

has asked that I conduct this fifth and concluding session of the 158th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled in the Tabernacle and to those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders Dean L. Larsen and George P. Lee are seated on the stand. We send also our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or by means of satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and John Longhurst at the organ, will begin this service by singing "Lead On, O King Eternal." The invocation will be

offered by Elder Russell C. Taylor of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Lead On, O King Eternal."

Elder Russell C. Taylor offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "God So Loved the World." Following the singing, Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker.

The choir sang "God So Loved the World."

Elder L. Tom Perry

Elder Scott, I would just like to add my welcome to the others that have been given to you as you assume this great position. You are joining a most unique quorum. It is made up of very common men with a most uncommon calling. There is a spirit, a unity, and a devotion in this body like none other you will ever experience. We are excited to have you and your great talent and abilities with us in our quorum. Welcome! Welcome! Welcome!

Train up a child

I have selected as the theme for my conference message a line from Proverbs: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (22:6).

The Lord has been very specific in His instructions to parents in this day. From the Doctrine and Covenants we read:

"And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach

them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents. . . .

"And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.

"And the inhabitants of Zion shall also observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy. . . .

"Now, I, the Lord, am not well pleased with the inhabitants of Zion, for there are idlers among them; and their children are also growing up in wickedness; they also seek not earnestly the riches of eternity, but their eyes are full of greediness.

"These things ought not to be, and must be done away from among them" (D&C 68:25, 28-29, 31-32).

The language is direct, and it leaves no room for misunderstanding. The responsibility for training children rests primarily with the parents.

Parents' responsibility

Many years ago I had the great pleasure of having the assignment as second counselor in the Sunday School presidency with specific responsibility for what was then the Junior Sunday School. Each Sunday I would watch a particular father bring his son to church. The boy would be crying and screaming, begging not to be turned over to the teacher. I watched the father take him to the classroom, push him through the door, and then hold onto the doorknob on the other side—so his son could not come back out—until the teacher had managed to get control of him and settle him down in the class. It was almost as if the father were saying, "I haven't the patience or the time to train this young man. I am turning him over to you, Teacher, to teach him how to be reverent in his Sunday School class."

I had almost the same feeling the other day when Elder Featherstone and I spent a few hours with the president of Brigham Young University. We had asked for an appointment to discuss with him what the priesthood leadership could do to help enforce the standards required of the students when they are accepted at Brigham Young University. As we sat with the leader of this great institution, I was reminded of this experience in Junior Sunday School many years ago. I had the feeling that many parents were bringing their children to the doorstep of BYU, pushing them through the door, then holding onto the doorknob, expecting school administration to assume the responsibility for completing the training of their children.

I have also had the same feeling about some of the missionaries I have had opportunities to interview in the field. Some parents must feel that "if I can only get my child on a mission, it will make up for those years when I have failed to teach him the principles of the gospel."

Of course, the large majority of the students entering Brigham Young University and the young men and women entering the mission field have been trained in good homes and come forth with a spirit

of the gospel, and are exemplary to all the world. However, there is a small percentage who come with problems, and the trend indicates this number is increasing. So today I would like to echo the counsel that has been given almost from the beginning of time as a voice of warning to parents. If you abdicate your responsibilities of teaching and training your children and then expect some other institution to pick up this responsibility and effect an immediate transformation, you expect what never was or never will be.

Importance of strong family life

Today there are many problems in our society, and so many of these problems are symptoms of failure in the home. President Benson has said:

"If we continue with present trends, we can expect to have more emotionally disturbed young people, more divorce, more depression, and more suicide.

"The family is the most effective place to instill lasting values in its members. Where family life is strong and based on principles and practices of the gospel of Jesus Christ, these problems do not as readily appear" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, p. 85; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, p. 59).

Establish a gospel foundation

There are three solutions I would like to call to your attention and emphasize here today. The first is to establish a good, strong, gospel foundation in the home. President Kimball once said: "Our success, individually and as a Church, will largely be determined by how faithfully we focus on living the gospel in the home. Only as we see clearly the responsibilities of each individual and the role of families and homes can we properly understand that priesthood quorums and auxiliary organizations, even wards and stakes, exist primarily to help members live the gospel in the home. Then we can understand that people are more important than programs, and that Church programs should always support and never detract from gospel-centered

family activities" ("Living the Gospel in the Home," *Ensign*, May 1978, p. 101).

I am afraid too many of us have had the experience in life of finding out how difficult it is to establish basic family traditions and practices after our children have grown into their teenage years. It is then that we realize how much easier it would have been to establish these practices early in their lives. How important it is that gospel training begin right at the start when we accept a new little spirit into our home.

In addition to reading fairy tales to our children, we should build a consistent, planned program of introducing the principles of the gospel through Bible and Book of Mormon stories, stories of our current-day prophets, and also of our family histories, which bring a heritage of gospel living into the lives of our children. We should carefully watch their television time to be certain they are tuned to the right programs. We are blessed in this day to have alternatives to programs of violence and sin. The video market has expanded to offer us choices of programs which are proper for family entertainment and learning. We should be certain there is family prayer, night and morning, weekly family home evenings, and regular attendance at our Sunday meetings. And then we should plan time for an activity day when we can teach children how to work and how to play.

This is a responsibility that cannot be abandoned. It rests solely upon the shoulders of parents to establish a gospel foundation in the lives of their children. Of course, there are other organizations that can help, but we should want to be certain that we know what they are learning, and that we take the time and have the patience to determine carefully and in a planned, organized way, that they are growing up with a sure foundation on which to build their lives.

Things of the world

The second area of concern in training children is not to allow them to be caught up so much in the things of the world. It was interesting to me, as we

discussed concerns of students at BYU with the president, that he remarked that the students from the farms where they had been taught to work, save, and conserve were the ones who seldom stepped out of line in violating school standards. Students whose parents had spoiled them with worldly goods were the ones who seemed to create most of the problems. It was the student who arrived at school driving an expensive, fancy car who seemed to think he was above abiding by university standards.

Brigham Young taught:

"I believe in indulging children, in a reasonable way. If the little girls want dolls, shall they have them? Yes. But must they be taken to the dressmaker's to be dressed? No. Let the girls learn to cut and sew the clothing for their dolls, and in a few years they will know how to make a dress for themselves and others. Let the little boys have tools, and let them make their sleds, little wagons, etc., and when they grow up, they are acquainted with the use of tools and can build a carriage, a house, or anything else" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 210).

Teach the joy of honest labor

Third, children need to be taught the joy of honest labor and experience the satisfaction which results from seeing a job well done. They do not need everything the neighbor's children across the street are receiving.

Of course, we want them to develop their talents, but do they need to enroll in every athletic camp or every cultural development course which comes along?

I am shocked as I become aware that in so many homes, many of the children do not know how to make a bed, care for their clothing, squeeze a tube of toothpaste to conserve, turn off the lights, set a proper table, mow a lawn, or care for a vegetable garden. These simple acts of cleanliness, order, and conservation will bless their lives every day that they live and prepare them to become self-sufficient when they reach an age when they must

be out on their own. Teach them the basic knowledge that the earth is the Lord's. He has a marvelous system of replenishment and renewal so long as we care for, conserve, and waste not.

Brigham Young again counseled:

"Mothers, will you be missionaries? We will appoint you a mission to teach your children their duty, and instead of ruffles and fine dresses to adorn the body, teach them that which will adorn their minds. Let what you have to clothe them with be neat and clean and nice. Teach them cleanness and purity of body and the principles of salvation, and they will delight to come to these meetings" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, pp. 210-11).

Dress modestly

President Kimball delivered a great talk many years ago at Brigham Young University entitled "A Style of Our Own." He encouraged us not to be among those who would follow worldly, immodest styles, but to have the courage to dress in a way which will send a message that our standards are different. Our dress will reflect the way we intend to live, founded on principles of the gospel of our Lord and Savior. It is impossible to expect a child who has been taught to love to dress in the immodest style trends of the day, to then change overnight to an entirely different wardrobe when they enter a Church university or a missionary training center, or when they are married in the temple, or even when they dress for the Sabbath day. Modest, proper styles must be taught almost from birth.

I know a little girl who is the last child in a large family in which the other children are all boys. I guess the shock of being a girl in this big family of boys has made her keenly aware of the fact that she is different from the other children. Her mother has wisely taught her that the boys wear trousers and that she wears dresses. Now you cannot get her to wear anything else but a modest dress. I am certain she will have no problem adjusting to Church dress standards anytime in her life because there will be no need for change.

This is something she has been taught from the very beginning of her life. How easy it will be for her to accept the proper dress standard as she moves from child to youth to adult.

Now, before I receive letters from upset women telling me that I said they should not wear slacks, save your postage. I did not say that, although I don't think they are appropriate for the Sabbath day. What I am saying is that we have established a dress standard which requires a modest, wholesome style. And the best way to ensure that this standard will be comfortable and acceptable when it is required to be worn is to see that it is taught and practiced throughout a child's life. The way we dress is usually a good indicator of how we will act.

Prepare children

Missions, Church universities, seminaries, and institutes do a tremendous job in establishing gospel standards in the lives of all those who will partake of these grand opportunities. However, their contribution is so much more enhanced if the students or the missionaries come prepared to receive and serve, rather than come to be reformed. Again from the counsel of Brigham Young:

"Let us live so that the spirit of our religion will live within us, then we have peace, joy, happiness and contentment, which makes such pleasant fathers, pleasant mothers, pleasant children, pleasant households, neighbors, communities and cities. That is worth living for, and I do think that the Latter-day Saints ought to strive for this" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 204).

May the Lord bless us with the desire to instill in the lives of our children a standard that will always be acceptable to the gospel of our Lord and Savior. I give you my witness that this is his work in which we are engaged, and I pray that we will be earnestly involved in bringing about an understanding in the hearts and souls of our children. This is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to

us. It will now be our privilege to hear from Elder Richard G. Scott, who was sustained yesterday as a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Richard G. Scott

A resolve to know and do God's will

It is understandable that when one has received a call and been conveyed a trust that will completely change his life forever, feelings would be sensitive and emotions very near the surface.

As I have struggled to begin to understand this sacred assignment and all that it implies, I have spent much time pouring out the feelings of my heart to our beloved Father in Heaven. I have pled that he would guide me and strengthen me that I may serve him and his beloved Son as well as I am able.

There has distilled within my mind and heart a resolve that I have covenanted with the Lord to obey. It is to live to be worthy to know the will of the Lord and to live to have, with his help, the capacity and courage to carry out that will—and to desire nothing else.

I make that same commitment with each of you today.

Now, may my prayers be answered that I may help you who are struggling with a personal challenge or striving to overcome a debilitating habit or appetite, or are anguishing over a loved one who has gone astray.

I wish to share with you some of my most treasured friends, that as they have helped me, they may help you now and throughout your life.

Know, live, and share Book of Mormon truths

First, some background. During the dedication of the Mexico City Temple, I had one of those singular experiences that readjusts the course of a life. It occurred during the eighth dedicatory session, where many of the men and women leaders of Mexico and Central America were

present. When unexpectedly asked to speak, I attempted to convey the strong impressions that poured into my heart. I spoke of those beyond the veil who, in fulfillment of prophecy, had served, suffered, and given greatly to form the foundation which permitted the opening of a new era of the work.

I expressed a feeling to plead in behalf of former prophets who had prepared and protected the sacred records of the Book of Mormon. I sensed that they were saddened as they see us walk from place to place with an unopened Book of Mormon under our arm or see it kept in homes where it gathers dust and is not read, pondered, nor its contents applied.

The Book of Mormon was prepared by divine assignment for the blessing and enlightenment of all those who receive it.

As I spoke, I realized in my heart that all the efforts that I had expended for six years in trying to help those beloved leaders overcome the effects of false traditions and learn to apply the teachings of the Lord would have been better directed had I strongly encouraged them to ponder and apply the teachings of the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon contains messages that were divinely placed there to show how to correct the influence of false tradition and how to receive a fullness of life. It teaches how to resolve the problems and challenges that we face today that were foreseen by the Lord. In that book he has provided the way to correct the serious errors of life, but this guidance is of no value if it remains locked in a closed book.

I witnessed that it is not sufficient that we should treasure the Book of Mormon, nor that we testify that it is of God. We must know its truths, incorporate them into our lives, and share them with others. I felt an overwhelming love