

of the young men there, and how many of them bear testimony that it was because somebody met them and worked with them, and gave them companionship and love, that they were able to withstand the temptations that are so prevalent there.

So, brethren, you bishops and stake presidents, when these young men leave home to go to school, be sure that you send the recommends and the information you have regarding them to that university or college. When they go into the armed services, for goodness' sake, for the sake of these young men, be sure that you are not too busy and that your interest is keen enough to do all in your power to try to save these young men who are going into the armed services. Send information ahead of them to the group leaders or other proper people.

Returned missionaries

As for these missionaries, when they return, and the young men who are preparing, be close to them. Let your influence be felt. Encourage them. They are on fire when they return from a mission. You know when they are returning. Meet them, greet them, love them, and give them an opportunity to work. I have heard several examples of this—one just last week. A mother said to me, "When my boy

returned from his mission, he wasn't given an opportunity to speak in the ward, he wasn't approached by the bishop other than to say, 'Hello, it's good to see you home,' and no one seemed to take an interest in him." Then she said, "I really had to work with that boy to keep up his interest and activity in the Church."

Brethren, you who are returning from these armed services and school and missions, report to your bishops and offer yourselves to be of service. And bishops, I appeal to you to see that when these young people leave your ward, you send on information to the proper officials in schools, universities, and the armed services, so that they might know and be able to give the necessary help and encouragement when they arrive.

Importance of a soul

May the Lord bless us that we might realize the importance of a soul; that right in our midst we have people needing attention and help, and it is our responsibility to keep them active, to encourage them, and to reach them if they are having problems. May we realize that the priesthood of God is the power of God given us to act in his name. May we do it wisely, humbly, effectively, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

First Counselor in the First Presidency

During the last week, we have spent an afternoon and all day with our Regional Representatives of the Twelve, directing their attention to a

theme, "The Church has need of every member that all may be edified together." We developed some statistics that have now been reduced to

charts, which the Regional Representatives will be taking out to the various regional meetings to impress the need for reaching out to those who presently are not active in the Church.

Priesthood activity figures

I may take figures from one chart to impress the importance of what we are talking about. On one chart we have 353,000 holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood in the Church, most of whom are fathers, and only 187,000 are active, using attendance at one sacrament meeting and one priesthood meeting each month as helpful criteria. Or, in other words, they were considered active if they did that much. Of the 184,000 men over 21 who hold the Aaronic Priesthood, most of whom are fathers too, only 17,000 are active, mind you. There are also 48,000 adult male members who are unordained, and 117,480 nonmember husbands, most of whom are fathers also. Thus, of approximately 700,000 adult males, many of whom are fathers, almost 500,000 of the total are by these criteria inactive, if we include unordained males and nonmember husbands in describing this scope of our challenge.

The weight of responsibility

Now, brethren, we are going out now with a determined activity to bring these our brethren into activity—activity of some kind. One of the mission presidents, with a group of his missionaries back in the Eastern States some years ago, was meeting in a hall with pillars that ran down the center of the hall, and he said to one of the missionaries, "Get up and push that pillar over."

"Well," said the missionary, "I can't."

"Why?"

"Because the weight of that ceiling is all on top of the pillar."

Then the president asked, "Suppose that weight were lifted off. Could you push the pillar over then?"

The missionary replied, "Why, sure, I think I could."

Then the president said, "Now, brethren, you and I are just like one of those pillars. As long as we have a weight of responsibility in this church, all hell can't push us over; but as soon as that weight is lifted off, most of us are easy marks by the powers that drag us down."

Now we want to put a weight of responsibility on every holder of the priesthood and on every father in every home. You must remember that if we are to multiply the number of those who are so-called inactives, who haven't been to the temple, by the average-size family, you are counting up to hundreds of thousands of members of this church who, unless we do something about it, will not be sealed together in the temple and will not, therefore, belong together in family relationships in the hereafter.

Remember that activity is the soul of spirituality.

Focus on individual

We propose that you introduce this kind of program: We want the bishops now to instruct the home teachers and quorum leaders to submit the names of inactive members to their bishops, along with suggestions as to how these individuals might be approached and involved. We want the bishops, in turn, to submit these names to their stake presidents in the same manner, so that there is a

continuing effort and evaluation over a period of time in which we focus on individuals rather than numbers, in which we test our love and creativity in terms of how we can best reach and assist fellow members in giving them the opportunity of serving others.

Call for professional services

We have had these brethren speak as they have tonight, directing your attention to this vital subject. All of them have touched upon various areas of concern. We have in the Church many men in various professions who have been asking, "Why can't we, instead of being called to go out on a proselyting mission, go on a mission where we can use our talents, our professional skills, in helping the work of the Lord?"

This is a program that we will hear more of, and this is a call to doctors, nurses, agricultural people, and all those whom Dr. Mason has talked about that we are going to try to marshal and call as regular missionaries to go out at their own expense, as all proselyting missionaries do, to give help for a period of time in helping to lift the standards of our people wherever that help is needed. Now we can see in this a great uplift and a great surge of strength that will come from many of these persons who are asking for somebody to give them a chance to serve in the fields where they are able to serve; to reach out to all of these who are in some measure less active than they should be and give them something to do. Use your imagination, you leaders, and see that everyone is given some responsibility, with the feeling that the Church needs them for a specific service.

Caring for others

I recall, and I think I have mentioned this before and I repeat it tonight, the experience of the late Adam S. Bennion when he went out to the Utah State Penitentiary. He was bolder than some of us have been when we have gone out there. He engaged them in conversation. "Boys, I would like to ask you, what happened in your lives that caused you to make the mistakes that brought you here as inmates in the Utah State Penitentiary?" After he broke the ice, as it were, they gave him one answer: "We are here in the state penitentiary because there came a time in our lives when we were made to feel that nobody cared what happened to us."

You and I sit here tonight in a comparative measure of security, but the Lord help any one of us if ever we are made to feel in our hearts that nobody cares what happens to us. A father or a mother or a child, or one who is not active, who feels that nobody cares—that man or woman is in a dangerous state, and we want you to reach out to all of these and bring them now into a measure of some activity, as soon as you can marshal your forces so to do.

Joy from husband's activity

I was down in a husbands-and-wives meeting in Provo years ago when a lovely sister bore her testimony as to the joy that had come into her home since her husband had become active in the Church. She told about going through the temple with her husband. She told how he had been inactive, how he had smoked and hadn't been advanced in the priesthood, and how someone took hold of him and

finally helped him to become worthy and ready to receive the priesthood; and the bishop had finally given him a recommend to go to the temple. After she had described that wonderful evening, she said, "Here, five little girls came in to be sealed to their father and mother. This man of God pronounced us a family for the eternities." And as she finished this story and bore her testimony, she looked over the pulpit and down in front of her where her husband was seated. She seemed to forget for that moment that there was anybody there but just the two of them, and she said to him, "Daddy, I can't tell you how happy the girls now are and how grateful we are for what you have done for us, because, you see, Daddy, except for you who holds the priesthood, neither the children nor I could be together as a family in the hereafter. Thank God for our daddy who holds the key and unlocks the door to an eternal family home."

I could have wished that every careless father in the Church could have heard that girl's testimony.

Challenge to priesthood

Please, we ask you priesthood holders, wake up these fathers now, while it is yet day and while there is time for them to receive their blessings before the darkness comes. May the Lord help us so to do now and to catch the vision and the message that President Tanner and these men who have spoken to you tonight have given you—a glimpse of what we can

do if we will only exercise the priesthood, which is the power of God by which he works through men to the salvation of his children. That the Lord might help us so to do, to catch that vision, and to carry out the purposes of what we are trying to do in these years ahead, I pray humbly in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

We shall now close this meeting with the chorus singing "Praise the Lord." We are grateful to the Men's Chorus of the Tabernacle Choir, with Richard P. Condie conducting, and Roy M. Darley at the organ. These brethren over the years have touched our hearts with their wonderful service, and we thank them again for this service.

We should remind you that if you come to the broadcast in the morning you must be here at 9:15. The broadcast starts at 9:30.

After the chorus sings "Praise the Lord," the benediction will be offered by Elder David B. Haight, Assistant to the Twelve, and this conference will then be adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The Men's Chorus of the Tabernacle Choir sang "Praise the Lord."

The closing prayer was given by Elder David B. Haight, Assistant to the Twelve.

The conference was adjourned until Sunday at 10 o'clock a.m.