

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth general session of the conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 7, 1984. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the beginning of the session, the choir sang "With Songs of Praise" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Good morning, brothers and sisters. We are pleased to greet you this beautiful morning as we assemble in this fourth general session of the 154th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We are delighted to have with us this morning President Spencer W. Kimball. We are honored by his presence. We regret that President Romney is unable to be with us this morning. He is watching the proceedings on television and sends his love and blessing.

We acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television, those who are seated in the overflow

congregation in the Assembly Hall where Elders Hartman Rector, Jr. and Jacob de Jager preside, and those participating through satellite transmission assembled in over nine hundred stake centers in the United States and Canada.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands, who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The choir opened these services by singing "With Songs of Praise" and will now sing "Come, We That Love the Lord," following which Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "Come, We That Love the Lord."

Elder Richard G. Scott offered the invocation.

The choir sang "God Bless Our Prophet Dear" without announcement.

President Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Women's conference and priesthood gathering

A week ago last evening there emanated from this Tabernacle on Temple Square a great conference of the women of the Church. Many thou-

sands participated in that conference, which was carried across the continent from coast to coast. It was an inspirational experience to look into the faces of those assembled in the Tabernacle on that occasion—women of beauty, women of strength, women of capacity, women of virtue, women of faith.

Last night, similarly, there emanated from the Tabernacle a great gathering of the priesthood, a meeting which was carried from here to 714 other locations across the world and to 900 stake centers in which were assembled men and boys of the Church who love the Lord and walk with faith and conviction. What a marvelous thing this work is, my beloved brethren and sisters.

The prophet of the Lord

It is a great honor to stand before you and speak to Latter-day Saints across the world. I pray for direction of the Holy Spirit. I am not here as a substitute for the President of the Church. I am speaking as his Second Counselor, a responsibility I did not seek but one which I have accepted as a sacred call, in the fulfillment of which I have tried to lift some of the heavy burdens of office from the shoulders of our beloved President and move forward the work of the Lord with diligence. President Kimball is the prophet of the Lord. None other can or will take his place for so long as he lives. When he passes, there will be another ready, a man who, through long years of experience and service, has been trained, has been tested, has been schooled and refined and prepared to fill that sacred and awesome responsibility.

Work going well

I wish to report to the membership of the Church wherever you may be that the work is going well. I feel that our Father in Heaven smiles upon it with approval. I realize, of course, that each of us, regardless of our position, could do better in our responsibilities. We ought constantly to be improving. Nonetheless, there is cause for satisfaction.

The missionary work moves forward, with new fields opened since we last met in conference. The activity of Church members throughout the world improves. The vast work of genealogi-

cal research is being expanded, and an ever-increasing number of faithful Latter-day Saints carry forward the sacred work in the temples.

We are building new houses of worship on an unprecedented scale. Economies of construction have been developed to hold down the cost of these structures.

Dedications of Boise, Sydney, and Manila temples

Three new temples have been dedicated since last we met—one in Boise, Idaho; one in Sydney, Australia; and, most recently, one in Manila, the capital city of the Philippines. Tens of thousands of Latter-day Saints have participated in these inspiring dedicatory services. In the Boise Temple, twenty-four individual services were held, with a great outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord in each. Numerous were the expressions of appreciation. In Australia it was the same. People came to the temple from as far away as Tasmania in the south, and from Thursday Island in the far north; they came across the entire continent, from Perth on the west coast, many of them at great sacrifice, to enjoy the wonderful atmosphere of that significant occasion when fourteen dedicatory services were held.

We returned only a few days ago from Manila in the Philippines. There on an eminence where the ground falls away to the rear, affording a view of an entire valley, stands a beautiful and sacred temple. Here, as elsewhere, there is incised in the stone of one of the towers the words "Holiness to the Lord. The House of the Lord." By the thousands they came, the wonderful, faithful members of the Church in the Republic of the Philippines. With songs of thanksgiving, with words of counsel and testimony, with a prayer of dedication, they all joined in presenting to the Lord, as the gift of a thankful people, this beautiful house as his abode.

In all of these new temples, the buildings have been opened to the general public prior to dedication. Tens and tens of thousands have gone through them. They have been free to ask any questions concerning them. These visitors have been respectful and reverent as they have partaken of the spirit of these sacred structures. As they have felt of that spirit and learned something of the purposes for which the temples have been built, these who have been our guests have recognized why, following dedication, we regard these buildings as sanctified and holy, reserved for sacred purposes and closed to the public.

Participating in these dedicatory services, one senses the true strength of the Church. That strength is in the hearts of the people, who are united by a bond of recognition of God as our Eternal Father and Jesus Christ as our Savior. Their individual testimonies are firmly established on a foundation of faith concerning things divine.

Ancient cornerstone ceremony

In each new temple we have had a cornerstone ceremony in harmony with a tradition that goes back to ancient times. Before the general use of concrete, the foundation walls of the building were laid with large stones. A trench would be dug, and stones would be placed as footings. Starting at a point of beginning, the foundation wall would be run in one direction to a cornerstone; then the corner would be turned and the wall run to the next corner, where another stone was placed, from which the wall would be run to the next corner, and from there to the point of beginning. In many instances, including the construction of early temples in the Church, cornerstones were used at each junction point of the walls and put in place with ceremony. The final stone was spoken of as the chief cornerstone, and its placement became the reason for much celebration. With this cornerstone in position, the foundation was ready for the super-

structure. Hence the analogy that Paul used in describing the true church:

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

"In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:19-21).

Cornerstones of our faith

We have basic cornerstones on which this great latter-day church has been established by the Lord and built, "fitly framed together." They are absolutely fundamental to this work, the very foundation, anchors on which it stands. I should like to speak briefly of these four essential cornerstones which anchor The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I mention first the chief cornerstone, whom we recognize and honor as the Lord Jesus Christ. The second is the vision given the Prophet Joseph Smith when the Father and the Son appeared to him. The third is the Book of Mormon, which speaks as a voice from the dust with the words of ancient prophets declaring the divinity and reality of the Savior of mankind. The fourth is the priesthood with all of its powers and authority, whereby men act in the name of God in administering the affairs of his kingdom.

Chief cornerstone—Jesus Christ

May I comment on each of these. Absolutely basic to our faith is our testimony of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who under a divine plan was born in Bethlehem of Judea. He grew in Nazareth as the carpenter's son, within him the elements of both mortality and immortality received, respectively, from his earthly mother and his Heavenly Father. In the course of his brief earthly ministry, he walked the dusty

roads of Palestine healing the sick, causing the blind to see, raising the dead, teaching doctrines both transcendent and beautiful. He was, as Isaiah had prophesied, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). He reached out to those whose burdens were heavy and invited them to cast their burdens upon him, declaring, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). He "went about doing good," and was hated for it (Acts 10:38). His enemies came against him. He was seized, tried on spurious charges, convicted to satisfy the cries of the mob, and condemned to die on Calvary's cross.

The nails pierced his hands and feet, and he hung in agony and pain, giving himself a ransom for the sins of all men. He died crying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

He was buried in a borrowed tomb and on the third day rose from the grave. He came forth triumphant, in a victory over death, the firstfruits of all that slept. With his resurrection came the promise to all men that life is everlasting, that even as in Adam all die, in Christ all are made alive. (See I Corinthians 15:20-22.) Nothing in all of human history equals the wonder, the splendor, the magnitude, or the fruits of the matchless life of the Son of God, who died for each of us. He is our Savior. He is our Redeemer. As Isaiah foretold, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

He is the chief cornerstone of the church which bears his name, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved. (See Acts 4:12.) He is the author of our salvation, the giver of eternal life. (See Hebrews 5:9.) There is none to equal him. There never has been. There never will be. Thanks be to God for the gift of his Beloved Son, who gave his life that we might live, and who is the chief,

immovable cornerstone of our faith and his church.

Joseph Smith's first vision

The second cornerstone—the first vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The year was 1820, the season spring. The boy with questions walked into the grove of his father's farm. There, finding himself alone, he pleaded in prayer for that wisdom which James promised would be given liberally to those who ask of God in faith. (See James 1:5.) There, in circumstances which he has described in much detail, he beheld the Father and the Son, the great God of the universe and the risen Lord, both of whom spoke to him.

This transcendent experience opened the marvelous work of restoration. It lifted the curtain on the long-promised dispensation of the fulness of times.

For more than a century and a half, enemies, critics, and some would-be scholars have worn out their lives trying to disprove the validity of that vision. Of course they cannot understand it. The things of God are understood by the Spirit of God. There had been nothing of comparable magnitude since the Son of God walked the earth in mortality. Without it as a foundation stone for our faith and organization, we have nothing. With it, we have everything.

Much has been written, much will be written, in an effort to explain it away. The finite mind cannot comprehend it. But the testimony of the Holy Spirit, experienced by countless numbers of people all through the years since it happened, bears witness that it is true, that it happened as Joseph Smith said it happened, that it was as real as the sunrise over Palmyra, that it is an essential foundation stone, a cornerstone, without which the Church could not be "fitly framed together."

The Book of Mormon

The third cornerstone—the Book of Mormon. I hold it in my hand. It is

real. It has weight and substance which can be physically measured. I open its pages and read, and it has language both beautiful and uplifting. The ancient record from which it was translated came out of the earth as a voice speaking from the dust. It came as the testimony of generations of men and women who lived their lives upon the earth, who struggled with adversity, who quarreled and fought, who at various times lived the divine law and prospered and at other times forsook their God and went down to destruction. It contains what has been described as the fifth Gospel, a moving testament of the new world concerning the visit of the resurrected Redeemer on the soil of this hemisphere.

The evidence for its truth, for its validity in a world that is prone to demand evidence, lies not in archaeology or anthropology, though these may be helpful to some. It lies not in word research or historical analysis, though these may be confirmatory. The evidence for its truth and validity lies within the covers of the book itself. The test of its truth lies in reading it. It is a book of God. Reasonable men may sincerely question its origin; but those who have read it prayerfully have come to know by a power beyond their natural senses that it is true, that it contains the word of God, that it outlines saving truths of the everlasting gospel, that it came forth by the gift and power of God "to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ" (Book of Mormon title page).

It is here. It must be explained. It can be explained only as the translator himself explained its origin. Hand in hand with the Bible, whose companion volume it is, it stands as another witness to a doubting generation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It is an unassailable cornerstone of our faith.

Restoration of the priesthood

Cornerstone number four—the restoration to earth of priesthood power

and authority. That authority was given to men anciently, the lesser authority to the sons of Aaron to administer in things temporal as well as in some sacred ecclesiastical ordinances. The higher priesthood was given by the Lord himself to his Apostles when he declared, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19).

In its full restoration, it involved the coming of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, whose head was taken to satisfy the whims of a wicked woman, and of Peter, James, and John, they who faithfully walked with the Master before his death and proclaimed his resurrection and divinity following his death. It involved Moses, Elias, and Elijah, each bringing priesthood keys to complete the work of restoring all of the acts and ordinances of previous dispensations in this the great, final dispensation of the fulness of times.

The priesthood is here. It has been conferred upon us. We act in that authority. We speak as sons of God in the name of Jesus Christ and as holders of this divinely given endowment. We know, for we have seen, the power of this priesthood. We have seen the sick healed, the lame made to walk, and the coming of light and knowledge and understanding to those who have been in darkness.

Paul wrote concerning the priesthood: "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Hebrews 5:4). We have not acquired it through purchase or bargain. The Lord has given it to men who are considered worthy to receive it, regardless of station in life, the color of their skin, or the nation in which they live. It is the power and the authority to govern in the affairs of the kingdom of God. It is given only by ordination by the laying on of hands by those in authority to do so. The qualification for eligibility is obedience to the commandments of God.

There is no power on the earth like it. Its authority extends beyond life, through the veil of death, to the eternities ahead. It is everlasting in its consequences.

"Fitly framed together"

These great God-given gifts are the unshakable cornerstones which anchor The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as well as the individual testimonies and convictions of its members: (1) the reality and the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God; (2) the sublime vision given the Prophet Joseph Smith of the Father and the Son, ushering in the dispensation of the fulness of times; (3) the Book of Mormon as the word of God speaking in declaration of the divinity of the Savior; and (4) the priesthood of God divinely conferred to be exercised in righteousness for the blessing of our Father's children.

Each of these cornerstones is related to the other, each connected by a foundation of Apostles and prophets, all tied to the chief cornerstone, Jesus Christ. On this has been established his Church, "fitly framed together," for the blessing of all who will partake of its offering. (See Ephesians 2:21.)

So undergirded beneath and fitly framed above, it stands as the creation of the Almighty. It is a shelter from the storms of life. It is a refuge of peace for those in distress. It is a house of succor for those in need. It is the conservator of eternal truth and the teacher of the divine will. It is the true and living Church of the Master.

Testimony

Of these things I give solemn testimony, bearing witness to all within the sound of my voice that God has spoken again to open this final glorious dispensation; that his Church is here, the Church which carries the name of his Beloved Son; that there has come from the earth the record of an ancient people bearing witness to this generation of the work of the Almighty; that the everlasting priesthood is among men for their blessing and the governance of his work; that this is the true and living Church of Jesus Christ, brought forth for the blessing of all who will receive its message; that it is immovably established on a foundation of Apostles and prophets, with cornerstones of unshakable firmness put in place by him for the accomplishment of his eternal purposes, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.

Of such was the faith of our fathers. Of such is our faith. "Faith of our fathers, holy faith. We will be true to thee till death!" ("Faith of Our Fathers" in *Hymns*, 1985 ed.). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still" without announcement.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still."

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder James E. Faust

With a prayer in my heart for understanding, and with some timidity, I speak today concerning parents and children with special problems. I do so

because I am persuaded that these extraordinary challenges are, as the Savior himself said, that "the works of God should be made manifest"