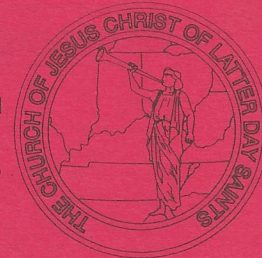


The IRON ROD



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

March, 1992

It's the Spirit that Matters Most

In speaking to missionaries about missionary work President Benson said: "If there is one message I have repeated to my brethren of the Twelve it is that it is the Spirit that counts... I never tire of saying it --- It is the Spirit that matters most."

The Lord teaches us that those who are sent forth to preach the gospel if they do it with the Spirit both the missionary and investigator are edified and true conversion results. If our teaching is not by the Spirit but in some other way then it is not of God. For example, if we teach the gospel by the power of the intellect and even though everything we say is absolutely accurate and done in the most skillful way without the Spirit of God it does not edify and is darkness (see D&C 50:13-26). Regardless of all else our message must be confirmed by the Spirit. Missionaries must always remember the importance in relying totally on the Lord and recognize that left to ourselves we cannot do his work.

To do the Lord's work we must 1) develop the Christ-like attributes taught in the scriptures and by modern prophets and discussed in the Missionary Guide, and 2) develop the skills necessary to be effective with the tools he has provided. President Benson said, "The *Book of Mormon* is the most powerful proselyting tool that we have...all we need to do is read it and declare it."

One of the Christ-like attributes we need is courage. The Lord has repeatedly told missionaries to open our mouths and talk to everyone:

"And at *all times*, and in *all places*, he shall *open his mouth* and declare my gospel as with the voice of a trumpet, *both day and night*. And I will give unto him strength such as is not known among men." (D&C 24:12, emphasis added)

"...Yea, you shall ever *open your mouth in my cause*, not fearing what man can do, for I am with you." (D&C 30:11, emphasis added)

"Yea, *open your mouths and spare not*, and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your backs, for lo, I am with you." (D&C 33:9, emphasis added)

When the Lord says "spare not" I suggest that he means that we should not hold back but that we

should deliver our message with courage and a sweet boldness.

The way the Spirit works with missionaries, if we are worthy and if we will open our mouths, is set forth in D&C 100:7-8: "But a **commandment** I give unto you, that ye shall declare whatsoever thing ye declare in my name, in solemnity of heart, in the spirit of meekness, in all things. And I give unto you this **promise**, that inasmuch as ye do this the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say." The commandment is to declare or in other words open our mouths and testify. The promise is that the Holy Ghost will bear record to our investigators of the truthfulness of our message.

Often we spend too much time trying to follow-up with people who are not making a sincere attempt to keep commitments or appointments. These people may listen to us and be nice but they will not sincerely read, pray, or attend church so they don't progress.

We know that if we will open our mouths and speak with everyone we can the Lord will bring us the elect and they will readily accept the things that we say. They keep their commitments, meet with us often, and progress quickly toward baptism.

If we spend our time and resources with people who are not progressing we will be frustrated. However, if we are willing to open our mouths we can rely on the promise of the Lord that we are called to gather his elect and he will open their hearts and they will receive us. (see D&C 29:7, 31:7) We can be assured success because we are on his errand and the works and the designs and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated (see D&C 3:1-3).

President Benson said, "The *Book of Mormon* is the instrument God has designed to gather out the elect... The *Book of Mormon* is the great finder of the golden contact. It does not contain things which are pleasing to the world and so the worldly are not interested in it. It is a great sieve." In order to be converted members and non-members alike must read and pray about the *Book of Mormon*. We must skillfully invite them to do so and testify of its importance. Then the Holy Ghost will bear witness to what we say. The elect will hear and do it, and their lives will be changed forever.

With Love,

President Lunt