

## Elder William R. Bradford

I solemnly testify to you that God the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, have appeared in this dispensation. These two glorious Personages actually stood before and spoke to the young man Joseph Smith.

### **True church organized and missionaries sent forth**

This occurred in 1820. Since then the heavens have remained open. The fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored by revelation. Angels have been sent as holy messengers. We have been given records of God's dealings with His children. The Holy Spirit has poured out the truths of God's plan for the exaltation of His sons and daughters.

The true church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has been organized under the direction of Jesus Christ Himself.

Prophets and Apostles have been called. They have been given power from on high. They are special witnesses of Jesus Christ in all the world.

They are sent out, holding the keys, to open the doors for the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. By their work the doors are being opened. The gospel is being proclaimed throughout the world.

Being inspired and directed by the Lord, these prophets, seers, and revelators have called upon the disciples of Jesus Christ and have sent them forth by commandment, which commandment is:

"And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples; whom I have chosen in these last days.

"And they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them.

"Wherefore, fear and tremble, O ye people, for what I the Lord have

decreed in them shall be fulfilled." (D&C 1:4-5, 7.)

Presently there are about thirty thousand missionaries serving in 188 missions. They are proclaiming the restored gospel in 82 nations, territories, and possessions in 48 different languages.

Thousands of our Father's children are hearing the gospel, are obtaining testimonies of its truthfulness, and are being baptized into His true church. There are now some five million members.

### **Purpose of missionary work**

We are humbled and greatly pleased with the success that attends the labors. We acknowledge the hand of the Lord and the dedication of His disciples in what has been accomplished up to now. But there is still much left to be done.

We feel a great urgency for the work and wonder if we could cause it to be accelerated.

There is concern as to whether all of those who should and could participate in this work really understand and believe the basic principles and purposes for which God's firm decree, to declare this gospel to all the world, was given.

Although there are thirty thousand missionaries now serving, there should and could be many times that many. If they would prepare themselves and step forward to do that which is their decreed duty, the work could be done at a rate and in dimensions beyond our highest expectations.

I have pondered and prayed about this matter. I have searched for words and pleaded to the heavens for power to say them so as to motivate those who should be faithful in this work.

The words have come into my mind. They are simple words. They

have oft been taught. To say them is to repeat what you have heard over and over again.

They invite us to come unto Christ and be perfected in Him. This is done by serving Him with all of our heart, might, mind, and strength. If we do this, we receive a remission of our sins and become holy and without spot and may return to our Heavenly Father to dwell again with Him, to live the kind of life He lives.

The Savior stands with His hands extended, offering us glorious blessings if we will serve Him. As we study what He means by this service we come to understand that it is fundamentally the service of teaching the truths of His gospel to those who do not know it.

But even with the simplicity of the words and the divine source from which they come, and even with the sure promise of blessings, there are still those who should and could serve who choose not to serve.

It causes me to wonder if they really understand and believe the two-fold nature of the purpose of missionary work: first, to sanctify the missionary himself, and second, to bring converts to a knowledge of the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and to baptism into His Church—which is the sure and natural product of a missionary who is in the process of sanctification.

### **Some justify themselves in not doing their duty to God**

Satan is attempting to block this work. His influence is insidious and persistent. Many who should and could do this work are falling victim to his influence.

Some are being deceived and are slipping away from that which is true to experiment with that which is false and foolish.

May I talk to you young men who are approaching or are now the age to

be called into missionary service.

Some of you say in your minds, "Oh well, you just don't understand my case. My situation is different. I plan to be a great lawyer, or doctor, or athlete, or some other great person. Surely neither you nor the Lord would expect me to leave my studies at such an important time. A mission would interfere with my future plans."

Others are thinking, "Yes, I know about missions, but if you had a girl friend like mine, you'd never leave her. What will happen to her while I'm gone?"

Yet others of you are thinking, "Missions cost so much. I just got this job. I just purchased a car and a stereo. It's just the time of life when I'm starting to get things together for myself. I can't drop all that now. I just can't afford it."

Then there are also those who are thinking, "My situation disqualifies me. I have fallen into transgression and am not participating in the Church. I had always planned on being a missionary, but I slipped and now I don't live the standards required of a missionary."

If I could listen to you separately, each case would unfold with one thing in common. All would justify yourselves in not doing your duty to God.

Many of you are attempting to justify yourselves even against the correct counsel and teachings of your parents. They love you. They would support you in every way to do what's right if you would allow it.

But unfortunately there are also parents who side with you in your justification. They have made plans for your future, and those plans do not include missionary service. They say, "My son is going to be a great lawyer or doctor or star athlete. He can't interrupt his studies to go gallivanting out in the world for two years. Let someone else's sons do that. My son is special."

### **Earthly fame compared with God's promises**

If I could speak separately to each of you young men and your parents who so justify, I would say with all the power of speech I could generate, "Just who do you think you are? What right do you have to match your wisdom with that of God, who through His prophets has issued a firm decree, a solemn mandate, that the restored gospel must be declared to all the world by the voice of His disciples? This means you!"

I would remind you of the Lord's own words as He addressed those who "doeth not anything" and who have doubtful hearts.

"Who am I that made man, saith the Lord, that will hold him guiltless that obeys not my commandments?"

"Who am I, saith the Lord, that have promised and have not fulfilled?"

"I command and men obey not; I revoke and they receive not the blessing.

"Then they say in their hearts: This is not the work of the Lord, for his promises are not fulfilled. But wo unto such, for their reward lurketh beneath, and not from above." (D&C 58:29-33.)

Do you really believe that earthly fame and title, tied to earthly positions and occupations, can compare with God's promises to the faithful? He has promised "thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers." He has promised "exaltation and glory in all things." He has promised "a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever." He has promised eternal life. (D&C 132:19.)

I would say to you that you are left without excuse and without justification and that you have placed your eternal salvation in grave danger.

Your education can wait. The Lord will open the doors of education and a proper vocation for you when you return from your missionary service.

And speaking of your girl friends, the Father wants to give you one of His elect daughters, one who is loved and cherished by Him, one who is pure, one who understands eternal values and is striving for exaltation.

Surely you cannot expect this to happen if you are not faithful in doing that which would make you worthy of her as an eternal companion. It is after your missionary service has helped to sanctify you that this can happen.

Lest I be misunderstood, may I say to you young women, this also applies to you. Many of you say, "What will I ever do if he leaves me?" You hold him back. You allow your association with him to go beyond where it should. You often contribute to his decision not to serve. You sometimes even contribute to his unworthiness to serve. By so doing you are also disqualifying yourself from your intended blessings.

Let him go. Don't just let him go, but encourage him! You are perhaps the strongest single influence on him at this time in his life. You can make all the difference. Help keep him clean. Help him to be prepared.

Perhaps you would also like to, and should, serve as a missionary. Many lady missionaries are now serving. The same blessings promised to young men are extended to you. Although your most important role in this life is motherhood, it may be appropriate for you to serve a mission first.

### **Sanctification**

For those of you who feel you cannot serve because you have slipped into transgression, I would say, "Don't despair. There is a way back. The plan of repentance really works. You can take steps to return to full worthiness. You can make acceptable restitution and place yourself in the service of the Lord."

If I could speak separately with each bishop and stake president about

those who should and could be serving as missionaries, I would say, "You have a most important obligation. It is your sacred duty to work with them and their parents until they understand, and do, their duty.

"You cannot leave them hanging as fruit on a tree, maturing, ripening, and then falling to the ground to spoil or be devoured, with no one concerned for conserving the harvest. If you do, you will assuredly be held accountable. The day will come when you will stand before the judgment bar of God to give account for them, name by name, every one."

This is a marvelous plan. It is a process of sanctification. When a missionary is placed in a mission environment of order and discipline where all that is done is in harmony with the Spirit, the missionary experiences a great transformation. The heavens open. Powers are showered out. Mysteries are revealed. Habits are improved. Sanctification begins. Through this process the missionary becomes a vessel of light that can shine forth the gospel of Jesus Christ in a world in darkness.

There is much to do. You are the royal generation that has been "hid from the world with Christ" to come forth in this day to do the work. (See D&C 86:9.)

You must prepare. You must now make yourselves worthy and available. If you do not, the work will go on without you. It will go on at a slower pace, but it will go on. If you are not

part of it, if you do not do your duty, what will happen to you? How will you be sanctified?

If you do not do your duty, those whom you could have taught but did not will eventually have their opportunity to hear the gospel from someone else, but what of you? How will you be sanctified?

Missions are for missionaries. It is a marvelous gift of time, a time given when you can experience glimpses of heavenly life here on earth. It is a time of cleansing and refreshing. It is a special time when the Holy Ghost can seal upon you the knowledge of the great plan for your exaltation. It is one of your best opportunities to become a celestial candidate.

The teaching and conversion of others is the natural product of this process. To sanctify yourself you must serve others. The highest of all service to others is to teach them truth and bring them into the kingdom of God.

Thus the decree: Send forth the elders and preach my gospel to every kindred, tongue, and people. (See D&C 133:8.)

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Romney

Elder William R. Bradford, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us. We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Charles Didier, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder Charles Didier

"*Il faut se battre!* We must fight!" gurgled the hoarse voice of a man who had lain stiff in the devouring mud ever since our awakening; 'we've got to!' His body turned heavily over. 'We've got to give all we have, our strength and our skins and

our hearts, all our life and what pleasures are left us. The life of prisoners as we are, we've got to take it in both hands. You've got to endure everything, even injustice—and *that's* the king that's reigning now—and the shameful and disgusting sights we see,