

Sister Elaine Cannon

President Kimball, it is a great blessing to all of us to have you here, President Hinckley, President Benson, and Brethren. I want to pay a special tribute to Elder Tuttle, who just spoke, because he has been the adviser to the Young Women for this past period of time, and we love him very dearly.

It is a great thrill for me to stand at this pulpit in this Tabernacle where I have come to conference all the years of my life. I have a birthday at this season of the year, and I can remember very clearly spending my ninth birthday here in the Tabernacle listening to the great speeches, and I am thrilled to have this part today.

We are gathered here in the name of the Lord. We are engaged in the work that is true, and I am, like you, grateful for the privilege of membership in this church. Yesterday I had an interesting experience. There has been talk lately in some circles about ordaining women to the priesthood, and someone asked me how I felt about holding the priesthood. I said very stoutly, "I love holding the priesthood when he comes for dinner." I know that isn't very original, but that was my answer. Now with this release from sweet but demanding service, I have every intention of being there when my fine husband comes home and our precious family members gather.

Heart full of deep appreciation

The remarks that I want to make today stem from a heart full of deep appreciation and a heart full of concern. I will talk about appreciation first. Sister Darger and Sister Smith and I, with Sister Palmer, who has been the executive secretary in the Young Women General Presidency, have loved this service with your beautiful young women. We have loved every minute of it, and we feel a great sweetness in the work that we have enjoyed together.

We have served in peace. We have served in faith, and we have sought the help of the Lord and have felt great support. We appreciate that privilege of having been guided in these ways. We have loved serving, and greatly appreciate the remarkable and attractive and faithful members of the general board and staff in the Young Women who have been released this day.

We have appreciated working with the organizations, the other auxiliary leaders, the departments, and the great machinery that operates this institution of the Church. We appreciate all of them, and we will miss those close ties.

But we are comfortable with the new callings that have been made. We love Sister Ardeh Kapp and are proud that she is able to take the helm of this important work in this day.

Over the years, as I have mentioned, we have had special guidance from great priesthood leaders whom we have come to love very, very much, and we appreciate them. My great tenderness goes toward President Kimball, whose hands were placed upon my head nearly six years ago to set me apart, to give me a special blessing to serve in this capacity. This great, loving, beloved servant of God is indeed a prophet. This fine gentleman, who has said, "Do it," on one occasion, and I say this here in the Tabernacle with great joy, said to me as we talked about the youth of the Church, "Tell them, don't do it—especially if it is something wrong."

Tithes, offerings, and services

The other day in the dedicatory prayer for the new Church Museum, President Hinckley reminded us of all that is made possible by the tithes of faithful Saints. He asked Heavenly Father to look with favor upon the tithe-payers, to open the windows of heaven

and shower down upon them choice blessings.

At that moment, within me, my own heart turned over. I have come to value in a new way all that has been made possible for the young women, for example, through the tithes of all you good people—manuals and handbooks and opportunities and guides for their personal progress. How we appreciate your tithes and the offerings and the services!

Good and gifted people to guide and lead

Brothers and sisters, there are good and gifted people in this church. This is another powerful lesson that I have learned and that I am deeply grateful for. In each place that we have traveled in these years of service, I have repeatedly marveled at the able women leaders and the strong priesthood leaders who have been raised up in the far places where the Church is established. One gets off a plane, and there, among a sea of strangers, is one face of light. We recognize each other as disciples of Christ, as members of this church. It is wonderful. Again and again Heavenly Father has raised up good people who will guide the youth of the Church today to be accountable, responsible, and faithful people.

Concern for the coming generation

Now, this brings me to my concern as I leave this very fine opportunity that has been ours. We must raise up a generation that is prepared to make wise choices, to stand and to withstand. We must raise up people who will desire to make the holy covenants and keep them, and learn the word of God and share it. This has been a deep feeling within us as a presidency.

We have reestablished a wonderful, old tradition that many of us here grew up with in the old MIA. The young people are given a new scripture theme every year, and the girls memorize it and recite it each week. They

speak of it, they set their goals by it, and we hope they try to live by it. This year's scripture is the theme of commitment taken from 1 Nephi 3:7: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded." "I will go." We say it over and over again.

You parents listening to this conference have more responsibility than we do as church workers. I echo what has been said by the Brethren. This recitation of 1 Nephi 3:7 should become a reality in the lives of the coming generation, who must be prepared, as President Kimball told us several years ago, as a covenant generation to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord.

Those of you who are gathered here in this historic Tabernacle or tuned into the conference listen to the messages translated into your own languages. This is so you can understand the word of God. It would warm your heart to see the numerous translators in their booths below us here in the Tabernacle. Many of them are youth. The Lord promised his children that they would be taught the gospel in their own language. This Church is making that happen. My concern is that families need to teach the gospel to each other *in the language of God*, our Heavenly Father. In the home, when direction is needed, when a problem or misunderstanding arises, I pray that we may open the scriptures with our youth beside us and find the law irrevocably decreed upon which blessings are predicated. Reading the will of God in the language of God builds reverence and witness and commitment, and we will all live more purely.

I love the gospel. I love the Lord. I am grateful that there is not a doubt in my mind that these men here are his special servants. I am happy to have served in whatever way I have. And I am grateful that there are people like you who will take up the concerns that we have had, who will prepare these young ones, who are so precious. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.