

the other members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, the Presiding Bishopric, and the emeritus Brethren as at present constituted. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

The Relief Society: Barbara Ann Woodhead Winder as president. The Young Women: Ardeth Greene Kapp as president. All in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign. I should say that these calls have come just very recently—a matter of hours—to these women, and they will have more time to select their counselors and members of their boards.

All of the other general officers and boards as at present constituted. All in favor, manifest it. Contrary, by the same sign.

It appears to me that the voting has been unanimous in favor of the General Authorities and these general officers.

New temples announced

I mention to you another matter. We announced this morning the con-

struction of five new temples, to be built in Bogotá, Colombia; San Diego, California; Portland, Oregon; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Toronto, Ontario, Canada. We met earlier at 7:30 this morning with officers of the stakes in these areas, and all expressed their enthusiastic support of these undertakings.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We shall ask the Brethren and sisters who have been newly called to take their places on the stand, the women over here and the new Seventies here. That will be a long walk for some of them.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "How Wondrous and Great." We shall then be pleased to hear from President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir sang "How Wondrous and Great."

President Ezra Taft Benson

Take gospel to the world

Ten years ago President Spencer W. Kimball stood at this pulpit. In that conference, he was sustained by Saints throughout the world as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In the decade of his leadership that has followed, we have seen progress and growth unequaled in the history of the Church.

In his first conference address as President of the Church, President Kimball declared the program of the Church is "to reaffirm and boldly carry forward the work of God in cleanliness, uprightness, and to take that gospel of

truth to that world that needs so much that godly life" (*Ensign*, May 1974, p. 8).

My message today is to provide counsel on how we as a church and as individuals can carry forward the work of God to all the world.

Strengthen families

First, we need to strengthen families.

We must recognize that the family is the cornerstone of civilization and that no nation will rise above the caliber of its homes. The family is the rock foundation of the Church. We therefore

call on the head of every household to strengthen the family.

We believe marriage was ordained by God for a wise, eternal purpose. The family is the basis of the righteous life. Divinely prescribed roles of father, mother, and children were given from the very beginning.

God established that fathers are to preside in the home. Fathers are to provide, love, teach, and direct.

A mother's role is also God-ordained. Mothers are to conceive, bear, nourish, love, and train. They are to be helpmates, and are to counsel with their husbands.

Parents' responsibility

There is no inequality between the sexes in God's plan. It is a matter of division of responsibility.

Children are likewise counseled in holy writ in their duty to parents:

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

"Honour thy father and mother; [which is the first commandment with promise;]

"That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3), said the Apostle Paul.

When parents, in companionship, love, and unity, fulfill their heaven-imposed responsibility and children respond with love and obedience, great joy is the result.

Spiritually strengthen families

Recently a letter came to me from a member of the Church describing some of the difficulties and challenges that a husband and his wife were having in rearing their children.

They were married in the temple, but subsequently drifted into inactivity. They had only recently become active again in Church responsibility. They asked for personal counsel as to what they might do to ensure that their children would remain faithful to the gospel and avoid some of the pitfalls that

they had experienced and had seen come to other families.

In other words, they were asking, "How can we spiritually strengthen our family?"

I would invite each of you to ponder that significant question. As a response to this request, I would further invite you to consider the tried and tested formula that successful families have used over the years to attain love, unity, and loyalty to one another and to understand the principles of the gospel.

Love, respect, communication

Successful families have love and respect for each family member. Family members know they are loved and appreciated. Children feel they are loved by their parents. Thus, they are secure and self-assured.

Strong families cultivate an attribute of effective communication. They talk out their problems, make plans together, and cooperate toward common objectives. Family home evening and family councils are practiced and used as effective tools toward this end.

Fathers and mothers in strong families stay close to their children. They talk. Some fathers formally interview each child, others do so informally, and others take occasion to regularly spend time alone with each child.

Provide wholesome influences

Every family has problems and challenges. But successful families try to work together toward solutions instead of resorting to criticism and contention. They pray for each other, discuss, and give encouragement. Occasionally these families fast together in support of one of the family members.

Strong families support each other.

Successful families do things together: family projects, work, vacations, recreation, and reunions.

Successful parents have found that it is not easy to rear children in an environment polluted with evil. Therefore, they take deliberate steps to provide the best of wholesome influences. Moral principles are taught. Good books are made available and read. Television watching is controlled. Good and uplifting music is provided. But most importantly, the scriptures are read and discussed as a means to help develop spiritual-mindedness.

Tried and proven formula

In successful Latter-day Saint homes, parents teach their children to understand faith in God, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. (See D&C 68:25.)

Family prayer is a consistent practice in these families. Prayer is the means to acknowledge appreciation for blessings and to humbly recognize dependence on Almighty God for strength, sustenance, and support.

It is a wise and true maxim that families that kneel together stand upright before the Lord!

This, then, is the tried and proven formula for rearing successful families. I commend the formula to you.

As parents and grandparents in Zion, it has been the shared hope of my wife and me that all of us will be together in the eternities—that all will be worthy, without a single empty chair.

That is my fervent hope and prayer for each family in the Church.

Now may I direct some remarks to us as members of the Church individually.

New editions of standard works

More than at any time in our history, brothers and sisters, we have need for greater spirituality. The way to develop greater spirituality is to feast on the words of Christ as revealed in the scriptures.

One of the most significant happenings in recent Church history is the publication of the new editions of the

standard works with the new footnotes and other helps.

I think we can say without exaggeration that never before in any dispensation have the Saints been so abundantly blessed with the words of the Lord and His prophets.

For your profit and learning

Now our challenge is to do as the Lord commanded: "Study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men" (D&C 11:22).

This year we are to read the Book of Mormon in the adult curriculum of the Church. The Prophet Joseph Smith said of this sacred record: "The Book of Mormon [is] the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], p. 194).

We urge you to study the Book of Mormon as individuals and families and then to do as the prophet Nephi counseled: liken the scriptures to yourselves so that it will be for your profit and learning. (See 1 Nephi 19:23–24.)

We have requested priesthood leaders to minimize administrative meetings on the Sabbath so that families may engage in worship and family time. Our hope is that you will use this time to attend your meetings, render Christian service, visit family members, hold family home evenings, and study the scriptures.

Accept callings and give service

We counsel you to accept callings in the Church and to serve faithfully in the positions to which you are called. Serve one another. Magnify your callings. As you do so, you will be the means of blessing others and you will increase in spirituality.

We urge you, particularly priesthood brethren and Relief Society sisters, to be sensitive to the needs of the

poor, the sick, and the needy. We have a Christian responsibility to see that the widows and fatherless are assisted. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

Keep the commandments

We urge you to keep the commandments of God. By so doing, you will keep yourself free from the bondage of sin.

"Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ . . . serve him" (D&C 59:5).

Confess the hand of God in all things. (See D&C 59:21.)

"Be patient in afflictions" (D&C 24:8).

"Be of good cheer" (D&C 61:36).

Sustain and support the priesthood in the home and Church. (See D&C 107:22.)

Pay an honest tith and a generous fast offering. (See D&C 119:4; Mosiah 4:21.)

"Love thy neighbor as thyself" (D&C 59:6).

Teach your children. Bring them up in light and truth. (See D&C 93:40, 42-43.)

"Cease to find fault one with another" (D&C 88:124).

"Forgive one another" (D&C 64:9).

Elect honest, good, and wise men to public office. (See D&C 98:10.)

Obey and befriend "that law which is the constitutional law of the land" (D&C 98:6).

Be thrifty. Stay out of debt. (See D&C 19:35.)

Do not covet. (See D&C 88:123.)

Be honest in your dealings with others. (See D&C 51:9.)

Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy. (See D&C 59:10, 12-13.)

Abstain from the use of liquor, tobacco, and strong and hot drinks. (See D&C 89:5-9.)

"Cease to be unclean"; shun pornography (D&C 88:124).

Seek learning out of the best books. (See D&C 88:118.) Avoid literature and movies which portray evil as good and good as evil.

Do not commit adultery "nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6). That means petting, fornication, homosexuality, and any other form of immorality.

"Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45).

"Practice virtue and holiness" continually (D&C 38:24).

"Clothe yourselves with the bond of charity" (D&C 88:125).

Live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. (See D&C 98:11.)

Be valiant in your testimony of Christ. (See D&C 76:51, 79.)

Honor your covenants. (See D&C 25:13.)

"Endure to the end" (D&C 14:7).

In a word, though you live in the world, be not of the world!

The mission of the Church

The mission of the Church is to save souls by proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead.

We urge you to do all within your talent and means to help build the kingdom of God on the earth. Always strive to sustain, support, and do what is best for the kingdom of God.

We commend you!

Finally, a word of commendation and encouragement.

Over forty years ago President Kimball and I were called to be members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. We were ordained Apostles only a few minutes apart.

When we came into the Council, there were 146 stakes. Today there are 1,460—over 800 of which have been organized since President Kimball became President.

The number of members in 1943 was less than a million. Today we exceed five million. Almost two million have become members in the last ten years.

The Church has never been in a better position than at present. There are more devoted members than ever before. Missionary work has caused us to rapidly expand throughout the world. Genealogical and temple work has significantly increased. Leadership has improved. Our youth are more spiritually prepared than ever before.

We are pleased with the activation of many of our brethren and sisters. We encourage priesthood and auxiliary leaders to continue this great effort.

Latter-day Saints, we commend you! We commend your faithfulness. Never have our opportunities and our blessings been so great. In the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, "Shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage . . . and on, on to victory!" (D&C 128:22).

Heritage from the Lord

Some of our members have become disturbed because of derogatory things said about the Church and its leaders, or because of misrepresentations about our doctrines or our practices.

But opposition is not new to the Church. We have had opposition in the past, and we shall continue to have opposition in the future. Do not become discouraged by what others say or do. Stay on the strait and narrow path. You do this by holding fast to the iron rod—the words of God as contained in the scriptures and as given by His living servants on this earth.

I carry with me a statement of the Lord from the Book of Mormon, which my brethren of the Twelve have

heard me quote. The passage reads as follows:

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall revile against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord" (3 Nephi 22:17).

Fervent prayer to bless good men and women

Brothers and sisters, this is the work of the Lord. This is His church on the earth. He has entrusted His church to the care of humble men, who have extraordinary responsibilities. We need your faith, your support, and your constant prayers.

I testify to you that God lives and that today He communicates to His servants His will. President Spencer W. Kimball is his chosen prophet on earth today. I testify that this is the Church of Jesus Christ—the kingdom of God on this earth.

I pray most earnestly that God's favor and blessing will be on you, your families, and good men and women the world over, for we all are children of one Father.

To this I testify and leave my blessing, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Truth Eternal" without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, has just addressed us, followed by the Choir singing "Truth Eternal."

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.