

the land and will, with our help, build up a holy city, even the New Jerusalem, unto their God.

Only in our doing all in our power to restore these people to their heritage can we even approach a justification for having taken their promised land. May the Lord assist us all to see our full duty respecting these people and give us the courage and determination to guarantee that they have the education, culture, security, and all other advantages and luxuries that we enjoy—I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER EZRA TAFT BENSON

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Through seven inspirational sessions I have not lost faith that my time would come.

To one who has spent the major part of the last year amidst the rubble and destruction of war-torn Europe, this conference has been doubly inspirational and appreciated. As I have looked into the faces of this well-fed (almost too well-fed in many cases) audience, well-clothed, surrounded with all the comforts and blessings of life, I have found that my thoughts have many times drifted across the Atlantic to those of our brethren and sisters with whom I have been closely associated during recent months. I love them, my brethren and sisters, as I am sure you do, many of you having descended through progenitors from those nations.

We have heard much in this conference regarding Europe and the Latter-day Saints in those countries. You heard testimonies from two of the former mission presidents of those missions who told of the suffering of the Saints and who bore fervent testimony to the faithfulness and devotion of Latter-day Saints in Europe. You heard from Brother Frederick W. Babbel, my companion and faithful associate, regarding his observations in Europe. If the Lord will bless me during the next few moments, I should like, in keeping with the suggestion of President Smith, to refer briefly to some other phases in connection with observations and travels in Europe, covering a period of some ten months and more than sixty thousand miles.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GOD'S DIRECTING HAND

I hasten to suggest, my brethren and sisters, that even though many fine comments were made regarding our mission over there, I assure you I know the source of the success which attended our labors. Never at any time have I felt it would be possible for me or my associates to accomplish the mission to which we were assigned without the directing power of the Almighty. I shall never forget my feelings when I read in the press the announcement by the First Presidency regarding our call. The magnitude of it seemed overwhelming. They gave us a four-point charge: First, to attend to the

spiritual affairs of the Church in Europe; second, to work to make available food, clothing, and bedding to our suffering Saints in all parts of Europe; third, to direct the reorganization of the various missions of Europe; and, fourth, to prepare for the return of missionaries to those countries.

Our great desire was to live so that the Lord would bless us in carrying out those directions, and I testify to you this afternoon, my brethren and sisters, that the Lord has in very deed blessed us on every turn. He has gone before us. Barriers have melted away. Problems that seemed impossible to solve have been solved, and the work in large measure has been accomplished through the blessings of the Lord.

I remember well our first inquiry as to the time we could set sail, either by plane or boat. We were told it would take three months, that all bookings were filled for that period. Yet within twenty-one days from the time our appointment was announced, we landed at Hurn Airport sixty miles south of London. And in spite of a most acute housing shortage in London, two days thereafter suitable headquarters had been established; how, I do not know, except through the blessings of the Almighty; and had we been free to select a spot for our headquarters, as it developed later, we could not have done better for our purpose. And so today I am grateful beyond my power of expression for the blessings that have accompanied us on our mission in Europe.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE EUROPEAN SAINTS

I am grateful for the love of the Saints over there, and for their devotion, for their faith, for the manner in which they received us. They are a great people. I have never seen greater faith anywhere in the Church than we saw among the Saints in the war-torn countries.

I will not take time today to describe the terrors of war, the worst of which is not the physical combat but that which follows: the abandonment of moral and religious restraints, the increase in sin, disease; the increase in infant mortality; and all the suffering which accompanies famine, disease, and immorality. We saw these things on every side. We saw nations prostrate, flat on their backs economically. We found it difficult even to get a telephone call through from London to many of our missions on the continent when we arrived. We could not even make a telephone call to Holland, let alone countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia, and other nations. Almost the only type of transportation available was that under the control of the military. But through the blessings of the Lord we were able within eight days to make our first trip to the continent, and from Paris made our journey into the various nations of Europe.

I think I shall never forget those first meetings with the Saints. They have suffered much, my brethren and sisters. We wondered just how they would receive us, what the reaction would be. Would

their hearts be filled with bitterness? Would there be hatred there? Would they have soured on the Church? I well remember our first meeting at Karlsruhe. After we had made visits through Belgium, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries, we went into occupied Germany. We finally found our way to the meeting place, a partially bombed-out building located in the interior of a block. The Saints had been in session for some two hours waiting for us, hoping that we would come because the word had reached them that we might be there for the conference. And then for the first time in my life I saw almost an entire audience in tears as we walked up onto the platform, and they realized that at last, after six or seven long years, representatives from Zion, as they put it, had finally come back to them. Then as the meeting closed, prolonged at their request, they insisted we go to the door and shake hands with each one of them as he left the bombed-out building. And we noted that many of them, after they had passed through the line went back and came through the second and third time, so happy were they to grasp our hands. As I looked into their upturned faces, pale, thin, many of these Saints dressed in rags, some of them barefooted, I could see the light of faith in their eyes as they bore testimony to the divinity of this great latter-day work, and expressed their gratitude for the blessings of the Lord.

That is what a testimony does. We saw it in many countries. I say there is no greater faith, to my knowledge, anywhere in the Church than we found among those good people in Europe.

SPIRIT OF FELLOWSHIP PREDOMINANT

Many interesting things happened as you can well imagine. Oftentimes our meeting rooms were in almost total darkness as we were forced to close the windows, filled with cardboard instead of glass, because of a rainstorm. But the Saints insisted that we go on with the meeting. Other times we would close a meeting, and then they would ask if we could not hold another before we sent them home—they were so happy to have the opportunity of meeting with us. I remember in Nuremberg that the people had waited two hours for us—we were delayed because of detours around bombed bridges and other things. Shortly after we arrived, the curfew rang; but they requested that we allow them to stay on; and after the meeting was over, they were forced to stay all night in the old partially bombed-out-schoolhouse, because of curfew restrictions. Words cannot adequately express the joy of the Saints for the first missionwide conference following the war in England, Holland, Sweden, and other countries.

We found that our members had carried on in a marvelous way. Their faith was strong, their devotion greater, and their loyalty unsurpassed. We found very little, if any, bitterness or despair. There was a spirit of fellowship and brotherhood which had extended from

one mission to the other, and as we traveled, the Saints asked us to take their greetings to their brothers and sisters in other countries although their nations had been at war only a few months before. Local missionaries had carried on during the war period. In some districts there had been more baptisms than during a comparable period prior to the war.

They had lived the standards of the Church. The Word of Wisdom has been a great blessing to them. Whereas many people, driven by the pangs of hunger, had had their desire for tobacco intensified and would trade their meager food allowance for more tobacco, the Saints traded their rations of tobacco for more food. Truly this revelation of over one hundred years ago is a great blessing to them.

SUFFERINGS OF THE SAINTS

They have suffered much, my brethren and sisters. You heard President Clark read a letter here on Friday from President Walter Stover in Berlin. You may think that is an isolated case. It is only one of hundreds, many of which are much worse than the one he referred to, because our Saints in some cases have suffered more than death. It is worse than death for a mother or a father to have to stand at the point of a gun while they witness their little thirteen and fourteen-year-old daughters being ravished by fiends in human form. Some of our Saints were forced to go through that.

Yes, they have been hungry; they have been cold. We saw many such families long before welfare supplies arrived in Europe. Thank God that the welfare supplies are there now!

Our local mission presidents have performed a marvelous work. The local leaders, district and branch presidents, have done yeoman service for which we are deeply grateful to them. The local people have rallied around and supported them in every way.

Probably the saddest part of our mission was with our refugees. These poor, unwanted souls, have been driven from their once happy homes to destinations unknown. They came with all their earthly possessions on their backs, but after organizing them into branches, calling them into meetings, they sang the songs of Zion with a fervor I am sure has never been surpassed. We visited some of their homes—their shacks—where as many as twenty-two people were living in one room—four complete families! And yet they knelt together in prayer night and morning and bore testimony to us regarding the blessings of the gospel.

THE WORK OF THE WELFARE PROGRAM IN EUROPE

Now, just a word about the welfare program. I bring to you, my brothers and sisters, the deep gratitude and thanksgiving of the Saints in Europe. The spirit of the welfare program was there long before we arrived. The Saints in various countries had sent help

to their less fortunate brothers and sisters in other nations. Welfare gardens had been planted. We found them among the bombed-out buildings. We ran on to many instances where following bombings, branches had joined together and pooled all their remaining supplies, food, clothing, and household articles, and turned them over to the priesthood for distribution according to need.

It was a great joy when the welfare supplies came through. It was also a great surprise to the military authorities and others to learn with what dispatch the supplies arrived from Zion, after arrangements were made, and the cable sent back to Zion, March 14, 1946, to start shipments. They could hardly believe that there was a Church in existence with a hundred storehouses well stocked, ready to dispatch supplies to the suffering people in Europe. You have heard figures regarding the quantities that have arrived—some fifty-one carloads. That means over two hundred European carloads, or approximately two thousand tons, and I am sure that if the cost of transporting it on the European end was considered, it would total well over three quarters of a million dollars. The bulk of that, of course, has gone to the countries in greatest distress, Germany and Austria, Holland, Norway, Belgium, with quantities going to many other countries according to need.

I have faced congregations of more than a thousand Latter-day Saints where it was estimated by the mission president that more than eighty percent of the total clothing worn was clothing from Zion, sent through the welfare program. My brethren and sisters, do you need any further evidence of the need for this program and the inspiration back of it? I wish you could have spent a few days with me in Europe during this past year. I tell you God is directing this program. It is inspired! Had it not been so, there would have been many, many hundreds more of our Latter-day Saints perish with hunger and die of cold because of the lack of simple food commodities and clothing.

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH PROGRESSING

Now the work is going forward in Europe. New buildings are being provided. Under the direction of the First Presidency, purchases have been made in Sweden, England, and Holland, of buildings and lots. New headquarters have been established and the work of the Lord is progressing. We have fine cooperation from the military authorities, from civic, business, and professional people. Our United States embassies have cooperated fully. The radio and the press have been friendly. And on the whole, with mission presidents now back in all of the missions, except the West German, and permission granted for a president to go there, with four hundred and fifty missionaries already called and assigned and one hundred others waiting for visas, the outlook is encouraging. Even in Germany and Austria, where missionaries have not been permitted to go in num-

bers, some seventy local missionaries are serving full time to carry on the great work.

Two distributions of welfare supplies have been made in all districts in Germany and in the East German Mission; a third distribution was made through purchases on the Swiss market before welfare supplies arrived. A third distribution is now being made in the western zones which comprise the West German Mission. In Holland and Norway the work is progressing equally well.

EUROPE IN HOPELESS STATE

While the outlook for the Church is favorable in Europe if peace can be maintained, certainly the outlook for the world at large is anything but encouraging. After two years, following the second world war in twenty-five years, the world is indeed in a sorry state. Once powerful nations in Europe, Asia, and the Orient are flat on their backs, industries broken, economies shattered, and their once happy people on starvation doles. A large part of the world is cold, hungry, and desperate. Millions without the gospel are without hope. Europe today is in the midst of one of the greatest ideological conflicts in recorded human history—whether government exists for the individual or the individual for the government. We feel it only vaguely here, but it is real. To me the threat of Godless communism is a stern reality, not only in Europe but also in blessed America.

THE GOSPEL THE ONLY HOPE FOR THE WORLD

The outlook for the world is not encouraging, but we know what the answer is. There is only one answer, and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Peace must come from the heart. Men's hearts must change, and righteousness must rule in the lives of the people of the world before peace can come. May God hasten the day. May the message of the restored gospel go forward in great force, by increasing numbers, that God's children may escape the calamities which are impending. I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President George Albert Smith:

The brethren whose names we added to the list of the General Authorities by your vote today have not had an opportunity, perhaps, to get their breath, but we would be glad to have them tell us whether they are willing to serve, or not, and they may say anything else they have in their hearts. We shall ask Brother Henry D. Moyle to come to the stand.

The Choir and congregation sang the hymn, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," Hymn Book No. 152, L.D.S. Hymns No. 298.