

**ELDER ALMA SONNE***Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

To most of us a General Conference of the Church is an important event. From it we receive strength and courage. It occurred to me as I sat here this morning and this afternoon that the Church is a great educational institution, supplying the training and the education so much needed in this world, torn asunder at the present time by war and destruction. Its purpose is to enlighten and exalt humanity.

**CONFERENCES AN INSPIRATION**

Today, in conference assembled, we rejoice in the efficiency of this Church, in its vitality, its power, its growth, its leadership, in its comprehensive program, and in the wide scope of its activities. The conferences of the Church have always been a great inspiration to the Latter-day Saints. We come here to be renewed in our faith, to be encouraged in our labors and to be strengthened in our responsibility, and we never go away disappointed.

**RELIGION A PRESENT DAY NEED**

The challenge to you and me today, as workers in this Church, has never been greater. "There was never a time more cut off from Christ," says a modern writer, "than the present, and there was never a time that needed Him more."

We have witnessed in recent years a departure from fundamentals long established, a breaking away from standards and doctrines that are as old as the Decalog. The paramount need of the hour, it seems to me, is a return to the old-fashioned virtues that formed the very bedrock of our social and economic life. We should have learned long ago that paganism and true Christianity can never be welded together. You cannot serve God and Mammon, said Jesus. That doctrine was true centuries ago when it was uttered; it is true today. A compromising, distorted and vacillating Christianity was never taught by Jesus and His apostles, or by Joseph Smith and his followers. They were firm and unyielding in their requirements for Church membership.

**REJOICES IN CHURCH**

I rejoice in the testimonies which have come to me concerning the divinity of God's work. It is a great work, as I said in the beginning. The Church is great in purpose and plan, in its program. It is great in its achievements, and in its missionary endeavor. In these days of crisis and turmoil we must not fail, for much depends upon our faith, our integrity, and our activity in the Church.

May God bless the Latter-day Saints, that they may be true to their responsibilities and true to their convictions, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.