

Tuesday, 12 March, '91

Dear Family,

I've got a new companion again. His name is Elder Morin, and he comes from Maine. He came into the country while I was in the office. Elder Barnard is still here, with Elder Wright, who has one ~~to~~ month in the country and comes from Delta. He was going to UCC before he came here, and working as a machinist at an ammunition shop. The missionaries are really thinly spread with the reduced numbers, but President Andrus decided to take two more from P-a-u-p to put here, not only for the work, but for security reasons. It's a good thing, too - but we'll get to that later.

The Z's called us last Wed. and told us we'd be getting two more the next day, and also that the AP's would be doing a fireside for the branch and showing a session of conference in Crede - the first time they've done that

© for ~~the~~ the branches. Wednesday morning we rode around telling a few church members, and Thursday evening there were more people in the church than I had ever seen. It was very good. They showed the session which started with President Hinckley's talk, "Thornmore means more good." Ellen Port did some of the translating. They've translated sessions before, but this is the first time they've shown something here in Haiti. They kept opening more sections all the way back. If we could only get that kind of turnout on a Sunday morning at 9:00...

~~Saturday~~ ^{Sunday} night a thief tried to break into the house. Actually, it was ~~Monday~~ ^{Sunday} morning, about 5:00. They were having terrible problems with thieves several months before I got here, but I was here for two months without losing anything but an umbrella left hanging just inside an open window. Of course, it's been dry, and they like to come while it's raining, because there's nobody

③ outside and the noise of it masks theirs. Elder Morin had heard all of the voleur stories (voleur=~~thief~~ ~~thief~~ thief), and he woke up because it was raining hard, and he was worried. And he heard a noise, distinctly, three times: panes being slid out of a louvered window. He woke the two others (I slept) and they walked into the other room to investigate, iron bars in hand. There's a place in the second story in back where the ~~my~~ ironwork ~~is~~ over the window is weak, and thieves, or burglars, I guess, had entered there before. As they came to the doorway and looked in, they saw a man with his torso inside the house, removing the last pane of glass. Elder Morin took two steps towards him before he looked up and saw him. What woke me up was Elder Morin screaming at him at the top of his lungs. He didn't take his time in getting away; ~~thief~~ thieves caught in the act are usually lynched pretty brutally here. The members who ~~sleep~~ sleep out back (who couldn't hear

④ because of the rain on their tin roof) say they would be much more humane: they would only beat them up, break both of their legs, and then turn them over to the authorities. Elder Mergens witnesses a mob cutting off a living man's head with a hacksaw. "What did he do?" he asked. "I don't know, but it must have been pretty bad."

Anyway, we slept very lightly Sunday night, and then yesterday morning hired some welders to weld iron bars over ~~any~~ any possible weak spots. I don't think anyone's going to get into the house now without making a lot of noise. At any rate, I'm sleeping better.

Elder Mergens also had a good story about his and Elder Cope's trip up to Port-de-Paix. The branch there is practically if not yet officially apostate now. They openly defied the instructions President Andrus sent ~~to~~ up with Mergens & Cope. As a matter of fact - well, get Elder Mergens to tell you the story some time. There's also another, somewhat related, story

⑤ about a former investigator / con artist (creole: magwiyè) who managed to get several thousand dollars out of the members up there by convincing them that he could get visas for them. He disappeared, probably to the States with a stolen passport. The poorest Haitian can get you a hundred dollars by tomorrow if they think it will get them through U.S. customs. You can't find someone who doesn't have a relative in Miami, New York, or Boston. I f there's a stumbling block as great as the impression that we hand out money, it's the impression that we hand out visas. Early(?) in the history of the Mission, there were some Haitian elders, called to Haiti, who escaped from the MTC. as a result; no Haitian missionaries since have had the chance to go there. I heard that one of them is now a Baptist minister somewhere in the South, making good money. There was also once a Haitian elder, on church support, who was released a month early (honorably, I think), and turned around and sued the church for his "last month's pay." On the other hand, there are

many Haitian elders who served
with all of their hearts and are
now working hard to help the
Church progress here. President
Vercella, for example, and Osnick
Julien, of the St. Marie branch.

With 17 months on my
mission, I'm just starting to
understand what it's all about.

~~Most of my investigators~~ Most of my investigators
might now have some problem
which has kept them from progressing
or being baptized. But it's in over-
coming these problems that people
can start to gain a testimony, and
learn to sacrifice, which is what's
needed if they are to remain
active.

Bye now. I love you all. I love
Saint Marie. I love being a missionary.
They've been giving us an awful
lot of electricity just lately, with
only a few outages, and it's ~~not~~
making me sort of vaguely uneasy.
Too good to last, you know...

Anyway,

(Elder) Inaug Hall