

HISTORICAL REPORTS

Now we have had a great deal of difficulty in getting these historical reports. Sixty-three stakes and two missions failed to send in reports for 1947 and 1948 and 1949. We have some stakes and some missions that have not reported for much longer periods of time, and yet these are quarterly reports. We are under the necessity constantly of sending out letters asking for these historical records to be sent in to us so that they may be filed and preserved according to the commandments of the Lord.

COMPLETENESS AND ACCURACY

I would like to call attention also, to the fact that, notwithstanding the information we ask for, that many of these reports are not complete. Every name should be written in full. Clerks should be appointed, or historians, in the wards and stakes who can write legibly so that their records can be read.

Some of them evidently do not read the instructions that are on these blanks. Many valuable matters pertaining to the records are not included. We would like to call your attention to this. We have been after you and some of you know that we are after you because we are writing constantly, and some of the stakes have been busy and they have gone to work and have complied, although they have had to go back years to do it.

UP-TO-DATE RECORDS

Too many mistakes are made because information is not written at the time. Everything should be recorded as nearly at the time of the event as it is possible for it to be. I know from my own experience that I cannot trust to my memory, and when things are neglected for any length of time mistakes are bound to enter into the records, in regard to certain incidents and as to the time when matters have been performed.

Now brethren, will you look into these matters in your stakes and see that this record is kept up to date? This is the way we are keeping the record of the Church. It is most valuable; it is absolutely necessary, and we ask you for your help, for your support in these matters, that we may have our records up to date, kept neatly, written in permanent ink, or upon the typewriter with a permanent ribbon, and in a manner that it can be preserved eternally.

I thank you for the opportunity of presenting this matter to you. May the Lord bless you all, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

As Elder Mark Petersen and President S. Dilworth Young and I were walking at a good clip this evening to get into our seats by

seven o'clock, and encountered crowds of men outside the Tabernacle, and as we entered the west door, saw this building crowded to capacity, I had a re-affirmation of the strength of the priesthood. It is a fact, as you know, that if you have a moving body, and you increase the speed, the greater is the momentum. Add weight to that body and increase speed the momentum is still greater. That is what is occurring in this Church, a great body of priesthood, moving with an acceleration never before known to the Church. Brethren, there is nothing that can stop the progress of Truth, excepting only our weaknesses or failure to do our duty.

The older I grow the more thrilled and more grateful am I for the Church of Jesus Christ, and the more impressed I am with the importance of declaring this truth to the world.

PROGRESS IN MISSIONS

That leads me to the thought about which I am requested to speak tonight. What I have said about the momentum of this body of priesthood is applicable to our great missionary force. Never before have we had so many representatives in the field preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and never before in the history of the world, I think, was that message more needed.

Over eight thousand missionaries, choice men and women, now laboring at home and abroad. They have the love of the truth in their hearts. I am glad to report to you that 1949 has, perhaps, been one of our most successful years. In material improvement we show great progress. Many of you spent your first years in foreign fields, met in undesirable halls—we all have—and we know the need and importance of having suitable meeting places. You will be glad to learn tonight that during last year we had in the missions one hundred and thirty-seven new building projects. Besides these are remodeling projects, thirty-eight; and other projects, including buying of lots, furnishings, etc., nine; or a total of one hundred and seventy-two building projects during 1949. The people are grateful for this surge forward to get suitable meeting places for those who are seeking the truth.

TAHITIAN MISSION

You have read in the paper about the completion of the edifice down in Papeete, Tahiti, the first mission opened by the Church among the Polynesians.

For years they have been in need of a means of transportation to go from island to island out there. What you Tahitian missionaries have endured during the past fifty years, or more, very few of us can realize. The Lord bless you for having endured it.

Well, the president of the mission and the elders and the saints will not be wholly dependent upon sailing schooners which sometimes get caught in a calm, and elders and saints remain on deck for hours and days and sometimes even weeks. An excellent

schooner, or yacht, was recently purchased and a little over two weeks ago they left Wilmington Harbor, and after a successful voyage of three weeks on the Pacific, they arrived at Papeete in safety. You will be pleased to learn that that schooner was piloted, by one of the best captains in the United States. He is qualified to run any steamer, on any ocean in the world, and that man—not a member of the Church—Captain Kenny, volunteered his services to take the schooner to Papeete, without any monetary consideration.

If you could hear Elder Stephen L. Richards and Brother E. Bentley Mitchell, former president of the Tahitian Mission, tell how the way opened up for them to get that schooner, at less cost than the auxiliary engine that is in it, you would appreciate how the Lord is helping forward this missionary work. And you will all be happy to learn that Elder Richards received a cable from Captain Kenny day before yesterday, that they had landed on one of the islands in the Marquesas Group. It read: "After fifteen days on the ocean, we are all well and happy."

GREATER MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

So much for a glimpse at the progress that the missions are making in buildings and other physical aspects. The real progress, however, is in the increase in activity of the missionaries. One or two missions are yet a little lax, but most of the missions are getting the best service possible out of the missionaries, and the more the missionaries work, the more devoted they are, the greater their testimony of the divinity of this work.

More baptisms are reported, also greater sales of the Book of Mormon. The distribution of the Book of Mormon has exceeded that of any other year. Offers from non-members to aid have exceeded, so far as the brethren know, any other year. So, all in all, we can all feel happy and grateful tonight that the way is being opened for the spreading of truth.

CZECHOSLOVAKIAN MISSION

There is only one sorrowful phase and that is in Czechoslovakia, but brethren, every member of this Church should take a lesson from what has occurred in that communisticly dominated land, and if you do not, then you are not using the intelligence and the inspiration to which you are entitled.

Communism is anti-Christ. We have heard that some of our members suspect that stories which come out of Russia are exaggerated. Do not be deceived. No matter what the effect may be, I am going to tell you three things about communism which are facts. This was just hinted at six months ago. One of our brethren, loyal and true, presiding over a branch, held the priesthood just as you and I, had a testimony just as you and I, a prosperous businessman, true to his wife and has a lovely family. Brother Benson has met him and knows him.

They held a well-attended conference, Brother Toronto being present, and had a spiritual feast. A night or two later officers entered his home and arrested him. Asked for the charge, he was answered indignantly,

"Never mind the charge. Come with us."

"I ask to be heard," said the arrested man.

"You have already been heard and tried."

That is not an exaggeration. That is a fact.

And he was taken that night without even having been given a hearing and put into a concentration camp, his wife not knowing where.

Now you weigh the significance of that.

Second. You know all about the imprisonment of two elders, each put in a cell by himself with no communication. The President of the Mission could not communicate with them. The U. S. Consul could not. And there they remained, charged with what? They did not know, and day after day wondered what would happen to them. They had not violated any law. You and I know they had not. They were on their way to visit one of the Saints who needed comfort. She was up near the Polish border. Perhaps unwittingly they entered a forbidden area, but they did not do it intentionally. Well, they came out all right. They had to leave the country.

The third point followed the expulsion from that country of President Toronto and all the elders. You read it in the public press, that the Mormon missionaries were government spies. You and I know that is false, of course, and any government or any group of men who would publish it, do so in ignorance or with maliciousness.

Well, pray for those Saints over there, and we shall leave the rest to the Lord, and do all we can to comfort and bless them, and the people in every other country. They are God's children and they are longing for the Gospel.

I referred to the improvement, the accelerated force now manifested by our missions. Our mission presidents are doing excellent work. It is an inspiration to sit in their presence. You could listen for hours to their narrating manifestations of the Lord, resulting from the strength and activity of the elders. Now, brethren, will you please cooperate with them in making more effective the missionary cause.

STANDARDS FOR CALLING MISSIONARIES

There are certain standards by which we should be guided in calling our missionaries. First, call no young man or young woman, for the purpose of saving him or her. The young man is getting wayward and you think a mission would do him good. It would. But that is not why you are sending him out. Choose the young men and young women who are worthy to represent the Church, see that they are sufficiently mature, and, above all, that they have character.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

Now in regard to maturity, we have an age, twenty years for the young men, twenty-three for the young women, and recently, because of the call of mission presidents, we have said you may call young women who are twenty-one. But that is just in order to fill up the ranks that such a call is made. But now many are asking that we send young girls eighteen or nineteen. Please do not hurt their feelings. Just sit down and talk to them and say: "You work here at home. Prove yourself to be worthy, and as soon as they need you, we will recommend you and you will be called."

Some of you say, "Well, you have called young men at nineteen and now it hurts their feelings if we do not call their companions."

Now in every case if you will analyze it you will find that those young men have not left for their missions until near their twentieth birthday, or more. Please cooperate with us in that.

PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

Again there is the problem of the physically handicapped, of course you would like them to go, but think how they will interfere with their companions. Elders should go two by two and so should sisters, and no one of them should be hampered in his or her activity with somebody who is just not equal to the responsibility of missionary work.

Some of them are able to pass the physical examination all right, but when they get out under the strain of missionary work—and I tell you it is a strain—they soon break and then the mission president has a responsibility which diverts his attention from his regular duties, and missionary work is retarded.

IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER

But the most important standard is character. Let each one whom you interview sense the fact that he is going out as a representative. Some of the brethren have urged that each ward should have in the mission field a certain percentage of the ward membership. That is not an ideal. If you have no one who is worthy and financially able to represent the Church, do not send anybody out, but sit down with these young men and young women and say, "If you accept this call willingly, you go out as a trusted representative of the Church and of the Lord Jesus Christ." And to be trusted, young men, is a greater compliment than to be loved, and you cannot violate that trust. You are obligated to keep that trust between now and the time you go to the missionary home. Maintain the Church standards with your companions who will want to give you a farewell party. We have heard of some missionaries who have been called who have joined in with their fraternity friends in actions that reflected discredit upon themselves and upon the missionary cause.

Tell the young man, "From now on, from this very moment, you

are a trusted representative of this ward, of your parents and of the Lord Jesus Christ."

CARE NEEDED

Brethren, let us be more careful. These missionary presidents are calling for recruits. Why, today, where we thought five missionaries in a certain area would be sufficient, the president of the mission said, "send us twenty more."

There are some other points, but I will not take the time. I have spoken about their representing the Church. So do you and so do I. I would like to say in conclusion what that means tonight.

GLOOM AT CRUCIFIXION

President Smith appropriately referred to the fact that tomorrow is Easter. This is not just an anniversary, I mean as to the date. Easter varies from one date to another as you know. But I am not so sure that April is not a commemorative month, not only for the resurrection but for the birth of our Lord. And so I like to think that about two thousand years ago tonight, there were some pretty gloomy apostles. Peter was heavy-hearted; John was grieving; as was Mary, Christ's Mother. The other apostles had fled. Judas had realized what a crime he had committed. What a gloomy night!

Next morning Christ arose, and we are celebrating that event in the Christian world. That being true, this event establishes the immortality of the soul, the existence of loved ones who are on the other side, their personality persisting. They are as real in that spiritual realm as Christ's spirit when He preached to the spirits in prison.

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

I wonder if the Christian world will take as evidence the testimony of those gloomy apostles, nineteen hundred and fifty years ago tonight, for it is an evidence of the divinity of Christ's resurrection from the grave. Let me read the following:

"When Christ was crucified the apostles' hopes had all but died. That His death was a reality to the disciples was shown in their intense grief in the statement of Thomas, in the moral perplexity of Peter and in the evident preparations for a permanent burial of their Master. Notwithstanding the often repeated assurance of Christ that he would return to them after death, the apostles seemed not to have accepted, or at least not comprehended Christ's statement as a literal fact. At the crucifixion they were frightened and discouraged. They were left alone and they seemed confused, helpless, panic-stricken. Only John stood by the cross.

"Not with timidity, not with feelings of doubt and gloom and discouragement is a skeptical world made to believe. Such wavering, despairing minds as the apostles possessed on the day of the cruci-

fixion could never have stirred people to accept an unpopular belief, and to die martyrs to the cause.

"What was it that suddenly changed these disciples to confident, fearless, heroic preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ? It was the revelation that Christ had risen from the grave. His promises had been kept; His Messianic mission fulfilled, 'The final and absolute scene of genuineness had been put on all His claims, and the indelible stamp of a divine authority upon all His teachings. The gloom of death had been banished by the glorious light of the presence of their risen, glorified Lord and Savior.'"

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE RISEN LORD

I said these missionaries are representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, and so is every man within the sound of my voice. To be the representative of the risen Lord is the greatest honor that can come to man.

I think it was J. A. Francis, who wrote in the Los Angeles Examiner, in his tribute to Christ, as follows: "I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has this one, solitary life."

And yet if we face the facts tonight on the eve of his resurrection, the anniversary of his resurrection, we know that there are many so-called Christians who do not believe in the literal resurrection, and upon your shoulders and the shoulders of ten thousand others in this Church rests the responsibility of declaring to the world his divine Son-ship, his literal resurrection from the grave, and his appearance in person in the presence of the Father to the prophet Joseph Smith.

I bear you my testimony that these things are real, your authority is real, you are trusted servants who must represent the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in your allotted spheres to this dispensation.

May the Lord give us power to be worthy representatives and discharge our duty ably and well, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

First Counselor in the First Presidency

My brethren, as always I come to you in fear and trembling and in humility, and I ask our Heavenly Father to bless me, that what I may say tonight may be of some value to us in our work.

POWER OF THE PRIESTHOOD

I am again impressed, as always, by the strength of the priesthood. I have seen it work in the lives of many men. I have seen