

*Vision 2020 Virtual Little Philmont*  
Excerpt from Closing Comments of Charles Dahlquist  
May 15, 2020 – Friday Night Session

Thanks to each of you for being with us tonight. I am touched by your individual strength and the impact you are having in the lives of the Rising Generation. I do, indeed, love this hymn. I remember the night President Hinckley introduced it to most of the Church in General Priesthood Meeting in 2006. He said something like, “Recently I was listening to BYU Television and the BYU Men’s Chorus sang a song that I don’t recall ever hearing before. The words of it are these:

Rise up, O men of God,  
Have done with lesser things.  
Give heart and soul and mind and strength,  
To serve the King of Kings.

Rise up, O men of God,  
In one united throng,  
Bring in the day of brotherhood,  
And end the night of wrong.

Rise up, O men of God,  
The Church for you doth wait.  
Her strength unequal to her task  
Rise Up and make her great.

Rise Up, O men of God,  
Tred where His feet have trod,  
As brothers of the Son of Man  
Rise Up, O men of God.

I love that song, and especially the charge in the last verse to “Rise Up, and make her great.” That is the charge of all of us and especially to the youth of the Rising Generation.

A short while ago, I heard a touching poem by Billing Collins that is a tribute to each of you and which I’d like to share with you this evening.

The Lanyard – Billy Collins

The other day I was ricocheting slowly  
off the blue walls of this room,  
moving as if underwater from typewriter to piano,  
from bookshelf to an envelope lying on the floor,  
when I found myself in the L section of the dictionary  
where my eyes fell upon the word lanyard.

No cookie nibbled by a French novelist  
could send one into the past more suddenly-

a past where I sat at a workbench at a camp  
by a deep Adirondack lake  
learning how to braid long thin plastic strips  
into a lanyard, a gift for my mother.

I had never seen anyone use a lanyard  
or wear one, if that's what you did with them,  
but that did not keep me from crossing  
strand over strand again and again  
until I had made a boxy  
red and white lanyard for my mother.

She gave me life and milk from her breasts,  
and I gave her a lanyard.

She nursed me in many a sick room,  
lifted spoons of medicine to my lips,  
laid cold face-clothes on my forehead,  
and then led me out into the air light

and taught me to walk and swim,  
and I, in turn, presented her with a lanyard.

Here are thousands of meals, she said,  
and here is clothing and a good education.

And here is your lanyard, I replied,  
which I made with a little help from a counselor.

Here is a breathing body and a beating heart,  
strong legs, bones and teeth,  
and two clear eyes to read the world, she whispered,  
and here, I said, is the lanyard I made at camp.

And here, I wish to say to her now,  
is a smaller gift – not the worn truth

that you can never repay your mother,  
but the rueful admission that when she took  
the two-toned lanyard from my hand,  
I was as sure as a boy could be  
that this useless, worthless thing I wove  
out of boredom would be enough to make us even.

As I read this, I thought of you and others who teach our youth what they need to know to be prepared—for Life. As I went home to our cabin after hearing this poem and took down my red and white boondoggle, I was grateful for the leader at Camp Billy Rice in Idaho, those many years ago, who taught me to weave the plastic over and over – as I did and made this lanyard that hangs around my neck tonight. And I thought about you and the miracles you are working as you prepare our youth to – Rise Up.

I referred earlier to Elder Maxwell as he once said, “In the Church, all the easy things have been done. From now on, it's high adventure.” Our youth must be prepared to do hard things – and WE must prepare them. Our youth must be prepared in every way: spiritually,

mentally, morally, physically – with life skills to help them be prepared – to develop leadership skills, to serve in foreign countries – many of them Third World countries – In addition to being spiritually strong, they need to be prepared with First Aid skills, skills to help them preserve and care for the environment, skills to help them with time management and money management, and personal management; with communications skills; with a love for their country and a knowledge of how be citizens of the community, the nation and the world; they need survival skills –they need to be prepared to appreciate, care for and survive in nature – and much more.

We have too many monomaniacs in the world today – those who have done very well in one area of their life, but whose life is so far out of balance that they lose all prospective and, in the end, when asked to make decisions based on integrity, they choose self-interest instead. They have not learned the Scout Oath. They have not learned the Scout Law, or the Scout Motto (Be Prepared) or the Scout Slogan (Do a Good Turn Daily) – and they certainly haven't learned to live those moral principles. And so they make decisions based on selfishness and pride – we call them fallen giants, and we have too many of them.

We need men and women who are prepared and who continue their life long to continue to prepare for the challenges ahead. We need men and women who have made second nature being “physically, strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.” – who do a good turn daily, because they WANT to serve and lift those around them. Who live lives of Duty to God, who swell with pride as the flag of these United States passes by and are involved in improving their neighborhoods, their cities, states, the nation and the world. In a word, we need a generation – and Rising Generation – who are prepared and will, indeed, “RISE UP” and strengthen those around them, wherever they are.

We pray that the comments made tonight and the training tomorrow will help us to prepare a Generation for the challenges and the windows of service that await them. God bless each of us to do our best, do to our duty to help them “RISE UP.”