



By President Thomas S. Monson

Welcome to Conference

Thank you, my brothers and sisters, for your faith and devotion to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

How good it is, my beloved brothers and sisters, to meet together once again. This conference marks 180 years since the Church was organized. How grateful we are for the Prophet Joseph Smith, who sought for the truth, who found it, and who, under the direction of the Lord, restored the gospel and organized the Church.

The Church has grown steadily since that day in 1830. It continues to change the lives of more and more people every year and to spread across the earth as our missionary force seeks out those who are searching for the truth. Once again we call upon the

members of the Church to reach out to the new converts or to those making their way back into the Church, to surround them with love and to help them feel at home.

Thank you, my brothers and sisters, for your faith and devotion to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thank you for all that you do in your wards and branches, in your stakes and districts. You serve willingly and well and accomplish great good. May the Lord bless you as you strive to follow Him and to obey His commandments.

Since last we met, the Church has continued to provide much-needed humanitarian assistance in various

locations around the world. In the past three months alone, humanitarian assistance has been provided in French Polynesia, Mongolia, Bolivia, Peru, Arizona, Mexico, Portugal, and Uganda, among other areas. Most recently we have assisted in Haiti and Chile following devastating earthquakes and tsunamis in those areas. We express our love to our Church members who have suffered in these disasters. You are in our prayers. We express profound gratitude to all of you for your willingness to assist with our humanitarian efforts by sharing your resources and, in many cases, your time, your talents, and your expertise.

This year marks 25 years since our humanitarian program became part of our welfare effort. The number of individuals assisted by this program could never adequately be measured. We will always strive to be among the first on the scene of disasters, wherever they may occur.

The Church continues to grow and to move forward. The building of temples is an indication of such growth. Recently we announced a new temple which will be built in Payson, Utah. We also announced major renovations which will be made to the Ogden Utah Temple. Within the next three months we will dedicate new temples in Vancouver, British Columbia; in the Gila Valley, Arizona; and in Cebu City in the Philippines. Later in the year other temples will be dedicated or rededicated. We will continue to build temples throughout the world as our membership grows. Each year millions of ordinances are performed in the temples for our deceased loved ones. May we continue to be faithful in performing such ordinances for those who are unable to do so for themselves.

Many of you are aware that a short time after October conference, my





dear wife, Frances, suffered a fall, which left her with a broken hip and a broken shoulder. After two successful surgeries and several weeks of hospitalization, she was able to return home. She is doing well and continues to make progress toward a full recovery. She was able to attend the general Young Women meeting last Saturday and plans to attend a session or two this weekend. In fact, at the last minute she said, "I'm going today!" And she's here! She joins me in expressing our deep gratitude to our Heavenly Father and to all of you for your prayers and your well wishes in her behalf.

Now, brothers and sisters, we have come here to be instructed and inspired. We welcome those of you who are new in the Church. Others of you are struggling with problems, with challenges, with disappointments, with losses. We love you and we pray for you. Many messages, covering a variety of gospel topics, will be given during the next two days. Those men and women who will speak to you have sought heaven's help concerning the messages they will give.

It is my prayer that we may be filled with His Spirit as we listen and learn. That this may be so, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, amen. ■

