

MISSIONARY WORK

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is actively involved in teaching the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, with more than 50,000 volunteer missionaries throughout the world sharing the joy they have found in the gospel. Indeed, the Church's missionary program is one of its most recognized characteristics.

The missionary effort is based on the New Testament pattern of missionaries serving in pairs, teaching the gospel and baptizing believers in the name of Jesus Christ (see, for example, the work of Peter and John in the book of Acts). The Savior taught, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19) and Church members consider it a privilege to show their love for others and the Lord by sharing the gospel.

Missionaries generally begin serving when they are from 19 to 21 years old, though many retired men, women, and married couples also choose to serve missions. Missionaries work with a companion of the same gender during their mission, with the exception of couples, who work with their spouse. Missionaries serve voluntarily for either 18 months or 2 years, receiving no payment for their service as official representatives of the Church. In fact, missionaries pay their own living expenses as they serve throughout the world.

Before serving a mission, a person is interviewed by a Church leader to determine worthiness to serve, and then completes an application and submits it to Church headquarters. Then the person receives a call from the prophet to serve in

a designated area and is sent only to a country where the government allows the Church to operate. Missionaries do not request their area of assignment and do not know beforehand whether they will be required to learn a language

Prior to going to their assigned area, missionaries spend a short period of time at one of 17 missionary training centers throughout the world. There they learn how to teach the gospel in an orderly and clear way and, if necessary, they begin to learn the language of the people they will be teaching. The largest training center is in Provo, Utah, with additional centers in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, England, Guatemala, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, Spain and South Korea.

Missionaries teach the gospel of Jesus Christ and perform community service in the areas they are called to serve and are instructed to have the deepest respect for the laws and customs of the countries where they serve. Some missionaries take special assignments to assist with health, welfare, or other needs. Many missionaries are far from home and welcome the opportunity to visit with and learn about the people they are serving.

Contacts with family and friends during this time of service are limited to letters and occasional phone calls to family at special times. Missionaries avoid entertainment, parties or other activities common to this age-group as long as they are on their missions, so they can focus entirely on the work of serving and of teaching others the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If you have questions and would like to meet with missionaries, please visit www.mormon.org or simply speak with a member of the Church.