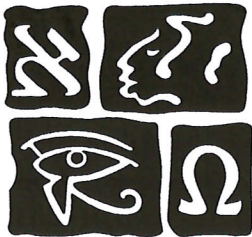




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Transcript

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Ed Pinegar

Missionary Work and the Book of Mormon

Summary:

Referring to passages in the Book of Mormon (which is the great converter), Ed Pinegar, former president of the Missionary Training Center, emphasizes the commission that all members of the church have to bring souls to Christ. Missionaries are expected to exemplify the virtues that they teach to potential converts, such as repentance-induced purity, charity, obedience, fasting and prayer, faith, knowledge, and commitment.

Transcript
Book of Mormon, Teachings

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Missionary Work and the Book of Mormon

Ed Pinegar

Missionary work and the Book of Mormon! In the Book of Mormon we are taught the very purpose for which it was created and translated. The purpose of the Book of Mormon is to show the goodness, the mercy, and the greatness of God to us; and the covenants he has made with us, as well as, and most importantly, a testament or witness that Jesus is the Christ. This is the message of the Book of Mormon and this is the message for all the world. And this is the message that missionaries take to all the world. And why is this the case? The Book of Mormon is the great converter. It has power to change lives.

When we get into the Book of Mormon we learn that the very essence of the book is to bring people unto Christ. When Moroni was finishing the book, and recording the very last portions of the book, we read in Moroni 10:32, "Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God." That was the last exhortation that Moroni gave in the book—hat we might come unto Christ and be perfected in him. Exaltation! perfection! We learn from Moses 1:39 that this is the work and the glory of God—the immortality and eternal life of man.

And now with the Book of Mormon as our tool it becomes the great converter. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "Man would come closer to God by adhering to the principles taught in the Book of Mormon than any other book." We want to come unto Christ. We want to know our Heavenly Father and the Book of Mormon. Yea, these restoration scriptures are the very key. The prophet Heber J. Grant said, "The Book of Mormon is, in fact, the great converter."

Now as we discuss this, there are six major areas that we will discuss in the Book of Mormon as it relates to missionary work. And this vision is important, for without the vision people perish. We need the revelation, we need the understanding of what the Book of Mormon can do.

1. Who is invited to come unto Christ? Who is the book for?
2. What is our responsibility as members of the Church and set-apart missionaries?
3. What must we do to be effective missionaries? What instruments prepared the disciples for the Lord?

4. What is the will of the Spirit, in missionary work, as taught by the Book of Mormon?
5. The very work itself
6. The power of the book in every setting of life

Who is invited to come unto Christ? We read from 2 Nephi 26:33, "For none of these iniquities come of the Lord; for he doeth that which is good among the children of men; and he doeth nothing save it be plain unto the children of men; and he inviteth them *all* (not some) to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile." The work is for everybody! Everybody is to come unto Christ and be converted in him, or rather through him.

The book itself, in Mosiah 28—will somebody read that for me please? Verse 19, Mosiah 28:19.

"And this account shall be written hereafter; for behold, it is expedient that all people should know the things which are written in this account."

So it is clear now that all mankind, all the children of God, have a right to know the teachings of the word of God—the Book of Mormon—and have a right to come unto Christ and be perfected in him.

What is our responsibility as members of the Church? Now, Moroni, when he was getting ready to finish the Book of Mormon, had not planned on writing the book of Moroni. He had put his conclusion in the book of Mormon and the abridgement of Ether. But he says, "I have a little space here," and Moroni wants to make sure that they all know these things are true. What is our responsibility as members of the Church, and as missionaries in the kingdom of God? In the book of Mormon, chapter 9:22, the Lord mentions to us, "Go ye into all the world," that they might hear the word of the Lord. Go ye unto all the world! Would one of you please read 3 Nephi 5:13 and see how Mormon (the abridger of the book), felt about the work of the Lord.

"Behold, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I have been called of him to declare his word among his people, that they might have everlasting life."

As a disciple of Christ, one who loves his brother, the very key is to make sure that missionaries preach the word, and that they love their fellowman. When we love our fellowman the first thing we want to do is share the gospel of Jesus Christ with him.

When Alma was with the saints at the waters of Mormon he was talking about what was required of those who were to be baptized. In Mosiah 18:8-9 he talked about being willing to mourn with those that mourn, comfort those that

stand in need of comfort, bear the burdens of those who have burdens to be borne, and then he concluded with being willing to stand as a witness for God at all times, in all places, and in all things.

As members of the Church we are missionaries. This is the dispensation of the fulness of times. This is our duty: to help world to hear the word of God that they might be blessed. Witnesses—what do they do? They testify! They testify of God! They testify of Christ! They testify of the kingdom, the Church, the gospel, the doctrine, the worth of souls, all truths! We are witnesses of the truth of the word of God.

Now, Alma described it this way when he said how he felt about missionary work. He says this is my glory and joy, perhaps I might be an instrument in the hands of the Lord to bring some soul unto repentance, and this is my glory and my joy (cf. Alma 29:9). This is better than being Mr. America, king of the road, or whatever it might be. This is the greatest thing—to be an instrument in the hands of the Lord to bring some soul unto repentance.

Now, the Whitmer brothers, in the early days of the Church, came to the prophet Joseph and said, “Joseph, what would be the greatest thing we could do?” Would one of you turn to Doctrine and Covenants, section 15, verse 6, and we’ll find out what the prophet Joseph received from the Lord, as to what would be of most worth to them. What would be the thing that mattered more than anything else in all of the world?

“And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father. Amen.”

So the bottom line, the duty of members of the Church, of set apart missionaries, is to build up the kingdom of God. We build up the kingdom of God by bringing souls unto Christ.

When Alma was giving his blessings to his sons, Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton, in Alma 36-42; it is interesting, in the last verse to Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton, he said to his sons, now remember, be sober in this work (cf. Alma 38:15).. Be serious, be solemn minded, and preach and teach the word. What a blessing to a son. Alma knew what mattered. So much of the time, in our earthly existence, we have our eyes set on the wrong target, the wrong goal. And the only thing that will ever, ever matter, now and in eternity, is Heavenly Father’s children. Our money will stay here. Our clothes will get worn out. Our hair will fall out. Everything will go. But the soul of man lives forever.

If we do not have this vision, as members of the Church, we will not have concern for our fellowman. It is kind of interesting—the vision of caring for another. When the sons of Mosiah were converted with Alma, they were so good,

and so nice, and so kind, so wonderful. They wanted to preach the gospel to everybody. This is what they said. This is Mosiah 28:3:

“Now they were desirous that salvation should be declared to every creature, for they could not bear that any human soul should perish; yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure endless torment did cause them to quake and tremble.”

Now think about that. Did they care about their fellowman? When we have that vision we will not only understand our responsibility and our duty, we will want to do it. Because you know what? Good deeds last forever. They last forever, isn't that neat? Every time we help somebody be happy by coming unto Christ, it lasts forever. To me that is exciting. I am sure the returned missionary will remember section 18, verse 15-16, how great shall be your joy with those souls that you have brought, and how happy the time you will spend with them in the hereafter. Yes, this is the joy of doing the work of the Lord.

We have the vision of our responsibilities and our duties. What must we do now, in order to become an effective missionary—a worthy and prepared disciple of the Lord? Yea, a pure disciple! Well, the first thing we need to do is to repent through faith on the Lord, Jesus Christ. It is very difficult to preach faith unto repentance until you have lived faith unto repentance. Too many times missionaries have difficult experiences because they do not realize they must live *before* what they teach today. We must live faith unto repentance.

We learn in the Book of Mormon that when the disciples, and the priests, and the teachers were called, they were to preach nothing save it was faith unto repentance. Faith unto repentance! And these could not preach this word until they had a change in their life. They had a mighty change. They had become pure disciples of Christ. And once you have had the conversion to Christ and the spirit is upon you, then you can preach these words so long as you continue to be worthy before the Lord.

Now what is the sacrifice we offer to be this worthy instrument in the Lord's hands? A broken heart and a contrite spirit. We are humble. We are totally dependent upon the Lord and our relationship with him. When we are humble we can be directed by the spirit, and then we can understand the things the Lord would have us do.

I will never forget the day when I was in England as a mission president and a young missionary had come in to see me. Every month we would have our little visit, interview together. And I would say, “How are you doing Elder,” and he would say, “Pretty good, president. Work isn't going too well.” And every month we would have more interviews and I could see something was wrong. He wasn't fulfilling the measure of his creation as a missionary. He wasn't a pure disciple in the hands of the Lord. And after four or five months the interview came along and

I said, "Elder, tell me—something is bothering you. I see it in your eyes, and you are not happy in the work, you are not enjoying the mission. Is there something I can help you with?" And then it happened. "Oh, president, I just couldn't tell anybody. I wanted to come so badly. And here I am." And then he unfolded the transgression. Because you cannot teach what you do not live, because he had not repented he could not preach the word of God. It is impossible to be a pure disciple in the hands of the Lord, unless we pay the price of repentance; for the spirit will not dwell with us. There is no other way. So, as a missionary we are repentant—full of faith.

As missionaries, if we are worthy disciples, we are full of charity, full of love. In John 13:34-35 the Lord says, a new commandment I give unto you, that if ye are disciples of the Lord, that you love one another. By this ye may know, ye will love one another. Charity is the pure love of Christ. Missionaries without charity cannot teach charity. As I would interview the missionaries in their mission, and I would see that they would start to become successful and they were happy. Every time they were successful and happy, I would say, "I see that you are so happy Sister/Elder/couple, you are doing so well. Tell me about it. What was the difference in your mission? What made the difference?" And they would say, "President, when I loved the people, and loved the Lord, and loved the work everything was wonderful. I guess you could say, president, when I had the pure love of Christ my mission became wonderful."

If there is no love the people will know that. Consider the oft-quoted saying, "Don't tell me how much you know until I know how much you care." As the missionaries would bring people into the Church by the power of the spirit, I would write the converts, and I would say, "Tell me about your wonderful experience." And they would say, "President Pinegar, I felt their love so much, I had to listen to what they said. And by listening I felt the spirit and I knew I had to be baptized. Yes, love was the first thing that started the process of conversion." Now, think about that as our relationship to God our Father and Jesus Christ. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

When Nephi was talking about the Savior in 2 Nephi 26:24, he said, "He doeth nothing save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world even that he layeth down his life [for the world]." Everything that God our Father and Jesus Christ have done for us is motivated by love. When our motive is pure it will be for the love of our fellowman. And you will always know where you are in your progression toward Godhood or to eternal life—it is based on how much love you possess.

In Doctrine and Covenants 4:5 we read about what qualifies a person for the work. It is interesting to note how often times we become skill-oriented in the work, rather than attribute-oriented in the work. It is interesting how the scriptures are always focused on the attributes. For, when the attributes are centered in your

heart you can learn the skills, and they will flow as an expression of love. We will get into that later. Section 4, verse 5. "And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work." The qualification for the work is charity.

What other things must we do to be a worthy, prepared instrument? We must learn to obey, to be exactly obedient like the sons of Mosiah. We learn that from Alma 57:21. They were blessed because they were exactly obedient. We learn also from Nephi that whenever he was successful he would do the things the Lord had commanded him because the Lord prepared a way. Nephi learned to obey. And the sad part is, if we don't obey, or if we are wicked, nefarious, or choose to be disobedient in any thing, we automatically lose the spirit.

In Mormon 1:13-14, will one of you read that for us? This is so important. This is a beautiful scripture because it teaches us that if we are not obedient and we choose to be wicked, which is disobedience, we lose the spirit. Mormon 1:13-14:

"But wickedness did prevail upon the face of the whole land, insomuch that the Lord did take away his beloved disciples, and the work of miracles and of healing did cease because of the iniquity of the people.

"And there were no gifts from the Lord, and the Holy Ghost did not come upon any, because of their wickedness and unbelief."

Thank you, my dear. In other words wickedness destroys the power to have the spirit.

Fasting and prayer. What does the Book of Mormon teach us about fasting and prayer? Now, remember the attributes of a missionary are what leads and guides him to be good, to be effective. In Helaman 3:35—you've got to read this one. We ought to just read the whole Book of Mormon today, but I know we don't have time! In Helaman 3:35, look at the results of fasting and prayer.

"Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God."

Now, is that powerful enough? Through fasting and prayer we become humble. Now, humility is total dependence upon the Lord and having a relationship with him. The fruits of humility are being submissive, meek, lowly, easily entreated, teachable; but, humility is having that relationship. We fast and pray and we have a relationship. Whose work is this? This is the Lord's work. When we do good, who does the good? God does the good, we are the instrument. So when we become humble we possess the greatest attribute—the beginning virtue

of all righteousness.

See, our missionaries are taught from the Book of Mormon. This is the restoration scripture. We become firmer and firmer in our faith. Faith is the foundation of all righteousness. Faith has three degrees, the prophet Joseph Smith taught in the school of the prophets: that of belief and hope, the living cause of all action, and the power to do all things. And through fasting and prayer we can become firmer in our faith.

Is faith powerful? When Ammon and his brethren were preaching they were coming back along the trail and met Alma. And they were so excited to see each other, they hugged and gave broadswords and everything. They were so excited to know they were all still strong in the church, and they had fasted and prayed much that they would have the spirit of prophecy, the spirit of revelation, and when they taught they taught with the power and authority of God. Now is that a good enough example of what missionaries need? The power of fasting and prayer gives us the power of God in the work.

The Book of Mormon teaches us that we must know the word of God in order to preach the word of God. We know the words through study and effort and always by and through the spirit.

Going back to that last story—when Alma met with the sons of Mosiah. Would someone please read for us Alma 17:2? Now, they are just meeting on the trail, and this tells another reason why they were such good missionaries, why they were so powerful. Look at the price they paid—what the Book of Mormon teaches us about being prepared missionaries. This is why the prophet asks everyone to read the Book of Mormon before they go on their mission, so they understand it better.

“Now these sons of Mosiah were with Alma at the time the angel first appeared unto him; therefore Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren; and what added more to his joy, they were still his brethren in the Lord; yea, and they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.”

I love that verse. Search the scriptures to know the word. Men of sound understanding. They waxed strong in the knowledge of truth. All because of the book! The word of God helps missionaries, helps all of us, live the word of God. We read from 2 Nephi 32:3 that the words of Christ will tell us all things what we should do. When we realize the power of the word we will then come to the point, as missionaries, that we will learn now and forever—that without the word we perish. Without the word we have no message! Without the word there is nothing! So the word is in fact, the personification of Jesus Christ, for he is the word. We learn from 1 Nephi 14:1, the Lamb of God is manifested in word and in power. We learn from the book of Revelation that Jesus Christ is the word. We

learn from the book of John that Jesus Christ is the word. And that's why, when we read the word, it is as if we have heard his voice.

I have to read you one scripture. I wasn't planning on doing it—section 18. It is so beautiful as it expresses what the word does for us in our lives, when we really come to know the power in our life. Verse 34 of section 18:

“These words are not of men nor of man, but of me; wherefore, you shall testify they are of me and not of man;

“For it is my voice which speaketh them unto you; for they are given by my Spirit unto you, and by my power you can read them one to another; and save it were by my power you could not have them;

“Wherefore, you can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words.”

We have a chance to *know* Christ through the word of God and that is what missionaries must do, and that is what we do to teach our investigators.

The spirit and the work. As we are worthy and prepared we can enjoy the spirit in everything we do. The spirit has such power the prophet Ezra Taft Benson has said the spirit is everything. The spirit teaches, the spirit converts, the spirit testifies, the spirit makes the difference as missionaries.

2 Nephi 32:5 mentions that the spirit will show us all things what we should do; Alma 17:9 that a portion of the spirit is needed to help the missionaries; Alma 17:3 that we can only teach by the spirit; 2 Nephi 33:1 that the spirit carries teachings into the hearts of the people; Alma 8:30-31 that we can be filled by the Holy Ghost to a point that we have power; and Moroni 8:26 that the spirit will fill us with hope and perfect love. Yes, it is the spirit that counts. And the Book of Mormon teaches us that without the spirit we can do nothing that is good.

We also learn from the Doctrine and Covenants that when the spirit speaks—the spirit speaks the words of Christ—it is the voice of the Lord, the word of the Lord. Let's read for a minute section 68:3-4 to understand the power of the Holy Ghost for us as missionaries:

“And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost.

“And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.”

That is very clear about what the Holy Ghost can do, and that is why missionaries depend upon the spirit to teach and help souls come unto Christ.

When the Savior was with the Nephite people and he was leaving, they knew that he would be gone. And I would like my dear friend to read for us 3 Nephi 19:9 as to the desire in the hearts of the people as it relates to the gift and the blessing of the Holy Ghost in their lives. Please.

“And they did pray for that which they most desired; and they desired that the Holy Ghost should be given unto them.”

They desired that the Holy Ghost would be given unto them. When missionaries teach they help the people recognize the spirit, and while recognizing the spirit they will have a desire to do good, for their minds have been enlightened, and they will want to come unto Christ. That is why when they feel the spirit people make changes in their lives.

Now to the work. The work of the Lord—bringing souls unto Christ. We bring souls unto Christ by preaching the word by the spirit, allowing them to feel and recognize the spirit, helping them make commitments to live the gospel, and by the fruits they will know the Church is true. And indeed this is the word of the Lord—that Joseph was a prophet, that Jesus is the Christ, we are led by prophets today.

We learn from Alma 31:5; let me read you this so you will understand why we do what we do as missionaries. What is so important when we go out to preach the word of God in the work of the Lord? We read:

“And now, as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God.”

Now the word of God has greater power to change men’s souls and women’s souls—all people—than anything else. So the Book of Mormon is teaching us, we must have the word to preach to the people. Now the word expresses the doctrines, the principles, and the concepts of the Lord Jesus Christ. Doctrines and concept and principles which are understood and appreciated bring greater change and behavior than preaching behavior. In other words, when a person understands and appreciates something they are more likely to do it. And if you are bent on saying “keep your room clean,” and, “be home at 10:30” and all these things you will always have value collisions because people are not always at the same level of conversion. Verse 5 of Alma 31 teaches us the principle. But when the word is understood it will cause changes in peoples lives. A lesson for parents! Teach your children the principle to understand and appreciate and even practice, and behavior becomes deeper, quicker, and lasts longer.

Now, as we begin to preach the word, in the missionary guide we learn a

group of words called, *the commitment pattern*. This is the way people are taught in missionary work today. Now, some might think that a commitment pattern is a new deal. Well you need to know that Ammon used the commitment pattern in exactness when he taught King Lamoni, and he just did it as a natural consequence of the spirit. I simply believe that the commitment pattern is a method of showing love by the power of the spirit. And that is what all great missionaries in the Book of Mormon did.

Ammon did it with King Lamoni. One of the great teaching experiences in all of the Book of Mormon is found with King Benjamin when he taught the Saints from Mosiah 2-5. King Benjamin loved the people, he taught the people by the spirit, and they made changes. Alma—the same thing when he was with Amulek. They used this expression of the commitment pattern.

Now, look at how the commitment pattern is worded and see how it ties in with everything in the Book of Mormon. Prepare the people. Ammon: I am your friend, I just want to help you serve with King Lamoni and you can trust me. King Benjamin: I have labored all my days in your behalf and toiled for my work too, and we love you King Benjamin. You see the relationship of trust. They were prepared, and as soon as they had that relationship of trust then they began to teach. They preached the word.

So you present the message and then you say, "How do you feel about this?" Ammon says, "How do you feel about this" to King Lamoni. He responded. When Alma was teaching the people in Alma 5 he asks over forty-three questions on how people feel. Have you experienced a mighty change? Have you been spiritually born of God again? And then we say, "How do you feel about this?" "I feel so good." King Lamoni's father says, "I would give away all my sins to come into this." Oh here you make a commitment so you invite them to come unto Christ. Alma did it. King Benjamin did it. Ammon did it. All the missionaries did it. The missionary guide is more than an expression of the doctrine taught in the Book of Mormon of how to teach. It is so good!

Well, we prepare them to hear the word that they might feel the spirit. When they feel the spirit we invite them to make a commitment. When they make a commitment then we follow up to make sure they do that which is right. In fact, as we preach the word we are always following up to help people be happy.

Now, when is this work successful? We'll go back now to some of the attributes that have been taught in the Book of Mormon. In Ether 12:14 we learn that Nephi and Lehi were so successful, and caused such great change among the Lamanites because of their faith. Because of their faith they were great teachers. We learn that when Nephi was preaching on his garden wall and the five were cast into prison and they were converted—they came out and guess what happened. In Helaman 9:39. The people testified and many believed "because of the testimony of the five for they had been converted while they were in prison." So faith,

testimony, and great missionaries in the work of the Lord always depend upon the Lord.

Remember when Aaron and Ammon were teasing one another and Aaron says, Ammon you do carry yourself away unto boasting. And Ammon says, I do not boast of myself, for I am nothing. And, then in Alma 26—let's read that. Let's read Alma 26:11-12 to see how Ammon felt about the work of the Lord, and how the Lord was eminently involved within that.

"But Ammon said unto him: I do not boast in my own strength, nor in my own wisdom; but behold, my joy is full, yea, my heart is brim with joy, and I will rejoice in my God.

"Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore I will not boast of myself, but I will boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things; yea, behold, many mighty miracles we have wrought in this land, for which we will praise his name forever."

How beautiful, my brother. Yes, in the strength of the Lord the work is done. Let's read another one. Let's read Alma 29:15, and see what kind of work ethic the Book of Mormon teaches us about the work of the Lord. Alma 29:15:

"Behold, they have labored exceedingly, and have brought forth much fruit; and how great shall be their reward!"

They labor exceedingly and how great shall be their reward. Now, we do see that the work is good. The work is productive as people are full of faith, work by the spirit, and are directed by the Lord in the strength in all things. All the qualities of righteous disciples are involved in being a truly successful missionary. But members are not the reflection or measure of a great missionary. A missionary's work is simply put in this phrase: "*Doing the will of the Lord.*"

Abinadi, the great prophet, is called to preach to the saints with wicked King Noah. King Noah is not a good a king! And Abinadi preaches to him and calls him to repentance. The wicked priests and King Noah get after Abinadi. Abinadi is almost fruitless in his work—no one listens. At least he doesn't know that anyone listens. And Abinadi says, I don't care what you do with me. I have a message to give so don't bother me until I am through my message. Then, after I am through my message whatever you want to do is okay. And they burn Abinadi at the stake! Because, he said all I want to do is the Lord's will. Abinadi was not aware of the great convert Alma who went on to establish the Church. Do you question one soul? One soul is priceless! One soul and a companion, exalted and sealed for time and all eternity, can be worlds without number. Abinadi did the will of the Lord!

Now, we have done the work and we've got them into the fold. What does the Book of Mormon teach us about new members? What are we to do? Let's read in Moroni 6:4, and we will find out after a person is brought into the Church, what

does the Church do—"O yippee we have another convert" and go on? Or do we continually nurture and bless them? Please.

"And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith."

In other words, once a person is brought into the Church we are continually nourishing them with the word of the Lord. Now, in the Church today you have seen how the missionary guide was written from the Book of Mormon. The new member discussions, as soon as they are given, as soon as they are presented, follow Moroni 6:4—continually nurturing with the word of the Lord.

Now, in the Church today we care about everybody. We send home teachers and visiting teachers. We encourage fathers to have family home evening, family scripture time, family prayer. That all might be continually nourished with the word of the Lord. And if some stray or become offended or have difficult times, make sure we don't say, "Hey we don't care about them anymore." In the Church today, as in all days gone past, and as the Book of Mormon has taught us, we are always reclaiming. Alma went to the Zoramites; Alma and the sons of Mosiah went to the Lamanites. We are continually striving to work with those who have come into the fold—active or less active, hurting or healthy, the Church is to save souls. The kingdom of God is to bless our fellowman. And this is what the Book of Mormon is teaching us.

Now, our dispensation has the duty. We have the book that can convert and bring souls unto Christ. If the Book of Mormon is true, and it is, Jesus is the Christ. If the Book of Mormon is true, and it is, Joseph Smith is a prophet. If the Book of Mormon is true, and it is, this is the Church and kingdom of God today. If the Book of Mormon is true, and it is, we are led by a prophet today. Yes, if the Book of Mormon is true, and it is, it resolves every concern of every living soul upon the earth today. For it was translated by the gift and power of God. And it is a true testament of Christ, and it will bless everyone and everyone's life in every moment of every day.

I carry a little card in my wallet that says, "Do as Jesus would do." And then another little card that says, "Is there anything in the Book of Mormon that would help you in this moment, at this time in your life?" When missionaries teach the gospel and someone says, "I don't know if I can stop drinking tea," we turn to 1 Nephi 3:7, and say, "The Lord will prepare a way, my brother." And the person says, "I'm so weak I just can't do it, I just feel so weak," we turn to Ether 12:27, men are given weaknesses that they might become humble. The Lord will give them strength to do what is right. And, if we need help the Lord said whatsoever is

expedient I will be there to help you. I will give you strength in all things.

The Book of Mormon is the word of God. It has power to change lives. I bear solemn witness to you today that this book changed my life and my family's life. For, every day for 15-20 years we read from this book and it made a difference. Missionary work and the Book of Mormon—that is why the Book of Mormon was written. That all might come unto Christ. I bear witness of its truthfulness, and its purpose for our life today, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.