

**President Marion G. Romney**

We have just listened to Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve, followed by the Choir singing, "How Wondrous and Great."

The Choir and Congregation will now join in singing, "Hope of Israel," following which we shall hear from Elder M. Russell Ballard, Jr. of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The Choir and congregation sang the hymn, "Hope of Israel."

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**President Romney**

To those of the television and radio, audience who have just joined us, we are convened in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this Sixth Session of the 146th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church.

We shall now hear from Elder M. Russell Ballard, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and President of the Canada Toronto Mission. He will be followed by Elder Joseph Anderson of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

**Elder M. Russell Ballard, Jr.**

Of the First Quorum of the Seventy

My brothers and sisters, my coming to conference while serving as a full-time mission president makes me feel somewhat like an army field commander who has been summoned home from the front lines to report on conditions of the war to the commander in chief, joint chiefs of staff, and other general officers.

**Struggle for righteousness**

The war is not a hot one where there are guns and armaments; but the struggle between the forces of righteousness and of evil for the souls of our Heavenly Father's children is intense, and the conflict is very real.

From my front-line position in the mission field I can personally testify that the enemy is well trained in the arts of eternal warfare. The army of the devil exploits all kinds of sinful practices, and promotes his cause through every kind of printed, audio, and visual means. Perhaps the most cunning of all their methods is the spirit

of apathy and indifference that they use to penetrate the minds and the hearts of mankind, to dull their feelings towards God, His Son Jesus Christ, and His church.

The great prophet Mormon taught: "Wherefore, all things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil continually." (Moro. 7:12.)

**Prepare**

Based on my experience, I believe that if the Saints and missionaries are to build up the Church at the much faster rate that President Kimball has called for, we must all strive to prepare ourselves to become better gospel teachers. I often see the great joy that comes into the life of the new member of the Church when he is baptized. At each baptismal service I am reminded of the tremendous amount of individual

preparation that is required by both member and missionary to bring about the conversion of one soul.

I have asked myself, "What can we as parents and leaders do to more effectively teach our youth how to defend the principles of righteousness?"

### Training

Better training and preparation seem to me to be the best answer. Realizing that I would need all the help I could get to give my first conference talk, I went to my wonderful missionaries and asked them to help me by answering a few questions about their pre-mission preparation. I think we may learn something from their answers.

My first question was, "What could you have done to better prepare yourself before your mission?"

My missionaries responded with comments like these: "I could have really read and studied the scriptures," "paid more attention in seminary and other Church classes," "learned how to pray and relate to the Lord," "started much earlier to build my testimony."

May I suggest to all of the youth of the Church that I believe you can come into the mission field loaded with knowledge about the eternal truths of the gospel—knowing for yourself that Jesus is the Christ, and that His church has been restored to the earth through a living prophet, and that the Book of Mormon is the word of God.

I like these words of Nephi: "Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do." (2 Ne. 32:3.) Young people, why not make the best investment of your life by spending more of your time now to study and learn for yourself the ways of the Lord? If you will do this now you will arrive in the mission field with the Spirit of the Lord as your companion, and you will be filled with the desire to en-

thusiastically and intelligently teach the gospel to the people.

May the Lord bless every one of you who will be a missionary with a clear view of your own self-worth, and the vision of your own important role that you play in this great work. May the roots of your testimony be driven down deep through your pre-mission preparation so when the winds of adversity blow upon you, you will be able to weather the storm and be able to make your very best contribution to the growth of this great Church.

### Role of fathers

I then asked my missionaries: "What could your father have done to better prepare you?"

Here are a few of their answers: "He could have taught me more about the priesthood," "taught me to understand that the priesthood is the power by which the cause of righteousness moves forward," "given me a father's blessing," "taught me how to budget my money," "taught me how to set and reach goals," "prayed with me and shared with me his testimony."

May I share a personal missionary experience? Shortly after we arrived in Toronto we were preparing the children to enroll in their schools. My five-year-old son was to start kindergarten, but on the first day he was afraid to go. My wife and I were concerned, and I was impressed to invite my son to come into my office and sit in what the missionaries call the "hot seat," and we would have an interview.

He climbed up into the big black chair, and I asked, "Son, how can I help you?"

I shall never forget as long as I live the look of real concern on his face. With his little chin quivering, he said, "Daddy, I am afraid."

I understood, for I knew he had left behind several friends of his same age, and so far he had found no one his age near the mission home. I said, "Craig,

Sunday, October 3

Third Day

you have a friend that will always be with you. Let's kneel down together and ask Him to help you." We did, and Craig assigned me to say the prayer.

The Lord helped Craig find his courage in this experience. Every morning thereafter we held our interview, and every morning I was assigned to pray.

Then one morning, about two weeks later, there came no knock at my office door—no special father-and-son prayer. He had found his confidence and made some friends, and I was the one that missed that very special experience each morning with my little boy. I hope that this choice learning experience while on this mission will remain with Craig and become a source of strength to him when he is called to serve the Lord on a mission of his own.

Fathers, you are the first-line priesthood leader, and almost without exception my missionaries expressed their love and respect for you. There is no one in the world that can prepare and train the future missionaries of the Church like you can.

### How mothers help prepare

To you wonderful mothers of the Church, listen to the response of my elders to this question: "What could my mother have done to better prepare me?"

They said: "Somehow Mom should have insisted that I pay more attention when she was trying to teach me about housekeeping—cooking, cleaning, laundry, bargain shopping, personal hygiene, mending, quick recipes, to name just a few." To be an effective missionary one must be spiritually in tune, but the temporal well-being of the missionary becomes far more important than perhaps most of us realize.

Mothers, teach your children to be sensitive and aware of the needs of others. Teach them to know and to practice basic principles of good human relations. May I suggest to you wonder-

ful mothers that you put your arms around your children, look them squarely in the eye, and tell them to learn these skills because you want them to be happy and successful on their mission. What son or daughter will not respond to the loving eyes of his or her mother?

### Church leaders

In the survey my missionaries expressed their love for their leaders and suggested that their stake presidents, bishops, advisors, and teachers could have prepared them better if they would have: explained to them in realistic terms what is expected of a missionary; had more frequent and in-depth interviews; helped them make their commitment to the Lord earlier; taught them from, and stressed the importance of, the scriptures; and taught them the power of a positive and enthusiastic attitude.

If our missionaries could be taught more of these principles before coming on a mission, I believe that their stride would be lengthened at the outset and the pace of the work would be quickened in the beginning, because they would start right out on the first day of their mission prepared to teach the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### Harvest is urgent

President Kimball said to the mission presidents that left for the field in 1974: "Evangelistic harvest is always urgent. The destiny of man and of nations is always being decided. Every generation is crucial; every generation is strategic. We may not be responsible for past generations, but we cannot escape full responsibility for this one, and we have our time and our generation and our missionaries and our great potential." (Mission Presidents Seminar, June 27, 1974.)

Our great potential is to prepare

the world for eternal living in the presence of our Heavenly Father and his Son Jesus Christ, and to do this we must teach the gospel to all the people of the earth. To you, our nonmember friends, please stop and take a moment to ask yourself: "Where did I come from? Why am I here on this earth? Where will I go when I die?" Today I have suggested to the members and missionaries of the Church that we all strive harder to prepare ourselves to be better able to share and to teach to you what we know to be true. We love you, and ask you to please listen to our message, for we teach the true gospel of Jesus Christ by the power of the only divinely recognized priesthood on this earth today. We can answer your questions, and we will place before you the evidence that the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth, so you can decide for yourself if we teach to you the truth. We will give to you the Book of Mormon, that you might read for yourself to know that this second witness of the Lord Jesus Christ is in very deed the word of God like unto the Bible, and it testifies to the truthfulness of our message.

## Elder Joseph Anderson

Of the First Quorum of the Seventy

Righteous Israel, ancient and modern, has always been a covenant-making people.

### Covenants in Ancient Israel

Ancient Israel worshiped a living God, a personal God, a God in whose image they had been created. In this respect they were different from all other peoples.

Another difference was the observance of the weekly Sabbath. Jehovah

### Listen to Gospel

My dear friends, no people on this earth are striving harder to prepare themselves to be able to effectively teach the gospel of Jesus Christ than are the members of this church, and we ask you to please take time to listen to the glorious message of the Restoration.

I testify to you that we are the only true church of Jesus Christ on the earth today, and one of our great missions in this life as members of the Church is to share the gospel truths with all of our Heavenly Father's children. May the Lord bless each one of us that our ears may hear and our eyes might be opened, that together we may learn to live the gospel and find the joy that only the gospel can give to us, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President Marion G. Romney

We have just listened to Elder M. Russell Ballard, Jr., of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Joseph Anderson of the First Quorum of the Seventy will now address us.

told Israel that other nations would recognize this as a distinguishing feature.

Jehovah commanded Israel that they should pay a tenth of their increase as tithing. This, too, was an important distinguishing feature of God's people.

The Lord entered into covenant with Abraham, stating that He would make of him a great nation and make his name great. He said: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all