Many years ago I was with my companion at the missionary training center when I heard the voice of a child say, “Grandma, are those real missionaries?” I turned to see a young girl holding her grandmother’s hand and pointing at me and my companion. I smiled, extended my hand, looked her square in the eye, and said, “Hello, I am Elder Richardson, and we are real missionaries.” Her face beamed as she looked at me, thrilled that she was in the company of genuine missionaries.

I walked away from that experience with renewed dedication. I wanted to be the type of missionary that the Savior, my family, and this young girl expected me to be. For the next two years, I worked hard to look like, think like, act like, and especially to teach like a real missionary.

Upon my return home, it became increasingly apparent that even though I had left my mission, my mission didn’t leave me. In fact, even after all these years, I still feel that my mission was the best two years for my life. One unexpected carryover from my mission was that young girl’s voice. Only now I was hearing in my mind, “Grandma, is that a real priesthood holder?” “Grandma, is that a real husband or a real father?” or “Grandma, is that a real member of the Church?”

I have learned that a key to becoming real in every aspect of our lives is our ability to teach in a way that does not restrict learning. You see, a real life requires real learning, which depends on real teaching. “The responsibility to teach (effectively) is not limited to those who have formal callings as teachers.”¹ In fact, every family member, Church leader, and Church member (including the youth and children) has a responsibility to teach.

While we are all teachers, we must fully realize that it is the Holy Ghost who is the real teacher and witness of all truth. While we are all teachers, we must fully realize that it is the Holy Ghost who is the real teacher and witness of all truth. Those who do not fully understand this either try to take over for the Holy Ghost and do everything themselves, politely invite the Spirit to be with them but only in a supporting role, or believe they are turning all their teaching over to the Spirit when, in truth, they are actually just “winging it.” All parents, leaders, and teachers have the responsibility to teach “by the Spirit.”² They should not teach “in front of the Spirit” or “behind the Spirit” but “by the Spirit” so the Spirit can teach the truth unrestrained.

Moroni helps us understand how we can teach by the Spirit without replacing, diluting, or dismissing the Holy Ghost as the real teacher. Moroni said the Saints conducted their experiences “after the manner of the workings of the Spirit.”³ This requires more than just having the Spirit with us. To conduct ourselves “after the manner” of the Holy Ghost means that we may need to change our way of teaching to emulate the way the Holy Ghost teaches. As we align our manner with the Holy Ghost’s manner, then the Holy Ghost can teach and testify without restraint. This important alignment may be illustrated by the following example.

Many years ago my children and I hiked to the top of South Sister, a 10,358-foot (3,157 m) mountain in Oregon. After several hours we encountered a long 45-degree slope of tiny volcanic pebbles. With the summit in sight, we pressed on only to find that with every step, our feet would sink in the pebbles, causing us to slide backward several inches. My 12-year-old son forged ahead as I stayed with my 8-year-old daughter. Fatigue and discouragement soon set in, and she was heartbroken, thinking that she might not join her brother at the top. My first impulse was to carry her. My spirit was willing, but sadly my flesh was weak. We sat down on the rocks, assessed our situation, and devised a new plan. I told her to put her hands in my back pants pockets, hold on tight, and—most important—as soon as I lifted my foot to take a step, she should quickly put her foot in its place. She mirrored my every move and relied on the lift that came from...
hanging on to my pockets. After what
seemed like an eternity, we made it to
the top of the mountain. Her expres-
sion of triumph and satisfaction was
priceless. And yes, she and her brother
were, in my estimation, real
hikers.

My daughter’s success was a result
of her diligent effort and how well she
hiked after the manner that I hiked. As
she synchronized her movement with
mine, we achieved a rhythm together,
allowing me to utilize my full energy.
Such is the case when we teach “after
the manner of the workings of the
Spirit.” As we align the manner of our
teaching to match that of the Holy
Ghost, the Spirit strengthens us and,
at the same time, is not constrained.
With this in mind, please consider two
fundamental “workings of the Spirit”
worthy of our emulation.

First, the Holy Ghost teaches indi-
viduals in a very personal way. This
makes it possible for us to intimately
know truth for ourselves. Because of
our different needs, circumstances,
and progression, the Holy Ghost
teaches what we must know and do
so we may become what we must be.
Please note that while the Holy Ghost
teaches “the truth of all things,”4 He
does not teach all truth all at once.
The Spirit teaches truth “line upon
line, precept upon precept, here a
little and there a little.”5

Those who teach after the manner
of the Spirit understand they teach
people, not lessons. As such, they
overcome the urge to cover every-
thing in a manual or teach all they
have learned on the subject and focus
instead on those things that their
family or class members need to know
and do. Parents, leaders, and teachers
who mirror how the Spirit teaches
learn quickly that real teaching
involves much more than just talking
and telling. As a result, they intention-
ally pause to listen, carefully observe,
and then discern what to do next.6

When they do this, the Holy Ghost
is in a position to teach both learners
and teachers what they should do
and say.7

Second, the Holy Ghost teaches
by inviting, prompting, encouraging,
and inspiring us to act. Christ assured
us that we come to the truth when
we live doctrine and act accordingly.8
The Spirit leads, guides, and shows
us what to do.9 He will not, however,
do for us what only we can do for
ourselves. You see, the Holy Ghost
cannot learn for us, feel for us, or act
for us because this would be contrary
to the doctrine of agency. He can
facilitate opportunities and invite us
to learn, feel, and act.

Those who teach after this manner
of the Spirit help others by inviting,
encouraging, and providing them
opportunities to use their agency.
Parents, leaders, and teachers realize
they cannot feel for, learn for, or even
repent for their family, congregation,
or class members. Rather than asking,
“What can I do for my children, class
members, or others?” they ask, “How
do I invite and help those around me
to learn for themselves?” Parents who
mirror the workings of the Holy Ghost
create homes where families learn
to value rather than just learn about
values. In like manner, rather than just
talking about doctrines, teachers help
learners understand and live gospel
doctrines. The Holy Ghost is unre-
strained as individuals exercise their
agency appropriately.

With the current conditions of
the world, we desperately need real learning and teaching in our homes, meetings, and gospel classes. I know that your quest to improve may seem overwhelming at times. Please do not become discouraged with your progress. I think back on my experience hiking with my children. We agreed that every time we stopped to catch our breath, rather than focusing exclusively on how much farther we needed to go, we would immediately turn around and look down the mountain. We would take in the scenery and say to each other, “Look how far we’ve come.” Then we would take a deep breath, quickly turn, face uphill, and start climbing again one step at a time. Brothers and sisters, you can parent, lead, and teach after the manner of the workings of the Spirit. I know you can do this. I testify you can do this, and lives will change.

My life has been blessed by real teachers, who have taught with the Spirit and especially by the Spirit. I invite you to align the manner of your teaching after the manner of the Holy Ghost in all you do. I testify that Jesus Christ is our Savior and that His gospel is restored. Because of this we must be real parents, real leaders, real teachers, and real learners. I testify God will help you in your efforts, in the sacred name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES
5. 2 Nephi 28:30.
8. See John 7:17.

By Elder Kazuhiko Yamashita
Of the Seventy

Missionaries Are a Treasure of the Church

I am thankful that missionaries are called by the Lord, that they respond to that call, and that they are serving throughout the world.

One night a number of years ago, a newly called missionary named Elder Swan and his Japanese senior companion came to visit our home. Fortunately I was home, so I invited them in. When I greeted them at the door, my eyes were drawn to the coat that Elder Swan was wearing. Without thinking, I said to him, “That sure is a nice coat you are wearing!” However, it wasn’t a new coat, and it was rather faded. I assumed that the coat was one that a previous missionary had left behind in the missionary apartment.

Elder Swan immediately responded to my words, and it was completely the opposite of what I had been thinking. In halting Japanese he replied, “Yes, this is a good coat. My father wore this coat when he served as a missionary in Japan over 20 years ago.”

His father had served in the Japan Okayama Mission. And when his son was leaving to serve a mission in Japan, he had given his coat to him. This picture shows that coat that two generations of Elder Swans wore in Japan.

I was touched when I heard Elder Swan’s words. And I now understood why Elder Swan wore his father’s coat while he was proselyting. Elder Swan had embarked on his mission having inherited his father’s love for Japan and its people.

I am sure that some of you have experienced something similar to this. A number of missionaries serving in Japan have told me that their fathers, their mothers, their grandfathers, or their uncles have also served missions in Japan.

I would like to express my sincere love, respect, and feeling of thankfulness for all the returned missionaries who have served around the world. I am sure that those you helped convert have not forgotten you. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings . . . !”

I am one of those converts. I was converted at 17, when I was a high school student. The missionary who performed my baptism was an Elder Rupp from Idaho. He was recently released as a stake president in Idaho. He and I have exchanged e-mails with him and talked to him by telephone. I have never forgotten him. His