

Most of the time we do not even have to go too far; within our own communities there are people of all ages who are homeless, terminally ill, or lonely. We cannot hope for a better world, for more perfect governments and societies, if we are not willing to do our share.

We need to look around us, and if we cannot see poverty, illness, and despair in our own neighborhood or ward, then we have to look harder. And remember, we cannot be afraid to go beyond our own social and cultural circles. We have to rid ourselves of religious, racial, or social prejudices and expand the boundaries of our service. Service should never discriminate and is hardly ever easy. Did not Jesus Himself mingle with those who were branded unfit by the self-righteous Pharisees? And were not those people the ones who needed Him the most?

I understand that the needs of this world can overwhelm us and that the injustices of life and the ills of society can paralyze us. But I believe that no good cause is in vain, and if we can only touch one life, the world is a better place. Choose your service today, and choose it wisely. Prepare yourself to be of help to others. There are many good causes inside and outside the Church. There is a need for volunteers who share their time and talents with those who are less fortunate.

### **We should love and care for others**

To love and care for others is a decision. It is the answer to the Lord's

exhortation, "Come, follow me." It is the answer the Apostles gave to those who asked, "What shall we do?" To say "I cannot" is a decision for *no*. It is a decision that will rob us of the very happiness we are seeking. And most of all, it is a decision against a Christlike life.

I testify to you that we can only be in the service of our God if we are in the service of our fellowmen (see Mosiah 2:17). I hope that we all have the wisdom and determination to decide today whom we want to serve. And I pray that we will decide together with the prophet Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

We have just heard from Elder Hans B. Ringger of the Seventy. Brother Ringger is a citizen of Switzerland and presently serves as President of the Europe Area of the Church. You may be interested to know that among those newly sustained this afternoon are citizens of Chile, England, and Brazil, as well as of the United States.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Called to Serve."

Elders Spencer J. Condie and F. Melvin Hammond of the Seventy will speak to us following the singing.

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## **Elder Spencer J. Condie**

I wish to extend a warm welcome to the new members of the Church who "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

### **Visions from the mountaintops**

Inasmuch as many of you newly baptized members will soon be called to

serve as leaders at different times in various Church callings, I would like to share some short scriptural lessons on leadership.

In the Pearl of Great Price we learn that as Moses was called to become a prophet of God, he was taken to a mountaintop, where he beheld a panoramic view of all of God's wondrous creations.

Jehovah gave him a vision of his immediate goal, which was to "deliver my people from bondage" (Moses 1:26). The Lord then explained his long-term goal: "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (1:39).

From the Book of Mormon we read of the young prophet Nephi who also beheld a vision on a mountain (see 1 Nephi 11:1). Once he had envisioned the promised land, he could not be dissuaded from building a ship that would take him there (see 1 Nephi 17–18). Once parents have a vision of a son dressed in a missionary suit or of a daughter in the temple dressed in white, then family home evening, family prayer, and scripture study assume their proper place in every home. From Moses and Nephi we learn that *a leader must have a vision of the work which lies ahead.*

### Lessons from the kings of Israel

Following the Great Exodus from Egypt to the land of promise, the children of Israel were governed by judges for a period of more than three centuries (1429 to 1095 B.C.). These judges were then succeeded by a series of kings, the first of whom was Saul, anointed by the prophet Samuel (see 1 Samuel 8–10). For decades Saul enjoyed the adulation and support of the people. But then, lifted up in the pride of his heart, he disregarded the counsel of the Lord's prophet. At that point Samuel reminded him of the time when he was little in his own sight (see 1 Samuel 15:17) and taught him that immortal lesson: "To obey is better than sacrifice" (15:22). From Saul's life we learn that *a leader must be humble and obedient.*

Saul was succeeded by King David, whose forty-year reign is considered by many to be the golden age of Israelite history. Indeed, Jerusalem became known as the City of David. But notwithstanding his great leadership abilities, he was tempted to commit a very grievous

sin, which he then compounded with an even greater sin. From King David's life we learn that even kings must be careful. *Leadership positions do not totally protect us from temptation.*

Following the death of David, his son Solomon ascended to the throne. At the beginning of his reign, Solomon prayed in deep humility: "O Lord my God, . . . I am but a little child. . . . Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people." And God *did* give him "a wise and an understanding heart" (1 Kings 3:7, 9, 12).

Armed with the Spirit of the Lord, Solomon became God's instrument in building the holy temple for which Israel had hoped and prayed for many generations. But with the passage of time Solomon took him wives outside of Israel "and his wives turned away his heart" and he "did evil in the sight of the Lord" (1 Kings 11:3, 6). From Solomon we can learn that *knowledge and wisdom alone do not qualify people to lead.* Perhaps Jacob said it best: "To be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God" (2 Nephi 9:29).

After Solomon's forty-year reign, his son Rehoboam went to Shechem to be made the king. He sought the counsel of the elders regarding how he should rule. "And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve *them*, and answer *them*, and speak good words to *them*, then *they* will be *thy* servants for ever" (1 Kings 12:7; italics added). The Savior gave his disciples similar counsel when he taught them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mark 9:35). Within the kingdom of God, *to lead is to serve.*

But Rehoboam rejected the counsel which required him to humble himself and to serve others. Instead, he chose to reign over Israel with a very heavy hand, thus causing the great division into the northern Kingdom of Israel and the southern Kingdom of Judah (see 1 Kings 12:20).

### Hezekiah led Israel righteously

For the next 220 years the people generally set aside their sacred covenants, thus wandering in the ways of the world. Then a young man named Hezekiah began to reign in Judah. "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord," and "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel" (2 Kings 18:3, 5).

Hezekiah gathered together the priesthood bearers of the day and said, "Hear me ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place" (2 Chronicles 29:5). "Be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the Lord God . . . but yield yourselves unto the Lord, . . . and serve the Lord your God" (30:7-8).

In response to this assertive leader, who was supported by the prophet Isaiah, "the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people" (30:20), and "in their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness" (31:18).

From King Hezekiah, as from King Benjamin (see Mosiah 2-5), we can learn a very positive lesson on leadership: circumstances do not always need to remain the same. Leaders *can* make a difference! *Faith in the Lord and high expectations can bring about a mighty change of heart* among an entire people.

### The leadership of the prophets

One of the great teachers and prophet-leaders in Israel was Ezra, who "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10). As Saints of the latter days, we are grateful for a modern-day Ezra, even our beloved prophet, Ezra Taft Benson, who, like Ezra of old, has prepared himself to receive the word of the Lord and is prepared to do the Lord's will. I bear you my witness that there is a living prophet in Israel today.

Another great leader who continually sought the will of the Lord was the Prophet Joseph Smith. His very life exemplified Paul's admonition to live the gospel that we preach (see 1 Corinthians 9:14). A great strength of the Prophet was his ability to delegate and develop leadership skills in those around him. The expedition of Zion's Camp is but one example of Joseph's leadership based upon the principle "Come, follow me" (see Luke 18:22). At the conclusion of Zion's Camp, the Prophet gave the newly organized high council detailed instructions regarding their callings and then told them, "If I should now be taken away, I [have] accomplished the great work the Lord [has] laid before me" (*History of the Church*, 2:124). Long before his martyrdom the Prophet Joseph was diligently training those who would continue to lead the kingdom after he was gone. Here is another important lesson of leadership: *Leaders are duty-bound and obligated to prepare others to take their place* at some future time. Brothers and sisters, the cemeteries are filled with leaders who thought they were indispensable.

Among the most righteous and effective leaders to ever walk the earth was Enoch, who persistently sought to save every single soul.

"And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness. . .

"And lo, Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven" (Moses 7:18, 21).

Note the reference to the "process of time." A great leader must have high expectations, tempered with patience. In section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants we learn that Enoch was "four hundred and thirty years old when he was translated" (v. 49). Brothers and sisters, I rest my case: *perfection takes a long, long time*. But still, we are commanded to become perfect, even as our Father in Heaven is perfect (see Matthew 5:48; 3 Nephi 12:48).

### The leadership example of Christ

From the most exemplary life of all, even that of the Savior Jesus Christ, we learn perhaps the most important lesson of all. As the Savior was in the depths of suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane, he prayed that the bitter cup might pass from him, adding in meekness and lowliness of heart, "Nevertheless not *my* will, but *thine*, be done" (Luke 22:42; italics added). *A leader in the Lord's kingdom must be meek and lowly of heart* (see Alma 37:34).

May each of us engaged in the work of the Lord perform *His* work in *His* way, "by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

"By kindness, and pure knowledge, . . .

"Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love" (D&C 121:41-43).

I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder F. Melvin Hammond

My beloved brothers and sisters, today I am happy to express to you the genuine love of the members of the Church in the South America North Area and of your wonderful missionary sons and daughters, young and old, who constantly say to me, "Elder Hammond, when you see our dear prophet, please tell him that we love him. And when you speak in a general conference of the Church, please tell the Saints that our love of the Savior is united firmly with theirs." They are all so wonderful, and I am pleased to comply with their loving request.

### The understanding of young people

On this occasion I would like to speak especially to the young people the world over. Somehow, I believe that they have a special ability to understand important things. May I illustrate with this little story?

Many years ago we sat as a family in our weekly home evening discussing the principle of the Resurrection. Attempting to explain in simple terms what is involved, I noticed our small children looking at me with puzzled expressions on their tiny faces. Apologetically, I mumbled something about it being very difficult to understand such things. Whereupon, Lezlee, our then five-year-old, with a look of loving concern for my

discomfort, said, "Don't feel badly, Daddy; I understand you." And then she proceeded to demonstrate her new gospel knowledge. Lying down on the floor, straight and stiff, with her arms outstretched, she slowly raised herself and said, "It's simple; you just sink up."

So I want to talk to you about the resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ, because on Easter Sunday we will celebrate His rising from the dead and all of us *should* know the wonderful story of that remarkable event.

### The first Easter morning

It was early on Sunday morning. Deep darkness still hung over the holy city, Jerusalem. Mary of Magdala entered the garden and approached the tomb where the body of Jesus of Nazareth recently had been laid.

Just two days before, the humble Christ, hanging from a wooden cross, had given up the ghost, and mortality had ended for the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh.

Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin but a loving disciple of Jesus, had gone to the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate, and had asked that he be allowed to remove the body from the cross. Permission was granted. The body was taken from the cross, and Joseph, with the assistance of Nicodemus, who