

In the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Before hearing President Kimball's concluding remarks, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during the sessions of this General Conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the members of the Tabernacle Choir for again giving so generously of their time to bring us the beautiful and inspiring music heard at this conference. We are grateful for the lovely music performed by the Primary Children's Choir at the Saturday Afternoon Session and for the Prospective Elders' Choir that sang at the Priesthood Session. We are also thankful to their conductors and organists.

We also thank all who have contributed in various ways to the success and inspiration of this lovely conference, especially the General Authorities who have given such appropriate and inspiring messages.

We appreciate the attention given by local and national press representatives and by representatives of radio and television in reporting sessions of this conference.

We thank our City officials for the cooperation given, the City traffic officers for courteously and efficiently handling the increased traffic; the Fire Department and the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses, who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference.

We are grateful to the Tabernacle ushers for seating the great audiences of these conference sessions in such a courteous manner.

We again express appreciation to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in the United States, Mexico, Central America, and Canada; by satellite to Australia, the Philippines, and South America; and by shortwave to Europe, Africa, and Latin America.

We thank the interpreters who have provided translation for the sessions of the conference.

Our beloved Prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball, will be our concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing, "Come, Follow Me."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and President of the Texas San Antonio Mission, following which this conference will stand adjourned for six months.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Beloved brothers and sisters, wasn't it a happy moment when we were permitted to be here today to hear that beautiful testimony of Brother LeGrand Richards? and the four new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy who poured out their hearts in those moments they had? and to hear all the other brethren who have given of their rich lives?

Tribute to Primary

I should like first to pay special tribute to the divinely inspired Primary organization of the Church. It is just a hundred years ago that Bishop Hess, with the approval of the First Presidency, called Aurelia Spencer Rogers to organize the first Primary in Farmington, Utah. From that humble begin-

ning has grown a worldwide organization that has touched the lives of millions of people. I am confident there is not one within the sound of my voice who has not had his or her life influenced for good by the teachings of the devoted officers and teachers of this Primary organization. This past month I have received hundreds and hundreds of birthday cards. Many of them have been handmade by the Primary children of the Church. It is the humble Primary leaders who through their teaching and personal example instill in the hearts and minds of these wonderful little children, in their sensitive and formative years, love for the Savior, the Church, and for its leaders.

Primary helps little boys and girls prepare for their future great responsibilities as mothers and fathers and citizens of Zion. All that is taught in Primary is virtuous, lovely, and of good report, and praiseworthy. May the Lord continue to bless and prosper the Primary organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with all the other organizations who are doing comparable work.

I remember coming to this tabernacle as a boy from Arizona, with my father, to attend general conference. I was thrilled to hear all the Brethren speak. I have heard President Joseph F. Smith and all who have followed him up to now. I was thrilled at their utterances and took their warnings seriously, even as a young man. These men are among the prophets of God, just as were the prophets of the Book of Mormon and of the Bible. I do not remember ever feeling that these men pulled any punches or that their counsel went unheeded.

Do not reject the prophets

Various excuses have been used over the centuries to dismiss these divine messengers. There has been denial because the prophet came from an obscure place. "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46.)

Jesus was also met with the question, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Matt. 13:55.) By one means or another, the swiftest method of rejection of the holy prophets has been to find a pretext, however false or absurd, to dismiss the man so that his message could also be dismissed. Prophets who were not glib, but slow of speech, were esteemed as naught. Instead of responding to Paul's message, some saw his bodily presence as weak and regarded his speech as contemptible. Perhaps they judged Paul by the timbre of his voice or by his style of speech, not the truths uttered by him.

We wonder how often hearers first rejected the prophets because they despised them, and finally despised the prophets even more because they had rejected them. Even so, why else is the record of rejection so complete? The cares of the world are so many and so entangling, even very good people are diverted from following the truth because they care too much for the things of the world, such as the young man who had kept all the commandments from his youth up. He could not do the one last thing that Jesus asked: "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor." (Luke 18:22.) We read that he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions.

Sometimes people let their hearts get so set upon things and the honors of this world that they cannot learn the lessons they most need to learn. Simple truths are often rejected in favor of the much less-demanding philosophies of men, and this is another cause for the rejection of the prophets.

Poor excuses for not heeding prophets

But while there are various excuses for rejection, there's a certain cause for this sad record. It must not be passed over: the cares of the world, the honors of the world, and looking beyond the mark are all determined by a persuasive few who presume to speak for all. Paul had difficulty because there were no

leaders of thought among the Jews: Jesus was seen as a stumbling block, and among the Greeks, Christianity was seen as foolishness.

The holy prophets have not only refused to follow erroneous human trends, but have pointed out these errors. No wonder the response to the prophets has not always been one of indifference. So often the prophets have been rejected because they first rejected the wrong ways of their own society.

These excuses for rejection of the prophets are poor excuses. The trouble with using obscurity as a test of validity is that God has so often chosen to bring forth his work out of obscurity. He has even said it would be so. (See D&C 1:30.) Christianity did not go from Rome to Galilee; it was the other way around. In our day the routing is from Palmyra to Paris, not the reverse. Just because something is in our midst does not mean that we have been in the midst of it. We can daily drive by a museum or an art gallery but know nothing of what is inside.

The trouble with rejection because of personal familiarity with the prophets is that the prophets are always somebody's son or somebody's neighbor. They are chosen from among the people, not transported from another planet, dramatic as that would be!

David was the youngest son of eight. His eldest brother was peeved at the presumptuousness of David for even being at the front where Goliath taunted the armies of Israel. Those who were so busy being indignant with David missed the purity in David's indignation at Goliath, for the giant was defying the armies of the living God. (See 1 Sam. 17:28-32.)

David was a local boy and was ignored until he could no longer be ignored. The trouble with rejecting the prophets because they lack prestige is that Paul, who knew something of rejection, forewarned us when he said, speaking of the work of God, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not

many mighty, not many noble are called." (1 Cor. 1:26.)

In multiple scriptures the Lord has indicated that he will perform his work through those whom the world regards as weak and despised. Of course, rejection of the holy prophets comes because the hearts of people are hardened, as people are shaped by their society. Yet even when the hardening is swift, it can also be subtle. Who, for instance, a scant twenty years ago would have foreseen the massive use of abortion in society today, like all the diseased doctrines of the devil. The practice is pleasing unto the carnal mind.

Prophets have a way of jarring the carnal mind. Too often the holy prophets are wrongly perceived as harsh and as anxious to make a record in order to say, "I told you so." Those prophets I have known are the most loving of men. It is because of their love and integrity that they cannot modify the Lord's message merely to make people feel comfortable. They are too kind to be so cruel. I am so grateful that prophets do not crave popularity.

If we need a reminder of harsh realities and the dangers of duty which prophets face, Jonah gives us a glimpse in relation to his call to the exceeding great city of Ninevah, which took three days just to walk through, its size was so intimidating. (See Jon. 3:3.) One cannot read about the prophet Ether, warning the city by day and hiding by night in a cave, without marveling at his capacity to go each day once again into that hostile city. (See Eth. 13.) We read of Enoch who was called when but a lad. He describes himself as a lad whom the people despised and who was slow of speech; yet he did his duty in love and compassion with stunning success. (See Moses 6.) I marvel at the empathy of these men in all ages, because even prophets have no immunity from thorns in the flesh. They learn to cast all their cares upon the Lord.

The testimonies of the holy prophets of God have been written in the scriptures but also have often been writ-

ten in red because these individuals are the Lord's prophets. They help us to see the end from the beginning. The prophets have always been free from the evil of their times, free to be divine auditors who will still call fraud, fraud; embezzlement, embezzlement; and adultery, adultery.

Give heed to counsel

Now as we conclude this general conference, let us all give heed to what was said to us. Let us assume the counsel given applies to *us*, to me. Let us harken to those we sustain as prophets and seers, as well as the other brethren, as if our eternal life depended upon it, because it does!

Now may I make a few further comments to let you know some of my concerns for us as a people who live in such challenging times. May I stress again the value of reading the addresses given at our general conferences in the *ENSIGN* magazine.

Please follow the counsel you have been given in the past and maintain your personal journals. Those who keep a book of remembrance are more likely to keep the Lord in remembrance in their daily lives. Journals are a way of counting our blessings and of leaving an inventory of these blessings for our posterity.

The spring of the year reminds us, too, of the need to garden so that we can produce some of our own food as well as flowers to beautify our yards and our neighborhoods. Even if the tomato you eat is a \$2.00 tomato, it will bring satisfaction anyway and remind us all of the law of the harvest, which is relentless in life. We do reap what we sow. Even if the plot of soil you cultivate, plant, and harvest is a small one, it brings human nature closer to nature as was the case in the beginning with our first parents.

How can one see the slackening of traditional moral standards and not notice the decline in decency? As a boy I saw how all, young and old, worked and

worked hard. We knew that we were taming the Arizona desert. But had I been wiser then, I would have realized that we were taming ourselves, too. Honest toil in subduing sagebrush, taming deserts, channeling rivers, helps to take the wildness out of man's environment but also out of him. The disdain for work among some today may merely signal the return of harshness and wildness—perhaps not to our landscape but to some people. The dignity and self-esteem that honest work produces are essential to happiness. It is so easy for leisure to turn into laziness.

Avoid immorality

How can one witness so many of those who ought to be good examples becoming bad examples and not cry out? Those who seem to flout the institution of marriage, and who regard chastity before marriage with fidelity after as old-fashioned, seem determined to establish a new fashion on their own and impose it upon others. Can they not see the gross selfishness that will lead finally to deep loneliness? Can they not see that, pushed by pleasure, they will become more and more distant from joy? Can they not see that their kind of fulfillment will produce a hollowness and an emptiness from which no fleeting pleasure can finally rescue them? The law of the harvest has not been repealed.

Once the carnal in man is no longer checked by the restraints of family life and by real religion, there comes an avalanche of appetites which gathers momentum that is truly frightening. As one jar loose and begins to roll down hill, still another breaks loose, whether it is an increase in homosexuality, corruption, drugs, or abortion. Each began as an appetite that needed to be checked but which went unchecked. Thus misery achieves a ghastly monument.

Decadence is very demanding and dogmatic, and it is no friend of liberty. Decadence which grows in the soil of tol-

erance and permissiveness soon seeks to drive out all of these. Then, finally, it reaches a point when, as one prophet declared, "There was no remedy." In such moments the prophets of God speak out even more forcibly, doing as Alma did when he began bearing down in pure testimony against the evils of his time. (See Al. 4:19.) Nothing less will do under those conditions.

We read of sections of this land where abortions outnumber live births, of how illegitimate births outnumber legitimate, and we wonder how long the judgments of God can be stayed. We read of those who have yielded to the fashion of the time and lived together without being legally married and wonder why such people do not realize that there can be no finding of their identity nor any real sense of belonging while they trample underfoot the commandments of God. We read of the increased portion of our children who are being reared by a single parent and wonder again about what will come when the law of the harvest operates. What is wrong is wrong, and trends do not make something right which is at variance with the laws of God.

We note the increasing coarseness of language and understand how Lot must have felt when he was, according to Peter, "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." (2 Pet. 2:7.) We wonder why those of coarse and profane conversation, even if they refuse obedience to God's will, are so stunted mentally that they let their capacity to communicate grow more and more narrow. Language is like music; we rejoice in beauty, range, and quality in both, and we are demeaned by the repetition of a few sour notes.

Far from freeing those involved, sin is an admission of surrender to the herd. It is a capitulation to the carnal in man and a rejection of joy and beauty in this life and in the world to come. Because sin is such sadness, the righteous do not stress an attitude of "I told you

so"—because the righteous, in their love, truly wish they had been more effective in communication and in testifying so that there could be less misery and more happiness in the world. No wonder we who bear the plan of salvation feel a special urgency in sharing the gospel, because we love our own neighbor. May God help us in the opportunities which are ours to live righteously as a way of witnessing to the world, to speak out humbly but forthrightly, to lead out effectively and thoughtfully, ever using the gospel of Jesus Christ as our constant guide.

Testimony and blessing

Before closing I should like to just add—the four testimonies of these young, new leaders of the Church were very, very inspiring. When I heard each one of them say, "I have put everything I own or ever have owned upon the altar; it's there for the Lord or his servants to identify and to call upon," that pleased me because we know there is still faith in the Church, in Zion, among the youth, and among the young people who are growing up in this church. I would not wish to talk longer but just say, the Lord bless you, my brethren and sisters, as you return to your homes. Peace be with you. May you find every home to which you return a real Latter-day Saint home with all the gospel in it. I bear testimony to the divinity also of this great work which is the greatest thing in the world, as was said by one of the Brethren. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn, "Come, Follow Me."

The benediction was offered by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone.

The Conference then adjourned for six months.
