

## SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

The first session of the 172nd Semi-annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, October 5, 2002, at 10:00 A.M. President Thomas S. Monson conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir. Craig Jessop and Mack Wilberg directed the choir, and Clay Christiansen was the organist. To begin this session, the choir sang "Press Forward, Saints." President Monson then made the following remarks.

### President Thomas S. Monson

My dear brothers and sisters, we welcome you to this, the first general session of the 172nd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Gordon B. Hinckley, who presides at this conference, has asked that I, Brother Monson, conduct this session.

We acknowledge the General Authorities seated on the stand in the Conference Center and at the overflow locations in the Tabernacle and the Assembly Hall. We likewise acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Men, Young Women, Sunday School, and Primary general presidencies in attendance at this conference.

We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present with us.

We are grateful to the owners and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring this conference to a large audience in many parts of the world.

We are also pleased to make available these proceedings via the Internet at [lds.org](http://lds.org).

The music for this session will be by the Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Craig Jessop and Mack Wilberg, with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The choir opened this session by singing "Press Forward, Saints" and will now favor us with "Secret Prayer." At the conclusion of the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Ben B. Banks of the Seventy.

---

The choir sang "Secret Prayer."

Elder Ben B. Banks offered the invocation.

---

### President Monson

Thank you, Brother Banks. It will now be our privilege to hear from President Gordon B. Hinckley, our beloved prophet.

## President Gordon B. Hinckley

### "O that I were an angel"

My beloved brethren and sisters, we greet you again in a great worldwide conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Alma declared, "O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake

the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!" (Alma 29:1).

We have reached a point where we can almost do that. The proceedings of this conference will be carried across the world, and the speakers will be heard and seen by Latter-day Saints on every continent. We have come a very long way in realizing the fulfillment of the vision set forth in the book of Revelation:

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (14:6).

What a tremendous occasion this is, my brothers and sisters. It is difficult to comprehend. We speak from this marvelous Conference Center. I know of no other building to compare with it.

We are as one great family, representatives of the human family in this vast and beautiful world.

### **The Nauvoo Temple—a crowning jewel**

Many of you participated in the dedication of the Nauvoo Temple last June. It was a great and marvelous occasion, one to be long remembered. We not only dedicated a magnificent building, a house of the Lord, but we also dedicated a beautiful memorial to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

In 1841, two years after he came to Nauvoo, he broke ground for a house of the Lord that should stand as a crowning jewel to the work of God.

It is difficult to believe that in those conditions and under those circumstances a structure of such magnificence was designed to stand on what was then the frontier of America.

I doubt, I seriously doubt, that there was another structure of such design and magnificence in all the state of Illinois.

It was to be dedicated to the work of the Almighty, to accomplish His eternal purposes.

No effort was spared. No sacrifice was too great. Through the next five years men chiseled stone and laid footings and foundation, walls and ornamentation. Hundreds went to the north, there to live for a time to cut lumber, vast quantities of it, and then bind it together to form rafts which were floated down the river to Nauvoo. Beautiful moldings were cut from that lumber. Pennies were gathered to buy nails. Unimaginable sacrifice was made to pro-

cure glass. They were building a temple to God, and it had to be the very best of which they were capable.

In the midst of all of this activity, the Prophet and his brother Hyrum were killed in Carthage on the 27th of June 1844.

None of us living today can comprehend what a disastrous blow that was to the Saints. Their leader was gone—he, the man of visions and revelations. He was not only their leader. He was their prophet. Great was their sorrow, terrible their distress.

### **Feverish work to finish the temple**

But Brigham Young, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, picked up the reins. Joseph had placed his authority on the shoulders of the Apostles. Brigham determined to finish the temple, and the work went on. By day and by night they pursued their objective, notwithstanding all of the threats hurled against them by lawless mobs. In 1845 they knew they could not stay in the city they had built from the swamplands of the river. They knew they must leave. It became a time of feverish activity: first, to complete the temple, and secondly, to build wagons and gather supplies to move into the wilderness of the West.

Ordinance work was begun before the temple was entirely completed. It went on feverishly until, in the cold of the winter of 1846, the people began to close the doors of their homes and wagons moved slowly down Parley Street to the water's edge, then across the river and up the banks on the Iowa side.

Movement continued. The river froze over, it was so bitter cold. But it made it possible for them to move on the ice.

Back to the east they looked for the last time to the city of their dreams and the temple of their God. Then they looked to the west to a destiny they did not know.

The temple was subsequently dedicated, and those who dedicated it said

“amen” and moved on. The building was later burned by an arsonist who almost lost his life in the evil process. A tornado finally toppled most of what was left. The house of the Lord, the great objective of their labors, was gone.

### **Rebuilding the temple**

Nauvoo became almost a ghost city. It faded until it almost died. The site of the temple was plowed and planted. The years passed, and there slowly followed an awakening. Our people, descendants of those who once lived there, had stir within them the memories of their forebears, with a desire to honor those who had paid so terrible a price. Gradually the city came alive again, and there was a restoration of parts of Nauvoo.

Under the prompting of the Spirit, and motivated by the desires of my father, who had served as mission president in that area and who wished to rebuild the temple for the centennial of Nauvoo but was never able to do so, we announced in the April conference of 1999 that we would rebuild that historic edifice.

Excitement filled the air. Men and women came forth with a desire to be helpful. Large contributions of money and skills were offered. Again, no expense was spared. We were to rebuild the house of the Lord as a memorial to the Prophet Joseph and as an offering to our God. On the recent 27th of June, in the afternoon at about the same time Joseph and Hyrum were shot in Carthage 158 years earlier, we held the dedication of the magnificent new structure. It is a place of great beauty. It stands on exactly the same site where the original temple stood. Its outside dimensions are those of the original. It is a fitting and appropriate memorial to the great Prophet of this dispensation, Joseph the Seer.

### **Two temples stand as bookends**

How grateful I am, how profoundly grateful for what has happened. Today, facing west, on the high bluff overlooking the city of Nauvoo, thence across the Mississippi and over the plains of Iowa, there stands Joseph's temple, a magnificent house of God. Here in the Salt Lake Valley, facing east to that beautiful temple in Nauvoo, stands Brigham's temple, the Salt Lake Temple. They look toward one another as bookends between which there are volumes that speak of the suffering, the sorrow, the sacrifice, even the deaths of thousands who made the long journey from the Mississippi River to the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

### **A plea for members to use the temples**

Nauvoo became the 113th working temple. We have since dedicated another in The Hague, Netherlands, making 114 in all. These wonderful buildings of various sizes and architectural designs are now scattered through the nations of the earth. They have been constructed to accommodate our people in carrying forward the work of the Almighty, whose design it is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man (see Moses 1:39). These temples have been constructed to be used. We honor our Father as we make use of them.

At the opening of the conference, I urge you, my brethren and sisters, to utilize the temples of the Church.

Go there and carry forward the great and marvelous work which the God of heaven has outlined for us. There let us learn of His ways and His plans. There let us make covenants that will lead us in paths of righteousness, unselfishness, and truth. There let us be joined as families under an eternal covenant administered under the authority of the priesthood of God.

And there may we extend these same blessings to those of previous generations, even our own forebears who await the service which we can now give.

May the blessings of heaven rest upon you, my beloved brethren and sisters. May the Spirit of Elijah touch your hearts and prompt you to do that work for others who cannot move forward unless you do so. May we rejoice in the glorious privilege that is ours, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

---

The choir sang "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus."

---

### President Monson

President Gordon B. Hinckley has just spoken to us, followed by the choir singing "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus."

We shall now hear from Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He will be followed by Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Presidency of the Seventy. The choir and congregation will then sing "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

After the singing, Sister Coleen K. Menlove, Primary general president, will address us. She will be followed by Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The choir will then sing "There Is Sunshine in My Soul."

## Elder L. Tom Perry

### Sacred duty of parents

The fifth article of faith states, "We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof."<sup>1</sup>

One of our most important priesthood callings, one that requires our constant attention, is in our families and our homes. Brethren, as fathers and patriarchs in our families, we are "by divine design . . . to preside over [our] families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for [our] families."

"Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. . . . Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and

fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations."<sup>2</sup>

### The power of the priesthood

We live in a world that is crying for righteous leadership based on trustworthy principles.

In our Church we have been taught, in our own unique way, correct principles of leadership, directed by priesthood authority. I believe few of us realize the potential of the priesthood and the blessing it is. The more we learn about holding the priesthood and understand its operation, the more we appreciate the blessings the Lord has given to us.

John Taylor once declared:

"I shall . . . briefly answer that [the priesthood] is the government of God, whether on the earth or in the heavens, for it is by that power, agency, or principle that all things are [upheld and] governed on the earth and in the heavens, and [it is] by that power that all things are upheld and sustained. It governs all things—it di-