

**ADDRESS**  
TO THE  
SEVENTY-FIRST  
**GENERAL CONFERENCE**  
OF THE  
REORGANIZED  
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER DAY SAINTS



BY  
**PRESIDENT FREDERICK M. SMITH**

DELIVERED AT  
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# The President's Address

to the

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**I** SCARCELY need say to you men and women, ex officios and delegates of the conference, that I stand before you this morning with mixed feelings. Perhaps rather uniquely so. I stand before you feeling joy that we have completed another year of progress. I find that joy augmented by the hope and belief that we are at least one year nearer to the great Zionie goal which has challenged our admiration and our zeal for many years; and yet I find that joy mitigated by sorrow that there has been unfortunate disaffection in our ranks; and to a small degree depletion thereof. And yet that sorrow may be lessened to some extent by the thought that there have been augmentations to the ranks as well, and that perhaps there is a finer and a deeper and better feeling of devotion and zeal in the ranks of those who remain. I find myself heartened this morning because we seem to be well started toward the Zionie goal of which we have spoken, and my heart is lifted up as a result of this thought. But even that lifting up and heartenment is accompanied by a feeling of apprehension when I realize the scope

and magnitude of the work yet unaccomplished by this church, for I realize that every man who is a servant of the church, every person, man or woman, every worker in it must carry a burden of responsibility which is unknown to people who do not serve the Lord as we are trying to serve him. I am happy to see so many here and yet grieved that all who would be here cannot come; and grieved because those who are here cannot be cared for as comfortably and as adequately as I would like to see.

**T**HE conference officially begins this morning, the 6th of April, but to all practical intents and purposes the conference began last Sunday morning at the sacrament service in this church, which partook of the nature of the opening session; and as such it was an omen of a deeply spiritual conference and one of special significance to the church. There was sensed by everyone present a deep religious spirit, a forward-looking spirit, which bespoke the spirit of the church at large; while the whole audience manifested a deep concern for the coming conference, and earnest and feeling petitions for guidance and for fraternity bespoke the contrition and the devotion and the zeal of a people who are deeply desirous of doing God's will, and we have no doubt that the spirit of the meeting was such as will on the whole characterize the sessions of this conference. That is not to say that we expect our stormy periods are entirely passed, for those of us who have stood by the shores of the troubled ocean have seen the waves rolling over the rocks long after the disturbing winds have passed away, and so perhaps to-day on the shores of our progress may still be rolling for a

while the waves from troubled waters. But the sun has broken from behind the clouds, and our course is laid.

**T**HE year has been one of readjustment, and it was not expected, at least by the officials of the church, that this needed readjustment would be instantaneous or that our ranks would remain intact; for not a little time had been consumed in leading to the crisis of last conference; and hence the probability of considerable time being needed for the readjustments leading to more desirable conditions; and battles are always accompanied by casualties. But no one can gainsay that the Saints of the church have with pleasing celerity fallen into the forward march, a forward march made possible by the clearing action or result of the conflict; and while hearts have been heavy and many wounded and in a few faith has been disturbed and souls tried, yet out of the trials and troubles most of the Saints have risen to higher levels of activity with firmer faith, and they now march onward with surer tread. We pray for those who have fallen by the way and leave them to God's mercy, the while we pray for guidance through the new fields into which we have entered and for aid to reach the goal which we have set for ourselves.

**N**OT since 1920 have we entered into a conference with better prospects of its being constructive and faith building in its character. At no time has the march toward Zion been one which was free from dangers or arduous labors. At no time is it likely to be other than one demanding continuous alertness and continuous endeavor. The accomplish-

ment of the purposes of this church means thwarting the forces of evil; and those forces will not give way without contention. The work of the church in its missionary efforts, in its local activities, in its literary concerns, as well as in the departments has been constructive the past year. And as a result a better feeling prevails throughout the entire church, though in places some disaffection has occurred. The educational factor in our work has been given increased coefficient, and as a result the Saints are surely on a higher plane.

**T**HE action of the last conference in the adoption of a program of human interactions and inter-relationship definitized not only group endeavor and gave common direction to the thought of the church, but it has unified the teachings of its representatives and placed us on a constructive basis; and from all these directions benefit has flowed to the church and will continue to flow if we but keep before us the objective of this program.

**W**HAT are some of the objectives that are caught up in the program which was adopted by the last General Conference? I cannot hope this morning in the time allotted to me to do anything more than to touch a few of the significant and outstanding features thereof. Let me emphasize that one of the great objectives is to implant and preserve the fear of God among the people; for nations decay when they forget God, and churches decline when the fear of God is lessened in the hearts of its people. And one of the functions of the church is not alone to keep alive the fear of God in its own

ranks but to disseminate that fear into the hearts of others.

And then, too, we would suggest that one of the objectives is to keep God before the people as creator and director of the universe, whose hand is constantly guiding, whose influence is ever present, and whose interest is always with the people.

It is to preach not alone God, and God as the creator and director of the universe, but it is to preach Christ and him crucified. It is to keep before the people the fact that Christ was born of the virgin Mary, because God willed it so. He came as a Messiah in his own way or as God had directed, and as the risen Lord. His birth, his life, his work, his philosophy, his death, and his resurrection were necessary to complete his sacrifice.

**I**T IS one of the objectives of the church to stand sponsor for the philosophy of Jesus, a philosophy which reaches and touches the innermost recesses of the hearts of humanity and all their activities.

It is one of the objectives of this church to preach the gospel as the power of salvation. It is only by the force which is liberated in the minds and hearts of the people that they can work out their own salvation.

It is an objective of the church, caught up also in the program which we have established, to press the application of the Christian philosophy to human endeavor and human interrelationship, as well as individual thought and activity; group activities as well as individual doings, and that for the betterment of the race. Not alone the individual but the present race and future generations.

It is also an objective caught up in that program to present and emphasize fraternity; for the Fatherhood of God cannot exist in itself. It can exist only in the presence of brotherhood.

It is an objective to make religion an ever-present factor in the life of the church, not alone in religious thought, ceremony, or ritual, but in every act and in every thought in our daily life and conversation.

It is an objective to preach Christianity as a working force of bettering human endeavors in all manifestations.

It is an objective of the church as outlined in that program more specifically to make stewardships a living force in human lives and activities, not alone a theory or a philosophy but an economic and industrial dynamic according to which we function as citizens of the kingdom of God, citizens of the country, the state, and the government.

It is an objective to teach stewardships so that every man will not alone feel his responsibility to God but also responsibility to his fellow man. It is an objective ultimately to put every Saint upon the stewardship basis, and when we use the word *stewardship* here we use it not in its narrowed or contracted sense of one having conscious responsibility to God, but an economic and broadened idea that that responsibility also functions in responsibility to our fellow man and to the group.

**L**AST conference saw a distinct start in this direction, and the development of the year has seen the steady, and some may say slow, progress toward this end. We have at times grown a bit impatient at the rate of progress which we were mak-



ing, yet retrospection, when we have paused to take it, has always shown that there is a distinct forward movement; and even at times when the movement seems to be the slowest is when there is a gathering, a realignment of them if you please, so that when the movement does start forward it will have additional and yet proper impulse. Not only have large numbers of Saints expressed a desire and a willingness to be placed upon the stewardship basis, but the endowment fund which was solicited for Grace-land College, which was to be applied to the practical putting into effect of stewardships, shows a fine demonstration of the determination of the Saints to loosen the hands of the officers of the church in their efforts to put into practical effect and into practical working our long-cherished doctrine of stewardships. It was a concrete expression of the faith of the Saints in a doctrine which has brought joy to their hearts for an hundred years.

**A**ND yet there are problems before us to be solved. I cannot even state all the problems, let alone give you an expression or equation of their solution. And yet a statement of the problems and their presentation is always the first step towards their solution; and before the minds of the people, before the minds of the ex officios and delegates of this conference, as well as the Saints at large, there must be constantly kept the problems before us as a church yet to solve.

**T**HE Auditorium work has begun, and this must be carried to completion. It has been my hope, expressed freely, my deep-seated belief, that the work once begun on that building will not wholly

cease until the building itself is completed and ready for occupancy in all details as planned. The start of the work on the Auditorium has brought joy and satisfaction to thousands of Saints, and let us hope that their satisfaction and joy will be intensified and increased by soon being able to look upon it as a splendid, completed building.

And when the work on the Auditorium is finished, let us hope it is only to begin work on other needed buildings. There is, or should be, before the church a building program which looks forward into the future which will take into consideration in its planning, not alone the needs of the present time, but the needs of the people for time to come. I wonder if I need tell you, or are you not conscious from your own experiences, and your observation that we as a people are years behind in our building program? We have stood still and waited for something unexpected to happen when we should have been at work planning and doing. And the result is that to-day, as I expressed before, we are years behind what our program should have been.

**W**E NEED larger churches in almost every part of the land. In nearly all of the branches they are crowded for accommodation. We need better churches in many places, though there has been pleasing progress in many localities in the better conditions under which they now meet. We need larger auditoriums in Independence as well as in Kansas City and the neighboring stakes, to say nothing of the outlying districts. We need a larger and better hospital and sanitarium. We need new and better school buildings.

I can realize that the need of betterment so far as

buildings are concerned is likely to impose an additional and perhaps at times an unbearable burden upon the people, who in their zeal will attempt to meet their need. This is a danger that must be guarded against, and that danger can be met only by a unified church building program that will take into consideration, not alone the needs of the center place, but the needs of every branch in this church. And this always in relation to the missionary work, which is one of the chief and prime functions of the church.

**T**O set out upon a distinct and far-reaching building program such as I have very briefly touched upon will require faith, faith in the church, faith in its objectives, faith in God, and faith in the people of the church. In urging this building program and setting it before you as one of the problems, I do not for one single moment lose sight of the great work of the church in developing character and spirituality; but I have observed, in attempting to read history or to watch the factors by which people develop, that where spiritual group progress has been made it spells material progress as well. And public buildings and public lands are two of the chief factors which represent or spell group progress.

And must I mention still before us the great task of building, ultimately, the Temple to which we have all looked forward? I have not forgotten it. I do not forget it. For in my dreams of Zion it is always in a prominent place of perspective. I cannot look upon the buildings or upon the plans even of the buildings that shall be in this center place without seeing them clustered around that jewel of all our architectural achievements, the Temple. But the

Temple must have its proper setting, and that setting can only be the place of the jewel, if you please, in a setting of buildings planned and designed in harmony with our philosophy, our ideals, and with the splendid achievements of the people of the past and the great needs of the people of the future always in view.

**A**ND might I pause long enough to say something about the church and our youth? Our youth presents to us one of our great problems. And I am not laying the blame upon the youth, but I am taking the blame fairly and squarely upon our own shoulders. Our youth are largely what we make them. They are largely what they are because of the forces and the conditions and the environments in which we have compelled them to move and to be. What are we doing to meet the problems of the youth? What are we doing to keep our youth constantly interested in and working for the affairs of the church? Jazz and youth's response to it are but the outcrop of forces which lie beneath, and forces with which we must reckon. The problem of controlling those forces lies close to the problem of creating a proper recreation for our youth; but our treatment must be positive and not negative, and this demands something more than a mere negative attitude towards commercialized recreation.

**I**T MIGHT not be inappropos this morning if I expressed very briefly a problem which I believe must be solved, at least attacked, by this people, and that is the question of marriage and divorce; and I might add divorce and remarriage, for these problems are coming before us in an increasing number

of forms. In my opinion we must redeclare ourselves on both marriage and divorce. The attitude of the church has long been known, for from our earliest beginning we have been strictly monogamic in our attitude and in our belief and in our practice. But while we still remain monogamic, I think there can without doubt be said to be a movement into the church of forces which came from without which tend towards lessening the sanctity of the marriage covenant; and towards a reestablishment of the sanctity of marriage as one of the sacraments of the church we must clearly move.

Furthermore, we must take not only legislative action, but we must take educational action toward creating a more and a definite permanency of the marriage covenant; and that is to say that we must stand against divorce except under proper conditions—and this opens up a whole field of problems with which we are concerned. For improperly formed unions are very likely to result in disrupted unions, hence the whole problem must be approached by educating our youth in the sanctity of marriage, that will cause marital unions not to be made in haste, but with wisdom and the Spirit of God directing.

There has been without doubt a lowering of the standards of marriage throughout the world to-day. Every nation has been touched by the evil consequences of this force, and with it and perhaps as a concomitant has gone a changing attitude towards childbearing; and the lessened power of the home has been one of the fruits of the advent of this evil in the midst of society, and all have contributed toward an increased number of divorces. And in all

these aspects of the marriage problem we are presented with a religious and a church problem as well as a social problem. In fact, I am firmly of the belief that in religion, in a proper church attitude, and in proper church activities, alone, will be found the solution for the marriage and divorce evil that confronts society to-day. And in saying this I present a problem of religious education. The standard of the home follows closely the stability of the marriage covenant, and trace history as you may you will find that the lessened stability of the home, of the marriage covenant, usually precedes national decay; and that is true of church as well as nation. This all constitutes a problem of education in responsibility to race, and of responsibility to moral standards.

**H**OW shall we attack the solution of our problem? By education of our youth in preparation for adult responsibilities in all its ramifications lies the only attack that is safe. And the only thing that promises the solution we desire to reach is the creation of a broad sense of responsibility to future generations as well as to present.

There are two great degrees of advancing altruism; first, when we begin to think of the other fellow; and next, when we begin to think of those who come after us. It is simply another aspect of the war against self-serving interests that must be carried on by all people who represent the true philosophy of Jesus Christ.

I wonder if it has ever occurred to you, my fellow workers, that a probable solution of the marriage evil and the divorce problem lies in steward-

ships. How can this work toward a solution of this difficulty? perhaps you will exclaim. First, stewardships is based on responsibility to the group, and that arouses at once a consciousness of the needs not only of others, but of the trend of future events and of the needs of the future. Stewardships can only be made possible when there has been created a disposition to think of this next generation; and, furthermore, the inclination toward an establishment of the doctrine of stewardships will result in the lessening of the fear of dependency, and that has kept many young men and young women out of the bonds of matrimony; for they can take care of themselves, but they fear they cannot take care of a family. Furthermore, stewardships solves the problem by creating the happiness which springs from "finding our corner."

**I** WONDER if I am daring upon ground which is dangerous if I say a word about dress and morals. I have but to call your attention to what the Book of Covenants has long been holding forth to our people, namely, that dress is a social factor, for we have long been warned that dress has a relationship to our religious attitude. But perhaps I may venture this far and say that the morality of dress so far as we as a people will be concerned, when we recognize the instruction given of God in the Doctrine and Covenants and when our fashions are developed as a consequence of that rather than still remaining slaves to the fashions that are designed in Paris and New York by people who have forgotten God—I say the importance of dress in relation to morals will be apparent. And in speaking thus I am not reflecting entirely upon the females of the audience, for I

discover that men are as much slaves to fashion as are women; witness the balloon trousers, not to say anything about starched collars.

**I** WOULD like to take time this morning to speak more extensively than I can upon the health problem of the church, on the problem which the health department should be attempting to solve. Much has been done by the health department workers of the church, but the start is so small compared with what the end results should be that we feel it is only a start, and so we are hoping and praying earnestly for the time to come when there shall be an expansion of our health department which will enable us to anticipate the encroachments of disease so far as the individual is concerned, and guard against it so far as the group is concerned. And let me say in connection with this that our health as a church will be better when we pay more attention to the Word of Wisdom. And I refer not alone to tea and coffee, but the entire system of diet which is presented in that wonderful document, the Word of Wisdom. Perhaps enough along that line.

**A** WORD in regard to world conditions may not be out of place here, and yet I shall not attempt by any means to present an exhaustive or perhaps even a brief scrutiny of world conditions. Not all the necessary economic and industrial readjustments following the war have been made, and as those readjustments come and as nation after nation makes the monetary and economic and industrial readjustment necessary, we are bound to feel the effects, and the church cannot escape them. Hence this indicates the wisdom of a word of warning to the Saints and



caution that they be not caught by a depression industrial which will injure them perhaps beyond recovery. And what I say of individuals I say of the church, and I am deeply concerned in regard to it.

**T**HE gathering is always a topic in which we are all interested. It is something about which we have been commanded and the accomplishment of which has been directed by divine instruction and which we have not been carrying out as wisely or as effectively as we should. While we must obey the command to gather, still the caution is always necessary, "Let the gathering be done according to the instructions which have been given and with the preparation that is indicated in the law. In this connection I wish to call your attention to the work of the Bishopric in presenting to the people instruction and reasoning and logic in regard to the methods in gathering; and to the aid of the Bishop and his corps of temporal and financial workers, I invite the entire cooperation of the members of the church.

If you will take the time to look over the financial reports of the church for the past five years I think you will discover that while there has been a general and perhaps almost universal increase of net worth so far as the church is concerned, there has yet on the other hand been a playing up and down, if you please, of the income and outgo which has at times disturbed us greatly, because many months the income has not been equal to the outgo in many respects.

Frozen or slow-moving assets have presented a problem to the financial department. The problem is one of refunding outstanding debts, so that their liquidation may be had systematically and in a

businesslike way. A correlate of that problem is to convert much of our holdings now small or non-income-bearing into cash, or make them income-producing. We feel a distinct move in this direction has been made in two ways—(1) in issuing bonds to refund present floating indebtedness, and (2) by organization of trusts and trust associations of the business men of the church to manage many of the properties of the church—which have hitherto been under the direction and management of the Bishopric. In this, two things are at least accomplished; first, that the Bishopric will have their minds relieved so that they can give their attention to some of the larger aspects of church affairs; and second, we will be utilizing the services of those who are engaged in the business affairs of life, and who should as well be giving their services to the church as those who are engaged in the spiritual activities of the church. In both of these moves the church members and business men can be of great service to the church. Of this the Bishop will doubtless have occasion to speak to the priesthood and delegates as the conference shall develop.

**O**N THE whole, the work is onward. Our individual burdens are not likely to be lighter; but by teamwork we can reduce the worry that the few have been compelled to carry.

The horizon is not clear of clouds; but the sun is shining; hope is warm; faith is larger; and God's in his heaven.

The way to Zion seems clearer, though the task of redeeming it grows heavier; but with God's finger and voice pointing the way, we should rejoice that we have found much for our hands to do.

## Program for the Establishment of Zion

The General Conference of 1925 adopted the social program which was adopted by the Joint Council of April, 1924. It is as follows:

Be it resolved that we favor the immediate initiation of a program looking towards the establishment of Zion and the application of the law of stewardships, which program is as follows:

1. That the Bishopric secure completed financial statements by the selection of a corps of men qualified by special training (if possible) who shall be assigned territory with a view to securing these financial statements by personal contact.
2. That financial statements be provided which are especially designed to serve these purposes.
3. That the members of the church be requested to file their financial statements annually.
4. That arrangement for the payment of tithes due the church should be made at the time of filing of the inventory.
5. That all who are willing and desirous should be placed upon the stewardship basis, either individual or group, as they shall manifest the essential qualifications.
6. That books, tracts, etc., expressing the social ideals of the church should be published without delay.
7. That ministerial propaganda of the church include the presentation of the social ideals of the church with specific reference to the law of tithing and consecration, that they may cooperate in the education of the Saints, particularly young people and inquirers.
8. That the people of the church should be urged to gauge their expenditures in accordance with definite budgets to be formulated with the idea of maintaining an equitable standard of living consistent with the attainment and perpetuation of their maximum efficiency and the needs of the group.
9. That in looking to the completion of the surveys of man power, capital, markets, territories, etc., a bureau of research and service should be established.
10. That the determination of the order of economic development should be given immediate consideration.
11. That the surplus consecrated from stewardships in operation should be set aside for, or at once used in the establishment of other stewardships.
12. That in view of the extension of our social organization, there will be necessity for providing vocational guidance and training.

Respectfully submitted,

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY,

By FREDERICK M. SMITH.  
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