

**ELDER MARVIN J. ASHTON**

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

● Six months ago, by appointment from the First Presidency, we attended a mission-wide conference in South Africa. After four glorious days with the wonderful people of that nation, and as we were leaving, many of the members said: "When you return, please give our best regards and love to our friends all over the world." Little did they realize, and little did I realize at that time, that I would have this kind of an opportunity of extending their love to their friends worldwide.

**"Ye are my friends"**

Since this responsibility has come to me, I have thought a great deal about friends in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am reminded in the 84th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, that great revelation on priesthood, of how the Savior reported through the Prophet Joseph Smith, in verse 63, "... you are mine apostles, even God's high priests; ye are they whom my Father hath given me; ye are my friends," indicating the importance and blessing of being recognized as a friend of the Savior.

May I leave this thought with you as we think of friends and the part they should play in our lives as Latter-day Saints. Perhaps this simple illustration will help us to realize the need of being friends in the home, friends in the neighborhood, and friends in the community.

**Incident of newspaper boy**

Some months ago my wife and I were in the front of our yard when the newspaper boy came down the street on his bicycle. His bicycle was loaded with papers. About twenty or thirty yards in back of him, there was another boy following him on a bicycle. I was not sure at that time what their relationship was, but I did notice they were coming down the street at a pretty good clip.

When the newspaper boy came to our sidewalk entry, he was traveling

too fast to make the approach to our home, and, as a result, he went one way, the bicycle went another way, and the papers went everywhere. Noticing the boy had fallen on the lawn and was not hurt, but realizing that he would undoubtedly be embarrassed from the fall in front of his friend, we moved toward him.

At the sight of this perfect three-point landing, if we may refer to it as that, his companion shouted his pleasure and laughed heartily with complete and full enjoyment at the misfortune of his associate.

Trying to relieve the embarrassment of the paper boy, knowing he didn't want help but he wanted to have his pride repaired a little, I took a few more steps toward him and said: "It's kind of a low blow to have your friend laugh when you've had a bad spill, isn't it?"

He went on picking up his papers without even looking up. Finally, he had the papers back in place and got on his bicycle; and as he started out away from our home, he made the remark: "He isn't my friend—he's my brother."

**Living as close friends**

His words have been ringing through my ears with a great deal of significance ever since then. Brothers and sisters, I sincerely feel that one of the great purposes of family evenings and home teaching is to have family members realize that a brother can be a friend, and that a sister can be a friend, and that a father and a mother can be more than parents, they can be friends.

I would hope and pray that we may catch the wisdom and the inspiration of building a home so that our members in that sacred unit can look upon a father and say, "He is my best friend," or "My mother is more than a mother, she is my friend." When we realize that parents and family members can be more than blood relations and are in very deed friends, then we

will have a glimpse of how our Heavenly Father wants us to live, not only as brothers and sisters but as very close friends.

### Appreciation for confidence

I humbly bear testimony to you this day that this is our Heavenly Father's work, and that I approach this new assignment in all humility, aware of the fact that I need your blessings to carry on and to function as our Master would have me serve. May I express to President David O. McKay my gratitude and appreciation for his confi-

dence in calling me to serve with him and these brethren, my friends, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

### President Alvin R. Dyer

I am sure that we will all feel the effects of the service of this good man in this new calling.

Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve will be our next speaker, and he will be followed by Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Twelve.

## ELDER LEGRAND RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve

● I should first like to extend my congratulations to Elder Ashton on his call. He can't help it, but I'm his uncle by marriage and I am proud of him. Furthermore, he is a son of my first counselor when I served as the Presiding Bishop of the Church, and of all the men who have been General Authorities in this church, I think his father was one of the most beloved throughout the entire Church.

### Expression of love

Now I greet all of you brothers and sisters here today and express my love for you and my appreciation for your kindness to me as I travel throughout the Church, and my congratulations for your great contributions in helping to build our Father's kingdom. In your presence I would like to express my love for my Father in heaven and for his Son Jesus Christ and for the holy scriptures, for without them what would we know about the love of our Father in heaven, who gave us his Only Begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"? (John 3:15.) And what would we know about the life and the labors, the teachings, the example, and the great atoning sacrifice of the Redeemer of the world? No wonder we love him and are proud to be his representatives!

### Words of the prophets

I love the scriptures. I love the words of the prophets, for the Lord has permitted many of them to look down through the stream of time and behold coming events of great importance in this world.

I think of the words of Jesus as he walked with two of his disciples as they were on their way to Emmaus following his resurrection, and we are told that "their eyes were holden that they should not know him." (Luke 24:16.) When he heard what they had to say, he realized that notwithstanding the time he had spent with them, they did not comprehend the magnitude of his ministry, and he said: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." (Luke 24:25.) Commencing with Moses and the prophets, he showed them how in all things the prophets had testified of him.

### Two great events foretold

To me there are two great events recorded in the holy scriptures that are outstanding above all others, and one is the announcement by the holy prophets of the coming of the Redeemer of the world in the meridian of time. Those prophets were permitted to describe his life and his ministry in such minute detail that they even told