

### Prominent Members Who Passed Away during the Year

Elder S. Dilworth Young, emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and former Senior President of the First Council of the Seventy; Elder Del Alvin Talley, senior Regional Representative; Freda Joan Jensen Lee, widow of President Harold B. Lee; Belle Smith Spafford, general president of the Relief Society from 1945 to 1974 and former president to the National Council of Women; Lucile Reading, managing editor of the *Friend* magazine and former counselor in the General Presidency of the Primary; Dr. Henry Eyring, world-renowned scientist and author; Dr. Harvey Fletcher, interna-

tionally known expert and inventor in the field of communications; A. Hamer Reiser, former counselor in the General Presidency of the Sunday School; Louise J. Lake, teacher of the handicapped and recipient of the President's Trophy for Handicapped American of the Year; and George S. Eccles, prominent banker and civic leader.

### President Romney

Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder Howard W. Hunter

### World's greatness

There are some among us who have been unhappy with their lives because they have wanted to achieve a measure of greatness in this life but now feel they have failed in some fundamental way. We have concern for those who have worked hard and who have lived righteously but think—because they haven't achieved in the world or in the Church what others have achieved—that they have failed.

Perhaps we should consider the things that make a person great.

We live in a world that seems to worship its own kind of greatness. It's true that the world's heroes don't last very long in the public mind, but, nevertheless, there is never a lack of champions and great achievers. We hear almost daily of athletes breaking records; scientists inventing marvelous new devices, machines, and processes; and doctors saving lives in new ways. We are constantly being exposed to exceptionally gifted musicians and

entertainers, also to the work of unusually talented artists, architects, and builders. Magazines, billboards, and television commercials bombard us with pictures of individuals with perfect teeth and flawless features, wearing stylish clothes and doing whatever it is that successful people do.

### True greatness

Because we are being constantly exposed to the world's definition of success and greatness, it is understandable that we might frequently find ourselves making comparisons between what we are and what others are, or seem to be, and also between what we have and what others have. Although it is true that making comparisons can be beneficial and may motivate us to accomplish much good and improve our lives, yet we often allow unfair and improper comparisons to destroy our happiness when they cause us to feel unfulfilled or inadequate or unsuccessful. Some-

times, because of these feelings, we are led into error, and we dwell on our failures while ignoring aspects of our lives that may contain elements of true greatness.

In a short editorial written by President Joseph F. Smith in 1905, he made this most profound statement about what true greatness really is:

"Those things which we call extraordinary, remarkable, or unusual may make history, but they do not make real life.

"After all, to do well those things which God ordained to be the common lot of all mankind, is the truest greatness. To be a successful father or a successful mother is greater than to be a successful general or a successful statesman." (*Juvenile Instructor*, 15 Dec. 1905, p. 752.)

This statement raises a query as to what are the things God has ordained to be the common lot of all mankind. Surely they include the things that must be done in order to be a good father or a good mother, but, to generalize, they are also the thousands of little deeds and tasks of service and sacrifice that constitute the giving or losing of one's life for others and for the Lord. They include gaining a knowledge of our Father in Heaven and his gospel. They include bringing others into the faith and fellowship of his kingdom. These things do not usually receive the attention or the adulation of the world.

### Those who do the Lord's work

To extend the statement of President Smith and to be more specific, we could say: To be a successful Primary president or den mother or Spiritual Living teacher or loving neighbor or listening friend is much of what true greatness is all about. To do one's best in the face of the commonplace struggles of life, and possibly in the face of failures, and to continue to endure and persevere with the ongoing difficulties of life—when those

struggles and tasks contribute to the progress and happiness of others and the eternal salvation of one's self—this is true greatness.

Surely we need not look far to see the unnoticed and forgotten heroes of daily life. I am speaking of those you know and those I know who quietly and consistently do the things they ought to do. I am talking about those who are always there and always willing. I am referring to the uncommon valor of the mother who—hour after hour, day and night—will stay with and care for a sick child, or the invalid who struggles and suffers without complaint. I'm including those who always volunteer to give blood or volunteer to work with Scouts. I am thinking of those who may not be mothers but who nevertheless "mother" the children of the world. I am speaking of those who are always there to love and nurture.

I am also talking about teachers and nurses and farmers and others who do the good work of the world, who teach and feed and clothe, but who also, in addition, do the work of the Lord—those who lift and love. I am referring to those who are honest and kind and hardworking in their daily work, but who are also servants of the Master and shepherds of his sheep.

### Secondary achievements

Now, I do not mean to discount too much the great accomplishments of the world that have given us so many opportunities and which provide culture and order and excitement to our lives. I am merely suggesting that we try to focus more clearly on the things in life that will be of greatest worth. You will remember that it was the Savior who said, "*He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.*" (Matt. 23:11; italics added.)

Listen to the words of President Joseph F. Smith as he goes on in his remarks to help us place in proper perspective the achievements and ac-

complishments that lead to worldly success and recognition. Notice that he refers to worldly achievements—that is, those that may bring the fame and fortune of the world—as “secondary.” He said:

“It is true that such secondary greatness may be added to that which we style common-place; but when such secondary greatness is not added to that which is fundamental, it is merely an empty honor, and fades away from the common and universal good in life, even though it may find a place in the . . . pages of history.” (*Juvenile Instructor*, p. 752.)

### A long-term process

With this definition of true greatness, how do we proceed to achieve it? The Lord has said, “*Out of small things proceedeth that which is great.*” (D&C 64:33; italics added.) Each of us has seen individuals become wealthy or successful almost instantaneously, almost overnight. But I believe that even though this kind of success may come to some without a prolonged struggle, there is no such thing as instant greatness. This is because the achievement of true greatness is a long-term process; it may involve occasional setbacks. The end result may not always be clearly visible, but it seems that it always requires regular, consistent, small, and sometimes ordinary and mundane steps over a long period of time.

True greatness is never a result of a chance occurrence or a one-time effort or achievement. It requires the development of character. It requires a multitude of correct decisions for the everyday choices between good and evil that Elder Boyd K. Packer spoke about when he said, “Over the years these little choices will be bundled together and show clearly what we value.” (ENSIGN, Nov. 1980, p. 21.) Those choices will also show clearly what we are.

### Self-evaluation—effect on others

As we evaluate our lives, it is important that we look, not only at our accomplishments, but also at the conditions under which we have labored. We are all different and unique individuals; we have each had different starting points in the race of life; we each have a unique mixture of talents and skills; we each have our own set of challenges and constraints to contend with. Therefore, our judgment of ourselves and our achievements should not merely include the size or magnitude and number of our accomplishments; it should also include the conditions that have existed and the effect that our efforts have had on others.

It is this last aspect of our self-evaluation—the effect of our lives on the lives of others—that will help us understand why some of the common, ordinary work of life should be valued so highly. Frequently it is the commonplace tasks that have the greatest positive effect on the lives of others, as compared with the things that the world so often relates to greatness.

### Out of small things

It appears to me that the kind of greatness that our Father in Heaven would have us pursue is within the grasp of all who are within the gospel net. We have an unlimited number of opportunities to do the many simple and minor things that will ultimately make us great. To those who have devoted their lives to service and sacrifice for others and for the Lord, the best counsel is simply to do more of the same.

To those who are doing the commonplace work of the world but are wondering about the value of their accomplishments; to those who are the workhorses of this Church, who are furthering the work of the Lord in so

many quiet but significant ways; to those who are the salt of the earth and the strength of the world and the backbone of each nation—to you we would simply express our admiration. If you endure to the end, and if you are valiant in the testimony of Jesus, you will achieve true greatness and will live in the presence of our Father in Heaven.

As President Joseph F. Smith has said, “Let us not be trying to substitute an artificial life for the true one.” (*Juvenile Instructor*, p. 753.) Let us remember that “out of small things proceedeth that which is great.” (D&C 64:33.) Let us remember that doing the things that have been ordained by God to be important and needful and necessary, even though

the world may view them as unimportant and insignificant, will eventually lead us to true greatness.

That we may never be discouraged in doing those daily tasks which God has ordained to the common lot of man is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Romney

Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder Robert L. Simpson

My thoughts today are centered in the concern we all share over a growing crisis in today's world, a sort of spreading cancer which continues to eat away at the family unit, which has been ordained of God.

### Divorce rate

Divorce, with all of its diabolic side effects, threatens the very foundations of society. President Joseph F. Smith observed: “Marriage is the preserver of the human race. Without it, the purposes of God would be frustrated; virtue would be destroyed to give place to vice and corruption, and the earth would be void and empty.” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1939, p. 272.) Each prophet of this dispensation has said essentially the same thing in his own way.

According to data from the National Center for Health Statistics, nearly two million divorces are being granted this year in the United States. This is the highest number ever record-

ed and three times the number reported just twenty years ago. Most nations of the world seem to be following a similar trend. Today, more than one out of every three marriages is terminating in divorce. Families within the Church, unfortunately, are following this world pattern to an alarming degree, and it should not be so.

### Lack of communication

*U.S. News & World Report* recently quoted Herbert A. Gliberman, a recognized authority on divorce and domestic relations, as follows: “The biggest rise in the divorce rate has been among couples married 10 years or longer. It's not uncommon today for couples 25 and 30 years into their marriage to seek and obtain a divorce.” He then identifies the main cause:

“No. 1,” he states, “is the [couples'] inability to talk honestly with each other, bare their souls and treat each other as their best friend. . . . They [talk] about mostly