

ELDER CLIFFORD E. YOUNG*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

As I listened to President Israelson telling us that forty years ago he was called on his first mission to Scandinavia, I was a bit shocked. I was with Brother Israelson in crossing the ocean, and it came to me very forcibly, as he spoke, that time is rapidly passing.

There have been so many lovely things said in this conference that I hesitate to attempt to make any contribution to it. I hope, however, I may add to the spirit of it, and I humbly pray that the Lord will inspire what I may say.

REPORTS FROM MISSION FIELDS

The other day we had the privilege of meeting in the temple with the presidents of the missions. In listening to their reports, it was very impressive to observe the kind of men that the Church has called into its missionary service, men of rare intelligence, men of fine leadership, and men of great faith. Although they are now laboring under extreme handicaps because of the lack of missionaries, yet the manner in which they are carrying on, as reflected in their reports, is very impressive. They are men of God.

In all of the things that were reported by them, there was not an unkind word or a derogatory thing said about any faith, or anyone not of our faith. The spirit of their reports was the spirit of carrying out the work of the Lord as He has revealed it in this day, a spirit to labor faithfully and true.

As we listened to these reports, I thought of the great contribution the missionary system has made to the Church. The leaders of the Church—you—we, all of us largely received our schooling through the opportunities afforded in laboring in the mission field. We may not have converted very many people, but we did convert ourselves, and thus the mission field became a school, from which has come the leaders of the Church. It was not only a mission field, but an institution, the results of which we see in evidence today.

As we listened to the reports and were told that by July there would be very, very few male missionaries in the field, I wondered about the future with reference to this phase of our work. I wonder what will take the place of this great school that has produced so many men of faith and testimony, men who have taken their places as leaders in the wards and stakes of Zion.

THE EFFECTS OF WAR

We were told that our boys who are going into the service are making good. Many of them are, without doubt, but we must not forget the fact that war in and of itself is not a constructive force; it is not an agency

that produces righteousness; nor is it an agency that promotes the standards of the Church. On the contrary, it is an agency that tears down and breaks the very fiber of which men of Latter-day Saint caliber are made.

Yet reports are coming in that reflect that the boys who have been in the mission field, who have grown in this great school and have been educated in it, are making good, and are withstanding the onslaught of evil that comes with war. We are grateful for that. There are many reports that bear this out.

But I believe, my brethren, that when the story is finally told at the close of the war there will be many scars, and we need to have much concern about it. This emphasizes again the need of our keeping in close contact with our boys as far as it is humanly possible to do so under existing conditions. We should let them feel and know that we are thinking of them. This contacting the boys by mail should be made a quorum activity which will not only stimulate the quorum but will also help our boys in meeting conditions that come to them, and the loneliness which at times they must feel.

THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

Yesterday we were all impressed as we listened to the statistical report as presented by President Clark. It reflected a marvelous growth and strength. During President Grant's administration the number of stakes has doubled. Then, too, reference was made to the great strides of the Welfare program. Eight years. It is only six years since we undertook projects. At that time a statement went out over the press that the Church expected to take care of its own. Well, in these six or eight years we have demonstrated what we can do, and that we can meet that requirement, if men and women will but subscribe. It is marvelous when you think of it.

In contemplating the next ten years we can visualize the great potent power which lies in this agency of human welfare. It is a part of the Church, a part of quorum activity. How grateful we ought to be for it.

So I say to you, with all the adverse things, with all the problems which youth have to meet, the problems which were suggested by Brother Benson this morning, with it all, we have much for which we may be grateful. Today I join with you in thanking our Heavenly Father for the evidence of the divinity of this work on every hand, the evidence in its growth, in its power and its strength.

I am grateful, my brethren, for my standing in this Church. I am grateful for the testimony which I have. I am grateful for the evidence of leadership found everywhere in the Church.

May God give us power and faith that we may not fail in our trust, and as we grow in our leadership, grow in faith and power, the Church will grow, and you and I need but to look about to see the evidence of what we may expect, with us all doing our duty as God expects us to do.

God help us to do this, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.