

## ELDER THOMAS E. MCKAY

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

President Smith, counselors, and my brethren and sisters: It has been my privilege since our return from Europe in the spring of 1940, to visit three of the missions and nearly all the one hundred and fifty-eight stakes in the Church, and participate in their quarterly conferences. This is an opportunity that I have appreciated very much.

## COMMENDATION FOR GOOD WORK

It is a fine thing for one to keep busy, at least, it is a fine thing for me. Work is a great blessing. Someone has said that even a mule can't kick while he's pulling. It has been very interesting as well as instructive to get better acquainted with you fine stake and ward leaders, to see you in action, to observe how you do things, and I was going to say, how some of you don't do things, but that wouldn't be fair, because all of you, as far as I have been able to observe, are doing a splendid job. Of course, some of you are doing better than others. For example, in some of the stakes we find but very few young people in the meetings, not only in our conferences, but also in the sacrament meetings, and in other stakes nearly half of the congregations are made up of young people of twenty-one or under; most of them are there because they have been asked and trained to furnish the music; others have been given definite assignments. In some of the quarterly conferences we have had as high as three hundred young people, furnishing very excellent music. An Aaronic Priesthood chorus of two hundred thirty-eight clear-toned young voices gave some very choice selections in the general priesthood session of the conference; one of the numbers was so outstanding they were requested to repeat it in the evening session. A number of the stakes have choruses of from fifty to two hundred fifty voices made up entirely of Aaronic Priesthood members. In one stake, an adult Aaronic Priesthood chorus furnished at least part of the musical program. May I take this opportunity to compliment the Presiding Bishopric of our Church upon the splendid efforts they are putting forth in behalf of both the boys and men in the Aaronic Priesthood. After they had made a survey of the Aaronic Priesthood members, and it was shown that there were nearly as many men (that is, men over twenty-one), as boys under twenty-one, they set about to discover the cause—the source that brought about such a condition, and are now trying to remove the cause. They are fencing the cliff. Many of you know the poem on "The Fence or the Ambulance," that illustrates what I mean by discovering and removing the source of evil.

## "THE FENCE OR THE AMBULANCE"

The community was divided into two factions: one favoring

the fence around the cliff; the other, the ambulance down in the valley. And the ambulance, it seemed, had the majority; and so they put the ambulance down in the valley. Then an old sage remarked, "It's a marvel to me that people give more attention to repairing results than to stopping the cause, when they had much better aim at prevention."

"Let us stop at the source, all this mischief," cried he,  
 "Come, neighbors and friends, let us rally,  
 "If the cliff we will fence, we might almost dispense  
 "With the ambulance down in the valley."

"Oh, he's a fanatic," the others rejoined,  
 "Dispense with the ambulance, never!  
 "He'd dispense with all charities, too, if he could,  
 "No, we'll support them forever."

But the sensible few who are practical, too,  
 Will not bear with such nonsense much longer;  
 They believe that prevention is better than cure,  
 And their party will soon be the stronger.

Better guide well the young than reclaim them when old,  
 For the voice of true wisdom is calling,  
 To rescue the fallen is good,  
 But it is best to prevent other people from falling.

Better close up the source of temptation and crime,  
 Than deliver from dungeon and galley;  
 Better put a strong fence around the top of the cliff,  
 Than an ambulance down in the valley.

#### PRESIDING BISHOPRIC FENCING THE CLIFF

It is shown by a survey made by the Presiding Bishopric that as a rule the twelve boys in the deacon's quorum remained and were worthy to be ordained teachers, but some of them were lost as teachers, and more of them as priests; thus, the adult Aaronic Priesthood group kept getting larger, and the Church and the State were put to more expense and trouble in furnishing more ambulances. The Presiding Bishopric is doing a splendid job in removing the source—in fencing the cliff. The bishops in the wards are also carrying out a program of definite assignments. The bishop, who is president of the priest's quorum, receives the priests from the teacher's quorum as a body, and this group of boys are made to feel that they belong to the bishop—are his special bodyguard, and they are prepared to be recommended to be ordained elders in a body—not one of them left behind to add to the number of adult Aaronic Priesthood members, and the number of ambulances can be reduced.

#### PRIVILEGE OF THE BALLOT

It is a fine thing to study causes. Ambulances, so-called, are increasing in so many ways, and they will continue to do so until the sources are discovered and removed. The ballot is a most con-

venient method that we have in this great free country of ours to remove causes or sources that make it necessary to pay thousands of dollars for ambulances (you can name the *nuisances* that ambulances stand for), and may I urge with all the emphasis possible that every person show his appreciation for his citizenship in this land of freedom by voting every time the opportunity presents itself, and thereby help to keep this country free. I feel so keenly about this matter of voting that I wish at times when I see the indifference manifest by so many of our people that some penalty could be imposed upon those who neglect this God-given right. I feel that every person who is entitled to vote and doesn't do so is not a good loyal citizen. And especially is that true of members of the Church. They are not only not good citizens, but I think that they are not good Latter-day Saints, and should be very much ashamed.

It may be wise for me, right here, to get back to the discussion of "The Fence or the Ambulance," as exemplified by the Presiding Bishopric. These brethren are not only getting at the source, taking care of these boys, but they are also trying to offer a remedy for those who have already fallen over the cliff. They have prepared a definite outline—a course of study—a book of songs—have assigned these adult members to see that everyone is made comfortable as far as seating and ventilation are concerned. Many of them are also assigned to welfare projects. In one ward in a southern stake that I visited, every member of the adult Aaronic Priesthood was reported active. In another stake, a ward sent down quite a large group, eight men who had qualified themselves as worthy of having received the Melchizedek Priesthood, and they came to the temple in a body and were sealed to their wives and their children for eternity, and not just "until death do ye part."

#### RETURNED SERVICEMEN

I am very happy that the Presidency of the Church appointed a servicemen's committee to look after our one hundred thousand servicemen. Prevention again is better than cure. You can't estimate the good that this committee and the coordinators have accomplished, putting their arms around our servicemen, guiding them over dangerous places, talking to them at the crossroads. I am delighted also that President Hugh B. Brown has been appointed to work at Brigham Young University to continue his splendid work with the servicemen and women. It might be well if such a committee were appointed also to look after the hundreds of young people who are scattered throughout the land, some of them away from organized wards, stakes, or branches, many of them occupying very responsible positions in business, politics, education, and various other professions. These are fine young men, intelligent, and I am sure that the mission presidents would welcome men especially qualified to help them in contacting

these very intelligent young men who in the words of the Ancient in *Three Wise Fools*, have reached the age of reason.

#### PRESIDENT SMITH—AMBASSADOR OF GOOD WILL

These young people are surely worth saving, and I am very delighted that President Smith—our ambassador of good will—is leading the way in this respect; in his kind, tolerant, sweet spirit he has put himself out to speak to many such persons. I know personally of two or three who, because of President Smith's interest in them, are now using the talents with which they are abundantly blessed, for the Church instead of against it. President Smith, like those presidents who have preceded him, is the right man in the right place at the right time. He is the prophet for us in this day.

The Savior also set a very splendid example for all of us to follow. Saul, another brilliant young fellow who had arrived at the age of reason, was so sure of himself that he was persecuting the Christians, even assisting in the stoning of one of the prophets, but that did not deter the Savior from extending his hand, speaking to Saul, and eventually Saul became Paul, one of the greatest of the apostles, the great apostle to the Gentiles. Our Lord also left the ninety and nine and found supreme joy in rescuing the lost one.

May God bless us all, brethren and sisters, with wisdom, especially you stake and ward leaders, in our efforts to discover and remove causes, sources of evil and at the same time keep working diligently to cure and remove the evils that do now exist, I pray in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### ELDER MARK E. PETERSEN

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

#### JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

A man we shall call Bishop Brown, for the sake of anonymity, sat reading his evening newspaper and came across one item that especially interested him. After reading it he said to his wife who sat near by, "I see that Jones boy has finally gone to jail. It's a wonder he didn't go sooner, considering the record he had." And then he recalled that this Jones boy, when he used to go to Church, was rather rowdy and hard to handle. Later he became a truant at high school, sluffed his classes to go out joy riding with the boys, and then later with a group began to steal automobiles. Then, one night when the boys were short of money, a few of them decided to rob a store. It was for this crime that they were being sent to jail. The bishop, turning to his wife said, "It's certainly terrible, isn't it, how the young people carry on these days?"

This was a favorite theme with the bishop. He would talk about