

majestic Jesus meekly declared, "Glory be to the Father"! (D&C 19:19). This should not surprise us. In the premortal world, Jesus meekly volunteered to be our Savior, saying, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2). Jesus was true to His word.

### Glory be to the Father

Now, in closing, I humbly declare, "Glory be to the Father"—first, for rearing such an Incomparable Son. Second, "Glory be to the Father" for allowing His special Son to suffer and to be sacrificed for all of us. On Judgment Day, brothers and sisters, will any of us want to rush forward to tell our Father how we, as parents, suffered when we watched our children suffer?

Glory be to the Father, in the name of Him who can succor us amid all

our ironies and adversities (see Alma 7:11–12), even Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "A Marvelous Work" without announcement.

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### President Hinckley

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us. The choir then sang "A Marvelous Work."

At the conclusion of my remarks, the choir will sing "Go Forth with Faith," and the benediction will be offered by Elder Hans B. Ringger, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

We shall then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

## President Gordon B. Hinckley

### Expression of optimism

We've had a wonderful morning where the Spirit of the Lord has been felt. I pray for a continuation of that Spirit.

A distinguished Protestant minister called on us the other day. In the course of our conversation he asked, "How do you feel about things?"

I replied, "I feel very optimistic. Things are happening in the world that are salutary and good. There are wars, yes. There is conflict, yes. But there also is much of peace among the nations of the earth. Something of tremendous significance is happening in the USSR and the People's Republic of China. There is growing freedom of expression and activity. A new openness is developing. I feel the spirit of Christ is brooding over the nations of the earth.

"Of course there are problems, many and serious. We sorrow over the plague of drugs with its bitter harvest. We deplore the terrible scourge of pornography. We grieve over the wicked flood of immorality and abortion. We are concerned with the epidemic of infidelity, of divorce

and broken homes. We are disturbed over the plight of the homeless and over stark hunger in many parts of the earth.

"But the remarkable thing is that so many people care. More than at any time in the history of the world, I believe, there are men and women by the tens of thousands who are reaching out with their strength and their substance to help those in distress. Modern science and medicine are doing wonders to alleviate pain and prolong life. There is greater fulfillment in the lives of millions.

"Concerning our own work—that is, the work of this church—I feel even more optimistic. We are growing stronger. I hope our people are growing better. I think they are. There is increased activity, increased devotion, increased faithfulness."

I told him that two or three weeks earlier I was in an area where the percentage of members regularly attending their Sunday meetings was 70 to 75 percent. I think that is wonderful. In fact, I believe it is unique. These are wards of ordinary, faithful Latter-day Saints.

I concluded by saying, "I repeat, I feel optimistic — guardedly so, yes, because of the extent of evil in the world. But, on the basis of what I see, goodness is gaining, and the work of the Lord is growing in strength and power."

### Church growth since 1981

After he had left, I reflected on what I had said. I recalled an experience I had in January when I heard President Ronald Reagan give his farewell address to the people of this nation. He spoke of what had been achieved during the eight years of his presidency. As he spoke, I wondered what had happened in the Church during those eight years. I asked our record keepers for some statistics. You may be interested in a few highlights.

It so happens that during these same eight years I have served as a Counselor in the First Presidency and have had an opportunity to see the picture of the entire Church worldwide in its many activities and ramifications. Remarkable things have happened during this period. I do not speak in any sense of boasting. Nor do I claim any credit.

Yesterday, Brother Michael Watson, secretary to the First Presidency, presented the 1988 statistical report of the Church. Let me draw on that for a moment, using some comparisons.

At the beginning of 1981, the membership of the Church stood at 4,600,000. At the close of 1988, the membership had reached 6,720,000, an increase of over two million from January 1, 1981, to January 1, 1989. The number of stakes increased during that period from 1,218 to 1,707, or approximately 500. The number of congregations increased from 12,591 to 16,558, or approximately 4,000 new wards and branches. The number of missions grew from 188 to 222. The number of political entities — nations or territories — in which we are working grew from 83 to 125. The number of temples more than doubled, from 19 to 41.

These are only statistics, but behind all of them are men and women, boys and girls. We are speaking of sons and daugh-

ters of God into whose lives has come greater knowledge and into whose hearts has come increased faith in the things of eternity. There has likewise been greatly increased consecration and dedication.

At the close of 1988, there were 36,132 missionaries in the field or under call. There were likewise thousands of volunteers serving in the Family History program, working in various Church offices, and teaching in our seminary system. The value of their consecrated time would run into the tens of millions of dollars.

### Love is like the lodestar

The Church is moving forward because it is true. It is growing because there is a broadening love for that truth. It is growing because of a love for God, a love for the Savior, a love for neighbor, and a strengthening spirit of love in the homes of the people. It is this love which is the great constant in all of our work. It stems from that love which is divine:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

I wish to say a few words about that love, that constant, never-failing quality that has the power to lift us above the evil, the conflict, and the trouble of the world in which we live.

When I was a boy, we lived on a farm in the summer. It was in the country, where the nights were dark. There were no streetlights or anything of the kind. My brother and I slept out-of-doors. On clear nights — and most of those nights were clear and the air was clean — we would lie on our backs and look at the myriads of stars in the heavens. We could identify some of the constellations and other stars as they were illustrated in our encyclopedia. Each night we would trace the Big Dipper, the handle and the cup, to find the North Star.

We came to know of the constancy of that star. As the earth turned, the others appeared to move through the night. But the North Star held its position in line with the axis of the earth. And so it had

come to be known as the Polar Star, or the Polestar, or the Lodestar. Through centuries of time, mariners had used it to guide them in their journeys. They had reckoned their bearings by its constancy, thereby avoiding traveling in circles or in the wrong direction, as they moved across the wide, unmarked seas.

Because of those boyhood musings, the Polar Star came to mean something to me. I recognized it as a constant in the midst of change. It was something that could always be counted on, something that was dependable, an anchor in what otherwise appeared to be a moving and unstable firmament.

Love is like the Polar Star. In a changing world, it is a constant. It is of the very essence of the gospel. It is the security of the home. It is the safeguard of community life. It is a beacon of hope in a world of distress.

### God's great love for us

Back in 1984 we participated in the dedicatory services of the Sydney Australia Temple. There were many talks and much music and many prayers to open and close the various sessions. I confess I do not remember much of what was said or sung. But I have never forgotten the words spoken by a man who offered one of the opening prayers. He said, "Dear Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast loved us." These words, among the very many heard on those occasions, have fastened themselves upon my mind.

Great beyond comprehension is the love of God. He is our loving Eternal Father. Out of His love for us, He has given an eternal plan which, when followed, leads to exaltation in His kingdom. Out of His love for us, He sent His Firstborn into the world, who, out of His own divine love, gave Himself as a sacrifice for each of us. His was an incomparable gift of love to a world that largely spurned Him. He is our great exemplar. We should let love become the lodestar of our lives, with the absolute assurance that, because of the love of God our Eternal Father and His own beloved Son, our salvation from

the bonds of death is sure and our opportunity for eternal exaltation is certain. Let that divine love, shed on us, be reflected from our lives onto others of our Father's children.

### Love and help the poor

As we look across the broad spectrum of humanity at the masses who walk in hunger and poverty and in whose lives are the constant afflictions of disease and misery, let us be generous with our substance to assist. We did a significant thing back in 1985 when we held two special fast days. In a great outpouring of love, our people contributed on those two days more than 10½ million dollars to help in bridging the gap between life and death for uncounted starving and underprivileged people. The Church continues to have a program, a Hunger Fund, to which we may contribute with love-filled hearts to assist those not of our faith who are in misery in many parts of the world.

Out of a sense of love for the less fortunate among our own, let us observe the law of the fast, going without a little food — which we do not need — and contributing the value thereof and even more to help those who are in desperate circumstances.

### Serve through temple work

Let love become the lodestar of our lives. Surely we are a blessed people. We are blessed with the good things of earth, and we are blessed with the precious things of heaven. The holy priesthood is among us; its powers extend beyond the veil of death. In the sacred houses which we call temples, there is opportunity to do for others that which they cannot do for themselves. As surely as Christ offered Himself a vicarious sacrifice for *all* mankind, so we can engage in vicarious service in behalf of *some* of mankind, thus affording them the opportunity to move forward on the road of immortality and eternal life. Great is this work of love which goes on in these holy houses. Legion are the men and women who, with

total unselfishness, labor day and night in this work which speaks of divinity.

### Reach out to the distressed

Let love be the Polar Star of our lives in reaching out to those who need our strength. There are many among us who lie alone in pain. Medicine helps, but kind words can bring to pass miracles. Many there are who walk in frightening circumstances, fearful and unable to cope. There are good bishops and Relief Society officers who are available to help, but these cannot do it all. Each of us can and must be anxiously engaged. It was said of the Savior, "[He] went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

Said Isaiah: "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

"Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you" (Isaiah 35:3-4).

Declared Micah, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8).

And the divine voice of revelation speaks, "Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings" (D&C 108:7).

Such are the injunctions — these and many more — to reach out to those in distress with a measure of that love which was epitomized in the life and works of the Savior.

### Love and forgive enemies

There are even those among us whose lives are torn with hate. They lash out at one thing and another, including the Church. They manufacture and spread vile falsehoods behind which there is not a shred of truth. There is nothing new about this, except that there have been those in each generation, including this generation, who appear to be possessed of a sickness that so manifests itself. In such circumstances, we draw comfort from the words of the Master: "Blessed

are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake" (Matthew 5:11).

We think also of the mandate of modern revelation: "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men" (D&C 64:10).

We think of a public figure who, when driven from office, said, "Those who hate you don't win unless you hate them — and then you destroy yourself."

It is not always easy to follow the Polar Star of love. It requires a discipline almost beyond the power of many to observe. I think it is the most difficult and also the most important of all commandments. But out of its observance comes a remarkable discipline and a refining influence that are wonderful to experience. It savors of the sweet, all-encompassing love of Christ.

### Strengthen family love

To those of you who live in troubled homes, may I suggest that you let love become the lodestar of your family life. There is too much of shouting, too much of recrimination, so many tears in the homes of some of our people. Love is the only remedy. It is the very basis of marriage. It can be nurtured and strengthened, or it can be starved and weakened. The power lies within ourselves. Bridle your tempers, husbands. Wives, hold your tongues. Revive the wondrous feeling that brought you to the marriage altar.

Love is the very essence of family life. Why is it that the children we love become so frequently the targets of our harsh words? Why is it that these children who love their fathers and mothers sometimes speak as if with daggers that cut to the quick? "There is beauty all around," *only* "when there's love at home" (*Hymns*, no. 294).

### Love never faileth

The word *love* is often used in place of the word *charity* in Paul's great declaration. I so read it:

"[Love] never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. . . .

"And now abideth, faith, hope, [love], these three; but the greatest of these is [love]" (1 Corinthians 13:8, 13).

Speaking to us in this dispensation, the Lord has said, "And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify [us] for the work" (D&C 4:5).

Few of us see the Polar Star anymore. We live in urban centers, and the city lights affect our vision of the wondrous firmament above us. But, as it has been for centuries, the star is there, in its place, its constancy a guide and an an-

chor. So likewise is love—unyielding, unchanging, "the pure love of Christ," as Moroni declared, "and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him" (Moroni 7:47).

I leave with you my love and extend my blessing and pray that there may be peace in your hearts and in your homes, in the name of Him whose life was the supreme offering of love, even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "Go Forth with Faith."

Elder Hans B. Ringger offered the benediction.

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## SECOND DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 159th Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 2, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Monson made the following remarks as the meeting began:

### **President Thomas S. Monson**

President Ezra Taft Benson, who has presided at all sessions of this conference, has asked that I conduct this fifth and concluding session of the 159th Annual 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 Adney Y. Komatsu and Francis M. Gibbons are seated on the stand. We also

send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We had a wire which indicated that this morning's conference session was received clearly and with great excitement by overflowing audiences in Manchester, England; Frankfurt, Germany; and San Jose, Costa Rica.

The Tabernacle Choir, directed by Jerold D. Ottley and accompanied by Robert Cundick, will begin this service by singing "Praise to the Man." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Douglas J. Martin of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

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The choir sang "Praise to the Man."  
Elder Douglas J. Martin offered the invocation.

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### **President Monson**

The choir will now sing "A Song of Peace." Following the singing, Elder