



John Larsen <theclaw56@gmail.com>

A letter from Dad: 27 June 2011

John Larsen <john@larsen-family.us>

Sun, Jun 26, 2011 at 10:47 PM

Reply-To: john@larsen-family.us

To: Phillip Larsen <phillip.larsen@myldsmail.net>

Cc: joyce@larsen-family.us

Dear Phillip,

This person from Teresina sent a Facebook friend request. Should I accept?
Bina Castelo Branco

COMMENTS ON YOUR LAST EMAIL TO ME:

Let's see. There are 6.9 billion people in the world. There are 52,250 missionaries in the field right now. That's one missionary for every 132,057 people. To contact your "allotment" of Heavenly Father's children during your 730 day mission you would need to contact 181 people per day. That isn't physically possible, and that would be just contacting them. So, you are one of Heavenly Father's messengers sent to children that he loves. To find the ones prepared of the 132,057 you need to be guided by the Holy Ghost. If your heart is right and your desires are there, Heavenly Father will help you find those people.

Now, having said that, missions are all different. For example, France sees little success. It was interesting at work the other day. As you know, David Huntington is now the stake patriarch. He has been studying about lineage to better help him understand his calling. He told me that based on his studies, France doesn't have very much of the tribe of Ephraim in it. That's one of the reasons why the work is small there. On the other hand, there is lots of Ephraim in South America.

During my mission it was a rare thing to have a "normal" week. My last area when I was District Leader was probably the most "normal." It is important to try to meet the "gold standard" week, but things come up. Zone conferences take time. Transfers happen and take time. Other emergencies or situations come up. However, if you strive to keep your focus on the work, then the Lord will bless you. I know on my mission there were times when the schedule just didn't work out. There was one time when I was in serving in the office when we stayed up very very late. Sister Broschinsky had been promising the cookbook for many weeks and zone conferences. We had worked very diligently and finally had all the pages printed for about 350 books. President and Sister Broschinsky were heading out on another

round of Zone Conferences the next day. They really wanted the cook books to give out. In the afternoon we set up stacks of pages all over the office in order starting with page one and going through the end. As I recall, we started collating books in the afternoon. We would grab page one, move to the next pile and grab page two, etc, until we had a whole book. Then we would punch the pages and put in the rings and start over again. The whole office staff worked on it for hours late into the night and early morning until we were all done. That is an example of a messed up schedule. It took time to recover from that too. The next couple of days were messed up. As a zone leader we had travel. We'd take trains to the cities in our zone and make the visits and training. That would always mess up our own teaching schedules. I was a junior companion only about the first 3 months of my mission, and that was to a zone leader, so my schedule was messed up right from the beginning. Anyway... the "gold standard" week provides something to measure yourself to.

I don't know if you've received the package yet or not. If so, then you will see the copies I made of pages from my missionary journal and weekly tracking sheets. (BTW, I did include "A Day of Passing" in the box. Of course, if you've received it you already know that.) My suggestion to you is to just keep striving to do better. When you slip up or have an off day, or things just don't go as expected, keep trying. The Lord will bless you. Don't be too hard on yourself, but don't be too lenient either. I'm sure you'll do fine.

ATTACHED PICTURES:

The floating house is still floating, but there is a foundation growing underneath it. There are slots in the foundation so that when the lower the house back down the I beams holding it up will slip into the slots and the house will settle on the foundation. Then they will pull the I beams out. It looks like they are putting in an under-the-house garage, extending the foundation in the back and will add some kind of addition to the back of the house. It will be interesting to see what happens.

Jake Carroll entered the marine corps today. I bumped into him at church after the meeting block and got this picture of him. Unfortunately the white balance was incorrect and the speed was slow and I wiggled. Anyway, he said to say, "Hello" and got your address and intends to write you a letter.

There was a baptism Sunday afternoon at 5 PM. Arial Scott's boy friend has been taking the discussions and was baptised today. Taylor Bentall got home from his mission this past Thursday and spoke in Sacrament Meeting today. He was at the baptism so I got him and several others to pause for a picture.

NEW STUFF:

At work Carl still hasn't made his Egypt trip. Until he makes his trip I won't be making

mine. And that assumes that the Egyptians want to try our new optical encryptor out right away. They might want to delay weeks or even months. However, I'm all vaccinated now. I just finished up the typhoid series last Friday.

I don't know if we mentioned that Johnny Carl is getting married in August. That will keep the Carls busy this summer.

Elder Skidmore called Rachel today (Sunday) and they talked for awhile. He is getting married on Nov 2nd.

Rachel has been sick again the past few days. She was feeling well enough to go to church today, and was actually looking quite fine. She went to the baptism this afternoon, but then she ate some of the brownies and ice cream. That kind of hit her system hard, and she has been feeling really yucky the past few hours, throwing up and not happy. I wish there were something more we could do.

Last week Sister Hawkins (Primary President) gave Rachel an assignment for the summer. She will be helping in the nursery during the 3rd hour. She gets to teach the kids songs and play with them. She really enjoyed her time in there today. She loves little kids and has fun with them.

Sister Stevens made it to sacrament meeting today. I talked with her for about 5 minutes after the meeting. She is improving. The doctors have determined that three of her disks have degenerated in her back to the point that the sciatic nerve is being impinged. This is the cause of her pain and numbness and falling down. She has been getting therapy in a swimming pool. She gets in a float and they put weights on her ankles. This stretches out her back and relieves the pressure on her spine. It has been helpful. She is able to get around without a walker and usually doesn't need a cane either. It was goo to see her there. She said to tell you hello. She gets your emails and enjoys them. She thinks you are an awesome man.

The Heritage Park Ward is planning a Hill Cumorah Pageant trip in July. Heather will be borrowing our van so she can take herself and 4 other people. The plan is that we'll move the bench seat up where the captain seats are, and that will open up the back for all the equipment. They will be camping the night after the pageant and then visiting church sites the next day. Rachel has expressed an interest in going. Her objection to camping is not being able to shower. She said that if she can shower in the morning then it would be okay. I plan on letting Heather borrow whatever equipment she needs, tents, air mattresses, sleeping bags, etc. It should be a good time. The STake Youth Conference is also going to the pageant, so Julia will be there also.

The other day when I was driving home from somewhere I happened to have the radio

on listening to oldies. (I don't listen to the radio much. I tend to listen to church mp3s instead.) I tuned in in the middle of a song that had awesome horn parts. The next day I hummed it to Gary Cardone at work and he identified it. It is "Sir Duke" from 1976 (when I was on my mission) and is by Stevie Wonder. I found it on youtube and listened to it several times. It got stuck in my head so much that I just had to go to through all the work of making horn and piano scores for it. That took up most of my spare time over the weekend. So, instead of practicing a bunch over the weekend I ended up getting another song ready for the Secret Agent Band. I'll practice for the July 3rd Merrimack Band concert this week a bunch. I really want to play well. It is never perfect, but if I can make fewer and fewer mistakes I'll feel good about it.

Julia is done with school so the morning schedule has changed. Joyce and Julia can sleep in. I wake up at the normalish time of 6:00 AM and go to the gym. When I come home I try to be very quiet so they can sleep. I guess this will be the normal summer routine. It rained a bunch last week so I wasn't able to ride my bike much. This week promises to be more dry, so I should be able to ride again. I enjoy that.

Brother Bates spoke in Sacrament Meeting today. His talk was on Faith. I enjoyed it a lot. He told a story about a greenie missionary that was assigned to his first companion, Elder Carlson, and they were both new to the area. He said that Elder Carlson spoke Spanish so fast that people had trouble understanding him and that his name sounds close to "underpants" in Spanish, so people thought he said his name was "Elder Underpants." However, he told his junior companion that they were going to baptize 10 people that month. They had so much confidence and faith in that goal that they told the whole mission in a mission conference that they were going to baptize 10 people. Being a junior companion he believed in the goal set by Elder Underpants. They worked hard and found three people over the next couple weeks and they were baptized. They fasted and prayed and searched some more. Time was running out. They were discouraged, but Elder Underpants said they were still going to baptize the 10 people. They went back to a family that had been taught previously, but the parents weren't married so they couldn't be baptized. On a Sunday morning they went to this family, knocked on the door and boldly said that the family needed to be baptized. They agreed. They needed to be married so the mission president was called and he came out to do the interviews and perform the marriage. The bishop of the ward arranged the baptism. The family was baptized. They had 7 baptisms, but the month ran out that day. Elder Underpants was so distraught because they hadn't achieved their goal. The mission president helped the companionship recognize the amazing thing they had accomplished. He told them that this area hadn't had any baptisms the entire year before they came, and in one month they had found and baptized 7 people. It was a great accomplishment and the Lord was pleased with their work. The junior companion in this story was Elder Bates himself. It was a neat story. One thing to learn from the story is that we may set goals, and set them high, sometimes too high. Then we work hard and get part way there. We need to

recognize what we do accomplish and not flog ourselves for what isn't done. It is a learning experience and we are all learning, line upon line, precept upon precept. Have faith and be believing.

I'm going to bed now. I love you and am proud of all the good things you are doing. Keep the faith. Trust in the Lord. Do your best.

Love,

Dad

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3 attachments

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311K

SSPX0518.jpg
135K

SSPX0519.jpg
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