

Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Tabernacle Choir sang, "Send Forth Thy Spirit."

Elder George P. Lee offered the invocation.

Following the invocation, the Choir sang without announcement, "Sing Unto God."

President Spencer W. Kimball

My beloved brethren and sisters, I greet you with the warmest feelings of love and gratitude at this, the opening of the divinely appointed world conference of the Lord's church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I send my blessings and solemn greetings to all the Saints and to our countless friends and investigators the world over. Also, I invite the honest in heart everywhere to join with us in worshipping our divine Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Church expansion

Since we last met in general conference here on Temple Square in Salt Lake City six months ago, we have witnessed much growth and expansion of the Lord's kingdom. We have opened a beautiful new temple in South America at Sao Paulo, Brazil, and have rededicated for the work of the Lord the temple in Logan, Utah, for the temple ordinances to be performed there.

Five other temples are in varying stages of construction, and more are in contemplation toward fulfilling the prediction of latter-day prophets that holy temples will dot this and other lands from end to end, where the work of the Lord is being firmly established.

Our missionary force is constantly growing and is now approximately 28,000 missionaries. We think that there are tens of thousands of brethren and sisters in the Wasatch

Front and elsewhere in the Church who could fill regular missions as worthy, able brethren and sisters if their bishops would call them on missions. We recognize that many of these missionaries are young men and young women, and it's a growing number always. They are spending two years of their lives in the mission field, in the most significant and unselfish volunteer service, to carry the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations of the world. These numbers are impressive, but we must not stop there. The need is ever greater, and more and more laborers are needed in the world.

We have established new missions covering almost all of the free world, and we are turning our attention more diligently now to one day sharing the gospel with our Father's children behind the so-called iron and bamboo curtains. We have need to prepare for that day. The urgency of that preparation weighs heavily upon us. That day may come with more swiftness than we realize.

Every year now we are adding approximately a hundred new stakes—the locally governed ecclesiastical units of Mormonism composed of several wards and branches each. Only a few weeks ago we created the thousandth such stake of Zion at Nauvoo, Illinois, a place of deep historical significance to the Church.

I rejoice with you, my brothers and sisters, in these statistical evi-

dences of the progress and growth throughout Zion. It is indeed progress to add new thousands of people to a membership now in excess of four million. It is pleasing to build the temples and places of worship in so many lands and to add thousands of students to our expanding educational and training programs for both youth and adults.

We are happy to see the further expansion of our vast Church Welfare program, with new bishops' storehouses and production units for relief of the poor. The Savior has commanded and charged us with the care of the poor among us since the very earliest days of the Church—even to the directing of the ways in which the responsibility should be discharged—a program which has always stressed the independence of the individual by helping provide work opportunities and guiding lines for those who need rehabilitation. We feel very happy with this growth and all other growth that is being displayed in the Church in all the lands where we go.

Each of our quorums of the priesthood has increased steadily in membership, as also have our auxiliaries working especially among the children, the youth, and the women of the Church.

In all of this evidence of progress, there is cause for rejoicing, but unfortunately we cannot proclaim that "all is well in Zion." We find that we Latter-day Saints are also vulnerable to the destructive forces of evil that are all about us in this sick world. Of the greatest concern in this day are those evils which tear at the fabric of the home and family.

Beautification encouraged.

Often we have called upon our people, and we repeat it again, to give attention to the outward appearance of their homes and buildings, the barns, the sheds, the fences, the

places of business, to make our communities attractive and desirable. We have asked, and repeat it again and again, that you plant trees and shrubs and vegetables and berry gardens to beautify your properties and help provide for your needs. Your response to these appeals has been gratifying, and many letters have been received telling of your cooperation in these matters, and we are very proud of you.

Don't stop. Continue on. But while we would encourage you to continue to give attention to the outward appearance of your homes, we now implore you to give more and more attention to the *interior* of your homes. I do not refer alone to the cleanliness and attractiveness of the home and furnishings, as important as these may be, but to the cleanliness and godliness of the family members and to the general atmosphere that prevails.

Train children

The Church's long-standing concern for children and its massive commitment in time and energy and resources to improve their lot are well-documented. We are constantly seeking ways to strengthen families and bless children, and that commitment will be continued and reinforced this year and in all the years to come.

The Church welcomes the concerns of others to achieve these beneficial ends through appropriate means. We again are reemphasizing, however, that the greatest blessing we can give our own children and that can be extended to all the children of the world will come through the simple processes of teaching and training them in the way of the Lord.

Home life, proper teaching in the home, parental guidance and leadership—these are the panacea for the ailments of the world and its chil-

dren. They are the cure for spiritual and emotional diseases and the remedy for its problems. Parents should not leave the training of children to others.

There seems to be a growing tendency to shift this responsibility from the home to outside influences such as the school and the church, and of greater concern, to various child-care agencies and institutions. Important as these outward influences may be, they never can adequately take the place of the influence of the mother and the father. Constant training, constant vigilance, companionship, and being watchmen of our own children are necessary in order to keep our homes intact and to bless our children in the Lord's own way.

The Doctrine and Covenants makes it very clear. It is the responsibility of the parents to teach their children. All other agencies are secondary. If parents do not teach their children—their children—they will be held responsible.

Fortify homes

We need continually to fortify our homes and families and defend them against the onslaught of evils such as divorce, broken families, brutality, and abuse, especially of wives and children. We need to constantly guard against immorality, pornography, and sexual permissiveness that would destroy the purity of the family members, young and old.

Such evils are very real and very threatening. One has but to read the headlines of our newspapers and magazines to become frighteningly aware of the crumbling, destructive influences which surround us.

Perhaps I sound like an alarmist. If so, it is because I *am* alarmed. I am greatly concerned, and so are my Brethren in the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles and others of the General Authorities.

If we could but suggest you go home and lock these evils out by closing and bolting the windows and locking the doors of your homes securely, it would be a simple matter.

However, such security would be ineffective against the evils of which we speak. They come into our homes on ether waves by radio and the television screen. We find these evil forces almost everywhere we go. Exposure is almost constant. We track them into the home from the school, from the playground, from the theater, the office, and the marketplace. There are but few places we go in our everyday world where we can escape them.

What then must be our service? What must we do? We must be constantly alert to their evil presence in our homes and destroy them as we would the germs and filth of disease. We must hunt them from the closets of our minds, freeing ourselves of such worldliness, quenching the embers of wickedness before they become destructive flames. How do we do this?

If we would escape those deadly thrusts of the evil one and keep our homes and families free and solidly fortified against all destructive influences so rampant about us, we must have the help of the very founder and organizer of this family plan—the Creator himself. There is only one sure way and that is through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and being obedient to its profound and inspired teachings. Surely we must be made to realize that the purchase price of a family hearth free of such evil influences is the keeping of the commandments of God.

Honorable marriage

Marriage, *honorable* marriage, is ordained of God. He decreed that the basic unit of society should be the home and the family, and we

must be warned that the false culture of the day is turning away from this God-ordained plan.

That the inspired plan was the Lord's is shown in his declarations to us:

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

In Hebrews we read this: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4).

Thus our Lord, who "is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Morm. 9:9), has throughout all the ages reiterated these requirements of the adults who follow his ordained plan and sire and bear children.

Parental responsibility

The oft-quoted scriptures given in the early days of this gospel dispensation have been a basic instruction from the beginning of time and will continue to be until the end of time. He commands,

"And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents" (D&C 68:25).

I would emphasize that eight years of age. We don't wait until they are young adults or till they are nearly grown to teach them these laws. They should know at eight or before eight all about baptism and about confirmation.

This command was to be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, not a mere hope or suggestion. As the stakes of Zion now are spreading farther and farther among the in-

habitants of the earth in many lands, the responsibility becomes ever greater.

The Lord continues his advice to the parents in Zion, and he says, "And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:28).

We must realize that this commandment does not cover prayer only but all the doctrines of the Church and the whole way of life.

The command to teach the children seems to be of equal power with the command to sire and to bear children. "Multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28) was the directive given in the Garden of Eden.

Selfishness is an element that breaks and corrodes and destroys marriages as it destroys lives and all that is good. It is an act of extreme selfishness for a married couple to refuse to have children when they are able to do so. It is a crime next to murder itself to destroy and abort the fetus except for extreme reasons which would endanger the life of the mother.

As we have said on previous occasions, certainly our Heavenly Father is distressed with the increasing inroads among his children of such insidious sins as adultery and fornication and homosexuality, lesbianism, abortion, alcoholism, dishonesty, and crime generally, which threaten the total breakdown of the family and the home.

Marriage ordained of God

To our beloved young people we would say a few more things about the responsibility of marriage. When the selection of a life's companion is made and the time comes, our young people should marry in the holy temple and have their families; complete their education; establish themselves in a profitable, honorable and rewarding occupation; and give

themselves to their families, to the gospel, and to the Church.

What we are saying about eternal marriage is not my opinion only or the opinion of the leaders of the Church today. This is the word of God, which supersedes all other opinions.

There seems to be a growing trend against marriage from degenerate areas of the world and a very strong trend toward marriage without children. Naturally the next question is, "Why marry?" And the "anti-marriage revolution" comes into focus. Arguments are given that children are a burden, a tie, a responsibility. Many have convinced themselves that education, freedom from restraint and responsibility—that is the life. And unfortunately this benighted and destructive idea is taking hold of some of our own people.

Marriage is ordained of God. It is a necessary and delightful condition. It is the only true state, and the failure of many marriages does not change the rightness of marriage.

As we enter into an eternal marriage and seek to fortify our family unit against that which would destroy our celestial happiness, let us remember also that the Lord will not leave us alone to accomplish this task.

Prayer

The Lord has not promised us freedom from adversity or affliction. Instead, he has given us the avenue of communication known as prayer, whereby we might humble ourselves and seek his help and divine guidance, so that we could establish a house of prayer. I have previously said that they who reach down into the depths of life where, in the stillness, the voice of God has been heard, have the stabilizing power which carries them poised and serene through the hurricane of difficulties. President Harold B. Lee has said it

this way: "Just as a flood-lighted temple is more beautiful in a severe storm or in a heavy fog, so the gospel of Jesus Christ is more glorious in times of inward storm and of personal sorrow and tormenting conflict" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1965, p. 16).

There is a great need in the world today for prayer which can keep us in touch with God and keep open the channels of communication. None of us should get so busy in our lives that we cannot contemplate with prayer. Prayer is the passport to spiritual power.

Follow Jesus Christ

It seems that at no time in world history has there been a greater need for understanding and blending the wholesome and divine teachings of the Master into our lives and into all our dealings with our fellowmen. I say to everyone within the sound of my voice, "Do not fail the Lord." We must accept the truth that the gospel principles are not on trial but that we are. The teachings of Jesus as revealed through the ancient and modern prophets are constant and unchanging.

The history of man evidences that these teachings are true. The rise and fall of civilizations according to the alternating righteousness and wickedness of the peoples proclaim the need to hear and to heed the Savior's divine messages. We must prepare ourselves, both individually and as a church, to defend the gospel truths against a world steeped in atheism and godlessness. We must oppose the so-called intellectuals who reason that they have all the answers, and we must contend mightily with those whose lust for power and worldly gain destroy their sense of right and wrong.

As members of Christ's true church we must stand firm today and always for human rights and the dig-

nity of man who is the literal offspring of God in the spirit. We cannot condone a separation of our religious beliefs from our daily living. Righteousness must prevail in our lives and in our homes.

It is a *must* that we develop a love for Christ and give full allegiance and service in the establishment of his kingdom. Being a good Christian means we must be a good citizen of our country, wherever we live. We must be respectful and honorable in all our relationships with our fellowmen. We must worship the Lord in truth and keep all of his commandments. We must seek for an enlarged capacity to influence the world toward a return to righteousness and a pure love of God.

May the Lord bless us all in our homes and families as we strive to

draw nearer to him and keep his commandments, I humbly pray, my beloved brothers and sisters, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Following President Kimball's address, the Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn, "How Gentle God's Commands," without announcement.

President Spencer W. Kimball

The Tabernacle Choir has rendered, "How Gentle God's Commands." We shall now hear from Elder Paul H. Dunn, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Paul H. Dunn

Millions throughout the world sustain President Kimball as a prophet of the Lord. We in the Church sing a very important hymn that says, "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet / To guide us in these latter days" (*Hymns*, no. 196). Prophets have done that throughout all of history. I testify to you that Spencer Kimball really is a prophet.

Faces

For many years I have been a people-watcher. I love to watch people. They are interesting, fascinating. There is a sermon in every face. Faces! Smiling faces, frowning, angry, calm, unhappy, content. Faces! Round, square, oval, dimpled, beautiful, plain, striking, ordinary. Faces! Old and young.

Is there anything quite so revealing as a boy's face at his birthday

party, the faces of a young couple just engaged, of new parents with their first child, of a proud mom and dad at their son or daughter's graduation, of a husband and wife on their golden wedding anniversary?

Is there anything quite so funny as the face of a six-year-old with bubble gum exploded from ear to ear, a forgetful girl with two dates for the same night, a young bride who innocently cooks the peas in the pod, a parent who calls every name in the house before finding the right one, grandpa without his teeth?

And finally, is there anything quite so touching as the face of a teenager alone in a new school, a couple upon the death of their first child, parents worried sick over a wayward child, old people unvisited, a child in prayer?

Faces! They reveal so much! They tell a story. Speaking of faces,