

## 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  
 Leone W. Doxey, Second Counselor

with all members of the Board as at present constituted.

**President Clark:**

President McKay, so far as I could observe the vote to sustain these officers was unanimous in the affirmative.

**President David O. McKay:**

Elder Thomas E. McKay will be our first speaker this afternoon. 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 preceding President Clark, we heard Elder Orval Adams, Chairman of the Auditing Committee, read the report of that Committee.

## ELDER THOMAS E. MCKAY

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**P**RESIDENT MCKAY and Counselors, President Smith, members of the Council of the Twelve, other General Authorities, and my brethren and sisters and friends: I am very happy and thankful for this opportunity of being here this afternoon and also this morning, listening to the wonderful testimonies of the brethren, and participating in the business of this great Church. I am grateful that I have had the privilege of voting. I have always been taught to vote. I still vote in Huntsville, and I have never missed an occasion on election day to be there if I were in the country.

I had a grandmother who used to visit us in Huntsville when we were quite young. I remember one morning she arose early. My father, however, had already gone to the canyon to get some

barn timber. She asked about him. They told her where he had gone, so she said, "Well, it's election day in Ogden. I'm going down to vote." There was nothing special to vote for, no specific items, but she walked the thirteen miles and cast her vote. That is an example that we can follow.

A short time ago I received a telephone call, a rather unusual call. When I said hello, the speaker called me by my first name and said, "Tom, I have wanted to call you for some time. You are one of the kindest men that I have ever known." I appreciated the compliment.

It also suggested, besides being a compliment, giving me, as it were, a shot in the arm, a theme around which I should like to say a few words today. That theme is kind words. "Let us all speak kind words to each other. Kind

Friday, April 6

First Day

words are sweet tones of the heart." I like those sentences—I like that definition of kind words. They are sweet tones of the heart, and if I may take just a minute or two out of the time allotted to me, I should like to express appreciation for a group of singers, student singers, who have not often been mentioned. They mention our choir—God bless them. This is a wonderful choir we have heard today. Our own Tabernacle Choir has been emphasized. You cannot estimate the good they are doing, and especially on their recent trip to Europe. I have done missionary work in those countries visited by the choir, and, oh, how those people will appreciate and continue to appreciate the good that the members of the choir did at the dedication of the temple.

But this group of singers that I refer to were students. They were advanced students in music, studying abroad. I first came in contact with some of them when I landed in Liverpool on my first mission. I had been ordained a seventy and set apart to labor in Great Britain as a missionary by President Heber J. Grant. When I arrived in Liverpool, Elder James McMurrin, a counselor in the European Mission presidency, met the boat and asked our names. When I told him my name, he said, "Are you a brother of David O. McKay?" I said, "I am." He said, "Well, if you do just half as good a work as he did, we will be satisfied. I think we will take you with us to Glasgow tomorrow night." They were going there to hold conference.

Well, I had expected to go to Scotland. I had a little black book full of addresses from my father and from my brother who had been there before me. That night, however, the brethren had had a meeting, and we were called together Saturday morning, and after they had heard from each of us, Brother McMurrin again came to me, put his arm around me, and said, "Brother McKay, what would you think, and what would your parents think if we sent you to Germany instead of to Scotland?"

The words of my father just before I left Ogden to go on that mission came to me. "Remember, my boy, it doesn't matter so much where you work. It is

how you work. You go where the Lord wants you to go." I repeated that to Brother McMurrin, and he said, "Well, we are going to send you to Germany. President Schulthess is in Berlin as mission president. He is calling for missionaries, and there is not one in this large group (and it was a large group) assigned to the German Mission. You may spend a few days visiting in London and then go to Paris, (it was 1900, and the World Fair was on), and wait there at a hotel where the missionaries who are visiting the fair are staying, until you hear from President Schulthess."

I went to London. I had promised our local paper in Ogden, the *Standard* [now the *Standard-Examiner*], to write a report occasionally of my visit. I started one from London. I am glad I never sent it. I was disappointed in London. It was storming. I had been on the boat eight days. I was sick eight days, and then to have my assignment changed to a country that I knew nothing about—at least I did not know the language. I was rather discouraged.

However, I met some people there in London on Sunday at the meeting who were from Ogden, and I want to mention them; they were missionary students. It was Brother Edwin Tout and his family. They were all musicians, all singers. He had rented his home in Ogden, and they had moved to London, so he could be there with the children while they were getting advanced lessons in music. Of course I had known them at home, and they made me welcome and invited me to come to their home while I was visiting in London, urged me to come, and it didn't take much urging.

Thirty-six months later I stopped in London again on my way home. I suppose it was the same London, but it did not look the same to me, and I want to relate this incident concerning the Tout family. They had regular tours from London up through the Trossachs. I had not been in Scotland, so my folk had sent me a little extra money to make that trip. It was a great trip—no automobiles, no busses, but four horses attached to one of those wonderful coaches, I call them, and we would travel in those, and then get out and take a boat from one lake to another,

and have an opportunity to walk through the beautiful woods occasionally.

We were walking on one of the trails through that beautiful country. Sister Maggie Tout, the eldest daughter of the Tout family, a great singer, was in the group along with some of the missionaries from London. There was quite a percentage of the group who were members of the Church. We stopped there to rest, loitering through the trees, and Nannie, as I always called her, stood between two beautiful trees, and started to hum a tune. All the tourists quieted, and we sat down and listened. She burst forth singing that wonderful song, "Oh, My Father."

My first attendance at the statewide mission conference was in Berlin, and it was surprising how many of these advanced music students I knew and had met at home. One of those students who was there is the one who telephoned to me. He is now near his eighty-second birthday but still going strong, and, Hugh, I want to thank you for those few kind words, if you are listening in.

There were others there, but as I say, it is dangerous to mention names, but I wish to pay tribute to the group of singers, those advanced students who have done so much towards music in the Church, along with our other singers in the choirs. God bless their memory. Some of them have gone to the other side, and I have not carried out what I generally preach, when I have the opportunity, of expressing appreciation before it is too late. We feel appreciation. We love, for example, our wives, but how often do we tell them that we do? We just let them take it for granted.

It is like another of my old friends who often visited us. He was circulating until he was ninety-eight years old. He passed to the other side, however, a short time ago. He always gave us something. He had a wonderful memory, and I always remembered this poem that he quoted:

**Don't Wait 'till I'm Gone**

When I quit this mortal shore  
And mosey round the earth no more,  
Don't weep, don't sigh, don't sob;  
I may have struck a better job.

Don't go and buy a huge bouquet  
For which you'll find it hard to pay;  
Don't mope around and feel all blue,  
I may be better off than you.

Don't tell the folks I am a saint  
Or any other thing I ain't;  
If you have jam like that to spread,  
Please hand it out before I'm dead.

If you have roses, bless your soul,  
Just pin one in my buttonhole  
While I'm alive and well today;  
Don't wait until I've gone away.

That was his favorite poem. It was requested at his service that this poem be read, and I understand that it was. I refer to Brother James Hart. God bless his memory, also.

Now, with reference to this telephone call, it did give me a theme, kind words; I never heard my father, and nobody else did, speak an unkind word to my mother, so it has not been difficult for me to say kind words. I trust, my brothers and sisters, and pray that we may all remember to speak kind words to each other, and especially may the Lord help us to remember that "Kind words are sweet tones of the heart," I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**President David O. McKay:**

Elder Thomas E. McKay, Assistant to the Twelve, has just spoken to us.

The Congregation will now join in singing, "Oh, Say, What Is Truth?" with the Choir, conducted by J. Spencer Cornwall. Following the singing, Elder Levi Edgar Young of the First Council of Seventy will speak to us.

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The Brigham Young University Combined Choruses and the congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Oh Say, What Is Truth?"

**President David O. McKay:**

We shall now hear from Elder Levi Edgar Young of the First Council of Seventy, who will be followed by Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church.