

## President N. Eldon Tanner

*Second Counselor in the First Presidency*

This has been an inspirational meeting indeed. It is a privilege and blessing to all who have been here and to those who have listened in and who will apply what they have heard. Our challenges and our opportunities and our blessings are great and unnumbered; there is no greater power in all the world than the power of God delegated to the priesthood holders of the Church, if we will but magnify the priesthood which we hold.

### Visit to Far East

Sister Tanner and I have just returned from visiting four missions and one stake in Japan, all of which are presided over by Japanese. One couple are natives who were born and raised there, who have filled missions in Japan, and who are doing a great job. We visited the mission in Korea and the one in Hong Kong, each of which is presided over by Americans who had filled missions only ten or twelve years ago; in fact, six of the mission presidents have served in the areas where they now preside, and five of the wives.

It thrilled me to see the marvelous work being done by the missionaries throughout these great countries, to see the growth of the Church, the quality and devotion of the members, old and new, most of whom are young people twenty to thirty-five years of age.

Outstanding leaders were observed in every mission and in the stake, and great strides are being made. We had from 300 to 1,000 people attending the meetings of

the members, and one cannot help but have every confidence in the future growth and strength of the Church there. There was a great spirit in every meeting.

### Effective missionaries

Impressions I received while I was there were that these are devoted, able, humble, prayerful, effective missionaries; boys who have developed into men; men with courage, understanding, and leadership ability; ambassadors of the Lord, admired, loved, and respected by the members, carrying heavy responsibility, filling all or any leadership positions and training others to fill these positions, such as branch presidents, heads of auxiliaries, and teachers; baptizing, confirming, and ordaining, etc., encouraging and strengthening the weak, administering to the sick. One bore testimony of a miraculous healing that he experienced where he was the one who gave the blessing to his father.

They are men and women with testimonies who have met and overcome temptation and evil; men who will come home prepared and ready and able to accept any position in a ward or stake; men who have felt important and have been important; men who will strengthen, inspire, and give leadership to your wards and stakes and inspire your youth if you will just give them an opportunity to do so; men deeply concerned about inactive members; men deeply concerned about anyone who has a problem and who are trying to help him solve it. This is one group of men.

### Work of servicemen

I would like to refer to the servicemen. We met some while we were in Korea and in Osaka, and many of these young men are doing a tremendous work in the Church.

When I was speaking to newly called missionaries, I asked for all who were twenty-four years of age to stand, because that is the age Joseph Smith was when the Church was organized. Five stood at this meeting, and I asked one of them to come up and tell us how he happened to come into the Church, and to bear his testimony. He said he was in the armed services in Vietnam, and that while there he met some of our young men, one in particular who was living and teaching the gospel, and as a result this young man is now a member of the Church. He explained the great difference it had made in his life, how he had repented of what he had done, and how he came to understand the purpose of life. And then I asked the other four. Two of them told the same thing in bearing their testimony—that they had joined the Church while in the armed services. It was a thrilling experience to realize the effect of young servicemen who were devoted, who had testimonies of the gospel and the courage to live and teach the gospel and bear testimony, while in the armed services.

It was thrilling to see in the stake and missions how missionaries were able to bring people into the Church, people who regard them very highly. One convert was a university professor; another, a successful businessman; two, outstanding doctors, one of whom was a heart surgeon. It was most humbling

to see how these men praised the work of the young men who had brought them into the Church and influenced their lives, and they bore testimony of the great things that the gospel has done for them since they joined the Church.

I was greatly impressed by the leadership in each and every mission and in the stake.

### Opportunity to serve

I appeal to the bishops and stake presidents to see that these young men, when they return from their tour of duty, have an opportunity to serve.

And to the young men: Your study and your devotion and experience have prepared you for real service in the work of the Lord. Thank the Lord for the privilege you have had of testing in your lives and improving your testimony. Never feel that you have finished or completed your tour of duty in church service. You have only prepared yourself to be of further service in the work of the Lord. Seek and accept opportunities to serve. Never return to the old gang. Be an example. Let the young girls and boys see what a mission will do for a young man, and never let them down. These youth in the wards and stakes, when you return, will look up to you and expect great things of you; and if you live as you should, you will influence their lives for good, as much as you have the lives of those with whom you have come in contact when you were in the service—the service of your country or the service of the Lord.

Encourage these young men with whom you meet when you come home to prepare themselves for

missions, temple marriage, and the blessings that are available to faithful members of the Church. Help them to overcome evil and temptation, to appreciate the priesthood that they hold, and to sustain their leaders. That is the thing I hope these returning men will do.

### **Promise of blessings**

Magnify your priesthood at all times. Honor and uphold one another. Never, never submit to temptation. Honor womanhood and virtue with your life, if necessary. Never become discouraged or quit. As you continue in active church service you will be more successful, more highly regarded, and happier than you will in any other way. And I want to promise you, my young brethren, that if you will seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and be prepared to serve the Lord wherever you can, the Lord will bless you with greater success and happiness and contentment than you could possibly enjoy otherwise. You will do better in your school work if you will be active in the Church, and you will be an influence for good in the world.

A man with whom I am associated as a director in a large company said to me the other day (he is representing the government now, and he has been a very successful businessman in the lumbering industry): "We asked for applicants who were prepared to accept a certain job in the government. We had many applicants, and we got them down to ten, and as we were considering those ten, we noticed that one of them was a member of your church, and we took him just like that."

I said, "Why did you take him?"

He said, "Because we knew that he wouldn't be carousing at night; we knew that we could depend upon him, and we knew that he would do the work assigned to him." And I thought, what a tremendous thing if our young men would all just realize that that is true.

### **Problem with delayed recommends**

I could read you a letter here tonight that I read to the Regional Representatives, and I think I should read parts of it, at least. Maybe I can tell you what is in it.

The president of the Korea Mission, when I was over there, was telling me of the problems they have with young men in the service because the bishops were not sending the recommends for two or three months after they had arrived. He said that our servicemen do not enjoy—in fact, they resent—being there, and they become lonesome, and there are prostitutes there in great numbers. In fact, he told me that it was a common thing for these soldiers to have a prostitute companion. He told me an experience where one of our priests who was lonely, who had not been too active, became involved with one of these prostitutes. And then one of our young men who was living the gospel and who was interested in trying to save these young men contacted him, worked with him, and finally got him to acknowledge the value of the Church, to repent of his doings, and to strive to work as he should to be worthy of the blessings of the Lord. And then he said if he could have just got hold of that boy when he arrived, he could have helped him and probably prevented this tragedy. He goes on to tell of the experience with many

of the young men there, and how many of them bear testimony that it was because somebody met them and worked with them, and gave them companionship and love, that they were able to withstand the temptations that are so prevalent there.

So, brethren, you bishops and stake presidents, when these young men leave home to go to school, be sure that you send the recommends and the information you have regarding them to that university or college. When they go into the armed services, for goodness' sake, for the sake of these young men, be sure that you are not too busy and that your interest is keen enough to do all in your power to try to save these young men who are going into the armed services. Send information ahead of them to the group leaders or other proper people.

### Returned missionaries

As for these missionaries, when they return, and the young men who are preparing, be close to them. Let your influence be felt. Encourage them. They are on fire when they return from a mission. You know when they are returning. Meet them, greet them, love them, and give them an opportunity to work. I have heard several examples of this—one just last week. A mother said to me, "When my boy

returned from his mission, he wasn't given an opportunity to speak in the ward, he wasn't approached by the bishop other than to say, 'Hello, it's good to see you home,' and no one seemed to take an interest in him." Then she said, "I really had to work with that boy to keep up his interest and activity in the Church."

Brethren, you who are returning from these armed services and school and missions, report to your bishops and offer yourselves to be of service. And bishops, I appeal to you to see that when these young people leave your ward, you send on information to the proper officials in schools, universities, and the armed services, so that they might know and be able to give the necessary help and encouragement when they arrive.

### Importance of a soul

May the Lord bless us that we might realize the importance of a soul; that right in our midst we have people needing attention and help, and it is our responsibility to keep them active, to encourage them, and to reach them if they are having problems. May we realize that the priesthood of God is the power of God given us to act in his name. May we do it wisely, humbly, effectively, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## President Harold B. Lee

*First Counselor in the First Presidency*

During the last week, we have spent an afternoon and all day with our Regional Representatives of the Twelve, directing their attention to a

theme, "The Church has need of every member that all may be edified together." We developed some statistics that have now been reduced to