

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Live the gospel

My brothers and sisters, this has been a glorious conference. Only one thing has been lacking, and that is to have heard from the President of the Church, the prophet of the Lord. I wish that President Kimball might have been able to speak to us. We love him. We pray for him. He would have me convey his love and blessing to each of you.

We have likewise missed the counsel of President Romney. These our Brethren have each reached an advanced age. Our hearts go out to them. We pray that the Lord will bless them and comfort and sustain them according to his all-wise program. His wisdom exceeds that of any man. He is working his grand design with reference to his purposes and his kingdom.

If our leaders could have spoken to us, I am confident they would have said, "Live the gospel." That is the greatest challenge we face. It is a simple declaration, but encompassed in those few words is a mandate applicable to each of us. It concerns our home and family life. It concerns our daily work. It concerns our activities and responsibilities as men and women, brothers and sisters, in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As we return to our homes, let us resolve within our hearts to more fully live the gospel.

No power will retard progress

One hundred years ago at the October 1884 conference, in this same Tabernacle, George Q. Cannon, Counselor in the First Presidency, standing where I now stand, said to those here assembled:

"If I could speak so that the whole world would hear the utterance I would like to sound it in the ears of all mortal men—that there is no power that will ever be permitted to array itself, or to

combine itself against this work of our God, to retard its onward progress from this time forward until the full consummation will be achieved—that is, if the Latter-day Saints themselves are faithful to God, if they will keep the commandments of God, if they will sanctify themselves and cleanse themselves from sin, and live pure and holy lives. If they will do this, then the success and the triumph and the continued growth and advancement of this kingdom . . . are assured unto us as a people. There is no doubt of it. I say in the name of Jesus Christ, that it will be so" (*Journal of Discourses*, 25:325).

Unity and loyalty among General Authorities

I appreciate what has been said by all who have spoken in this conference. I want to assure you, as I have assured you in the past, that there is unity in the leadership of the Church. There is not the slightest divisiveness among the General Authorities. There is a great sense of loyalty among them—loyalty to you, loyalty to one another, loyalty to this cause, loyalty to God and his Eternal Son.

I love these my Brethren. Not one of them has ever hesitated to respond to any call that was made upon him. They have been willing to travel over land and sea, in sunshine or storm, to accomplish any task asked of them. They have lived up to the solemn charge given each at the time of his call—to put the interests of the kingdom of God ahead of all other interests.

Local leaders called by revelation

I can say the same of members of stake presidencies and bishoprics, Regional Representatives, mission presidents, and many others. It is a constantly unfolding miracle to me to witness the faithfulness of these men

who have been appointed as local Church leaders.

I want to assure you that they have been called by the spirit of prophecy and revelation. They have been set apart by those who are in authority to do so. They have been blessed with judgment and understanding, with discernment and inspiration.

Take problems to local leaders

I urge the people of the Church, wherever you may be, when you are faced with problems, first to try to solve those problems yourselves. Think about them, study alternatives available to you, pray about them, and look to the Lord for direction. If you are unable to settle them yourselves, then talk with your bishop or branch president. He is a man of God, called under the authority of the holy priesthood as the shepherd of the flock.

So very many letters come addressed to President Kimball asking for counsel and advice on personal problems. Most of the questions raised could be settled by the individuals themselves, and most certainly in counseling with their bishops or stake presidents, who best know the members of their wards and stakes. These brethren are close to the people. It is my observation that they are willing to give of their time unselfishly to listen to the troubles of those for whom they are responsible. They are willing to fast and to pray in seeking solutions.

It is so much better that you consult with these your local brethren rather than that you write to the General Authorities of the Church, who, in many instances, will simply refer your query back to your bishop or stake president. Such referral will not come of an unwillingness to take the time to assist those in trouble. It will be prompted by an established procedure in the Church that we should look to our local leaders for counsel, those who know us best. They are entitled to inspiration from the Lord in

counseling those for whom they have responsibility.

Even if President Kimball were in good health and vigorous, there is no way that he could deal with all of the personal problems of the people and still carry the tremendous administrative load which is attached to his office. If bishops and stake presidents do not know the answers to problems which come to them, then they may properly write to the Presidency of the Church. That is the order of things, my brethren and sisters, and there is great wisdom in it.

Cultivate a spirit of gladness

Now a final word. Enjoy your membership in the Church. Where else in all the world can you find such a society? Enjoy your activity. When I was a missionary in London fifty years ago, my companion and I would shake hands in the morning and say to one another, "Life is good." Life in the service of the Lord is good. It is beautiful. It is rewarding.

Be happy in that which you do. Cultivate a spirit of gladness in your homes. Subdue and overcome all elements of anger, impatience, and unbecoming talk one to another. Let the light of the gospel shine in your faces wherever you go and in whatever you do.

God be with you, my beloved brethren and sisters. May he smile with favor upon you as you walk in obedience to his commandments.

I add my testimony to the many that have been borne in this conference. I know that God our Eternal Father lives, the Father of the spirits of all men. Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, our Savior and our Redeemer, who gave his life as a vicarious sacrifice for each of us.

Joseph Smith was and is a prophet. We have a prophet among us at this time. This is the Church of Jesus Christ, restored in this dispensation for the blessing of our Father's children.

Saturday, September 29, 1984

I leave with you my love and blessing and that of each of my Brethren in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide."

Elder Franklin D. Richards offered the benediction.

GENERAL WOMEN'S MEETING

With the theme "Striving Together," a general women's meeting was held Saturday evening, September 29, 1984, in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah. Latter-day Saint women and girls ten years of age and older met in the Tabernacle and Assembly Hall on Temple Square and gathered in meetinghouses to view the proceedings by television and satellite coverage. The program included music by a women's chorus from the Hol-

liday Utah Region and talks by President Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency, Elder Dean L. Larsen of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and the general presidents of the Primary, Young Women, and Relief Society.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, gave the following talk at that meeting.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

What a wonderful thing it is that, although we are separated into perhaps some nine hundred different congregations, we are met together with one mind, with one heart, and with one desire. That desire, I am confident, is that each of us shall be lifted to a higher plane of thought and living.

Associates with their brethren

We were recently honored with visits to the Church Administration Building, on two consecutive days, of Ronald Reagan, President of the United States, and Walter Mondale, who is campaigning for the presidency. It was my opportunity on these occasions to introduce each of these distinguished gentlemen to Sister Young, to Sister Kapp, and to Sister Winder. In each instance I indicated that Sister Young presides over an organization of more than 650,000 children, that Sister Kapp

presides over an organization of more than a quarter of a million young women, and that Sister Winder presides over an organization of more than a million and a half mature women—the oldest continuously operating organization of women in our nation, if not in the entire world.

I also introduced these gentlemen to the members of the Council of the Twelve and to the Presiding Bishop. We all sat together, men and women, officers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, meeting in the council room of the First Presidency.

Women in the Church are associates with their brethren in carrying forward this mighty work of the Lord. It is no small thing that there are enrolled in these organizations, presided over by women, some two and a half million members.