

THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

UTAH SALT LAKE CITY  
HEADQUARTERS MISSION  
15 East South Temple Street  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150-0403

April 22, 2019

Re: Utah Salt Lake City Headquarters Mission Young Elders

Dear Parents and Family Members of Young Elders:

Sister Fenn and I are blessed to associate with the young elders assigned to the Utah Salt Lake City Headquarters Mission (the "Mission") beyond what we can adequately express to you. For nearly 22 months we have watched with wonder as we have seen the Spirit of the Lord manifested in the lives of these young men. As most of you know, we previously presided over the Chicago Illinois/Chicago Illinois West missions. We have experience in observing miracles. Notwithstanding our previous experience, we have seen more miracles in the lives of your missionaries than we ever experienced in Chicago. You should know that we believe your sons are as capable and worthy of receiving spiritual blessings as any missionaries in the Church.

In many cases, these young men arrived in the Mission with anxieties, some social challenges, doubts as to their abilities and feeling bruised by the way they ended up being assigned here. We believe, however, that the hand of the Lord has been in their assignments. We believe that these young elders were assigned to this mission by inspiration, because they needed the experiences and associations the Mission provided and because the Lord needed them in this work. We have seen your missionaries prosper both socially and spiritually.

I want to tell you a bit about the spiritual growth that occurs in their lives. We focus on teaching missionaries the doctrines of the Restoration. While we have many shortcomings, we do know one thing the Lord has blessed us with in the Mission – a determination to explain the doctrines of the Restoration in such a way that these missionaries have an increased desire to learn and to strengthen their testimonies. Because of the compact geography of the Mission, we teach the gospel perhaps more frequently than any mission in the Church. Every month, your sons participate in the following events in which we teach and testify: a Book of Mormon class, a mission conference, a Sunday devotional and a transfer conference. In addition, the elders attend the Sacrament and other meetings of our two branches and a weekly mission devotional in which they have opportunities to speak or teach. They participate weekly in their district meeting and in an evening class covering doctrinal or other topics that promote social and emotional health. They read and study the Book of Mormon in personal and companionship study and study *Come Follow Me* on Sunday. They also have regular opportunities to participate in service projects to minister to others.

This mission serves as the bedrock of testimony and developing the discipline necessary for discipleship. By paying the price through obedience, study and faith, your sons can become devoted disciples of Jesus Christ. They are strengthening their testimonies of the Prophet Joseph Smith in his role as a revelator of Christ and developing an unshakeable testimony of the Book of Mormon. I ask the young elders to read

the Book of Mormon every day. I promise them that if, after their mission, they will read the Book of Mormon regularly and at least once a year for the rest of their lives, they will continue to build on the foundation they have established in this mission, stay active in the Church and endure to the end. We have been impressed with the ability of these elders to learn doctrine and to conform their lives to gospel principles. They love the Book of Mormon and drink deeply from it.

Thank you for supporting and loving your sons as they have served in the Mission. We want you to know how much we love them and have advocated on their behalf. We believe the work our missionaries perform is as valuable as a proselyting missionary's work. Consistent with President Nelson's April 2018 conference message "we invite all of God's children on both sides of the veil to come unto their Savior, receive the blessings of the holy temple" etc., our missionaries' principal objective is to assist in the great work of salvation on the other side of the veil. Our missionaries annually help thousands of patrons discover their ancestors, leading to untold numbers of vicarious temple ordinances being performed for their families. We tell our missionaries they are the top baptizing mission in the Church because of the work they do in performing ordinances to redeem the dead. We believe that in the Lord's eyes the work of salvation is one work, and that the work our missionaries do in the Mission is missionary work, pure and simple. In addition, our missionaries play a key role in the Church History Department, in conducting tours to tell the story of the Restoration and in performing other important assignments to help tell and preserve the history of our faith.

The young elders in the Mission have been part of a pioneering effort to demonstrate the ability of young missionaries, many of whom had been honorably excused from proselyting missions, to serve in meaningful ways to further the work of salvation. The experience of young elders in the Mission has had a powerful impact on the Church. As the Brethren have visited the Mission and observed these young elders in mission conferences and on the Church campus, there has been a growing awareness of the capacity of these young men to serve the Lord. Your sons have had a transformational impact on the future of missionary work in the United States and Canada. In part because of the experience of young missionaries in the Mission, missionary candidates typically no longer receive an "honorably excused" letter. Instead, both proselyting and service missionaries now receive a call letter signed by the prophet to serve as missionaries. Your sons' example and experiences have provided important information to the Brethren and helped the Church to see a service mission in a different light and recognize a service mission as an equally valuable experience for young men and women. Your sons have truly been pioneers.

Today in our mission devotional the missionaries in the Mission have been notified of the following: **The Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has determined that the time has come to consolidate, effective July 1, 2020, the service of young elders in the Utah Salt Lake City Headquarters Mission with the live-at-home Service Mission program of the Church.** In connection with this announcement, I am authorized to inform you:

1. Young elders presently serving in the Mission will continue to serve in their current capacities in various mission zones in the Family History Library, Church History Library, Joseph Smith Memorial Building and Granite Mountain Records Vault, performing their assigned work. The Brethren are pleased with the service of missionaries in the Mission. They have faithfully and honorably performed the duties they have been assigned and have demonstrated their enduring commitment to the work of redeeming the dead and establishing Zion.
2. Seventy of the 100 young elders now serving in the Mission will complete their missions on scheduled release dates before July 1, 2020. As the number of young elders declines over the

next fourteen months as they complete their missions, there will be some necessary consolidation of work assignments. Determinations as to which zones will continue to have young elders assigned will be made by the Mission Presidency in consultation with the Family History and Church History Departments.

3. Thirty young elders have release dates after July 1, 2020. After counseling with the missionary and his parents and stake president, we will provide input to the General Authorities of the Church who will determine before that date the desired course to take, including continued service in some capacity.
4. While it is contemplated that no new young missionaries will be hereafter assigned to the Mission, it is anticipated that missionaries will still have opportunities to serve in significant leadership roles in the mission as the current leadership callings will be continued until July 1, 2020.

Sister Fenn and I, and the other members of the Mission Presidency and their wives, support and sustain this decision which has been approved by the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. We know that not only are these men prophets and revelators, but they are also seers and, as such, have insight we do not have as to the future of this work.

We pray that your sons will be comforted by the Holy Ghost and given peace regarding this decision. We know that their sacrifices are as acceptable to the Lord as those of any other missionaries in the Church, and we know by the power of the Holy Ghost that the Lord is pleased with their service as His missionaries. We have complete confidence that they will press forward with a steadfastness in Christ as they continue to serve the Lord in faith.

We are hopeful that the Lord will comfort you, as parents and family members of these young elders, and give you an outpouring of the Holy Ghost to guide you in being supportive of and positive with your missionary. This may be difficult, emotional news for many of our missionaries and generate significant concerns. Yet most of them will see no impact on their own mission – they will be able to serve a complete and honorable mission. We are confident for the 30 elders who will have not completed their missions by the July 1, 2020 consolidation date, that the Lord will bless and comfort them and that matters will work out to their benefit and blessing.

If you have any questions, I invite you to call or email me directly. May the Lord bless you and your missionaries as we move forward in faith.

Very truly yours,



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