

Let the joyful news abound;
Go till every nation hear you,
Jew and Gentile greet the sound.
Let the gospel echo all the earth around."

I pray in the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

ELDER ALVIN R. DYER

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My dear brothers and sisters, it has been our great privilege this morning to hear the opening message of our beloved President. I feel grateful for his words of counsel and enlightenment, which have already, through his remarks today and in meetings previous to the conference, set the spirit of the conference.

I feel that I should be ungrateful this morning if I did not testify to you, my brethren and sisters, and to my fellow associates, as one with you who has come to know that President McKay is truly a prophet of God, and who in the inspiration and revelation of his calling is effectively leading the Church in its present great period of expansion. I have witnessed his prophecies come true and have participated in the unerring wisdom of his counsel. Truly he is a great missionary Apostle and President. His travels throughout the world in behalf of God's work have exceeded even the travels of the early-day apostles.

President McKay is loved by each of the General Authorities who stand unitedly by his side and who are willing to give their all in following his inspired leadership. His guileless love for the Saints finds a spring of affection in the hearts of us all. His vision is the inspiration, I am confident, behind the acceleration of our proselyting effort all over the world with which I have been directly connected and to which I can testify. Not only this, but under his direction other facets of Church growth are going forward to match these increased conversions: the expanded building program to provide the facilities of worship and cultural growth among the members; the increased activity in the priesthood, in the church education system whereby through uni-

President David O. McKay:

Elder Alvin R. Dyer, Assistant to the Twelve, former president of the European Mission, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve.

versities, colleges, institutes, and in the auxiliaries, the youth of the Church, who, while safeguarding their lives, are being prepared for leadership in the Church—the integral expansion of which is demanding that at least 15,000 new stake and ward leaders be called each year to match the growth of the Church.

The erection of temples, particularly in foreign lands, has proved to be a great stimulus to the faith of the members in these areas, and has caused thousands to remain in their native lands to help build the Church stronger, rather than to come to America and the West. The effectiveness of the Church welfare program continues.

Many other phases of the Church program could be mentioned which are going forward under the inspired leadership of our beloved President.

I am deeply grateful, my brethren and sisters, for the great honor and privilege that came to Sister Dyer and me and our son for a part of his mission which he also spent in Europe; for the privilege of serving in these ancient lands and of having the privilege of witnessing the power of God go forward in the expansion of his work. I have seen almost daily the witness of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the lives of people and have seen many men and women in almost every land receive of the teachings of the gospel from the missionaries and then have watched their lives change and have witnessed their preparation to become leaders in the Church.

I am most grateful this morning that here in the congregation are men who have been called to preside over stakes in Europe. I have been directly connected with these men. I know of their

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faith and their love of the gospel and of their desire to see the work of the Lord go forward.

The most frequent question that is asked of me since my return from Europe is this: "What is causing this tremendous growth in the Church? What is it that is causing people to accept the gospel more readily than ever before?" In analyzing this, I have come to the conclusion that there are three areas of activity which combine to produce the rise in converts in virtually all of the missions of the world. The fact that these very things are transpiring calls to mind the parable of the fig tree with its symbolical indication which the Master gave as an evidence of the approaches to the culmination of his work here upon the earth.

The first reason, I surmised, is simply that the harvest time is here. When the Prophet Joseph Smith was being instructed in the work which he had been called to do by holy messengers sent from the presence of God, it was made known to him by revelation, as our beloved prophet has mentioned this morning, that a great and marvelous work was about to come forth among the children of men, but the Lord also said that the field was white already to harvest. As to the meaning of the field being white already to harvest, we are enlightened by the words of the Apostle Paul, who by prophetic utterance told the Saints at Ephesus of that which would transpire in the very day in which we now live. This is his declaration:

"That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: . . .

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

"Having predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, . . ." (Eph. 1:10, 4-5.)

Thus, from the statement of the Lord given to Hyrum Smith, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and from this statement of Paul, we conclude that many of the noble and valiant spirits

of the pre-existence have been withheld as to birth into mortality until this particular time that they may be here upon the earth, either born under the covenant or converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ, that there will be strength within the Church to fulfil the divine commitments which the Lord has placed upon us as a people. These choice spirits so withheld, as could be expected, respond more readily to the gospel message here in life when they hear it.

The Lord speaks of this very thing, as referred to by the Apostle John, concerning the mission of the Holy Ghost whom the Master sent after his earth life departure, which was to bring remembrance to those who, by the spirit of conviction, would recognize the message of truth when they heard it. These are his words:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26.)

For the purpose of awakening interest in the hearts of people, we have learned that nearly all converts to the Church today sense that the gospel message is true the first time they heard it proclaimed by the missionaries.

I recall a noted architect in Munich, mature in years, highly successful in his field of work, a respected man in his city and church, who recognized, by the power of the Spirit, that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God the first time that the missionaries testified of it. He came to know this and of the truth of the message of the restoration from this initial awakening of interest, or the "bringing of things to his remembrance" and was led to baptism and is now with his wife an active member of the Church.

A noted attorney in Stuttgart sensed in his heart upon first contact by the missionaries that the gospel is true, though his baptism was delayed for several weeks while the missionaries taught him the lessons, which he confessed to me later that he could not fully understand at the time. This attorney knew that the elders were servants of God and that they had told him

the truth. He is now a member of a bishopric in the Stuttgart Stake.

A mature woman and her daughter, whose husband and father was dead, replied to a Danish missionary, when asked if they had understood all of their teachings concerning the Godhead and the Holy Ghost, that they did not, but the woman said she knew they were true servants of God, and she accepted what they had told them to be true, and after repentance they were baptized members of the Church.

The second reason, I believe, for the increased number of conversions is that the Church and its objectives stand today in a much better image before the world than ever before. There are many reasons for this that have gone on through the years, and it would appear that the relentless general good behavior and upstanding characteristics of the members of the Church is beginning to have its effect upon good men and women, civic and educational leaders, and other inspired men all over the world.

I think the relentless effectiveness of the Tabernacle Choir Broadcast, coupled with the goodwill tours that have been made, has been a great contribution in breaking the crust of false concept and has established us in better image before the people of the world, along with the many services which are rendered by the Church Information Service and the many bureaus of information at temples, historic sites, and mainly the Temple Square Bureau, where people have come to know the truth about us.

The outstanding representation we are now receiving from favorable newspaper and magazine publicity has helped. In some instances, through advertising agencies, but usually the efforts of mission presidents and missionaries, who in the course of their regular proselyting procedures and as a part of their program, contact the various civic and educational leaders and keep in close touch with the newspapers, make it a definite point to get acquainted with editors and reporters. In Europe this has been especially effective, where more than 8,000 newspaper articles favorable to the Church have been obtained, many of which show pictures of the missionaries, most usually in the

process of calling upon people, holding cottage meetings, cycling on the cycle paths to and from their tracting districts and in pursuing other typical missionary routines.

Press conferences have proved to be most helpful in getting our story before the public, and we have witnessed a change come over the civic and educational leaders in Europe whereby today we have recognition, and we are finding that information about the Church is being sought for and not necessarily only as we offer it. It is not unusual for the mayor and the ministers of education, presidents of universities, presidents of various states, and other influential people to be present with their wives at press receptions. We have been able to get many of our generals and leaders of our Armed Forces in Europe to attend these press receptions and into this atmosphere we have brought newspaper and magazine reporters and editors, and they have been amazed to see the influential people who have been in attendance.

Very often these reporters have been heard to say, "What is the mayor doing here?" Or, "Why is the president of the university present?" The answer is, of course, "They are friends of the Church," and invariably, because of the high calibre and sincerity of these affairs, more comprehensive articles about the Church have resulted.

Opportunities for free radio and television time, where the story of the Church can be told, is increasing with each passing week. The correction of disparaging articles about the Church, and the replacement of erroneous sections in encyclopedias, in books of knowledge, is a constant task, but many important steps are being taken in this regard to establish a better image of the Church and our people through these sources of information in the various countries of the world.

We have witnessed a vast improvement in the attitude of individuals. If time would permit, I could tell of experiences with ministers of education, with editors of many of the large newspapers in Europe, and with others who have actually defended the position of the Church and are publishing favorable articles about us, which assist the

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missionaries with the golden question, when they ask, "What do you know about the Mormon Church?" Instead of there being a negative answer, there is a willingness to listen, and this is contributing to the expansion of proselyting effectiveness in the world.

Of course we have a long way to go yet to gain the full effect before the world of the image of our people, but definite progress is being made.

The third reason is the concept of "Every Member a Missionary," as inspired by our beloved President. This has led to more effective ways of getting the gospel message to people. If every member of the Church will react to this inspiration, fulfilling the commitment that has been placed upon us as a people, there is every reason to believe that the convert expansion of the Church will continue.

In the preface of the Doctrine and Covenants there is recorded what the Lord made known to the Prophet Joseph Smith that we are expected as a people to convey to the masses of the world for the purpose "... that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world"; and this means that a man who stands at the head of his household may receive the priesthood through his faithfulness and then be able to speak in the name of the Lord for and in behalf of his family and Church, and also "That faith might increase in the earth;

"That mine everlasting covenant might be established;

"That the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers." (D&C 1:20-23.)

The inspiration of our prophet in the projection of the idea that every member be a missionary forms a concept, which like a banner, must be kept high. There should be no apathy within the ranks of the Church to this great challenge. The enthusiasm and spirit of missionary work must be kept alive and active in the heart of every member, for this is the spirit of the Church.

As I see it, there are three kinds of missionaries in the Church. There is the full-time missionary, who devotes his every waking hour in leading souls into the kingdom of our Heavenly Father

through the waters of baptism, and then there is the part-time missionary, who devotes all of his time except that which is needed to make a living and to care for his family. Then there is the member missionary, who by example and his good life will provide an image of the Church for his neighbors and friends and relatives to observe. They will assist the missionaries by opening their homes to investigators and to assist in other ways, in conveying the gospel message to those who do not understand the truth.

I am most grateful, my brethren and sisters, that the message of the gospel is to the individual, for each person can receive and evaluate the truth for himself. I thrilled recently as I attended a meeting behind the Iron Curtain in East Germany to hear one of the leaders stand and testify that no one could tell him how to worship God in his own heart.

Jesus, in his parables, manifested his way of teaching which was always to the individual as evidenced by his parables "a certain nobleman," "Behold the sower," "The rich young ruler," "The ninety and nine and the search for the one that is lost," "The prodigal son," etc.

What is true of conversion is true of membership in the Church, for each of us must work out our own salvation, and as the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "at times it may be with fear and trembling," but our obligation is to convey the message of the gospel unto the people of the world. This means our neighbor, as well as those who are afar off.

In conclusion may I read two statements from the revelations of the Lord concerning our obligation to teach the gospel. The Prophet Joseph Smith said that we are not to be ashamed to stand up boldly for the cause of Christ, for said he: "... It should be the duty of the Elder to stand up boldly for the cause of Christ, and warn that people with one accord to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, and for the Holy Ghost, always commanding them in the name of the Lord, in the spirit of meekness. . . ." (DHC, Vol. 2, p. 263.)

In the other revelation the Lord di-

rects all of the members of the Church to proclaim the gospel: “. . . I give unto you a commandment, that every man, both elder, priest, teacher, and also member, go to with his might, with the labor of his hands, to prepare and accomplish the things which I have commanded.

“And let your preaching be the warning voice, every man to his neighbor, . . .” (D&C 38:40-41. Italics added.)

I testify to you, my brethren and sisters, in the name of Jesus Christ,

that this is the Lord's work, and I pray that we may go forth in it and fulfil the commitment of extending the gospel in a continuing manner unto the children of the world, and I do it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Alvin R. Dyer, Assistant to the Twelve and former president of the European Mission, has just addressed us. Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve, will be our next speaker.

ELDER STERLING W. SILL

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brothers and sisters, I appreciate very much this semiannual privilege of having a part with you in the general conference of the Church. In thinking about the purpose that brings us together, I recalled a recent full-page newspaper advertisement which, with the exception of the name of the sponsoring lumber company down in the lower right-hand corner, the entire ad was a blank but for two small words in the middle of the page, which said, “Build Well.”

Then I thought of the interesting application made of this important idea by the Apostle Paul when he said to the Corinthians, “. . . ye are God's building . . . [therefore] let every man take heed how he buildeth. . .” (1 Cor. 3:9-10.)

The greatest responsibility that is ever entrusted to any human being is that of building his own personality. The first soul that anyone should bring to God is his own soul. President McKay recently pointed out that the purpose of the gospel is to make men better. The primary objective in the mission of Jesus was to provide the world with better men and women. God himself has said, “. . . this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” (Moses 1:39.) It is God's work to build character, ability, and Godliness into the lives of his children. Any influence that works against that purpose is evil, and whenever we build evil into our lives, we are tending toward failure.

In a survey recently made at Stanford

University, it was discovered that ninety-four percent of all workers who were fired from their jobs lost out for some reason not even remotely connected with job competence. They lost their jobs because they were lacking in basic fundamental character. The specific reasons given for the termination of their employment included such things as dishonesty, disloyalty, disobedience, hate, immorality, selfishness, sloth, and wrong thinking. These are also the traits that cause our crime waves, our delinquency scourges, and our cold and shooting wars. Building these traits into our lives also accounts for so many people finding themselves at the end of that broad road leading to eternal destruction.

I talk with a great many people every year who are unable to solve their problems. And I am certain that ninety-four percent of all of our troubles come because someone disobeys God's commandments. Nations as well as individuals could live successfully and happily if they could just learn to follow the tested principles of righteousness.

Recently I was in the office of a building contractor who was erecting a multi-million dollar building. He had spread out before him a set of drawings which he called a blueprint. And I was impressed with this idea that any builder can erect the most magnificent building that the greatest architect can conceive, if he just knows how to follow the blueprint. And then I tried unsuccessfully