

and follow the counsel and obey the commandments of Jesus of Nazareth, our Savior and our King. He lives. I so testify in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. Matthew 28:19–20.
2. Mark 16:20.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 18:10.
4. Luke 18:22.
5. Acts 8:31.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 64:34.
7. In *Journal of Discourses*, 21:375.
8. Acts 4:19–20.
9. 1 Timothy 4:12.
10. Romans 1:16.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 4:5.
12. Jeremiah 8:20.
13. 1 Peter 3:15.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 84:88.

#### President Hinckley

Thank you, President Monson, for your inspiring words.

## President Gordon B. Hinckley

#### Gratitude for sustaining vote

Thank you, brethren, for the effort you have made to come to this great worldwide priesthood meeting. Wherever you may be, we thank you and commend you for your faith, for your loyalty to this the work of the Lord, for the efforts you make in your daily living to be worthy of the sacred priesthood which you bear.

This morning we all participated in a solemn assembly. That is just what the name indicates. It is a gathering of the membership where every individual stands equal with every other in exercising with soberness and in solemnity his or her right to sustain or not to sustain

We remind you brethren that the CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning. Those desiring to attend the broadcast and the Sunday morning session, which follows, must be in their seats by 9:15 A.M. daylight saving time. Daylight saving time begins tomorrow at 2:00 A.M. We encourage you—in fact we admonish you—to move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire this evening, or you'll enjoy only the second half of the conference in the morning.

We express appreciation to the combined institute men's choir from the Logan, Ogden, Salt Lake University, and Orem institutes for the beautiful music this evening.

Following my remarks the choir will conclude by singing "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" I wonder who organized this program to think I was going to stir up conflict! The benediction will then be offered by Elder F. David Stanley of the Seventy.

those who, under the procedures that arise out of the revelations, have been chosen to lead.

The procedure of sustaining is much more than a ritualistic raising of the hand. It is a commitment to uphold, to support, to assist those who have been selected.

Concerning the First Presidency the Lord has said, "Of the Melchizedek Priesthood, three Presiding High Priests, chosen by the body, appointed and ordained to that office, and upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church" (D&C 107:22).

I emphasize those words "upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church."

Your uplifted hands in the solemn assembly this morning became an expression of your willingness and desire to uphold us, your brethren and your servants, with your confidence, faith, and prayer. I am deeply grateful for that expression. I thank you, each of you. I assure you, as you already know, that in the processes of the Lord there is no aspiring for office. As the Lord said to his disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you" (John 15:16). This office is not one to be sought after. The right to select rests with the Lord. He is the master of life and death. His is the power to call. His is the power to take away. His is the power to retain. It is all in His hands.

I do not know why in His grand scheme one such as I would find a place. But having this mantle come upon me, I now rededicate whatever I have of strength or time or talent or life to the work of my Master in the service of my brethren and sisters. Again I thank you, my beloved brethren, for your actions this day. The burden of my prayer is that I will be worthy. I hope that I may be remembered in your prayers.

### **Releasing of regional representatives**

Now in the ongoing of this work, administrative changes sometimes occur. The doctrine remains constant. But from time to time there are organizational and administrative changes made under provisions set forth in the revelations.

For instance, twenty-eight years ago the First Presidency was inspired to call men to serve as regional representatives of the Twelve. At the time that was a new calling in the Church. The Presidency stated that this was necessary because of "the ever-increasing growth of the Church," which made "evident a greater need to train our stake and ward leaders in the programs of the Church that they

in turn might train the membership in their responsibilities before the Lord."

At that time there were 69 regional representatives. Today there are 284. The organization has become somewhat unwieldy.

More recently the Presidency were inspired to call men from the Seventy to serve in Area Presidencies. As the work grows across the world, it has become necessary to decentralize administrative authority to keep General Authorities closer to the people. We now have such Area Presidencies well established and effectively functioning.

It is now felt desirable to tighten up the organization administered by the Area Presidencies. Accordingly, we announce the release—the honorable release—of all regional representatives effective August 15 of this year. To these devoted and able brethren we express our deep appreciation for the tremendous work you have accomplished, for your loyalty, faithfulness, and devotion in advancing the cause of our Father in Heaven. I cannot say enough of good concerning these men. They have sacrificed their time and their resources. They have gone wherever they have been asked to go, whenever they have been asked to go. They have greatly assisted stake presidents and bishops with wise counsel and direction, with skillful training and instruction. We thank them one and all and pray that through the years to come the Lord will bless them with the satisfying assurance that each of them made a significant contribution to the work and that their labors have been accepted by Him.

### **The new office of area authority**

Now we announce the call of a new local officer to be known as an area authority. These will be high priests chosen from among past and present experienced Church leaders. They will con-

tinue with their current employment, reside in their own homes, and serve on a Church-service basis. The term of their call will be flexible, generally for a period of approximately six years. They will be closely tied to the Area Presidencies. They will be fewer in number than have been the regional representatives. We are guided in setting up this new corps of area officers, as were our Brethren before us in the calling of regional representatives, by the provision contained in the revelation on priesthood, section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants. After directions to the Twelve and the Seventy, the revelation states:

"Whereas other officers of the church, who belong not unto the Twelve, neither to the Seventy, are not under the responsibility to travel among all nations, but are to travel as their circumstances shall allow, notwithstanding they may hold as high and responsible offices in the church" (v. 98).

Now, I repeat that these changes will not be effective until August 15 of this year.

### **Growth of the Church**

Now, brethren, a few words on a related matter. The Church is becoming a very large and complex organization. We now have members in more than 150 nations. There are nine million of us, and we are growing at the approximate rate of a million each three and a half years. In addition to such regular programs as sacrament meeting, home teaching, and meetings of the priesthood quorums and auxiliaries, all of which are designed to meet the needs of the living membership of the Church, we are carrying forward an enormous program involving such undertakings as the world's largest archive of genealogical and family history data; the operation of the largest private university in the nation, if not in the world, with a related seminary and institute program embracing hundreds of

thousands of students; the staffing and management of the largest missionary organization of which I am aware, with the number now approaching 50,000; the carrying forward of a building program of unprecedented proportions; the operation of a very large and efficient publishing facility; and the training and motivation of the largest organization of noncompensated ecclesiastical officers to be found in any institution of which I know. I hesitate to use superlatives, but I think they fit in this case.

### **Concern for the individual**

We are becoming a great global society. But our interest and concern must always be with the individual. Every member of this church is an individual man or woman, boy or girl. Our great responsibility is to see that each is "remembered and nourished by the good word of God" (Moroni 6:4), that each has opportunity for growth and expression and training in the work and ways of the Lord, that none lacks the necessities of life, that the needs of the poor are met, that each member shall have encouragement, training, and opportunity to move forward on the road of immortality and eternal life. This, I submit, is the inspired genius of this the Lord's work. The organization can grow and multiply in numbers, as it surely will. This gospel must be carried to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. There can never be in the foreseeable future a standing still or a failure to reach out, to move forward, to build, to enlarge Zion across the world. But with all of this there must continue to be an intimate pastoral relationship of every member with a wise and caring bishop or branch president. These are the shepherds of the flock whose responsibility it is to look after the people in relatively small numbers so that none is forgotten, overlooked, or neglected.

Jesus was the true shepherd, who reached out to those in distress, one at a time, bestowing an individual blessing upon them.

President Lee told us on more than one occasion to survey large fields and cultivate small ones. He was saying that we must know the big picture and then assiduously work on the particular niche assigned to each of us, and that in doing so we concentrate on the needs of the individual.

### **Dedicate all efforts to the individual**

This work is concerned with people, each a son or daughter of God. In describing its achievements we speak in terms of numbers, but all of our efforts must be dedicated to the development of the individual.

For instance, President Hunter urged us to greater temple activity. This sacred work concerns the entire human family, past and present. But it is accomplished on an individual basis, with those who have received their own ordinances standing individually as proxy for another.

Likewise missionary service is a personal labor, with the missionary teaching and bearing witness to the investigator, who must search and pray alone in the quiet of his own soul if he or she is to gain a knowledge of the truth.

The gaining of a strong and secure testimony is the privilege and opportunity of every individual member of the Church. The Master said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17).

Service in behalf of others, study, and prayer lead to faith in this work and then to knowledge of its truth. This has always been a personal pursuit, as it must always be in the future.

We speak frequently of Wilford Woodruff's conversion of the United Brethren in England when some 1,800 were baptized into the Church. But let

us not forget that each of them had to walk the lonely road of repentance, of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and of acceptance of the fact that the ancient gospel had come again to earth in this the promised dispensation of the fulness of times.

### **Choose the right**

The decisions we make, individually and personally, become the fabric of our lives. That fabric will be beautiful or ugly according to the threads of which it is woven. I wish to say particularly to the young men who are here that you cannot indulge in any unbecoming behavior without injury to the beauty of the fabric of your lives. Immoral acts of any kind will introduce an ugly thread. Dishonesty of any kind will create a blemish. Foul and profane language will rob the pattern of its beauty.

"Choose the right when a choice is placed before you" is the call to each of us ("Choose the Right," *Hymns*, no. 239).

### **Testimony and charge**

Now in conclusion, may I say that I glory in the wonderful, courageous, victorious past of this great work. I marvel at the present when you and I stand as watchmen upon the towers. I envision the future with hope, assurance, and certain faith.

God, our Eternal Father, lives. This is His work, designed to assist Him in "bring[ing] to pass the immortality and eternal life" of His sons and daughters of all generations of time (Moses 1:39).

Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah, who came to earth in the most humble of circumstances, who walked the dusty roads of Palestine teaching and healing, who died upon Golgotha's cruel cross and was resurrected the third day. This is His church. It carries His name. We are His servants, each of us. The priesthood which we bear is His priest-

hood, and we exercise it in His name. It was bestowed upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by those who held it anciently, having received it from the Lord Himself.

The gospel is the way of peace, of progress, of safety, of salvation, of exaltation. This, the last and final dispensation, was ushered in by the glorious appearance of the Father and the Son to the boy Joseph Smith. You and I, my brethren, have received this holy priesthood through the laying on of hands by those in authority. We must live worthy

of it. We must safeguard it. We must honor it. We must use it in righteousness for the blessing of others. God help us to be true to the great and sacred trust which has been given to each of us, I humbly pray, as I leave my blessing with you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "Where Can I Turn for Peace?"

Elder F. David Stanley offered the benediction.

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## SUNDAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth general session of the 165th Annual General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 2, 1995. President Gordon B. Hinckley conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley conducting and Richard Elliott at the organ.

To begin the session, the choir sang "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah." President Hinckley then made the following remarks.

### President Gordon B. Hinckley

We welcome you this Sabbath morning from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, to the fourth general session of the 165th annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Tabernacle is filled to capacity, with overflow gatherings in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Russell M. Nelson, Charles Didier, and John E. Fowler are seated on the stand; and in the Joseph Smith Memorial Building, where Elders Gene R. Cook and John B. Dickson are in attendance.

We extend our greetings to those of you who are participating by radio, tele-

vision, cable, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of these facilities, who are broadcasting this conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and members of the Church who have assembled from far and wide to worship together.

The Tabernacle Choir, directed by Jerold Ottley, with Richard Elliott at the organ, opened these services by singing "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah." They will now sing "Oh, May My Soul Commune with Thee," following which Elder Kenneth Johnson of the Seventy, who comes from England, will offer the invocation.

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The choir sang "Oh, May My Soul Commune with Thee."

Elder Kenneth Johnson offered the invocation.

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### President Hinckley

We shall now be pleased to hear from President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency.