

Elder Alvin R. Dyer

Apostle

My dear brothers and sisters, it is most difficult at a time like this to express one's true emotions. As I sat there since the sustaining of the officers today, I thought that in every life there are a number of semaphores of direction; and rather hastily there came back to me a few of those semaphores which, if I had taken the wrong turn, most surely would have prevented me from occupying this position today.

Times of decision

These brethren who hear me sing would not suspect that in my early life I sang in a quartet: we became pretty good, to the extent that at the age of 18 we received a contract to go on a vaudeville circuit to sing for some 42 weeks, and we were all primed for this. But at this time Bishop Parry of the 16th Ward called me to his office and said that they wanted to recommend me to be called on a mission, and, of course, that was the end of the quartet as far as I was concerned. I went into the mission field at the age of 18; and when I came back, having previously played some baseball in my high school years, I was approached by two or three semi-pro teams who wanted me to play for them. It was then, because of my great desire to play baseball, that the possibility of making it a career occurred to me. I signed to play with one of these teams but soon found, as I was called to labor in a bishopric about the same time, that it was interfering with my responsibilities as a member of the bishopric, so I had to make the decision; and the decision was to continue my work in the bishopric and serve the Lord to the best of my ability.

I then settled down to the work of succeeding in business. As the years passed, it became more favorable, and as most young men, I desired to make a lot of money. I had as my goal a million dollars, and I felt that if I would follow the course that I had

taken, perhaps I could do this by the time I would reach the age of 55. Things were progressing very well in this direction when President Stephen L. Richards called me to his office and said that I had been called to preside over the Central States Mission. A year or so after that I disposed of my business interests, so I will never know whether I would or could have made a million dollars.

I remember receiving a telephone call, after I had become one of the Assistants to the Twelve, while attending a conference in the Teton Stake. It was just a matter of routine, yet the tremendous implications of it have startled me many times when I think about it. A member of the First Presidency on the other end of the telephone said, "Brother Dyer, we would like you to go to Europe. When can you leave?" I said, "I can leave any time," thinking that I was to go there on a trip for maybe two weeks to attend some conferences or some other assignment. But he said, "You won't be coming back very soon, so you had better think a little longer about this." But it made no difference. I accepted the call and with my wife spent 25 months presiding over the European Mission.

There have been many other semaphores in my life, and I am confident that each of you in your own life has had many of your own.

When President McKay asked me in the temple a few days ago if I would accept the calling of the apostleship, I replied that I would, although I was somewhat perplexed as to what this calling would mean under the circumstances. As we moved to another room in the temple, my feelings were somewhat quieted by the kind and meaningful words of a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, whom I greatly love and respect. After extending his well wishes, he said these words (and they have tremendous meaning): "Don't worry, Alvin. You have been

called by the highest authority upon the earth to this calling, and it will be made known to you what you are to do."

I know only partially now, at the present time, what holding the apostleship in my case will entail for me. I know, of course, that the Lord has made known that an apostle is to contend against none but the church of evil, to take upon himself the name of Christ and speak the truth in soberness, and to be a witness, a special witness for Jesus Christ in the world.

Calling by authority

But it matters not as to its entirety, for I am committed to serve the president of the High Priesthood, whom we call the President of the Church. He is the one declared by the Lord to be like unto Moses, to preside over the whole Church, and there is only one appointed to this high and holy position upon the earth at one time. I know with all my soul that President McKay is that servant of God upon the earth today.

The presence of Prophet

I have been privileged to feel the nearness of President McKay's spirit. I have felt the majesty of his soul as we stood in the valley of Adam-on-di-Ahman, observing in the short distance a place there known as Spring Hill, referred to in Section 116 of the Doctrine and Covenants as the place where Adam, Michael, or the "Ancient of Days," in accordance with the prophecy of Daniel, shall in the due time of the Lord visit the earth for an important reason, and while there hearing President McKay utter quietly, "This is a most holy place." I have shed tears of joy and of sorrow with this great man upon occasions.

I remember the experience of a very noted European who came to America, Dr. Hans Wachter of Munich, a very accomplished and well-known architect who had been converted to the Church, a man known all over Eurasia, South America, and Africa for his great ability. He has written a number of books on the use of light in buildings.

I had the privilege of introducing him to the President and sitting at the other end of the table while they talked. And then I heard this man say, as we reached the foyer outside the President's office, these words which in a sense echo my own thoughts over and over again this day: "Today I have stood in the presence of a prophet of God. Truly he is a prophet. I shall return to my beloved Bavaria and testify unto my family and my friends that David O. McKay is a prophet of God."

Programs of the Church are impressive

These past days, my brethren and sisters, have been most glorious, as the Spirit of the Lord has been made manifest in the progress of the Church and its programs of the future in the service to mankind. Yesterday, in the regional representatives seminar, we all felt an overwhelming surge of the Spirit as Brother Lee was testifying of the work. It had a motivating power over all who were present, and affected me very deeply. I am firmly committed to the laws of the priesthood and to the instruction and direction, given to us as a people by the Lord, of this important work and of all the revelations, both for the present and for the future. In this the priesthood is the governing force, while revelation is the guiding light.

Service shared with family

At this time my feelings concern most deeply my tried and true and most wonderful companion for time and for all eternity, my dear wife and sweetheart. Together we have shared many years of service in the work of the Master, and always there has been that feeling of oneness in that service; even now my heart is full, and I know that her heart is with me in this call and that she is a part of it. How wonderful is her support and understanding. I am most grateful for her and our two children, Gloria and Brent, who with their companions for time and eternity bless our lives with our grandchildren. I have one brother liv-

ing. My brother Gus and I are the only two of a family of 15, and I am grateful for him and his untiring work in the Church, which he has pursued throughout all his life.

I do not feel to speak longer, but in closing may I read just one verse that has impressed me for many years as reflecting the true teachings of the Master in our dealings one with another. The spirit of every word can be found in his parables and teachings:

"May I be no man's enemy, and may I be the friend of that which is eternal. . . . May I never devise evil against any man: if any devise evil against me, may I escape . . . without the need of hurting him. May I love, seek, and attain only that which is good. May I wish for all men's happiness and envy none. . . . May I win no victory which harms me or my opponent. . . . May I respect myself. . . . May I always keep tame that which rages within me." (*This Age of Confusion*, p. 296.)

May joy and happiness continue as a

possession of those who love and are obedient to the gospel, and may the gospel be the hope and the opening of the door of light to the honest in heart who seek its golden truths the world over, that they may be thus numbered with the children of our Heavenly Father in this great latter-day work. I bear you my testimony that I know without any question that this is the work of our Heavenly Father; I am grateful for the semaphores of life that have pointed the way, and I await now only the opportunity to continue that service in the kingdom of God. I bear this witness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Alvin R. Dyer has just addressed us.

We will now hear from Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of the Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder James A. Cullimore, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Of the First Council of the Seventy

May I raise in the minds of thoughtful and sincere Christian people such questions as these:

Crucial questions

Does the Holy Bible foretell the mission and ministry of Joseph Smith?

Is the advent of Mormonism spoken of in the ancient scriptures?

Was its establishment, growth, and eventual earth-filling destiny known to the prophets and seers of old?

Did Peter, Paul, John, and the other ancient apostles know that their apostolic mantles would rest in due course on the shoulders of Mormon elders, on prophets and apostles of modern times?

Did the ancient apostles and prophets know that after the predicted falling away from the faith once delivered to the saints, there would be a day of restoration and renewal, a day when

all the glories of old would be seen and known again?

Strange and improbable as such questions may seem at first blush, more extended investigation will reveal their aptness and deep significance.

Inspired men knew of events of today

If it is true that inspired men of old knew and spoke of the very events now transpiring where The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is concerned, then a knowledge of this Church and its doctrines becomes more important than any other knowledge in the whole realm of religion.

If it is true that these New Testament authors foretold both an apostasy and a restoration, then the traditional concept of many equally true Christian sects must give way to the stern reality that there is and can be but one true