

which can be critically important in his life. A young man who understands and is fully committed to the great principles of the Scout Law has his feet firmly planted on a path that can lead to a happy and constructive life. He will qualify for his own self-respect, and he will very likely form wholesome relationships with others and will establish an honorable family. If he is true to Scout principles he will be helped in forming a companionship with his Heavenly Father that will strengthen all the other relationships and aspects of life. It is our understanding and belief that Scouting is still strongly centered in these duties and principles, and that there is a determination in its present leadership to strengthen them further. This being true, The Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints affirms the continued support of Scouting and will seek to provide leadership which will help boys keep close to their families and close to the Church as they develop the qualities of citizenship and character and fitness which Scouting represents.

Again, I thank you sincerely for this award.

### **President Spencer W. Kimball**

Bishop Victor L. Brown, the Presiding Bishop of the Church, will be our first speaker this evening.

He will be followed by Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Supervisor of the Mexico-Central America Area.

## **Bishop Victor L. Brown**

Since I last addressed the priesthood of the Church, some very basic changes in the responsibility of the Presiding Bishopric have taken place. The First Presidency has announced that the responsibility for all youth programs rests with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and has given much of the temporal responsibility of the Church to the Presiding Bishopric. We as a Bishopric have enjoyed greatly our association with youth throughout the world, as well as with our associates in the Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women at headquarters. The fact that this change has taken place does not lessen our interest in or love for youth. We continue to feel that the youth of today are a royal generation with a great destiny and pray for the well-being and success of youth people everywhere.

### **Organizational changes**

We continue to serve in the Aaronic Priesthood as it pertains to the

temporal affairs of the kingdom. Within the past six weeks, I with one of my counselors have traveled to every area of the Church outside the United States and Canada presided over by a General Authority Area Supervisor. As we have become more intimately acquainted with the rapid growth of the Church in many countries, resulting in stress and strain on the temporal organization of the Church and its physical resources, we can clearly see why the Lord inspired his prophet to make the organizational changes he has in recent months.

### **The rock of revelation**

I believe herein lies one of the most important and basic principles we should all be aware of. This lesson is taught by the Savior as recorded in Matthew 16:13-18:

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his dis-

ciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

"And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock [the rock of revelation] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The priesthood we bear and the Church we belong to today are the same as in the beginning. They were restored by revelation to a prophet—Joseph Smith—and are led by a prophet today—President Spencer W. Kimball. This I know to be true. I am so grateful for this knowledge.

All of the changes that have taken place during President Kimball's ministry are the result of revelation, the same revelation the Savior referred to as the foundation stone of his church. With all my heart I, with my counselors, accept President Kimball as a prophet of God and accept his direction in all things, not only willingly but enthusiastically; and we encourage all faithful members of the Church to do likewise.

### Counsel of President Lee

President Lee on several occasions gave wise counsel with respect to following the living prophet. I should like to quote from one of his Brigham Young University devotional addresses:

"Now may I make a personal reference, which I'll try to treat in such a way as to preserve the confidentiality. It involved a beautiful, young wife and

mother from a prominent family. She had gone away from her home and was now in the East. She had gone out into an area where she and her husband had taken up with those in the ghetto, and she wrote me a rather interesting letter, and I quote only a paragraph: 'Tomorrow my husband will shave off his long, full beard. Because of the request of the stake president and your direction in the *Priesthood Bulletin*, he must not have the appearance of evil or rebellion if he is to get a recommend to go to the temple. I have wept anguished tears; the faces of Moses and Jacob were bearded, and to me the wisdom and spirituality of the old prophets reflected from the face of my own spiritual husband. It was like cutting out for me a symbol of the good things my generation has learned.' Then the letter concluded with a challenge to me: 'We are prepared for clear, specific, hard-line direction as youth. Wishy-washy implications are not heard very well here. We look to you to tell it straight.'

"I don't know whether she knew just what she was asking for when she asked me to tell it straight, but these are some things I wrote to her: 'In your letter you address me as, "Dear President Lee," and in your first sentence you refer to me as the Lord's prophet. Now, in your letter you tell me that you are saddened because with the shaving off of the beard and the cutting of the hair, which, to you, made your husband appear as the prophets Moses and Jacob, he would no longer bear that resemblance. I wonder if you might not be wiser to think of following the appearance of the prophets of today. President David O. McKay had no beard or long hair; neither did President Joseph Fielding Smith; and neither does your humble servant whom you have acknowledged as the Lord's prophet.

"The inconsistency in your letter has made me reflect upon an experience that I had in the mission field when, in company with some missionaries and

the mission president, we were at Carthage Jail, where the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph and his brother, Hyrum, took place. In that meeting there were recounted the events that led up to their martyrdom. Then the mission president made some significant comments. He said, "When the Prophet Joseph Smith died there were many who died spiritually with Joseph." Likewise there were many who died spiritually with Brigham Young, and so with others of the presidents of the Church, because they chose to follow the man who had passed on, rather than giving allegiance to his successor upon whom the mantle of leadership had been given by the Lord's appointment." "And then I asked her, 'Are you following, in looks, prophets who lived hundreds of years ago? Are you really true to your faith as a member of the Church in failing to look to those who preside in the Church today? Why is it that you want your husband to look like Moses and Jacob, rather than to look like the modern prophets to whom you are expressing allegiance? If you will give this sober thought, your tears will dry, and you'll begin to have some new thoughts.'" ("Be Loyal to the Royal Within You." *Speeches of the Year*, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1974, pp. 97-98.)

### Elisha and Naaman

Another important lesson concerning following the direction of a living prophet can be found in 2 Kings, chapter 5. It tells of a great warrior and servant of the king of Syria whose name was Naaman. He had contracted leprosy. He was sent to the king of Israel, who later referred him to the prophet Elisha. We read in verses 9-14:

"So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

"And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

"But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

"Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

"And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

"Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

### Following the living prophet

President Romney tells an interesting experience he had with regard to following the living prophet:

"One day when President Grant was living, I sat in my office across the street following a general conference. A man came over to see me, an elderly man. He was very upset about what had been said in this conference by some of the Brethren, including myself. I could tell from his speech that he came from a foreign land. After I had quieted him enough so he would listen, I said, 'Why did you come to America?'

"I came here because a prophet of God told me to come."

"Who was the prophet?' I continued.

"Wilford Woodruff."

"Do you believe Wilford Woodruff was a prophet of God?'

"Yes," said he.

"Do you believe that his successor, President Lorenzo Snow, was a prophet of God?'

"Yes, I do."

"Do you believe that President Joseph F. Smith was a prophet of God?'

“‘Yes, sir.’

“Then came the ‘sixty-four dollar question.’ ‘Do you believe that Heber J. Grant is a prophet of God?’

“His answer: ‘I think he ought to keep his mouth shut about old age assistance.’”

(*Conference Report*, April 6, 1953, p. 125.)

What a great blessing it is to live in this world and have ears with which to hear the direction from a living prophet of God—direction that can bring inner peace in a time of great confusion and difficulty. I pray that each of us will listen to and follow President Kimball, who, I testify, is the mouthpiece of the

Lord to mankind today. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Spencer W. Kimball

Bishop Victor L. Brown, the Presiding Bishop of the Church, has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Supervisor of the Mexico-Central America Area.

He will be followed by Elder G. Homer Durham, who was sustained this afternoon as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder J. Thomas Fyans

Young men, I should like to talk to you about your progress toward the eternities. One of the greatest opportunities of this life is the refining influence that comes into your soul as you make preparations to touch hearts when you are on His sacred errand as a missionary. May I suggest six things you might do:

### Preparation for a mission

1. Pray fervently to your Father in heaven at least twice each day—perhaps appropriate times would be as the day begins and as it closes. This will build a close personal relationship with him. Listen to these thoughts titled, “Proof”:

*If radio's slim fingers can pluck a melody  
From night—and toss it over a continent  
or sea;*

*If the petalled white notes of a violin  
Are blown across the mountains or the  
city's din;*

*If songs, like crimson roses, are culled  
from thin blue air—*

*Why should mortals wonder if God hears  
prayer?*

(Ethel Romig Fuller, “Proof,” in *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*, ed. James Dalton Morrison, New York: Harper and Bros., 1948, p. 407.)

2. Have your own personal copies of the scriptures. Young men, will you put forth sufficient effort to secure them?

3. Let these scriptures become worn and used so they will feel as comfortable in your hands as well-worn tennis shoes do on your feet. Study them daily. You may wish to resolve to read particularly the Book of Mormon within the next year. This can be done by averaging less than two pages per day. If you were to read four pages a day, you could within the next year read the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the New Testament. This would be a worthy goal to establish. But please do not settle for less than absorbing the Book of Mormon in the next year of your life.

4. Have a mission savings account. I hope this is only a suggestion to continue what you have already started.