

Third Session of the 133rd Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Brother Richard P. Condie, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ, will open these services by singing, "God of our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand."

Following the singing the invocation will be offered by Elder Merrill A. Nelson, president of the Kearns Stake.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the number, "God Of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand."

Elder Merrill A. Nelson, president of the Kearns Stake, offered the opening prayer.

President David O. McKay:

The invocation was offered by President Merrill A. Nelson.

The Tabernacle Choir will now favor us with, "Sing Unto God With Unmeasured Praise." Following the singing Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of Twelve will be our first speaker.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the selection, "Sing Unto God With Unmeasured Praise."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us.

## ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

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

My beloved President, and my beloved brethren and sisters:

For more than a third of a century it has been my privilege to speak to many of you many times through my association with the Tabernacle Choir and its remarkably long series of broadcasts and through other organizations and activities. But I feel a weighty responsibility this morning in speaking to you of some things that are close to my heart and important to my life, and which are vitally a part of the principles and convictions of the Church to which I have the honor to belong—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, sometimes inaccurately referred to as the "Mormon" Church, whose head and lawgiver is our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, who with his Father—the Father of us all—is the foundation of our faith.

It is God the Father and his Son our Savior whom we worship. This places us on common ground with all sincere worshipping Christians, through our belief in the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. It places us on common ground with all other men also who believe in God the Father and Creator of us all, in whose image, as scripture testifies, men are made.

Now since we have this literal relationship with our Father in heaven and his Son, our Lord and Savior, the matter of communication between God and man, between a loving Father and his children, becomes a matter of primary importance—for life is a search for all of us—a search for its purpose and meaning—a search for the answers to questions, to problems—answers that will satisfy the yearnings of our hearts, the reaching of our minds. These are answers that can only come from a divine source.

This brings us to the question of communication between God and man, between a loving, all-knowing Father and his searching, seeking children. This communication includes prayer, inspiration, impressions from the divine source upon the mind of man, the findings of truth through earnest seeking and research, and also what is called revelation, to which the ninth Article of our Faith refers in these words: "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."

Who knows all the answers or any of the ultimate answers? Since no one

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does, they must come from continued revelation—from continued prayerful seeking and search.

There has been among men some suggestion that the heavens are closed, that scripture is closed; that God revealed his mind and will to his prophets in the far past, but for some reason does not do so today.

Do we need his guidance less today than men once did? Do we have fewer problems? Would a just and loving Father love us less than he did his children of the past? What kind and loving father would fail or refuse to respond to his children if they approached him with urgent need and humble hearts?

What gracious and all-wise Administrator of heaven and earth would ignore the problems of the present or leave his children to grope alone in life?

The comforting answer to these questions is that the channels of communication are open; that our God and Father is still interested in all our affairs; that he has his prophet on earth; that he gives to his children what in his wisdom they need and seek and are prepared to accept.

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7.) "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Prov. 29:18.)

This need for prophets and their vision—lest the people perish—prompts us to quote another Article of Faith: "We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church (i.e. the Church founded by our Savior in the Meridian of Time), viz., apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc." (Article 6.) Would not our Savior's Church today be organized as when he was on earth?

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sustains in this conference President David O. McKay, who has stood before us this morning in his ninety-first year, in his kindly wisdom and far-seeing perception; sustains him as a prophet of God in this latter day, with the same divine commission that was given to the prophets of the past.

Some have asked about our belief in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon is not a substitute for the Bible. We accept the Bible and use the King James Version. But we do not believe that the Lord God confined his communications to the people of ancient Palestine or to any place or period of the past. He has had prophets in other places. The Book of Mormon, which supplements the Bible and is compatible with it, is an account of the counsels and communications of God, as is the Bible, and contains sacred and secular history, given to and preserved by the prophets of ancient America, among whom were some of the ancestors of the American Indians.

God is no respecter of persons and has not confined his communication to one part of his family, to one time of history, or to one land.

Now not only does our Father in heaven communicate by revelation, by inspiration, but he reveals truth also to earnest searching, seeking men in many fields of truth. Knowledge has been poured out upon the earth, the evidences of which are too numerous to dwell upon.

And not only does he reveal his will to his servants the prophets and to sincere searching men, but he responds to a child's simplest prayer—the simplest, sincere desire of the soul. He is mindful of every one of us in all our needs, in all of our decisions, in all our uses of life, in the thoughts of our innermost hearts, and our outermost actions. And aside from revelation as such, there is the impression within—the whisperings of the Spirit to the hearts and consciences of men.

And not only do we need communication with our Father in heaven, but we need communication and understanding with one another. So often we misjudge men. We misjudge motives; we believe rumors, and not only believe them, but sometimes add to them and pass them on. We sometimes believe what gossip and prejudice says of others, rather than going to factual sources of information. We often reach conclusions based on sheer assumptions. "O

mortal men," said Dante, "be wary how ye judge."

Parents need better communication with their children, and children with parents. They need to counsel and respect each other and confide in each other and share with each other the thoughts of their hearts. What more important charge could anyone have in life than to care for and nourish and understand and teach and love a child whom God has given? What greater loyalty can a child have than to confide in a father and a mother with respect and love, sharing hopes and dreams and plans and experiences. And there is safety in this—safety in doing nothing that we would not be willing and proud to confide to parents or to our Father in heaven, who in fact knows all things whether or not we confide.

There is safety in a mother and a father waiting for children to return at whatever hour—safety in these close confidences.

Husbands and wives need to confide and communicate with each other and not withdraw themselves within themselves, but to keep always open between them a gentle and frank and kindly communication.

Those who don't communicate sometimes sit in brooding silence, and let small things seem large, and imagine offenses that were never intended, and misjudge minds and hearts and motives, and pull apart and sever the most sacred ties, and break hearts and homes.

There is so much of misunderstanding that could be cleared with communication, with talking things out—suspicions, offenses, misjudging motives, much of which would disappear with communication and the sincere sharing of confidences with those who have a right to expect us to confide. As a poet so long ago expressed it—

"Not understood. We move along  
asunder,  
Our paths grow wider as the seasons  
creep  
Along the years; we marvel and we  
wonder  
Why life is life, and then we fall  
asleep,  
Not understood.

"Not understood. We gather false im-  
pressions  
And hug them closer as the years go  
by,  
Till virtues often seem to us trans-  
gressions;  
And thus men rise and fall and live  
and die,  
Not understood.

"Not understood. Poor souls with  
stunted vision  
Oft measure giants by their narrow  
gauge.  
The poisoned shafts of falsehood and  
derision  
Are oft impelled 'gainst those who  
mould the age,  
Not understood.

"Not understood. The secret springs of  
action,  
Which lie beneath the surface and  
the snow,  
Are disregarded; with self-satisfaction  
We judge our neighbors as they often  
go,  
Not understood.

"Not understood. How trifles often  
change us.  
The thoughtless sentence or the fan-  
cied slight  
Destroys long years of friendship, and  
estranges us,  
And on our souls there falls a freez-  
ing blight:  
Not understood.

"Not understood. How many breasts  
are aching,  
For lack of sympathy? Ah! day to day,  
How many cheerless, lonely hearts are  
breaking!  
How many noble spirits pass away,  
Not understood.

"O God, that men would see a little  
clearer,  
Or judge less harshly where they can-  
not see!  
O God, that men would draw a little  
nearer  
To one another! They'd be nearer  
Thee  
And understood."

—Thomas Bracken

I would leave my witness with you

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that there is purpose in life, that there is a Father in heaven who made us in his own image; that he did send his Son, our Savior, to redeem us from death; that God has revealed himself to man through the prophets of the latter days even as through the prophets of the far past; that he is interested in his children; that he responds to prayer; that he gives the revelations of his mind and will; that men are immortal and eternal; and that there is everlasting purpose and reason for the righteous living of life, for keeping his commandments, for cherishing, serving, and loving one another.

We would share with you these words from King Benjamin from the Book of Mormon:

"Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend.

"And again, believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them. . . .

"And ye will not suffer your children . . . that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin, . . .

"But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another.

". . . I say unto you, that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.

". . . O remember, remember that these things are true; for the Lord God hath spoken it." (Mosiah 4:9-10, 14-15; 3:17; 2:41.)

The answers men so much seek are to be found, and to the aching, yearning loneliness of human hearts, and to the anguished agony of the world there can come direction, revelation, comfort,

guidance, inspiration, and a finding of the way to the purposeful, happy living of life with the peace and cleanliness of a quiet conscience, and with the blessed assurance of an everlasting life with limitless opportunities, and with our loved ones with us.

May God be with you, my beloved friends, and give you every needed blessing in life, and your loved ones, in peace and health and happiness, in prayerful searching and seeking, in pursuit of the divine purpose, with the assurance that the answers are there. May you have help in your daily pursuits, and in your homes, and in all relationships with your loved ones, and with wise and good choices in all the living of life.

God does live! He is real and reachable and not indefinable. He is mindful of us. He hears us. He is interested in us. He is ever ready to communicate with us. He is our Father and made us in his own image, and as we seek him he will not leave us groping and lonely and alone. His word, his Church, his purposes are here and now on earth. The Creator is still in command. May God bless you and peace be with you—always, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve.

Following a brief Tabernacle Organ interlude, the Tabernacle Choir will sing, "Hosanna, Christ Has Risen," with Albert Fallows as soloist.

Selection by the Choir, "Hosanna, Christ Has Risen," (Albert Fallows, soloist).

President David O. McKay:

We welcome all those who have just joined us by radio and television in the 133rd Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City.

We shall now hear from Bishop John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop to the Church.