

spirit your music has added to this meeting.

Following President Benson's remarks, the choir will sing in closing, "The Lord Gave Me a Temple, "My Body Is a Temple,"

and "I Am a Child of God." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## President Ezra Taft Benson

The Lord has declared this "a day of warning, and not a day of many words" (D&C 63:58). My message is a witness and warning about some of the evils which threaten America—a land I love with all my heart. There are other countries with this same problem. You who have seen these dangers in the land you love will have a deep feeling for what I will say.

### America a choice land

America is a place of many great events. Here is where Adam dwelt, where the Garden of Eden was located. America was the place of former civilizations, including Adam's, the Jaredites', and Nephites'. America is also the place where God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph Smith, inaugurating the last gospel dispensation on earth before the Savior's second coming.

This consecrated land has been placed under the everlasting decree of God. That decree is recorded in the sacred Book of Mormon, a new witness for Christ, in these words:

"For behold, this is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. . . .

"Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but

serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ" (Ether 2:10, 12).

### U.S. Constitution

The eventful destiny of America has also been revealed to God's prophets. To Joseph Smith the Lord revealed that "the whole of America is Zion itself from north to south" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938, p. 362). Further, the Lord decreed this land to be "the place of the New Jerusalem, which should come down out of heaven, . . . the holy sanctuary of the Lord" (Ether 13:3). To serve God's eternal purposes and to prepare this land for Zion, God "established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom [He] raised up . . . and redeemed the land by the shedding of blood" (D&C 101:80).

The Constitution of the United States was ratified in 1789. The priesthood of God was restored in 1829. Between those two dates is an interval of forty years. It is my conviction that God, who knows the end from the beginning, provided that period of time so the new nation could grow in strength to protect the land of Zion.

### Monroe Doctrine

In the decade prior to the restoration of the gospel, many countries of South America fought wars of in-

dependence to free themselves from European rule. Russia, Austria, and Prussia, however, urged France to aid Spain and Portugal to restore their monarchies in South America. This effort was repulsed by a proclamation from the United States government known as the Monroe Doctrine. The heart of the Monroe Doctrine consists of these words: "The American continents . . . are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers."

The Lord had promised, "I will fortify this land against all other nations" (2 Ne. 10:12). President Joseph Fielding Smith said that "the greatest and most powerful fortification in America is the 'Monroe Doctrine' . . . It was the inspiration of the Almighty which rested upon John Quincy Adams, Thomas Jefferson and other statesmen, and which finally found authoritative expression in the message of James Monroe to Congress in the year 1823" (*The Progress of Man*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., pp. 466-67).

Thus, in that four-decade period the United States had grown to sufficient strength that she was able to provide a cradle of liberty for the restored Church of Jesus Christ.

### Communism a Satanic counterfeit

But whenever the God of heaven reveals His gospel to mankind, Satan, the archenemy to Christ, introduces a counterfeit.

Isaiah foresaw the time when a marvelous work and a wonder would come forth among men. Isaiah also predicted there would be those who would "seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us?" He saw the time when the work shall say of him that made it, "He made me not" (Isa. 29:15-16).

It is well to ask, what system established secret works of darkness to overthrow nations by violent revolution? Who blasphemously proclaimed the atheistic doctrine that God made us not? Satan works through human agents. We need only look to some of the ignoble characters in human history who were contemporary to the restoration of the gospel to discover fulfillment of the prophet's prophecy. I refer to the infamous founders of Communism and others who follow in their tradition.

Communism introduced into the world a substitute for true religion. It is a counterfeit of the gospel plan. The false prophets of Communism predict a utopian society. This, they proclaim, will only be brought about as capitalism and free enterprise are overthrown, private property abolished, the family as a social unit eliminated, all classes abolished, all governments overthrown, and a communal ownership of property in a classless, stateless society established.

Since 1917 this godless counterfeit to the gospel has made tremendous progress toward its objective of world domination.

### Battle of opposing systems

Today, we are in a battle for the bodies and souls of man. It is a battle between two opposing systems: freedom and slavery, Christ and anti-Christ. The struggle is more momentous than a decade ago, yet today the conventional wisdom says, "You must learn to live with Communism and to give up your ideas about national sovereignty." Tell that to the millions—yes, the scores of millions—who have met death or imprisonment under the tyranny of Communism! *Such would be the death knell of freedom and all we hold dear.* God must ever have a free people to prosper His work and bring about Zion.

I am a witness to nations and people deprived of their freedom. I was there. I watched that great Iron Curtain drop around nations which formerly had prized their freedom—good people. I was aghast as these were written off by the stroke of a pen. I saw Poland abandoned by nations with a heritage of freedom—the United States and Great Britain.

I was in Warsaw in June of 1946. I shared a room with seven other men in the Polonia Hotel, the only hotel even partially intact in the great city of Warsaw. Our ambassador, Bliss Lane, had his office in part of the building. He was so saddened that he resigned and wrote the book *I Saw Poland Betrayed*, which detailed the failure of the United States and England to keep their promise that the Poles would have a free election after the war.

I saw firsthand our great nation stand by at the time of the Hungarian revolution—when “freedom fighters” with bare hands and stones resisted bullets, tanks, and artillery. I confess I was ashamed at the response of my country—a nation which I believe the Lord intended to be an ensign of freedom to all others. Freedom did not die that day (23 October 1956) for Hungary alone. Hope died for many in other captive nations and has only recently been somewhat revived by courageous men willing to speak against oppression.

Since that day, I have seen the Soviet Union, under its godless leaders, spread its ideology throughout the world. Every stragem is used—trade, war, revolution, violence, hate, detente, and immorality—to accomplish its purposes. Many nations are now under its oppressive control. Over one billion people—one-fourth of the population of the world—have now lost their freedom and are under Communist domination. We seem to

forget that the great objective of Communism is still world domination and control, which means the surrender of our freedom—your freedom—our sovereignty.

### Warning

On 3 July 1936, the First Presidency published this warning to Church members:

“Communism is not a political party nor a political plan under the Constitution; it is a system of government that is the opposite of our Constitutional government. . . .

“Since Communism, established, would destroy our American Constitutional government, to support Communism is treasonable to our free institutions, and *no patriotic American citizen may become either a Communist or supporter of Communism. . . .*

“We call upon all Church members completely to eschew [shun] Communism. The safety of our divinely inspired Constitutional government and the welfare of our Church imperatively demand that *Communism shall have no place in America*” (signed: Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark, Jr., David O. McKay, The First Presidency, in *Deseret News*, 3 July 1936; italics added).

More recently, President Marion G. Romney, in the First Presidency Message in the September 1979 EN-SIGN, wrote: “Communism is Satan’s counterfeit for the gospel plan, and . . . it is an avowed enemy of the God of the land. Communism is the greatest anti-Christ power in the world today and therefore the greatest menace not only to our peace but to our preservation as a free people. By the extent to which we tolerate it, accommodate ourselves to it, permit ourselves to be encircled by its tentacles and drawn to it, to that extent we forfeit the protection of the God of this land” (p. 5).

The truth is, we have to a great extent accommodated ourselves to Communism—and we have permitted ourselves to become encircled by its tentacles. Though we give lip service to the Monroe Doctrine, this has not prevented Cuba from becoming a Soviet military base, ninety miles off our coastline, nor has it prevented the takeover of Nicaragua in Central America, the surrender of the Panama Canal, or the infiltration by enemy agents within our American borders.

Never before has the land of Zion appeared so vulnerable to so powerful an enemy as the Americas do at present. And our vulnerability is directly attributable to our loss of active faith in the God of this land, who has decreed that we must worship Him or be swept off. Too many Americans have lost sight of the truth that God is our source of freedom—the Lawgiver—and that personal righteousness is the most important essential to preserving our freedom. So, I say with all the energy of my soul that unless we as citizens of this nation forsake our sins, political and otherwise, and return to the fundamental principles of Christianity and of constitutional government, we will lose our political liberties, our free institutions, and will stand in jeopardy before God.

No nation which has kept the commandments of God has ever perished, but I say to you that once freedom is lost, only blood—human blood—will win it back.

### Steps to prevent destruction

There are some things we can and must do at once if we are to stave off a holocaust of destruction.

*First:* We must return to worship the God of this land, who is Jesus Christ. He has promised that the righteous will be preserved by His power (see 1 Ne. 22:17). But we must keep the commandments of

God. We must pay our tithes and offerings, keep the Sabbath day a holy day, stay morally clean, be honest in all our dealings, and have our family and personal prayers. We must live the gospel.

*Second:* We must awaken to “a sense of [our] awful situation, because of this secret combination which [is] among [us]” (Ether 8:24). We must not tolerate accommodation with or appeasement toward the false system of Communism. We must demand of our elected officials that we not only resist Communism, but that we will take every measure to prevent its intrusion into this hemisphere. It is vital that we invoke the Monroe Doctrine.

Then we must put our trust in Him who has promised us His protection—and pray that He will intervene to preserve our freedom just as He intervened in our obtaining it in the first place.

*Third:* We must do as the Lord commanded us by revelation in 1833: “Wherefore, honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil” (D&C 98:10).

Men who are wise, good, and honest, who will uphold the Constitution of the United States in the tradition of the Founding Fathers, must be sought for diligently. This is our hope to restore government to its rightful role.

*Last:* We must study the inspired Constitution and become involved in the political process ourselves. I quote the First Presidency statement that was read in sacrament meetings on Sunday, 1 July 1979: “We encourage all members, as citizens of the nation, to be actively involved in the political process, and to support those measures which will strengthen the community, state, and nation—morally, economically, and culturally” (Letter

from the First Presidency, 29 June 1979).

I fully believe that we can turn things around in America if we have the determination, the morality, the patriotism, and the spirituality to do so.

### Preserve liberty

My single-minded concern is for the freedom and welfare of my countrymen and my posterity, the freedom of all men.

I testify to you that God's hand has been in our destiny. I testify that freedom as we know it today is being threatened as never before in our history. I further witness that this land—the Americas—must be protected, its Constitution upheld, for

this is a land foreordained to be the Zion of our God. He expects us as members of the Church and bearers of His priesthood to do all we can to preserve our liberty.

May God bless us that, with His help, we will not fail to bring to pass His purposes on earth. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The children's choir sang the numbers, "The Lord Gave Me a Temple," "My Body Is a Temple," and "I Am a Child of God."

Elder John H. Groberg offered the benediction.

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## GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

### THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 7:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 6, 1979. President Spencer W. Kimball presided and President N. Eldon Tanner conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined choir from men of the Tabernacle choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

President Tanner opened this session with the following remarks:

#### President N. Eldon Tanner

Brethren, we are assembled in the general priesthood session of the 149th Semiannual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Kimball presides at all sessions of the conference and has asked me to conduct this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and

will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Salt Palace and in approximately 1,760 locations in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Australia, the Philippines, Korea, and Hong Kong.

We extend our greetings and blessings to all the priesthood members assembled here in the Tabernacle or elsewhere. We commend all members of the priesthood who have made arrangements to participate in this important meeting.

We note that Elders Theodore M. Burton and James A. Cullimore are seated on the stand in the Salt Palace, and Elders Marion D. Hanks and George P. Lee preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the general session this afternoon, Elder Eldred G. Smith was designated as Patriarch Emeritus; Elders Hugh W. Pinnock, Ronald E. Poelman, and Jack H. Goasling, Jr.