

SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

The first session of the 181st Semiannual 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, October 1, 2011. President Henry B. Eyring conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir, directed by Mack Wilberg and Ryan Murphy, with Richard Elliott and Andrew Unsworth as the organists. To begin this session, the choir sang “The Morning Breaks.” President Eyring then made the following remarks.

President Henry B. Eyring

Brothers and sisters, we welcome you to the first session of the 181st Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and extend a special welcome to members and friends participating here in the Conference Center and throughout the world, wherever you may be. President Thomas S. Monson, who presides over this conference, has asked that I conduct this session.

We acknowledge the General Authorities and the general auxiliary presidencies in attendance at this conference.

We are grateful to 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.

The music for this session will be provided by the Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Mack Wilberg and Ryan Murphy, with Richard Elliott and Andrew Unsworth at the organ. The choir opened this session with “The Morning Breaks” and will now sing “With Songs of Praise.” The invocation will then be offered by Elder Gary J. Coleman of the Seventy.

The choir sang “With Songs of Praise.”

Elder Gary J. Coleman offered the invocation.

President Eyring

We will now be pleased to hear from our beloved prophet, President Thomas S. Monson. Following his remarks, the choir will sing “We Ever Pray for Thee.” After the singing, Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will speak to us. He will be followed by Sister Barbara Thompson, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency. We will then be pleased to hear from Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy.

President Thomas S. Monson

It is good, brothers and sisters, to welcome you to the 181st Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

This conference marks 48 years—think of it, 48 years—since I was called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles by President David O. McKay. That was in October of 1963. It seems impossible

that so many years have come and gone since then.

Temple dedications

When we’re busy, time seems to pass far too quickly, and the past six months have been no exception for me. One of the highlights during that period was

the opportunity I had to rededicate the Atlanta Georgia Temple on May 1. I was accompanied by Elder and Sister M. Russell Ballard, Elder and Sister Walter F. González, and Elder and Sister William R. Walker.

During the cultural celebration entitled "Southern Lights," held the evening prior to the rededication, 2,700 young men and young women from throughout the temple district performed. It was one of the most outstanding programs I have seen and had the audience on its feet several times for standing ovations.

The following day the temple was rededicated in two sessions, where the Spirit of the Lord was with us in rich abundance.

During the latter part of August, President Henry B. Eyring dedicated the San Salvador El Salvador Temple. He was accompanied by Sister Eyring and by Elder and Sister D. Todd Christofferson, Elder and Sister William R. Walker, and Sister Silvia H. Allred of the Relief Society general presidency and her husband, Jeffry. President Eyring reported that it was a most spiritual event.

In the latter part of this year, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf and Sister Uchtdorf will travel with other General Authorities to Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, where he will dedicate our temple there.

Announcement of new temples

The building of temples continues uninterrupted, brothers and sisters. Today it is my privilege to announce several new temples.

First, may I mention that no Church-built facility is more important than a temple. Temples are places where relationships are sealed together to last through the eternities. We are grateful for all the many temples across the world and for the blessing they are in the lives of our members.

Late last year the Provo Tabernacle in Utah County was seriously damaged by

a terrible fire. This wonderful building, much beloved by generations of Latter-day Saints, was left with only the exterior walls standing. After careful study, we have decided to rebuild it, with full preservation and restoration of the exterior, to become the second temple of the Church in the city of Provo. The existing Provo Temple is one of the busiest in the Church, and a second temple there will accommodate the increasing numbers of faithful Church members who are attending the temple from Provo and the surrounding communities.

I am also pleased to announce new temples in the following locations: Barranquilla, Colombia; Durban, South Africa; Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and Star Valley, Wyoming. In addition, we are moving forward on our plans for a temple to be built in Paris, France.

Details of these temples will be provided in the future as site and other necessary approvals are obtained.

General Temple Patron Assistance Fund

I have mentioned in previous conferences the progress we are making in placing temples closer to our members. Although they are readily available to many members in the Church, there are still areas of the world where temples are so distant from our members that they cannot afford the travel required to get to them. They are thus unable to partake of the sacred and eternal blessings temples provide. To help in this regard, we have available what is called the General Temple Patron Assistance Fund. This fund provides a one-time visit to the temple for those who otherwise would not be able to go to the temple and yet who long desperately for that opportunity. Any who might wish to contribute to this fund can simply write in the information on the normal contribution slip which is given to the bishop each month.

Now, brothers and sisters, it is my prayer that we may be filled with the Spirit of the Lord as we listen to the messages today and tomorrow and learn those things

the Lord would have us know. This I pray for in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang “We Ever Pray for Thee.”

Elder Richard G. Scott

Those of us who come to this pulpit during conference feel the power of your prayers. We need them, and we thank you for them.

Guidance from the scriptures

Our Father in Heaven understood that for us to make desired progress during our mortal probation, we would need to face difficult challenges. Some of these would be almost overpowering. He provided tools to help us be successful in our mortal probation. One set of those tools is the scriptures.

Throughout the ages, Father in Heaven has inspired select men and women to find, through the guidance of the Holy Ghost, solutions to life’s most perplexing problems. He has inspired those authorized servants to record those solutions as a type of handbook for those of His children who have faith in His plan of happiness and in His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. We have ready access to this guidance through the treasure we call the standard works—that is, the Old and New Testaments, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

Because scriptures are generated from inspired communication through the Holy Ghost, they are pure truth. We need not be concerned about the validity of concepts contained in the standard works, since the Holy Ghost has been the instrument which has motivated and inspired those individuals who have recorded the scriptures.

Scriptures are like packets of light that illuminate our minds and give place to

guidance and inspiration from on high. They can become the key to open the channel to communion with our Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

A foundation of truth and support

The scriptures provide the strength of authority to our declarations when they are cited correctly. They can become stalwart friends that are not limited by geography or calendar. They are always available when needed. Their use provides a foundation of truth that can be awakened by the Holy Ghost. Learning, pondering, searching, and memorizing scriptures is like filling a filing cabinet with friends, values, and truths that can be called upon anytime, anywhere in the world.

Great power can come from memorizing scriptures. To memorize a scripture is to forge a new friendship. It is like discovering a new individual who can help in time of need, give inspiration and comfort, and be a source of motivation for needed change. For example, committing to memory this psalm has been for me a source of power and understanding:

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

“For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

“He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.