

who are listening here tonight. But the cautions we give to the few are important reminders even to the faithful.

### Be ready in time of critical need

In the most difficult and discouraging days of World War II, Winston Churchill said to the people of England:

“To every man there comes . . . that special moment when he is figuratively tapped on the shoulder and offered the chance to do a special thing unique to him and fitted to his talent. What a tragedy if that moment finds him unprepared or unqualified for the work which would be his finest hour.”

In an even more serious kind of spiritual warfare, brethren, the day may come—indeed, I am certain *will* come—when in an unexpected circumstance or a time of critical need, lightning will strike, so to speak, and the future will be in your hands. Be ready when that day comes. Be strong. Always be clean. Respect and revere the priesthood that you hold, tonight and forever.

I bear witness of this work, of the power we have been given to direct it,

and of the need to be worthy in administering it. Brethren, I testify that the call in every age—and especially in our age—is Joshua’s call: “Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.” In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### NOTES

1. Joshua 3:5.
2. Isaiah 52:11; see also 3 Nephi 20:41; Doctrine and Covenants 38:42; 133:5.
3. See 2 Kings 25:14–15; Ezra 1:5–11.
4. 2 Timothy 2:20–22; italics added.
5. C. S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (1967), 33.
6. See Enos 1:2–10.
7. See Genesis 32:24–26.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 31:10.
9. “The World Is Too Much with Us,” line 1.

### President Hinckley

We have just heard from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve.

Our next speaker will be Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Presidency of the Seventy. He will be followed by Bishop Richard C. Edgley of the Presiding Bishopric.

## Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander

### Sustaining the prophet

Brethren, this evening I would like to share an experience that has great meaning to me. During the Sunday afternoon session of general conference, April 6, 1986, a solemn assembly took place, the purpose of which was to sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and 13th President of the Church. All Church members were invited to participate either by being in the Tabernacle or by means of radio or TV. As a family, we

accepted the invitation to participate in our home. Except for one son then serving a mission, all were present—one high priest, one priest, one deacon, an 11-year-old son, and my wife, LeAnn. By direction and in turn, each of us who held the priesthood stood; then all of us together as a family stood to sustain President Benson.

Why does the Lord call prophets, seers, and revelators? And how do we sustain them?

### Prophets bear testimony of Christ

The fundamental responsibility of prophets, seers, and revelators, all of whom bear apostolic authority, is to bear certain testimony of the name of Jesus Christ in all the world. This basic call to be a special witness of His name has remained constant whenever Apostles have been on the earth. This testimony, borne of the Holy Ghost through revelation, was the heart of the New Testament Church and is the heart of the Church today.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter bore pure testimony that Jesus of Nazareth was “taken, . . . crucified and slain” and that He was “raised up, having loosed the pains of death,” of which the Apostles were all witnesses.<sup>1</sup> So powerful was this testimony of Jesus Christ, spoken by a living Apostle, that hearts were changed and about 3,000 people were baptized for the remission of their sins. We read that these new converts “continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”<sup>2</sup>

This account in the book of Acts gives deep spiritual meaning to the words that Paul later wrote to the Ephesians—that those who embrace the gospel become “the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”<sup>3</sup>

In this dispensation of restoration, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “the fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”<sup>4</sup>

In keeping with this divinely mandated responsibility to bear certain witness of the name of Jesus Christ to all the world, the living Apostles of our day have given their testimony. In the proclamation “The Living Christ,” they de-

clare the restoration of His priesthood and Church, testify of His Second Coming, and “bear testimony, as His duly ordained Apostles—that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God.”<sup>5</sup>

Ancient as well as modern Apostles bear witness of the name of Jesus Christ because “there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.”<sup>6</sup>

### Prophets teach the word of God

Secondly, prophets, seers, and revelators teach the word of God in clarity that all His children may benefit and be blessed through obedience to their teachings. Of Joseph Fielding Smith, President Hinckley wrote: “He did speak straightforwardly and without equivocation. Such is the mission of a prophet.”<sup>7</sup>

The need for prophetic teachers who know the revealed word of God and who speak it directly and without apology is as important in our day as it has ever been. In a confusing world of conflicting ideas, shifting values, and selfish desire for power, well might we study carefully the conversation between Philip and the man from Ethiopia. As this man was reading the scriptures, Philip ran to him and asked: “Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?”<sup>8</sup>

To the people of the Lord, Alma taught:

“Trust no one to be your teacher nor your minister, except he be a man of God, walking in his ways and keeping his commandments. . . .

“ . . . And none were consecrated except they were just men.

“Therefore they did watch over their people, and did nourish them with things pertaining to righteousness.”<sup>9</sup>

These words describe perfectly the prophets, seers, and revelators who lead this Church. They speak the words of

God with clarity, authority, and understanding.

### **Prophets see beyond the present**

Thirdly, we sustain 15 men not only as prophets and revelators but as seers also. The presence of seers among us is not much spoken of, yet the ability to see beyond the present lends power and authority to apostolic testimony and teaching. I refer to two scriptures that speak of this important and unique calling. Ammon teaches King Limhi in the Book of Mormon that "a seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, . . . and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known."<sup>10</sup>

In the Pearl of Great Price we read that the Lord instructed Enoch to anoint his eyes with clay and wash them, that he could see. Enoch did so. "And he beheld . . . things which were not visible to the natural eye; and from thenceforth came the saying abroad in the land: A seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people."<sup>11</sup>

To the question of what our modern seers are making known that otherwise could not be known and what they are seeing that is not visible to the natural eye, I make a very simple response. Listen, ponder, and prayerfully consider what they are teaching and what they are doing. As you do so, a pattern emerges that reveals much, and therein will the answer to this question be found.

### **Sustain prophets by heeding them**

Now returning to my family's experience with the solemn assembly. At the completion of the voting, President Hinckley, who was conducting, said: "Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your sustaining vote. We feel that you have sustained us not only with your hands but also with your hearts and your faith and prayers,

which we so urgently need, and pray that you will continue to do so."<sup>12</sup> Brethren, our sustaining support of prophets, seers, and revelators is not in the upraised hand alone, but more so in our courage, testimony, and faith to listen to, heed, and follow them.

But I ask myself, if this is so clear, why is it so difficult? There may seem to be many answers to this, but I think, in reality, there is only one. Most of the difficulty can be traced to our desire to be more acceptable to the world than to God.

The teachings of a living prophet are often contrary to the trends of the world. We, as Latter-day Saints and the holders of the priesthood of God, must understand that there is an expanding gulf between the standards of the world and those of the gospel and kingdom of God, and that living prophets will always teach the standards of God. As much as we may want the gospel to accommodate to the world, it can't, it won't, it never has, and it never will.

So much of our modern world is based on self-indulgence, immediate gain and satisfaction, and social acceptance at all cost. The gospel and kingdom of God are so much more than this. Among the characteristics God prizes are patience, long-suffering, endurance, kindness, and brotherly love, none of which is short-term or developed in a moment.

Brethren, to have living prophets, seers, and revelators among us and not listen to them is no better than not having them at all. The prophet Jacob hoped that the words written with so much difficulty on the plates by righteous men would be received by their children with thankful hearts and that they might learn from them "with joy and not with sorrow."<sup>13</sup> May we be wise enough to do likewise with the words of the living prophets, seers, and revelators of our time.

I bear witness of the saving power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. I also bear witness of living apostles, prophets,

seers, and revelators. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. Acts 2:23–24; see also verse 32.
2. Acts 2:42.
3. Ephesians 2:20.
4. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 121.
5. “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2000, 3.

6. Mosiah 3:17.
7. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 525.
8. Acts 8:30–31.
9. Mosiah 23:14, 17–18.
10. Mosiah 8:17.
11. Moses 6:36; see also verse 35.
12. In Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 95; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 75.
13. Jacob 4:3.

## Bishop Richard C. Edgley

### A summer snipe hunt

As a young man having just finished my first year of college and needing to earn money for a desired mission, I spent the summer working at the new Jackson Lake Lodge in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Many college-age youths came to work in that pristine, beautiful area.

One such person was Jill, a young woman from San Francisco, California. Feeling that a young woman from a big city might be a little bit naive about her new environment, I and a few friends felt it our obligation to teach her about the ways of the real West. We decided to take her on a “snipe hunt.” For those of you who may not be familiar with a snipe hunt, it is a practical joke, as there is no such thing as a snipe, at least not in the western United States. The tools necessary for a snipe hunt are a stick and a cloth bag. The “hunter” is told to go through the brush, beating the bushes with a stick while calling the snipe in a high-pitched, ridiculous voice. The non-existent snipes are thus to be driven into the cloth bag.

We gave Jill her cloth bag and a stick and an area to hunt across the hill. The plan was to return to our starting point in about 15 minutes, at which time we would supposedly count our snipes.

When she did not return at the appointed time, we gloated and took delight in the seriousness with which she took her hunt. After about 30 minutes, we felt it was time to rescue her, explain the joke, have a good laugh, and all go to dinner. However, it became apparent that she had taken her snipe hunt more seriously than we had expected—she was not to be found in her assigned area. After searching rather extensively and still finding no evidence of her, we began moving into the woods, calling for her at the top of our voices, but to no avail.

Hoping she might have gone back to her dormitory, we returned and asked some young women to search for her there, but this also was to no avail. It was now turning dark, and our concern heightened. We enlisted all the young men we could from the boys’ dormitory and with flashlights continued the search deep into the woods.

Well into the darkness of night—frightened, concerned, and hoarse from calling—we decided it was now time to report our ridiculous deed to the park rangers. While we were standing in front of the dorms, trying to determine which brave soul would have the privilege of reporting her disappearance, Jill suddenly appeared—not from her dormitory, but rather from that of a friend with whom