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# TAKING THE GREAT COMMISSION SERIOUSLY

*Because of the spread of Mormonism throughout the earth, it is inevitable that other religious groups, particularly Christian denominations, should be concerned and even angry about Latter-day Saint growth. They ask, Is it even proper to proselytize? Why do Mormon missionaries approach Christians? Why do they not direct their efforts to the unconverted, the heathen, the lost souls who have never accepted Christ? This chapter provides a brief overview of the aims and purposes of the missionary thrust of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and why we feel compelled to present the message of the Restoration to all who will hear.*

JESUS Christ is our Redeemer, the only one to save us from death and sin. Because of his selfless sacrifice, the way is opened for each of us to return to God our Father. With him, we are everything; without him, we are nothing. Because our doctrine derives all hope and meaning from Christ, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints take seriously the Savior's counsel "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). By acknowledging our love for and dependence on Christ, we hear the Savior's call just as Peter did: "Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep" (John 21:15–17).

This chapter will discuss the Latter-day Saint response to the Great Commission, the Lord's commandment to "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" (Matthew 28:19–20;



*"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" (Matthew 28:19–20). (Harry Anderson, Go Ye Therefore, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.)*

see also Mark 16:15–16). In addition to references from the Bible and Latter-day Saint scripture, my source material comes mainly from general conference addresses by General Authorities of the Church; these reflect official Church teachings and current emphasis.

Latter-day Saints generally use the term *missionary work* to describe their response to the Great Commission. To describe our invitation to others to receive Christ, we prefer the verb *proselyte* rather than *evangelize* or *witness*. Proselyting for Latter-day Saints does not imply coercive tactics but instead a straightforward, sincere witness of Christ and an invitation to be baptized into the Church. Likewise, we respect others' efforts to proselyte according to their own beliefs (see Articles of Faith 1:11). Furthermore, Latter-day Saints are philosophically in agreement with evangelical Ed Stetzer, the president of LifeWay Christian Research, when he observes, "Christianity . . . has been a missionary movement since its beginning. . . . Sharing with others the way to [truth] is not oppression but in fact an active demonstration of love and concern."<sup>1</sup> The Latter-day Saint desire to proselyte grows

out of our love for all God's children and our wish to share beliefs that have brought us happiness and hope.

This chapter is divided into five sections: (1) the doctrinal foundation and historical precedents for our missionary zeal, (2) a profile of those called to witness for the Lord and places where missionaries are called to labor, (3) ways missionaries are prepared, (4) content of our missionary message, and (5) a personal reaction to the call to serve.

### *Doctrinal Foundation and Historical Precedents*

The Book of Mormon teaches that all the holy prophets from the beginning taught of Christ and his gospel.<sup>2</sup> For Latter-day Saints, a key example of such a prophet is Abraham, who covenanted with God that his gospel would be preached to all the world through the seed of Abraham. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently observed, "The process of becoming a missionary is directly related to understanding who we are as the seed of Abraham."<sup>3</sup> Knowing that the Abrahamic covenant involved Abraham's faithful descendants and that we are among those descendants is foundational for understanding the Church's enthusiasm for missionary work.

*Abrahamic covenant.* God promised Abraham that his descendants would become "a great nation," be given a land "for an everlasting possession," and be made up of "as many as receive this Gospel" (Abraham 2:9, 6, 10). Collectively and over numerous generations, Abraham's seed (both literal and spiritual) would be empowered by God to bless "all the families of the earth" by "bear[ing] this ministry and Priesthood to all nations," "bless[ing] them that bless thee, and curs[ing] them that curse thee" (otherwise identified as sealing power, which includes the authority to seal families to God), and thereby invite all to receive "the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal" (Abraham 2:9, 11; see also Genesis 12:2–3).

Additional references to the covenant and reminders that it retains relevance long after Abraham's era appear often throughout scripture. For example, Mary recognized the covenant's importance to

her son's mission in her prophetic witness of the Messiah even before he was born (see Luke 1:54–55), and Zacharias related the covenant to John the Baptist's mission to prepare the way for Jesus Christ in his inspired blessing over his newborn son (see vv. 70–75). Shortly after his resurrection and during his visit to the Americas, the Savior told the Nephites that they were children of Abraham and under the same covenant since it was not yet fulfilled (see 3 Nephi 20:25–28; 8:8). Furthermore, the Book of Mormon clarifies that the Abrahamic covenant prioritizes the importance of a spiritual gathering over a geographical gathering: first, to gather Abraham's seed to a "knowledge of their Redeemer," and second, to gather them "to the lands of their inheritance" (2 Nephi 6:11; see also 1 Nephi 22:11–12, 25; 3 Nephi 5:23–26; 16:4–5).

Latter-day Saints view the Book of Mormon as an important element of the "marvelous work" of restoration that God orchestrated through Joseph Smith to continue his great promise to Abraham (1 Nephi 22:8–11; see also 3 Nephi 21:7). The Book of Mormon's title page (presumably written by Moroni, the concluding author and abridger of the plates) summarizes the record with the book's three-fold purpose, further underscoring the connection between the Book of Mormon and the covenant to gather Abraham's children to Christ:

- "To show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers"
- "That they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever"
- "The convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations."

Looking through the lens of the Abrahamic covenant and as recipients of the Book of Mormon, Latter-day Saints see themselves among the "children of the covenant" (3 Nephi 20:26) and likewise under sacred duty to "bear this ministry and Priesthood unto

all nations.” Furthermore, the eventual promise of the covenant reminds us that our goal is not “merely to bring people into the church” or “persuade people to live better lives.” Elders Dallin H. Oaks and Lance B. Wickman explained how our purpose offers something more: “The purpose of witnessing and missionary work by representatives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to offer all of the children of God the opportunity to learn the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ as restored in these latter days and to give all the children of God the privilege of receiving the ordinances of salvation. By this means the door is opened for all the living and the dead to receive ‘eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God’ (D&C 14:7).”<sup>4</sup> References to “the ordinances of salvation . . . for all the living and the dead” point to the temple and the need for keys, or divine authority to rightfully preside over these ordinances.

Days after the first temple was dedicated to the Lord in April 1836, three heavenly messengers appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to restore priesthood keys associated with the Abrahamic covenant. First, “Moses appeared before us,” Joseph Smith explained, “and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth” (D&C 110:11). Next, “Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed” (v. 12). Finally, Elijah the prophet appeared, stating that his coming fulfilled Malachi’s prophecy that Elijah would “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse” (v. 15).

Collectively, these restored keys allowed continued fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to Abraham in the current day: (1) families could hear the gospel of Jesus Christ preached in their own language and receive the invitation to be baptized; (2) when they come to a knowledge of Christ and his gospel and are baptized, families could be sealed together forever in a sacred temple dedicated for that purpose;

and (3) families thus united could then be sealed to their progenitors in a continuous chain back to Adam and Eve.

The ultimate purpose for the gathering is therefore not baptism but the blessings of the temple, where the ordinances of salvation can be received. “What was the object of gathering . . . the people of God in any age of the world?” Joseph Smith taught, “The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation.”<sup>5</sup>

The Abrahamic covenant is as vibrant in its promises and responsibilities to Church members as ever in the past, as reflected by Elder Bednar’s recent reminder to the men of the Church:

You and I, today and always, are to bless all peoples in all the nations of the earth. You and I, today and always, are to bear witness of Jesus Christ and declare the message of the Restoration. You and I, today and always, are to invite all to receive the ordinances of salvation. Proclaiming the gospel is not a part-time priesthood obligation. It is not simply an activity in which we engage for a limited time or an assignment we must complete as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Rather, missionary work is a manifestation of our spiritual identity and heritage. We were foreordained in the premortal existence and born into mortality to fulfill the covenant and promise God made to Abraham. We are here upon the earth at this time to magnify the priesthood and to preach the gospel. That is who we are, and that is why we are here—today and always.<sup>6</sup>

When seen through the lens of the Abrahamic covenant, the Savior’s directive to “be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8) is apparent in numerous scriptural examples.

Before and after the Savior's mortal ministry, faithful disciples preached the gospel of Christ to believers and unbelievers alike.

*Scriptural examples.* At the Last Supper, as recorded in the New Testament, the Lord commissioned Peter, "when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). The Apostle Peter later learned through revelation that the Lord's invitation comprehended literally every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Peter exclaimed, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34–35).

The Apostle Paul received the invitation to spread the gospel of Christ as a divine imperative, even though he entered the gospel fold after the Savior's directive: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16). The New Testament preserves a sampling of Paul's lifelong missionary efforts to Jew and Gentile, all while his focus remained steadfastly on Christ.

The Great Commission is taught throughout the Book of Mormon era, thereby indicating its importance even before the Savior's mortal ministry. The commission is not restricted to prophets and leaders; the commission's relevance to everyone who accepts baptism is demonstrated by the baptismal covenant "to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death" (Mosiah 18:9).

Additionally, the Book of Mormon provides examples of missionaries who took the gospel message to both the God-fearing and the wicked. Once they were converted, individuals such as Enos, Alma, and Ammon received a divine desire to preach the gospel to everyone. Enos prayed at length for a remission of his sins. When at last he heard the good news that his sins were forgiven and his "guilt was swept away," he "began to feel a desire for the welfare" of his own people, the Nephites who already believed in Christ, and then for his enemies, the Lamanites who denied the existence of God. That desire led Enos to

go “among the people” and testify of Christ and “[stir] them up continually to keep them in the fear of the Lord” (Enos 1:6, 9, 19, 23).

Alma is first introduced in the Book of Mormon as “a very wicked and an idolatrous man” (Mosiah 27:8) who was born again and consequently was desirous to preach the gospel everywhere. Relinquishing the highest political office among the Nephites, Alma embarked on a five-year mission that took him to every Nephite city, among those whose “hearts were hardened” against the word of God as well as those who were humble, diligent, and obedient before God (Mosiah 26:3; see also Alma 4–16).

After preaching of Christ for fourteen years among the unbelieving Lamanites and seeing miraculous numbers converted, Ammon exclaimed, “Now . . . we see that God is mindful of every people, whatsoever land they may be in; yea, he numbereth his people, and his bowels of mercy are over all the earth. Now this is my joy, and my great thanksgiving; yea, and I will give thanks unto my God forever” (Alma 26:37).

Similarly, revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants reiterate the Great Commission’s importance for today’s Latter-day Saints:

- “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 trump, declaring my word like unto angels of God” (D&C 42:6).
- “Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come. . . . Go ye into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature” (D&C 68:6, 8).
- “Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor” (D&C 88:81).



- “For it shall come to pass in that day, that every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language, through those who are ordained unto this power, by the administration of the Comforter, shed forth upon them for the revelation of Jesus Christ” (D&C 90:11).

Latter-day Saints believe that the Lord has always commanded his followers to preach his gospel, wherever and whenever they have lived. The sanctity of this belief is evident from the time that Joseph Smith organized the Church.

*Historical precedents in the Church.* Manifestations that the Church recognized the importance of taking the gospel to all the world are seen from its inception. In April 1830, Samuel Smith carried copies of the newly published Book of Mormon to neighboring towns of upstate New York; additional missionaries were called later that year to preach in the western frontier. Throughout the following years, despite threats of poverty, persecution, and serious illness, missionaries took the message of the restored gospel to other states in the country and into Canada.

In April 1837, the Prophet Joseph Smith admonished, “After all that has been said, the greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel,”<sup>7</sup> and he commenced sending missionaries overseas to the British Isles. From 1839 to 1841, nine members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were in Great Britain expanding the overseas mission and quickly building a membership that exceeded the number of Latter-day Saints in America.<sup>8</sup>

By 1851, after challenges surrounding the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, expulsion from Nauvoo, and reestablishing the place of gathering in the Salt Lake Valley, the number of missionaries multiplied and their fields of labor increased to include French Polynesia, Wales, California, Scandinavia, France, Italy, Switzerland, Hawaii, Australia, and India. Missionaries heading east often passed new converts crossing the plains to gather with the Saints in the West.

No opposition or deprivation thwarted the Saints' commitment to preach the gospel wherever they could go.

Through the intervening decades, the numbers of missionaries and mission fields have continually grown, accelerating during years when the United States was not at war and when political conditions changed to allow Latter-day Saint proselyting in previously forbidden nations. Responding to the commission to minister among believers and unbelievers alike, missions have also increased in areas with a preponderance of Latter-day Saints. For example, the state of Utah currently contains six of the 344 worldwide missions and consistently reports among the highest rates for baptism and retention.<sup>9</sup>

Prophets and apostles from the time of Joseph Smith to Thomas S. Monson have constantly reminded the Saints to proclaim the gospel to all the world. In a charge that echoes the Savior's reminder "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8), Elder George Albert Smith (who would become Church President from 1945 to 1951) taught: "Upon us, as elders of the Church, has been laid the obligation to go into all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature. We have received a wonderful gift, but with that gift comes a great responsibility. We have been blessed of the Lord with a knowledge beyond our fellows, and with that knowledge comes the requirement that we divide it with His children wherever they may be."<sup>10</sup>

More recently, in February 1999, President Gordon B. Hinckley convened a Churchwide satellite broadcast to discuss his concern for the missionary effort. He charged members of the Church to remember: "Great is our work, tremendous is our responsibility in helping to find those to teach. The Lord has laid upon us a mandate to teach the gospel to every creature. This will take the very best efforts of every [one of us]. . . . God bless you, my beloved brethren and sisters, in meeting the tremendous challenge that is ours. We cannot evade it. We cannot escape it. We must face up to it. The opportunities are tremendous. We are equal to it, and the Lord will bless us as we try."<sup>11</sup>

Every semiannual general conference of the Church includes entire addresses as well as frequent indirect references to our continued commitment to the Great Commission. For instance, three of the thirty discourses given by General Authorities during the April 2006 sessions of conference were devoted specifically to encouraging missionary work,<sup>12</sup> as were four of the thirty-three discourses in the October 2005 conference<sup>13</sup> and four of the thirty discourses in April 2005.<sup>14</sup> In his opening remarks at the October 2010 general conference, President Thomas S. Monson (current President of the Church) addressed what he called “a matter close to my heart . . . missionary work.” He reminded young women and mature members of the Church of their opportunities to serve missions. To the young men of the Church, however, he delivered a reminder of their “duty,” saying, “I repeat what prophets have long taught—that every worthy, able young man should prepare to serve a mission.”<sup>15</sup>

Latter-day Saints see clear connections between the Church’s practices and teachings surrounding missionary work and biblical instructions to preach the gospel. Modern revelation and consistent commitment to missionary work reaffirms and amplifies our appreciation for the Abrahamic covenant’s directives and promises.

### *Profile of an LDS Missionary*

The ages of missionaries and length of their service have varied during the history of the Church. Today, full-time missionaries come from one of three general categories of members. The great majority are unmarried men between the ages of nineteen and twenty-six who serve for two years. Throughout their formative years, young men are reminded of their particular obligation in this regard, as Church leaders recently reminded all bishops in the Church: “All young men who are worthy and who are physically and emotionally able should prepare to serve in this most important work.”<sup>16</sup>

Single women who are at least twenty-one years old are also invited to serve as full-time missionaries for eighteen months, if



*Hermana Nielsen (left) with Dalia (center), a young teenage mother of two (pictured with her newborn) who wants a better life, and Hermana Clark in the Mesa Arizona Mission. Dalia wants to be a mother that God would be proud of. (Courtesy of Camille Fronk Olson.)*

they elect to serve. A significant number of the Church's fifty-two thousand missionaries are single young women. President Hinckley explained: "We need some young women [to serve as missionaries]. They perform a remarkable work. They can get in homes where the elders cannot. But it should be kept in mind that young sisters are not under obligation to go on missions. They should not feel that they have a duty comparable to that of young men, but some will wish to go."<sup>17</sup>

Retired couples and single women over forty years old, who serve from six to eighteen months, represent the third and smallest group of full-time missionaries of the Church. In conjunction with proselyting activities, these senior missionaries may receive assignments for visitors' centers, humanitarian efforts, health and welfare, family history, public communications, education, or other labor needed in a particular area. Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles observed the value of retired members' involvement in the

Great Commission: “There are two unique times in our lives when we can truly live the law of consecration and devote ourselves in full-time service to the Lord. One is as a young man or woman serving a full-time mission. The other is the unique time you are given after having fulfilled the requirements of earning a living . . . when you can draw upon the rich experiences of a lifetime, go out as a couple, and consecrate yourselves fully as servants of the Lord.”<sup>18</sup>

*What are the qualifications to serve.* Full-time missionary service requires a large sacrifice of time and talent at a time when young adults are often self-absorbed with dating, personal possessions, schooling, and planning for a career, and when retired men and women are dreaming of leisure activities and involvement with grandchildren. A missionary is expected to sacrifice in order to adhere to the highest standards of conduct and to a distinct code of dress that exceeds the standard modesty code requested of other Church members.

Furthermore, younger missionaries are given strict rules of conduct to help them remain focused and close to the Spirit. Only authorized reading material, music, and recreational activities are allowed. They are required to be with their companions at all times, forbidden any intimate association with others, and charged to protect each other from physical and spiritual danger. Every day they arise at 6:30 a.m. and are in bed by 10:30 p.m. They receive instruction concerning customs, culture, laws, and religious practices of the people where they serve to help them know how to show proper respect and avoid offense.<sup>19</sup> While immersing themselves among populations in metropolitan centers and rural villages around the world, they are set apart “from sin, apart from the carnal; apart from everything which is crude, low, vicious, cheap, or vulgar; *set apart* from the world to a higher plane of thought and activity.”<sup>20</sup>

A plea for better-prepared missionaries was issued in the October 2002 General Conference. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that “we are raising the bar”

for those who will serve and requiring greater preparation before embarking on a full-time mission:

What we need now is the greatest generation of missionaries in the history of the Church. . . . We need vibrant, thinking, passionate missionaries who know how to listen to and respond to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. This isn't a time for spiritual weaklings. We cannot send you on a mission to be reactivated, reformed, or to receive a testimony. . . . We need you to be filled with "faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God" (D&C 4:5). . . . Resolve to avoid pornography as you would avoid the most insidious disease. . . . Resolve to completely abstain from tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs. Resolve to be honest. Resolve to be good citizens and to abide by the laws of the land in which you live. Resolve that from this night forward you will never defile your body or use language that is vulgar and unbecoming to a bearer of the priesthood.

And that is not all we expect of you, my young brethren. We expect you to have an understanding and a solid testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. We expect you to work hard. We expect you to be covenant makers and covenant keepers. We expect you to be missionaries to match our glorious message.<sup>21</sup>

With no economic incentive or financial compensation, missionaries do not use salesmanship or any form of brainwashing. Elders Oaks and Wickman explained, "The primary restraint on a Mormon's duty to witness is his or her profound respect for moral agency—the right of every soul to choose what he or she will believe and practice."<sup>22</sup> Additionally, missionaries are not schooled in detailed history of their Church, points of tension with other religious beliefs, or in-depth biblical or theological studies. They are not expected to have answers

to all the questions they will encounter or to questions specifically formulated to cause them to flounder. They are trained, however, to respond graciously “in mildness and in meekness” when they are badgered (D&C 38:41), “trusting in [the Lord], reviling not against revilers” (D&C 19:30), and avoiding confrontations and debate when preaching the gospel “not in haste, neither in wrath nor with strife” (D&C 60:14). The subsequent success of these “weak and . . . simple” ambassadors for the Lord is further witness of a power beyond their own that accompanies them, giving God the praise rather than the missionary (D&C 1:23; see also 1 Corinthians 1:26–27).

While they will not know every answer or even see it as prudent to answer every question, full-time missionaries are expected to know, believe in, and cherish the foundational doctrines and principles of the restored gospel and have a basic knowledge of at least portions of the scriptures. They need to be acquainted with the influence of the Spirit and be able to recognize his confirmation of truth. “We don’t expect them to be perfect,” Elder Ballard explained, “but they need to be anxious, willing, and committed to serve so they can reach new levels of spirituality as gospel teachers. They need to know the message of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ and teach it with power in their own words under the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>23</sup>

*Where are missionaries sent?* Despite their relative inexperience in preaching or even living on their own, young missionaries are given significant responsibility with frontline participation and immediate leadership duties in unfamiliar areas of the world. Without a clue of where they may be assigned, young men and women complete an application, prepared to accept a call to serve wherever assigned. Some are called to labor in areas where a belief in God has all but disappeared after decades of tyrannical rule. Others find themselves in lands where a state religion has influenced social policy and government for generations. Still others are sent to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to people who know and love the Bible and already accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.

In every one of the nearly 350 missions (as of this writing) organized in over one hundred countries of the world, however, the Church has received official clearance to proselyte. Permission is often granted after sending general Church leaders to introduce themselves to government and religious leaders and explain what our religious beliefs are, what our purpose for proselytizing is, and what our missionaries would do while in their country.

In such settings, Church leaders are often asked why they use their limited missionary force to preach to those who already accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. Responding to a leader of the Orthodox Church in a former Eastern Bloc country who asked that question, Elders Russell M. Nelson and Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles replied, “We preached to believers as well as unbelievers because our message, the restored gospel, makes an important addition to the knowledge, happiness, and peace of all mankind. As a matter of practicality, we preach to believers as well as unbelievers because we cannot tell the difference.”<sup>24</sup>

A fundamental principle within our doctrine assumes the infinite worth of every person who has ever lived or will ever live on this earth.<sup>25</sup> Every individual is recognized as a son or daughter of God, with potential to be divinely changed to incorporate Christlike attributes, or to be born again, if he or she will repent and trust in him.

Because of this concern for the welfare of every soul, Latter-day Saints see temporal assistance as being connected to the charge to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to every land and people. Christ’s example in the parable of the good Samaritan admonishes us to “go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:37). Helping a people address welfare needs—for example, after extreme natural disasters and in long-term impoverished areas—teaches the power of Christ’s gospel through action as well as word. In 2004, President Hinckley summarized recent humanitarian efforts by Church members in this regard: “Where devastating floods have come, where earthquakes have created disaster, where hunger has stalked the land, wherever want has



been created by whatever cause, representatives of the Church have been there. Some 98 million dollars in cash and in-kind assistance have been distributed in the past year, bringing such aid to a total of 643 million dollars in just 18 years.”

This aid is freely given, without conditions of baptism or adherence to LDS beliefs. President Hinckley continued: “In extending help we have not asked whether those affected belong to the Church. For we know that each of earth’s children is a child of God worthy of help in time of need. We have done what we have done largely with the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing. We seek no commendation or thank-yous. It is compensation enough that when we help one of the least of these our Father’s children, we have done it unto Him and His Beloved Son.”<sup>26</sup>

At a time of religious and cultural diversity and rebellion, faithful Nephites practiced the same principle: “In their prosperous circumstances, they did not send away any who were naked, or that were hungry, or that were athirst, or that were sick, or that had not been nourished; and they did not set their hearts on riches; therefore they were liberal to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, whether out of the church or in the church, having no respect to persons as to those who stood in need” (Alma 1:30).

Because the worth of every soul is great, missionaries are sent anywhere they are invited, where local governments will allow, and where anyone is willing to hear the message of the restored gospel. Where they encounter someone who already embraces the Bible and the salvation of Christ, their teachings find an existing foundation where more knowledge can be given. In the early days of Mormonism, Brigham Young taught, “We, the Latter-day Saints, take the liberty of believing more than our Christian brethren. . . . Do we differ from others who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? No, only in believing more; we are one with them as far as they believe in Him.”<sup>27</sup> More recently, President Hinckley told Brigham Young University students: “[We are] not argumentative. We do not debate. We, in

effect, simply say to others, ‘Bring all the good that you have and let us see if we can add to it.’”<sup>28</sup> The Latter-day Saint missionary philosophy does not assume that we have a monopoly on truth but that we have something to offer everyone.

*Why are missionaries sent when they are young?* The wisdom in sending young men and women on missions before they marry, have a family, complete their education, or begin a career is evident in multiple ways. First, young missionaries are blessed spiritually. When they return home and resume these activities, returned missionaries stand on a solid religious foundation of trust in the Lord that can inform and bolster some of their most important decisions. Most missionaries return with confidence in their doctrinal understanding and a significantly higher interest in and ability to continue personal gospel study. After missions, young men and women discover time, interest, and opportunity to research questions they encountered during their missions and have a deeper appreciation for the answers when they find them.

Second, young returned missionaries are strengthened academically and vocationally. The discipline learned and practiced as full-time missionaries often strengthens their renewed educational pursuits. They know better how to manage time, delay gratification, and focus on a goal. In contrast to Christians in general, who show a decrease in religious devotion with increased education, researchers Stan L. Albrecht and Tim B. Heaton found a positive relationship between level of education and various indicators of religiosity among Latter-day Saints. Overall, they found that Latter-day Saints with a college degree had the highest church attendance of any other denomination considered.<sup>29</sup> Returned missionaries make up a significant percentage of college-educated Latter-day Saints who immerse themselves in lifelong scripture and gospel study habits.

In view of a returned missionary’s increased potential to study and learn marketable skills, President Hinckley announced the creation of the Perpetual Education Fund in 2001. Endowed by

generous contributions of Church members all over the world, the fund makes loans available to returned missionaries who would otherwise be unable to pay for an education in their respective countries. When they qualify for employment, they repay the loan with a small amount of interest, which in turn can be used to finance another returned missionary's education. Thousands of young men and women to date have been enabled by this inspired program—and families and Church units where these returned missionaries reside have been strengthened by their continued commitment to the Lord and to their communities.<sup>30</sup>

Third, their age and era of life place young missionaries closest to the largest demographic of those who accept baptism into the Church. Sociologist Rodney Stark recognized the phenomenon that at any given time, the majority of Latter-day Saints will be first-generation members. “Even with a fairly low rate of growth (even well below that maintained by the Mormons in fact), the majority of members of a movement will *always be first-generation converts*. Thus while the stereotypical Mormon is someone born in Utah or Idaho of Mormon ancestors, in reality the average Mormon converted in his or her late teens or early twenties.”<sup>31</sup> Recent statistics of LDS convert baptisms report that “most of those we baptize are children, youth and very young adults. Most of this majority is very young. Children ages 8 to 14 make up 40 percent.”<sup>32</sup> Young missionaries will likely relate with many of the fears, challenges, and interests of those they teach. Often-times friendships endure long after a missionary returns home, assisting in retention of the new member as well as the returned missionary.

Finally, full-time missionaries come home trained for a lifetime of being a witness for the Lord. They return to communities where faith is often weakened and love for the world has increased. They appear as heroes to younger siblings and many of the children and teenagers in their wards. They return with skills, profound faith, love for a people and a land other than their hometowns, and knowledge of the gospel that was missing in their lives before they became

missionaries. Their examples of proclaiming the gospel, resisting the world, and loving those who are not of their faith have great potential to inspire adults and children to deeper commitment to God.

Elder L. Tom Perry acknowledged the power of continued service among returned missionaries, saying, “What we need is a royal army of returned missionaries reenlisted into service. While they [do] not wear the badge of a full-time missionary, they . . . possess the same resolve to bring the light of the gospel to a world struggling to find its way.”<sup>33</sup> Young men and women with full-time missionary experience become enthusiastic ambassadors for the area where they served and inspire a new generation to “go and do likewise.”

*Every member a missionary.* The Apostle Paul wrote the Corinthians Saints, “Ye are our epistle, . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart” (2 Corinthians 3:2–3). The positive influence of everyday Latter-day Saints living the gospel of Jesus Christ is unparalleled in generating interest in the Church. President Hinckley observed, “The most effective tract we will carry will be the goodness of our own lives and example. And as we engage in this service, our lives will improve, for we shall be alert to see that we do not do or say anything which might impede the progress of those we are trying to lead toward the truth.”<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland acknowledged, “Asking every member to be a missionary is not nearly as crucial as asking every member to be a member!”<sup>35</sup>

When we think no one is watching and we instinctively show integrity, kindness, and Christlike love to another, we communicate more than is possible from any discussion with missionaries. Those who have served full-time missions can appreciate this truth. They know the reality of an interested contact who witnesses a local member’s poor behavior or unkind words and then suddenly discontinues associations with the missionaries. When those same missionaries return home and establish social networks in their schools, workplaces, and communities, they have perhaps the finest opportunities

to demonstrate to friends and colleagues how their religion influences their lives.

Elder Ballard's observation of blessings that follow those who serve missions in their youth summarizes the rationale for this practice in the Church: "Those who serve and return home with honor have established a pattern of living and serving that will bless their own lives and the lives of generations to follow. They return better prepared to be strong leaders and teachers in the organizations of the Church. They return better prepared to be righteous fathers and mothers and able to teach their children the gospel. Full-time missionary service is a blessing for those whom the missionaries find and teach as well as for the missionaries themselves."<sup>36</sup>

### *Missionary Preparation and Teaching Focus*

Being a Latter-day Saint in one's childhood and youth is an education in missionary preparation. Sunday classes for all ages use scripture for the primary text and Church doctrine as the focus. While activities and object lessons may be used to illustrate gospel principles, teachers are given strict direction not to camouflage the reality and unmatched power of Jesus Christ and his prophets as taught in scripture and general conferences.

Children learn numerous songs that speak of the great opportunity to be a missionary for the Lord. They know the stories of courageous and faithful missionaries in scripture. They carry their own copies of scripture to Church and learn to locate favorite stories and teachings. Children also have frequent opportunities to give short devotional thoughts to all the other children in the ward.

Youth between the ages of twelve and eighteen regularly deliver five-to-ten minute talks to the entire congregation of ward members on Sundays. Many teens are also given leadership responsibilities for their age-group which often cross over to interaction with children and adults, building many social networks within their church community.

Members of all ages are counseled against exclusivity. They are encouraged to build honest friendships with peers who are not of our faith. Recently, Elder Ballard reminded members that “our neighbors not of our faith are good, honorable people—every bit as good and honorable as we strive to be. . . . Get to know [them] . . . and do so without being pushy and without any ulterior motives. Friendship should never be offered as a means to an end; it can and should be an end unto itself.”<sup>37</sup> Discussions with a friend of another faith over differing perspectives on religion and the purpose of life assist a young man or woman to respond naturally to others when called as a full-time missionary.

Youth also receive continuous invitations to learn and discuss gospel doctrines and stories. In addition to Sunday classes, most Latter-day Saint teenagers can enroll in weekday seminary classes that typically meet each morning before a standard high school schedule begins. Each year teenagers study a different book of scripture (that is, Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants) and explore the meaning and application to their concerns and choices. Students often want to discuss how they could answer some of the questions about their religion that they are hearing from students not of their faith. Moreover, they frequently invite some of those friends to attend seminary classes with them.

In a more focused activity, older teens may have an opportunity to be a real missionary for an evening. Assigned to be the temporary companion of a full-time missionary assigned to the area where the teen lives, a young man or woman dresses like a missionary, accompanies the missionary to appointments, and participates in gospel discussions.

Collectively, these experiences prepare youth to accept a challenge that Elder Bednar issued to “increase in your desire to serve God, and . . . begin to think as missionaries think, to read what missionaries read, to pray as missionaries pray, and to feel what missionaries feel. You can avoid the worldly influences that cause the Holy

Ghost to withdraw, and you can grow in confidence in recognizing and responding to spiritual promptings.”<sup>38</sup>

By the time a young man or woman departs for a full-time mission, he or she should have received countless opportunities to articulate belief, answer questions about basic beliefs, and find answers to personal questions through scripture study and interaction with caring teachers. Importantly, a young man or young woman who enlists to be a full-time missionary has hopefully recognized a witness from the Spirit that serving a mission is precisely what the Lord wants him or her to do.

*Missionary Training Centers.* Currently, seventeen Missionary Training Centers (MTCs) are in operation in various locations in the world, each adjacent to an LDS temple.<sup>39</sup> Depending on the mission assignment (whether or not learning a foreign language is required), missionaries receive between three and twelve weeks of formal training. MTC instructors are primarily men and women who have recently completed missions in the same area in which their students will soon arrive.

Every week some five to seven hundred new missionaries commence their missions at an MTC. On the day of arrival, each missionary is assigned another new missionary as a companion. Together continually during their MTC training, companions help each other assimilate into the missionary lifestyle and work together as a complementary team. Weekly devotional addresses from General Authorities, physical fitness programs, and temple visits complement a rigorous and intensive language acquisition program, cultural awareness, and gospel study.

While training missionaries to teach the gospel has always been the primary focus of the MTC, the methodology and suggested lesson content have changed often over the years, reflecting the needs and resources of the day. With the introduction of the missionary guide *Preach My Gospel* in October 2004, significant changes have again occurred. Rather than memorizing scripted lessons, missionaries

now develop their own lesson outlines. They practice speaking from their hearts, teaching concepts in their own terms, and following the guiding influence and confirming witness of the Holy Ghost.

The new missionary guide cites a statement of purpose jointly authored by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

Our purpose is to teach the message of the restored gospel in such a way as to allow the Spirit to direct both the missionaries and those being taught. It is essential to learn the concepts of the [lessons], but these should not be taught by rote presentation. The missionary should feel free to use his own words as prompted by the Spirit. He should not give a memorized recitation, but speak from the heart in his own terms. He may depart from the order of the lessons, giving that which he is inspired to do, according to the interest and needs of the investigator. Speaking out of his own conviction and in his own words he should bear testimony of the truth of his teachings.<sup>40</sup>

Early in their preparation in the MTC, missionaries begin to experience the Lord's promise: "Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say; but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall meted unto every man" (D&C 84:85). The training has subsequently become more relevant and meaningful to the missionary.

This missionary guide is available to anyone, LDS member or not, for personal study. No strategies for undermining another's faith are included in the book or in classroom instruction. The overarching "skill" that permeates every aspect of missionary training is following the Holy Spirit.

The guide begins with a clear statement of purpose for every missionary: "Your purpose: Invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ





*Guiding others to the waters of baptism is an integral part of a Latter-day Saint missionaries' purpose to "invite others to come unto Christ." (Courtesy of Camille Fronk Olson.)*

and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end." In thirteen chapters, *Preach My Gospel* gives valuable information to help missionaries succeed in the stated purpose; focus on the central gospel messages they will teach; and interface effectively with local members. More specifically, individual chapters provide guidelines to recognize and understand the Spirit, develop Christlike attributes, study effectively, help people make and keep commitments, and find people to teach. Advice for learning a mission language and time management is also included. Each lesson is supported by numerous scriptural references and occasional statements by living prophets.

### *What Do Missionaries Teach?*

Although the methodology for missionary training has developed over the years, the lesson content has remained largely

unchanged—teachings of consistent doctrines and practices that reinforce our faith in Christ and set us apart from the rest of the Christian world. This continuity and consistency is indicated by comparing an early twentieth-century Church President’s description of the missionary message to what is contained in *Preach My Gospel*. In 1911, President Joseph F. Smith answered the question, “What shall [people] be taught?”

Why, faith in God, in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost, faith in the efficacy of prayer, and in the ordinances and principles of the gospel which Jesus taught; faith in the restoration of this gospel and all its powers, to the Prophet Joseph Smith; faith in the Church which he was instrumental in establishing; faith in the priesthood, as authorized servants of the living God; faith in the revelations received in modern times; faith in the performance of the works required of a Latter-day Saint; faith in the principle of tithing, and in all other requirements, temporal and spiritual, mentioned in the law of God; and, finally, faith to live lives of righteousness before the Lord.<sup>41</sup>

Key concepts for the five lessons that today’s missionaries are teaching echo President Smith’s response. As identified in *Preach My Gospel*, the lessons are entitled (1) The Message of the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, (2) The Plan of Salvation, (3) The Gospel of Jesus Christ, (4) The Commandments, and (5) Laws and Ordinances.

In what could be viewed as a summary of those lessons, the current missionary guide states that our “one message” is that “through a modern prophet, God has restored knowledge about the plan of salvation, which is centered on Christ’s Atonement and fulfilled by living the first principles and ordinances of the gospel. . . . The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ is convincing evidence

that Joseph Smith was a prophet and that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored.”<sup>42</sup>

### *Personal Reaction to the Mission Experience*

My favorable report on missionary work is partially explained by my own experience as a missionary. Although I never desired to be a full-time missionary and was not expected to serve a mission because of my gender, my decision to go has had a profound influence on my life. When I turned twenty-one years old, the invitation to serve provided the earliest crossroads that I had yet encountered where a clear right or wrong choice was not evident.

To learn what God wanted me to do rather than what others advised me to do required sincere prayer and an open heart. The answer was profound for me because it wasn't what I had hoped for, but it communicated that God knows me personally and has a plan for my life. I therefore volunteered to be a missionary for him wherever I was called.

Assigned to the mission headquartered in Toulouse, France, I spent the first two months of my eighteen-month mission at the MTC in Provo, Utah. Though I studied French in high school and college, it wasn't until I was preparing for my mission at the MTC that connections and facility with the language began to occur.

That was the beginning of many miracles during my mission. I soon forgot my shyness, self-consciousness, and awkward communication when I discovered a God-given gift to speak in a new language of deeply held beliefs. People responded by engaging in real conversation with me. Suddenly witnessing of Christ and the restored gospel to people I had never before met seemed natural. These people weren't strangers but fellow children of God who were promised the same joy and eternal blessings that I had.

During my mission, I discovered a scripture that helped me understand how I could find divine support and inner happiness even amid daily episodes of rejection: “And whose 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” (D&C 84:88). My multiple fears were replaced by a confidence and delight in finding people who were willing to hear our witness.

Perhaps most miraculous was the blessing of being witness to the light that the gospel message spread in other people’s lives when they accepted it. To see the “perfect brightness of hope” kindled in the eyes of people who had all but given up reinforced for me the incredible power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ (2 Nephi 31:20). Individuals became new creatures in Christ, families were bounteously blessed, and love for others could not be contained.

While few convert baptisms occurred in my mission during the years I was in France, I met wonderful people who treated us kindly and showed respect for our beliefs. The opportunity to articulate what I know about God, his prophets, and his gospel created a solid religious foundation that has encouraged me ever since. My mission also taught me to recognize the good in those who do not believe as I do. Because of my interaction and friendships with many I met and taught in France and the challenges I faced and surmounted, I returned with a deeper reliance on Jesus Christ and appreciation for his amazing grace. More than I could have imagined before my mission, I now wanted to always be a witness for him.

### *Conclusion*

The Great Commission is not only important to Latter-day Saints; in many ways it defines us. Once we have received a witness through the Spirit that Jesus Christ lives; that his Atonement enables us to say, do, and become all that he desires of us; that he appeared to Joseph Smith and authorized him to restore his Church; and that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ, we cannot refrain from wanting to share this good news with all the world.

Rather than criticizing another's beliefs or working to tear down other churches, we offer the added truths of the restored gospel. We strive to share these truths as much by our everyday actions and genuine respect for others' beliefs as by our direct missionary message. We do not see our success in worldwide missionary work as a challenge to others' evangelizing efforts but a contribution.

With a hand of friendship and the bond of brotherhood and sisterhood, we invite all the families of the earth to enjoy the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, and "by the Holy Ghost . . . know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:5).

"The powerful missionary spirit and the vigorous missionary activity in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints becomes a very significant witness that the true gospel and that the authority are possessed here in the Church," said President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "We accept the responsibility to preach the gospel to every person on earth. And if the question is asked, 'You mean you are out to convert the entire world?' the answer is, 'Yes, we will try to reach every living soul.' Some who measure that challenge quickly say, 'Why, that's impossible! It cannot be done!' To that we simply say, 'Perhaps, but we shall do it anyway.'"<sup>43</sup>

### *Notes*

1. Ed Stetzer, "Proselytizing in a Multi-Faith World: Why Mutual Respect and Tolerance Require Us to Witness for Christ," *Christianity Today*, April 2011, 25.
2. For instance, the Book of Mormon prophet Abinadi taught, "For behold, did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah, and that God should redeem his people? Yea, and even all the prophets who have prophesied ever since the world began—have they not spoken more or less concerning these things? Have they not said that God himself should come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of man, and go forth in mighty power upon the face of the earth? Yea, and have they not said also that he should bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, and that he, himself, should be oppressed and afflicted?" (Mosiah 13:33–35; see also Jacob 7:11; Mosiah 15:11–17; 3 Nephi 20:24).
3. David A. Bednar, "Becoming a Missionary," *Ensign*, November 2005, 46–47.

4. Dallin H. Oaks and Lance B. Wickman, "The Missionary Work of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," in *Sharing the Book: Religious Perspectives on the Rights and Wrongs of Proselytism*, ed. John Witte Jr. and Richard C. Martin (New York: Orbis Books, 1999): 249–50.
5. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 5:423.
6. Bednar, "Becoming a Missionary," 47
7. *History of the Church*, 2:478.
8. See James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, and David J. Whittaker, *Men with a Mission, 1837–1841: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992).
9. See *2006 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Morning News, 2005).
10. George Albert Smith, in Conference Report, April 1922, 53.
11. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," *Ensign*, May 1999, 107–8.
12. See David F. Evans, "Your Mission Will Change Everything," *Ensign*, May 2006, 32–34; M. Russell Ballard, "Creating a Gospel-Sharing Home," *Ensign*, May 2006, 84–87; Richard G. Scott, "Now Is the Time to Serve a Mission!," *Ensign*, May 2006, 87–90.
13. See C. Scott Grow, "The Book of Mormon, the Instrument to Gather Scattered Israel," *Ensign*, November 2005, 33–35; Paul K. Sybrowsky, "If Christ Had My Opportunities . . .," *Ensign*, November 2005, 35–37; Bednar, "Becoming a Missionary," *Ensign*, May 2005, 44–47; Thomas S. Monson, "The Prophet Joseph Smith: Teacher by Example," *Ensign*, November 2005, 67–70.
14. See Richard G. Scott, "The Power of *Preach My Gospel*," *Ensign*, May 2005, 29–31; Robert D. Hales, "Couple Missionaries: Blessings from Sacrifice and Service," *Ensign*, May 2005, 39–42; M. Russell Ballard, "One More," *Ensign*, May 2005, 69–71; L. Tom Perry, "What Seek Ye?," *Ensign*, May 2005, 84–86.
15. Thomas S. Monson, "As We Meet Together Again," *Ensign*, November 2010, 5–6.
16. Gordon B. Hinckley, "To the Bishops of the Church," *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 19, 2004, 27; also cited in *Ensign*, May 2005, 70.
17. Hinckley, "To the Bishops of the Church," 27.
18. Hales, "Couple Missionaries," 27.
19. See directives for missionary conduct in *Missionary Handbook* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006), 7–42.
20. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982) 478; cited in *Preach My Gospel* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 4.
21. M. Russell Ballard, "The Greatest Generation of Missionaries," *Ensign*, November 2002, 47
22. Oaks and Wickman, "Missionary Work," 248.

23. M. Russell Ballard, "The Essential Role of Member Missionary Work," *Ensign*, May 2003, 37.
24. Dallin H. Oaks, "Have You Been Saved?," *Ensign*, May 1998, 57.
25. For example, Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–14 reads, "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God; for, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. . . on conditions of repentance. And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth! Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people."
26. Gordon B. Hinckley, "I Was an Hungered, and Ye Gave Me Meat," *Ensign*, May 2004, 60–61.
27. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–1860), 13:56.
28. Gordon B. Hinckley, "The BYU Experience," BYU devotional address, November 4, 1997; also cited in *Ensign*, May 1998, 57.
29. Stan L. Albrecht and Tim B. Heaton, "Secularization, Higher Education, and Religiosity," in *Latter-day Saint Social Life*, ed. James Duke (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1998), 293–314.
30. For the initial announcement and explanation of the fund, see Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Perpetual Education Fund," *Ensign*, May 2001, 51–53. For periodic updates on recipients and statistics associated with the fund, see "Reaching Down to Lift Another," *Ensign*, November 2001, 52–54, "To Men of the Priesthood," *Ensign*, November 2002, 56–59; "I Was an Hungered, and Ye Gave Me Meat," 61.
31. Rodney Stark, "How New Religions Succeed: A Theoretical Model," in *The Future of New Religious Movements*, ed. David Bromley and Phillip Hammond (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 24; emphasis in original.
32. Dallin H. Oaks, "Retaining Converts Begins with Understanding Difficulties," *Church News*, July 8, 2006, 4.
33. L. Tom Perry, "The Returned Missionary," *Ensign*, November 2001, 77.
34. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," *Ensign*, May 1999, 107.
35. Jeffrey R. Holland, "'Witnesses unto Me,'" *Ensign*, May 2001, 15.
36. Ballard, "One More," 70–71.
37. M. Russell Ballard, "Doctrine of Inclusion," *Ensign*, November 2001, 37.
38. Bednar, "Becoming a Missionary," 46.
39. Missionary Training Centers are located in Provo, Utah; Mexico City, Mexico; Guatemala City, Guatemala; Lima, Peru; Bogotá, Columbia; Santiago, Chile; Buenos Aires, Argentina; São Paulo, Brazil; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Madrid, Spain; Preston, England; Accra, Ghana; Johannesburg, South Africa; Tokyo, Japan; Seoul, Korea; Manila, Philippines; and Hamilton, New Zealand.

40. *Preach My Gospel*, 29–30.
41. Joseph F. Smith, “Baptism,” *Improvement Era*, January 1911, 267–68; also cited by Hinckley, “Find the Lambs,” 106.
42. *Preach My Gospel*, 6–7.
43. Boyd K. Packer, “The Redemption of the Dead,” *Ensign*, November 1975, 97–98.