

Missionary Reports to the High Council

2018

January – May



Madeline Jeanne Doty

Charlotte North Carolina

4th Ward

I served in the South and it was such an incredible experience. My mission president and his wife were absolutely phenomenal and set such a good example of not only choice missionaries, but Christ-like people. I served in a technology mission so it was really neat and helpful to have those tools available to us. The climate in N.C. is hot and humid and then extremely cold and humid so I experienced the “best” of both worlds. I absolutely love the people of North Carolina. They are extremely religious and have a deep love of Jesus Christ and really recognize the divine role as the Savior. They are also generally very kind and friendly even if it is just fake Southern hospitality.

When I was half way through my mission, I started to experience a little bit of depression. I was homesick. I had a hard companion, and I was struggling as I went back and read through my journal. I really started to see just how aware Heavenly Father was of me at that point. This is the point in my mission where I think I grew the most and where I really started to understand the importance, meaning and power of prayer. I came to understand my Savior better. I was

humbled and I came to know my Heavenly Father. This was probably the first time I had ever come to know my Heavenly Father. This was probably the first time I had ever truly felt like I had connected with Him in prayer. As I struggled with the hopeless feelings of depression, I started to rely more on Heavenly Father and saw his hand more in my life.

I know that the gospel of Jesus Christ truly has been restored by Joseph Smith—that it was lost but it has been brought back. I know that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God. I also know that the Book of Mormon is a true record and that it can speak peace to us with whatever trials we face. I'm eternally grateful for the prophets who sacrificed to keep that record so we could benefit from it today. I know that Heavenly Father hears my prayers and is aware of my needs. Prayer works and I know He loves me. I also testify of the divinity of Jesus Christ. I know that He lives. I have a strong and growing knowledge of the Atonement. It truly is enabling. He is the way back home to Heavenly Father.



Kassidy Shoell

Canada Vancouver

6th Ward

The area I was serving in is very diverse, it is a mixing pot of many different cultures. Everyone is very earth conscientious. Depending on the area I served in people's belief in God Changed. Some areas it was like all atheists, others were super Christian.

The experience I want to share actually comes from a zone conference. At the end of the conference President Wong gave us time to ask questions. I was feeling off so I wasn't participating much. President Wong asked, "Sister Shoell what do you want to learn?" I was like "I don't know?" so he was like "okay, I'll come back to you."

I finally asked the question of "how can I not be scared?" So, he had me read D&C 36: "Look unto me in every thought, doubt not, fear not," so I read it straight from the scriptures. Then he said to read it with more enthusiasm, so I did, still looking down. Then he was like "look up when you say it." So, then I looked at everyone and said it. Then he said, "No Sister Shoell look up and he pointed up. So, I recited it again. This time to the ceiling. He asked me what was the least scary? I said "the last!" He asked why. I said because I realized who was actually saying it." He is literally giving us a cheat sheet!

My testimony is that I know we have a Heavenly Father that knows us and loves us. I have seen over and over Him answering my prayers. I know and believe Joseph Smith was called to be a prophet of God. I can feel at peace every time I recite the first vision, which helps confirm that it's true and he did see Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I know that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. I have seen how it can apply to my life, and how it really answers all the questions I have. I also love the Book of Mormon because it really helped me come to know who my Savior is. I really stand all amazed at what He has done for me. I know that He is my greatest example and friend. The more I read and learn about Him the more I want to be like Him and the more I love him.



Brittany Bunker

Washington Everett Mission

3rd Ward

My mission ran along the coast, from Everett, 30 miles north of Seattle, up to the Canadian border. Michael Wilding was president of the mission. We had about 150 total missionaries. Among those were thirty Spanish speakers who were sweet and warm. We Spanish speakers were hard-working, honest and loyal. From her mission report in 3rd ward on January 28th: “The atonement is Christ’s love in action. We are motivated to act in faith when our hearts have been changed by love.”

During a Family Home Evening Julio, a nine-year-old boy and recent convert, testified that he knew prayer and Heavenly Father were real because as he prayed at night for his mom’s safety coming home from work late in a storm, she got home safely. He started by cutting into our Spanish conversation by asking, “Can I say something?”

I testify that God and His Son live, love me and guide me. Through the Spirit I have been very blessed and received much direction. Jesus is the Christ. He suffered the Atonement for me. Through Him, I can do all things and be with those I love forever and be happy.



Elder Spencer Campbell

Peru Huancay

4th Ward

The people are very nice, very hard working. They rely on their own hands to feed themselves. Almost all are Christians, with very extreme beliefs and yet, for the most part, they are receptive to the missionaries.

I think one of the most sacred experiences in my mission was the moment I started to change and really repent of my past life. I became a new person. I could feel that the Lord was carrying me through those difficult days.

I know that the Church is true. My people have tried to convince me that it is not. But I know that the Book of Mormon is true. I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, that Jesus lives and personally judges this church.



Elder Christian Carter Christesen

Uruguay, Montevideo

4th Ward

My mission was filled with many wonderful people. People that not only LOVE talking but really understand the importance of family. They love soccer and really go crazy whether their team wins or loses. The more I served them the more I fell in love with them and their culture.

Santiago: My most sacred moment has to do with Santiago. We found him on a winter evening filled with lots of rain. I was cold and a little wet. My companion and I were ready to call it quits for the day. The rain stopped as we came to two roads that intersected. We had gone through all of our plans. Looking at our agenda, my companion asked what we should do next? I looked up and saw a man limping and drinking mate, a popular drink made from milk. I

said “Let’s go and talk to him.” We found out that he had recently separated from his partner and had been in a motor cycle accident. He eventually accepted the gospel and was baptized. I saw the hand of the Lord in our lives that day we met him.

I am so grateful for my mission, leaving everything behind to serve and do what the Lord wanted me to do. I have been changed because of it. I have become closer to my Savior like never before. He helped me when I was low and did not want to continue. Thanks to him I have imperishable joy in my heart and soul. He lives and is my friend. He suffered and died so that every single person that accepts him in their lives can feel his love and happiness without end. I am grateful for the Book of Mormon that testifies the Church of Jesus Christ is on the earth today and that God has not forgotten his children.



Sarah Bensen

England London Mission

7th Ward

London is beautiful. It is a melting pot of people of different cultures from all over the world living in one place. Their lives are mostly filled with working, struggling and eating. But outer London isn’t London at all. Most areas are convert wards with some really involved in missionary work and others not as much. Our mission area stretched from the river Thames to Norwich with the weather being a common topic of conversation. It is cloudy most of the time, rains often, is humid and there is a cold wind. I taught people from all over the world with few being English.

I realized I had developed my own testimony while in a testimony meeting. A member shared a question she was asked in her final missionary interview: “How do you feel about the Savior?” As I applied that question to myself, a flood of emotion engulfed me and I was overwhelmed with love for Him. As investigators gain love for the Savior their life changes incredibly. Being there to help them recognize the Savior’s love and implement it in their lives is most gratifying.

I know God loves us and that He is our Father in Heaven. He cares about each one of us and sent his only Begotten Son to bridge the gap between mortality and immortality, that we might return to the presence of the Father through the Atonement and Resurrection. I know Jesus is the Christ, our brother and exemplar and through a simple prayer by Joseph Smith the way was paved for the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in this dispensation. Joseph Smith is indeed a prophet of God and the Book of Mormon is the word of God. Personal revelation is a gift available for each of us from our loving Father in Heaven as long as we are faithful and obedient to the commandments.



Sarah Jane Young

Ohio Cleveland Mission

9th Ward

Kirtland was in my mission. Several revelations in the Doctrine & Covenants were received there and the first temple in the last dispensation was dedicated there. It is a special place. It was the cradle for the restoration. Most of my mission I served on the outskirts of Cleveland and Kirtland. People there are often very kind and open to talking and at least listening. Finding investigators was heavily in the hands of the missionaries so the majority of our time was spent tracting and street contacting. I love my mission!

I was able to witness one baptism on my mission. We found a young 24-year-old man named Micah who was so prepared and ready for the gospel. He accepted the gospel with no reservations and his whole life was transformed. His family was bought back into better harmony, he has more goals to gain a higher education and serve so readily with his priesthood. He loves the temple and has been working to bring family names. His whole countenance is just filled and continues to fill with light! And he himself is working to prepare to serve a mission.

I know God is my Heavenly Father. He loves me and knows me and has a plan for my life and each of His children's lives. I know Jesus Christ is the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. Through the Atonement and by living the Gospel of Jesus Christ we can receive eternal life, exaltation and joy. I know that Joseph Smith is the prophet of this last dispensation and that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is the Lord's kingdom once again established on the earth, and that we are led by living apostles and prophets. I know the Book of Mormon is the word of God.



Hannah Curtis

Fort Worth, Texas – Spanish

Ward

I feel as if I served two missions, Spanish for nine months and English for nine months. Serving with the Spanish people was very humbling. They are a great example of gratitude and Christlike love. While serving in English Areas I learned about a lot of different Christian faiths seeing the importance of Christ in others. Lives helped me to realize how important He and his

gospel are to me. My mission was exactly what I needed. I am so grateful. for the lessons I've learned and the blessings I've received while in the service of the Lord.

It is really hard to pick one specific moment but I will share an impactful experience from the end of my mission. I had barely moved into a new area that did not have much happening. We counseled as a companionship with the Lord. We felt impressed that we should contact all the potentials in our Area Book, a tedious that hadn't been done for a long time." We knew it would be worthwhile even ft it eve for 'the one.'" We worked and worked. We didn't find many, but we found one who was prepared. Her daughter was in our book, but when we met her she was so excited. She told us she had requested a Book of Mormon that day. We got the referral a few days later.

I know that Heavenly father loves me. I have seen his hand in my life prevalently over the past 1 ½ years. I know he has been guiding me all along, but it is in moments of humility where I truly recognize His help. I am so grateful for the gospel. Striving to be like Christ and following His gospel has brought me true joy. I am thankful for the messengers He sent to help me along the way. I love my parents, my family, my companions and friends, our prophets and most importantly my Savior. I have a simple but strong testimony and am grateful for that.



Emma Engebretsen

Korean Mission

Ward

Korea is unique. Over the past 50 years it has transformed itself and that is because of the great, extremely hard-working people. Their work ethic is unbelievable. They love to be busy. I was blessed to serve there, to meet them, to interact with them, and through that interface learn to love just a little bit more. The Savior loves freely. He doesn't hold anything back just because we may disappoint him or are different. He looks at us, especially at our hearts and sees the good that is always there, just sometimes hidden or harder to reach.

Korea is prosperous now. They went through a lot during World War II and suffered greatly but have turned it around. They've developed to the point that there is not as much interest or openness to the gospel and our church teachings and doctrine. That was difficult, often times disheartening. I knew what I was sharing was good, right, and of God. It was and is true. I felt that multiple times through experiences and feelings before my mission and during, but it felt as though lots of people didn't care. I didn't realize it towards the beginning of my mission, but as time went I came to understand a little of what God wanted to teach me. He knew of my testimony in my heart and those righteous desires. He supported me and was proud of me and I was blessed to feel that as I served.

But my priorities- righteous as they were- were not always His, which meant that I felt disappointment and sadness when we didn't have as many investigators as we'd hoped or our investigators were becoming disinterested. It hurt and did discourage me sometimes. In those moments, I was humbled and reminded that he is in charge and has a plan and timing bigger and greater and more perfect than I can understand, right now or in 20 years. I could not control the situations or our investigators.

The one thing that I could do was love. Regardless of what I didn't understand when investigators didn't keep commitments or stopped communicating with us, I could love. I could forgo judgment because I don't know what's going on in investigators' hearts, minds, and lives. I can understand just a little bit through the Spirit, which God gives through His Son as an anchor to my soul. He sees the whole picture and asks that I give the light, love, and patience that I have, regardless of my perspective and opinion, because said perspective is narrow and limited and doesn't see everything clearly. That is win trust and humility are essential and it can never be done on our own. That's why we have Christ. With him we can. He helps us give our best selves and see that same divine worth in others. That can transform our hearts and then the world. It broadens our eyes and helps us to see, not as the natural man, but with spiritual eyes that have unlimited depth and character, all stemming from God. I know He lives and loves us each individually.

We are exactly who we are for a reason and divine purpose in His eyes. We are never alone. His Son is there to provide a way. Because of Him we will walk this life journey with a comforter and guide and assurance that Christ truly does understand us. God and Christ did appear to the prophet Joseph Smith, reaffirming the divine relationship between God and man. We can receive personal revelation and help in our daily walk of life. God wants that for us and that is why He called Joseph Smith as a prophet in His church.

We are blessed to have that priesthood again here on earth today and I know that President Russel M. Nelson also carries that same authority from God. Let us rise up in our lives to the callings we have received, as mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, friends, strangers, and in our duties at church. Onward, ever onward, with the truth of God's love and His Son, Jesus Christ's light burning in our hearts.



Jaxton Hawkes

Florida Tampa Mission

Ward

My mission has a great culture of obedience and diligence. My mission president, President Cooper, was really good at helping us do everything to be constantly focused on our mission purpose to invited others to come unto Christ. The people of Florida are amazing. A large majority have a strong faith in Jesus Christ and a knowledge of the Bible. They are always open to hearing God's word.

Toward the beginning of my mission I had yet to read the Book of Mormon cover to cover on my own. I always knew that it was the word of God but hadn't received a spiritual witness of it's truthfulness. I can still vividly remember the day on my mission when I finished the Book of Mormon for the first time. I remember having a feeling wash over me and knew that it was true. This lasted for what felt like about ten minutes. I could feel the love God has for me.

I know that God is our living Heavenly Father and that he gave His only Begotten son, Jesus Christ because He love us and wants us to return to live with him. I know that Jesus Christ can

help us overcome anything as we turn to him. I know that his restored church is on the earth today and that His Priesthood authority has been restored. I know that Joseph Smith saw our heavenly Father and Jesus Christ the day he went to the grove in prayer. I know that God hears and answers prayers through His spirit.