

President Spencer W. Kimball

My brothers and sisters and friends, how happy we are to see you here at this conference, the leaders and the members. We hope that you will be inspired by the proceedings of this conference.

In press conferences which we attend, we are frequently asked: "Well, what is the condition of the Church?" We answer, "The Church is well and growing and is strong and healthy. Thank you."

Growth of Church

As we approach the conference, we have 661 stakes. There were but 148 when I came to the headquarters of the Church in 1943. There were no stakes abroad, and we were to wait for many years before the Church began to cross the oceans and the great land masses. Already—since President Romney organized the Auckland, New Zealand, Stake in May 1958—there are 86 stakes overseas. We now have 112 missions, plus the 661 stake missions, and we now have approximately 18,000 missionaries, whereas in 1943 there was a very small group, relatively. We are happy with the growth, which is consistent and continues to be stable.

And when we are asked why we are such a happy people, our answer is: "Because we have everything—life with all its opportunities, death without fear, eternal life with endless growth and development."

With 3.3 million members of many races and numerous lands in the north, the south, east, and west, we will soon close another year of development and growth.

The people are attending their meetings and looking after their personal responsibilities. The temples are increasing in numbers, and the work at the temples indicates great spirituality. The educational program is pleasing, with the university and the colleges, the

institutes and seminaries, and the ecclesiastical organizations of the Church all teaching. And knowledge is expanding and testimonies are deepening.

The construction program continues to expand throughout the land so that whereas many church buildings throughout the world are turned into bars or are boarded up and abandoned, we are building almost daily new chapels throughout the world, and they are filled with happy, faithful people.

We are not satisfied or boastful, but keep in mind constantly what the Savior has said to us:

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32.)

We must remember the Lord's great prayer:

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:15-17.)

Cleanup campaign

Now, brothers and sisters, we have launched a cleanup campaign. We are a throw-away people. Trash piles grow faster than population by far. Now we ask you to clean up your homes and your farms. "Man is the keeper of the land, and not its possessor."

Broken fences should be mended or removed. Unused barns should be repaired, roofed, painted, or removed. Sheds and corrals should be repaired and painted, or removed. Weedy ditch banks should be cleared. Abandoned homes could probably be razed. We look forward to the day when, in all of our communities, urban and rural, there would be a universal, continued movement to clean and repair and paint

barns and sheds, build sidewalks, clean ditch banks, and make our properties a thing of beauty to behold.

We have asked leaders of youth groups, auxiliary organizations, and priesthood quorums to give power to this concentrated action for beautification.

The Lord said:

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." (Ps. 24:1.)

"And I, the Lord God, took the man [Adam], and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it." (Moses 3:15.)

Therefore, we urge each of you to dress and keep in a beautiful state the property that is in your hands.

Again we are approaching an election. This is most important to us. We urge you to study the platforms and acquaint yourself with the candidates. Then pray to the Lord for guidance, and go to the polls and vote.

Polygamy cults

We warn you against the so-called polygamy cults which would lead you astray. Remember the Lord brought an end to this program many decades ago through a prophet who proclaimed the revelation to the world. People are abroad who will deceive you and bring you much sorrow and remorse. Have nothing to do with those who would lead you astray. It is wrong and sinful to ignore the Lord when he speaks. He has spoken—strongly and conclusively.

We urge you to teach your children honor and integrity and honesty. Is it possible that some of our children do not know how sinful it is to steal? It is unbelievable—the extent of vandalism, thievery, robbery, stealing. Protect your family against it by proper teaching.

Brothers and sisters, we teach all of our people to be loyal. "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." (Twelfth Article of Faith.) Be loyal and true.

Word of Wisdom

Perhaps one of the most distinguishing features of the Church is the fact that its people abstain from liquor, tea, coffee, and tobacco. Of course, there are some who apparently have not the courage nor the testimony to follow this program, but numerous thousands observe it strictly.

One of the many revelations of God through a living prophet was the 89th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, giving what is known as the Word of Wisdom. For 141 years now we have been practicing this great truth embodied in that revelation that we would abstain from wine and strong drinks, that tea and coffee are not for the body, and that we should not use tobacco in any form, that it is good only for bruises and all sick cattle. (See D&C 89:8.)

We noted recently of a community in Minnesota which set up a "D-Day" in which, through all their agencies, they persuaded people to give up smoking. In their January 7 "D-Day," they reported 271 smokers who gave up that habit. We commend such an awake community and its leaders.

Now after all these years, we find that many of the medical profession and others agree that numerous diseases are the result of the use of these things. I remember standing by a hospital bed of a good friend of mine, and I watched him die of cancer. His physicians said it was caused by the use of tobacco. I have helped to bury people who have been killed by the demon alcohol, and many other innocent people died because someone was driving who had been drinking.

The use of liquor has brought much sorrow, pain, suffering, death to innocent bystanders. Some social drinkers claim they will never become alcoholic, but how sure can they be?

Those who break the Word of Wisdom have strange and spurious excuses for the using of these obnoxious things. How can anyone ignore the

revelations given through a living prophet? The Lord reiterated it through another prophet and made it a definite commandment.

We deplore the practice of many business and professional firms and others who serve liquor as a part of the entertainment in their special parties. We are especially concerned that at Christmastime many celebrate this holy birth of Jesus Christ our Lord with a so-called social hour which surely must be an affront to him. Is it not a sad reflection upon people to have to drink to have a good time, or to take a stimulant to give them energy or self-assurance?

We hope our people will eliminate from their lives all kinds of drugs so far as possible. Too many depend upon drugs as tranquilizers and sleep helps, which is not always necessary.

Certainly numerous young people have been damaged or destroyed by the use of marijuana and other deadly drugs. We deplore such.

Sabbath observance

We call attention also to the habit in which many buy their commodities on the Sabbath. Many employed people would be released for rest and worship on the Sabbath if we did not shop on that day. Numerous excuses and rationalizations are presented to justify the Sunday buying. We call upon all of you to keep the Sabbath holy and make no Sunday purchases.

We hope faithful Latter-day Saints will not use the playing cards which are used for gambling, either with or without the gambling. As for the gambling, in connection with horse racing or games or sports, we firmly discourage such things.

Welfare program

In the welfare meeting tomorrow morning much will be said regarding the Welfare program. We regret that there are so many people who are shift-

ing the responsibilities of parents to institutions.

Some have become casual about keeping up their year's supply of commodities. We hope that there may be sufficient funds and commodities in the Church program to take care of the people for their emergency necessities, and we urge the people to do something constructive by way of reciprocating for that which they receive. We urge our bishops to be wise in their providing help, neither stingy nor overgenerous, and that the people who need the temporary assistance will be honest and fair and wise.

Should evil times come, many might wish they had filled all their fruit bottles and cultivated a garden in their backyards and planted a few fruit trees and berry bushes and provided for their own commodity needs.

The Lord planned that we would be independent of every creature, but we note even many farmers buy their milk from dairies and home owners buy their garden vegetables from the store. And should the trucks fail to fill the shelves of the stores, many would go hungry.

We believe in work. We remember the fourth of the Ten Commandments says, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work" (Exodus 20:9), and we are not sure that the rapidly decreasing work week is beneficial to mankind. We think the Lord knew what he was talking about. It would seem that we are play-conscious, travel-conscious, and our economy seems to be providing for the traveling public and the gaming public and the drinking public.

Waste and spending

We are also concerned with the great waste from our homes and stores and restaurants and otherwise. After the usual banquet, enough is carried out in the garbage to feed numerous mouths that have been drooling for a bite to eat in less-favored countries.

Many are starving, and we throw away much and waste much.

We have always encouraged the members to own their own homes. We seem to see a different brand of stability among those who own their homes. Analysts claim that hard times could come again. And we wonder what our people will do who have been spending their all and more. If employment and income should reduce, what then? Are you living beyond your means? Do you owe what you cannot pay if times became perilous? Are your shock absorbers in condition to take a shock?

Food costs are high, we know, but how much better off you are than if your employment were to terminate or incomes be greatly reduced.

Profanity and pornography

When we go to places of entertainment and mingle among people, we are shocked at the blasphemy that seems to be acceptable among them. The commandment says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." (Exodus 20:7.) Except in prayers and proper sermons, we must not use the name of the Lord. Blasphemy used to be a crime punishable by heavy fines. Profanity is the effort of a feeble brain to express itself forcibly.

We hope that our parents and leaders will not tolerate pornography. It is really garbage, but today is peddled as normal and satisfactory food. Many writers seem to take delight in polluting the atmosphere with it. Seemingly, it cannot be stopped by legislation. There is a link between pornography and the low, sexual drives and perversions. We live in a culture which venerates the orgasm, streaking, trading wives, and similar crazes. How low can humans plunge! We pray with our Lord that we may be kept from being in the world. It is sad that decent people are thrown into a filthy area of mental and spiritual pollution. We call upon all of our

people to do all in their power to offset this ugly revolution.

It is ridiculous to imply that pornography has no effect. There is a definite relationship to crime. Murder, robbery, rape, prostitution, and commercialized vice are fed on this immorality. Sex crime statistics seem to reflect a relationship between crime and pornography.

It is utterly without redeeming social value. We urge our families to protect their children in every way possible. We live in a permissive world, but we must make certain we do not become a part of that permissive world, that degenerate world. We are shocked at the depths to which many people of this world go to assert their freedom. We fear that the trends of permissiveness toward immorality are destroying the moral fabric of our generation.

Increase in crime

Governor Reagan of California stated: "In our humanitarian society we have safeguarded the rights of the accused. Nothing horrifies us so much as the possibility of punishing the non-guilty. But now we have carried this to an excessive concern for the guilty. We do not call him a criminal. He is a patient. He may be ill, but a failure of society; and since society cannot be tried for its crime, why should he take the blame?"

We seem to shrink away from punishing of criminals or the disciplining even of children. Crime in the United States is said to be increasing nearly nine times as fast as the population. One-third of our firstborn children in the United States in two tabulated years were said to be conceived out of wedlock. In one year there were an estimated 400,000 illegitimate births in the United States; and many other countries have like records. About half of the female dropouts from high school were pregnant. The ugly

estimates continue: More than a million American women each year resort to illegitimate abortions. This is one of the most despicable of all sins—to destroy an unborn child to save one from embarrassment or to save one's face or comfort. An estimated 8,000 women die every year from such consequences. It is reported that suicide is said to be the number one cause of death among the U.S. college students.

Moral austerity

One popular writer said: "Jesus Christ is not making a universal appeal today because of His moral austerity. Right down the line Christ gives offense by His moral austerity." He rebukes our acquisitive society. He rebukes our comfort-loving, take-it-easy philosophy. He rebukes our moral laxity. He rebukes our reliance on force and our rejection of love and of the royal way of life. Ours is a comfort-loving society. We equate comfort with civilization. Thanks to our Heavenly Father and his Son that the program is austere.

Paul identified it:

"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." (Titus 1:15-16.)

The home is the teaching situation. Every father should talk to his son, every mother to her daughter. Then it would leave them totally without excuse should they ignore the counsel they have received.

Cleanliness of mind and body

The number of parents who go astray astounds us. The numbers of divorces that were the result, in whole or part, of the infidelity bring us back to our basic theme as quoted in the Doctrine and Covenants:

"Thou shalt not . . . commit adultery, . . . nor do anything like unto it." (D&C 59:6.)

We say to all: Stay clean in mind and body, and let nothing lead you into the bypaths which will bring ruin and great distress to you. As the Lord said:

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. 5: 27-28.)

Now the lust of the heart and the lust of the eyes and the lust of the body bring us to the major sin. Let every man remain at home with his affections. Let every woman sustain her husband and keep her heart where it belongs—at home with her family. Let every youth keep himself from the compromising approaches and then with great control save himself from the degrading and life-damaging experience of sexual impurity. There must be an early and total and continuing repentance.

Sin of homosexuality

Every form of homosexuality is sin. Pornography is one of the approaches to that transgression. There is no halfway.

Some people are ignorant or vicious and apparently attempting to destroy the concept of masculinity and femininity. More and more girls dress, groom, and act like men. More and more men dress, groom, and act like women. The high purposes of life are damaged and destroyed by the growing unisex theory. God made man in his own image, male and female made he them. With relatively few accidents of nature, we are born male or female. The Lord knew best. Certainly, men and women who would change their sex status will answer to their Maker.

We hope this is another trumpet call. President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., said: "Our very civilization itself is

based upon chastity, the sanctity of marriage, and the holiness of the home. Destroy these and Christian man becomes a brute." (*Conference Report*, Oct. 1938, p. 137.)

Beloved brothers and sisters, you are facing a trial of your faith. Will you listen to your leaders?

Sanctity of marriage

Not all sins of this permissive world are with the youth. I was shocked recently when I read a magazine article. The man spoke of marriage as a legalistic, paper-signing institution, and said: "It should be abolished. Without the social pressures in the state, it could be utopia." He asked the woman. She said: "Marriage should be done away with. I already know people who are living quietly together without marriage, but I haven't yet seen the effect of this on children as they grow up in such a society."

These are not the only ones who are advocating living together without marriage. We call this to the attention of our people with all the strength we possess.

We say again: We members of the Church marry. All normal people should marry. (There could be a few exceptions.) All normal married couples should become parents. We remember the scripture which says:

"Whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man.

"Wherefore, it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation." (D&C 49:15-16.)

The earth cannot justify nor continue its life without marriage and the family. Sex without marriage, for all people, young or older, is an abomination to the Lord, and it is most unfortunate that many people have blinded their eyes to these great truths.

We have discoursed many times about these worldly and pernicious

things. May we quickly and firmly mention other things which we must avoid if we hope for the Lord to bless us.

Broken homes

Husbands and wives should love and cherish their spouses. They must not break up their homes with divorce, and especially through infidelity and immorality.

A higher and higher percentage of children grow up with only one parent. This is certainly not the way of the Lord. He expected for a father and a mother to rear their children. Certainly any who deprive their children of a parent will have some very stiff questions to answer. The Lord used parents in the plural and said if children were not properly trained "the sin be upon the heads of the parents." (D&C 68:25.) That makes it a bit hard to justify broken homes. Numerous of the divorces are the result of selfishness. The day of judgment is approaching, and parents who abandon their families will find that excuses and rationalizations will hardly satisfy the Great Judge.

Church teachings

May we repeat: Sex perversions of men and women can never replenish the earth and are definitely sin without excuse, and rationalizations are very weak; God will not tolerate it.

As to abortions, we deplore the report of a million unborn children who will lose their lives in this country this year. Certainly the women who yield to this ugly sin and the sin which often generated it, and those who assist them, should remember that retribution is *sure*. It is *sure*.

We marry for eternity. We are serious about this. We become parents and bring wanted children into the world and rear and train them to righteousness.

We are aghast at the reports of young people going to surgery to limit

their families and the reputed number of parents who encourage this vascotomy. Remember that the coming of the Lord approaches, and some difficult-to-answer questions will be asked by a divine Judge who will be hard to satisfy with silly explanations and rationalizations. He will judge justly, you may be sure.

Why do we take our destiny in our own hands? From the building of the first colonial cabin, the home and family have been the center of true civilization. Any distortion of the God-given program will bring dire consequences. The families worked together, played together, and worshiped God together.

God will not be mocked

Could it be possible that many of us, like a cork in a stream, have been swept off our destiny line by false concepts, perilous ways, and doctrines of devils? By whom are we enticed? Have we accepted the easy way and veered off from the "strait and narrow" way to the easy and comfortable way and the broad way which leads to sorrowful ends? (See Matt. 7:13-14.) We know better than we do. Will you listen? Will you follow the advice and counsel of your leaders, local and general? Or will you choose your own paths though they lead you into the dark wilderness?

God bless you, our beloved people. Listen to the words of heaven. God is true. He is just. He is a righteous judge, but justice must come before sympathy and forgiveness and mercy.

Remember, God is in his heavens. He knew what he was doing when he

organized the earth. He knows what he is doing now. Those of us who break his commandments will regret and suffer in remorse and pain. God will not be mocked. Man has his free agency, it is sure, but remember, **GOD WILL NOT BE MOCKED.** (See D&C 63:58.)

Our counsel then to you is to live strictly the laws of your Heavenly Father. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Following President Kimball's sermon, the Tabernacle Choir without announcement sang the hymn, "How Firm a Foundation."

President Spencer W. Kimball

From the Tabernacle Choir we have heard "How Firm a Foundation." The choir will continue now with a beloved anthem, "Brother James' Air."

Following the singing, Elder Loren C. Dunn of the First Council of Seventy will address us.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the number "Brother James' Air."

President Kimball

We will now hear from Elder Loren C. Dunn of the First Council of Seventy.

Elder Loren C. Dunn

Of the First Council of the Seventy

What a beautiful spirit of peace this Tabernacle Choir has established for us in that last song. It is an honor to be at this conference this morning, my

brothers and sisters, and to receive the instructions and direction from the prophet of God. I bear testimony to the fact that President Kimball is a prophet