

## AN OLIVE LEAF

"... plucked from the Tree of Paradise, the Lord's message of peace to us."  
(See History of the Church 1:316 and D&C 88.)

## "TACTICAL REVELATION"

By Neal A. Maxwell

Earlier this year, the Public Broadcasting Service aired a multi-part series called "Searching for God in America," which featured interviews by Hugh Hewitt with American religious leaders. Selections of Hewitt's conversation with LDS Apostle Neal A. Maxwell were in the PBS series, and the companion book, *Searching for God in America* (Word Publishing), included the entire text of the interview. This excerpt is reprinted by permission.

HUGH HEWITT: On the question of revelation, have you experienced it?

NEAL MAXWELL: Yes, I have. Often it comes in words or phrases such as when I am trying to select a state [sic] president to preside over a body of several thousand Saints. I may have a strong personal preference after I have interviewed thirty men but often the Spirit will say it should be so and so. I have also experienced it often in what might be very mild forms where it is time to go see someone in the hospital—only to get there a few moments before some major procedure is to happen and so on. I call that tactical revelation, but it's just as real as if it were theological.

HUGH HEWITT: Does it ever amount to the audible voice of God?

NEAL MAXWELL: The voice in the mind is there. I was about to pray a few days ago for an afflicted sister who was dying of cancer and about to leave four children. As I was about to pray the Spirit said, "That will not be necessary." I received a phone call about an hour later from Spokane saying that she had just died. Now for me, revelation doesn't have to be spectacular or global. It's the personalness of revelation that matters the most.

HUGH HEWITT: In your role as a steward of the Church, as one of the twelve Apostles who along with the three members of the First Presidency guide this massive Church, are there

moments collectively or individually when there is a very obvious revelation?

NEAL MAXWELL: Yes, I have been present on four or five occasions in the upper room of the temple where that has happened. It's a very sacred special thing. Most of the time we give our views out of our own backgrounds and talents as we have to make a decision. But there are times when the President of the Church will be impressed to cut across that process in terms of announcing to us that something needs to be done. And we can't always explain the process but soon see the wisdom.

HUGH HEWITT: Can you describe it? I mean, what is that process like?

NEAL MAXWELL: It's the voice of the Spirit. It's the voice in the mind. It is the Lord speaking to us in such a way that when men may have had different opinions on something, then comes the prophetic intervention. There is a calmness and a serenity, and we vote to sustain that action, feeling

the peace in our hearts even though a few moments before we might have felt differently about a matter. Now Paul says—and Hugh, this must be emphasized—that to the natural man, these things are foolishness, but the things of the Spirit are understood by the spirit. It's a lifelong experience—at least it has been for me, getting familiar with the Spirit and the nuances of it and trying to live in such a way that the Lord can speak to me more often; for instance, to be prompted to write a letter to a young man who was about to leave the missionary training center. He was discouraged and couldn't learn the language. The Spirit said, "Write the letter now." The letter apparently arrived when his bags were packed and he was leaving. So that's another example of tactical revelation. He stayed and then, went ahead with his mission. Thus I have to be careful so that I don't get so busy with paper that I neglect the Spirit.

