

**PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY***Second Counselor in the First Presidency*

The radio audience will be interested to know that notwithstanding the attendance at this conference has been restricted to the officers already named, with the exception of a few seats in the tabernacle in the northeast part of the tabernacle the entire auditorium is filled with representatives of the Priesthood.

**ELDER STEPHEN L RICHARDS***Of The Council of The Twelve Apostles*

I would like to use the limited time available to me at this conference to broadcast a message to the youth of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These young people are not with us in our meetings. Restrictions on travel and other war necessities not only prevent their attendance, but have also hindered the functioning of the several organizations of the Church which are devoted principally to the care and education of the youth. For two years now no general conferences of the young peoples' organizations have been held and these groups have had but limited opportunities to meet in stake capacities. I want them to know, however, that they have not been forgotten and that the Church is now as always most ardently devoted to their welfare and advancement.

**PROVISION FOR CARE AND TRAINING OF YOUTH**

I believe it is safe to say that no organization has ever made more ample and adequate provision for the care and training of youth than has the restored Church of Christ. Since its organization it has devoted a very major portion of all its efforts to the education and development of children in the home, the school, and the Church. And not only has it provided almost unparalleled opportunities for their education but it has also placed upon youth responsibilities that have seldom, if ever, come to young people of comparable age. This has come about, in part, through the unique organization of the Church, and, in part, through the universal concept of its membership that everyone, old and young alike, who secures a knowledge and testimony of the restored gospel thereby becomes a potential missionary for the dissemination of the truth to all mankind.

Another most unusual circumstance supporting this concept is that all the young men of the Church, almost without exception, have been ordained to the holy Priesthood. Beginning at twelve years of age, all boys of good moral standing pass through three gradations or offices of the Priesthood by the time they reach the age of nineteen, and before they reach their majority nearly all of the young men of the Church come to hold the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood, which is the Priesthood after the order of the Son of God. It is needless to say that these offices of Priesthood bring to the boys obligations and opportunities for service. Through divine revelation there have come specific duties for each order of Priesthood and these duties entail a devotion, a discernment, and wis-

dom that might well become men of far more mature years. So that the Priesthood duties of boys within the Church are not trivial; they call for and promote manliness; and they fully support the premise that the youth can make large contributions to the support of the work of God.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES CARRIED BY THE YOUNG

The history of the Church is replete with such contributions. The Prophet Joseph was but fourteen when he received the first heavenly vision which initiated the work of the restored gospel. He was seventeen when he received the revelation of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. He was twenty-one when he was given the plates for translation, and he had not long passed his twenty-fourth birthday when he caused to be organized the restored Church with its marvelous institutions and a sizable part of the great body of theological doctrine and principle that has undergone the scrutiny of more than a century without discovering a single error in the fundamentals he announced. He lived only fourteen years after the Church was organized and died at an age young enough to have been included within the present draft of young men for military service.

The Prophet's associates in beginning the work of the Church were, with but few exceptions, very young men. Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow, who became presidents of the Church, assumed responsibilities very early in their lives. George A. Smith, grandfather of our present president of the Twelve, was only twenty-two when he was ordained to the apostleship, and our beloved President Grant was not yet twenty-six.

The missionary work of the Church has been carried on principally by young people. For many years the average age of missionaries did not exceed nineteen, and latterly it has scarcely been above twenty until the war made impossible the sending of more young men. The missionary labors of the young people of the Church are too well known to require much comment. I believe that their work measured in terms of devotion to a cause, expenditure of available time and means, and proportionate numbers of the whole group engaged, has fed, if any, counterparts in all history. What these young missionaries have accomplished in bearing God's word to the world would require volumes in the telling, and the appreciation of their efforts in the joy they have brought to the hearts of men, women, and children the world over is of a depth and a nature never to be told. Thousands upon thousands who are the beneficiaries of their unselfish Christ-like ministry rise up all over the land to call them blessed, and generations to come will look back upon them as the source of the most enduring happiness they will ever know.

#### OBLIGATION TO THOSE IN ARMED SERVICES

I cite these things in the hope of making my young friends in the Church more conscious of the part they have to play in this great work of the latter-days. I am cognizant of the fact that the young men of military age are not now available for Church service as they otherwise would be. I must address my remarks chiefly to the boys of pre-induction

age and to the girls. These constitute a large group in the Church, and to them I would like to make a special appeal.

I also acknowledge the necessity of making the fullest possible contribution to the war effort and the country's service. We are impelled, not only by the circumstances, but by our sense of obligation to our own and other boys who are fighting the country's battles to give them the fullest possible cooperation and support in every way in which it is possible to help them. But while this is war and it is probably a good time, as someone has suggested, "to adjourn politics," it is no time to "adjourn" religion. We have a definite obligation to our soldiers who bear the brunt of this terrific ordeal to help preserve the worth-while things for which they are fighting—liberty, morality, and justice, and to try to make the country and the world worth their sacrifice and effort.

I don't need to argue with you, young men and women of the Church, that the true religion of Jesus Christ is essential to make the kind of world which the thoughtful, high-principled, young men of the Church and of America are fighting to establish. You know that they want to come back to a decent society that has not been ruined by crime and moral perversion. You know that they want to come back to sweethearts and girls yet to be sweethearts who are worthy of their fidelity and devotion, and worthy to be true mothers in countless homes yet to be established, and you know that they want to come back to wholesome education, to good opportunities for making a living, and to mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters and dear friends whom they prize more than anything else in the world, and of whom they proudly boast as being the finest, the sweetest, and the most exemplary of all people in the earth.

Now, my first appeal to you young men and women is not to disappoint these gallant fellows who have gone to defend your liberties and the things you prize most. They are counting on you, and I think an enemy bullet would not hurt your soldier brother more than information telling him that in his absence his sister had forsaken the high ideals that he ascribes to noble womanhood, or that his brother had been a cad and lacked the courage and manhood to maintain standards of truth and honor. Young folk, you cannot, you will not, be guilty of such treason against your fighting brothers.

Is it not treason to betray the cause these soldiers support; to turn liberty into licentiousness, to mock the God of the land, to violate the high principles upon which the republic was founded? In the long run could any traitor do more damage than those who violate the sanctity of home, the purity of womanhood, and otherwise corrupt the morals and honor of our national life? You are to live in this country and with society longer than some of us, my young friends. It will be a great source of regret to you, for all your lives to come, if you do not make it a good and decent place to live in.

#### FUTURE MISSIONARY WORK

Now, I do not wish to dwell on the gloomy side of the picture. There is unfortunately much discouraging information and statistical data which

might be presented, but I pass over these items because I indulge the confidence that when my young friends of the Church come to realize the opportunities that lie ahead of them they will devote themselves to making preparations for the future. It is of these opportunities and this preparation that I wish to speak briefly.

Every young man and many young women of the Church can look forward to missionary experience. The Church is essentially a missionary Church, its chief objective being to proclaim and establish the gospel of Jesus Christ among men. As I said before, foreign missionary work has been carried forward largely by young people. At the present time very few young missionaries are in the field and in the course of a few months almost none will be left. It is possible that a good many young men who would, except for military service, have been available for missions, may never now have that opportunity. Upon their return from the war many will take on family responsibilities and be unable to leave their homes for missionary service. In these circumstances, we must look to the group to whom I now speak—young men of pre-draft age and some of our young women, to be our principal missionaries in the near future. I most earnestly hope that this group will prepare themselves for the service. In this preparation I see three chief items which I shall mention.

#### PREPARATION FOR MISSIONARY LABORS

First, young men and young women should make financial preparation. Many are now receiving high wages. I know of nothing better to do with any excess money than to save for a mission. Such purposeful saving will accomplish several things. It will deter excessive spending. It will reduce the temptations which come with excessive spending. It will establish thrift habits. It will retard inflation. It will put purpose into earning, and it will ultimately bring great blessings to many people. From the reports which have come on young people's earnings, I feel warranted in saying that many hundreds of missions could be totally or partially financed by a consistent practice of saving for that purpose.

In this respect, I should like to reinforce counsel which has long been given to parents to pay their debts and put their houses in such financial order that they can contribute to the proclamation of the gospel and the support of missionaries. I well remember numbers of families in the days of economic stress whose bondage in debt and financial difficulties made impossible this worthy attainment for many a Latter-day Saint home.

It is readily conceivable that after the war the Church may have need for and opportunities to use far more missionaries than it has heretofore maintained in the field, although previous numbers have been very great. New fields of labor may be opened and a more kindly reception offered our missionaries in many parts of the world. Some influences which have heretofore made our entry into countries and among people almost impossible may be broken down. I feel that the opportunities of the future may tax our missionary resources to a much extended limit. May all be prepared when the day comes.

The next item that I urge is education—education to expound the

true principles of the mighty cause we have the honor to represent. This education comprehends school learning, gospel understanding, and spiritual development. Boys and girls who contemplate a mission should neglect no opportunities which their facilities afford to acquire good study habits and as much knowledge of history, man, and the universe as they can possibly secure.

I wish to lay stress on the knowledge of gospel doctrine and principle which every missionary should possess. It is true that with the adaptability of youth many missionaries secure a good working knowledge of the gospel after they reach their mission fields. Unfortunately, however, a good deal of time most valuable to the missionaries and those whom they serve is lost in so postponing gospel education. With the facilities which the Church maintains, this equipment could be had before the missionary leaves home. If he would avail himself fully of opportunities offered in Priesthood quorums, Sunday Schools, Mutual Improvement Associations, and other activities, he could if he would, be prepared to present the distinctive messages of the restored gospel clearly and impressively before he reaches his field of labor. He could have practice, too, in the exposition of the gospel, for he would be welcomed into the ranks of those who carry the gospel to our neighbors within the stakes of Zion. Such education and practice would save thousands of dollars expended for missionaries' maintenance during the learning period of their mission. On this matter of gospel education, I should like to ask a question. Will the election, which we are told each one of God's children is to make as to whether or not he will receive the gospel of Christ, be binding upon the one who makes it unless the principles of the gospel have been adequately presented to him clearly and understandingly? I know of no way to secure a presentation that will suffice except through preparation and testimony.

#### TESTIMONY NECESSARY TO SUCCESS IN MISSIONARY WORK

That brings me to the final item in a missionary's equipment—testimony and spiritual influence. Before missionary experience is attained it may be difficult to establish these essentials in the minds and hearts of youth. I shall have to get my young friends to take the word of those who have had opportunity to observe the missionary process, that the spiritual influence of the missionary is the most important converting factor at his disposal. Now spiritual influence is the product of disposition and living. No one ever acquires it who does not want it and live for it. It is in reality the spirit of God manifest through man. We often call it testimony because it is characterized by a deep and abiding conviction of the existence of God and the truth of his gospel. It is the expression of perfect faith and a sincere love for God's children. If our young people could but know its worth, I am sure they would strive for it.

#### HAPPINESS IN WHOLESOME LIVING

To secure spiritual influence is not a joy-killing operation. It is a mistake to think that it robs youth of the zest and beauty of young life.

It puts only one limitation on all the aspirations and desires of youth, and that is to do nothing that is not good. Experience, as well as divine principle, has taught us that there is no enduring happiness except in goodness, and the Church seeks only the lasting happiness of its young people, as well as the old.

So I say to my young friends everywhere—enjoy the happy days of youth. Live life joyously, beautifully, unmarred by the ugliness of sin. Show to the world what good, wholesome living will do for the oncoming generations. Demonstrate your gratitude for good homes, loving families, and great opportunities and prepare for happy days ahead when the army of liberators shall have won the victory and broken down the barriers so that you may go forth as an army of peace and good will to invade the countries of the earth and take to men everywhere the pure, restored gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. God keep and preserve you for that great and holy mission, I humbly pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### ELDER JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

#### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1.)

#### PURPORTED SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS

It has only been a few weeks since I was approached at a stake conference by a good brother who said there was a gentleman there who had a very important message that he wished to present to me, and would I please give him an interview. So the interview was arranged. This man stated that he had been visited by one of the three Nephite disciples, and he told me a very fantastic story. After listening to it patiently until he had finished, I said to him, "If you have had a vision or manifestation, it is your duty to keep it to yourself; it is not for the Church, and I advise you not to repeat it." I hardly think that was the counsel he was seeking.

In the past few months I have received a number of communications from various parts of the Church, from good, honest-thinking people who have made inquiry regarding some purported visions and dreams which are being circulated in all parts of the Church. These inquirers wish to know what my judgment is concerning these purported visions. We have also had certain individuals traveling among our people, prevailing on some of the bishops to let them hold meetings where they could relate to the people their remarkable experiences which they claim to have had. They have on their own responsibility held cottage meetings and invited the people, and some have been foolish enough to go and listen to these stories as they have been told.

Now, I think it is wrong for any bishop or anyone else to invite these people who profess to have had a dream or a vision, or some kind of manifestation, into a meetinghouse, or even into the homes and gather the people in to listen to these presentations. In my judgment it is contrary to the teachings of the Church. When John said, "Believe not every spirit,