



## PRESIDENT WILLIAM NOBLE WAITE'S REPORTS IN GENERAL CONFERENCE

October 4, 1952

Last October the presidents of the stakes in the Los Angeles Temple area received a commission from the First Presidency. We were called into session. President [Stephen L] Richards instructed us that morning, and then at the close of the meeting, he gave out this information to the presidents: That it is customary in the temple areas for people to make contributions to the temple and “we have decided that possibly a million dollars would be your fair share.” Now, President Richards, you do not know how nearly you knocked out fourteen stake presidents with that statement.

We kept our chins up and it was only afterwards when we got out, and we confided in each other that really we were staggered. But we had received the commission, and so our instructions before we left were to make a plan, organize, and submit the plan, and get the approval of the First Presidency and then we would be given the green light to go forward.

We made such a plan, when we got back to Los Angeles, and we submitted it. The First Presidency made some changes and eliminated some of the suggestions we had made, and the plan was finally adopted and as a result we started to raise the million dollars.

It was suggested that we indicate to the people, first of all, how much they should give, that is, how much it was necessary for them to give. We broke it down on a stake level and allocated the quota on a per capita basis to each of the stakes and missions in California.

We put out the literature, the little pamphlet that aided and assisted in the raising of the money, and then we decided we would launch the campaign on February 4th. President McKay agreed to come and start that meeting.

There were 1,200 people, those were the leaders, the stake presidencies and the high council, the stake clerks, the bishops and their counselors, and their clerks, in attendance from all of the stakes and the missions in the temple area. We called upon each of the stake presidents, and when this plan was submitted to President McKay, he thought, maybe, knowing stake presidents as he does, they would take too long to speak, all twelve of them or all fourteen of them, but they were given a minute and a half each. Of course there was a little method in our moving in that direction, because we asked one

or two that we knew were very enthusiastic to speak first, and they committed their people. Then, of course, we sandwiched some of the others who were not too enthusiastic. By the time we got through they all committed themselves to reach the quota, and that was what we were after.

Everything went along very smoothly, but I want the priesthood of this Church to know, that with all of the organization and all of the planning that the stake presidents did, the whole thing would have fallen flat if it had not been for the soul-inspiring discourse of President McKay. He electrified those 1,200 people, and they went out of that meeting with a determination in their hearts that they were going to consummate that commission that was given by the First Presidency. I talked with any number of them, and they said, "We just cannot fail. We will raise the money."

In the plan was this method, that each stake president first would give his fair share. To sell a program you must sell yourself, and the stake president naturally would have to give and if he expected the people over whom he presided to give generously, it was necessary for him to do so. And then his counselors and then the stake clerks, and then we called in the members of the high council, and each in turn gave his generous fair share. We called in the bishops and their counselors, and their ward clerks. We had the leadership, and then we said, "Go out into the wards, and sell this program and give the people the opportunity of receiving great blessings by contributing generously to the temple." And they did.

We told President McKay in April we would be to Conference and report to him and that we hoped to be able to report that we had raised the million dollars. I think he was quoted in the last Conference as saying that we had raised, that is we had pledged and promised to pay one million six hundred fifty thousand dollars at that time.

Since these pledges have been made, some people seem to be a bit apprehensive as to whether when a person gave a generous pledge he would live up to his pledge. It is our responsibility to follow it up and see that they do in every ward. In every ward in every one of these stakes there is an assistant ward clerk, who has a record of every giver, and a record of how much he has paid. When a person gets behind, he is tactfully reminded of the fact that he is a little behind, and that he is depriving himself of a lot of blessings when he fails to pay the things that help to move the work of the Lord along, and the money comes in.

This organization is set up in every ward. I should like to report now to you, that we are ahead of schedule in the temple area. We have paid in excess of a quarter of a million dollars in cash, and we are better than forty thousand dollars ahead of the schedule.

I want to assure the First Presidency and the General Authorities of the Church and the priesthood of the Church, that our people in the temple area will continue to respond as they have done, and we will pay every dollar of the \$1,650,000, and not just a million. Not only that, but we have issued ten thousand pieces of literature to pass out to the newcomers into the area and to the converts that have been made. We want everyone to have an opportunity including the individuals who did not give as much possibly as they would have liked to give at the time, together with the inactive ones who felt at

the time that they could not give. So we feel definitely that we will raise the \$1,650,000 and if any of the brethren have had any fears or apprehension in regard to that, we should like at this time, to allay those fears, because we feel that we are going to raise that amount of money.

. . . I should like to say, that possibly no section in the Church is blessed with a greater number of expert mechanics than we have in that area, and they are very anxious, our people are, to contribute of their time, and their talents, in addition to the money they have contributed. We hope they can be given that opportunity; we appreciate there are difficulties in connection with it, but I hope the situation will not get so serious that our people will be deprived of the opportunity and the blessing that will come to them by getting their hands in the mud and plaster and working as they would like to work in the construction of the temple. . . .

We are enthusiastic, my brethren. We are very happy and very proud, and we are very thankful that the First Presidency and the other General Authorities of the Church are building a temple in our area. I am sure it is going to do a great deal of good in Southern California.

I vision a spiritual renaissance in that area. Our people will be spiritually uplifted. It will be a great blessing. We want you people to know that we are happy. We are enthusiastic. We are resolute in our determination to fulfill the commission which was given to us. Unflinchingly and unhesitatingly, we shall move forward doing everything in our power to see that everything goes in accordance with the plan of the First Presidency of the Church.

In closing, I should like to bear my testimony that I know that this is the work of the Lord. I know that we are being guided and directed by men of God, and all we need to do, brethren, is to follow the counsel and never become so wise that we think we know more than those who give the plan for the direction of this great work, and if we get into line and follow the counsel, there is no question as to the outcome.

God help us to be true to the faith, to magnify the priesthood that we bear, and to assist in rolling the work forward! May God bless us in our determination to do this, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.<sup>1</sup>

## October 2, 1954

Humbly, my brethren, I accept the assignment given me, and pray for inspiration of the Lord to direct my remarks, that they may be appropriate and intelligent. This is an inspiring sight to see this Tabernacle filled to overflowing with the priesthood of the Church. President McKay has asked me, as chairman of the Temple Committee in Los Angeles, to review for the priesthood of the Church the progress of the temple. I am very happy to make this report.

Three years ago today the First Presidency assigned the stakes of southern California the responsibility of raising one million dollars to aid in the construction of the Los Angeles Temple. We accepted the

challenge, and with the approval of President McKay and his counselors, the campaign was launched on February 4, 1952. Within two months of this time the people of the Los Angeles Temple area had pledged \$1,648,000. In April of that same year, we began our collections. Quarterly reports were made regularly to the Expenditures Committee of the Church. The quarter ending September 30 of 1954, that was the day before yesterday, showed that we had remitted to the Presiding Bishopric of the Church \$1,040,000. By the time the temple is ready for dedication, we will have raised every dollar pledged of the \$1,648,000.

Today all of the presidents of the southern California area met with the First Presidency and unani- mously accepted the proposal made by them that we finish the job. I think I would be remiss in my responsibility if I were not to recognize my brethren, the presidents of the Los Angeles Temple area. We have been very close to each other. Together in a spirit of love and harmony we are resolved to do our duty. [Names of 15 stakes with their presidents]

May I at this time relate an incident that occurred in the South Gate Ward of the South Los Angeles Stake at the time the campaign was launched? A young boy of deacon age—he was a deacon—came to his bishop, Ivan Magnusson, and asked for the privilege of making a pledge for the temple. The bishop gave him one of the little souvenir folders with a personal pledge card inserted. In a few minutes the boy returned with his card. When the bishop noticed the amount, he thought the boy had placed his decimal in the wrong place. But the boy assured him the amount was within his reach. He delivered papers and when this job failed he cut lawns. Little jobs came his way. The money from these was turned over to his bishop. I am happy tonight to report after 2½ years this boy has completely paid the \$150 he pledged toward building a temple to the Lord. Another incident of love and devotion: an elderly lady, nearly blind, pledged \$100 and paid it out of her meager savings—another \$100 pledged, and she paid it. The third pledge card for \$100 seemed far too much. But within a short time it was paid. Today she is on her fourth pledge of \$100. She said to me a week ago, “I hope and pray the Lord will bless me and preserve my life until I can have the privilege of going through the Los Angeles Temple.” There are thousands of cases just like these. Children by the hundreds have pledged generously. There is a fervor and a spiritual tone that characterized the people of the temple area. . . .

The angel Moroni statue is completed and is being shipped to southern California. It will be placed on top of the temple as a reminder to the world of the vitality of Mormonism and the ultimate destiny of this Church.

To the people in southern California who are listening, we have pledged to the First Presidency that we will complete the pledge made in your behalf. We cannot and will not fail! The forces of southern California will be mobilized and with the devotion and generosity of our people this chal- lenge will be met.

We are growing rapidly in southern California. We appreciate deeply the missionary opportuni- ties that are ours, and we are ready to meet them. People by the thousands, outside the Church, are

interested in the Los Angeles Temple. They are asking if an opportunity will be afforded them to visit the "Mormon Temple." They have been assured they will. We want to take advantage of their interest and through the missionary effort in southern California bring to them the gospel message. . . .

I testify to you that I know that this is the gospel of Jesus Christ. I sat in the audience today when Bishop Isaacson was speaking about the life of Christ and cried like a child! I am thankful that I know he is the Savior of the world. We are guided and directed by Brethren who are divinely appointed to the positions they hold—President McKay and his able counselors, and the Quorum of the Twelve, and all of the General Authorities of the Church. God help us to sustain them and do something about it in the stakes and wards we represent, so that there will be a spiritual uprise in this Church, and we shall be happy because of the good we do, is my prayer and my testimony, and I bear it to you humbly in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.<sup>2</sup>

## Notes

1. William Noble Waite, in Conference Report, October 1952, 75-77.
2. William Noble Waite, in Conference Report, October 1954, 72-74.