

## ELDER THORPE B. ISAACSON

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

President McKay, President Moyle, President Brown, President Smith, my beloved brethren of the General Authorities, brothers and sisters: I had prepared a talk that I thought would be fitting on the subject of fasting, fast offerings, and fast day, but I feel today that it would not be appropriate. I would therefore like to save this subject for another time.

I think there are times which come in every man's life when he feels that he is not quite up to the situation with which he is confronted. This is one of those times for me. I am sure you can imagine and understand that I have prayed diligently for the help of the Lord, and I would like to ask you if you will help me. I think it was fifteen years ago at the October conference, when the death of that great man, Bishop Marvin O. Ashton, left a vacancy in the Presiding Bishopric. At that time I was called to the councils of the Church to serve as second counselor to Presiding Bishop LeGrand Richards, whom I regard as one of God's noble servants.

Then after some years, I was called to serve as first counselor to another choice man, Presiding Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin. In my humble opinion Bishop Wirthlin is one of the hardest workers I have ever known.

If anything, probably he worked too hard. I have heard him say many times, "No matter what the brethren ask me to do, I will do it."

I would also like to say that Bishop Carl W. Buehner has been a great strength to both Bishop Wirthlin and to me in the Presiding Bishopric.

Yesterday when President McKay called us to his office and told us of our release from the Presiding Bishopric, he asked us how we felt. I am sure he detected that we felt all right about it, because we did feel all right about it. This morning when you voted to give us a vote of thanks as you released us, I am sure that our hands went higher than any others in the building. I confess, President McKay, that I leaned over to Bishop Wirthlin and said, "That

is the greatest relief I have had in fifteen years." Then in about two minutes and forty seconds, when the names of the General Authorities were read, I nearly stood up to ask whether they were being read from the wrong sheet. When I heard my name, it came as a bolt of lightning to me. I did not know, nor did I expect, nor did I desire such a calling.

But talk about blessings! I haven't the words to express the blessing it has been for me to be associated with these brethren; to visit in the wards and stakes of the Church. A few weeks ago I went to a stake where I had never been before. I did not know those men, I had never seen them. They were in far-off Florida. But after being with them for only two days, we embraced each other as I left those choice men of that stake presidency.

Can you imagine that kind of blessing in any other work in the world? I would not take anything for the wonderful experiences I have had these last fifteen years, although at times, of course, the work was hard. I hope you will always remember that none of these brethren sought the positions they hold; that every one of them is probably giving more than his physical energy would normally permit. I have said to my boys, "If there is any work that has to be left undone, it must not be the work of the Church."

I am so grateful to you brethren in the wards and stakes who have made us feel so good when we have come to you. I have witnessed the blessings of the Lord, and I have seen men change. I know what it is for men to change. I plead with all the senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood whom I love very deeply. I have seen many of them change, because when you once catch the Spirit that Elder Marion G. Romney has been talking about, you are bound to change, and you will always change for the better. I know what the Spirit of the Lord is, and I know what it is not to have it. With all my heart, I plead with you leaders to take good care

of the senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood and not let those fine men stay out there alone. They need and deserve your help. They are good men. I am one of those who believe the Lord loves them. If you have a wayward son, do you love him? Certainly you do. Well then, what makes you think the Lord does not love his sons who might be a little wayward?

I plead with the senior members of the Aaronic Priesthood to make themselves available for activity in the Church. I know what it is to have the Spirit of the Lord, and I know what it is to receive inspiration. Without them, we cannot function in this Church.

I ask you not to find fault with your leaders. We are not perfect. We do not profess to be. But we are trying to live as close to the Lord as we know how. I think when you allow someone to find fault with your bishop or your stake president or one of the General Authorities, you ought to raise your voice against such practice because that person will be hurting himself more than he is hurting anyone else.

My son called this morning and said, "If you are released today, I do not want you to feel bad, because we have gone fifteen years without your close association. We would like to have you home a little bit." My daughter said, "It will seem good to have you home once in a while." They were both quite happy this morning. But I am sure they will be happy now, because I believe the Lord will make it up to each of them in some way. My wife has been lonesome, of course, and she had looked forward to my being home more. The loyalty of my wife and family has inspired me through the years. Their love has sustained me.

There is nothing in the world like the gospel in the lives of men and women. A short time ago I was riding with a man who was not a member of this Church. I asked him what his faith was, and he said he didn't have any particular faith. I said, "You do belong to a church?"

He said, "Yes."

"What does your church do for you?"

He said, "Nothing."

I then said, "Do you attend church?"

"No."

"Well, what do you do for your church?"

"Nothing." Then I thought when he said the church had done nothing for him, it was probably because he had done nothing for the church.

Oh, how different we are! What would we be without the Church? I think all of us here would say that everything we have and all that we are that are worthwhile have come to us because of the blessings of the Church to our parents, our grandparents, and our forebears. Life without the Church would not be worth living.

I would like to thank many of those who have assisted me in my assignments in the Presiding Bishopric. Brother Irvin Nelson takes care of these grounds and lawns, which was one of my assignments. I have never worried about them because he has always taken such pride in them. I would like to thank Brother Samuel Bateman who has been the head custodian of this great building for so many years. He has done a great work.

I would like to thank J. Frank Marble and his staff of workers, my secretaries, Darcey Wright of the Church Office Building, our hospital administrators, and our boards of trustees.

I thank Lee A. Palmer, David G. Thomas, Henry G. Tempest, N. Keith Carroll, and Ray L. White of our office. They have been wonderful in helping us in our many assignments.

We pledge our wholehearted support to the new Presiding Bishopric, Bishop John H. Vandenberg and his counselors. We know a little of the details with which they will be confronted. We pledge that we will help them with every ounce of energy we have in picking up the loose ends and getting things in order with as little delay as possible.

I bear my testimony and thank God my Father for life. I have recognized that he was kind enough to spare my life when I had an illness recently. I want to do that every day as long as he will let me live. I thank you, my brethren and sisters, for being so tolerant with me. If I have offended any one of you in any way, (because sometimes

I am quite blunt) I wouldn't want to hurt you, and I ask your forgiveness.

I bear testimony to you that I love the Lord. He has been so good to me that I owe him everything. I know that God lives, that he hears my prayers and your prayers. I couldn't get along a day if I could not go to him. One of the most peaceful experiences in my life is when I follow Elder Romney's admonition, when I can find a spot alone. I endorse that to you. It will give you strength, peace, comfort, inspiration, and greater faith.

I bear testimony to you that I know Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, as I know President David O. McKay is a prophet of God. There isn't a day that I do not pray for President McKay—a number of times, and for every one of these General Authorities, with no exception. I regard them as prophets of God and servants of the Lord. Would you ever want to speak unkindly about a servant of the Lord? Not ever again, if you ever have.

May the Lord bless us that we may be strong and that we may move forward with the Church. The Church is growing fast, and if we want to keep up we will have to do likewise.

God bless you. May he watch over us all and give us the strength and the faith to do as he would have us do, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**President David O. McKay:**

We have just listened to Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson, recently released as one of the Presiding Bishopric and sustained this day as one of the Assistants to the Twelve.

The combined choral groups and congregation will now sing, "Come, O Thou King of Kings," conducted by David Austin Shand. After the singing Elder LeGrand Richards will speak to us.

The Combined Choral Groups and the congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

**President David O. McKay:**

Our next speaker is Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of Twelve. He will be followed by Elder Sill.

## ELDER LEGRAND RICHARDS

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

I feel it a great honor and privilege, my brethren and sisters, to have an opportunity of attending this conference with you. I love the Saints of Zion. I thank the Lord for my association with my brethren of the General Authorities.

I think it would be appropriate today if I should pay my tribute of love and respect to Bishop Wirthlin and Bishop Isaacson. As the Presiding Bishop of the Church, I was privileged to select counselors from all the priesthood of the Church, and I selected them without any duress or guidance, except the Spirit of the Lord, and they were wonderful counselors, and I love them and pray the Lord always to be with and bless them. I love Brother Buehner, too, and I welcome these new men who have been sustained today as General Au-

thorities. I am sure they will do a great work.

I am very happy to know of the great progress the Church is making in the missionary field. I am sure we were all thrilled this morning in hearing the report given by President Moyle of the great upsurge and increase in baptisms. I think I have been a missionary nearly all my life. When I was just a little fellow, I remember attending a ward meeting where two missionaries, returning from the Southern States, gave their report. I do not know whether they said anything unusual or not, but if they did not, the Lord did something unusual for me, because when I left that meeting I felt that I could have walked to any mission field in the world, if I had just had a call, and so I went home