

President N. Eldon Tanner

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Elder Ezra Taft Benson**Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles**

We live in a time of crisis. Never since the period of the Civil War has this nation faced such critical days. Americans are destroying America.

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—the Mormon Church—believe—

—"that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society."

—"that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life."

—"that all governments necessarily require civil officers and magistrates to enforce the laws of the same; and that such as will administer the law in equity and justice should be sought for and upheld by the voice of the people. . . ."

—"that all men are bound to sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside, while protected in their inherent and inalienable rights by the laws of such governments; and that sedition and rebellion are unbecoming every citizen thus protected, and should be punished accordingly. . . ." (D&C 134:1-3, 5.)

No people can maintain freedom unless their political institutions are founded upon faith in God and belief in the existence of moral law. God has endowed men with certain inalienable rights, and no legislature

and no majority, however great, may morally limit or destroy these. The function of government is to protect life, liberty, and property, and anything more or less than this is usurpation and oppression.

Breakdown of law and order

The Constitution of the United States was prepared and adopted by courageous men acting under inspiration from the Almighty. It is a solemn contract between the peoples of the states of this nation that all officers of government are under duty to obey. The eternal moral laws expressed therein must be adhered to or individual liberty will perish. It is the responsibility of government to punish crime and provide for the administration of justice and to protect the right and control of property.

But today these basic principles and concepts are being flaunted, disregarded, and challenged, even by men in high places. Through the exercise of political expediency, the government is condoning the breakdown of law and order.

Law enforcement in America is at the point of crisis. A recent *Life Line* broadcast warned that "in Chicago, 64 men quit the police force in one month. Baltimore has 360 police vacancies. Washington, D.C., is 230 men short of its authorized complement. And cities all over the country are desperately seeking recruits.

"Police aren't striking; they're quitting, and it is understandable. They're being demoralized by the hostile attitudes of the politically minded

Supreme Court. They're being demoralized by a weird penal system which frees hardened criminals almost as fast as they're arrested. . . . Policemen are demoralized by slanted news reporting, distorted facts which show police activities from the criminal's side. And they're being demoralized by an avalanche of new laws, which are making it even harder to convict the guilty.

"San Diego Police Chief Wesley B. Sharp warns that: 'If there isn't a change, the increase in crime will lead to anarchy and criminals will control the nation.'" (Life Line Freedom Talk No. 53, February 22, 1968.)

Qualification for civil liberty

Edmund Burke, the great English statesman, explained that "men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites,—in proportion as their love of justice is above their rapacity,—in proportion as their soundness and sobriety of understanding is above their vanity and presumption,—in proportion as they are more disposed to listen to the counsels of the wise and good, in preference to the flattery of knaves. Society cannot exist, unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere; and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters." (*The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, Vol. 4, pp. 51-52.)

Greatest threat

I do not believe the greatest threat to our future is from bombs or guided missiles. I do not think our civilization will die that way. I think it will die when we no longer care, when the spiritual forces that make us wish to be right and noble die in the hearts of men, when we disregard the importance of law and order.

If American freedom is lost, if America is destroyed, if our blood-bought freedom is surrendered, it will be be-

cause of Americans. What's more, it will probably not be only the work of subversive and criminal Americans. The Benedict Arnolds will not be the only ones to forfeit our freedom.

"At what point, then, is the approach of danger to be expected?" asked Abraham Lincoln, and he answered, "If it ever reaches us, it must spring up among us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher; as a nation of freemen, we must live through all time or die by suicide." (Springfield, Illinois, January 27, 1837.)

If America is destroyed, it may be by Americans who salute the flag, sing the national anthem, march in patriotic parades, cheer Fourth of July speakers—normally good Americans, but Americans who fail to comprehend what is required to keep our country strong and free—Americans who have been lulled away into a false security.

Erosion of national morality

Great nations are never conquered from outside unless they are rotten inside. Our greatest national problem today is erosion, not the erosion of the soil, but erosion of the national morality—erosion of traditional enforcement of law and order.

Theodore Roosevelt said: "The things that will destroy America are prosperity at any price, peace at any price, safety first instead of duty first, and love of soft living and the get-rich-quick theory of life." (Quoted in *The Red Carpet*, p. 315.)

In this blessed land we have exalted security, comfort, and ease above freedom. If we dwelled at length on the many things that are disturbing in the life of America today, we might well become discouraged. I mention only a few of the reported startling evidences of our national illness, our moral erosion.

—There is a decline of U.S. morals and moral fiber, a turning to pleasure and away from hard work and high standards of the past.

—There is a growing worry in our

universities over cheating in examinations.

—Nationwide juvenile delinquencies show an eight-fold increase since 1950.

—There is a 500-million dollar smut industry in this country causing youngsters to wrestle with standards of value.

—America is the biggest market for narcotics.

—Although we consider ourselves a people who believe in law and order, we have seen much evidence of the passion of the mob.

—Riots have occurred in 137 different cities and towns in 33 months, resulting in 120 deaths, including 12 police officers slain; 3,623 other persons injured; 28,932 arrested; and hundreds of millions of dollars property damage.

—Crime in the United States is up 88 percent in seven years, rising nearly nine times faster than population, up 16 percent per year, according to the FBI. Crime costs some \$20 billion a year, and less than 21 percent of reported crimes result in arrests and less than one-third of those in convictions.

—In the midst of a cold war and preparation for a possible shooting war of survival, we have faced 651 strikes at missile bases in six years.

—The United States government has racked up a shameful record of 31 treasury deficits in the past 35 years.

—The sky-rocketing cost of the welfare state increased in 8 years from 6.9 billion to 20.3 billion dollars in 1961 and stood at 87 billion 578 million in 1966.

—There are over 7,700,000 people on relief in federal, state, and local programs.

—During the past 33 years our budget has increased 20 times over, and our national debt has increased from \$16 billion to an admitted \$324 billion; adding accrued liabilities payable in the future, our real indebtedness exceeds \$1 trillion, or an average indebtedness of \$5,200 for every man, woman, and child in the United States.

—Our present federal debt is equal

to a first mortgage of \$10,000 on all owned homes in the country and is reported to exceed the combined debt of all countries of the world. Annual interest on the soaring national debt is over \$15 billion—only defense and welfare are higher.

—American currencies are weaker than those of Germany and Japan, who were defeated in World War II.

—Inflation has struck a serious blow to the value of the American dollar.

—We continue to move in the direction of more federal intervention, more concentration of power, more spending, more taxing, more paternalism, more state-ism.

The present shocking situation was summed up succinctly by J. Edgar Hoover in the April 1967 *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* in these words:

“Morality, integrity, law and order and other cherished principles of our great heritage are battling for survival in many communities today. They are under constant attack from degrading and corrupting influences which, if not halted, will sweep away every vestige of decency and order remaining in our society.”

Responsibility for chaos

A recent issue of the well-known and highly respected *Babson's Washington Forecast Letter* carried a four-page special supplement, which concluded as follows:

“Who are we to indict for sparking this chaos in America? Are the prime defendants the Stokely Carmichaels, the H. Rap Browns, the hippies, the draftcard burners, the peaceniks, the juvenile delinquents, the rabble-rousers, the Commies who have gained respectability as honest dissenters? Certainly, most of these could be brought before the bar of justice to answer charges of law violations . . . and they should be.

“However, there is a stronger, truer bill of indictment which may be drawn against those who have invited the bloody blackmail of America by permitting, even encouraging, mounting civil disobedience. . . .”

And then the article names names of

men of national prominence and continues: "These men of power, prestige, and great influence in the political structure of America have permitted the concept of 'freedom of speech' to be expanded to include subversion, intimidation, sedition, and incitement to riot; they have condoned the distortion of 'academic freedom' to encompass the adulteration of young minds with Communist doctrine and the disintegration of a well-disciplined educational system; they have allowed 'freedom of assembly' to mushroom into disruption of peaceful activity, mob rule, riot, and insurrection.

"Unless those in authority in the United States can be influenced to abandon the suicidal course on which they have embarked—or unless they can be replaced by men who will—we cannot hope to restore in our nation the kind of domestic peace and order which has made our many generations proud to be Americans . . . living in a land of freedom, security, opportunity, and justice under law.

"The crisis we now face is the most serious, the most dangerous, in the history of our country. Each of us must diligently employ our influence and our effort—in speech, letters, and at the ballot box—to help set straight the way."

Gradual encroachments

The facts are clear. Our problem centers in Washington, D.C. And this applies to the administration of both political parties. In the words of James Madison, "Since the general civilization of mankind, I believe there are more instances of the abridgment of freedom of the people by gradual and silent encroachments of those in power, than by violent and sudden usurpations." (*Elliot's Debates*, Vol. 3, p. 87.)

If America is to withstand these influences and trends, there must be a renewal of the spirit of our forefathers, an appreciation of the American way of life, a strengthening of muscle and sinew and the character of the nation. America needs guts as well as guns. National character is the core of national defense.

Appreciation for American system

Could many of our ills today have resulted from our failure to train a strong citizenry from the only source we have—the boys and girls of each community? Have they grown up to believe in politics without principle, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without effort, wealth without work, business without morality, science without humanity, worship without sacrifice?

In recent months a nationwide survey of high school and college students has been conducted. The U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce reveals that 41 percent believe that freedom of the press should be cancelled; 53 percent believe in government ownership of banks, railroads, and steel companies; 62 percent said that the government had the responsibility to provide jobs; 62 percent thought a worker should not produce all that he can; 61 percent rejected the profit incentive as necessary to the survival of free enterprise; 84 percent denied that patriotism is vital and plays an important part in our lives. (*Bookmailer News*, Vol. 10, Nov. 1, 1965.)

Letters that come to my desk from worried parents deeply concerned by what is being taught to their children in the schools are shocking, to say the least.

We can never survive unless our young people understand and appreciate our American system, which has given more of the good things of life than any other system in the world—unless they have a dedication that exceeds the dedication of the enemy. Character must become important in this country again. The old essentials of honesty, self-respect, loyalty, and support for law and order must be taught the younger generation.

Right to be uncommon

I appeal to people everywhere, young and old, to heed these words of Dean Alfange:

"I do not choose to be a common man. It is my right to be uncommon. I seek opportunity to develop whatever talents God gave me—not security. I

do not wish to be a kept citizen, humbled and dulled by having the state look after me. I want to take the calculated risk; to dream and to build, to fail and to succeed. I refuse to barter incentive for a dole. I prefer the challenges of life to the guaranteed existence; the thrill of fulfillment to the stale calm of utopia. I will not trade freedom for beneficence nor my dignity for a handout. I will never cower before any earthly master nor bend to any threat. It is my heritage to stand erect, proud and unafraid; to think and act myself, enjoy the benefit of my creations and to face the world boldly and say—"This, with God's help, I have done." All this is what it means to be an American."

Those of us conscious of the seriousness of the situation must act, and act now. It has been said that it takes something spectacular to get folks excited, like a burning house. Nobody notices one that is simply decaying. But in America today we not only have decaying but burning before our very eyes. How much we need hearts today who will respond to the inspiring words of the poet, John Greenleaf Whittier:

"Where's the manly spirit
Of the true-hearted and the unshackled gone?
Sons of old freemen, do we inherit
their name alone?

"Is the old Pilgrim spirit quenched
within us?
Stoops the proud manhood of our souls
so low,
That Mammon's lure or Party's wile
can win us to silence now?

"Now, when our land to ruin's brink is
verging,
In God's name let us speak while
there is time;
Now, when the padlocks for our lips
are forging,
Silence is crime."

Heritage threatened

Our priceless heritage is threatened today as never before in our lifetime:

from without by the forces of Godless Communism, and at home by our complacency and by the insidious forces of the Socialist-Communist conspiracy, with the help of those who would abandon the ancient landmarks set by our fathers and take us down the road to destruction. It was Alexander Hamilton who warned that "nothing is more common than for a free people, in times of heat and violence, to gratify momentary passions, by letting into the government, principles and precedents which afterwards prove fatal to themselves." (*Alexander Hamilton and the Founding of the Nation*, p. 462.)

Serious and concerned citizens everywhere are asking, "Can we cope with these threatening realities?" Yes, we can; if we would allow the local police to do their job, they could handle the rioting and looting. Yes, we can, if we have the courage and wisdom to return to basic concepts, to recall the spirit of the founding fathers and accept wholeheartedly these words of Thomas Paine, whose writings helped so much to stir people to action during the days of the American Revolution when he said:

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it NOW, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; 'tis dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated." (*The Political Works of Thomas Paine*, p. 55.)

The way of safety

As American citizens who love freedom, we must return to a respect for national morality—respect for law and order. There is no other way of

safety for us and our posterity. The hour is late; the time is short. We must begin now, in earnest, and invite God's blessings on our efforts.

The United States should be a bastion of real freedom. We should not support the world's greatest evil, the Godless, Socialist-Communist conspiracy that seeks to destroy all we hold dear as a great Christian nation and to promote insidiously the breakdown of law and order and the erosion of our morality.

With God's help we must return to those basic concepts, those eternal verities, the rule of law and order upon which this nation was established. With an aroused citizenry and the help of Almighty God it can be accomplished. God grant it may be so, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Elder Marion D. Hanks

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

Great emphasis is being given these days to programs designed to preserve and develop physical fitness. This morning my wife read to me a quotation that emphasizes other aspects of fitness even more important: "There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up." I pray for that spirit of uplift in these few moments.

Where are you in your world

In the writings of a great modern religious figure is the story of a conversation between a persecuted saintly rabbi of the late eighteenth century and his jailer in Petersburg. The jailer asked, "How are we to understand that God, the all-knowing, said to Adam: 'Where art thou?'"

Having obtained from the jailer his assent that "the scriptures are eternal and that every era, every generation and every man is included in them," the rabbi said, ". . . in every era, God calls to every man: 'Where are you in your world? So many years and days of those allotted to you have passed,

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing "God of Our Fathers." After the singing Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of the Seventy will speak to us.

Selection by the Choir, "God of Our Fathers."

President N. Eldon Tanner

To those who have just tuned in on this conference, we wish to extend a hearty welcome.

Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of the Seventy will now address us.

and how far have you gotten in your world? . . . How far along are you?" (Buber, *The Way of Man*.)

Says Buber: "In so asking, God does not expect to learn something he does not know; what he wants is to produce an effect in man which can only be produced by just such a question, provided that it reaches man's heart—that man allows it to reach his heart."

We know that much that demeans man and keeps him from finding himself and his place, and from developing his great potential, comes from his efforts to hide himself from his Father as Adam did, and from the love, the relationships, the service, and the vicissitudes that the Father has sent him to this earth to experience.

Human potential elusive

A thoughtful editor has recently written these words: "The human potential is the most magical but also the most elusive fact of life. Men suffer less from hunger or dread than from living under their moral capacity. The atrophy of spirit that most men