

ness of character all lead us away from eternal truths.

### **Cultivate a tradition of righteousness**

Of all the traditions we should cultivate within ourselves and our families, a "tradition of righteousness" should be preeminent. Hallmarks of this tradition are an unwavering love for God and His Only Begotten Son, respect for prophets and priesthood power, a constant seeking of the Holy Spirit, and the discipline of discipleship, which transforms believing into doing. A tradition of righteousness sets a pattern for living which draws children closer to parents, and both closer to God, and elevates obedience from a burden to a blessing.

In a world where traditions often confuse right and wrong:

- We are inspired by the courage of each young person who has honored the Sabbath day, kept the Word of Wisdom, and remained chaste when popular culture has established the opposite as not only acceptable but expected.

- We are inspired by the wisdom of each man who has molded a career which properly supports his premier responsibility to spiritually lead his family when wealth and power are more highly valued by the world.

- We are inspired by the nobility of each husband and wife who have established a relationship of equality and kindness when one of selfishness and indifference is so common.

As the supernal nature of our life begins to be understood and experienced, we desire nothing temporal to impede our celestial journey.

Humbled by the responsibility but joyous in the opportunity to preach the gospel and bear witness in all the world, I affirm my knowledge of eternal truths and everlasting culture. I testify of 15 men with prophetic calling and apostolic authority and one among them, even President Gordon B. Hinckley, who presides with dignity, vision, and a clear sense of righteous tradition. Of most significance, I testify of the Savior and Redeemer of mankind, of His Church, and of His atoning love, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Monson**

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us, followed by Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will now sing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Following the singing, Elders Ronald A. Rasband and Douglas L. Callister of the Seventy will address us. They will be followed by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

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## **Elder Ronald A. Rasband**

### **Gratitude for calling and family**

My dear brothers and sisters, I feel it a great privilege and honor to stand here at this pulpit today. I pray for the blessing of the Holy Spirit, that what I say may add to the spiritual feelings we all experience at conference time.

I would be very ungrateful if I did not take this opportunity to thank the Lord in all sincerity for my calling as a Seventy. I would also like to thank our dear prophet, President Hinckley, and his fellow leaders of the Church for their confidence in me. I pledge to them and

all of you my best efforts in the years of service that lie before me.

Through many hours of reflection, I have been drawn back to my pioneer ancestors in deep appreciation. All eight of my great-grandparents came into the Church as early converts. Six of the eight immigrated to the United States from Europe, where I am now serving. I feel a deep sense of love and connection to the European Saints and commit myself to do all that I possibly can to strengthen the Church and build up the kingdom of God there or wherever I may be assigned.

I express my love and gratitude to my dear eternal companion and choice family for their devoted support and love. I wish to convey my love to our friends and dear missionaries whom we recently served with in the New York New York North Mission. One of the great blessings of my life is that of treasured friends and close associates whom I have had the privilege to know and learn from.

### **Jesus loves us all one by one**

Throughout my life, I have come to know through my own experiences that Heavenly Father hears and answers our personal prayers. I know that Jesus is the living Christ and that He knows each of us individually, or, as the scriptures express it, “one by one.”

This sacred assurance was taught compassionately by the Savior Himself in His appearance to the people of Nephi. We read of this in 3 Nephi, chapter 11, verse 15:

“And it came to pass that the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth *one by one* until they had all gone forth” (italics added).

Further illustrating the “one by one” nature of our Savior’s ministry is the account in 3 Nephi, chapter 17, verse 9:

“And it came to pass that when he had thus spoken, all the multitude, with one accord, did go forth with their sick and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, and with all them that were afflicted in any manner; and he did heal them *every one* as they were brought forth unto him” (italics added).

We then read of the special blessing given to the precious children in verse 21:

“And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, *one by one*, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them” (italics added).

This was not a small gathering. In verse 25 we read:

“And they were in number about two thousand and five hundred souls; and they did consist of men, women, and children.”

Certainly there is a very profound and tender personal message here. Jesus Christ ministers to, and loves us all, one by one.

### **We should serve others one by one**

As we reflect on our Savior’s way of loving, we sustain you dedicated stake and ward leaders—men and women of great faith. We gratefully recognize the many efforts of those of you working with the youth. And we express great appreciation to our caring Primary leaders and teachers for your Christlike service. We consider each of your *one-by-one* ministries and say thank you and please, please continue. Perhaps never in the history of mankind do we need to be serving on a one-by-one basis more than we do now.

### **Inspiration to invite an elder to pray**

During the final months of our mission last year, we experienced an event that taught once again this profound prin-

ciple that each of us is known and loved by God.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell was coming to New York City for some Church business, and we were informed that he would also like to have a mission conference. We were so pleased to have this opportunity to hear from one of the Lord's chosen servants. I was asked to select one of our missionaries to provide the opening prayer for the meeting. I might have randomly picked one of the missionaries to pray, but felt to ponder and prayerfully select one whom the Lord would have me ask. In going through the missionary roster, a name boldly stood out to me: Elder Joseph Appiah of Accra, Ghana. He was the one I felt the Lord wanted to pray at the meeting.

Prior to the mission conference, I was having a regularly scheduled interview with Elder Appiah and told him of the prompting that I had received for him to pray. With amazement and humility in his eyes, he began to weep deeply. Somewhat surprised by his reaction, I started to tell him that it was all right and he wouldn't have to pray, when he informed me he would love to offer the prayer, that his emotion was caused by the love he has for Elder Maxwell. He told me that this Apostle is very special to the Saints in

Ghana and to his own family. Elder Maxwell had called his father to be the district president in Accra and had sealed his mother and father in the Salt Lake Temple.

Now, I didn't know any of what I just related about this missionary or his family, but the Lord did and inspired a mission president on behalf of *one* missionary to provide a lifelong memory and testimony-building experience.

At the meeting, Elder Appiah offered a wonderful prayer and made a humble contribution to a meeting where Elder Maxwell taught the missionaries of the attributes of Jesus Christ. All who were there will never forget the feelings of love they experienced for their Savior.

### **Come to the Savior one by one**

I have a testimony in my heart, brothers and sisters, that God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ know and love us individually. I'm not sure I fully understand how; I just know and have experienced that They do. I urge all of us in our own ministries—to our families and to our fellowman—to embrace the Savior's warm invitation to come unto Him, one by one, and be perfected in Him.

I share this witness and hope, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## **Elder Douglas L. Callister**

### **Seeking the Spirit—an urgent quest**

In Italy there is a majestic sculpture of Moses with a crack on one of the knees. A tour guide may say that Michelangelo, viewing the masterpiece, hurled a chisel at the sculpture and exclaimed in disdain, "Why doesn't it speak?"

Unlike the inanimate stone, the true Church of Jesus Christ is filled with life.

The voice, Spirit, and power of God are found in our worship services or whenever the ordinances of the holy priesthood are administered.

Elijah inquired of Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee." Elisha said, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."<sup>1</sup> He could not have asked for anything greater.