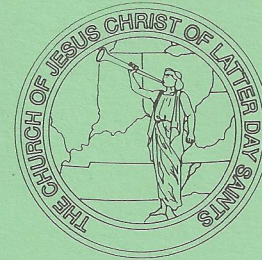


# The IRON ROD



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

September, 1992

### The Gathering of the Elect

Prophets from the beginning have understood the covenants of the Lord concerning the final worldwide gathering of the righteous before the Second Coming of the Lord. For example, the Lord revealed to Enoch some of the significant aspects of this great latter-day gathering. "And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men..." (Moses 7:62.)

In the latter days, revelation from heaven began again when the Father and the Son appeared to a fourteen year old boy and answered his question as to which church he should join. The very next step in the restoration took place three and a half years later when Joseph was instructed concerning the coming forth of a buried scriptural record. The revelations from heaven and the Book of Mormon from the earth are a powerful witness of the doctrine of the resurrection. The scripture continues, "...and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth..." The restored gospel, as evidenced by the Book of Mormon, is sweeping the earth.

The inspired way the Lord has designed for us to introduce the Book of Mormon is to teach a first discussion. This discussion in an organized and effective way allows us to teach and testify of the truths that are unique to the restored gospel. It is intended that after this discussion, the people's strongest impressions will be of the Book of Mormon and the Prophet Joseph Smith, because through them we gain our understanding of God and His plan.

The first discussion is designed so that as we teach of the first vision and of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon we are to bear a personal and powerful testimony of the truthfulness of these things. When a worthy missionary bears testimony of these essential truths the Spirit will bear witness with great intensity that the things that we have testified to are true.

The elect will hear the voice of the Lord and will react in some way that will let us know they are feeling the Spirit. (see D&C 29:7.) Because people who are not used to these feelings may not recognize them, we identify the Spirit and help our people

understand this is their witness of the truthfulness of what they have been taught. When people feel the Spirit, that is the time to challenge them and set a date for their baptism, using the Invitation to be Baptized as found in the Instructions for the Discussions.

As we give the rest of the discussions to prepare them for baptism, we have the opportunity and responsibility to testify to the truthfulness of every gospel principle we teach. Each time we do this the Spirit bears witness to our testimony. The conversion process continues as our investigators increase in faith. Paul taught that "...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17.) Joseph Smith added to our understanding of this scripture when he explained, "faith comes by hearing the word of God through the testimony of the servants of God: that testimony is always attended by the Spirit of prophecy and revelation." As people accept and keep the commitments we give them, they are worthy of baptism.

The way investigators can consistently feel the Spirit, even when the missionaries are not there to teach and testify of gospel truths, is to read and pray about the Book of Mormon. If a person will not read and pray about the Book of Mormon it is unlikely he will be baptized, and even if he is he probably will not remain active. As President Benson has said, "Social, ethical, cultural, or educational converts will not survive under the heat of the day unless their taproots go down to the fullness of the gospel which the Book of Mormon contains. There is a difference between a convert who is built on the rock of Christ through the Book of Mormon and stays hold of that iron rod, and one who is not."

I am certain that if we use the Book of Mormon as the Lord intends, then we will get the harvest of souls that He has promised. I concur with Elder Bruce R. McConkie when he said, "Note it and note it well: It is the power of the Book of Mormon that gathers Israel in the last days."

With Love,

President Lunt