

THE STAKE MISSIONARY WORK

We are doing not only all that we can do for our own beloved land, as a nation, but we are doing for those who dwell in our immediate vicinity that which God commanded us to do. Our missionaries are scattering abroad the truths which they have received. It was my pleasure to tell you, a year ago, that during the year 1939 the Stake missionaries had performed 2,220 baptisms; and again I say to you that last year, in 1940, the same missionary group of splendid men and women brought into this Church 2,203 converts.

This work goes on apace, and God is calling more unto the fold each day and doing more for them and for our communities as a whole. With cheerful hearts these missionaries have gone out and performed this labor of love with the help and assistance of the splendid Stake presidencies which we have in the Church. So I say, with grateful hearts let us give unto God the honor and the glory and the praise.

Above everything else may we have that sweet assurance which He has given through His servants to us, from this stand, and from His servant, Joseph Smith, and all the revelations of scripture which have been given to us, that we shall, through obedience to the laws and ordinances of this Gospel, not be destroyed but ultimately gain salvation and our reward. I ask that in Jesus' name, Amen.

The Blackfoot Stake Choir sang an anthem, "Jesu, Priceless Treasure"—Bach.

ELDER MARVIN O. ASHTON*First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric*

Some of you wonder why some of us who have the responsibility which is mine at this particular moment frequently ask for guidance from above. If some of you had this responsibility I believe you would be asking for the same help.

It has just been my pleasure to make a visit to the Hawaiian Islands. I am sure those who have been to this beautiful country will not be at all surprised if, in the few weak words I may say on this particular occasion I refer to these islands and those wonderful people.

A LESSON DRAWN FROM FISHING IN HAWAII

In speaking of guidance from above, I am reminded that some of us take ourselves very seriously, in fact too seriously, sometimes. If we would continually seek for guidance from above, we would all be better off. In the Hawaiian Islands, they catch fish in different ways. One of the parts played in the most popular way of fishing is to have one of the natives go to a precipice or high mountain overlooking the bay, or the place where they fish, and he, from that particular viewpoint, directs the fishing. By the way, as you go over the islands in an airplane and you look down in the water, you find it as clear as crystal. You can see the coral below. Of course, he can see the schools of fish as they move

about. This man on the heights scans the water below, locates the school of fish, signals to the natives below. They go out sometimes with a mile of net and corral, if you please, the fish, and, of course, all is accomplished by this continual signalling back and forth. Without this guidance from above the fishermen would make many a false move. Much of his work would be guesswork, there would be much lost motion because of a lack of vision.

That little story of fishing has meant much to me. We can't get very far unless we have communication from above. There must be signalling going on between us on earth and One on high. We are sometimes so close to the forest we don't see the trees. Sometimes if the source of our guidance were farther away, we would see more clearly. Our work would be easier and our catch greater if we had communication from above.

EXPERIENCE BROADENED BY PERSPECTIVE

This trip to Hawaii and our contact with this new people reminded me of the story of a little bird. I think the story was in an old reader. The bird first lived in a pale blue shell and it thought the whole world was pale blue. Its next experience was a nest, and it thought the whole world was feathers and sticks. Its next vision was from the top of the nest. After the mother and father had crowded it out, it thought the whole world was green leaves. One day, in the course of the education by the parents, the children were pushed out of the tree and they found a big world before them. Sometimes I think we are like the little bird. Our thinking apparatus, if you please, works, depending on what our experience is. We sometimes think the whole world is a pale blue shell because our experience is so limited. Our gauge is broadened by the experience we get when we get out of that tree. We have a better perspective of things.

These Hawaiian people—I have had some thrilling moments in my life. I often think back on those things in my life that have been thrilling moments. I want to say very frankly and clearly here that never have I been thrilled more than in the contact with those people. Sometimes we get a notion that all the virtues belong to the white race. We will change our minds some day.

A TRIBUTE TO THE PEOPLE IN HAWAII

Speaking of the Hawaiian Mission under Brother Cox and the Japanese Mission under Jay Jensen, those men are doing a wonderful piece of work. As I have said, I have had a lot of thrills, but I have never been thrilled more than two weeks ago today, at the Fast Meeting of those Japanese people. Boys and girls from fifteen up, two at a time, crowded to the front to bear their testimonies. Those people are wonderful people. Those Chinese people, the Japanese, the Hawaiians, and what not, some of those dark-skinned people have the best blood flowing through their veins of any people that the Lord ever created. Some time we will find it out.

They sing because they have to. It is spontaneous combustion, if you please. They love because they must love. They put a lei around your neck. Love prompts it and in their bestowing the lei they expect only love in return. It gives you a sweat bath by the time they get you decorated the way they do; but better than a sweat bath around your neck is the warmth that comes to your heart. You can't get away from it. There you find nature in the rough, if you please, but not very great emphasis on the "rough." There were some of the highest class, best educated people that I have ever met among those people; they are cultured and refined.

I want to state here that if you ever have had in your philosophy: "God bless me and my wife, and our son John and his wife, us four and no more"—if you have got that in your system, take a trip to the Islands. It will do you a wonderful lot of good. Hawaii is the gateway to the Pacific, the gateway to the Orient. Millions and millions of people, the best people in the world are there.

I sometimes believe in order that our thinking be straight and our conduct right that we have to go up-stream once in a while to the source of the fountain—go back to Christ. What is the Gospel? Do we pervert it sometimes? Do we adulterate it? Do we get away from the original article? My experience with those people taught me that they have a wholesomeness, a piece of that original Gospel spirit that we shouldn't get away from. Sometimes we do pervert it; we change it. With all of our civilization and the advantages that come with it, our thinking is corrupted. We so change the original article that the one looking for the real thing can't recognize the substitute.

I heard this story the other day. It did me good. An antique worshipper—you have them all through this country; some of your wives are antique worshippers. (Laughter.) Maybe I didn't mean that, just the way that you took it. If you think I meant some of your husbands, well, let it go. This antique worshipper was going about in Virginia. He came to a farm where they were doing some advertising of antiques. His eye spied an old man out in the yard chopping wood. In his scrutinizing this thing and that, he went up to the man and the conversation was about as follows: "How do you do?" He said: "It looks like an old axe that you are using." The old man stopped. Said he: "Yes, they have said that this is an axe that George Washington used to use." Of course, the eyes of the antique lover bulged. Exclaimed he, "My dear man, if that is the axe George Washington used, I would give you a right good price for it." The old man grinned. "The only trouble is, if this was the axe that George Washington used, I know this is the third head it has had and the fifth handle."

In the spirit we do things and in our interpretation of the Gospel, that is exactly what we are doing. We have changed the head several times and what we are chopping with has had thrust into it the fifth handle. We have to go back up-stream sometimes to see what the real spirit of the Gospel really is. In those islands you find it. I want to say that.

THE MENACE OF INTOXICANTS

Just one more word in closing: In my observation, in going to and fro, including life on the boat, including conduct going to restaurants, it is my judgment that America never was going at such a pace as she is going right now in this liquor business. We are going fast and furious. It will take stamina of steel to stem the tide. I never was more impressed in my life. We are going drink crazy. The example we are setting the youth is criminal.

We members of the Bishopric are to be forgiven if we continually hammer on this youth question. Speaking again of the youth, I saw a sight that impressed me much. Will you please let me tell you about it? A good bishop was taking me on an inspection trip about the island. In the course of our travels he said, "I want to show you something. You probably haven't seen anything like this before." He was right—I had not. All over the islands everywhere were cocoanut trees. Everywhere they stood erect with their fruit to the sun. They were in most everyone's yard and on many of the highways. He repeated, "I want to show you something." He took me to a yard and there on the ground crawling as it were, like a great 50-foot python snake was a cocoanut tree. It did everything but cut the figure 8 in sprawling and looping the loop. Instead of keeping its head up and majestically filling its destiny in the world, that ten inch monster was crawling in the dust.

I thought to myself: Well, there is the way some of our youth are brought up. Somebody, when that plant was just taking root, gave it a kick. Even then, when yet tender if someone had only given it a kind touch, it would have gone straight. Instead of the tree facing the sun, its fruit toward the sun, there it was sprawled on the ground—too late, the day of correction past.

That is our great problem. It is going to take courage to stem the tide. The enemy are the millions. I often think of that story of the Greek at Thermopylae. When he was told that the arrows of the Persians darkened the sun, he said, "So much the better. We will fight in the shade." Yes, in this fight against this demon, liquor, we'll have to fight in the shade. Let's put on our shield and may we fight on with the same undaunted valor of the Greek youth, whose mother buckled on his shield and said, "Come *with* it or *on* it."

May the Lord bless us with courage—if we ever needed it, it is today. Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN

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I sincerely trust, my brethren and sisters, that I shall enjoy a portion of the Spirit of the Lord in the attempt to address you this morning.

THE TEACHINGS OF A GOOD MOTHER

I am ever grateful to an angel mother for the many lessons she taught me with respect to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the inspired