

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

August, 1992

To Increase in Faith

Quoting President Kimball, President Benson said, "Missionaries must have much greater faith than we have ever demonstrated if we are to dramatically increase the number of convert baptisms." Joseph Smith taught us how to increase in faith: "Three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation. First, the idea that he actually exists. Secondly, a correct idea of His character, perfections, and attributes. Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to His will."

We know that there is a true and living God. We know that He possesses all worthy characteristics and righteous attributes and is the embodiment of all perfection. Our main challenge is the actual knowledge that our life is pleasing to the Lord. Joseph continued, "It is through the medium of sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God." In other words, our acts of sacrifice increase our faith.

There is never a better time to increase in faith by meeting the test of sacrifice than on a mission. In the calling each of us received from the Lord through President Benson, we were told, "you will also be expected to devote all your time and attention to serving the Lord, leaving behind all other personal affairs." We meet the test of sacrifice by focusing exclusively on serving the Lord full time and eliminating all other distractions in our lives.

We need greater faith in the Lord's work as follows:

1. The importance of greatly increasing convert baptisms and retention. The White Handbook reminds us, "The Lord desires the conversion of each soul." Elder Dallin Oaks recently explained the doctrinal need to baptize more people.

We do not preach and teach in order to "bring people into the Church" or to increase the membership of the Church. We do not preach and teach just to persuade people to live better lives. We honor and appreciate the many ministers and others who are involved in the kind of ministry that make bad men good and good men better. This is important, but we offer something more. You can qualify for the terrestrial kingdom instead of the telestial kingdom without the aid of this Church. We are concerned with a higher destination.

The purpose of our missionary work is to help the children of God fulfill a condition prescribed by our Savior and Redeemer. We preach and teach in order to baptize the children of God so that they can be saved in the celestial kingdom instead of being damned in a lesser kingdom. We do missionary work in order to baptize. That is the doctrinal basis for missionary work.

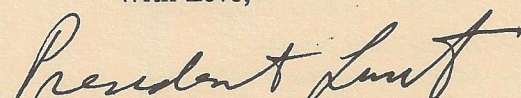
2. The importance of finding families who will receive our message. Again from the white handbook, "You have been called to teach all people, but with the specific responsibility to seek out families, the eternal unit in the gospel. When an entire family is taught, they fellowship and strengthen each other." As President Benson expounded Alma 26:22 he said, "that a missionary should exercise faith, believing that he can do great things for the Lord, that he can achieve his personal goals, that he can find golden families and teach them with the Spirit and baptize them." Families are the key to the growth and strength of the Church.

3. The importance of media referrals and our ability, with the help of the Lord, to teach and baptize a significant percentage of them. Recently we have received several hundred referrals a month. This is the way the Lord intends for us to find many hundreds of people who will hear our message. Currently we are baptizing less than one percent of the media referrals we receive. The Lord desires a much greater harvest. As we increase in faith and desire to teach and baptize the elect, the Lord will expand our opportunity to do so through media referrals.

4. The importance of using the members in all phases of our work. Members respond to missionaries they trust and who are focused.

As we focus on our work with urgency and desire, being willing to sacrifice for the Lord by devoting all of our time and attention to His work, and as we live the commandments, the mission rules and schedule with exactness, we will be given great faith. We will then feel as Ammon, "Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore I will not boast of myself, but I will boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things; yea, behold, many mighty miracles we have wrought in this land, for which we will praise his name forever." (Alma 26:12.)

With Love,


President Lunt