

President Harold B. Lee

My beloved brothers and sisters and friends who may be listening in over the radio or television:

I seek for the inspiration of this great conference during these few moments.

Purpose of restoration

On the day the Church was organized, and shortly thereafter, the word of the Lord came to the prophet-leader of this dispensation. After the announcement of the establishment of the Church of Christ in these latter days, the Lord gave to the President of the Church commandments and "gave him power from on high," first, to bring forth "a record of a fallen people, and the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ" (D&C 20:8-9); then, to be a light to the world and a standard for Church members and for those who are not members to seek for it (D&C 45:9); third, to prepare a people ready to receive the coming of the Lord; and finally, to teach the fullness of the gospel with power unto all nations (see *Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 4, p. 537).

Grave world problems

In our day, when grave problems are before the nation and the world, men everywhere are seeking panaceas for the ills that afflict mankind and the answers to world problems that remain unanswered.

The ancient prophets seemed to have foreseen our day of complete frustration, when men would be looking for answers in the wrong places and the solutions to their problems in the wrong way. The prophets foresaw the day when there would be "a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing

the words of the Lord." Furthermore, said the prophet, ". . . they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." (Amos 8:11-12.)

It seems that in these days of frustration, from every side we are being asked such questions as:

What does the Church think about the Vietnam war?

What is the stand of the Church on overpopulation and birth control?

What is the position of the Church relative to abortion?

How should we combat the threat of Communism throughout the world?

What are the views of the Church relative to the crime wave and the increase of juvenile delinquency?

What can be done to strengthen family ties and reduce the wave of immorality, to teach self-reliance and responsibility and moral and physical discipline?

Are there no solutions to these problems?

Preach the word

To set the theme for my few remarks, may I repeat something of vital importance that was said from this pulpit almost ten years ago by a former President of the Church, President David O. McKay:

"In these days of uncertainty and unrest, liberty-loving peoples' greatest responsibility and paramount duty is to preserve and proclaim the freedom of the individual, his relationship to Deity, and the necessity of obedience to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. *Only thus will mankind find peace and happiness.*" (*Improvement Era*, December 1962, p. 903.)

Then comes the question, what shall we do about all this?

When Paul the apostle was a

prisoner in Rome, he sent a letter to Timothy, saying:

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

"And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Tim. 4:2-4.)

Quoting again from President McKay's remarks:

"It is just as important today as when Paul wrote that farewell message to Timothy that . . . members everywhere 'preach the word; be instant [that is, to be *eager, earnest*] in season, [and] out of season.'

"Today, in the midst of the world's perplexity, there should be no question in the mind of any true Latter-day Saint as to what we shall preach. The answer is as clear as the noonday sun in a cloudless sky. . . .

"In simple words, then, this is the word that we should preach—the *gospel plan of salvation*.

"The founders of this great republic had faith in the economic and political welfare of this country because they had faith in God. Today it is not uncommon to note an apologetic attitude on the part of men when they refer to the need of God's governing in the affairs of men. . . .

"But I say to you, preach in season and out of season belief in God the Eternal Father, in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

"Proclaim that fundamental in the gospel plan is the sacredness of the individual; that God's work and glory is 'to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.' (Moses 1:39.) . . .

"Proclaim that God lives, and that his Beloved Son is the Redeemer and Savior of mankind; that he stands at the head of his Church that bears his

name; that he guides and inspires those who are authorized to represent him here on earth. . . .

"Preach that the responsibility of declaring this plan of life, this way of life, this plan of salvation, rests upon the entire membership of the Church, but most particularly upon those who have been ordained to the priesthood and who have been called as leaders and servants of the people." (*Improvement Era*, December 1966, p. 1093.)

Eternal verities

These eternal verities are as applicable in the year 1972 as they were when Jesus first promulgated them, and they will remain fundamental and essential in man's progress and happiness as long as life and being last.

Then reference was made to a quotation from an eminent educator, who said:

"If there is to be social and political regeneration in our Republic and in the rest of the world, it must be by tremendous regeneration of moral ideals." (Dr. J. William Hudson, University of Missouri.)

The scoffer will immediately and invariably brand such a statement as naive and coming from one who has lost step with the realities of our times, as was demonstrated by some of our social science students recently who apparently haven't learned that their little learning is not a dangerous thing, if they were only to realize that what they know is only a little learning.

Proclaim peace

Time will permit but a few observations with reference to some of these startling challenges to our present generation.

In the midst of the early persecutions of this church, the Saints sought earnestly from the Lord as to how they were to meet the threats of their enemies.

The answer came: "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.)

And then came this significant promise:

"And again I say unto you, if ye observe to do whatsoever I command you, I, the Lord, will turn away all wrath and indignation from you, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against you." (D&C 98:22.)

Subject to powers that be

Early in the history of the Church came the enlightening word of the Lord:

"Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land.

"Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under his feet." (D&C 58:21-22.)

The inspired prophet-leader of this dispensation declared the faith of this people in what we call the Articles of Faith:

"We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." (Article of Faith 12.) Obedient to that declaration, even in times of national emergency, we yield obedience to civil authority.

In plain language, then, the Saints were told that to avoid war with their enemies they must renounce war and proclaim peace and to see that this was to begin within the home where fathers and children would be at peace with each other.

Preparation in home

The Lord gave a further promise, saying that when and if all wrath and indignation would be conquered within themselves, the evils of Satan's

powers could not successfully assail them.

He didn't leave us with any question as to the prime place in his church and in the world where this preparation and the battle against evil—unless curbed in the beginning—would break out into armed conflict.

After giving his law to parents to teach and train their children to walk uprightly before the Lord, he indicated his displeasure relative to those among us who, in his language, "are idlers . . . and [our] children are also growing up in wickedness; they also seek not earnestly the riches of eternity, but their eyes are full of greediness." (D&C 68:31.)

If these words are clearly understood, we have been told where the roots of all evil are to be found. Our children have not been properly taught by parents in the home. Our communities have adopted policies which encourage idleness instead of work for those who want to work for what they need, and have failed to adopt measures to see that idleness and unemployment are reduced to the absolute minimum.

Importance of work

In our own day a pioneer leader, President Brigham Young, spoke as a pioneer statesman about the importance of work. Said he:

"My experience has taught me, and it has become a principle with me, that it is never any benefit to give, out and out, to man or woman, money, food, clothing or anything else, if they are able-bodied, and can work and earn what they need, where there is anything on the earth, for them to do. This is my principle, and I try to act upon it. To pursue a contrary course would ruin any community in the world and make them idlers." (*Discourses of Brigham Young* [Deseret Book Co., 1943], p. 274.)

Now I want to digress for just a moment and repeat something that

was said in a previous meeting this morning where the leaders just a few years ago, when the welfare program was instituted, said this:

"This is the essence of the Church security program, not merely that men should be fed and clothed, we know that this is important, but that the eternal man should be built up by self-reliance, by creative activity, by honorable labor, by service; a generation raised in idleness cannot maintain its integrity." (Richard L. Evans, *Improvement Era*, vol. 39 [1936], p. 768.)

"From the beginning the long-range objective of the Welfare Plan was to build character in the members of the Church, both givers and receivers alike, thus rescuing all that is finest down deep inside of them and bringing to flower and fruitage the laden richness of the spirit, which after all is the mission and purpose and reason for the being of this Church." (Albert E. Bowen, *Church Welfare* [Deseret Sunday School Union, 1946], p. 44.)

Church program

You in the Church must realize now that in order to put these divinely inspired admonitions into practice as they have come from heaven-inspired leaders, the members of the Church have been given the family home evening plan for family instruction and involvement. Linked with that, he has given us the plan of temporal salvation in the churchwide welfare program, where everyone is to give in labor, money, or service to the full extent of his ability and then receive from out of the bounties, of which each one who needs has been a producer, and then without embarrassment or reticence, he receives according to his need.

Beyond this the Lord has directed the establishment of children and youth activities and of instruction

to mothers and fathers in the auxiliaries and priesthood quorum organizations of the Church, where every means is provided to give to all, as an outside observer said, speaking of the youth activities provided by the Church, "the opportunity to participate in so many good things that they have little or no time for the evil activities."

Application of Lord's plan

Any thinking person can see that if these fundamentals of sound social principles are not employed in every community to deal with crime, unemployment, and juvenile delinquency, then the seeds of unrest and bitterness would lead to the ultimate, of which the Lord warned. When these principles of right living and the application of his doctrines of salvation are not heeded, then we must expect that the power of evil will lead to conflict in the family, in the nation, and throughout the world.

Here are the Lord's own prophetic words that, instead of peace, there would be a sword; a son would be "at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." (Matt. 10:35-36.)

Are you aware that this is what is happening in many families throughout the world? Do I need to say more to bring us back to the complete application of the Lord's plan to save mankind and the world? If this people will heed this counsel from your leaders, you have the promise that, as the Lord said:

". . . the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory." (D&C 21:6.)

We would be so bold also to invite the honorable of the earth everywhere

to follow a similar course to the blessing of all mankind.

Never-ending contest

But now the members of this church throughout the world must brace themselves for the never-ending contest between the forces of righteousness and the forces of evil. The Prophet Joseph Smith made this declaration to the Twelve, borne out of his experience, and to which many of us since that time can testify. He said:

"You will have all kinds of trials to pass through. And it is quite as necessary that you be tried as it was for Abraham and other men of God, and . . . God will feel after you, and he will take hold of you and wrench your very heart strings, and if you cannot stand it you will not be fit for an inheritance in the Celestial Kingdom of God." (John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 24, p. 197.)

Restrictive measures

Now, again, where there is abject poverty in some heavily populated countries, we declare it is a grievous sin before God to adopt restrictive measures in disobedience to God's divine command from the beginning of time to "multiply and replenish the earth." Surely those who project such measures to prevent life or to destroy life before or after birth will reap the whirlwind of God's retribution, for God will not be mocked.

What is sorely needed is a worldwide movement, with every means possible, to overcome the ignorance to be found among these unfortunate peoples, where the fundamental principles of right living and self-control and sound economic principles, patterned after the Lord's plan of salvation, must be adopted.

This church must be in the forefront in showing the way. If we will

do this, we will begin to see the beginning of the fulfillment of the ancient prophecy when, as the prophets said, the "mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, . . . nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord . . . and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isa. 2:2-3. See also Mic. 4:1-2.)

Political turmoil

With regard to the political turmoil among the nations, we would earnestly pray that if this and other nations would be constrained to live by and adopt governmental systems where civil and political liberties are secure, we could then hopefully look for the fulfillment of the ancient prophecy of the prophets Isaiah and Micah, to which I have already made reference, "that out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." When that day comes, the blessings and freedoms of the free world will then be realized.

Counterfeit plan

Now a final word about one of the great dangers of some of the widely disseminated doctrines of the enemies of freedom, which in essence have been characterized by our beloved prophet-statesman, President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., as but "a clumsy attempt of Satan to counterfeit the Lord's plan of the United Order, as defined in the Holy Scriptures." Our present welfare plan could well be the "setting-up" exercises to see how prepared this church is to live this plan, so that, as was the joyous realization of a people on this continent, as recorded in an ancient scripture we call the Book of Mormon, after they were all converted to the Lord,

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Second Day

"there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all . . . partakers of the heavenly gift" and "surely there could not be a happier people" on the face of the earth (4 Ne. 3, 16), by living fully the law of sacrifice and consecration.

There are some well-intentioned persons within the Church who seem to have taken upon themselves to substitute for the great principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God what some have characterized as "cults"—the results of which, no matter how sincere, have caused confusion by using other organized bodies than those of the priesthood of God to combat these dangers. In doing so they have set brothers against brothers in the Church and thus weakened the unity of the greatest weapon the Lord has already provided against these evils, through the priesthood organizations of the Church and kingdom of God. Some such groups, by adopting counterfeit measures and procedures, have been led away and have apostatized and been excommunicated from the Church.

Leadership of priesthood

If we follow the leadership of the priesthood, the Lord will fulfill his promise contained in the preface to his revelations, when Satan would have power over his own dominion. This was his promise: ". . . the Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst, and shall come down in judgment upon . . . the world." (D&C 1:36.)

I earnestly urge all our people to unite under the true banner of the Master, to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ so powerfully that no truly converted person could ever be aligned with these controversial concepts and procedures contrary to the Lord's plan of salvation.

The Lord does reign in the midst of

his Saints through his priesthood, which he delegates to man, rather than through other man-made organizations, the like of those to which I have made reference.

Prayer for world

Now, in conclusion, may I offer a humble prayer in behalf of the Church and the nation and the world. I realize that there is much more that might be said, but in this prayer may I indulge and ask that you might unite your faith with mine for a few moments:

"Our heavenly and eternal Father, hear our prayer this day, and sanctify to our good all that is being done by righteous men and women in the Church and throughout the world to bring to naught the evils that are rolling over the world like an avalanche. Increase within us the zeal to bring thy great plan of redemption to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, looking to that glorious day when thy prophecy will be realized when truth will cover the earth as waters cover the mighty deep.

"We appeal to the protection of thy almighty power to that end which accords with thy purpose concerning us and thy work. We put ourselves under the surveillance of thy watchful eye and pray that thou will never leave us alone, and continue to give the guidance necessary to the accomplishment of thy purposes."

I add to that humble prayer my witness to the members of this church and to the world that through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, "all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel." (Article of Faith 3.)

This is indeed the Lord's work in which we are engaged. He lives and is ever ready to draw near to us when we prepare ourselves to be worthy to draw close to him. From my own personal experience, I know this, which I declare in

all soberness to be true, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Choir sang following President Lee's address "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" without announcement.

President Harold B. Lee

This is the third session of the 142nd Semi-Annual Conference of the Church.

The Tabernacle Choir will now

sing "Inflamatus" with Olga Gardner as the soloist.

Following the singing, Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve will speak to us.

The Choir sang the song, "Inflamatus."

President Lee

Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve will now address us.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

Of the Council of the Twelve

One of the most striking prophecies of the Old Testament, which certainly characterizes our day, is this one spoken by Amos:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord:

"And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." (Amos 8:11-12.)

Spiritual famine

Famine was one of the common scourges of Old Testament times, and people understood the devastating consequences of crop failure and starving people. Amos brought this understanding into sharp focus by his prediction of a spiritual famine. He said: "... not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."

Long before this time Moses had written: "... man doth not live by

bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." (Deut. 8:3.)

Present-day reports of confusion and frustration of individuals and religious institutions, as they attempt to resolve their religious doubts and conflicts, remind us of these words of Amos: "... they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it."

They seek to find the solution without building on the rock of revelation, as the Lord said must be done, if the gates of hell are not to prevail against it. (See Matt. 16:17-18.) This problem has engaged the minds of good and sincere men before and since the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in this dispensation.

Emerson's questions

In the year 1838, 134 years ago and only eight years after the organization of the Church, Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered an address before the senior class of the Divinity School at Cambridge University. In it he asked ques-