



Elder Robert D. Hales

Presentation to the Department Heads Meeting

February 5, 2010 Regarding Leadership for the Employee Leaders of the Church:

ELDER HALES: As I went around shaking hands, and as I looked at your pictures last night when I was going through this, I thought, “Good heavens, I’m going to go talk to men I’ve spent 20, 30 years with.” I think a high percentage of you know more about me than I care to admit to.

But this is a very, very important subject, and I hope that as you spend your time today, that you will ask yourself, Why is this important to the First Presidency? The wheel that you saw and those elements that make up what we call the leadership pattern, is a discussion of what we’re going to have to have for the future, even more than what we’ve had in the past.

I thought maybe I’d start, when we talk about to lead as the Savior would, or such things as to act under the direction of the Spirit and align with the Brethren, that aligning with the Brethren is to have you understand that as a leader, you’re a counselor, and that it is your responsibility to identify those things that the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve in some cases where the First Presidency draws upon them, and the Quorum of the Twelve finds themselves in much the same position you are oftentimes, in terms of looking at a concern somewhere in the world and then looking at what the solution might be.

It goes through three phases. One, you recognize there’s a need for something, and then you recognize a need for change, and then you say—the third element is, well, how are we going to change it, and then you make a proposal to make a difference, to make the change happen.

And to do that, you have to do it in a way in which everyone is comfortable about it, and you have to make sure that everyone in our circumstances understands it and can move forward. I think one of the greatest mistakes that I’d like to start with today is to be able to get approval for something without understanding.

And why I start there is a very interesting thing. When the Human Resource Committee was reviewing this, and we were talking about leaders for the future, and this pattern, Ralph of course was going through this and presenting it, and there was a discussion with the First Presidency. And there is one thing that we all understand I think, we being the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, seven Presidents, is the fact that we need leaders who have outstanding gospel principles, but also the practical skills that were spoken of.

In fact, that’s why you are where you are. A number of cases, Ralph was saying to me, a lot of these people are here, you know, because of your involvement in their life. And I said, I’m very much aware of that. And in many cases, when we reached down and came in, we were changing where we were going and what we were doing, from what we had.

I thought I’d give you an example. And this is a tender one, but I—but I want to have you understand—you’re leaders, and I think you can understand how I can give this example, and many of you have lived it. But when we came in as a Presiding Bishopric, when I was called about 1985, I’d been 10 years Assistant to the Twelve and in the Seventies quorum, First Quorum of Seventy. And, and it was rather interesting, because I came out of the world, and went into the Priesthood Executive Council. And can you believe, like Yogi Berra said, “It’s *deja vu* all over again.” February 1, I’m back in the PEC. After 25 years of being in the PEC, I was given a few years off, and now I’m back again—



the difference being that I'm in the chairman's chair rather than the assistant to. And there's a difference in that calling, as you know, as a department head versus being where you are assisting.

But when we came in, we were just starting with directors of temporal affairs. And I think it's the best way I can describe the evolution of where we're going from where we are now, and where I know the Church has to be 10 years from now. But when we started out—and people misunderstand what happened—Bishop Brown put together, and they were starting into area management.

Now to do that they needed a substructure of organization upon which to build an ecclesiastical—they needed a foundation that was solid to build an ecclesiastical organization for the future. Now this is 1985 that I'm speaking of. It's hard to believe it, but it's, you know, you're talking 25 years ago. Is that possible? But that's where we were.

But you know, as a Presiding Bishop, when I came in I realized the absolute necessity that we had to have that structure built in before we could start to build the areas as we know it today. So over time, we would bring all of the DTAs in, and we had to go through the process which is being spoken of here. We had to have the DTAs be able to be literally the third counselor in an Area Presidency. And it took the better part of a quarter of a century, but we're there now. And when we think of it, when I can set—oh, let me tell you, at one point, a DTA could not hold an ecclesiastical position. Now how far is that from what you're talking about? So what we did, we had to build, train, get a new—the thought. And now when we do an area conference on a Thursday—excuse me, on Wednesday afternoons for area conferences, the DTA most often is sitting with the Area Presidency and is an integral part, and the DTA reports to the Area President and is part of the Area Presidency, as opposed to being part of the bishopric, where you try and wire around it, kind of like an elders quorum president with a bishop and a stake president. It's done ecclesiastically, and you can work it out. And those are worked out. But now we have DTAs who are General Authorities who are DTAs; we have those that are Area Seventies.

And I guess the point I'm really trying to say to you is, what I want to do is take you through that process in your own mind, and I want to open up for discussion from some of you who walked through that, who have seen it, and share what it is.

But it was very interesting. To me what had to happen was we had to change how the directors for temporal affairs looked at themselves, at who they were. And to do that, you, you have to have Alma's mighty change of heart.

And I think the same thing is true for a lot of you today. You're on the verge of doing that, but I'd like to open up with a question. What do you do when someone comes and makes a statement, and you're in the department, and you're moving forward, and they say, "This is what the Brethren want." What is your response to that? Because this is part of what we're talking about. How do you find out really what the Brethren want? So often, things are done after a conversation someone has with one—and I want you to know there's a huge difference between the brother and the Brethren. You've got to understand that.

Now each of you has a first contact. And that first contact may have very strong feelings. And it may be that the first contact has talked to maybe one, possibly two others of his quorum. But it may not be the Brethren. And therein lies where I want to start our conversation, when we come down to this element. When it says, "We need leaders who are outstanding in both gospel principles and practical skills aspect that are depicted in the leadership pattern." We need leaders who develop other leaders. That is your job.



Now I talked with Ralph, and I said, “There’s a very simple problem. I’ve been here now, hard to believe, but 35 years—and I find—I found the same in business. There is the kind of an individual who can go vertically up and do extremely well with their superiors, and in fact they can move—their mobility vertically through the organization—can be very successful doing that.

Then there is a vector line to those of their contemporaries. And they maybe do very well there, but maybe—those I find who have a strong vector going up, do less well, if I were to draw arrows with certain weighting—do less well for those of their contemporaries.

And then there’s a vector which goes down to their subordinates and to those who are working for them. That to me is the weakest link in this leadership pattern. And what you have to understand is that is the only way that you build the next generation of leaders—not only in your discipline where you’re called to serve, to move through.

In that regard, why I bring that up is the fact that too often if you spend your time pleasing one or two individuals over here, you may miss the most significant element that you have to really make a difference for the kingdom, not only now but in the future. And you are totally limited to the scope of that relationship.

As opposed to if you would go up in that vector, went to your Heavenly Father—you’ll think, “Well, you know, this is a bishop sitting in here. You know, we’re running an organization, Elder, don’t you understand that?” Yes, I do. But you still need as your major vector not to an individual, or not to a brother, if you will. It has to go where you are going to the Lord and where you know, and you are counselors.

And one time with one of the Presidents of the Church, when I was Presiding Bishop, I was holding back because I had some strong feelings. And he sensed that I was not happy with where he is. And he said, “You aren’t worth a darn to me, unless you tell me.” And he did this early in my relationship with him. That is a good leader. And he was the best leader. But what he wanted to establish with me early in the game—because when I came into his room, when I walked in, he said, “I need to talk to my bishop.” And that should have been my signal of what he was saying to me: I want to know what’s in your heart, not what’s in your mind.

Now to do that you have to have a very strong feeling of who you are and why you’re here. And then ask yourself, Why have I been chosen here? Well, I could go around this room. The reason you’re here is that you are trusted, implicitly. The reason you are here is that those who you work with, those areas and those which you do, they know who you are.

Sometimes you forget that. Sometimes I forget that. And I have at times, and have had to be reminded, as the President of the Church did on that occasion. Do you know, on that occasion, after he went through what he did, there were two major problems, and he said, “I’ll take one of them, you take the other, and we’ll report to one another on a weekly basis.” And then he walked around the table and knelt in prayer with me, that we might accomplish what we had talked about.

All I’m trying to say to you is this: There is a place, if you can lead, where before you start into the business of what you’re going to do when you have those who are reporting to you, that you spend a little time maybe in the scriptures. Or maybe you talk about something that you have done in service, and you give them a way. It’s very interesting, when I look at our prophet and how he leads, how every prophet is unique. And as you look at every prophet, you ask yourself, what was the reason that he was asked to lead the Church in this dispensation at the time in which he served as a prophet? And each one has a unique thing.



When we do our reports, for example, on Thursdays, of what we did in the past, we start with the junior member of the Twelve and go around. It's a great way, and you ought to do this in your departments and ask, "Well, what have you done in the last week?" You know, it would be very enlightening for you. In other words, how did you spend your time? Not only on the job, but in your personal life, your family. And you need to know what they are doing and how they're doing it. It's not because you're, you know, over-managing or trying to do their life, but you're trying to understand and you're trying to help them. Because you'll be able to say things to them of which, "Have you thought about doing this or that?"

Well, we go around. By and large, when each one of us reports, we report on the callings or assignments we've been given—which stake conferences, a funeral, a blessing. I was out at the boys ranch, and we'd had a funeral this last Sunday, and so I went out and talked to the sacrament meeting, and then took questions and answers from the young men in Sunday School. It was an experience they hadn't had before—it was interesting. It's much like you are sometimes. The psychologist who was out there said, "I don't know if that's a good idea." And I said, "Well, what is your concern; what's your reservation?" He said, "Well, let me tell you." He said, "These are angry young men, some of them, and I just don't know whether you want to be subjected to that kind of—what may happen." And I said, "Can I ask you a question?" And this is the question I'd ask you: "Are you protecting me? Are you afraid they're going to embarrass you or that because of what they say it may reflect on you?" I said, "What is your concern? Don't be concerned about me. I'm a New York boy; I think I can handle it." And I relaxed and got him.

But when you go to question, when you go to do something, you will have many people that'll say, "Ooh, don't go there. We know how X, Y, or Z feel about this, and we aren't going to go there." The question is, "Is it right, and should it be done?" Not what you think the reaction's going to be.

By the way, we had a magnificent experience. The first question—I had spoken to them in sacrament meeting and kind of set the groundwork, knowing I was going to take the question and answer, which the staff there just couldn't believe that I was going to do. But the first question by a young man was—and I watched his body language during the sacrament meeting. And he was a little bit older, and I could tell he was just a bundle of—and he shouted out his question, first one. And I said, "Well, here we go; this is going to be interesting." And I said, "Yes?" He said, "When do I know I'm forgiven?"

And I looked up, and the psychologist was crying. Tears in his eyes. He could not believe the question that had come, after sitting in—and I'd talked to them about repentance; of yes, you've done wrong, you know; yes, you aren't going to do it again; yes, you're going to do, you know, whatever you can to rehabilitate or to make good for what you've done. But I said, "The fourth element isn't taught very well, and that is, you have to forgive yourself. And until you've done that—we're told we'll be forgiven in the same degree as we forgive others. Have you forgiven those who've abused you, have you forgiven your mother, your father, whatever the circumstance, why you're here? Do you understand you're here because someone loves you? If not, you'd be under a viaduct somewhere in a cardboard box? Do you thank your Heavenly Father that out of the billions of people in the world"—and I was talking to one or two that was there. The father of one had died, adopted father. He'd given his widow fits, and I was part of getting him to there. He'd had some problems, and the reason I went out was, the bishop said to me, "He really needs to see you." And so I went out with a counselor of the former bishopric; we went out, the Young Men's presidency -- and anyway we went and talked.

Now, here's why I'm telling you the story, and why I'm talking about President Monson. As we go around the circle, we all are talking about what we've done. We get to President Monson. What does he say? I went to an old friend's funeral. Then he'll tell a story. And what you have to understand is, he's like the Savior. He teaches in parables. You get out of it as much as you bring to it, if you know what I mean.



You may have heard this story before. But this time something may have happened in your life, it may mean more to you. And then he sits down and he says, “Well, I went to the hospital. And I went because this individual is—has fatal cancer. While I was there, people saw me, some of them,” he said, “and so I”—oh, I’ll have tears—“because I could help. So I did five or six other blessings before I left the hospital.”

Let me just share a few quotes with you. These are from my interview notes when I was talking with Ralph. I think this will be helpful.

I guess the point I’m just going to say is, each one of you have different styles. That’s not the important thing. The important thing is you know who you are; you know that your main line going up is going to be going to the Savior and direction for the Holy Spirit. Yes, you do have a line going up where you relate, but how you relate to your peers, how you relate to your subordinates, is equal to or more important than how you’re viewed by your superior. Now that’s not true in the world, but in the kingdom of God, you and I should be the same to our superiors as we are to our peers as we are to our subordinates.

And if you can just understand that one element, you’ll then understand that’s the kind of leader you want to bring up. Because the people who are underneath you, if they watch you, if you don’t face the tough decisions because the alarm may go off, and you unplug it, you lose. Because that individual, as they go, is going to react the same way you have.

If you are hard on subordinates, and aren’t loving, lifting, forgiving, so on and so forth, that’s the attributes—you know, it’s rather trite sometimes when we talk about the qualities and attributes of the Savior, but that’s what it’s all about. What did he do to the sinner? Go and sin no more. He was judgmental at times, in the temple when things had to be done. One hundred and twenty-first section has its times, you know, to correct and then come back with more love. But you do have to understand that there is a place and a reason for tough love—not just for you, with your subordinates and with your peers, but for you personally. When you get corrected, learn from it. When you make a mistake, learn from it. When you need and want direction, seek it. It is not seen as a weakness. And you pray about it, fast about it. And then you get it.

The world today is changing. Above all, we need leaders who are courageous, who have courage, even if they become unpopular in the world. We always need to ask, Are we going to do the things that are necessary, in an environment that will become increasingly one of persecution?

The adversary is very clever. And I sometimes wonder, when I teach from John 17—here’s the Savior praying to His Father. Father’s listening to the prayer. He knows what’s ahead for His Son. And His Son is asking Him in this particular prayer, it’s about five or six times he says, when I was with you before we came.

And when I’m with clergy of other denominations sometimes, and in a setting, I’ll hold up my Bible, and I’ll say, “Is your Bible the same as mine? Can I read this? Does this sound like a man praying to himself?” Because they have a very difficult time on who the Savior was and who God was, et cetera, et cetera.

And so what we begin to understand is, in there the Savior says that He was hated. And He also makes a statement that’s very interesting to us, telling us He knows that we will be hated for taking His name upon them. He’s telling His Father that.

But then also in that prayer, He says to His Father, “Protect them.” That’s for us. And another thing He says, “That they might come where I am”—His greatest desire.



Well, having said that, what does that mean for each one of us in our responsibilities? Well, our leaders need to be able to ask the questions that the Twelve would ask if they were there. Because at some point, the Twelve will not be there like they've been in the past. The time will be coming when the Twelve will be a body that listens to your departments, and this is what we're preparing you for and why I'm here today, really, to let you know it's going to be different.

Right now I sit on an executive committee. I listen to what's being done, and I listen to the nuts and bolts and everything else. But the time's going to come when you will be sitting alone, and you will come and present to the Twelve. All I'm saying to you is, ask yourself one question: Am I doing things as though I had a member of the Twelve—do I know what it would be? It's personal—you know my personality. I share things with you under the Spirit that may not be down for posterity.

I watched my counselors one time. I was a brand new Presiding Bishop. And we were going to be taking something to the First Presidency. And it's the first time I really understood what I'm trying to teach you. And we went over, and we had a discussion in the Bishopric. I said what I felt; they said what they felt. There was a little bit of a disagreement and misunderstanding—you know, we weren't all together. Well, let's take it on to the First Presidency.

We did. And President Hinckley gave verbatim what I had said to my counselors on the issue. What did that teach us? What did it teach me? Your judgment and how you feel, you know where the president is on this. And the same was true with President Benson when he was President. You'll know. And then the counselors had to say to themselves, maybe—and what I said to them was, “That was an item we didn't have to take to the First Presidency. That's an item we could have resolved and gone with the recommendation of where we were. He would have nodded, and we would have moved on. We didn't have to have a discussion where we were in disagreement or where we weren't one, because we virtually were there.”

Now, you think of the agendas that you bring forward, and ask yourself next time—just go back and look at the last things you brought to an agenda, or that you took forward, if you will. Many times, what you take forward—and as a leader what you're teaching those under you are, “I'm not going to stand up and make a decision on this; I'm going to take it forward to protect myself.” First John, “There is no fear in love.” You're loved; you're trusted. When you know in your heart of what you're going to do is right, just go forward as an information item, or, This is what we're planning on doing; do you feel well about it? and move on. You don't have to take items that you know are right and yet you want to be safe. And yet you do have to have the approval and the understanding. In other words, it isn't that you don't take it; it's how you take it. Because what you're forcing members of the Quorum of the Twelve or the Seventy or the First Presidency are to get totally involved and have to go through the process you should have gone through in preparing for them to listen to what you're saying. Leaders of the future, I'm just saying to you, again, we need leaders who will not get caught up in what they think they were hired to do, trying to build their own kingdoms after the manner of the world, trying to become the benchmark and the standard. This is good, but it might not be best for the kingdom or for the Church, and for the members.

Our leaders need to be able to ask questions that the Twelve would ask if they were there. I want to repeat that. Because at some point the Twelve will not be there like they have been in the past. That's the next generation who follows you. You may be there; I don't know.

We need men and women who have truly come to understand what this work is really about. These are the men and women we need, and these are the men and women you need to identify, who have those unique qualities of being able to go to the Lord, be able to go to their superiors, be able to work with their peers, and lead, and be able to lead subordinates and build them.



Leaders of the future cannot be one-faceted. This leads to tunnel vision, or what I call target fixation. We need leaders who can step out of their specialties to work together.

What do I mean by target fixation? Well, that's a pilot term. I lost two of my dearest friends to what is called target fixation. This is when you're in a jet fighter, and you have in your reticule on your, on the window reflected up there, and you're going to go in, and you're going to strafe or dive bomb or skip bomb, whatever you're going to do when you're helping. And you fixate on that target going in on it, because you can see where your bullets—you're sending out 50-caliber cannon shells—and when they hit, you see where, and then you can walk it right in, and you know you're on it. And to make sure when—the closest I came to doing it in competition, you go across the foul line of safety to make sure you put in a higher percent of your cannon shells so you can score higher, and then all of a sudden you can't pull out, because when you pull out, you go down and come back, and you hit the ground, and they're gone.

Many times, you get target fixation as a leader. And you've got yourself so fixated on what you're trying to do that you don't let the people around you be able to guide and direct on what they're feeling. Because all of you should be praying and working and going towards it, and you should be able to have, each of you—it isn't just where you want to go.

The problem I have on this also—and I want to be very delicate how I say this—but each one of you have assignments where you have literally *carte blanche*. But there are times you have to step back and ask yourself one question: Am I doing this so I can make what I'm working on an icon for my heritage and my legacy, or am I doing this for the kingdom? And then you ask yourself the question: Am I going to the cutting edge on this and trying to compete with the world, or am I looking at what the Church needs, and cut the cloth to fit what the Church needs, which is far less than what my dream is of where I can go, or the ultimate of what I can do? Or can I just have the insights that what I'm doing is right for what's needed at this time for the kingdom?

And in every one of your departments, you will have individuals working for you, or down in the micro, doing their thing for what they want to accomplish and to maybe achieve a dream they have. It may have nothing whatsoever to do with what's needed. Because there's only one question you and I need to ask on every project, every program of what we're doing: Is it furthering the work?

Time and again President Kimball, President Benson, President Hunter, President Hinckley, now President Monson will do it occasionally, will ask the question: Is this going to build the kingdom? Is this what's right for the kingdom? Not for the Church, but for those who have come from the world into the kingdom.

Sometimes we do things for the Church. I look at budgets, and I've dealt a lot with it, and I can see when we try and do reductions—we are not very good at cannibalism. We aren't really willing to take some of the things that are part of a legacy of our departments. But sometimes, you know, zero-based organizational structure and work is the most effective thing you're going to do, when you go back and say to yourself, If I was just called, and I was just going to come in, how would I structure this organization? How would I define what the roles are of the people who are here? What is here because of tradition, the tradition of those who were before you, or your own? And what kind of a legacy do I leave behind with the people behind me? Do they know that it may be all right sometimes to unlatch something that we've put together, because we're moving on?

Leaders of the future cannot be one-faceted. That leads to tunnel vision, or what I'll call target fixation. We need leaders who can step out of their specialties, step out of the forest and look at the trees, and not dwell within that forest, looking at the trees we're familiar with.



We need leaders who can give the end, but then can figure out how to get there through the Spirit. They envision that they are insightful and practical. We need leaders who can give honest feedback, but do it appropriately. They can be effective, but can give the soft answer.

That's what it takes, and that's what we must talk about when we think of the scriptures. We have to be able to express ourselves in such a way that we don't antagonize or anger or shut off the discussion. If you go into a meeting and say, "I would like you to discuss the following," and in the very next statement you say, "My feeling is—," amen to the discussion. It's gone. And then you say to yourself, "You know, Elder Hales, I try and do this, but it just doesn't work." And I hope you got someone by your side that will take you aside and say, "You know, you aren't very good at this for a reason. You know? I had to be taught that." And it's what we do.

When I look at those who are great leaders, and those who are not, the difference is the Spirit. Being a great leader is about what you feel, and there is no specific way to measure that. It really becomes who you are. There are many things in the kingdom that we work on, that we will never be given the facts. The Dragnet approach: Just give me the facts. Too early for you; you wouldn't understand. Okay, okay, I'll look around for those people who have gray hair.

But what you have to understand is, too often when we're looking for facts and not going by the feelings and where we're being directed and guided, it's because we're unsure of ourselves.

So what I want to say to you is, go to your Heavenly Father, ask Him, How can I be a better leader? How can I reach out and have the Spirit, how can I be guided? What do you do; you know, what is needed? The best thing you can do is go through what you're doing and ask yourself and prioritize—I'll call it a spiritual prioritization—and ask yourself, What's the most important thing I'm doing? What will make the greatest difference? And how I would measure it is, what will make the greatest difference to move the work forward?

And I guess on that what I'm going to say to you is, selection is the best part of leadership development. You've got to be able to know your people, and to be able to have a selection process where you know what they are.

For example, as a mission president I used to go out with those I was going to call as zone leaders, and I would tract with them, and I would watch them teach. And I wanted to feel of their Spirit and to know if they not only knew their discussions, but if they could teach others. And I went in with an outstanding man; he now has his doctorate, and is teaching at a large university. He's very, very successful. And we were out teaching; we'd been rejected—this was in England—then started coming up, and a woman opened the door. And she said, she said to us, "Come in, men—." What did she say? "Men of the cloth," or ministers of the Lord, I think she said—men of the cloth was the second statement—"are welcome in my home." And this Elder looked at me and said, "How does she know that?" And I said, "She's been observing us, and the Spirit told her." As we were walking, she was walking.

So we sat down. He started into the first discussion, in those days. When he got to the point where, where he said, "A light brighter than the noonday sun descended, and two personages . . ." And very softly she said, "You teach with the Spirit." Very softly. He just kept right on going.

The doorbell rang. It was her daughter with some grandchildren. She was at the door, and she said, "Oh, come right in; come right in. We have men of the Lord here. They teach with the Spirit. Come right in."

She had told us on Sundays she taught Sunday School for all of the kids who didn't go to church in the neighborhood. They came to her house and taught them. What were we learning about her? What did we know about her?



And so the kids sat down, and the daughter sat down. While they were gone, I said to this lad, “When she says, ‘You teach with the Spirit’—start right from the beginning for the daughter and her—and when you get to the First Vision, and she says that, and she’s feeling the Spirit, what do you know?” “I”—he said—“well, I know that I was feeling the Spirit.” “And what do the scriptures tell us, if you’re feeling it and they’re feeling it, then you can bear testimony to them. Would you tell her what she’s feeling? She does not understand that she can have that gift given to her with baptism and the laying on of hands of the Holy Ghost. Teach her about the Holy Ghost and how she can get it, and how important it is to her.” And he said to me, “Oh, Elder, that isn’t, you know . . . President,” he says, “Oh, President”—and he was a very, very accomplished individual—he said, “Oh, President, that isn’t until the fourth discussion.”

Do you know what I’m trying to tell you? You’ve got to be able to not follow a prescribed path—and that’s Preach My Gospel—all of us who were mission presidents, who went through those kinds of experiences, you know, it was an anathema to memorize and then have our elders befuddled when Mr. Brown didn’t give the right answer—where do I go from here? That isn’t the way the Spirit works, the way that life works, and it isn’t the way it works for you. Because you may be sitting there, even on an agenda, when you get on a discussion—you may get on a discussion when you have a formal agenda, where you push it all aside and say, “Let’s go here.”

It happened to us in the PEC. Of course my first PEC meeting after a long time, and we were talking about Preach My Gospel. And then we went in and we were talking about a new program for Aaronic Priesthood, which is going to be coming forward, a redo of Duty to God. And they had a prescribed kind of thing. And all of a sudden, I said, “The Spirit’s telling me, that isn’t really what’s important. What’s important is, what are Mom and Dad feeling? If you want them involved, what is the priesthood doing, what are the Young Men’s presidency doing, what are the Young Women’s presidency doing, what’s the Relief Society doing?” And all of a sudden we put everything aside and said, “Okay, what do we do to make a difference here? We have got to get those who are working with the youth to understand what it means.”

And we came up with a very simple chart. We had two lines, one from the parents going up to God, one from the children or the youth going up to God, and then the baseline that we’re going to teach is going to be very simple: how do you get the parents to be able to teach their duty. And then out of that will come a conference talk between temple—after having that meeting, then going to the temple yesterday, all during the temple meeting people are testifying, and the Spirit’s saying to me—and I’m writing notes down as they’re going through there saying things in their testimony—all of a sudden the outline comes.

So I want to close with that. I’ll read these two things, and then we’ll close. We need leaders who can ask the question, how do we make the Church stronger? And not, how do I make my discipline stronger within the Church? We need leaders who believe. We need leaders who first believe in themselves, and then believe in their ability to knock and get an answer.

Now I’m going to leave you with this in my closing. Then I’d like to open it up—do we have time for a few questions? It’s your day. You know, with me, it’s like my grandkids, you can’t get them in the tub, and then once they get in you can’t get them out. So I’m sorry. Anyway, that’s kind of where I am here. I don’t want to leave you; I feel your strength and your presence. You are an incredible group. You have to understand that—and what you are and who you are, that in this room is where this Church is and where it’s going to be led, from the standpoint of the administrative working with the ecclesia.



So before we open for questions, I want to ask a simple question that I'm going to be asking a number of people: What is our duty to God? And I'm going to go to work on this. I'd love to have a paragraph from each of you on that, but I won't—you know, I'm not here to give you an assignment. But it would be helpful, for those of you I know well. What is our duty to God?

And the second question is, once I start understanding that, as I was making notes in the temple as the Spirit was saying this and that, I was asking myself, what is our duty to God?

Well, our first duty is to know him. And we know that to know God and Jesus Christ is one of the prime examples. So, first we have to know him.

Second, we have to—after that desire of knowing Him, we have to desire to be like Him, God the Father and Jesus Christ, to know them and to, to understand it. And that means that we have to learn about Them.

So first, to get to know Them, what do we have to do? We have to study, pray, ponder. We have to learn about Them. Then we have to be willing to take upon us the third element—those attributes. And then what we have to be willing to do is to act or to serve, and to make something happen.

All of you know my favorite scripture, Some have compassion, making a difference. It's one thing to have compassion, it's one thing to read and study the scriptures and everything else, but if you don't link it—and that's why with faith there has to be works. Same thing, same principle. But once you understand and once you say you're going to do it, then we have to testify and bring others. So, I'm working on this; as of yesterday I made a note or two and talked with some of the people. But I'm going to ask you to do your own search. What is your duty to God in the calling which you have? How do you learn what you should be doing? How do you teach it to others? And then, how do you make a difference, so that the Church is stronger and moves forward?

And that is my summation of what your position of leadership will be, and those who follow you.

Now I'd like to open it for questions. I know all of you. Let me just ask, we've had the discussion, now you know me well enough to know that if I don't have the answer I'll get it for you. But I also know—and it's not humility, it's reality—that those of you in this room are far better to answer any question I have than for me to answer questions you might have. You're very, very good at what you do and who you are. The Lord loves you, and so do the Brethren. What's the first question? Any thoughts? Yes, brother?

MALE VOICE: I wonder if you could just talk to us a little bit more about the counseling in councils. Or, you said, you know, don't shut off discussions. Can you just elaborate a little bit more on how to make the most of the councils that we have around us?

ELDER HALES: Yes. I think what has to happen, I think we have to do is what we're doing here today. I think—to me in a council, the best way is to open it up. What I would do if I were to open up the first door, I would do a white paper on what your duty to God was, and what you're doing in your departments and what are your priorities. And I would go through a white paper where I would go through and I would maybe divide in maybe three areas, what is absolutely essential. What are the things you hold sacrosanct, that are absolutely who you are, and what's expected of you by the Lord and by the Brethren. And then ask the question, what are we doing to strengthen that? So that would be the first.



Then I would look at the kinds of projects or the kinds of functions you're doing, what comes onto the agendas. You know, I don't know if you've ever done it, go over the last five agendas, where you've been spending your time, and ask yourself after you've gone through this, my duty to God, what is it? How do I take the duty to God for what I've been asked to do in this organization or this discipline; is it moving things forward, are we making progress? And then, these are the things we're working on, so then start to prioritize them with that set of glasses on. And that will open up your council, and it will open up the hearts of the people you're working with, and it will be an ah-hah. Because what they will say is, "You know, if that's the case, maybe we should be doing this, or maybe we're doing this this way—maybe if we did it this way we'd make a difference."

I watched, with the people I'm working with in the PEC, all of a sudden they began to realize, yes, you have a book that's Duty to God; yes; you're going to mail it out—but we did that last time. And what didn't happen and why, as I asked. Like Yogi Berra, you know, *deja vu* all over again; here I am. And Brother Packer said to me, I am so glad you're here. In other words, because this time I hope you get it right. And the Lord's let me come back, and I'm going to get a shot at trying to do something I failed at. Now true, I was sitting in the copilot seat, and I'm not there now, and the Lord has made it very clear to me, you do not have that excuse this time. And you have to understand, there's nobody you can turn to. You're guiding the ship to which you've been given responsibility. And you have to open up and ask yourself, is what we're doing the best we can do, can we do it better? And then let the discussion begin. Does that help?

MALE VOICE: Thank you.

ELDER HALES: Okay. I've just been through it, starting the third of February was my first meeting, and already what they're saying to themselves is, you know, where did they find this fellow? And you know, I've got to tell you something. Years ago Brother Yonkies was being put in as the president of the London Temple. This is where I learned it, with President Kimball. And we went to the temple. He asked if our missionaries and I would be there to do the driving of the cars and be there and make sure everything went well. And so I helped in that process, and I was a mission president in London. We went up and we went to Heathrow, and there was a waiting room, and one of the airlines graciously offered the president to be in.

And prophets are always teaching. And so he said to my elders, "Come on up." I had a mission made out of two missions. One mission was a "love" set of missionaries, one were "numbers" missionaries, they called them, one another. When they were in separate missions, I had them together. And I began to realize, the Lord was very clear, the Spirit was very clear, if I could take the best qualities of both missions and merge them, I'd have the ultimate mission. So I chose one assistant from one mission and one from another, put them in, and I did that in each one of the companionships. I could have isolated them, waited until they went home and gone on with my own mission six, nine months later. I didn't choose to do that.

And so President Kimball calls them, and he starts asking them questions. Just imagine yourself in this situation today, as a department head. And the President of the Church and you sitting down, and he's got your staff sitting around with him. And he starts asking them questions. The office staff was there, four elders, the assistants--and I only had two other elders in the office, and one was the secretary and one was financial. Anyway, we gave away the printing press and other things; it wasn't helping with the work. But that's the previous mission president—that was a big deal. I mean, he was a publisher, he was a—well, I won't go there.



But what I want you to know is, it's what I'm telling you. You have to sit—I said, What do I need to do? So I'm sitting there with the President of the Church. And he—the first question he asked them, “How many baptisms did you have last month?” Oh, no, I'm sorry—“How many converts did you have last month?” And they answered of course the number of baptisms. And he said, “No, how many converts did you have?” And then he proceeded to talk to them about what was needed.

In other words, all of a sudden there was a learning jump for all of us. And then he said, “Why didn't you have more?” And they went through, “Well, this is a wicked generation, and we don't get any help from the members; we don't get any help from the priesthood.” And on every one he'd go, “Oh, my.” Can't you just hear his voice: “Oh my, oh my,” says President Kimball, “oh my. Oh, we need to correct that, yes.” They went through all of it. They laid out all of their problems. “Oh my, what are we going to do?” Then he would ask other questions.

And then finally he said, “What are we going to do? Will it ever change?” he lamented with them. “Oh, will it ever change? And what he's saying is, “None of those things are really going to change unless you change it.” But he didn't say that. When is it going to change? When's it going to change?

And then I'm sitting with Brother Kennedy across the room, and he goes like this to me, he says, “Can you see where he's taking them?” And I said, “Oh, yes.” Finally he said, “Isn't there anyone here who can change it, anyone who can make a difference?” And of course then one of my assistants said the last thing I wanted him to say: “Oh, yes, we have someone who can change it; we have them with us now.” “Who is that?” says the President. “President Hales.” And he goes like this to me.

Now imagine your staff sitting with the President of the Church and they're discussing it, and then you're sitting across there, and now you're motioned. So I sat down, crossed my legs on the floor just like my elders, and he went through with the same questions with me. But one thing that I knew, because I'd seen the, the foreshadow of this, the preamble if you will, I said to them, “We could change it, President.” And I saw a look on his face: “Oh, finally.”

Then he said to these elders—before he got me there, by the way, he said, “Are we going to wait, have to wait until all the priesthood leaders have changed? Are we going to have to wait until you go home and new missionaries come? Is that when it's going to change?” They still didn't get it. And then he said to me, when I said that, he said, “What are you going to do about it?”

We're walking to the airplane. When you see a picture of someone walking with the President of the Church, and you see the President of the Church holding on to them, and you think, Isn't that nice, someone helping the President of the Church. I want you to know, that guy's getting worked over something fierce. Because he said to me, “Oh, Brother Hales. Oh, Brother Hales.” He said, “Why do you think you were called?”

I was originally called as a mission president; then they called me as Assistant to the Twelve. Three years, he goes to Brother Tanner. He says, “I want him to have his missionary experience; I want him to go back to the mission he went to.” Therefore, I'm out there as Assistant to the Twelve, then a Seventy, out as a mission president.

Then he said to me, “Why do you think you were called as a missionary—mission president?” He says, “You're to teach us, like Alma and those of old, how to baptize hundreds and thousands.” Well, most of the missions in England had 15 baptisms or 20 baptisms. And that's when my mission, on the 10th reunion—I think it was the 5th reunion the first time I heard it—they bore their testimony and they said, “The president came back like a man possessed.”



My pillow was wet that night, because as he went on the airplane, and I walked him on his seat and came back, he said to me, “Robert, how many converts did you have last month?” And I said, “Well, I’d only been there a month.” “Yeah,” I said, “15 or 20.” And he said, “Oh, Robert, that’s not good enough.”

I think we’ll leave with that. I hope you have the opportunity of—by the way, we went up to 125, and kept it there. But we involved the members; we involved the priesthood; we did what had to be done. When you look at chapter 8 of Preach My Gospel, that’s because a member of my quorum came and said, “You’ve done it. Will you write—will you promise me if we do it this time we can keep to the five simple steps of going from the world into the kingdom, and be able to teach and have it so we can keep it where they know what they’re doing?”

How it was developed, I had a group of missionaries who didn’t know, as we would say, their hat from third base. They would go in, and I’d go in, and they would all say, go in and say, you know, baptize. And they would turn in a number that they were going to have 50 baptisms. Finally, here I am as a new mission president. I’m saying, I know that they’re honest; I know that they’re good; I know that they’re sincere; I know where their hearts are. But they don’t have a clue of what they have to do.

Because I would ask to them, “How many people do you have on discussion?” “One or two.” “And yet you’re telling me you’re going to have 10 baptisms. Are you lying to yourself, are you lying to your president, are you lying to the Lord?” “No, no, that’s, that’s our goal; that’s what we’re going to do.” I said, “Well, then you have to do in the steps that are necessary; you’ve got to go find; you’ve got to teach.” They had never had a box called Progress. Once they got someone they were teaching, they had them on forever. Why? They had this wonderful number. They’d go back to dinner; they would visit them and everything else. And then I said, “No, I’ve got to tell you, sorry, but there’s a death in the family. You’re going to have to take them off if they haven’t, aren’t progressing within two or three weeks.”

And then I said, “How many discussions are the members teaching with you? We have to put that in there. Are they coming to church?” And then when they started coming to church, I had to say, “Are they coming because you’re bringing them, or are they coming on their own? You have to make sure you wean them and they’re coming on their own.”

And then all of a sudden it started to build. It took us about three or four months, and all of a sudden, what they said they were going to do, they were doing. Those missionaries came back into the world. They are very, very successful. Why? Because they taught what they felt; they were successful, and they knew. And when they got into the world, they said to themselves, If I want to achieve that goal, what are the steps I have to do? No different than what you’re doing.

Well, I’ve given you more than you need. I want to bear my testimony to you. I, I want to bear my testimony that we live in these latter days of the restored Church. I want to bear testimony that we live by the name of our Church in latter days. And that the adversary will be loosed, and that your position is to make sure that we are protected from the fiery darts of the adversary and build the shields that are necessary. Because if you think it’s bad now, just wait. I cannot tell you, in the 35 years I’ve been here, when I look at what we’re facing today—in the courts, wherever it may be—with our members, Internet, pornography, all of those things.

You say, well, how does that affect you? You know, I’m running a department. Yours is the foundation upon which we will have the ability to meet the adversary and to be able to overcome. Now, we know what the outcome’s going to be in the end. It’s nice to know the end of the story. But I’m hoping that we can bring as many as possible with us.



Everything that you do is vital. In the air force we were always reminded, there were 600 or 800 people on the base for every pilot, combat-ready crew or pilot. And what we're asked to say to ourselves, Why was all that necessary? So that someone can go out and be a gun platform or deliver the weaponry. But that's what you are. You are there so that others can go forward into the world, bear testimony.

And that's the testimony I leave with you. I know that God lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ. I know who you are, and I know that you know who I am. It's hard for me sometimes to realize I'm not just Bob Hales, because that's really where I'm most comfortable. And it's hard for you to realize, you aren't just who you are; you're a department head in one of the most remarkable organizations on earth. And your role is to do things in such a way to allow others to go forward and bear their testimony and be able to make a difference because of you. You may do so, I so pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.