**Micah’s Mission Story**

I was in the bottom of West Philadelphia. My companion and I would take turns praying and asking the Lord where we should go tracting. Eventually I couldn’t get my companion to pray about where we should tract- he felt like the Lord was not answering his prayers and that the Lord was not leading him and thus us to where we needed to go. So eventually I was the only one praying where we should go to tract.

One such day I prayed about where we should go and I felt very strongly that we should go to this specific street (I always prayed looking at a map of my area). We got to the area and we began tracting, me on one side of the street and my companion on the other (Philadelphia had tight streets and row homes so we were always within 15 feet of each other). About halfway down the street I knock on a door and a man answered the door. Once he saw me a smile crossed his face and he began to chuckle and then said, “come on in” and waved me in with his left arm and then turned around and disappeared into the house. I turned around and called my companion over (who was on the other side of the street) and I went into the house.

I noticed when I walked in that the man had posters of Sam Cook and the Temptations etc all over the walls of his home, these were all groups or singers that my dad loved! And which obviously I was subjugated to listen to growing up so I was very familiar with them. I pointed at the posters and then began singing songs from the different groups, and his response was, “no blacks kids your age know any of these groups, and yet you do?” (implying I’m some white kid…) And I told him about my dad and how much he loved the music and he responded, “What are the odds?” About that time my companion came in (I stood in the doorway with the door open so I could still see my companion). So once we came in and sat down with him, his first question was, “How did you find me?” to which we replied we didn’t know what he was saying, like should we know him? (Like maybe he was an ex-member or less active etc). The man then told us his story: That he was a member of a local church for the past 40 years and actually a “deacon” in that church. The church had recently undergone a schism in which his Baptist church had accepted homosexuality and homosexual marriage and had decided that they would no longer teach it as an afront to God. This was serious enough that it caused this man to leave his church. The previous night he found himself on his knees, praying and asking God what he should do. He knew the commandments of God and wanted to live them but didn’t know where to find the truth. As he was praying intently, in his mind appeared two missionaries in white shirts and name tags. He remembered seeing them in his neighborhood when he was a teenager. He then asked God why he was showing him these two and God told him that this was the answer to his prayer. This man then promised God and said, “If you lead them to me again I will join that church.” We knocked on his door the next day. I testified to this man that the Savior had an immense love for him and knew him personally “for at the same moment you were praying, I was looking at a map, praying to know where we should go and the Lord told me I needed to go right here, right where your home is.” The man was baptized three weeks later.

**Things we can learn from this:** God is a God of miracles, the Lord can do his own work and if you are worthy the Lord can and will use you as an instrument in his hands. If you are unworthy, lack real intent, lack faith in the Savior etc even if you hold the keys God will use another who holds the same keys. You might be a bystander, you might get to witness miracles, but you will never become a fulfillment. I learned God answers prayers. And as always I learned that the field is not ready to be planted, not ready to be dunged, not ready to be pruned, I know the field is white ready to harvest and he that thrusteth in his sickle with all his might the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not but bringeth salvation to his soul.

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

**Micah’s Mission Story**

We were driving home from a meeting late at night, there were 4 elders in the car and we were passing a car stalled on the road. Three of us hopped out of the car while the 4th parked the car and we proceeded to push the stalled car down the offramp and onto a really dark street. But we could see in the distance, maybe a mile down the road a gas station. We asked the man driving the car (who as an African who spoke broken English) if he has a gas container to which he replied no. So we all decided to just push him down the road to the gas station. After about 10 minutes of pushing we were covered in sweat- one elder was pushing on the back, two on the right side of the car on the curb side of the road and me on the left side. All of a sudden a man pulled over in a truck and hopped out of the car and gave me a gas container and said, “Here you go.” I thanked the man, turned around and gave the gas tank to the elder at the back of the car who then joined the other two elders on the other side to put the gas in the car on that side. As he was going over there with my back turned to the individual I thanked the man and said, “we’ll get that gas canister right back to you” to which he replied, “there’s no need, elders” to which I turned around and he was gone. The other elders came back from the other side of the car and asked who I was talking to and I said “a man in a truck” and we looked down the road in either direction for miles and there was no lights. The two elders on the other side never heard him or saw him, the elder at the back of the car heard him but didn’t see him, I heard him, saw him, but I can’t remember his face. If we weren’t standing there holding the gas canister nobody would have believed or known what had happened. We told the individual who was driving that we had a gas canister for him and we put it in his trunk (I should have kept it, haha) and he drove off. We walked back to our car and drove home, the entire time trying to figure out what had just happened.

**Things we can learn from this:** angels are among us.

I testify that this is a true story, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

**Micah’s Mission Story**

I was in the bottom of West Philadelphia- we didn’t have a baptism lined up for that Sunday so my companion and I prayed for someone who had been to church enough times so they could get baptized that Sunday. As we were saying the prayer, a man’s face and name came vividly into my mind. The prayer ended and my companion said, “I know who it is who is ready to be baptized” and I said, “who did the Lord tell you?” expecting him to say the name of the man who was in my mind. But instead he had a woman we were teaching in his mind. I told him who I had in my mind. This man that had popped into my mind was somebody who had been to church for months now and the last time we were over there my companion had attempted to commit him to baptism to which the man refused and so my companion had what we called “soft dropped” him- he was unwilling to go over to his house again. He had taken this man’s rejection to be baptized personally and didn’t want to go back. When I shared the man’s name, my companion became hostile, he was not happy, going as far as to say, “the Lord would not tell us to go back to that man’s house.” I felt the spirit wash over me and told me to stay calm, that everything would work out and that we should follow my companion’s plan. We went over to the lady’s house- the appointment was a no show and when we got in contact with her on the phone, standing outside her house, she dropped us. I could see my companion’s face as the conversation was happening on the phone becoming more and more upset and his rhetoric becoming more hellfire and brimstone. The conversation abruptly ended, my companion didn’t even make eye contact with me and just looked up the street and said, “well she’s going to hell!” A few moments later I asked him, “can we go do a stop by on this man?” My companion reluctantly agreed. When we knocked on the door and the man answered, the man’s face lit up and he said, “Oh elders, just who I wanted to talk to!” We went in, sat down and the individual said, “Elders, before you start, I need to tell you something- I’ve been praying and the Lord told me vividly a few days ago that I need to be baptized this Sunday”. We hadn’t even said a single word yet, not even an opening prayer! The man was baptized that Sunday. The very next Wednesday we had a Zone conference and during the fast and testimony meeting my companion stood up and started to bear his testimony and then began to cry. He said that the learned a powerful lesson the previous week. And that lesson he learned? He said, “the power of unity in your companionship.” He said that he hated me as a companion because of all of my faults but that once he learned to love me as the Savior loved me and decided to be unified in a companionship, miracles happened.

**Things we can learn from this:** free-flowing tears in a testimony does not necessarily mean truth or the Spirit. Do not try to rationalize revelation, for the Lord’s thoughts are not your thoughts. Even if you don’t have a baptism lined up for that Sunday or in other words, even if all of your other plans have fallen through, the Lord does not give you a commandment that he has not provided a way for you to accomplish. The Savior’s new plan of Preach My Gospel includes the commandment to baptize weekly, and it is a fulfillable commandment. If you don’t have the spirit of truth in your life miracles can pass you by and you won’t be able to recognize them- just like with Laman and Lemuel, their hatred for Nephi blinded their minds to the miracles that they had seen performed by Nephi.

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

**Micah’s Mission Story**

While I was doing my 3 week stint as a “moving specialist” (the position was an Office Elder position that most missionaries never held for long), we had just moved an Elder in the Northwestern section of our mission in Pennsylvania and we were driving back home. While we were driving back home the spirit prompted us to go eat some Chinese at a sit down restaurant. I said to my companion, “I think we need to eat some Chinese” and he was driving and looked at me and his eyes got wide and he said, “that thought just came into my mind!” So I said, “let’s keep an eye out for one” and it wasn’t even a minute later we saw a Chinese restaurant on the side of the road. Our thought was that maybe there was someone in the restaurant that we needed to talk to, but when we went in it was literally dead. So we ate and left and we thought it was weird but didn’t think about it again. Less than a week later, the assistants to the president accused my companion and me of looking at porn on the office computers! While we were being lambasted by the assistants in front of the mission president the thought came over me, “how do they know someone looked at porn?” So I asked. To which they let us know that they had a history with timestamps on the computers. So we asked to see them. When we saw the dates and timestamps our eyes got wide and my companion said, “Give me one second!” and left the room and came back in with his driving logs and receipts and pointed at the time on the receipt and said, “This is where we were”- it was the Chinese restaurant! My mission president looked at the date and then looked at the assistants and said, “Well I guess that settles it.” My companion then hacked into the same history and found that these assistants were in the office during times that they were not supposed to be there and were on websites that they were not supposed by on and bought stuff online on Sunday! We circled all of the information and handed it in.

**Things we can learn from this:** Record keeping, record keeping, record keeping. The prophet Joseph Smith said, “Let me prophesy. The time will come, when, if you neglect to [keep accurate records], you will fall by the hands of unrighteous men. Were you to be brought before the authorities, and be accused of any crime or misdemeanor, and be as innocent as the angels of God, unless you can prove yourselves to have been somewhere else, your enemies will prevail against you.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.73). This was a literal fulfillment of that! Hypocrites of God are quick to go about gossiping, backbiting, murmuring, besmirching, but more times than not it is projection. There is a much larger beam sticking out of their own eye and instead of fixing it, instead of getting better, they instead spend their time tearing other people down.

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

**Micah’s Mission Story**

In this story I would like to talk about an event that happened on my mission in my very first area, in North Philadelphia. My companion told me to pray to know where we needed to go tracting, and I was always really uncomfortable with this early on in my mission. So I prayed and prayed and prayed, and what I started to do was I got a map of our area- I put an outline around it with a marker to show our area, and then I would pray over the map. So that night I wasn’t getting anything and it was time for bed so I said, “God please help me know where to go.” So I go to bed and I have a dream. And in the dream I see a building in front of me and on the building is painted a word in a box, there was a rectangle with a word written on it and somebody is talking to me and I don’t know who it is but they tell me “this is where you need to go tracting.” And I walk up closer to it and read it and it says “Silver”. But it’s not a street sign, it’s painted onto a brick building. So I wake up and I think it’s interesting and I write it down. The next day during personal study I’m looking over my map of my area looking for Silver St and I can’t find it in my area! So I think maybe this is a dud. And then all of a sudden I find it! It’s a tiny, little street in the dead bottom left of our area, so southwest in our area. And I tell my companion that’s where we are going to go tracting. Our apartment is in the far eastern side of our area on the street there, 20th and Lehi, so he, my trainer, thinks that I want to go to Silver St because it will take us a long time to get there, to walk there and thus would chew up a lot of our tracting time. I could not get him to agree to go there so I told him about my dream- I told him I prayed about knowing where to go, then I had this dream where someone tells me to tract there and told him about the street name painted on the building. So he goes “okay, fine, we will go down and check this out.” So we’re walking, I think we took a bus maybe and we finally turn onto the street and we are trying to find out if we are actually on Silver St but there is no street sign! And so we look up and you guessed it, painted on the side of a brick building was the word Silver Street. Now he was training me, he knew I had never been there, he himself had never been there because we both had been doubled into this area and opened it, no missionaries had ever been there, and he looked up at the building, then back at me, back to the building then back at me and said “is that what you saw?” And I said “yes, that is exactly what I saw” and he looked around again and said “we’re going to find a baptism on this street.” And I thought it was a little amusing, he was a little late to that party! I knew we were going to find something here because that’s where God wanted us to be. And you always hear the joke, last house on the left, but in this case it was literally the last house on the left. In Philadelphia you would tract and the row homes were attached to each other and he would tract one side and I would tract the other, so I was tracting the left side and he was tracting the right side in this case. And I knocked on the last house on the left and a lady answered and said “oh Elders! Oh my goodness, what are the odds?” And she goes on to explain “I’m a member of the church and I’m from Baltimore and I’m here visiting my cousin who is not a member.” So we go in and teach her (the cousin) and she was baptized. She had 6 kids, and at that point in time the North Philadelphia building next to the Burger King was actually being constructed so we had to bus all the way to Northeast Philadelphia, which was about 45 minutes to an hour and a half one way trip up to that building. So we actually helped them get up there, we paid for their bus fare, and when we got up there we had these 6 kids- I had one of the kids on my shoulders, and our African first councillor in the Ward, came out of the building, and then started to get emotional when he saw us come up and he said “I just saw a fulfilment to prophecy!” I wasn’t really sure what he was referring to, was he just talking about missionary work? But, it was fast and testimony meeting and this man stands up and bears his testimony and talks about this event, seeing me walking to church with this kid on my shoulders, and he quotes the scripture about how missionaries will go out, how beautiful on the mountain are the feet of those who proclaim the gospel, and that they would gather up the children and put them on their shoulders and carry them to Zion. I was 19 at the time and I had never read that scripture in that context before. I thought that was pretty cool. For the rest of my mission I never put children on my shoulders because I didn’t want to inflate my own ego, but I thought about that moment a lot, and that it was a pretty cool moment.

Obviously baptisms followed…

**Things we can learn from this:** God is a God of miracles. The missionaries of Philadelphia PA were a part of fulfilling prophesy. The field is white, ready to harvest. If you ask (prayer), if you knock, it shall be given you. I also learned early on my mission that the Lord has people He wants us to find, and that He will bring us to them if we are worthy. This was important because I never received such a powerful answer to prayer again on my mission- I had to learn how to listen to the “still small voice” and grow. I also learned that you have to work after revelation- you have to go to the map and do some work yourself and then follow!

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

**Micah’s Mission Story**

One time in North Philadelphia, my companion and I exited a lesson and looked at our watch. It was around 8:15pm. Our mission President had taught us that we were to work until 9pm and then go home. We looked at each other and then our watch and then each other and my companion, who was my trainer said, “well, we need to tract until 9.” The first door that we knocked on a Jehovah’s Witness came to the door. Long story short, she wouldn’t let us into her home, she just wanted to bash, and she also wouldn’t let us leave ie. She didn’t want us tracting her street. We spent 30 minutes standing outside trying to calm her down and to get her to go back into her home. I don’t remember who it was, one of us offered to say a prayer for her, and then started to say a prayer. JW’s believe it is blasphemous to allow an improper prayer to take place in front of them (to them you have to pray to Jehovah, not the Father) and so as soon as that happened she squealed like a witch and went back into her home. We then looked at each other, looked at the time, and then at each other. We had less than 15 minutes left. I totally wanted to go home, I was completely done. But my trainer looked at me and said, “Let’s finish this street.” We did what is called “double knocking” which means we each knocked a door to speed things up. The first door I knocked and a lady opened the door a crack and proceeded to have a conversation with me. It lasted about 15 minutes while Elder King tracted the rest of the street. The lady was really nice but was hesitant to let us in that late at night so I asked her if we could come by at another time, to which she gave us a time the very next day and the door was closed. My trainer wasn’t too happy as he had finished the street and was standing outside (out of sight) listening to the last bit of the conversation. I had failed to pray with her so it wasn’t counted as a lesson and I didn’t get her phone number. My trainer had no faith that she was going to be there the next day- I did. But only because I was a naïve trainee, I took her at her word. The next day we showed up, she was there, and at least 4 people in that house ended up being baptized. That lady’s grandson was actually named after me. Something else interesting happened in the first lesson with her. I, for the first and only time in my entire mission, when explaining the power of the Holy Ghost to convince her of the truthfulness of what we were teaching, I said that the Holy Ghost has the power to activate any of your senses as to convince you in a way that you will know what it came from God and not from man/yourself. I said “It could even be a smell.” My trainer looked over at me, his eyes got wide, I shrugged. Later that night my companion somewhat rebuked me for being “so weird” in a first lesson. When we went back over there for the second lesson the lady, before the lesson even started, had to tell us of a powerful experience that happened to her last night while praying to know of the truthfulness of what we were teaching. She said that while she was praying earnestly she all of a sudden smelled this wonderful, sweet smell and then she recognized the smell as that of her mother’s perfume. Her mother had passed away some years ago. The Holy Ghost convinced her of the truthfulness in a way that was personal to her.

Things we can learn from this: feed off of the strengths of your companions. My companion had faith that we would see blessings if we were exactly obedient to tracting at night, while I was discouraged. And my companion was discouraged about a stop back while I was hopeful and had faith. Follow inspiration and revelation to a T, even if it sounds or feels “weird”.

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

**Micah’s Mission Story**

My trainer in North Philadelphia prayed to know where we should go tracting. We went off tracting that area and not only did we not have success, the people there were extremely hostile. That night we had what’s called an exchange, my district leader came into my area and my trainer went into my district leader’s area. My trainer told my district leader of my ability to receive revelation praying over a map to know where we should go tracting and the miracles we had seen because of it. My district leader wanted to see it in action, so I prayed just like every night, staring at a map, and I had an extremely strong impression in my mind that we needed to go to this specific spot. I pointed to the spot on the map and said we have to go here. The next day we left our apartment at 10 to go tracting and we go to the area. Once we get there I’m shocked to discover that it’s the same location that we tracted the day before. I was obviously new to the mission and area so I had no idea that this was the same area that we had tracted the day before. I pulled out my mini map out of my back pocket and looked at the map and then up and then back at the map and then back up- the district leader says, “yep, this is it.” To which I protested and let him know what had just happened, that we were here yesterday, and not only did we not have any success, the people were hostile, and that I must have made a mistake so I needed to pray again. My district leader, much to his credit, looked at me and said, “Elder English, the Lord told you to tract here so we will tract here.” I was not very happy, especially when I started knocking the same doors. This area was a giant cul-du-sac in North Philadelphia that had a circular park in the center of it. My trainer was African American and my district leader was Asian. We started knocking, going counter clockwise around this entire cul-du-sac. People were answering and were very, very, hostile. They were a little confused because they couldn’t tell if I was the same white kid from the day before, and they definitely knew that the Asian guy wasn’t the same. So they kept getting mad and saying, “you were just here yesterday! You guys don’t know what you are doing!” We had a lady who came out on the porch and took out her phone and started calling her neighbors right in front of us, telling them that the Mormons were here again, warning them of our approach. For hours we didn’t get let in a single door as we made our way around the entire circle. Finally I could see the last house in the cul-du-sac and my escape from this torture. To my horror, what looked to me to be a battle-hardened gangster, came out of his house, shirtless, and sat on his porch. And I thought, “oh no, he’s waiting for us”. So we finally get close enough to him and we start to tell him who we are and he says, “I know who you are, you are men of God aren’t you? Come sit down.” And my first thought was, “this guy wants to bash with us.” But as we crossed over and sat down on his porch, I notice that the man is holding on his lap a brand new infant and his chest had a scar running right down his sternum. The man proceeds to tell us that he had a near death experience and had a new child at the same time period. And he was praying and told God that if he will/would prolong his life so he can help this child, he (the man) will do whatever the Lord wanted him to do. He then tells us that the Lord told me to go sit out on his porch because he was sending someone to him. He said when he sat down on the porch and saw us knocking the street he assumed we were the messengers he was waiting for. The man also owned his own vehicle, which missionaries will know that that in itself is another miracle. The man, his wife and his two older children (10 and 12) were all baptized.

**Things we can learn from this**: If you don’t follow inspiration and the directions from the Father you won’t experience the miracles. Another thing, it doesn’t matter how wrong you think the inspiration is, follow through on it and then judge the fruits of it. The more you do this, the better you will get at receiving and then recognizing real inspiration vs strange spirits.

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

**Micah’s Mission Story**

I was in North Philadelphia with my trainer and we were double knocking. I knocked on a door and a nice lady answered the door, and she said she wasn’t interested but she was very friendly. So as my companion was knocking the rest of the street, I talked to her. I explained who we are, what we do. She said something along the lines of “I bet your mothers miss you and worry about you.” And I felt prompted for the first time in my mission (I did use this tactic repeatedly for the rest of my mission) to lament about missing my mother’s cooking to women who I knew were mothers. She immediately became worried and said, “oh no, what do you eat?” And I said, “oh you know, pancakes, top ramen, you know….” To which she said “oh no, that’s terrible! I’ll tell you what, you and your friend need to come over for dinner.” I said, “wow, seriously? That’s so nice!” And then she asks for my phone number and I give it to her and she says she will call, says goodbye and closes the door. My trainer is so disappointed once again with my failure to get her number or to say a prayer with her! So much so, he complained the whole way home. We sat down and he proceeded, during our break, start doing role plays with me about “how to do it right.” I told him that I felt she was a genuine, nice person and he said something along the lines of “there is no way somebody (a non-member) is going to phone you, Elder English, to give you a dinner appointment at their house.” And as he was doing this, sitting across from me in his chair, myself feeling like a downtrodden failure, his phone rings. I hear what my companion is saying “yes, the lady we just met? Oh, yes the dinner….” and it becomes apparent that this lady has phoned not even an hour after our meeting! He is now having a conversation with her about his favourite food that she was now going to make for him. The phone call ended and my trainer looked at me and said something like, “well I guess we got our dinner.” He was shocked. So we go over there, she holds her appointment and feeds us. We felt prompted to just feel her out and not plan for a full blown lesson. During the dinner she said something and I felt super prompted to bring up genealogy (which I never did this again on my mission, let alone during a first meeting). To which the lady said, “Hold on one second you two” and left the room. My trainer turns to me and goes “what was that?” and is worried that we just spooked her and that I said something really weird. The assumption being that she went into the back to get dessert or something to wrap up the meeting and get us out. Instead she comes out of her back room carrying a four inch thick binder full of paper. She tells us that she felt prompted to do genealogy and gather all these names together and that the Lord had a purpose for all this genealogy and she was praying to know what the purpose was. Needless to say, her and her 16 year old son were shortly after baptized and within half a year when the ward split, she became the new Relief Society President. She obviously put that genealogy to good use.

Things we can learn from this: Follow inspiration, even if it sounds weird. Never underestimate a mother’s concern for children and their stomachs. The field is white, all ready to harvest. I would just remind people once again that in this mission, on average, missionaries would baptize 1-2 people per year. I took part in just that fist area of my mission to bring into the church over one person per week. I was there for 2 transfers, or 3 months. My trainer, when I left as his companion, did not baptize a single person for the remaining 4.5 months of his mission. Meaning the field is white, ready to harvest for those who are worthy, have a desire to harvest, and who are willing to do whatever the Lord tells them to do regardless of how weird it seems. Those that care about what others think of them ie. The fears of men, will never be used.

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

**Micah’s Mission Story**

When I was in Southwest Philadelphia (my second area) my district leader wanted to once again see how I prayed over a map to see where we should tract. So I prayed to know where we should go and the next day we went there to tract. We tracted from 10-3 and had minimal success and then we were walking home. I was told by the spirit to stop, so I stopped. My DL asked why we stopped and I told him we needed to go back the direction we were coming from. So we walked back and I found myself looking down a street and the spirit told me we needed to tract that street, even though it was time to go home. So I told my DL “I think we need to tract this street before we go home” and he agreed. We started double knocking, him on the left side and me on the right side. About halfway down the street I knocked on a door, the door opens, a lady comes to the door and I started talking to her- she doesn’t say much and I start to feel weird and then the lady took a couple steps backwards and collapsed on her couch. I turn around and call my companion over and then let myself into the house and tried to ask the lady if she was alright but she is completely unresponsive on the couch. My companion comes in the door and sees the lady and I tell him what happened, and without saying anything to me, he goes over to the lady and checks her wrist, sees an armband and then pulls some trigger mechanism and within seconds somebody is talking to us via a speaker in the room. My district leader tells the dispatcher that the lady has had a diabetic episode and needs help ASAP. Turns out that my DL was a diabetic and knew exactly what had happened and recognized the medical equipment in the room and knew how to operate it. Shortly EMS showed up, came in and took her to the hospital. While they were working on her the EMS asked us how we knew her and we explained how we got there and they said that if we hadn’t found her when we did she would have most certainly died. I was transferred out of the area shortly after that but I left detailed info about her in the area book. I asked the Elders that were in the area now about her and they told me that they had gone back over to visit her and that she was furious with them because “those Elders that were here before stole $20 off of my table while I was unconscious.” We obviously didn’t take her money.

Things we can learn from this: The Lord puts pieces together and makes them work in a way that defies chance. I knew nothing about diabetes and neither did my companion. My district leader however did. Once again, always follow inspiration if you want to be the fulfilment of the Lord’s work vs simply being a bystander to miracles. The Lord has a work to do for the saving of souls as well as the condemning of souls. There is no way to explain what happened to that lady other than an act of God. And yet the lady hardened her heart.

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

**Micah’s Mission Story**

North Philadelphia, we were walking home, me with my trainer and I feel prompted that we need to go into this corner store. My trainer shrugs and says, “Maybe they sell cheesesteaks here” which obviously every human being of common intelligence and above loves. So we get in there and I can’t figure out why I’m there so I just order a cheesesteak with my trainer. And as we are sitting there waiting for them to be made, a young girl comes across the street, into the store, and walks right up to me and says, “What’s a white boy doing in my corner store?” I said, “Excuse me?” She then says she was watching us walk down the street from her second story window and felt like she wanted to come talk to us but that she convinced herself not to because we were just passing through. But when she saw us go into the store, she thought “If a white boy is brave enough to go into a corner store in this neighborhood, then I’m brave enough to go talk to that white boy.” We sat down on the curb and ate our cheesesteaks and had a lesson with her. She came to church a couple times and I got transferred. I don’t know what happened to her. My mission president was really strict with missionaries having no contact with people in previous areas. He only allowed us to write letters to him and our parents once a week, all other correspondences was/were prohibited.

Things we can learn from this: Cheesesteaks are celestial. Follow promptings, once again, even if they seem weird.

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

**Micah’s Mission Story**

My companion and I tracted from 10-3, had minimal success, and were in the process of walking home for our one break from 3-5. I was feeling a bit miffed because I felt strong about going to that area but hadn’t found who I thought I was supposed to find. In the process of walking back to our apartment, I heard a West African woman on the other side of the street disciplining who I thought was her kid. The spirit told me that I needed to talk to her. So I turned to my companion, who I was greenie busting (he was only out 6 weeks), and I said “we need to talk to that lady.” He said, “we need to go home and take a rest!” I proceeded to jog across the street and started a conversation with this lady. She didn’t seem to want to talk to me and continued walking to her destination (which turned out to be her home). As I followed her and talked with her she let me know that she had a church and she had a bible study and she was not interested etc etc. But the spirit told me that I needed to keep trying. My companion was following us like a lost puppy 20 yards behind us. A couple times he waved motioning me to go. Finally we get to this lady’s home and she is trying to get in her home and leave. And in one final desperation I bring up West African food, and I ask her if she knows how to cook Cassava leaf. She turned around and lit up, “oh, you know of Cassava leaf?” I let her know, “of course I know about Cassava leaf! I love West African food! Cassava leaf, potato greens, fufu, etc. but my favourite is Jellof rice!” She further lit up, “Oh, that’s so nice!” So I said, “the problem is it’s hard to find people who will cook for you.” So I asked her if I paid her would she cook an African meal for us. She said something along the lines of “if you eat African food, I will cook African food for you for free.” And so we got an appointment with a free meal scheduled. When praying to know what we should teach when we went over there, I felt prompted that we needed to bring a recent West African convert over with us. So we called this recent convert and we asked her if she would join us and she agreed. When we get to the door and knock on it, the lady answers the door, sees the member we have brought with us, and goes “Oh \_\_\_! (and says her name)” It turns out that they knew each other, but more than that, they were actually related! The member was married to this lady’s brother, who was now deceased. When civil war broke out in Liberia a lot of people were killed and families would come and be placed in cities like Philadelphia and they wouldn’t even know if relatives were alive or dead or still in Africa or now lived in the same city. We also come to find out that this lady is a member of African tribal royalty. Because they knew each other, the lady wanted to, before eating, wanted a lesson about the Church. So we sat down, said a prayer, and started the lesson. Another relevant thing to point out, both of these ladies, the member was in her 80’s and the lady was in her 60’s, so these were grandmas. The toddler I had seen the lady with was her great-grandson. We asked the member to explain the story of Joseph Smith and sat back and proceeded to watch one of the most powerful teaching experiences of my life. The member began speaking in her African dialect, and I couldn’t understand much of what she was saying, but when she, this old Oma, got off of the couch and got down on her knees and put her hands in the air and was pointing at the ceiling, I knew that she was acting out the First Vision. The lady looked a bit shocked and asked a question, which I’m 90% sure was “God and Jesus?” And the member nodded and pointed back up at the ceiling, now with tears in her eyes and finishes explain the First Vision. She points at her sister in law and says “and this why you need be baptized in this Church.” To which the lady looked at us and said “can I come to Church on Sunday?” It was one of the most amazing member-missionary moments I have ever seen. The lady and her husband and her granddaughter showed up to Church that Sunday. After Church the lady walked right up to me after Sacrament and said “me and my granddaughter will be baptized in this Church”. Her, her husband and her granddaughter were all eventually baptized.

**Things we can learn from this**: Once again, don’t think that following inspiration is easy or will result in a quick fix or an easy victory. I exhausted everything I could think of before the wall came down. Once again, desire, worthiness and obedience and faith determine whether or not you will be a fulfillment to prophecy or merely a bystander to it. Another thing to learn, just because somebody was hard or cold upfront does not mean that they aren’t absolutely the elect. Members and friends have the potential in them to open doors in people’s hearts that strangers can’t. Don’t be obsessed with making things always about you (priestcraft), always have as your desire, what is best for those who you are teaching. The work of the Lord takes no breaks. This lady turned out to be African royalty and was instrumental in bringing scores of other Africans into the Church (I’ll get to that in Missionary Story #12), and the missionary that was to have the privilege and honor in being a fulfillment of the miracle of bringing that lady into the church, had to value souls more than his break. If that was the time to reach her, if that was the window, and the Spirit is telling you, then you need to act. The entire day tracting and walking home for our one and only break from 3-5 and the whispering of the Holy Spirit to go talk to this lady was a fourth watch principle (ie. you receive no blessings until after the trial of your faith and the trial of your faith will always be proportionate to the blessing).

I testify this is a true story in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

**Micah Mission Story**

My district leader who was a French-Canadian from Quebec knew that I was having a lot of success, especially with West Africans, and I was greenie-busting his trainee. And he had just tracted into a West African family who was polite with him but had no desire to have any lessons or come to church, and he wanted me to go over and talk to her. So he arranged exchanges and I came into his area with him. We go over to teach this West African lady at her house, she lets us in, I don’t know how to describe it other than she ran a home like a foster care parent. The war in Liberia, like I said, tore up families pretty good, and so there was a ton of kids living with her. We taught the lesson and got nowhere. Once again, at the very end of the lesson I felt prompted to invite her to the lady and her granddaughter’s (from story #11) baptism that was taking place that Sunday. When I said the name, this lady looked puzzled and repeated back the name to me. I said “yes, that’s her name”. She said, “from the Krahn tribe?” I said “yes…” And she started chuckling and said, “she’s not being baptized in your church!” She obviously knew her, because as I said in story #11, this lady was tribal royalty, and she didn’t believe this lady was in Philadelphia, let alone getting baptized in our church. So we convinced and committed her to come to church on Sunday and she agreed to go purely because she expected to prove us wrong, that either a. it was a different lady from the same tribe not THE lady or b. it was the same lady but she wasn’t actually getting baptized. So she showed up on Sunday and my district leader brought her and her family up to me as I walked in with my lady who was getting baptized and her granddaughter. The two African immediately recognized each other, hugged and started talking. The other lady looked at me in shock and said, “this IS \_\_\_\_(and said her name)!” After church I baptized this lady and her granddaughter, and after we got changed back into our church clothes, we joined the group and my district leader’s family got out of their chairs, marched over to us and looked me right in the eyes and said “if \_\_\_\_ gets baptized (she said her name), then I get baptized!” And that was all she wrote for that family. They investigated the church and eventually joined.

**Things we can learn from this**: the power of an example. The power of one person having an effect on thousands. Listening to the promptings of the spirit, even if it seems weird (ie. inviting someone who was totally not interested in the church to a baptism). Not all French-Canadians are bad guys! (that’s a joke)

I testify this is a true story in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

**Micah Mission Story**

In West Philadelphia the missionaries were bringing in and baptizing so many people into the Church that it was becoming impossible for members to give rides. There was simply too many people and not enough members with empty seats in their cars. The bishop there fasted and prayed about a solution and came up with the token system. Now, in Philadelphia a token could be used for a single public transportation use. Everyone within the ward boundaries could get to the church with one token. So what this bishop did, he got a jar full of tokens and after sacrament meeting he would shake the hands of all the members and meet them and talk to them, get to know them, and then if they required transportation, he would at that time give them two tokens- one to get home that Sunday and one to get back to Church the next Sunday. The bishop, who was a pediatrics doctor, planned on using fast offerings to pay for this but then simply opted to basically pay for all of them himself. Because of the efforts of this bishop, he started with a talent (around 90 active members of the ward) and within one year it had split into three wards all with each over 100 active members. His one talent became three talents because he sought first for the Kingdom of God.

When my family from story #11 was baptized, problems arose because that lady’s granddaughter was 12 turning 13 but she was the one who had the child ie. the great-grandson that I met on the street that day was the son of her 12 year old granddaughter. When going to church, the Oma took her great-grandson with her to class, Relief Society etc and the granddaughter went to Young Women’s. The Young Women’s President walked up to us at Church and said that she would not be accepting this girl into Young Women’s because she had a kid and that disqualified her from being able to attend that class. I was unaware of that “rule” at that point in my life and I told the Young Woman’s President that we were sending this girl in, ready or not, and she then said she was going to talk to the bishop, to which I agreed because I knew she has no keys (I did understand keys at that point in my life!) Later that week we got a call from our Zone Leaders, who as soon as we answered the phone asked us, “what did you do?!” I said, “I have no idea, what’s going on?” They said, “the bishop says he wants to talk with us tonight and he didn’t say what about.” The Zone Leaders picked us up and drove us over to the Church and the entire way there one of the Zone Leaders was chewing me out because he thought I had made the bishop upset and he was telling me all of the wonderful things the bishop was doing and we couldn’t afford to lose him “on our side” (which I totally agreed with). But I had no idea what I had done. So we sat down with the bishop who had just come in from working as a doctor, in his office, said a prayer and he looked at me and said, “Are you Elder English the one who baptized \_\_\_\_ (and he listed off some people including this little girl and her Oma)?” He then immediately proceeded to gush over me- that he was so grateful for the work I was doing, how many people we were bringing into the Church- he specifically mentioned the Oma because of the good she was doing in the community, and the Zone leader who was chastising me, his eyes grew wide in shock and sat back in his chair- he was expecting a beat down not praise. This Zone Leader got moved into the highest baptizing area in the mission and only baptized a single person that transfer (which for us was terrible, let alone in the hottest area in the mission. And the only person he baptized was somebody I had found, I will get to that in story #14. Needless to say, he was not very happy with me being out 4.5 months and baptizing 11 people in a single transfer in an area that was completely dead.)

So the conversation then changed to that of the little girl. The bishop told me that he absolutely wanted to go with my plan, have the Oma take the baby and have the girl stay in Young Women’s. He then said, “I work as a pediatrics doctor in this city” and he looked right at me and said, “I know that there is a good chance that getting pregnant was not her choice.” To which I responded, “It wasn’t, it was rape, but they were highly religious and didn’t believe in abortion”, to which the bishop said “and that’s exactly why we shouldn’t punish her for doing the right.” So we sat in that office for about an hour and this bishop wrote up a plan of action for this one little now 13 year old girl to make her feel comfortable, wanted, etc etc. There were literally hundreds of people being baptized in this bishop’s ward and he was a doctor, he had a family with multiple young children, and his time was extremely sought after. Yet, this bishop took an hour+ of his time, after work, to create a plan of action for just a single little girl.

But there is yet another story of this bishop, and that is, at that time in the Church a study had come out and the study showed that of people baptized into the Church, only 1/3 remained active one year later. They then showed how many of them stayed active in a year if they had received a calling, a friend, responsibility etc and none of them had a huge effect. Except for one, and it was “have they been to the temple within 3 months of their baptism?” If they answered yes to that, it more than doubled the retention numbers well over 80%. This bishop, reading these numbers, and knowing he would be responsible for the talents (souls) he had received, started chartering a bus (once again, with his own money) and this bus would take recent converts once a month down to the Washington DC temple (at the time it was the closest one available). They then took a picture of the group in front of the temple and began lining the halls of the church with them. If you at conference around 2005-2010 saw pictures of a bunch of West Africans in a group standing outside of the Washington DC temple, there is a good chance that this was what you were seeing. The activation of converts baptized in our mission was well over 60% (which was double the Church’s worldwide average), but this bishop maintained numbers between 80-100%. He was unbelievable.

**Things we can learn from this**: This bishop gave me, a young missionary, a taste of what Zion could be and should be if members sought for the kingdom of God first, if members’ desire was to build up the kingdom and to esteem his brother as himself. This bishop, to this day, was the best and most impressive example of somebody holding that mantle that I’ve ever seen. Numbers don’t lie, getting people to the temple really does have an impact. The parable of the talents is real. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth from those who neglected and/or buried their talents. And there will be weeping and shedding tears of joy for those who held the mantle, those who held the talents, and multiplied them. You don’t have to be an old missionary to be a great missionary. You don’t have to be a Zone Leader to be a great missionary. Being an old and experienced missionary doesn’t by default make you a better missionary than a younger, less experienced missionary. The same can be said for a district leader, assistant to the president etc. Lift where you stand and the Lord will make you great. The missionary makes the area, the area does not make the missionary. If you are somebody holding talents (souls), ie. holding keys, and you wish to multiply your talents, the first thing you will have to solve is the transportation issue. Members driving investigators is not and never will be a sustainable model for growth. If you wish to maintain your new talents you will have to solve the problem of getting them to the temple in 3 months. Any bishop, stake president etc that doesn’t have a transportation plan or a temple trip plan is not taking their talents seriously.

I testify that this is a true story in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

**Micah Mission Story**

My second area of my mission, I was out 3 months, and I got doubled into an area (meaning me and my companion were both new to the area) and my companion was somebody I had come out on the mission with (so we had a combined experience of 6 months, which is funny because the next transfer I greenie-busted so the combined experience was still 6 months). When we got to the area there was a map on the wall that had an outline around what we thought was our area. I prayed to know where we should go tracting the very first day and felt really strongly that we needed to go to this specific area. The next day we took off and went and tracted that area. It was getting close to 3 (that’s when we headed back for our one break from 3-5) and we had had pretty good success, but we knocked on this door and a West African man answered and we had a wonderful conversation. He had just moved to the area, was interested in finding a church, and was all around an extremely polite guy. In the middle of the lesson he said, “Don’t you two elders live right next door” and he pointed to a door not even 5 feet away from us. To which we said, “no…” and we told him where we live (which was blocks away). And he said “man, I swear I have seen you going in and out of there” and we both thought he was seeing members of another faith, like Jehovah Witnesses, or something. We wrapped up the lesson, said a prayer, and we are standing there looking at our clock, deciding if it is early enough to start walking back (it was 2:45, we were debating if we should tract right up until 3). And we look up the street and we see what looks to be missionaries walking towards us. And to our shock, it was our Zone Leaders, coming home early! And yes, they lived in the very house the man had pointed to. They walked right up to us and wanted to know what we were doing and we said, “tracting in our area” and they said “this is our area”. I pulled out a map from my back pocket with the outline of our area and the Zone Leader said, “oh, I forgot, you got doubled in and the area changed” (I think this might have been the dumbest Zone Leader on the planet LOL). So he drew the new boundaries of our area on my map, we then passed on all the people we had found that day, including the man that lived next door to them. They wanted to know where we had tracted, turns out we had tracted a full circle entirely around their house. The African next door neighbor was actually baptized shortly after (which I mentioned in story #13).

**Things we can learn from this**: sometimes your baptism lives next door- talk to everyone! Be friendly with your neighbors, get on a first name basis with them. Ask them if they need help, how their kids or dog is doing, etc. Missionaries have keys over every non-member in the mission, not just their area.

I testify that this is a true story in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

**Micah Mission Story**

Tracting South West Philadelphia, we tracted into an old, old, African Oma in her 70-80s (a lot of them actually didn’t know when they were born). It was a nice meeting- she did not have a church and was really excited at the prospect of all the West Africans at the congregation and wanted to see it. We invited her to Church on Sunday. We had a family of seven (I will get to that story later) that we prioritized going over on Sunday morning, helping them get ready and get to church, and we didn’t have time to check up on this Oma. We get to church and this old Oma walks in, a little sweaty and looking very exhausted. She didn’t have any money so she walked the whole way there. She was so excited to see friends that she knew from Africa and was so excited to be there, but said to us exhausted, “I don’t think I can walk home”, and so we asked a senior sister couple if they would feel comfortable driving her home. They agreed and the three of them hit it off and became good friends. They drove this Oma to church every week. This Oma was baptized three weeks later, on the same Sunday as the family. The two senior sister missionaries worked closely with me and the Oma after because they focused on genealogy but had a hard time understanding Africans (I will get to that story another day). These two sisters worked with us a lot and got lost a lot. The story of these sisters working with those I had baptized, and getting lost doing it, was shared in the talk, To Grow Up unto the Lord, at General Conference April 2006. Hearing the story of the two sisters getting lost on their way to me and somebody I was teaching was probably the most exciting/fun thing I’ve had happen at conference (if you click to play the video you will see a picture of these two missionaries teaching a recent convert).

**Things we can learn from this:** do not complain so much, this African woman in her 70-80s walked miles to Church. It was a humbling experience, an experience where you asked yourself, “if I had to walk like that to church, even knowing what I know, would I do so without complaint?” You are never too old to change, to receive a second birth, your conversion of fire etc.

I testify that this is a true story in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

**Micah’s Mission Story**

After a long day it was time to go home- we had worked until 9pm like we were told, it was dark and we were wending our way back to our apartment. Streets in Philadelphia get a little more crazy as the night goes on so we were moving back to our apartment pretty fast, when I heard a man’s voice talking with his friends in front of his car. And I knew that I had to go talk to him. I told my companion that we need to stop and talk to that guy (this is the same companion who was only out 6 weeks who didn’t appreciate me tailing that grandma all the way back to her home). He was scared and wanted to go home and pointed out that they were all standing around drinking alcohol. I said that we needed to go talk to them and then crossed the street. When I got close this West African man’s face immediately changed from boisterous intoxication to sorrow. I said, “How are you doing this evening? We are messengers from Jesus Christ” to which the man told us that he knew that we were messengers of Christ and he sent his friends away and poured the remainder of his alcohol out on the ground. He said, “You are messengers of Jesus Christ and it’s not right for me to be drinking like this.” He said that he would invite us into his home but that he wasn’t in a good condition and he said that he would get him and his family ready for us if we came back the next day. We said a prayer with him, thanked him for his time and then came back the next day. This man was legally married (sometimes individuals said they were married but it was just common law) and he had five kids above baptismal age. We taught that family and they became one of my most beloved West African families that I knew in my entire mission. They adopted me into their tribe (they said that I could call myself a “Basa man” from that point on). There was a stake meeting the week after the Sunday that they were all baptized (we had 21 investigators at Church that Sunday) so the bishop wanted us to confirm them that Sunday (the day they were baptized). Baptizing them and then confirming them was the most spiritually draining experience of my life. It was as though power had actually left me and I didn’t even know if I was going to be able to walk all the way home, but I did. I threw myself on the couch, thanked God for the day and had a nap! The baptizing of that family was the record for the largest family baptized with a husband and wife and the highest baptizing in a single week (7) and I would have missed out on that entire opportunity if I had feared man more than God. I celebrated my 20th birthday over at their house.

**Things we can learn from this:** Once again, always follow promptings. Miracles always occur in the fourth watch. Just because somebody is drinking (intoxicated) or smoking or cursing etc does not mean that is who the individual is or that they don’t want to change or that is the extent of their potential. Spiritual experiences are draining. I learned firsthand why Joseph was so exhausted and later on why the apostles were so exhausted and Joseph was not. It’s like a muscle and spiritual experiences will exercise it and will drain you, but the more you do it, the stronger you will become and your capacity will increase.

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

**Micah’s Mission Story**

I actually have a couple other stories from North Philadelphia (my first area) that I forgot to share.

We found this lady early in the week and were teaching her throughout the week and we stopped by her house on Saturday to reconfirm her coming to Church on Sunday, making sure there were no obstacles in her way that we could help her overcome etc etc. In the lesson I felt prompted to tell her that Satan will give you something good (not of God, but good) to keep you from something great (something from God). Then the Spirit told me to say, “You might even have a long lost uncle show up on Sunday. What are you going to do?” She chuckled and said “I’d go to Church!” We left the lesson and my trainer turned to me and once again said something along the lines of “what was that? You are so weird Elder English”. Sunday came and went and the lady didn’t show up to Church. We tried to get in touch with her throughout the week and finally saw her in person and asked her what happened on Sunday. Her face lit up and she said, “Oh Elders, you won’t believe what happened on Sunday! A long lost uncle of mine that I hadn’t seen in over a decade showed up!” My trainer’s jaw hit the ground, his eyes got wide and he just looked at me. I reminded her of what the Lord told her to be true the previous week and I reminded her that the Lord warned her that a long lost uncle could keep her from that truth. She said that she remembered but that she didn’t believe such a thing could be from Satan, and not only that, her uncle was going to take her to his church, and it was a sign from God that that was what she needed to do. The lady never held another appointment with us. She had kneeled and prayed with us and was told the message was true, she had accepted a baptismal date and was warned specifically of how Satan was going to attack her. And yet she could not recognize the spirit of prophecy and signs of the times. Walking out of that apartment my trainer was still in shock and he kept shaking his head and saying “This kid!” I was never told to warn another person about long lost uncles ever again, this was specific to her. She understood it, and role played it with me and she will be held to account for her decision.

**Things we can learn from this:** Once again, follow inspiration even if it seems weird. Just because somebody has received a spiritual witness of the truth, just because they have accepted a baptismal date, just because they have witnessed firsthand prophecy fulfilled, it does not guarantee outcomes. Laman and Lemuel, early apostates of the restored church, etc are perfect examples of this. “Even if one rises from the dead they still will not believe.” Satan absolutely will give you something “good” (something of the world) to keep you from something “great” (something of God). He will take away your boils if you are willing to eat the bullet.

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

**Micah’s Mission Story**

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.

**Micah Mission Story**

In Wilmington Delaware I was doubled in (meaning two brand new elders) with an elder who had just spent the last three months being trained by the same person who trained me. He had been on his mission three months and hadn’t baptized a single person (which was and is common for a lot of missions). I promised him that we would get a baptism this transfer, and he was hopeful but was struggling with belief- meaning he wanted to baptize and did long for it, but he wasn’t holding his breath- that was his current state. I felt inspired to do something that I’ve done ever since, even being home from my mission, if the elders want to work with me, I do this. I went out on the first P-day and bought a bottle of sparkling cider, the stuff that comes in a “wine” bottle, has a cork, and comes in flavors like apple or peach and is non-alcoholic. And I put it up high on a shelf in our apartment and I told him to look at it and I told him “we will open that when you get your first baptism.” In the weeks that followed (which were tough, I had just come from West Philadelphia which had in it one of the best bishops I have ever been graced to shake hands with in my entire life, while Wilmington Delaware had one of the worst bishops I’ve ever had the misfortune of having to work with) we had a lot of opposition, struggle, there were a lot of days we both felt like giving up, but having that bottle there as a physical reminder kept us going. We got our baptism lined up and we spent an entire week trying to find somebody in the ward who would give this individual a ride to her baptism, and we couldn’t find anybody. I called the bishop, I asked him what was up, and he said “I told the members that if she can’t find a way to get to church on her own she shouldn’t be baptized.” It just so happens that this was one of the few areas my entire mission (two) that I had a car. You guessed it, I broke mission rules and we drove this individual to their baptism. There were about 20 people there and all of them asked us “who drove her?” We told them, “the Lord drove her.” Shortly after her baptism a miracle took place and she acquired a car. She said at the time “I know this is against your rules but I know I need to be baptized and no one has ever done anything like this for me”. That night the bottle was opened and to this day thinking back to that moment in that apartment, I can still vividly remember the feelings of gratitude that I had that I in some small way was able to help or facilitate or take part in this experience for this individual and for my companion who did the baptizing.

**Things we can learn from this**: the power of visual reminders and the power of hope. It’s easy to get side-tracked, it’s easy to get overwhelmed, but hope truly is an anchor for the soul. Celebrate the good times. Sometimes we chase the next plateau too intently and we miss the opportunities at each plateau to take a breath, look out over the horizon, thank God for how far you’ve come and celebrate. The power of the keys cannot be understated. The effects of a righteous priesthood holder with keys on a branch, ward or stake are visibly seen. And the effects of a key holder who “buries the talent” are also painfully obvious. Are you doubling or are you stagnant? Look to the keys for the answer and look to the Parable of the Talents for the ending of the story. “When ye are under the spirit, ye are not under the law”- I know because I am the letter of the law kind of person, I don’t even have a parking ticket, the importance of being exactly obedient, but I also know that when the Spirit tells you to do things differently and you feel comfortable reporting that decision to the keys above you, you follow through on those promptings.

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**Micah’s Mission Story**

When I was in North Philadelphia I baptized a lady and her special needs son (this was the story of the lady who fed us with the genealogy book). She wanted her son to be baptized with her, even though her son was not accountable. We asked our mission president and had to learn the rules, and we were informed that such individuals do not require baptism but if the parent desired it then it is on the parent’s discretion once they are over the age of eight. Fast forward to Wilmington Delaware, we are teaching a convert going on a dozen years, seeing how she is doing, teaching her missionary lessons etc. Something that I learned to do (this was self-taught) when I got into a new area, the very first thing I asked for was a list of all of the members of the unit and I would ask for any converts or part member families to be highlighted and then I would make it an effort to go visit them as quickly as possible. This lady was one such individual. While we were over there having a lesson I felt prompted to ask the lady when her young teenage daughter was baptized. She looked over at me in shock and said “I’ve been told for years that I’m not allowed to get her baptized” and I said, “Oh, why?” and she said “Well because my daughter is a special needs kid.” Due to the experience I had already gained on my mission, I was able to practically quote the handbook to her. This lady actually began to cry because it was something she had wanted so bad, to be a part of, but was denied the opportunity. We told her exactly the rules: that they don’t need baptism because they are not accountable, but if a parent desired to be a part of that process, desired the baptism, that is on the parent. She made it very clear that it was something she desired, and we told her to pick a date and we would take care of the rest. For over a month we had battles with the ward about this baptism. The bishop actually called my mission president and my mission president read him the handbook. The home teacher of this family came up to us (me specifically) and accused me of only caring about baptisms and pushing these people into baptizing the daughter, to which I told them that the mother requested it and she told us that she had requested it before and she had been turned down. I told him, “So if you believe that I’m pushing her into something, go talk to her”. My companion, over the weeks, built a strong rapport with this lady’s daughter and the lady wanted and asked my companion by name to be the one to baptize her daughter. This lady planned out the entire baptism, had special outfits for her daughter, the whole nine yards. My companion went down into the water and baptized her and it was a beautiful experience. As my companion and the daughter were getting changed (obviously with her mother), the wife of the home teacher marches right up to me and sticks her finger in my chest and says, “She shouldn’t have been baptized and if she was to be baptized my husband should have been the one doing the baptizing because he has been her home teacher for years.” She even swore at me as I was explaining to her that the mother had requested my companion because of the rapport they had built. I asked her if it would be alright to take the conversation out into the hall so everyone didn’t have to hear it, but she refused and then sat back down with her husband. Thank goodness this lady didn’t hear any of this and they came out happy as ever and we concluded the meeting. When I told my companion what had happened (he was over 6 feet tall and Samoan and his dad had played middle line backer for the Chiefs and his brother was currently a tight end in the NFL) he was ready to go brawl. I had to calm him down and remind him that there was a sparkling cider at our home with our names on it and the Lord was happy with what we had done.

**Things we can learn from this**: “First seek to obtain my word before you share my word” ie. before you teach church doctrine and procedure you might want to first make sure you know church doctrine and procedure. The Lord gives us experience which opens up doors for us later on in life that we don’t even see coming. The Church is true “collectively, not individually”. All branches, wards, stakes etc are not created equal. If you are going through a tough time in a unit it very well could be the unit. If your unit is doing exceptionally well, don’t assume all units are like that and don’t assume that when the keys change hands that it will stay the same as it is. Another thing you can learn is that you can get a lot done in the service of the Lord, you can be an actual fulfilment to miracles vs simply being a bystander to them so long as you don’t care who gets the credit. If all you are interested in is the glory, the praise, standing in the water yourself, etc, you will find looking back at your life that you accomplished very little, but the few things that you did accomplish, you made sure everyone knew about it. The contrary to that is looking back at your life and realizing that the Lord through you accomplished countless miracles and only you and the Lord know about it.

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