

Saturday, October 10

President David O. McKay:

Bishop Carl W. Buehner of the Pre-

siding Bishopric will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Alma Sonne.

## BISHOP CARL W. BUEHNER

*Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric*

My dear brethren and sisters, with you I have enjoyed every moment of this great conference. I have had a lump in my throat a number of times as I have felt the power and Spirit that has been present in these sessions. I am very grateful to you for your sustaining vote which permits me to be with my brethren for six more months.

I should also like to express my gratitude in the selection of Elder Howard W. Hunter to become a member of the Council of the Twelve and sincerely pray that the Lord will magnify and sustain him in this high and holy calling.

I must confess to you that in making preparations for these few precious moments, I conferred with a very choice friend of mine. He has given me a number of suggestions. He said, "Warn the young people how the evil one, through his power, would like to destroy all that is good in them, defame their character, undermine their physical body, and poison their mind even as the lowly termite can destroy a building."

Do you know what a termite is? A termite is an ugly, little ant-like looking insect, very light in color, that does all its work in the dark. If it has to get from the earth where it gets its moisture, to the area in which it finds the timbers in which it works, it builds itself a little channel so that it cannot be seen as it goes back and forth. It costs citizens of this country hundreds of millions of dollars annually to replace the damage done to the wood in buildings by these little destroyers. The exterior of a structure can look beautiful and sound, but because the strength of its timbers has been eaten away by termites, and only an outer shell is left standing, it can become very dangerous and of little value. "So also can evil influences undermine us and darken our vision to the wonderful blessings ahead," my friend said.

My friend also gave me this idea: He

said, "How about the message in the song that says,

"The world has need of willing men,  
Who wear the worker's seal.  
Come, help the good work move along.  
Put your shoulder to the wheel."

I thought of thousands of our organizations in all parts of the world, officered with those willing and able to keep the good work moving along. A tremendous effort to further our Father's business is in progress, and for each of us to put our shoulder to the wheel would not only increase this effort but also bring in return, happiness, and blessings that could be secured from no other source. "Urge everyone to go to work in this great cause," said my friend.

I asked him for one more idea. I had to admit that he did have wonderful suggestions. He said, "What this world needs is people who go about doing good." One of the greatest compliments paid to the Savior was given by his great disciple, Peter, when among other things, he said, and he ". . . went about doing good. . . ." (Acts 10:38.) Then my friend reminded me that in my travels I had surely observed instances and had experiences that illustrate this very thing. Said he, "Why not tell the people some of these things?"

In my mind's eye, I immediately saw an army of 140,000 men and boys, visiting among the wards as ward teachers, making in excess of three and one-half million visits each year to the homes of the members of the Church. The good that is being accomplished by them and the blessings they are bringing into these homes cannot be measured. I learned recently that one of these ward teachers had served in excess of eighty-two years. It is said that in those eighty-two years, he missed visiting his district only four or five times. I heard one of the bishops who presided over

this ward pay a tremendous tribute to this man. He indicated that if there was ever a man alive who went about his ward doing good, it was this man. I have learned of some who served for over seventy years, and many who have given sixty years of service as ward teachers. I cannot help feeling that they certainly have been a power and influence for good among the people of the Church.

Only a few days ago in a stake quarterly conference I heard a young man, who, with his parents, had been living in the mission field, say that he had the responsibility of visiting three families each month. He, together with his companion, in order to make these visits was required to travel 160 miles in one direction from the place they lived to visit two of these families and had to go 130 miles in the opposite direction to visit the other family, but they did the visiting every month.

I learned of the dedication of some others. While visiting a stake in the Northwest, I learned that there are communities which become isolated from the rest of the world during the winter months. Here some of our members reside. Ward teachers who have the responsibility of visiting these families have been so eager to make contact with them that they have traveled by horseback, jeep, and even used a tractor to make the visit to be sure that all was well and to learn whether or not they could be of any assistance. Then I realize that the same thing exists with the great Relief Society visiting teachers' program. They, too, go into the homes of members every month with probably 140,000 teachers. This makes 280,000 teachers visiting among our families, and this cannot help being a powerful influence for good.

I heard a story about a little Primary child who came from a home where the parents were inactive. The child faithfully attended Primary and apparently listened carefully to each lesson. One night as the family gathered around the dinner table and were ready to partake of the meal, the little girl suddenly said, "I can't eat tonight." After careful questioning by the parents, the little girl finally said, "Mother, I have

learned in Primary that we should not eat the food that is placed before us until we thank our Heavenly Father for it." The father and mother looked at each other, wondering what to do, and the little girl, observing the anxiety in their eyes, said, "If you are wondering who can do this, I can." The little girl asked the blessing on the food; her appetite returned; and everything seemed all right until the same situation occurred the following evening. The little girl just could not eat her dinner, and the mother, remembering the experience of the night before, said to her, "You asked the blessing last night, ask it again tonight." The little girl said, "Mother, I can't do it. I learned in Primary that there are some things the Lord does not want us to take into our bodies, and some of these things are on this table." When the cups of coffee and the coffee pot had been removed and disposed of, the little girl asked the blessing on the food, and the family resumed eating. "You will never know the change that came over our home through the teaching of our little Primary child," the mother remarked.

An appreciative wife whose husband was a very inactive man in the Church related the following experience: "Through the personal missionary program of the priesthood quorum, a fine, active man was assigned to contact my husband to see if he could bring him back into activity in the Church. This man faithfully telephoned our home every Saturday night, telling my husband that he would call again in the morning in the hope that he would be ready to go to priesthood meeting with him. 'It would be a pleasure to let me come and take you to meeting with me. You just don't know what you are missing,' he said. Each time for twenty weeks, my husband found an excuse, not only on Saturday evening but on Sunday morning; but on the twenty-first Sunday morning, my husband came out of his bedroom all dressed up. Excitedly, I said to him, 'My heavens, where are you going this morning?' He remarked that in a few moments he would be getting a telephone call. 'I have had them for twenty weeks, you know, and I will receive one again in a few moments. When I tell this man that I am all

Saturday, October 10

Second Day

dressed and ready to go to priesthood meeting with him, it could be such a shock to him that he may not be able to come and get me.” “Well,” said his wife, “you don’t miss the blessings of the priesthood in the home until you realize what has been denied you. My husband will never get over thanking this man for calling him persistently until finally he yielded. What it has done for him and our family is tremendous.”

I have learned in the last day or two of many of the great services our servicemen are lending in the building program of the Church. As you know, they are assigned to military camps in all parts of the world. In many of these areas, buildings will be erected, and servicemen will make very substantial contributions to those buildings in cash and in time. In many instances, they will not be able to use these buildings when they are completed. They will have been transferred to another area. I learned yesterday of a man who, with his family, had decided to take a vacation. When all preparations had been made, and because they were in the midst of a building program in their ward, he said to his family, “Well, let’s just buy a plane ticket for mother so she can go and visit her family, and while she is gone, the boys and I will give our vacation time to the construction of our chapel.” I saw that chapel. I saw this man and his sons working on this chapel. I shook hands with each of them. I caught the thrill that came to them. Probably the best vacation this man will ever have will be the one he gave to assist in building one of these beautiful chapels in the Church.

Many stories of the efficacy of our welfare program have been told, and I realize I must not take too much time to speak about these, but let me tell you of one case that happened recently. A man and his wife came to our office, the man bandaged from his head to his feet, to pay tribute to the work of the welfare program. Fire had struck this man’s home. Two of his children were burned to death in the fire; two others sustained serious burns; and he, too, was burned practically over the entire surface of his body. He had now recovered sufficiently to leave the hospi-

tal and was so overjoyed when he saw what the brethren of his ward had done to rebuild his burned home that he came to the office of the Presiding Bishopric just to thank the Church for the great welfare program. We were about to have a meeting with the First Presidency and so invited this man and his wife to go downstairs with us and shake hands with these brethren. I am sure no greater thrill will ever come to this couple than to have this privilege, and I heard this man say to the First Presidency, “I do not think I could have endured that which has happened to us had it not been for the warmth, the love, and the blessing of the brethren who came to my rescue.” The day he came to our office, he said, “Fifteen or twenty masons are there today installing my block walls, and by tonight my house will be up to the square. They told me that tomorrow that many carpenters will be there to place the rafters on the roof, cover them with sheathing, and I am told by tomorrow night, it will be shingled, all this done in one day.”

There are many instances where farmers through illness or accidents have not been able to plant their farms in the spring and harvest their crops in the fall, but their farms were planted and their crops were harvested because of the love of their quorum members.

I learned of individuals who sacrificed for the missionary program. Just one or two expressions: one given by a grandmother who was on her way to the mission field. In bearing her testimony the last night the missionaries were in town, she said, “I would be willing to scrub floors the rest of my life if my twelve grandsons could have the wonderful experience of going on a mission.” Could you ask for any greater dedication than this? One other young man said, “My mother is doing janitor work to sustain me while I am in the mission field.”

I feel there are many people in the world who are going about doing good. I wish all had a desire to do good.

I want to thank my friend for these thoughts. I hope my friend may also be your friend. My friend is the still small voice. He and I have had an interesting experience on many occa-

sions as we have pondered over the work of the Church.

God bless you, inspire you, and help you to go about doing good, blessing our people. I pray for this and bear you my testimony in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Bishop Carl W. Buehner of the Presiding Bishopric. Our concluding speaker this morning will be Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve.

## ELDER ALMA SONNE

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My brethren and sisters, the good and fervent prayer offered at the beginning of this session by President Lewis has been answered in blessings upon our heads. I hope the good Spirit will continue with us throughout this service.

I am very happy, and I was delighted to hear that President Hunter had been called to fill the vacancy in the Quorum of the Twelve. President Hunter has been for many years a leader in Zion. He has been proved, and I say that a Church is very fortunate indeed that can call upon men of his caliber to serve freely and pleasantly in the great position which he now occupies.

I was also very happy this morning to hear the vigor and the strength demonstrated by President Clark in his sermon to us. The Lord has blessed him, and I am sure you join with me in expressing gratitude for his recovery, that his leadership may continue amongst us.

Yesterday, I was thrilled and greatly uplifted by that masterful sermon delivered by President McKay on the character, the teachings, and the life of Jesus Christ, the Lord. I was also pleased with his references to the Sermon on the Mount delivered by the Savior before a small group of people gathered on the mountainside. That sermon has lived for centuries. It has survived the Dark Ages. It has survived the Renaissance. It has survived modern speculations and the conflicts and the contention among nations.

That sermon will live forever. There is nothing more fundamental in God's word than the sermon which the Savior gave and which is called the Sermon on the Mount.

A few years ago I attended a Sacrament meeting in the South London Branch in London. The occasion was

a Christmas program. On that program appeared a Jewish musician. He played a selection on the cello. It was very good. The presiding officer tried to get him to play another selection, but he refused. He said, however, "I will sing a solo, if that will be acceptable." He stepped forward, and he sang the song we all love, "The Lord's Prayer," after which he took his seat in the audience.

When the meeting was over, he walked up to me and said, and these are his words, "You will have to get something more practical than the Sermon on the Mount if you expect to convert the Jews."

I said to him, "Have you ever read the Sermon on the Mount?"

He said, "I must have read it."

"I hope you have," I suggested, "before you criticize it." And then I said to him, "You sang a wonderful song tonight, 'The Lord's Prayer.' Did it ever occur to you that that prayer was a part of the Sermon on the Mount?" He did not seem to realize it.

"Now," I said, "Will you tell me one single teaching in that sermon which is not practical. Name one thing in it that cannot be practised and introduced into your daily life." He was silent.

Then I began to repeat for him that wonderful prayer offered by Jesus as an example to his disciples. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6-7.) Isn't that a practical aspiration to have?" I said.

He made no reply.

Then I repeated this: "Give us this day our daily bread." Surely, that is practical to a man like you."

And he said, "Oh, it is very practical."

I continued, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." We are having a lot of trouble with debts