

## ELDER MARION D. HANKS

*Of the First Council of the Seventy*

Perhaps no conference in my remembrance has devoted such effective and repeated emphasis to the home and the family, to children and youth, and to those who have to deal with them. Not attempting to correlate or specifically to fit in with what has been said, and out of my modest experience and ability, I would like today, in the time allotted to me, to talk not to the young (which I have often done), nor exclusively to their parents, but about the young to the adult generation in and out of the Church.

Out of my love for young people and the blessing of teaching them over the years and the association and friendship I have enjoyed with them, I have learned a few things, some of which I would like to mention today as pertinent to the general theme of home and family and the relationships of adult and youth.

About the young people I have learned these things, among others:

1. That by and large they are inclined to be like their parents, to be what their parents are. President Richards has impressively given the basis for my brief repetition of this thought. There are, I am certain, exceptions, since each child, like each of us, is an agent before God, blessed with the right to choose and responsible for his choices. They, like we, must choose, and therefore some of them are not like their fine parents, while some improve upon their parents. But we may repeat with absolute assurance that by and large they are inclined to be like their parents.

Now, this characteristic of youth can result in great good or in bad, depending upon what parents are, what kind of example and precept they present.

2. A second thing I mention about the young: they can be tremendously influenced by interested adults other than their parents, by teachers, leaders, counselors, bishops, by interested adults who will take time to love and give attention to them, to have confidence in them, and faith, because young people, like the rest of us, respond to those who

show interest in them. They love those who love them, trust those who trust them, and in general can be counted upon responding to the type of adult who is interested in them.

Of course, this, can be a good or bad thing, depending upon the kind of adults who show interest, and what their motivations are.

3. A third thing I have learned about the young: They love an ideal. They are great followers. Their ideal may be a singer, an actor, a teacher, a parent, an author, an explorer, a scientist, an athlete, but they are inclined to choose someone to idealize. Usually it is someone older than they, more mature and adult, but not always.

This, like other characteristics of the young, can be good or bad, depending upon the persons whom they choose to idealize.

4. I have learned about the young that they can be taught, that they are responsive to the atmosphere and environment of the world around them. They respond to advertising and example, to filth and evil and degradation and bad influence, and they will respond likewise to virtue and decency and integrity and honor, if these qualities are manifested to them in language they can understand. They can be taught.

This can be good or bad, depending upon the fare their minds and eyes are fed upon.

5. I note about the young that they are not easily misled as to individuals. They can often detect quickly one who seeks to deceive them. They can uncover in interested adults with questionable motivations the real purposes of their interest. Again and again I have seen it demonstrated that they can spot one who tries to deceive, who pretends to represent virtue and integrity and does not. It is also true that young people sometimes are more willing to follow an openly evil or cynical person than one who is not what he should be and pretends to be. Therefore, it matters a great deal that we be genuine

and earnest and honest in our relationships with them.

Believing that the young can be taught, and desiring to surround them with virtuous and uplifting and ennobling ideals, the Church has endeavored to provide experiences and influences and opportunities in the lives of the young which will bring into their beings, their minds, their very souls, the high and noble and decent things which will motivate them to contributing, participating citizenship in the world and in God's kingdom.

For that purpose, the Brethren have provided a series of small cards and large posters, with a general theme, "Be Honest with Yourself," and some magnificent contributions have been made to the young, contributions with which I am sure every right thinking adult, in or out of the Church, would be sympathetic. My experience as I have traveled the country and passed on the idea to others not of the Church is that they have responded with great interest to the program. Last night Brother Petersen announced that records have been added to this program—recordings of voices of successful, spiritual men, whose example and whose counsel will bless the lives of the young.

Now, I have one serious question to ask. I have talked about the young, and have said of them that they are going to be like their parents by and large, but that they will respond to interested adults outside of the home; that they are responsive also to ideas and ideals; that they can be taught; and that we are attempting to get them to "be honest" with themselves. The question I ask is: "Are we, the adult generation, honest with ourselves and with them?"

Time will not permit any kind of extensive treatment of the problem or question, but I repeat it and ask: Is it possible that in our approaches to the youth we are missing the significance of the opportunity to teach them that is ours? Could it be that Thoreau speaks of many of us when he says there are "thousands hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the roots"?

I read a statement by an interested modern observer a time ago, which is a little harsh, perhaps, but which I

repeat because I am sure it has some truth in it. He says,

Youth has more to teach its parents than to learn from them. The real savages are the old, not the young. Much of what the young learn from their elders they acquire at their peril. The world's tragedy is that it must be grown up—in other words, that it must be run by men, who though they know much, have forgotten what they were in their youth.

And as a key to what I am hoping to suggest to you, in and out of the Church, interested adults, these words of Quarles:

Thou canst not rebuke in children what they see practised in thee. Till reason be ripe, examples direct more than precept. Such as is thy behavior before thy children's faces, such is theirs behind thy back.

May I point out an example or two. The Lord has given us counsel about the significance of this magnificent machine, the body with which we are mortally blessed, and has taught us that the body is an eternal component of the soul—that "the spirit and the body are the soul of man." We teach the young that their bodies matter, and that their care of them is important.

On an airplane a week ago last Friday headed toward the East, I read out of the same section of one newspaper two interesting items—one a statement by a director of the American Cancer Society that if Americans would stop smoking it is likely 25,000 of them would be saved from certain death by lung cancer in the next few years. And in the same section, the notation that in 1957 Americans smoked 409 billion cigarettes, an increase of four percent and more over the year before. Can you say to a youngster, "Be Honest with Yourself," in a world where this goes on? Do you yourself contribute to the confusion that must result in his mind?

I read in that same newspaper (out of one edition in one day) another interesting item—a statement about a 62-year-old practising attorney in a midwestern city who had given himself up under the pressures of a tremendous man hunt for a hit-run driver. A prominent leading citizen, he confessed that he had a hazy notion of having hit something on his way home from a cocktail party.

The something he hit was a 31-year-old father of five children, a scoutmaster who died on the street where he was hit. In newspapers and magazines on the airplane were the blandishments of the liquor trusts, encouraging youngsters to be like certain "men of distinction," like this man, perhaps.

There are so many elements of the theme that there is not time to touch them, but I ask you today that when we cry to the young to "be honest" with themselves we consider what goes on in the world around us, the movies and television, the books and plays, the advertising in the newspapers we read, that so pervert the great creative capacity of man given us of God in order that we might find a partner, get married in his appointed way, establish a home and build a family, an outpost on earth of heaven's promise. So many have perverted this magnificent gift of God that we live in a world where sexual adventuring is almost, it would seem, a rule among many, looked upon as a form of amusement. I say I cannot believe that we can with honor and honesty tell the young to "be honest" with themselves knowing that they are responsive to the example we interested adults set.

It is so with us—we who claim to be followers of the Risen Christ and yet do not obey his commandments. It is so especially on this significant Easter day. He said:

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. (John 14:6.)

### BISHOP THORPE B. ISAACSON

#### *First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric*

Surely we all owe a debt of gratitude to this marvelous choir. Brother Condie and the choir have won our hearts this morning. There are many individuals in the Church and out of the Church all over the world who greatly appreciate their beautiful music and the selections of their renditions.

While standing before you today, I pray that the Lord may sustain me and direct me, and I shall be grateful to each of you for an interest in your faith

and prayers. Truly, this is a humbling experience. I am sure it would be a humbling experience for you, too, but probably that is as it should be because we are here this morning—this beautiful Sabbath Easter morning—in true worship. We acknowledge God as our Heavenly Father. We accept Jesus Christ as the Savior and the Redeemer of the world. We teach his birth in Bethlehem, his life in Galilee, and his sojourn in Jerusalem. We accept the

Yet there are those preaching in his name who are willing to be quoted in the newspapers as saying that they prefer not to have the term *Christian* applied to themselves, for Jesus Christ, to them, said one recently, was a folk tale like Santa Claus.

I say to you that there are those who know for certain for themselves that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that living his commandments and being honest with ourselves is the only way really to motivate the young to do what we would like them to do. I testify that I do know these things. God bless us that we may bless them as he intends we shall, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy has just addressed us. The Choir and congregation will now sing, "High On The Mountain Top," with Richard P. Condie conducting. After the singing Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson of the Presiding Bishopric will address us.

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The Choir and congregation joined in singing the hymn, "High On The Mountain Top."

President David O. McKay:

Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson of the Presiding Bishopric will now speak to us. Bishop Isaacson will be followed by Elder Mark E. Petersen.