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Remarks and Dedication of the Fayette, New York, Buildings

President Spencer W. Kimball



Spencer W. Kimball, "Remarks and Dedication of the Fayette, New York, Buildings," *Ensign*, May 1980, 54



My beloved brothers and sisters, I am grateful for this opportunity. It was a thrilling experience to speak to you a few minutes ago from the Peter Whitmer farm home where the Church was organized. It is now an inspiring experience to be in this lovely chapel in Fayette, Seneca County, New York, because it represents something of the marvelous progress made by the Church during the 150 years of its history.

My brothers and sisters, today we not only celebrate the Sesquicentennial of the organization of the Church, but also the greatest event in human history since the birth of Christ on this day 1,980 years ago. Today is Easter Sunday.

Immediately following the semiannual conference last October, Sister Kimball and I accompanied President and Sister N. Eldon Tanner and others to the Holy Land for the dedication of the Orson Hyde Memorial Gardens on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. During the few days we were there, we retraced the footsteps of Jesus.

We saw Bethlehem and Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, and the River Jordan. We visited the Mount of Transfiguration and Jacob's Well, the Garden of Gethsemane and Golgotha. We sat and meditated in the empty tomb. And then we walked out of the tomb into the sunlit garden where early in the morning the angels spoke to the two Marys and said, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen" ([Luke 24:5-6](#)).

That is my witness to all within the sound of my voice. He is risen! He lived. He died. He was resurrected—the Son of God, who opened the door of immortality to all men and the blessings of eternal life to those who live his commandments. Of his reality and divinity, I add my solemn testimony this beautiful Easter Sabbath.

In the proclamation just read by Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, we have reviewed briefly the events of the coming forth of the Church as a restoration of the original church established by the Savior himself when he was upon the earth. We have borne witness to the world of the miraculous and wonderful events which preceded that restoration, and also we have spoken of the remarkable progress of the work in the years that have followed. For 85 of those 150 years, I have been a living witness of this progress.

Knowing full well that before long, in the natural course of events, I must stand before the Lord and give an accounting of my words, I now add my personal and solemn testimony that God, the Eternal Father, and the risen Lord, Jesus Christ, appeared to the boy Joseph Smith. I testify that the Book of Mormon is a translation of an ancient record of nations who once lived in this western hemisphere, where they prospered and became mighty when they kept the commandments of God, but who were largely destroyed through terrible civil wars when they

forgot God. This book bears testimony of the living reality of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior and Redeemer of mankind.

I testify that the holy priesthood, both Aaronic and Melchizedek, with authority to act in the name of God, was restored to the earth by John the Baptist, and Peter, James, and John; that other keys and authority were subsequently restored; and that the power and authority of those various divine bestowals are among us today. Of these things I bear solemn witness to all within the sound of my voice. I promise in the name of the Lord that all who give heed to our message, and accept and live the gospel, will grow in faith and understanding. They will have an added measure of peace in their lives and in their homes and by the power of the Holy Ghost will speak similar words of testimony and truth. I do this and leave my blessing upon you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

I now invite you to join me in a prayer of dedication:

Dedicatory Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. On this anniversary day, we are met where The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized under revelation from thee 150 years ago. Our hearts are filled with gratitude for thy marvelous blessings, so generously bestowed. As we review the past, we are subdued in contemplating the works of those who have gone before us, and particularly the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum who, with their life's blood, sealed their testimonies of the sacred things which occurred in this area.

We are grateful for all who have labored with faith in the nations of the earth to bring the Church to its present stature. Standing today at this milestone of history, we look with assurance to the future. We know that with thy direction thy work will roll on for the blessing of thy children of all generations and throughout the earth; and that where there are now hundreds there will be thousands; and that, whereas thy work is established today in many nations, it must and will roll forth over the whole earth until men everywhere shall bow the knee and give homage to thee and thy Son.

We plead with thee, our Father, that thou wilt touch the hearts of the rulers of nations that they will open their doors to thy servants until truth shall cover the earth as the waters cover the mighty deep.

Today, dear Father, in the authority of the holy priesthood, which thou hast given us, we dedicate these structures which stand on the farm of Peter Whitmer, Sr.: the restored log farmhouse, with its furnishings, as a reminder of the humble beginnings from which thy mighty work has grown; the later Whitmer home, as a place of residence for thy servants who will labor here as missionaries among the many strangers who will be attracted to this place of history; and this beautiful chapel and visitors' center, in which we meet today, that it may be a place of sacred worship, a place of instruction, a sanctuary from the world, and a place of hospitality to the scores of thousands who will come here as visitors. May thy Holy Spirit abide here. May thy protecting power be made manifest in the preservation of these important scenes of history. May knowledge of thee increase and testimony of thy divine Son strengthen in the hearts of the many who will come with interest and depart with added faith and knowledge.

Father in Heaven, on this day of dedication we pray for thy servants and thy people everywhere throughout the earth. Bless those who walk in righteousness, and let thy Holy Spirit be with them. Strengthen within the heart of each a renewed sense of dedication to thee and thy everlasting truth.

We love thee, our Father. We love thy holy Son. We give our witness to the world concerning him and thee, and ask that thou wilt accept of our thanks, our labors, and our love, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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