

## Testimony Outline - Mike Baird

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### Testimony comes from the Holy Ghost

- Joseph Fielding Smith:  
"A testimony of the gospel is a *convincing knowledge given by revelation* to the individual who humbly seeks the truth." (Answers to Gospel Questions, 3:31)
- Spencer W Kimball:  
"Every one of you who has a testimony and bears it is telling about a personal revelation from God. It is nothing less, or it isn't a testimony, because the Holy Ghost revealed it to you. If you have a testimony, it is a revelation." (Unpublished address, Church Historical Department, 2 Jan. 1959—Los Angeles, Calif., p. 14.)
- Hugh B Brown:  
"When we speak of a testimony of the Gospel, we refer to a motivating, soul-transforming conviction. One may not know how he received the testimony, nor will he be able to give it to another. There is but one source, and it is available to all who comply with the conditions. A testimony of the Gospel is of inestimable and eternal value. It is predicated upon obedience, as are all blessings from God; and it may be lost through disobedience or sin." (Instructor, Oct. 1959, p. 320)
- Joseph Fielding Smith:  
"The impressions on the soul that come from the Holy Ghost are far more significant than a vision. It is where Spirit speaks to spirit, and the imprint upon the soul is far more difficult to erase. " (The Twelve Apostles," address to the seminary and institute faculty at Brigham Young University, 1958)

### Essential Components of a Testimony

## ***Temple recommend Questions***

- Do you have a testimony of God, Jesus & Holy Ghost?
- Do you have a testimony of Jesus Christ as Savior and Redeemer and the atonement?
- Do you have a testimony that the Church is the restored Church?
- Do you have a testimony that the Church is lead by a prophet of God?

## ***Thoughts from Prophets & Apostles***

- First Presidency:  
"Bishoprics are encouraged to help all people learn to express a brief, heartfelt testimony of the Savior, His teachings and the restoration."  
(Letter from First Presidency, May 2, 2002)
- Joseph Fielding Smith:  
"There are three important truths in every effective testimony.  
*First*, Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the Redeemer of mankind.  
*Second*, Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of God called to restore the gospel and kingdom of God upon the earth in these last days to prepare the world for the second coming of Christ.  
*Third*, the Church is the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth with which the Lord is well pleased." (The Twelve Apostles," address to the seminary and institute faculty at Brigham Young University, 1958)
- Mark E Petersen:  
"As Latter-day Saints we have a responsibility to bear a particular kind of testimony—all of us. And what is that testimony?  
*First of all*, that God lives, that he is truly our Eternal Father and we are his literal spirit offspring.  
*Second*, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Savior of the world, and that he has a modern ministry as well as an ancient one, and that you and I—all of us—are involved in that modern ministry.  
*Third*, that Joseph Smith was raised up in these last days and especially chosen as an instrument through whom the Lord would introduce his modern ministry to the world.  
*And fourth*, that following Joseph Smith there has been an unbroken line of prophets who have carried on his work and will continue to do so. These are the mighty facts of which we may bear testimony." (Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year, 1977, p. 195.)

## **Bearing a testimony in a meeting – Expressing ourselves**

- D&C 100:7  
"ye shall declare whatsoever thing ye declare in my name, in *solemnity of heart*, in the *spirit of meekness*, in all things"

### ***Is it OK to:***

- Express Love? Yes, but that is not really a testimony
- Express thanks to others? Yes but that is not really a testimony
  - Hartman Rector Jr:  
"Bearing testimony has to do with bearing witness to that which we know to be true. Much of what we call testimony bearing is not really testimony at all—it is a statement or expression of public thanks. It is good to be thankful, but public thanks is not testimony. Testimony comes from the Holy Ghost." (Conference Report, Apr. 1974, p. 159.)
- Express your feelings? - Yes absolutely

### ***Some "Don'ts"***

- Often we have experiences that are great and maybe uplifting. Expressing our feelings about these things is usually not bearing a testimony.
  - "I know my friends are true"
  - "I know my vacation was true"
  - "I know EFY is true"
- Not a place or time for public penitence
  - Jay E. Jensen (of the 70):  
"A testimony is... Not a public confession" ("Bearing Testimony," Ensign, Oct. 2005, 22.)
- Not a place or time to share confidences
  - Family confidences
  - Personal or family problems
  - Private and or confidential conversations with the Bishop or others
- Don't preach a sermon
  - Spencer W Kimball:  
"Now, you are going to give your testimonies this afternoon. I hope that you'll just open your hearts and let us look inside... will you? Just open them up wide and turn on the lights and let us see your hearts... how you feel. A testimony is not an exhortation; a testimony is not a sermon; none of you are here to exhort the rest. You are here to bear your own witness. It is amazing what you can say in thirty seconds by way of testimony, or in sixty seconds, or one hundred and twenty, or two hundred and forty, or whatever time

you are given, if you confine yourselves to testimony. We'd like to know how you feel." (Spencer W. Kimball, Unpublished address, Church Historical Department, 2 Jan. 1959—Los Angeles, California, p. 9.)

- Jay E. Jensen (of the 70):  
"Individuals who stand and exhort others in a fast and testimony meeting or even try to call others to repentance, even with the best of intentions, are usurping authority and are often offending others and disrupting the spirit of the meeting." ("Bearing Testimony," Ensign, Oct. 2005, 22.)
- Not a place for reading and expounding the scriptures
- Not a place for reading and expounding Ensign stories or talks

### ***Sharing experiences***

- Care should be taken in sharing experiences
  - Jay E. Jensen (of the 70):  
"A testimony is... Not an experience, although experiences may illustrate belief and conviction" ("Bearing Testimony," Ensign, Oct. 2005, 22.)
  - Not a time for sharing long experiences to make a point
    - Jay E. Jensen (of the 70):  
"A testimony is... Not a long explanation of how you know but rather what you know" ("Bearing Testimony," Ensign, Oct. 2005, 22.)
  - Not a time for sharing sacred experiences
    - Not a place to share from your patriarchal blessing
    - Boyd K Packer:  
"I have come to believe also that it is not wise to continually talk of unusual spiritual experiences. They are to be guarded with care and shared only when the Spirit itself prompts you to use them to the blessing of others. I heard President Marion G. Romney once counsel mission presidents and their wives. "I do not tell all I know; I have never told my wife all I know, for I found out that if I talked too lightly of sacred things, thereafter the Lord would not trust me." We are, I believe, to keep these things and ponder them in our hearts, as Luke said Mary did of the divine events that surrounded the birth of Jesus. (See Luke 2:19.)" ("The Candle of the Lord" Taken from a talk given at a seminar for new mission presidents)
    - Harold B Lee:  
"Some people have had a unique testimony, and to draw attention they go around repeating it again and again everywhere they go. Some have even published them and had them broadcast over the Church. They tell of dreams and of administrations when they

have been healed. Well, *they have their reward*. These are wonderful blessings, but why, why do they think they have to publicize it all over the Church?" (Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year, 19 Apr. 1961, p. 9)

- John A Widstoe:  
"Revelations of divine manifestations for the comfort of individuals may be received by every worthy member of the Church. In that respect all faithful members of the Church are equal. Such manifestations most commonly guide the recipients to the solution of personal problems; though, frequently, they open the mind to a clearer comprehension of the Lord's vast plan of salvation. They are cherished possessions, and should be valued, of those who receive them. In their very nature they are sacred and should be so treated. If a person who has received such a manifestation by dream, vision, or otherwise, feels impressed to relate it beyond his immediate family circle, he should present it to his bishop, but not beyond. The bishop, then, may decide upon its further use, if any, or may submit it to those of higher authority for action. The gift was a personal one; not for the Church as a whole; and the recipient is under obligation, in harmony with the established order, not to broadcast it over the Church.

It is un wisdom, therefore, for those who have received such manifestations to send copies to others, to relate them by word of mouth in diverse places, and otherwise to scatter abroad a personal, sacred experience. There are times and places where testimony may be borne of our knowledge that the restored gospel is of the Lord, and of the goodness of the Lord to us, and when we may present evidence of our faith. It would be well to remember that the Lord Jesus Christ, while on earth, usually instructed those whom He had healed or otherwise blessed, that they should not tell others of the occurrence. Some things are done for the public good, others for private welfare. "  
(Improvement Era, Sept. 1940, pp. 545, 575.)

### ***Do you have to cry to show you have a testimony?***

- Alvin R Dyer:  
"You don't have to cry about the gospel to have a testimony! Many times we think that we don't have a testimony unless a few tears flow. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is not necessary or needful for a person to have tears streaming down their face to have a

testimony of the gospel." (Unpublished address, Church Historical Department, 25 Mar. 1961—Berlin, Germany, pp. 12-13.)

- Some of us have difficulty controlling our emotions when we speak of things that touch us deeply
  - That is OK but not required

### ***Should I feel that I shouldn't say - "I know" because every body else does?***

- Spencer W Kimball:  
"I know it is true. Because that word, those few words have been said a billion times by millions of people does not make it trite. It will never be worn out. I feel sorry for people who try to couch it in other words because there are no words like "I know." There are no words which express the deep feelings which can come from the human heart like "I know." (Unpublished address, Church Historical Department, 15 Jan. 1962—Berlin, Germany, p. 5)

### **Little children & bearing of testimonies**

- First Presidency:  
"Parents and teachers should help children learn what a testimony is and when it is appropriate for them to express it. It may be best to have younger children learn to share their testimonies at such times as family home evening or when giving talks in Primary until they are old enough to do so in fast and testimony meeting." (Letter from First Presidency, May 2, 2002)

### **Should I prepare what I will say in my testimony?**

- D&C 100:5-8  
"Therefore, verily I say unto you, lift up your voices unto this people; *speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts*, and you shall not be confounded before men;  
*For it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say.*  
But a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall declare whatsoever thing ye declare in my name, in *solemnity of heart*, in the *spirit of meekness*, in all things.  
And I give unto you this promise, that *inasmuch as ye do this the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say*"

### **Testimony supplied as you share it**

- Boyd K Packer:  
“How can I bear testimony until I get one? How can I testify that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that the gospel is true? If I do not have such a testimony, would it not be dishonest?”  
Oh, if I could teach you this one principle. A testimony is to be found in the bearing of it! Somewhere in your quest for spiritual knowledge, there is that “leap of faith,” as the philosophers call it. It is the moment when you have gone to the edge of the light and stepped into the darkness to discover that the way is lighted ahead for just a footstep or two. “The spirit of man” as the scriptures says, indeed “is the candle of the Lord.” (Prov. 20:27.)  
It is one thing to receive a witness from what you have read or what another has said; and that is a necessary beginning. It is quite another to have the Spirit confirm to you in your bosom that what you have testified is true. *Can you not see that it will be supplied as you share it? As you give that which you have, there is a replacement, with increase!*  
The prophet Ether “did prophecy great and marvelous things unto the people, which they did not believe, because they saw them not. “And now, I, Moroni, ... would show unto the world that faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.” (Ether 12:5-6.)” (“The Candle of the Lord” Taken from a talk given at a seminar for new mission presidents)