**Micah’s Mission Story #18**

Two quick stories dealing with a single family because they both deal with gifts of the spirit.

We got out of an appointment a little early, had a little time before our next appointment and I thought instead of tracting, why don’t we go over a see this recent convert family, do a stop-by, and see how they are doing? This West African family let us into their home, probably even fed us, and gave us water (this was a big culture thing), and in the process we ran into one of their family members who was there, who was not a member of the Church. I struck up a conversation with her, she said she belonged to another church, I asked her if she would be willing to have a “bible study” with us, she agreed and three weeks later she was baptized. I talked to this recent convert family and I asked them “I thought you didn’t know anybody who weren’t members?” And their response was that they knew people and they had no problem with us introducing ourselves and inviting ourselves over to teach them, but they didn’t feel comfortable yet doing missionary work. It was at this time that I had an idea- that idea became to be known as “Retention Specialists”. My mission president wanted to know what I was doing and how I was finding so much success- now my mission president was very “once they have been baptized they are now the ward’s responsibility and missionaries should not be over there”- I convinced him that you could find thousands of baptisms off of these recent converts and the reason is because they still have one foot in Babylon and one foot now in the Church. Meaning, they still have a lot of friends and family who are not members of the Church. Once people have been members for 10, 20, 50 years, the amount of non-members in their lives dwindles into obscurity (or at least it should as the world’s standards continue to plummet). The problem is/was that recent converts were just like most people, terrified to do missionary work. My idea was to do random stop-bys to recent converts, catching them off-guard and catching them with non-members, who we could teach! This was one of many examples I used (this story) to prove my point (I was only out six months at this time). It wasn’t even a couple transfers later that the mission president rolled out the program, he called them Retention Specialists and they were elders in charge of wards with heavy convert baptisms and their job was to do exactly this, visit only recent converts. This was a case of listening to the spirit of inspiration and revelation but also the gift of the spirit of wisdom that enabled me to see this untapped potential. The Retention Specialists in my mission were a huge success and I know they would never have been implemented if I did not listen to inspiration/revelation and go to bat for it (like I said, my mission president was at first very hostile to the idea).

The second story dealing with this same family: we were working and we got a call from the two senior sister missionaries (mentioned in a previous story). They were at this family’s house, at this time trying to get their genealogy done. But they “couldn’t understand a word of what was being said.” So we headed over to help. As soon as I walked in one of the Omas turned to me and said “Oh English, they don’t understand what I say!” The West Africans did speak their own dialect but they also spoke what we might called “broken English” with a strong accent. I was given the gift to interpret the tongue of the West Africans. When they spoke they might as well have been speaking Idaho hillbilly because I understood everything that they said. I never spoke their language but they always understood me. I sat down and proceeded to translate for the family as the two senior sisters filled out the record sheets. Some of the hilarious confusion arose when one man of the home was trying to explain that he was married to these two different women. The senior sisters didn’t understand that they were two different women because they had the same last name. I looked over at him and I said “Sisters?” and the entire family erupted in laughter and he said “Oh English, yes, sisters” and then I said “Married at the same time?” to which the family behind him is crying in laughter as these two white senior sister missionaries sit at the table with shock and horror on their faces. The man, who didn’t know his age because they didn’t have “birthdays”, he was “an old man, English, I old man”- even he was now blushing at this point. So I translated the messages and this man’s record was filled out. Most of his family, including all of his wives were now dead, and as he was going through the list of all the people who had died in the war in Liberia, he could see that it was hurting me to hear this and he put his left hand on my right shoulder and he said something like “Oh English, it okay, it okay” and even in a moment like that with so much pain, he was trying to make me feel better.

**Things we can learn from this**: the gifts of inspiration and revelation are real, the gift of the spirit of wisdom is real, and the gift of the interpretation of tongues is real. If you know you have received revelation and inspiration, even if the keys above you seem hesitant or hostile to the ideas, be courageous and present the information anyway and then stand back, have patience and let the decision rest with the keys. It seems as though those who have suffered the most in life truly are the most empathetic and caring people around.

I testify that this is a true story and share it with you in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.