

they carry, and every person who has an honest desire for the truth will learn to know the true and living God and that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of all mankind by his atoning sacrifice, if he will give heed to the message. May the faith of each of us be strengthened by conscientious effort, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

Elder William Grant Bangarter, newly sustained as an Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, will now address us.

Elder William Grant Bangarter

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

I feel like the young mother who was being wheeled into the delivery room and said, "I don't believe I'll go through with it."

The brief interview my wife and I had the other day with President Kimball indicated that the service that we have enjoyed in the years past now has the expectation of being expanded so that we may have contact, and hopefully influence, throughout the entire world. It's amazing to the two of us how suddenly, in the space of a few brief moments, the greater part of our personal plans, ambitions, and world desires has been swept away, never to return in this life.

Qualifications

I wakened one morning many years ago with the realization that it was my 35th birthday, and the thought crossed my mind, "You are now old enough to be President of the United States." Then the second thought came right behind it, humbling, and said, "Yes, and that is the only qualification you have."

My one qualification today, possessed and treasured by all Latter-day Saints, is a sweet assurance given to me by the Holy Ghost that God really does live—the knowledge that I have talked with him in prayer and that he

has answered me many times and given me the influence of his Holy Spirit.

On an occasion, again many years ago, when I was called to be a stake president, Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve interviewed me searchingly as to my worthiness to serve, and he persisted with one question: "Brother Bangarter, do you believe the gospel?"

I responded that I did insofar as I understood it.

He said, "No, I mean do you believe the gospel according to President Joseph Fielding Smith?"

Most of you know that because of the strictness with which President Smith taught the doctrines of the gospel, this was a question that could separate the sheep from the goats. I am grateful that there has been an influence in my life near to me which has made it easy for me to accept the great truth that the gospel really has been restored in the last days to the earth, and that the president of this Church is in reality a prophet of God with the priesthood and the authority of Jesus Christ to organize his kingdom and direct it here on earth.

Perhaps some of my qualifications are adequate. I am by trade a carpenter. I remember how Brother James E. Faust said a short time ago that he had to repent of being a lawyer to take this position. I don't feel the need to repent

of that, but I have been repenting just the same.

Influence of loved ones

I know that my parents reared me and all of their eleven children to be worthy of this or any other calling of service. I have felt since childhood that my mother, who is a great soul, carried with her the spirit of Hannah, the mother of Samuel of olden time—that whatever else her children might become, she had already dedicated them to the Lord and to his service. We were raised to go on missions, to work hard, to pray often, and to give our lives over to service. More than all other people put together, the influence of my parents has led me to this position. William H. Bangerter and Isabel Bowden are sacred names to me, as are, in connection with them, my brothers and sisters and other relatives.

No one's life belongs to him alone. My circle of close friends and loved ones encompasses the earth and includes many who are now departed, beginning with my dear wife Mildred, who went years ago into eternal life, who gave us our first four children, one of whom is with her. And my wife and beloved companion Geraldine, a partner and a miracle worker. She was described, in my feelings, by Elder Perry in his wonderful testimony yesterday. She has added seven other children to our family—all vibrant, loving, and devoted to each other and to us—and our lives are very rich. Six of them are waiting for us to return to Europe. Others in our circle include childhood and youthful companions; great missionary companions; and I must refer again to Brother Faust, who labored with me in the mission field; fellow workers in Church service in bishoprics, stake and mission presidencies, high councils—their numbers so vast now I can hardly recall; these beloved associates who are Regional Representatives, many who have been released, and the General Authorities of

the Church with whom I have had the privilege to associate from time to time, sometimes on a close personal basis; many others in and out of the Church to whom we owe so much. And I would especially like to mention the tremendous experience that has been from time to time a part of my life over many years to associate and labor among the people in Brazil. Their representatives are here today, and it is difficult to describe how much I have enjoyed and loved my association with them, and now with others across the sea. There are many hundreds of missionaries who have been close to us as if they were our own family, and we appreciate and love each of them.

Testimony of a prophet

Brother Peter Mourik, who gives devoted service to the Church as the real estate agent in Europe, was telling us the other day that while he was sitting on an airplane ready to depart, a woman, who appeared to be wealthy, entered and took the only remaining seat next to him. Since the man in the seat ahead was bathing them in clouds of cigar smoke, Brother Mourik commented to the woman, "I hope to see the day when I can enter an airplane without the necessity of being suffocated by tobacco smoke."

The woman replied, "Amen to that."

Then without further thought or reason—this was several years ago—Brother Mourik said, "Joseph Fielding Smith is a prophet of God."

The woman turned to him and repeated almost to herself, "Joseph Fielding Smith is a prophet of God? Joseph Fielding Smith is a prophet of God? Now I remember," she said. "I was sitting looking at television and there was some sort of conference or religious assembly taking place, and I saw this old man speaking, and he looked right at me. He told me to repent of my sins and to keep the commandments of God. I think they said his name was Joseph Fielding Smith."

A prophet to the whole earth

By such power the Spirit of God moves among men, and so now I must tell you, realizing that what I say may be reaching many tens of thousands of people, that Spencer W. Kimball, now in the place of Joseph Fielding Smith and other prophets who have died, is a prophet of God. I can say this because when he was presented to the Church to become our president a year ago, the Spirit of the Lord said distinctly and almost audibly, "He is speaking as a prophet of God."

I know that as I tell you this the Spirit of the Lord also tells you that it is the truth. He is not merely the prophet of God to the members of this Church; he is God's prophet to the whole earth. And he has for us all the words of eternal life as he tells us again that the gospel has been restored and that we are in the work of building God's kingdom in the last days so that mankind need not be wasted and destroyed by the calamities and the destructions that have been predicted and will surely come to pass unless we repent and turn unto him.

I do testify to the truth of these

things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just listened to Elder William Grant Bangerter, who was sustained yesterday as a new Assistant to the Council of the Twelve.

The congregation and Choir will now join in singing, "Redeemer of Israel."

After the singing, Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve Apostles, will address us.

The Tabernacle Choir and congregation sang the hymn, "Redeemer of Israel."

President Kimball

Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Robert D. Hales, who was also sustained yesterday as a new Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder Sterling W. Sill

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

Tomorrow, April 6, 1975, will be the 145th anniversary of the establishment of the Church upon the earth in this greatest and final of all the dispensations. By direct revelation we have been informed that tomorrow will also be the 1,975th anniversary of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea.

Birth

But this is also the Easter season. Last Sunday we commemorated the anniversary of the initiation upon this earth of the universal resurrection. This is also the springtime of the year, when

all of nature is being reawakened into a newness of life. And I thought that inasmuch as this is a season of so many new beginnings I would like to talk to you about birth. However, I don't mean the birth of Jesus, nor the resurrection, nor the reawakening of nature. I mean your own birth and the great possibilities involved in our own human reawakenings.

Henry David Thoreau, an early American philosopher, once said that we should thank God every day of our lives for the privilege of having been born. And then he went on to speculate on the rather unique supposition of