

Elder David B. Haight

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

● I stand before you, my beloved fellow Saints, in deep humility. As I view this vast audience of Church leaders and many friends for the first time as a General Authority, the feelings in my soul on this day have been expressed by Alfred, Lord Tennyson as he wrote, "There are times which are too full for sound or foam." Some events and incidents happen in our lives that somehow are so overwhelming, and yet seem to be tied so closely to Divine Power—and influence—and yet we feel so inadequate and unprepared.

Commitment to serve

Six months ago, as President Tanner directed me by the arm down the long corridor to the First Presidency's office, there to look into the faces of our living prophet and President Lee and President Tanner, I knew in my soul that I was in the presence of the Lord's anointed. I knew not what may lie ahead, but one thing was certain: I was already committed in my heart to serve the Master, wherever and whenever called.

We have been taught, and we believe, that we all are children of God and fellow citizens in the body of saints. We are sincere believers, thus enabling us to know him better, to trust him absolutely, to serve him faithfully, and to proclaim to all the world, as did Andrew to his brother Simon, "We have found the Messiah." I know he lives, that he is real, that he stands at the head of this, his church, the only true church on the face of the earth.

Rich spiritual experiences

These first few weeks of my new calling have been most eventful with deep, rich spiritual experiences. I have participated in some of your stake conferences, stayed in your homes, and felt your humble spirit of service and true dedication to the task of "strengthening thy brethren."

I have had the privilege of going to some of the overseas missions and visiting individually with your sons and daughters—many future leaders of this church—and I have borne testimony with them to those out in the world who seem to say, "Is there any word from the Lord?" "Where shall we turn?" "Is there something true and real to believe?" And I have been able to proclaim with your sons and daughters to them that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored with all the authority, keys, and blessings necessary for the individual salvation of all who will repent and be baptized and keep his commandments.

Testimony nurtured by many

The testimony of the truthfulness of this work that burns in my soul has been assisted and encouraged in its nurturing by the lives of many people, some of whom I must humbly acknowledge on this particular day. Someone has compared our lives to that of the mighty Mississippi. As it flows into the ocean, it is the end product of many sources: streamlets—some large, some small—melting snow from the Rockies, and tiny springs; but they have all had an influence and effect. So it has been with me. Many of those great influences have passed on, but many of them are here today.

A lovely companion

It has been said that to develop good thoughts and acts, we must live and associate with good people. The Lord blessed me with my lovely companion—my, how he blessed me—one who has stood by my side through trial and joy, disappointment and triumph, and has contributed inspiration and strength to our family as a loving wife, mother, and counselor. Our sons and daughter and their loved ones are strong, sturdy, and dependable and committed to the building of the kingdom of God as a result of her great influence.

Good parents

I can also appreciate and understand Nephi's acknowledging good parents. My own mother, left a widow far too early in her life, never shirked her duty to her children's spiritual training. Many a lesson was taught me at her bedside during her long illness. Her testimony never wavered; I understood and felt it early in life.

My father has always been my ideal. Ever since I was a small boy, I've wanted to be like my father—to serve people, to assist them whenever possible, to be concerned and to assist the Church and community. My father, as did his father, responded to calls from the leadership of the Church and followed their direction. I hope and pray that it will ever be thus with my posterity. When my father died, the local newspaper editorialized:

"We have lost our greatest and beloved citizen. He was ever foremost in every movement to better the community. As bishop of the First Ward, he was the very father of it. His loss is felt throughout the state of Idaho. . . . He was ever on the side of morality and good government."

Heritage of noble ancestors

My grandfather set the tone for his sons. Starting at age 17 he made seven trips across the plains, assisting immigrant trains requiring help. He served with Lot Smith, scouting Johnston's army in the interest of the Saints. With his wife and family he responded to the request to leave his green acres in Farmington and help colonize and

organize a stake in southern Idaho. They were a close-knit family.

My grandmother was the first counselor to Aurelia Rogers in the original Primary organization. Her eight children helped swell the first class.

On this day I honor the memory of some who have helped mold my life and character. Someone has written, "No better heritage can a father bequeath to his children than a good name; nor is there in a family any richer heirloom than the memory of a noble ancestor."

Request for support

I prayerfully and humbly request the help that only the Lord can furnish. Perhaps I need it to a greater degree than anyone else, as I embark on this calling in the ministry. I take comfort from the Lord's promise in the Doctrine and Covenants when he said, "The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, . . . and all this that it might be fulfilled. . . ." (D&C 1:19, 18.) May my weaknesses be made strong enough to fulfill my obligation and desire.

I pledge my love and support to the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and to my other fellow associates of the General Authorities; and to them, and to all of you, I testify that I will labor diligently and, I hope, effectively in using the talents that the Lord has given me to help prepare for his coming and to assist in the building and strengthening of his kingdom here on earth now. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

Elder Richard L. Evans

Of the Council of the Twelve

● President Smith; my beloved brothers and sisters—all our Father's children everywhere: These choice young people here, whose music we have heard, bring to mind all the unnumbered others who, worldwide, are looking for a way of life. If what follows

shall reach their hearts and yours, it will be so because of your faith and prayers, and I pray that it may be so.

Making the most of life

There comes to mind a mother who was concerned with what her daughter