

# *Let Your Light Shine*

HARTMAN RECTOR, JR.

I heard a story some time ago about a young man, a teenager, who came home too late. He had violated his curfew, and his father, waiting for him as he came in the house, delivered a 2 ½-minute sermon about how he should get in on time, how he would need to have strength if he was going to fulfill his mission on the earth, and how he had to have proper rest and sleep. “The early bird gets the worm,” he said, “and you can’t get up early if you’re tired and sleepy.” Like most teenagers the young man had a sharp comeback: “That worm must have been up too early, or the bird would never have gotten him.” The father’s response was that the worm had been out all night and that his getting in too late was how he had gotten into trouble.

It is important that we understand why we are here, and this institution is dedicated to making that purpose known to us. Such men as Truman Madsen convey a vivid understanding of why we are here and what our potential is—our purpose. Brother Madsen is a great missionary, and I hope each one of you is too, because you have that responsibility. I would have spoken to you tonight at some length about service. I’m not going to do that, although I may come back and do it—if I get invited, that is.

## **The Influence of Righteous Living**

May I say that you never know where your influence will reach, and you never know what’s going to happen in the lives of people that you touch. Shortly after I was baptized in Japan during the Korean War, I came back home to San Diego. I had found the truth, and I was sure that everyone in the world was looking for the truth. I was going to give it to them, whether they wanted it or whether they didn’t. I joined a car pool that went from my home in Chula Vista, California, to North Island, my duty station. It was about a forty-five-minute ride in each direction. In the car pool with me were three other lieutenants (I was a lieutenant at the time) and one enlisted man. The enlisted man’s name was George Whitehead; he was a first class ordianceman. I figured, “This will be a cinch. It will be easy to convert these four. They can’t get out of the car, and the trip is forty-five minutes in each direction. It won’t be long until I’ll have them all in the Church. Then I’ll move into another

*Hartman Rector, Jr., was a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this fireside address was given at Brigham Young University on 3 March 1974.*

car pool and convert them. . . . Why, I can convert a whole ward just by going back and forth to work." I then went to work on those four.

The three lieutenants never heard a word that I said, or if they did I couldn't tell it, but that enlisted man dared not turn me off. I could tell that George was interested, so when I drove I would let the other three out of the car, park in front of George's house, and preach the gospel to him for an hour before I'd let him out. I had the pressure on him to come to church. It seemed that he was interested, but he wouldn't come. It took about four weeks, as I recall, before he finally said, "Well, I'm ready to come to church tomorrow, and my wife, Lucille, is going to come with me." I found out it was Lucille who had been holding up the works all the time.

I went over to the chapel the Saturday evening before George was coming to church on Sunday, taking with me the young man who had baptized me in Japan. (He was spending a lot of time at my house at that time.) We washed the back door of the church. We really scrubbed it because it was dirty. "You're crazy, washing the back door of a church," my friend told me.

I said, "I'm going to wash the back door of the church because George and Lucille are going to come through this door tomorrow, and everything has to be perfect." (I presume no one looks at the church more critically than a missionary bringing a contact to church for the first time. He wants all the babies to be quiet, the music to be beautiful, and everybody on the stand to stay awake. But perhaps that's too much to expect.)

They came to church, and we had a great Sunday School class, which I taught. I had planted some questions among members of the class that I felt my contacts needed to hear the answers to in church. And I had all the answers ready, of course. George looked like a sponge, soaking up everything that was said. But

Lucille, sitting beside him, looked like a sphinx. You couldn't tell if she had heard a word that I said; if she had, it hadn't registered. I could hardly wait. As we walked out of the church, through that clean door (about which I made some comment, I think), I asked Lucille, "What did you think about that? How did you feel about your first visit to the Lord's church?"

She said, without a smile, "I was born a Methodist, and I expect to die one."

I hadn't heard LeGrand Richards's story at that time about the Englishman and the Scotsman. The Englishman said, "I was born an Englishman, raised an Englishman, and expect to die an Englishman."

The Scotsman replied, "Have you no ambition?"

I could have used that on Lucille, but it's a good thing I didn't because what I did say was "Lucille, I promise you that you'll never have to give up anything true you've learned as a Methodist to be a Latter-day Saint. We have no quarrel with other churches. We don't write tracts against other churches, and we never will because we are not in the business of tearing down people's faiths, but rather of building them up.

"To our Protestant friends who believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone, we make no argument because we are not to contend with people. We are to bear witness of what is true. We say to them, 'We understand your emphasis on faith. We believe, too, "without faith it is impossible to please God." You must have faith. But there is more to salvation than just faith. There are also certain works you must perform, certain ordinances you must receive, and certain authority you must hold. So come, let us share with you the fulness of the gospel. We won't take anything from you that's true; we'll just add to what you have.'

"To our Catholic friends who believe that salvation is by grace through sacraments, we say, 'We understand your emphasis on the

sacraments—we call them ordinances. We believe them too. Did not the Master say, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5)? We believe that baptism is essential to salvation, but there is more to salvation than just baptism. There are certain works you have to perform, yes, and certain faith you must exercise in the Lord and in your fellowman. There is authority you must hold. So come, let us share with you the fulness of the gospel. We are not going to take anything from you that’s true; we will just add to what you have.’”

That’s essentially what I told Lucille, but she didn’t say a word. She just walked on. That was in 1952.

Six years later, in 1958, I was back in Washington, D.C., still in the navy. The navy sent me out to southern California to do some temple work. As a matter of fact, they didn’t send me to do temple work, but that’s the way it worked out. I went out to go to a special school at USC, and while I was there, I did the work in the temple for my grandparents on both sides of my family, also for my own mother, who had died not having accepted the gospel. As I recall, I sealed one of my grandparents, my grandfather, to two wives and sixteen children. Of course, I’ll have to answer to him one day for that, but I think he’ll be pleased.

The girl who was proxy for two of my grandmothers and for my own mother was the same Lucille Whitehead. This girl, who had been born a Methodist and expected to die one, didn’t quite make it. As a matter of fact, she was ready for baptism just two weeks from the time she made that statement to me, because the Holy Ghost had touched her heart, and she knew the Church was true. As a matter of fact, she was ready for baptism before George, her husband, was. George was in the bishopric of the Oxnard Ward in California just two years after he was baptized.

The last time I saw George and Lucille together, they had two books of family group sheets that were four inches thick. They had both found volumes about their families that someone they had never met had put together without knowing why. All Lucille and George did was to copy off all these names and do the work in the temple for them.

It was about three years ago, I think, at October conference time that the door of my office suddenly opened and in came this sister. She rushed over, threw her arms around me, kissed me on the cheek, and swung me around a couple of times. I said, “Now, this sure is exciting, but who in the world are you, anyway?”

She answered, “Brother Rector, don’t you recognize me? I’m Lucille Whitehead.” (She’d put on a pound or two since I’d last seen her.)

“Well, where are you, Lucille?” I asked.

“I’m the Relief Society president in the Colorado Mission—the whole mission.

“What is George doing?”

“Why, he is the branch president.” I think the branch was in North Platte, Nebraska.

You see, these are choice people whom the Lord knew. I didn’t know that she was going to do the work for my mother. If you don’t know who the people are around you, the Lord knows, and if you take the opportunity to share the gospel with them, they will have an impact on your life. I testify of that.

I know where those two missionaries are that knocked on my door back in 1951. I wasn’t at home, but my wife was and she let them in. She was what you call a “new move-in”; she had just moved into the house. She was also expecting our third child—expectant mothers make good contacts too. It is important that we be alert to the experiences that prepare people to hear the gospel and that we live the gospel so that our examples will be in harmony with the Spirit of the Lord.

### **Obedience to the Principles of the Gospel**

You are great examples to the whole world. We love you. We appreciate you. You have a great service to render, and you have opportunities to serve all about you. May I bear witness to you that I know that God, our Heavenly Father, lives and that he is your Father. You don't belong to your parents; they just act as if you did. You belong to the Lord. You are his children, and he is much concerned about you and very anxious. He wants to bless you, but you have to be in condition to get those blessings. Being in that condition comes through obedience. I plead with you to live the commandments as you understand them so that all things will be possible to you. All blessings will be available when you are in condition to receive them, and condition comes through obedience.

I bear witness that Jesus is the Christ. He is our Elder Brother. He did pay the price for our sins, and because of him we have access back to our Heavenly Father. He made our return possible. He had no sins of his own; it was your sins and mine that caused him to suffer, but he did it because he loved us. He says that, if we come unto him and confess our sins and forsake them and follow him, we will go free, for he has paid the price for us. Wouldn't we be stupid not to accept that offer?

I bear witness to you that this is the church and kingdom of God on earth and that it has been restored through a great, great prophet—Joseph Smith, wonderful man that he was. We could talk for days about the Prophet Joseph. Among other things nothing could “get him down.” He seemed never to get discouraged. At one time he said, “Never be discouraged. If I were sunk in the deepest pit in Nova Scotia and the Rocky Mountains were piled on top of me, I'd hold on, exercise good courage and faith, and come out on top.” Joseph would have, too.

There was another time when he said, “I am wont to walk in deep water,” just as Paul

said, “I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation” (2 Corinthians 7:4). Isn't it great that Paul liked trials, because he had so many of them? That's the way the prophet Joseph was, too—you couldn't beat him.

Don't you just love people who can't be beaten? That's the way the Lord is. Nothing can defeat him. The kingdom is not going to fail. It's going to roll forth. Yes, it will break down all other kingdoms and fill the whole earth and stand forever, and you're part of it. Isn't it great to be part of a winning team? Don't you love a winner? I do; I hate to lose. I think I'm the worst loser in all the world. I don't believe in losing. Some say, “It matters not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game.” That may be all right for football or basketball, but it's not all right for the kingdom of God. No, sir. It makes a lot of difference whether you win or not. I certainly didn't join this Church to lose my soul. We came here to win, and we will win if we stick with the Lord because he's not a loser. The kingdom will not fail. Isn't it great to be part of it? But you've got to be in the thick of it to really enjoy it. The Lord will let you get right in the middle of it if you want to. This is his kingdom.

I bear witness to you that we have a living prophet of God on earth—President Spencer W. Kimball. We could talk a long time about him, too, marvelous man that he is, preserved by the Lord to lead his church and kingdom at a critical time. President Kimball will lead the Church marvelously well, for he acts under the direction of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, whose church this really is.

I bear this witness to you in all soberness. May the Lord bless us to walk uprightly before him, keep his commandments, and show him that we love him by the way we obey. That we may do so I pray humbly in Jesus' name. Amen.