
Selection by the Choir, "O Thou
That Tellest Good Tidings."

President Hugh B. Brown

To those who have just tuned in on this conference we wish to extend a very hearty welcome.

Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy will now address us.

Elder Marion D. Hanks

Of the First Council of the Seventy

With President Tanner, I too believe in prayer, and learned long ago that there are occasions when, perhaps not very literarily but with utmost earnestness, we say, "Lord, help me now," and I pray to that effect this morning.

Youth

We are told that this broadcast is going to beloved Britain, and so it is appropriate that I begin by noting that in the foyer of a church building in a British city a time ago, I happened by a group of older ladies who were discussing somewhat critically the behavior of several young members of the congregation who had just walked noisily by. I had observed the incident and had thought the young people a bit exuberant, but not objectionably so. The ladies disagreed. As I passed by I heard one of them disapprovingly say, "Ah, well, what can you expect from this younger generation, anyway!"

I did not agree with her implication, but I take her rhetorical question very seriously, believing that the answer is of vital significance.

What can be expected of this younger generation?

There are few questions more important.

In the population

In the first place, there are so many young people. Most of us have heard the statement, sometimes uttered in solemn and hushed tones, half in apprehension, half in resignation, that soon 50 percent of the population will be under age 25.

The statistic is correct, the prospect sobering. Some who speak of it do so almost as if they expected that when the magic mark is reached, the older generation will relinquish their responsibilities and succumb, and the young will then automatically take over! Of course, it will not happen that way. But there really are so many of them! And they are so important.

Publicity

What kind of people are they?

A small, raucous, rebellious, sometimes harmless—in some cases very dangerous—minority gets most of the publicity. The hippies, the drug adventurers, the motorcycle brigade, the flower crowd, the politically unstable, the lawless get so much press attention that there is an unquestionable effect on the style of life and the way of thinking of multitudes of youngsters everywhere.

Speaking of the discontented ones, a writer has recently said: "So far I have seen or heard very little in the way of constructive suggestions from them. What fruitful insights and programs have they to offer us? I can't help wondering [as they criticize their adult generation] if they ever wonder what *their* children will have to thank *them* for. For fouling their chromosomes with LSD? For dropping out and copping out at a time when society was never in greater need of their participation? What are their credentials for billing themselves as the take-over generation?" (Albert Rosenfeld.)

We cannot afford to underestimate or ignore their influence.

But obstreperous and well publicized as they are, they constitute a small minority of the young generation.

Competent youth

The solid majority of our young people want to do well, are doing well, and intend to do well with the great challenges facing them.

Across the world I have found them threading their way resolutely through the maze of a civilization often characterized by conflict and inconsistency, a civilization that could not exist except upon indispensable foundations in good homes, stable marriages, happy families, exemplary parents, yet increasingly beset by disrupted family life, contention, divorce, parents who do not teach or discipline or set a good example. The young are sensitive; they see the gap that exists between our stated convictions and our conduct, and they are bewildered, sometimes embittered. They say that the adult generation condemns a promiscuity it frequently practices, preaches peace and supports war, counsels the priority of the spiritual but in fact seeks first the material, talks of love but acts in self-interest, and generally represents a hypocrisy that cannot be admired.

Responsibility

In all of this our generation must acknowledge some measure of guilt.

But the young people can and do also take heart and direction from the unselfishness and sacrifice they observe in the adult generation. They see much patience and patriotism, goodness and truth, and beauty and brotherly love all about them. They appreciate the values of good homes and parents who care. They love God and their country. They want to live wholesome and happy lives. Their insights are sometimes remarkable. I heard one of them say about another, "His parents don't like him. He can do anything he wants."

Let me tell you about two or three of them whom I have recently met.

Resources of youth

Over the jungles of Vietnam a few

months ago Brother Hinckley and I sat buckled in bulkhead seats in what the flying men call the "Gooney Bird"—the old C-47. Alongside me was a 19-year-old corporal who was serving with distinction as a chaplain's assistant. He told me how he had become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Capacity for faith and action

"I didn't like my way of life or my associations or my prospects for the future," he said. "I knew I was missing something. So one day when I was 16, I went into a grove of trees near my home in Colorado. I didn't know much about prayer or God. I had never heard of Joseph Smith. I just stood there and looked up and said, 'God, I am ready for you, if you are ready for me.'"

There was no voice, no vision, no startling experience, just sweet peace and assurance in his heart.

Within hours, through the help of the Lord, as he testified to me, he was in touch with people who introduced him to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. His life since is a stirring youthful expression of faith and great promise. He was ready for God, and God was ready for him.

Dauntless steadfastness

In Hong Kong I asked a young Mormon missionary how he was getting along in his efforts to master the difficult Cantonese language. "Just fine," he said. And when I expressed mild surprise at his optimism and faith in the face of heavy obstacles, he told me of the courage with which his parents had met a deep personal tragedy.

"With an example like that," he said, "you wouldn't expect me to whine or whimper about the blessing of learning this choice language and teaching the gospel to this wonderful people, would you, Brother Hanks?"

Heroic acceptance of trouble in "my time"

A high school student leader was called on to speak extemporaneously in a church meeting. He responded with

good feeling and good sense. He spoke briefly about the conflict in which our country is engaged; then with a tear in his eye, he electrified and moved us emotionally when he said, right off the top of his heart, "If there has to be trouble, thank God it can be in my time. I don't want my little brother or the son I hope someday to have to have to fight a war on these or other shores. If there has to be trouble, thank God it can be in my time."

Well, what can we expect from the younger generation? Everything good, creative, decent, wholesome, uplifting, if we help them, and if somehow they come to a knowledge of what makes for happiness, makes for joy.

Cultivate the attributes we honor

Plato said, "What is honored in a country will be cultivated there."

And Pericles said, "The young draw strength not from twice-told arguments, but from the busy spectacle of our great city's life as we have it before us day by day."

How can we help them?

We can be more consistent in our lives. We can provide a better example. We can repent. We can obey the commandments of God. We can teach them.

Charity out of a pure heart

Do you remember the stirring statement of the Apostle Paul to his young brother in the gospel, Timothy:

"... the end of the commandment [I suppose he meant the result of obedience to the commandments] is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." (1 Tim. 1:5.)

The promise is valid and personally relevant to all of us. Paul—he of great intellect and strong training and shattering experience; he who had persecuted, and then been turned around, and who thereafter gave his full measure to the better way—he knew the really important values of life. His testimony to Timothy was that in good conscience, in wholesome, happy relationships with our families and fellowmen, and in the true faith that grants us confidence in the pres-

ence of God lie the real blessings of life.

Conscience "spark of celestial" light

Is good conscience important? It is a prize beyond expression! And conscience is more than a local standard or the accumulation of the mores and traditions of a community or a society or a generation. Whatever else it is, it is the voice of God speaking to us, inspiring moral obligation. Washington called it "that little spark of celestial fire." It is true that we can desensitize our conscience, as it were. In the Book of Mormon we read of a group to whom God had spoken "in a still small voice, but ye were past feeling." (1 Ne. 17:45.) It is also said that there are those who have become "dead as to things pertaining unto righteousness." As we can desensitize a conscience, so to speak, so we can prepare ourselves better to hear the voice of the Lord by stripping off what the poet called the layers of "muddy vesture and decay," by ceasing to sin and learning to obey. There is the privilege of learning true values and living to them.

"When I do good I feel good"

Abraham Lincoln is credited with a simple summation of conscience and the way to live with joy: "When I do good I feel good, and when I don't do good I don't feel good."

No one can be truly happy who has a bad conscience, and bad conscience is the inevitable result of conduct below the level of our understanding.

"We live in a universe of moral law. We can choose evil and get what we want right now and then pay for it afterward. Or we can choose good and pay for it first, before we get it." (Fosdick.) So it is with a life of honesty and responsibility, of sexual purity, of integrity, of selfless service. The blessing is substantial and sweet and satisfying—worth everything, worth working and waiting for.

Marks of moral and spiritual maturity

When Paul spoke of charity out of the "pure heart," I believe he was

talking about the sense of honest, unselfish concern for others that is the mark of moral and spiritual maturity. To accept the responsibilities as well as the benefits of loving, loyal membership in a family is a high challenge to a teenager tempted on all sides by other peer and worldly loyalties. To truly care about others, to be considerate and kind and responsible reflects true maturity. The rebel group we have mentioned is expressing the selfishness of babyhood and the rebelliousness of early youth. In babies and in children these are natural expressions of stages of living, which, sublimated and disciplined as maturity comes, become appropriate self-concern and self-reliance. In a generation charged with major responsibilities amid great complexities, these characteristics are not worthy. Beyond the "give me" and the "let me alone, don't tell me what to do" stages is that level of life which leads us to say, "How can I help? What can I do to be useful? Where am I needed?" It is on this level, we bear testimony, that the real contribution and happiness of life can be found.

I read recently of the development of "breeder reactors," which produce vast amounts of energy from a given amount of fuel and "breed" or produce more fuel than they use while they are doing it. Life is meant to be like that. We are meant to appreciate and use the good things of our inheritance and to leave a greater store behind us.

With good conscience and a genuine concern for others, we need faith in Almighty God. Jesus told the lawyer that the first and great commandment is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . ."

"And the second is like unto it," he said. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. 22:37, 39.) All other commandments depend upon this.

Capacity to cope with adversity

In a generation represented by youth who refuse to whine and whimper in the face of great difficulties, who can thank God for trouble in their

time if it has to come, there is great and glorious promise. But I believe the summation of the best in them, or in any of us, is in that attitude which motivated one of their number to say, "God, I am ready for you, if you are ready for me."

Have you said that, in your own way, and really meant it?

The problems of our day are very great. Many of the voices we have traditionally been able to count on are silent or confused. In the world of theology and religion there is uncertainty and controversy. Faith seems to wane, spirits to sag. We worry about what men say. Perhaps it is time to cease to worry so much about what men say and ask ourselves, "What has God said?" More important than what our neighbors are doing, or what the rest are doing, is what has God done.

"To obey better than sacrifice. . . ."

Long ago there was a young man who, though "little in (his) own eyes," was chosen king of all Israel. The humble Saul was ready for God; and when the prophet of God had anointed him, he "turned into another man." The Spirit of the Lord came upon him. "God gave him another heart." While he listened to the Lord and his prophets, he led with great strength. When he became willful and stubborn and rebellious, he ceased to be useful and he lost his place. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." (See 1 Sam. 10, 15.)

A young man named Solomon loved the Lord and earnestly said to him, ". . . I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in." (1 Kings 3:7.) He asked God for an understanding heart that he might discern between good and bad, and he was so blessed. Only when he ceased to listen to the Lord and became a law unto himself did he lose his gift and his place.

On the other hand, young Samuel learned and remembered all his life to say, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth," and became a great power for good and a chosen instrument in the hands of the Lord. (1 Sam. 3:9.)

Young Joseph, sold into Egypt as a slave, remembered who he was and what he had been taught, even in the terrible temptations of Potiphar's household, and lived to serve and save his people.

A humble young Joshua presented himself to the Lord pleading for help, and the Lord said to him, ". . . as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

". . . Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Josh. 1:5, 9.)

Need for messengers from God to man

God has spoken and still speaks, and the message is clear.

Beyond these, and above them all, is the scriptural account of a choice Son of God knowing the need for a messenger from God to man, on a mission requiring great faith and courage and sacrifice, who said to his Heavenly Father: "Send me."

The power of meekness

He delivered his message, completed his mission, gave his life. In his moment of great agony and torment before Calvary, he laid his life on the altar and said, as we have learned:

"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26:39.)

He was saying, as one of his humble young disciples said in a grove of trees in Colorado a little time ago, "God, I am ready for you, if you are ready for me."

For youth of promise—great responsibility

To the younger generation, our admonition and loving invitation is that you accept the responsibilities of your great promise. Continue to prepare for the duties of the day and the morrow. Get the help of the Lord.

Appreciate your heritage. See the great goodness around you. Forgive us our trespasses and improve upon our performance. Respect our earnest efforts to protect and perpetuate the good things of life for you. Have a decent respect for generations yet unborn. Know that *your* decisions will materially affect the opportunities open to *them*. Build more strongly than we have the foundations for a decent future for all mankind. Keep the idealisms of the fathers of your freedom and the fathers of your faith. Accept the implications of your freedom; make the difficult choices when they are right, and act on them, even if you must stand alone.

Through search and service and reverence, through a life of personal cleanliness and consideration and caring, through faith and trust in God you can be ready for him. Tell him you are, and he will surely give you the strength and courage and quality to live with contribution and meaning and with great personal satisfaction in this, his world.

God bless us in Jesus' name. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

The men of the Tabernacle Choir, with Richard P. Condie conducting and Alexander Schreiner at the organ, will now sing, "Ah, Then My Heart So Free," following which the Choir and congregation will join in singing, "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

The men of the Tabernacle Choir sang, "Ah, then, My Heart So Free," following which the Choir and congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

President Hugh B. Brown

Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve will now address us.