



Seeing Leadership as a System | How I Lead as Area Seventy | An Interview with Gene R. Chidester

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We live in a world plagued by pornography and people are looking for help. When an individual struggles with pornography, they often turn to their church leader for that help. How does a leader help a person overcome the shame of this issue and start seeing positive progress? How can a leader help youth to open up about struggles with pornography? What are some lasting proven tactics that actually make a difference? In order to help leading saints has created the liberating saints library with more than 20 presentations featuring individuals who have a unique perspective or expertise around this topic. Three of those most popular sessions are available to watch now. Simply text the word lead to four 747 four 7 to start watching now or visit leading saints dot org slash liberating. And remember, text the word lead to four 747 four 7 in order to access the three most popular sessions of the liberating saints library. Welcome back to the leading saints podcast, leading saints is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping Latter day Saints be better prepared to lead. And we do that through content creation, much like this podcast, we have articles at leading saints dot org, you should check out a weekly newsletter, you should subscribe to also has unique content, so let's jump into this week's episode. Today I'm in a beautiful family room with Jean chidester. Did I say you're not your name right Jean? You got it right. Thank you. And it's an honor to have you with us. Well, I'm excited to be here. I don't know if this is my first time I heard your name, but you were on the latter day lives podcast with my friend Sean Reaper. And you also help out with that podcast, is that right? Yeah, so since about June, I've been the producer of that podcast. Nice. And wonderful people. Just an amazing experience as we've heard. Nice. And so we're fellow podcasters so some extent.

You're not always on the mic. But you're in the good work of it, right? I am. Nice. I'm really enjoying it. Cool. And how did you and trying to remember, did you listen to that podcast or reach out to Sean? Yes, that's exactly what happened. I started listening to his podcast probably about two and a half three years ago. Just really impressed. And then earlier this year, he had actually suspended the podcast about a year ago for a period of time. And then he restarted it and put out a help wanted, if you will, looking for a producer. And I just feel impressed. I reached out to him and told him it might be interested in. So that's great. And you're making it happen. Make it happen. That's cool. Now, I'll definitely will link to that episode because you talk about your life there and maybe some parts of your life that we won't cover here. But it's a good listen. And if you're not familiar with the latter day live supply cast a good introduction to see the type of people they interview and then John interviewed me at one point, but I'm lower on the list and people long forgotten about that episode, but now how would you describe your leadership experience in the church? You've been around the block a few times when it comes to church leadership. Looking back, had just about, I've served in about every organization in the church, including in the release society for a brief time as a missionary. And then the primary long before it was vogue for brother and to serve in the primary. My parents taught me from a very early age when you're asked to serve you serve. So that was never a question. And so my very first calling was when I was 12 years old, I was called to be the deacon scorn president over the third quarter of Dickens and reward. A lot of deacons over 30 deacons. Wow. And I was blessed to have a wonderful adviser who understood a little bit about shadow leadership and he understood about ministry. I think he was a man ahead of his time. We couldn't do visits. We'd walk up to the door, and he'd say, remember, you're the president, and he just asked me to lead out and I learned a lot. Wonderful. And after that, as you may be matured into your adult years, was there a specific calling where it was, you think back like that was the beginning of your leadership experience as an adult? I'd have to say when I was early in our marriage as a student married student at a BYU, I was called to be a young man's president. This is the man of award to south campus. One of the young man, all we had to he knew he was in our words, all there were a couple of kids. He had a daughter and a son that was in the mutual time. It was a very small word.

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I was the young man's president, also deacons coronavirus or teachers at coronavirus and priest's adviser. I was the entire young presidency. But we had a wonderful bishop and it was an opportunity to step up in the lead. Yeah. And where'd you serve your mission as young men? Argentina. Nice. And that later led to your time as a mission president in Uruguay, right? That's correct. Although there have been 30 years in between them. And I had not used the language pretty well forgotten it. Yeah. When president monson extended the call to preside over a Spanish speaking mission, I said, that would be wonderful. There's one problem that I don't speak Spanish. And I did not get any empathy. Yeah. You said, oh, it'll come back. Nice. How long do you feel like it took to kind of get a handle of it again? Well, we were called right after Thanksgiving in 1999 and of course we had been leaving and to be down in your way in the first part of July. The week after we received the call from president monson, we got a call from the senior MTC, and it was a sister who was seized from I believe the Dominican Republic speaking in Spanish to me, satellites who speak in very fast. I don't think she was. But it was just kind of

leaning on every word trying to understand what she was saying. The message was the brother in a very concerned that mission presidents and their campaigns are showing up in their field of labor's not been able to communicate with their native missionaries, nor the members. So she offered to customize a Spanish learning program for each of us, and she said, when do you want to get started? So we took her up on her offer. For 6 months, we had a room down in the Provo empty sea. We would go down on Friday, sleep there Friday nights. They're all day Friday and all day Saturday. And my wife had her own tutor and I had mine. And so 6 months in it started coming back. It was a lot of work. The answer coming back. Yeah. Wow. And then you came home from your mission and then how long until you were called as an area 70. So we got back from our mission in 2003, and I was called as near a 17 2012. Oh, okay. And so in the interim, I had a number of different callings. When we got back, I believe the first calling I had was teachers corm adviser, which was a little bit of a challenge because I had just come off of three years of young man and younger sisters wanting to hear what I had to say. Yeah. They wanted to listen to me. Hanging on to each word hang on each word, and then all of a sudden every Sunday I'm in a classroom with young men leading on the chairs doing things rolling their eyes. But they were a young man. And so and then from there, I worked a lot in the Hispanic initiative. Mostly in northern Utah. Yeah, so I was wonderful. Nice. And is there story behind when you were called as an area 70? How did that process go? Yeah, it just came completely out of the blue, which was something I've never understood because we had promptings on I'd say about every significant calling I'd had as a bishop twice as an interstate presidency. Mission president he had had some promptings that something was coming. And one day we got a call from Eller J Jensen's office, inviting us down to visit with him. I thought, well, he had been our area president when we were doing maybe he just wants to say hi. I hadn't seen you for a while. And I thought well, if it's not that, it's probably just a chance. There's just going to be called something. She had done some church committees and so we thought maybe that's what this was all about. We got down there and chatted for a while. And it Robin the letter from the first parents and asked her to read it. It was extending the call to me to be an area 70. It's completely blown away. Yeah. Yeah. And what did they give you much as far as what to expect what your responsibility would be or anything like that? So I was referred to there was a series of video training that present packer video clips and from what I remember there were 6 or 7 minutes long it loras band interviewed. Present packer about what is an area of 70. And I can't remember how many different videos they were, but one of the things comments that present packer made that I would turn out to be very telling because elder has been asked him that very question. What kind of training is there for area of 70s? And he basically said, not much, they don't need much. They're very experienced brethren. And it turned out to be true. And so you went, right? The way we ran. Nice, nice. Well, you know, as we do with these interviews, I have to think through some general leadership principles that maybe you've relied on during your roles and assignments. And as we go through these, maybe there'll be some stories and applications that come to the surface that we can explore. But first of all, you mentioned as far as defining leadership. And I think this is a good place to start with anything. Defining how you see it and whatnot. So I would define the leadership as a process and as a process of exerting influence over others and leading towards some type of a desired outcome.

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And so given that it's a process, it can be improved because all processes can be improved. And given that it's a process, it can be observed, learned, it can be trained. So I think there might be some misconceptions and fallacies in the church that will they'll never call me to that leadership position because I'm not a leader. And I think that's false. Anyone can learn those skills, because it's a process. And by observing studying and reading people can learn how to lead, and so I view leadership as exerting social influence over others. And then I like to think of so what are the attributes that are required? And we can refer to a doctrine covenant one 21 towards the end in the first 41 and 42 talks about the attributes of persuasion, long suffering, gentleness, and meekness, and love and faint kindness. Those are the attributes that are required. To be an effective leader. As opposed to power and we might look at a position or calling in the church and say, with that inherent in that position would be power. That'll only go so far. And people will not will not sustain person who derives their who drives by power rather than exerting proper influence. So connecting that with the leadership is being a system like, what does that look like maybe for a leader? If you're a time machine, go back to president chichester's day one in Uruguay. How do you begin to coach someone into seeing leadership as a system? So I would define it as there are a lot to say probably at least four key elements of a leadership processes. And the first one starts with vision. And it's the leaders responsibility to create and convey mental and verbal pictures of a desired outcome of a desired goal. And for example, I can going back to Uruguay and this is something that came to me very early on when I was there an impression of what the vision for this mission be. And it came to me that what I wanted missionaries to do so walk in the streets, I wanted them to think about coordinates, and so we came up with a phrase today's faces and Blanco, three times in white. And so I asked our missionaries and this is when we talked about often, as they would see people, see them in your mind, dressed in white three times. The day of their baptism in the temple and in the social kingdom. And that takes you right to the end and saw. So that's what a leader does and that's the leaders responsibilities to create that vision and then get the followers to buy into that vision, and to accept it. And I want to highlight this concept of having a just saying three times in white. That's a very catchy, but a mainly it immediately focuses individuals on what the grander vision is of the people that you're interacting with, right? Well, in the beauty of that one, is it focuses on ordinances? Baptism and dimple. And so leadership in the church really ought to have that same kind of focus. So that's the vision. And so to bishops and members of word counsel, listening to this podcast, what is your vision? What is your vision for the people in your organization in your ward or in your release society and think of ways to convey that vision? And then you work to get people to buy into the vision. Yeah. Yeah, that's really helpful. So what else as far as the key leadership? So the leadership processes. So the first being vision, anything else with vision or what comes after that? So then we talk about creating a shared plan and underlying the word shared. We create a plan leading that we'll get us to the desired outcomes. And that I use the word shared, we want the lord council. We want the followers to participate in creating this plan. That way they get ownership. That way it's not just the bishop's plan for just the primary prisons plan or just the oldest presence plan. It's our plan. And so it becomes the shared plan. And it's developed in facilitated by the followers. Now key in all of this is delegation, and I'm a firm a big believer in the need for leaders to delegate to their followers. Sometimes it can be a challenge for people who are very talented, very skilled. They see something that needs to be done, and it would be just much easier for them to do it,

and they look at somebody in the room and say he or she they've never done that. And it's going to take some time and we got to what happens is things start pulling up at the bishop's desk if he's not delegating and things aren't moving ahead and people in that room are not growing.

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So a delegation does, it gives the opportunity because the buy in because that person now who has been given that responsibility, they're getting bought into that process as well. The person doing the delegating needs to set the expectations needs to provide appropriate resources and needs to follow up. And so what will come from that is then the followers are that gives them growth opportunities. And so as the delegation part of that shared plan approach is that that's part of it. So who's going to carry out the plan? Got you. So we develop a plan and it'll have specific tasks that need to be done. And who's going to do that? And then the leader has the responsibility to make it very clear what the expectations are, including time frame. And desired outcome. Yeah. And then provides input. We can counsel together, and then there's ongoing and consistent follow up. Yeah. Now part of that, and as we develop these shared plans, is we develop appropriate metrics and measures. At present Thomas S monson dot that when performance is measured, performance improves on performance as measured and reported, the rate of improvement accelerates. And I have found that to be also true. But have also found out about metrics is you're dealing with an organization. You need to keep them focused and understood and they need to affect the desired result. Few measures are good. And the plan and the measures that are selected to track the performance to the plan, the majors need to be something that the followers can affect. Otherwise you're going to frustrate them. We're being measured on a number of baptisms. Well, do I have do I have a control towards that? I have input towards that. I mean, depending on other people's decisions, and so the measures need to be something that those on the word council can affect. And they can see that by their performance, they'll be able to move the needle. As far as shared plan, as far as developing that plan, and obviously, I'm just curious maybe the stakes that you would visit as an area 70 how could a state go about to put together a plan? Obviously, it starts with that vision. But then what does that nuts and bolts look like after that? So let's go a little bit upstream and actually have quite a bit of experience with this. The role of the 70 is to carry out the mission of the 12 that they represent the 12. And the 12. And so is a 70 goes around. He represents the 12 in the responsibility of the 70s to make sure he clearly understands where the 12 set and their positions are and what their areas concerns are and what their focus are. And so we would have regular training and then working with the area presidency who have the direct contact with the 12th on an ongoing basis. Theory presidency then develops an area plan that area plan then gets passed to the state presidents. And then the state presidents and will tweak and adjust their stake plan, but it's under the umbrella of the area plan. And then the state president, then works with his bishops, and that it just funnels all the way down to the end of the role. To how does the primary president relate to this area plan of strength? Yeah. And as far as sometimes it would be difficult on the stake level and the word level to if they don't understand that area plan and maybe it's hard to fit that into your agenda. And whatnot, when you want to carry out maybe a different agenda. That's exactly right. Yeah. I think it's important that we recognize in the church, we do the decision we talked about earlier is needs to be supportive of

the brethren. There's a Nelson on down. What does their vision and in this vision we have for our ward or organization? Is it consistent? And isn't under that is it under that umbrella? Yeah. President packer talks about which way do you face? And so our responsibility as leaders is to face the brethren, understand what their hopes and expectations are and then do our part to turn and implement that as we lead those people in our congregations. Not the other way around of well here's here are the needs and the people the organization I think I know better than what president Nelson might know. So the question is which way do you face? Yeah. So anything else in relation to the shared plan process? I think the other thing is just to make sure that the goals, the goals we have in place are the members of the team the followers are bought into them. They agree in their supportive and that they're working to make them happen.

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And then don't be afraid to make adjustments as you go along. Because things can change. Yeah. So what else as far as key leadership processes that you found? So we have a plan and then we implement it. And we measured as we're going along. And I think, and I won't go a lot into that, but I think the last thing I would say is when appropriate, celebrate successes. And sometimes that can be there can be a goal that's set up front. And if we achieve this goal, here's what we'll do, or it might be at the end. There's some celebration of we've all worked together and we worked hard and let's celebrate the success. I'll give you an example from our mission. We've been in our mission a couple months, and I felt it would be appropriate that we established an overall mission baptism goal. And that was the only goal I wanted to establish. And I remember where I was, the moment I was standing in front of 80 missionaries in his own conference and in a number of popped in my head and it was a baptismal goal for the whole mission, which was almost double where we currently were. So I just threw it out there. Urgent gas. I remember that president chidester is new. He doesn't always talking about. And I said, so when we achieve this goal, sister jitter will make cinnamon rolls for the entire mission. It took till that following July. And we achieved the goal. And we went around and delivered cinnamon rolls to the entire mission. We hauled a microwave and cold milk. And the machine isn't really still talking about that. And just kind of a follow on comment to that, when we establish that goal, I know it was just the beginning. Which it turned out to be. Yeah. But just taking that moment of celebrating that rather than all right, we got that, let's move on to the next thing. It was acknowledgment of a job well done a little a lot of effort by an entire mission. That's cool. Awesome. Let's go back up here. Anything else as far as you mentioned power and influence. Anything we haven't discussed with those two aspects. Yeah, so let's go back to doctor Kevin and one 21 39 three 41. It talks about unrighteous dominion. And I would suggest that when a leader approaches their responsibility not to influence but to power and overpower people that that might be under righteous dominion. But if there is such a thing as unregistered minion, I would suggest there's such a thing as righteous dominion. And then I would say that that's the ability to exert proper influence for our followers. Yeah. And how did you see when you felt like you were in that zone? Where did that often look like or because especially with missionaries, I would imagine that this sometimes she just want them to comply. Just do what president says. This will be great. But then there's other times where it feels like, man, I feel like I'm in that zone that doctor Evans won 21 talks about anything coming to mind as far as what that looks like. Well, what it looks like is when the spirit is there in full abundance and directing it. I found in looking

back that if those uncharged elite feel and know and recognize that I love them and I love those that they are leading, it makes all the difference. Yeah. As opposed to if a leader is proceeded to have his or her own personal agenda, and people are questioning, why is he doing this? Why is she doing that? Or when the motives are pure and people really sense a great love and that we're doing this because we love God and we love his children. That to me is always the telling feature. One of the things I've learned over the years is that God truly loves his children. Yeah. And he really wants them back home. And so as leaders, we have an opportunity to participate in that process of helping God's children back. I'll share an experience again for our mission in Uruguay. This happened about three months after we got down there, there was this elder who had three months left in his mission. He I don't think his mission was what he had hoped it would be. By the time I got there, I think he pretty well given up. And he was pretty negative and critical of me. He just was a thorn in my side. He just went, he did about everything he could do. He knew every hot button I had. And he was really good at hitting everyone. Oh wow. And so here it comes time for him to leave. And I had made a personal goal before we got into Uruguay that that final interview I'd have with a missionary would be positive would be upbeat because I recognized what was going to happen as I was sending these missionaries back into the world, even though they had been maybe 8000 miles away from home. They'd really been in a protected state as the lord's side of our servants. And being a missionary. And so I always wanted that final interview to be just a positive upload here. I still remember to this day been in this mission in the mission home doing these final interviews with these mysteries are going home and I knew this elder was the next one to come in the office and I closed the door before he came in.

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And I got on my knees and I asked for help because I didn't want to be disingenuous. But I didn't have real positive feelings towards him. And so I asked for help. He I got up I invited him and he sat down. And here we go. I took a deep breath and I looked up and over his shoulder. And this was the first office I had down there was really tiny. It was almost like a closet. But on that back wall, there's a painting of the red robe, Jesus. And I heard in my mind tell him I love him. There's the answer to my prayer. And so I looked at this older and I said, elder, I want you to know that the lord loves you in a way the way I do too. And for me, the great takeaway is that God loves all of his children. And however, however, nominal minimal that elders contribution was the lord loved him for it. And I think so it is as we serve in words. Yeah. And just communicating that, right? And I'm curious with this, this is a process that probably becomes quite routine by the end of your time as a mission present. But just those final interviews, anything else that you did or approach regardless of who was your meeting with to make that a positive experience for that missionary? Or that's a good question. I can tell you the longer I was there the greater love I developed for each of these missionaries. Because we love those we serve. And I can tell you in the last two years, those weighed shared with the blast and what would it be last year? So those weighted shared with we'd picked up at the airport and now we're taking back to the airport and we had been through a lot of battles. And I had seen a lot of growth and it was, I don't know who this is the answer to your question, but the love came very easy. Yeah. And so the focus. And I would go back to that experience I just shared with you. I knew that these were sons and daughters of God who had given of their life two years or a year

and a half. And I love them for that. And the more you serve with them, as you got more familiar with it, that love naturally just flows, right? Sure, yeah, then we have some very tender experiences. And I remember particularly Leonard Latin areas would be in their missions. 105 ever see them again. Yeah. And many have not, but a whole bunch I have, and it's just been wonderful. Yeah, that's great. And then you mentioned before we record as far as like, as you visit a different stakes as an area 70 and councils really emphasizing the people and ordinances being the main focus of a lot of these council meetings. This is a difficult thing a difficult dynamic as a new bishop or even in presidency meetings to it's easy to default to the administrative points. Maybe an impact that this approach as far as the focus of people and ordinances. Okay. So I think we as bishops will run and lead at the word council the way we were trained. And sometimes that might be appropriate. Sometimes might be time to step back and say. False traditions of our fathers. Exactly. There might be a better way to do this. And I think we also in board council meetings or presidency meetings will default to where we're comfortable. And very often, is the administrative task real comfortable with the numbers or the reports. But I'm not so sure that that's a good use of time, and that's not sure that's going to accomplish our desired outcomes. What we're trying to do is help our heavenly father's children get back home. How do they get back home? They receive the necessary organs and they keep the comments they've made associated with those governors. I think in the church sometimes, we make it way too complex. And we back in the days and when we had boy scouts and other things and those as good as those programs were and our and can be sometimes they can really get in the way of the essentials. And I really like the president Nelson talks. You remember when he was the first press conference he had when he became the prophet who was at the temple and talking about the towel. And president Nelson talks about we start with the end in mind. And if you listen closely to him, he talks implied in most everything he says is the importance of coordinates, leading up to the temple. So back to how do we what do we do? And to be effective leaders in presidency meetings or counsels, I would suggest that we set calendaring aside, administrative matters aside, most all of those things can be done outside the meeting. Yeah. What we ought to do is come prepare to talk about specific individuals and their needs and ask this question who needs an ordinance? I remember being down in Uruguay and being invited to a state conference and the 70 that came in for the leadership meeting broke up, everybody into chords.

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He gave them a worksheet, and he asked them to identify people and then they had somebody he had the bishop come up and report. And they had listed all the saving ordinances and asked them to identify two people in their stewardship that had need for an ordinance. I followed that in many state conferences. And as I went around, I visited in a lot of word counsels, and that would be some something I would suggest that any bishop considers strongly as talk about people and who needs an ordinance and who hasn't partaken of the sacrament for a while. What 7 year olds are coming up needing to be prepared for baptism and the primary president can come in and prepared to talk about that, release study president and come in and talk about some woman that might benefit by going to the temple and receive in balance or some couple. Nail her score and presidency can be prepared also. To identify people who are in need of ordinances because when all is said and done, that's what we offer. And that's what the true

church is all about. We don't have in the church. We don't have a corner on love for the lord. That's for sure. In my current calling sister and I serve on what's called the Dave's communication council. It's kind of think public affairs. That's what it used to be. In our specific responsibility, we work with interfaith groups, the Spanish groups, and we work with some pastors, and we have attended services and have learned that they have a great love the lord sincere a great love for the lord. We don't have a corner on that. But what we do have is we have the priesthood of God, which allows a facilitate ordinances. And so that's really what sets us apart. And that's where we ought to be focusing our efforts in our time. Yeah, that's really helpful. So maybe this sort of a fire round here is that everyone jump around these callings. You mentioned you're serving in a public affairs or communications capacity right now. And I've interviewed several individuals especially outside of Utah where the communications council is maybe a little more obvious as far as their place inside of Utah, they're so saturated with members in, I feel like there's a lot of stakes to sort of dismiss that. Well, yeah, there's somebody in the stakes are high councilman or whatever. But we really don't know what to do with it. So I'm curious from your experience now being communications in Davis county and whatnot. What are we missing or what's the best approach as far as inside of Utah or saturated area of Latter day Saints? How can we effectively go about that role in the communications? I think the communication can also play such a valuable role in connecting the stakes to these other faiths in the faith groups. And I'll give you an example in our case. And this goes back about a year ago. So we've had this calling for about a year and a half. And we thought we knew where all the non IDS face were. One morning a couple of weeks before Thanksgiving a year ago, I got up and I saw Facebook pulls for a Christian Hispanic church in bountiful that that later that day, they were going to be distributing food to those in need. And down below, we had said in the small print of volunteers would be appreciated. What had happened as a result of COVID, the Utah food bank at decentralized their operation. And so this small Christian church here in bountiful picked up part of the responsible retail food bank. And so they would have pallet loads of food, dropped off, and it was this pastor and his wife were the ones that were breaking these in like 500 boxes and then distributed it to 500 people. So I saw that. And I thought I'd never heard of this church. And furthermore, it's a Spanish church. And so I waited for the sun to come up. And I called a pastor, not knowing what kind of reception I would get. And I introduced myself. And I said, could you use some help? He said, oh, we sure good. And by 11 o'clock, I called I called some sake presents. I call it Randy Rigby, who oversees just serve and Davis county. But 11 o'clock, we had 70 people there. And we broke down the food and then later that afternoon, the people came by and picked up the food. And then the next week, we did the same in anticipation of Thanksgiving. Well, as a part of that, then I'm developing this relationship with his pastor. And I turned to him and I said, so what are your needs? What are your dreams? And he pointed to his worship facility, I hadn't seen on the inside, just looked like an old warehouse. And he said, oh, we want to turn that into a temple. And he said, we need carpet, and we did this and we do that. And I said, let me see what we can do.

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So I contacted the state president in that area, who was most supportive and excited about getting involved in this and reached out to some local merchants who donated carpet, the steak

and the ward there. I donated the labor and then a whole bunch of other things end up donating all through that. We've had a great connection with the stake to this church. So through this experience, we've become very close with this pastor and his wife as a co pastor, pastor novice, and the cost of anything else, and we help them to get their facility ready to be dedicated as a temple. I also worship for them. He's apostle from Guatemala City, flew up from Guatemala for the dedication, which was last April. I was invited to speak at that dedication. The dedication was three and a half hours long, included about an hour and a half in the middle of a Christian rock band, and it was quite remarkable because it was very loud. And then it got very quiet and very reverent. And this apostle ordained this pastor, these pastors who passed on his wife is very sacred. Most a wonderful experience. So it sounds like it really begins it's easy to assume in Utah where you are familiar with what other denominations or churches there are, but to be proactive and really looking for opportunities to step in and serve and lend a hand. Correct. Yeah. Those opportunities are there. And we have other congregations. And so we are working really hard to connect the local stakes and bishops with these congregations. I'll give you one other experience. Two others, so there's a Spanish Hispanic church of occasional that we work with. They've had needs, they're parking lot needs to be repaired and sealed. And they've had some issues in their basement with mold. And so the state communication contact has been very actively involved in getting contractors and leaning on people for lower bids and donations. So it's works when we follow the procedures and intend to be things work. Yeah. So I want to pivot back to your time as mission president. What was your general approach to his own conference? Did you have a methodology there that was your own conference? I'd always pray about a topic. And we would have a particular thing, and we'd ask as the missionaries to come prepared with a 5 minute talk on that scene. And then at random, I would call on a missionary and some would play the odds. And get caught. And you knew when they got caught? One of the funniest ones was I called on sister Judith street once as a 5 minute talk. And she was not prepared. That ended okay. Anything else his own conferences that were? So we would it was a process that we kind of developed over time. We'd have workshops, workshops would be led by either assistance to the president or zone leaders. We would have from what I remember. It's been a while. And these workshops would center on missionaries skills teaching and finding and those kinds of things such as would lead to workshop on might be cooking or sewing or some helpful skills that way. We would for the new missionaries coming from the states we'd hold a workshop workshop should be held in English, but for everybody else they were held in Spanish. I recall, hey, had an assistant from Argentina, who was learning one to learn English. And I had him come into the office to be one of the office workers and he, one of the office missionaries, and he told all the other elders who were all from the states. Said don't speak Spanish. She said I want to learn English, which he did. He became quite fluent. And then later in his mission, he became one of my assistants, and he would teach the English workshops in English. Oh, wow. So now I'll roll the clock forward several years. This elder became let's call as a state president. This would have been two or three years ago down on the stake that was created the very tip of South America, Louis shuya steak. It's the southernmost stake in the entire church. And it'll hurt a lot of Romano. Is the safe president? Wow, this is awesome. That is great. So we'd have these workshops. And then the afternoon, we'd have a lunch and they would in the afternoon. Substitute us. And I would give some spiritual issues around the theme that we're talking about. And then we'd hear a testimony generally from those that were going

home. One of the things that concerned me when we got her a mission is I didn't feel like this sister missionaries were treated with great respect. And so we worked really hard on that. We'd have started by having the sisters when we'd be meeting in the chaplain or zone conference.

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They'd sit up front. And we've been working on this. And I kind of felt like the elders were starting to figure it out and they were starting to treat the sisters with a little bit more respect. But I wasn't sure. And so I intentionally that one zone conference I set up fewer chairs and tables than there were missionaries. Now, elders are really hungry. And they'd come to his own conference. And they just wanted to eat. But my intent was, and I called the sister missionary as a side. And I said, don't let us do. Said there are not enough chairs for everybody. And I want you sisters to go in last. Let's see what happens. Nice little social experiment there. So they were excited about this. So the others get in there, of course they're all sitting down. And all the shares are taken and here come the sister missionaries. And I believe it's a zone leader at the time. Elder Pearson got really nervous when he saw these sisters couldn't find a seat to sit. And he started ordering elders away from the table. And inviting the system and generates to sit down. It was just sweet. Nice. So it's taken hold there. They're cold. That's awesome. That's awesome. With these workshops, was the point just getting people in smaller groups. So there's more interaction there. What was the they tended to be a very open classroom kind of the setting. And again, we'd have three going on. So you could have it a zone conference. You could have typically about 40 or so missionary settings on conferences. So break it down into a much more manageable way to get more interaction with measuring. And we do a lot of role playing. Yeah, that's great. And then your time is area 70. Obviously, having a lot of state conference assignments as being the visiting authority, you'd speak a lot. And obviously, as a mission president, you do that as well. What have you learned about speaking, standing in front of a congregation and speaking? So that goes back to when I was first called. So when you're called in that position, you go down into the April, general conference training. And to the new area of 70s, they hand you a packet and in the packet, it has your first three state conference assignments. And you're in training. And so you were assigned with a general authority. And the very first one I had was up in cainsville, if you know where that said north here in northern Utah. Okay. It was a sign of a Marlin K Jensen. It's about hopper kind of west of augment. And it was a wonderful weekend and he's always been one of my favorites. And just such a great teacher. Yeah. And so afterwards, we sat down and just had a real opening can of discussion and I asked for ask for feedback and ask for suggestions and tips. And it just was one of those wonderful experiences where I got. I'm sitting there with what really one of my church heroes. And I'm able to pick his brain. And I asked him the very question about, so I'm going to be giving a lot of talks. He said, let me give you a suggestion. He said, I have prepared 50 talks that I know very well. I can give and I can give as the spirit directs. And so you might consider that. So I did that and I didn't do 50, but I probably got 20 something talks that I would outline. I would have on my little notepad and has the spirit would direct. And so sometimes they stay conferences would come so fast and so furious. Sometimes you have three weeks in a row. And keep in mind an area of 70 has also a full-time job. So you have your weekends are taken up and you're working. There just isn't time. Yeah. And so you rely heavily on the spirit and you realize heavily on that prior preparation. But it worked. And you think about a weekend where an

area 70 would preside, he'll speak in a, I'm so removed from it now, but back in my time, it's been appreciative leadership session. So we can Saturday evening session. Speaking of general session, sometimes we'd have special meetings with new members or in some cases Hispanic members in so you're just always speaking. And then when I didn't, when I wasn't signed to say conference, I would visit two wards in a stake in my one of my coordinating councils. And I'd always speak there. So it just gets to be where it's just what you do. Yeah. And no nerves on quite honestly. It's a muscle that you exercise enough that so here's the irony. And perhaps I shouldn't say this and gets out. I'm not spoken since I got released. Oh boy. Who knows? And that was four years ago. Oh, nice. I think that muscles its atrophied. Interesting. Any advice on, you know, I remember being the sick person that was sort of this anxiety of the area authority coming in.

00:45:04 - 00:50:00

You weren't sure his MO and what did he want to focus on any advice you'd give to better prepare for the zing 70? Well, that's a great question, because I sense that many times. And as I go to these wards, I remember telling a few bishops just to relax and just take a breath. Because we're all in this together. And we all have the same we're not coming into judge and critique. We're here to help. And that's sincere. I would, in preparing for these state conferences, I visit multiple times at stake presidents ahead of time. And we plan together. And we talk about need to take and hopefully through that at stake president can sense sincere desire to help. Not to come in and judge about to really come in, how can I help you? How can I set a state presence carry out an awful big burden? And I know that most probably the more mature state presence we've been in a while. I think they get that. They understand that when an authority comes from the outside, they really are there to help. That's great. Well, this has been awesome. Any other principle or concept we didn't touch on? Maybe calling or something. I'd like to talk a little bit about calling for good. As an area 70, I was involved in 19 state reorganizations, which is the most remarkable experience. In that, as a part of that process, I estimate they interviewed about 500 brother. At a 500, I remember only knowing one beforehand. And that your task with a pretty enormous responsibility. Yeah. To identify who the lord has prepared to be in the next state president. It's a very humbling. It's a very humbling experience, but it always works. With you on the presiding general authority and I just had a remarkable experience about that. But one of the things I learned is it's not about calling the brother with the most impressive church resume. And I think that relates to any of us, is we're going to call it a new primary release study president. The other corporation, whatever, it's not about who is the best prepared. It's who the lord have called. And so these callings are for us to grow. I reflect back on all the experiences I've had in church callings and so so very grateful for that. When we were called when we were invited down to present monson's office and extended the call to us to preside over Spanish speaking mission, he shared three quotes that had been given to him by Harold B Lee when he and sister monson had been called to preside over the Canadian mission. And some of these culture are recognizable. Again, these came from here it'll be Lee, whom the lord calls the lord qualifies. When you're on the lord's errand, you're entitled to the lord's help. The lord shapes the back to bear the burden placed upon it. And so it's my witness that these callings are inspired and canon should be inspired. Sometimes we might as a bishopric get a little bit desperate and we'll share experience I had when I was a

bishop up in Oregon. We had a young woman's president called into a steak position. So she needed to be released. And we were struggling as a bishopric to find her replacement. One name kept coming up, but I as the bishop and my great wisdom kept putting it down because this woman had a young family and her husband was the young men's president. So by logic, it just didn't make sense. And so after about a month and then getting pressure from the sister who was being released, I got desperate and found probably the most qualified sister in our ward that could lead the young women. And I said, brother, let's call her to be the youngman. Women's present. I invited her in, and extended the call and she looked at me and she said bishop. Can you look at me in the eye, it looked me in the eyes and tell me this was an inspired calling, because it feels to me like you're desperate. And she said it doesn't feel inspired to me. She said, I'll accept the call. If you're telling me that this is coming by way of inspiration, I said, I can't tell you that. And so I withdrew the call. I went back to my counselors and decided to give in to what I felt was pressure, but turned out to be the spirit directing this other sister who was whose husband was the youngest president, invited her and extended the call. And she said, yes, I'll accept. I've been wondering wondering what's been taking you so long. So she knew weeks before. So it worked out well. Callings in the church. This is God's church. That's my testimony. Let me share an experience with you that I had when it was called as a bishop.

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So it was a Tuesday evening I was called hump Greeley humbled by the call. The next night Wednesday night I went over to the outgoing bishop's home. It was a good friend of mine. And we sat in my car in his driveway, and he handed all of her manuals and counsel and things that a new bishop ought to know about the word he was coming into. The responsibility was coming into. And among those was a bank statement. Now, back then, this was 1984. Back then, we had our own board bank account. We were responsible to raise a budget, board budget. And that was some pressure. I got home that night, and I, again, this was a Wednesday night. I opened it up, opened up the bank statement, and the word budget was \$350 in a hole. The only reason checks weren't bouncing is the prohibition had not sent in the missionary funds donations, which we were supposed to send us all link. For the missionary fund. But that was capsule checks wouldn't bounce. There had been a project just before I was called as bishop, released study project that was approved, but no plans have been put in place to raise the money. The three and \$30. So I thought, oh, what a wonderful way to start my time as a bishop. And \$350 on the whole. I didn't say anything to anybody. Didn't say anything to my wife. I just got on my knees and asked for help. And I just is a young bishop, just pouring out my heart that Sunday I went to church after church, this man came up to me a member of our warden and an envelope. And he said, bishop, you're probably not aware. He said I do property appraisal for the church every now and then. And they pay me and here's a chance you deal with it as you see fit. And open the envelope in the check was for \$350. Wow. That's great. So I learned early on as my predecessor told me. I should back up to my little meeting in his driveway, he said, you will learn very shortly his church this is. And he said, I wish every member of the church had the opportunity to serve as a bishop for at least a month. He would see the lord's hand for stand. And so I had that very real experience of many others that follow, but that very real one just a few days later. That's powerful. Love that. Last question I have for you is just as you reflect on your life in various leadership opportunities and callings, how is being a leader helped you

become a better follower of Jesus Christ? Well, what a powerful question. I think being the leader has helped me feel and see the way and know the way that God allows us children. So I'll give you an example. So I mentioned as an area of 70, I was assigned to 19 state organizations. In addition to that, I presented over 55 state conferences. So I over many thousands of people that would be, it happened every time when I would stand in front of that congregation, generally not knowing a soul. I could feel God's love for his children. And so that through leadership and the experience I just shared with you and seeing God's hand in this great work and being in people's involved in people's lives with various challenges and seeing how God loves his children. He truly loves his children. And so that helps me as a follower to sustain those who are trying to carry out God's work. That makes sense. It helps me recognize that this is God's work and I want to do my part to bring the passes work in his glory. And that concludes this how I lead, interview, hope you enjoyed it and I would ask you, could you take a minute and drop this link in an email on social media in a text? Wherever makes most sense and share it with somebody who could relate to this experience and this is how we develop as leaders just hearing what the other guys doing, trying something out, testing, adjusting for your area and that's where great leadership's discovered, right? So we would love to have you, share this with somebody in this calling or a related calling, and that would be great and also if you know somebody at any type of leader who would be a fantastic guest on how I lead segment, reach out to us go to leading saint thought or slash contact, maybe send this individual email letting them know that you're going to be suggesting their name for this interview will reach out to them and see if we can line them up. So again, go to leading saints dot org slash contact and there you can submit all the information and let us know. And maybe they will be on a feature how I lead segment on the leading saints podcast. It came as a result of the position of leadership, which was imposed upon us by the God of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ and when the declaration was made concerning the all and only true and living church upon the face of the earth.

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We were immediately put in a position of loneliness. The loneliness of leadership from which we can not shrink or run away. And of which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.