

**Missionary Work**  
**Sacrament Meeting Talk 2003**  
**By Cameron Ford**

As we all know, one of the essential parts of the baptismal covenant is the promise to "... stand as a witness of God at all times, and in all things and in all places that ye may be in, even until death...". This is essentially a description of the basic principle of missionary work. I have recently come to a realization that we as priesthood holders have a special responsibility to lead in missionary work. In one of the past general priesthood sessions, President Hinckley described how that it was not a duty for our young women to serve full time missions, because it is primarily a priesthood responsibility. I realize that the comment was mainly focused on the fulfilling of full-time missions, but seeing as every member is always a missionary, his comments hit home to me that as a priesthood holder I have a specific responsibility to lead my family in doing missionary work.

There are basically five different levels of missionaries. Each level builds on the one below. I would like each of us to think for a moment to assess at what level we are at.

1. Won't talk about Church, but is a good example. People might know he is a member.
2. Talks about the Church with others every once in a while, most know that he is a member.
3. Talks all of the time about the Gospel, everyone knows he is a member, most are certain that it is the center of his life, but he is still afraid of hurting friendships.
4. Loves the Gospel so much that he invites people all of the time, but is mostly unsuccessful because he isn't listening to the Spirit.
5. Everyone knows that Christ is the center of his life. He loves Christ and his friends so much that he constantly prays for opportunities to share his testimony with others. He loves them and serves them and obediently follows the promptings of the Holy Ghost concerning how to share the Gospel. He is bold, but not over-bearing.

When we think about these levels in relation to ourselves, many of us might feel discouraged. We need not be. God does not expect us to become like Christ in a day,

but he does expect us to make an effort. Perhaps we cannot be at missionary level five by tomorrow, but we might be able to go from a two to a three. The important thing is that we are progressing. If there is one thing I have learned over the past ten years, it is the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to change people. I stand amazed at the change that has come to my heart in the past ten years. To me it is a miracle. The change is beyond my power to express. All I know is that it has happened and I am grateful.

If we let him, Christ will change our very natures. He will change us to be "fishers of men". In November 1995, Elder Henry B. Eyring said: "He will make you a fisher of men, however inadequate you may feel now. It won't be done by a mysterious process. It will be the natural result of your choosing to follow him. Just think about what you must do to be a fisher of men, to touch lives with faith for him. You will need to love the people you serve. You will need to be humble and full of hope. You will need to have the Holy Ghost as your companion to know when to speak and what to say and how to testify. But all of that will come naturally, in time, from the covenants you make and keep as you follow him. Here is the description of how that will happen, from the eighth chapter of Moroni, the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses:

"And the first fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith unto fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins; and the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God."

Love is the key to the successful missionary. I am absolutely positive of this. Love is the key, and there in the scripture is the roadmap. Faith, repentance, and humility brings the companionship of the Holy Ghost, which fills us with Love. Love of God, and Love of our fellow men. When we truly love the people we are trying to share the gospel with, they will feel of our sincerity and concern, and most importantly, the Spirit will testify of our love and of the truthfulness of the things we share. Without Love, our efforts are very hollow. Elder Eyring said it this way: "Those we meet will feel the love that springs from our long practice in keeping a covenant to "mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort." It may not be in hours or days,...but

they will feel our love after testing our hearts. And when they find our concern sincere, the Holy Spirit can more easily touch them to allow us to teach and to testify".

One other important way to learn to love people is to serve them. This is shown to us by one of the greatest missionaries of the Book of Mormon. When Ammon went to King Lamoni, he served him first before he ever talked about the Gospel. Once King Lamoni saw that he truly cared for him and his people he was prepared to open his heart to what Ammon had to say. Any return missionary can testify of the Love they have for the people they served. After two years of sacrificing for and constantly worrying about, and praying and fasting for a people, a missionary is filled with a love for that people that just can't be described. This is the same reason we love our children so much. We are filled with love for a person to the same extent that we are willing to sacrifice for them. This is why Christ Loves us so much. He was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for us. We know that he did it because he loves us so much, but perhaps he loves us so much because he sacrificed so much. This is the great paradox of the Gospel. To receive, we have to give. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

It is my testimony that as we serve our friends and put our faith in Christ's ability to change us, that he will fill us with his love and cause us to be successful missionaries and disciples in every sense of the word. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.