

11. 1 Corinthians 10:13.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 133:5.
13. *Deseret News: Semi-Weekly*, 6 Aug. 1878, 1.
14. *Hymns*, no. 105.
15. Psalm 46:10.

President Hinckley

Thank you, brethren. We remind you that the Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning. The Sunday morning session will immediately follow.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Heavy load on local leaders

Now, my beloved brethren, I speak with a desire to be helpful. I pray for the Spirit of the Lord to guide me.

I need not tell you that we have become a very large and complex Church. Our program is so vast and our reach is so extensive that it is difficult to comprehend. We are a Church of lay leadership. What a remarkable and wonderful thing that is. It must ever remain so. It must never move in the direction of an extensive paid ministry. But we know that the administrative load is very heavy on our bishops and stake presidents, as well as some others. An awareness of that fact has led the Presidency and the Twelve to hold a number of meetings, some of them long and interesting, in which, in effect, we have taken the Church apart and then put it together again. Our objective has been to see whether there might be some programs we could do away with. But as we have analyzed these, we have not seen much that could be dropped. To drop one is like giving away one of your children. You haven't the heart to do it. But I wish to assure you that we are aware of the burdens you carry and the time you spend. In this priesthood meeting I wish to men-

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We express gratitude to this Aaronic Priesthood choir for the beautiful music they have provided this evening.

Following my remarks, this session will conclude with the choir singing "We'll Bring the World His Truth." The benediction will then be offered by Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Seventy.

tion a few of the items we have discussed. I think you will note that we have made some progress, although it may be small.

I shall speak to you about a number of miscellaneous items.

Temple recommends valid for two years

We have determined, first, that effective November 1, temple recommends will remain valid for two years instead of one. This should cut the time that bishops and stake presidents and their counselors have to spend in interviews for temple recommends. Of course, if at any time the recommend holder becomes unworthy of going to the temple, then it will become the responsibility of the bishop or stake president to pick up the individual's recommend.

But experience has shown that there are very few such incidents. And so this will become the program, brethren. Beginning the first of November, regardless of the date written on the recommend, the term will be extended for one year. Recommends will then be renewed every two years rather than the present one year. We hope this will be beneficial. We are confident that it will.

Missionary farewells and open houses

Another item.

Elder Ballard has spoken to you concerning missionaries. I wish to endorse what he said. I hope that our young men, and our young women, will rise to the challenge he has set forth. We must raise the bar on the worthiness and qualifications of those who go into the world as ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, we have an interesting custom in the Church. Departing missionaries are accorded a farewell. In some wards this has become a problem. Between outgoing missionaries and returning missionaries, most sacrament meetings are devoted to farewells and homecomings.

No one else in the Church has a farewell when entering a particular service. We never have a special farewell meeting for a newly called bishop, for a stake president, for a Relief Society president, for a General Authority, or anyone else of whom I can think. Why should we have missionary farewells?

The First Presidency and the Twelve, after most prayerful and careful consideration, have reached the decision that the present program of missionary farewells should be modified.

The departing missionary will be given the opportunity to speak in a sacrament meeting for 15 or 20 minutes. But parents and siblings will not be invited to do so. There might be two or more departing missionaries who speak in the same service. The meeting will be entirely in the hands of the bishop and will not be arranged by the family. There will not be special music or anything of that kind.

We know this will be a great disappointment to many families. Mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, and friends have participated in the past. We ask that you accept this decision. Where a farewell has already been arranged, it may go forward. But none in the traditional sense

should be planned for the future. We are convinced that when all aspects of the situation are considered, this is a wise decision. Please accept it, my dear brethren. I extend this plea also to the sisters, particularly the mothers.

We hope also that holding elaborate open houses after the sacrament meeting at which the missionary speaks will not prevail. Members of the family may wish to get together. We have no objection to this. However, we ask that there be no public reception to which large numbers are invited.

Missionary service is such a wonderful experience that it brings with it its own generous reward. And when a missionary returns to his family and his ward, he may again be given opportunity to speak in a sacrament meeting.

Report on the Perpetual Education Fund

The next item.

Let me give you a brief report on the Perpetual Education Fund, which was established a year and a half ago at the April conference. The program is now going forward on a sound footing. We have a substantial financial corpus contributed by faithful Latter-day Saints. We hope more will be forthcoming to make it possible to assist a larger number of those worthy of help.

Today some 5,000 men and women, most of them young, are being educated who otherwise might not have had the opportunity. Think of the consequences of this. These faithful Latter-day Saints are offered a ladder by which they may climb out of the condition of poverty in which they and their forebears have lived. Their earning capacity is being greatly increased. Their power of leadership is being enhanced. They will become men and women of substance, members of the Church who will carry forward its program in a manner previously unimagined.

I give you one example. The first young woman to receive a loan has now completed a year of training and has applied for funds for her last year of training. She is studying to become a dental assistant.

Previous to this she worked in a restaurant earning \$130.00 a month. It is anticipated that when she completes her training, in a short time she will receive \$650.00 a month to begin with—an immediate 500 percent increase. That will grow through the years.

What a marvelous difference a few dollars make when they are properly applied. Now, you multiply her experience by 5,000. It is a most remarkable thing to contemplate. Students are receiving training to become mechanics, systems analysts, administrative consultants, nursing technicians, information systems technicians, nurses, hospital workers, computer programmers, computer engineers, fashion designers, accountants, electricians, English teachers, bakers, hotel administrators, and graphic designers, to name a few.

The possibilities are endless, and what is happening is indeed a wonderful and miraculous thing.

Be committed to family home evening

The next item I wish to mention is family home evening. We are fearful that this very important program is fading in too many areas. Brethren, there is nothing more important than your families. You know that. This program was begun back in 1915, 87 years ago, when President Joseph F. Smith urged the Latter-day Saints to set aside one evening a week devoted specifically to the family. It was to be a time of teaching, of reading the scriptures, of cultivating talents, of discussing family matters. It was not to be a time to attend athletic events or anything of the kind. Of course, if there is family activity

of such a kind occasionally, that may be all right. But in the increasingly frantic rush of our lives it is so important that fathers and mothers sit down with their children, pray together, instruct them in the ways of the Lord, consider their family problems, and let the children express their talents. I am satisfied that this program came under the revelations of the Lord in response to a need among the families of the Church.

If there was a need 87 years ago, that need is certainly much greater today.

The decision was made that Monday evening would be devoted to this family activity. In those areas where there are large numbers of Church members, school officials and others honored the program and did not schedule events on that evening.

Now there appears to be a growing tendency to schedule other events on Monday night. We respectfully request that our public school officials and others let us have this one evening a week to carry forward this important and traditional program. We ask that they not schedule events that will require the time of children on Monday evenings. We are confident that they will realize that it is most important that families have the opportunity, at least once a week, to be together without conflicting loyalties. We shall be grateful indeed if they will cooperate in this matter. And we urge, in the strongest terms possible, that fathers and mothers regard most seriously this opportunity and challenge to make of Monday evening a time sacred to the family.

I have received not a few invitations to participate in community Monday gatherings of one kind or another. I have uniformly turned down these invitations with appreciation, but with the explanation that I have reserved Monday as family home evening time. I earnestly hope that each of you will do the same.

Become self-reliant in family welfare

The next item.

Brethren, I wish to urge again the importance of self-reliance on the part of every individual Church member and family.

None of us knows when a catastrophe might strike. Sickness, injury, unemployment may affect any of us.

We have a great welfare program, with facilities for such things as grain storage in various areas. It is important that we do this. But the best place to have some food set aside is within our homes, together with a little money in savings. The best welfare program is our own welfare program. Five or six cans of wheat in the home are better than a bushel in the welfare granary.

I do not predict any impending disaster. I hope that there will not be one. But prudence should govern our lives. Everyone who owns a home recognizes the need for fire insurance. We hope and pray that there will never be a fire. Nevertheless, we pay for insurance to cover such a catastrophe, should it occur.

We ought to do the same with reference to family welfare.

We can begin ever so modestly. We can begin with one week's food supply and gradually build it to a month and then to three months. I am speaking now of food to cover basic needs. As all of you recognize, this counsel is not new. But I fear that so many feel that a long-term food supply is so far beyond their reach that they make no effort at all.

Begin in a small way, my brethren, and gradually build toward a reasonable objective. Save a little money regularly, and you will be surprised how it accumulates.

Get out of debt and rid yourself of the terrible bondage that debt brings.

We hear much about second mortgages. Now I am told there are third mortgages.

Discipline yourselves in matters of spending, in matters of borrowing, in practices that lead to bankruptcy and the agony that comes therewith.

Exercise moral discipline

Now, finally, my brethren, I wish to return briefly to a matter I have spoken on before and which has been dealt with by Elder Ballard and President Monson in this meeting. I hope that they will not object to my trying to emphasize again what they have said. I refer to the moral discipline of members of the Church.

Too many are being caught in the web of immorality and all of the bitter fruit that flows from it. To the boys who are here tonight—the young men—I wish to say in the strongest language of which I am capable, stay away from moral iniquity. You know what is right and wrong. You cannot use ignorance as an excuse for unacceptable behavior.

How can you possibly think that you can become involved in immoral practices and then go into the mission field as a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you suppose that you can be worthy to go to the house of the Lord, there to be married for time and eternity, if you have indulged in such practices?

I beg of you, my dear young friends, to avoid such behavior. It will not be easy. It will require self-discipline. The forces you confront are powerful and inviting. They are the forces of a clever adversary. You need the strength that comes of prayer.

Stay away from the erotic stuff of the Internet. It can only pull you down. It can lead to your destruction.

Never lose sight of the fact that you hold the priesthood of God. When John the Baptist conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, he stated that this priesthood "holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of bap-

tism by immersion for the remission of sins" (D&C 13).

Do you wish for the ministering of angels?

That ministering will bring with it incomparable rewards. Take the high road in your lives, and God will bless you and nurture you and "lead [you] by the hand, and give [you] answer to [your] prayers" (D&C 112:10).

To you mature men I extend the same plea and the same warning. Small beginnings lead to great tragedies. We deal with them constantly. There is so much of heartache, resentment, disillusionment, and divorce among us.

No tolerance for child abuse

May I again mention a matter with which I have dealt at length in the past. I speak of the evil and despicable sin of child abuse.

We cannot tolerate it. We will not tolerate it. Anyone who abuses a child may expect Church discipline as well as possible legal action.

Child abuse is an affront toward God. Jesus spoke of the beauty and innocence of children. To anyone who has an inclination that could lead to the abuse of children, I say in the strongest language of

which I am capable, discipline yourself. Seek help before you do injury to a child and bring ruin upon yourself.

Priesthood is a great force for good

You men who hold this precious priesthood, bind it to your very souls. Be worthy of it at all times and in all circumstances.

If you do so, you will enjoy that "peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

May God bless you, my dear brethren of the priesthood, young and old. Fathers, set an example for your children. Boys, look to your fathers for wisdom and guidance and understanding.

How great are the promises of the Lord to those who walk in faith. I leave with you my blessing, my love, and my testimony. What a great and marvelous force for good is in this priesthood if we are united and move forward as one. May the Lord bless us to do so, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "We'll Bring the World His Truth."

Elder Donald L. Hallstrom offered the benediction.

SUNDAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 172nd Semiannual General Conference convened in the Conference Center at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 6, 2002. President Gordon B. Hinckley conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir. Craig Jessop directed the choir, and Richard Elliott was the organist. The choir sang "Redeemer of Israel" to begin the session. President Hinckley then made the following remarks.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My dear brothers and sisters, we welcome you to this, the fourth general session of the 172nd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend our greetings to those of you who are participating by radio, television, cable, the Internet, or satellite transmission.