

## SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

The first session of the 175th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 2, 2005. President James E. Faust conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir. Craig Jessop and Mack Wilberg directed the choir, and Richard Elliott and John Longhurst were the organists. To begin this session, the choir sang "Come, Listen to a Prophet's Voice." President Faust then made the following remarks.

### President James E. Faust

We welcome you to this, the first general session of the 175th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Gordon B. Hinckley, who presides at this conference, has asked that I, Brother Faust, conduct this session.

We acknowledge the General Authorities seated on the stand in the Conference Center and Assembly Hall and likewise acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Men, Young Women, Sunday School, and Primary general presidencies in attendance at this conference.

We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present with us.

We are grateful to the owners and operators of the many television and radio stations and satellite and cable systems, for offering their facilities as a public service to bring this conference to a large audience in many areas of the world. We are also pleased to make these proceedings available by Internet at [lds.org](http://lds.org).

The music for this session will be by the Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Craig Jessop and Mack Wilberg, with Richard Elliott and John Longhurst at the organ.

The choir opened this session by singing "Come, Listen to a Prophet's Voice" and will now favor us with "Redeemer of Israel." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Earl C. Tingey of the Presidency of the Seventy.

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The choir sang "Redeemer of Israel."  
Elder Earl C. Tingey offered the invocation.

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### President Faust

We shall now be pleased to hear from our beloved prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley. Following President Hinckley's remarks, the choir will sing "God Loved Us, So He Sent His Son."

## President Gordon B. Hinckley

### Remembering Pope John Paul II

My beloved brothers and sisters, on behalf of the worldwide membership of this Church, I extend to our Catholic neighbors and friends our heartfelt sympathy at this time of great sorrow. Pope John Paul II has worked tirelessly to advance the cause of Christianity, to lift the burdens of the poor, and to speak fearlessly in behalf

of moral values and human dignity. He will be greatly missed, particularly by the very many who have looked to him for leadership.

### Accounting of stewardship for past 10 years

Now, my brothers and sisters, I think it appropriate that in opening this conference I give a few words of accountability

concerning our stewardship during the past 10 years.

On March 12, 1995, there was bestowed upon us the high and sacred responsibility of the Presidency.

In the conference that followed I made this statement:

“Now, my brethren and sisters, the time has come for us to stand a little taller, to lift our eyes and stretch our minds to a greater comprehension and understanding of the grand millennial mission of this, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This is a season to be strong. It is a time to move forward without hesitation, knowing well the meaning, the breadth, and the importance of our mission. It is a time to do what is right regardless of the consequences that might follow. It is a time to be found keeping the commandments. It is a season to reach out with kindness and love to those in distress and to those who are wandering in darkness and pain. It is a time to be considerate and good, decent and courteous toward one another in all of our relationships—in other words, to become more Christlike” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 95; *Ensign*, May 1995, 71).

You must be the judge of how far we have come in realizing the fulfillment of that invitation given 10 years ago.

### **A remarkable flowering of the work**

This past decade has been a wonderful season in the history of the Church. There has been a remarkable flowering of the work. There have been many meaningful accomplishments.

This forward thrust is not the work of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, the Seventy, or the Presiding Bishopric alone. It is the result of the faith, the prayers, the efforts, the dedicated service of every member of a stake presidency or high council; of every bishopric and quorum presidency; of every auxiliary presidency; and of every faithful, active member of the Church across the world.

To each of you, wherever you may be, I express the feelings of my heart and thank you for your great and dedicated service. What wonderful people you are.

The majesty and the wonder of the gospel of Jesus Christ restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith shine today with resplendent luster.

### **Great growth of the Church**

As we stand on the summit of these years and look back, we must never feel arrogant or proud, but we can feel humbly grateful for what has been accomplished in a variety of undertakings.

For instance, the Church has grown across the world until our membership outside of North America exceeds that in North America. We have become a great international family scattered through 160 nations.

In these past 10 years, more than 500 new stakes have been created and more than 4,000 new wards and branches. Three million new members have been added.

The enrollment in our education system has doubled, increasing by approximately 200,000. For the most part, our youth are stronger and more faithful.

The Perpetual Education Fund has been created. We started with nothing but hope and faith. Today nearly 18,000 young people are being assisted. They live in 27 different nations. They are being trained and are moving out of the slough of poverty in which they and their forebears have lived for generations. Their skills are being refined and their earnings multiplied.

We have greatly increased the number of temples. In 1995 there were 47. Today there are 119, with three more to be dedicated this year.

The Book of Mormon was had in 87 languages in 1995. Today it is available in 106 languages.

Fifty-one million copies of the Book of Mormon have been distributed during these past 10 years.

We have constructed literally thousands of buildings across the earth. They are of a better quality and more suitable to our needs than those previously built.

In addition, we have constructed this remarkable hall from which we speak today, the unique and beautiful Conference Center here in Salt Lake City.

With all of this and much more, we have reached out across the earth to assist those in distress and need wherever they may be. In the last 10 years we have supplied in cash and commodities hundreds of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid to those not of our faith.

We have traveled the earth bearing witness of this, the work of the Almighty. During these same years I personally have traveled nearly a million miles, visiting some 70 countries. My beloved companion traveled with me until a year ago, when she passed away on the 6th of April. It has been lonely since then.

### **A marvelous future**

Our hope concerning the future is great and our faith is strong. We know that we have scarcely scratched the surface of that which will come to pass in the years that lie ahead.

I am now in my 95th year. I never dreamed that I would live this long. My life reminds me of a sign that hung by a rusty staple to a run-down barbed-wire fence in Texas. It read:

Burned out by drought,  
Drowned out by flud waters,  
Et out by jackrabbits,  
Sold out by sheriff,  
Still here!

I hope to have the privilege of associating with you, my beloved friends and co-workers, for as long as the Lord permits. And I hope that service will be acceptable.

### **Stand a little taller**

Our foundation is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The authority of the holy priesthood is here, restored under the hands of those who received it directly from our Lord. The curtains have been parted, and the God of heaven and His Beloved Son have spoken to the boy prophet Joseph in opening this last and final dispensation.

Our burden in going forward is tremendous. But our opportunity is glorious.

I now repeat what I said 10 years ago: let us “stand a little taller, . . . lift our eyes and stretch our minds to a greater comprehension and understanding of the grand millennial mission of this, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

This, my brothers and sisters, is my invitation to you this morning. I extend my love, my blessing, and my gratitude as we open this great conference. May the Spirit of the Lord direct all that occurs is my humble prayer, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang “God Loved Us, So He Sent His Son.”

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### **President Faust**

We shall now hear from President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, after which Bishop Richard C. Edgley of the Presiding Bishopric will address us. The choir and congregation will then sing “Come, Ye Children of the Lord.”

We shall then be pleased to hear from Sister Coleen K. Menlove, Primary general president. Following her remarks, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will address us. The choir will then sing “Teach Me to Walk in the Light.”