

PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

IN BEHALF of the General Authorities of the Church, I wish to extend to the ten thousand people or more assembled here in the Tabernacle and on the Tabernacle Block, and to the tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of listeners a cordial welcome to the opening session of this, the 123rd Annual Conference of the Church.

The General Authorities sense deeply the responsibility that rests upon them. Everyone, I am sure, feels, as I, the weight of this responsibility, and each one prays for your prayerful sympathy and your co-operation in the carrying on of this great work of establishing the kingdom of God on earth.

We are especially pleased this morning to note in the audience, His Excellency, Honorable J. Bracken Lee, governor of the state of Utah; His Honor, Mayor Earl J. Glade, and representatives of the leading educational institutions, President A. Ray Olpin of the University of Utah, President Ernest L. Wilkinson of Brigham Young University, Superintendent M. Lynn Bennion of the City schools, and Superintendent E. Allen Bateman, state superintendent of schools. I am not sure whether President Louis L. Madsen of the Utah State Agricultural College is present or not; if he is, we bid him welcome with the others. We wish to welcome also Dr. Franklin L. West, Church commissioner of education, and his associates; Dr. John L. Clarke, president of Ricks College, and other leading educators.

May we have your sympathy—I appeal to all who are listening in to give us your faith and prayers, as we present to you this morning the messages that will come from those who will be called to occupy the pulpit.

In addition to the statistical and other data just presented to you by the Clerk of the Conference, you will undoubtedly be interested in the following items which pertain more directly to the spiritual interests of the Church. This is merely a summary, and I shall present it as quickly as possible.

The activity of the men holding the Melchizedek Priesthood is especially gratifying. A summary of the past five years discloses the fact that there is an increase in the following activities: (1) in the number of full tithepayers, (2) the number holding family prayers, (3) the number attending weekly group meetings, (4) the attendance at sacrament meetings shows no increase, and (5) visits by quorum officers to quorum members show a decrease of two percent, but participation in Church work, an increase from forty-four percent to eight-one percent. These figures refer only to Melchizedek Priesthood workers. Favorable as the record is, we admonish them to more activity and urge them to participate more generally in Church activities.

The Relief Society of the Church gives an equally pleasing report, growing in membership, accomplishment, and spirituality. During 1952 there were 7900 names added to the membership. The sisters fully co-operate with the priesthood and lend great strength to wards and stakes, missions and branch activities, such as building programs and welfare projects.

The compassionate services are receiving careful attention. During 1952 there were 209,890 visits made to the sick and the homebound, and 22,500 eight-hour days bedside nursing on a voluntary basis. This is particularly important in view of the pronounced nurse shortage. The sisters have strong testimonies of the truth of the gospel, as is attested by the righteousness of their lives, and evidenced in the testimonies borne during the testimony period held in connection with the monthly theology lessons.

"It is our personal opinion," say the Presidency, "that the Church has never had a generation of Relief Society women more spiritual, more diligent, or more devoted to the work of the Church."

The Sunday School—a goodly number of Sunday Schools whose superin-

tendents have been left in that position long enough to catch the spirit of effective Sunday School work—has made strides in increasing the testimony and spiritual attunement of a large proportion of members by the following means: first, ward teacher training classes for prospective teachers; second, increasing numbers of stakes are holding monthly union meetings which had to be abandoned during the war; third, great numbers of Sunday School teachers report having been helped immensely by the inspiration, the lesson enrichments, and the teaching “know-how” contained in the great magazine for Sunday School teachers, *The Instructor*; and, fourth, by double use of ward chapel and classrooms; for example, one overcrowded Sunday School has increased its average attendance from a crowded 342 in 1950 to a comfortable 424 in 1952. And that is not an increase in the membership of the ward.

Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association—Increase of enrolment during last year, 29,000. Last year over 30,000 young people participated in choral productions; not one of them failed significantly to lift the spiritual sights of the participants. Over 25,000 individual talks or speeches were given, most of them on spiritual topics. Over 35,000 young people participated in some way or other in an M.I.A. drama.

Young Women’s Mutual Improvement Association—The great purpose of the Young Women’s Mutual Improvement Association is to build testimonies in the lives of the young women of the Church, both members and investigators. This purpose is promoted in three major ways: First, there is the girls’ program which stresses, along with full activity in the Church, regular attendance at sacrament, Sunday School, and M.I.A. meetings. For the past year over 25,000 individual awards were given to girls.

This means that they attended at least seventy-five percent of the Sunday School and M.I.A. meetings, fifty percent of the sacrament meetings. Over

2000 leaders received an award, which in their case, also indicated attendance at seventy-five percent of the leadership meetings. In December 1952, all girls, twelve to nineteen, in the Church, achieved an average of fifty-seven percent attendance at sacrament meeting, sixty-six percent at Sunday School and sixty-seven percent at M.I.A. This is an increase over the previous year of four percent at sacrament meeting, and three percent at Sunday School and M.I.A.

Primary—Four objectives have been highlighted in the Primary Association this year: first, stimulate interest in the reading of the Book of Mormon; second, promote greater reverence in our chapels—a most commendable objective; third, teach the children to pray—equally important; fourth, stress the importance of the boys receiving the Aaronic Priesthood. Thirty-two thousand officers and teachers have been reading the Book of Mormon as a scripture assignment.

Primary teachers throughout the Church have been urged and advised to accept the responsibility and privilege of teaching the children to pray and to help them to trust in our Father in heaven, believing that he will hear and answer their prayers. Over 7000 boys have been graduated from Primary and have been assisted in their preparation to receive the Aaronic Priesthood.

I wish that the ten thousand people here assembled might have seen the program that was given to the presidents of the Primary Associations in the Hotel Utah last Thursday evening.

We commend the priesthood workers and all the auxiliary workers of the Church. God bless you in your sincere and untiring efforts to teach the young ones and the older ones the principles of truth and salvation.

TWO FUNCTIONS

And now, my dear fellow workers, a few words in general, regarding the great mission that is yours in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. In anticipa-

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tion of this hour, I have been impressed to emphasize two great functions of the Church: first, the putting in order of our homes, and keeping them in order; and second, the proclaiming of the divinity of the mission of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. With these two objectives in mind, may I have your attention, your faith and prayers.

"For what is a man profited," said the Savior, "if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26.)

The first recorded question of the Savior after his baptism in the river Jordan, was, "What seekest thou?" In the text I have just read, he again refers to the dominant incentive prompting man's actions in daily life. If a man seek wealth, worldly honors, pleasures, and all that riches and honor can bestow but neglects and leaves undeveloped the eternal riches of his soul, what is he profited?

Thus does the Lord emphasize in a simple though majestic comparison of material and spiritual possessions.

On another occasion, in the Sermon on the Mount, he admonished his hearers to seek "first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (*Ibid.*, 6:33.) Seeking to establish the kingdom of God and to foster his righteousness should be the paramount purpose of life. I think none will gainsay that.

Leading statesmen, clear-thinking educators, in public addresses and in magazine articles, frequently refer to what they declare is an apparent spiritual poverty of the present age, and they cite the need for higher moral and ethical standards.

Some months ago, you will recall, a British jet plane crossed and re-crossed the Atlantic Ocean in about eight hours. Shortly thereafter a cartoon appeared in the *New York Times*, which pictured a jet plane traveling at fantastic speed. The plane was labeled, "man's scientific progress." On

the ground was a huge turtle moving slowly and ponderously. It was labeled, "man's moral progress."

Commenting upon this, Professor William G. Russell, instructor in the Memorial High School at Pelham, New York, writes:

"In a vivid way this cartoon symbolizes what could be the tragedy of the modern age, and what is without doubt one of the most compelling reasons for greater attention to moral and spiritual values in our homes and in our schools."

And then he adds as a school man: "Courses required of all students in our public schools should include all the important areas of study that directly or indirectly provide the student with opportunities for spiritual growth and religious inspiration.

"From such study," he continues, "it is reasonable to expect that our students will better understand how vital has been the role of religion at critical moments in history, how important spiritual insights and religious faith can be in the lives of men and women, how closely related are true human greatness and such qualities as honesty, integrity, humility, generosity, compassion. We may expect in our students more idealism and less of cynicism, more of a wholesome courage and faith in the future and less of pessimism and foreboding and fear.

"We may hope for increased tolerance of racial and religious differences, increased respect for those of opposite political views or of lower social and economic levels, increased awareness of the basic and inviolable dignity of the individual man or woman. We may contribute to the development of a more sensitive social conscience, a greater sense of responsibility for the less fortunate in our society. We may even, perhaps, without knowing it, bring a boy or girl closer to God." I cite that because of the opportunities which I think lie ahead of us in our public schools.

In his great inaugural address, Presi-

dent Dwight D. Eisenhower referred to this same great need. "In the swift rush of great events we find ourselves groping to know the full sense and meaning of these times in which we live. In our quest of understanding, we beseech God's guidance. We summon all our knowledge of the past, and we scan all signs of the future. We bring all our wit and all our will to meet the question:

"How far have we come in man's long pilgrimage from darkness toward the light? Are we nearing the light—a day of freedom and of peace for all mankind? Or are the shadows of another night closing in upon us?

"At such a time in history, we who are free must proclaim anew our faith.

"This faith is the abiding creed of our fathers. It is our faith in the deathless dignity of man, governed by eternal moral and natural laws.

"This faith defines our full view of life. It establishes, beyond debate, those gifts of the Creator that are man's inalienable rights, and that make all men equal in his sight.

"In the light of this equality, we know that the virtues most cherished by free people—love of truth, pride of work, devotion to country—all are treasures equally precious in the lives of the most humble and of the most exalted.

"The men who mine coal and fire furnaces, and balance ledgers, and turn lathes, and pick cotton, and heal the sick, and plant corn—all serve as proudly and as profitably, for America as the statesmen who draft treaties and the legislators who enact laws.

"This faith rules our whole way of life. It decrees that we, the people, elect leaders not to rule but to serve. It asserts that we have the right to choice of our own work and to the reward of our own toil.

"It inspires the initiative that makes our productivity the wonder of the world. And it warns that any man who seeks to deny equality among all

his brothers betrays the spirit of the free and invites the mockery of the tyrant.

"It is because we, all of us, hold to these principles that the political changes accomplished this day do not imply turbulence, upheaval, or disorder. Rather, this change expresses a purpose of strengthening our dedication and devotion to the precepts of our founding documents, a conscious renewal of faith in our country and in the watchfulness of a divine providence.

"The enemies of this faith know no god but force, no devotion but its use. They tutor men in treason. They feed upon the hunger of others. Whatever defies them, they torture, especially the truth."

And so we have the call of men of clear vision and sound judgment, for a re-dedication of schools and homes to moral and spiritual values.

Our most precious possession is the youth of the land, and to instruct them to walk uprightly and to become worthy citizens in the kingdom of God is our greatest obligation.

Religious freedom and the separation of church and state are clearly set forth in the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and no governmental agency can have any supervision, control, or jurisdiction over religion. Though our public schools may emphasize moral, ethical, and spiritual values as essential elements in the public school program, they cannot favor any particular religion or religious system. The teaching of religion is therefore definitely a responsibility of the home and the Church.

In discharging this responsibility, I say again, members of the Church should ever keep in mind two paramount obligations: (1) to put and to keep your home in order; and (2), to proclaim the divinity of Jesus Christ and the essentiality of his teachings to the salvation of the human family.

If, upon examination, you were to find that termites are undermining the foundation of your house, you would

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lose no time to have experts make thorough examination and have the destructive insects exterminated. You would have the weakened materials removed and the foundation strengthened and, if necessary, rebuilt.

Well, more important than the building of your house is the rebuilding and purifying of your home.

"Our home joys," says Pestalozzi, "are the most delightful earth affords, and the joy of parents in their children is the most holy joy of humanity. It makes their hearts pure and good; it lifts them up to their Father in heaven."

Well, you know, and I know, that such joys are within the reach of most men and women if high ideals of marriage and home be properly fostered and cherished.

But there are destructive termites of homes, as well as of houses, and some of these are backbiting, evil-speaking, faultfinding on the part either of parents or of children. Slander is poison to the soul. "Slanderers are like flies that pass all over a man's good parts to light only on his sores." In the ideal home, there is no slanderous gossip about day schoolteachers, about public officials, or Church officials. I am more grateful now, as years have come and gone, to my father, who with hands lifted said, "Now, no faultfinding about your teacher or anybody else."

Quarreling and swearing also are evils that lower the standards of the ideal home. I cannot imagine a father or mother swearing in the presence of children or even letting it pass their lips.

George Washington set us a good example in this regard. When he learned that some of his officers were given to profanity, he sent a letter to them on July 1, 1776, from which I quote:

"The general is sorry to be informed that the foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing, a vice heretofore little known in an American army, is growing into fashion. He hopes the officers will, by example, as well as influence, endeavor to check it, and

that both they and the men will reflect that we can have little hope of the blessing of heaven on our arms if we insult it by our impiety and folly. Added to this, it is a vice so mean and low, without any temptation, that every man of sense and character detests and despises it."

Another deterrent to happiness in the home is the refusal to bear the full responsibility of motherhood and fatherhood. Members of the Church who are healthy and normal should not be guilty of restricting the number of children in the home, especially when such action is prompted by a desire for a good time, or for personal gain, or to keep up with the neighbors, or by a false impression that one or two children in a family can be better educated. These are excuses which members of the Church should not harbor, for they are unjustified.

The question of size of families, I know, brings up many problems: the question of woman's career, the false cry of "quality, not quantity," which one writer rightly says should read "extinction, not preservation," or the matter-of-fact question of daily living and getting on in the world.

With the high ideal of marriage as revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, members of the Church should have but one goal, and that is to keep in mind the fact that marriage, the foundation of society, is "ordained of God" for the building of permanent homes in which children may be properly reared and taught the principles of the gospel:

The following, I am sure, will strike a responsive chord in the hearts of the majority of parents in the Church. I quote:

"Every period of human life is wonderful; the irresponsible age of childhood, the thrilling years of adolescence and courtship, the productive, fighting, burden-bearing era of parenthood; but the most wonderful time of life comes when the father and mother become chums of their grown-up, successful

sons and daughters, and can begin to enjoy their children's children. . . .

"Youth is confined with restrictions, limitations, schedules, and dominations; adolescence is full of mysteries, longings, and defeats; early fatherhood is absorbed in struggles and in the solution of problems; extreme old age is shadowed by eternal mysteries; but middle age and normal old age, if life has been rightly and fully lived, are filled with the thrills, not merely of success, but of companionship with children and grandchildren.

"Every normal individual should complete the full cycle of human life with all its joys and satisfactions in natural order: childhood, adolescence, youth, parenthood, middle age, and the age of grandchildren. Each age has satisfactions which can be known only by experience. You must be born again and again in order to know the full course of human happiness. When the first baby is born, a mother is born, a father is born, and grandparents are born; only by birth can any of these come into being. Only by the natural cycle of life can the great progressive joys of mankind be reached.

"Any social system which prevents the individual from pursuing the normal cycle of life, from marrying young, from rearing a family before the age of fifty or so, and from obtaining the deep, peculiar joys of middle life and grandparenthood defeats the divine order of the universe and lays the basis of all sorts of social problems.

"When a young man and woman of the right biological type marry in the early twenties and are prepared to earn a living and support and rear a family, they have started in the normal cycle of life. They are likely to give society far fewer problems of crime, immorality, divorce, or poverty than are their unmarried companions. They will have children and rear them while they are strong, enjoy them when they are grown up and successful, depend upon them in weakness, and profit by the finest type of old-age insurance ever

invented by man or God, an insurance which pays its annuities in material goods when necessary, but which mainly pays in the rich joys of love and fellowship. . . . The crowning joys of human experience will come in middle age and onward, through the companionship, love, and honor of children and grandchildren." (R. J. Sprague.)

We appeal to all members of the Church to set their homes in order and to enjoy the true happiness of harmonious family life.

As already stated, the second paramount obligation is to proclaim the divine mission of Jesus Christ. Nineteen hundred years ago, a valiant defender of that cause said: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:11-12.)

The man who thus declared Jesus to be the one and only safe leader and guide in the world was an ordinary fisherman who lived nearly two thousand years ago. He grew to manhood, experiencing life among common folk such as you and I. He was not a dreamer. He was thoroughly a man of action, though somewhat impetuous. He was fairly prosperous, possessed qualities of leadership, and, above all, he was honest.

Circumstances drew Peter into close relationship with Jesus of Nazareth. For nearly three years this hardheaded fisherman accompanied Jesus almost constantly. He became intimately acquainted with the Master. Jesus' philosophy of life became Peter's philosophy. Not suddenly, but gradually, through careful, critical observation and inward experience, Peter arrived at a firm and sublime conviction, expressed clearly and unhesitatingly when he declared before his accusers, the leaders of the Jewish Sanhedrin, ". . . there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

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MODERN VIEW OF SALVATION

Saved is a trite word, frequently applied by religious leaders to a real or imagined instantaneous change of heart. The sense in which we use it this morning is expressed by Dr. Charles Foster Kent, professor of biblical literature in Yale University, who, in answer to the question, "From what does man need to be saved?" writes:

"This question must be answered today, not in the light of metaphysics or abstract theology, but of physiology, psychology, political science, economics, and sociology. In the light of modern psychology, it is apparent that while a man may experience instantaneously what is commonly called conversion, his salvation is not attained in a moment but is a continuous educational process. It is accomplished not by negations, but by developing within him nobler impulses and ideals and by bringing him into normal relations with his environment and by teaching him how to function, that is, effectively to accomplish his lifework in the environment in which he is placed.

"This is precisely what Jesus did for the needy men and women who gathered about him during his work in Galilee. And what he did for them then he is able to do for men today, for the needs and the processes of salvation are eternally the same. He was able to perform his saving work because he himself had felt many of the same needs and had found the only way of satisfying them.

"No teacher of the past was more awake to the weakness of human nature than Jesus; but he also saw and proclaimed clearly its divine possibilities. He saw that those possibilities could be realized only as each individual was brought into normal living touch with the Heavenly Father. A man's recognition of his sonship to God opens his eyes at once to the fact that all men are his brothers. Herein lies the miracle of the religious life. It is the eternal mystery of conversion.

"When once a man enters fully into his filial attitude toward God and fraternal relations with his fellow men, he suddenly finds himself saved from the dominance of his passions, his selfish impulses, from worry and fear. Even the consequences of his past sins no longer master him, but a great alluring field of service opens before him. With this self-forgetting service there come peace and the joy and exultation that crown worthy achievement."

Furthermore, members of the Church declare at Easter season, and throughout the year, that the Church of Jesus Christ stands with Peter, with Paul, with James, and with all other Apostles who accepted the resurrection not only as being literally true, but as being also the consummation of Christ's divine mission upon the earth. Religious leaders since history began have taught virtue, temperance, self-control, service, obedience to righteousness, and duty; some have taught a belief in one supreme ruler and in a hereafter; but only Christ broke the seal of the grave and revealed death as the door to immortality and eternal life. To the unimpeachable evidence of the ancient Apostles to the resurrection of our Lord we add the sublime declaration of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!" (D. & C. 76:22.)

As Christ lived after death, so shall the human family, each one taking that place in the next world which he or she merits through actions during earthly life. Since love is as eternal as life, the message of the resurrection is the most comforting, the most glorious ever given to man; for when death takes a loved one from us, we can look into the open grave and say, he is not here; he is alive.

Happy homes give to their inmates a taste of heaven on earth—acceptance of the divinity of Christ's mission and compliance with the principles of his

gospel, give assurance of immortality and eternal life.

I testify that a knowledge of his existence and of the truth of his gospel is the source of the greatest comfort and happiness to man.

May the day speedily come when honest, sincere men and women throughout the world may have in their souls this assurance, I earnestly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

YESTERDAY, with my Brethren, I was in session with some thirty missionary presidents. We heard a report from all in relation to their work and the work of the missionaries who labor under them. At the close of the meeting, and all through the meeting, we felt to rejoice because of the glowing reports that they were able to give to us.

There is one reason why these missionaries go forth and that is to fulfil the promise that was made by our Redeemer that his gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world as a witness before the time of his second coming. In his discourse as recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew which came in response to the request of his disciples to know concerning his second coming, and the events that would take place before his coming, he told them of the calamities, the distress among the nations, the wars, the rumors of wars, the commotions, men's hearts failing them, and that they would turn away from the truth. Then speaking of the latter days he said to them:

"And again, because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold; but he that shall not be overcome, the same shall be saved.

"And again, this Gospel of the King-

President David O. McKay:

The Choir and congregation will now sing, "O Ye Mountains High," with Richard P. Condie conducting.

After the singing, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Council of the Twelve will speak to us.

The congregation and the Choir joined in singing the hymn, "O Ye Mountains High."

dom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked." (Pearl of Great Price. Joseph Smith. 1:30-31.)

Fulfilling that prediction that the gospel would again be preached, inferring that there would be a time when it would not be preached and it would have to be restored, these missionaries are going forth and spending their time which is appointed among the nations of the earth.

Unfortunately, because of conditions which cannot be controlled by the Church, our missionary forces are reduced. We need missionaries. It is true today, as it was one hundred years ago, that the field is wide; the harvest is great; but the laborers are few. Likewise the field is white and ready for the harvest. In a revelation given to the Church November 1, 1831, the Lord said he would send forth his missionaries, or his servants.

"And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days.

"And they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them.

"Behold, this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants, and my