

to Nephi's exhortation. I hope it moves you as deeply as it does me. He said:

"... behold, my beloved brethren, . . .

"... I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.

"Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.

"And now, my beloved brethren, I perceive that ye ponder still in your hearts; and it grieveth me that I must speak concerning this thing. For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray.

"But behold, I say unto you that

ye must pray always, and not faint; that ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul." (2 Ne. 32:1, 3-4, 8-9.)

That the Lord will help each of us bearers of the holy priesthood to acquire such a powerful motivating desire that we will, through searching and pondering upon the words of eternal life and praying about them, be led to magnify our callings in the priesthood, and that we may thereby qualify ourselves to receive the promised blessings of the "covenant which belongeth to the priesthood," I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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### President Harold B. Lee

President N. Eldon Tanner will now speak to us.

## President N. Eldon Tanner

### *First Counselor in the First Presidency*

It is a great privilege, honor, and responsibility to stand before and speak to the priesthood assembled in this historic Tabernacle and in the 800 other buildings in the United States and Canada. This is the largest group of priesthood ever gathered to hear the voice of the Prophet, and when we think that they can hear this through closed circuit transmission as he speaks to them, it reminds me that we have an open conduit and a private closed circuit or wave length by which we can speak to our Heavenly Father and hear him, if we keep in tune and hear him, if we keep in tune and try to listen to him.

### Appreciation of priesthood

I often wonder if we really appreciate what the priesthood means. President Romney, who is so close to the Lord, has given us some instructions tonight which, if we would follow, would help us to appreciate the priesthood and enjoy the blessings of those who magnify their callings in the priesthood. If I should say in my talk tonight to magnify the priesthood, I should like it to mean to be in complete harmony with President Romney, to magnify the priesthood in the office which you hold, because that is what we should do, my brethren. We have

this heavy responsibility placed upon us when we are given the priesthood of God.

Every time I think of the priesthood, I think of the great honor and privilege we have of speaking and acting in the name of our Heavenly Father, and the responsibility it places upon us. I often say, "What are we going to do about it? Are we going to realize who we are, what we have, and what our responsibilities are?"

I would like to say to you young men: Have a good time; play basketball, play football; play tennis; play anything you want to play, and do anything you want to do as long as it is right, but honor your priesthood wherever you are, that you might be an example to the world.

### **Importance of family**

I would like to deal briefly with the question of how we as priesthood holders should live, and I would like to say just a few words first about the family. The father must realize always that the family is the most important thing in his life. He should never neglect his family. As he looks after his family, he should remember that if he is going to enjoy the family now and throughout eternity, it is essential that they live according to the teachings of the gospel, and remember that "no other success can compensate for failure in the home." Remember too that it is in the home that the most impressive teachings are taught and where the lives of our children are shaped.

If the father will love God, love his wife, love his family, and honor his priesthood, he will have very little to worry about. If all the priesthood would do that throughout the world, what a great influence we would have. Some will be saying: "What about the girls, and the mothers, and the women?" The same is true for them, but I am speaking

to the priesthood and how they should act.

Keep the Sabbath day holy. Keep the Word of Wisdom strictly. Pray always, and be honest with one another and with your fellowmen. Study the gospel. Know what is expected of us, why we are here, that we are actually spirit children of God, and as such we must keep ourselves morally clean. And that is one thing, fathers, that we should teach our boys to do.

I should like to give you, as I speak about the family and fathers, an example by reading what Sister McKay said about President David O. McKay: "I am very, very proud of my husband. He is just as lovely, just as courteous, just as polite, just as kind and just as sweet in our home as he is anywhere else, and I am very proud of him. And I am grateful for him. I cannot see anything wrong with him. I pray that our brethren will try to follow his example in every way, shape, and form."

And I can't think of much better advice, brethren, for us to have.

### **Example of good teaching**

As an example of good teaching, I remember a young man telling me one day about his parents and how they taught him the importance of going to the temple and preparing himself to be worthy to go into the house of the Lord by going to the temple regularly. As they were preparing to go to the temple, they would talk about it, and the experiences they would have, and what a great privilege it was to go to the temple, and to go regularly. When they would return from the temple, they would talk about it, and how lovely it was to see a young couple married in the temple, realizing that they could then be parents of spirit children of God, and what a great privilege it was for them to be there

in the temple. This boy could hardly wait then for the time to come when he could go in and receive his own endowments, and he knew how important it was to prepare himself to be clean and pure and to go there knowing that the Lord would accept him.

### **Appreciation for father**

Personally, I should like to express the appreciation I have always felt for my father. Father taught us to pray. It seemed that he was talking directly to the Lord when he knelt down in family prayer. He taught us to pray privately. He was honest and honorable in all of his dealings. I wish I had time to tell you some of the experiences I had to let me know that he was honest and upright in his dealings with his fellowmen. He magnified his priesthood, and he expected us to do it. He always showed great love for Mother.

He used to take us hunting or fishing, as busy as we were on the farm. He found it difficult, I am sure, to leave, but he would go with us, and he would never go on Sunday; he never thought of that. We always attended our meetings regularly with him. I remember some of my friends saying, "I wish I had a dad like yours. It is sure great to be with him." And I can tell you that we boys—there were four of us—would rather be with our dad than anybody else because he was a good father. Fathers, it is important that you be with your boys so they can see how you live, and you can see how they live.

### **Expression of confidence**

I remember Father's placing confidence in me. We used to work on the farm, as I said before, and he would call me in the evening or early morning to discuss his plans, his

program for the day, and ask me what I thought about it. Should we do this or should we do that? I felt that I was a part of it. I know now that he had his plans pretty well formed, but he showed that confidence in me. And realizing that I was part of it, I worked my head off to accomplish it, and I loved my dad for it.

And then I remember him saying to me one day, "You know, my son, I would rather have you helping me than any hired man I have. I have full confidence in you, and you surely do a good day's work." Such an expression of confidence and appreciation makes one more determined to do well what he is expected to do.

It is very important that we help our boys set their goals high and then set about to reach them. We must understand that Satan is there and is real, as has been told us twice tonight, and is determined to destroy us, to discourage us, to tempt us, and to lead us astray.

### **Representing the Lord**

I should like to repeat a beautiful experience, which is very touching to me. I hope Bishop Featherstone won't mind my mentioning him as the one about whom I am going to speak. This happened just after they moved here from their lovely home, where they had many friends and were very popular. He had come home after work and had gotten into his lounging clothes, and his young son, Joe, said, "Dad, I wish you would give me a special blessing so that I can adjust and feel at home and be happy here."

His father went upstairs and changed his clothes. As he was coming down, his wife said, "Surely you are not going out tonight." He said, "I am going to give someone a blessing." And then he said, "Joe has asked for a special blessing, and I

wanted to be dressed and ready to honor the priesthood and to show Joe the interest I have in him, and to make it possible for him to enjoy the blessings through the faith he has in me and the priesthood."

Brethren, that is the spirit to have. And, of course, as he told his wife, you can naturally imagine what happened. She shed tears as she realized she had a husband, the father of her son, who would be an example and be so interested in him that he would be prepared to represent the Lord in the priesthood that he holds.

### **Responsibility for Aaronic Priesthood**

I would like to say just a few words to the bishops, to the other officers in the wards and stakes, including the stake presidents, and to mission presidents. We have a heavy responsibility; and especially the bishop, with his counselors, has the responsibility for the Aaronic Priesthood. Much has been said about that tonight, but I would like to say just a few words. You should know every boy by his first name. Show an interest in him; stay close to him. When you know his first name, use it. You remember when God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph, and he asked the question, God turned to him and said, "Joseph," calling him by name, "this is my beloved Son." (See Joseph Smith 2:17.) A boy likes to hear his name called.

Let us remember and remind our boys always, when they are officiating as holders of the priesthood, that they are representing the Lord. They can have their good times every other place and play the way they want to do, but when they are officiating in the priesthood, they should realize that they are representing the Lord, and be so dressed and so prepared and humble and

reverent as to properly represent him.

### **Readiness for priesthood**

And bishops, it is important that we help them to understand and appreciate what the priesthood means. When I was a bishop I had six boys in my ward old enough to be ordained elders. I could only recommend five of them, because one of them wasn't ready. We had talked about it several times, and he had said to me, "I am not worthy." He felt very bad about it, but he didn't expect to be recommended to the stake president. His uncle came to me and said, "You are surely not going to hold that boy back with his five friends going forward." He pled with me to let him go. He said, "You will be driving him out of the Church if you don't."

I explained to this man, "The priesthood is the most important thing that we can give this boy. We are not handing the priesthood out on a silver platter. This boy and I understand each other, and he is not ready to be ordained an elder." And he wasn't recommended.

A few years later I was attending a general conference right here on this Temple Square, and a young man came up to me and said, "President Tanner, you wouldn't remember me. I am the boy whom you didn't recommend to be ordained an elder." As he put his hand out, he said, "I want to thank you for it. I am a bishop now in California. If you had recommended me when I wasn't worthy, I possibly never would have appreciated what the priesthood is and what is expected of one, and surely I would never have been a bishop as I am today."

Bishops, these young men don't expect something for nothing. They don't appreciate anything they get for nothing, and they should realize and appreciate just what the priest-

hood means and then be prepared to qualify and be worthy before they are advanced.

### **Encouragement to advance**

By a searching interview, know that they are ready for a temple recommend, for advancement in the priesthood, for a mission, or anything that you are considering them for, and be sure they are ready. It is certainly no kindness to recommend someone when he is not ready—in fact, it is a great disservice and it shouldn't be done. Help them to appreciate what it means and the importance of being ready and worthy. Encourage them, let them know that you love them, and do all you can to help them prepare.

I would like to say, bishops, that as fathers of the wards you have the great privilege, the great joy of directing all the affairs in the ward and of helping these young men to become the kind of young men who will be the leaders in the ward and in the stake, and someday sitting on this stand—some of them certainly will be. Help them to prepare and help them to appreciate that they might be holding responsible positions. And let me say this to you tonight: It is not possible for everyone holding the priesthood to be called to positions of leadership, but holding the priesthood of God is a great privilege, a great blessing, and it alone, if we honor it, will prepare us for salvation and exaltation, if we are ready to serve the Lord wherever we are called. The priesthood of God is something the world doesn't have.

### **Judges in Israel**

Bishops, you have an additional responsibility. You are judges in Israel, and you should always judge and deal with the transgressor with love and confidence, with a desire in your heart to help him, and carry

out your responsibilities to deal with him. Stake and mission presidents also have this responsibility. It is important that when you know there is iniquity, you be kind enough to show an interest in the transgressor and bring him to repentance, and that is a kindness. Love all, but tolerate no iniquity. When it appears that something is wrong, it is your duty to investigate and handle all cases of transgression according to the seriousness of the case. By moving promptly, you might be able to prevent further transgression.

Study the scriptures and the handbook and do as they direct. Bishops and stake presidents must not shirk this responsibility. Anyone who says that he has never disciplined, disfellowshipped, or excommunicated anyone, and that he never intends to, has an entirely wrong attitude and may himself be held accountable.

The Lord has said, "Any member of the church of Christ transgressing, or being overtaken in a fault, shall be dealt with as the scriptures direct." (D&C 20:80.)

And President John Taylor said this: "Furthermore, I have heard of some Bishops who have been seeking to cover up the iniquities of men; I tell them, in the name of God, they will have to bear them themselves, and meet that judgment; and I tell you that any man who tampers with iniquity, he will have to bear that iniquity, and if any of you want to partake of the sins of men, or uphold them, you will have to bear them. Do you hear it, you Bishops and you Presidents? God will require it at your hands. You are not placed in a position to tamper with the principles of righteousness, nor to cover up the infamies and corruptions of men."

### **Cases to be handled**

The cases that are to be handled

by the Church include but are not limited to fornication, adultery, homosexual acts, abortion, or other infractions of the moral code; intemperance; criminal acts involving moral turpitude, such as burglary, dishonesty, theft, or murder; apostasy; open opposition to and deliberate disobedience of the rules and regulations of the Church; cruelty to spouse or children; advocating or practicing so-called plural marriage; or any un-Christianlike conduct in violation of the law and order of the Church.

Those who are guilty of transgression are never happy until they confess their sins and repent. Experience has proven that every transgressor who is dealt with as he should be, with love and a desire to help and with the proper discipline, is able to start out anew with a clear conscience and can then and only then progress as he could not do otherwise. He will thank you for it, and as you try to help him, the Lord will bless both you and the repentant individual.

### Keeping morally clean

I would like to say just a few words to the boys and young men as priesthood holders—the young men particularly. You have been told what your responsibility is tonight. I want to impress upon you the importance of keeping morally clean. Prepare yourselves for the great blessings that come only through the priesthood, such as temple blessings, filling missions, and doing other things that you can do in the offices you hold. No man, young or old, who holds the priesthood of God can honor that priesthood without honoring and respecting womanhood. Any young man should be prepared to protect a woman's virtue with his life, if necessary, and never be guilty of lusting after a woman or doing anything that would de-

grade her or cause her to lose her virtue. Every young woman has a perfect right to feel safe in going out with a young man holding the priesthood, knowing that he will respect and protect her in every way.

We all know that the morals of the world are loose. Though we are in the world, we must not be of it. Whether your associates are members of the Church or not, and whether or not they are transgressors, they will expect you who hold the priesthood to honor that priesthood and will respect you if you do. Otherwise, they lose confidence in you and respect for you and for the Church.

If we would live each day so that we could look the bishop, branch president, the stake president, the president of the Church, or the Lord in the eye and say, "I am doing my best to magnify my priesthood," then we would be safe.

### Worthiness for callings

No young man guilty of serious transgression should apply for a temple recommend or expect to be called on a mission or wish to be advanced in the priesthood until he has repented and is worthy of such a call. I can think of no greater disappointment, sadness, or sorrow that can come to anyone than to have a missionary who is not worthy, not dedicated, and guilty of transgression, be sent home dishonorably released, disfellowshipped, or excommunicated. This is a great disappointment to his companion, and it makes the mission president's heart bleed to have to deal with one of his missionaries who is guilty of transgression either before coming or while in the mission field, and then to have the difficult responsibility of sending him home. It distresses the parents and grieves the bishop and stake president and those

with whom he has worked so closely. It is an affront to the Lord and seriously affects the life of the missionary.

May the Lord help us to appreciate who we are and to live accordingly, realizing that we do hold the priesthood of God in the church of Jesus Christ, the only men in the world who hold the authority to

speak in God's name. Assembled here tonight in these different buildings, every priesthood office of the Church is represented, and the success and progress of this church depend on you as individuals who hold the priesthood. May we prove worthy, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## President Harold B. Lee

We have here Captain Larry J. Chesley, Major Jay C. Hess, and Lieutenant Commander David J. Rollins. Will you stand up, please? Captain Chesley, United States Air Force, was a prisoner of war for seven years. He comes from the Burley Stake, Star Ward. Major Jay Hess, United States Air Force, was a prisoner of war for six years, from Bountiful East Stake. Lieutenant Commander Rollins, United States Navy, a prisoner of war for six years, is from the San Diego North Stake.

### Representative of servicemen

These three young men represent many of those boys who have gone through the fire of adversity. We just want you men to know that our hearts have been touched by the announcement of your faith, your confidence in your country and in your commander-in-chief, that you have come through thus far. We want to say to you that we have been praying, we have been hoping with every means at our command; and we now say to the priesthood, brethren, will you put your arms around these boys, and help them now to make their adjustments as may be necessary in their homecoming.

The Lord bless you, brethren.

We love you and the many others who have been in these circumstances and have come through the fire, and have now been prepared to go forward. You will be the kind of men that we look to for the standards of our youth in the years that lie ahead. Thank you, brethren. We welcome you home.

Our hearts go out to the many others, to the mothers and fathers in the thousands of homes where the boys didn't come home. We are having an Easter program where they have asked me to respond, seeing what might be done to ease the aching hearts of the thousands of others who didn't come home. There is hope. Thank God for the promise of the gospel and the blessings that lie beyond the grave.

### Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood MIA

Just a word now about what has been said regarding the Aaronic Priesthood MIA and the Melchizedek Priesthood MIA. I am sure that you listened to President Romney and heard him define that word *ponder*, and then made its application; that is what we are asking you to do now, and not go out as a Monday morning quarterback and try to do all the second-guessing. I want to say to you that there is no topic