
Ministry
in the
Home



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INTRODUCTION

In the Fall of 1943, the Priesthood Class of the Stone Church School, under the guidance of its teacher, Patriarch A. K. Dillee, began the study of "Priesthood Visiting." The interest which this group manifested in this phase of priesthood work seemed to demand something more than an ordinary treatment of the subject. It was decided by the class to make a thorough study of this important function of the priesthood. A comprehensive list of questions dealing with every conceivable phase of priesthood visiting was compiled by the members themselves, this list to be used as a basis for the class discussion. It was also the opinion of the group that such an exhaustive study as this should not be lost, but should be preserved in some permanent form in order that other members of the priesthood as well as those of the class might be given the benefit of these discussions. It was agreed that the discussions each Sunday should be taken in shorthand and later assembled in some conveniently usable arrangement to serve as a guide for the men of the priesthood, particularly those new to the work, in the matter of procedure and technique of the visiting minister.

The notes were taken and later transcribed in keeping with the plan outlined above, and a committee was chosen to arrange and prepare the material for publication. After several months, the work of the committee was completed, and early in the Spring of 1945, this pamphlet began to take form.

Following is the list of questions which was used as the basis for class discussion.

A DISCUSSION OF MINISTRY IN THE HOME BY THE PRIESTHOOD CLASS AT THE STONE CHURCH

W. F. Bolinger, President
A. K. Dillee, Teacher
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1. What qualifications must one have to do successful priesthood visiting?
2. What preparations and arrangements should a member of the priesthood make before the visit?
3. Should there be previous preparation on the part of those to be visited?
4. Should appointments usually be made in advance?
5. What should the visiting officer know of the needs and attitude of the people to be visited?
6. Should we give the family some foreknowledge of the purpose of the visit?
7. What message may properly be presented in the priesthood visit? What matters discussed or what lessons taught?
8. What may successfully be presented to families who are part members and part non-members?
9. Should non-members be visited in the interests of the church?
10. Should visits be made to new members; also members just moving in with whom we are not acquainted?
11. What should our approach and message be for the indifferent? Careless? Fault-finders? The disaffected and those in transgression?
12. Should we insist upon visiting those who object to being visited?
13. Should we attempt to force our religious views on non-members who are not interested?
14. What approach should be made to non-members who are interested?
15. Should we visit and strive to comfort the bereaved?
16. Are friendly visits as well as official visits advisable?
17. May a friendly visit be changed into an official visit? If so, at what point and how?
18. Is it possible or likely that an elderly member of the priesthood can successfully visit the young, particularly those of teen age? Likewise, can a young officer successfully visit the aged?
19. Is it possible to interest young people in visits by the priesthood and get them to participate.
20. What helpful instruction may the visiting officer give

to parents of children nearing the age for baptism, and what instruction may be given the children themselves? Also, how may parental objection to baptism at eight years of age be met?

21. What is embodied in the instruction, ". . . attend to all family duties?" (D. & C. 17:10)

2. What are the most favorable times for visiting?

23. What orders of the priesthood are apt to visit together most effectfully when paired together?

24. May the district supervisor properly visit with any of the members of the priesthood in his district?

25. Is it advisable for a member of the priesthood to visit accompanied by his wife?

26. Is it advisable for a member of the priesthood to visit alone?

27. Should homes of members of the priesthood be visited?

28. What procedure should be followed when it is evident that Church Court action may follow the visit?

29. Should parents where there is a baby be encourage to have it blessed? At what age of the baby?

30. Should visiting officers observe the effect of visits, and follow up?

31. How important in visiting is personality and personal appearance?

32. How important in the visit is the life, character and ability of the visiting officer?

33. Why is it so difficult to get men of the ministry to do home visiting? How may this be overcome?

The above questions are those which the class felt were vital. The answers and discussion subsequently presented, while in more or less narrative form, are not set forth as the ideas of the committee, but as the concensus of opinion of some forty members of the priesthood who participated in the study.

The succeeding pages are submitted with the hope that they will be helpful to men of the ministry in their God-ordained task of "shepherding the flock."

Signed:

The Committee

J. E. Kelsey, Chairman.

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NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL PRIESTHOOD VISITING

I

To Visit Successfully a Minister Should Have a Solid Background of Knowledge.

Some Things He Must Know:

The Scriptures.

The first fundamental law of teaching stated as a rule is: "Know thoroughly and familiarly the lesson you wish to teach; teach from a full mind and a clear understanding." As the visiting minister is concerned primarily with the religious life of those he visits, it follows naturally that to teach and explain the religious truths of the Scriptures he must know them.

Our Own Church.

Since we believe that our own church is the Church of Jesus Christ our Lord, restored in the latter days, and that its philosophy is the truth and that it is divinely commissioned to represent God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son, surely it must be at once recognized that a thorough knowledge of its doctrines, history, organization and officers; also its current program, problems and projects is imperative.

Other Churches.

As the visiting minister will frequently come in contact with those who are members of other religious denominations, it is necessary that he have a sufficient knowledge of other churches and their beliefs to enable him to point out their likeness and their difference and show the superiority of our own church. This however, if done at all, should be done with kindness, tact and tolerance.

As Through a Knowledge as Possible of the People to Be Visited.

If a visiting minister is to help in supplying the spiritual needs of a person or persons, he will be compelled to know them well enough to know what their needs are. These needs would comprise a list that could not be compiled. Scores of suggestions could be offered but a complete list would be endless. In fact, their most urgent need might not be spiritual at all; it might be something to do with family life, finance, health, education, recreation, etc.

To know what the needs are the minister must know his people thoroughly.

Age of the Visiting Minister.

It is thought by some that an elderly man of the ministry cannot successfully visit the young, especially those of teen age, and vice versa. This does not necessarily follow, for

some of our most able and successful visitors are elderly men. This is as it should be, for the experience of the visiting minister is of great assistance. It is not a matter of age but of ability. Young people will respond quickly and enthusiastically to the visit of an old man who has a sympathetic understanding of the interests and problems of youth and who can look at these from their point of view.

Likewise a young minister who is enthusiastic, capable and wise may in the right kind of a visit greatly encourage and strengthen elderly people who like to have the assurance that their fondest aspirations, their hopes for achievement and the institutions they love and cherish are safe in the hands of the coming generation.

Here the ministering agent needs to be a good listener much more than he needs to be talkative, and he will learn many a valuable lesson for himself in listening to the aged. He should be able to lead them to avoid being morbid and depressed, even in the face of trouble or suffering. Cheerfulness is an imperative quality in such a visit, not assumed, but genuine, for cheerfulness cannot be put on or laid aside like a garment. To be effective it must be a quality of the young minister's life.

There may be a few exceptions to the general rule in this matter of age. If the visit is purely in the interest of some activity that is exclusively for young people, then perhaps the visit might better be made by the right kind of a young person. The same would hold true for elderly persons.

Participation.

It is possible and advisable to get young people to participate in visits of the minister, not by a series of embarrassing questions but by bringing out their ideas on matters of vital concern to them. Having succeeded in doing this, the minister who is wise and tactful may help greatly in assisting them to develop right ideas and to correct mistaken ones.

A pastor once reversed the usual procedure of visiting, with splendid results. The plan was about as follows: Making a list, the pastor invited them one at a time to his own home. He led them to do most of the talking, getting them to express their opinions on how the church services could be improved and made to serve more effectively the young; what additional activities could be engaged in by the church; what services or activities might (in the light of present conditions) better be discontinued, etc. By this means the pastor received some valuable, useful information and made the young men feel they were making a helpful contribution to the work.

Which Orders of the Priesthood Should Visit Together.

Because of similarity of functions elders and priests are apt to visit together more satisfactorily than when paired together with other orders of the priesthood. The same is true of teachers and deacons. This arrangement is provided for in Doctrine and Covenants, 17:10-11.

These are not, however, hard and fast rules that must not be varied. There might be circumstances that would make it necessary for other combinations of the priesthood to visit together, and in a highly organized locality such as we have in Independence, Mo., with our group system, the elder in charge should visit occasionally with each of his associates to observe and to help them improve their methods and to give them the benefit of his knowledge and experience (if as should be he has these qualities).

The same may be said for the divisional supervisor and perhaps for others occupying in administrative positions.

The Minister's Wife.

A minister might on some occasions very properly visit accompanied by his wife. It would depend very largely on the wife and the nature of the visit. If the purpose is to get acquainted and the visit is of a social or neighborly order, and if the wife is the type that meets strangers well and is of a kind and friendly nature, the visiting minister would be greatly assisted by her presence.

The minister must not feel that his prerogatives are being intruded upon because others visit. Almost everyone, as well as the ministry, should visit—laymembers, women, young people, children. We should be a cooperative, neighborly, friendly people. One of the best ways to show these qualities is by visiting, especially to those who are newcomers among us or who are in trouble or in need.

Visiting Alone.

Ordinarily two men of the ministry can visit together much more effectively than one alone. By their wholeheartedly supporting each other, the visited person gets the benefit of the combined wisdom and inspiration of the two or double what would be received from one.

Then, too, if persons of the opposite sex are being visited this eliminates the possibility of unfavorable suspicion or comment.

There are, however, exceptions to this general rule. There might be circumstances that would make it necessary for a minister to visit a person alone. To illustrate the point: President F. M. Smith believes that the patriarch is the logical minister to whom confessions may properly be made, an opinion concurred in by perhaps all the patriarchs in the church. If a

patriarch were visiting an offending member to receive his confession, usually no one else should be present. Even then such a visit should be arranged so as to protect both the member and the patriarch and avoid suspicion or gossip.

Summary.

Summing up the necessary qualifications for the successful visiting-minister:

He should be a man of character, whose life, reputation and example command respect. He should be wise, kind, cheerful, patient, tactful, humble, enthusiastic, energetic, thorough, cooperative, spiritual, clean in clothing, body, language and mind. He should be possessed of a pleasing yet forceful personality. If to these can be added an extensive experience, so much the better.

Why the Dearth of Visiting; Cause and Cure.

There are several reasons why it is so difficult to get sufficient ministry in the homes. The element of time enters in very prominently. In the high pressure, busy times in which we are living it is frequently difficult to find times convenient for people to be visited.

Most of our visiting ministers are busy men whose daily occupations keep them employed most of the time. So far as the minister is concerned this perhaps can best be overcome by budgeting one's time, setting aside such portion of time as can reasonably be employed in this work, consistent with his occupation, home responsibilities, etc.

However, much of the failure is due to a lack of understanding of the importance and need of the work of visiting, and the results to be attained. Men who qualify for this work and engage in it faithfully and persistently are practically unanimous in their testimony of the joy they find in it and the large measure of good resulting therefrom.

THE PURPOSE OF PRIESTHOOD VISITING

II

In modern revelation God says: "This is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and the eternal life of man." What better or higher purpose can man have than that which God places first in importance? His purpose should become the purpose of His priesthood. Our Heavenly Father desires that man shall have fellowship with him. If we are to have fellowship with him, we must become like him, having the same mind and objectives, working the same works.

The purpose of visiting is closely associated with the major purposes of the Church: the Evangelization of the World and the Establishment of Zion. For working purposes these objectives should be broken down into smaller and more immediate undertakings. How can the visiting priesthood assist in making these objectives the working goals of each individual member of the church?

The visiting officers should seek to develop in the individual member a strong faith in God, an appreciation of his purposes, and a knowledge and understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus. They should encourage each individual to develop a healthy body, a clean and intelligent mind and a well rounded-out Christian character. The visiting priesthood should foster among the members the development of a real appreciation for the church and a desire to participate in its services and goals. They should endeavor to help every member to realize the wonderful opportunity which is his of assisting in the building of Zion.

A well-directed program of visiting should serve to instruct the Saints in the use of the tools for the accomplishment of the above objectives, such tools as living a godly life each day; making sacrifices for Christ's cause; participating in the work of the church; obeying the financial law; preparing themselves for more intelligent and effective service by studying the standard books and other literature of the church, reading other good books and periodicals, taking part in classwork, participating in civic and cultural activities, making friends, developing stimulating avocations, and being good neighbors.

PREPARATION

Priesthood Preparation.

III

Read again No. 1, "Necessary Qualifications for Successful Priesthood Visiting." To possess legal authority does not qualify one for a task. One must have the requisite knowledge for the task and wisdom and skill in using them. To have attained these qualifications as set forth therein, one must have made broad and intensive preparations in study and labor. Although the above discussion of qualifications may be considered general in their nature, they are none the less important. They are indispensable. Probably ninety per cent of the value of the visit is dependent upon the qualifications of the visiting officer. Intensive study will bring the knowledge of how to visit but the skill of using this knowledge comes from the actual performance of visiting.

There should in most instances be specific preparation for a visit. Learn as much as possible about an individual or family before the visit is made. In the case of a family: what are their occupations, interests, activities? Who are their friends? What service physically or spiritually can you render? What is it you expect to do? What response do you expect from them? The visiting officers must have this information before effective ministry can be rendered.

Careful and prayerful study of the needs the family as a whole and as individuals must be made in light of the information obtained in the first contacts. The type and content of the ministry needed may not be known without thorough study with the help of Divinity. If the ministers have not made as thorough study as possible God may find it difficult if not impossible to bring to them the direction they need.

As thorough a study of these needs should be made as an engineer makes on an engineering problem. This means thorough and complete study of every influencing phase of the problem. The answer to every phase must be obtained before the solution can be obtained. The following illustration from the engineering profession parallels in principle that of priesthood ministry to a family.

A member of an engineering firm has a problem to solve. He must study thoroughly every possible solution of the problem and must have every possible bit of information to every solution. Each solution and part of solution must be carefully weighed as to its relative value. After all this labor has been performed it may be necessary to obtain the final decision from the chief engineer. If a thorough and complete study has been made the chief engineer can quickly make a decision. But if only part of the information needed for a decision is available the problem must be given more study and his time has been wasted.

One may say that professional men have special training for their work. Would it be expecting too much to expect men of the priesthood to have special training for their work? Many of the problems the priesthood are expected to help solve are more far reaching in their results than those of the engineer.

Visit by Appointment.

Some members of the priesthood think that an appointment should always, with few exceptions, be made for a visit. They admit there may be some rare exceptions to this rule.

Visiting by appointment does give the housekeeper an opportunity to have the house in order to receive visitors. It is unfair to her to come in unexpectedly. It is not to be expected that the house will always be in a condition to receive visitors.

The requirements of modern life demands long hours of regular and special schedules of labor. There are also many regular and special appointments for the evenings which cannot be easily broken. This presents a difficulty in finding a time when both the visiting officers and the family can arrange for a visit. But the visiting officers must make their schedule conform to the convenience of the one to be visited.

Some of the priesthood report that individuals sometimes fail to keep the appointment for a visit. This surely must have been a case of forgetting the appointment rather than an avoidance on prepose. If an individual does purposely avoid a visit, then the priesthood are justified in making an unannounced visit.

A visit by appointment also gives the individual to be visited an opportunity to make some preparation for the visit. If given some time to think over his problems the individual could bring them to the priesthood more clearly defined than without previous thought.

On some occasions the priesthood have been specially directed to make calls when no previous arrangements have been made and a timely ministry has been performed.

Some of the ministry testify that they have been passing houses with no intent to call but have been specially directed at that moment to enter the home with wonderful results ensuing.

Should the Purpose of the Visit Be Known to the One to Be Visited?

Under most circumstances the answer to the above question is yes, but there may be times when it is advisable to withhold the purpose of the visit. The reason for the visit may be such as to cause the one to be visited to avoid the visit.

Only a few years have passed since it was quite generally considered that a visit by the priesthood was for the purpose of correcting some fault in the individual. Thanks to educational processes we now know that every member of the church

needs a priesthood ministry that can only be accomplished by visiting. Ministry from the pulpit is too limited to reach many of the needs of the members.

If the visit is general, or for some specific purpose, a foreknowledge of the purpose gives the one to be visited opportunity to make as much preparation for it as he cares to do. Snap judgment is seldom good judgment.

WHOM SHALL WE VISIT?

IV

The answer to the above question might be briefly answered by quoting in part Doctrine and Covenants, Section 17, paragraph 10: "The priest's duty is to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament, and visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret, and attend to all family duties . . ." But such a general answer does not bring to us the importance and breadth of this instruction. It is the purpose of this discussion to call attention to the types of individuals and some of the factors and conditions of such visits. It is generally, if not universally, agreed that all orders of the priesthood are visiting officers.

By reading the entire paragraph, one will note that not just once, but twice the Lord says: "And visit the house of each member." The variety of qualifications of the different orders of the priesthood suggests a variety of conditions and reasons for visiting. Experience has very definitely proved this to be true. The conditions and reasons for visiting are as many as there are individuals involved, each one having some peculiarity due to the background of the individual, but a number of general types will be discussed in the following pages.

The Needy.

Jesus said: "For the poor always ye have with you." The fact that we do constantly have the poor places a permanent responsibility upon the priesthood. But those who are seemingly permanently poor are not the only ones who may come under this heading. It happens quite frequently that there are those who because of economic uncertainties, such as depression, money panics, misfortunes, etc., are in temporary need. Often the individual who under normal circumstances has been able to supply the family needs, in time of depression or misfortune may, because of pride, hide the need for help until unnecessary suffering results. Such conditions need not be if close contact with and friendship for every member are continuously maintained by the visiting priesthood. It is possible that the ministers may not sense some of the needs of a family as quickly as a woman might. The women of the church are eminently qualified to discover the needs of a family, and this phase of work can be adequately cared for by the women's organization.

In the apostolic church, deacons were chosen and ordained by the laying on of hands as standing ministers of the church, and one of their duties was to look after the poor and needy. The men chosen were not second-rate individuals assigned to an unimportant task. One of the finest Bible characters was

Stephen, the martyr, one of the seven chosen for this important task. This office and responsibility were given back to man kind in the Restoration, and are to continue because of the need for them. But such work can be accomplished only by those who know where need exists. While it is one of the special callings of the deacon to look after the needy and the poor, that responsibility also falls upon every member of the priesthood.

The Sick

"Is there any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sin, they shall be forgiven him." James 5:14, 15. Administrations have brought blessings in body and spirit to many; developing in the individual faith to such an extent that God can come into his being and set up those forces that may instantly, or in time, bring the curative power needed. A visit for the purpose of administration is not the only kind that is of benefit to the sick and afflicted, but a visit filled with kindness, hope and cheer will work wonders.

Probably, nothing is so potent in combating disease as a cheerful, hopeful spirit and outlook on life. Many persons in a serious condition as a result of sickness or accident have completely recovered their health because they willed it so. This "willing it so" has often been brought about by kind and loving association of friends, who in the time of need have made life worth living. How frightening and despairing it must be to one in dire need physically and spiritually to be left alone, deserted, without a friend! Much as we may try, we cannot prevent the passing from this life, at some time, of our friends and loved ones, but how comforting it must be for one who must pass from this life to do so holding the hand of a friend who loves him. Many a person has brought joy, happiness and curative power by a friendly visit. It has not only brought benefit to the sick, but also satisfaction to the one doing the visiting.

The Bereaved.

Among the many calls upon a minister, or pastor, there is none in which he feels so powerless as when death invades a home. There seems so little one can do to alleviate the pain of bereavement. Because of this helplessness on the part of the minister, he is tempted to do nothing. He should bear in mind, however, that though there may be very little he can do in a material way, yet this may be the time he can perform a valuable service.

This is a time of intense feeling. Small things may be magnified all out of proportion to their normal values. A failure on the part of the minister to perform the service of sympathy

or help, may leave bitterness in an aching heart which it may take years to erase. The bereaved usually sense the inability of others to share in their loss; hence, any genuine act of sympathy or help means a great deal. This is a time above all others when the spirit of hope and calm assurance is the spirit for the priesthood member to radiate.

Good judgment and tact are needed on such an occasion. Do not stay longer than is necessary. Help so far as required should be offered immediately, but no interference should be attempted. A desire to help but not to interfere will usually find the proper service to render. There may be instances in which there is no relative to see that all arrangements are made for the undertaker and the funeral, or the relatives may be inexperienced. In such case the minister may find it necessary to look after these details.

The Faithful Member.

Probably, the faithful member, who attends the church services regularly, pays his tithes, makes generous freewill offerings and is continually rendering service to the church, may not need visiting as urgently and often as some others, but at times a visit from the priesthood may be of great worth in renewing his courage and zeal. No one can continuously give out good fellowship, hope and cheer without continuously receiving the same. And where do they get these things? From fellowshiping with those having these qualities. As has been before quoted, "the priest (and all other orders of the priesthood) shall visit the house of every member."

The need is not only proved by the statement from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, but also by experience. Many faithful and strong members have testified to the benefit from an occasional visit of this nature.

The Priesthood and His Family.

Members of the priesthood and their families are quite likely to be forgotten in the program of visiting. This is especially true of those of the higher orders of priesthood. They are expected to give out good influence and encouragement without provision being made for receiving these elements. Every individual, without exception has had his fondest dreams and desires frustrated. Though his aspirations be of the highest quality they often come to naught. In these times of disappointment a deacon, teacher or priest may bring just the message the one of higher rank and responsibility needs.

It has been related that the late Joseph Smith spoke very appreciatively of the visits of the priesthood in his home. Though he was a man of tremendous faith and courage, he valued their visit, not from the standpoint of seeing them do their duty, but because of the ministry of the Spirit of God through the means He has ordained.

The minister's family too should be visited. The father may be giving so much of his time to helping others that his family is neglected. Such neglect has caused bitter resentment, especially on the part of the young of the family, which has resulted in killing forever their interest in the church. Their interest might have been made to grow into an abundant harvest of service if wisdom had been exercised. The father may have been wise and considerate of his own family and may have been always blameless in his example and teachings, but this is not always sufficient because it is rather to be expected of him with his own family. The same teaching from one outside the family may have more weight because they are not considered to be over-anxious, as in the case of the father.

A son or a daughter of a minister is often held up to ridicule by his or her associates. They cannot do this or that questionable thing because they are the preacher's boy or girl. Under such stress of desirion the young person will do things his judgment tells him not to do rather than be called a "goody goody." Then, too, the mistakes and shortcomings of a minister's family are magnified many times beyond their proportion. The whole psychological set-up puts them under a strain to which others are not subjected. Some good, wholesome, dispassionate counseling from an outside source may bring a balance of reason and strength of character that will turn sorrow into joy and satisfaction.

Newly Baptized.

Baptism is the door into the kingdom of God. It is the process of a new birth. Those who have gone through that experience are new born babes in this new life. They need protection, guidance and training for their new responsibilities. It is the duty of the priesthood to furnish some of this guidance and training.

What books and papers are suitable for their study? What classes should they attend? Where can they find their places in the services of the church? Every member of the priesthood should be able to answer these questions correctly. They should be qualified to answer for these new members any question of doctrine or practice of the church, and to lead them into an ever expanding interest for this knowledge and understanding. The public services of the church are not sufficient to supply all these normal growing requirements of new saints and if they are not supplied by visiting and personal association when they are wanted, the desire for them will cease. Interest is very strong at this time. A failure to furnish guidance, or a breakdown in the quality of the guidance may be fatal.

New in the Neighborhood.

When members move into a new locality, they should be visited immediately by the priesthood. If they are not particu-

larly interested in the church they may never voluntarily hunt up the church building and attend services. It is regrettable that there are members who place such low value on their membership. Some of our members have been lost to the church because they were not visited at the proper time. Some of our neglected members have been won over to membership into other churches because the minister or members of that church have shown interest in them.

In large congregations the member will have more difficulty in finding his place in the church work. Some assistance at this time will be very helpful. If he is entirely unknown to the membership of the local branch it may take a long time to find opportunity to function in the church.

The Indifferent.

Indifference is probably the hardest state of mind to combat, but no normal individual is entirely indifferent to everything. In fact, only those who are completely unbalanced mentally could so be classified. This fact, that every normal being is interested in something, leaves opportunity for the entering wedge.

It will be necessary to approach such a one from his interest. This approach is recognized as good salesmanship. The church had better be kept in the background until an interest has been aroused. Discover the person's interests and hobbies; start on common ground. This effort will be successful only if we have nothing to "sell" to him, but have a genuinely brotherly love for him. A good neighbor is more effective than a good minister, especially at this time. If we can have a common interest in one thing, this may soon be widened into kindling anew, or for the first time, an appreciation for the church and its program. Show by your life, not in word only, the value of the gospel.

Nonmembers.

Nonmembers: (A) Antagonistic. (B) Uninterested. (C) Interested.

Visiting nonmembers might properly be considered the work of evangelization, which the general church organization assumes as one of the major purposes of its existence. Though the general church makes evangelization one of its major objectives, with special organization, training and priesthood calling, yet every lay member and local member of the priesthood of every order has some responsibility in this field. The statement in the scriptures that "he that is warned should warn his neighbor" is not only scriptural but is true in experience. If all efforts in proselyting were left to missionary services conducted by ministers under general church appointment, the work would surely suffer. Example is much more effective than precept. The membership and local priesthood have a fine op-

portunity in the field of living to bring the value of the church to nonmembers. What we are speaks so loudly others cannot hear what we say, hence the importance of a clean Christian life.

(A) We have no right to thrust our religion upon the antagonistic. Such an act only increases opposition. A fine example of clean, honest intelligent conduct is more effective than anything else in breaking down prejudice.

Everyone should know his neighbor and be interested in sharing the "good news" of the gospel with him. Care should be exercised in order that the attempt to share will bring pleasure instead of offense. We should not attempt to "sell" him something. Visit as an individual, not as a minister, and thereby avoid the "professionalism" of your ministry. Being "official" causes offence.

When a new family moves into a neighborhood, an excellent opportunity presents itself for making a contact which may ripen into friendship, and if the family is composed of nonmembers may develop interest in the church which finally culminates in membership. This method of early contact has been used in some of the large cities, in well organized political parties, by having the ward worker call immediately to see if the newcomers needed any service he could render for their comfort. This act generated friendship which was turned to the benefit of the political organization. This method is excellent though the purpose above cited is questionable.

In a certain city the priesthood organized for a thorough canvass of every home in the interest of the church. They knocked at every door. One member of the team said many times the door was slammed in their faces, sometimes they were invited in, but no conversions resulted from their efforts. They considered the method not very effectual. The method probably lacks the friendly and timely approach. If some ground work had been well laid beforehand, more favorable results might be expected.

(B) In our daily labors we meet many persons who have no particular interest in religion. A casual remark may arouse the individual to ask questions. If possible let them take the initiative. Do not force the conversation. Some may have no interest in the church because they know nothing at all about it. Give them a chance to develop an interest but be careful. Do not overstate your religion.

(C) Many church families contain some nonmembers, who have never seen what seems to them to be a good reason for uniting with the church. This furnishes a rich field for labor. Individuals of the family who are members may have tried to convert them but without success. Often, someone outside the family can have a stronger influence than members of the family; at least they may be the deciding factor.

An affirmative, but charitable, position about your own church is always the proper approach. Never deride or attack the other. Do not try to prove the other person wrong.

The Careless.

Nonmembers as well as members of the church can be classified as careless with regard to their moral and spiritual values. It is the calling of the priesthood to be interested in both. The task of the church is twofold: evangelization of the world, and the establishment of the cause of Zion. All of this is centered in individuals.

Some members of the church place a low evaluation on their membership. They are careless in their conversation, dress, business dealings and responses to some moral situations. Not only do they break down their own moral fiber and influence, but they also injure the influence of the church. Tactful teaching, especially by example, may bring an awakening to the erring one. Sometimes the appeal to the group's interest may be more potent than to his individual welfare.

The circumstances of life may have been such that the nonmember has seen no need for religion, or at least has not recognized that need. Into every life crises are sure to come. A philosophy of life and an understanding which the religion of Jesus Christ will bring to an individual are of inestimable worth, providing the elements of hope, faith and sometimes the greatly needed virtue of charity.

Men of the ministry should study the benefits of citizenship in the kingdom of God and be capable of explaining these values to the careless one. This cannot be explained by simply stating that the Bible says so. Something more deep and fundamental must provide the answer. The Bible may not be an acceptable authority, so the ministry must be qualified to use the acceptable authority, or authorities chosen by the individual.

The Disaffected.

Individuals sometimes become dissatisfied toward the church because of the act of some individual member, or the local or general church. Members, and sometimes the priesthood, fall below their high calling and thereby cause others to become estranged. The exercising of patience and kindness on the part of the priesthood with such is much more effective in arousing the affection than stern disciplinary measures. Nothing is gained by a hasty intolerant spirit or an attempt to punish. Time is a great healer.

Disaffection for the church is more often centered in persons than in principle. The value of the church certainly is not lessened by the failures of an individual or group of individuals. There may have been an actual violation of principle,

but it does not help the situation by wanting "to get out of it all." If a group or local church does go astray in its acts, the one who severs his connection with the body has no opportunity to help correct the wrong. This should be emphasized to him. In this case as in all others "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Association with the righteous would prevent much of this loss.

The Faultfinders.

William James, the great psychologist, says in substance that we find the things for which we look. If we look for the bad, the mean, the despicable, we will surely find them. Just as surely we will find the good, the beautiful, the true if we look for them. Finding fault, or greatly exaggerating a trivial error, can be practiced until it cankers our soul.

Mr. James says we can, according to our choosing, cultivate either faith or skepticism. Faith is not blind credulity, it must have substance, and that substance can be found if we look for it. There is a hymn in the Saints Hymnal, "Look for the Beautiful," which should be made the motto of our lives. Fault-finding is a common failing, often making "a man an offender for a word." Tolerance, faith, hope and charity will prevent us from having such a grievous fault.

Those Who Object to Being Visited.

A visit should usually be mutually pleasant for both the visitor and the visited one. Often it is the type rather than the visit itself to which they object. There is seldom, if ever, any objection to a truly friendly visit.

The priesthood should not force themselves upon persons who object to being visited, except under certain circumstances which will be discussed later. Persons have a right under most circumstances to choose the time and purpose of a visit, and their wishes should be respected. The "official visit" is often objectionable, especially where the visiting officer announces he has come for an "official visit;" opens the "meeting" with prayer, or hymn and prayer, and then proceeds to question each one, especially the children and young people, if they attend all church services, including the prayer meetings; say their prayers night and morning, etc., and if the answer is no, gives a lengthy lecture on the evils of such failings.

Sometimes it is not the purpose of the visit but the individual member of the priesthood to which people object. It is regrettable indeed if the visiting officer has been guilty of some act of dishonesty, a moral sin or questionable business dealing. If he knows his ministry will not be as effective as some other, he should get another who could minister acceptably to go in his stead. The pastor may be the one that will be received, and certainly should be called under such conditions.

The objection may be because the individual is in transgression, or has committed an offense against someone. Under such circumstances, it may be necessary to force a visit upon him. A little patience upon the part of the visiting officer may be worth a great deal.

The Transgressor.

An offense or transgression may be against an individual or the church as a whole. Doctrine and Coverants, section 42:20, 21, 22, 23 and the official Church Court procedure quite clearly outline the procedure in case of offense against an individual and the church, for a number of categories of transgression. It is recommended that the priesthood become thoroughly familiar with the procedure so that grievous mistakes may not be made.

A hasty move against an offender may do more harm than good, but on the other hand undue delay may encourage sinful habits, which if continued cause the individuals to become hardened transgressors. The interest of the sinner and of the church both are at stake. If mercy is unjustly granted the offender, it becomes unmerciful to the victim of the offense and wrongs the church by encouraging sin without restraint. Love, mercy and justice must apply to the innocent victim of the offense as well as to the sinner himself.

Great wisdom and care should be exercised by the church officer that he does not spend his time and energies on trivial offenses. Tact should be used in bringing the true value of the complaint to the one making the charge.

All efforts in visiting should be directed toward bringing redemption to the sinner, saving him from his sins, but if reconciliation and restoration cannot be effected, the offender should be brought before a court of elders for trial. "My disciples, in days of old, sought occasion against one another, and forgave not one another in their hearts, and for this evil they were afflicted, and sorely chastened; wherefore I say unto you, that you ought to forgive one another, for he that forgave not his brother his trespasses, standeth condemned before the Lord, for there remaineth in him the greater sin. I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men; and ye ought to say in your hearts, Let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds. And he that repeneth not of his sins, and confesseth them not then ye shall bring him before the church, and do with him as the scriptures saith unto you, either by commandment, or by revelation. And this ye shall do that God might be glorified, not because ye forgive not, having compassion, but that ye may be justified in the eyes of the law, that ye may not offend him who is your Lawgiver." D. C. 64:2, in part.

THE MESSAGE

V

Priesthood Need Excellent Working Knowledge.

The most important element of a visit is the message which the priesthood bring. That message should be affirmative, helpful and strongly fortified by knowledge and wisdom on the part of the visiting officers. This presupposes an excellent working knowledge of the contents of the three standard books of the church, the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the revelations contained in the Book of Doctrine and Coverants. The Restoration has for its foundation the revelations contained in these sacred records two of which were given to Joseph Smith the Seer by angelic messengers and the very Son of God himself.

The normal individual craves spiritual food just as naturally as animal life craves water and food for the physical being. (See John 21:15-17; Book of Mormon, pages 644, 645; Doctrine and Covenants 105:6).

The messages usually should be for every member of the family, the children as well as the adults. Participation by the children should be sought and received by making them feel free and at ease in a natural, friendly atmosphere.

Reading the church's official periodical, the Saints' Herald, should be encouraged by the visiting officer. God admonishes us to be an informed, enlightened people and to work intelligently in his kingdom. To do this we must know what the program of the church is. To be able to recommend some specific features or articles in the Herald to the individual who is not reading it is more effective than general counsel to read it.

There are still individual members and families who do not know the simplest requirements of health. For this reason the message of the visiting priesthood may include general counsel relating to health and sanitation. It is not expected that the priesthood prescribe medical treatment for disease, but advice to consult a physician may be just as essential to the well being of the members as any spiritual counsel the visiting officers could give.

One of our traveling missionaries tells of two incidents where common sense on the part of the visiting elder saved the lives of two small children. On one of the islands in the Pacific a young child with a penny lodged in its throat was slowly choking to death. The elder was called to administer to the child which he found sitting upright in its mother's lap. He took the little one in his arms, turned its head down, shook it, and the penny fell out. In the other case a child was gasping for breath. Seemingly it was dying. When the minister entered the room, he found several people sitting around in a close small area smoking tobacco. The missionary, a strong healthy man, could scarcely breathe in the smoke-filled room. Quickly

he opened the windows and doors to clear the smoke away and provide fresh, life-giving air for the lungs of the baby. Then he administered to the little sufferer. The next day when he called again, the baby was much better and well on the way to recovery. The missionary says he believed in the administration which he performed as a minister for Jesus Christ, but he thought the fresh air did more good in this instance than the administration itself.

Visiting Divided Families.

The message to be taken to a home where part of the members are Latter Day Saints and part are not should depend largely upon the ground work laid by those of the family who are members. If this ground work has been carefully and intelligently laid, those visiting the home as ministers will not find it difficult to bring about religious unity. They should vary their approach to fit the need of that particular family depending on whether the nonmembers are affiliated with some other denomination, or are not connected with any church organization at all. If they are members of some denomination, the visiting priesthood should invite them to talk about their church and its beliefs; voice appreciation for what they have said, and express a conviction that the world is better because of the sincere beliefs of the founder of their faith, and that the Lord worked with various individuals during the Reformation period until the time arrived for the Restoration of the gospel. Our ministers then should explain the Apostasy, the Reformation and the Restoration movements.

Talking With Interested Nonmembers.

Many people become interested in the latter-day movement by discussing the gospel story with some of the church membership. The visiting priesthood should strive to increase their interest by answering their questions, reading or quoting from the Scriptures, and relating personal experiences. They may also suggest that they listen to radio programs sponsored by the church. They should invite them to attend services at the local house of worship; be there to meet them and introduce them to the pastor and other friends. The priesthood should be prepared also to tell them the story of the church, describe its officers and their duties, and to prove, when this becomes necessary, that this is the true Restoration of the gospel in latter days, by using both sacred and secular history with reference to time element, place and the principles of gospel as taught in the three standard books. The scriptural authority for the official organization, and the doctrinal principles are most convincing to the nonmember.

The Friendly Visit.

Let us consider a friendly visit. Brothers Jones and Thompson are visiting Brother and Sister Brown who recently moved into their district. After welcoming them into the district, asking them about their work and how they like their new home, they should feel free to spend the remainder of the evening in getting better acquainted, relating spiritual experiences which have come as a result of obedience to the gospel. It is well to remember also that a friendly visit may be made with your neighbor over the yard fence, just discussing current events.

Official Visiting.

When priesthood members visit officially, it is important that they do so in the spirit of friendly interest in the family. If the family is building a new home, the officers should show keen interest in the project by praising certain workmanship or arrangement of the house. The wise minister will approach those he is visiting through some interest of their own, a hobby or avocation. Listen to them talk, exchange ideas, and in this way establish friendship and confidence.

The visiting officers do not become officials for the church, or to the family, by simply telling them: "This is an official visit." They become official representatives of the church when both church and family trust them and regard them as friends.

If a family of members has been guilty of misconduct, when they are approached by the visiting officers in a friendly spirit, they often acknowledge their guilt and being in a repentant spirit, ask to be forgiven for their mistakes and follies and permitted to start their spiritual life anew. Having been forgiven by the church, they still have a long road to travel and they need spiritual help. If they receive it, they may become lively stones in the kingdom; if they do not receive any attention, they probably will drift away again and be lost to the church. In this connection let us think of the example of Jesus with the woman taken in adultery (John 8). He said: "Go thy way and sin no more." To the thief on the cross (Luke 23) he said: "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." In both instances Christ recognized a repentant spirit. They were guilty of wrongdoing; they were sorry; they would turn from sin unto righteousness. Jesus came to save mankind. They felt this through the words he spoke; they would not betray his confidence in them. Ministers for Christ today must have a similar attitude toward repentant members.

Teaching the Blessing of Little Children.

When ministers of our church visit in Latter Day Saint homes, or in the homes of friends of the church, they should ascertain if the young children have been blessed by the elders. All parents should be encouraged to have their little ones

blessed. This ordinance should be cared for early, preferably as soon as mother and baby are able to attend a service. The blessing of babies is one of our most beautiful and appealing ordinances. There have been instances when through this sacrament alone, a nonmember parent has become interested in the faith of the latter days.

Aiding Parents Who Have Children of Baptismal Age.

In homes where there are children who are nearing the age of baptism, or who have reached the age without asking to be baptized into the church, the visiting priesthood should shape their message to include instruction for both the parents and the girls and boys. Latter Day Saint parents who are rearing their children with the expectation that they, too, will someday be effective workers for Christ, will teach these young ones in such a way that they will look forward to the day of their baptism. This teaching should begin quite early in the life of the child (Doctrine and Coverants 68:4), and the priesthood should discuss this obligation with the parents, the methods of teaching which are effective, and kindred topics. The ministers should stress the task of the parents to create a desire within the child to look forward to baptism when he is eighty years of age and also to live righteously, keeping the commandments of the Heavenly Father.

The priesthood should acquaint such families with the purpose of the pre-baptismal classes now being held in most of our congregations. These classes are a great help in preparing the boys and girls for baptism. In them they are taught to believe unwaveringly in God and his Son Jesus Christ and also in the fundamental principles of the gospel and the law of the church. If such classes are not available in the community, the priesthood should talk with the parents and the children, as wisdom and the Spirit of the Master direct, explaining the gospel provisions and principles.

The visiting officers also should be prepared to meet objections raised by parents who feel that an eight-year-old child is too young to understand what he is doing. The priesthood should remind such parents that they are admonished so to teach their children that they will understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ as the Son of God, baptism, and the laying on of hands for the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, when they are eight years of age. Otherwise the sin rests upon the head of the parents. (See Parental Responsibility, Doctrine and Covenants 68:4). (Read also Doctrine and Covenants 28:13). In Gen. 17:11 the Lord places the age of accountability at eight years, and experience has taught us that this is the proper age for baptism. Facts and percentages show that more children whose parents are members, unite with the church at this age than any other.

Instructing Concerning Family Duties.

When visiting in the homes of the members the priesthood find many opportunities to carry out the instructions given them in Doctrine and Covenants 17:10 to "preach, teach, expound, exhort them to pray vocally and in secret, and attend to all family duties." The visitors will vary their message to fit the need of the family. If, for example, the family problem should be financial difficulty, the priesthood should be able to help them solve the matter, or direct them to someone qualified in this field from whom they may receive advice. If the problem is one of family relationships in which husband and wife are uncongenial, instruction is needed to help bring about a feeling of good will and a greater degree of unity in the home. One pastor listened gravely to a good sister in his congregation who was complaining about her husband's lack of interest in her and in their home. Then he suggested that she meet her husband at the door with a smile each evening, dressed in her neatest house dress; that she have the evening meal ready to put on the table; that she manifest interest in his work, and above all, that she be cheerful and happy. "Try this, and let me know if it works," he said. Some weeks later the sister met her pastor and gratefully informed him that his suggestions had worked, and that their home-life was once again happy and united. (Read John 17:21-23).

The problem of sex as a topic of discussion should be met by the visiting officers with frankness and sincerity. If they have given this subject some thought and study, they may help the family in a practical way. Otherwise, it is better to direct the family to some good doctor, or to the reading of certain books on the subject. Today our young people in college and university discuss this topic openly in their classes, and this helps to stimulate individual discussion between young couples planning marriage. Thus is created a better understanding in the adventure of matrimony.

In some homes the priesthood will discover that the parents are failing to deal with their children with the result that both parents and children are missing the greatest opportunity which comes to them, the opportunity of becoming better acquainted with each other, enjoying a relationship in which a son becomes a partner, a father a hero. In such cases the visiting ministers should counsel the parents to study and worship with their sons and daughters, go with them on hikes and other outings, and share as many experiences as possible with them.

In a few homes instructions on cleanliness and sanitation are necessary. In cases of this kind the priesthood may find it efficacious to enlist the aid of the women's organization or of the church school. A child, reared in an untidy, unclean home, began attending church school. The teacher realized that the children had not been taught to be clean. She reported the mat-

ter to the school director, asking his advice. "Teach her," he said, "By stressing in the class the next few Sundays, how important it is to keep clean. Teach her that cleanliness is next to godliness." Two weeks later the teacher reported that this had worked. "The little girl came to class this morning scrubbed clean." (Scriptures: Psalm 24:4, Isaiah 52:11, Matthew 23:22, Doctrine and Covenants 38:9, 85:20).

RESULTS

VI

In all fields of endeavor "results" seem to be the yardstick used in the measuring of the success or the effectiveness of that endeavor. Some types of activity lend themselves much more readily to this form of measurement than others. It is relatively simple to determine whether a certain process or procedure on the production line in a factory is more effective than another by the results obtained, both in quantity and quality of the finished product. Likewise, a salesman can soon learn which territory is the best for the disposal of his product, measured in terms of sales results from his efforts. He also learns the best methods of approach for each type of customer and he verifies the wisdom of his choice of approach in each instance by the results obtained. The farmer makes his choices of seeds and soils on the basis of results which he expects to secure at the time of harvest. In fact, in every useful and gainful activity, the "result" is the motivating force, and the factor which determines the procedure to be followed to obtain it.

In virtually every field of man's effort, there are certain well established principles which must be observed in order to obtain the desired goal or result. The chemist, surrounded by his test tubes, realizes the importance of adhering to his formulae; the physicist in his laboratory must ever keep in mind the principles of gravity, deflection of light and sound, the law of levers, etc., if he would achieve the results he desires; the engineer must have a working knowledge of certain mathematical principles and formulae, if he would obtain the results necessary to his profession. We might go on indefinitely naming our examples to illustrate the importance of the observance of natural laws in the physical world in which we live and of which we are a part.

In this world of God's creation, we come to realize more and more that every thing, both animate and inanimate, conforms to certain principles or laws, if it would fill the measure of its creation. This idea likewise carries over in the work of the ministry. Shepherding the souls of men is the most important work in the world, but because results are not easily measured, it has not been easy to set up procedures that will be universally effective. In this task, we are dealing in human behavior, which is never quite predictable. However, it is possible for the minister who plans to enter the homes of his members, to set up certain objectives or goals which he hopes to reach by his visit or series of visits as the case might be. Sometimes these objectives are set for him by force of circumstance, and other times he must search them out for himself. Once he has determined the result desired by the visit, he should make an attempt to analyze his procedure in the light of

the need and the circumstances existing in the home to be visited. For instance, if the home is divided, the result which he hopes to reach is the conversion of the nonmembers, or if converted, to secure their agreement as to a date for baptism. Perhaps the visit is for the purpose of stimulation—regular church attendance and the keeping of the laws of the Church, which requires, of course, a different procedure. Sometimes it is the duty and privilege of the priesthood visitor to go into a home to bring about harmony between or among its members, and this will often require a different type of approach and procedure.

Obviously, then, the result has everything to do with the nature of the preparation and the procedure relative to the visit. Sometimes the result is specific in its nature, and is of course more easily determined. On other occasions, the result is more general and the measurement of its achievement is not always easy. Often visits are made and no immediate results are discerned. Probably none are apparent for years, but who can tell how far-reaching the effort may be? The seed, having been sown, may bring forth fruitage at some later day. Therefore, it is most important that careful preparation be made for each visit, not only as to procedure, but in a Spiritual way. The man who ministers in this capacity should do so in the Spirit of Christ, whose servant he is, and whatever the desired result may be, it stands fairly certain of being accomplished in God's own time and way.

The Follow-Up.

Every minister, experienced in visiting, will concede that only on rather rare occasions can results of lasting value be attained by a single visit, especially where the objective is general in its nature. There must be a series of visits, carefully planned and seasoned by the Holy Spirit if real goals are to be reached. This program of visiting is fittingly termed the "follow-up."

The frequency and number of visits in the "follow-up" program are determined by two main factors, namely; the nature of the result desired, and the personality of those to be visited. Perhaps a brief discussion of these two major factors might be in order.

If the result desired is of a special character, as in securing the decision for baptism, to bring the blessing of healing through administration, investigating and settling a court case, bringing about reconciliation between members of a home, extending of sympathy and help in time of bereavement, etc., the number of visits required can be determined more or less easily, because the results are of an objective nature, and therefore, it is more obvious when they have been attained. However, when the visits are to be made for the purpose of

bringing instruction and guidance to members of the family relative to their duties to the Church and to each other, or to raise the Spiritual level in a home, etc., it is more difficult to know just when the job has actually been accomplished. It is not the intention of this discussion to convey the idea that the visiting program should ever be suspended or considered at an end just because a certain result has been achieved. As long as there is sin and imperfection among the membership of the Church, and this includes the priesthood, there is an urgent need for visiting. Each specific result attained should bring a challenge for greater effort to bring about continued growth and development of the Saints; that their normal and Spiritual level of living may be constantly moved upward until their lives reflect the Spirit of Christ continually.

The other factor, that of personality does have much to do, not only with the procedure of visiting, but with the number and the frequency of such visits. Some individuals require constant prodding and the setting up of goals before them to keep them in line of duty. This type of person frequently is nonstudious. Sometimes he is just too busy with his every day affairs and fails to take the time for meditation and study, hence he needs to be confronted often with new appeals and varied stimuli in order to keep him conscious of his duty and his need for self improvement and growth in the Church. Others are more studious, meditative, and probably more serious in their Christian warfare. They set their own goals and plan their own courses on the basis of their study and thought; they seem to have the power of development resident within themselves, and need to have only a little guidance and encouragement now and then. Obviously, this type of person requires fewer visits and at less frequent intervals than the one formerly described.

It is imperative that the visiting priesthood should study their membership and their needs in order to set up an intelligent "follow-up" program. This study and the subsequent execution of the program will require all the common sense, sympathy, love, and understanding that the minister can command, coupled with an ever increasing measure of the Divine Intelligence, if the people are to be helped, and the great work of the Kingdom accomplished.