

world. Its future is secure as the church and kingdom of God, of which I bear solemn witness in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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Following Elder Hinckley's remarks, the Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn "Praise to the Man" without announcement.

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### President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has just

addressed us from the new chapel in Fayette, New York, near the site of a replica of the log cabin where the Church was organized 150 years ago today.

Following Elder Hinckley, the Tabernacle Choir sang "Praise to the Man."

The Choir and congregation will now render "Now Let Us Rejoice," following which we shall be pleased to hear from Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

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The choir and congregation sang "Now Let Us Rejoice."

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## Elder Boyd K. Packer

### Humble members

That day, 150 years ago, came and went quietly.

Those who met in that humble farmhouse to organize The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were not—indeed they were not—the prominent men of their day.

Only a few, and they of most humble prospect, were party to it. It was as Paul had told the Corinthians:

"Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:26-27).

This sacred event, witnessed by those few, had been preceded by marvelous spiritual manifestations.

In preparation for it the Father and the Son had appeared to one of them. He had been called as the prophet.

Angelic messengers had instructed them.

The principle of revelation, thought by most to have concluded in centuries past, was demonstrated to be ongoing.

The Book of Mormon had been published, and its pages carried a testimony of the prophet Moroni that angels have not "ceased to appear unto the children of men." Nor will they, "so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved" (Moro. 7:36).

These humble men from among the common folks of that day were to become Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, as surely as Peter, the fisherman, and the other common men had been made Apostles in ancient times.

And so the angels came, a continuation of them, to teach these men, to confer the priesthood upon them, to deliver keys of authority to them; for these were things that men could not assume, nor take to themselves.

Above all, the Lord Himself appeared and reappeared, "That the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world" (D&C 1:23).

### **Days of beginning not far past**

Those days of beginning were not so far away as we sometimes think. There sits behind me on the stand Elder LeGrand Richards of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

He remembers personally some of those who helped to open this work.

He attended the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple and remembers President Wilford Woodruff very clearly. He heard him speak on several occasions.

Yesterday Elder Faust mentioned the incident where Wilford Woodruff, leading a group of immigrants, was inspired not to take an ill-fated boat. Brother Richards heard Brother Woodruff give that sermon, name a number in the audience, and say to them, "If I had not followed that prompting, you would not be here today."

President Woodruff was only two years younger than the Prophet Joseph Smith, and he had been an Apostle for five years when the Prophet was martyred.

Hands we have touched have touched the hands that shaped the beginnings of this dispensation.

### **Rank and file carry gospel spirit**

Some things have not changed very much over the years. Some things have not changed at all. This work has been brought through 150 years by ordinary men and women and children across the world.

The rank and file of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, present and past, who now number in

the millions, have each carried their part.

Lives are shaped through the influence of obscure, faithful members who carry the spirit of the gospel.

When once I tried to thank a great teacher and patriarch, William E. Berrett, he quickly passed the credit back to one who had taught him. An old convert from Norway was called to teach a group of mischievous Aaronic Priesthood boys. They were greatly amused by his broken English, but somehow the Spirit polished his words and soon the boys responded.

I have heard Brother Berrett testify on more than one occasion, "We could warm our hands by the fire of his faith."

### **Examples**

President Heber J. Grant once heard Bishop Millen Atwood preach a sermon in the Thirteenth Ward, "I was studying grammar at the time," he said, "and he made some grammatical errors in his talk.

"I wrote down his first sentence, smiled to myself, and said: 'I am going to get . . . enough material to last me for the entire winter in my night school grammar class.' We had to take . . . four sentences a week, that were not grammatically correct, together with our corrections.

". . . But I did not write anything more after that first sentence—not a word; and when Millen Atwood stopped preaching, tears were rolling down my cheeks, tears of gratitude and thanksgiving that welled up into my eyes because of the marvelous testimony which that man bore of the divine mission of Joseph Smith, the Prophet of God. . . .

He continued: "Although it is now more than sixty-five years since I listened to that sermon, it is just as vivid today, and the sensations and

feelings that I had are just as fixed with me, as they were the day I heard it. . . .

"... the one thing above all others that has impressed me has been the spirit, the inspiration of the living God that an individual had, when proclaiming the Gospel, and not the language. . . . I have endeavored, from that day to this . . . to judge men and women by the spirit they have; for I have learned absolutely, that it is the spirit that giveth life and understanding, and not the letter—the letter killeth" (*Improvement Era*, Apr. 1939, p. 201).

### Joseph Millett

Whenever we seek for true testimony we come, finally, to ordinary men and women and children.

Let me quote from the diary of Joseph Millett, a little-known missionary of an earlier time. Called on a mission to Canada, he went alone and on foot. In Canada, during the wintertime, he said:

"I felt my weakness. A poor, ill-clothed, ignorant boy in my teens, thousands of miles from home among strangers.

"The promise in my blessing and the encouraging words of President Young to me, with the faith I had in the gospel, kept me up.

"Many times I would turn into the woods . . . in some desolate place with a heart full, wet eyes, to call on my master for strength or aid.

"I believed the Gospel of Christ. I had never preached it. I knew not where to find it in the scriptures."

That didn't matter so much, for, "I had to give my Bible to the boatman at Digby for passage across the sound."

Years later, Joseph Millett, with his large family, was suffering through very, very difficult times. He wrote in his journal:

"One of my children came in and said that Brother Newton Hall's folks was out of bread, had none that day.

"I divided our flour in a sack to send up to Brother Hall. Just then Brother Hall came.

"Says I, 'Brother Hall, are you out of flour?'

"'Brother Millett, we have none.'

"'Well, Brother Hall, there is some in that sack. I have divided and was going to send it to you. Your children told mine that you was out.'

"Brother Hall began to cry. He said he had tried others, but could not get any. He went to the cedars and prayed to the Lord, and the Lord told him to go to Joseph Millett.

"'Well Brother Hall, you needn't bring this back. If the Lord sent you for it you don't owe me for it.'

That night Joseph Millett recorded a remarkable sentence in his journal:

"You can't tell me how good it made me feel to know that the Lord knew there was such a person as Joseph Millett" (Diary of Joseph Millett, holograph, Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City).

The Lord knew Joseph Millett. And He knows all those men and women like him, and they are many. Theirs are the lives that are most worth recording.

This rank and file of the Church—150 years of them—have brought the truth to this generation. It is planted where it is most likely to bear an abundant harvest—in the hearts of the ordinary people.

### Glimpse of heaven

When President Kimball first came here as a member of the Twelve, he was asked to sit for a portrait. (Those of us who know him

well know how those hours of sitting still must have bothered him.) To keep him from daydreaming, the painter one day asked an abrupt question:

"Brother Kimball, have you ever been to heaven?"

His answer seemed to be a shock, as he said without hesitation, "Why, yes . . . certainly. I had a glimpse of heaven just before coming to your studio."

He then told of an experience in the temple where he had performed a marriage:

"As the subdued congratulations were extended, a happy father . . . offered his hand and said, 'Brother Kimball, my wife and I are common people and have never been successful, but we *are* immensely proud of our family. . . . This is the last of our eight children to come into this holy house for temple marriage. They, with their companions, are here to participate in the marriage of this, the youngest.' . . .

"I looked at his calloused hands, his rough exterior, and thought to myself, 'Here is a real son of God fulfilling his destiny'" (EN-SIGN, Dec. 1971, p. 36; also in Conference Report, Oct. 1971, p. 152-53).

## Pioneers

President J. Reuben Clark told of pioneer members of the Church in these words:

"Day after day, they of the last wagon pressed forward, worn and tired, footsore, sometimes almost disheartened, borne up by their faith that God loved them, that the restored gospel was true, and that the Lord led and directed the Brethren out in front.

He then told of the morning:

". . . when from out that last wagon floated the [cry] of the newborn babe, and mother love made a

shrine, and Father bowed in reverence before it. But the train must move on. So out into the dust and dirt the last wagon moved again. . . .

"Who will dare to say that angels did not cluster round and guard her and ease her rude bed, for she had given another choice spirit its mortal body" (*Improvement Era*, Nov. 1947, p. 705).

Who would dare to say that angels do not now attend the rank and file of the Church who—

answer the calls to the mission fields,

teach the classes,  
pay their tithes and offerings,  
seek for the records of their forebears,

work in the temples,  
raise their children in faith,  
and have brought this work through 150 years?

## Day of miracles

There comes a witness, also, from some who have stumbled and fallen but have struggled back and have found the sweet, forgiving, cleansing influence of repentance. They now stand approved of the Lord, clean before Him; His Spirit has returned to them and they are guided by it. Without reviewing the hard lessons of the past they guide others to that Spirit.

Who would dare to say that the day of miracles has ceased? Those things have not changed in 150 years, not changed at all.

For the power and inspiration of the Almighty rests upon this people today as surely as it did in those days of beginning:

"It is by faith that miracles are wrought; and it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men; wherefore, if these things have ceased wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief" (Moro. 7:37).

The prophet Moroni taught that angelic messengers would accomplish their work "by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him.

"And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts" (Moro. 7:31-32).

There has come, these last several years, a succession of announcements that show our day to be a day of intense revelation, equaled, perhaps, only in those days of beginning, 150 years ago.

### **Apostles of Jesus Christ**

But then, as now, the world did not believe. They say that ordinary men are not inspired; that there are no prophets, no apostles; that angels do not minister unto men—not to ordinary men.

That doubt and disbelief have not changed. But now, as then, their disbelief cannot change the truth.

We lay no claim to being Apostles of the world—but of the Lord Jesus Christ. The test is not whether men will believe, but whether the Lord has called us—and of that there is no doubt!

We do not talk of those sacred interviews that qualify the servants of the Lord to bear a special witness of Him, for we have been commanded not to do so.

But we are free, indeed, we are obliged, to bear that special witness.

But that witness, the testimony of this work, is not reserved to those few of us who lead the Church. In proper order that witness comes to men and women and children all over the world.

### **Revelation**

Across the world the ordinary members, who might be described as

obscure, bear witness that they were guided to this Church by revelation and that they are guided in their service in it.

Revelation that belongs to the prophet and president of the Church, to speak on matters for the entire Church, rests as well upon all who hold office, each within the limits of his calling.

It rests upon parents who preside over families, and if we will live for it, it will rest upon each of us.

Like all of my Brethren, I too come from among the ordinary people of the Church. I am the seventy-eighth man to be accepted by ordination into the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in this dispensation.

Compared to the others who have been called, I am nowhere near their equal, save it be, perhaps, in the certainty of the witness we share.

I feel compelled, on this 150th anniversary of the Church, to certify to you that I know that the day of miracles has not ceased.

I know that angels minister unto men.

I am a witness to the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father; that He has a body of flesh and bone; that He knows those who are His servants here and that He is known of them.

I know that He directs this Church now, as He established it then, through a prophet of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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At the conclusion of Elder Packer's address, the Tabernacle Choir sang "And Then Shall Your Light Break Forth" without announcement.

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### **President N. Eldon Tanner**

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our concluding speaker.