

by his side. When he saw us, he said, "Why, Brother Monson, how in the world did you know that this is my birthday?" I smiled but I left the question unanswered.

Those in the room who held the Melchizedek Priesthood surrounded this, their father and my friend, and a priesthood blessing was given.

After tears were shed, smiles of gratitude exchanged, and tender hugs received and given, I leaned over to Hyrum and spoke softly to him, "Hyrum, remember the words of the Lord, for they will sustain you. He promised, 'I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.'"¹⁰

May each of us ever be on the Lord's errand and thereby be entitled to the Lord's help, I pray humbly. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. In Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 75; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 52.
2. *Deseret Weekly*, 2 Nov. 1889, 598.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 107:99.
4. In Conference Report, Oct. 1955, 86; paraphrasing, capitalization, and punctuation altered.

5. Ether 12:27.

6. In Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 14.

7. Acts 9:3-6.

8. James 1:22.

9. Whitney Montgomery, "Revelation," in *Best-Loved Poems of the LDS People*, ed. Jack M. Lyon and others (1996), 283.

10. John 14:18.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us.

We remind all of you that the Tabernacle Choir broadcast will go from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. tomorrow, and the Sunday morning session will immediately follow. So it's important that we be in our places by 9:15 at the latest.

We express our deep appreciation to the men of the Tabernacle Choir and the BYU Men's Choir for the beautiful music they have provided this evening.

Following my remarks, this session will conclude with the choir singing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives." The benediction will then be offered by Elder Claudio R. M. Costa of the Seventy.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren, I commend you, wherever you may be. As usual, the Tabernacle is filled to capacity this evening. Next spring we shall be able to accommodate all of you who wish to sit together in these great Saturday evening priesthood gatherings, and what a blessing that will be.

Why we do some of the things we do

As we conclude this meeting, I wish to speak for a few minutes on the subject of "why we do some of the things we do."

Now, I recognize that this is a rather strange-sounding title, but this is the only meeting where we can discuss Church procedures and Church business. I pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Church is an ecclesiastical organization. It is an eleemosynary society. It is concerned primarily with worship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our great mission is to testify of His living reality. We should not be involved with anything not in harmony with this major objective. We should be involved with whatever is in harmony with this objective.

Why does the Church sponsor BYU?

We do many things which on the surface do not appear to be associated with this overriding pattern. I'm going to speak of two or three of these. Among these is the operation of Brigham Young University. People ask why we sponsor such a large and costly institution that is basically concerned with secular education. The question is appropriate. This sponsorship has a doctrinal root.

The Lord has decreed in revelation:

"Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand;

"Of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms—

"That ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you" (D&C 88:78-80).

It is apparent that we are obligated not only to learn of ecclesiastical matters but also of secular matters. There is a tradition in the Church that deals with these things. There was the School of the Prophets in Kirtland. The Seventies Hall in Nauvoo was used for educational purposes. A university was projected in Nauvoo.

When the Saints arrived in these western valleys, academies were established for the training of the young. The University of Utah was chartered in 1850 by our pioneer forebears. Brigham Young University came along later, out-

lasting most of the Church academies. It has grown until its present enrollment numbers more than 27,000. That is a large number of students, but it is a very small fraction of the young people of the Church worthy of a university education. We can accommodate only a relatively few. If we cannot give to all, why should we give to any? The answer is that if we cannot give to all, let us give to as many as we can. The number who can be accommodated on campus is finite, but the influence of the university is infinite. Tremendous efforts are being made to enlarge and extend that influence.

How fortunate are those who have the opportunity to attend. I almost become angry when I hear of complaining among the students or the faculty. I am grateful to be able to say that with very few exceptions those who come to learn and those who teach are appreciative and mindful of the great blessing that is theirs.

Moreover, the university has brought much favorable notice to the Church. Its sponsoring organization, the Church, is widely recognized. It has become known for standards and ideals which have been written about and talked about and which have let the world know of those things in which we believe. Its academic programs and its athletic programs have both brought honor to the university and the Church. And as generations of students move through its halls and on to graduation and then out across the world, they will bring honor to their alma mater and its sponsor, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Continued support of Church schools

We shall continue to support BYU and its Hawaii campus. We shall continue to support Ricks College. We are not likely to build other university campuses. We wish that we might build enough to accommodate all who desire

to attend. But this is out of the question. They are so terribly expensive. But we shall keep these as flagships testifying to the great and earnest commitment of this Church to education, both ecclesiastical and secular, and while doing so prove to the world that excellent secular learning can be gained in an environment of religious faith.

Backing up these institutions will be our other schools, our institutes of religion, scattered far and wide, and the great seminary system of the Church.

It is hoped that through these our youth, wherever they may be, may experience some of the good to be had at BYU.

Why is the Church in business?

Now, the next question: "Why is the Church in business?"

We have a few business interests. Not many. Most of these were begun in very early days when the Church was the only organization that could provide the capital that was needed to start certain business interests designed to serve the people in this remote area. We have divested ourselves long since of some of these where it was felt there was no longer a need. Included in these divestitures, for instance, was the old Consolidated Wagon and Machine Company, which did well in the days of wagons and horse-drawn farm machinery. The company outlived its usefulness.

The Church sold the banks which it once held. As good banking services developed in the community, there was no longer any need for Church-owned banks.

Some of these business interests directly serve the needs of the Church. For instance, our business is communication. We must speak with people across the world. We must speak at home to let our stand be known, and abroad to acquaint others with our work. And so we own a

newspaper, the *Deseret News*, the oldest business institution in Utah.

We likewise own television and radio stations. These provide a voice in the communities which they serve. I may add that we are sometimes embarrassed by network television presentations. Our people do the best they can to minimize the impact of these.

We have a real estate arm designed primarily to ensure the viability and the attractiveness of properties surrounding Temple Square. The core of many cities has deteriorated terribly. This cannot be said of Salt Lake City, although you may disagree as you try to get to the Tabernacle these days. We have tried to see that this part of the community is kept attractive and viable. With the beautiful grounds of Temple Square and the adjoining block to the east, we maintain gardens the equal of any in the world. This area will become even more attractive when the facility now being constructed on Main Street is completed and the large Conference Center to the north is finished.

Profits support worthy causes

Are these businesses operated for profit? Of course they are. They operate in a competitive world. They pay taxes. They are important citizens of this community. And they produce a profit, and from that profit comes the money which is used by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Foundation to help with charitable and worthwhile causes in this community and abroad and, more particularly, to assist in the great humanitarian efforts of the Church.

These businesses contribute one-tenth of their profit to the Foundation. The Foundation cannot give to itself or to other Church entities, but it can use its resources to assist other causes, which it does so generously. Millions of dollars have been so distributed. Thousands upon

thousands have been fed. They have been supplied with medicine. They have been supplied with clothing and shelter in times of great emergency and terrible distress. How grateful I feel for the beneficence of this great Foundation, which derives its resources from the business interests of the Church.

Why is the Church involved in legislative matters?

I have time to discuss one other question: "Why does the Church become involved in issues that come before the legislature and the electorate?"

I hasten to add that we deal only with those legislative matters which are of a strictly moral nature or which directly affect the welfare of the Church. We have opposed gambling and liquor and will continue to do so. We regard it as not only our right but our duty to oppose those forces which we feel undermine the moral fiber of society. Much of our effort, a very great deal of it, is in association with others whose interests are similar. We have worked with Jewish groups, Catholics, Muslims, Protestants, and those of no particular religious affiliation, in coalitions formed to advocate positions on vital moral issues. Such is currently the case in California, where Latter-day Saints are working as part of a coalition to safeguard traditional marriage from forces in our society which are attempting to redefine that sacred institution. God-sanctioned marriage between a man and a woman has been the basis of civilization for thousands of years. There is no justification to redefine what marriage is. Such is not our right, and those who try will find themselves answerable to God.

Defending the sanctity of marriage

Some portray legalization of so-called same-sex marriage as a civil right. This

is not a matter of civil rights; it is a matter of morality. Others question our constitutional right as a church to raise our voice on an issue that is of critical importance to the future of the family. We believe that defending this sacred institution by working to preserve traditional marriage lies clearly within our religious and constitutional prerogatives. Indeed, we are compelled by our doctrine to speak out.

Nevertheless, and I emphasize this, I wish to say that our opposition to attempts to legalize same-sex marriage should never be interpreted as justification for hatred, intolerance, or abuse of those who profess homosexual tendencies, either individually or as a group. As I said from this pulpit one year ago, our hearts reach out to those who refer to themselves as gays and lesbians. We love and honor them as sons and daughters of God. They are welcome in the Church. It is expected, however, that they follow the same God-given rules of conduct that apply to everyone else, whether single or married.

I commend those of our membership who have voluntarily joined with other like-minded people to defend the sanctity of traditional marriage. As part of a coalition that embraces those of other faiths, you are giving substantially of your means. The money being raised in California has been donated to the coalition by individual members of the Church. You are contributing your time and talents in a cause that in some quarters may not be politically correct but which nevertheless lies at the heart of the Lord's eternal plan for His children, just as those of many other churches are doing. This is a united effort.

I think that is all I need to say on that and the other matters on which I have commented. I have tried to explain why we do some of the things that we do. I hope I have been helpful.

Love for the priesthood

Now in conclusion I wish to say that I love the priesthood of this Church. It is a vital, living thing. It is the very heart and strength of this work. It is the power and authority by which God, our Eternal Father, accomplishes His work on the earth. It is the authority by which men speak in His name. It is the authority by which they govern His Church.

I love the boys who hold the Aaronic Priesthood. Every young man who does so, walking in obedience to the commandments of the Lord, may expect to have the guidance of the Holy Spirit in his life. That Spirit will bless him in his studies and other pursuits and will lead him in efforts that will bless him and bless the lives of others all about him.

Live worthy of the priesthood

Boys, I endorse and repeat what has been said here this night; live worthy of the priesthood you hold. Never do anything that will make you unworthy. Observe the Word of Wisdom. It is not difficult, and it will bring you promised blessings. Avoid drugs. They will utterly destroy you. They will take from you control and discipline over your minds and bodies. They will enslave you and place a vicious and deadly grip upon you that will be almost impossible to break.

Stay away from pornography. It too will destroy you. It will cloud your minds with evil and destroy your capacity to appreciate the good and the beautiful.

Avoid alcohol as you would a loathsome disease. Beer will do to you what hard liquor will do. Each contains alcohol in varying amounts.

Shun immorality. It will blight your life if you indulge in it. It will destroy

your self-respect. It will rob you of pleasant opportunities and make you unworthy of the companionship of lovely young women.

As you look forward and plan your lives, include a mission. You have an obligation to do so. It may be a difficult experience, but it will enrich and give balance to your life, and it will bless the lives of others in a way beyond your power to comprehend.

So much depends upon you, my very dear young friends.

May God bless you as you go forward with your lives, walking in obedience to His commandments.

This, I remind every man and boy in this vast audience tonight, is the Church and kingdom of the Almighty God. As our history has amply demonstrated, it is not a cause of ease nor a work without effort, even sacrifice. We shall go on pursuing the path which the Lord has marked out before us. We shall try to be strong and faint not as we pursue those programs and practices which have been established and maintained through generations of time.

Brethren, what a tremendous organization we are all a part of. We shall go forward and never flag or be deterred in our efforts to build this kingdom and establish righteousness in the earth. May God grant us wisdom, strength, and resolution, I humbly pray in the name of our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

Elder Claudio R. M. Costa offered the benediction.
