

The Choir will now sing "More Things Are Wrought by Prayer." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Rex C. Reeve, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Executive Administrator of the British Isles-Africa Area.

The Choir sang "More Things Are Wrought by Prayer."

Elder Rex C. Reeve offered the invocation.

Without announcement, the Choir sang "A Marvelous Work."

President Tanner

Our beloved President, President Spencer W. Kimball will now speak to us.

President Spencer W. Kimball

My beloved brothers and sisters, I am grateful, as always, just to be with you and to be near you. These last six months I have felt your love and support and prayers, time and time again, and wish to thank you most sincerely for them.

Righteous history

General conference is always a glorious event. But this conference is even more special because we celebrate the Sesquicentennial of the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The history of the Church is essentially the history of its individual members. One of the best ways to celebrate righteous history is to make *more* of it, make more righteous history! In this connection, you will recall that a year ago you were called upon to stretch yourselves in further service. Included in the counsel given then was the suggestion that each active member or family bring an individual or a family into the Church by the time the April 1980 conference arrived. That conference is now here. Did we do it? Or are some of us still being "neighbors as usual," not yet fully sharing the gospel with our friends and neighbors?

As we speak of sharing the gospel, let me say that the First Presi-

dency has just been advised by the Church Missionary Committee that as of last week we had 30,004 full-time missionaries. That is the largest number of missionaries ever in the history of the Church. What a glorious work they are performing and what blessings they bring into the lives of our Father's other children throughout the world who hearken to their message of joy and peace and salvation.

Brethren and sisters, there are more young men who can and should serve in the mission field. Presently they represent 79 percent of our total missionary force. We have not yet reached our potential. The young sisters serving represent 13 percent of the total. Eight percent of the total missionary force is represented by older couples. What a blessing their maturity and experience are wherever they serve. With the divine commission we have to share the gospel with the entire world, we do indeed need many more missionaries. Remember that "the field is white already to harvest" (D&C 4:4).

Consolidated meeting schedule

You will recall, also, our saying last year in general conference and in seminars for the Regional Representatives that some further program ad-

justments were coming. We said at that time: "We see ourselves as positioning our people so that the Latter-day Saints can give greater attention to family life, can focus more on certain simple and basic things, can render more Christian service, and can have greater effectiveness in all these things—through the process of simplification, scheduling, proper priorities, and by honoring the priesthood line" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 5 Oct. 1979; see also *ENSIGN*, Nov. 1979, p. 100).

Those adjustments, as you have recently learned, now have been made. We are confident that as a result we will indeed see an upsurge in quality family life, in Christian service, and in attendance at Church meetings.

Living the gospel in the home

We hope, for instance, that either before or after your series of Sunday meetings, depending upon your particular consolidated meeting schedule, you will do what the Savior asked the Nephite disciples to do: After he taught them, he asked them to go to their homes and to ponder and to pray over what was said (see 3 Ne. 17:3). Let us keep that pattern in mind.

We also said last year that we have paused on some plateaus long enough, and then we gave an emphasis to councils—family councils, ward and stake councils, and on through to area and Churchwide councils.

If you continue to observe carefully, you will see how all these developments are pointing us in one direction. As a people, we are being positioned to do more perfectly that which the Lord has given us to do.

May we suggest that, in our desire to enrich family life in the Church and to provide more time for Christian service, we make sure we

do not overlook the tens of thousands of single Latter-day Saints who do not live in a traditional Latter-day Saint family setting. Please do not neglect these wonderful brothers and sisters.

A year ago it was also observed that "our success . . . will largely be determined by how faithfully we focus on living the gospel in the home" (Spencer W. Kimball, *ENSIGN*, May 1979, p. 83). That is surely true and, in like manner, we will be spiritually successful to the degree that we are good neighbors and good friends to those in the household of faith and to our non-member friends.

Genealogy and temple work

With the announcement just made of the construction of seven new temples, there begins the most intensive period of temple building in the history of the Church.

The building of these temples must be accompanied by a strong emphasis on genealogical research on the part of all members of the Church.

We feel an urgency for this great work to be accomplished and encourage members to accept this responsibility. Members do so by writing their personal and family histories, participating in the name extraction program when called to do so, completing their four-generation research, and then continuing their family research in order to redeem their kindred dead.

To assist and give encouragement to this important work, the Genealogical Department, under the direction of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, has organized another World Conference on Records to be held in Salt Lake City in August of this sesquicentennial year. Experts in family history from thirty countries will present four days

of seminars to an audience of participants from around the world. We encourage all who can to attend.

Progress in the Church

Brothers and sisters, we rejoice in the fifteen decades of progress of the Church. We want to keep faith with that small but noble band of souls who assembled in the Peter Whitmer home 150 years ago for the purpose of formally organizing the Church. We *can* keep faith, in part, by helping the Church to grow in numbers and also in spirituality. We can count our growing membership. We can count the increasing numbers of stakes. These numbers thrill us, as they indicate the progress we are making and remind us, likewise, that we must achieve in even more major ways in the years ahead.

We can also tell that we are making progress by the attention we get from the adversary. Do not falter nor be distressed when others misrepresent us, sometimes deliberately and sometimes in ignorance. This has been the lot of the Lord's people from the beginning, and it will be no different in our time.

Keep the faith

Brothers and sisters, pray for the critics of the Church; love your enemies. Keep the faith and stay on the straight and narrow path. Use wisdom and judgment in what you say and do, so that we do not give cause to others to hold the Church or its people in disrepute. Do not be surprised or dismayed if trials and challenges come upon us. This work, which Satan seeks in vain to tear

down, is that which God has placed on earth to lift mankind up!

I have lived for more than half the 150 years the restored Church has been upon the earth in this last dispensation. I have witnessed its marvelous growth until it now is established in the four corners of the earth. As the Prophet Joseph said:

"Our missionaries are going forth to different nations, and in Germany, Palestine, New Holland, Australia, the East Indies, and other places, the Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

Let us, then, press on confidently in the work of the Lord as we look forward to the glorious years of promise ahead. Through our faithfulness, all that God has promised will be fulfilled. This is the work of the Lord. The gospel is true. Jesus is the Christ and our Redeemer. May the Lord bless us all as we begin this great sesquicentennial conference of his church, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

We shall now hear from Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.