

safety for us and our posterity. The hour is late; the time is short. We must begin now, in earnest, and invite God's blessings on our efforts.

The United States should be a bastion of real freedom. We should not support the world's greatest evil, the Godless, Socialist-Communist conspiracy that seeks to destroy all we hold dear as a great Christian nation and to promote insidiously the breakdown of law and order and the erosion of our morality.

With God's help we must return to those basic concepts, those eternal verities, the rule of law and order upon which this nation was established. With an aroused citizenry and the help of Almighty God it can be accomplished. God grant it may be so, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Elder Marion D. Hanks

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

Great emphasis is being given these days to programs designed to preserve and develop physical fitness. This morning my wife read to me a quotation that emphasizes other aspects of fitness even more important: "There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up." I pray for that spirit of uplift in these few moments.

Where are you in your world

In the writings of a great modern religious figure is the story of a conversation between a persecuted saintly rabbi of the late eighteenth century and his jailer in Petersburg. The jailer asked, "How are we to understand that God, the all-knowing, said to Adam: 'Where art thou?'"

Having obtained from the jailer his assent that "the scriptures are eternal and that every era, every generation and every man is included in them," the rabbi said, ". . . in every era, God calls to every man: 'Where are you in your world? So many years and days of those allotted to you have passed,

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing "God of Our Fathers." After the singing Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of the Seventy will speak to us.

Selection by the Choir, "God of Our Fathers."

President N. Eldon Tanner

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

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

and how far have you gotten in your world? . . . How far along are you?" (Buber, *The Way of Man*.)

Says Buber: "In so asking, God does not expect to learn something he does not know; what he wants is to produce an effect in man which can only be produced by just such a question, provided that it reaches man's heart—that man allows it to reach his heart."

We know that much that demeans man and keeps him from finding himself and his place, and from developing his great potential, comes from his efforts to hide himself from his Father as Adam did, and from the love, the relationships, the service, and the vicissitudes that the Father has sent him to this earth to experience.

Human potential elusive

A thoughtful editor has recently written these words: "The human potential is the most magical but also the most elusive fact of life. Men suffer less from hunger or dread than from living under their moral capacity. The atrophy of spirit that most men

know and all men fear is tied not so much to deprivation or abuse as it is to their inability to make real the best that lies within them. Defeat begins more with a blur in the vision of what is humanly possible than with the appearance of ogres in the path or a hell beyond the next turning." (Norman Cousins, *Saturday Review*, February 6, 1965, p. 18.)

We know well that character is an achievement, not a gift, yet all men to some measure, most of us to some considerable measure, and too many of us to a tragic measure live below our moral capacity, are willing to accept a plausible lower view of mankind and of ourselves than we should or need to, and fail to "make real the best that lies within" us.

The Lord wants us to be our best; he wants us to achieve our highest possibilities. This is the purpose of the gospel. He died to give us that opportunity. What principles are involved in our succeeding? What problems keep us from it?

University survey results

Recently I read a brief newspaper account of a survey made at a great American university among many thousands of students over a period of several years. With access only to the article and not to the study itself, let me briefly paraphrase, to some measure quote, and add some of my own words to the four conclusions that came out of that study, which coincide with what I also have observed and experienced in some years of working with youth. While this study dealt basically with college-age students in our current generation, what it notes is significantly applicable to our culture in general:

1. They are looking for a faith, but are skeptical of all faiths, being disposed and encouraged to question everything and to doubt the established ways.

2. They are looking for a community to which they can belong—for a family, a group, a society—but they are skeptical of all organization. They see institutions as authoritarian,

threatening their identity and individuality. Many feel that the family has failed them. Disorganization and resistance give them a chance for preservation as persons, so they sometimes favor chaos over order.

3. They know they need to think beyond themselves and to give service, but they are frightened by the commitment service requires.

4. They want to love and be loved, but their image of self is poor, and they are not sure they are capable of love or worthy of being loved.

In summary, the problems revealed by the survey are in *believing, belonging, giving, and loving*. These happen to be the basic ingredients essential in the development of the human potential. They are pivotal principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let me speak of them briefly, primarily in illustration.

Believing

What does it matter to our happiness or to the development of our character whether or what we believe?

Before Joan of Arc was burned at the stake, not yet 19 years of age, having saved her country, she was offered her freedom if she would repudiate her vision and her faith. Maxwell Anderson's great play *Joan of Lorraine* has her answering:

"Every man gives his life for what he believes. Every woman gives her life for what she believes. Sometimes people believe in little or nothing. . . . One life is all we have, and we live it as we believe in living it, and then it's gone. But to surrender what you are, and live without belief—that's more terrible than dying—more terrible than dying young."

The apostle Paul spoke of "faith unfeigned." (1 Tim. 1:5.) It is not, of course, lip service or eye pleasing of which he spoke. It is not to know everything, or to understand perfectly. Recall the wonderful answer of a loving father who sought the help of the Master for his afflicted son. Jesus asked him if he believed, and the agonized father, his son's life in the balance, was supremely honest: "Lord,

I believe; help thou my unbelief." (Mark 9:24.)

Motivation of faith

Faith is not rooted in perfect behavior, though it inspires us to desire it, to seek for it. Consider the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisee boasted of his righteousness; the publican (who the Savior said went down to his house justified, rather than the other) "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." (See Luke 18:10-14.)

Faith is to know that he will not reject us. From the Book of Mormon: "And now, my beloved brethren, seeing that our merciful God has given us so great knowledge . . . let us remember him, and lay aside our sins, and not hang down our heads, for we are not cast off." (2 Ne. 10:20.) From the Bible: ". . . therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you. . . ." (Isa. 30:18.)

Faith motivates us to yield our hearts to him, truly yield our hearts. It motivates honesty to acknowledge limitations and vulnerability, willingness to learn, humility to seek help, courage to act, simplicity to trust. It is to have confidence in the presence of God. Faith is, as it has been well said, ". . . a condition born [of the Spirit] in a mind that has looked at all of the available evidence and discovered in it a meaning with which the soul can live at peace. It is not appalled by an invitation to think. . . ." (Guy C. Wilson.)

The need to believe

Recently in Vietnam I learned again of the need for men to believe. A choice friend was serving as the commander of a helicopter gunship unit. They had suffered many casualties and much damage, but miraculously no deaths in their highly dangerous work. The morning before I talked with him in Da Nang my friend, a wonderful servant of the Lord, was standing by

his ship preparing to lead his group on another difficult mission. The blades of the whirlybirds were rotating when the major was approached somewhat hesitantly by a young enlisted man from one of the aircraft. The commander impatiently asked the boy what he wanted.

"Some of us were wondering, sir," he said earnestly, "whether you've had time to say your prayers this morning."

Humbled by the nature and spirit of the question, the commanding officer replied that he had had time to talk with the Lord.

"Thank you, sir," said the young man, smiling, relieved. "The guys and I didn't want to take off on this mission until you'd had time to pray." (See *Era of Youth, Improvement Era*, May 1968, p. 39.)

There had been no overt prayers before the group and no sermon or lesson on the subject, but somehow the word was out among the men that their outfit had something special going for them because their commanding officer was a man who prayed.

Application of spiritual truths

The most urgent need of our time is to understand spiritual truths and apply them to our lives. It has been said—and I think well said—that "our age has tried sophistication and intellectualism, but these have given no peace. Psychology and sociology, humanism and rationalism, have given us not a fraction of the abiding joy and calm our fathers knew through their faith. For still, there is the devastation of doubt and fear and envy and greed and guilt." (Rev. Massey M. Heltzel.)

We have learned again in this conference that the most significant confrontation to be experienced in this world is with Jesus Christ, and yet many still turn from him without knowing him or opening their hearts to him.

A marine in Vietnam said it impressively for his generation in a poem published recently in the *Era of Youth*:

SOUL SURVIVOR

"Last night, on our perimeter,
A man fell in the barbed wire coils
And, in his delirium,
Sobbed these words;
'Oh, dear Christ!'

"I thought with him: the blood was
flowing;
Far away from homeland, injured,
Tired from the all-night guarding,
Weary from the sandbag filling;
Emptiness walked all around him,
Caused by missing many loved ones,
Caused by worried fears of dying,
Worrying more about worrying them.

"Yet, in his one time of trial,
Still, the mighty hope remained—
The faith in higher strength, in mercy;
Then I thought, 'Just how can I,
Even at my most contented,
Ever turn my back on Jesus?'"

(John Blosser, *Era of Youth*,
March 1968, p. 53.)

Importance of belonging

He who believes knows that he belongs. But he also needs to feel himself an important and accepted part of a group. Young people want and deserve parents and a family they can be proud of. Their capacity to become worthwhile persons is strongly affected by the absence or presence of such a family and by their own acceptance of the challenge to be a contributing, responsible member of it. The influence of a good family is well-captured by this account from an unknown source:

"It was a gorgeous October day. My husband Art and I were down at the boat landing helping our friend Don drag his skiff up on the beach. Art remarked wistfully that it would be a long time before next summer, when we could all start sailing again. 'You folks ought to take up skiing like our family and have fun the year round,' Don said.

"'Doesn't that get pretty expensive?' I asked.

"Don straightened up and smiled. 'It's funny,' he said. 'We live in an old-fashioned house—legs on the tub,

that sort of thing. For years we've been saving up to have the bathroom done over. But every winter we take the money out of the bank and go on a couple of family skiing trips. Our oldest boy is in the army now, and he often mentions in his letters what a great time we had on those trips. You know, I can't imagine his writing home, 'Boy, we really have a swell bathroom, haven't we?'"

Climate for growth

In the love of such a family is the climate most suitable for the growth of quality and character and moral capacity. If there is added to this the strengths of good companionships, commitment in a truly living church, involvement in a community of enlightened and mutually concerned persons, responsible citizenship in a great country, young people will have the ideal atmosphere for growth. When they do not have, or could have but do not choose or appreciate these blessings, they are suitable subjects for small vision, inadequate self-discipline, and a deteriorated sense of responsibility.

The strengths and problems of our youth were illustrated in an experience our teen-age daughter had recently. Backing from a driveway onto an unlighted street, she dented the fender of an automobile parked across the narrow road. Flustered and upset by the incident, she yet took time to leave a note on the car identifying herself and accepting responsibility for the damage. She then came home and acquired a parent and the two returned and knocked on the door of the home of the owner of the car and made arrangements with him. She was praised for her direct and uncompromising honesty.

That very night while leaving the public library she and a friend saw a fur-coated lady in an expensive car seriously damage a parked automobile and then speed away without a glance or effort to make the thing right. Feeling at home in a society including this kind of experience is understandably difficult for some young people.

Giving and serving

With believing and belonging, we need to learn to give and to serve if we are to live up to our moral capacity.

I have referred before to the development of "breeder reactors"—a variety of machine that will produce vast amounts of power at a low cost, and in the process will actually create more nuclear fuel than it burns. A life patterned on the way of Christ would be like that, and every life should be. It is our blessing to use, thoughtfully and thankfully, all that is provided for us from the past, and to leave behind us more and better materials with which the generations ahead can work. In faith, freedom, wisdom, beauty, in material blessings, we should add to and not consume our heritage.

Recently I learned of a meeting at the University of Pittsburgh where 2,500 senior honor students from the high schools of Pennsylvania gathered. At the podium was a man who stood in braces, on crutches. He was a medical researcher who had worked on the polio vaccine project. He left many of those bright shining faces wet with tears when he said to them, "Our generation couldn't find the answers in time to save itself. Thank God we found them in time to save you."

What a significant challenge to youth to make real the best that lies within them! Yet someone has called ours the "age of the shrug." I hope and believe this is not so. Do you recall the words of Marshal Pétain after the fall of France? Sobering words:

"Our spirit of enjoyment was stronger than our spirit of sacrifice. We wanted to have more than we wanted to give. We tried to spare effort and we met disaster."

Contrasting this is the statement of a noble man near the end of a rich life of contribution. Asked how he could account for his wide acquaintance with and memory of the poets, the philosophers, and the prophets, he smiled and said, "Well, I had to work hard to learn it, and then I gave it and gave it and gave it until it was mine."

(Attributed to Dr. Howard R. Driggs.)

Loving and being loved

What of loving and being loved? Perhaps the most serious problem of many young people and of their adult generation is their poor self-image, a conviction that they are worthless. To be able to truly love God and his neighbor, one must esteem himself. Everyone needs to love and to have the assurance that he is worth loving and that he is loved, beyond "demand or reciprocity, praise or blame." No mere tolerance or indulgence can take the place of such love, which does not come from sermons or resolutions, but only from persons who can give it, and from God.

It is written: "You cannot love another person—that is, behave toward him so as to foster his happiness and growth unless you know what he needs. And you cannot know what he needs unless he tells you—and you hear him."

Evidences of love

So much that is spurious and counterfeit is spoken and done in the name of love. Hear the word of the Lord:

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments." (1 John 5:2.) That charity which is defined by the prophet as "the pure love of Christ" (Moro. 7:47) is described clearly by the Apostle Paul: It "suffereth long, and is kind; . . . envieth not; . . . vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

"Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity, . . . rejoiceth in the truth."

Such love, said the apostle, "never faileth." (See 1 Cor. 13:4-6, 8.)

The major source of our self-image should be our Heavenly Father, whose children we are, in whose image we are made, whose attributes and qualities we have within us in embryo. He it is who loved us so much that he sent his Only Begotten Son to show us the way and to die for us. We are

his children, worthy of love, and we have in us the capacity to love. We must learn to love even as we are loved by him.

Let me conclude with this prayer and earnest hope: God help us, and help us to help younger generations, to make the choices that will qualify us as worthwhile people, to make real the best that lies within us, to live up to our moral capacity, and to accomplish what is humanly possible, through believing, belonging, serving, and loving, even as the Son of God has taught us. God help us to be able to answer in good conscience when he asks: "Where art thou?"

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang, "Lovely Appear."

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to

us. He was followed by the singing, "Lovely Appear."

We shall now have a brief interlude with the Tabernacle Choir singing, "Father Omnipotent." The congregation and Choir will then join in singing, "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

The Tabernacle Choir sang the anthem, "Father Omnipotent."

The Choir and the congregation then joined in singing the hymn, "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

President N. Eldon Tanner

We wish to welcome the television and radio audiences who have just joined us, and again we announce that we are gathered in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the third session of the One Hundred Thirty-eighth Annual Conference of the Church.

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve will now address us.

Elder Mark E. Petersen

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I would like to talk with you today about the United States and its relationship to God.

Most people do not realize it, but this nation is different from all other nations. It has a divine destiny not shared by other countries, and was set up as an independent power by a deliberate act of God to fulfill that destiny.

America's divine destiny

Because our nation is a creation of heaven, and because it has a divine destiny, we Americans must learn that it can continue to exist only as it aligns itself with the powers of heaven. If we turn our back upon the Almighty, even by ignoring him, we jeopardize our national future. If we deliberately oppose his purposes, we place ourselves in danger of destruction.

These stern facts have been taught

to Americans from the beginning of our national history, starting with our first President, George Washington. He realized and he publicly announced that we obtained our independence through an act of Providence, since we were far too weak to gain it by ourselves. Knowing this, he warned that if we are to survive as a free and independent nation, we must obey the Almighty God who brought us into being.

Abraham Lincoln, another inspired President, said virtually the same thing, warning that if we fail to obey the commandments of God, we shall go down to ruin.

A crucial time

We have reached a point in our national history as crucial as the time of the Civil War. Our present dangers are quite as great. Threats to our