

That there are living among us many people who need what we have to offer—the gospel message—there can be no question from the fact that they are being converted in great numbers within the stakes and wards of the Church. The souls of these inactive members and nonmembers among us are as precious as the souls of people in foreign countries and in the islands of the seas where our missionaries are laboring. In conclusion let me read a few lines of poetry.

How sweet 'twill be at evening,
 If you and I can say
 Good Master, we've been seeking
 The lambs that went astray—
 Heartsore and faint from hunger
 We heard them making moan,
 And lo! We've come at nightfall
 Bringing them safely home.

May the Lord add his blessings, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I hope, my brethren and sisters, the words of testimony that I shall bear to you today may be prompted by the Spirit of our Heavenly Father, that I may carry on in the same fine spirit that has characterized the things that have been said already.

CONVERSIONS TO THE GOSPEL

I am extremely happy today in the fact that I am here; that I am, with you, a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; that with you I have a testimony as to the truth of the gospel and the authenticity of the priesthood which we bear.

It is almost a hundred years since a missionary in New England found my mother's father and baptized him into the Church. He became one of the Apostles of the Church and was sent to open the missions of the Church in the Scandinavian lands.

Yesterday Dr. [John A.] Widtsoe told me that it is quite likely that nearly half of the people who are in the Church today can trace their ancestry to Scandinavia. About the same time a missionary in New Jersey found my father and brought him into the Church, my father eventually to become a counselor to President Grant. When I think of the weight of the responsibility I have in representing them, it is almost more than I can carry.

MISSIONARY BODY

I stand before you this morning representing the seventies of the Church, the great missionary body especially set apart for that purpose. It is our problem to see that the work initiated by

the Twelve is properly carried into the world, and that the people who are susceptible to the teaching and the spirit of God shall have the opportunity of coming into the Church where they can receive the benefits and the blessings which President [George F.] Richards has indicated in his remarks this morning.

We are not all in the mission field, but we still have that duty. The presidents of our priesthood quorums, all of the Melchizedek Priesthood quorums, and especially the members of the seventies' quorums and their presidencies have the responsibility of preparing men for this priesthood, the purpose of which, I believe, is to perfect men—bring them to a state as near perfection as possible so that they may be worthy of the heavy duties imposed by the receipt of the priesthood.

I fear that many of us who have those responsible positions of presidency in the Melchizedek Priesthood don't realize the weight of the responsibility that we have. What are we expected to do for the members of our quorums? Are we to sit and preside over them, assuming that all of them are firm in the faith and know the whys and wherefores of all these things, or is it our duty to look after the members of our quorums and implant in their hearts the principles of righteous living, as well as to preside over their meetings and keep the quorums moving along nicely?

PERFECTING OF QUORUM MEMBERS

I believe the great weight of their responsibilities is in the perfecting of the members of their quorums, and since this great body of people to whom President Richards referred is not in any of these Melchizedek Priesthood quorums, I believe it the duty of the seventies of the Church to reach out and find them. When they find them, it is their duty to teach them, to lead them back into activity. And, of course, in order best to do that, they should all be exemplary bearers of the priesthood. They should live the principles of the gospel as nearly perfectly as possible so that when they go to these men they may have influence with them which comes from the presence of the Spirit of God.

There are in some of the stakes as many as two hundred and fifty to three hundred men outside of the priesthood over twenty-one years of age, and when I think of the responsibility of this group of seventies toward that group of men, I am appalled. I wonder how I am going to teach them their tasks, for it devolves upon the Council of which I am a member to teach the leaders of this group of men their duty and how to perform it.

FULL FAITH REQUIRED

What should they be, these men in the priesthood, in order to be worthy of it? They should not only have full faith in the principles of the gospel, know that God lives, and that he insti-

tuted this great organization, but they should also live so as to be exemplary and useful men in their communities.

Every man in the quorums of the Melchizedek Priesthood should be an honest man, a man who would not deliberately incur an obligation when he had a fair assurance that he would not be able to complete it or carry it through; a man who would turn every resource in his power to the realization and fulfilment of a promise he had made; a man whose verbal promise, without witnesses even, is just as potent, just as powerful over him as a promise before a notary public and witnesses. An honest man, in other words, should be every man who bears the Melchizedek Priesthood.

He should likewise be a diligent man, so that he could not only carry his own burdens and the burdens of his family, but that he could also find time to seek out these other people and teach them the gospel.

TIME FOR SERVICE

We think, many of us, that we do not have time for that, but if we will find time for it, we will be surprised how much there is that we can spend in the interest of our fellows, much of that time being spent now to no worthy purpose and to no really significant accomplishment.

I remember the story of a bishop who had a herd of sheep and was prospered; then he bought two herds of sheep, and still he prospered. The authorities made him president of the stake, and he became so well off that he bought three herds of sheep, and then he couldn't find time to be president of the stake, so he asked to be released. Within the next little while he found out that he didn't have any sheep, and he wasn't president of his stake, or the bishop of his ward, and he wasn't even happy.

DEPENDABILITY

We must be diligent enough and sincere enough in our sense of responsibility to our brothers that we will find time to seek them out and help them. If we are honest and diligent, we must also be dependable. We must be such men that when the leaders of the Church assign us a responsibility and we say we will accept it, they may rest assured that we will do it, and the leaders will have no more worry about it.

Dependability is one of the best attributes of a fine man, so we must develop that, and if we will, we will be useful. We should all of us strive to be useful in our community, men that others respect because of our fine qualities.

If we can develop these and a few other tendencies so that the men with whom we labor will have no cause to find fault with us when we go to them, we will have an influence with them that we should have.

DUTY BETWEEN MEETINGS

Now, how many of us who are presidents of the priesthood quorums, the Melchizedek Priesthood quorums, feel that we have a duty to our fellows between meetings? How many of us ever go to them and sit down by the haystack or on the ditch bank, or take an automobile ride with them and talk over their responsibilities, especially with those who are not up to the full performance of their duty?

It is not the duty of the president of a priesthood quorum to work only with the members who come out to meeting every meeting day. That is the least of his responsibilities. His responsibility is to the lame and the halt, the indecisive and the inactive members of his quorum, and if and when he can so discharge his duty as to bring one or two or three or more of those inactive men into full activity, then he is a worthy president of a quorum.

Now, can we do it? Can we who have this responsibility first come to know actually and deep down in our hearts that Christ lives and that we hold the right to represent him in the ordinances that will save men? Let's not make it a parrot-like thing to bear testimony to these truths, but let's know deep down in our hearts.

After one of the general conferences, one of our prominent brethren received a letter from another prominent man who had listened to the testimonies of the conference, and he indicated that he was a bit fearful that these testimonies become routine with us. Now that just must not be. We must have in our hearts a testimony that is actual and true, to know the truth of these things, and then we must feel our responsibility if we are to preside over the quorums of the priesthood.

We should go out and seek the lost among us, and we have heard this morning how numerous they are. If we can't do that as presidents of priesthood quorums and as members of priesthood quorums, the quorums serve us to little purpose; for, after all, those quorums exist for us, their members. They are supposed to offer the means of bringing us as near as possible to a state of perfection so that we can always be worthy to go into the temple of God and receive there the wonderful ordinances which are the gifts of the priesthood of God.

I pray that we may have that type of testimony in our hearts as leaders of the priesthood and as members of it, for it is the greatest and grandest power under heaven that has ever been given to man.

I bear you this testimony as it comes from the bottom of my heart, brothers and sisters. God bless you. Amen.

President George Albert Smith:

President Antoine R. Ivins of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken.