

and that they would do anything for us. So, as we stood there and watched them go, we knew that something important must go on in that temple, to have these two people who loved us more than anything leave us as often as they did to go there. We gained an understanding in those tender years of the importance of the temple.

While we were growing up, our father was a ward clerk for fifteen years, and I remember that every Sunday evening he would come home after meeting and go into the dining room. He would pull down the blind and on the oak table he would put the money that he had gathered that day for the bishop—the tithes and offerings.

He would count it and account for it and put the ones and the fives and the tens in a pile; and then he would get the ironing board and an iron and a wet rag, and then our dad would take each of these paper bills and iron it smooth.

Now you would wonder what four little boys would recognize about this. The one thing they got from it was that whatever you do for the Lord, you do the very best that you know how. There is nothing that is too good for the Lord.

This humble man and his wife, who didn't have much of the world's goods, by some very simple experiences implanted in their sons a love for the Lord. And it is because of these experiences, and others like them, that I can stand here this morning and tell you that I know that God lives; that I know that Jesus is the Christ, and that I know that this is his church and that he organized it for the salvation of his children.

I know these things are true, and I testify of them in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. □

### President Harold B. Lee

I am sure you brethren agree with me that the testimonies of these brethren indicate the inspiration of the Lord which brought them into these positions.

The concluding speaker at this session will be our beloved Spencer W. Kimball. I suppose it would not be amiss if we were to say to President Kimball that in the midst of some physical problems he may have that he may know with one united heart that the faith and prayers of the entire Church are sustaining him. President Kimball, we bless you with all our souls.

## President Spencer W. Kimball

*Acting President of the Council of the Twelve*

My beloved brothers and sisters, it is always a frightening but joyous experience to stand before you and proclaim the everlasting gospel and bear witness to the divinity of the Church, of the Lord's mission, of the prophet, and of his leaders.

We miss terribly Brother Richard Evans, who has passed away since our last conference. We have a great stalwart as the twelfth member in the Council now, Brother Ashton. We welcome with all our hearts Brother Peterson and Brother Featherstone into the group

of General Authorities. It will be a joy to work with them and with Bishop Vandenberg and his counselors in their new capacities.

### Resurrection of Jesus

This is Easter week—a time when we solemnly remind each other of the unprecedented occurrence which took place in a small inner garden, in a rough-hewn tomb, in a caliche hill, outside the walls of Jerusalem. It happened there in an early morning

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and startled every soul who heard of it.

Since it had never happened before on this earth, it must have been difficult for the people to believe, but how could they any longer doubt, when the resurrected Lord himself came to them and showed himself, and they felt the wounds in his hands and feet? Hundreds of his intimate believing friends bore witness.

This was Jesus of Nazareth, born in a manger, reared in a small village, baptized in the Jordan River, crucified on Golgotha, buried in a stone-cold roomlet in the cliff, and his resurrection attested to in a small, pleasant garden near the tomb.

### Living the commandments

His suffering before and on the cross and his great sacrifice can mean little or nothing to us unless we live his commandments. For he says:

"... why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46.)

"If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.)

Certainly if we fail to live his teachings, we lose communication with him.

### Broken communication lines

In South America we saw once an example of broken communication lines.

We were riding far out in the north-west of Argentina. It was cattle country. The road was straight and narrow for numerous miles, and on either side was a four-wire barbed fence. Parallel to the fence line was a series of poles on which were strung the wires for telephone communication to the world. Upon each telephone pole was a crossbar, and strung from crossbar to crossbar were the communication lines.

As we traveled along where the grass had been heavy but now was burned, we found where some of the telephone poles, being in the wake of

the fire, were burned off near the ground. Someone had carelessly thrown a lighted cigarette from a car window. It had ignited the grass, the telephone communications were ended or limited, and communication was down.

Nearly all the poles for a distance were scorched or burned. Some had been burned off the first few feet from the ground and were hanging by the top part in the air from the wires they were intended to support. Dangling in the air, these sagging wires had let the poles touch the ground as they were swinging in the wind, each time creating static on the line.

The poles had been set to hold up the lines, but here they were sagging.

Many a time during the three years that I was in charge of the work in South America, I tried to get long-distance calls through to these distant places. When the connection was made, almost invariably there would be static, and the words were cut in two and grating sounds were heard. In my mind's eye I could see the telephone line on the Salta Road swaying in the breeze, hitting the ground and occasionally breaking connection.

### Communication impaired

I thought that telephone lines and telephone poles are a little like people. They are built for one purpose and sometimes serve another. They are designed to be firm and stout and to give support; but in many cases they are leaning and swaying and sagging until communications are greatly impaired, if not actually cut off.

In my experience I find that in a large number of marital cases, the problem is lack of communication; the wires are down, the poles are burned, husbands and wives are jangling, and there is static where there should be peace. There is growing disgust and hate where there should be love and harmony.

### Inability to communicate

This typical young couple, only a few hectic years into their eternal marriage—only two children away from the eternal vows they had made in the holy temple of God—were each going a separate way. Their ideas of life were different as to spiritual matters (as well as many others)—one wishing to move along almost to what the other thought was fanaticism and the other moving along in a path that the other spouse thought to be almost apostasy; and both were wrong.

They talked about it and lost their tempers and drew farther and farther away from their common goal. Both were good people basically, but they needed unburned telephone poles and untangled wires of communication that were now sagging. Their inability to communicate in reasonableness led to anger, hard words, misunderstandings.

In time, each found another person and set up different communication lines for sympathy and understanding and comfort; and this disloyalty led to physical adventures that resulted in adulteries and two broken homes and disillusioned spouses and crushed hopes and injured children.

And all this because two basically good people let their communication lines get down and permitted the security poles to drag the ground. This is not one couple, it is tens of thousands of couples who started out in a blaze of glory, sweet felicity, and an inter-responsibility and with the highest of hopes.

### Returned missionary

At a distant stake conference one Sunday I was approached after the meeting by a young man whose face was familiar. He identified himself as a returned missionary whom I had met out in the world a few years ago. He said he had not attended the conference but had come at its conclusion, wanting to say hello. Our greetings

were pleasant and revived some choice memories. I asked him about himself. He was in college, still single, and fairly miserable.

I asked him about his service in the Church, and the light in his eyes went out and a dull, disappointed face fashioned itself as he said, "I am not very active in the Church now. I don't feel the same as I used to feel in the mission field. What I used to think was a testimony has become something of a disillusionment. If there is a God, I am not sure any more. I must have been mistaken in my zeal and joy."

### Church inactivity

I looked him through and through and asked him some questions: "What do you do in your leisure? What do you read? How much do you pray? What activity do you have? What are your associations?"

The answers were what I expected. He had turned loose his hold on the iron rod. He associated largely with unbelievers. He read, in addition to his college texts, works by atheists, apostates, and Bible critics. He had ceased to pray to his Heavenly Father. His communication poles were burned, and his lines were sagging terribly.

I asked him now, "How many times since your mission have you read the New Testament?"

"Not any time," was the answer.

"How many times have you read the Book of Mormon through?"

The answer was, "None."

"How many chapters of scripture have you read? How many verses?"

Not one single time had he opened the sacred books. He had been reading negative and critical and faith-destroying things and wondered why he could not smile.

He never prayed any more, yet wondered why he felt so abandoned and so alone in a tough world. For a long time he had not partaken of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and he wondered why his spirit was dead.

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Not a penny of tithing had he paid, and he wondered why the windows of heaven seemed closed and locked and barred to him. He was not receiving all the things he could have had. And as he was thinking of his woes and his worn-down faith, his loneliness, and his failures, I was thinking of a burned-out pasture in northern Argentina and burned-off telephone posts and sagging wires and dragging posts.

### **Dwindling faith**

Deeply disturbing are the numerous signs of dwindling faith in our world. Matches are dropped. The grass is burned.

The sagging in spiritual conviction is frightening. Morale is often low even among employees in their jobs—selfish “gimme” tactics. “How much can I get?” “How about a raise?” More holidays. Fewer hours. Poor morale among the employers.

We are too affluent. We have too much money and other things. We have so many things. Even many poorer people have many things, and “things” become our life, and our vocabulary has been invaded with, “Let me do my thing.”

Yet the Lord has said, “. . . seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matt. 6:33.) Too often, though, we want the “things” first.

### **Laxity of prayers**

We have a great generation of youth, but as I talk to many, I am amazed and surprised at the laxity of prayers among them, especially those who are in sin. Many have nearly ceased to pray. Their communication wires are down. Also numerous young people in their early married days cease to pray with regularity; their lines are sagging.

My first question to people in trouble is, “What about your prayers? How often? How deeply involved are you

when you pray? And when you pray, are you humbly thanking or are you asking?”

### **Elijah and priests of Baal**

Israel was in deep trouble—a sustained draught.

Israel’s King Ahab demanded of the prophet Elijah:

“Art thou he that troubleth Israel?”

“And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.” (1 Kings 18:17-18.)

The spectacular drama portrayed on Mt. Carmel between Elijah the prophet and the ineffectual false priests of Baal is the story of sagging lines of communication. Great wickedness—and the Lord had sealed the heavens from rain. Elijah had said: “. . . if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. . . .” (1 Kings 18:21.)

The contest brought about by Elijah was to prove to Israel that the gods of stone and wood and metal were powerless. When the 450 priests of Baal could not influence their gods to burn the offering, and the Lord, through Elijah, brought down fire from heaven and consumed the bullock, then with a revival of faith on the part of Israel, the clouds came and a torrential rain fell. Weak Israel had now set up new poles; they had restrung their wires, and communication was reestablished.

### **Couples in sorrow**

Two young couples from the Northwest came, bowed in sorrow. The husband of one and the wife of the other had lost themselves in frustration arising out of disloyally finding comfort where no association should have been tolerated. Their problems reached the maximum, and sorrow resulted.

It is generally the same. The two young people, unfaithful to their spouses, had conversed and confided too much; then secret meetings fol-

lowed, then disloyal disclosures concerning the spouse of each. And finally, that which surely could not have been dreamed of—the transgression.

Both couples had reduced their activity, become casual in their churchgoing. They had joined a social group who were also turning to spiritual casualness like themselves. Their new way of living was beyond their means, and debts crowded out tithing.

Too busy they were for home evenings and too rushed for family prayer, and when the great temptations came, they were not prepared. Their grass had been consumed, and with it the poles had been burned off and the dangling charred stubs were hanging to the sagging wires.

Sin comes when communication lines are down—it always does, sooner or later.

### A sagging world

We are living in a sagging world. There has been sin since Cain yielded to Satan, but perhaps never before has the world accepted sin so completely as a way of life. We shall continue to cry repentance from this and thousands of other pulpits. We shall continue to warn the people all too ready to accept the world as it pushes in upon them.

May we always repair our sagging lines and fulfill our total obligations and thus keep close to our Lord and Savior, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. □

### President Harold B. Lee

Thank you, President Kimball.

We express our thanks and appreciation to the General Authorities who have spoken to us in this the first session of the conference.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the Brigham Young University Combined Chorus, with Ralph Woodward conducting. Robert Cundick is the organist. I wish the television audience in the whole world could look upon this group of young adults, beautifully groomed, beautifully dressed. This is the kind of judgment we would like to have rendered upon the youth of this Church. The Lord bless you beautiful, handsome, wonderful young people. You are a credit to the Church.

The chorus will now close this session by singing from the Messiah by Handel, "Behold the Lamb of God," after which the benediction will be offered by Elder Arthur S. Anderson, former president of the North Carolina-Virginia Mission, after which this conference will stand adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

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The Brigham Young University Combined Chorus sang the number, "Behold the Lamb of God."

The closing prayer was offered by Elder Arthur S. Anderson, former president of the North Carolina-Virginia Mission.

The conference was adjourned until 2 o'clock P.M.

## FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

### SECOND SESSION

The second session of the conference convened at 2 P.M. on Thursday, April 6, 1972.

President Joseph Fielding Smith presided, and President N. Eldon Tan-

ner, second counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The choral music for this session was provided by a Primary Leaders Chorus, combined choruses of the Utah North