

After the singing Bishop Carl W. Buehner will speak to us.

The congregation and the Chorus sang the hymn, "O Ye Mountains High."

President David O. McKay:

Bishop Carl W. Buehner of the Presiding Bishopric will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Spencer W. Kimball.

BISHOP CARL W. BUEHNER

Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric



Y DEAR brethren and sisters: I think if I were perfectly honest with you at this moment, I would tell you that I appreciate shaking before you the next few

minutes.

This has been a marvelous conference. I expected it to be so, knowing of some of the great events that have happened in the Church during this past year. I am sure it has been one of the greatest years in the history of the Church. When I think of temple work and temple building alone—one temple dedicated, one ready for dedication, ground broken for a third, a fourth one ready for construction immediately, and land purchased for a fifth, all in one year—it is a great day in the history of the Church.

We have heard marvelous reports of what has happened in other parts of the Church, the creation of new missions, and the growth of the Church. I was very impressed yesterday morning when President McKay announced how many new members had come into the Church in the past year, I suppose more than in any other one year in the history of the Church. I have been interested in how some of these new converts have joined the Church and the reasons for their joining the Church. I thought today I would like to say just a few words about some of them.

I remember a mother standing up in a conference in the southern part of Utah, giving credit for her membership in the Church to a four-year-old daughter. She said, "My husband and I and our three children moved into this community a few months ago, and shortly after we became established, we decided that our children should have some religious affiliation. I do not know why I did not think the parents should, but

at least we thought the children ought to have some. So we suggested to the children that they go to Church with other children living in the community. A few weeks later my little daughter, four years old, came home to me after Sunday School one morning, and said, "Mother, how is it that everyone else's mother goes to Sunday School with them, but you don't go to Sunday School with me?" And the mother said, "You might as well have stabbed me in the back with a dagger, it cut that deep. I decided I wasn't going to have my little daughter accuse me of being the only mother not attending Sunday School with her daughter, so I began going." Then she said, "I met some of the most wonderful people that I have ever learned to know in my life, and I heard things in Sunday School that were new and impressive to me, and it wasn't very long after that, that I became a member of this Church."

I have heard some who have had some unusual experiences in becoming members of the Church through the building program. I was down in a stake in California a while ago. We had a little time to visit, and the stake president took me to a new branch that was under construction. While we were riding to the new building, he said, "You know, this has been a very unusual project. The Church has furnished the material, and the branch has done all of the work. They have a man here who is a non-member of the Church who has contributed free all of the plumbing labor for this building, and a senior member of the Aaronic Priesthood who has done all of the electrical work in the building."

As we approached the building, I noticed the roof was on, and the outside was stuccoed. We went around to the front. There we saw a plaster mixer

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running, and a woman shoveling sand and hard-wall into the mixer. That seemed a little unusual to me. We walked into the building, and I was made acquainted with the branch president. I said to him, "Say, I am a little worried about a woman outside, shoveling sand and hard-wall into a mixer." He said, "You better be careful what you say; that is my wife. She is a part of my firm. She is the best hod carrier we have here in Yucaipa." Just at that time she came into the front door with a large wheelbarrow full of plaster and loaded up her husband's mortar board until he could not talk to us any longer. He had to get it on the wall. I feel certain that the man who did the plumbing in that building has plumbed himself right into the Church. I am quite sure he has.

I have heard of others who have painted their way into the Church. Not long ago I heard of a man who had some good Mormon neighbors who were building a chapel. He was a painter. He was invited to assist in painting the chapel, and he not only made a fine contribution painting, but he painted himself right into the Church.

I heard of a man down in Las Vegas, just a month or so ago, that plastered himself into the Church. So you see, you can become interested in the Church in many different ways.

I think we are losing some opportunities if we do not invite our neighbors who are not members of the Church to help us in the erection of our wonderful buildings. The plasterer was thrilled as he told me of his profession. He was invited to come over and help. He met the finest men he has known working on that building. Through this contact, he became a member of the Church.

The most recent I have heard is about a minister of a church, who, I think, is going to preach himself in. The chorus we heard this morning is bound to sing people into the Church. Through our living the gospel, we can melt people into the Church. But here is a man who is going to preach himself in and may bring with him a number of his own congregation. I would like to read a little from a talk he delivered. It is a good Mormon sermon delivered by

the Reverend Frank S. Morley of the Grace Presbyterian Church of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. His subject was, "What we can learn from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." This is what he said:

"About all I knew of the Mormons until comparatively recently was what I had read in Zane Grey. I remembered an adverse picture built around one of Zane Grey's novels that I had read when I was a boy, that I had seen as a boy. That sort of impression remained with me unhappily until comparatively recently when I came to know a good many of that Church more intimately, and I began to find out a bit more about that Church. Especially did I find it out when two young men came to call on me not long after I had been in Calgary. They came from afar down in the United States. They came just to talk over their faith with me. I thought that was very wonderful of these two young men. It took some courage—at least I would have thought it took some courage to come up and face a rather formidable Presbyterian minister, and they walked in and talked—just young fellows who had just started to shave, I think—and began to talk about their faith. I asked them how they were managing to make a living because they said they paid their own expenses, and one boy told me had had just written home and told his father to sell a cow he owned and to send up the money. They dedicate two years to such work and pay their own expenses. After that, another couple of young men came up to see me and also talked about their faith and answered some more of my questions.

"At the [Utah] centennial celebration in 1947, the Mormon Church said they had sent out 51,612 missionaries in that one hundred years—going out for two-year terms and paying their own expenses! They had in 1949, 8,695 at work in thirty-eight countries. But since then they are sending out something like four thousand annually, so I guess they have more missionaries at work in the world now. An amazing missionary work for a Church that is comparatively small and comparatively new.

"Now what are the things that I like

about this Church? First, their clear-cut statement of faith. For example, their first statement is that they believe in God, in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit. It had been said to me that Mormons do not believe in Jesus Christ! Such superstitions and misunderstandings we have regarding them need clearing up. They believe in things that we would find a little peculiar, perhaps, like eternal progression, revelation taking place today—prophetic revelation—and eternal marriage. They don't believe that death makes any divorce. But is this faith bad?

"The second thing I like about them is that their religion enters into their life immediately. Idleness, laziness, living off the government—these things to them are evil. They believe that one should work and should not be supported by the government.

"Third, is that it is a family-centered religion. This family-centered religion begins with family prayers in the morning and family prayers at night, and no food is eaten until it is blessed. The entire family goes to Church, led by the father and the mother. There is a home evening each week. Isn't that a wonderful thing? One evening in the week everybody is home in the Mormon family, and they again have family life.

"In order to hold office in the Mormon Church, you have to follow the Book of Wisdom strictly—no tea, no coffee, no liquor, and no tobacco (which will immediately rule out a good many of us). You have to be morally clean, you have to pay a tithe, and you have to be an active worker in the Church. Now I don't know whether it's because of this way of life to which their religion is related so intimately or not, but they are perhaps the healthiest people in the world. During the war, in Utah you found more men acceptable for the services than any other state in the United States.

"The death rate in the United States is 10 per 1000, but among the Mormons it is under 6 per 1000. The births per 1000 in the United States are 24 but among the Mormons 38. In the leading 22 civilized nations of the world, the average number of children born out of wedlock are 74 per 1000. In

the United States 40 per 1000 are born out of wedlock, but in Utah only 10, and in Idaho (which is next in proportion being a Mormon state) 11. An amazing contrast! They have a very low divorce rate also.

"Another thing I like in the Church is its fellowship, especially among young people. They keep their young people around the Church. And another thing, and it may result from this fellowship, they believe in early marriage. That's a good idea. As a matter of fact, they prepare their young people for marriage. It would be a fine thing if our young people were prepared more for marriage. The protestant church has a most inadequate preparation of young people for marriage.

"Another thing I like about their Church is their devotion. Take the stake president for example. A stake is a certain area that goes a long way outside of Calgary—takes in a vast area. The stake president is unpaid. The man that holds that position is a most prominent citizen—one of our busiest—and yet that stake president gives this sort of time to his Church: He gives one night a month for faculty meeting of the stake officers. He gives one night a week for a stake presidency meeting. He gives two Sundays a month to visit the wards. He gives one full afternoon one Saturday a month. He attends two general conferences a year at Salt Lake City, and they last for three days each. He has four stake conferences a year where he gives one and one-half days each, and one day a month he gives to the temple. Now just think of that sort of time! Just think of it! I can't; it appalls me. [And here I would like to say, I am glad he does not know how much more time a stake president or a bishop puts in for the Church or he might faint.] That amazing sort of time! We have nothing like it! In our church there's nothing at all resembling that sort of sacrifice of time, and I know my church from coast to coast.

"I think also of their generosity not only in the matter of time, but with their tithes. They pay one-tenth. On the first Sunday of each month they have a fast offering. They go without two meals on that Sunday and give the money to the poor. President Hoover

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said that if all churches were to practise help to the poor as the Mormon Church does, there would not have to be any state support whatever. They take care of their members, and that's another thing I like about their Church. Their wards are divided into what they call 'blocks,' which merely means a section of the city, and in that section there will be from 3 to 8 families who are Mormons, and they will be visited by two teachers. Every month they will be visited by two teachers. [And I wish that were right, too.] They may be missed this month for some reason, they may be in California or away when called upon, but they will be visited next month. Every family in the Mormon Church is visited by these teachers from 6 to 12 times every year. Last month they aimed at 100 percent visitation, and they failed. They didn't get 100 percent. They only got 95 percent. [And if the rest of you do that well, then you will hear no more complaints from the ward teaching committee.] Some folk were away when they were called on. Normally their program is about 80 percent efficient in their calling. These teachers do three things. They carry, first, a message for the month. Secondly, they go to help, if any is needed, and then they encourage activity in Church life.

"What message does this hold for us? First of all, this Church is composed of laymen. There is no one in the Calgary Stake who is paid at all. Isn't that astounding? It's a layman's church. Just think of the work these laymen do. Our protestant church is built upon laymen. Our Presbyterian Church is built upon laymen. Unless we can revive the laymen of the Presbyterian Church, I don't believe it has any great future. All of the work except some inconsequential things are turned back upon the minister of the Church. Unless we can get the laymen of our church to teach, I tell you our church will be a dwindling church.

"The teaching we get from this Mormon Church is this—that religion is not to be taken easily. A religion that imposes no obligation is no religion."

He said many other wonderful things. I have the complete sermon over in my

office, if some of you would like to get the rest. I cannot help feeling that this man is on his way to preaching himself into our Church. And if he talks to the same audience another time or two, he is going to bring some of them with him.

I am interested in the new converts to the Church. I am grateful to see them coming from all walks of life and through all the different channels we have in the Church. I would like to say to those listening to me today who are not members of the Church: Investigate the Church; listen to the missionaries; work your way into the Church on a building project; catch the spirit through the singing of these choruses or through any other avenue that will impress you with the most important thing that can come into your life—a testimony of the gospel. And then for some of you that are not as active as you should be, I would like to say to you: Become more active, enjoy the great blessings that our Father in heaven has in store for the faithful of this great Church and kingdom of his, established for the last time upon the earth.

I would like to close by adding my testimony that I know that God lives, and that Jesus Christ is his Son, the Savior of the world, and that the gospel has been restored in this Dispensation of the Fulness of Times through his servant, the Prophet Joseph Smith.

One other thought I would like to leave is this: "It is recommended that we take an interest in the future . . . that's where we'll spend the rest of our life."

This may be a good thought to close on. May the Lord bless each and every one of us, I pray, humbly, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Bishop Carl W. Buehner of the Presiding Bishopric has just concluded speaking. We shall now hear Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve, who, six months ago, was appointed to visit the European Missions.