

CONFERENCE IN MEXICO

August, 1972

I am pleased and honored to be with you in this great area conference of the Church and kingdom of God on earth.

We are now in a new era of church growth and development. In the early days of this dispensation, in the very nature of things, if the saints were to survive as a people, they had to assemble together in chosen places. Otherwise they would have been lost among the masses of men and overcome by the world.

But now, in large measure, we are past that stage of our history. Congregations of saints are springing up in all parts of the world. We are becoming a world Church—not an American Church, not a British Church, not a Mexican Church, but a Church for all mankind, for the honest and upright in every nation.

And with this new status comes a responsibility we have never had before, a responsibility to be worthy of our high position in the world, and to strengthen the Church in all the nations where it is and shall be established. It is our responsibility in Mexico and Central America, for instance, to build up the Church here, in these favored nations, and among the choice people who dwell in them.

As you know, the Lord chose Joseph Smith to be the instrument in his hands of restoring the fulness of his everlasting gospel and of making its truths and blessings available to all men in this day.

As part of that restoration, Moses—the prophet and lawgiver of ancient Israel, the one chosen of God to lead his people out of Egyptian bondage to their ancient promised land—came to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on the 3rd of April in 1836. He then committed unto them “the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four Parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.” (D&C 110:11.) Those keys are now vested in the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

May I remind you that this promised gathering of the Lord’s chosen people was the hope and prayer of all the prophets of Israel. Of it they spoke, and wrote, and prophesied. Even after the Lord Jesus had completed his earthly ministry, the ancient apostles asked: “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

He answered that this glorious eventuality was not for their day; that it was not for them “to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:6-8); and that the gathering of Israel was, thus, to await the great day of restoration.

Ancient Israel was scattered—”upon all the face of the earth, and also among all nations” (1 Ne. 22:3)—because they forsook the Lord; because they turned from paths of truth and righteousness to worship and serve other gods; because they left the true Church and kingdom of God on earth and put their trust in false systems of religion.

And the scattered remnants of Israel are and shall be gathered when they turn once again to worship the God of Israel; when they begin again to walk in paths of truth and righteousness and to worship and serve *that* God who made heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of waters; when they join again the Church and kingdom of God on earth; when they put their trust in the saving truths of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This gathering has commenced and shall continue until the righteous are assembled into the congregations of the saints in all the nations of the earth. “I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them,” the Lord says, “and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.” (Jer. 23:3.)

Of this glorious day of restoration and gathering, a Nephite prophet said: “The Lord . . . has covenanted with all the house of Israel,” that “the time comes that they shall be restored to the true Church and fold of God”; and that “they shall be gathered home to the lands of their inheritance, and shall be established in all their lands of promise.” (2 Ne. 9:1-2.)

And it was Nephi himself who saw in vision the results of this gathering. He saw that in the last days, “the covenant people of the Lord, . . . were scattered upon all the face of the earth”; and that “the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth”; and that these saints were to be “among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people.” (1 Ne. 14:11-14.)

Now I call your attention to the fact that the gathering of Israel consists of joining the true Church; of coming to a knowledge of the true God and of his saving truths; and of worshiping him in the congregations of the saints in all nations and among all peoples. Please note that the revealed word speaks of the folds of the Lord; of Israel being gathered to the lands of their inheritance; of Israel being established in all their lands of promise; and of there being congregations of the covenant people of the Lord in every nation, speaking every tongue, and among every people when the Lord comes again.

Any person, therefore, who has accepted the restored gospel, and who now seeks to worship the Lord, in his own tongue, and among his own people, and with the saints of his own nation has complied with the law of gathering and is entitled to all of the blessings promised the saints in these last days.

God is no respecter of persons. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a world Church. The gospel is for all men. As Paul said, God “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before

appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him.” (Acts 17:26-27.)

The place of gathering for the Mexican Saints is in Mexico; the place of gathering for the Guatemalan Saints is in Guatemala; the place of gathering for the Brazilian Saints is in Brazil; and so it goes throughout the length and breadth of the whole earth. Japan is for the Japanese; Korea is for the Koreans; Australia is for the Australians; every nation is the gathering place for its own people.

The Book of Mormon teaching is: “There is one God and one Shepherd over all the earth. And the time cometh that he shall manifest himself unto all nations.” (1 Ne. 13:41-42.) The gospel is the same everywhere. It does not matter where we live if we keep the commandments of God, and the commandments are the same in all nations and among all people.

All men everywhere must come unto Christ and love and serve God with all their heart, might, mind, and strength. Service and obedience are essential to salvation, and it is just as important for you to keep the commandments as it is for me; it is just as important for your sons to go on missions as it is for mine. All of us must be clean and pure and upright; we must develop in our souls the attributes of godliness until we become like the Lord.

The talents and abilities of the saints of God are needed among their own people and with their own kindred. You are and should be the leaders of the Church here. It is your responsibility to do the missionary work in your own nation. You already know the language and customs of the people and are in a position to say to them: “Come follow me; let us learn and live the gospel together; we are brothers; the Lord wants us in his kingdom; the kingdom is here; let us both be part of the gathering of Israel in our choice and favored land.”

Now I rejoice with you that I hold membership in the Church and kingdom of God on earth. I know the work we are engaged in is true; that the fulness of the everlasting gospel has been restored; that Moses did in fact bring again the keys of the gathering of Israel; and that the Lord has set his hand the second time to gather his people into his Church and kingdom in all the lands whither he has driven them.

I rejoice with you that we are members of that choice and favored family, and I know that if we keep the commandments we shall live forever in celestial glory in that Eternal Family which is Israel. That all of us may so do is my prayer.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who I repeat is the God of Israel and the God of the whole earth. Even so, Amen.