

summer evening when we were engaged in a ward building-fund project. We had contracted to supply the food service at a state fair. I was assigned to the dishwashing detail along with Bay Hutchings, another member of our ward. We were working across the counter from the customers who were enjoying our delicious food. There was a call from the cashier's cage: "Dr. Hutchings, the hospital is calling you." Suddenly all the forks were suspended in midair. The customers turned one to another and exclaimed, "A doctor washing dishes?" We had to immediately explain that this was a Church building-fund project. No one was being paid for his services. The waiters, cooks, dishwashers, and busboys were doctors, lawyers, merchants, chiefs—all having one great time working together for our project. We must never forget that the wealth, the strength, the security of the Church is our ability to labor together. Let us be a righteous example of this fundamental principle in our homes, our places of employment, our neighborhoods, our communities, our states, and our nations.

### Formula for success

The history of the Lord's dealings with His children, as revealed through His prophets, has clearly outlined a formula for success for our mortal experience. First, it is to have

a foundation in our mortal experience, a deep and abiding faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our value system must conform to His, must be consistent with His teachings.

Second is the process of laboring together to use the power of a child of God to build a better world. In this jubilee year let the trump sound again from the tops of the mountains. Let us rejoice and appreciate the accomplishments of the past. But more importantly, let this be a year of determined effort to teach correct principles with all of the energy we can muster. Let us learn to work together to make our homes places of love and beauty, our communities clean and wholesome, our nation fit for the blessings of the Lord, and the world a place where peace and understanding can dwell in the hearts of all mankind.

I want to add my testimony to this historic conference. God lives. Jesus is the Christ. The greatest joy we can find on this earth is conforming our lives to His principles. This I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Marion G. Romney

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder Dean L. Larsen

My comments today will bear upon President Kimball's challenge to us to rise above the plateaus we have been on. They will relate also to the added flexibility and freedom we are being encouraged to assume in the new pattern of Sunday worship and weekday activity. I'll speak to the

principle which undergirds these new developments. Latter-day Saints understand that mortal life was purposefully designed to place us in circumstances where we can be individually tested and where, by the exercise of the agency God has given us, we can determine what our future

possibilities will be. The ancient prophet Lehi understood this when he said to his son Jacob, "Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men, or to choose captivity and death" (2 Ne. 2:27).

He further explained that men "have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law . . . according to the commandments which God hath given" (2 Ne. 2:26).

### Freedom to exercise moral agency

On one occasion the Lord explained that it was his desire that "every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency . . . given unto him, that every man may be accountable" (D&C 101:78).

When we understand what is right and what is wrong, we are in a position to exercise our freedom in making choices. In so doing, we must stand accountable for our decisions, and we cannot escape the inevitable consequences of these choices. Such freedom to exercise moral agency is essential in an environment where people have the highest prospects for progress and development.

By our very endowment as children of an Eternal Father, we have had implanted within our souls the urgency to be free. It is natural for us to want to be accountable for our own fates, because there is a whispering within us confirming that this accountability is absolutely essential to the attainment of our eternal destiny.

The existence of laws, regulations, and procedures has never

been sufficient to compel men to obedience. Productive obedience comes through the exercise of free will. Elder Albert E. Bowen of the Quorum of the Twelve once said:

"It is a truism that no law is any better than the people who administer it. Howsoever well framed a law may be or however worthy its purpose, it can degenerate into utter futility unless wisely administered by those sympathetic with its purposes" (*The Church Welfare Plan*, Sunday School manual, 1946, p. 115).

### Self-accountability

We are told in the scriptures that prior to the creation of this earth, fully one-third of all the hosts who contemplated the challenges of mortal life allowed themselves to be deluded into thinking that there were acceptable alternatives to the essential risks that accompany the exercise of agency and free will (see Abr. 3:27-28; Rev. 12:4). The price they paid is beyond comprehension. Today we are being encouraged to accept greater responsibility for the allocation of our time, for our spiritual development through personal and family study of the gospel, and for giving loving Christian service. We must be willing to respond to this new challenge. Our willingness to accept this added accountability will exert an influence that will reach far beyond our Sunday worship service and religious life.

Unless we retain a vibrant desire to be free, and unless we understand and practice the principles that give life to essential freedoms, we have little reason to hope they will endure. If we allow ourselves to accept dependency and regulation and to cease valuing independence and self-accountability, then we are vulnerable to the forces that destroy freedom. If righteousness is judged primarily by

the degree to which one responds to programmed activity, then a condition develops within which opportunities for progress decline. The resulting tragedy affects the mortal potential of man and has a profound effect on his eternal possibilities as well.

Programmed behavior cannot produce the level of spiritual development required to qualify one for eternal life. A necessary range of freedom and self-determination is essential to one's spiritual development. With an understanding of correct principles and an intrinsic desire to apply them, one must be motivated within himself to do many good things of his own free will; for, as the revelation says, the power is in him wherein he is an agent unto himself (see D&C 58:27-28).

### **Balance of freedom and restraint**

In preserving our freedom for self-determination, we cannot ignore the need for carefully ordered structure and procedure within government or any other organization. A careful balance must be maintained between that which is ordered for the welfare of the group and that which is reserved for the conscience and the incentive of the individual.

This necessary balance of freedom and restraint is essential to right relationships within families and communities, and it cannot be ignored in our assignments within the Church.

I have pondered the injunctions that have come to us in recent months from leaders of the Church to simplify and reduce the number of programmed activities prescribed for the members. There seems to be a sensitivity to the need for maintaining this essential balance. We have heard increased emphasis given to the need for individual initiative and accountability within families. In

his concluding remarks at the April 1979 general conference, President Kimball said:

### **Individual spiritual growth**

"The basic decisions needed for us to move forward, as a people, must be made by the individual members of the Church. The major strides which must be made by the Church will follow upon the major strides to be made by us as individuals. . . .

"... Our individual spiritual growth is the key to major numerical growth in the kingdom" (ENSIGN, May 1979, p. 82).

I rejoice in the spirit and intent of this instruction from a living prophet. I see in it the purposeful effort to preserve our individual accountability in the context of our Church membership and religious life.

When members of the Church exercise self-determination in their application of gospel principles, they need not relax in their compliance with these principles. In fact, optimum progress can only occur when conditions are ideal for it, and these conditions must include the necessary degree of freedom and self-accountability. Anything less will guarantee stunted spiritual growth.

We must understand that as freedom for unrestricted development is enhanced, the possibilities for failure are also increased. The risk factor is great. The ideal cannot be achieved otherwise. Celestial attainment can be reached in no other environment.

We have inspired leaders today who are reconfirming the fact that there is no ultimate safety in programmed security where others assume accountability for our direction and performance.

Those who insist that a Church program exist for every contingency

and need are as much in error as their counterparts who demand that government intervene in every aspect of our lives. In both instances the ideal balance is destroyed with a resultant detriment to human progress.

These are essential truths which our leaders are reinforcing for us today. These are challenging truths. They demand much of us. They press us to make our lives better by our own initiative and by our own efforts. They make no unconditional promises.

At the same time, our obedience to them preserves for us the elements of life which make individual progress possible. They make life purposeful and full of promise. They lead to eternal progress. Humanity cannot fulfill its destiny when these truths are disregarded and abused. I cherish them with all my soul and am unreservedly committed to their promulgation among all the peoples of the earth. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### **President Marion G. Romney**

We have just listened to Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Our next speaker will be Elder Hugh W. Pinnock of the First Quorum of the Seventy and General President of the Sunday Schools of the Church, who is with President Spencer W. Kimball in the new chapel at Fayette, New York, which President Kimball dedicated this morning.

Following Elder Pinnock's address, we will be pleased to hear from our beloved prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball, who will deliver the closing address of the conference from the new Fayette chapel.

The first verse of "We Ever Pray for Thee" will then be rendered by the Fayette New York Branch choir, directed by Robert B. Winebrenner

and accompanied by Alma Jean Porschet. The second verse will be rendered by the Mormon Youth Chorus. The Mormon Youth Chorus will then sing the closing hymn "God Be with You." Following the singing, the benediction will be pronounced by Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch Emeritus, who is also with President Kimball in Fayette.

Before hearing from Elder Pinnock, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during 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 appreciative of the inspiring music performed by the Relief Society choir at the Saturday afternoon session, the Aaronic Priesthood choir at the priesthood session last night, the Mormon Youth Chorus at the session this afternoon, and the Fayette New York Branch choir for their singing at the sessions today. We are thankful to their conductors and organists.

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

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

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference; 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, and Canada;

and by satellite to Australia, Central and South America, Spain, and Taiwan.

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

We shall now hear from Elder Pinnock in Fayette, who will be followed by President Kimball.

## Elder Hugh W. Pinnock

What a marvelous day this has been, and what an incredible age in which we live! For over a year I have thought of this great day—the dedication of these three buildings, the many people who have made these projects possible, and the remarkable effect of the restoration of the gospel upon the world.

### Church growth explained

As we study this reinstatement and the theological basis of the Church, we will find ourselves thinking about the questions that so many others have asked. What is the explanation for the growth and the amazing influence of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? What does make Mormons different? Perplexed scholars, social critics, religionists, and cultural observers have given many answers. Their responses have ranged from describing the Church as a social abnormality that appeals to accomplishment-oriented people to such a simplistic idea as a conservative church always generates interest during troubled times.

However, the more deeply one wonders what makes us different from our nonmember friends and neighbors, the more certain is the answer: the Redeemer and other heavenly messengers personally restored the everlasting gospel to the earth. That is why we are here.

A poet so aptly said, "An honest tale speeds best being plainly told" (William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, act 4, sc. 4, line 358). That is my posture this day. The plain fact is that we believe the very same concepts that were revealed to the prophets ever since the world began. We utilize the same principles taught by the Master two thousand years ago.

As we study the Church today, we conclude that it is the same institution that was on the earth so many centuries ago. No other explanation is sensible. This is why scholars who attempt to relate the gospel of Jesus Christ to popular movements of the day, to a chance happening, or to other responses simply do not make sense, nor do they satisfy the longings of even the most naive seeker after truth.

### Aspects of restored Church

An example: the Master, while speaking to his disciples in the Old World, said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). We have known for 150 years that the other sheep were those sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father living here in the Americas. These are they whom the