



Spring 2008

ESPECIAL WITNESSES

The Seventy Newsletter

Do Not Be Afraid to Go Where It Beckons

By John Wight, President, First Quorum of Seventy

It has been a year now since the Quorums of Seventy were specifically called “to be the forerunners of Christ’s peace, preparing the way for apostolic witness to be more readily received.” (Doctrine and Covenants 163:5c) We hope that each of you has been finding renewed purpose and direction in your ministry as an especial witness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the intervening months since those words were shared, many things have been happening in missionary outreach throughout the church. Not the least of these is the development of strategic plans for each of the apostolic fields. Those plans have been shared in a gathering of the Apostles and Field Missionary Coordinators as well as with the First Presidency. It is truly exciting to see such intentionality being focused on missionary outreach.

We want to again encourage you to become intimately acquainted with those field strategies and be ready and willing to support them as your Apostle and Field Missionary Coordinator work with the Seventies in their field to implement those plans. The Council of Presidents of Seventy stand ready to be a support to each of you as well. Our success as forerunners of peace and the success of these strategies to reach out to those who do not yet know the peace of Jesus Christ are dependent upon each Seventy continuing to take his/her place in those plans.

The words from the first verse of Section 163, although not specifically directed to the Seventy, have particular meaning to us as we look to the future: “Do not be afraid to go where (your identity and calling) beckons you to go.” No doubt when Jesus sent the Seventy to go out (Luke 10) they had some fear and trepidation. No doubt some of them questioned why Jesus was asking them to do this—especially “with neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes.” And yet they went despite the doubts. Their willingness to follow His direction and step out apparently resulted in a powerful success because “the seventy returned again with joy.”

Over the last two years we have pressed the work into two areas of Independence, Missouri that are considered undesirable and, to a certain extent, dangerous. My testimony of the fact that God has already gone before us into those places to which we are being beckoned has repeatedly been strengthened with each step we have taken. Doors have been opened and contributions have been received unexpectedly. Seventy Keith McMillan and I often “return with joy” after being in these locations, saying to each other, “Can you believe that?” And then we remind ourselves

that, indeed, God has already been there long before we were. I have no doubt whatsoever that we will accomplish marvelous things and reach many, many souls if we pray, “Lord, help me do what you are already blessing” rather than, “Lord, please bless what I am doing.”

May you all be richly blessed as you continue in specific ministries to which you have been called in some cases or as you step into ministries to which you are being newly called!

News from the Fields

Canada/North Central USA Mission Field

“The call to respond is urgent. Look to the needs of your own congregations, but look also beyond your walls...Each disciple needs a spiritual home. You are called to build that home and care for it, but also to share equally in the outreaching ministries of the church. In that way the gospel may be sent to other souls also yearning for a spiritual resting place.”

--Doctrine and Covenants 162:7d

The church in the North Central US and Canada Field is focusing on creating and nurturing the spiritual homes of its members, and more importantly those who have not yet been invited to come home. With an emphasis on hospitality and training to become more sensitive to the ‘stranger’, we are moving toward the development of healthy congregations where there is balance between inviting/witnessing, gathering and sending/serving ministries, and where all are welcomed and accepted.

This is not just the ministry of the seventy, but will require the efforts and gifts of all members. However, the seventy bring a passion to the needs of those standing, waiting outside the walls of the church, feeling not worthy or acceptable to enter in. The seventy bring an understanding of the power of invitation and the humbling ministry of listening to another’s story of God’s involvement in their life, and sharing their own. The seventy carry a burning desire to let all of God’s children know they are loved and invited to share in the peace of Jesus Christ.

Exciting things are happening in this Field, as well as all around the church. Congregations are sensing a new call, God’s call, to create more than just a Sunday morning experience, but a living, breathing congregation of God’s people, listening to and acting on behalf of a loving, restoring and healing God. May spiritual homes continue to be built daily for those who have not yet come home.

Kris Judd, Field Missionary Coordinator

Southern USA Mission Field

In 2007, the seventy, as part of the leadership of the Southern Field, participated in the discovery and discernment process that guided the development of a Southern Field Missionary Strategy. The primary objectives developed during this process are as follows:

- Foster an intentional, systematic, sustained cultural shift towards invitation and care for one another
- Identify signal communities for intentional, invitational ministry focus
- Empower and engage all Southern Field seventy
- Leadership development for invitational ministries
- Involve young adults and youth in ministry and leadership development
- Develop African-American and Hispanic leadership and ministries
- Support and replicate plants and ministries to marginalized

The seventy in the Southern Field are already accepting the challenge to participate in fostering within mission centers and congregations, an intentional, systematic, sustained cultural shift towards invitation and care for one another. As 2008 unfolds, Southern Field seventy will be working in partnership with mission center leaders to develop Seventy Invitational Ministry Assignments focused on mentoring others, developing and refining ministerial skills, modeling Disciples Generous Response, supporting established church plants and compassionate ministries, and seeking out new avenues of invitation that will provide opportunities for sharing the ministry and message of Jesus Christ.

It is an exciting time to share together with the women and men who boldly move forward in ministry, inviting all to come, to participate in worship and fellowship, and to share in God's creative, redemptive process.

Karin Peter, Field Missionary Coordinator

Africa and Haita Mission Field

Seventy Tanoh Assoi recently requested prayers for the seventies and others in Kenya as they faced violence and other potential threats because of political unrest. Below is an update from Brother Tanoh:

“The conditions are improving in Kenya even though there are some areas where they still have some people fighting. The constitution has been amended to share the power between the elected president and his opponent. The other violence we need to think about is all those people who are suffering for hunger, AIDS (most of sub-Saharan countries in Africa), and lack of peace like western Congo, Zimbabwe (DRC)...

Hope these details are helpful

Tanoh.”

Pathfinder Web Site

As part of its ongoing effort to promote missionary outreach, the Council of Presidents of Seventy sponsor the Pathfinder portion of the church's web site. This includes the Sunday Night Live Chat Room and a page with testimonies. We need the help of the seventy for both of these features.

If you have a personal testimony or know of someone who does, please send them to John Wight at jwight@cofchrist.org. We need these on an ongoing basis, so any time you experience one or hear one, please send it.

The SNL Chat Room, which is intended to address questions from seekers and engage them in "conversation", is always in need of guest ministers. There are four moderators who guide the discussion and keep things on track. But having guest ministers to share their testimonies, help answer questions, and offer prayers during the chat is always a great help. If you are interested in serving as a guest minister or have questions about this ministry, please contact John Wight at jwight@cofchrist.org.

Reviving and Equipping Faithful Communities Congregational Life Workshop 2008

The 2008 Congregational Life Workshop will be held at Graceland University in Lamoni, Iowa July 22-August 1, 2008. More than 20 classes will be offered on subjects ranging from exegetical preaching to congregational hospitality. A number of the classes will focus on invitational ministries and missionary outreach skills and techniques.

"We encourage each congregation to send at least two people to CLW," said the First Presidency. "The more participants there are from the same congregation or mission center, the more broadly shared the educational and practical experiences of the week will be."

It is hoped that a good representation of seventies will be in attendance to learn, but perhaps more importantly to share their enthusiasm for inviting persons to share in community. More information is available on the church web site at <http://www.cofchrist.org/clw/> or by phoning Tammy Lindle at 1-800-825-2806, ext. 2383.

The seventy are to be the forerunners of Christ's peace, preparing the way for apostolic witness to be more readily received.

Quorum Changes

Newly Ordained Seventy

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following individuals who have been ordained since our last newsletter:

Omar Cerrato, Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Luis Dias-Cervantes, Diriomo, Nicaragua
Lionel Vijayakumar Edwin, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India
Manuel Martinez-Mercado, San Marcos, Nicaragua
Gay Spalding, Kansas, USA

New Ministry Opportunities

We would like to recognize with sincere appreciation the years of ministry as seventy given by the following individuals who have moved on to other ministerial opportunities since our last newsletter:

Glenn Day, ordained to the office of Evangelist, Pennsylvania, USA
Peter J. Lonsdale, ordained to the office of High Priest, Western Australia
Andrew Michael Fox, ordained to the office of High Priest, Derbyshire, England
Jerry Stone, requested and granted honorable release from office of Seventy, Maine, USA

In Memoriam

We also want to recognize and honor the many years of ministry as seventy given by W. Lee Dennis of Independence, Missouri, USA who passed away in 2007.

New Adult Study Text to be Released Soon

The adult study text *Claimed by Christ's Vision* is ideal for reunions, Sunday school classes, and small group study. Explore insights on seven topics related to Doctrine and Covenants 163 and other scriptures with the following authors: Apostles Linda Booth and Susan Skoor, young adult ministers Adam Wade and Erica Blevins, Presiding Bishop Steve Jones, Becky Savage of the First Presidency, and World Church secretary Andrew Shields.

Order your copy (available May 1) for \$10 from:

www.HeraldHouse.org, sales@HeraldHouse.org, or 1-800-767-8181

Or download it free (in April) at www.CofChrist.org/OnlineResources/Claimed/

Yahoo Group—Another Tool

by John S. Wight, President 1st Quorum of Seventy

The Yahoo Group Cofc70s was created and is maintained to give seventies and missionary coordinators a tool to help them in their ministries. We want to encourage its use, but would ask that you carefully consider what you put on the site. It was designed to provide a forum to share testimonies, ideas, ask questions, share prayer concerns, etc. Please use discretion in what you post to the web site. It is probably best not to forward items to the site such as virus warnings, unbelievable deals, and other similar items which usually turn out to be bogus.

As we continue down this new road of missionary emphasis begun at the last World Conference, this tool can be a major asset for seeking advice and sharing successful ideas. In addition to the “conversations” which can occur, the site also has stored files including the most up-to-date Seventy Roster.

If you are not currently registered as a user, please follow the following instructions:

1. Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Cofc70s/>
2. Click on the “Join This Group!” button.
3. If you already have a Yahoo User ID, type it and your password in. If you don’t have a Yahoo User ID, go to the Sign Up link and it will walk you through the process to set up a Yahoo ID. (If you already have an email address at which you would prefer receiving notices from the Yahoo Group, you can enter that in the alternate email box during the sign up process.)
4. Once you establish your Yahoo ID, you will be sent to a page with three steps which are self explanatory. Under Step 1 there is a box that says tell the group owner about yourself. . . **It is very important that you specifically identify yourself by name indicating that you are a seventy.** (Sometimes it is impossible to tell by the Yahoo ID who you are.)
5. Once you have completed these steps, an email will be sent to us so that we can approve your request to join the group.
6. If you have any problems or questions, please contact John Wight at wightj@swbell.net or 816-224-4921.

We look forward to the participation of those who have not yet been involved. You may have just the idea or testimony that someone needs to hear to launch a new ministry or get an existing ministry moving at an accelerated pace.

Community of Christ