

Saturday, April 7

Second Day

from the Pioneer, Salt Lake and Sugar House Regions, and Davis, Layton, and North Davis Stakes are with us this afternoon to furnish the music for this, the Fourth Session. Sister Florence Jepsen Madsen is conducting and Elder Frank W. Asper is at the organ.

We shall begin these services by the Singing Mothers favoring us with "The Wintry Day Descending to Its Close."

The opening prayer will be offered by Elder Royle S. Papworth, president of Columbia River Stake.

Singing by the Relief Society Singing Mothers, "The Wintry Day Descending to Its Close."

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Royle S. Papworth, president of the Columbia River Stake.

President David O. McKay:

President Royle S. Papworth of the Columbia River Stake just offered the invocation.

"O Savior, Hear Me," will now be rendered by the Relief Society Singing Mothers, and Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker following the music.

Selection by the Singing Mothers, "O Savior, Hear Me."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker. He will be followed by President Joseph Fielding Smith.

ELDER DELBERT L. STAPLEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

FIRST I SHOULD like Elder [Adam S.] Bennion to know that it doesn't take a prophetic statement for one to suffer. I have been suffering since yesterday morning when it was anticipated that I should speak.

I desire to preface what I have to say today by recognizing and paying honor to our beloved President, David O. McKay, who has rounded out fifty years of devoted service as one of the General Authorities of the Church. I want you to know that it is a great privilege and blessing to be associated with him in the General Councils of the Church. We love him as you love him. It is our privilege to feel the strength of his spirit, the power of his personality, the strength of his character, and the inspiration of his soul as we associate daily with him in the affairs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President McKay is the epitome of saintliness, for he has incorporated into his life the great truths of the gospel of our Lord. We all know that the gospel has a great refining influence in the lives of those who accept it and who obey it. It is a great blessing in our Council, after a matter has been taken

care of, to hear President McKay say: "The will of the Lord has been done." My brethren and sisters, President McKay has given a long, faithful, and devoted service to this Church and its people. Truly he represents everything the Church teaches, and it couldn't fall to an individual to have a greater privilege than to sit at his feet and to learn of him. There is not anything too unimportant for him to give his personal attention and consideration. The Lord loves him and is sustaining him by his holy power. He represents what we look for in a prophet of the Living God. I hope we will all pay him honor on this important day in his life.

Now, my brothers and sisters, today I should like to represent another voice speaking in behalf of the Lamanite people and the Church's responsibility to them, with the hope we shall all be encouraged more fully to support and carry the Lamanite banner until these people of chosen lineage realize every privilege and blessing promised to them by revelation and prophecy.

While there are many scriptural statements in the Book of Mormon that support with unquestioned evidence a return to them of the true gospel of our

Lord and the restoration of promised blessings as members of the house of Israel, I shall refer to three only:

In 1 Nephi, 15th chapter, we are informed by Nephi that in the latter days and many generations after the Messiah shall be manifested in body unto the children of men, then shall the fulness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the gentiles, and from the gentiles unto the remnant of father Lehi's posterity, who are the American Indian and his blood relations in the isles of the Pacific.

"And at that day shall the remnant of our seed know," continues Nephi, "that they are of the house of Israel, and that they are the covenant people of the Lord; and then shall they know and come to the knowledge of their forefathers, and also to the knowledge of the gospel of their Redeemer, which was ministered unto their fathers by him; wherefore, they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer and the very points of his doctrine, that they may know how to come unto him and be saved." (1 Nephi 15:14.)

Now, my brothers and sisters, as I speak of the Indians, I have in mind all elements of this branch of the house of Israel.

When the Savior visited the Nephites on this continent following his resurrection on the Eastern Hemisphere, he informed them that the establishment of his Church among the gentiles in this land of freedom, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and its teachings to their descendants, was the sign by which they were to recognize his work among the children of men. Then he affirms:

And when these things come to pass that thy seed shall begin to know these things—it shall be a sign unto them, that they may know that the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he hath made unto the people who are of the house of Israel. (3 Nephi 21:7.)

Mormon, a great prophet toward the close of the Nephite history, speaks of the loathsome state to which the Indian should fall, beyond the description of that which ever had been among the Nephites or the Lamanites, and then declares that after the scattering of his

people by the gentiles and after they have suffered much affliction and tribulation, then the Lord will remember the covenant which he made unto Abraham and to all the house of Israel.

When the Lord brought forth the record of the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith in this dispensation, he committed to his Church with that important record the responsibility of taking to the Indian and Lamanite people the knowledge of their forefathers and the fulness of the gospel, which record also includes the Lord's promises to them as a branch of the house of Israel.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, section 3, the Lord, after reproving the Prophet Joseph Smith for the loss of certain manuscripts relating to the first part of the Book of Mormon, declared:

Nevertheless, my work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people—

. . . through the testimony of their fathers—

And this testimony shall come to the knowledge of the Lamanites, and the Lemuelites, and the Ishmaelites, who dwindled in unbelief because of the iniquity of their fathers, whom the Lord has suffered to destroy their brethren the Nephites, because of their iniquities and their abominations.

And for this very purpose are these plates preserved, which contain these records—that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people;

And that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and that they might know the promises of the Lord, and that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name, and that through their repentance they might be saved. (D & C 3:16-20.)

Very shortly after this revelation was given, the Lord gave another revelation that instructed the Prophet to open the work among the Lamanites, as we learn in reading section 28 of the Doctrine and Covenants, wherein Oliver Cowdery was called as the first missionary to the Indians from the newly restored Church. The assignment reads:

And now, behold, I say unto you that you shall go unto the Lamanites and preach

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my gospel unto them; and inasmuch as they receive thy teachings thou shalt cause my church to be established among them; . . . (*Ibid.*, 28:8.)

Three others were later appointed by revelation to accompany Oliver Cowdery on this first mission to the Indian people.

[President Brigham Young gave much prayerful thought and attention to promoting the gospel among the Indians and in establishing friendly relations between them and the Saints.]

President John Taylor was greatly concerned about an active Lamanite program, for he declared:

The work of the Lord among the Lamanites must not be postponed, if we desire to retain the approval of God. Thus far we have been content simply to baptize them and let them run wild again, but this must continue no longer; the same devoted effort, the same care in instructing, the same organization of priesthood must be introduced and maintained among the house of Lehi as amongst those of Israel gathered from gentile nations. As yet, God has been doing all, and we comparatively nothing. He has led many of them to us, and they have been baptized, and now we must instruct them further and organize them into churches with proper presidencies, attach them to our stakes, organizations, etc. In one word, treat them exactly in these respects, as we would and do treat our white brethren. (*The Gospel Kingdom*, p. 247.)

President Wilford Woodruff stated:

I am satisfied that, although we have done a little for the Lamanites, we have got to do a great deal more. (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p. 296.)

President George Albert Smith, in inaugurating work among the Indians during his administration, strongly emphasized the importance of the Church mission to the Indians in these simple yet dynamic words:

"The day is here for the gospel to go to the Lamanites, and we must never fail them again."

This was later reaffirmed by President David O. McKay when he emphatically declared: "God would hold us accountable if we failed."

These statements make unmistakably clear what our duty is to the Indian people. Now, my brothers and sisters,

we should not deny to them longer their full rights and opportunities for blessings. We must always remember, we only have the authentic record which furnishes the true origin of the American Indians, their history and God's work and gospel teachings among them. Great are the promises of the Lord unto the Indians, which spiritual blessings this people alone hold the keys, rights, and powers to grant and bestow upon them.

In a sense I do not feel sorry for the Indian people because they are children of promise, belonging as they do to the house of Israel and are the posterity of Abraham, the father of the faithful, through whose lineage the Lord promised that all nations of the earth are to be blessed; therefore, they are a chosen race and people unto God, possessing a divine and royal heritage. However, I do feel sorry about the lack of privileges, denial of citizenship rights, and insufficient opportunities for schooling and culture which continue to shroud them in darkness and despair. There are too many of them in our modern day, living under most primitive conditions and circumstances which destroy faith, initiative, ambition, and confidence. That it required hundreds of years for the Indians to reach their low state of degeneracy does not allow the Church or the nation unlimited time to return them to the high civilization and spiritual activation they once enjoyed nor the opportunities and blessings of our present enlightened era of scientific knowledge, productive achievement and culture.

Our apparent insufficient interest and somewhat unsatisfactory follow-up of the Prophet Joseph Smith's taking the Book of Mormon and the gospel to the Indian as well as partial failure to heed the counsel of all presidents of the Church in relation to this program, is an indictment against us and represents a challenge and an obligation we cannot afford longer to ignore.

It is unfortunate that we have permitted others to indoctrinate them to different ways of life than that of their fathers as recorded in the Book of Mormon. Our efforts over the years have not been sustained, but intermittent, and each stoppage of activity causes us

to lose ground and permits others to become more firmly entrenched, creating a serious proselyting problem which could in large measure have been avoided. The Indians themselves have chided the missionaries about such conditions and occurrences.

Without question in my mind, we must fulfil completely the Church duty to the Indian and thus lay suitable plans to prevent any future departure from a chosen course of intense missionary activity among them. We truly cannot afford to neglect them again. If called to an accounting by the Lord, could we vindicate the apparent indifference towards them? The Lord has counseled that we are not to be commanded in all things and he that doeth not anything until he is commanded and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned. (See D & C 58:26.) The revelations make clear the Church path of duty. What additional direction is needed to awaken us to the importance of this God-given task?

My brothers and sisters, the Indian cause and program is not a dead issue in the Church today but continues a constant challenge and duty. We must regain through devoted service to the Indian God's approval and blessing upon this most important assignment.

In my judgment, to be successful the Indian program must become a full Church effort that involves every person and organization. We should also encourage government bodies to study more thoroughly Indian problems, give them increasing local autonomy and furnish the type and quality of leadership and help to elevate the Indian to his rightful place of ultimate full citizenship with opportunity to enjoy every educational and work advantage that will make him independent and self-sustaining. Because the first inhabitants and rightful citizens of our great country are in a minority group does not justify indifference to their cause, nor should they be ignored by the strong political parties of our nation. The government, having subjugated and taken possession of their lands and made them wards of the government, places upon this nation

and people a debt and obligation that should be fully and honestly met to permit them in proper time to enjoy full rights and benefits of citizenship with economic and social privileges and proper home life in the society of American peoples.

Perhaps too thoughtlessly we consider the Book of Mormon as belonging to us exclusively, overlooking the source of its divine preparation, also the descendants of the people to whom the record was originally given. We hold it in sacred trust for the American Indian as well as for our own use. The Book of Mormon record has for the American Indian a familiar voice speaking as it does from the dust, of their ancestors.

We must rely on stake and full-time mission leadership and missionaries, priesthood quorums, also the Church auxiliaries, to carry forward this important work. I cannot promise you that it will be an easy task. It will be full of discouragements and will require years to attain reasonable progress, but when accomplished, think of the marvelous blessings and satisfactions we as a people can experience for bringing a backward branch of the house of Israel to a knowledge of truth and of their God. The problems and handicaps that now exist in working among the Indians cause an assignment to be distasteful to some, and because the results often are disappointing and quite unproductive, tend to frighten many away who are considered for missionary service among them. Perhaps they are fearful of what they might find and revolt against the idea of working and associating with these people who live under such humble circumstances and for the most part are without modern facilities that we accept as a part of our daily living. The Lord taught that to eat with unwashed hands did not defile a man, but those things which proceed out of the mouth and come forth from the heart, they defile the man. (See Matthew 15:18-20.)

We should take seriously these words of Jacob, the brother of Nephi:

Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, which is the word of God, that ye revile no more against them because of the darkness of their skins; . . . (Jacob 3:9)

Why do we as a people hesitate, my brothers and sisters, to pursue fully the work God has assigned us to do by revelation? How can the Indians be encouraged to a full life of opportunity, joy, and happiness without our help? As we meditate this challenge, we should remember the example of the Christ who humbly and graciously washed the feet of his disciples to teach them the lesson of humility in his service.

Calling to mind the vision and lesson given to the Apostle Peter, who at first resisted taking the gospel to the gentiles, "We cannot call that common or unclean which God has cleansed." (See Acts 10:15.) Does not that same counsel apply to us today, now that the time has arrived for the Indian to receive the fulness of the gospel of our Lord? I am firmly convinced the Lord in his own way is preparing the Indian people to receive the message of the restored gospel, but we must willingly cooperate with him in this program according to the important assignment given to the Church.

Now we should resolve, my brothers and sisters, to never give up in this program regardless of disappointments and discouragements, but fulfil in a pleasing way to the Lord our duty to the Indian people with patience, love, and kindness. Also, we must faithfully keep all promises made to them, and by real sustained interest and never failing them again build confidence through our ef-

forts to serve and thus create a desire within them for the gospel and kingdom of our Lord.

I do not want you to get the idea from this talk that the Church does not have an Indian program and is not making some progress in this field of service, because we are, but we must step up our efforts, increase effectiveness of the work, and accomplish much more than we are now doing to fully bless these people and to please the Lord, our God.

I recognize and express appreciation to those of our brothers and sisters who have given and are giving such faithful and devoted service to the peoples of Lamanite origin. I pray that the choice blessings of our Heavenly Father will be upon this branch of the house of Israel, that our efforts among them will never diminish but will continue to increase in order that they may enjoy the blessings that God has promised to them, which I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

That earnest appeal for the Lamanites to which we have just listened was given by Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve. President Joseph Fielding Smith, president of the Quorum of the Twelve, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Henry D. Moyle.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

MY DEAR brethren and sisters: We are here assembled, as we assemble at every conference, for the purpose of being instructed, built up, and encouraged so that when we return to our homes, we will be able to teach our people and keep them in the path of truth. We may even be admonished, if that is necessary.

This afternoon I wish to bear testimony to the restoration of the gospel, to the mission of our Redeemer, to the call of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the establishment of this work in the dis-

persation in which we live, known as the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. I know absolutely that Jesus Christ is the only Begotten Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, the Savior of men insofar as they will repent of their sins and accept the gospel. Through his death he redeemed all men and took upon him that sacrifice which would relieve us of our sins that we may not answer for them if we will accept him and be true and faithful to his teachings.

I am just as fully satisfied, because I know, that the Father and the Son ap-