

## ELDER MARION D. HANKS

*Of the First Council of the Seventy*

I AM humbled and honored beyond my capacity to express by this calling and assignment. In the past five years, during which I have followed after the footsteps of Brother Evans on Temple Square, I have had a great many occasions, hundreds of them, to stand behind this pulpit and to welcome to our city, into this great building, thousands of guests who have come here to learn of us and to hear our story. I have always done so humbly, but I assure you that I have never felt in doing it as humble as I do today.

In the few brief moments that I shall stand here, I should like to pay tribute to a principle as I pay my respects to a few people to whom it is in my heart today to give thanks. The principle I should like to suggest is one so basic and so simple that each of you knows it, and yet so important that scarcely anything we might say would supersede it, and that is that the gospel of Jesus Christ is a personal thing, a very personal thing.

We talk in multiples, and we think in numbers, and we teach classes with many people in them. We direct guide tours where there are large numbers. But always there is the simple truth which we must understand: that the gospel of Jesus Christ is God's plan to get us home individually; and while we may teach classes, and while we may hold cottage meetings for groups, people come to faith and convictions individually. They enter the waters of baptism individually; individually they receive the blessing of the imposition of hands by those who have that authority; and when they seek to get acquainted with their Father in heaven, and to go to the place he would like them to be, they do it individually.

President McKay is honored by this congregation and his people beyond my efforts to add or augment, but I should like to say of him this one thing: Within

the last two weeks, a call came from his office inviting us to meet a Protestant clergyman who was visiting in our city. As he directed, we walked up the street and met President McKay about halfway. He brought with him this good man of another faith who had come here to visit us and to learn a little about us.

President McKay brought him personally, having spent a good deal of time with him, and turned him over to us, and we brought him here to this building and spent some more time telling him our story, but the thing he wanted to talk about most was how a great man so busy, so very busy, had taken time to give him the personal attention he had received from President McKay. When I received a note of thanks from this clergyman last week, saying about the same thing, I said to myself, "How unwilling have you been to take as much time as you have needed, or been offered opportunity to take, to bless many, while President McKay, with all he has to do would take and has taken the time."

I should like to pay a moment of tribute also in reference to the general theme of these few remarks, to the people who serve on these grounds and with whom it has been my privilege to spend much of my time for five years, particularly to Brother Evans who has no need of my further tribute in your minds, I know. I should like to have it known here that I have as much love for him as my heart has capacity to offer. The greatest thing that has come into my life in my mature years has been the privilege of enjoying his confidence and spending time in his company.

I should like to pay tribute to the people who do the work on Temple Square, who greet, and in an individual manner teach and love and take to their homes many who come here. I should

like to pay tribute for a moment also, in the same vein, to the youth of this Church with whom I have spent the major portion of my short life, and I should like to say that I have all the faith and confidence in them which it is in my power to possess.

I have had the privilege of teaching them for a number of years now at high school and institute level. I wonder if you know how faithful they are. Do you know, for instance, that in this very city for a number of years large groups of these young people have been coming at seven o'clock in the morning to learn the story of the Book of Mormon and to read that great book together in seminary gatherings? This activity has spread to California where thousands of fine young people are meeting the same test.

I have spent some time in the service. I have spent a good deal of time in the missionary field, and wherever I have gone, I have felt it in my heart—although there are some who are not what they ought to be, I know that—that there never has existed on the earth, a more righteous and excellent and loyal group of young people than these who are ours to teach and to take care of, and I honor them. When they come up to me and tell me occasionally, as they have done this morning on these grounds, that they appreciate what little I have been able to do in their lives, I rejoice, and my heart fills.

I would like to take just a moment to pay tribute to those who teach the youth of the Church in their religious education classes. While they are not always understood and while they are criticized

to some extent, their job is difficult, and I want to express my own faith in them, and my conviction that there is no body of men more faithful, more loyal, and more able to support these brethren whose job it is to lead this Church. I am proud to have been numbered among them.

Finally, may I pay tribute, as I feel I must on this occasion—and I perhaps will not have it or take it here otherwise, to my own family; to my father, whom I did not know—he passed away when I was a baby; to my angel mother who reared six of us under conditions very much like those Brother Evans' mother endured and braved; to my brothers and sisters, each of whom I love, and who have given service to this Church; to my beautiful wife who has stood at my side during many hours of activity in the Church; and to my lovely children.

I should like, too, as I leave this pulpit, to say to you that I do not come to this position faultless. I have been at times a little critical of some people in some instances. I do not feel critical today. I have been impatient. I do not feel impatient today.

I do ask God to bless me, that my efforts might be of some value to him, to these brethren, in forwarding a work which I know to be true, which I have spent my young life trying to forward in this earth because I know it to be true. I ask God to help me as I in humility seek to do a job which seems to me at this moment to be beyond my poor capacity to do, and I humbly pray it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

**W**E HAVE just listened to Elder Marion D. Hanks, whom, as I stated a few moments ago, you have this day sustained as a member of the First Council of the Seventy.

Messages of appreciation of the television service rendered this forenoon to the people of the Northwest and on the

Pacific Coast, still come in. Knowing your interest, I will read two more.

This is from Seattle, Washington, signed by Wilford H. Payne, Seattle Stake: "Please accept appreciation of the first television broadcast conference session to Saints and friends in the Northwest."