

day and always, are to bear witness of Jesus Christ and declare the message of the Restoration. You and I, today and always, are to invite all to receive the ordinances of salvation. Proclaiming the gospel is not a part-time priesthood obligation. It is not simply an activity in which we engage for a limited time or an assignment we must complete as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Rather, missionary work is a manifestation of our spiritual identity and heritage. We were foreordained in the premortal existence and born into mortality to fulfill the covenant and promise God made to Abraham. We are here upon the earth at this time to magnify the priesthood and to preach the gospel. That is who we are, and that is why we are here—today and always.

You may enjoy music, athletics, or be mechanically inclined, and someday you may work in a trade or a profession or in the arts. As important as such activities and occupations can be, they do not define who we are. First and foremost, we are spiritual beings. We are sons of God and the seed of Abraham:

“For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.

“They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God” (D&C 84:33–34).

My dear brethren, we have been given much, and much is required of us. May you young men more fully understand who you are as the seed of Abraham and become missionaries long before you go on a mission. After coming back to your homes and families, may you returned missionaries always be missionaries. And may all of us rise up as men of God and bless the nations of the earth with greater testimony and spiritual power than we ever have before.

I declare my witness that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. I know that He lives! And I witness that we, as holders of the priesthood, are His representatives in the glorious work of proclaiming His gospel, today and always. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Charles Didier

### **Man's search for divine truth**

Among this vast audience tonight are three special guests—three dear old school friends. They made a long trip from Belgium, my native country, to be here to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our high school graduation and to attend this conference. To them, to you priesthood holders, and especially to you young men preparing to become missionaries, I dedicate this message. It is about man's search for divine truth. Once found, it is to be applied in this world of increased religious confusion and moral decadence. It must become the personal spiritual foundation that leads us to live according to the principles of right-

eousness. As the Lord said, “In righteousness shalt thou be established” (3 Nephi 22:14).

### **Hear and heed the voice of the Lord**

Where is divine truth to be found? It is to “hear the voice of the Lord, . . . [hear] the voice of His servants, [and] give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles” (D&C 1:14). Hear and heed. To hear is relatively simple. To heed and apply what is heard becomes life's perpetual challenge.

First, hear the voice of the Lord. Communication from the Lord about divine truth or spiritual knowledge is found in the

scriptures. It is called revelation—literally, “to make known or uncover” (Bible Dictionary, “Revelation,” 762). It is given to “know how to worship, and know what you worship” (D&C 93:19). Elder Neal A. Maxwell said, “Only with revelation can we do the Lord’s work according to His will in His way and according to His timing” (“Revelation,” *First Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 2003, 5). “Without revelation, all would be guess-work, darkness, and confusion” (Bible Dictionary, 762).

Second, hear the voice of His servants. Revelation, or divine truth, is given by the will of the Lord to His servants in different ways and times and is also found in the scriptures. “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

Third, give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles. To give heed is to pay special attention. It is to listen to those who have been called by God to be the especial living witnesses of Jesus Christ for our time. It implies that they are recognized in this role, that a response is given to their invitation to receive a personal spiritual confirmation that their teachings are true, and that a commitment to follow them will be made.

In summary, the Lord has a pattern of sharing divine truth with prophets to guide and bless us through the challenges and evils of life: hear and heed. Our personal spiritual foundation needs to be built upon this pattern if we want to enjoy the blessings of the Lord. So it is not enough to search the scriptures to know the mind of the Lord. It must be followed by an act of faith, accepting to do the will of the Lord by obeying His commandments, before we can enjoy the blessings of the Lord. A personal spiritual confirmation of this process by asking and believing that we will receive becomes, then, the prayer of our lifetime.

## We must be prepared to hear

In reality, the communication or hearing about divine truth can be summarized in three words: revelation, commandments, blessings. However, it is going to be a lifetime challenge to first hear and then heed the voice of the Lord and His servants. Why? “For the natural man is an enemy to God . . . and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit” (Mosiah 3:19). Spiritual preparation is a prerequisite to receive a personal spiritual impression. The rest of the verse reads that we must become “a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord” and also become “as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to” the will of the Lord, meaning His commandments. Then says the Lord, “When we obtain any blessing . . . , it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:21).

## Building a personal spiritual foundation

Let us now understand this pattern with a recent example of hearing and then giving heed to the words of the prophets and apostles of our time. The First Presidency recently extended an invitation to all members of the Church to read the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ before the end of the year. The challenge ended with a promise:

“[You] will be blessed with an added measure of the Spirit of the Lord, a greater resolve to obey His commandments, and a stronger testimony of the living reality of the Son of God” (First Presidency letter, July 25, 2005).

Why would we need to grow a stronger testimony of the living reality of the Son of God as found in the Book of Mormon? Today there is much confusion in the Christian world about the doctrine of Christ—not only about His divine nature but even

about His Atonement and Resurrection, His gospel, and especially the commandments related to it. The result is a belief in a self-made-man Christ, a popular Christ, and a silent, crucified Christ. Wrong religious beliefs lead to wrong religious behaviors.

A personal spiritual foundation can and must rely on a personal spiritual confirmation by the Holy Ghost of the living reality of Jesus Christ, the prophets, and the scriptures containing the revelations of the Lord. More specifically, the living reality of Christ is associated with the Restoration of His gospel and its message “that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, that Joseph Smith is his revelator and prophet in these last days, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s kingdom once again established on the earth” (Book of Mormon introduction).

This spiritual confirmation by the power of the Holy Ghost is given on the Lord’s conditions to anyone who is willing to ask in faith, believing that an answer can come by that power. It starts by listening to the voice of the Lord, His servants, His prophets and apostles, and it continues by giving heed to their words. Spiritual knowledge of the Restoration is a matter of faith.

### Personal conversion experience

May I share my personal spiritual experience as a convert, as an example of this spiritual process. When the missionaries came to our home, I had the desire to listen to the message of the Restoration of the gospel. My motivation was mainly curiosity. Attending church, I heard more new spiritual knowledge. It was interesting and I liked it, but I was missing the essential: giving heed. I had to build a personal spiritual foundation upon the living reality of Christ and the confirmation that Joseph

Smith was the prophet of the Restoration. That confirmation came only when I gave heed and tested my beginning faith in the Book of Mormon, the physical evidence of modern revelation.

However, acquiring that knowledge was not enough; it had to be followed by a commitment to transform my faith into certainty that the Book of Mormon was true and so was Joseph Smith as a prophet. My faith in Christ had never been in question. I trusted the Lord and His promises. Peace in my mind, inner peace, was the answer—no more questions. The spiritual foundation was set and followed by a commitment in my heart to accept the covenant of baptism. Then came the gift of the Holy Ghost to guide me and help me make righteous decisions to endure to the end. I knew from then on what to do with my future in this mortal life.

### Test the power of God’s word

Test divine revelation. Hear the voice of the Lord. It is real; it is personal; it is true. Reason does not and cannot replace revelation. Quoting President James E. Faust, “Do not let [your] private doubts separate you from the divine source of knowledge” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2003, 22; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 22).

Test and feel the powerful effect of the word of God upon your mind as given by the Lord’s servants (see Alma 31:5).

Test, ask and receive in faith, then give heed to the words of prophets and apostles, and you will “receive a crown of eternal life” (D&C 20:14).

Now, just remember, in conclusion, that following the Lord’s pattern to hear and give heed to divine truth will help you build a personal spiritual foundation and determine what you will become in this life and in the life hereafter.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.