

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled in the Tabernacle and to those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders James E. Faust, J. Thomas Fyans, and Horacio A. Tenorio are seated on the stand. We also send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, directed by Donald Ripplinger and accompanied by John Longhurst, will begin this service by singing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Rex C. Reeve, an emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

Elder Rex C. Reeve offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "Each Life That Touches Ours for Good." Following the singing, Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will address us.

The choir sang "Each Life That Touches Ours for Good."

Elder L. Tom Perry

Thomas Kane's visit to Nauvoo

Colonel Thomas L. Kane, a non-member of the Church, spoke to the Historical Society of Philadelphia, as recorded in the memoirs of John R. Young. He told them that during his travels a few years before, he had passed through a very unusual city named Nauvoo, a community established on the banks of the Mississippi. He explained that after traveling up the river for some time, he left the steamer and began to travel on land because of the rapids in the river.

While on the road, he had seen only unimproved country where idlers and outlaws had settled. Then he saw Nauvoo. Quoting him:

"I was descending the last hillside upon my journey, when a landscape in delightful contrast broke upon my view. Half encircled by a bend of the river, a beautiful city lay glittering in the fresh morning sun. Its bright new dwellings [were] set in cool green gardens ranging up around a stately dome-shaped hill, which was crowned by a noble marble edifice, whose high tapering spire was radiant with white and gold. The city appeared to cover several miles, and beyond

it, in the backgrounds, there rolled off a fair country chequered by the careful lines of fruitful husbandry. The unmistakable marks of industry, enterprise and educated wealth everywhere, made the scene one of singular and most striking beauty. . . . No one met me there. I looked and saw no one. I could hear no one move, though the quiet everywhere was such that I heard the flies buzz and the water ripples break against the shallow beach. I walked through the solitary streets. The town lay as in a dream, under some deadening spell of loneliness, from which I almost feared to wake it, for plainly it had not slept long. There was no grass growing up in the paved ways, rains had not entirely washed away the prints of dusty footsteps, yet I went about unchecked. I went into empty workshops, rope walks and smithies. The spinner's wheel was idle, the carpenter had gone from his work bench and shavings, his unfinished sash and casings, fresh bark was in the tanner's vat, and fresh chopped light wood stood piled against the baker's oven. The blacksmith's shop was cold; but his coal heap and ladling pool and crooked water horn were all there, as if he had just gone for a holiday. . . .

“ . . . Fields upon fields of heavy headed yellow grain lay rotting. . . . No one was at hand to take in their rich harvest” (in *Memoirs of John R. Young, Utah Pioneer 1847* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1920], pp. 31–33).

Colonel Kane could not understand why such a beautiful city had been abandoned. He was unaware that the Saints had been *driven* from their city by the mobs. His curiosity caused him to search for the people who had left the city. When he found them, he observed that even though they were suffering and dying from hunger and exposure, they were peaceful and wholesome. Why had such a harmless people been so persecuted?

Persecution of missionaries

In many ways the situation has not changed a great deal today. The Church still faces some situations which, in many ways, are similar to the Nauvoo period. There is not, of course, the same degree of antagonism manifest against us as in our early history. But we still must wonder, as Colonel Kane did, why it is sometimes directed, as it so recently has been, against our great missionary force. I can only guess that it is because of the widespread misunderstanding of the essential purposes for which our missionaries are called to serve.

The missionary purpose has not changed with time. We recall the account of Ammon in the Book of Mormon. His missionary call was to the land of the Lamanites—a dangerous assignment. The fate of a Nephite entering the land of the Lamanites was left entirely in the hands of their king, who could slay him, cast him into prison, or force him to leave.

“And thus Ammon was carried before the king who was over the land of Ishmael; and his name was Lamoni; and he was a descendant of Ishmael.

“And the king inquired of Ammon if it were his desire to dwell in the land among the Lamanites, or among his people.

“And Ammon said unto him: Yea, I desire to dwell among this people for a

time; yea, and perhaps until the day I die.

“And it came to pass that king Lamoni was much pleased with Ammon, and caused that his hands should be loosed; and he would that Ammon should take one of his daughters to wife.

“But Ammon said unto him: Nay, but I will be thy servant. Therefore Ammon became a servant to king Lamoni. And it came to pass that he was set among other servants to watch the flocks of the Lamoni, according to the custom of the Lamanites” (Alma 17:21–25).

As with Ammon, the only desire of our army of modern missionaries is to serve their fellowmen.

Missionaries have pure intent

It has been over 160 years since Samuel Smith left his home with a knapsack on his back filled with a few copies of the newly printed Book of Mormon. He left to declare his witness of the truths contained in this book and to extend an invitation to anyone interested to read its contents and discover for themselves whether it be true. Since Samuel Smith’s time, thousands of our missionaries have given their time and their means and left their homes for a season to declare a message they believe to be true.

Today we have a multinational force coming from many nations and spreading themselves among a great number of other nations of the world. Missionaries go forward with the purest of intent, with no hidden agenda, and at great personal sacrifice. They are not out to destroy anyone’s faith or to exert unrighteous pressure. They are teachers who invite those interested in their message to listen and determine for themselves if the message is true. They go forward not representing any government or political philosophy. Furthermore, they will not be active nor participate in, encourage, or even express an opinion on the politics of the country in which they are called to labor.

Missionaries return home with a love for the people they have served and taught. They are true ambassadors spreading goodwill for the peoples in whose

countries they have lived and worked. They are not concerned with income levels and have no racial bias. They are not out to build any worldly kingdoms. They are, in the words of Mormon, "the peaceable followers of Christ" (Moroni 7:3). The only kingdom which interests them is the kingdom of our Lord and Savior which He will establish at His return. Their only hope is to prepare us for that great day. Until then, our missionaries, as well as all members of the Church, will be "subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates" and will be found "obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law" (Articles of Faith 1:12).

Choose how best you can serve

Now I would like to change subjects and conclude my remarks with some counsel to the membership of the Church. We have been taught about the mission of our Lord and Savior and that by following Him we receive the greatest joy and happiness to be found here on earth. We have experienced the joy of service in our Heavenly Father's kingdom and know the soul-satisfying fulfillment it brings to our lives. I often think of the challenge which Alma faced when he could see the urgent need of the people to be taught the importance of having an understanding of the gospel of our Lord and Savior. At that time he served in two positions, that of chief judge and high priest over all the Church. He had to make a choice between the two in order to maximize his effectiveness in serving the people. The book of Alma records:

"And he selected a wise man who was among the elders of the church, and gave him power according to the voice of the people, that he might have power to enact laws according to the laws which had been given, and to put them in force according to the wickedness and the crimes of the people. . . .

"Now Alma did not grant unto him the office of being high priest over the church, but he retained the office of high priest unto himself; but he delivered the judgment-seat unto Nephiah.

"And this he did that he himself might go forth among his people, or among the people of Nephi, that he might preach the word of God unto them, to stir them up in remembrance of their duty, and that he might pull down, by the word of God, all the pride and craftiness and all the contentions which were among his people, seeing no way that he might reclaim them save it were in bearing down in pure testimony against them" (Alma 4:16, 18-19).

He selected for himself the position which would allow him to do the most good for his people.

Show which kingdom you seek

Sometimes, however, in our enthusiasm for the gospel, we cast our pearls indiscriminately, and we might even be tempted to enhance the luster of our pearl of great price by placing it in a much too attractive setting. This may only detract from the true value of our pearl. Our pearl will stand on its own, with all its beauty and simplicity. We do not need to enhance it with bright and flashy things that will only bring antagonism and conflict to the Church. We need to speak less about our accomplishments and, by our actions, show which kingdom we seek.

Could I offer this little suggestion to you? In the elevators in the Church Office Building we place scriptures and sayings of the prophets to make the time that people spend in the elevators productive as they ride up and down. This is an idea we could carry into our homes. We have an appliance we use all too frequently in our homes—the refrigerator. We need to place a sign on our refrigerators to elevate our thoughts. And by so doing, we could remind ourselves of the scriptures as we go about our daily duties—of who we are and what we represent. Could I suggest just a few scriptures to you for starters? The first is in the book of Matthew 5:43-44:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

Maybe a second would be from Luke 6:35:

"But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

And in James 1:27 we read:

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Finally, display one of the great scriptures from the Book of Mormon, Moroni 7:47:

"But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him."

I love the gospel of our Lord and Savior. It has brought into my life the

greatest peace of mind, joy, and happiness I could ever hope to find on this earth. I pray that each of us might be willing and able to share this pearl of great price—a pearl of lasting and singular beauty—with all of our Heavenly Father's children, that we may go forward armed with the gospel of our Lord and Savior. This is His work in which we're engaged. God lives. Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world. This is my solemn witness to you, in His holy name, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, also a member of the Council of the Twelve. Following Elder Wirthlin, we shall hear from Elder Victor L. Brown, an emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

My beloved brethren and sisters, I pray for that same Spirit that we have enjoyed so much during this conference. I should like today to address my remarks to the youth, to those of you who still have before you the greater part of this journey we call life. I hope you have decided to follow the course marked by our Savior and his teachings. Following that course requires great effort and the help of the Lord at each step along the way. I promise you that his help always is there.

The marathon

In recent years, running has become a popular form of exercise throughout the world. Many run primarily for the exercise, but others run to condition themselves for well-publicized races of various

distances. Perhaps the premier endurance race is the marathon, a modern-day race that has its roots in ancient Greece. Today, the meaning of the word has been broadened to include any contest or activity of great length that requires extraordinary effort and endurance.

A young friend of mine, whom I will call Alan, recently ran his first marathon—a distance of 26.2 miles. He had set his goal several months in advance, learned what preparation was required, and disciplined himself to follow a rigorous training schedule. He sought the advice of experienced runners and read articles on running a marathon. He practiced running the marathon route and planned a strategy for traversing the hilly course.