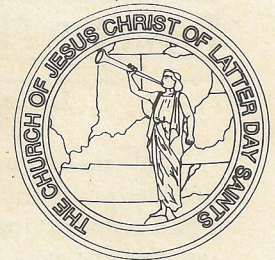


# The IRON ROD



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

January 1993

### The Message of The Restoration

Many people we meet are interested and even anxious to speak about their belief in Christ and the Bible. However, their attitude often becomes negative when we speak about the Restoration, particularly the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. Early in my mission I remember thinking that we could discuss the gospel with many more people if we would simply introduce ourselves as representatives from the Church of Jesus Christ. It was the words, "of Latter Day Saints," that not only made the name of the Church seem long but it was the part that many people were uncomfortable with. I reasoned to myself we could in this way first build relationships of trust and later explain "Latter Day Saints" and "Mormons".

I have come to understand the significance of the words, "Latter Day Saints," and it is not just to distinguish us from the "Former Day Saints". The words, "Latter Day Saints," should remind us of the importance of the Restoration because it is The Restoration of the gospel in the latter days and the faithfulness to it that sets us apart from all other churches.

We have experienced the power and the intensity of the witness of the Spirit to our testimony concerning the Restoration, the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. Those people who are prepared will feel the Spirit when we testify to them. President Benson has taught that the Book of Mormon is a great sieve because it is not "pleasing unto the world." The message of the Restoration is "pleasing unto God and unto those who are not of the world." (1 Nephi 6:5.) If a person rejects the Prophet Joseph Smith, continuous revelation and living prophets or discounts the Book of Mormon and additional latter day scriptures, then they are not prepared for our message. It is the teaching of the Restoration and the concepts associated with it that gathers the elect.

It requires courage to testify of the Restoration because many people scoff at such things as visions, ministering of angels, gold plates and spiritual gifts in our day. It is normal to want to be liked and to be accepted by others. However, Elder Bruce R. McConkie has suggested that sometimes we are prone to leave the Book of Mormon and the Restoration behind in an effort to make friends and show we are much like them. He further observed that only when we lovingly and humbly emphasize the differences--what we really have to offer--will we enjoy the quantity and quality of

converts that the Lord and his prophets have described. (see Ensign Dec. 1992, p. 8.)

The claims of the Restoration demand a decision. The Book of Mormon either come from God or it came from Satan. Joseph Smith was either one of the greatest prophets or the biggest fraud of all time. Satan stirs up great opposition because our message is true. If it were not true we would be left alone to fit in comfortably with the other churches. All anti-Mormon arguments boil down to one thing. They deny the Restoration and specifically that God still speaks in the latter days to prophets.

As we start a new year, let's each resolve:

1. To bear testimony of the truthfulness of the Restoration whenever we have the opportunity. We must open our mouths more and speak of the Restoration.
2. To do as Elder Ballard requests and read Joseph Smith History from the scriptures every month.
3. To follow the instructions for the first discussion and emphasize the message of the Restoration. After the first discussion the investigators strongest impression should be of the Book of Mormon and the Prophet Joseph Smith.
4. To know the first discussion well enough so that we are able to look the investigators in the eye and with feeling tell that part of the Joseph Smith story in the Prophet's own words without having to read it. Then to bear testimony by the power of the Spirit that it is true.
5. To use and emphasize the latter day scriptures, particularly the Book of Mormon when we resolve concerns and answer doctrinal questions. The words of the Prophet still apply, "the different sects understood the same passage of scriptures so differently so as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal the Bible." Here in the Bible belt, the Book of Mormon is the buckle. It ties together the doctrines referred to in the Bible that are misunderstood by so many people and teaches them in plainness and simplicity.

Missionaries are commanded to testify of the Restoration. If we do so and labor with our might, our sins will be forgiven and the Lord will give us success in the harvest and bless us with eternal life. (see D&C 31:3-5, 75:1-5, 84:61.)

With Love,

President Lunt