

BISHOP CARL W. BUEHNER

Of the Presiding Bishopric

President Brown began his address by saying this is the first conference since the change of his status, and I could well begin by saying this is the last conference since the change of my status with the General Authorities of the Church; but I am very happy and very joyous in the wonderful and marvelous experience that I have had, and I have discovered there is something wonderful in being released. I have had hundreds of people come to me and embrace me, tell me how much they loved me, how much they appreciated me, and how much I am going to be missed. I would never have known about this if I had not been released.

When I was sustained as the second counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, I remember saying to the Church that I pledged my wholehearted support to Bishop Wirthlin, Bishop Isaacson, and to the leaders of the Church; and I think to the best of my ability and at least in a reasonable measure, I have accomplished this. I have enjoyed my work so much. Bishop Wirthlin is a great man, a man of integrity, a man of honesty, a man whose word was good all the time, and it is to Bishop Wirthlin that I owe the great honor that came to me, since he is the man who asked that I serve with him as a counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

I have enjoyed, of course, with him, the labors with Bishop Isaacson; and we have had a great time together. We have been in many council meetings. We have been on our knees many times, invoking the blessings of the Almighty in the great responsibilities that are those of members of the Presiding Bishopric.

We love the boys and the men of the Church who hold the Aaronic Priesthood and the great army of men who have been serving as ward teachers—160,000 of them in the Church now. There are many things that bring great rewards through service in this great Church.

When my brothers heard that I had been asked to become a member of the

Presiding Bishopric, they said, "We are proud of you. You go and assume those responsibilities, and we will run the business. We will keep you on the payroll." They have been wonderful, and I appreciate this.

All along the line, people have been so grand. I am so grateful for all of the marvelous blessings that have come to me.

I should now like to make a few acknowledgments: I have had the full support of a loyal and loving wife. She has been a Church widow if there has ever been one. My children are all married, and each has a home of his own. Therefore, my wife has been home many, many days alone. I feel she will welcome this release. She has already thought of many things we can now do, and my children have already called and said, "Dad, we can get together now and do some of the things we have not been able to do in the past years." So, the future looks wonderful, I can see this. I appreciate my family. My four children were all married in the temple. Between them I have sixteen grandchildren. They and their companions have never embarrassed me for one minute. They are all active and devoted to the Church. One cannot help loving children and grandchildren like these. So, you see, the Lord has been good to me all along the line.

I had wonderful parents. They have been gone for twenty-seven years. They did not have very much so far as things of this world are concerned, but they had great faith in the gospel and a strong testimony. Certainly, we should be good children, having had parents like these and having been trained in a home where such great faith was exhibited all the time.

I would like to pay a tribute to those with whom we have labored in our office—wonderful, dedicated people. We have been blessed with qualified secretaries. They know just about as much of our work as we know ourselves. In a minute's notice, they can bring letters out of a file; they can tell you what

your appointments are; and they can remind you of many things. They are efficient and wonderful.

Bishop Isaacson mentioned members of our staff in his talk. I should like to pay tribute to Brother Henry G. Tempest who has been "my man" in the ward teaching program. He has gone out many nights to hold conventions and to speak at ward teachers' meetings and to encourage the great program. While there is still a long way to go, much has been accomplished. We now get into the homes of eighty-one percent of the people of the Church. This is an increase of about thirty-five percent over the past few years. I am thrilled about this, and some good must come from it. Brother Thomas and Brother Palmer who have Aaronic Priesthood assignments, those under twenty-one and those over twenty-one, have performed their duties in the same wonderful way. Recently, Brother Ray White was added to our staff. He is a qualified, experienced man who has come to do our writing. Brother Keith Carroll has been our office manager. He has been on the job all the time. He has kept our office routine moving in a smooth and efficient manner. We learned to love people of this caliber. Brother Harold Kirby, Brother Walter Poelman, and Brother Phillip Jensen are men of this same caliber. I should like to mention Sister Ella Jack who supervises the department that has more than 1,700,000 membership records in it. This department is so efficient that within a matter of five or six seconds, the workers can bring out the membership card of any member in the Church. If you can spell their names, and if they are members of the Church, this department can produce the membership records for you. It is this type of efficiency in all of our departments that has been so obvious.

Another department that should be mentioned is the comptometer department which was formerly headed by an outstanding servant, Fern Dunn, who passed away a few months ago, and our medical welfare department where we handle many cases of people in distress and difficulty. Sister Hilda Harvey and her staff are qualified, dedicated women

who take care of those who come to this department.

I am going to miss many of these wonderful experiences that I have enjoyed. I will miss sitting in our weekly report meeting where the experience of our visits at stake quarterly conferences are related. I, personally, have been to more than 350 quarterly conferences during the time I have been in the Presiding Bishopric, and this in itself has been a tremendous experience.

As I look at this great audience, particularly those of you who are leaders of the Church, I realize what an amazing group of men you are. You have come from all over the Church, actually, from all parts of the world. I shook hands with leaders from Holland the other day and then with some from the new Berlin Stake, as well as leaders from Australia and New Zealand. You may be sitting next to each other at this very moment. You have come from farms, from small communities, from large cities, from most of the states of the Union and from many foreign countries to be inspired and lifted, edified, and electrified. I hope you catch on fire so that this great work will move forward as never before.

I have had the honor of sitting in the presence of President McKay and his Counselors at least twice each week, and many times, oftener. I will never be in any more wonderful company than while in the presence of prophets of God. Add to this those who comprise the body of the General Authorities of the Church.

Elder Romney mentioned my experience with him in the welfare program. Early in the program, I learned to love President Clark, and I wish he were here today so that I could tell him of the tremendous influence he has been in my life and for the great contribution he has made to the welfare program. I was closely associated with President Moyle while he was chairman of the program; Elder Harold B. Lee, managing director, Elder Romney, and all others associated with this outstanding program to bless people. I will prize this great association all of my life.

I have met with hospital boards, while dedicated men have sat and

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pondered and worked out problems pertaining to our hospitals. These men have given their time hour after hour in the solution of the problems that confront these institutions. They have been a great aid to the administrators.

These are some of the things I shall miss. My association with the men and boys who hold the Aaronic Priesthood has been tremendous. This, I shall also never forget. I am even going to miss my new, red chair down here. From now on, I will be competing with you for a seat on one of the benches down below. I have a feeling this is going to be enjoyable.

Someone said, "Why do so many meetings start at 8 pm *sharp* and close at 11 pm *dull*?" This may be because I have been holding some of these meetings. I hope this will now eliminate all those classified as dull.

I know I must not speak much longer, but I should like to let you know that I wholeheartedly sustain the changes that have been made. I endorse the new brethren whose names have been mentioned. I have loved and appreciated Elder Hinckley and admire him greatly. I fully support the new members of the Presiding Bishopric. I have a feeling they will do a better job than we have done. It seems, when changes are made, new individuals always lift the Church to greater heights. If I can do anything to assist them, I offer my services.

I am very grateful that Bishop Wirthlin has received a new assignment in the Church. I am also grateful that Bishop Isaacson has a new assignment. President McKay said, "Brother Buehner, this will give you time to run your new Beehive State Bank." I told him I would take some of my time to do this and some for other things in which I have an interest.

In closing, may I say that through the privilege I have had of traveling about the Church, meeting you wonderful stake presidents, I express appreciation for the fact that you have given me the best room in your home. You have killed the fatted calf; you have traveled over busy highways to call for me at the airport or at a railroad depot; you have waited on us and extended to us

every courtesy. For these things, I ask the Lord to bless you, and I express my appreciation for you. As I step aside now, I will remember these tremendous experiences. You are a great blessing to the leadership of the Church. Many times I have said that because of the dedicated men and women scattered throughout the Church, this Church can never fail. I trust our only concern is, "How far can we take it?" We have an excellent start and yet a long way to go.

The one other thought I would like to leave is that the Lord is trying to save all of us. I hope we will conform our lives to his teachings so that he can help us to become perfect and one day bring us back again into his presence. We would not be happy to be in his presence if we did not make every effort to bring with us those we have learned to know and love and appreciate and even many yet that we do not know. The purpose of the Lord is to bring us all back into his presence. He has given us the plan whereby this can be done.

I have a great testimony of the gospel. I love the Church. Again, I say, I appreciate every honor and every courtesy that has come to me. I would like to say again to President McKay and his Counselors and to all of the General Authorities that I am a better man as I leave this assignment because of them than I have ever been before.

Tomorrow will be moving day for me. I must say good-bye to most of you now. Some of you I hope to see often. I thank the Lord for every choice blessing I have had.

I have had to speak this way or I would have choked up and could not have said a word. God bless everyone of you as you continue your great labors in the work, and may our Father in heaven continue to bless these wonderful General Authorities.

Many great men in the past have been released by death. I am released while I am still alive, and there is some advantage to this. God bless you every one in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

You have just heard a retirement