

Apostles. Elder Earl C. Tingey of the Presidency of the Seventy will now ad-

dress us, and he will be followed by Elder James M. Paramore of the Seventy.

Elder Earl C. Tingey

Tonight I speak to all young men of the Aaronic Priesthood preparing to serve missions, all full-time missionaries, and all fathers and grandfathers who motivate and prepare young men to serve.

Sacrifices of early missionaries

Several months ago I visited Far West, Missouri. At one time it was the home and place of refuge for three to four thousand members of the Church. Today the homes are gone and only fields of grass remain. In July 1838 the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation that the Twelve were to depart Far West on April 26, 1839, to commence missionary work in Great Britain.¹

In the *Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, we read: "When that revelation was given, all was peace and quietude, comparatively, in that land. But when the time came for the twelve apostles to fulfill that revelation, the Saints had all been driven out. . . .

"President Young asked the twelve who were with him—'What shall we do with regard to the fulfilment of this revelation?'"² Some of the Brethren said that the Lord would accept the intent of the Twelve and that the Lord would not require their lives to fulfill the revelation.

Wilford Woodruff continues: "The Spirit of the Lord rested upon the twelve, and they said—'The Lord God has spoken, and we will fulfill that revelation and commandment'; and that was the feeling of President Young and of those who were with him."

The Twelve, in obedience to the revelation, departed for their missions. Wilford Woodruff was so sick he could hardly stand on his feet. Heber C. Kim-

ball wrote that Brigham Young was so sick that he was unable to walk a distance of 30 rods without assistance. He left his wife and children lying sick in bed. When he left home, Brigham Young was wearing a long quilt over his shoulders because he had no coat.³

On August 28, 1852, five years after the Saints arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young convened a special conference where approximately 100 men were called to serve missions to the far corners of the earth. The charge given the missionaries by George A. Smith of the Twelve was as follows: "The missions we will call for during this conference, are generally, not to be very long ones; probably from 3 to 7 years will be as long as any man will be absent from his family."⁴

Being a full-time missionary is a great blessing

Today, our missionaries do not serve or depart for their missions under such extreme circumstances. They go with relative comfort and ease, appropriately dressed, adequately fed, and they travel by jet airplane.

Currently over 58,000 full-time missionaries serve in 136 nations and territories. By July there will be 331 missions. The excitement and thrill of being a full-time missionary is one of the greatest blessings a young man of the Aaronic Priesthood can aspire to.

Most missionaries receive special training in one of the 15 missionary training centers throughout the world. The largest, in Provo, currently has approximately 3,000 missionaries in residence. I thought you might be interested in sev-

eral statistics shared with me during a recent visit to the MTC. In one month the missionaries consume over 5,000 pounds of dry cereal. That is over two and one-half tons. Of that amount, 2,200 pounds is Lucky Charms. Lucky Charms is a popular breakfast dry cereal. Maybe one of the best preparations for being a missionary is to eat Lucky Charms. For you parents who try to focus your young men's eating habits on what you may consider is more nutritious food, you might be aware that in one month missionaries consumed only 16 pounds of All-Bran.

Ways to prepare for your mission

Young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, may I suggest six ways you can prepare for your mission:

First, secure your individual testimony of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Know for yourself that you hold the priesthood and that Jesus Christ is your Savior.

Second, study and ponder the Book of Mormon to the point where you can declare that it was received by Joseph Smith from the angel Moroni and that the Prophet Joseph translated the book from the golden plates.

Third, be clean and pure. To those who have slipped, repentance is available if you will approach your bishop and seek his help and counsel.

Fourth, pay your tithes and offerings so that you can bear witness of this great principle of the gospel. Save money so that you can serve a mission. A mission is not free, and all missionaries should expect to financially contribute toward the cost of their missions.

Fifth, learn how to work. Be willing to get up early in the morning, work hard all day, and retire on time. As you prepare for your mission, learn how to work.

And sixth, serve as a home teacher in your ward to know the joy of service.

Suggestions for full-time missionaries

For all full-time missionaries, I have several suggestions:

First, open your mouth. The Lord tells us, "And thou must open thy mouth at all times, declaring my gospel with the sound of rejoicing."⁵

Speak to everyone: shopkeepers, passengers riding buses, people on streets, and everyone you meet.

Second, work hard. Missionary work results in many rejections. It is easy to be discouraged. "And ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect; for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts."⁶

Third, be obedient, faithful, and true. Missionaries serve in companionships for protection. A missionary best protects his companion when he is loyal to the Lord and helps his companion. By keeping the missionary rules, you gain the freedom of having the Spirit assist you.

Fourth, teach and testify. "And ye shall go forth in the power of my Spirit, preaching my gospel, two by two, in my name, lifting up your voices as with the sound of a trump, declaring my word like unto angels of God."⁷

And fifth, when you complete your mission, maintain the spirit, appearance, and trust of a missionary. Brigham Young once said to the returned missionary: "Come home with your heads up. Keep yourselves clean, from the crowns of your heads to the soles of your feet; be pure in heart."⁸

To fathers and grandfathers

To the fathers and grandfathers of Aaronic Priesthood young men:

Motivate and encourage your sons and grandsons to serve missions.

Provide a righteous home and an atmosphere of peace and stability where young men can be reared and prepared to serve.

Set a personal example by keeping the commandments. Pay tithes and offerings, attend sacrament meetings, read the scriptures, and have family home evenings so that your sons will be prepared for their missions.

As couple missionaries, you and your wife should prepare to serve when that time comes. We need many, many more couple missionaries.

Testimony of joys and blessings

The joys and blessings of serving a full-time mission are so personally sacred, they are hard to express adequately. Thirty-five years after I served my first mission, I received a letter from a family whom I had taught but did not baptize. The letter shared that their family of four little children, whom I once knew, now consisted of four temple marriages, three full-time missionaries, three bishops, a Relief Society president, and a dozen grandchildren maturing and developing in the gospel. You can well imagine the thrill and joy I received knowing that I had helped to find them and to teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, may I testify of the blessings of missionary service. Last year, my father passed away at age 88. As a young man, he was called on a mission during the Depression, when few were able to serve. It was hard and difficult. He always said that his decision to

serve a mission was the best decision he ever made. When he died, he left 10 children, 9 living; 56 grandchildren; and 116 great-grandchildren.

Of his posterity, 32 served full-time missions and 15 spouses who married into the family had served missions, resulting in 47 full-time missionaries—or almost 100 years of full-time missionary work. All of this resulted, in part, because one man served a mission. I shall be forever grateful that my father served a mission and that I was motivated and taught to follow his example.

I bear witness of this great privilege we all have in the Church—to be missionaries. Inherent in our responsibility of holding the priesthood is being a missionary. I pray that we will all fulfill that obligation we have to the Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See D&C 118.
2. *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, ed. G. Homer Durham (1946), 309.
3. See Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (1888), 275–76; Wilford Woodruff, *Leaves from My Journal*, 2nd ed. (1882), 69.
4. “Minutes of Conference,” *Deseret News*, 18 Sept. 1852, 1.
5. D&C 28:16.
6. D&C 29:7.
7. D&C 42:6.
8. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 328.

Elder James M. Paramore

The brotherhood of the priesthood

To the priesthood of the Church here on this earth, I salute you. It is an honor to be in your presence tonight. The priesthood that is here and across the whole earth is a wondrous thing. A few months ago, I was in the main lobby

of the Church Administration Building waiting for an elevator when three men came in and asked the receptionist at the front desk, “Is this where the brothers are?” The receptionist smiled, and I thought, “Isn’t that a great salutation.”

Wherever I go, we are brothers. It is instant, and it is reassuring. I return to