

**MINUTES**  
**UTAH MISSIONARY CORRELATION MEETING**  
**UTNO/UTSLC/UTSO**  
**FEBUARY 6, 2015**  
**7:30 AM**  
**AMBASSADOR ROOM JSMB**

**Presiding:** Elder L. Whitney Clayton  
**Conducting:** Elder Don R. Clarke

**Opening Hymn:** #221, *Dear to the Heart of the Shepard*  
Chorister: President John A. McCune  
Pianist: Brother Scott T. Seamons

**Invocation:** President Richard W. Moffat

**Scripture:** 3 Nephi 11:31-35; Luke 15:3-7; 8-10; 11-32 Elder Mervyn B. Arnold

**Presentation: “Convert Retention” (Handout)** Brother Michael Telaroli

Principle upon which research was performed: D&C 84:106, “And if any man among you be strong in the Spirit, let him take with him that is weak, that he may be edified in all meekness, that he may become strong also.”

**President Thomas S. Monson** – “I have emphasized a need for the ‘rescue’ of our brothers and sisters from many different situations which may be depriving them of all the blessings the gospel can provide...There is yet much to do in this regard.”

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** – “This is serious business. There is no point in doing missionary work unless we hold on to the fruits of that effort. The two must be inseparable.”

**Elder Russell M. Nelson** – “Missionary work should begin and end with our minds focused on the blessings of the holy temple. Missionary work is all about gathering people out of the world, ennobling them, and enabling them eventually to dwell with God forever...Simply summarized, God, our loving Heavenly Father, wants His children to return home to Him.”

The research indicates patterns in the data that help us understand how a new member becomes converted and retained. Each new member is a unique individual with a unique combination of needs. When we meet those needs we help them become converted. A program or checklist doesn’t necessarily work. We have to understand each new member’s unique set of needs and work to meet them.

### **Things that Matter in the Conversion Process**

1. Whom we baptize
2. Preparation for membership
3. Path of deepening conversion

#### **Whom We Baptize**

The circumstances of investigators/new members significantly impact their progress towards becoming members of the Church and being converted.

1. Fifty percent of new members are young, single, mobile and struggling financially.
2. Many need changes to behavior and lifestyle, have below-average physical or emotional health, and/or were “spiritual” but “un-churched.”
3. Among the investigator’s circumstances, the following have a material impact on a new member’s retention:
  - a. The young (18-30, 50% of adult new members) are more difficult to retain.
  - b. If they have an active, inactive or nonmember spouse.
  - c. Adults who have religious practices before baptism.
  - d. Having to quit an addictive habit such as smoking.
  - e. Needing to change moral standards.
4. Investigators progress more when they experience Gospel principle (e.g. saying the prayer rather than being told how to pray, fasting rather than discussing it as a principle, making a fast offering donation rather than being shown how it is done, etc.).

#### **Preparation for Membership**

Investigators need to be prepared for what is frequently as major “life-style” change and need to qualify in conformity with D&C 20:37, 68-69; Moroni 6:1-3; Mosiah 18:10; and Alma 5:14.

Concerning new members, the research shows in general:

1. Having felt the Spirit is the strongest influence encouraging investigators to be baptized, but is not necessarily a good predictor of continued activity.
2. Almost all believe the doctrine, that Joseph Smith was a prophet, the priesthood was restored and that the Church is true. Doctrine is seldom mentioned as a reason for inactivity.
3. There is a strong correlation between the number of times a new member attends church before baptism, and their retention.
4. Circumstances that generally help or hinder a new member’s retention:
  - a. Struggling to live LDS standards.
  - b. Having a calling.
  - c. Qualifying to go to the temple.
  - d. Working on their family history.

- e. Having a close friend/mentor in the Church.
- f. Unexpected items such as having a calling or how much there is to do.
- g. They feel they are not as perfect as they think other Church members are.
- h. They don't fit in because they don't have church clothes or are the only person like themselves in the ward.
- i. Lack the perspective and understanding of how to get over setbacks.

### **Path of Deepening Conversion**

What challenges does a new member face on the path to conversion?

1. Individual circumstances such as working on Sunday, sole support for a sick family member, etc.
2. Experiences they have had such as being offended by Church members or persecuted outside the Church.
3. Differences of beliefs do not have much impact.
4. Anti-Mormon media is seldom the reason they are not active (negative media does play a role in preventing people from investigating the Church).
5. Family history and temple work.
6. The nurturing and attention before baptism is not consistently available after baptism.

Having a friend, a responsibility, and being nourished by the good word of God are effective if they are linked together (e.g. the friend actually helps the new member wade through the challenges of membership, a co-teacher helps with the challenges of teaching, a friend shares family names with new members who does baptisms for the dead, etc.). We need to work on strengthening the links (Handbook 2 Sections 3, 4). True friendships are critical to ongoing activity in the Church. New members need to be meaningfully engaged in a responsibility. Spiritual nourishment needs to be consistent and address the needs of the new member.

We have reasons to be hopeful as most less active seem amenable to greater activity in the Church and most still consider themselves to be a Mormon.

### **Discussion:**

**Elder L. Whitney Clayton**

1. Converting missionaries is one of mission president's top priorities. This provides a lifetime of growth in the Church when they go home.
2. Missionaries take for granted that investigators will do what they ask. Missionaries need to help investigator experience the Gospel, not just learn about it (e.g. helping an investigator pray rather than just teaching how to pray, establish a practice of reading the scriptures by a daily call to remind the investigator to be reading at the investigator's selected time, etc.).
3. Use of senior couples is critical as they can be mentors to new members. Senior missionaries report milestone (saving ordinances) and with full-time missionaries use the "New and Returning Member" form.
4. Missionaries follow new member progress longer with a purpose.



5. Invite stake leaders to zone conference to expand understanding of these principles and exchange ideas on how to accomplish them.
6. New members are not being taught and helped to do their family history work.
7. When we get new members to the temple we lose very few.
8. Link family history and temple work with new converts. Take new converts to the temple with their family names.
9. Have members take investigators to family history centers and help them start their family history work.
10. Maybe there needs to be a little more time before baptism for investigators to prepare.
11. Attending four consecutive times to church is a huge indicator of successful retention.
12. Call a church service missionary to help a new members complete "My Family".
13. Teach Lesson 5 more effectively by teaching then seeing that the investigator/new member experiences what is taught. Ward leaders and missionaries teach Lesson 5. It is one of the great times for obtaining referrals.
14. Accountability for new member progress tends to fall apart after baptism.
15. Missionaries tend to do what is measured so we should measure those aspect in member retention that need improvement.
16. A true friend in the Church is very important!
17. Teach investigators that being baptized is the beginning of a new life style for the rest of their lives.
18. Missionaries and members need to rise to a higher level.
19. More lessons being taught with members present is a good sign.
20. Full-time missionaries should do everything possible to find a close friend of their investigators, who is a member, to attend the lessons.
21. Take new members to the temple with their family names to perform work.
22. Full-time younger missionaries (not full-time senior couples) should teach all five lessons before and after baptism and seek referrals.
23. Better coordination with ward councils are needed to improve new member retention and conversion.
24. Missionary work does not stop at the font.
25. Begin with the end in mind. Focus on the holy temple. (Elder Russell M. Nelson)

**Discussion:    Sacrament Meeting Attendance  
                     Requirement Prior to Baptism**

**Elder Don R. Clarke**

Preach My Gospel page 204 – What does several mean to Him? More than two. If you need to change this in your mission, do not do quickly. Let it be an evolution not revolution.

Testimony:

President Hansen

**Benediction:**

**President McCune**

**Attendance:**

**Utah Area Leadership:** Elders L. Whitney Clayton, Mervyn B. Arnold, Don R. Clarke

**Attendance:** President and Sister: John R. Center (via: web), Robert E. Chambers, John C. Eberhardt, Maurice D. Hiers, Jr., John A. McCune, and Earl S. Swain; Presidents Curtis R. Bennett, Steven W. Hansen, Dean R. Hobson, Richard W. Moffat, and David E. Poulsen.

**DTA:** M. Scott Newbold      **Executive Secretaries:** F. Wayne Elggren, Scott T. Seamons

**Special Guest:** Michael Telaroli

**Excused:** Sister Adrienne V. Poulson, Sister Amy Beth Moffat