

President Marion G. Romney

We have just listened to Bishop H. Burke Peterson, first counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. We shall now be

pleased to hear from Elder Hartman Rector, Jr. of the First Council of Seventy. He will be followed by Elder William H. Bennett, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr.

Of the First Council of the Seventy

We live in a world where almost no one knows anything for sure. The world seems to delight in jumping from one theory to the next, but that which was thought and purported to be the hope of the world only yesterday often turns out to become the bane of the world today. A miracle drug used to treat the discomforts of pregnancy was found to cause deformity in the offspring. The "war to end wars" merely spawned the next conflict. We seem to be eternally searching for answers in *new programs*. But of course there is no answer in a new program. We're looking for secret potions to prolong life, maintain youth, end suffering, eliminate fatigue, and abolish work.

Suffering is essential

Of course, if the truth were understood, the things that we're trying to get rid of are the very things we ought to have; suffering is essential. "Learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8); and how great it is to be able to get tired enough to sleep soundly. The glory of work cannot be overemphasized. The satisfaction of a difficult task successfully completed or accomplished is one of the greatest satisfactions that we know in this life. The fulfillment of old age, looking back on a full life, the serenity of understanding gained by long experience make old age a golden, glorious time of life.

No magic in programs

Yes, our society is one that is leap-

ing from one fantasy into the next, grasping for happiness, hoping against hope, with faith in some new program. But there is no magic in programs. It matters not from whence they come.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is being lionized today in many quarters. Articles like "Utah's Shining Oasis" in *National Geographic* (Apr. 1975, pp. 440-73) and "When the Saints Go Singing In" in the *Reader's Digest* (Apr. 1975, pp. 45-50) make the Church look *almost* as good as it really is. Also, the sincerest form of flattery has other churches copying our Church programs. The family home evening program is being copied by other churches, even down to using the same manual. There is a feeling that they can have the same results if they use the same program, but it will not work. The vitality of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not in the programs of the Church but in the doctrines of the Church.

I have a very good friend who served as a Congregational minister for over 26 years. He had one of the largest churches on Long Island, New York, at one time. He became acquainted with the Mormons by visiting Salt Lake City and receiving visits from Latter-day Saint missionaries in his home. He developed a great admiration for the programs of the Church, primarily *because* of the fruits he saw that were produced by the Church. So he thought to borrow these programs and adopt them into his own church, which he tried to do. But he found that they did not work. His statement to me was:

"It was somewhat of a jolt to dis-

cover that the genius of Mormonism was in its theology, not its methodology, and that the amazing vitality of the Church sprang from the commitment of its members to the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ received by revelation. It became obvious that *one could not have the fruits of Mormonism without its roots.*" (John F. Heidenreich, "It May Change Your Life.")

I am convinced that others who are attempting the same thing today will ultimately arrive at the same conclusion. The family home evening program, the youth activity program, young adult program, building programs, welfare programs, and Relief Society programs will not produce for others. The programs will not work for other churches. The magic is not in the program; it is in the theology. We can help them set up the programs, but we cannot guarantee them success.

Correct understanding of God

A correct understanding and testimony of our relationship to God is the foundation of success in the programs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The programs are inspired of the Lord, but only to those who know where they came from, who know why they are here, and who know where they are going after they leave this mortal life. These are those who have a testimony. In other words, those who know that God is our Father know that we are begotten sons and daughters made eternally in his image, and also know that because he is our Father, we not only call him Father but we expect him to help us to become as he is, realizing that children become like their parents.

Those who have a testimony know that the Son, Jesus Christ, is our elder brother. He is a god; however, he is not his own Father but a son of the Father, and the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind; the Mediator between God

and man. There is no magic or confusion or mystery in this.

Those who have a testimony know that God our Father doesn't leave us without guidance on this earth today but has given us a living prophet to reveal the mind of the Lord and the word of the Lord and the will of the Lord for his children today.

Testimony of the truth necessary

Those who have a testimony know it is the desire of the Father "that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world." (D&C 1:20.) Therefore, he has once again given authority to man on earth to act for him, and by this authority or priesthood man has authority to baptize, to lay on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, to heal the sick, cast out devils, speak with new tongues, and, in general, show forth the signs that Jesus said would always follow the believers. (See Mark 16:17-18.)

Further, they know that by this same authority or priesthood a man and woman are married—not until death do they part, but for all eternity, for whatsoever is bound on earth will be bound in heaven. (See Matt. 16:19.) When these truths are not only believed but indelibly etched upon the heart of a man, woman, or child by the Holy Ghost, then the programs that the Lord established on the earth to allow his children to grow in light and knowledge and experience become a living, vital part of the pathway to immortality and eternal life.

Programs require sacrifice

These programs do not run by themselves. They are made to work by people, and every program requires sacrifice, just as Elder McConkie has so eloquently said. It seems we are eternally having to do that which we may not particularly want to do to bring to pass the purposes of God among his children on earth. The real secret of the

success of the Lord's program here on earth, or anywhere else for that matter, is sacrifice.

"It [is] through . . . sacrifice, and this only," said the Prophet Joseph Smith, "that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. . . .

"For a man to lay down his all, his character and reputation, his honor and applause, his good name among men, his houses, his lands, his brothers and sisters, his wife and children, and even his own life also—counting all things but filth and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ—requires more than mere belief or supposition that he is doing the will of God; but actual knowledge, realizing that, when these sufferings are ended, he will enter into eternal rest, and be a partaker of the glory of God." (*Lectures on Faith*, p. 58.)

Church theology not passive

The theology of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is such that you cannot be passive. If Joseph Smith's claims are true, that God the Father and the Son did appear to him and did in fact talk to him and give him commandments for all mankind; if a heavenly messenger, Moroni (an angel of the Lord), did visit him and deliver an ancient record written on gold plates containing the fulness of the gospel as delivered by Jesus Christ himself to the ancient inhabitants of this land of North and South America; if John the Baptist did return on the fifteenth of May, 1829, and restore the authority to baptize and have it accepted by God; if Peter, James, and John did return to restore the Melchizedek Priesthood with authority to perform all ordinances and bind on earth and therefore bind in heaven just as though Jesus had done it himself in person; I say, if these things are true, then everyone should know

about it, for they were done for the blessing of *all* God's children.

Saints follow commandments

Many of the three and one-half million Latter-day Saints bear witness that they know these claims are true, and because they know it, they live their lives in harmony with the directions that come from the living prophet of God. When he advises them to hold family home evening, approximately 500,000 Latter-day Saint families gather their children about them every week to talk about the goodness of the Lord to them, their love for him, for their neighbor, and for each other. They strive to live so as to secure the blessings of a kind, loving Heavenly Father to themselves and their children.

Tithing has been an integral part of the Lord's program since the days of Abraham and before. Thus, the Bible scriptures contain abundant evidence of this eternal principle. And so, all churches that accept the Bible as their sacred record should live this principle, but none even approach that which is the norm in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Why do over 19,000 of our young men and women accept a call to leave their home, their family, their school, their friends, and go into the nations of the world, many times under very hostile conditions? Surely not for monetary reward (they pay their own way), not to secure position or power or worldly acclaim, but only to share the truth of the message of the restoration—the roots of Mormonism—with the children of our Heavenly Father. I ask, why do they do it? They do it because they know they have the answer to all the world's problems, *particularly man's inhumanity to man*.

Gospel is restored

It is the gospel, the good news, that Jesus lives and has once again spoken from the heavens. He has come again to

establish his church in all its fulness, even as Peter prophesied when he said,

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

“Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:19-21.)

Power of church in its theology

No, the power or vitality is not in the programs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is in the theology. You cannot have the fruits of Mormonism without having the roots of Mormonism, and the root is a testimony—a witness borne by the Spirit to our hearts. It is not the program, but *people* with a certain knowledge of God and their relationship to him burning in their hearts that bring about success in the activities of the kingdom. *This is the strength and vitality of Mormonism.*

I am a witness that these things are true. I know that they are true. I know that God is our Father, that he lives, and that he hears and answers prayers. I know and bear witness to you that Jesus

is the Christ and that he lives, that this is his true church, for he has reestablished it upon the earth in our own day and time through his great prophet Joseph Smith, wonderful man that he was, and that we have a prophet of God on earth today.

Yes, Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of the living God, and he makes the decisions in the church and kingdom of God and gives forth the mind of the Lord and the will of the Lord just as he has done in this conference.

I bear witness that if we follow the prophet, we will have blessings unnumbered and that the programs of the Church will work, for they will bring people to an understanding of their responsibility to their Heavenly Father as well as to their fellowman, and they will love to carry out these assignments. This is the church of Jesus Christ and he runs this church. I bear this record in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr. of the First Council of Seventy has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder William H. Bennett, Assistant to the Council of Twelve.

Elder William H. Bennett

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

A few months ago I read with considerable interest an article that appeared in one of the issues of *Scouting* magazine under the title “Be Prepared for Life.” That took me back to my boyhood days, and I remembered that I could hardly wait for the time to arrive when I would be old enough to become a Boy Scout. Finally that time did arrive, and I came under the influence of some very dedicated leaders. They taught me what it meant to say, “On my

honor I will do my best.” And I learned that the Scout motto, “Be Prepared,” meant that I should strive diligently on a continuous basis to try to so develop myself physically, mentally, socially, morally, and spiritually that I would be prepared for whatever came my way.

Those were choice days, those Scouting days, and I had the opportunity to participate in many exciting activities. They were teamed up with some very choice spiritual