

from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brothers Robert Bowden and Donald Ripplinger, with John Longhurst at the organ.

We shall begin by the choir singing "Saints, Behold How Great Jehovah." Following the singing, Elder Robert E. Wells of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

---

The choir sang "Saints, Behold How Great Jehovah."

Elder Robert E. Wells offered the invocation.

---

### President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with "Secret Prayer." Following the choir number, Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve will speak to us.

---

The choir sang "Secret Prayer."

---

## Elder Marvin J. Ashton

### Finishing the job

Many years ago I had the opportunity of witnessing a state championship high school track meet at Brigham Young University. The lesson I learned as I watched the mile run was most impressive. I know I shall never forget it. About a dozen young men had qualified to represent their schools. The starting gun was fired, and these young men who had trained so long and so hard took off. Four fellows, closely bunched together, took the early lead. Suddenly the runner in second place spiked the first runner's foot with his shoe. As the leader was about to make the next stride forward, he found that he was without a shoe.

As I noticed this, I wondered what the leader would do because of what his competitor had unintentionally done to him. It seemed to me he had a number of choices. He could take a few extra quick sprints and catch up to the fellow who had put him out of first position, double up his fist, and hit him to get even. He could run over to the coach and say, "This is what you get—I have trained all my life for this big day, and now look what's happened!" He could run off into the stands and say to his mother, father, or girlfriend, "Isn't this horrible?" Or he could sit down on the track and cry. But

to my pleasure, he did none of these things. He just kept running.

This was halfway around the first lap, and I thought to myself, "Good for him; he'll finish this first lap of the four and retire gracefully." But after he had completed the first lap, he just kept running. He completed the second lap, then the third lap—and every time he took a stride, cinders were coming up through his stocking, hurting his foot. They ran on cinder tracks in those days. But he didn't quit. He just kept running.

I thought, "What an outstanding display of courage and self-discipline! What parents! What a coach! What leaders who have affected his life enough so that in a situation like this he would not stop running!" He finished the job he had to do. He did not place first, but he was a real winner. When I walked over to him at the completion of the race and congratulated him on his courageous performance, he was composed and in complete control. He was able to carry on when it would have been much easier to quit.

### Carry on

Just before our esteemed, honored Apostle and special friend of Aaronic Priesthood and their leaders worldwide,

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, passed away nearly 4½ years ago, with his sweetheart and eternal companion, Amelia, at his bedside, some very significant words were shared. As Sister McConkie held his hand during his final earthly minutes, she asked, "Bruce, do you have a message for me?" Though weak and expiring, he responded in a firm voice his last words, "Carry on."

Here was one of God's choicest servants, who had studied, pondered, and written as extensively on the life and mission of Jesus Christ as anyone else in his time, using these two powerful words for direction and encouragement. Sister McConkie has since shared with me the great importance and strength of "carry on" as time has passed. Elder McConkie knew as a special witness the importance of, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Salvation and exaltation are here emphasized as being based primarily upon commitment and enduring.

### To endure joyfully

Enduring, or carrying on, is not just a matter of tolerating circumstances and hanging in there, but of pressing forward. I know that's what most of us find difficult — to endure joyfully.

One weekend I had the opportunity of attending a stake quarterly conference in Idaho. As a group of Primary children stood before the congregation and sang "I Am a Child of God," I noticed three young Primary members on the front row singing but saying nothing vocally. They were deaf; they sang with their hands. No one heard them audibly, but we received their message. They touched my spirit deeply, and it was my privilege to tell them in front of the members of that stake that our Heavenly Father heard them. Even though vocally they had said nothing, they transmitted a memorable message. In moving silence they taught of the spirit, they taught of the mind, and they

taught of the heart. They had not given up singing just because they had no voice. They had been taught to carry on.

Let me now share with you the text of the song "Carry On."

Firm as the mountains around us,  
Stalwart and brave we stand  
On the rock our fathers planted  
For us in this goodly land —  
The rock of honor and virtue,  
Of faith in the living God.  
They raised his banner triumphant —  
Over the desert sod.  
And we hear the desert singing:  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!  
Hills and vales and mountains  
ringing:  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!  
Holding aloft our colors,  
We march in the glorious dawn.  
O youth of the noble birthright,  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!

We'll build on the rock they planted  
A palace to the King.  
Into its shining corridors,  
Our songs of praise we'll bring,  
For the heritage they left us,  
Not of gold or of worldly wealth,  
But a blessing everlasting  
Of love and joy and health.  
And we hear the desert singing:  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!  
Hills and vales and mountains  
ringing:  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!  
Holding aloft our colors,  
We march in the glorious dawn.  
O youth of the noble birthright,  
Carry on, carry on, carry on!  
(*Hymns*, no. 255.)

Fifty-nine years ago, when this beautiful number, "Carry On," was first shared with the Church in general, to say that it was timely is an understatement. Today it should be a way of life, our top priority and clarion call for young and old. Young people, boys and girls, and leaders worldwide, I encourage you to carry on. Do not give up, falter, or become weary. Do not yield to the ways of the world that can bring only unhappiness and discouragement. I love and respect

young people who stand firm when outside influences would make it easy for them to fail or fall.

### **Youth of the Church are pioneers**

I thank God continually for the young men and young women of this generation. I firmly believe that the finest young people that have ever lived in the history of the entire Church are with us today. The great majority are pioneers on the move in righteousness and truth. Most of our youth are true to the faith despite conditions of the day and are avoiding the temptations and subtleties of misconduct that tempt them on every hand. What a joy it is to reflect upon the fact that we have more young men and young women than ever before serving in the mission field today—young people who have great commitment and are enjoying unusual success.

As we have experienced harassment, destruction, vandalism, and even the loss of lives, the attitude of our missionaries is not one of being afraid but of marching forward in a spirit of "carry on." Few, if any, have asked for releases or transfers as the winds of fire, destruction, and danger have blown in their paths. It is a joy to see them stand firm as the mountains around us. God will continue to help them carry on, and their work will not be thwarted but will be enhanced and fruitful.

### **Be true to your foreordained mission**

I share with you a statement that President Benson made to a gathering of youth in Southern California after he became President of the Church:

"For nearly six thousand years, God has held you in reserve to make your appearance in the final days before the Second Coming. Every previous gospel dispensation has drifted into apostasy, but ours will not. . . . God has saved for the final inning some of his strongest children, who will help bear off the kingdom triumphantly. And that is where you come in, for you are the generation that

must be prepared to meet your God. . . . Make no mistake about it—you are a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time as there is of us. . . . Each day we personally make many decisions that show where our support will go. The final outcome is certain—the forces of righteousness will finally win. What remains to be seen is where each of us personally, now and in the future, will stand in this fight—and how tall we will stand. Will we be true to our last-days, foreordained mission?"

### **Winning the victory**

A number of years ago Peter Snell of New Zealand was the best in the world in the one-mile race and the 880-yard race. I had the opportunity of meeting him in Wellington, New Zealand. Later on in the week someone said to me, "Would you like to see where Peter Snell does his training and his running?" I answered yes. I was shocked when I was taken down to the beach—not to a track, but to the beach. I asked, "Where does he run?" My friends said, "He runs out close to the water where the sand comes up over his feet. There it is difficult to pull his feet out of the sand after each stride." I had an idea why, but I said to my friends, "Why does he run there?" They answered, "When he gets on a track in competition, he feels like he's floating because he doesn't have to pull his feet up out of the wet sand."

In my mind I could see him running on that difficult track. I learned from him. A little later my friends took me to another place where Peter Snell trained, up in the mountains. When I looked for a track again, they said, "No, he runs up the steep hills. Then, when he is on the level at track meets, it is pretty easy to run." That is why he breaks records, and that is why I remember his example. They told me he ran every day regardless of the weather conditions or how tired he was.

I've always been very impressed with some of the statements Winston Churchill made as he served as prime

minister during England's darkest days of war. Among other things, he said the following:

"It is no use saying, 'We are doing our best.' You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary" (in *Reader's Digest*, July 1964, p. 247).

Also, "We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. . . .

"You ask, what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war, by sea, land, and air, with all our might and with all our strength that God can give us. . . . That is our policy.

"You ask, What is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all the terror; victory, however long and hard the road may be" (quoted by Louis L. Snyder, *The War: A Concise History, 1939-1945* [New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1961], p. 89).

Young people, bearers of the priesthood, God wants us to be victorious. He wants you to triumph over all of your foes. Stalwart and brave we must stand. God is at the helm. There is no reason for defeat.

### **Stand strong in all circumstances**

It should be inspiring to all of us to constantly review and reread the message of the Prophet Joseph Smith given in Doctrine and Covenants, section 121, verses 7 and 8:

"My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

"And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes."

Here was God conveying to the noble prophet the importance of carrying

on under all circumstances and situations.

### **"Thy God shall stand by thee"**

We promise the youth of today with the same conviction the Lord shared with the Prophet Joseph in Doctrine and Covenants, section 122, verse 4, "Thy God shall stand by thee forever and ever." As we carry on today, this promise is in force and is everlasting.

I am proud that we have a President, even Ezra Taft Benson, who loves and encourages the youth of the noble birthright to work, carry on, and live close to God. The youth programs of the Church today are stronger because of his influence presently and over the past years.

Jesus is the Christ. He is our Redeemer, our Lord and Savior and friend. We constantly give thanks through deeds and prayer for his unmatched example of carrying on under circumstances that caused him to bleed from every pore and anguish in the misunderstanding and misconduct of his associates. Joy and happiness come through determination and the practice of carrying on under all conditions. May God help us to so do and reap the rewards in this present day, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

We have heard Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Robert L. Backman of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Benjamin B. Banks, who was sustained as a member of the Seventy at April conference.

## **Elder Robert L. Backman**

### **Chastity is not outdated**

One day I sat with a handsome, young, prospective missionary as he poured out his sad story through sobs of

sorrow, anguish, and remorse. I wanted to cry with him. Pressured by his so-called friends, he found himself at a party where liquor was served. Against every-