

Missionary News

Contact with home. Missionaries are now authorized to communicate with their families each week on preparation day by text messages, online messaging, phone calls, and video chats, in addition to letters and emails.

Planning tool for prospective missionaries. A new online mission planning tool from the Church's Missionary Department can help prospective missionaries be more deliberate and thoughtful as they decide when they will be best prepared to serve the Lord as a missionary.

Service missions for young missionaries. As of January 2019, young Church-service missionaries are called "service missionaries." All young adults in the United States and Canada who apply for missionary service do so in the same way, through an online portal, and all mission calls—whether for a proselyting mission or a service mission—come from the prophet. Worthy young adults who for various reasons are excused from serving a proselyting mission can be called on a service mission.

Sister missionaries may wear pants. Sister missionaries now have the option of wearing pants during normal daily activities, although sisters should continue to wear dresses or skirts when attending the temple and during Sunday worship services, leadership and zone conferences, baptismal services, and missionary training center devotionals. Wearing slacks can help protect sisters from mosquito-borne viral diseases, keep sisters warm in cold climates, and make it easier for sisters to ride bicycles.

Missions created, boundaries realigned. Four new missions have

been created, and twelve missions will be absorbed into existing missions. Such changes occur from time to time in order to adjust to the number of missionaries serving. The new missions are Democratic Republic of the Congo Kinshasa East, Guatemala Antigua, Peru Limatambo, and Philippines Antipolo. Parents of missionaries serving in the affected missions—whether created or dissolved—will receive additional information from their mission presidents.

Number of missionary training centers adjusted. In order to make better overall use of missionary training centers worldwide, centers are being closed in Argentina, Spain, Chile, and the Dominican Republic. With the closures, the Church will operate 11

missionary training centers, located in Brazil; Colombia; England; Ghana; Guatemala; Mexico; New Zealand; Peru; Philippines; Provo, Utah, USA; and South Africa.

Safety videos. The new 12-part video series *The Safety Zone* is designed to increase the safety of the 65,000 currently serving full-time missionaries as well as those yet to serve. The first video is designed to be watched by prospective missionaries with their parents after a mission call is received and prior to entering a missionary training center. At the MTC, the missionary will rewatch the first video as well as the other 11. Periodic safety reminders will also be given to missionaries throughout their mission. ■