

prepared to undertake the long journey to San Bernardino. But they had no \$600.

Then there came a knock at the door, and Peter Nielsen, from the nearby community of Washington, entered the house. He said to David Cannon, "Brother David, I have had a persistent dream that I should bring the money that I had saved to expand my house—bring it to you, that you would have a purpose for it."

While all of the men gathered around the table, including little David, Jr., Peter Nielsen took out a red bandanna and dropped gold pieces, one by one, upon the table. When David Cannon counted the gold pieces, they totaled \$600—the exact amount needed to obtain the glass. Within an hour the men waved good-bye and, with their teams, set forth on their journey to San Bernardino to retrieve the glass for the tabernacle.

When that true story was told on "Death Valley Days," young David Cannon, Jr., was then eighty-seven years of age. He listened to the story with rapt attention. I feel that in his mind, he once again heard those gold pieces, one by one, dropping upon the table as astonished men saw with their very eyes the answer to their prayers.

### **Trials and testimonies help build spiritual temples**

Tabernacles and temples are built with more than stone and mortar, wood and glass. Particularly is this true when we speak of the temple described by the Apostle Paul: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of

God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). Such temples are built with faith and fasting. They are built with service and sacrifice. They are built with trials and testimonies.

### **"Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory!"**

If any brethren within the sound of my voice feel unprepared, even incapable of responding to a call to serve, to sacrifice, to bless the lives of others, remember the truth: "Whom God calls, God qualifies." He who notes the sparrow's fall will not abandon the servant's need.

God bless you, my brethren—you who bear the priesthood. You "are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9).

May we respond affirmatively to the Prophet Joseph, who urged: "Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory!" (D&C 128:22). This is my earnest and humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

We have just heard President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel."

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The choir and congregation sang "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel."

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke without announcement.

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## **President Gordon B. Hinckley**

President Benson and the Brethren have asked that I deal with two or three matters of concern to all of us.

### **A spirit of reverence and worship in meetings**

The first of these is reverence in our meetings, particularly in our sacra-

ment meetings. This is a matter that ought to concern every holder of the priesthood, whether Aaronic or Melchizedek, as well as every member of the Church.

Why do we go to sacrament meetings? We go, of course, to renew our covenants in partaking of the sacrament. This is the most important element of these meetings. And we also go to be instructed, to meditate upon the things of God, and to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. We go because of the commandment of the Lord, who said in revelation:

"Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

"And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

"For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High" (D&C 59:8-10).

We need, every one of us needs, to pause from the hectic pace of our lives and to reflect upon things sacred and divine. I recall that when I was a missionary in London, England, more than fifty years ago, we held our meetings in the Battersea town hall, which we rented. The floors were hard, and we sat on chairs. Every time a chair moved there was a noise. But this was not the worst aspect of the situation. Far worse was the noisy socializing of the members of the branch.

On one occasion we invited a family whom we had met while tracting. With great expectation we as missionaries stood by the door to welcome them. There was the usual convivial spirit in the hall, with the members talking noisily one with another. When this family came into the room, they quietly moved toward some chairs, knelt for a moment, and closed their eyes in a word of prayer. They then sat in an attitude of reverence amidst all the commotion.

Frankly, I was embarrassed. They had come to what they regarded as a worship service, and they behaved themselves accordingly.

At the close of the meeting they left quietly, and when we next met they spoke of their disappointment in what they had experienced. I have never forgotten that.

I invite you brethren of the priesthood, wherever you may be, and particularly you members of bishoprics, to begin an earnest effort to cultivate a more beautiful spirit of worship in our sacrament meetings and an attitude of increased reverence generally in our church buildings.

### **The spirit of worship**

I am grateful that we now have carpeted aisles in our chapels, and in many of the newer buildings, carpet over the entire floor. Fixed pews are in place rather than folding chairs. In planning, in renovating, in maintaining our structures, we ought always to have in mind the importance of those physical aspects which contribute to a spirit of worship.

Music, of course, is an important factor. Our buildings for the most part are equipped with organs, which when properly played, can add much to the worship atmosphere of the service. The singing of hymns and the rendition of selections from the great sacred oratorios by ward choirs all enhance the spirit of worship.

### **Avoid socializing in the chapel**

Socializing is an important aspect of our program as a church. We encourage the cultivation of friends with happy conversations among our people. However, these should take place in the foyer, and when we enter the chapel we should understand that we are in sacred precincts. All of us are familiar with the account in Exodus of the Lord's appearance to Moses at the burning bush. When the Lord

called, Moses answered, "Here am I" (Exodus 3:4).

And the Lord said, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (v. 5).

We do not ask our people to remove their shoes when they come into the chapel. But all who come into the Lord's house should have a feeling that they are walking and standing on holy ground and that it becomes them to deport themselves accordingly.

The example of those on the stand will do much to create the proper atmosphere. If there is preparation beforehand, if there is a brief prayer meeting preceding the service, it would be exceptional when there might be any need for conversation among those seated on the stand while the service is in progress.

### **Administer the sacrament reverently**

The young men of the Aaronic Priesthood should be trained to know that the sacrament which they administer is sacred and holy unto the Lord. Encouragement and training should be given to see that the prayers are spoken plainly and in a spirit of communion with our Father in Heaven. The priest at the sacrament table places all in the congregation under sacred covenant. The offering of the prayer is not a ritual to be thoughtlessly spoken. It is, rather, the voicing of an obligation and a promise. Cleanliness of hands, as well as purity of heart, should be taught to the priests who officiate at the sacrament table.

At the conclusion of the administration of the sacrament, it is not uncommon for the priests and even the deacons to leave their places and scatter all over the chapel. Possibly the bench on which the priests sit is not comfortable. If so, perhaps space could be reserved on the front row to which they could quietly move at the conclusion of the sacrament service.

Most important of all is the training of our people, and particularly our young people, in the importance of reverence in the chapel.

### **How to improve**

I wish that every father in the Church would make this a matter of discussion with his family at the next family home evening and occasionally in family home evenings thereafter. The subject for discussion might be something like this: "What each of us can do to improve the spirit of our sacrament meetings." Wonderful things will happen if this is done.

With our block-plan scheduling, three hours is a long time for a small child to sit in meetings. It is a long time for a mother who has small children around her. But with thoughtful training and careful consideration of all elements of the situation, a great improvement can be brought to pass. Mothers with small babies may plan to sit near the aisle so that, if necessary, they can leave quietly to care for their children.

To ancient Israel Jehovah said, "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and *reverence my sanctuary*: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:30; italics added).

Brethren, we ask that you discuss this important matter in your homes and that you who are officers discuss it in your planning meetings. There is much room for improvement, and with a little effort it can happen. As reverence is improved, all will be blessed. I leave the matter in your hands.

### **The plague of AIDS**

I speak next on an item of great delicacy. I pondered much over whether it should be discussed in the leadership meeting last night or whether it should be discussed in this general priesthood meeting. I concluded that the subject is of such widespread concern and that some knowledge about it is had so generally,

even by boys and girls of the deacons' age, that I might properly treat it here. I do so with sensitivity for the nature of the subject.

There is a plague of fearsome dimensions moving across the world. Public health officials are greatly concerned, and everyone else should be.

The Surgeon General of the United States has forecast an AIDS death toll of 170,000 Americans in just four years. The situation is even more serious in some other areas of the world.

AIDS is a commonly fatal malady caused primarily from sexually transmitted disease and secondarily from drug abuse. Unfortunately, as in any epidemic, innocent people also become victims.

### **Chastity would help check this epidemic**

We, with others, hope that discoveries will make possible both prevention and healing from this dread affliction. But regardless of such discoveries, the observance of one clearly understandable and divinely given rule would do more than all else to check this epidemic. That is chastity before marriage and total fidelity after marriage.

Prophets of God have repeatedly taught through the ages that practices of homosexual relations, fornication, and adultery are grievous sins. Sexual relations outside the bonds of marriage are forbidden by the Lord. We reaffirm those teachings. Mankind has been given agency to choose between right and wrong. Said the prophet Lehi to 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 Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself" (2 Nephi 2:27).

### **Negative consequences follow wrong choices**

I repeat, each of us has a choice between right and wrong. But with that choice there inevitably will follow consequences. Those who choose to violate the commandments of God put themselves at great spiritual and physical jeopardy. The Apostle Paul said, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Jacob taught, "Remember, to be carnally-minded is death, and to be spiritually-minded is life eternal" (2 Nephi 9:39).

Jesus gave a commandment to control our thoughts as well as our deeds. He said, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

There is a principle of accountability with reference to human behavior. The prophet Alma declared:

"For our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God. . . .

"But this cannot be; we must come forth and stand before him in his glory, and in his power, and in his might, majesty, and dominion, and acknowledge to our everlasting shame that all his judgments are just" (Alma 12:14-15).

### **Control thoughts to control actions**

Mental control must be stronger than physical appetites or desires of the flesh. As thoughts are brought into complete harmony with revealed truth, actions will then become appropriate.

The timeless proverb is as true now as when it was first spoken: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

Each of us, with discipline and effort, has the capacity to control his thoughts and his actions. This is part of the process of developing spiritual, physical, and emotional maturity.

A prophet taught that "the natural man is an enemy to God, . . . and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord" (Mosiah 3:19).

We plead with people everywhere to live in accordance with the teachings of our Creator and rise above carnal attractions that often result in the tragedies that follow moral transgression.

### **Homosexual inclinations should be overcome before marriage**

The Lord has proclaimed that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and is intended to be an eternal relationship bonded by trust and fidelity. Latter-day Saints, of all people, should marry with this sacred objective in mind. Marriage should not be viewed as a therapeutic step to solve problems such as homosexual inclinations or practices, which first should clearly be overcome with a firm and fixed determination never to slip to such practices again.

### **Reach out**

Having said this, I desire now to say with emphasis that our concern for the bitter fruit of sin is coupled with Christ-like sympathy for its victims, innocent or culpable. We advocate the example of the Lord, who condemned the sinner, yet loved the sinner. We should reach out with kindness and comfort to the afflicted, ministering to their needs and assisting them with their problems. We repeat, however, that the way of safety and the road to happiness lie in abstinence before marriage and fidelity following marriage. Declared the Lord in this dispensation: "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45). There follows a remarkable and wonderful promise: "Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God. . . ."

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an

unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion" (vs. 45-46).

### **Guard against sexual adventurism**

Now, in conclusion, this leads to a related matter I wish to mention, and that is the sexual adventurism which is spreading like another plague across the world.

There is a philosophy among large numbers of people that sex education in our schools is the answer to the terrible problems of teenage pregnancies, abortions, and other grievous matters.

I am not disposed to discuss in this forum the merits or otherwise of sex education in the public schools. But in passing, I am inclined to agree with one who was recently quoted in the newspaper *USA Today*: "More sex education in public schools will not reverse the damaging legacy of the sexual revolution unless the clear message is premarital chastity and marital monogamy."

This writer continues: "There are many defects in sex education courses. The philosophy behind them is to ridicule chastity, scoff at fidelity, and glamorize sexual adventurism. They teach there is no such thing as right and wrong. . . ."

"Thirty years of advocating sexual liberation has brought raging venereal diseases and rampant teen-age pregnancy. . . ."

"Most sex education in the public schools morally disarms the students rather than giving them moral sensitivity to help them make the proper sexual choices. . . ."

"Sex education fights the modesty and morality endemic to human life" (Tottie Ellis, "Teaching about Sex Endangers Children," 16 Mar. 1987, p. 12A).

### **Teach moral cleanliness**

There is in each of us that sense of modesty and morality to which this writer refers. To the young men who

are here tonight I wish to say that the Lord has made it clear, and the experience of centuries has confirmed it, that happiness lies not in immorality, but rather in abstinence. The voice of the Church to which you belong is a voice pleading for virtue. It is a voice pleading for strength to abstain from that which is evil. It is a voice declaring that sexual transgression is sin. It is contrary to the will of the Lord. It is contrary to the teachings of the Church. It is contrary to the happiness and well-being of those who indulge in it.

You should recognize, you *must* recognize, that both experience and divine wisdom dictate virtue and moral cleanliness as the way that leads to strength of character, peace in the heart, and happiness in life. Will and Ariel Durant, who wrote eleven large volumes of history covering thousands of years, declared: "A youth boiling with hormones will wonder why he should not give full freedom to his sexual desires; and if he is unchecked by customs, morals, or laws, he may ruin his life before he matures sufficiently to understand that sex is a river of fire that must be banked and cooled by a hundred restraints if it is not to consume in chaos both the individual and the group" (*The Lessons of History* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968], pp. 35–36).

My dear young brethren, the Lord has been very good to you. He has brought you forth in this, the greatest age in the history of the earth. He has made you the beneficiary of His glorious gospel, restored to the earth for your blessing. No other generation has been the beneficiary of so much knowledge, of so much experience, of so much affluence and opportunity.

For your own sakes, for your happiness now and in all the years to come, and for the happiness of the generations who come after you, avoid sexual transgression as you would a plague.

Prove your strength, show your independence, by saying no when enticement from peers comes your way. Your own strength will add strength to those who are weak. Your own example will give determination to others.

God bless you, my beloved brethren—you of the noble birthright, you of the great promise. "Look to God and live" (Alma 37:47). May you do so, I humbly pray as I leave my love and blessing with you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

It will now be our privilege to listen to the counsel of President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet leader. He will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Benson speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir Broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

We change time at midnight tonight, so please move your clocks one hour ahead so that you will be here when the conference convenes.

We are grateful to you choice young men of this combined institute choir for your inspiring music, and we ask the blessings of the Lord upon you.

Following President Benson's closing remarks, the choir will sing "Brightly Beams Our Father's Mercy," and the benediction will be offered by Elder George P. Lee of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren of the priesthood, it has been a joy to be with you this evening and to be instructed by

these choice men of God. I have felt of your power and faith, and I commend you for your attendance here tonight.