

Official Report of the  
One Hundred Fifty-ninth  
Semiannual General

# CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ  
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle  
Salt Lake City, Utah

September 30 and October 1, 1989





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# THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-NINTH SEMIANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 159th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, September 30, 1989, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, September 30 and October 1, 1989. The general priesthood session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, September 30, 1989, at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at all sessions of the conference. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately nine hundred locations in many countries.

## General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

*The First Presidency:* Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson

*The Council of the Twelve:* Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott

*The Presidency of the Seventy:* Dean L. Larsen, Marion D. Hanks, Robert L. Backman, James M. Paramore, J. Richard Clarke, Rex D. Pinegar, and Carlos E. Asay

*The First Quorum of the Seventy:* Angel Abrea, William R. Bradford, Ted E. Brewerton, F. Enzo Busche, John K. Carmack, Joe J. Christensen, Gene R. Cook, Derek A. Cuthbert, Jacob de Jager, Charles Didier, Loren C. Dunn, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Jack H. Goaslind, John H. Groberg, W. Eugene Hansen, Jeffrey R. Holland, F. Burton Howard, Marlin K. Jensen, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Adney Y. Komatsu, H. Burke Peterson, Hugh W. Pinnock, Ronald E. Poelman, Hartman Rector, Jr., Hans B. Ringger, and Robert E. Wells

*The Second Quorum of the Seventy:* Carlos H. Amado, H. Verlan Andersen, Benjamin B. Banks, Monte J. Brough, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, George I. Cannon, Albert Choules, Jr., Spencer J. Condie, Lloyd P. George, Francis M. Gibbons, F. Melvin Hammond, George R. Hill III, Malcolm S. Jeppsen, L. Lionel Kendrick, John R. Lasater, Richard P. Lindsay, Merlin R. Lybbert, Douglas J. Martin, Gerald E. Melchin, Alexander B. Morrison, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Gardner H. Russell, Robert E. Sackley, Douglas H. Smith, Lynn A. Sorensen, and Horacio A. Tenorio

*The Presiding Bishopric:* Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace

*General Authorities Emeritus:* Eldred G. Smith, Joseph Anderson, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Bernard P. Brockbank, Victor L. Brown, Theodore M. Burton, Royden G. Derrick, J. Thomas Fyans, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., Sterling W. Sill, and Robert L. Simpson<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Elders Paul H. Dunn and John H. Vandenberg were excused due to illness.

### Other authorities present

Other Church authorities in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards,

and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

## FIRST DAY MORNING SESSION

The first general session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, September 30, 1989, at 10:00 A.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert C. Bowden conducting and Clay Christiansen at the organ.

To begin the meeting, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "The Lord Is My Light" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

### President Gordon B. Hinckley

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 159th semiannual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We welcome all who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders L. Tom Perry and Wm. Grant Bangerter with Bishop Robert D. Hales are seated on the stand. We welcome also the many others who are receiving these conference

proceedings by satellite transmission, radio, cable, and television.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance this morning except the following, who are excused: Elder Paul H. Dunn, who is at home on the advice of his physician following recent surgery, and Elder John H. Vandenberg, who has not been well. We also acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies, who are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present with us.

The Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brother Robert C. Bowden, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ, opened this session by singing "The Lord Is My Light." The chorus will now favor us with "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee."

Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Theodore M. Burton of the Seventy.

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The chorus sang "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee."

Elder Theodore M. Burton offered the invocation.

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### President Hinckley

At the request of President Benson, our beloved prophet and President of the Church, Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will read President Benson's message.

## President Ezra Taft Benson

(Read by President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency)

My beloved brethren and sisters, it is a joy to be able to meet with you again in another glorious general conference of the Church — to feel of your spirit and support and to know of your love of the Lord.

I look forward to hearing the inspiring messages of the General Authorities of the Church. I am so grateful for their sustaining power and in particular for the great help of my noble Counselors and the Quorum of the Twelve.

May I express to them and to all of you my deep appreciation for your kind remembrances to me on my recent ninetieth birthday.

### To the elderly in the Church

In the past I have directed my remarks to the children of the Church, to the young men and young women, to the single adult brethren and sisters, and to the mothers and fathers in Israel. This morning I would like to speak to the elderly in the Church and to their families and to those who minister to their needs.

I hold special feelings for the elderly — for this marvelous group of men and women. I feel that in some measure I understand them, for I am one of them.

The Lord knows and loves the elderly among His people. It has always been so, and upon them He has bestowed many of His greatest responsibilities. In various dispensations He has guided His people through prophets who were in their advancing years. He has needed the wisdom and experience of age, the inspired direction from those with long years of proven faithfulness to His gospel.

The Lord blessed Sarah, in her old age, to bear Abraham a child. Perhaps King Benjamin's greatest sermon was given when he was very elderly and nigh unto death. He was truly an instrument in

the hands of the Lord as he was able to lead and establish peace among his people.

Many other men and women throughout the ages have accomplished great things as they went forth to serve the Lord and His children, even in their elderly years.

In our dispensation, of the thirteen prophets who have been called of the Lord, many were called when they were in their seventies or eighties, or even older. How the Lord knows and loves His children who have given so much through their years of experience!

We love you who are the elderly in the Church. You are the fastest-growing segment of our population in the world today, as well as within the Church.

Our desires are that your golden years will be wonderful and rewarding. We pray that you will feel the joy of a life well spent and one filled with fond memories and even greater expectations through Christ's atonement. We hope you will feel of the peace the Lord promised those who continue to strive to keep His commandments and follow His example. We hope your days are filled with things to do and ways in which you can render service to others who are not as fortunate as you. Older almost always means better, for your wealth of wisdom and experience can continue to expand and increase as you reach out to others.

May we suggest eight areas in which we can make the most of our senior years:

### Temple work

1. *Work in the temple and attend often.* We who are older should use our energies not only to bless our predecessors, but to ensure that, insofar as possible, all of our posterity might receive the ordinances of exaltation in the temple. Work with your families; counsel with and pray for those who may yet be unwilling to prepare themselves.

We urge all who can to attend the temple frequently and accept calls to serve in the temple when health and strength and distance will permit. We rely on you to help in temple service. With the increasing number of temples, we need more of our members to prepare themselves for this sweet service. Sister Benson and I are grateful that almost every week we can attend the temple together. What a blessing this has been in our lives!

### Family histories

#### 2. *Collect and write family histories.*

We call on you to pursue vigorously the gathering and writing of personal and family histories. In so many instances, you alone have within you the history, the memory of loved ones, the dates and events. In some situations you *are* the family history. In few ways will your heritage be better preserved than by your collecting and writing your histories.

### Missionary service

3. *Become involved in missionary service.* We need increasing numbers of senior missionaries in missionary service. Where health and means make it possible, we call upon hundreds more of our couples to set their lives and affairs in order and to go on missions. How we need you in the mission field! You are able to perform missionary service in ways that our younger missionaries cannot.

I'm grateful that two of my own widowed sisters were able to serve as missionary companions together in England. They were sixty-eight and seventy-three years of age when they were called, and they both had a marvelous experience.

What an example and a blessing it is to a family's posterity when grandparents serve missions. Most senior couples who go are strengthened and revitalized by missionary service. Through this holy avenue of service, many are sanctified and feel the joy of bringing others to the knowledge of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Also, through the Family-to-Family Book of Mormon Program, send copies of the Book of Mormon on missions with your testimonies enclosed.

### Family togetherness

4. *Provide leadership by building family togetherness.* We urge all senior members, when possible, to call their families together. Organize them into cohesive units. Give leadership to family gatherings. Establish family reunions where fellowship and family heritage can be felt and learned. Some of the sweetest memories I have are of our own family reunions and gatherings. Foster wonderful family traditions which will bind you together eternally. In doing so, we can create a bit of heaven right here on earth within individual families. After all, eternity will be but an extension of righteous family life.

### Church callings

5. *Accept and fulfill Church callings.* We trust that all senior members who possibly can will accept callings in the Church and fulfill them with dignity. I am grateful to personally know brethren who are in their seventies and eighties who are serving as bishops and branch presidents. How we need the counsel and influence of you who have walked the pathway of life! We all need to hear of your successes and how you have risen above heartache, pain, or disappointment, having become stronger for experiencing them.

There are rich opportunities for you to serve in most of the organizations of the Church. You have the time and solid gospel foundation which enable you to render a great work. In so many ways you lead out in faithful service in the Church. We thank you for all that you have done and pray that the Lord will strengthen you to do more.

### Finances

6. *Plan for your financial future.* As you move through life toward retirement



and the decades which follow, we invite all of our senior members to plan frugally for the years following full-time employment. Let us avoid unnecessary debt. We also advise caution in cosigning financial notes, even with family members, when retirement income might be jeopardized.

Be even more cautious in advancing years about "get-rich" schemes, mortgaging homes, or investing in uncertain ventures. Proceed cautiously so that the planning of a lifetime is not disrupted by one or a series of poor financial decisions. Plan your financial future early, then follow the plan.

### Christlike service

7. *Render Christlike service.* Christlike service exalts. Knowing this, we call on all senior members who are able to thrust in their sickles in service to others. This can be part of the sanctifying process. The Lord has promised that those who lose their lives serving others will find themselves. The Prophet Joseph Smith told us that we should "wear out our lives" in bringing to pass the Lord's purposes (D&C 123:13).

Peace and joy and blessings will follow those who render service to others. Yes, we commend Christlike service to all, but it is especially sweet in the lives of the elderly.

### Physical fitness

8. *Stay physically fit, healthy, and active.* We are thrilled with the efforts being made by so many of the elderly to ensure good health in advancing years. We see many walking in the early mornings. We hear of others who use exercise equipment in their own homes. Some even enter marathons and do remarkably well. Still others have swimming programs to keep them fit. Until recently our own beloved General Authority emeritus, Joseph Anderson, now in his one hundredth year, would swim a mile every day. I am not quite up to that, but I do enjoy a vigorous walk each day, which refreshes me.

How we love to see our elderly remain vigorous and active! Through keeping active, both the mind and the body function better. One stake president reported that one of his members went waterskiing on his eightieth birthday.

### Overcome aloneness by serving others

To those who have lost your spouses, we should also like to express our love. Sometimes there is for some of you a feeling of uselessness and aloneness which can be almost overwhelming. In so many instances, this need not be so. In addition to the eight suggestions just mentioned, here is a sampling of activities that have proved helpful to others.

Some who are alone keep busy by quilting blankets for each new grandchild to be married or each new baby born into the family. Others write letters on birthdays or attend school and athletic events of grandchildren when they can. Some compile albums of pictures of each grandchild to give on birthdays. We know of one widowed great-grandmother who teaches piano to nearly thirty students. She has spoken to nearly five thousand youth in the last three years. One of them asked her, "Did you cross the plains with the pioneers?"

We see numerous others of our widows who volunteer as "pink ladies" at the hospitals or render other kinds of community service. So many find fulfillment helping in these ways.

The key to overcoming aloneness and a feeling of uselessness for one who is physically able is to step outside yourself by helping others who are truly needy. We promise those who will render this kind of service that, in some measure, you will be healed of the loss of loved ones or the dread of being alone. The way to feel better about your own situation is to improve someone else's circumstances.

### Remain strong through illness

To those who are ill and suffering pain and the vicissitudes of this life, we

extend particular love and concern. Our hearts and prayers go out to you. Remember what father Lehi said in blessing his son Jacob, who had suffered at the hands of his older brothers Laman and Lemuel. He said, "Thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain" (2 Nephi 2:2). And so he will for you.

We pray that you will continue to strive to remain strong in attitude and spirit. We know it is not always easy. We pray that those who now do for you tasks that you no longer are able to do for yourself will do so in love, in gentleness, and with a caring spirit.

We hope that you will continue to generate good thoughts and feelings in your heart and mind and quickly dismiss those which are harmful and destructive to you. We trust your prayers are being offered daily and even hourly, if needed. As the Book of Mormon teaches, "Live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which [God] doth bestow upon you" (Alma 34:38).

You will find that the daily reading of the Book of Mormon will lift your spirit, draw you nearer to your Savior, and help you to be a student of the gospel who can share great truths with others.

### **To the families of the elderly**

Now for a few minutes may I speak to the families of the elderly. We repeat a scripture from Psalms: "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth" (Psalm 71:9).

We encourage families to give their elderly parents and grandparents the love, care, and attention they deserve. Let us remember the scriptural command that we must care for those of our own house lest we be found "worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8). I am so grateful for my own dear family and for the loving care they have given their parents over so many years.

Remember that parents and grandparents are our responsibility, and we are to care for them to the very best of our ability. When the elderly have no families

to care for them, priesthood and Relief Society leaders should make every effort to meet their needs in the same loving way. We submit a few suggestions to families of the elderly.

### **"Honour thy father and thy mother"**

Ever since the Lord etched the Ten Commandments into the tablets of stone, His words from Sinai have echoed down through the centuries to "honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12).

To honor and respect our parents means that we have a high regard for them. We love and appreciate them and are concerned about their happiness and well-being. We treat them with courtesy and thoughtful consideration. We seek to understand their point of view. Certainly obedience to parents' righteous desires and wishes is a part of honoring.

### **Be grateful and forgiving**

Furthermore, our parents deserve our honor and respect for giving us life itself. Beyond this they almost always made countless sacrifices as they cared for and nurtured us through our infancy and childhood, provided us with the necessities of life, and nursed us through physical illnesses and the emotional stresses of growing up. In many instances, they provided us with the opportunity to receive an education, and, in a measure, they educated us. Much of what we know and do we learned from their example. May we ever be grateful to them and show that gratitude.

Let us also learn to be forgiving of our parents, who, perhaps having made mistakes as they reared us, almost always did the best they knew how. May we ever forgive them as we would likewise wish to be forgiven by our own children for mistakes we make.

### **Allow freedom of choice**

Even when parents become elderly, we ought to honor them by allowing them freedom of choice and the opportunity for

independence as long as possible. Let us not take away from them choices which they can still make. Some parents are able to live and care for themselves well into their advancing years and would prefer to do so. When they can, let them.

If they become less able to live independently, then family, Church, and community resources may be needed to help them. When the elderly become unable to care for themselves, even with supplemental aid, care can be provided in the home of a family member when possible. Church and community resources may also be needed in this situation.

### **Support care-givers and include the elderly**

The role of the care-giver is vital. There is great need for support and help to be given to such a person. Usually this is an elderly spouse or a middle-aged daughter with children of her own to care for as well as caring for the elderly parent.

We also hope that you would include the elderly in family activities when possible. What a joy it is for us to see lively, sweet grandchildren with a loving grandparent in the midst of them. Children love such occasions. They love to have their grandparents visit them and to have them over for dinner, for family home evenings, and for other special events. This provides opportunities for teaching ways to honor, love, respect, and care for those who are in their later years.

### **Opportunities for grandparents**

Grandparents can have a profound influence on their grandchildren. Their time is generally not as encumbered and busy as the parents', so books can be opened and read, stories can be told, and application of gospel principles can be taught. Children then obtain a perspective of life which not only is rewarding but can bring them security, peace, and strength. It is possible to send letters, tapes, and pictures, particularly where distances are great and it is not possible to see one another often. Those who are blessed with a closeness to grandparents

and other elderly people have a rich companionship and association. There might be times when they can attend graduations, weddings, temple excursions, missionary farewells and homecomings, and other special events with family members.

We enjoy watching our children and grandchildren grow and achieve in special ways as we share in many of their joys and rejoice in their victories. Happiness blesses our lives as our children strive and achieve in their own lives. In 3 John 1:4 we read, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." And knowing this can bring a renewal of love and courage to continue in our own struggles.

### **To the priesthood leaders of the elderly**

Finally, we would urge priesthood leaders of the elderly to be sensitive to the Spirit of our Father in Heaven in assessing and meeting the spiritual, physical, emotional, and financial needs of the elderly. We trust you will utilize your counselors, Melchizedek Priesthood quorum leaders, and Relief Society leaders, home teachers, and visiting teachers in this great responsibility, for we must fulfill these duties without reluctance or hesitation.

### **Give church callings**

We hope that priesthood and auxiliary leaders will continue to give the elderly callings in which they can use their reservoirs of wisdom and counsel. We hope, where possible, that each can be a home teacher or visiting teacher. Even those who are somewhat confined to their beds and homes can sometimes assist in this watch-care through telephone calls, writing notes, or other special assignments.

A priesthood leader can do much to assist and encourage individuals and couples as they prepare to serve missions. The temple extraction and welfare programs are blessed greatly by those who are in their senior years and have opportunities to serve in these areas.

## Assign home teachers and visiting teachers

We hope each of the elderly individuals and couples has sensitive and caring home teachers and visiting teachers assigned to them. Great comfort and peace can come to those who know they have someone to whom they can turn in time of emergency or need. It is important that tact, diplomacy, and sincerity be evident in assessing and addressing such needs.

We hope you will involve the independent elderly in compassionate service assignments. Include them also in stake and ward social activities, especially single members and those with dependent spouses. So many times they are forgotten. Especially at the time of the death of a spouse, loving care can be given. This is a very tender time for most.

## Help those who care for the elderly

At times temporary relief is very much needed and appreciated by family members who provide constant physical and emotional care to those with special needs. It is important to help the family maintain its functions as a family with periodic freedom from the heavy responsibilities that long-term or terminal illness can impose. All need loving support and relief from the overwhelming duties of serious illness or problems.

Transportation is often a great concern to the elderly. We can assist by providing a way for them to attend their Sunday meetings, visit loved ones, shop, and go to the doctor or clinic.

Again, we should prayerfully seek inspiration and direction in caring for the elderly. There is always a great diversity of individuals and individual needs.

## Prophetic testimony and blessing

God bless the elderly in the Church. I love you with all my heart. I am one of you.

You have so much to live for. May these golden years be your very best years as you fully live and love and serve. And God bless those who minister to your needs—your family, your friends, and your fellow Church members and leaders.

I leave you my testimony of the joy of living—of the joys of *full* gospel living and of going through the Refiner's fire and the sanctification process that takes place. As the Apostle Paul so well said, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28).

I leave my blessing upon you. The Savior lives. This is His church. The work is true, and in the words of our Lord and Savior, "Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life" (3 Nephi 15:9), to which I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The chorus sang "I Believe in Christ" without announcement.

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## President Hinckley

It has been our privilege to listen to President Benson's opening message as read by his Second Counselor, President Thomas S. Monson, following which the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "I Believe in Christ."

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

## Elder James E. Faust

I wish to speak today of a special dimension of the gospel: the necessity for constant communication with God

through the process known as divine revelation. This principle is basic to our belief. President Wilford Woodruff declared,

"Whenever the Lord had a people on the earth that He acknowledged as such, that people were led by revelation" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 24:240). I affirm at the beginning that the inspiration of God is available to all who worthily seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is particularly true of those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

I wish to speak today, however, of God's communications to all of his children through prophets, as distinguished from personal revelation received by individual members of the Church and others. The prophets, seers, and revelators have had and still have the responsibility and privilege of receiving and declaring the word of God for the world. Individual members, parents, and leaders have the right to receive revelation for their own responsibility but have no duty nor right to declare the word of God beyond the limits of their own responsibility.

I use as my text the ninth article of faith: "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."

### Past revelation

The first part states, "We believe all that God has revealed." Through the ages, God's messages to his children generally have been revealed through prophets. Amos tells us, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). These are the prophetic oracles who have tuned in over the centuries to the "celestial transmitting station," with a responsibility to relay the Lord's word to others. The principal qualifications of a prophet in any age are not wealth, title, position, physical stature, scholarship, or intellectual attainment. The two qualifications are that a prophet must be called as such by God, by open prophecy, and ordained by one known to have legal and spiritual authority, and he must receive and declare revelation from God (see D&C 42:11). No man knows the ways of God except they be revealed unto him (see Jacob 4:8).

Over the centuries revelation from prophets has come incrementally. The Lord stated, "For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith" (D&C 98:12).

Revelations have come by different means. Among other ways, they have come by the guidance of the Holy Ghost (which is perhaps most common), by the spoken word, and by visits from holy messengers.

### Present revelation

The ninth article of faith continues, "We believe . . . all that [God] does now reveal." For some strange reason it seems easier for many to believe the words of dead prophets rather than those of living prophets. The greatest revelator in our time has been Joseph Smith. In the difficult period between 1823 and 1843, just twenty years, 134 revelations were received, printed, and made public.

Each of the eighty-nine Apostles called since then has been sustained as a prophet, seer, and revelator. But *the* prophets, seers, and revelators succeeding Joseph as Presidents of the Church have been those Apostles in whom all of the keys of Christ's earthly kingdom have been active and functioning.

We now move forward nobly and boldly, with courage and conviction, led by our venerable prophet, Ezra Taft Benson. He is in every respect entitled to our sustaining action. For forty-six years he has been sustained as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is now the senior Apostle on the earth. He has been ordained and set apart as the prophet, seer, and revelator to the world. He has been sustained as the President of the Church. He has been given two inspired Counselors to help him. He is the presiding high priest over all the priesthood on the earth. He alone holds and exercises all of the keys of the kingdom under the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the head of this church and is the chief cornerstone. In his presidency, assisted by his two great Counselors and sustained by the Quorum of the Twelve, he is leading this work forward.

I do not believe members of this church can be in full harmony with the Savior without sustaining his living prophet on the earth, the President of the Church. If we do not sustain the living prophet, whoever he may be, we die spiritually. Ironically, some have died spiritually by exclusively following prophets who have long been dead. Others equivocate in their support of living prophets, trying to lift themselves up by putting down the living prophets, however subtly.

In our lifetime we have been favored with ongoing communication from the heavens, which have been open to the prophets of our time. Major divine pronouncements have included what we now know as section 138 of the Doctrine and Covenants, given in 1918. Surely one of the greatest divine disclosures came in 1978 when the blessings of the priesthood and temple became available to all worthy male members. Line upon line and precept upon precept, new knowledge and direction have been given to the Church.

Thus, by revelation in our day the Seventies have been given an expanded role as members of Area Presidencies and in general Church administration, helping the First Presidency and the Twelve "in building up the church and regulating all the affairs of the same in all nations" (D&C 107:34). Many other divine instructions have also been received. Much revelation received, in this time as well as anciently, has been doctrinal. Some of it has been operational and tactical. Much of it is not spectacular. President John Taylor reminds us: "Adam's revelation did not instruct Noah to build his ark; nor did Noah's revelation tell Lot to forsake Sodom; nor did either of these speak of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. These all had revelations for themselves" (*Millennial Star*, 1 Nov. 1847, p. 323).

In our time God has revealed how to administer the Church with a membership of over six million differently than when there were just six members of the Church. These differences include the use of modern technology such as films, computers, and satellite broadcasts to teach

and communicate new ways to conduct missionary work in various nations; the location and building of temples; and many others.

This process of continuous revelation comes to the Church very frequently. President Wilford Woodruff stated, "This power is in the bosom of Almighty God, and he imparts it to his servants the prophets as they stand in need of it day by day to build up Zion" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 14:33). This is necessary for the Church to fulfill its mission. Without it, we would fail.

### Future revelation

A very encouraging portion of the ninth article of faith we have been considering is its conclusion: "We believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." Elder Boyd K. Packer stated: "Revelation is a continuous principle in the Church. In one sense the Church is still being organized. As light and knowledge are given, as prophecies are fulfilled and more intelligence is received, another step forward can be taken" (*The Holy Temple* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980], p. 137).

This church constantly needs the guidance of its head, the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This was well taught by President George Q. Cannon:

"We have the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants; but all these books, without the living oracles and a constant stream of revelation from the Lord, would not lead any people into the Celestial Kingdom. . . . This may seem a strange declaration to make, but strange as it may sound, it is nevertheless true.

"Of course, these records are all of infinite value. They cannot be too highly prized, nor can they be too closely studied. But in and of themselves, with all the light that they give, they are insufficient to guide the children of men and to lead them into the presence of God. To be thus led requires a living Priesthood and constant revelation from God to the people according to the circumstances in

which they may be placed" (*Gospel Truth*, comp. Jerreld L. Newquist, 2 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957], 1:252).

When will this promised revelation come? Only God knows when. It will come as needed. To whom will it come? To obtain the answer to this, we must go back to the words of Amos: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). This continuous revelation will not and cannot be forced by outside pressure from people and events. It is not the so-called "revelation of social progress." It does not originate with the prophets; it comes from God. The Church is governed by the prophet under the guidance and direction of God. Parley P. Pratt disclosed:

"The legislative, judicial, and executive power is vested in Him [the Lord]. He reveals the laws, and he elects, chooses, or appoints the officers; and holds the right to reprove, to correct, or even to remove them at pleasure. Hence the necessity of a constant intercourse by direct revelation between him and his church" (*Millennial Star*, Mar. 1845, p. 150).

We have been promised that the President of the Church will receive guidance for all of us as the revelator for the Church. Our safety lies in heeding that which he says and following his counsel.

The doctrine of this church was stated by Elder Stephen L. Richards: "They [the Presidency] are the supreme court here on earth in the interpretation of God's law.

"In the exercise of their functions and delegated powers they are controlled by a constitution, a part of which is written and a part of which is not. The written part consists in authenticated scripture, ancient and modern, and in the recorded utterances of our latter-day prophets. The unwritten part is the spirit of revelation and divine inspiration which appertain to their calling.

"In formulating their interpretations and decisions they always confer with the Council of the Twelve Apostles who by revelation are appointed to assist and act

with them in the government of the Church. When, therefore, a judgment is reached and proclaimed by these officers it becomes binding upon all members of the Church, individual views to the contrary notwithstanding. God's Kingdom is a kingdom of law and order" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1938, pp. 115-16).

How can we be so sure that, as promised, the prophets, seers, and revelators will never lead this people astray? (see Joseph Fielding Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1972, p. 99; or *Ensign*, July 1972, p. 88). One answer is contained in the grand principle found in the 107th section of the Doctrine and Covenants: "And every decision made by either of these quorums must be by the unanimous voice of the same" (107:27). This requirement of unanimity provides a check on bias and personal idiosyncrasies. It ensures that God rules through the Spirit, not man through majority or compromise. It ensures that the best wisdom and experience is focused on an issue before the deep, unassailable impressions of revealed direction are received. It guards against the foibles of man.

The responsibility for determining the divine validity of what one of the oracles of God states does not rest solely upon him. President J. Reuben Clark stated, "We can tell when the speakers are 'moved upon by the Holy Ghost' only when we, ourselves, are 'moved upon by the Holy Ghost'" (*J. Reuben Clark: Selected Papers on Religion, Education, and Youth*, ed. David H. Yarn, Jr. [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1984], pp. 95-96).

This is in harmony with the counsel of Brigham Young: "I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are led by Him. I am fearful they settle down in a state of blind self-security, trusting their eternal destiny in the hands of their leaders with a reckless confidence that in itself would thwart the purposes of God in their salvation, and weaken that influence they could give to their leaders, did they know for themselves, by the revelations of Jesus, that they are led in the right

way. Let every man and woman know, by the whispering of the Spirit of God to themselves, whether their leaders are walking in the path the Lord dictates, or not" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:150).

Revelation was required to establish this church. Revelation has brought it from its humble beginnings to its present course. Revelation has come like flowing, living water. Continuing revelation will lead it forward to the windup scene. But as President Clark told us, we do not need more or different prophets. We need more people with "a listening ear" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1948, p. 82).

We make no claim of infallibility or perfection in the prophets, seers, and revelators. Yet I humbly state that I have sat in the company of these men, and I believe their greatest desire is to know and do the will of our Heavenly Father. Those who sit in the highest councils of this church and have participated as inspiration has come and decisions have been reached know that this light and truth is beyond human intelligence and reasoning. These deep, divine impressions have come as the dews from heaven and settled

upon them individually and collectively. So inspired, we can go forward in complete unity and accord.

I witness humbly that I know the Lord still guides his church through his servants, regardless of any individual imperfections. I pray that we may be responsive to his Spirit and be found listening to the oracles he has appointed. I so pray because I know that we mortals, without the aid of revelation, cannot know the purposes of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel," following which Bishop Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will address us.

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The chorus and congregation sang "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel."

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## Bishop Henry B. Eyring

### Being grateful and generous

Many of you have had the same experience I have had. And if you haven't, you will: you will go to a hospital or to a house to comfort someone, and instead they will comfort you. Or you will try to encourage someone who seems to you to have so little, and they will express gratitude for things you take for granted.

To find gratitude and generosity when you could reasonably find hurt and resentment will surprise you. It will be so surprising because you will see so much of the opposite: people who have much more than others yet who react with anger when one advantage is lost or with resentment when an added gift is denied.

A poem describes that contrast; it is called "How Different."

Some murmur when the sky is clear  
And wholly bright to view,  
If one small speck of dark appear  
In their great heaven of blue:  
And some with thankful love are  
filled,

If but one streak of light,  
One ray of God's good mercy, gild  
The darkness of their night.

(Richard Chenevix Trench, in  
*Sourcebook of Poetry* [Grand Rapids,  
Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House,  
1968], p. 396.)

You and I would like to know how to control our wants and increase our gratitude and generosity. We are going to need that change. Someday, in our families and as a people, we will live as one, seeking each other's good.



## Living as one in Orderville

You know from studying Church history that we have tried to live as one in a variety of settings. A story from one of those tries, in Orderville, Utah, gives us a clue as to why it is so hard.

Orderville was founded in 1870 and 1871 by people who wanted to live the united order; in 1875 they began the order. They built housing units in a square, with a common dining hall. They built a storehouse, shoe shop, bakery, blacksmith shop, tannery, schoolhouse, sheep shed, and woolen factory. They grew and made nearly everything they needed, from soap to trousers. They had carpenters, midwives, teachers, artists, and musicians. They produced enough surplus that they could sell it in neighboring towns for cash: with that they built up a capital fund to buy more land and equipment.

The population rose to seven hundred people. One hundred and fifty of them gave Orderville a special advantage: they had come to Orderville from the mission on the Muddy River, where they had nearly starved. When those who had been called to the Muddy were released, they were in near destitution. Twenty-four of those families went to Long Valley, founded Orderville, and pledged all they had to the Lord. They didn't have much, but their poverty may have been their greatest contribution. Their having almost nothing provided a basis for future comparison that might have guaranteed gratitude: any food or clothing or housing that came to them in Orderville would be treasure compared to their privation on the Muddy mission.

But time passed, the railroad came, and a mining boom put cash in the hands of people in the neighboring towns. They could buy imported clothes, and they did. The people in Orderville were living better than they had in years, but the memory of poverty on the Muddy had faded. They now focused on what was in the next town. And so they felt old-fashioned and deprived.

One ingenious boy acted on the discontent he felt when he was denied a new pair of pants from the Orderville factory because his were not worn out yet. He secretly gathered the docked lambs' tails from the spring crop. He sheared the wool from them and stored it in sacks. Then, when he was sent with a load of wool to sell in Nephi, he took his sacks along and exchanged them for a pair of store pants. He created a sensation when he wore the new-style pants to the next dance.

The president of the order asked him what he had done. The boy gave an honest answer. So they called him into a meeting and told him to bring the pants. They commended him for his initiative, pointed out that the pants really belonged to the order, and took them. But they told him this: the pants would be taken apart, used as a pattern, and henceforth Orderville pants would have the new store-bought style. And he would get the first pair.

That did not quite end the pants rebellion. Orders for new pants soon swamped the tailoring department. When the orders were denied because pants weren't yet worn out, boys began slipping into the shed where the grinding wheel was housed. Soon, pants began to wear out quickly. The elders gave in, sent a load of wool out to trade for cloth, and the new-style pants were produced for everyone.

You know that isn't a happy ending. There were many challenges Orderville faced in the ten years they lived the order there. One of them they never really conquered. It was the problem of not remembering. That is a problem we must solve, too.

Just as they forgot poverty on the Muddy, we so easily forget that we came into life with nothing. Whatever we get soon seems our natural right, not a gift. And we forget the giver. Then our gaze shifts from what we have been given to what we don't have yet.

### **Affliction helps us remember**

God has used one method over and over to help with that problem of remembering. A group of people in the Book of Mormon record lost their flocks, their herds, and their fields of grain. Some lost their lives. And then the survivors remembered. In Alma it says, "And so great were their afflictions that every soul had cause to mourn; and they believed that it was the judgments of God sent upon them because of their wickedness and their abominations; therefore they were awakened to a remembrance of their duty" (Alma 4:3).

### **The miracle of gratitude**

Confronting death and difficulty does return memory and therefore gratitude to righteous people as well as the wicked. But there must be another way to remember, one we can choose.

There is. A servant of God named King Benjamin taught it to his people and to us.

He taught them that none of us is above another because we are all dust, to which God has given life and then sustained it. He described a fact which is true for every human being: unforgiven sin will bring us unending torment. And he described the gift we all have been offered: those whose faith in Jesus Christ leads them to repentance and forgiveness will live in never-ending happiness.

King Benjamin's teaching had a miraculous effect. Gratitude for what they had led to faith unto repentance. That led to forgiveness. That produced new gratitude. And then King Benjamin taught that, if we can remember and so remain grateful, we will retain a remission of our sins through all the losses and the gains of life. He taught it this way:

"And again I say unto you as I have said before, that as ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God, or if ye have known of his goodness and have tasted of his love, and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceedingly great joy in your souls, even so I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the

greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the angel.

"And behold, I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; and ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true" (Mosiah 4:11-12).

### **The Holy Ghost can help us remember**

How can you and I remember, always, the goodness of God, that we can retain a remission of our sins? The Apostle John recorded what the Savior taught us of a gift of remembrance which comes through the gift of the Holy Ghost: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

The Holy Ghost brings back memories of what God has taught us. And one of the ways God teaches us is with his blessings; and so, if we choose to exercise faith, the Holy Ghost will bring God's kindnesses to our remembrance.

### **Prayer can help us remember**

You could test that in prayer today. You could follow the command, "Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things" (D&C 59:7). President Benson suggested prayer as a time to do that. He said:

"The Prophet Joseph said at one time that one of the greatest sins of which the Latter-day Saints would be guilty is the sin of ingratitude. I presume most of us have not thought of that as a great sin. There is a great tendency for us in our prayers and in our pleadings with the Lord to ask for additional blessings. But sometimes I feel we need to devote more

of our prayers to expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving for blessings already received. We enjoy so much" (*God, Family, Country* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 199).

You could have an experience with the gift of the Holy Ghost today. You could begin a private prayer with thanks. You could start to count your blessings, and then pause for a moment. If you exercise faith, and with the gift of the Holy Ghost, you will find that memories of other blessings will flood into your mind. If you begin to express gratitude for each of them, your prayer may take a little longer than usual. Remembrance will come. And so will gratitude.

### Writing can help us remember

You could try the same thing as you write an entry in your book of remembrance. The Holy Ghost has helped with that since the beginning of time. You remember in the record of Moses it says, "And a book of remembrance was kept, in the which was recorded, in the language of Adam, for it was given unto as many as called upon God to write by the spirit of inspiration" (Moses 6:5).

President Spencer W. Kimball described that process of inspired writing: "Those who keep a book of remembrance are more likely to keep the Lord in remembrance in their daily lives. Journals are a way of counting our blessings and of leaving an inventory of these blessings for our posterity" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], p. 349).

As you start to write, you could ask yourself, How did God bless me today? If you do that long enough and with faith, you will find yourself remembering blessings. And sometimes, you will have gifts brought to your mind which you failed to notice during the day, but which you will then know were a touch of God's hand in your life.

### Remembering Jesus Christ

You can choose to remember the greatest gift of all. Next week, you can go

to a meeting where the sacrament is administered. You will hear the words "always remember him" (D&C 20:77, 79). You can pledge to do that, and the Holy Ghost will help you. President Marion G. Romney talked about the gift we will be helped to remember. He said:

"We should be thankful and express appreciation for all favors received—and surely we receive many. The chief objects of our gratitude, however, should be, and are, God, our Heavenly Father, and his son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer. . . .

"To the Lord Jesus we owe an undying debt of gratitude, for he bought us with a great price. It is impossible for us, weak mortals as we are, to fully comprehend and appreciate the sufferings he endured on the cross that he might gain for us the victory over death" ("Thou Shalt Thank the Lord Thy God in All Things," *Ensign*, June 1974, p. 3).

I bear you my testimony that Jesus is the Christ, that he atoned for our sins, and that the keys which unlock the doors of eternal life were restored to the Prophet Joseph Smith and are on the earth today. I bear testimony that President Ezra Taft Benson now holds those keys.

Not long ago a man asked me, "Does your church still believe that when Christ comes you will be living as one, the way they did in the city of Enoch?" He put a spin on the word *still*, as if we might not believe such a thing anymore. I said, "Yes, we do." And then he said, "You are the people who could do it."

I do not know why he thought that, but I know why he was right. He was right because this is the kingdom of God. Your baptism for the remission of sins, your receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost were offered by priesthood servants recognized by God.

### The seed of gratitude

And so the remembrance King Benjamin urged upon us can be ours. Remembrance is the seed of gratitude, which is the seed of generosity. Gratitude for the remission of sins is the seed of charity, the pure love of Christ. And so

God has made possible for you and me this blessing, a change in our very natures: "And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God" (Moroni 8:26).

I pray that we may make the simple choices which will lead us there to dwell with Him. And I pray that we will remember and be grateful for the gift of the Atonement and the gift of the Holy

Ghost, which make that journey possible. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The chorus sang "Joy in the Morning" without announcement.

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### President Hinckley

Bishop Henry B. Eyring addressed us, after which the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Joy in the Morning."

It will now be our pleasure to listen to Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve.

## Elder Boyd K. Packer

### Personal revelation

Following baptism, one is confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in a brief ordinance during which there is conferred the gift of the Holy Ghost. Thereafter, all through life, men, women, and even little children receive the right to inspired direction to guide them in their lives—personal revelation! (see Alma 32:23).

The Holy Ghost communicates with the spirit through the mind more than through the physical senses. This guidance comes as thoughts, as feelings, through impressions and promptings. It is not always easy to describe inspiration. The scriptures teach us that we may "feel" the words of spiritual communication more than hear them, and see with spiritual rather than with mortal eyes (see 1 Nephi 17:45).

The patterns of revelation are not dramatic. The voice of inspiration is a still voice, a small voice. There need be no trance, no sanctimonious declaration. It is quieter and simpler than that.

The Book of Mormon teaches that "angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost" (2 Nephi 32:3) and records that even though an angel spoke to some, they "were past *feeling*, that [they] could not *feel* his words" (1 Nephi 17:45; italics added).

If you have experienced inspiration, you understand.

### Revelation and the Word of Wisdom

Our physical body is the instrument of our spirit. In that marvelous revelation the Word of Wisdom, we are told how to keep our bodies free from impurities which might dull, even destroy, those delicate physical senses which have to do with spiritual communication.

The Word of Wisdom is a key to individual revelation. It was given as "a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints" (D&C 89:3).

The promise is that those who obey will receive "great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (D&C 89:19). If we abuse our body with habit-forming substances or misuse prescription drugs, we draw curtains which close off the light of spiritual communication.

Narcotic addiction serves the design of the prince of darkness, for it disrupts the channel to the Holy Spirit of Truth. At present the adversary has an unfair advantage. Addiction has the capacity to disconnect the human will and nullify moral agency. It can rob one of the power to decide. Agency is too fundamental a doctrine to be left in such jeopardy.

It is my conviction, and my constant prayer, that there will come through research, through inspiration to scientists if need be, the power to conquer narcotic addiction through the same means which cause it.

I plead with all of you to pray earnestly that somewhere, somehow, the way will be discovered to erase addiction in the human body.

It is not just human suffering, even human life, which is at risk; it is all of the personal and social and political and spiritual freedoms for which humanity has struggled for ages. At risk is all that was purchased by the blood of martyrs. Moral agency itself is in jeopardy! If we all pray fervently, the Lord will surely help us. And with those prayers, teach your children to obey the Word of Wisdom. It is their armor and will protect them from habits which obstruct the channels of personal revelation.

### Spiritual things are like leavening

Things of the Spirit need not—indeed, should not—require our uninterrupted time and attention. Ordinary work-a-day things occupy most of our attention. And that is as it should be. We are mortal beings living in this physical world.

Spiritual things are like leavening. By measure they may be very small, but by influence they affect all that we do. Continuing revelation is fundamental to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And I assure you that revelation attends our prophet President and those ordained as Apostles, as prophets, seers, and revelators. But revelation is not limited to them. The Lord desires that “every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world” (D&C 1:20).

### Promptings from evil sources

Not all inspiration comes from God (see D&C 46:7). The evil one has the power to tap into those channels of revelation and send conflicting signals which can mislead and confuse us. There are

promptings from evil sources which are so carefully counterfeited as to deceive even the very elect (see Matthew 24:24).

Nevertheless, we can learn to discern these spirits. Even with every member having the right to revelation, the Church can be maintained as a house of order.

### Revelation and order

Revelation comes in an orderly way in the Church. We are entitled to personal revelation. However, unless we are set apart to some presiding office, we will not receive revelations concerning what others should do.

Revelation in the Church comes to those who have been properly called, sustained, ordained, or set apart. A bishop, for instance, will not receive any revelation concerning a neighboring ward, because that is out of his jurisdiction.

Occasionally someone will claim to have received authority to teach and bless without having been called and set apart. Less than a year after the Church was organized (February 1831), a revelation was received which the Prophet specified “embrac[ed] the law of the church.” It includes this verse:

“It shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except he be ordained by some one who has authority, and *it is known to the church that he has authority* and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church” (D&C 42:11; italics added).

That is why the process of sustaining those called to office is so carefully protected in the Church—that all might know who has authority to teach and to bless.

An unusual spiritual experience should not be regarded as a personal call to direct others. It is my conviction that experiences of a special, sacred nature are individual and should be kept to oneself.

Few things disturb the channels of revelation quite so effectively as those people who are misled and think themselves to be chosen to instruct others when they are not chosen.

Others, fearing they also might go astray, then hold back and do not seek the source of divine revelation. Obedience to constituted priesthood authority will protect us from going astray.

### Revelation and change

There are those within the Church who are disturbed when changes are made with which they disagree or when changes they propose are not made. They point to these as evidence that the leaders are not inspired.

They write and speak to convince others that the doctrines and decisions of the Brethren are not given through inspiration.

Two things characterize them: they are always irritated by the word *obedience*, and always they question revelation. It has always been so. Helaman described those who "began to disbelieve in the spirit of prophecy and in the spirit of revelation; and the judgments of God did stare them in the face" (Helaman 4:23). "They were left in their own strength" (4:13), and "the Spirit of the Lord did no more preserve them; yea, it had withdrawn from them" (4:24).

Changes in organization or procedures are a testimony that revelation is ongoing. While doctrines remain fixed, the methods or procedures do not.

### Changes in the scriptures

For instance, when the most recent editions of the scriptures were published, many corrections were made on the basis of original or printer's manuscripts, some of which had not previously been available. For instance, in Alma chapter 16, verse 5, the word *whether* had appeared. The original manuscript for that verse does not exist. However, when we found the printer's copy, we saw that the Prophet Joseph Smith had changed the word to *whither*. *Whether* means "if"; *whither* means "where." The next verse verifies *whither* to be correct.

Another example: in Alma chapter 32, verse 30, the words "sprouteth and

beginneth to grow" occurred three times. An obvious typesetting error left one of them out. In the 1981 edition, thirty-five words were restored. It now conforms to the original text.

There were many such changes. None altered the doctrine. Each change, however small in detail, was carefully and prayerfully considered and approved by the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in a meeting in the temple.

### Guidance through authorized servants

All such matters are determined that way. The Lord established that process when He gave revelations relating to temple ordinances.

In 1841 the Saints were commanded to build a temple in Nauvoo in which to perform baptisms for the dead, and they were given time to do it. They would be rejected if they failed. The Lord said:

"I command you, all ye my saints, to build a house unto me; . . .

"And if you do not these things at the end of the appointment ye shall be rejected as a church, with your dead, saith the Lord your God" (D&C 124:31-32).

The Saints did not fail. However impossible it may have seemed to them, given the terrible opposition they faced, the Lord promised to guide them through His appointed servants:

"If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

"But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest" (D&C 124:45-46; italics added).

Later, speaking on the same subject of temple ordinances, the Lord affirmed again that He will reveal His will to His authorized servants:

"For him to whom these keys are given there is no difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of the children of men" (D&C 128:11).

### Changes come through revelation

That principle of revelation has been with the Church ever since. Those who hold the keys have obtained knowledge of what to do. When changes have come, they have come through that process. The Lord does as He said He would do:

"I, the Lord, command and revoke, as it seemeth me good" (D&C 56:4).

"I command and men obey not; I revoke and they receive not the blessing" (D&C 58:32).

He told the Saints that when enemies prevented them from keeping a commandment, He would no longer require them to do so. And He said, "The iniquity and transgression of my holy laws and commandments I will visit upon the heads of those who hindered my work, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not" (D&C 124:50).

The gospel plan was revealed line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little. And it goes on: "We believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Articles of Faith 1:9).

There will be changes made in the future as in the past. Whether the Brethren make changes or resist them depends entirely upon the instructions they receive through the channels of revelation which were established in the beginning.

The doctrines will remain fixed, eternal; the organization, programs, and procedures will be altered as directed by Him whose church this is.

### Revelation continues today

We who have been called to lead the Church are ordinary men and women with ordinary capacities struggling to administer a church which grows at such a pace as to astound even those who watch it closely. Some are disposed to find fault with us; surely that is easy for them to do. But they do not examine us more search-

ingly than we examine ourselves. A call to lead is not an exemption from the challenges of life. We seek for inspiration in the same way that you do, and we must obey the same laws which apply to every member of the Church.

We are sorry for our inadequacies, sorry we are not better than we are. We can feel, as you can see, the effect of the aging process as it imposes limitations upon His leaders before your very eyes.

But this we know. There are councils and counselors and quorums to counter-balance the foibles and frailties of man. The Lord organized His church to provide for mortal men to work as mortal men, and yet He assured that the spirit of revelation would guide in all that we do in His name.

And in the end, what is given comes because the Lord has spoken it, "whether by [His] own voice or by the voice of [His] servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38). We know His voice when He speaks.

Revelation continues with us today. The promptings of the Spirit, the dreams, the visions and the visitations, and the ministering of angels all are with us now. And the still, small voice of the Holy Ghost "is a lamp unto [our] feet, and a light unto [our] path" (Psalm 119:105). Of that I bear witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The chorus sang "True to the Faith" without announcement.

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### President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer has addressed us, and the Mormon Youth Chorus has sung "True to the Faith."

It will now be our pleasure to listen to President Howard W. Hunter, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, who will be our concluding speaker for this session.

## President Howard W. Hunter

I am honored to greet a vast audience of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, many of whom are gathered here on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. However, I am aware that by means of modern television technology and the courtesy of a number of television stations, I am privileged also to speak to many who are not members of our church and who may not be familiar with all of its doctrines and beliefs.

### The divine right to choose

Today, I would like to address both groups, members of our church as well as others, about one of the most important tenets of our faith and one of the most precious of God's gifts to mankind. It is our freedom, our agency, our inalienable and divine right to choose what we will believe and what we will not believe, and to choose what we want to be and what we want to do. I wish to speak of our responsibility and our opportunity to choose God, and the good, and eternal life, or to select evil, and the destructive, and that which leads to painful misery and despair.

Abraham Lincoln once asked, "What constitutes the bulwark of our own liberty and independence?" He then answered, "It is not our frowning battlements, our bristling sea coasts, our army and our navy. . . . Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us" (in John Bartlett, ed., *Familiar Quotations* [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1968], p. 636).

There are, of course, those who, in bitterness and disbelief, have rejected the idea of an independent spirit in man that is capable of free will and choice and true liberty.

We declare a bright and glorious view of God and man to all who will hear, a view revealed in and illuminated by the restored light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We testify of God's loving goodness and of his eternal respect for each of

us, for us as individual children of God and for what each of us may become.

As our prophet leader, President Ezra Taft Benson has declared:

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims that life is eternal, that it has purpose. . . . [God has a] plan . . . for the benefit and blessing of us, His children. . . .

"Basic to [that] all-important plan is our free agency. . . .

"The right of choice . . . runs like a golden thread throughout the gospel . . . for the blessing of His children" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], pp. 80-81).

### Our premortal existence

Part of our reassurance about the free, noble, and progressing spirit of man comes from the glorious realization that we all existed and had our identities, and our agency, long before we came to this world. To some that will be a new thought, but the Bible teaches clearly just such an eternal view of life, a life stretching back before this world was and stretching forward into the eternities ahead.

God said to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). At another time God reminded Job that "all the sons of God shouted for joy" before there was yet any man or woman on the earth God was creating (Job 38:7). The Apostle Paul taught that God the Father chose us "before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4).

Where and when did all of this happen? Well, it happened long before man's mortal birth. It happened in a great premortal existence where we developed our identities and increased our spiritual capabilities by exercising our agency and making important choices. We developed our intelligence and learned to love the truth, and we prepared to come to earth to continue our progress.



### The battle for freedom of choice

Our Father in Heaven wanted our growth to continue in mortality and to be enhanced by our freedom to choose and learn. He also wanted us to exercise our faith and our will, especially with a new physical body to master and control. But we know from both ancient and modern revelation that Satan wished to deny us our independence and agency in that now-forgotten moment long ago, even as he wishes to deny them this very hour. Indeed, Satan violently opposed the freedom of choice offered by the Father, so violently that John in the Revelation described "war in heaven" (Revelation 12:7) over the matter. Satan would have coerced us, and he would have robbed us of that most precious of gifts if he could: our freedom to choose a divine future and the exaltation we all hope to obtain.

Through Christ and his valiant defense of our Father's plan, the course of agency and eternal aspirations prevailed. In that crucial, premortal setting, a major milestone was passed, a monumental victory was won. As a result, we would be allowed to continue to pursue what President David O. McKay once described as the "eternal principle of progress." Later Christ himself would come to earth, President McKay noted, "to perfect society by perfecting the individual, and only by the exercising of Free Agency can the individual even approach perfection" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1940, p. 118).

So we came to our mortality, like Jeremiah, known by God as his literal spirit children, having the privilege to choose our personal path on matters of belief and religious conviction. With Christ's triumph in heaven in overcoming Lucifer, and later his triumph on earth in overcoming the effects of Adam's fall and the death of all mankind, "the children of men" continue "free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not be acted upon. . . .

"Wherefore, men are free . . . to choose liberty and eternal life, through [Christ] the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the

devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself" (2 Nephi 2:26-27).

### God will not violate our agency

To fully understand this gift of agency and its inestimable worth, it is imperative that we understand that God's chief way of acting is by persuasion and patience and long-suffering, not by coercion and stark confrontation. He acts by gentle solicitation and by sweet enticement. He always acts with unflinching respect for the freedom and independence that we possess. He wants to help us and pleads for the chance to assist us, but he will not do so in violation of our agency. He loves us too much to do that, and doing so would run counter to his divine character.

Brigham Young once said: "The vilitation of [man] is free; this is a law of their existence, and the Lord cannot violate his own law; were he to do that, he would cease to be God. . . . This is a law which has always existed from all eternity, and will continue to exist throughout all the eternities to come. Every intelligent being must have the power of choice" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 11:272).

To countermand and ultimately forbid our choices was Satan's way, not God's, and the Father of us all simply never will do that. He will, however, stand by us forever to help us see the right path, find the right choice, respond to the true voice, and feel the influence of his undeniable Spirit. His gentle, peaceful, powerful persuasion to do right and find joy will be with us "so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved" (Moroni 7:36).

### Repent of wrong choices

Given the freedom to choose, we may, in fact, make wrong choices, bad choices, hurtful choices. And sometimes we do just that, but that is where the mission and mercy of Jesus Christ comes into full force and glory. He has taken upon himself the burden of all the world's risk.

He has provided a mediating atonement for the wrong choices we make. He is our advocate with the Father and has paid, in advance, for the faults and foolishness we often see in the exercise of our freedom. We must accept his gift, repent of those mistakes, and follow his commandments in order to take full advantage of this redemption. The offer is always there; the way is always open. We can always, even in our darkest hour and most disastrous errors, look to the Son of God and live.

### Choose God's blessings

When the children of Israel returned from Egypt and stood on the threshold of the promised land, they faced the clear choice of what was before them. Of the future that was about to be theirs, the Lord said to them:

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

"A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day:

"And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 11:26-28).

That is the choice the Lord puts before us as we face our own promised lands and our own bright futures. We are given the knowledge, the help, the enticement, and the freedom to choose the

path of eternal safety and salvation. The choice to do so is ours. By divine decree before this world was, the actual choice is and always has been our own.

Let us be conscious of the fact that our future is being fashioned by the decisions we make. May we exercise our faith and our agency in choosing the blessings God has set before us in the great gospel plan of our Savior, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

President Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us.

We express appreciation to the many who have offered facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a very large audience in many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "How Great Thou Art," following which the benediction will be pronounced by Elder Jack H. Goaslind of the Seventy, and we will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

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The chorus sang "How Great Thou Art."

Elder Jack H. Goaslind offered the benediction.

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## FIRST DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, September 30, 1989, at 2:00 P.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by a Polynesian choir from the Salt Lake Valley. Kuinise V. Matagi conducted, and Clay Christiansen was at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Monson made the following remarks:

### President Thomas S. Monson

My beloved brethren and sisters, President Ezra Taft Benson has asked that I conduct this second general session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio, and many who are watching in stake centers throughout the various parts of the world where the conference is being carried by satellite transmission. We express appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except the following, who are excused: Elders Paul H. Dunn (who is at home on the advice of his physician following recent surgery), Sterling W. Sill, Joseph Anderson, and John H. Vandenberg.

We note that Elders Neal A. Maxwell, H. Verlan Andersen, and L. Lionel Kendrick are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

The music for this session will be provided by a Polynesian choir from the

Salt Lake Valley, under the direction of Brother Kuinise V. Matagi, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The choir will open this session by singing "Joseph Smith's First Prayer." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Jacob de Jager of the Seventy.

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The choir sang "Joseph Smith's First Prayer."

Elder Jacob de Jager offered the invocation.

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### President Monson

The choir will now sing "The Morning Breaks." President Gordon B. Hinckley will then present the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

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The choir sang "The Morning Breaks."

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## The Sustaining of Church Authorities and Officers

### President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brothers and sisters, as requested by President Benson, I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain President Howard W. Hunter as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and the following as members of that council: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David

B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may so manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we release Elders Wm. Grant Bangerter and Hugh W. Pinnock as members of the Presidency of the Quorums of Seventy. Those who wish to extend a vote of appreciation to these Brethren for their faithful service may do so by the uplifted hand.

It is proposed that we sustain as Presidents of the Quorums of the Seventy Elders Dean L. Larsen, Marion D.

Hanks, Robert L. Backman, James M. Paramore, J. Richard Clarke, Rex D. Pinegar, and Carlos E. Asay. All in favor may manifest it. Any opposed.

At the October 1978 general conference, several of the General Authorities were given emeritus status. At that time the announcement was also made that additional members of the General Authorities would be so designated from time to time.

Today, in consideration of factors of age and health, it is proposed that we sustain the following as emeritus members of the First Quorum of the Seventy with a vote of thanks for their faithful and effective service: Elders Theodore M. Burton, Robert L. Simpson, Victor L. Brown, Paul H. Dunn, J. Thomas Fyans, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Royden G. Derrick, and Rex C. Reeve. Those in favor, please manifest it.

When the Second Quorum of the Seventy was established in April 1989, the initial membership of the Second Quorum of the Seventy was composed of General Authorities currently serving under a five-year call. It is accordingly proposed that we release with sincere appreciation for their devoted service the following members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy: Elders Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, and Keith W. Wilcox. Those in favor of an expression of gratitude to these Brethren, please indicate by the uplifted hand.

It is proposed that we release with a vote of thanks Elders Robert L. Simpson,

Devere Harris, and Derek A. Cuthbert as the Sunday School General Presidency. Those in favor, with an expression of appreciation, may indicate.

It is proposed that we sustain Elders Hugh W. Pinnock, Derek A. Cuthbert, and Ted E. Brewerton as the Sunday School General Presidency. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we release with a vote of thanks Elder Rex D. Pinegar as First Counselor and Elder Robert B. Harbertson as Second Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency. Those who wish to voice their appreciation may so indicate it.

It is proposed that we sustain Elder Jeffrey R. Holland as First Counselor and Elder Monte J. Brough as Second Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency. All in favor may manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities and general officers of the Church as presently constituted. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may manifest it.

President Benson, it appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative.

### President Monson

Elder Russell M. Nelson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker at this session. He will be followed by Elder W. Eugene Hansen of the Seventy.

## Elder Russell M. Nelson

Words are inadequate to express the gratitude we feel for these brethren who have just been released from active assignment as General Authorities of the Church. We appreciate their marvelous ministry and powerful influence for good in the world.

Our privilege of sustaining leaders is granted by the Lord (see D&C 20:63-66;

26:2; 28:13; 38:34; 93:51; 104:21; 124:144). Sustaining makes known to the Church who has authority (see D&C 42:11) and enables each of us to show support. We honor all our leaders, both men and women, and are grateful for brothers and sisters so united in this kingdom of God on earth.

### Woman — of infinite worth

At a recent news conference in an Eastern European country, I was asked about the potential for women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I replied that perhaps the Church does more to enlighten understanding about and to lift the cause of women than any other institution on earth. It provides the path to her eternal destiny.

A worthy woman personifies the truly noble and worthwhile attributes of life. A faithful woman can become a devoted daughter of God — more concerned with being righteous than with being selfish, more anxious to exercise compassion than to exercise dominion, more committed to integrity than to notoriety. And she knows of her own infinite worth.

Each faithful young woman in the Church proclaims that *individual worth* is one of her most cherished values. She declares, "I am of infinite worth with my own divine mission which I will strive to fulfill" (*Personal Progress* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989], p. 7). Each daughter of God is of infinite worth because of her divine mission.

Important lessons about her divine mission may be learned from women of the scriptures. Mother Eve was a great example. She labored beside her husband as a partner. They both knew the plan of salvation. They both heeded commandments of obedience to God. Likewise, she prayed for divine guidance. She bore children. She taught the gospel to them (see Moses 5:1–12; D&C 138:38–39).

Sarah, in becoming the mother of Isaac in her advanced years, verified that nothing is "too hard for the Lord" (Genesis 18:14).

Mary, mother of our Redeemer, was the perfect example of complete submission to the will of God (see Luke 1:38). She kept confidences (see Luke 2:19). In faith, she endured grief (see John 19:26–27).

The stories of these and other scriptural heroines show that women are

essential in God's plan for His children. Likewise, men have important but different assignments. We learn from the scriptures that men are to hold priesthood responsibilities and, as husbands and fathers, provide for and protect their families (see Romans 12:17; 1 Timothy 5:8; D&C 75:28; 83:2, 4; 134:6, 11). From the beginning, the priesthood has been conferred only upon men, coming through the "lineage of the fathers" (see D&C 84:6–16; 86:8; 107:40–41; Abraham 1:3–4).

### Equal blessings and opportunities

Blessings of the priesthood are shared by men and women. All may qualify for baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. All may take upon themselves the name of the Lord and partake of the sacrament. All may pray and receive answers to their prayers. Gifts of the Spirit and testimonies of the truth are bestowed regardless of gender. Men and women receive the highest ordinance in the house of the Lord together and equally, or not at all (see D&C 131:1–3).

Opportunities for development of spiritual and intellectual potential are equal. Masculinity has no monopoly on the mind, and femininity has no exclusive dominion over the heart. The highest titles of human achievement — teacher, educated professional, loyal employee, faithful friend, student of the scriptures, child of God, disciple of Christ, trusted companion, loving parent — are earned under a uniform requirement of worthiness.

### The great role of mother

Loving parent. What a noble title! There are no greater roles in life for a man than those of husband and father. Likewise, there are no greater roles for a woman than those of wife and mother.

As I have watched my beloved companion and our dear daughters stretch to meet the challenging demands of these sacred roles, I have truly been inspired.

I have marveled at Mother's forecast that a child would break out with measles or chicken pox well before my trained medical eye would have so predicted. I have watched the incredible calm of Mother when her child experienced a convulsive seizure.

So much is expected of a mother. Often she is a detective; she must search for lost articles and solve on a daily basis baffling "who done it" mysteries.

Frequently, her eager audience requests her talent as a musician by calling on her to sing — any time, any place. She is an artist, using crayons and coloring books, needles and thread, or other means to create works of art by her own hands (see Psalm 90:17; D&C 42:40).

During the early life of most children, a woman is the principal disciplinarian. She treads the tightrope of judgment between being too strict or too permissive.

Mother is "secretary of labor" for her home. She teaches the work ethic with its responsibilities and rewards. Father, too, shares that duty. I remember a hot Saturday afternoon years ago when one of our little daughters heard the chimes of an approaching ice-cream wagon. She asked me for some money. A bit heartlessly, I replied, "Sweetheart, why don't you *earn* your money like everyone else does?" I'll never forget her reply.

"But, Daddy," she said, "I don't like to work!" (Things are different now with four children of her own.)

A woman is a master communicator. And she communicates best in humble prayer. How many of us first learned to pray beside the bended knees of our mothers? Surely she knows that her children can walk alone only when they have found their pathway to Father in Heaven through prayer.

Certainly, a woman is a teacher. Someone said, "When you teach a boy, you teach an individual, but when you teach a girl, you teach a whole generation."

J. Edgar Hoover said that "the cure of crime is not the electric chair but the

high chair" (in Emerson Roy West, comp., *Vital Quotations* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968], p. 78).

### **Honor for women who are not mothers**

I honor women who are not mothers. They know that motherhood is but one of the realms of womankind. The virtue and intelligence of women are uniquely applicable to other realms as well, such as compassionate service and teaching.

I am indebted to so many wonderful men and women who were my teachers. From grade school I remember Miss Crow, Miss McLean, Miss Starr, and others. Later, Miss Bradford, Miss Cunningham, and Miss Snow were among my favorites. They were modest, gracious, and moral examples. They were not concerned with what I was to acquire, but with what I was to become. These marvelous unmarried teachers exerted an influence distinct from that of my angel mother. Their gleaming hopes, vicarious ambitions, and exacting demands were vitally important to my preparation for life.

### **Wise and righteous women**

A wise woman renews herself. In proper season, she develops her talents and continues her education. She musters the discipline to reach her goals. She dispels darkness and opens windows of truth to light her way.

A woman teaches priorities by precept and example. Recently I watched a television program in which a female lawyer was being interviewed. She was at home with her child on a full-time basis. When asked of her decision, she replied, "Oh, I may go back to the law sometime, but not now. For me, the issue is simple. Any lawyer could take care of my clients, but only I should be the mother of this child."

Such a decision is made not in terms of rights but in terms of obligations and responsibilities. She knows that as she

rises to meet responsibilities, rights will take care of themselves.

The Prophet Joseph Smith was taught this lesson while unjustly incarcerated in Liberty Jail—scene of so few rights, so little freedom, and so much abusive authority. As the Master tutored His Prophet regarding rights, those instructions were surrounded by schooling about obligations and responsibilities (see D&C 121).

A righteous woman is a student of the scriptures. Many apply uniquely to her life (see Genesis 27:46; Psalm 113:9; Proverbs 31:10–31; Ephesians 5:22–33; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:3–5; Jacob 3:7; D&C 25). In the scriptures she finds “great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19).

She need not have majored in physics to know divine truths, as “there is no such thing as immaterial matter” (D&C 131:7). She need not have graduated in astronomy to learn lessons taught by God to Abraham—the relation of the earth to the sun, the sun to the planets, the planets to the center of the universe, and more (see Abraham 3). When she sings “Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are,” she knows scriptural answers.

Well do I remember attending an important international symposium. The speaker was one of the world’s leading scholars, addressing a learned society with faculty representatives from major universities near and far. He said, in effect, that libraries of the world are being filled with case histories and anecdotal research. He pled for a significant change in direction. “What we need,” he said, “is research in things that *really* matter. We need to learn more about why we are here, where we have come from, and where we are going!”

That unforgettable address comes to mind each time I hear teachers at Primary and mothers at home enlighten children with revealed answers to these same questions. While so doing, they bear firm testimonies of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Feeling a sense of infinite worth

Of course, there are times when a woman’s ability to endure is taxed to the limit. A teacher may have had enough of childish pranks, or a mother might be heard to say she’s “ready to resign.” She could become discouraged, especially if comparing herself unrealistically to others or focusing on what she is to do instead of on what she is to be.

Her self-esteem cannot be based on physical features, possession or lack of a particular talent, or comparative quantities of anything. Her self-esteem is earned by individual righteousness and a close relationship with God. Her outward glow is generated by goodness within. And her patience is much more apparent than any imperfection (see D&C 67:13).

Sweet serenity is found in fervent prayer. Then, we forget ourselves and remember the reaching hands of the Savior, who said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). As our burdens are shared with Him, they do become lighter.

Feelings of worth come when a woman follows the example of the Master. Her sense of infinite worth comes from her own Christlike yearning to reach out with love, as He does.

When her husband, children, grandchildren, nieces, or nephews return from a day marred by the world’s rude realities, a loving woman can say, “Come unto me. I will give you rest.” Wherever she is can become a sanctified place, safe from the storms of life. Refuge is there because of her ability to nurture and to love unconditionally.

Sometimes this true love necessarily takes the tone of tough love. Her lessons of obedience and accountability must resemble those of her Master, who said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15; see also Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:10; Mosiah 13:14; D&C 46:9; 124:87).

### In partnership with God

The Good Shepherd said, “Feed my lambs” (John 21:15). So a woman feeds

her loved ones, providing succor and sustenance just as the Savior would do. Her divine gift is to nurture, to help the young, to care for the poor, to lift the brokenhearted.

The Lord said, "My work and my glory [is] to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). So His devoted daughter-disciple may truly say, "My work and my glory is to help my loved ones reach that heavenly goal."

To help another human being reach one's celestial potential is part of the divine mission of woman. As mother, teacher, or nurturing saint, she molds living clay to the shape of her hopes. In partnership with God, her divine mission is to help spirits live and souls be lifted. This is the measure of her creation. It is ennobling, edifying, and exalting.

### **Satan's efforts to demean women**

Her saintly calling is opposed by Satan. He would shatter the family unit and demean the worth of woman. He would triumph if one man would offend or fail to honor her, or if one woman would deny her infinite worth and behave beneath her dignity. The vulgar portrayal of her beauty as an object of lust, the vile invasion of her private purity, should provoke righteous indignation from all caring people.

The gospel has been restored in these latter days so that the light of the Lord can

prevail over efforts of the adversary. This day has long been prophesied. The Lord has promised worthy Saints of our time, "Upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2:29).

### **Women's divine potential**

A woman's richest rewards will come as she rises to fulfill her destiny as a devoted daughter of God. To all faithful Saints He has promised thrones, kingdoms, principalities, glory, immortality, and eternal lives (see Romans 2:7; D&C 75:5; 128:12, 23; 132:19). That is the potential for women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is exalting, everlasting, and divine.

God bless us to honor each woman in her divine mission as a woman of infinite worth, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Monson**

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Elder W. Eugene Hansen, who was sustained last conference as a member of the Seventy, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, also sustained last conference as a member of the Seventy.

## **Elder W. Eugene Hansen**

My beloved brothers and sisters, since this is my first opportunity to address you since the call to this new assignment, I want you to know how grateful I am for the privilege of serving the Lord and dedicating my life to the building of the kingdom.

### **The Savior's mission of love**

There is no single word that better characterizes the life and mission of the Savior than the word *love*.

The Savior's mission was begun out of love which the Father had for His children. In John we read, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Thus, the greatest mission in the history of the world was ordained and begun because of the love of our kind and caring Eternal Father.



## The need for love in the world

You will recall that the Pharisees, in their effort to ensnare the Master, had the lawyer put the question to him, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" (I wish it had been someone other than a lawyer who had asked that question, but there is some comfort in the fact that the Pharisees put him up to it.)

You will remember the response:

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40).

Elder James E. Talmage has commented that these two commandments "are so closely related as to be virtually one: . . . 'Thou shalt love.' He who abideth one of the two will abide both; for without love for our fellows, it is impossible to please God" (*The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1968], p. 431).

As we approach what seem like insurmountable problems facing mankind today, there has never been a greater need for love in the world — not only of God, but love of all mankind.

## Showing love through Church service

As a church, we are fortunate to be able to show love and render service in an organized way.

Our missionary program is an expression of love for our neighbors as we share the message of the gospel. It is out of love and concern for others that our missionaries spend up to two years, largely at their own expense, living in all parts of the world. Many experience hardship, deprivations, and danger as they share the blessings of the gospel.

Our tithes and offerings, when given with the right spirit, are an expression of love and concern that we have for the

Lord's work and for those in need of material assistance.

The brotherhood and warmth of our priesthood quorums, Relief Society, and youth organizations are available to all who will "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him" (Moroni 10:32).

Countless thousands of hours are spent in meaningful Christian service by bishops, stake presidents, Relief Society presidents, home teachers, nursery leaders, and all who have accepted callings to do their part. They render this service not just out of a sense of duty, but out of genuine love for those they serve.

## Showing love in personal relationships

But for all of the good that is being accomplished, much remains to be done. Perhaps the greatest opportunity for improvement is in our individual relationships with one another.

As the Savior was closing His ministry in preparation for the sacrifice that was to be the greatest of all gifts of love, He gave the powerful admonition, "Love one another; as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

May I offer four suggestions to help focus on principles that will make us kinder, gentler, more harmonious, and loving persons.

First, be considerate. Be sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of others, always careful not to demean or belittle by either word or act. Be encouraging, uplifting, careful not to break down a person's confidence. It was my experience even in the legal profession — combative as it can sometimes be — that there was still much room to show consideration and respect.

Second, be complimentary. Look for attributes and acts of others that you can be genuinely complimentary of. Everyone is lifted by sincere and deserved commendation.

Third, be charitable. The prophet Moroni counsels us with respect to the need for charity: "For if he have not charity he is nothing" (Moroni 7:44). In his epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul sums up the importance of charity in

that familiar verse: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1).

What does it mean to be charitable? Charity is the opposite of selfishness. It means being generous and giving of both one's means and one's time in the service of others.

We should have an element of sacrifice in our offerings and in the consecration of our time. We should strive to lift those within our reach who are forlorn or who despair. We should take a special interest in the youth around us.

"Charity is the pure love of Christ" (Moroni 7:47).

Fourth, be grateful. If we would show our love to our Heavenly Father, we would be grateful. We would show our gratitude by the way we live, not just by what we say or profess.

It has been said that the sin of ingratitude is more serious than the sin of revenge. With revenge, we return evil for evil, but with ingratitude, we return evil for good.

### An example of love

Years ago, when it was the practice to hold baccalaureate services at graduation time, President Harold B. Lee related a story to a group of college graduates that has always stayed with me.

He told of a woman who was widowed early in life and left with several children to support and care for. Money was scarce. The children had to work hard to supplement the meager amounts that the mother was able to earn doing laundry and cleaning houses.

But as the children took top academic honors and went on to notable achievements in the community and business world, the family attracted the attention of the local newspaper. A reporter was sent to the home to interview this remarkable mother who, by then, was somewhat stooped and gray.

Several questions were asked by the reporter in an attempt to learn the secret of her success. She had accomplished so much with so little.

The reporter asked his final question: "With such a wonderful family of children, which one did you love the most?" With a tear softly moistening her eye she replied:

"I loved most the one who was sick until she was better.

"I loved most the one who was away until he returned.

"I loved most the one who was failing until he succeeded.

"I loved most the one who was sad until she was happy."

### Emulate Christlike love

In closing, may I quote from Solomon Bennett Freehof:

"Years ago I preferred clever people. There was a joy in beholding . . . a mind . . . bearing thoughts quickly translated into words, or ideas expressed in a new way. I find now my taste has changed. Verbal fireworks often bore me. They seem motivated by self-assertion and self-display. I now prefer another type of person; one who is considerate, understanding of others, careful not to break down another person's self-respect. . . . My preferred person today is one who is always aware of the needs of others, or their pain and [their] fear and [their] unhappiness, and their search for self-respect. . . . I once liked clever people. Now I like good people" (in Richard L. Evans, comp., *Richard Evans' Quote Book* [Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971], p. 166).

May we all strive more diligently to show our love of the Lord by the way we emulate Christlike love in our relationships with others, that we may lay claim to the "crown of life" referred to by James, "which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12), I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

### Expressions of gratitude

I join with Elder Hansen and all of my Brethren newly called to the quorums of the Seventy in expressing gratitude to the Lord for the privilege of this holy calling and opportunity to serve. There is no sufficient way to express either the sense of responsibility or feelings of inadequacy one has in being called to such a ministry. In these many weeks of self-examination, I have repeatedly felt, as Paul once wrote, “pressed out of measure, [and stretched] above strength” (2 Corinthians 1:8).

I also wish to express appreciation to my family, who have loved me, prayed for me, comforted and sustained me all of my life—as only a family can. They alone know how deeply I love them. I alone know how much they will mean to me forever.

This afternoon I wish to thank you, the faithful members of the Church, for your sustaining vote last April and again this day. It is no small thing to “sustain” another person. The word literally means to “uphold” or, if you prefer, to “hold up.” When we sustain life, we nourish it, we keep it going. When we sustain a friend or a neighbor or a stranger in the street, we give support, we share strength, we provide help. We hold each other up under the weight of present circumstance. We bear one another’s burdens under the heavy personal pressures of life.

### Jesus provides sustenance

As with all else in our experience, the Lord Jesus Christ is our exemplar and ideal in this very important matter of providing sustenance. His is the ultimate arm of strength and his the endurance which endures all things. At no time did he demonstrate that unflinching devotion more clearly than during the final moments of his earthly life, hours when he might well have wished that others could have been sustaining him.

As the sacred supper of that ultimate Passover was being prepared, Jesus was

under the strain of deep and profound emotion. Only he knew what lay immediately ahead, but perhaps even he did not fully anticipate the depth of pain to which he must go before it could be said, “The Son of Man hath descended below them all” (D&C 122:8).

In the midst of this meal and such thoughts, Christ quietly arose, girded himself as a slave or servant would, and knelt to wash the Apostles’ feet (see John 13:3–17). This small circle of believers in this scarcely founded kingdom were about to pass through their severest trial, so he would set aside his own increasing anguish in order that he might yet once more serve and strengthen them. It does not matter that no one washed his feet. In transcendent humility he would continue to teach and to cleanse them. He would to the final hour—and beyond—be their sustaining servant. As John wrote, who was there and watched the wonder of it all, “Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end” (John 13:1).

So it had been, and so it was to be—through the night, and through the pain, and forever. He would *always* be their strength, and no anguish in his own soul would ever keep him from that sustaining role.

In the moonlit silence of that Near Eastern night, every acute pain, every heartfelt grief, every crushing wrong and human hurt experienced by every man, woman, and child in the human family was to be heaped upon his weary shoulders. But in such a moment, when someone might have said it to him, he rather says to us, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

“Ye shall be sorrowful,” he said—sad, lonely, frightened, and sometimes even persecuted, “*but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. . . . Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*” (John 16:20, 33; italics added).

How can he speak that way? Of good cheer and joy? On a night like this? With the pain he knew was just ahead? But

those are the blessings he always brought, and that is how he always spoke — to the very end.

### Jesus endured and triumphed

We cannot know to what extent his disciples fully understood the approaching events, but we do know that Christ faced his final moments alone. In one of the truly candid comments he would make to his brethren, he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matthew 26:38). And he left them to do what only he could do. The Light of the World stepped away from human company and entered the garden grove to wrestle with the prince of darkness alone. Moving forward, kneeling, falling forward on his face, he cried with an anguish you and I will never know, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39). But he knew, for our sakes, that it could not pass and that he must drink that bitter cup to the dregs!

His disciples, understandably, were weary and soon fell asleep. What of Christ's sleep? What of his fatigue? What rest or slumber will sustain him through such an agonizing ordeal? That is simply not his concern here, nor does it ever seem to be. He will endure. He will triumph. He will not falter nor fail us.

Even in crucifixion he would reign with the benevolence and bearing of a King. Of those who rend his flesh and spill his blood he says, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). And to the penitent thief at his side he gently promises paradise. To his beloved mother he is unable to make any caring gesture with his hands. So he simply looks at her and says, "Woman, behold thy son!" Then commending to John her future care, he declares, "Behold thy mother!" (John 19:26-27). He would be concerned for others — but especially for her — to the very end.

Because he must ultimately tread this winepress of redemption unaided, can he endure the darkest moment of them all, the shock of the greatest pain? This comes not with thorns and with nails, but with the terror of feeling utterly

alone: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? . . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). Can he bear all of our sins and our fear and loneliness too? He did and he does and he will.

We do not know how such great sorrow can be borne, but it is no wonder the sun hid its face in shame. No wonder the veil of the temple was rent. No wonder the very earth convulsed at the plight of this perfect child. And at least one Roman centurion who saw all of this sensed something of what it had meant. In awe, he uttered the declaration for all eternity, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54).

### Pure love of Christ never faileth

Life has its share of some fear and some failure. Sometimes things fall short, don't quite measure up. Sometimes in both personal and public life, we are seemingly left without strength to go on. Sometimes people fail us, or economies and circumstance fail us, and life with its hardship and heartache can leave us feeling very alone.

But when such difficult moments come to us, I testify that there is one thing which will never, ever fail us. One thing alone will stand the test of all time, of all tribulation, all trouble, and all transgression. One thing only never faileth — and that is the pure love of Christ.

"I remember," Moroni cries to the Savior of the world, "that thou hast said that thou hast loved the world, even unto the laying down of thy life for the world. . . ."

"Now I know," he writes, "that this love which thou hast had for the children of men is charity" (Ether 12:33-34).

Having watched a dispensation die and an entire civilization destroy itself, Moroni quotes his father for any who will listen in some later ("latter") day, "If ye have not charity, ye are nothing" (Moroni 7:46). Only the pure love of Christ will see us through. It is Christ's love which suffereth long, and is kind. It is Christ's love which is not puffed up nor easily provoked. Only his pure love enables him — and us — to bear all things, believe

all things, hope all things, and endure all things (see Moroni 7:45).

Oh, love effulgent, love divine!  
 What debt of gratitude is mine,  
 That in his offering I have part  
 And hold a place within his heart.  
 ("God Loved Us, So He Sent His  
 Son," *Hymns*, no. 187.)

I testify that having loved us who are in the world, Christ loves us to the end. His pure love never fails us. Not now. Not ever. Not ever.

Of that divine sustaining vote for all of us I testify in this, his true and living

Church, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

Elders W. Eugene Hansen and Jeffrey R. Holland of the Seventy have just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Elders Marlin K. Jensen and Carlos Amado, sustained at April conference as members of the Seventy, will then speak to us.

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The choir and congregation sang  
 "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

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## Elder Marlin K. Jensen

### Expressions of gratitude

Brothers and sisters, I am grateful for the opportunity to greet all of you and to tell you how thankful I am to have been called as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. My wife, Kathy, says she always knew I would receive a life sentence of some type, but neither of us dreamed it would be something so rewarding!

No one can stand at this pulpit for the first time — where so many truly great men and women have stood over the years — without experiencing a strong sense of personal inadequacy and an overwhelming desire to express appreciation. I feel both today.

I want to express appreciation to my friends and neighbors in the little mountain valley where I was born and where I have chosen to live my life thus far — also, to my noble ancestors and my living extended family. I am constantly aware of their goodness and their interest in me. I sincerely thank my parents, who continue to work on a project that began at my birth forty-seven years ago. I am especially indebted to my companion. Her support, love, and cheerful disposition make my life very enjoyable. She would

want you to know of her own strong conviction of the truthfulness of the restored gospel. Together we have been blessed with eight delightful children, whose development and happiness are our primary concerns. I love each one of them very much.

I am also very grateful for the blessing of daily association with the General Authorities of the Church. I pledge to these dedicated men my loyalty, my love, and my untiring efforts in building up God's kingdom. I promise them also that I will always heed the Lord's admonition in the Doctrine and Covenants: "Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings" (D&C 108:7).

Finally, I am very grateful for each of you, my brothers and sisters all over the world, who have come to a knowledge of the Redeemer and are part of His Church. I appreciate your goodness and devotion and look forward to meeting you and serving at your side in the years ahead. With you, in the words of the Apostle Paul, I am humbled to know that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height,

nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39). For this knowledge I am most grateful of all.

### **An eye single to God's glory**

As I have searched the scriptures in recent months for guidance in my new calling, I have become aware of the importance to our eternal welfare of our motives, our desires, and our attitudes. I speak of one of these today: the necessity of performing our earthly labors with "an eye single to the glory of God" (D&C 4:5).

The temptation to seek personal recognition and reward from our service to others is ever-present. The pattern was established in the pre-earth life by Satan himself. There, when the Father explained His plan of salvation for the inhabitants of this earth and the need for a redeemer, Satan responded by saying, "Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor" (Moses 4:1). In contrast, Christ showed us for all time that God's work is to be done with an attitude of *Thine*, not *mine*. Said He, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (4:2).

Those who seek honor and gain for themselves in doing the Lord's work are guilty of what the scriptures call priest-crafts. Of this sin, Nephi stated, "Priest-crafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion" (2 Nephi 26:29).

### **Blessings of giving glory to God**

Latter-day Saints whose eyes are single to God's glory see life from a vastly different perspective than those whose attention is directed elsewhere. Such members, for instance, care little about receiving credit or recognition for their good deeds. They are more interested in feeding the Lord's sheep than in

counting them. In fact, they frequently find their greatest happiness in serving anonymously, thereby leaving the beneficiaries of their kindness with no one to thank or praise except the Lord. In this regard, we can perhaps learn a lesson from our Christian brothers and sisters in the Amish communities of Pennsylvania. It is reported that their writers frequently compose and publish poetry and religious literature anonymously, so as to deflect attention from themselves and ensure that only God receives the glory.

There is something particularly noble about the good works of those who act without restraint or compulsion and with no expectation of reward or recognition. Their goodness has its source in the "desires of their hearts" (Alma 41:3) and is the result of pure motives.

Our second-youngest daughter illustrated this principle in a simple way a year or so ago when she was three. Without special occasion, except the joy of doing something nice for someone, she hid a tasty bedtime treat under my pillow. When I thanked her and asked her the next morning why she had done such a good deed, she said, "Just because I love you, Daddy — just because I love you."

### **The least shall be great**

Considerations of church position and title are also of little consequence to Latter-day Saints whose eyes are directed toward God's glory. Their concern is focused on the opportunities for service that church callings present, rather than on gaining personal notoriety. Such members, who serve competently and quietly, regardless of whether they are the "highest" or the "least" in the kingdom, are probably those that the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote, "And those members of the body [meaning the Church], which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour" (1 Corinthians 12:23).

The merit of rendering faithful service, regardless of one's position in the Church, was tenderly brought to my attention several years ago during the funeral service of a man who had done

much good in his life without ever being recognized with a high church office. I was touched as I heard the deceased's brother-in-law describe him as a man who had never served as an elders quorum president, as a bishop, or as a stake president, but who "had made a lot of them look awfully good."

All of us who have observed a loving Primary nursery leader ministering patiently to her flock of two-year-olds or who have felt the gentle spirit of those wonderful white-haired men and women who faithfully serve in the temples of the Lord will understand perfectly the Savior's comment, "For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (Luke 9:48).

### **Sacrificing our vain ambitions**

When our eyes are fixed on God's glory, we feel the majesty of His creations and the grand scope of His work on this earth. We feel humble to be participants in His latter-day kingdom. If we pause and quietly reflect on our role in all of this, we will come to know that placing our egos and our vain ambitions on the sacrificial altar is one of the most important offerings we can ever make. Well might we acknowledge, as did Moses after beholding in vision God's glory, "Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed" (Moses 1:10).

Paul demonstrated a similar attitude and recognition in his first letter to the Corinthians, in which he asked rhetorically:

"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?"

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

"So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).

Brothers and sisters, I testify that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God's kingdom on the earth today. This kingdom will roll forward with or without us as individuals. Men and women who even momentarily take their eyes off of God's glory and seek to exalt themselves, or who become entangled in the vain things of this world, will find that the kingdom quickly moves on without them. Unfortunately, none of us is immune from this all-too-human tendency. In the final dramatic hours of the Savior's life, even His Apostles — those stalwart men who certainly should have known better — argued with one another about who should be accounted the greatest (see Luke 22:24).

### **The Lord's promise**

To those faithful Latter-day Saints whose view of their own importance in God's plan is in perspective, the Lord has promised:

"And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.

"Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will" (D&C 88:67-68).

Of these truths I testify, adding my own humble witness of the reality and goodness of God and His Son. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Carlos H. Amado

### Seeking God's comfort in adversity

The day I arrived in Mexico City as a General Authority with my family, I received a telephone call from a former missionary companion who wanted to talk to me that night. His oldest son, who was just starting his first semester of college, had died in a tragic accident. He was only seventeen years old and full of enthusiasm for life. He was faithful in the Church and a seminary graduate. Just two weeks before, he had talked to his parents about desires and goals in life. Now he was gone. They understand the plan of salvation well and are sealed for eternity, but the physical separation affects them.

Those who have gone through this kind of trial recognize that there are tragedies that are so difficult we cannot understand them. We do not have an answer in this life for every adversity. When trials come, it is time to turn our souls to God, who is the author of life and the only source of comfort. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27).

### Changing tragedy into a blessing

Some months ago I heard that the wife of a friend was again threatening miscarriage. I hurried, along with others who were concerned about the baby, to make sure that things would be well. While arrangements were still being made, we were told that it was too late. This was the third time she had gone through this painful experience. I asked myself, What can I say to comfort them? How will the Lord help them overcome this new blow?

The day she left the hospital she heard about another sister from her stake who was going through the same experience. Full of trust in the Lord, she went to visit the sister and give her support. She changed her own tragedy into a blessing of comfort for others.

Thinking about her attitude, I remembered a lesson I learned many years

ago when my father died. He died suddenly, leaving my mother a widow with fifteen children, ten of whom were dependent on her. This was a great tragedy in her life. Of course, the gospel, the fellowship of the Church, and our own testimonies gave us a solid base which comforted us and helped us to accept this loss with dignity. In spite of the fact that we never left her alone, it affected her deeply. Although she accepted the will of God, her soul did not find inner peace.

One morning as we were traveling downtown on a bus, she began to feel her loneliness. I noticed it, but also knew that I couldn't give her the comfort she needed. She cried in silence, but with dignity. A lady passenger came up and said, "You seem to be very sad." My mother answered, "I have just lost my husband." Then the lady asked, "Do you have children?" and my mother answered, "I have fifteen children, and each one of them has some trait that reminds me of their father. So I am constantly reminded of him."

When she heard this, the woman said, "You are truly blessed because you lost only your husband. I lost my husband, too, and my two daughters in an automobile accident, and I am living alone. So I do understand your pain and sorrow." Then she added, "Only God can help us overcome trials like this."

Those who suffer great adversity and sorrow and go on to serve their fellowmen develop a great capacity to understand others. Like the prophets, they have acquired a higher understanding of the mind and will of Christ. To me, this woman was like an angel. She gave comfort and raised my mother's thoughts toward God in a time of great trial. From that day on, each time my mother felt lonely or abandoned, she would say to me, "Son, pity the woman who lost all. I am grateful that the Lord has blessed me with fifteen children to be my companions in life."

### Christ understands our suffering

This personal experience has helped me understand the importance of what



God revealed to Joseph Smith in the Doctrine and Covenants:

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit — and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink —

“Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men” (D&C 19:18–19).

Christ has suffered more than any of us, and He knows the intensity of our afflictions. There is no suffering we have that He did not undergo in Gethsemane and on Calvary. That is why He understands and can help us.

Christ stated, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25). The greatest tragedy that can happen to a person is not the loss of his possessions, or his intellect, or his mortal life, but rather to lose eternal life, which is the free gift of God.

### The true trial of our faith

The scriptures are a witness of the various prophets — ordinary people, with extraordinary callings — who faced great tribulation and opposition. Father Lehi was commanded to abandon his gold, his silver, and his country. The sons of Mosiah had to renounce the throne. Job lost his lands, his cattle, and even his children, while Abinadi, Stephen, and Christ’s Apostles were killed in His service.

For some, the true trial of our faith is to remain faithful, without murmuring against the Lord, when we lose earthly position, family members, or even when we are required to give our very lives.

There is evidence in the scriptures that these great men trusted fully in the Savior, even without a full understanding of His purposes. The Prophet Joseph Smith learned, as he established the kingdom of God in this last dispensation, that the more he struggled to bless the lives of

others, the greater was his opposition. He went to the Lord seeking justice. Christ did understand Joseph and suggested to him that he might have to suffer more. The Lord told him: “The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?” (D&C 122:8).

Later, Joseph, with more understanding of the will and purposes of his Savior, accepted his glorious destiny by offering his life. It is not important to know the trials we may be required to go through in this mortal life. What is essential is our attitude in facing these trials and the lessons and experiences that we learn from them. These will help to refine our understanding and increase our spirituality.

### The eternal perspective

Basically, we limit our vision to the events that happen in this life with the greatest emphasis placed on the present. Only when we fix our gaze on the heavenly things do we begin to understand the eternities. Only with the help of Christ can we fully overcome tragedy. It is necessary to develop our faith in Him as the Redeemer of the world. He taught us, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). It is my prayer that when we have afflictions we will follow the pattern that He taught during His bitter experience in Gethsemane. He said, “If thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). This I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

We have just heard the remarks of Elders Marlin K. Jensen and Carlos Amado of the Seventy.

Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder M. Russell Ballard, also of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

## Elder Richard G. Scott

### Recognizing answers to prayer

Across from me a woman sat sobbing. With tear-filled eyes, she told me, "I don't know what I believe anymore." She spoke of having struggled and prayed many days to know how to make a vitally important decision in her life, without success. She anguished, "I don't know what to do. If you'll tell me what to do, I'll do it." With her hand on the scriptures, she said, "God told us He would help us. He answers everybody else's prayers. Why won't He answer mine?"

When one is caught in a whirlpool of emotion, it is difficult to find a way out alone. My prayer is to help you who have similar feelings.

When answers to urgent prayer don't seem to come, it may be that we don't understand some truths about prayer, or because we don't recognize answers when they come.

Our Heavenly Father did not put us on earth to fail but to succeed gloriously. It may seem paradoxical, but that is why recognizing answers to prayer can sometimes be very difficult. Some face life with only their own experience and capacity to help them. Others seek, through prayer, divine inspiration to *know* what to do. When it is required, they qualify for power beyond their own capacity to do it.

Communication with our Father in Heaven is not a trivial matter. It is a sacred privilege. It is based on unchanging principles. When we receive help from our Father in Heaven, it is in response to faith, obedience, and the proper use of agency.

It is a mistake to assume that every prayer we offer will be answered immediately. Some prayers require considerable effort on our part. True, sometimes impressions come when we have not specifically sought them. They generally concern something we need to know and are not otherwise able to find out.

### Apply truths that God has revealed

We are here on earth to gain experience we can obtain in no other way. We

are given the opportunity to grow, to develop, and to gain spiritual maturity. To do that, we must learn to apply truth. How we face challenges and resolve difficult problems is crucially important to our happiness.

To better understand prayer, I have listened to the counsel of others, pondered the scriptures, and studied the lives of prophets and others. Yet what seems most helpful is seeing in my mind a child approaching trustingly a loving, kind, wise, understanding Father, who wants us to succeed.

Don't worry about your clumsily expressed feelings. Just talk to your Father. He hears every prayer and answers it in His way.

When we explain a problem and a proposed solution, sometimes He answers yes, sometimes no. Often He withholds an answer, not for lack of concern, but because He loves us — perfectly. He wants us to apply truths He has given us. For us to grow, we need to trust our ability to make correct decisions. We need to do what we *feel* is right. In time, He will answer. He will not fail us.

I have described the absolute reality of our relationship with our Father. There is nothing about us He does not know. He is conscious of our every need and could provide all of the answers. Yet, because His purpose is our eternal happiness, He encourages us to make the correct choices.

Sometimes, like a child, we misbehave, act unwisely, and feel we cannot approach our Father with a problem. When communication is strained, how wonderful it is to have a Mediator who works things out when we obey His counsel and repent. Such is our Elder Brother, the Savior.

### Ask in faith with an honest heart

Perhaps Oliver Cowdery's experiences were recorded for us to understand how to pray and how to recognize answer to prayer. Oliver was told:

"Assuredly as the Lord liveth, . . . even so surely shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall *ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive* . . . .

"I will tell you in your *mind* and in your *heart*, by the Holy Ghost" (D&C 8:1-2; italics added).

When we receive an impression in our *heart*, we can use our *mind* either to rationalize it away or to accomplish it. Be careful what you do with an impression from the Lord.

Oliver was further taught: "Remember that without *faith* you can do nothing; therefore ask in *faith*. Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not. . . .

"According to your *faith* shall it be done unto you" (D&C 8:10-11; italics added).

"Ask in faith" means ask with confidence in our holy Father. Like many of us, Oliver did not recognize the evidence of answers to prayers already given by the Lord. To open his eyes and ours, this revelation was given through Joseph Smith:

"Blessed art thou for what thou hast done; for thou hast inquired of me, and behold, *as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction* of my Spirit. If it had not been so, thou wouldst not have come to the place where thou art at this time.

"Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did *enlighten thy mind*; and now I tell thee these things that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth" (D&C 6:14-15; italics added).

If you feel that God has not answered *your* prayers, ponder these scriptures—then carefully look for evidence in your own life of His having already answered you.

### Answers reach the heart and mind

To help each of us recognize answers given, the Lord said:

"If you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried

unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

"*Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter?*" (D&C 6:22-23; italics added).

The Lord provides further insight by counseling us to study a problem out in our mind and then to ask if it be right:

"If it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall *feel* that it is right.

"But if it be not right you shall have no such *feelings*, but you shall have a stupor of thought" (D&C 9:8-9; italics added).

### When the Lord withholds an answer

It is vitally important to recognize that the Lord also responds a third way to prayer by *withholding an answer* when the prayer is offered. Why would He do that?

He is our perfect Father. He loves us beyond our capacity to understand. He knows what is best for us. He sees the end from the beginning. He wants us to act to gain needed experience.

When He answers *yes*, it is to give us confidence.

When He answers *no*, it is to prevent error.

When He *withholds an answer*, it is to have us grow through faith in Him, obedience to His commandments, and a willingness to act on truth. We are expected to assume accountability by acting on a decision that is consistent with His teachings without prior confirmation. We are not to sit passively waiting or to murmur because the Lord has not spoken. We are to act.

### Be spiritually sensitive

Most often what we have chosen to do is right. He will confirm the correctness of our choices His way. That confirmation generally comes through packets of help found along the way. We discover them by being spiritually sensitive. They are like notes from a loving Father as evidence of His approval. If, in trust, we

begin something which is not right, He will let us know before we have gone too far. We sense that help by recognizing troubled or uneasy feelings.

### **Nephi followed the spiritual law**

Nephi's efforts to obtain the plates of brass show how the principles work. When the older brethren were asked to go, they murmured and received no help. Nephi was assured, "Thou shalt be favored of the Lord, because thou hast not murmured" (1 Nephi 3:6). Nephi's words "I will go and do" reveal a positive commitment to act and to succeed by using spiritual law (1 Nephi 3:7).

After two unsuccessful attempts, Nephi remained confident. He crept into the city toward the house of Laban without all the answers. He observed, "I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do," significantly adding, "*Nevertheless I went forth*" (1 Nephi 4:6-7; italics added).

Nephi was willing to try time and again, using his best efforts. He expressed faith that he would be helped. He refused to be discouraged. But because he acted, had confidence in the Lord, was obedient, and properly used his agency, he received guidance. He was inspired step after step to success, and in his mother's words was "given . . . power [to] accomplish the thing which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 5:8; italics added).

Nephi knew he was required to confide in God, to exercise faith, and to act so that he could receive help, step by step. He did not murmur nor ask for a full explanation. But, observe particularly, he did not wait passively for help. He acted! By following spiritual law, he was inspired and given power to act.

### **Seek God's will**

Sometimes answers to prayer are not recognized because we are too intent on wanting confirmation of our own desires. We fail to see that the Lord would have

us do something else. Be careful to seek His will.

I confess I don't know how to make a correct decision except where there is righteousness and trust in a Heavenly Father. The principles simply will not work when agency is intentionally used at variance with the will of God. If there is unrepented sin, we are left to our own devices to flounder and struggle on our own. We *can* be rescued through our own repentance.

### **Answers may come gradually**

When we seek inspiration to help make decisions, the Lord gives gentle promptings. These require us to think, to exercise faith, to work, to struggle at times, and to act. Seldom does the whole answer to a decisively important matter or complex problem come all at once. More often, it comes a piece at a time, without the end in sight.

### **Express gratitude in prayer**

I have saved the most important part about prayer until the end. It is gratitude! Our sincere efforts to thank our beloved Father generate wondrous feelings of peace, self-worth, and love. No matter how challenging our circumstances, honest appreciation fills our mind to overflowing with gratitude.

Why is it that the most impoverished seem to know best how to thank the Lord? In the highlands of Guatemala, members barely subsist. Going to the temple requires *great* sacrifice. A visit takes a year of preparation. There is hard work, sacrifice to save money and food, the spinning, dyeing, and weaving of new clothing. There is the long, barefoot walk out of the mountains, the crossing of Lake Isabel, the bus rides with little food. Tired and worn, they arrive at the temple. They scrub until they shine, dress in their new clothing, and enter the house of the Lord.

Reclothed in white, they are taught by the Spirit, receive ordinances, and make covenants. One highland woman was greatly touched by the spirit and

meaning of the endowment. Entering the celestial room, she saw others seated, with heads reverently bowed. Innocently, she knelt at the entrance to the room, oblivious to others. She bowed her head, sobbed, and for twenty minutes poured out her heart to her Father in Heaven. Finally, with her dress soaked with tears, she raised her head. The sensitive temple matron asked, "May I help?" She responded, "Oh, would you? This is my problem: I've tried to tell Father in Heaven of my gratitude for all of my blessings, but I don't feel that I've communicated. Will you help me tell Him how grateful I am?"

### **Trust God and be clean**

The counsel about prayer is true. I have tested it thoroughly in the laboratory

of my own personal life. I have discovered that what sometimes seems an impenetrable barrier to communication is a giant step to be taken in trust.

If you seek His help, be sure your life is clean, your motives are worthy, and you're willing to do what He asks — for He *will* answer your prayers. He is your loving Father; you are His beloved child. He loves you perfectly and wants to help you.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Monson**

We have just heard from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker for this session.

## **Elder M. Russell Ballard**

### **Sorrow for deaths of missionaries**

My brothers and sisters, since April's general conference, some of our missionaries have found themselves in increasingly more difficult circumstances. As the adviser to the South America North Area Presidency, I was saddened, as I know you were, at the news that two faithful missionaries, Elder Todd Ray Wilson and Elder Jeffrey Brent Ball, lost their lives in Bolivia. The deaths of these two righteous young men while they were in the service of the Lord caused the entire Church membership to mourn. We grieve also for other missionaries who have died from illness or accident since the first of the year.

Our sorrow at the loss of any faithful missionary can be tempered by this declaration from the Lord himself: "And whoso layeth down his life in my cause, for my name's sake, shall find it again, even life eternal" (D&C 98:13). To all parents, family members, and friends of missionaries who have lost their lives while in the service of the Master, we

extend to you our love, gratitude, and prayers for comfort and peace.

### **President Stephen Wright's dream**

With the permission of President Steven B. Wright of the Bolivia La Paz Mission, I share this special experience that came to him in a dream: "I saw these two elders dressed in white, standing at the doors of a beautiful building. They were greeting numerous people, who also were dressed in white as they entered the building. It was obvious from their dress that those who entered were Bolivians. I envisioned the temple that will someday be built in Bolivia. Elders Wilson and Ball were ushering those they had prepared to receive the gospel in the spirit world into the temple to witness the vicarious ordinances being performed in their behalf. This dream has been a great comfort to me and has helped me to understand and accept their deaths."

This glimpse by President Wright of the work of redemption beyond mortality is consistent with the heavenly vision

given to President Joseph F. Smith more than seven decades ago. He declared, "I beheld that the faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel . . . in the great world of the spirits" (D&C 138:57).

### "By Him shall we remain"

Trials and tribulations have confronted the Church ever since the beginning. The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "Hell may pour forth its rage like the burning lava of Mount Vesuvius, or of Etna, or of the most terrible of the burning mountains; and yet shall 'Mormonism' stand. Water, fire, truth and God are all realities. Truth is 'Mormonism.' God is the author of it. He is our shield. It is by Him we received our birth. It was by His voice that we were called to a dispensation of His Gospel in the beginning of the fullness of times. It was by Him we received the Book of Mormon; and it is by Him that we remain unto this day; and by Him we shall remain, if it shall be for our glory; and in His Almighty name we are determined to endure tribulation as good soldiers unto the end" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 139).

So far this year, more than thirty-seven thousand faithful missionaries have been instrumental in bringing tens of thousands of people to a knowledge of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. These new members have experienced a mighty change in their hearts and have "humbled themselves and put their trust in the true and living God" (Alma 5:13).

### Risks of missionary service

Our missionaries have not participated in this great work without serious challenges, tribulations, and difficulties. Parents of missionaries have always known the risk of losing a loved one serving in the mission field due to accident or illness. Now, we must add to the risk of missionary service the possibility of acts

of terrorism. Terrorism is centuries old but perhaps has never before been so open and blatant nor had such extensive news coverage.

Terrorism has many victims. They include the innocent and law-abiding people who are residing in a troubled region and are striving to provide for their families and to do what is right. Missionaries live among the peoples of the world; and even with the protection of the members, they also can become innocent victims of acts of violence. We must not judge the people of any nation or region because of the irresponsible, cowardly acts of terrorism perpetrated by a few.

Sometimes terrorists attack Church members or Church property because they believe, mistakenly, that the Church represents the interests of a country. Contrary to such misguided beliefs, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has no past or present affiliation with any government agency of any country, including the United States of America. In genuine Christian kindness and loving concern, missionaries and other Church members offer to all sincere and law-abiding peoples nothing more or less than the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Sad experience has taught us that not all people accept these assurances of fact. Therefore, leaders and members must be prepared for any event that may occur in the future.

### Low death rate among missionaries

The increased visibility of the Church in the world brings a variety of new challenges. However, you parents and prospective missionaries have *no* reason to be fearful and to feel that serving a mission is unusually dangerous or risky. Our records since 1981 reveal that the total number of missionaries who have lost their lives through accident, illness, or other causes is very small. The life-style of Latter-day Saint missionaries before and during their missions contributes to their health and safety. For example, the death rate of young male missionaries from the United States serving worldwide is one-fifth the rate of young males of

comparable age living in Utah. It is one-seventh the rate of young males of comparable age in the general population of the United States. I do not imply that missionary service is a guarantee of increased longevity, but missionaries obviously have a much lower risk of death than others of comparable age.

### Efforts to ensure safety

The Church is making great efforts to safeguard the health and safety of missionaries by decreasing the likelihood of illness and accident. In the past year, a highly qualified team of LDS doctors visited many of the missions in developing nations and made important recommendations that have been adopted to improve missionary health. We are doing and will continue to do all within our power to reduce any risks that could harm the missionaries. However, in a world of free agency, the Church cannot eliminate all risk nor guarantee absolutely that a missionary never will be ill, injured, or harmed.

The Missionary Department employs six former mission presidents who are on 24-hour-a-day call to serve mission presidents and their missionaries. They respond immediately with the resources of the Church to ensure the well-being of missionaries and their families.

When a problem occurs, such as the recent unrest in Colombia, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve, through the able leadership of the General Authority Area Presidencies, monitor conditions daily and even hourly, if necessary.

Be assured that the safety and protection of missionaries always is a paramount concern. At the same time, however, the Church cannot retreat from areas of the world that are in turmoil unless absolutely necessary. Brothers and sisters, the charge from the Lord to "go ye therefore, and teach all nations" is a difficult one to fulfill (Matthew 28:19).

### Battle fought with faith and love

The battle to bring souls unto Christ began in the premortal world with the war

in heaven (see Revelation 12:7). That same battle continues today in the conflict between right and wrong and between the gospel and false principles. The members of the Church hold a front-line position in the contest for the souls of men. The missionaries are on the battlefield fighting with the sword of truth to carry the glorious message of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the peoples of the earth. No war has ever been free of risk. The prophecies of the last days lead me to believe that the intensity of the battle for the souls of men will increase and the risks will become greater as we draw closer to the second coming of the Lord.

Preparing ourselves and our families for the challenges of the coming years will require us to replace fear with faith. We must be able to overcome the fear of enemies who oppose and threaten us. The Lord has said, "Fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail" (D&C 6:34).

When I visited the missionaries in Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador immediately after the tragedy, I was extremely impressed with the deep love our missionaries feel for the people they are called to teach. Their intense desire to continue serving the precious people of their mission is beyond description. Sometimes parents and family members understandably voice worry, anxiety, or even feel alarm about the safety of their missionary sons or daughters, but rarely, if ever, do we hear the missionaries express such concerns. They love and care deeply about the people they are serving, and generally they want to continue in the service of the Lord. These dedicated missionaries illustrate so powerfully for the rest of us that "there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18).

In many ways, brothers and sisters, the past sixty years in the Church have been relatively calm, compared to the beginnings of the Restoration. Persecutions and tribulations have been minimal. Perhaps some of these recent events are a

toughening process to help us learn how to shoulder and not shrink from our responsibilities to preach the gospel to all the peoples of the earth.

We parents need to begin early to prepare our children to have a strong, fervent testimony of the gospel. We must possess the faith, the courage, and the commitment that our pioneer forefathers had if we are to continue building up the kingdom of God on the earth.

Remember also that membership in the Church requires an understanding of the principle of sacrifice in the service of the Lord. The Prophet Joseph Smith put it this way: "When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, . . . he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life" (*Lectures on Faith*, comp. N. B. Lundwall [Salt Lake City: N. B. Lundwall, n.d.], 6:7).

### We must continue moving forward

You remember what the Prophet Joseph wrote to Mr. John Wentworth, the editor of the *Chicago Democrat* newspaper: "The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

The Lord has not yet said the work is done, so we must continue moving forward. It is good to know that during the four years that President Ezra Taft Benson has presided over the Church, more than eighty thousand missionaries

have been set apart to proclaim the glad tidings of the Restoration.

The work will continue to grow and prosper throughout the world. In recent years the Lord's servants have unlocked the door and opened the work in the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. They have opened many nations of Africa, including Nigeria, Ghana, Zaire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Ivory Coast, and Namibia; they have also opened Papua New Guinea. Thirteen nations and territories have been opened for missionary work in just the past four years. Many others will be opened to the preaching of the gospel. Truly, no unhallowed hand can stop the sacred work of proclaiming life and salvation to all nations and peoples, but this work will not continue without challenges and risks.

The work of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world will require knowledge, faith, sacrifice, and the best efforts of every member of the Church. As the Prophet Joseph Smith said to the Saints in Nauvoo in 1842, "Shall we not go on in so great a cause? . . . Courage, . . . and on, on to the victory!" (D&C 128:22). Today the leaders of the Church echo these words of the Prophet Joseph.

Brothers and sisters, the missionaries need our faith and prayers. Pray fervently every day for their safety and protection, for this is one very important way we all can support them in accomplishing their essential assignment of proclaiming the gospel to all the world. I bear testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We are engaged in his work. I testify that through the faith and prayers of all members of the Church, we will continue moving this great work forward to the final victory. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.



We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting that will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M. mountain daylight time.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast and the Sunday morning session, which immediately follows, must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

We express gratitude to this Polynesian choir from the Salt Lake Valley for

the beautiful music we have heard this afternoon. This wonderful choir composed of sons and daughters of Father Lehi will now sing in closing, "Come, O Thou King of Kings." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Helio R. Camargo of the Seventy.

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The choir sang "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

Elder Helio R. Camargo offered the benediction.

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## GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, September 30, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus. The choir was directed by Robert Bowden and Donald Ripplinger, and John Longhurst was at the organ.

President Hinckley opened the meeting with the following remarks:

### President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this general priesthood session. We extend our love and best wishes to all of the brethren who are participating.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the BYU Marriott Center, and locations in many countries around the world. We note that Elders Boyd K. Packer, Robert E. Sackley, and Richard P. Lindsay are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders George I. Cannon and Albert Choules, Jr.,

are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the session this afternoon the following members of the First Quorum of the Seventy were given emeritus status: Elders Theodore M. Burton, Robert L. Simpson, Victor L. Brown, Paul H. Dunn, J. Thomas Fyans, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Royden G. Derrick, and Rex C. Reeve.

Elders Wm. Grant Bangerter and Hugh W. Pinnock were released as members of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy. Elders Rex D. Pinegar and Carlos E. Asay were sustained as Presidents of the Quorums of the Seventy.

The following members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, who have served for five years, were honorably released: Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, and Keith W. Wilcox.

Elders Hugh W. Pinnock, Derek A. Cuthbert, and Ted E. Brewerton were sustained as the Sunday School General Presidency, and Elders Jeffrey R. Holland and Monte J. Brough were called as Counselors in the Young Men General Presidency.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a combined men's choir

from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brothers Robert Bowden and Donald Ripplinger, with John Longhurst at the organ.

We shall begin by the choir singing "Saints, Behold How Great Jehovah." Following the singing, Elder Robert E. Wells of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

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The choir sang "Saints, Behold How Great Jehovah."

Elder Robert E. Wells offered the invocation.

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### President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with "Secret Prayer." Following the choir number, Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve will speak to us.

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The choir sang "Secret Prayer."

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## Elder Marvin J. Ashton

### Finishing the job

Many years ago I had the opportunity of witnessing a state championship high school track meet at Brigham Young University. The lesson I learned as I watched the mile run was most impressive. I know I shall never forget it. About a dozen young men had qualified to represent their schools. The starting gun was fired, and these young men who had trained so long and so hard took off. Four fellows, closely bunched together, took the early lead. Suddenly the runner in second place spiked the first runner's foot with his shoe. As the leader was about to make the next stride forward, he found that he was without a shoe.

As I noticed this, I wondered what the leader would do because of what his competitor had unintentionally done to him. It seemed to me he had a number of choices. He could take a few extra quick sprints and catch up to the fellow who had put him out of first position, double up his fist, and hit him to get even. He could run over to the coach and say, "This is what you get—I have trained all my life for this big day, and now look what's happened!" He could run off into the stands and say to his mother, father, or girlfriend, "Isn't this horrible?" Or he could sit down on the track and cry. But

to my pleasure, he did none of these things. He just kept running.

This was halfway around the first lap, and I thought to myself, "Good for him; he'll finish this first lap of the four and retire gracefully." But after he had completed the first lap, he just kept running. He completed the second lap, then the third lap—and every time he took a stride, cinders were coming up through his stocking, hurting his foot. They ran on cinder tracks in those days. But he didn't quit. He just kept running.

I thought, "What an outstanding display of courage and self-discipline! What parents! What a coach! What leaders who have affected his life enough so that in a situation like this he would not stop running!" He finished the job he had to do. He did not place first, but he was a real winner. When I walked over to him at the completion of the race and congratulated him on his courageous performance, he was composed and in complete control. He was able to carry on when it would have been much easier to quit.

### Carry on

Just before our esteemed, honored Apostle and special friend of Aaronic Priesthood and their leaders worldwide,

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, passed away nearly 4½ years ago, with his sweetheart and eternal companion, Amelia, at his bedside, some very significant words were shared. As Sister McConkie held his hand during his final earthly minutes, she asked, "Bruce, do you have a message for me?" Though weak and expiring, he responded in a firm voice his last words, "Carry on."

Here was one of God's choicest servants, who had studied, pondered, and written as extensively on the life and mission of Jesus Christ as anyone else in his time, using these two powerful words for direction and encouragement. Sister McConkie has since shared with me the great importance and strength of "carry on" as time has passed. Elder McConkie knew as a special witness the importance of, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Salvation and exaltation are here emphasized as being based primarily upon commitment and enduring.

### To endure joyfully

Enduring, or carrying on, is not just a matter of tolerating circumstances and hanging in there, but of pressing forward. I know that's what most of us find difficult — to endure joyfully.

One weekend I had the opportunity of attending a stake quarterly conference in Idaho. As a group of Primary children stood before the congregation and sang "I Am a Child of God," I noticed three young Primary members on the front row singing but saying nothing vocally. They were deaf; they sang with their hands. No one heard them audibly, but we received their message. They touched my spirit deeply, and it was my privilege to tell them in front of the members of that stake that our Heavenly Father heard them. Even though vocally they had said nothing, they transmitted a memorable message. In moving silence they taught of the spirit, they taught of the mind, and they

taught of the heart. They had not given up singing just because they had no voice. They had been taught to carry on.

Let me now share with you the text of the song "Carry On."

Firm as the mountains around us,  
Stalwart and brave we stand  
On the rock our fathers planted  
For us in this goodly land —  
The rock of honor and virtue,  
Of faith in the living God.  
They raised his banner triumphant —  
Over the desert sod.  
And we hear the desert singing:  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!  
Hills and vales and mountains  
ringing:  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!  
Holding aloft our colors,  
We march in the glorious dawn.  
O youth of the noble birthright,  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!

We'll build on the rock they planted  
A palace to the King.  
Into its shining corridors,  
Our songs of praise we'll bring,  
For the heritage they left us,  
Not of gold or of worldly wealth,  
But a blessing everlasting  
Of love and joy and health.  
And we hear the desert singing:  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!  
Hills and vales and mountains  
ringing:  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!  
Holding aloft our colors,  
We march in the glorious dawn.  
O youth of the noble birthright,  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!  
(*Hymns*, no. 255.)

Fifty-nine years ago, when this beautiful number, "Carry On," was first shared with the Church in general, to say that it was timely is an understatement. Today it should be a way of life, our top priority and clarion call for young and old. Young people, boys and girls, and leaders worldwide, I encourage you to carry on. Do not give up, falter, or become weary. Do not yield to the ways of the world that can bring only unhappiness and discouragement. I love and respect

young people who stand firm when outside influences would make it easy for them to fail or fall.

### **Youth of the Church are pioneers**

I thank God continually for the young men and young women of this generation. I firmly believe that the finest young people that have ever lived in the history of the entire Church are with us today. The great majority are pioneers on the move in righteousness and truth. Most of our youth are true to the faith despite conditions of the day and are avoiding the temptations and subtleties of misconduct that tempt them on every hand. What a joy it is to reflect upon the fact that we have more young men and young women than ever before serving in the mission field today—young people who have great commitment and are enjoying unusual success.

As we have experienced harassment, destruction, vandalism, and even the loss of lives, the attitude of our missionaries is not one of being afraid but of marching forward in a spirit of "carry on." Few, if any, have asked for releases or transfers as the winds of fire, destruction, and danger have blown in their paths. It is a joy to see them stand firm as the mountains around us. God will continue to help them carry on, and their work will not be thwarted but will be enhanced and fruitful.

### **Be true to your foreordained mission**

I share with you a statement that President Benson made to a gathering of youth in Southern California after he became President of the Church:

"For nearly six thousand years, God has held you in reserve to make your appearance in the final days before the Second Coming. Every previous gospel dispensation has drifted into apostasy, but ours will not. . . . God has saved for the final inning some of his strongest children, who will help bear off the kingdom triumphantly. And that is where you come in, for you are the generation that

must be prepared to meet your God. . . . Make no mistake about it—you are a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time as there is of us. . . . Each day we personally make many decisions that show where our support will go. The final outcome is certain—the forces of righteousness will finally win. What remains to be seen is where each of us personally, now and in the future, will stand in this fight—and how tall we will stand. Will we be true to our last-days, foreordained mission?"

### **Winning the victory**

A number of years ago Peter Snell of New Zealand was the best in the world in the one-mile race and the 880-yard race. I had the opportunity of meeting him in Wellington, New Zealand. Later on in the week someone said to me, "Would you like to see where Peter Snell does his training and his running?" I answered yes. I was shocked when I was taken down to the beach—not to a track, but to the beach. I asked, "Where does he run?" My friends said, "He runs out close to the water where the sand comes up over his feet. There it is difficult to pull his feet out of the sand after each stride." I had an idea why, but I said to my friends, "Why does he run there?" They answered, "When he gets on a track in competition, he feels like he's floating because he doesn't have to pull his feet up out of the wet sand."

In my mind I could see him running on that difficult track. I learned from him. A little later my friends took me to another place where Peter Snell trained, up in the mountains. When I looked for a track again, they said, "No, he runs up the steep hills. Then, when he is on the level at track meets, it is pretty easy to run." That is why he breaks records, and that is why I remember his example. They told me he ran every day regardless of the weather conditions or how tired he was.

I've always been very impressed with some of the statements Winston Churchill made as he served as prime

minister during England's darkest days of war. Among other things, he said the following:

"It is no use saying, 'We are doing our best.' You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary" (in *Reader's Digest*, July 1964, p. 247).

Also, "We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. . . ."

"You ask, what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war, by sea, land, and air, with all our might and with all our strength that God can give us. . . . That is our policy.

"You ask, What is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all the terror; victory, however long and hard the road may be" (quoted by Louis L. Snyder, *The War: A Concise History, 1939-1945* [New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1961], p. 89).

Young people, bearers of the priesthood, God wants us to be victorious. He wants you to triumph over all of your foes. Stalwart and brave we must stand. God is at the helm. There is no reason for defeat.

### **Stand strong in all circumstances**

It should be inspiring to all of us to constantly review and reread the message of the Prophet Joseph Smith given in Doctrine and Covenants, section 121, verses 7 and 8:

"My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

"And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes."

Here was God conveying to the noble prophet the importance of carrying

on under all circumstances and situations.

### **"Thy God shall stand by thee"**

We promise the youth of today with the same conviction the Lord shared with the Prophet Joseph in Doctrine and Covenants, section 122, verse 4, "Thy God shall stand by thee forever and ever." As we carry on today, this promise is in force and is everlasting.

I am proud that we have a President, even Ezra Taft Benson, who loves and encourages the youth of the noble birthright to work, carry on, and live close to God. The youth programs of the Church today are stronger because of his influence presently and over the past years.

Jesus is the Christ. He is our Redeemer, our Lord and Savior and friend. We constantly give thanks through deeds and prayer for his unmatched example of carrying on under circumstances that caused him to bleed from every pore and anguish in the misunderstanding and misconduct of his associates. Joy and happiness come through determination and the practice of carrying on under all conditions. May God help us to so do and reap the rewards in this present day, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

We have heard Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Robert L. Backman of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Benjamin B. Banks, who was sustained as a member of the Seventy at April conference.

## **Elder Robert L. Backman**

### **Chastity is not outdated**

One day I sat with a handsome, young, prospective missionary as he poured out his sad story through sobs of

sorrow, anguish, and remorse. I wanted to cry with him. Pressured by his so-called friends, he found himself at a party where liquor was served. Against every-

thing he knew to be right, he succumbed to the taunts and jeers of all those present, became drunk, and before the evening was over lost his virtue.

Unable to resist the peer pressure he faced, his resolution to stay chaste being dissipated by the circumstances he found himself in, he had seen his lifelong dream of a mission and a temple marriage change to a nightmare — and now he felt ashamed, unclean, unworthy.

“Have I forfeited my opportunity for a mission, for marriage in the temple?” he asked. “How can my Father in Heaven forgive me for what I have done? I wish the earth would open up and swallow me!” My heart ached for him.

Almost overriding my sympathy for him was the anger I felt toward those who had led him down that “primrose path,” seemingly oblivious to the pain they had caused, listening to Satan’s siren song that chastity is outdated.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery,” Jehovah commanded, “and he that committeth adultery, and repenteth not, shall be cast out” (D&C 42:24).

My beloved young brethren, despite what the world would have us believe, God has never changed that law.

### Immorality brings punishments

The First Presidency of the Church, in another time of moral crisis, declared:

“To the youth of the Church we . . . plead with you to live clean, for the unclean life leads only to suffering, misery, and woe physically, — and spiritually it is the path to destruction. How glorious and near to the angels is youth that is clean. . . . Sexual purity is youth’s most precious possession; it is the foundation of all righteousness. . . .

“Times approach when we shall need all the health, strength, and spiritual power we can get to bear the afflictions that will come upon us” (in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75], 6:150).

“You youths of Zion, you cannot associate in non-marital, illicit sex relationships, which is fornication, and escape the punishments and the judgments which the Lord has declared against this sin. The day of reckoning will come just as certainly as night follows day” (in *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6:176).

The full force of his actions was obvious to my tearful friend, who understood, at last, the reality of Alma’s words, “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10).

### Cleanliness leads to eternal life

As I shared those sad moments with that sorrowing young man, I could not help contrasting his feelings with those of another whose sealing I had performed in the house of the Lord.

There, in the presence of their families, the happy couple expressed their joy at the solemn covenants they had made with God and with each other as they knelt at that sacred altar, looking into each other’s souls with complete trust and confidence, approaching their marriage clean and worthy of the celestial blessings pronounced on their heads.

Their happiness was unrestrained.

My beloved Aaronic Priesthood brethren, with all you are learning as you progress toward virile manhood, I pray that you will get understanding of the vital truth that chastity is the ultimate and perfect standard underlying all spiritual progression.

Righteousness is happiness.

The Lord has declared, “And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end” (3 Nephi 27:19).

I challenge you to be *clean*, be *worthy*, be *strong*, be *happy*! How? What can you do to withstand “the fiery darts of the wicked [one]” (D&C 27:17), to resist temptation and walk uprightly before the Lord?

## Be patient

First, be patient. Don't be too anxious to grow up. Bask in the pleasure of anticipating what it will be like to be an adult. Remember, you are only young once, and you are going to be old for a long time.

Our impatience often causes us to flirt with the forbidden, forgetting the consequences of our foolish experimenting. President Harold B. Lee painted a vivid picture of the pain suffered through flirting, then succumbing to temptation:

"I've seen beautiful young human butterflies playing with the tempting fires of sin. . . .

"Many of these beautiful human butterflies winged for heavenly flight have fallen with wings singed and badly seared because of their curiosity about the forbidden. The more I see of life, the more I am convinced that we must impress you young people with the awfulness of sin rather than to content ourselves with merely teaching the way of repentance. I wish that someone could warn you of the night of hell that follows the committing of a moral sin . . . , as one who has sinned has described it in these words: 'No one knew anything about it. You told no one, and no one found out, no one condemned. But your face flushed, your heart beat against your ribs. Perspiration broke out upon your brow. You went to bed that night, you tied a bandage around the eyes of your soul, you built a little shelter in which to hide, you tried to sleep, but no sleep came. You said to yourself, "Other people do it," or "I had to do it," or "No one else can ever find it out." But there were hands from the unseen world that came through the darkness and tore the bandage from the eyes of the soul, and smashed down the little shelter you had made for your cowering spirit'" (*Youth and the Church* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1970], pp. 87-88).

My young friends, please be patient.

## Focus on your eternal destiny

Second, focus on your eternal destiny. The Lord has promised the faithful, "All that my Father hath shall be given

unto him" (D&C 84:38). Think what that means to you as a son of God.

Brethren, set limits to your actions — bounds you will not pass — far from the line which separates good from evil. Be prepared for the experiences that lie ahead. Plan in advance how you will face temptations — weigh the consequences, now and forever. Be sure you understand the situation confronting you. If someone, perhaps a friend, asks you to do something you are not sure about, restate what he has said, "You want me to do what?"

Next, ask yourself, "Will doing what my friend says break my rules, or the law, or hurt someone I respect or love, or make someone distrust me?" Then look at both sides of the question. What good things will happen if you do this, and what bad things will happen? Now that you have assessed all the results, you are prepared to make a decision. If everything is positive, you will probably want to go along with your friend; if not, you have the responsibility to say No. (Adapted from John W. Larsen, *Youth's Frontier, Making Ethical Decisions* [Irving, Texas: Boy Scouts of America, 1985] p. 14.)

Get tough with yourself. President Spencer W. Kimball gave us a powerful example in a talk to the youth of Stockholm, Sweden. Describing his own boyhood, he said:

"As I was out alone, milking the cows, or putting up the hay, I had time to think. I mulled it over in my mind and made this decision: 'I, Spencer Kimball, will never taste any form of liquor. I, Spencer Kimball, will never touch tobacco. I will never drink coffee, nor will I ever touch tea — not because I can explain why I shouldn't, except that the Lord said not to.' He said those things were an abomination. There are many other things that are, too, that are not in the Word of Wisdom. But I made up my mind.

"That's the point I am trying to make. I made up my mind then, as a little boy: 'I will never touch those things.' And so, having made up my mind, it was easy to follow it, and I did not yield.

There were many temptations that came along, but I did not even analyze it; I did not stop and measure it and say, 'Well, shall I or shall I not?' I always said to myself: 'But I made up my mind I would not. Therefore, I do not.'

"I'm a little older than any of you here tonight, and I want to just say that I will soon go into another year and that I have never tasted tea, nor coffee, nor tobacco, nor liquor of any kind, nor drugs. Now that may sound very presumptuous and boasting to you, but I am only trying to make this point: that if every boy and girl—as he or she begins to grow a little more mature and becomes a little more independent of his friends and his family and all—if every boy and girl would make up his or her mind, 'I will not yield,' then no matter what the temptation is: 'I made up my mind. That's settled.'" (in Conference Report, Stockholm Sweden Area Conference 1975, pp. 86–87).

### Stand by your convictions

Third, stand by your convictions. Take control of your life. It is *your* body—the clothing of *your* spirit—you are dealing with. Don't become a slave to your appetites or passions. Be mature enough to have your spirit control your body. Self-control is vital when you are resisting what you know is wrong, especially when a friend insists. This self-control comes with practice, so it's important to build your inner strength. Constantly remind yourself that you are a son of God with great things to do.

Winston Churchill, that courageous World War II statesman, gave sound advice to all of us. He thundered his conviction: "Never give in, never give in, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense" (in John Bartlett, comp., *Familiar Quotations*, 15th ed. [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1980], p. 745).

### Repent of your mistakes

Fourth, repent. Some of us are held back in our development by mistakes

we have made, sins we have committed, regrets that we let weigh on our consciences until they burden us down to the breaking point.

In the comic strip *Peanuts*, Charlie Brown told Lucy about his New Year's resolutions. He said, "You're going to be proud of me, Lucy. . . . I've decided that this next year is going to be my year of decision! This is a list of things in my life that I'm going to correct. . . . I'm going to be a better person!"

Lucy's reply was, "Not me. . . . I'm going to spend this whole year regretting the past. . . . It's the only way, Charlie Brown. . . . I'm going to cry over spilled milk, and sigh over lost loves. . . . It's a lot easier. . . . It's too hard to improve. . . . I tried it once. . . . It drove me crazy. . . . 'Forget the future' is my motto. . . . Regret the past! Oh, how I regret the past! Why did I do this? Why did I do that? Why? I regret it all! Oh, what regrets! What remorse! What anguish! What . . ." Charlie Brown sighs and throws away his resolutions. (Ellipses in the original.)

Our loving Father in Heaven is only interested in what you are going to do with your future, conditioned on your repentance from your past sins. Coming back to the questions posed by my distraught young friend and to those of you who may have transgressed as he did, I assure you that you are still dearly loved by your Father in Heaven and by the Lord's church. The second principle of the gospel is repentance, that beautiful saving principle without which all of us imperfect people would be lost. The Lord has made the promise, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

Isn't that a glorious promise? And it is conditioned only on your repentance. Though the roadway may be long and difficult, though the pain and sorrow may be acute, though the Church may have to take loving action to balance justice and mercy, the repentance process can cleanse your soul, and you can walk in the light of the Holy Spirit again—the transgression forgiven, the soul purified and sanctified.



You know the steps! Don't delay. Forget the past — except to use it to build a better life. Begin now to be worthy of the eternal blessings God has promised the faithful and the true.

My precious young brothers, may you understand that chastity is the source

of virile manhood, the crown of beautiful womanhood, the foundation of a happy home, and the ultimate and perfect standard underlying all spiritual progression. May we who have been called be worthy to be chosen, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.

## Elder Benjamin B. Banks

### To prospective missionaries

I would like to address my remarks this evening to you young men of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods who are planning on or contemplating serving a mission, and to those young men of the Aaronic or Melchizedek priesthoods who perhaps might be struggling as to whether or not they want to serve a mission.

### Preparing for a bicycle trip

I would like to share with you the following story. Nine years ago this spring, my son Ben came to me and said, "Dad, we are going to hold our family reunion this summer at Flaming Gorge recreation area" (a distance of 220 miles east of Salt Lake City). "Why don't you, myself, and any of the boys in our family that would like to leave a few days early, ride our bikes to Flaming Gorge, and meet the rest of the family there?"

I said, "That sounds great, but we have only one motorcycle!"

Ben said, "No, Dad, you misunderstand. I mean pedal bicycles." I thought he was kidding. He said, "I will outline and prepare a training schedule for us. We'll get up early Saturday mornings and for three hours we'll go out and ride over the courses I will outline, so that when the time comes we will be prepared to go."

I said, "Okay," not really knowing what I was in for. I didn't own a bicycle and knew I would have to use my daughter's old, heavy, ten-speed bicycle with what seemed like bent wheels and a seat that was terribly hard. I also knew that

getting up early on Saturday mornings was not one of my favorite things. But knowing that some of my sons wanted me to go with them, I said, "Okay."

As the time for training and preparation came, I found all kinds of excuses not to go on the training rides. However, one Saturday I rode with them to the top of Parleys Canyon and back. It was hard, but I thought I would be okay. Little did I know!

The time for the trip came. I joined my boys the second day of the trip, as I had meetings the first day. The journey that second day took us from Heber City to Roosevelt (approximately one hundred miles).

As we checked into the motel that evening, I called my wife at home and told her I had never hurt so badly in my life. Every muscle, bone, and fiber in my body hurt from my head to my feet. I implored her, "When you come tomorrow with the rest of the family, please bring all the ointment and lotion you can find."

She said, "Honey, you sound terrible."

I told her, "I look and feel worse than I sound."

The next day I hated to see the dawn come, knowing what it would be like to sit on that hard seat and pedal all day once again to reach our destination — especially the stretch from Vernal to Flaming Gorge, which would include approximately thirty-six-plus miles with grades up to 9 percent and ninety-degree-plus temperatures. Needless to say, for me the whole trip was a very trying and arduous task. But for my sons, who spent a lot of

time waiting at the top of the hills for their slow, unprepared dad, it was exciting, fun, and rewarding.

That evening as we arrived at our destination, I came to an easy, yet profound recognition of how poorly prepared I was for what should have been a great experience with my sons, but was not because I did not take the time to prepare properly. I resolved that night that I would never again be that unprepared. I went home and bought bicycles for myself and my two youngest sons, and started training and preparing so that by the time the next summer came, my sons and I could ride our bikes to Lake Powell, a distance of three hundred miles, which we did. The next year we cycled to St. George, and every year thereafter we rode our bikes to Lake Powell until our mission call to Scotland two years ago.

### Preparing for a mission

If it is important to prepare for a bike ride, my young friends, it is much more important for you in this life to prepare to serve as missionaries. Why? Because of the eternal significance of a mission in your life and in the lives of others. We learn of the responsibility we have to preach the gospel when Jesus said: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). Paul to the Corinthians counseled, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16).

I plead with you, my young friends, to never be "ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 1:16). Prepare yourselves and make yourselves worthy to receive a mission call. Live clean, pure lives. Study the scriptures — not just read, but study the scriptures — especially the Book of Mormon, as President Benson has counseled us to do. Be strong enough to live the Word of Wisdom and follow the counsel of your parents and priesthood leaders.

### Blessings of missionary service

I know you young men are growing up in a challenging world with all kinds of peer pressure. You may even be struggling with the decision of going on a mission because of your educational and vocational desires, or because of a budding musical or athletic career, or a serious girlfriend you may find hard to leave. I understand, because I have seven sons, as well as a son-in-law, who have had to make similar decisions. Yet each has made that decision to serve.

If you wonder or struggle as to what will be of most worth to you, listen to the direction given by the Lord:

"For many times you have desired of me to know that which would be of the most worth unto you. . . .

"And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father" (D&C 15:4, 6).

I promise you young men that if you will commit and prepare to serve a mission, it will be the most rewarding and exciting experience of your lives. Yes, there will be many and varied experiences — yes, even humorous experiences, like the elder who shared with me how he and his companion got on the bus, and as they sat down, in the seat in front of them was a grandfather with a young grandson who was having a temper tantrum. Missionaries being as ingenious as they are, these two elders decided they would see what they could do to quiet the little boy down and help the grandfather.

The boy had a baseball cap on. The elders proceeded to take the cap off his head and made a gesture like they threw it out of the window, but instead they quickly hid it under their seat. They then told the boy, as he felt his head, that if he wished hard enough he could wish it back on his head. The boy looked at his grandpa, wondering what was going on, and as he did the elders quickly put the cap back on his head. The boy immediately felt the cap on his head, took it off,

looked at it again, and then he proceeded to throw it out the window, saying, "Do it again, Grandpa!" I think the elders got off at the next stop.

### **Blessing others with the gospel**

Yes, you may have many humorous experiences on your mission, but those experiences which will be the most joyful and rewarding to you, and which will be with you throughout eternity, will be the times when the Spirit will work through you to touch the lives of others, such as Sister Ciardo from Sardinia, Italy, who joined the Church and came to Scotland on a mission. As Sister Ciardo left for her mission, her mother would hardly speak to her and her father said she would never be welcome back home again. But the faith of this young lady brought forth a miracle.

Approximately a year after Sister Ciardo had been on her mission, she came to see me one day with tears running down her face. She had a letter in hand from her mother. I, too, had tears come to my eyes as I read the letter telling her daughter she had been baptized and that her father was attending church and was going to listen to the discussions.

I think of a Tony Ridden and a Tracy McFall from Scotland who were baptized a couple of years ago, coming from backgrounds that you would never have thought this possible. Yet both stood and spoke just a few months ago at their own missionary farewells with tears in their eyes, expressing love and gratitude for the elders who brought the gospel into their lives.

### **"The worth of souls is great"**

Just how important is a Sister Ciardo, a Tony Ridden, a Tracy McFall, and many others just like them? The Lord gives us the answer to that question:

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

"For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; where-

fore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. . . .

"Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!" (D&C 18:10-11, 14-15).

### **The angels will rejoice over you**

O youth of noble birthright, I bear witness to you this night that if you will commit, prepare, and with a willing heart go forth to serve Jesus Christ and preach his gospel, great will be your blessings and reward. Listen to the words of our Savior:

"Ye are blessed, for the testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you, and your sins are forgiven you" (D&C 62:3).

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9).

Stay on the Lord's side and you will find eternal joy and fulfillment. I bear my witness to you that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This is His church. President Ezra Taft Benson is our living prophet, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

We have appreciated listening to Elders Robert L. Backman and Benjamin B. Banks of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Israel, Israel, God Is Calling." Following that, Elder Joe J. Christensen, sustained at the April conference as a member of the Seventy, will speak to us.

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The choir and congregation sang "Israel, Israel, God Is Calling."

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## Elder Joe J. Christensen

### Good memories are real blessings

Brethren, it's a marvelous privilege to be with you this evening. I've appreciated so much the messages that we have heard.

Someone who was a little more poetic than theological said, "Memory is the one Garden of Eden out of which one need never be cast." Good memories are real blessings. Tonight I would like to share a few memories that have made a real difference in my life.

### Memory of a general priesthood session

When I was a young man about the age of some of you deacons here, my dad was bishop of the ward in our little farming town of Banida in southeastern Idaho. I remember the first time he brought me with him to Salt Lake City to attend a general priesthood meeting. In those years, Dad always seemed to me to be really old. As I recognize now, he must have been around thirty-eight years of age. I was happy to be with him.

I remember we sat in the balcony — there on the north side. Before the meeting started, Dad pointed out which one of the Brethren on the stand was President Heber J. Grant and which were his Counselors. I saw the Twelve Apostles and the other Brethren. And that night, a warm feeling of love and respect for the leaders of the Church came over me and has continued to grow to this day.

That night, I decided I wanted to do everything I could to support my dad as bishop. I didn't want to do anything that would embarrass or disappoint him. To this day, I am grateful for those feelings that came to me that night.

### Memory of a good friend

None of us knows how long we are going to live. In the Book of Mormon, Alma asked the question, "Can ye look up to God at that day with a pure heart and clean hands?" (Alma 5:19). I remember

when the need to have "clean hands, and a pure heart" (Psalm 24:4) became very meaningful to me.

It was just after my friend David Carlson and I had graduated from Preston High School. We were happy with the fact that it was the same school that Presidents Ezra Taft Benson and Harold B. Lee had attended when they were growing up. Even though they had changed the name from the Oneida Stake Academy to Preston High School, we still had some of our classes in the same building.

We thought that 1946 was the "golden year" of athletics at Preston High. That year our teams won the district championship in every sport, and in basketball our team won the state championship — and that was in the days when the small high schools played against the big ones.

David was a good friend to me and, I think, to everybody in the school. He was a fine student. He worked hard and received excellent grades. He achieved in Scouting and seminary and was a well-coordinated athlete. David was a member of the basketball team, and his playing was one of the reasons our team won the state championship.

Soon after high school graduation, David went to the hospital for what everyone thought was a routine operation, but there were some complications. Infection set in, and the next thing we heard was that he had died. We could not believe it. At age eighteen, David had died. What a shock! I still remember how painful it was to lose a good friend.

His funeral was held in the stake center. Everyone seemed to come. It was like a crowded stake conference with standing room only.

Bishop Eberhard included a statement in his remarks that made a powerful impression on me. He pointed over to the sacrament table and said, "When David knelt to bless the sacrament, I knew that he knelt there with 'clean hands and a pure heart.' I never had to worry about what he had been doing the Saturday night before."

I thought that was one of the finest compliments he could have paid to my friend, and I wanted to live in such a way that my bishop would not have to worry about what I had been doing the night before. I'm sure that all of us could benefit from making a similar decision.

### Memory of a determined missionary

Another memory taught me more about the value and importance of fulfilling a mission.

A few years ago, while serving as president of the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, I had a delightful visit with one of the missionaries who came into my office. He was obviously older than the average young elder. He was about twenty-five years of age. He told me of his conversion.

When he was sixteen, he was baptized into the Church in Europe along with his mother. His father did not object to his wife's and son's joining the Church, even though he was not interested. He was a banker and wanted his son to prepare himself for a profession in the same area.

The young man loved studying the scriptures, but occasionally had some difficulty when his father would interrupt him when he was studying his seminary course and say, "Don't waste your time studying those things. Study your regular school courses so that you can be accepted at the university."

The elder said, "One night later on, when I was about eighteen, I had a dream. I dreamed that I had been called on a mission to Japan. I felt so good about it. I really wanted to go. The next day, when I told my parents about my dream, my dad strongly objected. He said, "Oh, no! Don't waste two years of your life on a mission. You need to get on with your university studies."

Since he was too young to leave for a mission at that time anyway, he did go on with his university studies. He chose to come to Brigham Young University. He majored in finance and banking for his undergraduate degree and stayed to

complete a master's degree in business administration.

He was hired by an international banking firm in Germany and was doing very well as a promising junior executive, but the idea of filling a mission would not leave his mind, and so he went to visit with his bishop and stake president. When he told his stake president of the vivid dream he had years before about going on a mission to Japan, his stake president chuckled and said, "Well, I don't think you will be going to Japan. Missionaries from here generally are called to some other country on the continent, and a few go over to the British Isles."

When he received his call and his father heard of it, he came and tried to change his son's mind because he thought that a two-year interruption would be a disaster for his son's professional career. One of the bank executives came down from Frankfurt and tried to discourage him from leaving, saying something like, "My boy, do you know how much this will cost you in salary and opportunity loss? You ought to sit down and figure it out."

The elder said that he did that, and he had determined that the mission would cost him a very large amount of money—more than 150,000 dollars. Then tears came to his eyes, and he said, "But President, if it were to cost several times that amount, I would still be here, because I know that serving a mission is what the Lord wants me to do."

That elder was one of the few I remember who left the Missionary Training Center speaking what Japanese he had learned with a German accent. He was called to Japan. He served a successful mission, and I am confident that when he finished he found many international businesses that would like to hire a junior executive who can speak English, German, and Japanese—the major languages of the economic free world. Even if he didn't earn an extra cent, he still knew that he had done what the Lord wanted him to do.

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord revealed the scripture which we have already heard from Elder Banks this evening — “that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me” (D&C 15:6; 16:6).

Over the years we have been so impressed by the thousands of missionaries we have seen at the Missionary Training Center, at Ricks College, and elsewhere, who have demonstrated their willingness to serve their missions—and some of them, at great personal sacrifice.

### Make more good memories

Brethren, may it be that in our lives generally, and in our priesthood responsibilities specifically, we, like David, my good friend, will set the kind of example so that our bishops will not have to wonder or worry about what we have been doing the Saturday night before.

I am grateful for sons who still come with me to general priesthood sessions. You young brethren who are not with your fathers tonight, for whatever reason, can decide right now that when you are blessed with sons of your own, you will bring them to the general priesthood sessions wherever they may be broadcast.

## President Thomas S. Monson

### The service that counts

While driving to the office one morning, I passed a dry-cleaning establishment which had a sign by the side of the front door. It read, “It’s the Service That Counts.” I suppose in a highly competitive field such as the dry-cleaning business and many others, the factor which distinguishes one store from another is, in actual fact, service.

The message from the small sign simply would not leave my mind. Suddenly I realized why. In actual fact it *is* the service that counts—the Lord’s service.

As I look up into the balcony tonight, I see some of you young men who are seated with your fathers, and I remember—I remember that first time so long ago. Dad passed away four years ago, and especially at general priesthood session time I am reminded more forcefully of how much we miss him. May we strive never to do anything that would embarrass or disappoint our Father in Heaven or our parents, and it will help make more of our memories to be good ones, because good memories constitute the “one Garden of Eden out of which we need never be cast.”

Young brethren, we respect you. We have confidence that you will rise to the best that is in you, and we love you.

Our Heavenly Father lives. He also loves you and even knows you by name. Jesus is the Christ, and this is His church, led by the living prophets who are presiding at this general priesthood session. I share this testimony in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder Joe J. Christensen of the Seventy has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

All of us admire and respect that noble king of Book of Mormon fame—even King Benjamin. How respected he must have been for the people to gather in such great numbers to hear his words and receive his counsel. I think it most interesting that the multitude “pitched their tents round about the temple, every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple, that thereby they might remain in their tents and hear the words which king Benjamin should speak unto them” (Mosiah 2:6). Even a high tower had to be erected that the people might hear his words.

In the true humility of an inspired leader, King Benjamin recounted his desire to serve his people and lead them in paths of righteousness. He then declared to them:

“Because I said unto you that I had spent my days in your service, I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God.

“And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:16–17).

This is the service that counts, brethren—the service to which all of us have been called, the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As He enlists us to His cause, He invites us to draw close to Him. He speaks to you and to me:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

To all who go forth in His service, He provides this assurance: “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88).

### **Remember the worth of souls**

Many assembled tonight have responsibility to provide leadership to those holding the Aaronic Priesthood. To you I say, The finest teaching you can provide is that of a good example. Youth need fewer critics and more models to follow. All of us who are engaged in the Lord’s work have the responsibility to reach out to those who are less active and bring them to the service of the Lord. Their souls are ever so precious.

In a revelation to Joseph Smith the Prophet, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer, the Lord taught:

“Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

“For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. . . .

“And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!

“Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

“And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

“And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!” (D&C 18:10–11, 13–16).

Some years ago while I was attending a priesthood leadership session of the Monument Park West Stake conference, this scripture became the theme for the visitor from the Welfare Committee, my former stake president, Paul C. Child. In his accustomed style, Brother Child left the stand and began to walk down the aisle among the assembled priesthood brethren. He quoted the verse, “Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God” (D&C 18:10). Then he asked the question, “Who can tell me the worth of a human soul?”

Every man in attendance began to think of an answer in the event Brother Child were to call on him. I had grown up under his leadership, and I knew he would never call on a high councilor or a member of a bishopric; rather, he would select one who would least expect to be called. Sure enough, he called from a list he carried the name of an elders quorum president. Thunderstruck, the brother stammered as he asked, “Would you repeat the question, please?” The question was repeated, followed by an even longer pause. Suddenly the response came forth, “The worth of a human soul is its capacity to become as God.”

Brother Child closed his scripture, walked back to the pulpit, and while passing me whispered, “A profound reply; a profound reply.”

With this perspective firmly in our minds, we are prepared to serve in the great mission of bringing souls unto Him.

### Learn the joy of service

Many of you hold the Aaronic Priesthood. You are preparing to serve as missionaries. Begin now to learn in your youth the joy of service in the cause of the Master.

Following Thanksgiving time a year or so ago, I received a letter from a widow whom I had known in the stake where I served in the presidency. She had just returned from a dinner sponsored by her bishopric. Her words reflect the peace she felt and the gratitude which filled her heart:

"Dear President Monson,

"I am living in Bountiful now. I miss the people of our old stake, but let me tell you of a wonderful experience I have had. In early November all the widows and older people received an invitation to come to a lovely dinner. We were told not to worry about transportation since this would be provided by the older youth in the ward.

"At the appointed hour a very nice young man rang the bell and took me and another sister to the stake center. He stopped the car, and two other young men walked with us to the chapel where the young ladies took us to where we removed our wraps—then into the cultural hall, where we sat and visited for a few minutes. Then they took us to the tables, where we were seated on each side by either a young woman or a young man. Then we were served a lovely Thanksgiving dinner and afterward provided a choice program.

"After the program we were given our dessert—either apple or pumpkin pie. Then we left, and on the way out we were given a plastic bag with sliced turkey and two rolls. Then the young men took us home. It was such a nice, lovely evening. Most of us shed a tear or two for the love and respect we were shown.

"President Monson, when you see young people treat others like these young

people did, I feel the Church is in good hands."

I reflected on my association with this lovely widow, now grown old but ever serving the Lord. There came to mind the words from the Epistle of James: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

I add my own commendation: God bless the leaders, the young men, and the young women who so unselfishly brought such joy to the lonely and such peace to their souls. Through their experience they learned the meaning of service and felt the nearness of the Lord.

### Joseph Millett's experience

One of the great missionaries of pioneer times was Joseph Millett, who served a mission to the Maritime Provinces of Canada when but eighteen years of age. His mission was marked by discouragement, yet punctuated by faith-promoting experiences—even miraculous intervention by the Lord. This lifelong servant of the Lord, who learned on his mission, and never forgot, what it is like to be in need and how to give, leaves us with this final picture of himself, taken from his personal journal and using his own words:

"One of my children came in, said that Brother Newton Hall's folks were out of bread. Had none that day. I put . . . our flour in sack to send up to Brother Hall's. Just then Brother Hall came in. Says I, 'Brother Hall, how are you for flour?'

"'Brother Millett, we have none.'

"'Well, Brother Hall, there is some in that sack. I have divided and was going to send it to you. Your children told mine that you were out.'

"Brother Hall began to cry. Said he had tried others. Could not get any. Went to the cedars and prayed to the Lord and the Lord told him to go to Joseph Millett.

"'Well, Brother Hall, you needn't bring this back if the Lord sent you for it. You don't owe me for it.'"



His journal continued, "You can't tell how good it made me feel to know that the Lord knew that there was such a person as Joseph Millett" (in Eugene England, "Without Purse or Scrip: A 19-year-old Missionary in 1853," *New Era*, July 1975, p. 28).

### **The Lord knows and remembers us**

Brethren, the Lord knows each of us. Do you think for a moment that He who notes the sparrow's fall would not be mindful of our needs and our service? We simply cannot afford to attribute to the Son of God the same frailties which we find in ourselves.

A while back, my good friend G. Marion Hinckley from Utah County, my fellow trail rider, came to the office with two grandsons who were brothers, one having served an honorable mission in Japan and the other in Scotland. Brother Hinckley said, "Let me share with you a wonderful experience which came to these grandsons of mine." His buttons were almost bursting with pride.

In faraway Japan a commercial street photographer stopped one of the brothers, having taken a picture of him holding a small child. He offered the print for sale to the missionary and his companion. They explained that they were on a tight budget, that they were missionaries, and they directed the photographer's attention to their nameplates. They didn't purchase the picture.

Some months later, the brother serving in Scotland was asking two missionaries why they had arrived late for a zone meeting, when they told this story: A most persistent street photographer had attempted to sell them a picture of a missionary in Japan holding a small child. They had no interest in the picture, but to avoid arriving even later at their zone meeting, they purchased it.

"A likely story," responded Elder Lamb, whereupon they handed him the picture. He could not believe his eyes. It was a photograph of his own brother in faraway Japan.

That day in my office they presented to my view the two pictures, and with

their grandfather beaming his approval they declared, "The Lord surely is mindful of his servants the missionaries."

As they departed my office, I thought, Yes, the Lord is mindful of his missionaries—and their fathers, their mothers, their grandparents, and all who sacrifice for their support that precious souls may be taught and provided His gospel.

Now, many are not on the front line of missionary service in the Church calling them fill. Does God remember them also? Is He mindful of their needs and the yearnings of their hearts? What about those who have been in the limelight but have grown old with faithful service, have been released and have slipped into the anonymity of the vast congregation of Church members? To all such individuals I testify that He does remember and He does bless.

### **Clifton Rooker's service**

Many years ago I was assigned to divide the Modesto California Stake. The Saturday meetings had been held, the new stake presidencies selected, and preparations concluded for the announcements to be made the following morning in the Sunday session of conference.

As the Sunday session was about to begin, there went through my mind the thought that I had been in Modesto before. But when? I let my mind search back through the years for a confirmation of the thought I was thinking. Suddenly I remembered. Modesto, years before, had been a part of the San Joaquin Stake. The stake president was Clifton Rooker. I had stayed in his home during that conference. But that was many years earlier. Could my thoughts be playing tricks on my mind? I said to the stake presidency as they sat on the stand, "Is this the same stake over which Clifton Rooker once presided?"

The brethren answered, "Yes, it is. He was our former president."

"It's been many years since I was last here," I said. "Is Brother Rooker with us today?"

They responded, "Oh, yes. We saw him early this morning as he came to conference."

I asked, "Where is he seated on this day when the stake will be divided?"

"We don't know exactly," they replied. The response was a good one, for the building was filled to capacity.

I stepped to the pulpit and asked, "Is Clifton Rooker in the audience?" There he was—way back in the recreation hall, hardly in view of the pulpit. I felt the inspiration to say to him publicly, "Brother Rooker, we have a place for you on the stand. Would you please come forward?"

With every eye watching him, Clifton Rooker made that long walk from the rear of the building right up to the front and sat by my side. It became my opportunity to call upon him, one of the pioneers of that stake, to bear his testimony and to tell the people whom he loved that he was the actual beneficiary of the service he had rendered his Heavenly Father and which he had provided the stake members.

After the session was concluded, I said, "Brother Rooker, how would you like to step with me into the high council room and help me set apart the two new presidencies of these stakes?"

He replied, "That would be a high-light for me."

We proceeded to the high council room. There, with his hands joining my hands and the hands of the outgoing stake presidency, we set apart to their callings the two new stake presidencies. Brother Rooker and I embraced as he said goodbye and went to his home.

Early the next morning, after I had returned to my home, I had a telephone call from the son of Clifton Rooker. "Brother Monson," he said, "I'd like to tell you about my dad. He passed away this morning; but before he did so, he said that yesterday was the happiest day of his entire life."

As I heard that message from Brother Rooker's son, I paused to thank God for the inspiration which came to me to invite this good man, while he was yet alive, to come forward and receive the

plaudits of the stake members whom he had served.

### **"Ye have done it unto me"**

To all those who serve the Lord by serving their fellowmen, and to those who are the recipients of this selfless service, the Redeemer seems to be speaking to you when He declared:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

"And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

"Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

"When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?"

"Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:31-40).

That each of us may qualify for this blessing from our Lord is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us.

President Benson has felt that he would not speak tonight, but we convey

his love and blessing to brethren of the priesthood wherever they might be assembled this evening.

Before giving the closing remarks, I remind you that the CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning. Those desiring to attend this broadcast and the Sunday morning session, which follows, must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

As you leave this meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use

caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We express our gratitude to the brethren of the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus for the wonderful music they have given and will give us. They will conclude after I have spoken by singing "The Pilgrim's Chorus." The benediction will then be offered by Elder Spencer J. Condie of the Seventy.

## President Gordon B. Hinckley

### **The released and emeritus brethren of the Seventy**

Brethren, this has been a wonderful meeting, in which we have been stirred and uplifted and motivated, and I pray for a continuation of the Spirit of the Lord.

This great semiannual gathering of tens and tens of thousands of boys and men is a religious conference unique and wonderful. I desire to treat two matters this evening.

The first is an expression of appreciation to my brethren of the Seventy who were honorably released from active service this afternoon. Others eventually will be called to take their places. No one here needs to be told that the Church is growing. It is spreading over the world in a remarkable way. Involved in this are many problems of administration. The pace is heavy, and the demands are many. Coincident with this growth, there is an increasing number of men of faith and ability who can serve full-time for a season. As announced some years ago, a program of rotation will be followed among the Brethren of the Seventy. Likewise, age and conditions of health will become factors in the length of service the Brethren are asked to give.

To those who are released or who receive emeritus status, may I express appreciation in behalf of the entire Church. Without exception, you have done a magnificent work. When you were called, you consecrated yourselves to this work. You have gone wherever you have been asked to go and never complained. You

have put in long and wearisome days. You have dealt with very serious problems. You have been absolutely loyal to the Church and its membership. You have served at times at the peril of your own health. You have gone when human wisdom would have dictated that you stay home. You have sacrificed private means in giving your full time to the work.

You have exercised apostolic power in carrying the gospel to the nations of the earth. You have exercised the divine sealing power in the temples of the Lord. You have spoken from scores and scores of pulpits with power and conviction, with great persuasiveness to your listeners, and with deep sincerity welling up from the strong and sure testimonies which you carry in your hearts. Your wives have been a part of all of this. They, too, have made sacrifices. In many instances, they have remained at home while their husbands have been off traveling in the ministry. They have known much of loneliness and even anxiety. To them we express our deep and sincere gratitude. We sincerely thank each of you.

While these brethren are being released from Churchwide service, they still have much to offer. They are men of demonstrated judgment and wisdom. They know the gospel. They know how to speak about it. They know how to teach it. They know how to live it. They are not ready to lie down and die. They have so much of value in them that they can still make tremendous contributions. While some have physical limitations

which would make it inadvisable to call them to certain duties, others are not so limited except by factors of age, which eventually slow us all. You presidents of stakes and bishops of wards should speak with them and find out their desires and be guided thereby.

They have served as General Authorities of the Church, with worldwide jurisdiction. There is due them much of gratitude, much of respect, and much of understanding. Be sensitive to their conditions and circumstances.

They leave the ranks of the active General Authorities with our commendation for work well done, with our love because of the wonderful association we have had with them and their companions, with our respect for the goodness and strength of their lives, with our good wishes for health and strength and a measure of relaxation from the very hectic schedule under which they have been living, and with our prayers that the Lord will bless them and their companions and make sweet their days through the years that lie ahead. It is not easy to retire from any duty to which one has wholly dedicated himself over a long period. The very nature of their work, out among the people who have come to know them and love them, makes even more difficult a sudden cessation from strenuous activity.

God bless you, our dear brethren. Your testimony of the truth of this work is strong and vibrant. We have heard your expressions. Your love for the Lord is real and personal. We know that. Your desire to serve is sincere and commendable. We know because we have worked beside you. Please know that you will continue to be in our prayers and that we shall never forget you, having served with you on the front lines of this great and vital work.

### **The scourge of illicit drugs**

Now, I should like to say a few words on another subject. It is a matter much in the public press these days. It is the widespread use of illegal drugs

with all of the ramifications associated therewith.

I received a letter the other day from a government official who for years has been involved in the fight against illegal drugs. He says: "I know from firsthand knowledge what a scourge illicit narcotics are to this country and others. The drain on the human and monetary resources of the world being caused by this dilemma is inestimable and threatens the very foundations of freedom. I have watched as families dissolved, morals collapsed, and lives were lost, both directly and indirectly due to the effect of drugs."

I am confident this man knows whereof he speaks. He pleads for help, for public support, for Church support against this terrible scourge that is destroying so many. The *Wall Street Journal* a few days ago carried the results of a national poll which indicated that "three out of four Americans have been touched personally by drugs. Half have personally used drugs or have a family member who has. A remarkable 43% say that drugs are the nation's single most important issue."

The article goes on to say: "A surprisingly high 70% of the voters surveyed believe at least half of the crimes committed in their neighborhoods are drug related. Also, 70% of those with children between the ages of 13 and 17 say that drugs are sold in their children's schools."

As most of you are aware, the president of the United States has described the drug problem as the gravest domestic threat facing our nation. He has launched a battle against illicit drugs, with some eight billion dollars to be spent on strengthening police forces, building more prisons, and implementing other measures. Notwithstanding this, "those responding to the poll were deeply skeptical that the battle can be won: Only a third believe a federal program would do a 'great deal' or 'quite a bit' to correct the drug problem."

A woman respondent said, "No amount of money is going to stop it. It has to be a change within the hearts and minds of people. Young people have to think: 'I have just one body, and I'm

going to need it all my life'” (Michael McQueen and David Shribman, “Battle against Drugs Is Chief Issue Facing Nation, Americans Say,” *Wall Street Journal*, 22 Sept. 1989, sec. A, pp. 1, 12).

I am inclined to agree with this woman. Stiffer enforcement measures may be necessary. But I believe that, only when far greater numbers of people conclude within their hearts and minds that the fruits of drug-taking are only sorrow and trouble, remorse, and even death, then will things change to any significant degree.

I wish I could say that all of our people, and particularly our young men, are free from this scourge. They are not, although I am pleased to note that drug use has declined among young people in some areas, including Utah.

Many of you young men to whom I am speaking are high school students. We may not be able to change the nation or the world. But we can change the problem in our own lives as individuals and, in that process, move others in the same direction.

Some have even used as an alibi the fact that drugs are not mentioned in the Word of Wisdom. What a miserable excuse. There is likewise no mention of the hazards of diving into an empty swimming pool or of jumping from an overpass onto the freeway. But who doubts the deadly consequences of such? Common sense would dictate against such behavior.

### **Use of illegal drugs is an affront to God**

Regardless of the Word of Wisdom, there is a divinely given reason for avoiding these illegal substances.

I am convinced that their use is an affront to God. He is our Creator. We are made in His image. These remarkable and wonderful bodies are His handiwork. Does anyone think that he can deliberately injure and impair his body without affronting its Creator? We are told again and again that the body is the tabernacle of the spirit. We are told that it is a temple, holy to the Lord. In a time of terrible conflict between the Nephites

and the Lamanites, we are told that the Nephites, who had been strong, became “weak, like unto their brethren, the Lamanites, and that the Spirit of the Lord did no more preserve them; yea, it had withdrawn from them because the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples” (Helaman 4:24).

Alma taught the people of Zarahemla, The Lord “doth not dwell in unholy temples; neither can filthiness or anything which is unclean be received into the kingdom of God” (Alma 7:21).

Can anyone doubt that the taking of these mind- and body-destroying drugs is an act of unholiness? Does anyone think that the Spirit of God can dwell in the temple of the body when that body is defiled by these destructive elements? If there be a young man anywhere who is listening tonight, who is tampering with these things, let him resolve forthwith, and with the strongest determination of which he is capable, that he will never touch them again.

You hold the priesthood of almighty God, and the revelation is clear that this priesthood cannot be exercised in any degree of unrighteousness. In holding the Aaronic Priesthood, you partake of the keys of “the gospel of repentance.” Begin immediately to implement that repentance in your own lives. It may not be easy to stand up to your friends. It may be most difficult to resist the demands of your body for more of this illicit material. Pray for strength. Seek help. God will bless you if you make the effort. And I promise you that you will be grateful for the remainder of your lives for the decision you have made.

I know it is difficult to resist following when your peers are pulling you along with others down into the swamp of narcotics. It takes a man with something of a bit of steel in his spine to say no and then keep his resolution.

### **Blood on the hands of drug users**

We recently deemed it prudent, for reasons of personal safety, to move our American missionaries out of one of the nations of South America. It was not an

easy decision. We have many wonderful and faithful Latter-day Saints there. The people in that area are receptive to the gospel. For the most part, they are good people, law-abiding, and desirous of doing what is right. But the very life of that nation is threatened by powerful men of the drug cartel. There would be no such problem if the people of the United States and other nations refused to become a market for these narcotics. It is a supply-and-demand situation. There is great demand with a ready supply to meet that demand. Everyone who partakes of these illicit drugs has on his hands some of the blood of those who have been killed or wounded in the fight to stop the cultivation and exportation of these destructive products.

### **Drugs destroy self-worth**

You cannot afford to tamper with them in the least. Certainly you must be grateful for your bodies and your minds, the very substance of your mortal lives. Certainly you must know that health is the most precious of assets. Certainly you recognize that, for the years that lie ahead, you will need health of body and clarity of mind if you are to live productively and with the respect of your associates. You would not knowingly break an arm or a leg just for the fun of it. Broken bones will mend and will function again in a normal way. But a mind warped by drugs or a body weakened or distorted by these evil things will not be easily repaired. The drug-induced destruction of self-worth and self-confidence is almost impossible to restore.

### **Drugs jeopardize posterity**

To you who may be partaking, I repeat, stop immediately. To you who at any time in the future may be tempted, I urge you to stand your ground. Reflect on the fact that you are a son of God our Eternal Father, blessed with His holy priesthood and endowed with those faculties of body and mind which will help you to take a place that is significant in the world in which you will live. Do not

throw away your future. Do not jeopardize the well-being of your posterity.

I watched on television the other evening a documentary on what are called cocaine babies. I have seen few things more pitiable. These children, born of addicted mothers, come into the world under a terrible handicap. Their future prospects are hopeless. Many of them doubtless throughout their lives will be cared for at public expense. You will bear this burden as taxpayers. That, of course, is serious. But more serious is the manner in which the gift of life has been so wickedly abused by parents who had not the will to resist the drugs that have all but destroyed their children.

### **A clear defense against the plague**

In earlier centuries there were plagues that swept across England and the nations of Europe. They struck like lightning, carrying tens of thousands to their death.

This modern drug scourge has become as a plague on the world. But in most cases, the death it brings is not swift, but rather, it follows a long period spent in misery and pain and regret. Unlike the plagues of old, from which there was no known defense, the defense is clear and relatively easy in the case of illicit drugs. It lies in simply refraining from touching them.

### **Stand free from personal holocaust**

As I look at you young men in the Tabernacle tonight, I recognize that, in as brief a period as ten years from now, the youngest of you will be twenty-two. Hopefully you will have completed honorable missions. You priests who are here tonight will for the most part have completed your educational programs and will be employed in the vocations of your choice. Ten years pass so quickly. They are almost as sunrise and sunset. Do not blight your future. Do not impair your capacity. Do not offend God, in whose image you were created.

Although I recognize that drugs are not mentioned specifically in the Word of

Wisdom, I am confident that the promise attached to that revelation will apply also to those who refrain from these evil and vicious destroyers. I repeat, therefore, these marvelous words of the Lord:

“And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

“And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

“And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

“And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall

pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them” (D&C 89:18–21).

Let no member of this church, be he man or boy, girl or woman, fall prey to this frightful scourge. Some things are right; some are wrong. You know this as well as do I. God grant you the strength to stand free from this enslavement and from the personal holocaust of destruction which inevitably follows.

God bless you to this end I humbly pray, as one who loves you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang “The Pilgrim’s Chorus.”

Elder Spencer J. Condie offered the benediction.

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## SECOND DAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 1, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Before the session, the choir sang “Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth” without announcement.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks:

### **President Thomas S. Monson**

We welcome you this Sabbath morning from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, to the fourth general session of the 159th Semiannual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this and all sessions of the conference, has

asked that I, Brother Monson, conduct this meeting.

We acknowledge the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and in the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Marvin J. Ashton, Loren C. Dunn, and Merlin R. Lybbert are seated on the stand. We extend our greetings to those of you participating by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of the stations that are broadcasting this conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Brother Jerold D. Ottley, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ, opened these services by singing “Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth.” The choir will now sing “Lord, I Would Follow Thee,” following which Elder Derek A. Cuthbert of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

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The choir sang "Lord, I Would Follow Thee."

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert offered the invocation.

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## President Gordon B. Hinckley

### "An ensign to the nations"

My brothers and sisters, I very much appreciate Brother Cuthbert's prayer. It is always an awesome responsibility to speak in this historic Tabernacle. I seek the direction of the Holy Spirit.

For a moment, may I take you back 142 years when there was, of course, no tabernacle here, nor temple, nor Temple Square. On July 24, 1847, the pioneer company of our people came into this valley. An advance group had arrived a day or two earlier. Brigham Young arrived on Saturday. The next day, Sabbath services were held both in the morning and in the afternoon. There was no hall of any kind in which to meet. I suppose that in the blistering heat of that July Sunday they sat on the tongues of their wagons and leaned against the wheels while the Brethren spoke. The season was late, and they were faced with a gargantuan and immediate task if they were to grow seed for the next season. But President Young pleaded with them not to violate the Sabbath then or in the future.

The next morning they divided into groups to explore their surroundings. Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, and a handful of their associates hiked from their campground a little to the south of us, on past the ground where we are, and up the hill to the north of us. They climbed a dome-shaped peak, President Young having difficulty because of his recent illness.

When the Brethren stood on the summit, they looked over this valley to the south of them. It was largely barren, except for the willows and rushes that grew along the streams that carried water

### President Monson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our first speaker this morning.

from the mountains to the lake. There was no building of any kind, but Brigham Young had said the previous Saturday, "This is the place."

The summit where they stood was named Ensign Peak out of reference to these great prophetic words of Isaiah:

"And he [speaking of God] will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly" (Isaiah 5:26).

"And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah 11:12).

There is some evidence to indicate that Wilford Woodruff took from his pocket a bandanna handkerchief and waved it as an ensign or a standard to the nations, that from this place should go the word of the Lord, and to this place should come the people of the earth.

I think they may also on that occasion have spoken of the building of the temple, which today stands a few feet east of here, in fulfillment of the words of Isaiah:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3).



### A vision drawn from the scriptures

How foolish, someone might have said had he heard these men that July morning of 1847. They did not look like statesmen with great dreams. They did not look like rulers poring over maps and planning an empire. They were exiles, driven from their fair city on the Mississippi into this desert region of the West. But they were possessed of a vision drawn from the scriptures and words of revelation.

I marvel at the foresight of that little group. It was both audacious and bold. It was almost unbelievable. Here they were, almost a thousand miles from the nearest settlement to the east and almost eight hundred miles from the Pacific Coast. They were in an untried climate. The soil was different from that of the black loam of Illinois and Iowa, where they had most recently lived. They had never raised a crop here. They had never experienced a winter. They had not built a structure of any kind. These prophets, dressed in old, travel-worn clothes, standing in boots they had worn for more than a thousand miles from Nauvoo to this valley, spoke of a millennial vision. They spoke out of a prophetic view of the marvelous destiny of this cause. They came down from the peak that day and went to work to bring reality to their dream.

### Seeing the grand picture

Sometimes in our day, as we walk our narrow paths and fill our little niches of responsibility, we lose sight of the grand picture. When I was a small boy, draft horses were common. An important part of the harness was the bridle. On the bridle were blinders, one on each side. They were so placed that the horse could see only straight ahead and not to either side. They were designed to keep him from becoming frightened or distracted and to keep his attention on the road at his feet.

Some of us do our work as if we had blinders on our eyes. We only see our own little narrow track. We catch nothing of the broader vision. Ours may be a

small responsibility in the Church. It is good to fulfill that responsibility with diligence. And it is also good to know how that responsibility contributes to the great overall program of the growing kingdom of God.

### The cumulative power of small acts

President Harold B. Lee once said from this pulpit, quoting an unknown writer, "Survey large fields and cultivate small ones."

My interpretation of that statement is that we ought to recognize something of the breadth and depth and height—grand and wonderful, large and all-encompassing—of the program of the Lord, and then work with diligence to meet our responsibility for our assigned portion of that program.

Each of us has a small field to cultivate. While so doing, we must never lose sight of the greater picture, the large composite of the divine destiny of this work. It was given us by God our Eternal Father, and each of us has a part to play in the weaving of its magnificent tapestry. Our individual contribution may be small, but it is not unimportant. When we were children we learned a nursery rhyme:

Little drops of water,  
Little grains of sand  
Make the mighty ocean,  
And the pleasant land.

So it is with us in our service in the kingdom of God. Many small efforts and little acts become the cumulative pattern of a great worldwide organization.

On March 26, 1907, the First Presidency issued a proclamation to the world in response to hateful criticism charging the Church and its leaders with selfish interests and narrow bigotry. The First Presidency responded: "Our motives are not selfish; our purposes not petty and earth-bound; we contemplate the human race—past, present, and yet to come—as immortal beings, for whose salvation it is our mission to labor; and to this work, broad as eternity and deep as the love of God, we devote ourselves, now, and

forever" (*Improvement Era*, May 1907, p. 495).

We serve as teachers in quorums and auxiliary organizations; we serve as missionaries at home and abroad; we serve as researchers in family history and as temple workers—hopefully each with diligence in our little corner. And from all of this there emerges a remarkable and wonderful pattern, a phenomenon grand in its comprehensiveness, as broad as the earth and encompassing all of the generations of men.

If each of us does not do well that which is his or hers to do, then there is a flaw in the entire pattern. The whole tapestry is injured. But if each of us does well his or her part, then there is strength and beauty.

### Progress in building the kingdom

I need not remind you that this cause in which we are engaged is not an ordinary cause. It is the cause of Christ. It is the kingdom of God our Eternal Father. It is the building of Zion on the earth, the fulfillment of prophecy given of old and of a vision revealed in this dispensation.

Under its present organization it has been moving forward for only a little more than a century and a half. It will continue, ever growing and spreading over the earth, as part of a great millennial pattern until the time comes when He whose right it is to reign will rule as King of kings and Lord of lords.

When President Young and his brethren stood atop the peak to the north of us and spoke of an ensign to the nations, they soon put in place a program to implement it, and this notwithstanding the circumstances in which they found themselves. In August of 1852, only five years later, a special conference was held in the old tabernacle on this square. President Heber C. Kimball opened by saying:

"We have come together today, according to previous appointment, to hold a special conference to transact business, a month earlier than usual, inasmuch as there are elders to be selected to go to the

missions of the earth, and they want an earlier start than formerly. . . .

"The missions we will call for during this conference are, generally, not to be very long ones; probably from three to seven years will be as long as any man will be absent from his family."

The clerk then read ninety-eight names of individuals who had been proposed for foreign missions. (*Joseph I. Earl Family History*, p. 1.)

To me it is a thing of wonder that at a time when our people were struggling to gain a foothold in these mountains, they put the spread of the gospel ahead of comfort, security, the well-being of their families, and all other considerations. Across the broad prairie between the mountains of the West and the Missouri and Mississippi rivers there were two bodies of Latter-day Saints moving in opposite directions. Missionaries traveling to the eastern states and Europe passed converts gathering from those lands to the Zion of the West. There was likewise a movement to the West Coast and across the Pacific, with elders going to Hawaii, even to Hong Kong, China, Siam, Ceylon, and India. This was all part of this grand vision of an ensign to the nations. It has gone on ever since, and it goes on today at an accelerated pace. In a hundred nations missionaries of the Church are teaching the doctrines of salvation.

They are building the kingdom across the world. They are touching for everlasting good the lives of all with whom they work, and generations who come after them will be affected by what they do today. They are fulfilling the declarations of ancient prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord concerning the "marvellous work and a wonder" that should come to pass in the dispensation of the fulness of times (Isaiah 29:14).

### The ensign of Temple Square

I think of this beautiful Temple Square, where we are meeting. I think of the travail that lies behind its creation.

Last year some 3½ million visitors came here. They came from all states of

the United States and all provinces of Canada. They came from other nations around the globe.

Their freely written comments remind us of the words of Isaiah, written of old, that in the latter days people from the nations will come to learn of the ways of God and to walk in His paths. Listen to a sampling of these comments:

From a Protestant from New Jersey: "I have often heard the word *Mormon* and associated it with a fanatic religious group. I couldn't have been more wrong!"

From a Congregationalist from Massachusetts: "I have always felt that religion should be a joy, and you certainly show it!"

From a Christian from Maine: "This is beautiful; it is the first time in my life I have wondered if my religion is the right one."

From a Catholic from Pennsylvania: "I envy your way of life."

A Presbyterian from Canada: "God is in this place; we see him everywhere."

A Christian from Germany: "I enjoyed myself very much here. I cannot believe such a place exists that offers so much and asks for no money."

And so they go, on and on by the thousands. Many come with doubts and bias. They leave with appreciation and curiosity. The great work that is being done here is all a part of the fabric of this tremendous cause we describe as the kingdom of God in the earth.

### **The breadth of temple work**

And then I think of the work that goes on in this temple and in the other temples of the Church.

We are sometimes looked upon as provincial. Is there any group in all the world with a vision so broad and a work so comprehensive? I know of no other people so concerned with the eternal well-being of the sons and daughters of God of all generations. Surely the work that goes on in these sacred houses is the most unselfish of all work. Those who labor here do so, for the most part, in behalf of those beyond the veil of death. They do it

because of a knowledge of the importance of eternal ordinances and covenants. They do it so that even the dead may exercise agency concerning the acceptance or rejection of sacred ordinances.

It is all part of the great pattern of the God of Heaven, who is our Eternal Father, and of His Son, who is our Savior and our Redeemer, the author of our salvation, through whose sacrifice came universal resurrection from the dead and opportunity for exaltation for those who, whether in life or in death, will walk in obedience to His commandments.

### **A compelling responsibility**

My brethren and sisters, the priesthood is upon the earth, the power of God given to men to act in His name and for His purposes. It carries with it "the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering<sup>of</sup> of the people of the Lord in the last days (D&C 113:6).

My co-workers in this great cause and kingdom, you and I are weaving the grand design of that standard to the nations. It waves to all the world. It says to men and women everywhere, "Come, walk with us and learn of the ways of the Lord. Here is the priesthood given to men in these last days. Here are the great keys for the redemption of the dead. Here is the authority to carry the gospel to the nations of the earth."

We do not say it selfishly. We do not say it with egotism. We do not say it boastfully. We say it as those charged with a great and compelling responsibility. We say it with love in our hearts for the God of heaven and the risen Lord, and with love for the children of men everywhere.

### **Contribute to the grand vision**

To those of the Church, all within the sound of my voice, I give the challenge that while you are performing the part to which you have been called, never lose sight of the whole majestic and wonderful picture of the purpose of this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. Weave beautifully your small thread in

the grand tapestry, the pattern for which was laid out for us by the God of heaven. Hold high the standard under which we walk. Be diligent, be true, be virtuous, be faithful, that there may be no flaw in that banner.

The vision of this kingdom is not a superficial dream in the night that fades with the sunrise. It is veritably the plan and work of God our Eternal Father. It has to do with all of His children.

While grubbing the sagebrush of these western valleys to lay the foundations for a commonwealth, while doing all of the many mundane things they were required to do to stay alive and grow, our forebears ever kept before them the grandeur of the great cause in which they were engaged. It is a work which we must do with the same vision they held. It is a work which will go on after we have left this scene. God help us to do our very

best as servants, called under His divine will, to carry forward and build the kingdom with imperfect hands, united together to execute a perfect pattern. I so pray, as I bear witness of these things, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "I Sing the Greatness of Our God" without announcement.

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### President Monson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "I Sing the Greatness of Our God."

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now speak to us.

## Elder David B. Haight

### Grateful that life was spared

I pray for your faith and prayers that my utterances will be received and understood "by the Spirit of truth" and that my expressions will be given "by the Spirit of truth" so that we might all be "edified and rejoice together" (D&C 50:21-22).

As I stand here today—a well man—words of gratitude and acknowledgment of divine intervention are so very inadequate in expressing the feelings in my soul.

Six months ago at the April general conference, I was excused from speaking as I was convalescing from a serious operation. My life has been spared, and I now have the pleasant opportunity of acknowledging the blessings, comfort, and ready aid of my Brethren in the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, and other wonderful associates and friends to whom I owe so much and who surrounded my dear wife, Ruby, and my family with their time, attention, and prayers. For the inspired doctors and thoughtful nurses I express my deepest gratitude, and for the thoughtful letters

and messages of faith and hope received from many places in the world, many expressing, "You have been in our prayers" or "We have been asking our Heavenly Father to spare your life." Your prayers and mine, thankfully, have been answered.

One unusual card caused me to ponder upon the majesty of it all. It is an original painting by Arta Romney Ballif of the heavens at night with its myriad golden stars. Her caption, taken from Psalms, reads:

"Praise ye the Lord: . . .

"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

"He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.

" . . . His understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:1, 3-5).

### The goodness and majesty of God

As I lay in the hospital bed, I meditated on all that had happened to me and studied the contemplative painting by President Marion G. Romney's sister and

the lines from Psalms: "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names." I was then — and continue to be — awed by the goodness and majesty of the Creator, who knows not only the names of the stars but knows your name and my name — each of us as His sons and daughters.

The psalmist David wrote:

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? . . .

"For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psalm 8:3-5).

To be remembered is a wonderful thing.

### **The crisis, the peace, and the testimony**

The evening of my health crisis, I knew something very serious had happened to me. Events happened so swiftly — the pain striking with such intensity, my dear Ruby phoning the doctor and our family, and I on my knees leaning over the bathtub for support and some comfort and hoped relief from the pain. I was pleading to my Heavenly Father to spare my life a while longer to give me a little more time to do His work, if it was His will.

While still praying, I began to lose consciousness. The siren of the paramedic truck was the last that I remembered before unconsciousness overtook me, which would last for the next several days.

The terrible pain and commotion of people ceased. I was now in a calm, peaceful setting; all was serene and quiet. I was conscious of two persons in the distance on a hillside, one standing on a higher level than the other. Detailed features were not discernible. The person on the higher level was pointing to something I could not see.

I heard no voices but was conscious of being in a holy presence and atmosphere. During the hours and days that

followed, there was impressed again and again upon my mind the eternal mission and exalted position of the Son of Man. I witness to you that He is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, Savior to all, Redeemer of all mankind, Bestower of infinite love, mercy, and forgiveness, the Light and Life of the world. I knew this truth before — I had never doubted nor wondered. But now I knew, because of the impressions of the Spirit upon my heart and soul, these divine truths in a most unusual way.

### **Visions of Jesus' earthly ministry**

I was shown a panoramic view of His earthly ministry: His baptism, His teaching, His healing the sick and lame, the mock trial, His crucifixion, His resurrection and ascension. There followed scenes of His earthly ministry to my mind in impressive detail, confirming scriptural eyewitness accounts. I was being taught, and the eyes of my understanding were opened by the Holy Spirit of God so as to behold many things.

The first scene was of the Savior and His Apostles in the upper chamber on the eve of His betrayal. Following the Passover supper, He instructed and prepared the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for His dearest friends as a remembrance of His coming sacrifice. It was so impressively portrayed to me — the overwhelming love of the Savior for each. I witnessed His thoughtful concern for significant details — the washing of the dusty feet of each Apostle, His breaking and blessing of the loaf of dark bread and blessing of the wine, then His dreadful disclosure that one would betray Him.

He explained Judas's departure and told the others of the events soon to take place.

Then followed the Savior's solemn discourse when He said to the Eleven: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Our Savior prayed to His Father and acknowledged the Father as the source

of His authority and power — even to the extending of eternal life to all who are worthy.

He prayed, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

Jesus then reverently added:

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:3–5).

He pled not only for the disciples called out from the world who had been true to their testimony of Him, “but for them also which shall believe on me through their word” (John 17:20).

When they had sung a hymn, Jesus and the Eleven went out to the Mount of Olives. There, in the garden, in some manner beyond our comprehension, the Savior took upon Himself the burden of the sins of mankind from Adam to the end of the world. His agony in the garden, Luke tells us, was so intense that “his sweat was as . . . great drops of blood falling . . . to the ground” (Luke 22:44). He suffered an agony and a burden the like of which no human person would be able to bear. In that hour of anguish our Savior overcame all the power of Satan.

The glorified Lord revealed to Joseph Smith this admonition to all mankind:

“Therefore I command you to repent. . . .

“For . . . I, God, . . . suffered . . . for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; . . .

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore. . . .

“Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power; and that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these punishments” (D&C 19:15–16, 18, 20).

## Testimony of the Atonement

During those days of unconsciousness I was given, by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, a more perfect knowledge of His mission. I was also given a more complete understanding of what it means to exercise, in His name, the authority to unlock the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven for the salvation of all who are faithful. My soul was taught over and over again the events of the betrayal, the mock trial, the scourging of the flesh of even one of the Godhead. I witnessed His struggling up the hill in His weakened condition carrying the cross and His being stretched upon it as it lay on the ground, that the crude spikes could be driven with a mallet into His hands and wrists and feet to secure His body as it hung on the cross for public display.

Crucifixion — the horrible and painful death which He suffered — was chosen from the beginning. By that excruciating death, He descended below all things, as is recorded, that through His resurrection He would ascend above all things (see D&C 88:6).

Jesus Christ died in the literal sense in which we will all die. His body lay in the tomb. The immortal spirit of Jesus, chosen as the Savior of mankind, went to those myriads of spirits who had departed mortal life with varying degrees of righteousness to God’s laws. He taught them the “glorious tidings of redemption from the bondage of death, and of possible salvation, . . . [which was] part of [our] Savior’s foreappointed and unique service to the human family” (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1916], p. 671).

I cannot begin to convey to you the deep impact that these scenes have confirmed upon my soul. I sense their eternal meaning and realize that “nothing in the entire plan of salvation compares in any way in importance with that most transcendent of all events, the atoning sacrifice of our Lord. It is the most important single thing that has ever occurred in the entire history of created things; it is the

rock foundation upon which the gospel and all other things rest," as has been declared (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], p. 60).

Father Lehi taught his son Jacob and us today:

"Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth.

"Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.

"Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise.

"Wherefore, he is the firstfruits unto God, inasmuch as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved" (2 Nephi 2:6-9).

### Importance of the sacrament

Our most valuable worship experience in the sacrament meeting is the sacred ordinance of the sacrament, for it provides the opportunity to focus our minds and hearts upon the Savior and His sacrifice.

The Apostle Paul warned the early Saints against eating this bread and drinking this cup of the Lord unworthily (see 1 Corinthians 11:27-30).

Our Savior Himself instructed the Nephites, "Whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily [brings] damnation to his soul" (3 Nephi 18:29).

Worthy partakers of the sacrament are in harmony with the Lord and put themselves under covenant with Him to always remember His sacrifice for the sins of the world, to take upon them the name of Christ and to always remember

Him, and to keep His commandments. The Savior covenants that we who do so shall have His spirit to be with us and that, if faithful to the end, we may inherit eternal life.

Our Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that "there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation," which plan includes the ordinance of the sacrament as a continuous reminder of the Savior's atoning sacrifice. He gave instructions that "it is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus" (D&C 6:13; 20:75).

Immortality comes to us all as a free gift by the grace of God alone, without works of righteousness. Eternal life, however, is the reward for obedience to the laws and ordinances of His gospel.

I testify to all of you that our Heavenly Father does answer our righteous pleadings. The added knowledge which has come to me has made a great impact upon my life. The gift of the Holy Ghost is a priceless possession and opens the door to our ongoing knowledge of God and eternal joy. Of this I bear witness, in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" without announcement.

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### President Monson

We have just heard from Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and a living miracle himself and the beneficiary of our Heavenly Father's blessings, followed by the choir singing "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" following which we shall hear from Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy.

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The choir and congregation sang "Oh Say, What Is Truth?"

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## Elder Dean L. Larsen

Since the announcement yesterday of the change of status of some of the members of the Seventies quorums, I have been trying to think of words that might appropriately pay tribute to these good men. I've concluded that words are inadequate and that in reality their real tribute will be found in the lives of people throughout the earth who have been touched by their influence, which influence will continue for generations to come. We love these men with a love that will not be diminished, even though our contact with some of them will not be as frequent as in the past. We acknowledge that they have pioneered many of the aspects of the Church in many parts of the world. And now they are pioneering a new course that some of the rest of us will soon follow. They go with our love, our prayers, our deep respect and admiration, and our eternal gratitude.

### Our physical clocks

On the wall of the kitchen in our home hangs a clock. It's a windup clock. That is, it is necessary every seven or eight days to wind up the mechanism with a key. If this is not done at regular intervals, the clock eventually begins to lose time; its chimes become sluggish and off-tone. Finally it stops until it is re-wound again.

Sometimes when I am rewinding this clock, I think how good it would be if I could restore my physical powers to their youthful vigor in a manner as simple as this. I suppose increasing age sometimes brings these thoughts to all who move into the later years of life.

In some ways, and to some degree, I can effect a partial rejuvenation through exercise, rest, and proper nourishment. I realize, however, that my physical clock is gradually winding down. The mechanism becomes increasingly sluggish. The chimes are less vibrant and sometimes a little out-of-pitch. One day the clock will

stop altogether, in spite of all my desire and effort to keep it going.

So it is with the physical clock in each one of us. It is part of the Lord's plan. Our time here is but one phase of an eternal existence. As our physical clock winds down, we have the assurance of new beginnings and even greater possibilities as other phases open to us.

### Our spiritual clocks

As I think of these sobering realities, there comes to mind another figurative clock that operates within me. It is my spiritual clock. It has some similarities to the physical one. It, too, needs regular winding to stay in time and keep its true tone. Unlike the physical clock, however, the spiritual one is not necessarily destined for dissolution. In fact, with proper attention and regular care it grows more vigorous—more perfect in its operation, more clear and resonant in its tones. But this is not an automatic process. Just as with the clock that hangs on our kitchen wall, unless there is a regular winding up of the mechanism, a spiritual sluggishness develops, the spiritual tone becomes off-key, and unless something is done to correct the winding-down process, the clock can stop.

In the world's environment today, spiritual clocks that do not receive regular attention can wind down very quickly.

Just forty years ago, in the October conference of 1949, Elder Albert E. Bowen, a member of the Council of Twelve, spoke these words:

"Men are mortal and beset by human frailties. They are enticed by the pressures of immediate . . . desire to depart from the high standards of the perfect law. When they are under the influence of an exalted occasion, they make high resolves. They firmly determine to avoid past mistakes and to do better. But gone out from under the spell of that influence and absorbed in the complicated pursuits of life, they find difficulty in holding fast



to their noble purposes. . . . So it is essential that they come again, and frequently, under the influence which kindles anew the warmth of spirit in which good resolutions are begotten, that they may go out fortified to withstand the pressures of temptation which lure them into false ways. Happily, if they refresh themselves frequently enough under ennobling influences, the spirit of repentance will be at work with them, and they will make conquest of some temptations—rise above them—and advance thus far toward their final goal” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1949, p. 139).

All of us require the “ennobling influences” about which Elder Bowen spoke to “wind up” our spiritual clocks. Just as exercise, proper nourishment, and rest are essential to our physical well-being, so are such things as regular prayer, scripture study, Sabbath worship, partaking of the sacrament, and service to others necessary for our spiritual vigor. Without these continuing influences in our lives, our spiritual clocks wind down.

### Prayer

Nephi said: “If ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray. But behold, I say unto you that ye must pray always, and not faint” (2 Nephi 32:8–9).

Amulek understood the importance of prayer as a spiritually rejuvenating influence. “Humble yourselves,” he said to the Zoramites, “and continue in prayer. . . . Ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness” (Alma 34:19, 26).

Amulek counseled the people to pray over their flocks, their households, and their fields (see Alma 34:20–21). “Yea,” he said, “and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you” (Alma 34:27).

Earnest, sincere prayer is an essential ingredient in maintaining spiritual tone.

### Scripture study

No leader of the Church in this dispensation has given greater emphasis to the study of the scriptures than has President Ezra Taft Benson. His inspired counsel to the members of the Church, and to all people, has led many to draw close to the scriptures, particularly the Book of Mormon. The testimonies that can be borne to the value of scripture study are numerous. There is a special power in the scriptures. Scripture study, combined with daily, purposeful prayer, can provide much of the resolution that is necessary today to offset the influences so prevalent in the world that lead us into forbidden ways.

Alma likened the word of God to a seed. “We will compare the word unto a seed,” he said. “Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me” (Alma 32:28).

I can testify that Alma’s analogy is a valid one. One who regularly turns to the word of God for spiritual strength and enlightenment will find it good—delicious to the spiritual taste.

Alma promises that the seed that is planted by studying and applying the word of God will grow to the stature of a tree. But he warns those that begin to slacken in this effort:

“If ye neglect the tree, and take no thought for its nourishment, behold it will not get any root. . . .

“Now, this is not because the seed was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable; but it is because your ground is barren, and ye will not nourish the tree. . . .

“But if ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to

grow, . . . it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life" (Alma 32:38-39, 41).

### **Sabbath worship and partaking of the sacrament**

One of the most effective ways to wind up our spiritual clocks is to worship on the Sabbath day and partake of the sacrament.

"That thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day" (D&C 59:9). These are the Lord's instructions to us. He knows that our spiritual clocks wind down quickly without this regular experience.

There is something essential about joining together with other believers to worship, to sing, to pray, to learn of God's will for us, and to acknowledge his goodness to us. He has commanded that this should be so.

It may be well to emphasize also that our church buildings are not the only places where we can worship. Our homes should also be places of devotion. It would be well if each day we could "go home to church." There should be no other place where the Spirit of the Lord is more welcome and more easily accessible than in our own homes.

### **Service**

A final comment about service to others and its influence in winding up our spiritual clocks: anyone who has unselfishly given of himself in service to another can testify of the lift that comes

to the giver. We need this reinforcement to our spiritual well-being. When we cast our bread upon the water in this sense, it inevitably comes back to us in even greater abundance.

President Spencer W. Kimball once said: "I have learned that it is by serving that we learn how to serve. When we are engaged in the service of our fellowmen, not only do our deeds assist them, but we put our own problems in a fresher perspective. When we concern ourselves more with others, there is less time to be concerned with ourselves. In the midst of the miracle of serving, there is the promise of Jesus, that by losing ourselves, we find ourselves." President Kimball added, "There is great security in spirituality, and we cannot have spirituality without service!" ("Small Acts of Service," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, pp. 2, 5).

In this, as is true with all of the other virtues, the Master is the perfect example. He is our Lord, our Savior, and our Redeemer and the perfect example in all things.

I testify to you that these things are true. May those "ennobling influences" about which Elder Bowen spoke come regularly enough into our own lives that our spiritual clocks will continue to run strong and true is my earnest prayer. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Monson**

Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

## **Elder Dallin H. Oaks**

### **Faithful pioneers of the last wagon**

The days of the pioneers are not past. There are modern pioneers whose achievements are an inspiration to all of us.

In a message about the pioneers who crossed the plains over a century ago,

President J. Reuben Clark spoke words that apply to pioneers in every age. In his description of "Them of the Last Wagon," President Clark paid tribute to the rank and file, "those great souls, . . . in name unknown, unremembered, unhonored in

the pages of history, but lovingly revered round the hearthstones of their children and their children's children" (*J. Reuben Clark: Selected Papers on Religion, Education, and Youth*, ed. David H. Yarn, Jr. [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1984], pp. 67-68; see also *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1947, pp. 704-5, 747-48).

In every great cause there are leaders and followers. In the wagon trains, the leaders were "out in front where the air was clear and clean and where they had unbroken vision of the blue vault of heaven" (*Clark*, p. 69). But, as President Clark observed, "Back in the last wagon, not always could they see the brethren way out in front and the blue heaven was often shut out from their sight by heavy, dense clouds of the dust of the earth. Yet day after day, they of the last wagon pressed forward, worn and tired, foot-sore, sometimes almost disheartened, borne up by their faith that God loved them, that the Restored Gospel was true, and that the Lord led and directed the brethren out in front" (*Clark*, p. 69).

The purposes of God were accomplished by the unswerving loyalty and backbreaking work of the faithful tens of thousands who pushed on, as President Clark said, "with little praise, with not too much encouragement, and never with adulation" (*Clark*, pp. 69-70).

"And thousands upon thousands of these . . . measured to their humble calling and to their destiny as fully as Brother Brigham and the others measured to theirs, and God will so reward them. They were pioneers in word and thought and act and faith, even as were they of more exalted station. . . . God keep their memories ever fresh among us . . . to help us meet our duties even as they met theirs" (*Clark*, pp. 73-74).

### Modern pioneers

President Clark's words of tribute also apply to the membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in our day. In every nation, in every worthy occupation and activity, members of this church face hardships, overcome obstacles, and follow the ser-

vants of the Lord Jesus Christ as valiantly as the pioneers of any age. They pay their tithes and offerings. They serve as missionaries or as Church Service volunteers, or they support others who do so. Like the noble young mothers who postpone the pursuit of their personal goals in order to provide the needs of their children, they sacrifice immediate pleasures to keep commitments that are eternal. They accept callings and, in the service of others, they willingly give their time and sometimes their lives.

They do as the Savior taught: They deny themselves; they take up their crosses daily; they follow Him (see Luke 9:23). These are those the Savior likened to the seed that fell on good ground: "in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, [they] keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15).

The fruits of the gospel issue from every honest and good heart, without regard to past origins or current positions in the Church. As President Clark declared, "There is no aristocracy of birth in this Church; it belongs equally to the highest and the lowliest" (*Clark*, p. 73).

I will give some illustrations of modern pioneers. My examples are not necessarily the most notable, but I believe they are typical of the rank-and-file Latter-day Saints who are the heart and the hands of this great latter-day work.

### Elderly missionary couples

Our older couple missionaries, now numbering over 2,600 throughout the world, provide an unequalled example of Christian service. Who could calculate the contribution these couples are making in furthering the mission of the Church? They preach the gospel, strengthen leaders and members in struggling branches, serve in temples and visitors' centers, and in countless other ways accomplish the essential work of the kingdom, both the important and the routine.

In a missionary meeting in a remote corner of the world, Sister Oaks and I listened as a devoted brother said, "I never thought I could teach the gospel. I only thought I could fish. But now that

I am here, I get so wrapped up in telling people about the gospel!"

A few minutes later, another devoted missionary, his wife, said, "I feel so sorry for those who have nothing to worry about and occupy them except how many steps to the swimming pool or the golf course!"

Time after time, the pioneers President Clark praised left their homes, loaded their wagons, and moved to new hardships at the direction of their prophet. In our day, many couples go on mission after mission. One dear veteran described her family's reaction: "Our children say, 'We hope you'll come by and at least have dinner with us before you go on another mission.'"

Every day other thousands set aside personal preferences and give devoted service as teachers and leaders, as temple workers, in name extraction, and in so many other ways.

### **"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation"**

The Apostle Paul described the followers of Christ as "rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation" (Romans 12:12). We are tested for those qualities in different ways at different times.

A few weeks ago, some members of my family visited the Winter Quarters cemetery at Florence, Nebraska. There they saw Avarad T. Fairbanks's marvelous statue of the pioneer parents looking down at the body of their baby, soon to be left in its grave at the side of the trail. Those pioneers received some of their toughest tests at graveside. Some modern pioneers receive their tests at bedside. One sister wrote:

"My mother cared for her mother until [Grandma] was ninety-eight. My dad now has Alzheimer's disease, and my mother patiently cares for him. . . . The amazing part of this is the attitude of my mother. She always thought she would travel after she retired. She has always kept a beautiful home, loving to entertain others. She maintains her home as best

she can, but has had to put aside many things that bring her joy. The amazing part is the joy my mother radiates. Her attitude is so beautiful. She finds real joy in the simple things of life. She is the pillar of strength to the whole family as she uplifts us all with her positive attitude."

### **God notices all service**

There are hidden heroines and heroes among the Latter-day Saints—"those of the last wagon" whose fidelity to duty and devotion to righteousness go unnoticed by anyone except the One whose notice really matters.

Others, including those who have been called to prominent positions, are more noticeable, but surely no more noble. I am one of these. At a public occasion a mother introduced me to her teenage son. "Do you know who this is?" she asked him.

"Sure," the boy replied. "He's one of those guys who hangs on the wall at seminary."

Prominent position—"hanging on the wall at seminary"—does not put anyone on a fast-track to exaltation. The criterion for that ultimate goal is the same for every person—leader or follower, prominent or obscure: Have we received the ordinances of salvation and kept our covenants? A member of the Church in Great Britain said it best. He had served as stake president. As that period of prominence came to an end, he told Elder Boyd K. Packer why it did not bother him to be released: "I served because I am under *covenant*. And I can keep my covenants quite as well as a home teacher as I can serving as stake president" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, p. 26; or *Ensign*, May 1987, p. 24).

Numberless officers, teachers, advisers, and clerks keep their covenants in that same way. Their service is almost invisible, except to Him who sees all things and promises all who do good that they shall "in nowise lose their reward" (D&C 58:28; see also Matthew 10:42).

### Walk the trail blazed by leaders

The pioneers who crossed the plains took their directions from the trails blazed by their leaders. For safety, those pioneers traveled in groups. Then, as now, a pioneer who got separated from the company and off the marked trail walked a lonely and dangerous path until he could rejoin the group. So it is today. A letter said it this way:

"One and a half years ago I was excommunicated. I was guilty of great hypocrisy and deception before God in matters of infidelity. This Saturday I am going to be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. As the day approaches, my gratitude deepens for the Lord's mercy extended to me, allowing me to repent and experience the mighty change in my heart. It grieves me to know of the great contribution I made to the Lord's suffering in Gethsemane, but I glory in the proposition that I, as a result of that suffering, might turn my life and make His purposes my purposes."

This writer expressed gratitude for "the Lord's repentance process," which would now "allow me to become the father, son, and priesthood-bearer that I always appeared to be. The feeling of finally being an honest, truly honest, man is indescribable."

One of the best qualities in any of the sons and daughters of God, whatever their circumstance, is a determination to become better. Since we all have a need to improve, we should always be willing to recognize goodness and encourage improvement in everyone.

### The importance of forgiveness

One of the most Godlike expressions of the human soul is the act of forgiveness. Everyone is wronged at some point by someone, and many suffer serious wrongs. Christians everywhere stand in awe of those pioneers who have climbed that steep slope to the spiritual summit attained by those who have heeded the Savior's command to forgive all men (see Matthew 6:14-15; D&C 64:9-10). For-

giveness is mortality's mirror image of the mercy of God.

A sister wrote me about her feelings toward a relative who had abused her as a child, leaving her with a painful physical condition. In her words, "I have to live with the pain and try to function around it." She wrote, "At times I [felt] angry and wonder[ed] why I had to suffer the abuse in the first place and why must I continue to pay a price now."

One day, as she listened to a talk in church, her heart was touched. The Spirit bore witness that she should forgive the man who had wronged her and that she could do so with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ. Her letter explained: "The price for that sin has already been paid by Him in Gethsemane. I have no right to hold on to it and demand justice, so I gladly hand it back to Him and rejoice in His love and mercy."

Her letter described the result of her decision: "My heart is so full of joy, peace, and gratitude and love! Isn't His work glorious? How I do love Him! Words cannot express my feelings."

Like this sister who forgave, many modern saints do their pioneering on the frontiers of their own attitudes and emotions. The proverb says, "He that ruleth his spirit [is better] than he that taketh a city" (Proverbs 16:32). Modern saints know that one who subdues his own spirit is just as much a pioneer as one who conquers a continent.

### Burdens carried by modern pioneers

The path of modern pioneers is not easy. Burdens carried in the heart can be just as heavy as those pulled in a handcart. And just as some early pioneers struggled for the benefit of others, so some modern pioneers carry burdens imposed by the transgressions or thoughtlessness of others.

Another letter came from a woman who had been divorced. Although she said that the ten years that followed her divorce were a time of trial, heartache, struggle, and loneliness, she described that experience as "a blessing" — "a refining

process." She expressed gratitude "for what I now have. It has brought me so close to my Heavenly Father and particularly to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a feeling that I'm not sure can be expressed in words. I literally came before the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. No physical pain I have ever experienced has been as painful as the emotional pain I have felt. But each time I feel it, it draws me so close to the Lord because I think of all He suffered, and it makes me so grateful. I love Him with all my heart and soul for His sacrifice and for all He represents."

Many of our members are struggling valiantly to try to do it all. They support themselves and provide for their families. They strive to carry out the responsibilities of their church callings. They spend many hours transporting their children to numberless church and school activities. They try to be generous with money and time for worthy causes in the community. They strive to improve themselves. They hope, after all of this, to have some little time left for togetherness and recreation.

One sister wrote, "We are having great difficulty [just] trying to cope." Many could say the same. Yet they do cope. They carry on without complaint, even when they have just cause for complaint. And even when they fall short, the Lord blesses them for their righteous desires (see Mosiah 4:24-25), for, as King Benjamin taught, "it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength" (Mosiah 4:27).

### Grateful for faithful members

How grateful we are for the service and example of these faithful members! Like all my Brethren among the General Authorities, I look to the rank-and-file members of this church for my models of faithfulness and nobility. When I visit a conference and mingle with the Saints, I always receive more than I give. I agree with the sentiment voiced by President Gordon B. Hinckley. After describing the faithful Saints he had met at a conference, he added, "We have the responsibility of leading them, when, in fact, we can learn so much from them."

Our faith and resolve are strengthened by the spiritual achievements and service of ordinary Latter-day Saints. There are thousands of such inspirational examples, but they are rarely published except on the pages of the *Church News* and the Church magazines — the *Ensign*, *New Era*, and *Friend*. I encourage everyone to have these unique publications in their home.

### Home teachers and visiting teachers

Some of the unsung heroes and heroines of our day are the faithful home teachers and visiting teachers who feed the Master's sheep. When the Apostle Paul likened the Church to a body, he referred to such less-visible members as the hands and the feet, saying that upon these we should "bestow more abundant honour" (1 Corinthians 12:23).

An LDS girl whose two parents took no part in Church activities later wrote this recollection to an elder who had been her home teacher:

"You were the bright hope in my often difficult life. There is no greater call than a home teacher. You loved and showed respect for my parents. You honored them and at the same time supported me. You were *there!* . . . As I look back now, I realize you and the truth you offered were my life-support.

"Behind the doors were years of pain, tears, and fear. You were able to come into our home and chase them away, if only for a short time. No one else could do that."

### All things shall work for your good

In our day, as in the days of earlier pioneers, those in the lead wagons set the direction and signal onward, but it is the faithful men and women in the wagons which follow that provide the momentum and motive power for this great work.

As modern pioneers press forward, they suffer hardships and make sacrifices. But they are sustained by an assurance given by the Lord Himself. These words, first spoken to the struggling Saints in Ohio, apply also to the faithful of our day:

“Verily I say unto you my friends, fear not, let your hearts be comforted; yea, rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks;

“Waiting patiently on the Lord, for your prayers have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and are recorded with this seal and testament—the Lord hath sworn and decreed that they shall be granted.

“Therefore, he giveth this promise unto you, with an immutable covenant that they shall be fulfilled; and all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good, and to my name’s glory, saith the Lord” (D&C 98:1–3).

This is His work. We are His children. He loves us — one and all. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang “The Lord’s Prayer” without announcement.

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### President Monson

What a beautiful number, brothers and sisters, “The Lord’s Prayer” as rendered by the Tabernacle Choir. President Benson has suggested that I serve as the next speaker.

## President Thomas S. Monson

This is an awesome responsibility for me as I approach this task. Before doing so, however, I too would like to echo the sentiment expressed by others in expressing appreciation and love to our General Authorities of the Church who yesterday were given a change of status or an honorable release from their strenuous duties. May I add my personal appreciation for their outstanding service over the years and extend to them and their devoted companions my love and my blessings. They have traveled far and wide in the Lord’s service and merit His approbation “Well done.”

### Windows

On one such journey while I was waiting my turn at an airline office in London, England, I reached forward from my chair and selected an advertising brochure from the small table which contained reading material. The publication bore the title *Windows to the World*. Each page contained a framed picture of a well-known and beautiful site, accompanied by a well-written description which made one desire to visit all of the locations shown. The Matterhorn in Switzerland,

the Alps of New Zealand, even the Taj Mahal of India — all seemed to suggest to the reader the desirability of an immediate visit.

Windows are wonderful. They serve as a frame on which we might focus our attention. They provide a glimpse of God’s creations. The azure blue sky, the billowy, white clouds, the verdant green forest all are as framed pictures in the memory of the mind. Windows also reveal the approach of a friend, a gathering storm, a magnificent sunset — even the passing parade of life.

Windows welcome light to our lives and bring joy to our souls. The absence of windows, such as in dark prison cells, shuts out the world. When we are deprived of light, the depression of darkness encompasses us.

### President Hugh B. Brown’s window

Windows teach lessons never to be forgotten. Ever shall I remember a visit to the home of President Hugh B. Brown. It was graduation day at Brigham Young University. He was to conduct the exercises, and I was to deliver the commencement address. I drove to President Brown’s home and escorted him to my

car. Before we could drive away, however, he said to me, "Wait just a few minutes. My wife, Zina, will come to the front window."

I glanced at the window, noted that the curtain had parted, and saw Zina Brown sitting in her wheelchair, affectionately waving a small, white handkerchief toward the gaze of her smiling husband. President Brown reached into his jacket pocket, retrieved a white handkerchief, and began to wave it gently, much to the delight of his wife. We then inched away from the curb and commenced the journey to Provo.

"What is the significance of the white-handkerchief waving?" I asked.

He replied, "Zina and I have followed that custom since we were first married. It is somewhat a symbol between us that all will be well throughout the day until we are again together at eventide."

That day I witnessed a window to the heart.

### Windows sealed by pain and neglect

Some windows are sealed shut by sorrow, by pain, by neglect. The forgotten birthday, the unremembered visit, the overlooked promise—all can sow seeds of sorrow and bring to the human heart that unwelcome visitor, despair.

A national columnist one day titled her story, "What a Forgotten Birthday Can Mean," and then quoted from a letter she had received:

"I have never written to you before, but I believe the following might interest you and your readers. I found it in an old magazine. No author's name was mentioned—just 'A Heavy-Hearted Observer.'

"Yesterday was a man's birthday. He was ninety-one. He awakened earlier than usual, bathed, shaved, and put on his best clothes. Surely they would come today, he thought.

"He didn't take his daily walk to the gas station to visit with the old-timers of the community because he wanted to be right there when they came.

"He sat on the front porch with a clear view of the road so he could see

them coming. Surely they would come today.

"He decided to skip his noon nap because he wanted to be up when they came. He had six children. Two of his daughters and their married children lived within four miles. They hadn't been to see him for such a long time. But today was his birthday. Surely they would come today.

"At supper time he refused to cut the cake and asked that the ice cream be left in the freezer. He wanted to wait and have dessert with *them* when they came.

"About 9 o'clock he went to his room and got ready for bed. His last words before turning out the lights were, 'Promise to wake me up when they come.'

"It was his birthday, and he was ninety-one."

### The window of faith

When I read that touching account, tears came easily. I reflected on an experience in my life, one that had a happier ending.

Each time I would visit an older widow whom I had known for many years and whose bishop I had been, my heart grieved at her utter loneliness. A favorite son of hers lived many miles away, and for years he had not visited Mother. Mattie spent long hours in a lonely vigil at her front window. Behind a frayed and frequently opened curtain, the disappointed mother would say to herself, "Dick will come; Dick will come."

But Dick didn't come. The years passed by one after another. Then, like a ray of sunshine, Church activity came into the life of Dick. He journeyed to Salt Lake to visit with me. He telephoned upon his arrival and, with excitement, reported the change in his life. He asked if I had time to see him if he were to come directly to my office. My response was one of gladness. However, I said, "Dick, visit your mother first, and then come to see me." He gladly complied with my request.

Before he could get to my office, there came a phone call from Mattie, his



mother. From a joyful heart came words punctuated by tears: "Tom, I knew Dick would come. I told you he would. I saw him through the window."

Years later at Mattie's funeral, Dick and I spoke tenderly of that experience. We had witnessed a glimpse of God's healing power through the window of a mother's faith in her son.

### The window of example

The holy scriptures are replete with sacred accounts of our Master's love for the downtrodden and the poor of this world. Though many are forgotten by men, they are remembered by God and are oftentimes seen through the window of personal example.

Who among us can forget the timeless lesson taught by the Lord when, "in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples,

"Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

"Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers" (Luke 20:45-47).

"And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

"And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.

"And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:

"For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had" (Luke 21:1-4). What a beautiful lesson, as taught through the window of example.

### The window of priesthood power

At a city called Nain, the Lord opened to his disciples and to many people who followed him a window through which they might view true compassion:

"Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother,

and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

"And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

"And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother" (Luke 7:12-15).

The disciples of the Lord witnessed through the windows Jesus opened the power of God and were made partakers of this same power when, in righteousness, they ministered to the children of the Almighty.

A beautiful account, recorded in the book of Acts, tells of a disciple named Tabitha who lived at Joppa. She was described as being a woman "full of good works and almsdeeds."

"It came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

"And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.

"Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which [Tabitha] made, while she was with them" (Could we not say this was a window through which Peter glimpsed the industry of Tabitha's life?) "Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

"And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

"And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord" (Acts 9:36-42).

Would it not be ever so sad if such a window to priesthood power, to faith, to healing, were to be restricted to Joppa alone? Are these sacred and moving

counts recorded only for our uplift and enlightenment? Can we not apply such mighty lessons to our daily lives?

### The window of loving service

When we catch the vision regarding the worth of human souls, when we realize the truth of the adage, "God's sweetest blessings always flow through hands that serve Him here below," then we have quickened within our souls the desire to do good, the willingness to serve, and the yearning to lift to a higher plane the children of God.

Such was the experience of William Norris, formerly the chairman of a large computer manufacturing firm and a friend of many years. Mr. Norris determined to build a plant in an area of extreme poverty. The neighborhood was predominantly composed of a minority race of unmarried women with children—women who were uneducated, uncared-for, but needing help. These women became the work force in the production of high-tech computers.

I had the privilege to be hosted by Mr. Norris and to be given a tour of his new facility. I was impressed with the employment provided—but more impressed with the company nursery, which occupied a wing of the building. Here, while their mothers worked, children received schooling, including proficiency with computers. Since most of the children did not have fathers and grandfathers who cared, retired grandfathers in the community were invited to have lunch with them. The children were benefited, and the grandfathers had a special blessing brought into their lives.

As a result of Mr. Norris's dream, the chain of poverty was broken. Children learned to earn. It was as though William Norris had personally blessed the life of each worker. Through the window provided by Mr. Norris—even love in action—I saw demonstrated the philosophical and practical truth: The bottom line of living is giving.

### Following the Savior's example

As we go about our daily lives, we discover countless opportunities to follow the example of the Savior. When our hearts are in tune with His teachings, we discover the unmistakable nearness of His divine help. It is almost as though we are on the Lord's errand; and we then discover that, when we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help.

Through the years, the offices I have occupied have been decorated with lovely paintings of peaceful and pastoral scenes. However, there is one picture that always hangs on the wall which I face when seated behind my desk. It is a constant reminder of Him whom I serve, for it is a picture of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. When confronted with a vexing problem or difficult decision, I always gaze at that picture of the Master and silently ask myself the question, "What would He have me do?" No longer does doubt linger, nor does indecision prevail. The way to go is clear, and the pathway before me beckons.

### A window to the soul

Some months back I sat in my office chair reading the daily mail. I opened a letter from Martha Sharp of Wellsville, Utah, and read her entreaty seeking a blessing for her grown son, Steven, who was a patient at University Hospital in Salt Lake City. She described Steven's spiritual and physical needs and the likelihood that he would suffer the amputation of his foot. Her tears were felt in each word, and her feelings of love marked every sentence. Hers was a request which the Spirit simply did not allow me to delegate.

When I entered Steven's hospital room that night, I saw a man who just seemed built to ride a horse. Sensing this, I began to chat with him about a Western adventure film I had seen recently. I described the beautiful horses ridden by the principal characters. A warm smile came over Steven's face. Not until that moment did I note on his nightstand a book he

had been reading. It was the book from which the film we had been discussing was made. Our conversation was warm and free from that point forward.

In describing his condition, Steven commented, "I hope they leave enough of my foot so that I can get it into a stirrup." I assured him we would remember his name when the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve met in the holy temple and that my wife and I would personally remember him in our prayers. I told him that he had a wonderful mother, who loved him and remembered him in his need, and a Heavenly Father who also loved and remembered him. Steven began to weep. A special spirit filled the room. A blessing was given, a heart cleansed, a memory of home and family rekindled, and a mother comforted.

As I departed the hospital, situated high on the east bench of Salt Lake City, I gazed at the panoramic view of the valley before me. The miles collapsed; the stars drew near. I could almost see through the window of mortality the expanse of eternity. One star shone especially bright. It seemed to light the way and mark the path to Wellsville. I remembered the poem from Primary days:

Star light, star bright,  
The first star I see tonight,  
I wish I may, I wish I might,  
Have the wish I wish tonight.

What was my wish? That Martha Sharp might receive the welcome message, "Your son loves you."

From sacred soil far away, and from a timeless truth taught long ago, came the message, "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

Once more a gentle but unseen hand had opened a window to the soul, that precious lives might receive blessings heaven-sent.

He beckons to each of us and extends the warm invitation not only to gaze at the beauty seen through the windows He opens, but also to pass through them to the priceless opportunities He provides to bless the lives of others.

That each may experience this privilege is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Children of Our Heavenly Father," and the benediction will be offered by Elder F. Melvin Hammond of the Seventy. The conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

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The choir sang "Children of Our Heavenly Father."

Elder F. Melvin Hammond offered the benediction.

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## SECOND DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 1, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

President Hinckley made the following remarks as the meeting began:

### **President Gordon B. Hinckley**

President Ezra Taft Benson, who has presided at all sessions of this conference, has asked that I conduct this fifth and concluding session of the 159th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled in the Tabernacle and to those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders James E. Faust, J. Thomas Fyans, and Horacio A. Tenorio are seated on the stand. We also send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, directed by Donald Ripplinger and accompanied by John Longhurst, will begin this service by singing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Rex C. Reeve, an emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The choir sang "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

Elder Rex C. Reeve offered the invocation.

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### President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "Each Life That Touches Ours for Good." Following the singing, Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will address us.

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The choir sang "Each Life That Touches Ours for Good."

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## Elder L. Tom Perry

### Thomas Kane's visit to Nauvoo

Colonel Thomas L. Kane, a non-member of the Church, spoke to the Historical Society of Philadelphia, as recorded in the memoirs of John R. Young. He told them that during his travels a few years before, he had passed through a very unusual city named Nauvoo, a community established on the banks of the Mississippi. He explained that after traveling up the river for some time, he left the steamer and began to travel on land because of the rapids in the river.

While on the road, he had seen only unimproved country where idlers and outlaws had settled. Then he saw Nauvoo. Quoting him:

"I was descending the last hillside upon my journey, when a landscape in delightful contrast broke upon my view. Half encircled by a bend of the river, a beautiful city lay glittering in the fresh morning sun. Its bright new dwellings [were] set in cool green gardens ranging up around a stately dome-shaped hill, which was crowned by a noble marble edifice, whose high tapering spire was radiant with white and gold. The city appeared to cover several miles, and beyond

it, in the backgrounds, there rolled off a fair country chequered by the careful lines of fruitful husbandry. The unmistakable marks of industry, enterprise and educated wealth everywhere, made the scene one of singular and most striking beauty. . . . No one met me there. I looked and saw no one. I could hear no one move, though the quiet everywhere was such that I heard the flies buzz and the water ripples break against the shallow beach. I walked through the solitary streets. The town lay as in a dream, under some deadening spell of loneliness, from which I almost feared to wake it, for plainly it had not slept long. There was no grass growing up in the paved ways, rains had not entirely washed away the prints of dusty footsteps, yet I went about unchecked. I went into empty workshops, rope walks and smithies. The spinner's wheel was idle, the carpenter had gone from his work bench and shavings, his unfinished sash and casings, fresh bark was in the tanner's vat, and fresh chopped light wood stood piled against the baker's oven. The blacksmith's shop was cold; but his coal heap and ladling pool and crooked water horn were all there, as if he had just gone for a holiday. . . .

“ . . . Fields upon fields of heavy headed yellow grain lay rotting. . . . No one was at hand to take in their rich harvest” (in *Memoirs of John R. Young, Utah Pioneer 1847* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1920], pp. 31–33).

Colonel Kane could not understand why such a beautiful city had been abandoned. He was unaware that the Saints had been *driven* from their city by the mobs. His curiosity caused him to search for the people who had left the city. When he found them, he observed that even though they were suffering and dying from hunger and exposure, they were peaceful and wholesome. Why had such a harmless people been so persecuted?

### Persecution of missionaries

In many ways the situation has not changed a great deal today. The Church still faces some situations which, in many ways, are similar to the Nauvoo period. There is not, of course, the same degree of antagonism manifest against us as in our early history. But we still must wonder, as Colonel Kane did, why it is sometimes directed, as it so recently has been, against our great missionary force. I can only guess that it is because of the widespread misunderstanding of the essential purposes for which our missionaries are called to serve.

The missionary purpose has not changed with time. We recall the account of Ammon in the Book of Mormon. His missionary call was to the land of the Lamanites—a dangerous assignment. The fate of a Nephite entering the land of the Lamanites was left entirely in the hands of their king, who could slay him, cast him into prison, or force him to leave.

“And thus Ammon was carried before the king who was over the land of Ishmael; and his name was Lamoni; and he was a descendant of Ishmael.

“And the king inquired of Ammon if it were his desire to dwell in the land among the Lamanites, or among his people.

“And Ammon said unto him: Yea, I desire to dwell among this people for a

time; yea, and perhaps until the day I die.

“And it came to pass that king Lamoni was much pleased with Ammon, and caused that his bands should be loosed; and he would that Ammon should take one of his daughters to wife.

“But Ammon said unto him: Nay, but I will be thy servant. Therefore Ammon became a servant to king Lamoni. And it came to pass that he was set among other servants to watch the flocks of Lamoni, according to the custom of the Lamanites” (Alma 17:21–25).

As with Ammon, the only desire of our army of modern missionaries is to serve their fellowmen.

### Missionaries have pure intent

It has been over 160 years since Samuel Smith left his home with a knapsack on his back filled with a few copies of the newly printed Book of Mormon. He left to declare his witness of the truths contained in this book and to extend an invitation to anyone interested to read its contents and discover for themselves whether it be true. Since Samuel Smith's time, thousands of our missionaries have given their time and their means and left their homes for a season to declare a message they believe to be true.

Today we have a multinational force coming from many nations and spreading themselves among a great number of other nations of the world. Missionaries go forward with the purest of intent, with no hidden agenda, and at great personal sacrifice. They are not out to destroy anyone's faith or to exert unrighteous pressure. They are teachers who invite those interested in their message to listen and determine for themselves if the message is true. They go forward not representing any government or political philosophy. Furthermore, they will not be active nor participate in, encourage, or even express an opinion on the politics of the country in which they are called to labor.

Missionaries return home with a love for the people they have served and taught. They are true ambassadors spreading goodwill for the peoples in whose

countries they have lived and worked. They are not concerned with income levels and have no racial bias. They are not out to build any worldly kingdoms. They are, in the words of Mormon, "the peaceable followers of Christ" (Moroni 7:3). The only kingdom which interests them is the kingdom of our Lord and Savior which He will establish at His return. Their only hope is to prepare us for that great day. Until then, our missionaries, as well as all members of the Church, will be "subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates" and will be found "obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law" (Articles of Faith 1:12).

### Choose how best you can serve

Now I would like to change subjects and conclude my remarks with some counsel to the membership of the Church. We have been taught about the mission of our Lord and Savior and that by following Him we receive the greatest joy and happiness to be found here on earth. We have experienced the joy of service in our Heavenly Father's kingdom and know the soul-satisfying fulfillment it brings to our lives. I often think of the challenge which Alma faced when he could see the urgent need of the people to be taught the importance of having an understanding of the gospel of our Lord and Savior. At that time he served in two positions, that of chief judge and high priest over all the Church. He had to make a choice between the two in order to maximize his effectiveness in serving the people. The book of Alma records:

"And he selected a wise man who was among the elders of the church, and gave him power according to the voice of the people, that he might have power to enact laws according to the laws which had been given, and to put them in force according to the wickedness and the crimes of the people. . . .

"Now Alma did not grant unto him the office of being high priest over the church, but he retained the office of high priest unto himself; but he delivered the judgment-seat unto Nephiahah.

"And this he did that he himself might go forth among his people, or among the people of Nephi, that he might preach the word of God unto them, to stir them up in remembrance of their duty, and that he might pull down, by the word of God, all the pride and craftiness and all the contentions which were among his people, seeing no way that he might reclaim them save it were in bearing down in pure testimony against them" (Alma 4:16, 18-19).

He selected for himself the position which would allow him to do the most good for his people.

### Show which kingdom you seek

Sometimes, however, in our enthusiasm for the gospel, we cast our pearls indiscriminately, and we might even be tempted to enhance the luster of our pearl of great price by placing it in a much too attractive setting. This may only detract from the true value of our pearl. Our pearl will stand on its own, with all its beauty and simplicity. We do not need to enhance it with bright and flashy things that will only bring antagonism and conflict to the Church. We need to speak less about our accomplishments and, by our actions, show which kingdom we seek.

Could I offer this little suggestion to you? In the elevators in the Church Office Building we place scriptures and sayings of the prophets to make the time that people spend in the elevators productive as they ride up and down. This is an idea we could carry into our homes. We have an appliance we use all too frequently in our homes—the refrigerator. We need to place a sign on our refrigerators to elevate our thoughts. And by so doing, we could remind ourselves of the scriptures as we go about our daily duties—of who we are and what we represent. Could I suggest just a few scriptures to you for starters? The first is in the book of Matthew 5:43-44:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

Maybe a second would be from Luke 6:35:

"But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

And in James 1:27 we read:

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Finally, display one of the great scriptures from the Book of Mormon, Moroni 7:47:

"But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him."

I love the gospel of our Lord and Savior. It has brought into my life the

greatest peace of mind, joy, and happiness I could ever hope to find on this earth. I pray that each of us might be willing and able to share this pearl of great price—a pearl of lasting and singular beauty—with all of our Heavenly Father's children, that we may go forward armed with the gospel of our Lord and Savior. This is His work in which we're engaged. God lives. Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world. This is my solemn witness to you, in His holy name, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, also a member of the Council of the Twelve. Following Elder Wirthlin, we shall hear from Elder Victor L. Brown, an emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

My beloved brethren and sisters, I pray for that same Spirit that we have enjoyed so much during this conference. I should like today to address my remarks to the youth, to those of you who still have before you the greater part of this journey we call life. I hope you have decided to follow the course marked by our Savior and his teachings. Following that course requires great effort and the help of the Lord at each step along the way. I promise you that his help always is there.

### The marathon

In recent years, running has become a popular form of exercise throughout the world. Many run primarily for the exercise, but others run to condition themselves for well-publicized races of various

distances. Perhaps the premier endurance race is the marathon, a modern-day race that has its roots in ancient Greece. Today, the meaning of the word has been broadened to include any contest or activity of great length that requires extraordinary effort and endurance.

A young friend of mine, whom I will call Alan, recently ran his first marathon—a distance of 26.2 miles. He had set his goal several months in advance, learned what preparation was required, and disciplined himself to follow a rigorous training schedule. He sought the advice of experienced runners and read articles on running a marathon. He practiced running the marathon route and planned a strategy for traversing the hilly course.

Finally, the day of the marathon arrived; it would be the culmination of months of training, discipline, and sacrifice. He got off to a good start in a large crowd of runners. He felt strong and confident, following his predetermined strategy. About eight miles into the race, on a downhill part of the course, he caught up with an experienced runner, Brent by name, who had given him sound advice during his training. Alan decided to match his stride to Brent's disciplined and experienced pace.

As they passed the eighteen-mile mark, Alan struggled to stay with Brent so someone he knew would be by his side if he began "hitting the wall." Hitting the wall means feeling a sudden urge to quit, encountering an almost tangible barrier that requires a tremendous effort to overcome. It often comes at about the twenty-mile mark.

For the next two miles, Alan kept pace with Brent. Then it hit him. He felt a sudden loss of energy, an almost overwhelming desire to stop or walk. "Stay with me," Brent said. "We all feel it at some point. You can get through it. I'll help pull you through."

Somehow, Alan continued. He and Brent began to pass spectators. He knew his wife, children, and other family members would be watching about one mile ahead. Drawing on the strength provided by thoughts of his family, he was able to hang on until the desire to quit left him.

As they finally neared the finish, Alan found the last mile to be the hardest of all. Alan and Brent crossed the finish line just five seconds apart. Alan was more exhausted than he ever had been but was elated because he had beaten his goal by more than fifteen minutes and had finished among the top twenty-five runners.

### **Life is like running a marathon**

In some respects, progressing through life is like running a marathon. You young people are nearer the beginning of your earthly sojourn. You chose to come to this earth and to be tested and proved. The end may seem too far away to concern you now. But life, like a mara-

thon, requires a good start and a strong, consistent effort all of the way to the finish.

### **Set goals**

Marathon runners set explicit goals. You should look ahead now and decide what you want to do with your lives. Fix clearly in your mind what you want to be one year from now, five years, ten years, and beyond. Receive your patriarchal blessing and strive to live worthy of its promises. A patriarchal blessing is one of the most important guides in life that members of the Church enjoy. Write your goals and review them regularly. Keep them before you constantly, record your progress, and revise them as circumstances dictate. Your ultimate goal should be eternal life—the kind of life God lives, the greatest of all the gifts of God.

### **Prepare**

After you visualize yourself as you would like to be in twenty years from now, identify the preparation you will need. Determine to pay the price in effort, money, study, and prayer. Be sure you understand the course or path you will be taking. The ideal course of life is not always easy. Comparatively few will find it and complete it. It is not a well-marked freeway, but a narrow path with only one entrance. The way to eternal life is straight and narrow. When I think of staying on the right path, I am reminded of Lehi's dream about the tree of life. In it, the love of God was likened to a tree that bore delicious fruit, fruit that was desirable above all others. As Nephi recorded his father's words: "And I also beheld a strait and narrow path, which came along by the rod of iron, even to the tree. . . . And I saw numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward, that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree" (1 Nephi 8:20–21). Many of these people later "fell away into forbidden paths and were lost" (8:28). But those who ignored the scoffing and ridicule of the world and held tightly to the rod of iron enjoyed the



fruit of the tree. The rod of iron represents the word of God, that leads us to the love of God (see 1 Nephi 11:25). You must hold firmly to the rod of iron through the mists and darknesses, the hardships and trials of life. If you relax your grip and slip from the path, the iron rod might become lost in the darkness for a time until you repent and regain your grasp of it.

Remember that success results when preparation meets opportunity in your lives. You will not always know precisely what opportunities will come or when they will come. But you can be sure they will be valuable only to the extent that you are prepared to respond to them. You can see the equation of preparation plus opportunity equaling success in the lives of leaders in the Church, government, business, professions, and, hopefully, in your own lives.

Preparation is vitally important in the Church so you can do your part when called upon and so the Lord can use you when he needs you.

### Seek help and give help

In life, as in a marathon, you should seek the help you need. Do not depend on your own strength alone. You have never done all you can to finish a task until you have sought help from the Lord, loved ones, Church leaders, and friends.

I'm sure we've all been impressed by a miracle that has occurred recently in this valley. Joshua Dennis, age ten, is alive today because of his own fervent prayer, faith, and overwhelming optimism, and, in addition, because of the fact that he listened to his mother and obeyed her counsel. In addition, we remember the feeling, and I call it inspiration, given to John Skinner, who led the search party to Joshua. I hope our youth will remember this great lesson of prayer as they pass through life's journey.

Relying on only your own abilities can lead to the sin of pride. In the opening section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord described the wicked condition of many in the world, and I quote: "They

seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god" (D&C 1:16). If we boast in our own strength and "walk in our own way," we can slip easily from the straight and narrow path to the broad roadways of the world. Do not be misled by the occasional easiness of the way, like the downhill part of a marathon. Keep close to the Lord and trust in him during the easier times, just as you do in your uphill struggles.

Marathon runners pass aid stations located along the course; they provide water, encouragement, and assistance. Without this help, many runners could not carry on. You young people also have "aid stations" to help you keep moving along your course. They should include your parents, other family members, ward leaders, and teachers who have "run more races" and are farther along the path of life. Benefit from the experience they have accumulated. Trust them; seek their advice, counsel, and support; and then listen to them. They will help you stay on your course.

You young men should be grateful for the great privilege and blessing you have of bearing the Aaronic Priesthood. Be faithful in your priesthood duties; they will help you prepare for greater service. I urge you teachers and priests to be faithful home teachers, which is a lifetime calling for all of us. You young women should participate in the Young Women program. Learn the values of this program and apply them personally in your lives. Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women leaders support your parents in helping guide you through this critical part of your lives when the decisions you make have such far-reaching effects.

Always be willing, even anxious, to help others. Nothing else you do will give you the same genuine satisfaction and joy within because, and I quote, "when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiiah 2:17). Ignoring the needs of others is a serious sin. Think of the words of Alma to the people of the Church in Zarahemla. He asked:

"Will ye . . . persist in the wearing of costly apparel and setting your hearts upon the vain things of the world, upon your riches?"

"Yea, will ye persist in supposing that ye are better one than another; . . .

"Yea, and will you persist in turning your backs upon the poor, and the needy, and in withholding your substance from them?" (Alma 5:53-55).

King Benjamin taught that we must care for those in need—the poor, hungry, naked, and sick—both spiritually and temporally if we are to receive a remission of our sins from day to day or, in other words, if we are to walk guiltless before God (see Mosiah 18:29).

### Hitting the wall

I suppose some of you, at one time or another, feel that you are "hitting the wall," feeling an almost compelling urge to quit, give up, or give in to temptation. You will meet challenges, adversities, and temptations that seem to be more than you can bear. In times of sickness, death, financial need, and other hardships, you may wonder whether you have the strength, courage, or ability to continue.

You young people face the same temptations that have been common throughout history, plus many others that were unknown to earlier generations. However, be sure you understand that God will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability to resist (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). He does not give you challenges that you cannot surmount. He will not ask more than you can do but may ask right up to your limits so you can prove yourselves. The Lord will never forsake or abandon anyone. You may abandon him, but he will not abandon you. You never need to feel that you are alone.

The reason to stay on course in a marathon is obvious. The reason to stay on a course that leads to a righteous life may be less obvious but is much more important. In simple terms, a righteous life is the way—the only way—to happiness, joy, and peace. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught:

"Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God. . . .

". . . In obedience there is joy and peace, . . . and as God has designed our happiness . . . , he never has—He never will . . . give a commandment to His people that is not calculated in its nature to promote that happiness which He has designed" (*History of the Church*, 5:134-35).

We read in the Book of Mormon, "Men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25).

Our Heavenly Father knows the way for you to enjoy happiness and peace; the principles of the gospel mark the way. They are a gift to you, his children.

On the other hand, Satan will try, at every step of the way, to lead you off course. His objective is to make you unhappy and miserable like he is (see 2 Nephi 2:27). Vast sums of money are spent each year to package and disguise sin and evil to make them appear enticing, attractive, even harmless. However, regardless of appearances, "wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10) and never will be. Never find yourselves in the position of the Nephites just a few years before the birth of the Savior. They "sought . . . for that which [they] could not obtain; . . . for happiness in doing iniquity, which thing is contrary to the nature of that righteousness which is in our great and Eternal Head" (Helaman 13:38). You cannot find happiness in sin and iniquity.

The Lord has given you the gift of agency (see Moses 7:32) and instructed you sufficiently to know good from evil (see 2 Nephi 2:5). You are free to choose (see 2 Nephi 2:27) and are permitted to act (see 2 Nephi 10:23; Helaman 14:30), but you are not free to choose the consequences. With absolute certainty, choices of good and right lead to happiness and peace, while choices of sin and evil eventually lead to unhappiness, sorrow, and misery.

## Endure to the end

An obvious parallel between life and a marathon is the necessity to run diligently and endure to the end. Among his final words to his people, Nephi told them: "And now, . . . after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; . . . Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ . . . and endure to the end" (2 Nephi 31:19-20). I think of this promise of the Lord: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). You have that promise.

My dear young friends, I pray that the Lord will guide and strengthen each of you in running your personal marathon. Then you can say, as Paul wrote to Timothy, "I have fought a good fight, I have

finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). I know that you *can* live righteous lives and, with the help of the Lord, *do* all that you should do. I bear testimony that our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love each of you and want you to be happy. Joseph Smith is the prophet of the restoration of the gospel in these latter days, and President Ezra Taft Benson is the prophet today. This is the Church of our Lord and Savior; I am one of His witnesses. I bear this humble testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Hinckley

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Elder Victor L. Brown, who will speak as one who has received emeritus status in this conference.

## Elder Victor L. Brown

### Serving with prophets of God

Twenty-eight years ago today, to my total surprise, my professional life took a completely different direction. I had spent twenty-one years in the commercial aviation industry, and I enjoyed it. We had just moved into a new home in Chicago when a call came from Church headquarters inviting me to come to Salt Lake City for an interview with President David O. McKay. All my prior plans were discarded as I was called to be a Counselor to the new Presiding Bishop, John H. Vandenberg. I had never thought nor aspired to become a General Authority, but there was only one answer possible when President McKay, a prophet of God, called me to this work.

These twenty-eight years following that experience in October of 1961 have provided opportunities for service I never could have dreamed of. I have been blessed with dedicated associates in many countries and at headquarters who have worked faithfully to help build the kingdom of God, often at great personal sacrifice.

I was privileged to serve very closely under four Presidents of the Church — Presidents David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, and Spencer W. Kimball. As a member of the Presiding Bishopric for twenty-four years, I sat in weekly meetings with the First Presidency and was privileged to be taught by these prophets of God. Prior to President Ezra Taft Benson's call to be the President of the Church, I was released from the Presiding Bishopric. Although I have not had regular opportunities to meet with him, I have appreciated his leadership and have greatly benefited from his challenge to each member of the Church to study and ponder the truths of the Book of Mormon. Each of these five Presidents under whom I have served as a General Authority has had his own personality and style; yet I testify each is a prophet of God. Through my association with them, I have come to understand why we sustain them as prophets, seers, and revelators.

## Look at how people treat others

In my experience with these Brethren and with other men and women in many parts of the world, I have found that the measure of a man is not necessarily his title or his position but rather how he treats others — his peers, his supervisor, the cab driver, or the airline clerk after he has missed an important connecting flight. This is particularly true in how a man treats those closest to him — his wife and children.

I once overheard a conversation between two friends of mine who are somewhat older than I and very successful in their professional pursuits. One said to the other, quietly, not realizing I could hear his comment, "You may think you love your wife, but I love Elizabeth twice as much as you do Rachel." Each had been married over fifty years. Their greatest success, in my opinion, is the love and respect they have for their companions.

I pay tribute to my wife, Lois, who had the major responsibility in rearing our children, as my assignments have caused me to travel very extensively throughout the world. Because of her wonderful influence, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 1:4).

## People who have walked in truth

I have been blessed to meet many young Church members who "walk in truth" and who have taught me so much through their quiet obedience to the Lord's commandments. Let me share with you a few examples:

- A fifteen-year-old Korean boy, a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood, used his allowance each week to buy newspapers. Then he and his friends sold them on street corners in Seoul, giving the money to a classmate who couldn't remain in school without this financial help. He wanted to know how it felt to be a Good Samaritan rather than having just an intellectual understanding of the lesson he had studied in the scriptures.

- Another teacher, a fourteen-year-old Tongan boy, had the same faith the Prophet Joseph Smith did at fourteen. He

thought, If, at my age, Joseph Smith could pray to God and get an answer to his prayers, why can't I? He prayed that he might somehow obtain an education to prepare him to help his people. The answer came when he received a full scholarship to the Church college of Hawaii without having applied for it. Since then he has used his education to bless his people.

- An eight-year-old girl, reared in a good home with parents who did not believe in God, on her own initiative learned the Lord's Prayer and recited that prayer privately every day. Eventually she added her own words and finally began offering her personal prayers to her Heavenly Father. She knew He lived, even though her parents did not. A few days ago I had the honor of officiating at her marriage and sealing in the temple. Her mother was with her — the result of her daughter's example.

- A deacons quorum president startled his adult leaders by asking a boy who hadn't been coming to church to offer the prayer in quorum meeting. When asked afterward if it really was wise to ask a boy to pray who had only been in church the second time, he responded, "But I just spent three days this week teaching him how to pray."

- A young woman whose understanding of eternal life was far beyond her years said that the only gift she wanted for her twelfth birthday was to be able to go to the temple and be baptized for the dead.

These wonderful young Latter-day Saints, whom I love very dearly as I do all young people, are some of my heroes of the past twenty-eight years. They cause me to have great faith in the future even though there is much to concern us today.

## Blessings of temple service

The capstone of all the experiences I have had in Church service was the blessing of serving in the Salt Lake Temple. There, Sister Brown and I, with the wonderful, devoted temple workers, had the privilege of associating daily with faithful members who came to the house

of the Lord to perform sacred service. I had always intellectually understood and accepted the purposes and the ordinances of the temple, but now I know to the depths of my being the joyous, peaceful spirit of that service.

When we go to the temple because we want to go and not because it is an obligation; when we go with an attitude of worship and a reverence for God and for His son Jesus Christ, and with gratitude for the Savior's sacrifice; when we spend sufficient time to leave the cares of the world outside, wonderful things happen which cannot be described. The Spirit of the Lord distills upon one's soul in these holy houses, truly the most sacred places on earth. A new perception comes into focus of who we are, of what this life is really about, of the opportunities of eternal life, and of our relationship with the Savior.

A young medical student in Italy, a friend of mine who is now a cardiovascular surgeon, expressed his feelings about the temple this way:

"Doing temple work, especially for your loved ones, is an edifying and spiritual thing. You feel the gospel in action; you feel the love of God and the sense of the wonderful plan He made just for us, His children.

"Two days ago, I was at the hospital working when an eighteen-year-old boy came to me, asking for news of his father, who was undergoing coronary bypass surgery. At 5:00 P.M. came the news: his father's heart ceased to beat. I'll remember for the rest of my life how miserable and void of hope is a life without the comfort of the certainty of resurrection, of being eternally sealed as a family, of having the opportunity again to be with Heavenly Father."

The Lord invites all to come unto Christ through the ordinances and covenants of the temple, that we might receive the greatest of all God's gifts to His children, the blessing of eternal life and exaltation.

## Testimony

At the conclusion of these twenty-eight years, I testify of our Heavenly Father's love for us. The unconditional love the Father and the Son have for us is so real. The Savior continually invites us to "come unto him and partake of his goodness" (2 Nephi 26:33).

The whole message of the gospel is found in one short scripture which speaks to all of us: "And now, my beloved brethren, I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption. Yea, come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved" (Omni 1:26).

I bear witness that He lives, that He loves each one of His children — and that means every human being — every man, every woman, every girl, every boy, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Victor L. Brown, whom all of us knew for so many years as Bishop Victor L. Brown, who served with great distinction first as a Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, then for a long period of time as Presiding Bishop of the Church and more recently as president of the Salt Lake Temple. Bishop Brown lost his beloved companion, Lois Kjar Brown, only a few days ago. I'm confident that the hearts of members of the Church throughout the world reach out to him in love and understanding and comfort.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top." Following this, Sister Jayne B. Malan, First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, will speak to us.

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The choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

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## Jayne B. Malan

### The summer of the lambs

The day school was out at the beginning of each summer, our family went to our ranch in Wyoming. It was there, with my parents and brothers and sisters and a few cousins mixed in, that I learned about family loyalty; love and concern; birth and death; that one must finish a job once it is started; and, to quote my father, "There are only two things important—the family and the Church."

One year my father was waiting for us as we arrived. He said he had a big job for my brother Clay and me to do that summer. I was about twelve at the time, and my brother was two years older. Pointing to the field by the side of the house, my father said, "Do you see all of these lambs in that field? I'll share the money we get for the ones you raise when we sell them in the fall." Well, we were excited. Not only did we have a significant job to do, but we were going to be rich! There were a lot of lambs in that field—about 350 of them. And all we had to do was feed them.

However, there was one thing that my father hadn't mentioned. None of the lambs had mothers. Just after shearing, there had been a violent storm that chilled the newly shorn sheep. Dad lost a thousand ewes that year. The mothers of our lambs were among them.

To feed one or two baby animals is one thing, but to feed 350 is something else! It was hard. There was plenty of grass, but the lambs couldn't eat the grass. They didn't have teeth. They needed milk. So we made some long, V-shaped feeding troughs out of some boards. Then we got a great big tin wash-tub, ground up some grain, and added milk to make a thin mash. While my brother poured the mash into the troughs, I rounded up the lambs, herded them to the troughs, and said, "Eat!" Well, they just stood there looking at me. Although they were hungry and there was food in front of them, they still wouldn't eat. No one had taught them to drink milk out of a trough. So I tried *pushing* them toward

the troughs. Do you know what happens when you try to push sheep? They run the other way. And when you lose one, you could lose them all because others will follow. That's the way with sheep.

We tried lining up the lambs along the troughs and pushing their noses down in the milk, hoping they'd get a taste and want some more. We tried wiggling our fingers in the milk to get them to suck on our fingers. Some of them would drink, but most of them ran away.

Many of the lambs were slowly starving to death. The only way we could be sure they were being fed was to pick them up in our arms, two at a time, and feed them like babies.

And then there were the coyotes. At night the coyotes would sit up on the hill, and they'd howl. The next morning we would see the results of their night's work, and we would have two or three more lambs to bury. The coyotes would sneak up on the lambs, scatter the herd, and then pick out the ones they wanted and go after them. The first were those that were weak or separated from the flock. Often in the night when the coyotes came and the lambs were restless, my dad would take out his rifle and shoot in the air to scare them away. We felt secure when my dad was home because we knew our lambs were safe when he was there to watch over them.

Clay and I soon forgot about being rich. All we wanted to do was save our lambs. The hardest part was seeing them die. Every morning we would find five, seven, ten lambs that had died during the night. Some the coyotes got, and others starved to death surrounded by food they couldn't or wouldn't eat.

Part of our job was to gather up the dead lambs and help dispose of them. I got used to that, and it really wasn't so bad until I named one of the lambs. It was an awkward little thing with a black spot on its nose. It was always under my feet, and it knew my voice. I loved my lamb. It was one I held in my arms and fed with a bottle like a baby.

One morning my lamb didn't come when I called. I found it later that day under the willows by the creek. It was dead. With tears streaming down my face, I picked up my lamb and went to find my father. Looking up at him, I said, "Dad, isn't there someone who can help us feed our lambs?"

After a long moment he said, "Jayne, once a long, long time ago, someone else said almost those same words. He said, 'Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep'" (John 21:15-17). Dad put his arms around me and let me cry for a time, then went with me to bury my lamb.

### **The Savior's lambs**

It wasn't until many years later that I fully realized the meaning of my father's words. I was pondering the scripture in Moses that says, "For behold, this is my glory and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of [all mankind]" (Moses 1:39). As I thought about the mission of the Savior, I remembered the summer of the lambs, and for a few brief moments I thought I could sense how the Savior must feel with so many lambs to feed, so many souls to save. And I knew in my heart that he needed my help.

You wonderful young people, from what we've observed, you're not unlike our lambs. You, too, are hungry—hungry for things of the Spirit that will make you grow strong and keep you safe from the coyotes that are out to destroy you. You are capable and willing to do your part in building the kingdom when you are taught how. And we want to help you.

We know that you need someone to love you, someone to listen and understand. You need to be needed. You need opportunities to come together in a safe environment, a safe fold so to speak, where you can share with one another and develop wholesome friendships based on brother-sister relationships rather than romantic involvement. You need opportunities to experience the joy of sacrifice and service, of caring for and loving one

another as our Savior loves us. Within the gospel we have what you need, but you will need to reach out and accept it.

### **Youth, prepare now**

It would have been far easier to save our lambs if the mothers had been there to feed them. Young women, you are the mothers of tomorrow. Young men, you are the fathers. Together, you are the parents, the teachers, and the advisers who will help nurture and feed young lambs and lead them home. Prepare yourselves now for that sacred responsibility. Study the scriptures. Develop your God-given talents. Learn all you can about the world around you that is clean and good. Prepare yourselves to enter the temple of the Lord and be worthy to receive the ordinances and blessings by living, teaching, and sharing the gospel.

Your Heavenly Father knows you and cares about what you are doing. He wants you to fulfill your divine mission, then come home and bring your family and friends with you. He wants you to be happy. Be on your knees daily and talk to your Heavenly Father. Share the happy times. Talk about what's hard for you. Like my father, your Heavenly Father will understand. He'll be there to walk with you and to comfort and protect you, for he has promised to those who seek him, "I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88).

### **With a shepherd's loving care**

Our prophet, President Benson, has said, "The symbolism of the Good Shepherd is not without significant parallel in the Church today. The sheep need to be led by watchful shepherds. . . . With a shepherd's loving care, our young people, our young lambs, will not be as inclined to wander. And if they do, the crook of the shepherd's staff, a loving arm, and an understanding heart will help to retrieve them" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 3 Apr. 1987).

Parents, priesthood leaders, teachers, advisers, be "watchful shepherds"; and you, our noble youth, band together in the strength of the Lord and lead out in righteousness. Reach out with loving arms and understanding hearts to those who are weak or wandering. Help bring them back to the fold, where they can learn of the Good Shepherd and grow close to him. And please choose carefully the paths you walk, for others will follow. That's the way with sheep.

Of our little flock, we saved only one-third. And what of the Savior's flock? He has said, "Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep."

This I know: He needs our help. With more people to help, more lambs

will be saved. A simple fact, but true. Of this I can bear testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Thank you, Sister Jayne Malan, for that very touching and impressive talk and testimony.

We should now like to hear brief testimonies from Elders F. Arthur Kay and John Sonnenberg, who have served as members of the Seventy called five years ago and who have served the Lord so very well and faithfully.

## Elder F. Arthur Kay

### Seeing God's power at work

My beloved brothers and sisters, this is indeed a challenge and an opportunity, a privilege that I had not anticipated and yet one of those great opportunities to do that which I have been called to do for the past five years — and that is to bear witness of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

These five years have been filled with experiences that have further taught me what I had learned in the previous forty years while serving in various capacities of leadership in the Church — and that is that God does hear and answer prayer, that there is power in the priesthood, and that by that power and authority to act in his name great things happen in the lives of people.

I have in mind today a blessing given to someone precious and close to me who was told by her physicians that the child she was to bear would unquestionably have Down's syndrome; an abortion was recommended. She refused, and in the next few weeks calls from the hospital and others came encouraging that the little fetus be aborted. Finally, in desperation, she called her doctor and said, "Get those people off my back. This little child will have a right to life regardless of its

condition." She had been given a priesthood blessing by her father and had been promised that the little child would be normal and healthy. When the little child involved was born, so it was. Today she is an unusually beautiful, bright, charming child.

I have thought how many times in her life she would have had cause to reflect had she followed that counsel which was contrary to that given her by her father.

I recall that not too long ago I became acquainted with a precious young woman named Sharon living in Brisbane, Australia. She had cystic fibrosis and had in the last few years spent nearly as much time in the hospital as she had in her home. She was downcast and desperate, feeling that God had forgotten her and that there was no chance for her. But a priesthood blessing told her to trust in the Lord with all of her heart and lean not to her own understanding and promised that He would guide and direct her. And then came the words that somewhat frightened him who was pronouncing the blessing: "Sharon, there will come in your lifetime medical advances which will correct the problem and alleviate the challenges that you are facing."



Within thirty days, in Melbourne, Australia, there came a medical announcement of a new drug, experimental in nature, that showed promise in combating cystic fibrosis. Sharon applied for treatment, and it has been successful. Today she spends very little time in the hospital; the rest of her time is spent preparing for a career.

### Keep the faith

My brothers and sisters, these are only two instances of times I have seen God's power at work. I want you to know that my testimony came when I was a little boy at the feet of my parents. I loved my parents. They taught me in the way of truth and righteousness. I was taught the story of the Restoration, which I believed with all of my heart because I believed my parents.

In the forty-sixth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord says: "To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. . . . To others it is given to believe on their words" (46:13-14). I was one of those who believed on my parents' words. To me, the teachings of the First Vision,

the visits of Moroni and others were as real as if they had been personal experiences of my own. I have never had a day in my life that I can remember when I haven't known these things are true.

I pay tribute this day to my wife of some fifty years, who has been at my side, encouraging, sustaining, supporting, and enduring when the going was tough. I want her and my children to know that I love her and them with all of my heart.

In the past two or three weeks, I have greeted most of my grandchildren, and I have shaken their hands and looked into their eyes and have said, "Keep the faith, my child. It's true." Almost invariably there has come the response, "I will, Grandpa, I will."

Their words, "Yes, Grandpa, I will," have caused me to reflect. My greatest desire is to continue faithful as an example to my family. I trust that one day the response will be, "Yes, Grandpa, I have."

I bear you my witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. Ezra Taft Benson is a prophet of God. I leave that testimony with you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder John Sonnenberg

### The true meaning of love

My beloved brothers and sisters, I am grateful for this opportunity to bear witness of the divinity of this great work and testify to all the world that we are led by a prophet of God. I don't think I've heard any more convincing words of love than those I've heard when I've been in the temple with President Benson and his dedicated Counselors and he says, "I love you, my Brethren. I love every one of you." From the depths of his heart, he has proclaimed to us the true significance of love for our fellowmen.

A few years ago while we were in Sydney, Australia, my wife and I received a letter from one of our grand-

children. He wrote: "Dear Grandma and Grandpa, I just turned twelve years of age, and the bishop called me into the office, and he said, 'I have some questions to ask of you, Bruce. Bruce, you're twelve years of age now, and so I need to know if you love the Lord.' I told him I do. 'Do you say bad words, Bruce?' 'No, bishop, I never say bad words.' 'Do you love your mother and dad?' 'Yes, bishop, I do.' 'Do you pay your tithing, Bruce?' 'Yes I do, bishop.'"

"You know, Grandpa and Grandma, the bishop said that I could receive the Aaronic Priesthood because I was twelve years of age, and he asked me if I knew what the Aaronic Priesthood was. I told

him that I knew a little bit and that I could be ordained a deacon. You know, the next week the bishop asked who I would like to be ordained by. I said I would like to be ordained by my dad. So my dad put his hands upon my head, and the bishop stood around and so did my uncles, and my dad conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon me and ordained me a deacon.

"Now, Grandma and Grandpa, you're a long way away, but I know that you're a General Authority and some day you'll come home. You know, I can't wait until you come home because I know you'll sit on the stand, and then Grandpa, I can pass the sacrament to you."

I think that is the true meaning of love, of families.

### **A light unto the world**

I express my love to my devoted sweetheart and eternal companion. I'm grateful for the matriarch that she is in our family. I am grateful for each of our children; I am grateful for their families. I'm grateful to the Lord Jesus Christ for his atoning sacrifice. I've come to know him more assuredly as I have sat in council with your great leaders. I testify to you that they are men of God.

I like a scripture that I reflect upon frequently, and I think of it when I think of them, "For they were set to be a light unto the world, and to be the saviors of men" (D&C 103:9). I bear witness that those who come into the kingdom will eventually say unto them who have helped them come into the kingdom, "You were a light unto me, and I acknowledge you as literally being a savior to me."

Another of my favorite scriptures that I would like to share with you is, "Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith ye have covenanted one with another" (D&C 90:24).

### **Look to the Savior**

Inscribed on the granite walls of the temple here in Salt Lake City is the constellation of Ursa Major, or the Great Bear, commonly known to you as the Big Dipper. If you were to project a line through the bottom two stars opposite the handle, it would point to and bisect the North Star. The mariners and those who have been lost at sea or on land have looked to the North Star to find their bearings.

I bear witness that there is, figuratively speaking, a "North Star" leading us today — a beloved prophet of God. Look to him. He will point you to the way of truth and righteousness. Look to the Savior, for he will give you life eternal.

Again I express my love to you, President Benson, to your dedicated and devoted Counselors, to the General Authorities, and to the body of the Church for your love and sustaining influence. We have come to love you in the Pacific islands; we have come to love you in Europe, where we served; we have come to love the Saints all over the world. My lovely companion and I shall ever remember this association with grateful hearts as we continue to bear witness of the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I bear witness that the Church has been restored, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, as is a living prophet today, President Ezra Taft Benson, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

Thank you, Elder Kay and Elder Sonnenberg, for those beautiful and moving testimonies. Testimonies of similar substance and beauty could be borne by each of those who has been released during this conference. We pray that the blessings of the Lord will go with them and be with them now and throughout their lives.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve, will now address us.

## Elder Neal A. Maxwell

With all of you, I express my admiration to these wonderful men who are being released and whose status is being adjusted. They were exemplary at the time of their calls; they are even more so today. They are portable sermons for us all. My sermon was essentially prepared in June. It is for myself as well as for the members of the Church.

### Murmuring against the Lord

Murmuring is defined as a half-suppressed resentment or muttered complaint. We all remember, in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye's verbal asides to God.

However, just as "a yawn [can be] a silent shout," so murmuring can be much more than muted muttering (G. K. Chesterton, in Robert Andrews, ed., *The Concise Columbia Dictionary of Quotations* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1987], p. 30). The real "Addressee" of some of our murmuring is clearly the Lord, as when the people complained against Moses (see Exodus 16:8; 1 Nephi 16:20). At least Tevye honestly acknowledged whom he addressed.

### Scriptural accounts of murmuring

Murmuring seems to come so naturally to the natural man. It crosses the scriptural spectrum of recorded complaints. We need bread. We need water (see Numbers 21:5). The needed military reinforcements did not arrive (see Alma 60). "Why did we ever leave Egypt?" (see Numbers 11:20). "Why did we ever leave Jerusalem?" (see 1 Nephi 2:11). Some, perhaps understandably, murmured over persecution by unbelievers, and others even murmured over what the name of Christ's church should be (see Mosiah 27:1; 3 Nephi 27:3-4). Most ironically, the coming forth of more scripture from God was to cause murmuring (see 2 Nephi 29:8).

An early scriptural instance of murmuring involved Cain's offering to the

Lord, illustrating how our intentions are at least as important as our deeds (see Moses 5:20-21). Cain was "wroth" that Abel's offering was acceptable but not his. Sometimes, brothers and sisters, we, too, worry if someone else seems to be more favored than we. Worse still, we want to be accepted of the Lord — but on our terms, not His!

A basic cause of murmuring is that too many of us seem to expect that life will flow ever smoothly, featuring an unbroken chain of green lights with empty parking places just in front of our destinations!

In its extremity, murmuring reflects not only the feelings of the discontented, but also the feelings of the very conflicted:

"Their sorrowing was . . . the sorrowing of the damned, because [they could not] take happiness in sin.

"And [yet] they did not come unto Jesus with broken hearts and contrite spirits, but they did curse God, and wish to die. Nevertheless they would struggle with the sword for their lives" (Mormon 2:13-14).

In His parable of the vineyard workers, Jesus noted of disciples how those who worked from the first hour, having "borne the burden and heat of the day" (Matthew 20:12), murmured because they received the same wages as those who worked only the last hour (see 20:11). We beggars are so concerned with our entitlements.

Laman and Lemuel murmured against father Lehi for leading them into the wilderness because of the "foolish imaginations of his heart" (1 Nephi 2:11; see also 3:31; 4:4). This same depressing duo declared that father Lehi had judged the Jerusalemites too harshly, yet Jerusalem was soon to fall.

Lehi rebuked murmuring Laman and Lemuel for complaining over Nephi's saying "hard things" to them (1 Nephi 16:3). Lehi noted, "That which ye call anger was the truth" (2 Nephi 1:26). How often you and I, brothers and sisters,

can make that same mistake! Cutting truth does hurt, but its lancing can drain off pride.

There was murmuring, too, because Nephi broke his steel bow and couldn't build a ship (see 1 Nephi 17:17) and because he was seen as trying to "rule over us" (2 Nephi 5:3). Those same murmurers, however, soon surfeited themselves on the meat brought back by Nephi's new bow, and they sailed in the ship that Nephi built. How handy inspired but imperfect leaders in the Church are as focal points for our frustrations, especially if circumstances require them to suffer in silence! Having confidence in leaders who keep confidences is part of sustaining them.

Oliver Cowdery fell short of the coveted privilege of translating. He was told, "Do not murmur, my son, for it is wisdom in me that I have dealt with you after this manner" (D&C 9:6). Emma Smith was likewise told to "murmur not" that certain things were withheld from her (D&C 25:4).

### The nature of murmurers

In pondering these and various other examples of murmuring, several other things become obvious.

First, the murmurer often lacks the courage to express openly his concerns. If the complaint concerns a peer, the murmurer seldom follows Jesus' counsel, "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother" (Matthew 18:15).

Second, murmurers make good conversational cloak holders. Though picking up no stones themselves, they provoke others to do so.

Third, while a murmurer insists on venting his own feelings, he regards any response thereto as hostile (see 2 Nephi 1:26). Furthermore, murmurers seldom take into account the bearing capacity of their audiences.

Fourth, murmurers have short memories. Israel arrived in Sinai, then jour-

neyed on to the Holy Land though they were sometimes hungry and thirsty. But the Lord rescued them, whether by the miraculous appearance by quail or by water struck from a rock (see Numbers 11:31; Exodus 17:6). Strange, isn't it, brothers and sisters, how those with the shortest memories have the longest lists of demands! However, with no remembrance of past blessings, there is no perspective about what is really going on.

This powerful verse in the Old Testament reminds us of what is really going on:

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no" (Deuteronomy 8:2).

Perspective makes such an enormous and constant difference in our lives. It shouldn't surprise us, therefore, that Satan, we are told, does not know the mind of God (see Moses 4:6).

Perhaps when we murmur we are unconsciously complaining over not being able to cut a special deal with the Lord. We want full blessings but without full obedience to the laws on which those blessings are predicated. For instance, some murmurers seem to hope to reshape the Church to their liking by virtue of their murmuring. But why would one want to belong to a church that he could remake in his own image, when it is the Lord's image that we should come to have in our countenances? (see Alma 5:19).

The doctrines are His, brothers and sisters, not ours. The power is His to delegate, not ours to manipulate!

One especially fundamental fact about murmuring is contained in this verse: "And thus Laman and Lemuel . . . did murmur because they knew not the dealings of that God who had created them" (1 Nephi 2:12).

Like Laman and Lemuel, we too sometimes fail to understand the dealings of our God in our lives and in our times (see 1 Nephi 2:12; 17:22).

### Thomas B. Marsh's murmuring

Presidents Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball tried to discourage Thomas B. Marsh's murmuring, but to no avail. A repentant Brother Marsh later said of that time:

"I must have lost the Spirit of the Lord out of my heart. . . .

"I became jealous of the Prophet . . . and overlooked everything that was right, and spent all my time in looking for the evil; . . . I thought I saw a beam in Brother Joseph's eye, but it was nothing but a mote, and my own eye was filled with the beam; . . . I got mad and I wanted everybody else to be mad. I talked with Brother Brigham Young and Brother Heber C. Kimball, and I wanted them to be mad like myself; and I saw they were not mad, and I got madder still because they were not. Brother Brigham Young, with a cautious look, said, 'Are you the leader of the Church, Brother Thomas?' I answered 'No.' 'Well then,' said he, 'why do you not let that alone?'" (in Joseph E. Cardon and Samuel O. Bennion, comps., *Testimonies of the Divinity of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Its Leaders* [Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1930], pp. 103, 105).

### The faithful do not murmur

Laborers in the Lord's vineyard who murmur over life's inequities, declared Jesus, murmur "against the goodman of the house" (Matthew 20:11). The goodness of the Lord is attested to in so many ways — mansions await! — yet we ungrateful guests still complain about the present accommodations.

Those of deep faith do not murmur. They are generously disposed, and they are reluctant to murmur, even while in deep difficulties, as with one faithful group, who said:

"Behold, [perhaps] ye are unsuccessful . . . ; if so, we do not desire to murmur. . . .

". . . It mattereth not — we trust God will deliver us, notwithstanding the weakness of our armies" (Alma 58:35, 37).

Exemplary Job, who went through so very much, was openly anxious that he not charge God foolishly (see Job 1:22).

The pleading of one filled with faith who is also concerned with the welfare of others, as with Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail, is not murmuring. This is not the murmuring of a superficial follower who is quick to complain and who is slow to endure. Reassurance and further instruction followed with Joseph being told, "My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment" (D&C 121:7).

Damage to ourselves is sufficient reason to resist murmuring, but another obvious danger is its contagiousness. Even faithful father Lehi, for one brief moment, got caught up in the contagion of murmuring (see 1 Nephi 16:20). Similarly, when Moses lapsed, very briefly, it was under exasperating pressure from rebels (see Numbers 20:7–12). No one knows how to work a crowd better than the adversary.

### Be of good cheer

Instead of murmuring, therefore, being of good cheer is what is needed, and being of good cheer is equally contagious. We have clear obligations to so strengthen each other by doing things "with cheerful hearts and countenances" (D&C 59:15; see also 81:5).

Basic things over which the scriptures say we are to be of good cheer include the transcending blessing that our sins can be forgiven and that Jesus has overcome the world! These are marvelous blessings. Additionally, we are assured that the Lord is in our midst. He will lead us along. He will stand by us (see Matthew 9:2; John 16:33; D&C 61:36; 68:6; 78:18). By knowing that these everlasting things are firmly in place, can we not, then, better endure irritations, such as a dislocated travel schedule? Besides, brothers and sisters, how can it rain on the just and the unjust alike without occasionally raining on our personal parade? (see Matthew 5:45).

## Ways to express legitimate concerns

Of course there are ways provided — formal and informal — for expressing legitimate concerns and complaints, and for doing so productively. These avenues often go unused, especially if one's real desire is to parade his discontent. Letting off steam always produces more heat than light (see Matthew 18:15). True, we may merely gripe or grumble in a passing way. We may even do it cleverly. Still, even mild murmuring can be more pointed than we may care to admit.

## Murmuring is a form of mocking

Some actually question God's capacity, this in the face of His assurance to us, "I am able to do my own work" (2 Nephi 27:20, 21). Therefore, murmuring can be another form of mocking God's plan of salvation (see 3 Nephi 29:6). Yes, such individuals say, God has an overall general plan, but we don't care for His specific timing (see 2 Nephi 27:21; Enos 1:16; Ether 3:24, 27). Yet the scriptures specifically advise us that "all things must come to pass in their time" (D&C 64:32; see also 24:16).

Yes, such individuals may acknowledge God, but they criticize His ways (see Jacob 4:8; D&C 1:16; 56:14). We want things to be done in our ways, even though our ways are much lower ways (see Isaiah 55:8-9).

## The importance of patience

Furthermore, since God has told us He intends to try our faith and our patience, are not situations of stress the very settings from which such murmuring would emerge? (see Mosiah 23:21). Of course — unless we are careful.

God accomplishes things, brothers and sisters, "in process of time." This calls for our patience. Moreover, doing things in process of time is often His way of either preserving our agency or of providing us with needed opportunity. In

fact, certain experiences, over which we might understandably murmur, can actually be for our good (see D&C 105:10; 122:7; Genesis 30:27). Thus you and I may think God is merely marking time, when He is actually marking openings for us, openings which are sorely needed. Even then, we are so slow to use those openings in order to escape from the familiar cell of selfishness.

## Murmuring deafens and blinds us

Murmuring can also be noisy enough that it drowns out the various spiritual signals to us, signals which tell us in some cases to quit soaking ourselves indulgently in the hot tubs of self-pity! Murmuring over the weight of our crosses not only takes energy otherwise needed to carry them but might cause another to put down his cross altogether. Besides, brothers and sisters, if we were not carrying so much else, our crosses would be much lighter. The heaviest load we feel is often from the weight of our unkept promises and our unresolved sins, which press down relentlessly upon us. In any genuine surrendering to God, one says, "I will give away all my sins to know thee" (Alma 22:18). To Whom shall we give our sins? Only Jesus is both willing and able to take them!

Finally, nonmurmurers are permitted to see so much more. Ancient Israel was once compassed about with "a great host" of hostile horses and chariots. Elisha counseled his anxious young servant, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings 6:16). The prophet then prayed that the Lord would "open" the young man's eyes, "and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha!" (2 Kings 6:17).

Elisha's counsel can help Church members today to silence our murmuring. Regardless of how things seem, or come to seem, in troubled times, "They that be with us are more than they that be with

them." My brothers and sisters, if our lips are closed to murmuring, then our eyes can be opened. I so pray for us all in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

## President Gordon B. Hinckley

### Appreciation for President Benson

We come now to the conclusion of this great conference. President Benson asked President Monson in the opening session to read a message from him, which was beautiful and inclusive and of great value to us. He has felt that he would not speak in this session.

We commemorated President Benson's ninetieth birthday last August fourth with a great celebration in this Tabernacle, which was carried to the Church across the nation and even to some foreign areas. His life has been rich and wonderful and marvelous. His service has been tremendous and unceasing. His love for the people has been deep and magnificent.

I know that he would have me express in his behalf his deep love for each of you, for you members of the Church throughout the world wherever you may be; likewise, he would extend that love to those who are not members of the Church, for he stands as a prophet of the Lord Jesus Christ, extending in his life and in his authority as that prophet all of the love which the Lord would have his children receive.

"We ever pray for thee, our prophet dear." God bless you for your great leadership, for your dedicated service, for your example to us, for your love of God expressed through your service to His children.

As we conclude this conference, we express our sincere appreciation to the Mormon Youth Chorus, the Polynesian choir, the Tabernacle Choir, and their conductors and organists for their beautiful and inspiring music.

### The Tabernacle Choir: a national treasure

May I say concerning this great Tabernacle Choir, which has sung for us today, that it has become an institution in the Church and has become, as expressed by a great national leader, a national treasure. They are dedicated and wonderful people, skillfully led and directed by good and able leaders, who sing the glories of God each week to a vast audience from sea to shining sea across this land and have been doing so for sixty years. Last July that anniversary was celebrated here, again in this Tabernacle. Think of it — six decades without an interruption of singing as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, representatives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There is nothing like it in the history of broadcasting in this nation or in any other nation. They have now given 3,127 continuous programs, that number being the number of the program that was given this morning. We salute them. We honor them. We praise them. We thank them for their dedicated service and their unmatched contributions.

The roots of this choir lie in the soil of this block. It was 140 or more years ago — first in the old Bowery and then in the old Tabernacle, which stood just to the south of us — that a group of singers first raised their voices in this valley in praise to God. The choir they began has gone on ever since and in the process grown better with age. Thank you so very, very much.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society, the doctors and Church

health unit nurses who have been on hand to render service, and the ushers and interpreters. We express appreciation to local and national press representatives for the coverage of the conference. We are grateful to the owners and the operators of the many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems who have given time and made facilities available to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

The choir will sing "A Gaelic Blessing," and the benediction will then be offered by Elder Malcolm S. Jeppsen of the Seventy. The conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

### A word of benediction

As we conclude, may I leave with you, in the form of a word of benediction, some of the words of the Lord as set forth in His revelation:

"Therefore, cease from all your light speeches, from all laughter, from all your lustful desires, from all your pride and light-mindedness, and from all your wicked doings. . . .

"See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires.

"Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another. . . .

"And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace.

"Pray always, that ye may not faint, until I come. Behold, and lo, I will come quickly, and receive you unto myself [saith the Lord]. Amen" (D&C 88:121, 123-26).

Our prayers go with you. May there come into your minds remembrances of the wonderful things we have heard as we have sat together as the Saints of God and partaken of His everlasting truths, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "A Gaelic Blessing."  
The benediction was offered by  
Elder Malcolm S. Jeppsen.

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## SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Mormon Youth Chorus, conducted by Robert C. Bowden, furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning session of the conference.

Music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a Polynesian Choir from the Salt Lake Valley, conducted by Kuinise V. Matagi.

At the general priesthood session, music was furnished by a combined men's choir from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus. Robert C. Bowden and Donald Ripplinger conducted the choir.

The Tabernacle Choir, conducted by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger,

provided music for the Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Throughout the conference sessions, prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

**F. Michael Watson**  
Clerk of the conference



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