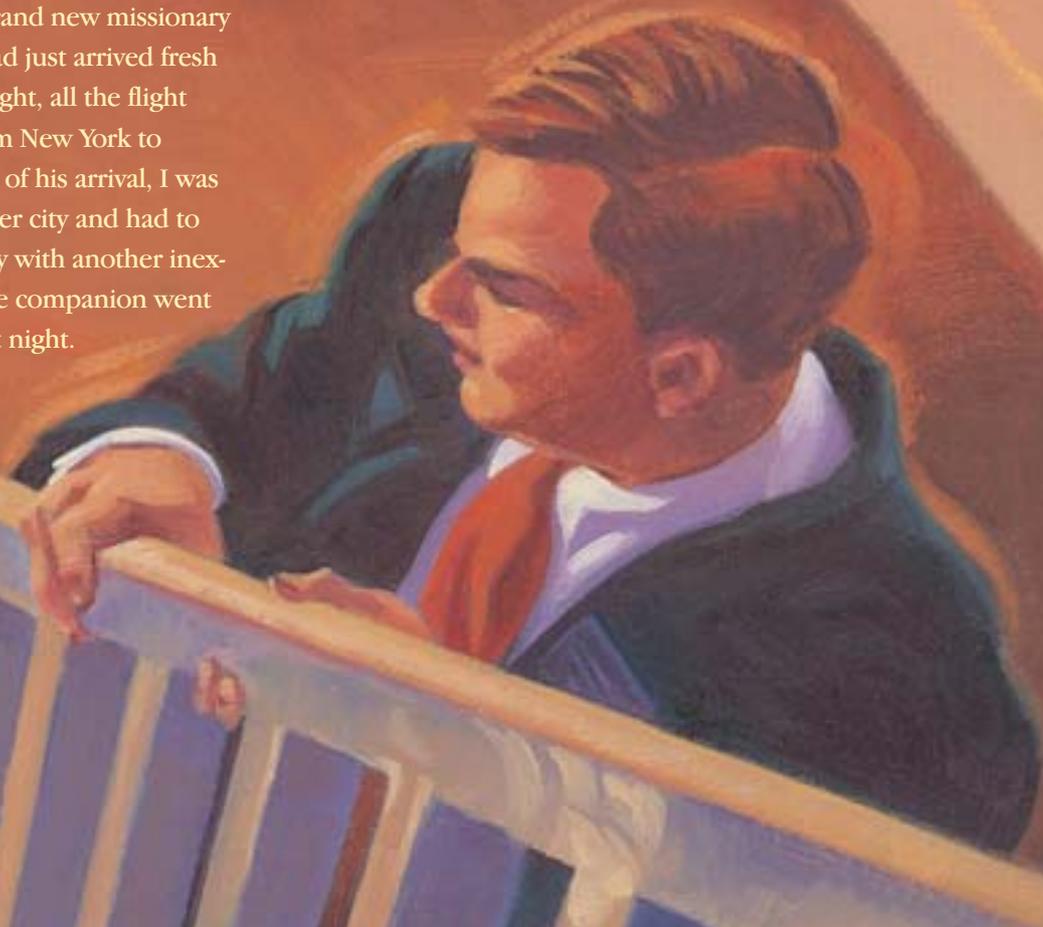
BY ELDER BRUCE C. HAFEN
Of the Seventy



I said it was a waste of time, but my companion knew we had to keep going.



When I had been on my mission in Germany about a year, I was assigned to work with a brand new missionary named Elder Keeler, who had just arrived fresh from converting, so he thought, all the flight attendants on the plane from New York to Frankfurt. Within a few days of his arrival, I was called to a meeting in another city and had to leave him to work in our city with another inexperienced missionary, whose companion went with me. I returned late that night.



The next morning I asked him how his day had gone. He broke into an enthusiastic smile and said he had found a family who would surely join the Church. In our mission, it was rare to see anyone join the Church, let alone a whole family. I asked for more details, but in his excitement he had forgotten to write down either the name or the address. All he could remember was that the family lived on the top floor of a big apartment house. "Oh, that's great," I thought to myself as I contemplated all those flights of stairs.

He also explained that he knew so little German that he had exchanged but a few words with the woman who answered the door. But he did think she wanted us to come back—and he wanted to go find her and have me talk to her that very minute.

I explained that the people who don't slam the door in our faces do not necessarily intend to join the Church. But off we went to find her, mostly to humor him. He couldn't remember the right street, either, so we picked a likely spot and began climbing up and down those endless polished staircases.

After a frustrating hour, I decided I had to level with him. Based on my many months of experience, I said, it was simply not worth our time to try any longer to find her. I had developed a tolerance for the realities of missionary work and simply knew more than he did about it. His eyes filled with tears and his lower lip began to tremble. "Elder Hafen," he said, "I came on my mission to find the honest in heart. The Spirit *told* me that that woman will someday be a member of the Church."

I thought I would run him ragged to teach him a lesson. But in the end, he taught me that "being realistic" can inhibit the workings of the Spirit.

So I decided to teach him a lesson. I raced him up one staircase after another until he was ready to drop, and so was I. "Elder Keeler," I asked, "had enough?" "No," he said. "We've got to find her." I began to smolder. I decided to work him until he begged to stop—then maybe he would get the message.

Finally, at the top of a long flight of stairs, we found the apartment. She came to the door. He thrashed my ribs with his elbow and whispered loudly, "That's her, Elder. That's the one. Talk to her!"

So I did.

Not long ago, my wife and I were with this woman's family in the Frankfurt Germany Temple, where the father, now a temple sealer, performed the marriage for their youngest child and her husband. It was a sacred moment for all of us. Earlier he had been a bishop, and the mother was a Relief Society president. Three of their four children have served missions. All four have married in

the temple. They are raising righteous families and contributing their strength to the wards where they live. Their lives reflect the fruits that grow from 40 years of living the gospel.

That experience is a lesson I can never forget about the limitations of skepticism and the tolerance for ambiguity that comes with learning and experience. I hope that I will never be so aware of "reality" that I am unresponsive to the whisperings of heaven. **NE**

From The Believing Heart: Nourishing the Seed of Faith, Deseret Book (1990), 67–68. Used by permission of the publisher.

Read about missionary experiences each month in the *New Era*.

Subscribe at www.ldscatalog.com.



FIT TO SERVE

Spiritual preparation is vital to a missionary's success. But physical and mental preparation are also required. The Missionary Department Health Services Committee has these suggestions for physical and mental readiness.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Start at least 2 years before your mission, and work with your doctor and dentist.

Exercise regularly (5–6 times a week). Missionaries need to be able to walk 6 miles a day and ride a bike 12 miles a day.

Get enough sleep (7–8 hours a day). Make a habit of being in bed between 10:30 p.m. and midnight and out of bed between 6:30 and 8:00 a.m.

Maintain an appropriate weight for your height.

Eat healthy meals, and learn to prepare them using proper sanitary and cooking methods.

Practice good hygiene. Wash your hands, care for your nails and hair, wear neat and clean clothes, and keep an orderly room.

Resolve chronic problems. Treat gastrointestinal, heart, or breathing problems; headaches; and athletic injuries or other orthopedic problems.

Take care of your teeth. Brush and floss your teeth, make regular dentist visits, and repair cavities. If you need orthodontic care (braces), complete it before your mission.

Treat skin problems, such as extreme acne.

MENTAL HEALTH

Some concerns may require evaluation by a mental health counselor. Where available, use LDS Family Services.

Emotional extremes may require professional help. These include excessive feelings of depression, anxiety, or fear; mood swings; or problems with anger or temper.

Obsessive thoughts or extreme worry, guilt, perfectionism, or repetitive behavior (like hand-washing) may also require professional help.

Treat extreme learning problems, such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

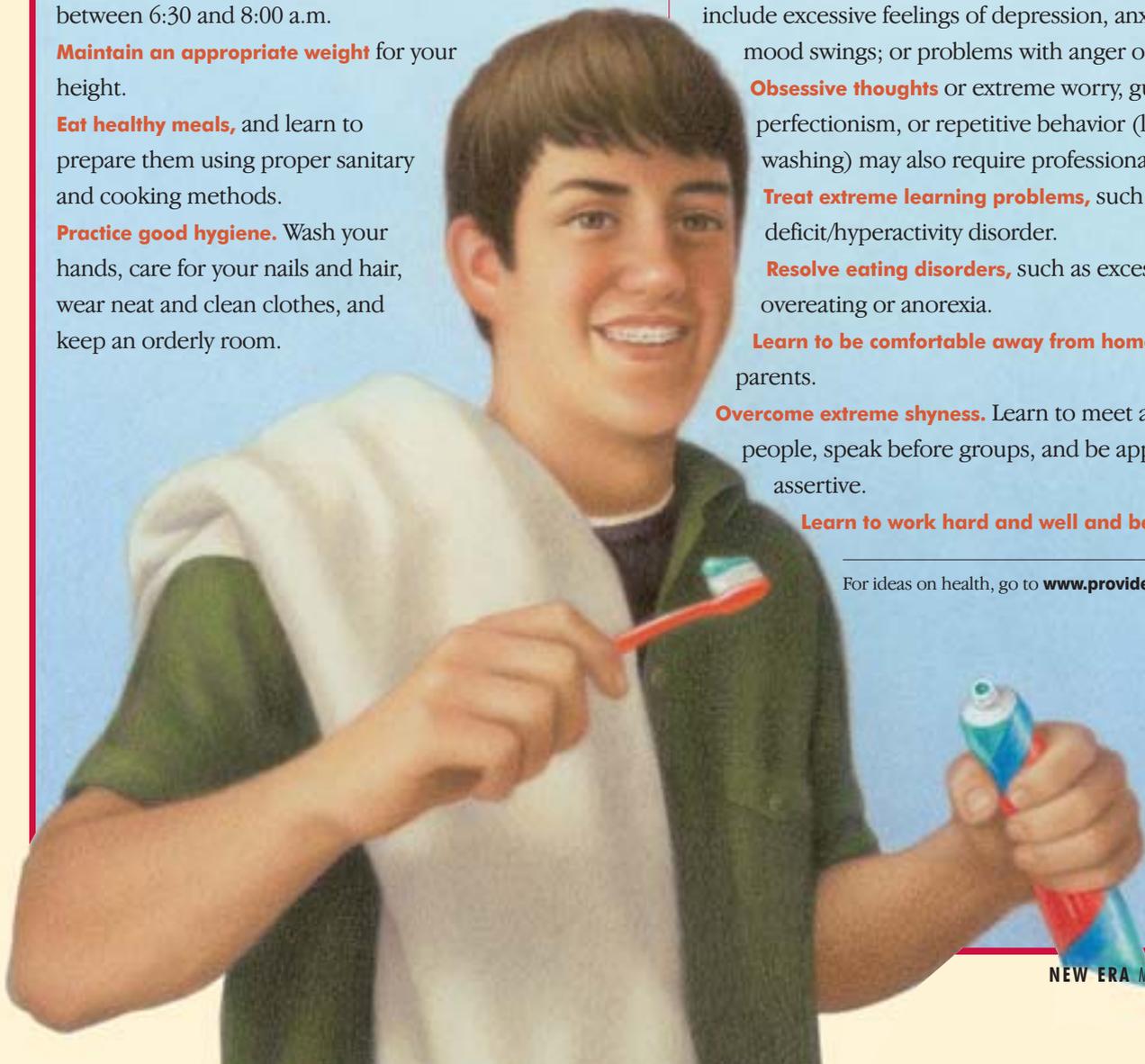
Resolve eating disorders, such as excessive overeating or anorexia.

Learn to be comfortable away from home and parents.

Overcome extreme shyness. Learn to meet and talk to people, speak before groups, and be appropriately assertive.

Learn to work hard and well and be reliable. *NE*

For ideas on health, go to www.providentliving.org.



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



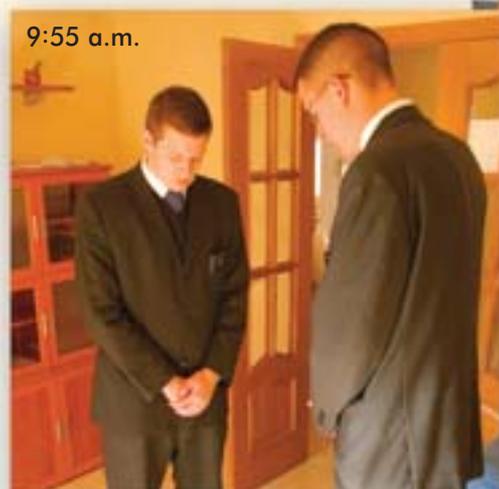
a man from France, an investigator they're going to invite to be baptized.

"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. 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.

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.

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."



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



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.



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.



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."

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.



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.



THE FIVE M'S OF MISSIONARY WORK



The message is divine, and the missionaries who preach it are called of God by prophecy.

PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON
First Counselor in the First Presidency

Understanding these aspects of missionary life will contribute to a missionary's success.

I'd like to speak about "Five M's of Missionary Work."

1. The Message

The message is divine. I think our keynote was sounded by our Lord and our Savior, who stands at the head of the great army of missionaries worldwide. After His Resurrection, He appeared to His 11 disciples. He could have given them any counsel, any expression, any warning that He chose to give. But what did He say? It's recorded in Matthew 28:18–20. He said as follows:

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

What a promise! If we respond affirmatively to that sacred call, that binding authority, "I will be with you always, even unto the end of the world." I can't think of a greater promise.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said simply this: "After all that has been said, the greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel" (*History of the Church*, 2:478).

What is the gospel? It is the message we take, a message that declares that an angel flew in the midst of heaven and that the gospel of Jesus Christ was restored. If we'll remember that and the other elements of the message missionaries bear, we'll be effective. In that message is the Book of Mormon, which is part and parcel of every missionary's library—internal, what he knows, and external, what he teaches.

The Book of Mormon, the true nature of the Godhead—the world hungers for this message. It's part of that which missionaries will take to the people.

Another element that I have found very important is that the Church is based on a foundation of Apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone (see Ephesians 2:20). And we emphasize a "living" prophet today. I testify that President Hinckley is such a living prophet—the prophet, seer, and revelator of the Church.



If I could put my finger on that portion of the gospel which seems to penetrate a broader range of people and penetrate more deeply their hearts and their souls and move them to action, it's the plan of salvation, or our Heavenly Father's plan—where we came from, why we're here, where we go when we leave mortality.

It's been my observation that the stumbling block for investigators is not the Word of Wisdom. It isn't Sabbath day observance. It's a testimony that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God. It's very important that we declare that message. The message is divine. Remember that.

2. The Missionary

The second M: the missionary, the desire of a lifetime.

One of the Brethren went to a conference

and brought back to me a very simple note from a missionary.

"Dear President Monson, You shook hands with me when I was 17. You told me to go on a mission. I'm here in Seattle on my mission. Thank you." Think of it—the influence of a handshake.

Missionaries are marvelous. They're called of God by prophecy. Only those who are sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators make the suggested call to a missionary, and they're called by the prophet of God. They represent the fruits of all that is good within the Latter-day Saint family.



Members help convince investigators and strengthen new members (right).

Missions can have an esprit de corps. In Canada we made sure our missionaries knew that they were in the place where Parley P. Pratt had converted John Taylor (far right).

Mission presidents show missionaries how to achieve success (bottom right).



3. The Member

Let's talk just a little bit about the member.

When I was a mission president in Toronto, Canada, we knew that investigators worry about the changes that are going to come into their lives. We had a practice of supplying teams of members to help the missionaries. For example, the missionaries were working with a Catholic family (and that was the majority faith in our area). About midway through the set of discussions they could call on Brother and Sister Anthony Belglio. They had been Catholics. They'd joined the Church and were a great help to the missionaries. When the missionaries had borne their testimony, Brother and Sister Belglio would say, "We know what

you're going through. We were in the same position, but when we heard the truth and realized that a prophet was on the earth at this time, there was no question what we must do, and we never looked back and we've never been sorry." It buttressed the testimony of the missionaries.

Brother Stoneman from up in the north area had been a member of the United Church of Canada. He'd been employed by the United Church of Canada. He was their printer. He lost his job. He found another, better one. He and his wife would go to the investigator who has been a member of the United Church of Canada and bear their testimony. He said, "I lost my job. I lost many of my friends, but I found a wealth of new

friends, and I found the truth. You will not regret it.”

We had others who had been members of the Anglican Church. In fact, we had three teams in every area where missionaries were laboring. And what did it do for those new members? It strengthened them. What did it do for the investigator? It helped convince him. It was a proselyting method; it was a fellowshipping method. It worked both ways.

4. The Mission

Now, a word about the mission itself. Build an esprit de corps in your mission. It doesn't matter which one it is or where it is. We were in Canada. I didn't know anything about Canada, but I did a little reading. I found out that Canada was the only place the Prophet Joseph Smith ever went outside of his own country. That's also where the early elders of the Church went to prepare for their mission to Great Britain. I let our missionaries know that. Sister Monson pointed out that Brigham Young went to Kingston, Ontario, and labored 30 days, walking through snow hip deep, and converted and baptized 40 people. I made sure our missionaries knew that. Parley P. Pratt, in answer to a referral, finding a man from England named John Taylor no more than 20 miles from Toronto, brought him into the Church, and he became the third President of the Church. All of those things we would weave into the history, the goals and the objectives of our missionaries.

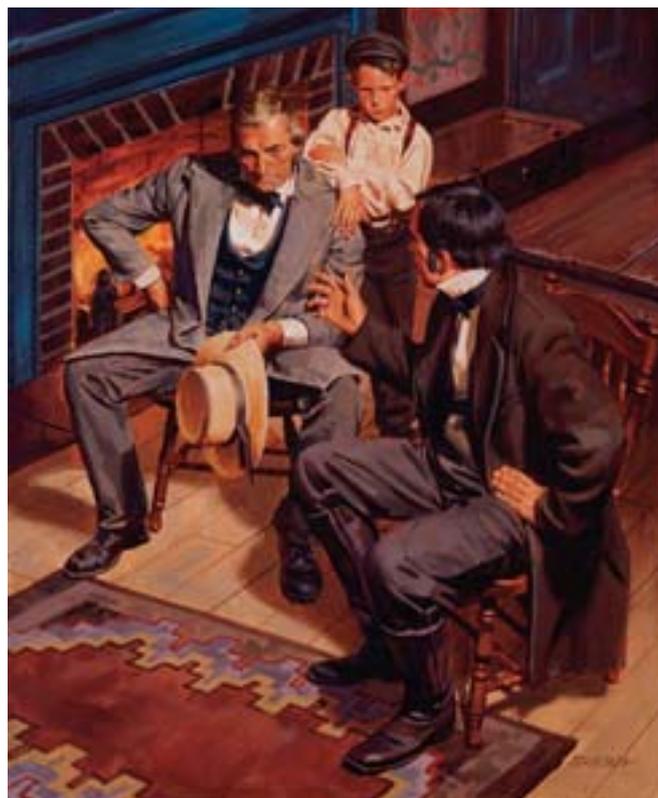


ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL MANN

5. The Mission President

Now, a word about mission presidents. Their philosophy is that of a teacher who says, “No one fails in my class.” They're responsible for the missionaries' success. Every missionary wants success, and the mission president shows him how to achieve success.

He helps each missionary to work, but more significant yet, he helps each one to work effectively so that the kingdom of God will grow under his inspired direction.

Remember: “I am with you always,” said the Lord (Matthew 28:20). In addition, the great promise found in the 84th section of the Doctrine and Covenants is yours: “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (v. 88).

See *True to the Faith*, pp. 104–6, or online at the Gospel Library on www.lds.org.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE BUNDERSON



ME?

A SISTER MISSIONARY?

BY TARYN SALMON

I didn't realize how much I wanted to share the gospel until I signed a contract promising I wouldn't.

Teaching English in Wuhan, China, was an amazing experience. I had always wanted to go somewhere and do something service oriented, and this was the perfect opportunity. I was part of a volunteer program organized by a college professor. I found that I loved teaching. Even more, I loved getting to know the students, the Chinese teachers, and the other volunteers. But one thing was tough for me.

We signed contracts as we joined the program stating that we couldn't say anything about religion. If we did we would be sent home. I spent a lot of time thinking about that. I cared a lot about these people. They were my friends now, and they didn't have the gospel. But I kept my promise.

When I returned to Brigham Young University, however, I found myself thinking that although I had given service, I still had more I wanted to give. I kept thinking how much I would like to teach people the gospel so they could know what I know. I spent a whole semester thinking about applying to serve a full-time mission. I have always wanted to serve, but I needed to know that's what the Lord wanted me to do.

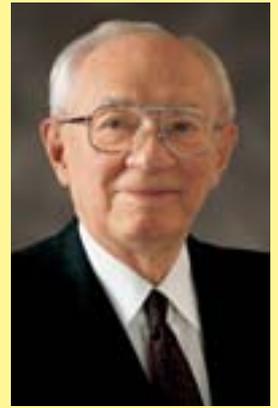
I received good advice from my brother and my two brothers-in-law, just by speaking with them about their own mission experiences that were so life-changing. And I talked with my dad, because not only is he my dad, but he's also my home-ward bishop. No one ever made me

feel pressured or pushed. They just encouraged me to listen to the Spirit and do what was right.

I fasted. I prayed. I searched my soul. And I listened to general conference. When I heard Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles give his address, "Now Is the Time to Serve a Mission!" it seemed that the Lord was speaking directly to me through him. (See *Ensign*, May 2006, 87.)

I made the decision to submit my application. I was excited, but I was also a little scared. I think much of the anxiety came from not knowing where I was going to go. My father called me several times up at school, giving me words of encouragement. I think my experience was bringing back memories of his mission, and he had a lot of neat experiences to share.

Even though I was at school, I asked for my call to be sent to my parents' home in Tempe, Arizona. When the envelope arrived, my dad set up a conference call, so there was my family in Tempe, Tucson, and Mesa. We all sang the hymn "I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go," and I was definitely wondering where that would be. But as soon as my mom read I was going to Asunción, Paraguay, I felt an overwhelming peace and comfort. I haven't had a moment's worry since. I know that's where the Lord wants me to go, 100 percent. And this time as I go to serve, I don't have to worry—I can talk about the gospel with everyone I meet. **NE**



“**W**ith reference to young sister missionaries, there has been some misunderstanding of earlier counsel regarding single sisters serving as missionaries. We need some young women. They perform a remarkable work. They can get in homes where the elders cannot. But it should be kept in mind that young sisters are not under obligation to go on missions. They should not feel that they have a duty comparable to that of young men, but some will wish to go. If so, they should counsel with their bishop as well as their parents.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “To the Bishops of the Church,” Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting, June 2004, 27.

BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY
Church Magazines

They couldn't serve full-time missions. But that didn't mean they couldn't serve.

Jacob and Jeff Balls grew up on Cherokee Street in Pocatello, Idaho. And growing up on Cherokee Street means you're part of the unofficial "neighborhood club" that works together, plays together, and advances in the Aaronic Priesthood together. You remain worthy and you prepare to serve a full-time mission. That's just the way it is and has been for years. During the last decade, more than a dozen young men from Cherokee Street have



DETERMINED *to Serve*





served or are serving full-time missions.

But Jacob and Jeff both were born with an intellectual disability—not so extensive that they can’t be helpful and involved, but enough that full-time missionary service isn’t possible for them.

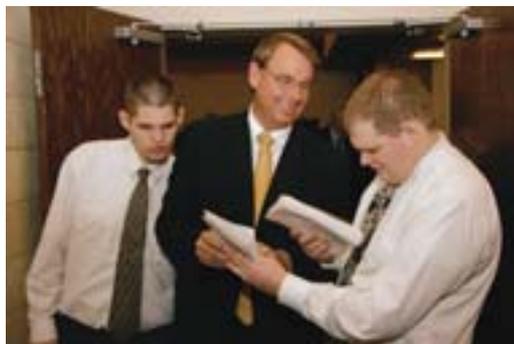
Still, they wanted to serve. What to do?

Plan in Advance

Robert Chambers, who was their bishop in the Indian Hills Ward at the time, explains what happened. “Everybody loved Jacob. His priesthood leaders and his quorum, as well as his family, were always interested in providing him with opportunities that were similar in nature to the other boys in the quorum. About the time he was ordained a priest, we started talking with his mom and dad and his priesthood leaders, looking forward to the time when the young men in the quorum would be going on missions. We wanted to find an alternative way for him to give service, too.

Jacob and Jeff’s father, Dan, continues. “We went to see the bishop to ask about alternatives to missionary service. We found out it was already on his mind, and he was working on it.”

When he turned 19, Jacob was called to



The Balls brothers have found a lot of joy in giving service. Jacob loves to help teach children about baptism, both of them have regular meetings with the bishop of their home ward, and both serve as ushers in the singles ward in their stake. They share their experiences with their parents and with each other, and once a week Jeff serves in the Idaho Falls Temple.

Jeff and Jacob study scriptures together, join their other brothers for a family dinner, talk to the full-time missionaries, and share in their family's legacy of missionary work—grandparents, brothers, and a sister-in-law have served, and younger brother Jesse is now on a full-time mission in New York. Jeff works well with his supervisor in the temple cafeteria.



serve with the ward mission leader, teaching each soon-to-be eight-year-old child in the stake a class about preparing for baptism and confirmation. He was told that part of his service was to study his scriptures regularly. He was also called to serve as an usher at sacrament meetings. Jacob served so faithfully that his calling was extended. He is still serving.

Look for Opportunities

By the time Jeff was missionary age, Bishop Chambers had been called as the stake president. But the new bishop, David Nye, had already heard from Jeff, who wanted his opportunity to serve, too. President Chambers and Bishop Nye arranged for Jeff to work one day each week in the cafeteria of the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple. In addition, Jeff was called to serve with his brother as an usher, and they were encouraged to study their scriptures together.

Both young men check in regularly with their bishop, and from time to time with their stake president, to report on their progress. That progress has been magnificent.

The young men are enthusiastic about their callings and greet everyone they meet with a handshake and a smile. In return, they are greeted with friendship and kindness. Everybody in their home ward, as well as in the Riverside Singles Branch, which meets in the same building—in fact, just about everybody in the stake—recognizes the Balls brothers and knows about their special assignments. Lots of children in the stake remember Jacob as one of the special teachers who helped them learn about baptism and confirmation. And every



Wednesday, Jeff's mother Denise makes the one-hour drive to the temple so Jeff can spend the afternoon working in the cafeteria.

There, Jeff has made friends with cafeteria workers and temple patrons alike. He gathers up dishes and helps serve food, and yes, he loves to eat the meal he is provided, especially the slice of pie. But his number-one accomplishment, he says, is to help people feel happy. It's something Jeff does in the house of the Lord, and something both Jacob and Jeff do in the ward, branch, and stake where they serve.

Since both Jacob and Jeff are living at home, they have been able to serve as home teachers with their father. They have also helped in the ward nursery and in the ward library. And they are also able to bless the sacrament regularly. "Jacob and Jeff take about three minutes longer to say the prayers," Bishop Nye observes, "but they are so sincere that the spirituality is augmented





OTHER WAYS TO SERVE

Because of health problems or other circumstances, some people can't serve a regular full-time mission. If you have been excused from full-time missionary service but would like to serve the Lord in some extra way, ask your bishop to discuss the possibilities with you. He and the stake president may help you find other service opportunities in your area. Some places you might possibly serve include:

- **A seminary or institute**, working in an office, at a reception desk, or as computer support.
- **A welfare facility**, such as a bishops' storehouse, cannery, Deseret Industries, employment center, or other welfare facility.
- **A Church-owned farm or ranch**, doing chores or clerical work.
- **A temple**, working in the cafeteria, in the laundry, or on the temple grounds.
- **A visitors' center**, working in an office or at a reception desk (sisters only).
- **A missionary training center**, working in the referral center, in the mail room, in the cafeteria, or with building maintenance.
- **A meetinghouse**, helping with building maintenance.

By serving in the Church, you show the Lord your love for Him and your commitment to your baptismal covenant. And service helps to build the Lord's kingdom on the earth. As He said:

"Be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.

"Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days" (D&C 64:33–34).

immeasurably." With tears in his eyes, their father talks about the example older brother Jeremy set by walking Jacob and Jeff through their sacrament assignments as deacons until they understood how to pass, as teachers until they understood how to prepare, and as priests until they were comfortable saying the prayers and distributing the trays.

Join in the Legacy

Just as Jacob and Jeff have looked to older brothers as an example, they are now passing on that same legacy of priesthood service to their younger brother, Jesse, 19, now serving in the New York Utica Mission, and their youngest brother Jason, 17, who is also preparing for a full-time mission.

"Without Jacob and Jeff, I wouldn't be who I am," Jesse says. "They prove that there's something good out there for every person to do."

And the neighborhood club?

Jacob and Jeff's service is their way of maintaining that tradition, too. "They know they can't do things that everyone else can do, but they know that in this way they are serving others," their father says. "Just because they are mentally limited doesn't change the fact that they have important things to achieve."

Ask Jacob and Jeff Balls if there is something that those who can't serve full-time mission *can* do, and there's no question what their answer will be. Both Jacob and Jeff now know there is always much to do about something, even when that something is close to home. **NE**

Service opportunities are listed under Other Resources at www.lds.org.

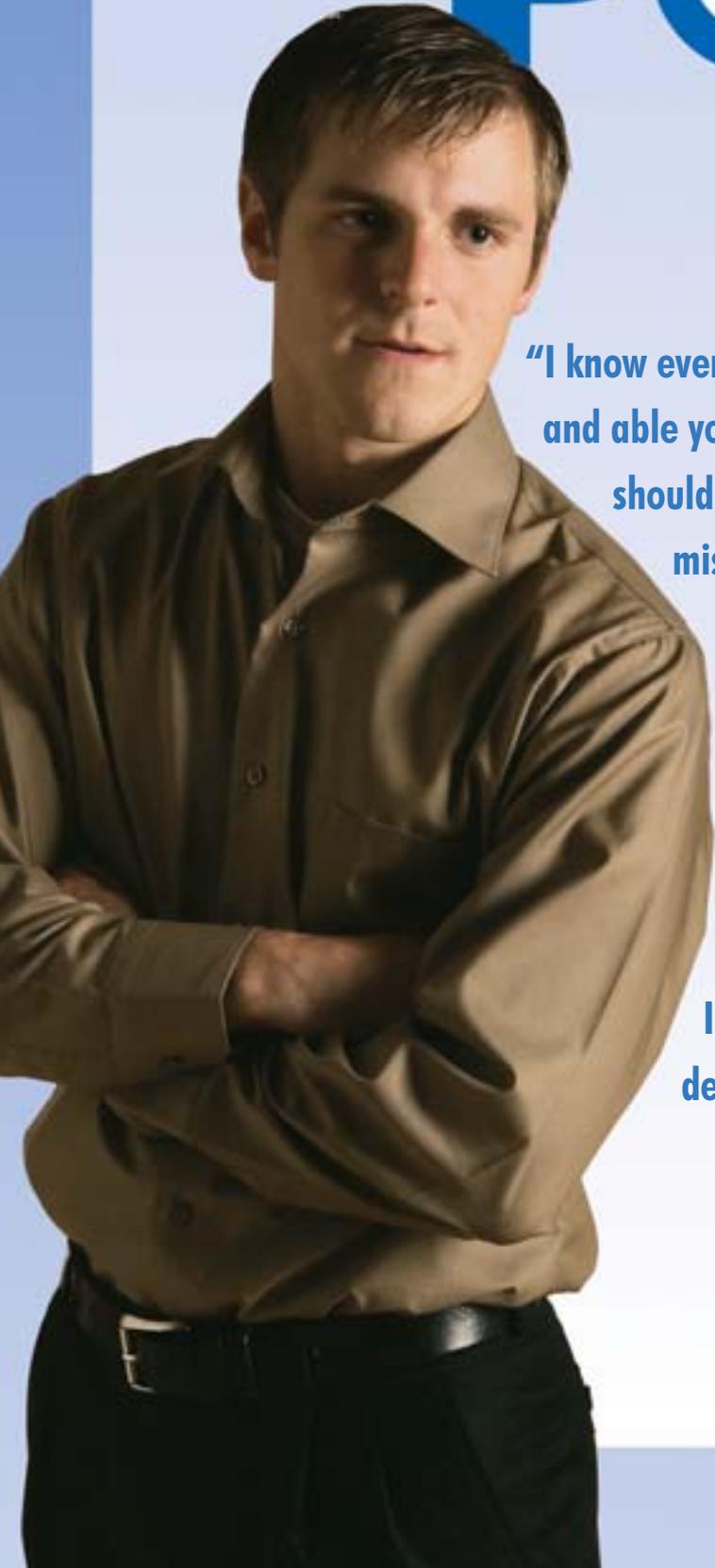


"We recognize that it may not be wise for some of our young men and young women to face the rigors and challenges of a full-time mission. If priesthood leaders excuse any of you from full-time missionary service, we ask you and your families to accept the decision and move forward. You can prepare to participate in the saving ordinances of the temple and find other ways to be of service. And we ask all of our members to be supportive and to show great love and understanding in assisting all of our faithful youth in their various Church callings."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "One More," Ensign, May 2005, 69.



POINT



"I know every worthy and able young man should serve a

mission. But

I have no desire to serve.

How can I gain that desire?"

You can do many things to gain a desire to serve. First, you can pray for this desire (see 3 Nephi 19:24). Since a mission call comes from the Lord, He can bless you with the desire to fulfill that calling.

Strengthen your own testimony and conversion. Notice what happened to people in the scriptures after they were converted. Paul, Enos, Alma, and the sons of Mosiah wanted to share the gospel only after they gained testimonies and had a change of heart.

Consider serving simply because you love the Lord and because the gospel brings you so many blessings. Most likely, you will become more excited about a mission as you think about your love and gratitude toward Him.

Find out what a mission is like. Ask current and returned missionaries why they went on a mission and what they experienced. President Gordon B. Hinckley said, "What appears today to be a sacrifice will prove instead to be the greatest investment that you will ever make" ("The Question of a Mission," *Ensign*, May 1986, 41).

Elders and sisters come home from their missions more confident, converted, and committed. They are more knowledgeable about the gospel, life, and relationships. A mission prepares them for school, work, marriage, and future Church service. They've learned how to work hard, pray with faith, and teach by the Spirit. They've learned that joy comes from service and that the gospel brings people happiness. **NE**

“Sometimes people ask me challenging questions about the Church, and I’m not sure how to answer them. How should I respond?”

Whether people are asking a sincere question or are just trying to upset you, your response should always be honest and genuine. Don’t be defensive or argumentative.

If they ask about something you don’t know much about, just tell them what you do know, along with a simple, humble testimony to help them feel the Spirit. Or if you want to give a quick answer that will lead them to more information, visit www.mormon.org with them, which gives straightforward answers to many common questions.

Be honest about the things you don’t know, but tell them that you can find out. If people are interested in finding out about the Church, they won’t mind waiting for an answer. If they’re *really* interested, go ahead and offer to arrange a meeting with the missionaries.

People have been asking challenging questions about the Church practically since the day it was founded. You’re not the only one who has had to deal with them. Talk to your parents, your bishop, the full-time missionaries, or other members. They’ll either know how to answer or where to look for an answer. A couple of good resources you can look up on your own are: *Preach My Gospel*, which can help you learn how to talk to people, and the book *True to the Faith*, which contains basic information about a wide variety of Church topics.

Often people have simply heard strange

things about the Church and just want to know whether they are accurate. You can reassure them by telling them about life in the Church as you know it—the fun, the love, the caring, and the spiritual growth you have experienced. Let them know how being a Latter-day Saint has helped you draw close to Jesus Christ. **NE**

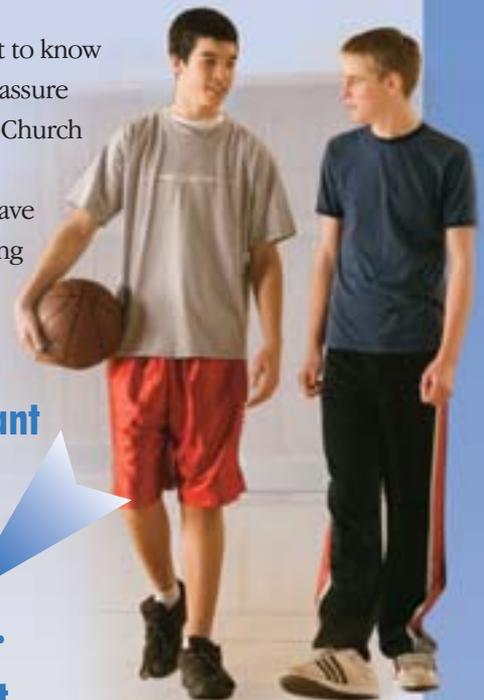
“My best friend doesn’t want to know anything about the Church, but I want to tell him more. How can I do that without making him upset?”

First and foremost, love him for who he is. If he’s your best friend, then he probably won’t be upset if you share your deep feelings with him. Maybe the time isn’t right now, but he could come around in the future. Don’t give up on him, and remember to always be a good example.

When the time is right, you can invite him to Church meetings, youth activities, or family home evening. You can also share a copy of the Book of Mormon with him. If he has more questions than you can answer, ask him to look at www.mormon.org, or invite him to your house to visit with the missionaries. There are many ways to tell him more about the gospel. You can ask your local full-time missionaries for more ideas, too.

Heavenly Father knows what you need to do about your friend. Pray and ask Him for guidance. (See 3 Nephi 14:7–8.) **NE**

Read “Forget Yourself and Go” by President Gordon B. Hinckley, *New Era*, Oct. 2002, p. 5.



If I Had Known at 19...

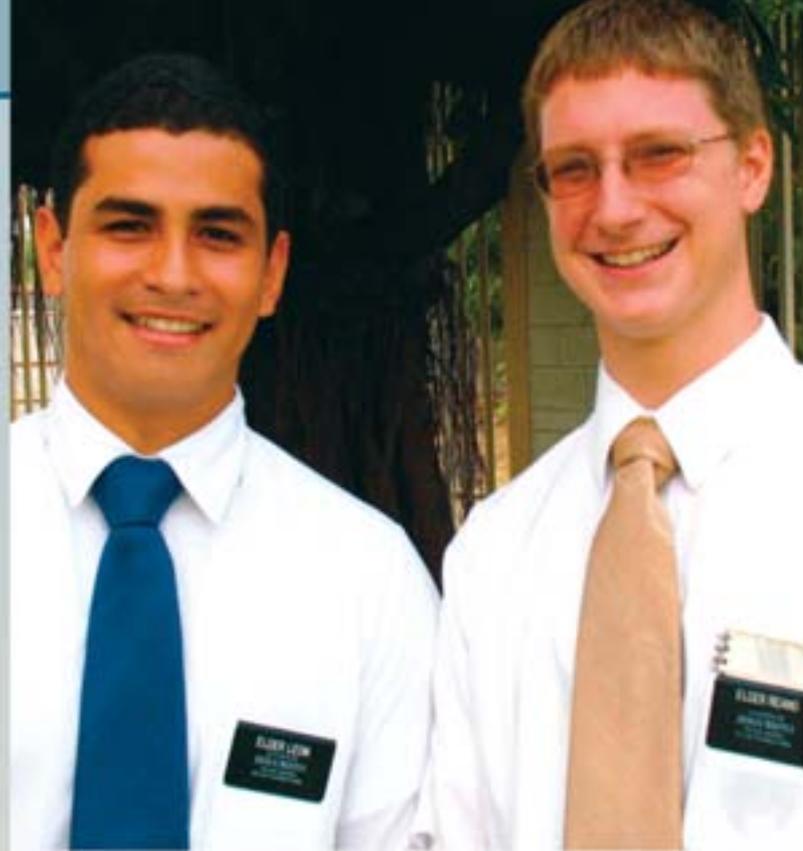
what I know now, I would have done a few things differently as a missionary.

BY ROGER TERRY

I served in northern Germany from 1975 to 1977. These were indeed two of the most memorable years of my life, but memory also brings with it some added perspective. Hindsight being a wonderful gift, I offer four suggestions that might help those of you who are preparing to serve a mission.

1. I would make it my second highest priority to love my companion.

My companions came in various shapes and sizes with unique gifts and personalities. Some became instant friends and have remained so over the years. Others I didn't have much in common with beyond tracting and teaching. One or two, I'm ashamed to admit, I didn't have very warm feelings about. In fact, sometimes things got downright icy.



But with each of these companions, I had at least one piece of common ground: we were both sacrificing our time, means, and effort to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. If I had it to do again, I would try my hardest to be every companion's best friend, regardless of how well our personalities or interests meshed. I would encourage him and try to be contagiously enthusiastic without being critical.

If loving my companion would be my second highest priority, what would be first, you might ask? To be obedient. Loving your companion does not mean you should follow him in disobeying commandments or mission rules. Fortunately, none of my companions were disobedient. A couple were not as motivated as they could have been, but what they needed more than criticism or nagging was someone to accept and strengthen them.

2. I would look for miracles. In fact, I would expect them.

I remember sitting in the mission home at the end of my mission, sharing a testimony meeting with 13 elders and one sister who were also going home. I don't remember what I said. I don't remember what the other elders said. But I will never forget Sister Thorpe's testimony. She explained that in the interview with her stake president 18 months earlier she had revealed a secret desire: "I want to see miracles on my

mission,” she had confided to him. Then, almost apologetically, she had asked him if it was wrong to seek miracles. He had assured her it was not wrong. After relating this conversation to us, she testified, “I’ve seen miracles on my mission.”

I suddenly realized I had also seen miracles, but I hadn’t sought them or expected them. I had just let them happen. By failing to seek them and expect them, I probably prevented quite a few. Miracles come by faith, and faith has something to do with expecting certain things to happen and actively working to bring them to pass.

If I were going out to serve today, I would do my part, but I would also expect the Lord to do His part in my work as His servant. He specializes in miracles, which we might define as things He can do for us that we can’t do for ourselves. I’ve come to believe He is more willing to *perform* miracles than we are to *receive* them. Teaching by the Spirit is probably the most effective way a missionary can open the door to miracles. It invites the Lord’s influence directly into an investigator’s life.



3. I would work smarter and harder.

My first district leader’s motto seemed to be “Work smarter, not harder.” I don’t agree with the second half of this motto, but if I had it to do over, I would certainly try to work smarter. My district leader was quite creative *and* quite successful. For instance, he organized a volleyball team among the youth in his branch, and they invited their friends to play. It was a fun and simple way to help the youth be missionaries. Teaching opportunities

would expect to see miracles. The Lord specializes in miracles, and I’ve come to believe that He is more willing to perform them than we are to receive them. If we do our part, the Lord will do His part.



My companion and I loved working together. We were united. We worked hard. And because of our attitude and effort, I believe the Lord blessed us with success.

and conversions resulted from this non-threatening approach to sharing the gospel.

I was probably too rigid and restrictive in my definition of what the Lord's work should be. I considered myself lazy if I wasn't out knocking on doors all day long or teaching serious investigators. But the Lord's work doesn't have to be hard to be considered work. If I were a missionary today, I would, under the guidance of my mission president, try to be more creative in finding people to teach.

4. I would not let rejection and failure discourage me.

On my mission, rejection and failure were as much a part of our everyday lives as eating and breathing. It was easy to expect rejection and anticipate that our investigators would lose interest in our message. But five weeks in one particular city taught me a valuable lesson.

It was a city where no one had ever had much

success. But someone forgot to tell my companion or me. We got along famously. We worked hard. And we had fun. We met lots of people interested in our message. We had a thriving investigator class each Sunday in this tiny branch. Miracles were happening in people's lives. And we felt we were just scratching the surface of this golden city.

Why did we have so much success there? I believe the Lord blessed us with success because of our attitude. My companion and I loved working together. We were united. We worked hard. We honestly believed the city was a gold mine just waiting to yield up its treasures. Attitude has a lot to do with faith. Faith has everything to do with success. And faith is contagious.

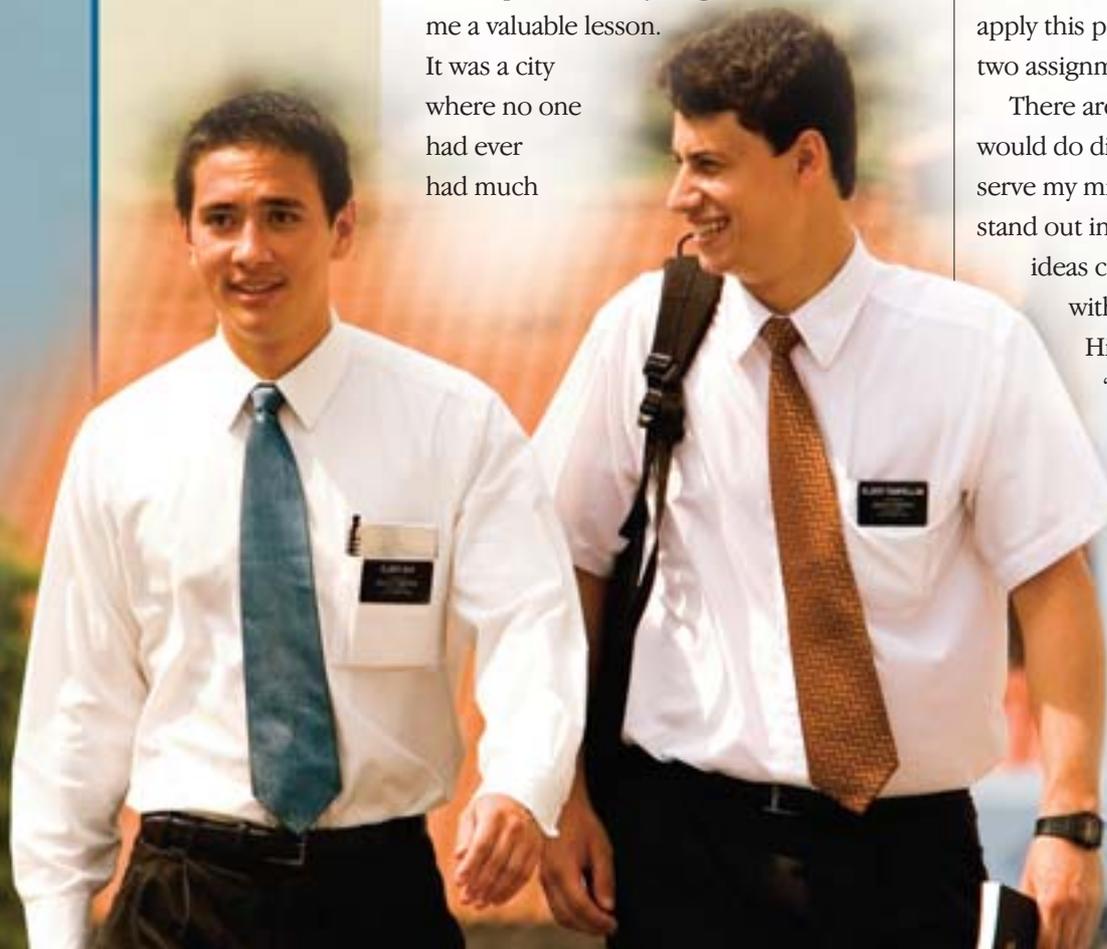
Unfortunately, I was late in understanding this lesson. I failed to make the connection between the *fruits* of our labors and the *way* we labored. Consequently, I was not able to apply this principle as successfully in my next two assignments.

There are probably many other things I would do differently if I had the chance to serve my mission over again, but these four stand out in my mind. If you look at these

ideas carefully, you'll see that they fall within the qualifications the Lord Himself outlined for His servants:

"And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work. Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence" (D&C 4:5-6). **NE**

See "Your Mission Will Change Everything" by Elder David F. Evans, *Ensign*, May 2006, p. 32.



THE EXTRA SMILE

"So I figured hey, as long as the bugs in this country are this big, why not make use of them?"



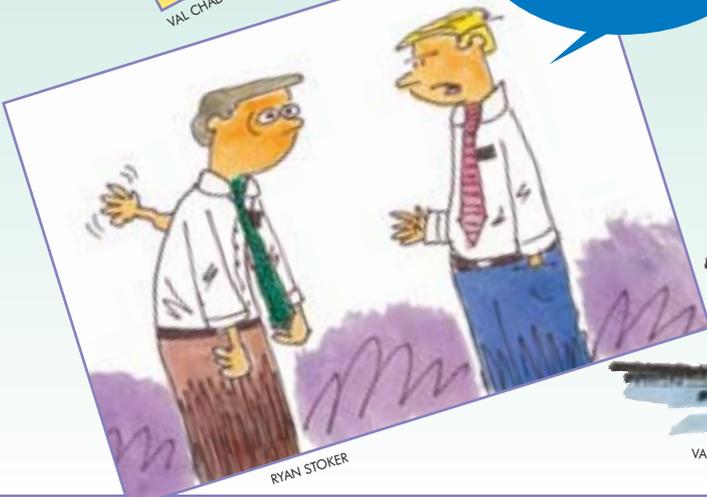
RYAN STOKER

"Read that part again about a 'mighty change of heart.'"



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

"And that, Elder, is why we boil the water here before we drink it."



RYAN STOKER

"You two can't be sisters. You look nothing like each other."

ARIE VAN DE GRAAF



"The hardest part of being humble is not being able to talk about it."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

MISSIONARY MAIL

BY CONNIE MYERS

What should we write about? How do we get it there? What should we send?

No matter where they are serving, missionaries love mail. Letters and packages from friends and family reassure missionaries that they haven't been forgotten while they are away from home serving the Lord. Where it is available, missionaries are also authorized to communicate with their families by e-mail.

But what should we at home write about? What kinds of letters and e-mails do missionaries most enjoy? What are they hoping to find when they open a package from home? How can we best support missionaries?

Messages from Family and Friends

When you write to missionaries, tell them the important things that are happening in your life with school, family, and the gospel. Write as though you were talking to them face to face.

"I think it is very important to receive letters that are related to the gospel and the work of the missionary," says Devin McCabe, who served in the Brazil Campinas Mission. "Keep your sense of humor, but stay focused on the true nature of missionary work. The more encouraged a missionary can be, the better the work will go."

"Friends should write about spiritual or missionary experiences they've had in order to keep up the enthusiasm of their missionary," says Elder Jesse Rock, serving in the Mexico Guadalajara South Mission. "They shouldn't write about gossipy little things like who likes who or the party they went to last week. Those are a distraction."

If you dated someone who is now serving a mission,

make your letters friendly and encouraging, but not romantic. You can help missionaries focus on the work of the Lord with uplifting letters and reassurance that they are where they need to be. Avoid romantic allusions.

"Write about the blessings that you have received through his mission," advises Eric Elggren, who served in the Brazil Londrina Mission. "Write about what you are doing to help the missionaries at home."

Here are some more ideas.

Things to ask about

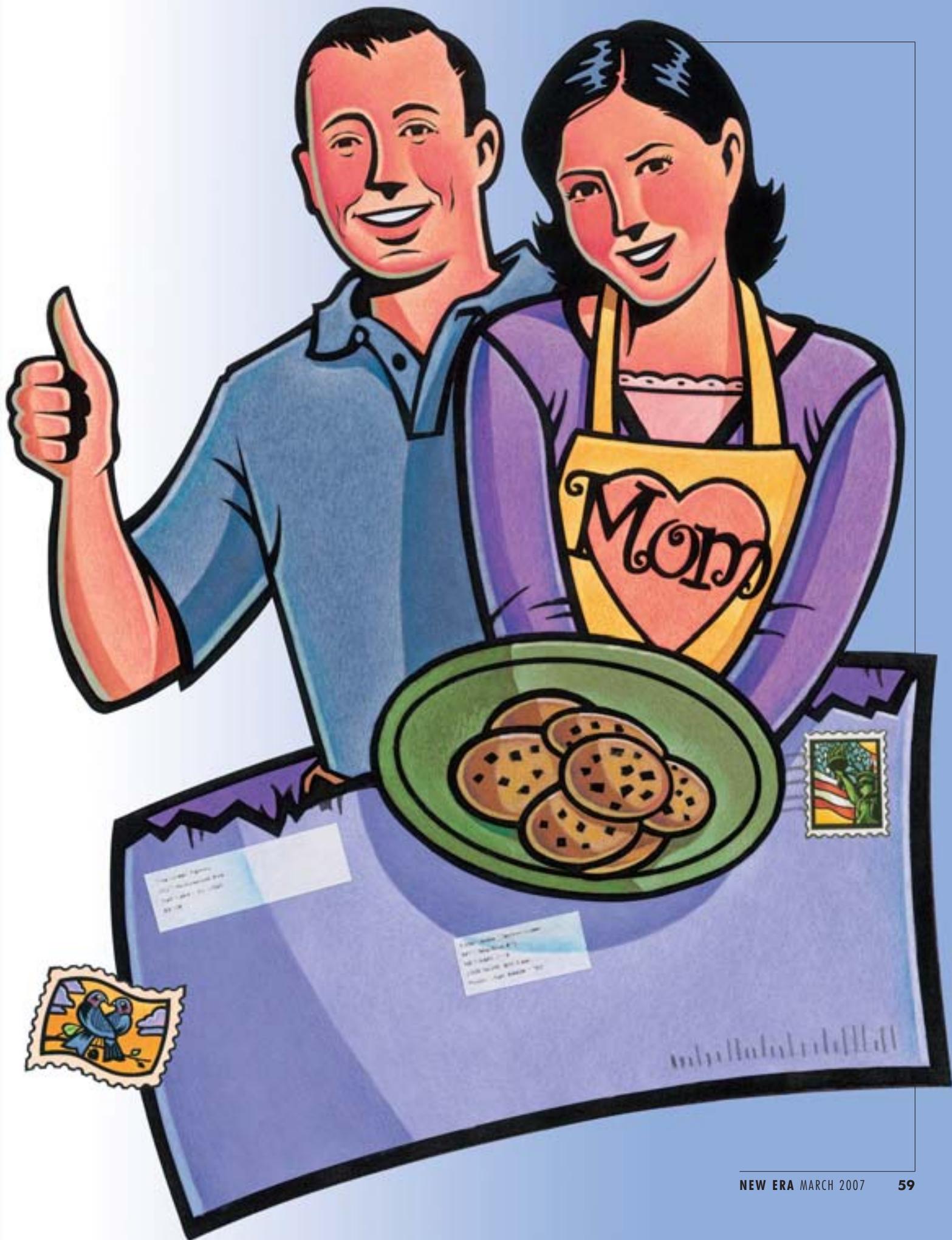
- The work, the schedule, the culture, and the experiences of your missionaries.
- Who your missionaries are teaching. When they tell you the names of their investigators, follow up in your next message and ask about them by name.

Things to share

- Insights you've gained in seminary or Sunday lessons.
- A scripture you've found meaningful.
- Testimony-building experiences you have had.
- News about mutual friends who are also serving missions.

Things to avoid

- Don't ask how many baptisms missionaries have had. The people in some missions are more receptive to the gospel than others. Encourage them in their work as they plant and spread the seeds of the gospel.
- Don't criticize missionaries, even if they haven't written back to you.
- Don't mention every problem that arises at home.



Missionaries love packages.

But it's especially nice when the family remembers to include a small item or two for the companion.

The New Era asked a few returned missionaries about items they appreciated receiving that were useful and still reminded them of home. Here are some suggestions:

- Socks
- Familiar-tasting toothpaste
- Dry drink mix
- Seasoning packets
- Recipes for simple dishes
- Gift certificates to chain restaurants (only if mailed in the same country)
- Letters from younger siblings, cousins, or Primary children
- A favorite treat

There are some problems they should know about, but there are many others that would only worry or distract them unnecessarily.

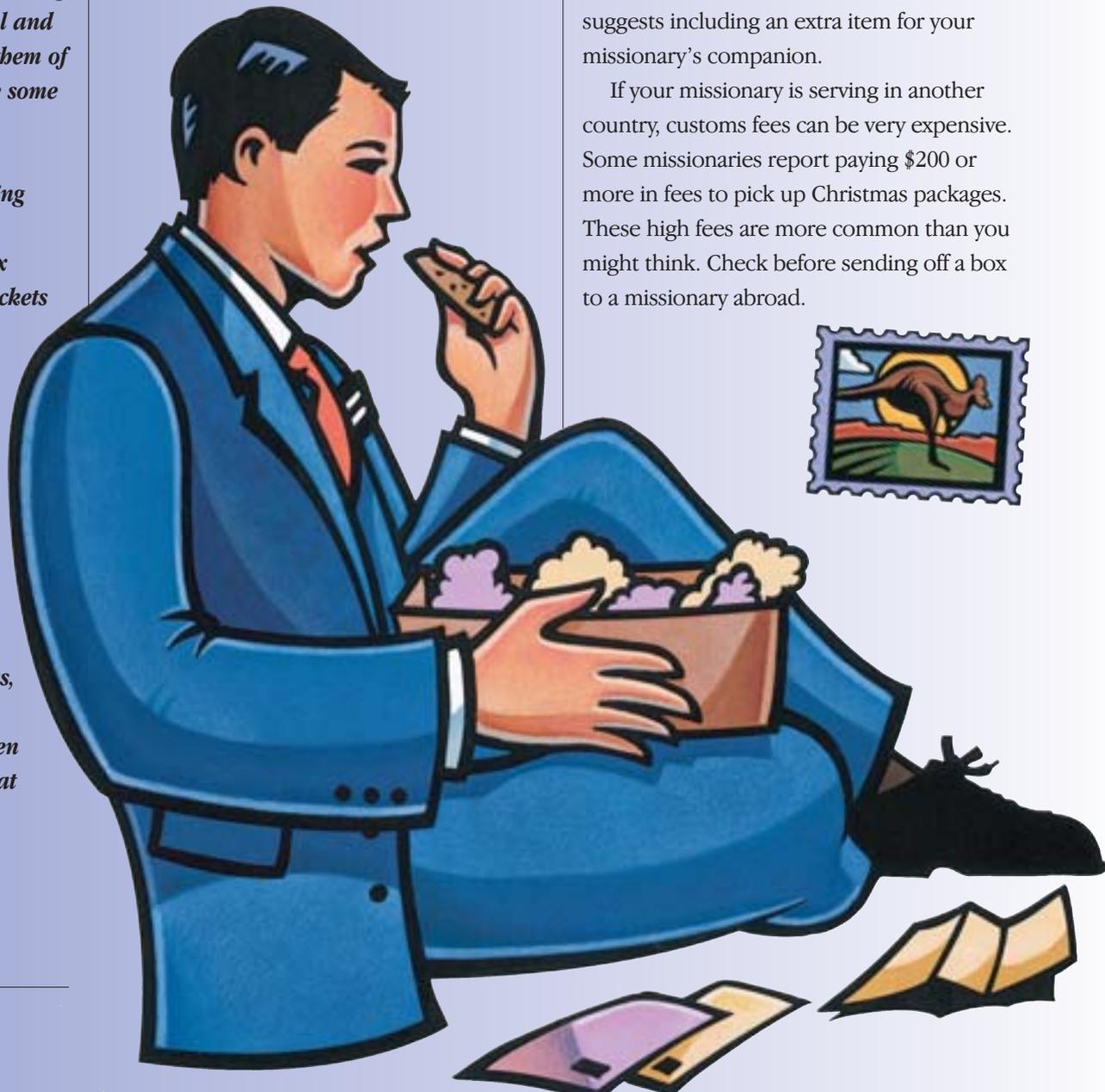
Good Things in Small Packages

Missionaries love receiving thoughtful packages from friends and family back home, but make sure to honor the guidelines of their mission. Some missions discourage packages, and some ask for restraint on food, music, and other items. In considering what to send missionaries,

remember that they often have limited time and budgets for shopping. Favorite food items from home may not be available in their fields of service. And receiving a package tells missionaries that someone back home is thinking of them.

Remember to keep your gifts simple. "Keep the packages small. Make sure the contents are economical and not extravagant," says Aaron Turner, who served in the Mexico Guadalajara Mission. "Remember that for every package sent, there's a companion that probably didn't get one." He suggests including an extra item for your missionary's companion.

If your missionary is serving in another country, customs fees can be very expensive. Some missionaries report paying \$200 or more in fees to pick up Christmas packages. These high fees are more common than you might think. Check before sending off a box to a missionary abroad.





MISSIONARY E-MAIL

Missionaries are allowed to communicate with their families by e-mail. Their mission presidents set the specific guidelines for their e-mail use. Here are some general guidelines missionaries follow:

- They may use e-mail only on preparation day.
- They may use computers in public facilities such as libraries or appropriate commercial outlets.
- Companions should always be together while using a computer.
- They should not impose on Church members who may have computers.
- They should pay any cost for using e-mail.
- They should exercise caution in the content and language of the e-mail, making certain that no confidential or sensitive information is included.

Due to limited resources, missionary training centers do not provide e-mail service for missionaries.

(See *Missionary Handbook* [2006], 20–21.)

Missionaries enjoy receiving Church materials both for personal use and for investigators. Mormon Tabernacle Choir music, Church pictures, Church stickers, pictures of the Savior, and bookmarks are all popular items. But remember to consider the circumstances of the mission. For example, in some areas, people may not have electricity, let alone a CD player. Also, in hot climates, some food items may melt.

Other thoughts:

- Some items may be less expensive to purchase in the mission. Doing this will also help avoid theft and customs fees.
- Missionaries must pack everything they own into two suitcases for transfers. Bulky items may be thrown away or left behind.
- Record your testimony and send it to your missionary.

- Don't send books. Missionaries have the Church basics they need. Extra books are not approved and add weight to their already full suitcases.
- Don't send toys or games. Missionaries have plenty to do on their preparation days.
- Don't send cash through the mail. It is illegal to send cash internationally. Even within your own country's borders, cash is often lost in transit.

Post Script

Having a friend or a sibling out on a mission can be a great experience for you, too. What's the best thing you can do at home to support your missionary?

"Pray. Write good, supporting, spiritual letters. And pray some more," says Jesse Rock, who served in the Mexico Guadalajara South Mission. "Prayers that are offered for missionaries are felt and received with gratitude."

"Pray for them. Keep in touch with them," says Sister Kathryn Kane, serving in the Nevada Las Vegas Mission. "Most of all, while your friends are serving missions, you too should be doing things to help yourself grow spiritually."

Your missionaries are growing from their daily experiences. Create opportunities for growth in your own life. Serve your ward members through a Church calling or through acts of service. Pray and read your scriptures each day. Participate in temple work with family history research or proxy baptisms. Look for opportunities to share the gospel with those you meet each day.

"Love them, support them, and send them pictures!" says Elder Ryan Malone, serving in the Knoxville Tennessee Mission. "Pictures from home are like a lifeline. They really are worth a thousand words."

Though missionaries love receiving letters from home, they can't answer every letter they receive. Don't be discouraged if you don't hear back regularly. Continue to write. Know that missionaries value your words and thoughts and prayers as they continue in service to the Lord. **NE**

Find additional ideas in Q&A, *New Era*, Feb. 1997, p. 17.

MEMBERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

BY KAMI LARSON

As a missionary in Chile, I learned that investigators' conversion is greatly helped by the involvement of ward members. My companions and I found out quickly that ward members were essential in reactivation and in keeping recent converts active.

In one area, we had been working with a family for many months.

They had once been very strong in the Church but had fallen away from activity. The family didn't feel as though the ward members cared whether or not they attended Church or other activities. As missionaries, we struggled to get the members excited about reactivation. They were unwilling to do even simple things like ask the family to sit with them at church, visit them, or invite them to activities.

In another area, however, the ward members seemed as excited about missionary work as the missionaries. The members were so involved and were always willing to help us find and

keep investigators. After the members met our investigators, they practically took over. They invited the investigators or less-active members to every activity and offered to pick them up for church. Many times investigators would tell us how welcome they felt and how they didn't feel like just another number because the members took such a personal interest in them.

I learned how important it is that bonds of fellowship in the gospel be formed between ward members. As missionaries, we come and go. But the association with ward members lasts much longer. **NE**



THE NAME ON THE TAG

BY JOHN CRESPO

I don't remember many details about my baptism. Much of what was said is a blur to me. But I will never forget my thoughts afterwards. "Be careful what you do—you are a representative of Jesus Christ." At the time, that meant to me that I shouldn't sin, but recently it has taken on a whole new meaning.

Receiving my mission call to the Philippines Cebu Mission was a momentous occasion in my life. I had been preparing for quite some time, and I was ready to serve. Entering the missionary training center was a great experience. It struck me that the first thing that they do there is give you a name tag. But this is no ordinary name tag—it has two names. One is the missionary's name and the other is the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Putting on that name tag was the start of a new understanding for me of what it really meant to be a representative of Jesus Christ.

Recently I had an experience that made me reflect on that understanding again. My companion and I had been working nonstop the entire day. We had just finished teaching a new investigator and started making our way back home. Along the way, a group of kids came over to talk to us. They gathered around my companion as he began doing some tricks for them while I stood back and watched. Then I noticed a young boy not watching but staring at me. He walked up to me and looked at my name tag. He took his pointer finger and drag-

THREE LITTLE NOTES

BY DANIEL UYI

One evening while serving as full-time missionaries in Nigeria, my companion and I made plans to visit some of our former investigators. We were filled with the Spirit as we walked down the street. We sang some hymns softly, and I said a prayer in my heart that the Lord would help touch the hearts of these people so they could continue investigating the Church.

Our first attempt was very discouraging, and we wanted to quit. But we summoned our courage and stopped at the home of a family who had been investigating the Church. Unfortunately, nobody was at the house. A neighbor told us that the family was away traveling, and no one knew how long they would be gone. All we could do was stick a note on their door, telling them how much we loved and cared for their family.

A few days later we stopped by the

ged it along each word. He mumbled until he got to one part: "Jesus Christ!" His jaw dropped and he slowly looked up at me.

I can't describe how I felt at that moment. I looked into the eyes of this young boy and thought to myself, "Was I representing Jesus Christ well?" I felt I had been. How grateful I am that I could stand there and say I had been doing my best to show others the light of Christ.

This experience has stuck with me

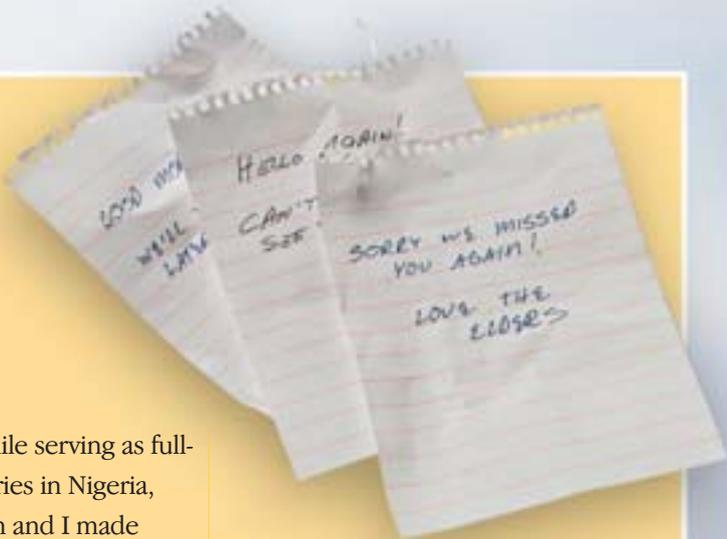
house again and found our note still stuck to the door. We put up another and went on our way. Some days later we found our notes were still there, so we put up another, making three in all. Over the next few weeks we passed the house frequently. We left no more notes, but we prayed for the family.

Some weeks later, to our astonishment, this family attended church. They told us how they wept for joy when they saw our notes at the very time they needed them most. They said our little notes are among their most cherished possessions.

From that experience I learned that with one success, a thousand failures are forgotten and that hearts can be changed by our acts of love and kindness. **NE**

throughout my mission, and every day I try my hardest to remember who I represent. I know that as members of the Church, we must strive in our everyday lives to represent Jesus Christ. I think King Benjamin said it best in Mosiah 5:8: "There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ." **NE**

Share your own experience with us at newera@ldschurch.org.





PHOTOGRAPH BY WELDEN ANDERSEN

Mission Facts Quiz

See how you do at answering some of these interesting questions about missions and missionaries.

1. How many missions does the Church have worldwide?

- A.** 339
- B.** 344
- C.** 351

2. How many full-time missionaries are currently serving?

- A.** 53,143
- B.** 54,491
- C.** 56,119

3. In how many nations and territories are missionaries serving?

- A.** 144

- B.** 152
- C.** 157

4. In how many languages is the gospel being taught by full-time missionaries?

- A.** 164
- B.** 73
- C.** 96

5. Outside the USA, which nation has the most missions?

- A.** India
- B.** Mexico
- C.** Brazil

6. What is the largest mission geographically?

- A.** India Bangalore
- B.** Russia Vladivostok
- C.** Canada Edmonton

7. What is the farthest

from home a current missionary is serving?

- A.** about 9,800 miles
- B.** about 11,800 miles
- C.** about 12,600 miles

8. Which mission likely had the hottest average temperature in July at 102° F (38.8° C)?

- A.** Ghana Accra
- B.** Ivory Coast Abidjan
- C.** Arizona Tucson

9. Which mission likely had the coldest average temperature in January at -22° F (-30° C)?

- A.** Denmark Copenhagen
- B.** Alaska Anchorage
- C.** Novosibirsk Russia

ANSWERS: 1B, 2A, 3C, 4A, 5C, 6B, 7B, 8C, 9C

“THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO TO PREPARE FOR A CALL TO SERVE IS TO BECOME A MISSIONARY LONG BEFORE YOU GO ON A MISSION.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Becoming a Missionary," *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 45.

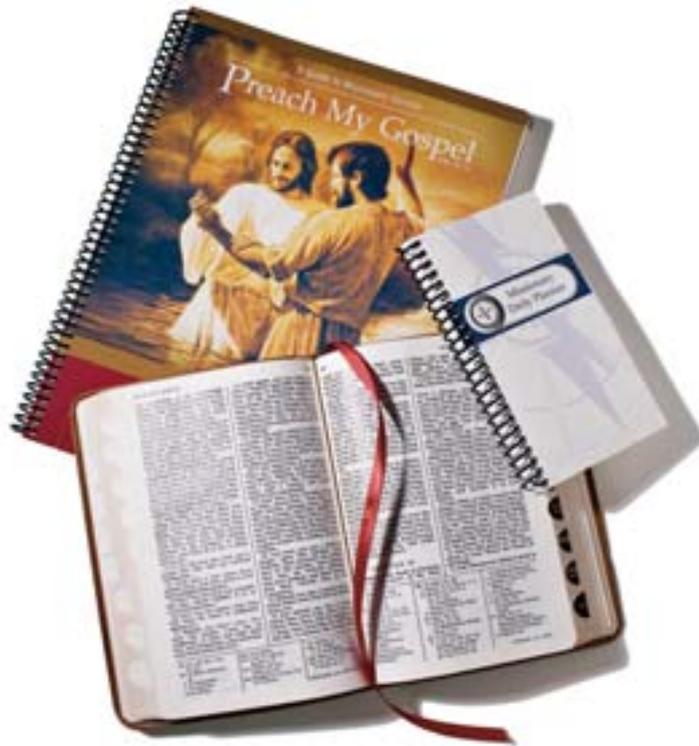
What's up where you are? Let us know at newera@ldschurch.org.



TO J.E.H. AND MANY OTHERS

BY PETER B. BALL

I have known a missionary,
Hardly known, but I have—
 Known his power,
 Known his testimony,
 Known his faith.
And I have resolved this day to
 Know that power,
 Know that testimony,
 Know that faith,
In my own life and thereby—
Know myself.



IN THIS ISSUE: PREPARING FOR YOUR MISSION

- *Follow the application process step by step.*
- *Learn how a mission call is issued.*
- *Take an inside tour of the Provo MTC.*
- *Spend a day on a mission in Spain.*

Also read how a sister decided to go on a mission and how two brothers who couldn't serve full-time still found ways to serve.