

viduals at various periods in Israel's history who held the Melchizedek Priesthood, but it was not generally possessed. Apparently the Priesthood has not ever gone to all humanity. The Lord has guarded it very, very carefully, and he guards it in the same way today.

So, my brothers, we need not be dismayed or suffer any inconvenience or embarrassment from the fact that the Priesthood is a sacred calling which is bestowed upon those whom the Lord designates, with such powers and such authority as the Lord may indicate by virtue of the office. We have deacons, teachers, priests, elders, seventies, high priests. You know how that comes about, how we get these various grades of Priesthood.

But two points:

First, there never was a time when all spirits were equal, so far as the Lord has revealed; so far as he has revealed, there never will be a time when all spirits are equal. He has provided different kingdoms and glories for the different kinds of individuals as they come to this earth, and I can imagine, having in mind the Gadarene demons, I can imagine that those who did not keep their first estate but who still may come to earth and get a body, are anxious to come and get a body no matter what the conditions are, if we are to judge by the anxiety of those demons who were cast out and who asked that they be permitted to enter the swine.

Next, the Priesthood has never been possessed by all individuals; the Lord has chosen those to whom he wishes to delegate his authority. He has carefully guarded the exercise of that authority. Some, our sisters, for instance, have never held the Priesthood.

Thank you, brethren, for your kindness.

I bear you my testimony that the Lord lives. I bear you my testimony that Jesus is the Christ, that he lived, was crucified, died, was resurrected.

I bear you my testimony that the Priesthood has been restored to us through the Prophet. I bear you my testimony that all of the rights and the powers which Joseph had have descended from him till now and that they are now possessed by President David O. McKay.

May the Lord bless us and build up our testimonies, enable us to understand the principles of the Gospel and not get off on the theory of this ideology that everybody is alike, and all have equal rights,—our rights depend upon our course before we came here, and our course since we arrived.

God bless you, I pray in the name of his Son. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

President Stephen L Richards of the First Presidency will now address us.

PRESIDENT STEPHEN L RICHARDS

First Counselor in the First Presidency

MY DEAR BRETHREN, President McKay has accorded me the privilege of bringing to your attention some matters concerning our missionary work. We think it well that the whole Priesthood of the Church should have an understanding of the great missionary work which is carried forward, reaching such large proportions as we took the liberty of telling you this morning. I assure you it is no inconsiderable undertaking to keep a force of 5,000 men, may I call them such, in the army of the Lord scattered throughout this world, and to replenish their numbers and cause all to

work in harmony and in accordance with the spirit of missionary work, which is the spirit of our Father.

So, there does arise the necessity of having some definitely defined procedures for the direction of this great undertaking, and we think it well if you knew perhaps a little more about these procedures than all may now know, although of course generally our work is well understood by this vast congregation of Priesthood.

I am going to mention several matters which relate largely to the calling of our brethren into the mission field.

Experience has taught us that it is not wise to call young men just married or just to be married. We have learned that it is better to let such a young man in justice to his wife begin his home at once so that he may have a period of time within which to establish a proper family relationship. So we would like young men and their bishops to understand that it is better that they be not recommended under the circumstances which I have mentioned.

We bring to your attention again the health of the missionaries. We feel a deep interest in conserving the health of our young people. We recognize that the mothers who let their sons go feel that they must have the best care, and we ask all to help safeguard conditions of health before missionaries go into the mission field. We are grateful to a great many doctors who render their services free of charge in physical examinations. Sometimes, however, the examinations, I suppose, seem necessarily hurried, and histories of disabling maladies sometimes do not come to light, and out of the ardor for missionary work, they are sometimes overlooked, and then sorrow comes in the mission field. Sickness requiring the missionary patient to be sent home, or hospitalized for long periods of time, of course, is embarrassing to the missionary and his family, to his companion in the mission field, and to the mission work generally. We again urge bishops to use the greatest of care in assuring us that those who go into the field, so far as is foreseeable, are in a state of health that will enable them to accomplish their work.

Our sisters help us in the mission field tremendously. We have reports from every mission that the influence of the sisters is one of the most refining and ennobling of all the good forces that we have in the mission field, and we know that there are many who would like to go into the field; but we have long since established a minimum age for sister missionaries. That age is 23, and that was not arrived at without considerable care, examination of statistical information regarding marriages, etc., and we find still that many endeavor to secure exceptions to that rule, which only make for charges of discrimination, and which do not facilitate

our work. Please know that that is the age for sister missionaries, and help us in conforming to it.

Nearly all missionaries are asked by those who interview them if they will go where they are sent, and I think nearly always the missionaries reply yes, they will. I am sure that nearly all of them recognize that it is essential to respond to calls to go where they are needed. One can readily see that if preferences should be recognized generally, one mission might be—it is hard to say overstaffed—but there would be many more than in other missions, and some missions might be left with few missionaries. We have constant calls from mission presidents for the replacement of missionaries being released. Oftentimes it is necessary for missionaries to maintain branches, and therefore it is essential that our prospective missionaries go where they are called, and cheerfully respond to their calls, and that even though they may have some preferences, that they subdue those preferences for the good of the whole Cause, and the building up of our missionary work.

Six months ago, as I recall it, we called your attention to the necessity of making welcome into the wards and branches of the Church all of the new converts. We are hopeful that progress has been made. Many of those who come into the Church feel at a loss if they do not receive a welcome among the Saints with whom they gather. Our people themselves should be persuaded to extend the hand of welcome to every new convert in the Church, and wherever it is possible the bishop of a ward, or the president of a branch should provide activity for these new converts as readily as may be done.

I wish tonight to thank those who have so generously contributed to our general missionary fund. We have been more than gratified with the gifts which have been made to this fund which have enabled many poor people, young men without means in foreign lands, and young women too, to undertake missions for the Church. I note that so far as our record goes 174 missionaries have in the last few years been assisted from these contributed missionary funds. One hundred of those missions have

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been completed; 74 missionaries are still in the field. In nearly all instances they have written to the contributors expressing their appreciation for the opportunity afforded to them to go out and serve the Lord.

Now, another item: No young man, or young woman either, should be pressed into the missionary service. It is true that it is perfectly legitimate to point out the advantages of missionary service, its opportunities, but everyone who goes should be imbued with the remarkable opportunities that a mission affords, and he should also know that he goes to bear witness of the Living Christ to all men, and to the divinity and the vitality of this work of the latter days. It is unfortunate when some get into the mission field and say that they were so pressured into coming that they have no interest in it. There are very few in this category, but we do think that there should always be assurance that those who go into the field go with a full understanding of what their work is to be, and with willingness to perform that work.

I pay my tribute to the wonderful men and women of the Church who so gloriously respond to missionary calls. They have set an outstanding record. I think in the eyes of the world nothing commends us to the esteem of men more than our marvelous missionary system. Indeed, many are unable to comprehend how our youth will go out at the expense of their parents, and at their own expense, to disseminate the principles of the Gospel among men without any

contribution whatever, and I pray the Lord to bless all the families that send these missionaries forth. May they have the satisfaction in their hearts of knowing that they are contributing tremendously to the advancement of this great work.

As we indicated this morning, baptisms are most encouraging, and they will continue to increase as you supply this great missionary movement with the young men and the young women that it needs to carry forth. Older men and older women are also welcome if they are in good health, but we have had many instances where their health would not stand the rigors of the missionary calling.

I will not take more time to dwell upon this important phase of our work, but I will solicit your cooperation—cooperation of bishops, and presidents of stakes, and of all the Priesthood—in seeing that our processes for the selection of missionaries and their placement in the field operates smoothly, without disappointment to missionaries or their families, and without regrets to anyone.

I pray the Lord's blessings upon you, my brethren of the Priesthood. I honor you in your respective callings, and I know that the holy power which you hold, and which is so potent and indispensable to the establishment of our Father's Kingdom, is genuine and divine. I thank God that we hold his divine power, that he has so generously endowed us with the right to represent him, and I thank him for all blessings in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

THIS AFTERNOON at the height of a most inspirational meeting I saw two young men on my left in the gallery rise from their seats and walk out of the building. I hastily put on my long distance glasses to see more definitely who they were. They impressed me as being teachers, about the age of 15.

That little act emphasized one of the points to be mentioned at this Priesthood Meeting, and that is the attitude of our young men bearing the Aaronic Priesthood who are asked to administer

the emblems of our Lord's death and life. No more sacred ordinance has been given to us by the Lord than the administration of the Sacrament. I shall not dwell long upon its significance, the principal one of which is a covenant that we make with the Lord. We give our word of honor to do certain things, which as the Brethren said today, are contributive to our spiritual growth and happiness if kept, but which weaken our characters if we violate them.

Say over in your mind briefly just