

## Elder Mark E. Petersen

Of the Council of the Twelve

I cannot refrain, my brothers and sisters, from expressing deep gratitude to the marvelous musicians who have sung and played for us during this conference. I have been thrilled with the music as I seldom have been in a conference, and just for one I would like to say to all these singers and the organists how grateful I am to you. I feel you have made a marvelous contribution to this very exceptional conference.

### A message for the world

We Latter-day Saints have a message for the world. It is divine and declares to all mankind that God has spoken again from the heavens in these modern times.

As the Almighty thus spoke, he said, "Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof, for the Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior.

"Great is his wisdom [and] marvelous are his ways." (D&C 76:1-2.)

And he said, "The voice of the Lord is unto all men. . . . And the voice of warning shall be unto all people." (D&C 1:2,4.)

### New revelation of Christ

The crux of our message is that Jesus of Nazareth is Christ the Lord, the Redeemer of all mankind, the Savior of the Christians and the Messiah of the Jews. We affirm most solemnly that this same Jesus was the literal begotten Son of God, born of Mary, and that without him there is no Savior.

The Almighty repeatedly affirmed that Jesus of Nazareth is his Son and insistently commanded, "*Hear ye him!*" In these last days, as the Almighty gave his great new revelation of Jesus Christ, again came the commandment, "*Hear ye him!*"

So as Latter-day Saints we bring to you a new and modern revelation of Jesus Christ, and in doing so we pass on to all who will listen the urgent command of God the Father in which he says again, *Hear ye him!*

Our message is true. It is of vital concern to this troubled world. The Lord himself 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." (D&C 1:1.)

### The matter of credibility

When we thus declare his modern revealed word, there arises immediately in the minds of many people the matter of credibility. This we realize full well, knowing that the credibility of our message rests to a large extent upon the credibility of us as a people. With that in mind, permit me to tell you a little about ourselves.

We are a people committed to sobriety and good character, to honesty and righteous living. We teach virtue and chastity as basic cardinal principles of our faith. We advocate the stability and preservation of the home

### Family the cornerstone

To us the family is the cornerstone of civilization and must ever be. It is the foundation of proper human relationships.

We teach our men and women fidelity in its loftiest meaning. We believe that each of us is a spirit child of God and that the Lord intends that we shall so live that eventually we may become perfect, as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. (See Matt. 5:48.)

We believe the family was intended to become an eternal unit, to be projected beyond death and the resur-

rection into an everlasting and immortal life.

It is to prepare ourselves in worthiness for such a destiny that we teach this high standard of fidelity on the part of both husband and wife. We have but one single standard of morality for all. Our constant cry is "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." (D&C 38:42.)

### Fast-growing church

We are a fast growing people. Honest-hearted men and women respond as they hear our message. We now have a Church membership of 3½ million. Ten years ago it was less than 2½ million.

We operate a consistent missionary program. We now have 133 missions with congregations in sixty-two different nations. Ten years ago we had only seventy-four missions. Today we have 21,168 missionaries, mostly young men about twenty years of age. Ten years ago we had only 12,585. These missionaries give their full time freely and willingly for a period of two years, and they pay all of their own expenses. You may judge from this the sincerity of our convictions.

Our congregations generally are divided into what we call branches, wards, and stakes—the branches and wards being somewhat comparable to parishes, the stakes being likened to dioceses. Ten years ago we had 6,000 wards and branches, and now we have nearly 8,000. Ten years ago we had 412 stakes, the larger units; now we have over 700. They are found in nations from South America to Scandinavia and from Alaska to South Africa to Australia and the islands of the South Seas.

### A healthy people

We are generally a healthy people. Dr. James E. Enstrom of the UCLA School of Public Health reported in the Pasadena *Star-News* last April 9 that the

incidence of cancer among the Mormons is 50 percent lower than the national average. In Utah the cancer death rate is the lowest in America.

With respect to lung cancer, LDS women have only 31 percent of the national average, the men only 38 percent of the national average. For cancer of the esophagus related to alcohol usage, the figure for Latter-day Saints is only 11 percent of the national average for women, and 34 percent for the men. These figures are provided by Dr. Joseph F. Lyon, director of the Utah Cancer Registry.

The *Statistical Abstract of the United States* for the year 1971 (Bureau of the Census) reports some interesting figures in which Utah and the rest of the nation are compared. All states in the union are listed according to frequency of incidence of the diseases which I shall mention, with the states placed lowest on the list having the least number of cases.

For diseases of the heart, Utah ranks in 46th place; for influenza and pneumonia, 49th place; for cerebrovascular diseases, 46th place; arteriosclerosis, 49th place; cirrhosis of the liver, 45th place; bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma, 30th place; tuberculosis, 50th place; venereal diseases, 50th place; major cardiovascular and renal diseases combined, 50th place; diseases of the cardiovascular system, 50th place; vascular lesions affecting the nervous system, 50th place; hypertensive heart disease, 43rd place; other hypertensive disease, 50th place; infectious diseases, 50th place; complications of pregnancy, 46th place; infant mortality, 50th place.

When speaking of these figures for the state of Utah, it should be kept in mind that about 30 percent of the total population do not belong to our Church, but they are included in the Utah state statistics.

### Sponsorship of Scouting

Our Church has been a leader in promoting youth development through

the Boy Scout program, which we feel is a very effective organization for the training of boys of all nations, creeds, and peoples.

In the United States as a whole, only 23 percent of the available boys of Scout age are registered as Scouts. But among the Latter-day Saints the percentage is 85.

In the United States, 1.5 percent of the registered Scouts obtain their Eagle award. Among the Latter-day Saints it is 4 percent.

In 1974 our Church, as a sponsoring unit for Scouting, ranked second in the United States in the number of sponsored units. We were exceeded only by the Parent-Teachers Association. They sponsored 20,800 units; we sponsored 14,344 units. Following us came the United Methodist Church with 13,789 and the Roman Catholic Church with 11,734 units.

### Activity of youth

In this day of juvenile delinquency, we are greatly heartened by the fact that of the 256,000 teen-age boys in our Church, 70 percent are actively associated with the Church, and of the 238,000 girls of comparable age, 73 percent are actively associated with the Church. Think of this. Can you match this anywhere? Think of it. A half million teen-age boys and girls devoted to a church which prohibits liquor, tobacco, and premarital sex. Try, if you can, to duplicate that anywhere.

You will be interested in our Sunday School attendance. Fifty-nine percent of all of our little children are in our Sunday Schools every Sunday, and of the teen-age group, every Sunday 60 percent of all LDS youth are actually present in their classes.

### Emphasis on education

In our Church we teach that "the glory of God is intelligence." (See D&C 93:36.) We believe also that the glory of man is likewise intelligence. With this

in mind, we are strong advocates of education.

When Dr. Clark Kerr, chairman of the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, addressed the commencement exercises of the University of Utah last year, he said this interesting thing:

"Utah stands first in the nation in the total population ages 3 to 34 enrolled in school.

"Utah stands first in the percentage of the total population enrolled in school at every age level except ages 16-17, where Minnesota ranks first. . . .

"Utah stands first in the average years of school completed for all of its citizens age 25 and older. . . .

"Utah stands first in expenditures on the operating programs of medical schools per \$100,000 of personal income in the state."

And then he said this: "The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education surveyed the performance of higher education in each of the 50 states. It found Utah, unlike many states, to have no major deficiencies."

Remarkable, isn't it?

Then he asked, "Why has Utah done so well? It is neither the richest, nor the oldest, nor the best located state for educational development. If one could find its secret, perhaps it could be exported elsewhere. But this is not easy, for its secret, I think, is its history. Your early leaders placed a great emphasis on education." And he then quoted Brigham Young in his advocacy of education.

This educational background is reflected in the number of our people who have reached places of prominence in the United States, Canada, and the world.

### Accomplishments of Church members

Mark W. Cannon, in a discussion entitled "Mormons in the Executive Suite," said that a recent study shows that among the 471 leading business in-

stitutions of America, more of their presidents were born in Utah, in relation to its population, than in any other state of the union. Utah produced one such president for each 62,000 persons of population compared to one for each 205,000 nationally. Currently fifty-five Latter-day Saint men are holding positions as either president, chairman of the board, or vice-chairman of the board for American companies listing assets of more than \$10 million. Seventy-seven hold major positions in corporations with assets exceeding \$75 million.

Latter-day Saints have filled cabinet positions in the United States and other important positions in Canada. We have our generals and admirals in the military forces. Our people have served regularly in the U.S. Congress over the years, as well as in governing bodies in Canada. For example, in 1952 there were fifteen holding seats in the United States Senate and House. Now there are twenty-eight.

Latter-day Saints have served likewise in important positions on the Federal Reserve Board, the U.S. Customs Court, U.S. Tariff Commission, and in Federal Housing positions.

Dr. Harvey Fletcher, a Mormon high priest, developed stereophonic sound; another Mormon, Philo Farnsworth, developed television.

Mormons have been world presidents of Rotary International and Lions International. They have headed the American Medical Association, the American Bankers Association, and various scientific societies. Also they have held many other positions of importance in scientific research, business, and finance, too many to mention at this time.

### **Women's liberation**

Many people today are interested in the so-called movement for the "liberation" of women.

You will be pleased to know that Mormon women were the first women

anywhere to receive the franchise to vote. They were given this important right in the days of Brigham Young more than a century ago.

We believe that Mormon women are less circumscribed and are possessed of greater liberty than any women in the world. They understand the true meaning of liberty and justice for all, because it is part of their religion and is fundamental in their daily routine.

We have in our church an organization especially for women, operated and directed by the women themselves. It is known as the women's Relief Society. It has nearly a million members. Leaders of this organization have served prominently in the World Council of Women, and one of them, Mrs. Belle S. Spafford, recently served as president of the National Council of Women in the United States.

The purpose of this Relief Society organization is to provide compassionate service for those in need, but it also promotes the cultural development of the women, helping them to achieve their desired goals in life and to establish high ideals in the family circle.

### **New scripture**

As part of our message, we bring to the world a new and additional volume of scripture known as the Book of Mormon. We publish more than a million copies of this book every year. It is a sacred history of ancient America. As we speak of the Book of Mormon, we are sometimes asked if we use the Bible. Of course we do. We use the Bible as most other Christians do. We accept it as one of our standard works. But we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God, providing a second witness to Christ and his work in these latter days.

We believe in modern revelation and announce to all mankind that God has raised up new prophets who give voice to modern revelations for the guidance of mankind.

### Divinity of message

Our message is solemn. Our message is true. Our people are substantial citizens, law-abiding, intelligent, and progressive, as all who know us will agree. Our pattern of life, as you can see, is adequate and ample evidence of the credibility of the divinity of our mission and message. It is out of a background such as I have described that we do issue our great religious message to the world.

In this day of darkness, sin, and confusion, would you not welcome a new revelation from God, reaffirming his existence, showing anew the way to salvation, and providing a beacon as a light upon a hill?

We testify that God does live. He is the Creator of the world. We testify that Jesus Christ lives and that he is the Redeemer of this world. And we unitedly give voice to God's command with respect to the Christ: "*Hear ye him!*" There is salvation in and through him alone. And to this we testify in his holy name. Amen.

### President Marion G. Romney

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the General Priesthood Meeting, which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 7 o'clock.

The Sunday morning session will be broadcast by many radio and television stations in the western United States, and by way of oceanic cable received by members assembled in 105 chapels in England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, and Austria.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir Broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

We are grateful to the members of the Mormon Youth Chorus for rendering the beautiful music we have heard here today. Thank you for your presence and willingness to sing at this session of the conference this afternoon. The choir, with Brother Robert C. Bowden conducting and Brother Roy M. Darley at the organ, will now sing, "The Lord's Prayer" by Gates.

The benediction will be offered by Elder Rex A. Skidmore, recently released as a regional representative of the Twelve.

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The Mormon Youth Chorus sang the number, "The Lord's Prayer."

The closing prayer was offered by Elder Rex A. Skidmore, former regional representative of the Twelve.

The conference was adjourned until 7 o'clock this evening.

## GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

### FIFTH SESSION

The General Priesthood Meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 7 o'clock P.M. on Saturday, October 4, 1975, with President Spencer W. Kimball presiding and conducting.

The Combined Mormon Youth and Tabernacle Choir Men's Chorus with Robert C. Bowden and Donald H. Ripplinger conducting, and Roy M. Darley at the organ, furnished the music for this session.

President Kimball made the following opening remarks: