

Update

Conference Emphasis

The setting was familiar; the speakers were predictable. But the tone of the recent annual general conference of the Church took on a new note of expectation and urgency.

President Spencer W. Kimball set the stage with a frank talk to Regional Representatives about the Church's potential missionary work in China. "The door to China is starting to open. Rather than waiting to be asked, we should take affirmative action to obtain approval to enter." He told Regional Representatives to encourage members to pray: "Let us ask our Heavenly Father to grant our petition and permit this great neighbor, China, to join the great family of nations now bowing to the Lord Jesus Christ."

He also gave the first official words on missionary work in the African nations of Ghana and Nigeria. The two missionary couples in those countries have sent privately quoted letters, glowing with success, to friends—and to President Kimball. Using information from a letter by Elders Rendell N. Mabey and Edwin Q. Cannon, the President announced that there had been 483 convert baptisms in Nigeria and 430 in Ghana.

Church leaders were challenged not only to take the gospel to the world, but to take it to ethnic groups inside the United States. And President Kimball said that some statistics regarding missionary work were "dismally low." He referred to the overall .67 percent of Church members on missions. "If we had just one additional missionary couple from each ward and branch of the Church, we would have approximately 16,500 new missionaries," he said.

Also, "If every stake and district in the Church had two percent of its adult males who have not yet served missions, we would have over 7,800 new missionaries beyond the current level.

"Just something to think about as you travel back to your homes."

The Regional Representatives and thousands of others who attended conference sessions or watched them

on television had lots to think about by the time conference was over.

Two talks that have received wide discussion—and were misquoted widely before their official publication in the May 1979 *Ensign* magazine—were Welfare Session addresses by President Marion G. Romney, second counselor in the First Presidency, and Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve.

"I stand before the Church this day and raise the warning voice," said Elder McConkie in the early morning Saturday session. "For the moment we live in a day of peace and prosperity, but it shall not ever be thus. Great trials lie ahead. All of the sorrows and perils of the past are but a foretaste of what is yet to be. And we must prepare ourselves temporally and spiritually."

While the world will continue in wickedness until its destruction, members of the Church "shall invite all men to flee from Babylon, join with us, and live as becometh Saints," he said.

"As the Saints of the Most High we shall strive to 'stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world' (D&C 78:14). Our only hope is to free ourselves from the bondage of sin, to rid ourselves from the chains of darkness, to rise above the world, to live godly and upright lives."

He spoke of desolation and pestilence, of calamity and trouble. "It may be, for instance, that nothing except the power of faith and the authority of the priesthood can save individuals and congregations from the atomic holocausts that surely shall be."

President Romney, following Elder McConkie, supported the theme.

"Now, I would like to repeat what you have heard a thousand times, more or less, about taking care of yourselves. You ought to now, more than at any previous time, make sure that you are prepared to go through a period of stress on the resources you have provided for yourselves. The necessity to do this may come any day. I hope it will not come too soon." And, on a lighter note, "In fact, I hope it doesn't come in my lifetime. But it will come sooner or later.

"Never forget this matter of providing for yourselves, even though you don't hear as much about it now as you did a few years ago." (And it was just a few years ago that Elder Vaughn Featherstone challenged members to get their year's supply by the next April conference—just to get it done. On that note, some Mormons bought hiking shoes for what they thought would be the inevitable hike to Missouri. Others simply predicted "the end.")

President Romney continued: "Remember that it is still a fundamental principle, one that has been taught the Saints ever since they came to these valleys of the mountains. We have always been urged to provide ourselves in the day of harvest, enough to last until the next harvest. Be sure that you do so now. Be prepared to take care of yourselves through a period of need."

Though the message was sober, President Romney expressed hope.

"Let us do what He has told us to do and then put our trust in Him. He can take care of us, and in the day of need He will do so."

An hour later, in the first general session, President Kimball maintained the spirit of the earlier meeting.



"We find that we Latter-day Saints are also vulnerable to the destructive forces of evil that are all about us in this sin-sick world. Of the greatest concern in this day are those evils which tear at the fabric of the home and family.

"We need continually to fortify our homes and families and defend them against the onslaught of evils such as divorce, broken families, brutality, and abuse, especially of wives and children. We need to constantly guard against immorality, pornography, and sexual permissiveness that would destroy the purity of the family members, young and old."

He said there is a "great need in the world today for prayer" to help the saints through adversity or affliction.

"I have previously said that they who reach down into the depths of life where, in the stillness, the voice of God has been heard, have the stabilizing power which carries them poised and serene through the hurricane of difficulties."

The need now is greater than ever before, he said, for "understanding and blending the wholesome and divine teachings of the Master into our lives and into all our dealings with our fellowmen. I say to everyone within the sound of my voice, 'Do not fail the Lord.'"

"We must accept the truth that the gospel principles are not on trial but that *we* are. . . . We must prepare ourselves, both individually and as a church, to defend the gospel truths against a world steeped in atheism and godlessness. We must oppose the so-called intellectuals who reason that they have all the answers, and we must contend mightily with those whose lust for power and worldly gain destroy their sense of right and wrong. . . .

"We cannot condone a separation of our religious belief from our daily living."

As Church leaders spoke, an airplane sporting a pro-Equal Rights Amendment banner flew over Salt Lake, sponsored by Mormons opposing the Church's anti-ERA stance. Inside the Tabernacle, conference went on, purposely oblivious to the distractions of protest common to general conference. The messages of Church leaders reached the ears of those who came—and those who tuned in—to hear their prophet.

Polygamy in Good Housekeeping

Rulon Allred may have been dead for two years, but his story lives on—right there in the pages of the April 1979 *Good Housekeeping*.

Allred, murdered May 10, 1977, had seven polygamous wives and forty-eight children. One child, Dorothy Solomon, wrote the *Good Housekeeping* article on "What it was like growing up in a polygamous family." The article, "A Very Different Kind of Family," gives details of polygamous lifestyle in Salt Lake City, right down to going shoe-shopping with ten other children, and clandestine bickering over which wife would keep Allred's shirts.

"My memories were sometimes bitter, but more often hearty and sustaining as sunshine," she writes. Her happy memories relate to the love shown her by her father and other "mothers." Her

memories, however, are sometimes unhappy. "I was always coming up short in the harmony department. I saw my father's time consumed by the others and felt it belonged to me."

Although sufficiently disillusioned with polygamy to choose a monogamous marriage, she found that "no matter how you live, you'll meet hardship." Her father didn't approve of her marriage choice at first ("feeling I had sacrificed my heavenly blessings"), but he later accepted her freedom and their relationship was close in the final years of his life.

She describes the scene the night of his death: "We held each other and wept and spoke each other's names and laughed and wept some more.

"We remembered and shook our heads and stared at one another for long moments, tacit with memory and feeling. We realized something which soothed and filled our hearts. No, we weren't lost. In (his) place, he had left us each other."

Church vs. ACLU

When the statement of the First Presidency went out, the ire of the American Civil Liberties Union went up. But only briefly, it seems.

The First Presidency issued a statement March 9 stressing the protection of the constitutionally based religious heritage in the United States. Soon after the statement's release, the ACLU spokesperson was quoted by the media as saying the statement had been directed at the ACLU. The brief statement was carried by wire services.

In the meantime, the First Presidency statement was put in the Congressional Record.

"As the ruling principle of conduct in the lives of many millions of our citizens," the statement said, "religion should have an honorable place in the public life of our nation, and the name of Almighty God should have sacred use in public expressions. We urge our members and people of good will everywhere to unite to protect and honor the spiritual and religious heritage of our nation and to resist the forces that would transform the public position of the United States from the constitutional position of neutrality to a position of hostility toward religion."

The statement referred to specific uses of prayer, the name of God, and religious phrases (such as "In God We Trust"), and references to a religious theme in music or public programs.

"We. . . deplore the growing efforts to

establish irreligion, such as atheism or secularism, as the official position of the United States of America, thus obscuring and eroding the rich and diverse religious heritage of our nation. We refer here to attacks on time-honored religious symbols in public life."

Devereaux House

After a struggle of several years by preservationists, on 10 April 1979 Salt Lake City's historic Devereaux House became property of the state of Utah. (See Allen Roberts, "House on the Block," *Sunstone* 3:23, November-December 1977.) The mansion on west South Temple was erected in 1855 by William C. Staines and was the scene in 1858 of negotiations between U. S. officials and the Mormons, bringing to a conclusion the so-called Utah War. Later acquired and enlarged by William Jennings, Utah's first millionaire, the mansion became the social center of the territory, housing many prominent people on their visits to Utah.

By the turn of the century the area around the mansion ceased to be fashionable and the Devereaux House and its extensive grounds passed into commercial use. At the time of its purchase by the state the mansion was extremely delapidated and heavy mining equipment was stored on its grounds.

The 1978 legislature appropriated \$750,000 to purchase the property but when the 1979 legislature met, the owner J. J. Caan had not yet agreed to sell, spurring an unsuccessful attempt to withdraw the appropriation. The owner finally agreed to sell when the Utah Bicentennial Commission threatened to condemn the property.

Utah governor Scott M. Matheson has appointed a committee to make plans for the restoration. A restoration architect has been appointed and plans are progressing with Terracor, Inc., a development firm, to make the restored mansion the centerpiece for a revitalized western edge of the downtown business district.

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