

April 1942 General Conference

Elder Harold B. Lee

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

This has been a gathering that might accurately have been described as a Church leadership conference. President Grant, at the opening session of this conference, bore testimony to the divine calling of those who have presided over the Church in this dispensation. In his testimony he has given us the key by which we may be safely guided in our own presidency and leadership responsibility, and he sounded the key-note that has carried through this entire conference. I am persuaded that any presiding officer who does not have such a testimony is not qualified to preside as an officer in the Church.

From the beginning of time, as recorded in sacred scripture, the prophets of the Lord have sounded the warning note to the world and to the membership of the Church. There have always been those with apostate leanings who have ridiculed, and have stood on the side-lines and made light of the efforts of those who sought to follow that counsel. It was so in the days of Noah, and that history is repeating itself at the present time.

In 1831, the Lord gave a revelation to this Church, in which He declared that "the time was not yet, but soon, when peace should be taken from the earth." That time, we all recognize, is here. In that same revelation the Lord declared:

Wherefore, I, the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun. and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments. ([D. & C. 1:17](#))

Again He has declared, "whether by mine own voice, or by the voice of my servants, it is the same." ([D. & C. 1:38](#)) Not all of His commandments have been given to the Church in the writings of the scriptures.

This conference has convened on the sixth anniversary of the launching of what we have styled the Church Welfare plan which was given to the Church by our leaders as they were inspired by the Lord. The activities of the Welfare plan have provided the greatest opportunities for spiritualizing this Church that perhaps have ever been given this people in our generation and as we have watched it unfold and its purposes be more fully revealed, we have come to see therein a building for not only the temporal salvation but also the spiritual salvation of the Church as well. Priesthood quorums everywhere who have rallied to that call, and have joined together as a group, have bound themselves in love and unity that has blessed this Church beyond our fondest expectations.

We have come to understand, and it is my firm conviction that the thing most needed in the Church today is a membership stimulated to action by a fervent conversion to the divinity of the calling of the brethren who preside as leaders of this Church. We have been a most blessed people above all other peoples. We have been given the power of the Priesthood. We have been

blessed with a divine leadership and an inspired organization, and a great pioneering heritage and experience. The Lord will hold us responsible for the blessings that He has given us, and if the calamities that have been foretold come upon this people, they will come because we have not done our full duty, and we have not made the most of our opportunities, nor have we discharged the responsibilities we bear before our Heavenly Father.

We have had many evidences of the power manifesting itself from the united team work of Priesthood quorums. We have witnessed that wherever stake welfare groups have followed the counsel of the leaders, and have banded together as regional organizations, when there was a disaster or an emergency as was the case in southern Arizona during a serious flood situation, we have discovered to our delight that the way was provided by which true brotherhood was fostered. We have noted how Priesthood quorums have made large contributions, with but very little effort when they worked unitedly together. We have seen how great amounts of produce have come from those who saw in their assignment not merely an out and out contribution, but a chance to work together and to develop together, on a permanent foundation, some project of which their community was capable.

We have been delighted to observe throughout the Church an attempt to study the basic reasons for our economic difficulties, and in farming communities we have noticed that farmers have set their goals to two prime objectives, namely, first to produce all they can on their own farms, for their own living; and second, to make an all-out war on debt. The analysis of how that work should be done has been something that I am sure would provide intelligent and profitable reading for those who are struggling with these problems.

The general Church Welfare committee would have me say to you, that from the standpoint of organization there is no other way to carry forward this work except by the Ward Welfare committees properly supervised by the stake Welfare committees. It cant be done without an intelligent analysis of problems as revealed in the survey that you have been asked to make. The only ones who are objecting to the carrying forward of that survey, or to the organization as now set up, are those who have never organized or who have never made the survey.

We are pleased that in the Salt Lake region we have received the report that at least seventy-five percent of the wards are functioning according to program.

We have been asked today to be patriotic. This Church, as has been read by President McKay, has a record of accomplishment that is a delight to all of us, and a testimony to the world of the patriotism of this people. We have been sending our boys into the army, and will continue to do so. We will buy war bonds and stamps. We will pay inordinate taxes, for the carrying on of the work for the buying of planes and munitions of war. We will produce and conserve foodstuffs, that there may be sufficient of the necessities to carry on, as we have been requested by our government.

But beyond all that, the Latter-day Saints have a responsibility, that may be better understood when we recall the prophecy of Joseph Smith who declared that "the time would come when (the destiny and) the Constitution of these United States would hang as it were by a thread, and

that this people, the sons of Zion, would rise up and save it from threatened destruction." (J. of D., Vol. 7:15)

I want to ask you to consider the meaning of that prophecy, in the light of the declaration of the prophets of the Book of Mormon times, who declared that this land was a choice land above all other lands, and would be free from bondage and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of this land, even our Savior, Jesus Christ. ([Ether 2:12](#))

This is a people whom the Lord has chosen to preach the gospel of righteousness. We talk of security in this day, and yet we fail to understand that here on this Temple Block we have standing the holy temple wherein we may find the symbols by which power might be generated that will save this nation from destruction. Therein may be found the fulness of the blessings of the Priesthood. Yesterday morning, as we assembled and heard the broadcast from that place, broadcasting to the world a message, it to me was significant of the prophecy that from this place "the law shall go forth to the world, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The spires on the eastern towers of the temple are to represent the presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood; the spires to the west, the presidency of the Aaronic Priesthood; the gilded figure of the angel Moroni symbolizes the preaching of the gospel to the world. The gospel must be preached as a witness under the direction of the holy Priesthood: "Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come." ([Revelation 14:7](#)) Therein lies the responsibility of this Church in sanctifying this people and this nation, that they might be spared the judgments that otherwise might come upon them, were it not for the preaching of the humble elders of this Church.

The Prophet Isaiah comforted his struggling people with these words:

Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him.

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. ([Isaiah 57:19-21](#))

May we return home and teach our people the way of peace-peace because they are willing to live the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ, I humbly pray, in His name. Amen.

Message of the First Presidency

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.: It is now my privilege and honor to read to you a rather long message from the First Presidency of the Church.

In these days of trial and sorrow, when Satan is "seeking to destroy the souls of men" ([D. & C. 10 27](#)) we send to the righteous everywhere our greetings with prayers for their blessing; to the Saints in all lands and on the islands of the seas, we renew our testimonies and pledge our unselfish service, exhorting them to lives obedient to the gospel and the commandments of the Lord; we extend to them the hand of true and faithful fellowship, with deep and abiding love and blessing.

Our Testimonies

We bear witness to all the world that God lives, and still rules, that His righteous ways and His truth will finally prevail.

We bear testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father, the First Fruits of the Resurrection, the Redeemer of the World, and that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." ([Acts 4:12](#))

We solemnly declare that in these the latter-days, God has again spoken from the heavens through His chosen Prophet, Joseph Smith; that the Lord has, through that same Prophet, again revealed in its fulness His gospel,-the plan of life and salvation; that through that Prophet and his associates He has restored His holy Priesthood to the earth, from which it had been taken because of the wickedness of men; and that all the rights, powers, keys, and functions appertaining to that Priesthood as so restored are now vested in and exercised by the chosen and inspired leadership of His Church,-The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, even as that Priesthood has been exercised on the earth from the Beginning until this day, whenever His Church was here or His work had place among the children of men.

These testimonies we bear in all soberness, before God and men, aware that we are answerable to God for the truthfulness thereof. We admonish all men to give ear to these testimonies and to bring their lives into harmony with the gospel of Christ, that on the day "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him," they may stand with those on His right hand, to whom He will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." ([Matthew 25:31, 34](#))

We shall now speak first of some vital practical matters which should be uppermost in the minds of all Latter-day Saints.

Message to Parents

It is becoming increasingly clear that very many of our physicians and surgeons will be taken by the government for service with the armed forces. This is well, for we want our soldiers and sailors to have every care which it is possible to give them. But this will leave the civilians with curtailed and probably inadequate medical help: In some areas we shall be left with little more trained assistance than was available to our pioneer fathers. Yet it is our patriotic duty to be as fully effective in production at home as our boys are effective in combat in the field. Those in the front lines cannot be strong unless those behind the lines are strong also. To meet this patriotic duty and to prepare for this threatening condition, we urge all parents to guard with zealous care the health of their children. Feed them simple, good, wholesome food that will nourish and make them strong. See that they are warmly clad. Keep them from exposure. Have them avoid unnecessary crowds in close, poorly ventilated, overheated rooms and halls. See that they have plenty of rest and sleep. Avoid late hours. Keep them home in the evenings and remain home to enjoy them. Teach them strictly to observe the Word of Wisdom which is God's law of health. You parents observe these rules yourselves, and keep the other commandments of the Lord. You bishops and presidents of stakes, first lead your people by example and then they will follow

your precepts. Parents, prepare yourselves and your children for the times to come. So live, day by day, that you may with confidence, ask the blessings of health with which the Lord clothes those whom, living righteously, He delights to succor.

Message to the Youth

To the youth of the Church we repeat all the foregoing advice, but above all we plead with you to live clean, for the unclean life leads only to suffering, misery, and woe physically,-and spiritually it is the path to destruction. How glorious and near to the angels is youth that is clean; this youth has joy unspeakable here and eternal happiness hereafter. Sexual purity is youth's most precious possession; it is the foundation of all righteousness. Better dead, clean, than alive, unclean.

Times approach when we shall need all the health, strength, and spiritual power we can get to bear the afflictions that will come upon us.

Welfare Work

We renew the counsel given to the Saints from the days of Brigham Young until now,-be honest, truthful, industrious, frugal, thrifty. In the day of plenty, prepare for the day of scarcity. The principle of the fat and lean kine, is as applicable today as it was in the days when, on the banks of the Nile, Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream. Officials now warn us, and warn again, that scant days are coming.

We renew our counsel, and repeat our instructions. Let every Latter-day Saint that has land, produce some valuable, essential foodstuff thereon and then preserve it: or if he cannot produce an essential foodstuff, let him produce some other kind and exchange it for an essential foodstuff; let them who have no land of their own, and who have knowledge of farming and gardening, try to rent some, either by themselves or with others, and produce foodstuff thereon, and preserve it. Let those who have land produce enough extra to help their less fortunate brethren.

The Welfare plan should be carried forward with redoubled energy that we may care for the worthy, needy poor and unfortunate, and many of us may hereafter enter that class who now feel we are secure from want.

As the Church has always urged since we came to the Valleys, so now we urge every Church householder to have a year's supply of essential foodstuffs ahead. This should, so far as possible, be produced by each householder and preserved by him. This course will not only relieve from any impending distress those households who so provide themselves, but will release just that much food to the general national stores of foodstuffs from which the public at large must be fed.

The utmost care should be taken to see that foodstuffs so produced and preserved by the householder, do not spoil, for that would be waste, and the Lord looks with disfavor upon waste. He has blessed His people with abundant crops; the promise for this year is most hopeful. The Lord is doing His part; He expects us to do ours.

FALSE POLITICAL Isms

We again warn our people in America of the constantly increasing threat against our inspired Constitution and our free institutions set up under it. The same political tenets and philosophies that have brought war and terror in other parts of the world are at work amongst us in America. The proponents thereof are seeking to undermine our own form of government and to set up instead one of the forms of dictatorships now flourishing in other lands. These revolutionists are using a technique that is as old as the human race,-a fervid but false solicitude for the unfortunate over Whom they thus gain mastery, and then enslave them.

They suit their approaches to the particular group they seek to deceive. Among the Latter-day Saints they speak of their philosophy and their plans under it, as an ushering in of the United Order. Communism and all other similar isms bear no relationship whatever to the United Order. They are merely the clumsy counterfeits which Satan always devises of the gospel plan. Communism debases the individual and makes him the enslaved tool of the state to whom he must look for sustenance and religion; the United Order exalts the individual, leaves him his property, "according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs,"

[\(D. & C. 51:3\)](#) and provides a system by which he helps care for his less fortunate brethren; the United Order leaves every man free to choose his own religion as his conscience directs. Communism destroys man's God-given free agency; the United Order glorifies it. Latter-day Saints cannot be true to their faith and lend aid, encouragement, or sympathy to any of these false philosophies. They will prove snares to their feet.

Gospel of Love

The gospel of Christ is a gospel of love and peace, of patience and long suffering, of forbearance and forgiveness, of kindness and good deeds, of charity and brotherly love. Greed, avarice, base ambition, thirst for power, and unrighteous dominion over our fellow men, can have no place in the hearts of Latter-day Saints nor of God-fearing men everywhere. We of the Church must lead the life prescribed in the saying of the ancient prophet-warrior:

I seek not for power, but to pull it down. I seek not for honor of the world, but for the glory of my God, and the freedom and welfare of my country. ([Alma 60:36](#))

Hate Must be Abolished

Hate can have no place in the souls of the righteous. We must follow the commands of Christ Himself which declare the true life:

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. ([Matthew 5:44-45](#))

These principles must be instilled into the hearts of our children, taught to our youth, given by way of instruction to our vigorous manhood and womanhood, lived in very fact and deed by the aged, ripened in experience and wisdom. These are the principles which God enjoins upon all who teach, in whatever capacity or in whatever place. The Lord has declared that those who teach not their children light and truth, according to the commandments' shall be afflicted, the wicked one shall have power over them ([D. & C. 93](#):42), and the sin shall be upon their heads ([D. & C. 68](#) 25). Woe will be the part of those who plant hate in the hearts of the youth, and of the people, for God will not hold them guiltless; they are sowing the wind, their victims will reap the whirlwinds. Hate is born of Satan; love is the offspring of God. We must drive out hate from our hearts, every one of us, and permit it not again to enter.

Mission of the Church

The Lord has established His Church in these latter-days that men might be called to repentance, to the salvation and exaltation of their souls. Time and time again He told the Prophet Joseph and those with him that "the field is white already to harvest." ([D. & C. 4:4](#); [6:3](#); [11:3](#); [12:3](#); [14:3](#); [33:3](#), [7](#)) Over and over again He commanded them to preach nothing but repentance to this generation ([D. & C. 6:9](#); [11:9](#), [14:8](#)) finally declaring:

And thou shalt declare glad tidings, yea, publish it upon the mountains, and upon every high place, and among every people that thou shalt be permitted to see.

And thou shalt do it with all humility, trusting in me, reviling not against revilers.

And of tenets thou shalt not talk, but thou shalt declare repentance and faith on the Savior, and remission of sins by baptism and by fire, yea, even the Holy Ghost.

Behold, this is a great and the last commandment which I shall give unto you concerning this matter; for this shall suffice for thy daily walk, even unto the end of thy life.

And misery thou shalt receive if thou wilt slight these counsels, yea, even the destruction of thyself and property. ([D. & C. 19:29-33](#))

These commands we must obey that men shall come to know God and Jesus Christ whom He sent, for "this is life eternal." ([John 17:3](#))

For this cause was the Church organized, the gospel again revealed in its fulness, the Priesthood of God again restored, with all its rights, powers, keys and functions. This is the mission of the Church. The divine commission given to the apostles of old ([Matthew 28:18](#) if.; [Mark 16:15](#) ff.) has been repeated in this day, that the gospel shall be carried to all nations ([D. & C. 38:33](#)), unto the Jew and the Gentile ([D. & C. 18](#) 26); it shall be declared with rejoicing ([D. & C. 28:16](#)); it shall roll to the ends of the earth ([D. & C. 65](#) 2); and it must be preached by us to whom the kingdom has been given. ([D. & C. 84:76](#)) No act of ours or of the Church must interfere with this God-given mandate. The Lord will hold us to this high commission and exalted duty, imposed by His commandment to us, when He said:

And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments. ([D. & C. 59:21](#))

We shall be excused from this divine commission, individually and as a Church, only if some power beyond our control shall prevent our obedience to God's commands, then they who hinder must bear the penalty. ([D. & C. 124](#) 49) But to that point of hindrance, it is our bounden duty to carry on.

Sending of Missionaries

It is our duty, divinely imposed, to continue urgently and militantly to carry forward our missionary work. We must continue to call missionaries and send them out to preach the gospel, which was never more needed than now, which is the only remedy for the tragic ills that now afflict the world, and which alone can bring peace and brotherly love back amongst the peoples of the earth. We must continue to call to missionary work those who seem best able to perform it in these troublous and difficult days. Our duty under divine command imperatively demands this. We shall not knowingly call anyone for the purpose of having him evade military service, nor for the purpose of interfering with or hampering that service in any way, nor of putting any impediment in the way of government. These would be unworthy motives for a missionary life. Our people have furnished and we expect them to continue to furnish their full quota for those purposes, but we see no alternative, until new rules are made by the government, but to continue to call the best and most effective men into missionary work, if they are available therefor.

Having in mind that the worldwide disaster in material and spiritual matters has brought vital and difficult problems to the nation and to the Church,-the nation because of need of manpower for the armed forces and defense works, and to the Church because of the imperative need it brings to us to employ in our missionary work the experience, testimony and faith possessed by our more mature brethren, we have instructed our bishops, presidents of branches, and presidents of missions to confine until further notice, their recommendations of brethren for missionary service in the field, to those who on March 23, 1942, were seventies or high priests. Furthermore, in recommending these brethren, none but those who are and have been living worthily, should be chosen; and as to these, they should choose those only who have not received their notice of induction, who are not likely to receive it within a short time, and who have a real desire to do missionary work.

To preach the gospel, under ordination from the Priesthood of God, is a great privilege, to be enjoyed by those only who are thoroughly qualified and who are and have been strictly living the commandments and attending to their Church duties. Every bishop will carefully examine everyone whom he considers for a mission, to be sure he meets these requirements. No lukewarm or unworthy person should be recommended. The bishop must not in any way play favorites, thus avoiding giving just ground among the people of his ward for that unworthy, unrighteous thought, sometimes voiced by those whose sons have gone into the service, that because their sons have gone into the army, every other parent's son should go into the army, and that none should be sent on missions. This feeling has behind it thoughts that do not comport with the teachings of our Heavenly Father. Moreover, those going on missions are amenable to

selection for army service so soon as they return. A mission exempts from army service only for the term of the mission.

Church and State

The Church stands for the separation of church and state. The church has no civil political functions. As the church may not assume the functions of the state, so the state may not assume the functions of the church. The church is responsible for and must carry on the work of the Lord, directing the conduct of its members, one towards the other, as followers of the lowly Christ, not forgetting the humble, the poor and needy, and those in distress, leading them all to righteous living and a spiritual life that shall bring them to salvation, exaltation, and eternal progression in wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and power.

Today, more than ever before in the history of the Church, we must bring the full force of the righteous living of our people and the full influence of the spiritual power and responsibility of the holy Priesthood, to combat the evil forces which Satan has let loose among the peoples of the earth. We are in the midst of a desperate struggle between Truth and Error, and Truth will finally prevail.

The state is responsible for the civil control of its citizens or subjects, for their political welfare, and for the carrying forward of political policies, domestic and foreign, of the body politic. For these policies, their success or failure, the state is alone responsible, and it must carry its burdens. All these matters involve and directly affect Church members because they are part of the body politic, and members must give allegiance to their sovereign and render it loyal service when called thereto. But the Church, itself, as such, has no responsibility for these policies, as to which it has no means of doing more than urging its members fully to render that loyalty to their country and to free institutions which the loftiest patriotism calls for.

Nevertheless, as a correlative of the principle of separation of the church and the State, themselves, there is an obligation running from every citizen or subject to the state. This obligation is voiced in that Article of Faith which declares:

We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

For one hundred years, the Church has been guided by the following principles:

We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society.

We believe that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life.

We believe that all governments necessarily require civil officers and magistrates to enforce the laws of the same; and that such as will administer the law in equity and justice should be sought for and upheld by the voice of the people if a republic, or the will of the sovereign.

We believe that religion is instituted of God; and that men are amenable to him, and to him only, for the exercise of it, unless their religious opinions prompt them to infringe upon the rights and liberties of others; but we do not believe that human law has a right to interfere in prescribing rules of worship to bind the consciences of men, nor dictate forms for public or private devotion; that the civil magistrate should restrain crime, but never control conscience; should punish guilt, but never suppress the freedom of the soul.

We believe that all men are bound to sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside, while protected in their inherent and inalienable rights by the laws of such governments; and that sedition and rebellion are unbecoming every citizen thus protected, and should be punished accordingly; and that all governments have a right to enact such laws as in their own judgments are best calculated to secure the public interest; at the same time, however, holding sacred the freedom of conscience. We believe that every man should be honored in his station, rulers and magistrates as such, being placed for the protection of the innocent and the punishment of the guilty; and that to the laws all men owe respect and deference, as without them peace and harmony would be supplanted by anarchy and terror; human laws being instituted for the express purpose of regulating our interests as individuals and nations, between man and man; and divine laws given of heaven, prescribing rules on spiritual concerns, for faith and worship, both to be answered by man to his Maker . . . We believe . . . that murder, treason, robbery, theft, and the breach of the general peace, in all respects, should be punished according to their criminality and their tendency to evil among men, by the laws of that government in which the offense is committed ([D. & C. 134:1-6, 8](#))

Church Membership and Army Service

Obedient to these principles, the members of the Church have always felt under obligation to come to the defense of their country when a call to arms was made; on occasion the Church has prepared to defend its own members.

In the days of Nauvoo, the Nauvoo Legion was formed, having in view the possible armed defense of the Saints against mob violence. Following our expulsion from Nauvoo, the Mormon Battalion was recruited by the national government for service in the war with Mexico. When Johnston's army was sent to Utah in 1857 as the result of malicious misrepresentations as to the actions and attitude of the territorial officers and the people, we prepared and used measures of force to prevent the entry of the army into the valleys. During the early years in Utah, forces were raised and used to fight the Indians. In the war with Spain, members of the Church served with the armed forces of the United States, with distinction and honor. In the World War, the Saints of America and of European countries served loyally their respective governments, on both sides of the conflict. Likewise in the present war, righteous men of the Church in both camps have died, some with great heroism, for their own country's sake. In all this our people have but served loyally the country of which they were citizens or subjects under the principles

we have already stated. We have felt honored that our brethren have died nobly for their country; the Church has been benefited by their service and sacrifice.

Nevertheless, we have not forgotten that on Sinai, God commanded "Thou shalt not kill"; nor that in this dispensation the Lord has repeatedly reiterated that command. He has said:

And now, behold, I speak unto the church. Thou shalt not kill; and he that kills shall not have forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come.

And again, I say, thou shalt not kill; but he that killeth shall die. ([D.&C. 42:18-19](#); and see 59:6)

At another time the Lord commanded that murderers should "be delivered up and dealt with according to the laws of the land; for remember that he hath no forgiveness." (*ibid* 79) So also when land was to be obtained in Zion, the Lord said:

Wherefore, the land of Zion shall not be obtained but by purchase or by blood, otherwise there is none inheritance for you. And if by purchase, behold you are blessed; And if by blood, as you are forbidden to shed blood, lo, your enemies are upon you, and ye shall be scourged from city to city, and from synagogue to synagogue, and but few shall stand to receive an inheritance. ([D.&C. 63:29-31](#))

But all these commands, from Sinai down, run in very terms against individuals as members of society, as well as members of the Church, for one man must not kill another as Cain killed Abel; they also run against the Church as in the case of securing land in Zion, because Christ's Church should not make war, for the Lord is a Lord of peace. He has said to us in this dispensation:

Therefore, renounce war and proclaim peace ([D.&C. 98:16](#))

Thus the Church is and must be against war. The Church itself cannot wage war, unless and until the Lord shall issue new commands. It cannot regard war as a righteous means of settling international disputes; these should and could be settled-the nations agreeing-by peaceful negotiation and adjustment.

But the Church membership are citizens or subjects of sovereignties over which the Church has no control. The Lord Himself has told us to 'befriend that law which is the constitutional law of the land':

And now, verily I say unto you concerning the laws of the land, it is my will that my people should observe to do all things whatsoever I command them.

And that law of the land which is constitutional, supporting that principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges, belongs to all mankind, and is justifiable before me.

Therefore, I, the Lord, justify you, and your brethren of my church, in befriending that law which is the constitutional law of the land;

And as pertaining to law of man, whatsoever is more or less than this cometh of evil. ([D. & C. 98:4-7](#))

While by its terms this revealed word related more especially to this land of America, nevertheless the principles announced are worldwide in their application, and they are specifically addressed to "you" (Joseph Smith), "and your brethren of my church." When, therefore, constitutional law, obedient to these principles, calls the manhood of the Church into the armed service of any country to which they owe allegiance, their highest civic duty requires that they meet that call. If, harkening to that call and obeying those in command over them, they shall take the lives of those who fight against them, that will not make of them murderers, nor subject them to the penalty that God has prescribed for those who kill, beyond the principle to be mentioned shortly. For it would be a cruel God that would punish His children as moral sinners for acts done by them as the innocent instrumentalities of a sovereign whom He had told them to obey and whose will they were powerless to resist.

God Is At the Helm

The whole world is in the midst of a war that seems the worst of all time. This Church is a worldwide Church. Its devoted members are in both camps. They are the innocent war instrumentalities of their warring sovereignties. On each side they believe they are fighting for home, and country, and freedom. On each side, our brethren pray to the same God, in the same name, for victory. Both sides cannot be wholly right; perhaps neither is without wrong. God will work out in His own due time and in His own sovereign way the justice and right of the conflict, but He will not hold the innocent instrumentalities of the war, our brethren in arms, responsible for the conflict. This is a major crisis in the world-life of man. God is at the helm.

Righteous Suffer With Wicked

But there is an eternal law that rules war and those who engage in it. It was given when, Peter having struck off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the High Priest, Jesus reprovved him, saying:

Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. ([Matthew 26:52](#))

The Savior thus laid down a general principle upon which He placed no limitations as to time, place, cause, or people involved. He repeated it in this dispensation when He told the people if they tried to secure the land of Zion by blood, then "lo, your enemies are upon you." This is a universal law, for force always besets force; it is the law of 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth' ([Exodus 21:24](#); [Leviticus 24:20](#)); it is the law of the unrighteous and wicked, but it operates against the righteous who may be involved.

Mormon, recording the war of revenge by the Nephites, against the Lamanites, pronounced another great law;

But, behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished; for it is the wicked that stir up the hearts of the children of men unto bloodshed. ([Mormon 4:5](#))

But, we repeat, in this war of the wicked, the righteous suffer also. Moroni, mistakenly reproving Pahoran 'for sitting upon his throne in a state of thoughtless stupor, while his enemies were spreading the work 'of death around him, yea, while they were murdering thousands of his brethren,' said to Pahoran:

Do ye suppose that, because so many of your brethren have been killed it is because of their wickedness? I say unto you, if ye have supposed this ye have supposed in vain; for I say unto you, there are many who have fallen by the sword; and behold it is to your condemnation;

For the Lord suffereth the righteous to be slain that his justice and judgment may come upon the wicked; therefore ye need not suppose that the righteous are lost because they are slain; but behold, they do enter into the rest of the Lord their God. ([Alma 60:7, 12-13](#))

In this terrible war now waging, thousands of our righteous young men in all parts of the world and in many countries are subject to a call into the military service of their own countries. Some of these, so serving, have already been called back to their heavenly home; others will almost surely be called to follow. But 'behold,' as Moroni said, the righteous of them who serve and are slain 'do enter into the rest of the Lord their God,' and of them the Lord has said "those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them." ([D. & C. 42:46](#)) Their salvation and exaltation in the world to come will be secure. That in their work of destruction they will be striking at their brethren will not be held against them. That sin, as Moroni of old said, is to the condemnation of those who 'sit in their places of power in a state of thoughtless stupor,' those rulers in the world who in a frenzy of hate and lust for unrighteous power and dominion over their fellow men, have put into motion eternal orces they do not comprehend and cannot control. God, in His own due time, will pass sentence upon them.

Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. ([Romans 12:19](#))

Message to Men in Service

To our young men who go into service, no matter whom they serve or where, we say live clean, keep the commandments of the Lord, pray to Him constantly to preserve you in truth and righteousness, live as you pray, and then whatever betides you the Lord will be with you and nothing will happen to you that will not be to the honor and glory of God and to your salvation and exaltation. There will come into your hearts from the living of the pure life you pray for, a joy that will pass your powers of expression or understanding. The Lord will be always near you; He will comfort you; you will feel His presence in the hour of your greatest tribulation; He will guard and protect you to the full extent that accords with His all-wise purpose. Then, when the conflict is over and you return to your homes, having lived the righteous life, how great will be your happiness-whether you be of the victors or of the vanquished-that you have lived as the Lord commanded. You will return so disciplined in righteousness that hereafter all Satan's wiles and stratagems will leave you untouched. Your faith and testimony will be strong beyond

breaking. You will be looked up to and revered as having passed through the fiery furnace of trial and temptation and come forth unharmed. Your brethren will look to you for counsel, support, and guidance. You will be the anchors to which thereafter the youth of Zion will moor their faith in man.

To you brethren and sisters who make up the body of the Church we send again our greetings and our blessings. We are grateful to our Heavenly Father for your loyalty, your devotion, and your righteousness. We love and bless you. We are grateful for your faithfulness in your tithes and offerings, the greatest in the last year in the whole history of the Church.

We remind you that as the Lord said to ancient Israel, so He says to us, in an eternal principle:

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts. ([Malachi 3:10-12](#))

We give thanks and praise to our Heavenly Father for the unselfish and righteous service of the officers of the stakes, of the wards, of the auxiliaries, of the Priesthood, of the missionaries, and of every man and woman who is helping to advance the cause of Truth. We give our blessing and love to all of you. We claim all of you as fellow servants of the Lord. To our brethren of the General Authorities,-the Twelve and their Assistants, the Acting Presiding Patriarch, the First Council of the Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric-we give our love and trust. We thank them and our Heavenly Father for their loyal support, their faith, their righteous works, which they carry on with an eye single to the glory of God and to the progress of His work, so magnifying in righteousness their callings.

We exhort all the Saints to remember the great commandment which Jesus gave:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. ([Matthew 22:37-40](#))

And as King Benjamin, the Nephite prophet-king, said to his people:

. . . Learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God. ([Mosiah 2:17](#))

May the Lord preserve the officers and the body of the Church in health and strength, increase our faith and our testimonies, endow us all with wisdom and understanding beyond measure, that we may all so live that when we are called home we may be saved and exalted in the celestial kingdom.

Our Heavenly Father: Hear us in our petitions before Thee: Let nothing stand betwixt us and Thee and Thy blessings; work out Thy purposes speedily; drive hate from the souls of men, that peace and brotherly love may again come to the earth and rule the hearts of Thy children, that nations may again live together in amity. Watch tenderly over Thy children in all lands; bless therein the sick and afflicted, care for those in distress; help us, their brethren bearing Thy Priesthood, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give shelter to those who have no homes; comfort, our Heavenly Father, with the full sweetness of Thy Holy Spirit, those who mourn, we humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.