

President Thomas S. Monson

My beloved brothers and sisters, it has been customary for the President of the Church to welcome you and deliver a message at the commencement of conference. With all his noble heart, President Benson would desire to stand at this pulpit and bear to you his witness concerning the truth of this work, the gratitude he feels for your prayers, and his fervent hope that all may so live as to merit and receive the abundant blessings a loving Heavenly Father desires to bestow.

Tears come easily to the eyes of our prophet when he receives letters written by children in which they express their greetings and send to him their love. President Benson is a family man who loves his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and, indeed, children everywhere in this wonderful world in which we live.

Days of national prayer

President Benson has suggested that I begin this conference with a brief message in his behalf. He is pleased that the president of the United States has proclaimed that yesterday, today, and tomorrow be designated as days of national prayer and that sincere expressions of gratitude ascend to heaven for the end of the war in the Middle East. The First Presidency has commented: "We are thankful for the resolution of the war, and it is our fervent hope and prayer that all nations involved will work in concert for a lasting peace. The collective prayers of the nation and the world should focus not only on a lasting peace but also on the needs of the many on both sides who lost loved ones and endured suffering in the conflict."

The price of peace

President Benson has stated: "The price of peace is righteousness. Men

and nations may loudly proclaim, 'Peace, peace,' but there shall be no peace until individuals nurture in their souls those principles of personal purity, integrity, and character which foster the development of peace. Peace cannot be imposed. It must come from the lives and hearts of men. There is no other way" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], p. 703).

Depend on prayer

President Benson has urged: "If we would advance in holiness—increase in favor with God—nothing can take the place of prayer. . . . Give prayer—daily prayer, secret prayer—a foremost place in your lives. Let no day pass without it. Communion with the Almighty has been a source of strength, inspiration, and enlightenment through the world's history to men and women who have shaped the destinies of individuals and nations for good" (*God, Family, Country: Our Three Great Loyalties* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 8).

In speaking to a large audience in São Paulo, Brazil, some time ago, President Benson testified:

"All through my life the counsel to depend on prayer has been prized above almost any other advice I have ever received. It has become an integral part of me, an anchor, a constant source of strength and the basis of my knowledge of things divine.

"Our Heavenly Father is always near. . . . Thank God we can reach out and tap that unseen power, without which no man can do his best" (address delivered to temple workers and Church employees at São Paulo, Brazil, 20 Nov. 1982).

President Benson has frequently quoted the words of a favorite hymn:

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near. . . .

O thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer thyself hast
trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.
(*Hymns*, no. 145)

President Benson's testimony

The words of testimony spoken by President Benson are particularly ap-

propriate on this special day of prayer and thanksgiving. He said: "I testify that there is a God in heaven who hears and answers prayers. I know this to be true, for He has answered mine. I would humbly urge all within the sound of my voice to keep in close touch with our Father in Heaven, through prayer" (São Paulo, Brazil, 20 Nov. 1982).

I heartily endorse this plea of our prophet and President, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley will now present the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for our sustaining vote. Then Brother F. Michael Watson, secretary to the First Presidency, will present the statistical report for the Church for the year 1990.

The Sustaining of Church Authorities and Officers

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Our brethren and sisters, as is customary in the general conference of the Church, we present the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Any opposed may do so.

It is proposed that we sustain Howard W. Hunter as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and the following as members of that council: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A.

Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott. Those in favor may manifest it. Any opposed may do likewise.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed.

In December we announced the calls of Elder Earl C. Tingey as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Elders W. Mack Lawrence and Rulon G. Craven as members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy. Those who wish to join in sustaining these Brethren in these callings, please manifest it. Any who feel otherwise.

It is also proposed that we sustain as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy the following Brethren cur-