

This work is divinely directed. God lives. Jesus is the Son of God. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Joseph Smith's First Prayer." After that, we shall hear from Elder Hugh W. Pinnock of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Joseph Smith's First Prayer."

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock

Four critical commandments

There are four critical commandments, four declarations from the Lord so powerful that almost everything else we think upon and live pales in comparison.

They are from the teachings of the Master, where he stated:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the *first* and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39; italics added).

"The third?" you ask. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

And the fourth, "If ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

It is the fourth, the concept of unity, of which I would like to speak.

Unity fosters family growth

We first might ask, "Are we one with our families? Is there truly peace at home?"

A man in a distant city was struggling to make a living, raise a family, and attend to his Church callings. His debts were piling up, there was discontent at home, and his children seemed to be misbehaving increasingly, with

everyone going a different direction. Suddenly his job was threatened, and the pressures mounted.

About the time when he didn't know if he could take any more, his teenage daughter, who had been noticing his frustration and pain, said, "Dad, as a family we can do anything. Hey, let's work together! I have a wonderful job after school, and Bill has found a paper route. Besides, isn't it about time we started to eat from our food supply in the basement?"

Well, the entire family caught the spirit. They concentrated their efforts. With time and the mutual support of one another, things did work out.

Can you see father Lehi gathering his loved ones around him near the end of his life? As a loving patriarch who had been tested and tried, he asked his family to leave their comfortable home and travel to a distant place in a new world. There they encountered dire circumstances, dangers, and contentions. He spoke to his family:

"And now that my soul might have joy in you, and that my heart might leave this world with gladness because of you, that I might not be brought down with grief and sorrow to the grave, arise from the dust, my sons, . . . and be determined in one mind and in one heart, united in all things, that ye may not come down into captivity" (2 Nephi 1:21).

As a loving father, he knew that if they were to flourish they must be one.

Unity betters communities

Are we one with our neighbors? Is the street where you live a little more peaceful because you dwell there?

There were two ranchers living side by side in southwestern Montana. They bickered and fought because each thought a rusty barbed wire fence that separated their ranches was not the true property line. Each felt the other was encroaching upon his land. The real estate records were unclear at the county courthouse.

They forbade their children to play with one another. The conflict became worse. Finally, after years of exchanging words and threats, one of the ranchers said to himself, "Enough of this." He drove down the lane from his place onto the county road and then down the long driveway to his neighbor's place.

"What do you want?" his adversary asked.

"Look, you take your hired men and your sons, and I'll take mine; and we'll put the fence wherever you'd like it. I've had enough of this. I want us to be friends."

His raw-boned neighbor softened, and tears ran down both of their faces. The neighbor responded, "Hey, let's drive to Virginia City and record that the present fence is where both of us want the property line to be."

They did and the problem was solved. Why? Because a neighbor wanted to be one with the family next door.

There could have been serious contentions in a community not far from here. But a group of neighbors, in unity, solved a problem before it became serious. A lovely young lady told the following story at a stake conference. She said, "I am a convert from upstate New York. My parents wanted their children to have eternal marriages. There were no Latter-day Saint

members to marry in our little branch, so our family moved to Utah.

"Eventually I found myself a husband. He was the president of the local motorcycle club—black leather jackets and motorcycle boots. We rode together—perhaps not what my mother had hoped—but by that time I had wandered from the Church."

She reported: "We moved into a house. Often our friends would gather there. I'm afraid our neighbors were quite uncomfortable with us. At least one neighbor would take her children into the house when we were roaming about.

"But do you know what our neighbors did? They mowed our lawn and fixed things up because we didn't have a mower. They would bring flowers when there was illness, and quite often they would bring food to our home. Our little daughter was included in the activities of the other children, including a party on her birthday."

As she and her husband attempted to thank their neighbors, they replied, "Well, we all like to help each other." They were made to feel welcome living next to unified and loving neighbors.

She continued, "About ten months later, we traded our black leather jackets and motorcycle boots for the white clothing and slippers of the temple. As we knelt across the altar from each other and looked around that room, there were our neighbors—those who had been mowing our lawn and making things better for us."

Now they were truly one. She reported to me there is still a wonderful feeling of unity in their neighborhood and ward. It wasn't temporary.

Unity brings blessings to any good endeavor

Most of us have observed a basketball, football, or soccer team slip into a state of such perfect harmony that those five or eleven athletes are like one. Suddenly the game changes. In fact, if unity can be maintained, we know which team will win.

Yes, the blessings of being unified are found almost everywhere. As a young man still in my twenties, I was called to be a bishop. I was inexpert and inexperienced. I called two older men as counselors, men who knew far more than I knew, men who were obviously more skilled than I. What did they do? They unified themselves to accomplish the work. We served five wonderful years together because they were mature and wanted to bless the kingdom in harmony.

How often we see that when a mission, ward, stake, Young Women, or Sunday School class is unified great things happen. We forget personal pettiness and silliness as we work together. We subordinate ourselves to serve the organization and the cause.

General Authorities are united

As if memories were never to fade, we can still see President Kimball sitting on the stand at general conference, being aided in sensitive and kind ways by his counselors, and then by one strong counselor. They were serving as one during those vital years, just as our First Presidency serves as one today. And just as all the Brethren are one in their ministries, we are all united in our pursuit of the three-fold mission of the Church—to proclaim the gospel, to perfect the Saints, and to redeem those that have passed on. But are we all united in bringing these eternal blessings into the lives of those we know?

Unity brought forth a miracle

I remember a special event that occurred in Idaho. It was early spring. The stake president called and said, "I think you had better look things over up here." So I drove to southern Idaho. He took me to a reservoir several miles above some little towns. The water was almost ready to lap over the edge of the dam. He said, "Most people don't realize that we are going to have a flood this

year. They are relaxed down there in the valley. Most do not understand what is going to happen if a canal is not built to contain the excess water and take it away from the reservoir."

He told me that as a young man he had walked those hills but had never seen so much snow left that late or so much water in the reservoir that time of year. Here was a man who knew what he was doing. The only thing I could say to him was, "Do what's right. Do what you must."

I went back a few weeks later and saw huge earth-moving equipment going back and forth, almost as if by some predetermined melody, digging a channel. Men and boys worked with shovels; people worked together. A miracle was being performed as a canal was dug twenty-three miles long in a matter of several days. The communities were saved. Yes, some of the farms were injured, but a whole area was now safe. How? Why? Because of the unity of courageous people doing what needed to be done together. No one person could have done it. No small group of men or women could have accomplished the task. But with the unity which that stake president helped to create, we saw the National Guard, construction companies (not knowing if or when they would be paid), and men from near and far loaning their valuable equipment so that a valley could be rescued. It was a latter-day miracle brought about by unity.

Unity strengthens the Church

I was speaking with a remarkable business leader and teacher of Christianity in New York City a few weeks ago—a man who is actively working with some 220 different Christian denominations. He continued to comment upon the effectiveness of the Latter-day Saint Church. He said many wonderful things about our members, about their dedication and the certainty of their beliefs.

He reported: "One of the most remarkable characteristics of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that you seem to be working together. You are headed in the same direction. As one, you concentrate upon doing that which you believe Jesus wants you to do. You all study the same doctrine. You respond to your leaders. You are unified."

That was a great lesson! Even though I already realized much of what he said, to hear it from a man who had more contact with other churches than almost anyone added special meaning to the importance of our like-mindedness and the bonds of our harmony.

You see, one of the facets that makes us different is that we strive for compatibility. We sustain our leaders and generally follow their counsel and direction. There are many reasons to be unified, but perhaps the greatest reason is that we have been asked to be one. In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord asks us to assemble ourselves together to agree upon his word (see D&C 41:2). Joseph Smith stated, "Unity is power" (*History of the Church*, 6:198), when speaking about stability in governments. Just so, unity adds power in the Church and in our families.

Christ's emphasis on unity

Let us turn again to the Book of Mormon, where the Savior is preaching to his other sheep. Jesus is praying with those in the Western Hemisphere, "And now Father, I pray unto thee for them, and also for all those who shall believe on their words" (3 Nephi 19:23). He was not only praying for the believers and those that would be missionaries who were gathered there but for those they would be teaching, "that they may believe in me, that I may be in *them* as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one" (3 Nephi 19:23; italics added).

Yes, we can almost see Jesus standing before those ancient Americans as he continues, "Father, I pray

not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world, because of their faith, that they may be purified in me, that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one, that I may be glorified in them" (3 Nephi 19:29). It was this same Jesus, as Jehovah of the Old Testament, who inspired these words, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1).

Help others join the fold

How do we glorify Jesus? How do we say thank you for the Atonement? How do we state gratitude for the ordinances and the covenants? How do we express appreciation for his teachings? Of course, we do it by loving God, by loving our neighbor, by living the commandments, and also by being one. We adapt to the Master's teachings. We place him and others with us into one: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," as Paul taught (Ephesians 4:5). We accept those called over us as our leaders without creating a fuss. Our leaders know of our loyalty because we do what they call us to do.

May we be one in this great work, brothers and sisters. May we in loving and sensitive ways work with those who are not yet members of the Church so that they will understand. May we also seek out those that have wandered away to help them come back so that they may be one with us. May our children observe this solidarity and a genuine desire to be one that enhances our lives with peace and with power.

With gratitude in my heart, brothers and sisters, for you and for that which we are doing together, I pray that we may each resolve, in this era of social problems and economic difficulty, to follow as one our prophet-leader and others who have been called to direct us. May we avoid the pain and problems that come to families, neighborhoods, and institutions when they are not one, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, amen.