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Another Week in Texas

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Minha Querido Familia,

So these past few weeks have really flown by. Last week on Tuesday was when Transfers occurred and it's already almost 2 weeks into this Transfer and I have already come to love the ward here. The members are very helpful and it is nice to be able to understand Sacrament meeting and classes fully. Elder Yorgason, Elder Thode, and I have been enjoying biking as well. Elder Thode has been in this area for 6 months already so he knows all the members pretty well and that has been a great help because Elder Yorgason and I have only been in Texas a little over a month! The time really flies by though. Time is always ticking even during those long hours of tracting and it's pretty crazy that we're coming up on 4 months on our missions already.

We're officially not labelled as greenies anymore, well I don't feel like a greeny really. We participate a lot in the lessons that we teach. Right now we have a few investigators and end up needing to go finding a lot but that has been unfruitful because of the time of year it is. We are teaching a 40ish (Not sure of his age) year old man named James, he has had a problem with smoking for some time but a couple days ago, I think it was Sunday, we had him smash his last cigarettes on his front porch. We asked him how he felt and he said:

James - "Embarrassed"

Us - "Why?"

James - "Because it had to come to that. I felt like a child"

He overall though felt very happy that he was able to do that and he has a strong testimony. Right now he has a baptismal date for the 1st of the year, I hope everything works out for that to happen.

Matt and Teresa are our other solid investigators who we have regular lessons with. Elder Thode wasn't able to visit them for about a month because they just had a baby and she was a premie (Don't know if that is spelled correctly) but she's a month and a half old now and we've been able to visit them and teach them. They have been

accepting the different things that we have taught them and they understand the doctrine behind a lot of the principles of the gospel. They also have a strong desire to turn their lives around and they have stuff to change before baptism but we're working with them for January 8th.

We are back in our apartment now too. Well we actually live with a member, but they have a small apartment-like house behind their house that the missionaries stay in. It was already crammed with Elder Thode and his previous companion but now we have 3 missionaries in there, but it is pretty awesome. Right now it is a mess because we officially moved in there yesterday and we've been organizing it but we'll eventually get settled completely.

One less active part member family had given Elder Thode a christmas tree replica of the tree in Charlie Brown Christmas. I'll be sure to take pictures of it and send them next week. Also I will take pictures of the apartment and a couple of houses. Also speaking of houses to answer your question Heather, and also something pretty different about houses here than in NH Brad, more than half of the houses here in Texas are brick houses, although I think that it is just a layer of brick around the entire house, but they look pretty cool. Houses here do not have basements or second floors usually, (of course with a few exceptions on the second floor) There are a lot of huge houses here too, some of them have gigantic castle-like walls around them too.

I got the package yesterday that you sent and thanks a bunch! Also thank you a lot for the 12 days of Christmas, that has been very fun being able to open a thing each day. We did have a slinky race today right before studies and I've enjoyed the candy as well! I do need more Preident toothpaste soon too, I don't know how much longer that bottle will last me but that is just something I had forgotten to mention before but I think I have 1/3 of the bottle left? I can't remember how much exactly. Just something I remembered.

We had a Christmas party here, a ward breakfast and it went really well. It was on the same day as our ward (Nashua 1st) too I think. They had breakfast and then we had a talent show. Elder Yorgason is really good at playing piano and played a carol of the bells rendition. I didn't do anything but I watched. Also there was the silent choir of the monks and they were all dressed like the monks from Monty Python and they had boards with different syllables and words from the Hallelujah Chorus. It was very funny to watch, I have it recorded on my camera but I can't email those files. They're too big. I'll have to make a disc and mail that home eventually.

Another Brazilian-going Elder came to the Texas Lubbock Mission (TLM) and he brought some news that could very well be just rumors about visa situations. Apparently there are 3 members from the Quorum of the Seventy there trying to fix the problems with the Brazilian government and they're expecting a lot of visas to come

by the middle of January. It could be longer or shorter but I don't know.

I had more Menudo (Cow Stomach) soup. In fact, last Friday we went to the Spanish Branch's ward Christmas dinner and earlier that day at Matt and Teresa's we were also fed Menudo. It is still weird to me but it wasn't as shocking as the first time I had it. We have also been eating at a lot of members houses which was nice. The people here in Texas are really nice as well.

What mission in Alabama did Ricky go to? There is this one family whose son is in Alabama and that there are a lot of visa waiters that go there. I couldn't remember when Ricky finally got to Vitoria but they were looking for a picture of him on this blog that the mission president and his wife update there. I wonder if my mission president in Teresina does that, and also how long he's been out in the field. They are there for 3 years.

At the Jones when we were staying there, it reminded me of home because their bathroom has the same tile stuff we have on the upstairs bathroom and they had the same glasses that were used for the prayer cup until it broke. It was very nice staying there though because we were with other missionaries as well which is always fun. That is something that was nice in the MTC is that you always would see your district, and we had a good district too. Some of the missionaries had really bad experiences in the MTC but I loved my district.

Midland 2nd Ward just recently had 3 baptisms that we were able to attend. One of them was a younger man who came to church on his own alone and then took the lessons from the missionaries. The service for that one was very cool. The other 2 baptisms were 2 members of a family and the mom is still working towards baptism. Attending those services is so nice because you see the amazing happiness that people receive.

Today and yesterday have been quite cold compared to other weeks. It hasn't rained still but the sky is very cloudy. We won't have a white christmas here I'm sure. What is new in the Ward now? How is everybody doing? The Christmas party and the Christmas Sacrament meeting sounded like they went well. We had a sacrament meeting program as well but I miss the cantata that we do in Nashua. How was the Pageant? Do you have any pictures from it? Has it snowed yet?

That makes sense for the origin of the word. Trunky in this mission means that you've packed your bags, thinking of home, and losing focus and having a hard time working. I am not that trunky, my district leader right now who has 1 transfer after this one left is pretty trunky though, well that is what I heard but he is working hard and doing well with that.

I feel bad asking for stuff as well and I really appreciate the letters and packages you have sent me too, could you send pictures of family and friends every once in a while as well? I really like the pictures you sent with one of those packages at the MTC. Pictures are just really nice to have.

As for when we're talking on the Phone, Elder Yorgason is on the phone at 3 on Christmas, and I'll be calling at 4 Texas Time which is 5 in NH? I'm not sure. It'll all work out. I'll try today to have a member that we visit call you guys and let you know of the timing for sure just so it all works out well. (That is allowed, don't worry :) I just won't be able to talk to you directly, it'll be the member talking to you.)

Every day my Testimony grows stronger for the importance of this work. When I teach people and see their lives improve as they start living the principles of the Gospel, I find that I can relate more with Ammon and the Sons of Mosiah. Bringing this message brings people happiness and being able to do that is such a blessing and privilege. I don't know if I expressed my experience when Mike came to the MTC but when we met each other I felt like Alma and the Sons of Mosiah when they met on the road and rejoiced because they were still strong in the Gospel. I think I did say this in a previous email but it will be an awesome time coming home and being able to see you all again after my mission and the ward and friends.

I love you guys very much, this season is hard as a missionary even though we get to call home for an hour because Christmas is a time that you spend with family but I am going to be gone for it :(but I really enjoy the packages you sent, and don't worry I'm waiting for Christmas to open it. :D Love you a lot, and miss you guys. I hope you have an enjoyable Christmas and that this month has been great and enjoyable for you all! Talk to you on Saturday!!!

Love,
Elder Phillip Larsen
(or for Julia, Elder Brother Phillip Edward Larsen the First.) ;P

Quote for the week - **"You become what you want to be when you are being what you want to become"** - *Richard G. Scott*

Picture Information:

That car we saw just in a parkinglot here in Midland. It didn't look like it was unintentional either O_o Carbomb? I don't really know.

Brad, I saw this "Sas Factory" sign near the mall in Midland. I found the source of all Sas(s)! :P I thought you'd enjoy that.

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