

large family of small children for his wife to care for. She welcomed that opportunity to sacrifice for Church and family, and I well remember how heroically she bore her burdens during those difficult winter months.

Later, during the long, cruel years of the Great Depression, even though my parents suffered severe financial hardship, they always kept one of their children in the mission field.

My father passed away at a relatively young age, and after he was gone and we children had married, my mother asked for, and was given, permission to serve a mission in Mexico.

If there is honor attached to my call to the First Quorum of the Seventy, and indeed there is, it goes not to me, but to those whose examples of sacrifice and dedication have influenced my life so greatly. I pay tribute to them for their tireless and unceasing devotion to the Church and to their family. They have wielded an immense influence upon their ten children and their other numerous posterity.

I must not close without expressing my love and appreciation for my dear companion, who is herself a notable example of hard work and sacrifice. I think she deserves to be heard from, and so I am going to pass on to you the following thoughts that she suggested I include in my address, not expecting I would attribute them to her:

Message to grandparents

"And now a word to grandparents on missionary work. The blessings you receive therefrom reach down into your families. The grandchildren will never forget the special joy they feel at your farewell. Then, when you get into the mission field, letters start arriving containing statements like these: 'Grandma and Grandpa, I keep praying for you to be good missionaries,' or, 'Sometime I'll go on a mission just like you.'

"Grandmothers, you say you cannot leave the grandchildren? I want to bear you my testimony that you can be a lasting influence for good in the lives of those little ones by giving a year or so of your time to the service of the Lord in the mission field. The bonds of love will be strengthened, and true miracles will occur. Don't deny your grandchildren those blessings. I challenge you to put missionary work to the test."

Such is the message of my dear wife, with whom I am in total agreement. And now in closing, I bear you my own witness that missionary work truly is the lifeblood of the Church and that we have a divine commission to share the gospel with others both at home and abroad. I know, nothing doubting, that this is the work of the Lord and that President Benson is his prophet on earth today. This testimony I bear in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder George I. Cannon

My brothers and sisters, the Lord's work is moving forward in Asia through the faith, prayers, and good works of the Saints and missionaries in many countries in that part of the world. A spiritual awakening is taking place, and doors are being opened. It is a humbling and uplifting experience for Sister Cannon and me to be called to serve in that choice area of the world.

I would like to share some thoughts with you as a father and grandfather.

Importance of children

First, I would like to talk to you young children. I want you to know that you are loved by your Father in Heaven and your Elder Brother, Jesus Christ. When Jesus was living upon the earth, a very important event took place:

"Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them [or tried to stop them from coming].

"But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

"And [then] he laid his hands on them" (Matthew 19:13-15).

How important each one of you is to your Father in Heaven and to his Son, Jesus Christ! They want you to be happy. They have told of some things which, if you do, will make you feel good inside. Jesus told us to "honour [our] father and mother" (Matthew 15:4). That means we need to listen to our parents, ask for their help and advice, and, as they do what is right, follow their example.

Jesus also said, "Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing" (D&C 19:38). I hope that each morning and evening you kneel beside your bed and pray to your Father in Heaven. As you start the day, ask him to help you think good thoughts and do good deeds. As each day ends, thank him for your blessings, and ask that his spirit will always be with you. I know from my own experience that prayer can make you a happier and better person.

I hope that you are going every week to Primary, where you can learn how to be happy and serve the Lord, and that once a week your family is holding family home evening. If your family is not holding family home evening, ask your parents if you can start having one, and then you help them with it.

Challenges and opportunities of youth

Now I would like to speak to those of you in your youth. This is a great time to be young. You are living in the most exciting period of this world's history. You are also living in the most challenging. We know there are many temptations, but we have confidence in

you. The Lord has confidence and faith in you. There is unlimited growth ahead for you if you are willing to work hard and earn it. Be happy! Be glad you are you.

Follow the wise counsel of Alma to his son Helaman given centuries ago: "O, remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God" (Alma 37:35).

In one of his last conference addresses, President David O. McKay gave this counsel to the youth of the Church:

"Our body will not fulfill its purpose — it cannot — without that life-giving something within which is the offspring of Deity as eternal as [your] Father [in Heaven]. . . . That spirit within, young man, young woman, is the *real* you. What you make of yourself depends upon you as an individual. You are in this world to choose the right or the wrong, to accept the right or yield to temptation. Upon that choice will depend the development of the spiritual part of you" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1967, pp. 134-35; or *Improvement Era*, June 1967, p. 110).

O wonderful youth of Zion, pray, study the scriptures, and serve in the Church so that you can have that inner peace that Christ is your Savior and the gospel is the right way to live.

As Elder Richard L. Evans wrote: "*Oh, beloved young friends: remember life is forever — but youth doesn't last very long. Live to make memories that will bless the whole length of your life*" (*Richard Evans' Quote Book* [Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971], p. 40).

Important roles of single adults

Now I speak to you stalwart single adults. You are making great contributions wherever you go. You are helping to build the individual, the home, the Church, and the community as you serve as missionaries, teachers, neighbors, and friends to those in need. Your enthusiasm, spirit, and faith are a blessing to all of us. My fatherly counsel is

to remind you of the importance of today. This is the time in which the work of this life is to be done. Be a participant. See that things happen. Make commitments to yourself and the Lord. Live outside yourself with love. A Hindu proverb says, "Help thy brother's boat across, and lo, thine own has reached the shore."

Sacred responsibilities of parents

Now I speak to you who are parents. I was reminded of a cartoon LaRue Longden, former counselor in the YWMA, would often share in her talks. It shows the early morning hours with a couple out camping. The husband is fishing with a big smile on his face. The wife puts her sleepy head out of the tent — her hair going in all directions, the mosquitoes buzzing around her face, her eyes barely open — and comments to her husband, "Tell me again, dear, how much fun I am having." As a parent, do you need to remind yourself occasionally of how much fun you are having? Be sure and enjoy being a parent. It is a wonderful and sacred responsibility.

Three thoughts I would share:

First, take time for your children. As Elder Evans counseled: "Children are shaped and molded at a very early age. . . . Life goes quickly. Don't brush them off and turn them over to others. Take time for your children — before they're grown, before they're gone" (*Thoughts for One Hundred*

Days: Volume Four [Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1970], pp. 34–35).

Second, live within your income. Be frugal and wise. Pay your obligations to the Lord, your country, and yourself, and then live on what is left. It takes willpower to say no when you can't afford it, but you will sleep better at night.

Third, remember constant courtship. The most important relationship upon this earth for you is between you and your sweetheart. Work at it, sacrifice for it, enjoy it. You can make your home a bit of heaven as you build for an eternity together.

The need for older members to serve

Now to those in your mature years. "Press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men" (2 Nephi 31:20). Continue to be living testimonies of the gospel as you share your faith, love, and wisdom. You are sorely needed in the mission field. What lives you will bless as you accept the call to serve! There is so much for you to do in the holy temples. Don't retire from active service in the Lord's kingdom. You are needed!

I bear my testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Savior, and that the gospel is for every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Gardner H. Russell

I think it's wonderful to have a calm exterior; I didn't know my heart could beat quite this hard. I am thrilled to be a member of the Mexico and Central America Area Presidency. You've heard from all three of us today: Elder Gene R. Cook in the prayer, Elder H. Verlan Andersen, and myself.

Now, it is with humility that I stand before you as one of the Lord's

servants with a prayer in my heart that someone, somewhere, will be touched by the Spirit of the Lord which, hopefully, will speak through me, and his or her heart and life will be changed.

Father's blessings

What a wonderful experience of love came to me just a few weeks ago