



The IRON ROD



September 1990

President's Message

Recently, I was reading in D&C 1:30 where the Lord said that this Church is, "...the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth." We often talk about it being the only true church and we have a good understanding what this means. However, we must also understand what the Lord meant when He said it is the only "living" church. It is the only living church because it is the only one that is guided by continuous revelation through living prophets.

There is no question that the Lord has raised up President Benson to remind us of the importance of the Book of Mormon in our lives and in our missions. Please review frequently the statements by President Benson on the use of the Book of Mormon on missionary work. We have been asked to study the Book of Mormon for one-half hour each day. This must have top priority. I have found from personal experience that if we study the Book of Mormon each day, we will increase in faith, and if we stop, then fears and doubts will get in our way as missionaries. We must study, pray, understand, and apply the Book of Mormon in our missionary work.

We have been told by the Lord through His prophet how we must do missionary work. We have talked about President Benson's sermon entitled, "The Prophet's Vision of Missionary Work." President Benson set out four areas of emphasis on missionary work. This is what we must focus on in order to do missionary work the Lord's way. I ask that you again read and pray about the "Prophets' Vision of Missionary Work."

In that sermon, the prophet challenges us to develop some Wilford Woodruffs in our missions who could baptize hundreds and thousands. Wilford Woodruff labored as a missionary in Kentucky and I have recently been reading from his missionary journal. He, like other great missionaries, prayed in great faith, worked with unweariness, were completely focussed on their missions, and have been very direct and bold in their testimony of Christ and the restoration.

Great missionaries never hesitate to invite people to be baptized. As they testify and invite people to come to Christ through baptism, the Spirit bears record and the elect receive the testimony and the invitation with joy. This is what the Lord means when He says that we are

"...called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect, for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts." (D&C 29:7)

The Lord has told us that missionaries must "...open [our] mouths and spare not, and [we] shall be laden with sheaves upon [our] backs..." for He will be with us. (D&C 33:9) When He says, "spare not", I suggest that He is saying that we should not hold back but that we deliver our message with courage and boldness. If we will do this, we will be filled with the Spirit and what we shall say will be given to us in that very moment.

In the Mission President's Handbook we are told that a person can be prepared for baptism within a two to three week period. Those who will receive our message are those who have been fore-ordained and prepared in the pre-existence so that when they hear the Gospel in mortality, it strikes a resonant chord in their heart and their spirit responds. When people have felt the spirit, we should immediately set their baptism date so as to teach the discussions within a three week period or less. Often if baptism is delayed, the feelings given of the Spirit may be forgotten, and the adversary quickly gets in the way.

A few days before we came into the mission field, a dear friend of mine gave me a book entitled, "The Challenge" by Alvin R. Dyer, a former member of the First Presidency. He suggested that I teach my missionaries to "Challenge and Testify." I ask that you read "The Challenging and Testifying Missionary" which was passed out at the September Zone Conference and we will discuss it at the October Zone Conference.

This is the Lord's work and He is at the head. If we hope to have success, we must do missionary work in His way. It is non-negotiable. We either learn to do missionary work the Lord's way with great success, or we rely on our own strength and flounder.

Our calling as missionaries in the Kentucky Louisville Mission is to testify of Christ and the Restoration and invite all to come and be baptized unto repentance that they may also be partakers of the fruit of the tree of life. (See Alma 5:62) This must be our greatest missionary desire.