

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

Frequent reference has been made throughout this conference by previous speakers to the importance of training youth. Several messages have been directed specifically to the young people of the Church. I should like to say a few words on this important theme.

Our children are our most precious possessions. They are treasures of eternity. None of them should be lost. Our Father's glory is in their salvation. As a Church we have great opportunity to reach these young people; and as individuals—teachers and officers—we have a great responsibility in teaching them correct principles.

Emphasizing the opportunities of the Church in this regard, Paul wrote to the branch at Corinth: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors, and teachers;

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11-13.)

Fitness of American Youth

On November 21, 1957, the President of the United States appointed the President's Council on Youth Fitness, composed of the Secretary of the Interior as Chairman, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson, who sits here with us this afternoon, the Secretary of Labor, and the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.

He said it was the duty of this council to promote the efficacy of existing programs and the launching of additional programs which will enhance the fitness of American youth. He also established at that time the President's Citizens Advisory Committee on the Fitness of American Youth. That was in 1957.

On the thirty-first day of January of this year, the President issued another proclamation:

"Whereas the ongoing strength of our Nation depends upon the health of our young people; and

"Whereas we must always strive to improve the fitness of our youth by determined and coordinated efforts; and

"Whereas, in this challenging world, it is essential that our young people recognize their obligation to themselves, to their families, and to the Nation, to endeavor to keep themselves mentally, emotionally, spiritually, socially, and physically fit; and

"Whereas the President's Council on Youth Fitness has recommended that a National Youth Fitness Week be designated:

"Now, therefore, I, Dwight D. Eisenhower, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning May 3, 1959, as National Youth Fitness Week.

"I request officials of the Government, and I urge parents, young people, and interested local and national organizations, to use all appropriate means during that week to promote programs and activities demonstrating the importance of youth fitness to the end that we may assure the continuing strength and well being of our people."

Over a quarter of a century ago another President of the United States made the following significant reference to the importance of training childhood and youth (I quote from President Hoover's address to the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, November 1, 1931, Washington, D. C.)

"These questions of child health and protection are a complicated problem requiring much learning and much action. And we need have great concern over this matter. Let no one believe that these are questions which should not stir a nation; that they are below the dignity of statesmen or governments. If we could have but one generation of properly born, trained, educated, and healthy children, a thousand other problems of government would vanish. We would assure ourselves of healthier minds in more vigorous bodies, to direct the energies of our Nation to yet greater heights of achievement."

President Eisenhower's council has as its scope not only "muscle making"

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and "tendon stretching," as set forth by Shane McCarthy, Executive Director, but also the mental, moral, emotional, and spiritual development of youth. This youth program is most timely and fitting. I am glad that two of our General Authorities are connected with it—Elder Ezra Taft Benson, of the Council of the Twelve, and Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of the Seventy.

Recently one of my sons called attention to an address delivered by Major Mayer of the Brook Army Medical Center, Department of Psychiatry, San Antonio, Texas. It was delivered to the officers and supervisors of the San Francisco Naval Shipyard, and the Naval Radiological Defense Laboratory on the fourth of October, 1956. The major pointed out that the communists have gained control over many people in this world by the well-known devices of wars, purges, Siberian war camps, mass executions, etc. But he says more significant is the fact that for every person brought under the Russian banner by violence, many hundreds have been controlled without violence, and yet such control has been absolute.

Then he gives the result of his study of 4000 returning prisoners of war from Korea, and he finds a technique which has been termed "brainwashing." Before the communists could put their plan into effect they had to segregate these prisoners, which they did very simply by putting them into what was called "reactionary" camps. Note whom they put into these "reactionary" camps.

First, people who tried to be leaders or who showed what the communists called "poisonous individualism." If the soldier had the temerity to try to organize anything, off he went to the "reactionary" camp. He was obviously hopeless.

Second, those "reactionaries" or people with a higher education, who were considered automatically pretty reactionary unless they volunteered to cooperate, and some of these did.

Third, overtly religious people. The communists felt that they could not do much with them.

Out of these 4000 prisoners, what percent do you think they put in the "reactionary" camp? Five percent, and

after getting rid of those, they began the process of "brainwashing." It is surprising how many soldiers knew so little about our way of life—the American way of life.

Once they had the leaders segregated, they invoked the techniques which have become universal throughout the communist world.

Youth's Responsibility

We are living in an age of gadgetry which threatens to produce a future generation of softness. *Flabbiness of character* more than *flabbiness of muscles* lies at the root of most of the problems facing American youth.

The youth of yesterday are carrying the responsibilities and directing the affairs of the world today. The youth of today will contribute to the destiny of the world tomorrow.

Never a day passes but gives some reminder of the fleetness of time and the brevity of life—childhood—youth—maturity—old age. In childhood there is no past—no future—happy in the present—heaven lies about him, and it is all for him.

Youth—beautiful—sweet—rash—inexperienced! In the words of Longfellow:

"How beautiful is Youth! How bright it gleams
With its illusions, aspirations, dreams!
Book of Beginnings, Story without End,
Each maid a heroine, and each man a friend!"

Then comes manhood with all its responsibilities, duties, failures, successes, each spending his time and worry on how much he can get, instead of how much he can give to this world and make it better. Before he knows it old age is upon him. "The easiest thing for our friends to discover in us, and the hardest thing for us to discover in ourselves is that we are growing old." But of one thing we are keenly aware—that

"Years rush by us like the wind
We see not whence the eddy comes,
Nor whitherward it is tending,
And we seem, ourselves, to witness their flight
Without a sense that we are changed.

Yet time is beguiling man of his strength
As the winds rob the trees of their
foliage."

(Sir Walter Scott's "Woodstock")

The President's Council on Youth Fitness should be commended in recommending that a National Youth Fitness Week be designated. By so doing they recognize that in this challenging world it is essential that our young people be aware of their obligations to themselves, to their families, and to the nation. In this recognition they endeavor to keep themselves mentally, emotionally, spiritually, socially, and physically fit.

I. Responsibility of Parents

Parents have a responsibility in this education. Youth needs guidance, direction, and proper restraint. "Let thy child's first lesson be obedience, and the second will be what thou wilt," said Benjamin Franklin. A child learns this lesson early at his mother's knee—sometimes across his mother's knee. The child should learn early that the world is not created for him alone; that he has an obligation to others; that he owes his parents, particularly, a debt unpayable except in only one way—in living a life that will honor his name and bring joy to them in their old age. He should learn that

"He ought to be true for the sake of the folks who think he is true.

He should never stoop to a deed that his folks think he would not do.

If he is false to himself, be the blemish but small,

He has injured his folks, he has been false to them all."

(Paraphrased from Edgar A. Guest.)

It was old King Lear who cried in his anguish, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." He is recreant, indeed, who for selfish indulgence would bring disgrace upon his parents, and upon the good name he bears.

Parents, too, have a responsibility in this training not to provoke children to wrath. They should be considerate not to irritate by vexatious commands or place unreasonable blame. Whenever possible they should give encouragement rather than remonstrance or reproof.

II. The Obligation of the Church

The obligation of the Church is to spend not just *one week* this coming month on Youth Fitness, but *fifty-two weeks* every year. Quorums and organizations have been set up in the Church, as our text says, for the "perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12-13.)

Now, let us just take a glimpse of the completeness of the Church organizations, and we shall find it discloses the fact that in the auxiliary organizations, quorums, and other groups, there is an army of officers and teachers ready to guide and direct youth in the proper way.

In the Sunday School for example, there are 82,449 officers and teachers, having under their charge 664,750 people. Primary: 51,053 officers and teachers, having under their charge 290,789 children. YMMIA: 24,754 officers and teachers, and 178,766 youth under their direction. YWMIA: 32,988 officers and teachers, and 194,094 girls under them. Aaronic Priesthood: 28,837 officers and teachers, having 86,176 youth. Foreign missionaries: 5,512, and stake missionaries, 5,934, or 11,446 missionaries. Or a total of 231,527 officers and teachers in the Church who first of all should be *exemplars*. "Children have more need of models than of critics." No officer or teacher should be continued in office who persists in the obnoxious use of tobacco. The elder who hesitates to teach the Word of Wisdom is shirking his duty. He who fails to live it robs himself of strength of body and strength of character to which he is entitled.

Resisting Temptation

Truth is loyalty to the right as we see it; it is courageous living of our lives in harmony with our ideals; it is always power. With the ideals of right living before him, no member of the Church can continually violate the Word of Wisdom with impunity.

In this old world, the easiest way

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seems to be the indulgent way. If a person has the least desire or inclination to drink tea and coffee or to smoke cigars, temptations to indulge the appetite are on every hand. At parties, during social calls, at chance introductions or friendly visits, in restaurants or trains, indulgence in these stimulants and narcotics is not only encouraged but also too often urged. Under such influence and environment, the easy way is to yield and become one of the crowd. But not one of these officers, 231,527 of them, should ever yield to that easy way. One never develops character by yielding to wrong. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life. . . ." (Rev. 2:7.) Strength comes by resisting!

We are living not only in a commercial age, but also in a nicotine age, and viciously the cigaret habit is fastening itself upon the human race. Government, medical, and other statistics are constantly warning us of the enormous strides that this insidious enemy to health and morals is making; but we little realize how active and potent are the forces at work to foster this and kindred vices, and all for commercial gain.

In "Habits that Handicap," Charles B. Towne, a quarter of a century ago, explains how "salesmen and demonstrators a few years ago were employed by manufacturers to go throughout China 'to show the people how to smoke cigarettes.' It is estimated that as a result of this campaign, one half of the cigaret consumption in the world is in China. It is little wonder, when we learn that because of cheap labor twenty cigars could be sold for a penny!" The author also makes this remarkable statement: "I consider that cigarette smoking is the greatest vice devastating humanity today because it is doing more than any other vice to deteriorate the race."

Think of the effect of an army of officers and teachers, with hundreds of thousands of youth under their care, not one of whom should ever put a cigaret in his or her mouth! What a potent example! The voice of the Church will ever be raised against the increasing tendency among men and women to stain their lives with nicot-

tine. Especially does it deplore this growing evil among women. Heretofore, virtuous Anglo-Saxon womanhood has been above this indulgence, and has therefore been a restraining and uplifting influence on men. Now, this influence is being subjected to the insidious lure of the cigaret; and mothers of men, around whom center the sweetest, purest, noblest sentiments of our lives, are contaminating their sweetness and purity by indulgence in one of man's vices. The more woman becomes like man, the less he will respect her; civilization weakens as man's estimate of woman lessens.

That it is woman's right to indulge in this habit, we do not question; yet, we lose some of that sweet respect and admiration for women when we see them walk deliberately into mire holes that have heretofore besmeared only men. It is difficult to conceive that any mother would arrogate to herself the thought that staining her lips with tobacco would add to her dignity as mother, or increase the admiration and pride that children hold for true motherhood.

The mission of the Church is to proclaim the truth of the restored gospel, to uplift society that people may mingle more amicably one with another; to create in our communities a wholesome environment in which our children may find strength to resist temptation and encouragement to strive for cultural and spiritual attainment. It is the binding duty of leaders of youth, and particularly mothers, *by example* to make ineffective the influence of designing men who would make profit out of their fellows who have fallen so low as to be slaves to vice and passions.

The restored gospel is a rational philosophy that teaches men how to get happiness in this life and exaltation in the life to come. The mission of the Church is to establish the kingdom of God upon the earth, "which is not a mythical but a real kingdom," says a prominent writer not of the Church. "It is a body of people dominated by ideals of productivity, which is mutual service. We do not strive for the things which satisfy but for the moment and then leave a bad taste. We strive for the things which build us up, and en-

able us and our children to be strong, to flourish, and to conquer. We strive to make ourselves worthy to receive the world by fitting ourselves to use the world more productively than others. We believe that obedience to God means obedience to the laws of nature, which are but the manifestations of his will; and we try by painstaking study to acquire the most complete and exact knowledge of that will in order that we may conform ourselves to it." (Thomas Nixon Carver.)

III. Power of Example

To live an upright life, to conform to high ethical standards, is the responsibility and duty of every teacher of the land. Greater than this is the responsibility of the religious teacher, for in addition to his belief in the efficacy of ethical and moral precepts, the religious teacher assumes the responsibility of leading the youth into the realm of spirituality.

Example is the best and most effective way of teaching. Let us be exemplary in our speech. No true leader of the Church will ever profane the name of God or his Beloved Son, especially in the presence of his sons, or in the presence of any other young people. Profanity is a vice. We can set a proper example also by speaking well of others. The Lord has admonished us not to engage in backbiting. Another worthy example is exercising self-control, controlling our temper by not speaking angrily in the home. Let calmness be characteristic of our home life.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord:" said Paul, "for this is right.

"Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;

"That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:1-4. Italics added.)

To this admonition of Paul, we add the word of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph as follows:

"And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents.

"For this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized. . . .

"And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord." (D&C 68:25-28.)

The training of youth is an obligation, first, upon the parents; next, upon teachers in the Church, in auxiliaries and quorums, in the missionary field, proclaiming the gospel wherever they may be called, and upon all the citizens whether in the Church or out of the Church. It is one of the obligations to which our attention is now called by the President of the United States who has placed the responsibility upon his cabinet, who have appointed a citizens' committee, and asking the entire nation to combine in this great educational campaign.

Fellow workers, may inspiration from on High be given each of us to discharge our responsibilities throughout this Church in training the youth, not only during Youth Training Week throughout this land but *always*, having in mind God's saying found only in this revealed Church: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

God help us to be true instruments in his hands in accomplishing this divine ideal, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Hanks, will you come forward please. Elder Marion D. Hanks will now speak to us and he will be followed by Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve.