



President's Message:

September/October 2004

Working with Members

During our time as missionaries one of the great opportunities we have is that of working with members and their leaders. Developing a mutual trust and being able to work together will strengthen and more firmly establish The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the stakes of the Canada Edmonton Mission. *Preach My Gospel* states:

“The relationships you establish with Church leaders will bless you for the rest of your life. These are important relationships as you and Church members seek to bring the restored gospel to Heavenly Father’s children. Understanding the basics of how to work within the ward [or branch] organization will help you move forward with greater focus and power.”

Good first impressions are absolutely vital when seeking to develop a feeling of trust. Always keep in mind that one can never have a second “first impression.” There is only one chance. Make it your best. In our most recent round of zone conferences we spoke at length about developing trust. We emphasized the importance of missionaries never being “out of service.” In order for members to have a firm belief in our honesty, truthfulness, and ability to teach, they must always see us as being “in the service” of the Lord. Our appearance and attitude play a significant part in developing confidence and reliance.

Trust is also developed by having the “How can I serve and help you” attitude. Ammon’s experience with King Lamoni provides an excellent example of the service concept. As Ammon entered the land of King Lamoni, he was taken, bound, and carried before the king. It was the king’s pleasure to slay the bound captives, to retain them in captivity, to cast them into prison, or to cast them out of the land. King Lamoni in questioning Ammon asked if he wanted to “dwell in the land among...his people.” Ammon responded by saying, “I desire to dwell among this people for a time; yea, and perhaps until the day I die.” The king was “much pleased” and loosed Ammon’s bands. Ammon had made a good first impression. King Lamoni was so impressed that he wanted Ammon to take “one of his daughters to wife.” Ammon responded, “Nay, but I will be thy servant.” Ammon had developed trust. He had made a good first impression. The “How can I serve and help you” attitude had been a success.

From *Preach My Gospel* we read further:

“Local Church leaders and members are your best allies. Respect them and strive to build good relationships with them. As you work with these leaders, remember that they have other responsibilities associated with their callings. Seek to be a blessing, not a burden, to the leaders of your stake, ward or branch...Counsel with the bishop and ward mission leader concerning your plans and activities. Make sure that what you do supports the ward mission plan.”

Too often we see an adversarial roll between missionaries and members. In the Canada Edmonton Mission there should never be a moment in which missionaries and members are at odds with one another. Missionaries must work with members; they must grow to love them unconditionally; and they must be patient and understanding as they seek to help. Each of us must be constantly aware of the impressions we are making. We must be willing to help wards, branches, and stakes learn how to develop trust relationships with their non-member friends and confidence in approaching them. We must be willing to help with reactivation efforts. We must be willing to working with part-member families. We must learn the “return and report” principle and keep ward and stake leaders abreast of our activities and responses to referrals.

Our success depends on our ability to work with members in a trusting, meaningful relationship. We thank you for your willing service, your support, and for your Christ-like attributes. May the Lord bless you with continued patience, discernment, and unconditional love as you work with the wards and branches to which you have been assigned.

President David M. Randall

