

Received July 24 - had a 29 cent U.S. stamp and a Utah postmark on it of July 20, 1991

Dear Mom, Dad, & Laura,

Hello from one of the hottest places you've never been! I cooled off yesterday, though, in a wonderful baptism of a very pregnant lady named Silvia Elizabeth Mazariegos. She's a good woman we began teaching three weeks ago. She wants us to choose the name for her boy--he's not born yet, but in the confirmation, my comp. called him a ni-no. We'll find out in very little time. I think we'll name him Melchizedek. Melchizedek Mazariegos. What an awesome name, huh? 'Just kidding!

I'm listening to a great tape called "God Science," by a person named Skousen. That's why I'm drawing so much (wild doodles all over the margins). I'm listening to a tape that's really interesting. Try and get a copy of it or find out about it.

Anyway, I'm still looking for families with educated and intelligent fathers who can become great, spiritual leaders.

In many ways I feel that during the past months I've "lost sight of the cross." It's so important to remember, meditate, and study the crucifixion of Christ. This is something which is so vital. At the beginning of the mission, it's easy to have the Spirit because one is enthusiastic, green, and eager to be righteous. It's in the middle and at the end of the mission that one has to fight to maintain the Spirit. Just the same, one receives a lot of personal inspiration and revelation which truly helps.

I've written very little. Sorry about that. I love you all and I'm grateful for the gospel in my life.

Love, Elder Bartholomew

Received July 26, 1991 (feast after the famine)! This time with Guatemalan stamps and a postmark of July 12.

Dear Family,

Hot! HOT! **HOT!** I'm outside the Capitol now in a place called Puerto Barrios, and it is very HOT here. My companion is Elder Smith, and he is the zone leader (there is only one here).

Anyway, the place is a port. Ships come here from all over the world: the States, Europe, etc.

We had one baptism yesterday. A 15 yr. old named Boris Brownfield. He's very intelligent, and he's got a very good spirit.

That's good--to have a baptism early in the month. It takes off the pressure, and we can concentrate on working on baptizing others and helping other areas in the Zone to baptize.

We have zone conference and interviews with the president of the Mission this Wednesday. Working hard here. Trying to be perfect and not even coming close (big smiley face).

Love you guys, Elder Bartholomew P.S. Pray that we find complete families, including DADS!

8 July 1991 (did not get here until August 15)

Dear Family,

I got a letter with 20 DOLLARS IN IT. WOW !!! I'M RIIIIIIIIICH! I've got it stashed away for emergency situations (such as Snicker bar attacks).

I'm in Puerto Barrios and liking it. So what if it's hot. By the way, I got a whole bunch of mail at once, and except for Zina's letter, it was all from you guys. I loved it. I haven't gotten that much mail for some time now.

I was really pleased to hear that they'll probably accept me at B.Y.U. I really want to go back and repent and study hard in the best classes. I sure hope that I can enter again.

We haven't been finding lots of golden people until last night when we met a young couple named Miguel Angel and Maria Luisa. They seem very receptive, and I have a lot of faith that they'll progress.

By the way, when I opened up the letter with the twenty dollar bill, I was on the bus, and when I unfolded the letter, it popped out, along with my eyes and those of my companion.

By the way, I was just reading one of the letters my companion, Elder Wheeler, got. Let me write one of those CHOICE LINES FOR YOU....: "I want nothing more than to be your wife forever." She signed it "Katherine Wheeler," and instead of saying, "Love, Katherine," she wrote, "Eternally, Katherine." Pretty darn psycho, huh?! He has 5 months. A year after Christmas, he'll probably already have a kid. He just showed me another letter. Some of these lines are so classic: "The most important things are my Heavenly Father, you, and our family." Whoa, baby. That's HEAVY!

I'm so glad I don't have a girlfriend waiting. GOOD GRIEF.

Anyway, thanks for the letters. I really enjoyed the talk at BYU that you sent me. It also scared me. I sure hope they accept me. If Dad can do it, have him fill out an application for summer term after I get back and have it in early for me. Pray for me hard.

By the way, folks, I was so happy to hear Matt Clayton's going to France. He's going to be one of those great missionaries. He comes from the greatest family.

Pray for me--that I'll be able to discipline my mind. Now that I'm nearing the fourth quarter of my mission, I'm finding that my focus and enthusiasm, etc., aren't the same. I love this work. The problem is just that I have to work harder to maintain the same Spirit.

'Love you guys, Elder Bartholomew

22 July 1991 (arrived about the same time as the previous letter)

Dear family,

I've been really miserable about getting my letters sent off, I know, and I feel bad, and so I've finally decided that I have to write a serious letter and actually SEND IT.

I'm here in Puerto Barrios, and I'm really enjoying it with my companion Elder Wheeler. He's a little weird, but in a cool way, so it doesn't bother me. Actually I've learned a lot from him.

He's kind of a handy-man. He carries around basic tools (hammer, nails, screwdrivers, pliers, wrenches, etc.), and we've really enjoyed pounding nails in the walls all over the house to hang stuff up.

Anyway, I've fallen in love with tools. I haven't bought any yet. I want to, but I'm going to wait a week or so until I come to my senses. Once I've come to my senses, I'll buy a hammer or something. Whatever the Spirit permits.

We both like an organized, clean room [sic!] and house, and this place is pretty much spotless. Everything has a place. There were lots of bugs here before, but not anymore. It's just too much fun dumping alcohol on top of bugs and tossing a match. The other day we sacrificed a huge moth about this size (draws a moth the size of a grapefruit). NO JOKE. VERY, VERY BIG. They eat suit coats (smiley face). That is, unless they are on fire.

We also have killed several spiders about this size (draws one the size of a plum). Not tarantulas, but very, very big and UGLY AND GRUESOME SPIDERS which are also quite fast. I have found myself running around the house leaving a trail everywhere, as I try to catch 'em with shaving cream that some elder left before. It pretty much leaves them stuck--comparable to dumping a ton of honey on some human being. We watch him trying to get out and then dump on some alcohol and a match and then it's DEAD.

This week we baptized a really cool black girl who is 20 yrs. old and makes wedding cakes and cuts hair for a living. She's friends with the branch president's wife and really is a good person. Her name is XOCHI. Pretty cool, eh?! We also have 7 people with a baptismal date for this next Sunday.

I can tell I've been in the mission for a while because I have to really discipline myself against distractions (music, girls, etc.). The devil is always hard at work against missionaries. 'Just the same, I feel I'm really progressing.

I hope to see you folks soon, but only when I've finished the mission honorably, and I still have a good 7-8 months.

Love, Elder Bartholomw

He enclosed a comic with a note, "Read this one, Dad." It shows a man with glasses and dark hair who looks like Dan, sitting on the bed of his son and saying things like Dan used to say: "Calvin, your Mom and I looked over your report card, and we think you could be doing better."

"But I don't like school."

"Why not? You like to read and you like to learn. I know you do."

"I mean, you've read every dinosaur book ever written, and you've learned a lot, right? Reading and learning are fun."

"Yeah."

"So, why don't you like school?"

"We don't read about dinosaurs."