

# Path of Redemption

## A Talk Given by Chauncey C. Riddle

Chauncey C. Riddle was professor of philosophy and chairman of the Department of Graduate Studies in Religious Instruction at Brigham Young University. Dr. Riddle published frequently in Church magazines. The following is a close reproduction of a talk given by Brother Riddle, August 12, 1965, at Brigham Young University. Brother Riddle came in very concerned about an incident which had just occurred in his office, which incident is described below. The following has been taken from the notes of Molly Johanneson and Carma Moore, September 2, 1965 and though they believe what is said, the thoughts are those of Brother Riddle, unless otherwise indicated.

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A young man who used to be a student here at Brigham Young University and who has been in the east for the past four years was just in my office. He told me that since leaving the "Y", he and his wife had experienced a 'deadening sensation' in relation to the gospel. He said that he had held a number of jobs in the church; so had his wife, and his wife had supported him in all the things he had done. They had paid their tithing and they still did. They had done everything asked of them. Still he felt that there was not much that the church had to offer him anymore. His wife felt the same way. How is it that a person could come to feel this way? Have you ever had the same feeling? He said that he has a number of friends who commiserate with him and his feelings - a number who felt the same way.

Why is it that a person who is active in the church, who is doing the things which he is asked to do by the church leaders, who is trying to keep his testimony alive, could find that the church could mean less and less to him? Is this the way that it should be? Are there not many missionaries especially who find this same thing? Are there not many fine men who have at one time been bishops, etc., who were at one time considered "A-1" Mormons who have found that the church has lost its meaning and who are today straying from the straight and narrow? What is the answer to these questions? Do these things need to happen?

First I would say that there is a need in the lives of all of us to outline clearly in our own minds what the role of the church is in our lives. It is necessary to point out that there are two kinds of people in the church. There are those who go to church to be inspired, to be fed and strengthened, and there are those who go to inspire, to give, and to help. This latter group get their strength elsewhere, and then they are able to go to church and give the strength they have received. The church serves as an important instrument to build, up the individual. The more he participates in the organization, the less he is going to get out of it. This is because the more he accumulates the knowledge disseminated there, the less there is for him to receive in the limited scope of that particular phase of the gospel. Most of the things that are given there, he will have already received.

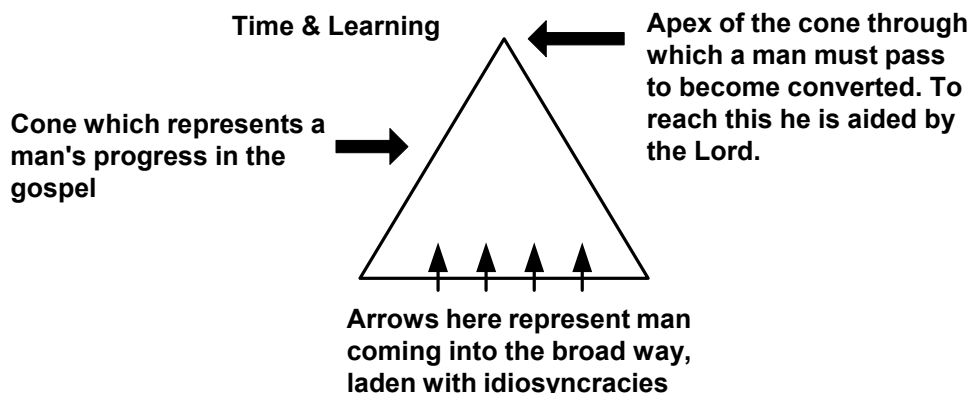
Now because he has received these things, is it the Lord's intention for him to reach that pinnacle of knowledge, starve to death, and leave the church? Impossible! It isn't the Lord's intention for any man to starve. When ordinary Church association doesn't inspire a man, he is supposed to have been converted by this time; he should have been changed, transformed to the point where the Spirit can direct him and inspire him. This is that other source from which he receives strength. The message of the church is to change over our basis of living from a material to a spiritual basis. The converted are those who receive the real message which the church has to give; if people are looking to the church for inspiration, they will see that the message is more than merely going to church and doing the job asked of them. They will see that they are supposed to read the scriptures and perform other acts to gain wisdom, so that they might find the Lord as their source of strength personally; they will seek the Lord many times a day. Those who find the Lord and receive personal inspiration from him do not experience this "lack", this "deadening sensation". Those who never shift over to this personal, spiritual basis are never really converted to the Lord; they fall away, as they have come to a dead end. The man I was talking to said, "The shoe fits, all I saw was the church." He never really got converted over to the Lord.

Another phenomenon had occurred at the same time. I look at it this way. When people come into the church, they are in a "Broad Way". All that a man must do to be baptized is say that he will accept the gospel. Perhaps he will

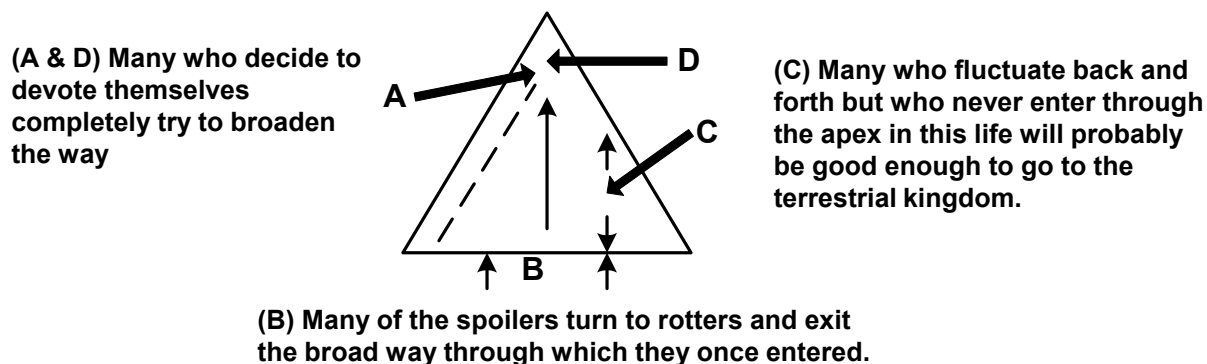
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have to give up smoking, but few other demands are made on him immediately. Each man brings many of his idiosyncrasies with him.

Let us take, for example, the man who teaches religion professionally. He is usually the young, fireball type who is most energetic and also most naive - he knows very little about the world and the ways of religion. I think we can class most young returned missionaries in this group. They are not learned, but as they teach, they find that they do learn very rapidly. And as they learn, they begin to experience a squeezing-in sensation. They begin to see that there are fewer and fewer things they can get away with and still obey the spirit and the knowledge which they have received. The way becomes very narrow. They finally come to the point where they realize that in the gospel of Jesus Christ it is all or nothing. If they wish to continue up through the nose of the cone pictured below, they must choose to devote themselves wholly and completely to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is supposed to be the covenant that we make at baptism, but few realize that this is the promise they are making, and even fewer keep the covenant.

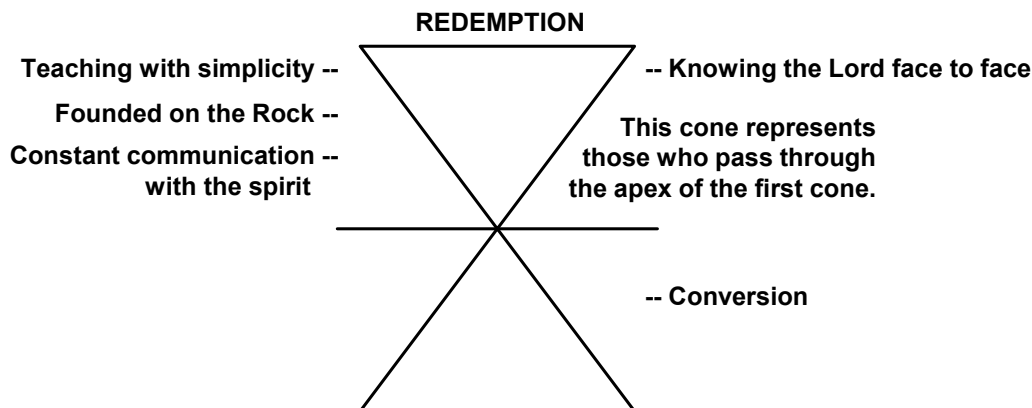


Now when one reaches the apex of the cone, one of two things happens. (1) The individual decides that he does not want to sacrifice. He knows that he can go on living in the church apparently as a Latter-day Saint (doing what everyone else is doing). So, HE ESSENTIALLY RENOUNCES COMPLETE SERVICE TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. When a man does this, something else occurs. In order to be able to live with his conscience, he begins to water down the doctrines, so he can live them better. He starts broadening the gospel. These people who were once on the upgrade meet themselves on the downgrade and thus experience a deadening effect. I refer to this situation as "spoiling". Many spoil to the point that they become rotten; others fluctuate all their lives in this state of incomplete service. They have backed off to a terrestrial level; the celestial demands everything.



(2) This man realizes that if he is to go ahead, he must devote himself to the Lord – 100 percent. After much struggling he will go ahead, and pass through the apex of the cone. And there is the wonderful thing about passing through the apex. As one passes through the apex of the first cone, he finds himself emerging into another cone where the Lord enlightens his mind to a new undreamed of knowledge which forever expands.

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As one passes through the apex, one also sees a change in the teachings of that man. They- teach less and less. In other words, their teachings become more and more simple. They emphasize the spirit. This is the foundation on the rock. They teach the fundamentals, the things that are necessary to get through that gate into the new world of knowledge, the things that are necessary to lead a man to redemption. Once a man has made the decision to go ahead, he discovers that other cone on top of the first one. This is a cone in which his spiritual power increases, yet he is still in the same channel of doing what the Lord tells him to do, and only what the Lord tells him to do. Paul says that he is the prisoner of Christ. Not that he minds being the prisoner of Christ! This is the most delightful, most wonderful experience that he has ever had..., in the world. It is by becoming a prisoner of Christ that we truly become free. It is in this way that the power of godliness comes to the world and a man begins to really do good for people. Remember the scripture which says, "If ye continue in my word then ye are my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32) The truth is the Savior himself! (See John 14:6 and John 16:13). By knowing the Savior, one may gain complete freedom by obedience, freedom from Satan's power, though he, will still be bombarded by temptations as long as he remains on this earth.

What is it that would keep a person from going through that nozzle? (People refer to the apex as the nozzle of a hose.) One must give himself up completely to the Spirit. He could never eat another meal, never take another drink, unless the Lord told him to do so. (This is a very real thing. I am not exaggerating) But a person will find certain other things on which to feast. It isn't "HARD" but he can do it.

IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR ANYONE TO SPOIL UNLESS HE WOULD RATHER HAVE WORLDLINESS THAN RIGHTEOUSNESS. The decision is up to every man personally. He has his free agency.

People who never rise above this apex in this life will probably go to the terrestrial kingdom. It is likely that they will see in the spirit world the opportunity they missed because of their desire for worldliness, but they will not be able to enter into the celestial kingdom if they knew and rejected in this life. The decision that we must make in this life is whether we will listen to the voice of our conscience or not.

Now getting back to going to church. Why would it be necessary for a man who has passed through the apex to go to church? He is just the man who can give. Does this mean that he needs to preach the sacrament sermon every week? No! A man can give much by just sitting in the group. A good man, a good spiritual man will pull out of the speaker all the spirit he has; he will be a catalyst to the man who is speaking, so that he can give to the audience every bit of knowledge and spirit which they need to receive, and both the speaker and the righteous man as well as the people who hear will rejoice. The righteous man is a benefit to all.

The formal business of the church is meaningless except that it accomplishes its grand purpose which is to bring us together so that we can be exposed to each other. If we don't learn that this is the most important part of the gospel, then the church will begin to become very boring to us. If we don't get past the formalism, we will begin to dislike the church. If we only see what the speaker didn't bring with him - that he is unprepared, if we only see uncouth deacons, then we are not seeing the real meaning of the church.

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Some ask if we are not losing our freedom by doing all things which the Lord directs us to do. I say, and President McKay says also that it takes more determination, more intelligence to do this than to do the things that our own carnal nature tells us to do. Those who deliberately choose to serve the Lord are free. While those who think that they are free when they are doing what they want to do are being led about by Satan. There is only one way not to be a robot. The person who thinks himself free is being led by a power "unbeknownst" to him. Those who choose to serve the Lord are the only ones who are not robots.

(Someone then asked Dr. Riddle if it was wrong for one who wished to pass through the apex to work for material wealth.) Anyone who has material wealth as a goal, if he is a righteous man, this goal will be a secondary one; I can say that much. He will be working first to build up the kingdom of God. Remember the man who is first working to have money to build up the kingdom after he has the money is strongly influenced by Satan. The worldly influence of Satan is more than just physical; but, so is the influence of the Lord. (However, the first influence that the Lord must have is influence over the spirit. That is why the Church does not go out and feed all the millions of the earth. Our missionaries go out to feed the people spiritually; for when they - any person - receive the gospel, they are fed spiritually and then intellectually and physically. We give people the gospel and then they can learn to handle their own physical needs.

Too many people think what their profession is going to be first. They should think first how their life will include the spiritual and then all things will follow in their places. This is the message of John the Baptist. Stop being material. Work becomes not the end to the means, but a means to the end. However, we must also remember that with following the gospel there is no guarantee to each man for material wealth and success.

Now here is my whole point. The gospel is worthwhile to every man. Church is the means whereby we as the children of our Father may meet together and help one another. No matter how righteous you are, what revelation you are receiving personally, you will have your ultimate blessing of exaltation taken from you unless you share your blessings with the other children of our Father in Heaven. (Charity is the greatest gift of all, and without it all else will fail.) If we had any idea what is really in store for us, we would not waste our time on the undesirable.

Getting through that apex and staying there takes concentrated day-by-day effort of a lifetime. There are recorded instances of people who did it while they were still in their teens. They have to do the first things first. You can do it; I can do it. There is no need for anyone to spoil. There is no need for the church to mean less and less to anyone. There is no need for a deadening sensation to occur, if a person will only understand the real essence of the gospel. And if this deadening sensation does take place, it is not too late. The important thing is for us to discover what we like. Do we like to listen to the prompting of the Lord better than eat that piece of cake, or work overtime when the Lord is telling us to do something else also? If we do, then fine. That choice is yours, my brothers and sisters, and mine. And the Lord will allow us to have whatever degree of freedom we really desire. And now is the time that we must make the choice.