

THIRD DAY

AFTERNOON MEETING

The seventh and concluding session of the Conference was held in the great Tabernacle Sunday afternoon, October 11, at 2 o'clock.

President David O. McKay presided, and conducted the services, as he had done at all the previous general sessions of the Conference.

The *Tabernacle Choir* furnished the singing for this session of the Conference, under the direction of Richard P. Condie, assisted by Jay E. Welch, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ console.

President David O. McKay:

Members of the Church are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in the concluding and seventh session of the One Hundred Twenty-Ninth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church. For those who are unable to enter the building, and there seems to be hundreds, we announce that these services are being broadcast in the Assembly Hall and in the Barratt Hall over television.

We welcome the service men who came yesterday and also the fifty-six Marines who came in this morning from El Toro, Camp Pendleton, California.

These services are also being broadcast as a public service by television and radio stations throughout the West. The names of these stations were announced to the television and radio audiences at the beginning of the meeting. To the owners and managers of these various stations we again express our sincere appreciation for this wonderful public service so generously extended.

The music for this session will be rendered by the Tabernacle Choir, with Richard P. Condie conducting, and Alexander Schreiner at the organ. We shall begin this service by the Tabernacle Choir singing, "Be Still and Know That I Am God," with Jay E. Welch, Assistant Conductor, directing. The opening prayer will be offered by Elder Junius M. Jackson, formerly president of the New England Mission.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the anthem, "Be Still and Know That I Am God," with Jay E. Welch, Assistant Conductor of the Choir, directing.

Elder Junius M. Jackson, formerly president of the New England Mission, offered the invocation.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Junius M. Jackson, formerly president of the New England Mission, offered the invocation. The Tabernacle Choir will now sing, "I Know that My Redeemer Lives," conducted by Richard P. Condie. After the singing, Elder Ezra Taft Benson will address us.

Singing by the Choir, "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker this afternoon. He will be followed by Elder Antoine R. Ivins of the First Council of Seventy.

ELDER EZRA TAFT BENSON

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My beloved brethren and sisters, humbly and gratefully I approach this sobering responsibility. First, may I say that I welcome and sustain with all my heart, my good friend and brother as a member of the Council of the

Twelve. President Howard W. Hunter can look forward to the sweetest association known among men in this world. God bless him.

With Sister Benson and two of our daughters, I returned to the shores of

this blessed land last Friday. Two weeks ago today we spent a glorious Sabbath with the Saints and friends in West Berlin. A week ago today we spent an inspiring Sabbath with Saints and friends in Helsinki, Finland.

It is truly good to be home, and it is an inspiration and an uplift to attend this great conference. How I wish and pray that everyone of the millions of good people, citizens of Russia and other communistic-dominated nations, could sit through one of the general conferences of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Sometime I would like to say more on this subject of communism. It would be inappropriate for me to do so now. I feel a bit like Alma of old, when he said, "O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart." (Alma 29:1.)

My brethren and sisters, I commend to you the counsel and the warnings that have been issued in the instructions of President David O. McKay and President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., on this subject during this conference. I would add only one word, a word which I hope we will never forget. Any system which denies the existence and power of God, which robs men of their God-given free agency, and which destroys the basic institution of the home, is of the evil one. No true Latter-day Saint can ever become a part of any such system.

I know there are difficult days ahead, politically, economically, socially, and spiritually. But God rules this world. He is at the helm. May he help us to be prepared for any eventuality.

We live in a choice land. But we live in a time of anxiety—a time when the basic concepts and values of a free society, which we cherish, are being seriously challenged. This challenge is not only from godless, imperial communism abroad, but also from dangerous ideologies and practices here at home.

It is true that outwardly everything seems prosperous. More people are working at higher wages and enjoying a better standard of living than ever before in the history of our country. More of our people are enjoying travel, cultural and educational opportunities than any time in our history. New churches are being erected at a rapid

rate, and an increasing number of people are church-affiliated. Our nation is at peace.

All these things should give a feeling of stability, inner assurance, and a sense of satisfaction, but they do not seem to do so. Discontent among our people, nationwide, seems to be high. We view with alarm the ever-rising level of public and private debt and the threat of inflation. We note with fear the increase in crime, juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, drug addiction, and sex offenses.

We pay lip service to the principles embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution without realizing what they are and the danger of ignoring them. We demand more and more of government, so "government grows larger all the while, marking the stampede away from personal responsibility which occurs at all levels of life." We passively contribute to the spirit and demoralizing philosophy of "something for nothing."

Because sin is rampant and increasing, I make bold enough to call this nation to repentance. Only through righteousness is there safety for our beloved country. There is no other way.

Today I speak out against one of the insidious and rapidly increasing threats against our young people.

As a Church we have always placed great emphasis on youth. Our young men, if worthy, receive the priesthood at twelve years of age. We enlist a higher percentage of our young boys in scouting than any other group. We have a comprehensive program, combining Sunday School, Primary, MIA, priesthood activities, and weekday seminary classes, to guide the activities of our youth, instill within them a testimony of the gospel, and help them to grow up to be good citizens and faithful members of the Church. Yes, we recognize full well that our boys and girls, our young men and women, are our greatest asset. They are our hope.

The youth of today are the trustees of the future. Sooner than we think the leadership of the Church and the future of our country will rest in their hands. It is our grave obligation to help prepare American youth to be worthy trustees, to help them fit them-

selves for their coming responsibilities. This is the obligation of every adult citizen.

We have confidence in our youth, yes. But we know they face troubled times. They are beset by many temptations—temptations, which, if not new, are certainly more blatant, more prevalent, than ever before.

We know how important it is for our youth to possess clean minds in healthy clean bodies. “. . . be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.” (Isaiah 52:11.) Moral purity is an eternal principle. The Spirit of God “cannot dwell in an unclean tabernacle.” Purity is life-giving; impurity is deadly. God’s holy laws cannot be broken with impunity. Great nations have fallen when they became morally corrupt, because the sins of immorality left their people scarred and misshapen creatures who were unable to face the challenge of their times.

I speak about one aspect of this question of morality which affects all our youth. There are forces at work in this country today which are victimizing many thousands of our youth, undermining their moral fiber, poisoning their minds. There is being spread about in this land a veritable flood of obscene photographs, movie films “for private showings,” filthy books, and so-called comics that drip with depravity and obscenity.

Every day some 200,000 circulars are flooding our cities and towns, seeking to sell obscenity and filth to the American people. It is a \$500,000,000 a year business and growing fast. The sales volume of mail-order obscenity has doubled in the last five years.

Who are the targets of this drive? Three-fourths of these circulars are sent to our youth. Our school children are the targets, our boys and girls, particularly between the ages of eleven and sixteen.

The United States Post Office department estimates that between 700,000 and a million children in American homes will receive unsolicited obscene and pornographic literature through the mails this year.

Our boys and girls need not have shown any interest in this vile stuff. It is thrust into their hands by racketeers who go to great lengths to get the names of our children. They buy mail-

ing lists from standard sources. They get names from high school yearbooks and classbooks. They set up fake business “fronts.” A boy sends away for a model airplane, a baseball bat, a toy automobile, a stamp collection, often advertised at bargain prices—and the muck merchant has his name and address on his list.

Then the solicitations begin.

The smut dealers last year mailed out an estimated fifty million sales circulars under the protection of first-class mail. Some of these circulars are in the form of pseudo-personal letters in girl’s handwriting, signed with a girl’s name.

The smut dealers go farther. They even seek to involve our youth as salesmen of their trash. One scheme is to sell our youngsters playing cards decorated with lewd pictures for perhaps \$3.00 a deck—to be resold at 25c or 50c a card.

Many children fall into the trap of ordering obscene material. Traffic with children is a major and growing part of the filth merchants’ business.

Postal inspectors in New York City recently raided one dealer in pornography. They confiscated seventeen tons of highly obscene printed and filmed materials. They found mailing lists containing the names of thousands of high school graduates taken from high school yearbooks.

Some parents are almost frantic because of their inability to keep this unwanted material out of their homes. A mother in a midwestern state writes to the Post Office department as follows:

“Enclosed you will find the filth that has been sent to my son for the past year. He is fourteen. Think what this could do to him, and how many other innocent boys and girls he could corrupt by passing this literature on to them. Can’t you do something to stop it?”

Another parent in the East writes:

“Ads like this come to my minor son at the rate of one or two a week.”

A lawyer tells how his son answered an innocuous appearing ad in a national magazine and received a batch of obscene pictures and an order blank for more. His name is on the mailing list, and nearly every week an ad for pornographic material comes in the mail. The lawyer says, “My wife and I are beside

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ourselves as to how to stop this flood of mail."

Now, what are the effects of this material on our youth?

Juvenile delinquency has become a blot on our country. Gangs roam the streets of some of our big cities. Arrests of juveniles for major crimes rose about ten percent last year. Authorities have observed on repeated occasions that the obscenity racket is a prime contributor to the increase in juvenile delinquency.

FBI figures show that more boys of eighteen and nineteen are now committing the heinous crime of rape, than males in any other age group. The percentage of convictions of boys under twenty has grown substantially in recent years.

Now, of course, some people will argue that many children exposed to these pictures and books never become delinquent. This argument has no merit at all. Your child may be exposed to tuberculosis or polio and never contract either disease. Is this a reason for deliberately exposing children to infection? Of course not.

It is true that people go wrong for many reasons. Children become delinquent in part because of such factors as broken homes, drinking parents, indifferent parents, and bad companions. But the wish is father of the deed. Thought precedes action. We cannot help being influenced by what we read and what we see. A dirty book, a filthy picture, may be the trigger that sets off a terrible crime.

Reports from police chiefs and sheriffs indicate the tie-up. Here are typical statements from city officials in Massachusetts, Colorado, and Pennsylvania: "Teen-ager criminally assaults 16-year-old girl. Search of his room revealed 50 pornographic pictures beneath his mattress."

"Student molesting two teen-age girls found to have pornographic literature in glove compartment of his car."

Let me quote from a report of a Senate subcommittee that has studied this problem. The report says in part:

"There is a peculiar resemblance to narcotics addiction in exposure of juveniles to pornography. There is the same pattern of progression. Once initiated into a knowledge of the unnatural, the impressionable young mind with the

insatiable curiosity characteristic of those reaching for maturity inevitably hunts for something stronger, something with more 'jolt,' something imparting a greater thrill.

"The dealer in pornography is acutely aware of this progressive facet; his array of material to feed this growing hunger is carefully geared to the successive stages. Like the peddler of narcotics, his only interest is to insure that his customers are 'hooked.' He knows that once they are 'hooked' they will continue to pay and pay."

These are some of the direct results of the smut campaign. There are indirect results, too. Our children, our wives, our friends, may be the horrified victims of criminals who are triggered by obscene materials.

Well, what is the response of the smut publishers and dealers to these facts?

Their attitude is summed up in some such sentiment as this: My job is to make a dollar, not to look out for unstable children or adults. No wonder J. Edgar Hoover has said:

"The activities of the muck merchants are national in scope. Your child can easily become one of their victims."

What are we going to do about it? Shall we fold our arms, shake our heads dismally, and do nothing?

Shall we permit organized crime to continue and extend the obscenity racket—already a half billion dollar a year business—and make it really big and immeasurably more vicious?

Shall we allow more and more of our children to be victimized, allow them to be "hooked" by this menace to clean and right living, this threat to moral purity?

Shall we sit by and watch sex crimes grow and grow in number and violence?

Shall we permit these cheap peddlers of filth to undermine the moral fiber of our youth, the moral strength of our nation?

I believe I know what our pioneer forefathers would have answered to these questions.

And I think I know what you and other responsible citizens will answer. They would have said, as we say today: "Forbid it, Almighty God. We shall not sit by any longer. We shall act in

defense of decency and order and in the name of our country."

Our government is striking with all the weapons it possesses against the obscenity menace. Until last year, purveyors of filth had to be prosecuted at the point from which they mailed their smut. This was a severe handicap to prosecution. Courts, notably in Los Angeles and New York, where the great bulk of the mail-order business in obscenity originates, handed down soft rulings on obscenity. Few offenders were convicted, and these usually paid a small fine and began operating again.

Legislation passed by Congress last year has now made it possible to prosecute where the mail is received.

The first case prosecuted under the new law was in Boise, Idaho. A man and his wife, who were mailing extremely obscene material from the west coast, were given ten years in jail, plus a heavy fine.

A Virginia man and his wife dealing in obscenity were sentenced to a year in the Federal Penitentiary and fined \$2,000. In Louisiana, two more dealers in filth were given a year and eighteen months in jail respectively.

This is a good start. But it is only a start.

If government is to make full use of the new legislation, it needs and must have the co-operation of all our citizens and especially of all our parents.

The privacy of the mail is a basic American right. It will not be violated. The Post Office cannot open first-class mail even if it is certain the envelope contains obscene material. The Post Office can act only if parents supply the evidence *after* the mail has been delivered. Here is what we as parents can do, what we *must* do:

1. If mail coming to your home is obscene, or solicits the sale of obscene materials: save all the material, including the covering envelope; put it promptly in the hands of the local postmaster either personally or by mail.

2. Do not wait for this danger to strike your home. Join with other parents, teachers, local law enforcement officers, and civic groups in drawing public attention to the menace of this traffic in filth.

3. Work closely with teachers in your community to detect obscene materials

in the possession of children and to determine the origin of such material.

4. Join with other parents and teachers in making a special effort to impress upon the community the fact that even children who are never exposed to the obscene material may be victimized by sex criminals.

5. Co-operate with the schools in taking positive, long-range steps to help children develop wholesome interests in good literature and art—making it readily available to them at home, in the classroom, through literary and library clubs, and through student groups.

6. Help civic groups bring about the establishment of a decent literature committee, broadly representative of the interested civic organizations in the community.

7. Get local judges, law enforcement officers, and representatives of the police force to talk before civic groups telling what they, as guardians of the community's laws, know of the relationship between the traffic in obscene literature and juvenile delinquency and sex crimes.

We must defend our youth, in the interests of this nation which God has blessed above all others. We must rise to this task, stand up, and be counted on the side of decency. We must show by our lives and actions that we possess the virtues that made America great.

There will be those who will cry "censorship" and "suppressing of freedom of information." To these people there does not seem to be any difference between liberty and license—but there is a real difference. It is not a denial of liberty to forbid the sale of narcotics or alcohol to children, and neither is it a denial of liberty to ban the distribution of filthy, obscene, character destroying materials.

There has developed in this country, I am sorry to say, a species of so-called "broadmindedness" which tolerates anything and everything. It is high time right-thinking citizens showed they are fed up with such false broadmindedness. I, for one, fail to see where this so-called "tolerance" of evil has made society any better or individuals any happier. We cannot steer a safe course without a compass. We cannot build an enduring society except on principles of righteousness.

As Dr. Daniel A. Poling recently wrote in the *Christian Herald*, "It's time for a new crusade," a crusade for decency.

The youth of the Church and of America deserve that we parents live up to our responsibilities in this regard.

Many centuries ago, a celebrated Roman matron, Cornelia, was asked by an acquaintance to display her jewels. Cornelia called to her children to step forward. "These are my jewels," she said.

The youth of the Church and of America are our jewels. Let us prize them as they deserve. A clean America

will be a strong America, a secure America, a prosperous America, a peaceful America, a free America, an America that will continue to merit God's blessings in the future as it has in the past.

God grant it may be so, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We have just heard Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve. Elder Antoine R. Ivins of the First Council of Seventy will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Gordon B. Hinckley.

ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My brethren and sisters, you will pardon me if I say it has been a nervous wait. Twenty-eight years ago, at the October conference, I was sustained as one of your Presidents of the seventies quorum. That means that this is the fifty-sixth time I have stood here to bear my testimony to you. I have to confess that while I like to bear my testimony, the overwhelming sense of responsibility is almost more than I can stand. I seek therefore, your interest and your faith and your prayers that perchance I may drop a word or two that may be comforting to us.

I am happy this afternoon to be one of you, to be engaged in this wonderful work of the Church. I am especially happy and grateful this afternoon for the privilege of bringing my wife with me to this meeting. Some of you will remember that, just a little more than two years ago, reporters came over from the *Deseret News* and asked for a story they could publish in the event she would pass away. Through the faith and prayers of the Brethren, through her faith and courage, she is still with us, and for the whole time that I have been one of your servants, she has stood by my side and traveled with me being a great help and support and a blessing to the people with whom I have ministered. For this I am truly thankful. I am thankful also, regardless of the dangers that threaten us and the unholy conditions that prevail, that I live in this nation.

On Saturday morning, this body exercised the privilege of expressing approval and acceptance of the officers listed by the Presidency of the Church. It was the voice of the people—President Clark expressed it, as the Doctrine and Covenants does, as the common consent of the people. That is basic in the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—the voice of the people. If we are going to meet, successfully, the conditions of which we have just heard, it must be because the voice of the people shall rise up in defense of honesty, integrity, righteousness, and correct living conditions. I think it is within the power of the people to bring that about once the voice of the people could be so aroused.

Then I remember the two years or more I studied the constitution of a nation in which I was resident, a constitution which was not, as ours, the expression of the body of the people, but a constitution which was gathered out of ours and the French Constitution and adapted to that nation. It has taken more than a hundred years for those people to sense the import of their constitution.

I once heard a man say, "Democracy is not what is written on a piece of paper. It is the expression of what is within the heart of men." Our country came into existence just that way, in that the power is resident in the people and that every right and every privilege