

9. See "Parent-Child Relationships and Children's Images of God," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Mar. 1997, 25-43.
10. David Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem* (1995), 1.
11. See "Becoming a Better Father," *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 27.
12. Personal correspondence.
13. Edgar A. Guest, "Only a Dad," in *Best-Loved Poems of the LDS People*, ed. Jack M. Lyon and others (1996), 90-91.
14. Personal correspondence.
15. Personal correspondence from Robert A. Rees.
16. *Parisina*, stanza 13, lines 285-86.
17. 1 Nephi 2:16.
18. Enos 1:3.
19. Alma 36:17.
20. Genesis 18:19; italics added.
21. Doctrine and Covenants 29:48.
22. Mark 14:36.

The chorus sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

President Hinckley

Sister Carol Thomas of the Young Women presidency and Elder Jeffrey Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve have spoken to us, with the chorus singing "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

We are grateful to the Bonneville International LDS Radio Network and the owners and operators of many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service in carrying this conference to the world.

We express deep appreciation to the Mormon Youth Chorus for the beautiful music they have given and to Brother Bowden particularly for what may be his final presentation in this capacity. He has done a tremendous work, and we are so deeply grateful to him.

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our next speaker and final speaker, following which the choir will sing "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today." The benediction will be given by Elder Carl B. Pratt of the Seventy, following which the conference will be adjourned until 2:00 this afternoon.

President James E. Faust

My dear brothers, sisters, and friends, I earnestly seek the influence of the Spirit during the few moments that I stand at this pulpit. I pray for guidance and wisdom so that what I say may be acceptable to our Heavenly Father.

People have looked to our day

Brethren and sisters, ours is the time of which the Prophet Joseph Smith spoke, "upon which prophets, priests and kings [in ages past] have dwelt with peculiar delight; [and] have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful

anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; . . . we are the favored people that God has [chosen] to bring about the Latter-day glory."¹ Since the Prophet Joseph said this in 1842, men have acquired more knowledge than in all of the time before his ministry.

The two greatest historical events

We stand on the brink of the next century. From this vantage point, we need to remember that the most significant events in the last 2,000 years were not the marvels of science, technology,

and travel. They were the Savior's Atonement and the Restoration of the gospel with the priesthood keys and authority. These two singular events will continue to be of transcendent importance to mankind as we move forward in time. The past, present, and future pivot on these marvelous divine interventions.

Secular knowledge helps the Lord's work

On January 1, 1901, in this very building, the First Presidency greeted the world as follows:

"A new century dawns upon the world today. The hundred years just completed were the most momentous in the history of man upon this planet. It would be impossible in a hundred days to make even a brief summary of the notable events, the marvelous developments, the grand achievements and the beneficial inventions and discoveries, which mark the progress of the ten decades now left behind in the ceaseless march of humanity. The very mention of the nineteenth century suggested advancement, improvement, liberty and light. Happy are we to have lived amidst its wonders and shared in the riches of its treasures of intelligence!"²

When this statement was made 100 years ago, people still traveled by horse and buggy. The age of the telephone and electricity was just dawning. There was no air travel, no e-mail, no fax machines, no Internet. There has been an explosion of secular knowledge. I believe that God has opened up these treasures of intelligence to enhance His purposes on the earth. The new century will bring exponential advances in that treasury.

Prepare spiritually for the future

My message today is about preparing ourselves for the future. This is our time, and it involves more than just looking at the clock. Some of us are watching our

clocks quite anxiously as they tick their way inexorably into the next century. Our awareness of time affects how we think and act. This is illustrated by the story about the clock in a restaurant window. It "had stopped a few minutes past noon. One day a friend asked the owner if he knew the clock was not running. 'Yes,' replied the restaurant man, 'but you would be surprised to know how many people look at that clock, think they are hungry, and come in to get something to eat.'"³

If only there were some kind of divine timepiece that would arouse a spiritual hunger in people! What are most people hungry for? I believe it is spiritual and moral leadership. Increases in technology, scientific inventions, and medical miracles have been marvelous and incredible. But we must use them properly to bring us joy, and that requires spiritual and moral leadership. Civilization has been around for a long time. While computers are a great convenience and wonderfully helpful in reducing drudgery, we are reminded that the Nephites "lived after the manner of happiness"⁴ even without computers. Electronic marvels can actually bring some pitfalls. For example, surfing the Internet may draw us into that which, if pursued, can destroy our marriages, our homes, and even our lives.

Fear the breakdown of morals, not Y2K

Today many people are obsessed with the Y2K problem and worry about the date coming up right because of the way computers measure time. As someone once said about time: "[It] changes with time: in youth, time marches on; in middle age, time flies; and in old age, time runs out."⁵ We have come to rely on electronics for much of our daily work, and we are naturally concerned about the need to reprogram computers to move into the next century. While some

glitches may occur, I am optimistic that no great catastrophic computer breakdown will disrupt society as we move into the next century. I have a far greater fear of the disruption of the traditional values of society.

Indeed, I am more concerned about the failure of our moral computers of honesty, integrity, decency, civility, and sexual purity. How many people today are truly incorruptible? So many get caught up in waves of popular issues and tides of rhetoric. This breakdown of moral values is happening because we are separating the teachings of God from personal conduct. An honorable man or woman will personally commit to live up to certain self-imposed expectations, with no need of an outside check or control. I would hope that we can load our moral computers with three elements of integrity: dealing justly with oneself, dealing justly with others, and recognizing the law of the harvest.

Face the future with the Savior

I also hope our personal worship of the Savior will remain uncomplicated so that the simple majesty of gospel truth can work to bring us peace. We must keep our faith simple and our worship pure. Religion is more than a ritual; it is righteousness.

I have no doubt that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as an institution can meet the challenge of entering into the year 2000. Growth in membership, the number of new temples, and the inspired organization are all in place to move with strength into the next century. Having the images of technology in our minds is commendable, but in order to move forward spiritually we need to have the Savior's image in our countenances⁶ and in our hearts.

As the milestone year 2000 approaches, excitement abounds because we enter not only into a new century but

also the third thousand years since the birth of Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the World. This solitary figure, Jesus of Nazareth, without position or status or wealth, changed the world. So far as we know, during His life He owned no land nor any worldly things except the simple clothes He wore.

His message was also simple: "Peace be to this house."⁷ "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."⁸ "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."⁹ With these and other simple principles, He introduced a new way of life. He taught of love, the doctrines of hope and salvation, the pathway for peace in this world and the world to come. He spoke of the Resurrection, when spiritual darkness would be removed and the bright light and hope of eternal life given to all mankind.

Following His ascension into heaven, Peter, James, and John and the other unlettered Apostles and Seventy became men of steel as they carried this enlightened message to the world. With their primitive means of travel and communication, this small missionary band went forward boldly with this new message of hope. They did a majestic work in carrying the inspired doctrines of Christ far and wide.

Technology aids mission of the Church

Advances in travel and communication have helped the institutional Church move forward at a rapid pace in proclaiming the gospel. Media referrals are introducing our missionaries to more investigators. Church-produced videos help the missionaries explain the gospel message and the mission of the Church. But are we as individuals doing our part to move this holy work forward? Today the information highway, with all of its means of communication, affords an opportunity for us to carry the mission with

a thousandfold greater speed and ease than Peter, James, and John and the other intrepid disciples. Thousands of messengers, their feet shod with the gospel of peace, now go forth with the message of God.

Technology provides significant support to the ongoing mission of the Church. In the late 1950s, as the jet age began, President David O. McKay boarded a jet after dedicating the temple in New Zealand. As he arrived in Los Angeles, he said to Elder Henry D. Taylor and others, "Brethren, next Thursday when the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve meet, I am going to recommend that a stake be organized in New Zealand." He then said, "With these fast planes it will be possible for the General Authorities to travel swiftly to any part of the world, to visit stakes as they are organized."¹⁰ We now have hundreds of stakes outside of the United States.

Advances in communication and travel during this last century have hastened the pace at which the word of the Lord goes out from Zion.¹¹ I feel much like Isaiah, who spoke of our time, when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."¹² I believe that this marvelous outpouring of knowledge has heightened our ability to take the Lord's saving message to the world, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations."¹³

Deeper, daily worship necessary

As we approach the year 2000, the pressure of mastering the wonders of technology becomes more and more challenging. In this pursuit we could become technologically wise but spiritually illiterate. Undoubtedly, education unlocks the doors of the future for us. But we should be sure that our computers of faith are working so that we can constantly remain on the course of rig-

teousness. We can do this with daily prayer, scripture reading, family home evenings, and keeping our covenants and ordinances on a daily basis. Our worship needs to go deeper than the outward symbols, embracing the simple, profound principles of human conduct embodied in the Savior's teachings: "Repent and [turn] unto me with full purpose of heart."¹⁴ We should in faith "become as [little children] and be baptized in [His] name."¹⁵ The Savior's injunction to us is, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you."¹⁶

The most difficult of all challenges given to us is, "I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect."¹⁷ Perfection is an eternal goal. While we cannot be perfect in mortality, striving for it is a commandment which ultimately, through the Atonement, we can keep.

Remember, the marvels of modern science and technology will not exalt us. Indeed, the great challenge we face as we prepare for the future is to be more spiritually enlightened. All of this new, expanding intellectual property must certainly be mastered through great effort and learning. But technical savvy is not fully useful unless there is a spiritual purpose and meaning to it. I am certain the Lord expects us to apply it to the advancement of His purposes and the blessing of mankind, but we must adopt those lofty ideals as personal goals and desires before we can direct technology to those purposes.

Follow Church leaders, love others

As we approach the beginning of the third thousand years since the Savior's birth, how should the 10 million of us who have been baptized in His name carry on His work? We can do this by following the direction set by President

Hinckley, the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the other General Authorities. Much of our work ought to focus on changing our own lives and thinking. It should encompass what the Savior called the new commandment: "That ye love one another."¹⁸ To all of us, the feeding of His sheep is a continuing responsibility.¹⁹

Greater knowledge, blessings in future

As the Prophet Joseph indicated, this is our day and time. I believe the future holds greater blessings for mankind than ever before. I rejoice in this great outpouring of spiritual knowledge, when "the earth [is being] filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."²⁰ Knowledge and intelligence are dropping "as the gentle rain from heaven"²¹ to bless all of our lives. We should seize every opportunity to move forward in faith, looking beyond the year 2000 into a future bright with hope, acknowledging that all good gifts come by divine providence. With such increased knowledge comes a higher responsibility. If we work hard, wisely manage our personal stewardships, and live providently, the Lord will prosper us in our use of this heightened knowledge to advance His holy work.

President Gordon B. Hinckley is the prophet for our day and time. He is keenly aware of this higher responsibility and is energetically doing all he can to bring about God's purposes on earth. Each of us needs to do all we can to help move this work forward. As the Psalmist said, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."²² I have a conviction of this and so testify in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. *History of the Church*, 4:609-10.
2. In James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1965-75), 3:333.
3. In Jacob M. Braude, comp., *Braude's Treasury of Wit and Humor* (1964), 178.
4. 2 Nephi 5:27.
5. Evan Esar, comp., *20,000 Quips and Quotes* (1995), 812.
6. See Alma 5:14.
7. Luke 10:5.
8. Matthew 22:37.
9. Matthew 22:39.
10. Henry D. Taylor, in Conference Report, Apr. 1960, 118-19.
11. See Micah 4:2.
12. Isaiah 11:9.
13. Luke 24:47.
14. 3 Nephi 10:6.
15. 3 Nephi 11:37.
16. 3 Nephi 12:44.
17. 3 Nephi 12:48.
18. John 13:34.
19. See John 21:15-17.
20. Habakkuk 2:14.
21. William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, act 4, scene 1, line 184; see also Deuteronomy 32:2.
22. Psalm 118:23.

The chorus sang "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today."

Elder Carl B. Pratt offered the benediction.
