

April 6, 1990

Dear Mom, Dad, and Laura,

!¿Como estan?! Today is my second day in Guatemala and I just love it. My new companion is an Elder Travis Larson and he's a great guy. We met with our mission president after a very long, all-night plane ride (but we were given seats in first class, so we were well fed).

The airport and plane experience was awesome. I got four referrals and gave away about the same number of Book of Mormons. The people were all Spanish and just awesome. I was talking to one lady and she said something about how all religions are good but ours is better because of the "discipline" (her word). She emphasized how we don't smoke or drink. Then she told me her sister was a Mormon.

I went through the Book of Mormon and told her how Lehi and Nephi started a great civilization and how Jesus visited them (she had already agreed to take one). While I was talking to her, a woman sitting across from her got really excited, stood up, and asked if she could get one, if we were selling them! I said, no, but we'd be happy to give her one. One of the elders took over with her, and by the end, she was talking about being baptized.

This was not unusual. Each person I talked to showed remarkable interest and asked really good questions.

The guy sitting next to me on the plane asked how, with there being so many churches, we could know which one was right. He was confused about there being one God, yet so many religions.

I talked to him about what prophets were and then told him the Joseph Smith story. He also thought that God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost were all one, so I showed him the story of the baptism of Christ, showed him it in the Bible, and he accepted what I said right there. No struggle. Just acceptance. Absolutely amazing.

Anyway, Pres. Romney and his wife are going to be great [actually, we read in the Church News yesterday that he will get a new mission president named David Frischknecht. We're also getting a new mission president in Morristown, NJ named Davis.] He [Pres. Romney] is very strict (I'm glad), and we have to know the plantinas (discussions) by heart (not memorized, in our own words). My first companion is a gringo (American), but it's going to be great, anyway.

We live out in the middle of nowhere with dirt roads. People live in small brick rooms. There are lots of little children. These people are very poor by American standards. They wash their clothes (and ours) on rocks on the stream and the kids roll wheels down the street for toys.

There's lots of roosters, dogs, birds, flowers, trees, etc. It's quite different from White Plains or Scarsdale, NY. But the people are humble and kind and sweet.

This is a relatively new area. The missionaries have been here

April 2, 1990

Dear Mom and Dad and Laura,

Thanks for the letter! Today at 4:00 p.m., I'm outta here! Guatemala, here I come! The experience here at the MTC has been incredible, but teaching the gospel is going to be even better!

I'm probably doing my last batch of laundry right now for awhile. From what I hear, it's taken care of for us down there. Yow!!!!

Well, Mom, I guess they didn't change the age for girls to go on missions (not at Gen. Conf., anyway!) Thanx for sending me the stuff I left at home.

Keep being happy and don't get discouraged if your next letter comes in 3-4 weeks. The mail is slow. Mail it to:

Elder Daniel Bartholomew  
La Mision de Guatemala  
Ciudad de Guatemala Norte  
Apartado Postal 332-A  
Guatemala, Guatemala, C.A.

Gracias.

With love, your son, Elder Daniel H. Bartholomew

3-3-90 from 563 N. 150 W., Kaysville, UT 84037:

"Bro. & Sis. Bartholomew. I just wanted you to know your special son got off to Guatemala in fine spirits. It was our pleasure to share some time with him at the airport. We fed him pizza (along with a few other Elders!) and my daughter helped him repack a carry on case. He was absolutely delightful!

He radiated the gospel and we were all "thumbs up" as they boarded the plane. My son Garrett had the privilege of being friends with yours while in the MTC. Garrett was his DL for a few weeks.

You can both be assured that he was ready for his mission and will have many opportunities for growth. He felt good about himself and what he was prepared to do.

God bless you both for all you do in the gospel. Our prayers will be with your son and all those who serve in the greatest mission on Earth! May all be well with your family during the next few months. Sincerely, Bishop & Sister Sill"

Arrived April 26, 1990 (No date, no address)

Dear Mom, Dad, and Laura,

This past week has gone very well. It's absolutely amazing how much the Lord has blessed us (Elder Larson and me). On Sunday, I performed my first two baptisms. Their names are Valvina Abiego Aguilar and Luis Amntonio Chitay Luna. Valvina is a wonderful lady we've been working with and Luis was just a nice extra. He's the son of a couple my companion married yesterday. That's a big problem here. Lots of people never bother to get married. They just get what they call "united" and what we call "living together" or even more accurately, "living in sin." It took my companion hours of our time just to convince this couple they needed to get married. They have four children and they've been faithfully "united" for more than ten years. Here we're authorized to baptize them under these conditions if they've been together that long and been faithful.

Anyway, something really sweet happened last night, but I'll start at the beginning. The day I came here, perhaps earlier, my companion contacted the brother of a woman named Irma(?) on the bus. He got an address and we ended up contacting them last Saturday night. The brother ended up not living at the address he gave us, but his sister Irma listened to us and let us come in for a little while. Her neighbor friend was there and a whole bunch of kids. We sang two hymns with them, told them about who we were and why we were there and asked if we could give them the first platica (discussion) on Monday, April 9th. They said yes.

The first plat didn't go too well. Immediately after we began teaching about Joseph Smith, the drunk next door (they're called bolos here) knocked on the door really loudly and when it was opened had an awful lot to say but didn't want to come in. Then the telephone rang (wrong number). The kids next door started playing music and they had a strobe light they kept turning off and on for no reason. The light was coming into our room through a door that wouldn't shut completely and of course it distracted the kids.

It seemed like we just got rid of the drunk when the telephone rang. They'd answer it and hang up. We'd get started again and the strobe light went on. It was not a coincidence.

All of this coupled with my terrible Spanish and lack of experience made for a ton of distracted, bored kids and it just didn't go that great. The people were all very interested in our message but it was impossible to teach well with the Spirit under those conditions.

Yesterday we came to give the second plt. We began with a hymn and prayed and decided to read 3 Nephi 11 with them and challenge them to be baptized. First we reviewed the 1st lesson. Again, when my comp started to talk about the prophet Joseph Smith the phone rang. Wrong number. Then it rang again. Wrong number. My companion mentioned that this always happens when we talk about Joseph Smith, and they said they'd noticed it, too. The phone got disconnected and we weren't interrupted again. An answer to a silent prayer.

We got to the part about baptism, explained it with emphasis, and

about a year. The name of this little area is Bora de Monte ("mouth of the mountain" if literally translated), but in Spanish it really means something like foot or entrance of the mountain). Because it's fairly new, it isn't really organized yet, and we're finding out some interesting things. We spoke to a woman yesterday with her two children. Haydee (her name), Kathleen (9 yrs.) and Maria Andrea (11 yrs. old) were all really great to talk to. We found out that Haydee had been baptized into the Church as a teenager, but was now inactive or "pasivo," to use her word.

Anyway, we sang a song with her children and her called "Cristo Me Mando Que Brille" ("Jesus Wants Me For a Sunbeam"), and they loved it. We then talked to them a little bit about the temple and how they should pray. This was a little get-to-know visit, but next time they get the first discussion! Yippee!

It was kind of funny, because my companion speaks more or less fluently, and the woman speaks faster than I can hear. So, I was pretty quiet the whole time, but they asked me to teach them how to pray, and I did pretty well; and then they asked me to say the prayer, so I did that, too.

There's a service here called King's Express which is supposed to deliver in a period of days, so don't worry about it. You should get this in 3-5 days. [The envelope said it was mailed April 6 and it arrived April 10--better than service from Utah!]

Keep being happy, and don't worry. Everything's great here. We even have good water to drink because it's bottled by a company here called Salverida which ironically could be translated to mean "save life," although it is interpreted here as "life jacket" or "preserver." Close enough.

Gotta run!

Love, your son, Elder Daniel H. Bartholomew

*p. 5 We're leaving this Thursday (tomorrow night)  
for Arlington and will spend Easter with Virginia  
and a week's spring vacation at Virginia Beach,  
Wallops Neck, etc. with Janie and do some  
shopping in college.*

gave the challenge. If everything goes well, on April 19th, we'll have 8 baptisms just from these two families. Their names are Mirriam, lima Lesbia, Erica, Haydee, Rosa, Gorman, & Osman. Then there's a lady we challenged during the first plat named Priscilla. That's nine. Plus the friends of these families are interested as well, and if we work hard we should get 2 or 3 more from these and who knows. Needless to say, things are going great. Keep praying for my companion and me. It's working (of course).

Love, your son, Elder Daniel H. Bartholomew

P.S. I love and miss you guys. Good luck with your studies Laura, I'm praying for you. Keep enjoying work, Dad! Keep finding neighbor boys to do your work, Mom! I know the Lord will provide you with at least one replacement slave! Love you! (smiley face drawn).

P.S.S. My companion is a gringo (American) and I've talked to the elder in charge of our finances, and he said that last year Pres. Romney said each missionary should get at least \$180 per month over here. They give us each a specific amount of money per month and then if we want extra, we just ask for it. Please send the original \$190 per month we planned on. It isn't any problem with the natives. They understand the difference because their missions are supported by the Church.

Footnote by Grandmother: What do you do when your investigators invite you to dinner, and you know they have sacrificed to give you the meal, and have slaved over it? Yup. That's what Daniel said and ended up in the hospital with Amoebic Disentary. How do you solve that one, Tracy?