

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

(Read by his son Robert R. McKay)

• My beloved brethren and sisters:

It is a glorious but humbling experience to have the privilege of participating in another general conference with you. My gratitude and thanksgiving to you for your prayers and loyal support know no bounds. To partake of the spirit of faith and activity in the Church is inspiring. Membership therein is at once a privilege and a blessing.

Era of great progress

Looking around us, we are convinced that we are living in an era of great progress, embracing wonderful inventions and scientific discoveries. Man's search for the unknown has led him out of the world literally into the realm of space. Many of the theories and even the imaginations of Jules Verne are now commonplace realities. Walking on the moon is an achievement that was witnessed with great interest and excitement by most of the inhabitants of this earth. One-fourth of the peoples of the world, however, were denied that privilege by their governments.

The solar system and our ventures into space always have been of great interest. In June 1965, we watched with fascination the launching of Gemini 4 with Astronauts James McDivitt and Edward White. I was especially interested in the space walk of Edward White, who had personally visited me on July 18, 1963. At that time I quoted to Astronaut White the lines of our hymn "If You Could Hie to Kolob," which tells of the grandeur and eternity of God's creations in space. Major White was so interested in the poem that he asked for a copy of it so that he could read and study it when he reached his home.

Message from Apollo 8

On Christmas Eve, December 24, 1968, we were all again thrilled when Colonel Frank Borman, Major William A. Anders, and Captain James A. Lovell, Jr., who were encircling the moon in the Apollo 8, beamed the

following message to the earth: "For all the people back on earth, the crew of Apollo 8 has a message that we would like to send to you." And these three astronauts, gazing down on the earth from the vastness of outer space, read to the world from the Bible these simple but majestic words regarding the creation of the heaven and the earth: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

"And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

"... and God saw that it was good." (Gen. 1:1-4, 10.)

For the first time in history man viewed the earth from outer space, and he saw that it was a bright, beautiful earth where he was privileged to dwell with his brothers. Man knows that our solar system is merely one tiny part of our Milky Way galaxy, and that our sun is but an average star among a spiral of one hundred billion other stars of varying sizes—all are in our galaxy, which is only one of billions in the universe.

Man walks on moon

On July 20, 1969, we witnessed on television one of the greatest dramas in the history of man—Apollo 11 Astronauts Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr., actually walking on the moon while Astronaut Michael Collins hovered over the moon in readiness to rendezvous the spaceship *Columbia* so that he could pick up his fellow astronauts when they had achieved their assignments on the lunar surface.

Men all over the world were hushed with awe, and world-renowned television commentators were speechless as they watched and tried to explain the activities and easy strides of the astro-

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nauts on the lunar surface. Millions said, "I cannot believe it!" "Fantastic!" "Impossible!" One commentator on television said, "How can young people withdraw from a world of this kind?" Others exclaimed, "This is the biggest day in history since man learned to talk!" "It is the greatest drama in the history of man!" Then we heard the first words from Astronaut Armstrong: "Tranquility Base here: The 'Eagle' has just landed." And as he stepped down on the moon's surface, he said: "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind," and immortalized a great moment in history.

Then as the Apollo 11 and its crew were returning to the good earth on Tuesday, July 22, 1969, Astronaut Aldrin beamed back the words of David as recorded in the Bible: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

"For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." (Ps. 8:3-5.)

Numberless creations of God

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints always have known through revelation of the numberless creations of God. They are taught that somewhere out in that great expanse of space is the great star Kolob that we sing about in the hymn "If You Could Hie to Kolob." Abraham of old was shown in vision these kingdoms, and he said: "And I saw the stars, that they were very great, and that one of them was nearest unto the throne of God; and there were many great ones which were near unto it;

"And the Lord said unto me: These are the governing ones; and the name of the great one is Kolob, because it is near unto me, for I am the Lord thy God: I have set this one to govern all those which belong to the same order as that upon which thou standest." (Abr. 3:2-3.)

Moses' great vision

The following verses tell us further of Moses' great vision: "And . . . Moses cast his eyes and beheld the earth, yea, even all of it; and there was not a particle of it which he did not behold, discerning it by the spirit of God." (Moses 1:27.) And Moses heard the voice of God continuing: "And worlds without number have I created. . . .

"But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them. . . .

. . . The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine.

"And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words." (Moses 1:33-38.)

After seeing only a portion of the numberless creations of God, Moses cried out in awe and complete humility, "Tell me . . . why these things are so, and by what thou madest them?" (Moses 1:30.) After witnessing the recent accomplishments by our astronauts in walking on the moon, we feel as Moses did and marvel at God's creations; and ask again, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

We find the answer to our question, as Moses did to his, when the Lord said, "For mine own purpose have I made these things. . . . And by the word of my power, have I created them. . . . For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:31-32, 39.)

Man, the jewel of God

Therefore, although God has created the universe and all therein, "man is the jewel of God." This is just another way of saying that the earth was created for man and not man for the earth. God gave to man part of his divinity. He gave man the power of

choice, and no other creature in the world has it. So he placed upon the individual the obligation of conducting himself as an eternal being. You cannot think of any greater gift that could come to a man or woman than the freedom of choice. You alone are responsible, and by wielding and exercising that freedom of choice, you grow in character, you grow in intelligence, you approach divinity, and eventually you may achieve that high exaltation. That is a great obligation. Very few people appreciate it. The roads are clearly marked—one offering animal existence, the other life abundant. Yet, God's greatest creation—*man*—often is content to grovel on the animal plane.

Present-day turmoil

We cannot close our eyes to the fact that the world is ripening in iniquity. The present-day turmoil and bitter strivings threaten to undermine the basic foundations of Christian relationship. Liberty, freedom of speech, self-government, faith in God, and, particularly, faith in the efficacy of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ are facing a bombardment from the ranks of error such as the world has seldom if ever witnessed. This is evident when we take into account the following information.

A recent Gallup survey on American morals gives the following from a study among college students. To the question "Is premarital sex wrong?" 66 percent of all students answered "No." Seventy-two percent of the male students answered that it was not wrong, and 55 percent of the girl students said it was not wrong. In private colleges, an unbelievable 74 percent of all students questioned saw no evil in this practice. (Church News Section, *Deseret News*, June 21, 1969, p. 16.)

The most vicious enemy to home life is immorality. Social workers are greatly concerned over the number of young girls between 14 and 19 who seem to have lost all sense of decency and shamelessly sacrifice themselves on the altar of lust. This corroding evil is just as demoralizing to the young man as to the young woman. Chastity, not

indulgence, during the premarital years is the source of harmony and happiness in the home, and is the chief contributing factor to the health and perpetuity of the race. All the virtues that make up a beautiful character—loyalty, dependability, confidence, trust, love of God, and fidelity to man—are associated with this diadem in the crown of virtuous womanhood and of virile manhood. The word of the Lord to his church is "Keep yourself unspotted from the world." One of the Ten Commandments from God is "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Exod. 20:14.)

Use of drugs and liquor

"The Gallup survey also showed that 57 percent of all students contacted used drugs and liquor. It was of more than ordinary interest in this study to note that 67 percent of the college demonstrators use narcotics. . . ." (Church News Section, *Deseret News*, June 21, 1969, p. 16.)

President Richard Nixon told Congress on Monday, July 14, 1969, that the drug abuse problem was "a serious national threat to the personal health and safety of millions of Americans." He cited an increase of almost 800 percent in seven years in juvenile arrests involving use of drugs, and that New York City alone has some 40,000 heroin addicts, with the number rising between 7,000 to 9,000 a year. "These official statistics," said the President, "are only the tip of an iceberg whose dimensions we can only surmise." (*Deseret News*, July 14, 1969, p. 1.)

Self-mastery urged

The Church urges men to have self-mastery to control their appetites, their tempers, and their speech. A man is not at his best when he is a slave to some habit. A man is not his best who lives merely to gratify his passions. That is one reason why the Lord has given the Church the revelation of the Word of Wisdom so that, even from boyhood and girlhood, young men and young women may learn to control themselves. That is not always easy. The youth today face enemies—false ideologies and im-

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moral practices "glossed over" and "seasoned with a text." Sound preparation is necessary to meet and conquer these enemies. Keep in mind that man's earthly existence is but a test as to whether he will concentrate his efforts, his mind, his soul upon things which contribute to the comfort and gratification of his physical nature, or whether he will make as his life's purpose the acquisition of spiritual qualities.

The spiritual road

The spiritual road has Christ as its ideal—not the gratification of the physical—for he that will save his life, yielding to that first gratification of a seeming need, will lose his life, lose his happiness, the pleasure of living at this present time. If he would seek the real purpose of life, the individual must live for something higher than self. He hears the Savior's voice saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. . ." (John 14:6.)

Following that light, man soon learns that there is no one great thing that he can do to attain happiness or eternal life. He learns that life is made up, not of great sacrifices and duties, but of little things, in which smiles and kindness and small obligations given habitually are what win and preserve the heart and secure comfort.

Spirituality, our true aim, is the consciousness of victory over self and of communion with the Infinite. Spirituality impels one to conquer difficulties and acquire more and more strength. To feel one's faculties unfolding and truth expanding in the soul is one of life's sublimest experiences.

The man who sets his heart upon the things of this world, who does not hesitate to cheat his brother, who will lie for gain, who will steal from his neighbor, or who by slander will rob another of his reputation, lives on a low animal plane of existence and either stifles his spirituality or permits it to lie dormant. To be thus carnally minded is to be spiritually dead.

The worth of souls

We are truly living in an age of changing opinions, of swiftly shifting

human relations. Man's wisdom seems baffled. In all our readjustments, plans, and policies, we cannot do better than keep in mind the divine admonition that "the worth of souls is great in the sight of God." (D&C 18:10.) The saved individual is the supreme end of the divine will.

Jesus sought the welfare of the individual, and individuals grouped and laboring for the general welfare of the whole in conformity with the principles of the gospel constitute the kingdom of God. Many of the choicest truths of the gospel were given in conversations with individuals. It was while Jesus talked with Nicodemus that he gave us the message relative to baptism and being born again. From the conversation with the woman of Samaria is disclosed the truth that they who worship God must worship in spirit and in truth. From that with Mary and Martha, we get the divine declaration: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (John 11:25.) Jesus' regard for personality was supreme. When the Pharisees dragged into his presence the woman taken in adultery, Christ saw through the soul that had been stained with sin the personality that still contained the spark of hope, which he kindled into a light that warmed and guided a personality back to confidence and perhaps to righteousness.

Church furthers welfare of man

To members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the worth of the individual has a special meaning. Quorums, auxiliaries, wards, stakes, even the Church itself are all organized to further the welfare of man. All are but means to an end, and that end is the happiness and eternal welfare of every child of God. I therefore appeal to all members of the Church, and particularly to presidents of quorums and to officers of all auxiliaries, to put forth a unified effort to make sweeter the lives of men.

Supplant the thought that dominates the selfish world as expressed in the words "The world owes me a living," by the nobler prayer, "God, give

me power to lend a helping hand to others." There is a sound philosophy in the paradoxical saying: ". . . Whoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 16:25.)

Perfecting the individual

Keep as a guiding principle the consciousness that the ultimate purpose of life is the perfecting of the individual. This implies an intelligence directing creation, and to me it implies a divine personality, a beneficent Father.

I love the young people, and my heart goes out to them. May God keep them true to the faith and bless them that they will be able to withstand the temptations that constantly beset their paths. To the youth of the Church I say, go to your Father in heaven in prayer; seek the advice of your parents, your bishops, and your stake presidents.

To the members of the Church everywhere I say, live honest, sincere lives! Be honest with yourselves, honest with your brethren, honest with your families, honest with those with whom you deal—always honest. The very foundation of all character rests upon the principles of honesty and sincerity.

Be true to the Church. Be true to your families—loyal to them! Protect

your children and guide them, not arbitrarily, but by example.

Eternal truths apply today

I bear you my witness that the teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ contain the true philosophy of living. I make no exception. I love them. There are men who say that they are not applicable to this day, but I say they are as applicable today as they were when he spoke them; and, because they contain eternal truths, they will be applicable through all time.

God help us to understand these eternal truths; and may he give us power to live them, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

President Hugh B. Brown

Thank you, Brother Robert, for an impressive reading of a great message.

And now, President McKay, with one voice this vast audience wishes to say to you, Thank you for that inspiring message, and may God's choicest blessings be with you always.

We shall now hear from Elder Robert L. Simpson, first counselor in the Presiding Bishopric of the Church, after which we shall have a congregational song.

BISHOP ROBERT L. SIMPSON

Of the Presiding Bishopric

- My dear brethren and sisters: I feel great spiritual strength in the presence of these wonderful patriarchs who attend our conference here this morning. We love you, we appreciate you, and we feel confidence in your wonderful calling.

These few thoughts that I share with you this morning are directed primarily to a large group of men who are perhaps beyond the range of my voice. Nevertheless, I speak to them with all the sincerity and fervor of my soul, hoping that somehow perhaps a few may be reached.

A satisfying experience

As we visit the stake conferences

each week, few experiences are more satisfying than that little nudge on the arm from the stake president as he points out some good brother just taking his place on the third row, and then he whispers a few choice comments about some recent changes in that man's life. Sometimes it is about response to a faithful and patient home teacher; frequently, about the faith and prayers of a patient wife being answered in a glorious way. Too often the change has come about following adversity. Some are adversities that might have been avoided, but most important of all, he is back. He is on course again. He is feeling the joy of service to others, perhaps to some other