

TEACHING HISTORY

THE GOSPEL TEACHER AND HIS MESSAGE

by

President Ezra Taft Benson

Given to Religious Educators in the Assembly Hall,
Salt Lake City, Utah on Friday,
September 17, 1976


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My brethren and sisters, it is an honor and privilege for me to be with you this evening. I am most grateful to you for the invitation. I wish to commend you and your file leaders for the generally excellent job which is being done in instilling faith and testimony in the lives of our young men and women.

I am sure you appreciate that you have been given custody of some of the choicest spirits of all time. I emphasize that. These are not just ordinary spirits, but among them are some of the choicest spirits that have come from heaven. These are they who were reserved to come forth in this time to bear off the kingdom triumphant.

As a member of the Church Board of Education, I have been gratified by the progress our Church Educational System has made in the last several decades. I can recall, with some of you, when the Seminary and Institute program was largely confined to the western states of the United States, parts of Canada, and some of Mexico. We have witnessed a rapid internationalization of our religious educational program since 1971. Your leaders have been true to the mandate by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve that the Seminary and Institute program follow the development of the Church. We are likewise gratified with the expansion of the religious education program at the Brigham Young University and Ricks College.

As you no doubt appreciate, this commitment to the religious education of our youth represents a considerable outlay from the tithes of the Church. It also represents our confidence in you--a sacred trust.

This evening I desire to speak to the subject, "The Gospel Teacher and His Message." In doing so, I speak not only to the teacher who spends time in the classroom. I speak also to your partners--for you are a teaching team. Unless you are united in purpose, dedication, and loyalty, you will not succeed to the extent you otherwise could.

All of what I have to say to you tonight could be said in my own words, but I desire to do more than just speak on my own authority. I want you to understand what the Lord has said about your mission and wish to sustain the counsel of those, my Brethren, who have spoken to you before. Therefore, I will quote liberally from scripture and from some of the Brethren's previous messages to you.

I seldom cite a text for my remarks, but feel impressed to do so tonight. The text is taken from the Apostle Paul's letter to the Saints at Corinth. In his treatise, the Apostle not only declared the purpose of his ministry, but he defined in a broad sense a charge applicable to every present day teacher in the kingdom:

" . . . I came to you . . . not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness,

and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Corinthians 2:1-5.)

With this as a theme to my remarks, may I now illustrate its applicability to the teacher in the Church Educational System today.

Your first responsibility as a teacher of the gospel is to prepare yourself spiritually. All of you were interviewed by a General Authority when you applied for employment in the Church Educational System. I assume most of you were asked if you possessed a testimony--that personal witness--of Joseph Smith's calling, and the divinity of Jesus Christ. In the late President J. Reuben Clark's words, this is "the first requisite of a teacher for teaching (the gospel) . . . no teacher who does not have a real testimony . . . of the Sonship and Messiahship of Jesus, and of the divine mission of Joseph Smith--including in all its reality the first vision--has any place in the Church school system . . ." (The Charted Course of the Church in Education, August 8, 1938.)

We assume every one of you, without any equivocation, has such a testimony. If you do not, then your first obligation is to acquire such a testimony. Otherwise, you are flying under false colors, and your teaching is a sham--a pretense.

"The mere possession of a testimony," declared President Clark, "is not enough. You must have besides this . . . moral courage. For in the absence of moral courage to declare your testimony, it will reach the students only after such dilution as will make it difficult if not impossible for them to detect it." (Ibid, p. 7.)

This much we assume you do in the performance of your mission. This represents, however, only a basic requirement. Beyond this--to paraphrase the Master Teacher--we would say to you, "Teacher, heal thyself!"--or as He said on another occasion to his chief apostle, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren!" (Luke 22:32.) Conversion to Jesus Christ and His gospel is more than testimony; it is to be healed spiritually. In Paul's words, it is to partake of "the power of God." A most commendable example of this process is found in the Book of Mormon in the story of Enos.

You are all too familiar with the story for me to repeat the background. I only want to draw your attention to these verses. Enos testified: "I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God before I received a remission of my sins." (Enos 2.)

He thereupon clarified to us of what that wrestle with God consisted. Note the fervor in his petition:

"My soul hungered . . . "

"I kneeled down before my Maker . . ."

"I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul . . ."

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"All day long did I cry unto him." (Enos 4.)

Then Enos testified, "There came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed . . . wherefore, my guilt was swept away." (Enos 5, 6.) When he inquired of the Lord how this had been accomplished, the Lord answered him: "Because of thy faith in Christ . . . thy faith has made thee whole." (Enos 8.)

Enos was spiritually healed. Through his mighty supplications to God, he experienced what the faithful of any dispensation can, do, and must experience if they are to see God.

This process of obtaining a remission of one's sins is further outlined in another significant Book of Mormon episode. This was the aftermath of King Benjamin's mighty discourse about Jesus Christ, his divine Sonship and atoning sacrifice. Following this message, we are told how the Saints in King Benjamin's time received a remission of their sins:

FIRST: "They . . . viewed themselves in their own carnal (worldly) state . . ."

NEXT: "They all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of sins; and our hearts may be purified . . ."

FINALLY: "After they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ . . ." (Mosiah 4:2-4.)

This is the manner by which the Saints in all ages have come to be converted-- or in the words of the Book of Mormon, "changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming His sons and daughters . . . thus they become new creatures . . ." (Mosiah 27:25-26.) This is what is meant by partaking of the "power of God." You teachers--you who are to teach the power of this gospel--I would ask you, "have (you) spiritually been born of God? Have (you) received His image in your countenances? Have (you) experienced this mighty change in your hearts?" (Alma 5:14.)

A measure of this "change of heart" is what happens to the motives and desires of the gospel teacher. Enos testified that he "began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren." (Enos 9.) Alma, who also experienced this mighty change, said, "I have labored without ceasing, that I might bring souls unto repentance, that I might bring them to taste of the exceeding joy of which I did taste." (Alma 36:24.)

May your motives be likewise as pure. May the welfare of your students be the primary motive to your teaching. May you be converted so you can strengthen your students.

Before you can strengthen your students, it is essential that you study the doctrines of the kingdom, learn the gospel by both study and faith. To study by faith is to seek understanding and the Spirit of the Lord through the prayer of faith. Then

you will have the power to convince your students. This is not just good advice; it is a commandment of the Lord. Hear His words:

"I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom. Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you." (D&C 88:77-78.)

". . . treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man." (D&C 84:85.)

"Seek learning, even by study and also by faith." (D&C 88:118.)

"(Teach) none other things than that which the prophets and apostles have written, and that which is taught (you) by the Comforter through the prayer of faith." (D&C 52:9.)

"The Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive, not the spirit ye shall not teach." (D&C 42:14.)

"Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men." (D&C 11:21.)

The sequence to possessing the power of God in your teaching is to first seek to obtain the word, then comes understanding and the Spirit, and finally the power to convince. Yes, as our living prophet has instructed you, "There are blessings that come from immersing ourselves in the scriptures. The distance narrows between ourselves and our Father in heaven. Our spirituality shines brighter." (Spencer W. Kimball, Men of Example. Address given to Religious Educators in the Assembly Hall, September 12, 1975, Church Educational System Publication, p. 2.)

Always remember, there is no satisfactory substitute for the scriptures and the words of the living prophets. These should be your original sources. Read and ponder more what the Lord has said, and less about what others have written concerning what the Lord has said.

I would hope that before you leave your homes in the morning, you are kneeling before the Lord in secret as well as family prayer. And before you go into the classroom, that you ask to be led by the Spirit. The most important part of your teaching preparation is that you are guided by the Spirit.

A second responsibility I name is that you teach only the gospel of Jesus Christ. This, too, is a commandment of the Lord, for He has said:

"The . . . teachers of this Church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fulness of the gospel." (D&C 42:12.)

The Savior has clearly defined what He means when He says to teach "my gospel."

"This is the gospel which I have given unto you--

(1) "That I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me."

(2) ". . . My Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; . . ."

(3) ". . . after . . . I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil. And for this cause have I been lifted up, . . ."

(4) ". . . whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world."

(5) ". . . no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end. Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day. Verily . . . I say unto you, this is my gospel." (3 Nephi 27:13-16, 9-21.)

(6) ". . . whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. And whosoever shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock . . ." (3 Nephi 11:39-40.)

This is what is meant by teaching the gospel. This you have been consistently instructed to teach in the Church Educational System.

When we teach the gospel by the power of His Spirit, we, as a Church, have this promise: "If it so be that the Church is built upon my gospel then will the Father show forth his own works in it. But if it be not built upon my gospel, and is built upon the works of men, or upon the works of the devil, verily I say unto you, they shall have joy in their works for a season, and by and by the end cometh . . ." (3 Nephi 27:10-11.)

In 1938, President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., speaking for the First Presidency, pronounced a charge to you in an address entitled, "The Charters Course of the Church in Education." All of you should have a copy of this address and read it at least at the beginning of each teaching year. I quote this statement from his address:

"Your essential and all but sole duty, is to teach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . You are to teach the gospel using as your source and authority the standard works of the Church, and the words of those whom God has called to lead His people in these last days. You are not . . . to intrude into your work your own peculiar philosophy, no matter what its source or how pleasing and rational it seems to you . . . You are not to change the doctrines of the Church or to modify them, as they are declared by and in the standard works of the Church and by those whose authority it is to declare the mind and will of the Lord to the Church . . . You are not to teach the philosophies of the world . . . Your sole field is the gospel . . ." (The Charters Course of the Church in Education, pp. 9-10.)

This counsel has not changed over the years. Its applicability is even greater today as the religious education program has expanded, and numbers of teachers have increased. More recently, President Harold B. Lee renewed this charge in these words: "You're to teach the old doctrines, not so plain that they can just understand, but you must teach the doctrines of the Church so plainly that no one can misunderstand." (Address to Seminary and Institute personnel, Loyalty, July 8, 1966, p. 9.)

As you stay with the fundamental doctrines and gospel principles, adhering to the standard works, the words of the Brethren, and your Church Educational System outlined courses of study, seeking the guidance of the Spirit, you should have no trouble following this counsel.

I believe most, if not all teachers, will be in agreement with this counsel. The problem occurs on occasion when, in the pursuit of higher degrees, one becomes so imbued with the terminology and methods of a secular discipline, that almost without realizing it, the gospel message becomes compromised. The simple principles of the gospel should always be our basis for truth, not the disciplines of men.

When a teacher feels he must blend worldly sophistication and erudition to the simple principles of the gospel or our Church history so his message will have more appeal and respectability to the academically learned, he has compromised his message. We seldom impress people by this means and almost never convert them to the gospel. This also applies to our students. We encourage you to get your higher degrees and further your education. But let us not forget that disaffection from the gospel and the Lord's Church was brought about in the past by the attempts to reconcile the pure gospel with the secular philosophies of men. Nominal Christianity outside the Restored Church stands as an evidence that the blend between worldly philosophy and revealed truth leads to impotence. Likewise, you teachers will have no power if you attempt to do the same in your educational pursuits and classroom teaching.

Sometimes gospel principles are written with such erudition that the gospel is hardly recognizable in them. Worldly phraseology and authorities replace the scriptures and the prophets. You Institutes teachers need to be aware of this in teaching courses such as Courtship and Marriage, and in giving counsel on child rearing. Be careful of blending your worldly training to the gospel courses you teach lest you be guilty of diluting the pure gospel of Jesus Christ and end up teaching the philosophy of men mingled with a few scriptures.

President Clark's counsel to you on this matter is plain, "You do not need to disguise religious truths with a cloak of worldly things." (Charted Course, p. 6.) We ought to adopt the attitude of the Prophet Joseph Smith: "It matters not whether the principle (of the gospel) is popular or unpopular, I will always maintain a true principle, even if I stand alone in it." (HC, 6:223.) On another occasion he said, "It is our duty to concentrate all of our influence to make popular that which is sound and good, and unpopular that which is unsound." (HC, 5:286.)

In other situations some teachers have felt that they have to expound some new slant on a doctrine, or reveal sensational or intimate and sacred personal experiences from their own lives, or allegedly from the lives of the Brethren in order to

be popular with their students. You were not hired to entertain students or unduly dramatize your message. In President Kimball's words, you should not, "expound spectacular, strange, and exciting newness" in your teaching. (Address to the Seminary and Institute personnel, The Ordinances of the Gospel, June 8, 1962, p. 3.)

Some of our teachers have said, "I can see how the counsel to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ is applicable to gospel subjects; but what about subjects that deal in facts such as Church history?" I would answer this by saying that facts should not only be taught as facts; they should be taught to increase one's faith in the gospel, to build testimony.

The key to teaching Church history was provided by the Lord in His preface to the Doctrine and Covenants, section one: "I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments . . ."

(Now, note the purpose of these revelations.)

"That every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world; That faith also might increase in the earth." (D&C 1:17, 20, 21.)

Your purpose is to increase testimony and faith in your students. Should you wonder how this is done, carefully study how Mormon did it in the Book of Mormon with his "and thus we see" passages. A careful study of Orson F. Whitney's Life of Heber C. Kimball, or Matthias Cowley's Life of Wilford Woodruff will also demonstrate how one teaches facts and draws great lessons of faith therefrom. I would like to feel that all my grandchildren are edified, strengthened, and inspired as a result of your classes.

May I further restate something I said earlier this year at the Brigham Young University devotional assembly as it pertains to teaching Church history. I said then, "There have been and continue to be attempts to bring (a humanistic) philosophy into our own Church history . . . the emphasis is to underplay revelation and God's intervention in significant events, and to inordinately humanize the prophets of God so that their human frailties become more evident than their spiritual qualities." (Twelve-Stake Fireside, Brigham Young University, March 28, 1976.)

We would warn you teachers of this trend, which seems to be an effort to reinterpret the history of the Church so that it is more rationally appealing to the world. We must never forget that ours is a prophetic history. Our students need to understand this prophetic history. This can only be done by teachers who themselves possess the Spirit of prophecy and revelation.

We have had on occasion a teacher or two who have questioned this position with this challenge: "When and where can we begin to tell them our real story?" Inferred in that question is the accusation that the Church has not been telling the truth. A few teachers (and I emphasize that word "few"), have delighted in digging up alleged facts about certain Church leaders to expose their frailties. In view of the covenants taken in holy places, I would not have such temerity.

I would again remind you that your sole duty is to teach the gospel. You are

not "to intrude into your work your own peculiar philosophy, no matter what its sources or how pleasing and rational it seems to you . . ." (J. Reuben Clark, Jr., Op. Cit., p. 9.) Your teaching should not be the "enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith (and the faith of your students) should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor. 2:4-5.)

Permit me to offer you a word of counsel about writing books or articles. Some of you have desired to write, and we do not discourage that. Because of problems with some writings from some of our teachers who have put themselves in print, it is well to give you some cautions. Doctrinal interpretation is the province of the First Presidency. The Lord has given that stewardship to them by revelation. No teacher has the right to interpret doctrine for the Church members. If Church members would remember that, we could do away with a number of books which have troubled our members.

This same caution should be observed in interpreting the history of the Church. Has it occurred to you that one may interpret doctrine when he or she undertakes to explain certain events in Church history? To suggest, for example, that the Word of Wisdom was an outgrowth of the temperance movement in America and that Joseph Smith selected certain prohibition and dietary features from that movement and presented them to the Lord for confirmation is also to pronounce an explanation contradictory to the one given by Brigham Young. To suggest that Joseph Smith received "The Vision" on the three degrees of glory, Section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants, as he grappled for answers that contemporary philosophers were grappling for, is to infer an interpretation contrary to the Prophet's own.

We would hope that if you feel you must write for the scholarly journals, you always defend the faith. Avoid expressions and terminology which offend the Brethren and Church members. I refer to such expressions as "he alleged" when a President of the Church described a revelation or manifestation; or other expressions such as "experimental systems," "communal life," or "communitarianism" as they describe sacred revelations dealing with the United Order and Law of Consecration. A revelation of God is not an experiment. The Lord has already done His research. Revelations from God are not based on the theories or philosophies of men, regardless of their worldly learning.

Because of a great deal of misapprehension among some of our people regarding the United Order, President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., addressed the priesthood in 1942 on this subject. In his remarks he emphasized:

"The fundamental principle of this system was the private ownership of property. Each man owned his portion, or inheritance, or stewardship, with an absolute title, which he could alienate, or hypothecate, or otherwise treat as his own. The Church did not own all of the property, and the life under the United Order was not a communal life, as the Prophet Joseph himself said. The United Order is an individualistic system, not a communal system. . . The Church never was, and under existing commandments never will be, a communal society, under the directions thus far given by the Lord, the United Order was not communal nor communistic. It was completely and intensely individualistic."

To suggest that the Law of Consecration and Stewardship was a communal system is to assume a position at variance with a member of the First Presidency.

I would further stress that you avoid using labels which depreciate the calling of The Prophet of this dispensation, such as classifying him among so-called "primitivists."

Now, on another related matter, it has come to our attention that some of our teachers, particularly in our university programs, are purchasing writings from known apostates, or other liberal sources, in an effort to become informed about certain points of view, or to glean from their research. You must realize that when you purchase their writings, or subscribe to their periodicals, you help sustain their cause. We would hope that their writings not be on your Seminary and Institute or personal bookshelves. We are entrusting you to represent the Lord and the First Presidency to your students, not the views of the Church's detractors.

Third, and finally, your responsibility is to live as you teach. Be consistent in your life with the message you declare to your students.

The majority of you have provided strong, commendable examples of what a Latter-day Saint life and home should be. How many students have been induced into righteous decisions because of the examples of their religion teachers!

"I want to be just like them" is an often-heard expression referring to you as a husband and wife team. We think those expressions are well deserved and commend you for the examples you set.

We are pleased that so many of you, in addition to your teaching, are holding responsible callings in the Church. We commend you for this, for you have an obligation to do more in the Church than your vocation requires. The mission of the Church has never changed. It is that all members "seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion." (D&C 6:6.) As you seek to do this in your professional and service callings, you will have more of the Spirit to be with you.

We hope there is an excellent relationship between you as husband and wife. We hope that your home has in it the spirit of peace and love of the Savior, and that this is evident to all those who come into your home. In your homes you should not have quarreling and friction.

Last Friday, with our children, we celebrated the first fifty years of our eternal companionship, bolstered by daily love, devotion, loyalty, and unity, without a murmur from her lips. Yes, I know what it is as the eldest of eleven children to be reared in a home where I never heard a cross word between father and mother.

I was impressed by Elder Theodore Tuttle's tribute to Elder Boyd K. Packer and his wife in the foreword to Elder Packer's excellent book, Teach Ye Diligently. Speaking of Elder Packer's wife, Elder Tuttle wrote: "She it is who is his sweet-heart, his friend, and his quiet support. Because of her he can say, with complete honesty, 'I know there are families where parents can live together in love without a single argument for thirty years or more.'"

Though Elder Packer is now one of the Twelve, he was once a seminary teacher; then an administrator in the Church Educational System. He and his wife lived that example then as they do now.

Your home example may be a more powerful influence than you realize. Years ago, while in Washington, D. C., we had a prominent constitutional lawyer named John D. Miller spend an evening in our home. After an hour of visiting in the living room, Sister Benson and our daughters, who had been preparing the dinner, announced that it was ready. We went into the dining room, and the children started preparing chairs for family prayer. And so I said to Judge Miller, "Judge, it's customary in our home to have family prayer, daily devotion, morning and evening. Would you care to join us?" He said, "Yes, I would." Then he watched the children to see what they did, and then knelt at his chair. We called on our oldest daughter, who was then probably eight or nine years of age, to lead the prayer. She is now the mother of five children, wife of a stake president. Barbara offered a sweet, lovely prayer, much as your daughters would do, and then she added, "And Heavenly Father, bless Judge Miller that he will enjoy his visit with us and return safely to his hotel." That was all.

We drove the judge down to his hotel. Nothing was said of the incident. About six months later, this man was host to some twenty-five or thirty industrial, business, labor, and agricultural leaders at his winter home in Florida. After the dinner, they were seated in a large living room talking about problems facing the nation, and as men often do--more often I think than we realize--the subject turned to things of the spirit--to religion. And then John D. Miller, this fine Christian gentleman, not a member of the Church, told of this little incident that had happened in our home--this simple thing of family prayer. And he said, "Gentlemen, I went to my hotel that night feeling that I had not fully measured up as a father. We had never had devotion in our home with my children." And then he went on to tell of the power he felt there must be in the lives of children reared in a home where there is spirituality.

Let your homes radiate what you are, and that quiet influence will have a lasting impression on all who know you.

Now, let me speak to you on several other matters that relate to your example before the young people.

You, as a couple, represent the First Presidency in all you do and the way you appear. We expect that you will be conservative and well-groomed. The expression "follow the Brethren" has a broader meaning than some would apply to it. It means not only to agree with the counsel given to the Church by the Brethren; it also means to follow their example in appearance and deportment. As teachers, you need to ask constantly, "How would the Savior have me appear before others? How would He have me act?" You should not imitate in your dress worldly fashions or so-called "mod" expressions in your language. Your hair style should be in conformity with the standards of the Church. You are on the front line, so to speak, in impressing our young men to serve missions. Certainly you should provide them with an example of what we are asking future missionaries to conform to.

Because of your example and influence upon young people, they will come

to you from time to time for counsel on personal problems. May I urge you to develop a close relationship with their ecclesiastical leaders, so that when they do come to you, you can guide them to their bishops. This permits the problems to be handled in the Lord's way. Never must you get between the student and his own bishop.

Next I mention your responsibility for financial solvency. You should do everything you can to get out of debt and to stay solvent. I realize you need credit to buy your homes, or possibly advance your education, and sometimes transportation, but outside of this, you should pay as you go. You will not be able to purchase all the things you desire at once. Learn to postpone until you can pay cash. There should never be any question concerning any of our teachers' honesty and integrity. Pay your debts on time. There is no excuse for any teacher having a bad debt reputation in this program.

You should all be full tithers. That is a condition of your employment. You should give an honest day's work for your pay. This means that you are on the job during the normal working hours--even though you are not teaching classes during some of those hours.

You have been counseled repeatedly to "live in the world, but not be of the world." Sometimes some of our members want to live as close as they can to worldly standards, and yet qualify for a temple recommend. Live by the covenants you took in the temple--not on the fringes. You will be judged by the kinds of movies you attend, the way you dress, and the music to which you listen. Some years ago one of our teachers told his students that he used cola drinks and that it did not prevent him from holding a temple recommend. This was an indication of poor judgment on his part, and illustrates what I mean by "living on the fringes." Live the spirit of the commandments.

President Harold B. Lee made memorable this expression: "If you want to lift another soul, you yourself must be standing on higher ground." That "higher ground" is your persuasive example in keeping the commandments. So, to repeat President Kimball's counsel to you: "You will do all you teach your charges to do--in fact, to bear testimony, to pay your tithing, to attend all proper meetings, to attend temple sessions, to keep the Sabbath holy; to give Church service ungrudgingly, to have home evenings, and family prayers; to keep solvent, always honest and full of integrity." (Men of Example, p. 8.)

"What manner of men ought ye to be? asked the Savior. And His answer to us: "Verily, I say unto you, even as I am!" (3 Nephi 27:27.)

Now, tonight I've spoken directly to you. What I've said to you is to help you stay on course and render your message more effectively. As I stated in the beginning, we are much pleased with your service, your dedication, loyalty, and efforts to inspire the youth of Zion with testimonies of the gospel. So I summarize: Prepare yourselves spiritually; teach only the gospel of Jesus Christ; and live as you teach.

In Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life, he saw a man dressed in a white robe who beckoned him to follow him through the dark and dreary waste, which represented the temptations of the world. With the help of prayer, Lehi was led to partake of

the fruit of that tree, which provided him "with exceeding great joy." (1 Nephi 8:6-12.) We would hope that you teachers would be as men in white robes, leading our youth safely through the temptations of the world that they too may partake of the Tree of Life and have exceeding great joy.

And now, may I close with a blessing pronounced by President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., in his address to you in 1938. It is the same blessing we desire for you today:

"May God bless you always in your righteous endeavors, may He quicken your understanding, increase your wisdom, enlighten you by experience, bestow upon you patience, charity, and as among your most precious gifts, endow you with the discernment of spirits that you may certainly know the spirit of righteousness and its opposite as they come to you; may He give you entrance to the hearts of those you teach and then may you know that as you enter there you stand in holy places, that must be neither polluted nor defiled, either by false or corrupting doctrine or by sinful misdeed; may He enrich your knowledge with the skill and power to teach righteousness; may your faith and your testimonies increase, and your ability to encourage and foster them in others grow greater every day--all that the youth of Zion may be taught, built up, encouraged, heartened, that they may not fall by the wayside, but go on to eternal life, that these blessings coming to them, you through them may be blessed also." (The Charted Course of the Church in Education, p. 11.)

And now, it is my privilege as one of His special witnesses to bear my testimony to you.

I witness to you that God lives. He hears and answers prayers. Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world, and Advocate with the Father. These two Heavenly Beings did in very deed appear to Joseph Smith--the greatest event that has occurred in this world since the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I witness that this is the Lord's Church--even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He presides over it and is close to His servants. He is not an absentee Master. Of that you can be assured.

I witness to you that President Spencer W. Kimball is His living Prophet. I love and sustain him with all my soul. Listen to his messages, for that is what the Lord would have you understand for our day and time.

God bless you. I pray the Lord's blessings on you and your families. May you be ever faithful and true to the great trust the Lord and His First Presidency have reposed in you to uphold, sustain, and defend the faith. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.