

Life's flight pattern can be changed. The instruments we use in saving souls are love and sharing our testimonies of the divine mission of our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Thousands of our lost brethren, both men and boys, can be led to a safe landing if we will keep the commitments that we have made tonight. The power of the priesthood that is within each one of us is a greater power than any radar, radio, or any other communication system. Nothing is more important to the Lord than saving souls.

God bless us to keep this commitment, my brethren, to bring into

full fellowship one precious son of God, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President N. Eldon Tanner**

We have just heard from Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder W. Grant Bangerter, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## **Elder W. Grant Bangerter**

Central to the calling to administer the gospel to all people, living and dead, is the power of the Holy Ghost. My experience tells me that many who labor in the callings of the priesthood lack insight into this great agency and are unable to be as effective as they ought to be.

I pray that I may be blessed to give some helpful instructions about this most potent and sacred influence.

Obviously, if I do not have the Holy Spirit, I may as well not speak tonight.

### **Teaching by the Spirit**

Most of our work is done in the form of teaching. This takes place in classes such as priesthood quorums, Sunday School, and seminary; many times in interviews; by missionaries as they present the gospel in their discussions; by home teachers to the families of the Church; and, of course, in sermons such as this one.

So I'm speaking to stake presidents, bishops, and quorum leaders, to missionaries, auxiliary leaders, home teachers, and class instructors.

How can we teach by the Spirit? Brethren, try to detect the influence of the Holy Spirit in the following experiences.

### **Calls to serve**

While I was serving as stake president, my counselors and I invited a certain brother for an interview where we presented to him his calling to be the president of the stake Young Men organization. This man had not been fully active. He liked to spend his weekends, including Sundays, camping and fishing, and it was reported that he and his wife did not always obey the Word of Wisdom. There was some question as to whether we should consider him for such a position, but because of the prayerful discussions we had held in the presidency and the high council we concluded that he should be called. As we advised this brother of his appointment, he responded that he was not interested and that he did not feel worthy or qualified. We then told him how we had come to choose him over all the

members of the stake. We explained that we needed a strong and capable leader of youth in our stake and that both the presidency and the high council had offered earnest prayers, asking the Lord to indicate the person who should fill the position. We said: "The answer was clear. You are the man the Lord has chosen. It is for you to decide, of course, but you do have an obligation to go home and discuss the question with your wife. The only request we make of you is that thereafter you kneel down with her and ask the Lord what he wants you to do."

Three days later I received an unhappy telephone call from this same man. He reluctantly informed me that he would accept the position with all its implications. He gave powerful service in his calling, and when that assignment was finished, he became a member of the high council, and he has been happy about the gospel ever since.

We had a similar experience when we called another man to be the president of our stake mission. Through some discouraging experiences in Church service, he thought himself halfway on the road to apostasy and not at all sure of his testimony. He resisted his appointment vigorously, saying that it would deprive him of time to do some of the most enjoyable things in life. We explained to him how once again we had sought the direction from the Lord about who should preside over the mission. We told him that he was not being forced to accept the call, but that he should ask his Heavenly Father whether or not it was right for him to serve. The Lord gave him a powerful assurance that he was called to the work. The following year he, with his missionaries, baptized nearly ten percent of all the nonmembers in our stake. Later on, he was called to be a bishop.

### Missionary obligation

On certain occasions I have approached young men of missionary age and informed them that they have been called to serve a mission. Sometimes they explain that they have no desire to go on a mission. I then tell them that it is immaterial to me whether they serve a mission or not. Of course, it isn't all immaterial; but I say I am only informing them of the calling the Lord has already given them. And I'll explain how I know that. I was present the day President Kimball made the announcement that all young men should go on a mission. The Holy Spirit told me that the principle was true.

Later on, I was talking with a humble, but inspired, patriarch who is here tonight. He informed me that he was not trained nor educated to give patriarchal blessings and that he could only say the things the Lord told him to say. I thought that sounded about right. He then added: "You would be interested to know how many young men who come for their blessings are told that they will go on missions." With that statement, I again felt revelation and saw light, and I knew that President Kimball had not called them on a mission. He had merely made the announcement. But the mission had been ordained by the Lord himself, and every young man who belongs to the Church has an obligation to labor to build up the kingdom.

There has been no difficulty, therefore, for me in telling young men that I know they have been called on a mission. And when they respond that they are not interested, I merely say: "Don't tell me; tell the Lord. You go and pray and ask him what he wants you to do." Almost always they return from that experience saying: "Well, I suppose I had

better go on a mission." For some of them it is then time to say: "Now we both understand that you are not quite prepared, so let us begin to take the steps by which you will be qualified to go."

### Ask the Lord

Here's another situation. I have watched missionaries over many years, as they teach the gospel, find that some of their best investigators tell them that they have decided not to join the Church. Most missionaries at this point are discouraged and disappointed. The missionary who understands the Holy Ghost, however, takes that moment as his great opportunity.

He even welcomes it, because he knows what to do. And he might say: "Very well, if that is your wish. However, please allow us a moment just to tell you how much the gospel means to us. Do you remember how Joseph Smith knelt one evening in his room and prayed to the Lord to know of his standing before God? As a result, an angel appeared and said: 'Joseph, I have come to you from the presence of God to tell you that the Lord has a work for you to do, by which your name will be known for good and evil among all men' [see JS-H 1:33]. What did Joseph Smith say? Did he say: 'Oh, no thanks, Mr. Angel. I don't want to go on a mission. I only wished to know if the Lord loves me!' Of course, he couldn't have said that. We want to tell you that we know this work is true just as surely as if we had knelt there by the side of Joseph Smith, because God has revealed it to us. He will reveal it to you, too. We don't think you should decide not to join his church until you have knelt down and asked the Lord what he wants you to do."

And the investigators, as they pray, respond saying: "Of course, the Lord wants us to join the

Church." The next step, naturally, is to prepare for their baptism.

### Spiritual preparation necessary

What has taken place in all of these situations? It is simply that the Holy Ghost has come into the presence of those who are teaching and those who are listening and has given them a witness of the mind and will of God. They have felt something they never understood or knew before. Did you notice? You felt it, too, as I told you these experiences, and I felt it. This is explained in the Doctrine and Covenants: "Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together" (D&C 50:22).

We are further told: "The Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach" (D&C 42:14). Prayer is the principal means by which this Spirit is obtained and felt.

We must prepare ourselves to work with the Spirit of the Lord.

Certain principles must accompany our teaching through the influence of the Spirit: First, we are to be holy men. This does not mean like the Marlboro man or the macho man—*holy* men. Then we need confidence in the Holy Ghost; believe in it and expect its presence to be with us. And when it comes, we need to recognize its presence and be able to help others to feel the influence that it brings.

One of our great missionaries said: "I bear them my testimony. Then I bear them their testimony. And then I have them bear their testimony back to me."

That's the process. Alma did the same thing when he had explained to the people of the city of Gideon about the coming of Christ and the redemption that would be provided for those who would accept Him and

be baptized, he said: "And now my beloved brethren, do you believe these things? Behold, I say unto you, yea, I know that ye believe them; and the way that I know ye believe them is by the manifestation of the

Spirit which is in me" (Alma 7:17). To this I bear testimony, after many wonderful experiences of the influence of the Holy Ghost, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder John H. Groberg

My dear brethren, I ask that our faith be united so the Lord's Spirit may touch our hearts.

### Personal and family histories

I would like to begin by asking a question. (Don't raise your hand; just think about it.) How many of you, regardless of age, have your personal and family histories up to date?

As bearers of the priesthood, we have an obligation to follow the counsel of the prophet. President Kimball has made it abundantly clear that it is very important to write our personal and family histories. It is so important that this August the Church is sponsoring, in Salt Lake City, a great World Conference on Records to help all of us, and the whole world, better understand the vital importance of these histories and to learn much about how to write them.

Why is the writing of personal and family histories so important? There are many reasons. I will focus on just a few.

By writing personal and family histories and doing the research required thereby, we inevitably have our hearts turned to our fathers as well as to our children. The Lord says this must happen, "lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:6). Let us not be part of a curse.

Also, by writing personal and family histories, we are helped im-

measurably in gaining a true, eternal perspective of life. Writing our histories with the proper blend of fact and feeling (and so often, feelings in spiritual things are the real facts) gives us a deep spiritual insight into the meaning and purpose of our lives.

I wonder if, as in so many things, we don't deny ourselves this deeper spiritual insight by simply neglecting to write our histories.

### Becoming sensitive to spiritual things

Some people say, "I don't have anything to record. Nothing spiritual happens to me." I say, "Start recording, and spiritual things will happen. They are there all the time, but we become more sensitive to them as we write."

Writing our histories will certainly help us keep our eyes on the most important of all goals—even the goal of eternal life.

As we contemplate what those before us have gone through that we might be here, as we sense their faith and courage and feel their love for us and our love for them, we realize what is really important. We begin to comprehend the eternity of the family. We gain great insight into the things of God, and we are not the same. We talk and act differently—for we have a deepened understanding of eternity. We realize that so-called problems are only what