



Type: Magazine Article

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## The Lamanites Are Progressing

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Source: *Improvement Era*, Vol. 56, No. 6 (June 1953), pp. 432–435

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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**Abstract:** A testimony of the redemption of the Lamanites. Kimball gives examples of certain "Lamanites" who are progressing in the Church.

ture Committee" of the Church who are authorized to approve expenditures as they are required by the departments of the Church. This committee meets once a week. It is composed of the First Presidency, three members of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. And over the fifteen years that I have had the privilege of being a member of this committee, I have been inspired and thrilled by the careful appropriating of Church funds. Civil government could well afford to follow the example of the expenditure committee of the priesthood government of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What are the tithes used for? By revelation they are used to assist the poor, to erect temples and meeting-houses, for the maintenance of temples and missions, for the erection of school buildings, seminaries, and institute buildings, and for the other operating expenses that are necessary. Tithing may be used for the purchase of land. In the 42nd section and 35th verse of the Doctrine and Covenants, it is indicated surpluses might be used to purchase land for the public good of the people.

The Prophet Malachi declared:

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. (Malachi 3:10.)

I am not going to say to you, because you pay your tithing that tomorrow morning there may be a Cadillac in your garage or that you may all be blessed with a mansion in which to live. That promise I cannot make.

The Lord promised us that he would bless the obedient with the necessities of life. He will bless us with the inspiration to wisely handle our income and use it in a thrifty way to the end that we will be able to meet our obligations.

In many wards of the Church where chapels are in the course of construction, members are paying and have paid more tithing than they had previously, which is an evidence that the Lord directly, and through the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, blesses us in our temporal affairs when we obey the commandment of tithing.

At the time President Lorenzo Snow took over the administration of the priesthood government of the Lord Jesus Christ, it was at the end of a terrible period in its history. The Church had been prosecuted and persecuted with reference to the question of plural marriage. Its properties had been confiscated; money was borrowed at the rate of twelve percent interest; and the total income of the Church at the time President Snow came in was required to pay the interest on these loans.

The Prophet supplicated God mightily for divine direction and received a revelation indicating to him that if the people of the Church would obey the law of tithing their lands would be productive, the rains would come, and the financial problem of the Church would be solved. The promise of the Lord was kept through the obedience of the people; the credit of the Church was saved; and today it rests upon a strong financial foundation.

There are spiritual blessings—the blessing of faith, the blessing of testimony, the divine power that motivates

you and me to meet this divine commandment and out of which comes spiritual understanding, and that greatly needed virtue to be honest with our Father in heaven, honest with ourselves, and honest with our fellow men.

Happiness comes, and full fellowship in that we enjoy the association of our Heavenly Father's Holy Spirit. These are rewards of which Malachi spoke.

Brigham Young declared:

If we live our religion we will be willing to pay tithing. We are not our own, we are bought with a price, we are the Lord's; our time, our talents, our gold and silver, our wheat and fine flour, our wine and our oil, our cattle, and all there is on this earth that we have in our possession is the Lord's, and he requires one-tenth of this for the building up of His Kingdom. Whether we have much or little, one-tenth should be paid in for tithing. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, 1943 edition, 176.)

In conclusion, my brethren and sisters, if there is any question in your minds about this divine law, I ask you to follow the admonition of the resurrected Savior wherein he counseled as follows:

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:16-17.)

I promise you as God lives, through the spirit of the Holy Ghost, that testimony will come into your hearts that the law of tithing is a divine law, and it is necessary to carry on the functions of the priesthood government of the Lord Jesus Christ.

May God give us the strength to obey all of his commandments, that we might enjoy salvation and a place in the celestial kingdom, I humbly ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sixth Session, Monday Morning, April 6, 1953



Spencer W. Kimball

## The LAMANITES Are Progressing

by Spencer W. Kimball

OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE

faith and prayers. This morning I am missing from our number Elder John A. Widtsoe, our beloved brother, and I pay tribute again to him. I am grateful for his rich life of devotion to the Church and the delightful association we have had with him.

It shall be my great pleasure to sustain and to receive into my heart and into our Council, Brother Adam S. Bennion, whose life of rich and varied ex-

perience, his wealth of training, and his stalwart faith will bring to the people of the Church great blessings, and I am sure that you will love him.

Much has been said in this conference about missionary work. Nearly every speaker has referred to it. I am tremendously interested in the missionary work of the Church, both foreign and stake. I wish to direct my remarks this morning more toward the stake mis-

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA

**M**Y BELOVED brothers and sisters: I pray for the blessings of the Lord, as have those who have spoken before me, and I enlist an interest in your

sionary service and of that work, the minority program, and of the minority program, particularly the Lamanite phase.

The Lamanite is the forgotten man, and though there has been much progress and though there have been friends raised up to him, he still is the forgotten man and is in need of assistance. It seems to me that if the Lord Jesus Christ were here with us in person, he would emphasize the work among these people. I remember that as early as July 1828, the Lord said:

And again, verily I say unto you, O inhabitants of the earth: I the Lord am willing to make these things known unto all flesh. (D. & C. 1:34.)

Nevertheless, my work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people—

And to the Nephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, through the testimony of their fathers— And this testimony shall come to the knowledge of the Lamanites, and the Lemuelites, and the Ishmaelites, who dwindled in unbelief because of the iniquity of their fathers, whom the Lord has suffered to destroy their brethren the Nephites, because of their iniquities and their abominations.

And for this very purpose are these plates preserved, which contain these records—that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people;

And that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and that they might know the promises of the Lord, and that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name, and that through their repentance they might be saved. Amen. (*Ibid.*, 3:16-20.)

A little later in the same year, 1828, the Lord seemed to have this on his mind, as he dictated:

And I said unto them, [the holy prophets of the Book of Mormon] that it should be granted unto them according to their faith in their prayers;

. . . that my gospel . . . might come unto their brethren the Lamanites, and also all that had become Lamanites because of their dissensions. (*Ibid.*, 10:47-48.)

In September 1830, the Lord said:

And now, behold, I say unto you that you shall go unto the Lamanites and preach my gospel unto them; and inasmuch as they receive thy teachings thou shalt cause my church to be established among them. . . . (*Ibid.*, 28:8.)

That same month, through the Prophet Joseph, the Lord said to the Whitmers to go with Oliver Cowdery,

. . . for I have given unto him power to build up my church among the Lamanites. (*Ibid.*, 30:6.)

And again in October of that year, he revealed, "And Ziba Peterson also shall go with them," that is, with Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, and Parley P. Pratt, "and I myself will go with them and be in their midst; and I am

their advocate with the Father, and nothing shall prevail against them." (*Ibid.*, 32:3.)

Then in March 1831, through the Prophet there came a revelation to Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, and Laman Copley—

But before the great day of the Lord shall come, Jacob shall flourish in the wilderness, and the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose. (*Ibid.*, 49:24.)

And then I am remembering the prayer of the Prophet Joseph in the Kirtland Temple in 1836 and his reference to these people again, and he supplicates the Father,

And cause that the remnants of Jacob, who have been cursed and smitten because of their transgression, be converted from their wild and savage condition to the fulness of the everlasting gospel. (*Ibid.*, 109:65.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith in 1841 was receiving a great many Indian chiefs and their groups in Nauvoo. They came over on the ferryboat and two flatboats to see the Prophet Joseph. And he says:

I accordingly went down, and met Keokuk, Kis-ku-kosh, Appenoose, and about one hundred chiefs and braves of those tribes, with their families. \* \* \* I conducted them to the meeting grounds in the grove, and instructed them in many things which the Lord had revealed unto me concerning their fathers, and the promises that were made concerning them in the Book of Mormon. I advised them to cease killing each other. \* \* \*

Keokuk replied that he had a Book of Mormon at his wigwam which I had given him some years before. "I believe," said he, "you are a great and good man; I look rough, but I also am a son of the Great Spirit. I have heard your advice—we intend to quit fighting, and follow the good talk you have given us." (*D.H.C.* 4:401-402.)

Now, all through the Doctrine and Covenants, all through those early years, it would seem that the Lord intended that the work among these great people should not be hampered or delayed but should go forward without any delay.

President John Taylor said, and I have quoted this before,

The work among the Lamanites must not be postponed, if we desire to retain the approval of God. Thus far we have been content simply to baptize them, let them run wild again, but this must continue no longer. The same devoted effort, the same care and instruction, the same organization and priesthood must be introduced and maintained among the house of Lehi as amongst those of Israel gathered from Gentile nations. As yet God has been doing all and we comparatively nothing. He has led many of them to us and they have been baptized, and now we must instruct them further, organize them into churches with proper presidencies, attach them to our stakes, organizations, etc., in one word, treat them exactly in these respects, as we would and do treat our white brethren. (*The Gospel Kingdom*, John Taylor, 247.)

Many changes have come since those days. Nations have been annihilated; lands and forests and streams have been appropriated; royalty has been humbled; and great peoples have been subdued and brought to extremes in want, poverty, ignorance, superstition, and deprivation. They have been scattered and driven according to prophecy. They have been hissed and spurned, and the full weight of a big nation has pressed down upon them.

But a new day is dawning. The Lamanites are putting on their beautiful garments; they have made much progress with our limited assistance and much on their own. We have the priesthood among them. Many hundreds are occupied now in positions of responsibility. The Church has been established among them, to a limited degree, and we hope that it will continue. There are Lamanite wards and branches in many parts of the Church. In the islands of the sea, of course, this is a program extending over a century. But here among the Lamanites, as Brother Cowley said so beautifully last night in our Sunday School conference, it is rather a new thing. We have baptized this year 2500 Lamanites in the Church, and we have now approximately 45,000 of them on the records of the Church. We have in the El Paso Third Ward a Lamanite bishop, a high priest in the Church, and you should have seen the tears of joy of his people as he was installed in this high and important place.

We have a Pima Indian bishop in the Papago Ward in the Maricopa Stake, a forty-five-year-old man who runs a grade A dairy and operates a 1200 acre farm. He has been on the tribal council, and is a man of power and influence.

In the Mexican Mission we have the advisory council, twelve strong, faithful men. We have district presidencies and branch presidencies, and it was the privilege of Brother McConkie and myself in November to meet with many of these groups of branch presidencies, and in their very humble circumstances they sat and with their books and pencils were taking notes of the suggestions which we gave them as to the conduct of branches and districts in the organization and teaching of their people. These branch presidencies and these Lamanite bishops are interviewing people as to their worthiness and they have the power to withhold or to give temple blessings and other Church privileges to their members.

All through the Lamanite world we have leaders, and they are emerging now with greater strength and power. We have in the Mexican Mission forty-five young people who are filling full-term missions in addition to the fifty white boys and girls from other areas. There soon will be a preponderance of Spanish-speaking missionaries in that field. They are being supported by the special missionary fund of the Presidency of the Church and by individual donors who are helping them.

(Continued on following page)

Down in the Navajo area, we have branch presidencies now who are conducting sacrament meetings, who are leading, who are speaking, who are praying, and we have "singing mothers" groups among them. It is glorious to see them growing and expanding and coming into their own. The work is developing among them. A great need is missionaries. In Mexican cities we met in groups where we had as many as two or three hundred people, hungering and thirsting for the word of the Lord, and three-fourths of them were not members of the Church.

We have branches down in Navajo land and Hopi land, with 105, 140, 160 members of the Church carrying on in normal fashion. This coming from what were termed the primitive Indians yesterday is a great advance, and we are grateful for it.

Temple work is going forward. Through the work of Sister Ivy Huish Jones, wife of the mission president in the Spanish-American Mission, 10,000 sheets of family groups have been prepared, and all through the Spanish-speaking missions the work is going forward.

It would do your heart good to see numbers of Lamanite brothers and sisters sealed in the temple. Seventeen couples in San Antonio alone have been sealed in the temple; fifty-three in this small El Paso Ward have been to the temple and had their endowments; 281 people in the Mexican Mission, coming as far as a thousand miles, have had their endowments in the holy temple. It is a great joy to see the Hawaiian Temple as I saw it one day, filled with Japanese members doing their work, and all of the workers in the temple were Lamanites—Samoans and Hawaiians.

The question is asked me nearly every day when the Indian program is mentioned: Will they stay with the Church? Will they retain their faith? Or, will they go back "to the blanket?" And I want to tell you that few will return to the blanket when they have had their opportunities in education and the gospel.

President Golden Buchanan of the Southwest Indian Mission wrote me this: "We have had no excommunications, and with the exception of two or three, none have apostatized nor joined other churches, nor gone back to their own church. . . . It is my opinion that our loss through apostasy is probably smaller than any other mission or group of people."

Their superstitions are giving way. The medicine man is being replaced by the administering elders, and also the M.D.'s. They are taking inoculations and vaccinations; they are going to hospitals for their babies. Twenty-three hundred Navajo boys and girls are up at the Intermountain Indian school at Brigham City. They are all taken care of with chest X-rays and complete physical examinations. They are learning

that there are germs in the world, and by avoiding them they are increasing their health.

Superstitions held them down but they are giving way and twins are now permitted to live. That was not possible yesterday. Twins were a bad omen, and they were not allowed to live but were starved or otherwise permitted to die. But today twins are living. Down in Arizona the other day two boys whose names were Franklin Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie Gallerito were dancing for tourists, and you can guess their ages by their names.

Marriage has come to have a different significance. The first formal modern wedding was performed in Yakima recently. One of our young couples was married by one of our elders. The Yakima paper stated it was "the first formal wedding in the history of the Yakima Indian tribes."

Their burials have changed, that is, they are changing. It is a gradual process. Instead of cremation, they are being buried. A few years ago with President Flake, I visited Chief Baha Alchesay, the last hereditary chief of the 3800 Apaches in Arizona. He set a pattern for his Apache people when he asked for Christian burial. He had a great funeral; the governor of the state of Arizona was the speaker, and it was conducted by a Protestant minister of the church to which he belonged.

The Indians wept as they followed him to his grave. They shot no favorite horse; the widow did not clip her hair; no food or water was left in the casket or near it. He was buried in a blue serge suit with a white shirt and with a four-in-hand tie. He was the last of the hereditary chiefs. He did not put the mantle of his chiefship upon his son, as had his father upon him. The work now is carried on in a democratic way by the tribal council groups who are elected by their members.

The Apaches are quite well-to-do, and the Navajos have come into some money, and the Utes out here have received some money; and it is the privilege now of the missionaries and all of us to help teach them to use their money in beneficial ways for themselves instead of squandering it.

The Indian now has the franchise. Theoretically he has had it ever since World War I, but until last year it was not a reality in Arizona, where the greatest number of the Indians reside. Now they may vote. In the Shonto precinct last fall there were twenty-six voters and of them, twenty-two were Navajo votes. Of the election board, five out of six were Navajos, three men and two women. It was their first chance to vote for the President of the United States. There were 768 Navajos registered last year. About a quarter of the Apaches were registered for the election.

I should like to say that Dr. George A. Boyce is doing a good work with

the 2300 Indian boys and girls at Brigham City. One hundred and seven of them are Latter-day Saints, and you saw ten or fifteen of them here last night at the Sunday School presentation. One little boy wrote at election time:

The President promised to protect and defend the government of the United States. He said he would try to stop war and live in freedom. This is what he said. I hope he will.

Living advantages have increased. There are refrigerators in many homes, and there are also electric lights. Fourteen communities now are being considered for gas in the Navajo reservation—gas and electric lights in a Navajo hogan! It is coming. About one out of every four hogans is said to have a radio in it now.

In Gallup they have a radio station, and they give an hour a week in the Navajo language to send their messages to the people out in the hinterlands, and every day fifteen-minute-broadcasts are heard.

This, of course, is old for many of the Lamanites in other areas, but it is new here.

Employment is increasing. Thousands have found in their service in the war that it was good to sleep between sheets, and to have three good, varied meals a day and to have good clothes and money in their pockets, and to have all the advantages that white people have, and they have come back to the reservations dissatisfied and now thousands of them are working on railroads, in the mines, on the farms; and this brings to us another great opportunity to teach them the gospel as they come among us, instead of shunning them as many do.

The Indian converts are firm and steadfast. One Lamanite sister was in a group of women sitting together, and something came up about what the bishop was going to require of them, and a white sister said, "Well, we just are not going to do it, are we, Sister Poogy?" And Sister Poogy said, "Whatever the authorities ask us to do, that I am going to do."

They attend their meetings faithfully. Brother McConkie met 1144 on the Navajo reservation down there a few months ago when he was visiting the mission. They preach; they teach all phases of the gospel; they teach the Word of Wisdom; they teach chastity; they teach the restoration; they call the people to repentance; and they are living the commandments well.

And I could tell you many stories about their honesty and their integrity, about their cleanliness of living, about their love for the program of the Church.

Brothers and sisters, there is much I should like to say to you this morning about this great program, but time will not permit, but I would like to close with one or two further thoughts, and then I am through.

Here is a letter from a good brother who had been in the Church only months. Here is real devotion to the Church. He wrote:

Dear Friend: I am going to write to you for about Miss Mary ..... She is in school at ..... place, and she writes me a letter and she finds that they don't let her go to Mormon Church. Do you know why they don't let her go to our Church, and what can I do for her for she can go to Mormon Church, because I ask her and she my girl? You know we belong Mormon Church. Will you please write to me and let me know and maybe you know what I do for it? I am sure like it for her to go to Mormon Church. She said they let her go to another kind of Church. You know her. She was down with last month ago when is baptized. I just want to let you know about why they don't let her go to Mormon Church. Answer soon. Please.

The Lord bless the Lamanite people. They are a great people. They are

intelligent, and I repeat my theme song: The difference between them and us is opportunity. It is your privilege and mine through education, through employment and every other means, and particularly through bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ in all kindness and brotherliness to them, to give them that opportunity which will make of them enlightened, faithful sons and daughters of God with all of the blessings which are promised to them.

I pray with one of our Lamanite sisters, who pleaded, "Heavenly Father, please bless the missionaries, that they won't get discouraged with us Indians, and please bless the Indians that they will always listen." This is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

It is not humanly possible for us to become perfect and to keep all the commandments of God, but we are not talking about a human institution. We are talking about what the Apostle Paul said "is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16), and it is by the power of God that these things are done, as we place ourselves in a position for these principles to operate upon us.

It is the purpose of the Lord to bring us all back into his presence, if we will keep his commandments and enter into covenant with him and walk uprightly before him and serve him and keep his commandments all the days of our lives. Now, I am sure everyone here every day needs some repentance, and we need to have a remission of our sins, which comes by virtue of the fact that we repent and that we have been baptized into the Church. And above all, we need the Spirit and power of God. The older I grow, the more I am convinced that the chief thing that we do need, and the highest achievement in the world to which we can attain, is to be guided by the Spirit of God. We can do that by keeping his commandments and in no other way that I know of. The Lord has outlined that most wonderfully in the ninety-third section of the Doctrine and Covenants, referring to the operation of that principle and these principles of the gospel that have been given to us. He speaks of the reference in John, to the Lord Jesus Christ as having become perfect by receiving grace upon grace and advancing from grace to grace until he had a fulness. That is set forth as the method, the progress toward salvation and exaltation in the presence of God, and it is held up as the method by which we may progress.

We will obtain the advantage of these principles by having faith. In our first principle, it is not the abstract principle of faith that we hold to as the first principle of the gospel, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the only true faith in him is a faith in him as the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, who atoned for our sins, who opened the tomb and instituted the resurrection from the dead. He is the light and the life of the world, the Lord omnipotent. When we have true faith in him, all necessary things are possible, and it is by the power of God, through this faith, that we are to be perfected and made fit to come back into the presence of our God. We need that faith every day in our personal conduct, in overcoming our shortcomings, in keeping the commandments, in being forgiven for our transgressions, in having an increase of the Holy Spirit with us to guide us and direct us.

Every principle requires faith. I was very much edified by Bishop Wirthlin's reference to the law of tithing and the appeal that we should pay tithing. I think that is a good illustration of this principle of faith. I think when people say they haven't money enough

*(Continued on following page)*

## Perfection Through Obedience

by *George Q. Morris*

ASSISTANT TO THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE **George Q. Morris**



**M**Y DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS: I rejoice in being with you here this morning. I have been very much interested in Brother Kimball's references to the Lamanite people, and I recall a beautiful scene up on the borders of the Dominion of Canada, a winding river with a background of forest and soft, green sloping banks, where a Mohawk Indian, dressed in white, baptized his family into the Church of Jesus Christ.

I sincerely pray that the Lord may direct me to say that which he would have me say. I rejoice in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the power of God unto salvation, and what it is doing for the Lamanites, it is doing for all people who will accept it.

There is a statement in the scriptures made by the Apostle Paul, at least so translated,

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. (Hebrews 6:1.)

I haven't time to deal with the various versions of this passage except to say, of course, it doesn't mean that we can discard any of the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we cannot, after joining the Church, leave behind and discard the principles and ordinances

that we call the first principles in the articles of our faith. The rendering of this passage by the Prophet Joseph Smith in the inspired version is, "Therefore not leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection." I believe we should be more cognizant of the fact that we need the first principles of the gospel every day of our lives. It is by these principles that we live.

They are: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. By these two principles and the principles involved in these two ordinances we come into the Church, and it is my opinion that it is by the operation of these principles that we stay in the Church, and that we grow in the Church. Without them we could not remain faithful, and with them, we may advance to salvation and perfection through the power of the Lord.

It is sometimes said it is humanly impossible to keep all the commandments of God. The Apostle said we should go on to perfection, and the Lord said in his Sermon on the Mount,

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matt. 5:48.)