

talking about husband-wife relationships), He makes this statement: "And if ye abide in my covenant, and commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood," and so forth. (D&C 132:19.) What do you think He's talking about? Is it possible that He was referring to abortion? Think about it! Is there more innocent life than that of the unborn child? And why is murder referred to when the Lord is talking about marriage? Conception is a contract with God that you will create a body, and He contracts to put the spirit of life within it. Any covenant of the Lord cannot be broken without a penalty.

Choose to study the scriptures. Learn what the plan of the gospel is. Become a part of it.

Choose to keep the commandments of the Lord. Be a part of His kingdom in preparing for His coming.

Seek the guidance of the Lord in making decisions, but use that God-

given right of free agency. Then you, too, will know, as I know, that this is His church, the church of Jesus Christ, and I so testify to you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Marion G. Romney

We have just heard from Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church.

We shall now be pleased to listen to Elder Ronald E. Poelman, who was sustained this morning as a new member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

He will be followed by President Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman

Of the First Quorum of the Seventy

The Savior of us all invites each of us individually to come to him and asks us to bring to him "a broken heart and a contrite spirit." (D&C 59:8.) Never before have I sensed the significance of that invitation and request to the extent that I do now. At the same time, I feel a surge of strength and renewal for which I am profoundly grateful.

I accept this calling with faith and hope. Like the little turtle who found himself on the top of a fence post, I know that I did not reach this place by myself.

Gratitude

To my beloved family, friends, teachers, leaders, and associates, I feel

intense gratitude and devotion beyond my power to express. As I review my life thus far, it seems to have been much more difficult and much more fulfilling than I could have anticipated. I only pray that the cumulative experiences of this life have prepared me in some way for what lies ahead. For now, I am called by the prophet of God to full-time, lifetime service in the cause of the Savior, and I have a sense of inadequacy which makes me realize that the preparation for this service has only just begun.

To President Kimball, the other General Authorities, and to each of you, I feel great appreciation for your sustaining vote, and I pledge to you my best effort in any assignments which may come to me.

Testimony

Nearly thirty years ago, in response to my earnest study and fervent prayer, the Holy Spirit confirmed to me the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, the Savior and Redeemer of each individual soul. From that conviction, and by that same Spirit, has followed the knowledge that his gospel is eternally true, that it has been restored to the earth, that the scriptures—which I love—including the Book of Mormon, are divine records, that Joseph Smith and his successors, including Spencer W. Kimball, are prophets of God, and that our Heavenly Father loves us indi-

vidually. For this knowledge I give thanks and leave you my personal witness that these things are true, in the name of our beloved Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Ronald E. Poelman, a new member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

President Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

President Ezra Taft Benson

Of the Council of the Twelve

While on a recent visit to continental Europe and Scandinavia, I had occasion to hold several press conferences with foreign news reporters. These reporters were somewhat informed and appeared amazed about the Church's growth and progress as measured by the increase of converts. I said to them, "We're grateful for this rapid growth in numbers. But we are even more grateful for the growth in faith and spirituality." I then quoted some statistics in support of that statement. When I first came into the Council of the Twelve in 1943, I said, the average attendance at sacrament meeting—our Sunday preaching service—was about 20 percent. Today worldwide attendance is about 41 percent. Youth attendance is 46 percent, and attendance in the Primary—our young children—is 67 percent. The growth, progress, and increased spirituality of the members of the Church is not just accidental, I said to them. It is the result of a rich program based on eternal truth.

Jesus told the original Twelve that

this would be one of the signs of the times. He said:

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24:14.)

Message of the Restoration

Today The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is extending the heralded message of the restoration of the gospel to every nation which permits us entrance through its borders. This is a fulfillment of the vision and revelation received by Daniel, the prophet, "Who foresaw and foretold the establishment of the kingdom of God in the latter days, never again to be destroyed nor given to other people." (Joseph F. Smith—Vision of the Redemption of the Dead 1:44.) He likened the beginning of this kingdom to a small stone cut out of a mountain without human hands but which rolled forward to become a great mountain until it filled the entire earth. (See Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45.)