

PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

MY BELOVED brethren and sisters: The sense of responsibility of this moment is overwhelming. In anticipation of it I have prayed earnestly, daily, for inspiration and strength, and now I ask you for your sympathetic co-operation and your prayers that the interests of the Church, the establishing of the kingdom of God among men, may be enhanced.

"And lift up an ensign of peace, and make a proclamation for peace unto the ends of the earth." (D. & C. 105:39.)

This quotation is from a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith when Zion's Camp was at Fishing River, June 22, 1834. In that one sentence, the Lord sets forth one of the great purposes of his Church—to bring about harmony in human relations; in the individual to experience a mental or spiritual state in which there is personal freedom from "disquieting or perturbing" conditions that might interfere with the consummation of God's purposes to bring about the immortality and eternal life of man.

Considering world conditions, I think it is highly gratifying to note the commendable efforts, the wise, conservative judgment manifest by the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and other sincere statesmen in Congress, including our own worthy Senators and Representatives to foster the cause of peace and to avert a world-wide clash of arms. But it is very apparent that international conditions at present centering at Quemoy and Matsu Islands are filled with such volatile problems that a defiant move on the part of Chinese communists might disrupt the already precarious peace of the world.

We love peace, but not peace at any price. There is a peace more destructive of the manhood of living man than war is destructive of the body. "Chains are worse than bayonets."

After the Savior's resurrection when he appeared to his disciples assembled in an upper room, his divine greeting was "Peace be unto you." (John 20:19.) Even before his resurrection, he said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be

troubled, neither let it be afraid." (*Ibid.*, 14:27.)

We believe firmly that the basis upon which world peace may be permanently obtained is not by sowing seeds of distrust and suspicion in people's minds; not by engendering enmity and hatred in human hearts; not by individuals or nations arrogating to themselves the claim of possessing all wisdom, or the only culture worth having; not by war with resulting suffering and death from submarines, poison gas, or explosions of nuclear bombs. No! The peace that will be permanent must be founded upon the principles of righteousness as taught and exemplified by the Prince of Peace, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, "... for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.)

My theme this morning is: What are we doing as a Church and as members thereof to proclaim this peace?

Recently, as you know, it was my privilege and duty, accompanied by Sister McKay and President Franklin J. Murdock, who acted as secretary, to visit some of the far-off missions of the Church.

With the theme in mind of proclaiming the gospel of peace to the inhabitants of the world, I should like to comment on observations made of four effective factors operative in the spreading of the gospel.

First, we note the excellent work being done by the 11,500 missionaries throughout the world, 390 of whom it was our privilege to meet on this recent tour. Each one of these pays his or her own expenses, conforms to the requirements and laws of the country, and teaches the principles that constitute the basis of the restored religion of Jesus Christ. All are appointed messengers proclaiming the glad tidings of the restored gospel, giving of themselves, as well as of their means for the good of the world.

A second favorable factor is a better understanding by officials of governments and municipalities regarding the purposes of Mormon missionary work. Old stories that used to be extant accus-

ing missionaries of sinister motives are now repeated only by the prejudiced and uninformed. United States consuls, or their representatives, mayors of municipalities, and other officials, met us, bade us welcome, and proffered to render any service to make our visit profitable. Newspaper reporters, radio announcers, television representatives were on hand to learn the purposes of the tour, and without exception gave fair and unprejudiced reports of our visit.

The third observation (and this is important) is the need to put forth every effort within reason and practicability to place within reach of Church members in these distant missions every educational and spiritual privilege that the Church has to offer.

It is only recently that some of these missions have been visited by a General Authority. With modern means of transportation available, it is now possible and very practical to have these far-off missions visited as the missions here in the United States have been visited. Accordingly, and this you will be pleased to hear, at a meeting of the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve held March 17, 1955, it was unanimously decided that these distant missions should be included with other missions in the annual appointments of members of the Council of the Twelve.

Besides these visits, educational institutions are being made available for the young people. In Nukualofa, for example, in the Tongan Islands, under the able presidency of D'Monte W. Coombs, Professor Ermel J. Morton, principal, and an able staff, there is now established in full working order the Liahona College, accommodating three hundred students, and employing fourteen teachers. It is a credit to the Church and to the Tongan Islands. Indeed, it is one of the show places of passengers of the steamship *Tofua*, and her sister ship, the *Matua*. While the ships are loading and unloading cargo at Nukualofa, the passengers take buses out to Liahona to visit the school and inspect the work that is being done by the students.

At Pesega, Samoa, under the presidency of President Howard B. Stone, the school already established accommodates

from six hundred to one thousand students. Another is planned at Maupasaga, American Samoa. Thus will the branches be strengthened in far distant lands with visits of the Twelve, whose duty it is to set in order the affairs of the Church in all the world, with educational advantages to prepare students for the preaching of the gospel, and finally, with a temple within easy reach of those whose influence in the mission field will become a strength to the branches, and a means of proclaiming peace.

The fourth observation I wish to make is the influence of the power of example. One of the most impressive features of our recent South Pacific tour was the participation of youth in meetings, in the welcomes extended, and in the farewells, and the orderly conduct of the children, without an exception. The school at Liahona in Tonga radiated not only culture and refinement, but also the true spirit of the gospel. The same features existed in Tahiti under Acting President Larson H. Caldwell; New Zealand, presided over by President Sidney J. Ottley; Australia, under President Charles V. Liljenquist; in Samoa, as I have already stated, under President Howard B. Stone; in Hawaii, under President D. Arthur Haycock; and in the stake, under President Edward L. Clisold. Strangers who were present, (and they were there by the hundreds), had a good demonstration of what the Church is doing properly to interest and to direct the youth.

Herein lies the responsibility of membership. The gospel of peace should find its most fruitful effects in the homes of Church members. Flowers in our gardens require good soil and a favorable climate. So children, to be healthy and happy, should have a favorable mental and emotional atmosphere in the home.

Soon after our return from the South Pacific, I received a letter from President Ward C. Holbrook, a state official, stating that the divorce rate in Utah is such as to give cause for most serious consideration. It is inconsistent to go abroad to proclaim peace if we have not peace in our own lives and homes.

The greatest trust that can come to

a man and woman is the placing in their keeping the life of a little child. If a man defaults who is entrusted with other people's funds, whether he be a bank, municipal, or state official, he is apprehended and probably sent to prison. If a person entrusted with a government secret discloses that secret, and betrays his country, he is called a traitor. What must the Lord think, then, of parents who, through their own negligence or wilful desire to indulge their selfishness, fail properly to rear their children, and thereby prove untrue to the greatest trust that has been given to human beings? In reply the Lord has said: ". . . the sin be upon the heads of the parents." (D. & C. 68:25.)

The happiest homes in the world should be found among members of the Church. Statistics on broken homes, with resultant divorces, should alert all citizens, and particularly members of the Church to greater activity in preserving harmony in home circles. Let us begin at once as parents to maintain the kind of influence or home atmosphere that will contribute to the normal moral development of the children and eliminate from the home those elements which cause discord and strife.

Fathers and mothers sometimes by unwise conduct unwittingly influence their children toward delinquency. Among these unwise acts, I mention first, disagreeing, or quarreling on the part of parents in the presence of children. Sometimes such quarrels arise out of an attempt to correct or to discipline a child. One parent criticizes, the other objects, and the good influence of the home, so far as the child is concerned, is nullified. A child of such parents can never say truthfully in after life what John Ruskin writes of his memory of home:

"I never heard my father's or mother's voice once raised in any question with each other; nor saw an angry or even slightly hurt or offended glance in the eyes of either . . . I never saw a moment's trouble or disorder in any household matter."

I name as a second unwise condition those parents who pollute the home atmosphere with "vulgarity" and "profanity." I use the term "vulgarity" in

the sense used by David Starr Jordan. "To be vulgar," he writes, "is to do that which is not the best of its kind. It is to do poor things in poor ways, and to be satisfied with that. . . . It is vulgar to wear dirty linen when one is not engaged in dirty work. It is vulgar to like poor music. . . . To find amusement in trashy novels, to enjoy vulgar theatres, to find pleasure in cheap jokes, to tolerate coarseness and looseness in any of its myriad forms."

Parents are particularly untrue to their trust who will use profane words in the home. Profanity is a national vice. Parents pollute their home when they use it. People of our nation would stand on a higher moral plane if they would but follow the general order given by the Father of our country to his soldiers, July 1, 1776. Said he—or wrote he at that time:

"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."

I continue, vulgarity and profanity among the young is often, though not always, the result of the presence of those evils in the home.

To quarreling of parents before children, to vulgarity, and to the condemnatory use of profanity, there may be added a third contributing factor to parental delinquency, and that is the non-conformity in the homes to Church standards. Remember, fellow parents, that children are quick to detect insincerity, and they resent in their feelings false pretension. Parents, of all people on earth, should be honest with their children. Keep your promises to them and speak the truth always. Children are more influenced by sermons you act than by sermons you preach. It is the consistent parent who gains the trust of his child. When children feel that

you reciprocate their trust, they will not violate your confidence nor bring dishonor to your name.

"The parent must live truth, or the child will not live it. The child will startle you with its quickness in puncturing the bubble of your pretended knowledge; in instinctively piercing the heart of a sophistry without being conscious of process; in relentlessly enumerating your unfulfilled promises; in detecting with a justice of a court of equity a technicality of speech that is virtually a lie. He will justify his own lapses from truth by appeal to some white lie told to a visitor and unknown to be overheard by the little ones, whose mental powers we ever underestimate in theory though we may overpraise in words.

"If truth be the rock-foundation of the child's character, as a fact, not as a theory, the future of that child is as fully assured as it is possible for human pre-vision to guarantee." (Wm. George Jordan, *The Power of Truth*.)

The fourth observation: parents who fail to teach obedience to their children. Within the last decade there have been rampant some wild theories about the self-determination of children, and the preservation of their individuality. Some of these theorists believe that children should be permitted to solve their own problems without guidance from parents. There is some virtue in this, but there is more error. This theory has gained momentum in practice because of reaction to arbitrary government by parents.

Commenting upon this, one educator rightly says: "Thousands of conventions are laid down by society today, conventions which are often institutionalized and crystallized. Whether he likes it or not, every individual must conform to these conventions if he is to be either efficient or happy. If he does not conform, society brings all sorts of pressure to bear upon him. He may be jailed for certain kinds of nonconformity. For other less serious kinds he may become soured, disappointed, and even neurotic.

"If the home does not develop obedience, society will demand it and get it. It is therefore better for the home with its kindness, sympathy, and understanding to train the child in obedience

rather than callously to leave him to the brutal and unsympathetic discipline that society will impose if the home has not already fulfilled this obligation."

The best time to teach the child obedience is between the ages of two to four. It is then that the child should learn that there are limits to his actions, that there are certain bounds beyond which he cannot pass with impunity. This conformity to home conditions can be easily obtained with kindness, but with firmness. "Train up a child the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6.) In this old adage the word *train* has great significance.

Fifth, there are parents who say: We will let our children grow to manhood and womanhood and choose for themselves. In taking this attitude parents fail in the discharging of a parental responsibility. Parents and teachers are God's fellow workers. The Father of all mankind expects parents, as his representatives, to assist him in shaping and guiding human lives and immortal souls. That is the highest assignment which the Lord can bestow upon man.

The most effective way to teach religion in the home is not by preaching but by living. If you would teach faith in God, show faith in him yourself; if you would teach prayer, pray yourself. Would you have them temperate? Then you yourself refrain from intemperance. If you would have your child live a life of virtue, of self-control, of good report, then set him a worthy example in all these things. A child brought up under such home environment will be fortified for the doubts, questions, and yearnings that will stir his soul when the real period of religious awakening comes at twelve or fourteen years of age.

It is then that he needs positive teaching regarding God and truth and his relations with others. Activity in the Church is a good safeguard during youth. Continual absence from Church makes continual absence easy. Other interests in life make the growing youth indifferent to religion. Success makes him think that religion is not essential to his happiness. "It is a law of life

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that use gives strength; a capacity unused weakens and dies. It is as true of religious instincts as of any other. One need not be a sinner to lose God; he need only forget Him."

With respect to the responsibility of parents teaching religion to their children, the Lord is very explicit in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 68, 25th to 28th verse:

"And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents.

"For this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized.

"And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands.

"And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord."

Brethren and sisters, let us strive to have fewer broken homes, and in our homes to have harmony and peace. From such homes will go men and women motivated with a desire to build, not to destroy.

Thus in our homes, in our wards, branches, and stakes, we may join the appointed messengers in organized missions, and consistently proclaim the re-

stored gospel of peace unto the ends of the earth.

"Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of him whose holy work was 'doing good';
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

"Then shall all shackles fall: the stormy clangor
Of wild war music o'er the earth shall cease;
Love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,
And in its ashes plant the tree of peace."
(Whittier)

I hope that in the hearts of those who are listening there will have been awakened a realization that example in the home is entirely essential to the proclamation of peace abroad. The strangers who come to visit us will see that our lives comport with the proclamation of peace, with the ensign of peace that the Church holds up before the world. O Father, help us, that we may be thus blessed by the guidance of thy Holy Spirit, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We shall now hear from Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve, who will be followed by Elder Marion G. Romney.

ELDER ELRAY L. CHRISTIANSEN

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

AFTER LISTENING to President David O. McKay's timely and helpful message, brothers and sisters, I am sure that you feel, as did I, to say again in your hearts:

We thank thee, O God, for a Prophet,
To guide us in these latter days;
We thank thee for sending the gospel
To lighten our minds with its rays.

May we utter that thanks and show it in a fervent and personal response to this appeal of our great leader.

I am sure that what I shall say will

not be new to anyone, but it is a matter to which we should give serious consideration. The Latter-day Saints are a blessed people because they have made covenants with the Lord. As he made covenants with Israel of old, so he has made covenants with us, and we have made personal and individual covenants with him.

A covenant is a bond; a solemn agreement. It involves at least two individuals, and, of course, both parties must abide by the conditions of the covenant in order to make it effective and bind-