are nourished by all prudent means, including those available in modern medical science. The ELDERS of the Church perform this ordinance of administering to the sick, as the scriptures prescribe (cf. James 5:14–15; D&C 46:20), and the healing or other blessings are then in accordance with the will of God.

Personal experience with miracles might confirm the faith of the recipients. Further, personal experiences with miracles may give others increased confidence in scriptural accounts of miracles.

Of all the miraculous gifts of God given to his children, the one of greatest benefit is the Atonement of Jesus Christ. By powers and means not understood by mere mortals, Jesus was able to take upon himself the sins of the world and make it possible for anyone by repentance, to escape the otherwise inescapable suffering of sin and the doom of death, and thereby return to the presence of God. “For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent . . . which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit” (D&C 19:16, 18). The miracle of forgiveness and the marvel of resurrection are supreme indeed.

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PAUL C. HEDENGREN

MISSIONARY, MISSIONARY LIFE

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accept Jesus’ injunction to his ordained disciples, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28:19). They accept, indeed, a reiteration of it in modern times: “Go ye into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature, acting in the authority which I have given you, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (D&C 68:8). Missionaries consider themselves emissaries of the Lord in proclaiming his message.

WHO ARE CALLED. In the first generation of the Church, married men frequently were called to be missionaries, and they left wives and families for an indeterminate length of time. In recent decades, the majority of missionaries have been young men and women who serve about two years.

Currently, the Church calls as missionaries, on a voluntary, temporary basis, single men from the ages of nineteen to twenty-six, single women twenty-one years and older, and older married couples with no dependent children. Missionary service is coordinated with military service as required.

Missionaries or their families generally cover the major costs of serving a mission. Missionaries called from developing nations may receive needed financial assistance from the general missionary fund of the Church. This assistance covers only basic living costs, as the Church has no paid ministry. No one is paid for missionary service.

As the Church has expanded, more and more missionaries have been called. Approximately 76 percent currently are young men, 18 percent are women, and 7 percent are couples. The number of retired couples accepting calls to serve missions is increasing, with many couples serving more than one mission.

CALLING AND TRAINING. The official missionary call is preceded by an interview, often requested by the prospective missionary, with the ward bishop, who assesses the person’s worthiness and spiritual preparation. Prolonged formal study to preach the gospel is not required, but LDS parents are expected to prepare their children for missionary service through family scripture study and participation in Church classes and programs. Parents are also encouraged to teach children basic nutrition, health care, and homemaking skills that are essential for missionary service.

When a bishop has approved a missionary candidate, he sends the recommendation to the stake president, who also interviews the prospective missionary. When this process is complete, the stake president sends the recommendation to the Missionary Department of the Church. Designated members of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles suggest a preliminary assignment for each missionary or couple. These assignments are then sent to the first presidency of the Church, who confirms or modifies them on the basis of inspiration. These procedures are in keeping with the scriptural admonition that “no man taketh this honour [of ministering in the Church or
preaching the gospel in the world] unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron” (Heb. 5:4). Missionaries may be called to serve in nearby states or countries or anywhere in the world where there is an established mission of the Church. A letter calling the missionary or couple to a specific mission, bearing the signature of the President of the Church, is sent requesting a reply of acceptance or rejection of the call.

The prospective missionary generally is allowed several weeks to prepare before reporting at an appointed date to the nearest Church Missionary Training Center (MTC). Often the newly called missionary receives a letter from his assigned Mission President with specific recommendations for the climate and mission service rules. Missionaries who already are fluent in the language of their assigned mission typically stay in an MTC for three weeks. Otherwise, they receive several weeks of intensive language and cultural training included with their courses in scripture study and methods of teaching the gospel.

Missionaries in an MTC also attend regular inspirational meetings and study classes. One day a week, they may attend a nearby temple and also write letters and take care of other personal needs. Sundays are devoted to attending regular Church services and studying the gospel.

At an MTC and in the mission field, missionaries are divided into administrative units called zones and districts. Single missionaries are assigned companions of the same gender who are studying the same language or going to the same mission. Married couples, of course, serve as companions to each another. Companionship is one of the most pervasive aspects of missionary life: a missionary never labors alone. The need for harmonious relationships between companions is urgent, and, although it can sometimes be a challenge, it usually leads to lifelong friendships. For missionary couples, it typically leads to an enhanced marriage relationship.

While in an MTC, missionaries begin to experience the meaning and rewards of full-time service to the Lord. The training is intensive. They do not watch television, listen to the radio, or go to places of entertainment. Letters, phone calls home, and nonmission business are limited. Their clothing is conservative business wear with distinctive name tags, except on preparation days or for service projects, physical-fitness activities, or special circumstances. The missionary’s time is accounted for on reports submitted to the MTC or mission president; the principle is that one’s time as a missionary is dedicated to the Lord.

Entering the Mission Field. When missionaries arrive in their assigned geographic areas, they are welcomed by their mission president and are given a brief orientation in the mission home or headquarters office. Each new single missionary is assigned to be trained by an experienced missionary companion. Missionary couples may be trained by another couple for a short time before they go to their assigned area within the mission.

All single missionaries are asked to follow a daily schedule somewhat as listed below, with variations as suggested by the mission president or as needed according to the customs of the country:

- 6:30 A.M. Arise
- 7:00 A.M. Study with companion
- 8:00 A.M. Breakfast
- 8:30 A.M. Personal study
- 9:30 A.M. Teaching and contacting
- 12:00 P.M. Lunch
- 1:00 P.M. Teaching and contacting
- 5:00 P.M. Dinner
- 6:00 P.M. Teaching and contacting
- 9:30 P.M. Plan next day’s activities
- 10:30 P.M. Retire

Missionary couples may be given considerable latitude with their schedules because they often fill several different assignments, such as helping new converts gain experience in administering a Church unit, serving as guides at Visitors Centers and Historic Sites, or serving as nonproselytizing representatives of the Church in communities that do not allow proselytizing.

If missionaries are serving where they are learning another language, they spend time each day in language study. They also are encouraged to keep journals and exercise regularly. Missionaries spend most of their time finding receptive people and teaching them the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Frequently they meet with people who have expressed an interest in knowing more about the way of life of their LDS friends and neighbors. Other people develop an interest in the Church and its teachings from media programs, street displays, pamphlets, or from simply seeing missionaries and inquiring about their background and purpose. When missionaries have time between
teaching appointments, they often go door to door through a neighborhood asking those at home if they would be interested in learning more about the Church.

Missionaries work closely with local Church members, teaching people in their homes, speaking in ward or branch meetings about the importance of missionary work and on other gospel themes, and participating in social and athletic functions when their duties allow. Ward or branch members are encouraged to invite the missionaries to their homes for a meal as often as they can, to ease the financial burdens and to free their time for missionary work. Church members are often grateful to have the missionaries in their homes as role models for their children, while missionaries appreciate an hour of relaxation, home cooking, and LDS family life. Missionaries also often depend on local members for transportation, repairs on bicycles or other equipment, and advice and encouragement. Often, members of the elders quorum or Relief Society volunteer to serve as companions to male or female missionaries, respectively, so that the two full-time missionaries can split up for an evening and double their effectiveness.

Missionary apartments, while far from luxurious, must meet certain standards for health and safety, minimal space, and furniture. Apartments are rented and often become “missionary apartments” as a succession of missionaries transfer in and out of an area. In some places, Church members have apartments attached to their homes in which they invite missionaries to live. Missionaries travel on foot, by public transportation, by bicycle, or in mission cars, assigned at the mission president’s discretion based on the distances missionaries must travel and other circumstances.

Almost every missionary experiences a test of faith and courage. The experience of telling people that one represents Jesus Christ and has a message that will change their lives forever leads to solemn introspection, earnest prayer, and continual study. While some missionaries have already moved through this process, others find that they must spend many hours in prayer and scripture study before they receive a TESTIMONY.

After several months of service, missionaries become proficient in teaching the gospel, and more effective in bearing testimony of its truth. If they are speaking a foreign language, they accommodate to its dialects. As they grow and mature in experience, they may be transferred to different areas in the mission and placed with different companions, or assigned to meet new challenges and work with new people. They may in time become trainers for newly arrived missionaries. One missionary may be called to organize and preside over a branch of the Church. Another may not do formal missionary work but be called to serve the needs of underprivileged people as a welfare worker or to teach English and cultural information to refugees awaiting resettlement. Other missionaries may be placed in charge of the finances or other business of the mission and do direct missionary work only in the evenings. Older missionaries are sometimes called to serve in temples as ordinance workers.

The tasks of a missionary often are traumatic. Missionaries may experience cultural shock, language barriers, health problems, personality adjustments, hostility, and sometimes severe persecution. Yet missionaries are, for the most part, dedicated, enthusiastic, and faithful, and later may describe their service as “the best two years” of their lives to that time. Companions encourage one another, and the missionaries gain a new perspective of themselves, of people, of the place where they serve, and of the gospel. Often missionaries continue their association with a foreign country or language through their choice of a college major or profession.

GOAL OF MISSIONARY WORK. The ultimate goal of missionary work in the Church is to invite all the inhabitants of the earth to come unto Christ, through personal testimony, “by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned” (D&C 121:41). People throughout the world respond differently to the gospel message. Some quickly accept the message and within a few days or weeks request baptism into the Church. For others, it may be more difficult to leave past traditions, overcome social pressure, or break personal habits to conform to gospel standards. Occasionally, political and economic pressures countermand the inclination to conversion. Others simply feel no need for religion. All newly baptized members are accepted into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19). Missionaries develop Christlike love for those they teach about the Church and for the people in the area where they
serve. They are grateful for those who “hear [the Lord’s] voice and harden not their hearts” (D&C 28:7).

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SPENCER J. CONDIE

MISSIONARY TRAINING CENTERS

In 1832 a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith in Kirtland, Ohio, directed the elders to tarry and conduct a solemn assembly to study the “doctrines of the kingdom,” as well as a variety of secular subjects, so that they might “be prepared in all things” to go out and preach to the people (D&C 88:70–81). This initial assembly became the basis for the School of the Prophets with similar purposes, which opened on January 24, 1833. When Church schools were founded in Utah during the latter part of the nineteenth century, they created programs for missionary training. In 1883 “missionary meetings” were added to the offerings of the Theological Department at Brigham Young Academy, the predecessor to Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Similar programs were inaugurated at Ricks College in Idaho and at the Latter-day Saints University in Salt Lake City.

As missionary training progressed, the first presidency approved a Church Missionary Home and Preparatory Training School. A Salt Lake City home was purchased, remodeled, and furnished to accommodate up to ninety-nine missionaries. Inaugurated in 1925, the week-long program for departing missionaries emphasized gospel topics, Church procedures, personal health, and proper manners. This home accommodated the outgoing missionaries until the 1960s, but as the number of missionaries increased, other facilities were needed.

Program at Brigham Young University (BYU). For several years prior to 1960, Church and BYU officials considered the advisability of offering language instruction to missionaries. The occasion to launch this program came when missionaries assigned to Mexico and Argentina experienced lengthy delays in obtaining visas. On December 4, 1961, the Missionary Language Institute (MLI) opened with a class of twenty-nine elders in temporary quarters in a Provo hotel and various BYU buildings. Through classes, leadership meetings, and conferences, missionaries attending the MLI were able to develop facility in Spanish as well as in self-discipline and missionary spirit.

To enhance this program, in 1963 Church leaders gave its director the authority and stature of a Mission President, and the MLI became known as the Language Training Mission (LTM). Portuguese and German were soon added to its curriculum.

In 1968 Church leaders decided to offer language instruction in all sixteen languages then being used by missionaries. To meet this major challenge, separate LTMs were established at Ricks College to teach Dutch and the Scandinavian languages and at the Church College of Hawaii to teach Polynesian and Oriental languages.

Scope Broadened. The need for missionary training increased with the expansion of the Church. In 1971 over 2,500 missionaries received training at Brigham Young University in classrooms and housing that became increasingly inadequate. In 1973 the Church Missionary Committee approved plans to build a complex in Provo large enough to meet the needs of all language training for missionaries and decided to combine the three existing programs there. By 1976 the first phase was established. This multimillion-dollar complex demonstrated the Church’s resolute commitment to missionary work.

Prior to 1978, while foreign-language missionaries were trained at the LTM in Provo, the Missionary Home in Salt Lake City continued to train the English-speaking missionaries. Beginning in 1978, however, all elders, sisters, and couples called from the United States or Canada reported directly to Provo for training, and the name of the facility was changed to Missionary Training Center (MTC) to reflect its more comprehensive program.

Organization and Administration. In the 1950s, the General Authorities became more involved in personal direction of missionary training. Although past MTC leaders had customarily handled policies and procedures through BYU,