

D & C Lesson 41

“EVERY MEMBER A MISSIONARY”

Prepared by Duane S. Crowther, November 2001

1. The Church is coming forth out of obscurity

A. *D&C 1:30*: “. . . [that] those to whom these commandments were given, might have power to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness, the only true and living church upon the face of the earth, . . .” [*1:19-30*]

B. *D&C 65:2*: “The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountains without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth. [*65:1-6*. See *Dan. 2:28-45*]

C. *D&C 109:72-73*: “Remember all thy church, O Lord, . . . that the kingdom, . . . may become a great mountain and fill the whole earth, . . . and shine forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” [*109:72-77*]

D. *Joseph Smith*: “No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.” (*History of the Church*, vol. 4, p. 540)

2. Latter-day prophets have challenged us to take the gospel to all the world

A. “*President David O. McKay* gave renewed emphasis to missionary work by *urging every member to make a commitment to bring at least one new member into the Church each year*. He became well known for his repeated admonition: ‘*Every member a missionary.*’” [*Our Heritage*, p. 116].

B. *Key Missionary events*: (1) 1952: The first official proselyting plan was sent to missionaries: *A Systematic Program for Teaching the Gospel*: seven missionary discussions. (2) 1961: the first seminar for mission presidents was held: *they were taught to encourage families to fellowship their friends and neighbors and then have these people taught by missionaries in their homes*. (3) 1961: a language training program for newly called missionaries was established; later a missionary training center was constructed.

C. *Other related events*: (1) Following World War II, LDS soldiers opened the work in Japan and the Philippines. During the wars in Korea and Vietnam, LDS soldiers opened the gospel doors there. (2) 1961: the Church’s correlation program began. 1960s: Ward Teaching became Home Teaching and the program was reemphasized. (3) 1960s: Ward meetinghouse libraries were established. (3) 1971: the Church began publishing the *Ensign*, the *New Era* and the *Friend*, and unified its foreign language magazine program.

D. *Harold B. Lee* became LDS Church President on July 7, 1972. “President Lee and his counselors *presided over the second area conference, held in Mexico City*. Church members assembled at this conference were the first Latter-day Saints to sustain the new First Presidency. President Lee explained that the meetings were held in Mexico City to ‘give recognition and to commend the wonderful labors of the many who . . . have been instrumental in bringing about the tremendous growth of the Church.’” [*Our Heritage*, pp. 123-124]

E. *Spencer W. Kimball* became president of the Church following President Lee’s death on Dec. 26, 1973. His first address as President was to the Church’s regional representatives. In this meeting he

sounded the now-famous slogan: “*We must lengthen our stride.*” “He admonished his audience to increase their commitment to proclaiming the gospel to the nations of the earth. He also called for a large increase in the number of missionaries who could serve in their own countries.” “In 1978 he announced a revelation from God that was to have a tremendous effect on missionary work that was to have a tremendous effect on missionary work worldwide. For many years the priesthood had been denied to persons of African descent, but now priesthood and temple blessings would be granted to all worthy male members.” [*Our Heritage*, pp. 124-125]

3. **What would the Lord have us do?**

A. **“Every Member a Missionary”**

1. *D&C 1:4-6*: “The voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples.”
2. *D&C 88:81-82*: “It becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.”

B. Prepare to serve full-time missionaries. President **Spencer W. Kimball**: “When I ask for more missionaries, I am not asking for more testimony-barren or unworthy missionaries. I am asking that we start earlier and train our missionaries better in every branch and every ward in the world Young people [should] understand that it is a great privilege to go on a mission and that they must be physically well, mentally well, spiritually well, and that ‘the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance [*D&C 1:31*].’ [“When the World Will Be Converted,” *Ensign*, October 1974, p. 7]

C. Serve full-time missions. “Who should serve full-time missions? All worthy young men ages 19 through 25 should serve full-time missions. Full-time missionary service is a priesthood responsibility for these young men. Women ages 21 and older may also be recommended to serve full-time missions if they desire. Older couples are also encouraged to serve missions when they are able to do so. All missionaries must be worthy.” [*Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, 1999, p. 240]

Elder David B. Haight: “The goal of every physically able couple in the Church, just as it is for every nineteen-year-old young man in the Church, should be to serve a mission. No finer example can be given, no finer testimony can be borne by parents to children or grandchildren, than through missionary service in their mature years.” [*Ensign*, May 1987, p. 61]

D. Support full-time missionaries. “How can we support missionaries who are now serving? . . . remembering them in prayers, writing encouraging letters, and contributing to the ward or branch missionary fund or the General Missionary Fund. We can support missionaries who are serving in our area by helping them find and teach investigators and by giving other assistance.” [*Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, 1999, p. 240]

President **Gordon B. Hinckley**: “My brethren and sisters, we can let the missionaries try to do it alone, or we can help them. If they do it alone, they will knock on doors day after day and the harvest will be meager. Or as members we can assist them in finding and teaching investigators.” [“Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,” *Ensign*, May 1999, p. 7]

E. Share the gospel throughout our lives. “What are some ways we can share the gospel with others as part of our daily lives? . . . (1) set a good example for family members, neighbors, and friends. (2) Share copies of the Book of Mormon. (3) Refer names of interested people to the missionaries. (4) Share your feelings about the gospel with people. (5) Invite people to Church activities, meetings and firesides. (6) Invite people to family home evening and to neighborhood activities. (7) Invite people who are interested in genealogy to visit a Family History Center. (8) Invite people to baptismal services.” [*Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual*, 1999, p. 241]

F. Nurture new converts is our continuing responsibility. President **Gordon B. Hinckley**: “Every convert needs three things: (1) *A friend in the Church* to whom he can constantly turn, who will walk beside him, who will answer his questions, who will understand his problems. (2) *An assignment.* . . .

(3) *Every convert must be nourished by the good word of God (Moro. 6:4)."*
[*Ensign*, May 1999, p. 108]

Copyright © November 2001 by Duane S. Crowther.