

ELDER DELBERT L. STAPLEY

Of the Council of the Twelve

● My brothers and sisters, when considering the history of the various organizations of the Church, I am reminded of the statement by David Everett:

"Large streams from little fountains flow,
Tall oaks from little acorns grow."

No one society or no one organization has sprung at once into full, perfect maturity. Most good and great thoughts and things are a growth, not a sudden perfection, and so it was with the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association. This being their centennial year, it seems appropriate at this conference to recognize this important young women's organization and program.

Retrenchment Society established

Visualize the setting existing when President Brigham Young established the beginning organization, called in those days the Retrenchment Society. He was disturbed about his daughters' somewhat worldly interests and actions. He worried about their spiritual and intellectual development and was concerned over the growing trend toward materialism, commercialism, and sophistication among the younger Church members. His daughters seemed to reflect the general trend he had observed among the young women in Zion, whose main interests were young men, socials, theater, ice skating, sleigh and hay rides, picnics, and clothes.

As President of the Church and a former governor of the Territory of Deseret, Brigham Young felt personally responsible for the moral and social welfare of all the residents of the territory.

The young men did not seem to be such an immediate problem, as many were pursuing higher education and becoming well versed in the scriptures and preparing for missions. Others were kept busy in agricultural and industrial pursuits—building homes, stores, ward houses, roads, and working on the construction of the temple.

The family home required help from the young women, with miscellaneous household tasks and caring for the sick.

President Young's instruction

President Young's thoughts turned to his own daughters, knowing their needs for improved womanly virtues and their qualifications for a more complete and abundant life.

He asked Sister Eliza R. Snow to notify all his family to assemble in the Lion House, as he had important matters to present to them. The scene in the quaint parlor was a memorable one. Following the evening family prayer, President Young dismissed his sons and younger daughters, looked around at the lovely faces of his older daughters, and said: "All Israel are looking to my family and watching the example set by my . . . children. For this reason I desire to organize my own family first into a society for the promotion of habits of order, thrift, industry, and charity: and, above all things, I desire them to retrench from their extravagance in dress . . . in your speech, . . . wherein you have been guilty of silly . . . speeches and light-mindedness of thought. Retrench in everything that is bad and worthless, and improve in everything that is good and beautiful." (Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association*, pp. 8-9.)

The word *retrench* may to this generation sound rather archaic and outmoded. The dictionary defines *retrench*: to cut down, reduce or diminish, curtail, to economize.

The last sentence of the quotation is thus made more meaningful. "Retrench in everything that is bad and worthless, and improve in everything that is good and beautiful."

Challenge accepted

With mixed emotions, the daughters of Brigham Young accepted the challenge he had given them. Eliza R. Snow recorded his words and wrote

the subsequent resolutions to guide the organization. She knew that as a prophet of God he had organized the Retrenchment Society through divine inspiration, not just for his own family, but for the benefit and blessing of all young ladies of the Church.

Soon they caught the spirit and became involved in striving to be "worthy of imitation." Before a year had gone by, young ladies all over the valley were holding meetings in parlors, schools, and ward houses.

Program for young men

As Brigham Young watched the Retrenchment Society bless every Mormon community, he became concerned about the general welfare of the young men of the Church, especially during the winter months when time hung more heavily on their hands. In those early days the social structure was simple. There was very little in the way of sports or commercial amusement, and he felt the young men also needed a program of involvement. Junius F. Wells was given the assignment to organize societies among the young men of the Church for their mutual improvement. This led to the organization of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association. The Retrenchment Society thereafter, and until recent years, became known as the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association.

Brigham Young explained: "Ours is a religion of improvement; it is not contracted and confined, but is calculated to expand the minds of the children of men and lead them up into the state of intelligence that will be an honor to our being." (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 10, p. 290.)

Thoughts for today's youth

What he said a century ago is so applicable to the young people of the Church today. With this in mind, I would like to direct some thoughts to our youth.

As children of promise, do not choose to be common; rather, choose to excel. There is no prominent place in the society of men and women today for the mediocre. Strive for perfection and

you will attain perfection in many areas and approach it in others. You have a rich heritage. Be unafraid to think and act in accordance with gospel principles, and enjoy the benefits and blessings of it as you fulfill on earth the full measure of your creation as a child of God.

Set goals in life and achieve them.

Don't be quitters or failures; I believe the current word is "losers." Rather, be steadfast in attaining righteous, soul-satisfying goals.

Failure weakens one's incentive, purpose, and character, just as success strengthens these desirable attributes. The adage "Nothing succeeds like success" is true. Keep the aura of success and achievement with you.

Opportunities come to those who are better prepared by knowledge, training, desire, and are firm in determining what they want to do and become.

Standards never change

The Lord Jesus Christ is directing his church here on earth; therefore, the high standards for Mormon youth will never change. The world may lower its standards, but the Church can never do so, because God has revealed the way all faithful members should live.

Do not place man's science, his philosophies or sophistries above or on an equal plane with the truths revealed of God. The philosophy of man can rise no higher than the mind of man who created it. True philosophy is found only in the gospel of Christ. It is the Lord's way of life for mankind. The apostle Paul counseled: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7.)

H. S. Johnson expressed it in these words: "Great thoughts alone change men and women. By the great thoughts of Jesus, men and women, for some two thousand years, have been changed from folly to the ways of wisdom, from baseness to wholesomeness, from cruelty to mercifulness, from sin to righteousness."

The faith that saves

My young brothers and sisters, seek for the knowledge and faith that saves.

Choose your companions well, and be a person sought out by others as a proper companion. Hold high the standards and ideals of the gospel. Do not follow the crowd; they can be wrong and often are. Do not waver or settle for anything less than you are worthy and entitled to receive. To compromise is to give up something—and to give up something is to lose.

Grow spiritually, mentally, and physically into the full stature of intelligent youth; cultivate desires for beneficial service to mankind in whatever life's activities you choose to follow.

You are living in a modern world. You should learn how to live in the presence of these modern conditions and still express a wholesome, righteous response to them.

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., warned the membership of the Church: "If there was a time in our history when we must be on guard against the insidious influences and propaganda of the churches of the world, and the atheists of the world, that time is today."

". . . a standard for the nations."

The eyes of the world are more and more upon the Church. We are becoming better known, and because of our high standards, more is expected of us. We should live as people expect us as Church members to live. This does not mean giving up our initiative and living only to be seen of men, but to live as we know we should live and as our Heavenly Father wants us to live. Here is his admonition: "Verily, I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations." (D&C 115:5.)

Cultivating a strong testimony of the gospel will develop a feeling of self-worth that will cause one to be humble and meek and yet not subject to the domination of evil, designing persons or institutions.

Resistance to temptation

Resist temptation and keep yourselves free from sin and its sorrows. Third Nephi records Jesus' admonition to his followers: "Behold, verily . . .

I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." (3 Ne. 18:18.)

But the Lord promises: "Be faithful unto the end, and lo, I am with you. These words are not of man nor of men, but of me, even Jesus Christ, your redeemer, by the will of the Father." (D&C 31:13.)

I have seen the heartaches and sorrows of persons who have sinned and lost membership in the Church. The Lord, however, is merciful and forgiving and rejoices in the truly repentant soul. I plead with you young people of the Church to avoid the snares and pitfalls of sin that lead to one's unhappiness and so often to the destruction of everything that is pure, noble, and good in life.

It is incumbent upon each of us to see the full picture of God's complete plan for his children—one's preexistence, mortality, and immortality and eternal life. Each should chart his life's course according to gospel principles and standards.

Purposes of the YWMA

It is the beginning of the second century of the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association. One hundred years ago it was organized in one family, one community, one territory, and one country. Today it has a membership of approximately 360,000 young women and is organized on nearly every continent in the world.

Many teachers and leaders are involved in initiating and directing the best possible programs for the youth of the Church. Times have changed, the programs have changed, but the original purposes and principles have not, nor will they ever change until a higher order is revealed.

The Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association supports and enhances the beautiful ideal of family life. It provides for young women abundant and wholesome social and recreational experiences. It fosters friendships. It directs toward worthwhile goals. It promotes the mastery of good habits. It develops talents

and intelligence. It provides the opportunity for members to increase their knowledge of and appreciation for the beauties and wonders of the world around them. It teaches the satisfaction of service to others. It deepens testimonies that God is their Father, that Jesus Christ is his Son, and that the Presidents of the Church are prophets of God.

Service to youth

And now to you dedicated parents, teachers, and leaders: Continue your interest and service to youth. Go the extra mile—go beyond the class—go beyond the scheduled activities. Listen to them and learn to know their problems. Let them know you love them and will do all in your power to strengthen them. They are the elect of God's children.

The family home evening stressed by Church leaders today is an important time and place to teach these noble concepts to youth.

Remember, MIA leaders, youth come to you at a most critical period of their lives. They are wavering between childhood ideals and a maturity that comes with adulthood.

There are movies and television programs with poor standards that stress violence and place improper emphasis on sex. Perhaps these things are difficult to abolish; therefore, you must succeed in teaching chastity as a way of life, despite the existence of these and other temptations to which youth are subjected. Modern styles and immodesty of dress certainly are contributing factors to evil.

Alma's counsel

Develop within youth a desire to obtain the blessings promised to the faithful.

Alma, a Book of Mormon prophet, counseled:

"Preach unto them repentance, and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ; teach them to humble themselves and to be meek and lowly in heart; teach them to withstand every temptation of the devil. . . .

"Teach them to never be weary of good works, . . . for such shall find

rest to their souls." (Al. 37:33-34.)

Tryon Edwards hit a key note when he said, "People never improve unless they look to some standard of example higher and better than themselves."

Exemplary parents and leaders become a stabilizing influence for good and righteousness in the lives of youth.

Blessing of MIA

The Young Women's and Young Men's Mutual Improvement Associations have blessed every boy and girl, every leader, every family, every community touched by their influence; and all their accomplishments glorify our Father in heaven, for this is his plan that his children might also be glorified.

I pray the good Lord will bless these two splendid youth organizations and bless us leaders that we will be interested in the organizations and the welfare of youth and do all within our power to strengthen their faith and their testimonies so that their lives will be in harmony with the divine will. This I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

President Alvin R. Dyer

We are grateful to Elder Stapley and the others for their inspiring remarks this afternoon.

As a matter of information, the Saturday morning session will be broadcast direct by numerous radio and television stations, and recorded for transmission on Sunday morning to many television stations in the eastern and central parts of the United States.

A video tape of Saturday morning's session of conference will be flown from the mainland and televised Sunday morning in Hawaii.

The proceedings of the session of conference this morning and also on Sunday morning will be transmitted from the Tabernacle over direct oceanic cables to a large number of Saints assembled in over 70 chapels throughout Great Britain, Germany, France, Austria, and Belgium on Sunday. Direct circuits will also carry these sessions to Saints assembled in chapels throughout eastern Canada.

Both sessions of our conference today, Saturday, and Sunday, will be re-broadcast over KSL, KIRO at Seattle, KMBZ at Kansas City, and WNYW International Shortwave radio the following morning beginning at midnight, and will be heard in many parts of the United States and other countries.

I call your attention to several meetings of importance: A meeting for all stake patriarchs from throughout the Church will be held this evening in the Assembly Hall at 7:00. Others invited to be present are General Authorities, the Regional Representatives of the Twelve, stake presidents or their representatives.

The Deseret Sunday School Union meeting will be held this evening at 7:00 in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. All Sunday School officers and teachers are invited to attend. Members of the priesthood who have Sunday School responsibilities are to be in attendance at this meeting.

Under the direction of the First Presidency there will be a Welfare Agricultural meeting held in the Assembly Hall tomorrow morning, Saturday, at 7:30 o'clock a.m. Invited to attend this general session will be Regional Representatives of the Twelve, all stake presidencies, high councilmen, bishoprics, Agricultural Operating

Committees, stake Relief Society presidents, and others responsible for operating Welfare production.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the Relief Society Singing Mothers under the direction of Ellen N. Barnes, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ. We thank them for the beautiful music they have rendered at this session. They are to be commended for their desire to serve and to bring happiness to others through their music.

The Singing Mothers will now favor us with the "Twenty-third Psalm," and the benediction will then be offered by Elder Fred E. Schluter, high priest group leader of the Princeton Ward of the New Jersey Central Stake, and the General Conference of this Church will then be adjourned until 10:00 tomorrow morning.

Singing by the Relief Society Singing Mothers of the "Twenty-third Psalm."

Benediction by Elder Fred E. Schluter, high priest group leader of the Princeton Ward, New Jersey Central Stake.

Conference was adjourned until 10:00 a.m. Saturday, October 4.

SECOND DAY

MORNING MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The third session of the conference convened on Saturday, October 4, 1969 at 10 o'clock a.m.

President Hugh B. Brown, first counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the meeting.

The music for this session was furnished by the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir. Elder Richard P. Condie directed the singing. Elder Alexander Schreiner was at the organ.

Before the opening of the conference session, the Tabernacle Choir, under

the direction of Elder Condie, sang the number, "Sleepers Awake a Voice Is Calling."

President Brown made the following introductory statement:

President Hugh B. Brown

President McKay is viewing these services at his home. He is presiding at this conference and has asked me to conduct this session. He joins us in extending to all a most cordial welcome this morning in this great Tabernacle. We announce there will also be over-