

# Armenia Yerevan Mission Newsletter



December 2012

## Mission President's Message

Elders and Sisters,

The Christmas season is loved by Christians the world over for the feelings it brings to our hearts. Particularly in the Church we step away from the commercialization of it and find our hearts drawn out to family, friend and stranger alike. We are more generous, more compassionate, and more anxious to find someone to help. Until all of you live long enough to go on senior missions you will only have one or two Christmas days as a missionary. We pray they will be unique in what you give and what you feel and what you remember. My most memorable missionary Christmas days both included the baptism on that day of someone I had come to love. They are days never to be forgotten. Whether it happens on Christmas day or a different December day, I pray for each of you in this Christmas month to bless Father's children by helping one or more of them to the waters of baptism. What better gift could a missionary give the Savior, whose birth we celebrate.

Love,

*President and Sister Carter  
Armenia Yerevan Mission*



### **We say farewell, with love, to our departing Missionaries:**

Sister Boyle  
Elder Ervin  
Elder Hatch  
Sister Kohler  
Elder Larson  
Elder Offutt  
Elder T. Peterson  
Elder J. Peterson  
Elder Poulsen  
Elder Steggell  
Sister Tolman

### **Baptisms for the month of November**

*Hassan, Leanna, Anna,  
Gayane, Madlena, Ani  
& Anna*

A very warm Armenian welcome to Elder Smith who just arrived Nov. 15!



### **December Birthdays:**

**20 - Sister Henriquez**

**28 - Elder Hammer**

**30 - President Pratt**

## MISSIONARY MIRACLES:

This past week we had an AMAZING lesson with our investigators Hrpsime and Varia. We had given Varia a baptismal date before but then she left to a village and didn't come back for a month. We were about to drop her one week when we were walking home one night we saw them on the street! We were so happy and planned a meeting for the next day. That was a small miracle. Well we really talked about the importance of finding out for yourself if the gospel was true. Receiving your own answer and how they needed to act on it. Well we invited them again to church on the next day and then we would watch the Restoration movie with them after. Well, they came to church and then we watched the movie in Russian (Varia understands Russian a lot better than Armenian). Before the movie, we stressed several times for them to pay attention to the feelings they had during the movie. The Spirit was very strong during the movie, and afterwards we asked them how they felt. They kept expressing how much joy and happiness they felt during the movie and how it motivated them to come unto Christ! What a great feeling as a missionary! We then invited them to prepare to be baptized on December 29, 2012. They accepted, and Varia even said that she wanted to read a lot from the Book of Mormon and prepare. She smokes, which is really rare for women to smoke, but she says she is ready to quit. She even said, "I want to prepare more. Right now I'm only 20% ready to be baptized." I can testify that the Spirit teaches people, not Sister Beal. People learn so much more when they are prepared to act. I love being a missionary. Sisters Beal and Broadbent

## DEPARTING TESTIMONIES

Well I can't believe that the time is here. I know we can't write too much because there won't be a lot of room for everything in the Newsletter. But I do want to share 3 things. I want you all to know that first; I have a testimony of this gospel. I know that this Church is true. I know it. I know that this is the only pathway back to our loving Heavenly Father. Second; I want you all to know how much I love each and every one of you. You are all amazing and this experience and opportunity to serve the Lord is amazing and the best gift we could ever receive. And Third; that I love these Armenian people. They are all near and very dear to my heart. And we are their Angels, helping them find their way. My dear Elders and Sisters, do all you can, to be their angels. Go out and work, work to bring our dear brothers and sisters home. I thank you all so much for choosing to serve. And I am so blessed to have served alongside of you. Metz Sirov Sister Kohler

I never thought that the time would come for me to give my "departing testimony." I feel very humbled to look back at this past year and a half and see all the miracles that God has performed. I truly do know that this is the Lord's work. I know that His "elect" children are spread all over the world waiting to receive this gospel of happiness. We are very blessed that God allows us and trusts us enough to help Him bring His children back to the fold. I testify that our attitudes will make or break our missions. I testify that exact obedience allows God to use us more fully. I love these Armenian people with all of my heart and it is going to be very hard to leave them and this land behind. I am grateful for all of you- I have learned from everyone and I am grateful for all of your examples. I love that on a mission, we know that we are exactly where the Lord wants us to be, with exactly the right companion, at exactly the right time. I know that if we work with all of our heart, might, mind and strength and live every day to the fullest- that we can look back with no regrets. I am grateful for the truthfulness and happiness that the gospel brings. I am grateful to have served here in Armenia. I am grateful for Christ's atonement and I know that sincere repentance allows us to grow closer to God. I love my Savior, Jesus Christ and I love all of you! In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. Sister Tolman

Hello Everyone! Well, because discipleship is never finished, I won't leave you with my final words, but I do want to jot down a few departing thoughts. The deep desire I have to be able to summarize and itemize my mission into a few things that I learned exceeds my ability to do so. Therefore, I just want to express sincere gratitude for being a fellow traveler with you. You take someone as normal, weird, or wonderful as Joe Shmoe, and then send him on a mission to see what he can make of it. I feel humbled to have participated in the Joe Shmoe transformation act. But the best part about it is, there is no trick. I would like to echo Elder Bott, "The secret's in the basics." In just doing what you know we should. I think back about what made the good times good, and the bad times better, and it was completely dependent on how much I was trying to have the Spirit with me. I know that that is the key. Come prepared on a mission. Don't use the first 6 months of your mission trying to figure out how the Spirit works. Don't do what I did. Think of who the Savior is. Wouldn't every member give their friends as referrals to Jesus? Wouldn't they trust Him with their family members who have strayed? Wouldn't He always have the Spirit with him? Wouldn't he heal the lame and comfort those who just need a kind word? How do we live like that? How in the world do we become worthy to wear HIS NAME UPON US??? All we must do is have a desire and then let who he is, humble and change who we are. Otherwise, it is in vain - the two years, the promises, the miracles. For us it would be. But because He loves us, he wants us to participate. We need it almost as much as the people we teach who are His children living in Armenia and Georgia. "For though [we] preach the gospel, [we] have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon [us]; yea, woe is unto [us], if [we] preach not the gospel!" He loves these people so much. He showed us how to live, He showed us how to die, and of the Living Christ, I testify humbly as Paul did:

8 [Let us] not therefore be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord: but [let us] be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

11 Whereunto [we are] appointed preacher[s], and apostle[s], and a teacher[s] of the Gentiles.

That we be more like him, to bring his children back is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. - Elder T. Peterson

My beloved Elders and Sisters,

As I sit here I don't know what to write or even where to begin to write. It seems as I look back on my mission that it has passed before my eyes in such a short amount of time. I have loved my mission so much and am thankful for everything I have been able to experience during these years. It makes me sad that I will be leaving this country and this people and all of you. Each one of you has played a huge role in my mission and my life and I am so thankful for every little thing. My mission has truly been the most amazing time of my life; also it has been some of the hardest at times, but during those times I grew closer to the Savior and an understanding of His gospel and His atonement and I wouldn't trade those experiences for anything in the world. The joy of helping someone come to the waters of baptism with a converted spirit and heart is some of the greatest feelings in the world. To see someone change by accepting the gospel and to see the light of the Gospel come into them and show forth from them, brings such a warm spirit to your soul, and I will never forget those experiences. Cherish this time in the mission field and look for the good in every instance; laugh, and enjoy the service that you are in. I have come to love these Armenian people with a love I didn't think I could achieve. The Lord has helped me see how amazing this people really are and how they have been protected and kept for the coming of restoration of the gospel. The little things that might annoy you at first in your mission learn to smile at and see how special and childlike these people really are. I remember and will never forget one day when I was sitting in Gyumri with Elder Olsen and it had snowed all night and it started snowing in the morning again and I looked outside and saw a little Tatik sweeping in front of her door while the snow was coming down!! I thought what a crazy Tatik, but then I really thought how hard she was trying to keep it clean for just a little bit and how the snow was just coming down and down where she had swept and in a few minutes her front porch would be covered with snow again. These Armenian people are so special and try so hard. It talks about in D&C 123:12 how people are kept from the truth because they know not where to find it: to me that describes Armenians perfectly. They work so hard and try so hard but without the fullness of the Gospel people's front porches will be covered with snow and everything will have been in vain if they don't have the gospel. Armenians will always try, but without the path, they won't reach our Father in Heaven. In Preach My Gospel it talks about how a lot of your investigator's progression depends on your obedience; I would like to testify to that; how much more they are blessed when we are obedient. The Lord loves each one of you. I know Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer and that His Atonement reaches out to everyone who is willing to come unto Him with a fullness of heart. I know President and Sister Carter love each one of you so much and they pray for you every night and have such high hopes and dreams for each one of you. I love you all and thank you again for everything you all have done. Love, Elder Dustin Poulsen

I know that everything we as missionaries are doing is ordained of God. I know that Christ was the first one to establish missionary work when he told his apostles to take the Gospel to all the ends of the earth. How cool is it that we are preaching the same gospel in a land that was taught by some of the original apostles of Christ but now, in a NEW DISPENSATION! I know how great our calling are and I have a testimony that everything we do is what Christ would have done if He were here in our place. I know that we have the greatest blessing anybody in this country could ask for and we truly do represent the Lord in this work. I am going to miss you all and am grateful for your service and the help you have given me. -chapi mej sirov, yeretzzz larson

Well I would just like to start by testifying that this is truly the work of God, our Father in Heaven's. I truly believe we are called of God and were foreordained to come to the beautiful lands of Georgia and Armenia. I know after much praying and studying and pondering, that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true. I know that the Book of Mormon was brought forth through *miraculous* means, I know Joseph Smith is truly the prophet of the Restoration, and he truly by the gift and power of God translated my favorite book on the face of the whole world The Book of Mormon. I know Jesus Christ is the Redeemer and Savior of the world. "And now, my beloved [fellow missionaries], let us labor diligently; for if we should cease to labor, we should be brought under condemnation; for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay, that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness, and rest our souls in the kingdom of God." My last words are "When in doubt faith it out," in the name of my Redeemer my Savior, Jesus Christ's name, Amen. Elder Steggell (The one from Georgia)

During my mission there is one thing that I've come to know: Heavenly Father truly has a plan for each of His children. The experiences we have, the place we go, the people we meet - it's just not happenstance. It's all for our benefit and growth. And on the other hand, that means we're placed in the lives of others for their benefit and growth too - to help them.

I know that the Book of Mormon is true, and in it we find the true gospel of Jesus Christ, by which if we live it, we find the greatest peace and joy. Jesus Christ is our Savior. Because of His great Atoning Sacrifice, we can all become clean and return to Father in Heaven.

I'm so grateful for the opportunity I've had to serve among God's children in Armenia. I love them. I know He loves them. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. Elder Jeff Peterson

Well sireli Yeretsner, yev Quyrer the time has come. And I've got to say, it went by fast. But the Lord has blessed me abundantly with great lessons for life and I'm grateful to the Lord for what He has taught me. I am also grateful for all of you and for all your wonderful examples. It was a great pleasure for me to serve around many of you. I can testify assuredly that the Lord often answers prayers through others. I have found that again and again. And so I thank all of you for being here right where the Lord wants you.

I know the Scriptures are God's word to His children. I know as Elder Christofferson said, "The Scriptures are revelation, and they bring added revelation." I know the Book of Mormon is true. I know it has been written for our day. And I thank the Lord every day for that wonderful book. I hope that you will read and ponder its message daily. I also hope that you will use it daily in your work. It is the tool for missionary work. I add my witness to that of Elder Holland's "The Book of Mormon is true, and it was given to bring happiness and hope to the faithful in the travail of the last days." I also encourage you to accept this invitation from President Eyring "I plead with you to drink deeply and often from its pages. It has in it, the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the only way home to God."

I want to testify to you of the importance of relying on the Spirit. You don't have to do this work alone. The Lord wants to guide you. I testify that He knows the thoughts and the hearts of his children and I testify that if we will but ask, we shall receive. I also want to testify of the great blessing that the Gospel is in our lives. It really is a light unto the nations in an ever darkening world. I know that if we'll remember what it means to us we will be able to teach and testify with greater sincerity.

I testify of the Savior and His atonement. It is a gift unto mankind to help us leave behind sin and become a better person. I testify that "He took upon Himself our infirmities, and that His bowels are filled with mercy; that He may succor His people according to our infirmities." I testify that He really understands us, especially during the hard times. I testify that "his grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before Him." "I will not forget thee." "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

Finally, I testify of the love of God. I know He lives and loves us. I know through my mission I have come to know Him in no other way possible. I testify of this work and the blessing it brings to the people here. This work is true. I would just like to end with these quotes that have really come to mean a lot to me. "To the individual who's weak in the heart; fearful in the heart; be patient with yourself. Perfection comes not in this life, but in the next. Don't demand things of yourself that are unreasonable. But expect improvement." -Elder Russell M. Nelson. "I don't believe in Christ because I see Him, but by him I see everything else." "Your faith should always be in Christ, with or without the miracle." Of these things I testify. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. Elder N. McKay Hatch

My dad has always told me that time goes faster and faster as you grow older... well, he is right. I have enjoyed the past two years of living among a people who are so closed off from the world; they won't stand in front of air-conditioning for fear of getting sick. They have deep ingrained beliefs and traditions of Jesus Christ. I have learned so much here. I've learned to trust the Spirit. I know God cares about every little detail of our lives and He guides us through the Spirit. I know that God's plan is perfect down to the smallest detail. I know because I have seen His hand in our lives, guiding us to the blood of Israel. I wish that I could continue working here, but I have been called to a different field of labor so, you will have to continue carrying on the work here for us. D&C 29:7 Go and "seek out His elect," rejoice in this work. trust the Lord, He will guide you to them. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen - Elder Offutt

*"Where there is hatred, let me sow love; Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope; Where there is darkness, light; Where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master; grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love. For it is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life". – St. Francis Assisi*  
*I love you. I love Armenia. Elder Ervin.*

Bishop Stevenson told us: "There is divinity in each day of this work." I have learned much of that divinity is the potential each day of a mission brings to influence eternity – especially through relationship with others. Every companion, member, investigator, and contact has the potential to be an eternal friend. (D&C 64:33). Work each day to build eternal friendships! I testify that our Father in Heaven and his Son love each of us, and every person we will ever meet. Thank you all for serving the people I love. Armenia will always be sacred ground to us. With great thanks – Sister Boyle

Dear President and Sister Carter, Elders and Sisters serving in the great Armenia Mission. We wanted to express our love and warm thanks for all you have done and meant to us while serving with and among you. It has truly been our pleasure. Serving here has blessed our lives in so many ways. We have learned so much from your dedication and willingness to serve the Master in this part of his vineyard. It has also been our pleasure to have the opportunity to be at the feet of many of the Brethren and receive their counsel as they have come to visit Georgia, what a blessing. We have seen lives changed; we have seen people brought to knowledge of Christ and how it has blessed their lives and the lives of their families. What a testimony this is of the Gospel, seeing lives changed. The lessons we learn are a natural consequence of putting our trust and time in serving the Master. The Lord never returns less than a loaf for each crumb we offer him. Mission life is work-long hours, heat, cold, sweat, tears, all for the occasional grand vista around the bend of someone's life. All I can say is hold on, keep working, and keep a sharp eye for the beauty of those vistas that a changed life can provide. It is recognizing the Lord's tender mercies along the way that will keep your vision clear and your heart right so as not to miss the Lord's arm being revealed in our lives. The Gospel is true! - Love Elder and Sister Reese