

liefs concerning adolescence still prevail. Moreover, adults who so often tell "jokes" about sex and "giggle" among themselves concerning sexual matters can hardly expect their children to do better.

PROFILE OF A MORMON STUDENT

Gary W. Grant

Finally we are pleased to publish the introductory student speech given by Gary W. Grant at the First Bay Area College Convocation of the L.D.S. Student Association, held at the Oakland-Berkeley Stake Center on May 5, 1968. President Hugh B. Brown of the First Presidency of the Church was the honored guest and principal speaker; he was introduced by Elder Paul H. Dunn of the First Council of Seventy, who is National President of the LDSSA. Gary Grant is a second year law student at Stanford University and Vice-president of the Peninsula Region LDSSA.

My position on this program includes an obligation to "represent" the young people here — the high school seniors, college students, and college age non-students — and I think that means I should do a couple of things in the few minutes given me: I'd like to tell President Brown and Elder Dunn a few things about us, and, since President Brown is our most honored guest this evening, I'd like to tell him something of our feelings for him.

Both President Brown and Elder Dunn are already aware of the kinds of influences surrounding us on our campuses; i.e., student protests over racial strife, the Vietnam war, the draft; the increasing use of LSD and marijuana; increasing sexual freedom; dropping out, turning on, you name it. These are the visible temptations and influences on our campuses. However, tonight I'd like to focus on our more personal side—our individual concerns and responses to these issues and to the Church.

I hesitate to talk about an "average" student because I can't include all of your feelings, but I have had some experience with high school seniors this semester as a seminary teacher, and I've gone through the college experience very recently, so I think the description I'll make and the things I will say about us are real trends — real concerns of all of us.

First let me reaffirm our faith. We are committed, President Brown, to a belief that those events described by Joseph Smith, in which he spoke to God, our Heavenly Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, and to other heavenly messengers, actually occurred. And we know that President McKay and President Brown and the other General Authorities are prophets of our God, and that when the Lord reveals His will regarding the Church, it will come through these men.

Finally, we are committed to those two great commandments phrased by Jesus when He was asked which was the great commandment; He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *heart*, and with all thy *soul*, and with

all thy *mind* And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Our commitment to the first of these commandments causes us to ask many questions concerning our relationship to God: How does God act in my life? How many of the events of life does God actually "cause"? Is he really involved with my daily affairs; does he participate actively in my daily decisions? (And *how* does he hear and answer my prayers?) Or am I on my own most of the time?

Some may say that these probings suggest an imperfect faith, but I hold the contrary. I think they are founded in a sincere interest in doing what God wants us to do — a search to know God in the way we are commanded to know Him. Our faith is forged in the kind of "crucible of doubt" spoken of by Dostoevsky.

President Brown has recognized the importance of finding answers to these questions; he said on one occasion, "The depth, direction, and quality of our religious life depends upon our understanding of the nature, purposes, and even methods of God and our relationship and responsibility to him" (*Improvement Era*, June, 1963, p. 466). And a favorite prayer attributed to President Brown mentions these concerns; he prays, "Help us all to understand the purpose of our being and to be ever willing to submit to thy will and not insist upon our own."

We are willing, President Brown, to submit to our Father's will, but we occasionally have difficulty knowing just what that will is regarding such issues as the proper functions of sex, the proper role of government, the stance we should take toward conscientious objection, and what personal contribution to this life we should be making.

Some of you unmarried people may think your troubles will be over when you find your true love. But President Brown tells a story of a young bride who on her wedding day rushed up to her mother and said, "Mother, I'm the happiest girl in the world. Today I've come to the end of my troubles." The wise mother replied, "Yeah, but you don't know which end."

A characteristic which I think distinguishes us from generations past is that we seem to feel a much stronger commitment to the second of those great commandments which I mentioned earlier; we feel strong impulses to understand ourselves, first of all, but we also feel humanitarian impulses which lead us to participate in such programs as tutorial groups for underprivileged people, the Peace Corps, OEO aid groups, basic encounter groups. We seem to sense an obligation to the people of our world — to our whole society.

In fact, President Brown once answered the question "Who is my neighbor?" this way: he said, "All who need our help, all whose lives we touch, whether they live across the street, over the fence, across the continent, or over the ocean." And I might add, even over the tracks.

Our commitment to this second commandment has led us to probe into at least two other areas, the role of the Church in my life, and my role in this world. We know the purpose of the Church is to perfect men's lives, but we feel needs to find answers to questions like these: Shall my concern for non-

members be entirely as a missionary, or should I try to assist in other channels? Should we use the talents learned from our activity within the Church to serve in groups outside the Church? On the other hand, there seems to be a large group of us who lack this concern for the social thrusts of our times; that prompts us to ask, "Does focusing so intently on eternity — the life hereafter — contribute to a lack of concern for the plight of underprivileged people, for those dying in Vietnam, for racial problems? Does the Church absorb all my energy for such concerns?"

Many of us feel the need to take care of more than just ourselves and our own — to become involved with the rest of our world. I have heard many of you ask such questions as these: Where can I be of most service to others? entirely *within* the Church? or can I be of more help in outside-Church groups, or in Guatemala, or Africa? And are there real dangers to becoming involved in these extra-Church causes?

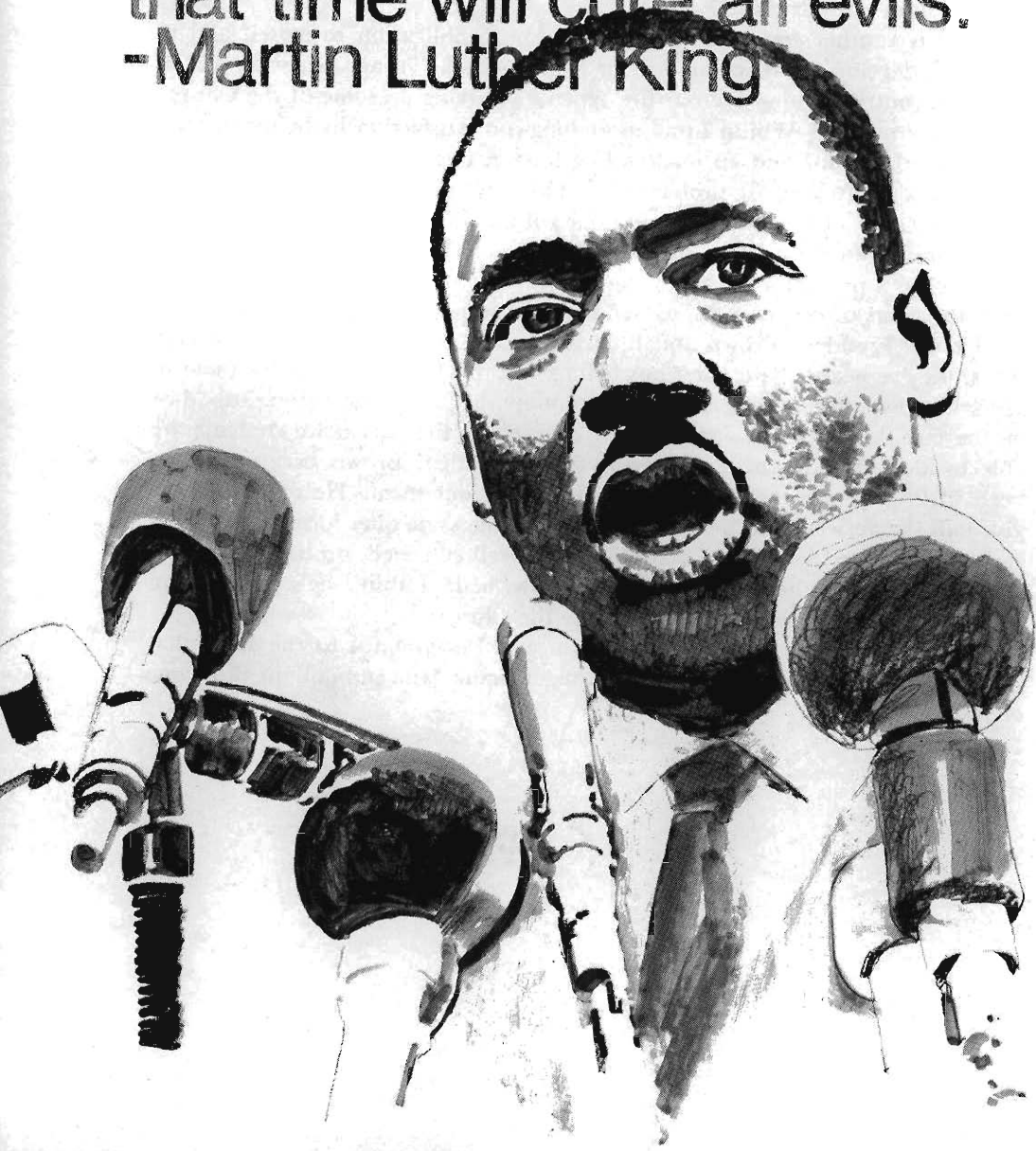
This is another common one: Do I have an obligation to myself and to society to develop a particular skill or talent — make an artistic, scientific, or academic contribution — even at the expense of giving up some of the Church activity I'm now in? Would I find more long-run satisfaction by being an *average* Latter-day Saint and an *outstanding* lawyer, doctor, scientist, or academician? Also, what kind of profession should I pursue? There seems to be a narrow breadth of acceptable professions within the Church, or at least there is a premium on business manager-MBA types, and dentists. Certainly there seems to be a premium on acquiring wealth, but we often feel an alienation from the goals of our parents, especially their emphasis on money-making.

I know President Brown and Elder Dunn are already aware of these concerns; they've heard these questions before, but maybe it's helpful for them to know how widespread they are, how commonly they are asked among us. Maybe the fact that they are aware of our concerns is the reason we students are able to identify with them. I identify with President Brown because he has been willing to face these questions — to talk about them. He may not have given all the answers, but he is concerned with the same questions we are. He's easy to identify with — he's a majestic figure, well educated, probably the most articulate speaker the Latter-day Church has had. I think he's a true hero figure, and I think we *need* heroes inside the Church.

I'm grateful to be a Latter-day Saint, and I'm grateful to the Lord that He has given us men like these to lead us. I thank Him publicly in the name of Jesus Christ,

Amen.

We may have to repent
in this generation,
not for the violent actions
of bad people but for the
inaction of good people
who have the notion
that time will cure all evils.
-Martin Luther King



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