

**President David O. McKay:**

Elder Joseph Anderson, Clerk of the Conference, has just read the changes in ward and stake organizations, and some obituaries of the Church, since last April. The reading will give the

Church a general idea of the progress of the Church during the last six months.

President Stephen L. Richards of the First Presidency of the Church will be our first speaker this morning. He will be followed by Elder George Q. Morris.

**PRESIDENT STEPHEN L. RICHARDS***First Counselor in the First Presidency*

I SHALL BE deeply grateful, my brethren and sisters, if I may have your faith and prayers and the assistance of the Holy Spirit in an effort to continue the lofty themes, the vital advice and counsel which have been given by my brethren during the preceding sessions of this conference. I greet my brethren and sisters with love and fellowship, and I extend also to our friends who listen in to the proceedings my appreciation of their interest, and my concern for their good in the consideration of the great principles of life and salvation.

As we meet in successive general conferences of the Church, our thoughts are repeatedly directed to the fundamental principles and purposes of the mighty cause which we have the honor to represent. It is well that it is so, and it is fervently hoped that we shall never become so absorbed and enmeshed in the mass of detail relating to organization and procedure as to obscure even for a moment the true purpose of our establishment in the earth.

Within the past few weeks, in order to meet the requirements of a distant foreign country for the Church to hold property and otherwise carry forward its activities within that country, the First Presidency has caused to be prepared and submitted to the governing authority of the foreign country a statement of beliefs and objectives of the Church. To cover the principal beliefs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we submitted the Articles of Faith issued by the Prophet Joseph Smith, which for a period of more than a hundred years have been distributed throughout the world. I

would not impose on the patience of an audience entirely composed of members of the Church to repeat these articles so well known to my brethren and sisters, but being convinced that many thousands of our friends not of the Church listen to these proceedings, I am going to ask you to indulge me as I present them:

1. We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.

3. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands, by those who are in authority to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.

6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, viz., apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc.

7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.

8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

9. We believe all that God has re-

vealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion will be built upon this [the American] continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

11. We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.

12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.—Joseph Smith.

I shall not comment generally on the Articles of Faith. They speak for themselves, and we trust they may prove acceptable to the government to which we submitted them as a statement of our principal beliefs.

In addition to the requirement of a statement of beliefs and doctrines, we were asked to set forth our purposes and objectives as a Church. The following is a brief statement of objectives which was sent. I quote:

"The objectives of the Church are to bear witness to the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ; to teach all men the principles of his Gospel; and to convert and persuade them to follow in his ways and keep the commandments of God, that they may thus advance the Kingdom of God in the earth to bring brotherhood and peace to men and nations, and earn exaltation for themselves.

"To achieve this objective the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints builds and maintains churches, tem-

ples, educational institutions for all ages, recreational buildings and facilities, and projects designed to teach and encourage vocational and industrial preparation for self-reliant living. It teaches loyalty to country and fosters good citizenship in all communities where it is established."

The statement submitted was necessarily brief. May I amplify some portions of it?

How and to what extent are we bearing witness to the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ? From the latest figures available I give you the following: We are at present maintaining about five thousand missionaries in the mission fields of the Church, which are established in nearly all countries of the world where the laws and practices of the people will permit their establishment. The average cost for each missionary a month is \$58.96, to cover his living and maintenance in the mission field. The total monthly cost for our missionary force exceeds \$290,000.00, borne chiefly by parents of the missionaries, the missionaries themselves, quorums, and other generous persons who contribute to the missionary fund. This vast sum of money, amounting to more than \$3,400,000.00 a year, is spent in the countries where the missionaries labor, and thus contributes, substantially in some instances, to the national economy of these countries.

Our missionaries do not live "off" the peoples in the countries where they are sent. They bring in rather than take from the communities where they serve. In addition to the five thousand missionaries who serve in these missions which we call foreign, there are 6,429 stake missionaries, who do not leave their homes, but perform missionary service among neighbors and friends not of the Church in the communities where they live. They give their service without compensation, as do all missionaries of the Church.

It will be interesting to members of the Church to know that for the first eight months of the year 1956 there were 9,910 convert baptisms in the foreign missions, and 5,549 in the stake missions, making a total of 15,459, a sufficient number, if concentrated, to

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make three or four new stakes in the Church.

The principal duty and the first obligation resting upon all of these 11,500 missionaries is to bear witness of the divinity of the Lord, Jesus Christ. They are sent out into the world as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and they are taught from the beginning that they cannot effectively represent and serve him without a firm personal testimony as to his divinity. If they live the principles of the gospel, they never lose their testimonies, and they are always able, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, to bear testimony with such conviction as to arrest the attention of God-fearing people. This bearing of sincere testimony serves as a persuading and convincing influence to touch the lives of many long before the immature missionary has been able fully to absorb and master the principles of the gospel in the teaching process.

How essential is this bearing of testimony to the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ? Why, it is the first essential credential of a Christian. Jesus himself set the example, when, in justifying himself before the Jews, he said: "I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." (John 8:18.) And from all we can learn from scripture, we must conclude that there is but one indispensable fact which lies at the basis of the whole Christian doctrine to which witness must be borne, and that is that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and sent by him to perform his mission in the world. How can anyone professing Christianity satisfy a Christian conscience without that testimony and that witness? Why are men reluctant so to commit themselves? Some may entertain conscientious doubts as to the divine nature of the Christ. I am sure they would do well humbly and open-mindedly to seek more knowledge about him. Many more, I fear, are in the category suggested by Paul who are "ashamed" openly to bear witness of him. They seem to think that in some way it is belittling to their intelligence, and I fear too that some regard an open confession of faith as a commitment to a course of life they do not have the strength and the will to follow.

I regret this reluctance, particularly of prominent and influential men, openly to declare their faith, because I am sure that their influence is very considerable, particularly in the lives of the young people who admire their successes, their standing in the community, and who could be made to see richer and nobler purposes in life through the example and open statements of those they so much esteem.

I think I know the underlying reason for this reticence. It is self-sufficiency resulting from a lack of humility. Men of success are so prone to forget their dependence on a beneficent providence. It seems often necessary to bring into the lives of the haughty and proud calamity and great deprivation. A rich man sometimes loses his possessions, his cherished wife and children, even his good name, before he begins to pray and acknowledge the supreme dispenser of all good things that endure. I appeal for more testimony, for more courage to bear witness, for more humility to acknowledge the goodness of the Lord to his children.

The second item in the statement of objectives which I mentioned is "to teach all men the principles of his gospel; and to convert and persuade them to follow in his ways and keep the commandments of God." Many of the principles of the gospel which our missionaries and our people teach are set forth in the Articles of Faith which I have read. Time will not permit any extensive comment on them. I wish, however, to mention a few items.

I mention the eleventh and twelfth articles: "We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may."

"We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law."

I am able to understand from the history of the times how much importance the Prophet Joseph Smith attached to these articles in his day. The violation of the principles by bigoted and unscrupulous persons entailed infinite suffering and persecution to him

and his people. I question if, however, except with divine insight, he could have envisioned what the violation of these principles would mean to the whole world a century or more after he lived. I am not sufficiently informed to know whether other churches have any comparable statements in their constitutions or declarations of faith, but the history of our times justifies the assertion that few, if any, things have contributed more to the chaotic condition of the world than the violation of the cardinal principles set forth in this statement of belief. They contain the very essence of freedom and liberty, and they support the majesty of the law. They are inspired statements, and within them is comprehended the only true basis on which permanent peace may be established. We preach and we practice these principles all over the world wherever we are given opportunity. We proclaim and we urge them in defense of liberty wherever we go. They are part of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and as such we teach them.

Perhaps we encounter some resistance in teaching the principles of the gospel because we have important aspects of it given by revelation that are explanatory and go beyond the conventional teaching of Christianity as our eighth article of faith proclaims: "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly." We teach the Bible as the history of God's dealings with man, and as the basis of the Christian gospel, but we have additional explanatory revelation which does not contravene the Bible, but which serves to interpret and make plain many of its statements which are obscure or incomplete.

I shall give to you one illustration which is typical of others. The Savior comforted his disciples at the time of his departure with that supreme statement of comfort: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:2.)

For many centuries the world was without an explanation of the "many mansions" in our Father's house. In February 1832, the Prophet Joseph wrote: "From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that

many important points touching the salvation of man had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled. It appeared self-evident from what truths were left, that if God rewarded every one according to the deeds done in the body, the term Heaven, as intended for the Saints' eternal home, must include more kingdoms than one." (See Introduction to D & C 76.)

It was in answer to this query in the mind of the Prophet that the revelation which is sometimes characterized as "The Vision" came to him. It is the explanation of the words of the Savior in that it defines the mansions, kingdoms, and glories which prevail in heaven, "my Father's house." These kingdoms are designated as the celestial, the terrestrial, and the telestial. These designations conform with the declarations of the Apostle Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians, wherein he sets forth,

"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory." (I Cor. 15:41.)

I wish I had the time to read to all our friends the description and attributes of these kingdoms and glories of the hereafter. Here is a revelation which makes plain to all men the transcendent and enduring benefits derived from striving for the best. To those who have the ambition, the courage, and devotion to attain the highest station, there are in store blessings that transcend the comprehension of the finite mind.

The Lord loves all his children, and in the orderly provision he has made for salvation every good deed is rewarded, and all who have not utterly destroyed their prospects for recognition will find place in the gradations of glory to which they are severally entitled. Here is universal justice in law and order, tempered with great mercy for the frail and the weak. The revelation gives us assurance that the highest station or glory is possible of attainment. In all our teaching and persuasion, our one all-pervading predominant motive and purpose is to prepare ourselves and our fellow men for entrance and exaltation in the highest glory he

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has revealed—the celestial kingdom. We want the best for ourselves, and we want it for others, but we know we cannot acquire this glorious blessing for others. Everyone must obtain it for himself.

Now, how is entrance into the celestial glory obtained? It is obtained only through compliance with the ordinances of the gospel, and keeping the commandments of God. Our missionaries are not infrequently asked: "Do you claim that you are the only ones who will go to heaven?" The answer to this question may well be given by the missionary asking of the inquirer, "What do you mean by heaven? If you mean by heaven, a resurrection from the grave to immortality, the answer is no. Through the atonement of Christ everyone will be resurrected. Do you mean by heaven one of the lesser glories and kingdoms therein? Then generally the answer is no. We believe that many, if not most, of the good men and women of the world will obtain places and recognition in the lesser kingdoms of heaven. But if you mean by going to heaven, gaining exaltation in the celestial kingdom of our Father, where God and Christ dwell, then the answer must be yes. No man can attain the highest station without compliance with the higher laws and ordinances, which may be administered only in the restored Church of our Lord Jesus Christ under his authority and delegated power lodged in the priesthood of his Church."

If there be any disposed to criticize this view as being narrow and intolerant, we must bring to their attention the fact that we did not formulate the rules, regulations, and requirements for entrance into the celestial kingdom of our Father. The Lord did that, both in ancient and modern revelation. We seek to teach men that these rules of eligibility, though seemingly strict and rigid, are in fact generous provisions for the happiness of the Father's children here and hereafter. If any of the requirements seem to circumscribe the personal liberty of individuals, it is because these so-called personal liberties in wisdom are not in the end good for the individual or communities. Every

commandment the Lord has given is for the blessing and good of mankind.

I appeal, my fellow members of the Church, and to all men, so to regard them. While many are in the form of injunctions of restraint, there is in the keeping of every commandment a positive element of improvement of life through self-mastery and the subordination of the material to the spiritual.

So our mission is to bear witness of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and teach his restored gospel in all its completeness. The Lord has been good to us. He has caused that provision be made so that there are available to us all the facilities essential to realize our great purposes. He has blessed the Church with the devotion of faithful members scarcely to be equaled in any movement of which we have record. They are generous in giving, they are responsive to calls to duty, and their lives exemplify the loving principles by which they should live.

True, not all are faithful. Some fall by the wayside in weakness, to whom we always hold out the hopeful doctrine of repentance. It is a glorious feeling, my brethren and sisters, to have place with the faithful, to feel the warm, generous support of true brethren and sisters in the Church of Christ. I have long been the recipient of his blessings, and I humbly make this acknowledgment and give thanks for membership in his Church and the privilege of serving him, for health to carry on, for the confidence and love of my associates, and for the privilege of living in the society of the Saints of God.

I bear my humble witness that God lives; that Jesus Christ was his Only Begotten Son in the flesh; that the biblical account of his birth and life is true and not fictitious; that however much we may proclaim our admiration of his attributes and his teachings, that above all his mission was divine; that we cannot truly worship him without recognition of his sovereignty and his lordship. I am happy to kneel at the throne of his power and give to him my allegiance and feeble effort for the establishment of his kingdom in the earth.

I bear witness that Joseph Smith was

his prophet, chosen to bring the complete gospel to the earth in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times; that he accomplished his mission; and that all men today are the beneficiaries of his inestimable contributions.

I bear witness that the holy priesthood has been restored to and continues in the Church of Christ; that that holy priesthood and power is here in the earth today in the year 1956, reposed in thousands of good men, servants of the Lord, with President David O. McKay appointed, sustained, and approved of the Lord, standing at the head, all to the end that the kingdom of our Father

may be established and advanced in the earth. Christ will come again. Our mission is to prepare the kingdom for his coming.

The Lord help us all to be devoted to that exalted undertaking I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President David O. McKay:

President Stephen L. Richards of the First Presidency is the one who delivered that fine sermon just now. We shall now hear from Elder George Q. Morris of the Council of the Twelve. He will be followed by the Congregation singing, "High on the Mountain Top."

### ELDER GEORGE Q. MORRIS

#### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**M**Y DEAR brethren and sisters, I am entirely dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord to direct me, and pray that the same sweet spirit that has prevailed will continue with us to lead me to say that which I should say. I am very thankful to the Lord that this his Church is built on the rock of revelation, so that we are not turned about in all directions by all kinds of opinions and doctrines. But as this is our blessing, we have also an obligation to know the truth, and live the truth, and speak the truth. What a supreme blessing is truth in this distraught world.

At a meeting I recently attended where reference was made to a revelation concerning the origin and nature of man and the creation of the world, a young man came to me—a fine young faithful Latter-day Saint—and said he was so discouraged and depressed by the teachings he was receiving in college that he worried about it, and about how he could pass his examinations because he could not accept these teachings. Of course I could only tell him that he would have to hold to the truth no matter what the situation was. That is an obligation that we do have as a people. Who else has the revelations of God? What other church in the world is based upon these revelations? Having them, we must be true to them.

As the Lord built his Church upon the rock of revelation so that it would

endure, I think we ourselves as individuals must stand on this same rock of revelation in our conduct, our thinking, and our lives, that we can endure; otherwise we will fall.

I hope this young man can hold to that principle, and I am concerned for all of our young people as they go into the field of higher education and meet all the ideas that are so prevalent, which are in sharp conflict with the revelations of God that we know to be true. I suppose he had been taught something about the origin of man according to the theory of organic evolution. I presume he might have been told what I remember reading in some man's writings, that we would have to look for our origin in some minute life in the ocean, perhaps, or in some amoebalike organism—the simplest form of life. That, he said, was man's beginning.

But we know better than that. The Lord says we were in the beginning with him.

Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth;

Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. (D & C 93:23, 29.)

We know beyond all doubt that we existed with God in the eternities and