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UA3/3 Hearing, Believing, Doing & Being

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MEMORANDUM TO: Dr. Kelly Thompson, President

In response to our discussion several days ago regarding the Liberty Men's Bible Class at State Street Methodist Church, I have secured a membership list as indicated below:

Marshall Bishop
Dr. R. O. Basham
Bradley Causey
Morton Chelf
L. M. Claypool
A. H. Cox
Ballard Clagget
Dero Downing
Joe Davenport
Wick Dotson
A. R. Estes
W. B. Follis
Marshall Funk
J. S. Fish
L. E. Gant
Dr. F. C. Grise
Nat Gilmore
Joe Garmon
M. D. Helsley
Charlie Hildreth
Leonard Hildreth
James M. Hill
Aubrey Hewitt
Joe Hunt
G. B. Hammond
C. H. Harris
Stanley Isbell
Elliott James
Norman Lones
Tom Lyne
Luther Long
Dick Lacefield
R. T. Markle
Fred Manor  
John McGown  
E. G. Murray  
Floyd McGregor  
Roy Mayhew  
Morton Napier  
C. B. Owen  
Harold Pearson  
Weldon Peete  
Richard Peete  
Homer Parrent  
Presley Perkins  
M. F. Parks  
Alton Rush  
W. M. Sherrill  
Linsey Stevenson  
Dr. John Scarborough  
Harold Sublett  
Dr. Paul Terrell  
A. E. Tucker  
H. L. Tinsley  
Rev. C. P. Walton  
Dr. W. M. Willey  
W. G. Williams  
Herber Young

The class convenes at 9:45 with the usual preliminary activities; songs, etc. The speaker ordinarily takes about 25 minutes, and the class dismisses at 10:30 in most instances.

It will be a wonderful experience for this class to have you address them on December 27, and I know they will look forward to it.

Respectfully yours,

Dero G. Downing  
Dean of Business Affairs

DGD: vbg
The subject for today's international Sunday School lesson is "Hearing, Believing, Doing, and Being." The exploration devoted to this most appropriate subject is summarized as follows:

The Bible is our greatest piece of devotional literature. Its diversity of literary form is attractive. Once attracted and attentive, we come under the Spirit of God, and God himself becomes real to us. The experiences of saints of old are seen as strangely akin to our own. The patriarchs, the leaders of Israel and Judah, the prophets, the priests, and the apostles were all involved in the kingdom of God. As we pray "Thy kingdom come," we find that we have a part in its coming. We not only desire to be worthy citizens in the Kingdom under the lordship of Christ, but we feel called to proclaim the good news.

Hearing and believing are in evidence on the part of all who are in this room; else, why would we be here? It is doing and being to which I would address our thinking this morning.

It is relatively easy to hear and to believe if we have had the great privilege, as all of us have, of having been raised in Christian homes. As to doing and being, this is another story.
In the doing and in the believing, the reward is incomparable for one's own soul; but for others, especially those whose minds and hearts are being formed, it is even greater. This leads me, of course, to young people with whom we come in contact. Here in this room is enough brain power and enough Spirit power to have a decided influence upon the youth of this community and elsewhere. As to the former, let me give you a statement, certainly not original, but modified somewhat to make it appropriate for this occasion:

"A mark of an educated man—the mark of a leader is his ability to differ without becoming angry, sarcastic, or discourteous. Such a man recognizes that in contingent matters, there will always be a place for legitimate difference of opinion.

"He knows that he is not infallible; he respects the honesty and the intellectual integrity of other men, and presumes that all men are men of integrity until they are proved to be otherwise.

"He is prepared to listen to them when their superior wisdom has something of value to teach him. He is slow to anger and always confident that truth can defend itself and state its own case without specious arguments, emotional displays, or personal pressures.

"This is not to say that he abandons his position easily. If his be a disciplined mind, he does not lightly forsake the intellectual ground he has won at great cost. He yields only to evidence, proof, or demonstration."
"He expects his adversary to show conclusively the superior value of his opinions, and he is not convinced by anything less than this. He is not intimidated by shouting. He is not impressed by verbosity. He is not overwhelmed by force or numbers.

"His abiding respect for truth's invincibility enables him to maintain composure and balance in the fact of impressive odds. And his respect for the person and the intellect of his opponent prevents him from using cheap tricks, caustic comments, or personal attacks against his adversaries--no matter how brilliant or forceful, unjust or unfair, they may be.

"Because of his large views of truth and of individual human respectability, he is prepared to suffer defeat in the mind of the masses on occasions when he knows his position is right. He is not shattered by this apparent triumph of darkness, because he realizes that the mass-mind is fickle at best.

"He is neither angered nor shocked by new evidence of public vulgarity or blindness. He is rather prepared to see in these expected human weaknesses compelling reason for more compassion, better rhetoric, stronger evidence on his part. He seeks always to persuade and seldom to denounce."
"The ability to defend one's own position with spirit and conviction, to evaluate accurately the conflicting opinions of others, and to retain one's confidence in the ultimate power of truth to carry its own weight, are necessary talents in any society, but especially so in our democratic world.

"In our day and in our land, there is some evidence that these virtues are in short supply. The venerable tradition of respectful argumentation, based on evidence, conducted with courtesy, and leading to the exposition of truth, is a precious part of our heritage in this land of freedom. It is the duty of educated men to understand, appreciate, and perpetuate this tradition."

Of the latter, which I referred to as "Spirit power," going from the complex workings of the brain to the simplicity of the open heart toward God, may I quote--

"Jesus loves me, this I know,
For the BIBLE tells me so"

Little children ask no more,
For love is all they're looking for,
And in a small child's shining eyes
The FAITH of all the ages lies--
And tiny hands and tousled heads
That kneel in prayer by little beds--"
Are closer to the dear LORD'S heart
   And of His Kingdom more a part
Than we who search, and never find,
   The answers to our questioning mind--
For FAITH in things we cannot see
   Requires a child's simplicity
For, lost in life's complexities,
   We drift upon uncharted seas--
And slowly FAITH disintegrates
   While wealth and power accumulate--
   And the more man learns,
       the less he knows,
   And the more involved,
       his thinking grows
And, in his arrogance and pride,
   No longer is man satisfied
To place his confidence and love
   With childlike FAITH in God above--
Oh, Father, grant once more to men
   A simple childlike FAITH again
And, with a small child's trusting eyes,
   May all men come to realize
That FAITH alone can save man's soul
   And lead him to a HIGHER GOAL.
The **being** and the **doing** then represent the full journey from a questioning and composed mind to the complete acceptance of *inspirational* faith of a child. Between these two extremes lies the opportunity for each of us to really **be** and to really **do**.

How?

In the frustrations of 1964 and '65, the temptation is great to think that one person cannot do much. This is a fallacy, for all around us are young people whose lives must surely be affected and patterned by what we do. One effort, one person, one life——

**ETERNAL SYMPHONY**

Each life is a bar of music

So fashioned, Lord, by Thee

To bear a part in Thy great art

Eternal Symphony.

So take Thou my little measure

And grant to me, O Lord,

Ability to strike for Thee

A single splendid chord.

You, or I, never know but what **he or she**, a young person, who tomorrow will truly **be** and truly **do** is under our influence.
THE HOPE OF TOMORROW

Somewhere today under the care of an unknown leader is a child who in his own time, grown to maturity, will lead the world away from war and toward peace. The affection planted in that child’s life by wise guidance; the sense of right values with which he is constantly surrounded; the integrity and initiative that are fostered in his unfolding life will come to fruition in a mighty service to the human race. It is a wise providence that no one can tell which of the two million babies born in our country each year is to be the savior of tomorrow. And when through honest growth, proved merit, and wise leadership the pilots of tomorrow take their places at the helm, we want them to be surrounded and supported by their fellows likewise schooled in the simple and abiding principles of democracy. With this purpose and in this faith, the teachers of America carry on. This faith was good enough for the founding fathers who launched this Ship of State in even more troubled seas than we now face. This faith has been good enough for the teachers and prophets of all ages who have understood the power of human aspiration and growth. It is the faith of Jesus—the Golden Rule, and the brotherhood of man. It is the faith that for 1900 years has held aloft through good times and bad, the torch of eternal truth. As we come to a New Year, let us renew our faith in this destiny of the individual human soul. This faith of the teacher—your faith and mine—as we look
into the eager faces of youth—is the hope of tomorrow—
a hope that cannot fail. Let us renew and deepen our
faith and dedication.

I ask you, as I ask myself, why we are what we are today. I realize
the innumerable factors involved in the answer; but I am sure that you will
readily agree that so much of what we are, or what we do, is because of the
example of someone else.

God gave us the eternal Word to hear and to believe, and He gave us a
plan for what to be and what to do. It was not his intention that there would
be need of headlines of testimonial, or even approvals from the world. He
made it abundantly clear that the serene knowledge would form in the mind
and in the heart. This made it possible for great deeds and small to be
properly evaluated, that the least might be measured with the greatest, if the
effort be truly complete.

TRES PASSES

THE MONK WHO DIDN'T SING

There was once a group of medieval monks who
annually prepared a program of Christmas music with
great care. One of their number, who sang fervently
a little off key, was a source of embarrassment to them.
He so loved to participate in the chants that they hesitated
to ask him to keep silent. After a few years, however,
their pride in the artistic effect of the service was so
great that he was requested not so sing.
Christmas came and went. Without the old monk, the music had been absolutely perfect.

However, God said to the angels, "I missed something this year. There used to be an old monk in a certain abbey on earth who sang the most exquisite service. But this Christmas, he didn't sing at all."

"But Lord," said one of the angels, "all of the other monks sang the service as usual."

"Indeed!" answered the Lord. "I have never heard the others. His was the only voice that ever reached my throne."

Let us pray:

Oh, Lord, help us- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
to hear and to believe throughout all the days of our lives.

Help us to do and to be in such manner as Thy divine and eternal Word directs.

Help us to do and be that we may find the glory and pure joy in our souls; but more than that, help us to remember that as we do and as we are, so will those whose futures to us have been entrusted.

Help us to remember that the greatest example of all was given by Him, whose birthday has just been celebrated around the world.

Help us to appreciate that to some, opportunities to lead seem great, while to others, such opportunities seem small indeed. But help us to remember that it may be that by example and influence, the least shall be first and the greatest.
Help us to be, each in our own way, an instrument of good;
and help us to do only that which in some small measure, at least, may help
another to hear, to believe, to be, and to do.

We ask this in the name of Thy son, Jesus Christ, without whom
Christmas would not have been. Where past there would
be no reason to say "Merry Christmas"
and without whom the place
we hope for the future as we
exchange the age-old greating
of "Happy New Year" - Amen.