

Sunday May 17, 2003 - Darlene Baird Missionary Journal

Dear Family,

A beautiful Oregon day here at the MTC oops SMTC. Cloudy and a few much needed rain showers. Today we had Sacrament mtg. at the SMTC and traveled to the MTC for Relief Society. Sister Sydney S. Reynolds of General Primary Presidency spoke to us. Us, being five hundred missionary sisters being sent throughout the world. I sat by two sisters from Mongolia. A Sister Murun and Sister Tungalag. They are going to serve in Colorado and Louisiana. They both apologized for their English.....WOW! Can they sing! The closing hymn was "I Know My Father Lives." They both sang in English with beautiful clear voices without any trace of an accent. Sister Reynolds taught us the power of music she would sing one line of a primary song and we would sing the next. Her fourth song was "Little Purple Pansies" and only we seniors sang back "Dressed in Yellow Gold." She then related that song had not been sung in Primary for forty years. SISTERS if you are asked to teach Primary at the spur of the moment sing gospel truths. A sister from the islands sang a solo the words being "He Hears Me" and another "You can believe in Christ, you can receive The Christ, Embrace his word, until you believe the word, come and believe in Christ, come and receive The Christ. Listening to her beautiful voice I thought all our granddaughters also need to serve a mission.

We have been very busy since arriving here in Provo. Classes start at 8 AM and continue all day. If you are learning a language you then start your language training at 6 PM. The couples learning a language had three weeks of telephone training before they arrive and have seven nights of learning then off they go. There were twenty-six couples and six sisters that arrived with us on Monday the Twelfth. The sisters are going to Mexico, Fiji, Montana and Thailand. We seven have couples going to Ohio, New York, Alabama, California, New Jersey, Nevada and Indiana.

Two of us are going to Canada. The other couple is going to be serving with the Cree Indians in the frozen wilds of Northern Canada. There twenty-five below is a good day in the winter. The rest are going to Chile, Peru, Mexico, Russia, Denmark, Cambodia, England, Africa and India. The nametag of the India couple reads LDS Charities. The couple going to Russia has six adopted Russian grandchildren and one of the couples going to Africa has an adopted African grandchild. Amazing huh? For several of these couples it was their second and third mission.

With the help of Chandra I entered the MTC with a crowning glory of WHITE! Your poor dad and grandpa just shakes his head and says, "Why did you do white?" I remind him I am white! I do fine until I look in the mirror. Life is funny! I am coping with temple hair and a sister comes up to me and says she knows she is not to covet or be jealous BUT she wants my hair. As welfare missionaries we have been told our number one priority is to teach "a generous fast offering." Some very powerful blessing result from a generous fast offering. The next meeting tells us another thing is our number one priority.

May 13 Tuesday night, Deiter F. Uchdorf was our devotional speaker. What an amazing thing to stand and sing "Called to Serve" with thirty-five hundred missionaries.

Our days fly by. We meet and are taught a principle or a discussion in one hour, then go to a room where we write a plan for that discussion in one hour then a church volunteer comes to our room and we teach that discussion. The volunteers are GOOD at their assignment. The first time we taught I sort of panicked thinking "I thought they said these people were role playing." (Joan Hoffine) Wednesday we were taught to teach the second discussion in sixty seconds. If we can do it in sixty seconds we can do it in an hour. Our less active volunteer just chatted with us for a minute then started to cry saying "I am suppose to also tell you I smoke, drink, and have boyfriends stay the night. Well, I love our Savior so much all I can say is that I have not been to church for years. I just can't repeat those words" She had served a mission and was seventy-five. The next volunteer Brother Miner said on our note "He would be baptized May 25<sup>th</sup>." He was such a hard case Dick and I were both exhausted when we finished teaching him.

I have learned so much since I arrived here at the SMTC. The teachers, Elder Graham and Elder are unbelievable. They say the words and I am taught by the spirit. Several times I have thought of President Dalton and his words when he set me apart. Do you remember him saying scripture would be "Made clear for me?" As I study and try to write lesson plans I think of a scripture that I think might fit, thinking hmmm that's in 3 Nephi a few pages in and underlined in green and as I open my scripture a scripture leaps out, I read it and WOW! All day long I'm sending a little thank you heavenward. I have made an interesting discovery that all those Relief Society and Sunday School lessons were a good preparation. I have been so grateful that I made the decision to do every scripture chain from those

little Sunday school booklets. (I was afraid I would be a scripture klutz when I was sitting by all those returned missionaries from forty years ago.) We just finished a fireside with Elder Woolley. He taught us how to find any scripture in thirty seconds. He promised if we would spend just five minutes a day using the tools he taught us in six months we could "Terrify" our children.

I guess all of you know it was very hard for me to walk away from our home. By Wednesday noon I realized if I would have known what I know now I would have given away our home.

One of our small classroom teachers is a Brother Miracle. The first thing he told us was his first name WAS NOT "Itsa." He has been so very helpful. We bought him the book "The Walnut Tree" as a thank you. He said it was the first gift he had received from a missionary couple. He is the only member in his family. As a boy of eleven he would climb into bed, lay on his back, clasp his hands across his chest and ask God (he didn't know about God) to tell his parents to quit fighting, yelling and how scared he was. A lot of mornings he woke up with his hands still clasped across his chest. He did this for four years. Then two things happened. His parents divorced and a girl from High School ask him if he would like to come over to her home and learn about the Mormon church. He served a mission in Japan.

Thank you for all your help in getting us here.

Thank you for your prayers.

Thank you for the good lives each of you live.

Thank you for Mother' Day caring.

Thank you for letting me be you mom, grandma

Thank you for taking care of our sons and daughters.

Thank you for you love.

AND grandkids thank you or being good!

As you read this please hold up your hand.....

Four fingers one thumb.

1. I know Jesus is our Savior.
2. I know The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is the true church.
3. I know Joseph Smith is a Prophet of God.
4. I Know the Book of Mormon is the word of God.
5. I know Gordon B. Hinckley is our Prophet of God today.

I know I am having just too much fun!

LOVES AND HUGS, Sister Mom .Sister Gram b.