

will experience and savor celestial joy through this life and throughout all eternity. I so testify and promise, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

He who has just spoken to us is Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will now address us.

President Thomas S. Monson

The joy of missionary work

What an inspiring sight to see this historic tabernacle filled to capacity, then to realize that chapels and halls throughout the world are similarly filled by those who hold the priesthood of God. I pray for the inspiration of heaven to attend me and to direct the remarks I make.

My mind goes back in memory to a general priesthood meeting held in 1956. At that time I was serving in the stake presidency of the Temple View Stake here in Salt Lake City. Percy K. Fetzer, John R. Burt, and I, the stake presidency, had come to the Tabernacle early, that hopefully we might find a place to sit. We were among the first to enter the Tabernacle and had almost two hours to wait before the meeting would begin.

President Fetzer related to President Burt and me an experience from his missionary days in Germany. He described how one rainy night he and his companion were to present a gospel message to a group assembled in a school house. A protester had broadcast falsehoods concerning the Church, and a number of people threatened violence against the two missionaries. At a critical moment, a woman who was a widow stepped between the elders and the angry group and said, "These young men are my guests and are coming to my home now. Please make way for us to leave."

The crowd parted, and the missionaries walked through the rainy night with their benefactress, arriving

at length at her modest home. She placed their wet coats over the kitchen chairs and invited the missionaries to sit at the table while she prepared food for them. After eating, the elders presented a message to the kind lady who had befriended them. A young son of the woman was invited to come to the table, but he refused, preferring his position of solitude and warmth directly behind the kitchen stove.

President Fetzer concluded the account with the comment, "While I don't know if that woman ever joined the Church, I'll forever be grateful to her for her kindness that rain-drenched night thirty-three years ago."

The brethren sitting in front of us here in the Tabernacle had been speaking to one another also. After a while, we began listening to their conversation. One asked the friend sitting next to him, "Tell me how you came to be a member of the Church."

The brother responded, "One rainy night in Germany, my mother brought to our house two drenched missionaries whom she had rescued from a mob. Mother fed the elders, and they presented to her a message concerning the work of the Lord. They invited me to join the discussion, but I was shy and fearful, so I remained secure in my seat behind the stove. Later, when I once more heard about the Church, I remembered the courage and faith, as well as the message, of those two humble missionaries, and this led to my conversion. I suppose I'll never meet those two missionaries here in mortality, but I'll be forever grateful to them. I know

not where they were from. I think one was named Fetzer."

At this point, President Burt and I looked at President Fetzer and noticed the great tears which coursed down his cheeks. Without saying a word to us, President Fetzer tapped on the shoulder of the man in front of us who had just related his conversion experience. To him he then said, "I'm Bruder Fetzer. I was one of the two missionaries whom you befriended that night. I'm grateful to meet the boy who sat behind the stove—the lad who listened and who learned."

I do not remember the messages delivered during the priesthood meeting that night, but I shall never forget the faith-filled conversation which preceded the commencement of the meeting.

A missionary-minded people

The words of the Lord seemed so appropriate then. They are equally appropriate now: "And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!" (D&C 18:15).

We are a missionary-minded people. We have a divine mandate to proclaim the message of the Restoration. You young men here this night are on the threshold of your missionary opportunity. That energetic missionary from the Book of Mormon, even Alma, provides for us a blueprint for missionary conduct: "This is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God to bring some soul to repentance; and this is my joy" (Alma 29:9).

I add my personal witness: Our missionaries are not salesmen with wares to peddle; rather, they are servants of the Most High God, with testimonies to bear, truths to teach, and souls to save.

The Lord's promise to missionaries

Each missionary who goes forth in response to a sacred call becomes a servant of the Lord whose work this truly is. Do not fear, young men, for He will be with you. He never fails. He has promised: "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88).

"And ye shall go forth in the power of my Spirit, preaching my gospel, two by two, in my name, lifting up your voices as with the sound of a trumpet, declaring my word like unto angels of God" (D&C 42:6).

Preparing missionaries

Fathers, bishops, quorum advisers, yours is the responsibility to prepare this generation of missionaries, to quicken in the hearts of these deacons, teachers, and priests not only an awareness of their obligation to serve, but also a vision of the opportunities and blessings which await them through a missionary call. The work is demanding, the impact everlasting. This is no time for "summer soldiers" in the army of the Lord.

The missionary recommendations that arrive daily at Church headquarters present a spectrum of preparedness. Let me share with you just one or two comments gleaned from the period I served on the Missionary Committee. One recommendation form contained this comment written by the bishop: "John is very close to his mother. She would be happy if he were assigned to a mission close to their home so she could phone weekly and visit him on occasion." As I read this comment to President Spencer W. Kimball, who assigned the missionaries then, I wondered what his reaction would be. Would he assign the young man to California or Washington, that he might be near his Oregon home? Without raising his eyes from the assignment sheet, President Kimball said, "Please assign this young man to Johannesburg, South Africa."

Another missionary recommendation contained the comment from the stake president: "This young man was instrumental in bringing his stepfather into the Church about a year ago. His stepfather told me it was because of Jerry getting up each Sunday morning and going to church that caused him to wonder what kind of church could have that much influence on a boy."

Value of missionary letters

In many respects, a mission is a family calling. The letters which a missionary sends to Mother and Father are packed with power—spiritual power. They are filled with faith—abiding faith. I've always maintained that such letters seem to pass through a heavenly post office before being delivered to home and family. Mother treasures every word. Father fills with pride. The letters are read over and over again—and are never discarded.

I trust parents will remember that their letters to a missionary son or daughter bring home and heaven close to him or to her and provide a renewal of commitment to the sacred calling of missionary. God will inspire you as you take pen in hand to express to one you love the feelings of your soul and the love of your heart.

At the funeral service for the mother of Elder Marion G. Romney, held in Provo, Utah, her son-in-law, Brother John K. Edmunds, gave the following account: "In their early married life, Brother and Sister Romney lived in Mexico. Brother Romney [like the father of President Benson] was called on a mission. There was no feasible means of support, yet he went and his wife sustained him. One day she grieved because she wanted to write her husband a letter but did not have sufficient money to buy a postage stamp. She prayed and then took a walk through the orchard that autumn day, kicking the leaves as she walked along and thinking of her husband. She noticed a shiny object on the ground and

discovered it to be a coin—just the right amount for several postage stamps."

Her letter had been written. Now, through the intervention of God, it could be mailed.

Missionaries' families are blessed

Brethren, think of the family blessings received by the Romney and Benson families, which blessings followed the commitment to missionary service.

I think of my own grandfather, Nels Monson, who waited seven years for his sweetheart to become his bride. The first entry in his missionary journal expressed eloquently his gratitude: "Today, in the Salt Lake Temple, Maria Mace became my eternal wife." The entry written three days later was more somber: "Tonight the bishop came to our house. I have been called to serve a two-year mission to Scandinavia. My dear wife will remain at home and sustain me." I treasure such faith. I cherish such commitment.

I commend the many couples who now go forth to serve. Leaving the comforts of home, the companionship of family, they walk hand in hand as eternal companions, but also hand in hand with God as His representatives to a faith-starved world.

To the many who contribute of their means for missionary service, I express the thanks of the Church and the sentiments of my soul. The gratitude of God may come soon. Then again, it may come as it did to Brother Fetzer—after thirty-three years. This I know: It will come. It will bless. It will comfort. It will sanctify.

Sudbury family blessed by missionary service

Last month the Salt Lake City newspapers carried an obituary notice for Fred Sudbury. It indicated that he was survived by his wife, Pearl, and a son, Craig; that he was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-

day Saints; and that his marriage had been solemnized in the Salt Lake Temple. What the obituary notice could not adequately convey was the inspiring human drama which preceded Fred's passing.

Some years ago, Craig Sudbury and his mother came to my office prior to Craig's departure for the Australia Melbourne Mission. Fred Sudbury, Craig's father, was noticeably absent. Twenty-five years earlier, Craig's mother had married Fred, who did not share her love for the Church and, indeed, was not a member.

Craig confided to me his deep and abiding love for his parents and his hope that somehow, in some way, his father would be touched by the Spirit and open his heart to the gospel of Jesus Christ. I prayed for inspiration concerning how such a desire might be fulfilled. Such inspiration came, and I said to Craig, "Serve the Lord with all your heart. Be obedient to your sacred calling. Each week write a letter to your parents; and on occasion, write to Dad personally and let him know that you love him, and tell him why you're grateful to be his son." He thanked me and, with his mother, departed the office.

I was not to see Craig's mother for over eighteen months. She came to the office and, in sentences punctuated by tears, said to me, "It has been almost two years since Craig departed for his mission. He has never failed in writing a letter to us each week. Recently, my husband, Fred, stood for the first time in a testimony meeting and said, 'All of you know that I am not a member of the Church, but something has happened to me since Craig left for his mission. His letters have touched my soul. May I share one with you?'"

" "Dear Dad,

" "Today we taught a choice family about the plan of salvation and blessings of exaltation in the celestial kingdom. For me it just wouldn't be a celestial kingdom if you were not there. I'm grateful to be your son, Dad, and want you to know that I love you.

" "Your missionary son,

" "Craig"

" "After twenty-six years of marriage, I have made my decision to become a member of the Church, for I know the gospel message is the word of God. My son's mission has moved me to action. I have made arrangements for my wife and me to meet Craig when he completes his mission. I will be his final baptism as a full-time missionary of the Lord." He heard the message, he saw the light, he embraced the truth.

A young missionary with unwavering faith had participated with God in a modern-day miracle. His challenge to communicate with one whom he loved had been made more difficult by the barrier of the thousands of miles that lay between him and home. But the spirit of love spanned the vast expanse of the blue Pacific, and heart spoke to heart in divine dialogue.

No missionary stood so tall as did Craig Sudbury when, in far-off Australia, he helped his father into water waist-deep and, raising his right arm to the square, repeated those sacred words: "Fred Sudbury, having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (see D&C 20:73).

The prayer of a mother, the faith of a father, the service of a son brought forth the miracle of God.

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15).

God bless us, my brethren, with missionary memories of stalwart service in the cause of Christ, I pray in His holy name, amen.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel."