

President Gordon B. Hinckley

A great family in reverence and worship

My brothers and sisters, what a wonderful occasion this is! I know of nothing else like it in all the world. We are gathered this morning as a great family in reverence and worship of the Lord our God. We are of one faith and one doctrine. We speak words of testimony concerning God our Eternal Father and His Beloved Son. We declare with conviction and certainty that they have restored in this last dispensation The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The great voices of radio, television, and cable are now joined by the Internet to carry our words literally to the ends of the earth. To meetinghouses scattered far and wide, the satellite will beam our signal to congregations large and small. And

Saints across the earth will listen in their own homes to the proceedings of this great conference by means of the Internet.

Workmen have labored long and hard in preparing for this great occasion. We thank each one of them for his devoted service. Tomorrow we shall dedicate this magnificent Conference Center and other facilities. An important chapter in the history of our people will then have been written.

Welcome to each of you, wherever you may be. May we all be touched by the Holy Spirit as we meet together in solemn worship is my humble prayer. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder Robert D. Hales

Lessons learned from suffering

After recovering from three major surgeries which have prevented me from speaking in the past two general conferences, what a joy it is to be able to stand in this beautiful Conference Center today to teach and bear testimony to those who desire to hear the word of the Lord.

In the past two years, I have waited upon the Lord for mortal lessons to be taught me through periods of physical pain, mental anguish, and pondering. I learned that constant, intense pain is a great consecrating purifier that humbles us and draws us closer to God's Spirit. If we listen and obey, we will be guided by His Spirit and do His will in our daily endeavors.

There were times when I have asked a few direct questions in my prayers, such as, "What lessons dost Thou want me to learn from these experiences?"

As I studied the scriptures during this critical period of my life, the veil was thin and answers were given to me as they were recorded in lives of others who had gone through even more severe trials.

"My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

"And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high" (D&C 121:7-8).

Dark moments of depression were quickly dispelled by the light of the gospel as the Spirit brought peace and comfort with assurances that all would be well.

Enduring to the end

On a few occasions I told the Lord that I had surely learned the lessons to be taught and that it wouldn't be necessary for me to endure any more suffering. Such entreaties seemed to be of no avail, for it