

Elder Wallace W. Johnson, President of the San Diego Stake offered the closing prayer.

Conference adjourned until Friday morning, April 7, at 10 o'clock.

SECOND DAY

MORNING MEETING

Conference reconvened Friday morning, April 7, at 10 o'clock.

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

First Counselor in the First Presidency

This is the third session of the 114th Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square, Salt Lake City.

President Grant is with us this morning, as he was yesterday afternoon.

All the other General Authorities are here as they were sustained yesterday, except Brother Rufus K. Hardy who is detained in the hospital.

The congregation sang the hymn, "High On The Mountain Top"—Words by Joel H. Johnson, Music by Ebenezer Beesley (L.D.S. Hymns No. 131).

Elder Irvin L. Warnock, President of the Sevier Stake, offered the opening prayer.

Singing by the congregation, "An Angel From On High"—Words by Parley P. Pratt, Music by John Tullidge (L.D.S. Hymns No. 131).

ELDER EZRA T. BENSON

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I think I know now, brethren, how effectively suspense might be used as a tool of punishment. [Laughter.]

I rejoice with you in the opportunity of meeting in this great conference. I was made happy yesterday in the appointment of Brother Mark Petersen to fill the vacancy in the Council of the Twelve, and with all my heart I sustain him and pray our Father to bless him, and bless us all in our respective callings in the priesthood.

INCREASE IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

I have been greatly concerned, as I am sure many of you have, over certain trends that are in evidence in this great land of ours, which tend to strike at the very foundation of many of the things we hold dear. I

recognize the great promises that have been made to this land of Zion, through the Book of Mormon prophets and through prophets in the latter days. And yet, I wonder sometimes if we, as members of this great land, recognize what is necessary for us to do in order that those promises might be realized.

I am sure we all know that the fulfillment of those great promises is contingent upon our worshiping the God of this land, who is Jesus Christ.

I would like, if the Lord will bless me, to refer to one of the trends which has caused me deep concern since we last met in conference assembly. In riding across the great plains of this country, en route from Washington, D. C., to the conference, I read a letter and report from one of our great friends of youth, law and order and decency, and the American home, Mr. J. Edgar Hoover.

I was astounded to find that the trend of juvenile delinquency in this great land has reached proportions which should shock all of us. I am going to refer, if I may this morning, to some of the figures which were presented in the "Uniform Crime Report for the United States and its Possessions, by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the U. S. Department of Justice," taken from the Annual Bulletin for 1943.

The increases in crime during the year 1943, as measured by arrests, are as follows:

Boy arrests, under 18	23.4%
Girl arrests, under 21	47.9%

For the first time since records have been kept, age seventeen predominated in the frequency of male arrests. For the first time, age 18 predominated in the frequency of female arrests. The seriousness of the situation is more clearly seen when it is remembered that these increases, particularly in female arrests in 1943, are in addition to similar increases in 1942. Compared with 1941, the arrests of girls under 21 years of age has increased 130.4 per cent.

Now, I recognize that these statistics are subject to some interpretation. Because of the lack of time I will not attempt any particular interpretation, but I do feel that they are indicative of a serious trend which should be the concern of every true American, and certainly every member holding the priesthood in this Church. Those offenses might be broken down as follows:

In the case of male arrests under 18, arrests for rape, 39.8 percent increase; robbery, 39 percent increase; burglary, 27.7 percent increase; auto theft, 23.4 percent.

Increase in female arrests under 21: offenses against property, 30.1 percent increase; miscellaneous violations, 53.2 percent; and offenses against common decency, such as drunkenness, vagrancy, disorderly conduct, prostitution, commercial vice, and other sex crimes, such as adultery and fornication, show an increase of 56.9 percent.

Mr. Hoover, in commenting upon this serious and alarming situation, made the following comment:

This country is in deadly peril. We can win this war and still lose freedom

for all in America; for the creeping rot of moral disintegration is eating into the nation. I am not easily shocked or easily alarmed, but today, like thousands of others, I am both shocked and alarmed.

The arrests of teen-age boys and girls all over the country are startling. Some of the crimes youngsters are committing are almost unspeakable. Prostitution, murder, rape, these are ugly words, but it is an ugly situation. If we are to correct it we must face it.

A recent survey of Christian ministers in this land indicates that sixty-five percent of the delinquency is due to broken homes. Commenting on this situation, Mr. Hoover continues:

America's youth, indicted by public opinion as reckless and carefree, is blamed for these misdeeds, but the real fault lies elsewhere. Before any youth has broken the law, some adult has committed a more serious crime. Driven by lust for money or enslaved by pleasure, the adult generation forgets that the most solemn obligation any person can assume in the eyes of God and men is to guide and direct the child along proper paths. To place anything ahead of that responsibility is akin to criminal negligence.

And then he comments on what he calls the "crack-pot theory":

This is the kind of "crack-pot theory" which has laid the groundwork for our present surge of teen-age trouble. For years we have listened to some quack theorists and pseudo-psychologists who have preached that discipline and control were bad for children, that they should be left uninhibited to work out their own life's pattern and their own self-discipline. But you never acquire self-discipline if you never learn what discipline is. Neither can life's problems be worked out without experience which can be secured only through hard knocks or by guidance from the experience of others.

Now, we are reaping the harvest. Fathers have gone to war or are working long hours; many mothers, too, are working on day or night shift. Youngsters are left to their own devices, and the tragic fallacy of the theory that self-discipline just grows is being demonstrated day by day.

PLEA OF A YOUNG SOLDIER FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Following a stake conference a few months ago, a young man in uniform came up to me and asked for an opportunity to talk for awhile. This was his story: He said: "I am a member of a certain camp near Washington, D. C. I have been attending the services held there by the Mormon boys, but," he said, "I haven't been able to participate. I don't hold the priesthood. Isn't there something that can be done so that I can get the priesthood and participate in the administration of the sacrament and the exercises among the Mormon boys?"

As we chatted for awhile, I learned that he had not only been deprived of the priesthood, but had never been baptized. Yet he told me of his home town here in Utah, a Mormon community, of his father and mother both members of the Church, his father inactive, his mother somewhat more active. But they had accepted this "crack-pot philosophy" that they would let the boy grow up and choose for himself. Then he pleaded with me that some means might be provided that he could come into membership in the Church and enjoy the blessings which he saw the other Mormon boys enjoying.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS

I call your attention, my brethren, to the revelations given by the Lord with reference to the responsibility of parents to train their children, to teach them the fundamental principles of the gospel, to teach them to pray and that parents who fail to accept and discharge this obligation will have the sin rest upon them.

Read what the Lord says in the 68th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. In the very early days of the Church, the Lord saw fit to chastise some of the leading brethren of the Church for their failure to train their children, to teach them correct principles, to teach them to pray, and they were admonished to put their own houses in order.

A SURVEY AMONG SEMINARY STUDENTS

I have been very much impressed with a recent survey made by our own Church department of education among the seminary students of this Church, our boys and girls. An attempt was made in this survey to find out what the youth of the Church consider are the important things which contribute to spirituality and a moral life. I am sure it will be a surprise to some to find that among the many things they listed—and apparently they did some very serious thinking on the matter—they listed prayer in the home. That simple thing, family prayers, devotion, which was so common in this great land a generation or so ago, but is found all too infrequently now, even in the homes of the Latter-day Saints.

Brethren, I encourage you, as fathers and as leaders, to see to it that every day we have a period of devotion in the home, if for no other reason than that it might influence the lives of our boys and girls.

They also listed as influences which contribute to spirituality, parents who were spiritual and set proper examples to their children, loyalty of parents to Church leaders, attendance at Church by children with parents, temple marriage—discussion of temple marriage in the home—love and kindness, good wholesome literature.

They were also asked to list the negative influences which tend to tear down spirituality and morality, and they listed, of course, lack of prayer and spirituality in the home, back-biting and criticism of Church leaders, lack of Church attendance by parents, and such anti-spiritual influences as smoking, drinking, card playing, profanity, hate, greed, dishonesty, and so forth.

These are our boys and girls who have thus spoken. They recognize what is necessary in order to provide the environment which will produce strong characters, morally and spiritually. I hope that as leaders in Zion we will do everything within our power to provide that environment for the youth of this great Church. I have confidence in the youth of Zion, I recognize, my brethren, the serious and crucial period through which the youth of Zion are passing, and I sincerely pray that we will throw around them every safeguard that is possible, in order that they can meet the temptations and overcome them.

INTERVIEW WITH A CHIEF EXECUTIVE

While holding a series of meetings in the eastern part of the United States a few weeks ago, I was invited by the chief executive of one of the great states to visit his office. I had no idea what he wanted to discuss, but as we sat there, it soon became clear that he was concerned with the problems of youth, and he wanted to know three things about the Mormon Church: First of all, our program of activity for youth; secondly, our great missionary system. He was not so much concerned about the proselyting program of the Church, but what that missionary system did to build character in young men; and, thirdly, the great Welfare program of the Church, which tends to restore and enjoin thrift, work, and such virtues that have built this great country.

As we sat there discussing these problems, the question of family prayer came up, and he told of his experience as a boy in his own home, where he knelt in devotion each day, and then he told about visiting several of the homes of his friends recently, where there was no devotion in the home. He had great fear for the future of the youth of this great land because of the lack of spirituality in the home.

Then I had the great pleasure of telling him something of our program, and made reference to a Gold and Green ball which had just been held in one of the great hotels in Washington, where six to eight hundred young men and women had enjoyed themselves in an evening of sociability. There were no cigarets, no liquor, and the party was opened and closed with prayer. I said, "Mr. Governor, would you believe that such a thing could happen?"

He said: "I wish it were more common. It is almost impossible for me to believe it, in view of what I know of conditions that are facing the youth of this land, and what is happening in my own state."

I told him that was only typical of parties held throughout the Church, in 147 stakes.

THE STANDARDS OF THE CHURCH A RECOMMENDATION
FOR OUR YOUTH

I am convinced, my brethren of the priesthood, that we have in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in the standards of Mormonism, an answer to this upward trend in juvenile delinquency, if we will only make our programs effective, if we will only make them work.

Now, as never before, the youth of this Church need the program of the Church. They cannot afford to be without it. They need the companionship of a good man and a good woman, and I hope, as officers and as fathers, we will provide that companionship, that we will put our arms around them and sustain them, help them and direct them during this very crucial period.

To the youth of the Church I would like to say this: I know beyond the shadow of a doubt that no young man or woman in this Church can afford to disregard the standards and teachings of the Church. Even if

they are looking at it only from their personal advancement in the material world, it pays to live the standards of Mormonism. I have seen it demonstrated, time and time again, particularly during the last five years that I have resided in the nation's capital.

I know there is a lot of wickedness in the world, as was pointed out by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith yesterday, but I testify that in spite of that wickedness, the world is yet willing to pay for the services of young men and women who remain true to the standards of this Church.

I could give you illustration after illustration that will demonstrate that fact. Only a few days ago a man called me in the early morning, on the telephone, and asked if I would have lunch with him that day. I accepted, and a few hours later we faced each other across the luncheon table in one of the hotels, and he said: "I presume you are curious to know why I invited you here?" I said: "Yes, I am."

He said: "I represent one of the great hotels of the middle west." It developed that he represented probably the greatest hotel, certainly the largest, in the middle west.

He said: "In a group of friends in Chicago the other day, I was telling them that I had the responsibility of going to Washington to open a Washington office for our organization, and," he said, "I began to outline the kind of man I would like to represent us in the nation's capital."

Then he said: "After I had enumerated his qualifications, one of the men spoke up and said, 'Well, what you want is a Mormon Missionary.'"

And then he said: "When I got in the nation's capital, I inquired who was the representative of your Church here, and someone referred me to you. That is why I have invited you."

Then he began to enumerate the things he wanted in this representative. First of all, he must be morally clean. His integrity must be beyond question. He must not tamper with alcoholic beverages. He would prefer a man who did not even use tobacco. Then he went on and recited, almost entirely, the standards of this people, then asked me if I could suggest a young man that would meet those requirements.

I said: "My good friend, I could give you the names of twenty or thirty that would meet every one of those requirements, so far as I have been able to determine."

Now, I mention this simply to indicate to the youth of Zion that if they are looking only to their material advancement, if they are thinking only of getting ahead in the material world, financially, in the business field, it pays to maintain the standards of Mormonism. And if you look to the Great Beyond, and consider your eternal happiness and exaltation, it pays time and time again to maintain the standards of the Church.

May the Lord bless us. May he bless us as leaders in Zion, that we may be able to inspire the youth of the land to righteous living, that they will recognize the importance of maintaining the standards of the Church, and receive the promised blessings which come from adherence to those standards, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen,