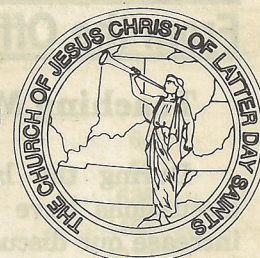


The IRON ROD



OUR CHARGE AS MISSIONARIES IS TO TEACH AND TESTIFY OF CHRIST AND THE RESTORATION AND INVITE ALL TO COME AND BE BAPTIZED UNTO REPENTANCE THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE PARTAKERS OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF LIFE.

President's Message

December, 1991

"The great tragedy in missionary work today is that full-time missionaries are only teaching three or four standard discussions a week in the United States." These are the words of Elder Robert L. Backman of the Seventy and Director Of Missionary Department.

In March we set a mission standard for each companionship to teach a minimum of 10 discussions per week. The number of discussions rose steadily until it peaked in July and has dropped since then to where recently it has been 3 to 4 per week. Not surprisingly the baptism trend has followed the discussion trend.

We must recommit ourselves to our mission standard of teaching a minimum of 10 discussions a week. We must plan to do it and expect to do it every week. We have done it before. We will do it again and more if we pray and labor with all diligence because then the Lord will grant our desires because of our faith. (see Enos 1:12)

We must improve finding through our own efforts. Finding must become something which we are always doing by opening our mouths and spontaneously talking to everyone that we meet. In addition we must also plan and set aside some time each day specifically for finding. Our mission standard is a minimum of 10 effective and planed hours of finding. This is in addition to work with members and on media referrals.

Personal finding will also improve our work with members. Members are far more likely to give us referrals when they see we are finding people ourselves. Members then know that we are great proselyting missionaries and they will give us referrals.

Because this is the Lords work and we are on his errand we must do as he instructs and use the tools he provides. We are to liken the Book of Mormon to ourselves. We have studied the four keys of repentance, faith, good works, and prayer that the sons of Mosiah used to bring thousands of souls to repentance. It is also significant that if these great missionaries had not used the scriptures, they "could not have convinced so many thousands of the Lamanites." (Alma 37:9)

We must follow this pattern and use the Book of Mormon which is the scriptural tool the Lord has designed to gather the elect in our day. Please review regularly as part of your daily study of the Book of Mormon the statements by President Bensen on the use of the Book of Mormon in Missionary work. You have each been given a copy of this as part of your permanent file.

It is easy and also ineffective to simply "give away" a Book of Mormon. The best way to place a Book of Mormon is to teach an effective first discussion. In the other discussions we always follow-up to make sure that our investigators are reading and praying about it.

In the conversion process the effective teaching of the discussions and the proper use of the Book of Mormon go together and cannot be separated. A person must keep the commitment to read and pray about the Book of Mormon to be converted. Therefore, we cannot spend valuable time with those who will not read or pray. If they won't pray with the missionaries we can be confident they are not praying at all. There are many elect people who if properly taught and invited to do so will read and pray and be converted. These are the people that we are looking for. These are the ones the Lord wants in His church.

To be more comfortable in teaching the discussions and more effective in using the Book of Mormon we must master the discussions and become more skillful in presenting them. In our companion studies 1/2 hour should be spent mastering the discussions and 1/2 hour using the missionary guide.

Our definition of mastery is paraphrased from the Instructions for the Discussions (page 1, paragraph 7) and is as follows:

"To memorize the full Discussion content so as to teach simply & boldly with feeling and power not digressing into less basic doctrines. Referring to paragraph headings, if necessary, to prompt memory at a glance."

As we teach more effective discussions the Book of Mormon will become more central in our missionary work. The doctrine taught in the discussions is best understood and believed by our investigators as they get a testimony of the Book of Mormon. Then they will keep their commitments, repent, be baptized and remain faithful.

President Benson has blessed us with a desire to flood the earth with the Book of Mormon and gather out the elect. For missionaries this means teaching more discussions and doing it more effectively by properly using the Book of Mormon. This is how we will have the harvest of souls the Lord expects.

With Love,

President Lunt
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