

ters. We have the greatest thing to offer in all this world. It is the restored gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a reformation. It came from heaven, from holy messengers, and I bear you that witness because I know it as I know that I stand here. May God help us to share it with our neighbors and our friends and the whole world, I pray, and ask God to bless you all in

the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

### President Alvin R. Dyer

We have listened to the faith-promoting remarks of Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us.

## ELDER THEODORE M. BURTON

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

● My brothers and sisters: One of the most beautiful prayers ever offered is found recorded in the Gospel of John. It was given as Jesus opened his heart in prayer to God the Eternal Father, pleading for unity not only among the apostles, but also asking that those who follow their words might reach a state of unity such as that found in the Godhead. They were to preach a gospel of peace and love, and so he said:

### Christ's plea for unity

"Neither pray I for these [the apostles] alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

"That they all might be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:20-21.)

Our present world is torn by argument, dissension, violence, war, and rumors of war, and because of the turmoil on every side, men's hearts are beginning to fail them. If men are to retain their sanity and hope, they must have an assurance of a peaceful solution for the ills of mankind. This assurance can be given if we who claim to be true followers of Jesus Christ demonstrate that unity spoken of in that great prayer from which I have quoted Christ's plea for unity.

### Necessity for unity

I feel impressed to stress the necessity for unity as one of the greatest needs of our present-day world. Not

only does it apply to the world in general, but it is particularly important within the Church if we are to take our rightful place in leading mankind toward peace.

In our generation the Savior gave us a statement so often used by the late President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.: ". . . I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine." (D&C 38:27.)

This doctrine is built upon true love, even the love of Christ, and is a most important principle of the gospel. Without the love of one man for another, how can justice and real freedom ever be achieved? Unless every man esteems his brother as himself and practices virtue and holiness before the Lord, how can that person hope to live in the presence of God, where unity, love, virtue, and truth abound? No unrighteousness can exist in the presence of God, and unless we learn to overcome disunity and unrighteousness here upon the earth, we cannot hope to be restored to live in the presence of God the Eternal Father in the resurrection to come.

### Causes of disunity

What causes disunity and friction? There are many reasons for disunity, but one of the principal reasons is the ego of man himself. I define this ego as the desire to be acknowledged as a person different from others. This desire is not evil in itself. In fact, properly directed, it can be a great virtue. There is a certain amount of faith or pride in one's self that every successful and happy person must have. Only

when the ego develops into egotism must we beware. Ego becomes evil when a person becomes obtrusive and makes excessive reference to himself as to his own importance. Beware when a man or woman monopolizes conversations and shows a disregard for the opinions of others. When a man is not humble and seeks to excel and outdo others, he is in a very dangerous position. I feel such a spirit is born of selfishness and a lack of the true spirit of Jesus Christ.

### Example of William W. Phelps

An example of such a spirit is evident in the case of William W. Phelps. Brother Phelps was a good man and a capable man, but he became too ambitious, letting pride move him to seek honors to which he was not entitled. The Prophet Joseph loved that good man, as did the Lord also. As a result, he was given a warning against this fault in his character. The Lord warned him:

"And also let my servant William W. Phelps stand in the office to which I have appointed him, and receive his inheritance in the land;

"And also he hath need to repent, for I, the Lord, am not well pleased with him, for he seeketh to excel, and he is not sufficiently meek before me." (D&C 58:40-41.)

Elder Phelps failed to heed the warning, and one thing led to another until he actually rebelled against the Prophet Joseph. When he found himself kicking against the pricks of conscience, he repented, humbled himself, and apologized for his conduct. He was forgiven and brought back into full church fellowship. In my opinion he was a great man of courage who was not ashamed to acknowledge a fault and had the strength to overcome it. Not all men have the greatness of character that William W. Phelps had. Too many who seek to excel lack humility, and if they do not curb this fault they will lose their inheritance in the Lord's kingdom.

### Gospel a united whole

I suppose disunity in the Church begins when each of us becomes so

wrapped up in our own interests and assignments that we lose the full perspective of the gospel of Jesus Christ as a united whole. We become so involved with our own particular interests that we forget that the gospel involves the whole of life. Sunday School, missionary work, priesthood, genealogy, temple work, welfare, home teaching, education, or whatever interest we have or church position we occupy at present is only part of the gospel whole. It is true that we are expected to push our own particular assignment, but not at the expense of others. It is most unwise to try to advance the field in which we are presently interested by downgrading the activities of others. We should never push one organization at the expense of another. An appreciation of diversification is the basis of unity. Though I strive to push priesthood, genealogy, and temple work with all my power, I should never resent any other gospel organization or principle within the Church structure, or sow discord among my brethren.

### Appreciation for others

Unity can come when I learn to appreciate each person in the Church and the value of every aspect of church organization. This is true of a deacons quorum, and it is true of the highest quorum of the Church, that of the First Presidency. Loyalty among the men of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is no more necessary for them than loyalty within a teachers or an elders quorum. When discussions arise among strong-minded men and women, anger must never be evident. Men and women should be free to state their opinions without fear, but they should do so without rancor or envy or belittling the character or abilities of other persons who hold differing opinions from their own. Only when we understand one another and appreciate one another can the Spirit of God enter our hearts, draw us one to another, and bring about unity.

### Consideration in discussions

Nowhere is this principle of consideration and love of one another more needed than in a discussion of gospel

principles. The Lord has warned us not to preach tenets or opinions:

"And of tenets thou shalt not talk, but thou shalt declare repentance and faith on the Savior, and remission of sins by baptism, and by fire, yea, even the Holy Ghost." (D&C 19:31.)

Tenets are the dogmas or principles generally accepted by a majority as true, whether those principles are factual or not. Thus we should not dispute with others about such matters, nor pursue discussions among ourselves about such matters that can cause feelings to be hurt or cause disputations to arise.

We should rather preach the first principles of the gospel, which are so necessary for our full growth and development. When we understand the basics or true fundamental principles of the gospel, we will not be buffeted by the doctrines and beliefs of men that so often lead to quarrels and misunderstandings. That is why the Lord went on to advise us:

"Behold, this is a great and the last commandment which I shall give you concerning this matter; for this shall suffice for thy daily walk, even unto the end of thy life.

"And misery thou shalt receive if thou wilt slight these counsels, yea, even the destruction of thyself and property." (D&C 19:32-33.)

### Role of peacemakers

We live in a world full of discord and disunity. We need not and must not become a party to that worldly way of living. Our role is that of peacemakers. As the Latter-day Saints of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, we must "therefore, renounce war and proclaim peace, and seek diligently to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children." (D&C 98:16.)

The need within the Church for a spirit of unity and loyalty and love is reflected in these words of the Savior from the Book of Mormon:

". . . And there shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points

of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been.

"For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

"Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away." (3 Ne. 11:28-30.)

### Plea for unity

When we hear our voices rise in speaking with one another, when we feel our faces getting flushed and red, when our muscles tense and we get warm under the collar, these are danger signals. It is time to repent and change whatever we are saying or doing. I plead for unity and consideration among us who claim to be sons and daughters of God. I pray for that love and affection which characterizes the true disciples of Jesus Christ. May God bless us all to know with such a surety of heart that this is the true church and kingdom of Jesus Christ, that we will have character enough to practice those principles which we espouse.

I pray for this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

### President Alvin R. Dyer

The congregation and chorus will now join in singing: "Oh Say, What Is Truth." After the singing Elder Boyd K. Packer will speak to us.

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The congregation sang the hymn, "Oh Say, What Is Truth."

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### President Alvin R. Dyer

Elder Boyd K. Packer, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us, and he will be followed by Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church.