

We also invite O. Leslie Stone, James E. Faust and L. Tom Perry to take their places likewise with the Assistants to the Twelve.

Will Elder Rex D. Pinegar, who has been sustained as a new member of the First Council of Seventy, please come forward and take his place with the First Council of Seventy.

We welcome you brethren. As you come to know these wonderful men, many of them are well known to you already, as we love them and as the Lord loves them, you will come to love them and sustain them because of the great strength they will bring to the General Authorities of the Church.

President Harold B. Lee

Today, at the greatest moment of my life, I find myself without words to express my deep and innermost feelings. What I may say, therefore, must be actuated by the Spirit of the Lord, that you, my beloved Saints of the Most High God, may feel the depths of my soul-searching on this momentous and historic occasion.

Order of the priesthood

As I have participated with you in this moving experience of a solemn assembly, there has been brought more forcibly than ever to my mind the significance of the great revelation of the Lord given to the Church in 1835. In this revelation the Lord gave specific instructions setting forth the order of the priesthood in the government of the church and kingdom of God.

In this revelation the Lord specified four requisites in the establishment of the First Presidency, or the presidency of the Melchizedek, or High, Priesthood of the Church, as the Lord speaks of it. (D&C 107:22.)

First, it was requisite that there be three presiding high priests.

Second, they were to be chosen by the body (which has been construed to be the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles).

Third, they must be appointed and ordained by the same body—the Quorum of the Twelve.

Fourth, they must be upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayers of the Church.

All of these steps were taken in order that the quorum of the First Presidency could be formed to preside over the Church.

Those first steps were taken by action of the Twelve and they were attended to in a sacred meeting convened in the temple on July 7, 1972, where the First Presidency were named.

Upheld by membership

Today, as never before, have I more fully realized the importance of that last requirement: that this presidency, in the Lord's language, must be upheld by the confidence, the faith, and the prayers of the Church—which means, of course, the entire membership of the Church.

We witnessed a short while ago the outpouring of love and fellowship that was in evidence in the great regional conference of our wonderful Lamanite Saints from Central America and Mexico, assembled in Mexico City in August. Over 16,000 Saints were gathered together in a great auditorium, where they sustained their General Authorities.

Bonds of brotherhood

Again, in the mighty demonstration of this solemn assembly, I am moved

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First Day

with emotions beyond expression as I have felt the true love and bonds of brotherhood. There has been here an overwhelming spiritual endowment, attesting, no doubt, that in all likelihood we are in the presence of personages, seen and unseen, who are in attendance. Who knows but that even our Lord and Master would be near us on such an occasion as this, for we, and the world, must never forget that this is his church, and under his almighty direction we are to serve! Indeed, I would remind you what he declared in a similar conference of Saints in Fayette, New York, and undoubtedly would remind us again today. The Lord said: "Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you that mine eyes are upon you. I am in your midst and ye cannot see me." (D&C 38:7.)

Presidents of the Church

On the sacred occasion three months ago when I began to sense the magnitude of the overwhelming responsibility which I must now assume, I went to the holy temple. There, in prayerful meditation, I looked upon the paintings of those men of God—true, pure men, God's noblemen—who had preceded me in a similar calling.

A few days ago in the early morning hours, in my private study at home and all alone with my thoughts, I read the tributes paid to each of the Presidents by those who had been most closely associated with each of them.

Joseph Smith was the one whom the Lord raised up from boyhood and endowed with divine authority and taught the things necessary for him to know and to obtain the priesthood and to lay the foundation for God's kingdom in these latter days.

There was President Brigham Young, who was foreordained before this world was, for his divine calling to lead the persecuted Saints in fleeing from the wrath that threatened the Saints in those early gathering places in Missouri and Illinois and to pioneer

the building of an inland commonwealth in the tops of these majestic mountains, to fulfill God's purposes.

To look upon the features of President John Taylor was to gain a realization that here was one, as President Joseph F. Smith spoke of him, "One of the purest men I ever knew. . . ."

As I saw the sainted face of President Wilford Woodruff, I was aware that here was a man like Nathanael of old, in whom there was no guile, and susceptible to the impressions of the Spirit of the Lord, by whose light he seemed to almost always walk "not knowing beforehand the thing he was to do."

While President Lorenzo Snow had but a brief administration, he had a special mission to establish his people on a more solid temporal foundation by the determined application of the law of sacrifice, to relieve the great burdens placed upon the Church because of mistakes and errors which had unwittingly crept in.

When I want to seek for a more clear definition of doctrinal subjects, I have usually turned to the writings and sermons of President Joseph F. Smith. As I looked upon his noble stature, I thought of the nine-year-old boy helping his widowed mother across the plains and the 15-year-old missionary on the slopes of Haleakala on the isle of Maui being strengthened by a heavenly vision with his uncle, Joseph Smith. It was he who presided during the stormy days when an antagonistic press maligned the Church, but his was the steady arm by the Lord's appointment to carry off the Church triumphantly.

I suppose I never drew closer to the meaning of a divine calling than when President Heber J. Grant placed his hands upon my shoulders and, with a deep feeling akin to mine, announced my calling to be an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. As his picture looked down upon me, there came again to my mind the prophetic words of his inspired

blessing when I was ordained in the holy temple under his hands.

President George Albert Smith was a disciple of friendship and love. He was indeed a friend to everyone. My gaze at his likeness seemed to give me a warmth of that radiance which made every man his friend.

Tall and impressive was President David O. McKay, as he now looked at me with those piercing eyes, which always seemed to search my very soul. Never was I privileged to be in his presence but that I felt for a brief moment, as I had done on so many occasions, that I was a better man for having been in his company.

To him who sought no earthly honors, but whose whole soul delighted in the things of the spirit, President Joseph Fielding Smith was there with his smiling face, my beloved prophet-leader who made no compromise with truth. As "the finger of God touched him and he slept," he seemed in that brief moment to be passing to me, as it were, a sceptre of righteousness as though to say to me, "Go thou and do likewise."

Soul-searching thoughts

Now I stood alone with my thoughts. Somehow the impressions that came to me were, simply, that the only true record that will ever be made of my service in my new calling will be the record that I may have written in the hearts and lives of those with whom I have served and labored, within and without the Church.

The day after this appointment, following the passing of our beloved President Smith, my attention was called to a paragraph from a sermon delivered in 1853 in a general conference by Elder Orson Hyde, then a member of the Twelve. This provoked some soul-searching in me also.

The subject of his address was "The Man to Lead God's People," and I quote briefly from his sermon: ". . . it

is invariably the case," he said, "that when an individual is ordained and appointed to lead the people, he has passed through tribulations and trials, and has proven himself before God, and before His people, that he is worthy of the situation which he holds. . . . that when a person has not been tried, that has not proved himself before God, and before His people, and before the councils of the Most High, to be worthy, he is not going to step in and lead the Church and people of God. It has never been so, but from the beginning some one that understands the Spirit and counsel of the Almighty, that knows the Church, and is known of her, is the character that will lead the Church." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, p. 123.)

As I have known of the lives of those who have preceded me, I have been made aware that each seemed to have had his special mission for his day and time.

A polished shaft

Then, with searching introspection, I thought of myself and my experiences of which Orson Hyde's appraisal had made reference. Then I recalled the words of the Prophet Joseph's characterization of himself, which seemed somewhat analogous to myself. He said:

"I am like a huge rough stone rolling down from a high mountain; and the only polishing I get is when some corner gets rubbed off by coming in contact with something else, striking with accelerated force against religious bigotry, priestcraft, lawyer-craft, doctor-craft, lying editors, suborned judges and jurors, and the authority of perjured executives, backed by mobs, blasphemers, licentious and corrupt men and women—all hell knocking off a corner here and a corner there. Thus will I become a smooth and polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty. . . ." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 304.)

These thoughts now running through my mind begin to give greater meaning to some of the experiences in my life, things that have happened which have been difficult for me to understand. At times it seemed as though I too was like a rough stone rolling down from a high mountain-side, being buffeted and polished, I suppose, by experiences, that I too might overcome and become a polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty.

Maybe it was necessary that I too must learn obedience by the things that I might have suffered—to give me experiences that were for my good, to see if I could pass some of the various tests of mortality.

In the selection of my noble counselors, President N. Eldon Tanner and President Marion G. Romney, I learned that I was not alone with a rich measure of the gift of prophecy. They too had passed the tests, and before the Lord they had not been found wanting. How grateful I am for these noble men of the First Presidency and the Twelve and the other General Authorities.

The morning after my call came, as I knelt with my dear companion in prayer, my heart and soul seemed to reach out to the total membership of the Church with a special kind of fellowship and love which was like the opening of the windows of heaven, to give me a brief feeling of belonging to the more than three million members of the Church in all parts of the world.

Prayers of the saints

I repeat what I have said on other occasions, that I most fervently seek to be upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayers of all the faithful Saints everywhere, and I pledge to you that as you pray for me, I will earnestly try to so live that the Lord can answer your prayers through me.

In these last months, there seem to have been awakened in me new well-springs of spiritual understanding

also. I know full well the truth of what the Prophet Joseph told the early missionaries to Great Britain: "The nearer a person approaches the Lord, a greater power will be manifested by the adversary to prevent the accomplishment of His purposes." (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* [Bookcraft, 1967], p. 131.)

There is no shadow of doubt in my mind that these things are as certain today as in that day, but also I am certain that, as the Lord said, "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; And if any man lift his voice against you he shall be confounded in mine own due time." (D&C 71:9-10.)

Solemn witness

How grateful I am for your loyalty and your sustaining vote! I bear you solemn witness as to the divine mission of the Savior and the certainty as to his guiding hand in the affairs of his church today, as in all dispensations of time.

I know, with a testimony more powerful than sight, that as the Lord declared, "The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth [from the Prophet Joseph Smith through his successors down to the present], and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth.

"Wherefore, may the kingdom of God go forth, that the kingdom of heaven may come. . . ." (D&C 65:2, 6.)

I bear that testimony with all the conviction of my soul and leave my blessing upon the membership of the Church and the pure in heart everywhere, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

We shall ask Elder Bruce R. McConkie, newly sustained member of the Twelve, to speak to us.