

First Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting

J A N U A R Y 1 1 , 2 0 0 3

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Published by
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Salt Lake City, Utah

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Printed in the United States of America
English approval: 1/03 23403

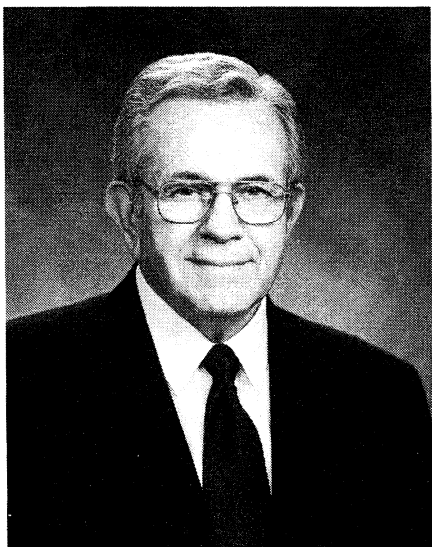
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PRESIDENT BOYD K. PACKER

Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

RESTORATION



I have been assigned to speak to you in this meeting on some of the fundamental principles of the Restoration.

“[One] Sunday night [in 1834] the Prophet [Joseph Smith] called on all who held the Priesthood to gather into the little log school house [in Kirtland, Ohio]. . . . It was a small house, perhaps 14 feet square. But it held the whole of the Priesthood of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were then in the town of Kirtland, and who had gathered together to go off in Zion’s camp. . . .

“The Prophet called upon the Elders of Israel with him to bear testimony of this work. . . . When they got through, the Prophet said: ‘Brethren I have been very much edified and instructed in your testimonies here tonight, but I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe

upon its mother’s lap. You don’t comprehend it. . . . It is only a little handfull of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will [grow until it will] fill North and South America—it will fill the world’ ” (Wilford Woodruff, in Conference Report, Apr. 1898, 57).

A Worldwide Gathering

In our mind’s eye, we can see you gathered in chapels in Otavalo, in the Andes Mountains; in Durban, on the coast of Africa; in Málaga, Spain; Salzburg, in Europe; Sydney, Australia; Sendai, Japan; Toronto, Canada; Port Moresby, New Guinea; and more than 5,000 other chapels.

One of you has left the farm to come to this meeting, another a fishing boat. Others of you came from your office or your operating room or your computer or your carpenter shop. We are all gathered in this great meeting in the name of the Lord.

We speak as we do when we meet you in your own buildings, through faithful interpreters. With their help, we will speak in more than 50 languages.

We are just like you. We have been called from among you. President Monson is a printer; I am a school-teacher; Elder Perry is a bookkeeper; Elder Ballard sold cars.

We, like you, have been called and sustained and ordained to an office in the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God. We come to you as Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Although we differ in language and custom and culture and in many ways, when we meet together we strengthen one another, and we become one. The language of the Church is the language of the Spirit.

Each of us is to learn just *how* to do what we have been *called* to do. In doing so, we are obeying a commandment given in the very early days of the Church:

“Hearken, O ye elders of my church whom I have called, behold I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall assemble yourselves together to agree upon my word;

“And by the prayer of your faith ye shall receive my law, that ye may know *how* to govern my church and have all things right before me” (D&C 41:2–3; italics added).

We want to teach you how to be better leaders and better fathers. We, as the scriptures say, “take the things . . . given unto thee in my scriptures for a law, to be my law to govern my church” (D&C 42:59). The Lord said that “every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world” (D&C 1:20).

We all are ordinary men with weaknesses, but, “if men come unto me,” the Lord said, “I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27).

The Chief Cornerstone

Now, these are very troubled times. In order that you will not drift, you must know the source of your authority and your power. You must measure everything you learn about your ordination and calling against fundamental truths. It is from the scriptures that you learn how to govern His Church.

These are fundamental truths that you must teach and reteach to your families and to your members. First, teach that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, established His Church “built upon the foundation of . . . apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20).

Jesus called and ordained Apostles and gave them the keys of the kingdom. These keys authorized them to bind the ordinances for eternity.

He was crucified and rose again. He atoned for Adam’s transgression. Every soul ever born upon the earth, or who will yet be born, will be literally resurrected. And “through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel” (Articles of Faith 1:3).

The Restoration

The Apostles were martyred, and in time an apostasy took place. The doctrines of the Church were corrupted and the ordinances changed. The keys of priesthood authority were lost. This universal Apostasy required a restoration of authority—of the priesthood keys, of doctrines, and of ordinances.

Joseph Smith was visited in person by God the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. They told him they had a special work for him to do. Through him the keys would be restored, and the Church, as had been established by Jesus Christ when He was on the earth, would be restored.

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood by John the Baptist (see Joseph Smith—History 1:68–69). They were ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood by the ancient Apostles Peter, James, and John (see D&C 27:12). These ordinations restored the authority and the keys for the kingdom of God, never again to be taken from the earth.

In April of 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith organized The Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The true Church of Jesus Christ was once again among men, with authority “to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof” (Articles of Faith 1:5; see also Joseph Smith—History 1; D&C 20).

Other priesthood keys were conferred upon Joseph and Oliver by Moses, Elijah, Elias, and other ancient prophets (see D&C 110:11–16; 128:18–21).

The scriptures explain how authority should be conferred to ensure an unbroken line of authority. The Lord said, “It shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except he be ordained by some one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church” (D&C 42:11).

That is why each of you is interviewed, called, and then sustained in a meeting. Then everyone knows what your responsibility is.

And, that revelation continues, “They shall observe the covenants and church articles to do them, and these shall be their teachings, as they shall be directed by the Spirit” (D&C 42:13).

The Scriptures

Joseph Smith, with divine inspiration, translated and published the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ.

The Book of Mormon verifies the Old Testament as a rich source of information, prophecy, and writings on the priesthood by the ancient prophets.

The Book of Mormon confirms the New Testament account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and His Apostles.

Other revelations came to the Prophet Joseph Smith and to his successors, and they were published in the Doctrine and Covenants. The Doctrine and Covenants contains instructions on how to organize the Church, about the order of the

priesthood and the ordinances and covenants of the priesthood.

These revelations explain the purpose of temples and command the Church to build temples for the redemption of the dead.

Much of the Pearl of Great Price was translated from ancient records. It includes the writings of Abraham and Moses, and also writings of Joseph Smith.

The Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price together form the scripture of the restored Church.

A commandment was also given that Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet, compile a book of hymns, and that was published. The sacred music is a language of the Spirit, and the lyrics of the hymns teach doctrine and bring inspiration into our meetings.

The Handbooks

Handbooks of instruction have been prepared. They help priesthood and auxiliary leaders and teachers learn how to serve in priesthood and auxiliary organizations.

In order to learn:

- You read the scriptures and become familiar with them. When you have a decision to make and need help, ask yourself, “What has the Lord said about this? Is there anything in the scriptures that will show me what to do?”
- Then you consult the handbooks.
- Then you follow the counsel from those ordained to lead, your file leaders.
- You counsel together.
- And then you pray always, for “notwithstanding those things which are written, it always has been given to the elders of my church from the beginning, and ever shall be, to conduct all meetings as they are directed and guided by the Holy Spirit” (D&C 46:2).

This will keep you on course. Always, always follow the promptings of the Spirit. Ordinary men and

women, properly authorized, can serve the Lord as leaders and as teachers.

The Church must be the same everywhere. While the way we do things may change from time to time, we must be unified on doctrine and on principles. These do not change.

The Lord “gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; . . . [that all may] come in the *unity* of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (Ephesians 4:11, 13; italics added).

There was revealed “the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church [with the same officers], apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth” (Articles of Faith 1:6), just as it was established by the Savior.

The Principle of Presidency

For example, the principle of presidency is outlined in the scriptures.

The First Presidency was organized with the President, who holds all of the keys, and a First and a Second Counselor, together with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who also hold the keys. Along with the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric, they administer the worldwide Church.

This pattern of a president, who has keys conferred upon him, and a first and second counselor, is duplicated in every stake, in priesthood quorums, in temples and missions, in wards and branches.

It is duplicated in auxiliaries. However, presidents of auxiliaries do not hold priesthood keys.

Each stake is independent from every other stake. The president holds the keys, but he does not stand alone. With his counselors, they form a presidency. With the high council and other officers, they govern the stake.

The stake presidency has authority to call, to release, to organize, to teach, to correct, according to the established pattern and as directed by the General Authorities who preside over them.

There is a presidency in every Melchizedek Priesthood quorum—the

quorums of elders and high priests. Each has a president, who holds the keys, and counselors.

It is the same in the wards. Each ward, separate from every other ward, has a bishop who holds the keys. With his counselors, they are the bishopric, which is a presidency.

The bishop is nominated by the stake president and approved by the General Authorities under the direction of the First Presidency. He is called, ordained by the stake president to be a bishop, and then set apart to preside over the ward. He is also set apart as the presiding high priest of the ward and as president of the priests quorum. His counselors are set apart. The bishop presides over the Aaronic Priesthood. The bishopric calls and sets apart other officers and teachers to watch over the families and members.

It is very important that you understand that a president obtains the united support of his counselors in all decisions. The three of you pray and counsel together in all that you do. This is true in every presidency.

Priesthood Authority

Now, the family is the basic unit of the Church, ideally led by a husband and father who holds the priesthood. He presides over his family in righteousness.

The First Presidency has said, “The home is the basis of a righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place nor fulfill its essential functions in carrying forward this God-given responsibility” (“News of the Church,” *Ensign*, June 1999, 80).

Authority in the priesthood is given through ordination. Power in the priesthood is received through righteous living. You must maintain your worthiness.

Can you see the divine inspiration in the Church with the “priesthood . . . after the holiest order of God” (D&C 84:19) conferred upon each worthy man? Each of us can receive revelation and inspiration through the Holy Ghost.

These fundamental truths have not changed. In these very troubled times, they bring unity to the Church and to the family.

“And again, the elders, priests and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fulness of the gospel” (D&C 42:12).

The keys and authority are held in each stake and ward and branch. Worthy Church members may obtain recommends to receive the blessings of the temple, the covenants and ordinances, including eternal marriage.

All the priesthood keys essential to salvation and exaltation were conferred by heavenly authority upon the Prophet Joseph Smith. That authority is now reposed in the current First Presidency of the Church. And authority is delegated to priesthood leaders across the world.

The Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost was conferred upon you following baptism. The Holy Ghost becomes your teacher and your comforter. Through the Holy Ghost, you receive inspired direction in your personal life, in your family, in your occupation, and in your callings in the Church.

Moroni reported that “their meetings were conducted by the church after the manner of the workings of the Spirit, and by the power of the Holy Ghost; for as the power of the Holy Ghost led them whether to preach, or to exhort, or to pray, or to supplicate, or to sing, even so it was done” (Moroni 6:9).

The Holy Ghost is like a sextant.

For centuries sailors have found their way across the trackless oceans by looking to the heavens with a sextant like this one. They set a small mirror to catch the light of the stars by night or the sun by day. From that light they got their bearings and set their course.

This small sextant was used by a fisherman who rowed his boat out into the Atlantic Ocean off the coast

of France to fish. If he drifted beyond the horizon or was blown off course by a storm, he could look to the heavens and get his bearings and find his way home.

Light from heaven can keep the fisherman from drifting off course. The Spirit of the Holy Ghost will keep you from wandering into forbidden paths.

Fundamental Truths

Now, we end where we began, and much of what we do is based on these fundamental truths:

- Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church.
- He has built His Church upon the foundation of apostles and prophets. He Himself is the Chief Cornerstone.
- He has conferred priesthood authority on those who lead the Church in this latter-day dispensation.
- Each man and woman and child confirmed in the Church receives the Holy Ghost, like an individual sextant, to get a bearing and to keep him or her on course.

I bear testimony to you, brethren of the priesthood, that the gospel has been restored, that Jesus is the Christ, and that the power of it and the authority of it are delegated to you in your wards and branches in the farthest places across the world. I pray His blessings upon you, as leaders of the priesthood and as fathers and grandfathers of families. I pray the blessings of the Lord to be with your children and their children, that the purposes that the Lord had in mind when He established this Church will be fulfilled. I extend that blessing and bear that testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

ELDER NEAL A. MAXWELL

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

REVELATION



Thank you, President Packer, for the symbol of the sextant. It's a delicate, wonderful instrument, and it leads so naturally into a discussion on revelation. After all, brethren, without revelation we can't govern the Lord's Church. This instrument wouldn't work without light. And one of the great blessings we have through revelation is to know that Jesus is the Light of the World. Furthermore, we are to see everything else by His light.

In fact, the very founding of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints involved the reading of an inspired scripture; you all know about it—James 1:5. Joseph Smith was moved by that scripture and went to a grove and uttered a heartfelt prayer. And then came the remarkable revelation in the spring of 1820.

The inviting words in James led to that marvelous moment, remarkable and unique, where young Joseph

Smith saw both the Father and the Son and was instructed by them. The long-awaited dispensation of the fulness of times had begun!

In the very beginning, after Eden, revelation was needed by Adam: "And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son" (Moses 5:9). This is still a major mission of the Holy Ghost, namely, to witness of the Father and the Son and to glorify Christ (see 2 Nephi 31:18; John 16:14).

Personal Revelation

Brethren, our duty as Church leaders is likewise to receive personal revelation from the Holy Ghost confirming that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world" (D&C 46:13). If we and Church members are built upon the Rock of Our Redeemer, the promise is that amid life's storms we will not be "dragged down" (see Helaman 5:12).

So vital is the help of the Holy Ghost that even angels "speak by the power of the Holy Ghost" (2 Nephi 32:3; 2 Nephi 33:1). Hence King Benjamin's great sermon, which we are all thrilled by, came through an angel, by the power of the Holy Ghost (see Mosiah 3:2).

This witness about our Savior is vital for us not only personally, but as fathers and shepherds of our various Church flocks. For among those Church flocks are some who do not so know, but to whom "it is given to believe on [your] words, that they

also might have eternal life if they continue faithful” (D&C 46:14). We need to know for their sakes too.

Even so, brethren, a few of you may still feel that revelation consists only of supernal events like the First Vision, or that revelation is out of your reach, or that it is something so extraordinary that a seemingly ordinary person is not entitled thereto. But you are entitled! Hence the few suggestions to follow concerning revelation. It’s usually a quiet, inward, but real and powerful process.

Only with revelation can we do the Lord’s work according to His will in His way and according to His timing.

More than any other way, the Holy Ghost can reveal to us how to connect the doctrines with our personal discipleship and also how to help members of the Church to do likewise. So when we “liken” these scriptures to ourselves, the Holy Ghost is necessary to help that to happen. He can see, for instance, our sins of omission, and by the workings of conscience, we are moved to repent of these sins as well. If we will do so, it will bring us even greater joy in this life than we have ever known.

Given in Mind and Heart

Most revelation comes in the following manner: “I will tell you *in your mind and in your heart*, by the Holy Ghost” (D&C 8:2; italics added). Now as you and I “liken” that scripture to ourselves, remember that both intellect and feeling are involved.

When Enos was “struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came *into [his] mind again*” (Enos 1:10; italics added). This voice, brethren, need not pass through the eardrums. Instead, the words go directly to our minds—and they are audible and distinct.

Sometimes revelations come by means of feelings. We are given needed direction by feelings, but feelings without explanations. So

whether by words or by feelings, there comes to us an accompanying and reassuring sense of peace! This confirming peace is such a reassuring blessing, to know that it is all right and that the Lord has directed us.

Elder Eyring is going to describe the gift of discernment in connection with interviewing. This gift is a form of revelation that guides you stake presidents and bishops in your interviews. However, brethren, do not be surprised if sometimes you know more than you can tell. You will know more than you can explain.

The gift of the Holy Ghost brings many other gifts. But, as Brigham Young observed, “we live far beneath our privileges” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widstoe [1954], 32). Brethren, to the degree that we cease living “far beneath our privileges” and rise to our revelatory privileges, we can lift the Church as never before!

The Holy Ghost is perfect at causing two-way communication. Pretty rare in the human family is to have genuine two-way communication. But the scriptures tell us “when a man speaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men” (2 Nephi 33:1), and “he that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth” (D&C 50:21). That is two-way communication, and it occurs during inspired teaching in a classroom, while speaking in sacrament meeting, or during conversations one with another.

At times, brethren, you will speak words beyond your own capacity. As President Marion G. Romney said a number of times, “I always know when I am speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost because I always learn something from what I’ve said” (quoted in Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* [1975], 304).

As we get experience with revelation, it builds on itself, just as the Prophet Joseph Smith taught when he said, “A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 151).

Serious Mental Effort

Enos’s struggling reminds us of Oliver Cowdery’s struggling to be able to translate. Oliver learned that it requires serious mental effort on our part. We have to take real thought, and then we have to continue as we commenced (see D&C 9:5–11). Brethren, revelation is not a matter of pushing buttons, but of pushing ourselves, often aided by fasting, scripture study, and personal pondering.

Most of all, revelation requires us to have a sufficient degree of personal righteousness, so that on occasion revelation may come to the righteous, unsolicited.

Now, brethren, in this scattered but wonderful congregation that girdles this globe, please remember, you live as close to heaven as any other location, and, mercifully, the Holy Ghost cannot be stopped at national borders, and revelation requires no visa!

As President Packer noted, we live in such varied conditions around the globe. Yet the Holy Ghost knows all those circumstances; He knows all of us. He can reach us in our various niches!

Never mind if the world doesn’t understand or even mocks this sacred process. Paul said, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually discerned*” (1 Corinthians 2:14; italics added).

I was once privileged to be with Elder Harold B. Lee late on a Satur-

day night. He was selecting a new patriarch for a stake. As I sat with him in a nearly deserted stake center, I watched him interview a man and his wife and then issue the call. The man began to sob and the wife urged her husband by saying, "Tell him; tell President Lee." And the husband, when he could regain his composure, said, "Brother Lee, the Lord told me two weeks ago this would happen." Elder Lee turned to me and said, "You see, Neal, why we must operate by the spirit of revelation." Hence, whatever our several callings, revelation is essential to help us discern the way. For instance, inspired and discerning patriarchs are guided by the Holy Ghost to bless members with personalized, not routine blessings.

Again, brethren, please remember that we sometimes receive directions without explanations. For instance, a bishop may *feel* a person is not quite ready yet to go to the temple. Or a bishop may *feel* he ought to talk to a particular husband and wife without, at first, knowing quite why.

Revelation can also help you administratively, to emphasize certain weightier matters in order to bless the flock, especially in some situations. Elder Perry will teach us about matching available time and resources, which are sometimes scarce, in order to build the Church better.

Sometimes, when we are taking thought and studying things out in our minds, revelation serves a unique purpose in that it connects incomplete insights. Then the whole matter becomes clear and things are "fitly framed" together (see Ephesians 2:21).

Sometimes the Holy Ghost will bring needed things to our remembrance, and other times He will put thoughts into our hearts "in the very hour, yea, in the very moment" (D&C 100:6). Brethren, we can so prepare to have things brought to our remembrance by "treasuring up"

beforehand precious things in our individual storehouses of memories (see D&C 11:26; 84:85).

Proper Channels

Remember, however, revelation always follows proper channels. Thus, Bishop "A" does not receive revelation for Bishop "B." Nor do lay members receive revelation for the whole Church, which is the role of the President and the prophet of the Church.

Sometimes the Spirit brings us much needed personal peace, especially in a world filled with "commotion," in which there are "wars and rumors of wars" (D&C 45:26). More than we realize, brethren, for example, it is the comforting from the Comforter which helps us to avoid growing weary and fainting in our minds (see Hebrews 12:3). We have got quite a few Church members who have fainted in their minds and need to be revived.

Sometimes directional revelation is given for the whole Church by the Lord's prophet. This occurred when President Lorenzo Snow was moved upon to stress the need for Church members to pay a full tithing. Likewise, President Gordon B. Hinckley was clearly inspired to direct the surge in the building of many temples, so that more faithful members worldwide can receive their temple blessings. It was what the Lord wanted done, but it was also done according to the Lord's timing.

Sometimes doctrinal revelation is given to the President of the Church for the whole Church, and the scriptures end up begetting more scriptures. The Prophet Joseph, for instance, was spiritually stirred while he was reading a scripture from John 5:29. He then received instructive revelation, now known as Doctrine and Covenants, section 76. Or, when President Joseph F. Smith had been reading and pondering

verses in 1 Peter, he received what is now known as section 138 concerning the work in the spirit world.

Personal Discipleship

We too can "liken" the scriptures unto ourselves "for our profit and learning" (1 Nephi 19:23), and thereby inspire our own families, serve better in our callings, and progress more in our personal discipleship. Moving forward in our personal discipleship is no small thing, brethren. We are to exemplify as well as to expound and to exhort.

Please teach others about revelation, brethren. It is imperative that more and more of our members and leaders enjoy this great privilege. The scriptures assure us that God's words can come, "not only [to] men but women also. Now this is not all; little children do have words given unto them many times, which confound the wise and the learned" (Alma 32:23).

To select but one example from personal experience: several years ago in the midst of leukemia, I was doing some pensive pondering and these 13 instructive and reassuring words came into my mind: "I have given you leukemia that you might teach my people with authenticity." I surely testify that this process is real, whether it concerns our duties and callings or our personal discipleship. Each of us needs precious perspective about the great realities of eternity. Once again, amid the challenges of everyday life and even the worries of the moment, it is the same revealing Holy Spirit which tells of "things as they really are, and of things as they really will be" (Jacob 4:13). Such glimpses of eternity can help us to travel the next 100 yards, which may be very difficult.

Brethren, we love you! We have confidence in your ability to seek and receive revelation! Remember, our families—about whom Elder Ballard will speak—as well as our Church

flocks, deserve shepherds who know that Jesus is the Christ and who know how to receive revelation.

I testify that the Church is governed by revelation and, further, that each member has the right to revelation in his or her callings and in personal discipleship as well. Very importantly, brethren, this is a time which was prophesied when the nations of the earth would be in distress, with perplexity (see Luke 21:25). Therefore, it is essential that Church members receive spiritual confirmation that the directions, the prophetic directions, being given by Church leaders truly are to guide us in these latter days.

In the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

ELDER L. TOM PERRY

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

BASIC UNIT PROGRAM



Thank you, Elder Maxwell, for reminding us how important revelation is to our spiritual growth and the growth of the Church. It is a great privilege to receive counsel from the Lord Himself that will help us answer our questions and solve our problems.

I would like to talk to you about the opportunities many of you are facing in establishing the Church and building the Church in areas where there are few members.

Different Needs and Challenges

I know firsthand the challenges you face in building a branch. I grew up in a very small Latter-day Saint community in northern Utah. Our whole community activity centered around the Church. The community was nearly 100 percent Latter-day

Saint. I had deep involvement in what was going on, for my father served as my bishop of our ward for the first 18 years of my life. During that period, I watched the way he administered the Church. I watched how he involved us to be certain we understood how the gospel affects our lives and those who embrace its divine teachings.

It was a fully developed ward organization. There was little conflict with the Sunday meeting schedule. We spent Sunday morning in priesthood meeting, followed by Sunday School. Then we came back in the evening and enjoyed sacrament meeting. There was very little in the community to distract us from attending. Tuesday evening was always Mutual. Even our schoolteachers recognized that and lightened up on the homework load, allowing us to participate in our Mutual activities. There was abundant leadership to give direction to the Primary, Young Men, Young Women, Relief Society, Sunday School, priesthood, and all the other organizations. I felt very comfortable and secure in this community.

When I reached the age of 19, it was time for me to leave the comforts of home and journey into the mission field. I had received a call to serve in the Northern States Mission. I was assigned to go to Columbus, Ohio. I had served in Columbus for only a month when my companion and I

were moved to Marion, a little town some distance away.

One Church family had moved to Marion for employment. The husband was an engineer by profession. He and his wife had been lifetime members of the Church. They had two small children. He was determined that his family would be reared in the gospel and have opportunities to participate in Church activities. He had encouraged our mission president to send two missionaries into the community so his family could have a Church experience.

My companion and I started with just one family as members of the Church. We held our sacrament meeting in the living room of their home. What a contrast this was to the full program of the Church I had experienced in my hometown in northern Utah! For teaching materials, all we had were the scriptures. There was no program for Primary, Mutual, Sunday School, or Relief Society. The only priesthood brethren were my companion and I and one high priest.

With that beginning, we started to organize a branch of the Church. We proselyted long hours during the day to find people we could invite to come and join us. Fortunately, in tracting, we found three other families living in Marion who were members of the Church. They knew nothing of our efforts until we knocked on their doors. These four families formed the nucleus of the branch. Almost every Sunday my companion and I did most of the preaching, teaching, praying, and administering the sacrament.

Gradually the living room became too small to accommodate the numbers attending the little branch. We moved to a rented hall to hold our services. The Church started to supply us with teaching materials. With more priesthood bearers available, now we could add priesthood meeting to our Sunday School and sacrament meeting schedules. At that

point, our biggest challenge was trying to keep from moving too fast and loading down the members with too many Church callings.

A few years ago I had the opportunity of returning to Marion. They now have a small chapel in which to meet. Because of their small numbers, they are still a branch. They still are not ready for the fully developed program of the Church.

Guidebooks for Basic Units

As General Authorities travel throughout the world, we see many stages of the Church organization. Some units are fully organized, like the one in my hometown. Others are small branches, similar to the one in Marion. Despite the differences in organization, the Spirit is still the same.

The Brethren recognize that units of the Church are at different stages of development and have different needs. For the fully matured wards and stakes of the Church, we have provided a handbook of instructions. The handbook contains the doctrine, policies, and procedures for the mature Church organization. It is a library and a reference guide. However, it contains instructions that are sometimes beyond the ability of smaller units to follow fully.

Therefore, we have developed a *Basic Unit Program Guidebook* for the beginning units, such as the one we had in Marion. It is small and quick to read. It has four companions: a *Family Guidebook*, a *Branch Guidebook*, a *Teaching Guidebook*, and a *Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders' Guidebook*. These guidebooks are all that members of the Church need to function fully as a basic Church unit.

There is nothing second-class about being a basic unit. The Savior's Church in all dispensations, where it has been established, began simply with a basic organization and basic

materials. The Spirit does not limit itself just to a big Church organization. In fact, I found a wonderful closeness in the branch we established in the mission field. The people knew each other; they loved each other; they strengthened each other; they built one another's testimonies. Any Church unit, large or small, would be blessed to have that kind of spirit.

Somewhere between this basic Church program and the handbook of instructions for the mature Church exist all of the branches, districts, wards, and stakes throughout the world.

We have seen some difficulty when unit leaders request the division of their unit before they are ready. Premature dividing can sap the strength of a branch or ward before it becomes a center of strength.

Some leaders religiously search the handbook of instructions trying to organize the full program, without consideration of the available leadership or the number of members whom they could serve. At times, in our eagerness to develop the full program of the Church, we overburden our members. Too many responsibilities can cause them to withdraw from Church activities.

There are several reasons members fall away from the Church. Some do not have a friend. Others do not find spiritual nourishment. Still others are not given a calling that helps them strengthen their testimony. On the other hand, we can give members too much to do, overwhelming them. For this reason we should attempt to give each individual in our unit just one calling plus home or visiting teaching.

Organizational Inventory

Now, as leaders, how do you decide where your organization fits? If you have even a few leaders, I suggest you take an inventory. Determine the number of members you serve, their ages, and their needs.

First, look at the total membership of your branch or ward. From this list, identify those adults who are active and can serve. This group will be your leadership base. They will serve in positions necessary to build your organization.

Now decide what kind of organization your leaders will need to fulfill their callings. If you have a few priesthood holders, your first objective will be to build a Melchizedek Priesthood base. Do the same for the sisters. If you have sufficient numbers, form a Relief Society. With small numbers, maybe all you will need will be a president to lead the organization, but that will be a good start.

Next, identify the youth in your unit. Determine the type of program, activities, and instruction they need to have a Young Men and a Young Women program. If they are not ready, wait before you create a youth organization. The Spirit will tell you when the time is right.

Finally, identify the number and names of the children. Create a Primary organization that is just large enough to meet their needs.

For example, in taking an inventory in a very small unit, you may find that there are not many youth. If so, do not create separate classes; instead, combine the youth into one class. Or, if you find that you have very few children, you do not need to call a Primary presidency. Maybe all you will need is an instructor to teach the children.

Strengths and Needs

The secret in building a branch or a district, a ward or a stake is to know your members, their abilities, and their needs, and build your program based on the leadership available and the needs of your members.

Once you know the members well enough to match them with the right calling, you can focus on the instructional materials they will need. Keep

in mind that for basic units, we have provided a basic curriculum. For mature units, we have provided a general Church curriculum.

In all you do, be aware that bigger is not necessarily better. Grow only as fast as the size and maturity of your unit permit. Preserve the strength of your members. Enjoy each stage of your unit's growth. Remember the fundamentals.

President Hinckley has continued to remind us to do the best we can. He did not say, "Do whatever you can," but emphasized, "Do your best."

Obedience to the Spirit

What is your objective? What is your goal? It is to build a strong testimony in the life of each member we have and encourage members to serve. Encourage them to keep the commandments of the Lord and receive all the sacred ordinances that will qualify them for eternal life. It is important to share our testimonies with others and give them the opportunity of embracing the gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to live worthy of having the Holy Ghost as our constant companion, to inspire us in our responsibilities.

We need to remember that the Lord will bless us with wisdom, with revelation, with strength beyond our own. He will even provide miracles for us when we have done all we can. With His help, we will move forward. He has the power to help. He will inspire and direct us as we serve Him faithfully in guiding His children.

A number of years ago I had some responsibility for the country of Peru. Inflation and internal strife had made life difficult for the people there. For their safety, it was necessary to remove those leaders and full-time missionaries from the country who were not Peruvian.

The Area Presidency recognized the need to fortify the members. After much prayer and fasting, the Area Presidency decided to emphasize two

basic gospel teachings: family prayer and family scripture study. Instructions were passed down through the priesthood line. Fathers were specifically asked to lead their families in daily prayer and scripture study.

The results were astounding. The Peruvian Saints faithfully adopted family prayer and scripture study as part of their daily routines. As they did so, testimonies increased. We saw a significant increase in sacrament meeting attendance. The Saints began to love and care for each other. They would undergo difficult and dangerous travel to attend the temple, and temple attendance increased.

The number of local and full-time missionaries from the wards and branches of Peru also increased. And the Peruvian missionaries arrived in the field much better prepared to serve, which resulted in a greater number of convert baptisms.

Because the leaders simply taught the practice of family prayer and family scripture study in their sacrament meetings, a remarkable maturing in gospel understanding and practice developed among the Saints. It does not take a complicated Church organization or a full library of materials to help Church members mature in the gospel. What they need, more than anything else, is the influence of the Spirit to give divine direction and faithful obedience.

Blessings of the Temple

If our members build on such a foundation, they will grow spiritually and eventually be ready for the ordinances of the temple. In fact, our primary goal should be to prepare every individual to enter the house of the Lord. We must "do the best we can" to see that every husband and wife are sealed together for time and eternity. Brethren, make it a personal goal to help each adult member of your unit become worthy of holding a current temple recommend.

We live in exciting times but also dangerous times. As the Lord has increased His pace, so has Satan. We need the Lord's help every step of the way. That is why He offers to make covenants with us—first in the waters of baptism, then renewed at the sacrament table, and finally in the temple. Spiritual strength flows from the Lord's endless supply when we keep our covenants. If, as priesthood leaders, you only help your members keep their covenants with the Lord, you have done measurably what you are expected to do.

In closing, I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you. May the Lord bless and prosper you in your families and in your Church callings. May He bless you abundantly with His Spirit. May He give you a clear mind and an understanding heart. In return, may you be wise in moving the kingdom forward. I encourage you to move at a pace slow enough that the weak will not be left behind and fast enough to keep the journey interesting. This is the Lord's work. I bear my witness of that fact. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

ELDER HENRY B. EYRING
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

STANDARDS OF WORTHINESS



Brethren, think for a moment about your happiest experience in all your Church service. Now think about your saddest experience in your service. For most of us, both moments will be about people. Your happiest moments, and mine, have been when someone we loved and served rose up to live the Lord's standards of worthiness and reaped blessings from it. And the saddest moment will have been when someone reaped misery from failing to rise to those standards.

The Lord's Standards

The Lord sets His standards so that He can bless us. Think about those blessings: He promises those who meet the standards the help of the Holy Ghost. He promises personal peace. He promises the chance to

receive holy ordinances in His house. And He promises those who endure in living His standards that they will have eternal life. They will live in families in the presence of our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son.

The Lord sets standards of what we must be and what we must do to be worthy of His blessings. Every missionary has seen that work. I did. I saw it when I baptized a big, strong 20-year-old man. When I brought him up out of the water, he grabbed me and with a smile on his face he said, over and over again, "I'm clean! I'm clean!" Some of the water pouring down off his face was from the font, but some of it was tears of joy from his eyes.

When my companion and I placed our hands on his head later to confirm him a member of the Church and give him the gift of the Holy Ghost, he found a quiet moment with us afterwards. His face was shining and he said, "When you had your hands on my head, I felt a warmth go through me from my head and down into my chest. It was like fire."

We baptized nearly 20 people in that city. He was the only one, at least that I remember, who told us so clearly that the promised blessings from being baptized in water and by the Spirit had been given him. All the other people we baptized had desired baptism. All of them had at least some confirmation by the Spirit that some-

thing we taught them was true. But with him, we made sure he had met the standard, the Lord's standard, for baptism.

You remember that standard from the Doctrine and Covenants: "And again, by way of commandment to the church concerning the manner of baptism—All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church" (D&C 20:37).

Now, that young man met the Lord's standards of worthiness for baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and so the Lord gave him the blessings. There are also standards of worthiness to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. There are standards to receive the blessings of the temples of the Lord. They are high and they are unchangeable. We have no right to alter them or to ignore them when we recommend anyone for sacred blessings.

The Lord's standard of worthiness includes some commandments we cannot break. We must be chaste. We must be full-tithe payers. We must keep the Word of Wisdom. We must be honest. And those commandments must be kept with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and with a humble and repentant heart.

Because we love the people we serve, all of us want to do better in lifting our Heavenly Father's children to the faithfulness and purity they need, to have all the blessings of the Lord. Brethren, my purpose today is to help you find ways to do that.

You know where to start, from your own experience and from what the scriptures tell us about how the prophets did it. You begin by holding up the Lord's standards clearly and without apology. And the more the world drifts from them and mocks them, the bolder we must be in doing that.

Let's start with the standard the Lord has set to receive a temple recommend. Lifting people to that standard is a great test of our leadership. The standard is very high. It has to be. Those who meet it are worthy to enter the house of the Lord. They have to be pure enough to go where the Lord Himself can go.

Temple Recommend Interviews

We'll talk about how the first temple recommend interview should be conducted by a bishop or branch president. From that, we will see more clearly what all of us must do to help people rise to the Lord's standards of worthiness.

To make it easier to visualize, think of yourself as a bishop or branch president about to interview someone for his or her first temple recommend. Before the applicant arrives, you have prepared yourself for the interview. You have prayed for the gift of inspiration. Only with revelation from God can you succeed.

You made absolutely sure the interview will be private. And you scheduled enough time so that you won't be rushed.

Now let's start with what you do as members enter. You make them feel welcome. You must find a way to say that you represent the Lord in this interview. Answers to your questions certify worthiness to Him, through you. You should tell them that they would want to enter the house of the Lord only as they are free from any unclean, unholy, impure, or unnatural practice and thus are worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

And you should let them know that you have prayed for the spirit of discernment—for them and for you.

Even if you think you know the person's worthiness well from previous interviews, you ask all the questions in the recommend book. You should not add any requirements. Satisfactory answers to those questions will allow you to know that the person is qualified to enter the temple.

The first three questions give you a great opportunity. They each begin with, "Do you have a testimony of . . ." The first is about the Godhead, the second is about the Atonement of Jesus Christ, and the third is about the Restoration of the gospel in the latter days. Each can be answered with a single word: "Yes." But rather than rush on to the next questions, you would be wise to invite members to express their feelings. You might ask what the Atonement has meant to them or how they feel about the Prophet Joseph Smith. When they answer, they and you will feel the Holy Ghost bearing witness. That will help them answer honestly all the questions which will follow. And it will help you discern their worthiness.

Then ask the next question about sustaining the leaders of the Church as the called servants of God. Although that does not include the words "do you have a testimony," an affirmative answer is a witness that they know by the Holy Ghost that the Lord calls His servants in His Church.

The questions which follow in the temple recommend interview include whether they live the law of chastity, live righteously in their families, are not affiliated with or sympathetic to apostate groups, strive to keep covenants, are honest, pay a full tithe, and keep the Word of Wisdom.

Answers to all of those questions require self-evaluation. That means they must know the Lord's standard in sufficient detail to answer. And it

means that they must have decided to be honest, whatever the cost.

That is particularly important and difficult for the standard of chastity when you interview young, unmarried applicants. The Lord's standard is brief and clear: it is to have no sexual relations with anyone except with your husband or wife. The drift in the world has misled some young people before marriage to delude themselves that they have not violated the standard of chastity when they have. Some may think themselves chaste when they aren't. Some may have rationalized their sins this way with this thought: "If the bishop doesn't ask about sexual acts in detail, I don't have to confess and repent."

You must pray for revelation to act wisely. Each individual is different and has different experiences. You must be particularly careful not to discuss the private sexual life of a married applicant. You must never be immodest. You must never put temptations into the mind of the person you interview by what you ask or say.

And yet for the unmarried applicant, you must dig deeply enough to allow you to discern whether the person is chaste by the Lord's standards. If you are impressed to do it, you might use the statement in the booklet *For the Strength of Youth*. It has three pages in which the standard is given in enough detail to give guidance to unmarried people.

But, bishop, if you find very often that you have to explain the standard of chastity or what a full tithe is in those interviews, you know that they need more preparation.

Before the Interview

Before you invite members for their first temple recommend interview, you can give them the opportunity to attend a temple preparation seminar. Stake presidents or bishops can organize those seminars. You may invite to those seminars, as

you are inspired, those who are less-active members, new members of the Church, unendowed adults, and endowed members who have not renewed their recommends for a long time. Everyone invited to that seminar is to read carefully and prayerfully the new and wonderful booklet *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple*.

There is a teacher's manual for that seminar entitled *Endowed from on High*. Listen to the first sentence under the paragraph describing who is to attend: "Participants in this course should desire to go to the temple and be worthy of a temple recommend. If they have not yet received a temple recommend, they should be preparing to receive one" ([1995], iv).

Bishops and branch presidents, that means that people must be lifted to the worthiness standard before the temple recommend interview. They should start the preparation seminar already living the worthiness standard.

Brethren, you can see why that is so. For instance, if the standard of chastity must be explained in graphic detail in the interview, the possibility of tragedy is great. Many of us know the pain, the heartbreak, the test of faith that comes when people must be told in that interview that they are not worthy to go the temple. Even when they answer the questions with the right answers, you may have to say at the end of the interview, "I don't have a settled feeling about signing your recommend tonight. Let's meet again soon." From that will come a confession which could have come earlier. The confession is a blessing because the member can start the redemptive process of repentance.

But the time to repent fully may be long. It would be so much better for them if they had been taught the standards early. Not only would they be ready to answer the questions with confidence in a temple recommend interview, but that early start to live the

standards might have fortified them against temptation. The temple recommend interview can be a joyful time when repentance is complete and members feel the peace of knowing that they have met the Lord's standard.

Help from Family and Others

Brethren, you already have the power you need from your calls to help members rise to the Lord's standards. But the bishops and branch presidents are heavily burdened. They can't prepare every candidate alone. They need help.

Bishop, there is a simple thing you can do. Think of the names of people who need preparation to understand and live the standards of the house of the Lord. Write down their names. Pray about them.

Now ask yourself this question: "What does each of those people need to know about the standards and getting the faith to live them?" It will be a little different for each one. One program won't fit them all. They need help fitted just to them.

But there are some things they all need. They need to know the standards. Then they must get a testimony that living the standards will bring happiness. They need to want that happiness. And they need to have a testimony by the Spirit that not living the standards will bring misery, in this life and the next.

And so, ask this question: "Where is that person most likely to get the needed individual help?" What you will find is that for all members what they need is already in place.

Start with families. The family is where standards are best taught and where that testimony is most likely to come. Parents can be clear and consistent about standards as no one else can. But too many aren't doing it yet as well as they can.

So you should gather together in council to seek revelation to know what is keeping families in your unit

from rising to their solemn charge to teach their children “to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands” (D&C 68:25). The Lord will answer as you counsel together and pray. You will then know what to do and what not to do. And your families will be given greater power.

Now, some members will not have faithful parents and families around them. They must be taught by quorum leaders and class leaders or by Young Men or Young Women leaders. You may not have enough active members to staff every position. But you can be sure that all those you are preparing for temple blessings have someone who cares about them, who is set apart to teach them, and who has also been taught the Lord’s standards and feels the blessings that come from living them. How to do that in your unit will be another productive question for you to discuss in your councils.

Bishops, here is a change to make in the way you lead. Think of the people. Ask, “Am I sure that there is someone called to watch over each member, someone who can help each member rise to those standards, to become worthy of the temple of God?”

Remember your aim—it is to make each person responsible and accountable to God for living His standards. That means that the people being prepared for the temple need more than someone to serve them; they need to be called to serve others. In fact, they need to serve others more than they need to be served. The Lord has provided opportunities to serve in the largest ward and the smallest branch in the Church, anywhere in the world. For instance, every priesthood holder from a teacher to a high priest and every woman in the Relief Society can be

called to visit other members for the Lord.

In what appears to be that simple responsibility to visit, there is the necessity to exercise faith, to ponder the scriptures, and to plead with God for help. Think of the charge from the Lord to those we call “home teachers.” Consider what doing such a work would do to teach both the standards of worthiness and the blessings of living them:

“The teacher’s duty is to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them;

“And see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking;

“And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty” (D&C 20:53–55).

Do you hear in those words an echo of the temple standard? That call puts them in the place of lifting others to the standards of worthiness. All calls to serve in the kingdom of God, properly given, are calls to rise to the Lord’s standards of worthiness and to help others rise to them. With those calls revelation is promised for those who seek it in faith. With those calls, faithfully performed, testimony and forgiveness through the Atonement will come. When the Holy Ghost becomes a companion, then the standards become clear and the rewards for meeting them both sweet and sure.

Drawing Us to Him

The Lord has given us His standards of worthiness. He has not done it to keep us away from Him but to draw us to Him.

We must be bold in holding the Lord’s standard before the people. They must be chaste. They must be full-tithe payers. They must live the Word of Wisdom. They must be honest. That is required of the Lord’s people. If we fail to do all we can to

see that they rise to the Lord’s standards, their sorrows will come upon us.

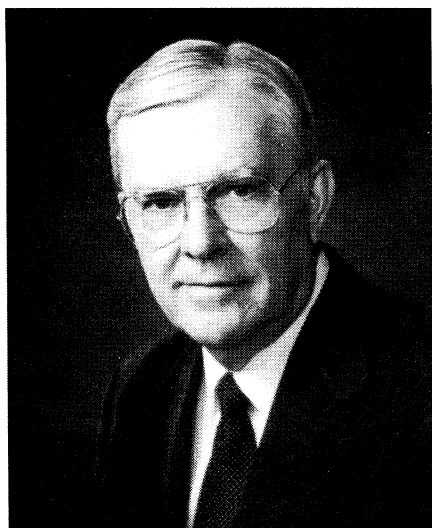
I testify that as we hold the Lord’s standards high, they will draw the people to the Lord. More people, not fewer, will respond to the invitation of the missionaries to enter the door of baptism and come into the Church. And more of them will be true converts, cleansed and changed. With standards held high, more missionaries will go into the field with greater power. And more of your members will enter the temples of God with the feeling that they are going home, worthy of the sacred privilege.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

ELDER M. RUSSELL BALLARD

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

FAMILY AND TEMPLE



My brethren, I hope I will now be able to add to the wonderful things that have been taught that will help you in your callings. I would like to begin by discovering together how well we understand and are applying a few more basic leadership principles. Will you take a clean piece of paper, and with your pencil would you number down the page from one to seven? If you don't have a pencil and paper, would you answer each of these questions in your mind? And please don't worry. We're not going to have this show up on your eternal report card. Here are the questions:

1. What single organization has the most influence upon your children?
2. Where are the habits of work, honesty, and the development of good character best learned?

3. Where can children and youth best develop a love for their Heavenly Father and an abiding faith in His Son, Jesus Christ?
4. Where is the best place for them to learn to read and love the scriptures?
5. Where is the best place to learn why, when, and how to pray?
6. Which worthy organization will continue after this life and throughout eternity?
7. What is the first basic unit of the Church?

Now, let's see how well you have answered these questions. If you have responded to each question with the answer "THE FAMILY," you are 100 percent correct.

The Importance of Family

Now let me ask you one more important question: "How would the members over whom you preside answer these questions?" Ask yourself, "Has your example as a priesthood leader taught them how important the family is as the basic unit of the Church? From your teachings, do they understand that the family is ordained of God and is vital to His eternal plan?"

Perhaps some of you are thinking, "Now, Elder Ballard, we have heard all this before." Well, in fact, President Packer, Elder Perry, Elder Maxwell, and Elder Eyring have already taught you this today. And it's because this principle is so vitally important. Wherever

you live you can see families being torn apart. Societies are shifting basic values away from precious family values, and we're surrounded by those who discount the importance of family. And we understand today that not all families have a father and a mother guiding them, but regardless of that, every individual is connected to his family.

President Spencer W. Kimball said this: "Many of the social restraints which in the past have helped to reinforce and to shore up the family are dissolving and disappearing. The time will come when only those who believe deeply and actively in the family will be able to preserve their families in the midst of the gathering evil around us" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1980, 3; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 4).

Brethren, remember, the Church is organized to assist families. Activities in our various branches and wards and stakes are very important, but they must not replace or consume all of the time for parents to teach their children within the walls of their own homes. You bishops and stake presidents should exercise wise judgment to see that family activities and Church activities are carefully balanced.

In 1995 the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued the publication entitled "The Family: A Proclamation to the World." This proclamation contains doctrine and principles that are vital to the happiness and well-being of every family. In the proclamation we warned the whole world that "the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102). Teach your members to read and ponder the teachings of the proclamation frequently, and show them how important it is for family members to live by these principles. In your council meetings, find out whether every family has a copy of

the proclamation, and if they haven't, then we would encourage you to see that they get one and review it often.

Another excellent resource that is available in many languages is the Marriage and Family Relations course of study. This course is designed to teach members how to find joy in marriage and in all their family relationships.

Resources for Families

Every organization of the Church can be very helpful if members will sit in council together and discuss how they can help families that they are responsible for. For example, in council you can discuss how to get the *Ensign* or the *Liahona* to each family so they can stay informed through the general conference messages and the other instructions and counsel received from general officers of the Church. This is a great resource, and we're not using it as well as we should. And another example: in council meetings you can decide how to implement President Hinckley's instruction of last general conference on family home evening. He taught us that family home evening is "a time of teaching, of reading the scriptures, of cultivating talents, of discussing family matters," and "not a time to attend athletic events or anything of the kind." Then he concluded, "We urge, in the strongest terms possible, that fathers and mothers regard most seriously this opportunity and challenge to make of Monday evening a time sacred to the family" (in Conference Report, Oct. 2002, 64; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 58). Now, if you have the magazines, you can read the entire instruction that the President gave to us on this subject. Brethren, know the resources that the Church makes available, and then show your members how to use them appropriately to bless their families.

In the Book of Mormon there is a good example on teaching from Alma

to his son Helaman. In the 36th chapter and the 37th chapter (I will move around a little bit in it), he says, "And now, O my son Helaman, behold, thou art in thy youth, and therefore, I beseech of thee that thou wilt hear my words and learn of me" (Alma 36:3).

Then, in continuing his instruction to him, he said, "By small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6).

Alma reminded him of the Liahona or the compass that the Lord had prepared to guide their forefathers in the wilderness. You remember this: "And it did work for them according to their faith in God. . . . Nevertheless, because those miracles were worked by small means it did show unto them marvelous works" (Alma 37:40-41). (This is Alma teaching his son.) But "they were slothful, and forgot to exercise their faith and diligence and then those marvelous works ceased, and they did not progress in their journey" (Alma 37:41).

Now, my brethren, as leaders of missions, stakes, and wards, as temple presidents, as patriarchs, or in other assignments, we have the challenge to lead our own family and others we are responsible for through the wilderness of sin in today's world. This can be just as difficult as in the days of the Book of Mormon. So let us not tarry in the wilderness of today's confused world and lose our direction because of the simpleness of the way.

The Simple Things

All of us can lead our families through this mortal journey by following the path marked by the scriptures and the words of our living prophets. We have the duty to show our people, by example and teaching, how to stay on the gospel path.

Now let's review some of these simple things that the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have taught repeatedly to help us find our way safely back to Heavenly

Father. You may want to make a note of these things:

- Share unselfish love between husband and wife and between parents and children.
 - Humbly offer frequent and regular daily family and individual prayers.
 - Show simple kindness and courtesy to one another. Avoid the spirit of the "exercise [of] control or domination or compulsion," as we read about in the 121st section of the Doctrine and Covenants, verse 37.
 - Regularly read and ponder the scriptures individually and as a family.
 - Use wholesome, fun family activities to help parents and children to know each other better and to make lasting memories.
 - Keep the Sabbath day holy.
 - Hold family home evening each week.
 - Pay an honest tithing and other offerings. Attending tithing settlement with your children is a meaningful way to show them the importance of living this commandment.
- Now let me share an example from my experience of serving as a bishop twice. One of the most precious experiences a bishop has is when a family comes to tithing settlement. And there is just nothing quite like a child who puts the coins on the desk of the bishop and then with those glistening, happy eyes, looks at the bishop and reports, "Bishop, this is my full tithing." Don't lose this opportunity, bishops, of connecting with your people at tithing settlement.
- Strive for family self-reliance—spiritually, physically, and temporally. This will prove to be essential in the future as the troubles in the world continue to increase.
 - Attend the temple as often as you can.

Now these are simple things, brethren, that all of us can do. Each of them carries a blessing. So, brethren,

ren, discuss together how you can help your members live these simple principles so they will stay on the gospel path.

The Responsibility of Parents

Bishops, we ask you particularly to teach fathers that each of them has the opportunity and the responsibility to lead and bless his family in righteousness. Show them how to prepare their sons to be stalwart, worthy priesthood holders. The greatest influence in helping young men prepare for the Melchizedek Priesthood, marriage, and fatherhood is the family. If their sons understand the basic doctrines required to become faithful fathers, the sons will surely be ready to serve worthily as full-time missionaries. Now, you need to teach the fathers and mothers that they cannot escape this eternal responsibility. Ecclesiastical and auxiliary leaders are an important resource to help parents and to assist parents to strengthen their family, but they are not a substitute for the direction that comes to the family through the inspired teaching and guidance and direction of worthy parents.

Explain that mothers and fathers share equally in the opportunity of rearing their children. As President Hinckley has reminded us, "Under the plan of heaven, the husband and the wife walk side by side as companions, neither one ahead of the other, but a daughter of God and a son of God walking side by side" ("Latter-day Counsel," *Ensign*, Mar. 2001, 64).

Help mothers to know that they should be examples of modesty and virtue for their daughters to follow. This is becoming increasingly more important. They have the best opportunity to teach and prepare children in a climate of love with a simple faith in Heavenly Father. Mothers, with the help of fathers, teach their sons and daughters how to prepare to be good parents to their own children and

that they must be true and faithful to one another. Remind them that their children will be raising their precious grandchildren. And the important role of grandparents in teaching and strengthening families must also be considered by all of us.

As leaders we all need to work to teach parents to be good listeners so children will confide in them, and share with them their fears and problems, knowing that their parents will understand and help them. And children know if we are listening.

Years ago when our family was little, one of my daughters, about five years of age, came and climbed on my lap. I was reading the newspaper, and she started to talk to me very rapidly about something that was very important to her. I was saying, "Uh-huh," "Uh-huh," but I didn't put the paper down. She reached up and grabbed the paper and ripped it out of my hands. She put her little hands on my face and lined our eyes up, and she said, "Daddy, you are not listening to me." And she was dead right. I was not.

Now, brethren, we need to be good listeners to our own families, and we need to be good listeners in our Church callings. Remember, wise and effective counsel begins with careful and sincere listening. Draw upon the insights and the experiences of your council members. Talk with them. Listen to them. Together you can build the kingdom of God as never before.

Temple Blessings

Now finally, brethren, in all our leadership and in all our efforts, we must focus on teaching each member in every family that our Heavenly Father's plan of happiness is for all His children. His plan is centered in the life and ministry of His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Through the precious Atonement, we as families may have the glorious promise of eternity where we can live together forever as families. The holy temples

are given to us so we can be sealed together as families by the priesthood of God. As families we can teach one another the doctrines of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and live by its teachings, so we can enjoy the full blessings of the temple and be able to return to Heavenly Father's kingdom and be together as families. Never forget, brethren, that children of parents who are married in the temple are many times more likely to marry in the temple themselves than those who are not.

President Hinckley has also taught: "Until you have received the sacred . . . ordinances of the [temple], you have not received all of the wonderful blessings which this Church has to offer. The great and crowning blessings of membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are those blessings which come to us in the house of the Lord" ("Recurring Themes of President Hinckley," *Ensign*, June 2000, 19). The President also said: "Every time you come to the temple, you will be a better man or woman when you leave than you were when you came. I believe that with all my heart. Redouble your efforts and your faithfulness in going to the temple . . . and the Lord will bless you, and you will be happier" ("Latter-day Counsel," *Ensign*, Mar. 2001, 65).

May God bless you, my brethren. We sincerely ask now that you would go forward from this meeting and teach these simple doctrines, which the Brethren have shared with you, to the individuals and to the families for whom you are responsible. Lead them to the eternal goal of receiving all the blessings that living the gospel offers, including those of the holy temple. We love and appreciate each one of you, my brethren. We pray that the Lord will bless you and your family in your tremendous responsibilities that you carry in building up the kingdom of God, and do so in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

MISSIONARY SERVICE



The Brethren have suggested that I speak to you on missionary service. This is a matter to which we have given much attention in recent months.

Missionary work is the lifeblood of the Church. It is the principal means by which it grows. It is because of this service that the Church has reached its present size in 172 years.

This work is older than the Church itself. Samuel Smith went about distributing the Book of Mormon before the Church was organized.

As all of you know, this work was mandated by the Savior Himself in His instructions to the Apostles before His final ascension: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).

In this dispensation He has plainly repeated the importance of this work: "Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people" (D&C 18:14).

None of us can have any doubt concerning its necessity. You ask, "Who should do full-time missionary work?"

Those who are worthy and who are called.

Concerning their qualifications the Lord has said:

"And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work.

"Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence" (D&C 4:5-6).

Regrettably, not everyone meets those qualifications.

The Standards for Missionaries

This work is rigorous. It demands strength and vitality. It demands mental sharpness and capacity. It demands faith, desire, and consecration. It demands clean hands and a pure heart.

The time has come when we must raise the standards of those who are called to serve as ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ to the world. We realize that this will disappoint some young men and women. It will disappoint their parents and even some bishops and stake presidents. But we

feel it is imperative. We recently sent to you privileged information concerning eligibility of those called to full-time missionary service. I hope that you have received it and that you have read it carefully. I remind you that missionary work is not a rite of passage in the Church. It is a call extended by the President of the Church to those who are worthy and able to accomplish it.

In the dedicatory prayer for the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph solemnly requested to the Lord: "Put upon thy servants the testimony of the covenant, that when they go out and proclaim thy word they may seal up the law, and prepare the hearts of thy saints for all those judgments thou art about to send, in thy wrath, upon the inhabitants of the earth, because of their transgressions, that thy people may not faint in the day of trouble" (D&C 109:38).

What a solemn and serious undertaking this work is. It demands that those who serve as missionaries be worthy in every respect. We simply cannot permit those who have not qualified themselves as to worthiness to go into the world to speak the glad tidings of the gospel.

I am confident that raising the bar on eligibility will cause our young people, particularly our young men, to practice self-discipline, to live above the low standards of the world, to avoid transgression and take the high road in all their activities. We will not knowingly send young men to reform them. If their lives need reforming, that must happen well before they go. That may take time. But not everyone needs to go at age 19.

Physical and Mental Health

Good physical and mental health is vital. A mission president recently sent home three of his missionaries with whom he had worked for months in an effort to help them.

The first was a young man who had been hospitalized with a collapsed lung. It turned out that he had a history of lung problems, which only grew worse under the stress of missionary service.

The second was a young man who suffered from kidney failure. Investigation indicated that he had kidney problems before he came. He could not begin to keep up with the difficult work of a mission.

The third was a young woman who had a mental collapse. She became a most difficult problem for her companions, as well as the mission president and the attending physician. It turns out that she came from a family with a history of emotional problems of which the bishop and stake president were aware.

The mission president accepted each of these and worked with them as if they were his own sons and daughters, but while he was doing so, his leadership of the 180 other missionaries suffered.

The doctors with whom he worked were most solicitous in trying to do everything they possibly could to assist. But the fact of the matter is these missionaries could not stand the rigors of the work.

There are parents who say, "If only we can get Johnny on a mission, then the Lord will bless him with health."

It seems not to work out that way. Rather, whatever ailment or physical or mental shortcoming a missionary has when he comes into the field only becomes aggravated under the stress of the work.

We simply must face up to the facts. We are spending millions of dollars on medical care and countless hours assisting those with problems that make it impossible for them to perform the work.

Now, we ask you brethren to be more selective in those you recommend. Let your young people know what will be expected of them if they are to serve missions. Let their parents

know what will be expected of their sons and daughters. There are other areas where those with serious limitations may work and have a satisfying experience. And the Lord will bless them for what they are able to do.

Effective Missionaries

I recognize that the position we have taken will appear unreasonable and harsh to many parents, who will plead that their sons and daughters have the opportunity of missionary service. But, brethren, we feel that we must bring back into focus the real purpose of missionary work and the need for certain qualifications in order to accomplish that purpose. I hope that all concerned will realize that it is better not to go, than to go out and have to return in disappointment and with a sense of failure after a very short time. Brethren, may the Lord bless you with inspiration, with direction and guidance, with love for those for whom you are responsible, and with the courage to stand up for what you know to be right and reasonable.

Following these guidelines may reduce the number of missionaries we have in the field. But it will increase the effectiveness of those who qualify to go.

Permit me to emphasize that we need missionaries, but they must be capable of doing the work. They must be spiritually sensitive to do that which is expected of them, which is essentially a spiritual work. They must be morally worthy in every respect, having kept themselves clean from the evils of the world. If there have been offenses, there must have been adequate repentance.

There should be an eagerness and a desire to serve the Lord as His ambassadors to the world. And there must be health and strength, both physical and mental, for the work is demanding, the hours are long, and the stress can be heavy.

We are not asking for perfection. The work of the Lord is done by

ordinary people who work in an extraordinary way. The Lord magnifies those who put forth the effort. Nowhere is this more evident than in missionary service. We have all seen the miracle of it. We have experienced the miracle of it in a personal way. With small means the Lord accomplishes His marvelous work.

And so we must be very careful that we do not go to extremes, but we can and must be very careful concerning those we recommend, that they may be contributors and not problems.

For those who should not go but wish to serve, let us find other places where they may make much-appreciated contributions.

I think that is all I need to say on that matter.

A Fourfold Endeavor

Now I wish to talk a little about some details, some "how-to's" of missionary work. Missionary work is more than two young men giving a memorized presentation to investigators. It is more than baptizing. It is a fourfold endeavor that concerns the missionaries, yes, and also ward members, bishops, the ward mission leader, and the entire Church organization. This fourfold effort includes (1) finding investigators, (2) teaching by the Spirit, (3) baptizing worthy converts, and (4) strengthening new and less-active members.

Before missionaries can teach, they must find those willing to listen. They must be certain that those they teach have an understanding of the gospel and a willingness to accept and live by it. These investigators will be greatly assisted by a friend or friends, preferably individuals who have been through a similar experience in coming into the Church.

They must meet the qualifications set forth in section 20, verse 37 of the Doctrine and Covenants. When baptized, they must have Church service of some kind to which they are assigned. And they must be

nurtured and strengthened in the work until they are solid in the faith.

Finding Investigators

Now, whose responsibility is it to find investigators for the missionaries to teach? It is the responsibility of everyone in the Church. The place to bring these elements together is the ward council meeting. Here will be present the ward mission leader. To this meeting may occasionally be invited the full-time missionaries. Missionary service will be on the agenda of each meeting.

The ward members should be encouraged to be aware of things taking place in the ward, such as births and deaths, sickness and various family problems. They should be aware of those who may be moving into the ward. They can offer help to these and extend an outreach in welcoming them.

Youth can befriend youth. Children can befriend other children.

All this must be done with care and sensitivity. But it has been done and can be done. Whenever the ward has a special event, such as a breakfast on a national holiday, those who are not members of the Church should be invited to come and participate.

Let us teach our people to be good neighbors. Let us teach them never to be smug or arrogant. Let us teach them to shun any "holier than thou" attitude.

Let us cultivate within our people a constant awareness of opportunities to reach out to others. Let neighborliness, an outreach with love toward others, become the attitude of our people wherever they are across the entire world.

Where there is enthusiasm for converts, there will be results. Where the members have confidence in the missionaries, they will work to find investigators for them to teach.

Families should be sought for—fathers and mothers and children.

We cannot build permanent strength in the Church without men who hold the priesthood.

Where an entire family comes in together, there will be unity in the home and a greater impetus to move forward together as active Latter-day Saints.

The missionaries may have to do some tracting to find investigators on their own, but referrals from Church members can and should be a principal source of investigators.

Every true convert who has come into this Church knows of the great blessings that have come with Church membership. With that should come a desire to share the opportunities of Church membership with friends and others.

A greater enthusiasm for missionary work will strengthen the entire ward. There will be less of a spirit of criticism, less of complaining, a greater pride in the Church and its programs.

It will be a great day when our people not only pray for the missionaries throughout the world, but ask the Lord to help them to assist the missionaries who are laboring in their own ward.

Really, when all is said and done, the most difficult phase of missionary work is finding people to teach. Enthusiastic members of the Church, and particularly enthusiastic new converts, can be the greatest and best source of referrals.

Teaching by the Spirit

The question now rises as to how the missionaries shall teach those who are willing to listen. For many years now we have had a standard set of missionary lessons. Great good has come of this. The missionaries have never lacked for something to teach in a systematic way. But unfortunately this method, in all too many cases, has resulted in a memorized presentation, lacking in Spirit and in personal conviction.

The Lord has said in revelation, "Notwithstanding those things which are written, it always has been given to the elders of my church from the beginning, and ever shall be, to conduct all meetings as they are directed and guided by the Holy Spirit" (D&C 46:2).

If this principle is observed, this principle which is repeated over and over in the revelations, there will come a new force into their teachings.

They should master the concepts of the lessons. But they should feel free to deviate from the established order, and to teach the concepts in their own words under the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit.

With reference to following the order of the lessons, may I give you an instance. A pair of missionaries were tracting in a European city. A woman answered the door. She had been crying and had difficulty holding back her tears. Forgetting all about the lessons, one of the missionaries said, "Madam, it is obvious that something is wrong. We are ministers of the gospel. Can we help you in any way?"

She replied, "Ministers are part of my problem. I need comfort and reassurance and not what ministers have told me."

"May we ask what is your problem?"

"I have lost my baby. I was told that he has gone to hell because he was not baptized."

"May we come in and talk with you for a few moments?"

She invited them in. The elder took the Book of Mormon from his case. He turned to Moroni and read Mormon's words concerning the innocence of little children. He bore his testimony solemnly concerning the truth of the scripture from which he was reading. He assured her that her baby was saved through the Atonement of Christ. Her eyes brightened. They talked together for a long time on the innocence of little children and the mercy of God in their behalf. That is all they talked about

on that occasion. But they had prayer together, in which the missionary pleaded with the Lord to comfort and bless this dear woman, whose burdens were so grievous. They said they would come back and speak with her further.

The end result was that she joined the Church and became a faithful and active member.

If missionaries will cultivate the Spirit of the Lord and live worthy of it, they will be guided to say those things and teach in such a way as to respond to the needs of those they teach. In very many cases their teaching will be strengthened if a member of the Church, particularly a convert who has come out of circumstances similar to those of the people they teach, can add a testimony and extend friendship.

Let me tell you about Eddie. He lived in Liverpool, England. Two missionaries met him on the street. He was intoxicated. He had recently passed through a very serious experience and was trying to drown his sorrow in drink.

They spoke with him. They asked if they might come by and see him when he was sober. He told them that they could.

They went to his home. He invited them in. They talked with him about his great loss and the sorrow which it had occasioned. They talked of the mercies of Christ and of the certainty of life after death. He responded. They took him to church and introduced him to the members. The members rallied around him, and he soon found himself with wonderful friends who understood his circumstances.

He was baptized. He was immediately given a minor responsibility in the ward. He continued in activity. He came to Salt Lake City to attend a general conference of the Church. I met and talked with him.

He now attends the Preston England Temple regularly. He has become

a full-fledged and wonderful member of the Church.

Teach the doctrine, but let that teaching come from the heart of the missionary and not from a wooden presentation.

Let the missionaries shake loose from their memorized lessons. Let them speak with great conviction, prompted by the Spirit of the Lord. Let them do so with great earnestness.

Every morning before they leave to go out to work, missionaries should get on their knees and plead with the Lord to loosen their tongues and speak through them to the blessing of those they will be teaching. If they will do this, a new light will come into their lives. There will be greater enthusiasm for the work. They will come to know that in a very real sense, they are servants of the Lord speaking in His behalf. They will find a different response from those they teach. As they do so by the Spirit, their investigators will respond under the influence of the same Spirit.

If in this process there is a member present who can add his witness and testimony, and who will become a true friend thenceforth, investigators will experience a warmth of acceptance that they can count on thereafter. At the conclusion of each teaching session, the investigator should be left something to read. It may be designated chapters from the Book of Mormon. It may be other literature. But there should always be something for him to read and think about, to ponder and reflect on. This can then become an opening topic of discussion the next time they meet.

The Lord has said, "Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say; but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man" (D&C 84:85).

This is the counsel of the Lord. It cannot be set aside with impunity. Following it will bring the promised

result. Such teaching will become more challenging, more individualized, and more suitable to the needs of those who are being taught. This is the kind of teaching that will lead to a request for baptism.

Baptizing Worthy Converts

Now let's talk about baptizing the worthy convert.

The Lord has made abundantly clear the qualifications for baptism. In the 37th verse of the 20th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, He has declared, "All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church."

The Lord has set a very high standard. Those whom the missionaries feel are ready for baptism should have attended sacrament meeting. They should have met the bishop. They should have been introduced to members. They should have the friend of which we have spoken. They must have an understanding of the First Vision and must have developed faith in Christ, repented of the past, and made sufficient changes in their lives to qualify themselves to become members of the Church. They should have put off the old man and taken on the new as Paul declares (see Colossians 3:9-10). They should be living lives of moral worthiness, be familiar with and have accepted the Word of Wisdom, and have made a commitment to pay tithing. If they are not ready, then baptism should be postponed until they are ready.

The baptismal service should be a wonderful occasion. There should be prayer, the singing of hymns, instruc-

tion concerning the nature of the ceremony. An explanation may be made that the baptism by immersion which we use in the Church follows that used by John when he baptized the Savior. It represents death and burial and the resurrection into a new and more beautiful life.

Friends and family should be invited to attend. Members of the ward should be there to welcome new members into the Church. Other investigators should be invited to attend a baptism. This experience will remove some of their fears and misgivings. It should be a very sacred and impressive experience.

Converts should be confirmed in a sacrament meeting of the ward of which they will become members. This confirmation should take place as soon as reasonable following the baptism.

Strengthening New Members

Coming into the Church can be a somewhat traumatic experience. Old associations and familiar patterns of living are left behind. I have said many times that every convert needs three things—a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with the good word of God.

The friend of which we have spoken is very important. Each new convert needs someone who is always near of whom he can ask questions in confidence. Every convert needs a friend to steady him when doubts arise, as they inevitably will.

Every new member needs a responsibility. Only as we serve do we grow. Faith is like the muscle of my arm. If it is used and exercised, it will grow strong. If it is put in a sling and left there, it will grow weak. Every new convert should be given some responsibility immediately. It may be ever so small, but it must be important.

The story has been told again and again of the convert who was assigned by the bishop to pass out the song-books each Sunday morning. He felt that it was absolutely necessary that

he be at the meeting early to see that the books were in place. He felt that he was needed. The meetings could not go forward properly without his having met his assignment. As he so served, he grew in faith and one assignment led to another.

There must be nurturing with the good word of God. Bishops should see that every sacrament meeting is faith-building and informative concerning the gospel. Class leaders should recognize the presence of new members and see that they are taught effectively.

Converts should be encouraged to read the Book of Mormon and other Church literature.

Every convert is worth saving. I am convinced we do not need to suffer losses among those who come into the Church. If they are taught effectively, if they are guided in the proper way, if boys and men are ordained to the priesthood and participate in quorum activities, if women become involved in the Relief Society, if children are active in their organizations, then they will grow in faith and understanding. Every one of them needs attention while they are developing as strong members of the Church. They cannot be neglected. They must not be neglected. They are as the sheep of which the Savior spoke. They are entitled to every attention as they grow in understanding and love for the Church and its programs.

Unity in Saving Souls

Brethren, the mission of the Church is to save souls. It is to teach the gospel to those who are willing to listen wherever they may be. It is to baptize those who have proved themselves worthy. It is to strengthen and nurture them until they are able to stand on their feet and move forward with strength and enthusiasm. There is no greater work. There is no more important work. There is no more compelling work than this which the

God of heaven has given us responsibility for accomplishing.

Now, my beloved brethren, we have participated in a great leadership meeting, a new undertaking in the history of this great work. We have spoken to the leadership of almost the entire Church throughout the world. The few whom we have not reached will be taken care of in a different manner.

What a remarkable thing this is. The Lord has made possible the technology by which we have reached you.

There will be another such meeting in June. Thus, we shall train the Church uniformly throughout the world.

We are all one Church, the Church of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. We should be performing our duty uniformly to bless the lives of all for whom we are responsible.

This is God's holy work, restored to the earth in this last and final dispensation. He and His Beloved Son, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, appeared to the boy Joseph Smith and parted the curtains to open this, the dispensation of the fullness of times. The Book of Mormon is among us as another testament of the Lord Jesus Christ. The priesthood with all its keys and powers has been restored. The Church is fully organized and carries the name of Him who stands at its head.

Glorious is this work. It will bless the life of every man, woman, boy, and girl who embraces it.

I leave you my testimony and witness. I leave you my love and blessing.

May heaven smile upon you as you go forward with your responsibilities. May you find great joy in your service. May you grow in strength and capacity. God bless you, my dearly beloved brethren, I humbly pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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