

Elder Robert L. Backman

Of the First Quorum of the Seventy

When I was three months old, the Salt Lake Stake held a great pageant here in this tabernacle. My angelic mother played the part of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and I had the honor of playing the role of the Christ child. I know I must have been much more comfortable at that time than I am now, probably because I didn't have to speak. But from that day to this, my beloved brothers and sisters, I have felt the Lord's guiding hand leading me and protecting me, sometimes protecting me from myself.

Blessings of Church membership

I've enjoyed such rich experiences as I've grown up and matured. As each one has come along, I've questioned, "Why me? Why has the Lord given me such rich opportunities to grow and to develop? Why has he provided such opportunities to give service?" I thank him from the bottom of my heart for the richness of my life, the happiness which I've enjoyed.

All of my life it seems that I've been surrounded by people who have built me and caused me to be better than myself, again, who sometimes have protected me from myself: my noble parents, who from the cradle have taught me the priorities that I ought to have in my life as they have sought the Lord first and foremost in their lives; a lovely, faithful wife who has sustained me in every calling I've received; seven beautiful daughters who think I ought to be the president of the Church; their wonderful husbands who are faithful and true to the covenants they have made in the house of the Lord; and delightful little grandchildren who are the joy of my life.

President Benson, in our seminar last Friday, mentioned the fact that the highest honor we could have is to be members of God's church, which I am; to know that Christ is our Savior, our personal Savior, which I testify to you I know; to hold his holy priesthood, which I do; and to be a part of an eternal family unit, which I am. I'm honored above all men. I'm blessed above all men. And I'm so grateful for this holy calling which has come to me.

I want to say to each one of you, my beloved brothers and sisters, that every blessing I have in my life, everything I hold dear and precious in my heart, I can trace to my membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to my love of the Lord, to the testimony I have of his divine gospel, and to the responses I've made to the opportunities of service.

Desire to serve

I rejoice now for the opportunity of concentrating my entire life to his service, and without reservation I lay my life and everything I have at his feet. President Kimball and my beloved brethren, my dear wife and I are prepared to go wherever you want to send us and do whatever you ask of us, and pray only that we might be instruments in the hands of the Lord to assist you dear brethren in your awesome assignment to build the kingdom of God; to sanctify his people; and to prepare the way when Christ will come in all of his glory and will take the reins of government, and Satan will be bound, and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that he is the Savior of the world, and he will reign forever and ever, which I testify in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.