

## President Gordon B. Hinckley

### Blessings of living in the fulness of times

My beloved brethren and sisters, wherever you may be, welcome to this great world conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are assembled in our wonderful new Conference Center in Salt Lake City. This building is filled or soon will be. I am so glad that we have it. I am so thankful for the inspiration to build it. What a remarkable structure it is. I wish all of us could be assembled under one roof. But that is not possible. I am so deeply thankful that we have the wonders of television, radio, cable, satellite transmission, and the Internet. We have become a great worldwide Church, and it is now possible for the vast majority of our members to participate in these meetings as one great family, speaking many languages, found in many lands, but all of one faith and one doctrine and one baptism.

This morning I can scarcely restrain my emotions as I think of what the Lord has done for us.

I do not know what we did in the pre-existence to merit the wonderful blessings we enjoy. We have come to earth in this great season in the long history of mankind. It is a marvelous age, the best of all. As we reflect on the plodding course of mankind, from the time of our first parents, we cannot help feeling grateful.

The era in which we live is the fulness of times spoken of in the scriptures, when God has brought together all of the elements of previous dispensations. From the day that He and His Beloved Son manifested themselves to the boy Joseph, there has been a tremendous cascade of enlightenment poured out upon the world. The hearts of men have turned to their fathers in fulfillment of the words of Malachi. The vision of Joel has been fulfilled wherein the Lord declared:

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all

flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

“And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

“And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

“The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.

“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call” (Joel 2:28-32).

There has been more of scientific discovery during these years than during all of the previous history of mankind. Transportation, communication, medicine, public hygiene, the unlocking of the atom, the miracle of the computer, with all of its ramifications, have blossomed forth, particularly in our own era. During my own lifetime, I have witnessed miracle after wondrous miracle come to pass. We take it for granted.

And with all of this, the Lord has restored His ancient priesthood. He has organized His Church and kingdom during the past century and a half. He has led His people. They have been tempered in the crucible of terrible persecution. He has brought to pass the wondrous time in which we now live.

We have seen only the foreshadowing of the mighty force for good that this Church will become. And yet I marvel at what has been accomplished.

Our membership has grown. I believe it has grown in faithfulness. We lose too many, but the faithful are so strong. Those who observe us say that we are moving into the mainstream of religion. We are

not changing. The world's perception of us is changing. We teach the same doctrine. We have the same organization. We labor to perform the same good works. But the old hatred is disappearing; the old persecution is dying. People are better informed. They are coming to realize what we stand for and what we do.

### **A time of greater evil than ever before**

But wonderful as this time is, it is fraught with peril. Evil is all about us. It is attractive and tempting and in so many cases successful. Paul declared:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

"For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

"Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

"Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

We see today all of these evils, more commonly and generally, than they have ever been seen before, as we have so recently been reminded by what has occurred in New York City, Washington, and Pennsylvania, of which I shall speak tomorrow morning. We live in a season when fierce men do terrible and despicable things. We live in a season of war. We live in a season of arrogance. We live in a season of wickedness, pornography, immorality. All of the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah haunt our society. Our young people have never faced a greater challenge. We have never seen more clearly the lecherous face of evil.

### **This work will go forward**

And so, my brothers and sisters, we are met together in this great conference

to fortify and strengthen one another, to help and lift one another, to give encouragement and build faith, to reflect on the wonderful things the Lord has made available to us, and to strengthen our resolve to oppose evil in whatever form it may take.

We have become as a great army. We are now a people of consequence. Our voice is heard when we speak up. We have demonstrated our strength in meeting adversity. Our strength is our faith in the Almighty. No cause under the heavens can stop the work of God. Adversity may raise its ugly head. The world may be troubled with wars and rumors of wars, but this cause will go forward.

You are familiar with these great works written by the Prophet Joseph:

"No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

The Lord has given us the goal toward which we work. That goal is to build His kingdom, which is a mighty cause of great numbers of men and women of faith, of integrity, of love and concern for mankind, marching forward to create a better society, bringing blessings upon ourselves and upon the heads of others.

### **Bless all humanity by reaching out**

As we recognize our place and our goal, we cannot become arrogant. We cannot become self-righteous. We cannot become smug or egotistical. We must reach out to all mankind. They are all sons and daughters of God our Eternal Father, and He will hold us accountable for what we do concerning them.

May the Lord bless us. May He make us strong and mighty in good works. May our faith shine forth as the sunlight of the morning. May we walk in obedience to His divine commandments. May He smile with favor upon us.

As we go forward, may we bless humanity with an outreach to all, lifting those who are downtrodden and oppressed, feeding and clothing the hungry and the needy, extending love and neighborliness to those about us who may not be part of this Church. The Lord has shown us the way. He has given us His word, His counsel, His guidance, yea, His commandments. We have done well. We have much to be grateful for and much to be proud of. But we can do better, so much better.

How I love you, my brothers and sisters of this great cause. I love you for what you have become and for what you can become. Notwithstanding the afflictions about us, notwithstanding the sordid things we see almost everywhere, notwithstanding the conflict that sweeps across the world, we can be better.

I invoke the blessings of heaven upon you as I express my love for you and com-

mend to you the great messages you will hear from this pulpit during the next two days, and do so in the sacred name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "Baptism."

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### President Monson

We have just listened to President Gordon B. Hinckley, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing the musical selection "Baptism."

We shall now hear from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He will be followed by Elder Charles Didier of the Presidency of the Seventy. The choir and congregation will then sing "Now Let Us Rejoice."

At the conclusion of the singing, Sister Sheri L. Dew, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, will address us. She will be followed by Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

## Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Thank you, President Hinckley, for your great message. We are all profoundly grateful for your vigorous and inspired leadership in this difficult time. Under that leadership, we are going forward with the work of the Lord, so urgently needed in this troubled world.

### Sharing the gospel

To proclaim the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ is a fundamental principle of the Christian faith. Three of the gospel writers report this direction by the Savior.

The book of Mark records:

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

Matthew quotes the Savior's command, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).

Luke states, "Thus it is written . . . that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" (Luke 24:46-47).