

13. Doctrine and Covenants 107:25, 34.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 107:23.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 107:35.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 107:22, 79.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 107:65–66.
18. Doctrine and Covenants 107:91–92; see also 21:1.
19. John 21:15–17.

### President Hinckley

We have just listened to President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

We shall now be pleased to hear from President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor.

## President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, you are an inspiring sight to behold. It is gratifying to realize that in thousands of chapels throughout the world, holders of the priesthood of God are receiving this broadcast by way of satellite transmission. Your nationalities vary and your languages are many, but a common thread binds us together. We have been entrusted to bear the priesthood and to act in the name of God. We are the recipients of a sacred trust. Much is expected of us.

With moist eyes and tender hearts we have said farewell to that gentle giant of a man, even a prophet of God, President Howard W. Hunter. We have sustained this day President Gordon B. Hinckley as the President of the Church and the prophet, seer, and revelator of God. I know that President Hinckley has been called of our Heavenly Father as the prophet and that he will lead us along those pathways the Savior has outlined. The work will go forward, and the people will be blessed. It is an honor and distinct privilege to serve with President Gordon B. Hinckley and with President James E. Faust in the First Presidency of the Church.

### **“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations”**

Long years ago a divine command was given by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as He said to His beloved eleven disciples: “Go ye therefore, and teach all

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”<sup>1</sup> Mark records that “they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them.”<sup>2</sup>

This sacred charge has not been rescinded. Rather, it has been reemphasized. The Prophet Joseph Smith set forth the purpose of the Church when he declared, “It is the bringing of men and women to a knowledge of the eternal truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer and Savior of the world, and that only through belief in Him, and faith which manifests itself in good works, can men and nations enjoy peace.”

Does the world in which we live stand in need of the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Almost everywhere one looks there appears an erosion not only of the environment but, even more seriously, an erosion of spirituality and of compliance with eternal commandments. One sees a blatant disregard for the precious souls of mankind.

It is almost as though the faces of many have been turned away from Him—even the Lord—who solemnly declared, “The worth of souls is great in the sight of God.”<sup>3</sup> The gentle words “Come, follow me”<sup>4</sup> fall on many with stopped

ears and closed hearts. Such seem to be attuned to another voice.

### Participate in priesthood service

Do you, with me, remember the story from childhood days of that persuasive musician, the Pied Piper of Hamelin? You will recall that he entered Hamelin and offered, for a specified sum of money, to rid the town of the vermin with which it was plagued. When the contract was agreed upon, he played his pipe and the rats came swarming from the buildings and followed him to the river, where they drowned. When the town leaders refused to pay him for his services, he returned to play his pipe and led the precious children away from the safety of their families and their homes, never to return.

Are there Pied Pipers even today? Are they playing alluring music to lead, to their own destruction, those who listen and follow? These “pipers” pipe the tunes of *pride* and *pleasure*, of *selfishness* and *greed* and leave in their wake confused minds, troubled hearts, empty lives, and destroyed dreams.

The deep yearning of countless numbers is expressed in the plea of one who spoke to Philip of old: “How can I [find my way], except some man should guide me?”<sup>5</sup>

Brethren of the priesthood, the world is in need of your help. There are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save. The harvest truly is great. Let there be no mistake about it; the missionary opportunity of a lifetime is yours. The blessings of eternity await you. Yours is the privilege to be not spectators but participants on the stage of priesthood service.

To those of you who hold the Aaronic Priesthood, I say, *prepare for your full-time missions*. You will become a part of that valiant missionary army of the Lord which now numbers 50,000 strong.

How might you best respond? May I suggest a formula that will ensure your success as missionaries:

1. Prepare with purpose;
2. Teach with testimony;
3. Labor with love.

### Prepare with purpose

First, prepare with purpose. Remember the qualifying statement of the Master: “Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind.”<sup>6</sup> Missionary work is difficult. It taxes one’s energies; it strains one’s capacity; it demands one’s best effort—frequently a second effort. No other labor requires longer hours or greater devotion or such sacrifice and fervent prayer.

President John Taylor summed up the requirements: “The kind of men we want as bearers of this Gospel message are men who have faith in God; men who have faith in their religion; men who honor their priesthood; men in whom the people who know them have faith and in whom God has confidence. . . . We want men full of the Holy Ghost and the power of God. . . . Men who bear the words of life among the nations, ought to be men of honor, integrity, virtue and purity; and this being the command of God to us, we shall try and carry it out.”<sup>7</sup>

### Teach with testimony

Second, teach with testimony. Peter and John, those converted fishermen who became Apostles, were warned not to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Their answer was firm: “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”<sup>8</sup>

Paul the Apostle, that sterling testifier of truth, was speaking to all of us—members and missionaries alike—when he counseled his beloved friend Timothy,

"Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."<sup>9</sup>

Elder Delbert L. Stapley, who served as a member of the Council of the Twelve a number of years ago, quoted Paul in his epistle to the Romans: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation."<sup>10</sup> Then Elder Stapley added: "If we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, then we should not be ashamed to live it. And if we are not ashamed to live it, then we should not be ashamed to share it."

### Labor with love

Third, labor with love. There is no substitute for love. Often this love is kindled in youth by a mother, expanded by a father, and kept vibrant through service to God. Remember the Lord's counsel: "And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work."<sup>11</sup>

Well might each of us ask himself: *Today have I increased in faith, in hope, in charity, in love?* When our lives comply with God's standard and we labor with love to bring souls unto Him, those within our sphere of influence will never speak the lament, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."<sup>12</sup>

### Meeting missionaries in a clothing store

Young missionaries always have an idea as to where they would *love* to serve. Usually it's a faraway place with a strange-sounding name.

One day I was in the men's suit department of a large store when I encountered two missionaries with their mothers. It isn't difficult to spot missionaries or their mothers. The two elders were conversing, and one said to the other, "Where are you going on your mission?"

Came the reply, "I'm going to Austria."

The first missionary responded, "You lucky dog, going to Austria! Those beautiful Austrian Alps, that wonderful music, those delightful people! I wish I were going there."

"Where are you going?" said the missionary assigned to Austria.

"California," came the answer. "You know, less than two hours away by plane. We go there every year for a vacation."

I could see by the expression on the mothers' faces and the near tears of one of the missionaries that it was time for me to intervene. "Did you say California?" I asked. "Why, I once supervised that area. You have an inspired call, Elder. Do you realize what you will have in California to help you? You'll have chapels and stake centers that dot the land, and they'll be filled with Latter-day Saints who can be inspired to be fellow missionaries with you in sharing the gospel. You are a very fortunate missionary to be going there." I glanced at the other mother, who said, "Brother Monson, say something about Austria, quick!" I did so.

Young men, wherever you are called will be right for you, and you will learn to love your mission.

### All can participate in missionary work

Brethren, all of us can participate, as may our wives and children, in bringing souls to Christ through cooperative effort with the stake and full-time missionaries. One highly successful and rewarding way is through the conducting of open house events in our buildings. You bishops of wards and presidents of stakes have had a video presentation provided you, featuring Elder Jeffrey R. Holland. It is an excellent tool to be used in a missionary open house. Use it. The membership of the Church will grow and the Spirit of the Lord will be among us as we do so.

Prepare with purpose. Teach with testimony. Labor with love. I testify to

the truth of this formula and, indeed, this divine work of the Lord.

### Conversion of Yvonne Ramirez

Many years ago I boarded a plane in San Francisco en route to Los Angeles. As I sat down, the seat next to mine was empty. Soon, however, there occupied that seat a most lovely young lady. As the plane became airborne, I noticed that she was reading a book. As one is wont to do, I glanced at the title: *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*. I mustered up my courage and said to her, "Excuse me. You must be a Mormon."

She replied, "Oh, no. Why do you ask?"

I said, "Well, you're reading a book written by LeGrand Richards, a very prominent leader of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

She responded, "Is that right? A friend gave this book to me, but I don't know much about it. However, it has aroused my curiosity."

I wondered silently, *Should I be forward and say more about the Church?* The words of the Apostle Peter crossed my mind: "Be ready always to give an answer to every [one] that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."<sup>13</sup> I decided that now was the time for me to share my testimony with her. I told her that it had been my privilege years before to assist Elder Richards in printing that book. I mentioned the great missionary spirit of this man and told her of the many thousands of people who had embraced the truth after reading that which he had prepared. Then it was my privilege, during the remainder of the flight, to answer her questions relative to the Church—intelligent questions which came from the heart, which I perceived was a heart seeking truth. I asked if I might have an opportunity to have the missionaries call upon her. I asked if she would like to attend one

of our wards in San Francisco, where she lived. Her answers were affirmative. She gave me her name—Yvonne Ramirez—and indicated that she was a flight attendant on her way to an assignment.

Upon returning home I wrote to the mission president and the stake president, advising them of my conversation and that I had written to her and sent along some suggested reading. Incidentally, young men, I recommended that rather than sending two elders to this pretty off-duty flight attendant and her pretty roommate, two lady missionaries be assigned to call.

Several months passed by. Then I received a telephone call from the stake president, who asked, "Brother Monson, do you remember sitting next to a flight attendant on a trip from San Francisco to Los Angeles earlier this fall?" I answered affirmatively. He continued, "I thought you would like to know that Yvonne Ramirez has just become the most recently baptized and confirmed member of the Church. She would like to speak with you."

A sweet voice came on the line: "Brother Monson, thank you for sharing with me your testimony. I am the happiest person in all the world."

As tears filled my eyes and gratitude to God enlarged my soul, I thanked her and commended her on her search for truth and, having found it, her decision to enter those waters which cleanse and purify and provide entrance to eternal life.

I sat silently for a few minutes after replacing the telephone receiver. The words of our Savior coursed through my mind: "And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for 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."<sup>14</sup>

Such is the promise to all of us when we pursue our missionary opportunities

and follow the counsel and obey the commandments of Jesus of Nazareth, our Savior and our King. He lives. I so testify in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. Matthew 28:19–20.
2. Mark 16:20.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 18:10.
4. Luke 18:22.
5. Acts 8:31.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 64:34.
7. In *Journal of Discourses*, 21:375.
8. Acts 4:19–20.
9. 1 Timothy 4:12.
10. Romans 1:16.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 4:5.
12. Jeremiah 8:20.
13. 1 Peter 3:15.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 84:88.

#### President Hinckley

Thank you, President Monson, for your inspiring words.

### President Gordon B. Hinckley

#### Gratitude for sustaining vote

Thank you, brethren, for the effort you have made to come to this great worldwide priesthood meeting. Wherever you may be, we thank you and commend you for your faith, for your loyalty to this the work of the Lord, for the efforts you make in your daily living to be worthy of the sacred priesthood which you bear.

This morning we all participated in a solemn assembly. That is just what the name indicates. It is a gathering of the membership where every individual stands equal with every other in exercising with soberness and in solemnity his or her right to sustain or not to sustain

We remind you brethren that the CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning. Those desiring to attend the broadcast and the Sunday morning session, which follows, must be in their seats by 9:15 A.M. daylight saving time. Daylight saving time begins tomorrow at 2:00 A.M. We encourage you—in fact we admonish you—to move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire this evening, or you'll enjoy only the second half of the conference in the morning.

We express appreciation to the combined institute men's choir from the Logan, Ogden, Salt Lake University, and Orem institutes for the beautiful music this evening.

Following my remarks the choir will conclude by singing "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" I wonder who organized this program to think I was going to stir up conflict! The benediction will then be offered by Elder F. David Stanley of the Seventy.

those who, under the procedures that arise out of the revelations, have been chosen to lead.

The procedure of sustaining is much more than a ritualistic raising of the hand. It is a commitment to uphold, to support, to assist those who have been selected.

Concerning the First Presidency the Lord has said, "Of the Melchizedek Priesthood, three Presiding High Priests, chosen by the body, appointed and ordained to that office, and upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church" (D&C 107:22).

I emphasize those words "upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church."