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Of the First Council of the Seventy

Notwithstanding, my brothers and sisters, the timid feeling that is in my soul, I am very happy to be called upon to speak this afternoon.

OPPORTUNITIES GIVEN THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

When I see the large congregation of men and women that we have today, and the large congregation of women that we had the other day when this Tabernacle was filled with Relief Society workers, and when I see the great number of members of the Priesthood who gather in this building, and know of the large attendance of members of the Church that we have in our ward and stake conferences and our auxiliary meetings, it impresses me with the fact we, as a people, are surely blessed in the opportunities that are given to us for religious training and development. This opportunity that we have of being members of the Church, and participating in the activities of the Church, surely trains us in leadership, and trains us to be intelligent followers.

We are a church of office holders. The majority of us have been leaders in the Church, are leaders, or some day will be. Paradoxically, we are all followers, and none of us is exempt from the directing influence of other men and women who may have been appointed to preside over us. The privilege of presiding gives us training in leadership and executive ability. To be a follower trains us in humility and appreciation of our brothers and sisters in the Church, and helps us to be sympathetic, kind and tolerant towards each other.

Perhaps these blessings have come to us because of the type of organization which we have in the Church. We are divided into stakes and wards and missions and branches. Being in small units we are able to know each other personally and to be helpful to each other in time of need. This type of organization gives us the same advantages in the Church units as the family gives the father and mother and the boys and girls in the family unit.

Then, again, we have the auxiliaries, in which we have another opportunity to teach or to be taught, to be a leader or to be a follower. The objectives of these auxiliary organizations are to train us in the things of God, to help us to have faith in the revealed word of our Heavenly Father, to acquaint us with the cultural things of life, and to give us an opportunity of participating in different types of activity that mean development and progress.

PRIESTHOOD INTENDED FOR SERVICE

Perhaps our greatest blessing is the Priesthood. Most of the male members of the Church have the opportunity of holding the Priesthood of the Lord, functioning in the activities of the Priesthood, and performing duties and obligations that bring happiness and comfort and consol-

tion to the members of the Church. All of these things are an advantage to us in our progress and development, but they are of no value unless we use them as they should be used. We are given the Priesthood so that we might act in the name of the Lord, and perform services for him to benefit and help our brothers and sisters in the Church. If we are only going to hold the Priesthood because it is offered to us, or because we have arrived at a certain age, I am sure that it is not very valuable to us.

I am convinced that the Lord did not intend that we should have the Priesthood just to hold, but that he expects us to function honorably and progressively in this Priesthood. There seems to be no justice in ordaining a boy who is a Priest, to the office of an Elder if he hasn't functioned as a Priest, or shown any desire to do the things that might have been assigned to him.

There is no particular use of having our auxiliary organizations unless we go to them, unless they are carried on in the best possible way, and unless in them we are taught correct doctrine. It seems to me that the Church shouldn't have to be worrying about the correctness of doctrines being taught in our auxiliary organizations. The type of men and women selected for teachers and the care given the preparation of study courses should prove ample safeguard.

"HARMONIZERS"

Recently I have been talking to some individuals about science and religion. Some of them are teachers in our auxiliaries and other Church institutions. Because of their attitude and their frequent reference to the word "harmonize" I have, for my own convenience, called them "harmonizers." As near as I can find out, a harmonizer in the Church is one who can take the doctrines and revealed word of the Lord and adroitly, by some whittling or some minor operation, if necessary, fit them into the scientific and intellectual puzzles of the day, without any apparent harm, (from his point of view) to the doctrine of the Church, or to the puzzle, or to the student.

MANY BLESSINGS

It seems to me, brethren and sisters, that when we have all of these advantages in the way of small units where we are kept closely together in the auxiliaries that perform a certain important and vital part of the Lord's work, and when we have the Priesthood which brings happiness and comfort, that we are indeed a blessed people and we should be, as undoubtedly we are, very grateful unto our Heavenly Father for all these blessings.

I trust, brethren and sisters, that as Latter-day Saints we will take advantage of the opportunities that are available to us so that the Lord will be more pleased with us than he may be at the present time, and that because of the righteousness of our lives we may receive greater blessings and be more worthy of a place in his kingdom. This I humbly pray in Jesus' name. Amen.