

Chapter XLV

Running Out of Time

January 2, 1967 – February 28, 1967

After everyone but Janet left to go home, things quieted down around the mission home. Having all ten grandchildren there made for a quite a bit of commotion most of the time. Each one competed for attention from their grandparents who they hadn't seen in a year. When they left, Sheffield and Ramona promised that they would be home in six months and they would have a big get together.

But for now, the holidays were over and Sheffield and Ramona had to get back to work. They had Wednesday at home, but were scheduled to be off the island for the rest of the week. On Thursday morning, Janet loaded her kids and luggage into her rental car and they saw her off as she was going up to Laie to spend the rest of the week with Takara.

After seeing her off, Sheffield, Ramona, and the assistants took off in the chartered Cessna for Kauai and another round of zone conferences. They finished the week in Kona with a full day of meetings on Saturday and the district conference which concluded on Sunday.

They flew home on Sunday afternoon and Janet and the kids returned on Monday. After the holidays and conferences, things had piled up that needed Sheffield's attention. Believe it or not, it was time to start thinking about the January transfers already.

Among other things that needed attention, the first part of January was the time to refresh the mission fleet. The older 1964 model Novas were exchanged for the new 1967s. As always, Sheffield's Impala was also replaced by a new one. While Sheffield was at work in his office, Wesley and Andrea would come in and play on the floor. Even with his workload, he had the evenings to spend with them. Ramona however, had time to spend with Janet and the grandchildren, especially little Pearl. She had grown in the just the two weeks that they had been there.

Toward the end of the week, Janet got a call from Jerry telling her that next week they had a court date to finalize the adaption. That meant that her time there had to be cut short. While she was there, they got a letter from Norma saying that Wade's interview at Ricks College had gone quite well. On Monday they celebrated her thirty first birthday four days early and on Tuesday morning, they saw her and the kids off at the airport. That gave them the rest of that day and the next to finish up the transfers before spending the rest of the week in zone conferences.

On Friday, while interviewing missionaries in the Pearl Harbor Zone, Sheffield had Elder Evan Gardner in with him. On the last transfer he had been sent to Moanalua with a brand new Elder to train. He reported that Elder Bishop wasn't being very cooperative. He said, "Its almost like he doesn't want to be here."

"Thanks Elder. I'll talk to him and see if I can see what the matter is. Be assured that you are doing a

terrific job. Keep up the good work.”

Sheffield sent him out to have Elder Bishop come in next. Elder Michael Bishop was from Ogden, Utah. When Sheffield interviewed him when he first arrived three weeks earlier, he sensed a feeling of apprehension about him, but reasoned that it was because everything was so new to him. Most missionaries feel it to some degree or another. He had answered all of the questions that were put to him with satisfactory responses, so Sheffield thought nothing more of it.

When Elder Bishop came in for his interview, it was obvious that he had a chip on his shoulder. Sheffield shook his hand and invited him to sit down. “So, Elder, are you getting settled into the routine of things.”

“I guess.” is all he said with noncommitment.

“How many of your discussions have you passed off?”

“I’m still working on the first one.”

That was another red flag that something was wrong, he should have been working on the second or second by then. Granted, it was different for everyone, but to still be working on the first discussion after three weeks was unacceptable. Sheffield got right to the point. “Is something wrong, Elder?”

“No.”

“You can tell me. I get the feeling that something is really bothering you.”

“No.” he answered again.

“I get the feeling that you don’t really want to be here.”

Finally, Elder Bishop opened up. “No President, I don’t”

“I see. Why then are you here?”

“Because my dad and mom would have been disappointed if I didn’t go on a mission. Besides, I didn’t want to be drafted. There was an opening in our ward for a missionary, so I took it.”

“What would you rather be doing?”

“Anything but this.”

“Well, you made the commitment to come. When your application was reviewed and your call was issued, the Lord had a reason to send you here to the Hawaii Mission. When I assigned you to Moanalua, I felt very strongly that the Lord had a reason to send you there. Is that any help to you?”

“Not really.”

“Do you want to go home?”

“Is that an option?”

“If you don’t want to be here, it doesn’t do anyone any good. But here’s what I ask of you. Give it another six weeks or so. And I want you to at least try to make an effort. If you put your heart and soul into it,

you might change your mind. It wouldn't be fair to you to quit without trying. One day you might regret it. Can you do that? Just keep in mind, If I do send you home, you'll most likely be drafted anyway. ”

“I guess.”

“I promise that if you give it your best, you'll see that there is a reason to be here. If after a few more weeks you still feel that way, I won't have much choice but to send you home. If nothing else, give me that much time to get a replacement out here for you. There are plenty who really want to come who can't, especially when those precious few opportunities are taken by someone who don't really want to serve.”

“Fair enough. But I can't promise that I'll change my mind.”

“How's your testimony?”

“I believe in the church and all, but there's a lot I don't understand. How can I teach others if I don't understand it myself?”

“That's why I asked you to at least try. If you put your heart into it, do you think you could pass off the first discussion by the end of the week.”

“If wanted to, I could. If I'd of wanted to, I'd just about have all of them by now.”

“Tell me, what kind of grades did you get in school?”

“Mostly B's and few A's and once in while a C.”

“Did you work hard in school?”

“Not really.”

“I taught school for a number of years and had students like that. They didn't try very hard and still got B's. I always wondered what they could have done if they'd tried a little harder. Do you ever wonder that?”

“Not really. I got through, didn't I?”

“Yes, but there is so much more to life than just getting by. What I'm asking you to do isn't just for right now as far as your mission goes. Were you into sports in school?”

“It wasn't for me.”

“I was a wrestling coach and what I tried to instill in my wrestlers were life skills that went way beyond the next match or the season. I see a big part of what I do here the same way. So go give it your best and we'll see where to go from here. I always felt bad when I had to cut someone from the team, particularly if I believed that they had it in them. I truly believe that you have it in you. I'd hate to see you go home without giving it your best shot.

“Yes, it takes work and effort. I also used to be a military officer during the war. The men under my command didn't understand why I always ran so many drills. Once the going got tough, they they were glad to have put forth the effort, because it meant that we lived to fight another day. So, how about it?”

“I guess six weeks won't kill me. I'll do what you're asking me. If I still don't want to be here, will you keep your end of the bargain.”

“Its a deal.” Sheffield felt it was best to end on that note and stood up and extended his hand.

“Deal.” Elder Bishop said as he shook on it.

In the moment he had before the next missionary came in, he hoped the best for Elder Bishop. During the testimony portion of the meeting, Sheffield was curious to see if he would have anything to say. By the end he still hadn't stood up. Then Sheffield saw Elder Gardner give him a nudge. So as not to disappoint his companion, Elder Bishop stood up and briefly expressed his belief in Church, without going much beyond that.

The next day, Sheffield and Ramona spent the day in Laie. During the morning they attended the temple, followed by the last zone conference for the month. After the meetings and the luncheon they drove back to Honolulu. Sunday was their twenty second anniversary, but other than recognizing the fact, it was just another Sunday. They waited until Monday to actually celebrate it by going out for the day.

While having lunch on Tuesday, Sheffield got a call from Elder Bishop, asking if he could come and see him. Thinking that he had decided to go home, Sheffield reluctantly told him to be at the mission home at two o'clock, before the transient missionaries began arriving.

Sheffield was in his office when he was informed that Elder Bishop was there, with Elder Mann the district leader. That puzzled Sheffield just a little. When he invited Elder Bishop in, there was an air of excitement about him, in contrast to his demeanor during his previous interview.

“Do you still want to go home, Elder Bishop?” he asked getting right to the point.

“Not on your life President. You were right. I now know why I was sent here.”

“Oh really. And what brought you to that conclusion?”

“Well after my last interview, I decided to try harder and I prayed to know why I was here. This morning I went on an exchange to work with Elder Mann in Halawa. We went to make a call back at an apartment building right next to the air base. No one was home, but as we were walking back out to the street, some called me by my first name. I looked up to see someone in an air force uniform running toward me.

“I couldn't believe it. It was my older brother who had ran away from home when he was seventeen. He called once or twice to let us know that he was alright, but we had no idea where was. It turned out that he had joined the Air Force and is stationed here. You can't tell me that it was all just coincidence that I am where I am.”

“That's the most incredible story that I've ever heard, Elder. See I told you.”

“I'm not surprised that he joined the Air Force. When we were growing up, he and I used to love to

watch the jets from Hill Air Force Base. He was fascinated by them and used to build models and had them all over in our bedroom. Any way, we talked for quite a while. Seeing me made him realize that the Lord is looking after him too. He said that he's ready to be part of our family again and wants to straighten out his life. I can't wait to tell my mom and dad."

"What's their telephone number? I'll call right now and let you talk to them."

Elder Bishop told him the number as he dialed it. A woman on the other end of the line answered. "Is this Sister Bishop?" ... "This is President Brason of the Hawaii Mission. Your son is here where with me." ... "No. He's not in any trouble. He has something so incredible to tell you, that I said he could talk to you. Here, let me hand him the telephone."

Elder Bishop related the tale of how he had found his long lost brother. When he was finished talking to his mother, he left with Elder Mann to go back to work. Before leaving, he again told Sheffield that he no longer wanted to go home and promised that he'd do everything expected of him from then on.

Even before Elder Bishop and Elder Mann left, a few of the missionaries in transit began arriving at the mission home for an overnight stay. Unlike the massive transfer the previous month, only eighteen Elders were affected with five going home. By dinner time, they were all there and after dinner, they each reported their missions. Those going home included Elder Wild, who was one of the Assistants and Elder Edwards who had once been the mission recorder. There were two special guests there that evening as Elder Hanna's parents had come all the way from Melbourne, Australia to get him.

On Wednesday morning, Sheffield had his final interview with each of them before seeing four of them off to the airport. Elder Hanna and his parents planned to tour the islands before returning home to Australia.

When Roy returned from the airport, he had with him five brand new Elders. Even though the missionary quota was in place, more Elders were now being called for a number of reasons. One of them was the natural growth of the Church. As more wards and branches were being formed, each was able to send out two missionaries each year. Another factor was better preparation and emphasis on missionary service. Many wards had previously fell short of their allotment due to the lack of prepared young men. This was particularly stressed in areas outside of the United States where the quotas did not apply. This was the case with Elder Val Harper from Auckland, New Zealand and Elder Nathan Stewart from Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

A third factor was many of the potential missionaries had now completed their military obligations and were now available to serve missions. Such was the case with Elder Gary Blaine from Ontario, Oregon. He had been drafted at right out of high school in the summer of 1965. He had been wounded when his company was ambushed by the Viet Cong in April of 1966. His wounds were severe enough to be

discharged from the Army. He had healed sufficiently that he now was able to served a mission.

After each of the new arrivals had been interviewed, they were paired with their instructors and sent to their first areas.

A letter arrived from Janet telling them that Pearl's adoption had been finalized by the court. They planned on having her blessed in February but they planned to wait until Sheffield and Ramona were released from their mission to have her sealed to them. The letter included a recent photograph.

The same day that the got the letter from Janet, Sheffield was taken back by a national tragedy that was reported on the ten o'clock news. Earlier that day three astronauts were killed in a fire in their space capsule while conducting a test launch of the first manned Apollo mission. Two of the three were veterans of previous space flights. Gus Grissom who was the second American to go into space and later flew in Gemini III, and Ed White, the first American to walk in space. The third, Roger Chaffee, was rookie. The mission was scheduled for February 21st. A review of the accident and any corrective actions required was certain to delay any further space flights for better than a year.

On Saturday morning, Sheffield and Ramona flew to Lihue for the Kauai zone and district conferences on Saturday and Sunday, which pretty much wrapped up the month of January. Time seemed to be quickly slipping away. The closer it got to the end, the faster it seemed to go. There was so much more to be done in the next five months and they wanted to give it their all, right up to very end.

Unfortunately not all missionaries were able to hang on so well. There was term for such missionaries, they were referred to as being "trunky" insinuating they they had their trunk all packed and sitting on it just waiting to go home. It seemed to sometimes affect even the best and most capable missionaries.

While in Lihue, Elder Coleman, one of the zone leaders, complained that his companion, Elder Martin Peterson from Adrian, Oregon had basically called it quits with three and half weeks to go and wasn't putting forth much effort. Elder Peterson had always been such a hard working missionary with a lot of energy, ambition, and ability. He was one of those farm boys in whom Sheffield placed a lot of confidence, so much so that he was placed into leadership responsibility ahead of many others. It was a puzzle to Sheffield as to why he all of a sudden shut down.

Now, Elder Coleman on the other hand, had some problems early on. He too was one of those farm boys and had been made a senior companion early on, but let his emotions get caught up in a young lady in one of the areas where he had served. Sheffield had to reprimand him by relegating him back to a junior companion for several months. Elder Coleman went on to redeem himself and eventually worked on the office staff and went on to fill leadership rolls.

At one time, Sheffield would of expected something like this from Elder Coleman, not Elder

Peterson. There wasn't much anyone could do, he had lost the momentum and was simply going through the motions, while Elder Coleman carried all the weight. It was unfortunate when it happened, this certainly wasn't the first case that Sheffield and Ramona had seen. They didn't want it to happen to them.

There was never a shortage of problems to deal with. If it wasn't one thing, it was another. During the first week in February, Elder Jarvis and Elder Harmon in Honolulu Central were robbed. When Elder Jarvis reported the incident to Sheffield, he related what had taken place.

They were walking home from an appointment one night after dark when they were confronted by a man wielding a knife, who demanded that they hand over their cash and valuables. Elder Jarvis explained that he didn't have any money on him. The assailant demanded his wrist watch. Elder Jarvis reluctantly gave him his gold watch, which had been a graduation gift from his parents.

Elder Harmon was a scrappy cowboy from Carey, Idaho who had only been out for six weeks. He had been brought up tough and wasn't about to let some punk get away with this. While the thief put Elder Jarvis' watch into his pocket, he made his move. He grabbed the robber by the wrist with one hand in an attempt to disarm him. With the other hand, he slugged the robber in the jaw.

In the process, the knife was dropped and Elder Harmon picked it up and held it on the thief, reversing the tables. When he demanded his companion's watch back, the man ran. Elder Harmon, who had also been a running back on his high school football team took after him and tackled him to the ground and with the moves of a steer wrestler pinned him down and held him until the police arrived. It turned out this same individual had been responsible for similar robberies in the last few days.

In talking to Elder Harmon, Sheffield told him, "As much as I admire your heroics, don't ever do that again. It could have gone the other way and you could have been hurt, or worse. If you're ever in that situation again, just give them what they want."

"But President." Elder Harmon protested.

"I know how you feel. I did the same thing once. I was a young Ensign just out of the Academy and we were in Rio de Janeiro on our way around the world. A buddy and I were walking down the street minding our own business when these two men bust out of a bank on a dead run right toward us. Everyone was shouting in Portuguese, we didn't understand what they were saying but it was obvious what was going on, so stopped them in their tracks. I was a wrestler and my friend was boxer. So I understand completely why you did what you did. But the Missionary Department is clear in their instructions in such matters." When Sheffield was finished with his lecture, he gave the young Elder a wink and a pat on the back.

The last part of the next week was spent in conferences off the island, including a district conference on Maui. In addition to all of the meetings, Sheffield extended a call to a new branch president in the Lahaina Branch. He gave him instructions to select counselors and get the names to President Kaaola. The

plan was that Sheffield would return in two weeks to take care of the business.

The third week in February was spent at the mission home. The first part of the week was taken up with working out the transfers. Sunday of the next week marked a significant anniversary in the Brason family. It was on that day twenty years ago that Samantha Taylor died, making the adoption of Craig, Norma, and Janet affective. It wasn't an anniversary that was noted each year, as significant as it was. Ever since then they were their children and would be forever after.

Transfer day came and went on the following Wednesday. It was a rather small transfer, only affecting fourteen missionaries. Nevertheless, it had some interesting results. Elder Ryan Wood who had been the mission recorder, with only a month left of his mission replaced Elder Dale as an assistant. Elder Geroge Moffatt became the new mission recorder. Including Elder Dale, there were three Elders going home. In their place were five new ones, two from outside the United States. One was Elder Katsuo Toshiro from Tokyo Japan, one of the first missionaries to be called from Japan, and Elder William Banks from Manchester, England. Elder Banks, a proper English gentleman, was put with Elder Rose, the cowboy from Wyoming. If any companionship had a lot to learn from each other, it was these two. Because of the two additional Elders, Sheffield was able to open a new area in Hawaii Kai at the southeast tip of Oahu.

The rest of the week was taken up with conferences in the three zones on Oahu. While in the Pearl Harbor Zone on Friday, Sheffield's interview with Elder Bishop was as if he was talking to a completely different person. No longer did he want to go home, but rather he was energized with his new found purpose for being there. He was doing everything he was supposed to be doing, and doing them for the right reasons and had worked extra hard and passed off all of his discussions. He reported that his brother had started attending church again and was working on ridding himself of the bad habits that he had acquired and called home to his parents and was making plans for going home for a visit when he got some leave time.

On Saturday, Sheffield and Ramona went up to Laie early enough to attend the temple before the conference. They wanted to take advantage of being near a temple while they could, because once they went home, they would only have the opportunity when they went out west to see Janet, and possibly Norma if Wade got the job at Ricks College.

On Sunday, Sheffield and Ramona flew to Lahaina on Maui so Sheffield could change the presidency in the Lahaina Branch. After taking care of his business, he took his seat on the stand and he Ramona sat through the rest of the meeting. Seated next to them were Elder Bauer and Elder Osborn.

Part way through the meeting, Ramona nudged Sheffield and whispered, "Look at how that young lady is making goo goo eyes at the Elders."

Sheffield who hadn't noticed, glanced down to see a girl about fourteen or fifteen years old with her eyes adoringly fixed on one of the Elders. But which one. A quick glance in their direction gave the obvious answer. Elder Lowell Bauer from Shelley, Idaho has doing everything he could to make himself invisible. He sat hunched

over in his seat with his hand shielding his red face from her flirtatious stare. Elder Osborn on the other hand seemed calm and collected.

Sheffield whispered back to Ramona, "It looks like she has a crush on Elder Bauer." Throughout the rest of the meeting, they couldn't help but notice the spectacle she was making of herself. Elder Bauer's attempts to hide from her made himself as much of a spectacle.

After the meeting, while everyone was congratulating the new branch presidency, Sheffield asked Elder Bauer, "How long has this been going on?"

"What?" He asked.

"How long has that young lady been bothering you?"

"Oh, you mean Dorothy Burkley, ever since I baptized her best friend a few weeks ago. She won't leave me alone. She's always making eyes at me. When she can, she'll get as close to me as she can. She's always leaving cookies or something on our doorstep or in our car. She's driving me crazy and I don't know what to do about it."

"Let me talk to her." Ramona volunteered.

Dorothy was still there, waiting to intercept Elder Bauer as he came down off the stand. He fell in behind President Brason, who he used as a shield, with Elder Osborn and Sister Brason right behind them. After passing by the row of pews where Dorothy was sitting, Ramona filed off and sat down beside her.

"Dorothy," she began, "I couldn't help but notice this lovely dress that you're wearing."

"Oh thank you Sister Brason. It's one of my favorites." Then she added, "I'm surprised that you know my name."

"I've made it a point to try to learn people's names around the mission." Which she did. Only she didn't let on that she had just barely learned her name. "I couldn't but help notice the way that you were looking at Elder Bauer during the meeting."

Dorothy shyly lowered her head.

"You must really like him, don't you?"

"Oh yes, Sister Brason. He's the most spiritual missionary I've ever known."

"If I didn't know better, I'd say that you have a crush on him."

With her head still bowed, she simply nodded her head.

"You do know that missionaries aren't allowed to become involved with pretty girls such as yourself, don't you?"

"Yes ma'am. But I just can't help myself. I got to sit in on the discussions when he was teaching my friend Ella. I found myself attracted to him."

"Was she the young lady sitting next to you?"

"Uh huh. I didn't know that it showed."

"Oh it shows alright. Everyone can tell. You wouldn't want people to think that Elder Bauer had a girlfriend

now would you? That wouldn't look very good for him.”

“No I guess it wouldn't. I just wanted to get him to notice me.”

“Oh he's noticed you alright. It's just not how you wanted him to.”

A tear began to make its way down Dorothy's cheek.

Ramona continued, “Listen, I understand how you could let your feelings get carried away. Its normal for a pretty young lady to affix her feelings on someone like Elder Bauer. He's like a hero to you for the way he taught and baptized your friend. Tell me Dorothy, how old are you?”

“I'll be fifteen in May.”

“You see, Elder Bauer is twenty. At this stage of life, five years is a big difference. Would you expect him to be attracted to someone still in high school? Besides, in two or three months he'll be transferred somewhere else and this fall, he'll be going home. Chances are, you'll never see him again.”

“I know. You're right.”

“If you really thought highly of him, you'd let him go about what he's here to do. You see, you're making him very uncomformable and it makes it hard for him to do his job.”

“Did he tell you that.”

“No Dorothy, he didn't. I've been around missionaries for longer than you've been alive. I've seen it before. Its okay for you to admire him, but you need to detach your feelings from that admiration. I'm sure the first plate of cookies were received as token of your appreciation for what he did for your friend. The more you do it, you send the wrong message and it makes him very uncomformable. I'm not saying that you can never talk to him again, just remember who he represents as a missionary. That's how you should act towards him. Besides, I'm sure there are plenty of young men your age who would love a little attention form a pretty girl, but let me give you a little advice, don't go overboard.”

Dorothy raised her head and looked into Ramona's eyes and said, “I understand. I need to apologize to him.”

“I don't think that would be necessary. I'll let him know that you're sorry. Just remember what I told you, alright.” Ramona wiped away that tear with her finger as it neared the bottom of her cheek. She stood up and concluded with, “I'm glad that we got to have this little chat, Dorothy.”

“Thank you Sister Brason. Me too.”

Dorothy got up and made a dash for the door and left the building. Ramona went out into the foyer to wait for Sheffield, who had gone into the Relief Society room to set apart the new branch presidency. While waiting for him, she found Elder Bauer and told him that she hoped that she had cleared up the issue. When Sheffield was finished, they were taken to the airport in Kaanapali, just north of Lahaina. On the flight home, Ramona told him that she didn't think that Dorothy would be bothering Elder Bauer any more.

On Monday afternoon, Sheffield was apprised of a fix that a couple of missionaries had got themselves into the the day before. Elder Gene Burrell from Long Beach, California and the district leader in

Honolulu East and his companion, Elder Carl Craig from Reno, Nevada had been teaching a woman who they thought they were making good progress with. When they kept an appointment earlier in the week to teach her the third discussion, they unexpectedly found her minister there. She had invited him over so she could hear both sides in her attempt to decide which way she wanted to go.

Elder Burrell who had been out for a year and half should have known better, but being well versed in the scriptures he felt up to the challenge. Elder Craig, on the other hand, had only been out for three months and was still quite green. The minister was quick to bring up the topic of salvation by grace alone.

They dueled back and forth without it becoming an outright Bible bash and in the end, the minister drew them into a trap, which Elder Burrell foolishly agreed to. He invited them to come and speak to his congregation and explain their view on the subject.

They arrived at the church and were warmly welcomed and given time to present their views. When they were done, the minister unleashed on them in a manner that gave them no chance to respond. The minister was out to destroy them before his congregation in order to keep anyone from ever opening their doors to the Mormon Missionaries again, as had the woman who they were teaching.

Elder Burrell was too ashamed to tell President Brason about the encounter himself, but did tell the zone leaders. They reported the incident to the Assistants, who passed it on to the mission president. Sheffield responded by inviting them to meet with him at the mission home the next morning.

When they arrived, Sheffield invited them into his office and sat them down. "So," he began, "I understand that you had a little run in with a minister that didn't go very well."

"I'm sorry, President." Elder Burrell responded. "I didn't think it would get that out of hand."

"You're not the first ones to get caught in that trap, unfortunately you won't be the last either. These types of meetings never end well. Do you know why?"

"Not really. I thought that with the truth on our side, we would be able to get them to see."

"Let me ask you something. Who is it that really does the teaching? Elder Craig, you know the answer."

"The Holy Ghost."

"That's right. As missionaries, we are just the messenger. It's the Spirit that does the teaching and convinces the honest in heart of the truth."

"Let me ask you another question. So why wasn't it there when you had your first meeting with the minister and later when you stood before his congregation? Let me answer it for you. First he wasn't honest in heart, he wasn't wanting to know the truth. His intent was to lure you into a trap. Then when you got caught up in the confrontation, the Spirit left, and you were on your own. That's why these things never work out.

“Let me tell you a story. When I was a counselor in the mission presidency back home in Virginia there was an Elder assigned to a nearby branch who went out of his way to get into debates with the Jehovah's Witnesses. There was a fairly large congregation in that little town. He spent so much time and effort on them that he neglected what he was really there for. His companion was new so he didn't know any better. They had some real knock down drag out debates in which no one came out on top. They started sending their kids out to follow the Elders around and report back where they were going. Then they'd go to their investigators in an attempt to sabotage them. They even caught them once looking through the window of their apartment copying down the information on their area board that they had posted on the wall. They even went so far as to go around pretending to be the missionaries and stirring up contention. It got so bad that eventually the mission president had to close the area for a couple of years, until the dust settled.

“That's just an example of how far out of hand things can get. I know that you meant well, Elder Burrell, and didn't go out of your way to seek a confrontation. You just need to be careful. So what happened to the woman that you were teaching?”

“She asked us not to come back.”

“I'm not surprised. Without pointing at you, I'd like to use this example in next month's zone conferences in order to help others to avoid a similar situation. Is that alright with you.”

“I suppose it would be alright. Especially if it helps. If I'd of understood then what you just explained, I could have avoided the whole experience.”

Then Sheffield turned his attention to the newer missionary. “How are you Elder Craig?”

“I was a bit shaken by it at first, but I'm alright now.”

“Good I'm glad to hear that. Now shake it off and go back to work.”

Sheffield got up and shook their hands and saw them off as they went back to their area.

February is a short month as it is. That night before retiring, Sheffield and Ramona changed all of the calendars to March. With only four months remaining, they were running out of time.

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The story of Elder Bauer is based on an experience that I had in one of the areas I was in on my mission, except no one intervened.

The story of the missionary going out of his way to contend with the Jehovah's Witnesses was based off my first companion when I was brand new. That's pretty much how it went. The part about the investigator inviting her minister over actually happened to me in that same area. I was the junior companion who had been out less than three months.