

Elder Charles A. Didier

Of the First Quorum of the Seventy

My dear brothers and sisters, as we shared yesterday the great "spirit of '76 North Main," of the Relief Society, I would like to share with you the "spirit of '76" of the Europe West Area, and bring to you the message of love, of testimony, from the people of Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Switzerland.

Value of people

During my last move, and going through what is called the elimination process, I found one of my former students' notebook of international law. I had written in big capital letters on the front cover a quotation from Aristide Briand, winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace and one of the animators of the former League of Nations. It read, "The institutions are worth what the individuals are worth." During the years I had pondered many times about this truth as I studied or worked with different institutions like companies, governments, or even churches. And I thought that by the same analogy I could say that the value of a country depends upon the value of its people and that it will rise or decline according to the desires of its people.

America

One people, one country, has done more for the world than any other nation in history because of the righteous desires of its people. May I today celebrate with you the bicentennial of the creation of this country—a country that has a divinely inspired constitution—and praise the Lord with you for what its inhabitants were, what they are, and what they will be?

I remember as a child the stories about the generosity of the American people as they were told by my grandfather as I sat on his lap. With a gentle

and broken voice, he explained how our people were saved from starvation at the end of the First World War. My own first vision of this charity came when I saw my first American soldier on his Bren gun carrier the day we were liberated. He handed me a large piece of something to put in my mouth. (I found out much later that this something was called "corned beef"!)

I remember as a teenager reflecting on the sacrifices of the American people as I rode on my bicycle through the cemeteries not far from my home and looked silently at the thousands of white crosses in orderly lines, marking the graves of those who gave their lives so that I could live in freedom. I remember as a student learning how our countries of Europe kept their economical freedom thanks to General Marshall's plan; how our countries kept their independence; how so many countries in the world, struck by natural disasters, were rescued and helped.

Blessings

I remember as a young man receiving in my home two young men. (Strangely enough, they had the same first name: Elder!) They showed our family the Book of Mormon, a divine evidence of the Lord's care and love for his children. They declared to our family the message of the restoration of the gospel, the divine sonship of Christ, the divine mission of Joseph Smith, and the divinity of this church. Their message and their willingness to follow the prophet's call changed our lives.

I remember as a father, as a priesthood holder, as a mission president, how, thanks to your examples of charity, of sacrifice, of love, of dedication, of work, I learned a lesson—that the source of all blessings is God, through obedience to his commandments. Now I see the fruits of the seeds

you planted as I tour the missions and stakes of Europe, and I would like to share some of them with you.

Fruits of the Gospel

I saw the fruits of sharing the gospel and calling every young man as a missionary as I watched a young local Spanish missionary bearing his testimony in Italy. Another elder just recently called from the Paris Stake told his mission president, with tears in his eyes, that he and his companion had taught five discussions the previous evening in a language that he did not speak three weeks ago.

I saw the fruits of loving the message of an inspired prophet of the Lord to lengthen our stride when I listened to a branch mission leader in Brussels, Belgium, telling his priesthood companions that he was thrilled to know that fifteen families were ready to find new families and invite them into their homes to be taught by the missionaries.

I saw the fruits of sacrifice as I listened to district presidents striving to get better activity, attendance, and results to be qualified to grow into stakes.

I saw the fruits of work and dedication as I watched hundreds of members going to the temple, preparing for the coming area conferences, building the kingdom with a renewed spirit of service to their fellowmen. The complete list of the fruits would be too long, but you should know that your seeds fell into good ground and are bringing forth more and more good fruit.

Value of country

Yes, I remember what you have done and so do millions of people who looked for the light of example and truth. Today is already the past for many, and tomorrow wears a mask of fear. Today can still change tomorrow, but what kind of society are we build-

ing? What kind of a country will we have if we, as one people, do not defend ourselves against the assaults of evil? Was it not Moroni who took a piece of his garment and wrote on it, in order to keep his people from slavery, "In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom and our peace, our wives, and our children." (Al. 46:12.)

I said in the beginning that the value of a country rests upon the values of its people. For the people of God, for the people who want peace, for their women and their children, there is only one way, one church, and one Lord.

Choose the right

The way is to repent and obey the commandments of the Lord and be examples to the rest of the nations by listening to a living prophet. The church is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, restored by the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Lord is the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it is said, "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.)

This is eternal truth, and "whatsoever is more or less than this is the spirit of that wicked one who was a liar from the beginning." (D&C 93:25.)

Today at school, at work, or wherever we may be, the choice between truth and evil will be presented to us in many different ways. It could be by papers, posters, individuals, radio, television, conversations. A mental choice has to be made concrete by accepting or refusing, by dictating or obeying, by counseling or dissuading.

What are the feelings that will determine this daily choice? Love, passion, fear, courage, pride, laziness, or will? Are these feelings in accordance with our faith and testimony? The key to the righteous answer is given by a loving Father:

Keep the commandments

"He that keepeth his command-

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ments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things." (D&C 93:28.)

Obedience to the commandments must be the sole and essential condition determining our choices and thus determining our eternal life. Alma expressed it in a very clear way:

"I ought not to harrow up in my desires, the firm decree of a just God, for I know that he granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life; yea, I know that he alloteth unto men according to their wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction.

"Yea, and I know that good and evil have come before all men; he that knoweth not good from evil is blameless; but he that knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires, whether he desireth good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of conscience." (Al. 29:4-5.)

Future of the world

May we remember together to

"make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.

"Serve the Lord with gladness: . . . know ye that the Lord he is God: It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." (Ps. 100:1-3.) The future of the world is in the hands of the people, and following a living prophet today will determine our salvation. It is my prayer that, thanks to a great conference, we will make new resolutions so that we will be remembered forever and ever as one people who wanted to serve the Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Charles A. Didier, a member of the First Quorum of Seventy and Supervisor of the Europe West Area.

It will now be our privilege and pleasure to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve.

President Ezra Taft Benson

President of the Council of the Twelve

My beloved brethren and sisters, humbly and gratefully I stand before you today. I thank the Lord for the eternal principle of freedom, free agency, the right choice. I cherish patriotism and love of country in all lands.

Love the Constitution

This morning, I speak about the Constitution of the United States—that glorious standard raised up by the Founding Fathers. I want to pay tribute to those who laid the foundation of our Republic. I desire to bear testimony

concerning one of the most vital principles that makes the work of the founders timeless and inspired.

Every Latter-day Saint should love the inspired Constitution of the United States—a nation with a spiritual foundation and a prophetic history—which nation the Lord has declared to be his base of operations in these latter days.

The framers of the Constitution were men raised up by God to establish this foundation of our government, for so the Lord has declared by revelation in these words:

"I established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of *wise men*