

These lofty goals still remain as the motivating force of all who are involved in this great work. And now, with the approval of the First Presidency, the temporal or financial, health, and social services functions are brought together in the welfare services organization of the Church concerned with the well-being of the whole man.

I bear my humble witness that this is the gospel of Jesus Christ, that he reigns at the head of this church and speaks through a living prophet, Harold B. Lee. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir sang the song, "Jesu, Priceless Treasure," without announcement following the address by Bishop Victor L. Brown.

President Harold B. Lee

We welcome those joining us on television and radio in this third session of the 142nd Semi-Annual Conference of the Church.

President Marion G. Romney of the First Presidency of the Church will be our concluding speaker.

President Marion G. Romney

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Brothers and sisters and friends, wherever you are:

As you have been advised, this service is a part of the 142nd Semi-Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Need of another church

Since there were at the time it was organized, as there are today, many other so-called Christian churches, the question "What was the need of another church?" is often asked. To this question I shall respond.

To begin with, it is obvious from the inquiry itself that the existence of so many churches was perplexing. The honest in heart were disturbed and confused as to which, if any, of them was the true church of Christ.

Perplexity of Joseph Smith

Among the disturbed was one Joseph Smith, Jr., a 14-year-old youth. In the spring of 1820, stirred

by a religious revival in the vicinity of Palmyra, New York, where he lived; perplexed by the conflicting claims of the churches; motivated by the admonition and promise of James, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, . . . and it shall be given him" (James 1:5), Joseph, in childlike faith, inquired of the Lord "which of all the sects was right," that he "might know which to join."

". . . I kneeled down [he said] and began to offer up the desire of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, . . .

"But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me . . . and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction— . . . I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy

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which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith 2:15-18).

This vision was the opening scene in an awesome drama that some ten years later culminated in the organization of the Church.

By the Son, with whom he conversed in the heavenly vision, Joseph was told to join none of the existing churches because they "were all wrong." (Joseph Smith 2:19.) They lacked both necessary components of the church of Jesus Christ, namely, his gospel and his name.

Indispensable elements of gospel

Indispensable elements of the gospel, which they lacked, included:

1. The truth concerning the personality of God and man's relationship to him,
2. A knowledge of its saving principles and ordinances,
3. The priesthood of God, and
4. Continuing revelation.

As to the first element, the personality of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, Joseph learned the truth in the vision above referred to. Later he said of them, "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also. . . ." (D&C 130:22.)

As to man's relationship to God, Joseph learned from a subsequent revelation that the inhabitants of "the worlds" (including those of us on this earth) "are begotten sons and daughters unto God." (D&C 76:24.)

These fundamental truths concerning God and man's relationship to him were not being taught by the churches of Joseph Smith's day, for the obvious reason that they were

neither known nor believed. It is true that they were known and taught and believed by members of the church of Christ in the days of Jesus and his apostles. But in 1830 an understanding of them had long since been lost. It was ignorance of a true knowledge of God and man's relationship to him that spawned the many churches.

During the 1820s a knowledge of the fundamental principles and ordinances of the gospel was revealed anew from heaven to the boy prophet, Joseph Smith. Many of these principles and ordinances he learned from the Book of Mormon, which came to him in the following manner.

The Book of Mormon

In September 1827, Moroni, an ancient American historian and prophet, at that time resurrected, delivered to Joseph a record inscribed on thin sheets of gold, which, by the gift and power of God, Joseph translated. This record contained an explanation of the principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it was taught and implemented among the ancient people of America.

In 1829 Joseph published his translation under the title *The Book of Mormon*. This book contains a record of the personal ministry of Jesus Christ among the inhabitants of America immediately following his post-resurrection ministry in the land of Jerusalem. To them he taught his gospel, even as he had taught it in Palestine. Among them he organized his church. Upon their leaders he conferred the holy priesthood. He instructed them concerning, and showed them how to administer, the saving ordinances of his gospel.

Restoration of priesthood

By the time he published the Book of Mormon Joseph had also received the third indispensable ele-

ment of the gospel, namely, the holy priesthood, which empowered him to act for and in the name of God.

The Aaronic Priesthood he received in May of 1829. While translating the Savior's teachings concerning baptism as they are recorded in the Book of Mormon, he and his scribe, Oliver Cowdery, besought the Lord for further light upon the subject. As they knelt in prayer they were visited by a heavenly messenger who said that his name was "John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament." This messenger laid his hands upon their heads and said:

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. . . ." (D&C 13.)

A few weeks later Peter, James, and John conferred upon Joseph and Oliver the Melchizedek Priesthood and ordained them apostles. (See *Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 1, p. 40.)

The fourth indispensable element of the gospel, continuing revelation, came with the restoration of the priesthood. It is obvious, from the manner in which Joseph Smith received a knowledge of God and of the principles and ordinances of the gospel, that he himself was receiving direct revelation from heaven. But this is not all that was necessary.

The gift of the Holy Ghost

Every member of Christ's church in the meridian of time received the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is a revelator. To receive him is to be spiritually reborn. Remember, Jesus said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.)

To receive the gift of the Holy

Ghost is to be born of the Spirit. The Lord instructed the priesthood officers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints "to confirm those who are baptized into the church, by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, according to the scriptures." (D&C 20:41.)

The priesthood and the power of the Holy Ghost is what gives life to the Church and its members:

"... the special office of the Holy Ghost is to enlighten and ennoble the mind, to purify and sanctify the soul, to incite to good works, and to reveal the things of God." (James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, p. 167.)

Without this gift, the Church would be as dead and impotent as an electric powerhouse without electricity.

Organization of church

Having thus received a new dispensation of the gospel, Joseph Smith was qualified to reestablish the church of Christ upon the earth, as he was directed by the Lord to do. Such direction came in various revelations, in which the manner and the date of organization were specified.

Obedient to these commandments, Joseph Smith, Jr., did, on April 6, 1830, organize the Church of Jesus Christ at Fayette, Seneca County, New York, strictly in harmony with the commandments of God and the laws of the land.

Thus the answer to the question—Why was the Church organized when there were already so many churches?—is obviously *because the Lord Jesus Christ himself directed Joseph Smith to organize it.*

Name of the church

Now, the Lord not only directed Joseph to organize his church: he told him what to name it.

It is a fact worth noting that of all the churches then claiming to repre-

sent Christ, not one of them bore his name. Joseph learned from the teachings of Jesus to the Nephites that no church could be Christ's church unless it did bear his name. When the Nephites raised the question about what to name his church, Jesus, as he ministered among them, said:

"... how be it my church save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses' name then it be Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel." (3 Ne. 27:8.)

This statement gives us the twofold test: Christ's church (1) must bear his name, and (2) must be built upon his gospel.

That there should be no uncertainty about the name in this last dispensation, the Lord said to Joseph Smith: "... thus shall my church be called in the last days, even *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*" (D&C 115:4. Italics added.)

The phrase "Mormon Church" is a nickname.

Twofold test of church

The restored church thus meets the Savior's twofold test: it bears his name and it is built upon his gospel. About this there can be no doubt, because both the name and the gospel were by the Lord Jesus Christ himself revealed to Joseph Smith.

And now in conclusion, I would like to say a few words about, and bear my testimony concerning, the restored gospel and church of Jesus Christ.

There have been no occurrences on this earth since the ministry of Jesus in the meridian of time of such importance to you and to me as the events we have just reviewed. They occurred for the benefit of Joseph Smith and his associates not only, but for the sake of the whole world.

Introduction to revelations

Introducing the revelations given to the Prophet, the Lord said:

". . . Hearken ye people from afar; and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together.

"For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none that shall escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated.

"And again, verily I say unto you, O inhabitants of the earth: I the Lord am willing to make these things known unto all flesh;

"For I am no respecter of persons, and will that all men shall know that the day speedily cometh; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand [this was in 1831], when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion.

"And also 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 1:1-2, 34-36.)

Today, more than 140 years since the foregoing words were spoken, peace has been taken from the earth. The devil now has power over his dominion, and the Lord has power over his saints. The day approaches when he will "come down in judgment upon . . . the world" and reign in the midst of his people.

Warning of calamities

Between now and then, however, if men and nations continue on their present course, great tribulation will come upon us. There shall be more "wars and rumors of wars, . . . there shall be earthquakes also in divers places, and many [other] desolations. . . the whole earth shall be in commotion. . . ." (D&C 45:26, 33.) Those are the words of the Lord himself.

The Lord foresaw the coming of these calamities and gave warning of

them. He restored his gospel and re-established his church as a means of escape therefrom.

Cause of predicament

About a year and a half after the Church was organized, he thus explained the cause of our present predicament:

"... they [speaking of the inhabitants of the earth] have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant;

"They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own God, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall.

"Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments;

"And also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the world. . . ." (D&C 1:15-18.)

The commandments to be proclaimed to the world are the principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ. By restoring his gospel and reestablishing his church in the earth, the Lord has provided the means for our temporal as well as for our spiritual salvation.

Prophecy fulfilled

The restoration fulfills the prediction of Daniel that in the days of the disunited kingdoms "the God of heaven [would] set up a kingdom, which [would] never be destroyed. . . ." (Dan. 2:44.)

It fulfills Micah's prophecy that "in the last days . . . the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall

be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it." (Mic. 4:1.)

It is the fulfillment of John's vision in which he saw an "angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come. . . ." (Rev. 14:6-7.)

Yes, verily, it is the "restitution of all things" which Peter said would come in preparation for the second advent of the Lord. (See Acts 3:21.)

Personal testimony

And now, as a special witness of Jesus Christ, I add my personal testimony that all these things are true. And I bear further witness to all of you who hear or read what I am saying that if you will inform yourselves of the historical facts and revealed truths of the restoration and then humbly and sincerely call upon the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, he will give you like assurance by the power of the Holy Ghost. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Choir sang the song, "Come Ye Children of the Lord," without announcement following the address by President Marion G. Romney.

President Harold B. Lee

We thank the brethren for their excellent addresses, particularly President Marion G. Romney, who has just given this concluding address.

We extend our appreciation to the managers and operators of the hundreds of television and radio stations who as a public service have made it possible for this session of conference to reach millions throughout many areas of the world.