

Friday, October 3

First Day

President David O. McKay:

Bishop Carl W. Buehner of the Presiding Bishopric will be our first speaker.

He will be followed by Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve.

BISHOP CARL W. BUEHNER*Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric*

MY DEAR brethren and sisters, this is a great moment in my life, and I pray that the Lord will make me equal to it. During the past two or three weeks, I have preached at least fifteen wonderful sermons during the middle of the night, but I have forgotten them by morning, so I guess those sermons are lost forever.

It has been a marvelous experience to be associated with these brethren of the General Authorities of the Church. I wish you could all have some of that marvelous association. I love these brethren. I certainly wish to let them know again today that I will do all I can to sustain them, work for them, and to make their burden as light as possible. Last April when Bishop Richards was honored in becoming a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, I am sure that we all had the feeling that one of the great Presiding Bishops of the Church had received a very worthy honor, and maybe there was some concern as to what might happen with the new Presiding Bishopric. I have known Bishop Richards for many years. He is a great and a powerful man and initiated many wonderful things for the youth of the Church, but I would like to tell you brethren and sisters today that as Bishop Richards moved into the Quorum of the Twelve, another great man was sustained as Presiding Bishop of the Church. Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin, too, is a very strong and vigorous man, a very spiritual man. He insists that everyone in this Church gets treated equally well. I admire him, I love him, and with Bishop Isaacson, it is an honor to be associated with him in the Presiding Bishopric of this great Church.

Recently, as I attended a quarterly conference, a new member of the Church stood up and bearing his testimony said, "You know, I was seventy-five

percent converted to this Church before anyone said one word to me about the gospel." That interested me very much, and after the meeting, I said, "Just what did you mean by that statement?" He said, "You know, we lived in a community where there were a number of Mormon families. My wife and I and our children began to notice these particular families, our children associated with the children of these families, and as they became acquainted with these children, and as we observed the lives of these members of the Church, my wife and I said frequently, 'We would like to live our lives like these people.'" I began to think of the great power of example that we have. If we just remember, brethren and sisters, who we are, we can be great teachers of our religion by living our lives in conformity to these great teachings. It has already been said in this conference that we are known the world over. The eyes of the world are upon us, and wherever we go, whatever we do, how we treat our fellow men and how we live our lives, we are watched and observed by someone.

A year or two ago, my wife and I and another couple were on a little trip. Just what a glass of milk will do! We had breakfast in Boulder, Nevada, one morning. We had been served our breakfast and were eating it when the waitress came and asked, "What will you have to drink?" We each ordered a glass of milk, and she said, "I'll bet you belong to the same Church I do." I said, "What Church do you belong to?" She said, "You know what Church I belong to," and I did, too. I knew which Church she belonged to. You have heard of our being identified all over the world because we have a glass of milk when we are supposed to have a glass of milk. It's quite a wonderful thing. I could relate many

examples that have come to my attention where the power of example has been a marvelous teacher to the people of the world.

I would like to say a word in behalf of our young people, too. The young people of the Church in many respects are setting a marvelous example to us older ones. In some of our activities, the children are a little better than the fathers and mothers. When Bishop Richards was the Presiding Bishop of the Church, he said that we should at least have a twenty-five percent attendance at sacrament meeting, and through the effort of the young people, we have about achieved that. You know, when Bishop Wirthlin became the Presiding Bishop, he said twenty-five percent is not enough; we must raise this to fifty percent. Well, now we have the youngsters on the way, brethren and sisters, we have got to bring you along to keep up with your youngsters or we are never going to get that fifty percent. Then, I guess one day there will be another Presiding Bishop, and he will get us up to seventy-five percent. They are going to get us perfect one of these days, if we will just listen and follow in the footsteps of these great leaders of ours.

Well, it isn't so long ago that I was a boy—fifty years ago, a little more or less, and I don't think the youngsters today are much different from the way I was. I enjoyed my youth. I enjoyed the activities I had in the Church, and I have often wondered what might have happened to me had I not been in a community and in a home where they were interested in my welfare religiously as well as just from a standpoint of general education. I will never forget as long as I live Bishop Elias S. Woodruff coming into our priests' quorum, about fifty or sixty of us in a room at the back of the chapel, and taking off his coat, hanging it on the back of the chair, and then going after us, counseling and teaching. It was a wonderful experience. I remember some of my Primary teachers. I remember some of the teachers I had in my Aaronic Priesthood quorums and all through my early

school life. I am thankful to the Lord now that these people were interested in my welfare. I went ward teaching with a man for six or seven years. We went to the same district every year. As I have become older, I have learned to love the people more that we used to visit each month, also the fine high priest who was my senior companion. I was a member of the Aaronic Priesthood. I am very grateful for these things.

I hope, brethren and sisters, that we will have a desire to set an example for our boys and our girls that they, too, will become strong in the faith. I can't help feeling that unless our youngsters are taught the right way of life, they are not going to be strong fathers and mothers in the years to come. They need our help, and I hope they will have it.

I heard this little experience told in another stake here just recently of a man who is now a member of a stake presidency. He said, "When I was a boy, my father severely reprimanded me one time for something that I didn't think I had coming. I talked with my father, and we argued back and forth. Finally, I said to my father, 'I don't think I have been treated fairly—I am going to run away.'"

Well, the mother heard part of this through the door in the house, but he said, "I finally went in the house, and said to Mother, 'Mother, Father has been after me pretty severely today for something that I didn't deserve, and I have decided to run away.' Do you know what Mother said? She said, 'Son, I will help you pack.'" He said, "She went into the bedroom, got two large suitcases, opened them up, and for the next hour or two, she went through the dresser, the clothes closet, and every place there was anything that belonged to me, carefully folded it all up, and very neatly laid it in the suitcases. It took a long time to do it. As she would get the different articles, she would explain when and how I would be able to use each particular article." He said, "You know, as I have thought about it

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years later, no missionary was ever better packed to leave than I was when my mother got through packing those suitcases. Then she said, 'Now, son, I wish you could come in the living room a minute.' He said, 'We went into the living room, and she said, 'I would like to kneel down and pray with you.' We knelt down in the middle of the living room, and my mother offered a prayer the like of which I have never heard before or since. She prayed for me, saying, 'My boy is going to leave us, and I want you to watch over him and protect him from harm and evil. Keep him away from men who might tempt him. Bless him that he will have food and a place to stay at night and when he is through that he will come back safely,' and many other wonderful things. Mother offered a wonderful prayer, and when she got through, she said, 'Now, my boy, you are going to go away, and I do not know how long you will be away. I wish you would offer a word of prayer.' He said, 'Mother, I do not need to pray. She said, 'That is right. You do not have to pray, but I wish you would pray for your father's and mother's welfare while you are away.' He said, 'Mother, I am not going.' Then he said, 'Mother picked up the two suitcases, and we went back into the bedroom, and in the next two hours she carefully put everything back again where she found it in the first place.'

I related this experience up in Portland two weeks ago, and at the close of the meeting, a little fellow, about ten or eleven years old, came up to me and said, 'Bishop Buehner, I had a little trouble in my home. I ran away. I was only gone two hours, but when I got back, my mother just beat the socks off me.' I said, 'What did you do about it?' He said, 'Well, I never ran away any more.' I said, 'Then there is more than one way to handle that situation, isn't there?' Then, finally this young fellow said, 'You know, I love my father, and I love my mother.' I thought, what finer compliment can any father or any mother hear from

their children than to have them say, 'I love my dad, and I love my mother.' I think it is wonderful!

Well, we have a great job to do, you and I. If we can guide the course of these youngsters in the paths they should go, I am sure they will become the strong men and women of the Church.

I would like to close by reading these few lines entitled "That Boy."

He wants to be like his dad! you men,
Did you ever think, as you pause,
That the boy who watches your every move
Is building a set of laws?
He's molding a life you're the model for,
And whether it's good or bad
Depends upon the kind of example set
To the boy who'd be like his dad.

Would you have him go everywhere you go?
Have him do just the things you do?
And see everything that your eyes behold,
And woo all the gods you woo?
When you see the worship that shines in
the eyes

Of your lovable little lad,
Could you rest content if he gets his wish
And grows to be like his dad?

It's a job that none but yourself can fill;
It's a charge you must answer for;
It's a duty to show him the road to tread
Ere he reaches his manhood's door.
It's a debt you owe for the greatest joy
On this earth to be had:
The pleasure of having a boy to raise
Who wants to be like his dad!

(Author unknown)

May the Lord help us raise our boys and our girls. Our girls are not so different from our boys, either, are they? I am sure it is a marvelous experience to be a girl as well as it is to be a boy, to be an honor and a credit to the Church. I hope that we will devote our time and our interest in the organizations who have these young people in their charge, to build faith and testimony in their lives, that they, too, will be happy and stalwart as they grow older and assume the responsibilities in the work of the Church.

May the Lord bless us each and every one in the responsibilities that are ours, I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.