

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is President J. Reuben Clark, Jr. of the First Presidency of the Church. Elder

Antoine R. Ivins will now address us. He is a member of the First Council of the Seventy of the Church. Elder Ivins will be followed by Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve.

ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My brethren and sisters, in October 1931, I occupied this position for the first time, as your appointed servant. I have occupied it at every conference since, and it gets no easier, brethren and sisters. There is a sense of growing responsibility that comes to one with the passing of the years and the experiences that come from this office, so I seek an interest in your faith and prayers, that perchance something I may say may be helpful to some of us, for the only purpose we have is that of helping to come to a betterment of our lives as members of the Church.

You have been told that I am a member of the First Council of the Seventy. It is astonishing how many people think that I can be a member of the First Council of the Seventy and a high priest in the Church, which is not the case. I think it may be appropriate if I can gather from my experience, just to tell you a few words about how the seventies came into existence under the inspiration that was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Almost all of the men who were ordained seventies in that first period, were men who had placed their lives at the disposition of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Almost all of them were men who had gone down in Zion's Camp and had proved a willingness, if necessary, to give their lives for the work of the Church, under the leadership of the Prophet.

Then there came a time, shortly after that, when the Prophet was inspired to call and ordain twelve men to the apostleship of the Church, that was in 1835 in the early part of the year. That was followed within a few weeks by the ordination of a number of men as seventies in the Church, and before very many weeks had gone there were three full groups of seventy each and forty of a fourth group who had been or-

daind to the office of seventy. Over all of them were placed seven men to direct their efforts.

Things went along pretty well for a while, and then one day there were two men working in a brickyard, one was a high priest and the other was a seventy, and the high priest undertook to correct the seventy, and he rebuked him for something he, the seventy, did, and the seventy said, "You just can't do that. I hold a higher office than you do in the priesthood." That little quarrel resulted in their carrying the question to the Prophet Joseph Smith as to which might be higher. I do not know whether the Prophet ever said which was higher, but he discovered this, that five of the men who had been appointed as seventies of the Church, had already been ordained high priests, and he is quoted as having said that it is contrary to the vision that a high priest should preside in the quorums of the seventies, so those five men were withdrawn, and another five took their place as presidents.

During the entire life of the Prophet Joseph Smith, there were only those seven men, under the direction of the twelve, to direct the work of the seventies.

At the first conference after the death of the Prophet, a member of the Council of the Twelve presented a resolution to the conference that all elders under thirty-five years of age, who were willing to accept of the responsibility of missionary work, should be ordained into the seventies quorum, and enough men were ordained to make up twelve quorums. Then this first group of seventy was broken down into ten groups and each seven became the presidents of a quorum. The first seven remained the presidency over all the seventies of the Church; the second, third, fourth to the tenth became the presidents of other quorums, the theory prevailing, it

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seems, that the first quorum was the presiding quorum of all the seventies in the Church.

Now the first quorum of the seventy has not been kept intact, except for the presidency of it, who are sustained as members of the General Authorities of the Church.

Now these brethren were given a very special office in the priesthood. All elders under thirty-five who are willing and worthy to do missionary work should be ordained seventies, and that is the primary responsibility of the seventies in the Church.

An appeal was made last evening for a great number of missionaries, a great increase in the number of missionaries in the Church. It just happens that I have been on that missionary committee since coming into the First Council and realize the need of it. We have twenty thousand men in this Church who are seventies, more than twenty thousand, I believe, every one of them committed to the proclamation of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Every one of them should be qualified for that particular purpose. And what should he be willing to do? Every one of them and every son that he should rear with the prospect of becoming a missionary, should be able to testify that he knows that God and Christ are Personal Beings, a testimony which I have often said, came back to the world through the vision that was first given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. He must be able to testify that through experience he knows that God lives, that Jesus Christ is his Son. He must evince a faith that will impel him to respond to every legitimate call that may be made of him by proper leadership in the Church.

It happens, however, that many have family responsibilities and their only opportunity to respond to this particular mission, is in the stakes of Zion, a mission which is equally important with those in foreign fields. It does not require the same time, it does not require the same loss of income. There are many things that are advantageous to it, as compared to the other, if you want to call it an advantage to avoid these responsibilities. But it is an important mission because no man can say that a convert in a stake is not as important as a convert in any foreign mission

which you might name. But the fact is, that we expect that type of service of them, one way or another. We expect every one of them to live in such a way that his growing children may grow up with faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and with an aspiration and an ambition someday to be able to declare it to people who have not yet come to understand it and have the glorious privilege of membership in the Church.

I wonder how well the seventies do it. I wonder how well the elders do it, because that is also their problem. I wonder how well the high priests do it, how well they indoctrinate into the hearts and minds of their growing children the testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he is our Elder Brother, and that they live, that they hear and answer prayers, and that this great work came into existence because God and Christ did appear to the Prophet Joseph Smith, because under their mandate other beings who had lived upon this earth, as resurrected beings I suppose, celestialized, whatever you call it—came back to the earth and bestowed a priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver, and with that authorization and under direct inspiration from God, our Heavenly Father, there was brought into existence a Church organization to control the use of the privileges of the priesthood in the ordinances that are essential to exaltation in the kingdom of God.

Every boy who expects to go on a mission, every boy or girl who aspires to a mission, should, through the way he lives and through his study and his faith and prayer, come to a position so that he can testify to those things before he goes into the mission field.

Now, brethren and sisters, that is not our happy experience always, as directors of this great missionary work. Too often, inexperienced, almost unconverted young people respond to our suggestion. It is almost never that they fail to get that testimony, once they get into the mission field and devote themselves to the work. But cannot you imagine that if that testimony were implanted in their hearts as growing young people, that their lives would be different, so that they would always be entitled to the Spirit of God to guide them and direct them, to help them in their studies and

preparation for this great work. Is there anything greater that people can do than to offer others the opportunity of membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and thereby give them the privilege of earning an exaltation in the kingdom of God? I think that is the greatest blessing that anybody can ever offer to people.

Now, the seventies have that as a special calling and a special responsibility. Just how well we acquit ourselves of it, I cannot say. I can say this, however, that as a member of the First Council, I am tremendously proud of the lives that most of our seventies live, and of their willingness to sacrifice for this great and worthy purpose.

But the great thing that has come out, or one of the great things that has come out, of the interviews that we have had with the mission presidents over the last few days, is the fact that some of these young people have not been so taught and they have to learn it under the direction of the mission presidents. It becomes a grave responsibility for a mission president to have to implant into the soul and heart of a young man the testimony that should have been placed there by his father by his own faith and prayer and service to the Church.

Now, if we could just realize this, brethren and sisters, if we could realize when these tots are growing up, that care in the way we live, care in the things we do, care in the things we teach them, can so build into their consciousness a testimony of the truth, that

at maturity they will have been able to go through all of the trials of adolescence and come out unscathed. That is the objective, brethren and sisters, of this great work—one of them.

And as fathers of this growing generation, and as mothers, we have that responsibility, brethren and sisters, to prepare these young people for that service, because that is one of the three major purposes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I am not here to tell you which is most important—the work for the living members of the Church, the work for our dead ancestors, or the effort to give this great opportunity to people who have not yet understood it. They are three major purposes of the Church, but it does not matter which one of those fields you aim at, the problem is to implant into the hearts of those youngsters whom you have brought into this world, a testimony that will make their lives as near perfect as possible, and their service to their fellows a tremendous and wonderful one.

May God bless and help us, I pray, doing it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Antoine R. Ivins, member of the First Council of Seventy. Elder ElRay L. Christiansen will now address us. He is an Assistant to the Twelve.

ELDER ELRAY L. CHRISTIANSEN

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I have been deeply moved by the timely and appropriate messages of those who have spoken in this conference, beginning last evening, and also by the beautiful and inspiring music that has been rendered both last night and today.

Now I desire to discuss briefly with you, a matter which should be the concern of every member of the Church and for which I believe there is a need, on the part of many of us, for greater interest and fervor.

We live in the period of time spoken

of by the prophets of the Bible, when all the keys of the priesthood, the powers, the gifts, and the authority are restored and are now in the hands of the servants of the Lord in this day, all of which is preparatory to the ushering in of the millennial reign of the Savior.

The primary purposes of this dispensation are first, to gather Israel through the great missionary service of the Church and the proselyting effort of all of us, that through the gospel of Jesus Christ, they may seek and find salvation and exaltation with their families.