

ness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reprov'd, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;

"That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.

"Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without com-

pulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever." (D&C 121:41-46.)

What a beautiful promise! Blessed is the family that can look to you brethren as the vital conduit joining heaven and home.

I testify to you that I know that He lives, that Jesus is the Christ, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Bishop H. Burke Peterson of the Presiding Bishopric has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Franklin D. Richards

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

My beloved brethren, we are living in a most interesting and remarkable age, when the Spirit of the Lord is being poured out on the face of the earth abundantly; but it is also an age of permissiveness, tribulations, and unhappiness, when many men's hearts are set upon worldly treasures, pleasures, and affluence.

"Seek not for riches"

One of the great challenges facing us today is to develop sufficient wisdom, understanding, and inner strength so that we can live happily and successfully in our complex and difficult world and not be caught up in the mad scramble for the material things and pleasures.

Recently, two young people and

one older man have come to me and explained that, although they are successful in a material way, they are unhappy and confused. Each asked my advice as to how he could remedy his situation.

I told them that the Lord had already answered that question when he said:

"Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich." (D&C 6:7.)

I suggested that they probably needed to change their priorities in life and seek after wisdom rather than after so many material things and pleasures.

Priorities

The problems my confused friends

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have are, in my opinion, essentially the same as those that face the approximately 418,000 prospective elders. Basically, these prospective elders need to change their priorities and seek after wisdom rather than so many material things and pleasures. This must be one of the most vital growth problems facing the Melchizedek Priesthood and, for that matter, the whole Church today.

However, since the prospective elder program was announced in 1972, many thousands of prospective elders have been ordained elders and are active in their quorums. Likewise, percentages of activity have increased considerably; and so I commend you dedicated priesthood leaders for your effective approach to so many of our growth problems. Growth is a problem we can enjoy solving.

Work with prospective Elders

Now, as managing director of the Melchizedek Priesthood Department, I call your attention to the fact that President Kimball has asked us to lengthen our stride. I would like to suggest that one very effective way to lengthen our stride is to start working with groups of prospective elders and others rather than individuals.

One thing that most of these inactive brethren have in common is that they really do not know the doctrine of the Church. If they did, most of them would be active.

In my experience, I have found that a substantial number of these prospective elders are married to non-member wives. In such cases it would be appropriate for the elders quorum president to request the ward mission leader to have the stake or full-time missionaries teach the nonmember wives with the cooperation and in the presence of the inactive husbands. Of course, the home teachers should continue the fellowshipping of these families.

Teach in groups

In order to teach and reactivate larger numbers, I have found that teaching and fellowshipping in groups is most effective—in cottage meetings, so to speak. I have also experienced better results when working with groups that are compatible insofar as their age, education, and interests are concerned. With a little effort it is generally possible to get them together in compatible groups.

This missionary approach, in my opinion, should be one of our major efforts in accomplishing our objectives, particularly as study is so vital in obtaining a knowledge of the gospel and in seeking wisdom.

The Lord has told us to “seek . . . out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith,” and also to “teach one another words of wisdom.” (D&C 88:118; see also D&C 109:7.)

In studying the gospel, we learn of a preexistent state, we learn of the purpose of this life and of a life hereafter; yes, as the scripture promises, we obtain wisdom, and the mysteries of God are unfolded unto us.

Teach Church doctrine

Great emphasis should be given to teaching prospective elders the doctrine of the Church. In many instances excellent results have been achieved by many elders quorums in teaching temple project groups.

Inasmuch as many of the prospective elders are older men, some elders quorums have used high priests successfully in the reactivation process.

I can also envision groups participating in athletic events, square dancing, and many other recreational activities, all a part of the great reactivation program.

As a part of teaching, training, and fellowshipping prospective elders, we should involve them in Church

activities, even though at first assignments may be of a minor nature. I recall listening to thrilling stories where prospective elders and new converts were assigned jobs such as to raise and lower the chapel flag each day, or to keep the song books in repair, or to act as an assistant secretary in the elders quorum; and in each instance, the persons involved were happy and received worthwhile experiences.

Brethren, make certain that prospective elders and new converts have opportunities to become involved in Church activities.

Build the Kingdom

It might be interesting to note that frequently, even when we seek after wisdom rather than riches, the Lord blesses us with wisdom *and* riches as he did King Solomon. When this occurs, we have the great opportunity and responsibility to use our material wealth in the building up of the kingdom of God.

The prospective elder program is only one of the challenges so important to the priesthood today. Let me very briefly comment on others.

One of the great needs today is increased love and solidarity within families, and the family home evening program of the Church is designed, as you know, to help fill that need. It is our responsibility to set an example in our own homes and as home teachers to encourage and motivate our families to do likewise. All of you who are holding family home evenings can testify that there is greater love between the parents, between the parents and the children, and between the children. Let us continue to emphasize this inspired family home night program.

Minority groups

Another matter of real concern to us is that of the minority groups in the Church. Members of the majority

groups are responsible to accept the minority groups living within their area and to provide full fellowship and encouragement in Church participation so that they can receive the blessings resulting from such activity. Church organizations will also encourage and assist minority people to accept the majority and to join with them. The First Presidency, in a letter dated October 10, 1972, and now being reissued, outlines basic principles to guide us in this area.

Military Relations

The Melchizedek Priesthood Department also administers the Military Relations program. In the military, there are many strong Church members that set a course of righteousness and follow it, and, in addition, find time to share with others and provide examples of courage and integrity for many who sorely need that assistance. Yes, in the far reaches of distant lands, home teaching is faithfully performed. We are vitally interested in and proud of the examples and contributions of our faithful members in the military service.

Home Teaching

Home teaching is another priesthood function we are concerned with. The Lord has told us the duty of a priesthood home teacher is to "visit the house of each member, exhorting them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties . . . to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them." (D&C 20:51, 53.)

Brethren, let each of us magnify our callings as home teachers, and the families we visit as well as our own will be blessed and strengthened.

Priesthood MIA

Another Church function that we are vitally interested in is the priesthood MIA, which was organized nearly three years ago to meet the needs of the single

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adults—to help them feel that they have an important place in the Church—and to encourage their involvement in some phase of Church activity.

The elders quorums are responsible for the fellowship and activity of the single brethren, and the Relief Society for the single sisters.

Reports from all over the Church reveal that there is a great increase in the involvement of the single adults—both the young adults and the special interests. They are in home evening groups; they are doing missionary work; they are filling their lives with interesting, worthwhile activities and are lightening the load of those burdened with illness and many problems.

I have personally visited with special interest and young adult groups in many parts of the world and find that, in their respective areas of activity, they are more and more appreciating the purpose of life and are finding happiness and peace beyond their expectations. Much progress has been made in these functions and more will be made, I am sure, as a greater understanding of their needs is obtained.

One of my granddaughters had this to say about the Young Adult program: "The Young Adult program is perhaps the most outstanding program the Church has ever provided for its young people. Why? Because it has the potential to meet all of their needs, whether they be religious, social, educational, recreational, or individual needs. Most important of all, the Young Adult program changes lives. I have seen many quiet, reserved people, who might have otherwise gone unnoticed, accept callings of responsibility and blossom into outstanding leaders. Indeed, it is an inspired program."

Seek wisdom

Brethren, how grateful we should be to hold the priesthood in this the dispensation of the fulness of times. Let us again resolve to honor our priesthood and magnify our callings at all times.

In summary, let me say that regardless of our age, one of the most important questions we all eventually have to answer is "Shall I seek after earthly riches or wisdom?"

I know that my confused friends and all of us as we seek not for riches but for wisdom will find happiness, peace, and eternal life.

May we so live that we may be worthy of these blessings.

I bear you my witness that I know that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. And I know that the Prophet Joseph Smith was the instrument in the hands of the Lord in restoring the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness as well as the power to act in the name of God. I also bear witness that President Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of God. May the Lord sustain and magnify him, and may we also sustain him in every way, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Today the congregation sustained four new members of the First Quorum of Seventy. It will be our privilege now to hear from these brethren. We will hear from Brother Carlos E. Asay first, followed by Brother M. Russell Ballard.