

Meet Again,"<sup>25</sup> we offer a prayer that the Holy Ghost will accompany our loved ones after we leave them. This hymn is a deeply moving expression of our need for companionship with one another and with the Spirit of God.

Our most common English expression of farewell is the word "good-bye," and this came to us over the years as a contraction for the expression "God be with you." In a day when people recognized our dependence on God more publicly, this wonderful phrase was used at times of departure to express love. It is still a sweet expression invoking the companionship of God during periods of separation. The phrase "good-bye," then, when fully understood, means, "If we can't be together, if we must part, if I can't be with you—then may God be with you."

Tomorrow afternoon, we will say fond good-byes to each other. May God be with each of you, my beloved brothers and sisters. May you give and receive the blessings of righteous companionship. May each of you be one who touches the lives of others for good.

I bear you my witness that God lives, that He loves His children. I know that God has called a prophet in our day, President Gordon B. Hinckley. Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, restored His true Church to bless His children. In His Church there is comfort, joy, and safety in the company of valued companions. Of these truths I bear my witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. Ephesians 2:19.
2. Moroni 6:5.
3. "Message of the First Presidency," in *Deseret News: Weekly Church Edition*, 3 Oct. 1942, 5. Quoted in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 9; or *Ensign*, May 1974, 8. See also Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 90–95; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 67–70.
4. "Each Life That Touches Ours for Good," *Hymns*, no. 293.
5. See John 15:14; D&C 84:63; 93:45.
6. 2 Corinthians 13:1; D&C 6:28.
7. Luke 24:6.
8. D&C 20:53.
9. D&C 1:38.
10. Romans 15:1.
11. In Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 118; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 86.
12. Mark 16:15.
13. Alma 17:2.
14. 2 Nephi 31:19–20.
15. In Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 66; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 47.
16. See Moroni 6:4.
17. Moroni 6:6; see also D&C 20:75.
18. John 14:18.
19. See Alma 5:13; see also verses 12, 14; Mosiah 5:2.
20. In Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 68; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 48.
21. See 2 Nephi 2:11.
22. See Luke 15:13.
23. See Mosiah 27:11.
24. See Mosiah 27:10.
25. *Hymns*, no. 152.

## Elder Richard G. Scott

### Each member can be a missionary

There are few things in life that bring as much joy as the joy that comes from assisting another to improve his or her life. That joy is increased when those

efforts help someone understand the teachings of the Savior and that person decides to obey them, is converted, and joins His Church. There follows great happiness as that new convert is strengthened during the transition to a new life,

is solidly grounded in truth, and obtains all of the ordinances of the temple with the promise of all the blessings of eternal life. President McKay showed us how to obtain such joy with his profound clarification of our responsibility to share the gospel: "Every member a missionary."<sup>1</sup> I know many more would follow that charge were they to realize that there are many different ways to fulfill that responsibility. I will describe some of them. But first, why has each of us been asked to be a missionary?

The Savior emphasized the vital importance of sharing the gospel when He said to His disciples: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that *believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*"<sup>2</sup> He charged His servants to "seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to *build up the kingdom of God.*"<sup>3</sup>

Lehi taught his son Jacob:

"Redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah. . . .

" . . . He offereth himself a sacrifice for sin . . . unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.

"*Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah.*"<sup>4</sup>

Joseph Smith understood the charge of God to share truth with the world. During the most difficult times of his life, he sent forth his loyal supporters to proclaim the gospel when they were urgently needed to support him. In the midst of the trial and deprivation of Liberty Jail he said:

"For there are many yet on the earth . . . who are blinded by the subtle craftiness of men, . . . who are only kept from

the truth because they know not where to find it. . . .

"Therefore, . . . let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed."<sup>5</sup>

### Steps to enduring conversion

How seriously have you personally taken the Lord's charge to share His gospel? It is a lifelong responsibility. It is to be addressed differently according to the various seasons of your life. Not everyone can be a full-time missionary. If you can, do it. If not, seek other ways to serve that meet your present circumstances.

As you ponder how to serve, consider where you can best participate in the steps that must unfold for a family or an individual to receive enduring conversion and full gospel blessings. First, the family or individual needs to be identified and prepared to receive the gospel. There follows a *doctrinal conversion*—that is, an understanding of new doctrines and prayer for confirmation of their truthfulness. As the teachings are practiced and the commandments lived, a testimony is gained, and conversion and baptism result. This effort is best performed by full-time missionaries working with stake missionaries, supported by caring members. They systematically present doctrinal principles and are carefully trained to teach and testify of these truths.

Simultaneously with doctrinal conversion there must be a *social transition*. Friends, habits, customs, and traditions not in harmony with the life of a Latter-day Saint are abandoned, replaced by new friends and activities that support a new life. Of the two important changes that must occur in a convert's life—the gaining of a testimony, or doctrinal conversion, and learning how to live as a Latter-day Saint, or the social transi-

tion—the latter is the most difficult to achieve. It is best accomplished with the love and support of members. Your worthy example and caring support can lead them through each step required to learn to live as a Latter-day Saint.

This social transition requires careful nurturing and help to teach new patterns of life, to introduce new friends, and to assist the new converts to be obedient and begin to serve in the Church. In his last conference message, as the representative of the Lord, President Hinckley stressed this vital role of members and leaders to help each new convert feel comfortable and be sustained in living the requirements of a new life. He said, "With the ever increasing number of converts, we must make an increasingly substantial effort to assist them as they find their way."<sup>6</sup>

### Three categories of service

As you ponder and pray about how you can serve as a member missionary, consider three categories of service available to you and determine which best meets your current circumstances. I will review each category briefly.

#### Serving without a formal call

As you prayerfully seek and cultivate missionary opportunities in your daily activities, you will find many ways to serve. They include helping to find, convert, and retain new members. The stake or full-time missionaries can teach you how to do that.

You can help the full-time and stake missionaries bring new investigators to church and make them feel comfortable. Let them know that they have a new friend. Strengthen that friendship by inviting them to your home or to Church activities with you. You can support them in obeying the commandments. Such valuable missionary service is not

difficult because it can be carried out in the normal routine of your daily life.

There are other ways you may not think of as missionary service. For example, a young mother can teach each growing son to prepare to be a missionary to preach the gospel and to share his testimony of truth. As mother and father cultivate that thought throughout his growing years, he will be a missionary. That is excellent missionary service.

You may choose to identify your ancestors and arrange for the ordinance work for them to be done in the temples, or if near a temple, have the blessing of performing those ordinances vicariously yourself. President Kimball said:

"Missionary work is not limited to proclaiming the gospel to . . . people now living on the earth. [It] is also continuing beyond the veil among [those] who have died either without hearing the gospel or without accepting it while they lived on the earth. Our great part . . . is to perform on this earth the ordinances required for those who accept the gospel over there. . . . I hope to see us dissolve the artificial boundary line . . . between missionary work and temple and genealogical work, because it is the same great redemptive work!"<sup>7</sup>

You in the United States and Canada can use our television and radio messages to generate potential interest in a family member, neighbor, friend, or acquaintance to learn more of the gospel. Simply ask if they have seen the Church messages. The family messages are a valuable resource to strengthen families. Our television messages with free offerings of instructive videocassettes, a copy of the Book of Mormon or Bible have prompted many to seek solutions to life's problems. Invite those who have heard these messages to a family home evening, a Church activity or meeting. Then introduce them to the missionaries.

Start today to find excitement and joy as you seek to find the missionary opportunities around you.

### **Serving a part-time mission**

Part-time missionary calls are for 4 to 30 hours a week while living at home. They include traditional service such as a stake missionary or a ward mission leader. There are also a wide variety of other part-time service opportunities in almost every branch of Church activity, such as the temple, family history, welfare, education, and public affairs. If you have a particular talent to share, contact your bishop. There will almost certainly be a need for your skills.

### **Serving a full-time mission**

President Hinckley extends the call for missions of 40 hours or more a week at home or elsewhere in the world. If you are a physically able, emotionally stable young man, pray about the opportunity and responsibility you have to the Lord to prepare yourself to be a full-time missionary. That includes understanding the scriptures, being obedient, keeping yourself clean, pure, and worthy to be endowed in the temple. When of age, accept a call by the President of the Church to serve for two years as an emissary of the Lord. I encourage you with every capacity that I have to pray about a full-time mission for the fulfillment it will bring to your life as you bless others to find the truth and receive the ordinances of salvation. Everything that I cherish in life today began to mature from my sacred experience as a full-time missionary.

There is an urgent need in the Church today for missionary couples, not to go first-contacting or teaching the discussions, unless you want to do so, but for meaningful missionary service in all of the activities of the Church throughout the world. There is far greater flexibility in the service opportunities of

couples than for single elders or sisters. In consultation with your bishop, you can indicate your own preferences for missionary service. We must train a growing number of fathers and mothers and priesthood and auxiliary leaders throughout the world who want very much to serve the Lord but simply do not know how to do it. You can help them as a leadership missionary couple. You can serve in temples, family history, educational and medical activities, welfare service projects, public affairs, and visitors' centers. There is a need for almost every discipline of life. There is undoubtedly a need somewhere in the world for your unique capacities and talents. Often special health considerations can be accommodated. The feelings you express to the bishop are communicated in a recommendation for a call. The President of the Church has made it possible for those calls to be inspired of the Lord, taking into consideration your special needs and desires as a couple. Stake presidents and bishops are kept aware of current full-time missionary needs. If you cannot find anyone locally to identify potential missionary opportunities, write to the Missionary Department at headquarters. We will send you a list of the current needs. I encourage each couple with available time to prayerfully consider a full-time mission. You will be greatly blessed for the courage to accept a call. Your children and grandchildren will be positively influenced for good as witnessed by many couples who have honorably served, some on their third, fourth, or fifth mission.

### **Participate in some way**

Don't wait to be asked. I invite each of you to come forth to participate some way in the glorious and varied opportunities for missionary service and in strengthening and sustaining those who embrace the gospel as new members.

You stake presidents and bishops have the privilege to prayerfully seek guidance to identify and call individuals to prepare to serve a full-time or part-time mission. While some will approach you, a greater number can be identified and encouraged to submit papers for a call through your prayerful efforts. Church service has always been based on an inspired call rather than volunteerism.

### The Lord has asked us to do this work

Why every member a missionary? Because that is what the Lord has asked us to do. Prayerfully consider it. There are those who would forever call you the angel of understanding and compassion that led them to the truth, fortified them in their faith, or helped them learn to serve the Lord. Do it. Talk to your bishop. Let him help you see the possibilities for joy unbounded in some aspect of "every member a missionary." You will find a renewal of life, excitement, and a deep feeling of personal fulfillment from having the courage to accept a call as a missionary. I know that the Savior will help you proclaim His word. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### NOTES

1. In Conference Report, Apr. 1959, 121–22.
2. Mark 16:15–16; italics added.
3. Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38; italics added; see also D&C 84:106; 108:7.
4. 2 Nephi 2:6–8; italics added; see also Alma 29:2.

5. D&C 123:12, 17.
6. In Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 66; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 47.
7. "The Things of Eternity—Stand We in Jeopardy?" *Ensign*, Jan. 1977, 3.

### President Monson

We have just listened to Elders Joseph B. Wirthlin and Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M. mountain daylight time.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 mountain daylight time. The Sunday morning session of conference will begin immediately thereafter.

We express gratitude to the lovely Farmington family choir—families seem to be an expression of a theme in these sessions—for the beautiful music we have heard this afternoon.

The choir will now sing in closing "How Will They Know?" Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy.

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The choir sang "How Will They Know?"

The benediction was offered by Elder Lynn G. Robbins.

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## GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 167th Semiannual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 4, 1997. President Gordon B. Hinckley conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir—Mormon Youth Chorus combined men. Craig Jessop and Robert Bowden directed the choir, and Clay Christiansen was the organist.