

President Spencer W. Kimball

This is the semiannual general conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and we bid you welcome, you who are in attendance and you who are listening over radio and television, and we extend to you our love and our appreciation.

Growth of the Church

Since our last conference, beginning a year ago, we have held twenty-six solemn assemblies for the priesthood leadership in the regions of the United States and Canada, in which we have reminded the brethren of their responsibilities and their opportunities. We have met about 28,000 of the leading brethren of the stakes and missions.

We recently held area conferences at which we have met some 151,000 of our members of the Church. Since we began holding area conferences, we have spoken of the gospel and its blessings to a half million (446,691) people in many countries. In general, we have found the Church is healthy and moving forward.

We glory with you in the advancement made to 764 stakes and 146 missions and about 9,000 wards and branches, and we feel that the Lord is blessing our extended efforts.

In the numerous new stakes created all over the world, the new, young, and vigorous leadership has been ordained and set apart to look after the interests of the people. We are delighted with the way these local officials accept this new responsibility.

The young missionaries have continued to proliferate, and we now have in excess of 25,000 missionaries, mostly young elders of nineteen to twenty-one, with some young women and many older couples. We are grateful to announce that success has followed us, and an estimated 117,000 converts will have been added to the rolls. They are happy in their new

responsibilities as they have found a new spiritual home and have learned more concerning our Heavenly Father, and His Son, and the program.

We have about 183,000 youth in seminary and 88,000 or more in institute, or a total of more than a quarter million, including youth of every land and about 8,000 Indians and hundreds of thousands of other Lamanites. By the end of this year, we shall approach the four million mark in the Church.

It is estimated that it took 117 years, from 1830 to 1947, to attain one million members. Then it took sixteen years, from 1947 to 1963, to reach the second million members, and then nine years, 1963 to 1972, to attain the third million. It will probably take about four or five years to move up to the four million mark, and then we can guess what the future holds.

What does this mean to us? It means that if the people of the Church do real proselyting in their home wards that the number of converts could grow to astronomical figures and ever hasten the time when the Lord will be returning to the earth in his second advent.

We are very gratified with the growth of the Church, both numerically and spiritually.

I can remember when the people in the Church were getting only about 19 percent attendance at sacrament meetings. Of course, that included all members of the Church, children and infants, but it was very low. Today we reached the record when many stakes and missions have reached nearly 50 and 60 percent of their total membership in attendance at sacrament meetings, and there are many units that record a much higher attendance record.

Rescission of Extermination Order

Since our last conference we have had a delightful message from

Christopher S. Bond, governor of the state of Missouri, who advised us that he has rescinded the 138-year-old executive order of Governor Lilburn W. Boggs calling for the extermination or expulsion of the Mormons from the state of Missouri. Governor Bond, present Missouri governor, writes:

"Expressing on behalf of all Missourians our deep regret for the injustice and undue suffering which was caused by this 1838 order, I hereby rescind Executive Order No. 44 dated October 27, 1838, issued by Governor Lilburn W. Boggs."

To Governor Bond and the people of Missouri, we extend our deep appreciation for this reversal and for the present friendly associations between the membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the people of Missouri as it is now in effect.

In Missouri now we have five stakes in fifty-one communities, with approximately 15,000 members of the Church, who, we are confident, are law-abiding citizens of the state of Missouri. Thank you, Governor Bond.

Gardens

Our pride is great in the people who have listened and who have planted gardens and orchards and trees in the past months. From all directions we hear of gardens which have made an astounding contribution. A couple in Alabama wrote, "We had vegetables all during the year. We feel it saved us quite a bit of money."

One authority estimates there will be about 35 million home vegetable gardens this year, up from about 32.5 million last year, and he says that probably 41 percent of all American households will do some canning this year, as against 37 percent a year ago. Many of the numerous gardens are found in hanging baskets, in containers on stairways, on trellises, and in window boxes.

In Oklahoma a state university

makes 240 plots available to married students. In Long Island some 400 plots have been turned over to residents. In Pennsylvania some 200,000 plots were under cultivation.

One authority says, "I have my own garden and have found it's my sanity away from work."

We would add to the garden-orchard project the clearing of yards and homes. We have mentioned it before. Still there are numerous homes with broken-down fences and barns, outbuildings that could probably be torn down or rebuilt, ditch banks that could be cleared. We congratulate all who have listened and followed counsel.

From Frankfurt Branch, Germany, this comes:

"We are two families in the Frankfurt Mission, and we tell you about our garden.

"It was not very easy to find a piece of land in a large city like Frankfurt—it is a tiny garden—and when we rented it, it looked like a wilderness, with a broken fence, a broken cottage, and wild grass all over. It did not discourage us.

"First we made a new fence, repaired the cottage, and dugged the whole garden. In the springtime we planted vegetables and the neighbours told us that it would not grow. There is a little stream where we can go on our bikes hanged with cans, and this way we carry our water. We prayed to the Lord that he would bless our garden. The Lord did answer our prayers. Every kind of vegetable came. It is so wonderful to see the plants grow. We take turns now to go to our garden and water our plants. We are happy to have a garden." (Correspondence from the Pfeiffer and Waschulzik families.)

Pornography

Members of the Church everywhere are urged to not only resist the widespread plague of pornography, but

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as citizens to become actively and relentlessly engaged in the fight against this insidious enemy of humanity around the world.

Last year billions of dollars were spent worldwide on obscene motion pictures and literature. This smut is surfacing in bookstores, magazine shops, motion picture theaters, and unfortunately, in some department stores, food markets, and even drugstores.

We urge Latter-day Saints to get involved as citizens and fight obscenity.

We quote from an article in a national magazine:

"After years of inertia, more and more U.S. citizens are cracking down on sex-oriented businesses.

"Tougher local laws, many of them stemming from recent rulings by the Supreme Court, are at work against smut and vice. . . .

"A . . . High Court ruling . . . upheld the right of cities and counties to use zoning to eliminate adult motion pictures." ("War on Pornography Begins in Earnest," *U.S. News and World Report*, Sept. 13, 1976, p. 75.)

"Pornography degrades sex and humanity. Sex is an extremely delicate part of our human relationships. When you assault that and degrade it, you make it an animalistic act and it is an assault on our humanity generally.

"As that spreads, it has an over-all effect on our population. Obscenity is counter to civilization. It attacks our basic beliefs. It's an attack on the family ethic." (Larry Parrish, U.S. Assistant Attorney, in "War on Pornography," p. 76.)

To Moses, the Lord, as recorded in Leviticus, spoke plainly and forcefully against adultery in various forms, whorings, and homosexuality. The Lord told Moses these things were an "abomination." (Lev. 20.)

They are still an abomination. They still corrode the mind, snuff out self-esteem, and drag one down into darkness of anguish and unhappiness.

And so we say to you: Teach your

children to avoid smut as the plague it is. As citizens, join in the fight against obscenity in your communities. Do not be lulled into inaction by the pornographic profiteers who say that to remove obscenity is to deny people the rights of free choice. Do not let them masquerade licentiousness as liberty.

Precious souls are at stake—souls that are near and dear to you and us.

Sins spawned by pornography unfortunately perpetuate other serious transgressions, including abortion.

Abortion

Abortion, with all its heartaches, to say nothing of the destruction of life, continues to rise alarmingly. Last year in the United States alone, there were reported over one million legal abortions. That is nearly fifty times the number only seven years before, in 1969. One leading authority estimates that by 1980 there may be 2.4 million legal abortions. These abortions in many other countries are running similarly high.

Abortion, the taking of life, is one of the most grievous of sins. We have repeatedly affirmed the position of the Church in unalterably opposing all abortions, except in two rare instances: When conception is the result of rape and when competent medical counsel indicates that a mother's health would otherwise be seriously jeopardized.

Certainly the tragedy of abortion often begins with a visit to an X-rated motion picture theater or fingering through an obscene magazine. The path to the grievous sins of fornication, adultery, and homosexuality can begin, too, with the viewing of some of the sex- and violence-oriented programs now being shown on television, including network television.

We must put on the armor of righteousness and resist with all our might these satanic influences. The time is now when members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints must

take a stand fearlessly and relentlessly for the Lord's ways as opposed to those of Satan.

Bicentennial

We have recently celebrated the notable event of the Bicentennial with all other good people of this country. We have experienced an increase of loyalty to our precious land.

We remember Benjamin Franklin said,

"I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: *that God governs in the affairs of men*. . . I firmly believe this. . . that without his concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel." (James Parton, *Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*, Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1864, 2:573-74.)

Out of years of turmoil and tragedy, wars and riots, assassinations and wrongdoings in high places, Americans have recaptured the Spirit of 1776. We again had visions of our revolutionary founders and our immigrant ancestors. Great and consoling is the vision of free men and free women enjoying limited government and unlimited opportunity.

And as we move forward from the Bicentennial, we state with John Adams in the carving over the marble fireplace in the White House, "May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof."

No government can remain strong by ignoring the commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Honesty

Today is the day to preach honesty and integrity. Many people have seemingly lost their concept of the God-given law of honesty. Joseph Smith led us in saying, "We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, vir-

tuous, and in doing good to all men." (Thirteenth Article of Faith)

Our Creator said in the carved message on Sinai, "Thou shalt not steal." Again it was reiterated in the basis of the Restoration, "Thou shalt not steal." (D&C 59:6.)

In public office and private lives, the word of the Lord thunders: "Thou shalt not steal; . . . nor do anything like unto it," He says. (D&C 59:6.)

We find ourselves rationalizing in all forms of dishonesty, including shoplifting, which is a mean, low act indulged in by millions who claim to be honorable, decent people.

Dishonesty comes in many other forms: in hijacking, the playing upon private love and emotions for filthy lucre; in robbing money tills or stealing commodities of employers; in falsifying accounts; in taking advantage of other taxpaying people by misuse of food stamps and false claims; in taking unreal exemptions; in government or private loans without intent to repay; in unjust, improper bankruptcies to avoid repayment of loans; in robbing on the street or in the home, of money and other precious possessions; in stealing *time*, giving less than a full day of honest labor for a full day's compensation; in riding without paying the fare; and in all forms of dishonesty in all places and in all conditions.

To all thieveries and dishonest acts, the Lord says, "Thou shalt not steal." Four short common words He used. Perhaps He wearied of the long list He could have made of ways to steal, misrepresent, and take advantage, and He covered all methods of taking that which does not properly belong to one by saying, "Thou shalt not steal."

"Everybody's doing it" is often given as an excuse. No society can be healthy without honesty, trust, and self-restraint.

In family life, men must and should be considerate of their wives, not only in the bearing of children, but in caring for them through childhood. The

mother's health must be conserved, and the husband's consideration for his wife is his first duty, and self-control a dominant factor in all their relationships.

Family life is gaining ground. Some countries are coming to an appreciation for the children and family life.

We note that France has now repudiated that program which would limit life. It is said that if a couple's combined ages in France do not exceed fifty-two and one of them is employed, the couple can borrow \$1,350 from the government on demand. This is for the payment of rent, payment on a home, or for household equipment, with fifteen months to pay.

If a French couple has a baby before the loan payment is due, their debt is reduced by 15 percent for the first child, 25 percent for the second child, 25 percent for the third, and complete debt forgiveness for the fourth. In France the expectant mother is said to receive \$150 for prenatal care. This is a step in the right direction.

Home Evening

The family home evening is committed to the belief that the family is the most important institution in all the world. We must give preference in time and energy to that family and observe properly and conscientiously the family home evening.

The father presides in this home evening, with his wife assisting, and, with song and prayer and teachings, a solid, righteous concept of living is developed in the family.

The home is the best place to teach the gospel of faith, repentance, and honesty, and integrity, and cleanliness.

The living of the commandments and the close relationship of parents and children will greatly reduce divorces, discourage all other forms of evil and misunderstandings. The family is the basic school of virtue.

One cleric wrote:

"Indeed, where the family is weak, or where it has been destroyed as a vital institution, the moral breakdown is most obvious. Man is a weak creature who needs the support of good institutions—the family, church, school, the fellowship of work, etc.

"If the family is 'the first and essential cell,' social decay must follow its breakdown."

An American author wrote this:

"Throughout history, nations have been able to survive a multiplicity of diseases, invasions, famines, earthquakes, epidemics, depressions, but they have never been able to survive the disintegration of the family.

"The family is the seedbed of economic skills, money habits, attitude toward work, and the art of financial independence.

"It is a stronger agency of educational success than the school, and a stronger religious training than the church.

"What strengthened the family strengthened society.

"When the family falters, life falls apart."

From the man who sits in the chair of the president of this country next January, there will be high requirements for imagination and courage.

"There may come a generation that will incorporate the basic virtues with the world's compulsive thrust toward the future. We hope that 1976 may be the year in which the nation began to move on to the remaking of itself." ("America's Spirit Is on the Rise," *U.S. News and World Report*, Aug. 23, 1976, pp. 25-27, adapted.)

Our devotion to this program is attracting the attention of many churches and individuals and groups in the country. We hope you will never fail to hold home evenings and use them for training, teaching, and blessing the family.

Humane Society

Brothers and sisters, we bring to

your attention the Humane Society, which has established a special week annually: "Be Kind to Animals Week."

I had a father who was infuriated if he saw a man beating a balky horse, or kicking his dog, or starving his other animals.

Wise Solomon said, "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast." (Prov. 12:10.)

"He [God] causeth the grass to grow for the cattle" (Ps. 104:14), and the fodder for the beasts which serve man.

Even rest is provided for the animals.

"Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest." (Exod. 23:12.)

An old Hebrew saying warns not to dwell in a city where the horse does not neigh nor the dog bark.

Politics

Another primary election in this country has just passed, and soon a general election will follow.

We hope that you will go to the polls in large numbers and vote for the strongest, finest people who are certain to do the most to safeguard the rights and freedoms of the people.

We do not endorse candidates, but we hope you will vote for good men of character and stability—you to be the judge.

We hope our Church buildings and our Church organizations will not be used to advance the candidacy or policies of any of the candidates.

Lamanite Work

Our Lamanite work has been going forward. The American Indians and others of the Lamanites, 60 million or more of them in South and Central America and Mexico and the islands, are accepting the gospel.

The placement program goes for-

ward wherein thousands of Indian children enjoy the benefits of excellent schools and well-ordered homes. They continue on in university training.

We are told that there are some thirty-six missions directed largely toward the Lamanite people. There are sixty stakes, with more being organized, which have large Lamanite membership. There was a recent count of Church members among those stakes and missions exceeding tens of thousands.

Engineers, chemical researchers, medical doctors, lawyers, and many professional people are coming from among the Lamanites.

The Book of Mormon prophecy which promises "nursing fathers and nursing mothers" for the Lamanites is being fulfilled. Some 10,000 or 15,000 Indian students are being taught in the seminaries and other instructional institutions of religion, and hundreds of the more mature students are receiving their degrees from Brigham Young University, probably the greatest benefactor of Lamanite students among all higher learning institutions. They may then go into teaching, surveying, organizing, banking, and other service. We are very proud of our Lamanites. We hope all of our people will be loving and kind and helpful to all of the minority people who come into the Church.

Calamities

We express our affection and sympathy to all those who have suffered in great calamities in the past months. The flood caused by the breaking of the Teton Dam brought misery and loss and suffering to numerous of our good people. With its high wall of water, the flood took nearly everything before it. We are grateful that Ricks College facilities were just above the flood line and served to make a home away from home for many who had lost their homes and to furnish hundreds of thou-

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sands of meals during their dilemma. We are very proud indeed of the organization, the faithful work, the hospitality, and the self-sacrifice of numerous helpers in this great tragedy.

Our sympathies go out also to the flood victims in the Big Thompson river flood in Colorado, with all the loss and devastation it brought.

We have deep sympathy for those who suffered loss in the Indonesian earthquake, and the earthquake and tidal wave in the Philippine Islands, and the Guatemala earthquake. We have followed with greatest sympathy and affection all these catastrophic experiences and pray the Lord will bless and sustain those who have suffered.

Brothers and sisters, we urge all our people to "be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (D&C 38:42), to live the Lord's commandments, to do what is right.

May God bless you with His divine Spirit as you yield to the spiritual sermons of this conference by the Brethren. And with my testimony I close in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

At the conclusion of President Kimball's address, the Tabernacle Choir sang "God of Our Fathers, We Come Unto Thee," without announcement.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Today we shall present four additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to you for your votes.

General Authority Changes

In 1941, five high priests were called to assist the Twelve Apostles in their heavy work, and to fill a role similar to that envisioned by the revelations for the First Quorum of the Seventy. The scope and demands of the work at that time did not justify the re-

constitution of the First Quorum of the Seventy. In the intervening years, additional Assistants to the Twelve have been added and today we have twenty-one.

Commencing a year ago, brethren other than the First Council of the Seventy were called into the First Quorum of the Seventy, and at present there are fourteen in that quorum, including the First Council.

Since the functions and responsibilities of the Assistants to the Twelve and the Seventy are similar, and since the accelerated, worldwide growth of the Church requires a consolidation of its administrative functions at the general level, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, with the concurrence of the Assistants to the Twelve and the First Quorum of the Seventy, have felt inspired to call all of the Assistants to the Twelve into the First Quorum of the Seventy, to call four new members into that quorum, and to restructure the First Council of the Seventy.

You will see that these changes, which are reflected in the list of General Authorities to be read by President Tanner, bring to thirty-nine the total number in the First Quorum of the Seventy, thus providing a quorum to do business.

With this move, the three governing quorums of the Church defined by the revelations, — the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the First Quorum of the Seventy, — have been set in their places as revealed by the Lord. This will make it possible to handle efficiently the present heavy workload and to prepare for the increasing expansion and acceleration of the work, anticipating the day when the Lord will return to take direct charge of His church and kingdom.

President N. Eldon Tanner, first counselor in the First Presidency, will now present the General Authorities, general officers and general auxiliary officers of the Church for the sustaining vote of the conference.