

Bishops, there should be no hesitation on your part to initiate a Recommend for Missionary Service interview to discuss and encourage missionary couples to serve a mission.

Elder Clarence R. Bishop, director of the Mormon Handcart Visitors' Center, has served five missions. The first one he served as a young man. The last four missions, he was interviewed to serve by inspired priesthood leaders. He indicated that he might not have served any of the last four had his bishop not encouraged him to serve.

Some mature couples and single sisters have been called as missionaries to teach English as a second language to students, teachers, and government officials in Thailand. These retired teachers and educational administrators, by giving freely of their gifts and talents developed through their many years of teaching experience, have made remarkable progress in teaching English to students, training teachers, and being good ambassadors for the Church in Thailand.

Jerry and Karen Johnson served in Hong Kong, teaching English as a second language. One day after class, near the end of their mission, a little second-grade girl, to whom Sister Johnson had become very attached, came up to her and, putting out her arms as though she were an

airplane flying, asked, "Meiguo?" (meaning "America?"). Sister Johnson looked at her and said, "Yes, we are returning to America." She buried her head in Sister Johnson's chest and sobbed. "I held her tight and sobbed right along with her," Sister Johnson said. "Fifty other students gathered around, sobbing right along with us. Our mission has placed us in the center of a whirlwind of love that seems to envelop us."

Go forth and serve

As Jesus sent forth the Twelve to go on their missions, He commanded them, saying, "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). Where much is given, much is expected. You have received much in your life; go forth and freely give in the service of our Lord and Savior. Have faith; the Lord knows where you are needed. The need is so great, brothers and sisters, and the laborers are so few.

"When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17). I know this is His work. Go forth and serve!

That you may experience the blessings of missionary service for you and your families is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Darwin B. Christenson

David, a future missionary

My dear brothers and sisters, a blessing of Church membership is the privilege of feeling and bearing testimony, which expression may also come from an act or an example.

As well as others, my wife and I shall never, never forget the young brother standing in the sweeping, torrential rains during the cornerstone ceremony of the Recife Brazil Temple last December.

As President Hinckley and President Faust came from the temple into his view, this little lad I'll call David—about 10 years old—braced himself, ignoring the wind and the rain, his white shirt and his trousers soaked through and through. He stood tall and resolute as a little soldier and gave determined recognition that he was, indeed, in the presence of the Lord's own prophets, seers, and revelators.

David is representative of the many wonderful young people who are the future of the Church. He has been well taught by loving parents, with reinforcement from Primary teachers, to honor, love, and follow the prophets. Given some exposure, our young brothers and young sisters come quite naturally, like David, to a deep love for Jesus and for our prophets. As parents and teachers, we have a responsibility and an opportunity to reinforce this tender love and respect.

Through this careful guidance, testimonies will grow consistently over time to become finally founded upon personally received revelation.

As poignantly demonstrated by David, our young brother in the rain, the family is the basic, everlasting organization of the Church, from which he has learned so much. With tutoring, he will gain his own personal testimony that Jesus is the Son of the Living God and that through His Atonement the Savior perfectly completed His expiatory promise. Joseph Smith is the first prophet of the Restoration. Gordon B. Hinckley is our current, living, and loving prophet.

David will grow up knowing he will serve a mission. His father will speak often of the blessings of his own mission. He is representative of the fathers in Zion who are faithful priesthood holders.

David's mother will build unity in the family by establishing important and lasting family traditions. She is representative of mothers who are eager to see children grow and who are able to wipe away tears and iron out many of the day-to-day wrinkles of mortality, as well as the wrinkles in shirts and skirts.

Avoiding the sharks of mortality

Along the beautiful beaches of Recife, there are posted signs indicating that swimmers can safely enjoy the ocean if they will but confine their activities to the areas between the beaches and the reef.

Those who swim or surf beyond the reef expose themselves to attack by sharks, which are a continuing threat and have caused a significant number of injuries and deaths.

Like the signs on the shore, the Lord and His prophets provide inspired guidance for earthly sons and daughters to be able to avoid the ever-present sharks of mortality: the pornography, drugs, and sins that can diminish or kill the inherent sense of divinity the Lord would have His children enjoy. This heavenly guidance is provided by God because of His inexhaustible, personal love for each of His children. Prayer, scriptures, and fasting are available to all who would use them.

"The Family: A Proclamation to the World" is a treasured resource, an inspired document provided by our prophets (see *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102). Let us learn and relearn its lessons. Then, as caring parents, we will want to struggle to whatever degree is needful for the protection and benefit of our Davids—representing our children, grandchildren, and loved ones.

Alma the Younger taught each of his sons individually. He indicates that he taught Helaman in his youth, even as we see David is learning in his youth (see Alma 36:3). David's father may well paraphrase, "O David, my son, learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God" (see Alma 37:35).

David learns he will never make even one small foray into the polluted waters of life, because he knows that the sharks of mortality can tear away the tender spiritual muscle of a growing testimony. He also knows he does not need to wear the uniform of the supposed nonconformists by body piercing and tattoos.

Book of Mormon lessons on parenthood

Before David leaves home to begin his missionary service, it will be a blessing for him to be taught individually by his

own father, even as Alma so beautifully taught his son Helaman: "Yea, and cry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord. . . . Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings" (Alma 37:36–37).

Immediately in the Book of Mormon we learn lessons of parenthood. Father Lehi provided the foundation background, giving his son Nephi reason to make the famous statement, "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father" (1 Nephi 1:1).

To Laman and Lemuel, Father Lehi provided a beautiful analogy in powerful teaching: "O that thou mightest be like unto this river, continually running into the fountain of all righteousness! . . . O that thou mightest be like unto this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord!" (1 Nephi 2:9–10).

Enos, reaching adulthood, and while out hunting in the forest, returned to a remembrance and gave heed to the life-long teachings of his father, Jacob. Enos at last decided to act upon those teachings, as he cried unto God "all the day long" and still through the night. At last the voice came: "Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed" (Enos 1:4–5). Then Enos changed his life's focus and went about teaching.

The powerful and great prophet Enoch gave credit to his parentage, saying, "My father taught me in all the ways of God" (Moses 6:41).

May all our Davids be so prepared to serve.

We all love to be of service. In the blessing and need for providing service, might I express appreciation for the support of my beautiful wife, for our children and their spouses, for our grandchildren, for our brothers and our sisters, for their families, for our missionaries who are lasting examples of commitment, for friends who are a constant support, for the beautiful people of Brazil, for leaders, for our prophets, and especially for our Lord and Savior. The Church is true.

I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Faust

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve have just spoken to us, followed by Elder Darwin B. Christenson of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will now sing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Following the singing, Elder L. Aldin Porter of the Presidency of the Seventy will address us. He will be followed by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Elder L. Aldin Porter

The march of man's accomplishments

We of the Seventy would like to extend a hearty welcome to the brethren who this day were sustained to the five quorums of Seventy.

We are blessed, brothers and sisters, to live in a world filled with almost

daily announcements of progress against disease and other threats to mankind. There seems to be a never-ending march of man's accomplishments in overcoming impediments to a long and healthy life. Most of us have become accustomed to a constant flow of wonders.