

## GENERAL AUXILIARY OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

## RELIEF SOCIETY

Belle Smith Spafford, President  
 Marianne Clark Sharp, First Counselor  
 Velma N. Simonsen, Second Counselor  
 with all members of the Board as at present constituted

## DESERET SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION

George R. Hill, General Superintendent  
 A. Hamer Reiser, First Assistant Superintendent  
 David Lawrence McKay, Second Assistant Superintendent  
 with all members of the Board as at present constituted

## YOUNG MEN'S MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Elbert R. Curtis, General Superintendent  
 A. Walter Stevenson, First Assistant Superintendent  
 David S. King, Second Assistant Superintendent  
 with all members of the Board as at present constituted

## YOUNG WOMEN'S MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Bertha S. Reeder, President  
 Emily H. Bennett, First Counselor  
 LaRue C. Longden, Second Counselor  
 with all members of the Board as at present constituted

## PRIMARY ASSOCIATION

LaVern W. Parmley, President  
 Arta M. Hale, First Counselor  
 Florence H. Richards, Second Counselor  
 with all members of the Board as at present constituted

**President David O. McKay:**

Elder Richards, will you take your place here in the Council.

We have just heard President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., of the First Presidency present the General Authorities, General Officers, and General Auxiliary Officers

of the Church for the sustaining vote of the General Conference, and he reports all voting in the affirmative.

We shall be pleased now to hear from Elder LeGrand Richards, whom you have just sustained as a member of the Council of the Twelve.

Will Elder Buehner please take his place beside Bishop Wirthlin.

**ELDER LeGRAND RICHARDS***Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**I** SUPPOSE only the men on this stand can know what has gone through my mind and my heart since President McKay called me to his office following the morning meeting.

I first want to tell you that I am proud that Brother Wirthlin has been called

as the Presiding Bishop of this Church. He and I have labored side by side for fourteen years, and I doubt if any two men have ever been closer to each other than we have been. He is a noble character, and he is as true and loyal to this Church as any man I have ever

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met. If we ever questioned the instruction of the brethren, he would say, "Well, you know, if the brethren were to tell us to put the Presiding Bishop's Office up on Ensign Peak, there it would go." That is the kind of faith he has.

And I have learned to love Brother Isaacson so much in these few years, five and a half years, that he has served as my counselor, and I am so happy that Brother Wirthlin saw fit to choose him to stand by his side.

And I love Brother Buehner. I have only been out with him once or twice, but I think they have made a wonderful choice.

Now I want to pay a tribute of respect and an expression of deep appreciation to the employees of the Presiding Bishop's office. We have some wonderful help there, and they have been so loyal and willing to do anything we have ever asked them to do. I should like to name them, but the list would be too long. God bless them in their further responsibilities in that office.

I cannot find words to express what is in my heart. I think of what Brother Alonzo Hinckley said when he stood here in a similar position and said, "My soul is subdued." I do not know what it takes to subdue the soul of a man, but for the past two hours, I have been trying to figure out how I could measure up and not disappoint you people, and not disappoint the Lord.

How grateful I feel to the brethren, President McKay and his Counselors, that they have enough confidence in me to nominate me for this position, and that the Quorum of the Twelve, knowing that I should become one of them, sustained them in the nomination.

And I thank you for your sustaining vote here this day, and I pledge you all the strength and ability that the Lord has given me to continue to help build up his kingdom on the earth.

I thank God for the opportunities that I have enjoyed of working among you, and in his Church, the missions that I have been able to fill, and the other sundry odd jobs, because I truly

love the work more than anything else in this world, and I know it is true. I could live better without the limbs of my body than I could without the testimony of the Holy Ghost and the Spirit of the Lord.

When I returned from my first mission, I was called to speak in my ward. I told the Saints that the greatest desire I had in my heart was that I might be able so to live now that I was home, that I could enjoy the same spirit I had enjoyed in the mission field. And I added, I hope the Lord will send me on a mission just often enough so I can keep that spirit. Maybe that is the reason I filled four missions. I thought when I got in the bishop's office, I would never get another, but who knows what might happen now?

I have loved my work with the youth of this Church, and with the Aaronic Priesthood, and for a time we had the girls' program. And we have lived to see some real achievement in the work with these boys. When we came into the office fourteen years ago, many a ward was still using the Melchizedek Priesthood in the administration of the sacrament. We tried to get the Standard Quorum Award going. We could hardly get a quorum to get twenty-five percent of the boys to attend sacrament meeting. And now the average for the entire Church is forty-one percent. It is not much to boast about, but it is up a long way to what it was.

And the girls were up to fifty-five percent, so they have to help the boys along a little, or the boys will not be worth their marrying a little later on when they want companions.

The growth of the Church during these fourteen years has been tremendous. I have been privileged to travel around the stakes of Zion, and it seems to me that every conference I attend, they say it is the largest crowd they have ever had. The way the brethren have been dividing the wards and stakes is indicative of the growth of the Church.

In tribute to the faithfulness and the integrity of the Latter-day Saints, I want to give you two or three figures of what

has happened since we came into the Presiding Bishop's office.

The membership of the Church in that time has increased 46.1 percent.

The tithes of the Church have in the same length of time increased 653.3 percent.

Forty-six percent increase in membership, 653.3 percent increase in tithing, and then you say the Latter-day Saints do not have faith.

And then you add to that what the brethren have already reported during this conference of the gifts of the Saints that are not counted as tithes, and I say the Saints are wonderful. God bless them everywhere for their faith and for their integrity.

I never come home from a stake conference but what I say to my wife, "You just have to get out in this Church to know the power of the Lord that is in it." How anyone in the world could be familiar with the Church and what it is doing, and the spirit and the power that is in it, and think that it comes from man! He would have to be a very bright man, wouldn't he?

The fast offerings in that time increased 230 percent. There have been 65 new stakes of Zion added; 458 wards, and 73 new independent branches.

I thought these figures might interest you and show that the Saints are coming along pretty well.

Now, brothers and sisters, if there is anything that I am sure of, more than anything else in the world, it is that this work is divine. It is not the work of man. It is the work of God, the Eternal Father, and his power is in it, and I tell you in all sincerity that the Holy Ghost, the Comforter that the Savior promised to send to guide us in all truth and bring things to our remembrance, is just as much a reality to me and just as necessary for our well-being as the sun that shines in the heavens is to the seed that is sown in the ground, and the plants as they germinate and come forth. I know the power of the Holy Ghost is in this Church.

When the Lord sent his servants out

in this day, he told them they were not going to be taught of men, but to teach that which he would give unto them by the power of the Holy Ghost. I do not know very much about the philosophies of men, but I know that God created the feelings of the human heart and the human soul, and I know that God has a way of bringing joy and happiness into the souls of men, when they seek after him, and when they enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost, far beyond anything that men can purchase with their money.

I have been in homes of rich people. I have never seen any tears of joy shed because of anything they could purchase with their money, but I have been in groups of missionaries and groups of Saints, when for hours at a time there was not a dry eye there; just because the spirit of God was there. Like Nephi of old said,

He [the Lord] hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh. (See II Nephi 4:21.)

I feel sorry for Latter-day Saints if they have never felt that power, and that blessing, unto almost the consumption of their flesh.

That is what Paul meant when he said of those who have tasted of the power of the world to come, and then fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, which gave me to understand that Paul understood that in this life, men could taste of the powers of the world to come. Surely that was what Paul experienced when he stood before Festus and Agrippa, there in chains as he was, and bore witness of the ministration and the appearance of the Savior to him on the way to Damascus, how he had seen the light, and heard the Voice saying,

... Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?  
... it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. (Acts 9:4-5.)

And after Festus and Agrippa had listened, Festus said,

Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

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But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. . . .

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. (*Ibid.*, 26:24-28.)

And there he was in chains, and his reply was something like this, "I would to God, that not only thou, but all men everywhere were as I am, save these chains that hold me bound." (See *Ibid.*, 26:29.) That is what the spirit of the Lord does.

And you remember when Jesus appeared to the people here in America, following his resurrection, and established his Church and ministered among them, the historian says that the joys that filled their souls no pen could write nor tongue express. And that is the thing the Lord gives to those who serve him, and that is the joy of service there is in this Church.

A few weeks ago I attended a stake conference, and a stake president told me about two visits he had made to an adult member of the Aaronic Priesthood, to try to induce him to quit his tobacco so that he might receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and be prepared to go to the house of the Lord with his family; and he said he had been unsuccessful. So I said to this stake president, "Did it ever occur to you that you might have been getting the cart before the horse, so to speak? If you would go to that man and teach him the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he would become converted, you would not need to ask him to quit his tobacco."

I think of the many, many homes into which I went in the mission field. I have in mind one now. The first night there, because we would not smoke with them, and we could not drink their coffee with them, the man said, "Well, I would never join your Church." Well, we did not discuss the Word of Wisdom any more for a few weeks, until we got him a little farther along. And when we got a little farther along, we did not have to ask him to lay away his coffee; it just disappeared. We did not have to ask him to quit his tobacco;

it went out the window the same way.

I remember one man past his eighties, who had been in the government service, walking up and down the streets and lanes in Holland for years and years of his life, and all he had for a companion and friend was his cigars. He chewed them instead of smoking them. And when he heard the gospel and became converted, he laid them away; he used to chew a little licorice root to take the place of the cigars.

I never hear of men like the one the stake president referred to but what I think—if they were only converted to the truth, they would not have to be asked to quit their tobacco. I could not help thinking the other night when we had this demonstration of missionary work, if every member of the Church could see it and hear it, and all the youth of the Church, we would not have so much transgression.

I have another thought before I close. You remember what the Lord said to Peter, he said,

. . . Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.

But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. (Luke 22:31-32.)

I tell you, brothers and sisters, the Latter-day Saints are becoming converted, and they are strengthening their brethren, but there would not be a man or a woman in all Israel who would ever buy a pound of tea or coffee or a cigar or a cigaret or tobacco, in any form, if they were only converted.

You just think of Peter. He said, "Though all the world forsake thee, I will not forsake thee." But the Savior knew that even though he thought he was converted he was not quite converted. And so you remember how the Savior said that ere the cock should crow, he would deny Jesus thrice, and he did. And he was the first one to say, "I go fishing," (see John 21:3) after the Savior was crucified, but when he had remained at Jerusalem accord-

ing to the Savior's command, until he had been endowed with power from on high, the Holy Ghost, then he went forth fearless as a lion, and when he was commanded that he should no more preach Christ and him crucified in the streets of Jerusalem, he replied: "Whom shall man obey? God or man?" And you will remember that finally he rejected the privilege of being crucified with his head up, because he thought he was not worthy to be crucified as was his Lord.

Brothers and sisters, if we could just get the Holy Ghost, the testimony of the spirit in the hearts of all Latter-day Saints, we would not have any of them saying that we harp too much on the Word of Wisdom. After all, God gave it.

God help us to so live his command-

ments that we may enjoy his Spirit, that we may ever be found walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, I humbly pray, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### **President David O. McKay:**

You have just listened to Elder LeGrand Richards, whom you have this day sustained as a member of the Council of the Twelve.

We shall now hear Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin, and he will be followed by Brother Buehner.

This afternoon we interviewed Brother Buehner, and just as he shook hands to leave, with tears in his eyes, he said, "I hope I shall not have to speak this afternoon, shall I?"

I suppose you will, Brother Buehner.

### **BISHOP JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN**

#### *Presiding Bishop of the Church*

**M**Y BELOVED brethren and sisters, I approach this task with mingled feelings this afternoon. The one difference between Bishop Richards' and my situation has been that I was asked to visit President McKay last night at five-thirty. Hence the turmoil in my soul has existed for twenty-four hours, whereas in his case, he has only had two hours of it.

I would like to say that this change has brought about an end of one of the sweetest experiences that I have ever enjoyed. The last fourteen years in association with Bishop Richards has been a great source of inspiration, joy, and happiness for me.

I found him to be a man of great faith. He has an abundance of humility, and in his heart of hearts there is a great love for all people. There has been a beaten trail to his door over the years by those who have been in distress, and they have never left his office empty-handed or without some inspiration and encouragement. And as he leaves us, we shed tears at our parting, but we are only two floors apart.

It was just fourteen years ago this month when the telephone rang in my office, and someone said, "President Grant would like to speak to you."

I answered the phone. The President said, "This is Heber J. Grant. We are reorganizing the Presiding Bishopric today. LeGrand Richards has been asked to accept the position of Presiding Bishop, with Marvin O. Ashton as his first counselor, and we are asking you to take the position of second counselor."

I was shocked, and I suggested to the President I should like to talk to him about the matter.

He then declared, "There are only thirty minutes before the next session of the conference takes up, and I want to have some rest. What do you say?"

I answered "Yes," and I have never regretted having answered yes to that call and all calls that have come to me in this great organization.

I think of Bishop Ashton today. I learned much from him. He had a heart that was full of kindness and love for all mankind. I say, "God bless his memory."