

Church in many capacities, including those of stake president and Regional Representative. Elder Call is a native of Mexico and has served as president of the Juarez Mexico Stake. He presently serves as president of the Uruguay Montevideo Mission. Elder Camargo is from Brazil, where at various times he has served as stake president, mission president, and Regional Representative.

Also for your information, in harmony with the principle we have followed of calling some members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to serve as temple presidents and as mission presidents, Elder Victor L. Brown has been called to serve as president of the Salt Lake Temple—his appointment will become effective June 1; Elder Peterson to serve as president of the Jordan River Temple—his appointment to be effective at the same time; and Elder Clarke to serve as president of the South Africa Capetown Mission, a place and a work he has loved ever since serving as a missionary in that land.

By way of announcement we desire to inform you of decisions of area administration. In three international areas, for over eight months, we have tested the concept of having Area Presidencies living on site. This has been done in Europe, in the southern part of South America, and in the Pacific Islands, and has proved highly desirable. We now announce that effec-

tive July 1 three more Area Presidencies will be put in place—one to reside in Brazil, to serve Brazil and the northern portions of South America; another in Mexico, to serve Mexico and Central America; and another will reside perhaps in Japan to serve the Far East—so that beginning in July we will have six Area Presidencies presiding in the international areas. Additionally, we wish to confirm that seven Presidencies will have responsibility over Areas in the United States and Canada. We thank these Brethren and their families for their willingness to go wherever they are asked to go.

With the exceptions noted, there have been no changes within the General Authorities or the general officers of the Church since the last conference. It is proposed, therefore, that we sustain all of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted. All in favor, manifest it. Any who may feel otherwise, may so manifest it.

It appears that the voting has been unanimous in favor in each instance. We thank you for your sustaining vote and for your undeviating support.

### **President Hinckley**

We shall now be pleased to hear from President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

## **President Ezra Taft Benson**

### **Our mission—to preach the gospel**

My beloved brethren and sisters, we have called a conference of mission presidents from all over the world. We have met with these wonderful men and their wives earlier this week, and they have received instruction and counsel. I therefore feel that I should like to say

a few words about our missionary responsibility as members of the Church.

Our mission as a church is to preach the gospel to all the world. That means, in due time, every country, nationality, and people. In a letter to Mr. John Wentworth in March 1842, Joseph Smith prophesied: "No unhalloved hand can stop the work from progressing; . . . the truth of God will

go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated *every* continent, visited *every* clime, swept *every* country, and sounded in *every* ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540; italics added).

### Much is required

To appreciate the accelerated progress that the Church has made in the last few decades, consider that it took 117 years for the Church to reach its first million members (1947); 16 years to reach its second million (1963); and 9 years its third million (1972). But during President Kimball's administration as President of the Church, over two million people were added.

Yet there is much to do before the work of God can be pronounced completed. Hearts of leaders of nations must be softened, doors of nations opened, false ideologies overcome, and the gospel presented to all our Heavenly Father's children.

As members of the Lord's Church, we must take missionary work more seriously. The Lord's commission to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15) will never change in our dispensation. We have been greatly blessed with the material means, the technology, and an inspired message to bring the gospel to all men. More is expected of us than any previous generation. Where "much is given much is required" (D&C 82:3).

Permit me to suggest some of the ways you can participate in this glorious endeavor to bring the gospel to all mankind.

### Live the principles of the gospel

First, *you can live the principles of the gospel.*

The Lord expects this of us. The Apostle Paul commended, "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in

conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

We are grateful that members of the Church for the most part are striving to live the gospel and dealing justly with our fellowman. But are we not all saddened and disappointed when Church members are found guilty of taking advantage of others through business transactions or are judged guilty of breaking the laws of God and man? As Church members, blessed with the truths of the gospel, the Lord expects us to be honest, morally clean, chaste, free from profanity and vulgarity, trustworthy, and exemplary in all our conduct.

The Lord said to Church members of this dispensation:

"But inasmuch as they keep not my commandments, and hearken not to observe all my words, the kingdoms of the world shall prevail against them.

"For they were set to be a light unto the world, and to be the saviors of men;

"And inasmuch as they are not the saviors of men, they are as salt that has lost its savor, and is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men" (D&C 103:8-10).

One of our best missionary tools is the sterling examples of members who live the gospel. This is what the Lord meant when He said to the Church, "Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; . . . Zion must . . . put on her beautiful garments" (D&C 82:14).

### Prepare sons for missions

Second, *we can prepare our sons to serve missions.*

President Kimball was once asked, "How many missionaries do you expect? How many do you need?" His answer: "All of them" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 3 Apr. 1975).

"I am asking," said he, "for missionaries who have been carefully indoctrinated and trained through the family and the organizations of the

Church, and who come to the mission with a great desire.

"I am asking," he further stated, "that we start earlier and train our missionaries better" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 4 Apr. 1974).

When do we begin such preparation? Our prophet said we should "start at the birth of a male child and begin to put away money and help him save for his mission so that at 19 years when he is of age, he is prepared and ready for his mission. Every boy should have saved much toward his mission" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 3 Oct. 1974).

How do you build in boys a great desire to serve? You do not wait until they are nineteen years old to help them decide to serve a mission. You help them decide to go when they are nine, ten, or eleven! The home is the seedbed for the preparation of young men. And every young man should be prepared in his home to serve.

Early preparation consists of teaching a young boy how to pray, reading him stories from the Book of Mormon and other scriptures, having home evenings and giving him a portion of the lesson, teaching him principles of moral cleanliness, starting a savings account for his future mission, teaching him how to work, and providing opportunities to serve others.

I know of families who always prayed in family prayer that their sons would be worthy to serve missions. This, they say, had a great effect on their sons.

For our teenage young men and women, one of the best preparations for a mission is provided by the Church through seminary and institute of religion classes. We hope you will urge your children to take part in this inspired program.

### **Financially support missionary program**

Third, *we can financially support the missionary program.*

Let me explain to you the challenge we face in the Church. Many of our worthy young men who desire to serve missions are in other countries of the world. Most of these elders and sisters do not have the resources to support themselves for two years on a mission and therefore must receive supplementary assistance. We have a General Missionary Fund in the Church to which we ask all members to contribute. Those who have received bounteously from the Lord can afford to give generously to support this program. Most adult members could contribute some each month and, by doing so, help prosper the missionary efforts throughout the world.

### **Introduce friends and neighbors to missionaries**

Fourth, *we can introduce our friends and neighbors to the missionaries.*

On January 2, 1831, the Lord said: "And again, I say unto you, I give unto you a commandment, that every man, both elder, priest, teacher, and also member, go to with his might, with the labor of his hands, to prepare and accomplish the things which I have commanded.

"And let your preaching be the warning voice, every man to his neighbor, in mildness and meekness" (D&C 38:40-41).

Also, on December 27, 1832, the Lord commanded:

"Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.

"Therefore, they are left without excuse, and their sins are upon their own heads" (D&C 88:81-82).

Our living prophet today has told us how this work is best accomplished:

"We must . . . involve the members of the Church more effectively in missionary work. Member-missionary work is the key to the future growth of the Church, and it is one of the great keys to the individual growth of our

members" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 3 Oct. 1980).

We all share this great responsibility. We cannot avoid it. Let no man or woman think that because of where we live, or because of our place in society, or because of our occupation or status, we are exempt from this responsibility.

Membership in the Lord's Church is a gift and a blessing which the Lord has given us in mortality, and He expects us to share that blessing with those who do not have it.

We also have a great obligation to love our neighbors. It is the second of the two great commandments. Many of our neighbors are not yet members of the Church. We must be good neighbors. We must love all our Father's children and associate with them.

How I pray that we will be filled with the love of God for our fellowman!

### Participate in missionary service

Fifth, we can participate in missionary service by preparing for and serving a mission.

One way couples can do this is to save and prepare to serve a mission together. Again I state, "We have need for select missionary couples" (*Ensign*, May 1984, p. 45).

I repeat, we urge you to seriously consider serving a full-time mission. Some of you younger couples have your sons already on missions. Perhaps now is the time for you to prepare financially and otherwise for missionary service. Many couples have provided distinguished service and stability to various missions in the Church.

You can study the scriptures together, particularly the Book of Mormon. The Lord has said that we are condemned if we do not remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon. (See D&C 84:56-57.)

Missionary service requires great faith. I know how difficult it is for older couples to decide to serve missions. I have two widowed sisters who went on a mission to England together. A brother has just left for his third mission

with his wife. Many couples can attest that their missionary service was among their happiest times together because they were completely dedicated to one purpose—missionary work.

### Spirit of missionary work

Yes, brothers and sisters, the field is "white already to harvest; and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul" (D&C 4:4).

I am grateful for the great missionary program of the Church. My father's family consisted of eleven children. All eleven of us have filled missions. My wife also filled a mission and had the pleasure of her widowed mother serving with her for the last six months. When my own father went on a mission, I remember, as the eldest son, the letters that he wrote from the mission field in the Midwest. There came into that home a spirit of missionary work that has never left it, for which I am humbly grateful.

May God bless this great missionary program. May He bless each of us with the spirit of missionary work prompted out of love for our fellowman.

I testify that this work is true and that the results of all our efforts today will one day fill the world with wards, stakes, and many millions of our Father's children whose souls are saved in His kingdom.

God bless us all as members of His Church to share the gospel with others, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just addressed us.

We shall ask the newly called Brethren to come and take seats here on the stand—if they will proceed to do so immediately so that all of you may watch them.