

one of these principles, he does not get pure white light. If he fails to have faith in all the principles of the gospel and does not have faith to live in accordance therewith, he cannot expect to get the pure light of the gospel in his heart.

Horizon extended

If you truly have faith in God sufficient to impel you to keep his commandments, you will draw nearer to him and he will come nearer to you, and your faith will become knowledge, and the limit of your horizon will extend into the eternal world.

May we grow in faith through the love and blessing of our Lord and Savior. May we keep the commandments that he has given us, that we may ultimately find salvation and exaltation in his celestial kingdom, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. □

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Joseph Anderson, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder William H. Bennett, Assistant to the Twelve, and he will be followed by Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder William H. Bennett

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

It was two years ago, my brothers and sisters, when I was called to be an Assistant to the Council of the Twelve. These years have brought new challenges and many choice and wonderful experiences. Today I should like to begin my message by expressing gratitude to my Father in heaven, to the leaders of the Church, and to my loved ones, for their confidence in me and for their support and sustaining hand.

Missionary assignment

Now I have received a new assignment from the First Presidency, to preside over the Florida South Mission. Along with my call, a call was issued to Sister Bennett to serve at my side as my companion and to be the supervisor of the activities of the women and children in the mission. We are deeply grateful for this call and accept it without reservations. It is our desire to direct the affairs of the mission in accordance with the instructions of the First Presidency. We ask for an interest in your faith and prayers.

Purpose of gospel

As I thought about what I might say today, I reminded myself of the mission of the Church and the purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Specifically, my mind went back to some statements made by the Savior. In the Pearl of Great Price we read, "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

Then in his Sermon on the Mount, the Savior said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:38.) In these words I find an expression of hope and confidence as well as a challenge from our Savior.

I then thought about how the Church and the gospel can help men and women in reaching these great objectives. The words of President David O. McKay came to mind: "The purpose of the gospel is to make bad men good and good men better—to change men's lives."

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I also contemplated the day-to-day operations of the Church and the performance of Church members in the stakes, wards, and missions as revealed in stake activity reports, genealogy reports, mission reports, etc.; and I realized that, while the Church and its members have moved forward and upward in many ways, there is much more that needs to be done.

Two missionary needs

It has been my privilege to tour a number of the full-time missions. I have also witnessed firsthand the work of many stake missions. As I have done so, I have become keenly aware of two great needs that should receive attention if we are to raise performance in missionary work both at home and abroad.

First, members of the Church everywhere should remind themselves that the gospel is to be preached and taught by example and not just by word of mouth. The lives of all Church members should be shining examples of the gospel of Jesus Christ in action.

Second, as members of the Church, it is our responsibility to assist the missionaries in finding investigators to whom the message of the gospel can be taught. The missionary program needs the help of all of us—young and old—and it needs our help now.

"There are chances for work all around just now,
Opportunities right in our way;
Do not let them pass by, saying,
'Sometime I'll try,'

But go and do something today.

" 'Tis noble of man to work and to give,

Love's labor has merit alone;
Only he who does something is
worthy to live,

The world has no use for the drone.

"Then wake up, and do something
more

Than dream of your mansion above;

Doing good is a pleasure; a joy beyond measure,
A blessing of duty and love."

—Hymns, no. 58

There are opportunities all around us if we are but alert to them. To illustrate this, I should like to share with you several personal experiences I have had over the years that bear this out and that have strengthened my own testimony, enriched my life, and enabled me to explain the gospel to others.

Obstacle to success

The question, "What is the main obstacle to success in stake missionary work?" was asked by President S. Dilworth Young of a group of stake missionaries in the East Cache Stake some years ago. A lady missionary's prompt reply was, "The failure of too many Latter-day Saints to live the gospel as Latter-day Saints should."

As I have attended stake conferences, I have observed that this also applies to other stakes in the Church. We can and ought to do something to change this situation. We can change it by letting our lives be shining examples of the gospel of Jesus Christ in action.

Experience of infantry patrol

During World War II, while serving with the 31st Infantry Division in the Dutch East Indies, I was placed in command of a patrol charged with the responsibility of searching out and destroying enemy supply bases.

As we proceeded on one particular patrol behind enemy lines, a native dog fell in with our group; and try as we would, we couldn't get that dog to leave. I became concerned about this. Later on, however, its alertness caused us to be suspicious to the point where we took extra precautions as we proceeded on to lower ground after coming to a fork in the trail. Therefore, when the enemy opened fire shortly thereafter, we were not caught completely by surprise. Four men

were wounded in the initial burst of fire, but not a single man lost his life. We were able to evacuate the wounded and withdraw to the rear under heavy machine gun and rifle fire without losing a single man.

Sergeant Leslie E. Milam of Natchitoches, Louisiana, the only other Mormon in my company, was with me on this patrol. After we returned to the rear, he was contacted by Sergeant Dabbs, our platoon guide, who said that he was aware that Sergeant Milam and I had been meeting on Sundays, whenever conditions would permit, for short religious discussions. He indicated that he knew that our lives had been miraculously saved in this patrol, and he requested permission to meet with us in our next religious discussion. He did meet with us, and he was just as sincere as we were in expressing gratitude to our Father in heaven for his protection and watchful care.

Shortly after this ambush, Private Collins, who went through the ambush with us, sought me out one night after dark and said, "Lieutenant Bennett, I think we had some help from on high out there the other day."

I replied, "Well, I don't know just how you feel about it, Collins, or how the other boys feel; but as far as I'm concerned, I know we did."

He then said, "And I know we did, Lieutenant Bennett, and there is something else I want to say. I've been a rough character in the past. I've done most of the things I shouldn't have done, but it's going to be different in the future. I'm a changed man."

I have thought about this choice experience many times, for it provided me with a great opportunity to explain the gospel message to Private Collins under conditions where his heart and his mind were open.

Sharing gospel teachings

Just prior to going overseas during World War II, while we were on maneu-

vers in the Louisiana-Texas area, my platoon sergeant, Sergeant Tiffin, came to me during a ten-minute break and said, "Lieutenant Bennett, you know and I know that we will be going overseas in the near future, and that when we go overseas it will not be long until we find ourselves in combat. When we get into combat, sooner or later some of us will be required to take the life of one or more of the enemy. I have been taught that if this should happen, I will be held responsible for the blood which I shed, even though I am a victim of circumstance. This is bothering me. Lieutenant, I know that you are a Mormon. What does your church teach regarding this matter?"

What an excellent opportunity for me to share with Sergeant Tiffin the statement of the First Presidency to all LDS servicemen throughout the world, which statement was part of the servicemen's kit given to each LDS soldier who entered military service. Similar instructions are found in the servicemen's kits that are made available to our servicemen today.

For the balance of that day, whenever we had a ten-minute break, Sergeant Tiffin and I continued the discussion. Each time we met, he brought others with him; and when we went into the bivouac area at night, the discussions continued into the wee hours. What a tremendous opportunity to share the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

The Book of Mormon

One evening on board ship, while sailing from Yokohama, Japan, to Seattle, Washington, after the end of World War II, I began talking to the officer in the bunk next to me about the Book of Mormon. He was not a member of the Church, but he lived in the Worland, Wyoming, area, and so he knew quite a bit about the Mormons. We had a lengthy but interesting discussion.

The next morning the officer in the bunk above me, who had listened the

night before but hadn't joined in the discussion, came to me and said, "Where can I get a copy of that Book of Mormon you were talking about last night?"

I said, "Give me your address, and I'll send you a copy just as soon as I return to Salt Lake City."

I sent it along with a few tracts and had his name referred to the missionaries, that he might be contacted.

Missionary referrals

While I was touring the South Africa Mission a little over a year ago, President Harlan Clark and I boarded the plane at Johannesburg to fly to Port Elizabeth, there to meet with the missionaries. President Clark took a seat next to a businessman, and I took one next to a nurse. We both received referrals, which were passed on to the missionaries for appropriate follow-up.

A few years ago I was assigned to the Tampa Stake conference in Florida. I had to change planes in Chicago. As I boarded the plane after making the change, I found that I had been assigned a seat next to a young lady who was very busily engaged in reading the newspaper. When I sat down, I did not disturb her. But all at once she said, "This is disgusting."

I replied, "What is disgusting?"

She said, "The point of view that so many people have today that they should look to the government to satisfy every want and need."

I responded, "You must be a Mormon."

"No, I'm not a Mormon," she replied, "but I have heard about the welfare program of the Mormon Church, and I think it is just wonderful."

This too provided an opportunity to explain the gospel. Before I reached my destination, she had given me

her name and address and permission to send her a copy of the Book of Mormon, some Church welfare pamphlets, and other Church literature.

Many missionary opportunities

These examples of true experiences in my life indicate that the door is wide open and that many opportunities are available for doing missionary work—if we are just alert and will put forth a little effort. The joys associated with going the extra mile to open the door and reach the hearts of people with respect to the gospel message can be illustrated by quoting a few sentences from a letter I received from a friend of mine just a few months ago:

"I love the gospel very much. My testimony is my most prized possession, and I couldn't live without it. My greatest happiness has been through participating in Church activities . . . and in missionary work. I have served for seven years as a stake missionary, and I have supported a total of eight full-time missionaries in the field. I have a special love for missionary work."

May we all feel more dedicated to this great, unselfish service of love that we refer to as missionary work, and may we be willing in our hearts to make a greater contribution to its forward progress.

I bear you my testimony that this work is true. God lives, and his Son Jesus Christ is indeed our Savior, the Redeemer of mankind. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true church, and I bear you this testimony in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. □

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Howard W. Hunter will speak to us now. He is a member of the Council of the Twelve.