

Sunday, October 7

**Counsel:** Will he who shared this marvelous experience with you please take the stand. It is with great pleasure that I present to the court the great American Prophet Joseph Smith, who went to the Lord in prayer and asked, . . . President Smith, this is your story; please take over and be brief.

**Witness:** "My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, . . .

"I kneeled down and began to offer up the desire of my heart to God. . . .

"I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, . . .

" . . . When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, . . . One of them spake unto me, . . . and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith 2:14-18.)

**Counsel:** That will be all, President Smith. Now, if you will step down, I will take your place and bear my humble witness:

To whom it may concern—and may it concern men everywhere:

Unlike the Prophet Joseph, I have never had the heavens opened to me nor have I in this mortal sphere, ever physically walked and talked with Jesus, yet I know that *he is the Christ—the Son of God*, and I know this because of the ministrations of the Holy Ghost unto me.

Now, may it please the Court, I rest my case. I have submitted twelve solid witnesses—all that my limited time will permit. If, after hearing their testimonies, there are those who are still reluctant to accept Jesus as the Son of God and who still prefer to accept his teachings as man-made philosophy rather than God's truth—they would do well to

ponder studiously the foregoing testimonies.

In early Israel, Moses established under God, a law of witnesses, namely:

"In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." (See Deut. 17:6.) This became the Jewish law in the days of our Lord. (2 Cor. 13:1.)

The early Common Law of England, after which our law is patterned, required twelve witnesses to the fact; also twelve jurors to the fact, and these jurors were supposed to know something about the case.

I have given you twelve witnesses. If you will accept them also as jurors, the verdict is plain—*Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

Yes, he truly is—and in his name I rest my case. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**President David O. McKay:**

He to whom you have just listened is Elder William J. Critchlow, Jr., Assistant to the Twelve.

The Choir and Congregation will now sing "High On The Mountain Top," conducted by Elder Jay E. Welch.

After the singing, Elder Alma Sonne will speak to us.

The Choir and congregation joined in singing the hymn, "High On The Mountain Top."

**President David O. McKay:**

Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder ElRay L. Christiansen.

## ELDER ALMA SONNE

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My brethren and sisters, I desire an interest in your faith and prayers during the few minutes I stand here.

Yesterday in conference we sustained a great man to the holy apostleship, a man who has proved his worthiness and demonstrated his leadership not only in

this country but also in Canada and across the seas. I am sure I speak for the Assistants to the Twelve when I welcome into their ranks President Brockbank, a devoted servant, a great missionary, and one qualified to carry forward the work of the Lord.

It occurs to me that in view of all that has been said of the growth and the expansion of God's work, it is well to hark back to the beginning, to get our bearings and better to appreciate and appraise our achievements.

The Church was organized on April 6, 1830, at Fayette, New York, with six members; their names: Joseph Smith, Jun., Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Peter Whitmer, Jun., Samuel H. Smith, and David Whitmer; all of them died in the Church except David Whitmer. The Church moved forward too rapidly for David Whitmer, and he was left behind.

On the 9th of June 1830, the first conference of the Church was held. At that early day there were seven ordained elders, three priests, two teachers in the Church. The membership was twenty-seven. Oliver Cowdery was appointed to keep the records of the Church.

The second conference of the Church was held on September 26, 1830, some three months later. David Whitmer was appointed to keep the records and the minutes. The membership then was sixty-two. The Latter-day Saints have always been a record-keeping and a history-making people.

The first bishopric of the Church was Edward Partridge and John Corrill and Isaac Morley.

From then on, through many years the Church grew rapidly in power and strength; trials, apostasies, hardships were numerous. The weak were eliminated through this process, and strong men became the pillars and the leaders. Someone has said, "The future of the forest is the acorn." Certainly so far as the Church is concerned, this was a humble beginning. Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams were set apart as counselors to President Joseph Smith on March 18, 1833.

In October of that year, Oliver Cowdery also became associated with the First Presidency. The first apostles and seventies were ordained in Kirtland in February 1835. The priesthood of the Church consisted of two humble elders on April 6, 1830, the date of its organization.

The growth of the Church has been marvelous, if not spectacular. The first mission outside of the United States and

Canada to be opened was in England, Lancashire, in 1837, headed by President Heber C. Kimball; associated with him were seven others. From there the work spread to Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and from there to Australia, South America, and East India.

In 1841, in the face of great hardship, Orson Hyde, an apostle of the Lord went to Jerusalem and dedicated the Holy Land for the return of the Jews. His prayer is a fervent appeal to God and a solemn dedication of that land for the purpose foretold by holy prophets. These prophecies, brethren and sisters, are being fulfilled, and the Jews are returning to the land of promise.

There was no delay in opening the way for the gospel message to the nations. Without money and worldly influence the work was established with a determination and a steadfastness seldom witnessed.

In 1850, Erastus Snow and Peter O. Hansen arrived in Denmark, John E. Forsgren in Sweden, Lorenzo Snow and Joseph Toronto in Italy, and Thomas B. H. Stenhouse in Switzerland, and George Q. Cannon in the Hawaiian Islands. About the same time the gospel was carried to India, then to China, Siam, Africa, Prussia, Gibraltar, the West Indies, and Norway; a little later to New Zealand, and in 1876 to Mexico, the republic on the south of us.

During these years the pioneer venture was proceeding in the intermountain west. Men of leadership and quality were needed there. The pioneer venture was a gigantic task, a stupendous undertaking, a challenge to a persecuted and driven people, but the pioneer movement was not a failure. It was gloriously and wondrously successful, and it is so acknowledged throughout the world by the historians.

I ask you the question, "Has the Lord blessed his people? Has the colonization effort any parallel in history? Does it look like failure?"

My brethren and sisters, the gospel message will continue to go forward to the world until all nations shall be advised of the restoration which has come through Joseph Smith the Prophet.

I testify that God's work will go on, and it will eventually fill the whole earth, for which I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.