

Brethren, may each one of us search the scriptures with diligence; plan his life with purpose; teach the truth with testimony; and serve the Lord with love. The elements of this formula then become our ideals. Ideals are like the stars: we cannot touch them with our hands, but by following them, we reach our destination.

### Great joy promised

The perfect Shepherd of souls, the missionary who redeemed mankind, gave us his divine assurance: ". . . If it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father! "And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!" (D&C 18:15-16.)

Of him who spoke these words, I declare my witness. He is the Son of God, our Redeemer, and our Savior.

I pray that we will respond to his gentle invitation, "Follow thou me," in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

### President N. Eldon Tanner

Brother James L. Bradley will now lead the congregation and chorus in singing, "Redeemer of Israel."

We would ask those assembled in all the different buildings to rise and sing with us, after which Elder Marion D. Hanks, Assistant to the Twelve, will address us.

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The congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Redeemer of Israel."

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## ELDER MARION D. HANKS

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

● I have been thinking about the story of a man who was seen running full speed toward a river, a broad river. As he approached the dock he increased his speed and then flung himself with all his might into the water maybe ten feet, turned around and swam back, got out, and was asked by a startled onlooker why he had jumped into the river. He answered that a friend of his had bet him a thousand dollars to one that he couldn't jump across the river, and after a while he just couldn't stand thinking about those odds without at least trying.

### Latter-day Saints Student Association

It is going to be quite a thing for me to talk about something else besides missionary work after this great meeting tonight, but I will try because it is my responsibility this evening, under assignment, to discuss the Latter-day Saints Student Association.

Under the direction of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the

Twelve and operating with the guidance of the Correlation Committee and the direct supervision and support of the Youth Correlation Committee of the Church, the Latter-day Saints Student Association functions as a correlating agency to serve Latter-day Saint students on college and university campuses across the world. The Student Association presently reaches about 285 campuses. Its work is important to all college-level students and to all those who one day will be; and, of course, parents and interested adults, bishops, executive secretaries, stake presidents, and other Church leaders will be deeply concerned, as should all Church members. It is our earnest hope that all of you who have the Student Association in your area will discover that and will cooperate fully and strengthen its work.

### Underlying principles

I would like to talk tonight for a few minutes, in order to put this program

in perspective, about some principles and problems and challenges that underlie it. Brother Monson has just repeated what may be the most significant fundamental principle underlying the work we do. If a few words could be thought to reveal the heart of the gospel, distill its essence, those words might be the ones: "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God." (D&C 18:10.) Of so much worth to God are the souls of men that he sent his Holy Son as his agent of redemption and of mercy and of happiness. Of so much worth are the souls of men to that Son that he gave his life on a cross that we all might enjoy the blessings of eternal life and lasting relationships with loved ones in the progressive, creative future with our Eternal Father that we envision and believe in.

### The worth of souls

In his lifetime Jesus witnessed majestically in his teachings his continuing interest in and his high valuation of the individual souls of men. Those three great parables in one chapter of scripture, in answer to a question from a critic about why he companied with sinners, teach us everlastingly how we ought to feel about the lost sheep, or the individual child of God, because the enfolded 99 and the wandering one all were important to him, and must be to us. And when in the parable of the Good Samaritan he taught us how we should behave toward each other, he gave us the objective and ideal we ought to be thinking about.

It is this great principle, the worth of souls in the sight of God, that causes the Church, the Lord's instrument, to be so very concerned with each age level of individual.

When we think about some of the problems that exist in this world today, and we think about what happens when one honest soul undertakes to learn and live the life the Lord wants him to, and how he frequently multiplies himself in so many ways in the lives of others (as we have seen it in missionary work, in the military, in teaching, in sports, in civic work, in

employment), then we know that this is in truth the Lord's kingdom, because it believes in the worth of souls.

Let me tell you then about an additional effort the Church is making to reach and assist its college and university students to find spiritual strength and balance while they grow in the academic and social worlds of university life.

### Situation on college campuses

You are all conscious, to some measure, of the situation on the college campuses, and President McKay's words relating to a survey about that as this conference began yesterday. He talked about some of the more significant moral problems in the attitudes of some young people toward premarital sex, drugs, and other difficult pressures and unrest situations on the campus these days.

Many adults are pessimistic about the generation involved, and certainly some of their acts indicate that some of them are not only radicals but that some are psychotics, disciplined Communists, or criminals. With them, however, are many genuine idealists who in the spirit of the times seek change toward a better and more lofty ethical and moral climate.

In some measure, I believe, unfortunately, the cynical words of William Butler Yeats written in 1921 seem to fit the situation. I repeat only the last two lines of a well-known poem:

"The best lack all conviction,  
While the worst are full of passionate intensity."

But this is true only in a measure. Some of those who are not optimistic about this generation describe the "worst" as wanting to "teach before they learn, retire before they work, rot before they ripen." (Eric Hoffer.)

### Majority want to do well

Others, and I am one of them, testify that the solid majority of this younger generation want to do well, and are doing well, but they need help to keep from becoming captivated by the temptations of this world and by the sterile lives of those misguided imitation men who spend their energies

fomenting furor and chaos, with no expression of their own that I have ever heard to improve anything. One wonders what their children will have to thank them for.

It is an established principle through the ages that when adult authority ceases to function effectively, the young are victimized by each other. A commentator has said it this way: "As adult authority disintegrates, the young are more and more the captives of each other. . . . The problem when adult control disappears is that the young's control of each other intensifies." (David Riesman, *Psychology Today*, September 1969.)

Where do young Latter-day Saints stand in the midst of all of this? I would like to bear testimony that they are special; they have special challenges, but they also have special dreams and capacity and preparation, and the courage to undertake to bring them into reality. I believe that potentially they are the greatest generation in every way, but they need help. They need the Church and its great principles, its leadership, and its program; and the Church reaches to help them in many important ways.

### Number in missionary and military service

All of us know, and have tonight and several times in this conference had reiterated for us, that from the college-age group, generally speaking, there are at this moment about 13,000 clean, decent, committed young Christians seeking to teach the gospel and bear their witness across the earth. Brother [Alan J.] Smith did a great job in reminding us of how important that is and how wonderfully precious they are.

At the same hour of which we speak, this hour, about twice that many are in the military services of the land, young Latter-day Saints committed to a patriotic sense of responsibility to serve their country, and having been called to serve are abroad in the world doing what they have been asked to do. We salute them and thank God that the Church with an ever-expanding interest and a program to express it is

reaching out to help them, to bring them companionship and leadership opportunities, to get to them regularly through the mail with letters and with the literature that will buoy them up and strengthen them. Again, I am tempted to tell what I know about them because I have seen them across the earth, in the camps and the far places of a terribly difficult land; and I testify that they really are, many of them, and I would wish all of them, devoted, dedicated missionaries and servants of the Lord. And the Church is seeking to serve them.

### Interest in university students

The Church is interested also in scores of thousands who aren't in any of these categories or in college but who work for a living or are otherwise involved. However, I am going to talk for just a few minutes tonight about a number that may surprise you. Remember, there are 13,000 or so of our wonderful young people in the mission field, 26,000 or so in the military, and about 125,000 on college and university campuses. Those now at school have the usual pressures of current university study, plus the special challenge of continuing to mature spiritually while they grow academically and of attempting to maintain the close relationship with the Church that they should have while they are giving appropriate attention to their school programs.

We believe, of course, that the Church and the gospel and the priesthood have the answers to help these young people. The Church has established colleges and a great university, involving about 30,000 of them. Institutes of religion are available on campuses where about 55,000 go. This leaves a remainder, but every year institutes grow in number and so do the people who attend them. Student stakes have been formed in various parts of the land, and student wards and branches in many places. In these great organizations the young lead each other in righteous ways. They serve and they take part. The auxiliary organizations are helping in their instructional and activity programs.

### Results from student program

Then three years ago, with the inspiration of Brother Lee and led by Brother Paul Dunn, with the approval of the Brethren, a pilot program of the Latter-day Saints Student Association was invoked. Its purpose was to support and strengthen the great work of the institutes, the student stakes, the auxiliaries, and other church elements. The product of the labors of these great youth-serving institutions may not be well enough known. Could I give you one example. Among all the marriages performed for members of student stakes last year, 95 percent were in the temple. Among institute graduates, 95 percent were in the temple. Among those attending Church colleges and the great university, 93 percent were in the temple. Of those attending institutes but not graduating, 84 percent of the marriages were in the temple. Among those attending college but not institutes of religion, about 50 percent were in the temple. The general Church average is a little below that.

### Sheltering wing for LDS students

Obviously we want to do everything we can to get our wonderful young students into the institutes of religion and to do everything we can to support the student wards and stakes and to multiply them as conditions permit in their great service to students. And that is why the Latter-day Saints Student Association was organized. It offers a sheltering wing for all Latter-day Saint students, active or inactive, and we might add, whether they like it or not we take them in. It reaches out to freshmen and new students, to returned missionaries and returned servicemen, to the boy and the girl from the little town, and the one from the big city, to LDS men and women in campus fraternities and sororities, to Latter-day Saint social groups, to representatives of the institutes and student wards, branches, or stakes, to the MIA, to the Relief Society, where applicable to married students, and so forth. It reaches out to converts, and this association has had a mighty and wonderful influence in bringing people into the Church.

### Student council

The Student Association forms committees to serve various of these groups and then it brings their representatives together in counsel in what is called the Latter-day Saints student council on a campus. Four student leaders are selected, interviewed, called, and set apart. They preside in the student council to which come these other representatives. The student council addresses itself to three basic questions: (1) What are the needs of the students on this campus or in this area? (2) How can those needs best be satisfied? (3) Which Church agency or institution or influence can best undertake to solve the problem—which can best lead out?

### Priesthood leadership

Of very great importance, the Student Association brings to the campus setting to help in this process priesthood leadership in the form of a stake president. On a campus where there is a student stake, the stake president of the student stake is generally the priesthood leader. Where there is no student stake, another great local stake president would be assigned that campus or the area. This stake president is the chairman of what is called the executive committee. He presides with an educational adviser from the institute, with MIA representation, perhaps a bishop of a student ward or a branch president of a student branch, and they meet with the students, hear their recommendations and their findings, and then give answers. The student voice is heard, and alert, seasoned priesthood leaders consider what they have to say. Decisions are made—some yes, some no—and then all the Church elements on campus get together and go to work. The representatives go back to the student council and report the decisions made in conference with their priesthood leader and his associates, and they resolve any problems and go to work.

### Need for correlation

Now, brethren, correlation is more than coordination. Actually, an in-

tense, devoted student could have a calendar coordinated so that he was going to an event every night with no conflict, but correlation will see to it that that doesn't happen. The need the students have may be for a week sequestered for study and preparation for exams. They will tell that to the priesthood leader, and the priesthood leader is in a position to see that no events are scheduled for that week except the regular Sabbath day meetings. The student need may be for tutoring or service or a social. All the Church elements are in the student council; they talk about it, they go then to the executive committee, and it is discussed and decisions are made.

The Student Association has no jurisdiction or appointment over the non-student, but this simple thought can be important, very important. While the Student Association is not chartered to reach out to the non-student, his brother of the same general age group, this priesthood leader has authority and responsibility to care about all young people, and so he can call representatives of the two groups together and real correlation begins to take place; no one is imposed upon and the right results occur. The results, I want to tell you, have been wonderful.

### Support of other groups

Let me repeat that the Student Association purposes to strengthen and support the Church organizations which serve the student. Ordinarily one of them is selected to take the lead in whatever undertaking has been decided upon, but occasionally there is a situation where no one of the fragmented groups, say the student stake, the institute, the MIA, can take the job—it is too big. Then the whole Student Association influence and effectiveness goes into action. Let me give you just one example, and I would like to give you a hundred.

At one major university the non-Mormon president of that school recently asked that the LDS Student Association take over a major church-related campus event, noting that no single group of the Mormon students

could likely handle it but all of them together could. He said this verbatim: "The Latter-day Saints Student Association is the most important factor for high idealism and stability on this campus. It is what I have prayed for on every campus I have worked on."

### University of Utah campus

How do the students feel? The University of Utah campus is the nearest to this building. Let me mention just a word about it. It is a great school from which I graduated and which I love. It has problems. It has many wonderful students. It has about 15,000 Latter-day Saint students, among them many thousands of returned missionaries. At this great university the students have the normal problems that bother students at the normal university these days. The Student Association has been accepted and given status on this campus. Among many Latter-day Saint students, some of whom are not seeking the Church, to be honest about it, but may be trying to hide from it, there are many diverse elements.

We have taped just about three minutes of the testimony of one young returned missionary, a choice young man who couldn't spend much time or didn't choose to at the institute before his mission, but who finds a difference there since. I am going to ask that it be played right now, if you will listen attentively to Randy Harmsen, and then we will finish.

### Testimony of returned missionary

"Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life."

"Recently there has occurred on the college campuses much dissent and unrest, which in some instances has led to militant and destructive action. Organizations like SDS, the Black Student Union, Maoists, etc., attract nearly all the attention, which leads some to think that other students have no argument. This in my opinion is not so. A great percentage of responsible students feel estranged from a system that has little room for student participa-

tion. The student wants a voice in the decision process. He needs a piece of the action.

"We realize that if we do not act responsibly while trying to obtain this goal of meaningful involvement, we will never receive it. In this quest for personal and/or student representation in the decision process, the Latter-day Saints Student Association provides opportunities and means whereby this goal can be accomplished. I am grateful for an organization that meets the needs of students through their involvement and leadership under the direction of the priesthood. The association would not remain vital without priesthood inspiration, experience, and support. We need it and we want it. A generation bond, not a gap, between students and priesthood exists.

"As I examine the impact of LDSSA on my life, I can only reflect on my experiences and observations at the University of Utah. As a freshman I soon realized that I was just one of thousands, a number on an IBM card. I had spiritual needs, not so much doctrinal as of identity, that were not being met. I had a desire to serve others within the university environment. My fraternity experiences were sometimes hollow and empty. The institute was not a place to go, and if I went I wanted few to know. I noticed a void of LDS student unity and support.

"We were so anxious not to offend the non-LDS students that little was said or done. We had needs but there didn't exist an organization or a place where we could meet mutually and discuss our problems and their possible solutions, so consequently religious experience to me was a Sunday affair, while during the week I wanted to appear as broad and as open as anyone.

"After my mission there was a marked change. The institute was and is respected, if not becoming the place to be. There exists a force, a union, a common bond between LDS students that I never felt before; a vibrancy of spirit, mutual concern, a desire to serve others is evident. It was like coming from the Andes Mission to a mission on the campus. LDSSA is an organiza-

tion that encourages students to use their ideas, talents, and abilities to act responsibly.

"I have a testimony of the value of the LDS Student Association, mainly because of its spirit. It is a spirit that prevails over the campus. There is a spirit that inspires the students to live their religion, to grasp the relevancy of the gospel principles and standards. In the words of our Savior, 'Labor not for meat which perisheth, but that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.' The Latter-day Saints Student Association provides those opportunities and student experiences through involvement that we can have a decisive voice in our eternal lives."

### Appeal for support

The point, brethren: We care about these individual, wonderful young people. Will you bishops, branch presidents, and executive secretaries care about their pink membership cards, or in some other way let us know where they are when they leave home for campuses? Will you wonderful young people accept our expression of love and interest? Will you go to an institute if you are on a campus and haven't done so? Will you be involved in *being*, not *seeming*? I close with these great words of Moroni written long ago and printed in the ninth chapter of Mormon. I offer them to the young as earnestly as I know how, changing only two words to include all of you and me with the writer: "Condemn [us] not because of [our] imperfection . . . but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been." (Morm. 9:31.)

I testify to you that I believe they will be, and pray God to help them in the undertaking, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

### President N. Eldon Tanner

We wish to express our appreciation to those who have participated in and made this meeting such an inspiration, I am sure, both to father and son, all holders of the priesthood.