

Chapter 12

# The Globalization of the Church Educational System

*Elder Joe J. Christensen*

FROM THE VERY beginning of this dispensation, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors have spoken in global terms in a remarkable and amazing way. For example, beginning with the first verse of the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we read: “Hearken ye people from afar; and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together. For verily the voice of the Lord is unto *all* men, and there is *none* to escape; and there is *no* eye that shall not see, *neither* ear that shall not hear, *neither* heart that shall not be penetrated. . . . Wherefore the voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth, that *all* that will hear may hear” (D&C 1:1–2, 11; emphasis added).

In this dispensation, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a charge similar to that which the Savior gave to His Apostles following His Resurrection and just before ascending to heaven: “Go ye into *all* the world, preach the gospel to *every* creature, acting in the authority which I have given you, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (D&C 68:8; emphasis added; see also Matthew 28:19).

Wilford Woodruff, shortly after his conversion, received a glimpse of what the destiny of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was to be when he attended a remarkable testimony meeting in which all of the priesthood brethren, then in Kirtland, met

in a little log schoolhouse room that was fourteen square feet. He heard testimonies for the first time from Oliver Cowdery, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, the Pratt brothers, Orson Hyde, and others. President Woodruff later recalled what the Prophet Joseph said after hearing those testimonies: “When they got through the Prophet said, ‘Brethren I have been very much edified and instructed in your testimonies here tonight, but I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother’s lap. You don’t comprehend it.’ I was rather surprised. He said ‘it is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America it will fill the world.’”<sup>1</sup>

In 1842 the Prophet Joseph reiterated the intention for the work of the Restoration to become globalized when, at the request of Mr. John Wentworth, editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, he wrote a “sketch of the rise, progress, persecution, and faith of the Latter-day Saints.”<sup>2</sup> Toward the end of his letter, he declared: “The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated *every* continent, visited *every* clime, swept *every* country, and sounded in *every* ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.”<sup>3</sup>

## Globalization Facilitated by Technology

Considering the circumstances in Kirtland, Ohio, the following prophecy, received in 1833, is truly remarkable: “And then cometh

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1. Wilford Woodruff, in Conference Report, April 1898, 57.
  2. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 4:535.
  3. Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:540; emphasis added.

the day when the arm of the Lord shall be revealed in power in convincing the nations, the heathen nations, the house of Joseph, of the gospel of their salvation. 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 90:10–11).

One of the factors that makes this such an impressive prophecy is that when the revelation was received, the Prophet Joseph Smith could not travel or communicate from one place to another any faster than the pharaohs in Egypt thousands of years before. To that point in time, and for the preceding thousands of years, the fastest means of travel and communication at a distance was a good rider on a fast horse.

The possibility for the globalization of the Church was facilitated following the Restoration of the gospel, as the spirit of innovation and invention was indeed poured out on so many, and man’s circumstances began to rapidly change. Like an avalanche, developments came such as photography, telegraph, transatlantic cable, telephone, radio, television, jet-propelled aircraft, advances in medicine, satellite communication, computers, the Internet, fiber optics, and on and on.

I am confident that so many of the technological developments came in direct fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy, which some biblical scholars estimate was recorded approximately eight hundred years before the birth of the Savior, when he spoke for the Lord and predicted: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth” (Joel 2:28–30).

Remember when the angel Moroni appeared to the Prophet Joseph in 1823, he quoted Joel’s prophecy and let him know “that

this [prophecy] was not yet fulfilled, but was soon to be” (Joseph Smith—History 1:41). And thus the flood of technological developments occurred after so many centuries in which there was little or no change.

Along this line, I remember hearing President Spencer W. Kimball mention that in his opinion, the scientists who developed jet aircraft were inspired by the Spirit in order to enable the leaders of the Church to travel rapidly from one place to another around the world to supervise the Church and its progress. He added that “of course, we let other people ride them.”

The seriousness with which the Brethren have taken that responsibility to carry the gospel to all the world is evidenced by so many of the early mission calls to elders to leave their families and go into the far reaches of the earth. Among my own family’s ancestors, Robert Owens, a great-great-grandfather, marched with the Mormon Battalion, and, when released from his military obligation in San Diego, California, made his way to the Salt Lake Valley, where he was reunited with his wife and surviving children—his wife, Catherine, had buried three of their children at Winter Quarters. Within just a few years, he experienced one of those calls over the pulpit in the morning session of a general conference in 1852. He was called again to leave his family—to go on a mission to India and Australia, with the assurance that the announced missions were “generally, not to be very long ones; probably from three to seven years will be as long as any man will be absent from his family.”<sup>4</sup> To respond to such calls required great faith because you can’t get much farther away from home than that!

After much challenge and travail, the territory was colonized, and the roots of the Church sunk deep into the soil of America’s western inland empire. Speaking of education, efforts were made from the beginning to establish schools to educate the children of the Church.

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4. Heber C. Kimball, *Deseret News*, September 18, 1852, 1.

## Education Important from the Beginning

As Latter-day Saints we are recipients of a remarkable heritage because that same intense and diligent concern for education of the Church membership has existed from the very beginning, whether the Church was struggling against the elements, sickness, persecution, disappointments, or apostasy. Classrooms were set up in the frontier of Missouri; the poverty of Ohio; the swamps of Illinois; the cold of Winter Quarters; in covered wagons crossing the plains; in log cabins and dugouts; from the center of the Salt Lake Valley to the peripheral colonies throughout Utah; in significant portions of Arizona, Nevada, Idaho, and Wyoming; and even in Mexico and Canada.

In far-flung, less-developed areas of the Church, where basic education was not available, Church-sponsored schools were established and operated until public-sponsored educational opportunities became available. In a few locations, they still exist.

Yes, this is a church that believes in education, and though our tactics, communications media, and economic circumstances vary greatly from those of the young Church of so many years ago, our strategy and goals are precisely the same. Religion, true religion, lies at the heart of our efforts and quest.

It was in 1832 and 1833 that the Prophet Joseph Smith received revelations that are now contained in section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants. In this section, you will note this same emphasis on education with religious roots. In my opinion, no treatment of the Latter-day Saint viewpoint of education would be complete without reference to this significant latter-day scriptural injunction, which applies to all members wherever they are in the world. Remember, we were counseled to “teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom” and also to teach “of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; . . . wars [and] perplexities . . . [and] judgments; . . .

and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms. . . . Teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books. . . . Seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:77, 79, 118).

### The Charge to Internationalize the Seminaries and Institutes of Religion

Geographically, in the 1950s and early 1960s, the bulk of the seminary and institute of religion programs and faculty were located in a rather compact area. Almost any faculty member, serving even in the outer limits, could be reached personally by a supervisor getting into his car and traveling no more than one full day. That situation was to change greatly in the months and years ahead, because the challenge had been much expanded.

After all those early developments that had been made to establish the Church essentially in the intermountain area, California, and, to some degree, throughout the United States, the time came particularly for the international expansion of the religious educational efforts of the Church. As it turned out, that was where I had the personal opportunity to make some contribution to the efforts. I will tell you a little about how that happened.

In 1970, after serving for eight years as director of the Institute of Religion adjacent to the University of Utah, my wife and I received a call to preside over the Mexico City Mission. We leased our home for the anticipated three years, bundled up our six children, and moved to Mexico City. We were deeply immersed in all that goes on in a mission. We had enrolled our children in school, and one afternoon we had been out purchasing school supplies. Upon return to the mission home, I was told that President Harold B. Lee had called and wanted me to return his call. It was our wedding anniversary, September 2. I did not know that the First Presidency made a practice of calling mission presidents to wish them well on their anniversary! I discovered that they do not.

President Lee's first words were, "Joe, are you sitting down?" I assured him I was. He then shared the purpose of his call with this message: "Today, in the Board of Education meeting, it was determined that we would like you to serve as associate commissioner of education to serve with Brother Neal A. Maxwell, the commissioner. Your assignment will be to administer the seminaries and institutes of religion and, in effect, to succeed Brother William E. Berrett, who is retiring. We would like you to return home as soon as we can find a replacement for you. You may call Brother Maxwell for more details."

I do not remember ever being more surprised—even shocked. We had settled into the mission. The children had adjusted, we were enjoying the challenge of the work, and things seemed to be going well. I had anticipated returning to the Church Education System (CES) for employment in some capacity after finishing the mission. I remember facetiously having said to some of my colleagues in CES that if Brother Berrett were to retire while we were gone, "I hope that a new 'pharaoh' doesn't arise who 'knows not Joseph'" (see Exodus 1:8).

Within three weeks, President Eran Call and family had been called, and we were home by the end of September 1970 to begin serving in the new assignment. What an experience lay ahead!

The Board of Education, at that time, consisted of the entire First Presidency, all of the Quorum of the Twelve, the Presiding Bishop, and Sister Belle Spafford, who was serving as the Relief Society general president. Commissioner Maxwell and the rest of us as his associates were asked to study the direction of Church education in all of its facets and make recommendations to the Board of Education and the Board of Trustees for any developments or adjustments.

It seems significant to note that in the November 1970 meeting of the Board of Education, it was determined that the seminaries and institutes of religion, in one form or another, should follow the membership of the Church throughout the world—as soon as was

practical. Through the efforts of assistant administrators Frank D. Day, Dan J. Workman, Frank M. Bradshaw, and, a little later, Bruce M. Lake, and other competent and dedicated staff, we tackled the assignment.

At that time, as many of you would know, the weekday religious educational program at the secondary and college levels was located only in English-speaking areas of the world, such as England, Australia, and New Zealand. The high school seminary program was primarily taught in the released-time format in Church-owned buildings adjacent to high schools throughout the Intermountain West and in some early morning settings—particularly in California. In a few less-populated areas, early experimentation had begun with a home-study seminary format that seemed to be well received by those who would not have any other form of weekday religious educational opportunity.

It was the home-study seminary format that was developed in the late 1960s that made the international movement feasible. The home-study program consisted of a class meeting once a week in a ward or branch, and the students were expected to study their course materials daily in their homes. Efforts were made through content and layout to make the course interesting and student friendly.

Once a month students would be brought together for a meeting on a district or stake basis. For a time this meeting came to be known as Super Saturday. This gathering was usually conducted by the individual CES employee assigned to the area. This system proved to be successful from a cognitive learning standpoint. Many of the students became remarkably proficient in learning and rapidly finding key scriptures, and their skills were tested in what then came to be known as “scripture chase” activities that generated a lot of enthusiasm.

One of the significant side benefits of bringing the young people together on this monthly basis was that many came from widely scattered areas where there were very few youth who were members. This social contact gave them reinforcement, and many long-standing



friendships were established that undoubtedly led to more marriages within the Church than would otherwise have occurred.

At the time the charge was given to have the program follow the membership of the Church throughout the world, there was not one seminary or institute course that existed in any language other than English. The translation, publication, and distribution of home-study course materials presented challenges. There was no international non-English faculty or staff in place or anyone trained in the non-English international areas who was acquainted with the program.

The next nine years proved to be very interesting, challenging, and stimulating. Our early decisions had to deal with where to start first—which languages and in which countries. After studying the international membership populations, we decided that we should begin with the Spanish, Portuguese, and German languages. Brother Robert Arnold was sent to Guatemala, Brother David A. Christensen to Brazil, and Brother Richard Smith to Argentina and Uruguay, with Brother James Christiansen soon to follow in Germany. They were the first CES personnel to be sent to non-English speaking countries.

From the standpoint of moving these educational programs throughout the world within a three-year period, three very important guidelines or objectives were given to these first brethren assigned as CES pioneers in non-English-speaking areas: (1) Develop a positive working relationship with priesthood leaders. (2) Start the home-study seminary program, enrolling interested secondary *and* college-age students. (3) Find and train a person who could provide local native leadership, thus removing the necessity of exporting others from the United States. We took seriously Alma's message from the Book of Mormon: "For behold, the Lord doth grant unto *all* nations, of their *own* nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have; therefore we see that the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which is just and true" (Alma 29:8; emphasis added).

Work in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and several other locations was soon to follow. In short, the goal was to start the program and have it nationalized within three years. Some remarkable local brethren were found and trained. I know of no other Church program that moved toward globalization and nationalization so quickly.

### Student Response to Seminaries and Institutes

The response of the students to seminary and institute was overwhelmingly positive and went far beyond what we expected. We had thought that the efforts would be successful if even one or two hundred students were registered in the first year. What a surprise it was during on-site visits in July of 1971 to find that more than seven hundred students were enrolled in Guatemala, a comparable number in Argentina and Uruguay, and more than nine hundred in Brazil.

At that same time, we made a feasibility study for starting the seminary and institute program in Chile. We held meetings with priesthood and mission leaders and determined that we would recommend to the Board of Education to begin the program at the start of the next school year. Upon return, the report and recommendation were made to President Harold B. Lee. In this case, the proposal to initiate the program was approved, but, surprisingly, his instruction to us was not to wait but to “start the program now.” That counsel proved to be inspired because many political changes were to come in Chile before the beginning of the next school year. President Salvador Allende became the first communist leader to come to power in a democratic election. Starting the program the next school year would have been more difficult.

The students who enrolled around the world seemed especially hungry and thirsty to learn more about the scriptures and the gospel. Among so many, there was a genuine feeling of excitement. Brother Frank D. Day reported that on one of his supervisory visits to Asia, he observed a Book of Mormon class being taught in a rented classroom

in a commercial building in downtown Seoul, Korea. He wondered if any students would come to that location, but at the appointed hour the students poured into the classroom. The teacher mentioned that he had a one-page handout describing the various groups of plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated and that he would distribute it at the end of the class period. A young girl picked up one of the sheets and asked, "Is this for me?" "Yes, it is for you to keep." She literally started to dance for joy at the thought of having something she could keep and study on her own. The teacher, Brother Seo Hee Chul, said, "You can be sure that when she comes to class next week, she will have memorized the detail on the whole page."

We felt confident that if we could get the students into the scriptures, there was a good chance of getting the scriptures and what they teach into the students. Using the students' later willingness to respond to missionary calls as a measuring tool, in many cases that proved to be true.

### A Prophetic Clarion Call for Missionaries from International Areas

Within the next few years, what was once a monolingual seminary and institute program, operating mainly in the western United States, was established in sixty-six countries and in seventeen languages around the world. Obviously, those numbers have continued to expand during the last several years. The teenage and college-age students were studying the scriptures and doctrines of the Restoration just in time to receive the prophetic missionary clarion call which President Kimball made with his characteristic candor and clarity in 1974, in which he called on all of us to lengthen our stride and raise our sights. He emphasized that each country should break with prior tradition and be providing its own missionaries. Here are a few selected quotations from that monumental address:

When I read Church history, I am amazed at the boldness of the early brethren as they went out into the world. . . . As nearly

as 1837 the Twelve were in England fighting Satan, in Tahiti in 1844, Australia in 1851, Iceland 1853, Italy 1850, and also in Switzerland, Germany, Tonga, Turkey, Mexico, Japan, Czechoslovakia, China, Samoa, New Zealand, South America, France, and Hawaii in 1850. . . . Much of this early proselyting was done while the leaders were climbing the Rockies and planting the sod and starting their homes. It is faith and super faith. . . . Today we have 18,600 missionaries. We can send more. Many more! . . . When I ask for more missionaries, I am not asking for more testimony-barren or unworthy missionaries. . . . I am asking for missionaries who have been carefully indoctrinated and trained through the family and the organizations of the Church. . . . I am asking . . . that we train prospective missionaries much better, much earlier, much longer. . . .

The question is frequently asked: Should every young man fill a mission? And the answer has been given by the Lord. It is "Yes." Every young man should fill a mission. . . . There is ample argument that Mexico, with its nine stakes and five missions, should furnish its own missionaries, or the equivalent.

Suppose that South Korea with its 37,000,000 people and its 7,500 members were to take care of its own proselyting needs and thus release to go into North Korea and possibly to Russia the hundreds who now go from the states to Korea.

If Japan could furnish its own 1,000 missionaries and then eventually 10,000 more for Mongolia and China, if Taiwan could furnish its own needed missionaries plus 500 for China and Vietnam and Cambodia, then we would begin to fulfill the vision. Suppose that Hong Kong could furnish its needed missionaries and another 1,000 to go to both of the Chinas; suppose the Philippines could fill its own needs and then provide an additional 1,000 for the limitless islands of southeast Asia; suppose the South Seas and the islands therein and the New Zealanders and the Australians could furnish their own and another several thousand for the numerous islands of south Asia and for Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, Bangladesh, and India. . . . Suppose that Mexico and Central America provided far more missionaries than they needed themselves and the people of South America had reached the point where they could export numerous fine missionaries and

then suppose that the United States and Canada awakened to their real responsibility, sending thousands of missionaries to join them.

President Kimball later quoted President Brigham Young: “This kingdom will continue to increase and to grow, to spread and to prosper more and more. Every time its enemies undertake to overthrow it, it will become more extensive and powerful; instead of decreasing it will continue to increase; it will spread the more, become more wonderful and conspicuous to the nations, until it fills the whole earth.”

And finally, President Kimball said that he envisioned “great numbers qualifying themselves for missionary service within their own country and then finally in other lands until the army of the Lord’s missionaries would cover the earth as the waters cover the mighty deep.”<sup>5</sup>

That powerful prophetic message came in such a timely way because it was just a few years after the young people in these non-English-speaking areas of the Church had begun to study scriptures and doctrines of the gospel in the weekday seminary and institute classes. Their knowledge and increased testimonies helped prepare them to respond positively to the mission calls that would come.

One concrete example of the response of young people to this clarion call came forcibly to my mind in the country of Brazil. When Brother Frank Bradshaw and I made that first on-site visit to Brazil in 1971 to see how the seminaries and institutes were progressing, we were informed that the number of full-time native Brazilians serving missions could be counted on one hand, or at the most, on two. When I returned to Brazil as a Seventy to serve in an Area Presidency in 1989, more than one thousand Brazilians were serving full-time missions. According to information received from the Missionary Department in August 2001, that number increased to over twenty-six

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5. Spencer W. Kimball, “When the World Will Be Converted,” *Ensign*, October 1974, 6–8, 12–14; see also *Deseret News*, January 5, 1854, 2.

hundred, of whom 180 have been exported to other countries. Interestingly, thirty native Brazilian missionaries are serving in Japan. Not only will they accomplish much good there among Portuguese-speaking members, but when they return to Brazil, they will have a much greater entrée into the Japanese population there. Some of you may know that there are more Japanese living in São Paulo than in any other city of the world outside of Japan itself—over one million.

Almost without exception, the young missionaries called in these countries have had prior seminary or institute of religion experience, and the personal growth and development during the mission provides a powerful contribution to leadership in this Church in which the leadership comes from among the members—people like you and me. To illustrate, any elder who follows the prescribed missionary schedule for his two years of service receives more than seven thousand hours of specialized instruction in the following areas: scriptures; basic doctrines of the Church contained in the discussions; how to teach those doctrines; how to relate with leaders, members, and nonmembers; and how to get along with companions. If a person were to attend the three-hour block of meetings every Sunday without fail, it would take him more than forty-six years to accumulate that much specialized instruction.

The whole procedure of having more returned missionaries who are native to their countries makes for a relatively young corps of competent priesthood and sister leaders, who are more committed and better prepared than ever before.

In a personal conversation I had with Elder Bruce R. McConkie, he shared an interesting experience he had after being in Mexico and calling a twenty-five-year-old returned missionary to be a stake president. He wondered how he was going to explain this action to the other General Authorities when he returned to Salt Lake City. Finally, he decided that the best approach would be to mention that he thought it best to call a stake president who was older than the bishops.

## Growth Exceeds Expectations

The globalization of the Church's weekday religious educational programs has not only been amazing to those of us who were directly involved in their implementation in their early years, but apparently, it is also of even greater surprise to Church members generally. In the Sydney B. Sperry Symposium in 2000, Dr. Victor Ludlow presented a paper entitled "The Internationalization of the Church," in which he reported members' estimates in several indicators as to whether they thought that more was occurring outside the United States and Canada than inside. The perception of the members was reasonably accurate with regard to general Church membership, Book of Mormon sales, and number of missions. But there was a wide divergence with regard to seminaries and institutes of religion. Generally, members estimated that perhaps 25 percent of the students would be enrolled outside of the United States and Canada.

Brother Ludlow noted that the international growth of seminaries and institutes "is the biggest surprise to most Latter-day Saints. They assume that the seminary and institute program is primarily a USA-Canada phenomenon. They are aware of the elementary school programs for LDS children in the South Pacific and some other underdeveloped areas, but they have no idea how rapidly the CES seminary and institute enrollment has exploded throughout the world."<sup>6</sup>

To place the growth more fully into perspective, when I was first appointed as a seminary teacher adjacent to Granite High School in 1955, the international enrollment in seminaries and institutes was listed at zero. In the report given in 2001, the total outside the United States and Canada is listed at 340,026—almost 50 percent of the total worldwide enrollment. The seminary and institute program now functions in eighty-two countries, and course materials have been translated into fifty-eight languages! All of this has occurred thanks

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6. Victor L. Ludlow, "The Internationalization of the Church," in *Out of Obscurity: The Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 213.

to the efforts of hundreds of dedicated full-time staff and thousands of faithful and effective volunteers.

Although the numbers of young people enrolled are impressive, I do not wish to convey an impression that there is not much more that needs to be done. Activity ratios need to be increased in every country, and the percentage of eligible young men serving full-time missions should be greatly enlarged.

### Gospel Truths Taught to Meet Challenges of Our Time

Why do we do all of this? Why do we go to all this effort as a Church? Let's face it, as a society, we are immersed in some serious problems. There is a decided weakening of the capacity of institutionalized churches to influence their members at the level of personal conduct. We see ample evidence that so many in public and private circles do not conduct themselves consistently with Judeo-Christian moral and ethical values. Scan any newspaper and you will see what I mean.

There are many in secular education today who believe that truth is relative to time, culture, and circumstance. We hear of "situational ethics," of individuals saying that peculiar circumstances determine the "rightness" or "wrongness" of actions; or that it may be right for you, but it is not right for me; or that it may have been right for me in the past, but it is not right for me today. We see emphasized in so much of our educational efforts today "what is," to the neglect or exclusion of "what ought to be," to such an extent that in many ways our continued existence as a civilized people is threatened. It is true, as someone said, that one of our weaknesses in America and so many parts of the world today is that we "aim at nothing, and hit it with accuracy." So much of what we do educationally in our society generally lacks direction and commitment.

This is not true with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for we hold that there are absolute truths. In other words, true principles are eternal; they never change. They are the same yesterday, today, and forever, in all cultures, in all times, and in all places.



The commandments, the standards, the word of God stand firm and unalterable. Someone has said that the Church is never more than a generation away from extinction, and so it is if truths are not taught effectively. Each generation has the responsibility of teaching these truths effectively to each succeeding generation. In other words, an effective religious educational program must exist. I remember that someone said, "Religion is always the search for the meaning of life. . . . The religious problem is therefore the ultimate issue in education."

I believe that one of the major reasons why many in the world have been so weakened in their moral fiber is because they have not had operating in society an effective religious educational program based on true principles. In the Church, we have that; and furthermore, we are committed. Our leaders are committed. We make no apology to anyone that we plan, organize, and invest resources of time and money. We drive countless miles to haul children to and from early morning seminaries and Church sponsored activities of all kinds. We print manuals by the hundreds of thousands for teachers and parents to use in teaching. We establish seminaries, institutes of religion, schools, colleges, and universities. Why? So that these truths can be taught and learned; so that circumstances can be created in which the Spirit can testify to all our spirits of the eternal truths of the gospel. Without this Spirit, we cannot succeed, and when teachers and students have it, we cannot fail. Our course is charted, and our goals are set.

The entire religious educational effort of the Church centers in Christ today, as it did in Book of Mormon times centuries ago: "For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do. . . . And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins" (2 Nephi 25:23, 26).

## The Church, an Educational Institution

This Church is an educational institution. It is made up of teachers—all of us, wherever we are in the world. As President David O. McKay has said: “We are a Church of teachers. In the Latter-day Saint home the father and mother are required to be teachers of the word—expressly required so by the revelation of the Lord. Every auxiliary organization, every quorum, is made up of a body of men and women or of men who are in the ultimate sense of the word, teachers.”<sup>7</sup>

A basic question is, “For what purpose do we teach?” I am reminded of an impressive experience we had while we served at the Missionary Training Center. On one occasion during a mission presidents’ seminar, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve was addressing the group of newly called mission presidents and their wives. He asked them, “What is your most important responsibility as a mission president?” Hands went up all over the room. He called on one of them, who responded with enthusiasm, “Baptize converts!” The brother agreed that baptizing converts was a very important responsibility, but he went on to say, “But that is not your most important responsibility as a mission president. Your most important responsibility is to facilitate the sealing of families.”

One of the major goals of this Church is to strengthen families and, through effective religious education, to raise up a membership throughout the world worthy of current temple recommends—a people fully qualified to enter into the sacred covenants that are performed in the houses of the Lord that bind on earth that which will be bound in heaven. These temples, through the efforts of President Gordon B. Hinckley and all who serve with him, are becoming available in ever-increasing numbers and in closer proximity to the membership of the Church. If all of us, as members of the Church, could genuinely come to the point in our lives “that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2) and

7. David O. McKay, “That You May Instruct More Perfectly,” *Improvement Era*, August 1956, 557.

honestly qualify for a temple recommend throughout our entire lives, we wouldn't have much to worry about in this life or the life to come.

As mentioned, there is so much more yet to be done, but what an impressive array of developments has occurred within the last several decades to fulfill, at least partially, the prophetic pronouncements that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will eventually become globalized.

The Brethren who lead this Church are committed to the idea that families must be strengthened, and to assist in this process, teenagers and young adults all over the world should have the opportunity afforded to them to enroll in weekday religious education, prepare to fulfill full-time missions, and qualify for temple marriage. Much progress has been made to make this possible, and there is much more that needs to be done.

I testify that our Heavenly Father lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that this is His Church led by living prophets, and that, as we have heard, "The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done."<sup>8</sup>

This Church will go forward with or without you and me. I am confident that it can go forth a lot better with us than without us. May we all work with diligence and in harmony.

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*Elder Joe J. Christensen is an emeritis member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. This essay was presented at "Education, the Church, and Globalization," the International Society's twelfth annual conference, August 2001, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.*

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8. Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:540.