

Brigham Young University, Provo; the Institute of Religion Building of the Utah State Agricultural College in Logan; South Idaho Falls Tabernacle in Idaho Falls; Big Horn Stake Tabernacle in Lovell, Wyoming.

The singing during this session, will be furnished by the Millennial Chorus, with Elder A. Burt Keddington as Director and Elder Roy M. Darley at the organ. We shall open these services by the Millennial Chorus singing, "Joseph Smith's First Prayer," conducted by Elder Keddington.

Elder Earl S. Paul, formerly President of the Mount Ogden Stake, and Presi-

dent of the Samoan Mission will offer the opening prayer.

Selection by the Millennial Chorus, "O How Lovely Was the Morning."

Elder Earl S. Paul, formerly President of the Samoan Mission, offered the invocation.

Singing by the Chorus: "Out In the Fields With God."

President David O. McKay:

We shall now have a message from the presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood, represented by Bishop Wirthlin.

BISHOP JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN

Presiding Bishop of the Church



RESIDENT McKay and my beloved brethren of the Melchizedek and Aaronic Priesthood, I sincerely trust that the Holy Spirit will guide and inspire me in my utterances this night.

This is a new day—a new day that dawned when a young man in the woods of western New York supplicated God humbly for divine direction in finding the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The prayer was answered. The Father and the Son appeared to him which appearance reaffirmed to the world that God, our Eternal Father, is a being with body, parts and passions and in whose image we are created. His visit confirmed to the world that the despised Nazarene crucified upon Calvary's Hill was the only begotten of the Father in the flesh—the Creator of mankind.

By divine direction, this young man, Joseph Smith, unearthed a sacred record buried centuries ago in the ancient Hill Cumorah. This record contained the revelations of the Lord to the people that lived upon this the American Continent centuries ago. The scriptures in this holy record are among the most profound ever given to any people or

in any dispensation. For example, Lehi declared:

Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy. (2 Nephi, Chapter 2, Verse 25.)

In this day, a new philosophy had fallen upon the ears of a disillusioned generation. The world was in the throes of a great apostasy.

As we think of the joy mentioned by Lehi, I submit the following questions: Could men have joy in the doctrine that unbaptized babes would burn in hell forever? Could men have joy in being denied the right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience? Could men have joy in being denied the right to read the word of God? Could men have joy in the thought that mental and physical torture manifests genuine repentance? Could men have joy in being lead into the realms of ignorance and worshiping a God of whom they could not conceive?

Many statements fell from the mouth of the young Prophet, but one which startled the world was the declaration: "The glory of God is intelligence." "Men cannot be saved in ignorance."

The Lord, through this American

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Prophet, revealed in the Book of Moses, Chapter 1, Verse 39, that his glory and work was as declared by the Lord:

For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

Had anyone previous to the Prophet Joseph Smith ever revealed to the world the most important work and glory of the Creator? Imagine if you will he who created all things—the universe, endless worlds and man declared that his most important objective was to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. If the work and objectives of the Lord are to be accomplished, there had to be established a direct relationship between our Father in heaven and man on earth. Channels of communication had to be reopened so that the Lord could reveal his mind and will to those he selected to represent him. Hence, the priesthood was restored to establish the former relationship wherein God directed his work for the bringing about the immortality and eternal life of man. John the Baptist returned to earth and conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery the Aaronic Priesthood, the same authority which existed in the days of John the Baptist which holds the keys of the ministering of angels and the gospel of repentance and baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. Shortly thereafter, by divine direction, the Apostolic Presidency, Peter, James, and John bestowed upon Joseph Smith and his associate the Melchizedek Priesthood which holds the keys of loosening and binding both upon the earth and in the heavens, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, the keys to preach the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue and people, the keys for the work for the dead, and, hence, the relationship which existed between the prophets and apostles of old was established in this day to the end that the Lord's plans for the eternal blessing of his children might be brought into fruition. Priesthood is divine authority, and as Joseph Smith declared:

... is an everlasting principle and existed with God from eternity and will to eternity without beginning of days or end of years. The keys have to be brought from heaven whenever the Gospel is sent.

In Section 121, Verse 36, of the Doctrine & Covenants, to confirm the above statements, the Lord declared:

That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

The priesthood is that which places a man in condition to receive the ministration of angels and to enjoy the presence of God the Father and his son Jesus Christ, which substantiates the declaration of the former apostle, John the Beloved, when he declared:

And this is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. (John 17:3.)

Brethren, this is a new day—the day of which the Apostles of old spoke when they prophesied a time of great refreshing would come when there would be a restoration of all things before the second coming of the Redeemer of the world. Does all of this mean anything to you and to me? My beloved brethren who hold the priesthood must realize that the joy of which Lehi spoke is the joy of service in the Lord's work; the joy of contributing to the salvation of the souls of our Heavenly Father's children; the joy of rendering service when called upon by those who preside over us and furthering the work of the Lord—his work to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man; and the joy in sustaining those who preside over us.

Today in the stakes of the Church, there are 156,000 men endowed with the authority of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, the priesthood after the order of the Son of God, and 129,000 holding the Aaronic Priesthood, or a total of 285,000 sons of God holding divine authority—the most precious gift

that has ever been bestowed upon mankind.

The membership of the Church in stakes only is 1,034,000 of whom 28% hold either the Melchizedek or the Aaronic Priesthood. By the way of comparison, the largest church in the United States with a membership of 29,407,000 has but 45,000 members authorized to participate in the rituals of the Church and to carry on its work, which indicates that 1.5% of the total membership as against 28% of the membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints enjoy the privilege of service.

One of the greatest evidences of the divine origin of this great Church and its priesthood lies in the fact that every male member of the Church over the age of twelve who is worthy may hold the priesthood of God and function therein. The bestowal of divine authority upon so many of the Lord's sons is an evidence that our Heavenly Father is no respecter of persons. Station in life and wealth make no difference. Faith in him and the gospel of salvation and obedience thereto wherein men live lives that are compatible with the wishes of our Heavenly Father qualify men to hold the priesthood. Priesthood privileges, powers and service are not in the hands of a few. All of these blessings are not for the General Authorities, stake authorities or bishoprics, but for every worthy holder of the priesthood. After all, salvation is an individual matter, and priesthood service in the cause of the Savior contributes to salvation and exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom. Brigham Young makes this point very clear in the following declaration:

The Gospel of salvation—The Priesthood of the Son of God—is so ordered and organized, in the very nature of it, being a portion of that law of heaven by which worlds are organized, that it is calculated to enlighten the children of men and give them power to save themselves.

Continuing with another statement, President Brigham Young stated:

The Gospel and the Priesthood are the means he employs to save and exalt his obedient children to the possession with him of the same glory and power to be crowned with crowns of glory, immortality and eternal lives.

This is the joy of which Lehi spoke: "Men are that they might have joy," and the highest degree of joy will only be found in the presence of God the Eternal Father and his Son Jesus Christ and to share his glory with him.

Some of our brethren who hold the priesthood and have within their grasp all of the blessings and privileges promised to the faithful have laid aside the opportunity of service and for some reason or another have become indifferent and thereby forgotten the covenants they made with the Lord when they received the priesthood. In the 108th Section of the Doctrine & Covenants, Verse 3, the Lord very implicitly reminds us of our priesthood covenants when he declared:

And arise up and be more careful henceforth in observing your vows, which you have made and do make, and you shall be blessed with exceeding great blessings.

No individual who holds either the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood has received it but what they were asked the question as to whether or not they would be faithful and true and to keep themselves sweet and unspotted from the sins of the world, and to render whatever service may be required.

To those who are active in the priesthood, the Lord has admonished us in the 108th Section of the Doctrine & Covenants, the 7th Verse, as follows:

Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings.

This places squarely upon the shoulders of all of us the responsibility to strengthen those who may be weak in the spirit of tolerance, patience, and love.

As I think of our inactive brethren, I feel that they are to some degree the

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"Forgotten Men." Might I ask you the question, "What have you done to encourage and stimulate the indifferent young men or older men to activity in the Church?" This should be the time to take an individual inventory of your attitude and my attitude toward our brethren. These men are not problem men, but they are men with a problem. Neither are they marked men, nor are they to be stigmatized, but rather your responsibility and mine is to find solutions to their problems. We must never forget that the Priesthood is a Divine Brotherhood, and the Divine Brotherhood of God should radiate love, good will and helpfulness to all.

There are no deficiencies in the priesthood organization as the Lord has revealed it to us, but there may be some deficiencies in those of us who fail to carry out the plan of the priesthood in being our brother's keeper. Our brethren who are not as interested as they might be have outstanding qualities of character, and these qualities could well be emulated by all of us. Again, the statement of Lehi of old: "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy," and the greatest joy of all is brought forcibly to our attention in the 18th Section of the Doctrine & Covenants, the 15th Verse:

And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

And in the 16th Verse:

And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!

Again, in the spirit of kindness, tolerance and patience let us strive to the accomplishment of bringing back into the fold of activity every member of the priesthood, and that by uniting together we shall lift one another up to the full stature of servants of God,

even from the deacon to the high priest.

These past two years due to the untiring work of stake presidencies, high councilmen, bishoprics and senior Aaronic Priesthood advisors, it has been possible to organize 1,581 senior Aaronic Priesthood quorums and groups constituted of the following: 826 senior priests quorums, 368 senior teachers quorums, 371 senior deacons quorums, and 16 mixed groups. These priesthood quorum organizations require the services of approximately 5,000 of our senior Aaronic Priesthood brethren to make up the presidencies. This is a most encouraging accomplishment, but we cannot cease our efforts upon this accomplishment, but we must look forward to see what there is left to be done.

In the stakes, there are 65,000 senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood. If all of these brethren were organized into quorums as the Lord has indicated in the 107th Section of the Doctrine & Covenants, we would have at least a total of 5,000 Senior Aaronic Priesthood quorums. The accomplishment of this will require unceasing effort.

In 1953, 3,000 senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood were advanced to the Melchizedek Priesthood. For this accomplishment, I would have you know we are most grateful, but unfortunately there were more of our brethren joined the senior Aaronic Priesthood group than were advanced to the Melchizedek Priesthood, which brings me to another question, "What about our sons who hold the Aaronic Priesthood under the age of twenty-one—these wonderful young men who Elbert Hubbard declared were made of 'Soul Stuff?' And the most valuable 'Soul Stuff' in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ are these young men born in this dispensation. They are the choice spirits, for they have been born in most instances under the new and everlasting covenant. It causes us deep concern when we find that during the year 1953 there were 3,332 twenty-year-old deacons, teachers and priests that within the coming year will become members of the senior

Aaronic Priesthood group. This terse statement tells a sad story. If we were to go into the lives of these young men, out of our investigation, we would find that someone, either a bishop, a bishop's counselor or an Aaronic Priesthood advisor has been remiss in his duty. I can't help but believe that all of these young men have become inactive and disinterested because they have lost contact with the Church, and we lose contact with all of these potential members of the senior Aaronic Priesthood by our failure to keep in constant touch with them, particularly when they are inactive and indifferent. There is but one solution to keep Aaronic Priesthood members under the age of twenty-one interested, motivated and active in their priesthood work, and that is through a very definite system of personal contacts. The Church has been built up on personal contacts. Your grandfather and my grandfather accepted the gospel because of many personal contacts made by missionaries. The contact system is still the most profitable and only one whereby inactive and indifferent members of the Church can be brought back into the fold.

I should like to relate a beautiful story of one of the great spiritual leaders of the Church, President Edward J. Wood, former president of the Alberta Temple and Alberta Stake. The story as related to me by him is as follows:

The bishop of his ward called into a special meeting some of the brethren, and among them was President Wood. The bishop announced that the brethren had been called together to go on a special mission, and this was the mission: The bishop announced, "We have a group of young men under the age of twenty-one who hold the Aaronic Priesthood who now manifest no interest and render no service. They must be brought back. Hence, I am calling each one of you brethren on a special mission to bring back one of these boys." President Wood said, "I wondered at first what kind of a mission my bishop was calling me to perform when I was president of the Alberta Temple and

president of the Alberta Stake of Zion, but when he made his announcement, I gladly responded to the call. My assignment was to visit a boy who lived five miles out of Cardston. I thought first of the boy's family. I knew I would have to face an indifferent father and an indifferent mother, and so I decided to invite him to attend the ward Priesthood Meeting with me which was held on a week night. I drove the five miles to the boy's home, and as I anticipated, the father was indifferent and the mother was indifferent saying, 'If our son decides to go to priesthood meeting with you that is his privilege.'" And so the president stated that after a good deal of persuasion the boy reluctantly consented to go to priesthood meeting.

During the time it took to drive the five miles, what do you suppose this wise man talked about? Did he talk about the Church? "No." Did he talk about priesthood? "No." Was he critical of the boy for his failure to attend to his priesthood obligations? "No." But, he talked about the things that the boy and all boys are interested in, namely athletics. He opened up the subject by telling the boy of his own experience when he and his brother William were the champion bicycle riders of the State of Utah. Was the boy interested? "Surely," for he, too, was interested in athletics as all boys are. The president of the stake, the president of the Temple brought himself down to the level of the boy in being able to look through the eyes of a boy, and with the same viewpoint, the boy opened his heart to President Wood and was willing to talk about his achievements in the field of athletics.

Arriving at the chapel, President Wood asked the boy if he would attend his deacons meeting, "Yes," he would. Then, the president requested him to listen intently and to report to him as to what had been said and what had been done. After the meeting, it was easy to open up a discussion on the priesthood, and as the boy reported in all frankness and forthrightness, he told the president that he hadn't heard

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anything he liked, nor was there anything done in the quorum meeting that inspired him. President Wood asked him what was wrong, and the boy readily answered, "The teacher was not prepared. I knew he was not prepared because when the quorum opened its meeting, he handed the manual first to one boy and then to another to read a paragraph." He said, "I might as well of stayed home, I am sure I would have learned more." There were no assignments made to the deacons, either for passing the sacrament or gathering fast offerings. In fact, there was no action in the quorum meeting, and boys love action.

Arriving home, the president extended another invitation to the boy to attend priesthood meeting. The boy consented, but during the interim between the first meeting and the second, the president of the stake went to the advisor of the deacons quorum and pointed out to him the reason why the boys were inactive and indifferent, the president's reason being that the teacher was unprepared, secondly, the president of the deacons quorum was not called up to preside over the quorum, and thirdly, no assignments were being made. You can rest assured that the next week the teacher was prepared, the presidency of the deacons quorum was in its place presiding over the meeting, and assignments were made, and thus for six consecutive weeks the man with the greatest amount of responsibility and work to do made a round trip of twenty miles to pick up a deacon and take him to priesthood meeting. As the seventh week dawned, the president asked himself the question, "I wonder if I am accomplishing anything in behalf of this boy? Tonight I will make a test of my plan." In place of driving to the boy's home, the president went to priesthood meeting, and soon the fruits of the president's efforts were manifested, for thirty minutes late, the deacon came in. At the end of the meeting, President Wood declared, "I received the greatest thrill of my life.

That boy sided up to me and placed his hand in mine, looked me squarely in the eye, and expressed his gratitude and appreciation for what I had done in just two words in boy language, 'My Pal.'"

Brethren, that is the solution to the problem of the Aaronic Priesthood under the age of twenty-one where they become indifferent—"Palship," and may I emphasize it is the solution. Palship first means contacts with boys. It means that if you establish palship, you have their confidence, good will, and their love. They will follow you to the ends of the earth if necessary. Yes, Elbert Hubbard was right when he declared, "Boys are made of Soul Stuff," and the most precious "Soul Stuff" in all the world is found in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, for herein are potential General Authorities, stake presidents, and bishops, and numerous other future leaders.

Yes brethren, there are some outstanding achievements due to the efforts of you Aaronic Priesthood workers. It affords me a great thrill to announce tonight that more than 15,000 young men will receive an Individual Aaronic Priesthood Award for their faithfulness and service in the priesthood, for they have attended their sacrament meetings, priesthood meetings, have paid a full tithing, have kept the Word of Wisdom and met their priesthood obligations in full. Again, we must not look back at what we have done, but rather we should look forward and remember that out of a total of 63,000 members of the Aaronic Priesthood under the age of twenty-one, there are still 48,000 who have not achieved as have the 15,000. These 48,000 should enjoy that divine thing that I choose to call "palship."

Brethren, there is but one question left, "Are you and I our brother's keeper?" The answer is obvious. The priesthood of God is a divine order founded upon the love of God for his sons, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, and his son so loved the world that he gave his

life for the redemption of all, and if you and I love our neighbors, as God has commanded, as ourselves, we shall close our priesthood ranks and we will gather our brethren who may be inactive in the priesthood to our side and present to the world a priesthood solidarity which will give all of us the strength to destroy the enemy of indifference and temptation and criticism, and which will inspire us to be as one, as are the Father and the Son one, and as Lehi declared: "Men are that they might have joy," and above that and most important of all that we shall be instrumental in the Lord's greatest work to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man, which I humbly pray will be the heart-felt desire and accomplishment of all of us, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin:

Brethren, the First Presidency, out of their kindness and generosity, have permitted the Presiding Bishopric to show you a film tonight that deals with the

procedures of the Adult Aaronic Priesthood plan and program. May I say to you that in this film there is a story and in the story there is a character. We want you to understand that while we show the extremes to which this particular man went, the purpose is to show what can be done if we are kind and patient, no matter how far afield some of our brethren may go. This film does not intend to carry the impression that all of our senior Aaronic brethren have gone as far as this particular character went.

(There was then presented on a screen a film story entitled "Come Back, My Son.")

The congregation and the Chorus joined in singing: "I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go."

President David O. McKay:

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr. will now speak to us.

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

MY BRETHREN: I hope that you will help me by your prayers for the few moments that I shall stand before you. This is a humbling experience, and I am sure we are all mellowed by that powerful picture showing how one man was led back from temptation and waywardness to enjoy the blessings of the Lord.

In recent years there has come to be a new philosophy which affirms that the world has been working on the wrong theory over the centuries, and they say that we must not longer talk of punishments, but only of rewards. You know, I believe that there are no real punishments except those which we bring upon ourselves. The felon in the penitentiary cell has punished

himself by his course of action which has taken away from him a blessing with which God endowed him, namely, his freedom.

The Lord has laid down as a part of the eternal plan great principles which we are to follow if we are to gain the blessings which are predicated thereon. If we fail to live those principles and rules we fail to get the blessings. The Lord does not need to punish, we punish ourselves, we deprive ourselves of the blessings which the Lord promised us.

And so with these members about whom we have heard and have seen tonight,—they are not punished by anybody. They are just failing in themselves to enjoy the blessings which they could enjoy if they lived as they should. And I should suppose that of