The Work Moves Forward

President Gordon B. Hinckley


The Church goes forward on its appointed mission in the direction of its appointed destiny.

Welcome to conference! We again welcome you, my brothers and sisters, to this great world conference. Six months between conferences once seemed like a long time. Now it seems to pass ever so rapidly. We gather together again as a great family, more than 10 million strong, to listen and learn from those who are called to lead, to renew our faith and build our resolution to live better, and to mingle together in pleasant sociality.

We are a happy and blessed people, working to build the cause and kingdom of God on earth. Regardless of race or nationality, whether we be poor or rich, old or young, we meet to share our common testimony of the Lord, in whose name we worship.

I am pleased to report that the Church is in good condition. The work continues to move forward; I will point out just two or three areas.

We now have approximately 60,000 missionaries. Come July, there will be 333 missions. We are trying to fulfill the mandate of the Lord when He said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28:19).

Additionally, there are 137,629 volunteers and missionaries in nonproselyting activities. These are, for the most part, mature individuals who contribute their time and talents without compensation of any kind but with a great love for the work of the kingdom. Their united contribution is the equivalent of 15,174 full-time employees with a payroll value of $531,000,000. What a remarkable thing this is.

Our family history work goes forward with increasing momentum. There is a tremendous interest in one’s roots everywhere. As the years pass, all of this will lead to the fulfillment of the great purpose for which this work is done. The hearts of the children are being turned to their fathers, that the purposes of the Lord may be fulfilled.

We are constructing temples on a scale never before dreamed of to carry forward this work to its destined conclusion. Since last October we have dedicated temples in Anchorage, Alaska; Colonia...
Juárez, Mexico; and Madrid, Spain. It is anticipated that we will dedicate 14 more during the remainder of this year.

This is a tremendous undertaking, with many problems, but no matter the difficulty, things work out and I am confident we will reach our goal.

We are constructing chapels in large numbers to accommodate the needs of our people. There is an old proverb that says it is an ill wind that blows no good. The economic problems that have afflicted Asia and other parts of the world have brought lower real estate prices, thus permitting us to acquire building sites at lower costs.

In many areas of the Church, sacrament meeting attendance is up and the level of activity is increasing.

I mention these items simply to indicate the robust growth of the work throughout the world.

We are prone to speak of large numbers such as the total membership of the Church. But we must never forget that we are all individuals with our own needs and problems, our own hopes and dreams, our own faith and convictions. Some are strong, some weak, but we all try. We have problems to deal with; they are serious and difficult. We need one another, to build and strengthen each other. We must never lose sight of the fact that we are to “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” ([D&C 81:5](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dcc/81/5)).

We must never forget that we live in a world of great diversity. The people of the earth are all our Father’s children and are of many and varied religious persuasions. We must cultivate tolerance and appreciation and respect one another. We have differences of doctrine. This need not bring about animosity or any kind of holier-than-thou attitude.

At this moment our hearts reach out to the brutalized people of Kosovo. It is difficult for us to understand how those who claim to be Christians can act so barbaric to those of another faith. I am grateful that we are rushing humanitarian aid to the victims of these atrocities.

I am pleased to report that the Church is better known and better understood. Generally the media have been kind to us. They have dealt honestly with us. There are exceptions, of course, and this we regret. The old images of the past continue to be dragged forth by those who deal in sensationalism and exploitation. But television images fade almost immediately with the tremendous amount of information given. Yesterday’s newspaper is soon forgotten. Meanwhile the Church goes forward on its appointed mission in the direction of its appointed destiny.

We will work together with patience, never losing sight of the great mission given us by Him who is our leader and whose Church this is.

Now I invite you to listen to the Brethren and sisters. All who speak feel the responsibility in so doing. Much of prayer and effort have gone into that which will be said. May our faith be increased in the great, salient underpinnings of our doctrine and our practice as members of this great Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.