

Armenia Yerevan Mission

July 2012

President's Message

Dear Elders and Sisters,

I was watching an old session of General Conference while I was exercising the other day. By the way... that is my favorite thing to do while I exercise. When you get home from your missions I would highly recommend it whenever you have to exercise inside. It keeps the mind busy with uplifting and inspiring thoughts. Anyway... I watched a talk by Elder Bradley D. Foster from the April 2010 Conference. It caused me to think of President Carter's recent counsel to "rescue a Young Single Adult and work through them to find your replacement as a missionary." I think this idea can relate to a family member, a friend, a former investigator, or a less active member. He said, "In a world where everyone is granted agency, some of our loved ones may stray for a season. But we can never give up. We must always go back for them - we must never stop trying. Our prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, has issued a plea for us to go rescue those of our loved ones who may be lost. We must continue to go back and find the lost ones, assuring them there will always be a "home" within the family and the Church, waiting for their return. We never know when a heart may be turned. We never know when a soul may be weary and worn out by the world."

These words really spoke to my heart. "We must always go back for them - we must never stop trying." Each of you have an Area Book and Branch Members you can work with to seek out and find those who are lost. The Lord may be preparing their heart. It will always be uplifting to know that they are loved and missed even if the time for their return is not right now. Maybe you will be helping to prepare them for the next visitors when they will be more receptive.

We have been called to save souls. We will have this calling for the rest of our lives. Here we are working with members and investigators. In the future we will also be working with family and friends. I pray that each of us will ever be ready to respond to the promptings of the Spirit when they come. It may be a letter, a visit, or a phone call. May we stand ready to bless the lives of Heavenly Father's children who need us.

President Carter and I pray for you and we love you all very much,

Sister Carter

June Baptisms:

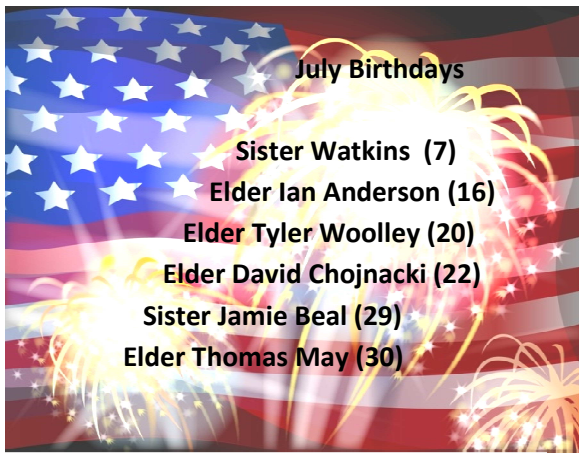
Chinar (Ajapnyak)

Gayane (Ajapnyak)

Sergey (Vanadzor)

Anahit (Arabkir)

Hayk (Ajapnyak)



MISSIONARIES

Sister Kaycee Clove

Sister Daniela Henriquez

Sister Sharlee Robles

Missionaries Experiences:

Lusine was recently baptized, and on Sunday she was confirmed and received the Gift of the Holy Ghost. After she sat down she was talking to me about how she had talked with her family on Skype the night before (her parents, her sister and her sister's family live in California. Her older brother lives in Yerevan and has a small family. Her littlest brother is getting out of the army in 2 weeks. As she talked with her parents and sister and her other brother, she told me that her parents mentioned how she was preparing the way for her family as they all joked who would be the next to be baptized. Throughout this whole process of teaching Lusine, she would Skype her family in California and tell them all about what she had learned that day. Her family could see the light in her eyes and could feel the peace and happiness that she has found. I do believe that in the future, they will follow Lusine down this path and learn about the Gospel. They are truly being prepared and what an amazing blessing these people will be in the Church. I am so grateful for the blessings I have received from my Father in Heaven for allowing me to be here at this time and serve with Sister Arslanian and teach Lusine...but in reality she taught me as well. Sister Kohler

Departing Testimonies:

Here ya go!

It really does go by as fast as they say it does. I am so grateful that I have had the opportunity to serve with many of you. You are truly among the great and noble ones. Thank you for your examples and the countless things that you have all taught me. I leave this mission changed. Changed, because of all of you. Thank you for being willing to be the Lord's instruments in carrying forth His will and inspiring all around you. Never settle for anything but your best. Never get too comfortable. I know that we are called and endowed with power from on high to be the Lord's emissaries. To represent His words with ours, His hands with ours, to serve this wonderful people even as He would. We have a great and noble calling. Higher than that of the kings of the earth. We are the light that must shine forth. We are the salt of the earth. This Church is the only true and living Church of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are led in these last days by the revelations conveyed through the Holy Ghost from a loving Father in Heaven to His children. This is the only way to happiness and eternal life. This is His work and His glory. And it is ours. May glory be to the God on High forever and ever. Love, Elder Lush

Well, this is it. The Real McCoy. I am going home to roost. I ponder to the point of nausea about the times I just had to get in the trenches and pick up the ball and run with it. Those times when I felt like I was in a swamp with alligators up to my eyeballs, like I was just a warm body to fog up the mirror and had to remind myself that standing water only breeds germs and I was being humbled down to rise up. I just needed to reach for the high water mark and remember the silver bullet! True story!

Elders and Sisters who I love, remember that you can't turn a battle ship on a dime, we just need to eat the elephant one bite at a time. Sometimes we just feel like we are putting out fires when people are pushing the envelope. Sometimes we meet the guy who has a grin on his face like he had just swallowed a canary, just nodding and bobbing to everything you

say. Sometimes we meet an unruly gaggle of children or even a WAMPAKU, but don't get a bee in your bonnet, or make a mountain out of a molehill, just get the water to the end of the row and let's see if we can't make lemonade. When we sacrifice, we get the reward. We will accomplish a lot of good by just opening the door a little wider. Sometimes we just need to re-balance the orchestra and let it be water off a duck's back. Don't be afraid of change - like cutting off your finger one knuckle at a time, just go for it and you will see that it is over the wall. Hold your feet to the fire and when faced with temptation learn to say NO.....with style. The Spirit's presence will be so thick you could cut the air with a knife.

Sometimes we get into a companionship that fits like a glove - two peas in pod. Sometimes we don't. Maybe there will be a burr under the saddle, but don't throw the baby out with the bathwater! Let it not be a chink in the armor and respond as if you could sleep next to a rattlesnake. Don't be squishy! Resist the urge to be a PEZ preacher and become a redwood instead. Even when the work is flat! So flat you could watch a dog run away for 2 weeks. There is no need to re-invent the wheel, the night is darkest just before the dawn. Keep in mind that when the student is ready, the master appears. We all have the opportunity to learn from great leaders like President Carter.

I sure learned a lot out here that I will want to keep in my toolbox. Not to beat a dead horse, but I loved my mission like a fat kid loves cake.

I want to testify of this work. I testify of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. I testify of him as our Savior and Our Redeemer. Rely on Him and everything works out in the end. The Gospel of Jesus Christ really is a running locomotive and Satan is a just a barking dog running next to the passing train.

Well, here I go. I am off like a dirty shirt! MUCH Love, Elder Aaron Gerber

I feel like it's too soon to be writing my departing testimony already. It all just went by too fast. I have truly loved my mission. Despite times of frustration and discouragement I will cherish this experience forever. Actually, probably because of those hard times will I always treasure my mission.

I have seen the hand and the love of the Lord in the lives of His children and in my own life. I have witnessed the miracles of change and repentance in people as they have turned toward the Gospel and Jesus Christ. I have a strengthened testimony that through the Atonement of Christ, all those who will accept Him can be saved – they can be changed and they can find greater joy and peace in their lives.

I know that the Spirit of God guides His missionaries. I have felt the Spirit working in and through me and it has produced miracles. I know that this message that we struggle and work to spread every day is true because I have felt the power of it as I have testified of it. I know we've all had those experiences. Draw upon them for strength in challenges and trials. The trick is to just remember.

I love this country. I love these people. I love this Gospel. I love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and I am grateful to them for giving me this opportunity to serve here amongst all of you. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. Sister Smith

This week I must say goodbye to the broken dirt roads of Artashat, the smell of burning trash in the afternoons, the squatting papiks, beautiful Mount Ararat, the missionaries I've served alongside of, and the people I've given my heart to for the past 18 months. Literally serving with all of my heart, might, mind, and strength.

As I say goodbye I must leave behind a people who I have laughed with, cried with, taught, and been taught by. Perhaps they shall never know the impact they have truly had on my life- because in losing myself to serve them- I truly *found myself*. As much as I know God loves me, I know he loves the people of Armenia.

I suppose I came on this mission to teach these people- but I think perhaps I am returning having gained far greater knowledge than I came with. Before my mission I thought I was strong. I was independent and self sustaining and often did not accept help from others. I called it stubbornness- the scriptures call it pride. However, throughout my mission I have come to know of the weakness that Ether, Jacob, and so many prophets teach us about.

Nevertheless, the Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions unto the children of

men, that we have power to do these things.

And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.

As strong as I thought I was...There have been times on my mission when I wondered how I would make it through just one more day. Days where being rejected, ignored, and mocked was more than I thought I would endure alone. And it was. But those were the times when I learned to turn to the Lord- and I learned that I was never alone. Looking back I see the change and the growth that came from putting all that I had on the table and relying on the Lord to make my weaknesses strong. I have come to embrace such experiences as I know they are only for our good.

"One's life...cannot be both faith filled and stress free. Therefore how can you and I really expect to glide naively through life, as if to say 'Lord give me experience but not grief, no sorrow, not pain, not opposition, not betrayal, and certainly not to be forsaken. Keep from me Lord, All those experiences which made thee what thou art! Then let me come and dwell with thee and fully share thy joy.'" Real faith...is required to endure this necessary but painful development process." Elder Neal A. Maxwell.

Through all I have learned- I've really only come to realize how much more there is to learn. I feel as though I know so little- but I know I know enough. Enough to testify that Jesus Christ lives. I know that he came to earth to do the Father's will. That he suffered and felt every pain, every sickness, every frustration, disappointment, and fear. I have literally felt him there with me when I was alone, and lift me when I was weak. He descended below all things and accomplished all that he was sent here to do- completely out of love for us. All that he requires of us is a broken heart and a contrite spirit. I testify of this work that this is the work of the Lord and that he is with us every step of the way- and sends his angels to surround and protect us. In the name of Jesus Christ Amen. **Sister Erica Bailey**

Sireli Yerevan Armenia Mission,

Well I guess it's that time - departing time, and that means testimonies. So before I get to mine I want to say that I love you all and that I am so grateful that I have had this opportunity to serve with you, if not around you - near you. This is the best mission and we are called of God to serve the peoples of Armenia and Georgia. Now to my testimony: I know that this is the Lord's work, not only that but it is a great work! I know that God called Joseph Smith as His first prophet in these latter days and that through God's power Joseph translated the gold plates. The Book of Mormon is true. This is Jesus Christ's true Church. Serve with all your might, mind, heart and strength!! It is worth it and the Lord will use you as an instrument for the salvation of His children. Love, Elder Morris

"My mission has been the most sacred time of my life thus far. I have grown and changed so much. I am amazed at how much the Lord loves me that he gave me the opportunity to serve this mission. I cannot imagine who I would have been had I NOT served this mission. There were many days that were hard. Where I wanted to cry, (okay, I did cry... a lot.) Where I just wanted to quit, to fall asleep on a plush leather American couch! To order an .89 cent bean burrito extra red sauce-no onions from Taco Bell or simply watch a movie that had nothing to do with the gospel. But then, Elders and Sisters, I would remember my purpose. I would stop and slow down and think of why I was here. I would think of how privileged I am and how special these, the Armenian people, are.

I would never take any of my mission experiences back for the world. The Lord is molding us into the men and women he wants us to be for the eternities. What a rare privilege it is to serve in the Armenia Yerevan Mission. How blessed we are. I have learned from the wisdom of all of you. Many of you have even been younger than me as I have sat in district meetings or zone conferences and been spiritually fed at the knowledge that you all are obtaining through your hardships and joyful moments.

I want each of you to know that I know this Church is true. I know that the Lord provides for His servants and that He is always with us-even in our darkest of moments were we feel we cannot go on one more day. He is there and He is real. He is waiting for you to speak with him through prayer. He loves you and He loves the Armenian people.

Elders and Sisters, thank you for changing my life. The gospel of Jesus Christ is true. God lives and Christ came to the earth to perform the Atonement for each and every one of us. I love you all so much! And Remember: " Do not run faster or labor more than you have strength and means..... but be diligent unto the end." Doctrine and Covenants 10:4. Be diligent unto the end." I love you! Sister Burnham