



John Larsen <theclaw56@gmail.com>

Texas!

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12:42 PM

To: joyce@larsen-family.us, John@larsen-family.us, brad.larsen@gmail.com

Yeehaw Family! I'm in Midland Texas!

I have 20 minutes left on the computer so if you want to email me and have me reply quickly do it! I have time :D

I got here on Monday around 4ish, we got into the airport, Elder Yorgason and me and we met the Assistants to the President: Elder Garling, and Elder Maughan. We got to spend time with President Robison and we ate out at Blue Sky burgers. It was very good. Hmm, I think I should probably talk about the days before and the flight to Texas. We had a 2 hour layover in Dallas and we ate McDonalds there. The fries were consistantly good, unlike the ones in the MTC. We then took a little flight to Lubbock and the plane had propellers. It was pretty fun, but we didn't get to talk to anyone on that flight. I was sitting next to Elder Yorgason and I was very tired so I just slept the entire 1 hour flight, or however long it was, but it was good. The first flight I sat next to a Sister from Uruguay and I was able to speak a little Portuguese to her, she spoke Spanish but could understand me alright most of the time. It was nice to be able to talk to people though, a big culture shock though. People do exist, not just missionaries! :P

But back to arriving here: We took pictures infront of cotton fields and that was pretty fun. The mission car we were in was a truck which was kind of unexpected but it was nice, and their apartment was pretty huge too. Texas is so different from Utah, no mountains whatsoever. It is so flat here but it is very nice, pretty warm sometimes windy. We went with them to the Mission home which is pretty sweet. Elder Garling showed us the mission map and it is the biggest mission in the USA. They have 130 missionaries here. So we met with President and Sister Robison, took pictures, ate dinner, and then we went to the Mission Office with the APs and then we were there till about 10:30ish. They are so busy! They do a lot of work and we got to the apartment at about 11:00ish. They were preparing for a leadership training meeting in Midland which is where Elder Yorgason and I were for the past 2 days. We were with the Zone Leaders and District leaders of the area and just being trained on different things for the mission. It was nice but my favorite parts of the past 2 days have to be when we started proselyting. I really feel like a missionary now. In the MTC I was still set apart and a missionary, but we were all missionaries so it didn't feel like it all the time.

My companions are Elder White and Elder Simmons. Elder White is the district leader for our district. We are in a Spanish Branch! Their apartment is really nice and they're very relaxed missionaries meaning they don't really care what I eat and we hit it off pretty well. They say I'm their son, and they are pretty young to be training me but its pretty cool. Being in a trio is nice. On Tuesday, after the leadership training meeting we went and started teaching. we had a dinner appointment with a ward member who was recently reactivated and then we went and picked up 2 members who are recent converts, Junior, and Kevin and went on splits and taught Obed, a young man who is investigating the Church. We were teaching him and a cool thing was that his sister who wasn't taking the lessons was there and we invited her to listen and she did! We were teaching the lesson The Gospel of Jesus Christ, well the principles of that anyways and she participated a lot. Elder Simmons asked me if I could share an experience that was faith promoting to me and I thought for a bit and shared about Stanford and that whole event. The spirit was really strong and then Obed's sister got interested even more and so we're teaching her tonight as well as Obed. She said the prayer at the end of the lesson as well! It was very cool.

After we taught them we left and went to another investigator's house. His name is David, and he is very cool too. All the people here that we are teaching speak Spanish and English. I really like it a lot, it is just so fun to be teaching finally! We got to David's house a little late so we didn't get to teach him a full lesson but Elder Simmon's did that trick with the lined paper, you know like with the Cross and the word Life at the end. I remember some missionaries doing that at our house before but I don't remember who. But he did that and David really liked that. Part of the story Elder Simmons said during the object lesson was about Temples and then we started talking about temples and the great blessings that come from it. It was a nice little chat. David and his Daughter were playing Wii sports when we got there. He has a pet turtle, a few fish, and a shark.

We left after that and it was about 9:10 and then we went to the Mission Leader's house where Elder White was. He went with the mission leader and went teaching, and then we dropped off Kevin and Junior and went to the apartment to plan and finish off the day.

Wednesday was similar to Tuesday, we went to the leadership training meeting. For lunch there we ate at Chick-Fil-A I've never been there before it was good though. we were going to get Icecream and President asked who wanted ice cream and had a cone, he handed it to me and then the machine broke. I felt a little bad, 3rd day in the mission field, but they went and bought icecream at a nearby grocery store and gave it to the rest of the Elders.

Going to the meetings was a very educational experience, I think it may have been one of the reasons why the Lord wanted me to come here to Texas.

Wednesday was great too!

So we finished with the leadership meeting and then we went to the apartment for a second to go to get ready to proselyte and then we went to a few houses to follow up on some investigators but they weren't home so we went to this referral we got from the mission president about a Brazilian lady who was friends with Dr. Ramos. Do you remember the Ramos's? They lived in Nashua about 20 years ago near DW College. Small world! and how cool is it that they hear about a Brazilian lady who was interested in the church and then 2 Brazilian elders come to Texas?!?! It was so awesome! We stayed at the Ramos's house for a bit. The Brazilian lady wasn't there at the time, she is in the national volleyball tournament and was playing a game away from Texas. Brother Ramos taught us instead of us teaching him. It was just over all an awesome experience. He said that Keyworth was his bishop or something? I can't remember. He said he hadn't thought about Nashua forever. He was the high priest group leader though.

We went to mutual afterwards to teach this one boy who is getting baptized this Saturday. It was very neat to teach him and his siblings. He has 3 brothers and a sister and while his mom and dad were in Temple Prep class we taught them also the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Elder White was getting a little stressed out because they were so rowdy but their rowdiness didn't even phase me and I didn't even notice Elder White being a little stressed out but I just turned to him and said "This is so cool!" He thought it was funny.

Elder Simmons relates with everybody and anybody. He played Wall ball with the children as I was meeting different members of the Ward. We set up tables in the Gym to get ready for a Thanksgiving party that is on Friday and I cut my hand on a part of the table that was broken but no biggy. They have pretty much all the same stuff they have at our stake center. I showed the kids my rubix cube and solved it and let them play with it. I think all that babysitting that I ended up doing before my mission helped me a lot. The baby sitting at the church during mutual and what not.

All the branch members that I've met are so cool and awesome. I really love them all, they are so friendly and nice. It was very good to be in a church building again, weird feeling at first but good.

Today we went to a funeral for a lady that Elder Simmon's gave a blessing to a few days ago. Both Elder White and Elder Simmons knew she was going to die after they gave it. The funeral service was short and the attendance was small but the lady who died, her neighbors are in the Branch and so they asked if we could come. I don't know what religion the man that was conducting the service was but when he saw us come in I guess he had a weird face when he saw us or something. That is what my companions said. The scriptures he used were a little weird, not from King James version and he didn't remember them all the way but the service was good. One person sang the song that goes "I pray you'll be our eyes" I don't remember the

name... "Our Prayer" I dunno. She is a member, and the song was really good. The service was a lot different from Stanford's.

Before we went to the funeral I had Language study with Elder Yorgason so we could work on our Portuguese. That went good. we weren't able to do that for 3 days.

I have loved these past 3 days. It is so good to be in the field, I just love it so much! I was a little homesick at first when I got to Texas but once I got to meet my companions and get to know them I was able to focus on the work and the reason why I am here.

How is everybody doing? How is the ward? Are you going to the Cole's for Thanksgiving?

Brad that is awesome that you are going to Texas! its been pretty warm here in Midland, I don't know what it is like though in Austin. If you can maybe bring your camera. The sunrises here are amazing, we had a 2 hour drive at 6:30 in the morning and I got a few pictures of the sunrise here, really awesome if you get the chance. If not take a picture, you still will be able to enjoy it here. Is the paper for class? I don't know how long I'll be here in Texas but thats awesome that you're flying out here.

If you didn't notice, our P-Days are on Thursday. We also get 1 hour of email instead of 30 minutes so that is pretty flipping awesome! The address for my apartment here in Midland is:

Elder Phillip Larsen
3601 Andrews Hwy Apt.405
Midland, TX 79703

That one will be more direct to me. I think I'll be staying there for however long I am down here in Texas.

I love it here a lot, it is so fun and cool and awesome to be serving finally! This is the work of the Lord and we are blessed to be able to participate in it. Hope to hear from you soon, Love you all very much, and I am so happy to be serving finally.

Love,
Elder Phillip Larsen

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