

Getting Started...

Hello from Utah!

As many of you I'm sure know, part of my team did not get our visas. Two out of five have visas. That fact brought up the topic of what the two with visas would do, if they'd go ahead and go to Brazil or if they would stay back and we'd all go some place else. The two decided to go ahead and go to Brazil. That left a the option of if the rest of us wanted to stick together or split up and go join another team. We decided to stay together, the three of us from Alaska (Jesse, Bekah, and myself). We were given a few options of where to go, in the end we all saw that Utah was wide open. And that brings us here!

Bekah and I left last Tuesday, the 21st and landed a few hours later. We met our coordinator, Mike Wiist, and his family. Mike and his wife have two little girls, one 6 and the other 3. Mike and his wife, Timbra, have both been through AIM. Mike went to Ireland and Timbra went to Fiji. They have been here for 5 years, we are their third AIM team.

Besides being our coordinator, Mike is also the preacher of this church. The church varies from 60-100 members. This church is actually a church plant from a bigger church of Christ just a town away. From the time that I have been here, I can see how active they all are as a whole. I got the opportunity to join a few church members in going to a women's shelter and just singing. I also got the opportunity to help in a youth event and meet some of the teenagers and get to know them a little bit.

Salt Lake City is very different in that it has the highest number of Mormons. There is a "promised land" for the Mormons, and it is here. This city was built by the Mormons, and a lot of the stores are owned by the Mormon church. Something interesting I have found out, is that all the streets are named by how many blocks they are away from the big Mormon temple, which is in the very center of the city.

We have been here for just over two weeks, and I'm already starting to see just how different the culture is. Where it is easier to be Christian in other states, in Utah, it is very easy to be Mormon here. Also, Salt Lake City is where the apostles and the rest of the Mormon church meet to speak about any revelations that they've had and to make any changes they feel need to be made. So because of that, saying that you're Christian is making yourself an outcast, especially in the schools.

Recently, we went to the Mormon temple to take a tour. They are free tours, two female missionaries show you around the temple and explain what they believe and where it came from. I have learned a lot about the religion just from taking a tour. For example, they believe that the Bible is confusing by itself, and that's where the book of Mormon comes in to clear it up, because "God is not a confusing God, he does not want us to be confused" So, their Bible is actually the Bible and the book of Mormon put together. That's what I have learned so far.



Around this globe are many many book of Mormon printed in almost every language. I saw one in Afrikaans, another in Romanian, and another in Sign Language. Any language, they probably have it.

The sign says “ The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ” and below it is Joseph Smith writing down the book of Mormon



The time here has been good and hard. Hard in that its such a shock to where we thought we were going to go to. And now our team consists of 3, instead of 5. Its been very good in getting to know some of the church members and seeing how each of them has their own ministries, whether its working at a women’s shelter, or working with the teens, or working with the college group, or even working with us AlMers, almost everyone has a ministry that they do. Next week, we will be sitting down and talking to Mike about what we want to do as ministries. I’m looking forward to that! This week has mainly been spending some time together as a team and getting to know our way around the city. It has also been very busy! We have small groups to go to 3 nights out of the week, and then tomorrow, we are helping in a weekend youth retreat. And its only our second week here!

Please continue to pray for us. Pray that we continue to show God in our actions and what we say. Pray that people can see God in our actions, not what we say we believe.

In Him,

Beta Katkus