

an anchor of strength to every man belonging thereto, when each such man may appropriately be able to say, 'I am a member of a priesthood quorum of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I stand ready to assist my brethren in all of their needs, as I am confident they stand ready to assist me in mine. Working together, we shall grow spiritually as covenant sons of God. Working together, we can stand, without embarrassment and without fear, against every wind of adversity that might blow, be it economic, social, or spiritual.'"¹⁷

We must not delay or wait longer for this great day of fulfillment. Each of you who has received an ordination in the priesthood belongs to a quorum. If you live in a place where there are not enough brethren to form a quorum, you are a member of a priesthood group that will become a quorum. Resolve now to do all within your power to make of your priesthood quorum one worthy of the name and one faithful to its mission. Study with your brethren in the quorum class. Stand with them in the quorum fraternity. Work with them in quorum service. The quorum, brethren, the quorum, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Les Goates, quoted by Vaughn J. Featherstone, in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 46–48; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 36–37.

2. *A Royal Priesthood* (Melchizedek Priesthood personal study guide, 1975–76), 131.
3. "What Every Elder Should Know—and Every Sister as Well: A Primer on Principles of Priesthood Government," *Ensign*, Feb. 1993, 9.
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 102:9–10; 107:9, 22, 78–81, 91–92.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 18:26–27; 107:23–24, 33, 35, 58.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 107:25–26, 34, 38, 93–97.
7. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:38–45; 43:15–16; 107:7, 10–12, 17, 89; 124:133–35, 137.
8. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:46–60; 107:60–63, 85–88.
9. In Conference Report, Oct. 1938, 118.
10. Moroni 6:4.
11. See Doctrine and Covenants 50:13–14.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 88:127.
13. William Hartley, "The Priesthood Reform Movement, 1908–1922," *BYU Studies*, winter 1973, 138.
14. In Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 53–54; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 38.
15. In Conference Report, Oct. 1968, 84; or *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1968, 84.
16. Mark 10:43–45.
17. "Welfare Responsibilities of the Priesthood Quorums," *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 86.

Elder H. Bryan Richards

Prepare young men to serve missions

"And Joshua said unto all the people [of Israel], . . . choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:2, 15).

As in the days of Joshua, so it is with us today. As parents, one of the choices we must make is whether or not we are going to prepare our young sons to serve full-time missions.

To help us understand the importance of this decision, let me quote from the prophets of our time.

President Howard W. Hunter noted: "Earlier prophets have taught that every able, worthy young man should serve a full-time mission. I emphasize this need today" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 118; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 88).

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: "I say what has been said before, that missionary work is essentially a

priesthood responsibility. As such, our young men must carry the major burden. This is their responsibility and their obligation" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 73; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 52).

What would the Lord say to a young man today who was making the decision to serve a full-time mission? In words filled with love, He said to 19-year-old Orson Pratt:

"My son Orson, hearken and hear and behold what I, the Lord God, shall say unto you. . . .

". . . Blessed are you because you have believed;

"And more blessed are you because you are called of me to preach my gospel" (D&C 34:1, 4-5).

Can you feel the love that the Lord has for a young man who has answered the call to serve?

As parents we have the responsibility to prepare our sons to be worthy and to have a desire to serve the Lord. We are stewards of those sons held in reserve for this day. The Lord has entrusted them to us, and we will be held accountable for them. One of the blessings of that stewardship will be preparing our sons to serve the Lord.

Responsibilities of parents and leaders

May I speak to the parents of the Church and their sons for a moment. One of the powerful stories in the Book of Mormon teaches us of the influence that parents can have in the lives of their young sons. This is the account of 2,060 young men who volunteered to defend the liberty of their country. They were led into battle by Helaman, yet "there was not one soul of them who did perish; yea, and neither was there one soul among them who had not received many wounds" (Alma 57:25). Why? Because "they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness." Then Helaman explains the reason behind this great miracle: "I did remember

the words which they said unto me that their mothers had taught them" (Alma 57:21). What did their mothers teach them? "That there was a just God, and whosoever did not doubt, that they should be preserved by his marvelous power" (Alma 57:26).

Parents, do you realize what great power you have in the lives of your sons? When you teach them that there is a just God and that He wants every able and worthy young man to serve a mission, your sons will have the faith to answer the Lord's call.

Bishops, as part of your stewardship you have a tremendous responsibility to prepare your young men to serve full-time missions. Begin early. Help them understand Alma's experiment. Plant the seed to serve a mission in their hearts. Then have them ask the Lord if it is a good seed. Then, if you help them nourish that seed, it will grow into the miracle of having that young man serve a mission.

I will always be grateful that Sister Richards, bishops, and priesthood leaders taught our sons and prepared them to serve missions.

How can we achieve a significant increase in the number of young men serving full-time missions? First of all, parents must understand the responsibility they have. They must ask our Heavenly Father to know how to prepare their sons to serve missions. That doesn't mean only those from America, England, Mongolia, or Brazil, but every able and worthy young man in the Church. Bishops, you must follow the same process.

Teach the worth of the soul

President Boyd K. Packer has said, "True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 20; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17). The doctrine that will change the behavior of our young men regarding missions is understanding the worth

of a single soul. Jesus Christ paid the supreme sacrifice in providing the infinite Atonement, which provides the only way for us to return and live with our Heavenly Father. When parents, bishops, and our young men understand this true doctrine, our young men will be prepared and have a desire to serve.

Importance of missionary service

May I quote from Elder Joe J. Christensen:

"The Lord did not say, 'Go on a mission if it fits your schedule, or if you happen to feel like it, or if it doesn't interfere with your scholarship, your romance, or your educational plans.' Preaching the gospel is a commandment and not merely a suggestion. It is a blessing and a privilege. . . . Remember, . . . the Lord and His prophets are counting on you" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 56; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 41).

There is not anything a young man can do that will be any more important than serving a full-time mission. The good they do as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ will carry on into eternity.

The greatest army of missionaries ever assembled in the history of the world is serving today. Don't let your sons miss being part of that great army.

These young men, trusted and proven before they came to earth, are not ordinary young men. They are choice spirits that have been held in reserve to come forth in this day.

As we ponder the great charge given to us by the Lord to proclaim the gospel to all the world, will you in your personal and family prayers plead with our Heavenly Father that every young man in the Church today will have the desire and live worthy to serve a full-time mission?

May our Heavenly Father bless us with the commitment to prepare our young men to serve. May the young men of the Church today become like the sons of Helaman, following every word of the Lord with exactness. May they become a light on a hill that shines brightly and says to all the world that they, like Joshua of old, have chosen to serve the Lord! I pray that it will be so, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder D. Todd Christofferson has just spoken to us, and he was followed by Elder H. Bryan Richards.

President James E. Faust will speak to us next. He will be followed by the choir and congregation singing "Ye Elders of Israel."

President James E. Faust

My beloved brethren, I express my love and appreciation to you for your devotion and faithfulness as the bearers of the priesthood of God.

Visit to World War I sites in France

Earlier this year, my three sons and I visited the sites in France where my father fought in the U.S. Army in World War I. Great was the suffering and terrible were the consequences to all in-

involved in that war. Millions lost their lives. Although my father was not killed, he carried mental and physical scars until he died. Despite his terrifying experiences, he prefaced his diary as follows: "If I had to do it again, I would do it because it was my duty."¹ As we traveled 80 years later through the beautiful countryside, we visited battle sites and cemeteries of the combatants on both sides. In the military cemetery outside Paris, with my hand resting on Stanford