

Elder David B. Haight

“Let the mountains shout for joy”

What a tremendous sight, my brethren. It's thrilling to stand here and look out on this vast audience in the Tabernacle and then think of what is happening throughout the world. The songs that we have just heard, I think, are quite appropriate. “Where Can I Turn for Peace?” (*Hymns*, no. 129)—we could talk about that topic all evening. Before that, we heard the stirring song “Let the Mountains Shout for Joy,” written by Evan Stephens. As we reflect upon the sesquicentennial year of our pioneers' arrival, you can imagine the thrill that the Saints must have felt when they sang that song or heard it for the first time. After they had made the trek across the plains and accomplished all that they had done—the suffering and the living in the wagon beds and sleeping out on the ground and walking barefooted and burying the dead out on the prairie—finally to arrive in the valley of the Great Salt Lake, there to establish Zion, you can imagine how they would later sing, “Let the mountains shout for joy! Let the valleys sing.”

We can do that now as we reflect upon our ancestors who were part of that trek and all that they have done in making the way for us, and then envision the Church today. As we heard the statistics read today and as we reflect upon what is happening throughout the world regarding the image of the Church, the growth, and the continued expansion of stakes and wards and membership worldwide into new countries, new areas, again we could sing with great enthusiasm, “Let the mountains shout for joy!” Here we are, and the word is spreading the way it has been predicted and the way it should be done.

The basics haven't changed

I'm honored to be able to be on the program here tonight. I'm getting old

enough now that I just about span the 20th century. I'm missing six years of the beginning of the century—I was born in 1906—and I have three years on the other end, which would cover the 100 years. The other day when President Hinckley was talking about a dedication coming up in the year 2000, he said to me, “And I'm planning on your being there.” I said, “I'll plan on being there.” So if I can make that date, that would close the three on the upper end and I'm only short the six at the beginning. That would give me 94 percent of the 100 years of this century.

Now as I reflect upon the 20th century and what I have learned, I would like to say something to the Aaronic Priesthood, particularly about what I have witnessed and what I have felt during that time.

I would remind all of you that in the year 1906 the population of the Church was about 360,000 people. There were 55 stakes. There were 22 missions. There were some 1,500 missionaries as far as I've been able to calculate, which would mean about 70 missionaries per mission in 22 missions. The work was moving forward that year that I came into existence.

The story was told by my mother that on the morning I was born, on a Sunday, my father was quite proud. He was the bishop of the Oakley First Ward in Oakley, Idaho, and he went outside to announce the birth to one of our Scandinavian friends, Brother Petersen, who was walking by. My father asked him to come in and see the new son. My mother said I was the homeliest little child she had ever seen. I was undernourished, wrinkled, and bald headed. And so Brother Petersen, after looking at me, said, “Sister Haight, do you tink he's worth boddering with?” Well, that was my entrance into the world.

And now from that time I've seen automobiles come into being, and the

first airplanes. I've seen radio develop from a little crystal with a "cat whisker" to tune it, to the beginning of the modern electronics world. I remember that we would sit in the Idaho Power Company at night with a little radio and scratch with that little whisker, and we would get some terrible static. We thought we were tuned in to China because we couldn't understand what was going on.

As I think of the world that I knew when I was young, the basics that we talk about were in place then. With all of the things that I've seen happen since I've lived upon the earth, nothing has come along to change the basics. We now have the great ability to communicate as rapidly as we do and in the various ways that we do. We can travel faster—through the air, in automobiles, and so on—but the basics, the eternal principles, haven't changed a bit.

Aaronic Priesthood boys should remember the basics

Those of you who are young today—and I'm thinking of the deacons who are assembled in meetings throughout the world—I remember when I was ordained a deacon by Bishop Adams. He took the place of my father when he died. My father baptized me, but he wasn't there when I received the Aaronic Priesthood. I remember the thrill that I had when I became a deacon and now held the priesthood, as they explained to me in a simple way and simple language that I had received the power to help in the organization and the moving forward of the Lord's program upon the earth. We receive that as 12-year-old boys. We go through those early ranks of the lesser priesthood—a deacon, a teacher, and then a priest—learning little by little, here a little and there a little, growing in knowledge and wisdom. That little testimony that you start out with begins to grow, and you see it magnifying and you see it building in a way that is under-

standable to you. You can feel the magnitude of it as you start to grow up and prepare for manhood.

Speaking of preparing for manhood, I remember when I was 12 years old. I was the head man around the house. I was a man by the time I was 12 because my mother expected that of me. She was not looked upon as a widow; she was my mother, to raise, to teach, and to train us and to help us prepare for life. And so I would say to the boys in the Aaronic Priesthood, remember the simple, simple basics that we learn from the beginning, that we're taught in the scriptures. Starting with Adam, the basics were upon the earth, and with the development of mankind, and the speed of automobiles or airplanes or communication, none of those gospel basics have changed. They're still in place. We have to be prepared as we move on through life, learning to do the things that are essential for us to advance in the priesthood or advance in positions in society or in whatever it might be, but we have to learn to obey the simple, basic rules of the gospel.

The Oakley, Idaho, football team

As the First Presidency came in tonight, one of them said, "Knock a home run," and someone else said, "Kick a field goal." That reminded me that a few years ago I told a meeting such as this of a football story that I was involved in when the school board in Oakley, Idaho, was able to raise enough money to buy 12 football outfits (see Conference Report, Apr. 1981, 57-58; or *Ensign*, May 1981, 42). We hadn't played football; we'd played basketball because that was easy to do and was cheap and wouldn't require much equipment. But they finally were able to buy 12 uniforms so we'd have a full team and one substitute. Our coach was the chemistry teacher. He had seen a game one time, and so he taught us how to tackle and run up and down

the field and run a few simple plays, but we had never seen an actual team play.

Our first game was to play Twin Falls, Idaho, who the year before had been the state high school champs. We got in the little Ford cars and traveled to Twin Falls. We put on our suits and basketball shoes and went out on the field, all 12 of us, and after we had run around a little loosening up, the band started to play and in came their football team. They had more in their band than we had in our whole high school. But as their team came in in their big Green Bay Packer outfits, we were amazed. There were 39 of them in full uniform.

Well, as you could imagine, the game was interesting. They kicked off to us, and we tried a couple of plays and didn't go anywhere, so we kicked it to get rid of the ball. Each time we would get the ball, we would kick, and each time they would get hold of the ball, they would score. It was an interesting afternoon. Near the end of the game, when we were battered and bloody and beaten, they started to get a little reckless, and Clifford Lee, who was playing halfback with me, had one of their wild passes land right in his arms. He wondered what to do with it. But he saw them coming after him and he started to run. He was not running for points; he was running for his life. He scored a touchdown.

The final score was 106 to 6. The Twin Falls paper just two or three years ago had an article about their great football teams. They listed that game against Oakley, and the score they published in the paper was 106 to 7. I wrote the editor of the paper, and I said, "Dear Editor, I thought you would like to hear from someone who played on the other side." So I described the game to him, and I said, "We didn't try an extra point because we didn't have anyone who could have kicked the extra point. And you should correct the score in your records, because it was 106 to 6."

Be clean, obedient, and prepared

Well, that is part of life and the opportunity we have to be prepared; and when there is something to be done and things to be learned in order to accomplish it, then we have to learn the basics and how to carry them out.

The gospel is true. As I think of the missionary force we have out in the world, my, what a great opportunity to carry out the Lord's work in the way that it must be done. We love you for what you're doing. You boys in the Aaronic Priesthood, be as good as you ought to be and learn to be clean and honest and pure and forthright and obedient—obedient above all things—that you might be able to carry out the Lord's work in the majestic way in which it must be done.

I leave you my love, my witness, my testimony that this work is true; that President Hinckley, who leads the Church today, is our prophet, seer, and revelator; that he is called by the Lord to preside over the Church. I have watched him closely now for more than 20 years, seeing his ability, his talent, his dedication, and the spiritual impact that he brings to the world as he leads this work. This work is true. It will move forward to fill every corner of the earth. People will have an opportunity to hear with their own ears—to hear someone declare that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, which I declare to you. I leave you my love, my witness that this work is true, in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Haight; you just keep that up. We appreciate what you have said. We will now hear from Elder Jack H Goaslind of the Presidency of the Seventy and the Young Men General President.