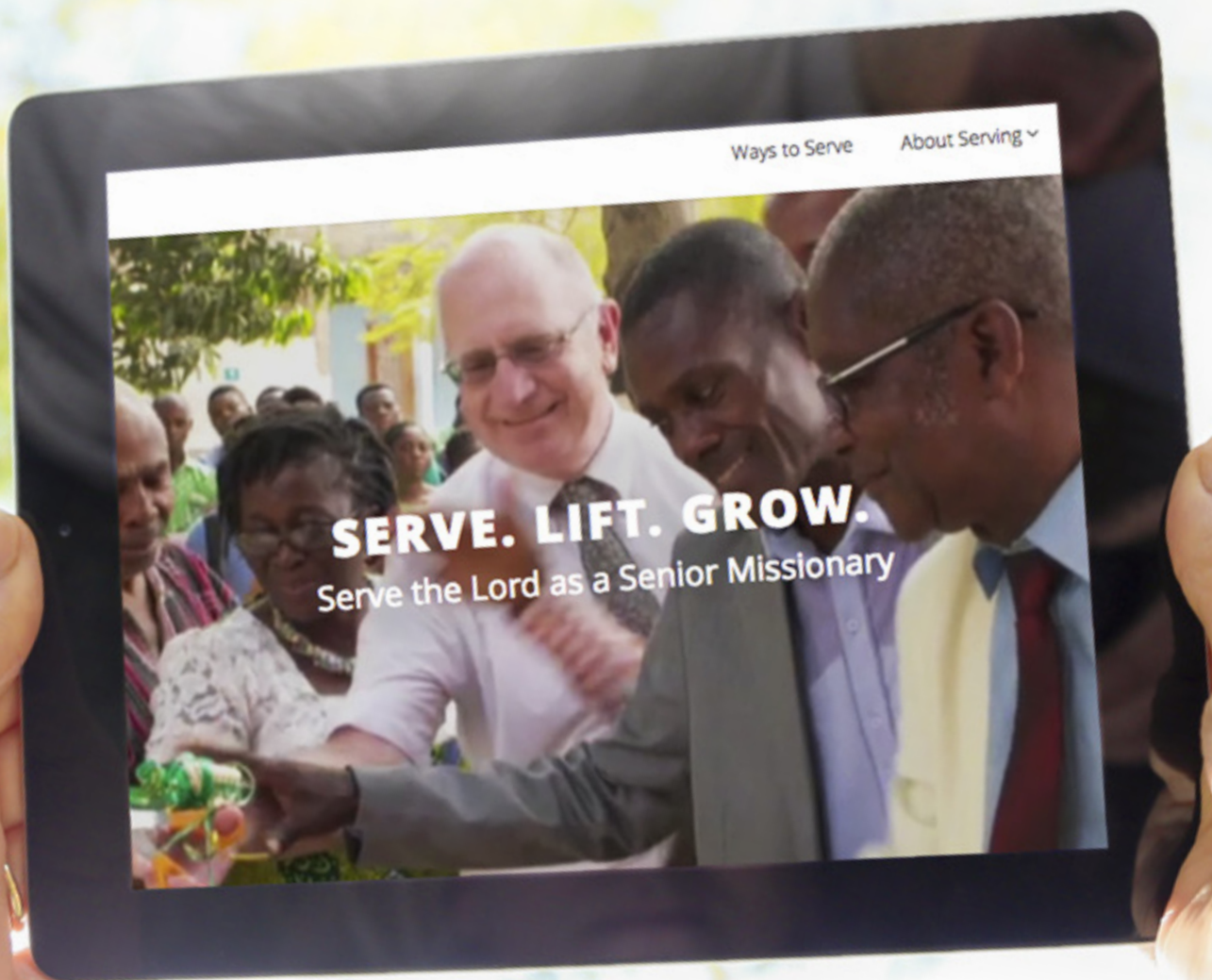


Senior Missionary Service Made Simple

A new Church website provides answers
for seniors seeking mission guidance.



By Margot Hovley
Church Magazines

For Marcia and Rodney Ford from Bountiful, Utah, serving a mission together as a senior couple was a long-time dream they kept alive while they raised their family. When they finally opened their mission call to New Jersey, they were surprised—and delighted. They threw themselves into the work, helping with local leadership and working with the people of the area. They grew to truly love the people they served, forming lifelong connections and finding so much joy and fulfillment in missionary work that they went on to serve again and again in missions around the world.

But since that day in 2004 when the Fords opened their first mission call, the process for getting ready to serve as a senior missionary has changed in new and exciting ways. And never have you been so needed. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “We need thousands of more couples serving in the missions of the Church. Every mission president pleads for them. Everywhere they serve, our couples bring a maturity to the work that no number of 19-year-olds, however good they are, can provide.”¹ This plea goes out to all seniors, married or single.

The Church has launched a new website that will make it easier than ever to learn the perfect way for seniors to serve. This powerful new tool will answer nearly all your questions about serving as a senior missionary.

Serve. Lift. Grow.

Start by visiting **senior missionary.lds.org** for a guided tour through the various opportunities available to seniors.

There are three main areas to experience.

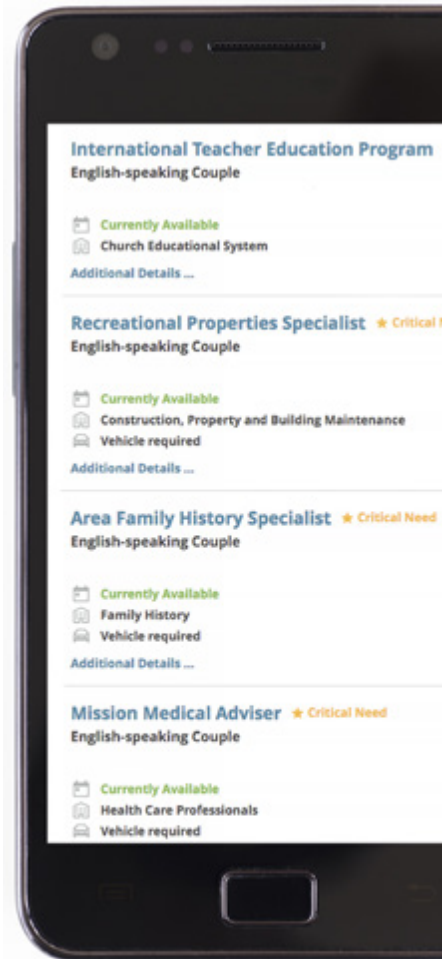
1 First, you’ll see a section titled **“What are the options?”** Click “Get Started,” and you’ll be presented with over 30 meaningful service options—whether close to home or across the world—that will allow you to serve the Lord and bless others. The wide variety of mission types are briefly described, with videos showing examples of seniors at work—helping you know what to expect with each kind of missionary service shown.

2 The next section, **“What is the best mission for me?”** asks you to log in to your LDS Account, which provides the system with basic information about you. Then you will be asked a series of questions that help the website tailor the opportunities it presents to you.

3 Lastly, you’ll see the section called **“Can I browse a list of opportunities?”** Click here to see a list of possible missions, curated by the information you’ve provided. You can filter your results by priority of need, couple or single, length of service, monthly cost, country or region, and language need. Once the list is filtered to your specifications, you can mark ones you are interested in. These will be compiled into a list for you, helping you see the opportunities at a glance. You can choose several favorites to ponder and compare, and the system will remember your selections for the next time you log in.

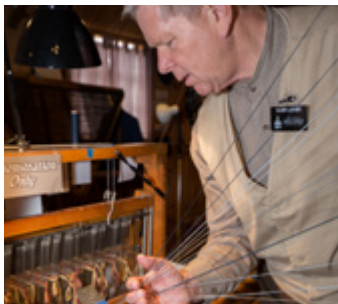
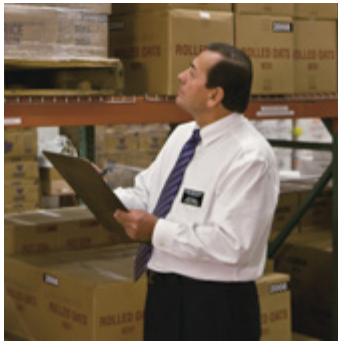
Once you have narrowed your choices, the website allows you to **submit them to your bishop** in a simple and easy process. He will then help expedite your calling through the necessary steps.

The website is a great resource of general



Members or priesthood leaders seeking additional assistance can call 801-240-0897 or e-mail seniormission@ldschurch.org.

There is a surprising variety of mission opportunities awaiting seniors.



information about missionary service. Tabs across the top give you quick access to the different areas of the site. The “Ways to Serve” tab will take you to the descriptions of mission types, where you can review the videos and learn more. The “About Serving” tab describes full-time missions, Church-service missions, and missions in a foreign country. In the “Search Opportunities” tab, your curated list of possible missions can be viewed at any time.

Seeking Service

In a church where we don't seek out callings, it may seem strange to initiate the process of a mission call. But this is exactly what is needed—and encouraged. Potential full-time missionaries are encouraged to make three to six specific choices on the website. President Russell M. Nelson has said, “Good inspiration is based upon good information.”² Be detailed in your interests and past experiences to allow for the best possible fit.

If you have the finances, health, and family support to allow it, please consider a full-time mission. Thousands of full-time opportunities are available and are the greatest priority. For those unable to leave home, many Church-service opportunities are available.

While full-time positions are limited to couples or single sisters, single brothers are also greatly needed in Church-service mission capacities.

Ask nearly any young missionary about the impact senior missionaries have, and they will tell story after story about how critically senior missionaries are needed, especially in developing countries where the local leadership is often new and inexperienced. A senior missionary's Church-service experience can be immeasurably important to these areas.

Kenny Hovley, who served as a young missionary in the Sierra Leone Freetown Mission in

West Africa in 2015, had this comment: “I can’t imagine how we could have functioned without the help of the senior missionaries. The Church is growing so rapidly in West Africa that an average of one new unit is being created every day. You can imagine that with that rate of growth, there is a huge need for the help and guidance of experienced members. Many more are needed than what we had. I know Africa could be challenging for those who have never lived there, but living situations for missionaries are very safe and comfortable for the most part. Please consider serving these choice new brothers and sisters in the gospel who need you so desperately. Don’t be afraid. God will strengthen and bless you.”

The Needs Are Varied and Great

You might be surprised at the variety of mission types for which seniors are needed. The website lists 13 categories (see below), with one to five options to consider within each category. Information and videos are provided throughout.

- Teach and Fellowship
- Interact with the Public
- Preserve and Share Church History
- Help People Find Their Ancestors
- Preserve Family History Records
- Provide Humanitarian Aid
- Feed the Hungry
- Help People Become Self-Reliant
- Support Church Operations
- Serve in a Temple
- Support Young Adults
- Manage and Maintain Church Properties and Facilities
- Use Your Professional Skills

President Nelson has said:

“No senior missionary finds it convenient to leave. Neither did Joseph or Brigham or John or



President Russell M. Nelson greets participants at the mission leadership seminar, June 2018.

Wilford. They had children and grandchildren too. They loved their families not one whit less, but they also loved the Lord and wanted to serve Him. Someday we may meet these stalwarts who helped to establish this dispensation. Then will we rejoice that we did not seek the shadows when a call to missionary service came from the prophet, even in the autumn years of our lives. . . .

“ . . . Opportunities for senior missionaries are varied and vast. Their calls to serve are officially made after prayerful consideration has been given to their occupational background, language experience, and personal capabilities. Of all qualifications to serve, a *desire* to serve may be the most important. The Lord has declared:

“O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day.

“Therefore, if ye have *desires* to serve God ye are called to the work’ [Doctrine and Covenants 4:2–3; emphasis added]. . . .

“As I extol the work of senior missionaries, I realize that there are many more who would like to serve but are not able to do so. Limitations imposed by age or by poor health deserve realistic appraisal, as do the important needs of family members. When desire burns within yet such limitations exist, you can extend your service through others. They can be your arms and legs, and you can provide needed funds. Still others can contribute time and talents as live-at-home missionaries. Each will be pleasing to the Lord, and each will receive His praise.”³

Even if you aren’t quite ready to serve as a senior missionary, try the website out and let it inspire you with ways you can serve the Lord when the time is right. You and your whole family will be blessed. ■

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “We Are All Enlisted,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 46.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 94.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Senior Missionaries and the Gospel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 81.