

## President Spencer W. Kimball

My beloved brethren, it's a joy to meet with you this conference session. Before beginning, I should like to express my personal appreciation to this great body of men who have sung so melodiously to us this evening.

### Conferences

As we announced to the Regional Representatives yesterday, we meet together often in the Church in conferences to worship the Lord, to feast upon the word of Christ, and to be built up in faith and testimony. We hold ward, stake, area, and general conferences, among others.

In recent years some of our most inspirational conferences have been the area conferences held outside the United States. We plan, beginning in 1979, to hold some area conferences in the United States. Through these area conferences more members of the Church will be able to meet and hear the General Authorities. Two members of the Council of the Twelve and others will attend each conference.

To ease the burdens of time, travel, and money upon members of the Church, we have also decided, beginning in 1979, to hold only two stake conferences each year in each stake. One of these will be attended by one or more General Authorities, and the other by the Regional Representative. This will leave more time for stake presidents and other local leaders to do more in perfecting the Saints.

### Family is the basic unit of the church

And now, my beloved brethren, may I say something about the great priesthood responsibility of fulfilling our role of patriarch in the home. This role becomes more vital with each passing day, as new challenges to the strength and sanctity of the home arise.

The family is the basic unit of the kingdom of God on earth. The Church

can be no healthier than its families. No government can long endure without strong families.

Never before have there been so many insidious influences threatening the family as today, around the world. Many of these evil influences come right into the home—through television, radio, magazines, newspapers, and other forms of literature.

### Be alert as to what enters the home

Brethren, as patriarchs in your homes, be worthy watchmen. Be concerned about the types of programs your family is watching on television or hearing on radio. There is so much today that is unsavory and degrading, so much that gives the impression that the old sins of Sodom and Gomorrah are the "in thing" to do today.

There are magazines today publishing pictures and articles which likewise beckon to the baser instincts of men and women and young people. There are newspapers around the world which, seeking greater circulation, boldly flaunt sex. Some of our newspapers continue to publish illustrated advertisements which are basely provocative, inviting their readers to pornographic motion pictures. It is in such advertisements and motion pictures where seeds are sown for rape, unfaithfulness, and the most repulsive of deviant sexual transgressions.

Brethren, be vigilant on what enters your home through the printed word as well as the electronic media. Guard against radio and TV programs that degrade. See that only good reading material enters your home. Subscribe to magazines which enrich the mind and uplift the soul. There are many good magazines, including our own Church periodicals, the *ENSIGN*, *NEW ERA*, and *FRIEND*.

In some of the large cities of the world such as London, Paris, Tokyo, New York, and Sao Paulo, there are a

number of daily newspapers from which to make a choice. Bring to your home that newspaper which is most compatible with the teachings and standards of the Church.

Here in Salt Lake City, the world headquarters of the Church, we are also concerned. Certainly a powerful force in helping this city and state achieve its high standards has been the *Deseret News*. This newspaper has been a defender of our convictions relative to such moral issues as liquor, pornography, and abortion. It is vital to a safe, clean city and state, which are the heart of our growing, worldwide Church.

As the *Deseret News*, with the *Church News*, strengthens our city and state, our newspaper can also strengthen the homes of you brethren residing in this area of the world headquarters of the Church.

Brethren, by being alert to what enters your home, you can do much in helping your family seek that which is "virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy." (Article of Faith 13.)

### Devotion of priesthood leaders

I had a note one day from a little boy who said, "I know a man who is such a wonderful man, and his name is The Bishop." We always had a good bishop. We always loved him. There was Bishop Zundel and Bishop Moody and Bishop Tyler and Bishop Wilkins. I loved all my bishops. I hope all my young brethren love their bishops as I did.

It is a real joy to meet with you priesthood members at this important time of the year, a time when we think of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and his accomplishments and his service and his example and his great program.

He gave to Moses this: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

### Thatcher, Arizona

I take this opportunity to express

our appreciation to the leaders of the organizations and all who serve in this great cause of priesthood activity, for their devotion and strength and power and influence which is worldwide and affects the lives of numerous people. I have been trying to think of the ways in which my life has been influenced by the youth organizations. I cannot remember when I began, but it seems to me like I can remember going to the old Robinson Hall in Thatcher, Arizona, almost as early as I could walk. It was only two blocks from our home, and we could walk to and from it, and we crossed the Union Canal time and again. This big Robinson Hall was a brick building of rectangular shape, and an all-purpose building for the community dances, for the Sunday School and Primary, for all Church services, for the funerals, for celebrations, and for everything that went on in our little rural town.

One night this great building caught fire, and I remember the lighted sky and the columns of smoke and the consternation and excitement for all of us, for a big fire like this attracted the entire town and all came hurrying with their buckets to help put out the fire. We had no fire department, but all men and their sons rushed across the town at the earliest call of "fire."

He who gave the leadership sent all the men and boys to the canal bank and lined them back to back toward the burning building. Standing on the bank of the canal, the first man drew a bucket full of water and handed the full bucket to another man and he to another and back to the crackling flames in the building. The last man doused the bucket of water on the flames. Many buckets of water were thrown on the fire, but the fire was gaining and finally the walls stood out as blackened sentinels, and we returned to our homes saddened and defeated. It was many years before the fire department was organized in our little town.

This was the same canal in which I was later baptized into the Church, and

this is the same canal from which I hauled water to the trees and plant life about our home. I was the smallest of the boys, so I was given this work. We called the transportation a "lizard." Did any of you ever see a "lizard"? We made it with a Y-shaped tree limb. In the center we fastened a barrel and hitched one horse to the "lizard." I drove it to the canal, where I dipped up barrels full of canal water, then drove the horse one block to the home where I dipped out the water for the plants and flowers.

My father made a great effort to surround the new home with every kind of flower and save them in those late summer days when water was so scarce. It was also my job to drive the horses and cows to the canal for their drinking water.

Sometimes the late summer rains would wash out the dams and leave all the valley dry and the canals all dry. Then the older boys, my brothers, answered the call to rush up to the headwaters of the canal with their teams and scrapers and wagons to haul rocks and brush and gravel to fill up the dam again to divert the water from the river to the farms and homes.

Years later we learned to make the sausage dams. The sausage dam was a long wire mesh filled with rocks to fill the water holes of the river and divert the river water back into the canal.

Nearly all the boys and girls were baptized in that famous old Union Canal.

The Allred Hall, a frame structure on Main Street two blocks north of Robinson Hall, was used for many purposes, and I can remember going here to Sunday School and Primary as a little boy and to sacrament meeting, for it was here that I was confirmed as a member of the Church.

We moved again to the old Allred Hall and then to the Academy Building, which was our educational institution and headquarters for the Polysophical Society meetings as well as all community and Church meetings, for Thatcher

was populated almost entirely by members of the Church.

Then in 1902 we broke ground for a new stake and ward building in Thatcher, and I gave two dollars from my nickels and dimes for the building. I remember they dug a great excavation and then there was a long delay before enough more funds could be gathered to construct the building. This was on the way to the post office and the stores where I was often sent to get coal oil for the lamps and for mail and to take the eggs and other things that my abilities made possible. I would always run down into the bottom of this great excavation hole and then up the other side; but when the weeds began to grow big in this enclosed area and I once saw some skunks there, I bypassed the excavation, for I had no interest in skunks as pets or as companions.

When the new stake building—which still stands and is being used for stake and ward purposes—was completed, it had just two large, rectangular areas, one for the meetinghouse on the top floor and one for recreation, the latter being the basement. I remember we had wires strung across the building and cloth curtains between the classes. We could hear something of nearly every class that was going on and even sometimes see, if the lights were just right. I remember some years later when we of the basketball team of the Gila Academy did our practicing here and played our games, and I always took more than my share of the credit for the fact that in this smaller building with some obstructions, we defeated some high school and college teams while we were but a high school team.

I remember some of the teachers. We always went to priesthood meeting on Monday nights, and we deacons would congregate around the potbellied stove and there receive our instructions. I remember some excellent teachers in Orville Allen and LeRoi C. Snow and others in that place, and also formed some excellent friendships among other young men of my age. LeRoi C. Snow

of Salt Lake City was there in the bank, and he intrigued us as we became deacons with his many stories of the Red Sea, and the crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel, and Jerusalem where he had been.

### Sunday School

I remember going to Sunday School, and I believe that I received a great deal of inspiration for the foundation of my life in this place. We had opening exercises in the chapel above and then went downstairs to our classwork.

I remember some of the teachers who came so devotedly and consistently to give us "the word," and they taught me many things which are basic to my acquaintance with the Church programs and the doctrines.

My mother had a good voice and played the organ, and she and my oldest sister, Clare, sang duets. I inherited a little of the love for music from her, so I was always interested in the singing of the songs, and I generally raised my voice and sang lustily. I remember the song, "We Meet Again in Sabbath School." (*Hymns*, no. 193.) And we did meet again and again and again, all my life. And I remember when my mother died up in Salt Lake City when I was eleven, there had been a goal set for us to attend Sunday School every Sunday of the year. She died in October. I had never missed a Sunday School since the first of January, I had been present every week, and I had a difficult time to square myself with myself to miss the Sunday that her body lay in state in our home.

I really didn't understand then how hard these teachers labored to teach us, and how grateful I am for the great army of teachers in all the organizations of the Church who are so devoted and untiring to teach the children of Zion.

### Church hymns

And then, if sometimes we had for-

gotten the verses, we could all join lustily in singing the chorus of the songs:

*Join in the jubilee; mingle in song;  
Join in the joy of the Sabbath School  
throng.*

(*Hymns*, no. 177.)

The song "Love at Home" (*Hymns*, no. 169) we sang in our home evenings, which the Kimball family always held in the early days of this century.

I remember the song "In Our Lovely Deseret," which Sister Eliza R. Snow wrote. She composed many of our songs. I can remember how lustily we sang:

*Hark! Hark! Hark! 'tis children's  
music,  
Children's voices, O, how sweet,  
When in innocence and love,  
Like the angels up above,  
They with happy hearts and cheerful  
faces meet.*

(*Sing With Me*, no. B-24.)

I am not sure how much innocence and love we had, but I remember we sang it, even straining our little voices to reach the high E which was pretty high for children's voices. I remember we sang:

*That the children may live long,  
And be beautiful and strong.*

I wanted to live a long time and I wanted to be beautiful and strong—but never reached it.

*Tea and coffee and tobacco they despise.*

And I learned to despise them. There were people in our rural community who were members of the Church who sometimes used tea and coffee and sometimes tobacco. The song goes on:

*Drink no liquor, and they eat  
But a very little meat*

[I still don't eat very much meat.]

*They are seeking to be great and good  
and wise.*

And then we'd "Hark! Hark!  
Hark" again, "... When in innocence  
and love Like the angels up above."  
And then the third verse went:

*They should be instructed young,  
How to watch and guard the tongue,  
And their tempers train, and evil passions  
bind;*

*They should always be polite,  
And treat ev'rybody right  
And in ev'ry place be affable and kind.*

And then we'd "Hark! Hark!  
Hark" again.

*They must not forget to pray,  
Night and morning ev'ry day,  
For the Lord to keep them safe from ev'ry  
ill,*

*And assist them to do right,  
That with all their mind and might  
They may love him and may learn to do  
his will.*

And then we'd sing, "Hark! Hark!  
Hark" again. I was never quite sure  
whether the angels were limited in their  
voice culture as we were, but we were  
glad to take the credit.

One of the songs that has dis-  
appeared was number 163, "Don't Kill  
the Little Birds," and I remember many  
times singing with a loud voice:

*Don't kill the little birds,  
That sing on bush and tree,  
All thro' the summer days,  
Their sweetest melody.*

*Don't shoot the little birds!  
The earth is God's estate,  
And he provideth food  
For small as well as great.*

(*Deseret Songs*, 1909, no. 163.)

I had a sling and I had a flipper. I  
made them myself, and they worked  
very well. It was my duty to walk the  
cows to the pasture a mile away from  
home. There were large cottonwood

trees lining the road, and I remember  
that it was quite a temptation to shoot  
the little birds "that sing on bush and  
tree," because I was a pretty good shot  
and I could hit a post at fifty yards' dis-  
tance or I could hit the trunk of a tree.  
But I think perhaps because I sang  
nearly every Sunday, "Don't Kill the  
Little Birds," I was restrained. The sec-  
ond verse goes:

*Don't kill the little birds,  
Their plumage wings the air,  
Their trill at early morn  
Makes music ev'ry-where.  
What tho' the cherries fall  
Half eaten from the stem?  
And berries disappear,  
In garden, field, and glen?*

This made a real impression on me,  
so I could see no great fun in having a  
beautiful little bird fall at my feet.

And then there was the song that  
Evan Stephens wrote, "The Mormon  
Boy," and how proud I was when we  
were to sing in the congregation:

*A 'Mormon' Boy, a 'Mormon' Boy  
I am a 'Mormon' Boy.  
I might be envied by a king,  
For I am a 'Mormon' Boy.*

I liked this song; I have always glo-  
ried in those words: "I might be envied  
by a king, For I am a 'Mormon' Boy."

I liked the song "What Shall the  
Harvest Be?" because it gave us a  
chance to sing in parts.

### **Priesthood power, keys, and ordinances**

My beloved brethren, as I close I  
bear testimony to you that I hold the  
priesthood. You hold the priesthood.  
This is the priesthood that Elijah held,  
and the prophets Peter, James, and  
John also. They and their associates  
held the priesthood. But without the  
sealing power we could do nothing, for  
there would be no validity to that which  
we do. That's the thing that counts. That

is why Elijah came. That is why Moses came, for he conferred upon the head of Peter, James, and John in that dispensation these privileges and these powers, these keys, that they might go forth and perform this labor. That is why they came to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and the Lord said, "I will send you Elijah the prophet before . . . the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (Mal. 4:5.)

Why should he send Elijah? Because he held the keys of the authority to administer in all the ordinances of the priesthood, and without the authority that is given, the ordinances could not be administered in righteousness.

Salvation could not come to this world without the mediation of Jesus Christ. How shall God come to the rescue of the generations? He will send

Elijah the prophet. The law revealed to Moses in Horeb never was revealed to the children of Israel as a nation. Elijah shall reveal the covenants to seal the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. The anointing and sealing is to be called, elected, and the election made sure.

"I know that God lives. I know that Jesus Christ lives," said John Taylor, my predecessor, "for I have seen him." I bear this testimony to you brethren in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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The Choir sang, "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

The benediction was pronounced by Elder John H. Groberg.

## SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

### FOURTH SESSION

The Fourth Session of the General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 2, 1978, with President Spencer W. Kimball presiding and conducting.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the beginning of the session, the Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn, "Praise to the Man," without announcement.

President Kimball then made the following remarks:

#### President Spencer W. Kimball

We welcome all who are present this morning in the historic Tabernacle

on Temple Square in this Fourth Session of the 148th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also acknowledge those who are seated in the overflow congregations in the Assembly Hall and Salt Palace and those tuned to this conference by radio and television.

Elders James M. Paramore and F. Enzo Busche preside in the Assembly Hall and Elders Henry D. Taylor and Yoshihiko Kikuchi preside in the Salt Palace.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this